

#hotdoglegs or #ad?

[CONTENT](#) [MARKETING](#) [SOCIAL MEDIA](#)

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From fashion and food to fitness, Instagram is starting to dominate the influencer marketing sphere and recent updates have helped them to grow even more

Instagram Stories was launched in 2016 to rival Snapchat, [including stickers](#) that display location names, time, weather, and emojis. The social media platform has acquired an additional 200 million users in under a year as a result of this and other efforts to improve the platform.

With such a large audience, the top influencers on Instagram have the power to appeal to a large number of consumers and this in turn has garnered the interest of major brands. Users are seeing more influencer content than ever before. But in amongst our #hotdoglegs and #cloudegg cluttered feeds are users aware of how many posts are

sponsored by brands?

Transparency in influencer marketing has always been a concern and with its increasing scale this is only going to rise. In April the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) sent notices to over 90 celebrities, brands and influencers in the US reminding them of the regulations around sponsored content. The FTC guidelines state that sponsored Instagram posts must include clear and conspicuous disclosure like #ad or #sponsored. Hashtags including “#sp,” “#partner,” and “Thanks [Brand]” [are not considered by the FTC as sufficient disclosure](#). A recent study by Mediakix involved monitoring the top 50 celebs on Instagram over one month (May). The study found that only 7% of posts were compliant with the FTC regulations. So what is being done to resolve this issue and protect brand reputations, influencer authenticity and more importantly consumer rights?

A recent development suggests that the platform is making a move towards further transparency. Instagram has developed a tool that allows influencers to tag the brands in sponsored posts. This will appear in the sub header above the image: “Paid Partnership with...” This new tool is currently being tested with a select group of brands and influencers with plans to make it widely available in the future. This will ensure it is clear which posts have been paid for by advertisers. What is perhaps most interesting for marketers is the performance metrics that are available. The tool allows insights to be gathered about the post and shared with both the creator and the brand. With measurement being a key challenge of influence marketing for brands, this will help brands measure the value of influencer activity and will incentivise the use of the new tool.

Transparency is key to building trust between brands and consumers. This new Instagram tool will not only help build trust between users and consumers but also help build a transparent relationship between brands and influencers.

CONTENT MARKETING SOCIAL MEDIA