

5 questions to ask when selecting influencers to work with

 By [Dominique Harmse](#)

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The rise and rise of influencer marketing has seen an increase in new agencies and software platforms that assist brands in making decisions regarding which influencers to work with for maximum impact.



Image credit: Maddi Bazzocco on Unsplash

While this is encouraging for the industry, it means that marketers are faced with important decisions to make when selecting the most relevant influencers to collaborate with.

Here are five questions to ask regarding influencer selection:

Are they authentic? Does their online presence match their real-life presence?

Have you ever ordered something online and when it arrives, it looks nothing like what was advertised? Disappointing right? But that façade is what digital life thrives on. My approach is to never take an influencer at face value.

The authenticity of an influencer is the lens through which the rest of this article should be looked at. I believe that it is important for brands to put their trust (and money) behind an influencer who communicates their values in real life in the

same way that they do on their social platforms.



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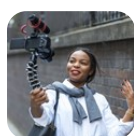
So, before you sign on the dotted line, meet your selected influencer in person or via Skype or Zoom. This 'face-time' is where you get to ask questions directly and be more assured that the collaboration will work.

Are their followers engaged with their content?

Are they engaging with their followers frequently through Q&As, polls, video stories, meet-and-greets or do they have a "look at me" approach? It is never just about the number of followers.

Being able to determine an influencer's engagement rate in relation to their following is hugely important. When I get asked the question, "What do you look at, followers or engagement?" My answer is always *engagement*.

I've found that the best results are achieved when selecting a combination of macro and micro-influencers who create relevant and authentic content – because they are the 'creative directors' of the content and, in turn, receive great engagement from their audiences (large or small).



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Does the influencer have a strong understanding of their target audience when asked? Is it clear from the kind of brands that they collaborate with?

Consistency is key. This is not to say that influencers should 'stay in their lane' by only working in specific genres such as 'only luxury' or 'only beauty'. It's more about the way in which they work with different brands and this should remain consistent.

“

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[I CAN SO I DID. Spotted this little girl at the Revlon Candid launch today. cute huh? 💎💎 @revlonsa #icansoidid #babyMihlali](#)

A post shared by [Mihlali Ndamase](#) (@mihlali_n) on Jul 4, 2019 at 7:32am PDT

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An influencer can work across various industries in order to diversify their brand and remain relevant, but their values should always remain the same. If not, the partnership does not come across as authentic and the audience will see right through it.

All content creators are influencers, but not all influencers are content creators

It is important to reflect on the purpose of the campaign and what you are paying for.

Some influencers bring brilliant photography, video or writing to the project and others are best at social sharing of brand content with their engaged communities.

This is an important distinction because the rates will be different. If someone is creating images or anything that has a production element that you can use on your brand's platforms, you should expect to pay hard costs as well as time fees. For an influencer who is going to be sharing info via their social platforms, they generally charge per post.

A good mix of content creators and social sharing influencers creates effective impact and authentic content.

Does the influencer's profile show signs of paid-for engagement and/or followers? Have you vetted their profile in detail?

When selecting influencers, it is vitally important to research all aspects of their social media profiles. There are a variety of websites such as [Socialblade](#) and [HypeAuditor](#) and service providers including [Webfluential](#) and [Humanz](#) that track community growth by picking up any anomalies in an influencer's reach and engagement.



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For example, massive dips or spikes in follower numbers in a short period of time can be a warning sign that something is amiss. Extremely low engagement could indicate that followers have been bought.

Look at the influencers' profiles in detail – are the comments on the posts short, generic sentences like 'awesome' or 'I like this' from a 'follower' that has one post or no followers themselves?

Influencers must be able to justify their social statistics and provide audience insights and demographics, such as age, gender and countries that followers are based on.



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Great results serve as proof that influencer marketing works – but if the great results are based on data that is tainted by fake numbers, they mean nothing in terms of authentic influencer marketing.

If your brand values the quality and authenticity of your product or service, you should always work with influencers that

share the same set of values. This will ensure that the content created truly resonates with an engaged community.

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