

MARKETING

Influencers, creators prioritize human connection: report

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Only 12 percent of creators/influencers say revenue is the most significant factor in determining their success. Image credit: Mateus Campos Felipe/Unsplash

By KATIE TAMOLA

Contrary to popular belief, most influencers and creators are not in the content world for fame and monetary return.

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According to a new report from MMI Agency and The Harris Poll, 77 percent of influencers/creators say they are in the marketing space because they have a passion for their respective subject areas. This creative group is aiming to bolster a community around them based on shared interests, which ultimately provides ample opportunities for brands to identify relevant products and collaborate with them for a mutually beneficial relationship.

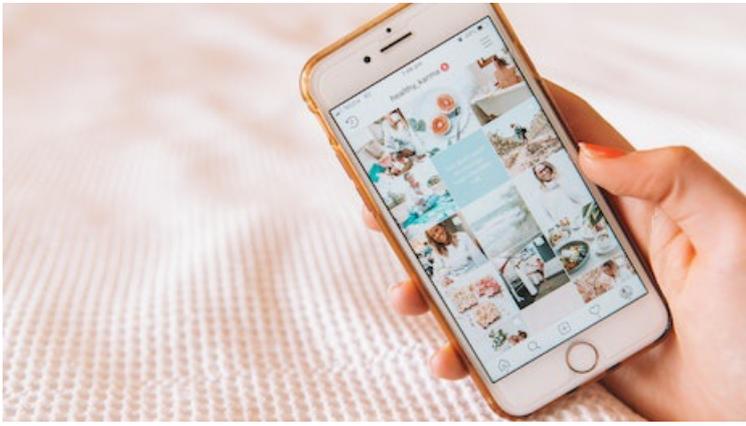
"Out of passion, influencers want to be intimately involved with the brands they represent," Maggie Malek, CEO of MMI Agency, in a statement. "They care deeply about the products and services they promote, and they're willing to work hard to make sure any content they produce is relevant and compelling to their audiences."

MMI Agency and Harris Poll conducted this online study in April 2022, polling 140 adults, who consider themselves an influencer or creators with at least 5,000 followers or connections on a social network, in the United States who are compensated in some form to post original content on social networks for a brand, platform, or audience/community.

Fostering the community

When it comes to the marketing world, it is not exactly surprising that for most influencers and creators, everything comes back to the human connection. Influencers and creators are consumers themselves and recognize that many shoppers are increasingly yearning to see people who look like them or share their interests reflected in what a brand is offering.

Creators prioritize being genuine, as 57 percent say brands should keep in mind the need for content to be authentic.



Fifty-seven percent of creators say brands should keep in mind the need for content to be authentic. Image credit: Maddi Bazzocco/Unsplash

It is imperative to note that for many creators and influencers, it is not about the money. Only 12 percent of respondents say revenue is the most significant factor in determining their success.

When it comes to collaborating with brands, creators are looking for the right fit. Sixty-one percent of creators say brands should keep in mind their audience when partnering with them.

As to how long creators' relationships with brands span, it varies. Forty-three percent of creators say their average brand partnership is just a one-off campaign, while 43 percent say their brand partnerships are year-long or longer ambassador programs.

Longstanding relationships with brands are rare, as only 14 percent of respondents say they have permanent or indefinite partnerships with brands.

Conversely, 68 percent of creators say that brands will routinely engage with them again if their original one-off campaign was successful.

Although creators are not ostensibly in the content world for money, brand partnerships do make up a significant part of their income for many, as 31 percent say brand partnerships make up 50 percent or more of their revenue.

Creators are also finding that they must spend money to make money, as 63 percent say out-of-pocket costs such as photoshoots are a significant burden, and 47 percent say that brands should keep these kinds of costs in mind when seeking partnerships with them.

As to how influencers and creators found themselves in this world, their paths vary. Fifty-two percent of respondents say they purposely sought out the role of influencer or creator while aspiring to become popular, while 48 percent say they accidentally became an influencer or creator and are now taking advantage of their followings.

As 72 percent of respondents who view themselves as influencers and 54 percent who identify themselves as creators note their presence on TikTok, the power of the platform cannot go unnoticed.

Consumers seemingly cannot get enough of the short video platform.

An influencer's world

In an increasingly tech-reliant world, the role of influencers packs quite the punch as so many consumers are constantly connected to the internet.

Brands are progressively recognizing influencers and creators who have prominent followings, and how they can form partnerships with them to facilitate their products reaching new customers.



Influencer Chiara Ferragni starred alongside her sisters and mother in a new spot for Tod's. Image credit: Tod's

Chiara Ferragni currently has 27.5 million followers on Instagram.

Last year, she worked with Swiss watchmaker Hublot as an ambassador ([see story](#)) and a global ambassador for Roman jeweler Bulgari ([see story](#)). She most recently worked with Italian fashion brand Tod in an idyllic campaign ([see story](#)).

Influencers are passionate about their work, as 60 percent say engagement with their follower and building a community is the most significant factor in their overall success.

The fashion influencer marketing space continues to evolve, with video-sharing platform TikTok becoming the latest hotbed for influencers.

According to a new whitepaper from Open Influence, marketers need to balance demographics with psychographics for the most effective campaigns. The best influencer relationships, however, give brands an opportunity to humanize themselves ([see story](#)).

"Influencers are truly obsessed with the category they're in, they are always in discovery mode and love to bring something fresh and unexpected to their followers," said John Gerzema, CEO of The Harris Poll, in a statement.

"Marketers need to understand this passion," he said. "It's what drives them."

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