



The Advertising Standards Authority rules in favour of the Society of British and International Interior Design



The UK's advertising watchdog investigates misleading advert and unsubstantiated claim

The website for the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID) claimed to be "THE UK'S LEADING PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION FOR INTERIOR DESIGNERS". The Society of British and International Interior Design (SBID) challenged whether the claim was misleading and could be substantiated.

The BIID stated that there were only two professional organisations in the UK that represented interior designers: BIID and the Chartered Society of Designers (CSD). BIID used membership numbers as a measure of substantiation for the claim. They showed that the number of their members was significantly higher than those for the CSD. BIID stated that these figures clearly showed that they were the UK's leading professional organisation for interior designers. They further stated that they did not believe the complainant would meet the commonly accepted understanding of the term 'professional organisation' because they did not publish their member list on their website. Also the complainant did not specify the length of term of office for its directors or that the directors must be elected by the membership.

The ASA's Assessment

The ASA upheld "in the absence of any qualification, consumers were likely to understand the claim "THE UK'S LEADING PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION FOR INTERIOR DESIGNERS" to mean that, relative to other organisations in the field of interior design, they had the highest total number of members.

We noted that BIID only provided evidence that compared their size with one other organisation. They had excluded other interior design organisations, such as the complainant, on the basis that the complainant had not listed their members or specified a length of term of directors. However, we considered that consumers would not interpret the claim so rigidly and would instead understand the claim to be referring to all organisations for interior design professionals, including the complainant. We therefore did not consider that a comparison with only one competitor was adequate to demonstrate that BIID had the highest number of members relative to other interior design organisations/ member bodies in the UK. For those reasons, we considered that BIID had not provided adequate evidence to substantiate the claim and concluded that it was misleading."

Dr Vanessa Brady OBE of SBID comments on the ruling, "It's a pity that the BIID chose not to respond our polite letter which raised concerns for our members over misleading claims. We are very grateful to the ASA for the results of the ruling, but also for the ASA's role in ensuring businesses can compete fairly and consumers are not mis-sold through unsubstantiated advertising".

Read the full ruling on the ASA website, [here](#).

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About SBID (Society of British and International Interior Design)

The Society of British & International Interior Design (SBID) was founded in 2009 by Dr Vanessa Brady, OBE. Not only are SBID a representative member for British Interior Design to the European Council of Interior Architects (ECIA), it is also a selected representative and industry-specific organisation for UK interior design linked with the All Party Support across the House of Lords and Commons led by Patron HRH Prince Michael of Kent. SBID provides the British economy with evidence of the annual financial growth for commercial design as an industry.

For more information visit www.sbid.org

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