

Radio Sponsorship Rules

Programming Sponsorship and Promotions Funded by Advertisers

1 Sponsorable Output: Definition

A programme or promotion is sponsored if it is broadcast in return for payment or other valuable consideration (which includes the provision of the programme itself) to a Licensee. All sponsorships, including ‘trails’ for sponsored items, must conform to all the Rules in this Advertising and Sponsorship Code.

The Rules which follow apply to sponsored programming and to programming promotions and programming competitions with advertisers, as well as to ‘Masthead’ programming.

2 Transparency

Listeners must unmistakably be able to recognise sponsored programming. Links between the sponsored programming and the sponsor’s commercial activities must be transparent and must be made totally clear to listeners.

A direct link between the sponsor’s commercial activities (except betting and gaming, see below) and the programming’s subject matter is acceptable in all sponsorable programming provided the nature of the sponsor’s involvement is made thoroughly clear.

3 Editorial Control and Responsibility

Editorial control of, and responsibility for, sponsored programming or promotions must remain with the Licensee. However, sponsors may contribute to the content of most sponsored programming or promotions (exceptions given below in Prohibited Sponsors and Sponsorships), provided contributions adhere to all the Rules in this Code.

Sponsors may contribute to, or suggest information, advice or ideas for, programming content or presentation. For example, a supermarket chain which sponsors an item on healthy eating may produce the feature, contribute to production costs and include specialist advice from its nutritionist. However, the content must be balanced and impartial, and an appropriate range of views and information must be represented where they exist.

4 Promotion of the Sponsor's Product or Service

All sponsorships which involve special category sponsors must be scripted and submitted for central copy clearance by RACC. All claims which need substantiation must be cleared locally or by RACC (for special categories). All sponsorships must comply fully with the requirements of the Advertising Code. The nature of the sponsor's involvement must be made absolutely clear to listeners.

All promotion of a sponsor's product or service within programming must be scripted and copy cleared for broadcast either centrally or locally in the same way as advertisements. A presenter may front or voice a sponsorship promotion or tag during his/her programme as long as the item is clearly not a part of normal editorial. This separation or distinction can be achieved by voice inflection, pauses, tone or jingles. Listeners must clearly be able to understand that this is a 'sell', set apart and distinct from normal output, and stations and presenters should not attempt surreptitious endorsement or product placement within programming.

5 Sponsor Credits

a) Definition

Sponsor credits are designed to be short branding statements, which may contain legitimate advertising (sales messages, slogans, addresses, phone numbers, web addresses etc).

b) Requirements

During sponsored items and also during trails, credits must contain:

- i the programming/promotion title or name;**
- ii the sponsor's name;**
- iii a clear expression of all aspects of the sponsor's financial and/or other contribution (if not self-evident);**
- iv a brief identification of the sponsor's commercial activities (where not self-evident).**

Advertising slogans or copylines may be used. Sponsors' names may appear in programming titles (see 'Masthead' programming below). The nature of sponsor funding and/or contributions to programming must be clearly acknowledged.

c) Frequency

At least one sponsor credit must be broadcast either at the beginning or end of every sponsored item, and from time to time as appropriate during longer sponsored items depending on the degree of transparency required.

The normal expectation would be credits about every 20 minutes but circumstances (eg. concerts) may demand otherwise.

6 Sponsor's Spot Advertisements

Sponsors may buy spot advertising in and around the programming they sponsor.

If the scripting and style of a spot advertisement sounds similar to the scripting and style of the programming, it must be clearly separated by a jingle/station ident.

7 Prohibited Sponsors

Those (except for betting and gaming, see below) who are prohibited from advertising may not sponsor programming.

8 Prohibited Sponsorships

a) All programming may be sponsored, with the exception of news bulletins and any news desk presentation. Care must be taken with the positioning of all sponsorships/commercials to avoid the impression that a news bulletin or the station's news output is sponsored.

The Broadcasting Act 1990 Section 90(1)(b) requires that "any news given in whatever form is presented with due accuracy and impartiality." Sponsorship should not compromise this requirement. However, stations may credit news sources with a simple single acknowledgement of the news provider, whether a news agency or local newspaper. This is not regarded as sponsorship, as long as the provider has not paid for the credit and it is not presented in a way which appears to suggest that the provider has paid for the credit.

b) Sponsors may pay for, but may not contribute to, the programming content of the following output, provided the chosen sponsor's business interests do not prejudice, or appear to prejudice, the impartiality of the programming content:

- i speech programming and features with a current affairs background rather than news desk presentation;**
- ii business/financial news or comment (but not commercially specific financial advice).**

These sponsorships are restricted to financial help only and this relationship must be made clear in the sponsor credit. Credits must not be positioned so as to appear to link

the sponsor with news output.

c) Sponsorship credits for programming aimed particularly at those aged below 18 years and for religious output must be copy cleared centrally. Special care should be taken to ensure that such programming is not linked to inappropriate sponsor products or services, such as alcohol, sexual material etc.

9 Limited Sponsorship by Betting and Gaming Companies

The Government currently requires that advertising restrictions apply to these businesses. Companies with betting and gaming interests may sponsor programming, subject to the following restrictions. All proposals must be copy cleared centrally.

a) bookmakers or betting companies may not sponsor programming concerned with betting, tips, horse or greyhound racing coverage or the results bulletins of such racing;

b) gaming companies may not sponsor competitions or features which closely resemble the gaming that takes place in casinos;

c) neither gaming companies nor gambling brands may sponsor programming specifically aimed at children (those aged below 18 years);

d) sponsor credits for betting and gaming companies (excluding football pools and permitted lotteries) may include only a concise, factual statement of the company's business (eg. "xxx, the online betting company"). No advertising content is permitted.

Note Government restrictions currently apply to the advertising of betting and gaming concerns on radio and TV. The Radio Authority is seeking relaxations and is now in dialogue with Government via the Gaming Review Board.

10 'Masthead' programming

Stations may use the names ('Mastheads') of non-news print or web publications for sponsored programming which is similar to that featured in the publication, subject to the requirements of this Code. Alternatively, 'Masthead' material may be broadcast as long advertisements, provided this is made totally clear with regularity appropriate to the degree of transparency required.

'Marie Claire' or 'GQ', for example, are both acceptable as names for features.

During sponsored editorial, the magazines' contributors may be used and credited, and programming may cover the same subject matter as the magazines but should not be used gratuitously to direct listeners to further information within publications. Discussions are likely to be unscripted (and therefore not copy cleared), but neither presenters nor interviewees can involve themselves in anything other than legitimate objective coverage within editorial. Anything beyond this will be construed as Product Placement (see below). Editorial control rests with the radio station.

As advertisements, the magazines' contributors may be used and credited, the advertiser may include features similar to those in the magazines and airtime may be used to direct listeners to further information within publications, within the discussion boundaries above. All advertiser mentions must comply with the requirements of this Code and clearance must be sought where necessary.

Product Placement and Undue Prominence

Product placement or undue prominence of commercial products or services in programming is prohibited.

Product placement means the gratuitous reference to a product or service within programming (that is, a reference not within an advertisement or sponsor credit). Any reference to products or services must be limited to what can clearly be justified by the editorial requirements of the programming itself.

Legitimate objective coverage of a commercial product or service in programme editorial is acceptable.