

# THE WHAT AND WHY OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

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**5W PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCY**

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The logo for 5W Public Relations Agency, featuring the letters '5W' in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. The '5' is significantly larger than the 'W', and they are positioned to the left of each other.

## THE WHAT AND WHY OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

Everywhere a consumer turns these days, advertisements are waiting to share their messages. Average consumers [are shown hundreds](#), if not thousands, of ads each day. Think about it: everywhere you go, you're shown some sort of ad. This could be on your Facebook feed, walking down the street, riding in an Uber. Literally everywhere you turn, there is another company trying to convince you to look their way. So how do you stand out above the noise?

It's true: the levels of trust that consumers have for the media, governing entities, and even business CEOs and leaders has plummeted in the last year, according to [a recent study](#) by the largest PR firm in the world, Edelman. This is one of the many reasons that marketing via influencers continues to be a quickly growing marketing format.

Influencers have made a livelihood out of building relationships with followers. Through exotic travels, witty humor, or even just pure good looks, influencers have built social media empires with millions of followers. Followers who are just waiting to open their wallets to give themselves a shot at replicating that lifestyle for themselves.

A deep level of trust has developed between influencers and their followers. Followers

share that same connection with their friends and family, which results in a quickly growing personal brand. This is why public relations professionals and marketing professionals wisely spend their time looking for the right influencers. The "right" influencer for your brand will vary based on the target market and your goals for marketing.



## WHY EVEN BOTHER WITH INFLUENCER PR OR MARKETING?

Word of mouth is the single most powerful form of marketing in the world – and influencer marketing is exactly that. [McKinsey & Company says that word of mouth and influencer marketing are approximately twice as effective as any type of advertising](#). Because an influencer and their followers have developed such a good relationship, advertising through them is as effective as word of mouth.

Most marketers will agree that word of mouth remains one of the most effective ways to gain

momentum (either positive or, if you're not careful, negative!) in a market. With technology taking center stage in most social interactions now, influencer marketing has sprung up as a viable alternative to word of mouth marketing. Now, one opinion is echoed to hundreds, thousands, or even millions of followers. Talk about getting your point across.

Additionally, traditional advertising is becoming increasingly ineffective. With television losing audience members to various streaming services, the vast majority of its power is lost. However, social media continues to trend upward. Everyone can access it immediately with their phones, and the prevalence of this technology has led consumers to be more easily reached than ever. But this doesn't mean that marketing is easier. Remember that statistic about seeing 5,000 ads a day? There is a lot of clutter out there.

Influencer marketing allows consumers to relate to the brands that they choose to buy. People want to relate to something, not to give their money to a faceless entity.

Now that the internet has made everything and everyone so accessible, the consumers of today simply demand more.

## WHEN BEGINNING A CAMPAIGN, KNOW YOUR GOALS

An influencer marketing campaign should be approached like any other, meaning it needs to be planned out. Here are some things that should be taken into account:

- Your target market. Who are you targeted customers or audiences?
- What should be considered "success" for this campaign? What outcomes are being pursued the most?
- How will the brand be highlighted by the information that is conveyed?
- Who are the most important influencers in the targeted niche? Are there particular influencers that would benefit most from the product or service?
- Is the entirety of the team on board with the outcomes or the focus of the campaign? Have they been allowed to weigh in on any of these subjects?
- What are the best platforms for the campaign? How will it serve to move the company's goals forward?
- How is the campaign getting started? Will there be an event (even a simple unboxing)? Is the influencer going to require instruction on how to use the product/service?
- How are you going to measure your results?



## MEASURING THE RESULTS OF AN INFLUENCER CAMPAIGN

Before you start a campaign, whether it's influencer marketing or not, set the goals for what the company wants to gain. Whether it's increasing exposure, improving sales, or improving the relationship between the company and its consumers, having something to measure the success of the campaign is important.

In nearly every situation, measuring the quantitative and qualitative outcomes is going to be key. The quantitative are the numbers of the campaign:

- How many unique views were received?
- How much interaction was there with the influencer (likes, shares, comments)?
- Have sales been impacted at all?

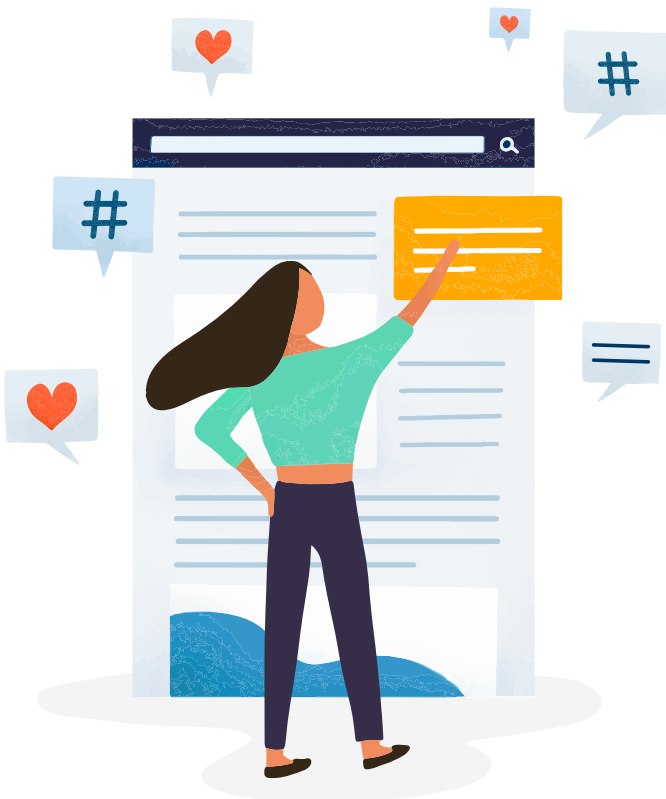
The qualitative has to do with whether the reputation of the brand was affected. Specifically, was the reputation enhanced? While this can be difficult to measure, the easiest way to do so is to read through comments and ask questions to people that interact with the influencer.

## FORMING RELATIONSHIPS WITH INFLUENCERS

Once you've outlined the parameters of your campaign and in what ways you'll measure the return on investment, it's now time to select the right influencer or influencers for your needs.

It's important to remember here that influencers should be treated like customers, not commodities. In an environment where fake often comes first, you want to find influencers who can share authentic viewpoints and perspectives. This approach builds loyalty. After all, it's likely one reason why the strongest influencers have gained such a strong following — through quality engagement with their audience.

And you don't necessarily need to go after the LeBron James of influencers, the biggest name with millions of followers. There are other



influencers who maintain smaller audiences, but often this can signal quality over quantity.

Once you have outlined the goals of your campaign, do some poking around on your target social media platform and start a list of influencers you'd like to form a relationship with. These could be a mix of larger market influencers as well as "micro" influencers within your niche. Be careful not to just go for the shiny influencer who has nothing to do with your niche — your dollars and/or product will be much more well spent with an appropriate influencer!

When you begin reaching out to prospective influencers, be polite and show that you've been following their content authentically. There's nothing quite so ingenuine as a generic comment left on an influencer's post. Take your time, establish rapport, and show them why your product would be best marketed in their hands.

And it's ok if the influencer you have chosen isn't interested! Only they know what types of brands will mesh well with their audiences, so don't be discouraged if you get a rejection. But chances are, if you've done your homework, the influencer will be happy to have the opportunity to promote your brand.

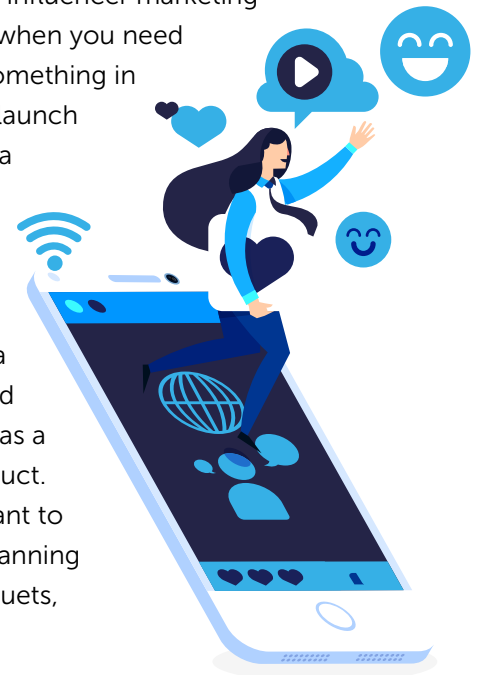
## LONG TERM BENEFITS OF UTILIZING INFLUENCER MARKETING

Influencer campaigns need to be carefully planned, executed, and managed. If you plan your year ahead of time (by quarter, for example), you can align your influencer marketing campaign plans with your overall strategy for your brand for the year.

Over time, you'll find that you can build strong and lasting relationships both with influencers and with your customers through this avenue. Remember, word of mouth marketing is perhaps the most trusted form of "advertising," and you want to do everything you can to ensure that conversation remains positive.

You can also utilize influencer marketing to make a "splash" when you need to. This could be something in anticipation of the launch of your product or a "boost" when you feel you're on a bit of a plateau.

Let's say you have a brand that's focused on a new software as a service (SAAS) product. This product is meant to streamline event planning for weddings, banquets,



corporate retreats, etc. You're wanting to launch this product with a big splash so that you can gain as much buzz and momentum as you can right out of the gate. How can influencers help with this?

It all starts by seeking out influencers in the right niche. Wedding planners, vendors, or hotels that frequently host events or retreats would be examples of where you might find some influencers suitable for your needs.

Perhaps you can plan an event to roll out the software. Select the highest performing influencers you can afford, as well as a few niche or micro influencers who may have smaller audiences but a strong engagement rate.

Treat the influencers like valuable partners, and really roll out the red carpet to welcome them to your brand. You want them to use your product, to enjoy it, and to recommend it to their followers.

Another benefit of using influencers? They can make just about any topic fun. Some consumers may hear "software" and tune out due to boredom. Influencers using your software and enjoying it can have

a massive, far reaching effect on the public perception of your brand — no matter what it involves.

With the meteoric rise of social media — and the staying power it clearly has — influencer marketing has become a leading choice of marketers and public relations professionals alike. No matter how big or small your brand is, chances are it could benefit from an influencer campaign. Don't be afraid to get creative, plan ahead, and watch your reach and influence grow just by utilizing an already-engaged audience to announce your brand's arrival.

