

Guide to **Becoming an Influencer** and Profiting



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Influencer marketing has skyrocketed in the past few years. In addition, it's expected to continue to grow. It's not just for big brands and social media celebrities, though. Many bloggers and social media posters with smaller followings are jumping in and profiting from this trend. They are called micro-influencers.

What is an influencer? An influencer is an everyday person who has established credibility and a loyal following, both on social media and off, in a specific niche or industry. They transparently share their expertise and valuable information with their followers.

People trust peers. That is how influencers are seen. Sharing content and insight in a transparent manner leads people to trust their recommendations. This applies to everything including what action to take, what product to buy, which movie to see and where to travel. However, this trust extends to many other areas of life as well.

Companies are using these influencers as a way to grab attention of their products and services. The influencer promotes the product for some form of compensation mutually beneficial to both the brand and the influencer. For example, the company reaches a more specifically targeted audience, while the influencer is paid and continues to grow their audience followers.

You can tap in to this and become an influencer in your own field. It won't happen overnight but with work, patience and following this guide you will be on your way to becoming an influencer and profiting from it.

We start by looking at how to become a micro-influencer, giving you some tips and the best ways to do so, along with some common mistakes you should avoid. Then we'll move on to the ways you can profit from being an influencer. Lastly, we'll show you how to pitch yourself as an influencer.

Becoming a Micro-Influencer

Before you can become a large-scale influencer with over 500,000 followers, you'll start as a micro-influencer. Let's begin learning how to become an influencer by determining what a micro-influencer is. A micro-influencer is someone with a few thousand followers, but less than 50,000 followers. They are small-scale influencers who are knowledgeable and passionate about their niche. They are also authentic and engage more often with their audience than large-scale influencers or celebrities.

What does it take to become a micro-, macro- or any type of influencer?

1. You have to find your niche and be passionate about it. Where do you want to be known? Focus on a particular niche within the industry you are passionate about. For example, are you passionate about losing weight? Instead of focusing on all

types of weight loss, you would focus on one specific way such as low carb eating. Determine who is your target audience and develop their unique persona.

2. Choose what social media channel you will focus your content on. Many choose to use Instagram, but you want to have an active presence where your ideal audience member is spending most of their time. Look at other influencers in your niche. Where are they posting?
3. Create stunning photographs. Instead of thinking only of individual shots you want to post, consider your entire feed as a way to represent your brand to your audience and potential customers. Create a cohesive palette. Keep things on topic and have an aesthetically pleasing look that is uniform and recognizable. For instance, post all your photos in bright colors or photos with cool undertones.
4. Post consistently and create a content strategy to boost your visibility and attract more followers. The more you post, the better your chances you will be engaging your followers and increasing your follower growth rate. Experiment on the time of day your posts get the most likes. Then create a posting schedule based on that time. Post more than once a day, as well, to gain followers and get engagement.

Use social automation tools to schedule your posts. This helps you to maintain consistency with your posts. These tools allow you to create, upload, and schedule several posts at once, instead of manually posting to each of your profiles at the time you want the post to go live. Scheduling multiple posts helps you to work more efficiently and ensure each post is seen on the appropriate date and at the optimum viewing time.

5. Build a lasting relationship with your followers. Establish loyalty by engaging meaningfully with followers to help you become an influencer. When your followers leave a comment or question on your post, take the time to respond to them. Take time to return the favor by liking and commenting on their content. This makes them feel like you value them and sincerely want to help them while building a relationship with them. It shows them you are listening to them.

Interacting with your followers, guiding them with their purchase decisions, provide them with useful and relevant tips and providing genuine help shows prospective brand partners you are someone who can effectively market their products.

Use this checklist to increase your post engagement:

- Include a call-to-action in your caption
- Post when you're likely to get the most engagement
- Host contests, giveaways
- Follow similar accounts. Engage with their content
- Use polls

6. Grow your network through blogging. Blogging helps you grow your follower base. Even though many internet users are using social media networks for information gathering, you don't own your space there. They can take down your account at any time, causing you to lose all your content and those hard-won followers.

Blogging is your own platform that helps you get discovered. Include social media sharing buttons on each of your blog posts for visitors to share your content. Have premium content offers on your blog that can be shared. Blogging lets you connect with key influencers in your niche.

7. Guest posting is another way to grow your following by getting featured in reputable sites within your niche. It helps you capture the attention of prominent influencers and opens doors to collaborating with them.
8. Evaluate your insights and analytics to keep track of your progress. Brands looking to collaborate look for this in influencers to partner with. Social media channels give you the tools to monitor your demographics, reach and engagement rate. These show you how quickly or slowly your audience is growing. Keep track of this information.
9. Stay up-to-date related to social media platform changes such as algorithms, posting terms, and other conditions to avoid being penalized. Familiarize yourself with FTC guidelines and policies as well. This is especially important if you plan to work with brands to promote their products and services, as part of your social media marketing.

Becoming an influencer of any kind takes time and patience. It takes consistency and work as well. Becoming a social media influencer in your industry requires a high level of responsibility, respect, honesty, and approachability. All of these characteristics and qualities help you to cultivate your followers by building solid relationships with them.

Tips and Best Practices

Now that you know what becoming an influencer involves, you can begin the process by following best practices and helpful tips to grow your following by attracting your target audience's attention, and establishing yourself as an authority in your field.

Follow these tips to start getting more followers.

- Create a noteworthy bio that catches people's attention. It should talk about your story in an engaging way. Your bio is the one of the first things brands and potential followers see on your account. Include your top keyword, such as travel

blogger, in the name field. Tell your story in your profile. Don't just give keywords talk about your story.

- Share your stories. The captions that go with the photos you share are important. They tell your stories and are what connects you with your followers on an emotional level. It's the reason they trust you, engage with you, and follow you.
- Be genuine in your actions. Followers will easily see through you if you're not. They can tell if you don't have a passion for your topic. Share personal stories in a way your audience finds interesting and authentic.
- Use the right hashtags. They are important since it allows your content to be found by other users. You can use a maximum of 30 hashtags on a photo on Instagram. You don't necessarily want to use hashtags with high search volumes because it could mean high competition. Instead, choose hashtags with a decent search volume between 10,000 and 1 million.
- Make sure your social media accounts are business accounts, if they are offered. Serious influencers all have a business account, which provides access to insights and analytics. You'll be able to see follower demographics, post engagement stats, as well as other important information and suggestions.
- Tag relevant brands once you reach at least a thousand followers with good engagement. Tag them on your photos to put you on their radar. Send direct messages to the brands that are relevant to your niche.
- Be passionate about what you are talking about. State the most important points or information more than once. Stay on top of your chosen topic by following the news and blogs related to your topic. You want to be able to talk with your audience about the newest happening in your niche.
- Plan how and when you will create, edit, and publish content. Make a schedule at least a month ahead of your publish date. Determine how many times a day you will be posting on each of the social channels you use.
- Experiment on the different types of formats to post. Photos, stories, videos, or live video. Photos are just a glimpse of what you want your follower to see. Stories are photos or videos that disappear after 24 hours but are excellent for getting exposure. Live videos stream what you're doing in real-time, for example, a "behind the scenes" look at what you do.

- Do not buy followers! It will hurt you in the long run. You want to be open and honest with your followers. Most brands won't work with you if you've purchased a list of followers. This mistake can damage your entire reputation, which is the kiss of death for an influencer. Without the trust and confidence of possible business partners and potential customers, you are not likely to succeed.
- Know your data for when brands ask, you can quickly give it to them. Transparency in influencer marketing is important. Stay ahead of the others by being open with your data. Use Google Analytics, Instagram Insights and other apps like Iconosquare to stay up to date on your progress. This information is valuable to both you and potential brand partners because you can show and prove your worth.
- Create a media section on your site. In it, provide a media kit to use as a promotion tool. A media kit showcases who you are and why brands should work with you. It contains information regarding your experience, social accounts, relevant statistics, accomplishments, motivations, and how you help brands achieve their goals, as well as other tools. Make the media kit easy to access and download. Include these types of things in the kit:
 - Your bio: who you are, your niche, etc.
 - What you offer
 - Your social handles/avatars
 - Follower counts
 - Engagement rates
 - Contact information
 - Brand info such as header, logo
 - Professional photo of you
 - Past collaborations

Building your following through trust, authenticity, and honesty is important to becoming an influencer that others want to work with. Use these tips to build and grow your following and get the attention of brands.

How to Make Money as an Influencer

Becoming an influencer is great but you probably want to be able to make money at it as well, right? How do you make money as an influencer? There are many options available to you on social media platforms.

Let's look at some of them.

Partner with Brands with Sponsored Posts

Sponsored posts are one of the most effective ways to make money as an influencer. Sponsored content on Instagram can be an image or a video talking about or highlighting the product.

Once you have enough followers, begin seeking out brands to partner with that align with your industry/niche and your image. Sponsored post endorses a brand or product and often stretch out over a set number of posts. You get paid per post.

For example, a brand may commission you to do four Instagram posts, one blog post and a live video. You get paid for each or you can offer a package deal for a set amount.

The amount you can make per post depends on two important factors:

1. The size of your following
2. Your engagement rates

You choose the kind of partnerships you want to enter into with brands. It can be a one-time partnership with only a few posts or a long-term partnership that is ongoing. Brands might seek you out or you can contact them directly. There are two ways to contact brands:

- Directly through emails or phone calls
- Indirectly using an influencer platform like Tribe or Upfluence

Although being paid for posts and videos is the most common way to charge for working with brands you can also charge for:

- ✓ A mention of the brand or product in a caption with out a picture of the product.
- ✓ A set number of stories mentioning the brand.
- ✓ Promoting a giveaway for the brand.
- ✓ Host an Instagram Stories takeover of the brand's account. Instagram stories takeover is where you or someone else temporarily takes over another person/brands Instagram Stories.

Become a Brand Ambassador

Brand ambassadors are an effective way for influencers to make money. Companies hire influencers for long-term relations and pay them on a retainer basis. The influencer becomes an expert on the brand and its product. They then promote their partnership on their social media platform. Brand ambassadors can be micro-influencers or be influencers with millions of followers.

Affiliate Marketing

If you are just starting to gain traction as an influencer, you might not have enough followers yet to do sponsored posts. Affiliate marketing is a good way to make money while you grow.

Affiliate marketing is the process of promoting a product through personalized links and getting paid for each sale.

Choose brands that align with your image and content. Contact them through their affiliate program and offer to promote their product or brand. There are many popular affiliate marketplaces online like Amazon, Ebates, ShareASale, and others.

Link to the product bio on Instagram. You get a commission when someone clicks on the link and purchases the product.

Your Own Products or Services

A direct way to earn money as an influencer is to promote and sell your own products or services. You can set up your own store or website with your services or products that are both tangible and digital. These might include things like clothing or jewelry, artwork, homemade cupcakes or books you've written. Digital products might include eBooks you've written software you created or any other product the consumer can instantly download.

Post beautiful, sharp pictures of your product in some creative way. Use editing tools like Pixlr or Adobe Photoshop to make the product interesting.

Make your descriptions clear and appealing. Post behind-the-scenes images or user-generated photos for an emotional connection with your followers. Use relevant hashtags to make it easy for people to find the product.

Sell Your Photos

If you're artistic or good at taking photos, you can make money-selling pictures you take. Advertise and showcase your pictures to other individuals or brands.

Take pictures that focus on popular niches. The images should be high quality and unique. Add a watermark to your images and use captions to list the selling details. Use appropriate hashtags to attract the relevant customer.

Events

This can be anything from a paid appearance for showing up at an event, hosting an event for others or your own event you sell tickets to. It can be a tour where you meet your fans and followers as well. Use your imagination to come up with creative ways to use events as an influencer to earn money.

These are just a few of the ways to make money as an influencer. Like any form of business, using your creative skills for ways to make money is unlimited.

How to Pitch Yourself as an Influencer

Successful influencers know how to pitch themselves. It's important to learn how as a new influencer to be successful collaborating with brands. You need to understand the fundamentals of pitching to win the brands you like the most. When you work with brands, you like and use, it allows you to be authentic and build trust with your followers.

Here is what you need to know for creating a pitch:

Learn about the chosen brand first. Ask yourself:

- What channels are they active on?
- What influencer marketing have they done?
- Who is their target market? Is it in line with your own?
- Is there an actual person to contact?
- What products of theirs do you want to promote the most?

Tag brands on Instagram to get the attention of brands. They might reach out to you to work together on something. This helps you begin to build a relationship with them that can lead to pitching them to collaborate later on.

Once you know more about who you are targeting, it's time to create your pitch. It can be done via email or over the phone. Find the right contact person if possible.

Approach it from the brands point of view. How can you make it easy for them to say yes?

Keep your pitch clear and concise. Write it once and edit it, removing fluff but still sounding human. Keep it warm, casual, and professional with a personalized touch.

Make the subject line enticing. In the email body, get straight to the point explaining who you are, why you love their brand and how you can help them achieve their goals. Offer them something. It could be a free shoot, a free post, or a mention on your social media channels.

Explain why you are a good fit. Be clear on this. Share previous work you've done with similar brands, include a link to your media kit, or mention previous clients. Share examples of your work with direct links to your work on your blog/portfolio/website.

Keep the email short, 2 or 3 paragraphs is best. Brands are busy running their business. They don't like getting long emails and don't have time to read them.

Keep track of all the names of all the brands you want to work with. Putting this information in a spreadsheet helps you see who you've contacted with the name of the contact person, who responded, follow up information and anything else you need to know to build a relationship with the brand.

Follow up is a good idea if you haven't heard from them after the first email. Follow up about a week or so after the first one with a short email.

Finally, don't give up or be discouraged. Pitching is a lot like selling. You may only get one or two answers from a load of emails sent. It's nothing personal if they don't want to work with you. It could be you're not the right fit for them or maybe they don't need you right now. You only need a few to begin making money from brands.

Your Next Steps

As you can see, becoming an influencer is more than just posting funny videos online. It takes work, preparation, and planning. It also takes putting yourself out there and taking the reins in working with brands.

You begin as an influencer when you start building relationships with your followers and they trust what you have to say. Answer their questions, respond to their comments, like, and share their content as well.

Begin to build relationships with other influencers and brands. Look for ones that compliment your own niche, are ethical and you like. Mention them in your feeds, follow their social media channels. Ask questions and comment on their posts.

Begin pitching to brands for sponsored posts to begin making money as an influencer. Find creative ways to work with brands and showcase their specific products. In the meantime, promote affiliate products that you use and fit with your topic. Promote your own products or services to help your followers and make money.

Being an influencer won't happen overnight, but it will happen if you take the right steps, share relevant content often, build relationships, and maintain a high level of transparency and trust.