

Hearst-Argyle TELEVISION, INC.

News – Sales Guidelines *January 2002*

Overview

- News content should be determined solely through editorial judgement and not as the result of outside influence.
- Sponsorship of news is not to be used to determine, manipulate, restrict or influence news content.
- Sponsorship of news should not put any station personnel in a position of endorsing a product, service or issue.

What is content?

- A broad definition: “Anything within a newscast”.
- A working definition: “Anything within a newscast that can be influenced by an outside agent”.

Examples of content that should avoid direct sponsorship

- Individual news stories
- Medical news
- Consumer news
- Education

Examples of content that may be sponsored

- Weather
- Sports
- Traffic and helicopter
- Closed captioning
- School closings
- Remote cameras

Operational guidelines

- Sales proposals involving news content should be reviewed by the General Manager, General Sales Manager and News Director before submission to clients or agencies.
- Proposals for news sponsorship should be presented to clients *IN WRITING* to avoid misunderstandings. *These proposals should NEVER include guaranteed news coverage or endorsement of products or clients by news personnel.*

- The General Sales Manager – not account executives – should present sales proposals to the News Director. Dialogue between the news and sales departments should be restricted to the management level.
- Sponsorship of non-news programs (i.e. medical specials) should be reviewed before committing news talent as hosts or moderators to avoid the appearance of an endorsement by the news anchor.
- Sponsorships of weather, sports, traffic, closed captioning, school closings, helicopters and remote cameras are acceptable within the bounds of each station's guidelines.

In conclusion

- ***SHORT-TERM SALES GAINS SHOULD NEVER PUT YOUR STATION'S NEWS REPUTATION AT RISK.***
- Although ***CLUTTER*** is neither content nor an ethical issue, it can confuse and irritate a viewer. Use logos wisely.
- There should be ***NO*** appearance of "quid pro quo" when accepting a news-related sponsorship. ***WHEN IN DOUBT – LEAVE IT OUT!***