

Censored

Environmental advertisement targeting Victoria's Secret rejected by more than 25 major publications



VICTORIA'S DIRTY SECRET

One million catalogs a day!
Ample forest destruction!

INSIDE:
forests stripped down...
to nearly nothing
getting rid of those
pesky endangered species

WE'RE OH-SO-SUPPORTIVE OF
global
warming

If Victoria's Secret wants to be **revealing**,
they should tell you what their catalogs do to the **environment**.

By printing over a million catalogs a day, mostly on non-recycled paper, Victoria's Secret is destroying North America's Great Boreal Forest—one of our first lines of defense against global warming. To find out more, visit www.victoriadirtysecret.net.

FORESTETHICS
San Francisco · Vancouver · Toronto · www.ForestEthics.org · info@forestethics.org · 1-800-725-0087

FORESTETHICS
Because protecting forests is everyone's business

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From May through July 2006, ForestEthics' environmental campaign targeting Victoria's Secret ran up against a disturbing obstacle: censorship from 26 mainstream publications.

Many of the publications—such as *Spin*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *Entertainment Weekly*—refused to explain why they were rejecting the ad. But those that did respond revealed an identical trend: an unwillingness to offend a major corporate advertiser. Only two of the publications approached, *Premiere* and *Paste*, agreed to run the ad.

“JANN WENNER, THE OWNER OF THE COMPANY, IS THE ONE WHO SAID NO TO THIS AD BUT DID NOT GIVE A SPECIFIC REASON. I AM ASSUMING THE AD MIGHT UPSET POTENTIAL AND CURRENT ADVERTISERS.”

– *Rolling Stone*

The censored advertisement was part of an ongoing environmental campaign against Victoria's Secret. The campaign—which has already successfully run two ads in *The New York Times* and has been featured in press across the country—takes aim at the million catalogs that Victoria's Secret mails daily, which are printed on paper from the world's last remaining Endangered Forests.



“[WE WILL NOT RUN THE AD] SIMPLY BECAUSE IT TARGETS SPECIFICALLY ONE OF OUR LARGEST ACCOUNTS.”

– Marie Claire

This latest advertising campaign was launched in early May with an eye toward informing the very same audience that Victoria’s Secret targets: young women. To that end, the ad ran in more than 30 online college publications as banner ads. But the ads were rejected by *Facebook* and *MySpace*, both of whom were initially interested.

Facebook was forthcoming in their refusal, stating that “they are not able to run ads that target specific companies.” *MySpace* negotiated rates and dates with us, but cut off all communication after we sent them a copy of the ad.

“THE AD MAY CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH OUR CURRENT ADVERTISERS.”

– BlackBook

The print campaign met with even more resistance. It was set to launch on May 22, with a full-page color ad in *USA Today*. Even though the ad was paid for and scheduled to run, the paper pulled the plug at the last minute.

Since that time, the ad has been censored in publication after publication. Many advertising representatives expressed initial interest in having ForestEthics advertise with their publications; some of them even expressed interest in or support for the campaign. But when the ad was submitted for formal approval, the response was quite different. Our inquiries were shuffled from person to person, then ignored or rejected. Multiple emails were sent and phone calls were made to ensure that each publication had ample opportunity to respond to the advertisement. Details about how each publication responded can be found in the following section of this report.

“WE DO NOT RUN ADS FROM ORGANIZATIONS THE OWNERS DON’T SUPPORT, [ALSO] DON’T KNOW IF THE CONTENT OF THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN AN ISSUE BECAUSE VICTORIA’S SECRET IS A BIG ADVERTISER IN THE COMPANY.”

– Lucky

The ForestEthics campaign against Victoria’s Secret was launched in October 2004. Full-page ads appeared in *The New York Times* in January 2005 and November 2005. To date, the campaign has included over 640 protests and events, and hundreds of media stories across the U.S., including feature items in *USA Today*, *Time*, and on the *Today Show*. To find out more about the campaign, visit www.victoriasdirtysecret.net.

For more information, please contact Tom O’Leary, ForestEthics Communications Manager, at 415-863-4563, x304 or at tom@forestethics.org.

Going to the Source: How Each Publication Responded



Lucky

Rejected because they will not run ads from organizations the owners don't support, but they "don't know if the content of this might have been an issue because Victoria's Secret is a big advertiser in the company."



Marie Claire

Rejected "because it targets specifically one of our largest accounts. There are a lot of manufacturers that run catalogues to generate business and we can not support signaling [sic] out one specific brand."



Rolling Stone

Rejected by Jan Wenner, owner and founder of *Rolling Stone*. Contact assumed because "ad might upset potential and current advertisers."



Nylon

Rejected, and when asked why, replied "Victoria's Secret is an advertiser of ours."



Facebook

Interested in running the ad, and began looking at dates. Later rejected it because they are not "able to carry ads that target specific companies."



BlackBook

Rejected because "the ad may cause problems with current advertisers."



USA Today

Ready to go ahead with the ad, and payment was already in place. At the last minute, they refused to run it. They did give feedback about why they would have censored the second *New York Times* ad, but not about the one they had rejected. In 2005 *USA Today* ran a favorable article about the campaign, which even reprinted the ad that ran in the *New York Times*.



Harper's Bazaar

Rejected because "creative is too controversial."



Elle

Rejected. Representative said they “did not get a specific reason, but probably similar to the other publications you have been trying to work with and have been turned down.”



Allure

Rejected, when asked for an explanation, responded, “Unfortunately we are unable to accept this ad in our magazine at this time.”



Time

Rejected because of “content.”



Details

Rejected, refused to supply explanation despite two emails requesting more information.



Newsweek

Rejected because the ad is not “appropriate for *Newsweek*.”



Entertainment Weekly

Rejected, refused to supply explanation despite two emails requesting more information.



InStyle

Rejected for “legal reasons.”



InTouch

Rejected because “it is just publisher’s discretion.”



MySpace

Began negotiating dates and rates. After receiving the ad creative, never responded, even after numerous emails requesting feedback.



Life & Style Weekly

Rejected because “it is just publisher’s discretion.”



OK!

Rejected, refused to supply explanation despite two emails requesting more information.



Cosmopolitan

Did not respond to six emails and two phone calls.



People

Rejected. When pressed for an explanation, replied "we can only reiterate that the ad is not acceptable for publication in *People*."



Spin

Did not respond to four emails and a phone call.



Teen People

Rejected, refused to supply explanation despite two emails requesting more information.



W

Did not respond to three emails and two phone calls.



Teen Vogue

Rejected, refused to supply explanation despite two emails requesting more information.



Vogue

Rejected, refused to supply explanation despite two emails requesting more information.

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