

A CONVINCING & CONVERT REPORT

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# THE INFLUENCER MARKETING MISTAKES GREAT BRANDS DON'T MAKE



A GUIDE FOR BRANDS

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**T**oday's marketing managers came of age in an era when celebrity endorsement was at a peak; you couldn't watch Must See TV without seeing Michael Jordan flaunt his Hanes undies onscreen. But today's most coveted audiences aren't watching TV in the family room – they're swiping through Stories and watching YouTube videos on mobile, and brands who are looking to resonate have to do more than put fame alongside its logo and products.

The meaning of "influencer" today goes much deeper than athlete or celebrity, and the impact is much different too.

While celebrity involvement may push reach, working with influencers who specialize in niche spaces sparks word of mouth and builds trust.

Expectations of how influencers participate and contribute to brand campaigns are deeper. Marketers have to be great, not just good, to demonstrate today's influencer marketing efforts are more than a fad – not a waste of money. That's why we've identified seven key mistakes great brands don't make when it comes to influencer marketing, and have written this playbook for making your next influencer campaign great.

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## **GREAT BRANDS UNDERSTAND HOW TO LEVERAGE MICRO-INFLUENCERS**

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When it comes to determining who is influential online, reach and follower counts aren't everything. Brands need to consider working with micro-influencers (those with audience sizes in four to five figures) who stand out in specific niches. Often micro-influencers have higher engagement rates than profluencers (1+ million in digital footprint). These individuals have a close proximity to end users, consistently engage and are authentic representatives of the niche interest.

If you were to tweet to golf superstar Rory McIlroy asking

him what golf clubs are best for beginners, there's a good chance you won't get a reply. Instead, if you ask an avid golfer on Instagram who posts frequently about golf and time spent at the golf course, there's a better chance they'll reply – and it's more likely you'll trust and act upon their recommendation.

When done right, working with micro-influencers can have a strong impact on a brand's reach, awareness and growth. They may be called micro-influencers but their influence is anything but micro.

# GREAT BRANDS VALIDATE THEIR INFLUENCERS BEFORE HIRING

Discovering the right influencer for your campaign isn't as simple as it seems. Like with any prospective new date, you want to use the power of the Internet to confirm you have similar interests and would make a good match.

**70% of US agency and brand marketers agree or strongly agree that finding the right influencer talent for a brand campaign is challenging**

WhoSay, "Influencer Marketing Insights," Dec 12, 2017

## 1 Define a set of specific criteria an influencer should meet to be eligible for a campaign

This should include:

- ➔ Audience and proficiency on key/preferred social media channel(s)
- ➔ Engagement rate on social content
- ➔ Content quality and mastery of a medium (writing, photo, video, stories)
- ➔ Location or willingness to travel
- ➔ Topics or industries in which they have influence
- ➔ Additional data points: Website ranking and traffic, content shares from domain, etc.
- ➔ Special skills (speaking, athletics, comedy, artistry, to name a few)
- ➔ Recency of past sponsored influencer campaigns
- ➔ On-brand tone and voice

## 2 Make a list of intriguing prospective influencers

Generally you need to identify at least five times as many individuals as you will ultimately engage for partnership.

- ➔ Rank each influencer on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of the criteria you've identified in the previous step.
- ➔ The top 2x in the total sum are your "A List" targets. Next 2x are your B list. Disregard the remaining names.
- ➔ For example, a campaign with 5 influencers should start with a prospect list of 25, ranked by criteria scores, resulting in 10 A-List and 10 B-List influencers to move to next steps.

## 3 Use Audience and Influencer platform insights to narrow your candidate list

This is where you validate the size and reputation of audiences for your A-List influencers. Ensure their followers are real people who look like the audience you need to reach. No brand wants to spend more money with an influencer who's audience is propped up by a thousand fake accounts from Taiwan. We recommend using three different tools or websites to verify influencer credibility, online expertise and audience insights.

It's fine to reach out to a prospective A-list influencer and let them know you're considering them for a

campaign or partnership opportunity. Many influencer pros have a media kit available on their website for download (or by request). If needed to qualify your decision, also ask potential influencers for more insight into their native social metrics or examples of past campaigns.

That's also a good time to ask them to confirm in writing that they have not bought any of their followers, nor participate in 'comment' clubs which result in empty engagements.

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# GREAT BRANDS KNOW HOW TO CYA

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Great brands usually have great legal teams who tolerate the wild and unconventional campaign ideas that social media pros want to execute (like working with influencers). If you haven't already set a meeting with legal to get buy-in on a campaign, stop now and ask for one. At that meeting, show them you have anticipated their concerns (helped by the list below) and they'll likely be happier than if you showed up with coffee or flowers (but that wouldn't hurt either).

- ➔ **Have written contracts or agreements with influencers.** Handshakes are nice enough, but your legal team (or boss) should expect to have a more defined relationship with any influencers doing work with a brand. While contracts are only enforceable if the influencer receives compensation for their participation, a written agreement is still recommended anytime someone outside the company does work on behalf of the brand. The contract should detail the expectations of an influencer's participation in a campaign, including:
  - Length of agreement.
  - Relevant financial terms (travel, expenditures, reimbursements, payments, W9s)

- Participation within the campaign by the influencer (type of content, quantity of posts, who owns the rights).
  - Specific URLs or tracking pixels the influencer needs to use or share
  - What results, metrics and data the influencer must share with the brand throughout and at the end of the campaign.
  - Outcomes and process, as expected for participation. If you need the influencer to deliver a specific number of leads or clicks, put it in the contract. If you are co-sponsoring a giveaway, include details of how it will be ran, who chooses and contacts the winner, and handles fulfillment.
- ➔ **Insist on disclosures (as mandated by the FTC in the USA) as appropriate.** Also, get documentation from the influencer that they agree to include disclosures on any sponsored content.
  - ➔ **Understand regulations surrounding privacy and advertising globally** (like GDPR regulations and implications in EU). Abide by them wherever relevant.

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# GREAT BRANDS ALLOW INFLUENCERS TO BE OPEN WITH OPINIONS AND CONTENT

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When working with influencers, understand the reason they have a following is because they share an authentic and unfiltered opinion – and their audience loves that about them. Avoid trying to control the content influencers are producing. Approach influencers as co-creators, and let them lead.

Remember all that research and vetting work you put in before selecting influencers to work with? Their own style and personality shined through and caught your eye. Let

them do the same now, on your behalf. Provide influencers with a canvas and some paint, but step back and let them do their work on their own terms.

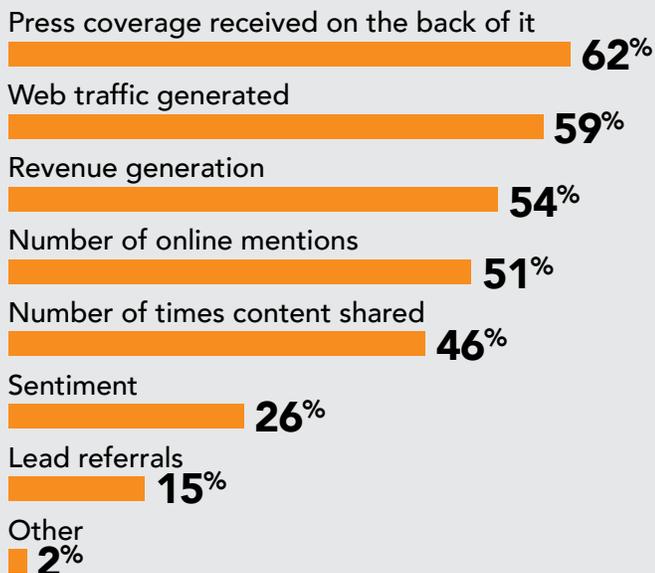
Great brands realize that influencers won't always say things "in the right way," (aka your corporate speak), though they don't intentionally mean harm. Embrace rather than bristle at their authenticity. Getting upset or overly reacting will generally turn off an influencer from a partnership or even worse, shed a bad light on the company.

# GREAT BRANDS KNOW HOW TO MEASURE INFLUENCER IMPACT

This could also read “great brands don’t procrastinate defining and measuring campaigns in order to save face.” Be up front with KPIs and what metrics tie back to demonstrating success. Tell influencers how campaigns are measured and what data is expected for them to provide (editorial calendar, native social analytics, email open rates, website views, etc.) so they don’t lose access to anything you deem important. Put it in the contract (CYA) and be sure to have a process in place to collect the reports, charts, and screenshots from influencers.

## Metrics Used by UK and US Marketing Specialists to Measure Success of Celebrity/Influencer Campaigns, Sept 2017

% of respondents



Source: *Celebrity Intelligence*, “*The Age of Social Influence*” in association with *Fashion and Beauty Monitor*, Nov 30, 2017

**29%** of influencer campaigns use trackable URLs for attribution

Based on a recent study from *The Age of Social Influence*

## Metrics that great brands ask influencers to provide to measure campaign impact include:

- ➔ Audience breakdown: Who actually saw the campaign content, and does that meet or exceed expectations?
- ➔ Results of Stories and paid or “dark” social media (mostly on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter):
  - Story view counts, completion percentage, and average time spent.
  - Poll results and resulting private messages as applicable.
- ➔ Post relevancy: how content is received and accepted by an influencer’s own audience (as scored by FB, IG, etc.).
- ➔ Engagement rate on all content shared over a set period of time.
- ➔ Video minutes viewed and percentage of video completed.

We were shocked to see that only 29% of influencer campaigns use trackable URLs for attribution (from a recent study, [The Age of Social Influence](#)). Great marketers know the importance of proper attribution of any campaign, and trackable URLs allow great brands to see the impact of individual influencers have on any campaign’s success. Provide influencers with custom URLs to key pages or content hubs to track how much traffic (leads or views) comes from any particular influencer. When a sales opportunity occurs, great brands create unique discount codes an influencer can share with their audience as an incentive for following. This allows them to track redemption at checkout, and properly attribute the sale to the campaign and influencer.

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# GREAT BRANDS TAKE INFLUENCERS BEYOND SOCIAL MEDIA

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Influencer partnerships shouldn't live and die on social media. Great brands can amplify influencers they partner with by using a variety of their own marketing touchpoints.

**Website integration** – Great brands feature influencers on their website and share their stories as they relate to the company culture or specific products.

**Lead generation** – Great brands invite influencers to assist with lead generation content like testimonials or video storytelling.

**Email campaigns** – If content from influencers works well on social, why wouldn't it work well in an email campaign? Share influencer stories and content in marketing emails to infuse your marketing with trust from real people who promote your brand.

**Offline events and experiences** – Invite influencers to events who can represent their niche, provide feedback to

key stakeholders, capture the experience live, or participate on stage.

**Custom video** – During events and experiences, bring along a camera crew to capture the experience on video. While live updates are beneficial, having a professional camera crew onsite will result in high-quality video footage that can be reused in the future.

**Live video** – When collaborating on live video, spread the word in advance on your (and their) website, social channels, and to email subscribers to drive viewership. Following the broadcast, repurpose the live video to a shorter length and share it on YouTube and other channels to reach a greater audience.

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# GREAT BRANDS UNDERSTAND THAT RELATIONSHIPS WITH INFLUENCERS AREN'T ONE-AND-DONE

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Influencers worth partnering with approach their personal brands as jobs, and invest in content and work to build and engage their audiences. Mimic their efforts by investing in an influencer strategy that creates a more substantial relationship than swiping right on Tinder.

Great brands develop brand ambassador programs which extend the relationship with influencers between campaigns, and invites them to be a closely tied into different opportunities within the brand, like speaking on their

behalf at events or being part of a focus group or beta test group. Even without a formalized program, you can continue to follow influencers online. Read and share their blog posts, like Instagram photos and Snap them occasionally just to say hello.

Finally, great brands recycle the best content from an influencer campaign into "Greatest Hits" content that can be reused well beyond the actual campaign, as long as it remains relevant to the core audience.

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# NURTURE YOUR INFLUENCER MARKETING

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**INFLUENCER MARKETING REQUIRES A FLUID AND DYNAMIC APPROACH THAT ALLOWS FOR CONSTANT RE-EVALUATION OF THESE KEY PARTNERSHIPS ON AN ON-GOING BASIS**

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With constant care and nurturing of the relationships, brands can build an army of advocates to speak well of the brand both on and offline.

Influencer marketing is far more than a bolt-on tactic. Today, it's key to the success of nearly all large brands, and is waiting for you. Let's not over-complicate things – this is about building relationships with individuals who share a common interest (your brand), so dive in and watch big things happen!

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## ABOUT CONVINCING & CONVERT CONSULTING

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Convince & Convert Consulting, led by Jay Baer, is an experienced, highly focused analysis and advisory firm that creates effective, best-in-class word of mouth and digital marketing strategies for the world's most interesting organizations. Your audience expects more from you than ever. And what is required to be remarkable continues to escalate. Are you certain you are meeting that demand today? Do you know how to get there specifically, and in what sequence of steps? We do. For more information on our comprehensive, research-backed strategic plans for word of mouth marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, email marketing and messaging, and/or website and online reputation, please set up a no cost consultation call with a Convince & Convert analyst at [ConvinceAndConvert.com/contact](http://ConvinceAndConvert.com/contact).



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