

How to ensure an influencer marketing campaign goes viral

By  Pieter Groenewald

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Big brands used to tell us what was cool. Today, consumers expect brands to be more human. In fact, the higher a brand's emotional intelligence, the more it wins.



Source: www.pexels.com

According to the [Kantar Purpose 2020 report](#), almost two-thirds of millennials and centennials (our soon-to-be economic engine), express a preference for “brands that have a point of view and stand for something.”

What a brand says, how it says it and how it behaves all make a difference. The challenge is that a brand cannot by default be a person – but it can show what it stands for through people, which is why influencers are playing an increasingly important role in the conversations that brands are having with their target audiences.

A great example of this in action is the National South African Lottery’s #LetsRebuildTogether campaign. Lotto SA’s agency, Wetpaint Advertising, leveraged two of our platforms, accessing micro-influencers through Webfluential and nano influencers through theSALT to create an incredible, authentic campaign following the riots and looting that took place in July 2021.

Taking a stand

There are a number of reasons why the campaign did so well (in less than 24 hours, it amassed over 10 million views and the hashtag #LetsRebuildTogether trended higher than the Nelson Mandela Day hashtag on Twitter), but the first and most important reason is that Lotto SA wasn't afraid to have a voice. Brands that stand for something are more authentic, which means consumers can connect with them, but it also means that influencers can connect with them, which can result in an incredibly powerful campaign.

In #LetsRebuildTogether, Wetpaint did not source influencers and then tell them what to say. Instead, the agency created a TV commercial, shared it with the influencers they had chosen and then asked them to express their feelings and sentiments with their fans. This created personal and authentic conversations that resonated deeply with South Africans at the time, which is exactly what influencer marketing done well should achieve.

While not every campaign can (or will) go viral, here are some great lessons we can learn from the success of #LetsRebuildTogether that you can leverage in your next campaign:

1. Start with an objective

Lotto SA wanted to show unity and support for the victims of the looting, while highlighting that as a brand they still believe in a positive future for South Africa. This is critical – without a clear objective, it's impossible to choose the right influencers to work with or the best platforms for a campaign.

2. Choose the right influencers for your brand and message

This was a campaign of positivity. #LetsRebuildTogether was about standing up to say, 'we believe in South Africa, and we will continue to fight for the nation we love.' Wetpaint chose to work with authentic nano influencers to create conversations that the micro-influencers then scaled to their larger audiences.

They knew the success of this campaign hinged on influencers who focus on their lifestyle as part of what they do and the conversations they have with their audiences, as opposed to macro-influencers who have a fan base due to the popularity of being a star. The influencers who were selected were all South Africans who could authentically share a message of hope, positivity and that as a nation we can stand together and rebuild.

3. And then trust them

This can often be the hardest step for brands because you are ceding control of the message to someone else. Selecting the right influencers is therefore critical, as well as trusting that your values and message will resonate. But ultimately, influencers make the biggest impact when they can speak freely, which is exactly what happened here. They weren't told what to say or how to say it. Instead, they were asked to share how they felt. The results speak for themselves.

4. Choose the right medium

This is an important one, and often overlooked. It's easy to say, 'Facebook has the most followers, we need to be there.' The question is, where is your target audience? Where are they having the conversations that you want to be a part of? Twitter tends to be highly political and so the strategy was to bring some positivity and hope to the conversations around looting and rebuilding South Africa.

Wetpaint also flighted the ad campaign on Facebook and Instagram, but the influencers drove the conversation on Twitter, and it was clear South Africans were hungry for it, with We Stand Firm, We've Got This Mzansi and Together We Can Conquer Anything dominating the sentiments the campaign triggered.

5. Positivity can win the day

With endless social media posts scrolling past our screens each day and divided opinions everywhere we turn, it's easy to think that the only way to get noticed is by being edgy, when in fact (and going back to the beginning of this post), most people just want to be human. A good dose of positivity is often exactly what we need.

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