

Working with Influencers

Based on the [webinar](#) presented by Dalene Heck with [HMI](#) on Thursday, October 22, 2020

What is an Influencer?

Influencers use social media to communicate with their audience through content such as live-stream video, blog posts, photo and video, etc. They have the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others because of their knowledge, status or relationship with their audience. But how do you decide whether you should work with them? Or how you should work with them? Use these tips to make the most of working with influencers.

Why work with Influencers?

The power that influencers yield over their audience is a form of modern-day “word of mouth” advertising and there are endless ways to work together.

A “Seamless” Sell

Modern consumers expect you to converse with them and 70% of consumers want to learn about products through online content as opposed to traditional advertising. Influencers who do their job well will organically incorporate your messages into their posts and make your business part of their overall story - making it seamless.

Driving Traffic & Raising Awareness

Influencers have the power to drive traffic to your website and social media channels which ultimately influences sales. They can also be freelance writers who contribute to other publications, which can help you get exposure in other places.

Organic Links

An organic link is a link from someone else’s website, blog, or social media page where they linked to your site without being asked to. Working with respected bloggers will garner organic links in their content which can help you rise in the rank of Google’s algorithm and drive traffic to your website.

Trackable Results

A blogger can tell you exactly how many people read their blog, how long they stayed on the page, how many times people clicked through to your website, and how many people were reached on social media posts. This can help you decide on future marketing decisions with a much stronger handle on what is working and what is not.

Evaluating Influencers

Before deciding to work with an influencer, you need to outline your goals for an influencer campaign. These goals will help you narrow down your list of influencers.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

- Brand awareness
- Quality content generation
- Traffic boost
- Sales / lead generation
- Social Media boost
- Engagement

Qualitative Evaluation

- *Niche* – Make sure their niche or voice is a good fit for your brand and how you want to be represented.
- *Voice and style* - Consider the tone of writing/speaking you are comfortable with, and also which language you would like their promotion to be published in (there are multilingual influencers out there). Make sure that you will be proud to have them talk about you.

- *Visual appeal* – Having good visuals is very important. Travel is often sold on a single photograph.
- *Engagement* – Do not base your decision solely on likes and comments because these can be bought. Thoughtful engagement is important to see if the influencer has a good rapport with their audience and has their trust.
- *Professionalism* – Work with those that are professional. Go through their channels and get a feel for their style and character and assess their interactions with their followers.

Quantitative Evaluation

Vanity metrics are things you can measure, such as the number of followers, page views, subscribers, etc., that may be satisfying on paper only. They are easily changed or manipulated, and they may not have a direct impact on your business goals. There are plenty of ways to look deeper. Ask influencers directly for their numbers and for whatever information you need to be comfortable with your decision. Some things to ask:

- *Demographics* – where are their followers from? Are they from your target market?
- *Average reach data / engagement* – if you get these numbers from various influencers that you are evaluating, the numbers will mean more when they are stacked up against each other. Ask for screen shots, case studies and references and don't accept it if it doesn't seem right.
- Consider a [Check List](#) like this to get the information you need to determine if the influencer is a good fit.
- *Evaluation tools*, such as the one available at [Social Blade](#), can provide you with global analytics for any content creator, live streamer or brand.

Getting the most out of an influencer campaign

Beyond building an itinerary, there are many things to consider and discuss for an upcoming influencer campaign. Key points to consider in advance are:

What is included?

Does the influencer expect that transportation, accommodation, meals, alcohol, etc. will be covered?

What will they give you in return? Number of posts to their blog, number of YouTube videos, etc.

Reporting

What will they share with you when the trip is over?

What results do you expect to evaluate the trip?

Timeline for publishing

Do they publish immediately or in a few days, weeks, etc.?

Negative review policies

Will they give you a chance to fix something that goes wrong before posting it on social media?

Disclosure guidelines

There are rules for disclosing when content is sponsored or part of an ad campaign. Make sure any influencers you work

with are familiar with and follow those guidelines on any posts included in your campaign.

To pay or not to pay?

Expect to pay in the following circumstances:

- it's the Influencer's policy;
- you request specific marketing coverage or hashtags;
- you expect extra coverage;
- you want to licence any content they are producing.

You have hired an influencer - now what?

Pre-Travel

Once the decision is made, spend the pre-travel time making a connection with your influencer by doing the following:

- Get to know them, track their social channels, etc.
- Put together a "swag bag" featuring locally made products but be conscious of space and tailor to the specific influencer.
- Introduce them to your social channels - they may find tips of things to do while they are visiting.

- If possible, meet up with them before they begin to travel. This can ensure a good working relationship going forward.
- Share pertinent information by email before they arrive, such as hashtags or social media accounts you want them to tag, news releases, etc.
- Connectivity is extremely important to influencers so ensure that you book hotels with free Wi-Fi and let them know in advance if they will not have access to WiFi.

During Travel

- When they start posting, share with your audience directly from their page.
- Know the rules of content ownership and always give proper credit when sharing.
- Engage with them during their trip as there may be questions from their followers that are easier for you to answer.
- Be available if something goes wrong or if you can make something last minute happen that they want to do.
- Ensure they have a good experience and be available to fix anything that might go wrong.

Post-Travel

- They will likely continue reliving a few of their best moments when they get home and will continue to share on social for days or even weeks.
- The blogs and videos can be weeks or months in the making and often will be published when it has the most impact on their audience.
- Keep in touch with their channels and see what else you can do to work together.
- [Upcycle the content](#) - cut and recut photos and video; share a new snippet of the same story. Follow the link for more ideas for repurposing content
- Take the time to properly assess how it went, ideally within two weeks. Look at the reactions, positive and negative feedback, etc.
- Ask the Influencer for feedback on how it went from their point of view.

Long-term Benefits

A SNAPSHOT OF RESULTS:

- Blog pageview and YouTube views
- Number of posts, reach and engagement on social channels
- Destination/business mentions
- Screenshot good comments

Use these results to inform future campaigns!

- Develop a database to house results every time you work with an influencer.
- Collect the same information every time to help you see emerging trends, patterns and what is driving people through your doors.
- You can create a simple [Google Form](#) to query influencers after their campaign.