

CONSIDERABLE
INFLUENCE

Influencer Marketing for Beginners

A Guide for Agencies and Brands

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It's no secret that...

influencer marketing is fast becoming the most important marketing development of the last decade.

Whereas once we looked to the lofty plinth of celebrity for consumer guidance, a whole new team of online stars have been born from blogs, vlogs and social media, and it's these individuals to whom the public is now listening. The rulebook of traditional marketing has been well and truly torn up.

So where does this leave brands and companies looking to be heard and seen in today's crowded, online marketplace?

Well, probably in need of a bit more influence...

To help guide you through this brave, new world, we at ConsiderableInfluence have put together a handy booklet covering every aspect of beginning to work with digital celebs. From how to identify the right influencers, to integrating them into your existing marketing strategy and everything in between, here's your comprehensive beginner's guide to influencer marketing.

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Why do You Need Influencers?

For anyone even slightly invested in the digital world, it's hard to imagine it without 'the influencer'. Rarely is a new product launched or promoted these days without a recognisable face from online realms merrily endorsing it, and social channels would be nothing without regular visual updates of influential blog writers' latest exploits. Rewind even five years however, and the term 'blog' was only really associated with weekend hobbyists, unchecked 'Livejournal' templates and monthly posts about recalcitrant pet cats.

In an almost unprecedented ascent of the digital media ladder, bloggers, vloggers and social stars have gone from overlooked dabblers, straight to the very epicentre of the marketing world. And not just digital marketing either. Online personalities are now commonplace as protagonists in above-the-line campaigns too – see the likes of Zoella, That Pommie Girl and the host of beauty bloggers featured in Avon's recent TV advert to name a few.

The phenomenon of working with online influencers to endorse products is now so prominent, it has led to the reinvention of the term 'influencer marketing'. In a survey conducted last year, it was estimated that businesses make an average of \$6.50 for every \$1 spent on influencer (usually blogger) marketing. And not to mention that a whopping 74% of consumers rely on social media influence to inform their purchasing decisions. Pretty powerful stuff hey?

Anyway, enough labouring of the point – the fact is that influencers pretty much rule the roost when it comes to marketing in 2017. With polished and consistent branding, slick, considered imagery and relevant, regular posts, influencers have become the editors, writers and producers of their own online magazines and identities – a world away from the glorified diarists they were once considered to be. And, just to be clear, we're talking 'online magazines' with monthly readerships and subscriptions that would make most Editors-at-Large green with envy.

At this point, it may be apt to examine how influencers have managed to occupy this lofty plinth of digital dominance. Particularly as, undeniably, anyone could legitimately and easily start a blog, vlog or social account themselves. But that's just it – the fact

that anyone could be an influencer is what makes influence so important. In a way that a magazine with a varied team of faceless (and often outsourced) writers rarely does, a blog/vlog/social channel can become a reliable source of information and entertainment that its readers can relate to on a personal level. An influencer's followers are loyal, trusting, supportive and, most importantly, ENGAGED. They feel a connection with the influencer they follow that cannot be replicated by a publication or brand, but which can be, and readily is, converted into sales of any products and services the influencer endorses.

Faced with this onslaught of facts and stats, you may be forgiven for thinking that the average successful influencer has it pretty sweet. One 200 word post or carefully worded tweet can be enough to make easy cash within hours, leaving plenty of time to bake, travel and/or strategically apply make-up. This is possibly the most dangerous assumption that any marketer can make in 2017. Underestimating the power of influencer marketing is a perilous game indeed.

“Not every blogger, vlogger or social personality has influence”

Firstly, the notion that very little effort goes into an influencer-brand collaboration is an erroneous one. Think of the influencer workload as an iceberg – the visible tip consists of creating posts, videos and social media updates. Below however, there's a hell of a lot going on. Influencers are their own content production team, creative directors, photo editors, graphic designers and features writers. And that's not even cracking open the bulging can of worms that is website maintenance. Needless to say, a blog or vlog is also worthless from an influencer marketing perspective without active and engaged social channels, which can easily equate to hours of scheduling, liking, commenting, hashtagging and curating content, for a slow and gruelling build up of followers.

The story of the modern-day influencer is a unique one, but also a perfect case study of how modern marketing is endlessly transforming. In just a few short years, the mantle of 'blogger' has gone from being a sidelined, hobby signifier, to a legitimate and sought after job title with tremendous capacity for influence. Any brand that hasn't yet recognised the power of that, is already at a disadvantage.

By far the most salient thing to remember when it comes to the power and significance of influencer marketing, is exactly what goes into forming a focused and engaged audience. The audience is the lucrative commodity of the influencer, as it is what brands are so keen to make use of. When working with the right influencer, a brand can reach a honed, interested and loyal customer base – a hugely valuable resource not to be sniffed at. And that, in a nutshell, is why you need influencers.

Common Pitfalls of Working with Influencers (and how to avoid them)

So you've bought into the hype, set aside the budget and are ready to make the investment into influencer marketing in 2017. But where do you go from here?

In this section, we will address the ways that brands often go wrong when embarking upon an influencer marketing project for the first time, as well as how to avoid falling into the same traps!

Pitfall 1: Working with the wrong influencer

It goes without saying that when it comes to brands using influencer marketing, choice of influencer is all-important. It's all too tempting to let your heart be ficklely won over by impressive follower numbers and buoyant unique users, but a successful influencer marketing endeavour should look past these often misleading figures. What really matters when selecting an influencer to work with, is their relevance to your brand.

How to avoid it:

Think very carefully about what audience you want to reach with your campaign, and try to align this as closely as possible with the audience of the influencer you work with. We will go into finding the right influencers in more detail later, but simply put, an influencer marketing campaign is a waste of time and money if the partnership isn't right.

Pitfall 2: Not paying attention to the platform, as well as the influencer

Identifying the right influencer to work with is of course essential, but many rookie influencer marketers forget to pay attention to which platform is best for promoting their products. Influencers are often associated with blogging and social media, but not only do those

two areas cover a multitude of different channels and platforms, there are also the vloggers, journalists and, in some cases, critics to consider. Investing in an influencer marketing campaign with an individual whose influence is restricted to one platform only will only work if your target audience are actively engaged with it.

How to avoid it:

Unfortunately, there is no quick fix for this one – it takes elbow grease and a great deal of research into your desired target market, their likes and dislikes, their online habits and their responsiveness to specific forms of content. For example, a fashion brand would be foolish to disregard Instagram influencers, as this is the platform of choice for many wannabe fashionistas.

Pitfall 3: Creating an advert, not a campaign

Simply put, influencer marketing is flourishing because consumers are tired of being advertised to. Using influencers to promote products and services appeals to people, as the approachability and personal touch aspects make the whole process an 'opt-in' concept – consumers choose to listen to influencers, adverts impose on consumers. This considered, one of the most common reasons for an influencer marketing campaign to be unsuccessful is for it to be too advert-like, and not sincere or authentic.

How to avoid it:

Ensure that you are working with an influencer who really believes in your brand, and whose values align with your own. This way, their endorsement of it will be endlessly more sincere and consumers will respond accordingly. To be extra sure that your influencer will make this happen, check through their work thoroughly before approaching them to collaborate – do they write regularly from their own perspective? Is their content original, and not contrived? If they have worked with brands in the past, have they promoted them in a believable way?

Pitfall 4: Not setting out clear ROIs

A tricky aspect about influencer marketing is that it is often quite vague and ambiguous in terms of measurable results. As it is based on creating 'positive feelings' within consumers towards certain brands, it is no surprise that many who have engaged in influencer marketing campaigns have found the outcomes of them hard to ascertain, and therefore hard to define as a success or a failure. Not agreeing your expectations and objectives with your influencer before beginning the process of working together, or devising a

method of recording them, makes assessing the success of the campaign an awful lot harder.

How to avoid it:

Be frank and open with your influencer – they will understand that you don't want to work with them and not be able to see the results. Think about what the ultimate goal of the campaign is, but also consider the smaller by-products (think increased engagement on your social media channels, more traffic through to your website etc). The key here is to be specific, not only with your ROIs, but exactly how and when you will take stock of them. Set timescales and key dates to keep you on track.

Pitfall 5: Assuming you are more important than the influencer

Working with influencers is not simply paying someone to talk about your brand, then sitting back and watching your business grow and sales skyrocket. Never forget that influencers are worth money because they have power. They can succeed where other marketing campaigns will fail, and this is why they are valuable to you as a brand. If you fail to acknowledge this, it is likely that your campaign will not be as successful as it could have been, and your influencer (not to mention their audience) will fall out of love with your brand.

How to avoid it:

See your collaboration with an influencer as you making an investment in them – make sure that you are giving them a project they can really get their teeth into, and that will really resonate with their followers. Influencers spend their time building relationships with audiences that have the potential to become your customers – never underestimate this.

Pitfall 6: Not including a CTA in the campaign

It's all very well building brand awareness and affinity through working with influencers, but anyone who claims that they're not ultimately hoping for an increase in revenue from influencer marketing is telling a bit of a porky pie. One thing that is absolutely rudimentary in generating sales through online marketing campaigns, but which constantly gets forgotten, is the CTA (call to action). If you don't include a clear action for your target audience to spur them on beyond just the campaign, they won't be spurred on. Simple as that!

How to avoid it:

Decide what you want your potential customers to do once they've seen your influencer marketing campaign and are at their most engaged with it. Should they proceed to your website to browse your products? Should they go to some of your other social channels? Or is it something more interactive, like sharing their own photos and experiences? Including this in your campaign keeps the consumer enthusiastic about your brand and is more likely to convert them into paying customers.

Pitfall 7: Not valuing your influencer enough

In a similar way to pitfall 5, underestimating your influencer's value is one of the most dangerous games a brand can play. Influencers work incredibly hard to create the kind of receptive, engaged audience that a brand can market to, and this is something that has to be not only appreciated, but paid for. For many brands entering into an influencer marketing campaign for the first time, it can be tempting to think that the influencers you work with have a fairly easy ride – on the surface, it appears that one short blog post or a couple of carefully worded tweets can bring in more money than most people earn in a week. However, not recognising the immense amount of work that goes on behind the scenes for the average influential blogger or social star leads to sour relations and bad vibes – remember that influencers do not work in isolation, and bad experiences can spread fast.

How to avoid it:

Agree a fee with your influencer that you are both happy with. Although influencers are usually keen to receive free products and discounts, this is NOT enough compensation for their work. Remember what you are paying for!

Final thoughts...

Although forms of influencer marketing have existed as long as advertising itself, it has only recently become so mainstream and accessible to all. For this reason, it is natural for brands to find themselves somewhat daunted when setting out, but as long as you maintain a respectful relationship with any influencers you work with, and remember their worth, you won't go far wrong.

THREE

Identifying the Influencers that Engage Your Customers

Renowned marketing expert Jay Baer once commented that **“true influence drives action, not just awareness”**, and never has this phrase rung truer than in the age of influencer marketing.

By now, most savvy brands have cottoned onto the fact that influencers are one of the most (if not the most) powerful marketing force of recent times, and are working closely with digital celebs on all manner of exciting projects. However, for those newly dipping their toes into the fast-flowing waters of influencer marketing, it can be easy to get swept away by the tide.

If the world of influencers, follower stats and measurable reach still seems a little hazy to you, you're not alone. Starting out is the most challenging stage of the process, as there are so many unanswered questions, the most common and prominent of these being simply 'Which are the right influencers to work with?' Identifying the individuals that will, as Baer says, drive action rather than just awareness is a difficult, precise, and essential process.

So how does one go about it?

One of the most salient things to remember when selecting influencers for your brand is that, ultimately, audiences will always shy away from anything that is obviously 'advert-like'.

Today's consumer is much more self-sufficient, preferring to research products, or to hear about their benefits from a trusted source. An influencer can brilliantly fill this gap – a bridge between brand and consumer in which both place their faith. So the question remains – what should one take into consideration when identifying the right influencers?

1. Stats are important, but not everything

It can be tempting to base your influencer selection on things

like social followings and readership stats, but these digits mean very little if the people they represent aren't going to be interested in the product you are offering. What is important however, is that the influencer's content aligns with your brand's message. Check through their archived posts and old social to really get a feel for what they are about, as well as if they have worked with any brands in the past. This is the best way to check that their audience is going to directly reflect your target market.

A good way to get this right is to profile the audience you want to reach through influencer marketing in minute detail. Once you have done so, think about where this audience is likely to get information and inspiration, what kind of people they are likely to listen to and what content topics will most interest them. Put yourself in your audience's shoes, and ask yourself who you would listen to and trust. The answers to these questions should guide your search for influencers.

2. Pay special attention to engagement

Once you have identified a number of potential influencers, look at the engagement of the content they produce. An influencer can tick all the boxes in terms of stats, followers and subject matter, but if the audience they are speaking to isn't listening, they are of little use from a marketing perspective. Look at things like comments, retweets, likes and shares, as well as where they are all coming from. This will give you a great idea of how inspiring, trusted and engaging the influencer is, and, to wheel our old friend Baer back in, whether their influence drives action.

It is also apt to register where the influencer's content is coming from – are they influential on Instagram? Do they get more engagement through their blog posts, or Facebook updates? The influencer's platform is relevant to which you work with, for example, fashion brands would be well advised to pay more attention to Instagram and Snapchat stars, whilst service providers might find more success when working with bloggers and vloggers.

3. Look at the authenticity of the influencer's content

If consumers have grown weary of being obviously advertised to (note how even behemoths like John Lewis are no longer producing product-heavy adverts), the last thing you want is for the campaigns you collaborate with them on to look like an advert. Check their previous social posts, blog content and online presence for how they have handled brand collaborations in the past, and indeed how much of their output is from their own personal perspective as opposed to recycled or contrived. Consumers trust influencers as they feel they know them. Therefore a successful brand ambassador

is one who talks about the brand in an open, personal and accessible way.

4. Assess the 'actionability' of the influencer

Armed with the above information and having filtered through potential bloggers, vloggers and social stars, you should now be in a position to make a pretty educated guess as to whether or not an influencer will spur your target market on into becoming actual customers. If you are in any doubt about this, the influencer you are considering is probably not right for you after all.

Influencer marketing works where traditional marketing fails, as it is essentially an 'opt-in' deal. Consumers choose whether or not to listen to and engage with an influencer, rather than having their agenda and opinions imposed upon them. For this reason, the most crucial aspect of influencer marketing for a brand is to pick the voice that your target market will opt to listen to.

Blogger, Vlogger or Social Star - Which is Best for Your Brand?

It's no secret that influencer marketing has been around almost as long as the concept of business itself, from word-of-mouth recommendations to celebrity endorsements. What has changed dramatically in the last few years however, is the type of influencers that rule the roost. In today's marketing spheres, untouchable celebs and all-powerful critics have made way for, amongst others, the blogger, the social media persona and the vlogger.

That said, it can sometimes be tricky to see how one influencer type differs from another. Why would one work with a vlogger in place of a blogger or content producer? And what advantages does employing a social voice have over a more traditional, print based one?

At this point, it is worth noting that almost all influencers will engage with their followers and readers through at least two of the three types we are discussing. However, every influencer has a primary platform – the one on which they have the largest influence.

This post focuses on identifying the differences between these, as well as which will work the best for your brand and overall business goals. Notepad and pen at the ready...

1. The 'Social Star'

Chatty, bubbly and always up on the latest trends, the social media influencer is at the hub of the ever changing industry they specialise in, pouring an immense amount of energy, time and effort into building and maintaining a large network of allies through constant interaction. Although the number of social channels to consider has increased dramatically of late, with Snapchat and Instagram's rise being the most marked, the way that influence works on them all is pretty similar. The social influencer is much more reactive than a blogger or a vlogger, often being lead by trending topics and hot conversations and hashtags, as opposed to previously planned content.

Unsurprisingly, social influencers will demonstrably be followed by huge numbers of people, but it is the engagement you should pay attention to when identifying someone who has real power

through a social channel. A content churning, multiple hash-tagging machine does not a genuine influencer make.

Should I work with a social star?

There is significant research that suggests consumer habits are massively swayed by social media. In a survey conducted last year by PricewaterhouseCoopers, 45% of buyers claimed that their purchasing decisions were affected by social media reviews and content. You don't have to be a PricewaterhouseCoopers analyst to work out that social influencers are a good bet if you've got a product to sell.

Where social influencers come into their own however, is brand reputation. If you are concerned with getting your brand actively talked about and showcased to a wide audience, a social influencer can provide you with staggering exposure and OTSs. The influencer will be able to advise on how best to do so.

2. The 'Blogger'

Blogging is the millennial superstardom, if done right. A groundswell of previously 'normal people' have become online celebrities due to their newfound ability to share their stories and adventures online. The blogger's influence is largely inbound, namely through a dedicated and constantly growing readership. For all the hype around visual content becoming ever more dominant, evidence suggests that the power of the written word is stronger now than ever.

A blogger is, effectively, the content strategist, researcher, SEO manager, writer and editor of their very own online magazine, and, largely speaking, will be drawing in readership numbers that could rival, nay trounce, actual magazines. The blogger has influence through being able to build up a long-standing relationship with their readers and revealing aspects of their own lives that develop a connection hard to replicate.

Should I work with a blogger?

Because bloggers naturally have much more space to share their experiences than the restrictions of social content, they are often a great fit for brands that provide a service. This is because a blogger's appeal is experiential, everything they share and write about is drawn from personal experiences. Therefore, a service that the blogger can experience using and then post about is the ideal partnership.

Of course, this is not the only way brands can work with bloggers. Blogger influence is directed towards readership, and although a good blog will be drawing new visitors in every day, this type of audience is largely already established and invested. A blog's readers already trust the voice they read – the groundwork is done. Therefore, a brand looking to market to and engage with a specific focused, engaged audience should seriously consider a blogger as a great way to do so.

3. The 'Vlogger'

Tapping into the recent marketing zeitgeist, a vlogger's medium is visual, namely video. Creating regular filmed segments, the vlogger literally speaks to their audience in a more visceral way than either social or blogger influencers. Because of the candid and open manner of engaging with followers that vlogging allows for, the vlogger's influence is particularly powerful.

Should I work with a vlogger?

As already heavily hinted, vloggers are very good at showcasing physical products, as they are able to show themselves actually using them, as well as their results. A brand looking to launch a new product, particularly one that fits into a popular vlogging genre (e.g. beauty, travel, food) would do well to dive into the pool of video content stars to do so.

Undeniably, visual content is also incredibly shareable, and has huge potential to 'go viral'. As a case in point, hugely popular vlogger Jenna Marbles, who is now rocking a cool 16 million subscribers to her YouTube channel, went from relative obscurity to 5.3 million views of her debut video 'How to Trick People into Thinking You are Good Looking' in just one week. Her second video was featured by the New York Times. If this kind of reach would be a blessing rather than a burden to your brand, vloggers may well be the way forward.

Although the world of online influencers may seem hard to permeate and figure out, each platform, channel and content form has its own unique benefits and subtle ways of working. Getting to grips with which of these will work best for not only your brand, but your specific objectives, is essential.

Micro, Multiple Micro or Macro - Which is Right for Your Brand?

Now that you've identified the right influencers in the right sectors that will work the best for your brand, you should begin to consider the reach you are hoping an influencer will bring.

As much as it seems logical to want to reach as wide an audience as possible, who says that influence has to be loud, large and global? For the last year, countless articles have bucked both previous trends and logical thinking, by extolling the benefits of brands working with 'micro' influencers, as opposed to their more well-known counterparts. From 'The Rise of the Micro Influencer' to 'Why Brands Should Use Micro-Influencers to Generate Sales', titles of the like have lately permeated the influencer marketing sphere, to the point where it's hard not to take notice.

First things first, how can we differentiate? Where does a micro influencer stop and a macro one begin? Unfortunately, the common definition bandied around is frustratingly vague – 'a micro influencer is an influential online personality with a smaller reach than a macro influencer'. Very helpful... If we were forced to quantify a micro influencer for the purpose of understanding, we would probably be looking at between 1,000s and 10,000s of social followers. Macros would be more in the realms of the 100,000s.

But the question remains – why are brands being advised to work with individuals who have demonstrably smaller audiences? Why is micro constantly trumping macro? To answer this, we have to consider a number of factors:

1. Audience Relationships

Although not the be-all-and-end-all, audience relationships are largely concerned with, that magic word, engagement. And when we compare the engagement levels of micro and macro influencers, the whole picture becomes a lot clearer. A survey conducted last year by Markerly found that when an influencer's Instagram followers reach a certain mass, their engagement rate begins to decrease. Instagram stars with between 1,000 and 10,000 followers saw a 'like-rate' of

roughly 4%, which drops dramatically to 2.4% for those with 10,000 – 100,000 followers, and then to just 1.2% for those with over 100,000. And these stats are mirrored in other social channels too.

But what does engagement have to do with value-for-money and ROIs for brands working with influencers? Well, put bluntly, the more engaged an influencer's audience are, the more likely they are to take a brand endorsement seriously and act upon it. Put another way, an engaged audience is one which will react positively to a brand showcase. Whilst it is undeniably tempting to be ensnared by macro influencers and their dazzlingly high fan counts, the genuine interest in the macro influencer's USPs becomes more and more diluted as the followers rack up.

Think of it this way – Kendall Jenner, one of the world's most influential individuals, currently has 74.7 million Instagram followers. Say you are a brand selling, for example, healthy smoothies. How many of Kendall's 74.7 million do you think are interested in healthy smoothies? Still a fair amount? How many of them are in the correct geographical location to buy one of your smoothies? How many of them are likely to be influenced by Kendall, who merrily endorses product after product, day after day, to purchase specifically a smoothie? The number dwindles pretty fast doesn't it? However, imagine a healthy-eating micro influencer who has around 10,000 social followers. As the stats above show, those followers are almost 75% more engaged already, and are invested in the lifestyle and opinions of the influencer because they are knowledgeable in the healthy eating sphere. If you conduct the same thought experiment here, you'll find the numbers a lot more robust

2. Audience Trust

We've touched on this in the above section, but it is very important to remember how different the relationships between influencers and their audiences are, micro to macro. Along with higher levels of engagement, micro influencers are able to develop and cultivate stronger, more authentic relationships with their audience. Subsequently, the audience is more trusting and invested in the influencer. If you select the right personality in the industry that matches your brand, chances are, their audience will have an interest in your brand when it is made known to them by an influencer whose opinion they value and trust.

The same cannot really be said for macro influencers – their followings are so large that there is no scope for personal, authentic relationships to form. Perhaps Kendall Jenner's influence can cause a product to sell out in record time as her followers scramble to get what they deem to be a piece of her lifestyle, but she is unlikely to inspire widespread brand loyalty due to authentic relationships with her followers.

3. Audience Demographics

A very useful exercise in answering the 'micro or macro?' question, is to think of a micro influencer as 'dominating a niche'. Let's say you are a sunglasses brand. Your niche is fashion, specifically eyewear fashion. Working with an influencer who is known for their association with the same niche, will mean that they are followed almost exclusively by people who are bang into sunglasses. A macro influencer, even one in the fashion industry, will be followed by a vast swathe of people, some of whom might be loosely interested in sunglasses, but most of which aren't particularly. It's not hard to see which of these two audience pools is more likely to have customer conversion success!

4. Approachability

For obvious reasons, micro influencers are much, much easier to approach and engage with than their macro counterparts. Aside from these practicalities, micro influencers are also much more likely to show genuine interest in your brand, as (if you're approaching the right ones), your influencers will share your brand's niche industry. This leads to far a more authentic, believable, trustworthy and powerful brand-influencer collaboration.

5. Workload

So, we've reached the point where micro influencers are looking like the 'no-brainer' choice for most average size brands looking to increase reputation and sales along the way. However, there is a twist in the tale. And it's this – although micro influencers are targeted and honed to reach the right people, in order to achieve the kind of scale that most brands require from marketing efforts, one micro influencer is not usually enough.

More and more, brands are looking to work with multiple micro influencers at a time. And, unsurprisingly, this takes a lot more sweat and effort than joining forces with just one macro influencer. From defining the pool of influencers to approach, to writing the campaign brief, agreeing payment terms and measuring the KPIs of one collaboration, the process has to be repeated again and again for each micro influencer you work with.

Final thoughts...

To answer the question that began this post, the most important thing to consider is what you are trying to achieve through influencer marketing. It may be that you can get the spike in UUs, social following and sales you're looking for with one micro influencer. Or, it may be that you are simply wanting to increase your brand reach as far as possible, in which case, a macro influencer may well be your best fit. If it's somewhere in between these two however, chances are you're in need of a multiple-micro strategy.

How Should I Use Influencers?

Even once you've factored influencer involvement into your budget, and identified the right influencers to work with, it is often difficult to know how to move forward. Where are influencers best placed? What kinds of campaigns are influencers best suited to? And how can they augment any existing strategies?

This section focuses on answering these questions, by outlining the most commonly successful ways that brands are working with influencers, and why these methods work so well...

1. The Content Share

Simple, straightforward and surprisingly effective, this is the influencer marketer's bread and butter. The concept here is a basic one – an influencer will share a brand's existing content (this can take the form of blog posts, social assets, product showcases etc) via their own site and/or social channels.

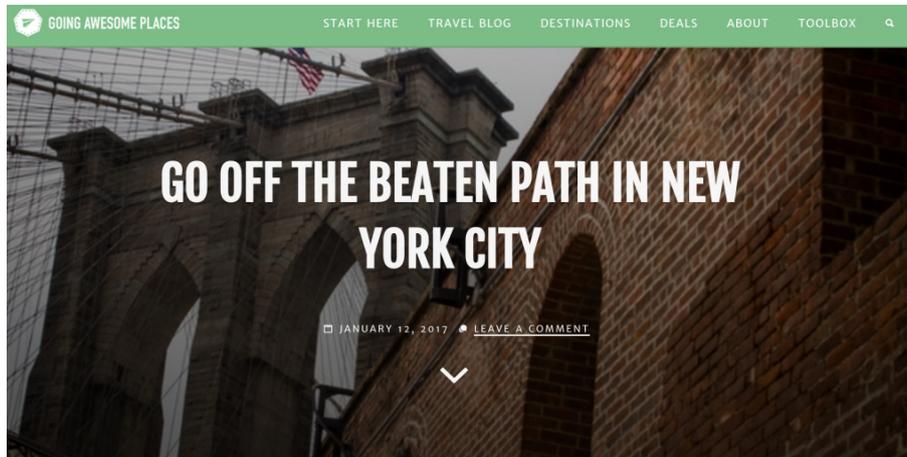
Why use an influencer here?

The answer to this is fairly obvious, but worth stating anyway – the right influencer has access to an audience of super engaged and enthusiastic people, who align with your brand's own target demographic. Putting your content in front of them, especially when it is endorsed by a personality that they trust and identify with, is the best chance you have to convert them to customers.

2. The Sponsored Post

An oldie but a goodie, the sponsored post is still going strong into 2017. In this iteration of influencer marketing, the influencer will create a post on their site that was 'sponsored' by a brand. Although it sounds very sales-y and corporate, 'sponsored' in this sense simply means commissioned, or inspired by. The brand will usually approach the chosen influencer(s) with a basic idea and subject matter, which the influencer(s) will then use in the manner they feel best suits their readership, most often with a backlink to the brand.

Here is an example of a sponsored post that one of our users, travel comparison site dealchecker.com, have produced. They worked with travel blogger William Tang of Going Awesome Places to create a post about New York's boroughs, which supports their recent campaign on the same topic:



Why use an influencer here?

Influencers with a readership that aligns with your brand's target audience will know through endless experience how best to talk to that audience. And the audience will be fully receptive to what's being said. This means that, if done in an authentic and uncontrived way, the influencer will be able to showcase your brand more believably and earnestly than you could yourself, to a focused collection of people likely to buy into it.

3. The Guest Blog

If a brand has an onsite blog (and if it doesn't, it should consider starting one immediately), a common way to use blog-based influencers is to invite them to write a piece to be featured on it. The post's subject can be chosen by the influencer, brand or both, but provided it is written in the influencer's known TOV and comes across as genuine, it can do wonders for brand reputation, not to mention reach.

Why use an influencer here?

This is a simple game of 'brand association'. If they know what they're doing, your influencer will promote their guest post through their own channels to their established readership, thus associating themselves with your brand and putting it in front of a receptive audience. It was estimated last year that '74% of consumers identify word-of-mouth as a key influencer in their purchasing decision', and influencer marketing is one of the most powerful forms of word-of-mouth there is. Especially when you consider the power and reach of the mouth in question.

4. The Joint Content Creation

Sneakily similar to sponsored posting, joint content creation involves both influencer and brand working closely together to produce content that both promotes the brand and furthers the influencer's reach. The content can largely take any form – social, blog, video etc, but it must be designed solely with the target audience in mind. If you picked your influencer correctly, this audience should be exactly the same as the readership they want to create content for – convenient hey?

Why use an influencer here?

This method is a fine example of good, old fashioned teamwork, with both influencer and brand bringing their own expertise and assets to the party. As a brand, you'll know the ins and outs of your product and identity, whilst the influencer will bring the right tone, angle and channels to reach the target audience. If done properly, this should result in a piece of content that is optimised in both ways.

5. The Product Review

A favoured method within the beauty and fashion influencer marketing spheres, this involves the influencer receiving and using a product from a brand, and subsequently talking about their experiences to their followers. This can take the form of vlogging, blogging, social media or, most commonly, a combination of all three. Here is an example of this in practice from another of CI's users – online restaurant reservation platform, Bookatable. Bookatable often send respected food bloggers to top London restaurants that they feature as part of their 'star deals' programme, and the bloggers will share their fine dining experiences with their hordes of expectant followers:



Why use an influencer here?

Influencers are always glad to receive free products and experiences from brands (although it is worth noting that you will often need to pay additionally for a review). Working with an influencer to use and review your products is an ingenious way of getting them showcased to a focused, targeted audience, but does also run the risk of that review being negative – be as sure as you can that your chosen influencer will fall in love with your product before you embark on this option!

6. The Competition/Giveaway

Tried and tested to the Nth degree, competitions and giveaways are some of the most successful ways of working with an influencer. Whether it's holding your own and getting an influencer to promote it, or sponsoring a competition that an influencer runs themselves, campaigns that drive engagement with extra incentives are rarely set to fail.

Why use an influencer here?

Simply put, competitions work better the more people that are involved, and if influencers are good for anything, it's garnering involvement and action.

7. The Event Promotion

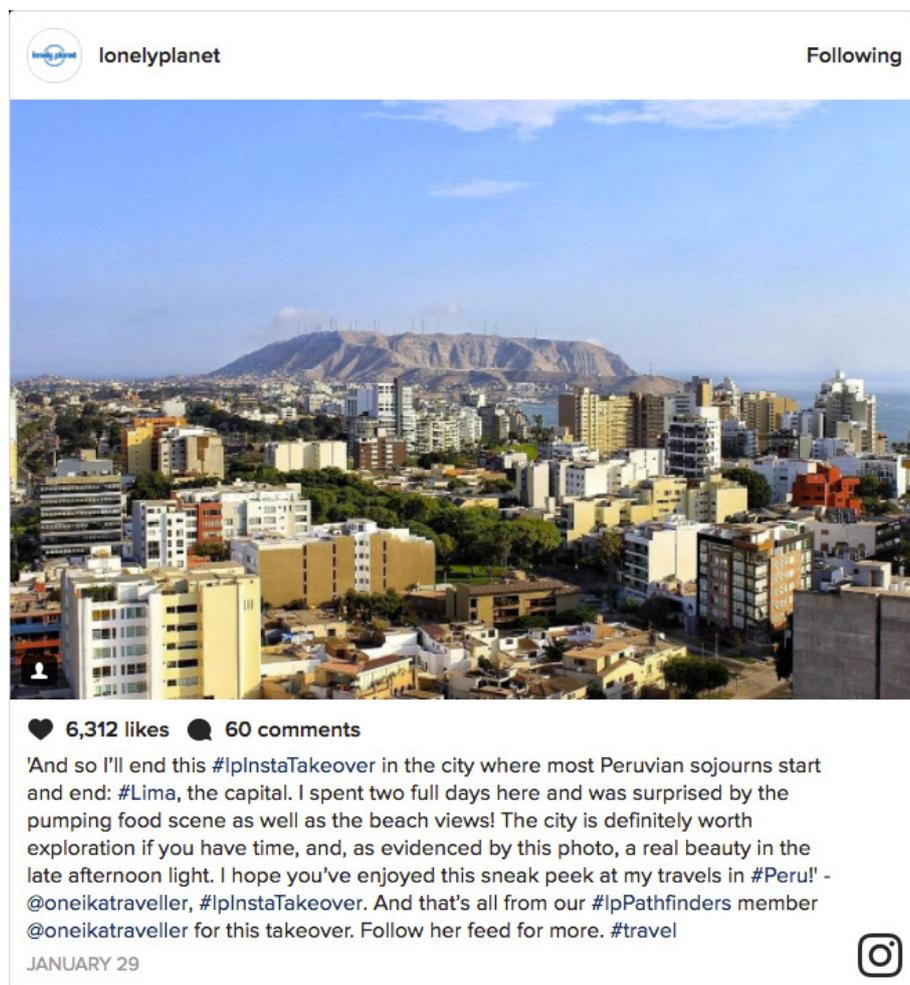
If a brand holds an event, be that the traditional, IRL (in real life) gathering or online meet-ups like webinars and hangouts, inviting a suitable influencer along is a great way to increase the event exposure exponentially. As long as the event is relevant to the influencer and their audience, they will be more than happy to chat about and/or live-stream it via their social channels, and may even write about it post-event if they really enjoyed themselves.

Why use an influencer here?

Having an influencer at your event is a great way to make it seem extra impactful and important, as well as having it broadcast to your target audience by someone they trust and value. If your event is a face-to-face type affair, it is also an invaluable opportunity to meet your influencer in person and strengthen your bond with them. Sometimes (note: NOT ALWAYS), influencers will be willing to attend events that they deem to be worthwhile without payment, but free food, open-bars and goodie-bags are only ever going to sweeten the deal if you know what we're sayin'.

8. The Takeover

As daunting as it may seem, handing over control of your social channels and/or blog to an influencer can do wonders for perception among your target audience. Takeovers involve the chosen influencer using the brand's channel as if it were their own, and posting their own content that relates to the brand in question. Usually these can last a day or two, but some larger brands have worked with influencers on projects that have lasted longer. Here is a recent example of travel guide brand Lonely Planet, who invited blogger Oneika Raymond to take over their Instagram channel recently:



Why use an influencer here?

This not only transforms the perception of your brand as one that a respected influencer is happy to put their name to in a very unique and personal way, it also strengthens your relationship with the chosen influencer. And, the process really shakes up your own breadth of content by giving your social voice a different flavour.

9. The Brand Ambassador

If the 'content share' is the shortest and simplest option, the 'brand ambassador' is the longest and most involved, but can also yield some of the best results. The process involves a brand working exclusively with just one influencer over a long time period, with said influencer establishing themselves as an ambassador of the brand and its product/service(s). This can take many forms – popular agreements involve regular product endorsements, curated content, social mentions and guest blogs, but all involve a long-term relationship between influencer and brand.

Why use an influencer here?

Establishing a special affiliation with an influencer who reflects your brand values and shares your target audience can be invaluable in terms of marketing to the right people. Influencers are trusted endorsers and are able to come across as authentic and genuine in a way that traditional marketing can't. Working with the same influencer also makes measuring ROIs and assessing the success of particular campaigns much easier, as you are comparing like-for-like.

Final thoughts...

Part of what makes influencer marketing so popular and effective is its versatility. Whatever your aims, values and budget, there is a way of involving an influencer that will work for you – if you haven't already, find it!

How to Integrate Influencers into Your Existing Marketing Strategy

Although influencer marketing is very much in the spotlight when it comes to contemporary marketing styles, it is important to remember that, despite appearances, it is not the be-all-and-end-all. Marketing still exists, and indeed has been happily existing in its more traditional forms for many a decade, and for the vast majority of cases, influencers are most effective when partnered with these pre-existing marketing strategies. To help you navigate the often bewildering world of influencer integration, this section will guide you through involving influence in different areas of both above and below-the-line processes.

Above-the-Line Marketing Areas

Public Relations (PR)

You may be currently employing the services of a PR team (or using your own in-house public relations specialists) to push your brand out to the mass audience through media, events and various other methods. As the primary objective of this kind of marketing is one of quantity rather than quality, any influencers involved need to have a very large appeal and range. This will naturally mean working what are commonly referred to as 'macro' influencers into your PR efforts, meaning influencers with mass appeal as opposed to a niche audience base.

Influencers can be used alongside PR teams to use their own relationships and affiliations with media to gain coverage, or add extra credibility to physical events, but essentially they will add clout and reach to any PR strategy.

Social Media

Employed in both above and below-the-line marketing, social media is easily blended with influencer marketing with invariably successful results. Above-the-line social strategies will involve aspects of social advertising, popular hashtags and promotional brand content, all of which can be amplified with a recognisable, powerful influencer on board.

If a socially based, influential online personality is working behind the scenes to talk about your brand in the right social spaces, it can often bring that essential bit of trustworthiness and earnestness to your own social output. And, this is what we are constantly seeing can be the difference between audience and customer.

Branding

The most essential of above-the-line marketing aspects, branding strategies are how you choose your brand to be seen by the public as a whole, not just segments of the public who fit into your target demographic profiles. The most obvious way to involve an influencer in your branding strategy is to get them to endorse it. This could be by sharing it publicly to their own followers and/or readers, or to employ what is known as a 'brand ambassador'.

Loosely speaking, a brand ambassador is an influencer employed in a long-term capacity to align their own name and persona with a chosen brand. This can be achieved through product launches and reviews, appearances at events and general, regular promotion of a brand.

Mass Advertising

Billboards, advertorials, television commercials and endless other forms of above-the-line advertising can all benefit from influencer involvement. In this case, it need only be a visual influencer endorsement from a chosen, widely recognised online personality to take an advertising campaign from standard to exceptional. Alternatively, including quotes from influencers as product reviews in print have proven very effective for many high-profile brands, as has employing influencers to promote particularly conceptual and clever print campaigns through online channels.

Below-the-Line Marketing Areas

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Although not an obvious union, SEO and influencer marketing can be an incredibly powerful partnership if executed cleverly. As SEO is largely concerned with backlinks and keywords, blogger influencers are especially useful here. If you are looking to improve the searchability of particular segments of your website or particular products you offer, consider involving a handful of niche, smaller-scale influencers with readerships and followers that reflect your desired customer base. They can give your chosen business areas a well needed boost by working on sponsored posts and social mentions based around it, and promoting them out to their own audiences. Although it may seem inconsequential, this method is tried and tested, and ideal for specific SEO projects.

Customer Retention

Marketing to existing customers should be easy – after all, they

brought into your brand before, why not again? However, the reality is often not quite that straightforward. In today's fast-paced consumer market, customer loyalty is a hot commodity that is hard to keep hold of. This is where influencers can really help – trusted and followed personas with dedicated audiences. Attach an influencer to your brand, and you gain the constant attention of their followers.

The key to customer retention is to appear new, exciting and evolving as a brand, at all times. Ways to keep interest levels peaked include competitions, returning customer offers, discounts and new product previews, all of which gain more traction and attention if they are being promoted by a carefully chosen influencer – simple!

Content Marketing

Largely speaking, content marketing is a below-the-line activity, as it focuses on producing content for a pre-defined audience niche rather than the public en masse. At the most basic of levels, drawing from content produced by those influencers with a matching audience to yours is a good place to start, but using these influencers to promote the content to those audiences is even better.

Collaborative and sponsored posts are also great examples of merging influencer and content marketing, whereby the reach and talent of the influencer is mixed with the aim of the brand in a completely unique way.

Social Media

Below-the-line social marketing is, unsurprisingly, a lot more targeted in its approach. This involves finding and engaging with social media users, using niche hashtags and contributing to smaller, online conversations, as well as creating content focused on grabbing the attention of a much more honed and specific group of social media users. Other than your basic retweeting, sharing and commenting, a great way to integrate influencers here is by holding a channel 'takeover'. This involves a hand-selected influencer with a specific appeal and audience base literally taking over one of your social channels and posting their own (pre-approved) content. This will immediately draw a legion of followers to your social channel that may not have previously aware of your brand and are already proven to be interested in it.

Final thoughts

In summary, however you have currently configured your marketing process, there will be an opportunity to give a little extra influence. The main selling point of influencer marketing is its versatility, bringing a wealth of specific and engaged audiences to pre-existing marketing concepts. And that ain't no bad thing, whatever way you look at it.

How to Build the Perfect Influencer Marketing Strategy

Integrating influencer marketing into your current brand promotion can be a daunting and seemingly complicated task. Of course, there are many, many, many ways in which brands can draw up an influencer marketing strategy and at CI, we are often asked for advice as to how to do so. This is our own preferred, failsafe method.

Based on the ever-popular SOSTAC planning process, created by PR Smith in the 90s, and still scarily relevant and accurate today, here are our six steps to influencer marketing success.

Situation Analysis – Where are you now?

This should always be the first step to making changes in business, and influencer marketing is no different. To assess where your brand is within the frame of influencer integration, consider the following:

- Whether or not your competitors are working with influencers, in what ways, and whether or not they are having notable success.
- Who your current customers are, and where they are coming from.
- What direction your industry is set to head in – if there are any growing trends that you need to make note of when undertaking influencer marketing endeavours, e.g. the rise of live-streaming and micro influencers will have an effect on the marketing dynamics of most industries.
- Whether or not your current advertising and marketing is working. If so, consider integrating influencer marketing into your current process, as opposed to undertaking it as a separate endeavor.
- What internal resources you have that can be assigned to influencer marketing. These may be financial, staff related or even pre-existing tools.

Objectives – Where do you want to be?

This stage is arguably the most important, as it focuses on the desired outcomes of any influencer marketing project. Concentrate on these areas:

- What it is that you are hoping influencer marketing can do for you. Is it a surge in brand awareness? An increase in sales? Tapping into a new audience? A combo of all three?
- If there are any specific timeframes these goals need to be achieved by.
- What is the most important aspect of change to focus on – brand reputation, growth, sales etc.
- Can these overall goals be narrowed down into more specific ROIs?

Strategy – How do you get there?

At this stage, forming your overall goals into actionable points need only be done to a rough degree. However, it still requires a knowledge of how brands and influencers can work together, and to what ends. Focus on exploring these key points:

- What customers you want to communicate to, and how they are best reached. Are you hoping to greater engage your existing customers, or grab the attention of new ones? What type of influencer do these customers listen to?
- Try profiling the 'digital day' of those customers you are looking to reach. When are they online? Are there certain channels that engage them? What news publications do they read? This information can all be gathered using third party, customer insight and analytics tools like Google Insights.
- Are there any ways that you could potentially isolate customers through certain types of influencer marketing, and how should you avoid doing so? For example, if your customers are slaves to Instagram, spending time and money on a text based, blog-centric influencer marketing project is not destined for success.

Tactics – How exactly do you get there?

Now we're down to the nitty gritty nuts and bolts of your influencer marketing plan. You've analysed who you are trying to engage, how they are best reached, and through which channels. It's time to translate this information into a set of actions, with timescales, accountability and any other details required:

- From a narrowed-down pool of potential, how will you select the best influencers to work with?
- How will you approach your selected influencers, and convince them to work with you?
- How will you communicate your vision to your influencer, so that they can represent your brand exactly as you'd like?
- How exactly will you do all of the above? Will you employ existing, in-house resources, which may save capital but will sap staff time, or will you pay more to employ an agency with endless experience and tools? Perhaps an influencer marketing platform offers the best of both worlds?
- What specific results are you hoping to see from these efforts, and when are you hoping to see them? Set out KPIs and timescales, and make sure your influencer agrees to them too.

Actions – What are the details of the tactics?

Although it seems laborious, the more detail you go into at this stage, the easier and more successful the project will be overall. Take each of your specified tactics, and think about it with regard:

- Who will be responsible and accountable for it.
- Are there any key tools or skills required to achieve it? If so, how should you obtain them?
- By when does this need to be done? Is there any leeway or are the deadlines absolute?
- Has this been communicated to every person that needs to be in the loop? Have you left anything to chance that should have been properly laid out?
- The agreed payments, and when they need to be completed.

Control – How will you monitor performance?

You should have a pretty comprehensive idea of your desired ROIs by now, as well as a number of KPIs that will keep the whole process on track. But the last stage of the SOSTAC process requires detailed knowledge of how to check up on the progress and success of your influencer marketing, and intercept any potential disasters before they happen. Think about:

- The ways in which the process can be measured. Are you looking at follower numbers on your social accounts? Rates of engagement with content? Website UUs? Conversion rates?
- What methods are you going to use to quantify these? Do you need UTM codes to track placements and mentions? Or will you use the good, old fashioned profit-and-loss account?
- Will you focus on specific product sales, or a more holistic figure?
- What specific, quantifiable results are you expecting to see and when by?
- What results are you responsible for, what is your influencer responsible for, and where is there joint responsibility? For your brand responsibilities, which teams are involved and which are accountable?

Final Thoughts

Yes, that is a lot of questions. SOSTAC is as rigorous as it is thorough, but, frankly, it works. Once you've completed this marathon planning session, any influencer marketing endeavour that you undertake is infinitely more likely to be successful, and ROIs to be all the more fruitful. Influencer marketing is only set to become an even more permanent fixture of the overall marketing mix as 2017 unfolds, so planning to integrate it into your strategy is a wise move indeed!

How to Approach Influencers

Once you've found the influencers you want to work with and strategised how you want to use them, how do you go about approaching them?

Influencers have influence due to having worked hard to create an engaged and enthusiastic audience, invested in the content they produce. For this reason, making contact with an influencer can seem daunting and intimidating. After all, their entire job consists of constantly communicating with and engaging with people – how do you avoid getting lost in the crowd?

1. Select your platform carefully

Influencers are busy people. Fact. When approaching your chosen one(s), the best way to ensure that you get heard is to contact them through the platform upon which they are most active. For example, Instagram stars are much more likely to respond to an Instagram instant message than an email.

2. Be upfront, honest and REAL

Even the smallest influencer is almost certainly inundated with requests and proposals every day, many of which will be generic, mass emails and/or inauthentic. People respond to people, so ensure that you are open about your motives and what you want to achieve through making contact – if not, you'll be rumbled immediately. Bear this in mind when writing your subject line! Your approach should reflect your brand and core values, but should never be sales-y or boastful.

In the same vein, steer well clear of any PR speak, hyperbole or overblown statements. If you are truthful and genuine about the product or service you offer, the influencer should be able to see for themselves how great it is – this is not a sales opportunity, but (hopefully) the start of a mutually respectful relationship.

3. Be personal

Successful influencer marketing campaigns work when the brand's target audience is exactly aligned with the audience the chosen influencer reaches. Therefore, it is imperative to highlight this when approaching your influencer. Research their content, both editorial and social, analyse their followers, those who share, engage with and comment on their output, and display that you have done so by referencing it in your collaboration proposal.

Influencers are much more likely to put their name to a brand when it represents something they care about, and that their audience cares about. Convince them that they should care about your brand on a personal level. If you have selected the right influencer to approach, this should be easy!

4. Keep it on track

As much as there's a lot to say, any message you send to an influencer must be as short as possible, whilst still being friendly and personal. Long, rambling paragraphs will not get read, or at least, not get read thoroughly. Similarly, even if you intend to build a long-term relationship with the influencer, don't propose this the very first time you contact them. Start with a small, collaborative campaign and build from there.

5. Be thorough with your information

Keeping the opening contact short and sweet is one thing, but it is also important to ensure that all the key facts and details are offered from the get-go. This not only minimises the back-and-forth that can lead to influencers (and indeed brands) losing interest in a campaign before it has even begun, it is also good to refer back to as an initial agreement. HOWEVER, including it all in one message is overwhelming and waffle-y. Get around this by either creating a document of key information points and linking it to the email/message, or inviting the influencer to join a shared folder on a platform like dropbox or gdrive. This way, the info is all easily accessible, but does not come in a swamping barrage before you've had the chance to build a rapport.

6. Engage with your influencer

As heavy-handed as it may seem, laying the foundations of a good relationship is greatly helped by following your chosen influencer's social profiles, engaging with their past content, and sharing it on your own channels. Not only will this show the influencer that you are familiar with their content and tone, but also that you are willing to

provide them with support and exposure, as well as financial compensation for their efforts.

Final thoughts...

Most influencer-brand collaborations will be successful if both see the union not as a business transaction, but as a mutually beneficial relationship – after all, this is what influencer marketing is all about!

How to Write a Great Influencer Campaign Brief

Once you've selected the best influencer to work with and got them on board, it's time to set your campaign in motion. The next stage of the process is where influencer marketing efforts often fail, and so getting it right is of prime importance. We're talking about writing and delivering your campaign brief.

Communicating your requirements to your chosen influencer is a tricky and delicate business – one small aspect getting lost in translation can mean the difference between success and failure.

1. Have you contextualised?

This is dependant on whether or not you have previously worked with your selected influencer. If not, they will need to be given a comprehensive idea of your brand, your raison d'être and your core values. The influencer should be clear about what you represent, as you will be counting on them to emulate and communicate it to their followers.

If you have previously worked with your influencer, be sure to communicate to them how you want your brand values to be represented within the campaign, and which aspects of them you most want to shine through. Also, include the reach of the campaign, and any further branches of it that will be happening outside of the influencer's involvement. This will help them get a better idea of the campaign's aims. In any case, the influencer should be familiar enough with your brand that you are comfortable for them to act as an ambassador and representative of it.

2. Have you been concise and clear?

We all know from personal experience than long, wordy chunks of information are a turn off. No one is primed to absorb key points if they are buried within paragraphs of waffle. Being as concise and clear as possible within your brief is essential (it's not called a 'brief' for nothing!) Use bullet points, numbers, section headers – whatever

you feel will make your writing as clear and unambiguous as possible. If you find yourself writing any unnecessary words, simply highlight and delete!

3. Have you avoided jargon?

As much as influencers will of course be aware of industry jargon, including it unnecessarily in your brief will only serve to muddy the waters. Unless it absolutely cannot be referred to in any other way, choose simple language over industry specific terminology.

4. Have you included objectives and expected ROIs?

For an influencer to be absolutely sure what it is you are hoping to get out of working with them, objectives and expected ROIs (returns on investment) are imperative. If an influencer is unclear about what the campaign is aiming to achieve, the message they are conveying to their audience on your behalf is already blurred and diluted.

Objectives should be listed at the very beginning of the brief, but try and narrow them down to only 3-4 maximum. Try to communicate them in as few words as possible for maximum clarity. ROIs should be listed also, so that the influencer knows exactly what is expected of them from the beginning.

5. Have you avoided making assumptions?

You live and breathe your brand, but it is important to remember that an influencer does not (yet). Don't assume that they are aware of every intricate detail about your brand, how it works, the industry you work in and the way you operate. If it's important that the influencer knows it for the campaign to be a success, spell it out in the brief. The clearer you are, the easier the whole process will be.

6. Have you defined your specifics?

Campaign briefs exist to ensure that both influencers and brands are on the same page, and this extends to even the most basic minutiae of the campaign itself. Clearly list the following:

- The agreed budget for the campaign (this should have been pre-agreed between you and the influencer)

- The key dates and timescales – which aspects of the work do you expect to have been completed/demonstrative and when?
- The location of any supporting documents/resources the influencer may need
- Key contact information of anyone involved in the process

7. Will you inspire your influencer?

For an influencer to advocate your brand to their audience in an engaging way, they need to be enthused about your brand and the project itself. Balancing clear, direct language with an inspiring tone is tricky and takes a bit of practice, but can be done. Remember, influencer marketing is a two-way process, through which both the influencer and the brand benefit more than financially. You are responsible for making that happen for your influencer, as much as they are for you!

How to Identify and Measure the ROIs of an Influencer Collaboration

As much as influencer marketing is being heralded as one of the most worthwhile endeavours a brand can engage in, it undeniably has one disadvantage over other, more traditional marketing efforts – the difficulty of measuring its success. As a process so reliant on generating ‘relationships’, ‘positive feelings’ and ‘customer affinity’, you would be forgiven for being at somewhat of a loss when it comes to recording the effect of these on revenue.

However complex though, this measuring process should not dissuade you from being a part of the unstoppable upswing in influencer marketing, and seeing the power of its reach. This section focuses on identifying and measuring ROIs, in order to fully ascertain what influencer marketing can achieve.

Identifying Your Outcomes

Before you do anything else, in order to be able to measure any ROI, you must identify the actual investment you are making (total cost). This should include every stage of the process, from identifying influencers, devising a strategy and building a rapport with your influencer(s), as well as payment of them (plus any extra incentives you may have offered, e.g. free products). Once you have this figure, you will be in a much better position to assess the success of any influencer marketing effort.

Now the outcomes. The most important thing to remember when it comes to identifying the desired results of a campaign, is that for influencer marketing to work, you need to think both short and long-term. Working with an influencer successfully should be seen as a relationship, not simply a one-off collaboration that ends as soon as the campaign does. For this reason, it helps to identify both campaign driven outcomes, and relationship driven outcomes that occur more slowly, over a longer time period. These can be split roughly into categories:

1. Influencer Outputs

Campaign-Level, e.g.

- Influencer public mentions of the brand campaign.
- Influencer shares of the brand campaign.
- Influencer links to the brand campaign.

Relationship-Level, e.g.

- Overall influencer engagement with the brand.
- Overall influencer brand mentions.
- Overall influencer share of brand objectives and tone.
- Overall relationship building of brand and influencer(s).

2. Target Audience Impact

Campaign-Level, e.g.

- Campaign mentions and reach.
- Campaign engagement, including shares, comments, likes, reposts etc.
- Re-use and shares of campaign content.
- Links back to brand 's website.
- An increase in 'referral' traffic.

Relationship-Level, e.g.

- Overall mentions of brand.
- Overall shares of brand values and tone.
- Overall increase in referral traffic.
- Increase in social followings of your own accounts.

3. Impact on Your Brand

Campaign-Level, e.g.

- Business leads generated from influencer campaign.
- Business opportunities generated from influencer campaign.
- Revenue generated from influencer campaign.

Relationship-Level, e.g.

- Overall influencer generated leads.
- Overall influencer generated opportunities.
- Overall influencer generated revenue.

Measuring Your Outcomes

So what do these outcomes look like, in terms of trackable data? And how does one go about tracking them?

1. Influencer Outputs

These will usually take the form of demonstrable actions from the influencer(s), both related to a specific campaign and overall, across a longer time period, including:

- Mentions of brand.
- Shares (both social and otherwise) of brand content.
- Links to brand.
- Strengthening of the relationship between influencer(s) and brand.

Tools to measure them include:

Traackr – this platform allows you to track and measure your ROIs in terms of relationship and keyword based stats. The 'brand mentions' and 'shares' reports are particularly useful.

Prezly – this influencer marketing tool allows you to assess the reach of your impact, and advises on how to increase it.

2. Target Audience Impact

These will largely consist of impressions, engagements and traffic to your site. Depending on the reach and audience of your chosen influencer(s), your campaign and brand overall will have a certain number of OTS (opportunities to see). Having a rough idea of this in advance of measuring the following will make it easier for you to assess the level of impact.

- Impressions on social shares of brand content.
- Engagements with brand content.
- Referral traffic to your or your client's site.
- Your own social media followings, retweet, shares and account followings.
- Brand sentiment (the perception of your brand). This can be assessed roughly from the tone and content of brand mentions.

vTools to measure them include:

BuzzSumo – this will allow you to track mentions and keywords related to your brand among your target audience.

Mention – this focuses on flagging up any time your brand is referred to across a number of channels, allowing you to better assess the sentiment.

3. Impact on Your Brand

This is the result that most companies are eager to see – the cold, hard cash. The impact on brand is the final step in the influencer marketing chain, and involves assessing to what extent influencer marketing has led to an increase in business. Outcomes will manifest in the following ways:

- Website UU numbers.
- Mentions of product/services.
- New business opportunities.
- New sales.
- Appearances in other media – e.g. trade press talking about your campaign.
- Links to your site.
- Visibility or Rankings of your key terms.

Tools to measure them include:

NeoReach – this system allows brands to track exactly how many online sales have been made through a specific influencers' efforts. It is a tool to manage/automate the process.

Google Analytics – this beloved tool can help you keep tabs on where your website traffic is coming from.

Final thoughts...

Although it seems like a lot of effort, laying the foundations of these tracking processes is an essential investment in any successful influencer marketing endeavour, and once complete, will require much less work overall than more traditional marketing methods.

As with any exercise designed to increase the impact and success of a business, outcomes need to be tracked so that the process can be constantly improved – if you can't measure it, how can you make it work even better?

How Much Should You Pay Influencers?

Once you've selected which influencers will help you reach your target audience, worked together to devise a plan to make it happen and clearly set out your ROIs, you'd assume the hard work is almost over right? Well, not quite.

The final stage of the influencer marketing preparation process is often the most delicate, especially for those newly trying it out – agreeing on how much to pay your influencer. Of course, this has to be a joint discussion, but having a rough idea about just how much hiring an influencer will be worth to you and your brand is a great place to start.

So what should you take into consideration when deciding how much influence is worth? In this final section, we will discuss just some of what your budget will buy when working with influencers.

1. An alternative to full-time employee(s)

For the vast majority of cases, if not assigned to influencer marketing, budget would be need to be put towards hiring a full-time member of staff, tasked with similar marketing efforts.

Considering the main objective of influencer marketing is to create a positive perception of the brand amongst its target audience, the equivalent in-house job role would likely involve some form of community management. This means having a staff member fully dedicated to building up, cultivating and maintaining an engaged target audience, as well as producing content for them to engage with. It is well worth remembering that an influencer has already done the bulk of this workload – an influencer is such because they already have influence over a certain audience, and that takes a lot of time, effort and expertise to achieve.

2. A 'Freelancer Rate'

According to the ISPE (Associate of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed), one should expect a 30% increase on

pro-rata earnings when paying a freelancer over a permanent employee. As influencers work in a very similar way on some types of projects as freelancers, the same should really apply. This 30% is essentially to cover additional costs to the freelancer that an employee would not have, e.g. equipment, travel, internet, experience etc.

It is tempting to think that if a freelancer, or, in this case, influencer is 30% more expensive than a full-time employee, it might be better to just hire someone instead. However, the amount you would pay an influencer would typically not be for as long a period as an employee, and influencers require no training to deliver results. Freelance-based talent is also a lot more flexible and, more often than not, of a higher quality.

3. A Unique Persona

Influencers are, undeniably, experts in their own fields. The perfect influencer to work with will spend their entire working hours immersed within the target audience that aligns with your brand, interacting with them, engaging with them on a personal level, and producing content designed for them.

The most salient and important value that an influencer has however, is their position as an individual. Consumers engage with influencers purely because they are not brands. Their voices are trusted because they are personal, individual and accessible. If the same messages and tone came from a brand employee rather than an influencer, they would almost certainly have a fraction of the success.

4. A Range of Specialist Tools and Skills

As a product of their professional lifestyle, influencers will have their own optimised methods and tools. These are invaluable when it comes to things like audience engagement, content creation, keyword optimisation, social media strategy and measuring success of campaigns.

So, who should set the rate?

Although setting a payment rate has to be a collaborative effort, it is good practice to let the influencer propose their fees and discuss from there. There are market forces at work too, let's not forget that you will have some basis for a comparison.

In all normal situations, it is unusual for the buyer to set the terms of payment in any area of business. However, the influencer will understand that you have a certain budget, and will do their best to land on a mutually beneficial figure.

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