

## Video 1: Taking Your Social Strategy to the Next Level

Hi I'm Crystal from HubSpot Academy.

As a brand, there is a lot you can do to get your message into the social media atmosphere. But if you really want to amp up your overall reach, you need to get your message into the hands of others – both influencers and the users themselves – to proliferate the content. In fact, Nielsen tells us that 92 percent of people trust recommendations from individuals over brands.

The fashion and beauty markets were some of the first to really embrace the idea of putting their products in the hands of influencers, both celebrities and real people, in order to promote their products. One famous example is Burberry who, back in 2009, decided to run a campaign that invited their customers to showcase their iconic trench coat. Their audience was delighted to help, and the photos started to pour in. They've continued to use this strategy throughout the years and now they are considered one of the top three luxury brands on social media. Their Facebook page now boasts over 17.3M likes. Companies rushed to follow their example, which helped push many fashion bloggers and Instagrammers to fame as influencers--individuals who talk about the products they love (and because of their influence, are now paid to promote).

That sounds like a good reason to let others do the talking for you, doesn't it?

Additionally, with the added challenges of new General Data Protection Regulations (often referred to as GDPR) on privacy, and changes in platform algorithms that begin to limit brand exposure, it's going to become increasingly hard to get directly in front of your audience. If brands aren't trusted (and more than 40 percent of millennials are using ad blockers) it will be even more important to rely on the voices of others to be heard.

Katie Greeves, Social Media & Public Relations Manager, OPIS By IHS Markit:

"I think influencer marketing is extremely important. In my line of work with social media, having an even handful of people that really are influential in the industry that refer back to you and your brand, and your company is huge. It builds trust. For example, we just did something with a White Paper, and we tagged two of our influencers on Twitter, they had a huge Twitter following. Just by tagging them in that tweet, it generated five times more interactions and engagements than any other tweet on that topic in that White Paper before, because it builds that trust and loyalty that, "Oh, if John Smith thinks this is a great paper, than of course I should read it too, and it's going to help me." And it's been phenomenal. And they also can come back and give us ideas on topics and things that we might have maybe of not have thought of before."

Influencer marketing and user generated content (often called UGC) can help in a variety of ways, including to:

- Build consumer trust and loyalty
- Extend your brand reach into audiences that may not follow you
- Provide social proof and amp up your credibility
- Extend your budget
- Put you directly in touch with your audience
- Boost SEO and

- Enable you to get past ad blockers because the content doesn't come across the same way as a typical ad

By working with influencers and letting your audience help you market through content that they are generating you'll be able to greatly extend your reach and build brand awareness.

## Video 2: The Varying Shades of Influencer Marketing

Hi, I'm Laura Fitton, who you might know on Twitter as @Pistachio. I've been an influencer on Twitter and I work closely with influencers for NBOUND, a business growth event that takes place in the US every fall.

Let's talk about how YOU can work with influencers.

Did you know that just 3% of people generate 90% of the impact online? Getting to know some of those three percent and finding ways to work with them is a valuable strategy for businesses looking to expand their reach on social media.

There are many possibilities when it comes to working with people who are influencers. Let's break that down so you understand the variety of options. But before we do that, I want you to keep one thing in mind-- working with an influencer is **not about you**.

Let me repeat that: **Working with an influencer is not about you.**

It's worth repeating because to work best with an influencer, you need to keep that in mind. When you choose to work with an influencer, you want it to be a mutually beneficial relationship. What are they getting out of it? What are their goals their reasons why they might want to work with you?

So going back to the types of influencers...let's go over the choices you have framed through that new lens. What will each influencer be hoping to gain?

**First** of all, there are celebrity influencers. These are people you know from the entertainment world, of film, television, music and more. But working with the likes of Drew Barrymore or Cristiano Ronaldo is going to cost you a pretty penny. There will be agencies, lengthy contracts, and strict rules about how you use their content and what they will do when working with you. Sometimes celebrities are bookable by influencer networks, but for high-end influencers, you'll likely be working with their talent agency or their agent directly. Influencers are interested in money but also supporting brands and causes they can get behind and endorse in a way that makes sense for their brand.

Next are **industry influencers**. These are people who might have celebrity status within a specific industry, for example, Elon Musk in the tech world, PR pro Brian Solis, marketer Mari Smith, fashion icon Chiara Ferragni, The Points Guy Brian Kelly, or Whole 30 diet founder Melissa Hartwig. Industry influencers tend to have high topical relevance and are extremely influential in their specific categories. You can generally reach industry influencers through the gatekeepers within their own companies or sometimes even directly. These individuals may be

interested in money, but they are also looking for ways to build their own influence and to provide value to their audience.

**Journalists and media personalities** are an entirely different breed of influencers. Working with these individuals is a public relations play. Getting your favorite Wall Street Journal reporter to write about your product or company is not as easy as just calling them up and telling them how awesome your product is. You will likely need to hire someone who is great at public relations and comes with relationships that they can draw upon. Someone who understands the complexity of pitching the media and managing reputation. And even then, you'll need to provide your PR person with compelling, interesting stories that will interest the audience of the media you'd like to target. Media outlets want stories with real value, and better yet, exclusive information that will drive traffic (and therefore ad impressions) to their website or their publications.

**Content creators** come in two camps --those who are creating great, consumable content that people want to watch, like Vine video whiz Zach King or physical comedy actor Nathan Barnatt. Then there are individuals who are behind the scenes, who know how to create amazing content that brands can leverage, like photographer [Juliane Falk](#), who has worked with Reebok to develop a series of Instagram visuals. These individuals are looking to boost their paychecks, gain visibility for their work (to lead to bigger opportunities) while providing value for their audience. You can often reach these individuals directly or through influencer networks. To find emerging influencers, start monitoring the channels and see who people are talking about, and which creators seem to be coming up in the ranks. Working with an emerging content creator can be economical and beneficial on a variety of levels.

**Next are micro-influencers.** These are everyday people with large and passionate audiences. They share and talk about specific topics with enthusiasm and they may offer exclusive events, contests, and content to build their reach through word-of-mouth. These micro-influencers are often free or inexpensive to work with or will accept a gift card in exchange for their participation.

**Local influencers** are the final category, and it's a category that may cross over several of the others. If you are a small business with a local audience, these are the people you might want to work with, whether it's an influential restaurateur, a local sports or news figure, or a local band or entertainer. There may or may not be fees involved, depending on the nature of what you might be asking them to do.

We've gone over the types of influencers and I've talked a little bit about the fact that you might have to dig into your pockets a bit to work with some of these people. But how much do influencers really cost to work with?

The short answer is, it varies. But in the majority of cases, it's likely not for free.

[Digiday outlines](#) several different ways that influencers are paid, including:

- **Commission:** Akin to affiliate models, influencers get a cut every time a promo code is used to purchase whatever they're selling.

- Upfront fee: Reserved for more top-tier influencers, fees are paid upfront, followed by a rolling commission-based model.
- Gift card: Influencers – particularly smaller ones – will render services for a brand gift card.
- Per click: Used particularly by YouTube influencers, this compensates influencers every time people click on product links in their bios or in videos.
- Cost per engagement: Brands can measure engagement metrics, then apply them as an attribute against different platforms so influencers get paid per engagement (like or comment) they receive.
- And invitations: Influencers receive party invites for exclusive events where it's normally difficult to get in. In exchange, they cover the event.

Digiday also suggests that fees can range anywhere from \$1,000 per 100,000 followers on Facebook or Instagram to a flat fee per photo of up to \$200,000 for celebrity influencers. In general, you can expect that appearance fees start at about \$30,000, and if you arrange for a commission as part of the contract, they are usually 25 percent of the sale. Of course, you'll need to adjust monetary amounts if you are in other countries. So you have a lot of options, which is good news. One last thing to keep in mind, however, is that you can--and should--also dip into your own customer base and ask them to speak on your behalf, or to help you create content. Their voice will carry more weight and even better, it develops further affinity with your customers, which means they will be even more loyal to your brand.

### Video 3 How to Work With Influencers

So you've decided you want to add an influencer component to your social media strategy. How do you decide who to work with, and how do you get started?

Let's start by talking about how you determine who is influential. You want to work with someone who can directly impact the opinions and behavior of an audience that will potentially buy your product or service. Influencer marketing company [Mavrck suggests](#) that there are three factors to determining how easily influencers can impact behavior:

- **Reach:** The ability to deliver content to a target audience
- **Relevance:** The strength of connection to a brand or topic
- **Resonance:** The ability to drive a desired behavior from an audience

Every influencer has some measure of these three factors, but you need to review each area to understand how they may be a good fit for your campaign goals. Is their audience relevant to yours? Does the influencer fit your brand tone and voice? Is their reach into an appropriate target audience deep enough? Can they evoke action?

Then you need to turn the lens back on yourself. Will the influencer find value in the project you want them to take on? What is that value? Is it money, greater visibility, free product or exclusive access to a person or an event? You need to be able to answer those questions as well--the best brand-influencer relationships bring balance to the equation.

Let's talk about how these influencers can work with your brand. There are a multitude of possibilities for influencer campaigns. Here are some ideas:

- Influencers sharing brand content **you've** created
- Influencers sharing brand content that they have created
- Sponsored posts that feature the influencer
- Contests or competitions

- Events with face-to-face contact with the influencer
- Channel takeovers - let them run your Instagram for a day
- Live streaming events
- Road trips with influencers - going city to city so fans can meet them
- Guest posts

So how do you do it? Here are a few tips:

- First, begin by building a relationship in social media. Follow the influencer, engage in casual conversation, share their content, and ask them questions. @mention them where it makes sense. Show that you appreciate and are interested in the work they do. This type of engagement is easier with non-celebrity influencers.
- Find ways to make it a win-win for the influencer. Your campaign should also help them build authority and further their own content or their reach. There are some simple ways that you can do this:
  - Ask to interview them, and include their commentary or quotes.
  - Ask for advice you can share with your audience.
  - Host an AMA (Ask Me Anything) webinar.
  - Get a testimonial from the influencer.
- Trust the influencer. They got there by doing something right--when you let them have creative license they will really shine. Don't assume the script you give them is what the influencer wants to say or what their audience wants to hear. Giving the influencer guidelines and brand details is certainly acceptable, but trust them to know what their audience wants. Approach the relationship with an openness to collaboration and be ready to make a few compromises.
- If you don't know where to start, there are a variety of influencer networks you can work with such as some of the following on this slide.

One last thing to keep in mind when working with influencers--be aware that there may be laws or guidelines you need to adhere to when it comes to providing transparency in the relationship you have with the influencer. For example, in the US, there are Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines that must be adhered to or your brand may face fines.

There you have it, everything you need to know about working with social media influencers.

## Video 4: What is User Generated Content and Why Does it Matter?

Let's face it, most brands don't have the resources or expertise to compete with larger, more established companies with bigger marketing budgets. So how can you create high quality content at scale? Well, one great way is to crowdsource. That's right, get your customers and fans involved! Let's discuss how brands can work with their audience to create value with their content. We call that user-generated content, or UGC for short.

What will propel you forward is content that we call "earned," or simply put, media exposure earned by your brand through word-of-mouth." Earned media" is the type of media or exposure your brand has earned by doing something positive or negative. Earned media comes in various forms, including reviews and feedback, recommendations, press coverage and articles, amongst others. The reason earned media works so well to build relationships is because it places users into your media channel, turning attention away from your brand and

onto your audience. The most important type of earned media is user-generated content, or simply content that your fans, customers and followers are creating about your brand. In fact, according to marketing company YotPo, 76% of consumers say content from past buyers – such as reviews and photos – influence their purchase decision.

And, the best thing about user-generated content? It's free.

The pinnacle of earned media is user generated content. Why? Because:

- UGC helps brands understand their target audience.
- UGC improves site engagement and time spent on the website.
- UGC increases customer satisfaction through conversations.
- UGC provides means for other users to connect, which then builds a stronger community.
- UGC improves the brand's search engine ranking and online visibility.
- UGC is inherently peer-reviewed, making it more trustworthy.

More importantly, user-generated content creates a competitive advantage for brands that is inherently difficult to replicate because communities can't just be copied.

It sounds great, right? But before you go ahead and ask people to help you create content, you should be aware of some of the challenges that working with UGC can bring:

1. **No Brand Control:** Since UGC comes directly from users, the content creation is out of your control. This opens up areas for concern with trolling, negative comments and various legal compliance issues, just to mention a few. Users may generate content that is off-brand or harmful. You are taking a chance when you open up your brand in this manner.
2. **Content Moderation is a Must:** You need a social manager to help curate and moderate the content, engaging and guiding the community and rewarding those who really go above and beyond. If the content is being posted in a channel you own, the moderator will need to be able to manage negative and abusive content. If the negativity is on unowned channels, then you may need to involve PR from a crisis perspective to manage the conversation before it gets out of hand.
3. **No Legal Ownership:** This is a tough one for some brands to swallow. If you aren't creating the content, then you don't own it. That means you'll require consent from the user before their content is reused or re-shared. At minimum, provide acknowledgement that the content does not belong to you and source the original creator of the content.

But don't let those three points scare you! There is tremendous advantage to tapping into the power of the crowd.

For example, let's look at **HubSpot's Culture Team**: Using the hashtag #HubSpotLife, we are sourcing photos from employees all over the globe showcasing how much we love working at the company. This does a few things -- it promotes our culture, it builds affinity with potential customers and with partners, it drives reputation and it helps our recruiting efforts. And it also helps us feel even more cohesive as a team because we can directly relate to these photos. Sharing employee photos is an easy way for B2B companies to jump on the UGC bandwagon.

**Wayfair** invited their customers to share their latest purchases and decoration ideas on the hashtag #WayfairAtHome. Not only are their customers doing the talking for them, but they are part of a community of other people who love Wayfair's furniture and home solutions, building up affinity and word-of-mouth.

User-Generated Content will only continue to become more and more important as platform algorithms change and organic reach is harder for brands to achieve. By giving your employees, customers, partners, and fans license and opportunities to talk about your brand, you are propelling yourself forward in a more authentic, holistic and yes, inbound-y way.

## Video 5: Encouraging User-Generated Content Among Your Audience

So you love the idea of including User Generated Content in your social media strategy, but how do you go about getting fans and followers to create content for you?

First of all, you want to shift your mindset when it comes to how you think about your audience. It's not just about pushing content at them and hoping that they respond. Instead it's about engaging with your audience directly and making them want to be part of the action, part of the team or part of the community.

Start with social listening so that you understand your audience. Find out what makes them tick, what grabs their attention, and most importantly, what they want. You need to understand your audience to be able to truly get them excited to participate in your call for content. You want to understand who is sharing, what they are sharing, where they are sharing, when, and why are they tagging your brand or your products.

Next, search for conversations by location and hashtag to see how they are already talking about you. Boost them by resharing and highlighting their delight to your broader audience.

**Create one or two branded hashtags.** These are hashtags that are connected to your brand in some way but are really about your customers. Share these hashtags in prominent places and include them in your campaigns. Add your hashtags to your marketing materials. Ask influencers to develop content using one of these hashtags. And most importantly, ask people to share photos and anecdotes from events on a hashtag.

One fun thing that you can do to encourage user-generated content is to **randomly reward your followers** who are creating great content. They'll be delighted and more inclined to create additional content, plus when others see there is the possibility for reward they will feel incentivized to join in the fun.

Don't forget to **ask your employees to create content** and share on branded hashtags too. Your employees are your most loyal fans and they can be a fantastic extension of your brand if you give them the right guidance.

You can also **run contests** asking individuals to create or do something. For example, a few years ago, Starbucks ran what they called a "White Cup Contest." Customers across the country were asked to sketch on their Starbucks cups and submit pictures as entries. The winning entry would be the template for a new limited edition Starbucks cup. Nearly 4,000 customers submitted entries in a three week span. The contest was a great way for Starbucks to earn publicity and prove that it strongly valued customer feedback.

Here are some things to keep in mind when running a user-generated content contest:

**Match the contest or the request to your audience.** For example, if you ask fans to submit video clips sharing their experiences with a particular brand or product, you need to keep in mind that creating a video requires a certain level of technical expertise that some people are more likely to feel comfortable with than others. Adobe,

for example, may be able to ask their users to do more technical things with their content than someone who is selling coffee.

**Request and curate content that you can use in your marketing campaigns.** If you are running a contest make sure that the types of “entries,” such as pictures, video, or testimonials, that you receive will be useful for other marketing purposes, for example, in advertising.

**Make the effort required commensurate with the reward being offered.** If you’re giving away thousands of dollars in value as part of your user generated content campaign, you’ll probably want users to demonstrate a more substantial level of buy-in than if you were offering simple coupons or discounts. If the prize you’re offering is big, making participants deliver something of value in return guarantees you’ll wind up with content you can use in your future marketing campaigns.

**Straighten out any legal issues before running a UGC campaign.**

Before launching your user generated content campaign, you’d be wise to consult legal counsel on two important issues: the rights you’ll hold over any content submitted to your promotion, and any restrictions that govern giveaways. First, you need to inform participants about what will happen to the content they create following submission in clear, easy-to-understand language. But also, if your state or municipality (or the mediums through which you run the contest) control how, when, and under what circumstances giveaways can occur, you’ll also want to be sure your promotion is in compliance before running afoul of the law.

Take some time to discover what excites your audience and empower them to develop content and be part of your community. Putting the trust of your brand into the hands of your audience may seem a bit daunting, but if they love what you offer and what your brand represents, they can be a potentially louder voice than any marketing campaign you may employ.