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**Which transparency strategies are
used by the youtubers to engage
their communities?**

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Introduction

Nowadays influence marketing is everywhere on social networks. Influencers inspire their followers with the photos, posts and videos posted on their personal pages. These online celebrities have massive communities which follow them. Brands and companies have quickly understood the potential of third-party communication and promotion via influencers. However, some detrimental effects can appear when companies do not correctly implement strategies with influencers. According to a study conducted by Reech, 95% of influencers claim to inform their audience of partnerships (Reech, 2020). However, according to the same study, 56% of influencers claim not to be fully aware of the rules on transparency.

There exist different types of influencers. They can be defined in terms of community scale or they could be categorized following the platform used. In this classification, there are as many influencers as there exist different social platforms. We can list the platforms most used by influencers:

- Instagram
- YouTube
- Blogs

Our research focuses on the second platform: YouTube by analyzing influencer videos on the platform.

In 2017, a study conducted by L  v  que, Damman & Michiels shows different results about influencers. The first finding is that one French person out of three follows one or more influencers. And more than half of them say they consult the posted content on a daily basis. Young people aged 15 to 25 appear to be the population category that follows these influencers the most (L  v  que and al, 2017). The second finding concerns the status of influencers. Indeed, influencers are perceived as advisors and not as representatives of a brand. The content created is an alternative to the information provided by the brands. This content is used by Internet users in their purchasing process. There are several reasons why a consumer might follow an influencer. L  v  que and al (2017) outline the main reasons for following an influencer:

- Information on products and their use
- Unpublished product or brand information
- Entertainment

After watching challenging videos where influencers were really transparent towards the partnerships and sponsoring, I decided to base my thesis on this subject. Preliminary research on that topic confirmed that transparency was a key element for influencers. I have decided to explore and found current strategies used by influencers to be more transparent towards their communities. The research aims to respond to the following question:

Which transparency strategies are used by the influencers to engage their communities?

Figure 1: Example of youtuber reviewing products



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC60-i99bQk&t=309s>

This picture shows an example of influencer reviewing product received freely from a brand.

This master thesis is articulated in two parts to address this research question:

The first chapter explores the existing literature in order to have an overview of the current situation of the influencer phenomenon. In particular the exploration focuses on one of the main platforms used by influencers: YouTube. Finally, the concept of transparency is defined before taking a look at the transparency of influencers on YouTube.

The second chapter introduces an exploratory research about the analysis of influencers video posted on social platforms. In order to draw consistent conclusions and interesting findings an analysis grid has been elaborated. The results and the findings are discussed in order to give a clear overview of the actual trend in the transparency of the influencer.

1. Literature review

1.1. Marketing Context

Marketing can be divided in two main categories: interrupting marketing and permission marketing. Both present advantages and disadvantages. There are usually used jointly in companies. However, this decade has seen the emergence of the empowerment of permission marketing over the interruption one (Backaler & Shankman, 2018). This section defines both type and explains the differences between interruption- and permission marketing. Finally, the end of this chapter provides an overview of the current situation and concludes on what are the main trends concerning these two ways to do marketing.

1.1.1. Interruption Marketing

Follow Hawkins (2014), interruption marketing, also called outbound or traditional marketing *refers to any marketing activity that “interrupts” a viewer’s attention. Essentially, the goal of this type of marketing is to capture the attention of anyone and everyone to generate interest about your product or service.*

Companies which use interruption marketing are in a product-centric logic. In that case, the product is the center of attention and the customers must adapt themselves to the features. Companies present information about their products to consumers even if they are not looking for these products (Dakouan, Benabdelouahed, & Anabir, 2019). Interruption marketing has trouble to target efficiently the audience. TV/radio advertising, untargeted mail campaigns, print ads, call, etc. are the main examples of interruption marketing used nowadays. It is difficult to define precisely who watches the TV commercials, who sees an ad in the newspaper or who listens to the radio commercial.

The main advantage of interruption are the quick results. Indeed, it is a real efficient strategy when the company wants to increase sales volume (Hawkins, 2014; Dakouan & al., 2019). It is also a good strategy to reinforce the relation with existing consumers (Reed, 2015). A second benefit of interruption marketing is its fast implementation, much faster than inbound. As the strategy is product-centric, the elaboration and the execution can be made totally internal, which allows executing faster the operations. The ads are massively spread via traditional media channel.

However, interruption marketing presents also some downsides. All the following disadvantages come from the lack of targeting from the strategy. Marketers cannot control who watch TV, read newspapers or listen radio. So, the ads are widespread and create irritation and annoyance from the non-target audience. Nevertheless, an ad aired on TV between two cartoons will not be the same as an ad aired during the news.

When people are exposed too often to interruption ads, they develop annoyance. The multiplication of platforms and other places demanding attention makes efficient marketing campaign harder (Dakouan, & Al., 2019). The consumer develops annoyance towards unwanted information due to the massive information he or she receive each second. This kind of marketing is also more expensive and has a low return on investment (ROI). The audience is not well-segmented so many consumers are not interested in the advertising, but marketers must pay to reach these people. Finally interrupting marketing campaigns is limited in time. Once the campaign is over, the target audience is not more reach, the ads are not spread on channels and the products promoted are replaced by other ones in the mind of the customers. It means that the impact of the marketing is limited to the duration you paid (Hawkins, 2014).

1.1.2. Permission Marketing

Permission or inbound marketing *refers to any marketing activity where you receive the privilege or permission to deliver anticipated, personalized and relevant messages to consumers* (Hawkins, 2014). The permission does not mean that you have a mean to reach the customer (like an email address), it means that the customer wants to receive information from the company. Buying a data base with potential prospects and sending them advertising is not permission marketing. On the contrary, collecting e-mail addresses for a newsletter is a typical example of inbound marketing.

The aim of inbound marketing is to find the right product for the customer, on the other side, outbound marketing aims to find the customers for your products. This marketing approach takes more time and needs a very careful targeting to offer useful and high content for the prospects (Patruti-Baltes, 2016).

Contrast with interruption marketing, permission marketing does not show fast result and the ROI is more long-term based. This long-term aspect is a huge advantage when we look at the relationship aspect. Indeed, this kind of marketing allows companies to build strong

relationships with their consumers on the long run. De Broqueville (2019) explains that the new generations and especially the consumers 3.0 are demanding for strong and personal relationships with the brands (DellaVigna, 2009). Consumers 3.0 are consumers who *are informed and are socially and environmentally responsible* (Houdek, 2016). These relationships require customization. The relationship between the customer and the brand must be personal and unique. The approach of permission marketing is customer-centric and based on listening what customers want. The goal of the approach is creating a product or useful content for the customers and not to find customers for the product (Dakouan, & Al., 2019). This type of marketing fit better to the current purchase behavior and allows more responsiveness (Patruti-Baltes, 2016). It is also easier to target a specific audience and so make it a more cost-efficient strategy. Finally, the conversion rate of inbound is higher than outbound. This can be explained by the fact that all members of the audience are interested in the product. The inbound marketing has growth faster these two last decades due to the increasing use of the internet (Dakouan, & Al., 2019).

1.1.3. Current Situation

The intensification of advertising campaigns has decreased the efficiency of interruption marketing (Backaler & Shankman, 2018). In the early 2000's, people interested in a product needed on average four exposures to make a purchase. Today this number has quadrupled, around sixteen exposures (Backaler & Shankman, 2018). Moreover, the number of advertising's blocker software has been constantly increasing. In 2018 one third of the laptop in Europe have a software to block advertisings (Statista, 2018). People do not tolerate being always interrupted when they are online.

Nowadays, no one wants to trust a faceless brand. When a big multinational adds on TV, people do not know who are behind the ad and so people mistrust the communication. Moreover, people do not tolerate anymore to be interrupt by ads. Interruption marketing is no longer as effective as it was before and sometimes, it damages the brand image of the company. Prospects are always interrupted by brand advertisings and it irritate themselves (Backaler & Shankman, 2018). Consumers are more and more proactive and react when they do not agree with brand image or with the communication strategy. In addition, it would

appear that user-generated content is more recommended to other consumers than content created by the brand itself (Welbourne & Grant, 2016). There is a reason why interruption marketing does not work as effectively as other techniques in a world where there is too much information to consume every piece: it is a vicious cycle where marketers spend more to receive less in return. Godin & al. (1999) describe this phenomenon as a list of fact logically linked:

- 1. Human beings have a finite amount of attention so they can't watch everything*
- 2. Human beings have a finite amount of money so they can't buy everything*
- 3. The more products brands offer, the less money there is to go around*
- 4. In order to capture more attention and more money, interruption marketers must increase spending*
- 5. But, by spending more in order to get bigger returns, consumers encounter more clutter*
- 6. Therefore, the more marketers spend, the less their efforts are effective AND the less their efforts are effective, the more interruption marketers spend (Godin & al., 1999)*

Another change that makes marketing, and particularly interruption marketing, even difficult is the decreasing of the attention time (de Broqueville, 2019). Generation X (people born between 1965 and 1980) and Y (born between 1980 and 1995) have an attention time respectively of 15 and 8 seconds. This number falls at only 3 seconds for the new generation, generation Z (born after 1995). In other words, if the advertising does not keep attention in less than 3 seconds, it will be ignored by the prospect and the marketing operation could damage the brand image. However, these last decades have been emerging the rise of influence marketing. An alternative to traditional marketing which are less intrusive and has a better return. Following Dakouan and al. (2019) influence marketing is a process that creates relevant and attractive content in order to obtain a positive behavior from the customer. The influence marketing has always existed but today marketers use it as a major tool to promote their products. The influence marketing breaks several rules of the traditional marketing. First it keeps again the attention of the customers, lost by traditional marketing (Backaler & Shankman, 2018). Influencer content is viewed 7 times longer than traditional ads according to collective bias influencer trends report (Collective Bias, 2017).

The rise of influence marketing is due to the exposure of internet and social media omnipresence: the web and more specifically social platforms allow any people to reach almost anyone else in the world, there are no more gatekeepers. People can spend information around the world. A second consequence of the internet is the potential exposure that it gives to every user. Internet makes people and companies vulnerable to any bad comments or meanings. Companies must be and are aware of this phenomenon and so try to give a positive brand image towards consumers. The companies do not control totally their brand identities, customers have an active role to play in the relationship with the brand. They are no longer passive receivers. Hayes (2018) defines “consumactors” as customers which interact actively with companies and participate in the elaboration of the brand identity. The second main environmental change is the democratization of technology. Nowadays people can create a professional website for less than €100, creates a cinematic look video or shoot amazing photos with a smartphone. Social platforms allow to reach people all over the world for free. People who had a limited influence in the past can now reach more and more people and can professionalized themselves (Backaler & Shankman, 2018).

To resume this section, we can list the main advantages and disadvantages of both marketing types to have a better understanding of the two strategies. The following table (table 1) resumes the advantages and the disadvantages of both marketing types. Based on the context, it seems that permission marketing fits better to the current customer behaviors and current people expectations. Indeed, today customers want customization, are bored by so many ads and do not trust faceless brand (Dakouan, & Al., 2019). However, even if permission marketing can be really attractive in a first case, managers must always be aware they must first define a specific goal for the marketing campaign before selecting one or another type of marketing.

	Permission	Interruption
Advantages	• High conversion rate • Long-term based relations • Accurate targeting • Cost effectiveness	• Fast results • Quick implementation • Really efficient for increasing sales
Disadvantages	• slow results	• Costly • Low ROI

Table 1: comparison between permission- and interruption marketing

1.2. Influencer Marketing

This section presents the wild world behind the word “influencer”. Today everyone has one definition for an influencer and has clichés about the profession. This part of the thesis tries to explain what an influencer is really and what the characteristics of the profession are. The first part lists the different type of influencer that a brand can hire and what are the advantages and drawbacks of each ones. The second part introduces the great lines to become a good and efficient influencer called the ABCC of the influencer.

1.2.1. Definition

Influencer marketing is related communication, the brand does not communicate directly to its customers but uses a third party: the influencer. In other words, the influencer is an intermediary between brands and customers. It allows the company to target easier and gain in credibility and trust. Influencers can be celebrities, bloggers, vloggers or any person who has influence on a community (Ehrlich, 2013). For consumers, influencers are viewed as an objective and authentic way to have information on a product or a brand. It is also a mean to increase knowledge and expertise in a specific area. This believe is so powerful that most consumers value more the influencer speech about a product that the brand which sells the product (Chowdhary & Grimaldi, 2018). For the brands, influencers play a key role in the growth of their e-reputation. Quantitatively, they present product’s brand to new audience and potential new customers. So the influencer exposes the brand to more potential buyers. Qualitatively, they enhance the e-reputation by associating their name to the brand. The brands can increase their e-reputation through influencer testing, product review, original influencer content, etc. (Bensadoun-Medioni & Benmoyal Bouzaglo, 2018).

1.1.2.2. Type of influencers

Influencers can be divided into different categories depending on the size of their audience. Several classifications exist, but the most common one divides these influencers into 3 categories. This classification helps to understand the landscape of influence marketing and to choose the right influencer for a company, which is mandatory when we want a positive return and avoid hurting the brand image (Backaler & Shankman, 2018; Collective bias, 2017).

1.2.2.1. Celebrity influencers

Celebrity influencers are the main category which comes to mind when the topic of influencer is on the table. Celebrity influencers are celebrities that have influence on their communities (if they do not have influence, they are just celebrities). It is the case for traditional celebrities like athletes, actors and musicians, but also online personality who have a massive following community. This kind of influencers change the behavior of their audiences due to the success lives they have. This kind of influencer is a top choice for brand awareness or new product launching (Hennessy, 2018)

1.2.2.2. Category influencers

Category influencers are people who master a specific topic and are recognized as a reference for this topic by peers. These influencers are trusted by their audience because they are expert or seem to be heavily interested in a specific technical area and have deep and large knowledges. This huge interest makes them a reliable source of information for the peers. These influencers are not as known as celebrity influencers, but they have a sufficient amount of influence to change the behavior of the people in their niches (Carr & Hayes, 2014).

1.2.2.3. Micro-influencers

Micro-influencers are the last category of influencer. Even if they are characterized by a smaller audience, they could be the best choice for companies in many cases. In most of the cases, they are individuals passionate about something: a topic, a phenomenon or a brand. These influencers speak to their network about the subject that captive them. These influencers could be online as offline and their audiences are mainly friends, family or people living in the same area (Backaler & Shankman, 2018; Ehrlich, 2013). Micro-influencers have to communicate more frequently to create a stronger relation with their community than the other influencers (Khamis, Welling, & Ang, 2016).

Even if celebrity influencers reach more people than the two other types, their engagement is lower. This can be explained by the fact that the first category does not have to create its influence, the influence comes from offline activities (Hennessy, 2018).

1.2.3. The POEM model

The Paid, Owned, Earned Media (P.O.E.M.) model is a classification of the media for a company. This classification is made depending on how the end-consumer is exposed to the company communication (Bensadoun-Medioni & Benmoyal Bouzaglo, 2018). Each type of media has its own characteristics in terms of goal and benefits (see table 2). The relationship brands and influencers have can either be characterized as paid- or earned media. In the second case the credibility of the delivered information is higher. Influencer can do a review of the product for a brand (s)he likes where (s)he promotes the product and gives positive review when the brand did not pay him or her. In this case the influencer is considered as an earned media (Bensadoun-Medioni & Benmoyal Bouzaglo, 2018).

Media type	Definition	Example	Role	Benefits	Challenges
Paid media	Channel a brand controls	- Website - Mobile site - Blog - Social media account	Build long-term relationships with existing potential customers and earn media	- Control - Cost - Efficiency - Longevity - Versatility - Niche - Audiences	- No guarantees - Company communication not trusted - Take time to scale
Owned media	Brands pays to leverage a channel	- Display ads - Paid search - Sponsorships	Shift from foundation to catalyst that feeds and owned and creates earned media	- In demand - Immediacy - Scale - Control	- Clutter - Declining - Response rate - Poor - credibility
Earned media	When customers become the channel	- WOM - Buzz - “Viral”	Listen and respond – earned media is often the results of well-executed and well-coordinated and paid media	- Most credible - Key role in most scales - Transparent and lives on	- No control - Can be negative - Hard to measure

Table 2: The POEM model; This table shows the three type of media that companies can use to reach consumers. Influencers following the relation they had with the brand can be considered either as the second category of media or as the third if they have a contract with the brand

Source: <https://www.mediaspecs.be/fr/glossary/paid-media/>

1.2.4. ABCC of the influencer

Nowadays anyone can be an influencer but to become a successful influencer you must respect 4 key factors (Backaler & Shankman, 2018). The ABCC is 4 key elements that make influencers successful. The effectiveness of an influencer endorsement depends on the perceived credibility of the last one.

1.2.4.1. Authenticity

Trust is the key of a successful career as influencer. Authenticity means you cannot betray your audience for a company check. To stay authentic, an influencer should do partnership with a brand only if the product could interest the audience and if the influencer gives an unbiased review of the product. (Luoma-aho, Pirttimäki, Maity, Munnukka, & Reinikainen, 2019). On the other side, authenticity does not say that you cannot be paid, but it is not the role for the influencer to promote the company product. In other case, he/she loses his/her neutrality and his/her independence.

1.2.4.2. Brand fit

When a brand comes with a proposal, influencers must always analyze whether this collaboration may hurt their reputations as influencers. It is crucial for an influencer to gain more and more influence to stay true with his/her audience and only collaborate with brands which similar in terms of values, audiences, industries, etc. Brand-fit means that the brand must be relevant for the audience and the brand content should not be weird in the influencer content (Backaler & Shankman, 2018).

However, a study by Gupta, Kishor and Verma (2017) contradicts this. According to this study, the characteristic that most influences the consumer is popularity, followed by attractiveness, reliability and finally relevance and expertise. This finding is reinforced by McCracken (1989) who argues that influencers with a large audience are the initiators of new fashions.

1.2.4.3. Community

The community is the main tool to measure the success of an influencer. The number of followers is not the only indicator of the influence. In order to evaluate the potential of an influencer, three parameters must be taken into account (Backaler & Shankman, 2018; Ehrlich, 2013):

1. Reach: it is the total number of followers, subscribers, traffic, etc. This number vary across the three different categories (celebrity influencer, category influencer and micro-influencer).

2. Resonance: it is the number of shares, likes, comments, etc. Resonance reflects the engagement of the audience. In the case of Instagram, resonance can be calculated by the number of likes divided by the number of followers. This ratio is between 15% (for the most popular influencers) and 5%. However, some posts could manipulate the ratio. It is the case for contest posts for example.
3. Relevance: it is the match between the content of the influencer and the audience's interest. The relevance is really interesting for brand to see if the influencer's community matches up the target audience of the company. If an influencer is truly influential the number of comments is high, but they quality. Influencer's audience is more about quality than quantity (Backaler & Shankman, 2018).

1.2.4.4. Content

The content is how the influencer is linked with his/her community. The content allows the influencer to add value, be create, build relationship. Content is also related to the platform the influencer use: youtubers, instagrammers, bloggers, etc. However, influencers usually use multiple platform to reach a larger audience. Some brands seem to want fast result and do not understand to process of content creation and time that takes to produce high-quality. The relationship between subscribers and an influencer is two-way. Indeed, they can interact via comments, tags or any other means depending on the platform. (Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). These interactions between the two parties generate content that is then used by other consumers in their purchasing process. Gangi and Wasko (2009) calls this content User Generated Content. This content can positively or negatively influence a brand or product. The content produced by influencers has a much greater impact as it is seen by more people. (Smith, Coyle and al., 2007).

Expertise and experience are quite controversial regarding the importance of these criteria in the success of influencers. Some studies have shown that an influencer does not have to be especially expert in his or her field to be influential (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1991). Others argue that this is one of the most important points for ensuring influence on the community (Bhatt & Patel, 2013; Gupta et al., 2017).

1.2.5. social networks and e-WOM

Influencers also play a role in the purchasing process of Internet users. There are seven steps that determine a consumer's purchase process (Blackwell and al., 2001). Each time a consumer makes a purchase, he or she goes through these 7 steps:

1. Recognition of a need
2. The search for sources of information
3. Evaluation of existing alternatives
4. The purchase
5. Consumption or use
6. Evaluation after use or consumption
7. Divestment

Depending on the type of good or service purchased, some steps in the process may take more or less time. The development of social networks and influencers have changed the purchasing process by altering the way consumers recognize their needs, seek information and evaluate before and after purchase (Blackwell and al., 2001). Influencers create communities around common values and interests that affect the way consumers determine their purchases (Nambisan & Watt, 2011). The more a consumer feels part of a community, the stronger the community will be in influencing his or her purchasing process (de Valck and al., 2009). In addition, social networks fulfill 3 main functions for the consumer according to Heinonen (2011):

- Entertainment through the content offered by the platform.
- Create social links with network users.
- To process information through the opinions given by users.

This last function of social networks plays a curial role in the consumer's purchasing process. Indeed, many studies have shown the importance of social networks in the search for information, advice, or opinions from peers or experts (de Valck and al., 2009). The information found is deemed reliable by the consumer (Heinonen, 2011). Social networks are used to share their experiences after purchasing their products. The phenomenon is called

electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Thoumrungroje, 2014). As mentioned above, social networks also have an entertainment function. Indeed, research has shown the influence of social networks on consumer mood. The search for positive and useful information is correlated with better mood (Heinonen, 2011). Many influencer accounts offer idealized content or experiences that seem to be perfect.

1.3. YouTube

YouTube is a video hosting website launched in 2005 by three employees of the PayPal company: Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim (Deutrom, 2018). The goal of this platform was to share and watch again videos of events. At that time, there was no solution to watch again video events. In February 2005, they decided to launch their start-up and in April of the same year they uploaded their first video. One year later, the platform counts more than 65.000 videos and 100 million views a day (Deutrom, 2018). Later that year and as a consequence with their fast growth, they faced a couple of issues. The first one was due to copyright issues. In fact, a lot of content shared on the platform was totally illegal. Another one concerned the profitability of the start-up, since they did not get enough revenue from the ads (Deutrom, 2018). To fix these problems the company signed deals with three major media companies to legitimate the distribution of the content on the platform (Associated Press, 2006). After this recovery, Google negotiated to buy the company for \$1.65 billion, having noticed the potential of YouTube. Google was already a company which mastered the online advertising and it knew how to increase profitability with YouTube. On top of that, according to Google chief executive at the time, Eric Schmidt, the two platforms shared the same objective: be consumer-centric and continuously improve the experience in the search for information (Associated Press, 2006). Today, YouTube has more than 2 billion users connecting every month, who every day watch more than 1 billion hours of video. Moreover, the website is available in more than 100 countries and is now translated into 80 languages (YouTube, 2020). YouTube represents a new way to search and find information around the world. With the rise of influence marketing and the massive content posted on YouTube, the platform has become one of the best social media for influencers. The concept of sharing video seduces many influencers especially gaming influencer and those who have strong storytelling.

In 2019, YouTube considered to mask comments under the video like Instagram had tried with the “likes” under posts. This decision would have affected the relation between influencers and their community on YouTube (Alexander, 2019). Comments section allows viewer to discuss and interact with the youtuber content creator, the community frequently sharing its experience about the product presented in the video (Wu, 2016). Following Luoma-aho & al. (2020) the decision of blocking the comments hurts the influence marketing on the platform.

The comments allow the community to verify the feelings in relation to influencers and to create and enhance parasocial relationships (Luoma-aho & al., 2020). Parasocial relationships are a virtual and imaginary relationships with media celebrities characterized by a perceived relational development with the influencer and the feeling of being friends (Brown, 2015). This relationship builds trust and credibility in the influencer and are corelated with the purchase of the community (Tian & Hoffner, 2010). So, as they work with influencers brands must give access to as much information as possible to allow influencers to create a strong parasocial relationship. As the main video sharing platform, YouTube is a top choice for influencers to share experience and create connections with their audiences. Product reviews, tutorials, testing of products are influencer contents that are typically shared on the video platform owned by Google. Today, sponsoring content on YouTube can be largely categorized in three main categories:

4. Explicit sponsoring: where the influencer receives a fee for promoting a product sometimes following the number of views. The exclusive purpose of this kind of video is promoting a brand or a product (Wu, 2016). In this case, the brand finances the project and the youtuber gives exposure to the brand.
5. Affiliated links: the influencer receive a coupon and the content creator perceives a commission on each purchase via this link. In this scenario, the youtuber is only paid if the community made purchase via the links which is really a poor compensation compare to the value bring by the content shared (Wu, 2016).
6. Free product sampling: the influencer receives free products from the brands and is asked to test and review it (Wu, 2016).

In 2009, the federal trade commission (FTC) edited guidelines for endorsements in advertising: Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsement and Testimonials in Advertising (Federal Trade Commission, 2020). The goal of these guidelines was to protect consumers from hidden advertising and impose legal responsibility. It imposes clear and unambiguous disclosure of partnership with brands. The two first category of endorsement are under the scope of the guidelines; content creators must henceforth reveal the partnership. For the third category, when the influencer receives free products, it is less clear and it depends on each case (Google, 2020). However, the transparency of the content creators towards partnership is really low.

Some write the disclosure at the end of the description box. The viewer must scroll to find the partners of the video. Others use their own format of notation for disclosure (Wu, 2016). The lack of transparency affects the relationship between viewers and content creators.

1.4. Transparency

Today, the world faces many scandals caused by lack of transparency. Transparency is commonly defined as an open flow of information (Holzner & Holzner, 2006; Piotrowski, 2007). These scandals happen in all life spheres: food and nutrition, states, companies, ... these events hurt the reputation of the accountable people and the affiliated organizations. In this context, the scandals caused by influencers can hurt the reputation of the brands linked. If so, brands can ask for transparency on the side of their partners and so the influencers.

On the others side, consumer-viewers can also ask for more transparency. They ask for authenticity and objective opinion. Moreover, transparent partnership where the influencer mentions the brands and the relation with a mention where the influencers explains that the opinion given is hers or his and it is honest, does not hurt the credibility of the influencer (Hwang, & Jeong, 2016).

1.1.4. Definition

In the governmental sphere, transparency is one of the most fundamental revendication made by citizens in democratic states (Pasquier & Villeneuve, 2007). In representative democracies, the right to have access to state information is commonly accepted and it is the norm for most of the states (Pasquier & Villeneuve, 2007). A second role of the transparency in the governmental sphere is the reduction of the corruption: indeed, transparency prevents corrupted practices due to the vigilance of the citizens. The government leaders can then not use their power privately (Florini, 2010). O'Neill (2012) observes that transparency is an efficient mean to change or prevent bad behaviors and to serve public interest. More transparency means less room for manoeuvre for corruption and abuses. Transparency can also be a mean to gain trust of the community and then sell easier products of the brand partners. Cho & Song (2017) study the definition of trust in many fields and define it as "a psychological state that includes the intention to accept a state of vulnerability on the basis of positive expectations about the intentions or behavior of others". They also concluded that the definition did not vary significantly across disciplines. As mention before, to perform as an influencer the ABCC must be respected. In this context transparency is a strategy to appear more authentic and increase credibility.

1.1.4. Youtuber's Transparency

For some years now, the communication of influencer has shift to more transparency. In a video from April 14, 2019, Squeezie¹, the French youtuber with the biggest community explains in an ironic video the main technique to win money with YouTube video. Even if the tone is ironic, the message is deep, whistleblower and the video is really transparent. The phenomenon was not isolated, in the beauty influence sphere EnjoyPhenix², one of the most iconic influencers, published a video early 2019 where she explains the relation she had with her partners. In this video, the influencer explains that the brands do not personalize the product they send. Some products do not fit with the influencer, skin tones do not match, type of cosmetic neither... It generates wastes and influencers with many contracts cannot test all the products that they receive. The Youtuber explains that the situation was no longer sustainable, and she decided to take action.

Following Dhanesh and Duthler (2019) ads recognition does not hurt so much the relation between influencer and consumers. On one hand, simple disclosures about sponsorship affect negatively the relation with the audience (Campbell and al., 2013; Carr and Hayes, 2014; Van Reijmersdal and al., 2015). On the other hand, spontaneously disclosing paid endorsement enhances the perception of the influencer's transparency what could impact positively the behaviors of the community (Dhanesh & Duthler 2019). In other words, being transparent and open towards partnerships with brands increases parasocial relationship. A more open relation can lead to more trust in the content creator and finally lead up to a higher conversion rate. Influencers who stay authentic and speak unbiasedly increase their credibility towards community and for most when the audience is high skeptic (Hwang, & Jeong, 2016). More transparency is beneficial for both influencers and viewers. Many researches have showed the negative impact of a third-party disclosure (Huang, 2015). When influencers, especially the smaller ones, are not transparent or hide partnership or sponsoring and a third-party reveals the relation the reputation, the credibility is injured. (Colliander and Erlandsson, 2015; Huang, 2015). On the contrary, self-disclose about commercial relations harms less the influencer's

¹ YouTube channel of Squeezie <https://www.youtube.com/user/aMOODIEsqueezie>

² YouTube channel of EnjoyPhoenix <https://www.youtube.com/user/EnjoyPhoenix>

relation with the community. Moreover, the addition of self and honest opinion in the disclosure may even improve the parasocial relationship (Hwang, & Jeong, 2016; Dhanesh & Duthler 2019).

The primary objective of revealing a partnership and informing the viewer of sponsored content. A first consequence of this revelation is the viewer's ability to better distinguish the sponsored content from the rest of the video (Smink and al., 2017). Disclosure can also raise mistrust in the viewer's mind. However, the disclosure of a sponsorship does not have a direct impact on the perception of the brand. If the consumer is sceptical before watching the video it will have a negative impact on the brand's image (Jacks & Devine, 2000; Wood & Quinn, 2003). Conversely, if the consumer is neutral towards the brand there will be no impact on the brand image. Moreover, awareness of a sponsored message does not diminish the persuasiveness of the message.

Finally, the revelation of a partnership allows a better memorization of the brand. As the brand is presented outside the context of the video the retention of the sponsor is better (Smink and al., 2017).

2. Practical Approach

2.1 Qualitative Research

The objective of this chapter is to understand how today influencers use transparency to engage their community, how they disclaim the partnership with brands and how these brand collaborations are integrated in their storytelling. The research tackles three main domains where influence marketing has been established for a long time: gaming, humor and beauty. The gaming category is mainly composed by Youtubers which play video games and film themselves while interacting with their communities. The second category is related to the creators which create entertainment videos. Finally, the last category is related to influencers which produce beauty and health care videos on the platform. Each category is divided in two subsections: the macro-influencers and the micro-influencers. Micro influencers are influencers who have less than 500,000 subscribers on their youtube channel. The research is based on video analysis to discover and understand how influencers communicate about their partnerships. Analysis focuses mainly on YouTube videos, however streaming platforms like Mixer or Twitch are studied for gaming influencers. An evaluation grid is used to analyze videos (see appendix 1). The grid is divided in two main parts: sponsoring and product placement. The first part concerns the brand and how this one is presented and integrated by the youtuber in the video. “How” and “when” the partnerships are disclosed is also observed in this first part of the grid. The second section is dedicated to the product itself. Usage, presence on screen, tone used to describe the product are criteria selected to analyze the videos.

The aims of this research are to (1) discover the strategies used by influencers to be more transparent and to (2) list these strategies in order to have a better understanding of the current situation.

The research has shown several interesting findings. The results are discussed in two phases. The first one is dedicated to the general observations and the main trends towards disclosures about influencer’s partnerships. The second focuses on the specific observations made in the different spheres. The findings described in both sections are based on a qualitative research and therefore cannot be extrapolated to all influencer video content.

The qualitative research is based on 61 videos from different influencer channels. The videos were sectioned through a rigorous process. Google searches based on the keywords: "influencers", "YouTube", "product placement", "gaming", "beauty", "humor" identified the majority of the videos in this analysis. Influencers without YouTube channel and youtubers which are not recognized as influencers can be not selected in the sample. Some micro-influencer videos were found directly via the videos hosting platform's suggestions via the algorithm. To ensure the diversity of the videos, influencers have been identified on several different sites. In addition, each video comes from a different YouTube channel in order to obtain the most varied strategies possible.

The three spheres of influencers are divided in two subsections: macro and micro-influencers to form six different cells of the table (see table 3). In order to have consistency in each cell, a minimum of ten videos are selected. Most of them come from YouTube platform. For the gaming videos one fourth of the video come from streaming platform like Mixer or Twitch and the same proportion are English speaking videos. The influencer channels are found via search on google and based on personal knowledge of influencers in each sphere. As the influence marketing evolves rapidly the analyzed videos were published less than five years.

Table 1: list of videos analyzed

	micro	macro
humor	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qagK3z98SXE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5HLo7CRS7Y https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=138&v=GzAHDLMskPs&feature=emb_logo https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZvcqnNRDU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XgbjF6vWM https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1pK1zSU6lg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TdH6OQUZ0U https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpVJ0o90pEA	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrQ5DL-0lTA https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= ZPpU7774DQ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIh94iVsbW0 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= YTWwTo6xcY https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McvSotvSxfw https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qv2lffqz65c https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHCKAyzUbXI https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfzSedyIBoG https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRYPyZ7X7GU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1_ew57z6D8
gaming	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2EW1GtaPnE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdhrEaSDIYU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60DaMksoSCQ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7aXmiQdAHc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CPZd5Djdr4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmtYWxdKAog https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BY45tp_r3Q https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYxCxAg90wQ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYIToM7bvMc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfkCVIvIqSc https://www.twitch.tv/solarfortnite https://mixer.com/KBeersmash https://www.twitch.tv/rrascal?fbclid=IwAR0ht8-Z57xpQq95cVuGgisyKYR2M2GODfy7qUvqliY77jm9Ztf_6-YolUg	https://www.twitch.tv/videos/392229077?filter=all&sort=time https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzNDmb-meew https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyEa_Q9mxrw https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJUtr7_ZE6o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVadMWMVR2c https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuhAEAudlpg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txG9Va2VjUg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FepIkIIumA https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfLn0p6kiHk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFNrjCFDxyU
beauty	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVibb6rOQgc https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrMqPFdVmx-F5LUMPIOIbGg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KG2ZUTCTIaw https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyvIagTgvGY https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66INB9wAlaY https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy3OqsFx_UE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlt9L6ul4bU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPDWiY1TODA https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TsWAVdH_v4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YJMnt68G5U	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8pQUUNvIF8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBEA2Jzm-Y https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfKsHsg9ggg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC60-i99bQk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huoyUJ135EE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ll_i2ogg_o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvWUtYcPtEk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-L3uEsgAgo https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVCIMJ9blcw https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaFU2Bo-sEI

2.2. General Findings

Today the influencers have no common way to disclose partnership. There are no guidelines followed by every influencer to disclose partnerships on video content. Content creators can be more or less transparent towards partnerships. There exist as many ways to disclose sponsors as there are influencers. This section presents the main findings of the exploratory research.

The first observation made based on the analyses of the videos is the mention of the sponsor. It seems that the sponsor is most of the time mentioned in the description box with a link to the brand company website.

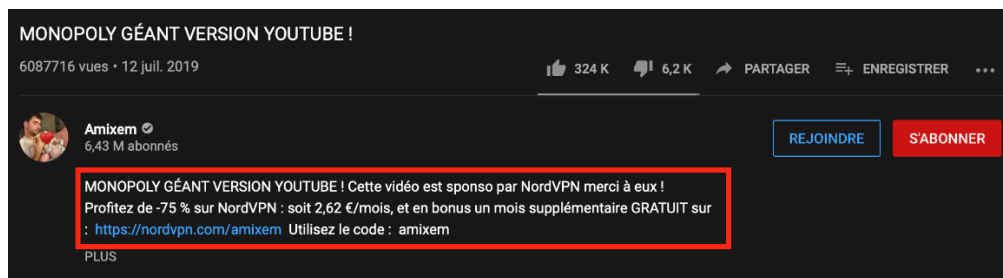


Figure 2: example of description box where the sponsor is mentioned with a link. The picture shows the description where the partnership is disclosed in the first lines. The name and the link of the sponsor are present without any additional action from the viewer.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrQ5DL-0ITA>

Influencers also invites viewers to check the description box when they speak about the brand or the product. Some youtubers do not mention the sponsor in the video, there is only a link in the description box. Without checking the description panel, it is impossible to be sure whether the video is sponsored or not. Another finding is the way to disclose the partnership. It seems that content creators disclaim more often partnerships orally when they present the brand than visually by showing the brand logo. Many youtubers begin their introduction by introducing the subject of the video and then thank their sponsor at the end of the introduction (figure 3).



Figure 3: Example of a video where the influencer orally mentions the sponsor. The automatic translation tab mentions the sponsor NordVPN at 38 seconds. The sponsor is also presented visually in this case.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrQ5DL-0ITA>

There is a trend to integrate a link to the company website in the description box when the youtuber discloses the partnership, but it is not always the case. It seems also that youtubers do not have a common and clear way to disclaim partnership. Some thanks the brand, others use more explicit terms like “sponsor” or “partner”. Sometimes it seems that the brand which sponsors the video is mentioned, but there is no clickable link to the website of the brand. There is a trend to add “honest opinions” disclaimer in the description box, but the place where the partnership is disclaimed is not always the same. The “honest opinions” mention is a small paragraph written or said by the influencer to inform that although the video is sponsored, the opinion given is personal and honest (figure 4).

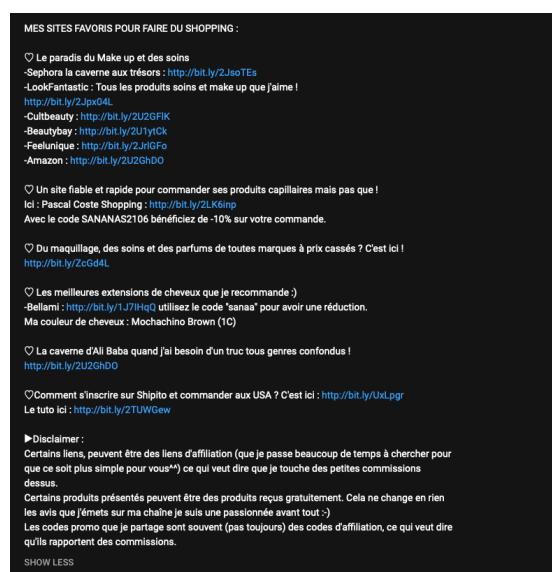


Figure 4: The last paragraph shows an example of honest opinions. The influencer claims that although his links are affiliated, his opinions and views remain unchanged.

Some Youtubers mention their partner at the top of the description box so, the partnership is visible without scrolling. In others cases the partnership is located in the middle or at the bottom of the description. When the sponsor fits the content of the video, youtubers seems to not mention orally the sponsor. Sponsors that are well integrated in the storytelling are not mentioned by influencers (figure 5). There is a certain trend to mention “includes paid promotion” but the mention is not always present (figure 6). The definition of paid promotion given by YouTube is quite vague for free product sampling and depend on the case (Wu, 2016).

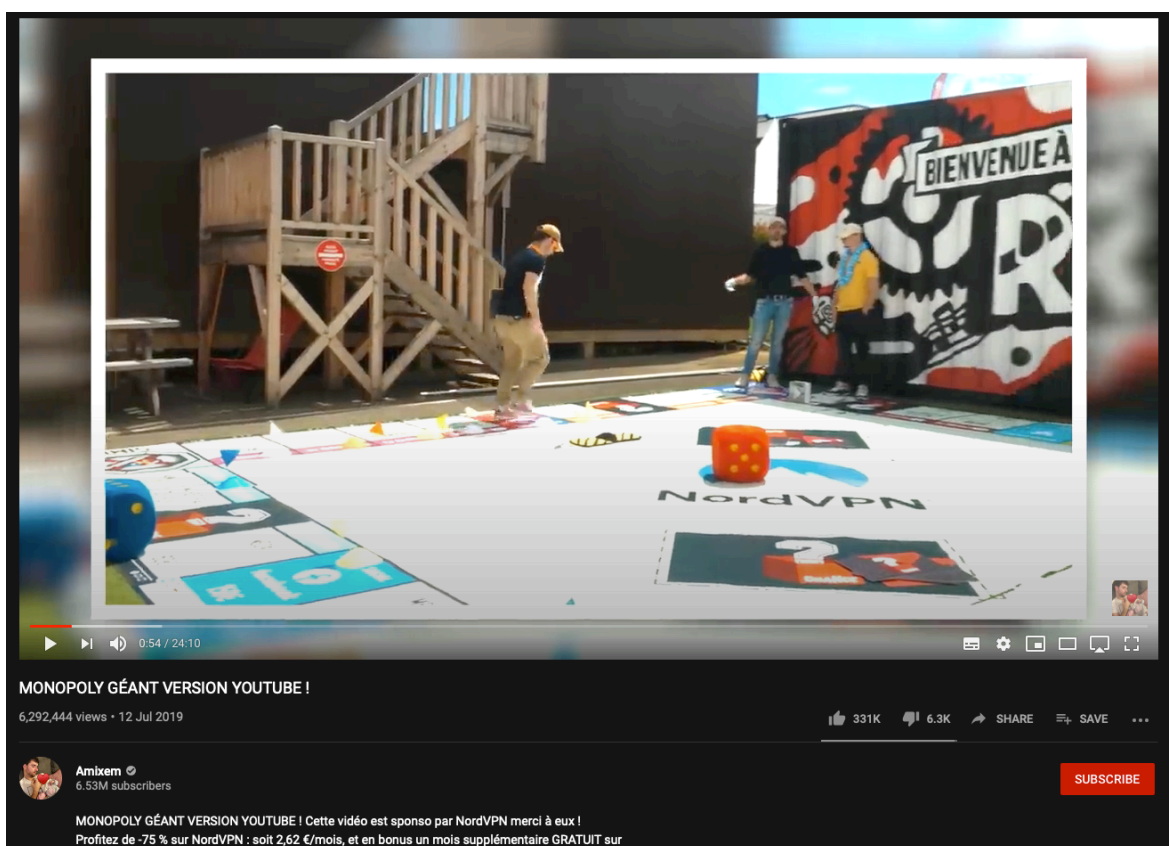


Figure 5: The picture shows youtubers playing a giant monopoly. In this video the partner brand is fully integrated in the video script. In the center of the game board is the sponsor of the video: NordVPN.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrQ5DL-0ITA>



Figure 6: example of video referenced as "paid promotion" on YouTube. There is a banner just above the button play which mention "included paid promotion". This announcement is present the ten first second of the video to warn the viewers of sponsored content.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfLN0p6kiHk>

In the beauty sphere, there is a certain trend to partner with brands that have products used in the video. Indeed, the products are used and tested in the video of the influencer to make the experience more intense. In the beauty sphere and in the humor sphere, the partnership seems to be more present in the storytelling. There is a trend to not explain clearly the partnership. Even if the partner is mentioned, viewers do not always know what the terms of the deal are and how the partner is supporting the creator. There is a trend for influencers to partner only with one brand. Partner with only one brand seems to be a standard in the content creation video sphere, but some video has many sponsors. In the videos analyzed the tone are positive and influencers are enthusiast towards partnerships. When the influencers integrate the products in their storytelling the product seems to be used and shown longer than if the product is not part of the script. In the opposite case, the product seems to be shown quickly at the beginning of the video and it may only be shortly used by the influencer. Some content creators only present the brand or the product without integrating it in the script of the video which looks and sounds like a traditional interruption ad made by the influencer.

The table below shows the different strategies identified during the analysis of the videos. Some strategies are recurrent while others are specific to certain influencers. The table list all the different transparency strategies, lines by lines. The columns are reserved for the different influencer categories. The last column is reserved for the sum of each strategies. The results of the analysis are discussed later in this section.

Type of relation between an influencer and the brand	Humor macro	Humor micro	Gaming macro	Gaming micro	Beauty macro	Beauty micro	Sum
1. Oral mention	7	6	6	12	7	7	45
2. Clickable link	4	7	9	9	9	10	48
3. Mention sponsor in the description box	8	7	9	7	8	8	47
4. Invites to check the description box	/	1	3	3	3	/	10
5. Visual disclosure	4	6	7	4	2	/	23
6. <u>Honest opinions</u>	/	/	/	/	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>
7. Mention at the top of the box	6	5	7	6	/	1	25
8. <u>“includes paid promotion”</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	/	/	<u>6</u>
9. Present in the storytelling	9	3	7	8	8	6	41
10. Product utilization	3	4	7	7	10	6	37
11. <u>Explain the partnership</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>16</u>
12. One brand partner	8	7	8	11	4	4	42
13. Positive tone	7	6	10	9	9	8	49
14. <u>Disclaimer paragraph</u>	/	1	/	/	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>
Sum							

Table 2: The table shows the different elements observed during video analysis for each category of influencers. The first column shows the links that exist between a brand and the influencer within the video. Each time an element is observed in a video, it is noted in the corresponding category. The elements studied are not mutually exclusive, a video can theoretically include all the 14 criteria studied. The last columns show the sum.

This table shows the different criteria analyzed in the videos. On the one hand, some criteria are used very frequently by influencers irrespectively of the type of influencers or the product presented. These strategies are in bold in the previous table. This is the case, for example, of

the oral mention of the sponsor, the link and the mention of the partner in the description or the positive tone used to present the brand or the product. The presence of the product in the storytelling is also a recurring element analyzed in the videos. This can be explained by the fact that the influencers present on YouTube mainly create video content for their community. On the other hand, certain strategies, underlined in the table, seem to be used less by influencers. This is the case, for example, for the disclaimer paragraph, the explanation of the partnership, the mention "includes paid promotion" or the mention of honest opinions. The lack of transparency concerning the partnership can be understandable when the partnership is seen as a contract between the two parties (the influencer and the brand). From this point of view, it becomes normal not to talk about or reveal the partnership.

2.3. Specific Findings

The previous section showed the general trends that emerged across all of the videos analyzed. This provided an initial understanding of the current environment. However, a more specific intra-category analysis allows new discoveries to be made and nuances to be added to the general findings. The following paragraphs focus on one category of influencers at a time or relate two strategies studied, trying to explain a correlation between the two.

A first discovery can be made concerning the mention of the sponsor in the description. As mentioned above, the mention of the sponsor is one of the most observed practices in this analysis. However, the place of the mention of the sponsor in the description also has its importance. If the influencer mentions the sponsor in the first lines, the viewer will be warned without having to do anything. Conversely, if the mention is present lower down in the description, the viewer will have to display the whole description to be able to see the partnership. On the basis of this difference, we can see that in the analyzed sample only half of the influencers mentioned their sponsors in the first lines of the description. This ratio seems to be even lower for beauty influencers. For this last category, the partnership is, in the analyzed videos, a partnership via affiliated links. This means that the viewer who is really interested in the products will check the description, while the viewer who is not interested will not pay attention to it and may not be aware of the partnership.

A second interesting point to address concerns the mention of honest opinions during the videos. Even if the strategy of mentioning honest opinions is not the most used one, this trend is only observed among beauty influencers regardless of the size of their community. Both macro- and micro-influencers use this strategy. This observation seems also to be correlated with the mention of disclaimer paragraph. The mention of honest opinion in most of the time include in the disclaimer paragraph for this sample of videos.

In some cases, this transparency strategy does, nevertheless, present some problems. Some youtubers use products given by the companies and link the products in the description via affiliated links. Then they write a disclaimer paragraph at the end of the description box to say that the video is not sponsored, and the opinions are honest even if there are some affiliated links. This finding is interesting in two aspects. First the disclaimer is located at the bottom of

the description box. So, viewers must scroll all the way down to read it. This may exclude some viewers who do not read the full description. Secondly, affiliated links is a sort of sponsoring explains by Wu (2016), so the disclaimer is not true.

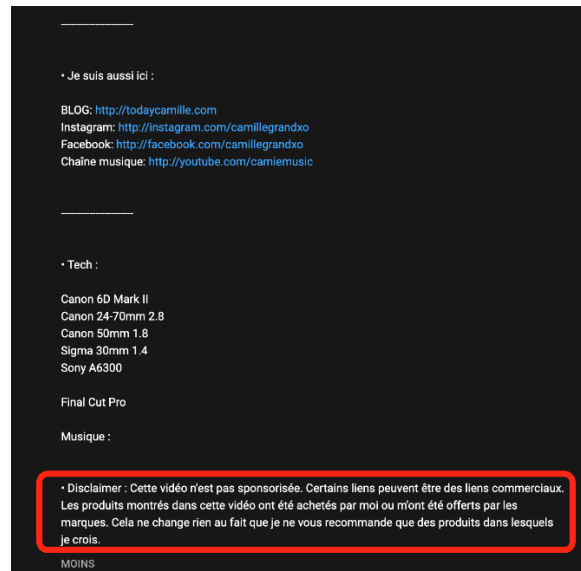


Figure 7: Example of disclaimer paragraph. The figure shows an example of disclaimer message. The youtuber explains via a disclaimer message that the video is not sponsored. However, the description above present affiliate links.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC60-i99bQk&t=309s>

When the partnership is about a product, the analyze show that influencers often use it in the video. Therefore, the partnership is part of the storytelling of the video. It is therefore much more difficult to award the partnership because it is an integral part of the video. When the partnership concerns a service, the analysis carried out shows that the influencer is less likely to use the product and seems to present it at the beginning of the video without integrating it into the general storytelling. In the latter case, the presentation of the product resembles a traditional advertisement conveyed by the influencer. A second distinction can be made according to whether it is a micro-influencer or a macro-influencer. Indeed, macro-influencers are less transparent towards their partners. They partner with brands and become brand's personality. Macro-influencers have more financial and relational means that allow them to create a more immersive video. The sponsor is more integrated in the storytelling. Sponsors included in some videos analyzed are so well-integrated that it is impossible to know whether the video is sponsored without checking the description box.

In the humor sphere the youtubers create mini movies in the universe of the brand. For example, for a game, Overwatch, a creator has created cosplays of the main characters and imagined a mini battle on the universe of the game. In the gaming sphere the gamers wear or use the products' brand. The product placement is implicit. Finally, the beauty influencers wear or use the product in their video as gaming influencers. On the other side, micro-influencers seem to be more transparent and disclose in a more explicit way their partnerships.

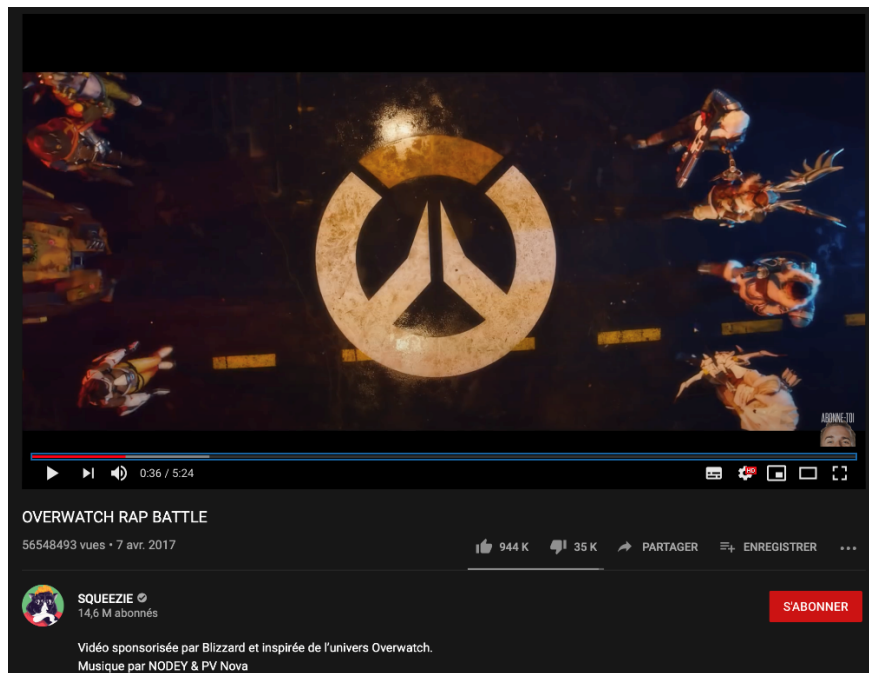


Figure 8: Example of well-integrated partnership. The picture shows an example of well-integrated partnership. In this case the youtuber has create a rap battle where the actors wear cosplays of Overwatch universe. The logo of the game is also present in the center of the screen.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZPpU7774DQ

The analysis also showed that most of the influencers' videos included the mention of the sponsor in the description. However, few influencers invite viewers to check the description. This once again has the consequence of revealing the partnership to viewers who are genuinely interested in the product or service. This discovery is all the more interesting when it is related to the fact that the sponsor is not always present in the visible part of the description.

2.3.2. Beauty specific findings

When focusing on beauty influencers, there are similarities within this category of influencers that distinguish them from other categories. The first point concerns the number of partnerships per video. In the humor and gaming categories, it would seem that influencers deal only with one brand. This is absolutely not the case for beauty influencers for which there are often several brands. In this case partnerships are affiliated links. All the links are present in the description, but the products are not necessarily mentioned or shown explicitly in the video. A second point noted during the analysis is the use of the product. Gaming and beauty influencers tend to use the product in their video. This can be explained as said before by the fact that these products are often physical products and therefore can be shown in front of the camera.

Finally, none of the analyzed beauty influencer videos had the mention "includes paid promotion". This can be explained by the type of partnership. Many beauty influencer partnerships are affiliated links or free products. YouTube does not give a clear definition of whether a video is sponsored or not and therefore whether the mention "includes paid promotion" is necessary or not.

2.3.3. Typology

On the basis of these observations, we can try to draw up a typology of the different practices used by influencers today. On the one hand, we have the strategies relating to description and on the other hand, those relating to the video itself.

Regarding description practices, there are different strategies that can be listed in order of recurrence in our analysis.

	Transparency strategies	Explanations	Percentage of observations
1	Clickable link in description	This strategy is the most recurring strategy analyzed in this sample of videos. This can be explained by the fact that it is easy for the partner brand to analyze the profitability of the partnership via this link.	79%
2	Mention of the sponsor in the description	This strategy is also recurrent in the analysis. However, some influencers play with words and use ambiguous terms such as "support", "help" and not more explicit terms such as "partnership" or "sponsors".	77%
3	Disclaimer paragraph	This transparency strategy is often found at the end of the description and is most of the time inaccurate as explained above. This strategy could be effective in strengthening the parasocial relationship between influencer and the community	18%
4	Invites viewers to check out the description	This strategy could greatly improve the transparency of influencers by revealing all the other strategies already in place. For example, a youtuber mentioning its sponsor with a paragraph explaining that its opinions are honest might not seem transparent to a viewer who does not check the description box.	16%
5	Honest opinions	Although being the least represented strategy in the sample, according to the research of Hwang & Jeong (2016) and Dhanesh & Duthler (2019) this strategy proves to be an effective strategy to reinforce the parasocial relationship.	15%

Transparency of influencer is also strongly influenced by the place of these strategies in the description. The earlier these strategies are mentioned in the description, the more likely they are to be seen by the viewer and therefore the youtuber is more likely to be considered as a transparent creator.

Concerning the strategies relating to the video itself, we can also make the same typology.

	Transparency strategies	Explanations	Percentage of observations
1	Positive tone	The positive tone used to talk about a product in videos is the most analyzed strategy in this sample. This recurrence can raise the question of the authenticity of the influence. However, there is a rational explanation. As the YouTuber Milkywaysblueyes explains in her blog, influencers can choose which product they want to promote and naturally decided to promote products they like (Marnette, 2020).	80%

2	Oral mention	Mentioning a sponsor orally is a really effective strategy to be transparent. Indeed, the viewer may not look carefully at the screen and still be warned of a sponsorship in the video.	74%
3	One brand partner	This observation can be seen as a transparency strategy. Indeed, most influencers decide to partner with only one brand per video. This observation is not true for videos in the beauty sphere. The presence of only one brand allows on one hand to have all the consumer's attention on this brand but on the other hand, to be more transparent because the brand is much more present.	69%
4	Present in the storytelling	Influencers are first and foremost content creators. Following this logic, it is normal that the influencer integrates the product into the story of his video. However, this strategy makes the partnership less explicit in the eyes of the viewer. Some partnerships perfectly integrated in the storytelling are almost indistinguishable.	67%
5	Product usage	As mentioned just before, Influencers use the product to integrate them in their storytelling of their videos. The use of products during the video makes the partnership less transparent. Indeed, without consulting the description it is impossible to know if the influencer presents a product because he likes it and bought it or because a brand offered him a partnership.	61%
6	Explain the partnership	As explained earlier, a partnership is a contract with a brand. Explaining a partnership is about revealing the contract between the brand and the influencer, which can be confidential. This could explain why few influencers decide to explain the partnership.	26%
7	Visual disclosure	A visual mention of a partnership is an uncommon practice in the videos analyzed regardless of the size of the influencer or its sphere of influence.	38%
8	"includes paid promotion" mention	Although this option has been available since 5 December 2018, it is the least frequent transparency strategy encountered in this sample. YouTube defines a product placement as: "Paid product placements may be described as pieces of content that are created for a third party in exchange for compensation, and/or where that third party's brand, message, or product is integrated directly into the content" (Youtube, 2020).	10%

		According to this definition, many more videos should include this mention.	
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Concerning the transparency strategy, there exist two main categories: one category relating to the video itself and another relating to the description. In these two categories, the influencers then have the choice between several strategies.

Transparency Strategy by Category

Finally, we can categorize the type of transparency according to the category of influencers. The following table describes the main characteristics observed for each category of influencers before naming these transparency strategies.

	Macro-influencers	Micro-influencers
Humor	The “ integrated transparency ” is the name given to the transparency of the last category. Indeed, this category makes video where the sponsor is fully integrated. It also seems that the sponsor is less often present in the description.	This category of influencers does not have strong characteristics that distinguish it from the others. There is therefore no type of transparency for this type of influencer.
Gaming	Gaming macro-influencer: “ visual transparency ” is the name that can be given to gaming influencers with large audiences. Indeed, the transparency of its influencers is strongly manifested visually.	Gaming influencers use the transparency tools available on YouTube. Indeed, these influencers seem to make more use of the "includes paid promotion" option. In addition, they also seem to explain more often the partnership as such. This is why we can characterize the transparency of these influencers of “ technical transparency ”.
Beauty	This category of influencers can be characterized by “ high transparency ”. Influencers highlight the product by describing it and invite their communities to check the description for more information.	This category of influencers can be characterized by “ honest transparency ”. Indeed, the mention of honest opinions is one of the main characteristics of this category.

2.3. Discussion

The previous section shows that there are common ways to disclose partnership. However, there are similarities in the disclosure methods. Some aspects are interesting to discuss in order to have a clear understanding of current transparency strategies.

Wu (2016) describes the main methods to disclose partnerships on YouTube. However, there seems to be a misunderstanding in the definition of “sponsored video” by the beauty influencers. The specific findings have shown that some beauty influencers affirm that some videos are not sponsored as no brand has paid for it. In fact, affiliated links and free products sampling are two other ways to sponsor videos. Influencers should either educate their community on what a sponsored video is to be sure that the term is well-understood or change the way they disclaim the partnership. The disclaimer paragraph in the description box is often accompanied by a sentence to precise that all the opinions are honest and authentic. This strategy to enhance transparency is beneficial for both viewers and Youtubers. Adding this kind of message improves the parasocial relationship of the influencer with the audience (Hwang, & Jeong, 2016; Dhanesh & Duthler 2019).

A second interesting point to address concerns the macro-influencers who perfectly integrate the universe of the brand in their storytelling. The video produced is anchored in the universe of the brand and the experience for the viewers is immersive. To make the experience even deeper, some youtubers do not present the sponsor. Nevertheless, research has shown the negative impact on the youtuber credibility when a third-party discloses partnerships (Huang, 2015). The negative consequences could happen if the viewer misses to check the description box

Some sponsoring deals are mentioned at the bottom of description box. This strategy is ambiguous. On the one hand, the influencer discloses the partnership, what is beneficial for everyone, but on the other hand, this section is hidden at the end of the description box. Viewers must click on the button “more” below the video and scroll all the way down to find the paragraph. On smartphones, it is even less intuitive. The button “more” is replaced by an arrow next to the title of the video. Today more than 70% of the videos are watched on a mobile phone, so many people do not see the partnership mention at the end of the description box (YouTube, 2020).

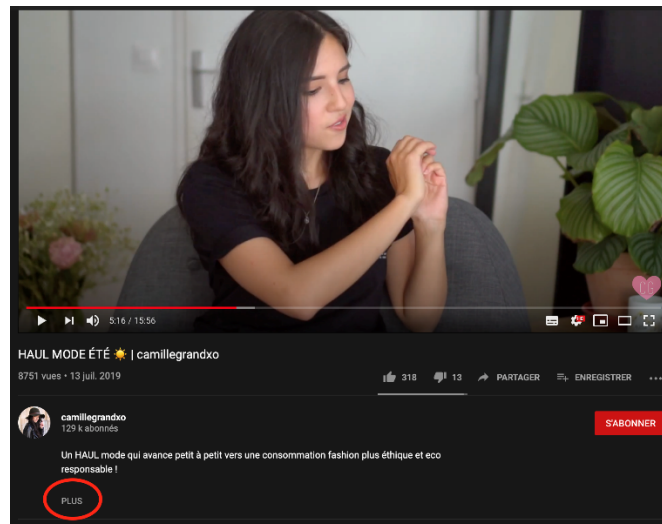


Figure 9: example of the button more. The red circle on the picture shows the button “more” indicating that the description is longer than two first lines.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC60-i99bQk&t=309s>

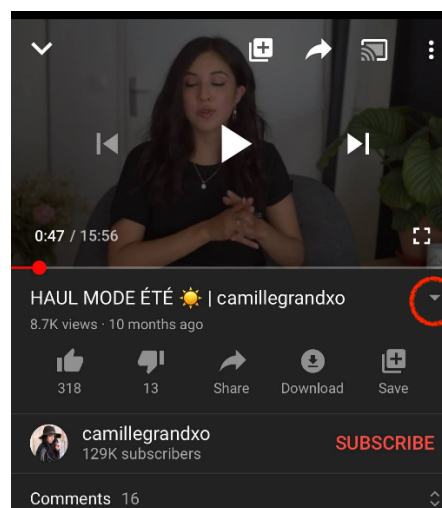


Figure 10: Example of the arrow in mobile devices. The red circle shows the arrow that the viewers must click to view the full description. It is even less intuitive than on computer.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC60-i99bQk&t=309s>

We can also see that each of the six categories of influencers has characteristics that distinguish them from the other categories. We can see that some influencers are more transparent in a visual way and others are transparent in the description. This second category of influencers mainly includes beauty influencers who often have very transparent descriptions about their partnership.

2.4. Limits

All of these discoveries need to be tempered by a few limitations in the research. This search has limitations that should not be ignored in the analysis of the results found.

First at all, videos mainly come from YouTube. The search of videos is biased by the algorithm of that platform. YouTube aims to propose videos that are similar to the content that you just watched. The videos proposed by the platform are similar and are often from the same influencer. This constraint could rule out some interesting influencers. As the research tries to have as much different influencers as possible the discovery of videos was challenging. In order to find videos not too similar to the content just watched, influencers and creators had been found as much as possible via other websites than YouTube.

Secondly the analysis of the video is covering a period between 2015 and 2020. As influence marketing constantly and rapidly evolves, disclosing behaviors could have change between the first and the last video. To deal with this issue, videos should have been selected all on the basis of a specific date in order to have a snapshot of the situation.

Thirdly, there is a personal bias in the selection of the videos. Some of the macro-influencers are chosen based on personal knowledge of influencers. Having a better knowledge of the French-speaking youtubers, the search of influencers was based mainly on personal knowledge. For the English-speaking influencers the discovery of new influencers was based on lists found on the internet. However, by choosing a large number of videos, the search of new channels is unavoidable even for the French-speaking youtubers.

Fourth, it is difficult to certify that all links are affiliate links. Some influencers mention that they are affiliate links, but for others it is difficult to know if the link is affiliated or not. The same limit is valid for the products presented in the videos. Without explicit mention of the influencer, it is difficult to know if the product is sponsored or not.

Finally, as a qualitative research, the findings and the managerial implications are to be taken with caution. It may not be transferable to all influencers on YouTube. Further research based

on quantitative data must be done to confirm and extent the findings of this research. Nevertheless, it seems to be very difficult to implement a quantitative research based on the same criteria. The data collection should require an important number of videos in order to draw consistent conclusions. However, quantitative research on such data is challenging to implement.

Conclusion

Today, influence marketing is growing rapidly (Reech, 2020). It is one of the most promising marketing strategies nowadays. The development of internet and social network have enhanced the efficiency of this strategy. The influencers can reach more people and with less efforts and resources. Moreover, interruption marketing does not work as it used to. Creating a story around a brand is really efficient to keep the attention of the consumer. Each influencer categories (celebrity-, category-, micro-influencers) can fit with the different marketing strategies. However, the key pillar for an influencer is the credibility towards the community. This credibility is based on four parameters: authenticity, brand-fit, content and community (Backaler & Shankman, 2018). The literature shows the importance of the transparency in the disclosure of the partnerships towards communities (Hwang, & Jeong, 2016; Dhanesh & Duthler 2019).

The credibility of an influencer depends of the trust that the community has in his or her personality. However, research have shown that there are no guidelines to disclose partnerships. YouTube policy about sponsoring content is vague and leaves room for interpretation from influencers. Moreover, a majority of influencer does not know precisely the rules and law concerning the partnerships (Reech, 2020).

The exploratory research shows that today there exist currently no conventions to disclose partnership. Content creators can be more or less transparent towards partnerships. Many ways exist to disclose partnership. Some creators disclose their partners in the video, other in the description. Disclosure can be both on screen and orally. Some influencers integrate the product in the video others only present the brand at the beginning of the video as a traditional ad.

However, according to the categories of influencers, that we can identify certain trends. we can therefore see that some influencers integrate the product much more in the video like the beauty influencers. Others prefer to use more technical methods such as micro gaming influencers. Some strategies seem more transparent than others because the mention of the partnership is clear, as is the case for oral mentions or "includes paid promotion" mentions.

Others are less transparent, as are all mentions that are not in the first few lines of the description.

The table below shows the main strategies used by each category of influencers to be transparent to their communities.

	Macro-influencers	Micro-influencers
Humor	The “ integrated transparency ” is the name given to the transparency of the last category. Indeed, this category makes video where the sponsor is fully integrated. It also seems that the sponsor is less often present in the description.	This category of influencers does not have strong characteristics that distinguish it from the others. There is therefore no type of transparency for this type of influencer.
Gaming	Gaming macro-influencer: “ visual transparency ” is the name that can be given to gaming influencers with large audiences. Indeed, the transparency of its influencers is strongly manifested visually.	Gaming influencers use the transparency tools available on YouTube. Indeed, these influencers seem to make more use of the "includes paid promotion" option. In addition, they also seem to explain more often the partnership as such. This is why we can characterize the transparency of these influencers of “ technical transparency ”.
Beauty	This category of influencers can be characterized by “ high transparency ”. Influencers highlight the product by describing it and invite their communities to check the description for more information.	This category of influencers can be characterized by “ honest transparency ”. Indeed, the mention of honest opinions is one of the main characteristics of this category.

This research has allowed us to identify the main influencing strategies used by the different categories of influencers today. However, this typology is in constant evolution, but can give a good overview of the current situation regarding transparency among influencers.

Finally, the results and the findings of this thesis have led to the emergence of new research questions:

1. “What is the effect of the YouTube mention “include paid promotion” in the engagement of the community?”

Analyzing via quantitative data, the impact of the mention proposed by YouTube on different ratios as comments, likes, dislikes or via qualitative research on the quality of the interaction in the comments section.

2. Which transparency strategy(ies) creates the strongest link of trust with the viewer?

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Evaluation Grid

Sponsoring:

Does the influencer write or mention the sponsor? Does (s)he mention the name before the first half? Does (s)he mention the brand's name or does (s)he show the logo?

Is there a clickable link in the description?

Does the influencer explain clearly the partnership?

Does (s)he speak about partner in her/ his storytelling?

Product Placement:

Does the influencer show the product? Mention it ? Both ?

Does the product appear on screen? Which places does it take? How long does it appear? How many times does it be shown on screen?

Is the product integrated in the script? Is it used by the influencer?

Which are the tone used to present the product? Neutral, positive, negative?

How many brands sponsor the video?

Appendix 2: Videos Analyses

Humor Macro influencers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrQ5DL-0ITA>

The sponsor is mention in the first second of the video and the youtuber explains clearly the role of the brand in the partnership. The brand finances the project which is really costly. In the description there is a clickable link in the description with a code to easier measure the ROI of partnership for the brand. The sponsor is included in the storytelling of the video and is really coherent. The product is part of the game played in the video. As the video has a humor ton, the sponsor is presented in a funny way. A fake interrupted ad made by the influencer is used to present the product. The ton used to present the product is ironic. The youtubers make jokes and force the product placement about the product always to a laughable way. As the product is a service it is really difficult for the youtuber to use it in the video. There is no other sponsors or brands showed in the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= ZPpU7774DQ>

The sponsor is clearly express in the video. The video is referenced as a sponsored video in YouTube channel and the description explains the partnership clearly in the first two lines. The video is a battle between youtubers who play roles in the universe of the game: Overwatch. There is a clickable link in the description. However, the video is a mini movie so there are no product placement or opinions on the products brand. Blizzard is the only brand which sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIh94iVsbW0>

Norman fait des vidéos also creates a fiction video where he embodies harry potter for the promotion of the new board game of the saga. The description mentions the sponsor of the video but to create a more realistic atmosphere the youtuber does not mention the name of the brand or any allusion to a partnership. In the end, we clearly understand that it is a video made for a promotion where the video shows clearly the product and describes it briefly. The

video shows and cites the product. Moreover, the entire intrigue is around the name and the content of the game. So when at the end, the product is showed, the memorization is immediate. The tone used to speak about the product is humoristic and funny. However, YouTube allows to clearly mark the promotion ad video which is not made for this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= YTWwTo6xcY>

In this video the channel dude perfect plays with Fortnite Nerf the sponsor of the video. The youtubers thank the brand and explain the game for the viewers. All long the video the product is present. There are clickable links to purchase the product. The channel does not speak about the partnership, but the brand is part of the storytelling of the video. The toys are used by the creators all long the video. The tone used to present the product is positive and enthusiast. Nerf is the only brand which sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McvSotvSx fw>

In this fiction, the youtuber plays the role of batman. The video is referenced as promotional video with the banner "includes paid promotion". However, the description does not mention any sponsor. The youtuber does not cite either a partner in the video. there is no product shown during the video besides a PS4 game of batman. The product is shown less than 3 seconds on screen. The tone used is humoristic. The analysis does not allow to know how many brands sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qv2lffqz65c>

The video is a parody of the series Stranger Things. The youtuber does not mention any sponsor and does not thank a brand. All down the description box a mention cites Netflix as partner of the video. the creator is not transparent about his partnership. No product is used or shown on screen, but the parody is in the universe of the series. The tone is humoristic. The universe is totally integrated in the script of the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHCKAyzUbXI>

This video draws inspiration from the universe of the series walking dead. The brand is mentioned in the middle of the video and the youtuber parodies his own product placement in his video. There is a clickable link in the second line of the description. The influencer does not explain the partnership, but the brand is part of the storytelling. There is no product shown on screen, but the mini movie is in the universe of the series. The tone used to speak about the brand is self-mockery. There is only OCS which sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfzSedylBog>

In this video youtuber show the mention “sponsored by TruLabs” in the first seconds of the video. Afterwards the youtubers wear merch for the sponsor. The brand is omnipresent. The description box mentions the sponsor and shows an affiliated link at the top. The youtubers use infrastructures of the partner and the brand is totally integrated in the storytelling. However, the creators do not explain the partnership. The tone use by the influencers is positive. There is only the partner of the channel which sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRYPyZ7X7GU>

In this video youtubers name the brand in the first second of the video but the logo of the brand is not shown. There is a clickable link in the description but in the middle of the description box. The influencer does not explain the partnership, but the brand universe is well integrated in the video. the product is not used or shown. The tone used to present the product is enthusiast. There is only one brand which sponsor the video: Tom Clancy’s Ghost Recon Breakpoint.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1_ew57z6D8

In this video, the youtubers thanks the brand in the first second of the video. They did not explain the partnership but explain why they collaborate with the brand. There is a clickable link in the description box and the first two lines thank Netflix for the sponsoring. The theme of the video is in the universe of the series promoted by the partnership. As the product promoted is a series it is difficult to use or to show it on screen. The tone use in the video is funny and little bit vulgar. There is only Netflix which sponsors the video.

Humor Micro Influencers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaqK3z98SXE>

In this video, a small bandier mention “includes paid promotion” which is raid shadow legend. The ads before the video is also refer to the same online game. In the early of his video the youtuber takes one and a half minute to present the product. The décor is totally different, the promotion part is filmed indoor while the rest of the video is outdoor. He shows why he promotes the brand and why he likes it. He explains he needs sponsors to finance the video. Finally, he gives a promo code to his community which gives advantages. In the description there is a clickable link for the product. After this small presentation, the video does not have any mention of the sponsor either visually than audibly. The product placement is really well executed. He links emotions with the product and gives arguments for different type of people (young ages which has only played actual video games and middle ages people which have known the older video games). The video present also another brand Jourmagic. This brand is quickly presented, and the tone used is really positive. The placement is made for a logistic reason: the youtuber needs infrastructures that the brand gives him for the video, so he thanks the company quickly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5HLo7CRS7Y>

In this video, Seb la frite parodies the different customers of the brand. There is no explanation of the partnership, but the background is the brand facilities. The brand is showed and written on the video but there is no clickable link. As entire part of the humor fiction, the youtuber does not take the time to explain the partnership. A long the video, the brand logo is show due to the background. The viewer can be misled about sponsored content because the company is well known and the youtuber could have done without partnership. Moreover, the ton used to present the brand is neutral so it can one more time misled the community. In this video there is only La Poste brand that is showed, and the brand is omnipresent.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=138&v=GzAHDLMskPs&feature=emb_log
[o](#)

in this video the youtuber is hosted in the YouTube channel of the brand. So, viewers know directly the brand. There is a clickable link in the description. The influencer makes his jokes

and does not cite the brand name or use a product of the brand. There are no explanations around the partnership in the video. No products are used or shown on screen but the orange, color of the partner is omnipresent. There is only one brand: Orange which sponsors the video made by the humorist.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZvqcqnNRDU>

In this video the youtuber creates a sketch around the fitness gym. The description mention that the video is not sponsored by Adidas but all long the video the brand is present, and the actors use the products of the brand. There is a clickable link to buy Adidas products in the description box but located at the end. The tone seems to be positive because the brand is emphasis by the actors. There is only one recognizable brand: Adidas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XgbjF6vrWM>

In this video the influencer presents the brand after 3min. the youtuber explains why this brand is interesting and why she uses it. She does not explain the partnership. The description begins with the mention of the partner and the affiliated link for the sponsoring. The creator uses the product and show how it works. However, the product is not use for a long moment compare to the video duration. The creator invites viewers to check the description box. The tone used is positive and there is only one brand which sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1pK1zSU6lg>

In this video the influencer presents the brand in the first second of the video. The brand logo is shown, and the influencer names the brand. The creator does not explain clearly the partnership nor the story she had with the brand. In the beginning of the description box there is a link with voucher. However, it is only at the end of the video that the influencer reveals clearly that is a sponsored video. The influencer uses the products all long the video and the products appear on screen. the brand is well-integrated in the script. The tone used is positive and there is only Loungeunderwear which sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TdH6OQUZ0U>

The influencer presents the brand in the first second of the video and explains with the product is interesting. She does not show the logo of the brand. The product is not shown

neither but cited. There is a clickable link in the beginning of the description so viewers can easier find the partnership. The partnership is not explained. The tone used to present the product is positive and enthusiast. There is only Audible which sponsors the video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpVJ0o90pEA>

In this video the youtuber begins the video by specified that the video is sponsored by a brand. The logo is shown while the influencer uses the products of the brand. There is a clickable link in the description box. However, this link is not directly visible, the viewer must click on the “more” button to find the link. The influencer does not explain clearly the partnership, but the brand is present in the storytelling. All long the video the products are shown and appear on screen. when they are shown they take all the screen. The tone used is positive and there is only one brand which sponsor the video: Veetee.

Gaming Macro influencers

<https://www.twitch.tv/videos/392229077?filter=all&sort=time>

In this video two main gaming play and speak about the difference between fench speaking community and anglo-saxon audience. There is not mention of sponsored video but there are affiliated links and the two e-athletes are sponsored by Red Bull and the brand is omnipresent in the video. Gotaga explains the relationship he had with the brand and how the company help him. The brand is totally included in the storytelling. As said previously the product is showed but never describe. The youtubers are ambassadors of the brand. The gamers use the products. In this video there are three main brands: Steelseries, Red Bull and Scuf.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzNDmb-meew>

In this video the American gamer Ninja present in a well-designed video his new set up. From the very beginning to the end a brand is showed: Red Bull. The youtuber explains that his sponsor finances the all set up and allows the pro gamer to upgrade his work environment. There is not clickable link in the description box. The influencer integrates the brand in the storytelling and explains how, with the support of the brand, the project was created. Red Bull is a central player in the storytelling of the video. All long the video Red Bull’s products are showed but Ninja never explains it. The brand also produces merchandising which is worn a

long the video. The ton use to speak about the brand is positive, inspiring. Red Bull is the main sponsor of the video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyEa_Q9mxrw

The sponsor Netflix is mentioned in the first seconds of the video. The youtuber Cyprien explains why he creates the video and why he accepted the partnership before the beginning of the video. There is no clickable link in the description box but the mention “included paid promotion” is present when the video is played. The sponsor is also cited in the top of the description box. The brand is fully integrated in the storytelling of the video. The subject of the video speaks about the new game and the sponsor. The product is not showed but well explain in an exited ton. As the video is a gameplay the product is fully integrated in the script. Netflix is the only brand that sponsors the video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJUtr7_ZE6o

In this video the youtuber plays and presents a new game. The sponsor is not cited explicitly. At the end the gamer thanks the brand for the discovery. In the description box there is clickable link to download the game and the sponsors in mention in the first lines of the description. The influencer does not explain the partnership. However, the product is fully integrated in the storytelling because it is a “let’s play” video, a video where gamer plays a game. The product is showed all long the video and the brand is cited many times. The ton use is quite positive but with some deceptions about some game specificities. Phoenix Labs is the only brand partner of the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVadMWmVR2c>

The youtuber mentions in the first second of the video the sponsor: Roblox. There is a clickable link to download the game. The youtuber explains that partnership allows him to create more expensive projects. The name of the game and the brand are cited many times during the video. Then the gamer launches the game and play Roblox. The product in the center of the video and is showed all long. As the product is a video game, it appears on screen most of the time. The sponsor is fully integrated in the script and the ton use to present the brand is humoristic. There is only Roblox which sponsored the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuHaEAudIpg>

The youtuber does not mention the brand or any sponsors because it is a cartoon video. The sponsored is never mention in the video. The only allusion to the partnership is the citation of a character: “hey it is the same situation as the trailer?!”. There is a clickable link but the youtuber does not invite viewer to check. In the first second of the video the mention “include paid promotion” appears. The partnership is not explained but the brand is integrated in the storytelling of the video. The product never appears on screen, but the cartoon is based on the same environment as the game. The product is fully integrated in the script but never used by the influencer. The ton used to present the video is humoristic and funny. Ubisoft is the only brand which sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txG9Va2VjUg>

the youtuber mentions in the first second of the video the name of the brand and the product. The product appears on screen from the beginning. There is a clickable link in the first line of the description and the gamer invites the viewers to check the description box. The partnership is clearly explained, and the video is centered on the game so, the brand is part of the storytelling. The mention “included paid promotion” also appear at the beginning of the video. The product is showed and mentioned all long the video. The place that it takes is central, the product if fully integrated in the script. It is a “let’s play” video. The ton used to present the game is really positive and exited. Epic Games is the only brand which sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FepIkIIlLumA>

In this video Dude perfect YouTube channel plays Fortnite. A quick transition showed three times mention “sponsored by Epic Game”. There is a clickable link at the top of the description and the youtuber invites the viewers to check the description box. Dude Perfect does not explain the partnership and the sponsor is part of the storytelling only for a part of the video. The game is played and mentioned and is fully integrated in the script. The product appeared one third of the video duration and take all the screen. The ton used to present the product is positive and energetic. Epic games is the only company which sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfLN0p6kiHk>

in this video the youtuber mention his sponsor in the first second of the video. He shows what is the game and what are the main characteristics of the game play. There is a clickable link at the top of the description and the youtuber invites his community to check the description box. There is also a mention “include paid promotion” for Monster Legends a mobile game. That is the only presentation of the sponsor. Then the gamer switches to another game and plays without come back to the game of the sponsor. The game is show in the early of the video and it takes all the screen. The product is not integrated in the script and the ton used to present the product is positive. Monster Legends is the only brand which sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFNrjCFDxyU>

in this video the youtuber mention his sponsor in the first second of the video. He shows what is the game and what are the main characteristics of the game play. The gamer has its own dragon called with the same name. There is a clickable link at the top of the description and the youtuber invites his community to check the description box. The sponsor brand is Dragon city a mobile game available on IOS and Android. That is the only presentation of the sponsor. Then the gamer switches to another game and plays without come back to the game of the sponsor. The game is show in the early of the video and it takes all the screen. The product is not integrated in the script and the ton used to present the product is positive. Dragon city is the only brand which sponsors the video.

Gaming Micro Influencers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2EW1GtaPnE>

the Youtuber mentions and thanks the sponsor in the beginning of the video and invites viewers to check the description box. There is a clickable link at the beginning of the description and the mention “included paid promotion” is present. The gamer plays the game of the sponsor, so the partner is integrated in the storytelling of the video. However, the youtuber does not explain the partnership clearly. The product is showed all long the video and takes all the screen. As it is a “let’s play” video the product is fully integrated in the video. The ton used to present the only brand which sponsors the video is positive and thankful.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdhrEaSDIYU>

the youtuber begins the video with a small fiction to introduce his sponsor: FlightRight. The sponsor is explained and “include paid promotion” is present. The logo of the brand is also showed. The youtuber invites viewers to check the description box where a clickable link is present at the top. The content creator does not explain the partnership but integrate really well the sponsor via the storytelling. As the sponsor brand offers services, it is difficult for the influencer to show the product. So, he describes really well the service and the advantages. The ton used to speak about the brand is positive. FlightRight is the only brand which sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60DaMksoSCQ>

in this video the youtuber Kstar present a negative review of a product received by his sponsor. He mentions the name and the product are there are clickable links for the product. However, these links are not affiliated. There is no clear explanation of the partnership and the brand has no place in the storytelling. Kstar shows the products and mentions it. During all the video the products are on screen. The script is written to speak about the review of the products. The ton used to speak about the brand is negative. Bangood is the only brand which sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7aXmiQdAHc>

In this video the youtuber presents the partner in the first second of the video. The brand and the products are shown and mentioned via an ad create by the influencer. There is a clickable link, but the description box does not contain a disclaimer about any sponsoring. The content creator explains the partnership and he integrate the brand in his storytelling. A mention of “included paid promotion” a present at the beginning of the video. the youtuber takes time to present the products of the brand but afterward does not speak anymore about the product or the brand. The ton used to speak about the brand is thankful and positive. Alienware is the only brand which sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA0BULpIRXA>

in this video the youtuber mentions his sponsor: Red Bull. he explains the relation he had with the brand and how the company supports him. There is no clickable link in the description box. The partnership is well-explained, and the brand is completely integrated in the storytelling. The youtuber does not show any product but mentions it. The product has a small place in the script and the ton used is really positive. There is only Red Bull brand which sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CPZd5DJdr4>

In this video the content creator presents the brand and thanks his sponsor: Igraal. In the description box there is an affiliated link, but no mention of any partnership. He explains in his storytelling why the brand sponsor him but does not explain the partnership. As the company offers services, the youtuber cannot show the product and does not make a demonstration of the service. The product does not appear on screen and are not used by the influencer. The ton used to present the brand is positive and calm. The youtuber change the ton of his voice when he speaks about the brand. Igraal is the only brand which sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmtYWxdKAog>

In this video the only disclaimer about the partnership is the acknowledgment made by the influencer at the beginning of the video. The brand is mention and the relationship is clearly explained: the brand had sent free products. There are clickable links in the description but no mention of any sponsoring in the description box. The brand is fully integrated in the storytelling. The products are described and shown. They take a central place in the video. The youtuber presents the characteristics of each products. The ton use to present the products is positive and Logitech is the only sponsoring brand.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BY45tp_r3Q

Before starting his video, the youtuber thanks all the sponsors which help him to create the video. he shows and mentions each brand. The description box contains all the link for the product and the influencer invites viewers to check the description. These links are not affiliated. The youtuber explains the partnership and integrates the brands in his storytelling. The products are shown and well-described all long the video. Each product is presented

successively and are fully integrated in the script of the video. The tone used to speak about product is neutral and authentic. There are six brands which sponsor the video: Asus ROG, Intel, Samsung, ThermalTake, REKT and Sharkoon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYxCxAg90wQ>

In this video the influencer reviews a game which is the sponsor of the video. the youtuber explains the game but does not explain the partnership. All the storytelling is around the game. There is no link in the description for the game or the brand. The product is used all long the video and the tone used by the influencer is really positive. The product takes all the screen during all the video. the script is built around the game. Sengoku is the only brand present in this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYIToM7bvMc>

In this video the influencer reviews a game which is the sponsor of the video. the youtuber explains the game and cites the main characteristics of the gameplay. All the storytelling is around the game. There is a link in the description for the game. The two first lines are dedicated to thanks the sponsor and show the link for the game. The product is used all long the video and the tone used by the influencer is really positive. The product takes all the screen during all the video. the script is built around the game. miHoYo is the only brand present in this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfkCVlvIqSc>

In this video the influencer reviews a gaming chair. The youtuber reviews the chair and explains why he loves the chair. The brand is mentioned and shown. The description box contains affiliated link. The two first lines are dedicated to the sponsor. The creator does not explain the partnership but includes the chair in his storytelling. All long the video the product is present. The tone is neutral and the influencer arguments not his opinions. There is only one brand which sponsor the video.

<https://www.twitch.tv/salaryfortnite>

In this video, the influencer plays a game. He mentions and thanks the brand between two rounds or when the game is less challenging. There is no storytelling around the brand. The

description contains the name of the sponsors and the partners. The gamer does not show the product but used it in his videos. The products are not integrated in the script of the stream. The tone used to present the product is positive. There are two brands which sponsor the video: Logitech and Predator.

<https://mixer.com/KBeersmash>

In this video, the influencer plays a game. He mentions and thanks the brand between two rounds or when the game is less challenging. There is no storytelling around the brand. The description does not contain the name of the sponsors and the partners. The gamer does not show the products, but the influencer uses it in his videos. The products are not integrated in the script of the stream. The tone used to present the product is positive.

https://www.twitch.tv/rrascal?fbclid=IwAR0ht8-Z57xpQq95cVuGgjsyKYR2M2GODfy7qUvqliY77jm9Ztf_6-YoIUg

In this video, the influencer plays a game. He mentions and thanks the brand between two rounds or when the game is less challenging. The description contains the name of the sponsors and the partners. The gamer does not show the products, but the influencer uses it in his videos. The products are not integrated in the script of the stream. The tone used to present the product is positive. There is no storytelling around the brand. The video is sponsored by Centerlink

Beauty Macro influencers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8pQUNVrIF8>

in this video the youtuber present his makeup routine. The sponsor is rapidly mentioned after the first half of the video. In the description box there is a mention of the partnership with affiliated links, but this mention is in the middle of the description so viewers must scroll. However, the influencer invites viewers to check the description box. The partnership is not clearly explained but it is integrated in the storytelling. The products are mentioned and shown less than one minute. When the product is shown it is the main subject. The influencer explains well the features and uses it. The ton used is a convinced one. The content creator

thanks only one sponsor while there are many links from different brands in the description box.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBEA2Jjzm-Y>

In this video the youtuber presents quickly the brand. The name is mentioned, and the products are showed. All the products presented in the video are linked in the description box. The influencer does not explain clearly the partnership. However, the sponsor is part of the storytelling: the content creator tests the products of the brand. Most of the screen is dedicated to products of the brand and they are shown all long the video. The products are well integrated in the script, the influencer uses each one. The ton used to review the product is funny and cool. Jowelcandle is the only brand which sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfKsHsg9ggg>

In this video the youtuber presents the brand, HelloFresh, when the products are on screen. The name is mentioned, and the products are showed. An affiliated link is present in the description box with coupon. However, this link is hidden in the middle of the description. The influencer does not explain clearly the partnership. However, the sponsor is part of the storytelling: the content creator uses the products of the brand to tell her story. Most of the screen is dedicated to products during the cooking moment. The products are well integrated in the script, the influencer uses each one. The ton used to review the product is positive. HelloFresh is the only brand which sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC60-i99bQk>

In this video the influencer does not disclaimed any partnership however the end of the description box contains a small message: *Disclaimer: cette vidéo n'est pas sponsorisée. Certains liens peuvent être des liens commerciaux. Les produits montrés dans cette vidéo ont été achetés par moi ou m'ont été offerts par les marques. Cela ne change rien au fait que je ne vous recommande que des produits dans lesquelles je crois.* The description box contains also many affiliated links. Each product is used and shown by the influencer during the video. so, the products are well-integrated in the script. The ton used to review the brands and the products is really positive. Due to the non-disclaim of partnership it is impossible to say how many brands sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huoyUJ135EE>

in this video the youtuber EnjoyPhoenix mention only one sponsor in the middle of her vlog. She thanks Land Rover for the loaned vehicle. The car's brand is easily recognizable. In the description box there are many affiliated links including one for Land Rover. At the end of the description box, a little mention that some links can be affiliated ones. The influencer does not speak about the partnership. The sponsor is part of the storytelling because the car is used in the vlog. The products are shown and mentioned with sometimes additional explanations. The products appear on screen less than half of the video. the script includes really well all the product. The ton to speak about the products is neutral and honest. She gives positives and drawbacks of the products. Due to the non-disclaim of partnership it is difficult to say how many brands sponsor the video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ll_i2ogg_o

In this video the influencer explains in the first second the partnership and explain why the sponsoring exists. The description box contains a link with the album promoted and the last sentence of the description is "FTC Cette video ies sponsorisée par Warner & Dua Lipa". The product is used during all long the video because the music of the promoted album is played. The subject of the video is totally link with the brand. the tone used is humoristic and there is only one brand which sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvWUtYcPtEk>

In this video the influencer does not disclaimed any partnership however the end of the description box contains a small message: *Disclaimer: certains liens, peuvent être des liens d'affiliation (que je passe beaucoup de temps à chercher pour vous pour que ce soit plus simple pour vous) ce qui veut dire que je touche des petites commissions dessus. Certains produits présentés peuvent être des produits reçus gratuitement. Cela ne change en rien les avis que j'émet sur ma chaine je suis passionnée avant tout. Les codes promos que je partage sont souvent (pas toujours) des codes d'affiliation, ce qui veut dire qu'ils me rapportent des commissions.* The description box contains also many affiliated links. Each product is used and shown by the influencer during the video. so, the products are well-integrated in the script. The brand names are well-recognizable. The ton used to review the brands and the products

is really positive. Due to the non-disclaim of partnership it is impossible to say how many brands sponsor the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-L3uEsqAgo>

In this video the influencer names in the introduction the sponsor. She explains why she made the collaboration but does not explain the partnership. There are clickable links in the description and a disclaimer at the end of the description box. The influencer mentions also orally the sponsor and precise that she mentions the sponsor in the description. All long the video the products of the brand are shown, described and used by the influencer. The tone used to speak about the product is positive. There is only L'oreal which sponsors the video even if there are many affiliated links in the description box.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVCIMJ9blcw>

In this video the youtuber use product of different brands. The influencer does not mention any partnership. However, in the description box there are many affiliated links. At the bottom of the description there is a disclaimer : *◆◆Disclaimer◆ Cette vidéo n'est pas une vidéo sponsorisée ou en partenariat avec une entreprise. Certains liens peuvent être des liens d'affiliation. Certains produits présentés peuvent être des produits reçus gratuitement. Cela ne change en rien les avis que j'émet sur ma chaîne. :) Pour une question de transparence, voici un petit code pour vous aider à mieux comprendre d'où viennent les produits que je mentionne et utilise dans mes vidéos.*

Liens affiliés ◆

Produit reçu gratuitement ◇

All long the video the products are used, described and shown by the influencer. The tone used to present the product is positive and confident.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaFU2Bo-sEI>

In this video the youtuber use product of different brands. The influencer does not mention any partnership. However, in the description box there are many affiliated links. At the bottom of the description there is a disclaimer *DISCLAMER: Ca m'arrive de faire des partenariats (=*

mon travail), mais mon avis ne change en rien! Alors merci de le respecter et de me faire confiance - Principes et Valeurs les babes! #Romies

All long the video the products are used, described and shown by the influencer. The tone used is positive. Many brands sponsor the video.

Beauty Micro Influencers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVibb6rOQgc>

The influencer mentions the brand sponsor in the beginning of the video. she explains what the brand and the service of sponsor is are not the center of the video. Once the partnership is presented the influencer does not speak anymore of the brand. The description box contains affiliated links from other brands and a thanks for the partnership. Products are quickly shown in the beginning on the website of the brand and take all the screen. This partnership looks like a traditional ad. The products are not used or integrated in the script and the tone is positive. Badoo is the brand that sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrMqPFdVmx-F5LUMPIOIbGg>

The influencer does not mention any sponsor in the video. However, in the description there are affiliated links to many brand websites. The description has also a disclaimer:

DISCLAIMER Cette vidéo n'est PAS sponsorisée. Certains des liens plus haut peuvent être des liens d'affiliation (ce qui ne change rien pour vous). The products shown in the video are not the product of the brands which have affiliated links. the tone used to review the product is positive. Many brands have affiliated links in the description box.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KG2ZUTCTIaw>

The influencer present in the beginning of the video a brand and says that the video is not sponsored by this last one. However, the youtuber receives the product from the brand. The influencer does not explain the partnership but explains why she decides to make this review. The product is mentioned and shown on screen while the influencer speaks about it. The youtuber uses the product and integrates it in the script. The description box has an affiliated link for the product but no mention of any partnership. The tone used to speak about the brand is neutral.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyvlaqTgvGY>

the influencer mentions the brand sponsor in the beginning of the video. he explains in a “small video” in another background what are the service offer by the brand. Once the partnership is presented the influencer does not speak anymore of the brand. The description box contains affiliated link and a mention of the partnership in the two first lines. This partnership looks like a traditional ad. The products are not used or integrated in the script and the tone is positive. Poulpeo is the brand that sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66INB9wAlaY>

the influencer mentions the brand sponsor in the beginning of the video. she explains why she appreciates the brand and the products, but the products of sponsor are not the center of the video. Once the partnership is presented the influencer does not speak anymore of the brand. The description box contains affiliated links from other brands and a mention of the partnership. Products are quickly shown in the beginning on the website of the brand and take all the screen. This partnership looks like a traditional ad. The products are not used or integrated in the script and the tone is positive. WhoWeAre is the brand that sponsors the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy3OqsFx UE>

in this video the youtuber speaks about the brand “the ordinary” and show some products of the brand. the description has clickable links which are affiliated but no mention of any sponsors or disclaimer. The influencer says that she receives free product from the brand but “it is not a sponsored video”. the creator explain why she receives the products and the brand is part of the storytelling. The product is shown and described. The product appears on screen as long as the youtuber uses it. The script is built around the product. The tone used to speak about is positive and the influencer mention only The ordinary as brand.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIt9L6ul4bU>

In this video the influencer mentions no sponsor or brand but shows many products which are easily recognizable. There are no clickable links in the description. The youtuber does not explain the partnership and does not speak about a brand in the video. Each product used are

shown and describe. When the product is cited, it takes all the screen and is shown as long as the influencer speak about. the ton used to speak about the product is positive.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPDWiY1TODA>

In this video the YouTuber Sacheu presents skincare products. The title of the video is “Unsponsored skincare routine Sacheu”. However, in the description box there are affiliated links. The influencer cites the brand and the product but does not show the logo of the brand. As considered as “unsponsored” video the creator does not explain the partnership or integrate it in the storytelling. All long the video the influencer used product and mentions it to explain the features of each one. The products appear on screen while the youtuber speaks about. The products are well integrated in the storytelling and the tone used is positive. There are many brands which have sponsored links.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TsWAvdH_v4

Nicole Tanneberg does not mention the name of the sponsor in is video but shows products of recognizable brands. At the bottom of the description box a small paragraph says *DISCLAIMER: All opinions are 100% mine. The description may contain affiliate links, which means that if you click on one of the product links and make a purchase, I may receive a small commission. This helps support my channel and allows me to continue to make video like this. Thank you for the support! Xoxo.* The disclaimer is hidden at the bottom of the description box. So, there are some affiliated clickable links. She does not speak about the brand in her storytelling. Each product appears on screen for the duration while the influencer is speaking about it. The YouTuber use all the product describe and linked in the description. The ton used to describe the products is positive, she is convinced by the products. Many brands sponsored the video via affiliated link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YJMnt68G5U>

in this video the YouTuber does not mention the sponsor or any related disclamation about any partnership. She presents products of the brand Flamingo. However, at the end of the description box the mention “*FTC: this video is sponsored by Flamingo” shows that the video is sponsored. There are clickable links for all the products presented. These links are affiliated ones. Even if the influencer does not disclose the partnership, she explains why she decides

to review the products and explains the impact of the brand on her life. Each product is showed and explained. The influencer takes the time to describe each one and the products are central in images. The ton used is positive. The YouTuber presents “products she believes in”. There is only Flamingo which sponsors the video.

1. Développer la **revue de littérature** (ne pas hésiter à aller voir d'autres mémoires sur le marketing d'influence ou les youtube).

