



The Power of Influencers

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The growth of influencers, and the impact they can have on their communities, has caught many businesses off guard over the past few years. Even now, as brands firm up partnerships and investigate new relationships, the challenge of identifying and leveraging the most beneficial opportunities in this space remains an ongoing point of discussion and disagreement.

The following insights look to address how brands can establish effective working relationships with influencers to promote their product or services and connect with audiences in a manner that is true to their business' values.

Being Authentic Online

It comes as no surprise that, to have influence, you need an engaged online community that respects and values the influencer's experience and opinion. Authenticity is therefore at the core of any content that is promoted or posted by influencers. Brands and

influencers must undertake their own due diligence on each other to ensure they are choosing the most effective partnership. Failure to do this could result in not only a wasted opportunity, but wasted marketing spend, and a negative experience of the brand for potential new customers.

Before you engage

In order to win a key influencer, brands should take the time to like, share and follow the influencer's content before contacting them directly.

In addition to this brands can send free products and items first so influencers can understand the brand before considering a public partnership. By employing this method, it demonstrates the brands commitment to the influencer – allowing time for the influencer to decide if the brand is the right fit for the target audience.

The major problems brands face

One of the major problems currently

facing businesses is choosing influencers who align with their brand, service, or product. Brands need to work closely with influencers to create content that is consistent and genuine, which strikes accord with their audience.

Brands may wish to consider using fewer partnerships but for longer campaign periods, to maximise the benefits of a good influencer partnership. Where this occurs, communities begin to associate specific influencers and messages with the brand and the influencer is more likely to become 'locked in' to that business.

Signed, sealed and delivered

Signing off on a contract for products or services is business as usual for most companies – and working with an influencer need not be any different. This allows both parties to set clear goals and the KPIs to be met.

Content approval processes can vary amongst influencers and this should also be discussed and agreed in advance. For example, paid sponsored material can be proofed and drafted up to eight weeks in advance for large projects and may be just one week in advance for smaller projects.

To streamline the approval process, and ensure messages do not get watered down, it is recommended that no more than two brand contacts are involved in the delivery and approval of content.

When influencers are live streaming for brands, the approval process requires significant trust between the brand and the influencer, as it is harder to develop genuine, scripted content.

In order to manage this effectively, a schedule of what will be filmed and the locations can be arranged and discussed well in advance. In order to monitor the success of a campaign, brands must ensure appropriate technology and analytics have been set up to track the impact of influencers and the conversion to sales.

The future of influencer marketing

There has been a steady increase in private label collaborations between influencers and brands. For example, Hatch Beauty's collaboration on a line of nail products with Jenna Hipp, the "green celebrity manicurist."

- <http://www.hatchbeauty.com/portfolio/jenna-hipp/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/jennahipp/>



“Instapods – selforganised groups of Instagram users. These groups can consist of brands, businesses, influencers or general users. These groups are tasked with improving engagement of each member's post through likes, shares and comments.”

Private label collaboration provides the brand with a valuable endorsement and a new way to market their product – and, if done well, can be incredibly successful for both parties.

As for the future, technology will drive the way in which influencers operate over the next five to 10 years. In order for brands to grow in this space, there is a need to remain open and adaptable to the changes that take place, and remain poised to seize the opportunities that arise.



17, 100 Edward Street, Brisbane QLD 4000
GPO Box 1564, Brisbane 4001

 +61 7 3230 5000
 www.phillipsgroup.com.au