

Dealing with Suppliers of Services

Advice and Guidance on how to deal with Suppliers of services

In the past twelve months AoR and other member organisations members have been contacted by various suppliers offering opportunities to advertise in journals and appointment cards produced on behalf of Doctors surgeries. Complaints mainly centre on:

- Misleading claims – such as the AoR supplying these companies with AoR members contact details or that AoR is being sponsored in some way
- Poor conduct of company staff
- Aggressive sales techniques
- Forcing sales by saying that they **MUST** make a decision by the end of the day
- Offering a specific opportunity e.g. your details in a surgery journal in your postcode area then subsequently changing it to a wider area where your business may have additional competition.

You are at liberty to choose to participate in any opportunity on offer but here is some advice to consider.

General

1. On the initial contact, take down all the particulars of salesperson, the company, what's on offer and the cost. Ask for this to be put in writing to you either by letter or by email. If they are not prepared to do this then you should question the reasons why.
2. View the AoR Discussion Forum or search Google for any comments or feedback by others that may have used the Company approaching you.
3. Do not be pressured in placing an order until **YOU** are satisfied with what is on offer or until you have seen a copy of the Contract.
4. When you receive your Contract read it **THOROUGHLY**. If the details have been changed **DO NOT SIGN** but take this up in writing direct with the Company.
5. Pay the invoice by credit card as you will receive the support of the Bank in the event of a dispute.
6. Keep records of all communication with the supplier including telephone conversations.

How to Complain (if you need to)

Hopefully you will not experience any problems but if you do then follow this simple advice.

1. Write, email or ring the supplier and ask to be sent copies of:
 - a) Their Customer Charter
 - b) Their Complaints Procedure

The Charter (if they have one) will detail what service you can expect to receive.

The Complaints Procedure (if they have one) will detail what to do and when and how the Company will deal with your complaint. Ensure that you keep copies of all correspondence and records of any telephone communication.

2. If they do not have a Complaints Procedure write directly to the Managing Director with a copy to the Company's Chair of the Board (if relevant). Be clear about what you are complaining about, why and what outcome you want.
3. If you are disappointed with the response write to your local Trading Standards giving them all the details plus any copies of correspondence. Send a copy of your letter to TV and Radio consumer programmes such as Watchdog. *Association of Reflexologists 2008*