Brandwatch

Social Listening in Practice/
Influencer Marketing

INTRODUCTION:

Think 'influencer marketing' is just a fashionable phrase? Not so. Influencer marketing can equal big business. Big money.

This paper, one of an ongoing use case series, will show you how using influencers to contribute to the marketing of your product can supercharge your campaigns and help you reach a bigger, more relevant audience than ever before.

We'll look at:

- The how
- The why
- Working examples: UNIQLO, Filippo Berio & Wendy's
- How to evaluate your efforts

The evolution of brands and social media

As consumer usage of social media has evolved over the past decade, so has the way it is approached by businesses.

Only a few years back, dialogue in the communications industry focused on the future of social media and how its significance in marketing, PR and customer relations would rise to global prominence. We're now beyond predictions; social media has reached maturity faster than we may have imagined.

Record-breaking, live-tweeted world events, customers complaining on Twitter before anywhere else, thousands of communities of teen YouTubers, Instagram celebrities and bloggers as influential as whole publications - evidence is abundant of today's socially consumed world.

But what does this mean for brands?

"Today's influencer landscape is populated by bloggers, college professors, podcasters, Instagram celebrities, and everything in between. Given this diversity, we now reach the point of pain for effective influencer marketing - targeting the best brand evangelist in a mix. This is where social metrics tools come in, as well as experience and intuition. Let's face it, engaging Lady Gaga to influence buyers of sports socks may seen a brilliant idea, but economically speaking the end result may be a horrendous ROI. Whereas, 20 key bloggers might serve the purpose better, and far more cost effectively, and especially in the long term"

Phil Butler, Senior Partner, Pamil Visions Public Relations

The social revolution has had a direct commercial impact too. With Amazon reviews, forums and blogs, there's been a shift in trust. We trust our peers.

Research from Sony has showed that people are more than five times as likely to buy based on a recommendation from a social peer than they are when having simply been exposed to traditional forms of marketing.

The great news is that brands can leverage this; Sony was able to focus on the 15% of their huge customer base that wielded significant social influence and increase sales by 300% by honing their marketing to target them.

INSIGHT, STRATEGY, CREATIVITY

With consumers now so entrenched in this social lifestyle, businesses are under incredible pressure to do more than simply participate. Insight, strategy and creativity are now as essential to social media communications as they have ever been to broadcast, print, PR and direct marketing campaigns.

That said, the public and conversational nature of the social landscape means that certain new challenges and potential opportunities are present within the fundamentals of commercial communication. Of these, none are more significant than those pertaining to monitoring, analyzing and understanding the ever-expanding universe of social media data.

The possibilities within social media monitoring have been recognized since consumers first began to embrace social media, and its sophistication has evolved in parallel with the increased adoption.

Ongoing and rapid technological development in the mining and analysis of social media requires businesses to stay informed about what can be achieved at the cutting edge. The purpose of this paper is to facilitate exactly that, specifically looking at the lucrative potential of influencer marketing.

We will look at how combinations of conversation and author data can be used across different platforms, helping to locate influential targets for outreach and measure the impact they can make.

What is influencer marketing, and how does it work?

In essence, influencer marketing is a very simple notion: a brand using the influence of an individual to increase awareness or sales of its products.

Speaking broadly, this may include celebrity endorsements or sports sponsorship; campaigns that take place offline, via traditional media. Here though, we are focusing on how in particular the web and social media can be used for influencer marketing. As such, with the growth of content marketing, subtler, less direct tactics may be employed, where the influencer is promoting a piece of content from a brand, rather than explicitly a product or service.

So, the specific goal may be referred traffic, link backs, lead generation, direct sales or simply reach or impressions. How exactly the influencers are sourced, partnered with and of course measured will be affected by which goals are prioritized.

It is also important to remember that when you're looking to your end goal, different companies offer different metrics - MozRank differs from Kred, which in turn differs from Klout. You need to work out which metrics suit you and your campaign, and build on them.

Where should you be focusing your efforts?

On social media, every platform plays a role in how individuals earn their influence, how their audience engages and how brands can leverage the influence. Which particular platforms you want to focus on will likely depend both on the industry and nature of your product/service as well as your particular goals. Let's consider the dynamics of the different platforms and what they may have to offer.

SOCIAL MEDIA

As the two giants of social networking, Twitter and Facebook are perhaps the most obvious places to think of influence. However and wherever they have earned it, individuals with significant authority online will likely have substantial followings on one or both of these platforms simply by virtue of the mammoth userbases of each.

"On Facebook, advocates can share deeper thoughts. The tool lends itself to longer posts, images and video. More than just the ability to share deeper content, Facebook also lends itself to deeper relationships, so advocates on Facebook generally have stronger relationships with friends than an advocate on Twitter has with his/her followers. Twitter is an effective broadcast platform, but doesn't have the same advocacy depth as Facebook due to the short posts and public nature of the platform/followers."

Erik Qualman, author of SocialNomics

Of course, there are limitations to these channels - they are typically not suited to longer form content, their content is not necessarily easily surfaced by search engines and they offer very little room for site links that provide SEO benefits.

While other platforms also may lend themselves to direct sale or lead conversion, what Facebook and Twitter are arguably most powerful for is their sheer reach, which can potentially lead to highly relevant and qualified traffic.

MULTIMEDIA

Self-made YouTubers are now a titanic force unto themselves. Whether it's pop culture, technology or fashion, the most popular YouTube channels exert incredible impact on the tastes and buying decisions of millions of viewers.

Certain brands and industries lend themselves to YouTube's visual nature, perhaps where physical exposure of the product is particularly important, such as unboxing of technology or cosmetics sample reviews, for instance.

Buyers can find a wealth of content online about pretty much any product today, and when it comes to certain items it is beneficial to get a feel for what it looks like for real, in a fellow customer's hands, rather than pro-lit studio shots.

6
billion hours of YouTube video are watched each month (almost an hour for every person on Earth)

Unboxings and product demonstrations are all about putting the viewer in the shoes of a new customer of the product before they actually have to make a purchase - almost a narrated simulation of having it for themselves. If a brand can use this proactively as a marketing tool, all the better for their chances of reaching the right audience.

It is worth considering the relatively newer platforms too.

In the last 2-3 years, Vine and Pinterest have become huge channels of activity. It was recently reported that leading 'Viners' can earn as much as £2k per second for brand placement. As for Pinterest, it's commonly cited as the leading social media force in retail, with 10.9% of its traffic heading to retailers' sites versus just 5.3% of Facebook's and 2.8% of Twitter's. (CNBC.com.)

BLOGS, FORUMS & COMMUNITIES

Perhaps easiest to compare with traditional PR is partnering with influential bloggers; think of inviting a journalist from your local paper down to see a play, or a food critic to your restaurant. One of the first forms of social media, blogger communities have evolved over several years to rival, and often supersede, traditional publications.

Many blogs that started out as personal diaries, read by few, have developed into multi-contributor channels, with high

6.7m
people blog, and **77%** of internet users read blogs regularly

volumes of content and policies regarding PR and sponsored content.

Blogs have a long shelf life, are very targeted and specific, and are very active for knowledge exchange. If someone wants to buy a new camera, they're able to do a quick search and find a wealth of blogs offering up expert advice and opinions. Interacting in comments sections is quick, simple and enables those in the know to impart advice when needed - brands should tap into this. Another early manifestation of social media, forums contain hordes of users who wield significant influence over their communities.Think of Mumsnet, Reddit, GameFAQs. Intimidating, perhaps. But worth persevering with.

Forums are self-organized, often closed and niche communities that are built on trust between their members, so can be a more sensitive place to work with influencers and should approached as such. But when approached correctly, the dividends can be fruitful. As an example, UK energy supplier Eon's reps spent time on financial forum MoneySavingExpert answering questions, cultivating relationships and engaging with their target demographic, allowing them to truly get into the heart of the conversations about their market online.

Remember - influencers can use multiple platforms

Unsurprisingly, the majority of online influencers are present across multiple platforms. They may promote their Vines via Facebook, their YouTube via Twitter or their blog via Pinterest. Cross-promotion is a powerful aspect to influencer marketing, and while specific platforms may perform certain functions particularly well, it's often advisable to look at online influence holistically.

CASE STUDY/ UNIQLO– CONNECTING DESIGNERS AND FASHION BLOGGERS VIA GOOGLE HANGOUT

Working with agency iCrossing, fashion brand UNIQLO successfully benefitted from blogger influence during their launch of the UNIQLO x Orla Kiely: HEATTECH collection.

In October 2013, UNIQLO hosted a Google Hangout in which Kiely was interviewed by fashion blogger and "super-fan" Carrie Harwood, as well as five other selected bloggers via the live video feed, which was open to view by all UNIQLO's customers.

Employing various pre-event tactics, the interview was hugely successful, with more than 30 articles written about it across fashion blogs and high profile publications. A great use of new technology combined with smartly targeted blogger outreach helped iCrossing achieve a 26% increase in year-on-year natural search revenue for UNIQLO, based on January to November figures, and the brand reaching their highest sales figures in 4 years, according to Bloomberg

The importance of research in the process

Social reach of this influencer campaign:

332,000
consumers

A key focus of this paper will be the "finding" component of influencer marketing. Once you've established a brief of what you want to achieve and what your angle for engaging advocates is going to be, every influencer marketing campaign should start with planned and meticulous research.

But your research is only as good as the technology that underpins it.

Finding high quality, relevant targets for outreach is absolutely paramount to success. Without a well honed set of influencers to go after, you risk wasting valuable time later on as you find your targets are outdated, irrelevant, based in the wrong location, not PR-friendly or any other number of hurdles. We'll focus on this crucial aspect in the subsequent sections, looking at how your tactics will differ depending on which platform you're looking at.

But you don't want to leave it there. Following the execution of the content and the output from your influencers, you're going to need to measure.

Did you want awareness? You could see how that translates into online mentions. Did you want to increase your brand profile? Perhaps that means a rise in Twitter followers of Facebook likes. Maybe you wanted traffic or even sales - so make sure your measurement process is able to shed light on this as much as possible via site visit/conversion data.

CASE STUDY/ WENDY'S– 'SWEET MADE SWEETER' BLOGGER OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Fast food brands don't need to try hard to win over the kids, as often they're already on-side but, of course, are usually at the mercy of their parents' buying decisions. Recognizing this, Wendy's sought out support from that infamous ring of influence: the mom bloggers.

By sourcing a selection of highly followed and widely read mom blogs, reaching out to them to give them a free "Frosty" and newly launched "Frosty Waffle Cone" products and asking them to post about their experience, Wendy's was able to reach a targeted audience from a platform of trust and resonance.

Asking them to focus on the nostalgic aspects of the Frosty, the creative angle of the campaign was about the "sweet moments in life" - backed up by the familiar personalities of the moms and brought to life in pictures of good times with their kids. Sales rocketed.

Spotlight on/ Finding your influencers

When you think about influencers and who it is you really want to find, one of the best ways to start your search is based on keyword queries - in other words, determining the words or phrases that the people you want to find might use.

This might be based on brands, whether that means yours, a competitor or perhaps even complementary brands. Depending on the size of the brand(s) in question and how frequently it's mentioned online, it's possible that your query will need greater specificity than simply the brand name.

For example, you might want to find those making comparisons, so mentioning more than one brand. Or perhaps you need to include language that draws out only people who have expressed an opinion about the brand, whether positive or negative. Similarly, you could home in on mentions relating to a potential or actual purchase of the brands' products.

Going down a level, your query may often need to focus on the brand's actual products, on a category, range or individual basis. Many of the same variations on language apply here as with the brand queries.

#Brandwatchtips

Try using Kred in Brandwatch to **identify influencers** on Twitter. The more people follow a tweeter, retweet or reply to the mention, the **higher their score.**

Greater sophistication and intelligence in your queries will pay huge dividends in the long run, so don't make the mistake of thinking only as far as Google.

Enterprise-level social media monitoring tools are built for analysis and research exactly like this. They allow you to craft incisive queries that can be saved and kept running to continue gathering data. They provide categorization and visualization tools to help you

manage and display the data. They can also collect huge amounts of metadata - vital for filtering and sorting to really dig into the information you're pulling in.

METRICS OR MANUAL?

Naturally, a degree of human analysis will always be required to check over potential targets for outreach.

However, combined with sophisticated online queries, stats, metrics, rankings, and metadata are extremely powerful in their ability to instantly filter, sort and prioritize huge groups of results. Numbers don't tell the whole story, but starting without them is impossible.

But metrics from tools such as Kred or Mozrank aren't all you need. You need to think about what's important to you - you need to find your own perfect balance. Don't just rely on a score generated for you.

FREQUENCY OR INFLUENCE?

When compiling your list of influencers, it may be worth determining the extent to which you are interested in the individuals' proximity and relevance to the brand/product/subject in question compared to their level of influence. In other words, would you prefer to target people who talk regularly about the pertinent topics but perhaps have a lower profile, or would you prefer those with the highest possible profile who occasionally (if at all) mention related topics? Clarifying this will make it easier to hone your searching and filtering methodology.

TWEETER	TWEETS	SENTIMENT POS	SENTIMENT NEG	SENTIMENT NEU	IMPACT TOTAL ▾	TWITTER FOLLOWERS	DEMOGRAPHICS ACCOUNT TYPE	DEMOGRAPHICS GENDER	KRED INFLUENCE	KRED OUTREACH
@DEEJAYSPURESILK	62	0	0	62	60	2199	Individual ⌄	Unknown ⌄	748	7
@WSJ	1	0	0	1	57	5122716	Organisational ⌄	-	998	8
@peta	1	1	0	0	54	524213	Organisational ⌄	-	988	9
@instagram	1	0	0	1	53	35443072	Organisational ⌄	-	1000	6
@lucyhale	1	0	1	0	53	3987291	Individual ⌄	Female ⌄	997	7
@BleacherReport	1	0	0	1	52	1072853	Organisational ⌄	-	986	7
@barbiesway	2	0	0	2	51	26068	Individual ⌄	Female ⌄	946	10
@HOT97	1	0	0	1	50	471558	Organisational ⌄	-	995	8
@JayyVonMonroe	1	0	0	1	50	222380	Individual ⌄	Unknown ⌄	985	7
@stopbeingfamous ▾	1	0	0	1	50	36137	Individual ⌄	Unknown ⌄	985	9

CASE STUDY/ FILIPPO BERIO– USING INFLUENCERS TO REACH OVER A MILLION CONSUMERS

Leading olive oil brand Filippo Berio targeted over 250 influential bloggers based in their key 15 target states in the US to help market their products and drive sales among those who they already knew used olive oil-based products, as well as cooking enthusiasts.

After targeting men and women aged between 25-39 who'd disclosed that they used olive oil once per week or more, Filippo Berio sent them a bottle of their Extra Virgin Olive Oil product, along with tips and tricks in a Mediterranean-themed recipe book and further booklets to pass to friends, including money-off coupons. Cue many happy home-cooks, writing about their experiences.

The campaign was a massive success, with 45% of the influencers targeted saying that they continued to purchase and use the Extra Virgin Olive Oil product after the campaign ended, with sales boosting to over double the average for the period following the process.

286
influencer-authored blogs, **over 1m** consumers reached

#Brandwatchtips
Set a **MozRank filter** to chart only mentions of pages with a score of over 5 to keep tabs on influential sites and **cut out irrelevant data.**

FINDING INFLUENTIAL BLOGGERS

When it comes to blogs, several of the primary indicators of influence or authority are the same you'd look at to profile a site for SEO purposes. That means:

MozRank - a score given to any page on the internet, based on the number and quality of other pages that link to them. The higher the quality of links, the higher the MozRank.

Backlinks (or "inbound links")

Including these filters and columns in your analysis of the blogs that mention your query (whether it's brand, product or topic based) will allow you to determine how much authority each site carries as a whole.

More specific to blogs, a quick-fire way to add a level of engagement analysis to the individual blog post is to use the number of comments that have been added to the blog.

Blogging sites that publish huge volumes of content may have achieved a high MozRank and garnered a substantial number of backlinks, but that doesn't mean readers are truly engaged with all their content. If you pick up a relevant blog that you find users regularly comment on, you know that successfully reaching out to that blogger will get you in front of an engaged and possibly even interactive audience.

FINDING INFLUENTIAL TWEETERS

It's probably the most oft-referenced vanity metric for any mainstream discussion about online influencer: Twitter followers. The public nature of the platform means, theoretically, anybody can attract followers from anywhere. However, those followers need to be at first earned and then rewarded in order for them to stick around and help the profile spread further. So, a substantial base of Twitter followers is a valuable asset to any individual, and is the first basic way of judging influence on the platform. However, the more something is valued, of course, the more people will try to cheat it. Any number of black hat tactics can result in a Twitter user garnering a large number of followers, but to evaluate the authenticity, and thus the value of these followers, requires extra dimensions.

Follower to following ratio

- Retweets
- Demographics
- Follower to following ratio

#Brandwatchtips

For reach-focused campaigns, apply a filter to **identify tweeters** with over **1000 followers**.

#Brandwatchtips

Keep an eye on the follower to following ratio— **the higher the ratio, the more influential** the tweeter. 10:1 or above can indicate a major thought leader.

It might not be immediately obvious why it matters how many people a Twitter user is following, but a simple way to spot a suspect character is to look for high following numbers. Someone might have 25k followers, but if they're following 25k users themselves, you know something's up - no genuine Twitter user could possibly need to follow that many people.

"With influencer marketing it is important to identify the different between influencers and advocates, while advocates may engage with a brand a lot it does not make them influential. I like to see the linkages a person has within different communities, to find the influencer who connects a number of communities together"

Dr Jillian Ney, Ceo, Disruptive Insight

RETWEETS

Another simple measure of a Twitter user's real authority, if you have the right tool, is how many retweets their tweets get. This will show how likely it is that the messages they post get amplified by others' activity, which not only tells you their followers are authentic and engaged themselves, but it can result in even broader reach if the retweeters have substantial following of their own.

Any good enterprise-level social media monitoring tool will allow you to include retweet numbers in your analysis - all the better if you can both sort by them as well as set parameters, e.g. only collect results with at least 1 retweet.

#Brandwatchtips

Sort your influencer tables by number of retweets to keep track of whose tweets are most popular.

DEMOGRAPHICS:

With a combination of the numerical Twitter metadata above, you should have a decent hold of who the most genuinely influential people are that match your original query. The process doesn't stop there, however.

Consider matters such as location, gender and account type (i.e. individual versus

#Brandwatchtips

Set up location and account type filters to your **data to find only individuals rather than businesses**, and experiment with location operators to get local influencers.

organizational) and it's clear how being able to include this qualitative metadata in your analysis will dramatically enhance the relevance and quality of your targets - beyond simply gauging their influence.

FORUMS, FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

Forums and their profile data can often be relatively private and secure to external parties. When using query-based methods though, filtering the page-type to show exclusively forums can be useful - particularly when there is metadata pertaining to the level of activity in a particular thread. Thread comments, views and similar numbers can indicate a thriving forum in which influential users are likely to be present - so consider this as a deft way of narrowing your search parameters when it comes to finding forum influencers.

#Brandwatchtips

Try using the platform-agnostic Impact score to surface widely shared content across page types, and easily spot who authored it.

FACEBOOK

While Twitter and YouTube are platforms from which influencers have actually originated and built their audience, this has never been quite the same for Facebook because of its foundation in being a "real friends" network.

That said, most influencers (particularly the very high profile) on other channels will have a Facebook page (as opposed to a profile) to augment their fan base and distribute their content, often as a secondary medium. For any targets you find on other platforms, it's worth seeking out their Facebook page to see if this will provide extra value in your campaigns with them.
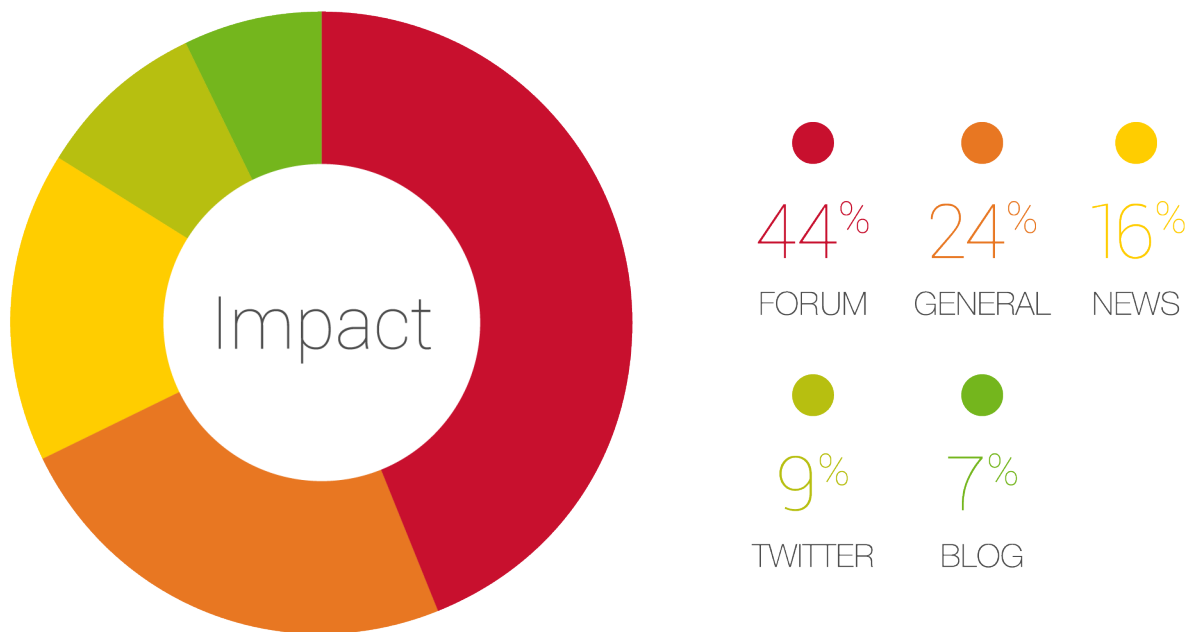
YOUTUBE

Aside from trawling YouTube itself, another way to source influencers from the video-sharing platform is to group all potential targets based, again, on a query. You can use monitoring tools to focus just on mentions from video sites, or even specifically on YouTube.

You'll then want to judge the level of influence by view counts or by subscribers - the latter number is the most commonly referenced for judging a YouTuber's stature.

SO, HOW EFFECTIVE WAS YOUR INFLUENCER CAMPAIGN?

The goals of your influencer campaign should, of course, be front of mind from the planning and research stages right through to the outreach, but the final stage is where you need to perform the analysis that measures how successful you've been.

Impact

44% FORUM

24% GENERAL

16% NEWS

9% TWITTER

7% BLOG

One of the most simple objectives is to increase the number of times your brand, product or specific campaign is mentioned online. In order to see the impact of your influencer campaign on this, you should have been monitoring mentions previously - but with certain tools it is possible to historically retrieve data in order to make those over-time comparisons.

Of course, not all mentions are created equal - 35 instances of "news" mentions might be seem valuable at first glance, but dig a little deeper into the impact of those items (for example by looking at the quantity/quality of shares) and it may become clear they are all replicas of a press article published across a syndicate of similar websites.

The chances are, then, that the handful of manually crafted tweets which garnered interaction from real users with real followers are more valuable.
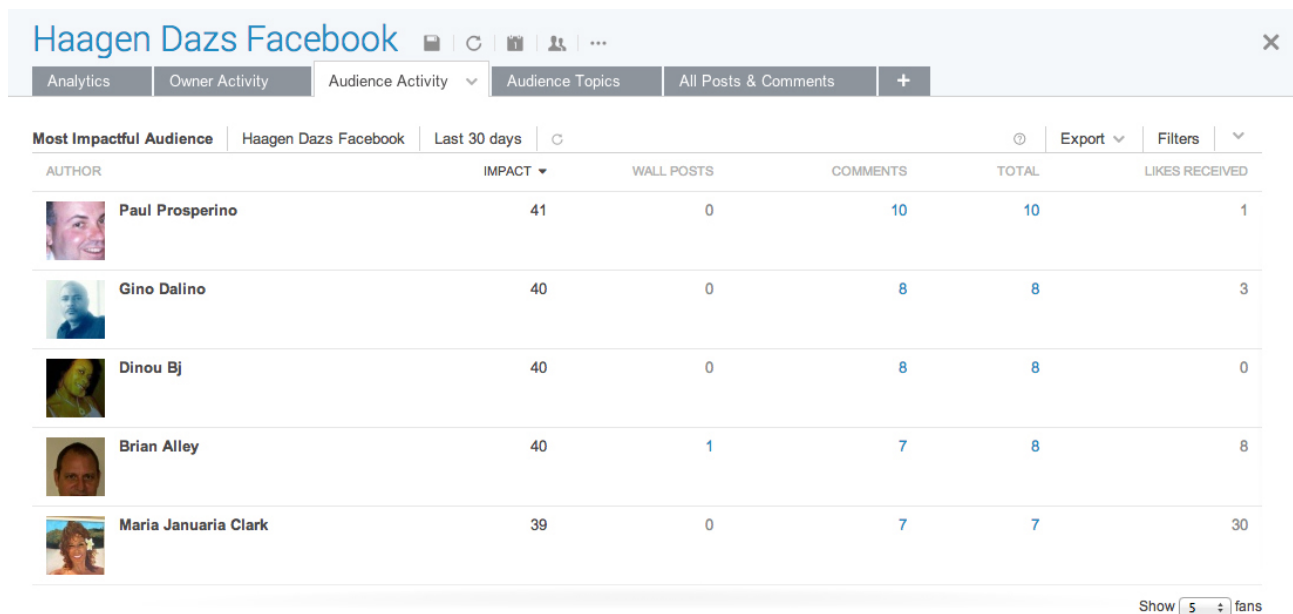
As well as comparing to your own level of online buzz over time, it's useful to monitor competitors to see if you can determine whether your campaign has helped steal a march on them and gain a greater slice of that share-of-voice pie.

COMMUNITY GROWTH

A significant increase in online conversation, as above, may have a trickle down effect on your social audiences, e.g. the number of likes on your Facebook page or followers on Twitter. This is a good means of validation of the integrity of that online conversation–if there are real people behind it, and the reaction is positive, you know it counts for something.

Have your influencers been explicitly promoting your own social channels via theirs? In that case, it makes even more sense to have had a goal for growth in these channels' audiences.

There are limitations of retrospective follower counting on Twitter so, again, it's advisable to have your profile set up with at tracking tool in advance so you can pinpoint the triggers which increased your follower numbers.

Haagen Dazs Facebook					
Analytics	Owner Activity	Audience Activity ⌄	Audience Topics	All Posts & Comments	+

Most Impactful Audience | Haagen Dazs Facebook | Last 30 days ↻   ⓘ | Export ⌄ | Filters ⌄

AUTHOR	IMPACT ▼	WALL POSTS	COMMENTS	TOTAL	LIKES RECEIVED
Paul Prosperino	41	0	10	10	1
Gino Dalino	40	0	8	8	3
Dinou Bj	40	0	8	8	0
Brian Alley	40	1	7	8	8
Maria Januaria Clark	39	0	7	7	30

Show 5 ⌄ fans

ENGAGEMENT INCREASE

Looking further down the "funnel" is to examine the engagement received, either on the influencers' output or on your own channels, as a result of their activity.

As with all these areas of measurement, a certain amount can be done manually on the platform themselves, but to really get the full picture you need to look to specialized tracking platforms.

For example, use a tool that allows you to monitor multiple Twitter accounts (e.g. yours and your influencers) so you can see the relative number of @s/RTs gained during the campaign period - and even better filter explicitly for just the relevant mentions.

Christmas
trick or treating   Price   Happy Halloween   Join
Halloween party   guys Halloween costume
chance to win   Halloween night   FREE
Halloween costume
Halloween this year   Check   Halloween costumes
celebrating Halloween

TRAFFIC, CONVERSION AND PURCHASE INTENT

For when your goals are more acquisition-based, you may need to move beyond the realms of social measurement to site stats in a tool such as Google Analytics. Here you can tie back your social/influencer efforts to traffic driven to your site, and even resulting conversions– whether that means email signups, lead generation or sales.

Still, site analytics often lack the personal link– you might see apparent interest resulting from your campaign in the form of traffic to product pages, but what if it doesn't fully convert. How do you know if that was genuine interest and what can you do about?

A more linguistically sophisticated component of social media analysis is using additional words and phrases in your queries to pull out mentions that relate to an intended or actual purchase.

By seeing how many more people have expressed interest in, or an experience of, actually buying the products related to your campaign, you can add a useful element of qualitative information to understanding the kind of impact your influencers have had - often more colorful and insightful than anonymous on-site metrics.

We use Brandwatch Analytics every day to understand and empower our own influencer marketing. To find out more, you can browse our 'influencers' section on the website.

Listen, analyze and act with confidence.

Find more value in the social data that's important to your business with an advanced social media monitoring and analytics platform.

We hope that you've found this guide useful, and will be applying the tips and tricks within to help find influencers. For this guide, and the others in the Social Listening in Practice series, we used Brandwatch Analytics for the examples we gave you.

You can find out more and request a demo by visiting **brandwatch.com/demo**

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