



AGENCY VS IN-HOUSE

THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO INFLUENCER OUTREACH

[WHITE PAPER]



INTRODUCTION



Influencers have changed the face of PR campaigns over the past few years.

Where once brands looked to celebrities to promote their products in traditional campaigns, influencers now speak directly to audiences that feel a deep connection with them, having followed their rise on social media.

In this white paper, we will look at the pros and cons of using agencies or in-house teams to connect with influencers.



THE INFLUENCER ENVIRONMENT

From millennial YouTube stars to social-media-savvy political researchers, influencers offer brands unparalleled channel reach and audience engagement.

According to a 2016 survey by EConsultancy, 43% of companies claim social media stars are the most relevant to their advertising strategies, followed by singers (38%), models (28%), TV actors (25%) and sports personalities (22%). They have engaged followings that have been developed organically – offering ‘authenticity’ that brands crave.

The influencer environment has also changed. The first generation of YouTube stars now have their own product lines and book deals; they increasingly resemble the conventional celebrities they initially appeared as an alternative to.



THE INFLUENCER ENVIRONMENT



Brands are turning more to ‘micro-influencers’ – who have a relatively small number of highly engaged followers – to target niche audiences. According to a survey by Markerly, ‘likes’ on Instagram posts drop off from 2.4% for influencers with 10,000 to 100,000 followers to 1.7% for those with one million to 10 million followers, pointing to a ‘sweet spot’ for engagement in the 10,000 to 100,000-follower range.

Brands looking for a way to circumvent ad-blocking have turned to the more collaborative approach offered by influencers.

While it’s fairly easy to block posts with #spon or #ad hashtags, higher levels of engagement mean brands can form fruitful partnerships with influencers.

Lubomira Rochet, chief digital officer at L’Oreal, which works with French YouTuber and make-up reviewer EnjoyPhoenix, among others, told the Financial Times last June:

‘We need to reinvent the experience and we need to make it less interruptive, more immersive, more rewarding, more personalised.’

THE INFLUENCER CHALLENGE



The challenge for brands is how to discover, track and partner the wealth of influencer talent out there – it's a shifting landscape, with new faces constantly emerging.

Brands have traditionally tended to outsource media relations to agencies, and so they have naturally picked up the baton for influencer marketing; more than 85% of agencies now offer 'influencer outreach', according to the PRCA.

Specialist influencer and digital comms agencies have also sprung up to meet the growing need; even areas such as public affairs now have dedicated agencies focused on building relationships with political players.

Agencies tend to be more agile, able to adapt quickly and use their previous experience alongside their existing contacts.

Their work with influencers is not restricted to a single brand or campaign, which allows them to develop strong, long lasting relationships that can prove fruitful for a multitude of clients.



THE INFLUENCER CHALLENGE



There are also advantages to using in-house teams. They have a deeper understanding of their brand that external agencies simply don't have time to develop.

They're permanently immersed in their brand values, and know instinctively what those values are and how to present their message authentically. This also equips them to spot relevant emerging influencer talent and build relationships with those individuals early on – when they're in that crucial sweet spot of reach and engagement.

Both agencies and in-house teams can develop long-term relationships to help brands deliver more authentic messaging through trusted influencers' channels as they grow organically.

Crucially, though, in-house teams also know what success looks like for their brand so they won't be wowed by vanity metrics about reach or follower counts that don't speak to the engagement that influencers have with their audience.

They know to look for KPIs relating to the way in which influencers affect consumer buying behaviours, advocacy and loyalty.

IN-HOUSE VS AGENCY



So, what are the main advantages of using in-house teams or agencies?

Agency

Able to focus more resources on influencer engagement and relationship development

Can develop relationships for a variety of clients and use these for new clients or campaigns

Specialist agencies that purely focus on one area for a variety of clients

In-house

Fully immersed in the brand's values that can be used to build the right relationships

Can measure an influencer's effect on their brand in real-terms

Entirely responsible for the relationship, not dependent on third parties staying on good terms

CONCLUSION



The challenge for in-house teams lies in the effort it takes to build and maintain networks of influencers – something that agencies can dedicate resources to through a focus on influencer marketing.

However, tools have emerged that enable in-house teams to curate and build relationships with networks of influencers much more easily.

For example, the **Vuelio Media Database** not only equips PRs with accurate, real-time media lists that help brands target contacts based on sector, interests, location and coverage topics; brands can also identify and track social influencers through the UK's biggest network of bloggers and digital influencers.

Vuelio also allows brands to build consistent, lasting relationships with influencers. It can automatically record every engagement and interaction to ensure the lines taken are consistent at even the largest, most unwieldy organisations.

Whether you're in-house or an agency, influencers are increasingly vital to the work you do and the future of your brand messaging. Vuelio is constantly evolving to meet the needs of any team looking to build relationships and take advantage of the influencer landscape.



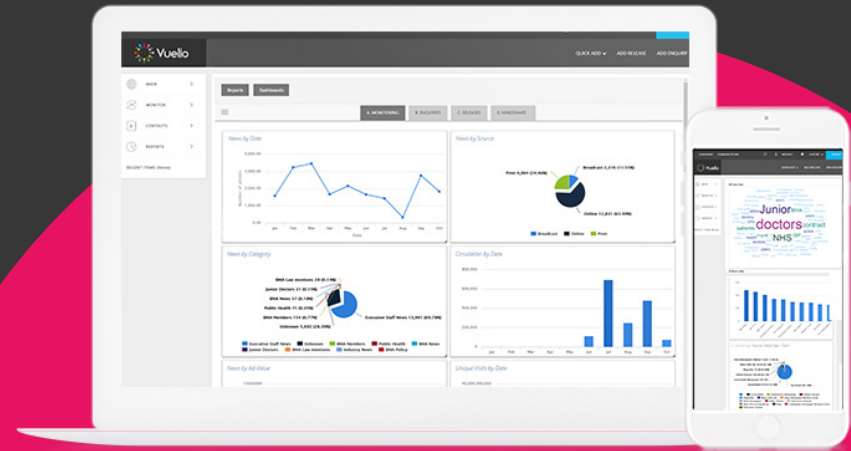
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