

Why the time is right to leverage the power of influence

By Tracy Jones

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Gone are the days when a brand could broadcast a message over the radio or TV and rest assured their target audience was listening. Consumers are inundated with content and messages across a broad spectrum of devices, and brands are competing for a share of that attention.

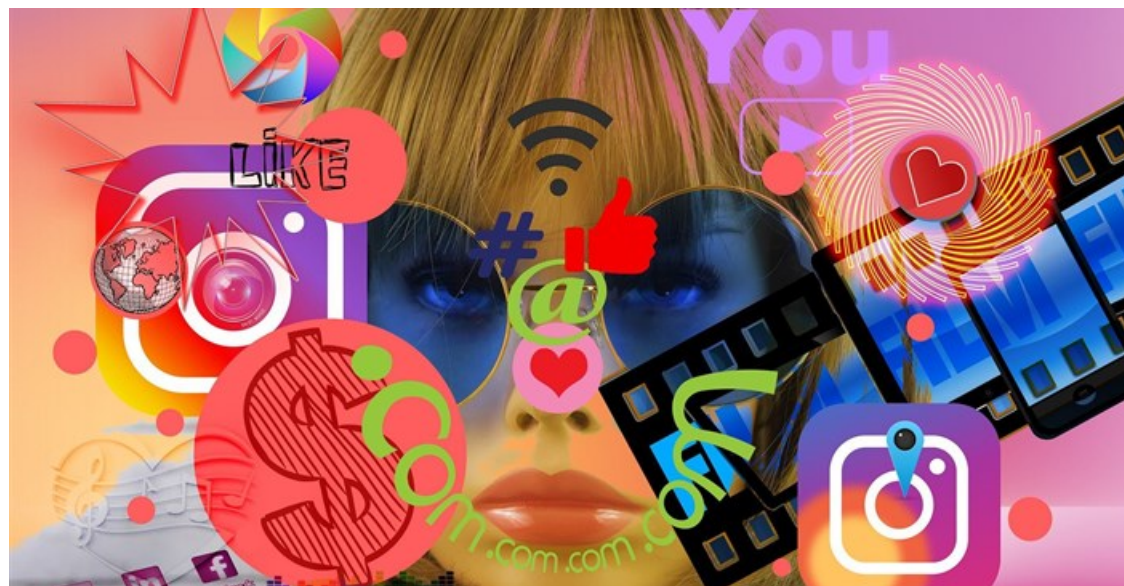


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It's not just other brands that you are competing with, but also platforms, friends and hobbies. The trick, then, is to find authentic and meaningful ways to interact with consumers in their communities, on their platforms, with their devices, on their clock.

Depending which report or which stats you read, you can reference huge spikes in social media usage. It makes sense, with much of the world in lockdown for large parts of the year.

One phrase that has made the rounds is that brands now have a “captive audience”. This is not entirely true. Audiences are there, no doubt, and they are having conversations, but the question needs to be asked: how can brands unlock the doors to join these conversations?



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Lockdown accelerated the drive toward quality content. This is because when people were cooped up in their homes they needed content that was escapist, inspiring, engaging, beautiful. They engaged with communities packed with their hobbies, passions and interests.

A brand that contributes to this positive experience is more likely to be interpreted as authentic, making it resonate with a consumer.

There are a few fundamentals that need to be in place for this to happen:

1. Content

Working with rich talent and a diversity of content creators is non-negotiable. You need a team that empowers them and does not dictate to them. Authenticity is not built by clipping wings and forcing inauthentic content to be produced. This is why our Influence division is led by a renowned content creator. The content must be front and centre.

2. Research

Agencies need to leverage the power of technology to understand which conversations are happening, where and when. AI and machine learning is able to give us a laser-sharp focus to augment the work we do as expert human communicators. You need to be able to filter through the clutter and find the right content creator match for your brand, complete with influence rating and risk profiling.

3. Digital natives

To be authentic, you need a team of digital natives who live on, engage with, create and consume in, the world that you wish to enter. Relevancy and authenticity cannot be faked.

4. Clout

The beauty of being the PR and influencer marketing offering in a creative group such as Duke, means we plug into strategists and execution arms across the spectrum of above and below the line offerings from our creative and digital partners. This is what clout is - the ability to strategically amplify and sharpen the message and its reach depending on the specific objectives of each brief.

As we emerge from this humbling year, and as brands seek to amplify their presence, the rise of curated content on social media provides a compelling opportunity to build influence in a way that's authentic and able to resonate amidst the noise.

ABOUT TRACY JONES

Tracy Jones is the founder and MD of Positive Dialogue, the full-service Public Relations and Influencer Marketing Agency in the DUKE Group of companies.

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