

Advertising ethics

The Code of Marketing Communication Self-Regulation in Italy

The 60th edition of the Code, written and approved by the IAP (Istituto dell'Autodisciplina Pubblicitaria) board, came into force on 12th November 2015 (the first edition dates back to 12th May 1966). Here is an extract of the General Principles, referring to the Rules of Behaviour.



Art. 1 – Fairness in marketing communication

Marketing communication must be honest, truthful and correct. It must avoid anything likely to discredit it.

Art. 2 – Misleading marketing communication

Marketing communication must avoid statements or representations that could mislead consumers, including omissions, ambiguity or exaggeration that are not obviously hyperbolic, particularly regarding the characteristics and effects of the product, prices, free offers, conditions of sale, distribution, the identity of persons depicted, prizes or awards. (...)

Art. 3 – Terminology, quotations, technical and scientific tests, statistical data

Terms, quotations and references to scientific and technical tests must be used appropriately. Technical and scientific tests and statistical data with limited validity must not be presented in such a way as to make them appear generally valid.

Art. 9 – Violence, vulgarity, indecency

Marketing communication should not contain statements, audio or visual treatments depicting physical or moral violence, or that may be considered indecent, vulgar or repugnant to prevailing standards.

Art. 10 – Moral, Civil, and Religious Beliefs and Human Dignity

Marketing communication should not offend moral, civil and religious beliefs. Marketing communication should respect human dignity in every form and expression and should avoid any form of discrimination, including that of gender.

Art. 11 – Children and young people

Special care should be taken in messages directed to children and young people or to which they may be exposed. Such messages should avoid material that could cause psychological, moral or physical harm, and should not exploit the credulity, inexperience or sense of loyalty of children or young people.

Art. 14 – Denigration

Marketing communication should not denigrate the activities, companies or products of others, even if not specifically named.

Art. 15 – Comparative advertising

Comparative advertising is permitted when it helps to explain the technical or financial features and benefits of promoted products and services, objectively comparing the relevant basic, technically verifiable and representative features of competitive goods and services, that meet the same needs or are intended for the same purpose.

