

GUIDELINES FOR THE TRAILING OF COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS ON BBC PUBLIC SERVICE TELEVISION CHANNELS

Introduction

These guidelines outline the approach the BBC will take when assessing the suitability of trailing commercial products on its public service television channels. They apply equally to commercial products produced by BBC Worldwide and by third party.

These guidelines are based on the principles set out in the BBC's Editorial Guidelines, the BBC's Fair Trading Guidelines and the OFT undertaking described below. They also reflect the conclusion of a review of the BBC's trailing activity by the Governors' Fair Trading Compliance Committee.

These guidelines are not intended to address on-air mentions of commercial products *within* programmes.

The original guidelines were drawn up following an investigation in 1992 by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission into the BBC's promotion of its own magazines on its television services. As a result, the BBC agreed undertakings with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) governing the trailing of BBC magazines.

Although the OFT undertaking only covers BBC magazines, the Governors' Fair Trading Commitment requires the BBC to observe both the letter and the spirit of the undertaking for all trails of commercial products on all the BBC's publicly funded television services.

In essence, the guidelines and the undertakings require the BBC not to promote its own commercial products unfairly – trails should only be shown if they provide information which has the overall editorial purpose of furthering the Licence Payer's interest, enjoyment and understanding of a programme.

The BBC's Media Planning Group (within its Marketing Department) implements these guidelines, with relevant referrals where necessary. It receives requests to trail products (both BBC and non-BBC) products, which have been commissioned, licensed or developed directly in conjunction with a BBC programme.

All mentions of commercial products in trails are at the discretion of Media Planning. No trail is guaranteed and **no contract should promise an on-air trail**. In cases of difficulty Media Planning will consult with Editorial Policy and Fair Trading.

Procedures

The BBC's Media Planning Group compiles regular reports on the number and timings of trails for all commercial product visuals for the BBC Annual Report. It also compiles reports recording all trails requests received and the outcome of the application. The report records details of the application (e. g. the slot, its duration, the programme after which the trail is requested, details of the product to be trailed and, where the trail request is accepted, the editorial rationale for each trail. The justification for rejecting a trail request must also be recorded). This latter report is submitted every six months to the BBC's Fair Trading Department.

In addition, to enable Media Planning to be satisfied that the various editorial tests outlined below have been met, a copy of any product being submitted for a trail request should be made available

on request (and should always be retained by the submitting agency - BBC Worldwide or the Commercial Agency on behalf of third party licensees).

The submitting agency should, as part of its application for a trail, provide a description of how and why the product meets the test in these guidelines and, on request, be able to provide documentary evidence of the editorial linkages – e. g. appropriate meetings of relevant editorial staff – between the product for which a trail is being requested and the BBC programme preceding the proposed trail.

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1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Editorial Guidelines and the Fair Trading Guidelines set out the BBC's editorial values and give guidance about on-air references to commercial products, services and publications (both BBC Worldwide and third party).

BBC related books, audio recordings, DVD's, CD's and CD ROMs are the type of products which may be trailed. We do not transmit trails for any other type of product.

Any product which is trailed must be:

- **Directly relevant to the programme after which it is to be trailed;**
- **Under the BBC's editorial control;**
- **Commissioned, licensed or developed directly in conjunction with the associated programme; and**
- **Consistent with the BBC's editorial and ethical values.**

Material which is trailed may be published by BBC Worldwide or by an outside organisation.

Trails or announcements after programmes should give simple factual information without any element of hyping.

Any proposal to trail commercial products related to BBC programmes on BBC Radio must be referred to Chief Adviser Editorial Policy.

1.1 Products that may not be trailed/ content that cannot be included in a trail

Following the BBC's Commercial Review, magazines must not be trailed on BBC radio, television or bbc.co.uk.

No products other than those listed above in section 1 may be trailed. No toys, novelty items or entertainment games may be trailed.

Some products that use game formats but have been designed *specifically* for clearly educational purposes may under certain circumstances be trailed. Editorial Policy must, however, be consulted in advance.

1.2 Style of trails

Under the OFT undertaking, all BBC magazine trails must be in the form of a static slide and cannot share the screen with programme credits. Although the BBC no longer runs magazine trails, it voluntarily applies the spirit of the 1992 undertaking to trails for **all** commercial products across all its channels. Therefore all trails for commercial products must be of the same style.

The OFT undertaking is very restrictive and closely defines what is acceptable for on-air trails. For instance, the OFT undertaking makes clear that:

- Trails must be a static frame; there can be no use of moving images.
- Static visuals should not, therefore, include anything other than a shot(s) of the product.

- The shot(s) should not include any 'promotional' claims or materials, e. g. "Competition/ Free Gift Inside
- "Split screen" product trails over the end credits of a programme are not permitted, although it is possible to have a voiceover only over the end credits.
- Announcements (i.e. voice-overs) are made by a single speaking voice and not by any person who has appeared or whose voice has been heard, other than incidentally in the preceding programme.
- Announcements must not be made by a well known person.
- Announcements must be objective and must not seek to endorse products or otherwise persuade viewers to purchase.
- The slide or announcement may state:
 - The name of the product, its publisher and price - (although the BBC chooses not to include price information in trails);
 - The connection between the product and the immediately preceding programme.
- All trails aim to be approx. 10 seconds in length and these are logged by BBC Media Planning.

URLs, price information and retail/mail order telephone numbers may not appear in trails.

Visuals are voiced by BBC Announcers and the scripts are written by the Domestic Stills team in Red Bee Media. These must not be altered without their prior agreement.

Only one product trail may be placed within the same junction. Where there are competing demands for products to be trailed in the same junction, Media Planning will log its rationale for deciding which trail request to accept. Although no guarantees can be given, Media Planning will also make best endeavours to ensure that the product which was refused an on-air trail initially is trailed following another relevant programme (provided the request meets the criteria of the guidelines). It is however possible to place more than one product in the same trail as long as all the products may be trailed after that programme, in line with the guidelines (see section 2.2 below).

1.3 Position of product trails

There can be no promotional mention of commercial products within programmes -this includes programme 'breaks' or sections within programmes, such as *Grandstand*, *Breakfast*, etc. Any mentions of commercial products in programmes must be only for strictly editorially justifiable reasons. Further advice on this area can be sought from Section 13 of the BBC's Editorial Guidelines.

Products can only be trailed after **BBC** commissioned programmes. For the avoidance of doubt, products may **not** normally be trailed after acquired programming (including films). Any proposed exception to this rule must be referred in advance to Editorial Policy or Fair Trading.

Product trails may only be broadcast after the BBC programme to which it is directly relevant. (For a definition of "directly relevant" see the appropriate product section below.)

As a general rule no commercial product trails are scheduled on Christmas Day or on New Year's Day.

1.4 Quantity of trails

The total quantity of product trails output in any seven day period on all the BBC's public service channels, commencing 0600 on Saturday, must not exceed seven minutes. Note that although the seven minute limit in the OFT undertaking applies only to BBC magazines, the BBC voluntarily applies the seven minute limit to all commercial product trails on all its public service television channels.

1.5 Frequency of trails

Media Planning will not normally schedule visuals after every programme in a series. The level of trails scheduled across a series will be at the discretion of Media Planning. We **would normally expect to trail a product no more than once per week per channel. Each product should normally be trailed a maximum of twice per series or season on each channel on which it is broadcast. A third trail will be allowed if the product appears as part of a multiple visual (see 2.2. below).**

Where a series is stripped over a number of consecutive days, it may be acceptable to trail the product twice in the course of the run.

Any proposal to trail a product more frequently must be explicitly agreed in advance with Editorial Policy.

1.6 Retailer availability and television advertising

Products should normally be on sale via normal retail outlets at the time of the trail. However, where the product relates to a one-off programme, a trail will be acceptable as long as the product is available in normal retail outlets the next working day.

Products may not be trailed if they are advertised on television within six weeks on either side of the proposed trail. This applies only to television adverts commissioned specifically by the publisher and does not apply to television adverts by retailers that include the product as one of several titles featured in a sales promotion by that retailer (over which the publisher may have little or no control). For the purpose of these guidelines featuring "several titles or products" means featuring more than two titles or products.

The BBC, its commercial partners or its licensees cannot be seen to be advertising products on television and trailing them at the same time. The purpose of trails is to inform licence fee payers of products related to BBC programmes that can enhance and extend their enjoyment of the original programme; if the product is already being advertised commercially this brings into question the need to trail it as a public service activity. We do not believe it is appropriate to do both concurrently.

2. ACCEPTABLE COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS

Although the OFT undertaking relates specifically to the trailing of BBC magazines, the BBC voluntarily extends the letter and the spirit of the undertaking to the trailing of all products on BBC public service television channels.

2.1 Editorial Criteria for an on-air trail

Products may only be trailed if they are directly relevant to the preceding programme. To be "directly relevant" a product must satisfy the following criteria:

2.1(i) Books, audio recordings of BBC programmes

These must be the official publication of the series:

- For books this could also include a novelisation based on the BBC intellectual property of the programme, an official guide to the characters in a series or, for childrens' publications, it could be an educational product which has been developed directly in conjunction with the series with a learning objective. Novelty products such as sticker books aimed at a general audience, diaries, calendars etc. will not normally qualify for a trail. If in doubt refer to Fair Trading or Editorial Policy.
- For audio recordings this could include the BBC radio version of the television series.

The publication should normally have the same title as the programme. For example, Jeremy Clarkson's *Motorworld* book could not be trailed after a *Top Gear* programme. Where the title differs in any way, such as the inclusion of a sub-title, advice should be sought from Editorial Policy.

For the avoidance of doubt "masthead" publications may not be trailed. This means that if a BBC programme or series is based on a pre-existing book, the book may not be trailed on-air. In the case of literary adaptations the book may not be trailed on air, even if stills from the BBC drama production are used on the cover.

Official publication(s) of a series may be trailed after the first edition of a series has aired on any BBC public service channel.

2.1(ii) DVDs and Videos

DVDs and videos must be recordings of the programme or series (which, for the avoidance of doubt, would include compilations of clips from various programmes in a series). Such products may also include (a minority of) additional material but that material must also comply with BBC guidance on additional material on audio visual product (which can be sought from Editorial Policy).

DVDs and Videos may only be trailed after the second programme in a weekly series. Where a series is stripped daily across the schedule referral must be made to Editorial Policy, who will advise on when it is suitable to begin trailing

2.1(iii) PC CD ROMS & OTHER COMPUTER FORMATS

Educational products on computer formats may be trailed if they are directly relevant to the programme after which it is to be trailed, i. e. it must have the same title as the programme; it must use the programme intellectual property (characters, scenarios etc). In addition it must be designed to have a specific educational/ learning purpose.

Entertainment games which have not been designed for a specifically educational purpose will not be trailed on air.

2.1(iv) MUSIC SOUNDTRACKS

Music soundtracks may be trailed if they are directly relevant to the preceding programme. They must have the same title as the programme or series; they must consist of the music of, or the music from, the programme - which may include the soundtrack of the series.

In certain circumstances the BBC may commission or co-produce special performances of musical events such as concerts, operas or ballets. In such cases it may be possible to trail a recording of that event after the programme which covers the event. Not all such products, however, will qualify for a trail. Reference must be made in advance to Editorial Policy before any trails can be granted.

2.2 Multiple visuals

Multiple visuals, e. g. Video, Book and Audio recording collections on a single slide, may be scheduled after the programme to which they are directly relevant, as long as each of the products meet the criteria outlined in these guidelines - these should be recognised and agreed with Media Planning prior to the start of the relevant series. Normally, there should be no more than three products on one visual.

It is possible to trail the official publication(s) of a series during the following series. For example, it is possible to trail a DVD of Series One of "The Office" during Series Two

2.3 Style of trails

Voiceovers over end credits are possible. They must be scripted by Media Planning and carefully monitored and logged by duration.

3. CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS

There is currently no trailing of commercial products on the BBC's digital childrens channels, CBBC and CBeebies.

DVDs will not be trailed within CBBC blocks on analogue channels such as afternoons and Sunday morning

In these slots only books, and educational computer formats may be trailed and then only if they are directly relevant to the programme after which they are to be trailed and are designed to serve a specific educational/ learning purpose.

The same visual should not be trailed more than twice per month. During CBBC Presentation, all Children's visuals must be pre-recorded to avoid endorsement by presenters. All visuals shown during childrens' programming should make clear that children should seek permission from an adult before buying.

DVDs, books and educational computer formats may be trailed after programmes aimed at older children, not in CBBC time.

4. CHARITY LINKED PRODUCTS

In certain limited circumstances products may be produced to help raise funds for a BBC charity initiative such as Comic Relief, Sport Relief or Children in Need. Some of these products may be of a “novelty” nature. Such fund-raising products may be trailed on-air in accordance with the BBC’s policy on charity fundraising initiatives.

All requests for any trail of such products **must** be referred to the Chief Adviser Editorial Policy, well in advance as these need special consideration.