MAKE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR IT'S AN AD
IDENTIFICATION OF ADS
QUICK GUIDE

In most cases, it's obvious to an audience when they are engaging with advertising.

But what about those situations that aren't so clear-cut? Ad content must be easily identifiable to an audience as advertising, regardless of the form the ad takes or the platform where it appears.

Here are our **top tips** to identify ads as ads:

1 BE UPFRONT

Consumers need to know it's an ad at their first interaction with the ad content. In some platforms, this is less obvious than in others; for example, sponsored content, advertorials or native content may not be clearly recognisable as advertising to consumers. So, make it clear from the start.

2 UNDERSTAND WHAT AN AD IS

The ASA's definition of advertising is broad and includes any content that is controlled directly or indirectly by an advertiser.

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ADS

3 IS THERE PAYMENT? IT'S AN AD

Payment doesn't necessarily need to be money. It can be free products or services, credit, tickets or product loans, for example. Does your website or social media account promote your goods, services or brand? If so, it's an ad. If in doubt, label it as advertising.

4 LABEL IT WELL

Labels should be obvious and able to be easily read, seen or heard. Think about the position, size and clarity of the label, the length of time it appears, clarity across different mediums or devices, and how different audiences will see the label. Ad labels on social media platforms include Ad, Advert and Advertisement. You may also see Sponsored Content, Advertising Feature or Advertorial.

5 EVERY PARTY IS RESPONSIBLE

All parties to an ad are responsible for making it clear the content is advertising. This includes advertisers, agencies, the media, and influencers and content creators.

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What are the rules around the identification of ads?

Rule 2 (a) of the Advertising Standards Code requires ads to be identified as ads. Content that is controlled, directly or indirectly, by the advertiser must not be disguised as something other than an ad. While this is particularly important to note for influencers using social media platforms, this rule applies to ads in all media.

Keep in mind that disclaimers and other qualifying statements must also be clearly visible and easily understood.

More information is available in the ASA's Guidance Note on Identification of Advertisements.

Remember the spirit and intention of the Code

When interpreting the Codes, the ASA Complaints and Appeal Boards consider compliance with both the spirit and intention as well as the rules and principles of the Codes. When checking Code compliance, we think about what the consumer takes away from the advertisement rather than the intent of the advertiser.

Further help

We offer industry training on this topic, or you can contact the AdHelp Information Service for written information about the advertising rules and guidelines. For a more detailed look at the rules, head to the Advertising Codes.

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