

Setting up successful micro-influencer campaigns

Influencer marketing is here to stay, the numbers don't lie. 92% of consumers trust product recommendations from individuals over those from brands and 74% of people on social media use it to inform themselves on potential purchase decisions.

However despite its rising importance, most companies still struggle with integrating influencer marketing into their daily marketing activities as a channel that performs consistently and can be scaled up. This guide aims to provide you the tips, tricks and ideas to help you in preparing, executing and analysing your influencer campaigns.





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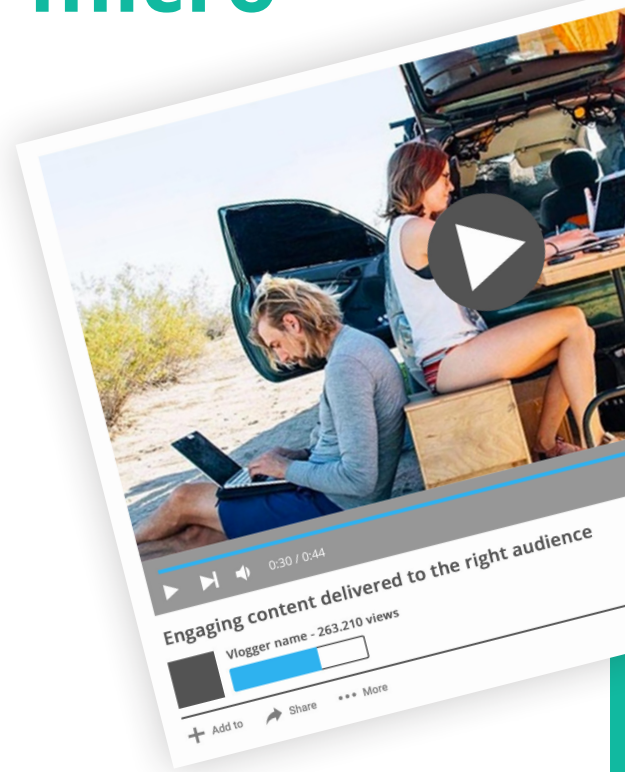


The importance of micro influencers

Countless studies show that the engagement (the number of social interactions such as likes, comments or shares with posted content in relation to the audience size of the influencer) is decreasing, the bigger the audience size of an influencer gets.

“A carefully selected set of micro-influencers can have a bigger impact than one big celebrity influencer.”

So subject to what your campaign goals are, it often makes more sense to work with e.g. 20 influencers with around 100,000 followers each rather than working with one influencer with an audience size of 2,000,000.



Working with micro influencers

Managing a multitude of cooperations with micro-influencers simultaneously is complex and time-intensive, especially if you are doing it for the first time. That is why we wrote this handy guide to get you started.

There are three main parts to every cooperation or campaign:

1. Preparation: including the definition of the campaign or cooperation goals, selecting a campaign type and channel as well as selecting a suitable compensation strategy
2. Execution: From selecting the right pool of influencers, preparing campaign briefing and outreach over to sending out samples and reminders, all the way through to tracking posts and amplifying the campaign or cooperation with your own advertising channels.
3. Post campaign: accurately measure the results of the cooperation or campaign as well as promptly pay the influencers.

Preparation

Step 1: defining campaign goals and campaign type

This phase starts with the definition of the campaign or cooperation. It is critical to take the time to think the campaign through in detail as it can be hard or impossible to correct things at a later stage.

The best starting point is the goal of the campaign. The goal itself is often already charting the course and dictating decisions later on in the process.

For example if the goal of the campaign is to increase sales in a specific period of time, then YouTube is a better channel to work with than Instagram. Another example of a decision implicitly dictated by the campaign goal would be the timing of the campaign itself.

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The linkr advanced campaign wizard automatically suggests a set of suitable campaign types, based on the selected campaign goal

Below, we have put together an extensive list of campaign types and details on what goals they are best suited for.

Name	Description	Best suited for
Product review	Ask an influencer to provide an honest review of your product on their social media profile. Important is that the influencer really informs their audience about your product, if they love it ask them why, is it the material? The unique design? (tip: if the influencer receives your product and does not like it, politely ask them to send it back to you and offer them the chance to select a different product).	Growing your follower base and long term sales.
Special Event	Campaign that is organised around a specific event such as Valentines Day, requires good coordination on timing of posts and usually involves content that is harder to reuse after the event is over. It helps to plan these far in advance so you have a great pool of influencers ready to go.	Quickly generating additional revenue.
Brand story on blog	Is your brand story and style really unique? Then ask the influencer to write a blog post about it, blog posts are quite a bit of work so you will likely need to pay a fixed fee for it but the content, SEO and traffic benefits can be massive.	Quickly generating additional revenue.
Discount Action	Want to boost short term revenue quickly? Use a limited time discount code to convert followers into buyers. Send free samples to influencers and ask them to let their audience know the product can be purchased at a discount only by using the code.	Quickly generating additional revenue.
Lookbooks	Work with a set of influencers (i.e. 5 to 10) to create image or video content specifically for a look book. This usually involves inviting the influencers to a studio and setting up a shooting day to generate high quality content that can be used on specific web pages or social profiles, also a great way to build long term relationship with the influencer.	Increase on page conversion

Name	Description	Best suited for
Favourite Products List	Ask influencers to select their favourite 2, 5, 10 (or any other number) of products from your brand. Goal is to have the influencer present their favourite list of products from you to their audience.	Quickly generating additional revenue.
YouTube Haul	YouTube influencers frequently post hauls where they show their most recent purchases. Reach out to influencers that fit your brand and offer to sponsor some products for their next haul.	Quickly generating additional revenue.
Lottery	Give an influencer a number of free products which they can use in a lottery for their audience. Influencers love giving something to their audience as it increases their engagement and your brand will benefit from the positive exposure.	Growing your follower base (specifically on Instagram).
YouTube unboxing video	Reach out to a YouTube influencer to do a dedicated unboxing video of your product. This works especially well if the packaging of your product is beautifully designed.	Quickly generating additional revenue.
Ambassador Selection	Acting as a kind of contest you can ask influencers to submit their best content for you to select a set of influencers with which to build a longer term cooperation (usually under contract).	Finding influencers that want to work with you for a longer time.
Social Media Takeover	Ask an influencer to take over your social media profile for a certain amount of time. The influencer will bring new followers from their audience to your profile and be very motivated to generate great content which will help make your social media profile feel very authentic and create engagement.	Getting more followers.
Influencer Inspired Product	More and more brands are asking influencers to become involved in the design process. As the influencer has in-depth knowledge of what their audience likes they can often provide new ideas or direction to your product lines. Besides if the new product or collection is co-branded with the influencer they are very motivated to promote your brand and their products as much as possible.	Growing your follower base and long term sales.

Step 2: defining influencer compensation

Another important topic is the decision about how to compensate the influencer not only for the (relevant portion) of the reach you'll get access to but also for the efforts involved with creating branded content.

The decision is not only subject to the size (i.e. number of followers) of the influencer or the chosen channel for the campaign (e.g. a video on YouTube is in general more expensive than Instagram). It is also dependent on - again - the goal of the campaign, which implicitly dictates certain compensation models while ruling others out.

The linkr blog features an article that provides an in-depth view on the different compensation models out there and which monetary values are considered to be fair for each model and on different channels at the moment. It also shows which models suit which campaign goals best.

Regardless of the chosen compensation type and amount, product samples are an essential part of almost every campaign on social media. Make sure to bake the value of your product samples into your compensation strategy. For example: If you are selling \$400 watches, you might not need any extra cash compensation on top of providing product samples when working with micro influencers or might even spoil them with the sample alone, subject to things such as audience size, engagement, etc.

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linkr automatically calculates the optimal price-tag for each individual cooperation, based on channel, influencer size, deliverables, content quality, exclusivity, product sample value,...

Execution

Step 3: selecting the right influencers

Considering that there are more than 7,6 million influencers worldwide, this seems to be a non trivial task. The 3 Rs of influence are a first baseline to get your selection process started:

1. **Relevance:** Is the content produced by the influencer as well as the following of relevance for my brand in general and to achieve my campaign goals in particular?
2. **Reach:** How many people within my target audience will I reach through that influencer?
3. **Resonance:** How high will the further above mentioned engagement of followers with the content featuring my brand be?

In connection with the above points, brands should especially watch out for accounts with fake followers, this is mostly a problem on Instagram. Fake followers can be purchased through online exchanges and often have fictive email addresses and no real value for the brand.

Studies show that as much as 8% of all Instagram accounts could be fake and a further 30% inactive. The following 3 points help to identify accounts with fake followers:

1. A majority of the followers doesn't have a profile picture or has a private account.
2. The follower profile has a heavily skewed ratio between followers and following - as a general rule avoid accounts who have less than 41 followers for each account they are following (the higher the worse).
3. An engagement rate on posts consistently below 0,6%.

Even though the first 2 points above are not a guarantee that an influencer has fake followers, the third point is an important factor in general. Fake or not, the lower the engagement rate, the less relevant the overall audience size of that influencer will be to achieve your campaign goals.

Step 4: reaching out to influencers

Influencer marketing means dealing with individuals, which means the more effort you put into clear, concise and personalised communication the more you will get out of it.

So what should be in an initial outreach mail? Here is a small checklist:

1

Start with a small personal note why you would like to work with the influencer (do you love their style, think their story is inspiring or thought a particular post was great?). Tip: always use the real name of the influencer, not their blog or profile name in the outreach mail.

2

Then crisply explain why you are writing, getting to the point quickly. It helps to define in bullet points what you are expecting from the influencer (for example a video on YouTube reviewing your product with your link in the description). Avoid defining what the influencer should say or how the post should look, allow them to be creative, the influencer knows best how to present you to their audience.

3

Also provide a brief description of what your brand does (include links to your site where helpful). If your brand has a unique story about why it was started, what it stands for or what the vision is it helps to include this so the influencer can relate better to your brand.

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linkr generates goal-specific, brand-tailored campaign briefings, for you to start out and adjust to your very specific needs.

Step 5: seeding product samples

Free product samples are an essential part of every cooperation. They're a prerequisite to allow the influencer to create authentic content. Who can write a believable story or post about a hotel, without having stayed there, recommend a skin lotion without having used it or talk about how great a pair of jeans fit without trying them on?

Make sure to provide a clear structure on which samples influencers are allowed to select - for example:

1. From a certain pool of products?
2. A certain number of products?
3. Up to a certain retail value?
4. ...

This might sound super-obvious but making things crystal-clear helps to avoid unnecessary back and forth communication and makes sure your compensation strategy does not dilute.

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linkr allows you to specify a pool of products, set selection limits, offers a beautiful, shopping-alike experience to the influencer and makes sure that sample requests land on your desk in a structured way.

Step 6: tracking and monitoring

It is good practice to prepare a set of reminders to be sent to participants ahead of major campaign milestones. Ideally, these reminders are kept very short and either include links to the initially provided briefing or list crucial, not-to-be-forgotten elements of the campaign.

In order for a campaign to pan out as planned,, it's important to keep a critical eye on it during execution. Did all influencers post at the agreed time? Has my brand account been linked? Have campaign hashtags been used? How's my product presented on the imagery?...

To be able to set corrective actions in case of errors, it's crucial to detect these errors early on. Mostly, errors aren't the results of sloppiness but misunderstandings induced by poor communication.

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the linkr platform monitors your defined campaign milestones, keeps an eye on deliverables and pro-actively sends out notifications and reminders to influencers.

After the campaign

Step 7: paying influencers

A characteristic of Social Influencer Marketing isn't only the ability to reach and appeal to a younger target audience but also the fact that the protagonists in that space are younger individuals themselves. Invoicing and payout can therefore be complicated from a company perspective as cooperation partners will be individuals rather than legal entities or businesses, not being able to send invoices, not having VAT numbers, etc. - so make sure to prepare for that in advance.

Unless there's any dispute on deliverables from the influencers, make sure to pay them on time - after all, you are expecting on-time delivery from them as well.

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linkr allows you to pay out influencers individually or in bulk mode and allows you to download a tax-compliant invoice for your records.

Step 8: reporting and analytics

At the end of each campaign will naturally impose the question on ROI - what results did we get for the money / time we did put into this? Especially for companies new to the discipline of Influencer Marketing this often seems to be a complex challenge.

At first glance, campaigns with a goal focused around generating sales transactions seem to be the ones where it's most easy to calculate the ROI. Unseasoned online marketers do quickly realise though that it's probably trickier than they initially thought to track revenue back to individual influencers during the campaign (Did the sales transaction come from influencer x or y?) or to attribute long-tail earnings after the campaign (Did sales figures in May increase as a result of the campaign in April?).

Cost-Per-Click models require tracking codes, Cost-Per-Engagement requires additional overhead for sifting through individual posts on some channels, CPM models can't be tracked at all on other channels, etc.

Careful preparation with a focus on initially set campaign goals is key to success here. What did I want to achieve with my campaign? How can I determine the degree of achieving these goals? What data do I need for that? How do I get that data? Asking these questions while the campaign is already running will soon realise data is missing to calculate goal achievement and that it's already too late to cater for gathering of the required data.

Conclusion

As we can see, successful Influencer Marketing requires a fair portion of planning. Also, the individual steps of the process chain encapsulate complexity that's not obvious to spot for most marketers when getting started.

Especially when working with a larger number of (micro) influencers, it's paramount to carefully orchestrate the individual process steps described, (semi) automate some of them while decentralising others, etc. Without a proper setup, the engagement gains and authenticity benefits of working with micro influencers are quickly eaten up by additional administrative overhead in dealing with multiple individuals.

The linkr Plattform allows brands to launch and execute influencer marketing campaigns of any size. It gives structure to and provides support for each step of the process chain, from campaign definition to influencer identification and selection, application of the right compensation model, sample seeding, communication, monitoring, compensation payout, invoicing and finally reporting and analytics.

Sounds interesting? Then start your free trial now!