THE ROAD TO INFLUENCE
8 Tips to Help You Amplify Your Brand through Influencer Loyalty and Advocacy
Be it a brand, service, product, or individual, establishing influence is a primary goal.

You want to influence consumers to purchase your products or services. You want to influence an audience to think about issues important to you. But you have to find the right balance of being an influencer while aligning yourself with other parties who can help boost your credibility.

Everyone understands that social media is a powerful and evolving tool to do this. Social media also amplifies the communicator’s role and makes it more effective. However, those realizations are just the tip of the iceberg.

To establish true influence through social media, many factors need to be considered. On the pages that follow, you’ll find eight tips that will help you establish maximum influence on social media.

Marketing-inspired word-of-mouth generates more than twice the sales of paid advertising, and these customers have a 37% higher retention rate.

Source: McKinsey Study
TIP #1: FIND YOUR AUTHENTIC VOICE

One of the most important factors in establishing a brand is authenticity. In social media, nothing matters more. You have to be true to yourself and make sure the real you shines through in your social voice. For brands seeking to be influential, social content must capture the brand essence by being authentic. Social is all about being real. And if you’re not – you will be quickly exposed to everyone.

“Living and breathing an authentic story is the best way to survive in a conversation-rich world.”
- Seth Godin, American author, entrepreneur, marketer, and public speaker

TIP #2: IDENTIFY INFLUENCERS AND WORK WITH THEM DAILY

To become an influencer, you need to know other influencers – and not just the well-known bloggers everyone knows. They are important, of course, but social influencers exist in almost every category – and not all of them have blogs. You need to understand how an always-on influencer program can positively impact your business. And if you keep your finger on the pulse of influence, you might even identify a “rising star.” That’s a relationship that truly proves beneficial if it’s established before that influencer gains his or her ultimate renown.

Among StatSocial’s Top-100 Social Media Power Influencers, 2015 Edition, are some non-bloggers: Laura Fitton and Dan Schawbel. Fitton (#25) is an online marketing generalist who co-authored Twitter for Dummies and Schawbel (#29) is a New York Times bestselling author.
TIP #3: UNCOVER THE POWER IN THE MIDDLE

Many of the tools being used to measure influence focus on how to best target and engage high-ranking influencers. But recent research has underscored how a focus on middle-level influencers – the “power middle” – is actually much more effective and cost-efficient in terms of engagement and driving earned media. The “power middle” are influencers of “average” influence that have as few as 2,500 recurring, highly targeted and engaged monthly followers. They might have a smaller following than A-list influencers, but their followers are much more loyal.

According to a SocialChorus analysis of more than 200 social word-of-mouth campaigns, “power middle” influencers drive an average of 16-times higher engagement rates than paid media and owned alternatives.

TIP #4: GATHER FACE-TO-FACE — IT STILL MATTERS

While social media enables connections to be established between parties anywhere in the world, live events still matter. Real-life gatherings are crucial to developing relationships – and relationships fuel social media. To be a true influencer, you need to be a true part of a community. Face-to-face is still the best way to establish that.

“Face-to-face skills complement the social media connection. I am a massive fan and evangelist of social media. However, the relationship that is formed by meeting people in real life and connecting with them on a face-to-face basis can never be replaced.”

- Douglas Lim, social media marketing and SEO expert, originally published on douglaslim.org and then posted on Leaders West Digital Marketing Journal.
TIP #5: ADD VALUE WITH A HELPING HAND

A key to becoming an influencer is providing information that will empower your audience to improve in a tangible way. On a very practical level, offering information will help your audience find a solution for a need or problem. On another level, you should look to help your audience members grow their own networks and share the spotlight with them. Many long-lasting relationships come from a sincere desire to help others.

“One thing that helps one become influential is to work on helping others rise up.”
- Chris Brogan, CEO of Owner Media Group

TIP #6: LEARN TO LOVE YOUR DATA

Measurement is often thought of as an activity that culminates a project. However, it is a critical part of an ongoing process. Measurement should inform strategy at all points of any project. Digital media gives you the ability to immediately understand what your audience relates to, what it wants to hear from you, and so on. Data, when used most effectively, will actually tell you how to increase your influence.

HubSpot’s Content Strategist Brittany Leaning writes on DataSift, “If you want to actually know the level of success you’ve achieved instead of guessing, you’ll need to use some level of metrics to analyze your influence.”

Though brands were the focal point of that statement, it holds equally true for individuals.
TIP #7: TRUST YOUR GUT

Data will give you valuable insight into what your audience needs to hear from you. But data only goes so far. Paying attention to trends and the news will certainly inform the content you put out there. A key reason you become – and stay – an influencer is because of your original thoughts and ideas that bring a new subject into the social media conversation. Sometimes you need to listen to that inner voice and be brave enough to introduce something new and exciting.

“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said, ‘Faster horses.’”

- Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motor Company, who is very much responsible for making the US a nation of car owners.

TIP #8: RUN A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

While social media understandably conjures up thoughts of immediacy and speed, success on social media rarely happens overnight. You won’t attain influence after a couple of months. And there are no shortcuts. You could try things to boost your Klout score, but that doesn’t mean you have clout. If you want to be a social media influencer, you need to put in the time and earn your “influencer” status.

Jay Baer, social media and content strategist and author of *Youtility: Why Smart Marketing is About Help not Hype*, says, “I have interacted with a lot of people who are considered influential in social media. The only thing universal among them is that they worked extremely hard to make it happen.”
ABOUT MARKETWIRED

Marketwired provides news distribution and social communication solutions to public relations, investor relations and marketing professionals who represent companies of all sizes, from start-up to Fortune 500. By sharing market-moving, direct-from-source information with media, investors, social networks and consumers anywhere in the world, Marketwired plays a pivotal role in connecting news makers with news consumers.

Marketwired Resonate: Made for Influencer Targeting

*Marketwired Resonate* is an integrated news release and social communication platform for content creation, media targeting, distribution and analysis. Powerful built-in tools help you identify your influencers and their online communities and improve audience targeting so you can create and share more impactful content through traditional and social channels. Post-distribution analytics extend beyond traditional reporting to give you in-depth insight about audience sentiment and engagement. And package pricing allows for unlimited words and multimedia, letting you write a good solid story and add the most compelling visuals—all without worrying about exceeding your budget.

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