***Interviewee: Margot Parks, 42 yo***

***Niche: Fashion & Style***

***Reach: 8 million followers (Instagram)***

**Q1. Please tell me a little about your work as a content creator/digital influencer, how it started, and how you have established yourself in your current niche.**

So, like, my digital influencer career really, you know, took off with this profound moment of clarity. I was hit with the realization that my deep love for fashion was, in a way, clashing with its environmental impact. It was one of those epiphanies where everything just clicks. It all began with me, like, diving into experimenting with thrifted finds and DIY projects, and then I started sharing those creative endeavors on social media.

When I first created my profile, it was more of a hobby than anything else. I remember setting it up and feeling so excited about, you know, the possibility of combining my passion for fashion with my newfound interest in sustainability. I was posting regularly, but, like, I wasn’t really making any profit or gaining significant traction. Honestly, that was not my primary goal; I never expected it to be my source of income one day. It was mostly about sharing my journey and connecting with like-minded people who were also passionate about second-hand fashion and eco-friendly choices.

It wasn't until my second year that things really started to change. By then, I had developed a clearer niche and built a more engaged audience. I began collaborating with eco-friendly brands and participating in events that, you know, spotlighted ethical fashion. Plus, I made a point to, like, actively engage with my followers. I answered their questions, offered advice, and encouraged them to think critically about their fashion choices and their broader impact on the planet.

Building my presence in this niche meant, like, blending my passion for style with a compelling message about sustainability. It’s been, like, this amazing journey of growth and discovery, and I’m genuinely thrilled to see more people, you know, embracing the idea that fashion can be both chic and sustainable. I should say, it’s really all about, like, making mindful choices and inspiring others to do the same.

**Q2. In what ways do you believe content creators/digital influencers shape consumer behavior? Could you share any examples?**

To me, we play a huge role in shaping shopping behaviors. In my case, I tend to think always in a positive way, especially in how people approach fashion and consumption. In my specific niche, for example, we have the power to highlight alternative ways of shopping, like thrifting or investing in sustainable brands. By showcasing these choices in a stylish and accessible way, we can make them more appealing and mainstream.

For example, I’ve shared before-and-after transformations of thrifted pieces and upcycled garments, showing how a bit of creativity can turn something overlooked into a fashion statement. These posts often spark conversations and inspire my followers to explore thrift stores or try their hand at DIY projects.

Another way we influence shopping behaviors is through the partnerships we form with brands. When I collaborate with eco-friendly or slow fashion brands, it not only introduces my audience to these products but also underscores the importance of supporting ethical practices.

One memorable instance was a campaign where I featured a series of thrifted outfits and challenged my followers to create their own looks with second-hand items. The response was incredible—many shared their own finds and transformations, demonstrating how a little inspiration can lead to significant changes in shopping habits,

In my opinion, we have a responsibility to use their platform to promote positive change. By encouraging a shift towards more mindful consumption and celebrating the beauty of sustainable fashion, we can help our followers make choices that are not only stylish but also ethical. It’s all about inspiring a movement towards a more thoughtful and responsible fashion industry.

But, well, I am not naive; I know that social media can often feel like the Wild West. There are many out there who use the available tools solely for monetization, often without considering their impact on their audience or the broader community. This mindset can lead to a cycle of superficial content, where the focus shifts away from genuine connection and value.

People may prioritize clicks and likes over authenticity, resulting in an overwhelming amount of noise and misinformation. It's disheartening to see creativity and meaningful dialogue drowned out by the relentless pursuit of profit.

While it's certainly possible to build a sustainable income on these platforms, I believe that true success comes from balancing engagement with integrity. Social media can be a powerful tool for building communities and sharing ideas, but it requires a thoughtful approach. Those who genuinely care about their audience and strive to contribute positively can create a lasting impact, even amidst the chaos.

**Q3. What strategies would you say content creators/digital influencers typically use to increase sales of sponsored products and services? Which ones have you used? What worked and what did not work for you? Why?**

There are definitely a lot of strategies out there for boosting followers and revenue, but to be honest, it's not always a space I enjoy diving into and not my mission with my web presence. Some of the tactics people use can get pretty aggressive and don't always align with my values. I’m all about keeping things authentic and organic.

For me, the focus is on recycling and reusing, rather than just pushing new products. I do have partnerships with some stores and brands, including stationary and larger retailers, where my followers can find the tools and supplies I use in my projects. But my main goal is to inspire sustainable choices through the content I create.

What’s worked best for me? Showing how I style and incorporate items into my daily life has made a big impact. It’s one thing to talk about a product, but it’s another to demonstrate how it can be used practically and stylishly. I love putting together lookbooks and how-to videos because they really help my followers see the versatility of sustainable fashion.

Engaging directly with my audience through live sessions and Q&As has also been fantastic. When I do live styling sessions or answer questions in real-time, it’s less about the hard sell and more about creating a genuine connection. It’s about having a conversation and showing how products can fit into real-life scenarios.

I guess that staying true to myself and creating content that’s genuine and engaging has been the key. It’s all about building real connections and demonstrating how sustainable fashion can be both stylish and impactful.

Interviewee: Anything that didn’t work out as well for you?

In terms of sales conversion, that’s not really my main focus, so I can’t speak to that specifically. This might be different for influencers who are more focused on profit and reach. Diversifying channels can definitely help you reach a broader audience, but it doesn’t always guarantee the same quality of engagement.

But when it comes to connecting with my audience, I found that managing multiple social media channels—like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok—was a bit overwhelming. It meant constantly producing and tailoring content for each platform, which became quite challenging.

So, I decided to streamline my efforts and stick primarily to Instagram. I really appreciate the variety of features it offers and how well it aligns with my content style. Plus, I’ve noticed that there’s a generational aspect where TikTok didn’t quite resonate with my audience in the way I had hoped. By focusing on Instagram, I’ve been able to create more meaningful interactions and maintain a stronger connection with my followers.

**Q4. What do you see as key ethical responsibilities of content creators/digital influencers? In your opinion, how should these ethics apply to endorsements and recommendations? Are there any personal examples you could share?**

Being responsible in the digital influencer space means being mindful of the broader impact of consumerism and its effect on the planet. We need to strike a balance between sharing exciting finds and promoting thoughtful consumption. It’s about encouraging our followers to make choices that are both stylish and sustainable. My mission as a digital influencer is to offer possibilities without driving impulsive shopping.

I find that my work, and the work of many other influencers who inspire me, takes a different approach from the mainstream. While some influencers focus heavily on driving sales and exploiting the platform, I aim to do something different. It’s everywhere you look—sometimes in your face, sometimes more subtly—but I don’t agree with it.

For me, it’s crucial to consider the broader impact of consumerism. Balancing the excitement of discovering new finds with promoting responsible practices and supporting environmental sustainability is key.

When I endorse a company or brand, it’s because I truly believe in their mission. If a product or service doesn’t align with my focus on slow fashion and conscious consumption, I won’t promote it just to make a sale. My followers appreciate my honest opinions because they know I’m not just pushing products for the sake of it.

A recent example of this is my collaboration with a fantastic service that focuses on recycling and repurposing old clothing. They offer a program where you can send in your unwanted clothes, and they either upcycle them into new items or ensure they’re recycled properly. I featured their service in a series of posts, showing how the process works and highlighting its positive environmental impact.

The feedback from my followers was incredibly positive. Many were excited to discover a practical way to responsibly dispose of their old clothes and appreciated the transparency and environmental impact of the service. It sparked conversations about sustainable fashion and encouraged people to think more about their own recycling practices.

Collaborating with a service like this not only supports a brand doing good for the environment but also empowers my audience to make more sustainable choices. It’s about promoting responsible consumption and inspiring actions that benefit both style and the planet.