



Portland Community Media
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Sponsorship & Commercial Content on Public Access Channels

What is Sponsorship?

Sponsorship is a show of support for a program. Sponsors may assist with the production and/or distribution of a program in a number of ways including, but not limited to: providing food for the crew, purchasing tape stock, or supplying the set pieces to assist with the program's visual design. Sponsors may provide a location for the program to be videotaped at no cost to the producer. Acknowledgement of a sponsor should take the form of a "thank you" for a show of support, and is not an advertisement for a product or service.

What is Commercial Content?

Commercial content is audio, text or video intended to identify and promote the products or services of a specific business or individual. Commercial content is not allowed on PCM channels.

What is a Call to Action?

A *call to action* is any audio, text or video that encourages the viewer to take action to purchase a product or service, or to visit a specific business. Calls to action are commercial.

Acceptable Interview Methods for a Business Owner or Representative

When interviewing a business owner or a representative from a business you must be careful to keep the conversation non-commercial and free from calls to action. Programs that contain commercial content and calls to action cannot air on PCM channels.

The guest should be introduced and the name of the business they own or represent should be mentioned as a statement of fact. This should be the last time you address his/her specific business. Avoid questions that encourage the business person to talk about what they sell. Instead, ask questions about the business person's history in the community, how long they've been in business, how the neighborhood has changed and how the business gives back to the community. Encourage the business owner to share anecdotes about his/her participation in the community, charitable events they've sponsored, or charitable events that are coming up in the near future.

Acceptable Graphics to Identify a Business Owner or Representative

A business person may be identified during the program with a lower third graphic. The graphic may include the person's name, title, and the name of the business they own or represent.

The business owner's contact information including address, phone number and web site address may be included as part of the end credits of the program. The intent of this graphic is to inform viewers - not to promote the business.

When Discussion/Education Becomes Commercial

Example I (Generic Interview): A producer has a soda pop specialist from Pepsi on his/her program. Discussion of the history of soda pop is acceptable. Discussion about how soda pop makes lives better, and improves your health is acceptable. When the discussion becomes focused on how Pepsi makes lives better and improves your health the discussion has become commercial.

Example 2 (Review Program): A producer is reviewing high tech products that can be used to expand the performance of your average personal computer. The host describes a generic family of video cards and how this video card will improve the performance of the PC. The host then identifies one video card as the best and suggests that viewers buy this one card. The program has become commercial.

Review programs are more difficult to work with because often the goal is to identify a “best thing” from a group of things. Here are a few ways to ensure a review program does not become commercial:

- choose three or more best picks from a variety of manufacturers and eliminate the call to action,
- identify best features to look for instead of a best product,
- educate the viewer on how to make the choice for themselves,
- avoid sponsorship (keep it independent).

Acknowledgement of a Sponsor vs. Where to Buy a Product

Acknowledgement of a sponsor is a “thank you” message, not an advertisement. When acknowledging a business it is to thank them for supporting the program, not to tell viewers where or how they can purchase an item.

Verbally thanking a business that has donated an item for the production of the program is acceptable. Graphics at the end of the show may include a thank you to the business for their support, and the address, phone number, and web site address of the business.

For example: You may thank a local clothing boutique that has provided an outfit for the host of the show, or a restaurant that has provided free food for the production crew.

Who Sponsors Community Media Programs?

A sponsor can be any individual, group or business that believes in supporting community building efforts such as those that happen through PCM facilities.

A sponsor of community media programming must understand that sponsorship is not an advertisement for their business. Sponsorship may be a show of support for a particular production project (such as OLLIE youth programming), it may be a method for the sponsor to personally participate in the promotion of free speech, or it may be a means for the sponsor to express his/her own views by supporting programming with similar ideas.

A small business can greatly improve its visibility in the community by sponsoring community media programming without the need for commercial content or calls to action.

And Finally, the Rules

- Programs containing commercial content or calls to action will be pulled from cablecast, and the producer will be notified.
- Graphics acknowledging a sponsor’s support can come either before the beginning of the program, or after the end of the program, but may not be placed within the program.
- Graphics acknowledging all sponsor’s support may not exceed 30 seconds total.
- Repeated violation of commercial content policies may lead to loss of use of PCM facilities.
- For the complete policy regarding commercial content please consult the PCM Operating Policies, Rules and Procedures document.