Marketers Up The Ante On Social Media Sponsorships

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Marketers rely most on blog posts and Twitter to reach their audience

Product placement is alive and well, having been reborn in the digital era as social media sponsorshipâ€”compensating social media users, or â€œinfluencers,â€• for mentioning a product or service.

While the practice initially drew criticism from some who argued that social media content should remain ad-free, the trend shows no signs of slowing. In a May to June 2012 poll, a majority of US marketers, 55.5%, told social media marketing company IZEA that they had provided a social media user with some compensation in exchange for a mention on the userâ€™s social media channel.

The research also found that blog posts and tweets have emerged as the preferred mediums for sponsored social media messages among both marketers and influencers. In fact, 54% of marketers had used a third-party blog to get their message out, while 55.4% of influencers had published a sponsored blog post, making it the most popular medium among both groups. But sponsored tweets were not far behindâ€”the poll found they were used by 47.3% of marketers and 51.8% of influencers.

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But paying influencers can raise some complications for both marketers and influencers. While older media channels, such as TV and radio, are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), social networks are regulated by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which has its own set of rules regarding sponsorship disclosures.

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