

The myth of influencers

By [Brendan Seery](#)

29 Aug 2019

OUTsurance gets an Orchid for its 'reality advertising' success, while using 'influencers' without any solid data to go on gets an influential Onion.

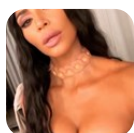


Tiffany Mitchell's post.

There are two words, or phrases, guaranteed to set my teeth on edge: "Lifestyle blogger" and "influencer". That's because, with very rare exceptions, such individuals – so eagerly courted by the advertising and marketing industries – are vacuous, ignorant and ineffective at pushing products.

And that's not even discussing how so many "influencers" have fraudulently increased their "following" by buying followers (which is easy and cheap).

Kim Kardashian, love her or hate her, is followed by millions of people and what she says can genuinely influence purchase decisions among her followers.



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Bronwyn Williams 14 Dec 2018



Most of the rest of the "influencers"? Not so much.

So I was interested to see the fuss on social media about an American "lifestyle blogger", one Tiffany Mitchell, after she claimed to have been involved in a "motorcycle accident".

“Miraculously, she was not only unhurt, she managed to generate no visible signs of injury and still managed to look

ravishingly beautiful for the professional photographer on the scene. ”



What got the attention of many was that, in one of the pictures, there were two bottles of designer water carefully lined up, labels facing the camera.

“ I didn't know this fuss, but I can understand that many people feel weird about these photos because these photos #TiffanyMitchell's friend snapped are organized and even aesthetic. The position of bottled water is perfect. #influencer <https://t.co/VUiTKwynhB>— Dice-K (@DiceK_koba_) August 20, 2019 ”

Was it a set-up? Many commentators thought so, pointing out the obviously staged nature of the scenes she posted. She denied it was a promo stunt for the water and the makers denied paying her.

Have a look at the pics yourself and decide.

“



[View this post on Instagram](#)

Did she stage it?? Once more, someone has been accused of faking it for the gram. Top American Lifestyle Influencer, Tiffany Mitchell is denying staging a photoshoot that went viral 2 weeks ago. She had posted images from an accident she herself was involved in. But some users believe the whole thing was staged, especially because the photos were incredibly 'glamorous', and there was a branded bottle of water on the side. Read full article using link in bio #trending #tiffanymitchell #tiffaymitchellaccident #tifforelie #denies #accident #motorbike #motorcycleaccident #fake #staged #photos #photography #streetphotography #promo #paid #untrue #critics

A post shared by [INFleur](#) (@infleurmagazine) on Aug 20, 2019 at 5:32am PDT

”

And then, if you are a marketer or advertiser and you are using “influencers” ask yourself: Why? Do you have any

reliable information to show they work? What's the return on investment? Are you doing it because you can win over the millennial market?



Give the people what they want: How influencer marketing is changing

Babalwa Nyembezi 29 Aug 2019



If you're using "influencers" without any solid data to go on, then you're wasting your, or your clients', money.

And that will get you an influential Onion every time.



Let's talk influence, not influencer marketing

Pieter Groenewald 28 May 2019



Word of mouth, they say, is highly effective when it comes to advertising. But what if that's not really practical? You do the next best thing: use real people, telling real stories.

OUTsurance is doing this very well at the moment.

“ I know many people are getting tired of the “drive and sell” TV ads – where happy OUTsurance clients, driving their own vehicles, talk about how much they save. For me, it works, because these are not actors and they are genuinely pleased with their decision to opt for OUTsurance. ”

I contrasted those ads with ones running at the moment for Prime Meridian Direct, which appear to be using ordinary people, but look stilted and scripted.

OUTsurance has turned “reality advertising” to its life insurance products and, again, it works.

The one I particularly liked features Nosipho and her family.



How South African insurers are missing the Facebook boat

Nick Paul 20 Oct 2016



While dad and the two kids look at books in a library, Nosipho explains why she wants to ensure they are financially looked after, if something should happen to her.

She says OUTsurance life is her solution and, while she talks, the premium and payout figure come up on the screen.

It's real and it hits to the heart and I reckon OUTsurance will have had plenty of calls from these type of ads, so they get an Orchid from me.

ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions* column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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