

# Centre releases guidelines for celebrities, influencers, and virtual influencers on social media platform

## Centre specifies disclosure word for paid or barter brand endorsement

### Disclosures must be clear, prominent, and extremely hard to miss in the endorsement: Department of Consumer Affairs

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The Department of Consumer Affairs, under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, has released a set of guidelines called "Endorsements Know-hows!" for celebrities, influencers, and virtual influencers on social media platforms. The guidelines aims to ensure that individuals do not mislead their audiences when endorsing products or services and that they are in compliance with the Consumer Protection Act and any associated rules or guidelines.

The guidelines state that endorsements must be made in simple, clear language, and terms such as "advertisement," "sponsored," "collaboration" or "paid promotion" can be used. Individuals must not endorse any product or service that they have not personally used or experienced or in which due diligence has not been done by them.

The department has observed that there is confusion regarding which disclosure word to use for what kind of partnership. Therefore, for paid or barter brand endorsement, any of the following disclosures may be used: "advertisement," "ad," "sponsored," "collaboration," or "partnership." However, the term must be indicated as hashtag or headline text.

The guidelines specify that individuals or groups who have access to an audience and the power to affect their audiences' purchasing decisions or opinions about a product, service, brand, or experience, because of the influencer's/celebrity's authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with their audience, must disclose.

The guidelines state that the disclosure must be placed in the endorsement message in a manner that is clear, prominent, and extremely hard to miss. Disclosures should not be mixed with a group of hashtags or links. For endorsements in a picture, disclosures should be superimposed over the image enough for viewers to notice. For endorsements in a video or a live stream, disclosures should be made in both audio and video format and displayed continuously and prominently during the entire stream.

The guidelines advise celebrities and influencers to always review and satisfy themselves that the advertiser is in a position to substantiate the claims made in the advertisement. It is also recommended that the product and service must have been actually used or experienced by the endorser.

In conclusion, the guidelines aim to ensure that individuals do not mislead their audiences when endorsing products or services, and that they are in compliance with the Consumer Protection Act and any associated rules or guidelines. It is essential for celebrities, influencers, and virtual influencers to adhere to these guidelines to maintain transparency and authenticity with their audience.

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**AD/NS**

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