

Micro influencers: a sweet opportunity

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Paid advertising is not trusted and ad blocking is only growing. Even bloggers are failing when it comes to communicating and engaging with consumers, as trust between brands and consumers continues to fall. But there is a new kid on the block and he is eager to engage; enter the influencer.

IndaHash's 2017 International Influencer Report found that 77% of consumers claim that influencers are competition for traditional media. For the most prominent influencers, their most opinion-forming sources are other influencers and social media users, with only 1% choosing radio, 3% press and 5% television.

"We started to look at influencer marketing about four years ago. Today we are seeing it evolving to the next stage of development, which we believe will see it exploding onto the scene very soon," says Federico Dedeu, head of MediaCom Beyond Advertising South Africa.



Federico Dedeu

Dedeu was one of the speakers at MediaCom and IndaHash's 'The State of Influence' event, that took place in Kramerville near Sandton on Wednesday.

There are different tiers of influencers he explains. "Micro influencers generally have 300 to 400 followers, macro thousands."

Most marketers collaborate with macro influencers to give their brands reach and relevance, but these influencers lack resonance he adds.

"Micro influencers might not have the numbers, but they have resonance, that is to get their followers to engage with the brand and take action."

Nicola Cooper, a trend analyst and cultural strategist, from Nicola Cooper & Associates, adds that macro influencers lack authenticity, and when that wears off, then trust goes. "In contrast, while micro influencers might not have the reach, they have a higher engagement with their followers and an emotional connection to the brand."

In Africa, there are only a limited pool of macro influencers. "But there is quite a large pool of micro influencers, and if we consider that on the continent, Africans have a different perspective (for example, Africans' view of luxury is not the same as it is for American or European consumers) and are not Eurocentric or Americanised, but if they are in the formation of a new identity constantly, then micro influencers can be a useful channel to reach them."

Content generators will have to be respectful of the above, but also of the generation they're trying to engage with. Generation Z is very different to the generation that came before it, the Millennials.



Nicola Cooper

"They are less pampered, less aware of gender and race. They have grown up online and have been photographed as an embryo, but they are aware of the boundaries between online and offline. They have no-device days, living in real-time with strict management of online time."

They do not like being spoken to but connect with their peers who they trust, she adds. “They have grown up with poverty and terrorism, which is partly why they do not trust, but unlike the Millennials, who only post online, they are actually going out there and making a difference.”



Joanna Pawluk

IndaHash’s Report also showed that the most prominent influencers mainly engage with online videos and 51% watch little or no TV. However, influencer marketing has been characterised by a lack of planning and strategy around video content, says Joanna Pawluk, chief growth officer at IndaHash.

There are some case studies, she says, such as GoPro, where brands have been built solely by influencer content. “However, together with the rise of influencer marketing is the rise of micro videos of under 30 seconds, and there are no case studies for these,” says Pawluk.

In general, she adds, we are lacking user-generated content from the influencers and, on the flip side, influencers are experiencing a lack of branded content. “This gap is a unique opportunity for brands to work with consumers, the true ambassadors of the brand and to engage an authentic audience.”

Dedeu adds that while influencer marketing is still in its infancy and there is still a way to go to understanding exactly how to leverage influencers, they are very bullish about it.

“While we are not naïve to the hurdles, we see it as a massive opportunity. When things are new, there is opportunity for brands that are willing to take the risk. In five years’ time this space will be more competitive and more expensive. It is never as sweet as it is today.”

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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