



Influencer Marketing Guide

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RhythmInfluence
by RhythmOne

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What is Influencer Marketing?

Influencer Marketing allows brands to authentically connect with consumers outside of traditional digital advertising channels. It does so by leveraging the influence a blogger and/or a platform superstar has on targetable consumer segments.

Influencer Marketing can include a wide variety of engagement and distribution tactics such as branded content creation, sponsored blog posts, Facebook posts, Pinterest boards, YouTube videos, Tweets, Instagram posts, Snapchat stories, and much more.



"An influencer promoting and amplifying your message, your brand, to their audience means credibility, it means additional reach and it means you get an outsized modifier to the conversion process" - *Rand Fishkin, Wizard of Moz*

WHO IS AN INFLUENCER?

An influencer is a person who can affect the actions, behaviors and opinions of others through their blog and/or social channels.

A valuable influencer is:

compelling
authentic
creative
persuasive
vibrant
real
powerful

Unlock the Potential of Influencer Marketing

Why Influencer Marketing? Simple. It Works.

Influencers draw passionate audiences that engage with their content and actively take part in the community conversations that stem from it. Strategically, Influencer Marketing offers brands the opportunity to creatively leverage an influencer's blog or social media properties to authentically connect with audiences, nurturing and growing the customer relationship.

In developing both sponsored and organic content, Influencers create not only a persona, but also an audience of loyal followers. The impact they bring to a marketing campaign can transcend other more traditional advertising methods and deliver to a brand a more engaged and interested consumer.

92% of consumers have made a purchase after reading about a product on their favorite blog²

89% of US Internet Users say Instagram and Twitter are "extremely" or "very" influential on their purchases, followed by YouTube (86%) and Facebook (78%)³

81% of marketers who have executed Influencer Marketing campaigns agree that influencer engagement is effective⁴

² "The Consumer Revolution Has Happened and the Influencers Are Now in Charge." Entrepreneur. October 20, 2014.

³ The Influence of Influencers." gen.video and Geometry Global. June 22, 2017

⁴ eMarketer – May 2015 Study.



The ROI of Influencer Marketing

Influencer Marketing programs are measured on several KPIs, including social media listening measures, engagement metrics, and more. At the end of the day, it's all about virality – a measure that's unique to Influencer Marketing.

Our latest Influencer Marketing Benchmarks Report, published in February 2017, defines clear performance benchmarks for Influencer Marketing programs. Earned media value (EMV) is a key indicator, but other measures such as engagement rate, cost-per-engagement, and brand sentiment help advertisers understand the full picture of their Influencer Marketing spend.

Well executed Influencer Marketing programs reach well beyond the bounds of paid placements. In our latest benchmarks report, we outlined how our clients received **\$11.69 in EMV for every \$1.00 of spend**, on average. This figure represents a 4.4% increase over the previous year's EMV average of \$11.20.

EMV refers to the value that can be attributed to publicity, social sharing, and other organic, unpaid digital media exposure. A good measure to understand the "amplification-effect" of Influencer Marketing, EMV is calculated by assigning dollar values to the reach of and engagement and interaction with branded content.



* RhythmOne Full Year 2016 Influencer Benchmarks Report. Feb 2017.

When evaluating the ROI of an Influencer Marketing campaign, there are other metrics to look at beyond EMV.

Engagement Rate

Engagement Rate is calculated by dividing total engagements by total exposure. "Engagements" are measurable actions taken by consumers, such as comments, clicks, and social media measures including likes, reactions, views, and more..

Cost Per Engagement (CPE)

CPE figures are generated by dividing a programs total spend by the number of total engagements. The measure seeks to quantify the value of an engaged consumer across social media, and it can provide a view into efficiency and competition for user attention.

Social Media Listening

Social Media Listening is the process of identifying and assessing what is being said about a company, product or brand by mining text for specific keywords on social media, blogs and across media publications. Like Engagement Rate, Social Media Listening is a good way to gauge if branded content is resonating with consumers.

RhythmOne offers Social Media Listening to clients on a campaign-by-campaign basis, and we examine brand mentions and brand lift for programs that have a minimum two-week flight.



Connect. Create. Amplify.

Breaking down the components of a successful Influencer Marketing campaign.

Setting Goals and Objectives

As with all marketing initiatives, it's important to begin with the end in mind. By clearly defining goals, you'll be better able to identify the appropriate influencers and platforms for your program – amplifying the opportunity for your Influencer Program to reach its maximum potential.

Consider the following questions:

How much budget do I have?

What is the lead time needed for my campaign?

How long will my campaign be in market?

What does success look like for my program?

What type of influencer am I looking to align with?

What is my plan for distribution of the content?

What influencer marketing executions have I liked in the past that I would like to emulate?

You don't have to know the answers. These are just some of the foundational questions you'll have to define as you make decisions about your campaign and the influencers in your program. At this stage, it may make sense to work with a partner. A seasoned Influencer Marketing team can help you address these questions, and design a program that will achieve your goals.



WHY ENGAGE IN INFLUENCER MARKETING?

Used strategically, Influencer Marketing can accomplish a number of goals – and support online and offline promotions:

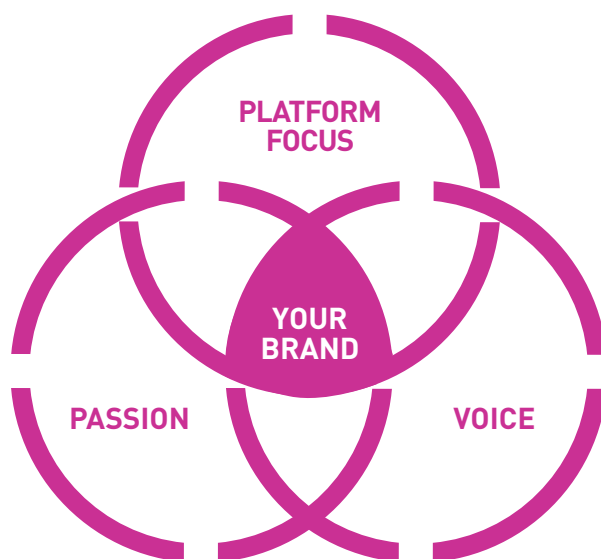
- Brand awareness
- Product launches
- Store openings
- Experiential connections
- Brand content distribution
- Influencer content distribution
- Sales and other promotions

Connect.

Discovering the Right Influencer for YOUR Brand

Just like there's a lid for every pot, there's the right influencer (or influencers) for your brand. Finding these influencers often requires the expertise that only an organization that specializes in Influencer Marketing can provide. Why? Because finding the right influencers isn't as easy as hopping on a social network or search engine to locate them. A good partner will work with you to fine tune your audience targeting and then find the right influencers that cover topics that resonate with that target audience. The better the audience targeting and influencer identification, the better the ROI you'll see on your program.

The following attributes are used to identify ideal influencers:



Using a combination of these three points – passion, platform focus, and voice – will help create synergy between your brand and the influencers selected. It can't be stated enough – finding the right influencers is critical to success!

Passion

Across the influencer space there are multitudes of content categories and verticals, but the right influencer should be focused and passionate about a topic that closely aligns with your brand and mission. Below are examples of passion points that cover most brands:

- Parenting
- Gaming
- Décor
- Fitness
- Fashion
- Crafts
- Beauty
- Green
- Arts
- Gadgets
- Music
- Sports
- Wellness
- Auto
- DIY
- Tech
- Nutrition
- Travel
- Food
- Entertaining

Think about the type of story you want to tell consumers and consider how your product or mission fits into their lives. This thought process is critical in the influencer selection process.

Once you've matched your target consumer's profile to an Influencer passion, fine-tune the influencer passion so you'll better align the niche content an influencer can produce with your consumer's profile.



ALIGNING BRANDS WITH THE RIGHT INFLUENCERS

Finding the right influencer is not as simple as finding an influencer that writes about topics in your industry - you'll want to make sure they're aligned with your brand's specific approach and values, for example:

Is your clothing company a high-end brand or an everyday, value-focused option?

If it's the former, a luxury fashion influencer would be a great choice. Whereas if it's the latter, you'd want an influencer who is passionate about finding great fashion deals.

Is your baby food company an organic brand?

If so, you might want to target a mom or family influencer and one who specifically focuses on healthy eating for the family and kids.

Is your skincare brand focused on launching a new anti-aging product geared towards middle-aged women?

Make sure your beauty blogger falls into that demographic in order to authentically attract the right audience.



Platform

It used to be that an influencer's mainstay was their blog. Their social media handles were extensions of that footprint. Today, many influencers have gained authority through a social media-only presence, especially on emerging, more visually-inclined networks like Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat. This

extension of the definition of an influencer has allowed for the creation of social-only programs that feature content created by the influencer and specifically designed for an individual social platform. As such, the audience, community and reach of these networks are factored in when selecting the right influencer.

DID YOU KNOW?



Instagram is great for targeting mobile-first consumers like Millennials and Teens.



YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world, behind Google. Having a properly optimized video will help to increase your video's organic rankings.



Capitalizing on Facebook's trending topic feature, when relevant, is an effective way to instantly boost reach and engagement.



Replying to a popular Twitter user's tweet will generate a significantly higher volume of views and engagement than simply retweeting it.



Pinterest generates more referral traffic than YouTube, Google+, and LinkedIn combined.



Snapchat, an entirely mobile channel, sees an average of 10B video views per day—a perfect platform for visual narratives or vignettes about an experience or adventure.

Understanding the various social networks and their benefits — as well as how your ideal influencer uses social media — is imperative as you start the Influencer Marketing process.

Voice

One of the highlights of Influencer Marketing is the opportunity for a brand to leverage an influencer's unique voice. That unique voice has a big impact on the type of content an influencer can produce for your brand. We find a very direct correlation between influencer voice and influencer type and categorize most influencers into one of the following three types:

Celebrities and Platform Sensations

These high-end spokespeople have developed an elevated status and built an audience that is invested in their persona. Their status lends greater impact to their message, and allow brands to reach a hyper-engaged, quality community of readers. These type of influencers often come at a premium price.

Rising Stars

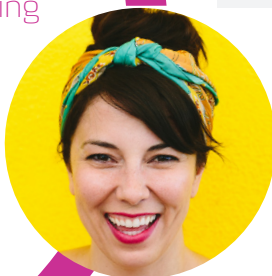
These unique custom content creators are established experts who have built engaged communities of followers. They create quality content and imagery and are open to creative direction and input from the brand in crafting the story and message.

Micro Influencers

These are everyday people who have engaged followings. Their communities are made up of friends, family, and acquaintances. These Influencers' followings may not be as large as the first two categories, but they are actively sharing content and helping to build and maintain brand awareness via their loyal audience.

"As influencers, when we take the time to work with the brands that mean something to us, our followers can absolutely sense that and it establishes a certain level of trust. There is so much information coming from media these days, and when a follower can weed out the noise and focus on the influencers they trust, everyone benefits."

- Chelsea Foy, Owner/Blogger
at Lovely Indeed



BRAND AMBASSADORS FOR CONTINUED IMPACT

A Brand Ambassador program develops longer-term relationships between a brand and selected influencers. These deeper relationships allow a brand to become a consistent presence on the selected influencers' blog and social media platforms – fostering a more meaningful connection with the influencers' audience. Benefits of using the same influencer or pool of influencers consistently include:

Execution

With each campaign, it gets easier to create compelling stories because the brand is better acquainted with the influencer's voice and style – the reciprocal is true for the influencer. This familiarity streamlines the creative process and can lead to more engaging concepts.

Loyalty

As the influencer's following becomes more accustomed to having the brand's message woven into blog and social media content, the more authentic and impactful the messages become – leading to greater engagement.

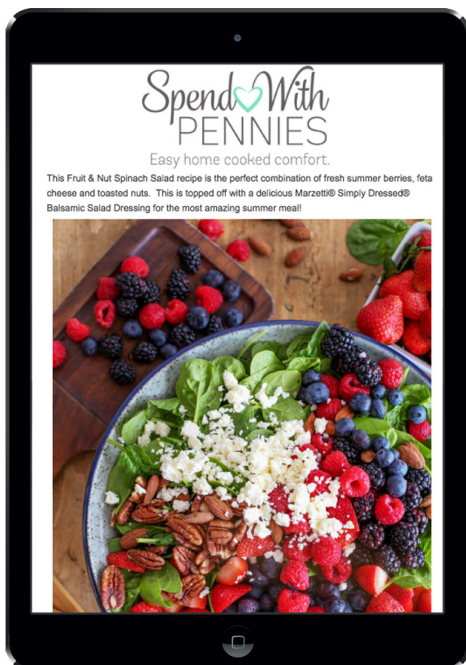
Create.

From Brainstorming Content to Execution

It's essential that the influencer's true self shines through. The idea here is to have a balanced and authentic piece of content that is aligned with the influencer's style and voice, but also tells your brand's story in a unique and engaging manner.

Allow the influencer to choose one of your products and let them write about the experience of using it.

When Marzetti wanted to improve brand perception and drive traffic for in-store purchases of their Simply Dressed® Salad Dressings, they turned to influencers to create custom recipe content as both blog posts and videos to showcase the product and share how they are a choice they feel good about. The influencers syndicated their recipes across their social networks to unlock the full potential of their communities. **The campaign achieved 58M+ in total social reach and received over 114K consumer engagements.**



EXAMPLES OF CONTENT OPPORTUNITIES

Blog posts

Social amplifications

Giveaways & prizing

Instagram takeovers

Long & short form video

Twitter parties

Snapchat Geo-filters

Have the influencer visit and experience your venue and let them share their unique perspective through photos, videos and words. Johnson and Wales University (JWU) wanted to create greater awareness about their schools. Since parents and prospective students care about different things, JWU invited young adult YouTube influencers and Mom influencers to visit their local campus for tours – immersing both young and older alike into the campus culture. Influencers documented their visits via long form videos, Snapchat photos using a custom-made geo-filter, social posts and recap blogs after their visits. **The campaign achieved 6.5M+ in total reach and received over 219K engagements.**



Let the influencer's unique point of view create a relevant experience that highlights your brand.

AutoZone wanted to educate consumers about AutoZone, and encourage preventative maintenance to save time and money during key drive times. In addition to influencers creating blog content, videos and social posts, a powerful and effective experiential component was used when Chris Fix, one of the YouTube influencers, hosted a live meetup for his fans at his local AutoZone. Chris performed product demonstrations, judged car contests, and mingled with the crowd. AutoZone gave out free food, products, and coupons to drive attendees to shop in-store. **The campaign achieved 53M+ in total social reach and a 2.42% Engagement Rate (ER).**



"Keep your wants simple and to the point. The more constraints you give an influencer the harder it is for their message to be authentic and engage the audience."

- Chadd "Madd Chadd" Smith,
YouTube
Influencer



⇒ A CASE FOR BRANDED CONTENT

61% of consumers are more likely to buy from companies that create custom content.⁶

90% of consumers find custom content useful.⁷

80% of consumers appreciate learning about company through custom content.⁸

⁶ Singh, Kyli. "61% of Consumers Prefer Companies With Custom Online Content." Mashable. August 11, 2014.

⁷ "[Infographic] The State of Content Marketing 2013." Wishpond. June 2013.

⁸ "A Guide to Marketing Genius: Content Marketing." Demand Metric. June 17, 2013.



Getting Creative: Giveaways, Influencer Contests and Events

Driving further engagement and excitement around Influencer Marketing campaigns sometimes requires getting creative and thinking outside the box when developing content and promotional strategies with influencers.

Giveaways

Many brands assume that the giveaway process is too cumbersome and complicated. While there are state and federal regulations regarding giveaways, working with an Influencer Marketing partner can make it easier to implement and well worth the effort. With a prize provided by the brand, the influencer(s) runs the contest (on their blog and/or social media channels) and selects the winner(s). What makes this so effective is that because the influencer is running the contest, there is a low barrier of entry for the consumer.

Influencer Content Contests

Influencers in the program create their own unique content for submission into a contest. Then all participating influencers encourage their audience to vote for which piece of content they want to win. In this scenario, the grand prize would go to the

influencer, but the audience could be further encouraged by offering up a smaller incentive to voters who selected the winning influencer. With this strategy, the influencer becomes even more invested as they want to see their content win. In addition, their followers become invested, because they want their influencer to win so they have a chance at a prize as well. All this leads to great viral potential for a campaign.

Influencer Events

Allowing an influencer's audience to connect in person at a live event hosted by the influencer or brand can provide an incredible viral opportunity as attendees create their own user-generated content to share via their social networks. Influencer events are a perfect vehicle for verticals that are more service-focused and do not have a physical product for an influencer to trial.

Amplify

Getting the Most Traction from Influencer Content

No matter what kind of custom branded content an influencer has created on behalf of your brand, it should be distributed across all digital channels in order to truly amplify the message and connect with as many consumers as possible. In addition to distribution through social channels, which is part of most influencer marketing programs, work with a provider who can also help you amplify the reach and impact of branded content through paid search tactics, native advertising and by seeding within ad units that can be distributed programmatically – allowing you to reach new and broader audiences of like-minded consumers.

Activating an Influencer Network

Ensure that the multiple networks that Influencers engage in are used to amplify content created for each campaign. Influencers with similar passions and audiences can also be leveraged to scale the reach of content through reposts and link backs. Influencers can also be tapped to purchase social ads on your behalf for 3rd party endorsements.

Brand Enthusiasm (Get involved!)

Once your campaign is live, influencers will drive content dissemination – but this doesn't mean that your brand shouldn't help with the push. Showing enthusiasm for the influencers' work and engaging with the campaign on multiple levels during (and even after) a program's flight is highly recommended. That enthusiasm can be shown through comments, re-sharing content, or other interactions.

Distribution Units

Ad units that feature influencer content are becoming increasingly common. Distributing content through video or rich media units with social sharing features can provide a great way for your branded content to reach new audiences – expanding the reach and impact of your campaign. Additionally, these distribution formats can be precisely targeted, when run programmatically, with data (captured at the content level, for example) and audience overlays to help ensure the audience you reach matches the same engaged audiences you engage through social media channels. Adding this layer of sophistication can drive consumers further down the funnel.



Ready to Get Started?

We hope this guide has served to demonstrate how Influencer Marketing can be a powerful tool in your marketing arsenal. It is effective in creating authentic connections with your target consumers in an environment they trust. Importantly, it drives ROI.

From this guide, you have learned that Influencer Marketing:

Drives ROI

Driving an average of \$11.69 in Earned Media Value for every \$1.00 in spend, Influencer Marketing works and is measurable.

Reaches beyond awareness

Influencer Marketing is effective for more than just awareness – it can be an integral part of product launches, store openings and sales and other promotions.

Relies on powerful connections

Finding the right Influencer or Influencers is not easy, but it is critical to success – and it's about more than reach – it's about finding the influencer who can authentically represent your brand.

Goes beyond the blog

Influencer Marketing extends well beyond popular bloggers. Many influencers arise and primarily publish through social-only channels like YouTube and Snapchat.

Is not just for Moms

Influencer Marketing is effective across industry verticals and audience segments – anywhere where communities and passion points thrive.

Allows you to get creative

Influencer marketing allows you to show the creative side of your brand – whether that's through Snapchat stories or fun giveaways, your brand's personality can really shine through.

Can be amplified through lookalikes and social ads

In addition to the social networks of the Influencers creating content, lookalikes with similar passions and audiences can help scale the reach of your campaign. Influencers can also purchase social ads on your behalf.

Can be amplified through other Digital Media

Your Influencer Marketing can have even deeper impact and reach if extended through traditional digital media channels.

Jumpstart your Influencer Marketing with RhythmOne

Through our RhythmInfluence offering, we have been running successful Influencer Marketing campaigns for over five years. Our tenured team of experts have a track record of connecting brands with the right influencers, and creating impactful solutions that ensure a brand's story is brought to life through content, pictures and video.

Proven Results

Average of \$11.69 for every \$1.00 in EMV

Tenured Team

Influencer Marketing experts with agency, digital media and content marketing experience across all industries

Structured Approach

Dedicated client service with a proven process – from goal setting to influencer matching to creative content development – that maximizes ROI

Cross-platform Expertise

Experience running campaigns across mobile and desktop properties as well as social channels

Programmatic Distribution

The only Influencer Marketing solution with programmatic distribution throughout unified programmatic platform, RhythmMax

Measurement Made Easy

30+ point campaign analysis gives you transparency into campaign success and ROI

Ready to get started?

Contact Katie Paulsen, VP Influencer Marketing, today to turn your branded content into brand impact!

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