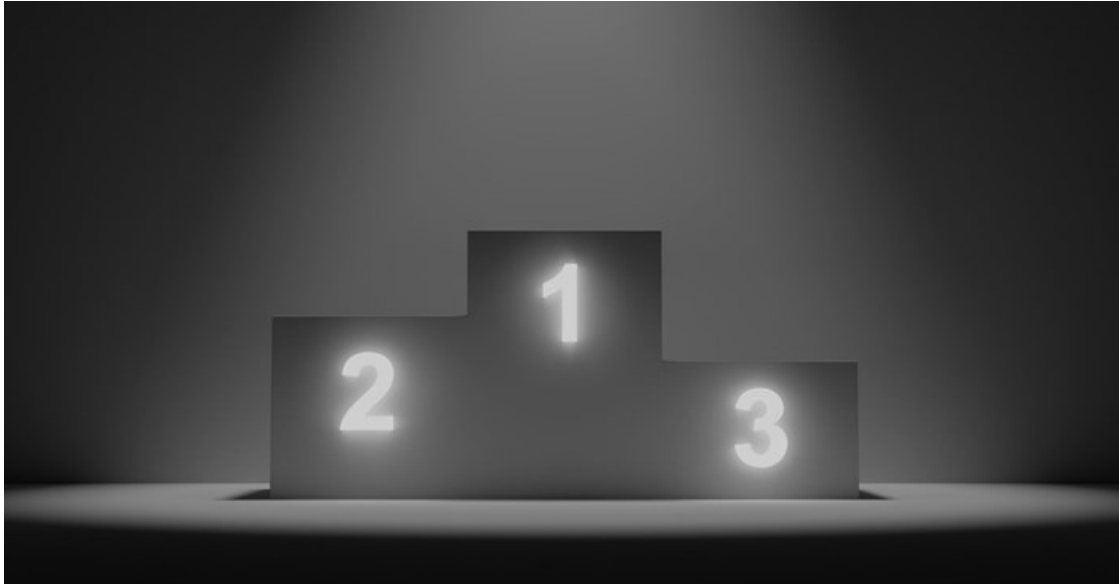


ARB amends rules on paid for rankings, adds vapour marketing appendix

In collaboration with the Competition Commission, the Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB) has announced an amendment for paid-for rankings in advertising listings.



Source: www.unsplash.com

This was announced at the ARB's AGM held on Thursday.

The code reads: *On intermediation services, search platforms and any similar digital platforms, where businesses pay for a particular rank position, or a boost in their ranking, on the search results page, this constitutes a form of advertising and must be clearly identifiable to the average user through appropriate labels such as: 12.5.1 'Sponsored', 12.5.2 'Promoted' or 12.5.3 'Ad'*

This clause ensures that consumers will understand that if a listing appears at the top of a search on certain platforms, it is not because it is the "best" but because it is paid for. While this may present some enforcement challenges, it believes this is a step in the right direction and says it will work with the Competition Commission to ensure that this protection has teeth.

We find ourselves faced with new advertising issues the whole time," says Gail Schimmel, CEO off the ARB. "We're excited that the Competition Commission flagged this issue with us, and trusts that self-regulation can be part of the solution."

James Hodge, chief economist, chair of OIPMI and acting deputy commissioner of the Commission, says, “This development is part of a larger enquiry by the Competition Commission. We are pleased that we can work with the ARB to find an immediate protection for consumers exposed to this advertising.”



ARB adds new clause to regulate cryptocurrency ads

23 Jan 2023



The ARB also added an appendix on vapour products, on behalf of ARB member Vapour Products Association of South Africa (VPASA) and welcomed Associated Independent Publishers as a new member.

More about the Vaping Code

The ARB has worked with member VPASA to develop an appendix that addresses the challenges involved in the marketing of vapour products. The new appendix addresses issues such as marketing to minors and health claims. The full appendix will be available on the ARB website.

“This is an inspiring example of an industry stepping up to the plate and embracing ethical advertising through self-regulation, in an area where there has been no other action,” says Schimmel. “We are proud to be part of this important development in consumer protection.”

“VPASA has developed self-regulating guidelines for its members which include standards aimed at preventing youth access to the products. We work with the government and other stakeholders such as the ARB to develop processes, legal regulations and standards for our industry and ensure that consumers have access to all available information about vapour products, and that minors are protected. This addition to the Code will ensure that we have enforceable standards around this shared vision,” explains Asanda Gcoyi, CEO of VPASA.

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