

What is an influencer?

Part 1:

You might have heard the term influencer used in marketing before and thought it only applied to Kardashians and epic marketing budgets and you'd be right. But times have changed and now the word applies to more than corporations and people who got famous for... handbags... (I'm not actually sure.)

So, what is an influencer? An influencer is someone who has the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others due to their authority, knowledge, or position, or relationship with their audience. They actively engage with a distinct niche and that following size can be large or more concentrated depending on the size of their topic or niche.

It only used to be sports stars, film stars and celebrities with this power but now, thanks to the explosion of social media, there's all kinds of people reaping the benefit. Influencers in social media are people who have built up a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They'll post content to their platform of choice on a regular basis to their large enthusiastic audience. The reason brands love influencers so much is because they can create trends and encourage their followers to buy their products.

Part 2:

As I mentioned at the start of the video the term influencer is no longer for those with millions of followers. In fact, there are now four different types. You might even be sitting there and without realising it, actually are an influencer in some way, shape or form.

Well, let's break that down into the four types of influencers for you now, starting with the largest, the mega influencers.

Mega influencers are people with an epic number of followers like the Rock or Ronaldo. But actually their following is overkill. There is no official benchmark, but people with over 1 million followers are seen as mega influencers.

Next we have macro influencers. These guys have followers between 40,000 and a million followers on social media. You tend to find this is where your B-grade celebrities hang out or successful online experts.

Macro influencers have a high profile and can provide a powerful way to generate awareness.

Now we have micro influencers. No, these aren't just a group of tiny weeny people but ordinary folks who have become known for their knowledge about a specific topic. Their followings are from a 1,000 to 40,000 people, so, like I said, you might have just found out you're an influencer.

And finally we have nano influencers. This is one of the latest groups to obtain recognition.

They have very small followings compared to others but appear an incredible niche for highly specialised fields. They are big fish in a very small pond. They can have less than a 1,000 followers who will all be very interested in what that nano influencer has to say.

Part 3:

What about types of content name? Most of the social media marketing today occurs with micro influencers and blogging with YouTubers becoming more important, too. Let's start by taking a look at bloggers.

Bloggers have the most authentic and active relationships with their fans. It has been connected to influencer marketing for a while now and there are a lot of highly influential blogs online. When bloggers positively mention a product, it can lead to their supporters wanting to purchase or at least try it out.

Now we have YouTubers. This is a similar situation to blogging except it is all video based. Instead of being on the website it's all on the YouTube platform. Brands often work with YouTubers sponsoring videos or paying to have them created for them.

Podcasts.

It sometimes feels like everyone has a podcast these days, but there is no denying it that they're a popular form of entertainment now. Brands can work with podcasters by sponsoring their show or an individual episode.

Social Posts.

All of these creators, podcasters, publishers promote their content on social media. They don't just hope that people find it on their own platform; this means they tend to build sizeable followings and are micro influencers as a result. So, there's another opportunity to work with them there.

So now let's finish up by taking a look at influencers by level of influence starting with celebrities.

As discussed earlier, celebs were the original influencers. They are, however, beginning to wane as the market gets flooded with the new kids in town. The problem brands face is that traditional celebs are finite. There are only so many willing to participate in these kinds of campaigns; sometimes a firm will make a product a celebrity already likes and uses which means they'll be happier to promote it.

Celebrities may have many fans and gigantic social media followings. However, it is debatable exactly just how much influence they hold over those who follow them.

Key Opinion Leaders are next. These are industry experts, sport leaders or even journalists. They gained respect because of their qualifications and position. This can be earned from who they work for. So, a journalist from a major newspaper may have no qualifications on the topic he or she writes about but is considered a credible enough a writer to report on it. Getting a journalist of a major newspaper to write about you is the same as getting a social media influencer to post something.

One thing to be aware of when working with key opinion leaders is that many have built up their reputation in an offline setting and may not have a large or active social following.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYIj1YvU9pI> (abridged, accessed in November 2020)