

Influencer Marketing: 10 things to keep in mind as we enter 2022

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From TikTok-everything to the widespread monetization of content creation and social commerce boom, influencer marketing will continue to shape the creator economy as we know it. Marketing departments are reacting accordingly, with more budget dedicated to influencer campaigns each year. At SocialPubli, we continue to see increased demand for influencer marketing campaigns and a growing appetite for exploration on new platforms.

Here's what we anticipate for 2022 and beyond:

1. TikTok influencer marketing is going full steam ahead.

TikTok continues to reach new heights, including passing the 1 billion monthly user milestone, with influencers and their clever, creative content powering the growth. According to our 2021 survey of influencers, 87 percent of TikTok influencers garner higher audience engagement on TikTok than on their other social media platforms, which is motivating and attractive to both influencers and brands.

How to leverage it

More than half of the marketing leaders we surveyed plan to increase their TikTok influencer collaboration budget in 2022,

so it's important to get on board before the market becomes saturated. Prioritize consistent creation of short-form content that highlights services without feeling overly brand-heavy.

Related: [How To Get Your Influencer Marketing Strategy Right](#)

2. Social media platforms make content creation easier.

TikTok may be growing in popularity, but that's no reason to write off the original influencer platform. Instagram is investing heavily in tools to build partnerships between influencers and brands and facilitate collaborations across accounts.

From Instagram Stories link stickers, which are now open to all users regardless of their follower count, to the "Add Yours" stickers and the Collabs feature, the social network is making it easier for content creators of all sizes to drive traffic, generate engagement and collaborate with other users and brands.

How to leverage it

Collaborations are a great way to get started and to grow your audience with like-minded users. Work with influencers in your niche to build a collab that can drive the right traffic to your account.

Instagram users are accustomed to influencer campaigns and more open to engaging with sponsored posts. Brands can move people through the entire sales funnel through a combination of Stories, Reels, posts and links.

3. More ways for influencers to make money

A variety of monetization tools have emerged across social networks to help influencers diversify their income streams. Virtual tipping, for example, is commonly used across social media platforms, including Twitch, YouTube, TikTok and Clubhouse, allowing community members to support and reward their favorite creators.

Instagram is working to make creativity even more lucrative, enabling influencers to sell their products as well as developing an affiliate marketing program. Badges and an in-the-works exclusive-content-subscription system encourage creators to prioritize their time creating for Instagram as opposed to other platforms.

How to leverage it

Tipping can be a strong indicator of an audience's propensity to follow an influencer's recommendations, which is exactly what brands are seeking in successful influencer partnerships. Brands should start integrating and leveraging these new monetization features into their influencer partnership agreements in ways that make sense for both sides.

Related: [How to Succeed Using Influencer Marketing and Brand Collaboration](#)

4. Influencer-led social commerce will boom

People have always turned to those they trust for recommendations before buying. Today, the people they trust are increasingly the influencers and content creators they follow online.

Instagram and TikTok are both hotspots for shopper research – 81 percent of shoppers use Instagram to research products, while the TikTok hashtag #TikTokMadeMeBuyIt has earned billions of views.

As shopping habits continue to shift online post-pandemic, social platforms want to capture their share of the pie and are investing in tools to make it simpler and more seamless to purchase in-app, including TikTok's recent partnership with Shopify and Instagram's upcoming native affiliate tools.

How to leverage it

While many past influencer and brand partnerships have focused strictly on awareness and visibility, these shopping tools give brands and influencers the power to move people through the sales funnel faster or, indeed, to become the entire funnel. Now that an increasing number of purchases can be completed entirely within a social app, brands should start leveraging influencers to sell and bring their followers all the way to the checkout button.

5. More influencers in more places and more niches

Think your brand's too old-school or too niche to work with social media influencers? Think again! Whatever your area of business, there's an influencer and a platform that's a fit for you and that can reach the audiences that you're most interested in.

Influencers and content creators don't need to have a massive reach. They do need to have expertise, credibility, and likability in their particular niche.

We've seen growth in gaming platforms like Twitch and on business networking platforms like LinkedIn. LinkedIn, for

example, launched new creator mode profiles to give business professionals the ability to create specialized content and build a following.

How to leverage it

Dedicate your energy to finding the right influencers for your brand. Using an influencer marketing platform can make it easier to sort through the many options out there and find the content creators that will represent your business and resonate with your target audience.

6. Influencers more careful about partnerships

As the influencer marketing industry matures, so do influencers and their know-how as it relates to campaign terms and negotiations. With the resources platforms are developing, influencers have more opportunities to earn money and support themselves. That means they can be more discerning when choosing brands to work with so they can ensure they maintain the goodwill and support of their followers.

Influencers may ask more questions before agreeing to a campaign and may be more confident speaking up about strategy or sharing concerns. That's all good, because it means you're working together to create content that really works.

How to leverage it

Appreciate the influencers who are asking questions and being attentive about every aspect of the partnership. That means they have a good understanding of their audience and their own brand and they want to make sure it aligns well with yours.

Take time to talk through your brand's goals, target audiences and more with your influencer partners. Greater

openness and collaboration can lead to better and more rewarding campaigns.

Related: It's Time to Redefine the Influencer

7. Micro-influencers and nano-influencers will have a greater impact

As brands of all sizes incorporate influencer marketing into their marketing mix, we will continue to see a growing preference for micro and nano-influencers. Both are perceived as more authentic by their followers and are niche-oriented – an ideal fit for brands that are seeking a reputable introduction to new audiences. And micro-influencers tend to garner the highest engagement percentage, which is also attractive to brands.

How to leverage it

Prioritize engagement rate over follower count and seek influencers that resonate with your audience.

Take time to vet the right people and to invest appropriately. You may get far greater engagement and return from a well-considered partnership with multiple micro-influencers than from a mega-influencer or celebrity who is less aligned with your brand.

8. Esports influencers go mainstream

Esports as an industry is booming, with global revenue of more than \$1.1 billion in 2021. They boast an engaged audience with long watch times and fierce loyalty. And esports influencers make their presence felt across multiple platforms. In

addition to Twitch, many also have active followings on Twitter, YouTube and other prominent social spaces.

How to leverage it

Companies across the spectrum, from Coca-Cola to Intel to BMW, have begun to partner with esports influencers. Your brand doesn't have to connect directly to esports or esports products, just appeal to the people who like watching and following esports players and tournaments.

Get started by watching one of the 50 leagues hosting tournaments. Check out the demographics of your audience and align them with certain games and players. Then, start making connections and experimenting with visibility in this growing market space.

9. Video increases in popularity

As social media attention spans continue to shrink, social video has taken a starring role in influencer and marketing campaigns. This year, 82 percent of global online traffic will come from video content, and videos earn greater engagement than other types of content across the board.

How to leverage it

Investing in video is crucial to growing your online presence. Influencer-created videos, especially using Instagram Collabs, can help you build a stronger bond with your audience and tap into the audience of your influencer partners.

Be bold and experiment with influencer video partnerships, especially as TikTok's audience continues to grow and Instagram continues to add new video capabilities.

Related: How Influencer Marketing Took Power, and What the Future Holds

10. Brands and influencers will take authenticity more seriously

In the TikTok era, authenticity is everything. As social media users become increasingly savvy in detecting superficial sponsored content and social media ads, it is imperative for brands and influencers to show up as their genuine selves.

Today's consumers are drawn to real, relatable, authentic content more than to a perfectly polished content piece that feels fake and overproduced. The more a post feels like an ad, the less social media users are inclined to interact with it.

How to leverage it

To be truly authentic, there must be an authentic connection between the influencer and the brand. The audience will notice if a campaign feels contrived or unnatural. The goal is to seamlessly incorporate the sponsored content in a way that feels real and honest.

As brands work with influencers, their campaigns should focus on showing the product in a real-life setting and organically incorporated into the influencer's life.

2022 is ripe with opportunities for both influencers and brands. As you set your marketing goals for this year, create an influencer strategy that focuses on authentic connection.

That may mean smaller, more focused audiences. It may mean seeking opportunities on new platforms. The goal is to be in the right place to connect with your audience and to have the right tools and relationships to make those connections meaningful and actionable. When you focus on authentic creation and meaningful relationships, you can seamlessly use influencer marketing to introduce your brand to new audiences and win over their hearts.

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