

# DJ Khaled under fire for ‘deceptive’ alcohol advertising

13th April, 2018 by Melita Kiely

Hip-hop producer DJ Khaled has cut back on his alcohol-sponsored social media promotions after being called out by numerous organisations for failing to mark them as ads.



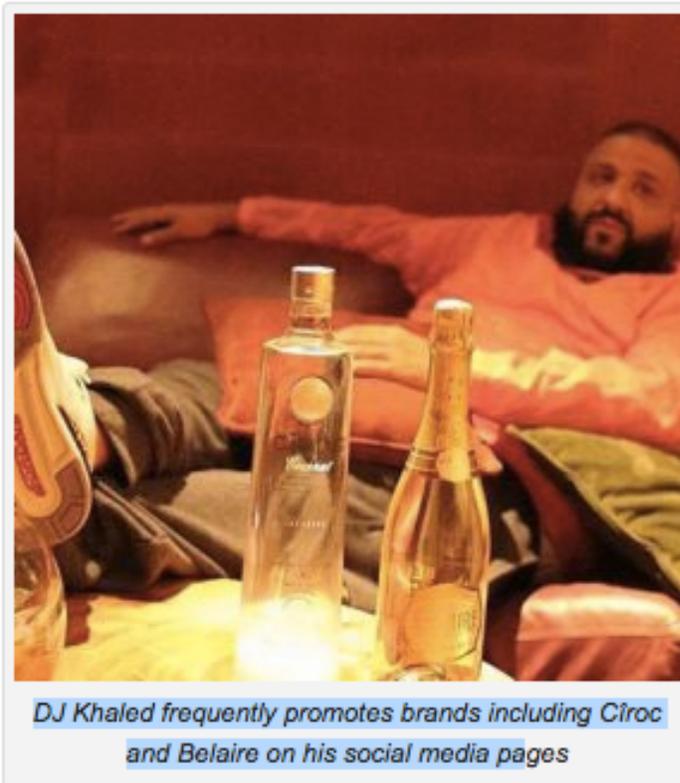
*DJ Khaled has overhauled his social media platforms to ensure any alcohol-sponsored posts are labelled #AD*

Following an investigation launched by truthinadvertising.org (TINA.org) on 29 March in partnership with Public Citizen, Alcohol Justice, US Alcohol Policy Alliance, Campaign for Commercial-Free Childhood, the Center for Digital Democracy, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the group sent a letter to DJ Khaled warning him about his legal obligation to clearly mark sponsored posts as ads.

Within a week of receiving the written warning, DJ Khaled overhauled his social media accounts, either deleting or editing all alcohol-related posts on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to include #AD.

Furthermore, the music mogul has not actively promoted alcohol brands on social media since receiving the letter. According to TINA.org, Bacardi has instructed the producer to remove all references to D’Ussé Cognac from his pages.

“DJ Khaled has done the right thing by disclosing his material connection to these alcohol brands,” said Bonnie Patten, executive director at TINA.org. “Time will tell if he is truly committed to ensuring that his followers are not misled by deceptive ads on his social media accounts.”



“As for alcohol companies, their failure to make certain that DJ Khaled complied with FTC law is absolutely inexcusable.”

A spokesperson for Diageo, whose brands including Ciroc vodka are frequently featured on DJ Khaled’s social pages, said: “We have a rigorous marketing code and take our role as a responsible marketer and these types of assertions very seriously.

“We have a strong commitment to comply with the FTC’s standards on advertising and robust policies in place to ensure compliance.

“We are working to ensure any issues are appropriately addressed.”

### ‘Exploitive marketing’

[The letter](#) claimed that of more than 300 alcohol ads collected from DJ Khaled’s social media accounts by TINA.org, the “vast majority failed to disclose his material connection to the company being promoted”.

It argued DJ Khaled was using sites such as Snapchat and Instagram to teach his followers about his favourite alcohol brands, with bottles of Ciroc, Belaire wine, D’Ussé Cognac and Bumbu rum “featured prominently” on his accounts.

“For example, in an Instagram post from November 2017, Ciroc and Belaire bottles are lined up like witnesses as Khaled, holding his son, signs a renewal contract with Epic Records.”

DJ Khaled frequently promotes brands including Ciroc and Belaire on his social media pages

The letter also highlighted DJ Khaled’s “unique vernacular” as an “incredibly effective marketing tool”, with the producer often promoting Diageo’s Ciroc vodka with phrases such as: “Celebrate success right. Ciroc! The only way,” and: “Blue dot pon your head top,” which the groups fear could influence younger audiences.

Diane Riibe, executive director of the US Alcohol Policy Alliance, said: “Overexposure to alcohol advertising is a driver of underage drinking, and it’s all the worse when it flies under the radar on social media platforms popular with youth, like Snapchat.

“These alcohol producers who are exploiting DJ Khaled’s popularity with young people need to stop this practice immediately and permanently, and Mr Khaled should stop being an instrument of this exploitive marketing.”

Earlier this year, Diageo suspended all Snapchat advertising after the UK’s advertising watchdog banned a [Snapchat advertisement for Diageo’s Captain Morgan](#) rum brand, upholding a complaint that it appealed to people under the age of 18.