

For Immediate Release

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**NAD Finds Verizon 5G Ultra Wideband Expansion Claim Supported; Recommends
5G Ultra Wideband “Most Reliable” Claim be Discontinued**

New York, NY – Aug. 11, 2022 – The National Advertising Division (NAD) of BBB National Programs determined that Verizon provided a reasonable basis for the message in its “Verizon is Going Ultra” commercial that Verizon 5G Ultra Wideband has expanded its coverage. However, NAD recommended that Verizon discontinue the “most reliable” claim when referring to the 5G Ultra Wideband network.

NAD also recommended that, when using a disclosure that states the number of “cities” where 5G Ultra Wideband is available, Verizon modify its advertising to more clearly define “cities” for consumers. The claims at issue were challenged by AT&T Services, Inc.

Verizon’s 5G Ultra Wideband has historically been associated with its high-band mmWave network, which offered fast speeds but had somewhat limited coverage, especially when reaching indoor locations. In January 2022, however, Verizon expanded the 5G Ultra Wideband brand to include its mid-band or “c-band” network. Unlike high band, mid-band 5G tends to be slower, but has broader coverage and can pass through some walls. Verizon then launched an advertising campaign promoting the inclusion of c-band to increase coverage of its 5G Ultra Wideband service.

Coverage Claim

In a 60-second commercial titled “Verizon is Going Ultra,” a voiceover claims that “America’s most reliable network is going Ultra with Verizon 5G Ultra Wideband, now in many more cities so you can do more.” At the same time, a disclosure appears at the bottom of the screen stating, “5G Ultra Wideband available in 1700+ cities.”

NAD determined that the images and voiceover used in Verizon’s commercial, by themselves, reasonably convey a message of expansion and not widespread availability. Moreover, because the claim focuses exclusively on “cities” and displays images from cities, NAD concluded that the message of expansion was limited to city environments and not other geographic locations (such as rural areas, towns, and villages). NAD concluded that Verizon provided a reasonable basis for its claims that 5G Ultra Wideband is available in over 50% of all cities in the United States regardless of how a city is defined. Based on a review of a sampling of Verizon’s coverage maps, NAD also concluded that 5G Ultra Wideband is also widely available within cities.

However, NAD found that consumers may believe 5G Ultra Wideband to be more widely available than it is based on the reference to “1700+ cities.” Accordingly, NAD recommended that, when using a disclosure that states the number of “cities” where 5G

Ultra Wideband is available, Verizon modify its advertising to more clearly define “cities” for consumers (e.g., “5G Ultra Wideband available in 1700+ cities (pop. > 10,000)”).

Reliability Claim

In the same commercial, a voiceover claims, “America’s most reliable network is going ultra.” A written disclosure appears stating, “Most reliable based on RootMetrics® US National RootScore® Report 1H 2021. Tested on 3 nat’l mobile networks across all available types combined, excl. c-Band. Not specific to 5G networks. Results may vary. Not an endorsement.” The same claim, without the disclosure, is also made on Verizon’s website. The RootMetrics analysis applies to the entire Verizon network (including 4G LTE and 5G Nationwide), not just 5G Ultra Wideband.

NAD concluded that consumers could reasonably understand the “most reliable” messaging to apply to 5G Ultra Wideband alone – a claim that is not substantiated by the RootMetrics report. NAD noted that while there are situations where older data can be used to substantiate a claim, especially in the fast-paced 5G industry where reports often lag behind innovations, this is not the case when there are major changes to a product or service that would render the older data stale. The addition of c-band to the 5G Ultra Wideband brand is a major change to Verizon’s service such that older data does not apply to the current network.

NAD also determined that the disclosure stating that c-band is not included in the RootMetrics results is insufficient to clarify this claim.

Therefore, NAD recommended that Verizon discontinue the “most reliable” claim in reference to the 5G Ultra Wideband network. NAD noted that nothing in its decision would prevent Verizon from making such a claim in the future provided it has new substantiation supporting such a claim.

In its advertiser statement, Verizon stated that it is “pleased with the decision and will comply.” The advertiser further stated that while it “does not agree that reasonable consumers might think that the 5G Ultra Wideband network was tested in isolation and determined to be ‘Most Reliable,’ Verizon appreciates NAD’s acknowledgment that the decision does not prevent it from making such a claim when new testing becomes available.”

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consistent standards for advertising truth and accuracy, delivering meaningful protection to consumers and leveling the playing field for business.