

FAIR BALANCE

Training on a Tricky Concept

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Has anyone ever asked you how to apply fair balance to a promotional discussion? In my experience, it's one of the most challenging FDA standards of promotion to explain, train, and apply. Most industry professionals understand how to keep a conversation on-label, but the definition of fair balance is a bit vague, and appropriate use can be a hard concept to grasp. Through a few simple steps during training, and by making the effort to partner with the businesses, we demystify the concept and help promotional people effectively balance their messages.

Good Training Enables Better Practice

If you've ever attended a sales training workshop, you know that sales representatives are extensively trained on promotional messages to make their discussions sound confident and natural. Role-playing, or some type of repetitive practice, is understandably an important part of the training content. Fair balance can be practiced in the same way if the audience understands and can apply the concept. Some amount of hand-holding is helpful, so training design is important.

For instance, if the content includes only broad, high-level examples of fair balance, trainees may struggle to apply the examples to their day-to-day discussions. As a result, fair balance messages are tacked onto the end of a promotional call, like a canned disclaimer. When training is customized using role-specific customer types and messages, the examples are more relevant, and trainees understand what a balanced message sounds like for their specific discussions. Armed with this understanding, they can practice balancing the promotional messages they typically use in their day-to-day customer conversations.

Collaborate for Shared Success

Since collaboration drives shared ownership and desire for success, partnering with business stakeholders is critical. When designing your training, meet with leadership members of your intended audience to share your vision and ask them about typical customer types and discussions. Seek feedback on the draft content. Are the



examples and scenarios relevant and easy to apply? Do business leaders feel confident providing feedback during coaching sessions? Make sure the sales training department is part of the conversation as well. Collaboration helps stimulate pull-through.

Finally, make yourself available for questions, and keep your commercial partners informed of questions you receive during and after the training and the answers you provide to those questions. Doing so will drive communication and advocacy and establish you as a valued resource and partner.

Effort Well Spent

Effective fair balance training leads to confidence in execution. When training is optimized as described, sales representatives know how to balance their promotional discussions, the sales training department has more confidence pulling the concept through, and the stakeholders across the company support and even advocate one of the trickier promotional standards. When all of that occurs, organizational risk is reduced and the compliance department is seen as a partner instead of just the "scary enforcer." The extra time and resources spent developing relevant, customized fair balance training, and partnering with the business, is not only worthwhile, but necessary, to improve learning and ensure representatives are balancing their messaging appropriately.

Thanks for reading.