

The Art of Negotiating With Influencers



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Influence can be powerful. And building strong relationships with those that have it will determine the success of every campaign.

The influencer relationship, in fact, begins prior to discovery: setting social marketing goals and the levers needed to achieve them will empower decision making, optimization and, most importantly, influencer alignment; by knowing what is specifically needed, it is easier to identify influencers that will help attain it.

A relationship doesn't begin with a simple mass email; create relations with the influencer (follow your influencer as an individual marketer and as your brand, like/share/comment on their posts to begin engagement) to build toward the relationship. The thoughtful personal engagement will surely influence the influencer.

Negotiating with influencers can be a tricky process, but having the goals, budget and priorities set will be fundamental to negotiations.

Negotiate Like It's a Job Offer — Because It Is

Before beginning the negotiating process, there are many factors to focus on when considering a partnership. Some of the most important factors include the influencer's **engagement, follower growth rate, content quality, brand fit, and authenticity**. If these factors fit your brand's needs, it is easy to set an initial price. Then, decrease it by 10 to 20 percent before approaching the influencer to create room for negotiation — like a job offer.

The outreach buffer that you put in place comes in handy if the influencer has a strong counteroffer. However, depending on the individual, an influencer may actually over-value their content & distribution. Before accepting or countering the deal, always try to understand what metrics or reference points they're using to calculate the price.

Using Rate Cards During Negotiations

Many established influencers have rate cards and media kits that offer insight on the influencer's **audience, creative strengths, and historical campaigns**. By reviewing these assets, it becomes easier to determine which influencers would create strong partnerships.

It's important to respect an influencer's rates, but managing a business is equally as important. Instead of negotiating on prices specifically, **consider negotiating on deliverables, timelines or campaign terms**.

Working with Management

Depending on how the influencer handles their own business, a manager or team may be involved. If the influencer directs communication to the manager, communicate **exclusively with them**.

The manager knows their clients' needs and goals and can help create a deal that benefits everyone involved. This allows the influencer to focus on the creative elements which are where they excel.

There's More Than One Way to Make an Impression

Negotiating terms is more than the rate; content type matters. Reach and impressions vary by content type, and influencers **may over or undervalue different formats**. In this case, it may make sense to alter the requested deliverables to **drive the same amount of impressions in a different way**, as long as that different content type still works for the objective / creative execution.

For example, Instagram feed posts tend to offer more reach than an Instagram Story on a per post basis, but an Instagram Story may be more appropriate for certain executions, like a product unboxing or a traffic driving campaign because of the full-screen visuals with a "Swipe Up" call to action.

Set Negotiation Priorities and Rank Their Importance

It's essential to set a list of negotiation must-haves with your team before you begin outreach. By establishing this beforehand, it provides a playbook of how to approach negotiations, clearly understanding concessions vs. dealbreakers.

For example, having flexibility with **exclusivity and usage rights** tends to provide a path to success for a deal with a bigger influencer, as these are typically deal breakers from a manager's perspective. Know the range of best case scenario to a tolerable concession that you or your client is willing to accept for all the deal terms that really matter *before* starting a negotiation.

Building mutually beneficial partnerships is an essential part of an influencer program; it begins with the one to one engagement & relationship building with the individual. From the initial ask to the final post, influencer negotiation is an important process that can be filled with question marks. Minimize those question marks while maximizing your partnerships with these tips for a successful influencer marketing campaign.