

Influencer Marketing – 6 Steps for Building an Effective Strategy

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People inherently rely on others for recommendations, and many purchasing decisions tend to be influenced by this advice. Not only do they depend on these suggestions from their inner circle, but also people they admire.

Today, the same principles can be applied to the online environment. Although now, it is becoming extremely difficult to cut through the noise and reach audiences on social. Advertising costs are growing, and marketers need to consistently demonstrate their ROI more than ever. Influencers provide another way to maximize your social ROI and communicate to your audiences more efficiently. Many have influence within a specific niche industry or over a specific audience – they have the power to sway customers to favor a specific business.

Influencer marketing is just one way you can promote your business – and establish yourself as a thought leader in your particular niche. Here are some of the most important aspects you should consider when developing a social influencer marketing strategy:

1. Develop influencer campaign goals, metrics, and analysis framework

Determine the goal of your campaign

Every marketing strategy has to have a goal. After all, you create marketing because you want to achieve a certain outcome for your product or brand. The same is true for an influencer marketing campaign. By defining a concrete goal, you can determine if you achieved success or not during the influencer campaign. However, you also need to decide how you're going to measure that success.

What do you want to achieve with this campaign?

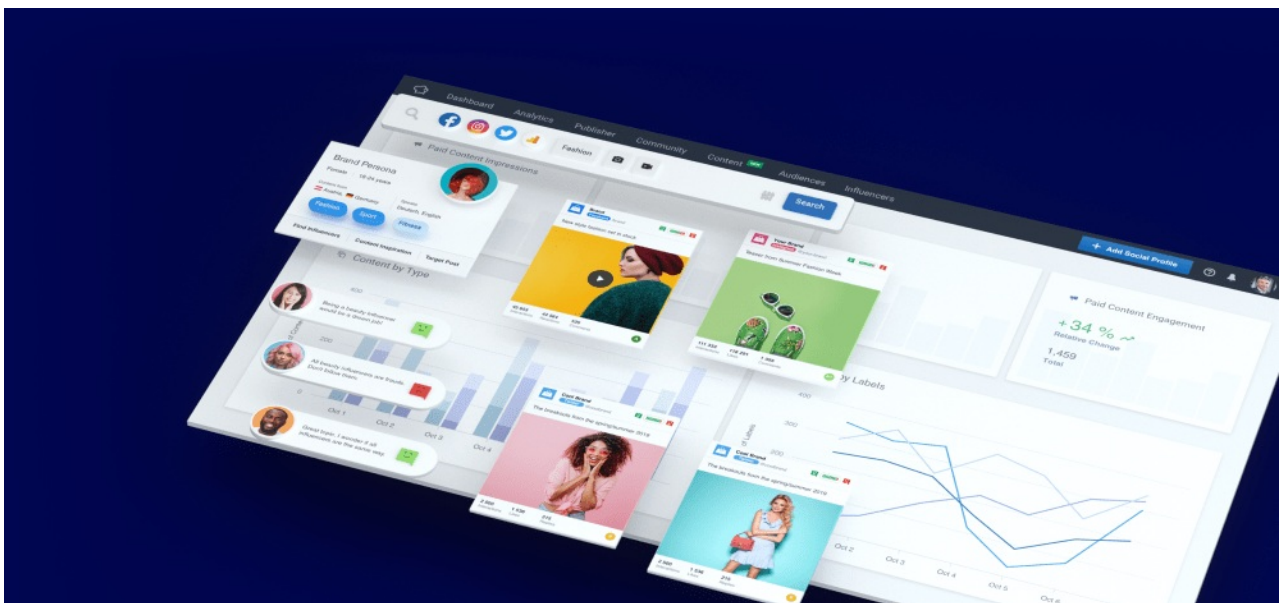
Perhaps you build your own content but need to amplify it further with content promotion. Or maybe you just want to launch a new product or feature for your brand, so you need someone to help you gain more attention.

If you're aiming to amplify your message and want to increase brand awareness, your campaign will look different, and the success metrics will be defined differently as well. If you're aiming to increase conversions, increase store visits or purchases, you might need an entirely different influencer – and again your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be different. This is why, before you jump into developing an influencer marketing strategy, it's important to have a clear understanding of your ideal goal and desired outcome.

How are you going to measure performance?

Once the goals have been developed, you'll need to decide how you're going to track your performance and analyze your results. What specific KPIs will be used for your success metrics? You will need to tie them to specific objectives. For instance, if your objective is to raise brand awareness, will you measure video views, engagement, brand recall or fan growth. If your objective is conversions, you might want to measure purchases, leads, or use of a coupon code.

7 Influencer Marketing Examples to Inspire Your Next Campaign



2. Find the ideal influencer, understand audiences and your communities

Define your ideal influencer

Now that you've determined the goal of your campaign, it's necessary to think about the right influencer which needs to align with the persona of your customer. Are you trying to reach people outside of your community by partnering with an influencer that can help you grow a specific segment? If so, you'll need to think about what type of influencer speaks to that particular audience type. An ideal influencer is someone who resonates with your marketing goals and brand. They are also someone who your customers follow, consume and engage with their content.

How do you define the ideal influencer?

First, you need to look at your industry and see which person has the most engaged community. Maybe there is a micro-influencer, a macro-influencer or even a celebrity. One crucial factor to consider is the potential ROI that can be achieved, such as return per number of fans. Perhaps a micro-influencer could be the better option because they receive more engagement than a celebrity.

Next, dive a little deeper and analyze that specific influencer by asking:

- How large is his/her audience?
- How active are they on different social media platforms?
- How relevant are they in your industry?
- What's the tone of his/her voice?
- How is the industry responding to him/her?

This is a critical step that enables you to evaluate how relevant this influencer is for your campaign, brand and community. Once you have identified the top social media influencers in your niche and how audiences are responding to their content, you can move on to the next step.

Now you'll need to look at the **influencer's history of past partnerships**. Who has the influencer already worked with? How many sponsored campaigns did the influencer execute every month? What was the rate of success?

These are also questions you should ask and seek answers to before starting your campaign and investing both time and money. In short, you need to take a look into your selected influencers' history and evaluate their past campaigns. As they are influencers in a specific niche, they most certainly will have had projects with other brands, and this history may help you evaluate their potential.

Try to find out how much these brands invested into their campaigns, as well as the results, and the direct impact on their image after having been associated with this specific influencer. At the same time, it is critical to know whether or not your chosen influencer has been collaborating with similar brands from the same industry.

If he or she has, then there might be a problem if you and your competitors share the same influencer: people might lose interest or confidence in an individual who promotes products or services just for money and not because he or she believes they are worthy of being promoted.

3. Evaluate growth potential: in-house, micro, macro, and celebrity

The next step comes with a new set of questions you need to ask yourself and then answer, with the utmost sincerity. You need to assess the potential growth of this influencer marketing campaign on both micro and macro economic levels. At the same time, you should assess the celebrity growth potential for your brand, as well as how a specific influencer you've chosen can contribute to this growth. Ask these three questions:

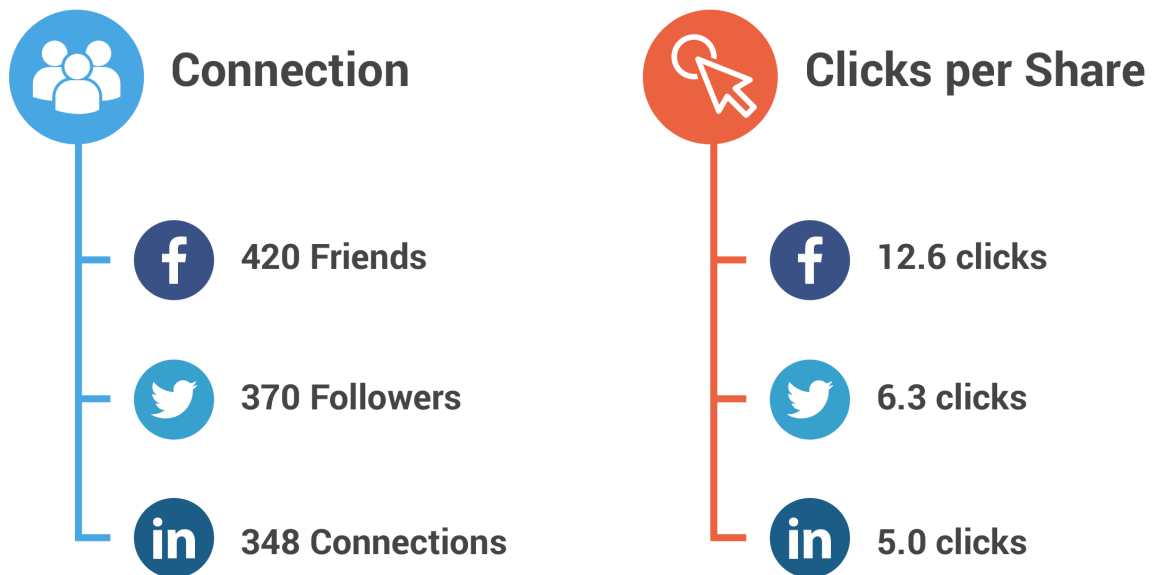
- What is the growth potential for this campaign?
- Will your brand help the influencer gain more traction?
- Will the influencer help the brand get more results?

You can answer these questions by comparing the performance of your own strategy to that of the influencer. How does your branded content fair on average compared to your ideal influencer? This is one way to effectively evaluate the potential Return On Investment (ROI) you can expect from your partnership together.

Many social media marketers are having the best success with Instagram influencers who have smaller, more targeted followings. You may also find it worthwhile to turn to the people who are already working at your company, employee advocates that can share your content – and at the same time – who may prove to be rising micro-influencers in their communities. Combining all their power, you can achieve great results, comparable with the results obtained from using a traditional influencer.

Smarp, a platform that can help your company develop a culture of employee evangelism, found that the average team member has 420 friends on Facebook and can deliver 12.6 clickthroughs per post on this social media platform alone.

Combining the sharing power of all your employees should allow you to achieve significant results.



Source: "The Average Employee Advocate", Smarp

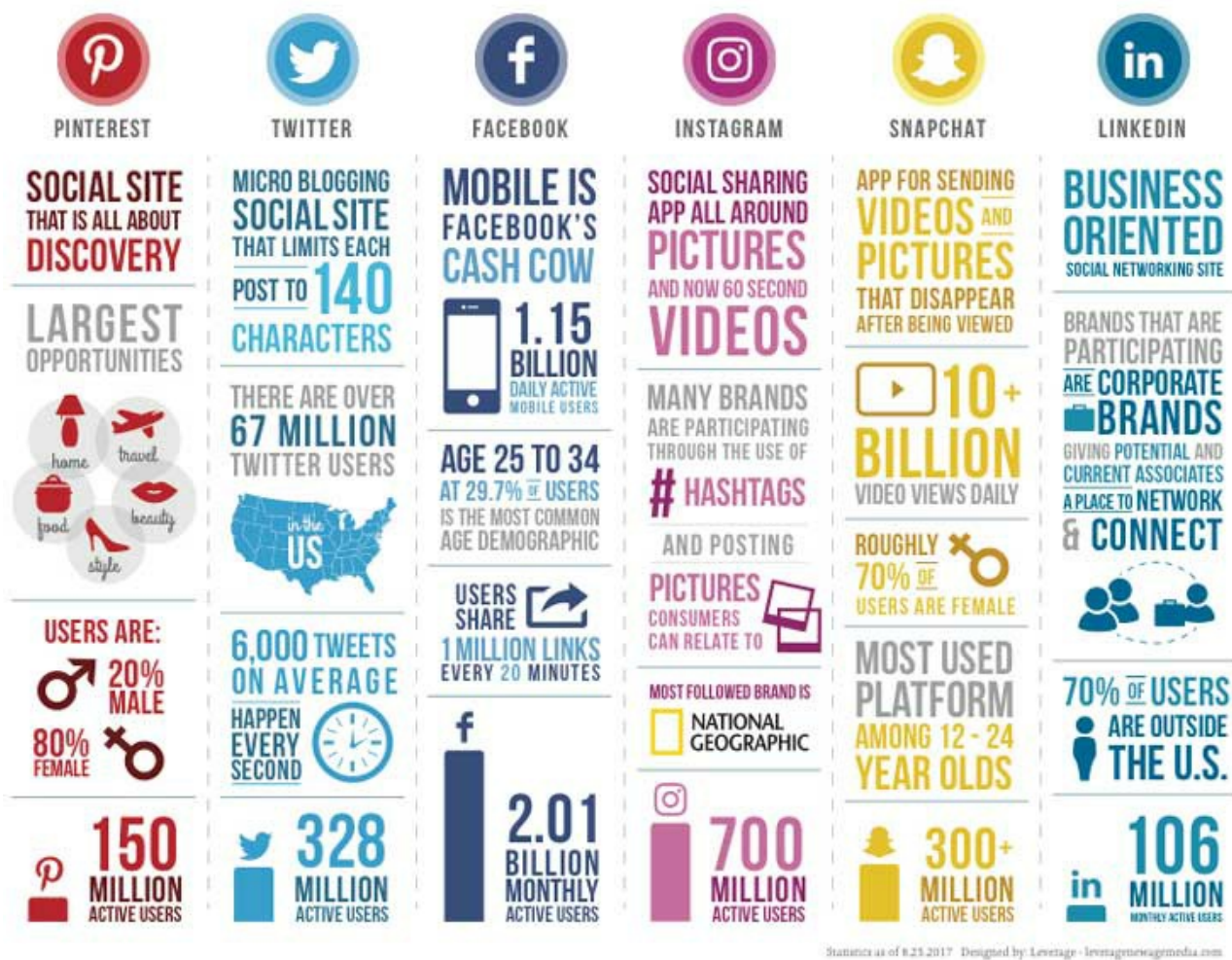
Whether you're sourcing alliances from within or elsewhere, it's imperative to have an understanding of the potential relationship between the influencer, your brand and audience. You need to acquire new customers, and though influencers can help drive people to your business, their personal brand is also at stake. You need to evaluate all these variables and how all stakeholders can benefit from the campaign.

4. Focus on a specific platform

At this point, you will need to choose the primary platform for achieving these goals, as well as develop a strategy for other channels that will be used for amplifying your message.

What will be the best social platform to achieve the greatest results?

This decision depends mainly on your social media strategy. For instance, if your main audience is on Instagram, then you'll want to ensure your influencer has a solid presence and a great pool of followers there. Have a look at this handy infographic [courtesy of Leverage Media](#), that can help you choose the social platforms that could be the best fit for your message:



Target demographics, interests, shopping behaviors

When integrating social media influencer marketing into your branding strategy, you'll need to analyze audiences. Especially the audience of the influencers you want to contact and establish relationships with for a marketing purpose. It's imperative to understand the community your influencer attracts. This will enable you to identify how well they fit your target audience, and whether they convert better or worse than the customers from your other campaigns.

You will need to consider these three questions:

- Who is following the influencer?
- What kind of interests do these people have?
- What are their shopping behaviors?

These answers will help you choose your influencer more effectively and target your posts, ads and links to a specific audience that are more likely to resonate with your brand, website, products or services.

5. Manage expectations with requirements and content deliverables

Assess content deliverables

You already know who the best influencer in your niche is; I am sure that you also have a list of the most important influencers that come in second, third and so on. Next, you'll need to think about content deliverables, timelines, posting frequency, and exclusivity.

Everything depends on the influencer's ability to create valuable content, his or her ability to attract your desired target audience, and of course, the frequency he or she is able to post content on your behalf or for your benefit. Perhaps you want them to include specific keywords or hashtags in their posts, number of photos or product placement usage.

It's time to assess the chosen influencers' ability to create content versus the ability to distribute content. There are a couple of questions you should ask at this point as well:

- Is the selected influencer capable of producing content that will be of benefit to your brand, business or website?
- How will this influencer distribute the content and to whom?
- Will this content be visible to your selected ad targeted audience?

Content is key. Your success will be defined by how your influencer will address his or her audience, but also his or her ability to reach out to the people that are important for your marketing campaign.

6. Exclusivity duration, contract length and price, cost-effectiveness

Once you've determined the top social media influencer that can effectively promote your brand, you'll be reaching out to them. Whether you sign a contract or forget legal papers, you need to know their price, be able to evaluate the cost-effectiveness the partnership, and come to an agreement on the duration of exclusivity.

The Takeaway

When we talk about marketing we should take into consideration a purpose, a strategy and also results. And if the content you put out there has no purpose, well... it's just content. **Influencer marketing can be an effective part of your marketing strategy**, as long as you know what you're doing, who you choose to contact and who their audience is comprised of. This is why you need a goal, a purpose and a clear strategy.

We've talked about some of the most important variables that your success is contingent upon when choosing an influencer to amplify the impact of your campaign. I am hoping that you will take these helpful top influencer marketing tips into account before starting to work on your marketing strategy.

Keep in mind, influencer marketing is just one trend marketers will have to tap into if they want to stay ahead of the curve in the social media landscape. Learn more about [what marketers should expect in 2018](#), from AI marketing and competitive benchmarking to personalizing your content .

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