

ASCI'S GUIDE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

TO HELP YOU PROMOTE RESPONSIBLY.





WHAT'S IN THE GUIDE?

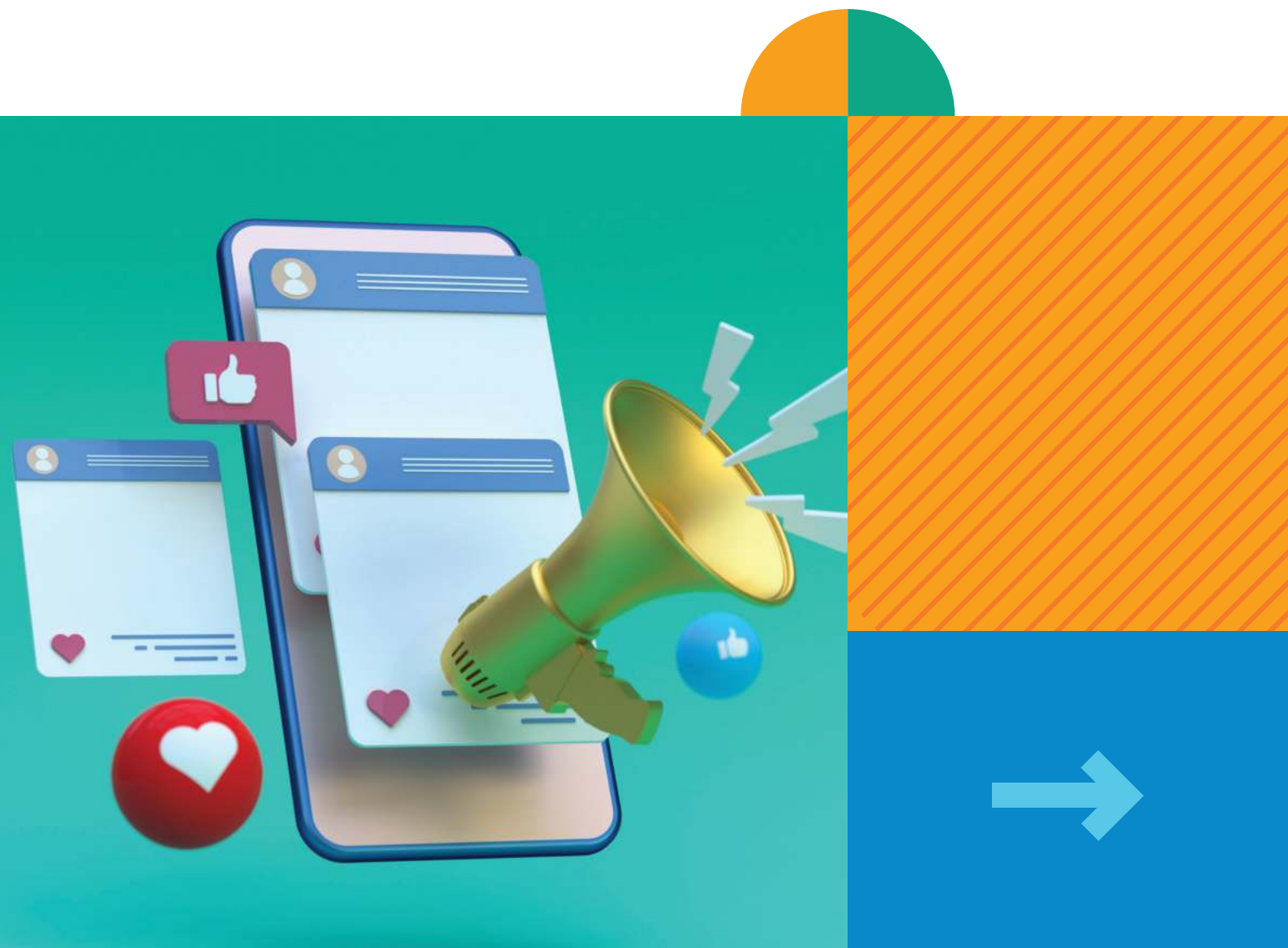
- When to make disclosures
- How to disclose
- What's in it for me
- What's in it for the influencer industry
- How will the guidelines be enforced
- Additional pointers for effective disclosures



WHEN TO MAKE DISCLOSURES


A disclosure is required for all brand promotions if there is any **material connection** between the advertiser and the influencer. This connection may be monetary or non-monetary.

So, when a brand pays you to create content promoting their product/service, it counts as an advertisement. There are many scenarios in which you need to use a **disclosure label**.



YOU NEED TO USE A DISCLOSURE LABEL WHEN

- You are paid to post a particular product or service
- A brand gives you free/discounted products or other perks with or without a request for mention in return
- Your post contains a hyperlink or discount code that means you get paid for every 'clickthrough' or sale that can be traced back to your content (Affiliate marketing)
- Your collaboration is a barter - i.e. you receive a product or service which you review or showcase in your content
- You are talking about a product or service for an advertiser where you are an employee or consultant
- You are talking about a product or service that belongs to a family member or relative



All these scenarios establish a **material connection** between you and the brand and make it necessary for you to use disclosure labels. Please choose an appropriate disclosure label for your post, from the various options provided in the guidelines.

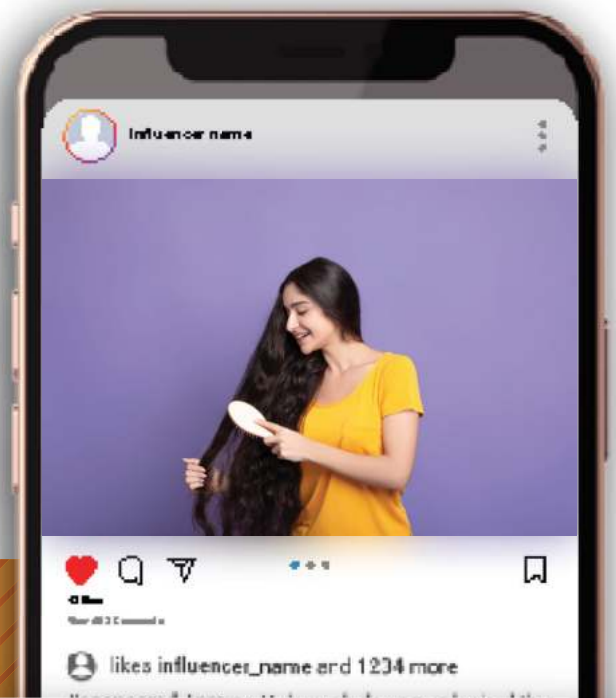
If you go for a trip or buy a product at your own expense, and choose to talk about it based on your experience, you **do not have any material connection** with the advertiser. In such cases, **no disclosure is required.**


HOW TO DISCLOSE

Use **upfront and prominent labels** such as 'Ad' (as directed in the guidelines) to help consumers clearly differentiate between promotional content and organic/editorial content.

Here's how to use disclosure labels effectively

- Use clear, legible font when you are superimposing disclosure labels
- Don't hide away disclosure labels under a group of hashtags
- Put disclosures in a manner that the audience does not need to read more
- Don't add blanket disclosures in the profile 'Bio' section
- For videos, use disclosure labels in the text description, or superimpose the label on the video as per the guidelines



 likes influencer_name and 1234 more
#sponsored #promo Hair wash day never looked this beautiful, can safely say Love is in the Hair... more
See 78 comments



READY RECKONER FOR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS



Instagram:

Include the disclosure label in the visible text/post description. If only the image/video is seen, include the label in the image/video itself (Eg: Reels/Stories)



Facebook:

Include the disclosure label in the title of the entry/post. If only the image/video is seen, include the label in the image/video itself (Eg: FB Stories)



Twitter:

Include the disclosure label or tag at the beginning of the tweet



Pinterest:

Include the disclosure label at the beginning of the message



Youtube/Other Video Platforms:

Include the label in the title/description of the post within the first 2 lines



Vlog:

Overlay the disclosure label while talking about the product or service if there is no text description



Snapchat:

Include the disclosure label at the beginning of the message as a tag, or superimpose it on the video



Bing:

Include the disclosure label in the title of the post



WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME

Honesty is the key to building a genuine, **authentic connection with your audience**. Influencer marketing is all about building **value-driven partnerships** through creative storytelling, with an emphasis on **shared responsibility**. So, create responsibly and disclose transparently, because both the brand's and your reputation is at stake. Over time, both responsible brands and consumers will want to associate with honest and authentic influencers who create great content, responsibly.

Take the **ASCI Influencer's Pledge** for responsible promotions, today!

[Take the Pledge](#)



WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE INFLUENCER INDUSTRY

Influencer marketing on social media continues to grow, becoming a vital part of the Indian advertising and marketing landscape. With more eyes shifting online and brands adopting novel ways to meet their advertising goals, influencers provide an effective way for businesses to reach consumers.

The guidelines are designed to help the industry-influencer ecosystem to work collaboratively and **communicate effectively and responsibly**. This protects the consumers from being misled and thereby protects the long term interests of the influencer community and the industry.

Remember, what is good for the consumers, is good for the industry.



HOW WILL THE GUIDELINES BE ENFORCED

Transparency and responsibility are the foundations of responsible advertising. We urge you to understand the ASCI Code that outlines the rules for what you can and cannot advertise, and how you should be advertising.

ASCI, as a matter of principle, does not impose penalties and fines. We believe that **self-regulation** is about being responsible and creating a transparent ecosystem. If an influencer behaves irresponsibly, they risk losing their reputation and future opportunities. ASCI may also escalate non-compliant cases to the government and sector regulators to protect consumer rights.

As part of its **National Advertising Monitoring Service (NAMS)**, ASCI will work with tech partners to use Artificial Intelligence tools to periodically monitor and identify potential paid advertising by influencers and publish reports of the complaints.

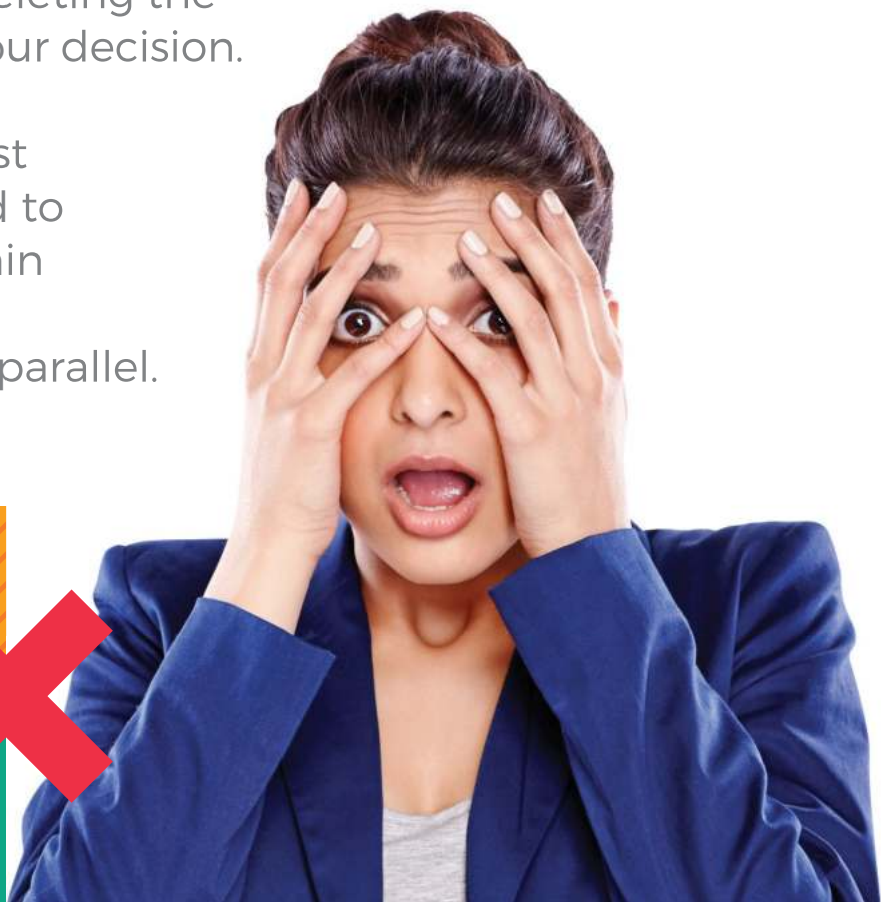




WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM NOTIFIED OF BEING IN VIOLATION OF THE GUIDELINES?

If you happen to receive a letter from ASCI, you should **review the advertisement** under question. If you feel that you have made a mistake, you can correct it by adding the disclosure or by deleting the post and informing ASCI of your decision.

However, if you wish to contest ASCI's letter, you will be asked to **reply with your reasons** within the stipulated time. We will also write to the advertiser in parallel.



SOME ADDITIONAL POINTERS FOR EFFECTIVE DISCLOSURES

- You need to add a disclosure label while promoting your own product/service
- Make disclosures even if your reviews/opinions are unbiased
- Don't assume your followers already know when you are advertising something, use labels clearly
- When posting from abroad, Indian laws apply if the post is intended for and will affect Indian consumers. Foreign laws might also apply
- Actors, comedians, sportspersons and celebrities fall under the definition of an 'influencer'. Thus, all guidelines need to be followed during promotions
- In addition to disclosure labels, consider using platform disclosure features such as 'paid partnership' or 'sponsored' tags
- Have a clear conversation and contract with the advertiser regarding the guidelines
- Conducting due diligence at the time of contract discussion would save you a lot of time and effort. Get it right the first time
- Do not talk about a product/service you haven't tried. Do not misguide audiences with false reviews
- The guidelines apply to influencers with 1K followers as well as 10M followers. We don't have favourites
- When in doubt, call it out

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH ASCI AND LEARN MORE?

- You can read the Guidelines on ASCI's new website asci.social/guidelines
- For queries, write to us at contact@ascionline.in
- If you'd like to register complaints, visit ascionline.in/index.php/lodge-ur-complaints.html

Always remember, with
great influence, comes
great responsibility.

