We Asked, They Answered: How Marketers Are Leveraging Influencer Marketing

Activate interviewed 100 U.S. based marketing professionals, from branding agencies (Public Relations, Digital Media, Branding, Shopper Marketing) to better understand the state of influencer marketing industry today.
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The influencer marketing industry has experienced explosive growth in recent years. As marketers continue to see results from engaging social media natives and creators as part of their overall marketing strategy, technologies with campaign management tools have emerged to allow for larger programs to run more efficiently.

At Activate, we work with hundreds of brands and agencies to partner with hundreds of thousands of influencers globally. In this latest report, we spoke with 100 marketing professionals spanning brand managers, PR professionals, social media managers, and more to understand the current landscape of Influencer Marketing.

In this report, we cover the following three areas…

1. The value influencer marketing plays in overall marketing strategies
2. How brands and agencies are currently executing influencer marketing campaigns
3. Influencer marketing budgets now and looking to the future

Who We Talked To

Respondents by Company Type

Respondents by Function/Team

*Activate conducted this survey by polling 100 U.S.-based marketing professionals. Fieldwork was undertaken in February 2017. The survey was carried out online.
Influencer Marketing Grows Awareness, Reaches New Audiences

We asked marketers about their experience with Influencer Marketing, the results show an overwhelmingly positive reaction to this relatively new form of marketing.

What Marketers Have to Say About Influencer Marketing

- Influencer marketing is a great way for us to grow awareness on various social media platforms: 71%
- Influencer marketing campaigns help me reach a more targeted audience: 67%
- I like Influencer marketing campaigns because of the original content creation: 61%
- I like Influencer marketing campaigns better than traditional ad campaigns: 41%
- Influencer marketing is an essential part of our marketing strategy: 32%
- I haven’t implemented an Influencer marketing campaign yet, but plan to this year: 13%

source: Activate

What Does This Mean for Brands?

In many cases, influencers have spent years growing their readership. They know what products and types of content their audiences enjoy best. This intimate relationship that influencers build with their followers makes them skillful marketers, especially with respect to authentic and genuine messaging and engagement.

Brands can expect influencers to help them grow and target new, engaged audiences, and produce relatable content for influencer marketing campaigns.
What Does This Mean for Brands?

Not only do influencers market your products and services to their audiences, they also act as an extension of your brand’s voice. So it is no surprise that marketers focus most on working with influencers whose content is of the highest quality and authentic to their brand and brand voice—this is what makes influencer marketing campaigns so powerful!

Influencers who demonstrate these desirable attributes, as well as ones who generate content that aligns with a brand’s voice and mission, will garner more and higher-quality engagement. They will also be better able to tailor the messaging and aesthetic of the campaign to their audience.
What Exactly Can Influencer Marketing Do for Brands?

We asked marketers why they work with influencers and why influencer marketing is part of their overall marketing strategies. The two most popular reasons were:

76% Grow brand awareness
71% Reach new audiences

Other Reasons Marketers Turn to Influencers Include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grow our social media following and engagement</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate sales</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have content created by influencers</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase site traffic</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive SEO value for our brand</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have never done an Influencer Marketing campaign</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Does This Mean for Brands?

While the immediate value in working with influencers is growing brand awareness and reaching new audiences, savvy marketers understand that the value drawn from influencer marketing campaigns goes above and beyond the campaign. Content created for campaigns contributes to overall SEO, benefits other marketing efforts through redistribution, and continues to inspire sales.
How Marketers Work with Influencers

Finding relevant influencers to participate in campaigns is a hurdle brands and marketers face when executing influencer marketing campaigns. The majority of marketers reach out to influencers directly—this can be a time-consuming and manual process. Meanwhile, **35% of marketers** say influencers reach out to them directly for work.

### How Marketers Typically Find Influencers for Campaigns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We reach out to influencers directly</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencers reach out to us directly</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencer marketing platforms</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more of the methods provided</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media companies or publishers</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent management companies</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Activate

### How Many Influencers Typically Work on One Campaign?

54% of marketers engage 5+ influencers per campaign

### What Does This Mean for Brands?

There are a number of ways for brands to work with influencers. Today, many brands are experimenting with the options available, including: working with influencers directly or tapping into influencers via platforms, media companies, or talent management companies. Nearly one third of respondents mention using two or more ways to work with influencers.

Brands should consider using influencer marketing platforms to execute campaigns where larger numbers of influencers are involved to assist with activating and managing influencers, communication, approvals, and automated reporting.
In this survey, we found that working with influencers across multiple channels—3 being the sweet spot—is essential to marketers. In fact, **over 74% of marketers distribute content for influencer marketing campaigns on 3 or more platforms**. This point corresponds to our findings in The Global Power of Influencers Consumer Survey Report where we found that **88% of women follow influencers on 2 or more platforms**.

What Does This Mean for Brands?

Distribution across multiple channels provides multiple consumer touch points without over saturation, which, in turn, keeps the feel of the campaigns authentic.

Influencers know their audiences best. Allowing influencers to decide the platform(s) on which content distributed will optimize for higher engagement.
While Instagram leads the way for influencer marketing content, savvy marketers know that different types of content perform better on certain platforms than others. For example, recipes may be best suited for blogs while ‘behind-the-scenes’ content is appropriate for Snapchat or Instagram Stories.

Additionally, savvy marketers should understand which platform(s) perform best for the influencers they work with to best target where to distribute content.

**Top Social Platforms for Influencer Marketing**

Our survey showed that Instagram is the top social media platform for influencer marketing with over 90% of those polled saying they have used the platform for campaigns. Facebook, Twitter, and blogs also ranked high, while YouTube, Pinterest, and Snapchat rounded out the list.

**What Does This Mean for Brands?**

While Instagram leads the way for influencer marketing content, savvy marketers know that different types of content perform better on certain platforms than others. For example, recipes may be best suited for blogs while ‘behind-the-scenes’ content is appropriate for Snapchat or Instagram Stories.
What Happens to Influencer-Generated Content after a Campaign?

Savvy marketers are driving value from influencer marketing programs long after the campaigns are over by repurposing the content in a variety of ways.

83% of marketers reuse content created for influencer marketing campaigns after the campaign has ended.

### How Are Marketers Repurposing Influencer Content?

- **Repurpose content on our own social channels**: 74%
- **Repurpose content on our owned and operated sites**: 46%
- **Repurpose content for paid ads on social media**: 36%
- **Repurpose content for ads on other digital media sites**: 20%
- **Repurpose content for programmatic advertising ads**: 14%

(source: Activate)

What Does This Mean for Brands?

In addition to the high quality content created by influencers for a specific campaign, brands also benefit from reusing and redistributing the same creative content after the campaign has ended.

Marketers should be aware that typically rights to post on the brand’s social channels is included in an influencer’s standard rate. If the intention is to repurpose for other marketing programs and on the brand’s owned and operated channels, rates need to be negotiated (potentially to a higher rate).
How Much Marketers Spend Per Campaign

While many marketers are still devoting test budgets—budgets of $5K or less—to influencer marketing campaigns, a significant portion of those we spoke with are spending $10K+—even upwards of $75K to $100K per campaign.

Factors to Consider When Negotiating Influencer Rates

- **Size & engagement** of the influencer’s social profiles and blog
- **Gifted products & experiences**: Rates may be lower if the influencer is gifted product or travel
- **Usage rights**: standard usage rights allow brands to use influencers’ content on social only. If they want to distribute above and beyond social channels (their website, press, boosting posts on social), premium rates may be negotiated
- **Exclusivity**: is the influencer allowed to work with competitive brands during the length of the term? If not, the rate may increase.
- **Length of partnership**: for longer-term partnerships, with high volume of content created by the influencer, the price per component can come down

### Average Spending per Influencer Marketing Campaign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spending Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $5K</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5K-$10K</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10K-$25K</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25K-$50K</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50K-$75K</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75K-$100K</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100K+</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**source**: Activate

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What Does This Mean for Brands?

As brands move beyond test budgets for influencer marketing and begin building larger campaigns with more influencers and content for distribution, we expect to see increased spend per campaign. It’s also worth noting that, anecdotally, we at Activate are finding many of our agency clients are running a high frequency of campaigns with smaller individual campaign spend—this could be contributing to campaign size data to skew lower.

Marketers should consider working with influencer marketing platforms to streamline recruitment, campaign and content management, analysis, and reporting.
How Does Influencer Marketing Fit into Overall Marketing Budgets?

We asked marketers what percentage of overall marketing budgets are allocated for influencer marketing. Of the 100 marketers polled, the results show the majority of marketers are spending less than 5% on influencer marketing, while others are spending up to 41% of their budgets working with influencers.

Percentage of Overall Budget Spent on Influencer Marketing in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Budget</th>
<th>Marketers Polled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% - 5% of budget</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% - 10% of budget</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% - 20% of budget</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% - 30% of budget</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% - 40% of budget</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Does This Mean for Brands?

While the majority of marketers are allocating smaller portions of their overall budgets—10% and less—to influencer marketing, it is clear that this new marketing solution is on the rise!

We are seeing more and more startups and direct-to-consumer brands build the majority of their marketing in partnership with influencers.
Marketers Are Spending More on Influencer Marketing

Our survey revealed that the majority of marketers are already increasing their influencer marketing budgets. While the majority have increased by 1-24%, some marketers have increased this portion of their budget by up to 200%!

63% of marketers said they increased their influencer marketing budgets for 2017.

Percentage of Increase in Influencer Marketing Budget in 2017

- Yes, by 1-24%: 44%
- Yes, by 25-49%: 9%
- Yes, by 50-74%: 6%
- Yes, by 75-99%: 3%
- Yes, by 100-200%: 1%

37% of marketers surveyed have not increased their Influencer Marketing budgets.

What Does This Mean for Brands?
The majority of marketers we spoke with anticipated an increase in spending in 2017. With the availability of various technologies that can help marketers scale out campaigns to work with more influencers across more channels, while allowing for more efficient execution and measurement, we expect this trend to continue.
How Brands Capitalize on Influencer Marketing

Why Influencer Marketing?

- Influencer marketing is a great way for brands to grow their own social media accounts, generate awareness through various platforms, and reach a more targeted audience.
- Quality and authenticity of influencer-generated content is a top consideration for marketers when picking influencers for campaigns. Additionally, engagement, number of followers, cost, and overall aesthetic are also important.

Breaking Down an Influencer Marketing Campaign

- The majority of influencer marketing campaigns involve 5 or less influencers per campaign, 59% of marketers and brands find influencers by reaching out to them directly.
- Influencers also reach out to brands for partnerships as they are eager to work with like-minded companies.
- 34% of marketers use a technology platforms to source, manage, communicate with, and evaluate influencers on campaigns.
- Marketers know to work with influencers across multiple platforms to capture their full audiences; the most common number of platforms to distribute content is three.
- Unsurprisingly, marketers use Instagram the most for influencer marketing campaigns—the platform boasts strong engagement and user growth, as well as robust measurement. Marketers also turn to Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs more than other platforms to execute influencer marketing campaigns.
- At the end of a campaign, marketers can redistribute and repurpose influencer-generated content, driving value beyond the campaign.

Influencer Marketing Spends Are on the Rise

- Various factors are at play when negotiating an influencer’s rate including: size of following and engagement, gifted products or experiences, exclusivity, and many more.
- While many marketers are still focused on testing influencer marketing, 35.6% report spending $5k of under per campaign, others are spending more and allocating 20% - 40% of their budgets to influencer marketing.
- Marketers know influencer marketing is a key part of their marketing strategy, 63% have increased their spending this year!
Learn more from Influence

Thought Leadership, Industry Analysis and Updates

Whitepapers and Research

Events and Webinars

Digital Marketing 101
Bloglovin X General Assembly

The Power of Branded Content
Bloglovin X New York Magazine

The Influencer Economy
Bloglovin X Northzone

10K+
Newsletter Subscribers

1.7M+
Social Media Reach

AS MENTIONED IN

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BI INTELLIGENCE
CMO.
DIGIDAY
Inc.

Fashionista
Fortune
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Social Times

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TouchPoints

Visit Influence
ACTIVATE
250 Lafayette St.
4th Floor
New York, NY 10012

research@activate.social
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