

ACA penalises MetropolitanRepublic

MetropolitanRepublic, a member agency of the Association of Communications and Advertising (ACA), was recently disqualified from the Loeries 2013 following the 'Project Uganda' entry for MTN that did not meet the eligibility criteria. (Read DMMA's statement on the issue [here](#))



Following the receipt of a written complaint regarding MetropolitanRepublic's actions, the ACA convened a Special Board meeting to consider the matter. The CEO was instructed to conduct an investigation into the allegations made against MetropolitanRepublic, in accordance with the Association's Articles of Association and to report back to the Board.

Admission of culpability

At the special board meeting, Alison Deeb (chief executive officer, MetropolitanRepublic) presented a formal and unequivocal apology for the manner in which the agency won and subsequently withdrew their 2013 Loerie Awards for the 'Project Uganda' entry. The agency also formally apologised to the Association and admitted culpability for failing to protect and uphold the ACA Code of Conduct, after calling into question the integrity and ethics of the ACA and its member agencies.

Sanctions to be imposed

Given that the ACA, as the self-regulatory body of the South African advertising and communications sector, sets the highest standards of integrity and professionalism amongst its members, management and staff, the actions of MetropolitanRepublic were deemed by the ACA to be a profoundly serious transgression of the ACA Code of Conduct. Their actions had brought the ACA and its members into disrepute.

of the ACA and its members. Therefore the Board voted unanimously to impose the following sanctions on MetropolitanRepublic:

1. The ACA will issue a written reprimand to MetropolitanRepublic, regarding the agency's transgression of the ACA Code of Conduct.
2. MetropolitanRepublic is to provide the ACA with a formal undertaking regarding the agency's future conduct and support of the ACA's Code of Conduct.
3. MetropolitanRepublic will be levied the maximum fine allowable in terms of the ACA's Articles of Association.
4. MetropolitanRepublic's membership of the ACA is immediately suspended for a period of twelve months.
5. Since MetropolitanRepublic's membership of the ACA is suspended, the agency's representatives must resign from the ACA Board and its various operations committees.

MetropolitanRepublic has the right of appeal against the sanctions imposed. Failing any appeal, MetropolitanRepublic's membership with the ACA may be reinstated after the suspension period, subject to a review of the agency's compliance with the ACA Code of Conduct during their suspension.

Professional integrity in the profession

"The ACA, as the official association of the advertising and communications profession, sets the highest standards for integrity and professionalism amongst our member agencies and in fulfilling our mandate to self-regulate the profession, it was decided that these sanctions be imposed on MetropolitanRepublic." says Odette van der Haar, CEO ACA.

The ACA is the official, representative body for the Communications and Advertising profession in South Africa, representing agencies in the profession (who at present contribute approximately 95% of South Africa's measured ad spend) to government, media and the public. The ACA is a voluntary body formed by and for the industry, focused on and committed to self-regulation and to defending the highest standards of ethical practice.

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