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'So where the bloody hell are you?': Tourism Australia faces off with British and Canadian legislation

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*We've bought you a beer . . .
And we've had the camels shampooed . . .
We've saved you a spot on the beach . . .
And we've got the sharks out of the pool . . . so . . . ?*

Iconic Australian images of Uluru, Sydney Opera House, Great Barrier Reef and the sun setting on a Western Australian beach coupled with iconic Australian slang—getting the 'roos off the green'—and iconic Australian humour—driving a ute down a long dusty road to open the 'front gate'—what better way for Tourism Australia to encourage overseas visitors to come Down Under and swell the coffers of Australia's multi-billion dollar tourism industry? And who better than Lara Bingle in a bikini to ask visitors, 'Where the bloody hell are you?'

Before Tourism Australia committed \$180 million for this international advertisement campaign, launched by tourism minister Fran Bailey in early 2006, it did its homework. It knew that Australia was viewed as one of the most desirable tourist vacation spots but was often seen as a 'can wait' destination. Tourism Australia wanted to 'cut through' the advertising from other 'desirable' tourist destinations and convince tourists that coming Down Under just couldn't wait any longer.

While \$180 million may sound like a lot of money, it was simply not enough to allow Tourism Australia to develop individualised advertisements with unique messages and creative executions for each country (adaptation). To make its \$180 million stretch as far as possible, Tourism Australia chose to go with a standardised advertisement that would play around the world, with only minor adjustments for local language. Besides the obvious cost savings, such standard-



ised advertising would allow Tourism Australia to communicate the same basic message to all potential tourists, regardless of their home country. To do this effectively however, it needed to ensure that its message and creative execution was interpreted in the same way by potential tourists, regardless of home country.

To that end, it invested over \$6 million in researching international markets, including conducting focus groups with more than 47 000 people in key markets including the United States, United Kingdom, China and Japan. The results showed the campaign grabbed attention, with one Japanese participant commenting, 'Bloody hell

... the more I hear it the more I like it'. It was viewed as distinctively Australian and authentic with an American participant commenting 'Definitely Aussie. It's something they would say and is unique' and a participant from the UK noting, 'It's Aussie ... cheeky, laid back, forthright'. Participants in all key markets saw the ad as representing a genuine invitation—'Australians want us there—it's real' (UK); understood the message—'Bloody hell just means you should come' (Korea); and challenged their perceptions about the diversity of tourist experiences on offer—'didn't know there was so much to do' (USA).

If so many potential tourists liked and understood the ads, why were they initially banned in the UK, partially banned and then edited in Canada, and changed for Asian markets? And why did Tourism Australia and the Australian government care so much?

The latter is easy to answer. Overseas tourists contribute over \$17 billion a year or over 10% of annual export earnings. British tourists represent the largest share, with over 700 000 visitors spending almost \$3.5 billion dollars annually. So attracting tourists is big business.

In terms of the Asian markets, Tourism Australia realised that 'Where the bloody hell are you?' would probably be offensive to many Asian tourists, despite reactions in the focus groups. The slogan was changed from the outset to 'Where are you?' for the Japanese, Korean, Thai and Singaporean markets. The reaction in the UK and Canada was not anticipated, however, catching Tourism Australia off guard and forcing tourism minister Fran Bailey and bikini girl Lara Bingle to make a quick trip to London to sort it out. The issue in the UK was the use of the word 'bloody'. The Canadians had no problem with 'bloody'; they took offence at 'hell' and a half-full glass of beer!

So, what was the problem with 'bloody'—a term used quite widely in British humour and everyday conversation? And why did the Canadians, who are known to drink the occasional beer while watching hockey, object? In both instances, Tourism Australia ran afoul of government regulations, industry self-regulation or a combination of the two.

In the United Kingdom, all UK-based broadcasters must be licensed under the *Broadcasting Act 1990*, with the licences granted by Ofcom, the agency responsible for regulating communication under the *Communications Act 2003*. One of the conditions of continued holding of the licence is that broadcasters ensure advertising complies with applicable advertising codes. Ofcom has delegated the creation and enforcement of advertising codes to the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP), an industry association that is part of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), itself an industry association. Television advertising must comply with the Television Advertising Standards Code, administered by the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice Ltd (BCAP). The Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre (BACC) vets and pre-approves all television advertising and the Advertising Standards Authority (Broadcast) Ltd adjudicates viewer complaints. While administration and enforcement has been delegated to industry associations, many functioning as limited liability companies, ultimately it is the *Broadcasting Act 1990* and the *Communications Act 2003*, which dictates what can and cannot appear on UK television screens. If this sounds complicated, it is—especially so for offshore advertisers who must comply with all codes and regulations, same as their domestic counterparts, if they want their advertisements to be aired.

In March 2006, the BACC imposed a ban on the advertisement, requiring that the word 'bloody' be removed. Following meetings with tourism minister Bailey and Lara Bingle, the ban was removed with the BACC giving the advertisement an 'ex-kids' restriction to ensure it was not scheduled during programs specifically aimed at children and also restricted its showing around religious programming. However, 36 viewers complained to the Advertising Standards Authority about the 'swearing', claiming they found the term 'bloody' offensive and were concerned that children might see the advertisement. During the complaint investigation process, the BACC referred to the focus group research conducted by Tourism Australia and the Advertising Standards

Agency's own research on offensive words where 'bloody' was relatively low at #27, after 'crap' and before 'God'. M&C Saatchi, the advertising agency responsible for creating the ad, said the use of 'bloody' had to be viewed in the context of the ad, which used everyday Australian language that would be judged as harmless and inoffensive by most.

In the end, the advertisement was found to breach the Television Advertising Standards Code rules concerning social, moral and psychological harm to children but not rules concerning offensiveness. It was ordered that the advertisement could no longer air before 9 p.m.

Was this the end of the story in the UK? No ... next came the posters, appearing on billboards on major motorways. Three posters were created as a joint effort between Tourism Australia and Qantas. One showed the Sydney Opera House at night with information about special Qantas fares and the tagline 'We've switched on the lights. And the champagne is on board. So where the bloody hell are you?' In early 2007, 32 complaints were received by the ASA with complainants again finding the 'swearing' offensive and concerned about potential exposure of children. Tourism Australia argued the posters targeted an older, more informed audience, were not placed near community based facilities such as schools, and that no offence was intended, just a hospitable welcome. The ASA found the posters breached rules concerning responsibility and children in the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing, which covers all non-broadcast advertising such as outdoor and cinema. The ASA believed parents were entitled to expect that poster advertising would not endorse or encourage swearing. In March 2007, Tourism Australia was ordered to remove all posters and refrain from using 'swear' words in future posters.

The Canadians, on the other hand, had no problem with the use of 'bloody': they objected to 'hell'. In March 2006, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canada's national broadcaster, banned running the ads during family programming such as Sunday evening's high-rating

Wonderful World of Disney and monitored audience reaction to the advertisement run during other programming. Telecaster, the organisation that vets advertisements for Canada's private broadcasters, cleared the use of 'hell', but warned private broadcasters that the advertisement contained 'objectionable language' and they should schedule accordingly. The Television Bureau of Canada which operates Telecaster felt the main issue was potential exposure of children to the word 'hell'.

So far, so good. No 'hell' during family programming, but okay for adult programming. But now the real problem—that half-full glass of beer and whether it complied with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages.

The CRTC is the independent public authority that regulates broadcasting under the *Broadcasting Act 1991*, reporting to Parliament through the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The CRTC licences television broadcasters and adjudicates complaints concerning television broadcast standards. Like the UK, a condition of continued holding of a Canadian broadcasting licence is compliance with all applicable CRTC codes. So in Canada, like the UK, ultimately it is the *Broadcasting Act 1991* that will dictate what can and cannot be aired on Canadian television screens.

Advertising Standards Canada (ASC) is the advertising industry's self-regulatory body, enforcing compliance with its member initiated Canadian Code of Advertising Standards. The ASC also pre-clears advertisements to ensure they adhere to all applicable legislation, regulations and CRTC and sectoral codes. Canadian broadcasters rely on this pre-clearance and will only air advertisements with an ASC pre-clearance number. Canada's private broadcasters also look to Telecaster for additional vetting.

So how does all this apply to a half-full glass of beer in an outback pub? The CRTC code prohibits, for example, alcohol advertising that attempts to influence purchase, implies social acceptance can be acquired through consumption or that alcohol is necessary for enjoyment of life.

Telecaster took particular issue with the implied consumption of unbranded alcohol, seeing, from its perspective, the now half-empty glass as a prop for mood setting, contrary to the Code. The end result was that the opening shot of the beer ended up on the editing room floor. No offer of Aussie beer for potential Canadian visitors!

Throughout, Tourism Australia tried to put a positive spin on the UK and Canadian bans with then managing director, Scott Morrison, referring to them as a 'marketer's dream', generating incalculable word of mouth and driving traffic to their website <<http://www.wherethebloodyhellareyou.com>> where the full advertisement could be viewed. Newspapers had a field day and parodies appeared on YouTube. Tourism minister Fran Bailey first questioned the Brits' sense of humour and then the Canadians', commenting 'Canada lags behind Americans, Brits and even Germans in the sense of humour stakes'. She extended an invitation to both British and Canadian regulators

to come to Australia and she'd shout the beer to say thanks for the free publicity.

While Fran Bailey joked publicly, her emergency trip to the UK to meet with regulators and government officials told the real story. At stake was a \$180 million dollar campaign directed at assisting a critically important sector of the economy. In the final analysis, it did not matter how harmless and stereotypically 'Aussie' the advertisement was. What mattered was whether it complied with domestic legislation and industry self-regulation in the markets in which it aired.

So was the advertisement a success? According to statistics released in March 2007, tourist spending increased by \$1.8 billion in 2006. This increase, however, was mainly due to longer stays and increased spending as actual numbers of tourists decreased slightly. Although the tourists who came stayed longer and spent more, Tourism Australia is still asking tourists who view Australia as a 'can wait' destination . . . 'Where the bloody hell are you?'

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Questions

- 1 Advertisers only need to be aware of applicable media laws in any given foreign market. Do you agree?
- 2 M&C Saatchi would have checked applicable legislation during the creation of the advertisement. Tourism Australia tested viewer reactions through its focus group research. With all this research, why did the advertisement cause such problems in the UK and Canada?
- 3 The tourism minister referred to the CRTC code as 'some sort of quirky Canadian regulation'. Does her opinion matter?
- 4 Standardisation is attractive to companies and organisations operating in a number of different markets due to economies of scale. However, as this case illustrates, standardisation may not always be appropriate. Given the financial constraints under which Tourism Australia operates, discuss which elements of the promotional campaign might be standardised and which must be localised.
- 5 In 2006, New Zealand's Advertising Standards

Complaint Board received 71 complaints concerning a Hyundai advertisement depicting a toddler driving its Santa Fe 4WD. Australia's Advertising Standards

Board received more than 80 complaints about the same advertisement. What would you expect to be the findings of the two industry associations?

“So where the bloody. clear ocean. c. British TV bosses have a commercial made by Australia’s tourism industry. The ad will not be shown because of the words “bloody hell” in the , “So where the bloody hell are you?” The question is an for Brits to a vacation in Australia. However, the conservative advertising execs decided it was “bad” language and too for British ears. The colorful commercial highlights all the things Australia is famous for - lovely beaches, clear ocean, aboriginal dancing and beer. British people can see the ad in in cinemas, newspapers and on the Internet. Australia’s Tourism Minister Fran Bailey is shocked by the and said it was “comical”. Following lobbying by Tourism Australia, including a visit to the UK by Australia’s tourism minister Fran Bailey and Lara Bingle, the ban was lifted, although a 9pm “watershed” was imposed on television commercials in May. In March 2007, the Advertising Standards Authority in the UK ordered the removal of roadside billboards bearing the slogan. Australian Internet Supplier iiNet has an advertisement for its ADSL2+ service, asking “So where the bloodii hell are you?” [http://www.iinet.net.au/about/news/img/iibus_winner.jpg]. At the 2006 Melbourne Comedy Gala, and on his 2007 Australian tour, American comedian Arj Barker replied to the ad, saying, “Whoa! Take it easy Australia! I never even said I was going there man...”

Transcribed Image Text from this Question. In February 2006, Tourism Australia launched the “So where the bloody hell are you” campaign globally. Costing \$180 million dollars to produce, it was hoped that the campaign would reap the rewards of increased tourism in Australia. Despite conducting market research in target markets, the campaign was not well received and even banned in some countries. What went wrong? Research the campaign and investigate its failure in two countries of your choice, determine why it failed and discuss how the campaign could have been modified to ensure its success? 2. Why are trade shows an ideal medium for the new exporter to introduce products into an overseas market? Get more help from Chegg.