

Federal Advisory Council for Household Goods Consumer Protection
Education Subgroup Teleconference
Meeting Minutes for January 26, 2017 11:00am – 12:30pm EST

The Federal Advisory Council for Household Goods (HHG) Consumer Protection Education Subgroup was convened for a teleconference at 11:00am EST on January 26, 2017.

Working Group Members Present:

Jennifer Gartlan, Esq. – Office of Consumer Affairs & Dispute Resolution Services, Federal Maritime Commission

Kelsey Owen, Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Better Business Bureau

Jonathan Todd, Esq. – Of Counsel, Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP

Daniel Veoni (Chairman) – Vice President of Government Affairs, AMSA

Charles White, CAE, M.Ed. – Senior Vice President, International Association of Movers

FMCSA Support:

Kenneth Rodgers – Chief, Commercial Enforcement & Investigations Division and DFO, FMCSA

Monique Riddick – Lead Transportation Specialist and Assistant DFO, FMCSA

Volpe Support:

Dianne Gunther – Volpe Lead

Erin Lohrenz – Record Minutes

Juliane Schwarzer – Facilitator

1. Introduction

Charles White, the subgroup’s spokesperson, kicked off the meeting by summarizing the three different focus areas discussed at the in-person meeting:

1. What is our overall education message/strategy?
2. Who is our target audience?
3. How are we going to reach this audience? (What are the distribution methods we will be using?)

2. Overall Strategy

What is our basic message?

- We are in an environment where we need to grab attention within 2 seconds. We need an immediate attention grabber.
 - “STOP” acronym
 - Use graphics - imagery for a traffic light (“red, yellow, green”) to invoke the preferable behavior
 - Catchy phrases - “Think before you leap”
- BBB has success with getting media attention when they discuss red flags
 - Red flags are more of a scare tactic
- Utilize “negative shock” potential of messaging – people have a short attention span

- Highlight the reputations of the “good guys” while also scaring consumers with the “bad guys”

3. Implementing the Recommendations

- Would someone within FMCSA take the recommendations, run with them and then fill in the holes?
- Recommendations for theme and messaging need to be most applicable to the modern educational tool
 - All generations expect modern tools
 - Keep the design clean, crisp and simple
- What tools are the Better Business Bureau (BBB) using to reach our audience?
 - Social media
 - Each BBB is responsible for their territory
- Utilize the FMCSA Facebook page
 - Possibly remap this page to focus more on HHG Movers
- Utilize Twitter
- Add a landing page that can link from social media that provides all the necessary information in one place
- Take advantage of the HHG Protect Your Move (PYM) website
- Utilize Google analytics to direct users to the Facebook page
 - This involves money and resources – do we have the capacity for this?
- Workgroup members should not feel limited by the current budget for the recommendations
 - Goal is that Congress will accept the recommendation and adapt the budget to accommodate them

4. What are the Recommendations?

- First recommendation is enhanced use of social media through Google’s search engine to enable consumers to find the necessary information
- Second recommendation is to provide funding to allow for Google analytics throughout the year, not just at peak moving season
- Possible recommendation: Utilize an ombuds office (revisit this recommendation)
 - Provides consumers with preventative information in protecting their move and giving them an option; consistently drives the message forward
 - Conducts general outreach
 - One important consideration is having sufficient funding
 - A concern is that people don’t know where to go to get the answers to their questions
 - Responsibilities being split between offices so there are multiple places to go for answers
 - One option is to have parties go to a general line or mailbox

- Ombudsmen have a regulatory role in Monique’s office – they work closely together
- More difficult for consumers who are moving outside of peak moving season to find a good mover
- What other internet-like tools should we encourage with our recommendation?
 - Recommend a series of podcasts that brings someone through the moving process
 - Videos
 - Texting
- How do we gather the information to provide texts and updates to consumers? How do we get this to the right people?
- Infographics are great – companies will pick information that makes sense and put it in a visual way that represents it instead of using words and images
 - **Action Item:** Kelsey Owen agreed to come up with some ideas for infographics before the next meeting
- Event driven outreach

5. What is our audience and how do we reach them?

- Utilizing life events is a good way to reach out (Ex: wedding shows, bridal events, open houses, assisted living)
- BBB knows to include information about FMCSA when they provide information to consumers
 - We outreach mostly to our consumers and give them a list of ways to find these businesses
- Innovative thought on how to approach this – we would message differently to someone getting married vs. someone moving into a retirement home
 - Encourage FMCSA to make more targeted outreach?
- Consider reaching back to our demographic to target specific age groups
- There may be examples or trends recognized by certain folks that could help drive these recommendations
- One missing piece is that FMCSA is focused on interstate moving – we see just as many issues on the international side as well as in local moving
- What are the “tools” we need to reach our audience?

6. Next steps:

- Start to put recommendations together
 - Volpe is taking notes to capturing the recommendations and rationale and will send to subgroup for review
 - **Action Item:** Volpe will provide notes at least one week prior to the next in-person meeting.
 - Subgroup will use the notes to develop the recommendation
 - Bring discussions from the subgroup calls to the in-person meetings

- Groups will have a chance to break into the subgroups again at the in-person meeting to further examine the direction
- **Action Item:** Volpe will put together PowerPoint slides to report out from the subgroup meetings
- Steps on educating consumers effectively:
 1. Find the right people
 2. Target these people
 3. Get a quick, eye-catching message out
 4. Help people understand what they need to make an educated decision
- May need to add private resources (Ex: UniGroup; Move Rescue)
- Recommend that the department produce a plan/report
- Individually take initiative in between meetings and bring back to the group
 - **Action Item:** All subgroup members will brainstorm ideas in between meetings and will be prepared to discuss in March.
- Plan for next in-person meeting:
 1. Review the notes and PowerPoints to focus on the recommendations
 2. Visualize the recommendations
 3. Start putting pen to paper to develop the recommendations

Adjournment:

The teleconference for the Education Subgroup of the National Advisory Council for Household Goods Consumer Protection was adjourned at 12:30pm EST on January 26, 2017.

Summary of Action Items:

Action Item	Assigned to
Bring some ideas for infographics to the next meeting.	Kelsey Owen
Volpe will provide notes at least one week prior to the next in-person meeting.	Volpe
Volpe will put together PowerPoint slides to report out from the subgroup meetings	Volpe
All subgroup members will brainstorm ideas in between meetings and will be prepared to discuss in March.	All subgroup members