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Influencer Marketing 101: Keywords and Buzzwords Explained

“Who are influencers and what is influencer marketing?”

Audience: The group of individuals and social media users who follow and engage with a specific influencer. By sharing authentic, engaging and relevant content on a consistent basis, influencers develop and grow their audience. Over time, a trusted relationship forms, which is one of the most valuable assets influencers possess.

Audience Demographics: Various characteristics that define an influencer's audience such as location, age, gender, income level, marital status, occupation, religion, number of kids, etc. This information is particularly interesting to advertisers who aim to partner with influencers whose audience demographics align with their target customer set.

Audience Health: A term that refers to how engaged and/or active an influencer's audience is. In recent years, audience health has become a topic of interest as [fake accounts or "bots"](#) become a growing concern on social platforms.

Celebrity-influencer: Individuals who have achieved more traditional “celebrity status” based on their social media presence alone. Alternatively, a celebrity-influencer is often a well-known actor, model, singer, or TV personality who has also amassed a large following on social media. [Read more about the different types of influencers here.](#)

Collaboration: A relationship between a brand and a collaborator with the goal being that the collaborator produces social media content for the brand. Synonym: Partnership

Comment Pods: Used primarily on Instagram, these are private, invite-only group chats where members share their latest posts and every pod member is expected to leave a relevant comment (i.e. more than 3 words, no emojis, etc.). It's hard to tell when Instagram comment pods first came on the scene, but it's safe to say they're a direct result of [Instagram's infamous algorithm change.](#)

Feed: The platform interface where a user views social content posted by people and influencers they follow. Or, if you're looking at your own feed, you will see your own post.

Finstagram: A finstagram account is a secondary Instagram account that some Instagram users and/or influencers create to share content with a more controlled audience. It can be an account followed exclusively by friends and family, or a stealth account where they can post things anonymously.

FTC, or Federal Trade Commission: A government agency whose job is to protect America's consumers—recently in the spotlight for regulations they've implemented for influencer endorsements. Read more on the FTC and their regulations for influencers [here](#) and learn about their recent case against a beauty brand [here.](#)

Influencer: A creative professional, person, or figure, who is motivated primarily by their craft or passion, and who possesses an ability to affect culture through the unique creativity they share with their digital audience. Synonyms

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include: a. Collaborator: Collectively's term for an influencer in our community and b. Content Creator: An individual who creates content on social media.

Influencer Endorsement: Support or approval for a brand's product or service, integrated into Influencer content in a creative way that generates awareness and consideration for a brand.

Influencer Marketing: The practice of connecting with influential people on social media to help communicate brand messaging.

Influencer Rate Card: A concise outline of an influencer's costs of services. An influencer's rate card will typically reflect the cost of content integrations and sponsored posts. Oftentimes, discounted rates are offered for a series of multiple posts, versus a single post. Rate cards may also include associated costs for licensing, or brand usage of posts, assets and/or likeness.

Influencer Representation: Today, it's not just high-profile celebrities, Hollywood stars and athletes who have agents representing their business interests. Many influencers have management teams or agents who bring them brand deals, negotiate contracts and even manage their content calendars.

Instagram Business Account: A type of Instagram account that allows businesses to access deeper insights into Instagram content and audience behavior, and to take advantage of exclusive business features that allow customers to connect with them more easily. In order to set up a business account, you must connect your Instagram account to a Facebook page. Today, Influencers with business accounts have deeper insight into their audiences and get access to features other non-business accounts don't have.

Creator Account: A new status of Instagram account launched in 2019 solely for creators and influencers. Creator Accounts provide influencer's with unique features like the ability to track follower growth, manage direct messages with folders, and access Instagram's Branded Content Tool.

Instagram Bots: Bots (short for robots) are designed to help users perform actions such as liking, commenting and following other accounts through automation. Any sort of automation on Instagram violates the platform's terms of use.

Micro-influencer: A creator with a smaller but usually more engaged audience (typically 10-100K followers). The term can also refer to an influencer who has a hyper-localized or niche audience.

Personal Brand: The features, values and/or particular qualities of an influencer, collaborator, content creator or digital publisher. When partnering with brands, influencers are mindful to make sure the potential brand partner aligns with or compliments their own personal brand, so they don't lose the respect and trust of their audience.

Platform: A social media or web application where influencers post content and build their audiences. Platforms include: Instagram, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok and Facebook. Sometimes, the term is used interchangeably with the word "channel."

Platform Algorithms: Computer code that determines what content users see in their feed, and the frequency at which they see it. Platform algorithms are designed based on various parameters, including user patterns and historical behavior.

Segment: Refers to a specific group of influencers differentiated by the type of content they create, or by the specific audience demographics they reach (fashion, food, family, DIY, millennials, etc.). Synonyms: Vertical or Category.

Shadowban: When a platform, inadvertently or directly, blocks a user's posts from being seen by other users. In the past, it has been thought by some that Instagram's algorithm was "shadow banning" influencer content. The shadow ban was thought to be in response to hashtag overuse, or the perceived use of automated engagement services, bots or buying fake followers. Eva Chen, Instagram's Director of Fashion Partnerships, [said "shadow banning" is just myth.](#) In 2019, Instagram launched the [Restrict](#) feature that allows users to block bullies or harmful followers from commenting on their content (essentially a form of shadow banning.)

Total digital audience: The sum of an influencer's potential reach across all active social platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Tumblr, Snapchat, TikTok, and Blog audience.

Verified: Social media accounts that are identified with a blue checkmark on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, which signifies credibility to the particular account. With the advent of trolls and obsessive fandoms, many copycat and/or fake accounts mask for the real thing—the verified symbol presents proof of legitimacy. [It's unclear exactly how one can become verified.](#) Traditionally, it's been granted by the social platforms themselves to celebrities and influencers of a certain status.

Wild Wild West: A term used to illustrate the lack of clear universal standards within the Influencer Marketing industry.

Get smart on the keywords and jargon around content creation.

Affiliate Link: A custom URL given to influencer partners and ambassadors to use when promoting goods or services online. The link tracks clicks and purchases, which can help measure the amount of sales an influencer generates, and provide a percentage of revenue on those sales to the influencer.

Call to Action, or CTA: A message that invites someone (a viewer, audience member, user, fan, or consumer) to perform a specific type of action. Common influencer CTA's include "like and comment to enter" a sweepstakes or "swipe up" to view a product shared within an Instagram Story.

Caption: The written copy included with a social post. Each social platform has different caption parameters. For example, Twitter captions are limited to 280 characters and Instagram allows 2,200 characters. Captions describe the content or photo being shared and convey the personality and tone of the influencer who's posting.

Disclosure: A written and visible indicator required by the FTC and included within sponsored influencer content that clearly conveys the material connection(s) between the influencer and sponsoring brand. Compliant disclosures include: The word or #hashtag ad, paid, or sponsored—more on disclosures [here.](#)

Flat Lay: A photograph or other type of image taken from an overhead perspective that depicts a group of items organized in a stylized way. Example: [@flatlays.](#)

Hashtag (#): A means to align your content and/or social media posts with a larger audience or conversation by adding searchable keywords or phrases; i.e. [#ootd](#) (outfit of the day) or [#nycblogger.](#)

Integrated vs. Dedicated: Describes content referencing multiple brands vs. just a single brand. Mostly used in reference to YouTube videos, and sometimes Instagram posts. An *integrated* video or Instagram post may mention multiple beauty brands, whereas a *dedicated* video only mentions one brand sponsor.

Instagram and/or Facebook Live: A video streaming feature on Instagram and Facebook. Viewers are able to watch live and interact in real-time via comments, likes, and sharing. On Facebook, a live video is saved after the live stream is over. On Instagram, a live video disappears after 24 hours, or can be saved to a user's highlights so that it can be viewed after the 24-hour window.

Organic vs. Paid: Refers to the two distinct types of influencer content: non-sponsored and sponsored. Organic content is non-sponsored and holds no material connection to a brand advertiser. Paid content, or sponsored content, is driven in some capacity by a sponsoring brand advertiser.

Link in Bio: A phrase and call to action (CTA) influencer's use primarily on Instagram to signal to their audience that they have put more info in their bio. Affiliate links will often be added in the bio.

Monetize: The process of converting assets or services into a source of revenue. For influencers, monetization occurs when they are able to earn cash from the content they create on their social media accounts or blogs. Typically, the most lucrative form of monetization for influencers is sponsored content, followed by affiliate revenue.

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Plandid: A carefully planned photo that's meant to look candid, but is actually strategically planned out. Coined as the most indulgent Instagram trend of 2017 by [Man Repeller](#).

Shoppable: Social media posts that allow users to initiate a purchase from, or within, the post itself. Historically, brands have had to request access to exclusive shoppable features just for merchants (like Shopify for [Instagram](#) and buyable pins on [Pinterest](#)). Influencers leverage various affiliate programs (such as [LIKEtoKNOW.it](#) for Instagram) that allow their fans to easily buy the products they share about. More recently, the Instagram Swipe Up feature has enabled influencer Story content to become shoppable and in spring of 2019, [Instagram launched their own in-app shopping feature](#) accessible to select merchants and influencers.

Unboxing/Haul: A specific type of video content that depicts an influencer opening, reacting to, and using various products. In an unboxing, a brand sends a package of products and the video shows the influencer "unboxing" the contents. In a haul video, the influencer has purchased products themselves and shares/reviews the items they bought, i.e. "Watch my latest [Sephora haul!](#)"

Swipe Up: A feature on both Instagram Stories and Snapchat that allows a user to link to a website from their post, so their audience can get more specific information about the product or service they are discussing. Example: "Swipe up to buy the lipstick I am wearing today!"

Influencer-brand collaboration: strategy and execution.

Always On: A phrase that describes an "evergreen" or ongoing campaign, meaning the campaign is occurring over a longer period of time, without a seasonal-specific timeline.

Content Reviews: When a brand or agency requests to approve influencer content before it goes live.

Creative Brief: A high-level concept or set of ideas that provides key messaging and direction for content creation. Collectively creative briefs guide influencers to ensure their content meets brand standards and generates optimum engagement.

Exclusivity: Refers to specific rights or restrictions a brand or agency might enact at any point during a collaborative effort. For example, an influencer may be asked to refrain from posting about competitive beauty retailers while partnering with Sephora.

Influencer Recruiting: The process of identifying the right influencers for a campaign, gauging their interest and availability, and contracting influencers to participate in a project. Depending on the scope of the collaboration, this process can take anywhere from 1-4 weeks.

In-Kind Collaboration or Sampling: A campaign in which goods or services are provided as a form payment (as opposed to money) in exchange for branded content.

Instagram Takeover: When a collaborator or influencer assumes responsibility for a brand's Instagram account for a short period of time, to share content with the brand's audience from their perspective.

Multi-tiered Approach: An activation that strategically leverages various influencers across different audience sizes to ensure all key performance indicators are addressed and high-level brand goals are met. We wrote more about developing a multi-tiered approach [here](#).

Off Brand: When an influencer's content lacks alignment to a brand, from an aesthetic perspective or based on their actual content themes.

Product Integration: When a brand's product is explicitly introduced, included, mentioned or displayed within influencer content.

Social Only: A campaign in which content is posted on social platforms only (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc.), and no long-form content (blog posts or YouTube videos) is created. In the past two years, there has been an increase in social only Instagram campaigns.

Licensing 101: What happens to influencer content after it's created?

Boosting: Investing in a social post to increase its reach, executed by an influencer or brand that has whitelisting access.

Dark Post: A social ad that looks identical to an influencer's native post.

Licensing: The process of acquiring the right to use influencer content, or likeness, based on permissions or usage rights. The licensing process varies in complexity based on the specific permissions a brand requests, including use of content for paid digital advertising, social media boosting, and other forms of digital repurposing and promotion. Some brands request usage rights for print marketing in catalogues or store signage.

Paid Social Amplification or Amplification: The practice of investing in influencer social content to increase its reach.

Whitelisting: The process by which an influencer grants a brand access to promote their social media content on their behalf.

SmartBoosting: Collectively's solution for boosting influencer content—100% secure and seamless for brands and influencers.

How is influencer content measured?

Conversion: In this context, when a link or URL within a piece of content leads to a marketing goal being met. Conversion is measured most directly by requiring influencers to use trackable or affiliate links. Conversion goals may include purchases or sales, website visits, brand channel follows, etc., as defined by the brand.

Cost Per Engagement (CPE): The cost associated with each engagement (like, comment, or share). CPE is calculated by dividing the cost of content by the total engagements the content generated.

Click-through Rate: The rate at which a link or URL that an influencer shares is clicked on. Influencers who generate high click-through rates have hyper-engaged and interested audiences who take action on their content.

Earned Media: The engagements (shares, likes and comments) and impressions generated as a result of audience members sharing influencer content. Earned media is the natural affect of influencer content, and the measured amplification, exposure, and organic advocacy that develops as a result.

Engagement Rate: A key metric that is a proxy for the quality of content based on the number of interactions. The general formula is total engagement divided by total impressions.

Impressions: The number of times a piece of content is displayed. Each platform reports on impressions differently, with slight variations according to specific platform algorithms.

Influencer Return on Investment (ROI): The measurable return a brand receives from their investment in influencer content. Measuring ROI varies, as there is no industry standard. To begin to truly measure ROI, marketers must: 1) know what role influencer marketing plays within their organization's larger marketing strategy and 2) have a deep understanding of how content strategy, campaign goals, platform nuances and influencer types affect outcomes.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI): A trackable metric used to guide the goals of a project, help measure its success, and uncover the need for a particular activation.

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Sentiment Analysis: The process of computationally identifying and categorizing opinions expressed within the comments posted in response to influencer content, in order to determine whether attitudes towards a particular topic, product, etc., are positive, negative or neutral.

Total Content Engagement: The sum of all shares, likes and comments. This serves as an input for Engagement Rate, a key metric that is a proxy for the quality of content based on the number of interactions.