

What is **Influencer Marketing** and How Do You Profit from It?



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Some users on social media post about their experiences with a brand and earn money for doing this. Typically, the people who earn the most from these posts are popular influencers. Influencers usually have large social media platforms and are trusted by their fans and followers.

The exciting thing about being influencer is that you don't need a special degree, ten million followers, or fancy software. You can become an influencer with just a few thousand followers.

You might look at some of the more popular influencers and think it's tough to reach that status, but actually, it's not. In fact, it's a lot easier than you think.

Start by Choosing a Niche

Companies and brands want to work with influencers that have built up a following in a specific niche. This means you don't want your Instagram or Pinterest profiles to be too varied. It might be tempting to split your focus between your passion for dog grooming, the fitness niche, and your obsession with knitting.

You need to choose one niche that you want to be known for. It's always best if you enjoy the niche and you have a genuine desire to help people. Whether you want it to or not, your motive will shine through as you're giving information to your audience. That means you want to focus on a niche that you absolutely love.

As soon as you know your niche, you want to check out who your competition is within the industry. For example, if you want to be known for makeup tutorials, look up the most popular beauty users on Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest.

Look at what they're doing right, what they're doing wrong, and what topics they haven't covered yet. Maybe you'll find an area they've overlooked or you'll discover fresh inspiration for your own page.

When you're choosing a niche in which to become an influencer, make sure it's profitable. You can do this by researching whether or not there's a big enough demand for products within that niche.

Look up what the keywords are for your niche. When you use a keyword tool to check, pay attention to how many searches are being conducted by consumers using those keywords. A simple keyword tool you can use is [Google Ads Keyword Planner](#).

That will tell you what the demand is within that niche. If you find that your keywords show a volume of at least a couple thousand searches a month, then it's a safe bet that there's a demand for that niche.

After you find your niche and check on it using keywords, make sure that your focus isn't too broad.

For example, if your niche is fitness, you want to narrow that down to something specific like "women's fitness." That niche is still kind of broad, so you may want to take it a step further and break it down into something like "women's fitness workouts."

Usually if you can find influencers making money in your niche, then it's a solid bet that you can, too. It might take some time as you build your platform but once you do, you'll be able to profit from your social media profiles for years to come.

Bring Something Unique

Many niches are overrun with similar ideas. You'll find countless influencers offering the same products and sharing the same ideas. When this happens then the followers can become bored and crave something new.

To stand out in the crowd, you have to stop following trends and focus on creating them. By being the first to try something new, you're more likely to build a group of followers who are excited to hear from you.

When you've chosen your niche, you want your engagement with your audience to keep on topic. You can post off-topic one post out of every ten or so. However, the other nine should always be within your niche. For example, if you follow the keto diet and you want to be an influencer for keto-friendly companies, then most of your posts should be about keto foods. You can still post the occasional selfie with your dog, but make these posts rare.

Focus on being unique. It's tempting when you're starting out to imitate other influences in your niche. It makes sense—you want their success so why shouldn't you copy them exactly?

If you pay attention, you'll see that the reason most influencers stand out is because they are unique. These influencers succeeded because they had their own style and their own way of engaging with their audience.

You can't bring someone else's style to your audience. You need to give them what they can't get anywhere else—your unique viewpoint. Do that and you'll build a loyal following and be well on your way to becoming an influencer.

Another way to bring something unique is to be vulnerable. Tell your story, even the parts that are embarrassing or painful. Your followers will connect with your humanity. They want to know that your days are less than perfect, that they're not the only ones who struggle sometimes. So, don't be afraid to get real and stay that way.

Let your audience know that you “get it.” Share your story to let them see how much common ground you have. Explain your similar struggles. Empathize with them by connecting with them through your shared feelings. When you do that, your audience will flock to you because they recognize you as someone who’s been “there” and want to do everything possible to help them.

Keep in mind that while you want to be vulnerable, you do want to protect your brand. That means you need to act like a professional on social media. Don’t post about that “wild after party” unless you’re intentionally going for the “party person” vibe on social media.

Pick A Platform

If you try to become an influencer across multiple platforms all at the same time, it’ll slow your growth. It’s hard to become an expert when you’re busy trying to be popular on every social media site.

Instead of splitting your time, concentrate on one social network in particular and build that one up to where you have thousands of followers. You need to be focused on growing your audience in one central place.

Look at which social networks are most popular in your niche. Instagram is a great network for beauty bloggers, fashion icons, and fitness brands. However, if your niche is business and technology, you’ll have more luck on LinkedIn or Facebook.

This doesn’t mean you can’t be on other platforms. It’s smart to go ahead and claim your username on other social networks. However, you need to develop your main platform first before you move on to expanding to other ones.

Think about your ideal audience when trying to choose your platform. If you want to reach an older demographic, then Twitter isn’t the best place to try to build your influence. Instead, look to Facebook or LinkedIn. Younger audiences like teenagers favor Snapchat and Instagram over Facebook.

Picking just one platform to begin your influencer journey is wise because you’re not going to have the time to do several well. Instead, you’ll end up doing a mediocre job across all of them.

Have an Influencer Road Map

You can’t get where you’re going, if you don’t know how to get there. To become an influencer, you need to create a plan to get from point A to B. You’ll need to build a following and consider how you’ll use that following to grow your business.

You must know what needs to take priority. This is one of the main steps in any influencer plan because it involves knowing where to build your audience and how to gain their participation.

When you have a plan, you can grow your reputation and optimize the interactions that you're having with other users. This allows you to be able to adapt products or collaborations and engage with followers effortlessly.

It's not only about what you share; but when you share it. You need to do research to see when is the most popular time to post on your chosen social media network. These hours are usually the peak hours when you'll get the most traffic.

Keep in mind that other influencers are posting about the "optimum" time, too. This means there's a lot of noise for your followers to sift through. Even worse, some social media posts only have a shelf life of sixty seconds before they're buried in the home feed.

That's why you want to focus on experimenting with your times and tracking your results. The ideal time to post on your network might be listed as 6am on Monday. However, your own tests might show that you get the most engagement at ten in the morning.

Your influencer plan should also include hashtags you'll be targeting. You can look up the most successful influencers and the brands in your niche to get some hashtag ideas.

Don't stop there. You'll also want to use a tool to help you find social media hashtags that you may have overlooked. One of the best tools for this is the Ingramer [Hashtag Generator Tool](#). To use this site, upload the image you plan to post and the software will suggest hashtags that might be a good fit.

You can also try [All Hashtag Generator](#). When you enter your keyword, this website will display several lists of hashtags including the top 30 hashtags for your niche, similar hashtags that you'll want to use, and other keyword phrases that might be a good match.

Keep in mind that every network is different when it comes to hashtags. You can include as many hashtags as you want on a network like Twitter. However, Instagram encourages their users to limit their hashtags to around twenty per post.

An important precursor of becoming a successful influencer is knowing ahead of time what content you'll be posting. You can't simply throw something out there and expect great results. Sure, you might hit on something every now and then that resonates with your audience, but it won't be consistent.

Try to create an editorial calendar for your content. Ideally, you want to be thinking 4-8 weeks in advance. That means you don't scramble for content at the last minute, desperately searching for something to post.

To make sure your feed is always filled with fresh content, try using a social media scheduler. You can use a tool like HootSuite or Buffer to prepare your updates in advance then select your daily post schedule.

After you schedule your posts, you only need to check in on your social media profile a few times a day. Spend these moments answering comments and engaging with your community.

Bring Value to the Table

Unless you provide valuable content that your audience wants, you won't have an audience. People don't stick around when they're hungry and you're not feeding them. They'll move on to the person who fills them up with whatever they need.

When you create content, the value can be found in the format that best suits the audience. So make sure you spread the format across several mediums. Make that content relevant and make it pop.

You can't make mediocre content and expect to become an influencer. Your content should sound like you. That means what you bring to the table should be made up of your life experiences, your setbacks, and your triumphs. It doesn't matter if your content is written or spoken; it needs to flow from you and through you.

Stay on topic when you're posting to social media. Few things are more annoying than someone who rambles on and on, saying a lot but never really imparting any takeaways.

You need to provide value to your followers if you hope to become an influencer. Sometimes, that value will depend on your niche. For example, if you're in the beauty niche then providing a detailed tutorial on how to use eyeshadow will be valuable in the eyes of your community.

However, if your niche is golfing, then that eyeshadow tutorial is more than just annoying. It's useless and likely to anger your followers. They wanted golf tips and advice and you didn't give them that.

Keep in mind that no matter what your topic, you want to make it fun and enjoyable for your followers. So focus on telling stories. Use examples in your content that depict human interest. Emotion is universal and when you tap into that, you connect with your audience and give them content they'll remember.

For some topics, it might be helpful to bring facts or studies to your content. Give your audience evidence or research backing up your message. Doing this boosts your brand and makes you look trust-worthy.

Don't forget that it's not just your followers watching you. As you grow your platform, brands and companies within your niche may begin to pay attention to your profile. That means you always want to have your information updated and your best content on display. If your content is lackluster and there's no easy way to contact you, a busy brand manager will look elsewhere for his company's next influencer.

Be Transparent

Your influencer goals will be to drive traffic, boost sales, build awareness for other brands, and continue to establish yourself as a leader in your niche. It's not difficult to do these things while still building a loyal following. However, you must always be careful to be transparent.

There are dozens of influencers across social media platforms that are not transparent. Their methods, in some cases, border on fraudulent. They don't follow the rules of their social media network of choice and they promote any company that's willing to hire them.

You want to build your following using methods that are authentic. This means that if you work jointly with a brand or you're promoting someone, you need to be up front about the collaboration, sponsoring, or selling.

Influencer marketing is a good thing but it has a seedy underside where people use or are tempted to use strategies that violate legal guidelines and cross ethical boundaries. As an influencer who's transparent the information you're giving your audience should never be deceptive. Don't hide your collaboration with a brand or other influencer. By acting like you just happened to find this great service or product, you give the reader the impression that you don't benefit in any way from mentioning or sharing the info.

Instead, be honest with your followers about how you "found" something, why you trust the person or product, and how you benefit from the business relationship that you have with the brand behind the promotion. This can be as simple as using #sponsored at the end of your post.

If you don't clearly call an advertisement an ad, then you risk getting into trouble with the social media network. Worse than that, you risk permanently losing the trust of your audience. Once you've lost that trust, it can be difficult to rebuild it.

There might be situations where only some of the content you're talking about is promoted. For example, maybe you're doing a tutorial on how to bake gluten free cookies.

Most of the recipe uses common household ingredients. However, you're getting an incentive from the company that makes the almond flour. Even when you only recommend or promote one item, you still need to tell your audience that the company gave you a free bag to try, in exchange for your honest opinion.

It's important that you're transparent as an influencer because what you say can affect the buying decisions of your followers. What some influencers and marketers have found effective is to promise to be ethical. For example, you might say, "I'll never promote a beauty product to you that I wouldn't recommend to my sister. I promise to only share products that I believe in 100%."

If you don't disclose an association with a brand or company, your followers may feel your recommendations were slanted. They may even think that your opinions were "bought" and can't be trusted in the future.

The most important part about being transparent is showing that you care about your audience. They don't mind if you bring a product to their attention. What they mind is if it's not relevant, and you wouldn't use it frequently yourself. If they feel that you're only promoting it to make a commission or receive some kind of incentive, you've just lost their trust and you'll see fewer and fewer click-throughs.

Audiences love what's honest and what's real. When you practice that, your outreach can't help but grow.

Engagement Builds Influence

If you're new to influencer marketing, you'll start out with no audience, or a very tiny one. However, it won't stay that way if you engage on your platform. The more you invest in your community, the faster your audience will grow.

Your value doesn't matter, when you want to become an influencer. What matters is how you value others. That's the creation of a relationship.

When people reach out to you by leaving a comment, you should always answer the comment. This kind of consistent engagement shows your audience that what they have to say mattered and that you're acknowledging them.

People will follow you or like a post. When that happens, return the action. Don't follow people just to build up your numbers and then unfollow them. Your audience might feel like you're just using them to build your numbers and you'll lose portions of your audience.

You might run into a common problem when you're trying to become an influencer. The number of people following you might be big but the amount of comments, likes or other engagement you get isn't.

What this means is that what you have to say isn't connecting with your audience. It means that you don't know your target audience well enough. It means you don't know what they want or what they're struggling with.

You must show the audience that you understand and empathize with them. Then you need to come up with a way to help your audience get what they want. For example, if you're in the body positivity niche, you might want to post daily affirmations that your users can repeat when they start thinking negative thoughts about how they look.

When you have a high engagement rate among your followers, it means your message is being well received. It also means that your influence is going to grow because of the quality of your message. The more your influence grows, the higher your popularity will go.

Remember that most social media networks are using algorithms to determine which content gets the best spot in your home feed. The more engagement your content gets, the more likely it is that the social network will place it high in the feed.

Collaboration is Key

When you want to become an influencer, you have to put yourself out there and collaborate with others. You don't always need a big following in order to find someone who's interested in partnering with you. However, you do have to be trust-worthy and be passionate about your niche.

Don't hold back thinking you need ten thousand followers before you can reach out. Collaboration does offer a lot of benefits to you but it also has perks for the other influencer that you're partnering with, too.

Collaborating boosts your reach and can result in hundreds of new followers. When you connect with another influencer in your niche, you bring more attention to their brand, too.

In addition, gaining another influencer's support or endorsement, makes you look popular and in-demand to your audience. Since the influencer, working with you trusts you, their audience will believe in you, too, which improves your authenticity.

Don't let your collaboration become a one-way street. When you connect with an established influencer, they're most likely going to have a bigger following. If you want them to agree to a collaboration opportunity, then you need to know how they'll profit from this partnership.

Have a plan in place ahead of time, before you approach the influencer. Show them what you might have to offer to them in exchange for the collaboration. One small influencer approached a bigger influencer who was busy. She offered to give this

influencer's audience a free copy of her new recipe eBook. The influencer loved the special perk because she needed content for a few days.

You might be tempted to think that the best way to collaborate is by finding the influencers with the biggest audiences. You may also believe that the influencers with the smaller followings won't be worth your time. However, that's not always true. Influencers with only a few thousand followers are known as micro-influencers and these influencers build a high level of trust among their followers. They come across as ordinary people who are talking about products that they use themselves.

They regularly interact with their followers to the point that their audience not only trusts them but feels as if they know them. A micro-influencer may have a higher engagement percentage than an influencer with 100,000 followers. This could mean higher conversion rates.

When you do seek to collaborate with someone else, you want to be sure that you check out the other influencer. You want someone who's authentic and won't bring harm to your brand. It could hurt your reputation if you accidentally align with someone who has shady practices or is offensive to audiences.

Tips for Becoming a Successful Influencer

Becoming an influencer can feel hard at first. You might wonder what you're supposed to do, worry about finding followers, and be totally uncertain about what to say in your posts. Don't worry. These feelings are totally natural. You will learn a lot about how to be an influencer as time goes on. However, if you're a newbie, here's what to do:

Start by filling out your profile. Add your real name, a profile image, and your location. Then craft your biography. You only have 150 characters so you must make them count. When you write your bio, try to think about what keywords someone might type in to find you. For example, you might put "Travel blogger" or "Makeup Artist" or "Beauty Vlogger" in your bio.

Next, focus on developing a theme for your content. Think about your brand and what you want it to represent. In many of Cara Jourdan's ([@CaraJourdan](#)) photos, she's wearing white, has a soft filter, and features her hair in soft waves. It makes her photos stand out in her followers' busy feeds.

Even though you may not be earning anything from your social media posts quite yet, go ahead and convert your account into a business one. There are two reasons you want to do. The first is that a business account usually means you can schedule content. This might not seem like a big deal right now but as you grow, you don't want to be chained to your phone, constantly having to post to your account.

Second, a business account gives you access to in-depth statistics. It's hard to know how well you're doing if you aren't tracking your stats. Every two to three weeks, pause

and review your most popular posts. Look at what you did differently with them then see how you can re-create that engagement again.

Conclusion

Becoming an influencer isn't something that will happen overnight. Expect to spend a few weeks or months building your brand before you can begin to profit from it. In the meantime, focus on supporting your followers.

Build a community with them and look for ways to solve their problems. Focus on being authentic in your interactions. When you're real, your followers can tell and that will attract them. They'll begin to trust your recommendations and look to you when it's time to make purchasing decisions.

As your community grows, don't be surprised if you catch the eye of a company or brand. Be prepared for this by regularly keeping stats about how many followers you have and what's working with them right now.