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ENTERTAINMENT

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# Celeb social media promotions: When to add more 'ad' information



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Sports fans breathed a sigh of relief when news was released that sideline reporter Craig Sager would get the bone marrow needed in order to fight through leukemia. But Sager isn't just known as a sports reporter. His outfits are colorful enough to give Lisa Bonet a run for her money during "The Cosby Show" days. And both NBA legend Michael Jordan and hip-hop's own DJ Khaled know all about it.

The Jordan brand released a special shoe color combo with wild colors galore. One glance at his outfits displayed on [SportsChatter](#) confirms why this design makes sense. [DJ Khaled](#) is somehow connected to the Jordan exclusive, too, judging from a recent Instagram post. And this isn't the first time that the deejay has affiliated himself with a brand. Emmanuel Seuge, senior vice president for content at Coca-Cola, nicknamed DJ Khaled "[King of Snapchat](#)." On both Snapchat and Twitter, he's also pushed fellow hip-hop icon Diddy's Apple Ciroc vodka.

But social media followers are left wondering what his connection is to these brands. Is DJ Khaled voluntarily bringing attention to leukemia or

these brands. Is DJ Khaled voluntarily bringing attention to leukemia or working with a charitable organization? Does he just like the Jordan shoes or is he paid to promote the exclusive? Is he partnering with Diddy to promote Ciroc, partnering with the company directly or does he just love the drink?



The same questions came up when Beyonce sang about Red Lobster in “Formation.” (Judging from the [lag time](#) it took for Red Lobster to respond via social media, it seems that the company was unprepared to get the surprising promo — and just in time for Valentine’s Day, too.)

Cheesecake Factory also got some love from Toronto’s own Drake, who rapped about his couple disputes in “[Child’s Play](#).” And Drake took it one step further by actually going to a Houston location while shooting his video for it.

But does Drake really like Cheesecake Factory or was he paid to promote it? Is Beyonce, who seems to be toggling between pescatarian and vegan, really hanging out in Red Lobster with Jay Z? Or, should entertainers be more clear about promotions the way Kelly Rowland did with her [McDonald’s Instagram pic](#), adding the hashtag “#ad” to her post? And from a legal standpoint, is it OK for these artists to push products without explaining whether it’s a voluntary opinion or a paid promotion?

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The short answer is no. The Federal Trade Commission ("FTC"), a government agency that is tasked with promoting consumer protection has issued guidelines concerning the use of endorsements and testimonials. The FTC guidelines make it clear that celebrities have a duty to disclose their relationships with advertisers when making endorsements on their social media accounts. Under the FTC guidelines, if a celebrity or influencer is endorsing a brand or product in their social media posts, their followers have a right to know. It does not matter if the celebrity or influencer is being paid by the brand for a particular social media post or not.

In order to avoid violating the Federal Trade Commission Act, celebrities and influencers should use "#Ad," "Ad:," or "Sponsored" when posting sponsored content. If a celebrity or influencer fails to comply with the guidelines, the FTC may file a lawsuit against the celebrity or influencer.

Have more questions about sponsored content and FTC guidelines?

Contact [J. Paye & Associates](#) today.

*Shamontiel L. Vaughn contributed to this blog. Find out more about her at [Shamontiel.com](#).*

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