

Ethikos Volume 38, Number 3. July 01, 2024 On ethics: Caveni Wong

By Caveni Wong and Adam Turteltaub

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AT: Since we both work in ethics and compliance, I think it's worth starting with a disclosure to the readers that the two of us have much in common. We both worked together many years ago at LRN. In addition, before I began working in compliance, I spent over 13 years working in advertising agencies—including for a time at an agency that was a part of a joint venture of dentsu, where you work. Of course, these days, it feels like I did it when ads appeared on cave walls. I think it's worth starting by addressing ethics in advertising. Many have the belief that there is none. Let's talk overall; first, how long would *Mad Men*'s Don Draper last in advertising these days?

CW: That depends on how quickly the ethics and compliance team hears about it! But really, there's a lot of truth to that. When you have a global company with far-flung operations that grow by acquisition, the sooner you learn about bad behavior, the sooner you can take disciplinary action, which means the speak-up culture must be alive and well.

Then, we'd have to consider Don Draper's behaviors and whether those would get him fired from a company like dentsu. If I remember correctly, he repeatedly harassed women, showed up to work drunk, berated subordinates, and made inappropriate and unprofessional comments. There's a violation of multiple policies that, based on our global disciplinary guidelines, would surely get him fired, no matter how high of a position he occupies.

AT: You've worked with many different companies over the years. Would you say the culture in advertising is similar to other companies, or is there still a bit of the freewheeling side of things?

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