Influence 2.0:

The Future of Influencer Marketing

Sometimes the best way to change the future is to change your perception of what's possible.

BY BRIAN SOLIS

INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing is one of the most promising and underappreciated disciplines in the digital marketing mix. The notion of engaging people with the capacity to influence desirable audiences is not only attractive, but can also be incredibly effective when managed properly. It opens up an entirely new world for companies to connect with increasingly elusive and discerning audiences in ways that are more natural and relatable. As people are becoming more connected and mobile, companies have to explore creative approaches to earn attention and build relationships.

 The result? New relevance.

For all of its potential, influencer marketing is equally rife with challenges. It has been overused by brands and agencies so that it often becomes another underperforming tool in the marketing portfolio. Add to that, the saturation of software that tackles only part of the problem by identifying "influencers," and the service providers that recruit and disband them with each campaign, and influencer marketing has become cheapened.

Influencer marketing also suffers the same limitations that plague traditional marketing. New technologies and channels are still governed by legacy perspectives and processes that are resistant to change.

To reach its true potential, influencer marketing needs an upgrade in its definition, justification, methodologies, and metrics to focus more on doing new things that unlock new value.

There's a lot for marketers to both learn and unlearn in order to see influencer marketing's potential in a different light. Influence isn't a switch; it doesn't go on and off. It requires continuous care through an influencer relationship management (IRM) platform and dedicated resources to connect customers with the people who influence them every day. Otherwise, influence marketing succumbs to iteration rather than innovation (doing the same but with new tools vs. doing new things to unlock value).

To help set our bearings, I partnered with influencer relationship management software provider Traackr to survey brand strategists and marketers around the world. The goal was to learn how influencer marketing is evolving and how to connect the dots between "influencer marketing" as it exists today to "influencer relations" of the future. I call it "Influence 2.0," and it's meant to help us see the forest through the trees.
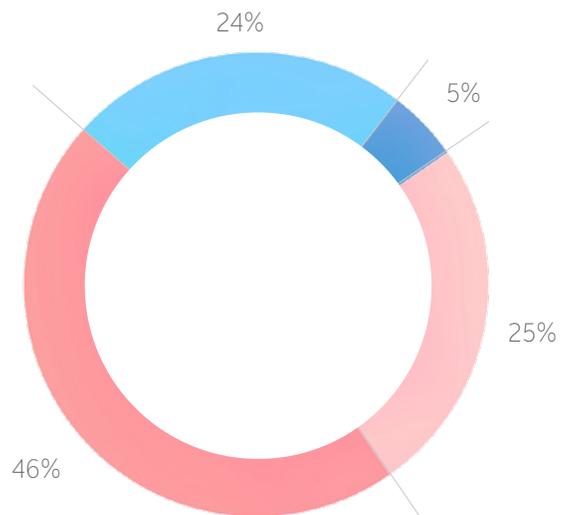
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INFLUENCE 2.0: SHIFTING FROM "INFLUENCER MARKETING" TO "INFLUENCER RELATIONS"

"*A Return on Relationship is the value that is accrued by a person or brand due to nurturing a relationship over time. This will demonstrate that the influencer is true to the brand, and this true relationship connection will pass through to the consumer.*" [1]

TED RUBIN,
Chief Marketing Officer, Brand Innovators

24%

5%

25%

46%

IS INFLUENCER MARKETING STRATEGIC?

- Highly strategic
- Strategic
- Somewhat strategic
- Not strategic

I once defined influence as, "causing effect or changing behavior." Much of influencer marketing today accomplishes neither. In our research, we find 43% of marketers are experimenting with influencer marketing, and 28% are involving influencers at the campaign level. The latter reflects a focus on tactical influencer programs vs. long-term influencer relations that live beyond a single campaign in order to impact multiple moments of truth. It's time for influence to mature. Some brands are leading the way, with 24% running an "always on" program, but only 5% have integrated influencer marketing into all activities.

Influence 2.0 isn't about introducing a clever new moniker; it's intended to push marketers forward. The goal is to take the best practices of influencer marketing and move them toward a more meaningful genre of influencer relations—a new discipline that transcends all relationship-driven marketing, not just a simple "rebrand" of existing PR resources. The checklist many use today

must be re-imagined. Relationships, and the IRM plat-forms needed to effectively manage them, require new standards and methods for identifying, managing, and measuring influencer engagement.

There are already promising signs that marketers are starting to think more strategically about the world of influence. Our survey results uncover that 71% of brand marketers rate influencer marketing as a strate-gic or highly strategic marketing category. More than half (55%) of B2C companies we studied stated that they currently employ ongoing influencer programs. Furthermore, 83% cited a top priority[i] to "identify and build one-on-one relationships with industry key influ-encers." But, influence still has some work ahead to become a top priority among CMOs.

"*Focus on a long-term approach rooted in a two-way dialogue. It's often the phases between campaigns and events that allow you to have in-depth conversations, get valuable feedback and really gain a deeper understanding around what matters to your influencers. Investing this time and valuable resources builds credibility. This credibility and trust with an influencer is key to ongoing success.*" [2]

AMANDA DUNCAN,
Senior Communications Officer, Microsoft

5%
24%
28%
43%
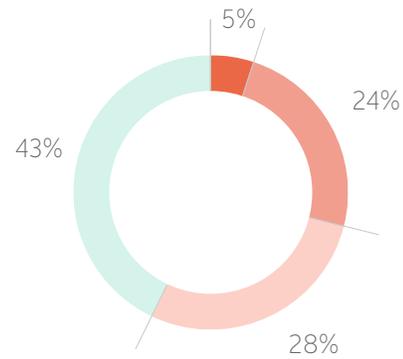
MATURITY OF IM PROGRAMS

7%
48%
14%
31%
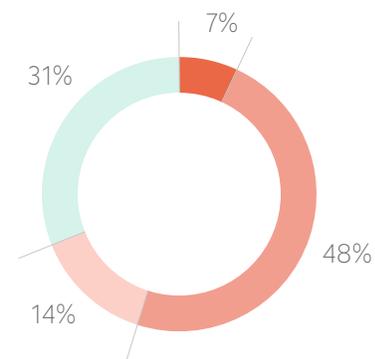
MATURITY OF **B2C** IM PROGRAMS

4%
11%
36%
49%
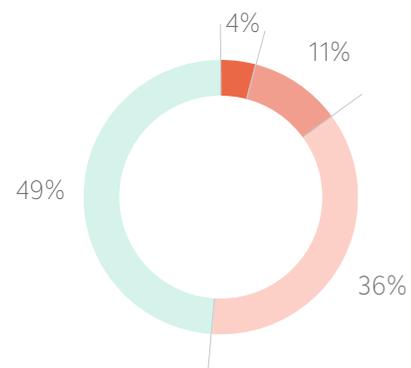
MATURITY OF **B2B** IM PROGRAMS

● Integrated program
● Ongoing program
● Campaign-driven
● Experimenting

[i] "Top priority" defined as those who marked this response as "important" or "very important."

5

LOW INVESTMENT REFLECTS LACK OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIZATION

Influence marketing is still young, and many brands reside in the very early stages of understanding influence.

Half of those surveyed report small influencer marketing budgets in comparison to the rest of the marketing mix, allocating less than $100,000 annually.

Small budget investments indicate that influence is still practiced at the tactical level and, thus, it's difficult to prove it as a strategic priority.
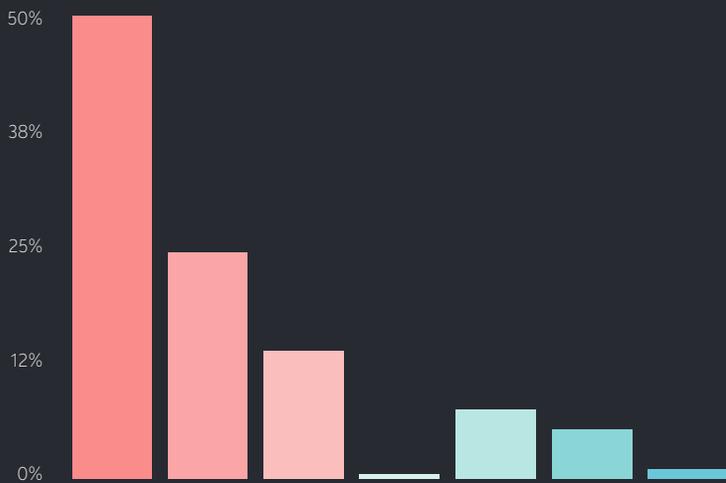
The good news is that the tide's about to turn.

Fifty-five percent of marketers plan to spend more next year, and for those companies that already spend more than $250,000 on influencer marketing, that percentage jumps to 67%.

The percentage grows further to 77% when examining companies that are currently investing in technology.
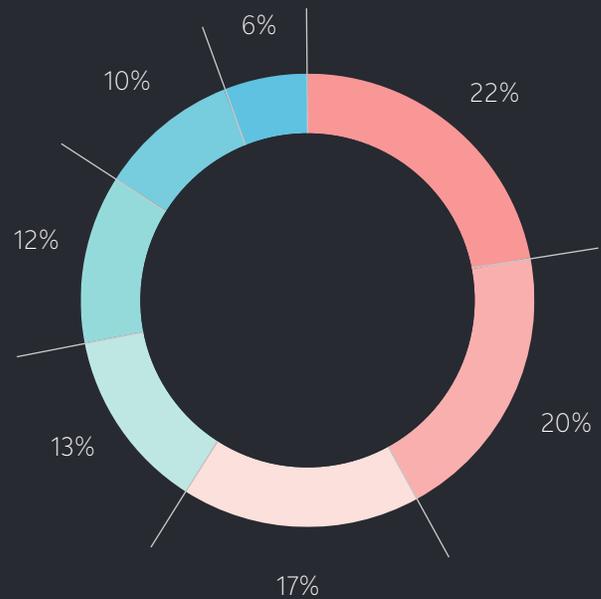
INFLUENCER MARKETING BUDGET

- < $100K
- $100-250K
- $250-500K
- $500K-1M
- $1-5M
- $5-10M
- $10-25M
- $25-50M

SHARE OF BUDGET

22%
20%
17%
13%
12%
10%
6%

- Content
- Staff
- Events
- Technology
- Agency
- Influencer cost
- Consulting

FUTURE INFLUENCER MARKETING BUDGET

19%
3%
23%
55%

BUDGET FOR THOSE WHO SPEND MORE THAN $250K

9%
5%
19%
67%

BUDGET FOR THOSE WHO USE TECHNOLOGY

3% 3%
16%
77%

● Spend more   ● Spend the same   ● Spend less   ● I don't know
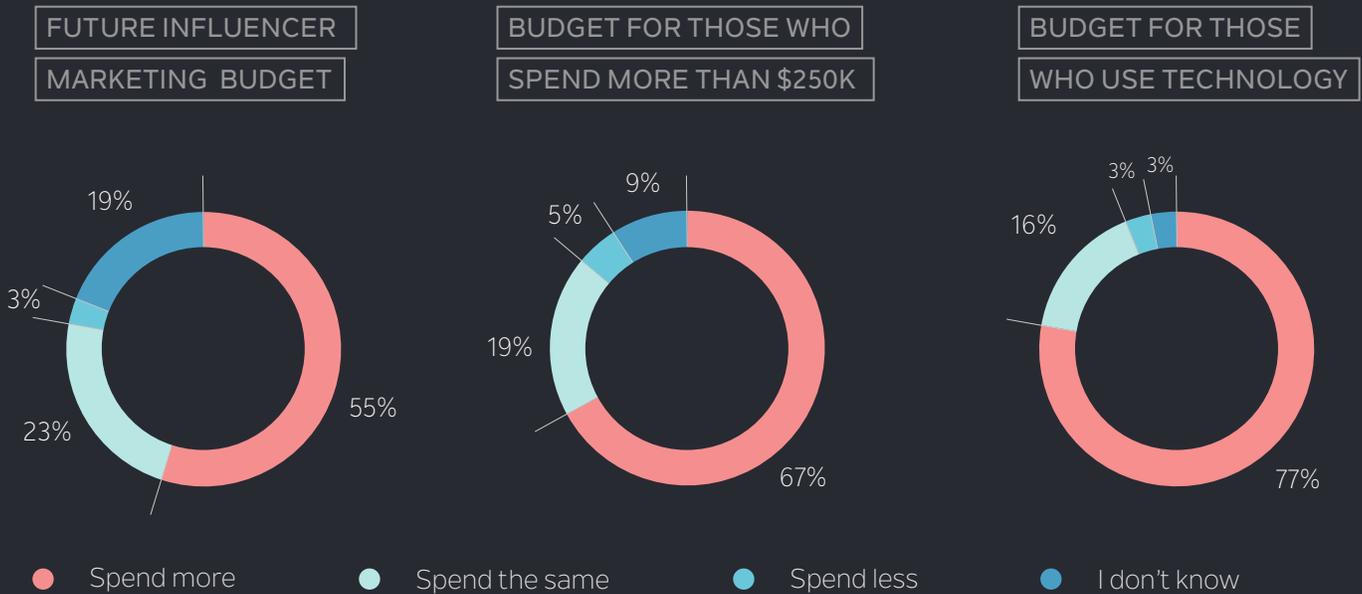
This shows that when influencer marketing reaches the strategic level of influencer relations, consistently managed and nurtured through an IRM platform, it produces results tied to measurable business impacts. 🐦

In turn, companies are willing to invest more.

But, to get that point of heavy investment—to grow budget, add resources, and expand the role of influence within the organization—strategic marketers have to move influence beyond the "chicken and egg" quandary. Executives, of course, want results to understand influence and see its impact, while marketers require budget and resources to build a proof-of-concept and make the case for its importance. So, which comes first?

Many marketers are tackling this conundrum by approaching influencer marketing first at the campaign level, in order to prove its value and justify larger investments. Campaigns generally serve a purpose in an always-on influencer program, representing key activation opportunities for brands. However, too often these tactical programs recruit influencers into

campaigns, push out content, and then abandon them when budget runs dry. This does not promote nor foster long-term, meaningful relationships. Further, when influencer marketing is operated as an extension of an advertising/paid endorsement or PR program, it cannot justify executive sponsorship.

"*So where is the power of influence marketing occurring … if it is happening at all?*

The true power of influence marketing is coming from: network connections of the individual; long-term collaboration that results in authentic understanding and advocacy; quality, trusted content that is seen and shared by a relevant audience; and face-to-face and word of mouth advocacy." [3] 🐦

MARK SCHAEFER,
Executive Director,Schaefer Marketing Solutions LLC

INFLUENCER PROGRAM LEADERS AND
IMPLEMENTERS ARE DISJOINTED

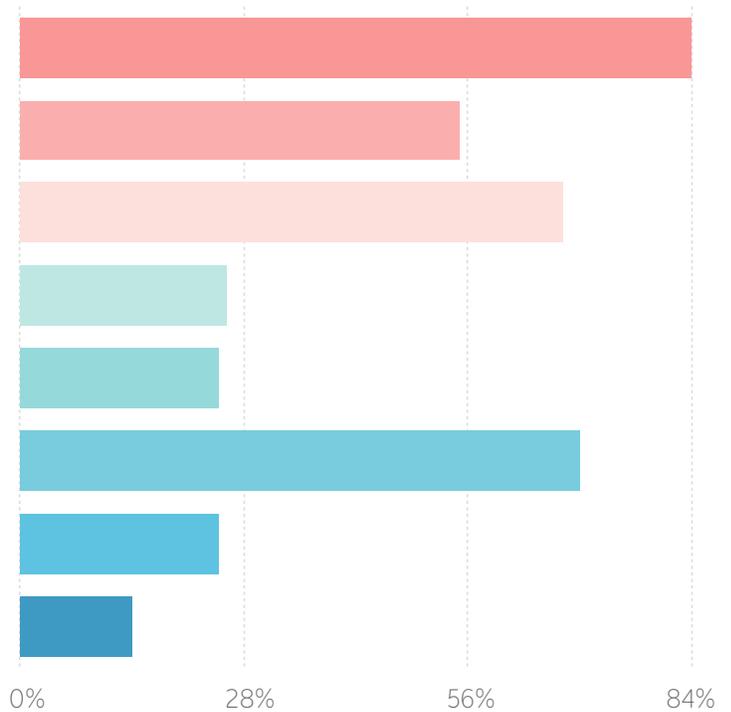"*If a brand is serious about scaling its social influencer relations...*

Long-term, trust based relationships with shared value creation take time and effort to build and investment to sustain. While results will be measured digitally in reach, impressions, online engagement, there is no shortcut for getting there. A dedicated team, much like an analyst relations team or a PR team, is one of the ways to scale current efforts." [4]

Dr. Konstanze Alex-Brown, Leading Corporate Social & University Influencer Relations, Dell
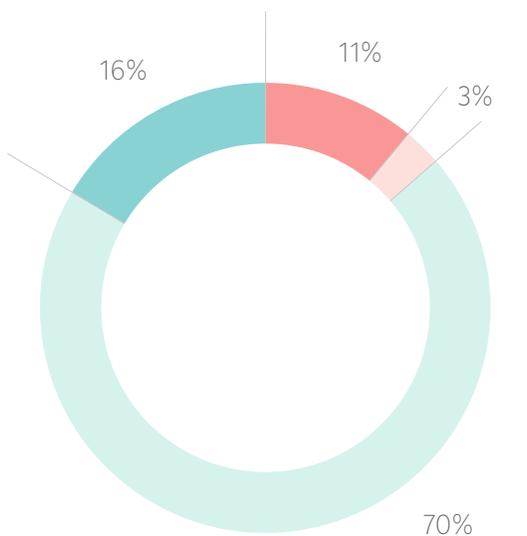
Influence program growth is stunted by a disconnect between the departments that own influencer marketing and those that execute its tactics and strategies. For example, only 16% of companies cite PR as the owner of influencer marketing, while 65% of companies report PR executing influencer relations that are owned by the marketing department.

Influence is bigger than any one group, though. This is about people and relationships. The opportunity for consumer engagement spans the entire journey, and

WHO ENGAGES WITH INFLUENCERS?

- Social Media
- Digital Marketing
- Brand/Product
- Advocacy
- Demand Generation
- PR
- AR
- Customer Care

11%

3%

16%

70%

WHO OWNS INFLUENCER MARKETING?

- Social Media
- Digital Marketing
- Marketing
- PR

influencers can play a role in each moment of truth. As such, influence needs more than an owner; it needs a group of champions to earn executive attention beyond any one function.

However, we are starting to see the stage being set for influence to expand its footprint within the organization.

Half of those surveyed state that four or more departments engage with influencers now. And, more than two-thirds (80%) say that three or more departments work with influencers today.

WHERE HAS INFLUENCER MARKETING BEEN MOST IMPACTFUL
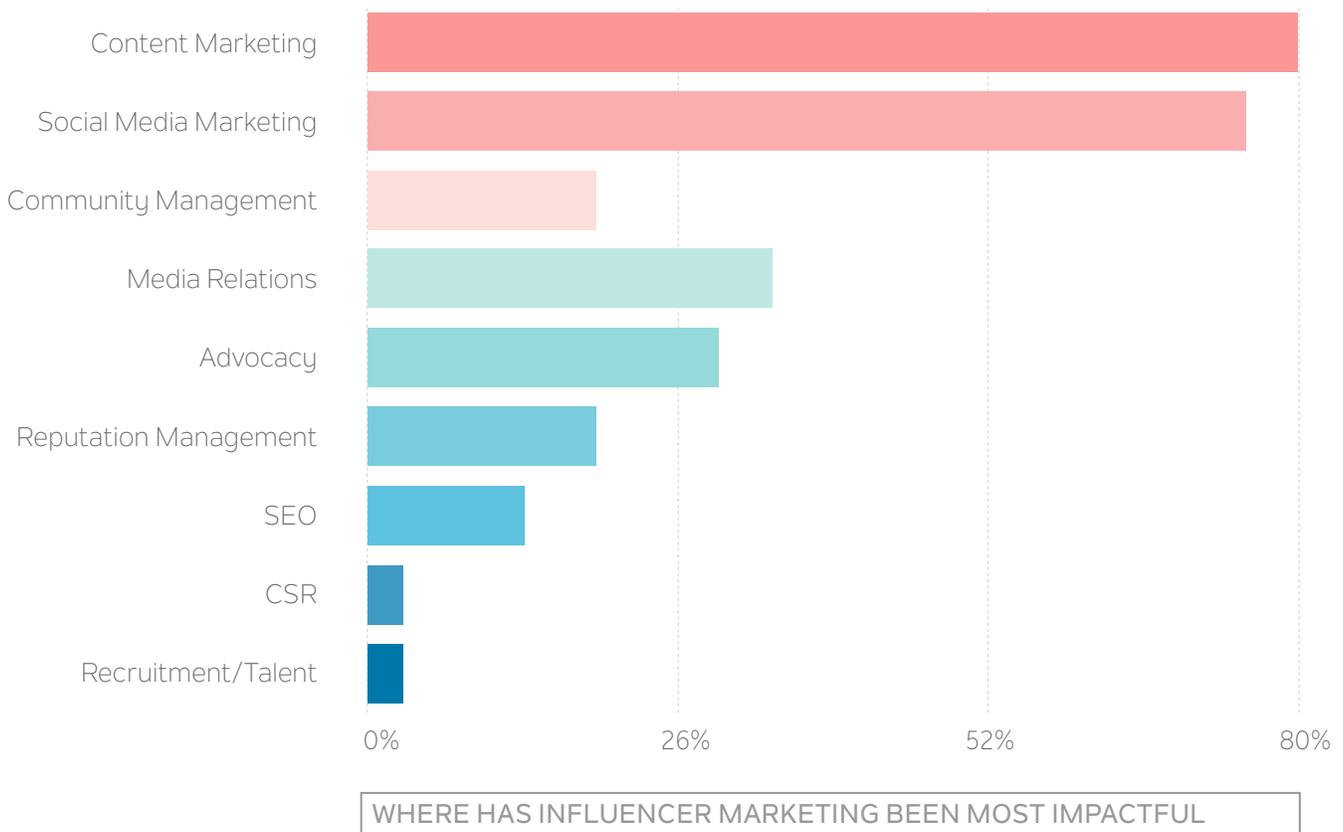
> "*Real business isn't done in board meetings; it happens in the small, personal interactions that allow us to prove to each other who we are and what we believe in, honest moments that promote good feelings and build trust and loyalty. Now, scaling those interactions is not only possible—provided you use the right tools the right way—it's necessary. In fact, those companies and brands that refuse to try could jeopardize the potential of their business, and in the long term, even their very existence.*" [5]
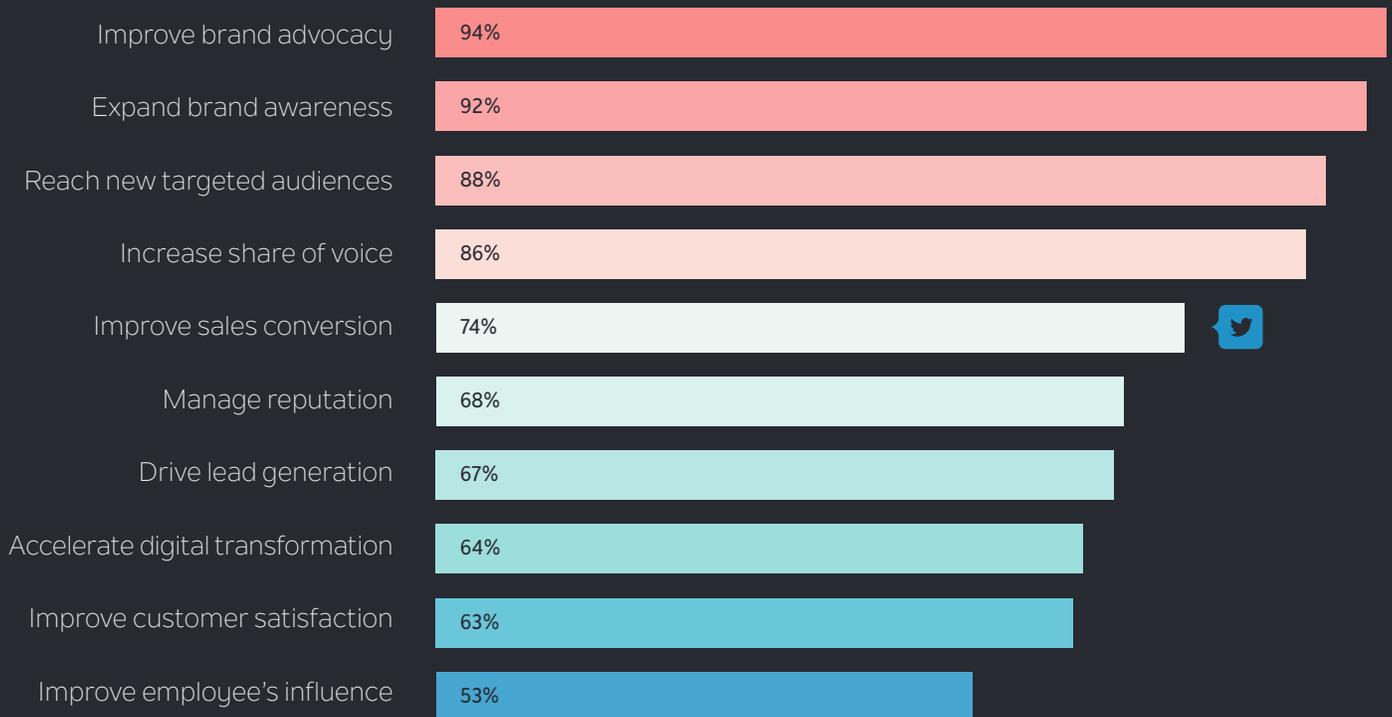
GARY VAYNERCHUK,
Chief Executive Officer, Vaynermedia

FUTURE GOALS FOR INFLUENCER PROGRAMS CENTER ON ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

The role of influence is also starting to explore new horizons. We learned that strategic marketers believe that influence can do much more than promote messages. Over the next few years, marketers share that they would like to see influence play an instrumental role in helping companies:

These numbers symbolize a more ambitious, cross-functional vision for influence spanning functions across the enterprise, including marketing, sales, support, and loyalty/advocacy programs.

10 GOALS OF INLFLUENCER MARKETING

Goal	%
Improve brand advocacy	94%
Expand brand awareness	92%
Reach new targeted audiences	88%
Increase share of voice	86%
Improve sales conversion	74%
Manage reputation	68%
Drive lead generation	67%
Accelerate digital transformation	64%
Improve customer satisfaction	63%
Improve employee's influence	53%

"*What customers want is intimacy... they expect to be understood as individuals,and to be treated like people. What marketers want is scale, the ability to touch lots of people at the most efficient CPM possible. The reason to get excited about social marketing is that it offers the promise of "Scalable Intimacy," really the first medium to do so. And authenticity is the currency of this medium. You can't "fake it," by definition."* [6]

MICHAEL TROIANO, Chief Marketing Officer, Actifio

EMPATHY AND CX UNLOCK
THE POTENTIAL OF INFLUENCER PROGRAMS

The future of influence is more significant than a legacy-based marketing program that emulates celebrity endorsements or advocacy programs in new paradigms. In all of my years studying this subject and investing in its maturation, I believe that empathy and customer-centricity is instrumental in taking influence to the next level. Empathy allows marketers to think less like corporations and more like human beings. You become the person you're trying to reach. This is a relationship business, not a mechanism for broadcast marketing.

To evolve, you need to consider the person, not about the size of his or her community. You need to think about the people who define the community and why they belong, and not just eyeballs or an audience.

The digital influencers that everyone covets are human beings who have built communities where others follow their updates for a variety of personal or professional reasons. The ties that bind are the very premises of relationships. These communities are rich with the exchange of mutual value and social capital. For marketers, influencer marketing is a new frontier and not one that can simply plug into traditional methodologies and practices. Influencer marketing requires a more human approach because, before you can market to someone, you have to first understand what he or she values. That takes care, nurturing, time, and—ultimately—providing value in return.

Influencer marketing could benefit from being recast as something more aspirational: influencer relations, if you will. Relationships are the driving force, as marketers request to borrow social capital from those with strong ties, in order to benefit their brand.

Influencer relations requires a reassessment of the value chain. Connecting with the right people for the benefit of creating value, not just for your brand but also for the relationships influencers maintain with their communities, should serve as the basis for any program. You must do more than use the relationships of others to broadcast on your behalf, regardless of payment exchanged. This "Influence 2.0" represents a significant upgrade that improves the user (influencer and customer) experience while also offering overall performance enhancements for your brand.

It all starts with you.

> " *There is no more B2B or B2C: It's Human to Human, #H2H. Social and marketing need to work together to personalize individual conversations, as well as deliver shared global experiences that crowds of common values can benefit from. This is what our social and digital mediums have gifted us, and how humans interact and feel more compelled to take action.* " [7]

BRYAN KRAMER,
Chief Executive Officer, PureMatter

CASE-IN-POINT:
INFLUENCE 2.0 IN ACTION

How Leading Players Reach New Highly-Targeted Audiences with Influencer Relations

OVERVIEW:

At the end of 2014, Orange, a global player in French telecommunications, launched Homelive, a solution that enables users to manage connected objects in the home by using a smartphone. With this new solution, Orange entered a completely new market for the brand, the connected home.
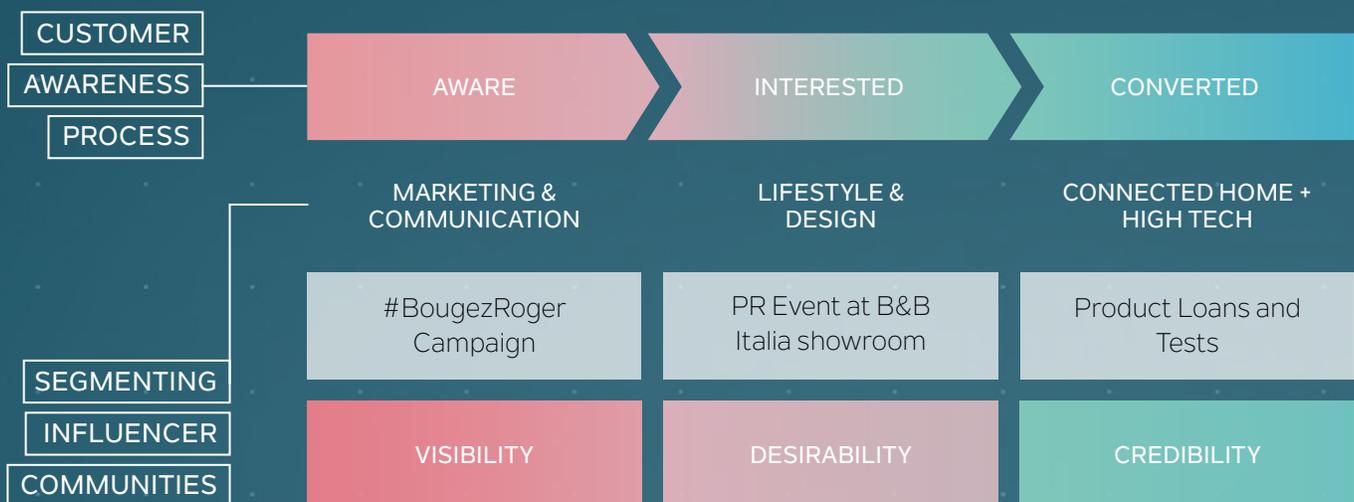
CHALLENGE:

Orange wanted to develop an influencer-driven communication strategy to obtain experts' recommendations, which is key to targeting a new audience and generating a measurable impact in an entirely new category.

SOLUTION:

Orange segmented its audience along the customer awareness process and identified four influencer communities to activate to:

- Generate awareness
- Create product desirability
- Obtain experts' recommendations and gain credibility

For each community, specific strategies with different activities and KPIs were designed and implemented.

CUSTOMER AWARENESS PROCESS	AWARE	INTERESTED	CONVERTED
	MARKETING & COMMUNICATION	LIFESTYLE & DESIGN	CONNECTED HOME + HIGH TECH
SEGMENTING INFLUENCER COMMUNITIES	#BougezRoger Campaign	PR Event at B&B Italia showroom	Product Loans and Tests
	VISIBILITY	DESIRABILITY	CREDIBILITY

RESULTS:

Leveraging influencers to drive visibility, awareness and credibility, Orange achieved a successful product launch in a brand new market. The telecommunications company generated the following outcomes:

- 14k mentions on social networks, demonstrating strong influencer engagement

- 60% share of voice on conversations around the connected home

- SEO boost with product website raised among the top 10 page results on Google

- Significant increase in website traffic, demonstrating amplified brand awareness

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS:

- Establishing a dedicated team, which falls under Digital Communications, that coordinates with other departments incl. Public Relations, Client Relations and Performance Web

- Identifying the right influencer communities to activate by aligning objectives with the customer awareness process

- Enabling an always-on program that activates two previously-engaged communities and aims to engage new communities

- Segmenting and designing programs for each community with different goals, activations, and KPIs, which helps to impact multiple moments of truth

To learn more about the Orange cross-functional influencer relations program, read the in-depth success story.

TAILORING SPECIFIC PROGRAMS FOR EACH COMMUNITY

	MARKETING & COMMUNICATION	LIFESTYLE & DESIGN	CONNECTED HOME + HIGH TECH
INPUT	#BougezRoger Personalized Toolkit	PR Event, Media Pack	Info, Product Loans and Tests
OUTPUT	#Mentions	Pictures, Product displays	#Publications, Tone, Quality content
OUTCOME	Visibility, Reputation	Brand image, Brands attribution	Credibility, Website linkbacks, SEO

THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF MARKETING AND INFLUENCE

> "*A social business needs technology in order to facilitate change and collaboration. Change management is the foundation of a fully collaborative social business. It addresses the need to drive organizational change in an effort to shift employee behavior, communicate more effectively across job functions and geographies and tear down organizational silos.*" [8]

MICHAEL BRITO,
Head of US Digital, Lewis

Digital transformation is among the most important trends affecting businesses around the world. And, it is increasingly becoming a C-level imperative. Every aspect of how companies operate, compete, and innovate forms the foundation of the future of business. No function, department, process or mission will go untouched.

Among the many factors driving digital transformation, successful companies are prioritizing investments in customer and employee experience. Focusing on people and their relationship with technology gives purpose to

digital transformation—otherwise, it's just about technology. In my research over the years, I learned that

CMOs are primarily driving digital transformation inside the organization (34%).[9] This is important because initially, it was largely assumed that CIOs owned digital transformation (today, only 19%).[10]

15%

5%

34%

19%

27%
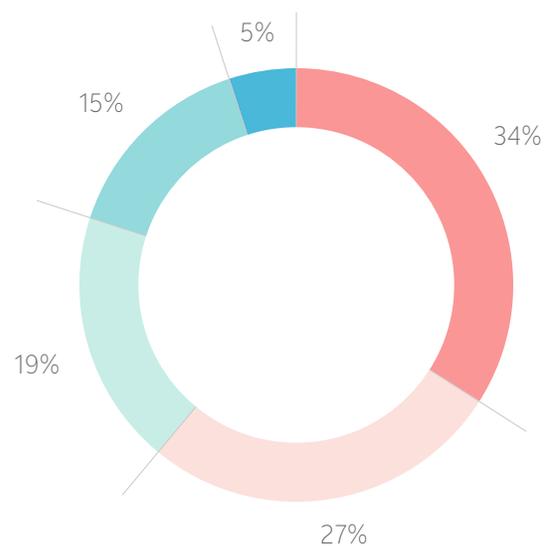
WHICH EXECUTIVE IS LEADING THE
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE?

● CMO ● CIO/CTO ● CXO
● CEO ● CDO

But, a focus on technology for the sake of technology might lead companies astray from the very relationships that will define the future of their business and markets.

Since CMOs are increasingly leading digital transformation, this opens the door to new initiatives that can radically re-imagine how companies reach customers.

Marketing needs an upgrade for the future. We can now engage consumers in their preferred channels and methods, not just try to grab their attention with a well-placed media buy. Almost every touchpoint before, during, and after transactions, can now become part of marketing. As a result, the role of marketing faces incredible opportunity and transformation as technology's impact on society and connection grows. Now, your customers and employees are becoming more informed, empowered, demanding, discerning, and elusive. The tactics and metrics of the past no longer align (if they ever really did) with how people are influenced and make decisions.

According to Edelman, every year,[11] people repeatedly say that they don't trust companies or executives. They don't succumb to campaigns the way they used to, or the way we think they used to. They don't search or browse the web like they did before. Their attention spans are becoming increasingly focused on what they want to discover. More so, their values and what they deem important is evolving.

It's what you do to understand the evolution of behaviors that shapes the course of your marketing innovation and its capacity to impact human perceptions and actions. Without doing so, you limit marketing transformation to the capacity and possibilities of the past.

Your customers and employees are counting on you to evolve. And, the more human marketing becomes, the more digital transformation can also become human … not technology-centered.

> "*What is it that I have to offer for people to choose us? It's not the thing that gives us the biggest profit margin or what's easiest for us. But what will lead people to make choices in their best interests, not just ours. If we're moving them towards good choices, then they're going to register that offering along the dimension that will benefit them.*" [12]

DR ROBERT CIALDINI,
President, Influence At Work

INFLUENCER MARKETING IS A STRATEGIC PILLAR OF HUMAN-CENTERED CHANGE

One of the challenges affecting the future of influence is that it is compartmentalized as part of other initiatives. This prevents influence from earning executive attention and support as a standalone program of value, benefitting a larger digital transformation effort. It's uncommon for executives to live the business the way their customers and employees do, so escalating influence requires marketers to expose how, where, and why digital customers and employees seek information.

Where do they derive value?
Who do they trust?
And, how does engaging with your company affect each step of their decision-making journey?

It's reported that 70% of attempts at change in organizations fail. Among the reasons, the lack of endorsement by leadership prevents change from gaining traction throughout the enterprise.[13]

When it comes to the digital transformation of marketing, gaining support at the executive level requires a champion and, ultimately, an organized approach that speaks the language of the C-suite (e.g. ROI, market share, revenue, brand score, etc.).

But, marketing as it exists today, is incredibly distributed. From search to social to mobile to web to email, to everything in between, marketing responsibilities are strewn across different facets of the organizations. It is no longer a unified function. The same fragmentation is occurring for the organization as a whole. If we examine all of the important touchpoints guiding customers and employees, there is little unification or collaboration across them. Customers don't want to see the "cogs," they want to believe that businesses operate seamlessly and effortlessly to serve their needs.

Influencer relations tops the list of marketing disciplines catalyzing the humanization of digital transformation.

And, it's one of the most effective and compelling disciplines in the marketing portfolio. To become more prominent within the marketing mix, influencer programs require someone to make the case, uniting stakeholders to lead a cross-functional initiative. By connecting the

dots between influencers and consumers throughout the customer life cycle, marketers begin to truly under-stand what drives their relationships. Influence needs its change agents to lead this charge.

> *"It's about relationships that add value to our customers, create new and exciting opportunities, and relationships that are symbiotic. We're not interested in taking a well-known face and giving them a cheque, as we are always centered on authenticity and being true to our brand." [14]*

SIMON SPROULE,
Chief Marketing Officer, Aston Martin

CASE-IN-POINT:
INFLUENCE 2.0 IN ACTION

How Leading Players Drive Digital Transformation with Influencer Marketing

OVERVIEW:
SAP, the global leader in business applications, effectively engages influencers to fuel its digital transformation efforts to reach new customers. SAP identifies third-party influencers, e.g. independent business consultants, academics, and authors who have the ability to influence its target audience, and engages them with content and programming opportunities.

CHALLENGE:
SAP's Audience Marketing team aimed to create content that would target both customers and prospects with compelling, insight-driven thought leadership. By partnering with influencers that already command the attention of the right line of business, SAP could rely on these specific voices to tell its story in a credible and trusted way.

SOLUTION:
To leverage the power of influencers for its digital marketing activities, SAP's team invited 11 influencers to attend SAPPHIRE, an annual user conference that attracts 20,000 in-person attendees and reaches up to 100,000 viewers online, and conducted interviews to live-stream throughout the event. Not only did this tactic help to extend SAPPHIRE's online reach, but it also generated evergreen video content to use in global marketing campaigns. By having influencers involved in creating the interview-based video content, SAP gave its audience another perspective of SAPPHIRE through the eyes of the influencers themselves. The content was then shared through different relevant Facebook pages (one per line of business) and the broader Facebook community.

RESULTS:
SAPPHIRE's influencer-driven video content helped Jim Dever, VP of Audience Marketing at SAP, to prove the internal value of the program by showing success along the way. The 11 influencers who participated in creating the live-video content generated 17% of the total online chatter around the event. Most importantly, SAP leveraged the video content created in order to support its ongoing global marketing campaigns.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS:

• Engaging SAP's senior executives to experience the insights of Influence 2.0 first hand and demonstrating the effectiveness of their program in order to gain buy-in from the leadership team.

• Acting as change agents and developing mutually-beneficial influencer relationships, which serve as influencer advocates both internally and externally to educate the team about best practices.

• Focusing on initiatives that offer a balance between being contained while also having some level of visibility, and leveraging events as mini influencer relations case studies.

• Driving change with interdepartmental collaboration by working with multiple teams managing audiences in IT, HR, Internet of Things, Finance, and Supply Chain.

To learn more about SAP's key success factors in driving digital transformation, read the full story about how SAP's Audience Marketing department effectively scales its influencer strategy.

"When you treat your influencers like clients, as SAP does, it leaves people with a positive feeling and they are going to want to engage with you time and time again. When the relationship is mutually beneficial, both parties are going to get the best results out of the engagement with the brand." [15]

AMISHA GANDHI,
Senior Director of Influencer Marketing

INFLUENCE IS AN ALLY TO CUSTOMER AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE INITIATIVES

Over the years, I've studied digital transformation at the enterprise level, exploring how and why companies change. Consistently, those companies that were further along in their efforts cited customer experience (CX) as a primary catalyst to accelerate and organize change. Like marketing and influence, CX work is distributed throughout the organization and is driven by the quest to understand connected customer behaviors and preferences. You can't be customer-centric if you don't understand people, and to understand people, you have to live a "day in their life." What you'll quickly realize is that people don't see departments, and they don't care about processes or policies (all the "cogs" we talked about earlier). They see one brand.

Strategic marketers are starting to see the bigger picture.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents believe influencer marketing will be integrated in all marketing activities in three years. More telling, almost half, 47%, believe it will be a cross-functional discipline that will expand beyond marketing.
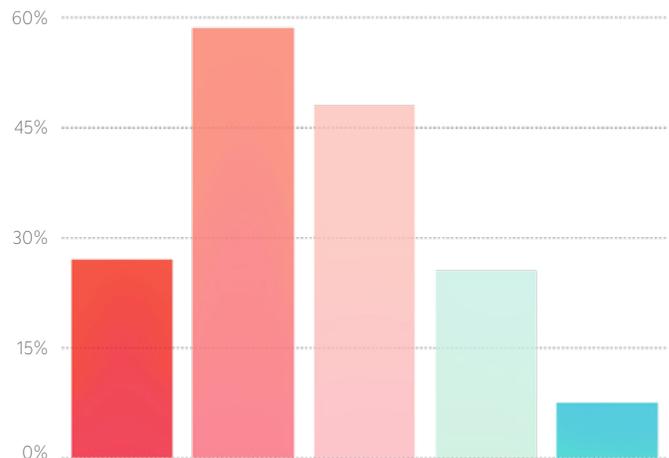
WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE INFLUENCER MARKETING PLAYING IN YOUR ORGANIZATION IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS?

- Influencer marketing will become a primary area of digital marketing investment
- Influencer marketing will be integrated in all marketing activities
- Influencer marketing will be a cross-functional discipline that will expand beyond marketing
- Influencer marketing will become a catalyst for digital transformation
- None of the above

In mid-2016, Traackr mapped out how influence (or what I call Influence 2.0) might look if it were practiced in a centralized way across the organization.[16] It introduced a visual model that displays how influence strategies should be deployed beyond social or outreach initiatives, suggesting other disciplines from

THE CROSS-FUNCTIONAL
INFLUENCE MODEL

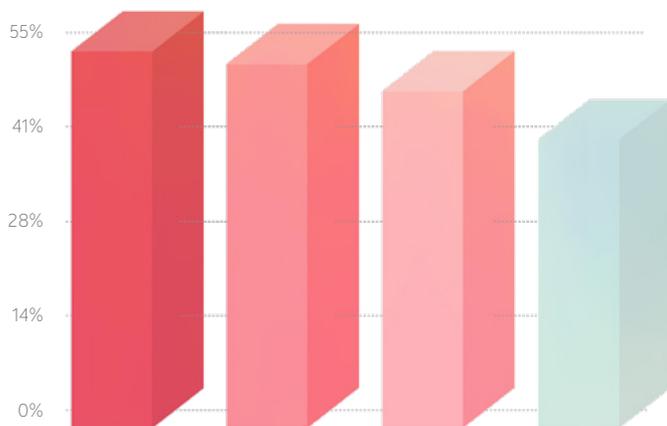Influencer programs throughout the organization
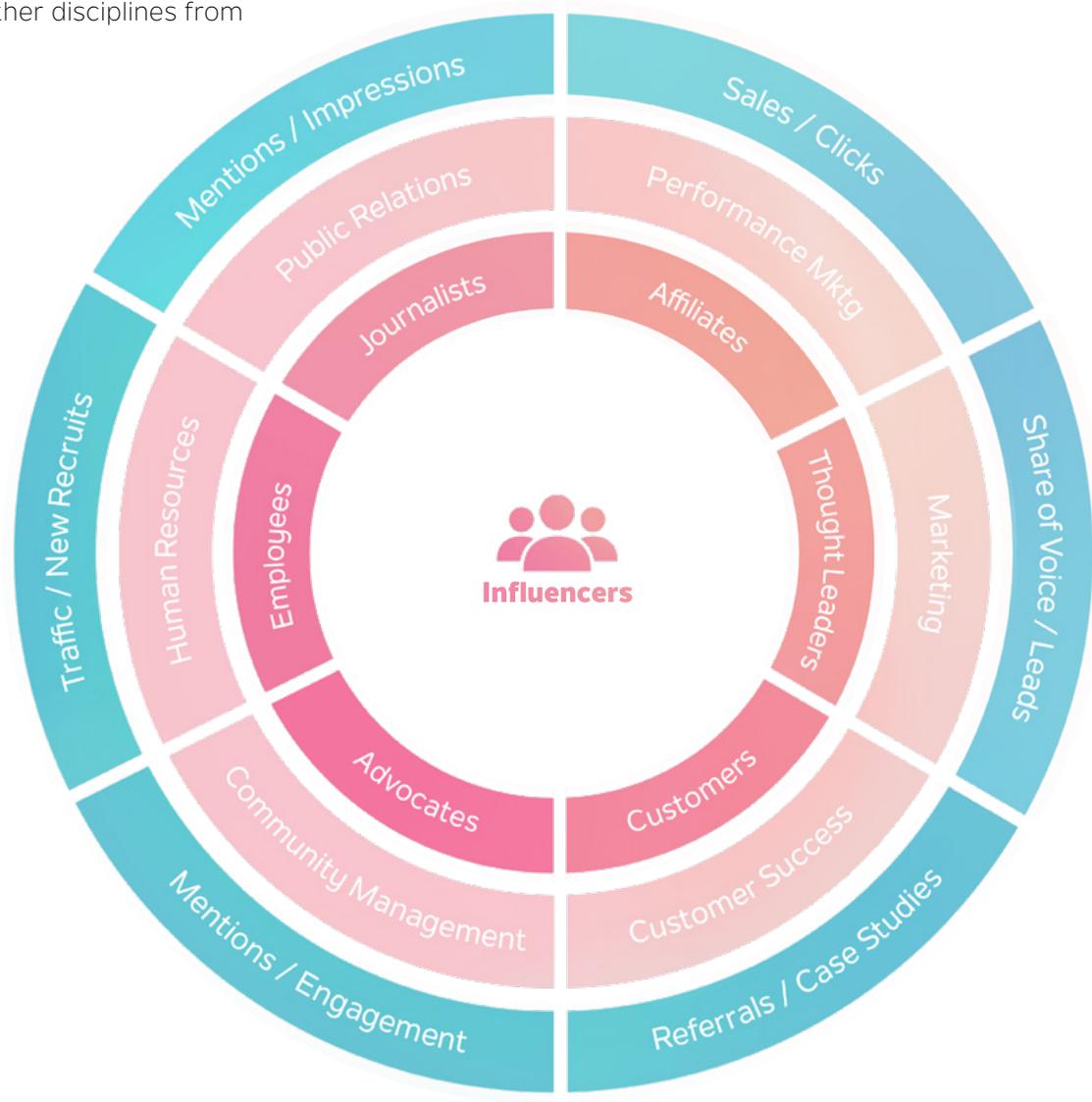
PR to HR to marketing to CX to performance. It showcases how influence is, in its very nature, cross-functional.

● Influencer Type
● Org Department
● Success Measures

Influence can become an instrumental part in trying to understand, improve, and reshape customer journeys. Earlier this year, I published "The 2016 State of Digital Transformation" with my colleague Jaimy Szymanski.

In it, we found that the top driver for CX-driven digital transformation was understanding, "evolving customer behaviors and preferences" (55%).[17] At the same time, we learned that the top challenge was "understanding behavior or impact of the new customer" (71%).

It is in this work that companies begin to close the gap between what they assume customers want or do, and what they actually want and do. This serves as the precipice for CX work and also raises the bar for digital influence.

"If you're in business, you're in the business of influence. Change always starts on one budget line so you need some champion in the organization to say we're going to try this and see what happens. Sensitizing the organization to influence flows is part of creating this competitive advantage through agility." [18]

PHILIP SHELDRAKE,
Managing Partner, Euler Partners

TOP DRIVERS FOR CX-DRIVEN
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

● Evolving customer behaviors and preferences
● Growth opportunities in new markets
● Increased competitive pressure
● New standards in regulatory and compliance

JOURNEY MAPPING SHEDS LIGHT ON CUSTOMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

One of the primary efforts that helps advance CX work is customer journey mapping. This process helps change agents document the paths customers take to make decisions. Journey mapping also helps stakeholders analyze touchpoints and identify what's missing from efforts overall.

In any customer journey, there are several common elements that guide, inform and shape perceptions along the way:

1. Efficient, optimized touchpoints, native to the device (mobile, desktop)

2. Context in each moment of truth (state of the journey, values, intent)

3. Trusted peers or influencers

4. Shared experiences (reviews, impressions)

5. Content (overviews, how-to, edutainment/entertainment and storytelling)

DISCOVER · RESEARCH · SIGNUP · USE · EXPERIENCE · INTEREST

WEEK 1 · WEEK 2 · WEEK 3 · WEEK 4 · WEEK 5
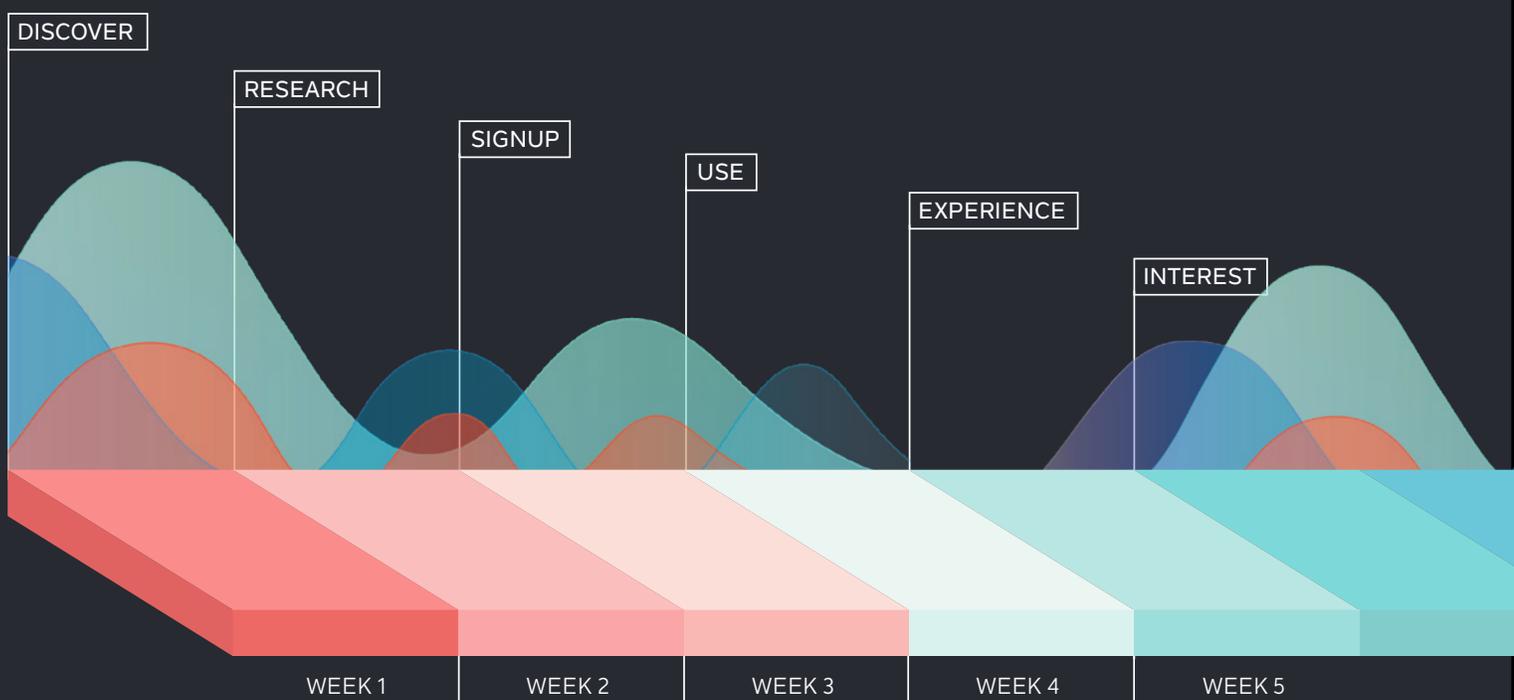
Another key benefit of journey mapping is its ability to help visualize customer behavior to other key stakeholders throughout the organization. It's important because it gives executives insights to the very things they couldn't see before and, thus, helps both human-ize digital transformation and prioritizes the initiatives that are going to have the greatest impact. Influence is always a key factor in informing the next steps of customers in all journeys, both B2B and B2C.

JOURNEY MAPPING
REPRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EARN COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

In our "State of Digital Transformation" research, we discovered that only half (54%) of survey respondents had completely mapped out the customer journey within the last year or were in the process of doing so.

And, a mere 20% were studying the mobile customer journey and/or designing for real-time "micro moments" in addition to customer journey work.

USE

LEARN

SHARE

BUY

INTEREST

EXPERIENCE

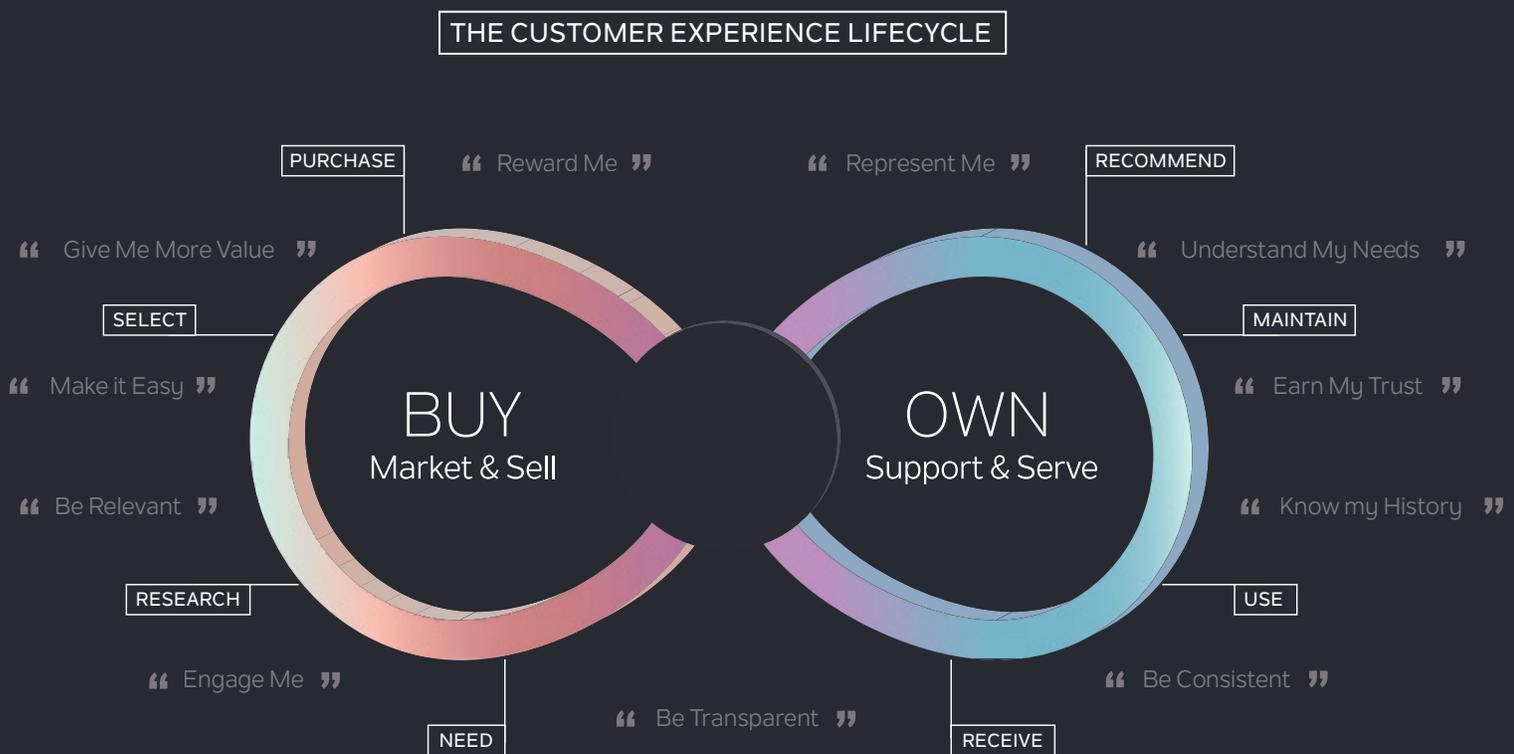| WEEK 4 | WEEK 5 | WEEK 6 | WEEK 7 | WEEK 8 | WEEK 9 |
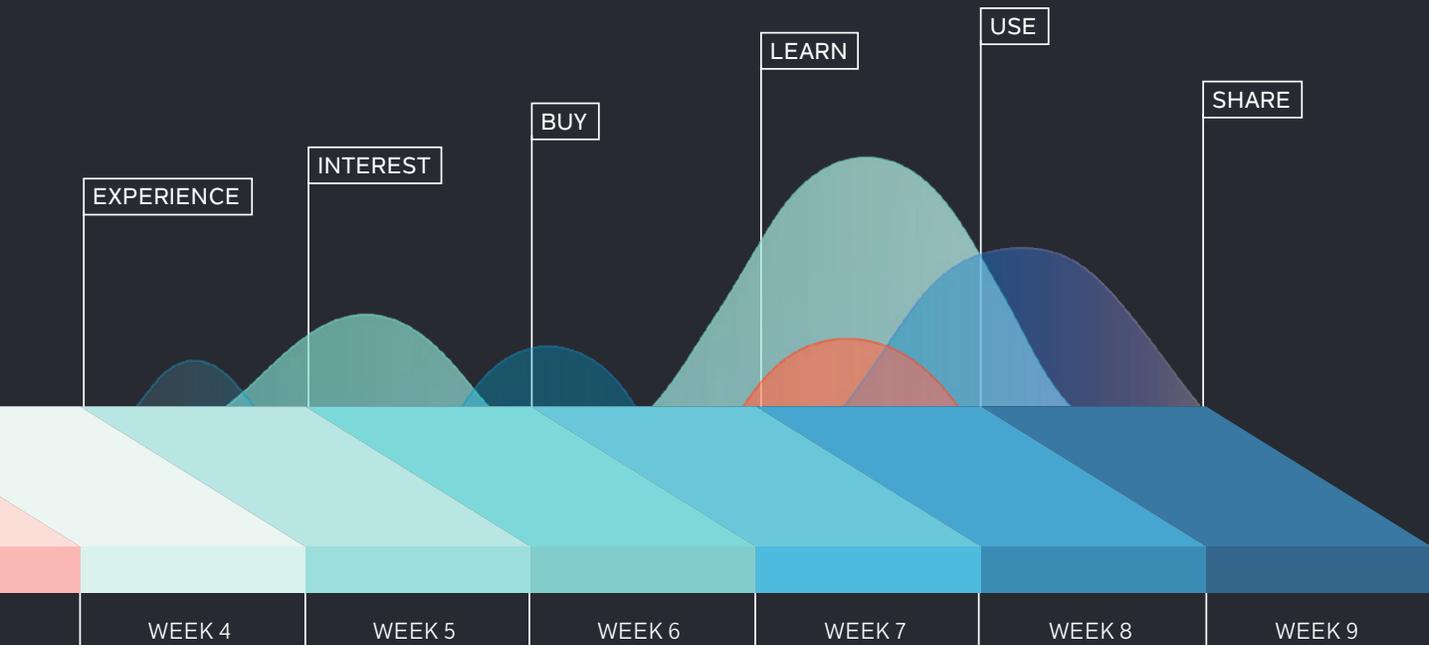
Those companies that are doing so gain a strategic, customer-centric perspective that impacts the organization far beyond marketing alone.

THE NEW, NON-LINEAR MODEL FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

People don't move linearly through decisions anymore. Below you can see how Eloqua has visualized the customer journey as an infinity loop, rather than a traditional funnel. The infinity loop voices moments of truth and opportunities for engagement through the voice of the customer. If you plot these infinity loops across your customer touchpoints during the decision lifecycle, you will set the stage for a new model of customer experience management.

THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE LIFECYCLE

PURCHASE

" Reward Me "

" Represent Me "

RECOMMEND

" Give Me More Value "

" Understand My Needs "

SELECT

MAINTAIN

" Make it Easy "

BUY
Market & Sell

OWN
Support & Serve

" Earn My Trust "

" Be Relevant "

" Know my History "

RESEARCH

USE

" Engage Me "

" Be Consistent "

NEED

" Be Transparent "

RECEIVE

At the same time, customer journeys are also becoming increasingly fragmented as mobile is the go-to device in all moments of truth. Google calls these mobile-first behaviors "micro-moments." At these points in time, customers turn to their smartphones or tablets for information, bypassing traditional marketing touchpoints.

Micro-moments and digital touchpoints in general, are defined by three pillars of new behavior that help marketers learn how to reach the right people, in the right place, at the right time, and in the right way:

1. **INTENT**
(what a consumer is trying to do),

2. **CONTEXT**
(location, time, etc.), and

3. **IMMEDIACY**
(time/efficiency).

INFLUENCE IS AN IDEAL PARTNER FOR CONTENT STRATEGIES

"*Make Your Customer The Hero of Your Story.*

Paradoxically, your "story" is not about you—it's about what you do for others. That's a subtle shift, but an important one, because it installs your customer at the very heart of your marketing. It's customer-centric versus corporate-centric." [19]

ANN HANDLEY,
Chief Content Officer, MarketingProfs

The one thing all influencers share is that their practices are built upon engaging content and community engagement. This helps them establish authority and earn trust within and beyond their communities. They all rely on engaging content, community engagement, and trusted sources to make decisions.

If you were to complement the customer journey mapping process with an influencer relationship management (IRM) platform, you would identify not only all of the key influencers for your business, but also uncover how each influence the customer journey uniquely.

Every day, your customers take to the web and social media to help make decisions or form opinions. And, they often do so via a mobile device, which changes the nature of how someone searches. In these micro-moments, customers are the most open to influence and engagement. Google found that 90% of mobile-first consumers are brand agnostic in a micro-moment and that 73% will make a decision about a brand based on which is the most useful or helpful in each instance.

This is where influence can play a tremendous role. At the same time, we found in our digital transformation research that only 22% of companies are investing in a content strategy that addresses customer needs throughout their journey. Yet, the most mature companies are finding ways to integrate influence management, content strategy and customer experience.

By aligning strategic content with influencer engagement, you can engage customers when they're most open to impressions in each moment of truth. This becomes a powerful differentiator and competitive strategy for Influence 2.0. In addition to campaign-focused programs, identifying influencers and arming them with useful, productive, and engaging content is critical. Content should help them help your potential customers in a variety of scenarios based on behaviors and goals.

CONTEXT EXPERIENCE

Re-imagining the customer journey based on customer-centered content, created and distributed by influencers and advocates. @ Brian Solis
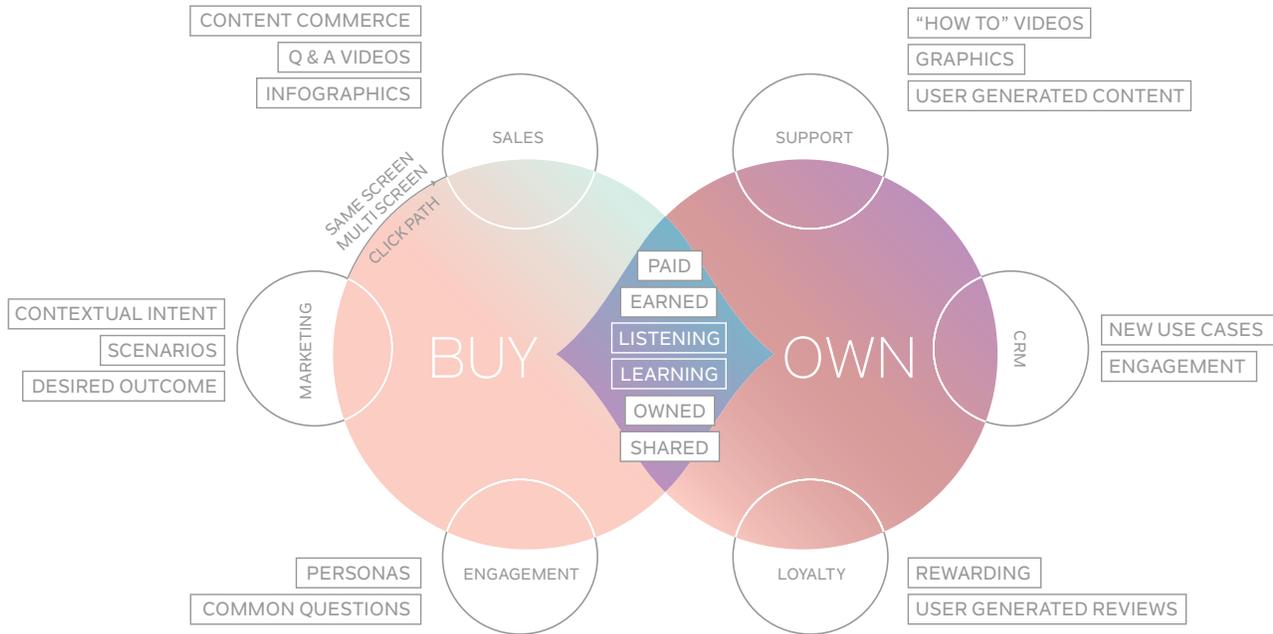
Following, you'll find a few examples of how to develop Influence 2.0 strategies (beyond campaigns) that re-shape your new customer journey. Note: your content should match your customer's preferred format, be shared in the networks your customers prefer, and be consumable on their favorite devices.

AWARENESS/DISCOVERY:

Influencers create content to introduce new products and feature capabilities to followers.

RESEARCH/INFORMATION GATHERING:

Influencers answer common questions or demonstrate common applications.

SERVICE/SUPPORT:

Influencers engage customers with information that solves problems or introduces new capabilities.

SALES/CONVERSIONS:

Influencers direct customers to the correct paths and channels to complete their purchase or further evaluate options (measured in downloads, trials, demonstrations, inquiries, purchases, etc.)

> " *If you only have one metric, then measure what matters — revenue.*
>
> *Definitely track what you've been able to influence with each activity. Are your marketing activities improving sale outcomes? Are they improving deal velocity? How about win rates, average contract values or client retention?* " [20]

JON MILLER,
Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder, Engagio

THE EVOLVING FUTURE OF INFLUENCE

The concept of Influence 2.0 is to help strategists envision a future of influencer marketing that aligns with the objectives of business, influencers, and customers. This is why the concept of Influence 2.0 is centered on relationships and relationship management. It's time for brands and agencies to think beyond traditional endorsements and campaign-driven thinking. While paid endorsements and one-off initiatives may offer short-term benefit, Influence 2.0 offers the capacity to become part of the customer journey.

By understanding customers, designing programs that matter to them, and then using platforms to partner with trusted influencers, brands can steer buyer impressions, decisions, and behaviors in more useful, productive, and mutually beneficial ways. While this may have been part of the original intention with influencer marketing 1.0, the truth is, most campaigns have been aimed at driving impressions, views, and share of voice. Influence 2.0 operates at a higher, cross-functional level, one that aligns influencers, peers, intent, and experiences throughout the customer journey. And that's what makes the influence 2.0 model so important. It's more than driving awareness or promoting advocacy; influence now spans multiple disciplines within the brand to unite once disparate groups in ways that complement

and impact sales, satisfaction, and retention. More so, by consistently connecting relevant influencers, useful and interesting content in the right places at the right time, brands earn reciprocity, establish trust and build loyalty.

> Through this renewed approach, influence helps marketers demonstrate to the C-suite that ROI is not only part of the equation, it is the direct result of clearly defining and linking the "R" or "return" to influencer and overall business objectives.

More so, ROI is tied to critical moments of truth along the customer journey.

Influence is a powerful agent of transformation, not only for marketing, but customer experience by and large. As such, influence, just like CX, cannot be considered a cost-center. In reality, it represents a strategic investment in a more meaningful and productive customer journey. ROI now becomes something tangible and measurable by function and by touchpoint because you can now link influence and content marketing directly to both business goals and customer objectives.

Remember, customer journeys are "always on," while campaigns come and go. Campaigns are not the totality of influence; rather, they are part of an overall relationship. Influence never stops, and people are always looking for others they trust to make informed decisions. To fast track digital transformation, strategists must learn more about how customers make decisions, who and what influences them, and why. Influencer relations, spanning from relationship building and nurturing, to the software platforms that enable accurate identification and influencer management, serves as the foundation for Influence 2.0.

Make influencer relations a priority now. If you continue to approach influencer marketing as usual, you are readying to be left behind, losing control of your brand and the ability to compete in a world where customers are in control.

Leaders must strategically align influencers with every customer touchpoint. They must also invest in an IRM platform to more effectively run and optimize long-term engagements. Without doing so, customers are left to their own devices as they continue to hack customer journeys to work for them. They no longer wish to follow legacy process or outdated touchpoints. Innovation in CX and influence culminates in conforming to customer

expectations and aspirations, instead of making them conform to your legacy perspectives, assumptions, processes, and metrics of success.

> "*I am a major advocate for making all of our jobs easier as marketers and it's time we put the technology to work for us. Having a tool such as Traackr in your arsenal can help tie influencer marketing back to overall business goals and prove the marketing value to your CMO; that's a very good thing.*" [21]

JASON MILLER,
Global Content Marketing Leader, LinkedIn

SETTING THE FOUNDATION FOR INFLUENCE 2.0

As you shift from traditional influencer marketing to a next-generation Influence 2.0 strategy, ask yourself: how can I start with a more effective approach to what I'm doing now?

1. START WITH OUTCOMES.

Of course you must consider business goals and objectives, but you must also align desired business outcomes with influencer and customer objectives in each moment of truth—from awareness, to consideration, to decision, to overall experience. This means that those working on influence and every facet of customer engagement must consider outcomes across the board and then reverse engineer programs to deliver against them. Otherwise, no influence program will operate in manners that are mutually-beneficial and productive.

2. ALIGN YOUR WORK WITH INTERNAL CX EFFORTS.

Customer journey mapping and persona development is either underway somewhere within the organization, or perhaps you can spark cross-functional alignment to get it done. Anyone working on customer engagement should know how influence plays a role in decision making and also establishing trust and loyalty. Chances are, those who are working in customer experience strategies, aren't thinking about influence, but they should.

That's where your work, and influence in general, will have its greatest impact. You'll have to make the case to CX stakeholders. They don't get influence, and they don't want to hear about influencer marketing 1.0 campaigns. They need education so they can appreciate how influencers aid in the customer journey. You can help them learn what collaboration looks like, how it works, and how cross-functional influence will greatly enhance the real-world experience customers want.

3. MAP (FOCUS) THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY SPECIFIC FOR INFLUENCE RELATIONS.

You have to meet customer expectations based on their behaviors and needs, not just based upon a touchpoint you're pushing on them. Start by identifying the touchpoints that are important to them. Understand where and how to be useful in everyday moments. Without understanding the customer journey, where they go and why, the questions they ask, the results they find, what's effective and ineffective about existing touchpoints, which touchpoints are missing, and who influences them, your work will miss the mark for meaningful engagement. This work modernizes the customer journey to include touchpoints and opportunities for influencer relations to create a vibrant community for peer-to-peer engagement.

4. UNCOVER THE TOP CUSTOMER SEARCHES AND THE QUESTIONS THEY ASK.

Rather than pushing marketing messages and trendy content at people, gather insights from their behaviors to deliver value when you connect influencers with them. Look beyond keyword searches, look at the questions that they ask. Many customers ask questions that begin with "what," "when" and "how." In fact, one of the most popular questions your customers ask, starts with "how to."

5. DISCOVER WHERE THEY'RE GOING TO ASK THOSE QUESTIONS, WHO IS ANSWERING THEM, AND WHAT THEY DO NEXT.

When people ask questions, they find answers. Based on behavior, uncover where they go and why. Furthermore, discover who they listen to and trust. An IRM platform will help you identify the right influencers who are leading the conversations that matter to your business. By understanding the questions people are asking and who's answering them, you can learn how to partner with the right people and create meaningful content that can serve in a variety of programs and touchpoints.

6. READ AND FOLLOW THE WORK OF INFLUENCERS.

In my experience, few people actually read the work of influencers before reaching out to them. They just assume influencers waiting idly for marketers to reach out with a brand partnership opportunity. Remember, this is about relationships. Make the personal investment in understanding why they have earned their communities and what mutually beneficial relationships would look like.

7. TALK TO CUSTOMERS.

Use surveys of course, but you can also benefit by having real conversations with consumers to see how and why influencers influence every day, in real-world scenarios.

Interview people to learn what they were seeking in each moments or even to learn what moments you're missing, who influences them and why, and how satisfied they were with the results they received. More importantly, ask them what happens in and after each moment. What's the journey according to them?

8. UTILIZE AN IRM TOOL TO SCALE INFLUENCER PROGRAMS.

As you're transitioning your influencer program to center more on CX and an "always on" mindset vs. traditional campaign approaches and/or "pay for play" tactics, it's time to consider technologies that can help deliver scale. The role of technology and software becomes especially important in efficiently executing global programs and managing their ongoing success. We learned that 53% of respondents with multi-geography execution and interdepartmental collaboration are using an IRM tool.

9. USE YOUR IRM PLATFORM TO ALIGN INFLUENCERS ALONG THE CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

and empower them with strategic content and engagement programs. Once you use an IRM platform to identify key influencers, work with cross-functional teams to design ideal content and engagement strategies that connect customers with trusted sources paired with authentic content and information (based on all of the above). Then create content and engagement programs that help your company be useful in key moments and micro-moments throughout the customer journey.

10. MEASURE FOR ENGAGEMENT, IMPACT, AND GROWTH.

Look beyond traditional marketing metrics. Identify with the value that matters to customers and the outcomes that matter to your business and the influencers you partner with; everything else is a distraction. Assign KPIs and outcomes to influencer programs that align with specific instances in the customer journey, i.e. awareness, sales, support, and loyalty. These KPIs should also complement existing metrics that matter to each moment, such as reach, acquisition, conversion, retention, etc. Also add an additional layer that considers metrics that tie to overall consumer intentions and aspirations. For example, implement customer effort/ efficiency scores, CSAT and/or NPS. And last but not least, include metrics that measure influencer engagement, performance and fulfillment. Ultimately, influencer program KPIs must align with over-arching business and departmental goals as well.

METHODOLOGY

This research study was commissioned by Traackr in partnership with TopRank Marketing to understand the current and future state of influencer marketing in leading enterprises.

The research was conducted by Traackr and TopRank Marketing with the guidance of Brian Solis from Altimeter using an anonymous online questionnaire between August 24 and September 28, 2016. In total, 102 brand strategists and marketers from leading companies from around the world responded. These included Microsoft, American Express, 3M, Amazon Web Services, Diageo, Adobe and many more.

This custom report is sponsored by Traackr and TopRank Marketing. While the research in this report has been informed by the qualitative research study, all analysis and insights are independent and represent Altimeter's body of research.

RESPONDENTS

102 brand strategists and marketers from leading companies around the world inc. Microsoft, American Express, 3M, Amazon Web Services, Diageo, Adobe and many more.

ENTERPRISE SIZE:

70% of respondents come from companies sized 1000+
48% of respondents come from companies sized 10000+
36% come from either Fortune 1000 or Global 500 companies

RESPONDENT LEVEL:

28% are CMOs or higher
50% are VPs or higher
81% are Directors or higher

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ABOUT

BRIAN SOLIS

Brian Solis is a digital analyst, anthropologist, and also a futurist. Solis studies the effects of disruptive technology on business and society. More so, he humanizes these impacts to help people see people differently and understand what to do about it. He is an award-winning author and avid keynote speaker who is globally recognized as one of the most prominent thought leaders in digital transformation, experience design and innovation.

Traackr and TopRank Marketing partnered with Brian on the "future of influence" because of his pioneering work in digital influence. With roots in the 1990s, he helped shape how digital influencers "become influential," developed best practices in influencer relations and measurement, formed a practice in 1999 dedicated to influencer engagement and also rose to become an influencer in his own right. Brian also authored a groundbreaking research report on "The Rise of Digital Influence" in 2012, which is still regarded as one of the most comprehensive studies and forward-thinking pieces on the subject.

Brian has also authored several best-selling books including What's the Future of Business (WTF), The End of Business as Usual and Engage! His latest book "X," explores the intersection of where business meets design to create engaging and meaningful experiences.

ALTIMETER®
@Prophet

Altimeter, a Prophet company, is a research and strategy consulting firm that helps companies understand and take advantage of digital disruption. In 2015, Prophet acquired Altimeter Group to bring forward-thinking digital research and strategy consulting together under one umbrella, and to help clients unlock the power of digital transformation. Altimeter, founded in 2008 by best-selling author Charlene Li, focuses on research in digital transformation, social business and governance, customer experience, big data, and content strategy.

TopRank® Marketing

TopRank Marketing is a respected digital marketing agency serving enterprise organizations with integrated content and influencer marketing solutions. As publisher of an award winning marketing blog and speaking internationally, TopRank Marketing advocates and implements holistic content marketing programs that strengthen influencer relationships, improve customer engagement and increase brand revenue.

TRAACKR

Traackr builds IRM technology that enables brands to effectively manage, measure and scale influencer strategies, while maintaining authenticity. This gives CMOs and their teams the ability to align influencers along the customer journey, impacting buying decisions at each moment-of-truth with trustworthy touch points. Traackr's SaaS platform powers leading influencer programs for B2B and B2C global enterprises such as L'Oréal, The Coca Cola Company, Samsung, Microsoft, Intel, SAP, Orange, USAA, Merck, Roche and Capital One.