

THE INFLUENCE OF INFLUENCERS

ARE INFLUENCERS THE NEW FUTURE ?

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(D)

Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat are a way of living these days. Who would have thought of that 10 years ago? That we will watch "stupid memes" and tag each other in almost every post with cats. OK, we admit it is quite funny. The world shifted from television to social media, also the world of advertising changed. Consumers look at other consumers to decide what products they are going to purchase. In the past we watched tv commercials or the famous Tell Sell, nowadays we will look at our favourite personalities and follow them on Instagram. Our favourite personalities, also called influencers are the new role models for generation z (generation born from 1992 till 2010) (Jan willem Doorenbos, 2011). We want the clothes the influencers are wearing, we want to visit the same restaurants, we want their life. The impact they have on society is huge. Big brands like Levis and Nike are using them as a marketing tool. But is there more in it for the influencer than just selling a brand? The question that makes us curious is: what does the future hold for social influencer marketing?

Influencers(L)

Everyone heard of the word influencer, but what does it mean? An influencer is an individual whose actions and opinions have an impact on potential buyers (Dijkstra, 2013). There are a lot of them and they are all different from each other. Someone can be an influencer because of what he writes about a brand, a passion or a love for that brand. Influencers have the power to move the followers into action.

Influencers use Social media to reach their followers and potential buyers. They can be very effective for a brand, this is because their followers listen and care about what they have to say. People follow influencers because of a certain interest they have in a subject.

Influencer marketing(L)

So we talked about the influencer but what does the influencer marketing mean? Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on partnering with key individuals to promote your brand message to their online audiences. Rather than buying an ad to reach people, you instead sponsor an influencer to spread your message for you. (Entrepreneur, 2014) The kind of impact influencers have on a brand can be huge. In a social media marketing context, the more influence a person has, the more appeal that individual has to companies or other individuals who want to promote an idea or sell a product. Many big brands have started working with influencers rather than celebrities.

Best case(L)

As an example just look at the car brand Ford (Guardian, 2013). They decided to use influencers instead of celebrities.

They chose this because people rather listen to someone they know or have a connection with than someone they don't.

They used 100 social media influencers to promote their Fiesta subcompact. The influencers reviewed the car by taking a testing drive with it. This resulted in 30,000 consumers for the Ford website and 83 percent were non-Ford holders.



The main goals of influencer marketing (D)

Brands are beginning to understand the power of the influencers but we are at the start of a new marketing revolution. Brands have already increased their budgets for this year influencer marketing and it will be growing in the upcoming years (Andrew Hickey, *Linkedin*).

Before we will predict the future of influencer marketing we will take a look at the current developments. There is not just one model that says, step 1: hire an influencer and you get the profit you would like. Unfortunately it is not that easy. What we are able to tell you is where brands use influencers for.

- Brand awareness: Influencer marketing is a great way to create brand awareness and to connect with a specific target audience . Start-up companies have a lot of benefit of influencers because they do not have a lot of followers of their own and know they can reach their target audience via the influencers (Gosse,2016).
- Creating engagement: Influencers do not only reach a specific target audience they are also really close to them ,can connect and easily start a conversation.

That is why influencers are a good medium to use, to create engagement with the target audience (Gosse 2016).

- Targeting selling: If a brand is releasing a new product, is it sometimes very difficult to approach the consumers. To make use of influencers it is easier to specific promote your product that will finally result in more profit.
- Promote your social media channel: When your brand already have awareness but do not have that much followers on the social media accounts. A solution to have more followers is to use influencers to extend the range. For example that the influencers do a take-over on the social media accounts with the aim to collect more followers (Gosse,2016).

Business model (D)

If you see a campaign with influencers it seems more natural but there is also a business model they are using. When you are using influencers in a campaign you can pay them in different ways.

- Money: The brand pays for the social posts the influencers does with their product

- Reward: The brand sends the influencer their product as a gift or they are invited to their event. In hope that the influencer will use their products

In a nutshell (D)

So influencers are people who are very popular on social media channels who have a lot of followers. The current role of influencers is promoting a product or a service via social media. They have such a big influence on the consumer that a lot of brand use them as a marketing tool. The brands will send them goods in hope for that they will post a photo or video of the product. The influencers get paid, it can be that the brand will offer money to post a photo or a reward that they sends gift or gets invited to an event. If we look at the current position of the influencer it is really "just making money" and showing a "perfect world". Didn't they started with the aim to send a message to the world or to inspire them?

Negative influence on society(D)

Besides that, there are a lot of people who loves to follow influencers and be a part of their perfect life are there also people who are more critical about them. They find that their posts are fake, you would not find any pictures in their profile where they are crying, upset or

shows their insecurity. They do not post that kind of pictures because they think their followers are not interested to see that and the brands are less interested to send them goods (Scarlet, 2015).

Another critical note was published last October in newspaper Metro that vloggers and bloggers causes money problems for teenagers and their parents (Metro,2015) For the kids it is really hard to proof against the appealing products the vloggers use. The kids are having a lot of peer pressure of their friends and want to buy that stuff that the vlogger is promoting.

Not only the purchases of the products also the pranks the vloggers do and their languages are not always that polite. Some of the primary schools in the Netherlands are asking their parents not to show vlogs of Enzo Knol (really popular Dutch kids influencer) because of this abusive language (Josan,2016).

There is a lot of critics on the influencers because most of them are using their influence in a negative way. Why should we use them as a marketing tool?

Why tell me why(D)

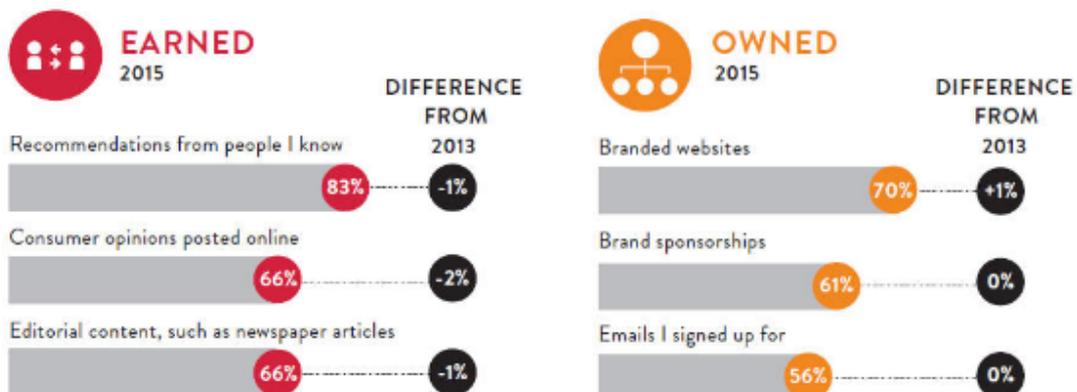
Several studies showed that the consumer has the most trust in people they know. That is why influencers are perfect to use as a marketing tool.

Market research institute Nielsen showed in their research that 83% of the

consumers trust their friends what they recommend. Not only their friends and family are trustworthy but also two-thirds of the consumers indicates that they trust the online reviews that are given of a product. It doesn't matter if we actually know them or we think we know them it works to win the

EARNED AND OWNED MEDIA REMAIN THE MOST TRUSTED AD FORMATS

PERCENT OF GLOBAL RESPONDENTS WHO COMPLETELY OR SOMEWHAT TRUST ADVERTISING FORMAT



bron: Nielsen: GLOBAL TRUST IN ADVERTISING 2015

consumers trust (Nielsen, 2015).

In the end the effect on sales is most important for the companies when they are using influencer marketing. It was a huge step when they started using influencer marketing instead of traditional marketing. Is the effect on sales increased when they started using influencer marketing?

Market institute Nielsen has done this research. They used several influencers to promote Silk unsweetened soja milk. The influencers promoted this product on their social media pages, in pictures, videos and recipes.

Via a tracking system they can track if the people who have seen these social posts of the influencers actually buy the product. The results were:

“1000 people viewing influencer content generated \$285 of incremental sales over the control group which... “Blows traditional digital advertising results out of the water (Nielsen)”

The effect on sales has increased. Also a positive point is that consumers can install ad blocker so they do not see traditional advertisement on a website or as a pre-roll (advertisement before a video). When you are using influencer marketing the consumer **cannot** use an  ad blocker because it is content related and not a traditional advertisement.

The desired future situation (L)

We discussed that social influencers can have a big influence on the consumer. Some people who watch the influencers see them as a role model. But what could an influencer do to really make a difference? Our idea was, instead of being busy on reviewing some new product, maybe they can help some social problems. For an example the influencer could do something with the elderly fund. They can do something with them like take a walk or just go on a visit. Than the influencer will vlog the whole day. After they did that, they can give everyone a challenge to do the same. Meanwhile, film it or make photos and post it on social media with the hashtag: #Elderlyday. Hopefully it will be as trending as the ice bucket challenge. Many elderly people are very lonely and this way there will be more attention for them and the influencer is doing something good for the society.

But what could a brand do to help make a better society? For a brand to accomplish a better society they have to go beyond 'social responsibility'. These brands use their marketing power and engage target groups to the max and facilitate them to help other people by tackling small **of** big societal issues. These efforts can yield tremendous effects. As an example, the company Douwe Egberts came with the idea of The National Neighbour Day. On this

day we come together with our neighbours and do something good for the neighbourhood. It will become more fun, social and save when neighbours meet and work for a better Neighbourhood. Douwe Egberts accomplished to make this day a national celebration every year. The brand helps working on a better society by bringing people together. To promote their campaign, they could use influencers. When the brand chooses for an influencer which target group is youngsters, also younger people will be triggered to participate on the National Neighbour day and everyone is happy.

Also a great example is the campaign GoedeMorgen (Marketingfacts, 2011). They encourage people to say good morning more often, even to people you meet on the street. This way there will be interaction between people who never even met each other. An influencer could be hired to also participate in this campaign, by encouraging people to say good morning. When he say's good morning all the time followers could follow that example and so the word would be spread. A great way using an influencer if you ask us!

Conclusion(L)

We have talked about influencers, what they are, what they do and how a brand uses them. Influencers are now mainly hired to promote a product or brand so the company will get more profit. But what if company's also thinks about what they could do to make a better society and use influencers there for? Influencers are seen as a role model to a lot of people. So when we want to answer the question: What does the future hold for social influencer marketing? We think that company's and influencers should work together to focusses attention on some problems regarding to society. People are more and more aware of the problems we have in our society and would like to see a change. Brands should be anticipating in helping solve the problems and therefore get the help of influencers. Company's and influencers working together on solving social problems and make the world a little bit better. That's how the future of influencer marketing should be!

ABOUT US



Hi, I am Danielle 's Jongers and I am a last year student of Social innovation. My interest for influencer marketing started during my internship at BrandDeli. Where we started creating campaigns with influencers as a leading role. What makes me curious is what will the future hold for influencer marketing?

Hello, my name is Lotte Vermijs and I am also a student of Social Innovation. I've been watching a lot of vlogs over the past few years and wanted to know more about influencer marketing. I am very curious about how influencers can have an impact on society.



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