

The influence of influencer marketing

 By [Pieter Groenewald](#)

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To suggest, as Bob Dylan once did, that 'the times they are a-changin' would be as true today as it was when the song was first released in 1964.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Indeed, change is something of a constant and in the wake of the pandemic, it's only gaining speed. Perhaps one of the areas we're seeing the most rapid development, and the demand to adapt, is in the realm of marketing.

All but gone are the days when a TV commercial or newspaper advert was the only marketing asset into which a marketer could pour their time and budget.

Today's population of Millennials and Gen Zs desire and demand engagement and authenticity from the brands and businesses jostling for their consideration. To meet this demand, a more refined and multi-faceted marketing strategy is required.

One of the biggest factors driving the move away from yesteryear's more traditional forms of advertising has been the growth and adoption of influencer marketing.

While influencer marketing hasn't entirely replaced other forms of advertising, such as commercials and digital

advertisements, there are many who believe that influencer marketing has an edge over other forms of advertising that just can't be beaten.

And that edge is credibility.



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Hubspot, an American developer and marketer of software products, suggests that the main reason for the shift from marketing investing its budgets into digital ads to investing into influencer campaigns is that influencer marketing works: "It uses tactics like word-of-mouth marketing and social proof, which are now critical aspects of any successful marketing strategy. Customers trust their peers, friends, and people they admire, more than companies selling the products and services they buy and use."

Because of the human element of influencer marketing, there is a degree of inherent trustworthiness with which digital ads can't compete. The term 'banner blindness' was first coined in 1998 by psychologist Jan Panero Benway, who conducted various website usability tests and concluded users had a degree of selective attention whereby they'd either consciously or subconsciously ignore information presented to them in online advertisements, particularly banner ads.

While there are ways and means of trying to design digital ads that hopefully stand out against such a thing, a study conducted in 2013 by Infolinks found that 86% of consumers suffer from banner blindness.



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It seems plausible to suggest that since then, banner blindness and other challenges, such as ad blockers (Statista.com reports more than 760 million people use ad blockers), that traditional and digital ads remain significant and – quite possibly – increasingly challenging to overcome.

While the benefits of influencer marketing are undeniable, from its high conversion rates and increased brand awareness to its potential for significant outreach to new audiences, there remains an argument to be made that the best approach is a combination of multiple forms of advertising – a considered and strategic influencer campaign that works alongside digital advertising, and even some other more traditional forms, depending on the target audience.

And while the other elements in your marketing mix remain up for debate as to whether you choose to include them, the one element that's become a non-negotiable is the influencer element. Potential customers are already invested in what an influencer has to say because they've chosen to follow them as a result of shared interests.



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Human connection is a powerful tool when put to work to spread the message about your brand and products. Advocacy in your favour by an influencer places a potential consumer further along the sales funnel more quickly than other advertising, making it more likely that they'll click on your digital ads or take note of your tv commercial, well before the seven times they

usually need to hear your marketing message.

The times, and the consumer audiences, are 'indeed a-changin' and so too, are their behaviours and demands, which continue to evolve at a rapid rate. The benefits of having a human element in your marketing, an influential face that communicates your brand's story on your behalf, is an invaluable asset.

And while the lure of celebrity may seem too good to ignore, consider digging into up-and-coming nano- and micro-influencers to stay-up-to-date and reap the reward of greater organic engagement, ensuring your brand and its message remain top of mind now, and in years to come.

ABOUT PIETER GROENEWALD

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