

The rise of the nano-influencer: What happens when your consumer is also a media channel?

By [John Davenport](#), issued by [Havas Johannesburg](#)

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A funny thing happened on the way to 2019. In the good old days when men were men and smoking was smoking, a media channel was a way to reach people. You paid the owner of that channel, and you could speak to your target audience.

This is still, to some extent, true. But it's also not. Because our consumers have become a media channel too.

Every day ordinary people send 500 million tweets to their personal followings. Every day they upload what they've been doing to Facebook around a hundred million times.

Almost ALL significant moments are shared. And these include the moments where they interact with brands. Our brands.

Every time they buy something they've wanted for a long time. Or buy something that they like. Or don't like. Or kind-of-like, it gets shared.

Whether we like it or not.

A product that delights. A queue that is longer than normal. Instructions that don't make sense. A staff member who is rude. It all gets shared.

While these individuals may not have enormous followings, when we add them up, 10 or 20 of them combined DO. And these people have something that an "influencer" never will: their audiences are incredibly engaged, and the engagement rate of their content is something that no influencer can BEGIN to compare with.

And an audience as engaged as these ones are, is a powerful thing.

So whatever is shared, really really really gets shared.

These aren't "Followers" like an influencer with 1,000,000 followers has. These people's followers are their known and trusted networks. What these nano- influencers (I feel I should copyright that term?) say is completely accepted.

The Havas Prosumer* report into The Future of Trust looks at how consumers who are active on social media think. And it shows that 80% of them feel that trust is on the decline, and that they can trust fewer people than they could in the past. And that they trust their friends and family TEN times more than they trust their FAVOURITE brands – let alone other brands...

It shows that our Prosumers* trust their friends and family MUCH more than they trust the BBC. So that's a LOT of trust. All in the hands of these nano-influencers.

If a brand were to interact with Rupert Murdoch when he walked into a shop (I admit this is unlikely to happen as Mr. Murdoch seems 1) too old to walk 2) too rich to ever actually go to a shop) the brand would be terrified of displeasing someone who controls news networks that reach millions of people, because he has the power to damage the brand with a single instruction to his minions.

The same terror / caution would be applied when Kendal Jenner interacted with a brand. Because the brand would be terrified of what she might say to her zillions of followers.

Yet ordinary people with exactly the same (if not far more) power to reach millions of people walk in and out of the same stores.

And we tend not to worry that much about what they think, because they only have a few hundred followers. But that means that 1000 of them have hundreds and hundreds of thousands of DEEPLY engaged followers, who will listen to EVERY word they say about us on social media.

So perhaps these consumers should be treated with the same deference, and receive the same kind of service as Mr Murdoch or Ms Jenner?

Because people, each and every one of them, aren't just consumers, they are media channels too. Because in the land of the selfie, the nano-influencer is king.

**Prosumers are today's leading influencers and market drivers. They influence the brand choices and consumption behaviours of others; what Prosumers are doing today, mainstream consumers will likely be doing 6 to 18 months from now.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Davenport is the Chief Creative Officer at Havas South Africa.

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