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# India Influencer Marketing Report

The New Era of Intelligent Influence



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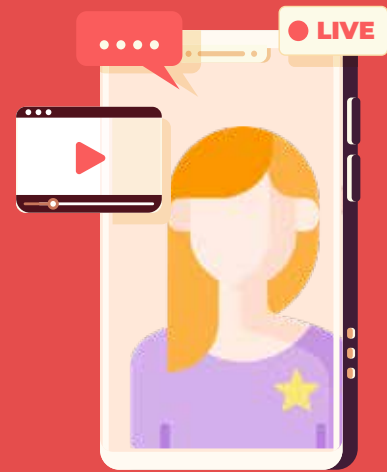


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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The INCA Influencer Marketing Report 2021 seeks to provide brands and marketing leaders with a bird's eye view of the industry landscape in India while occasionally swooping in to observe key topography features. The report is peppered with direct insights from marketing leaders of India's most popular and well-known brands. We encapsulate market dynamics, look at the effect of the pandemic, new ASCI guidelines, and what the future holds.



**The Influencer Marketing industry is poised to grow at a CAGR of 25% for the next decade, reaching a size of INR 2200 crores in 2025.** This projection considers only the talent and production costs (media deployment budgets excluded). **A unanimous 100% of marketing leaders surveyed ranked influencer campaigns as a top priority for 2021 and beyond. Every other leader indicated a budget growth of more than 25% this year.**



Trust, credibility and relatable stories are big reasons why influencers dominate the segment compared to traditional celebrities with millions of followers. The customization of content and creativity in storytelling make the brand value proposition stronger for consumers coming from an influencer. **In a country with more than 400 million active social media users, most of whom follow at least one influencer, this is a massive brand opportunity.** While the past 18 months have been tough for creators and brands alike, the segment has emerged wiser and better prepared.





The report discusses trends that are here to stay, with the rise of nano and micro-influencers a notable development as brands try to capture niche online communities. A key takeaway would be that brands do not have to deal with a one size fits all approach and can bring a lot of segmentation and choice into their influencer campaigns.



The report looks at new content formats resulting from the deeper collaboration with brands and the drive to differentiate campaigns. It also covers the new ASCI guidelines for influencer marketing in India and examines the impact on brands due to the guidelines.



As complexity layers in planning and executing influencer campaigns increase, technology, data analytics and intelligence are emerging as the go-to tools for marketers to derive better ROI. Influencer measurement metrics are a raging debate, and brands are increasingly aligning them with sales objectives. No surprise then that influencer marketing is fast climbing the priority charts in the marketers' strategy books.





# STATE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN INDIA

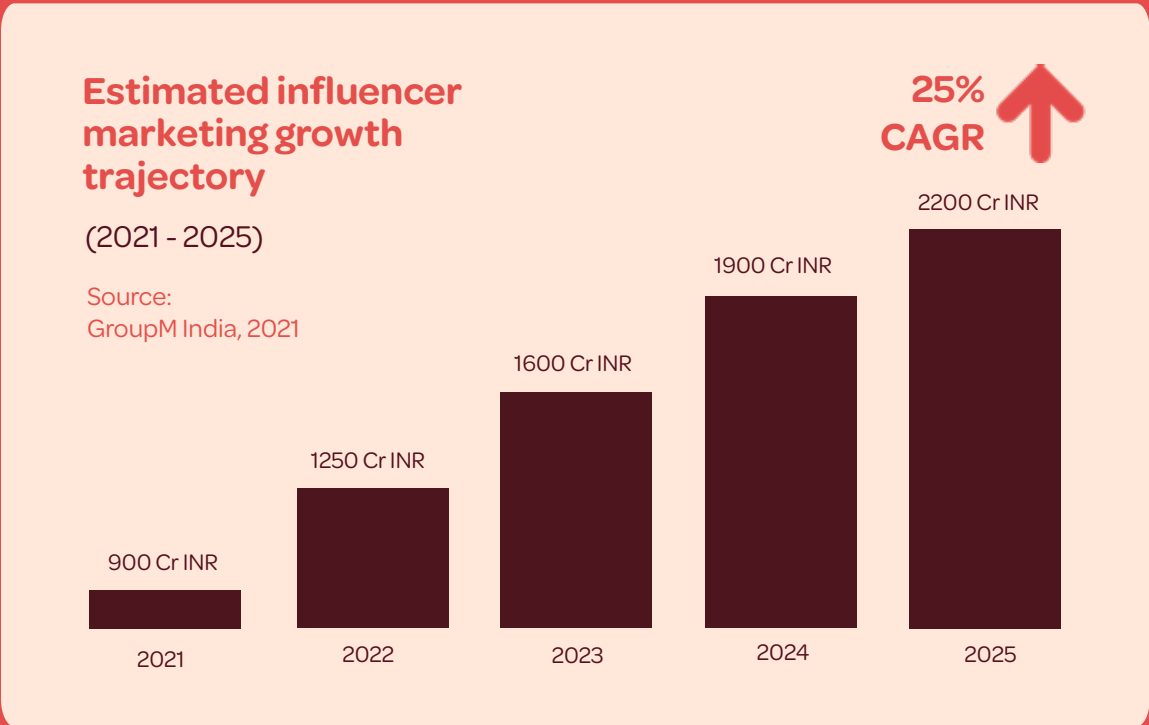
This section will look at the influencer landscape in India. One evident legacy is the impact that influencers are having on brands and consumers. Despite all the uncertainties caused by the pandemic, influencer marketing is still a prevalent and effective form of marketing which has become an integral part of the marketing mix.

We have become more connected than ever. Due to the pandemic, technology at the heart of the disruption has become an essential part of Indians lives. With more time-consuming content, we are witnessing an opportunity to gather data. Today, we understand harder to reach consumers, such as those from rural areas, which aids our understanding of their behaviours. This will help ensure influencer marketing will be a vital part of the marketing mix.

# INDUSTRY LANDSCAPE

The influencer marketing industry has undergone a severe transformation in a short time. Its inherent nature means that estimates of the potential revenue can vary depending on who you ask.

**The industry is currently valued at 900 Cr INR growing at a CAGR of 25% till 2025.**

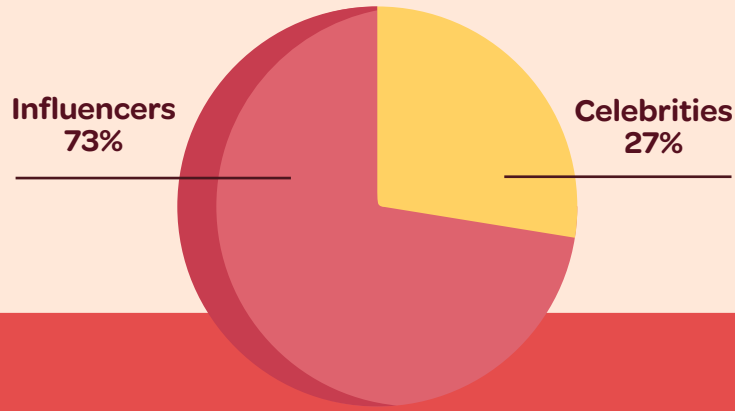


Furthermore, these statistics cover talent and production costs only. By factoring media deployment costs, the share of the digital pie further increases.



## Influencer marketing campaigns

Celebrities vs Influencers



Source: GroupM India, 2021



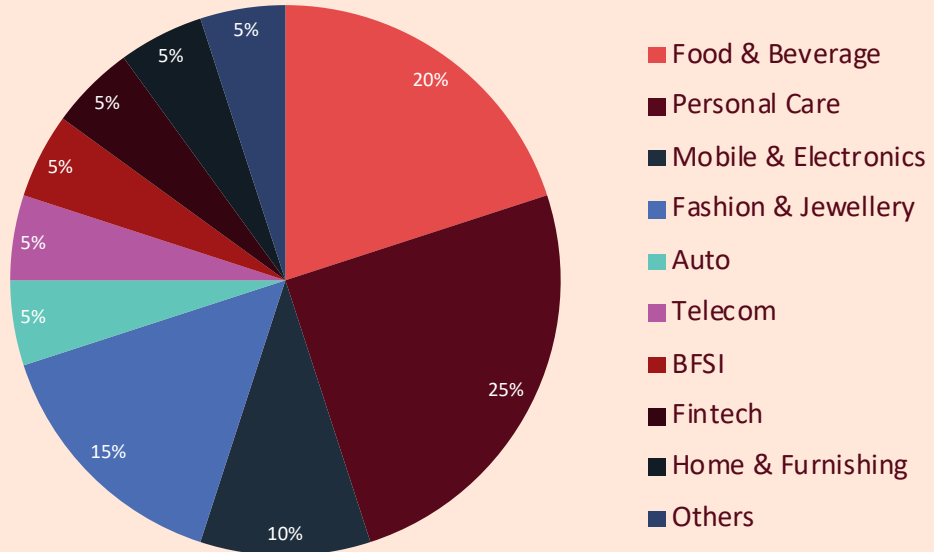
### Insight

Social media has given normal people an opportunity to build their own brand, create communities via content. Standard influencers have more authenticity and are more relatable than traditional celebrities.

Specialist and niche influencers command a high degree of authority on the topic and bring in more credibility in comparison to mass celebrities.

## Categories heavy on influencer marketing

Source: GroupM India, 2021



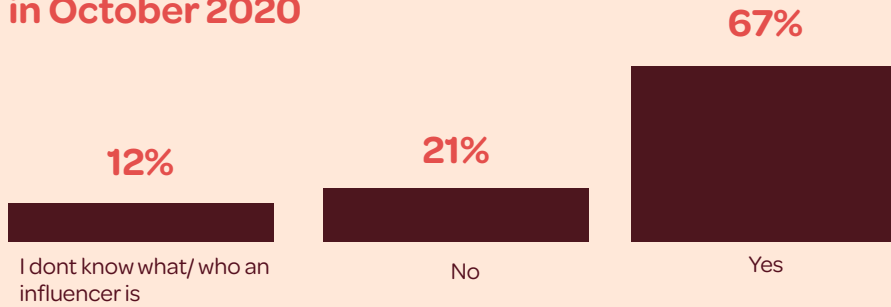
Note for editors: While defining the industry size for influencer marketing, we have considered only the talent and production cost and not the media deployment cost for the same; neither does it account for any celebrity brand endorsement deal.





The pandemic upended the digital landscape of the country. In a country of about 1.3 billion people, a third (more than 400 million) already had access to social media before the pandemic.

### Share of people that follow at least one social media influencer in india in October 2020



Share of respondents



Source:  
Rakuten Insight  
© Statista 2021

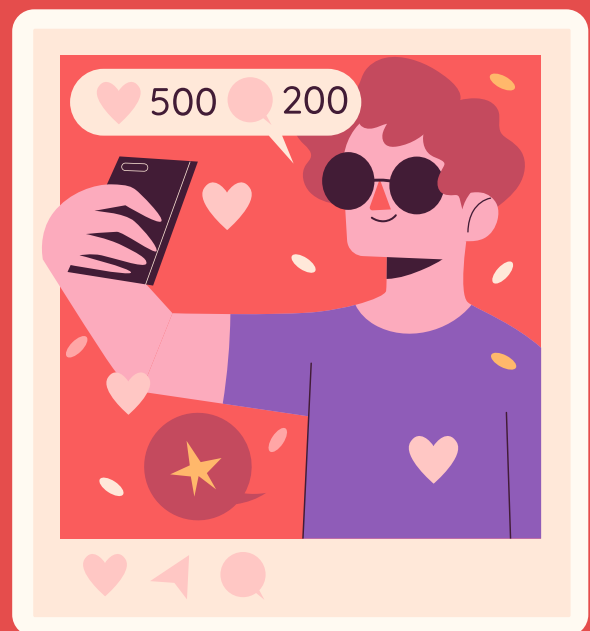


This number has undoubtedly skyrocketed in the last 18 months. But it is not just about the numbers. There is a significant shift in consumer behaviour that is the real fuel for the growth of the segment. Like the seemingly unlimited bespoke content that creators are churning out for brands, the growth potential for influencer marketing looks limitless.



### Nearly two third of the Indian population follow an influencer.

And according to the latest figures in the **Global Web Index (GWI)** the average Indian spends **2.29 hours per day on social media in 2020**. The evidence on how influencer marketing can captivate consumers is clear and its authority is just emerging.





# STATE OF DIGITAL IN INDIA



In the last two decades, digital advertising growth has accelerated and has become ubiquitous. It's been gaining share in the marketing pie by transforming its presence at the back of advertising technology platforms such as search, commerce, social, and programmatic. Marketing technology platforms (Analytics, CRM, CMS) have also contributed to this growth journey by enabling brands to understand consumer behaviour and their journey on and off the internet.

The unique advantage of digital is its Duality; in other words, it acts as an independent medium and becomes a measurement tool for other traditional mediums. **This dual nature has provided a staggering yet sustained 30% growth YoY in India.**

Due to lower data costs and affordable devices (like Smartphones, CTV), increased digital consumption has led to an explosion of digital supply in the Indian market. As a result, global and local walled gardens have grown by gathering insights on users, their behaviour and thereby controlling outcomes.

**Programmatic advertising has seen sustained growth because of its ability to unlock data and media across digital and commerce platforms, focusing on efficiencies. Content has natively evolved into social & audio platforms to nudge and influence users to remember brands subtly.**

Influencer and content marketing has gained a significant scale in the last 48 months.

**This sub-sector has witnessed over \$1B+ investments to build apps and other infrastructure to create and engage more audiences.**

Google and Facebook are building measurement solutions to quantify the impact of influencers and thus better aid collaboration between brands and content creators. While some alternative platforms and technologies are creating solutions to identify, curate influencers and content, streamline processes, including pricing and payments for influencers. The influencer market is maturing in India and will gain share from overall digital advertising from brands.



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# THE BUSINESS OF INFLUENCE

This section looks at the growth in influencer investment in India. This year, we saw brands seeking to solidify their online presence during the pandemic, and this trend will continue to grow in importance post the pandemic.

The Influencer space is set to grow exponentially in India. This means that brands are dedicating separate budgets to this workstream. With more significant investment from brands seeking to capitalise on influencers with strong communities, we will start seeing the industry reach a type of maturity that has not existed before.



# THE SWAY OF THE INFLUENCER

The sway of 'everyday' influencers has finally got the attention of the marketing fraternity. Spurred by the pandemic, today's influencer arena is a crowded one. Influencer marketing has thrived in a year when established disciplines of marketing were shaken up. The result is a wave of content creators from the smallest cities and towns of the country.



**Nawal Ahuja**  
Co-Founder,  
exchange4media

Two years ago, a YouTube subscriber list of 1 million plus was considered to be the bare minimum qualification, today there are thousands of influencers with that kind of following. The number of meaningful / sizeable influencers has estimatedly grown 2-3x in the last 16 months.

While categories have grown, so have super specialties. These influencers may not be able to overwhelm one with 20 million followers but their five million strong loyalists on social media can get the brand the high quality traction it seeks. Today, niche influencers with 50k to 100k followers are also raking in the moolah for being their authentic selves, and connecting with the people who look up to them for guidance.

While influencers play a passive role in creating traction that could eventual lead to a purchase, social commerce with the role of influencers is not a trick many marketers or platforms have aced yet. But this integration is certainly waiting in the wings, as the next big thing to watch out for in the space.

Influencer marketing is hard to gauge with regards to the actual conversions and is often kept out of the board rooms because of its inability to score well on ROI, as measurement in this field becomes difficult. But brands who have an eye on brand building and creating brand love, certainly get rewarded profusely.

It is vital for a brand to understand the nature of the followers and whether they are the right fit for them. With meaningful influencers having grown significantly, there are plenty to choose from.



# GROWTH IN INFLUENCER INVESTMENTS

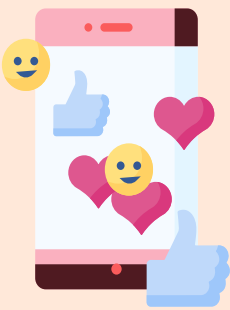
The growth curve of influencer marketing budgets can be linked closely to a few critical parameters.



**84%  
Brand  
Marketers**

**Leaning positively towards launching one influencer campaign this year**

**Brands that have already deployed an influencer campaign**



**81%  
are  
satisfied  
with the  
ROI**

Source: eMarketer

**In the INCA Influencer Marketing Survey,**



**100%  
Marketing  
Leaders**

**Agreed that influencer marketing was a high or top priority for their marketing calendar for 2021**

All respondents in the decision-makers category agreed that the influencer campaigns had a maximum impact in the 'consideration' stage of the sales funnel. Brands can probably interpret that influencers and creative storytelling correlate with brand differentiation, a key advantage as attention spans get shorter.

**More importantly, the INCA survey showed that decision-makers unanimously forecast strong growth in influencer marketing budgets, with at least**

**50% of respondents indicating a budget hike of 25-36%.**

As budgets increase, so will the demand for influencer-brand fit and higher transparency in the creation process. The survey data points to multiple brand benefits enabled by influencer marketing - the virality of content and increased engagement - being the most selected choices.

**Reach and stickiness have always been high priority metrics for most marketing leaders**, and influencer marketing has a demonstrable impact on both.

With brands increasing their dependence on influencer campaigns to meet marketing objectives, the experimentation with content creativity and channel usage will also go up. Higher budgets allow brands to refine their choice of influencers and seek niche audiences with creative narratives and co-creation.



**75%**  
**Marketing Leaders**

**indicated that influencer campaigns had a positive impact on the consideration and purchase stage of the sales funnel.**

Marketing leaders armed with incisive measurement tools and processes would be well-positioned to increase the influencer marketing priorities and budgets based on tangible ROI. The evolution of campaign management platforms is a vital step in that direction.



**Sreerupa Banerjee**  
Brand Head and EVP  
Marketing,  
Vodafone Idea

Influencers are powerful today because they connect with their audiences at a real, human and personal level. It's precisely why so many people follow them in the first place. Choosing the right influencer thus becomes very important.

At Vi, we choose to collaborate with influencers who believe in our brand and bring something fresh to it.

The true passion an influencer displays while conveying what the brand has to offer becomes the key differentiator. This generates positive share of voice, which in turn builds brand love and neutralises any negative sentiments that may happen on service brands like ours on social media.



3

# INFLUENCER MARKETING MAKES BIG GAINS



This section focuses on the benefits of influencer marketing that have proven to be successful in recent times. Influencer marketing offers many advantages that can help businesses in India stabilise and grow. As younger audiences reach their peak, spending investing in influencer marketing will drive unparalleled growth for brands.



**Vinay Subramanyam**  
VP, Marketing,  
Britannia Industries  
Limited

Influencers are brands in themselves and when they promote a product, it needs to resonate with who they are and be 100% authentic. When that happens, it works like magic. **This is a key reason why typical engagements on an influencer post promoting a product are 4x that of a brand post.** When a campaign's key metrics are engagement and consideration, influencer marketing is particularly effective as a channel strategy. We have seen many campaigns off late which use influencer marketing as the primary channel and have leveraged each influencer's authenticity to credibly land the brand message and create engagement.

# 10 REASONS WHY INFLUENCER MARKETING IS EFFECTIVE



Consumers proactively follow influencers; hence they are more receptive to content.



Influencers create engaging, quality content for use on multi-channel delivering cost-saving.



Drive greater attention, recall, and engagement.



Influencers' creative production time is often faster than a traditional creative agency, a handy skill in fast-changing times and quickly adjusting to news.



The ability for brands to target niche audiences by partnering with specialised influencers.



Well-crafted campaigns can benefit exponentially from virality factors inherent to social media.



Brands can work with influencers to deliver bespoke strategies and execution to address entire marketing funnel objectives.



Influencers are versatile to customise content to fit specific marketing objectives ensuring balanced brand growth.



Social media is the primary channel for brand and product research among Gen Zs, encouraging new brand discovery and triggering purchases based on recommendations.



Long-term partnerships with the right influencers allow brands to build multi-layered narratives across time and SKUs.

# FERRERO



3  
Influencers

8  
Pieces of  
Content

## Bringing Joy with Ferrero

**Objective:** To leverage positive word of mouth and brand salience during Rakshabandhan, by communicating the significance of the festival and linking the product to it.

**How INCA & Ferrero worked together:** Ferrero works with mom influencers to position Kinder Joy as the sweet of choice to be exchanged between siblings on Rakshabandhan. Given the nature of the festival, mom influencers with 2 children (or cousins) are chosen to create videos where they explain (to the children) the significance of the festival and showcase product usage.

206k  
Reach



140k  
Views



4.2k  
Engagements

1.99%  
Engagement Rate

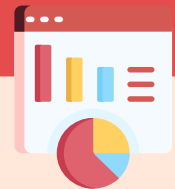




# The biggest gains lies currently in eCommerce

Globally, we are seeing that the online share of total retail sales is now 16.4%. eCommerce makes up more than three-quarters of overall retail growth. The pandemic has fueled eCommerce due to our dependence on digital. Retail is growing globally and today, part of the approach to customer acquisition is influencer marketing. (Absolut, 2020)

This is where the authority of data can support the need for influencers in eCommerce. People follow people who have the same interests, who they relate with and who have the same taste in products as them.



When making a purchase

**Only 1%**

**Millennials**

Trust advertisement

**33%**

**Millennials**

Trust blog reviews



Source: Eilte Study

**89%**

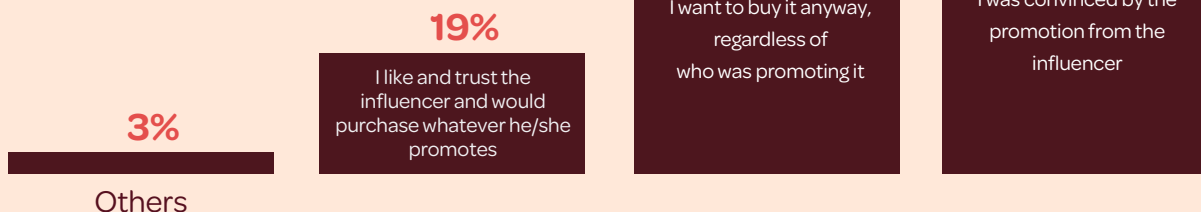
**Marketers**

said the ROI from influencer marketing was better or comparable to other channels.

Source: Mediakix Survey

**In India 60% of consumers can directly correlate purchase behaviour to influencer campaigns.** Trust and credibility are important drivers of customer acquisition.

**Reasons for purchasing products that were endorsed by an influencer in India in October 2020**



Source: Rakuten Insight © Statista 2021

# Determining the right fit



Advertising money follows where the eyeballs are. And data indicates that the eyeballs are definitely following the influencers in social media.

Despite advertisers recognising the power of influencers, advertising spends are still not reaching its full potential when it comes to influencer marketing. Advertisers do recognise the power of influencer marketing.

This is mainly because the influencer marketing experience can be an un-welcomed, tedious, uncharted and risky proposition. Also, brand safety, fraud and problems of ROAS measurement are always looming.

The first step for brands is to choose the right influencer marketing partner.

## Top 5 things to look out for in a potential influencer marketing partner:



### **Creative Problem Solving**

The ability to understand and resonate with brand requirements and come up with creative solutions that don't compromise credibility and authenticity.



### **Use of Data and Technology**

The use of right technology to ensure hygiene in some of the **downstream metrics** such as genuity, demographics of follower base, reach and engagement estimations as well as **upstream metrics** like influencer understanding and matching. AI deployment to understand influencers beyond the bio and tags is crucial.



### **Project Management**

The capability to connect with the right influencers and activating campaigns with defined workflows using automation will ensure efficiency gains.



### **Connected**

The ability to connect influencer activation to the larger marketing strategy drives an always-on influencer marketing approach.



### **Innovation**

Being disruptive of unique influencer-led solutions in areas of social commerce, live streaming, CSR and community management.



4

# CHANGES IN INFLUENCER MARKETING



This section is a summary of guidelines for influencer marketing in digital media. As influencer marketing gains popularity, it has become essential to understand the way consumers absorb them. There has become a need to place healthy guidelines for influencers to protect the public with increased activity. As the industry grows, so does our understanding of how to manage it.

It has also become necessary to keep updating the definition of specific terms related to advertising regulations and guidelines. Full disclosure is essential in the success of brands hoping to achieve maximum content creation and transparency.

# DO YOU KNOW THE RULES?

As digital media becomes increasingly pervasive and more consumers start to consume advertising on various digital platforms, it has become essential to understand the nuances of these ads and the way consumers view them.

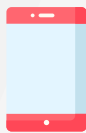
Hence the need to usher in a more transparent advertising ecosystem. The latest draft guidelines by ASCI help consumers understand social media better by ensuring that they know which content an influencer posts are ads.



**Digital Media** is defined as a means of communication that can be transmitted over the internet or digital networks and includes communication received, stored, transmitted, edited or processed by a digital media platform.



Internet



Mobile



Digital delivery home entertainment (DDHE)



Video on Demand



Digital terrestrial television (DTT)

Non-standard Television (NSTV)

# Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) Guidelines



## 1—Due Diligence

The influencers are advised to review and satisfy themselves that the advertiser is in a position to substantiate the claims made in the advertisement.

## 2—Disclosure

All advertisements published by social media influencers\* or their representatives, no such influencers' accounts must carry a disclosure label that clearly identifies it as an advertisement.

### A. Disclosure is required:

- If there is any material connection\*\* between advertiser and influencer
- Even when the evaluations are unbiased or fully originated by influencer

### B. Disclosure label must be upfront and prominent:



- **Picture/video post without text**  
Superimposed over the picture/video

- **<15 sec videos**  
Stay for minimum of 3 sec of video



- **15 sec - 2 min videos**  
Stay for minimum 1/3 of length of video

- **>2min videos**  
Stay throughout video



- **Live stream**  
Announced at the beginning and end of broadcast; added to text/caption if the post continues to be visible after the live stream is over



- **Audio**  
Announced at the beginning and end of broadcast; and before and after every break in between

### C. Disclosure must be well understood by an average consumer:



- Permitted labels:  
Advertisement/ Ad/ Sponsored/ Collaboration/  
Partnership/ Employee/ Free gift



- Language: English or language used in advertisement

### D. Virtual influencers must additionally disclose to consumers that they are not interacting with a real human being.

### E. Responsibility



- Advertiser**  
Ensure that the advertisement is in line with ASCI code and its guidelines



- Influencer**  
Make disclosures required under the guidelines





# INCA's take on the ASCI guidelines

The newly introduced guidelines are a welcome initiative towards bringing some self-regulation for an otherwise unorganised industry.

While more prominent brands have always adhered to the 'paid partnership' disclosure, publishing these guidelines will ensure adherence by more organisations.

The effort is in the right direction, but full-scale adoption might take longer. A case in point is some of the high-profile violations of these guidelines in the recent past by celebrities such as Virat Kohli, Jacqueline Fernandez, Akshay Kumar and Kartik Aryan – leading to online backlash and harsh trolling. The influencers immediately edited the posts to call out the 'paid partnership' status. The challenge is more significant for small creators who may not clearly understand the exact guidelines.



**Creators today come from all walks of life, SEC brackets, urban and rural territories. It is safe to assume that many of them are unaware of the ASCI or these guidelines – let alone the repercussions of not obeying these rules.**

Currently, the onus lies on brands, talent agencies, and influencer marketing companies to ensure adherence to these guidelines. To warrant full-scale adoption of these, the ASCI must develop a mechanism via which they can directly and regularly reach out to educate content creators across the board, clearly enunciating action areas, how, why, and the ramifications of not doing so are.



While this is a great start, we should keep reviewing these guidelines - not just for effectiveness but also test them for their simplicity and sustainability.



# What is the impact on brands?

Regulatory guidance from the ASCI is a natural outcome of the transformation of the influencer marketing industry. As mentioned before, the onus of adherence lies on all stakeholders - brands, creators, and the consumer.

**But brands should not see the guidelines as stifling content creativity.**

Brands will have to invest more time towards educating themselves on more delicate nuances of the policies. At the same time, brand teams will have to ensure strict compliance measures to avoid conflict.

Transparent disclosures are a hallmark of the new guidelines, which enforces the need for more creative storytelling and to ensure a better cultural fit between the influencer personality and the brand image. Influencer marketing platforms can play a critical intervention role on guidelines and help their adoption in the industry.

Influencer campaigns already run a higher risk of direct negative feedback. **The guidelines are a safety net for brands to lessen the chances of a backlash and a false representation of the brand message.**



**Shagun Sharma**  
Head of Marketing,  
Nature's Essence

The new ASCI guidelines have identified Influencer Marketing as a powerful and impactful marketing tool which needs to be regulated the way ATL has been. In traditional media channels there is an iron curtain between editorial and paid advertising and there is no reason why these basic marketplace principles should not be extended to new media.

**The bottom line is, 'The consumer has the right to know'.**

And brands need to stay true, honest and transparent to their consumers to enable them to make fair and informed choices. Most research shows that consumers tend to believe recommendations from peers or experts more than paid ads from product manufacturers. They think of influencers as a trusted source with 'informal expertise' acquired by being a user themselves. So there is a fair expectation of their content being unbiased, authentic and not commercially motivated. Since there was no differentiation between editorial and advertorial content on the internet, this was downright misleading the consumer. The consumer has the right to view advertising as 'advertising'. She should be able to make an informed decision about the authenticity of an influencer's claim. Hence, it is important to differentiate instances when the product recommendations are being put up because they are paid for. Even the most 'unbiased' review or endorsement needs to be declared as such if they have been initiated by a brand – paid or otherwise.

The new media landscape is evolving fast and regulators need to keep up with its dynamic nature, keeping consumers at the forefront. These new guidelines are a step in the right direction.



5

# NAVIGATING THE ROAD AHEAD



India has seen extensive use of influencers and KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) in decision-making and influencer marketing. However, the last 18 months have sparked a significant transformation in India's influencer marketing culture. Brand's currently need to look for new, enhanced methods of communication through influencers and KOLs that portray more mindful and sympathetic tones in such trying times.





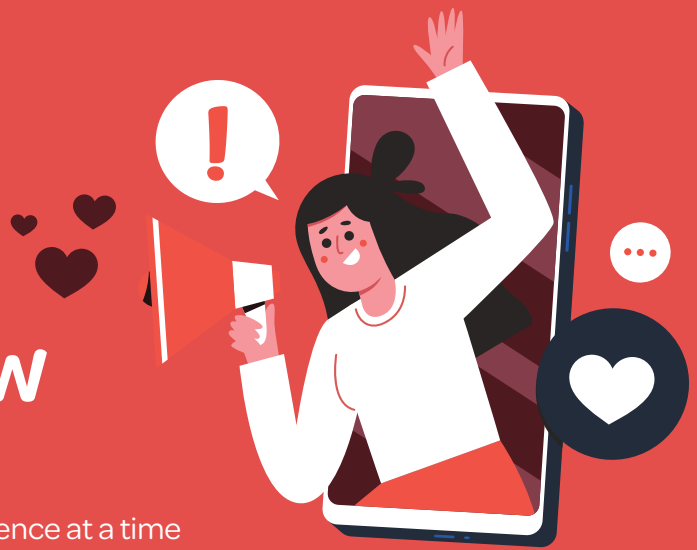
# NAVIGATING THE ROAD AHEAD

## **Backdrop:**

Covid-19 has struck yet another major hit in India this year and it has become the most important news topic of the year. Marketers are struggling to face changing behaviours and unprecedented challenges, while content creators are being reprimanded for creating inappropriate content.

The truth is - your customers are still there, but their priorities and expectations are now a little different. In these uncertain times, there is definitely a need for clarity on appropriate and effective brand communication.

# HOW SHOULD YOUR BRAND COMMUNICATE NOW



Communicate with your audience at a time and place convenient to them, through individuals that they trust.



Create credible content with the help of domain experts and disseminate the same via trustworthy and persuasive Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs).



Be mindful of your tone. Keep in mind the following guidelines while designing communication at this time.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD SPEAK ABOUT

### Content Topics



Vaccinations



Breathing Easy



Food



Motivation



Childcare



# WHAT WE'RE RECOMMENDING



## Be Sensitive

Be serious but not sombre or mournful – the intent is to communicate a crucial message, without adding to the negativity

Avoid being overly optimistic or happy – your audience is in a different frame of mind and this will appear insensitive

Remember that this is both a medical and mental-health crisis



## Show Empathy & Concern

Use this opportunity to let the human side of the brand come to the forefront

Avoid hard-selling or overtly branding content – keep it mindfully subtle, let the brand register on a subconscious level

Be a part of the larger battle – fighting it with your audience



## Keep it Simple & Relatable

Avoid embellished corporate language – explain complicated matters in simple language

Disseminate content via KOLs that the audience relate to

Do not preach - let your audience learn from others' experiences





## Ensure Credibility

In the age where fake messages dominate – the audience readily embraces verified facts presented by experts

Need of the hour is to propagate only facts, via personal experiences and expert opinions



## Have an Action- Oriented Approach

Focus on the solution, not the problem

Inform and empower your audience

Spread hope



## Take Action

This is the opportunity for your brand to gain mindshare and meaningful engagement with customers

Thoughtful communication can substantially improve brand imagery in consumers' mind

While several others adopt the “wait & watch” policy, be the one to Take Action



6

# TRENDS THAT ARE HERE TO STAY



This section looks at some of the most recent trends that will shape influencer marketing in the next decade. The rise of digitalisation, technology and eCommerce has given birth to the popularity of influencer-driven marketing techniques that are here to stay for the long haul. Planning campaigns will involve the right kind of data, and the quality and nature of influencers will primarily affect these decisions.

# 5 TRENDS THAT WILL SHAPE INFLUENCER MARKETING THIS DECADE



In the current context, where predicting the next quarter is complex, imagining the upcoming decade can feel like a fool's errand. Here are five trends that could define the influencer marketing industry this decade.



## 1 — The rise and rise of Direct-to-Consumer brands

The rising mobile and internet penetration, rapid growth of e-commerce platforms, ever-improving direct to consumer logistic infrastructure, proliferation of MSMEs with unique product lines, and finally, the pandemic have led to the sudden rise and growth of D2C brands.

As per Avendus Capital, India already has more than 600 D2C brands. Almost all these brands have worked with influencers to drive awareness, consideration and even purchase. Influencer marketing will be at the core of most D2C brand marketing strategies, which will give rise to some exciting collaborations between influencers and these brands. Influencers will even go on to inspire signature SKUs and brand extensions themselves.



## 2 — Measurement and accountability will make influencer marketing mainstream

The bane of influencer marketing - the lack of accountability will cease being a problem. Both marketers/platforms and influencers themselves will start migrating to accountable metrics like Cost Per Engagement, Cost Per Sales and Return on Ad Spend (ROAS). This shift is essential for influencer marketing to grow sustainably with D2C brands.

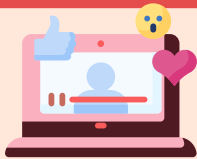


3

### **Influencer commerce will become integral to a brand's sales channel mix**

This has been the case in China, Korea, and Southeast Asia. India, too, is witnessing the birth and growth of influencer-driven commerce. Specialist platforms like Trelle and eCommerce platforms like Myntra and the social platform funnel - Facebook, Instagram, MX Taka Tak already enjoy a significant early mover advantage.

Most have stayed in the space of demand generation and order taking, while some, like Myntra, covers the entire funnel. This space will continue to evolve with new business models emerging.



4

### **The influencer universe will expand both in depth and width**

As platforms build capability to publish content in multiple Indian languages, the number of creators and the geographies from which we see content creators will expand.

With the rise of local Short Video Platforms like MX Taka Tak, Josh, Roposo, Moj, and vernacular social and content platforms like Sharechat and Daily Hunt, the industry is observing an explosive mix of talent and reach. As the audience and influencer ecosystem expands, it will also lead to a host of regional and local brands exploring and working with such influencers.



5

### **Influencers vs their audiences**

Campaign planning will become sophisticated and data-driven with evolved planning tools. As has been the case with INCA, campaign platforms will unearth precious insights that will aid campaign design and influencer selection.

For example, INCA enables insights such as working with Nano-influencers drives 10X engagement compared to Macro-influencers or celebrities. Also, Macro-influencers provide 15X more views than Micro-influencers.

Finally, we will see audience modelling making its way into influencer marketing as well. Depending on the marketing objective, the nature, type, and categories of influencers will get defined.



7

# PAVING THE WAY FORWARD



This section looks at the challenges marketers face while implementing influencer marketing plans and how brand safety and authenticity are essential in closing the gaps.

Influencer marketing is an open channel with the benefits of innovation within the creator economy, selecting the right channel and content is as important as measuring the ROI. India has seen a staggering amount of fraudulent influencers, but AI-driven solutions are helping to bring the numbers down.



# CHALLENGES THAT MARKETERS FACE WHILE IMPLEMENTING INFLUENCER MARKETING PLANS

The INCA Influencer Marketing Survey has good insight into the challenges marketers face during the implementation of influencer campaigns.



## 1 — Keeping up with the trends

Influencer marketing is fluid and open to a lot of innovation. As the landscape shifts rapidly, marketers could have a real challenge keeping pace. The consumer is always on the lookout for the next big idea. These could range from short format content, data-driven narratives, or new channels like the rise of audio.



## 2 — Understanding the right content to channel fit

A sufficient majority of brand marketers indicated that they do not prefer to use the same creator across multiple channels. Brands are deviating towards micro-influencers, who have a firm grip on a niche audience. The choice of medium then becomes critical to leverage that relationship of the influencer audience.



## 3 — Choosing the right creator and process

As the creator universe multiplies, more personas become available to brands every day. Growing choices increase the complexity in step one - choosing the right influencer. Platform providers can help ease the variables and uncertainty in brands while choosing personality and expected campaign outcomes.



## 4 — Measuring campaign ROI

Not surprisingly, with the customisation of campaigns, it is bound to make standardisation in measurement difficult. Digital analytics will ease brand marketer concerns with lack of actual data and measure beyond the quantitative. Influencer platforms need to equip marketers with end-to-end metrics that can measure ROI with more confidence.

### CHALLENGES

## BRAND SAFETY AND AUTHENTICITY

A series of high-profile controversies, scams, and legal troubles warrant a closer introspection on influencer campaign best practices. INCA also estimates that fraudulent activities consume about 15% of all influencer ad spend.



The second pandemic wave brought about a sharp decline in the number of brand campaigns as the consumer sentiment shifted significantly. Brands were accused of being tone-deaf, and creators also got caught in the crossfire of social media wrath. There is an equally high number of examples when creators waded into activism or lend their voices to a cause that stirs up controversy for an associated brand.

In an influencer marketing-focused blog, the faculty of IIM Udaipur raise a valid concern around the 'trust gap.' The more campaigns push the limit on creativity, the more audiences question how much they can trust the influencer for an authentic brand experience. As creator gratification goes higher, the audience is bound to feel a mismatch of trust towards the message.

In an ever-increasing binary discourse on social media channels, collaborating with creators who take a stand on public issues could also expose the brand to criticism. It means brands are culpable to bear the brunt of creator backlash from polarised digital opinion.

# THE EVOLUTION OF INFLUENCER FRAUD

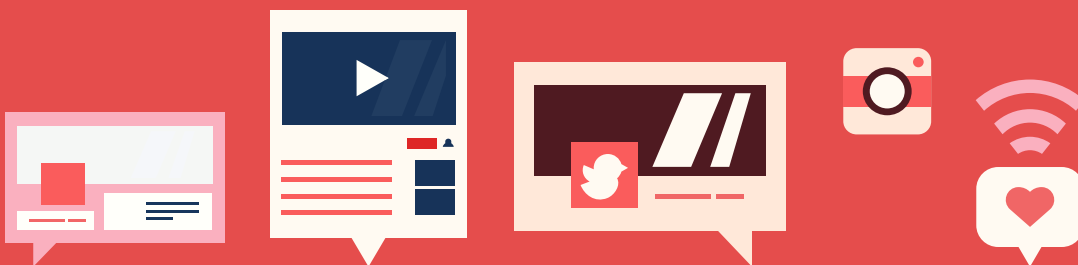


No longer is influencer fraud just categorized as securing a following of automated fake profiles, otherwise known as bots, or real people exercising false identities. Today, application programming interface (API) manipulation allows bots to choreograph social engagement in more nuanced ways.

For example, three types of bots exist on Twitter - scheduled, watcher and amplification. While the former posts on its own profile to maintain a facade of authenticity, the latter two actively respond to influencer activity with seemingly organic tweets and retweets. There are also so-called 'engagement pods' where clusters of real influencers band together to regularly interact with each other's posts.

In the face of these increasingly complex gambits, brands must effectively vet influencers. Some tell-tale signs of fraud include unexplainable spikes or dips in follower count, irregular like-tofollower ratios and sudden drops in engagement rates.

AI-driven solutions are helping advertisers verify the authenticity, credibility, and suitability of influencers for brands and address influencer fraud. INCA's proprietary platform INCAtch uses data to inform every decision along the way, including assessing an influencer's profile, content, authentic followers, engagement, competitors, audience sentiment, and audience demographics. These technologies have automated key indicators of influence to enable brands to feel more confident in their partnerships.



# How INCA helps guarantee brand safety

With marketers flagging influencer identification as their greatest difficulty, innovative AI-driven influencer marketing solutions, such as GroupM's INCA, have developed specialized technology and tools as part of their proprietary platform INCAtech to help guarantee brand safety.



## InScore

INCA's proprietary ranking score that rates creators and content pieces on a scale from 1-100. This is based on a proprietary algorithm that converges 60+ data fields that relate to an influencer's profile, content, audience and performance.

## Genuity Score

Indicates the proportion of real versus fake followers on an influencer's Instagram profile. The metric functions at an accuracy of 88% and is informed by Machine Learning to identify common features from bots across different providers.

## Engagement or View Graphs

Abnormal spikes or dips can easily be identified by reviewing an influencer's engagement and views trends on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook by hour, day, week and month.



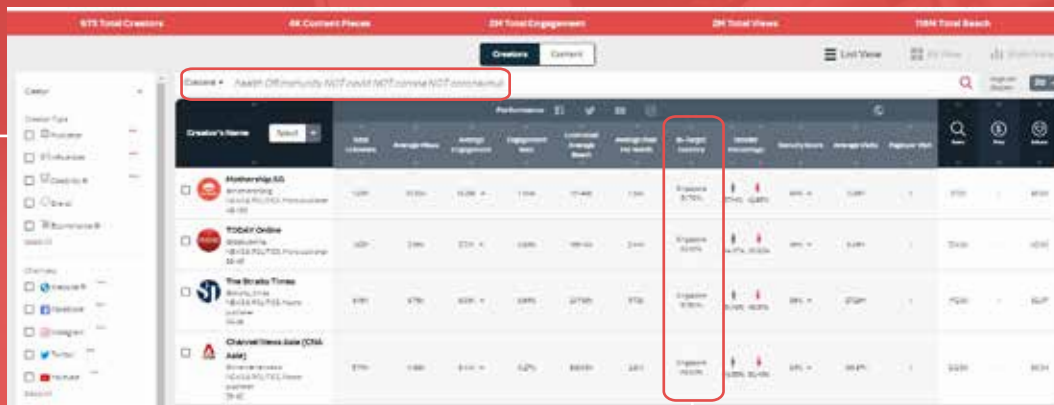
## Competitors Analysis

Up to three-years worth of historical data can be analyzed across multiple social channels to give brand's in-depth insights into their competitors' influencer content strategies. This can help brands avoid overlapping influencer partnerships.



## Negative Keywords

Using customizable search queries, any influencers who have posted or engaged with controversial topics in the past will be omitted from INCAtech's creator selection.



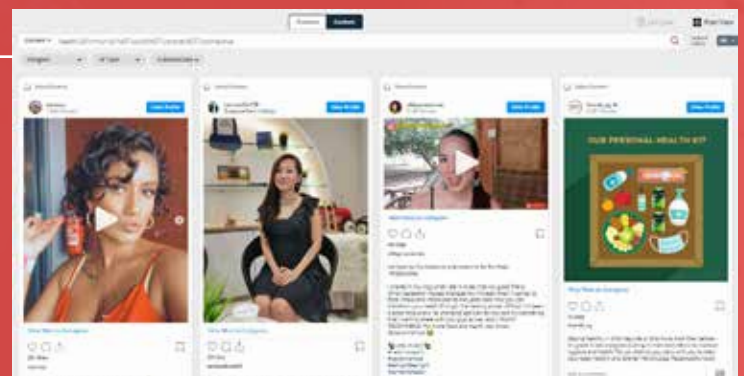
Creator's Name	Total Creators	Average Views	Average Engagement	Engagement Rate	Estimated Average Reach	Average Likes	In-Target Audience	Gender Percentage	Age Group	Security Score	Engagement Rate	Response Rate
Relationship 33	100	100k	10%	1%	100k	10k	85%	70%	18-24	95%	10%	5%
FOOD Online	100	20k	2%	0.5%	20k	2k	80%	60%	25-34	90%	5%	3%
The Straits Times	100	50k	5%	0.8%	50k	5k	90%	80%	35-44	98%	8%	4%
Charwell News (SM, AM)	100	100k	10%	1.2%	100k	10k	95%	85%	45-54	99%	12%	6%

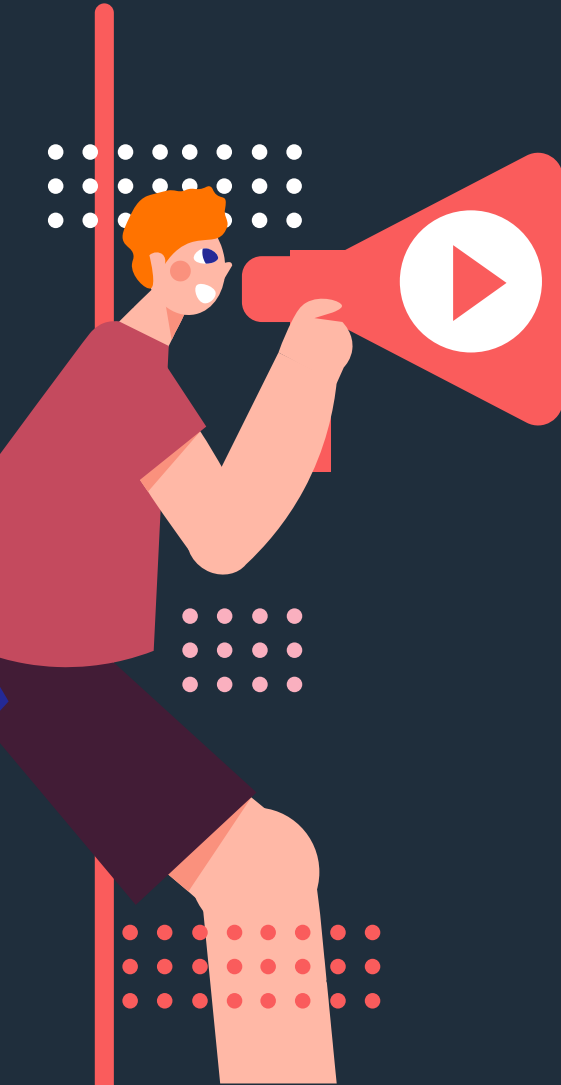
## % In-Target Audience

With special geographic, gender and age filters, INCAtech can determine the proportion of an influencer's following that fits with a brand's target demographic.

## Verified Filter

INCAtech can identify and filter for verified 'blue tick' profiles from Instagram and YouTube. This gives brands the added ability to work with only platform-verified creators.





8

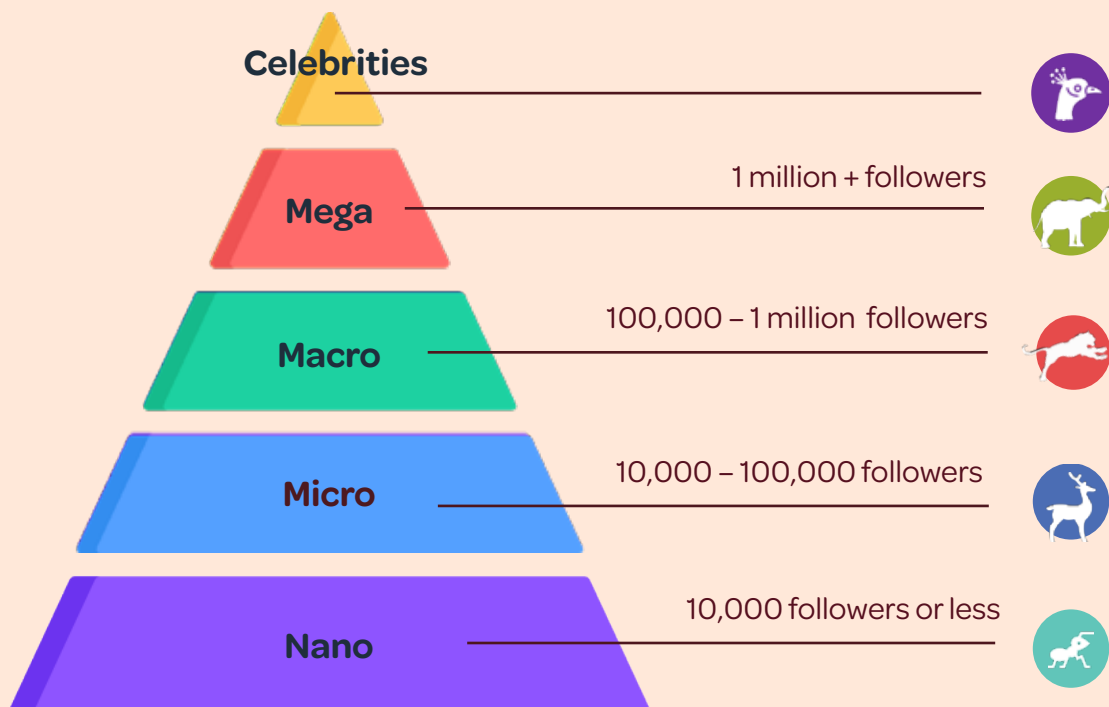
# THE ART OF INFLUENCE



This section looks at the different types of influencers in India and recommends how brands should work with them.

Depending on the objections, the right influencer can be critical to the success of a campaign. In India, we are witnessing the rise of the nano and micro-influencers for brands, as they have the power to truly connect with their audiences, vouching for brands and services in an unusual way.

# DEFINING CREATOR TYPES



## Nano



Everyday people who are incredibly relatable and largely focused on one topic. They have the lowest following but the highest engagement.

## Macro



These are highly sought by brands to drive awareness and visibility. Whilst well known, their engagement will be lower to nano and micro-influencers.

## Micro



Similar to nano, however they have a larger following and will provide a great engagement rate. They are deemed affordable, authentic and will provide credible recommendations.

## Mega



Highest-ranking category of social media influencers. Mega influencers are not necessarily celebrities but have online personalities that have developed significantly in the last few years.

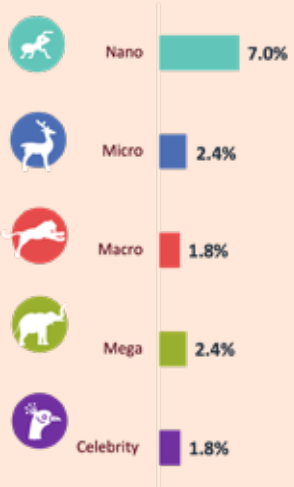
## Celebrities



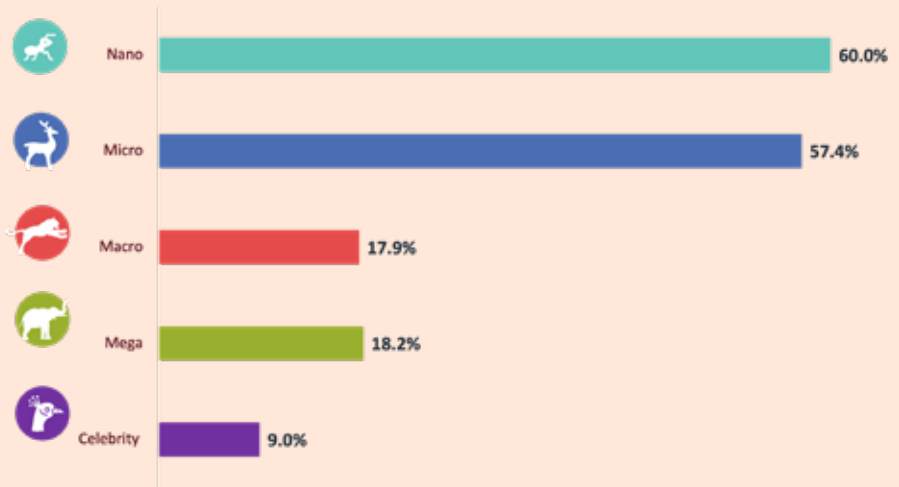
Famous and well-known people who are from the field of entertainment and sports and would also include other famous and prominent personalities like doctors, authors, activists, educationists, etc.

# Performance across creators

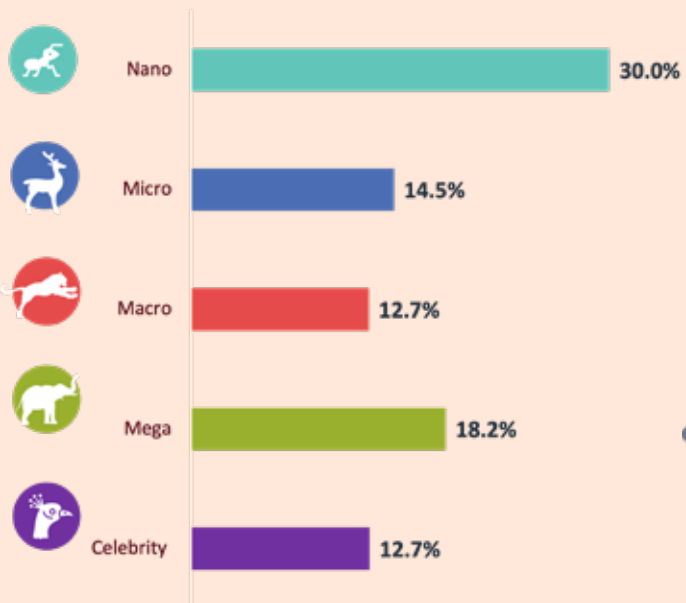
## Ave. Engagement Rate



## Ave. Video View Rate



## Ave. Estimated Reach Rate

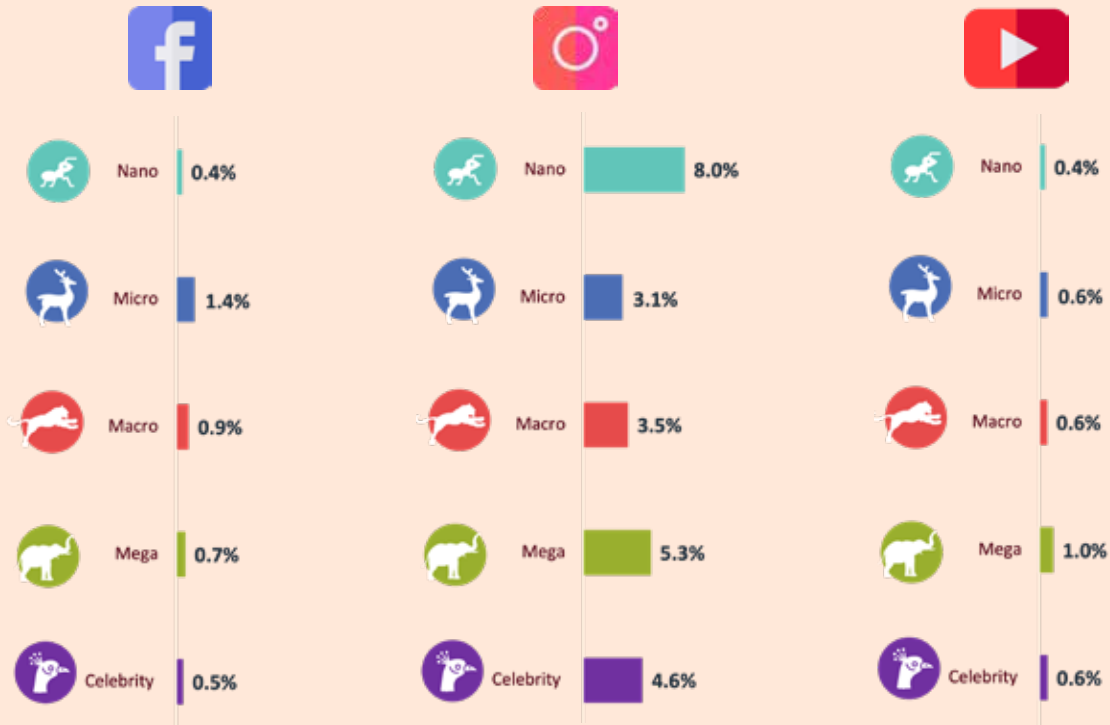


Source: GroupM India, 2021

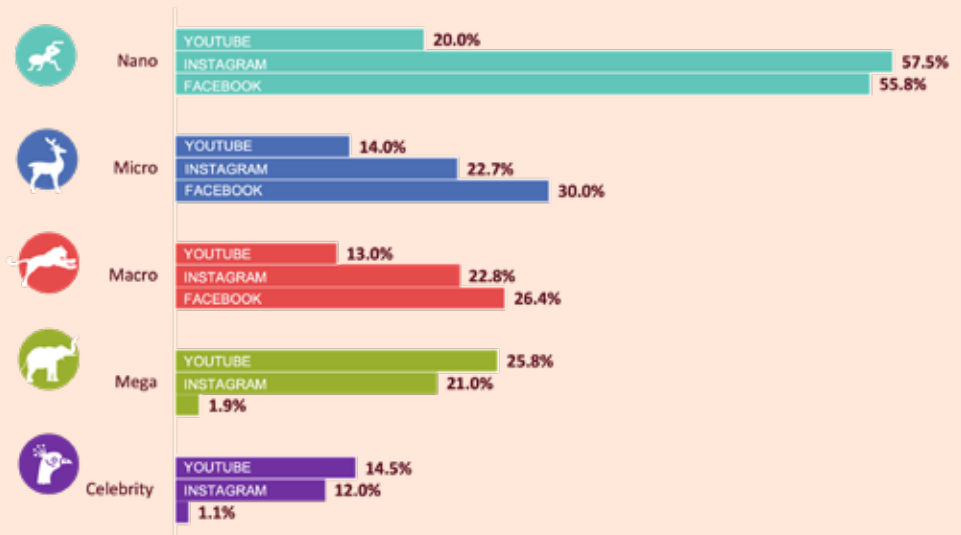


# Performance across platforms

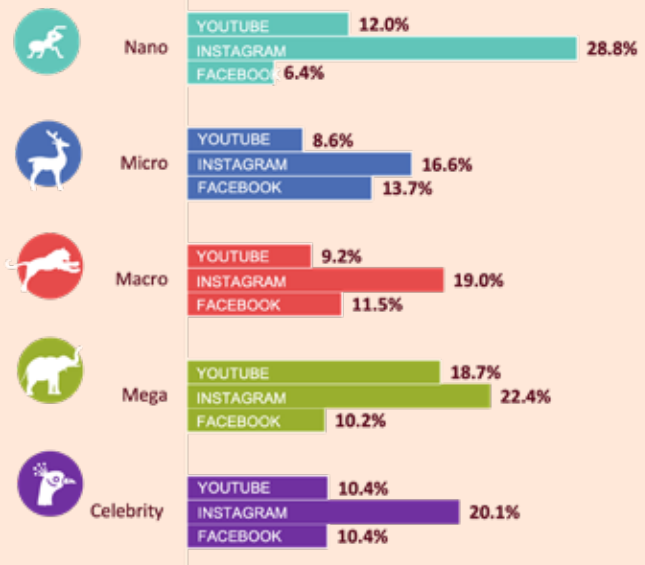
## Ave. Engagement Rate



## Ave. Video View Rate



## Ave. Estimated Reach Rate



Source:  
GroupM India, 2021

## Insight

Brands could balance desired metrics around the choice of influencers. Nano influencers might have limited reach, but can bring better RoI results due to the higher engagement they command with their audiences and hyper-customisation of brand message.



**Prarthana Parija**  
Region Media Manager  
Ferrero India

To leverage the growing Internet penetration, especially in Tier II and Tier III towns coupled with the rise of social media, brands have adapted to regional content creators for better engagement with the end consumers. The higher affinity of vernacular content creators versus national influencers makes it an appropriate and cost-effective choice for marketers. The challenge, however, will be in terms of scale as regional influencers will have a localised following, and hence the selection will be critical to achieving the campaign objectives accurately.



# INFLUENCER DISCOVERY

## Best practices when working with different types of creators

In a fast-changing environment of media and technology, there are no permanent ways of fixing best practices, but a particular approach can help get better results.



### Celebrities

Most of them have a massive following for their stature outside social media. Firstly, choose those who keep their social handles active with regular postings. Secondly, see that those posts are brand safe. Not something which contradicts your brand values. Use them as good storytellers, NOT sellers. Celebrities holding products to a camera and reciting lines from a prompt will give you very little. It is common public knowledge that this is a commercial partnership and may not reflect the views of the celebrity perfectly.



**How to Work With Them:** Ask your creative and content partners to give you compelling concepts and treatment. Also, use them after the mainline media establishes your brand campaign communication, ideally after three weeks.





## The Power of Celebrity: World Gold Council



**Objective:** To promote Gold as an essential part of every celebration – from festivals, to weddings to individual achievements and milestones.

**How INCA & World Gold Council worked together:** WGC’s “You Are Gold” campaign successfully served the brand’s narrative using celebrities with a story. Bhumi Pednekar, Neeti Mohan were engaged to narrate their **#YouAreGold** Story, about the moments that made them what they are and how they celebrated them with gold.



**642k**  
Reach



**236k**  
Views



**55k**  
Engagements

**0.64%**  
Engagement Rate

## Macro Influencers

Most of them are influential for their well-established passion, profession, and subject matter expertise. For example, Milind Soman can undoubtedly influence people to choose the right outfit for running, eating right, and the importance of fitness at any age. A product usage or demonstration overlapping with native content that looks natural is a win-win situation for the collaboration.



**How to Work With Them:** Macro influencers are a good choice for deeper storytelling as well to match your brand ethos.

## Micro Influencers

These are the most hardworking lot amongst the set of influencer categories. They are on a mission to build their strong social media following through their passion, profession, and subject expertise. Their profile distinctively defines their persona quite well. Their daily posts are a reflection of their passion areas. They are pretty active and visible on all channels.



**How to Work With Them:** Use them distinctively for product demonstration and benefits or a brand activity that has a call to action with some gratification. Also, go hyperlocal with them for their regional nuances.

## Nano Influencers

Usually, they are those who have turned their hobby into a part-time job or side hustle. They also have a faithful and loyal following. Use them to target a set of audiences sharply. For example, new moms are always looking for practical tips from experienced moms who are nano influencers. Or a craft class for young mothers to keep their kids away from social media.

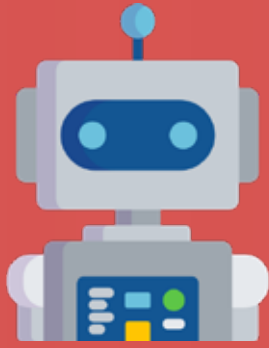


**How to Work With Them:** Use them for their hobbies turned into a shared passion with followers.

Irrespective of the category of influencers, it's passion, expertise, and opinion influencing ability that matter the most for choosing the right mix of types for your influencer campaign. But even in that mix, define the treatment and tonality that fits your brand.

Also, it is unwise to have a blanket KPI for all of them. Define your KPIs very clearly and keep the flexibility in your influencer campaign with outcomes and learnings.





## Across the Uncanny Valley: Working with AI Influencers

AI-generated digital personas or virtual influencers are three times more engaging than human influencers. A product of innovative AI companies and bold, independent artists, much discussion around virtual influencers question what makes them so fascinating to us digital audiences. Whether they serve as forms of cultural commentary or uniquely challenge our perceptions of fantasy and reality, it is clear that brands are catching on, and they are catching on fast.

As CGI technologies cheapen and influencer marketing budgets increase, we expect virtual influencers' available categories and sizes to diversify. As AI technology such as robotics develops, virtual influencers will break the third wall and engage in live Q&As and events. A great example is INCA's partnership with Sophia, the world's most advanced human-like robot.

Created by Hanson Robotics, an AI and robotics company dedicated to developing socially intelligent machines and enriching lives, Sophia is a celebrity and disruptor capable of generating facial expressions, mirroring people's postures, and discerning emotions from tone of voice. While she has worked with multinational brands in the past, Sophia's first-ever ambassadorship with an agency is groundbreaking for marketers, brands, and the AI industry alike. Nano and Micro Virtual influencers show high potential as the engagement rates of virtual influencers can be up to three times higher than their human counterparts.



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# CREATIVITY CREATIVITY CREATIVITY



This section provides a point of view for working with influencers. We are seeking a rise in different formats in social channels, from skits to unedited content, which can provide a refreshing opportunity for brands to connect with their audiences.

# WHOSE REEL IS IT ANYWAY?

Just skim through your Instagram feed; it's filled to the brim with glorified images, dance reels, heartfelt posts, and sponsored content in the fitness and cooking genres. Although it seems like anybody with a smartphone can be an influencer or create content, it takes a lot of time and talent to promote brands online.

+

The universe of influencers and the world of brands are two different cosmos.

Content creators and influencers are two different spectrums of Influencer Marketing. Influencers create content to connect with the audience, while content creators are known for integrating brands seamlessly in their content that entertains the audience.

Their accomplishments are because of their unique skill sets and talent, making them stand out from the crowd.

Add micro and nano influencers to the mix, and only those with a unique skill set automatically move into the influencer realm.

By activating influencers specific to their genre, the clients knew it's about creating content that can go places by using the influencer's uniqueness of 'what they bring to the table'.

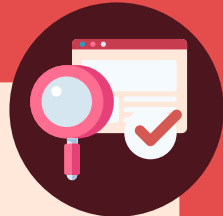
When a brand collaborates with such influencers, we need to keep in mind their status and accomplishments. Instead of dictating 'What the content should be' we'd rather ask them 'What should we do?' That is where the creative ownership comes in, along with the investment of effort and genuine interest.





# The Bottom Line:

There is a lot of overlap between content creators and influencers; both bring something great to the table. But it's up to you to use their talents in a way that gets out the creativity required to grab eyeballs for your brand. When creating branded content, the accomplished content creators should ideally hold the creative mantle; however, when associating with micro and mini-influencers, the brand should take creative ownership.



## Comedy and Friendship: Britannia #BourbonBlabberMates



**Objective:** To build recall via an entertaining social media challenge and create fan engagement by incentivising the audience with daily gratifications.



**How INCA & Britannia worked together:** Britannia Bourbon created a “Bourbon Blabbermates Challenge” used pairs of real-life friends promote it. Mega comedy and sketch creators were roped in to ‘challenge’ each other followed by a CTA. Nano influencers amplified the message by taking up the challenge with their friends.

The campaign won Gold at the exchange4media Indian Digital Marketing Awards 2021.



104   
Influencers

104   
Pieces of Content

3.9m   
Reach

2.2m   
Views

369k   
Engagements

2.01%   
Engagement Rate



10

# NEW FORMATS SET TO WIN



This section looks at the wide range of social channels available in India and considers the opportunities for usage. We have seen fragmentation in India within social media. Data and analytics will determine which channels work best for brands to ensure a successful ROI. We will take a deeper dive into emerging channels in India that are shaping the landscape today.

# NEW FORMATS SET TO WIN ON HOMEGROUND



Brands' association with influential personalities has long been part of the marketing mix. The rapid rise of technology, connectivity, and social platforms has turbo-charged this channel and had multiple implications for how brands can effectively reach ever more elusive fragmented audiences.

Combining high-quality, authentic content with addressable, scalable media allows brands to tell their stories in new ways to a new audience. Applying cutting-edge technology, primarily focused commerce solutions, empowers marketers to drive actual business results, pinpoint effective spending, and optimise how they allocate their media budgets effectively.



As a brand, the most important thing for us is to reach the audience who are now glued to smaller screens and not TV. Hence, Influencer Marketing makes it easier to get quick eyeballs. Influencers have shifted the audiences' focus away from movie and sports stars as opinion holders. They are considered more authentic and are the new-age experts. Having said that, I believe the medium still has some catching up to do with the traditional mediums in terms of quality. It is surely catching up at a rapid pace.



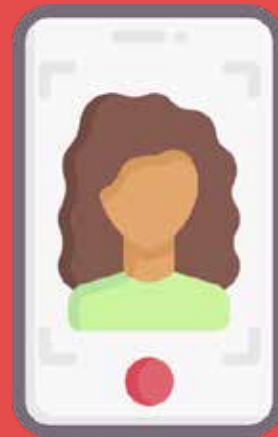
And even though, it is a much in demand medium, it is also essential to keep a balance between creative expression and driving the message. The idea is to keep the messaging as organic as possible while, at the same time, staying true to the original point of your sponsored content. I like to think, a mix of creative freedom and controlled brand messaging is the best approach. The right collaboration is critical as this fast-paced medium is changing every day and so are the consumer's behavior- their likings and dislikings.

## **Nilesh Shah**

Vice President, Business Planning & Marketing, Johnson Controls-Hitachi Air Conditioning India



# BEST PRACTICES ON NEW AND EMERGING CONTENT FORMATS



## Audio

During the lockdown, audio streaming platforms witnessed significant rise with players exploring new formats of audio entertainment while consumers were confined to their homes. Today, users can enjoy online music, podcasts, e-books, and even short videos all in one app. It said that music remained “therapeutic” as people multi-tasked and switched between household chores and professional engagements amid the pandemic.

**“Not having another screen” to go for content consumption is working for players in the audio ecosystem.**

Industry players have been consistently pushing the envelope with new innovations and strategies to drive growth on their platforms - from going hyperlocal to bring in authenticity and culture, to building digital payment partnerships, allowing users to conveniently purchase subscriptions and enjoy seamless integration across different online services.

The platforms are also exploring collaborations with brands as well as artists in their endeavour to forge stronger connections with consumers and create brand loyalty. While the players are diversifying, introducing new formats - it remains to be seen how platforms will endeavour to hit new notes and scale new heights in their attempt to sustain the momentum they have gained specifically amidst the pandemic.



## Short Form Video



With instant and everything now culture embedded in today's Genz and millennials - short form video has emerged as the most easy, quick, relatable and engaging form of video content.

For the short form to stand out in the sea of sameness - there are few elements that are a must have:

- **Clearly show WIIFM (What's in it for me?)**

From the viewers' point of view - either its informative, solving a problem or its leveraging a current trend

- **Go Behind the Scenes**

Bring the unseen and unheard to connect with the audience

- **Add in a UGC leg to it**

Today's audience wants to move from being fence sitters to setting a trend. Short form video gives the audience a chance to be creative and become inclusive to the content ecosystem

- **Keeping the content authentic and straightforward**

Give influencers creative liberty as they know the style of content which will connect with their fans / followers best

## • LIVE Live Streaming



Amidst the pandemic, live streaming has been a boon to consumers, advertisers and platforms. Who would have thought confined to your homes:

- One could watch their favorite artist perform, through live gigs
- Experience a masterclass with a renowned chef and
- Also witness a brand launch

The ease and convenience, distraction free, variety of content, reduction of costs and analytics tracking has created livestreaming as one of the most efficient ways to connect and engage with the end user.



## Social Commerce (Click to Cart)

The buying and selling of products or services within a social media platform, has never offered more opportunities for, nor felt more daunting to marketers across the globe and nearly every industry. However it is complicated and no one size fits all.

Your social commerce strategy will be determined by your

- Brand's Ecommerce ecosystem today and where you would like to be tomorrow.
- Other key factors that need to be considered would be - product/brand category, assets and technology that can be leveraged, endorsers and influencers play an important role in the click to cart journey and finally knowing and understanding your consumer through data collection.
- The Indian social commerce industry is creating a win-win sector, players such as Meesho, DealShare - are enabling users to shop instantly through AI-driven, brand-tagged user-generated content and on the other spectrum creating employment opportunities.

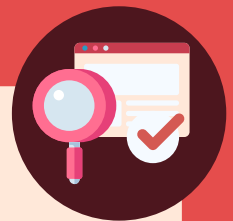
In addition, the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' drive is fuelling the ambitions of domestic producers by empowering them to establish their social commerce base, thereby accelerating the industry and its overall gains.





# Amplification across channels

Create incremental impact by repurposing organic influencer content across paid and owned media channels. Whether it be a banner or Facebook ad, brands who recognise this opportunity can harness the authentic relatability of user-generated content to extend reach across masses of relevant audiences.



## Amplifying Results for Huggies



**Objective:** To position the new range of premium diapers as the softest diaper in the market.

**How INCA & Huggies worked together:** Huggies worked with celebrity and macro mom influencers to spread awareness and build consideration for the new range, while establishing the product positioning. The content worked so well that the brand acquired the license to use one of these videos on their product page on ecommerce.

10   
Influencers

10   
Pieces of Content

 5.3m  
Reach

 4.2m  
Views

 72.6k  
Engagements

1.05%  
Engagement Rate



11

# MEASUREMENT AT THE HEART OF THE CAMPAIGN



This section will look at the importance of measurement and how to approach it. Today, influencer marketing has an instrumental role in communications that measurement can no longer fall by the wayside. Since influencer marketing came into the mix, there have been discussions and debates on measuring activity.

The industry has worked together, led by INCA, to set a framework for measurement, which would include how to collaborate, co-create and measure performance. At INCA, we believe that our unique positioning on data provides an unprecedented understanding of measurement in this space.



# GETTING SMART WITH INFLUENCER MEASUREMENT

ROI of influencer marketing is the so-called elephant in the room. Should Influencer marketing be as efficient as the regular paid ad? The answer is yes. Can we do an apple-to-apple comparison of a paid ad spot with a brand message seamlessly integrated within a content created and delivered by someone we trust? I leave this for you to answer.

Before we get into measurement, let's look at some learning from mainstream mediums like TV. Like the impact or success of any regular media campaign is relative and evaluated upon previous benchmarks, Influencer marketing should also be looked in similar light and put to test with a long-term vision and not one time dipstick.

Secondly the way we plan mainstream mediums like TV on a 2+ / 3+ SOV likewise influencer campaigns also work better with higher SOV. Thirdly to move the needle using any medium we need to do threshold investment, so does influencer marketing, a suboptimal investment will make no difference.

**Measuring the success of an influencer marketing campaign is slightly complicated yet achievable if we know what we are chasing.**

Let's start with defining the campaign objective which helps outline the exact KPI, which eventually helps in shortlisting the right creators. If the campaign objective is to address top of the funnel and increase awareness then the KPI should be Views, whereas if the campaign objective is to address middle or bottom of the funnel and increase consideration or sales then engagement would be the KPI, which is also one the most common measurement metric for any influencer campaign.



While there are several ways to measure the success of influencer marketing, below are a few widely used parameters that we have observed. These parameters would differ for different brands basis their product life cycle, maturity of the product category and familiarity of the brand. A matured brand would see different results as compared to a new entrant, likewise it will differ for different category of products; an impulse category will work very differently as compared to a high involvement product.



# INCA's guide to measurement: BENCHMARK



## Brand social assets

Monitor your brand's social assets, an influencer campaign can push the audience to your social assets to more information. Remember consumers tagging brands and mentioning hashtags are priceless. These audiences can be built into loyal consumer base over a period. Brand should also invest time in engaging with their social media base. Having followers but not engaging with them is not helping your brands.



## Engagement

This is one of the most common ways of measuring success for any influencer campaign. Simply put engagement is a summation of interaction that an influencer post generates. While impressions tell you how many eyeballs you got, engagement tell you how the audience interacted with the post. Higher engagement rate translates to higher audience interaction with the post. Brands should also jump in to answer technical questions if any. These engagements will lead to future consumers.



## Noise

This is one qualitative way of measuring success of any influencer campaigns. Brands are using several social listening tools to monitor the volume of conversation around specific key words used during a campaign. It also helps do sentiment analysis in relation to campaign hashtag and helps brands get into damage control mode if required.



## Commerce

There is no better way than measuring success of any campaign by relating it back to sales. Use unique codes for influencers and monitor sales. Create benchmarks and translate one time engagement to long term partnerships with best performing creators. Please remember that sales is not the only reason you partnered with someone to deliver your brands message in the first place. Secondly evolved mediums like television are also planned based 2+/3+ SOV. Likewise the impact of influencer campaigns will be better with higher SOV.



## High Quality Content

This is by far the most underrated by-products of influencer campaigns. While brands are engaging with influencers who enjoy a certain circle of trust to create authentic content, what they are also getting is a steady influx of high quality, fresh and engaging content. This not only helps create continuous engagement but has the potential to translate to great user generated content.



## Media Mix Modelling

This is one of the most complex yet effective way to measuring success of any influencer campaign. Media mix modelling helps attribute sales to specific medium which has helped generate the sale amongst all the mediums that the brand was present on in a specific timeframe. Media mix modelling exercise will only be successful if we have robust benchmarks and may not be helpful for the initial few campaigns.





## Audience

Monitoring site traffic is another efficient way of measuring the success of an influencer campaign. Influencers can drive traffic to your website using UTM coded links which helps identify the source of the traffic. Brands should ensure that once the consumer lands on the page he/she has enough reasons to stay and transact quickly. Capture essential details through quick sign ups, incentivising first time users will help nurture them into future loyal consumers.



## Reach

If awareness is the KPI then reach becomes the single most important factor. A combination of mega and macro influencers would work best in this case. While platforms will deliver a certain organic reach of any influencer post, that same can be expanded by boosting the content using tools like Facebook Branded Content Ads to amplify the reach and get better ROI on your content investment.



## Keyword Trends

This is one of the easiest ways to measure success of an influencer campaign. Using Google Analytics brands can monitor the surge in google keyword search. Using specific keywords in the influencer communication will help isolate and attribute surge to influencer campaigns.





# CONCLUSION

As the world returns to normalcy after a tough 18 months, growth-oriented economies like India will show a steep increase in brand spends. The key for brand leaders who view influencer marketing as a critical lever in their marketing mix will be to compare influencer marketing versus other media channels. As the tools to measure influencer campaign efficacy evolve, so will the outlook on content and creativity.

## Uncertain landscapes:

India's digital strategy can throw up the odd curveball; for example, the ban on TikTok in 2020 caused a sharp exodus of nano and micro-influencers towards other platforms. The ban also created a vacuum for local players to offer creators more reach, especially in the non-urban vernacular markets. Several platforms emerged to fill this void - MX TakaTak, Moj, Josh, Roposo, being a notable few. While these platforms are investing heavily in evolving their tech capabilities while also growing their user base - only time will tell which one will grab the largest share of the pie.

## Emerging niches:

The pandemic-induced change in lifestyle and growth of the creator economy has given rise to exciting creator openings and a hugely talented pool to leverage them. Industry segments that are showing substantial growth spurts include:



**Health, wellness, immunity** - While fitness has always been a sizeable category, the pandemic saw the shift towards more holistic healthcare. Content topics such as immunity boosting, nutrition, wellness took center stage and will continue to be prominent categories.



**Food** - The series of lockdowns that the country witnessed forced us all to cook our own meals and innovate with food. Chef content creators emerged heroes at this time, garnering an unprecedented number of views on recipe and instructional videos - while adding a whole bunch of new subscribers.



**Personal finance** - A host of millennial and GenZ creators are rushing to capture a large market of young professionals who are seeking simplified learning on money matters, investing and stock markets, and even cryptocurrency.

The pandemic and its aftermath showed us the power of social media - with thousands of influencers, using their platforms to spread awareness, arrange for emergency medical supplies, and promote vaccination drives. It was probably the most prominent example of technology bringing communities together for a good cause.



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INCA is GroupM's brand-safe influencer and content marketing solution. Using proprietary technology, in-house experts, and a network of industry-leading partners, INCA provides influencer selection and content production services, as well content distribution at scale across social and publisher platforms. INCA is part of GroupM, the world's largest media investment company, and has operational teams active in 20 markets around the world.

To learn more about INCA, please visit [inca-global.com](https://inca-global.com) or email us at [askinca@groupm.com](mailto:askinca@groupm.com).

