

MARKETING INFLUENCERS: WHO ARE THEY?

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ABSTRACT

In social media, directed links can signify a variety of things, including close friendships, shared hobbies, or even a love of the latest news or celebrity rumor. Such directed links control the information flow and so show how much power a user has over others—a concept that is essential to sociology and viral marketing. The emergence of social media has totally changed how individuals participate, interact, and communicate. In order to facilitate increased outreach and influence, these platforms are crucial. The practice of paying people to promote a product or service on social media is known as influencer marketing. Influencer marketing, which involves finding, enlisting, and supporting people who start discussions with a brand's customers, is a developing trend in PR campaigns. Influencer marketing is becoming more popular as a result of word-of-mouth marketing trends. Organizations are recognizing the potential of influencers in influencing a purchasing choice as customers use social media platforms. Finding the proper kind of influencer who would provide curated tips, stories, and recommendations to interest the audience is essential for effective influencer marketing.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Nano, Micro, Mid Tier, Macro, Mega Influencers.

Introduction

The start of Influencer marketing can be taken back to the 1920s when Coca-Cola used Santa Claus to drink it in ads they circulated. The success of Coca-Cola ad with Santa Claus made other brands realize the power of people in marketing.

A person who has the ability to influence others' purchasing decisions due to their stature, expertise, position, or connections with their audience is known as an influencerⁱ. Influencer marketing uses a well-established influencer with a sizable fan base and a solid brand reputation in a certain industry to support your business, promote your merchandise, or collaborate on content with the goal of raising brand recognition and boosting salesⁱⁱⁱ. For the purpose of marketing one of its goods or services, a brand works in conjunction with an online influencer^{iv}. Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy which employs the use of individuals, known as influencers, to help promote a brand to the market^v. A decade ago, only a small number of devoted bloggers and famous people participated in influencer marketing^{vi}. The increase of influencers' market saturation and even fraud seem to have occurred recently^{vii}.

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The idea behind influencer marketing is to work with influential people to increase their influence among friends and family. Word-of-mouth marketing is the actual channel through which this communication occurs. Therefore, word-of-mouth marketing campaigns are a natural part of all influencer marketing, but not all word-of-mouth marketing is fueled by influencer campaigns^{viii}. Marketers engage with their customers by integrating their products and brands into influencers' conversations with followers about what they wear, where they go, and what music they listen to^{ix}. Sales aren't the only way that influencer marketing is used, and frequently aims are more holistic; concerned with a brand's long-term goals instead of just short-term sales, and here is where the real sweet spot of influencer marketing is. The main attractiveness of influencer marketing and the reason for its quick rise in adoption among companies are its authenticity and the number of ways that campaigns can be established and utilised to complete a range of projects with varied objectives^x.

Influencer marketing is a relatively new revenue channel in marketing. As a result, marketers are struggling to find a way to measure the impact of influencer marketing on their business^{xi}. Brands use influencers to increase word of mouth marketing and eliminate, or significantly lower, the cost per customer acquisition^{xii}.

Influencer marketing is a fusion of traditional and newer marketing tools^{xiii}. Influencer marketing is a multidimensional discipline. It is more than just getting a product into the hands of the right people. It is about how these influencers see the brand and how they interpret a brief in their own style that appeals to their followers. It is about tailoring content to fit the influencers' aesthetic, rather than shoe-horning a square peg into a round hole^{xiv}. What makes influencer marketing unique is the use of social media to share their thoughts and opinions towards the brand^{xv}.

Review of Literature

According to Kadekova and Holienicnova (2018) internet is becoming more and more popular because to social media influencers' excellent content and visibility. Influencer marketing is still a viable option for marketers that are prepared to go outside the box in cultivating relationships with their target market, despite the fact that it is a relatively new tactic. The research findings confirm that there are significant differences between in the area of impact of influencers on consumer behaviour, which leads to different marketing opportunities^{xvi}.

Campbell and Farrell (2020) the audience, endorser, and social media management are three examples of influencers' functional components extended by value that influencers may be able to provide marketers for each of these elements and conclude by outlining how these functional elements work together to make influencers a potentially potent—and underappreciated—marketing tool^{xvii}.

According to Argyris et al., (2020) influencers are non-celebrity people who become well-known on social media by sharing visually appealing content and engaging in friendly conversation with other users. This close connection ignites the beneficial impacts of aesthetic consistency on brand engagement among followers^{xviii}.

According to Audrezet, Kerviler, and Moulard (2020) Influencer marketing, which involves brands approaching social media influencers (SMIs) to promote their products, is becoming more and more popular. SMI followers appreciate an influencer's internal reasons and lack of a profit-oriented focus and findings provide advice for marketers and SMIs on how to work together to create relationships that benefit both parties while preserving the integrity of SMIs.^{xix}.

Castillo and Fernández (2019) examines if the potential influence they have on their followers may alter brand engagement in self-concept, brand expected value, and intention to purchase recommended items in order to assess how effective digital influencers are at promoting brands via electronic word-of-mouth. This study also contributes to a deeper knowledge of the convincing power of digital influencers, which is still restricted and might be valuable for businesses when creating their own social media strategies^{xx}.

According to Tafesse and Wood (2021) Influencer marketing has emerged as a successful strategy for brands to engage with consumers via social media influencers, and a recent study examined the relationship between followers' engagement behaviour on Instagram and various metrics of influencers' content and engagement strategy. The study's findings add to the body of literature by shedding light on how certain aspects of influencers' content and engagement tactics affect followers' Instagram engagement behaviour^{xxi}.

According to Seeler, Lück and Schänzel (2019) the study highlights the importance of secondary experiences passively consumed through other people's eyes. It also throws light on the dual

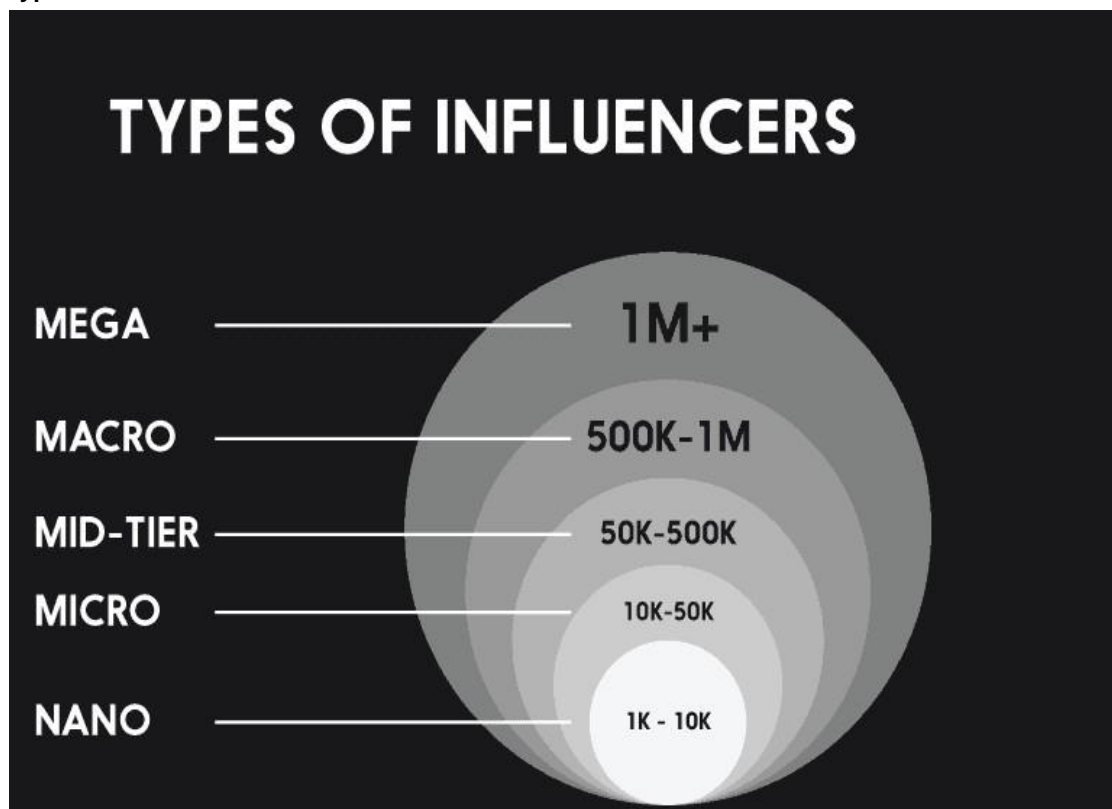
function of digital narratives, which include serving as both a sociological instrument for influencing tourists and a means for tourists to use themselves to become influencers (marketing perspective). This is a pertinent result with significant implications for tourism operators and provides doors for further study in other areas given the growing significance of social influencers and the advent of influencer marketing^{xxii}.

According to Zak and Maria (2020) Influencers greatly alter patterns in demand for specific items by influencing consumers' thoughts, attitudes, and views. The survey's results demonstrated that some products may benefit more than others from influencer marketing than others. When it comes to purchasing apparel, footwear, cosmetics, and, shockingly, services, influencers will have the biggest impact. People rely largely on other reasons to purchase their food, jewellery, and technology, but influencer marketing may have an impact on them as well^{xxiii}.

Objectives

- To discuss the essentials of influencer marketing
- To explain various types of influencer marketing
- To explain reasons for hiring influencer marketer.

Types of Influencers

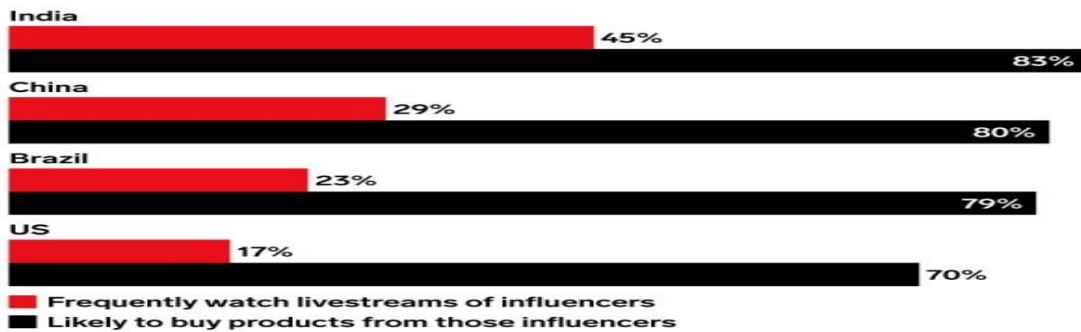


Source: <https://www.feedough.com/influencer-marketing/> dated 25/7/2022

A decade ago, the influencer marketing arena was limited only to celebrities^{xxiv} and Influencer marketing strategies are more difficult to navigate than ever as a brand^{xxv}. What makes them influential is their large followings on the web and social media^{xxvi}. Influencer marketing is now an established form of online marketing. Whereas in influencer marketing audience are engaged by putting their influence among friends and family, word-of-mouth marketing is the way it is actually communicated^{xxvii}. Influencer marketing is a kind of advertising that concentrates on employing influential people to spread the word about your company to a wider audience. Instead of actively marketing to a huge audience of customers, you encourage, employ, or pay influencers to spread the word about you^{xxviii}. These individuals have loyal and active online communities of followers^{xxix}.

Internet Users in Select Countries Who Frequently Watch Livestreams of Influencers and Are Likely to Buy Products From Influencers They Follow, Sep 2020

% of respondents



Note: among those who frequently watch livestreams from influencers they follow on social media

Source: GlobalWebIndex, "Connecting the Dots," Dec 1, 2020

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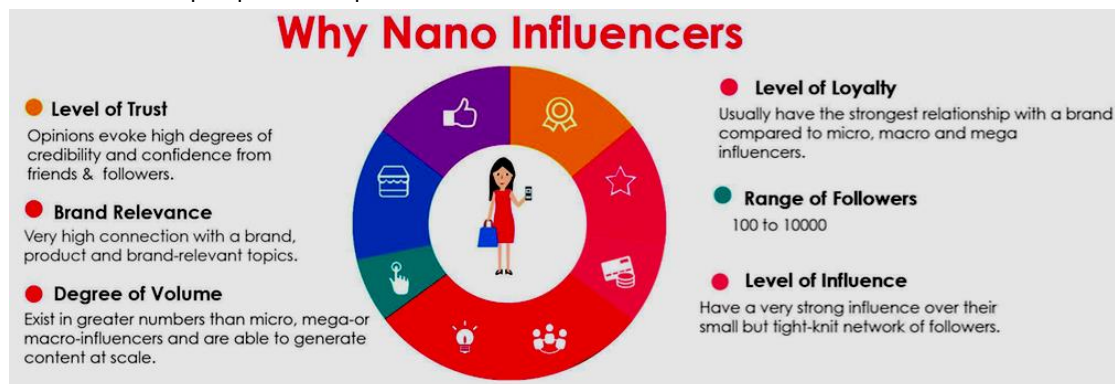
eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com

The above data show that India is clearly at the forefront when it comes to influence marketing^{xxx}. There are mainly 5 types of influencer as far as follower counts are concerned and 8 types of influencer as content or niche. Let's explain them one by one.

- Nano influencers (1K–10K followers)
- Micro influencers (10K–100K followers)
- Mid tier influencers (50K–100K followers)
- Macro influencers (100K–1M followers)
- Mega or celebrity influencers (1M+ followers)

Nano Influencers (1K–10K followers)

Nano influencer is the primary units as far as the follower's count are determined. They spend maximum time with audience and therefore highly authentic consequently, marketers partnering with this sort of influencer should expect a special experience^{xxxii}. They started their venture with limited capital which makes them cost effective and as soon as their subscriber base increases they become popular or recognize by the general public they don't even charge from the companies as they are more worried about their future prospects than present^{xxxii}.



Source: https://brandmentions.com/wiki/What_Is_a_Nano-Influencer retrieved on 9/8/2022

Nanoinfluencers have maximum interaction with their local community. Nano-influencers are "ordinary everyday people" who are used to spread the word about a brand's goods and services among their friends and family. Most of the time, user-generated content can help with this^{xxxiii} They are the one who first recognize and populate him/her and that is why most of the time you'll see them in their normal lifestyle, normal houses and doing things which are normal and to whom their subscriber can correlate.

Micro Influencers (10K–100K followers)

The first aspect of Micro influencers definition is the high engagement that will apply to those of the followers of the user that is already active. Secondly, the limitation of the audience size is a direct implication of our focus on the impactful yet not popular users^{xxxiv}. They are typically well-known in their particular area of interest and have very high rates of engagement from their

Audiences^{xxxv}. He is someone who has between 1000 to 100000 followers. They focus on a specific or niche area and are generally regarded as an industry expert or topic specialist^{xxxvi}. They are believed to have stronger relationships than a typical influencer^{xxxvii} such as food blogger, traveler, a local fashionista, or a fitness guru etc. These smaller, more focused niche experts connect on a deeper level with their audiences and generate greater engagement and as the number of followers increases the engagement tends to decrease^{xxxviii}. It just makes sense -- a smaller audience means much more hands-on, personal interaction and we all know that's marketing gold these days.^{xxxix}.

WHY MICRO-INFLUENCERS



Source: <https://www.viralnation.com/blog/the-power-of-micro-influencers-in-2019/> dated 26/9/2021

They are more approachable and affordable. They also enjoy the advantage of better engagement with their audiences. However, finding out suitable micro-influencers always involves tedious work by searching millions of posts for any keyword, hashtag or mention, with dozens of filters^{xl}. They have good relationship with their audience simply because of good grasp over the subject matter and that is why they are rightly called industry expert. They have uniform audience because of the size due to which they don't have celebrity status and brands like them as their followers are serious one and will follow him whatever he/she tell them^{xli}. They are hyper specific in a given niche^{xlii}. The beauty of micro influencer is that as their base is small but their impact on the promotion of goods or services is such that they actually generate a very good amount of total sale because of their interaction with them which in the long run finding the right audience for the product are going to be the driving factors to survive in the age of social media and digital marketing^{xliii}.

Mid-Tier Influencers

Usually, when someone thinks of an influencer, they visualise a famous person or personality. For the majority of people, these influencers are the most well-known, despite the fact that being an influencer is frequently not their primary identity. Celeb influencers typically begin their careers as actors, athletes, musicians, or other well-known public figures before securing brand partnerships thanks to their extensive platforms^{xliv}. Mid-tier influencers, who have 50,000 to 500,000 followers, fall between micro- and macro-influencers. These are more powerful than micro-influencers as they already have a loyal fan base, but keep in mind that influencers with a larger following also demand big payment^{xlv}. They are much more approachable than huge influencers and are regarded as more dependable and interesting than large- or micro-scale influencers^{xlvi}. Compared to macro- or mega-influencers, this sort of influencer gives brands a broad reach and a little bit more engagement. Each post has authentic, up-to-date content that is polished but not dated. They have a lot of experience producing content and have a stronger connection to their audience^{xlvii}. Compared to macro- or mega-influencers, this sort of influencer gives brands a broad reach and a little bit more engagement. Each post has authentic, up-to-date content that is polished but not dated. They have a lot of experience producing content and have a stronger connection to their audience^{xlviii}.

Macro Influencers (100K–1M followers)

Famous individuals with more than 100,000 followers on social media are considered macro influencers. Because of this, companies ask them to highlight a product on their social media pages, increasing the brand's visibility and awareness. Macro-influencers are the top users on social networks because they have vast groups. Due to some traits that set them apart from micro-influencers, they are clearly identifiable. They create content frequently since social networks are now where they work, which explains how they can run them like a genuine business. The size of their community defines them and having reach up to more than a million, they are approached by brands for their visibility and their indisputable popularity. Their posts reach far more people than those of micro-influencers, and ultimately their popularity on social networks has enabled them to develop a business, making them sought-after for marketing projects with prestigious brands^{xlix}

Macro Influencers

Macro influencers are more than just big stars just like the meteors of the social media universe. Whatever is said or posted, they have a large audience of people listening, macro influencers is the magic wand to wave in your marketing strategy and they have such an effect that a campaign that launched and sold out within hours. Lacs made in hours – thanks to the well-executed macro influencer campaign. The best part is if one is launching anything new it breaks the trust barrier between your brand and your potential customers. Macro influencers have their own reputation with their loyal followers. Because you're dealing with hundred thousand plus people when your brand collaborates with a macro-influencer, it's a make or break time as you'll receive valuable data insights with an opportunity to get feedback and all this data won't be in small numbers which points out things are on the right path or not. Last but not least they know what tactics work and what doesn't as a team of experts behind them and with a macro influencer; it's a smart opportunity to tap into their expertise for campaign success!

**M I C R O I N F L U E N C E R S
V E R S U S
M A C R O I N F L U E N C E R S**

MICRO INFLUENCERS	MACRO INFLUENCERS
Micro influencers are social media users who have 1,000 - 10,000 followers and are well-known for a particular area of interest	Macro influencers are social media influencers with a huge following, typically more than 100,000
Have more than 1,000 followers	Typically have more than 100,000 followers
Can reach niche-specific audiences	Reach broad and diverse audiences
Have higher audience engagement rates	Comparatively lower audience engagement rates
Less costly	More costly
Have less experience	Have more experience

Visit www.PEDIAA.com

Source: <https://pediaa.com/difference-between-micro-and-macro-influencers/> 19/7/22

Mega or Celebrity Influencers (1M+ followers)

Mega-influencers are highly active and visible on social media and their followers spend a lot of time with them. This is what makes them attractive to brands that want to leverage influencer marketing—and what makes them incredibly expensiveⁱ. Mega-influencers have a huge audience, but research shows that as the number of followers an influencer has grows, so does the rate of engagement. The engagement rate for this group of influencers is only 1.6%.ⁱⁱ. Mega influencers are the top most categories in social media having diverse followers from every walk of life who have different interest from one another and above all they don't have a close relation with their followers due to bigger size and because of the bigger size they are more expensive than other influencer. These influencers are used by brands when they want to promote products or service that appeal to the massesⁱⁱⁱ. Mega influencers access to millions of people at a click of a button due to which they have a strong impact over their followers also they are very professional and know how to use market for the promotion of their product or services professionally and lastly brand recognize that the personality and aura of the influencer is compatible with their brand so its increase their market worthiness and credibility^{iv}. They are celebrities, whether an actors, singers and TV stars, or internet personalities that have risen to prominence in recent years. But one should be cautious as due to the huge amount of eyes watching every move these mega influencers make, it's super important that any brand partnership is thoughtfully considered and meticulously planned^v. One should always remember that mega influencers are best suited to mega brands who can afford their price. Remember that they have a broad diversity of followers. So, if your product is very niche, then a mega influencer may not be the best option^{vi}.

What it takes to hire a Marketing Influencer for a business

- **Identifying the Correct Influencer:** On the internet, there is no shortage of influencers. To be a YouTuber, all you need is a camera, a microphone, and some basic video editing skills. However, when it comes to finding someone to speak on your behalf, you must be selective. Here are a few strategies for locating the right influencer for your company:
 - **Look at Popular Influencers in your Niche:** An unidentified influencer would fail to provide the necessary exposure, defeating the purpose of marketing entirely. Take an influencer from a related field, for example, for work in technology; make a list of the most famous influencers who are reviewing the latest technology or electronic devices. After creating such a list, one can begin the screening process to find an ideal influencer for the company.
 - **Find influencers that rank high on popular keywords in your niche:** Run a Google or YouTube search for influencers in subject area using the keywords that best define one's products and services which will generate a list of all of the top influencers who have published content in video, graphics, and audio formats.
 - **Influencers that already promote your brand:** Tech behemoths such as Apple, Google, Sony, and Microsoft invite influencers from around the world to their keynotes, where they get a free pass to explore whatever they want to talk about, while the brand benefits from the coverage that an influencer brings through his/her channel.
- **How to build an effective relationship with influencers:** To begin with explain to influencer the principles that underline brand and the methods used to create the goods and services and continue by educating them regarding company's principal rivals and your USPs. Give them all the details on the advantages of the items and why it is a great choice for your target market.
- **Review Products:** When an influencer evaluates a product, they may build their reputation and get more exposure at the same time and one of the most prominent tactics in influencer marketing is product review. Before making a purchase, a lot of customers watch product review videos. With the increase in e-commerce sales, online reviews are the most convenient way to determine a product's reliability and usefulness.
- **Publish influencer's content on their pages:** A significant portion of consumers base their purchasing decisions on the advice of influencers. Influencer marketing has advanced significantly, mostly due to the obvious candour of many well-known online influencers. In order to gain social proof, marketers are now putting material from influencer channels to their product pages.
- **Collaborate with influencers around major events:** The efforts around important events are doubled as a result of influencers promoting a brand and increasing product awareness. Coca-Cola used this tactic to good effect around the Rio 2016 Olympics^{vii} and saw Nike release new boots in FIFA World Cup 2018.

Conclusion

The social media influencer levels shows that the influencer marketing sector is more complicated than one might have thought. Influencer marketing has many facets and elements, and how it is positioned in the market fully depends on company's existing budget, as well as one's specialty and product. A nano or micro influencer who is willing to accept free products in exchange for a post can be a good fit for one's business. One can go for mid tier or macro influencer if an established brand wants to increase the reach of their product or use the opportunity to launch a new line and above all mega influencer or celebrities are most likely owned by big companies and brands whose marketing knows no boundaries and usually advertise across continent if not the whole world. Influencer marketing has the power to dramatically increase a company's revenues but it needs some preparation. It is important that the influencer's personality and the company's brand values mesh. Once the company identified the ideal influencer to represent their organisation, cultivate a close relationship with them by informing them of the direction of the marketing campaign and the main messages the firm wants to convey to viewers. Fair pay for the services rendered is another prerequisite for a good working relationship. Never forget that if influencer marketing is done properly, it can produce the desired outcomes.

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