

DMMA host debate to define rules of engagement between bloggers and agencies

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The Digital Media and Marketing Association (DMMA) recently facilitated a Blogger Debate which aimed to resolve a recent issue that had arisen between bloggers, advertising agency and public relations agency owners, on whether bloggers were entitled to charge for promotional posts on brands or if it would result in loss of credibility. The discussion aimed to define the rules of engagement, thus promoting an open channel of communication between the respective parties.

The debate, held at Quirk in Cape Town, was chaired by Nikki Cockcroft, chairwoman of the DMMA, and hosted and facilitated by Suzanne Little, DMMA Head of Marketing, and was attended by a well-known and respected contingent of bloggers, PR professionals and advertising agency heads.

The differentiating factor - amplifying the debate on-line

What differentiated this blogger event from past DMMA debates was the online participation of the larger media and marketing community via the micro blogging site, Twitter. Users could follow the hashtag #DMMAdebate and ask questions, offer opinions as well as discuss the issues at hand with industry experts as well as other bloggers. Therefore, this unique conversation extended further than the boardroom debate to encompass the greater community, which ultimately resulted in the topic trending in South Africa on Twitter on the date.

According to ORM company BrandsEye, the two hour debate resulted in:

- 1 168 mentions
- 318 people participating
- 1 361 810 opportunities to see the conversation

Initial feedback

The general consensus following the event was that no definitive rule regarding the payment of bloggers would be able to be established from a credibility perspective, and each scenario would need to be assessed on an individual case-by-case basis. Those in the marketing space were in agreement that each portal was different and that bloggers needed to be approached with a clear outcome in mind. Bloggers, PR representatives and advertising agency heads were given the opportunity to connect and understand what is expected of each other in these circumstances, ultimately resulting in a better relationship going forward.

Next steps

The DMMA has collated all the questions that arose during the debate and via Twitter and formulated an informal survey for bloggers to share their opinions. A report detailing the findings of the survey will subsequently be distributed to DMMA members. Bloggers interested in adding their voice to the informal South African digital research survey can [click here](#), complete the questionnaire and submit their answers.

Free trial membership

The DMMA is offering a free one-year trial membership to bloggers with less than 15 000 unique browsers a month. To inquire about membership please email info@dmma.co.za.

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