



**#1Rinfluencer**

# **1H 2015 Influencer Marketing Benchmarks Report**

August 2015

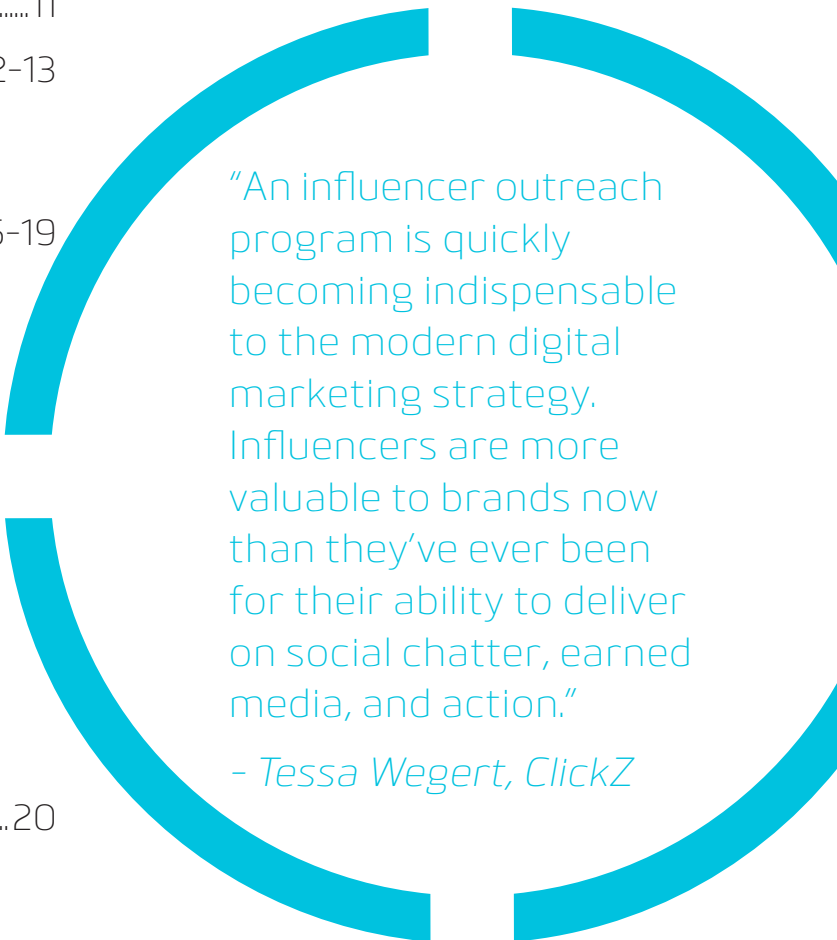
**RhythmOne**

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“An influencer outreach program is quickly becoming indispensable to the modern digital marketing strategy. Influencers are more valuable to brands now than they’ve ever been for their ability to deliver on social chatter, earned media, and action.”

– Tessa Wegert, ClickZ

# About This Report/ Methodology

## **RhythmOne's first half of 2015 (1H 2015) Influencer Marketing**

**Benchmarks Report** offers both top-level and in-depth analyses of the influencer programs we ran during the six-month period of January–June 2015.

Similar to our inaugural calendar year 2014 (CY 2014) report, this 1H 2015 report provides key insights in the areas of execution, earned media value, social media amplification, consumer engagement and more.

In 1H 2015, our US-targeted branded content programs spanned 10 advertiser categories and employed (in aggregate) 217 influencers – each of whom has a direct relationship with RhythmOne.

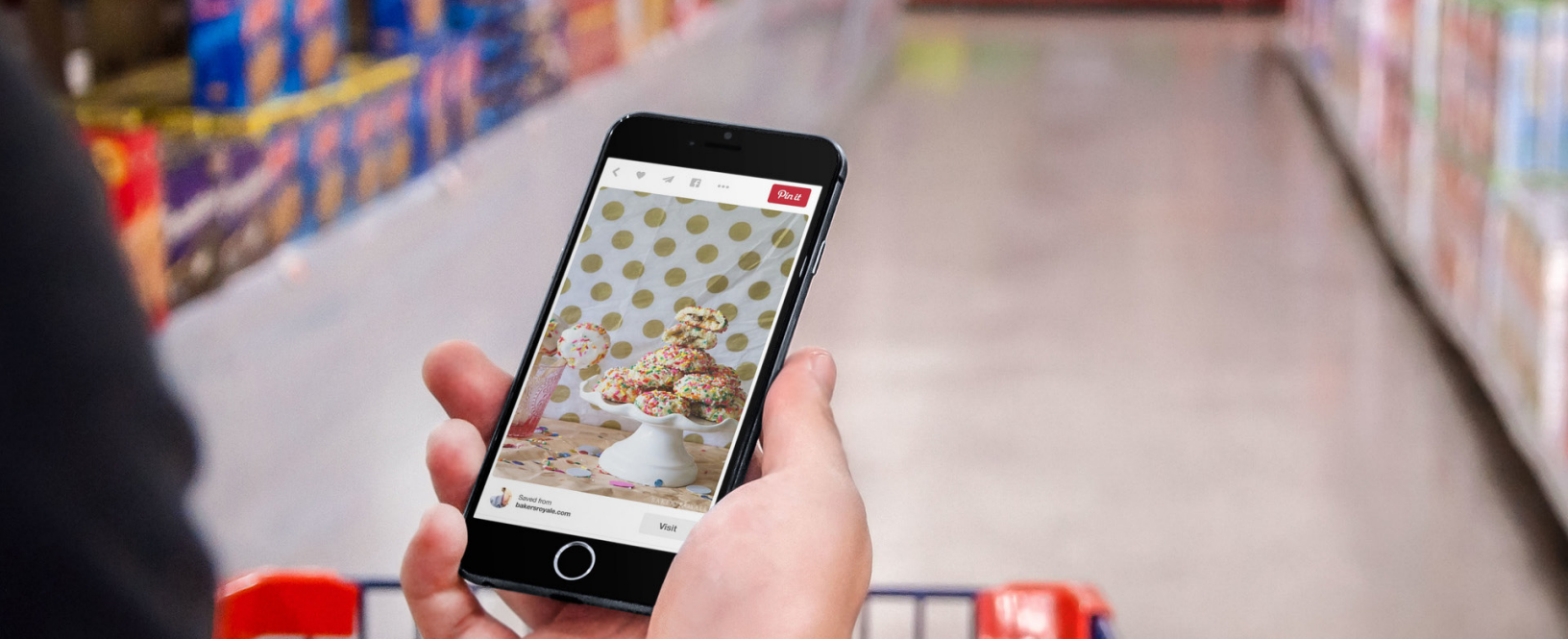
## **RhythmOne and Influencer Marketing**

We help marketers weave brand stories into the content and social platforms of some of the largest independent bloggers and publishers on the web. We do this through our Influencer Marketing programs that can include a variety of content distribution solutions, such as Sponsored Blog Posts, Social Media Amplification programs and Content Distribution Rich Media ad units.

We are advocates of Influencer Marketing because we know online consumers trust and are impacted by the influencers they follow. For brands, there is no more effective place to engage consumers than a trusted environment.

**Influencer Marketing** noun [*in-floo-uh-nser mahr-ki-ting*]

1. A form of marketing that has emerged from a variety of recent practices and studies, in which focus is placed on specific key individuals rather than the target market as a whole.
2. Identifies the individuals that have influence over potential buyers, and orients marketing activities around these influencers.



# 1H 2015 Highlights

On average, marketers who implemented an Influencer Marketing program in 1H 2015 received \$9.60 in earned media value (EMV) for every \$1.00 of paid media spend. This represents an increase of 1.4x over our CY 2014 average EMV of \$6.85.



**On average,** our 1H 2015 Influencer Marketing programs delivered a social engagement rate (i.e., reader engagements/social exposure) of 3.49%.



**Instagram** was the best performing social media channel for Social Amplification – it delivered a Social Amplification Rate of 1.75%.



**Similar to** our finding for CY 2014, the CPG Food category received the greatest earned media value for our 1H 2015 Influencer Marketing programs.



**As was the case** in CY 2014, inclusion of a sweepstakes or giveaway drove higher earned media value and higher social engagement rates.

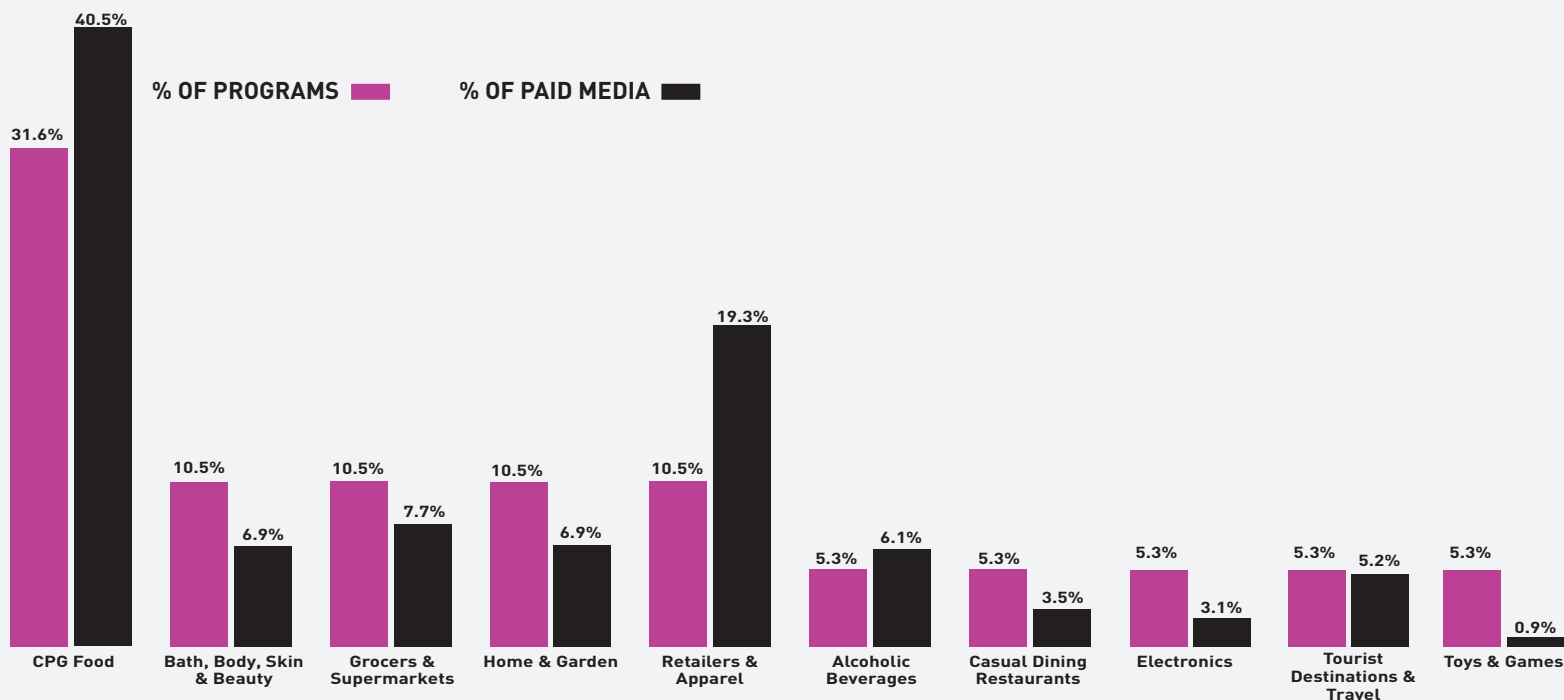
## SEE IT IN ACTION

# 1H 2015 Influencer Programs Overview

One-third (31.6%) of programs from the first half of 2015 were in the CPG Food advertiser category. CPG Food brands were also the top spenders; 40.5% of paid media dollars came from advertisers in this category.

1. CPG Food - 31.6%
2. Bath, Body, Skin, & Beauty - 10.5%
3. Grocers and Supermarkets - 10.5%
4. Home & Garden - 10.5%
5. Retailers & Apparel - 10.5%
6. Alcoholic Beverages - 5.3%
7. Casual Dining Restaurants - 5.3%
8. Electronics - 5.3%
9. Tourist Destinations & Travel - 5.3%
10. Toys & Games - 5.3%

## 1H 2015 Influencer Program (By Advertiser Category)



## 1H 2015 INFLUENCER PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

### Sponsored Blog Posts

All of RhythmOne's 1H 2015 Influencer Marketing programs included paid media in the form of Sponsored Blog Posts.

Our Sponsored Blog Posts pair brands with hand-selected influencers who develop and distribute brand-approved content that promotes products, services or other initiatives. Depending on the specifics of the program, the content of Sponsored Blog Posts takes the form of text, imagery and/or video.

### Social Syndication and Branded Content Distribution

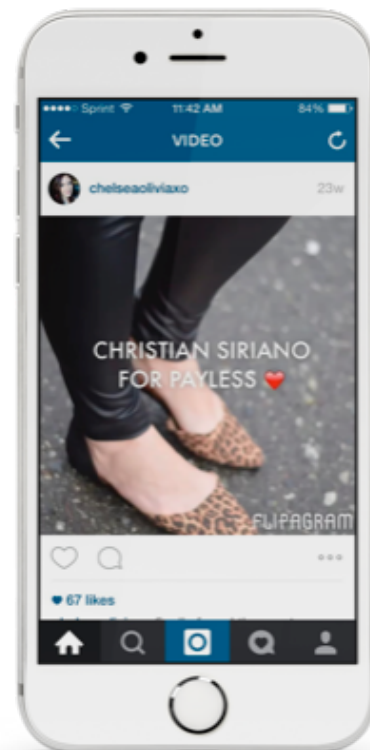
RhythmOne's Influencer Marketing programs also leverage the social media handles of influencers to strengthen the impact and extend the reach of Sponsored Blog Posts. We call this Social Amplification, and it can include Facebook posts, Pinterest boards, Instagram videos and posts, Vine videos, Twitter parties, sponsored tweets and Google+ Hangouts.

Our Branded Content Distribution Rich Media units (Expandables and Fixed Footers) can further extend a program's reach beyond the "influence" of the influencer by distributing created content on targeted sites. Brands seeking to extend the distribution and reach of their influencer marketing programs and curated content opt for these Rich Media units.

"Brands are starting to figure out that they're in a battle for attention. [Traditional] media models .... are less relevant because they ultimately need a consumer to go out and seek their brand as opposed to saying we're going to interrupt some other experience. Because of that, content marketing is really the best shot advertising has."

– Pat Connolly, Condé Nast<sup>1</sup>

*RhythmOne Social Amplification via Instagram*







## 1H 2015 INFLUENCER PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

### Influencers and Influential Content

With roots dating back to 1995, independent influencers are RhythmOne's currency. Our influencers are literally thousands of digital media publishers who foster vibrant online communities through sites, blogs and social media.

Most important, our influencers demonstrate seven key traits that are present in all that they do.

**1. Accelerated growth.** Determined and sustained audience development.

**2. Social power.** Significant and measurable clout on social media.

**3. Viral distribution.** Engaging content that is often shared organically.

**4. Consumer engagement.** Audiences that interact with and react to content.

**5. Content expertise.** Knows his or her focus inside out, no matter the topic.

**6. Aesthetically appealing.** Clean, clear and user-friendly design elements.

**7. Community leaders.** Respected as trailblazers within online communities.

## 1H 2015 INFLUENCER PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

### Earned Media Value

Earned Media Value (EMV) refers to the media value that can be attributed to publicity, social sharing and endorsement. It is an effective measure of an advertising campaign's success at reaching beyond the bounds of its paid placements and a good way to understand the "amplification-effect" of influencer marketing.

We consider a wide variety of measurements (see the below table) to calculate EMV for our influencer marketing programs.

#### RhythmOne EMV Measurements

Blog Comments/Replies

Contest Entries

Facebook: Shares, Comments, Likes, Shares from Posts

Twitter: Re-Tweets, Replies/Comments, Favorites, Shares from Posts

Pinterest: Re-Pins, Comments, Likes, Shares from Posts

Instagram: Comments, Likes

Google+: Shares, Comments, Likes, Shares from Posts

Reach of Influencer Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and Google+ Profiles

Other Social Shares: Clicks to Brand URLs, Posts with Specific Campaign Hashtags

Campaign-specific factors, such as a product giveaway or sweepstakes, can significantly impact influencer program EMV. Another significant consideration is the selected influencers themselves. For example, an individual's social media clout (e.g., Klout Score<sup>2</sup>) can impact EMV. The more social media clout an influencer has generally means more followers will share their content organically and frequently.

For a full breakdown of how we calculate EMV, see the Resources section of this report.



# Results

## Earned Media Value

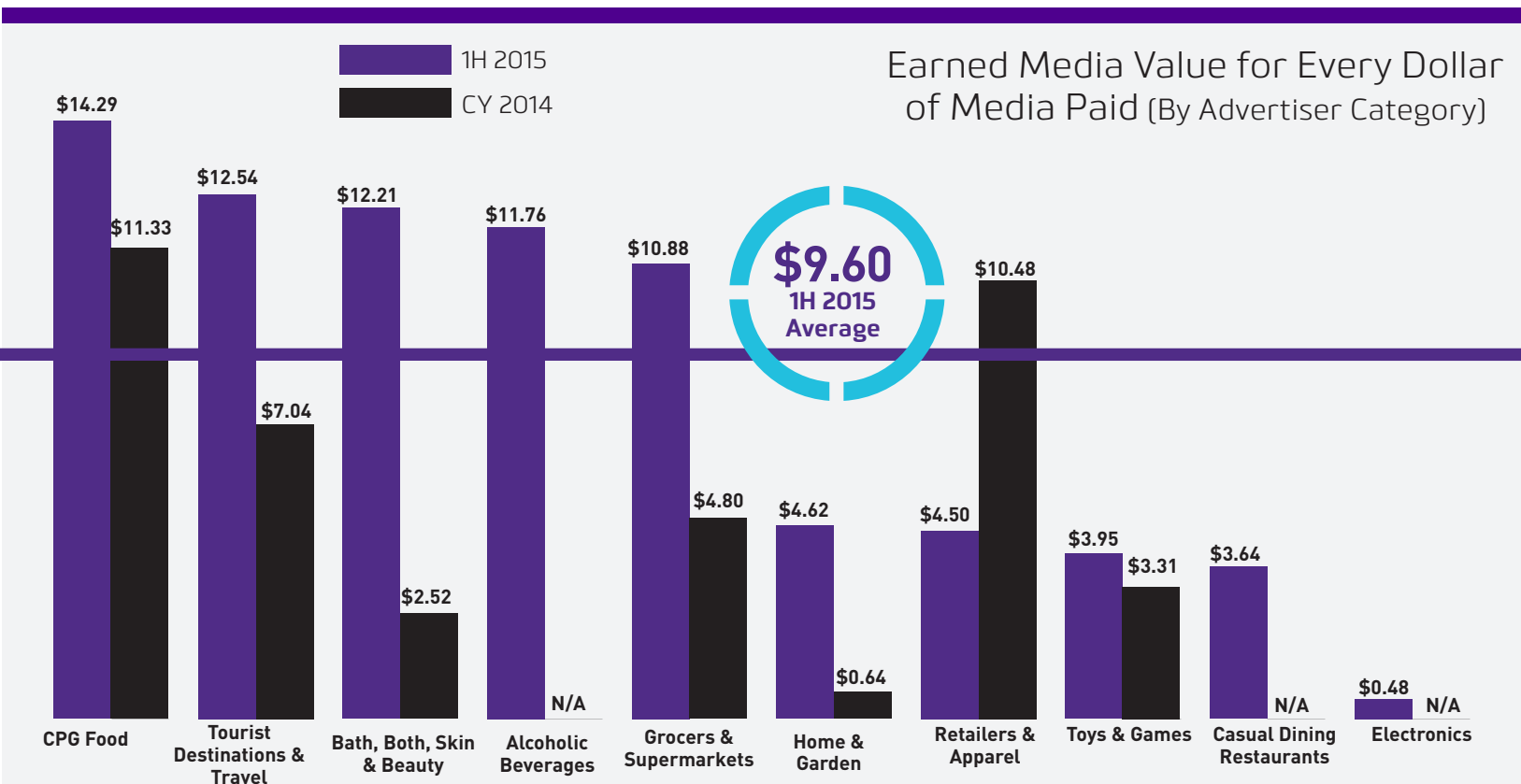
On average, our advertisers received \$9.60 in EMV for every \$1.00 spent on RhythmOne Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015. This represents an increase of 1.4x over our CY 2014 average EMV of \$6.85.

Among the 10 advertiser categories comprising our 1H 2015 Influencer Marketing roster, the average return of EMV breaks down as follows:

"In an economy where attention is at a premium, earned media is the ability to not just earn attention but have others share your message."

– Sarah Hofstetter, 360i<sup>3</sup>

- CPG Food (\$14.29)
- Tourist Destinations & Travel (\$12.54)
- Bath, Body, Skin & Beauty (\$12.21)
- Alcoholic Beverages (\$11.76)
- Grocers & Supermarkets (\$10.88)
- Home & Garden (\$4.62)
- Retailers & Apparel (\$4.50)
- Toys & Games (\$3.95)
- Casual Dining Restaurants (\$3.64)
- Electronics (\$0.48)



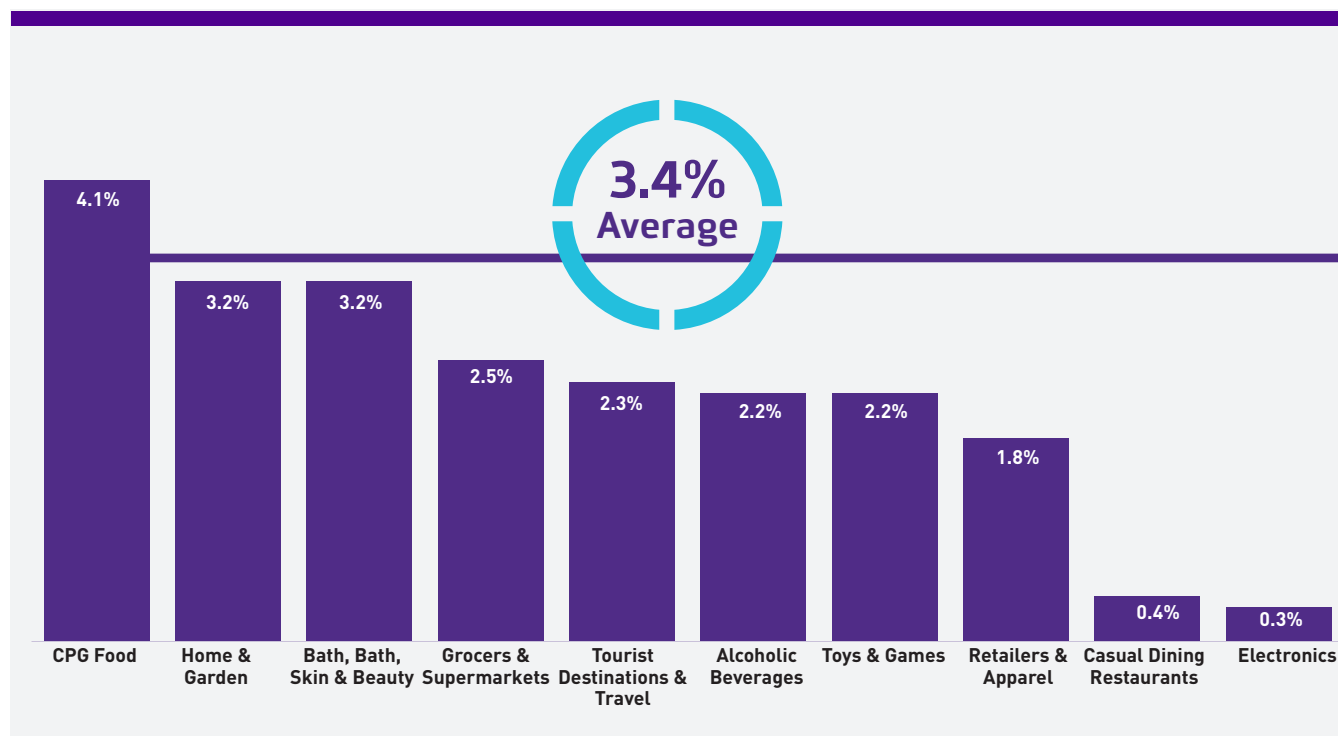
## RESULTS

### Social Engagement Rate

On average, our advertisers saw a 3.4% Social Engagement Rate for RhythmOne Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015. The average Social Engagement Rate breaks down as follows:

- CPG Food (4.1%)
- Home & Garden (3.2%)
- Bath, Body, Skin & Beauty (3.2%)
- Grocers & Supermarkets (2.5%)
- Tourist Destinations & Travel (2.3%)
- Toys & Games (2.2%)
- Alcoholic Beverages (2.2%)
- Retailers & Apparel (1.8%)
- Casual Dining Restaurants (0.4%)
- Electronics (0.3%)

Social Engagement Rate (By Advertiser Category)



**Social Engagement Rate** = reader engagements/social exposure.

**Reader Engagements** = measurable actions taken by readers, including (but not limited to) blog comments, re-tweets, Facebook likes, Instagram comments, etc.

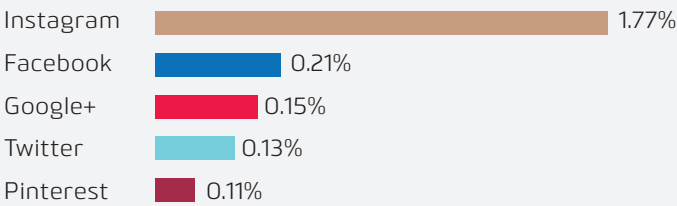
**Social Exposure** = the number of times an influencer's audience was exposed to a brand's Influencer Marketing program via Sponsored Blog Posts and social media.

RESULTS

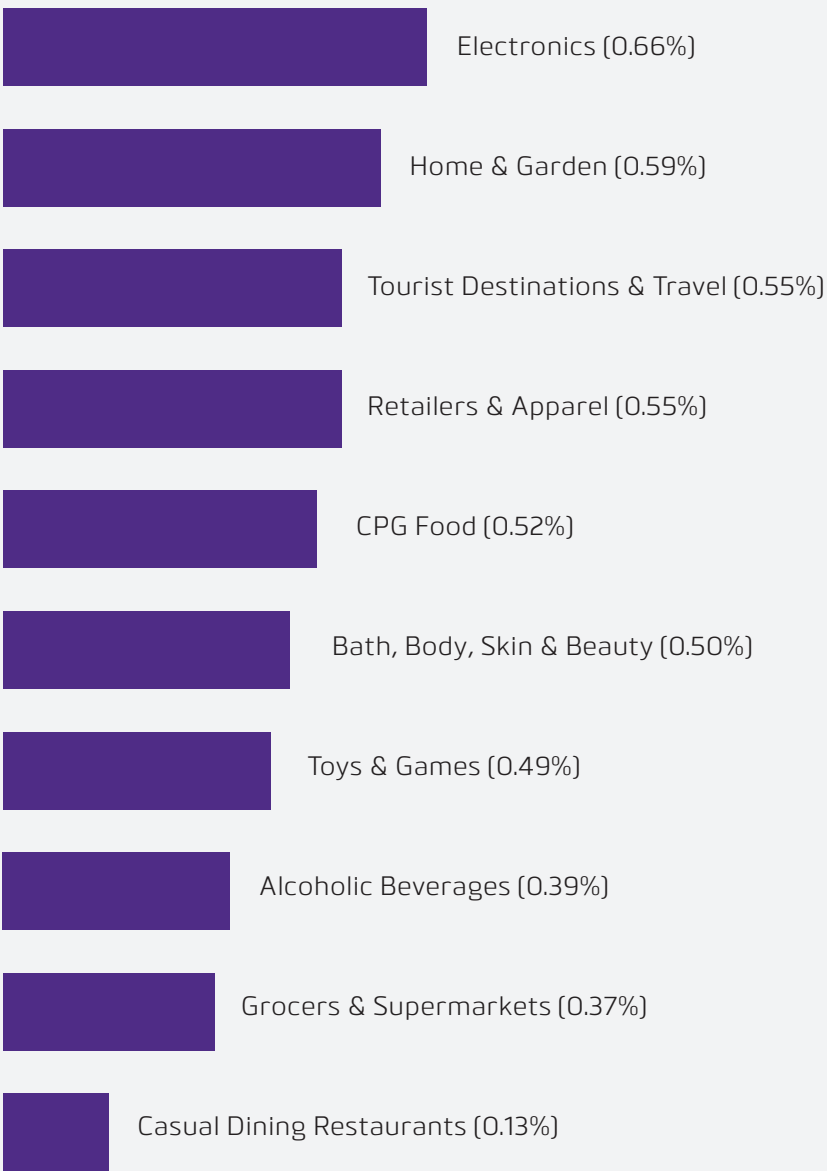
Social Amplification by Channel

In 1H 2015, Instagram was the best performing social media channel for Social Amplification. It delivered an average Social Amplification Rate of 1.77%. Facebook followed second at 0.21%. Google+ (0.15%), Twitter (0.13%) and Pinterest (0.11%) respectively rounded out the list.

Average Social Amplification (by Channel)



The Average **Social Amplification Rate** by category breaks down as follows:



Across the advertiser categories, the average Social Amplification Rate (i.e., all user actions/total social reach of all applicable channels) varied between 0.66% for Electronics to 0.13% for Casual Dining Restaurants. Campaign and category specifics drove these results, and channel-specific data are detailed in the Appendix section of this report.

# Conclusions

Influencer Marketing lives in a constantly evolving space. As consumption becomes heavily rooted across mobile devices, savvy brands are leveraging influencers across the channels that are more relevant to the always-connected consumer.

As we first mentioned in our CY 2014 benchmarks report, Influencer Marketing is ideal for reaching your brand advocates and then getting consumer-generated content to do the work for you. The tighter your audience is defined and the more focused your pool of influencers is, the better your results will likely be.

“Earned media supplemented with third-party influencers and distributed on social media channels will boost trustworthiness and increase eyeballs. Used strategically, traditional and new media are symbiotic elements of a communications ecosystem crucial to reaching audiences and making impact.”

– Jennifer Risi, Ogilvy Public Relations<sup>4</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

### **A picture is worth a thousand words – or in many cases, “likes.”**

Instagram and Pinterest are the two best-known (and most used) “image-centric” social media platforms. According to comScore’s June 2015 data, nearly 63.1 million users in the US accessed the Instagram app, and 40.8 million accessed the Pinterest app on a smartphone or tablet. comScore’s desktop numbers for the same month are also impressive: 29 million unique users visited Pinterest.com, and 19.2 million visited Instagram.com.<sup>5</sup>

As evidenced with Instagram’s performance (8.4x the Social Amplification of Facebook), quality and well-placed influencer imagery can drive consumer engagement in a significant fashion and even foster brand affinity and trust.

### **Don’t disrupt the consumer consideration process. Be part of it.**

Perhaps the greatest promise of Influencer Marketing – and perhaps what drives earned media value – is the fact that influencers are all about authenticity. Brands that effectively weave their stories into influencer content and leverage all of the amplification channels at their disposal have the greatest opportunity to see positive returns.

A reader who becomes aware about a new product through a trusted blog post and then sees a friend “like” an Instagram post about the same product is likely going to consider those experiences when it comes time make a purchasing decision.



# Appendix





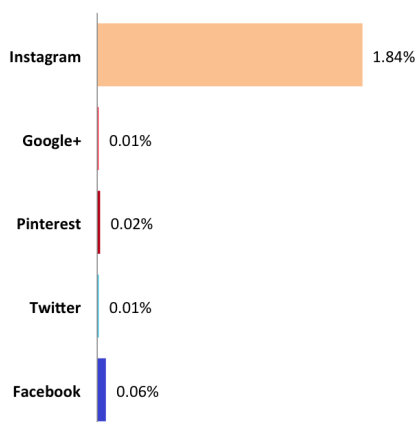
# Category-Specific Benchmarks

## Alcoholic Beverages

The sole Alcoholic Beverage advertiser used a total of eight influencers for their Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

The Alcoholic Beverage advertiser saw an EMV of \$11.76 for every dollar of paid media. Additionally, the campaign earned a Social Engagement Rate of 2.2% and a Social Amplification Rate of 0.39%.

**Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates (Alcoholic Beverages)**



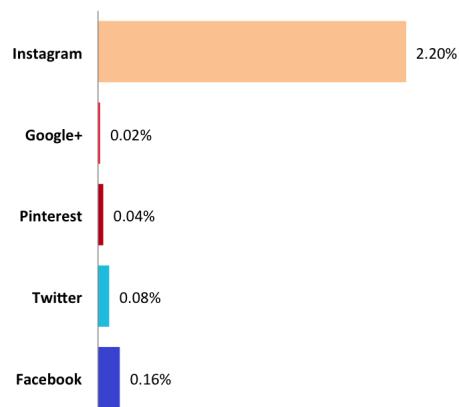
## Bath, Body, Skin & Beauty

Advertisers used a total of 11 influencers (in aggregate) for Bath, Body, Skin & Beauty Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

On average, Bath, Body, Skin & Beauty advertisers saw an EMV of \$12.21 for every dollar of paid media – an increase of 1.7x over the CY 2014 EMV benchmark.

Bath, Body, Skin & Beauty advertisers also saw an average influencer program Social Engagement Rate of 3.2% and an average Social Amplification Rate of 0.5%.

**Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates (Bath, Body, Skin & Beauty)**



## CATEGORY-SPECIFIC BENCHMARKS

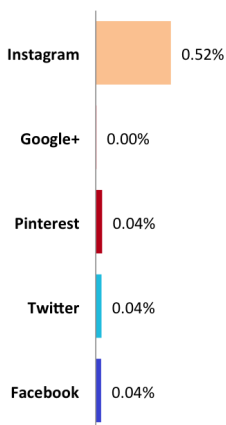
### Casual Dining Restaurants

Advertisers used a total of 40 influencers (in aggregate) for Casual Dining Restaurant Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

On average, Casual Dining Restaurant advertisers saw an EMV of \$3.64 for every dollar of paid media.

Casual Dining Restaurant advertisers also saw an average influencer program Social Engagement Rate of 0.4% and an average Social Amplification Rate of 0.13%.

Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates (Casual Dining Restaurants)



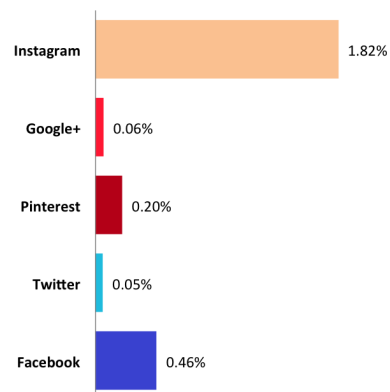
### CPG Food

Advertisers used a total of 78 influencers (in aggregate) for CPG Food Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

On average, CPG Food advertisers saw an EMV of \$14.29 for every dollar of paid media – an increase of 1.3x over the CY 2014 EMV benchmark.

CPG Food advertisers also saw an average influencer program Social Engagement Rate of 4.1% and an average Social Amplification Rate of 0.52%.

Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates (CPG Food)



## CATEGORY-SPECIFIC BENCHMARKS

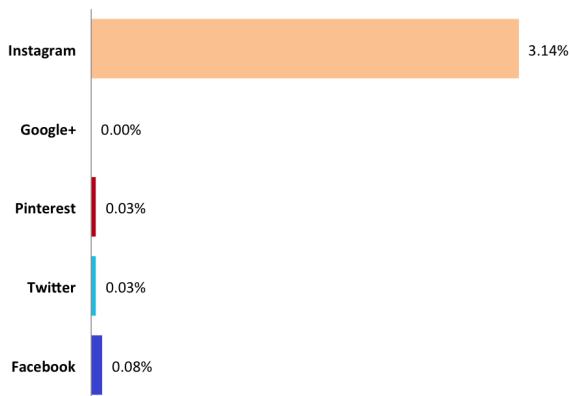
### Electronics

Advertisers used a total of five influencers (in aggregate) for Electronics Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

On average, Electronics advertisers saw an EMV of \$0.48 for every dollar of paid media.

Electronics advertisers also saw an average influencer program Social Engagement Rate of 0.3% and an average Social Amplification Rate of 0.66%.

**Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates (Electronics)**



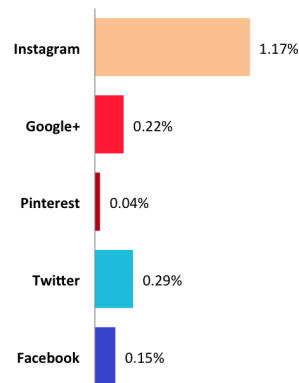
### Grocers & Supermarkets

Advertisers used a total of 30 influencers (in aggregate) for Grocer & Supermarket Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

On average, Grocer & Supermarket advertisers saw an EMV of \$10.88 for every dollar of paid media – an increase of 2.3x over the CY 2014 EMV benchmark.

Grocer & Supermarket advertisers also saw an average influencer program Social Engagement Rate of 2.5% and an average Social Amplification Rate of 0.37%.

**Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates (Grocers & Supermarkets)**



## CATEGORY-SPECIFIC BENCHMARKS

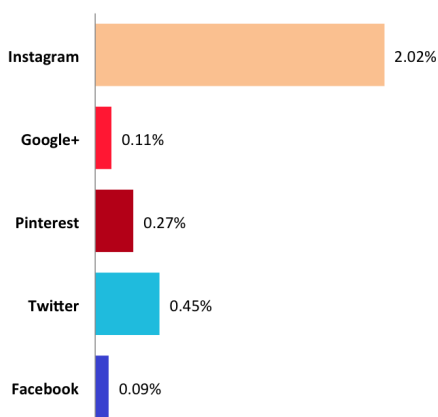
### Home & Garden Advertisers

Advertisers used a total of 12 influencers (in aggregate) for Home & Garden Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

On average, Home & Garden advertisers saw an EMV of \$4.62 for every dollar of paid media – an increase of 7.2x over the CY 2014 EMV benchmark.

Home & Garden advertisers also saw an average influencer program Social Engagement Rate of 3.2% and an average Social Amplification Rate of 0.59%.

Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates (Home & Garden)



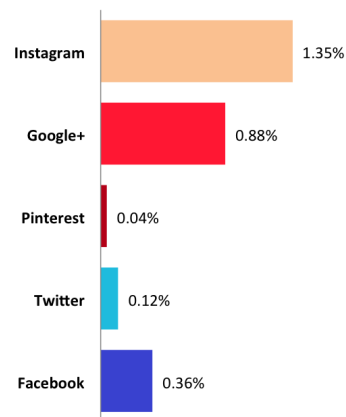
### Retailers & Apparel

Advertisers used a total of 30 influencers (in aggregate) for Retailers & Apparel Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

On average, Retailers & Apparel advertisers saw an EMV of \$4.50 for every dollar of paid media.

Retailers & Apparel advertisers also saw an average influencer program Social Engagement Rate of 1.8% and an average Social Amplification Rate of 0.55%.

Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates (Retailers & Apparel)



## CATEGORY-SPECIFIC BENCHMARKS

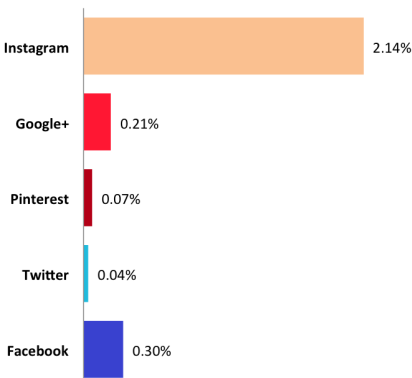
### Tourist Destinations & Travel

Advertisers used a total of five influencers (in aggregate) for Tourist Destinations & Travel Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

On average, Tourist Destinations & Travel advertisers saw an EMV of \$12.54 for every dollar of paid media – an increase of 1.8x over the CY 2014 EMV benchmark.

Tourist Destinations & Travel advertisers also saw an average influencer program Social Engagement Rate of 2.3% and an average Social Amplification Rate of 0.55%.

Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates  
(Tourist Destinations & Travel)



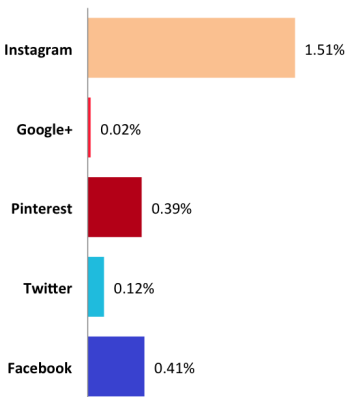
### Toys & Games

Advertisers used a total of five influencers (in aggregate) for Toys & Games Influencer Marketing programs in 1H 2015.

On average, Toys & Games advertisers saw an EMV of \$3.95 for every dollar of paid media.

Toys & Games advertisers also saw an average influencer program Social Engagement Rate of 2.2% and an average Social Amplification Rate of 0.49%.

Category-Specific Social Amplification Rates (Toys & Games)



# Resources

## Earned Media Value Breakdown

Earned Media Type	Dollar Value (Each Instance)
Blog Comments/Replies	\$2.00
Contest Entries	\$0.25
Facebook Shares	\$1.25
Facebook Comments	\$1.50
Facebook Likes	\$0.50
Facebook Shares from Posts	\$1.25
Re-Tweets	\$1.25
Twitter Replies / Comments	\$1.50
Twitter Favorites	\$0.50
Twitter Shares from Posts	\$1.25
Pinterest Re-Pins	\$1.25
Pinterest Comments	\$1.50
Pinterest Likes	\$0.50
Pinterest Shares from Posts	\$1.25
Instagram Comments	\$1.50
Instagram Likes	\$0.50
Google+ Shares	\$1.25
Google+ Comments	\$1.50
Google+ Likes	\$0.50
Google+ Shares from Posts	\$1.25
Vine Likes	\$0.50
Re-Vines	\$1.25
Vine Shares	\$1.25
Vine Comments	\$1.50
15% of Facebook Reach	\$0.25
5% of Twitter Reach	\$0.25
20% of Pinterest Reach	\$0.25
25% of Instagram Reach	\$0.25
20% of Google+ Reach	\$0.25
Vine Loops	\$0.25
Other Social Shares (e.g., clicks to brand URLs, shares using campaign specific hashtag, etc.)	\$0.75

Source: Prime Visibility (<https://www.primevisibility.com/>)

## Cited Articles and Quotes

<sup>1</sup> Kats, Rimma: "Condé Nast on How Digital Has Changed the Concept of In-House Agency." eMarketer, June 3, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> The Klout Score is a number between 1-100 that represents influence. See <https://klout.com/corp/score> for more details.

<sup>3</sup> Cohen, Heidi: "Earned Media Definition: 38 Experts Weigh In." Heidi Cohen Actionable Marketing Guide, April 27, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Risi, Jennifer. "Earned Media More Essential Than Ever in Today's Marketing Mix." Huff Post Media-The Blog, July 21, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> comScore MediaMetrix, Key Measures Report June 2015.





## About RhythmOne

RhythmOne links brands with audiences at scale across connected devices. Our multi-channel reach and comprehensive suite of desktop and mobile ad formats let us target quality audiences wherever and whenever they engage with media. Through our cross-screen advertising capability, brands can optimize spend and execute integrated campaigns with complete transparency into attribution and performance.

Visit [www.RhythmOne.com](http://www.RhythmOne.com) or call +1 (781) 852-5200 for more information.