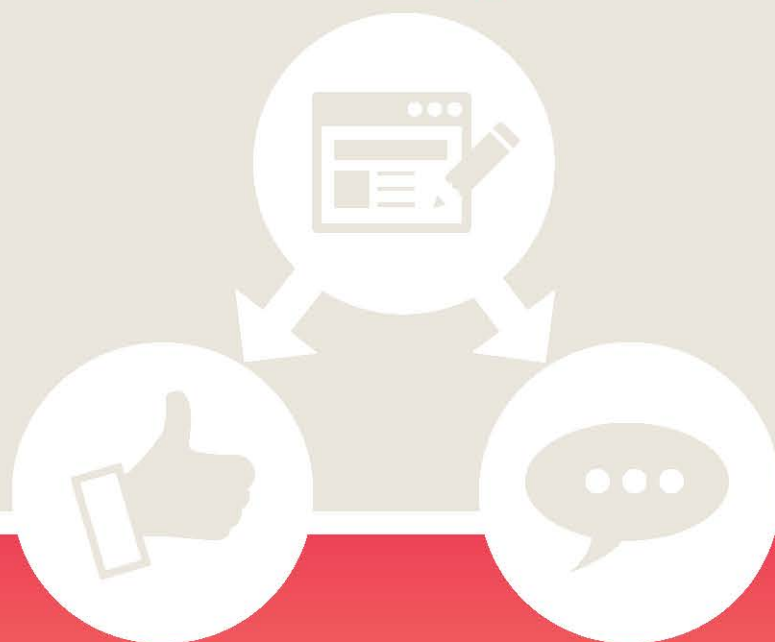


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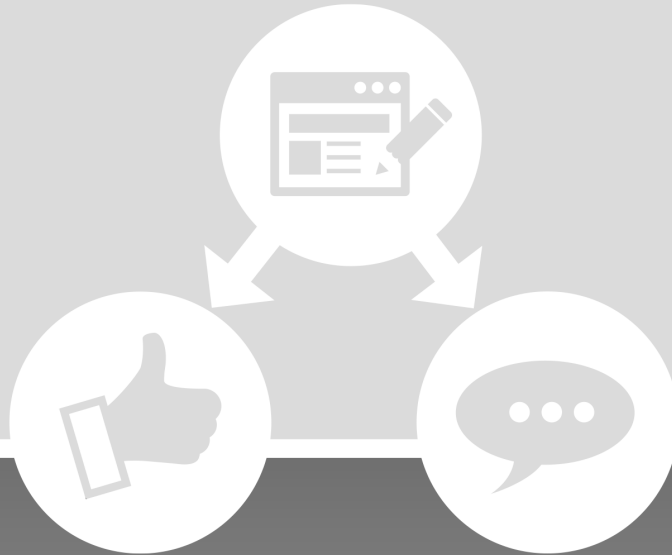
Social Media MARKETING

- Get a 360-degree look at social media marketing
- Craft a social media strategy that gets your business seen
- Engage with the right audience and build a following

ERIC BUTOW, MIKE ALLTON, JENN HERMAN,
STEPHANIE LIU, AMANDA ROBINSON

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The Power of Social Media

The need for human connection is right smack in the middle of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and has been a psychological truth of our species for ages. Humans have a deep-rooted desire to be part of communities where they are accepted and have opportunities to contribute.

As far back as the 1960s and 1970s, with the advent of early computer networks, there were glimpses of how that need for connection would be transformed into digital relationships and online platforms.

Remember the days of dial-up modems? Those happily beeping 2400-bps magicians were incredibly slow by today's standards, but their affordability and portability made it possible for even the most basic home computer to access online servers.

By the mid-1990s, the early social media platforms were born, starting in 1997 with Six Degrees, where you could create a profile and foster relationships with other people online. Friendster and MySpace brought new levels of features and capabilities in the early 2000s, and shortly after we were off and running, with LinkedIn and Twitter and Facebook. Figure 1-1 on page 2 gives you a brief look at just how quickly the social media companies you're familiar with popped up.

| Network | Launched |
|-----------|----------|
| LinkedIn | 2003 |
| Facebook | 2004 |
| YouTube | 2005 |
| Twitter | 2006 |
| Pinterest | 2010 |
| Instagram | 2010 |
| Snapchat | 2011 |

FIGURE 1-1. Today's social media landscape

All these platforms share two common traits:

1. They help individuals find and connect with other individuals, fulfilling a basic psychological need.
2. They were *not* designed for businesses.

Facebook and LinkedIn even have features called Groups where anyone can create a community around an idea, issue, area, theme, or brand, allowing members to connect and discuss common interests with one another.

And, of course, people today use social networks for news and entertainment as well. Gone are the days when they rely on a daily newspaper or the six o'clock news. The networks often provide trending news topics and stories, and people can rely on their friends and connections to share the most talked-about posts.

While most network founders intended to "monetize" their platforms in some way, be it through display ads or something else, their initial goal was to help people connect in some new and unique way.

YouTube, for instance, was created simply as a way for people to share videos with other people. At the time, other social networks did not support video playback, so YouTube was unique. Within a year, it was growing at a record-setting pace. Video advertising, which played before user-uploaded videos, is a monetization concept that launched *more than a year after YouTube was founded*.

This kind of post-launch implementation and constant evolution of social media is why businesses find it challenging to come up with a successful, clear social media strategy. It's ever-changing and unclear and nuanced. In many respects, traditional advertising is easier. Take billboards, for example.

A business can work with an advertising company to identify one or more billboard placements that seem promising, due to location, traffic volume, or some other factor.

They'll hire a graphic designer to create the perfect vinyl artwork, which the advertising company installs, and then negotiate and pay a set monthly rate according to their contract.

That's pure advertising. Your business, along with countless others, adopts a "Pick me!" attitude and hopes to get a potential customer's attention long enough to make a lasting impression. And in many respects, it works. The right billboard (or radio spot, newspaper ad, or TV commercial) at the right time in front of the right person can absolutely drive business results. But it's expensive, impersonal, and challenging to measure.

There's no way to know how many people looked at your billboard, or even gauge with any certainty how many people drove past it. Traffic estimates are based on municipal studies, which are conducted infrequently. And of course there's no way to have a conversation with the people who look at your ad unless they reach out to you first.

Contrast that with social media, where businesses can create profiles for free, share content and information for free, and freely review metrics and reports provided by those same social networks, which detail exactly how many people saw and engaged with their business online. That, coupled with the ability to use Google Analytics (also free) to measure referral traffic to a website from social media, offers businesses an incredible opportunity.

How to approach and leverage that opportunity is of course what the rest of this chapter and book will address. We're going to cover the importance of relationships and creating connections on social media.

BEING SOCIAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Because every social network is, first and foremost, designed for individuals, businesses are at a distinct disadvantage. Adopting the "Pick me!" broadcast approach isn't just ineffective; it's likely to backfire. While people have been conditioned to accept the existence of ads online, there is tremendous animosity toward businesses that want to interfere with the primary reason they're on these social networks.

In other words, people use Facebook to connect with their friends and family, not your business.

Rather than present you with a list of technical requirements or some arbitrary definition to determine whether an online service counts as a social network, what's important is that you understand the underlying meaning.

Does the online service facilitate the connection of individuals and the development of relationships? If so, even if it features a fraction of the users of Facebook or Twitter,

it can safely be considered social media for your purposes. That means sites like Yelp or Flickr or Pinterest have their place, though some may argue over the nuances.

The important take-away is that people use social networks to connect with, talk to, and learn from other people. If, as a business, you can insert yourself into that process and help them fulfill that need, you'll be on your way toward a successful social strategy.

As motivational speaker and marketer Jay Baer put it, "Focus on how to be social, not how to do social."

This means that to be effective at social media, businesses need to know how to build relationships. That's admittedly hard because relationships are formed one person at a time. Businesses that are already large, or in a hurry to become large, may be more enamored with ideas of scale and rapid growth.

Social media works very similarly. When someone follows you or comments for the first time on a post, it's an opportunity for you to welcome them, virtually, to your storefront. Will you rush into your sales pitch, or take a moment to encourage some dialogue and attempt to build rapport?

Fortunately, Chapter 10 is going to help you tremendously: it is in fact possible to scale relationship-building by using influencers as a bridge and conduit for relationships with customers.

HOW ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS BENEFIT OFFLINE

Before you get rolling with influencers, however, it's critical that you and your brand establish your own presence, personality, and message. Because even if you're using social media and communicating with people as your brand, it should still be clear that there's a *person* behind the logo who's talking.

The benefit is that through the use of social media in a way that is eminently social, brands can build relationships with fans, followers, prospects, and customers that lead them to know, like, and trust that brand. And that often leads to tremendously valuable relationships *offline*.

Take the 360 Marketing Squad, for example.

Jenn Herman, Stephanie Liu, Amanda Robinson, and Mike Allton, four of the authors of this book, have a private mastermind group for mutual support, as well as a paid membership group for students who wish to learn digital marketing. The four of them enjoy deep, supportive friendships and a tremendously successful business partnership—all made possible through social media.

Jenn and Mike became acquainted on Google+ back in 2012, where Mike had established nearly a quarter-million followers and Jenn was launching her career as an Instagram expert. Over the years they supported each other and developed a friendship.

They met in person for the first time four years later at Social Media Marketing World.

Stephanie and Jenn first learned of each other through Instagram and Facebook. They both had developed tremendous reputations as internet marketers, finally meeting in person at Social Media Day San Diego in 2017. That same year, Mike and Stephanie connected on Instagram, and were later introduced in person at Social Media Marketing World 2018 by Jenn.

Amanda and Jenn have shared many mutual connections in their respective spheres of influence on Facebook and Instagram. The two of them would carry on their online conversations in real life each time they saw each other at Social Media Marketing World and eventually became great friends.

While at the Midwest Digital Marketing Conference that year, Mike and Stephanie talked about the importance of having a support group, a Mastermind, and thought it would be a great idea to start meeting with Jenn, both as online marketers and as the parents of young girls. Out of that trio was birthed the idea to create a paid membership group with rotating experts, but they needed a fourth person to complete the group. That's when Amanda was brought in, and the rest is history!

A strong support group and lasting friendships, a business partnership that generates five figures of shared annual revenue, a live show, a podcast, and now a book—all made possible thanks to social media and building relationships both online and off.

Your results may vary.

Here, these four experts on social media marketing, with established expertise on every platform, are joined by co-author Eric Butow, who has written dozens of books on marketing and technology. Together, we represent decades of experience in every facet of online marketing and are bringing it all to bear for your benefit.

Throughout the rest of this book, we will be diving deep into specific networks and offering strategies and tactics that you can employ and adapt to your own business. Take notes, develop tests, and always consider how what you're doing can help develop relationships and contribute to the online *experience* that your fans are participating in.



Leverage Influencer Marketing

In 1903, decades before computers were commercially available, the preferred method of personal communication was the fountain pen. The predecessor to today's ballpoint pens, the fountain pen was elegant, beautiful, and prone to extreme messiness. Those who partook in extended use of such instruments were clearly—and literally—marked.

It was in that year that the Conklin Pen Co. in Toledo, Ohio, decided to employ influencer marketing—though of course it wasn't called that back then. *Influencer marketing* is a relatively recent term. Throughout the 20th century, businesses and marketing agencies turned to celebrities for endorsements and to serve as spokespeople for brands.

In the very early 1900s, most celebrity “influencers” were athletes, and by midcentury movie stars had come on the scene. But Conklin knew not just any old celebrity would do. In order to sell fountain pens to everyday folks, they needed someone everyday folks could relate to, and someone whom it would make sense to tie to the brand.

Imagine if Conklin had hired baseball slugger Babe Ruth as their spokesperson. Other than for signing fat contracts, Babe wasn't known for his use of the quiet quill. While his fans might have taken an interest in Conklin's offerings, few others would have paid it any mind.

So throughout the rest of this chapter, we're going to explore what influencer marketing really means, and how you can identify and work with influencers in your company's niche.

WHAT INFLUENCER MARKETING REALLY MEANS

Put simply, influencer marketing is when a brand leverages someone with an audience of their own to exert some influence over that audience. That might be a recommendation to purchase a product, or it might just entail using the influencer to introduce a brand or business to their audience.

It's important to recognize that *anyone* with an audience is an influencer. Influence is not limited to celebrities with millions of followers on social media. A well-respected member of your community is also an influencer—and, it might be argued, a more powerful one—for the right brand.

We therefore classify potential influencers into a number of categories, depending largely on the size of their audience.

Mega-Influencer

Influencers at this level typically have more than 1 million followers and are usually celebrities outside of social media. Just like the endorsers of the early 1900s, you can expect to see professional athletes and movie stars in this category.

Influencers on this level can generate broad brand awareness and interest over a wide swath of demographics—but you'll pay dearly for that exposure.

Macro-Influencer

Down a tier, we find influencers with between 100,000 and 1 million followers. You'll certainly find your share of real-life celebrities at this level, but you'll also see a great many influencers who have built their influence on social media itself. This includes bloggers, vloggers, and other internet personalities.

It's at this level that we expect to see a far greater degree of specialization or focused interest, such as travel or food, making it a bit easier to find influencers who align with a particular brand.

Micro-Influencer

Even more focused is the micro-influencer, with their 1,000 to 100,000 followers. Of course, someone with nearly 100,000 social media fans could still be said to have a great deal of influence, particularly if they've stayed focused on a specific niche.

It's at this level that brands who are not focused on a specific geographic area (e.g., the Gold Coast of Chicago) can find highly effective and extremely affordable influencers to work with. The challenge when you start to get to influencers in these smaller categories is identifying and working with them. Everyone knows who the mega-celebrities are, and they have experienced staff to handle campaign requests. Joe the Vlogger may have never worked with a brand before, so be prepared for that.

Nano-Influencer

Finally, we have the smallest tier at under 1,000 followers. This is typically where you'll find local influencers who are prominent members of their community. They may even be folks who have limited knowledge and use of social media.

Yet for the right business, a local influencer may be the absolute best choice to work with and drive results. Even a small social following might be ripe with targeted customers in a local setting. And such influencers could be easily incorporated into your own campaigns as a local, recognizable figure.

As you work through the rest of this chapter, begin to think about which categories of influencers might best fit your brand message *and* budget!

HOW TO IDENTIFY INFLUENCERS TO WORK WITH

Just as a Major League Baseball player probably makes for a lousy fountain pen spokesman, so too will most influencers be a poor match for you and your brand.

You need to consider brand fit first before proceeding with any individual influencer.

So what does that mean exactly?

Brand fit is the degree to which a particular influencer's voice, style, audience, and content focus align with that of the representing brand's. In other words, how do the brand and influencer mesh?

It helps if you've already thought about your own brand in terms of style, voice, message, and so on. Taking the time to craft a highly polished style guide (which we discussed in Chapter 6) that considers both aesthetics (fonts, colors, logo treatment) and tone (style, voice, culture, message) will make determining brand fit easier.

The second thing you need to consider is the category of influencer you want to work with (e.g., mega-influencer vs. micro-influencer) and your available budget.

With that in mind, it's time to start looking for influencers. There are a few different approaches you can take. One option is to start with people who are already talking about your brand. These may be customers, bloggers, or other influencers in your industry.

The benefits here are many:

- They are already fans of your brand.
- They may have existing content to amplify.
- They have a track record to evaluate.

And while it's likely these existing fans have smaller audiences and fall in the micro- or nano-influencer category, that means they're probably more affordable.

Another option is to consider the biggest “names” in your industry. These will likely be macro-influencers with established audiences—people who regularly speak at industry events and create content in and about your industry. One reason for starting with known macro-influencers is that it won't take a lot of time to come up with this list. You're probably already following them on social networks like Twitter!

But of course that suggests a third approach, and you'll likely need to do this at some point regardless: research.

Researching possible influencers can take some time but can also be extremely rewarding. It's quite likely you will find some highly influential people who are a great fit for your brand but whom you have never heard of before.

So where do you start?

BuzzSumo, an influencer and content discovery website, is one great option, though you can certainly search Google or individual social platforms directly. When you use BuzzSumo, you can search for influencers specifically on Twitter or Facebook, as well as “authors” who have published content online.

You can filter your results by date, country, or language, and see who some of the most prolific authors for your topic are in ranked order.

Next, drill down to see exactly what they've published and where, and see whether it's really the kind of content where it might make sense to incorporate your brand or products.

If it's a good match, you've found a potential influencer! We'll get into the specifics of what you can do with them later on, but let's first finish considering how to find more potential all-stars.

As you identify possible influencers, we recommend jotting them down in a Google Sheet or a customer resource management tool like Nimble, which will give you easy access to your growing list of contacts and help you learn more about that influencer. With a few clicks, Nimble can scour the web to find their social profiles, websites, contact information, and more. BuzzSumo gives you their Twitter profile, which you can import into Nimble using the Nimble Chrome extension. Tag them as an influencer and return to your research.

If your industry's potential influencers are more likely to be found on YouTube or Instagram, you can search those native platforms or use a tool like Keyword Tool, which

will help you search, filter, and sort the results to give you really meaningful information on potential influencers.

Once you begin reaching out to specific influencers, you can ask them to qualify and supplement your research. They can confirm their number of followers, as well as website traffic and email subscribers. More important, if they've worked with other brands in the past, they can share metrics and case studies for the projects they've completed.

It's worth repeating at this point, as we said in Chapter 3, that influencer marketing is all about relationships. We're going to use that word again and again. While you can be purely transactional with an influencer—for instance, fill out a form and pay them to send a tweet—that's not really effective.

Truly effective influencer marketing happens when you establish a relationship with the influencer: when they genuinely like and appreciate your brand and are eager to work with you, and you're eager to work with and support them.

But the thing is . . . relationships take time.

We don't want to say there are no shortcuts to building a great relationship, because we're about to share a bunch of them with you, but none of them will matter unless you can build rapport with each influencer as an individual.

We're stressing this now because you may start doing some research on potential influencers, find a couple, and want to rush into the courtship phase, rather than taking your time to look for more. But you're better off not pinning all your hopes on one person. Take the time to build a great list of potential influencers, and then begin to foster relationships with *all* of them! Some will be open to it, and some won't. Some influencers will be excited to know and work with you, while others will take more time.

These are, essentially, blind dates. And the problem with any relationship is that you *do not know in advance* how it's going to go. One of the people you reach out to today will be the most amazing brand ambassador for you tomorrow, but (and trust us on this) you won't know which one at first.

So if you can, make a list of 25 to 50 potential influencers, and then get to work sparking those relationships.

HOW TO SPARK RELATIONSHIPS

Did we mention relationships take time? We did? Cool. But the good news is that if you proceed deliberately, the odds of creating a mutually successful, beneficial, positive relationship in a shorter amount of time increase dramatically.

But first, a few *don'ts*:

- *Don't* stalk people, especially online influencers.

- *Don't* spam and definitely *don't* add them to email lists without their explicit permission.
- *Don't* have set expectations or demands.
- *Don't* rush.

OK! Now that that's out of the way, let's focus on what you *should* do!

Do Connect

Start by following them on *their* preferred social network. Glance through their various social profiles to see where they're most active and engaged. Note that depending on the network, some follows are one-way and some must be mutually accepted, which means one of you has to initiate the connection and the other must approve it. We'll call the first kind "follow" and the second "connect." Here's a quick rundown:

- Facebook Page: Follow
- Facebook profile: Connect
- Instagram profile: Follow
- LinkedIn profile: Connect
- LinkedIn Page/Influencer: Follow
- Pinterest profile/boards: Follow
- Snapchat profile: Connect
- Twitter profile: Follow
- YouTube channel: Follow

We want to make these distinctions clear because initially, if the influencer doesn't know you, they're not going to be inclined to *connect* with you. It's far easier to simply follow them on Twitter or Instagram, if that's an option.

If their preferred or only social network is one that requires a connection, it may be possible to follow their public posts, depending on the network and their account settings. Or you could bookmark their profile and visit it regularly to see what they've posted.

For nano-influencers who may not be active on social media, consider local organizations they may be involved in, such as Lions Club or the chamber of commerce. You may also want to look for a mutual acquaintance who could introduce you.

Do Engage

Once you have identified and connected with or followed key influencers, it's time to start engaging with them.

On most social networks, you can like/react to posts, share them, and comment on them. You'll need to use your best judgment to determine how to engage with each influencer's post, but here are some helpful guidelines:

- For each influencer, engage with no more than one post per day on average.
- Shares are the most meaningful way to engage: You're saying you trust this person and their content enough to share it with your own audience.
- Comments are an opportunity to open a dialogue that can demonstrate similarities in thought between you and the influencer. This is how you develop rapport.
- Likes and similar reactions are nice for staying top of mind, but are not very meaningful.

You may like, comment on, and share a single post from an influencer, but be wary of doing that too often; similarly, don't like every single post they publish. Some might perceive you as a raving fan, while others might just think you're raving.

Instead, we recommend a daily routine in which you spend just 30 to 60 minutes checking in on the activity of your target influencers and engaging when it makes sense to do so, in as natural a way as possible.

This is another area where Nimble can be incredibly powerful. As you identify influencers and begin to import them into Nimble, you can use tags to signify the stage of your relationship with them.

Let's say you have a "New" tag for influencers you're just starting to connect with. Within Nimble's Contacts area, you can search only for contacts labeled "New" and then scroll through that list. For each one, you can see your past engagements and other pertinent information, and you can click through to their social profiles to see if they've posted recently. You might add other labels for "engaged" or even "under contract" that you would change contact tags within Nimble and perhaps engage less or treat differently over time.

While you can create other mechanisms like Twitter Lists to follow multiple people, they can be easily overwhelmed by prolific posters. Using Nimble to jump to each influencer's social profiles will save you time, and you can easily stop in the middle of the process to handle another business task and then pick it up again later.

Do Observe

As you are building rapport with each influencer, you should also be observing how they meet your third requirement: *audience engagement*.

It is quite possible for someone to have a large social media following and yet exert very little influence. Their followers might have been purchased, or the influencer may have had an engaged audience at one time but now, due to a variety of reasons, their followers have lost interest.

As you're engaging with an influencer's posts and content, take note of how much more engagement they get. Are you the only one commenting? Are the same people commenting every time? Or are a nice variety of people engaging with the influencer and a decent number of people being reached?

And, in turn, how does the influencer respond to comments? Do they ignore you and everyone else? Or do they take the time to respond to every comment and keep their audience engaged? What is the tone of those responses? If they were replying to a comment while representing your brand, how comfortable would you be?

If you're observant, you will pick up on their perspectives when it comes to business, your industry, and other aspects of life that are important to you and *your* audience. You'll come to understand their worldview, and that will help you relate to them.

Make observations, take notes, and use your intuition as to whether a particular influencer is a good fit for your brand and marketing program—you'll usually be spot on. You can also go the more formal route of creating a spreadsheet and scoring system for each influencer you observe. If you're reporting to a CMO or department head, this would be a good way to document and establish the value of your effort.

After you have spent a while engaging with key influencers and they've responded positively, it's time for you to reach out and propose a new stage of your relationship: collaboration.

HOW TO WORK WITH INFLUENCERS

Mike is the Brand Evangelist at Agorapulse, where his approach with social media influencers is to gift them a free lifetime account with the company's social media management software and see if they like using it. He can see whether they're logging into the app or talking about Agorapulse online; if they are, he deepens the relationship by amplifying their content, sending them swag, and inviting them to participate in marketing activities like roundups or webinars, where everyone benefits.

Thinkific, which makes online learning software, has a very similar, extremely successful approach. Their Community Manager gives prominent influencers free access to Thinkific's course platform and ships them Thinkific hoodies to sport on social media (which gets the company even more attention!).

When Mike or Thinkific want to do a live show and need a guest, or want to run a virtual summit of webinars, they have a large pool of talented experts and influencers on hand to tap.

Unpaid Collaboration

If possible and appropriate for your business, this strategy of giving away free products or services is an excellent first step toward working with influencers, as there is mutual benefit and typically little to no cost to the brand.

For example, suppose you want to create a piece of content around a topic that is relevant to your brand and/or industry, perhaps one that answers a question many of your target prospects are struggling with. While you could write the entire post from your own perspective, it might instead be better to reach out to 20 or 30 influencers in your space and invite them to answer the question, publishing the results as a roundup. Here are three benefits of this strategy:

1. Roundup posts share varying perspectives and opinions.
2. Roundup posts with 20-plus participants will be epic in length due to the sheer number of participants. Even if the average response is just 150 words long, that will be more than 3,000 words for the overall post.
3. Roundup posts with 20-plus participants will be shared far more than usual, as most participating influencers will naturally share the post with their own networks, thereby significantly increasing the post's visibility.

When you publish a roundup post, your job is to make your influencers look amazing. Take the time to create nice graphics and “influencer cards” featuring their name, head shot, and Twitter handle. Once it's published, make sure they're all tagged on your social posts so they'll help you amplify the content and get your blog in front of their audiences.

It's a win-win.

Paid Collaboration

The next level of influencer collaboration is some sort of paid campaign. What that campaign looks like, and of course what the compensation is, will vary a great deal.

While you might be tempted to fork out large amounts of cash to get a mega-influencer to mention you in a tweet, a better option would be to build longer-lasting campaigns with influencers with smaller, but more targeted, audiences.

For example:

- Shoot a testimonial video.
- Write a blog post.
- Participate in a Facebook Live interview.
- Publish a review.
- Talk about your brand in their newsletter.

Generally, we recommend making a note of what each influencer tends to do and then coming up with an idea for a campaign format that fits their natural approach.

If, for instance, they excel at Instagram, perhaps create a series of image-centered posts or Stories that will educate their audience on your brand in a fun and interesting way—and one that matches their usual style.

The trick is to come up with a campaign that has as many of the following advantages as possible:

- It runs long enough to ensure brand exposure to a wide audience.
- It's short enough to limit investment and initial risk.
- It educates audiences about your brand/product(s).
- It entertains audiences and keeps them engaged.
- It results in assets that can be repurposed or reused.

Let's say you want a micro-influencer to talk about your brand on social media and introduce you to their network. Rather than a single tweet or post, you might come up with a specific topic that is important to that influencer and relevant to your brand, and devise a series of posts and activities centered on that topic.

That might include shares of relevant and engaging articles—yours or other people's, mentions of your brand and products, determining key hashtags, and perhaps a live video to finish the campaign.

At the end of that campaign, you'll have reached a sizable portion of the influencer's audience, driven traffic to your web properties, gained new social media followers, and created a piece of video content you can repurpose to use elsewhere in any number of ways.

Compensation

When it comes to compensation for influencers, brands have a lot of options and room to be creative. While a mega-influencer requires a contract and a significant cash payout, everyone else will be a lot more affordable.

That starts at free.

Many smaller influencers will be happy to work with you in exchange for free products, services, or access; co-marketing; and collaboration. In fact, many retail brands collaborate with micro- and nano-influencers simply by offering a discount on products.

The trick is to balance generosity with practicality. Come up with a variety of ways to work with and help influencers and then weigh what you're prepared to offer against what you expect to receive in return. Options include:

- Free products/services/access

- Upgraded services or access
- Corporate swag and gifts
- Behind-the-scenes/direct access to point people
- Affiliate commissions
- Increased affiliate commissions
- One-time payments
- Ongoing payments

Make sure that however you approach your influencer marketing and specific influencers, you set aside time to review the program and your measurables either monthly or quarterly. Don't just assume it's working. It's helpful to have that discussion with individual influencers as well. Is there anything else you can do for them that might make them even more vocal in support of your brand?

INFLUENCER MARKETING ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

While creating campaigns can be a lot of fun, the way you run your initiatives and influencer marketing program must be organized and thorough.

Use Contracts

You might not want or think you need to use contracts with your influencers, but you must have your relationship in writing once money starts to change hands. If you communicate upfront how the business aspects of the relationship will work, you can avoid potential friction that might jeopardize the entire connection.

That said, you don't need complex contracts filled with legal language, particularly when dealing with micro- and nano-influencers. In most cases, it is sufficient to document how you will compensate the influencer and what your brand will receive in exchange.

The more experience an influencer has working with brands, the more comfortable they will be with formal contracts. It's best to raise the issue early on and talk briefly about setting out the requirements for both parties.

Set Expectations

For each campaign, clearly document all agreed-upon expectations. These will typically include activity, time frame, frequency, assets needed or to be created, and any given performance metrics.

For example: "X social posts over X weeks to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, using images and copy provided by the influencer."

Manage Projects

Once everyone agrees on the nature and scope of the campaign, it's time to move on to project management. It's usually best to use a project management tool like Asana, because you can create campaign templates for yourself and duplicate them for each project and influencer as needed. However, something as simple as a Google Doc can work, too.

The key is to make sure everything is considered and communicated in advance. If other people have tasks they need to do, make sure they understand what's required and by when so that everything can be delivered on time.

Pay Promptly

When it comes to dealing with online influencers, prompt and full payment is essential. The last thing you want is an upset influencer with 100,000 followers ruining your reputation with a series of negative tweets.

Of course, you want to get what you paid for, and if an influencer agreed to a contract and didn't deliver, they shouldn't get paid. But never withhold payment if the results weren't quite what you hoped for, or perhaps a deliverable didn't arrive on time. You should be generous and magnanimous at this stage, and recognize the truth of influencer marketing: Working to improve brand awareness simply cannot be measured. Any activity on the part of influencers will be valuable and long-lasting.

That leads us into the final topic we need to consider when it comes to influencer marketing: success.

WHAT INFLUENCER MARKETING SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

At the beginning of the chapter, we talked about how the Conklin Pen Co. wanted to connect with a contemporary influencer to endorse their fountain pens. Who do you think they might have gone with in 1903, someone who fits all the criteria we've talked about?

They decided on famous author Mark Twain.

Twain was the writer of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Life on the Mississippi*, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. He was extremely well-known throughout the country as someone who *penned* his thoughts regularly. Clearly, Twain could easily be seen using and enjoying a fountain pen.

And so he was paid to endorse the Conklin Crescent pen and was quoted as saying, "I prefer it to ten other fountain pens because it carries its filler in its own stomach, and I cannot mislay it even by art or intention. Also, I prefer it because it is a profanity saver; it cannot roll off the desk."

His quotes and endorsements not only contributed to greater awareness of Conklin pens and doubtless more sales, but also represented assets the company was able to repurpose for half a century.

That engagement of an influencer was clearly a success for Conklin, whatever the cost. But how can you determine if your influencer marketing is successful?

Tip of the Iceberg

Because of the density of icebergs, they float through the ocean with just a small portion visible above the water. All you can see is a small tip, even though the entire iceberg may be huge.

THINK INSIDE THE BOX



Most people think influencer marketing is all about spending a lot of money with celebrities chasing vanity metrics. This couldn't be further from the truth. As I clearly outline in my book *The Age of Influence*, the democratization of media influence means that there are simply a lot more people who wield influence over other people, due to the mainstream maturation of social media, than ever before. This means that influence is all around us, so instead of thinking outside the box when considering influencers to collaborate with, think inside the box: employees, partners, fans and followers, customers, etc. There are probably a lot of people who already have a tremendous amount of brand affinity for your company who would love to collaborate with you.

Another myth about influencer marketing is that it is just for big consumer brands. But any business, no matter how small and regardless of industry, can find, engage with, and collaborate with other social media users and generate a win-win relationship. It comes down to developing relationships with social media users who influence potential customers and working together in a way that benefits both of you. It also means treating each influencer as an individual. Every influencer is different when it comes to what they would like from a brand collaboration, so stay open-minded while being very specific about what you would like the influencer to do on your behalf. You will never know the best incentive to get them to work with you if you don't ask!

—Neal Schaffer, author of *The Age of Influence: The Power of Influencers to Elevate Your Brand* (HarperCollins Leadership, 2020)

Measuring influencer marketing is the same. There are some things you can measure, such as *reach* (how many people saw a particular post), *clicks* (traffic sent from a post to linked assets), *leads*, and *sales*. Any campaign can make use of UTM parameters to fully attribute results, which we'll go into detail on within Chapter 13.

What you can't measure is the number of people who were introduced to your brand or products by an influencer and decide to purchase days or even weeks later. You also can't measure how people's perceptions change (hopefully for the better) due to that influencer's efforts.

Simply put, this is *brand awareness*. The more people know and talk about your brand, the more likely they will be to think of or consider your brand when the need arises.

It's impossible to measure accurately, but when it's executed well, your business should see improvements to the most important metric of all—your bottom line.