You are going to read an extract from a magazine article. Seven paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragaphs **A – H** the one which fits each gap **(1-7).** There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

The Social Media Product Placement Juggernaut

by Leah Burnett

Social media is the air that celebrities breathe. No other platform can keep them so relevant in the cut-throat business of fame. But beyond satisfying their need to connect with the public, social media is also helping to fill bank accounts. To maintain their fabulous lifestyles, celebrities can turn to social media where the world of Instagram and influencer marketing awaits. And what a lucrative world it is. 1

So what do we know about specific rates for social media posts? Mid-level reality TV stars can earn anywhere from $1,000 to $20,000 for a brand sponsored Instagram post. This can go as high as $50,000 for a TV sitcom star. That's a lot of money, but relatively low compared to the current crop of It-girl models who can command up to $300,000 for a single Instagram post, or an A-list actor who can receive up to $500,000. 2

Although celebrity endorsements have been around for as long as advertising itself, their foray into social media is new territory. Traditional print and TV advertising is replete with famous faces pushing products we doubt they use or consume, but there is an understanding that we accept the falsehood because we know the game, we know they've been paid. The pseudo-ads posted as selfies on Instagram or Twitter, however, usually contain no clear indication that money has changed hands, despite the fact that, in many cases, it's legally required to do so. 3

Beginning enthusiastically with 'OMG', the original post was liked online by hundreds of thousands of followers. There was no doubt that she had actually used the medication, as it had been prescribed by her doctor. But had she included the mandatory information, it would have given the very distinct, and true, impression that it was a promotion. Ever mindful of her public image, she was aware this may not go down well with her followers. For her sins, she was forced to remove her gushing reviews from Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, and repost with a huge risk disclaimer. 4

Celebrities love social media because it helps them to build some semblance of authenticity and social intimacy with fans. First they create an image of openness and honesty with their online followers and then they exploit it in their sponsored posts. One star, for example, recently confided that her 'secret' to staying trim was a certain weight loss tea. A photo of her looking slim and healthy, holding a cup of the miraculous fat-melting infusion was there for all to see. No mention was made of frequent, gruelling sessions with a well-paid personal trainer. A clearly sponsored post – though honest – would have dismantled her credibility. 5

As advertising professionals will tell you, that is exactly the goal of any ad - to sell an idea or a desirable lifestyle, and it doesn't even have to be true or attainable. The personality vouching for the product isn't even required to actually use it. All that needs to happen is for consumers to want some glamour and coolness to rub off on them. That is how advertising works. But this sneaky new form of celebrity endorsement, with its camouflaged product promotions requires consumers to completely suspend belief in order to place their trust in someone with an agenda. 6

As such, the language has to be just right, peppered with the kinds of casual terms friends use with each other. Celebrities 'swear by' a new skincare product, are 'in love with' a new coconut water, 'can't live without' a new protein shake. The more cynical among us might question the true author of these snappy captions – is it the paid influencer or has the brand's marketing department come up with the text and tailored it to the target audience? Because the audience is what it's all about. Keeping it is important, but first it has to be found. 7

So far, it's been a very successful strategy, and as long as a supply of famous faces are willing to accept cash for comments, the use of social media as a unique advertising tool won't be going away any time soon.

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A For that kind of money, celebrities are happy to plug a product hard. Juice cleanses, meal replacement regimes, weight-loss teas, waist shapers, teeth whitening kits – they comprise a range of categories that are perfectly suited to the highly narcissistic nature of the medium that is social media, requiring nothing more than a love of selfies and a complete lack of shame. The questionable efficacy of the products is no deterrent to the blatant money-grab.

B Advertising is powerful and its manipulation runs deep when consumers are gullible to such marketing ploys. The endorsements – casually slipped in between a candid photo with a beloved pet and a carefree snap with a close friend, for example – make unwitting followers feel that this product is simply a part of the celebrity's daily life, and that they should make it a part of theirs too. They want it, and at that point, they're hooked.

C Advertisers have a major responsibility to inform celebrities, bloggers and anyone else they're paying to push a product that appropriate disclosures need to be made. Advertising should be identifiable as advertising so that consumers know when they're hearing a marketing pitch versus an independent viewpoint.

D Disclosure with regards to medication is one of these instances. An American celebrity got into hot water with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for promoting a medication without providing information about possible side effects. The FDA, which is responsible for protecting public health through the regulation and supervision of a range of products including dietary supplements, prescription and over-the-counter medications, took a very dim view of this.

E The beauty of influencer marketing for brands is that they don't have to build their target audience from scratch – something which is costly and time-consuming as it involves extensive market research. Social media influencers already have a devoted fan following, so half the job has already been done. Once the influencer has been chosen, it is just a matter of getting the followers to support the brand, talk about it themselves to others, and buy the products.

F Make no mistake - they are raking it in. Even those who are no longer as famous as they once were can be offered tantalising amounts by companies to promote products on the main personal social media platforms – Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. The uber-famous with the largest followings are making money hand over fist, and the amounts are staggering.

G But what makes people susceptible to such influence? When asked, consumers said they trusted celebrities over brands. The problem with branded marketing content is that it is biased; influencer marketing, on the other hand, does not come across as an overt marketing attempt. Instead, it looks like a recommendation from a trusted friend.

H Besides failing to list the downsides of the product, the celebrity fell foul of the law by not being explicit about the fact that she was paid to make the post. There are rules about this sort of thing, too. Celebrities receiving payment to promote a product on their platforms are required to tag the post #ad or #sponsored – something to indicate that a monetary transaction has taken place in return for their endorsement. So what's preventing them from adding those few letters?

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