# Sowing Seeds and Cultivating Roots of B2B Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing or social media marketing has been associated with B2C for a very long time. But given its reach and credibility today, it is slowly and steadily gaining importance in B2B companies too.

With paid marketing becoming evasive, B2B companies are finding new ways to connect with their target audience authentically to drive value.

Let’s take the example of IBM. They ran a successful campaign to promote their software IBM Verse by featuring their own employees. The results of this campaign were outstanding as it drove 50,000 new registrations to IBM Verse in the first two weeks of its launch.

That said, for B2B companies, it is essential to identify potential influencers and nurture them to enhance brand sentiment and build trust before diving into influencer marketing.

## Who are your influencers – Given a thought?

Influencer marketing is no doubt one of the most effective ways to build brand awareness, making it more relatable and accessible. However, the question arises who these influencers are and what role do they play. Let’s take a close look!

Employees as influencers – Remember, it takes people to reach people. Your employees are real people with real connections who have complete knowledge of your brand, products and services. They are authentic voices who can connect you to your target audience and also help you seek better talents.

Clients as influencers – Identify clients who love your brand, products or services and talk about it to friends, and use it regularly because they like it. When clients demonstrate credibility, it enhances your brand value. It only takes a few people like these to get you good referrals and create a significant reach.

Alumni as influencers – Your alumni group and professors with their expertise and resources can help you in effectively spreading the word, shaping perspectives and engaging the audience in a way that resonates authentically with them. It could simply be through talks, workshops, seminars or demos.

Community as influencers – Industry associations like NASSCOM and CII organize regular events, seminars, and conferences offering valuable networking opportunities. By engaging with them, you can connect with influential players, potential clients, partners, and collaborators, thereby expanding your reach and visibility.

Now that we have identified potential influencers, let’s explore further to understand how you can effectively build and nurture these connections.

## Building and nurturing your influencer roots

Cultivate a strong rapport: Create a bond with your potent clients or employees by genuinely investing your time and sharing your work. This could be catching up with one of your valuable clients for coffee and getting some feedback and insights on your product/service or it could be rewarding your employees for their efforts and encouraging them to share their experience.

Help them grow: Motivate your employees to upgrade themselves through online courses, attending events and workshops. Identify their strengths, appreciate them for how far they have come and allow them to take ownership in what they do.

Invite clients to your events: Consider inviting clients to join as speakers in your conferences, webinars, or workshops. This not only lets them display their expertise but also gives you a chance to promote your brand through the platform.

Always give thanks: Express gratitude to your customers for their unwavering support on your journey. Show appreciation through brief celebratory emails, thoughtful gestures like sending goodies, and remembering them on significant occasions including birthdays and new year’s.

### The seedbed of influencer marketing

It is rightly said, “A brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories, and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer’s decision to choose one product or service over another.” In the world of influencer marketing, it is business stories, relationships, trust and the willingness to give that drive conversions, shape perceptions, and foster enduring connections. When your clients, employees or people who know and trust you talk about your product or services, their words carry more value and authenticity. It is this authenticity that fosters a sense of reliability, leading to increased brand credibility.