

# HOW TO LEVERAGE INFLUENCER MARKETING TO GROW YOUR BRAND ONLINE



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 **NationalPositions**  
Profitable Internet Marketing

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Bernard May is the founder and CEO of National Positions, an industry-leading digital marketing agency based in Agoura Hills, CA. Bernard started National Positions in 2004 out of his garage in Calabasas, California.



Ten years later, the company has worked with thousands of companies and has over 500 employees, with offices in the US, South America, Europe, South Africa, and India.

In 2012 after seeing great results with local clients, Bernard launched a new division of National Positions called Local Positions. This new division has successfully helped clients maximize their online presence and increase their rankings, leading to more traffic and sales.

Bernard has more than 20 years' experience in digital marketing for some of the worldwide leaders in technology and innovation. Prior to founding National Positions, Bernard served as Vice President of Marketing at First Advantage Corp; Vice President of US Search.com; and Senior Product Manager at Symantec Corp. Bernard earned a bachelor's degree in business science from the University of Cape Town and a Masters of Commerce in marketing and information systems from the University of Natal, South Africa.

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# INTRODUCTION

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This eBook examines Influencer Marketing: what it is, how it works, and how you can build and scale your own campaign. We'll also share statistics and success stories that demonstrate just how powerful sponsored Influencer content can be when you're looking to spread awareness about your brand and drive meaningful engagement online. If you're looking for an effective way to reach your market, this eBook is an excellent start.



# WHAT IS INFLUENCER MARKETING?

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While the concept of Influencer Marketing is relatively new, it's actually a new spin on one of the oldest and most effective forms of advertising around: word-of-mouth.

Word-of-mouth marketing is one of the most powerful forms of marketing available to brands, but it is also one of the most misunderstood strategies. As a consequence, companies frequently miss opportunities when it comes to online marketing.

Today, word-of-mouth has moved online. People are still turning to everyone from their peers to celebrities for authentic recommendations on products and services, but now those Influencers are all online: posting on social media platforms, sharing videos on YouTube, and writing some of your favorite blogs.

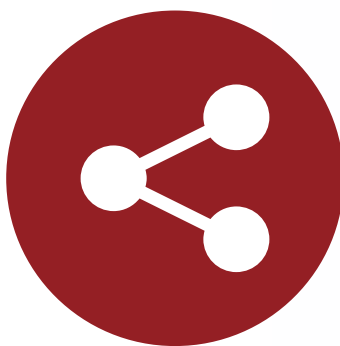
Social media users are already using sites like Facebook and Twitter to talk about their thoughts on products, share their experience with services, and promote their favorite brands—often without even realizing it. Whether they have a great meal at a restaurant or discover a product that saves them time, users are eager to share their experiences with others. The genuine, organic nature of these posts gives them credibility, especially among those who trust the poster's opinion.

Users who consistently create interesting, engaging content are often able to develop sizable followings – a group of people who are interested in what the user has to say, making that user an influential voice. The Influencer could be a celebrity who regularly interacts with fans, or someone knowledgeable in a particular niche, such as cooking, parenting, fashion or travel. Their thoughts and ideas are read by many, and perhaps even more importantly, passed along to others in the form of likes, shares, retweets, +1s, and more. When these Influencers share product recommendations, it can be seen by a vast audience, generating visibility and buzz among a relevant audience.

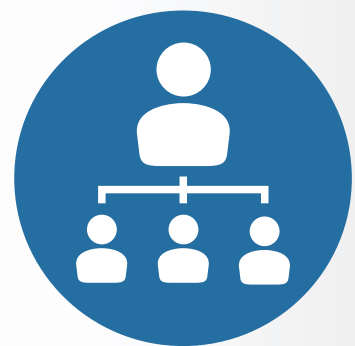
Influencer Marketing taps into this reach and credibility by creating a partnership between your brand and the people online influencing your customers. These Influencers have powerful reaches and opinions their audiences trust, making them impactful spokespeople capable of promoting your brand, products, and services through sponsored content. Influencers create and share content about your brand with their existing audience – an audience that is passionate about the content they're consuming. This approach can be more powerful and effective, and less expensive than direct marketing techniques.



## CREATE



SHARE















## INFLUENCE

## INTRODUCING THE NEW INFLUENCER

Not long ago, the ability to reach large audiences was generally limited to high profile personalities, such as celebrities and other public figures. However, social media has made it possible for anybody to build a following and have their voice heard by hundreds, thousands, or even millions of others. Influencers of any size can post content on the Internet, and within moments, it can be seen by countless people around the world. Whether it's a funny YouTube video or a thought-provoking tweet, viral content can quickly garner a lot of attention.

What sets Influencers apart is their ability to consistently create content that others enjoy. Someone who regularly posts engaging content can build a following of people who want to hear what they have to say, seek out their content, and trust their tastes. It may be a college student sharing amusing insights about campus life, the CEO of a startup musing about the latest tech innovations, or a stay-at-home mom sharing childcare tips. Whatever your target market is, chances are there is an Influencer who already has a sizable group of people interested in your products and services following them.

|   |  |  |  |          |                    |
|---|--|--|--|----------|--------------------|
|   | B. Scott<br>United States, California<br>@lovebscott | <br>24K    | <br>16K     | INDUSTRY | Entertainment News |
|  | Lars<br>United States, Virginia                      | <br>12.9K |  |          | Tech               |
|  | Heather<br>United States, California                 | <br>11K   |  |          | Food               |
|  | Chelsea<br>United States, California                 | <br>76K   |  |          | Lifestyle          |
|  | Johnnyjet.com  | <br>11.7K | <br>11367K |          | Travel             |



# TAPPING INTO TODAY'S NEWEST MARKETING CHANNEL

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Social is key and content is king; marketers everywhere understand this. But the way that your target market consumes content online today—especially branded content—is changing.



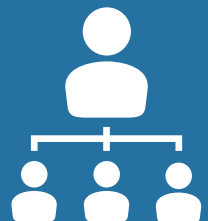
Content online is  
more social than ever



Digital advertising  
is becoming  
more integrated



Native advertising  
is on the rise



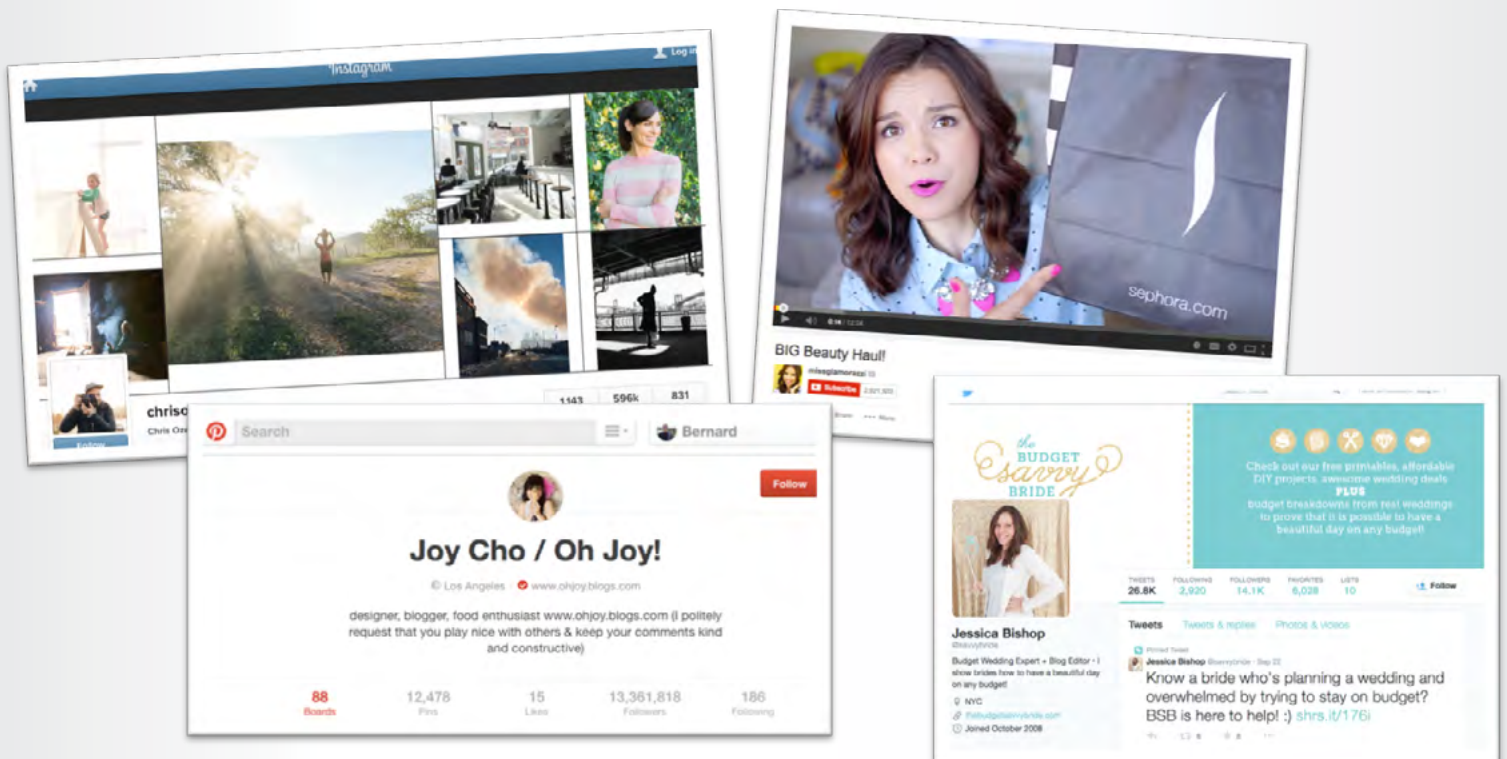
Influencer Marketing  
is emerging as  
the next big channel

Why should Influencer Marketing be part of your marketing strategy? Consider the changes in marketing and advertising over the last few years.

Engagement with traditional forms of advertising is on the decline – people use their DVRs to skip past television ads, readers flip past print ads, and online users simply scroll past or close out any ads they encounter en route to the content they’re actually seeking out. This has driven a shift towards native advertising—branded content that is integrated alongside genuine content. In this emerging model, a news site may nestle sponsored content amongst it’s regular articles, Pinterest may include a promoted pin between related pins, or Facebook may offer sponsored suggestions in a user’s news feed.

This type of content, however, is still frequently recognized by users as unwanted advertising, and conversion and engagement on this content remain low.

In light of this, a paradigm shift towards a new advertising medium is emerging in the form of Influencer Marketing. By partnering with Influencers to encourage them to share content about their products and services on social media, brands are able to reach their audiences more effectively.



# WHAT MAKES INFLUENCER MARKETING DIFFERENT?

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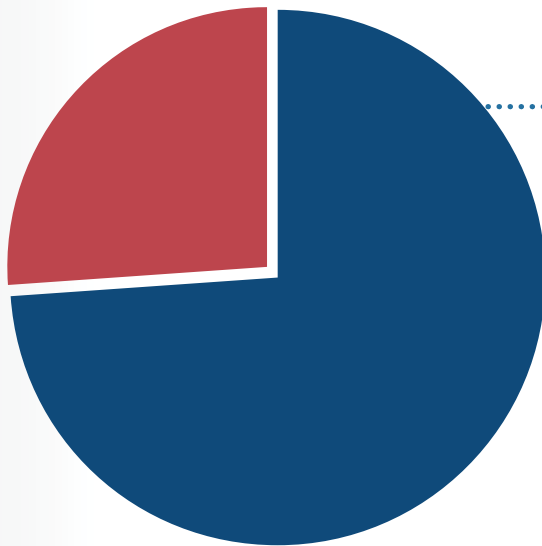
One of the reasons Influencer Marketing is so wildly successful is because Influencers are talking to audiences who are already passionate about their content and confident in their opinions.

An Influencer who is respected for his views on fashion, for instance, has an existing audience of people who have demonstrated an active interest in fashion related topics. This makes him an excellent marketing partner for a company that sells clothing, accessories, or other products and services that fashion-conscious users might be interested in. Because Influencers tend to focus on specific niches, this means that the message can be carefully focused to appeal to the target audience's interests. It also means that his or her followers have demonstrated a clear interest in that particular niche, giving brands the ability to zero in on their target market.



## WHAT INFLUENCERS HAVE THAT YOU DON'T

- Opinions that customers trust
- Wide reach and an actively engaged audience
- A reputation for producing content their audience likes
- The ability to share content with your target audience and beyond
- They can create content faster, cheaper, and better

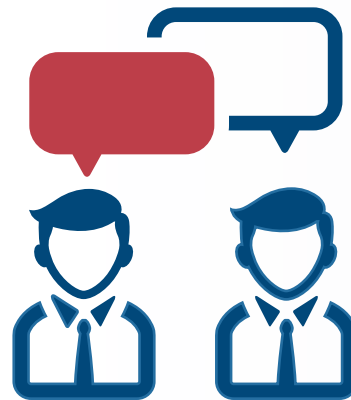


**74%**

of consumers rely on social networks for purchasing decisions on and offline\*



Word-of-Mouth has been shown to improve marketing efforts by up to **50%\***



**92%**

of people trust personal recommendations more than any other forms of marketing\*

*\*NIELSEN: GLOBAL CONSUMERS' TRUST IN 'EARNED' ADVERTISING GROWS IN IMPORTANCE*

## WHAT INFLUENCERS LOOK FOR IN THE BRANDS THEY PARTNER WITH

Effective Influencers are in high demand, so they have room to be selective when it comes to whom they partner with. They also want to know that their partnership with you will be successful, valuable to their followers, and ultimately, rewarding for themselves. What are Influencers looking for when choosing a brand to work with?

**The ability to be authentic.** Influencers know how to best communicate with their audience. A mistake that many marketers make is to dictate what Influencers should say about their brands. It is best to be more hands-off and allow Influencers to engage with their audience in an authentic way.

**The opportunity to monetize their followings** while staying true to their ideals. Influencers have worked hard to build their reputations, and they don't want to be perceived as "selling out." However, they also recognize that their hard work has value to brands. Influencers are seeking partnerships that allow them to make money doing what they love without sacrificing their integrity.

**Brands that have clear program goals.** In order to create quality, valuable content, Influencers need to know what their content should be trying to achieve. As we discussed, your campaign should start with clearly defined goals and ways to measure your success in achieving them. Be sure to share these goals with the Influencer, and provide them with the tools they'll need to reach them.

**Creative freedom.** Influencers are eager to follow content requirements, but in the end, they want to create content that feels like their own. This benefits the brand as well, as it is the Influencer's unique voice and personality that has made them successful. While your content brief should be clear and detailed, leave room for them to be creative and to put their personalized touch on their work.

# EXAMPLES OF INFLUENCER CAMPAIGNS

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The power of Influencer Marketing isn't simply speculation – it has been proven to be a powerful way to reach audiences. Mercedes-Benz demonstrated just how effective this can be by choosing six Influencers from Instagram to take a road trip in a Mercedes-Benz CLA. The campaign generated over 2,000 studio-quality images that reached over 2.8 million followers, resulting in greatly increased brand visibility and an exciting, engaging campaign that drove buzz and interest through hashtag promotions, contests, and giveaways for both the Influencers involved and their followers.



## THE POWER BEHIND INFLUENCER MARKETING

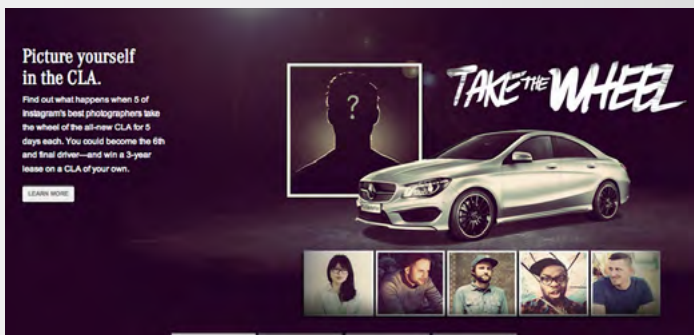
The best way to illustrate the power of Influencer Marketing is to provide actual examples of successful campaigns. Although the examples illustrated below are for Fortune 500 companies, the same results can be achieved on a smaller scale for companies of all sizes.

## MERCEDES-BENZ INFLUENCER CAMPAIGN

In July 2014 Mercedes-Benz launched an Instagram campaign designed to sell its new luxury GLA Sports Utility Vehicle to millennials. To do this, Mercedes-Benz loaned six talented Instagram photographers a Mercedes GLA to document a cross-country road trip.

## CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

The result was a campaign that reached over 2.8 million followers and resulted in over 2,100 Instagram posts.



# TACO BELL INFLUENCER CAMPAIGN

Taco Bell is known for its cutting edge social media department. To pre-launch their new Cool Ranch tacos, Taco Bell used YouTube, Vine, Twitter, and Facebook to promote their new product.

## CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

The combined campaign generated 2.7 million YouTube views and earned the equivalent of \$2.9 billion of Earned Media Impressions. This resulted in helping sell over \$1 Billion in Cool Ranch Tacos nationwide.





# BUILDING AN INFLUENCER MARKETING CAMPAIGN

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If customers are more interested in, and responsive to, Influencer content, the obvious question is how to partner with Influencers and start building your campaign.

GrowInfluence is an innovative marketplace that National Positions has engineered to bring brands and Influencers together in a collaborative space. Through this platform, both sides can achieve their goals: brands can reach new audiences, and Influencers can monetize the followings they've developed. To get the most impact, you'll need to not only find and partner with great Influencers, but create a campaign that generates high-quality content that resonates with a wide audience.





## What to Look for in an Influencer

### RELEVANCE

In order for an Influencer to have an impact on your target audience, they first need to be creating content that's relevant to both that audience and your industry. A clothing company, for instance, might choose an Influencer who specializes in fashion while a camera company might choose an Influencer that focuses on electronics, photography, or even travel blogging. For the greatest impact, brands can choose several Influencers for an even broader reach across several segments related to their market.

### REACH

Reach is one of the key reasons you're teaming up with an Influencer in the first place, so it's naturally one of the most important factors to consider. How large is their following? How many channels are they active on? Choosing more than one Influencer is another effective strategy for expanding your reach and maximizing your ROI. The more Influencers you work with, the greater your potential audience.

### RESONANCE

Resonance represents an Influencer's ability to create content their followers genuinely enjoy and engage with. Is their content typically well-received? Do their followers share their content, comment, retweet, or repin? Is the Influencer engaged with their audience – do they respond to comments and questions? You'll often find that high-profile Influencers can have large, but less involved, followings. Surprisingly, smaller audiences are often some of the most engaged.

Our GrowInfluence marketplace makes it easy to determine many of these factors with its unique scoring system that incorporates several different metrics to establish an Influencer's true social worth—such as Klout Score and Domain Authority. Based on this information, you can work with the Influencer to negotiate a price for the campaign.



## Celebrities



## Quality Content



## Buzz

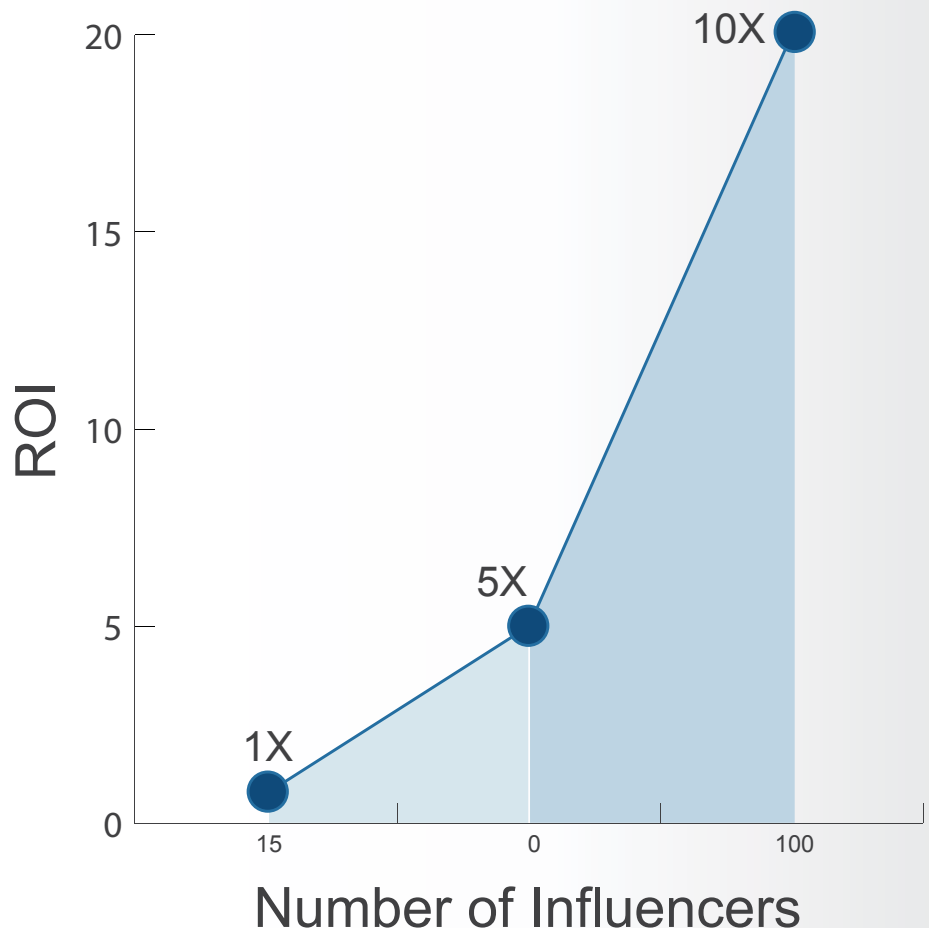


## Advocates & Employees



Marketers often think of Influencer Marketing as a single spokesperson promoting their brand.

In reality, the more spokespeople you have sharing your message in front of their audience, the better. Every Influencer you add to your campaign gives you exponential reach, and therefore, exponential ROI.





There are four main categories of sponsored content to choose from when setting up your Influencer campaign



## Content Creation



## Content Placement



## Video Creation



## Social Posting



01  
Setting your  
goals

02  
Finding  
the Right  
Influencers

03  
Setting Up  
Your Influencer  
Campaign

04  
Creating  
Authentic  
Content

05  
Approval &  
Measuring  
Results

Content is at the center of any successful Influencer Marketing campaign. Content types can range from blog posts to videos, product reviews to social shoutouts.

Allowing the Influencer to create content on your behalf is the most effective way to get more from your Influencer Marketing campaign. Give Influencers a direction to start and outline any specifics you'd like included. Then, let the Influencer do what they do best: create engaging content in their own voice. Authenticity is what makes Influencer Marketing so powerful, so it's important to allow the Influencer to be as authentic as possible. While you won't want them posting anything damaging about your product, you should allow them to be honest and straightforward. In the end, even if there are a few "cons" listed along with the "pros," if an Influencer recommends a product overall, that's what's going to carry the most weight.



love my new #lipstick  
from @bellec cosmetics  
#beauty #kissable



#obsessed with my  
new #calipop color  
from @bellec cosmetics



Top 10 Makeup  
Trends for 2015  
sponsored by  
Belle Cosmetics



## REVIEW AND APPROVE YOUR CONTENT

To get the most out of your Influencers, it's important to let them maintain their creative license and share their honest opinions. That doesn't mean you won't have a chance to proof and approve any content about your brand, however. Being able to sign off on the content your Influencers create before it goes live is key. Once the Influencer has created content according to your specifications, you will have the opportunity to review and approve content before it goes live. Once approved, the Influencer will publish the content across their channels.

This content can even be incorporated into your other marketing campaigns. Use your own site and social media profiles to promote the content for even greater visibility.

## MEASURE THE RIGHT METRICS

Once the campaign is complete, it's time to measure your success. How you'll do this will vary based on your specific program goals, but common metrics include:

- Impressions
- Likes
- Clicks
- Retweets
- Comments
- Pins/Repins
- Shares

## Marketing Tip

## Re-share and Reuse Influencer Content

- Publish references to your Influencer content on your website or owned media channels
- Reference in your marketing materials



# THE CASE FOR INFLUENCER MARKETING

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As users become less engaged with traditional advertising and more involved in social media, it's clear that a new approach to marketing is needed for brands to stay ahead. Influencer Marketing is paving a new path for marketers by giving them an opportunity to bring their marketing messages to customers in a more personal, authentic way.

Customers are more likely to trust the opinions of their peers than the marketing messages sent directly by advertisers, especially when that peer has proven to be a consistent source of reliable, valuable information. Followers tend to have a sense of trust and confidence in the Influencers they follow, and consider them to be knowledgeable in the topics they are passionate about.

Through Influencer Marketing, brands can not only become part of the conversation, but help shape it in new ways. GrowInfluence is the powerful marketplace where brands can connect with Influencers to build marketing strategies that recognize and leverage the way people are using technology to make their purchasing decisions, even when they're not actively thinking about buying.



# GET STARTED



There's no question that Influencer Marketing is a powerful strategy, but it isn't a blanket approach that suits every brand. The best way to discover whether Influencer Marketing is right for you is by creating a small starter campaign to test the waters. Set a small but measurable goal, establish a budget, and launch your campaign. GrowInfluence makes it easy to scale your campaign according to your needs so don't be afraid to start small – you can always ramp up your efforts once you see the results for yourself.

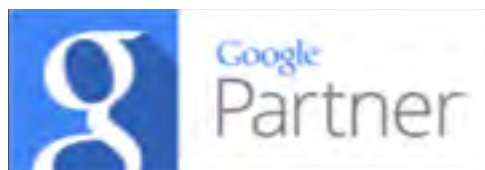
If you have a passionate target audience who is active in social media, chances are you'll soon discover what many other brands are already finding out: Influencer Marketing is a powerful new approach to one of the most trusted forms of marketing: word-of-mouth. By partnering with established Influencers with proven reputations for creating content that your customers care about, you'll be on your way to giving your brand the competitive edge it needs to stand out in the crowded marketplace.

# WHO WE ARE

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National Positions is an industry leading Digital Marketing agency based in Agoura Hills, CA. Founded in 2004, National Positions has helped more than 1,500 companies grow their business online. The company has over 500 employees with offices in the US, South America, Europe, South Africa, and India.

National Positions has won numerous awards for its work, including being named in Inc. Magazine's list of fastest growing privately held companies in the US from 2009-2012. National Positions specializes in Search Engine Optimization, Pay Per Click Advertising, Content Marketing, and Social Media Marketing. Some of the brands the company currently services include Wal-Mart, Colgate, and Land Rover.



NOT SURE WHERE TO START?  
**Talk to one of our experts.**

National Positions can give you a comprehensive audit that provides in-depth insight into your current marketing efforts and how Influencer Marketing would fit into your marketing strategy.

## Test an Influencer Marketing Campaign

- Discuss whether Influencer Marketing is right for you with one of our experts
- See a detailed roadmap of an Influencer Marketing campaign
- Get an exclusive look at our Influencer marketplace
- Learn which Influencers fit with your brand
- Determine the right channels and content
- See the potential reach and ROI of each Influencer

## Get a complete SEO audit

- Examines the key SEO factors which affect your ability to rank
- Pinpoints SEO issues and explains the remedies
- Performs over 300 checks
- Looks at 6 main areas of Local SEO and Maps
- Performs a competitive analysis
- Reports are customizable
- Includes explanations and advice

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP!



877-866-6699



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