



## **FAQ's FOR DISPUTE ADVISORY SERVICE**

### **WHAT IS THE DISPUTE ADVISORY SERVICE?**

It is a peer advisory service approved by the PPAI's Board of Directors to provide impartial input from industry peers who volunteer their counsel in a disagreement between two disputing firms, typically a distributor firm and a supplier firm.

### **WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR A DISPUTE ADVISORY SERVICE?**

To foster improved relations between distributors and suppliers.

### **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST FOR MEMBERS TO USE THIS SERVICE?**

There is no fee for this member service.

### **WHAT TYPES OF DISPUTES ARE GENERALLY HANDLED BY THE DISPUTE ADVISORY SERVICE?**

This service is for disputes that involve specific orders (minimum of \$250 gross), not for generalized complaints about individual policies, marketing practices, etc.

### **DO THE TWO DISPUTING PARTIES HAVE TO BE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION?**

Only one party needs to be a member of the Association.

### **IS THIS SERVICE A LEGALLY BINDING ARBITRATION SERVICE?**

This service is not meant to be (nor is it) a legally-binding arbitration service. As you may know, Promotional Products Association International, like other 501 c (6) non-profit trade associations, is not permitted by law to intervene in disputes between member firms. The Federal Antitrust Laws are very specific on that.

### **WHAT IS THE PROTOCOL TO BE FOLLOWED BY ASSOCIATION STAFF WHEN THEY GET CALLS ABOUT DISPUTES?**

Our Association staff is expressly prohibited from answering any disputee questions or providing any personal opinions or any information other than the guidelines of how the service works. Please refer the parties that call to the staff coordinator who handles the service.

### **HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?**

- (1) For this service to be provided, both parties must first voluntarily agree to participate in the service. If either party does not agree and comply, the service cannot be made available.
  - (2) Both parties should then individually provide the facts of the dispute, from their perspective, in writing.
- All references to the companies involved in the dispute will be deleted and forwarded in a written report to an advisory panel.

**\* NOTE: *There may be instances where staff may not be able to totally neutralize the material, such with products that have unique identifying features.***

The parties should provide complete, accurate information (with support documentation whenever possible) as it may have an effect on the opinions they receive back from the panel. The disputing parties are encouraged and welcomed to exchange their understanding of the facts of the dispute prior to submitting their individual forms. Where advisory panel members see incomplete or contradicting facts, it is less likely they will feel comfortable offering an opinion.

(3) After the staff coordinator of the service has received both completed fact forms and has removed all references to the companies involved, the information will then be forwarded to an advisory panel of four people, who are representatives of distributor and supplier member firms. They will individually review the forms (and the enclosures sent) and return their opinions to the staff coordinator. A report of the panel's opinion would then be forwarded to the parties involved. (Identity of the advisory panel members will be kept confidential.)

### **HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE?**

From the date that the coordinator receives completed forms from the parties involved it takes approximately three to four weeks to receive the advisory panel report.

### **DO THE PARTIES INVOLVED HAVE TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ADVISORY PANEL?**

Again, this is an advisory service and in no way binding, nor is it mandatory that the disputing parties accept their recommendations. The goal here is to provide impartial input from four industry peers who are volunteering their best counsel in this disagreement.

### **WHO IS THE STAFF COORDINATOR FOR THE SERVICE?**

Anne Lardner  
Phone: 972-258-3041