

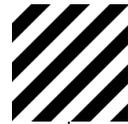
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**THE
GLOBAL
RISE OF B2B
INFLUENCER
MARKETING**



FOREWORD



Real People, Real Impact: The Power of Influence

The world of influencer marketing has evolved – and grown exponentially.

Since 2016, the global market size has grown by more than 20x. Today, Goldman Sachs estimates that the Creator Economy will reach \$500 Billion by 2027.

Social platforms like YouTube (2.2B), Instagram (1.4B) and TikTok (1B) lead the way to reach the next generation of consumers, closing in on a combined 5B monthly active users, and this growth is fuelled by those generating content every day. In every minute that passes, 2 million posts are shared on Snapchat alone. In the same timeframe, one million hours of content will be streamed by users worldwide.

Creators are the catalyst for the success of these platforms. Sharing information and starting trends are two of the most potent cultural forces shaping our world today. And now, with the continued evolution of **eCommerce**, entrepreneurs and businesses alike are capitalising on the power of Influencers to not only drive sales, but to birth new businesses, born purely from the opportunity the Creator Economy presents. For those in doubt: 62% of TikTok users report making a purchase after seeing it reviewed, promoted, or advertised on the app.

The Reality of the B2B Information Exchange

With influencer marketing stereotyped by many as a consumer tool, seeing photoshopped, fame-hungry Influencers promoting products they don't really use, the B2B world had largely written off collaborating with Influencers as not translating to business; a space built on credibility and trust. As a result, B2B had been slower to accept how Influencers could drive impact in their business operations.

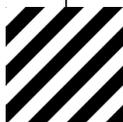
But if you look at the heart of both disciplines, you'd be foolish to ignore the underlying component of what makes influencer marketing so successful. Yes, the execution is different, but the principles are the same. Experiences shared from a like-minded community becomes uniquely validated, and the trust exchanged between that community becomes innately ingrained in all its participants.

Carefully selected Influencer partnerships now play an integral role in how businesses consume, verify and act on information. But not enough brands develop the deep, meaningful, and complex relationships with Influencers their audience demands. Businesses need to understand the value that lies in those authentic partnerships. For those who get that right can own the pockets of industry conversation where reputations are truly formed.



Rahul Titus

Global Head of Influence, Ogilvy





What you will see in this paper

Providing a Global Perspective

Although partnering with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) are certainly not new, the evolution of the B2B Influencer marketing landscape has been slower than its more developed big brother in B2C. As a result, we have very little research about how B2B businesses use Influencers in their marketing activities, or the successes and challenges being experienced.

That's why Ogilvy Influence embarked one of the first and largest global research projects in B2B Influence! Utilising the power of our global network, we've surveyed marketing leaders across Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia Pacific and the Americas and have

produced the most detailed global evaluation of the space to date, importantly highlighting both the similarities and comparisons of how Business Influence operates in different cultures and regions around the world.

This report will show senior opinion on the success of B2B Influencers and provide insight into how to execute the practice more effectively for marketers all over the world.

We will analyse the markets, share **insightful market-by-market comparison**, **spot the opportunities to seize** and **share useful tips** on how to shape your own Influencer strategy.

Our Partners

The sum of our findings is only as strong as the credibility of the data we collect and the unrivalled experience of the partners that contribute. That's why we chose to partner with a collection of B2B experts to bring this analysis to life including:



Opinium Research

Opinium Research are a global research firm with 20 years of research in quantitative study



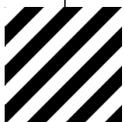
LinkedIn

LinkedIn is considered the principle and biggest professional social network with over 500 million users. With a plethora of services, LinkedIn acts as the foundation of B2B Influencer marketing



Analytica

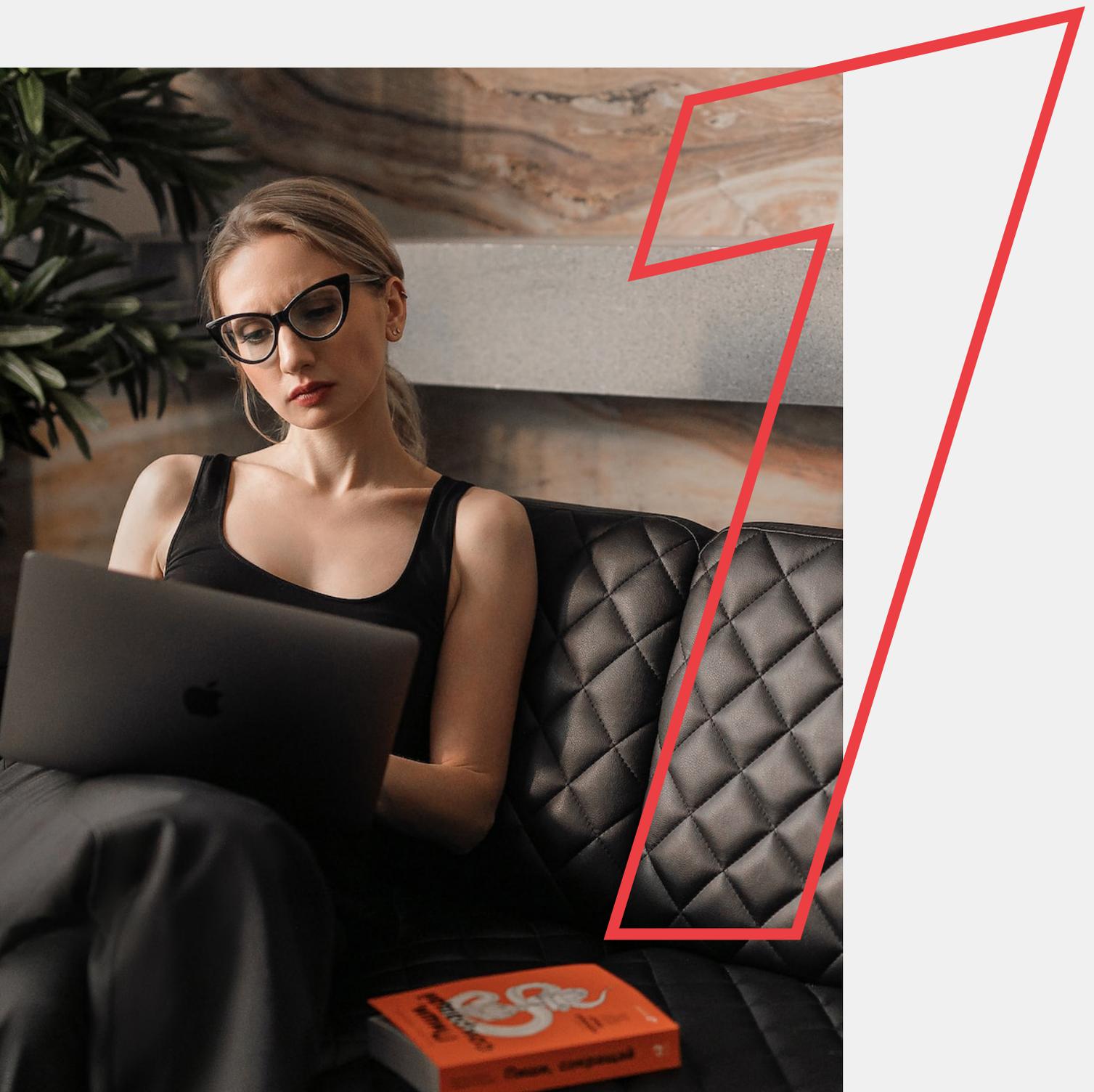
Analytica is a B2B Influencer marketing platform with search, analysis and management capabilities



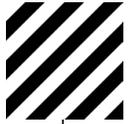
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THE FOUNDATIONS OF B2B INFLUENCE



THE FOUNDATIONS OF B2B INFLUENCE



What is B2B Influence?

B2B Influencer marketing is the practice of partnering brands with influential individuals, key industry figures, or subject matter experts. The focus of this collaboration is to create content that has a beneficial impact on their customers' brand perception and purchase decisions by providing credible information.

Businesses partner with Influencers for a multitude of reasons, including articulating their business benefits from an authentic perspective – or to a new audience.

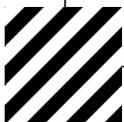
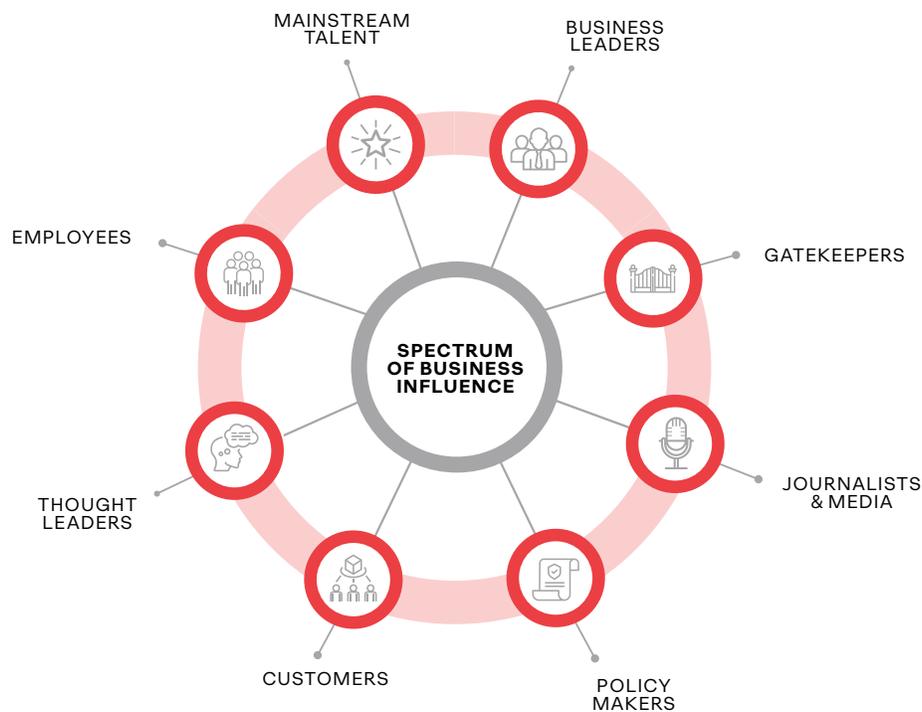
What does a B2B Influencer look like?

Whereas B2C more often demands trendsetters and tastemakers, B2B requires credible expertise rooted in proven experience that contributes to professional opinion.

This could come in the form of Thought Leaders, Subject Matter Experts, Academics, Business Owners, Content Creators, Analysts & Journalists, and even a company's own employees.

Often having their own in-built audiences and followers, their influence is visible through a plethora of channels, from widespread social media content, to detailed thought leadership events and media, even one-to-one meetings or industry discussion boards.

This influence then seeds into the industry conversation to create real impact on reputation.

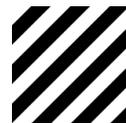


RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



OUR RESEARCH

Global Analysis of B2B Influencer Marketing



Methodology

To obtain both a mass global perspective, while also understanding detail in the experience, we conducted a global questionnaire of 550+ senior leaders through our research partner Opinium, alongside an in-depth interview series to CMOs of multi-national organisations.



550+ SENIOR B2B DECISION MAKERS



11 GLOBAL MARKETS



18 QUESTION GLOBAL SURVEY



ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW SERIES

Constructing our questioning

Participants took an 18-question survey that was device-agnostic and included demographic and qualifying questions. The survey constructed was designed to validate usage of Influencer marketing within the B2B industry, and to provide insight into successful practices.

All 11 Ogilvy markets contributed to questioning, tailored with each market's cultural factors and stage of development in mind. The construction of the questioning then drew from Opinium expertise to develop clear and decisive results.

Qualifying criteria for respondents



JOB LEVEL EXPERIENCE

Senior decision makers with experience in B2B



INDUSTRIES

Tech, Retail, FMCG, Legal, Construction, RealEstate, IT, Financial Services, Marketing & Advertising, Finance & Banking



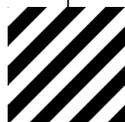
BUSINESS SIZE

Small (5-50 Emps), SME (50 – 500 Emps), Large Enterprise (500+ Emps)



MARKETS

UK, US, France, South Africa, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, The Philippines



MEET OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS

We conducted interviews with some of the most established CMOs & Marketing Leaders in B2B to get an intrinsic view of how Business Influence is being utilised by some of the biggest organisations in the world.



Beth Saint
CMO,
Schroders



Jim Habig
VP Marketing,
LinkedIn



Rebecca Hirst
CMO,
EY



Ashutosh Gupta
Country Manager,
LinkedIn APAC



Ryan Bares
Influence Lead,
IBM



Alexis Oger
VP EMEA Marketing,
Dell



Saad Abdullah
GM, Marketing,
Toyota and Lexus, UAE



Andy Davis
Founder,
10 x 10



Kerry Thorpe
Head of Comms,
Ben & Jerry's



Yogesh Dhringra
MD & CEO,
SmarterLogistics India



Jason Elliott
Head of Portfolio Marketing,
Nokia



Steven Nutbeam
CMO,
JP Morgan



Michael Chang
Managing Partner,
Taya Venture Capital



Anicet Bossia
GM, Brand & Marketing,
Airtel Africa



Shuchi Sud
Global Sales & Delivery
Amazon Web Services



Luca Destefanis
Global VP Marketing,
Kyndryl, Singapore



Peter Markey
CMO,
Boots



Sam Yang
Exec Director & CSO,
QMI Group

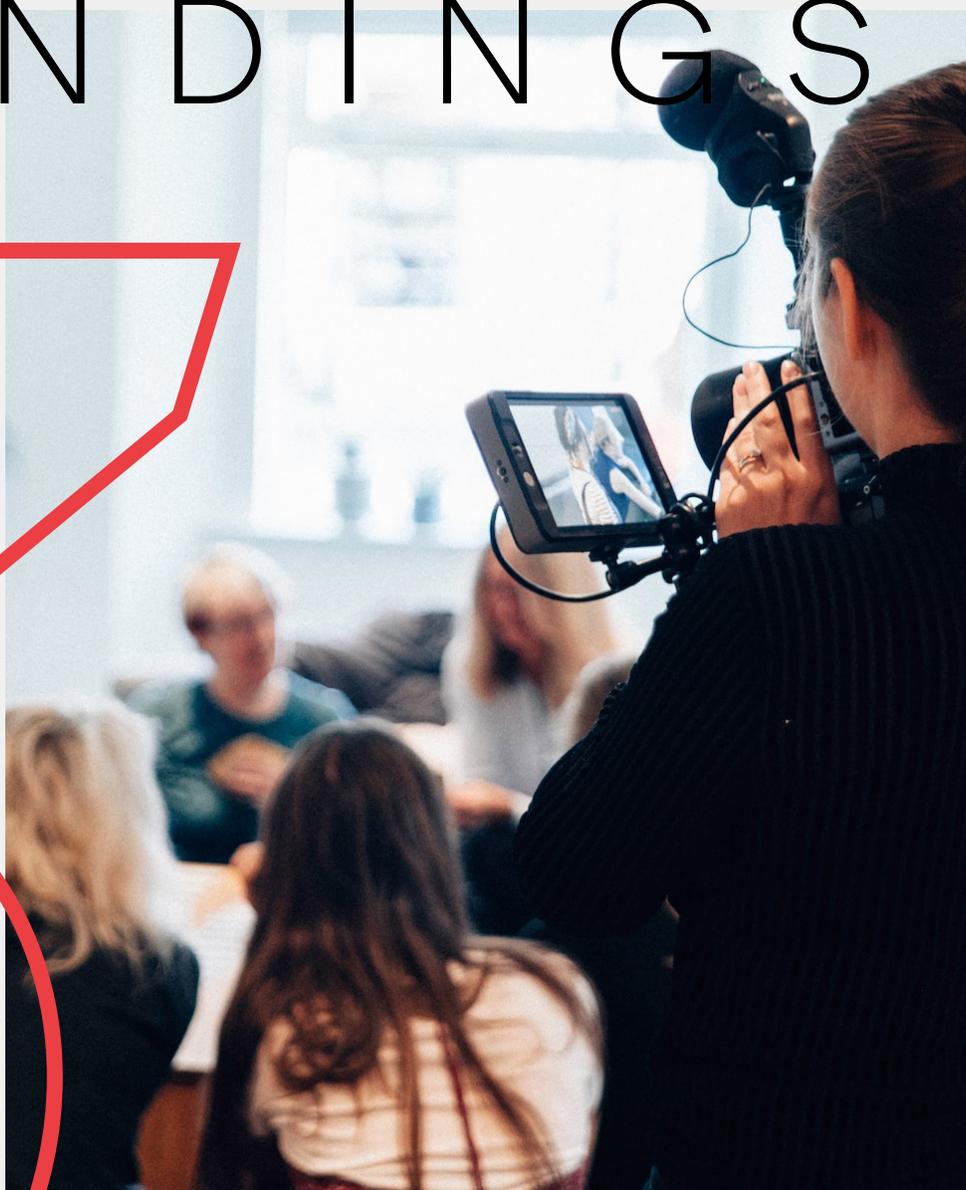


Atilla Cansun
CMO,
No7 Beauty Company



Alex Konstanze
PHD Marketing

GLOBAL FINDINGS



A SNAPSHOT OF THE GLOBAL FINDINGS



One of the most striking findings of our survey was that **93% of CMOs are planning to increase their usage of Influencers** in some form. Feedback from our interview series reveals that this kind of marketing enables brands to reach new audiences in new ways, whilst still adopting the principal element of trust.

But in contrast to the unequivocal opportunities around us, holes in the fabric of brand strategy are still visible, with marketing teams across the globe still missing the low-hanging fruit in a largely untested, under-developed and under-utilised Influencer marketing revolution.

Being used to achieve objectives at every stage of the customer journey, brands that integrate Influence effectively for contextual challenge will take strides forwards in creating ownable impact in spaces still untouched by all-but-a-few of the industry's most successful brand-building businesses.

If you don't have a B2B Influencer strategy, you're late to the party

75% of our surveyed B2B Marketers are already utilising Influencers and of those who don't, most are planning on starting soon. If you're not exploring the basic benefits, you're missing an opportunity for gains that your competitors are already taking.

Going back to handshakes over games of golf, utilising Influencers is nothing new; the playing field just looks different. With **90%** of the industry now seeing social media as an important source of business information, Influencers are impacting a due diligence process that was previously limited to sales reps and glossy brochures.

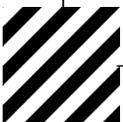
Everything is new, but nothing has changed. Influencers still impact due diligence processes.

Influencers are the most versatile full-funnel tool in your B2B marketing armoury.

CMO's are divided. There is no one best way to utilise influencers. Some businesses use them to build upper funnel relationships (**50%**), others to close the deal (**50%**) while significant evidence suggest no brands are utilizing **after-sales influence** to its full potential.

Your employees are typically your most valuable resource. Influencers are not only being used to motivate and educate your internal employees, but identifying your employees that can be Influencers themselves is a huge missed opportunity for one of the biggest ROI's of all time.

There is an unexplored symbiotic relationship between employees and Influencers only a few CMOs have spotted



THE RESULTS



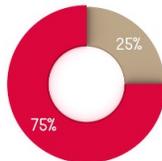
The richest of datasets available anywhere in B2B Influencer Marketing has been benchmarked across all participating regions, validated by our research partners and elaborated on in detail through our CMO expert interview series to give an eye-opening, heart-of-the-action, global perspective on the impact Influencers are having in B2B.

Below showcases some of the standout results that could change your approach to Influencers as you know it....

Usage

75%

of B2B businesses currently use B2B influencer marketing and of those, **93%** are planning to increase the use of them.



Of those who don't use Influencers yet,

53%

are already planning to use them in the future.

27%

of those who don't use Influencers, think they do not have the budget to implement influencer marketing in their current marketing strategy.

Performance

67%

of B2B Influencer campaigns had more impact on their marketing performance than their brand only marketing, rising to **77%** of people expecting it to outperform in the near future.

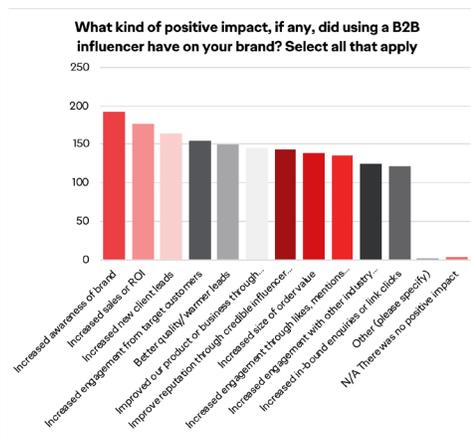
Only

1%

of businesses said their Influence campaigns performed worse than their brand content.

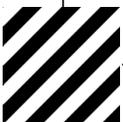
40%

of B2B marketers stated that **warmer leads, increased leads or increases in sales** were the success factors they experienced when implementing an influencer marketing strategy



We use Influencers in the early stages of the funnel through events and thought leadership, to start the conversation and build trust."

Rebecca Hirst,
CMO, EY



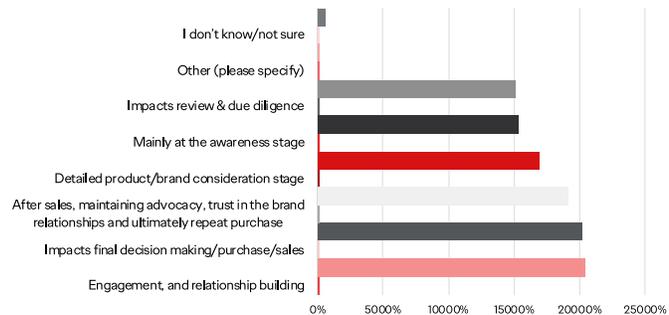
50 / 50

C-Suite marketers were split when choosing Influencer's biggest impact area in the marketing funnel between mid-funnel relationship building (50%) or lower funnel sales (50%).

47%

however believe there's an opportunity for B2B Influencers to have the biggest impact during **aftersales** when executed correctly, encouraging advocacy, trust in the brand and ultimately repeat purchases.

At what stage have B2B influencers made the biggest impact on your consumer journey/marketing funnel? Select all that apply.



Benefits of Influence

49%

of C-Suite marketers believe Influencers help the brand achieve a more credible, believable, and trusted opinion than it can by itself.

36%

of brand/product teams suggested working with Influencers helped them improve their product or business through **valuable expert feedback**.

48%

believe the authentic **two-way communication** that Influencers create with their customers cannot be replicated to the same level directly with the brand.



KOLs (key opinion leaders) give us access to an audience we don't already own. An Influencer partnership allows us to talk about specific topics to relevant, engaged audiences.



Ryan Bares,
Influence Lead, IBM

92%

of participants agree that using B2B Influencers for hyper-targeted marketing or personalised messaging is an **effective strategy** for **increasing brand consideration** and **customer acquisition**.

89%

of C-Suite marketers recognise that using **employees** as Influencers holds immense value for their businesses when integrating them into marketing strategies as a free, informed and impassioned Influencer.

47%

of executives believe that using external B2B Influencers positively impacted internal employees through **greater engagement and interest in brand.**

48%

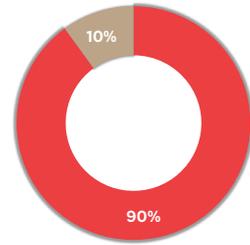
of participants confirm they share content directly with peers they feel may find value, expanding the qualified reach our Influencer content can achieve.

43%

of professionals believe the credibility and believability of a B2B Influencer is developed by strong engagement, having clear market-leading success and verifying credibility through referrals and endorsements from other B2B thought leaders.

55%

of decision makers are more receptive to business leaders when getting information and insights as it shows experience from others in their position. This is followed closely by practitioners (47%) and researchers (46%) - people with an educated and qualified point of view.



90%

of industry marketeers believe that B2B Influencers on social media are an **important source of staying up to date with their industry** - with 57% citing them as their **main source of information** on a day-to-day basis.

44%

of B2B decision makers find product or service-based content the most influential when making a buying decision, followed closely by testimonials (42%).

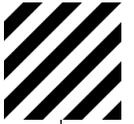
The top suggestion (56%) for improving performance of B2B Influencer campaigns

'Build long term relationships that show true brand advocacy'.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Applying our
learnings in practice





CATALYSTS OF CONVERSATION: INFLUENCE IS THE MODERN-DAY WORD OF MOUTH

Word of mouth has been recognised as the most effective marketing channel since the beginning of time. Understanding what makes word of mouth so effective, is to understand the components of its source.

Word of mouth is:

- *an honest, authentic opinion;*
- *embedded in relatable experience;*
- *from real people you can trust*

Welcome to the world of business Influencers...

In an age where 75% of the workforce will be digital natives by 2025 (Harvard Business Review²) businesses have to adapt to the new reality of the digital relationships & communication landscape becoming increasingly integrated with our physical one.

B2B Influencers are a conduit between the two - an authentic catalyst of conversation, and the beating heart of modern-day word of mouth marketing.

B2B marketers are not rewriting the rules of engagement. They've simply adapted to the new digital / IRL hybrid environment the quickest and claimed it for themselves.

The exciting thing is the word of mouth conversations B2B marketers have, are not one-on-one anymore. The accessibility of digital means that Influencers create detailed debate and conversation between hundreds, if not thousands of people on any one topic, but with the same authority they've already developed through years of credibility across other established channels.

Brands that establish partnerships with these influential leaders become an organic component of industry-leading discussion, and as a result establish the reputation of an integral business partner with a credible seat at the table.

In fact, 49% of C-Suite marketers believe that influencers help their brands achieve a more credible, believable, and trusted opinion than they could achieve by themselves.



"Influencers are successful individuals with established names and trustworthiness in the industry, with proven and successful careers in their fields. They are well respected in the industry and people look forward to their views and opinions. Influencers bring value to B2B marketing due to their credibility."

Yogesh Dhingra, CEO, Smartr Logistics, India

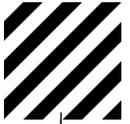
91%

of B2B purchases are impacted by word-of-mouth in some way¹
Forbes

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffromm/2018/11/07/how-to-impact-your-brand-by-word-of-mouth/>
² <https://hbr.org/2023/03/b2b-sales-culture-must-change-to-make-the-most-of-digital-tools>



HOW SHOULD BRANDS USE IT?



STEP 1: Choose Talent Wisely

The crucial first step is to carefully define who these creators are and ensure their voice and values fit with yours. Each Influencer possesses a unique voice that resonates with a specific portion of your customer base. Choosing the right Influencer and giving them creative license to promote your brand in their own way helps to create unrivalled authenticity.

Your selection also opens opportunity to tap into hard-to-reach niche markets and diverse customer segments, often in spaces brands have no authority to speak and therefore consider unattainable. This individuality becomes the cornerstone for marketers to stand out in an otherwise over-saturated sea of sameness.



As **Beth Saint**, CMO of Schroder's, aptly points out,

"Individualism is back. In a world where there is so much content available there has been a rise in the importance of individualistic tone of voice and perspective. Whether your Influencers are your employees, or your customers, the individual is critical for brands to be recognised now."

STEP 2: Invest in the Partnership

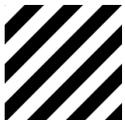
The next step requires the brand to invest in these partnerships beyond the financial.

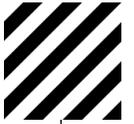
Educate them on your products, invite them to business development sessions, have them meet your employees. Build strong, meaningful, long-term relationships with Influencers who in turn, become deeply invested in your brand's purpose and naturally advocate for it, even when unprompted. It's a symbiotic relationship - invest in Influencers, and they'll undoubtedly invest in you.

As the age of B2B Influencers unfolds, businesses must collaborate to resonate & stay relevant. By harnessing the power of aligned Influencers, brands not only enter the hotspots of conversation at key moments, they stay there until decision makers are ready to listen.



Example: No7 Beauty Company serves as an exemplary model of this approach through its Creator Collective - a ground-breaking initiative that places substantial emphasis on empowering B2B Influencers. **Atilla Cansun**, CMO of No7 Beauty Company, describes the initiative as a powerful way to **"influence the Influencers, educate them, provide them with the right tools to grow, and become even more influential."**





EMBRACE EMOTION: THE VALUE OF HUMAN- CENTRIC STORYTELLING

B2B decision makers are ultimately just people too.

B2B has undergone a revolution. The social age of information and always-on accessibility has ushered through a new era of relationships between buyers and brands. What that has meant for the modern workforce is that we source professional information and connect with colleagues through the same channels as we do for our personal lives.

As our work life and personal life become increasingly entangled, appealing emotively to the human behind the professional is even

more important. Professional comms - but on deeper, more personal level - has risen to prominence, and with good reason...

The fundamental component at the core of emotion, is human stories. **Real people create real impact.** This provides the perfect opportunity to welcome B2B Influencers to the stage.

Research shows that **emotionally connected customers are more than twice as valuable** as highly satisfied customers, as emotions are known to influence decision-making and brand loyalty.³



Audiences will trust a brand they respect, and value opinions over standard brand messaging.

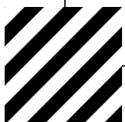
Andy Davies,
Former Investor-in-Residence at Google and Founder of 10x10



Research by the **LinkedIn B2B Institute** suggests that: 'inspiring emotion in B2B ads is x7 more effective than delivering rational benefits alone'.

49%

of C-Suite marketers believe Influencers help the brand achieve a more credible, believable and trusted opinion than it can by itself.



³ Forbes Publication. "How Emotional Connections Create Champions for your Brand" [Link](#)



Benefits for employees too!

We've also discovered that leveraging Influencers can ignite an intrinsic, relatable passion behind the narrative of your employees. Built on their personal investment in outcomes of the shared story, Influencers add a multi-layered benefit weaving further motivation into company performance.



We also use Influencers to connect emotionally with our team members to retain and attract talent as well as customer. It helps people feel more connected to the company and understand the values.

Alexis Oger, VP Marketing EMEA, Dell Technologies, France

Here are a few tips to build emotional relationships through Influencers

01

Market your brand values over product expertise. Find the values that have synergies with the consumer world that people care personally about and develop your creative ambition around these.

02

Select Influencers that authentically align with those values, onboard them early in your creative direction and collaborate to find the outcome. Trust that they know their audience because they speak to them all the time.

03

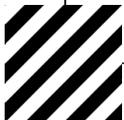
Through the creative direction you choose, the platforms you host your message on and the action you illicit, you must give your audience an opportunity to engage – comment, share, duet, DM, anything – as long as it's not just watch. The two-way engagement validates their initial emotional connection to build a real brand advocacy.

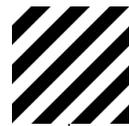
48%

Believe the authentic two-way communication that Influencers create with their network (and your potential customers) cannot be replicated to the same level directly with the brand itself.

"In our business model, which is high value technology services, the key to our success is advocacy. Advocacy to drive awareness and, equally importantly, for deepening relationships with our most relevant customers. That's why I really think advocacy in the B2B space, especially in the high value B2B space, is a hero."

Luca Destefanis, Global VP Marketing, Kyndryl, Singapore





THINK FURTHER: INFLUENCE MUST INTEGRATE

LinkedIn, the undeniable leader in B2B influencer marketing, stands tall with over 850 million global users and an impressive array of marketing capabilities, including the newly introduced **creator partnerships** feature. It's a low barrier-to-entry social platform rooted in thought leadership and embedded in community sharing, and is the perfect place to test and nurture your B2B influencer marketing for early success.

While it remains a no-brainer foundation to your Influencer strategy, Ogilvy's research has shown the opportunity to optimise B2B Influence is only strengthened by integrating your LinkedIn Influencers further afield.

Level 1 Integration – Social

Industry conversation happens in many forms and on many platforms. Start bringing your LinkedIn creators into play on other B2B platforms. Beyond LinkedIn, our research revealed that **50%** of B2B marketing teams consider YouTube the next significant platform for B2B influencer marketing, closely followed by Facebook (48%) and Instagram (46%). Unutilised platforms such as WhatsApp (14%), Reddit (7%), and even Telegram (9%) show untapped potential for reaching professional audiences when leveraged effectively.

Level 2 Integration – Multi-Channel Marketing

A more sophisticated approach to adding visible depth to your Influencer strategy is developing relationships that transcend social media and are woven into the fabric of your other marketing channels, bringing a foundational brand purpose and vision to every decision maker you touch.

Level 3 Integration – Business Operations

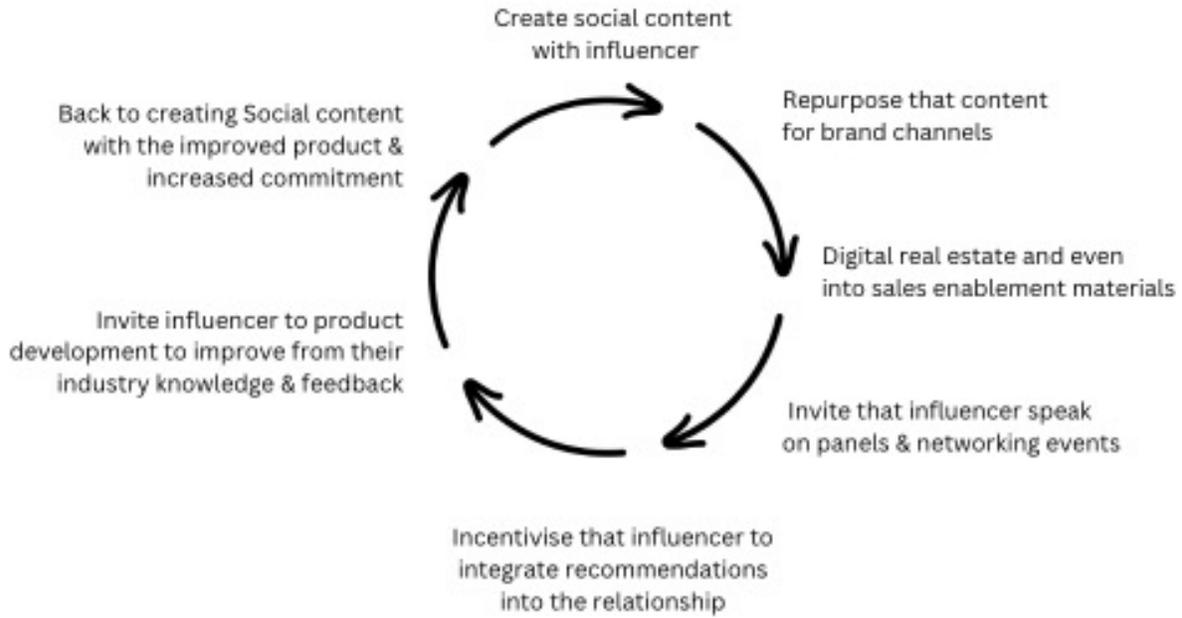
Expert integration would require you to incorporate Influencers into your product development opportunities and employee integration. These are individuals who understand what your customers need because they are your customers. They can feedback on challenges you haven't heard of and in return research the impacting result amongst their peers. Not only does that provide feedback but it builds advocacy for your brand.

In addition to content opportunities, Ogilvy's research suggests integrating Influencers into your operational day-to-day, whether that be for education or inspiration, drives increased engagement and interest from your employees, increasing output, effort & loyalty, ultimately investing in your most valuable asset (employees), long term.

47%

of executives believe that using external B2B Influencers positively impacted internal employees through greater engagement and interest in brand



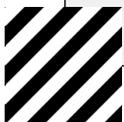


An integrated approach empowers your campaign to adapt to the ever-changing preferences and behaviours of your audience. With a finger on the pulse of their followers, industry Influencers understand how to effectively engage, captivate, and integrate their community into your brands; tailoring the content to resonate deeply with them, whichever way the market leans. The impact of such an integrated B2B Influencer campaign unlocks authenticity, positions a shared purpose, incorporates real resonance, and will ultimately deliver unparalleled ROI eventually to those who commit.



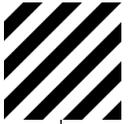
We've seen success in utilising industry experts through podcasts, blog articles and appearing in panel sessions at events. Having developed an Influence programme that allows our internal specialists to drive the credibility of our content with external experts has been really powerful for the business.

Jason Elliott, Head of Portfolio Marketing, Nokia





PERSONNEL POWER: THE UNTAPPED VALUE OF EMPLOYEE INFLUENCERS



Ask any CEO or CMO worth their seat at the top table, 'what's the special ingredient that makes your business so successful?' They won't say it's accurate balance sheets, or their latest CRM system implementation, or even their whacky founders risky, entrepreneurial ways. 9 times out of 10, C-Suite will recognise their employees as the most valuable asset the business has.

They are the lifeblood of any company, the passion behind its core values, the intelligence that keeps it innovating, and ultimately the reassurance in its ability to deliver.

With the advent of thought-leadership woven into the fabric of digital networking, we no longer need a nominated spokesperson to stand on a podium and sell our company vision. All your employees are now your billboards, on a daily basis, communicating with your industry every day, on the topics that matter right now. They're super engaged, their audiences are often larger than you think (10x larger...) and they never switch off. They are an untapped marketing resource to access your topical decision makers and they are, effectively free.



According to LinkedIn research, the collective network size of your employees is, on average, **10x** larger than your company network itself.

Aside from the access to large audiences, your employees can also communicate with the industry in ways your brand or independent thought-leaders just can't. From a position of authentic advocacy for what goes into developing the business, and the intentions to support their community through explanation and vision.

Not tapping into these organic advocates would represent a loss of market presence and significant opportunity cost.

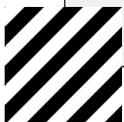
89%

of C-Suite marketers recognise that using **employees** as Influencers holds immense value for their businesses as a free, informed and impassioned advocate.



"Running an employee advocacy programme is an untapped resource for most brands. It's a cultural journey with your team to enable authentic individual opinion whilst working within the companies values, that can influence everything from future customers to finding top talent."

Beth Saint, CMO at Schroders





How to activate a scaled advocacy program with the right support

No matter how many followers an employee has, they are a gateway to a specific decision maker that may prove valuable to the business in more ways than one. There are many programmes we can develop to ensure we're setting our employees up for public success. Having said that, it's not a one size fits all approach when developing employee Influencers. We see it on a spectrum of engagement depending on your requirement and your audience.

Ogilvy

Everybody Welcome

Educate and Encourage, but don't over-incentivise

Create a company-wide program that educates all employees on how to be vocal on platforms like LinkedIn, within company guidance - where to research, how to write, how to grow.

One word of caution: do not aggressively incentivise or spoon-feed. It could see Influencers over-saturate and appear inauthentic with similar posts, drive fake engagement, or risk the quality of the work created.

analytica

Build a Group of Experts

Nurturing Authority

Getting slightly more selective, use analytics tools like Analytica to analyse key topics in the industry and the whitespace for your brand to exist, followed by assessing the strength of your employees, and their vicinity to both customers and conversations.

Create a topical environment around clusters of your employees with genuine existing authority in the space, providing extra support like boosting, partnerships and PR opportunities.

LinkedIn

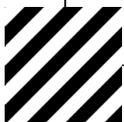
Marketing Solutions

Cherry-Picking Superstars

Champion & Promote

When creating your B2B Influencer marketing campaigns, bring those select few superstars into your brand marketing campaigns, creating content that their natural opinions can shine through.

These superstars should be seeded throughout cross-channel marketing opportunities and supported with events, PR opportunities and social boosting through the LinkedIn Marketing Solutions platform & Thought Leader Ad's.



REAL ROI: THE STORY OF B2B ICOMMERCE



David Ogilvy famously once said **'We sell or else'**.

It's the same-old question, and same-old illusive answers for marketers. How do we prove ROI on marketing spend when all benefits are not directly attributable as true revenue.

The majority of marketers (84%) say they need to provide ROI to justify marketing spend or budget increases for campaigns and initiatives.

Well, it could be suggested that the world of B2B Influencer marketing has more challenges on top. Influencer marketing sits comfortably in a world where basic campaigns celebrate impressions and reach, and where likes and shares count as engaged audiences. Other than an increase in iCommerce in-platform mechanics and basic tracking links, tracking purchases direct from the Influencer is a challenge, never really giving a true representation of how Influencer opinion impacts the buyer. Some of the most senior marketers globally however, suggest B2B Influencers have the most impact at the mid & lower funnel. On average, **40%** of B2B marketers stated **warmer leads or increased leads** were the success factors they experienced when implementing an Influencer marketing strategy.

On the B2B side, we know that 95% of any given B2B audience is not actively in market looking for a solution. This means, you either have to get very lucky you catch your decision maker at the right time, or hope your marketing is strong enough to leave a lasting impression for whenever they finally are ready. The likelihood of that purchase ever having a chance to track back to the initial influencer development, however, is highly unlikely.

50% of C-Suite marketers choose lower funnel sales when suggesting B2B Influencer's role in the sales funnel, with **43%** confirming they did see increases sales or ROI as a result.

What is it about Influencers that drives sales?

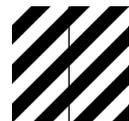
55% of the audience suggest **business leaders** make the best Influencers to consume insights from. That is because genuine experiences in the field reassures the audience they know what they're talking about, and the audience is smart enough to make their own comparisons between the Influencers business and their own to justify its relevance.

One of the key attributes of Influencers that drives acquisition is providing **practical and contextual information** that can be applied to your audience's business immediately, through a business leader that has visible experience of the same successes & failures your audience are experiencing. Not only do they provide credible advice on how to use your product properly, but it builds trust in the brand, whose intentions are to support its customers by going the extra mile.

Influencers can drive acquisition but understand the route to sale is long and you must take a customer through the funnel with the Influencer partnerships. Multiple touch points from the Influencer over a long-term relationship adds more ticks in the due diligence boxes, ready for when decision makers are ready to purchase.

43%

of C-suite marketers suggest their B2B Influencer marketing campaigns did produce increased **sales and ROI** as a result.



KPIs and ROI

Return On your Investment from Influencers doesn't necessarily mean revenue. The benefits of building a brand that people like, engage with, and importantly trust to help them long term, has a huge impact on whether they eventually buy from you. Understand that Influencers and their impact on your audience follows a funnel too. Figure out where you are in your Influencer journey right now, and what your real objectives of partnering with them are to ensure your ROI narrative matches those core objectives.



"The way we measure ROI of Influencers is by looking at what clients we get in the room with us, and how many new relationships we create from Influencer introductions or the appeal of those partnerships."

Rebecca Hirst, CMO, EY

How to hit your Influence KPIs

If you need to raise **AWARENESS** with new audiences the brand hasn't been able to penetrate before, create attention-grabbing, story-telling content on the right platforms. Analysing the organic reach of your Influencers audience to understand job level, businesses and demographics will prove crucial. Reaching a few of the right decision makers with the right budget is more valuable than reaching a lot of the wrong audience.

If you need to **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS** with key customers, use Influencers to start conversations and debate in industry forums. Measure conversation volume, engagement with content and brand perception.

If you need to drive **SALES**, you need to create sales enablement materials for your sales team to connect the dots between Influencers, buyers, and the product-based content that helps warm your leads before conversation. Measure link clicks, volume of leads, and importantly find your own way to track the strength of leads you receive.

Ogilvy survey results

47%

reported an increased awareness of their brand capabilities from Influencer marketing results

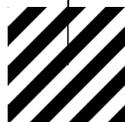
50%

suggested Influencers make the biggest impact at the relationship building stage of the funnel

47%

stated Influencers provided **better quality/warmer leads or increased new leads** compared to brand marketing

DID YOU KNOW: iFORENSICS is Ogilvy's off-the-shelf Forensic Influencer Landscape Reporting. Through a combination of social listening, media integration and measurement analysis, iForensics helps to assess any given topic area, what the key conversations or trends are within it, how its perceived, what Influencers are strongest, what media publications cover it, where your brands employees sit within the conversation to provide a 360 degree view of how brands can make an impact with Influencers. This data helps define the parameters of a campaign and realistic KPIs to measure the true ROI impact of Influencers.



CASE STUDY

OGILVY UK

Samsung Business: #JoinTheFold

CLIENT: SAMSUNG

Samsung have a huge name in electronics, particularly in the consumer world, but alongside driving sales for the launch of the new ZFold3, we needed to show how their B2B capabilities go beyond innovative tech and start to support the entrepreneurial community to be the best they can be.

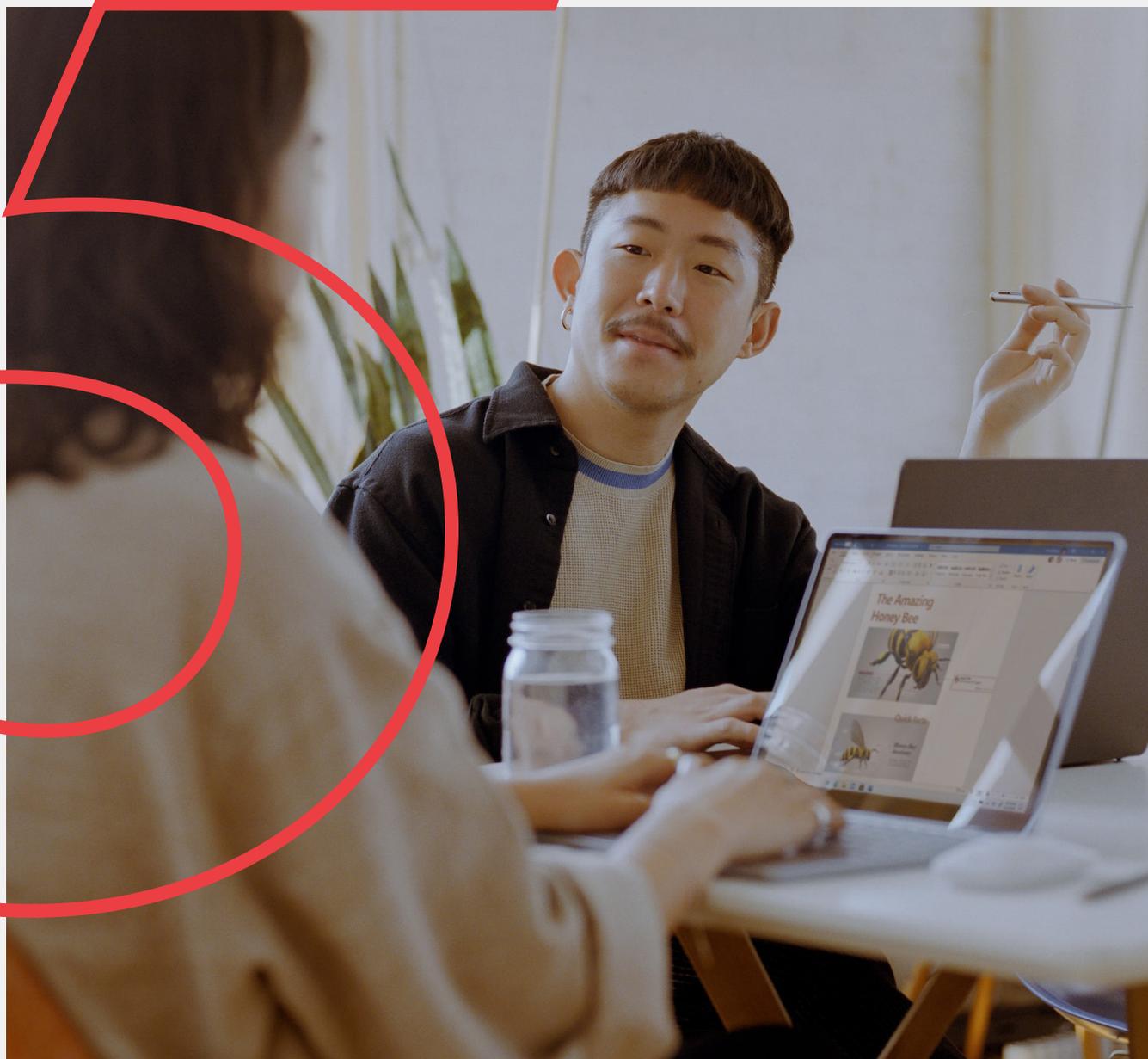
We knew advice from business leaders going through transformational change and team building was our route to connect with the business community. Working with 22 year old CEO Grace Beverly and Andy Davis, founder of 10x10, an investment incubator for black owned business, to create stories of their personal joineries, challenges and successes, we spoke to a targeted selection within the community of business leaders.

Thought leadership round tables featuring Influencers, employees and selected partners like Google and Android, to create social content and sales enablement materials. Influencers and sales partners utilised the content to spark conversation through multiple channels developing warm leads for the sales team to then convert and send prospective customers direct to Samsung.com. This empowered their retail partners to drive a record number of units sales.



REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Regional analysis will provide a deep dive into the key points of difference amongst our contributing markets, showing how B2B Influence is perceived and utilised different in different parts of the world. This aims to identify both proven success and opportunities to capitalise on.





AFRICA

KENYA & SOUTH AFRICA



Key Observations

According to business executives, the impact of Influencer campaigns within the African region has been significant – with 67% outperforming brand-only led marketing campaigns.

On average, 49% of B2B marketers reported that warmer leads, increased leads, or increased ROI were the success factors experienced when implementing influencer marketing strategies.

Influencers play a key role across the marketing funnel, with 52% of respondents stating that working with Influencers helped them increase engagement with target customers. In addition, 40% agreed to observing an improvement in reputation through credible Influencer opinions.

Globally, LinkedIn leads as the platform of choice for B2B influencer marketing, but in Africa, Instagram reigns supreme at an astounding 54%. YouTube leads in Kenya at (54%) with TikTok in South Africa coming in at (60%). And other platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter show promise if utilized effectively.

Within African industries, technology (56%) leads in the influencer marketing space, followed by financial services and healthcare. But in South Africa, retail (62%) takes the lead followed by technology. Kenya leads in the property and real estate sectors (54%). These outcomes are based on each country's unique economic advancements and its socio-economic demands. Key opportunities lie in financial services (41%) and healthcare (29%).

Spot The Opportunity

67% of marketing executives, agree that businesses can optimize their use of B2B Influencers by building long-term relationships that show true brand advocacy. There is much opportunity with hyper-targeting marketing or personalization via Influencers, 63% of participants across both markets found this effective in increasing brand consideration and customer acquisition.

Internal benefits were also reported. C-suite marketers see value in employee Influencers, with 59% of executives confirming that external B2B Influencers have positively impacted employee performance by providing inspiration for new ideas and boosting productivity.

Testimonial-based content (59%) tends to be most influential when making buying decisions, followed closely with product or service based social media content (48%) in South Africa and forums & blog post discussion (52%) in Kenya.

Finally, 73% of South African decision makers are more receptive to information from research organizations, showing a preference for data-driven insights, followed by business leaders (48%) and industry journalists or reporters (36%). In Kenya, 64% of business executives are more responsive to consultants who are particularly trusted due to their industry expertise.

"Building trust and credibility is crucial in B2B relationships since customers want to work with reputable brands that have a track record of delivering value and reliability. B2B Influencers provide valuable opinions and market insights that help brands refine their offerings to better meet the needs of their target audience. In addition, their endorsements lend credibility to a brand and significantly impact the perception of its products or services. However, their independence and credibility remains key. The valuable B2B Influencers are the independent ones who are not solely motivated by money."



Anicet Bossia, GM, Head, Group Brand & Marketing Enterprise, Airtel Africa





ASIA PACIFIC SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA, VIETNAM, THE PHILIPPINES



The diversity of cultures and languages in Asia Pacific (APAC) presents the most varied region for Business Influence. While there is rarely a one-size-fits-all strategy that works for all markets with Asia, the evolving media landscape has resulted in a healthy – and growing – creator economy in each market.

Digital spaces and Influencers in this region are increasingly surpassing news media as trusted subject matter experts as they take to social to share their perspectives, suggesting Asia is now the fastest growing adopted of Influencers in B2B in the world.

Asia as a region places high emphasis on local market Influencers for local market insights, lending perspectives that are unique for each market, while real advocacy is built through business who share beyond their core professional expertise as advocates of adjacent causes – be it sustainability best practices, medical knowledge, or financial know-how, Influencers play a key role in humanizing business values.

This is especially felt with the ‘growing middle’ of business micro Influencers with a sizeable sphere of individual, rather than institutional, digital influence. Real-life, genuine connections that are maintained digitally feature strongly for Business Influence in Asia Pacific, and a key reason for product or service-based social media content and testimonials indexing under the global average.

Key Observations

South East Asia (SEA) has one of the highest percentage of businesses currently using B2B influencer marketing (94%), and of those, 77% are planning to invest more into this area. Not having a B2B influencer marketing strategy puts your business on the back foot, especially as 66% find B2B Influencers more impactful than their usual marketing activities.

Beyond marketing, 44% of SEA businesses also saw positive commercial impact in being able to improve their product and business processes through receiving constructive feedback from the B2B Influencers they partner with, especially in early product development and testing stages – especially marked in Vietnam, Philippines, and Malaysia with one in two businesses reporting as such.

Almost all (98%) of SEA senior business decision makers find B2B Influencers on social media important in helping them stay up-to-date and interact with their industry, above the global average (90%). SEA places the most importance on Facebook (64%) as a platform for influencing B2B decision making and purchases, as opposed to global preferred platform of YouTube.

Influential perspectives put in front of business decision makers consistently go a long way, literally; Vietnam, Philippines, and Malaysia are the top countries to share information gleaned from B2B Influencers in their presentations (63%) and redirecting on social, compared to markets such as France (27%) or the UK (39%).

Spot The Opportunity

Given how SEA senior business decision makers rely heavily on B2B Influencers on social media to review information online daily (71%), presence in this space should be part of your mandatory foundation.

On the other hand, SEA under indexes against the global average in using B2B Influencers to bring a more human-centric storytelling narrative to their brands, at 41% of marketers compared to countries such as Kenya (62%) or the US (58%) despite this survey recognising adjacent values as important in APAC. Emotive, human, and purpose-driven storytelling often results in greater attention and memorability of brands, especially important to differentiate brands in a B2B context. More SEA and APAC B2B marketers could do well in co-creating engaging stories that capture the attention and interest of audiences with B2B Influencers.

"Influencer marketing, once primarily associated with consumer brands and social media celebrities, has evolved over time to become a valuable strategy for B2B companies looking to connect with their target audience in a more authentic and engaging way. A big reason is the trust and credibility that these experts bring to the table."



Ashutosh Gupta,
Country Manager and Head of
Online Sales, LinkedIn APAC



CASE STUDY

OGILVY SINGAPORE

IBM CTO Social Eminence

CLIENT: IBM

CHALLENGE

From an IBM Asia Pacific (AP) CTO study conducted by Ogilvy Singapore, we learnt that IBM was experiencing issues closing high value deals with CTOs in the region. This could be attributed to the CTOs perceiving IBM as a brand that was not progressing at the same rate as the tech and business landscapes. There was an opportunity to build brand resonance and establish IBM's relevancy in the region by elevating IBM CTOs as socially eminent thought leaders.

STRATEGY + CONCEPT

We championed 4x IBM CTOs as B2B influencers and thought leaders on LinkedIn by equipping them with personalised content (both long-form and short-form) combined with account-based marketing strategies to connect with key decision makers across 9 markets Australia, India, Korea, Singapore, New Zealand, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines.

RESULTS

The 4x IBM CTOs connected with 1,310 key decision makers across 9 markets. Out of which a quarter of the connected prospects expressed interest to meet up with the IBM CTOs (either F2F or via online meeting/calls). Short-form content (status updates) performed an average of 3 times above benchmark for views and 2 times above benchmark for engagement. Long-form content (blog posts) performed an average of 1.5 times above benchmark for views and 6 times above benchmark for engagement. The LinkedIn profile views of the IBM CTOs increased between 65% to 598%.

Championing 4x IBM CTOs
To drive relevancy and brand resonance among key decision-makers across 9 markets – Australia, India, Korea, Singapore, New Zealand, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines.

Elevating IBM CTOs as thought-leaders
By equipping them with personalised content (mix of IBM and non-IBM content) combined with account-based marketing strategies.

Blockchain

Data & AI

Cloud

8 Ways to Start Implementing your DataOps Strategy

Understanding Social Listening Analytics and Combining Intelligence to Private Data

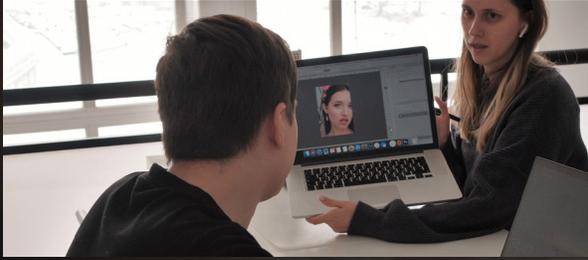
How will IoT Shape How We Live in the Future?

1,310
Key decision makers engaged



EUROPE

UK & FRANCE



While English may be the international language of business, markets within Europe vary in economic value, cultural nuance, and, language. The independent power across France, Germany and Italy respectively ensure they retain most business heritage in their native tongue.

Translated to influencer marketing, this means throughout Europe, countries are much more receptive to influencer campaigns in their native tongue, with over 71% showing an increased dwell time on content and likelihood to purchase.

The European audience base on LinkedIn is highly active, second in size only to the North America and used as a significant news source. Despite the comparatively larger volume of business celebrities compared to other regions, professional preference lies smaller in niche and specialist authorities to deliver trusted information.

Key Observations

45% of UK marketers put the value of B2B Influencers at the upper funnel awareness & relationships building stage, whereas France indexes more towards final-decision making being top response (45%).

The UK places more importance on LinkedIn versus any other market at 40% when it comes to driving sales with B2B Influencer. France however rates Instagram as the country's most important B2B Influencer channel with 68% believing Instagram is the best choice for professionals.

50% of European marketers believe existing business leaders with proven experience are the best type of Influencer due to their advice being contextual and providing a proven route to success.

France is the only market that believes FMCG is the industry to best utilise B2B Influencers alongside the globally acknowledged Tech & Retail, with 40% of marketers seeing opportunity here versus a global average of 23%.

Spot The Opportunity

Results show that European businesses do not yet see B2B Influencers as a valuable source of ideas for product development or business communication strategy. From the UK and France only 28% and 35% respectively recognised this use of Influencers, compared to markets like South East Asia, Africa & Middle East being far more agreeable at 64%, 50% and 63%. This could present an unutilised opportunity for business to integrate Influencers more directly in research & development, providing an advantage over competitors who don't.

Neither UK nor France are using Influencers as an after sales advocacy builder to drive repeat businesses yet and under-index against all other markets, with France's 24% the lowest of all, benchmarked against the highest, Singapore at 53%. We know the opportunity to explain further benefits of products increases both usage and satisfaction even after sales. It safeguards your reputation as having excellent customer service and ultimately drives repeat business.

Businesses that integrate Influencers into this practice can gain control in the battle for industry advocacy over brands that do not.



Influence doesn't end with a sale. After making a purchase, if you're like me, I tend to do even more research on a product I've just bought because I want validation, I want to better understand how to get the full benefit of the thing I've just purchased. Influencers have a huge role in the post-sale experience and journey.



Jim Habig, Vice President Marketing, LinkedIn Marketing Solutions



MIDDLE EAST UAE & SAUDI ARABIA



The evolution of influence in the Middle East has closely mirrored global trends, while developing unique characteristics shaped by culture, language, and technology. The region witnessed a significant impact on brands and businesses, shaping new dynamics and strategies for engagement with the rise of social media platforms creating seismic modernisation.

The Middle East places a strong emphasis on local Influencers, who resonate well with the diverse cultural preferences across the region. This success can be attributed to the nuanced understanding these Influencers possess, rooted in the region's cultural intricacies and their ability to foster genuine connections through the Arabic language.

As Influence matured, businesses in the Middle East have extended Influencer partnerships to promoting social and environmental issues, while governments have utilized Influencers as part of their communication strategies to attract direct foreign investment, new businesses, and facilitate market entry. Saudi Arabia (KSA) has seen Government-led initiatives using Influencers to promote Vision 2030, driving economic diversification, and boosting entrepreneurship. In the UAE, Influencers also promote the different sectors that contribute to the country's economy, most notably real estate, technology, and tourism.

As the region continues its rapid urbanization, evolving economically, socially, and culturally, it sustains a profound impact on behaviour, perception, and industry trends. This dynamic and innovative pace positions the region as a distinctive and influential player in the global Influence landscape.

Key Observations

72% of the Saudi market utilize B2B Influence to shed light on unknowns and dispel misconceptions about the market's health, unlike the UK, France, and the US. 56% believe it provides a two-way communication channel to engage with stakeholder concerns, and 54% view B2B Influence as offering immediate partnership opportunities to incoming organizations. In the UAE, 58% of marketers believe that B2B Influence has an impact on market health, as well as fostering open dialogue with stakeholders.

When it comes to credibility, 54% of experts surveyed in KSA believe that practitioners and gatekeepers have the most significant impact on communication, while 68% of UAE marketers view business leaders as most impactful.

Instagram emerges as the platform of choice in the KSA at 58%, while Facebook takes the lead in the UAE with the same percentage.

Spot The Opportunity

Saudi Arabia ranks 1st globally in terms of interest and appetite for B2B communications, with 100% of surveyed businesses utilizing some form of B2B Influence in their communications and marketing strategies. The UAE follows closely behind at 96%. Both markets have been pioneers in tapping into the power of Influence in recent years, paving the way for neighbouring markets to follow suit.

Within the context of the substantial demand for B2B Influence engagements in both markets, content holds undeniable power in capturing the attention and trust of audiences. In the Middle East, where cultural nuances play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour, the choice of content formats becomes even more crucial, greatly impacting the resonance and engagement achieved.

The results of this study show massive potential in unlocking new content formats and ways to engage with an rapidly evolving audience.



"Our responsibility as brands is to ensure that we leverage the right voices capable of impacting and delivering results as well as shaping the future of influence."



Saad Abdullah, GM, Marketing, Al-Futtaim Toyota and Lexus, UAE

CASE STUDY

OGILVY UAE

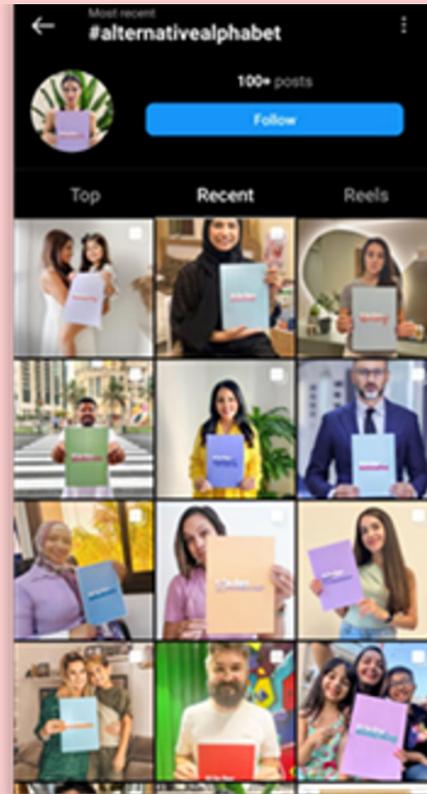
GEMS Education campaign

CLIENT: GEMS Education

Together with GEMS Education, we launched the Alternative Alphabet, a game with 26 original characters and unique words, aiming to foster understanding and positive impact among GEMS school students before exams.

The game was developed as a way of helping young teens identify, define, and discuss mental health issues based on the insight that 7 in 10 won't or aren't able to talk to their peers and friends about mental health.

As well as utilizing 26 unique Influencers to own an element, symptom, or topic on mental health, we also leveraged a homegrown psychology clinic, which specializes in supporting young teens. This additional layer of licensed and qualified advocacy delivered a significantly higher level of credibility to the campaign, allowing us to deepen the conversation and reach more audiences.



304M+
EARNED
REACH

AED 2.5M
PR VALUE

45k SOCIAL
ENGAGEMENT

11.3M SOCIAL
IMPRESSIONS



NORTH AMERICA USA



Within the US, business is conducted through relationships – and there’s no better way to build relationships than with real people with real influence. Influencers are used to putting a face and voice behind complex business solutions, and they humanise what can often be dry and difficult conversations. Our study bears this out, with 55% of our audience saying the most valuable component of an Influencer partnership is the ability to build authentic customer relationships through relevance and resonance.

The US typically works with a several tiers of Influence, from mega Influencers who have huge global reach in the tech space to niche micro Influencers who have tapped-in, highly engaged audiences in very specific business areas all playing a different role. Influencers with academic and real life expertise perform strongest in the US, with detail being desired above all.

While LinkedIn remains the primary platform for business decision-makers, each audience offers their own unique social media habits and business owners are willing to experiment. There is a growing number of small business owners utilising video content on TikTok, valuing the opportunity of viral numbers despite the largely individual-based, consumer audience. That being said, the US is still to be convinced of its results.

LinkedIn is the backbone of B2B Influence in North America and has the largest volume users of any region. The variety of content formats, audience targeting and Influencer support feature should be a key component of your strategy.

Key Observations

2/3 of US respondents agreed that B2B Influencers have had more of an impact than standard brand-only marketing.

B2B Influencers have direct impact on brand marketing funnel. 60% of US markets said B2B Influencers have the biggest impact in social engagement and relationship building, with 57% of business leaders agreeing they impact final decision making, purchase and sales. This is significantly higher than European markets (averaging 36%) – showing that US B2B Influencers have a larger impact on awareness KPIs in the marketing funnel.

In the US, 57% agree that B2B Influencers provide a more credible, believable and trusted opinion than the brand has on its own.

The US was sceptical of TikTok as an effective platform for B2B Influencers, with only 26% in favour of the opportunity of the platform compared to 74% of Asian markets (Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia).

Spot The Opportunity

Given that 55% of our audience says the most valuable component of an Influencer partnership is the ability to build authentic customer relationships, business must capitalise on Influencers to be the human voice behind complex or dry business concepts.

While 51% of the US market says they use and are planning to increase use of Influencers in their marketing strategy, this means the US is under-indexing in a form of marketing that they identify as being particularly effective (with 66% of marketers reporting that it has more impact than brand marketing alone). Nearly half of US marketers not currently utilising influencer marketing to its fullest potential!

Traditional channels like LinkedIn are well utilized by US marketers leveraging B2B Influence, but emerging channels with a more B2C lens are not ones that brands are activating on. For example, TikTok is a platform that under-indexes, with only 26% of marketers saying they’ve used it to reach a B2B audience with Influencers. Marketers should consider exploring new and upcoming social platforms.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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