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Influencer Marketing

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Learn to:

- Find influencers: it's not just a numbers game or a "who's who" of social media
- Engage with influencers once you've found them
- Recognize the best practices of influencer marketing and outreach

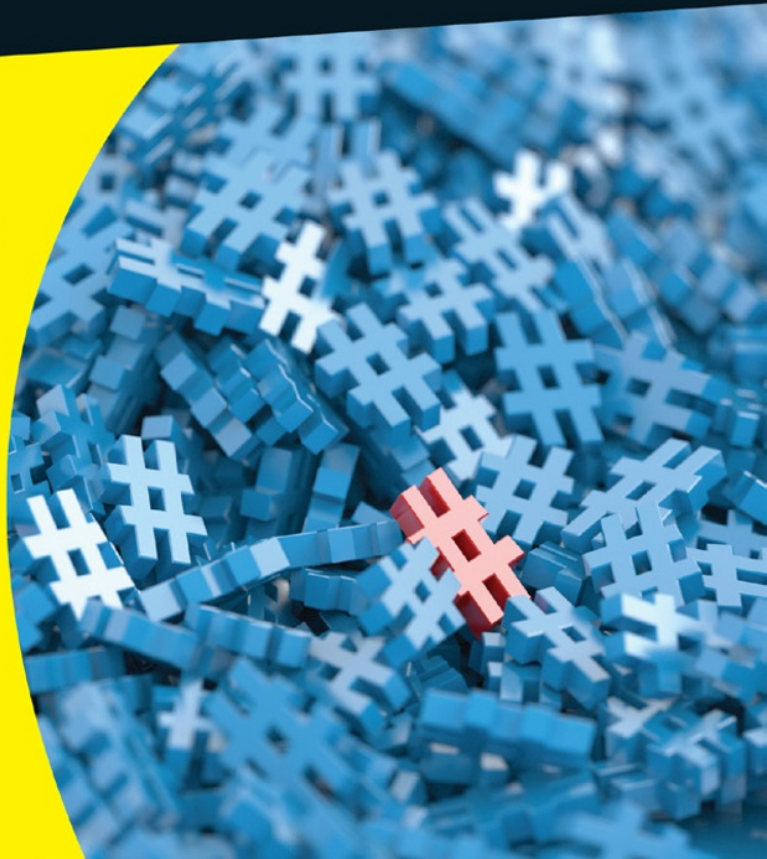
Kristy Sammis

Cat Lincoln

Stefania Pomponi

with Jenny Ng, Edita Gassmann

Rodriguez, and Judy Zhou



***Influencer
Marketing***

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DUMMIES[®]

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**by Kristy Sammis, Cat Lincoln, and
Stefania Pomponi with Jenny Ng,
Edita Gassmann Rodriguez, and Judy Zhou**



Influencer Marketing For Dummies®

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Introduction

If you work in marketing, or have a product or service to sell, you’ve probably realized by now that you need to establish an online presence in some shape or form. You also need to keep your online audience engaged in order to establish brand awareness and grow your business.

But the world of social media is vast, and there are so many platforms to choose from when it comes to publicizing your brand. New tools pop up everyday, and the social media landscape can easily become overwhelming! You’ve probably heard about the benefits of word-of-mouth marketing and perhaps even heard the term *influencer marketing* bandied about as a strategy to consider. Maybe you’re just curious to learn more about word-of-mouth marketing, what makes someone “influential” online, and whether working with influencers can help your business grow. If so, you’re in the right place!

We wrote this book with the goal of demystifying influencer marketing and all the various components that make it successful.

About This Book

This book is a reference. That means you don’t need to read it in order from front to back. Instead, feel free to skip to the sections that are most relevant to your brand and interesting to you. For information on a specific topic, check the table of contents or refer to the index.

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you’re reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it’s noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn’t exist. If you’re reading this as an e-book, you’ve got it easy — just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

Foolish Assumptions

As we wrote this book, we made certain assumptions about you:

- ✔ You already have an established web presence (a website and/or brand-owned social channels).
- ✔ You're interested in learning more about how to work with online influencers and identifying who they are.
- ✔ You have established clear business and marketing/PR goals, which may or may not yet include social media activations.
- ✔ You're trying to decide whether using influencer marketing will help you meet your business goals.
- ✔ You have a passion for social media, or you're at least open to learning more about how it can elevate your brand marketing campaigns.

Icons Used in This Book

To make your reading experience easier, we use various icons in the margins to identify special categories of information:



Anything marked with the Tip icon may help streamline your marketing efforts. We've learned through trial and error so you don't have to!



Material marked with the Remember icon serves as a quick reminder of information, including best practices that we've shared elsewhere in the book. Review it to refresh your memory on content that's already been covered previously.



When we throw up a Warning icon, it's our way of steering you away from tactics that may derail your influencer marketing plans. We urge you to consider these bits of information carefully to avoid being blindsided by poor outcomes.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the content contained within this book, we have curated additional companion digital content that's available to you online. These include the following:

- ✔ **Cheat Sheet** (www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/influencermarketing): Here you can find information like how much influencers make, what influencer marketing can't do, influencer marketing tactics that'll get you in trouble, and more.
- ✔ **Web Extras** (www.dummies.com/extras/influencermarketing): Each parts page contains a link to Dummies.com and articles that extend the content covered in the book. Here, we offer free articles on everything from tips on sending products to influencers, a year's worth of themes for engaging social content, how to get influencers to advocate for your brand, and more.

Where to Go from Here

We hope that this book proves to be an invaluable tool as you start or continue your influencer marketing journey. The road can be long at times, but you'll start to get the hang of it soon. Start small, conquering one social platform at a time while building up your key influencer relationships. To be sure, there are always new platforms sprouting up, so your skillset will continue to evolve.

If you're brand new to the concept of influencer marketing, we highly recommend starting with Chapters 1 and 2 to get the lay of the land. If you're already somewhat familiar with influencer marketing tactics, you might want to jump to Chapter 4 or review the different social platforms methodically (Part III).

No matter where you start, we wish you much success in your influencer marketing endeavors! If you have comments and feedback to share, please feel free to email us at info@clevergirlscollective.com.

Part I

Getting Started with Influencer Marketing

getting started
with

**influencer
marketing**



For Dummies can help you get started with lots of subjects. Visit www.dummies.com to learn more and do more with *For Dummies*.

In this part . . .

- ✔ Learn the origins of influencer marketing and how it evolved.
- ✔ Get acquainted with the six primary influencer platforms.
- ✔ Discover how to make influencer marketing work for you and your brand.

Chapter 1

Influencer Marketing 101

In This Chapter

- ▶ Getting the lay of the land
 - ▶ Approaching social media platforms like a pro
 - ▶ Redefining “influence”
 - ▶ Knowing what your business needs to launch successful programs
-

Congratulations! You’ve arrived at the era of influencer marketing: an exciting, interesting, fresh, ever-changing, and *seriously fun* time to be a marketer! You’re gonna love it here.

What makes influencer marketing so compelling? For one thing, it simply couldn’t have existed before now. Influencer marketing brings together age-old concepts but gives them a modern, social media twist, and then distributes them across platforms that change almost daily. And the results are stunning.

We believe that influencer marketing is unprecedented and truly differentiates itself from the old marketing practices. In fact, it challenges most of them. This new medium pushes traditional boundaries — and that’s a good thing! Consumers (the folks we’re marketing to) are savvier than ever. It’s our job to keep up.

In this chapter, we give you an overview of what influencer marketing is and why it matters to you — whether you know it or not!

Defining Influencer Marketing

So, what is influencer marketing exactly, and why are we so darn excited about it? *Influencer marketing* is the art and science of engaging people who are influential online to share brand messaging with their audiences in the form of sponsored content.

Advertisers have always used celebrity endorsements as a way to increase awareness and improve perception of a brand, because people tend to trust celebrities they admire, and sometimes aspire to be like them. Influencer marketing is similar in concept, but it has ushered in a new way to define *celebrity*. In addition to TV and movie stars, pro athletes, and musicians, celebrities of the social media world exist now, too. People can build big, engaged audiences on social media, such as blogs or Instagram. And those *social media influencers* wield influence over their audiences, akin to celebrity influence. Brands then work with these social media influencers to create a new kind of celebrity endorsement.

For example, maybe a new energy drink has just come out, and they want to market themselves as a “perfect boost for busy women.” They decide that — in addition to email blasts, online display ads, and in-person events — they’re going to reach out to influential female bloggers who write about their busy lives (and include information about the new energy drink). To engage these influencers, the energy drink’s marketing team will

- ✔ Find bloggers who meet their target demographic.
- ✔ Reach out to the bloggers in an effective and professional way so that both parties are happy with and clear about their upcoming partnership.
- ✔ Send the bloggers samples of the drink.
- ✔ Enjoy the results of a fantastic social media campaign! The bloggers’ readers are thrilled to have learned about their favorite online friend’s good experiences with this energy drink, and they comment that they’re going to try it themselves.

Of course, influencer marketing is not quite that simple, and these are actually quite time-consuming and involved (which is why we’ve written a whole book about them!), but the idea is sound.

So why a whole book about influencer marketing? What makes it so impossible to have done before and so hot right now?

- ✔ Social media today gives access to anyone to become an influencer; anyone who builds an audience can influence that audience. This means there’s a huge pool of influencers available for brands to work with.
- ✔ There are more tools than ever before to help brands find and engage with influencers. There are resources for turnkey influencer programs now that simply didn’t exist a year ago.
- ✔ Influencers exist on any channel or platform; they aren’t limited to one format or another.

- ✔ Consumers have little trust in advertising. No one clicks banner ads anymore! But consumers *do* trust their friends and family when it comes to product recommendations and purchasing decisions — and consumers consider social media acquaintances to be friends.
- ✔ When executed well, influencer marketing programs have proven to be one of the most cost-effective and powerful tools in a marketer's arsenal.

Identifying the Primary Influencer Platforms

There are a slew of social media platforms out there, but in this book, we focus on the six big ones. The ones we've selected are

- ✔ **The most established:** Programs on these platforms are replicable and scalable based on years of data and case studies.
- ✔ **The most marketing-friendly:** Marketers know they can expect good results from programs on these platforms. The Snapchats of the world are fun, but they haven't yet proven to yield demonstrable results for most businesses.

Regardless of how many new tools emerge, when you've mastered the basics of these six platforms, you can manage influencers *anywhere*.

Blogs

Blogs were arguably the first form of user-generated content that attracted advertisers. When the web evolved from *top-down editorial content* (content that was published on websites, much like magazines and newspapers were published, without any way for audiences to interact or respond to that content), bloggers were the first people to attract true, measurable, engaged audiences. Blogs allowed for commenters, which meant bloggers (publishers) were interacting with their audiences. This two-way communication was revolutionary, and entire communities formed around blogs. Advertisers followed.

Over the last 15 years, blogs have evolved from being primarily text-heavy outlets for sharing opinion and personal stories, to a dizzying world of highly visual, readily shared content.

Blogs are still a mainstay of influencer programs. Here's why:

- ✔ There are popular blogs for every topic under the sun.
- ✔ Traffic and activity from blogs (page views, visits, time on site, and so on) are easy to measure.
- ✔ Influential bloggers can create gorgeous content and tell beautiful, true stories in a way that brands simply can't.
- ✔ The "evergreen" nature of blog content means sponsored posts will be discovered long after programs have been completed.

Instagram

No other social media tool has enjoyed Instagram's meteoric rise to prominence. People of all ages (especially under the age of 34) love perusing and sharing snapshots of people's lives, whether they know them IRL (in real life) or not. Instagram is fun and easy to use, and though marketers were once hesitant to believe that fleeting photos on Instagram could do much for brands, nearly 95 percent of retailers are now on Instagram!

Working with influencers on Instagram is fabulous because

- ✔ Users want visual content that's easy to digest, which is why Instagram is so popular. Engaging Instagram influencers to ensure that brand content is prominent on Instagram is a no-brainer!
- ✔ Simple photos are a great way to bring your product to life, for others to see it in action. A picture really is worth a thousand words.
- ✔ Many tools are available to track Instagram programs simply by using a unique hashtag, so measuring program success is easy (and some of these tools are even free!).
- ✔ Instagram's audience is broad, and often different from the audiences who are reading story-based blogs. Instagram offers a fantastic additional channel to get sponsored content in front of as many people as possible.

Twitter

Twitter has changed the news cycle, and the way social media-savvy users consume news. Any event will be discussed and shared as it unfolds in real-time on Twitter. Twitter is the platform for the world's social commentary, whether it's serving as a political megaphone for citizens reporting live from the trenches, or a humorous collection of ongoing reactions to this season's *Bachelor* finale.

Facebook is where social media users check in and check up on family and friends (mostly people they know in real life). Twitter is where users go to find out — or share — what’s happening in the world at large with thousands of users they (mostly) don’t know. Therefore, Twitter is great for

- ✔ Hosting chats or “parties” with a wide cross-section of people who have a common interest.
- ✔ Disseminating information about a new product launch or anything newsworthy.
- ✔ Brands that are interested in actively engaging with users. Facebook is more passive — comments may go unanswered for long periods of time, for example. Twitter users expect responses quickly. As a brand, if you can’t engage in near real-time conversations with followers, working with influencers who can do it on your behalf is a fantastic option.

Facebook

Although Facebook isn’t quite as popular as it once was among the under-25 crowd, millions of Americans check Facebook daily. Marketers have to be there! But being there can be tricky. Facebook changes its algorithms, policies, and ad serving regularly — what worked today may not work tomorrow. It’s tough — but critical — to keep up.

For that reason, when it comes to Facebook, working with influencers is fantastic. Here’s why:

- ✔ People who are popular on Facebook know how to navigate the tool to ensure that their posts are seen as widely as possible. Working with influencers means working with experts.
- ✔ If you’ve already created branded content and you just want to disseminate it, engaging Facebook influencers is your perfect solution. Facebook is incredibly powerful for sharing brief, to-the-point messages, such as coupons, in-store sale info, or branded images or videos.



Running a company Facebook page is completely different from engaging influencers to post sponsored content to Facebook.

Pinterest

After soaring onto the scene a few years ago, fueled by users who couldn’t get enough of the beautiful, educational, and aspirational tool, Pinterest has established itself as an absolute must for any product-based brand. Pinterest drives more traffic to online retailers than any other site.

Here's why Pinterest is great for influencer marketing:

- ✔ Influencers love to create beautiful content and post it to Pinterest. The more beautiful the content, the more extensive the pin's reach will be.
- ✔ Working Pinterest into an influencer marketing program means thinking about the brand in a visual way, which ultimately makes the program more successful. For example, how do you make a child's plastic bucket visually beautiful and pinworthy? By adjusting the program content to work for Pinterest — for example, images of sand castles that influencers made with the plastic bucket or by posting a list of 13 outdoor activities for kids under 5 (and all you need is a bucket!).
- ✔ Unlike other platforms, pins tend to live on and on and on, because they're are pinned and repinned in perpetuity.

Video

Video influencers are, in some ways, the holy grail of social media influencers. In some cases, their videos reach millions of adoring viewers who can't wait for the next installment — and to be told what products to try. A popular beauty expert who makes a video about the perfect bronzer will directly affect sales of that bronzer.

In the influencer marketing world, video is its own special entity. The most popular video influencers are often quickly scooped up by agents or agencies, which makes it difficult for brands to work directly with them. Popular video influencers can also command much higher compensation than other types of influencers, especially if they have six- and seven-figure followings.

The good news is, as video production tools continue to become more ubiquitous, more affordable, and easier to use, there are more up-and-coming video influencers than ever before. Now that you can film nearly theater-quality movies with your camera, more and more people are entering the video influencer world and amassing thousands of viewers who aren't necessarily reading blogs, checking Pinterest, or using Twitter or Facebook. And when done well, a sponsored video can be as beautiful as a TV ad, while being more authentic and compelling to viewers.



To make the most of video influencer programs,

- ✔ **Don't focus too narrowly on YouTube stars.** There is video talent everywhere! For example, there are thousands of Vine users, who have tremendous followings even though their videos are only seconds long.
- ✔ **Keep your eyes open for new talent.** When a video talent is discovered by the masses, she's less likely to work one-on-one with brands or marketers.