



# ADVERTISING GUIDELINES FOR VERSANT NETWORKS

## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

The Versant Advertising Guidelines (“Guidelines”) were created to help advertisers and their representatives, including agencies and legal counsel, create advertisements. The Guidelines provide general guidance and should not be considered exhaustive or a substitute for consulting with the Advertising Standards Department (“Advertising Standards”).

### COMPLIANCE

Each advertiser and their representatives are responsible for ensuring that their advertising materials are in compliance with all applicable laws and governmental regulations, as well as internal guidelines, standards and policies. The function of Advertising Standards is to review advertisements for adherence to all such governmental laws and regulations, as well as Versant’s internal guidelines, standards, and policies.

### APPROVALS

Advertising Standards reserves the right to: (1) require revisions to advertisements; (2) accept or reject any advertisement at any time, including any advertisement with potentially offensive content that is deemed incompatible with Versant’s viewing environment or general standards; (3) expand or limit an advertisement’s scheduling based on content considerations, audience composition and program compatibility; (4) investigate the advertiser and the accuracy of all statements and claims made in advertising materials; and (5) at any time, revoke its approval of any advertisement which is inconsistent with Versant’s standards and policies in response to emergency circumstances or situations of unusual significance.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Advertising Standards treats all information and materials submitted by an advertiser or its authorized representative in connection with commercial clearances as strictly confidential.

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## ADVERTISING CATEGORIES FOR REVIEW ON VERSANT PROPERTIES

Advertising Standards reviews advertisements intended for air on the following Versant properties – CNBC, E!, Golf Channel, MSNOW, Oxygen, SYFY, and USA (collectively “Versant”) IF such advertisements are no more than five (5) minutes in length AND in one (1) of the following seven (7) categories:

- 1) [CBD Products \(Topical, Non-Ingestible\)](#)
- 2) [Controversial Issues & Political Advertisements](#)
- 3) [Dietary Supplements](#)
- 4) [Fantasy Sports](#)
- 5) [Gambling, Sports Gambling, Betting, Lotteries, and Games of Chance](#)
- 6) [Homeopathic Remedies](#)
- 7) [Weight Loss Products & Programs](#)

## SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS

There are two (2) ways to submit materials for clearance:

- 1) Upload materials to [www.nbcstandards.com](http://www.nbcstandards.com); or
- 2) Submit materials via MediaQurator

## ADDITIONAL DETAILS FOR VERSANT REVIEW

- 1) *Pre-Production Review*: Prior to production, advertisers should submit a script or storyboard of the proposed advertisement to Advertising Standards. Advertising Standards will request substantiation for all claims and authentication of all demonstrations and testimonial statements, as applicable.
- 2) *Rough Cut Review*: Advertisers may submit rough cuts for review before final production.
- 3) *Supporting Documents*: When possible, supporting documentation including, but not limited to, product testing, claim support, and affidavits should be submitted along with the script, storyboard, rough cut or final advertisement. For submissions via [www.nbcstandards.com](http://www.nbcstandards.com), attach as “Related Documents”. If you are responding to an Advertising Standards editor’s request, any materials you send must be submitted through the “Reply” link at the bottom of the applicable clearance report or attached to a message sent to the Advertising Standards editor via [www.nbcstandards.com](http://www.nbcstandards.com), or MediaQurator.
- 4) *Final Approval*: All final advertisements must be slated with a unique ISCI code, a title, and the length of the advertisement, and submitted via one (1) of the above submission methods. Advertising Standards cannot give final approval to un-slated advertisements.
- 5) *Time for Review*: Advertisers should allow three (3) business days for review of clearance materials.



#### ADDITIONAL ADVERTISING CATEGORIES FOR REVIEW ON E!, USA, AND SYFY

Versant requires the approval of the following ADDITIONAL categories for Versant's E!, USA, and SYFY networks:

- 1) Television Shows (Linear & Streaming)
- 2) Hard Alcohol
- 3) Movies
- 4) Personal Products
- 5) Video Games – M-Rated

#### SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS TO E!, USA and SYFY

There are two (2) ways to submit materials for clearance:

- 1) Upload your materials to [www.nbcstandards.com](http://www.nbcstandards.com) (E!, SYFY, USA, Golf) or
- 2) Upload your materials via MediaQurator (E!, SYFY, USA, Golf)

#### ADDITIONAL ADVERTISING CATEGORIES FOR REVIEW ON OXYGEN

Versant requires the approval of the following ADDITIONAL categories for Versant's Oxygen network:

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| 1) Alcohol   | 6) Medications – Rx and OTC             |
| 2) Television Shows (Linear & Streaming)                         | 7) Movies                               |
| 3) Corporate, Organizations, Government Entities, & Institutions | 8) Personal Products and Contraceptives |
| 4) Finance   | 9) Religious Advertising                |
| 5) Medical Devices & Pregnancy Tests                             | 10) Telemedicine                        |
|  | 11) Video Games                         |

#### SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS TO OXYGEN

There are two (2) ways to submit materials to Oxygen for clearance:

- 1) Upload your materials via MediaQurator (Oxygen)
- 2) Upload your materials to [www.nbcstandards.com](http://www.nbcstandards.com) (Oxygen)

#### REVIEW OF MATERIALS

After reviewing the submitted materials, Advertising Standards may have no concerns with the advertising materials, require modifications to the advertisement, or deem the advertisement unacceptable for air. For final approval, the advertiser must submit a copy of the final advertisement that is slated with a unique ISCI code using one (1) of the methods above.

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All clearance materials must be submitted using one (1) of the above methods or they will not be reviewed. Clearance materials should not be sent to Sales, Sales Operations or the Network Operations Center (NOC) in Englewood Cliffs.

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## ALCOHOL

- I. The advertising of beer, malt beverage and wine products (up to 24% alcohol content) is acceptable only when consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws. Advertising must be in good taste without glamorizing, encouraging or sanctioning alcohol abuse or misuse.
  - A. In accordance with federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) regulations, beer, malt beverage and wine advertising must include a legible disclosure of the corporate name, city, and state of the brewer, producer, packer, wholesaler or importer responsible for its broadcast.

[\(See also Disclaimers, Supers, and Horizontal Crawls\)](#)
  - B. Malt beverage advertising must disclose that the product is a malt beverage in video.
    - i. Advertising for hard soda and similar alcoholic beverages should not appeal to persons below the legal drinking age. These advertisements may be subject to additional disclosures and restrictions beyond the standard malt beverage guidelines outlined above.
- II. The advertising of distilled spirits and products made with or derived from distilled spirits is acceptable in programming, at Versant's discretion, where 85% of the audience is 21 years old or over. Advertising must be in good taste without glamorizing, encouraging or sanctioning alcohol abuse or misuse.
  - A. In accordance with TTB regulations, hard alcohol advertising must include a legible disclosure of the corporate name, city, and state of the brewer, producer, packer, wholesaler or importer responsible for its broadcast as well as the percentage of alcohol by volume.

[\(See also Disclaimers, Supers, and Horizontal Crawls\)](#)
- III. All alcohol advertising must include a drink responsibly message in the video.
- IV. The following are unacceptable:
  - A. Advertising that portrays intoxication, excessive drinking, or pronounced loss of inhibitions.
  - B. Advertising that portrays or encourages the use of alcohol products by persons who are, or appear to be, below the legal drinking age.
  - C. Advertising that depicts any entertainment figure, role model, animation or other characters, that appeals primarily to persons below the legal drinking age.

# VERSANT

- D. Advertising that associates alcoholic beverages with social status, stress relief, or portrays alcohol as a solution to personal problems, a “mark of adulthood” or a “rite of passage.”
  - E. Advertising that portrays the use of alcoholic beverages before or during any activity requiring alertness, dexterity, and/or sober judgment.
  - F. Advertising that states, suggests or implies that cars, motorcycles, or other vehicles can be safely operated while or after drinking alcoholic beverages.
  - G. Advertising that portrays a professional or amateur athlete promoting alcohol before or during their participation in an athletic event.
  - H. Advertising that states or implies that the consumption of alcohol increases athletic prowess, health, or conditioning.
  - I. Advertising that includes statements, references, or representations of the strength of alcohol products; however, alcohol content may be mentioned when necessary to establish that a product contains alcohol or is considered by law to be “low alcohol.”
  - J. Advertising that depicts the use of alcohol as the sole purpose of any activity.
  - K. Advertising that depicts remedies for “hangovers” or other side effects of alcohol ingestion.
- V. Advertising for establishments and other businesses that primarily offer non-alcoholic products and services (e.g., restaurants and airlines) may make limited and incidental references to the availability of cocktails.
- VI. Approval of the following types of advertisements will be determined on a case-by-case basis:
- A. Advertising that alerts the public to the dangers of alcohol abuse.
  - B. Advertising by retail liquor outlets for hard alcohol, beer and/or wine products.
  - C. Incidental representations of hard alcohol, beer, wine, and malt beverages (up to 24% alcohol content) in non-alcohol advertisements.

## ASTROLOGY, FORTUNE TELLING, AND PSYCHICS

Versant does not accept advertisements for astrology, fortune telling, phrenology, numerology, mind reading, or similar services and products.



## CBD PRODUCTS (TOPICAL, NON-INGESTIBLE)

This policy, in conjunction with the CBD Advertiser Certification, governs advertising for hemp-derived cannabidiol (“CBD”) products on Versant. Advertisements for CBD products (“CBD Advertising”) may only be accepted if they are consistent with this policy and meet the criteria set out below. Sponsorships or in-program elements promoting CBD products are prohibited.

### I. CBD Advertising Principles

#### A. Versant accepts CBD Advertising subject to the following restrictions:

- i. Versant only accepts advertisements for topical, non-ingestible CBD products (e.g., lotions and creams). Advertisements promoting drugs, food products, dietary supplements, animal foods, animal drugs, tobacco products, and medical devices that contain CBD are prohibited.
- ii. Versant only accepts advertisements for CBD products derived from hemp produced in compliance with all applicable laws, including the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (also known as the “Farm Bill”).
- iii. Advertisements for CBD products may not:
  1. make express or implied health or therapeutic claims about the product or CBD; or
  2. create the impression through images or other design elements that the product or CBD provides health, therapeutic, or medicinal benefits.
- iv. Advertisements for companies, brands, or products whose name(s) suggests or references any health, therapeutic, or medicinal benefits will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- v. CBD Advertising may not be targeted at viewers under the age of 21.
- vi. The products promoted may not contain substances that render the product injurious to users under the conditions prescribed in the labeling, or under such conditions of use as are customary or usual.
- vii. Advertisers must agree in writing to the Advertiser Certification for CBD Advertising.
- viii. All CBD Advertising must include the following disclaimer; “Products may not be available in all areas. Only available where legally sold.”
- ix. Advertising that portrays or encourages the use of marijuana is unacceptable.
- x. Advertising that associates CBD products (topical, non-ingestible) with cannabis imagery including but not limited to plants, leaves, seeds, etc., are unacceptable. However, any such imagery that appears as part of the product’s standard retail packaging may be allowed at Versant’s discretion.
- xi. Advertisements must clearly advise consumers to follow label directions (e.g., “Use as directed”).

# VERSANT

- xii. Advertisements must clearly disclose that the CBD product(s) for sale is derived from hemp.
- xiii. Advertisers must provide Versant with proof of the THC level in the product(s) advertised in the form of a chemical analysis.
- xiv. Advertisements must clearly and explicitly disclose the THC level of the product(s) advertised.

## II. Distribution Guidelines

- A. CBD Advertising may only air on the properties listed above.
- B. CBD Advertising may not air in any programming restricted under any applicable rights agreements.
- C. CBD Advertising is only acceptable in programming, at Versant's discretion, where 85% of the audience is 21 years old or over.

## COMPETITIVE MEDIA AND TALENT

- I. Versant reserves the right to reject advertisements that feature talent from, reference, or promote competing networks or programs.
- II. Advertising by cable systems, syndicators, cable program services, pay-per-view, direct broadcast satellite, and similar services will be approved on a case-by-case basis.
- III. Competitive media advertisements should avoid day, date or time mentions and "tune in" language.

## CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE & POLITICAL ADVERTISING

Controversial issue and political advertisements will not be reviewed until an order to buy is placed with Sales. Versant will accept advertisements that comment on controversial issues, subject to the below conditions. We reserve the right to reject controversial issue and political advertisements on Versant that violate the below guidelines.

### I. General Standard for Acceptance

- A. Versant accepts issue and political advertisements that express divergent points of view (including religious beliefs or political ideologies). As we do with all advertisements submitted for air, we reserve the right to require substantiation of factual claims made by an advertiser.
- B. Subject to the guidelines set forth in sections II and III below, advertisements generally will be accepted if there is a factual basis for the claims and such claims fall within the bounds of reasonable debate.
- C. An acceptance may be subject to limitations regarding time period and type of programming.



## II. Use of Versant Content is Not Authorized

- A. The inclusion of Versant content in controversial issue or political advertising can potentially mislead viewers as to Versant's endorsement of the position taken in an issue advertisement or otherwise be misconstrued. Accordingly, Versant does not grant permission for the use of our footage in issue advertisements, and we ask advertisers not to include our footage in these advertisements.

## III. Unacceptable Content

- A. An advertisement may be rejected if its content, or other content referenced in the advertisement or otherwise disseminated by the advertiser, is grossly offensive (e.g., on racial, religious or ethnic grounds).
- B. An advertisement may also be rejected if: (1) it is merely an attack of a personal nature, a direct attack on a specific organization (either a non-profit or a business) or a comment on a private dispute; or (2) it contains violent or otherwise graphic or potentially offensive content that is deemed incompatible with a network's viewing environment or general standards; (3) its content or style of production is otherwise deemed inconsistent with a network's viewing environment or general standards, as determined by the applicable network in its sole discretion; or (4) it includes Versant content in violation of the above policy.

## IV. Disclaimers/Disclosures

- A. Issue advertisements must disclose the party who paid for the advertisement for at least four (4) seconds in a readable and contrasting font equal to 4% of screen height or larger. Any issue advertising that refers to any federal candidate or solicits contributions must disclose whether the advertisement was authorized by a candidate. If the advertisement was not so authorized, the disclaimer should state: "Paid for by [Advertiser Name] and not authorized by any candidate." If the advertisement was paid for by a federal candidate, the candidate must sign a certification at the time the advertisement is purchased that pledges that the relevant advertisement either: (1) does not refer to any opposing candidate or (2) includes a statement in the paying candidate's voice disclosing that he or she has paid for the advertisement, along with the candidate's likeness.

<b>DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS</b>
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Congress defined the term "dietary supplement" in the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) of 1994 as an ingestible that contains a "dietary ingredient" intended to supplement the diet. Dietary ingredients include vitamins, minerals, herbs, botanicals, amino acids, and substances such as enzymes and metabolites.

- I. Dietary supplement advertisements may not include disease claims, explicit or implied, unless the claims have been approved by the FDA (e.g., osteoporosis and calcium, anemia and iron). For more information about FDA-approved health claims and qualified health claims, see the FDA's [Label Claims for Conventional Foods and Dietary Supplements](#).



# VERSANT

- II. Under DSHEA, nutritional supplement manufacturers are allowed to make “structure/function” claims, defined as statements that describe the role of a specific substance in maintaining normal healthy structures or functions of the body (e.g., “helps maintain digestive health”), under certain circumstances:
  - A. Structure/function claims are acceptable provided that they are supported by “competent and reliable scientific evidence” defined as “tests, analyses, research studies or other evidence based on the expertise of professionals in the relevant area conducted and evaluated in an objective manner by qualified persons and using generally accepted procedures to yield accurate and reliable results.”
  - B. Claims must be accompanied by the DSHEA disclaimer: “This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. This statement has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration”.
- III. Versant generally will not accept advertisements for dietary supplements with claims that have been the subject of FTC, FDA, Better Business Bureau, or ERA action.
- IV. Versant requires studies conducted on the advertised product to substantiate claims when the claims in the advertisement make a link between the product itself and the results attained. Studies of other products, individual ingredients, or alternate formulations will not be accepted as adequate support. However, when the link is made between the ingredients in the advertised product and the results attained, then reliable scientific data on the ingredients themselves may be acceptable.
- V. The following are not acceptable:
  - A. Claims about the safety of dietary supplements.
  - B. Claims that compare or equate dietary supplements with over-the-counter or prescription drugs, explicitly or by implication.
- VI. Nutrient comparisons between dietary supplements may be acceptable provided no comparative health benefits are claimed.
- VII. Physicians, dentists, nurses, or actors representing them may appear in dietary supplement advertisements so long as the advertiser provides sufficient documentation to support the professional endorsement of the advertised product where such professional endorsement is implied. Additionally, other health professionals such as pharmacists, nutritionists, physical therapists, or actors representing them are permitted in these types of advertisements under the same conditions.
- VIII. “Doctor recommended” and “pharmacist recommended” claims require a nationally representative survey of at least 250 doctors/pharmacists in the relevant specialty, showing that at least 20% of those surveyed recommend the advertised product in their practice.

## DISCLAIMERS, SUPERS, AND HORIZONTAL CRAWLS

- I. Disclaimers cannot be used to contradict or materially alter a claim.

# VERSANT

- II. When superimposed copy is used to qualify advertising claims, it must be presented so it can be read easily against a plain contrasting background and must be located within the safe title area of the television screen.
- III. The first line of every required super should appear on screen for at least three seconds. Each additional line should appear for at least one second (e.g., five seconds for a three-line disclaimer).
- IV. As a general rule, visual disclaimers should appear in a font that is easy to read and remain on the screen long enough to be noticed, read, and understood by an average viewer.
- V. Audio disclaimers should be clear and loud enough to be easily heard and understood by an average viewer.
- VI. The use of horizontal crawls in the lower third of the screen is unacceptable.

## **DISTRIBUTION AND AVAILABILITY OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

- I. To advertise nationally, the product or service advertised must reach 51% national distribution at the time of air through any generally accepted process of distribution (e.g., retail stores, company website, online retailer) unless otherwise clearly disclosed in the advertisement (e.g., “Coming Soon,” “Not yet available in all areas,” or “Available for preorder”).
- II. Unless available at all locations, advertising for franchise or chain retail outlets must indicate that the product or service is only available at participating stores.

## **DOCTORS AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

- I. Physicians, dentists, nurses, or actors representing them may appear in: (1) prescription drug advertising and advertising for medical equipment and services accessed by the consumer through a physician’s prescription, or (2) over-the-counter drug advertisements or in advertisements involving health considerations, so long as the advertiser provides sufficient documentation to support the professional endorsement of the advertised product where such professional endorsement is implied. Additionally, other health professionals such as pharmacists, nutritionists, physical therapists, or actors representing them are permitted in these types of advertisements under the same conditions. Said advertisements should not in any way imply that use of the advertised product is a replacement for regular doctor visits.
- II. To support an express or implied “doctor recommended,” “veterinarian recommended,” or similar claim Versant requires a nationally representative survey of at least 250 doctors in the relevant specialty, showing that at least 20% of those surveyed recommend the advertised product in their practice.

## **EMERGENCY ALERTS AND TONES**

The use of false or deceptive Emergency Alert System (EAS) Signals or Tones is not acceptable in any advertisement. The FCC prohibits the transmission of the EAS codes or Attention Signal (853 Hz and 960 Hz transmitted simultaneously) or a recording or simulation thereof except in the case of an



actual emergency or authorized EAS test. This rule applies to all forms of content, including programs, advertisements and other paid programming, public service announcements (PSAs), promos and other interstitial material. Content containing EAS tones, simulations or other related sound effects will not be accepted for broadcast.

## **FANTASY SPORTS**

### **Fantasy Sports Leagues**

- A. Advertisements for fantasy sports leagues, including fantasy sports leagues with real cash prizes, are acceptable, provided that the following disclaimers are included:
  - i. “Void where prohibited.”
  - ii. Clear disclosure of geographical limitations/restrictions (e.g., a list of states where the legality of fantasy sports is unclear or “Must be physically present where required by state law,” etc.).
- B. As a general rule, visual disclaimers should appear in a font that is easy to read and remain on the screen long enough to be noticed, read, and understood by an average viewer. The first line should appear on screen for at least three (3) seconds. Each additional line should appear for one (1) second (e.g., five (5) seconds for a three-line disclaimer).

## **FINANCIAL ADVERTISING**

### **I. General Overview**

- A. Advertisements for financial products and services must adhere to all of the rules and guidelines of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB), the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and all other applicable laws, including federal and state securities laws.
- B. Advertisements must be balanced, presenting both the risks and benefits of any investment, and based on principles of fair dealing and good faith. All relevant restrictions and qualifications must be disclosed. Advertisements must present a sound basis for evaluating facts about brokerage services, banking, stocks and bonds, real estate, futures, options trading services, or other investments.
- C. Advertisements for, or tips on, specific stocks and incidental references to specific stock quotes/prices are not acceptable.
- D. Advertisements may not predict or project performance, imply that past performance will recur, or make any exaggerated or unwarranted claims or forecasts.



- E. Comparative advertisements between investments and services must disclose all material differences between them, including (as applicable) investment objectives, costs and expenses, liquidity, safety, guarantees or insurance, fluctuation of principal or return and tax features.

## II. Loan Products

- A. Advertising for: (1) mortgage relief plans, products and services, (2) payday loan products and services, or (3) online loans will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Advertisers in the foregoing categories must provide documentation that they are licensed to make loans in the state in which they are advertising. In addition, the content of the spots must disclose all material terms, including applicable interest rates, related to the offer as required by applicable law. When applicable, any charges and/or fees beyond the advertised interest rates must also be disclosed. Versant generally will not air commercials for companies or organizations that have an unsatisfactory record or are otherwise not in good standing in the state(s) in which they operate.
- B. Advertising for loan products that require upfront fees or purport to offer credit with little or no regard for a user's credit or collateral (e.g., "No credit? No problem!") are not permitted.

## III. Cryptocurrency

- A. Crypto advertisements must be accompanied by the disclaimer: "This is not investment advice or recommendation. Cryptocurrency are highly volatile, are subject to significant risks, and may not be suitable for you. Not available in all jurisdictions."

## **FIREARMS, WEAPONS, AND FIREWORKS**

Versant does not accept advertisements for fireworks, firearms or weapons, including firearm or weaponry paraphernalia or accessories. Advertisements that contain (a) fleeting depictions of firearm or weaponry paraphernalia or accessories; or (b) firearms, weapons or fireworks as props, may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

## **GAMBLING, BETTING, LOTTERIES, AND GAMES OF CHANCE**

### I. General Overview

- A. The following guidelines apply to lawfully licensed betting, gambling, lottery, and other games of chance:
  - i. Advertisements for any publication, "tip sheet," electronic or mechanical device, application, or other product or service whose primary purpose is the giving of odds or promotion of betting, are unacceptable;
  - ii. The lawful advertising of lotteries permissible under the law of the



state in which they are conducted may be acceptable, so long as any such lottery is conducted by a:

1. Not-for-profit 501(c) organization,
  2. Governmental organization, or
  3. Commercial entity, provided that the lottery is promotional, occasional, and clearly ancillary to the primary business of that commercial entity.
- B. The advertising of legalized betting, including horse racing may be acceptable provided the advertisement is not instructional in nature and the organization complies with all state and federal laws. At a minimum such advertising must include:
- i. A video disclaimer stating, "Void where prohibited", and
  - ii. Gambling responsibly messaging (i.e. if you or someone you know has a gambling problem, please call 1-800-GAMBLER).
- C. Advertisements permitted under these guidelines must not present fictitious winners or winnings or misrepresent actual winners or winnings.
- D. As a general rule, visual disclaimers should appear in a font that is easy to read and remain on the screen long enough to be noticed, read, and understood by an average viewer. The first line should appear on screen for at least three (3) seconds. Each additional line should appear for one (1) second (e.g., five (5) seconds for a three-line disclaimer).

## II. Sports Gambling

- A. In all instances, Versant requires substantiation for claims, including those made in testimonials.
- B. Advertisements permitted under these guidelines MUST NOT:
- i. Be instructional in nature;
  - ii. Unduly exhort the audience to bet;
  - iii. Mislead or exaggerate one's likelihood of winning money or other prizes;
  - iv. Present fictitious winners or winnings or misrepresent actual winners or winnings;
  - v. State or imply praise for those who participate in the advertised activity or denigrate those who abstain; or



vi. Include third-party likenesses or intellectual property without the express permission of the owner or otherwise create unauthorized associations with third parties.

C. Sports gambling products, games of chance, contests, and advertising approaches not specifically referred to in the foregoing shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

D. All sports gambling advertising must include disclaimers disclosing applicable regional gambling restrictions and the risks associated with gambling, including at a minimum:

- i. Clear disclosure of geographical limitations/restrictions (e.g., a list of states where online/sports gambling is legal as applicable or “Must be physically present where required by state law,” etc.) and “void where prohibited”;
- ii. The minimum age requirements of the applicable state(s); and
- iii. Gambling responsibility messaging (e.g., If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, please call 1-800-GAMBLER).

E. Sports gambling advertisements may air only in:

- i. Sports programming, subject to league rules and restrictions, and
- ii. Programming not directed at children, subject to discretionary program and daypart restrictions based on the content of the specific advertisement.

### III. Online Gambling

A. Versant does not accept online gambling advertisements.

### IV. Other Gambling-Related Platforms

A. Advertisements for websites that provide gaming simulations or instructions for educational purposes only (e.g., online poker schools), will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## GET-RICH-QUICK AND PYRAMID SCHEMES

Versant does not accept advertising for pyramid or get-rich-quick schemes that promise guaranteed employment or earnings, or otherwise provide misleading information to potential participants.

## HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES

I. Versant will accept advertisements for OTC homeopathic remedies for minor, self-limiting conditions provided that the product is made from homeopathic ingredients recognized by the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States (HPUS).

II. Pursuant to the FTC’s [Enforcement Policy Statement on Marketing Claims for OTC](#)

# VERSANT

Homeopathic Drugs, unqualified treatment claims for self-limiting disease conditions amendable to self-diagnosis and treatment must be substantiated by competent and reliable scientific evidence, defined as “tests, analyses, research, or studies that have been conducted and evaluated in an objective manner by qualified persons and generally accepted in the profession to yield accurate and reliable results.” When such support is not available, advertisers must communicate the following:

- A. There is no scientific evidence that the product works; and,
  - B. The product’s claims are based only on theories of homeopathy from the 1700s that are not accepted by most modern medical experts.
- III. Versant generally will not accept advertisements for products with claims that have been the subject of FTC, FDA, Better Business Bureau, or ERA action.
- IV. Versant requires studies conducted on the advertised product to substantiate claims when the claims in the advertisement make a link between the product itself and the results attained. Studies of other products, individual ingredients, or alternate formulations will not be accepted as adequate support. However, when the link is made between the ingredients in the product and the results attained, then reliable scientific data on the ingredients themselves may be acceptable.
- V. The following are not acceptable:
- A. Claims about safety of homeopathic remedies.
  - B. Claims that compare or equate homeopathic remedies with OTC or Rx drugs, explicitly or by implication.
- VI. Physicians, dentists, nurses, or actors representing them may appear in homeopathic remedy advertisements so long as the advertiser provides sufficient documentation to support the professional endorsement of the advertised product where such professional endorsement is implied. Additionally, other health professionals such as pharmacists, nutritionists, physical therapists, or actors representing them are permitted in these types of advertisements under the same conditions.
- VII. “Doctor recommended” and “pharmacist recommended” claims require a nationally representative survey of at least 250 doctors/pharmacists in the relevant specialty, showing that at least 20% of those surveyed recommend the advertised product in their practice.

## ILLEGAL DRUGS

Versant does not accept advertising for illegal drug products, services, publications, or paraphernalia.

## MEDICAL DEVICE ADVERTISING

- I. General Overview
  - A. Medical device advertising must comply with applicable FDA and FTC regulations.

# VERSANT

- B. 510(k) clearance and complete labeling must be submitted for review for all medical devices advertisements.
  - C. Premarket approval (PMA) from the FDA must be provided for restricted Class I, Class II, and Class III medical device advertisements.
  - D. Medical device “product claim” advertisements should disclose relevant warnings, precautions, side effects, and contraindications that may result from the use of the device under its labeled, advertised, or usual conditions of use.
- II. Advertisements for restricted devices should include the following:
- A. References for consumers to conveniently access detailed labeling information via a toll-free telephone number and/or a website address.
  - B. Language that tells consumers to seek the advice of a healthcare professional.
  - C. Advertisements for prescription devices should clearly state that the advertised product is available by prescription only.
- III. Pregnancy Test Kits
- A. Advertisements must include an audio or video disclosure reminding viewers to “Follow Label Directions” and “See Your Doctor.”

## MEDICAL AND HEALTH RELATED PRODUCTS

- I. General Overview
- A. Health claims must be supported by clinical studies, appropriate consumer testing, and/or other scientific evidence.
  - B. Claims and demonstrations must be consistent with the product’s indications, directions, and warnings.
  - C. General safety claims are not acceptable (e.g., Drug X is safe). With respect to dental products and FDA approved over-the-counter drugs only, qualified safety claims (e.g., Drug X contains a safe amount of ingredient Y) will be considered on a case-by-case basis, provided that any such qualified claims are adequately supported by robust studies.
  - D. Children may appear only incidentally in advertisements for adult medications. Children may be used in advertisements for children’s medications and vitamins, but adult supervision must be portrayed.





- E. Depictions of product ingestion are generally not acceptable but may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
  - F. Claims that a product is a panacea or cure-all are not acceptable.
  - G. Direct or indirect references or comparisons between over-the-counter drugs and prescription medications must be clinically documented.
  - H. Advertisements for online prescription and diagnosis websites will be considered on a case-by-case basis. ([See Telemedicine Platforms](#))
  - I. Physicians, dentists, nurses, or actors representing them may appear in advertisements for medical and health-related products, so long as the advertiser provides sufficient documentation to support the professional endorsement of the advertised product where such professional endorsement is implied. Additionally, other health professionals such as pharmacists, nutritionists, physical therapists, or actors representing them are permitted in these types of advertisements under the same conditions. Said advertisements should not in any way imply that use of the advertised product is a replacement for regular doctor visits.
- II. Over-the-Counter (“OTC”) Medical Products, Medical Devices and Advertisements Making Health or Medical Claims
- A. Advertisements must clearly advise consumers to follow label directions (e.g., “Use as directed”).
  - B. Products bearing a Drug Facts label will be reviewed as OTC drugs. These include, but are not limited to, acne products, antiperspirants and sunscreens. Advertisements for dandruff products will not be required to have the “Use as directed” disclaimer, as these products pose a low risk for consumer misuse.
  - C. Advertisements for OTC medications can only promote occasional use and treatment of minor to moderate conditions.
  - D. Comparative efficacy claims for over-the-counter products that are based solely on in vitro data must be disclosed as such.
- [\(See also Doctors and Health Professionals\)](#)
- III. Prescription Drug Advertising
- A. Prescription drug advertising must comply with applicable FDA regulations. Advertisers should also reference the FDA’s [Prescription Drug Advertising Guide for Consumers](#) for additional guidance.
    - i. Advertisements must clearly advise consumers to consult a healthcare professional or call their doctor.



- ii. Advertisements must clearly state that the advertised product is available by prescription only.
- B. Advertisers must submit the following for review of a prescription drug advertisement:
  - i. Complete prescribing information and/or product insert.
  - ii. Evidence of compliance with FDA regulations in the form of a letter from: (1) the Office of Prescription Drug Promotion (OPDP) (formerly known as the Division of Drug Marketing, Advertising and Communications (DDMAC)), or (2) the advertiser's legal counsel, indicating that the advertiser has submitted materials to OPDP and is in compliance with all FDA regulations.
  - iii. If mentioned, please include evidence of print advertisement insertion order.

#### **MOTION PICTURES AND HOME ENTERTAINMENT ADVERTISING**

- I. All advertising for domestic theatrical films must disclose the Motion Picture Association (MPA) rating in both the audio and video.
- II. All advertising for home entertainment must include a disclosure of the film's rating in the video in a font that is large enough to be read by viewers.
- III. Versant may accept, on a case-by-case basis, advertising for films pending a rating provided that the advertisement discloses that the film "is not yet rated."
- IV. While the content of the advertisement and its accurate reflection of the underlying film is the primary concern, Advertising Standards also considers the substance of the advertised film and retains the right to expand or limit its scheduling based on content considerations. Placement of an advertisement will be determined based on audience composition and program compatibility. Advertisements which contain violence, horror, sexual themes or dialogue and/or shocking or inappropriate behavior may warrant scheduling restrictions such as "post 9pm" or "late night only."
- V. Versant does not accept advertising for "X- Rated" and similar "adult" films.
- VI. All proposed advertising for films carrying the MPA "NC-17" rating (no children under 17 admitted) will be approved on a case-by-case basis, taking into account both the content of the advertisement and the film. If judged acceptable for a network television audience, such advertisements must contain an audio disclosure that the film is "Rated NC-17, No Children Under 17 Admitted" and an appropriate MPA video disclosure. In no event may such advertisements be scheduled to air earlier than 9:55P.M., Central and Mountain Time zones and 10:55P.M., Eastern and Pacific. In certain circumstances, later scheduling may be deemed appropriate.



- VII. Advertising for the home entertainment release of television series and made for TV movies will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- VIII. Advertisements with secondary product mentions promoting a motion picture or home entertainment must clearly disclose the rating in the video. If the advertisement is predominantly promoting a film then the rating may be required to be disclosed in both the audio and video.
- IX. Advertisements with secondary product mentions promoting a motion picture or home entertainment must clearly disclose the rating in the video. If the advertisement is predominantly promoting a film then the rating may be required to be disclosed in both the audio and video.

## **PERSONAL PRODUCTS AND CONTRACEPTIVES**

- I. General Overview
  - A. Products and services of a personal nature including, but not limited to, feminine hygiene products, personal lubricants, contraceptives, incontinence products and other products that require sensitivity in presentation should be presented in a tasteful manner and will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Scheduling restrictions may apply.
- II. Personal Lubricants, Deodorants, and Cosmetic Douches
  - A. Generalized statements of product efficacy (e.g., “Helps you feel fresh for hours”) are acceptable as long as they are supported by reliable and competent scientific evidence.
  - B. Health claims are not acceptable.
  - C. Advertisements for cosmetic douche products must include the disclosures “Use only as directed” or “Follow label directions.”
- III. Medicated Douches and Genital Itch Products
  - A. Advertising may promote the product for health-related uses.
  - B. Advertising of products designed for external genital itch may not state or imply broader use. Advertisements for these products must include the disclosures “Use as directed” and “If symptoms persist, see your doctor.”

[\(See also Medical and Health-Related Products\)](#)

## **RELIGIOUS ADVERTISING**

- I. Versant will, within its discretion, accept advertisements for the sale of products that have a religious theme (e.g., books, recordings, artifacts, etc.).

# VERSANT

- II. Versant accepts religious advertisements that express divergent points of view. Religious books, periodicals, or other products depicted in advertisements may be reviewed by Versant to ensure that they do not disparage any group or individual or otherwise violate Versant's advertising policies.
- III. Versant may, on a case-by-case basis, accept advertisements of a general nature on behalf of religious organizations, for the announcement of meetings, religious services, or for the promotion of approved public service and charitable activities.
- IV. Solicitation of funds is acceptable on a case-by-case basis.
- V. Advertising may not depict, proselytize, promote, or discuss sectarian doctrine or dogma.
- VI. Advertising copy that denigrates, attacks, or negatively stereotypes any group or individual is not acceptable.
- VII. All religious advertising must include proper sponsor identification.

[\(See also Sponsor Identification\)](#)

## SEXUALLY EXPLICIT PUBLICATIONS, PRODUCTS, AND SERVICES

Versant does not accept advertising for sexually explicit publications, products, or services.

Adult toys and sites for adult toys will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## SPONSOR IDENTIFICATION

- I. Identification of sponsorship must be made in all advertisements in accordance with the requirements of the Communications Act and the rules and policies of the FCC relating to [Sponsorship Identification](#) (47 C.F.R. § 73.1212).
- II. An advertisement must disclose, visually or in audio, that it is paid for by the person(s), corporation, committee, association or other entity by whom or on whose behalf such payment is made. The required disclosure must take the form of "Paid for by..." or "Sponsored by..."
- III. An announcement stating the sponsor's corporate or trade name or the name of the sponsor's product, when it is clear that the name of the product constitutes sponsorship identification, may be sufficient when commercial products or services are being advertised. Such announcement would not be sufficient where the sponsor is a nonprofit or governmental entity and there are no commercial products or services being advertised, in that case, an appropriate sponsorship identification disclosure in the form outlined above must be included in the advertisement.
- IV. Generally, when no payment or other valuable consideration is paid or promised for broadcast or cablecast, no "sponsorship identification" is necessary, since by definition there is no sponsor. A "public service announcement" (one for which no charge is made and which is regarded as serving community interests, as by promoting programs, activities, or services of governmental or other nonprofit organizations) exemplifies the type of material that would not require sponsorship



identification because it is broadcast or cablecast for free. When payment is made, however, the same announcement must include an appropriate sponsorship identification disclosure.

- V. A copyright notice does not generally constitute adequate sponsorship identification unless the copyright notice is incorporated into the required disclosure (e.g., “Paid for by...,” “Sponsored by...”).
- VI. A website URL does not necessarily constitute adequate sponsorship identification unless it is the official name of the sponsoring entity.

## TELEMEDICINE PLATFORMS

The following guidelines are applicable to advertisements for any digital platform, including applications and services using two-way video, and other forms of telecommunications technology, that facilitates the use of medical information exchanged from one site to another via electronic communications to (1) diagnose and treat patients, and (2) sell and deliver prescription drugs and/or other regulated healthcare products, including dietary supplements and over the counter drugs (“Telemedicine Platform”). Advertisements for Telemedicine Platforms are also subject to the [Medical and Health-Related Products](#) and the [Dietary Supplements](#) guidelines.

- I. Versant will only accept advertisements for Telemedicine Platforms that:
  - A. Operate legally and have a physical address and telephone number in the United States; and
  - B. Comply with applicable FDA, FTC and state laws and regulations.
- II. Advertisements must include a clear disclosure of the availability and all applicable limitations, and exclusions and restrictions of the Telemedicine Platform’s services. Please refer to the [Distribution and Availability of Products and Services](#) and [Disclaimers, Supers, and Horizontal Crawls](#) sections for additional guidance.
- III. In addition to the above guidelines, Telemedicine Platforms advertising prescription drug services must also comply with applicable FDA regulations and the following:
  - A. Advertisements must not encourage self-diagnosis and self-treatment.
  - B. Advertisements must include messaging that directs viewers that consultation with a doctor will be required to access prescription drug services.
  - C. Advertisements that mention a specific drug or contain a representation of a drug in combination with claims about the drug must disclose the risks and all other information as applicable, in accordance with FDA regulations.
  - D. Advertisers must submit a letter from the advertiser’s legal counsel certifying that the Telemedicine Platform:
    - i. Complies with all FDA laws and regulations and all state pharmacy laws and regulations;
    - ii. Does not dispense drugs solely on the basis of an online questionnaire except where permitted under applicable telemedicine state laws or regulations with a pre-existing patient-prescriber relationship that has included a face-to-face physical examination.

# VERSANT

- iii. Has a licensed pharmacist that is reasonably accessible during regular business hours to address consumer inquiries.
- iv. Provides consumers access the drug's FDA-approved prescribing information.
- v. Requires a valid prescription from a doctor or other licensed health care professional authorized to prescribe under applicable laws in the state where the consumer is located.
- vi. Operates its pharmacy shipping services legally and only in states where such pharmacies are licensed by the state board of pharmacy, or equivalent state agency.

## TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Versant does not accept advertising for cigarettes (including electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes), chewing tobacco, snuff tobacco, small cigars, or nicotine pouches, or the use of these products in advertisements. On a case-by-case basis, Versant will accept fleeting depictions of tobacco use in advertisements for FDA-approved smoking cessation products, services, or advertising to discourage or prevent smoking.

## VIDEO GAMES

- I. Advertising for video games and computer software must contain an audio and video disclosure of the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rating.
- II. Versant accepts advertising for M-Rated video games, subject to content review, with scheduling limited to Primetime, Late Night, and Sports Programming. Advertisements containing an M-Rated video game as a secondary mention will be subject to the same restrictions.
- III. Inclusion of video games as a secondary mention in an advertisement will require disclosure of the ESRB rating as follows:
  - A. In audio and video for advertisements comprised primarily of game footage and/or when the game is the focal point of the advertisement.
  - B. In video for advertisements advertising a promotion or tie-in with the game where the game is not the focal point of the advertisement.
  - C. If the game is cross-promoted only by title or logo (e.g., a text listing of a game title with no box art or screen shot), rating information does not need to be displayed.

## WEIGHT LOSS PRODUCTS & PROGRAMS

- I. Weight loss supplements are subject to the Dietary Supplements and Homeopathic Remedies guidelines above, as well as the guidelines in this section.
- II. Weight loss advertisements must disclose that weight loss is achieved as part of a healthy reduced-calorie diet and exercise program.



- III. All weight loss claims must be supported by valid and reliable scientific evidence. Studies must provide strong evidence that the advertised product, as part of a diet and exercise program, resulted in weight loss above and beyond weight loss caused by diet and exercise alone. Study subjects should be representative of the targeted audience.
- IV. Documented “before and after” representations will be approved on a case-by-case basis and must be accompanied by a producer’s affidavit.
- V. Advertising for weight control may not be directed to children.
- VI. Advertising including mentions of specific weight loss amounts or the rate of weight loss consumers can expect must comply with the following:
  - A. Rates of weight loss advertised must not exceed two (2) pounds a week for a month or more without diet and exercise or three (3) pounds per week for more than four (4) weeks. Mentions of specific weight loss amounts must be accompanied by a disclosure of the amount of time it took to lose the weight (e.g. “I lost four (4) pounds in two (2) weeks”).
  - B. When a featured consumer lost weight at a faster rate than a typical consumer can expect, the typical results consumers can expect to achieve must also be disclosed (e.g. “Typical consumers lose one (1) to two (2) pounds per week on average”). Typical results must also be disclosed when an advertisement refers to the rate of weight loss (e.g. “Lose weight quickly”).
  - C. Weight loss advertisements containing testimonials must be accompanied by a testimonial affidavit from each featured consumer. If a specific amount of weight loss is mentioned, the affidavit must include the amount of weight loss and the length of time it took to achieve the loss.
- VII. The FTC has issued a document that warns against deceptive weight loss claims entitled [Gut Check: A Reference Guide for Media on Spotting False Weight Loss Claims](#). Consistent with the FTC’s recommendations, Versant will not accept claims that a weight loss product:
  - A. Causes weight loss of two (2) pounds or more a week for a month or more without dieting or exercise;
  - B. Causes substantial weight loss no matter what or how much the consumer eats;
  - C. Causes permanent weight loss even after the consumer stops using product;
  - D. Blocks the absorption of fat or calories to enable consumers to lose substantial weight;
  - E. Safely enables consumers to lose more than three (3) pounds per week for more than four (4) weeks;
  - F. Causes substantial weight loss for all users; or
  - G. Causes substantial weight loss by wearing it on the body or rubbing it into the skin.



- VIII. As a general rule, visual disclaimers should appear in a font that is easy to read and remain on the screen long enough to be noticed, read, and understood by an average viewer. The first line should appear on screen for at least three (3) seconds. Each additional line should appear for one (1) second (e.g., five (5) seconds for a three-line disclaimer).