

WHY INFLUENCER MARKETING MATTERS TO BRANDS



Executive Summary

Companies like Redbox, ABC News, Sears, Kraft, Coca-Cola, and P&G are leveraging the power of social influencers to develop engagement and trust with millions of potential customers. What is their secret? They use influencer marketing to connect with social media influencers that distribute brand-friendly content that is shared by others.

Influencer marketing is emerging as a powerful way for brands to create trusted content that is shared across the web and reaches millions of target consumers. This whitepaper helps brands, marketers, agencies, and digital strategists gain insight about the importance of engaging with influencers to create authentic, trustworthy content that creates engagement and advocacy with consumers.

Most brands and marketers have adjusted to the fact that their audiences are online. Information consumers used to get from television, newspapers, radio, and magazines can now be found online. Today's consumers prefer the convenience of doing research and shopping anywhere at any time. An estimated 167 million people will shop online this year and that number is expected to increase to 192 million by 2016 (spending an average of \$1,800 per person per year).¹ Since digital marketing is cheaper, more measurable, more scalable and more effective than traditional marketing, marketers should be pinching themselves, right?



The challenge is that most marketing strategies focus on simply having a social presence and fail to plan how they will keep people engaged.

Brands have Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, LinkedIn profiles, YouTube channels and maybe even a Pinterest board. Marketers will spend an estimated \$62B in display advertising by 2016 trying to herd consumers to these sites.² The problem for marketers is that it is not enough to get consumers to like or follow your brand. It isn't enough to shout at visitors in the sidebar with banner ads that distract them from digesting content. In order to have digital investments translate to ongoing interaction, brands must provide valuable, interesting, and relevant content that keeps consumers coming back. When brands provide meaningful content, visitors are more likely to return and more likely to share that content with their own readers and followers.



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Influencers help brands

- Provide relevant, trusted content
- Reach more targeted consumers
- Engage with consumers before they search
- Distribute content at scale across the web

When it comes to consumer spending, online content and social conversations have a huge impact on how consumers choose what to buy. Product information and brand-crafted messaging is not the type of content that keeps consumers engaged. Consumers want information that comes from like-minded people they trust.

The Importance of Trust

An obvious step to building trust for any person or organization is to be trustworthy. Be reliable, consistent, and transparent. If a brand is on a path to build or repair trust, it's important to partner with people who can reinforce the brand message and create trust. This is where influencer marketing has a positive impact for a brand.

Influencer marketing is the idea of partnering brands with bloggers and other active social media users. Influencers (like bloggers) create and distribute relevant content that is highly targeted and share it in an authentic and transparent way. That means less shouting and more listening, exchanging advertising “noise” for quality conversations about things that matter to the reader. When brands partner with fans and influencers who are closer to their target audience than they are, they gain trust by participating in the conversation. It is a two way street. Smart brands listen as much as they talk. They understand that they need to participate in the conversation rather than control it.

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Influencers Reach More Targeted Audiences

Bloggers and others with loyal followers on social media are the new influencers. They have loyal readers on their blogs and distribute content to millions on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest. Social savvy individuals often know more about social media and engaging with digital content than brands and agencies. What makes them even more powerful is the niche-based content they produce, which is often in a very specialized area. There are millions of bloggers publishing content in popular areas like parenting, food, fitness, fashion and entertainment. Influencers can be segmented further to reach specific consumers like parents of teens, pet lovers, marathon runners, tech fanatics and organic cooks. As the volume of data available increases online, the more consumers want specific information aligned with their unique needs. Working with influencers is a way for brands to reach people whose interests and demographics reflect a highly-qualified consumer.

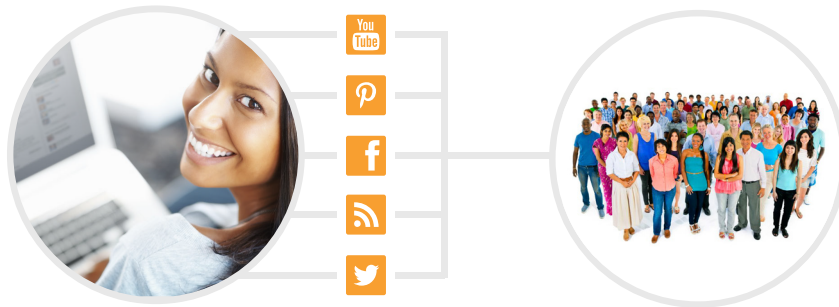
Influencer Content Is More Engaging Than Banner Ads

Success in the banner advertising space relies on distracting a visitor from the content they came to a site to read. This means advertisers are forced to interrupt readers about a topic that likely doesn't have anything do to with why that person came to the site. People have become ad blind, which has contributed to the decline in click-thru-rates and the overall effectiveness of banner advertising as an industry. Instead of fighting intention, a



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more influential approach is to support the visitor's mission and be an authentic part of the content they came to engage with. Smart brands are partnering with influential bloggers whose readers represented its core target audience and sponsoring content written by that blogger. This allows brands to be part of the content readers trust and they become part of the social conversation that follows.

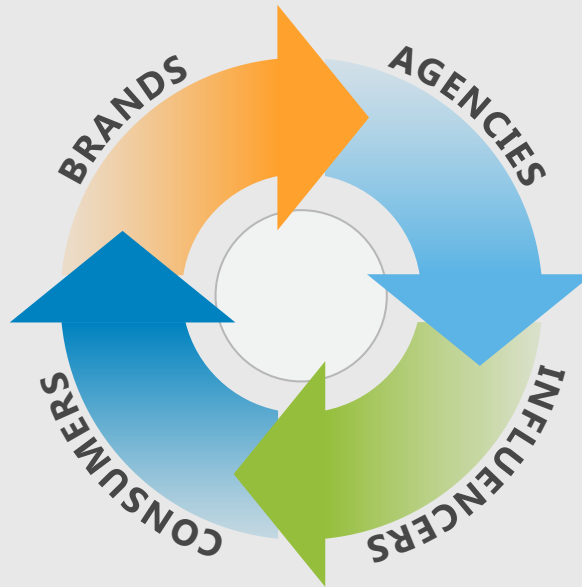


Consumers will actually devour (and share!) interesting, relevant content about a brand when it comes from a source they trust. By partnering with online influencers, brands and agencies get to participate in the discussions consumers are having way before they see an advertisement.

Scaling Content Across the Social Web

One of the reasons social media has such an impact on marketing is that it is based on the idea that people like to share. People like to discover interesting ideas, music, food, and products and then pass them on to their followers. When social media users share steady streams of relevant content, their influence grows and followers are more likely to share with their own networks. By partnering with digital influencers who serve as brand champions on social platforms and brand communities, brands increase their ability to reach more consumers by exponentially scaling how quickly and broadly content gets shared.





Influencer Eco-System

Brands need to reach millions of target consumers with peer-trusted content that can be distributed at scale across the web

Agencies need social solutions for brands that go beyond banner advertising

Influencers want authentic partnerships with brands they love

Consumers want relevant, useful content from people they trust

Conclusion

Brands now have the ability to identify key social influencers, mobilize them to create trusted content that goes beyond banner advertising, distribute that content at scale across the web on all social platforms, and measure the entire process. The combination of these trends is driving the explosive growth of what is known as Influencer Marketing.



TapInfluence is the market leader for influencer marketing. The company works with brand marketers, agencies and publishing partners to harness the power of social influencers through content-driven campaigns that are meaningful and useful for consumers. Its Influencer Marketing platform manages all aspects of a high-impact social marketing campaigns, helping brand marketers identify and activate influencers, distribute content across all social networks and measure campaign performance. Brands that use the TapInfluence for impactful influencer marketing campaigns include ABC News/United Nations Foundation, Redbox, Sears, Lego, Arm & Hammer and Tyson.

For more information please visit www.tapinfluence.com

Sources

- 1) "US Online Ad Spending, 2011-2016."eMarketer. <http://www.emarketer.com/Article.aspx?R=1008783> (accessed January 1, 2012).
- 2) Pring, Cara. "99 New Social Media Stats for 2012."The Social Skinny. <http://thesocialskinny.com/99-new-social-media-stats-for-2012/> (accessed January 1, 2009).

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