**UNMASKING DECEPTIVE ADS: ARB CONDEMNS RAINONE'S "1 RAND JOIN" PROMO**

The Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB) has ruled against RainOne, a South African Mobile Communications System for misleading Customers in the company’s most recent advert which states that customers can “Join now for just 1 Rand. Unlimited 5G home Wi-Fi + FREE monthly calls and data for 2 phones. Offer available until 31 July 2023. T’s & C’s apply.”

The issue was brought to the attention of the Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB) by Trevor Hill, who debated that this particular advert might lead the Consumers to believe they will have access to unlimited 5G home Wi-Fi, free monthly calls and data for two phones for just 1 Rand, however, upon clicking on the advert, it takes Users to a page on the website of RainOne where they were charged a sum of R599 and that the 1 Rand is merely for registration.

According to the reports from the Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB), Trevor Hill stated that the actual price of the product is not being advertised, only the joining fee of R1, and this misleads the consumer to believe the product is priced at R1 and also that Rain should have, at the very least, included the actual price of the product in the advert, which is R599.

RainOne, in response to this, gave an analysis of the advert stating that the customer would pay R1 for the first month as a joining fee, and then they could start paying a monthly subscription fee of R599 to keep enjoying the network. The Company further emphasized that they were not trying to mislead the consumers and that the promo was only for a limited time and had expired by the time of this complaint. Furthermore, Rain stated that the details of the advert were clarified in the terms and conditions.

As a consequence, after considering the impact and sensitivity of the topic, the Advertising Regulatory Board finalized that regardless of the clarifications in the terms and conditions, the advert should have included the subscription fee of R599 and thus deemed Misleading under Clause 4.2.1 Section II of the Code of Advertising Practice, which states that “Advertisements should not contain any statement or visual presentation which, directly or by implication, omission, ambiguity, inaccuracy, exaggerated claim or otherwise, is likely to mislead the consumer.” The Board further urged the public not to accept Adverts from Rain stating “Join Now for 1Rand” without further clarity.

In response to the rulings of the Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB), Rain stated that despite not being a member of the ARB, meaning any decision made by the regulator does not bind it, it is aware of the rulings and has since made the needed changes.