**Commenting Protocol  
Updated: July 1, 2012**

**This note updates our views on commenting**.

**BACKGROUND**

Commenting on the site is an important way to engage with readers and get their feedback on ideas and stories. In some ways new stories or angles come from them.

It is our main social media or engagement tool on *Good Returns*.

While it is successful there are come criticisms.

The main one we hear is about people making anonymous quotes.

Our view is that we will allow anon quotes or quotes made under a pseudonom. However that comment has to have an indentiable email address. Ones which are clearly fake should not be approved. Likewise we occasionally see comments with an email which has a company domain name but from the comment you can identify its varacity.

**RULE #1**

All comments have to be approved against our own, published guidelines:

Comments to Good Returns go through an approval process. Comments which are defamatory, abusive or in some way deemed inappropriate will not be approved. It is allowable to use some form of non-de-plume for your name, however we recommend real email addresses are used. Comments from free email addresses such as Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, etc may not be approved.

**ENGAGEMENT v COMMERCIAL INTERESTS**

We have an issue where some companies have questioned the comments made and in once case have pulled advertising.

While comments are important to us our commercial interests come first.

In order to address this issue we have agreed to restrict commenting on articles. The broad rule is that an article about a company news or product change (eg: an insurance company changing premuiums) will not be open to comment.

A story which is more issues based will be open to comment and discussion.

Drawing a clear line on these rules is something that we will get better at over time. But the reason for doing this is that we see competitors or former staff bagging companies on these types of stories. That is not acceptable especially when they don’t identify themselves publicly.

Secondly we should allow companies the ability to talk about changes without having to deal with the issue raised above.

**RULE #2**

Articles about companies and product changes will generally not be open to comment. If in doubt then please check with Philip and he will make a decision.

Also I have said to AIA that if there is a comment specifically about the company then we will send an email to Debbie Egerton advising her and the company may choose to respond. Her email is Debbie.egerton@aia.com

To implement these changes we have also added a new check box in the admin field allowing articles to be open or closed to comment. There will be a pop up reminder box at the time an article is taken live.



**CLOSING ARTICLES**

The other change is that we can close articles for comment. This will only be used if things get too heated or out of control. For instance that has been done here

[http://www.goodreturns.co.nz/article/976499750/non-pharmac-focus-part-of-accuro-s-adviser-push.html](http://www.goodreturns.co.nz/article/976499750/non-pharmac-focus-part-of-accuro-s-adviser-push.html#comments)



**KEEPING AN EYE ON THINGS**

It is Alana’s role to approve comments. No-one else should be doing this unless instructed.

To help keep an eye of things there is now a daily digest of comments approved which I get at 5pm each day.

**SOME BACKGROUND**

Making these changes to our protocols is something which isn’t done lightly. It is important we remain independent and don’t allow companies to try and censor material.

One of the issues that does come up is that *Good Returns* is a public site and some of the comments from advisers fail to portray the industry in a good light. Some are purile, petty and inane.

A question that is often debated is whether or not we try to improve the behavior and moderate the comments made? We do correct some English and grammar, however trying to create rules around sensible comment and dumb comments is pretty hard to do and something we are reluctant to have a go at. After all these are advisers warts and all.

Our overall goal should be to have sensible discussions and not allow the site to be over-run with nutters. After all the comments made, moderated and approved on the site reflect on us, our professionalism and the quality of what we do.

Philip  
July 1, 2012