

# Influencer marketing 101

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The popularity of social media platforms to market goods and services for businesses has made the term 'influencer' one of the latest buzzwords in the marketing sphere. In 2018, influencer marketing will continue to be a driving force for businesses looking to expand their audience and enhance sales through social media.



Businesses who have bought into endorsing influencers to reach their target audience have been predominantly active in the B2C sphere. Recently, there has been a noticeable shift in more B2B businesses exploring influencers.

## What is an influencer?

An influencer is an individual or group of people that have the power to sway the behaviour or thoughts of others - this expression is frequently referred to as influencer marketing.

The role of an influencer varies but can be broadly categorised into social media personalities, bloggers, popular youtubers, independent business consultants, academics, industry analysts, journalists or celebrities.

## How to characterise an influencer?

It is important to understand that influencers need to be unique to your specific industry as well as the product or service you want to promote in order for a return on investment (ROI).

For example, if you are interested in pursuing an influencer to market your business in the tech sector you will explore tech critics in the industry, individuals with popular tech-focused social media accounts, or specific radio and TV personalities who have influence in this space.

## Why influencers?

Influencers can be beneficial to an organisation for two reasons:

1. Influencers operate around the notion of trust - a person is more likely to believe the opinion of someone they trust as opposed to what a faceless brand has to say about their product.
2. This trust is translated into improved brand engagement.

## How to find influencers?

When searching for influencers to enhance your brand, there are various elements to take into consideration.

First and foremost it is important to understand the goals of your business and how the influencer will assist in accomplishing those goals. Establishing goals and outlining the influencer's role and responsibility, in the social media strategy, is essential to see results.

For an influencer to improve brand engagement, the following guidelines are noteworthy:

- **Contextually fit** - your influencer needs to be relevant and fit the context of your brand. If your businesses focuses on tech, it would be unfavourable to partner with a food influencer.
- **Wide reach** - is measured by engagement and not the number of followers they have.
- **Accountability** - your influencer needs to be given clear guidelines in order for them to be transparent with their audience. For example, if an influencer is getting paid to use a brand's product, they have to disclose every paid piece of content - #ad #sponsored #(company's name)Partner.

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