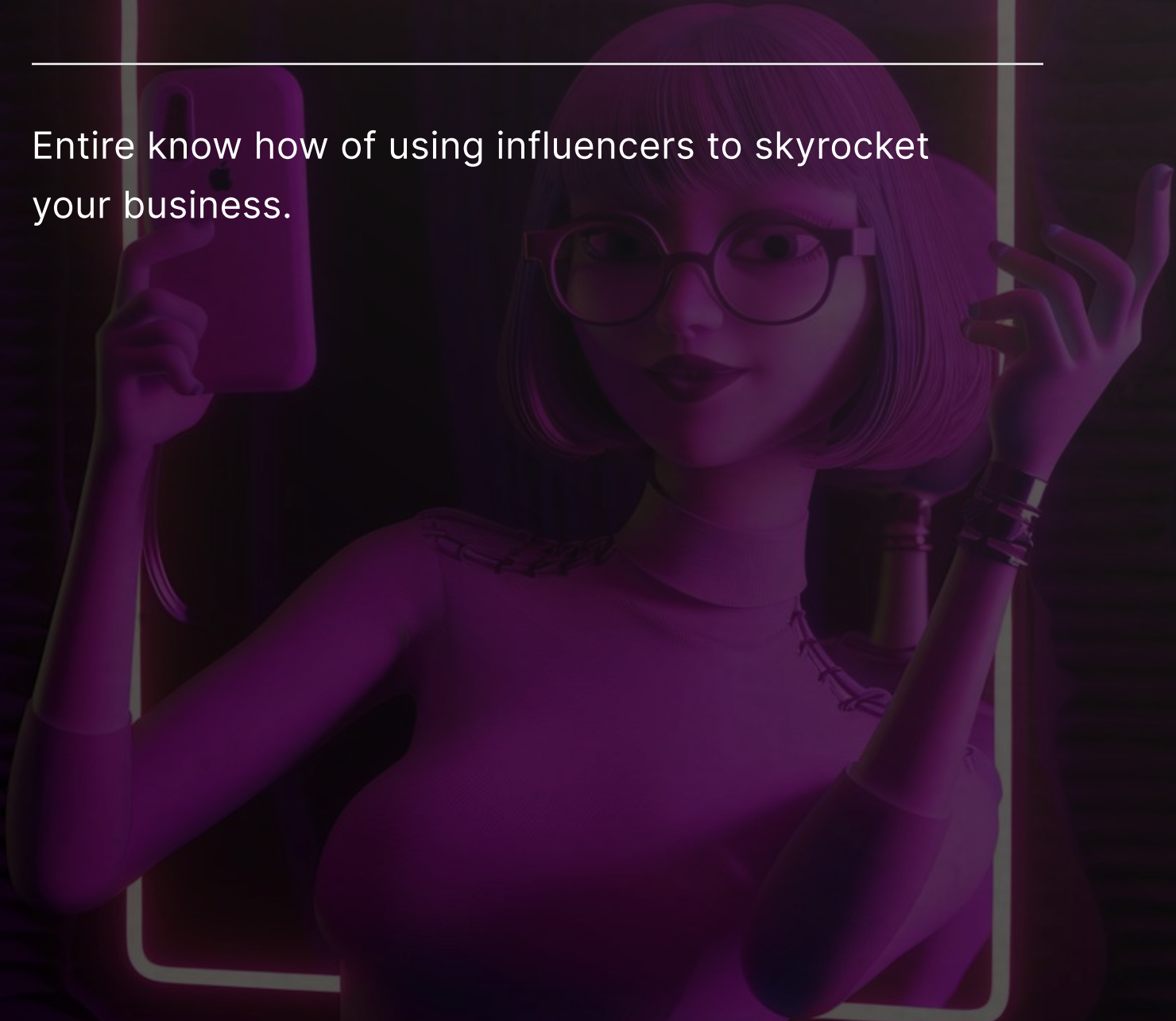


# INFLUENCER MARKETING MASTERY

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Entire know how of using influencers to skyrocket your business.



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# INTRODUCTION

# Introduction

Influencer marketing is no longer something you can ignore or play trial and error with. It is a mainstream branch of digital marketing and is no longer optional, no matter the brand.

The word influencer has been around for a few years now, but many marketers and their brands are unclear on how to tap into this market to reach demographics that are still out of sight for them. Well, there is a first time for everything, but that doesn't mean you go into it blind.

As the word suggests, an influencer is a person who can persuade their followers to change their behavior, which gives them a certain amount of control over the purchasing power of their audience on any given social media platform. There are three types of influencers on the internet today and it depends on the size of their followers.

- Micro influencers have less than 10,000 followers and can help reach a specific niche audience. This might be a small club but the audience loyalty is strong.
- Power middle influencers have less than 250,000 but more than 10,000 followers. They are not as big as international celebrities but have a considerable amount of influence over their followers. These influencers also have partnered with brands in the past and have some of that commercial experience.
- Macro influencers are the third kind and have more than 250,000 followers. Typically, they are YouTube or Instagram celebrities and have a huge following. But it is possible that they don't have the same level of credibility as powerful middle influencers, which means their impact in terms of changing buyer behavior won't necessarily be directly proportional to the size of their following.

To begin with, influencers came into existence because it is an incredibly difficult task for brands to get and hold the attention of users on social media. As Aaron Sorkin puts it, this "theater of short attention span" is a hard one to capture.

It is also because there are a number of brands with an online presence and the competition is quite fierce. With everyone bombarding customers with their products and services, it has become hard for users to make a decision. And the amount of self promotion brands do, hasn't helped their case much either because this has only made the customers skeptical.

So, there came a need for an innovative marketing strategy that did not include them talking about themselves. In short, they needed someone that customers would trust to give them a thumbs up. While celebrity endorsements have been around for that same reason, some influencers are more authentic with their followers for the sake of their own credibility. This has led to brands and influencers joining hands to make the best of the situation.

But every marketing strategy needs a plan and as popular or effective as an influencer might be, they are not the exception to this rule. Influencer marketing can achieve some very specific goals that are beneficial to both parties.

## CHAPTER 1

# **WHAT IS INFLUENCER MARKETING?**

# Chapter 1: What Is Influencer Marketing?

Now, we've gone through who an influencer is and how your brand can benefit from collaborating with them. But let's spend a minute on understanding the concept of influencer marketing as a whole. For starters, this is not a new concept at all. If you are an established brand with a big budget, you have probably been doing this all along in the form of celebrity endorsements.

You pay a famous person to put their vote of approval on your brand and compensate them for it. It is one of the most traditional ways of marketing a product or service. But here's the kicker. It is different from influencer marketing in more ways than one.

Customers are moving away from traditional marketing because they understand that celebrity endorsement is a marketing strategy and doesn't actually mean that the celebrity recommends or has even used the product or service they are endorsing. That's why they are more inclined to find fresh voices on the internet. Voices that are talking about the product or service after giving it a go. This channel of voices used to come in the form of reviews on platforms like Yelp.

But, over time, they have started making the same associations with their favorite influencers on these platforms because that follower base is more often than not filled with people who either have the same questions as the individual or the answer to their questions. Influencers are also perceived to be regular people, unlike celebrities who are likely to be from a different class of people than the guy on the street.

So, here are a few ideas in any brand's starter kit when it comes to collaborating with an influencer on a social media platform.

- Paying the individual for sponsored posts that are clearly marked as such.
- Giving them exclusive access and striking a deal with them to post X number of reviews which increases brand awareness and reach.
- Give influencers merch or discounts on merch and get an honest review.

This is a huge financial bargain compared to traditional channels of advertising, not only because the terms and conditions can be adjusted depending on the goals of a specific campaign, but also because influencers are all about flexibility.



Even when their focus is on making money, they strive to stay authentic with their followers. This is why your (potential) customers might be inclined to doubt big celebrities but will trust social media influencers who they perceive to be more like themselves.

Now, it is important to remember that some collaborations are not going to get you tangible results, meaning they will help you improve your brand recognition, which cannot always be measured. You might end up making 10 videos with an influencer instead of a short television ad. But rest assured that your influencer is likely to get you more engagement than the television advertisement.

In the introductory chapter, I also touched upon the importance of picking the right influencer for your brand. This is an interesting aspect of influencer marketing. Now, these minor celebrities can be found anywhere on the internet. That is part of the thrill and the challenge of finding them.

Typically, what makes them an “influencer” is the size of their following on social media. But that size can vary from hundreds to millions of followers. So, don’t get hung up on the numbers alone. Don’t count on their accounts being exceptionally jazzy either.

Some of them are known for their anonymity. Faceless internet entities like content creators Dream and Corpse or the hacker group Anonymous are extremely popular and influential among their followers. Sometimes they have a huge following and sometimes they have a small but extremely loyal, cult-ish following. If you can tap into that, you’ve really got something.

Influencers are not just individuals who talk about your niche. They might be photographers or bloggers or an industry insider who is known to reveal trade secrets to help the audience make better purchasing decisions.

The bottom line is that no matter the subject of the content they create, influencers have a phenomenal capacity to deliver your message to their followers while being true to both parties. They are like double agents except they do their best to be true to both parties and everyone (you and the audience) is aware of what they are dealing with.

## How This Works

When you want to move away from traditional marketing channels because you want to capture more or a different set of audiences, you not only look for influencers with the right kind of follower base but also individuals who are trendsetters. Individuals who can recommend your brand in a way that makes it more palatable to potential customers.

This is how influencers deal with brands. They are essentially content creators that want to make stuff that is likable and shareable. They create material that you can repurpose for your mainstream promotional channels like email marketing to name one. But influencer marketing is not restricted to social media posts and videos.

You can think of:

- Product reviews
- Product placements in their content
- Unboxing videos
- Promoting your campaigns and new launches
- Sharing discounts and coupon codes
- Announcing giveaways
- Partnerships that go for more than one video or post
- Supporting influencer causes (because it's a give and take) by taking part in their events
- Planting your product in their events

These are just a few ideas that are open to every brand that collaborates with an influencer. What more can be done depends on your brand and the influencer you engage with. So, let's elaborate on that.

## Types of Influencer Marketing

Here are five ways in which you can get started.

### **1. Contests**

Depending on your pricing, you can allocate a portion of your budget to organize contests and giveaways. This can be a monthly event but you can make it more

frequent if you can afford to do so.

Announcing contests through videos is a great way to engage the audience with your product. It is original content from the influencer and you get to measure audience interest in the form of likes, shares, redirected followers to your social media pages, more sign-ups for your newsletters and viewers tagging their friends who might be interested in your product.

You can get your influencer to do unboxing videos on your product on their social media channels. This will highlight your offer and maybe lower the price for viewers who come through the influencer.

Giveaways are also a big part of influencer marketing which means they can dedicate a day every week or month to unboxing the product and giving it away to winners of the contest. This is a great way to place your product in their content, do a few lines for a review even if you don't want to do a full unboxing video.

## ***2. Create Sponsored Content***

This is another popular way of getting users to engage with influencers and through them with your brand. It is a common marketing technique too. It gives you the opportunity to ask the influencer to endorse a particular product or service through their blog posts, images or videos.

You can launch entire campaigns using this premise with pre-decided terms and conditions. But make sure you let the influencer use their own voice and creativity because that's what their audience responds to the most.

## ***3. Content and Product Collaborations***

This is a mirror image of celebrity endorsements. You can create products along with your influencer which benefits both parties very well. It's a common practice in the fashion industry where an entire line of products is launched with a celebrity.

You will be producing the products but their branding will piggyback on the popularity of the influencer who is already an established presence.

#### **4. Takeovers**

This practice has been around for a while but is picking up pace quite rapidly in recent times. You allow the influencer to take over your social media channels for a period of time (more often than not, it is for a day) but you can do it for a particular season marking a special occasion.

This takes the brand to the behind the scenes of an influencer's life or your brand, whichever works best with the audience in question. They can create text-based posts, pictures, videos or stories that will excite and intrigue the audience. Engagement is high for these kinds of posts.

It starts with a certain level of trust and you must remember to change passwords at the end of the takeover period. On some platforms, like Snapchat, you can do this without giving your login details. Look into those options before you launch the idea.

#### **5. Reviews**

This takes us back into the realm of traditional marketing except, your influencer is the one reviewing the product. You can strike a deal to make it a favorable review or get an honest one. If you're gunning for a favorable review, you will have to offer a freebie but they will have to do a full disclosure to their audience.

Unboxing videos often give you the opportunity to try this technique. With influencers, the idea is that they have never used this product or service. So, they will be coming into the experience with fresh eyes and it will all be done while the camera is rolling. This is exactly the kind of stuff that lends authenticity to the review and the brand gains the audience's trust.

These methods often give:

- More credibility to the brand.
- Bring in a new audience to your fore.
- Repeatedly advertising your content makes it easy for the audience to remember your brand.
- Lends reliability to your brand through the influencer.

It is not hard to see how brands have benefitted immensely from influencer marketing.

## CHAPTER 3

# **WHAT IS A SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER?**

# Chapter 2: What Is a Social Media Influencer?

We have looked at the different types of influencers based on their following. But you can also make that differentiation based on the type of content these influencers create. A lot of influencer marketing happens on social media through bloggers and micro influencers. There is also a huge interest in videos on these platforms. So, here's how to spot these influencers.

## **1. Bloggers**

Micro-blogging is a big part of the influencer marketing pie. These individuals have a very active and credible relationship with their followers. Something that brands are actively looking to tap into. This space has been available and untapped for a while and now more than ever, there are plenty of bloggers with a stronghold on their audience because they were removed from the brands and provided objective insights.

This has also given them the opportunity to build a sizable following in their niche. Now, while there are plenty of them willing to collaborate with brands, they understand that their loyalty is with the audience more than the brand. So, bloggers in sectors like fitness, finance, music and health are influential because of their loyalty to the audience more than the brands they talk about.

If you want to tap into this market, you want the blogger in question to give you a positive review and recommend it to their readers. There are quite a few ways to do this including guest posting.

This is a technique where you get to post on their blog and control the content. It gives you the opportunity to talk about your product while the blogger remains out of the editorial content which gives them the chance to protect their integrity. It's a win-win for both. You get to reach their audience while they can develop a relationship with your brand without having to necessarily endorse your product or service.

If you are dealing with an experienced blogger, you might even be able to do a sponsored post. This gives you the chance to write a post on their blog or strike a

deal with the blogger where they write one for you for a predetermined compensation.

These posts are often positive and beneficial for your brand and come with a disclosure that they were paid for the post. But since the readers place faith in their judgment, they are likely to take it as more than a casual nod from a voice of authority on the subject.

The downside to this is that the readers recognize the 'Sponsored' tags and are likely to ignore them like they ignore ads on any other platform. But it is a risk worth taking.

## **2. *YouTubers***

Since making videos is now an integral part of every marketing strategy, it is only logical that you explore this space with your influencer. In fact, it is wise to remember that more people are inclined to watch videos on their phones than read text material.

And influencers know that for a fact better than anyone else out there. Videos are also a popular medium for any brand to reach their audience. So, there is no influencer who does not have a video marketing plan. That's exactly what you tap into for your brand.

## **3. *Podcasters***

This is the other half of the audio-visual spectrum. It is newer than some other forms of creating content but it is quickly becoming very popular. Whether you're a nobody or Michelle Obama, it feels like everyone has a podcast now.

And those who are too busy, have long commutes or like long format are all gravitating towards this medium for its ability to dive in-depth into one topic and provide insights. This is likely to get you the thinkers in the audience. So, that's most definitely an area to cover.

## **4. *Social Posts***

Now, you can't be a social media influencer without an active and dominant presence on social media. So, whether you are looking for a blogger or a podcaster or a YouTuber, you will find them on social media platforms. That's because even those who have their own websites rely on these platforms to draw

their audience like moths towards the flame.

It's based on the simple fact that hardly anyone checks websites to see if there is new content. Despite subscriptions to newsletters and RSS feeds, people find it easier to keep tabs on their favorite influencers through social media alerts for new posts, pictures, videos and lives. Influencers use this behavioral trait to publicize their material on these platforms which makes any kind of content creator with a sizable following a micro-influencer.

## **What Makes Them Good Influencers**

But how do you know who is a good influencer? One who has their finger on the pulse of their audience and can help do the same for your brand? Well, here are a few things that all good influencers know they need to do to keep their follower base happy.

### ***Conceptualize Their Niche and Brand***

It might feel like we live in an era where people are famous for being famous. Now, if you think about it, this isn't a new concept either. When we talk about this concept, the Kardashians are the first to come to mind.

But take a step back and look at their timeline and you will notice that they have been around for a long time. Paris Hilton is another example. She might have started modeling when she was a teenager but for better or worse, she was a lot more famous for the life she led than her modeling prowess.

We can't all do that which means we have to come up with sparkling ideas to get there. Although, if you think about it, their idea of making themselves the brand and the brand ambassador is pretty pathbreaking. You might not like it but it's a smart move. One that millions of people fell for.

When you think about influencers, they have to do the same. They need to find a product (which can be their personality) and then sell it to their followers. But not everyone needs to reinvent the wheel. More often than not, they identify niches that are already popular and provide insights in their unique voice.

Food, fashion, fitness, technology, gaming, health and travel are just a few examples where influencers make a killing. But their ability to garner followers comes from the way they present their ideas. It's not helpful if they take a popular field but do boring content. Some do serious content, some go for quirk and



humor and a few dare to go cringe.

But that's how you can identify the influencer for your brand too. Someone who can speak with your audience in their language but be true to your brand. This is what makes them stand out and will eventually make your brand stand out too.

### ***Make the Most of the Right Social Media Platforms***

Influencers find their audience on social media through trial and error. But once they start creating and posting content, a good one takes feedback from the followers. They ask them to engage with the post on both likes and dislikes and take that into account while creating the next post.

The key to being a good influencer is listening to what people want and how to build on that without losing your originality. That takes patience and market research. When you engage with an influencer, it is research you might not entirely have to do for your brand. They have figured it out and it's working well for them. When you sign them on, you use their talent and creativity to make your point.

### ***Identify Their Target Audience Skillfully***

The trial-and-error process mentioned in the previous step is critical to identifying the follower base no matter what the influencer's niche. Their ability to do that is what makes them good at their social media game. That is because influencers are brands themselves and they must be as good as you in identifying their audience.

If they can't do that, they are not of much use to you. They need to know who is consuming the content so that they can create it accordingly. When they sign on with a brand, there is another variable in the equation. Their ability to balance your audience and theirs (even though there is a large overlap in that Venn diagram) is what makes them skilled at their job.

It's what you should be looking for when you are on the lookout.

### ***Create Content That's Exciting and Marketable***

And this is what makes or breaks an influencer. They need to be able to win the top-of-the-mind recall game. This means their content has to be both exciting and they need to have the ability to sell it to their audience. That is exactly what you

want to do too. And they need to understand the importance of posting regularly and on a schedule. Also, the things you as a brand want to invest in.

While automation has made a lot of progress in the content creation industry, it can help you create templates and save time but it cannot make you original or unique editorially. That comes down to the talent of the influencer.

There is no other way to do this. Influencers can ride certain waves and fads but that fame does not last too long. As a brand, when you look for an influencer, you want to find someone who has the ability to create their own magic as well as hop on trends as and when the need arises. This is a sign of their ability to follow the market, create content in a timely manner and be true to their followers. All excellent qualities for their business and yours.

### ***Write Titles That Are Algorithm Friendly and Add the Right Tags***

All the above-mentioned qualities will produce no results if the influencer is not tech-savvy. This is entirely a technological game. So, if they have the best post or video of all time but do not know how to gain visibility on said platforms, they lose the game. That's something else you want to look for when you pick the influencer for your brand.

You want them to help increase your brand's visibility. You can offer your brand as a platform (if you are a well-established one) but they need to build on your popularity, not use it only to up their profile.

This requires them to be familiar with the algorithms of all the major social media platforms. They need to know about writing SEOfriendly headlines and adding keywords according to the content.

## CHAPTER 3

# **WHY INFLUENCER MARKETING WORKS SO WELL FOR BUSINESSES**

# Chapter 3: Why Influencer Marketing Works So Well for Businesses

There are lots of reasons why this marriage between brands and individual content creators who are seen as voices of authority in their niche is advantageous to businesses. The list can be unending, but here are the essentials if you need convincing on the benefits of influencer marketing.

## Precise Targets

Every marketing idea aims at gathering as many relevant visitors to the website as possible. But to get there you need to find an audience who will be interested in your product or service and are most likely to buy what you have to offer. If you don't target the right crowd, you might get visitors to the website, but you won't be able to turn them into paying customers.

Today, one of the most important ways of finding and attracting this demographic is on social media. You should know that the game of getting likes, comments and shares is not an impossible one to play, but you need some serious skill and resources invested to beat the competition. Even when you do a good job with your social media pages, you will need a little extra help to grab eyeballs in this short attention span market. That's where influencers come into the picture.

One of the best things about influencer marketing is that you can target the perfect audience for your product or service once you determine who they are. This process can be challenging and needs more than a casual market study.

When you start picking influencers, a step in that process gets eliminated. You don't have to find a place where your target audience gets together into a cluster because your influencer has that market captured. So really, your choice of the influencer is the big decision you need to make.

Make sure that they are highly relevant to your niche and that their personality, which is their brand, matches your product or service, aka your brand. This is why fashion brands partnering with millennial influencers who regularly address this subject in their posts is an excellent decision. These influencers can be

bloggers or models who have a strong social media presence.

When you engage these individuals, or should I say the right kind of influencers for the job, your content reaches exactly the kind of audience who are looking for these products and services.

## **Improves Brand Awareness**

Whether you are an established brand in the market or a relatively unknown one, there is always new ground to break, even in the demographics you think you have conquered.

Influencers are extremely useful thanks to their reach. They are the perfect tool to reach new audiences and increase brand awareness. Every time they promote your brand, their followers will notice it, and depending on the type of influencer you choose (I listed three types in the beginning), you have a good shot at being perceived as more authentic.

Using influencers as a platform also helps you to cut through other traditional forms of advertising and reach the audience directly. It helps your brand's visibility and gets the audience to engage with your brand in a meaningful way both at the same time.

## **Boosts Audience Engagement**

Speaking of engaging with the audience in a meaningful way, engagement is a technical term in social media parlance. It is a metric that calculates how involved the audience is with your content based on likes, comments, shares, etc. Building this is a long-term game and can be quite the task. And without meaningful engagement, it won't matter if your page has a lot of followers. This is where influencer marketing can help your brand.

Influencers can improve the quality of your content by tweaking it to suit their audience. Their audience that you have identified as your potential customers. This makes the content more customer-centric and gets traction. Influencers also have a better shot at getting the audience to engage with the content because that is their whole game. It is kind of a personality cult and followers love shout outs from their favorite celebrities. This incentivizes them to engage with the

influencer and in turn with your brand which expands your reach.

When you integrate influencers into your advertising strategy, you end up boosting the audience's engagement with your brand. So, this is an add-on to your regular channels of marketing but it makes a significant contribution to your reach.

It also increases the chances of potential customers searching for your brand on the likes of Google because their favorite influencer recommended it. This in turn increases brand awareness and brings traffic to your website. And even if they don't Google you, influencers usually add links to their social media platforms when promoting your brand. So, that will always bring traffic.

## **More Viewers Turn into Buyers**

You want brand awareness and would like to increase your reach. But the final goal is to increase sales and profits from these marketing strategies. In the business, that's referred to as conversion rate.

We know by now that bombarding your users with ads where you talk about your own brand is only going to get you so far. This has made customers more cautious and everyone likes to do their own research about a product or service to verify the authenticity of the claims made in advertisements.

When the recommendation comes from an influencer the users trust, your job gets a little easier. Their influence extends to swaying the purchasing power of their follower base. That's why you are tapping into the influencer fan base to begin with. There are studies that say that influencer influence when it comes to making people buy products and services is quite real. So, it's a pretty effective tool to gain new customers.

## **Credibility and Trust Levels Increase**

Speaking of influence, these individuals only have this kind of influence because of the trust they have cultivated with their follower base over a period of time. So, when you pick the right influencer, you are able to cash in on that and gain some of that trust for your brand too. This has the capacity of getting you a loyal customer base over time.

When the influencer gives your products or services honest feedback, your reputation gets a boost and it makes you more credible even with the newest audience. This is one of the easiest ways to reach new audiences and get them to like you sooner than they would with the best kind of traditional advertising. That is simply because influencers make their content relatable, have a reputation of being reliable and are usually fun, which is a welcome step for engagement.

## **Rejigs Content Strategy**

Engaging with influencers might also open you up to new formats of content. They know what works with their audience and might have ideas that will help your brand with the kind of market you are seeking to capture.

Their entire strategy is about getting more engagement because that's how they make their brand. So, they know what will grab the users' eyeballs and can help you rejig some of your material. This makes your brand more visible and accessible.

## **Better Ranking in Terms of SEO**

When you engage with influencers with real influence on the purchasing power of their followers, you make appearances on their platforms whether that is a text-based blog post, newsletter or video posts.

Typically, these posts link back to your website which brings their audience to your landing page. Search engines consider these legitimate tags and high-quality backlinks which will improve your ranking. That is every brand's dream when they strike these deals with influencers.

## CHAPTER 4

# **DEFINING YOUR GOALS WITH INFLUENCER MARKETING**



# Chapter 4: Defining Your Goals with Influencer Marketing

Now, there are two main reasons to get into influencer marketing. One is to improve brand awareness and two is to get these aware individuals to buy your products or services. But these are broad targets.

When you start building a strategy, you need to be more specific. You want to know how to find your target audience which will, in turn, help you find the influencer who engages this demographic. You want to know if you're looking to expand or reach more individuals in the existing demographic. You must know if you want the influencer to help you ride the trend or talk about your brand's core values.

Now, influencers have a very specific reach that is very useful to brands. They can be your voice in the niche that they conquer. So, you want to use their skills to get your message out. That's your medium. Here's how you narrow the above goals with the medium at hand.

## Define Specific KPIs

Key performance indicators or KPIs are a big part of defining the goals of influencer marketing. There are two aspects to deal with here—direct response and brand awareness. Sometimes, it's a mix of both.

You want the influencer campaign to get you both awareness and increase the conversion rate. That means your KPIs have to be specific.

### *Direct Response KPIs*

Direct response influencer campaigns are created to get a response from the user right away. You are looking at a single factor in terms of the conversion rate. That means the influencer has one goal. They either get their followers to:

- Buy the product or service
- Download the app

- Sign up for your newsletter

You need to define which of these is the end goal for a post, video or campaign.

### ***Brand Awareness KPIs***

Then there is the bigger narrative of improving brand awareness. This is about defining your brand for their audience. The KPIs for this task look somewhat like this:

- **Traffic:** Unique views and clicks
- **Search Interest:** Organic and paid clicks from a search of the brand name
- **Engagement:** Likes, shares, followers generated
- **Mentions:** Backlinks from media pieces and mentions from followers

## **Increasing Brand Awareness**

There are many ways to make specific goals to improve brand awareness. Here are a few strategies.

### ***Brand Mentions***

Your influencers can start by introducing the brand to their followers by talking about the things they relate to or like about it. A lot of them do this for brands they actually like which means you need to pick the right influencer for your product or service. These collaborations have the potential to be extremely fruitful.

### ***Product Reviews***

Then there is the option of getting them to do product reviews through posts. This can be their original experience which is more authentic and works well in terms of building credibility for the brand and maintains the influencer's integrity which in turn helps you hold their attention.

## **Improving Traffic**

Then you get to drive traffic back to your website. This is a specific goal that involves getting customers who are likely to purchase the product or service. Here's how you get that done.

### ***Sponsored Blog Posts***

Engagement is a key factor in increasing conversion rate. This means you need to connect with influencers who can write about your brand without losing the audience. These posts have the ability to get your brand a lot of visibility and bring them back to your landing page through backlinks in the blog post.

### ***Guest Posts***

I have also covered this aspect earlier in this book. Guest posts are a great way to write favorable content on popular blogs and add links that will bring their readers back to your website.

### ***Sponsored Social Media Content***

Research has shown that in the US alone, 77 percent of the population uses social media. And creating high-quality content on these platforms is the perfect ingredient to the recipe of bringing the audience back to your website.

## **Sales and Lead Generation**

Once you have the audience on your website, you need to generate ways of converting them into paying customers. Here are some strategies that help you make that leap.

### ***Collective Shout Outs***

This is a feature on Instagram which is a great tool in influencer marketing, for 92 percent marketers. Find yourself an Instagram influencer and get them to promote your product or service. This helps create more leads and drive sales sooner than you could on other social media platforms.

### ***Affiliate Marketing and Discount Codes***

This is another popular way of campaigning using influencers. It's a win-win for customers and the influencer. Affiliate marketing gives the influencer a chance to make some money which is an incentive for them. And it leads customers right back to the product on a platform where they can buy it within a matter of a few clicks.

Offering discounts to your customers who come in through these channels gives

the buyers incentive to come back to the influencer and your brand. And this data can easily be tracked too which tells you how effective your influencer campaign has been.

## **Driving Engagement**

This ties back to the point of brand awareness. You can use that metric to increase engagement which, once again, benefits both the brand and the influencer. Increasing your follower count by piggybacking on your influencer's follower size is a smart way to go about it. These followers might even be obligated to be patient and give you a chance because they come from a source they trust.

And let's not forget that their engagement with your brand started thanks to the content created by the influencer. So, naturally, they are inclined to engage with your pages too, if the quality and tone of the content are consistent. Here's how you can strategize that.

### ***Takeovers***

As mentioned earlier, this is a good way to strengthen your collaboration with the influencer and also engage with their audience. It has the potential to meet more than one goal at a time.

You can try two types of takeovers where either the influencer takes over your social media pages or you get them to send their content to you and post it as them. This can be done by looking at a prospective influencer's existing collaborations and see if that works for your brand.

As a collaborator, influencers play the role of your brand ambassador even if it is for a short period of time. Programs for brand ambassadors can help increase both your follower count and also engagement.

## **Reputation**

A brand's reputation is often considered to be an intangible asset. But there is a way to strengthen it with potential consumers. It is done by building partnerships that reflect the core values of the company.

People are likely to trust recommendations from their friends, family members and yes, the influencers of their choice. So, by making your influencer feel valued, you create a foundation where they are organically inclined to give you a positive review. You can do this in two simple ways, to begin with.

### ***Host an Event***

The best way is to host an event and send invites to influencers who have a good track record with commercial campaigns. This is a nudge in the right direction. It is also a chance for you to see them all in the same environment and test their response to your ideas. It also exposes your brand to the influencers and gives you the opportunity to see who connects best with it.

You can use these events to give out exclusive invites to the influencers of your choice and set goals for them to see who is looking for a collaboration.

### ***Send Gifts***

This is a good old sales method where you try to buy their affection. But if you are thoughtful and the gift is something they can use to create content, you might just get the bump you're looking for. It is one of the easiest ways to get in their good books.

## CHAPTER 5

# **HOW TO FIND EFFECTIVE INFLUENCERS FOR YOUR BRAND**

# Chapter 5: How to Find Effective Influencers for Your Brand

Now, you know what makes a good influencer. Here's how you find one that fits your brand. Well, this is not the exact recipe but these are the factors you will be looking into.

## ***Relevance***

Before you start looking at their stats like reach and visitors, you need to make sure their content matches the interests of your audience and your brand perception. Because, the influencer will be crafting the message and you need your principles and messaging to be aligned. That is key to reaching the demographic you want to capture. You should check their older posts and all social media accounts to get a sense of what they are like and the kind of crowd they attract.

Also, check their engagement and see the kind of response they are getting and try to determine if that's what you want for your brand. Just because an influencer dabbles in your niche, doesn't mean they are a fit for you.

You can do this by considering the demographic you want to target, whether it is stay-at-home moms or budget travel adventurers. Take a look at the language they use in their posts and look at the intangible factors before you look at their follower count and traffic.

## ***Engagement***

That is not to say that the tangible metrics are not important. When you are in the process of picking an influencer, you must look at the response they elicit from their followers.

Look at the percentage of the audience that tends to return to the influencer. And compare these numbers to the new followers they gather week after week. This gives you an idea of the size of the market you can tap into for the time period that you choose to engage with this influencer. You must also look at how meaningful the relationship is between the followers and the influencer.

## ***Reach***

This is a number that a lot of brands look at right away. It is an important one but is not number one on the list for a reason. You must consider unique visitors coming to the influencer on your list but you must not consider that to be the most effective way of measuring reach. The number of new followers and traffic can only tell you about the relationship to a certain extent.

That is why the first point in this list talks about looking at all the social media platforms an influencer is on. Look at the numbers on each platform and figure out the scale depending on where your audience is most likely to be. If the influencer's interests and reach match your preference of social media platform, you are headed the right way.

## ***Frequency***

There is a direct relationship between the blogger's post and the number of visitors who return to the blog. This is applicable to many niches (such as the verticals you might be running) and the rate of return depends on the quality of posts. That's how you measure how good their content is.

It is a fact that any influencer needs to prove to be good multiple times for the audience to return and click on their hyperlinks. So, when you collaborate and place links on their pages, you want the people to trust the influencer enough to automatically want to check out what they are endorsing.

If the influencer has already established their worth and has conditioned their viewers to click on the links, you are looking at the right person for the job at hand. Apart from quality, timely posting is another thing that creates loyalty and makes people trust the influencer. So, check the timestamps on their posts.

## ***Authenticity***

This sounds like another intangible factor but it is not. Some bloggers who post sponsored content are actually perceived to be more trustworthy. The key to making that happen is in the narrative. Those who create content with stories that deserve a mention of the product or service are better liked than those who do a straightforward review.

Readers don't look at reviews unless they are already looking to buy that specific product. So, while you might want to ask for a review, what you need is an



engaging story. Content that motivates people to look at products of that nature works better because it draws attention to its use before talking about the brand.

This kind of storytelling keeps the narrative fresh and the blogger continues to be seen as an authentic source of information. It leads to a larger conversation among the followers that is not just about the brand. It gives you the conversation to build on. That is how you keep the audience engaged with your brand.

## CHAPTER 6

# **HOW TO CONTACT INFLUENCERS AND HOW TO NEGOTIATE A DEAL**

# Chapter 6: How to Contact Influencers and How to Negotiate a Deal

After you have found the influencer of your choice, you have the task of convincing them to collaborate with you. These negotiations need to be handled with enough care because it is a case where both parties absolutely need to benefit.

One of the reasons is because you don't want to be the brand that influencers dislike and badmouth. Another reason is that building content with the same influencer is a better approach to building your brand, no matter the demographic.

## ***Do Your Research***

According to 61 percent of marketers, it is quite a challenge to find an influencer that matches the brand and the campaign. And if that decision goes south, that is only the first of many things that will eventually lead to the failure of the campaign.

So, the first thing that determines the success of your campaign is to pick the right influencer. That happens if you find an influencer who shares your goals and your brand's core values. It also makes negotiating the contract easier which makes the execution of the combined vision a joy. So, you need to start by understanding the influencer, their reach and approach properly which comes through thorough research.

There are quite a few tools that will help you find such influencers. But the best way to go about it is to go through the social media accounts of the influencers. And while evaluating them, you must keep these factors in mind.

- Quality of the content
- Follower count
- Rate of follower engagement
- Fit for your brand
- Demographics of the audience

### ***Offer Perks***

If you run a company that does not have a huge budget for influencer marketing, you don't have to bow out of the game altogether. Sometimes, monetary compensation is not the only way. You can strike a decent deal with an influencer by getting creative with what you have to offer.

Don't try to get work done for free or only offer them freebies. You can't expect high-quality content or end results with this approach. But you can throw in some other incentives like gift cards, paying for the photo and video shoots, offering travel expenses, a commission on sales and access to exclusive events. It's not the best solution but don't underestimate the power of perks along with fair compensation.

### ***Follow the Metrics***

It is very good practice to keep an eye on the numbers right from the beginning. Keep your influencer in the loop about the progress. This way, at the end of the campaign, you will be able to do an analysis of what worked and what didn't. Based on how that conversation goes, you can make a judgment call on whether or not you want to do another collaboration with the same influencer.

When it comes to measuring the success of a campaign, 75 percent of marketers say that engagement rate is the big decider. Apart from that, you must ask yourself, and in some cases, the influencer, if the goals set at the beginning were met and if the collaboration went as you envisioned. If the metrics were not met, you might want to make changes to the contract. And if there was an issue with the individual, well, that was a lesson for the future.

### ***Think about Repurposing This Content***

It is important to remember that some of this content might come in handy. For instance, if you're doing an independence day or thanksgiving special, some if not all of it can be used again. Sometimes, that part is just one element of the content like the templates made for the graphics.

You want them to create different content for different platforms but some items

(once again, like graphics) have the potential for reuse. You can use them internally or take the same concept and rehash them for your website or SMS marketing. It's a great way to save time and costs to an extent. But this also means that you need to negotiate full control over the content so that the intellectual property rights of the influencer are not violated.

So, think beyond just this campaign and these platforms. It helps your marketing budget and also works if an influencer was a bit more expensive than you anticipated.

### ***List Deliverables in the Proposal***

This is a very important one. Just the way you define your goals right in the beginning, put the deliverables on paper too. Your negotiations will be a lot simpler when you can set the tone of the relationship right away.

This means you mention the metrics that you will use to see how successful the campaign or collaboration has been at the end of the agreed period of time. If you want them to reject work from other brands, that's an important point to have in the contract too. That's because sometimes exclusivity means you might have to up the compensation.

## CHAPTER 7

# **7THING TO AVOID IN A POTENTIAL INFLUENCER CAMPAIGN**

# Chapter 7: 7 Things to Avoid in a Potential Influencer Campaign

A guide is never complete if I don't warn you of the mistakes that are commonly made even though they are easily avoidable. Here are seven of them you should absolutely run from.

## 1. Not Defining Campaign Goals and KPIs

If you don't define the goals clearly, you don't know what to compare the end results with. This rule applies to every kind of marketing and the influencer market is no exception. In fact, this branch of marketing is a lot more organic and has room for a lot of creativity. But the basics must be in place so that the success of the creative experiments can also be measured.

When the goals are well defined, your influencer knows what to aim for which helps them make a plan. It also helps them control variables like which demographic to target, what kind of formats to choose and which technique of brand interaction to use. It also allows them to pick the social media platform that works for your brand and that might be the key to the entire campaign's success.

Having clear KPIs also helps your team know what to expect so that they know which metrics are to be assigned hard figures and which ones are flexible for experimenting.

Planning an influencer campaign requires more than one approach in terms of creative decisions. No one format or one style of interaction works for all platforms or even all followers. You need to come at them from different angles. When there are so many variables involved it is helpful to have a core set of goals that help launch a plan. Otherwise, your influencer might end up wasting time and resources all while losing followers for your brand and themselves. That's a bad deal for both parties.

You can reach out to influencer marketing agencies to help develop these goals whether it is with metrics or sales and more. They have the expertise to help you outline entire strategies if this is your first rodeo.

## **2. Choosing Unvetted Influencers**

When planning a campaign with an influencer, this is one of the first mistakes many brands make. You want to pick someone in your niche. But that's not the only factor as we saw in the previous chapter. Picking a popular name from your niche is lazy work.

You want someone who has an original voice that is a good fit for your brand. They must agree with your core values and hopefully like your vision and believe in your product too. You are essentially picking a brand ambassador. You want someone with a good track record and reputation in the industry.

Why? Because you don't want your influencer to go rogue on you during or after the campaign.

For instance, in 2016, Olympic swimmer Ryan Lochte lied about being robbed at gunpoint. After this was unearthed, he lost all his sponsors and incurred a loss of over a million dollars. But the damage is not limited to the influencer. The brand gets a bad rep for not doing its due diligence. Now, some of these incidents cannot be predicted. But the more thorough your research, the better your chance of avoiding embarrassment. As a thumb rule, you want to stay away from anyone who was involved in acts of violence or has criminal convictions.

This might take some time but that is possibly why finding the right influencer is the toughest part of the job. But it is also highly rewarding.

## **3. Cold Outreach**

Contacting individuals you don't know is a process called cold calling. This practice has been around for a long time and is still actively used. This is the first step for many marketers even when it comes to finding influencers. If you are one of those, bad news. This doesn't always fetch you the results you're hoping for.

A lot of influencers regularly get these cold emails and their first response is to ignore them unless they are desperate for commercial collaboration. And even then, it's not good news for you.

Those who are not aware of you are not inclined to agree to your requests unless



your email contains a ridiculously good pitch. Even then, it's a game of luck. But that's why you need to learn to personalize the emails you send. This includes adding information about the influencer that you gleaned from their social media presence. Take the time to get to know them and show that you did. It's a very useful tool.

## **4. Bad Contracts**

Here's another key aspect. If you want to protect your brand from a failed influencer marketing campaign, draw an efficient contract. This is a document that has a record of all the things both parties agreed to.

So, it should include deliverables, communication details, intellectual property details, time period of the engagement, reports to be exchanged before, during and after the campaign and so on.

Contracts that have errors, loopholes and oversights are bad news for both the influencer and the brand. You might want to consider hiring an influencer marketing agency for the job to make sure there are no lawsuits in the future.

## **5. Cheap Promotion**

Don't try to get more for less. This is not a case where offering inadequate compensation has any chance of a win for you. The only scenario where this might possibly work is if the brand is established and well recognized but the influencer isn't. And in those cases, the collaboration is more likely to fail than succeed.

Sometimes, influencers will be generous with the promotion if you just let them keep the product. This is applicable to a lot of tech bloggers and such. But some others want to be paid along with the option of keeping the product.

In this case, we're talking about one review and you might be able to work it out. But if you want to work with them repeatedly or do entire campaigns, you need a well-thought-out budget. Giving them freebies and exposure is not enough and it's not a good strategy either.

## **6. Stifling Their Creativity**

Don't tell your influencer what kind of content must be created. That's their area of expertise. Plus, if it comes from your team, you might as well place a traditional ad. The idea behind using an influencer is to use their voice which resonates with their followers. It keeps them authentic which continues to maintain the trust they have with their audience. Trust that will transfer to your brand if you just let them do their thing.

Plus, the whole idea of approaching them is because they know what kind of content must be created for their followers on different platforms. They are well versed with what grabs the attention of their followers. They certainly know their fans better than you. So, give them the breathing room they need to spread their wings, be their support system and watch them deliver the results.

## **7. Neglecting Video Content**

Every branch of digital marketing must include a budget for video marketing. This is particularly applicable if you have a limited budget.

Making videos is not always a cheap affair and you must remember that original content is a lot better than curated stuff.

This is also a great way to generate interest on social media because the truth is, everyone is watching videos on their mobile phones. It is the most preferred form of content because of the importance it gets from social media.

## CHAPTER 8

# **HOW TO TRACK AND MEASURE INFLUENCER MARKETING CAMPAIGN**

# Chapter 8: How to Track and Measure an Influencer Marketing Campaign

This is the last leg of the adventure and as you can tell, it comes after the campaign or the collaboration comes to an end. You need a tangible way of measuring the success of this partnership and this is how it's done.

## Reach

This is the very first metric you want to look at. You need to start by looking at where your brand was before you launched the campaign and where the reach is at once the campaign has come to an end. The rise or drop in the reach tells you how far your message has traveled and how many buyers entered the fold. This can be calculated by looking into your KPIs.

Start with the follower count of your influencer. While some are obviously other brands and a few bots, you will have a fair idea of the growth during this time period. For this reason, it is helpful if the influencer was working exclusively with your brand. It's not the best indicator but it can give you an idea. You get a peek into the times your post showed up on your target audience's timelines by looking at the impressions.

You can also look at the traffic the content has brought in from the influencer's profile and it is an extremely reliable indicator of measuring reach.

## Target Audience Growth

Then there is growth. It's one of the biggest factors in influencer marketing and otherwise too. Here, however, growth in a particular demographic is everything. You want to see if your sponsored content is hitting your target audience.

Google Analytics will tell you the precise numbers. These numbers will also tell you if the influencer's brand messaging was on point. That's incredibly useful in measuring the success of the campaign.

However, you must remember to look at these numbers 30-60 days after the campaign has started to make sure the numbers have steadied themselves. This is very true for sponsored posts because while the sales start to come in after the first few days, potential customers check promo codes and affiliate links only after a few weeks (unless there is a time component to the offer).

## **Coupon Codes and Affiliate Links**

Speaking of discounts and affiliate links, these numbers are not only very easy to track but are also a reliable way of measuring the results of the campaign. You learn which influencer has been effective in bringing paying customers back to your website.

If you have used promo codes in your campaign, you will be able to track sales and also repeat purchases which is an added piece of information. You will also get insights like click-through rate (CTR) which is a terrific measure of the influencer's success in bringing customers to the fold.

# CONCLUSION

# Conclusion

Influencer marketing is one of the most rewarding investments if you are trying to sell a product or service to a demographic that spends a good deal of time on the internet. And since we live in the 21st century, that is the biggest chunk of the population. If 'internet land' was a country, it would be the biggest in the world and as a marketer, that's the one you want to capture.

You need to understand what social media influencers are all about. You need to know how they operate and where you fit in their scheme of things. You need to understand their values and see which one fits your brand the best. This takes research, effort and planning.

Once you have a list of influencers, it takes some more work to figure out who suits your product and the campaign you want to launch. You need to recognize the target audience and find the individual that has the most influence on their purchasing power.

Once you get there, you need to negotiate a deal with the influencer. Be clear about the goals of the campaign, write them down clearly and unambiguously in the contract, keep the communication lines open and support your influencer in the vision they have vis-a-vis the content they think will work on the demographic you want to conquer.

And when the campaign comes to an end, make sure everyone is back to the drawing table to look at the results. Compare the final outcome to the goals set by both parties at the beginning of the campaign. Use quantifiable parameters to see if the collaboration worked. If you did it right, it would've worked. That's a sign that you should plan more campaigns with the same influencer since you are now familiar with each other's rhythms.