

Finding the Sweet Spot to Get Gaming Influencer Marketing Right

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The gaming universe is thriving. Consumers of all ages and backgrounds have shown their willingness to invest money in gaming. They're also putting in hefty amounts of time, as both active participants and consumers. In 2021 alone, gaming enthusiasts clocked more than 100 billion hours watching YouTube gaming.

Did you catch that? I didn't say "playing." They're watching others stream their gaming exploits – talk about a captive audience.

With this growing crowd of gaming enthusiasts in mind, there's a golden opportunity for brands to jump in with influencer marketing partnerships. There's also a right and a wrong way to do it. Here's how brands can get it right and cement loyal customer relationships through influencer partnerships in the gaming world.

Related: Influencer Marketing 101: A Blueprint for Running a Successful Campaign

1. Get clear on your goals/intentions

If you're an advertiser considering the gaming space, define your reasons for jumping in before you get started. Ask

yourself:

- Which audiences am I trying to reach?
- What's my end goal? Why am I seeking to engage with them?
- What action do I want them to take?
- What value will this partnership add to my brand?

When you start from the right place strategically, you're less likely to be tempted into flashy partnerships that may not best serve your target audiences. At the same time, you're more capable of finding influencers who are the right fit and partnerships that make the most sense.

2. Dispel myths about the gaming community

The worst thing you can do when entering any market is to rely on stereotypes and generalizations to develop your marketing strategy.

The gaming market includes people of diverse backgrounds in every area – from age to gender to geographic location to economic bracket. For example, more gamers fall into the 35-to-44 age bracket than the under-18 bracket. And women currently make up almost half of all gamers (45%), even though most people would likely stereotype the average gamer as male.

Your gaming audience has nuance, and your influencer strategy should too. For example, just because a significant percentage of women are gaming, that doesn't mean you have to target female gaming ads to the latest *Call of Duty* game.

Research has shown that different demographic groups can lean heavily toward certain gaming styles. Women are more likely to

play puzzle or simulation/strategy games, while men are more likely to play sports and tactical shooter games.

Once you know who's playing where, you can determine their value as a potential marketing target, then find the influencers who appeal to each specific niche.

Related: How Entrepreneurs Can Harness the Power of the Booming Gaming Industry

3. Create the right types of collaborations

To build the right influencer marketing campaign, find the partnership options that are the best fit with your target audience. Examples include:

- **Team sponsorship:** Get specific targeted messaging out to your team's avid fans. You may be hitting a smaller audience but getting more aligned with their aspirational purchasing potential.
- **Tournament sponsorship:** Tournament sponsorships get you in front of many eyes but can also be very expensive. Big-name brands like Doritos have jumped in and sponsored industry-leading tournaments, gaining hours of captive eyes and ears soaking in their messaging.
- **In-game collaboration:** Creating partnerships with game developers can provide value and attract attention from players. For example, Coca-Cola recently released its new "Pixel" flavor as part of a *Fortnite* collaboration.
- **Gaming influencer partnership:** Work with a streamer or gaming influencer to promote your products and services. This might mean using your products or making mentions during their streams. You develop an advantageous partnership while also feeling genuine to their

audiences.

- **Cross-platform collaboration:** The gamer promotes your partnership across their other social media platforms as well as on the gaming site – these partnerships can be valuable if you work with a gamer who is well-established on different platforms and still growing their influencer presence on social media (especially since the majority of gaming influencers are still only doing a few campaigns a year).

4. Add value and think long-term

Another similarity between the gaming world and the “real” world: In reality, it’s rare to be able to walk in, start aggressively hawking your product and expect the crowds to flock to you.

The same goes for the gaming community. As with any other influencer activation, think about how your brand can contribute and add value. The brands that find synergies and think about giving and contributing stand out more positively.

You’ll notice their promotions are designed to create connections and mutually beneficial partnerships – think of Ryan’s World-based games like *Super Spy Ryan*, developed for kids and built entirely around an influencer and brand partnership. Or Gordon Hayward spurring massive online attention for a viral promo claiming he could “crush” LeBron ... to clarify, in the game *League of Legends*, not necessarily on the court.

Both these cases involve mega-influencers, but the concept is the same whether you’re working with a super-high-profile celebrity or a microinfluencer in your niche. The brands involved took time to understand their audience and cleverly designed partnerships that delighted their existing fans,

attracted a new audience and created real value.

The money that goes into thoughtful partnerships will stretch farther and generate stronger returns than the brands just seeking to put the logo somewhere or get a quick shout-out without a value-driven strategy.

Related: Here's Why More Investors Are Turning To the Online Gaming Industry

Gaming is not going anywhere, and its audience is growing by the minute. Gaming platforms are even successfully pulling the attention from other streaming and entertainment services. For example, in a recent survey our firm conducted, 68% of gamers claim they use Twitch as their preferred method of streaming live sports, so they can interact with fellow watchers simultaneously.

To make the most of gaming as a potential marketing channel, brands must bring a two-fold approach to gaming influencer investments: Developing them with a long-term vision while also being ready to experiment. As they learn more about the platforms, the influencers and their target audiences, brands will be more likely to find the right partners and create a formula for lasting success.

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