

# Influencer Marketing



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## Introduction:

Influencer marketing involves a collaboration between a brand and an online influencer to market one of its products or services. For intangible advertising, brands simply work with influencers to improve brand recognition, with this improvement their selling of this product increases. It is considered to be a “camouflage” to the advertisements the marketers intended to influence the potential customers by.

The money spent on influencer marketing is considered as money spent on advertising. Advertisers are trying to capitalize on this by communicating their messaging through social media influencers, who are trusted nearly as much as a friend. This conclusion is deduced from a joint study by Twitter and analytics firm Annalect, 56% of users surveyed said they rely on recommendations from friends, while 49% said they rely on influencers (Swant 2016). This trusting relationship was the main reason that advertisers are paying these influencers to post favorably about their brand or product.

what makes influencer marketing so powerful is the blurring of the lines between what is a genuine endorsement and what is a paid one through content-rich platforms. You log onto Instagram and a celebrity confesses their addiction to Chipotle with a burrito in their hand. Later you are scrolling through Twitter and one of your friends tweets an image with their Starbucks frappuccino. Both of these are examples of influencer marketing, the only difference being the first one is paid by advertisers and the second isn't.

An early example of influencer marketing involved YouTube celebrity PewDiePie. He teamed up with the producers of a horror film set in the French catacombs under Paris, creating a series of videos in which he underwent challenges in the catacombs. It was pitch-perfect content for PewDiePie's 27 million subscribers and received nearly double the views as the movie's trailer. Everybody won. This was a revolutionary point in advertising where influencer

marketing became visible for many brands to use in order to increase their popularity and product selling.

Being an influencer might look tough but the truth is that it is much easier than convincing one of your friends. One person has a particular agenda and a single worldview, convincing one person can be symbolized as climbing a wall that gets higher in each attempt you take climbing it. While influencing people with different minds and different perspectives that have never heard of you is like climbing a hill that gets easier with every step you take, every step of progress you make gets amplified as different people in marketing seek different things.

Taking into consideration how easy it is to be an influencer and how much impact influencer marketing on the market this topic of influencer marketing is considered globally one if not the most important topic in marketing nowadays. The faster the brand can respond to this trend, the more stability in the market it can achieve and the brand can continue to grow to avoid the risk of demolishing.

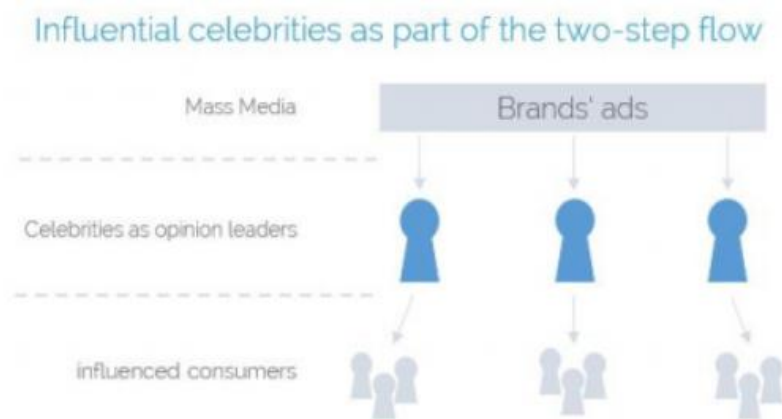
## Core Concept:

### *The origin of the concept:*

In order to understand this concept on a higher level of understanding, you need to dig deep into the origin of the development of this trend. The first influencers in the history of influencer marketing can be traced back to the early 20th century. In the 1920s, there were only a few brands on the market-shaping product-centered marketing 1.0. Brands of this market created personas to trigger the purchase decisions of customers emotionally. One of the most popular figures in influencer history is Santa Claus. The bearded, cuddly man we know today was made up by Coca-Cola and is far more than just a single-brand influencer by now. Another well-known character is Tony the Tiger, who graces Kellogg's packaging.

No one back then was familiar with the term “influencers” to describe these characters but comparable to the influencers nowadays, they had a relatively similar effect and interestingly, these influencers have lasted till today.

The second stage of the development of influencer marketing was the development of broadcasting systems facilitated advertisement and commercials on radio and TV during consumer-centered marketing 2.0. The strategy used due to the expansion of the market and the larger choice of products was to create the feeling that the customer is a king that finds himself exposed to many advertisements every day. Thus, the time of celebrities was on the rise functioning as influencers in the sense of a two-step flow approach in a mass-mediated world. (As shown in figure 2.1)



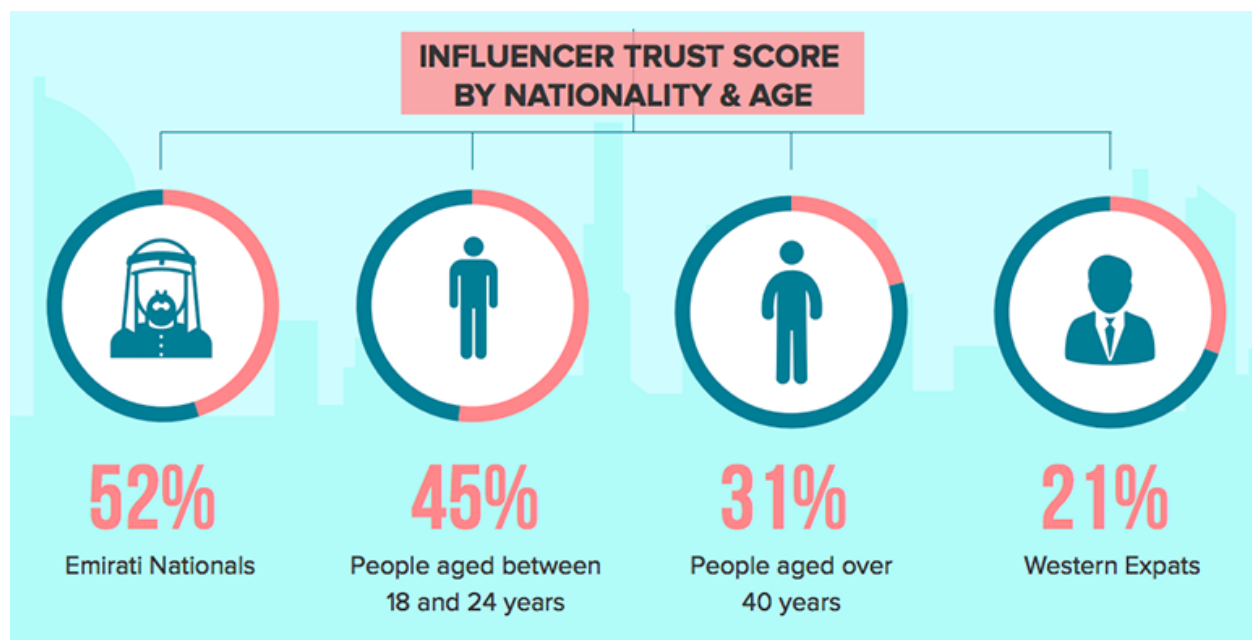
**Figure 2.1: The meaning of a two-step flow system**

In today's influencer marketing (also called marketing 3.0), the changes that occurred in social media enable developing niche markets. Now the customer is more than just a run-of-the-mill consumer but a human being with his own values. This era is an era of participation – anyone can create content online. The creators of these contents are also considered creators, opinion leaders, and (more or less) experts in their field who sell their reach and content on social media platforms to brands. Operating as third parties in the supply chain, they assure the approach of the right target group on the marketer's side and (ideally) trustworthy recommendations on the buyer's side. Which changed the point of

view of marketing completely from the previous marketing methods it is considered the most efficient yet the best at attracting customers globally.

### *How influencers attract people:*

The first reason is the one stated previously, people trust influencers. Trust is one of the most essential things to make any campaign successful. It's better and easier for people to buy new products or services when you see that other people use them, especially the ones whom you trust. Influencers have a wide effect on people of different ages and nationalities (as shown in figure 2.2), this effect is much superior to that of symbolic aspiration group like celebrities.



**Figure 2.2: Influencer Trust Score By Nationality and Age**

The second reason is that influencers create quality content, they are people who definitely know how to win the attention of their audience. So, you don't even need to think of how it would be better to present your product, service or event to the audience. Content creators will make everything on their own based on practical experience and reveal your product in the best possible way. This gives them an insight about your customers and their needs. When you cooperate with

content creators, you always get feedback in the form of users' likes, shares, and comments. Sometimes, influencers may give you their own tips and insights for better future cooperation. Which is very useful as Instead of spending tons of time and money for getting the actual market feedback, here you get it instantly. You will see what people really think about your product, its features, pros, and cons — and use these insights for marketing, sales, and product development.

The third reason is that influencer marketing is not like ads that can be blocked by the customer without even looking into your products. According to PageFair, 615 million people use Adblock apps. But people can't block a bloggers' post, even if it has a promotional nature. Moreover, they won't even think of that — because influencer's posts are interesting to them. They will read, discuss, and engage.

More than that the further you look into this topic the more you find advantages to your brand as you choose to use the influencer marketing as your advertising agency.

## Importance of this concept:

### *Statistics:*

The following statistics can speak of how important influencer marketing is:

- 70% of Teens Trust Influencers More than Traditional Celebrities
- 86% of Women Use Social Media for Purchasing Advice
- 49% of Consumers Depend on Influencer Recommendations
- 60% of Teens Follow Advice From Influencers Over Celebrities
- Influencer Marketing Campaigns Earn \$6.50 for Every Dollar Spent
- 22% of marketers say influencer marketing is the most cost-effective method of obtaining new customers.
- 57% of Fashion and Beauty Companies Engage in Influencer Marketing
- 67% of marketers planning to increase their budgets in the next 12 months, particularly on Instagram.
- The Influencer Marketing Industry is Expected to Hit \$10bn by 2020



- 74% of People Trust Social Networks to Guide Purchasing Decisions
- 40% of Customers Use Ad-Blocking Technology
- Marketers Spend \$25,000-\$50,000 on Influencer Marketing Campaigns
- 40% of Twitter Users Made a Purchase Based on a Tweet
- Two-thirds of Marketers Promote Content With the Help of Influencers
- 60% of Consumers Have Been Influenced by Social Media or a Blog While Shopping at a Store
- Purchase Intent Increased by 5.2x by Influencers on Twitter
- 71% of Marketers Believe Influencer Partnerships are Good for Business

### *Academic Importance:*

Studying the impact of such phenomena provides strategic insights to marketing practitioners to help reach the relevant target audience by using the right kind of influencer with the right content distribution strategy. Consumers today are more aware and informed and capable of telling the difference between an endorsement and a genuine recommendation. Brands that use influencers without studying the fitment between the influencer and the brand story are more likely to be deemed inauthentic. A sustainable strategy would require marketers focusing on identifying the right influencers and using them to drive brand engagement by identifying the target audience for whom the communication would be relevant. While most market research survey indicates that “recommendations from friends or family” is always the number one trusted source of information, the way consumers acknowledge influencers as an extension of their friend indicates that the question is not “why should I use influencer marketing” but “how should I use influencer marketing.” The research shows that influencers can be used as facilitators for building empathy, relationships and connect with consumers. However, personal relevance is more important than peer influence hence using the right kind of influencers for a particular product category is essential. Thus, the challenging task ahead for marketers is to find relevant influencers for the select target audience who can take the brand story forward while intimately connecting with the followers. When the focus is on getting maximum conversions, influencers should be



judiciously used to target a niche market. The present research also shows that micro-influencers and bloggers have massive social media presence and are preferred for categories like beauty, lifestyle, and travel.

The present studies explore a relatively new concept (which is an influencer). However, marketing, by encompassing views of millennial consumers, it is still restricted to urban millennial consumers. Also given the qualitative nature of the study, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to the entire universe. Given these limitations, the future research direction is to conduct a large-scale quantitative study to validate the antecedents of consumer acceptance model of influencer marketing. Further, it would be interesting to compare the opinions of urban vs. rural millennial consumers and study the effect of celebrities vs. influencers. Future research can also focus on studying the personality traits of the most followed influencers, in order to build a personality archetype. This would help marketers map influencer personality to the brand personality.

### *Practical Importance:*

In the present time where the consumer's attention span is limited and multiple devices and screens vie for his attention, marketers face a challenging task in breaking through the clutter to get themselves noticed. Brand stories are becoming popular with marketers realizing that an emotional hook has far better chances at consumer engagement. While most brands now have their official Instagram page, marketers are now noticing that engaging with influencers would cause a feeling of being more connected for the customers with the brand.

The market new demands which was caused by history and the technologic development needs to be satisfied using the right type of advertising which is influencer marketing. Advertisements online are overwhelming, and try wherever they can to grab one's attention. For the reason that people try to escape advertisements, programs as ad-blocks have started to develop. These programs allow consumers to avoid advertisements by blocking them in film clips, movies or removing them as disrupters on a webpage. Page fair and Adobe presents in their

report from 2014 that 40% of the Millennials are using ad-block. However, ad-blocks cannot block content, which is one of the reasons influencer marketing is effective and its practical importance is beyond comprehension.

The following graph(Figure 3.1) shows the increasing interest over time for both influencer marketing and content marketing. It is clear that influencer marketing is dominating the market the past few years.

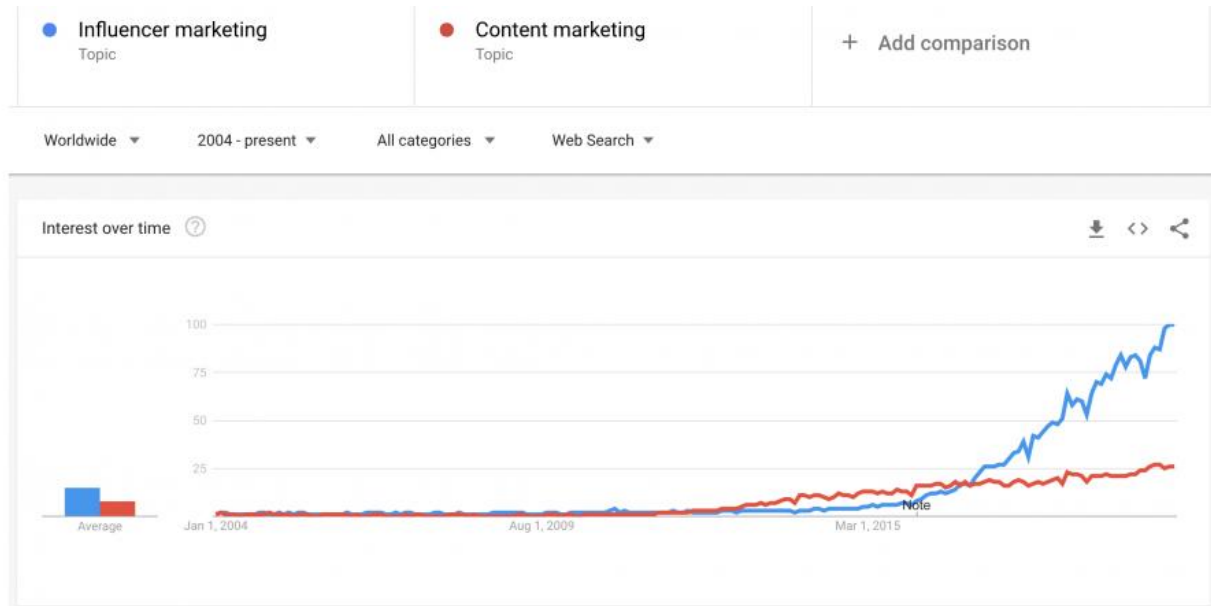


Figure 3.1: Influencer Marketing Interest over time

## Literature Review:

### *Evolution of Influencer and Rise of Influencer Marketing:*

Marketing literature has only recently seen the rise of the term influencer. Until date, the word influencer lacks a single theoretical definition. According to Brown and Hayes (2008), influencer marketing is the act of an external person who influences the consumers buying choices. Influencer marketing focuses on influencers who command a mass following on digital media to reach the intended target audience to promote a brand's message (Smart Insights, 2017). Conick (2018) stated that influencers win consumer trust compared to other online sources. Consumers pay much effort in avoiding

advertisements by using ad blockers. In such a case influencer marketing is thought to be non-intrusive and more engaging than traditional online advertisements like pop-ups, banners, etc. In the digital space, influencers on online platforms have emerged as reliable and trusted sources (Freberg et al., 2011).

Influencers were used to create two-way brand communication across online platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, etc. to influence their online followers toward particular brands (Markethub, 2016). Marketers are also using influencers to engage with the consumer segment who normally skip or evade advertisements (Conick, 2018). Most marketers understand the importance of utilizing influencers to build authentic relationships with their consumers. A report by Association of National Advertisers (ANA) in April 2018 stated that approximately 58 per cent of brands had affiliations with around 25 influencers in the year 2017 indicating that marketers want to have deeper connections between influencers and consumers (Conick, 2018).

### *Theoretical Framework:*

Social learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1963) has been used for academic research especially in the area of communication (Bush et al., 1999). The theory provides a structure, which helps to figure out the role of peers, experts, and others that influence consumer behavior (King & Multon, 1996; Martin & Bush, 2000). Individuals are inspired to show a favorable attitude due to socialization agents either immediately or due to prior social interactions (Moschis & Churchill, 1978; Subramanian & Subramanian, 1995). Various literature in the field of management has used this hypothesis to understand the role of family, peers, famous celebrities, opinion leaders in driving consumer consumption (Clark et al., 2001; Kotze, 2001; Martin & Bush, 2000).

The TPB by Icek Ajzen (1991) allows us to understand how the behavior of people can be upgraded. The TPB states that humans are motivated by three types of beliefs—behavioral (beliefs surrounding the possible consequences of the action), normative (beliefs about the expectations of others),

and control (beliefs about the absence or presence of factors that could improve or impede the performance of the behavior).

### *Effectiveness of Endorsements:*

The endorsement is considered critical in the marketing efforts of organizations to build positive brand imagery and meeting business goals. As of late, online influencers have become possible advocates themselves garnering a lot of attention as compared to other marketing tactics such as endorsements by celebrities, and are considered to be cheaper and more effective (Harrison, 2017; Patel, 2016; Talaverna, 2015). While some research has shown that online influencers have a favorable consumer influence (Booth & Matic, 2011) others state that research on influencers in the digital space is inadequate (Godey et al., 2016).

According to research company A. C. Nielsen, influencer marketing is responsible for better returns as compared to a digital marketing (Tapinfluence, 2017b). While the same report states that celebrity endorsements help achieve higher brand awareness among customers, online influencers are critical in forging product engagement thereby leading to brand loyalty (Tapinfluence, 2017b). Influencers have a smaller segment and hence the communication is sharper.

The effectiveness of endorsement is often studied by measuring the source credibility (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Taghipoorreynah & de Run, 2016). In particular, more trustworthy an endorser better is the perception of consumers toward a product/service (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Further endorsements help provide credible product knowledge (Amoateng & Poku, 2013; Sassenberg et al., 2012). It is the congruency between the product and the endorser that is key to achieving excellent outcomes. The hypothesis analyses the fit between the brand and an endorser (Kamins, 1990). Hence, in order to have a sound marketing plan, it is imperative to identify the right fitment between an endorser and the brand itself (Till & Busler, 1998).

To help understand consumers' purchase intention as affected by influencer marketing, this study has expanded on the TPB by breaking down the constructs (subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived behavioral control) along with social learning theory (source credibility and product influencer match-up) as the underlying framework. The authors have studied whether the intentions of an individual to purchase products is influenced by the above mentioned. Further, the study will also categorize the level of influence for various product categories and the type of influencer most suited for different product categories.

### *Knowledge on Influencer Marketing Targeting Children:*

One study performed a quantitative content analysis of branded vlogs. Nicoll and Nansen (2018) examined the content of 100 recent toy unboxing videos. They collected the videos by applying the "most recent" filter to the search term "toy unboxing" and analyzed the first 50 results on 2 days. They made a comparison between the vlogs of children (53%) and adults (47%) and analyzed variations of expertise, professionalism, and promotion across the vlogs. The age of the child unboxers ranged from toddler (2–4 years; 9%) to adolescent (12–18 years; 5%), with the majority (39%) being primary school age (4–11 years). Concerning their gender, 36% of endorsers were female and 52% male, while gender was undecided in 11% of the videos (e.g., only hands were visible, no commentary). Boys mostly unboxed (and assembled) toy cars and Legos, whereas girls tended to unbox toys like Shopkins (tiny collectable toys). Their main conclusion was that the toy unboxing videos of children tended to be much more varied and used more everyday language compared to professional (e.g., EvanTubeHD) or adult's videos, yet they seek to mimic adult and professional videos, including their production and branding strategies. On the other hand, well-known professional channels try to produce a semblance of amateur authenticity by imitating the playful qualities of children's videos (Nicoll and Nansen, 2018).

Next, three studies examined what children think about sponsored vlogs. Marsh (2016) took an ethnographic approach to observe how a 4-year-old child engages with unboxing videos on YouTube. According to this study, the

young child took the position of cyberflâneur who seemed to enjoy the mere act of viewing, while not engaging in nagging behavior, asking his parent to purchase the products.

Martínez and Olsson (2019) conducted a focus group study to examine how the practice of sponsored vlogging is perceived among 9- and 12-year old Swedish children of ages 12 focus groups with 46 children were conducted. Participants were shown a video (make-up tutorial) of the popular YouTuber Misslisibell as an illustrative example of advertising in vlogs. They had normative discussions around her vlogging practices and YouTube celebrity status related to her young age and had various interpretations of the video as advertising. The study shows the importance of YouTubers to children in their construction of identity and as a role model that guides their consumption (Martínez and Olsson, 2019).

The study of Folkvord et al. (2019) is an exploratory survey study among pre-teens/teens (10–13 years) in which they examined the amount of time children spend on viewing vlogs, their awareness and understanding of the endorsed brand in vlogs and their self-perceived susceptibility to the potential persuasive effects of these vlogs. Their conclusion was that the majority of children frequently watch vlogs and that their degree of bonding with the vlogger predicted the time they spend on watching vlogs. Moreover, they could easily recall products and brands displayed in the vlogs (mostly food and beverages) and believed that they themselves and others were affected by endorsements in vlogs.

## Types of Influencer Marketing:

### *Micro-influencers :*

leveraging 'normal' people to promote their products and services adds a lot of value to the advertisement that many smart marketers realized that in the recent days. Around this, the investment in micro-influencers boomed.

Micro-influencers aren't celebrities, just everyday social media users who have built up a following of like-minded people, and usually have between

1,000 and 10,000 engaged followers. The word engaged is what makes this type a special type of influencer marketing that In 2018, Forbes defined this group of influential individuals as the marketing force of the future.

While micro-influencers' followings may be smaller than celebrities, their targeted audiences are engaged and interact with content that these content creators put out. It is cheaper for a brand to collaborate with a micro-influencer than a celebrity, and while the reach won't be as high from a single collaboration, it is far more targeted to a key audience.

### *Celebrity (Macro) Influencers:*

Celebrity (or macro) influencers are those big-name stars with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of followers.

Working with this type of influencer makes it easier to reach large numbers of individuals and associate your brand with big-name stars. However, it is expensive, making the barrier to entry far higher for many businesses.

Working with celebrities isn't for every brand, but the most successful strategies will often look to balance both types of influencers for maximum impact.

### *Nano Influencers:*

For people with less than a 1000 followers but who are in a very small but highly engaged niche. The engagement is the key of the whole influencer marketing.

## **Types Of Influencer Campaigns:**

### *Discount codes and affiliate marketing:*

Influencers are teaming up with brands on discount codes, which are just as easily tracked and even easier to embed in graphics, videos, and share through mediums like podcasts. This attracts more people to view the content of the influencer and buy the products of the brand.



### *Competitions and giveaways:*

Depending on the product's price point, the brand can easily make room in its budget for giving away a handful of products each month to competition winners or directly to influencers.

Unboxing videos from Influencers, through their YouTube channel or Instagram live video, help shine a spotlight on their product by getting it in front of their entire audience at a minimal cost of the brand.

Some influencers receive so many freebies and exclusive products that they dedicate one day of the week to unboxing all their gifts on social media, thanking the brand that sent them, and either reviewing or using them right then and there on the platform.

## **Influencer Marketing Strategies:**

For the brand the money spent on influencer marketing is considered as advertising money which is mainly used for selling strategy. However the influencer to gain engagement the following strategies is used:

### *Document Goals and Key Performance Indicators:*

It is a gamble when a brand invest with an influencer for the first time. Because they aren't investing the necessary resources to properly test it as a viable channel, and partly because they don't take the time to set clear goals and determine the proper metrics that need to be tracked to meet those goals.

The big three goals around influencer marketing are:

- Building your brand online can be measured with follower count, likes, and engagement like comments, use of your hashtags, and shares.
- Attracting a new target market encompasses everything in brand awareness, but in an entirely new space or product line. For this, you need influencers who can build buzz and drive targeted traffic.
- Everything leads up to this: more sales. Getting more leads and customers are easily tracked with conversions and sales, but it can be tricky to track

sources directly unless you deploy specific codes or landing pages for each influencer.

Knowing which partnerships are working and which aren't will help you get the most out of your influencer strategy.

### *Understand The Influencer Landscape:*

An important component of influencer marketing is campaign is establishing a trusted relationship with a *relevant* influencer, one who's in tune with your audience's needs and desires and whom your audience will look to when they're making purchase decisions.

Finding the right fit between brand and influencer, you've got to find someone who is aligned with your brand's vision, mission, and identity. Instagram is typically the first platform that comes to mind when people think about when finding top notch influencers. In fact, in 2017, the #1 platform for influencers was Instagram, with a staggering 92% share.

Try to branching out this year and capitalizing on influencers across Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, and YouTube. Go wherever your target audience is active, and capitalize on the fact that influencers on platforms other than Instagram are likely more approachable and cost-effective for the time being.

## **Challenges Facing Influencer Marketing:**

- Spotting fake followers.
- Social algorithm changes.
- Building an always-on strategy.
- Rising influencer costs
- Keeping up with social media trends to stay relevant
- Building a strong creative strategy.
- Reducing time spent managing campaigns.
- Brand safety and brand alignment.

- FTC regulations and requirements.
- Tapping into emerging channels, such as Twitch.
- Moving more influencer marketing in-house.

## Influencer Marketing Trends:

### *Investing in Influencers Who Use Video:*

Video production is the latest craze, and if you aren't tapping into that channel you're already behind the curve. Some notable examples of this in action are product teaser campaigns, unboxing videos, and exclusive reviews from key influencers, all of which serve to create buzz early on and help crush sales goals for the initial product release. In a survey conducted last year, some 12% of influencers expected YouTube to be the network they focused on most in 2018, up from 3% in 2017.

### *Increased Transparency:*

One of the easiest ways to disclose the fact that influencers are being compensated to promote your brand is to have them put #sponsored, #ad, or #[brand name] partner in their post. Instagram took this a step further with their branded content option, which allows you to tag your business partner and will clearly show that it's a sponsored post. reducing the risk for your brand, it's highly recommended that you check your influencers' posts and content often to make sure they're adhering to the guidelines set by the FTC.

### *Creating Useful Content Instead of Ads:*

Content marketing is derived from people's demand for authenticity. Consumers were sick and tired of traditional advertising clogging up magazines, radio, TV, and billboards. Then, with the dot.com boom, the digital age brought about a new flood of advertising that elevated that demand for greater authenticity. With that in mind, the influencer you choose to partner with has to have the right balance of non-commissioned content and commissioned content. To avoid fading of trust.

## Recommendations:

Seek influencers who publish blog posts in addition to social media posts. Combining blog posts with social media promotions produces the best results. It is logical for that Blog posts appear in Google results for years, while social posts create a short-lived flash.

Previous research by influencer marketing company Markerly also found that followers are not put off by sponsored content. Sponsored posts and non-sponsored posts enjoy nearly identical like rates, and followers usually tend to engage more with sponsored content than non-sponsored. Try to meet the FTC requirements to avoid being marked as ads.

Be “influencer friendly.” A link from your homepage can point to a landing page where they can learn more about how your brand works with influencers. Influencer networks offer another option. The networks have proliferated, and networks specialize in almost every industry. About 75% of influencers surveyed work with networks.

Finally, select a few key metrics that make sense for your business. Many experts recommend social media measurement tools to determine the value of influencer marketing and demonstrate its value to management. Social media measurement tools can identify ideal influencers for brands, what content they share, how widely their content spreads across the digital landscape, and how they improve public sentiment toward the brand.

## Conclusion:

Brand marketers are eager to partner with influencers, particularly to attract the Millennials. Moreover, it looks like this trend will continue. Influencer marketing appeals to marketers for a number of reasons; among other things, it allows them to do an end run around ad blocking. eMarketer forecasts that in 2018, more than one in four Internet users will employ software to block ads. At this point it is adequate to say that online marketing has been just a new and different way of promoting goods, services or people. It has created a new form

of media on which to peddle goods and services. In 2018, the average Internet user has at least 7 social media accounts. The current trend is that an average person spends over 2 hours a day on social media, average teenagers 9 hours. Social media are integrated into everything they do – from school, through work, to entertainment and hanging out with friends. Social media are anywhere where people are. They have become an integral part of what a business is to its customers.

As influencer-backed promotion continues to grow in popularity for marketers, various tactics have proven more effective than others. We see future in ambassadorships as one of the most effective uses of influencers, ahead of product reviews and brand mentions. Influencers, especially YouTubers, have a great impact on Internet economy by influencing purchasing behaviour and representing a source of information and entertainment for the young generation known as Millennials. This is part of an overall shift in how we prioritise word-of-mouth information over paid television, magazine and newspaper ads; it is hard to ignore the power of these unofficial brand ambassadors. Influencer marketing provides an opportunity for companies to leverage the power of social proof, while relying on those who already have a large following.

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