

§ 240.9 Proportionally equal terms.

(a) Promotional services and allowances should be made available to all competing customers on proportionally equal terms. No single way to do this is prescribed by law. Any method that treats competing customers on proportionally equal terms may be used. Generally, this can be done most easily by basing the payments made or the services furnished on the dollar volume or on the quantity of the product purchased during a specified period. However, other methods that result in proportionally equal allowances and services being offered to all competing customers are acceptable.

(b) When a seller offers more than one type of service, or payments for more than one type of service, all the services or payments should be offered on proportionally equal terms. The seller may do this by offering all the payments or services at the same rate per unit or amount purchased. Thus, a seller might offer promotional allowances of up to 12 cents a case purchased for expenditures on either newspaper advertising or handbills.

Example 1: A seller may offer to pay a specified part (e.g., 50 percent) of the cost of local advertising up to an amount equal to a specified percentage (e.g., 5 percent) of the dollar volume of purchases during a specified period of time.

Example 2: A seller may place in reserve for each customer a specified amount of money for each unit purchased, and use it to reimburse these customers for the cost of advertising the seller's product.

Example 3: A seller should not provide an allowance or service on a basis that has rates graduated with the amount of goods purchased, as, for instance, 1 percent of the first \$1,000 purchased per month, 2 percent of the second \$1,000 per month, and 3 percent of all over that.

Example 4: A seller should not identify or feature one or a few customers in its own advertising without making the same service available on proportionally equal terms to customers competing with the identified customer or customers.

Example 5: A seller who makes employees available or arranges with a third party to furnish personnel for purposes of performing work for a customer should make the same offer available on proportionally equal terms to all other competing customers or offer useable and suitable services or allowances on proportionally equal terms to competing

customers for whom such services are not useable and suitable.¹

Example 6: A seller should not offer to pay a straight line rate for advertising if such payment results in a discrimination between competing customers; e.g., the offer of \$1.00 per line for advertising in a newspaper that charges competing customers different amounts for the same advertising space. The straight line rate is an acceptable method for allocating advertising funds if the seller offers small retailers that pay more than the lowest newspaper rate an alternative that enables them to obtain the same percentage of their advertising cost as large retailers. If the \$1.00 per line allowance is based on 50 percent of the newspaper's lowest contract rate of \$2.00 per line, the seller should offer to pay 50 percent of the newspaper advertising cost of smaller retailers that establish, by invoice or otherwise, that they paid more than that contract rate.

Example 7: A seller offers each customer promotional allowances at the rate of one dollar for each unit of its product purchased during a defined promotional period. If Buyer A purchases 100 units, Buyer B 50 units, and Buyer C 25 units, the seller maintains proportional equality by allowing \$100 to Buyer A, \$50 to Buyer B, and \$25 to Buyer C, to be used for the Buyers' expenditures on promotion.

§ 240.10 Availability to all competing customers.

(a) Functional availability:

(1) The seller should take reasonable steps to ensure that services and facilities are useable in a practical sense by all competing customers. This may require offering alternative terms and conditions under which customers can participate. When a seller provides alternatives in order to meet the availability requirement, it should take reasonable steps to ensure that the alternatives are proportionally equal, and the seller should inform competing customers of the various alternative plans.

(2) The seller should insure that promotional plans or alternatives offered to retailers do not bar any competing retailers from participation, whether they purchase directly from the seller

¹The discriminatory purchase of display or shelf space, whether directly or by means of so-called allowances, may violate the Act, and may be considered an unfair method of competition in violation of section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act.