



WTIC-TV/FOX 61
News-Sales Guidelines
2002

NEWS AND SALES

Credibility is what attracts viewers and advertisers to television news. Undermining that credibility can have serious consequences for a station's long-term future. While building revenue, we must be careful not to damage the foundation of our business by placing advertising in a way that weakens the integrity of the station and its news operation.

OVERVIEW

- News content should be determined solely through editorial judgment 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 would be: "Anything within a newscast."
- A working definition: "anything within a newscast than can be influenced by an outside agent."

ACCEPTABLE SPONSORSHIP STYLE ON FOX 61 NEWS

- It is inappropriate for any news department employee to say: "Tonight's news/weather/sports/feature is brought to you by sponsor."
- It is inappropriate to have a client's logo over news content, for instance, we would not have our meteorologist say: Tonight's Jeep 5-day forecast calls for...
- Billboards will not appear within the body of the newscast but may appear in the commercial pod.
- The graphic for the sponsor should be sufficiently different from News graphics.

EXAMPLES OF CONTENT THAT MAY BE SPONSORED

- Weather
- Sports
- Closed Captioning
- Medical
- Fox Focus
- Special Assignment
- Arts & Entertainment
- Business Report
- Weather, Sports and CC are easy and "clean." We must make absolutely clear to any sponsor of other content that they will not have any input on our news content, nor can they ask for exclusivity in our news gathering. For example, if a Hospital sponsors our medical reports, FOX 61 News must remain independent and free to seek news about and expert opinions from competing hospitals.

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 sponsorships 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.**
- Dialogue between the news and sales departments about sales proposals should be restricted to the management level. For example, A-Es should not take weather sponsorship proposals to the meteorologist nor sports sponsorship proposals to the Sports Anchor.

SPORTS

- The rules are slightly different for sports. A sponsor cannot affect the outcome of the game. So, in our weekly Sports Ticket program it is permissible to sell a sponsorship of a scoreboard that will include a sponsor's logo in content time—The New England Ford NASCAR points scoreboard, or the Jeep Olympic Medal count.
- It would be permissible to put a client's logo on a sports ticker during News or Sports Ticket time.

IN CONCLUSION

- Short-term sales gains should **NEVER** put FOX 61's news reputation at risk.
- There should be NO appearance of "quid pro quo" when accepting a news-related sponsorship. **WHEN IN DOUBT – LEAVE IT OUT.**