

Spot the tricks. Flip the script.

13 **manipulation** tactics you want to **avoid**

(and what to do instead)



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#1

Greenwashing

Claiming “eco-friendly” without evidence or offsetting/compensating for the harm still being done

What to do

Back up claims with real data, show your supply chain from A - Z, give specific details about the impact made, and share your goals for improvement

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#2

Wokewashing

Using social causes to look good without doing the work or embedding them into your mission

What to do

Align your actions with your values. Show the receipts and why you're supporting the cause. Don't just post about it and run away.

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#3

Fake Scarcity

Countdown clocks that reset and one-time limited offers that never expire

What to do

There's nothing wrong with using scarcity if there is a true need. Use real limits (like live events) and be transparent about timing.

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#4

FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out)

“Last chance to live your dream!” This offer will never be available again!” even when it’s launched every quarter

What to do

Be honest and transparent if you will offer this again. Give people time and space to decide. Avoid giving bonuses or rebates to those who buy within a few hours.

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#5

Blame + Shame

“If you’re not prioritizing this now, you’re contributing to the problem.” “Businesses that really care about impact invest in this.”

What to do

Invite action through encouragement, not guilt. Show what’s possible by using real examples, i.e. how nature regenerates, collaborates, or adapts to find solutions.

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#6

Unrealistic Promises

Setting big goals, i.e. “Net zero by 2030” or “Plastic-free packaging by 2025” and then stopping updates and cleaning up beaches for smaller marketing wins instead

What to do

Set goals you can follow through on. If you're not there yet, be transparent. Share progress, setbacks, and next steps. Consistency builds more trust than perfection ever will.

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#7

Price Priming

“Others charge \$15k. Ours is only \$5k.”

“Was \$997, now just \$197!”

When it never was \$997 to begin with

What to do

Use comparisons only when they're honest and helpful. Only slash real prices and explain the deal. Focus on showing your offer's value. Don't play the price war, you'll never win.

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#8

Virtue Signaling

Vague claims, i.e. “support reforestation and local communities.” With no info on how, who, where, or what % of the revenue actually supports anyone.

What to do

Support causes that align with your core mission and share how, not just what. Be very specific. People want to know what kind of an impact their purchase has made.

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#9

Secret Recipe

“Only we know the secret formula...” and
then lock it behind a priced offer

What to do

There are no secrets, just systems.
Most “secret formulas” are just
common sense with good packaging.
If it works, share how. That’s how trust
grows.

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#10

Bait + Switch

“We’d love to have you speak!” → Hidden pay-to-play fee. “Let’s collaborate!” → You work for free in exchange for ‘exposure’

What to do

Be clear about your intentions up front, especially if there’s a pitch or price tag involved. Define what both sides are offering in any collaboration, and value everyone’s time fairly.

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#11

Hidden Fees

Extra charges that show up at checkout?
Big red flag.

What to do

Price transparently. Ethical brands don't surprise people at the end.

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#12

Unsubstantiated Claims

“Best in the industry!” (Says who?) The ‘First’ anything should also be widely researched before ever making such a claim

What to do

Let third-party reviews, proof points, or data speak for you. Don’t just make claims you can’t back up.

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#13

Charm Prices

\$97, \$497, \$2.99: When the price on the left is lower, they're 'seen' as a bargain, playing tricks on your brain.

What to do

Round it up. \$500 feels clearer, cleaner, and more honest. When the value's real, people take you and your offer more seriously.

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**Need some help with
making your marketing
more effective?**

- ① Save this for when you're ready to craft your content strategy.
- ② Or DM Jessica Lohmann and let's build a strategy rooted in clarity and transparency, and aligned with your values.

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