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Marketers the world over are starting to realize that achieving “likes” and “follows” is only scratching the

surface social media’s potential as a marketing and sales vehicle. To turn social media into a viable tool

with real top- and bottom-line impact, marketers need to develop content, tap into relevant communities

and build relationships with key influencers.

One way to leverage social media engagement is to use big data – Big Social Data – to zero in on

communities of like-minded people, and then identify which members are most influential.

1.1 Find and Engage

Once you’ve found your on-the-street influencer, how do you nurture them without compromising

objectivity and turning the individual into nothing more than a paid tweeter or blogger? There are two

considerations here: getting the influencer on your team, and then keeping them fresh, alert and genuine.

The way to do this is not simple, and human intervention is necessary. A brand advocate needs several

touch points and a steady stream of quality content and product samples to keep their social conversations

interesting. Conversely, a brand advocate who suddenly turns on your product or service becomes a

liability, and should be managed accordingly. Ongoing monitoring will keep your team of influencers

functioning according to plan.

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13The Rise and Rise of the Influencer –

What it means to today’s marketers

1.2 What influencers mean to marketers

For brands seeking to use social media as a tool to boost sales, receiving mentions, likes and follows isn’t

enough. Companies need to identify those who are most influential in their subject areas, engage more

deeply with their target audiences, nurture and amplify them.

Both B2C and B2B consumers are looking for authenticity, and will gravitate to those in social media

who are speaking with passion and intelligence. Thus part of your digital content marketing strategy

should be social media content – provided by real people with real opinions.

Marketers have been trying to get to this level of information out of social media for a long time. Big

social data is now providing answers – listening in real-time to make distinctions between people,

and then grouping them into localised communities where true influencers can be identified. These

communities are easily addressable, if you know how to find the influencers who start discussions, state

opinions and engage others.

A vast number of people are now active on social media worldwide. The interrelationships between those

people, and the valuable data they generate, is too important to ignore.