

MARKETING

Everyday social media users becoming consumers' preferred influencers'

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When seeking influencers' opinions, consumers are attracted to the authenticity and genuine approach of everyday social media users. Image credit: Tribe Dynamics

By KATIE TAMOLA

In the social media age, anyone can take on the role of influencer which may actually have a large payoff for brands.

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According to research from ratings and reviews provider [Bazaarvoice](#), more consumers are actively seeking and prioritizing the authenticity of everyday social media users rather than celebrities. More than half of global consumers now mostly follow "everyday influencers," and four out of five global consumers note seeking stricter rules on influencers to disclose Photoshop or filter usage.

"No matter what industry they represent, influencers need to be authentic and honest because the trust their followers have in them is the most valuable thing that they possess," said Keith Nealon, CEO of Bazaarvoice. "While mega influencers such as celebrities are useful for increasing a brand's awareness, micro-influencers such as the everyday social media user are key for conversion.

"Their authenticity drives their credibility, which helps drive consumers' purchase decisions."

Bazaarvoice and researcher Savanta surveyed more than 9,000 consumers in July 2021, across the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France and Australia.

Following the everyday lead

While more than a third of U.S. consumers mostly follow celebrity influencers online, many continue to value the genuine content from everyday social media users.

Bazaarvoice identified four types of influencers: the subject matter experts, celebrities, social media stars and everyday social media users.



Most consumers trust influencers' non-sponsored posts, such as recommendations, reviews and photos and videos, the most. Image credit: Shoploop

Fifty-six percent of consumers indicated that the everyday social media user has become their preferred influencer to follow. Two in five respondents believe this group is the most trusted source for authentic content, as they are actively seeking genuine, day-to-day content from users who do not ostensibly have an agenda to promote.

Forty-two percent of consumers found subject matter experts such as beauty gurus, do-it-yourself accounts, chefs and fashionistas to be the most trusted to share authentic and genuine content.

Brands often tap these influencers to recommend, sell or post sponsored content for relevant products.

Three-quarters of consumers report not caring about the number of social media followers an account has and are solely focused on the content.



Italian model, influencer and designer Chiara Ferragni showing a look from the Versace spring/summer 2020 collection. Image credit: Versace

Transparency has never been more important for brands, as 80 percent of consumers globally, including 76 percent in the U.S., want stricter rules for influencers in disclosing editing or filters they use on published content.

Nearly a quarter of U.S. consumers, 24 percent, report wanting influencers who are non-compliant with advertising laws receive limited bans on social media platforms, while one in five would like to see influencers banned from monetizing their social media presence if they break advertising rules.

Authenticity and success

Consumers are increasingly seeking authenticity from influencers, particularly when it comes to sharing product information. However, 42 percent of respondents do not believe influencers have become more authentic in the last five years.

As a result, 83 percent of consumers find influencers' non-sponsored posts, such as recommendations, reviews and photos and videos, to be the most trustworthy or reliable.

Thirty-seven percent of consumers said they are more likely to take product recommendations from the everyday influencer. Eighty-six percent also seek out authentic user-generated content before deciding to buy a product they have not purchased before.

Through their online and in-store presence, brands should continue to look for ways to produce user-generated content, as consumers value the confidence and transparency UGC offers.

Whether brands are forming connections with everyday social media users or A-list actors to promote their products, it is crucial that any influencer have a genuine feel.

For luxury brands seeking a famous face to attach to their products, the current landscape provides a myriad of effective ambassadors.

The world of brand ambassadors and celebrity partnerships is constantly evolving, with luxury labels relying on some of the world's most famous faces in acting, entertainment, sports and social media to extend their reach. Whether literally the star of a show or an influencer dominating Instagram, consumers continue to seek star power and authenticity from their ambassadors across the board ([see story](#)).

Tapping everyday social media users fuels the conversation about a brand, helping the message, product and revenue spread to shoppers.

"One of the easiest ways to identify these everyday influencers' is by mining social media for them and their content," Mr. Nealon said. "Shoppers like to share what they buy, especially when it comes to luxury brands, and many already tag brands in their social posts or use a brand's hashtags

"Create a hashtag for your brand, use it in the captions of your social posts and encourage your customers to use it when posting about your brand as well."

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