

Real secrets of effective influencer marketing campaigns

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Stephane Rogovsky, CEO of R-Squared Digital, has been announced as one of the speakers at the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Conference 2018 to be held at Vodaworld on 8 February. He shares his insights on real secrets of effective influencer marketing campaigns.

With statistics like **\$6.85** in earned media value for every **\$1.00** of influencer marketing paid media (Burst Media, 2017), influencer marketing is dominating the social media landscape.



Adweek research states that “94% of those who’ve used influencer marketing believe the tactic to be effective”. In order to retain the awareness and your buyers past the initial burst of posts, it’s vital to understand that influencer marketing is a relationship, not a business transaction. This requires a strategic influencer marketing approach, which Stephane will cover in a 20-minute session, with tips and tricks to maximise your influencer marketing ROI.

Conventional marketing offers a generic corporate message broadcasted to a static target audience. Influencer marketing offers a format where each social influencer advocates for the brand in their own style, in their own words. It’s personalised and it’s people talking to people. This is why it’s imperative that influencer marketing be approached differently than other segments of marketing, requiring different expertise and skillsets. Finding the right influencer means not being restricted to a closed pool of potential influencers, but rather, finding the most appropriate influencer for your product or service.

It is critical to work on an influencer marketing strategy that is translated from the main marketing strategy, and to incorporate research on influencers based on their social media profile, reach (number of influencers), engagement rate (because the number of people interacting with the influencer’s post is more important than the number of people who just clicked on “follow” without engaging), and the audience analytics. Millennials alone have a staggering \$200-million stake in annual spending power . (business.com).

Most influencer marketing companies will provide a platform to marketers who are experts in their field (but not in influencer marketing) to select and manage their influencers, which can often lead to a very disappointing ROI; furthermore, they are limited to the influencers within their database, who might fit well a given campaign, without being the best because the choice will remain limited to those within the pool; while R-Squared Digital has the capacity to identify the most suitable influencers and to hunt for them even if they are not within our pool yet.

As with most relationships, it’s important to select the right people to hang out with. These are the faces that will represent your brand. If you focus on millennials, young, hip, and urban chic influencers will offer bespoke solutions to your crowd. If, on the other hand, your market is far more traditional, your influencers should reflect the primary characteristics and values of your brand.

By selecting an influencer by description rather than by audience, one might not choose the right influencer.

Female Fashion campaign case study, based on a recent campaign:

One would think that a South African Fashion influencer with a 20k following would be optimal for a fashion campaign. When we investigated further, via a deep audience analysis, this influencer has an audience which is a) predominantly

male, b) primarily based outside of South Africa and c) with her audience's key category of interest as travel because she takes her fashion pictures while traveling. By selecting this influencer, the brand would spend her budget to reach foreign males interested in travel, rather than South African women interested in fashion.

Looking at engagement rates, one might also think that an influencer with 50k followers would bring the greatest impact. This is, however, not the case in influencer marketing. The audience size does not matter, and quality prevails over quantity, so selecting a similar influencer with a smaller audience but a much higher engagement rate would bring a bigger impact at a smaller cost, resulting in a significantly improved ROI.

Influencer Marketing is about people, not technology. People will follow, engage with and support content from influencers they like, who embody the values they trust and believe in. An influencer who truly embodies your brand values will share why they love your brand. From a strategic perspective, the best way to leverage the message is by utilising multiple influencers whose stories overlap, and whose audiences overlap, to create a slowly unfolding online journal of why your brand is the best.

Acquisition might be your top-of-mind priority, but to best serve your brand's interests, the benefits of focusing on long-term retention of customers is far greater with an influencer marketing strategy incorporated in your company or brand's traditional marketing strategy.

So, what are the steps to a kick-ass influencer marketing campaign?

- Identify the right influencers for your target audience, industry, campaign and message.
- Make a shortlist of the influencers whose reach, audience and authentic voice reflect your own.
- Nurture a relationship with those influencers.
- Enable them to create unique content around your services and/or products.

There are a number of ways to access creative and unique content with influencers:

- Establish when, what and how your influencers should communicate your brand message, and understand how you can integrate this into your content marketing strategy.
- Have your influencers blog on your brand's behalf.
- Get testimonials from your influencers and post them on your site.
- Engagement, engagement, engagement. Ensure that your influencers consistently drive authentic conversation around your brand, across their chosen social media channels.
- Solve your social media native content requirements using your influencers' content across your social media channels.
- Make your influencers your brand ambassadors.

Each service or product has its own audience, and its own influencers, so regardless of the size of your company or brand, you can benefit from influencer marketing.

Integrated Marketing Communications Conference 2018

Stephane Rogovsky will speak at the Integrated Marketing Communications Conference 2018 on the 8 February 2018, Vodaworld, Midrand. Twenty-seven of the industry's top minds will present across three stages, tackling nine topical themes in interactive sessions under the theme, **Evaluate, Consolidate, Integrate**. Heated debates, networking platforms and learning content will be packed into one exhilarating day as big brands, top agencies and media owners come together to examine how the local and continental marketing industry is embracing new and exciting trends in the emerging market space.

Register here: <http://imconference.com/conference/johannesburg-2018/home/>.

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