

Influencer Marketing Disclosure Guidelines

Industry best practices created by:
Influencer Marketing Steering Committee

Update: Fall 2025



From Ad Standards' Influencer Marketing Steering Committee

Ad Standards, in collaboration with an industry panel of companies that engage in influencer marketing, presents these Disclosure Guidelines to illustrate industry best practices. The guidelines that follow are meant to educate the influencer marketing industry about their disclosure obligations and to give a practical framework for providing disclosure.

The members of the Ad Standards Influencer Marketing Steering Committee came together from across the influencer marketing sector and developed a set of guidelines and tools to provide clarity on how, when, and what to disclose when engaging in influencer marketing on any social media channel.

With rapidly evolving technology and marketing trends, it is impossible to predict every possible scenario. These guidelines are a living document and this is the most recent update. We invite your comments and feedback at info@adstandards.ca.

These guidelines do not replace or supersede regulatory requirements on influencer marketing that exist in certain sectors.

Further, the disclosure best practices that follow in this document do not constitute legal advice nor do they ensure compliance with the *Canadian Code of Advertising Standards* or the *Competition Act* on material connection disclosure; product performance representation not based on adequate and proper tests; nor false or misleading representations. The full context of any communication must always be considered to determine what may be required.

Application

Please encourage members of your team, from the inception of any influencer marketing campaign, to use these Disclosure Guidelines as a roadmap for providing truthful, fair, and accurate influencer marketing content.

The Disclosure Guidelines apply to anyone involved in influencer marketing practice. It is important to note that the same principles underlying these industry best practices may apply in contexts outside of influencer marketing. For more information, see our discussion about Canada's Self-Regulatory Framework on page 3.

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Regulatory Landscape

In Canada, the Competition Bureau is the primary government body responsible for enforcing laws about misleading marketing practices. An arm of the federal government, the Competition Bureau oversees the Competition Act with the goal of preventing fraud and eliminating deceptive marketing practices.

Breaching the Competition Act can result in civil or criminal action by the Competition Bureau (see Sections 52 and 74.01 of the Competition Act). The misleading advertising and deceptive marketing provisions apply to influencer marketing just as they do to any other form of marketing.

As a practice, there is no issue with advertisers compensating influencers, or with influencers accepting compensation. However, when influencers post about a product, service, or brand more generally, they are making a marketing representation and are therefore subject to the Competition Act, both in terms of the claims being made and the requirement to disclose their relationship with the advertiser. If a consumer believes that an influencer made the representation organically, they would likely value the claim differently than if they knew that the influencer was incentivized to make their representation. That is why it is important for consumers to understand that the influencer has been compensated in some way for their marketing message to avoid any deception.

Shared Responsibility for Compliance

The onus for mandatory disclosure compliance is on all parties involved in the influencer marketing collaboration. There is a shared burden on any agency, PR firm or company responsible for facilitating the sponsorship – in addition to the brand advertiser and influencers involved.

The Competition Bureau has published resources on influencer marketing:

- [Influencer marketing and the Competition Act](#)
- [The Deceptive Marketing Practices Digest – Volume 4](#)

Self-Regulatory Framework

Ad Standards, the Canadian advertising industry's self-regulatory body, administers the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards (the *Code*). Ad Standards accepts complaints from consumers under the *Code*, which are evaluated by Ad Standards and may be adjudicated by the Standards Council (Council). Council meets regularly and is composed of representatives from the advertising industry and the public who volunteer their time to support the consumer complaint process. When considering consumer complaints about influencer marketing, there are several provisions of the *Code* that may come into play.

Accuracy and Clarity

When considering a complaint about an advertisement and whether there has been a contravention of any clause of the *Code*, the general impression conveyed by the advertisement is assessed. Under **Clause 1, Accuracy and Clarity**, advertisements must not omit relevant information if the omission makes the advertisement deceptive or misleading. In the case of influencer marketing, omitting a disclosure of a material connection may be considered misleading advertising and could result in a violation of Clause 1(b) and 1(f).

Disguised Advertising Techniques

Clause 2, Disguised Advertising Techniques, states that an advertisement cannot be presented in a way that conceals the fact that it is an advertisement. This often happens when it is not clear that an influencer's post is actually an advertisement for a product (making it appear as though it is organic content). In the guidelines that follow, there are many examples that demonstrate how to avoid contravening this Clause by using upfront disclosures.

Testimonials

Another relevant section of the *Code* is **Clause 7, Testimonials**, which requires that testimonials, endorsements or other representations of opinion or preference, must reflect genuine and current opinions and be based upon adequate information. To enhance industry and public understanding of how to interpret and apply the *Code*, Ad Standards develops Interpretation Guidelines. Interpretation Guideline #5 provides guidance on disclosure that is required in order for a testimonial, endorsement, review, or other representation (in any medium) to comply with Clause 7 of the *Code*. The Interpretation Guideline states that a testimonial, endorsement, review, or other representation must disclose any material connection between the reviewer and the entity making the product or service available. If such a material connection exists, that fact and the nature of the material connection must be clearly and prominently disclosed.

Council may consider the best practices set out in these guidelines in reaching its decision on whether or not there has been a *Code* violation related to an influencer advertisement and specifically which clauses of the *Code* are at issue.

These principles apply to influencer marketing, as well as to any other instance where there is a material connection between the reviewer and the entity making the product or service available, such as employer-employee relationships or family relationships. Similarly, affiliate marketing and refer-a-friend programs may also trigger disclosure requirements where the individual is receiving compensation or other benefits for making the referral.

About this Update

While the core principles of these guidelines remain unchanged, the Influencer Marketing Steering Committee developed this update to provide expanded guidance in areas where additional clarity would benefit the industry. This edition includes more detailed direction on topics such as disclosure of gifted products versus event invitations, the effective use of social media paid partnership tools, and how influencers should disclose affiliate marketing relationships. It also offers enhanced guidance on disclosures directed at child audiences and on the use and disclosure of artificial intelligence in endorsements, including scenarios involving AI-generated influencers and AI-generated content.

Global Connections

Ad Standards is a member of the International Council for Advertising Self-Regulation (ICAS), a global platform that promotes effective advertising self-regulation. Canada is among the countries with self-regulatory codes and guidelines for influencer marketing. ICAS includes these Disclosure Guidelines in its online overview of the many ICAS markets worldwide that have guidelines to ensure transparent disclosures in influencer marketing.



Definitions

Term	Definitions
Advertising	“Advertising” and “advertisement(s)” are defined as any message where the content is controlled directly or indirectly by the advertiser and which is communicated in any medium to viewers with the intent to influence their choice, opinion, or behaviour.
Affiliate Marketing (or Network Marketing)	A marketing strategy whereby one party receives a commission (or something else of value) for generating traffic, leads or client acquisitions to the other party’s website, page, post or other content. This may be accomplished through links, tags, or through any other means that drives consumers to the promoted brand’s content.
Brand	This includes the professionals who work with the advertisers and their affiliated parties, which may include media agencies, PR agencies, creative agencies, or influencer marketing companies that work with the advertisers.
Brand Ambassadorship or Exclusivity	A material relationship for a long-term engagement, including employment, often with both defined and undefined content production and distribution expectations. This typically includes roles, responsibilities, deliverables, and a set time period outlined in a contract.
Influencer or Endorser	Someone who possesses the potential to influence others, regardless of the number of followers or viewers they may have. The people whom influencers affect are defined as a person or group who take action or change opinion/behaviour as the result of exposure to information provided by an influencer. This may occur on a blog, social media platform, or in other media publications. Influencers may also be known as ‘Talent’ or ‘Content Creators’.
Material Connection	Any connection between an entity providing a product or service and an endorser, reviewer, influencer or person making a representation that may affect the weight or credibility of the representation, and includes: benefits and incentives, such as monetary or other compensation, free products with or without any conditions attached, discounts, gifts, contest and sweepstakes entries, and any employment relationship, or any personal or familial relationship.
Payment	Payment means any form of consideration, including financial compensation or other arrangements, such as provision of free products (see definition of Material Connection). The disclosure guidelines apply to all exchanges of value between an advertiser—or a party working on behalf of an advertiser—and an influencer. This may include free products, monetary exchange, or other perks with the expectation—explicit or implied—that a promotion or inclusion of the advertiser’s products in a post occurs.

The Do's and Don'ts of Disclosure

Upfront is best.

Disclosures are meant to provide transparency and honesty for all viewers of the sponsored post.

These best practices are intended to catch the viewer's immediate attention and ensure the disclosure is clear, conspicuous, and broadly understood regardless of which device is used to view the post (i.e. desktop, tablet, smart phone).



When in doubt, spell it out.

The Disclosure Guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive, as it is difficult to keep up with rapidly changing social media platforms and viewer habits.

Should you be using a platform not mentioned in these guidelines, or if you encounter a situation outside its current scope, please continue to apply the principles that disclosure is necessary and must be **clear, conspicuous, and broadly understood**.



Do:



Disclosures should be clear.

One way to ensure clarity is to use widely accepted hashtags.



Hashtags that have been recognized as clear and widely accepted include:

#ad, #sponsored, #XYZAmbassador, #XYZPartner (where “XYZ” is the brand name), #Gifted (where the the influencer is not required to post about the brand but received a free gift), #InvitedGuest (where the influencer was invited to attend an event but not required to post about it).

#ad - used on its own and not combined with other words - is the gold standard as it easily understood by viewers.

Make sure that whatever disclosure you use can be read and easily understood. For context, if the disclosure gets combined with the brand name to create a new word, it could be confusing and not understandable. For instance, when combining a company name, such as “Cool Style” with “ad” to make “#coolstylead”, there is a good chance that viewers will not notice and understand the significance of the word “ad” at the end of a hashtag.

Do:



Disclosures should be specific about the brand, product and what was given.



Disclosure to the brand or product can be included within the content itself, organically – it does not necessarily need to be in a hashtag or @ statement.

Where the influencer receives payment other than financial compensation, such as free product or an exclusive invite, and the influencer talks about the product or the event, they should disclose the nature of the material connection in order to be transparent, such as #GiftedProduct, #Gifted, or #InvitedGuest, as applicable.

Don't: Ambiguous Hashtags

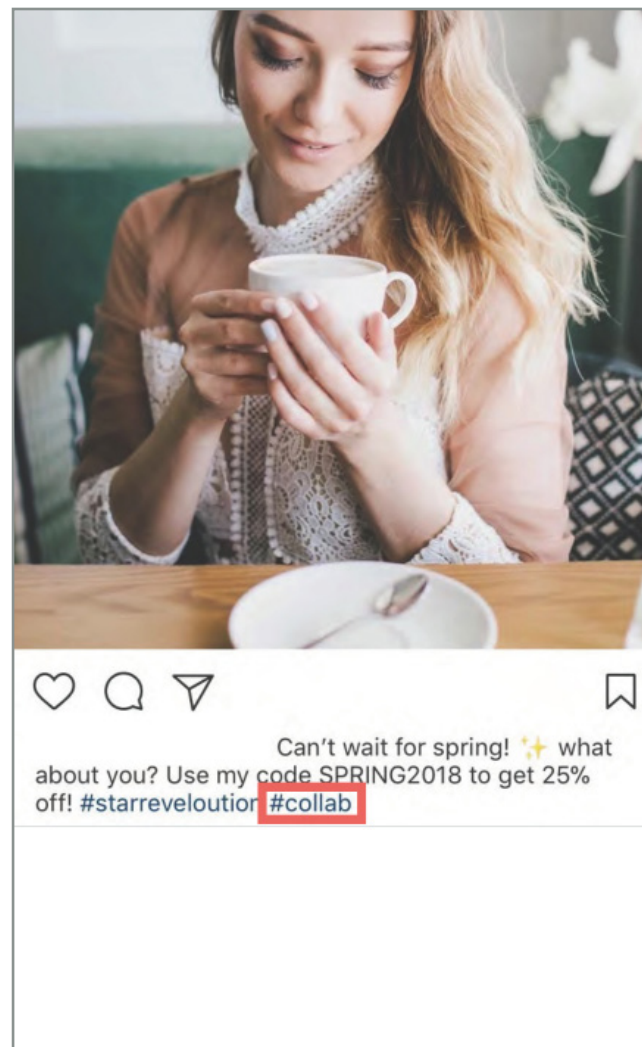


Effective Disclosure Tips

- The use of ambiguous phrases or hashtags does not make it clear to the viewer that there is a material connection. Examples of ambiguous phrases include: #Ambassador, #Partner, #Spon, #PR, #Promo, #PRHaul, #Brand, #Collab.

Highlights in the Example

- Usage of hashtags like “#collab” is not clear indicators that this was a sponsored post or the product was gifted.
- The disclosure attempt was also buried in a list of hashtags, which is not considered a clear indicator for viewers.



Don't: Hidden Disclosure



Effective Disclosure Tips

- If a creator uses a lot of hashtags/mentions at the end their content, then the disclosure should always be prior to those hashtags/mentions (ideally at the beginning of the post).
- If disclosures are buried in a hashtag list or are in overlays that are too small or faint, they could be considered hidden.
- Disclosures need to be clear and conspicuous.
- Viewers should immediately identify the post as advertising and be aware of the promotional nature of the content.

Highlights in the Example

- While this endorsement included the disclosure #ad, it was buried in a hashtag list that does not make the disclosure clear and conspicuous.



Don't: Hidden Disclosure

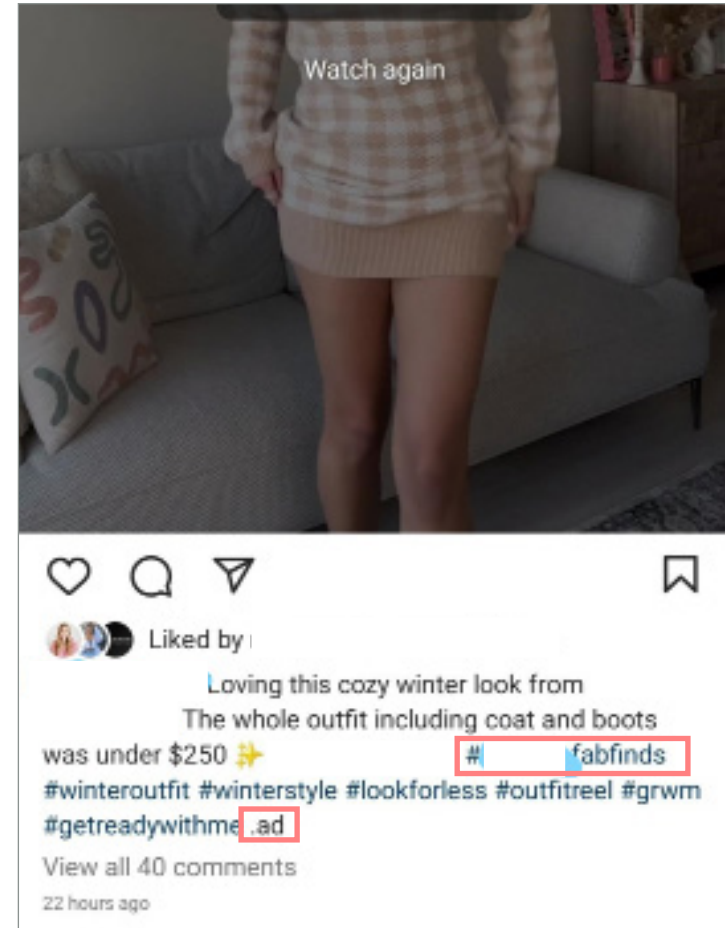


Effective Disclosure Tips

- Do not use misspelled versions of disclosure, including adding spaces within the disclosure.
- While hashtags are not mandatory, they are commonly accepted. If an influencer uses a disclosure that doesn't include a hashtag, care must be made to ensure that the disclosure is clear and understandable.

Highlights in the Example

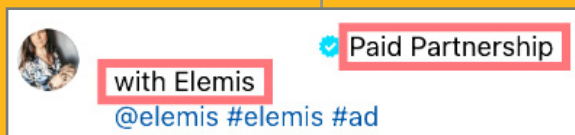
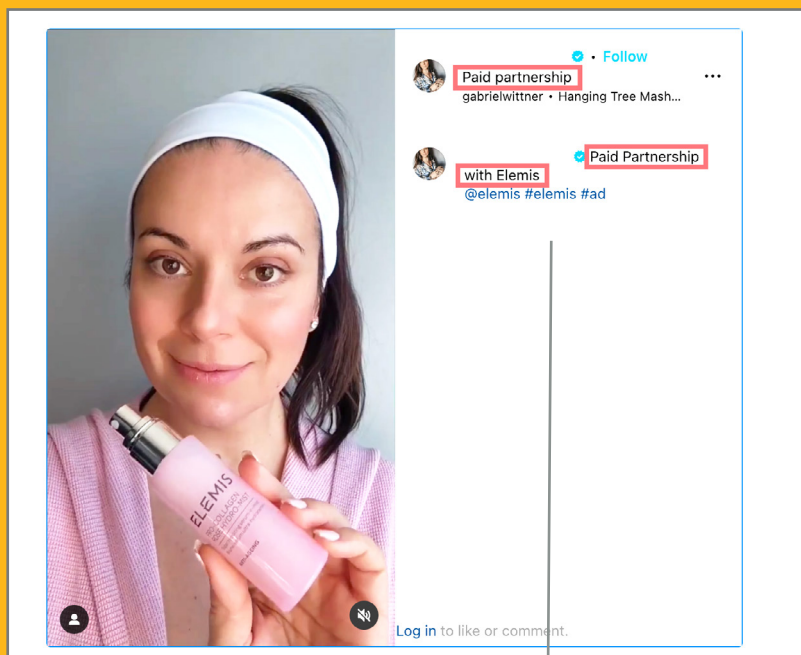
- Using .ad at the end of a list of hashtags is not effective disclosure. The rest of the copy does not make it sufficiently clear that it is a paid influencer piece.
- Including the brand name or “#brandfabfinds” is not sufficient disclosure to indicate that there is a material connection.



Do:



Use social media network or channel-specific tools/settings.



Many social media platforms offer tools to disclose an advertising relationship. Use of this tool, where available, is recommended.

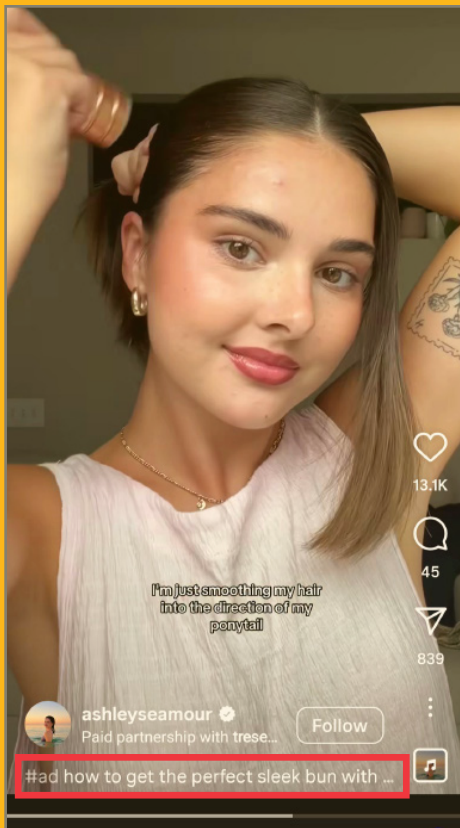
Where a tool provides prominent, clear and effective disclosure, additional disclosure is not required. However, it remains the influencer's responsibility to ensure that the tool provides such prominent, clear and effective disclosure. Influencers should ensure that the tool provides such disclosure regardless of the device used to view the post. If there is doubt, influencers should include their own disclosure in addition to the tool.

For example, where a video is attached to an influencer's posts where such a tool is used within the caption only, the video itself will still require its own disclosure because viewers watching the video will not necessarily see the accompanying disclosure in the caption.

Do:



Consider how posts are viewed by the audience to ensure disclosures are seen.



Influencers should consider the 'safe zones' on each platform to ensure that disclosures are clearly visible and not missed.

'Safe zones' are areas within a social media post where key content should be placed to ensure it remains visible and unobstructed across different devices and formats.

Influencers should consider how users typically view their content. For example, test to make sure that disclosures are prominently visible on a mobile device.

Do:



In videos, disclosure should be upfront and identifiable.



Disclose prominently at the beginning of a video because there is no guarantee that viewers will read, hear or see a message otherwise. For longer videos, having multiple disclosures throughout the video is most effective.

Disclosure in a video in audio or on screen is considered sufficient. Including verbal disclosure can often seem more authentic. For example: “I am working with XYZ brand to break through beauty norms” or “I teamed up with XYZ brand to talk about...”

Disclosure only in a caption accompanying a video is not sufficient. If the video itself contains content that triggers a disclosure, then the video should contain its own disclosure. But don’t forget to include disclosure prominently within the caption as well.

Do:



Disclosures should be made in the language of the endorsement.



The connection between an endorser and a marketer should be disclosed in whatever language or languages the endorsement is made, consistent with the viewer's interpretation. If the content and captions are in French, disclosures should be made in French. Likewise, if the content is in English, disclosures should be made in English.

Don't: Blanket Disclosure



Effective Disclosure Tips

- Blanket disclosures in a profile/bio/about section fall below the recommended standards for disclosures because people visiting the site might read individual reviews or watch individual videos without seeing the disclosure on another page.
- Many readers may not see this blanket disclosure clause and may not clearly understand the relationship between the advertiser and influencer.

Highlights in the Example

- This blanket disclosure does not meet the standards of mandatory disclosure because each individually sponsored post is not connected to a specific brand or product, and does not describe the nature of the material connection.
- In addition, the reference to the influencer's own disclosure of "c/o" is not sufficiently clear, as a viewer would not likely understand that disclosure to mean that the influencer received merchandise from a company. One cannot assume that people will read the bio to understand disclosures used.

“

Where I have received merchandise from a company, I make that clear in the copy of the post or in the outfit details by marking it 'c/o.' Where I have received monetary compensation in return for promotion, I disclose that the post was sponsored in the body of the post. While I attempt to make this as clear as possible on my social media channels, the abbreviated nature of a medium may impact my ability to do so.”

Do:



Disclosures should be made in close proximity to the endorsement.



The disclosure should be as close as possible to each message and placed in such a way that it travels with the message. This means including a disclosure before a URL (clickable or non-clickable), ensuring that sponsored brand mentions are seen with the specific disclosure, and ensuring it makes contextual sense. Include the disclosure in each post, in the video (where applicable), and not just in the comments.

Don't: Simply “tag the brand”



Effective Disclosure Tips

- Some influencers only tag their sponsors, some tag brands with which they have no relationships, and some do a bit of both. Viewers cannot be sure that simply tagging a brand indicates material connection.
- If there is a material connection between the brand and influencer, it needs to be specifically mentioned in addition to referencing the brand or product.

Highlights in the Example

- Tagging a brand may not be viewed and interpreted by viewers as clearly indicative of a material connection between the brand and the influencer.



Do:



Disclosures should be clearly communicated.



Context matters. Viewers should be able to see or hear the disclosure in context with the brand mention.

Some mediums may require both visual and audio disclosures.

Disclosures should be written, said, and/or displayed somewhere it can be easily read, heard, or seen.

- For example, Facebook/Instagram videos often play without sound, so a visual disclosure would be needed within the video itself in addition to disclosure within the caption. For Instagram photo posts, inclusion in the caption should suffice.
- If disclosures are buried in hashtag lists, or are displayed in overlays that are too small or faint, they could be considered hidden.

Don't: Fabricated Hashtags

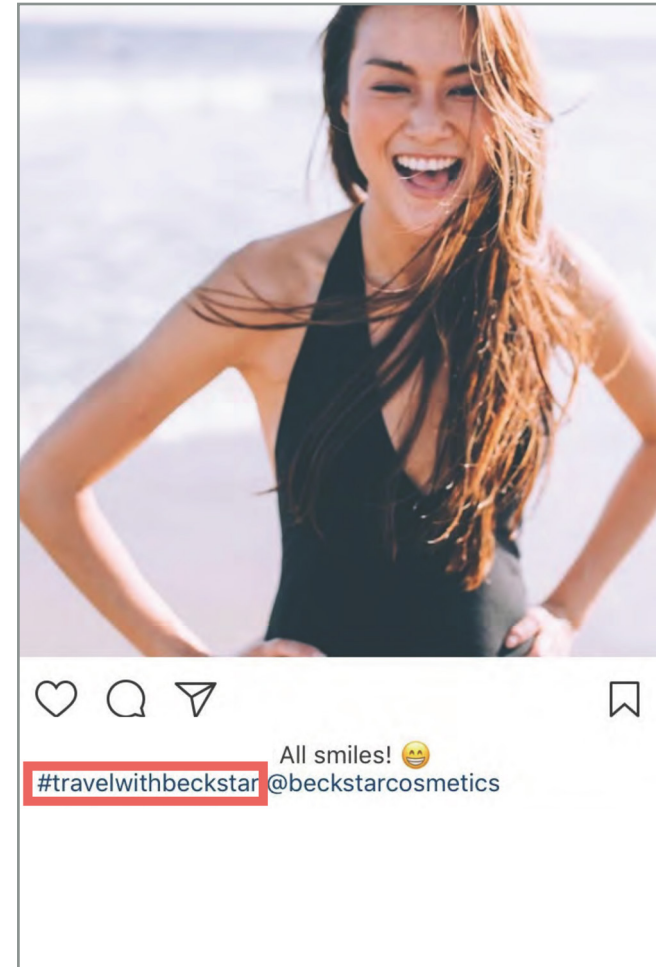


Effective Disclosure Tips

- Knowing that influencers received access to a private event, or free experience—sometimes including travel and accommodations—could affect how much weight readers give to influencers' thoughts about the product or brand.
- Inclusions like “thanks to X brand for inviting me” or “I’m at X event with X brand” could suffice where the influencer was invited but didn’t receive travel or accommodations.
- If a brand creates its own disclosure format, it needs to ensure that the material connection is obvious.

Highlights in the Example

- Fabricated disclosure hashtags may not be clear about the nature of the material connection.
- In this example, there should be additional disclosure beyond the fabricated hashtag to make it clear that the influencer received a free trip.



Don't: Ambiguous Phrases



Effective Disclosure Tips

- When creating disclosures (notices, hashtags, etc.), it is important to use clear and commonly understood language. Influencers and brands should not assume that viewers will understand industry-specific terms and jargon. Disclosures should be simple, straightforward, and easy to understand.

Highlights in the Example

- Usage of “a week away with @travelagogo” does not make the material connection clear.
- The “#partner” disclosure attempt does not make clear that there is a material connection between the influencer and brand.



Do:



Disclosures should be written with unambiguous language.



Influencers and brands should not make any assumptions that the viewer will interpret language as a disclosure of a material connection.

Treating “Thank Company Name” as an effective disclosure is not advisable. A “thank you” to a company or a brand does not necessarily communicate that the endorser received something for free or that they were given something in exchange for an endorsement.

The person posting could just be thanking a company or brand for providing a great product or service. But “Thanks XYZ for the free product” or “Thanks XYZ for the gift of ABC product” would be sufficient – provided you did not also get paid for the endorsement by XYZ.

Do:



If you are using an AI-generated influencer, disclosure is still necessary.



The fact that an AI-generated influencer is not a real person doesn't impact the requirement to disclose a material connection.

Make sure that the AI-generated influencer doesn't provide a testimonial about a brand's goods/ services that it cannot experience (i.e. this food sure tastes great!).

If a brand is using an AI-generated influencer, best practice is to disclose that the spokesperson is virtual - #VirtualInfluencer, #AIinfluencer or #AIcreated are easy ways to disclose.

Do:



If you are using AI in an influencer post, it is important to be transparent.



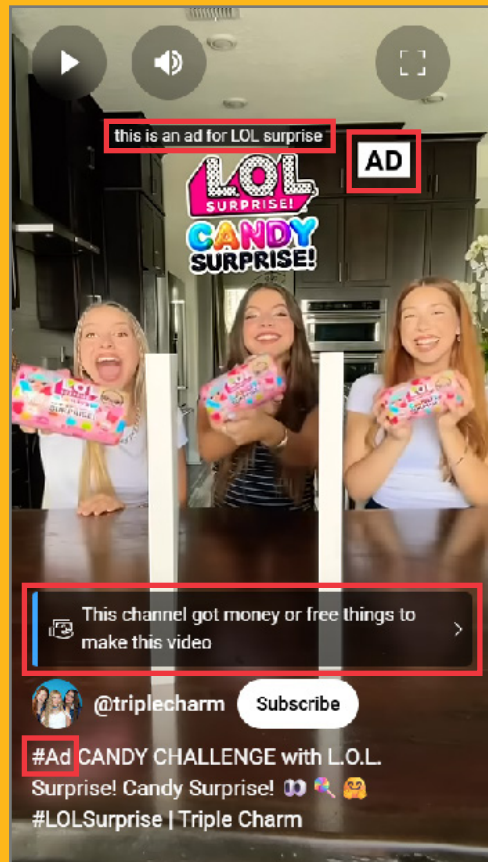
Some additional considerations for AI-generated influencer content that impact the truthfulness of the endorsement:

- If an image that shows the benefits/attributes of a product is generated by AI, or significantly altered using AI, this should be disclosed (for example #MadeWithAI or #AIcreated) as it can impact the truthfulness of the endorsement.
- Remember that images or videos created using filters or AI must remain truthful as to the benefits, results and attributes of the product or service. A disclaimer cannot correct a misleading impression.
- Don't make misleading or exaggerated claims through the use of filters or generative AI.

Do:



Children are considered a special audience and extra care is needed.



Children are considered a special audience because they are less equipped than adults to critically evaluate advertising content. As a result, influencers who have a child audience must take extra care to ensure that their audience understands the nature of their message - specifically that what they are seeing is effectively a message from the brand.

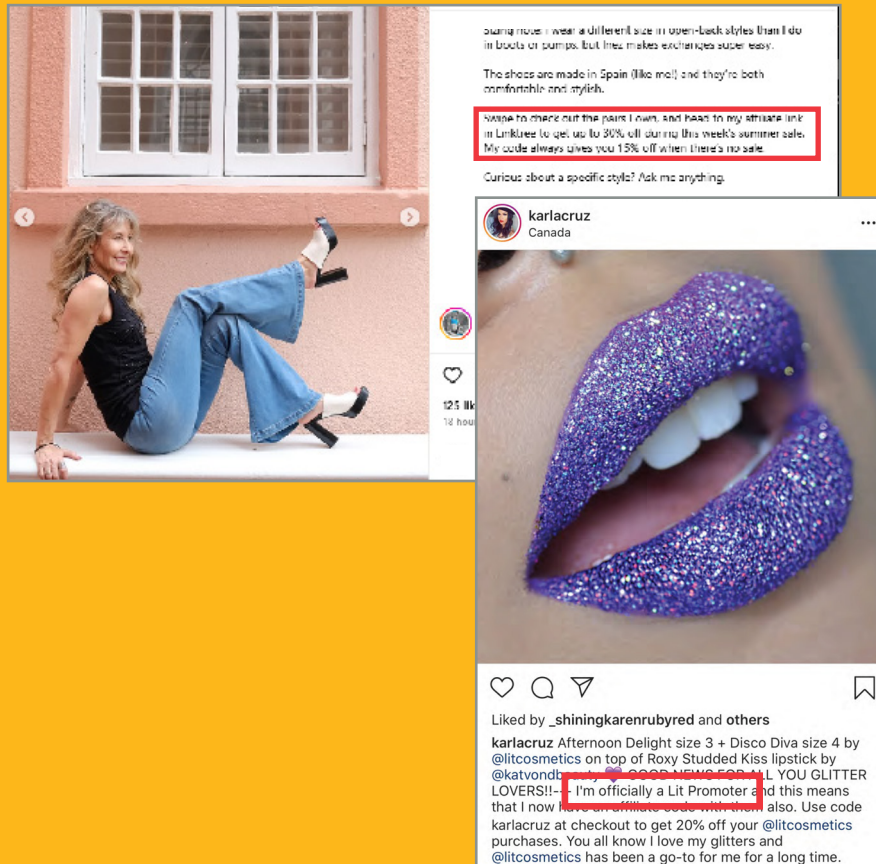
Make sure that the disclosure is noticeable and detailed so that children see and understand it.

Disclosure should be attention-grabbing, intrusive and properly explained using age-appropriate language.

Do:



If you are receiving a commission, discount or free products as a result of sales generated through links that you post, you need to clearly and conspicuously disclose that.



Disclosures should make the nature of the relationship clear. Using a hashtag like #affiliate, #AffiliateLink or #CommissionEarned works well.

Another option is to disclose using written words, such as “Each time you make a purchase through a link that I provide, I receive a commission.” or “I’ll get \$1 off future purchases for each person who signs up using my link.”

Disclosure should appear on every page and post where links are presented. Having disclosure in your bio only is not sufficient.

Examples of When to Disclose

Do I Need to Disclose?

Example	Do I need to disclose?	Guidance
Gifted items: “I was gifted an item from a brand for me to try out, but there wasn’t an agreement or obligation for me to post about the brand or product.”		Viewers may assess the review differently if they knew the product was gifted or discounted, so disclosure of the gift should be included. #Gifted is often good disclosure.
Employees: “I’m an employee at company XYZ, a clothing retailer, and am excited to be at XYZ’s event, so I post about it.”		It is a relevant connection that the person posting is an XYZ employee, even if s/he does not post specifically about the retailer’s products. The employee is promoting XYZ’s brand and a disclosure is required, such as #XYZEmployee.
Experiences/Events: “I got invited to a private event by a brand to see some of their new products.”		Knowing that influencers received access to a private event, or free experience—sometimes including travel and accommodations—could affect how much weight readers give to influencers’ thoughts about the product. Where an influencer is invited to attend an event, but did not receive travel or accommodation, inclusions like ‘thanks to X brand for inviting me’ or ‘I’m at X event with X brand’ or #InvitedGuest would suffice. Where the influencer received travel and/or accommodation to attend the event, the disclosure needs to be clear. “Thanks to brand X for bringing me to Hawaii to showcase their new products.” Or “I was so excited to be invited by Hotel Y to spend a few nights checking out their XX location.”
Tagging brands: “I received products from a brand, so I’ll tag the brand in my Instagram post and assume my audience knows it was given to me.”		Some influencers only tag their sponsors, some tag brands with which they have no relationship, and some do a bit of both. If there is a material connection between the brand and influencer, it needs to be specifically mentioned using disclosures beyond tagging.
Non-contractual brand mentions: “I’m doing a photoshoot with a brand and want to show my audience a sneak peek of me on set with the brand.”		If the influencer is working in a material relationship with the brand and creates content, even if it was not the contractually obligated post, they are obligated to disclose.

Do I Need to Disclose?

Example	Do I need to disclose?	Guidance
Paid, but genuine endorsements: “I’m getting free products from the brand but I REALLY like them and would post about them even if I wasn’t paid.”		The viewer has the right to know that there is a material connection between the brand and the influencer, even if they would post about the brand without getting paid.
Replies or direct messages to a “follower”: “One of my followers asks me questions about the brand I just posted about. Do I need to include disclosures in my reply?”		When responding to someone’s questions about a specific endorsement via email, text, or direct message, that person should already have seen the disclosure on the post—thus a disclosure is not necessary. (This is context-dependent.)
Testimonials with no material connection: “I didn’t receive any product, compensation, or experience from the brand, but I want to endorse a product.”		If no material connection exists between a brand and the influencer, no disclosure is needed.
Well-known partnerships: “I’m a professional athlete with a high-profile partnership with a brand. My audience and the public knows about my ambassadorship. Do I need to disclose every mention?”		When the material connection is one that viewers reasonably expect to exist due to widespread exposure in other media, such as when a celebrity endorses a product or service, then a disclosure may not be necessary. It depends on whether his/her followers understand that mentions about products are paid endorsements. <i>This can be difficult to determine, so when in doubt, spell it out.</i>
Informative blast to influencers: “I received information about an upcoming event open to the public, with nothing else included in the package (i.e. no swag, no tickets, and no promise or expectation of compensation or incentive). If I go to the event and post about it, is there a material connection that requires disclosure?”		Information about events that are open to the public (where no swag or tickets are provided to the influencer) does not create a material connection that requires disclosure.

Do I Need to Disclose?

Example	Do I need to disclose?	Guidance
Gifted product but no endorsement: “I was surprised by a gifted snowboard and posted a video of me receiving it from the brand.”		A brand can give an influencer a gift. If the influencer posts about the item, even if it is not an endorsement, the fact that the item was received as a gift must be clear. Otherwise, the implication is that the influencer chose to purchase the item which amounts to an endorsement.
Posting beyond contractual obligations: “What if I post beyond the contract range? Do I need to disclose every mention?”		The viewer has the right to know that there is a material connection between the brand and the influencer, even if the influencer genuinely loves and endorses the brand. Check with the advertiser first.
Avatar used by a brand on its own postings: “My company created an avatar that looks like our mascot. The avatar is used on our social accounts talking about our products.”		Where the avatar is the company's mascot, this is clearly an advertisement when used on the advertiser's own social pages. If the avatar has its own independent page or following, and the advertiser enter into agreements with third parties for use of the avatar as an endorser, then that material connection would need to be disclosed when used by the third party.

Specific Examples of Disclosure by Post Type

Paid Partnerships: Static Post

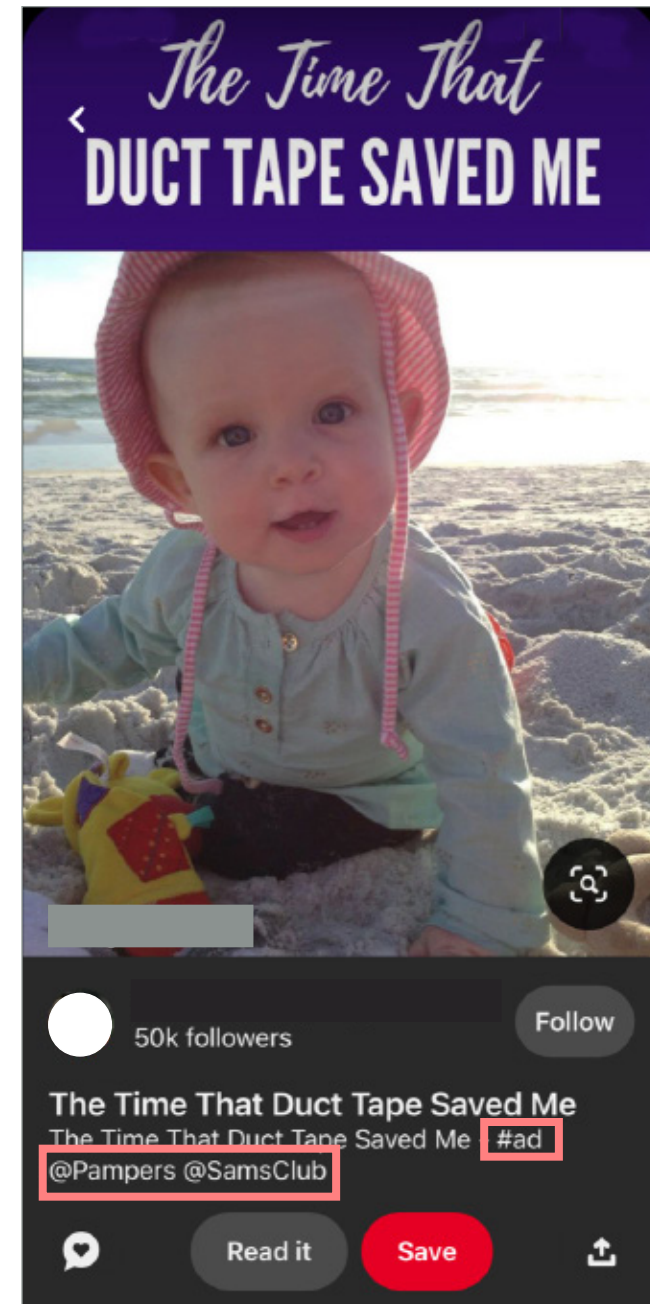
such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Pinterest

Best Practices

- Disclosure should appear in the caption as part of the main message. Disclosure should not be buried amongst hashtags.
- The brand with the material connection should be clearly indicated.
- Use the “Paid partnership” or similar tool if the influencer has access to that feature. Make sure the tool disclosure is clear, conspicuous and visible regardless of the device used by the viewer.
- Recommended hashtags are not mandatory; clearly written communication may suffice.
- When sharing affiliate content, do not use #ad but rather disclosure that you are a partner of the entity, i.e. #CompanyPartner or #CompanyAffiliate.
- When resharing from other platforms, ensure that the disclosures remain clear and conspicuous.

Highlights in the Example

- #ad is prominently displayed.
- The brands with the material connection are tagged in the post.



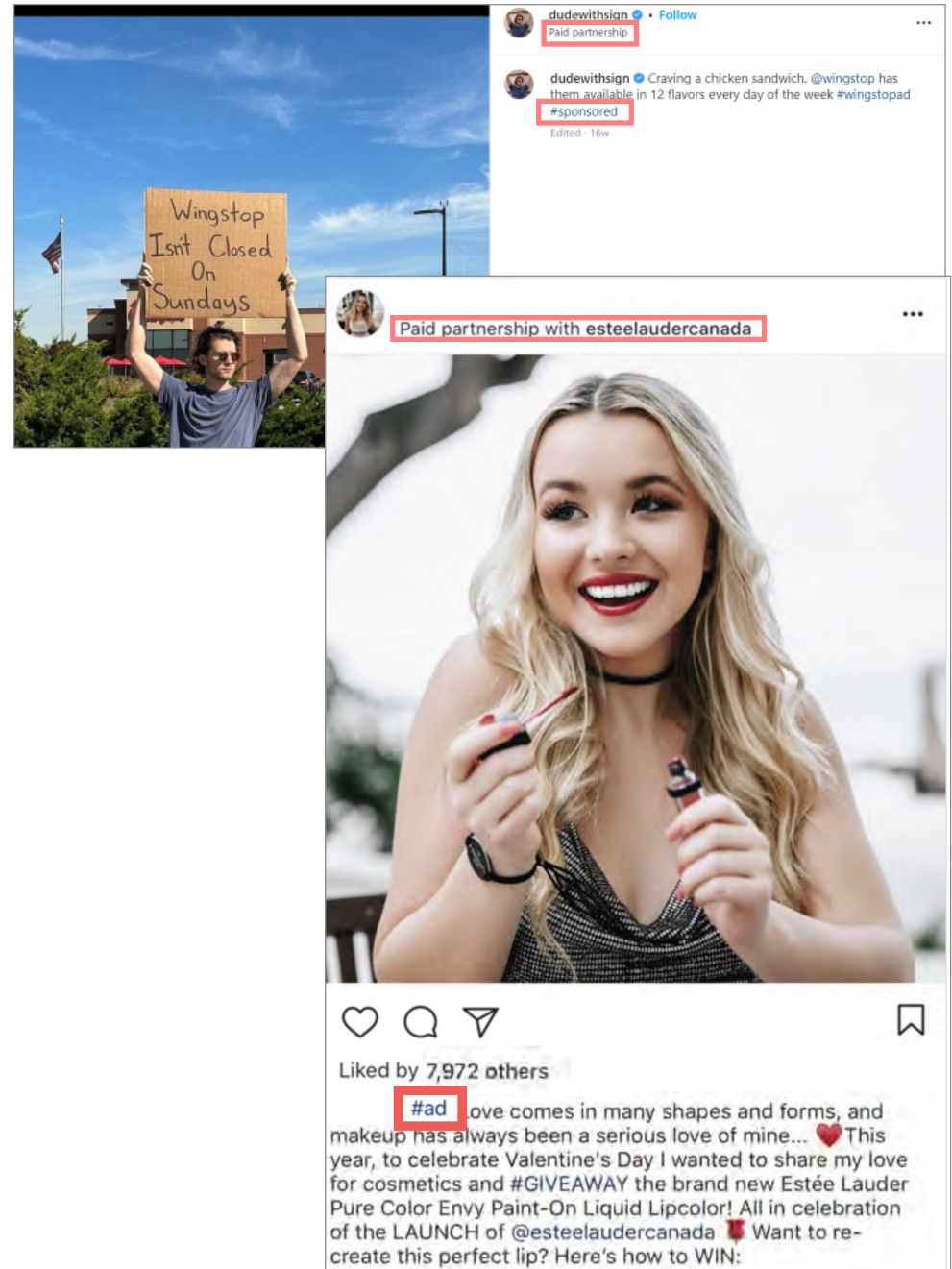
Paid Partnerships: Static Post

Highlights in the Example

- Use of paid disclosure where it is an available tool. Make sure the tool disclosure is clear, conspicuous and visible regardless of the device used by the viewer.
- The disclosure of the material connection is made at the end of the post, however given the length of the post, the disclosure is clearly and prominently visible at first glance.

Highlights in the Examples

- The influencer utilizes Instagram's built-in "Paid partnership" tool to indicate the material connection.
- Disclosures are made in the main message and not buried in the comments or buried amongst hashtags.



Paid Partnerships: Character-Limited Posts

such as X (formerly Twitter), Threads

Best Practices

- Given character limitations, the following recommended hashtags are most commonly used: #ad, #sponsored.
- Each post should have its own disclosure, as they can be consumed independently, even when they are intended to be consumed as a series
- The sponsoring brand must be clear in the post.

Highlights in the Examples

- Brand and disclosure are clearly visible in the text of the post.



Paid Partnerships: Video Posts

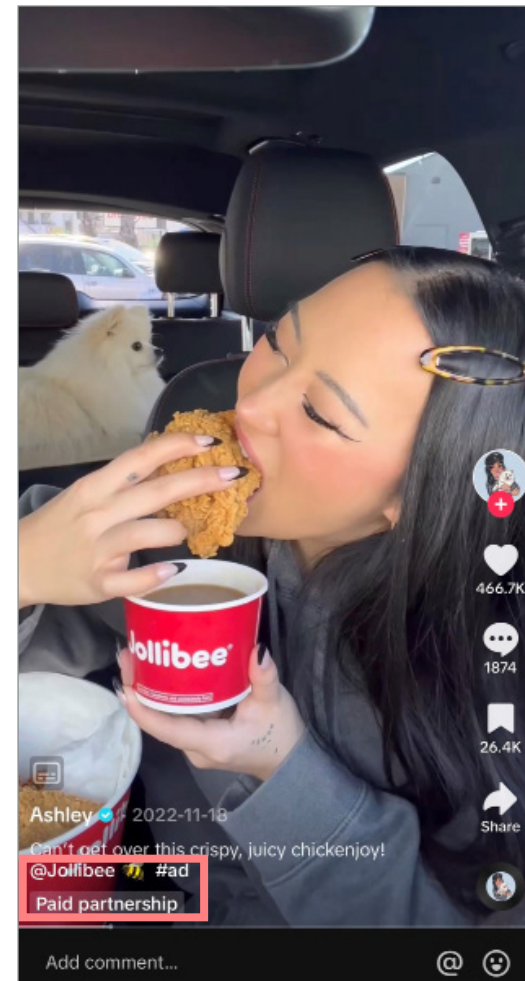
such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram/Facebook, Pinterest

Best Practices

- Disclosure should be prominently included in the video caption as well as in the video itself. This ensures the disclosure is maintained across platforms.
- The brand with the material connection should be clearly indicated.
- Disclosure should appear at the beginning of the video and be verbally mentioned or displayed visually in the video itself (within the first 30 seconds).
- For longer videos, having multiple disclosures throughout the video is most effective.
- If the brand helped shape the content of the video, that should be disclosed in addition to the paid partnership. E.g. “Thank you to X for sponsoring and collaborating with me on this video.”
- Use the “Paid partnership” or similar tool if the influencer has access to that feature. Ensure that the resulting disclosure is clear and conspicuous, regardless of the device used to view the video.

Highlights in the Example

- “Paid partnership” is clearly visible, in addition to #ad and the name of the brand.
- #ad is not buried in a list of hashtags.



Paid Partnerships: Video Posts

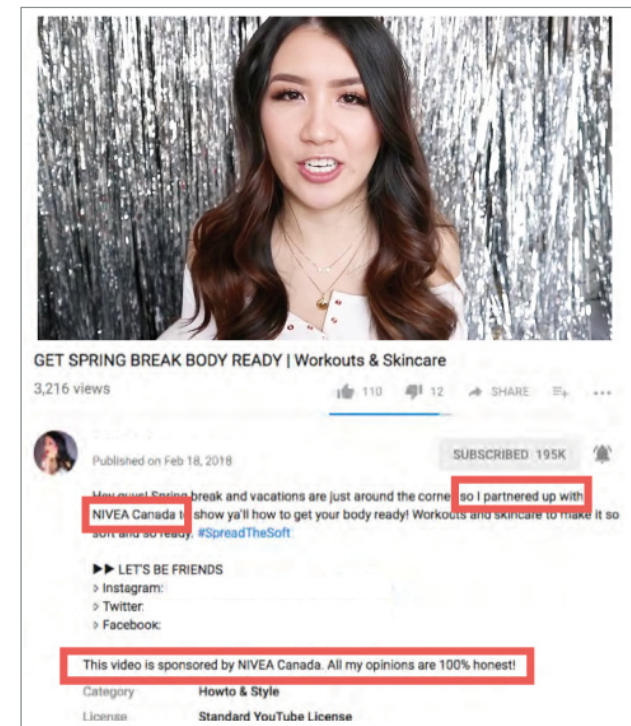
such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram/Facebook, Pinterest

Highlights in the Example

- Disclosures are both prominently displayed during the video and in the description beneath the video and includes #ad.
- Disclosures in the video are made both in audio and visually.

Highlights in the Example

- Disclosures are made in audio (within the first 30 seconds), as well as in the description on screen.



Paid Partnerships: Stories

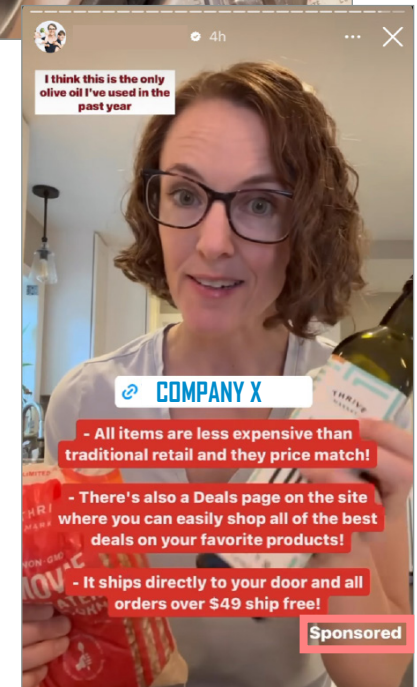
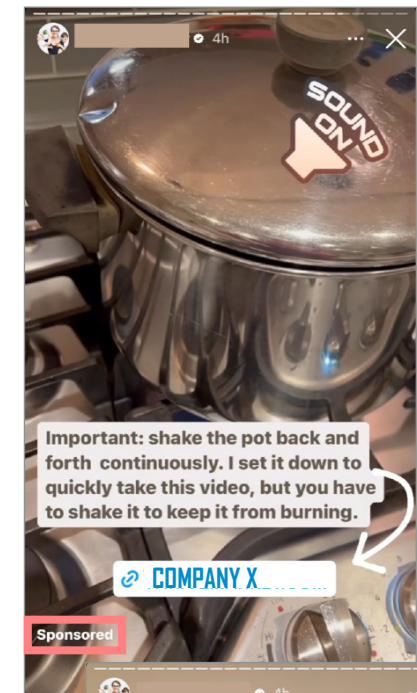
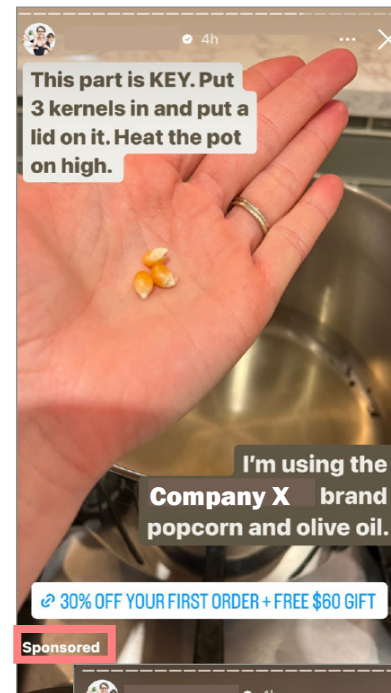
such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok

Best Practices

- Disclosure should appear at the beginning of the story and be verbally mentioned and/or displayed visually.
- For a series of stories meant to be consumed consecutively, disclosure is necessary at the beginning of the series.
- For multiple stories posted independently, each story should have its own disclosure.
- Disclosures should indicate that a brand paid for a collaboration and helped shape the content (e.g. thank you to X for sponsoring and collaborating with me on this video) or include one of the recommended hashtags, such as #Sponsored.

Highlights in the Example

- Each story in the series includes the word “Sponsored.”
- The disclosure is featured prominently.



Paid Partnerships: Blogs

Best Practices

- Disclosures should be made before a URL (clickable or non-clickable).
- The description of the material connection can be written out, as hashtags do not have functionality on a blog.
- The brand with the material connection should be clearly indicated.

Highlights in the Example

- The influencer clearly outlines the material connection in the main body of the blog post.
- Disclosures are made before any links to other content.

French Fridays: Double Chocolate Financier Loaf Cake

dessert, french, french Fridays, recipes | April 1, 2022 by Mandy Michaels



This post is sponsored by Cadipina.

If you read this blog often, you'll know what a huge financier fan I am (see [here](#) for other [financier recipes](#)). I love them because they sound (and often look) fancy, they don't use many ingredients, the ingredients they do use are pantry and fridge staples.

Gifted Products

Best Practices

- Every effort should be made by the brand to ensure disclosure, even if the exchange is gifted products, experiences or events and no monetary compensation is provided. The brand should recommend that the recipient tag the brand, and use #GiftedProduct or language such as “I received a gift!”
- Disclosure should appear in the caption as part of the main message, and should not be buried among hashtags.
- Hashtags are not mandatory; clearly communicated written or audio disclosure may suffice.
- A recommended disclosure hashtag: #GiftedProduct.

Highlights in the Example

- Clearly articulates the material connection to the viewer.
- Video also included verbal “I got a little gift here from...”



Events and Experiences

Best Practices

- Disclosures should be included, even if the post is about a gifted experience or private event, and no monetary compensation was provided.
- Recommended hashtags are not mandatory; clearly written or verbal communication may suffice.
- A recommended disclosure hashtag: #InvitedGuest
- Remember that if hotel, accommodation or gifts are provided to the influencer, disclosing an invitation may not be sufficient.

Highlights in the Example

- The influencer clearly indicates that she was invited by the two brands hosting this event.
- Disclosures are made in the main message and not buried in the comments or buried among hashtags.



Influencer Marketing Steering Committee Participants

ARTY



#paid

Cassels



STRATEGIC/OBJECTIVES

VIRAL
NATION

SUNTORY
GLOBAL SPIRITS



pros & content

Ad Standards' mandate is to support the advertising industry. We are proud to work with the influencer marketing sector on this project.

About Ad Standards

Ad Standards is the self-regulatory body for Canada's advertising industry. Through member support and cooperative industry initiatives, we build public confidence in advertising by helping ensure ads, in all media, are truthful, fair and accurate. We administer the *Canadian Code of Advertising Standards*, which sets criteria for acceptable advertising, and provides a mechanism for adjudicating and resolving consumer complaints and competitive disputes. We also review advertising creative and offer consultative services to help ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulatory guidelines. Our collaborative relationships with Canadian regulators and global self-regulatory organizations provide a diversity of valuable insights, which inform our initiatives and goals.



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linkedin/company/ad-standards-can



ad.standards.ca



info@adstandards.ca
www.adstandards.ca

About the Influencer Marketing Steering Committee

The Influencer Marketing Steering Committee is composed of influencer marketing professionals in agency, brand, and media organizations. The Committee meets several times a year. Together with Ad Standards, the Committee spearheads initiatives that aim to guide marketers and creators in producing influencer marketing content that is truthful, fair and accurate.

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