

# INFLUENCER TRENDS YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT IN 2022

Ogilvy



# INFLUENCER MARKETING IS GROWING RAPIDLY.

Having matured into adolescence, and grown in size, influence is still defining itself within the world, jockeying for position among more established routes to consumers.

At the outset, many were skeptical of this approach to comms. Indeed, as social media matured, this new kind of stardom, or at least fame, was not wholly embraced.

How solidly persuasive could these kids with smartphones really be? Can they really do a better job of resonating with a target audience? And does their influence really translate into more sales?

The numbers are in, and the answer to all of these questions is unequivocally yes. In fact, it's time to stop asking these questions all together.

Instead, we must acknowledge the role influence plays in your larger marketing mix, and how its unique success can best benefit your brand. The question is no longer if you should partner with influencers. Rather, you should be asking how to get the most out of influencer marketing in 2022.

Read on to find out everything you should know going into next year.

# SOONER IS BETTER

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# CREATE CULTURE. DON'T JUST BE A PART OF IT.

Rather than just crashing the party a week late, brands should define their own culture.

Culture is no longer something that you can plan for on a calendar. Today, it happens serendipitously. So as audience-first trends bubble up across social media, brands need to embrace these cultural catalysts, rather than trying to forcefully wedge PR moments into the digital space.

## Just let the hits happen.

Consider Lil Nas X, the 22-year-old artist whose hit song “Old Town Road” first went viral on TikTok in 2019, and shortly thereafter set a record for the longest-running song at the No. 1 spot on Billboard Hot 100. He’s since won two Grammys.

The more popular TikTok becomes, the less follower counts matter. On this platform, you can reach a large audience without a large following. Its algorithm serves up content to match the interests of each individual user, drawing on dwell time to determine what he or she likes to see in-feed, independent of whom that user follows.

Thanks to TikTok, we are in a newly democratized digital world. Its algorithm allows quality material of any kind, even without an inbuilt audience, to resonate far and wide.

Basically, discovery is easy on TikTok, and so anyone can put content in front of millions of eyeballs. All that matters is people choose to watch it.

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REMEMBER,  
**AUTHENTIC  
& ORGANIC**  
ALWAYS WINS.

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# YOU DON'T 'CHECK' TIKTOK. YOU WATCH TIKTOK.

When compared to TVD ads, influencer marketing is 277% more emotionally intense and 87% more memorable<sup>1</sup>. The reason for this is that influencer marketing is not perceived as an interruption of content. Rather, it is the destination – these are the users who people already enjoy watching on the platform.

Another example, in August of this year, one TikTok user posted a viral review of Peter Thomas Roth under eye cream. 31 million users watched her post, and 4 million liked it, even though she had fewer than 100 followers at the time. Within hours of her glowing endorsement – which likened the product to magic – the brand sold out. Suddenly word of mouth has a platform worth listening to.

As seen on TikTok is the new as-seen-on-TV; influence drives product purchases. Users are 1.7x more likely to have discovered the products they purchase on TikTok as compared to competitors – creating a one-of-a-kind e-commerce opportunity for brands

So, as you move forward into Q1 2022, you should go beyond arranging activations around the usual beats of the year and think strategically about your goals and channel strategy as it pertains to influencer marketing. Plan to be reactive, because culture isn't set 12 months in advance.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2019/06/18/influencer-ads-more-emotionally-intense-and-memorable-tv-claims-neuroscience-study>

## CASE IN POINT: BOMBAY SAPPHIRE

During lockdown, our Bombay Sapphire team partnered with the Design Museum, Camille Walala and a collective of young artist influencers to reopen the iconic museum as an essential shop – with groceries and sundries available for purchase, all wrapped in artist-designed packaging. The store sold out within the first 24 hours and Bombay Sapphire ended the year as the number 1 most talked about gin in Europe.



# 3 WAYS BRANDS CAN TAP INTO CULTURE THROUGH TIKTOK

## 1

### YOU'VE GOT TO BE PROACTIVELY SPONTANEOUS

The influencers you employ need to respond to culture as it happens; brands can no longer rely on one-week turnarounds (by that point, digital culture has moved on.) So, you need influencers who love your brand and understand it with products ready at home and contracts already signed. Shooting reactive content gives you an edge because influencers can inject your brand into culture in real time.

## 2

### WHEN ON SOCIAL, LOOSEN THE REIGNS

Keeping up with dizzying digital culture is not for every brand. But the good news is that a company can become a trend itself. In 2020, Collin the Caterpillar, an iconic Marks & Spencer's cake, battled its low-cost doppelgänger Cuthbert the Caterpillar, an Aldi confection. M&S got angry and went old school: they filed a lawsuit. Rather boldly, Aldi chose to troll them. The rebuke was a little risky, but it paid off. The hashtag #FreeCuthbert blew up, and now M&S looks like a stuffy old grandma who thinks some kind of cake was all her idea, whereas Aldi looks like it doesn't take itself too seriously.

## 3

### FIND PEOPLE WHO GENUINELY LOVE YOU FIRST

Anyone who loves your brand can be an influencer for you. The first step is just to show them some love back. Consumers can provide authentic word-of-mouth promotions on social. And, as we've discussed, follower counts don't matter as much, and they will matter even less in 2022. So: roll the dice. Engage with your customers, have a conversation. Send them some free stuff. And don't write off someone because they have too few followers. Look for passion and authenticity first, and the followers will come later.

# DON'T BE A BANDWAGON BRAND

Why purpose  
matters for  
more than just  
Gen Z

## Consumers are more likely to shop with brands that make an impact.

While Gen Z certainly feels the most passionately that brands should make a positive impact on the planet, this rule of thumb is not limited to the young folks. Rather, a 2019 a Nielsen report found the vast majority of shoppers of all ages felt that it was “extremely or very important” for companies to put programmes into motion to improve the environment.

Of course, sustainability is but one progressive purpose among many that brands during the past decade. But as virtually every company began saying all the right things, consumers started getting savvy.

Purpose is no longer enough: brands must now do something. Impact (which is to say, doing something) is now what measurably shifts attitudes and amplifies sales accordingly.

In summation: actions speak louder than words. And the volume of your action is loudest when the thing your brand is doing is relevant, authentic, and long-term. Not a

one-off or drop in the bucket. You need a durable initiative that aligns well with your offering.

This preference for brand impact has not waned in the wake of the pandemic. We all feel the reasons for this of course; the tumult of the pandemic has given everyone pause and, in this collective moment of reflection, we have reevaluated what matters to us.

Consumers are more likely than ever to choose brands based on purpose perception. A 2020 study<sup>2</sup>, found that consumers are 4 to 6 times more likely to “purchase, protect and champion purpose-driven companies.” The global survey also found that 83% of respondents say companies should only earn a profit if they also deliver a positive impact.

But remember, the penalties for paying lip service to a purpose are becoming more swift and severe. Brands that get it wrong may find themselves on the receiving end of vitriol posted on social media.

To make sure you get it right, it’s worth aligning with influencer allies who share your sense of purpose. Whatever your message is, it will resonate more authentically through someone who is already committed to a cause you care about.

<sup>2</sup> Source: From Zeno group

## CASE IN POINT: HELLMANN'S

Animal Crossing: New Horizons exploded in popularity in the UK during lockdown. But we noticed that Animal Crossing had a food waste problem: every week, players grow and trade turnips to make money; unsold turnips spoil and become worthless. Launching Hellmann's Island, we gamified food donation with influencers, allowing us to reach our 50,000 meals donation target for people in need during the festive period in 2020 through a Charity partner, FareShare – simply by encouraging turnip donations in app.



# SELECTING A PURPOSE DRIVEN INFLUENCER

## CAN YOU STAND BY YOUR STRAPLINES?

Don't enter into the conversation if you have something to hide, or risk being called out but your consumers.

## HAVE YOU DONE YOUR RESEARCH?

Don't forget that your influencers are brands with a history of their own. It's crucial that before entering any partnership you thoroughly vet all potential partners for not only brand suitability but also causes that they have chosen to align themselves with in the past. Leave no stone unturned.

## ARE YOUR INFLUENCER- ALLIES EDUCATED?

When working with new influencer partners on matters of purpose, one benefit is that they can speak on behalf of the brand. For them to do this well, you need to educate them on your message and brand journey. Have open two-way dialogues with your influencers that go beyond briefing forms – so that when they're asked the tough questions by their audiences, they're armed with the right responses.

# INCLUSIVE INFLUENCE

EQUALS  
BETTER  
RESULTS

How new transparency wrought an overdue reckoning

In 2020, Instagram users discovered an alarming pay disparity among influencers.

It began when one account, @influencerpaygap, asked influencers to anonymously submit details of their past campaigns, including their pay, racial background, and other demographics.

The results were undeniable: black influencers everywhere were being underpaid. In fact, studies show<sup>3</sup> that black female influencers are paid up to 10 times less for the same work as their white counterparts.

In addition to the steep racial pay gap, female influencers are paid 33% less than male influencers – even though female influencers make up 84% of the entire industry. On top of that, LGBTQ+ influencers, as well as influencers with disabilities, are more often compensated with ‘exposure’ in lieu of the standard rates brands usually pay.

Because of these startling facts, a pay gap reckoning began.

# 38%

OF CONSUMERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO TRUST BRANDS THAT CAST DIVERSE PEOPLE IN THEIR ADS.<sup>4</sup>

The takeaway for brands is that equality matters to consumers. But brands need to do more than fill quotas through diverse casting or attempt to appear demographically diverse during so-called key times. (A throwaway activation during Pride Month rings hollow, for example.)

<sup>3</sup>Source: Talking Influence

<sup>4</sup>Source: Adobe

## CASE IN POINT: TK MAXX

DEI casting audits led TJX to have a 233% increase in influencers from BIPOC backgrounds in fewer than 12 months. Their Staycation campaign immediately following, was both the most diverse and the most successful campaign the brand had seen via influence.



# STARTING THE CONVERSATION AROUND **INCLUSIVE INFLUENCE**

1

## ACCEPT THERE IS A PROBLEM

There is no arguing with the numbers. There is a clear disparity in pay that needs rectifying.

2

## AUDIT YOUR INFLUENCE WORK

To understand where there's room for improvement, take an unflinching look at the demographics of the influencers you work with.

3

## THINK OUTSIDE YOUR BUBBLE

Tap into perspectives outside your echo chamber.

4

## EDUCATE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

To really make an impact, you need everyone onside. Take the time to explain the importance of the issue and demonstrate how it can be improved.

5

## DEVELOP AN INSIDE-OUT STRATEGY

Start with your staff internally, ensure you have a diversity of people and talents, and that all employees are treated equitably. These standards will ripple out into your marketing efforts.

6

## DO

Actions speak louder than words.

WOW? YOU DID YOU DID

# MAXIMUM MARGIN RATE, **EXPLAINED**

To close the influencer pay gap, Ogilvy UK has launched the **Maximum Margin Rate** the first initiative of its kind in the advertising industry.

At its core, the initiative ensures influencers will be paid fairly for their work – optimising its supply chain to ensure influencers get the majority of the fees clients pay.

In addition, Ogilvy UK now runs quarterly diversity audits for its influencers. This has increased diversity casting across Ogilvy UK campaigns from 5% to 15%, a number which is reflective of the UK population.



# EXPERIENCE IS THE NEW E-COMM

Consumers want products and experiences – and not necessarily in that order

Looking forward to 2022, ecommerce is increasingly driven by experience and entertainment-led influence marketing.

There is no direct evidence that shows an increase in social actions, such as likes or comments, translates to an increase in sales. But there is data that shows an increase in video view rate (VVR) correlates with an increased likelihood of purchases.

Therefore, the success of videos on social shouldn't be measured on comments and likes, but rather VVR and VTR. If you want to measure true ROI within influence, you first need to understand the value of metrics and how they differ across content formats. If we constantly optimise for one metric, we're missing the bigger picture.

Indeed, brand video assets report drive 11% higher conversion rates, and 2-3x higher click-through rates, than static content.

**Consumers are more likely to act when brands provide an experience – taking them on a journey – that goes beyond a static product post.**

When we look at metrics beyond traditional influencer engagement, and towards a more content-first system of measurement, we can better measure the success of our partnerships.

## CASE IN POINT: ABERFELDY

Aberfeldy spotted an opportunity to partner directly with Amazon for its first ever influence-led, live-streamed, e-commerce integration tackling an outdated perception of whiskey drinkers. The livestream saw 2,700 watches live, with 129% increase in bottles sold, an increase in revenue of 94%.



# THE SLEEPING GIANT THAT IS **B2B INFLUENCE**

How influence  
has reshaped  
B2B marketing  
and employee  
advocacy

Some marketers believe in segregating B2B into its own substrata, as a unique branch of some grand marketing taxonomy. They believe that what makes B2B marketing distinct is its approach. It assumes their consumers are, by and large, rational decision-makers, or at least less susceptible to emotional appeals.

But B2B decision-making can be just as irrational as in consumer marketing. Both are equally driven by what people actually want, as opposed to what they say they want. Yet our essentially human irrationality is still widely ignored in B2B marketing, resulting in flaccid promotional strategies and tepid performance results.

**What marketers  
are liable to forget  
is that it's not  
about business-  
to-business, but  
rather business-  
to-human.**

In 2020, the B2B influencer industry was estimated to be worth \$4.6B and counting. The reason for this shift is that online content drives purchase decisions, no matter the industry.

In 2020, 70% of all B2B queries were made via smartphone. Accordingly, 70% of B2B buyers<sup>5</sup> increased mobile usage significantly over the past two to three years, and more than half expect to continue increasing mobile usage post-pandemic.

ADDITIONALLY,

# 83%

OF EXECUTIVES THAT  
CHOOSE A VENDOR  
ON BEHALF OF THEIR  
COMPANY USE SOCIAL  
MEDIA IN THEIR DECISION-  
MAKING<sup>6</sup>.

And 62% of B2B buyers<sup>7</sup> say they can make a business decision based on online content alone.

<sup>5</sup>As reported by Boston Consulting Group

<sup>6</sup>As published in Forbes

<sup>7</sup>As reported by Blue Corona

In terms of influencer marketing, there are still some distinctions between selling consumer goods and business acquisitions. When selling vodka or leggings, you need tastemakers. But when you're selling to businesses, your marketing needs reputable experts.

In B2B, long-term engagement is equally important, as is relationship-building. Myopic, transactional posts do not work well, as your aim is to command authority and engender respect, both of which take time. But B2B influence doesn't only live on LinkedIn, and it needn't be all about measuring reach. In fact, it needn't involve social platforms at all. Some of the best channels are podcasts or audio, where there is room for a large volume of detail and storytelling.

Indeed, B2B influence could be about finding the right person to attend your conference or identifying the strongest expert to sit within social-first influencer content.

Think beyond reach: what role can a particular influencer play for your brand?

Oftentimes, the best influencers are your employees. They know the business and can serve as a real human face for your products, employees can speak to audiences as individuals. And your staff is likely made up of experts, both in the C-suite and beyond, many of whom just need the right guidance to transform into thought leaders.

Your employees remove B2B marketing from the corporate world and insight emotional connections, otherwise missing from rational comms messaging.

## CASE IN POINT: IBM GLOBAL MARKETS

In 2020, Ogilvy worked with IBM Global Markets to test out different channels and mediums with influencers. We found that podcasts and long-form content were a major consumption point. So, we contracted B2B influencers in Insurance, FinTech, and more. We saw over 3M impressions and 15k podcast listens.



# 6 THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY

1

## THINK ABOUT THE VALUE EXCHANGE

What do employees get for doing this well? Make sure you have a fair protocol to reward positive advocates of your company.

2

## MAKE IT SOCIAL

Make this kind of content easy for your employees to share. Dedicated hashtags and internal social media pages – where you can collaborate and share guidelines – are a good start.

3

## IDENTIFY YOUR CHEERLEADERS – CAREFULLY

The best people to engage are those who enjoy their work, perform well and otherwise exemplify the brand. Select people whose judgement you can reliably trust for the long term. (And an inbuilt following doesn't hurt.)

4

## DEFINE WHAT 'GOOD' LOOKS LIKE

It's essential to present employees with a clear definition of success. This could be anything – from more positive social online conversations to higher rates of engagement. Whatever the target is, make sure your influencer-advocates know what they're aiming for.

5

## REMEMBER THAT EMPLOYEE-INFLUENCE IS A LONG-TERM GAME

As much as you think about the next month, or the next quarter, you should really plan for the shape your influencer-advocacy will take in the next few years. Investing in your employees is always a long-term proposition. Individuals take time to develop, but the rewards are worth reaping.

6

## AUTHENTICITY IS KEY

Don't over-engineer your programme. Your employees should have the freedom to create and express themselves genuinely. This is not your brand marketing campaign. Granted, approaching this all laissez-faire demands some bravery.

# INFLUENCE GOES METAVERSE

What this  
new virtual  
realm means  
for influencer  
marketing

Facebook, or rather Meta, has put all of its chips behind VR, AR, and cryptocurrencies.

In keeping with this spirit, the company's founder, Mark Zuckerberg, has grown fond of the word 'meta,' which means "self-referential" or "at a higher level" or both.

Of course, the metaverse, a loose collection of artificial worlds on the digital plane, is not a new concept. But Facebook's embrace of these technologies, and its rebranding of its name to 'Meta,' indicate a change in approach for the platform.

Although the plans for the metaverse will not be fully realised for at least 5 to 10 years, consumers are already gravitating towards the technological suite that underpins the concept.

According to Zuckerberg, the metaverse means transitioning away from consuming content to being right in the middle of it. Instead of just watching influencer videos on Instagram, for example, consumers will be able to interact with anyone streaming in the metaverse.

# HERE'S WHAT THE METAVERSE MEANS FOR INFLUENCE IN 2022

## EXPERIENCES NEED TO BE BOTH PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL FROM INCEPTION

It's not simply enough to live stream a physical experience anymore. We've allowed PR launches to be capitol city-centric for far too long and consumers outside of these bubbles now expect just as good, if not stronger experiences from wherever they're based. You need to start thinking experience first on all platforms for every brand interaction.

## INFLUENCERS CANNOT LIVE IN-FEED

Post-pandemic, we've started to peel back the façade of many digital personas, allowing raw, unfiltered personalities to come out. To draw audiences into partnership experiences, brands need to become more comfortable with letting these personalities shine through. It's no longer about endorsements, but the co-created experiences that consumers actively seek.

## COLLABORATE TO CAPITALISE

The metaverse empowers influencers to collaborate in ways they've never been able to before. Foodie influencers can cook with other foodies, style gurus can advise A-listers at the touch of button, and creators the world around can find new revenue streams within cryptocurrencies. As the digital world becomes more and more democratised, brands need to get comfortable with co-creation.

# THINK SYSTEM, NOT SILOS

Influence performs best when integrated into the wider marketing mix.

The days of guessing about the impact of influencer campaigns are over. The metrics are solid and the impact on ROI is easily measurable.

Looking at this data, it's clear that influencer marketing is most profitable when baked into wider marketing strategies.

By integrating with paid media, for example, and testing against traditional ads, we can unpack how influencer-led creatives impact the bottom line.

If you're not integrating into the wider mix, you're missing out on the low hanging fruit that could nourish your bottom line. At Ogilvy, we've found that for every channel that influence is added to, the potential to increase your ROI by up to 30% is introduced.

## Influence is a key ingredient, not a garnish.

By getting all teams into a room upfront at the start of the campaign, rather than working one team to the next as you move through the chain – from conceptual creative to earned and paid media and beyond – you're able to better identify moments of integration.

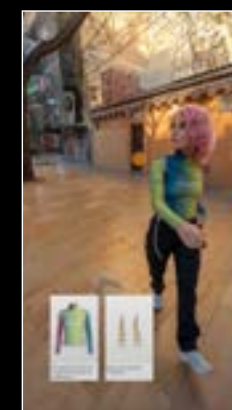
Moreover, by bringing influence into the loop sooner, you can spot opportunities. By ensuring influencer briefs work within the wider campaign plan, and that the content is setup to be trackable, you can more effectively manage production budgets and assess ROI against true business results.

When you combine paid and earned influence, you increase the likelihood for returns on long-term earned campaigns **from roughly 50% to nearly 85%.**

You also improve the quality of this earned media, as previously briefed and paid-for partners will already understand your brand values, product cues and tone of voice.

## CASE IN POINT: ZALANDO

Zalando needed an exciting way to launch its new streetwear collection and become the starting point of fashion. To execute the campaign, we designed a 360° production, featuring 28 content creators. Google created 16 pin stores for Zalando in Google Streetview all over Spain, turning Google Maps into an innovative e-commerce tool. We earned 3.5M impressions and were mentioned in more than 400 publications. Zalando plans to replicate the campaign in other nations across Europe.



# FINAL THOUGHTS

The future of  
influence is  
the future of  
marketing

## As social media revolutionised notions of fame and notoriety, so too have methods of persuasion shifted for the foreseeable future.

Now that anyone can reach millions, the barriers to entry have dissolved.

In 1946, Daryl Zanuck, an executive producer at 20th Century Fox, predicted that television would go bust in just 6

months. He reckoned it was just a fad. "People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night," he said.

Now the year will soon be 2022, and the way we all consume media has changed, yet again. There is strong evidence that this transformation, like those before it, is durable. But this transition is also not yet fully mature; there is still much room for growth.

We cannot be totally sure what things will look like in ten years' time. But we can confidently say that those who begin learning the ropes of influencer marketing now will happier later.

There will be brands that recognise influencers as the most convincing conduits for their messaging. And there will also be brands that resist this change, favouring familiar paths over relatively new territory.

## WHICH PATH WILL YOU CHOOSE?



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