

THE 8-POINT CHECKLIST

Complete every check before committing budget. Thresholds and review windows are suggested internal policy; sources [1–7] are on the References page.

1 Audience authenticity & quality score

INSPECT Sudden follower spikes within 24 hours, geographic mismatch (e.g. 60% of followers outside the target market), generic bot-style comments, comment-to-like ratio against comparable creators.

PASS Suggested internal screen: at least 80% estimated genuine audience. Assess target-market fit separately.

RED FLAG Unexplained overnight growth above 15% or suspicious clusters. Signals, not proof of fraud: investigate.

2 3-year sentiment & controversy scan

INSPECT Search the creator handle with keywords such as scam, apology, cancelled, reddit, lawsuit, crypto.

PASS Clean public record, or acknowledged, resolved and brand-aligned context.

RED FLAG Open legal disputes, hate speech, past promotion of risky products, unaddressed backlash.

3 FTC & regulatory disclosure compliance

INSPECT Last 10 sponsored posts and all material connections: payments, gifts, affiliate arrangements. [1, 2]

PASS Clear, conspicuous disclosure with the endorsement. In video, disclose in the video itself, visually and audibly where both modes carry the endorsement. [1, 2]

RED FLAG Disclosure hidden behind “more”, unclear labels, or a platform tag relied on without checking prominence. [1, 2]

4 Exclusivity & category overlap

INSPECT Sponsored content for the past 90 and next 90 days against competing brands. Agencies: scan every signed deal across the roster, not just this one.

PASS Zero conflicting category partnerships during the agreed lock-out window.

RED FLAG A competitor campaign ran 18 days ago under an active 60-day non-compete.

5 Commercial reliability & on-time delivery

INSPECT Reference check, or your own or an agency's historical ledger, on revision turnaround and live-date adherence.

PASS Suggested internal screen: on-time delivery of at least 90%, plus a clear channel to the manager.

RED FLAG Missed deadlines or launch windows, or four or more revision cycles.

6 Saturation index

INSPECT Share of sponsored posts in the last 30 posts, compared like for like.

PASS Suggested internal screen: 25% or less sponsored (no more than 1 post in 4).

RED FLAG Review at 26–40%. Hold above 40% or a 60%+ fall in branded-post engagement.

7

Rights, whitelisting & paid usage

INSPECT Organic use, paid-media licensing and platform authorization, reviewed separately. Confirm Spark Ads creator permission where relevant. [5]

PASS Priced usage term, channels, territory and permitted edits specified; platform authorization covers the campaign. [5]

RED FLAG Vague terms that let the creator revoke ad access mid-flight; no agreed authorization code validity.

8

Payment & escrow structure

INSPECT Milestone release versus net-60 or net-90 terms; who holds the funds and when they release.

PASS Funds held in escrow and released only on verified draft approval and live-link confirmation.

RED FLAG Demand for 100% upfront payment, unverified escrow, or personal-account transfers.

Scoring note. The pass count gives a quick screening rating (8/8 low, 7/8 moderate, fewer than 7 high), but it is only a screen. Any unresolved material legal, disclosure or contract issue overrides the score and requires a hold. Checks 3, 4 and 8 carry the most financial and legal weight.