

Should social influencers get paid for the work they produce?

By [Thabiso Mlooi](#)

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The debate of whether or not social influencers should get paid for the work they produce on behalf of brands seems to be a never ending one.

It's actually an interesting debate pitting the old-school form of thinking (usually in the form of classic advertising and PR agencies) against the new-age guys (usually the influencers themselves, new age agencies and influencer marketing companies).



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So if you were to ask me the question – bearing in mind I'm originally from a traditional PR background, and now currently in the influencer marketing space – the answer was also going to be interesting. Should influencers get paid? The simple answer is yes they should. If you were to ask me this question towards the end of last year, my answer would have probably differed, I also for a long time used to subscribe to the old-school notion of thinking.

Times are changing, [with new crops of consumers emerging](#), and in as much as I've seen a number of places that are embracing the new school of thought, one of which is an agency I was with prior, there's still a large number of companies, agencies and brands alike that find themselves stuck and using the very same tried and trusted means of marketing and advertising.

This doesn't have to be the case and it's great to see some top established brands like Unilever subscribing to new school of thought. In his talk at the Cannes Lions 2016, Unilever's Chief Marketing and Communications Officer (CMO), Keith Weed [stressed the importance of how brands need to start moving away from these \(usual\) stereotypes and be more progressive by challenging the status quo in their advertising campaigns](#).

Luckily for me, I quickly realised that gone are the days when companies, agencies and brands could simply send media (product) desk drops (with some sort of product info or press release) to influencers and bloggers alike and be guaranteed some sort of coverage or exposure on said sent product. Despite that, I'm still surprised to see this practice continuing and to be honest these days you will be lucky if you get a post, let alone a Facebook mention or tweet just from that. Most influencers are getting smart and simple media drops (no matter how creative or thoughtful) just won't cut it in most cases.

The fact of the matter remains that you are asking someone to invest their time, creativity and effort to craft a specific message – a message that not only aligns with your product/brand but also stays true to their identity to easily resonate with their audience. In addition, there's also a booming trend today where we're seeing more influencers [quitting their daytime jobs and instead dedicating their full time to their craft](#), and by so doing are [driving brand sales and awareness](#). With all that said, it then becomes a no-brainer, right? Also, does the question still need to be asked?

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An in-between introvert and extrovert, Thabiso is a curious individual who has interests in a number of topics including (but not limited to) influencer marketing, sports, technology and writing...

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