

THE POWER OF *influence*

Industry expert Gordon Glenister examines the rise and rise of influencer marketing, its impact on the hair and beauty sector, and shows how you can use it in your business.



ABOUT GORDON

Gordon Glenister is an international speaker, podcast host, author and runs his own influencer marketing programme for business owners. He is involved in analysing the metrics of the NHBF Top 100 Influencers Index. He also set up the UK body for influencer marketing under the Branded Content Marketing Association.

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Influencer marketing is the process of using people (influencers) to promote a product or service for a campaign, and so is actually nothing new – it's just different terminology. We have trusted the opinions of others for many years. Even now, how often do you ask your friends, family, colleagues or people you know for advice? The difference now is it's mainly on social media.

An influencer is an individual who can affect change in behaviour through trusted opinion, knowledge and often content creation on social media. And it's big business: as a global market, influencer marketing has grown from just \$1.7bn in 2016 to close

to \$14bn today, proving that more and more brands are investing in the sector.

Within the hair and beauty sector, influencer marketing is massive – and beauty is the top sector in influencer marketing. Instagram is by far the top channel for promotion, although YouTube and TikTok are becoming more and more significant too, largely due to the visual nature of the beauty industry. Make-up brands have even been launched on social media.

How can you work with influencers?

While salon owners or their staff can be influential, working with influencers can be a great way to build awareness and new

IMAGE: ISTOCK

customers. As a general rule, you should work with a small group of influencers as they all have different audiences that you can capitalise on.

YOU COULD OFFER FREE styling, haircuts or beauty treatments to help secure Instagram posts or stories from influencers, but increasingly you would need to pay for their content, certainly influencers with larger followings. The cost of an influencer with a smaller following but a good engagement rate could be £200 for a post/story, but could jump to £1000 or more for one with a substantial engagement rate and with 500k+ followers.

CHECK THEIR STATS It's very important to do this before working with influencers. All the good ones should have a media deck or be

able to show you their analytics. For example, what their engagement rate is (how many people like, share, comment on and see their content).

LOOK AROUND Use influencer tools to help you establish the audience demographic, location base, what the audience is interested in, and – most importantly – how authentic they are. An example is Audience2Media, a global influencer agency that has more than 107 million influencers on its system. It's worth highlighting that the real growth has been in nano- (1-10k) and micro-influencers 10-50k.

RUN CAMPAIGNS where you are able to use influencer content to amplify your own content on social media to reach an even bigger relevant audience.

BE SPECIFIC You might like to work with influencers on a specific challenge, competition or charity cause. Along with your staff, this could be a great way to create a real social buzz simultaneously. Some of the best viral campaigns start this way.

How to grow your own following on social media

BE CONSISTENT AND UNIQUE WITH QUALITY CONTENT on your salon social media account and/or an individual one. Tick all boxes by thinking about your 'weekly moment'. Is there something you do every week at the same time? A newsletter, or a hair advice surgery, or video upload?

EDUCATE, INSPIRE AND ENTERTAIN

Ask yourself if your content has all these elements, or at least one. Constant self-promotion will flop. If you're able to, create a monthly content plan to help you. Planned content could consist of sharing tips or motivational quotes. You could highlight different team members. Or simply tell

IN NUMBERS WHY DO PEOPLE FOLLOW INFLUENCERS

- 51% To learn something new
- 49% For entertaining/ uplifting content
- 43% Shared interests/ passions
- 38% To gain inspiration

customers about new services or products you offer.

TRY TIKTOK It's the fastest-growing platform, and not just for 20-somethings. Reels and live videos are driving huge engagement. The app has its own video editing software. Most important is to create content that's short and regular rather than just every now and then. (See the Spring 2022 issue for more tips).

FOLLOW YOUR CUSTOMERS on social media. If you can encourage them to share any pictures – aka user-generated content – post haircut/treatment, this is the best form of testimonial you can get.

LOOK OUT FOR...

Following its huge success in 2021, in November the NHBF will release its list of the top 100 most influential people in the industry for 2022. Watch out for the Hair & Beauty Industry: Top 100 Influencers Index – and perhaps you might find yourself on it soon! See page 15 and nhbf.co.uk/top-100-influencers