

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

## Pursuitist launches influencer service to benefit brands, publishers

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*Image courtesy of JetSmarter*

By JEN KING

Online lifestyle destination Pursuitist is simplifying how luxury brand advertisers and publishers source relevant influencers with the debut of its Pursuitist Influencer Network.

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The Pursuitist was launched in 2010 and serves as an editorial source for luxury-related reviews and news, with coverage on all verticals from travel and food, to automotive and style, among other topics. Now, Pursuitist is venturing in a new direction with the introduction of its influencer initiative, meant to connect impactful influencers, well-versed in luxury, with brands, advertisers and publishers to target affluent audiences online.

"I think the biggest challenge that the Web has right now is connecting the world's best marketers with the world's best, independent media brands," said John Shankman, founder and CEO of Hashtag Labs, Inc.

"It's difficult because the technology required to do this is new and evolving and tech platforms have cornered the market," he said. "The Pursuitist Influencer Network will be a bridge between great advertisers and independent media brands – a win-win for both parties.

"The marketer gains access to highly engaged, relevant audiences without sacrificing technological capabilities, and the publisher and media brands gain access to premium ad dollars and partnerships with the best marketers on the planet."

New York-based **Hashtag Labs, Inc.** has partnered with **Pursuitist** as the operations and technology solutions provider for the Pursuitist Influencer Network.

In the pursuit of influence

The Pursuitist Influencer Network is part of Pursuitist's continued evolution in reaching high-net-worth individuals through digital media. To achieve its target goal of connecting its brand partners with affluent individuals, Pursuitist has curated a network of luxury-leaning influencers.

With a dedicated sales team, the Pursuitist ad network, in hand, The Pursuitist Influencer Network will drive the ideal readership to high-end brands while driving additional revenue streams for publishers.

For The Pursuitist Influencer Network, Pursuitist has recruited top bloggers, Web sites and writers that have focused their time and careers on the luxury lifestyle industry. Within the network are experts on travel, auto, fashion, food and beverage as well as trends and topics that may seek to inspire the target audience.

The Pursuitist Influencer Network, serving as a gatekeeper, will align luxury brands with exclusive and hard-to-reach influencers. Once a relationship is established, the influencer will work together with a brand to promote relevant, engaging content to affluents.

Influencers will promote content through banner advertising, sponsored posts, video, events, dedicated online campaigns and custom native advertising solutions.



*The Pursuitist Influencers Network logo*

"In addition to developing high impact digital advertising solutions, we are creating real world events and experiences with the right influencers," said Christopher Parr, founder and CEO of [Pursuitist](#).

"Objectives and deliverables are established prior if that involves our influencers and journalists creating articles, videos for YouTube or live sharing their experiences on social channels. From our platform, brands will actually receive a ROI and brand impact with the right affluent audience," he said. "At [pursuitist.com](#), we have been building the correct affluent audience since 2010.

"Per our demographics, our readers are grad school educated executives in their mid-30s with a yearly household income of over \$150,000. We know how to find the right readers that can actually afford luxury cars, high-end products and travel experiences."

Overall, the goal of The Pursuitist Influencer Network is to drive traffic as well as revenue to its publishing partners and support the talent dedicated to the luxury industry.

The inaugural class of The Pursuitist Influencer Network includes travel and entertainment journalist Christine van Blokland, Pursuitist co-editor Carrie Coolidge, Pursuitist columnist Stacy Steponate Greenberg, travel influencer Scott Eddy and lifestyle blogger Kim Marie-Evans of [luxurytravelmom.com](#) and other lifestyle sites including [destinationluxury.com](#), [luxurylaunches.com](#) and [luxatic.com](#), among others.

Poppin' off

Influencer marketing brings relationship building into the digital age for luxury brands now that bricks-and-mortar visits have slowed.

The traditional luxury branding model is being challenged as consumers crave transparency and opportunities for participation from labels, forcing brands to let go of some control over their messaging.

This move away from exclusivity is evidenced in influencer marketing, in which brands trust handpicked individuals with desirable social media followings to share their story in their own voice, creating content that appears more authentic than brand posts. A recent white paper from Traackr, "Influencer Marketing: 9 Challenges for Luxury Brands," laid out the key considerations when working with influencers, from selection to content production ([see story](#)).



*Jimmy Choo invited bloggers to Zermatt, Switzerland to model its winter shoes*

Influencer marketing has proved effective, with social influencer campaigns being 11 times more impactful than traditional digital advertising efforts.

During a Luxury Daily webinar, titled "10 Key Influencer Marketing Predictions" Aug. 31, executives from TapInfluence emphasized that social influencers have a dramatic effect compared to traditional advertisements, but marketers should value transparency, authenticity and audience targeting.



*Bulgari tapped bloggers for the 2015 holiday season via Style Coalition*

TapInfluence's executives explained that celebrities, bloggers and other individuals on social media are having a direct impact on sales and campaign results for marketers by leveraging their bond with followers. However, brands need to pay attention to performance data, influencer data and audience data to see the right results ([see story](#)).

According to some experts, the influencer bubble is not sustainable and will eventually pop if brand marketers continue to align with individuals that may not have the correct appeal or audience metrics for luxury consumers.

"The wrong influencer bubble will pop soon," Pursuitist's Mr. Parr said. "Who's hot is constantly changing. One minute it is the blogger, then the Facebook or Twitter star, the YouTube dude or the Snapchat flash in the pan.

"We have aligned ourselves with longterm publishers and significant influencers not the flavor of the month," he said. "These are individuals and publishers that have multiple long term platforms from a Web site, podcast, social channels, YouTube or TV series. And they have a solid reach with affluent followers.

Mr. Parr drew from his own personal experiences in the space to appoint the appropriate members for The Pursuitist Influencer Network.

"Pursuitist has vetted our publishers and influencers. I attend too many press events, from hotel visits to auto drives, where the wrong 'influencers' are invited," Mr. Parr said. "The hot new Instagram star is basically attending the event for a free vacation. Instagram's algorithms change daily.

"Who was hot today can be unpopular the next. We don't believe in one-trick ponies with an unknown audience. We have journalists," he said. "They create videos, articles and share their experiences on their social channels and sites and, most importantly, they have affluent readers. Luxury brands are absolutely wasting their time by inviting the wrong bloggers.

"The Pursuitist Influencers Network will fix this."

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