

Brand Soundscapes

Guidance for Brand Soundscapes Sponsors

Brand Soundscapes are an opportunity for NPR sponsors to share stories of their brand history, corporate social responsibility and product innovation with the NPR audience through sponsor recognition and messaging. These stories must be compliant with the NPR Digital Sponsorship Guidelines in addition to applicable legal parameters and are held to a higher ethical and legal standard due to the nature of the content. These guidelines are meant to outline best practices for Brand Soundscapes content and to ensure that all content produced by NPM Creative in partnership with our sponsors is factually-correct, appropriate to be shared with the NPR audience and is clearly understood as sponsor content and not NPR editorial.

- Brand Soundscapes are an excellent avenue to share stories of a brand's efforts to impact their communities. These stories must speak to specific programs and initiatives and brands will be required to substantiate any claims or outcomes shared from these programs.
- Brands are encouraged to create Brand Soundscapes about product innovations and developments, particularly the sponsor's aspirations or goals for the product. Any and all claims about the product must be substantiated and should avoid comparative language about competitors.
- Brand Soundscapes cannot be designed to influence listener opinion on topics of national debate, encourage them to take actions politically or change their views on controversial aspects of the company's efforts.
- Brand Soundscapes cannot be used to directly challenge negative news coverage of the brand.
- Subjects featured in Brand Soundscapes should speak in their own voice. Interviews are not pre-scripted, although sample questions will be provided. Employees may be provided talking points for reference, but should be encouraged not to read pre-written answers. Brands will be able to provide feedback and request edits to all material during the post-production process and will have final approval on the content.
- Ideal subjects for Brand Soundscapes are:
 - Mid-Senior level employees who have direct impact and authority over the product or program being featured.
 - Community members who have been impacted by the brand's work.
 - Partners or customers of the brand who can speak directly about their experience.
- Entry-level employees and community members from vulnerable populations (e.g. people living in poverty, people with intellectual impairments) are discouraged as subjects for Brand Soundscapes to avoid the perception of coercion.
- The relationship between the brand and the Brand Soundscapes subject must be clearly disclosed to the listener. All subjects must participate voluntarily and any non-employees cannot be compensated for their participation.