



## **FTC Releases New Guidelines on Testimonials**

Published 11/24/2009 - 5:13 a.m. CDT

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reports on its website [here](#), that it has published "final guides" governing endorsements, and testimonials, and that these changes will affect testimonial advertisements, bloggers, and celebrity endorsements. The FTC announces that: "it has approved final revisions to the guidance it gives to advertisers on how to keep their endorsement and testimonial ads in line with the FTC Act."

"Under the revised Guides, advertisements that feature a consumer and convey his or her experience with a product or service as typical when that is not the case will be required to clearly disclose the results that consumers can generally expect. In contrast to the 1980 version of the Guides – which allowed advertisers to describe unusual results in a testimonial as long as they included a disclaimer such as "results not typical" – the revised Guides no longer contain this safe harbor."

"The revised Guides specify that while decisions will be reached on a case-by-case basis, the post of a blogger who receives cash or in-kind payment to review a product is considered an endorsement. Thus, bloggers who make an endorsement must disclose the material connections they share with the seller of the product or service. Likewise, if a company refers in an advertisement to the findings of a research organization that conducted research sponsored by the company, the advertisement must disclose the connection between the advertiser and the research organization. And a paid endorsement – like any other advertisement – is deceptive if it makes false or misleading claims."

"Celebrity endorsers also are addressed in the revised Guides....both advertisers and endorsers may be liable for false or unsubstantiated claims made in an endorsement – or for failure to disclose material connections between the advertiser and endorsers. The revised Guides also make it clear that celebrities have a duty to disclose their relationships with advertisers when making endorsements outside the context of traditional ads, such as on talk shows or in social media."