

GREATER PUBLIC



On-Air Sponsorship Copy Guidelines: Sample 2

As a public, not-for-profit radio station, [STATION] is bound by FCC guidelines for on-air sponsorship announcements. On-air sponsorship announcements are permitted to identify who the sponsor is, what they do, and how they can be reached. The FCC has identified five practices that promote, rather than identify, and therefore are not permissible for air on non-commercial stations: comparative descriptions, qualitative descriptions, pricing information, calls to action, and inducements to buy, sell, rent, or lease. Here are examples of each:

1. Comparative Descriptions

Announcements that contain descriptive language comparing the underwriter's products with those of competitors are not permitted. Comparative descriptions usually include words that draw an explicit or implicit comparison to others, such as *best*, *better*, *more* and *superior*.

Permitted: "Serving 50 cities in the Western United States."

This does not compare the airline to anyone else.

Not permitted: "Serving more cities than any other airline."

2. Qualitative Language

As a general rule, donor acknowledgements that contain qualitative descriptions of the underwriter's products are not permitted. Qualitative descriptions include words that describe the features, benefits, advantages, or other qualities offered by the underwriter's products or services. Examples of qualitative words are *excellent*, *tasty*, *distinctive* and *fashionable*.

Permitted: "With twenty locations throughout the Puget Sound."

Not permitted: "With twenty convenient locations."

3. Pricing Information

Announcements containing pricing information are not permitted. This includes interest rate information or other indications of savings or value associated with the product.

Permitted: "Information on rates is available online at bank dot com."

Not permitted: "7.7% interest rate now available."

4. Calls to Action

Announcements that contain a “call to action” are not permitted. Most calls to action contain imperative language. That is a statement to the listener that tells him or her to take action.

Permitted: “More information available at [NUMBER].”

Not permitted: “Call us at [NUMBER] for more information.”

5. Inducements to Buy, Sell, Rent, or Lease

Announcements containing any inducement to buy, sell, rent or lease are not permissible. Language or descriptions that give reasons for doing business with the underwriter should be suspected of serving promotional rather than identification purposes.

Examples are:

“Six months free service”

“The movie starts Monday at the University 4 Theater”

“A bonus available this week only”

“Now offering free checking”

“With twenty stores nearby to save you time and money”

Any specific short-term activity - even for businesses which regularly engage in nothing but short-term activities - will be considered an inducement.

Whether these statements are true makes no difference. If qualitative language is used to describe an underwriter’s products or services, it probably serves to promote rather than identify the underwriter, and therefore would not be permissible.

Additional On-Air Sponsorship Policies:

6. The station does not accept corporate sponsorships which promote the use of illicit drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or firearms.

7. The station does not accept political advertising.