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Celebrity faces: How a morality clause can protect the artist and business



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What better way is there to get the word out about a product than to find someone who already has an impressive following? Before social media, businesses would use artists who were famous in TV shows, movies, the fashion industry, etc. But with the advancement of social media, even everyday people can get the word out about a product — and sometimes better than traditional sales and marketing



word out about a product — and sometimes better than traditional sales and marketing tactics.



However, just as an artist wants to protect his or her reputation, companies should also be cognizant of making sure their brands match the artists. An animal awareness company will undoubtedly catch flack for using an artist who loves to wear fur. An anti-tobacco company will be less than thrilled to hear an artist laughing and joking about his heyday of smoking marijuana and cigarettes. A domestic violence awareness company won't be taken seriously at all if the celebrity promoting the company's name is seen fighting on reality TV.

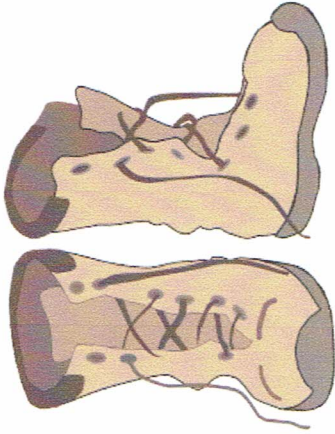


RAISING THE STAKES FOR JOB SEEKERS: COMPANY INVESTMENT PROS AND CONS

What's the best way to tell the world about your product? (Photo credit: Pixabay)

Granted no company can treat celebrities the way it would its own employees, but there has to be a middle ground. And that middle ground is often at the contract stage.

Recommended Reading: "[Celeb social media promotions: When to add more 'ad' information](#)"



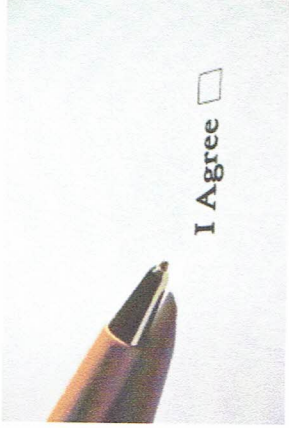
Referring back to one example above, say a male celebrity was often seen wearing hiking boots made from actual suede and leather instead of manmade products. This is his go-to item for any fashion shoot. Now let's say that guy catches the eye of a celebrity vegan. Or, maybe he guest hosts a cooking show. He learns the cooking process of one of his favorite meals and decides to stop eating meat.

Both the celebrity and the company may have to put each other in their shoes. (Photo credit: Pixabay)

(Snoop Dogg's reaction to finding out how **hot dogs are made** is one of many examples of how this can happen in real life.)

An animal-friendly clothing company catches wind of his decision and hires him for an animal friendly shoe ad campaign (think manmade leather). But his fans and foes challenge him on this by posting memes of him wearing those trademark boots. The company had no idea that this was one of his signature clothing items and now wants to ditch him from the clothing ad campaign, which would cause the artist to lose a considerable amount of money. Who's wrong? And who's right? It depends on the terms negotiated into the brand ambassador or celebrity endorsement contract.

Morals clause: This clause gives the brand the ability to terminate the endorsement contract if the celebrity becomes the subject of public disrepute, contempt or scandal. Brands often push for a broad morals clause so they have flexibility in terminating their relationship with the celebrity or influencer. On the other hand, celebrities and influencers will want to negotiate a narrow and specific definition of what is considered a violation of the morals clause.



Make sure both parties agree on all contract terms. (Photo credit: Pixabay)

Specific termination rights: Brand owners want to have the ability to quickly terminate the relationship with a celebrity or social media influencer who is no longer in alignment with the brand's image. A termination clause specifies situations when a brand can terminate the contractual relationship with the celebrity or influencer. An animal rights organization will want to stipulate in the termination clause if the celebrity is publicly photographed wearing fur. Then the organization can terminate its relationship with the celebrity.

Steps to mitigate brand damage: This clause contractually obligates the celebrity or influencer to attend press conferences or issue a statement of apology for conduct that

Steps to mitigate brand damage: This clause contractually obligates the celebrity or influencer to attend press conferences or issue a statement of apology for conduct that has a detrimental effect on the brand.

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Have more questions about endorsement or brand ambassador contracts? Contact [J. Paye & Associates](#) today.

Shamontiel L. Vaughn contributed to this blog. Find out more about her at [Shamontiel.com](#).

The information contained here is intended to provide useful information on the topic covered but should not be construed as one-size-fits-all legal advice. Speak to an attorney specifically about your contractual agreement for specific terms and conditions.
