

**AND  
MARKETING  
EXPERIENCE**

**INFLUENCER  
CUSTOMER  
JOURNALS**

Social media can be divided into many different areas from advertising to content market and community management. However, due to its word of mouth nature, influencer marketing has emerged and established itself as one of the most lucrative tactics, if done correctly.

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“Who are you most likely to believe?

A company website that says their product is the greatest thing since sliced bread or someone you know and trust who has used the product and really recommends it?”

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You may have heard something similar to this statement over the years. The power of influence has skyrocketed because of the growth of digital platforms. Attracting a well-connected influencer that can help provided a better experience for your customer requires making good choices, having a strong strategy in place, and a little bit of luck!

A lot of brands confuse influencer marketing with celebrity endorsement. Though there are some similarities, it is not the same. Paying a lot of money for a celebrity to be associated with, and therefore indirectly selling, your product or service is not giving brands the returns it once did.

There could be many reasons for this, but the main one is relevance. People are getting smarter to messaging and can sense

if a celebrity genuinely believes in the brand or are doing it for the money...and if they are suspicious, they will let people know on social media platforms.

But influencer marketing doesn't have to mean wooing an A list celebrity (or even a C list one) or the latest high profile YouTube star. At its heart, influencer marketing is about reaching out to people who are invested in your area/s or even your product, and taking the time to nurture them to be ambassadors for your brand.

### The Big Benefits of Influencers

Influencer marketing allows you to use fans of your brand to further develop its reputation and attract new customers. It comes down to a simple premise – people who like your product are probably connected to others who will like it too.

Influencers can become long-term partners in helping to develop and drive your product or service forward if they are handled properly. They might even produce their own user-generated content and post it online, promoting your business and giving you valuable free advertising.

By nurturing influencers you can increase your reach without investing in the large marketing spend that you might find, for example, with pay per click advertising. This is one of the reasons many brands are allocating resources towards this.

### Finding Influencers and Keeping them On Board

A big challenge with influencer marketing is connecting with the right people and then keeping them on board and engaged for as long as possible.

Ideally, you are looking for individuals or groups that have more influence on areas like social media than your average customer. This might, for instance, be determined by the number of followers they have on Twitter or how popular their YouTube channel is.



**Andrew Davis**

Digital Consultant & Workshop Leader

[andrew@twks.co.uk](mailto:andrew@twks.co.uk)

[www.thinkingoutsidetheblog.com](http://www.thinkingoutsidetheblog.com)

However, there are other important factors like engagement, past performance when working with brands and conversion metrics that outweigh follower count.

Influencers come in all shapes and sizes, but most can be categorised into one of 2 groups:

- **Macro influencers: Usually celebrities or someone with a very large following (e.g, 1 million+)**
- **Micro influencers: Profiles with a small but relevant following where they are seen to have influence in that particular area.**

As you can imagine, micro influencers fall into many different categories, depending on the sector. Here are some of the most popular:

- **Journalists, bloggers, personal brands, industry experts, thought leaders, staff, customers, activists and agitators.**

The next thing you need is an incentive for that person to promote your product or service. A lot will depend on your brand and what you have to offer. An online store, for example, may be able to reward an influencer with a gift card to spend on its site. A subscription service might have levels of membership they can open up. However, as the industry evolves and influencers are starting to see the value they can add to a brand, a large majority would want some financial compensation.

Finding which incentives motivate influencers the most and the return on investment of each may take a good deal of testing to find what works and what doesn't. Developing a formal yet flexible influencer engagement strategy will help keep this uniform and focused, providing a base on which responses can be monitored and new approaches tested.

Influencer marketing takes time and effort to implement effectively but it can have some major benefits if your brand fits a particular customer's needs. I have seen many organisations succeed with influencers and, if done correctly, it can be a very cost-effective way to build advocacy, awareness and sales.