

Survey will offer key insights on influencer marketing

A groundbreaking research project on social influence, to be released early in 2018, will reveal key insights into the audiences that populate brand communities on social networks. World Wide Worx, a leading technology market research company, is partnering with Continuon for the 2018 South African Social Influencer Survey.



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A homegrown social intelligence platform, Continuon is powered by advanced computational statistical analysis. Its smart social intelligence platform helps brands identify and segment influencers on big social media networks. The research study aims to show brands the importance of authenticity, reach, relevance, and resonance in the influencer marketing equation.

"The South African market is nascent, but there is growing interest in influencer marketing locally," says Arthur Goldstuck, managing director of World Wide Worx. "There is real gold hidden in the social communities of this country's most popular social brands. We're going to use some pretty smart algorithms to find them."

World Wide Worx and Continuon anticipate that the survey results won't delight all parties. Self-styled "influencers" could have the true extent of their influence laid bare by the data.

Word-of-mouth on social steroids

Bradley Elliott, founder of Continuon, says: "Brands are eager to investigate influencer marketing that goes beyond social celebrity endorsements. The 2018 South African Social Influencer Survey will reveal authentic influencers in brand communities on the major social networks, and this may upset brand use of social celebrities."

Elliott points out that influencer marketing is strongly associated with social celebrities because of the obsession marketers have with the concept of reach, or numbers of followers and viewers.

"But there's more to influence than reach," says Elliott "Think of influencer marketing as word-of-mouth on social steroids. When brands first adopted influencer marketing, they latched onto reach, because this measure is so familiar to marketers. Traditionally it has been a big part of how advertising is measured. But we're learning that influence is also about resonance, relevance and, most importantly, authenticity.

"The 2018 South African Social Influencer Survey will look beyond the usual celebrity influencers on which brands have depended. This is because the research will delve into the most active and engaged audiences in a brand's social networks. We'll be studying real people who promote brands on social media because they authentically want to do so.

Authenticity is critical to real influence

"Authenticity is proving critical to real influence as consumers become more sophisticated. Social South Africans are sussed: they can spot fake influence and insincere endorsements a mile off," says Elliott.

According to Goldstuck, 30 major brands have already signed up to allow their live data to be analysed in the new study. "This interest is driven by brands that appreciate the growing role that social influence plays in the marketing mix," he says.

Continuon's founder adds that the growing brand participation means there is a significant pool of live social data that will yield deep insights when the survey is published early in 2018.

World Wide Worx and Continuon are inviting other local brands to participate in this pioneering influencer project. There is no cost to participation. In return, each brand will receive in-depth social intelligence that is specific to their brand. The data will include:

- Insights on how to identify and leverage top brand influencers;
- A full social media behavioural analysis across the three big platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram;
- The analysis will reveal each individual's influence and interests within a specific brand community, across each of the three social media platforms;
- The research will identify behaviours, and reveal knowledge about what gets non-celebrity influencers talking;

Finally, the research will benchmark the quality of each brand's community, and assess the level of influence of these brand communities.

The results of this ground-breaking research will offer top-level insights on influencer marketing to the advertising, brand and reputation industries in South Africa, but brand-specific information will not be revealed publicly. Participating brands will be guaranteed anonymity in the published results and will receive confidential reports specific to their brand. The research report will be published during the first quarter of 2018.

Interested brands can contact Richard Nischk, Continuon product manager, by email on richie@continuon.co or by cellphone, on +27 60 322 5801. Continuon can be contacted on +27 21 822 2244.

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