

# WORKING WITH INFLUENCERS

*Social media influencers can help market your brand to a new audience – a targeted audience that is relevant to your business. Influencers can help with your brand awareness, convert new customers, provide you with copyright-free content to use, help launch a campaign, or even take over your social media platforms for a period of time. Depending on what you need help with within the digital sphere, there is an influencer out there who will happily get creative to assist you and your brand.*

## STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVE

As with any other marketing activity, it's important to identify exactly what you want to achieve. Is it to drive awareness of your business/brand? Is it to convert sales or bookings? Is it to drive leads to your website? Is it to grow your own social media following? Or is it to source high quality imagery to use on your own marketing channels?

Depending what your answer is, you'll need to find the right type of influencer to achieve your objectives. It's important to also set KPIs and deliverables so both you and the influencer are pleased with the outcome.

## STEP 2: DECIDE WHAT TYPE OF INFLUENCER

There are many types of influencer, each with their own particular skill-set or niche that can help you to achieve your objective/s. Influencers can be:

### Bloggers

Bloggers produce written articles for the web. Good quality written content can still be indexed (retained and found) by internet search engines for years. The more positive written endorsements online about your business, the greater the potential to convert into future customers. Engaging bloggers can be a good strategy to drive awareness and build a good reputation over the long term while also driving traffic to your own website.

Advantages of working with a blogger:

- Brand reputation
- Brand awareness
- Website traffic

### Social media influencers

There are many different social media platforms and new ones are springing up daily. In each of these, you'll find people who have 'influence', based largely on the strength of their content, size of their following and how engaged their audience is.

Here are a few key things influencers can help you achieve on each channel:

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## STEP 2: DECIDE WHAT TYPE OF INFLUENCER - CONTINUED

### Instagram

(Key audience: 18-40 year olds) – heavy image/  
visual emphasis

- Brand reputation
- Brand awareness
- Purchase intent
- Reaching new audiences
- Increase your following

### Facebook

(Key audience: 30-60 year olds) – biggest/broadest  
of all channels

- Brand reputation
- Brand awareness
- Purchase intent
- Website traffic
- Reaching new audiences
- Increase your following

### Twitter

(Key audience: 25-45 year old professionals) –  
events/ news/releases

- Brand reputation
- Brand awareness
- Purchase intent
- Website traffic
- Reaching new audiences
- Increase your following

### You Tube/Vloggers

(Key audience: 18-40 year olds) – emphasis on videos

- Brand reputation
- Brand awareness
- Purchase intent
- Website traffic
- Reaching new audiences

### Photographers

Maybe you just need some great visual content  
for your own social media and marketing. You can  
always negotiate a special price for high resolution  
images from a visiting influencer, especially Instagram  
photographers.

It may only cost you a free lunch, a night's stay  
or a tour in return for content creation. Beyond  
influencers, also think about locals in your area who are  
photographers; they'll love seeing their images on your  
website, print collateral or social media channels.

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## STEP 3: RESEARCH YOUR INFLUENCERS

You need to select the right influencer for your business to ensure the best return on investment. It would be ineffective to select a famous fashion and lifestyle influencer if you want to promote a nature tour! Think about who your target audience is (including demographic, age and interests) and ensure there's symmetry between your brand and the influencer's brand.

Look beyond the content to determine how influential they are. Read the comments to see how engaged the audience is. Conducting sound research shouldn't be underestimated. Ask for media kits for insights on who follows the influencer.

### **What platforms are they active on?**

Is the influencer dominant on only one channel (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or blog)? The greater the spread of their influence across multiple channels, the better the return is for you. Remember also that while images and videos can disappear very quickly in cyberspace, a blog can provide rich, long-lasting and informative content that will appear in web searches for a long time to come.

Where possible, it's a bonus to have a mix of the two.

### **Is the quality of content good? Do they post regularly?**

You'll want to see a steady stream of consistently great, relevant content. Blogs that integrate a large amount of high quality, rich visuals (images and video) are generally more impactful and desirable than those without.

You also need to ensure an influencer's niche, their audience and the quality of their content is up to your standards. The days of uploading grainy iPhone snaps and selfies are long gone. Think about how you would like your business/experience to be conveyed, and put yourself in the viewer's shoes – would this content be enough to inspire you to investigate further? If the answer is no, then you should skip them.

### **Can they articulate their message? Do they engage with their audience?**

There's no point engaging someone who posts beautiful content, but can't communicate properly. Social media is above all 'social' – it's word of mouth on digital steroids.

People are inspired by both visuals and words – they are unlikely to recall your product if there's not a good mix of both. Look at the influencers' image captions and writing style – do they endorse and convey the experience well?

Do they actively engage with their audience and provide extra value or guidance? Fans view influencers like friends so they tend to trust their recommendations. This is where you can leverage more than the influencers' images. Remember, you need them to drive awareness and consideration for your product, and ultimately drive people down the funnel to purchase so it's important that your influencer is articulate yet authentic.

### **Google them! Look for greater reach and influence.**

If a blogger or influencer is featured regularly in traditional media and/or other areas, this also helps to demonstrate their influence and authority and underscore that they are the real deal.

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## STEP 3: RESEARCH YOUR INFLUENCERS - CONTINUED

Search for some of the content a blogger has written to see where it ranks. If they're good, their content should appear on the first or second page of Google.

A few reputable travel blog ranking sites include:

[pretraveller.com](http://pretraveller.com)

[theexpeditioner.com/the-top-50-travel-blogs/](http://theexpeditioner.com/the-top-50-travel-blogs/)

[nomadicsamuel.com/top100travelblogs](http://nomadicsamuel.com/top100travelblogs)

### Engagement

Remember that an influencer's audience engagement is much more important than their number of followers. Someone with a highly engaged audience of 10,000 followers has much more cut through than someone with an audience of one million who doesn't engage or listen. It is vital to consider that engagement is relative to following. We will cover this in detail below.

Look at their audience. Sure, a big fan base can mean big exposure, but on average, how many people comment and like their individual posts? Comparing the actual engagement of an influencer's audience against their fan base is crucial to determine if their content actually resonates.

Unfortunately, in recent years some influencers have taken to purchasing followers (accounts that are not real), specifically on Instagram. Be savvy and look at their followers' accounts to check if they are real. Signs

that these accounts are not real include:

- No posts on their own feed or a very limited number of posts
- They will follow thousands of accounts and have no followers themselves
- No profile picture or bio
- Strange and cryptic usernames

### Engagement % on Instagram

There is no industry standard or benchmark on Instagram but the Moyne Shire Council works on a base engagement rate of 3%. If a follower has 10,000 fans, we would want to see a minimum of 300 likes per post plus comments. Similarly, if an influencer has 300,000 followers it's fair to expect 9,000 likes plus comments per post. To work out an influencer's engagement rate we suggest the following formula:

Engagement % = Number of likes per post/number of followers

For example:

@influencer has on average 6,000 likes per image and a total following of 170,000 fans.

$6,000/170,000 = .35\%$  engagement rate.

If you're still unsure, compare them with other like-minded accounts that have a similar sized fan base.

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## STEP 3: RESEARCH YOUR INFLUENCERS - CONTINUED

### Engagement % on Facebook

There is a sliding scale when determining engagement on Facebook. It can depend on many factors like how big a page is. The basic formula to determine the percentage of a page's engagement rate is as follows. You can use this to determine where the page's engagement fits within the bracket of how many followers it has.

Engagement % = Number of likes + comments (on a post) / number of page fans \* 100

The sliding scale of engagement

0-10k	0.96 %
10k – 20k	0.29 %
20k – 50k	0.21 %
50k – 100k	0.19 %
100k – 200k	0.16 %
200k – 500k	0.13 %
500k – 1 000,000	0.11 %
1,000,000 – ~	0.09 %

For example:

If a page has 50,000 fans, you should easily expect to see around 80+ likes/comments on most posts (some more, some less).

$$80 / 50,000 * 100 = 0.16\%$$

NOTE: engagement on certain posts can be heavily skewed by paid promotion which you won't be able to see.

### Engagement % on bloggers

For bloggers, engagement can be harder to gauge. The quality of comments is a great indication as to whether the engagement is authentic and genuine. Ask the blogger for their Google Analytics information (preferably screenshots) so you can look at how many readers are return visitors and how many are new.

If a good percentage are return visitors, it's fair to assume these people are loyal to the influencer and highly engaged. When we engage bloggers, we require screenshots of their unique monthly visits, unique page views, and how many sessions they receive a month. You should also pay special attention to the 'average time spent on site'.

This shows you whether people are staying long enough on the page to read their posts. Be wary when you take a blogger's word (without proof) as gospel. Ensure you are assertive, and pay due diligence to ensure you try and mitigate any potential risk to your return on investment.

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## STEP 3: RESEARCH YOUR INFLUENCERS - CONTINUED

### Ask bloggers how many email subscribers they have.

Email is probably the most important metric of all. Always ask bloggers for their email open rates, and click-through rates – it's the community a blogger 'owns' and if that number is high, they are more than likely a trusted source.

There is no point having a big email list if only 1% are opened. Also, ask how often they send emails and what type of content. Consider subscribing yourself to get an even deeper insight from a reader's perspective.

### Engagement % on Twitter

Engagement on Twitter can include likes, retweets, replies, @mentions, follows, profile clicks, URL link clicks and Tweet expansion clicks. If a Twitter profile has good engagement there are more chances the influencer is able to convert or influence their followers.

The average Twitter engagement rate for the top 25 brands (on Twitter) is 0.07%- 1.5%, so it can vary greatly. As the engagement can refer to invisible tracking (link clicks and Tweet expansion clicks) you'll need to be subjective and look at the influencer's Twitter account as a whole.

### Handing Hint: beware of fakers!

There are plenty of 'fake influencers' out there nowadays, so never accept statistics on face value. In the age of 'bot accounts' and sneaky 'pay-for-likes' tools, buying followers and engagement has become much more prevalent and a lot harder to detect. You'll definitely want to assess if their audience and engagement numbers are real.

One online tool that can help you assess if an influencer's audience is real or bought (fake) is <https://socialblade.com/> Just enter their username and select the platform (e.g. Instagram, Twitter, YouTube). This generates a handy summary of their recent statistics, or a more detailed analysis over time.

Check out their audience growth over the period – you'll want to see a gradual, consistent rise in fan base over time. If you see a sudden and substantial gain on one particular day – as shown in the numbers and line graph below – then sound the alarm bells! While not totally conclusive, it's a strong indication they have bought followers which is bad for you, as you want to reach real people! It could also mean they were featured on a large account that day and gained a new audience as a result, so implement the above-mentioned tools to understand the whole picture.

One of the best ways to determine if an influencer is buying 'fake engagement' is by looking at the quality of the likes and comments they receive. Look for a pattern across multiple posts. If one post has a substantially higher number of likes and comments than others, without any clear reason why, then there's a good chance it's been promoted.

If you're also seeing similar comments appearing on each post, especially one-word responses ('nice!', 'cool!'), or remarks from the same accounts each time (especially those with numbers in their name, e.g. @photoboy7563), it's time to look at a different influencer.

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## STEP 4: APPROACH INFLUENCERS

Ask for their media kit and/or previous case studies. If they're professional, the influencer should have a media kit with their statistics. You'll also want to ask who they've worked for, what their brief was, and what content they delivered, along with actual results of their campaigns.

There's nothing better than evidence and a case study is a common part of a media kit. Emailing influencers is more professional and will have a better chance of being opened and read.

## STEP 5: NEGOTIATE YOUR DELIVERABLES

As with any other marketing activity, all negotiated deliverables should link back to your overall objective for an influencer visit/campaign. You should set clear KPIs for their collaboration at the beginning of your discussions, especially the number of posts or blogs you want the influencer to actually publish, what @ accounts and #hashtags they should be tagging and how often.

### Example objectives and deliverables:

#### Objective: Increase awareness of your business

- Tag @yourbusiness in every post caption (Instagram/ Facebook/Twitter)
- Reference #yourbusinesshashtag in every caption, if you have one (Instagram/Twitter)
- Tag the geo-location of your business/experience/ attraction on each post (Instagram/Facebook)

- Write meaningful, descriptive captions and/or blogs of the experience – no vague one-liners! (All social platforms)
- Link your business name and website (Blogs)

#### Objective: Grow your social media following

- Tag your business in their bio (Instagram)
- Tag @yourbusiness in every post caption (Instagram/ Facebook/Twitter)
- Reference #yourbusinesshashtag in every caption, if you have one (Instagram/Twitter)

#### Objective: Drive leads to your website

- Include a trackable link to your website in blogs
- Include a trackable link to your website in social posts (Facebook/Twitter)
- Include a trackable link to your website in bio (Instagram)

#### Objective: Drive bookings

- Include a trackable link to your call-to-action page in blogs
- Include a trackable link to your call-to-action page (Facebook/Twitter)
- Include a trackable link to your call-to-action page in bio (Instagram)
- Provide influencer with unique 'booking codes' for people to quote when they click through to your call-to-action page and make a booking (e.g. 'to get this once-only special Instagram deal, quote SpecialInstagramDeal2017 when booking')

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## STEP 5: - CONTINUED

### Objective: Secure visual content for marketing

Number of high resolution images to be licensed and/or supplied with full copyright for your future marketing use (both online and print)

What format should they be supplied in? (JPEG, CMYK, TIFF etc.)

### Remember: Always follow the rules!

Before the trip, make sure both you and your influencer fully understand AANA's Clearly Distinguishable Advertising Guidelines, to ensure you're both comfortable with the disclosures you both need to make during your campaign. Use best practice approaches and if in doubt, just ask!

The best practice for influencer transparency is for the influencer to include a disclaimer on their blog to the effect of "My trip to Moyne Shire was hosted by the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism, but as always my thoughts and opinions are solely mine."

## STEP 6: REPORT BACK ON RESULTS

Once you've set all of your agreed objectives and deliverables for the campaign, you'll want to ensure you can track the campaign's success in achieving them. The first step to analysing your return on investment (ROI) from an influencer's visit is to set a mutually agreeable reporting due date – e.g. 1 month after the visit.

Key items you'll want to see in the campaign report will depend on your objectives, but can include:

### For social influencers:

**Reach** – How many people did the influencer's content reach?

**Engagement** – How many people liked, commented or shared the influencer's content?

**Video views** – How many times was video content viewed, and how long on average was it viewed for?

**Social shares** – How many re-grams or shares did the content receive from other social accounts? (Especially big ones) – where else was it distributed?

**Fanbase increase** – How many new followers/fans did you receive (from pre-post campaign)? Make sure you take note of your follower numbers prior to engaging the influencer to track your account growth.

Website referrals – How many people clicked through to your website from theirs?

### For bloggers:

**Website referrals** – How many people clicked directly through to your website from theirs? How many found their blog post via Google and then clicked through to you from there?

**Engagement** – How many people commented on the influencer's content?

**Email open rate** – For bloggers distributing their content by email.

**Number of page views and average time spent on site** – How many people read it, and how interested were they in the content?

**Screenshots** – a visual demonstration of key posts/highlights.