What Marketers Should Know About the FTC's Pinterest Contest Rules

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Whitney Gibson, a partner in the Vorys Cincinnati office and the leader of the firm's internet defamation group, authored an article for PR Daily titled "What Marketers Should Know About the FTC's Pinterest Contest Rules." The article highlighted a recent letter that the Federal Trade Commission sent to Cole Haan reprimanding the brand for a contest on Pinterest. Gibson says that now that the FTC has addressed the disclosure of material connections in the context of Pinterest contests, other brands may wish to tread lightly.

The article states:

> "When there is any activity that could be remotely construed as an endorsement, the company should consider disclosing its relationship with the potential endorser. Otherwise, the FTC could view the endorsement as undisclosed advertisements and take action. Certainly, it is difficult for companies to monitor every word said about them online, but they can still be held accountable if necessary disclosures are not made.

> The FTC's letter to Cole Haan should serve as reminder to other brands that, if contemplating contests on Pinterest or other social media outlets, when in doubt, always make (or advise consumers of making) disclosures. For further guidance, potential advertisers should consider reviewing the revised FTC's 'Dot Com Disclosures,' a guide to making effective advertising disclosures in the online world that was updated in March 2013.

> Also, be mindful that another reason the FTC was more lenient towards Cole Haan was the social media policy the company adopted subsequent to the contest that covered the FTC's concerns. Thus, companies should not only consider consulting with legal experts when it comes to conducting contests through social media (or even offline) but also to consider working with social media experts."

To read the entire article, visit the PR Daily website.