AN INDUSTRY GUIDE TO

Influencer Marketing

Education and Skills For The Professional Advertiser

MODULE 11
Influencer Marketing

Word of mouth on steroids. Advertising’s oldest form is now and industry.

Social media that is used to strategically share and create posts that feature or mention a brand, product or notion, is the core of influencer marketing. The influencer marketing industry is a direct result of digital technology; social networks, blogs, video sharing platforms and mobile devices. It is constantly growing in demand. According to a recent Forbes poll, 84% of marketers are planning to launch one or more influencer marketing campaigns within the year (2019).

Decades ago, advertisers referred to word of mouth (WOM) as the original form of advertising. Now it has a new name: influencer marketing.

The elements of influencer marketing identification, types, tools, activation and channels will be covered in this learning module.

This module provides an overview of Influencer Marketing as:

• A strategic growth advertising medium of measurable earned media value
• A multi-platform vehicle to drive activity at all levels of the marketing funnel
• A bonafide strategy of known tools, platforms, resources, key performance indicators (KPI’s) and legal requirements.

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Learning Objectives

Just what is Influencer Marketing?

Influencer marketing uses key leaders to drive a brand or product message to larger markets. Rather than mass advertise directly to a large group of consumers, influencers are paid to get out the word for a product, service or brand.

Influencer marketing often goes hand-in-hand with two other forms of marketing: social-media marketing and content marketing. Most influencer campaigns have some sort of social-media component, whereas influencers are expected to spread the word through their personal social channels. Many influencer campaigns also carry a content element in which content is created for the influencers, or they create the content themselves. Though social-media and content marketing often fit inside influencer campaigns, they are not synonymous with influencer marketing.

1. Detail the infrastructure of Influencer Marketing
2. Explain influencer marketing forms: Micro Influencers, Macro Influencers and Brand Advocates.
3. Explain the major influencer marketing channels: Instagram, YouTube, Blogs, Pinterest, Facebook and those trending.
4. Introduce methods of influencer outreach through databases, networks, agencies and influencer advocate marketing entities.
5. Explain influencer marketing compensation, along with legal disclosures required by the Federal Trade Commission.
6. Detail the principles of influencer activation, strategy and follower engagement.
7. Present influencer marketing key performance indicators (KPI’s)
Why Influencer Marketing

If a product’s effectiveness is shared by a friend, people often listen. Be it a line of lip gloss or an anti-stick frying pan, the perceived authenticity of peer advice makes people pay attention. According to Par Dots 2014 research on brand engagement, out of over 400 people surveyed, 80 percent pointed to authenticity of content as the most influential factor in their decision to engage with a brand.

Authenticity however, is nearly impossible to convey via a traditional ad. At least, not as well as good old word of mouth. Present day consumers are tired of being bombarded by advertisements. They are also heavily connected with other consumers, and by the ever-evolving social networking opportunities empowered by the internet. All of this has created a perfect storm for the birth of this extremely powerful type of marketing, which relies on individuals for targeted message dissemination.

The days of interruption as an advertising strategy are gone. Today, it is all about engagement. Consumers are bombarded with so many messages that a wall of permission has been constructed that limits the effectiveness of traditional ads unless they are amplified by a mix of messages, often from social, video and digital platforms. The result is that consumers would rather hear from real people than brands, and influencer marketing can deliver the connection to the authentic experiences that consumers crave.
What It Is

One of the misconceptions today about influencer marketing is that it is secretive, with unknown influencers and whatever-the-traffic-will-bear pricing. That may have been true in earlier times when “product seeding” (placing products with opinion leaders and key individuals) was explored by progressive marketers.

Influencer Marketing today consists of three variables:

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<th>Influencer Marketing Infrastructure</th>
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<td>Macro-Influencers</td>
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<td>Micro-Influencers</td>
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<td><strong>Influencer Outreach</strong></td>
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<td>Databases</td>
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<td>Example: BuzzSumo, Inkybee (Bloggers), GroupHigh (Bloggers)</td>
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<td>Networks</td>
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<td>Example: Whaler.com, GrapevineLogic, Famebit, TapInfluence, RhythmInfluence</td>
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<td><strong>Influencer Channels</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Software Platforms</strong></td>
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<td>Example: AspireIQ</td>
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<td><strong>Entity Solutions</strong></td>
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<td>Example: ExpertVoice</td>
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Influencer Marketing

Influencer Types

A number of categories and names such as nano influencers, brand advocates, and others are also used.

1. Macro Influencers

Macro influencers are generally characterized by their immense following, centered around a prominent personal brand. Examples of macro influencers include musicians and actors, professional athletes, business leaders, and platform sensations. The latter are being defined by RhythmOne as “people who have developed an elevated status on specific social media platforms by building a hyper-engaged audience, one that brands may want to reach through them.”

Think of Michael Phelps. The man is regarded as the world’s greatest swimmer. His reach is in the millions. Michael Phelps holding a product is like a lighted billboard in Times Square. People will look, notice, and possibly remember. Macro influencers have huge audiences. They are a powerful source of reach and influence with one key quality; authenticity.

Macro influencers are powerful tools for reach. Reach can be valuable in some endeavors, but carry less significance in others.

Before spending tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars on a Tweet by a sports celebrity or an Instagram post by a reality TV star, ask, “What are you trying to achieve?” A 2016 study by Markerly analyzed correlations between the number of Instagram followers and their engagement with the influencers that they follow. It revealed that the larger the following, the lower the like rate and the lower the comment rate. While users with less than 1,000 followers receive likes of their posts about eight percent of the time, those with more than 10 million followers have their posts liked only 1.6% of the time. Additionally, macro influencers generate about 13 times fewer comments in response to their posts.
Micro influencers are non-celebrity status individuals who influence a relatively small but highly engaged follower base. Micro-influencers come in a range of genders, ages, passions, and expertise. Here are just a few examples. A teenage girl who reviews fingernail polish on Instagram, a distance runner with a popular YouTube channel, or a photography expert who blogs regularly and maintains an opt-in email list.

Their non-celebrity status, expertise in specific field, passion about a specific subject, plus having 100,000 followers or less and high engagement rates, has the capability to motivate others to take action.

The underpinning idea is that these are non-celebrity individuals who influence a relatively small but highly engaged follower base.

For example, Daryl is a wildlife photographer. He captures images of grizzly bears, close up! He knows many by sight, and knows their national park service number or name designations. He will sit for hours in the blind to capture one spectacular image of a Mom and her cubs. Few people even attempt to do what he does. Yet Daryl’s following is far and wide. People who want to know how to take pictures of wildlife or just want a camera recommendation may turn to Daryl’s website or blog for advice. He is a micro influencer.

Micro influencers have less than 100,000 followers, but more than 1,000. Anything less is considered a nano influencer (still a micro influencer but smaller in reach).
There is a valuable type of consumer who is happy to evangelize for their favorite brands and products. They are brand advocates. Most do it without cash or coupons, payments, or perks. Genuine brand advocacy isn’t bought, it’s earned. They are called consumer advocates, brand ambassadors, consumer evangelists, and so on. The key concept is that they are individuals who are fans of what they consume and happy to be vocal about it without incentives. Their messages are quite possibly the most powerful form of influence.

The end product of many influencer campaigns is user generated content (UGC). A user creates a blog, video, tweet or message that is disseminated to their followers, and hopefully goes viral.

Brand advocates deliver content differently. ExpertVoice CEO Tom Stockham highlighted the importance of what he calls “user inspired content” (UIC). This is genuine amplification of a product or brand message from actual users.

Finding Brand Advocates
There are various ways to identify your brand advocates. One is to ask the ultimate question.

“How likely are you to recommend our product to your friends?”

On a 10-point scale, those who select nine or 10 are prospective promoters. Another way is to reach out to repeat customers. They are good prospects. A third is to employ social listening of key phrases that express advocacy of the brand or product.

How?
Monitor online reviews to discover brand admirers and supporters. And turn to fans and followers on Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms. Also, cultivate brand advocates. Provide exceptional service. Empower them in meaningful ways that may amplify their passion, reach and ultimate influence. Brand advocacy is the pinnacle of marketing influence. It is based on trust, earned value and ongoing belief in a product or service.
Influencer Outreach

Influencers. Who are they? How does one find them?
At the core of the influencer marketing campaign is the influencer. There are many types of influencers. The challenge is getting the right people for a brand or product influencer marketing effort.

There are two methods:

1. Self Search/Organic Discovery
2. Managed Influencer Outreach Services

These are not mutually exclusive. In fact, a prudent marketer may utilize both in stepwise progression.

Self Search/Organic Discovery
The first option is the simple do-it-yourself way to see just who is talking about a brand, product, category or service.

Start with a simple Google search. Take those industry keywords used in marketing efforts and see what type of content industry influencers populate. Search will reveal which influencers are dominating certain niche conversations and generating great audience engagement.

Next, type in keyword hashtags within each social media platform. If the project is in the culinary arts industry, in the search section, type in #culinaryarts, or #culinaryskills, or #foodstylists, to see which influencers turn up. Duplicate that search on each platform to see the influencers who are creating quality content and dominating the conversation. Follow this by looking at trending conversations. Influencers are always going to be present in industry trending conversations because they’re thought leaders.

And third, use an influencer identification tool. This is a paid, but optional step. NinjaOutreach is one of these tools that can accomplish a lot. It searches thousands of influencers to prospect the best fit, find the right contact information, conduct outreach, and much more.
Self-Managed Services

Managed Influencer Outreach Services
There are two broad categories of self-managed services for influencer outreach:

1. Influencer Databases
2. Influencer Networks

Some are self-service, while others will offer outreach and activation services. Some will just assist in influencer discovery, while others will also track your campaigns providing analytics data to evaluate their performance.

Influencer Databases
represent structured sets of data on publishers of digital content. An example is Buzzsumo’s database of Twitter influencers. Users may go to their interface, click the influencers tab, and within the Twitter influencers subtab, one may filter a search for food influencers in San Francisco for everyone but companies and regular people. The tool will yield a list of active influencers, primarily by analyzing their Twitter-related metrics but also finding some domain-related metrics.

Some tools focus on a specific social media platform. There are also those that take a more holistic approach to analyzing influencers reach and engagement across different social media.

Example: BuzzSumo, Inkybee (Bloggers), GroupHigh (Bloggers)

Example: Whaler.com, GrapevineLogic, Famebit, TapInfluence, RhythmInfluence
An example is Group High, a tool to discover bloggers by their website reach as well as their social imprint on Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube and others. The more advanced tools of this type come with a customer relationship management (CRM) element and analytics, to manage influencer outreach relationships.

**Influencer Networks**

are assemblages of influencers, and those that opted in, have been vetted by the network’s operator. Influencer networks minimize the risk and time-consuming labor of outreach. The upfront cost may be greater, however the ability to select the type of influencers to partner with, along with tracking and results analytics, makes this a one step process.

Influencer networks may be social medium specific or cover a broader spectrum of publishing platforms.

A few examples of media-specific tools would include Whaler, which is focused on creating partnerships between brands and Instagram content creators. Kitten,
Influencer Marketing

Example: TapInfluence vets Influencers by topic, media, reach, and rate

Instafluence, Cycle, and The Mobile Media Lab are all examples of networks dedicated solely to giving brands access to their stable of Instagram influencers. Grapevine, connects brands with creators of visual content on YouTube and Instagram. Famebit is worth considering for campaigns on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Tumbler, and Twitter.

Examples of more holistically geared opt-in influencer networks include Tapinfluence which works with thousands of vetted influencers, allowing advertisers to search them by media, reach, topic categories, and even proposed rates.
Influencer Marketing Platforms

Influencer Marketing Platforms
1. Software solution management providers
2. Agencies
3. Marketing entity solutions that allow brands to run influencer campaigns from A–Z.

An influencer marketing platform is a full service interface that conducts ongoing influencer campaigns from start to finish. Unlike influencer databases and networks, a true influencer marketing platform provides all of the following:

- Database of high-quality influencers
- CRM and workflow tools
- Analytics.

Software Platforms
AspireIQ Manage is an example of a current software solution platform that allows brands to easily communicate with influencers with features such as group message and auto-message. Brands can also manage each stage of the process from creating contracts and reviewing content, all the way to payment. Built-in analytics marketing platforms allow brands to track influencer ROI and campaign metrics. AspireIQ has an easy to read dashboard that keeps track of total impressions, media value, and other metrics that allow brands to gather insight and apply learnings to future campaigns.

Influencer platforms like AspireIQ analyze influencers regardless of whether they have signed up for the platform. Therefore, these platforms have a much larger scope of discovery. Because influencer platforms are proactive in how they seek influencers, they triage and find influencers who are talking about important topics for a brand.
Influencer Marketing

Inside an influencer marketing platform one can search for relevant influencers without being worried about who’s in the talent pool. An influencer marketing platform should be able to find anyone talking about a brand. This can help discovery of influencers who are an authentic fan of a brand, product or industry. This also enables brands to create personalized networks.

Influencer Agencies

There are advertising agencies that specialize in influencer marketing. An example is Obviously, a full service influencer marketing agency. Founder Mae Karwowski has dedicated her entire business to influencer marketing in order to help brands develop authentic influencer communities.

Obviously’s is a concept-to-completion influencer approach. Everything is under one roof. The agency has built out a self-triaged network of 400,000 influencers in vertical categories like fashion, tech, health and home decor, with statistics on followers, platforms and calculated earned market value (EMV). They handle every detail from initial objectives/goal setting to influencer identification, outreach, strategy, influencer network management, content development, logistics like shipping product to influencers, analytics, and ongoing evaluation.
Influencer Advocate Entities
ExpertVoice is an example of the final influencer marketing platform; influencer advocate entities. Brands, companies, products and agencies engage with ExpertVoice for the entire package of services, from influencer outreach, which includes retail sales associates, to social media, to performance metrics as well as actual (oftentimes passionate) users, and even product sales for desiring influencers.

The key point of difference between Influencer agencies and advocate entities is the outreach component. Agencies, just like networks and databases, reach out to bloggers and influencers who post and do videos for a brand, product or service.

Expert Voice is an Influencer advocate entity that taps into every layer of the buying journey from retail sales associates who sell the product in brick-and-mortar stores, to social media influencers, to actual users. Take running shoes for example. Many of their outreach individuals may be store clerks who sell running shoes. Others are fitness experts who are passionate about a brand or particular racing flat or distance shoe. The ExpertVoice influencer network is broad (beyond one million), and classified by product/service silos and degrees of engagement, whether the person is a sales associate, user or qualified expert/influencer in a category.
Influencer databases, networks, marketing platforms, agencies, advocate entities... and more are plentiful. Expertise is available on all levels— from initial outreach to ongoing campaign management, analytics and KPI's. The choice depends on four key factors:

- Marketing/Advertising Staff
- Number of Influencers
- Influencer Marketing Expertise
- Control Desired

Influencer marketing requires a level of basic advertising and marketing expertise. Brands with in-house marketing staff may execute a number of the functions themselves. Companies or organizations lacking in-house marketing or advertising personnel may need to utilize more managed services or outsource influencer marketing agencies and experts completely.

Use the accompanying grid as a guide to decide which method is appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influencer Outreach Options</th>
<th>Influencer Database</th>
<th>Influencer Networks</th>
<th>Software Solution Management</th>
<th>Influencer Advertising Agencies</th>
<th>Influencer Advocate Entities</th>
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<tr>
<td>In-House Marketing/Advertising</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>LITTLE–NONE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Numbers of Influencers Desired</td>
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<td>Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influencer Marketing Expertise</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In-House Control Desired</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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Influencer Marketing

Channels

Influencer marketing is currently dominated by social media platforms. According to influencer records on networks, databases and interviews with industry experts, two social media avenues, Instagram and YouTube, are used most for influencer posts. These platforms enable storytelling—the key to permission, persuasion and activation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influencer marketing channels where U.S. Marketers plan to spend the most, January 2019. % of respondents.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instagram</strong></td>
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<td><strong>YouTube</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Blogs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Twitch</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Pinterest</strong></td>
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**Pros and Cons**

**Instagram**
Used for top of funnel brand awareness but lack of click thru does not lead to activation shopping capabilities. Instagram stories is a key device.

**YouTube**
Good for 10K+ followers. Long form videos are key to depth of content.

**Blogs**
Require identification of influencers (and qualification of their followers) to match criteria of brand/product messaging. Can be more powerful if blogger’s reach extends to other social media.

**Facebook**
Can be effective but Facebook’s algorithm kills the organic reach of an influencer’s post if brand partners don’t boost it. Facebook is a pay-to-play model.

**Pinterest**
The platform’s “what it can be” messaging is key for influencers.

**TikTok**
An influencer app channel that allows users to watch, create and share 15-second videos shot on cellphones. Trending up as of Fall of 2019.

Influencer Campaign Strategy Development

Once the decision is made to employ influencer marketing as a direct tool or as a means of amplifying existing advertising campaigns, initial goal-setting to performance measurement is required. Here are the necessary steps.

- **Assess Marketing Funnel**
- **Establish Objectives**
- **Develop Influencer Brief, including**
  - Target Audience
  - Influencer Type (macro, micro, nano, advocate)
  - Influencer Channels
  - Number of Posts required
  - Timing of Posts
  - General Aesthetic
  - Influence Type
    - Objective: Advice of influencer
    - Subjective: Inspiration by influencer
  - Influencer Talking Points
  - Measurement
  - KPI’s
- **Budget/Compensation**

The first step is determining where the brand’s target audience is in the marketing funnel. This affects all objectives, strategies and influencer actions. Sure, the process seems elementary, but to certain audiences the brand may be known, established and accepted. To other audiences it may be true pioneering, a top-of-funnel challenge to generate awareness. This addresses the disparities between different awareness levels in brands, products or sources.

Overall influencer marketing campaign objectives need to be set. Campaign objectives may be to drive sales, increase traffic, increase event sign-ups, to further establish authority and branding, to gain impressions and reach, or to increase follower count.

Then jump right in! Develop an influencer brief that details audience, influencer type, channels, frequency of message, and measurement.
Influencer Compensation takes many forms, including payment. In certain circumstances, transactional incentives are used. In other situations, rewards may be relational.

In the case of micro and macro influencers, incentives will be transactional. These could include cash, free products, or payments generated per conversion, which could be a percentage of a sale, or a flat amount per generated action.

**Macro Influencers**
Largely celebrities with talent agents. Their fees will run in the five-and-six figure range. A recent celebrity blog post for a fashion product, which generated a reach in excess of 2 million followers, cost the advertiser over $200,000.

**Micro Influencers**
have far less reach, but a proven higher rate of engagement with their followers. In a 2016 research conducted by Bloglovin’, which surveyed 2,500 of its micro-influencers, discovered that 90% charge less than $250 for a branded blog post, 83% charge under $150 for a branded tweet, and 84% charge less than $250 for a sponsored Instagram post.

**Consumer advocates**
Different. Primarily, rewards will be relational. They are brand fans, not for the money, but because they prefer the brand. To them, VIP treatment, a product discount, an event invite, a sneak peek into what’s coming up, free product, or an opportunity to be among the first people to try a new product is preferred.

It is important to realize that brands, products or services that use influencers are forming a relationship. There must be synergies, as well as checks for transparency and authenticity. Influencers should be vetted to avoid conflicts with competing items, controversial stances and public posture.

Influencers are all different, and so is their compensation. An influencer’s fees will be largely determined by their follower count, engagement level, and what they’re asked to do. For example, in a recent Influencer.co Instagram influencer marketing study, the overall average price per post was about $271. Micro-influencers with fewer than 1,000 followers generate about $83 per post. And those with more than 100,000 followers average $760 per post.

### Influencer Compensation

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<th>Instagram Post</th>
<th>Blog Post</th>
<th>Tweet</th>
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<td>Less than $250</td>
<td>Less than $150</td>
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**Source:** Influencer Compensation Study, Bloglovin’ 2016
Performance Metrics/KPIs

It is essential to analyze the effectiveness of any marketing effort. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) will fall into one of the three stages of the Marketing Funnel.

- **Awareness**
- **Consideration**
- **Action**

KPI's for **Awareness** are views or reach along with new fans and followers generated. Re-posts and re-tweets demonstrate likes of posts or social media efforts. Traffic to the website, link likes and new links outside of the platforms used for the marketing campaign are also good measures.

Key Performance Indicators for the **Consideration** stage include views of specific pages on the brand website, which indicate consideration of the product or service. Email submissions to receive a discount for first-time purchase, free trial or demo version downloads, and items added to cart indicate respondent deliberation.

If the goal is an Action, be-it an online purchase, consultation request, table booking, form submission, or anything else, examine revenue generated by the influence campaign, return on investment, conversion rate which is expressed as a percentage, and is calculated by dividing the number of generated actions by the number of referred visitors, or clicks, and multiplied by one hundred. Track new customers versus return customers (e.g. incremental business). Examine average order value among those customers that were referred by influencers along with lifetime value of the customers driven by influencer marketing efforts.

Use the KPI Marketing Funnel as a guide for students.
Influencer Marketing Key Performance Indicators

**Awareness Phase**
- Views/Reach
- News Fans/Followers Generated
- Reposts
- Likes
- Website Traffic
- New Links

**Consideration Phase**
- Views/Reach
- News Fans/Followers Generated
- Reposts
- Likes
- Website Traffic
- New Links

**Action Phase**
- Revenue/Sales/App Downloads
- Return on Investment (ROI)
- Conversion Rate
- Advertising Cost of Sales (ACOS)
- New vs. Return Customers
- Average Order Value
Legal Requirements

Transparency is integral to any influencer marketing effort. Today the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has requirements that apply to testimonial advertisements, celebrity endorsements, as well as endorsements by consumers, experts, bloggers, and other word-of-mouth marketers. Influencers of all types and sizes are subject to the law. In simple terms:

“When there is a material connection between the advertiser and the endorsing influencer, it must be clearly disclosed.”

The FTC’s requirements place two key expectations on advertisers, marketers and influencers.

1. There must be clear and conspicuous disclosures of compensation relationships in marketing campaigns.

2. It is the responsibility of the all parties (advertiser, agency, marketer, consultant) to monitor influencer compliance.

Influence marketers are encouraged to use content monitoring tools, and manually check top performing influencers to ensure that they are compliant with the FTC’s disclosure guidelines.
Influencer Marketing

Good Sources, Resources and Experts

**Influencer Networks**
- TapInfluence  https://www.tapinfluence.com/
- GroupHigh  www.grouphigh.com
- Whaler  www.whaler.com

**Influencer Marketing Platforms**
- AspireIQ  https://www.aspireiq.com/1
- Traackr  https://www.traackr.com
- Markerly  http://markerly.com
- Famebit  https://famebit.com/

**Influencer Marketing Agencies**
- Obviously  https://www.obvious.ly

**Influencer Marketing Platform Entities**
- ExpertVoice  https://www.expertvoice.com/
- RhythmOne  https://www.rhythmone.com/#TB6qZeTa3hGhVDLT.97

**Influencer Marketing Experts**
- Eugene Prussakov  https://www.amnavigator.com/geno-prussakov/
- Lee Odden  https://www.toprankblog.com/lee-odden/
- Kristina Lerman  https://arxiv.org/abs/1506.03022
- Sam Fiorella  https://www.samfiorella.com/
- Jay Baer  https://www.jaybaer.com/
- Kyle Wong  https://www.pixlee.com/blog/author/kyle/
- Chelsea Krost  https://chelseakrost.com/
- Onalytica  https://onalytica.com/
What is the outreach procedure to engage Macro Influencers?
Macro Influencers are paid celebrity talent. Contact, pricing and instructional negotiations are made through their talent agencies. Four of the major talent agencies working with Macro Influencers are:

- WME (Wm Morris Enterprises) [https://www.wmeagency.com/expertise/](https://www.wmeagency.com/expertise/)
- NextModels [https://www.nextmanagement.com/](https://www.nextmanagement.com/)
- CAA [https://www.caa.com/brand-consulting](https://www.caa.com/brand-consulting)
- DBA (Digital Brand Architects) [https://thedigitalbrandarchitects.com/](https://thedigitalbrandarchitects.com/)

Other than cost, what is the major difference between Macro Influencers vs. Micro Influencers?
Macro Influencers have large followings in the hundreds of thousands; even millions. Therefore they have enormous “reach.”

Micro Influencers have smaller followings that are only in the thousands. The key difference is “engagement.” Although Macro Influencers have tremendous reach; that’s it. It’s good for awareness. But to go further into the marketing funnel, engagement is key.

An Experticity survey of 6,000 internet users found out that 82% of them were highly likely to follow a recommendation made by a micro-influencer versus celebrities. It all boils down to the engagement.

A 2016 study by Markerly, which analyzed posts of more than 800 Instagram users, discovered that the higher the follower count is, the lower the engagement trajectory drops.

Are there any “red flags” to be aware of with influencers?
Be observant for sudden spikes in followers. If an influencer all of sudden has a large increase in followers or response, that signals fraud. Unless one uses an agency or network that triages their influencers, there is a potential for “bots.” These are programmed boosts that mimic actual followers that are only repetitive bits of code disguised as followers.

What are the common formats for influencer content?
Video and Static are the broad format categories.

Static formats are blog or post mentions with either or both photo and story. Instagram stories is an example.

Video formats include posts from newsfeeds, IDTB, and live posts. Content formats include 1) How-to videos, 2) Unboxing videos, 3) Product reviews, 4) Sponsored blog posts.

The most popular form is combination of in feed photo/video with engaging content that drives traffic from the story to an activation site.

Is Influencer Marketing “doable” within a student project or campaign?
Yes. Any student (or agency team) can craft a number of influencers and some pricing which is eye candy only. The crux is a solid strategy that includes a comprehensive brief with talking points, messaging, general aesthetic, channels, posts, timing and KPI’s.
Final Words

Since 2017 the influencer marketing industry has grown, expanded, and morphed into a more structured entity. Firms that once were influencer databases are now networks. Influencer Marketing Platforms have emerged. And of course, a new set of legal rules, the need for security and safeguards, and even channels have come forth.

In light of the industry’s evolution, two principles form the foundation of influencer marketing success:

**Authenticity**

Authenticity of content is the most important reason that a consumer will be convinced to engage with a brand. It is the core driver of influencer marketing. Individuals who are trusted, whose content is sought, read, seen, heard and enjoyed, break through customer resistance. They engage consumers with a brand, product or service. True influencers can make this happen.

**The Majority Illusion**

When an individual observes a behavior or attribute in most of his or her friends, even if it is rare as a whole, an illusion is created that “this must be what everyone does!” It has been proven that influencers can create the illusion of something being more popular than it really is. This social phenomenon makes influencers successful with many followers.

Kristina Lerman, in a 2015-16 study at the University of Southern California, found that socially linked individuals who tend to be similar may grossly overestimate the prevalence of that attribute to their followers, making it appear more popular than it is. This is the majority illusion—the impression that a specific attribute is common when the truth may entirely different.

Attitudes and behaviors are shaped by perceptions of the choices, attitudes, and behaviors of others. For example, the decisions people make to adopt a new technology or idea, purchase or use products, engage in risky behavior, or join a social movement can influence others. As a result, a variety of behaviors are said to be “contagious,” because they spread as people perceive others adopting the behavior and then adopt it themselves. In influencer marketing, this “social contagion” escalates from a small number of initial adopters to a large portion of the population, resulting in action (purchase, use, belief, following) for the brand, product or service.

Express these core principles to students. The techniques in this module can be the ground floor of many successful campaigns. Implore students to structure influencer strategies that may amplify advertising, marketing and promotional recommendations.
Influencer Marketing

Module 11

Case Study:

ExpertVoice / “Gear Tester”

Icebreaker
A New Zealand manufacturer of merino wool products for outdoor enthusiasts.

Challenge
To increase trial of Icebreaker products by verified experts in the United States and Canada who consumers trust for product advice.

Strategy
Engage ExpertVoice’s full service influencer marketing platform to drive sales through trusted recommendations of 1) retail sales associates (RSA's) and 2) verified category professionals. The notion being that brand and product education combined with personal experience would lead to more full-priced conversion and passionate brand advocates.

Icebreaker “Gear Test”
ExpertVoice first targeted retail sales associates (RSA's) at Icebreaker’s key brick-and-mortar retail establishments. These individuals interface one-to-one with customers. Their advice is often the tipping point for purchase. RSA's at outdoor and sporting goods retailers were credentialed by completing online education modules that rewarded them with special product gear tests.

Brief
Support Icebreaker’s Natural Base Layer product line during the Fall/Winter 2019 season with the help of vetted top outdoor experts.

Strategy
“Activate a three-phase Gear Tester Program where targeted experts complete an application, receive gratis product, share an Instagram post and write product reviews.”

Timing
Mid-September – December 2018

Results
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gear Test Applicants</th>
<th>1480</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepted Experts in USA/Canada</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Instagram Followers</td>
<td>260,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Reviews Published</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surprisingly efficient
I used this product for about 20 days of backpacking at Philmont as a Ranger. First off the material held up great during “Shmocking” and general backpacking abuse. The breathability on this is impressive, now you’ll get sweaty in it but it allows a good flow without underarm zippers. The Polartec materials kept me plenty warm during the cooler 55-60 degree mornings and during work up 12000-14000 ft peaks. Way lighter than my normal warm layer and packed in tight! The water resistant layer is great for light drizzle, or for use under a rain jacket. Overall, fantastic jacket with great form fit (Order your regular size for a form fit).

Cody Stark

3a
16 days ago

Brand Certified
Verified Owner
Familiarity: I have used it many times
The same credentialing opportunity was also extended to verified professionals in the outdoor space within the ExpertVoice network. It was the belief that targeting experts to:

1. Complete an education application about icebreaker (education piece)  
   Coupled with
2. Sharing on Instagram  
   and
3. Writing a product review (engagement)

would drive additional full-priced sales, brand conversions, and reach.

**Results**

1,480 Gear Tester Applicants. 153 Accepted Experts in the U.S./Canada. 306 Icebreaker Base Layers Shipped Out. 260,679 Combined Applicant Instagram Followers. 202 Product Reviews published.

The more sales associates knew about a brand, the more likely they were to provide educated recommendations to consumers, and the more likely those consumers bought the brand.

The Gear Tester program proved that further product trial would lead to further brand conversion. In so doing, the influencer marketing strategy delivered the additional needed traction for Icebreaker product sales in the United States.
Challenge 1

What is core of influencer marketing effectiveness?
Influencer marketing focuses on using key leaders to drive a brand or product message to larger markets. Rather than mass advertising directly to a large group of consumers, influencers are paid to get out the word for a product, service or brand.

Challenge 2

The basic infrastructure of Influencer Marketing includes:

- Influencer Types
- Influencer Outreach
- Influencer Channels

Challenge 3

Traditional Advertising strategy is an interrupt-see/hear-sell notion. Influencer marketing is based on:

“Engagement”

Consumers prefer to hear from real people than brands. Influencer marketing can deliver the connection to more authentic experiences that consumers crave.

Challenge 4

Influencer Outreach
Influencer Outreach is engaging through:

- Influencer Databases
- Influencer Networks
- Influencer Marketing Platforms

Challenge 5

Influencer Marketing is dominated by two channel platforms. What are they? And why?

- Instagram
- YouTube

These platforms “enable” storytelling—the key to permission, persuasion and activation.

Challenge 6

Influencer Marketing Legal
Consumers are entitled to transparent messaging. Any influencer marketing is subject to the same Federal Trade Commission Guidelines governing product endorsement, testimonials and celebrity statements. This broad guideline interpreted by the US Supreme Court with violators subject to awards of unlimited amount states:

“When there is a material connection between the advertiser and the endorsing influencer, it must be clearly disclosed.”
What are the three(3) types of marketing influencers?

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

1. The main differences between Influencer Databases and Influencer Networks are:

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

2. Give an example of the following:

   Brand Advocate: ________________________________
   Micro Influencer: ________________________________
   Macro Influencer: ________________________________

3. What should be included in an influencer Marketing Client Brief. Provide a minimum of Seven(7) elements:

   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

4. Evaluation metrics are critical to any campaign. Two(2) obvious influencer metrics are “views” and “clicks”. Provide three(3) additional evaluation metrics and explain their importance:

   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

5. What does the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) require that advertising messages, including influencer marketing, efforts do?