

Specific Guidelines for reporting by Business Channels

Several instances of news/business channels broadcasting news relating to markets/stock trading, particularly during trading hours, without proper due diligence, have been brought to the notice of NBSA.

The news/business channels (for short ‘the channels’) which broadcast news and information relating to markets/stock trading and other financial/commercial matters need to adhere to certain standards of broadcasting/journalism in order that the news/information reported of the said channels is accurate, impartial, fair, objective, balanced and duly verified. This is necessary to protect the viewers and safeguard them from inaccurate and incomplete information. It is also necessary to prevent harm/damage or undue benefit to the companies being reported upon.

These Guidelines seek to ensure that the transparency/integrity and ethical standards of financial journalism are maintained by the said channels.

In pursuance of the above, to safeguard the interests of the viewers and the companies/entities being reported upon, the Guidelines set out hereinunder shall be followed by the channels while reporting on financial/commercial matters.

GUIDELINES

1. Before broadcasting any news relating to markets/stocks (more particularly in regard to news broadcast during market/trading hours), the channels shall carry out a due diligence verification to ascertain the accuracy of such news/information.
2. The broadcasters shall build-in adequate internal vigilance mechanisms in place to verify any news/information relating to markets/stocks or any other financial or commercial information before broadcasting such news. [Such verification can be by taking the version of the company concerned, or regulatory authorities, or other reliable sources, either by email or by phone. Notes/emails/records of such emails/telephonic exchanges, shall be retained and produced in case the broadcaster is required to produce such records in the event of any subsequent controversy.]
3. The channels shall make adequate disclosure of interest, if any, that the anchors/owners/management of the said channels may have in relation to the companies being reported upon. A declaration of such disclosure shall be prominently displayed prior to/during such broadcast. It is advisable for the channel to avoid broadcasting the recommendations, opinions, advice of any individual/company, where such conflict of interest arises. For this purpose, broadcasters shall ensure that updated records of investments and interests of owners/editors/anchors of the broadcasting company, are kept on the editorial desk.

4. The channels shall cross verify the authenticity of market/stock related news, from at least one alternative source, before broadcasting. However, in a live market situation, the channel shall endeavor to incorporate the reaction, the version of the concerned company/entity being reported upon.
5. The channels shall also ensure that those who appear as experts, analysts and specialists on their channels, make proper and adequate disclosure of their business interests (financial/commercial), in regard to the subject matter of the debate/news story, so that the viewers may correctly evaluate and assess the opinions and views expressed.
6. Any sponsored programme should properly be labelled as “sponsored/advertorial” throughout the programme so that the programme does not masquerade as a news/current affairs programme. The channels shall strictly follow **Guideline 6 of "Norms & Guidelines on Paid News"** which reads:

“Every news broadcasting organization shall disclose conspicuously and continuously in an appropriate manner during the entire broadcast of a program, on their television channel/s and on their website/s, including during a news, current affairs, sports, entertainment or promotional broadcast as to whether the content of such broadcast has been paid for by or on behalf of the Entity that is subject matter of such broadcast in any manner whatsoever; and whether such broadcast is an “advertorial” or other media marketing initiative.”
7. No editor/anchor/employee of a channel shall participate as a moderator or otherwise, in any sponsored/advertorial programme. However, in the unlikely event of such participation, adequate disclosures shall be displayed during the course of the programme.
8. No channel shall promote, or give the impression of promoting, any business or financial service/company. Editors/journalists shall avoid accepting gifts or favors, making them susceptible to favoured reporting leading to conflict of interest situations.
9. Any significant or material mistake in reporting market related news shall be corrected and broadcast by a channel immediately and the correction shall also be uploaded on its web/online portal.
10. The broadcasters shall follow the relevant SEBI Regulations/Guidelines while reporting any business news relating to markets/stocks.

Place: New Delhi

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