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ABC Consumer Magazine Reporting Standards (UK)

Changes have been agreed to the ABC Consumer Magazine Reporting Standards. We have updated the latest Reporting Standards – 2014 Version 6 – to incorporate these changes and you can now view or download these from our website www.abcstandards.org.uk.

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RULE CHANGE 1

1. REQUESTED SPONSORED SUBSCRIPTION SALES

A new circulation category has been introduced to allow copies to be claimed where an individual has requested to receive a subscription but the payment has been made by a third party (i.e. sponsor).

An example of its intended use might be an institution such as a Bank offering subscriptions to its customers as part of a loyalty/incentive scheme where the customer must opt to receive it but the bank pays the publisher.

This category is available from Reporting Periods ending January 2015 onwards.

Amendments

The following section has been added plus some small changes to the Reporting and Digital Edition sections as denoted by shading and struck-through text:

Setting the standard



REQUESTED SPONSORED SUBSCRIPTION SALES

DEFINITION

A single copy personally requested by and distributed to a known individual, but paid for by a third party sponsor for a contracted period.

PRINCIPLES

1. **There must be a contractual arrangement between the sponsor and the publisher (or their agent)**
2. **Single copy per issue, requested by and distributed to a known addressee**
3. **Copies are paid for by the sponsor**
4. **For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)**
5. **Standard subscription rates must be published**
6. **Reported by rate, comparing price paid by sponsor with standard rate**
7. **The price paid for the publication by the sponsor must be clear and conspicuous**

REQUIREMENTS

1. **There must be a contractual arrangement between the sponsor and the publisher (or their agent)**
 - a) You must be able to provide evidence of the contractual arrangements between the sponsor and the publisher (or their agent) including the issues/period, the quantities to be supplied and the price.
2. **Single copy per issue, requested by and distributed to a known addressee**
 - a) You must be able to provide evidence the addressee has specifically requested the copies
 - b) You must retain a list of individual recipients for one designated issue each reporting period (the Audit Issue - see General Principles section). In addition you must be able to recreate a list for any issue in the reporting period on request.
 - c) You must be able to demonstrate the copy is distributed to the addressee.

3. Copies are paid for by the sponsor

- a) The sponsor, who is paying for the subscription, is a third party to the addressee, publisher (and their agent if applicable). *For example: A bank may offer the subscription to its customers as part of a loyalty package. If the customer opts to receive the subscription then the bank contracts to pay the publisher.*
- b) You can claim copies where payment is outstanding as long as there are reasonable grounds to consider them to be live, good and collectable.

4. For a contracted period and for a minimum number of issues (at least two)

- a) You cannot claim distribution of back issues.

5. Standard subscription rates must be published.

- a) The 'Basic Annual Rate' (BAR) is the standard 1 year subscription rate for the publication, in contrast to a special price only available to a limited class, or under limited conditions.
- b) There can only be 1 BAR per country/wider geographical region.

6. Reported by rate, comparing price paid by sponsor with standard rate

- a) You must claim a subscription in the appropriate rate band by comparing the price paid for the subscription with the relevant Basic Annual Rate (BAR) for a single copy subscription at the time of sale (pro-rate if less than 1 year). Note:
 - i) Ignore for ABC purposes: Bank charges or exchange rate differences.
 - ii) Ignore for ABC purposes: The value (or perceived value) of any gifts or other incentives (including bundled publications or media products that are not claimed for ABC purposes).
 - iii) When calculating what price has been paid you must take into account:
 - Any reciprocal payments made by the publisher.
 - Any reciprocal charges for goods or services made by the sponsor as part of the deal (*for example: for distribution or marketing*).
 - The value of any other goods or services provided free or discounted by the publisher (*for example advertising or promotional messages*).
- b) If a subscription promotion includes a gift or product that is being claimed for ABC purposes (for example a bundled copy of a publication or access to a paid website) then the price paid must be allocated according to the following, moving down the list until one can be applied:
 - i) According to the specific terms of the offer.

- ii) Where specific terms are not clear, by pro-rating the price according to the relative prices of the products.
- iii) Where the specific terms are not clear and in the absence of a means of pro-rating the price paid, it should be divided equally between the number of ABC claimed products included in the sale.
- c) You may treat subscription orders for more than one year as a sale at Basic Annual Rate if the published multi-year subscription rate when pro-rated to 1 year:
 - i) Is at least 90% of the BAR for a two year subscription; or
 - ii) Is at least 85% of the BAR for a three year subscription.
- d) You may treat renewal or direct debit rates as full rate providing the amount paid is at least 90% of the BAR.
- e) If you do not publish a relevant BAR then those copies must be claimed in the lowest rate band.
- f) You must retain details of subscription rates and special offers during the reporting period

REPORTING

You will report Requested Sponsored Subscription Sales as follows, which will be broken out on the ABC Certificate (note: the term Full Rate will replace Basic Annual Rate for reporting purposes):

1. By geographical type:
 - a) United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland;
 - b) Other Countries
2. By rate band:
 - a) At Full Rate
 - b) Below Full Rate but not less than 50%;
 - c) Less than 50% of Full Rate;
3. By total average Requested Sponsored Subscription Sales over the period.
4. A list of the sponsors for all copies claimed in the Reporting Period.
5. The Basic Annual Rate at the time of the last issue reported in the period for UK, ROI and Other Countries. If there is more than one Basic Annual Rate for Other Countries then you must report a range, from the lowest to the highest.

For the following sections shading denotes new text added and strike-through text to be removed:

REPORTED DATA

1. Total Average Circulation

- a) You must report the total Average Circulation per issue for analysed into UK & Republic of Ireland, and Other Countries.
- i) Copies claimed in the following categories, both print and Digital Edition (where applicable), will be included in the total combined Average Circulation figure:

Retail and Single Copy Sales, including:

Retail Sales (Sale or Return)

Retail Sales (Firm Sale)

Single Copy Sales

Retail and Single Copy Sales (Digital Edition only) at less than 20% of Full Rate

Single Copy Subscription Sales

~~Requested Sponsored Subscription Sales~~

Multiple Copy Subscription Sales

Multiple Copy Sales

Society Circulation

Controlled Free Circulation

Non-Controlled Free Circulation

Monitored Free Distribution

Free Retail Voucher Copies

DIGITAL EDITIONS

REQUIREMENTS

5. **Digital Edition copies must meet requirements of the relevant print category except where varied by this section**
 - a) Digital Edition copies can be claimed only for specified circulation categories depending on the sector. The requirements of those categories in relation to print copies apply to Digital Edition copies except as varied by this section.
 - b) In relation to all paid categories you must be able to demonstrate the copy has been sold and at what price.

Setting the standard



- c) If the **end recipient purchaser** pays less than 20% of the relevant print copy price or it is received free:
- i) You must capture their name, postal address and email address.
 - ii) You can only claim one Digital Edition copy per individual
 - iii) You cannot claim the copy if you have provided a paid or free print copy to the same individual (where known).
 - iv) For Corporate Subscription Digital Editions:
 - There must be a contractual arrangement between the purchaser (a third party employer) and the publisher for at least two issues.
 - The copies are purchased by the third party employer for its employees
 - The claimed quantity must be restricted to those employees that have personally opted to receive/view the Digital Edition. *For example: A company takes out a subscription for each of its 100 employees. If only 40 of those employees personally register to receive/view the digital edition then only those 40 copies may be included on the ABC Certificate.*
- d) If the **end recipient purchaser** pays at least 20% of the relevant print copy price then there is no requirement to provide details of the purchaser.
- e) In relation to **free** Digital Edition copies **sent free to the end recipient** (where applicable):
- i) You must send an email alert to the individual informing them that the issue is available for view/download.
 - ii) You must exclude copies where the email alert generates a Hard Bounceback measured at least 24 hours after the email was sent. A Hard Bounceback is where an NDN (Non-Delivery-Notice) such as an SMTP 550 error or other hard bounceback error message is received.
 - iii) You must be able to provide evidence of the emails sent and Hard Bouncebacks received.
 - iv) Recipients may be contacted as part of the audit process.
- f) You must retain and supply us on an issue by issue basis (or as otherwise agreed) a list of individual recipients for each issue (the 'Total Distribution List' (TDL)) which includes details of all the recipients of individually distributed print copies and all Digital Edition copies (other than those purchased for 20% or more of the

relevant print copy price by the end recipient). We must be able to identify the circulation category/type each copy is claimed in. As referred to above, this list should exclude:

- i) Duplicate records (i.e. each individual on the list can only be claimed once - the print copy takes precedence).
- ii) Individuals where Hard Bouncebacks have arisen from email notifications for Digital Editions.
- g) You must supply us the claim for Digital Edition copies on an issue by issue basis (or as otherwise agreed).
- h) The print copy price against which the 20% level above is calculated will be the UK price unless you opt to use the relevant local print price for copies outside the UK.

REPORTING

2. By circulation type:

- a) As for print copies, in the same rate bands:
 - i. Retail and Single copy sales
 - ii. Single Copy Subscription Sales
 - iii. Requested Sponsored Subscription Sales
 - iv. Society Circulation - paid optional single copies, unpaid requested single copies
 - v. Controlled Free Circulation – individually requested
- b) Digital Edition specific:
 - i. Corporate Digital Edition subscriptions
 - ii. Retail and Single Copy Sales below 20% of Full Rate

If you would like the ABC Consumer Magazine Reporting Standards Group to review any current reporting standard or if you would like more information about how the above changes affect you, please contact your ABC Account Manager charlotte.brown@abc.org.uk.