



ASCI

THE HEAT IS ON

ASCI review of summer advertising claims

April - June 2026

INTRODUCTION

As temperatures rose, so did advertising of certain categories. Beverages, air conditioners, sun screens, travel, and wearables had specific summer related promises to make. At ASCI we kept a close watch to see if these ads could deliver what they promised. Through consumer complaints and our own proactive monitoring, we investigated a number of advertisements making claims that promised a better summer to consumers. Here's a snapshot of what we found:



Base: Ads processed with summer specific products and claims

ANALYSIS AND INSIGHTS

A total of 40 ads were reviewed that promoted products specific to summer needs, with claims that would grab consumer attention. The cases were dominated by personal care and environmental comfort products. Advertising for *sun protection and tan removal products emerged as the largest category*, followed by *home appliances and furnishings positioned around cooling, air purification, and indoor comfort*.

Sun protection - more than skincare? While topical sunscreens remain prominent, brands are increasingly introducing new formats such as ***sunscreen jackets boasting "UPF 150+ ratings" and cooling apparel like "Ice Cool Tech T-Shirts"***, expanding sun protection from skincare to wearable technology. As exciting as this sounds, unfortunately they were not able to substantiate the claimed technological capabilities, and left consumers disappointed.

Promotion of cosmetic products for babies and children: A concerning observation this quarter was the promotion of ***skin-lightening products specifically for babies and children***. By appealing to parental anxieties around tanning, these advertisements extend beyond legitimate summer care and risk reinforcing harmful beauty stereotypes even for babies. A total of 14 ads such cases were reviewed.

Air conditioners positioned as health solutions: In our monitoring efforts this quarter, we observed that air conditioners are not just marketed for cooling or energy efficiency.

Increasingly, they are promoted as solutions for air pollution, allergens, and disease-causing germs, with specialised filtration technologies positioned as delivering health and wellness benefits.

Ads promised absolute filtration or blocking, including "Removes up to 99.97% of air pollutants including Covid-19, Bacteria, and Pollen". In many of these cases, there was an overstatement of product capabilities by extrapolating limited or context-specific test data into broad consumer facing claims.

Instant transformation continues to dominate beauty advertising: Products such as exfoliating gels and chemical peels promise immediate tan removal and visible skin transformation after a single use, reinforcing consumer expectations of instant gratification. ***Claims promising near-instantaneous results, such as "De-tan & Glow In 30 Seconds", "Visible difference in 5 Days", and "Remove stubborn tan in 2 minutes"*** needed to be withdrawn or modified because of lack of appropriate data to support the said claims.

Collectively, these observations illustrate a broader evolution in advertising. Brands are increasingly competing by positioning everyday products as solutions to health, wellness, protection, and appearance-related concerns. While this reflects changing consumer aspirations and drives innovation, it also raises concerns around responsible communication. Persuasive marketing cannot outpace scientific substantiation.

THE GAP BETWEEN INNOVATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

What the cases reveal

Consumers look to brands to meet their ever-evolving needs, and product innovation lies at the heart of this. But when bold claims are not backed by robust evidence and responsible communication, ads can erode consumer trust and, ultimately, brand credibility.



THE GOLD STANDARD: SUBSTANTIATION DONE RIGHT

Among the cases reviewed, the only ad that was not found in violation demonstrated the value of robust substantiation, successfully supporting the extended odour protection claim with:

- Clinical studies evaluating efficacy over 72 and 96 hours
- Statistical evidence showing significant odour reduction versus untreated areas
- Scientific documentation confirming the active ingredients in the product formulation

The case illustrates that strong scientific claims can be successfully defended when supported by rigorous, product-specific evidence.



THE RECURRING GAPS

The majority of upheld cases revealed consistent shortcomings that extend across categories.

Absence of Substantiation: In many cases, claims went live before the supporting evidence existed.

Failure to Engage: Non-responsiveness to requests to engage and respond, putting consumers at risk of potentially unsubstantiated claims.

Weak Support for Technical & Leadership Claims: Leadership and performance claims frequently outpaced the evidence, relying on weak, selective, or irrelevant substantiation.

Insufficient Due Diligence by Endorsers: Influencer and celebrity endorsements often lacked evidence of due diligence, weakening consumer trust.

Echoing ASCI's Annual Complaints Report 2025-26, the findings reveal a recurring pattern: **speed to market is outpacing claim verification**. As advertising evolves, substantiation and responsible communication must keep pace. For brands, evidence is not just a compliance requirement - it is the foundation of consumer trust.



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