



HOW TO WORK WITH INFLUENCERS WITHOUT GETTING BURNED



Over the past decade, more brands have recognized the value and opportunity of working with influencers.

BY WENDY LEWIS

The principle behind influencer marketing is straightforward. When someone who is trusted by many people expresses a favorable opinion about a service or business, there is a reasonable chance that at least some of those people will take notice and become a customer.

In its infancy, influencer marketing was a relatively affordable way to get the word out about a product or business, especially when compared to the cost of celebrity endorsements, TV spots, or billboards. The explosion of Instagram took this marketing strategy to a whole new level, and it is now a big business that can be extremely profitable to influencers and content creators. Platforms like TikTok hire creators directly based on a minimum number of followers (10,000+) and number of views per video (100,000+ in the past 30 days).

Just as companies and brands have capitalized on the advantage of seeking out respected professionals who carry weight in their fields, you may take your practice to the next level via individuals who are willing to share with their followers their own experiences having a laser or a filler treatment.

LOOK FOR SOCIAL PROOF

People want to know that something is worth their investment of time and money. Thus, it's a form of confirmation when we see someone we trust and respect recommending something we may want to buy, try, or experience. The most effective influencers have built up credibility with their fans and followers by sharing honest and informative content and being transparent.

Minor celebrities, models, athletes, and experts in a particular field like fash-

ion, beauty, health, or fitness are among the most popular groups of influencers online. Reality stars may resonate with your preferred audience, but their credibility can be in question because they live in a pay-to-play genre.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT INFLUENCERS

Today's influencers can be real people who are active on the social channels that matter to your practice and have developed a loyal audience. With followers ranging from a minimum of tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands, they have influence over others. Fees for working with influencers with million-plus followers may be out of range for most practices.

"Micro-influencers" or "nano-influencers" can drive awareness of your practice, boost new patient consultations, and increase procedure and product sales. When the brand ambassadors you choose to work with create compelling content to blast out to their communities online and offline, their "in real life" experiences can really resonate with their followers and add a personal touch.

It is worthwhile to consider the best ways to develop valuable connections with influencers within the audience you want to reach. Start by seeking out potential influencers local to your practice and share your values and aesthetics, with a minimum following of 10,000-20,000. Check out their profile, followers, tone, imagery, style, and engagement (the number of comments, shares, and questions each post gets). An account that has many thousands of followers yet low

INFLUENCER TIERS

(Based on total audience size across all platforms)¹

VIP	5M+
Top	1M+
Macro	500K+
Mid	50K+
Micro	10K+
Nano	1K+

engagement may be a sign that they are fake or have been bought. Take notice of any posts that are relevant to your category, such as a plug for a skincare brand, toxin injections, or a video of a spa experience.

ENGAGE WITH INFLUENCERS

Influencers can be very effective as defacto salespeople because consumers tend to trust those they follow on social media. We self-identify more with our friends and peers and those we admire or want to emulate. For many practices, influencers of choice may include a loyal patient who is killing it on Instagram or TikTok, the owner of a popular salon, spa, or gym that refers clients, an in-demand makeup artist, or minor celebrity in the community. The “nano influencers” who are most attainable may just be normal people who are switched on about aesthetic treatments and live within a 60-mile radius. In some local markets, a single post or IG Live from a popular model, musician, stylist or makeup artist can put an aesthetic practice on the map.

CHOOSE AND MANAGE INFLUENCERS

Figuring out which platforms and which influencer tier will deliver the best engagements rates can become an all-consuming task. Do some research to identify a short list of social media darlings who may be a good fit for your budget and goals based on the range of tiers. In general, for a solo practice or a small group, Nano, Micro, and Mid-tier influencers will be inline depending

on your location. Nano influencers may be effective in locations with a smaller radius and population, whereas in New York, LA, or Dallas, Mid-tier influencers may be the best place to start. Regrettably, some of this will be based on trial and error.

According to newly released report from Tracckr,¹ in the US, nano influencers had the highest average engagement rate on Instagram and TikTok. TikTok earned the highest average engagement rate for skincare and hair care. Instagram tends to be best for fragrance and makeup.

Initiate contact by engaging with the influencer in their platform of choice. Respond to their posts to start a dialogue or send a DM. The next step up is to work with an agency or management company. This will save time but will also significantly add to your costs as agents will charge 15-20 percent for services.

Determine the content theme and form you want to get from the relationship. Without a doubt, the best content you can get from influencers is live video because it can be repurposed for most social channels, including your website and blog.

Request a detailed proposal of the itemized options they can offer and specific pricing for each individually or for a package. For example, the number of Instagram posts in feed, and/or reels and stories (including number of frames) and/or IG Live, or number and length of videos for TikTok. You may keep these organic or provide a budget for boosts and promotions. Whitelisting is a term you may come across. It basically refers to influencers or creators granting permission to use their handles, content, and audience targeting for promotions.

LEGALITIES OF INFLUENCER RELATIONSHIPS

When working with influencers, both parties need to establish rules in writing at the outset and adhere to them. A contract should itemize exactly what is expected from the influencer

and when (e.g., two Instagram posts, one Instagram story, two tweets, one YouTube video, and a blog post on a specific day to stay up for a specific time frame). This will require the usual consent forms and adherence to local regulations and patient privacy.

The influencer is responsible to disclose any monetary, product/treatment compensation, or both, as in free lip filler and a non-invasive fat-reducing treatment. Social media audiences appreciate authenticity; being honest up-front will make them more likely to believe the influencer’s content. This is typically done in the form of adding hashtags to posts to delineate the relationship, such as #sponsored, #ad, or #partnership. You may also see verbiage like, “I partnered with Dr. Jones to experience the benefits of a new laser for my sunspots...”

Establish a uniform policy and insist that anyone you work with is compliant. If you are not sure about the legalese, consult with an attorney. Disclosure should be clear and consistent throughout these partnerships. If your relationship goes sideways, think long and hard before you make it adversarial. Sending angry texts or taking legal action may not be wise when working with an influencer with 50,000 followers in your nearest zip codes.

Although influencer marketing is less direct than traditional forms of marketing and advertising, it has proven to be very effective as an authentic way of connecting with consumers who may ultimately become your loyal patients. Keep an influencer strategy in your marketing plan for 2022. ■

1. <https://www.tracckr.com/resources/2022-influencer-engagement-rate-benchmark>

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