



10 STEPS TO BECOMING

A SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER



INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing means that one or more people are deployed to influence the behavior of a target group. Well-known influencers usually have many followers on social media, and in particular on the app Instagram. By posting specific content that aligns with your content strategy they can “influence” their followers.

So, what is an influencer? The definition of an influencer is someone who has the power to influence / affect the purchasing decisions of others. There are several reasons why someone has the power to influence others, amongst them are authority, knowledge or because they are seen as experts. Furthermore some of them have a strong relationship with their followers, their followers feel as connected to the influencer as to their inner circle. Whenever they recommend a certain product / service they are very open to this recommendation. Note: authenticity is key!

Anyone who thinks millennials don't do that much and are lazy has probably never met a social media influencer. This actually also applies to anyone who thinks that social doesn't play a crucial role in a business. Influencers are and will continue to be the future of advertising.

Old-fashioned advertising campaigns via TV, radio and banners on the internet are making way for the popular millennial that (usually) advertises brands on social media platforms, mainly Instagram. Influencers replace the billboard and TV commercial. And this strategy works for businesses where old-fashioned marketing doesn't, scientists say.

Nowadays they belong to the fixed mix of marketing methods of many major brands. Influencers are a great, new way for businesses to bring brand awareness to people in a more authentic and sincere way.



1. CHOOSE YOUR NICHE

Before you start, it is important to ask yourself what industry you're interested in. Find something that you're passionate about and enjoy doing in your free time.

Whether it's makeup, fashion, cooking, etc, this step will help you identify your target audience you're trying to reach and from there you can now create your brand.

The tricky part of finding a niche is that, well, there aren't necessarily a lot of them left to grab. Just think back to those 8 million mommy bloggers – and there are probably equally vast numbers of people sharing their views on fashion, beauty, fitness, travel and food.

But don't worry. You don't need to create an entirely new specialism to be a success as a social media influencer. And if you did become a unique social authority on, say, monkey haircuts, then it sort of limits your appeal to most brands.

The reality is that to be an authentic and engaging social media influencer, your subject needs to be something you can speak about in an intelligent and inspiring way. In other words, you don't really find your niche as a social media influencer – your niche finds you.

The key is to make sure you specialise. If you have a passion for hill running, but you're also really into omelettes and woolly hats, then it's important to focus on your most influential topic – or at least only supplement it with related and relevant topics.

That's not to say your Instagram should be filled with post after post of omelettes/woolly hats. It's just making sure that you are developing a clear identity for yourself in your channels.

Typically, when deciding on how to become an influencer, you can choose one of the following categories:

Travel

Lifestyle

Fashion

Food

Beauty

Sports

Gaming

Entertainment

Tech

Health and Fitness

You don't have to limit yourself to just one of these categories. You can combine two or more of these niches. Make sure the individual niches align with one another. For instance, you can combine travel and lifestyle or beauty and fashion when you decide on your niche.

It is not mandatory for you to stick to these established and well-known niches. The key to becoming an influencer is adding your unique voice to everything you do. So, don't hesitate to experiment and carve your own niche that allows you to exhibit your strengths as well as your quirks.

Or, if you can't be bothered to do all that, you could always just go and arm-wrestle all the other influencers in your space. That shouldn't take too long.



2. CREATE ACCOUNT

Create a professional account on the platform that you want to use.

Let's say that you want to use Instagram. The first thing you need to take care of is your bio.

Creating an interesting and creative Instagram bio that grabs your audience's attention should be a key priority for all brands and influencers.

The best Instagram bios will showcase your brand's personality, promote your business, and convince people to follow you.

Use keywords for the name field

If you click on Edit Profile, the first field you will find is Name. This is different from your Username, which forms your Instagram profile URL (<http://instagram.com/username>) and gives your profile page its brand name.

The Name field, in fact, makes up the first 30 characters of your Instagram bio and is key to helping with Instagram SEO.

When people search on Instagram, the words in the Name field are analyzed for matches. So if you want to rank well in searches from an Instagram SEO perspective, it is crucial you use keywords relevant to your niche in the Name section (not necessarily your business name, as the title suggests).

Emojis can also be searched for, and so should also feature in the Name field if appropriate.

An Instagram bio has to make an impact on your audience. It has to tell people what your business is, what you do, and why they need you. It also has to convince people to not only follow you but to also complete a particular task of your choosing (like visiting your website).

And as you are only allowed 150 characters for your bio (plus the 30 characters for your Instagram Name) this is not an easy task!

Using emojis in your Instagram bio will give your profile a visually fresh and fun feel while helping your brand stand out from the crowd.

Emojis also take up less space than words, enabling you to add extra info about your brand that the character count wouldn't allow for with text.



3. DRAW ATTENTION

Now for the fun part! This is your chance to get creative. Create interesting videos for your audience that is helpful and attention grabbing. Think outside the box for an original idea that hasn't been created before.

For example, "Eating at the Worst Reviewed Restaurant", "Blindfolded Makeup Challenge", "Boyfriend Rates My Outfits" were all creative ideas that youtubers came up with to entertain their audience without involving click bait. This will get you the right type of attention that can lead to your audience subscribing to your channel and sharing it on social media.

An effective way to ensure that your content garners traction is to create content that your audience wants.

In order to get relevant content ideas, you can run a quick Google search for your niche. Scroll down to the bottom of search results to find the long-tail keywords that are being used by your target audience. You can also search platforms such as Quora and Reddit to get an idea of what your target audience is talking about. If you want your content to strike a chord with your audience, you must have a deep understanding of your follower community.

Most social media platforms have an analytics section that can give you meaningful insights about your target audience. You get access to audience demographics data such as gender, geographic location, occupation, online behavior, etc.

In addition, you should pay close attention to the comments section of your social media and blog posts. It can be a goldmine of fresh content ideas that your audience wants to read/watch. You can also conduct social media polls and ask your followers to tell you all about their preferences and pain points.



4. BE CONSISTENT

Publishing high-quality content on a regular basis is one of the most effective ways to retain your audience's attention. When you deliver good content on a regular basis, it creates a sense of anticipation among your audience.

That, in turn, boosts audience engagement and increases your reach. It is advisable that you create a timeline for all of the content you plan on publishing in the next few months. You can also create a weekly or monthly series to keep your audience hooked.

Create relevant and unique content ... and keep it coming. That doesn't mean create unique content ... just like everyone else. Certainly, there are trends in your industry that everyone is blogging, posting and updating about – and so can you. Just put your spin on it. You have ideas and a brand that sets you apart from others. Use that to create content that answers questions, addresses challenges or entertains.

This is an age of information dodgeball, and your audience is expert at ducking information that doesn't have immediate relevance. They have so much information whizzing by their heads, that just tossing out an update, tweet or blog once a week is not going to make contact. It is suggested to update content at least once a day, ideally several times (but not every minute – don't go into overload mode), to keep your brand and information in front of the pack.

Have a consistent presence. There are tons of social media sites out there, as well as blogs. Twitter, Facebook, Google+, blogs on your own website are just a few options out there. Find the ones that are most relevant and accessed by your industry and create a profile. Keep your branding and tone consistent and easily recognizable across all the social media platforms you choose to use. Salesforce suggest pumping up your content with industry terms to optimize exposure in search engines.



5. NETWORK WITH INFLUENCERS

Work with other influencers and content creators to increase your visibility online. Don't be afraid to reach out to people locally and over social media. Being associated with other influencers that have a larger following can help you gain more followers and subscribers. Partner with them to come up with creative ideas that can get both of you tons of traffic on your channels.

However, You must be able to offer something of use to the other influencer in order to tempt them to collaborate with you. If the bigger influencers seems out of reach, you can even partner with micro-influencers who have small yet highly engaged fan bases.

Don't make the mistake to see other influencers as opponents! You will learn lots of things from other influencers' experience.

You will be able to know what the new trends are, how to engage with your followers, and lots of other useful tips.



6. POWER OF HASHTAGS

As an Influencer, it is really important to use the right hashtags!

For example, on Instagram hashtags are everywhere—but do you know how to use hashtags on Instagram to get the most value out of them?

Hashtags might not seem like much of a priority on the surface, but they remain one of the most important aspects of promoting your Instagram.

Once you start digging into using hashtags on Instagram for example, you'll probably run into plenty of questions: Do you know which hashtags are leading followers to your page? What are the most popular tags in your industry? How many hashtags on Instagram do you tack on a typical post?

Without a keen understanding of Instagram hashtags and how they work, they can become #overkill pretty quickly.

Instead of just tossing dozens of tags on a post and hoping for the best, you need a strategy for using hashtags on Instagram. Some types of brands have it easier on Instagram, while others have to get a little more creative.

Most important, hashtags are what make your Instagram content discoverable.

Think about the time and energy that goes into any given Instagram post.

From snagging the perfect snapshot to crafting a clever caption, you don't want all of that legwork to go to waste.

That's where hashtags come in. Users can discover content by searching hashtags on their own or tapping through related posts for a particular tag.

Do your BEST when you're brainstorming about hashtags!



7. INTERACT WITH FOLLOWERS

It is really important to interact with your followers. It makes them feel special, and they will stay with you for a long time.

Here are some tips on how to interact with your followers:

- Be a Storyteller.
- Be Personable.
- Conduct Polls and Surveys.
- Use Video.
- Ask for their opinion on different things.
- Ask them questions in your stories.



8. LAUNCH A WEBSITE

If you ask someone how to become an influencer, they are likely to give you a lot of advice on content strategies and social media platforms.

Very few people will tell you the impact a website can have on your reputation as an influencer. However, anyone who is remotely familiar with marketing and branding knows how important a website can be.

So, why is your website important? As your fan base grows, many people will be tempted to run a quick Google search for your name. Having a well-designed and fully functional website adds credibility to your image and helps you win the trust of your target audience.

Creating your own website is the best way to gain credibility and bring traffic towards your brand. Use your site to tell your story and attract businesses and consumers. A website will give you a professional look as an established influencer and companies will now be able to contact you directly.

You could even sell merchandise to fans and subscribers that visit you on the site as well.

Additionally, having a well-designed blog section on your website further establishes your authority in your niche. It also improves organic search traffic to your website, thereby expanding your reach even further.



9. CONTACT BRANDS

Many online businesses nowadays are looking for people with strong online presences to advertise for them. Brand sponsorship and advertising plays a huge role into social media influencing. Reach out to brands via email or in person to let them know your interested in advertising for their business.

Most companies will pay you per post and it can vary depending on your follower count, engagement rate, etc.

Create and send your media kit:

Whenever you pitch a brand or make an introduction, be sure to send along your media kit! When building your media kit, make sure it has the following things:

Your social handles and website

Audience size on all platforms

Audience demographics (age, gender, location)

Examples of imagery you've produced in the past to give them an idea of the kind of content you'd create to advertise them. Depending on the brand you're pitching, you might switch these images up!

A list of brands you've worked with in the past (if any)



10. CONTACT AN AGENCY

Once you have a larger following you might want to consider contacting an influencer management agency. There, they can help you negotiate deals with brands, get in touch with other businesses, and even set you up with a PR team.

This step will give you more time to focus on making industry connections and with the right moves, you could even land a partnership with a huge company.

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