

CREATING INFLUENCE

From Media Relations To Influencer Relations

Mynewsdesk PR Academy

Study Guide | 2 of 5

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WHAT ARE INFLUENCERS?

Influencers are individuals who have built an audience – usually online – by publishing great content and attracting a loyal following. While they can be celebrities, politicians, journalists, or business leaders, influencers are as likely to be regular individuals who have a particular area of expertise or passion they want to share.

EVERY BUSINESS HAS INFLUENCERS

Whether you're in the consulting, agriculture, food services or fashion space, your business has influencers who publish content on topics your audience cares about.

WHY ARE THEY SO POWERFUL?

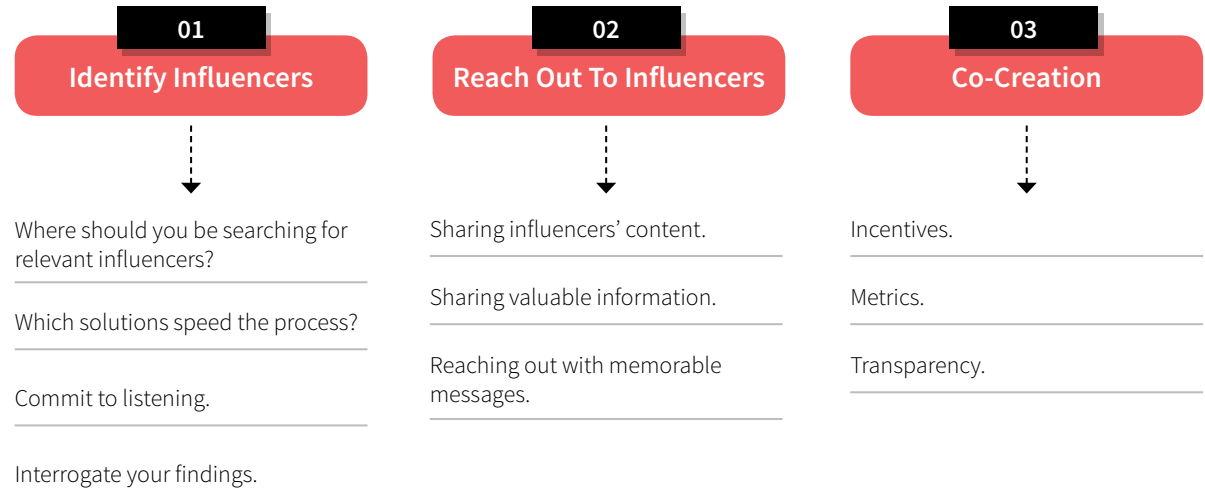
Influencers already have an audience – and it's the audience you're trying to reach. For many businesses trying to get started with a content-driven approach, **connecting and collaborating with influencers is a great way to build an audience more quickly and efficiently.** For small- and medium-sized businesses, influencer programs can also be more cost effective than building an audience from scratch.

INFLUENCERS ALSO OFFER AUTHENTICITY

Consumers are wary of marketing messages from companies. Influencers often have more credibility than your brand does – simply because they don't have a vested interest in selling a particular product or service. That means content from influencers is trusted more. Allying with an influencer helps you to build trust with your audience.

Part 1

How to Set Up Your Influencer Program



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01 Identify key industry journalists, social influencers and brand advocates.



Where should you be searching for relevant influencers?

The most basic method is to use Google. Plug in keyword phrases, and see which niche publishers pop up. Although searching manually is a great first step, technology can greatly aid the process.

Which solutions speed the process?

There is a massive ecosystem of tools that include some type of influencer features. We'll focus on two categories in particular.

- **Newsroom tools.** Multi-feature enterprise tools that allow your in-house communications or PR team to function much like a media newsroom.
- **Specialized channel tools.** While a multi-feature newsroom tool will take care of most of your influencer needs, specialized tools can help you identify additional influencers in niche categories. For example, if your top influencers are active on Instagram, Iconosquare helps you find the most relevant influencers. ViralWoot does the same for Pinterest, and GhostCodes is a great niche tool for Snapchat.

Commit to listening

Ultimately no single tool will take the place of listening. Technology can automate some of the work, but you should also be a regular user of the social media channels your customers frequent so you can hear what they are hearing.

Consider signing up for social tools (such as Hootsuite or Sprout Social) or media monitoring tools like Mynewsdesk Listen. These will make it easier to check in regularly and synthesize the top news and trends in particular topic areas, as well as see who is most active in those areas.

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01 Identify key industry journalists, social influencers and brand advocates.



Interrogate your findings

With a list of potential influencer targets in mind, ask yourself these questions to ensure you've found the right people:

- **Do they share my audience?**
Are their readers/viewers people you want to reach?
- **Is their content relevant?**
Do they publish content in a subject area that overlaps with your company's expertise or personifies the values you want your company to stand for?
- **Do they have an established audience?**
We generally recommend that influencers have at least 3,000 followers. Fewer followers (around 1,000 or more) is alright if they are particularly specialized.
- **Are they creating content regularly?**
In our experience, a blogger may be rated as a top-five choice one year, and then drop in consistency the following year. Even those with big followings may no longer be creating content regularly.
- **Is their overall message in line with our PR/content strategy?**
Some influencers might publish on topics that interest your audience, but they may have habits that you don't want to ally with. For example, do they have views that will alienate your audience, or use inappropriate language? Explore each of your choices carefully before continuing.
- **Are they advocates for your brand or your products/services?**
If the answer is "no", this isn't a deal breaker, but a "yes" in this category is a big win.

Part 1 | How to Set Up Your Influencer Program

02

Reach out to influencers.

With a priority list in-hand, commit to growing a relationship with top influencers. Remember, except in rare cases these relationships don't develop overnight. **Help the relationship grow over time by:**

a) Sharing influencers content

For example, if an influencer shares something on Facebook, go ahead and share it with your audience, or comment on it in a constructive or interesting way.

b) Sharing valuable information

Don't send every influencer everything you come across. Share judiciously by segmenting your influencer list and deciding what particular topics suit each best. (This must sound familiar by now, as spamming journalists is equally frowned upon.)

c) Reaching out with messages from time to time

If you find out an influencer will be at a conference you're also visiting, ping them ahead of time. For example, you might know from their social profile that they are avid bicyclists; ask them whether they'll be exploring any bike trails after the conference is over. Make it personal, short and sweet.



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03

Consider co-creation.

Among the most productive ways to work with influencers is to co-create. These can be informal relationships (such as guest blogging for an influencer) or paid relationships (sponsoring an influencer's content or paying to create custom content). **Decide in advance:**

a) Incentives

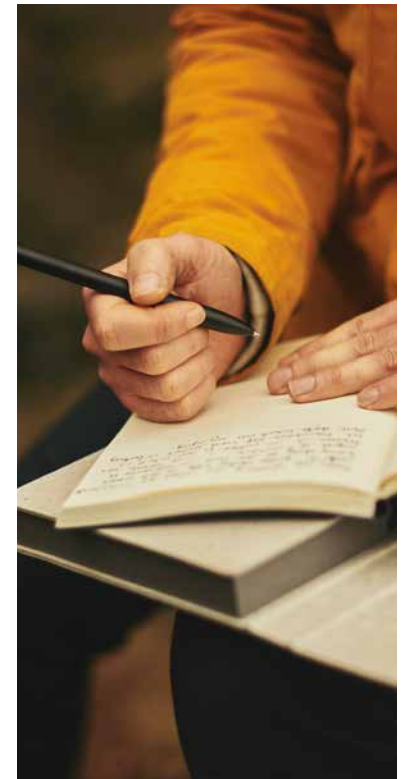
Will the relationship be purely financial, or would you agree to a barter-type arrangement? (Some bloggers will accept no remuneration in exchange for free gifts for their audience – which boosts their subscriber lists.)

b) Metrics

What targets will you both agree to? Does the collaboration require a certain number of impressions, for example?

c) Transparency

Is the relationship transparent to the audience? Does the influencer reveal they've been remunerated? (They should.)



Part 2

How Does Technology Fit In?

Relationships are not built on a single interaction, but on many interactions over time. Multiply that by the number of influencers you would like to engage and even collaborate with in some way, and you have a rather unwieldy scope of work.

A tool like Mynewsdesk – or other influencer management tools – offers you a way to manage the complexity of multiple influencer contacts. Specifically:



Manage contacts.

Technology can help you not only to create lists, but also to segment them by key topics. Keep track of an influencer's audience scale and engagement to ensure you're working with the right person.



Alert management.

A good tech platform will allow readers to set up alerts, giving you permission to send them information on a particular topic. This is preferable to a single-stream subscriber model, where a reader can only turn alerts 'on' or 'off'.



Ongoing discovery.

Assembling your influencer list is a process that should not end. Technology will help you keep tabs on who's covering specific topics, and who's writing about your or your competitors' brands.



Optimization.

Finally, analyze your communications, and track the reach of your activities and the exposure you've received.

You may also choose to join an influencer network, which functions similarly to an ad network. For example, [Women's Influencer Network](#) automates your brand's reach to an ecosystem of female bloggers that span self-publishers in design, fashion, fitness, and décor, among others. You can find influencer networks in a variety of industries and topics.

Part 3

Key Terms

Influencers

Individuals who have built an audience – usually online – by publishing great content and attracting a loyal following. While they can be celebrities, politicians, journalists, or business leaders, influencers are as likely to be regular individuals who have a particular area of expertise or passion they want to share.

Authenticity

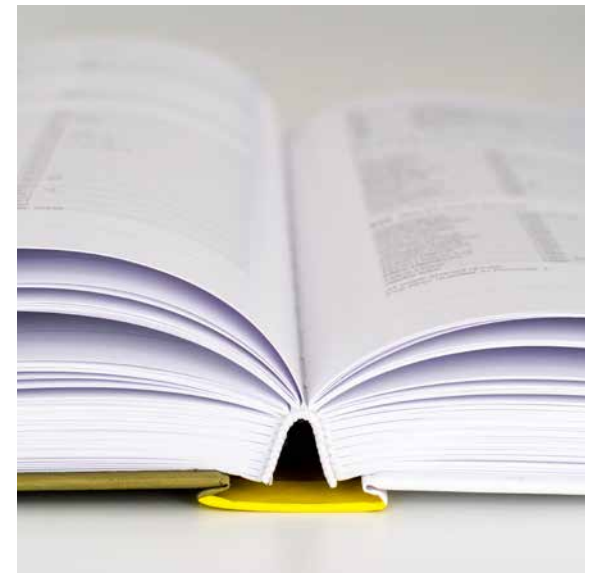
When a person or message is truly genuine and earnest—both in its delivery and its intent—it is perceived as authentic. Consumers are wary of marketing messages from companies. Influencers usually don't have a vested interest in selling a particular product or service so they are perceived as more authentic.

Co-Creation

A partnership struck with an influencer to create content together. These can be informal relationships (such as guest blogging for an influencer) or paid relationships (sponsoring an influencer's content or paying to create custom content).

Optimization

The process of making something better than it was before—and in the world of digital storytelling and distribution, it's a never-ending quest for "better."



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