
CONNECTING
WORLDS
HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF B2B INFLUENCER MARKETING
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As a global community experiencing unexpected (and ongoing) change, there is one thing we are all looking to brands for: and that is trust.

Buyers today are understandably hesitant about making purchases, especially when it comes to B2B technology or services. They want to ensure that when they do eventually invest their precious resources in a brand, they can trust them. And as we all know; trust can't be bought. It can't be sold. But it can be built over time.

For B2B brands recalibrating their plans for the rest of the year, there is one thing we can do now that can help build credibility with audiences and build relationships within digital communities - and that is collaborating with influencers.

We've seen first-hand how a great influencer programme can help create a solid platform of trust for a brand, and from our experience in doing so, we wanted to share a few of Digital Radish's success secrets. 5 of them, to be exact. But first, let's look at why many brands' approach to influencer marketing needs to change.

PLAYING WITH FYRE



Influencer marketing isn't all fashion, cocktails and big corporate events. It's a valuable asset not only in the B2C marketing sphere but within B2B marketing, too. But, how do we, as B2B marketers create authentic influencer campaigns that give us real results?

We learn from the past. Because when it goes wrong, it can go really, really wrong.

Fyre Festival was a blazing example of how a brand can obliterate global consumer trust in no time at all. If you've not heard of it, Fyre (an influencer tech company) used some of the world's most powerful influencers to sell a luxury festival to thousands of people. The catch? The festival didn't exist yet, and despite last minute attempts to get something organised, it transpired to be a full-scale disaster for everyone who'd paid to go. In the end, influencers were sued, Fyre's CEO is now in jail, and Netflix created a documentary about the scandal.

"JUST 4% OF INTERNET USERS TRUST SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS"

This long-winded example just goes to show how, without transparency, accountability or authenticity, influencer marketing can dilute buyers' trust and cause irreparable damage to a brand. With high-profile disasters like Fyre stuck in the public's consciousness, is it any wonder just 4% of internet users trust social media influencers?

But despite this distrust, influencers have become more important than ever in the B2B world, where their content can deliver up to 11 times higher ROI than traditional forms of digital marketing. B2B buyers typically have much higher purchase values, and therefore look to be informed with expertise before jumping into any purchase.

With complex tech brands and products, this is heightened even further. 53% of B2B buyers will read 3-5 pieces of content before contacting the supplier, looking at peer-reviews, recommendations and expert-opinions on their buying journey and seeking out a truly informed opinion on their purchase before they make it.

> "INFLUENCER CONTENT CAN DELIVER UP TO 11X HIGHER ROI THAN TRADITIONAL FORMS OF DIGITAL MARKETING"

Buyers *are* searching for trust. But how can you give it to them?

5 LESSONS TO BUILD TRUST

So, how can you swim against the tide of rising scepticism, learning from the mistakes made on the B2C market and build the kind of trust buyers can get on board with? Based on our experience, having worked closely on influencer campaigns, here are our top 5 recommendations for delivering a successful B2B influencer programme.

1

ONE: GET REAL

You can't buy true credibility. B2B buyers will see right through influencers who don't really care about what they're selling, and are only doing it for the pay-cheque. Look first at the people who know you best, who already have an affinity with your brand and can therefore act as true advocates. This could mean connecting with key members of your organisation over Zoom and on social media, encouraging them to source these influencers from their respective networks, too.

TWO: QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY

It's not how many influencers you use but picking the right ones. Those micro and macro influencers with the right centres of influence. Find them, build a relationship with them, and make something that can last. This will take online research with LinkedIn as a critical resource. Use its search capabilities to find people who have the relevant experience, expertise and audiences that make them a truly worthwhile influencer.

THREE: BE COLLABORATIVE

The best influencers are influencers for a reason. Don't simply get a quote from them and shoehorn it into a pre-written content piece. Use their expertise in a collaborative way and co-create something truly original. When beginning the process with them, clearly explain your objectives, and then use journalistic interview techniques to unearth their unique stories and perspectives. Be sure to do your background research before the meeting, so you can tailor your questions accordingly.

FOUR: VANITY AIN'T FAIR

Vanity metrics such as likes and shares don't give a fair measurement of successful content, particularly within the B2B space. You must set KPIs that are right for what you're trying to achieve within the specific campaign. Any of the following can give you a better indication of how the campaign is going:

- Content downloads
- Site views
- Spikes in web traffic
- Product sign-ups
- Relevant online conversations generated

Looking at the kinds of conversations your content has generated on Twitter and LinkedIn, for example, is a great way of seeing how your content is landing.

FIVE: STEADY AS SHE GOES

There's no need to rush your content out into the world before it's ready. Since its roots lie more in research and expertise, B2B influencer marketing is naturally a slower process than its B2C cousin. Focus on building trust and reputation rather than that quick sell.

PUTTING THE THEORY INTO PRACTICE

At Digital Radish, we align with these 5 principles wherever possible. We collaborate with influencers within our wider marketing strategies to bring authenticity and expertise to campaigns, case studies, vlogs, reports and more. In doing so, we aim to be the spark that brings people within B2B spaces together, starting conversations, sharing experiences and educating one another. In our experience, it's worked incredibly well.

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CENSORNET: DEFENCE 365

One brand we've been able to create consistently valuable influencer marketing content for is the cloud security specialist Censornet, particularly in our work for their comprehensive Microsoft Office 365 security package 'Defence 365'.

Whilst researching the topic, we quickly found that our audience – IT Directors, CTOs and CIOs – were already highly knowledgeable on the subject of Office 365 security, and therefore notoriously sceptical towards product marketing on the subject. Their preference toward the tips and advice of true experts was what led us towards using influencer marketing.

SEEK THE RIGHT EXPERTISE

To create an honest, balanced, unbiased series of content, we looked for influencers who not only had a strong social following of professionals who sat within our target audience, but who are globally recognised as some of the cloud and security industry's most prominent thought-leaders. With a hand-selected team of influencers ready to go, we then interviewed them extensively regarding the challenges of Office 365 security and their recommendations.

Combining this exclusive insight with Censornet's trusted cyber-security expertise, we created the premium report – Your Office 365 Journey: Securing every stage - which was roundly praised by cloud specialists and buyers alike.

> "One of the best reports I've seen for a long while"
>
> – BERNARD GOLDEN, CEO AT NAVICA

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INFLUENCERS

Our influencer insights informed not only the report, but shaped a number of content pieces that were designed to deliver helpful advice at every touchpoint of our target audience Office 365 journey. These included a quiz, a LinkedIn SlideShare, an infographic, a product video and a series of vlogs.

The key to the content's success was the subject matter, which was not only relevant to Censornet's sales goals but to the interests and beliefs of our key influencers as well. It was something they could truly endorse and get behind, and that integrity shone through.

You can visit the content hub we created for Censornet that formed the centre of their most successful ever marketing campaign, here.



NOW GO FORTH AND INFLUENCE

Within the B2B space, incorporating an influencer marketing strategy is a great way of educating and engaging potential buyers. It's something of a long game, but in a market where 93% of B2B consumers wish companies would educate rather than sell to them that's no bad thing. So, go forth and influence and – trust us – the buyers will come!

For more inspiration on influencer marketing or creative marketing in general, take a look at some of our other articles on our B2B marketing blog, or get in touch with us at info@digitalradish.co.uk.

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