

Why Disclosure Is Essential When It Comes to Influencer Marketing

Many players still don't reveal their ties to one another

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eMarketer Editors

It's been called a fad, a bubble, a waste of money. But influencer marketing will remain immensely popular in 2018, and it's important to put the discussion of disclosure in the context of just how important the tactic has become—not just for the usual suspects (marketers of fashion, beauty and gaming products) but increasingly for marketers in other categories.

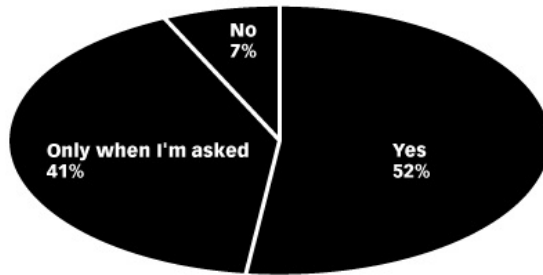
Influencer marketing has gotten big enough that disclosing ties between brands and influencers is a necessity, not an option. Although compliance is growing, there are many examples where it doesn't happen.

Marketers and influencers that don't disclose put themselves at risk for Federal Trade Commission (FTC) scrutiny and consumer backlash, both of which are rising.

According to a January 2018 survey of influencers worldwide from Zine, 52% of respondents said they labeled their content as sponsored. But the role of marketers in encouraging (or discouraging) disclosure is strong. In Zine's study, more than four in 10 influencers said they only labeled when asked to, and 7% said they never did.

Social Influencers Worldwide* Who Label Content as Sponsored, Jan 2018**

% of respondents



Note: *majority are from the UK and the US; **tagged with #ad or #sponsored
Source: Zine, "Influencer Marketing: Science, Strategy & Success," Jan 25, 2017

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Although there is some evidence that disclosure will lead to lower engagement with branded posts, surveys also show that consumers generally appreciate transparency and honesty from marketers and influencers.

Branded content tools from Facebook, Instagram and others are helpful in providing additional clarity and access to metrics, but marketers should proceed with caution, since the FTC doesn't consider these tools adequate for disclosure.

These insights are drawn from eMarketer's latest report "Influencer Marketing 2018: Why Disclosure Is a Must—and How Branded Content Tools Fit In." The report summarizes the state of influencer marketing in 2018 and provides guidance on ensuring proper disclosure. eMarketer PRO subscribers can access the [full report here](#). Nonsubscribers can [learn more here](#).