



Where serious technology buyers decide

Ethical dilemmas in editorial sponsored products

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Editorial sponsored products are on the rise

Content that requires registration can be leveraged for lead generation

Readers often see PDFs, webcasts, video and other enhanced formats as more valuable

While readers will consume vendor or custom content, they generally see editorial as more credible

Many vendors don't have extensive content assets of their own

What ethical dilemmas arise?

Too much sponsor influence

- Shaping the agenda
- Distorting the content
- Weakening our credibility with readers

Sponsor/sponsor conflicts

- Too much influence by one sponsor can weaken credibility with other sponsors, which is both an issue for editorial (gaining access) and sales



“We would sponsor you if you did something on blue widgets”

Blue widgets may not be all that interesting to readers

- Advertiser controlling the table of contents

Blue widgets may be related to something that's very interesting to readers but they call something else

- Advertiser controlling the language and terms of debate



Part 1 of the solution

Identify highest-priority hot topics we would like to cover more deeply AND have definite sales potential. Create eproducts schedule . we are doing these no matter what, we have budgets. When is negotiable.

Identify second tier of topics that are interesting to readers, that we are covering, but are not top priority for us. We would do these if we had resources.

PROBLEM: Advertisers want to know more. % would sponsor something on Energy Efficiency, but does it align with my message?+

Part 2 of the solution

We create working titles and one paragraph abstracts that summarize the angle

We do not reveal

- The author
- What products and vendors are discussed
- Other detail about the content

PROBLEM: We are not sponsoring anything that mentions my competitors+

PROBLEM: Doing a lot of these can detract from routine editorial, including many stories that are of higher value to readers, and even, in the long term, to the business

Part 3

In some markets, we are able to sell explicit comparison of products as a strength

In others, we simply point people to other content we have done that does that

Volume is a good problem to have. We are working on sorting that out now



For discussion

What is the line between sponsored editorial and custom publishing?

What is the relationship between sponsored editorial and normal editorial?

