

MARKETING

Leveraging influencers across multiple platforms key to digital brand marketing

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Each month, the influencer duo will select their favorite styles from NA-KD. Image credit: NA-KD.com

By NORA HOWE

The course of events in 2020 has had a dramatic impact on how brands have gone to market, especially in regards to influencer marketing.

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Consumers are questioning the authenticity and representation of brand ambassadors more than ever, and brands are beginning to challenge the financial benefits of influencer investment. During the [NRF Retail's Big Show](#) digital summit on Jan. 22, experts in influencer marketing shared lessons learned during the pandemic, how the health crisis has affected influencer marketing strategies and key ways companies can leverage influencers moving forward.

"Influencer marketing is not an easy thing," said Jarno Vanhatapio, CEO of [NA-KD](#), Sweden. "If you're just starting out, and you have no idea what you're doing, it's the quickest way to lose money.

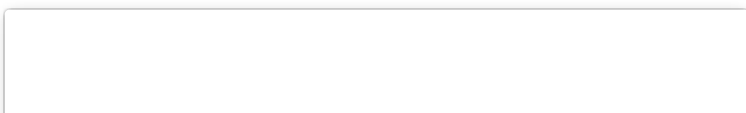
"But if you create a diversified portfolio, making sure to run a wide game for a while, it becomes a great brand marketing channel."

Ways to leverage influencers

Jennifer Powell, founder and chief executive officer of [Jennifer Powell Inc.](#), provided four actionable key takeaways in regards to successfully implementing influencer marketing into brand strategies.

First and foremost, Ms. Powell suggested simply investing in influencer marketing, making it one of the pillars of a company's marketing strategy. This begins with either hiring people who understand the influencer landscape or outsourcing to companies that can assist in developing a company's influencer marketing strategy.

"It's important to expand our ideas of what an influencer is," Ms. Powell said. "It's about looking to people who are simply telling stories in new and interesting ways."



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by JP, INC. (@hellojpinc)

An example of influencer marketing on Instagram

The second piece of advice focused on diversifying a brand's use of social platformstesting different mediums, learning and evolving. Ms. Powell and Mr. Vanhatapio emphasized the importance of taking the time to think about how brands show up in the different spaces of social selling.

"Instagram is crucial, but influencer marketing is not going to exist in one sole place down the road," Ms. Powell said. "People will and should continue utilizing various channels."

They further suggested that it is crucial to understand that each platform needs a different strategy behind it in terms of content and influencers, but that should not limit a brand from trying.

"You want to always discover and leverage new categories," Mr. Vanhatapio said. "You cannot just build a business on one social media you need to have other pillars."

"Instagram is all about aesthetic, while TikTok is all about content," he said. "Some still love the old-fashioned days when everything was glossy and definitive, while others now want raw content."

The third of Ms. Powell's key takeaways rested on the premise of creating community. Social media gives brands of all sizes endless opportunities to build relationships with consumers and simultaneously present opportunities to convert or create sales and build brands.



NA-KD collaboration with Warner Bros. Image credit: NA-KD.com

"2021 is about healing and mending relationships and viewing influencer partners as people that can help build up a community," Ms. Powell said. "Brands are gaining creative confidence and are willing to look towards the non-traditional influencers.

"Have the brand share their interests for the campaign and listen to the insight from influencers," she said. "Come up with something as a team."

Finally, invest in digital workflow and explore what the long term potential is in terms of a brand's overall business model, such as 3D design or CGI models.

Instagram reigns supreme

While TikTok has gained popularity and will continue to generate interest and drive higher spend in particular to attract and engage the Gen Z market, Instagram will remain the dominant platform for luxury brands, according to predictions made by [Inpulsus](#).

Instagram offers a significant number of possibilities for content creation: the Feed and IGTV allow luxury brands to maintain creative control, while Stories and Reels remain key to user-generated content and influencer content sharing and audience creation.

The Stories swipe-up feature and "Instagram Shopping" has allowed for a seamless strategy between brands and influencers. Now, the app has a "Checkout" feature which brings a streamlined, two-tap purchase process for users while they're using Instagram ([see story](#)).

According to a report from Tribe Dynamics released in September 2020, Instagram Stories have become integral to influencer marketing. Seventy-eight percent of brands surveyed by the San Francisco-based influencer marketing platform said Instagram Stories had very significantly impacted influencer content about their brands.

Per the survey of more than 60 brands and 250 influencers, 88 percent of influencers regularly use Instagram Stories. The 2020 Influencer Marketing Trends Report noted that 35 percent of brands with dedicated teams for specific platforms also have teams for TikTok ([see story](#)).

"At the end of the day, the market will set the rules," NA-KD's Mr. Vanhatapio said. "Ultimately, the market dictates what a post is worth."