

Embracing the shift from 'influencer' to 'creator'

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14 Jun 2022

The local influencer marketing landscape has transformed significantly from the early days of simple product mentions and celebrity endorsements.



Image supplied: Influencer marketing has evolved over the years

Today, a significant portion of marketing budgets are allocated to influencer marketing, with more spend allocated each year as this marketing discipline continues to gain momentum.

The evolution of the influencer marketing industry has completely changed the face of content creation and brand-creator partnerships, not only allowing creators more autonomy over the content they produce and their earning potential but also opening brands up to new opportunities and markets and ensuring influencer investments are both measurable and meaningful.

Influencer marketing now encompasses a diverse and expansive combination of creative content ranging from text to video, gifs, memes, music and voiceovers. Influencer marketing platform, Humanz, refers to influencers as creators now as many have become highly skilled production experts whose content helps build brands through their loyal, engaged followers.



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Many creators on the platform use influencer marketing to supplement their income, or in some cases as their primary income source.

Vetted, credible creators from the Humanz platform benefit from a number of tangible rewards when they contribute to positive ROI for brands, from exclusive access to free products and discounts to monthly brand ambassador retainer payments, content usage fees and affiliate payments when their followers purchase as a result of their content.

South Africa's record-high unemployment rate of 35.3% is most likely what has driven more young South Africans to look for alternative work opportunities.

From influencer to creator

The shift from an 'influencer' to a 'creator' mindset is a particularly noteworthy change that has not only contributed to boosting creator confidence in their own offerings but has also set a new and more productive tone for how marketers should approach potential collaborations.

For instance, where issues like fake followers, disingenuous product placement and endorsements and even fraud have given rise to 'influencer fatigue' among consumers, influencer marketing platforms offer analytical tools that allow brands to vet creators for their authenticity. From an influencer perspective, having peace of mind about the brand they choose to work with is equally crucial.



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The creator mindset shift also makes room for more authentic engagement with brands that consumers know and feel they can trust. And, when it comes to brand trust, consumers have made themselves abundantly clear – the opinions of creators carry more weight. A recent study revealed that 63% of consumers surveyed said they're more likely to trust what influencers say about brands much more than what brands say about themselves.

Added to this, the introduction of a Social Media Code of Conduct in South Africa, which regulates brands and influencers to ensure complete transparency for audiences, has helped hold both brands and creators accountable to one another and the public for the content they post and promote.

Bottom line – creators facilitate sales

The popularity of social commerce has soared over the last few quarters – in fact the South Africa Social Commerce Market Intelligence Report for 2022 predicts that the sector will grow by 107.8% on annual basis, reaching \$1,066.2m in 2022, with steady growth expected between now and 2028.

Following the examples and successes of celebrities – the likes of Amanda Du Pont who used social media to garner consumer insights and launch the campaign for her new skincare and beauty line, LeLive – many creators and, as a result, brands are realising the power of selling through their social media profiles.

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From a brand perspective, having the ability to measure the return on investment of these interventions, and to be able to track the customer journey from engaging with a creator's content to sale, is no longer a nice to have, but a necessity.

Creators can also track how their posts perform against campaign objectives while giving brands a clearer picture of how their influencer investments are performing.

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