

The Influence of Influencer Marketing

HOW BRANDS BECOME PART OF THE CONSUMER CONVERSATION



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CONSUMERS AS EVANGELISTS

With consumers exposed to more than 5,000 ads a day (according to Yankelovich), their attention is short. Consumers are not looking to see the same ad that was on TV last week — they are looking to be evangelists for new content. They are excited by the opportunity to be the first to share information with their friends because that allows them to continue building their online reputation. Brands must understand that content is fleeting, and the value of being relevant in the “now” moment of a consumer’s mind is one of the most valuable places a brand can be.

Influencer marketing is changing the way modern marketers connect with consumers, and it is time to embrace this new way of marketing. Brands have been slow to adopt influencer marketing, but forced advertising is no longer effective. We can see a new wave of influencer marketing emerging where brands are in the conversation — they are driving the conversations, and they are connecting with consumers on a more personal level. Consumers are your most important assets, and when consumers love a brand, they are the strongest advertising any brand will ever see. It is time for marketers to invest in influencer marketing, and we assure you that your brand will see the impact.



Tara Chang is the co-founder of Women's Innovation Lab, a leading female empowerment platform that partners with corporations to drive gender equality. As an expert in new marketing technologies, she has served as the former vice president of sales at Visible Measures, a leading video advertising company, and as an advisor for Revfluence, a social platform for influencer marketing. She received her education from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Oxford and the Kellogg School of Management. Tara has won various awards and competitions from DARPA, Facebook, Cisco, Macy's and the City of Boston.

Did you know that 31.2 million Facebook messages are sent every minute? And 300 hours of videos are uploaded to YouTube every minute? With the rise of new social media platforms, consumers are becoming more connected than ever. Instead of turning to brands to tell them what's hot, they are turning to their online communities and influencers to find out the latest trends. Brands are no longer able to bombard consumers through mass media messaging because consumers have learned to tune-out traditional advertising. With only 10 percent of consumers actually reading the copy of ads (as noted by George Gallup's research with Young & Rubicam), smart marketers have learned that it is essential to become part of the consumer conversation.

There is a fragmentation of trust that is plaguing the traditional advertising world. Marketers are battling for consumers' share of attention and are being forced to adapt to new pathways to connect with consumers. One of the most effective ways is to partner with social media influencers to help become a part of the consumer conversation. Influencers are able to organically reach consumers and brands now have an opportunity to relate to customers at the right place and in the right way.

THE CENTER OF INFLUENCER MARKETING - SOCIAL CURRENCY

Influencer marketing has created a new economy of social engagement where individuals are able to capitalize on their own user generated content. Their self-produced content has become their online voice and brought them social fame. Influencers are the ones who hold the power of social currency. By partnering with influencers, brands are able to share their messages with their audiences without being invasive. More importantly, they influence the perception of the brand. By partnering with these influencers, companies are able to align their brand with a particular message and online community. Marketers should heed the opportunity to partner with influencers to become a part of the conversation with consumers.

SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE

While influencer marketing has proven to be successful in gaining brand trust, it is only possible when brands speak the language of their consumer. If an auto company aligned themselves with a 15-year old EDM (electronic-dance music) influencer who doesn't have a driver's license, consumers would question the credibility of the influencer or could even have a more negative view of the brand. So how do brands find the right influencer to partner with? It is about knowing the brand DNA, not just who its target is. Many brands aim to capture the attention of millennials, and it is essential that the messaging be genuine. Instead of forcing a brand message upon an influencer, many brands have been successful by sending products to the influencers. Consumers are trained to ignore forced advertising, and a key way to effectively communicate with them is through an honest connection.

Influencers are the ones who hold the power of social currency.

GIVE THE INFLUENCER FREEDOM

Influencers are focused on staying true to their own brand. Some influencers will look to partner with brands to generate revenue, but the best influencers will do the same due diligence on a brand as brands should be doing on the influencer. Without giving influencers the freedom to craft content that will resonate with their fans, the resulting partnership content will not be as effective. Despite predictive analytics tools that can help determine the effectiveness of content, influencers are the ones who know their audience the best. They know the best type of content that will keep their fans engaged.