

The intrigue of influencer marketing

 By Leigh Andrews

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"Influencers have become walking media portals in their own right with audiences who are active and engage with every content mention or move an influencer makes." Therein lies the innovation aspect of influencer marketing. Davin Phillips, CSA director specialising in influencer marketing, explains.

With the rise in consumers' accessibility to mobile-connectivity, smart phones have also evolved from strictly operational communication devices to expanded platforms that let users consume content. They can also sync with their relevant networks to streamline the way they receive and interact with information.

Simply put, the success factor of influencer social media marketing boils down to that active, engaged audience. Outside of the influencer's own audience, traditional media and journalists are also interested in their newsworthiness, often using personalities to sell publications. That's especially true in 2016, where technological advancement means traditional print and broadcast media have now lost their primary function of providing news.

That's where influencer marketing comes in. With consumers on the receiving end of an overload of information, a specific brand's messaging may get lost or drowned out. One strategy to stand out then is to influence the millennial experience through using specialised apps and key influencers, many of whom have a bigger reach than traditional media and amplify that message.

Phillips tells us more below...

1. Elaborate on changing media consumption patterns in the face of technological advancement.



Phillips

Phillips: The most significant change is that one is no longer limited to receiving the news or content via traditional mediums of print, radio or TV. Today, news or breaking news is often shared or first viewed on an individual's social media feed long before the print edition is able to file the story and send it off to the printers! The demand for more instant news – and the amount of available content – is far more than it has ever been, with the result that we are becoming individuals who are "Always On". We seek active engagement, where news comes to us versus needing to go out and find it at the corner newsstand. In addition, we live in an era where we have a wider set of viewpoints and information and, as new young users join the smart phone community, the level of daily use of the internet for news and information will only increase. As a result, I think print will become more of a medium which comments, opines and gives perspective on current events rather than being the news breaker – which to my mind is still a very valuable component of the media mix.

2. Talk us through the resulting rise of personalised content.

Phillips: Consumers today interact with brands in entirely new ways; through digital channels that lie outside the domain of purely traditional advertising. As a result, contemporary living revolves around utilising mobile apps to streamline interests and activities as our lifestyles adapt to new content trends. In terms of personalised content, consumers have never been more enabled and empowered to subscribe to or access content of their choice – as against being limited by traditional media, where content is selected. As a result, consumers now have more choice and for content to stand out it needs to be engaging, relevant and entertaining, where the consumer feels he or she is being directly spoken to. Consequently, individual brands gain more attention and interest only so much as they are not at the centre of the discussion but rather

associated to the lifestyle and ideas shared.

3. How can influencer marketing reach Millennials in particular?

Phillips: Well, the first step in understanding Millennials is to realise that they consume media very differently. In fact, according to a recent McKinsey study, Millennials spend 30% of their total media time on content created by their peers. As a result, 92% of global customers trust user-generated content and word of mouth more than advertising, while 81% of social media posts by friends influence purchase decisions. Certainly, influencers with an active audience now wield as much as or more power than traditional media – becoming media outlets in their own right, with an audience who aspire to and trust them. In basic terms, influencers are the stars of the show, who stand above the clutter because of their active audiences.

4. Look into your crystal ball and share your predictions for marketing over the next while.

Phillips: I think we are only just starting to see the growth potential of influencer marketing. The reason for this is that consumers nowadays receive an overload of information and brands can often get lost in the clutter. This means that to survive in today's media landscape, brands must introduce new strategies to stay current. This includes meeting users' expectations of a 'customised online experience', accomplished mainly through the use of specialised apps and key influencers who not only offer niche insights in a brand-heavy environment but, importantly, can convey messages that amplified through their audiences, followers and other industry influencers.

Interesting times. [Click here](#) for more on CSA or follow them [on Twitter](#) for more.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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