

Media Participation Agreement

- 1) The media has a choice as to whom they call upon for information and expertise on personal finance issues. We must be prepared to respond promptly, give information that we know to be accurate, to the best of our ability, and to be unbiased, objective and without a personal agenda.
- 2) When we refer the media to you, you are representing FPA, not just your own practice. That does not mean you must compromise your opinions or practices, but you should consider that the articles are designed for a broad audience and that your advice should fall within the accepted parameters and guidelines of the financial planning process. The purpose of participating is NOT to directly promote your practice or any product. It is to provide information that would be considered appropriate and accurate for a wide audience.
- 3) The media appreciates being able to gain access to many CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professionals through one person and organization. After they have experience with a particular planner, they may, in fact, begin to call that planner directly as a resource. They do NOT wish to be called on by numerous individual planners. Planners should NOT contact the media representing themselves as calling on behalf of, or through, the FPA of Los Angeles.
- 4) If you have an opinion, an idea, or a grievance, then you should act on your own behalf and not as a member of the FPA of Los Angeles. As a practitioner, you may certainly write your own letters to the editor, contact the media on behalf of your own company, but NOT under the auspices of FPA of Los Angeles.

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- 5) When participating in a newspaper column or an article in which we are providing advice to a reader (such as, a Money Makeover) the reader is entitled to a limited amount of free unbiased advice, as a benefit to participating in the article. You are obligated to provide this advice. You are not required to go beyond a reasonable amount of service, however. It is imperative NOT to sell anything to the reader until the article is complete. If the reader should later decide to become a client of your firm, that is fine. Publications have expressed concern in cases where it has been discovered that a specific product had been sold or even strongly recommended to the reader during the time the article was being prepared. Our role is to provide general guidance, not promote or sell products, during that time.
- 6) For the purposes of articles that are handled through the FPA of Los Angeles, give a balanced view (pros and cons) of any product or advice you recommended. The media is very suspicious when a planner "over promotes" a particular product, particularly when they know there is a commission involved. That is just their nature!
- 7) Newspapers, radio, TV, etc. all work under tight deadlines. Generally, we can give our members only a week of lead-time in working on the article, sometimes less. It is imperative when you agree to participate, that you work on the assignment promptly and act professionally and graciously. Respect their deadlines or they will move on to the next source and we will lose an opportunity to promote the CFP™ mark and FPA of Los Angeles. Do not agree to take on an assignment if you don't have time to work on it adequately.
- 8) Once concern that we hear from our members is that the articles tend to be on very basic topics that may not be very fascinating to the planner. This will continue, because the newspaper/magazine is marketing to a broader audience than we may be in our own practice. When we approach the media we must assume an attitude of gratitude, enthusiasm and willingness to do our best, regardless of the topic. In return we gain invaluable opportunities to promote the CFP™ mark and our profession. Whining, complaining or conveying frustration or haste will undermine our relationship with the media.

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- 9) Keep in mind that the media do NOT owe us anything! They have their own agenda, which is to gather information and present it to their readers. They can do it with us or without us. We are not the author or originator of the article, interview, etc. We are simply a source. On occasion, writers will provide a draft of the article for you to review. You should point out any omissions that affect accuracy and look for misspellings and errors. Do not expect to get in every one of your points. Article length is constricted by space and time. They WILL edit. Certainly you may respectfully ask why a point was omitted or give your reason why you think it is important, but excessive pushing results in the reporter calling the PR Director or President of our chapter to complain and ask for assistance in dealing with the situation. Unfortunately, that is what they will remember about the planner! We are not purchasing advertising space for which we'd have total control. We are fortunate to have space in the more credible editorial side of the paper, but with that comes some loss of control. We feel it's worth it.
- 10) If you don't know the answer, find out or pass it on. It happens to all of us, but don't try to fake it. If you need help, let us know. We will help you behind the scenes, get you resources and do whatever we can as an organization to help you. Trust me, seeing your self quoted, saying something inaccurate, is not a pleasant experience!
- 11) Generally, we are not writing the article. We are a resource. Don't bother writing a lengthy, carefully worded article, only to be disappointed later. You will either be asked to give information to the reporter over the phone, or you may be able to jot down some notes, a graph, etc. to send over via fax or e-mail. Remember, this is their article.
- 12) If you are not familiar with the writer, the articles or the publication, please get familiar. It is okay to ask the writer for a previous article and keep up with the columns in your local publications. Often, you can go online at the publication's web site to find other articles written by the journalist. It will help you focus and do a better job.
- 13) Keep investment recommendations within the generally accepted parameters. For instance, we wouldn't want to recommend an allocation of 40 percent in direct participation programs in a newspaper article! Also, if you are with a broker-dealer, it is your responsibility to find out if you need approval to participate, beforehand.

Tips from FPA National:

- Focus on what the reporter or interviewer needs to know, not on telling them everything YOU know.
- Don't shoot from the hip: know the subject, know how to articulate it, try to provide back up documents if asked, statistics, and other sources to corroborate it, and get back to them quickly. You'll get more "points" from referring them to someone who is an expert, than "scrambling to get your name in print just so you can see its there."
(Financial Planning Magazine)
- Try to control the outcome by avoiding the spewing syndrome, that is, telling everything you know about a topic in great and often boring detail. Know your three points: reporters and interviewers use sound bites: crisp, concise points. You can always elaborate.
- Stay on the positive side of things, if possible.
- If you want to be quoted, read articles with an eye for the quotes. Use colorful adjectives and rely on powerful verbs. Avoid jargon and acronyms. Remember that they are writing for a broad audience, not a group of MBAs. They want to be thorough, but as simple as possible.
- Honor deadlines: the fastest way to alienate a reporter is to miss the deadline. Once you damage a relationship with a reporter it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to recover. Call back in the time allotted. If you don't know the reporter's deadline – ask. Then respond within that time frame.
- Attitude: Remember we do not have the corner on personal finance information. Stories will be written with or without FPA members. Cultivate a welcoming attitude so that the reporter never hesitates to contact a CFP™ professional for credible information.
- The media loves graphics, picturesque language, charts – anything visual that supports the story.
- Tip from FPA/LA: to get the most out of this, use the article to your advantage – send copies to clients, frame it, and use it with prospects.

Media Participation Agreement with the FPA of Los Angeles.

I have read the information regarding working the media through the FPA of Los Angeles. I agree to abide by the guidelines and standards set forth and to uphold our code of ethics.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Company Name

Phone Number

Fax Number

E-mail Address

Are you affiliated with a broker-dealer? _____

If so, who? _____

Specialties _____

Do you have a professional photograph? _____