



## Influencer marketing as a modern form of advertising

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**Abstract:** Today we live in a time of rapid change and modern technology. Smartphones, computers, and internet access have become part of our everyday lives, influencing the way companies advertise and sell their products. With the development of the internet and social media, new forms of advertising have emerged. One of them is influencer marketing. This means that companies collaborate with people who have many followers online and present their products or services through them. An influencer shows a product in their own way - based on personal experience - which feels more authentic and convincing, so people tend to trust them more. In recent years, influencer marketing has grown significantly, as it allows companies to connect with their target audience in a modern and more genuine way. This article presents how influencer marketing works, what its advantages and disadvantages are, and why this form of advertising has become so popular in the digital world.

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## Vplivnostni marketing kot sodobna oblika oglaševanja

**Povzetek:** Danes živimo v času hitrih sprememb in sodobne tehnologije. Pametni telefoni, računalniki in dostop do interneta so postali del našega vsakdana in vplivajo tudi na to, kako podjetja oglašujejo in prodajajo svoje izdelke. Z razvojem interneta in družbenih omrežij so nastali novi načini oglaševanja. Eden izmed njih je oglaševanje s pomočjo vplivnežev. To pomeni, da podjetja sodelujejo z osebami, ki imajo veliko sledilcev na spletu in prek njih predstavljajo svoje izdelke ali storitve. Tak vplivnež izdelek pokaže na svoj način - iz svojih izkušenj, kar deluje bolj osebno in prepričljivo, zato mu ljudje pogosteje zaupajo. Vplivnostni marketing se je v zadnjih letih močno razvil, saj podjetjem omogoča, da se na sodoben in bolj pristen način povežejo s svojo ciljno skupino. V članku predstavljamo, kako deluje oglaševanje prek vplivnežev, kakšne so njegove prednosti in slabosti ter zakaj je ta oblika oglaševanja postala tako priljubljena v digitalnem okolju.

**Ključne besede:** vplivneži, digitalno oglaševanje, družbena omrežja, potrošniki, zaupanje

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The world around us is changing rapidly. Today, many activities take place digitally – from education and work to shopping and communication. The digital world allows us quick access to information and countless opportunities. Because of this, companies are increasingly turning to online advertising, as it enables them to reach more people than traditional forms of advertising such as posters, magazines, or television commercials.

Digital advertising means that companies present their products and services online – for example, on social media, websites, or in online videos. According to Bailey (2020), successful advertising is the one that manages to connect traditional and digital approaches, as both influence consumers in their own way.

In addition to traditional online promotion, a growing number of companies are discovering the power of influencer marketing as a new way to reach audiences.

In recent years, influencer marketing has received special attention. It involves collaboration between companies and influencers – individuals who have a large following on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook. Since their followers trust them, influencers can strongly affect opinions and purchasing decisions with just one post. Companies therefore look for influencers with whom they can build long-term partnerships, as these promote them in a trustworthy and authentic way. The greatest interest in this form of advertising comes from younger generations, who use social media every day.

The purpose of this article is to present how influencer marketing works, why it is so successful, and what changes it brings to the modern digital world.

## 2 INFLUENCER MARKETING

### 2.1 Definition and development of influencer marketing

According to Agostino, Arnaboldi, and Calissano (2019), influencers are individuals who, through their posts and online content, influence the opinions and behavior of other people. On social media, they share engaging content such as videos, photos, or written posts that attract the attention of their followers. People often trust them and see them as role models, which is why they follow their advice and recommendations (Belanche, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2020).

Influencer marketing therefore refers to collaboration between a company and an influencer. The influencer promotes the company's product or service on their social media platforms, such as Instagram or YouTube (Mathew, 2018). Although influencer marketing is not a completely new phenomenon, it has experienced significant growth in recent years with the development of digital media.

This growing popularity shows that influencer marketing has become one of the most effective strategies for building connections between brands and consumers.

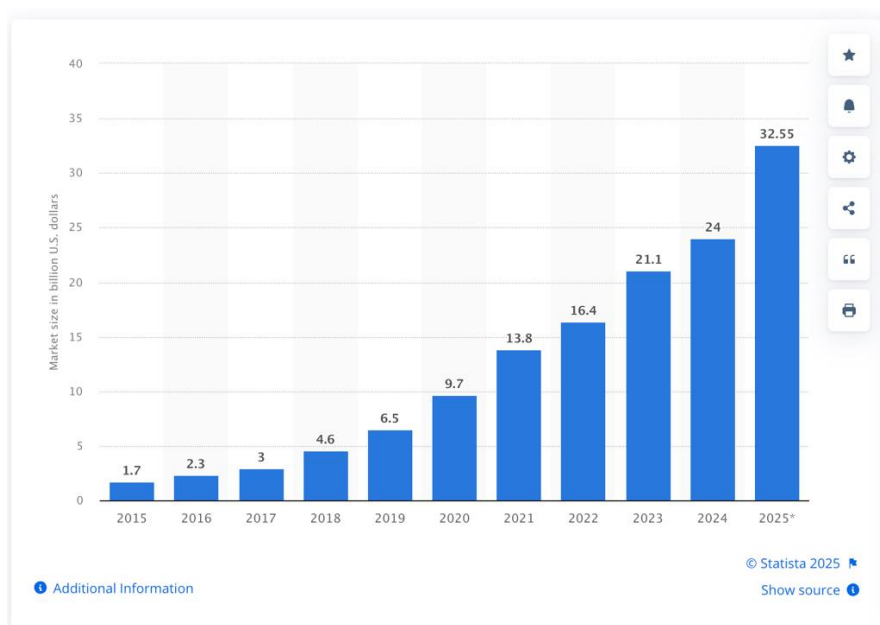
This form of advertising allows companies to quickly capture the attention of their target audience – the people who might be interested in their product or service. One of its main advantages is the fast response from followers – companies can almost immediately see whether a post is successful (for example, by the number of likes, comments, and shares) and adjust their strategy if needed. Another important feature of influencer marketing is that it does not feel intrusive. People follow influencers because they are genuinely

interested in their content and trust them. Therefore, posts in which an influencer presents a product appear natural and convincing (Barker, 2021).

Trust is one of the most important conditions for successful influencer marketing. Influencers build it through authentic and honest communication and by creating content that is meaningful to their followers (Horvat, 2017). Since influencers present products as part of their everyday lives, their advertising appears more natural. In the eyes of their followers, influencers hold significant social influence and a high level of credibility (Glucksman, 2017). Because of this, companies can more easily reach potential customers through them and present their products or services in a relatable way.

Figure 1 shows that the value of the global influencer marketing market has increased significantly in recent years. In 2015, it amounted to only 1.7 billion US dollars, but by 2025 it is expected to grow to more than 32 billion dollars. This demonstrates the growing interest of companies in collaborating with influencers.

Figure 1: The size of the global influencer marketing market from 2015 to 2025 (in billions of US dollars)



Source: Statista (2025)

In recent years, influencer marketing has been growing rapidly. An increasing number of companies are choosing to collaborate with influencers, as it has proven to be a faster and more effective way to reach their customers. Thus, influencer marketing is becoming an increasingly important method of connecting companies with their audiences.

After examining how influencer marketing works, it is useful to look at its main advantages and disadvantages.

## 2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of influencer marketing

Influencer marketing has numerous advantages that make companies use it more and more frequently (Barker, 2022b; Kitak & Vukasović, 2023):

- *Helps reach the right audience:* if a company chooses the right influencer, it can quickly reach people who are genuinely interested in its product. It is important for

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the company to consider who its target audience is, what kind of content attracts them, and on which social media platforms they are most active.

- *Builds trust and credibility*: this is one of the main advantages of influencer marketing. People trust influencers because they follow them daily and identify with them. When an influencer recommends something, followers often believe it to be a sincere opinion.
- *Increases brand awareness*: when an influencer posts content about a particular product, it can reach hundreds of thousands or even millions of people. In this way, the company's or brand's name quickly spreads among a wider audience.
- *A cost-effective form of advertising*: this is especially true for micro-influencers, who have fewer followers and therefore lower collaboration costs. They often agree to promote products in exchange for free items or services.
- *Faster purchasing decisions*: since followers trust influencers, they often buy the products recommended by them more quickly than those they see in other types of ads.
- *Saves time for companies*: influencers create their own content, photos, and videos, so companies don't need to invest additional time and money in producing advertisements. Their content is often more engaging and authentic than traditional corporate ads.
- Despite its many advantages, influencer marketing also has some drawbacks (Barker, 2022b; Kitak & Vukasović, 2023):
- *An unsuitable influencer can harm the company*: if a company chooses an influencer who behaves irresponsibly or has a poor public image, this can negatively affect the brand.
- *Influencer mistakes can be costly*: since influencer marketing is still a relatively new form of advertising, companies sometimes make mistakes and learn from experience. If an influencer misrepresents a product, the company may suffer losses.
- *It is difficult to measure success accurately*: people might see a post today but make a purchase only several months later. Therefore, it is challenging for companies to calculate how much sales a specific post has generated.
- *Success is not guaranteed*: even if an influencer has a large number of followers, it does not necessarily mean that the advertisement will achieve the expected results. Success depends on audience interest and the quality of the content the influencer creates.

To better understand this field, it is also important to explore the different types of influencers that exist.

### 2.3 Types of influencers

Campbell and Farrell (2020) distinguish five main types of influencers based on their recognition and number of followers:

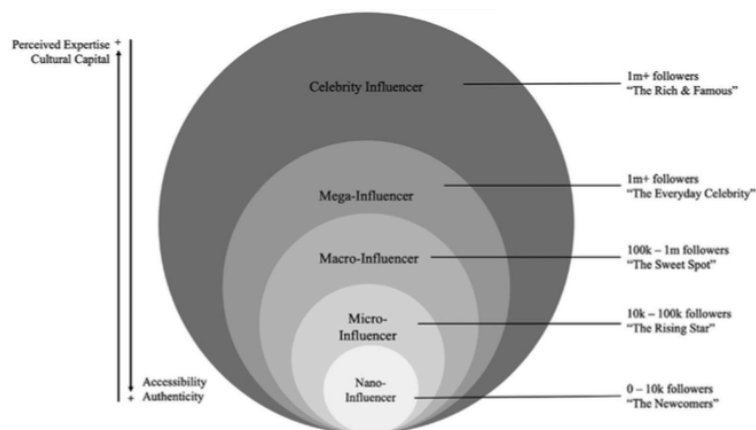
- *Celebrity influencers*: These include musicians, actors, athletes, and other well-known public figures who are recognized beyond social media. They have a huge following – often more than a million – and companies collaborate with them because they can reach a very broad audience. Their posts are usually related to their work in the entertainment industry.
- *Mega influencers*: These are individuals who have become famous mainly through the internet. They have a large following (hundreds of thousands or even millions), but the general public may not know them personally. They often pay close attention to which brands they collaborate with, as they want to maintain their credibility.
- *Macro influencers*: These influencers are not yet celebrities, but they already have strong influence and a substantial following – between 100,000 and 1 million. Their posts generate high engagement (many comments and likes), making them a good

investment for companies. They are more affordable than celebrities yet still very effective in promoting brands.

- **Micro influencers:** These influencers have between 10,000 and 100,000 followers. Their communities are smaller but highly engaged and loyal. Micro influencers often collaborate with various brands, and their content tends to be personal and authentic. Because of this, people trust them more, helping companies better reach potential customers.
- **Nano influencers:** These are newcomers to the influencer world. They have fewer than 10,000 followers, mostly consisting of friends and acquaintances. Despite their small audience, they are reliable and genuine, which makes them appealing partners for companies. They often promote products in exchange for free samples or opportunities to gain more exposure.

Figure 2: Types of social media influencers

Types of social media influencers



Source: Campbell and Farrell (2020)

Once companies understand the types of influencers, they can more easily decide which ones best suit their goals and values. The following section focuses on how companies choose the right influencer for collaboration.

## 2.4 Criteria for selecting suitable influencers

Choosing the right influencer is very important, as it can greatly affect the success of an advertising campaign. If a company collaborates with a person who has the right audience and shares similar values, the partnership is more likely to be successful (Ho, 2021).

When choosing an influencer, companies consider several criteria:

- **Audience match:** it is important that the influencer's followers are genuinely interested in the product or service. For example, if an influencer posts content related to sports, they would be suitable for promoting sports equipment, but not necessarily cosmetics.
- **Engagement rate:** companies check how many likes, comments, and shares the influencer receives. A high level of engagement indicates that followers are active and loyal.
- **Relevance:** the company selects an influencer who has a genuine interest in their product. Only then will their posts appear natural and convincing.

- *Authenticity*: the most successful influencers are those who are honest and maintain a trusting relationship with their followers. People believe them because they share personal experiences, advice, or ideas that are truly helpful.
- *Values*: before starting a collaboration, a company must ensure that the influencer's values align with those of the brand. For example, a company promoting a healthy lifestyle would not work with an influencer who advertises unhealthy products.
- *Content quality*: an influencer should post high-quality, clear, and creative content, as sponsored posts also represent the company's image.
- *Posting consistency*: to maintain followers' interest and trust, influencers should post regularly – at least a few times per week.
- *Reliability*: an influencer must be responsible, respect agreements, and complete tasks on time. Only then can the collaboration run smoothly and successfully.
- *Follower quality*: companies check whether the influencer's followers are real people and not fake accounts, as this affects credibility and the overall success of the advertising campaign.

When a company chooses the right influencer, they also agree on the form of collaboration. According to Barker (2022), there are several effective types of partnerships between companies and influencers:

- *Sponsored social media posts*: the most common form, where the influencer presents a product on their profile.
- *Free product samples*: the company sends a product to the influencer, who tests it and shares their opinion in a post.
- *Sponsored blogs*: the company is featured on the influencer's blog, where readers look for trustworthy information.
- *Guest posts*: the company writes an article or post that the influencer publishes on their page, allowing the company to reach a new audience.
- *Account takeovers*: the influencer temporarily posts content on the company's social media profile.
- *Brand ambassador partnerships*: the influencer becomes the "face" of the company and collaborates with it over a longer period. They regularly use its products, participate in events, and share discount codes or giveaways.

These forms of collaboration allow companies to leverage the reach and influence of influencers and effectively promote their products and services.

Overall, these insights highlight the growing role of influencer marketing in shaping modern advertising. The next section provides a summary of its impact and importance.

### 3 CONCLUSION

In today's world, where advertising plays a major role, influencers have become a key factor in shaping purchasing decisions. Through their posts, recommendations, and opinions, they strongly influence what people buy, how they perceive brands, and which trends they follow. Their influence is particularly evident in the fashion, cosmetics, and technology industries, where influencers are often the first to introduce new products. According to Sudha and Sheena (2017), the accessibility of information and the transparency of the internet have a strong impact on consumer decisions. Before making a purchase, people increasingly check the opinions of others—especially influencers they trust. Thus, influencer marketing functions not only as a form of advertising but also as a way of building a relationship between the company and the customer.

Influencer marketing has now become an essential part of digital advertising. It enables companies to reach their target audience in a more authentic and personal way than

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traditional ads. When a company collaborates with an influencer who shares similar values and genuinely believes in the product, the brand's credibility and consumer trust increase. Effective cooperation between companies and influencers can bring many benefits: greater brand awareness, faster consumer decision-making, and improved sales results. With their experience and influence, influencers help companies build trust and strengthen their connection with consumers.

The world of influencer marketing is evolving rapidly and is becoming an increasingly important part of modern communication. In the future, successful companies will be those that know how to harness the power of influencers while maintaining honesty, respect, and responsibility toward their consumers. Influencer marketing not only affects our purchasing decisions but also shapes how people think, share experiences, and connect online. However, it is important that influencers and companies advertise in a fair and transparent manner to preserve the trust of their followers.

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