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DEEP DIVE:

Influence the influencer – the packaging way

Influencers have an increasingly powerful role to play in helping brands promote their products. Clever packaging, with both visual and sensory appeal, can help influencers make the experience more effective.

When purchasing a product, consumers normally make the decision to buy online or in store, especially before the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to making a purchase, most consumers research the product online, check out the different alternatives and read reviews. Information is readily available in the digital space but the amount of information and statistics can be overwhelming and hard to evaluate especially when we don't know who is behind the reviews. Often, it is the brands, which are primarily showing the benefits of their product.

In such an environment, we tend to do the research but also rely on close friends or family to help us make a purchasing decision. We look to people whom we can trust and identify ourselves with. In this space, people we follow on social media



can play an important role, as they are normally people we look up to or admire in some way and what they say about a product weighs in on our decision-making. These influencers are becoming increasingly important to brands as they look to build relationships with consumers and today influencer marketing is no longer merely a niche area but an important focus area for brands. So, how do brands work with influencers and get them to show their products in a favourable way? Read on! →

CHAPTER 1:

Why do influencers matter?

The ability to reach consumers through advertising is increasingly difficult for brands. A whopping 96 per cent of consumers do not trust ads, according to a study commissioned by the American Association of Advertising Agencies.

According to Google/Ipsos, 53 per cent of consumers say that they do research before making a purchase. Advice on whether or not to make a purchase is taken primarily from family members or close friends. At the same time, nearly two-thirds of shoppers say online video has given them ideas and inspiration for their purchase. With an increasingly competitive and crowded marketplace, brands are boosting their efforts to both inspire and influence their potential consumers via a new breed of brand advocates, the influencers.

According to Business Insider, brands are set to spend USD 15 billion on influencer marketing by 2022. This former niche activity is becoming more commonplace for marketers and the reasons why are clear – it is effective.

In a study by Socialpubli, involving 150 marketing, communication and public relations professionals, over half of the respondents said they use at least 10 per cent of their budgets for influencer marketing. 18 per cent of the respondents using influencer marketing dedicate more than 50 per cent of their budgets to the activity.

It's easy to assume that this is only important to B2C brands, but it is worth noting that the trend is growing stronger also in B2B. If you are not active in this field and want to learn more, there is plenty of information available, including [Influencer Marketing Strategy in 2020: What You Need to Know](#), information focusing on how to build a powerful influencer strategy by Sujana Patel at BigCommerce or [The Complete Guide to Influencer Marketing](#) from Buffer.



What does influencer marketing do?

Influencers primarily act as a mutual friend connecting your brand with your target consumers. An endorsement from an influencer has the power to drive traffic to your site, amplify your message across social media platforms, and even directly sell your product through their recommendation. [Source: Buffer]

Why use influencer videos for unboxing?

“On one hand, you have the influencer’s loyal following who sees everything that the influencer posts, which is an opportunity for the customer to get to know you. On the other hand, there are people who are actively looking for reviews because they want to buy a product. These people will search for influencer videos in which they’ll be able to see the features first hand.” [Source: SocialPubli]



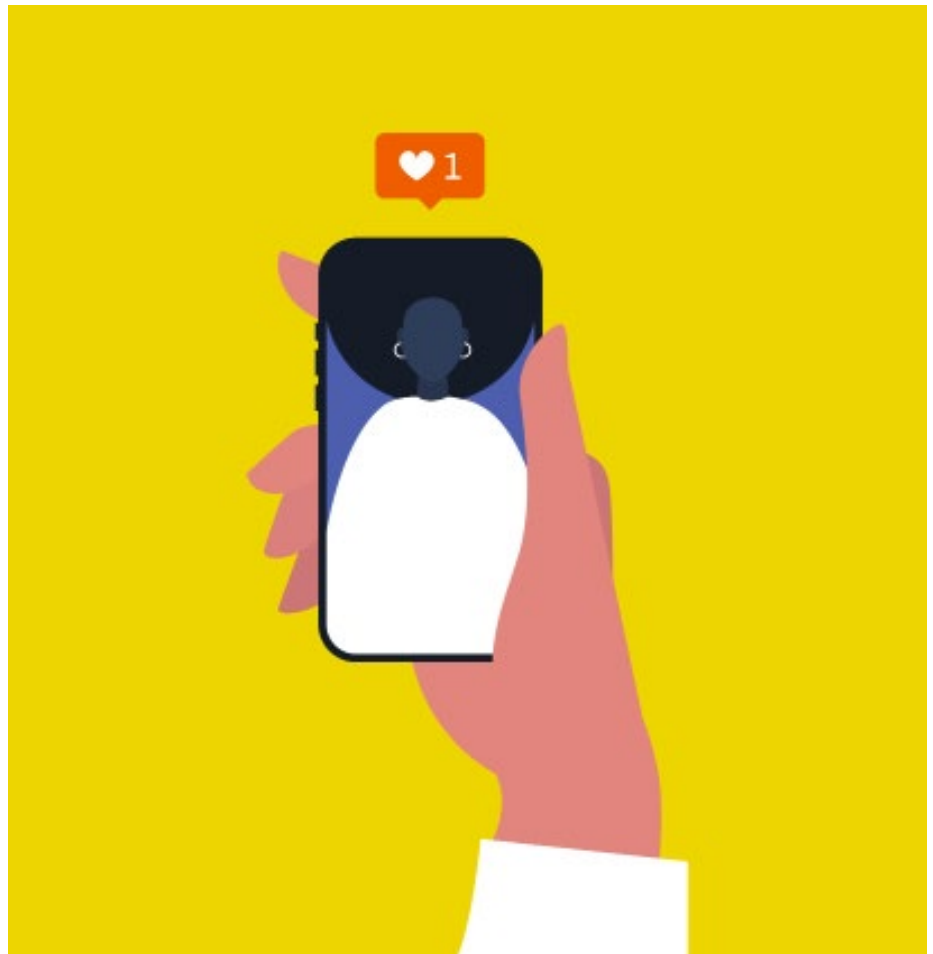
CHAPTER 2:

Find and influence the influencer

Navigating the influencer landscape means keeping up with an ever-changing arena. To find the right fit for your brand, an online tool like [BuzzSumo](#) could be of help.

It is easy to presume that the largest influencers with the most followers must be the best. That is not necessarily the case, with the focus increasingly on the “micro influencers” with fewer than 10,000 followers. Their effectiveness is due to their more “authentic” and personal relationship with their followers. But it is not easy to persuade them to enter into collaboration. For starters, 70 per cent of the influencers surveyed in SocialPubli’s Global Micro-Influencer Report 2019 say that the most important factor when collaborating is that the brand value is aligned with them and their target audience.

Brands likely need to take a longer-term approach when working with influencers. To build credibility, most influencers stay neutral and begin collaborating only when they have developed a proper feel for the product or brand. Hence the journey naturally starts with having a good product that appeals to your audience, and in turn is likely to also inspire an influencer to pick the product up and post it in their channels. In the end it’s important to remember that these influencers are people and building a relationship with them is key.



- **Learn about the influencer landscape.** Research the area and influencers active with your target audience using the likes of [BuzzSumo](#).
- **Be clear on what kind of influencer is aligned with your brand values.** If you want to build genuine relationships, your influencer network should be aligned with your values as a brand.
- **Make sure to build relationships, not only push your brand.** The more you nurture the influencer relationships the higher the chances are you are portrayed in a good light. What role does packaging play in the brand’s relation to influencers?

CHAPTER 3:

Does the packaging matter?



When researching influencers and their reactions to packaging, most of them were more interested in the product inside the packaging than the actual packaging it came in. However, packaging still matters and is especially important for influencers who are focused on the unboxing experience.

In fact, it can play such an important role that there are special influencer packaging producers focusing on how to persuade influencers to pick a package up and post it in their channels. What should you think about when producing packages for influencers? [Packaging Works](#) or [Taylor Box Company](#) are just a couple of packaging companies suggesting what to consider when producing packages for influencers. They highlight the possibilities when using high quality material, personal notes or even connecting the package to

a Spotify playlist for example, to set the unboxing mood. [Diam Pack](#), which works with retail and merchandising packaging solutions, suggests using sound effects and specially designed opening systems to add an element of surprise at the unboxing stage.

Whether it is a big or small influencer or a consumer, minimalist packaging seems to never go out of fashion. Its luxury appeal is increasingly strong and 'Instagrammable' or indeed 'TikTokable'. In the spirit of luxury appeal and keeping relevant, Chanel deserves to be mentioned. [This story](#) from the *New York Post* highlights the importance of packaging and its relevance in a digital world. It describes how people are buying the cheapest product on the Chanel website mainly to get Chanel's luxurious package.

Research shows that the right tactile coating, with a soft touch, can make consumers accept a higher price.



Tactile experiences are more relevant today than ever in an otherwise digital environment. Using structure in packaging surfaces is a strong message enhancer. A study from the California Polytechnic State University indicates that just by adding a soft touch finish to a package, a 5 per cent higher price can be justified.

At the time of unboxing, brands have maximum attention from the consumer or influencer and should take advantage of that. In many ways, what Martin Lindström wrote back in 2005 in his book *Brand Sense* is even more applicable today: Incorporating the senses when branding increases the chance to make a bigger impact. So, when designing packaging for influencers or consumers, remember to include more sensory elements to the unboxing experience and do not ignore the opportunity to add tactile elements.

- **Design the unboxing experience.** Take the opportunity to enhance the experience at the moment of unboxing. Why not be personal or add elements of surprise or suspense?
- **Quality design and overall feel is important.** It is a details game. Make sure you put yourself in the shoes of the influencer or consumer and their journey in the unboxing stage.
- **Take the opportunity to play with more senses.** At the unboxing stage you have the influencer or consumer's full attention and often this is the first time you put your brand into their hands.

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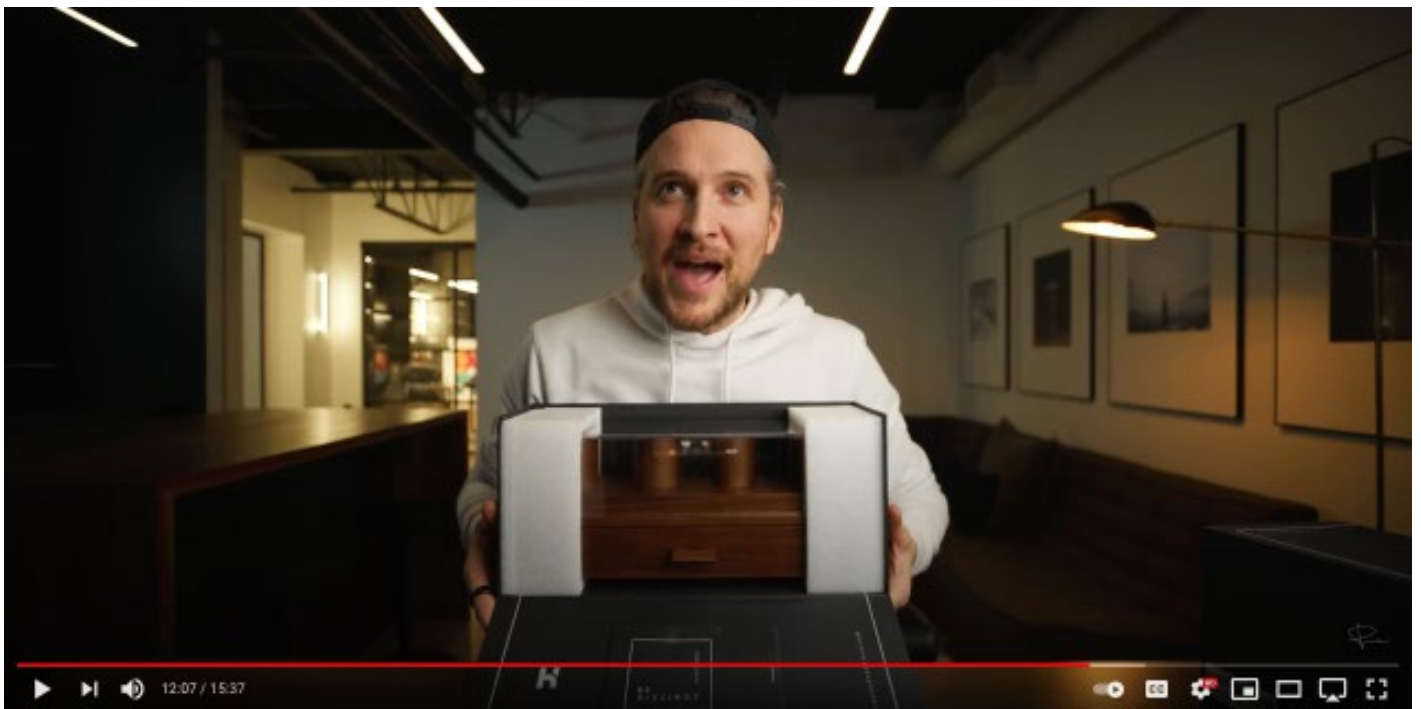
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Influencers unbox on YouTube



Building up the suspense:
“It even got my name on it”

YouTuber iJustine draws attention to packaging as she slowly unboxes a treasure chest of carefully wrapped items before the camera.



Design and overall feel:

“When you get good packaging you just know. The experience is already great...”

Youtuber Peter McKinnon describes his version of good, solid package design while unboxing the Holme & Hadfield Organizer.



It's all in the details:

"Very nice. Oh look at the gold inside the box."

The joys of unboxing a special edition Samsung phone come alive as this YouTuber plays up the experience of opening a premium box with special finishing details.

Further readings

[96 percent of consumers don't trust ads](#)

[Online video shopping - Statistics](#)

[Influencer marketing report](#)

[SocialPubli - Connecting brands with influencers](#)

[Influencer marketing strategy in 2020](#)

[Build a powerful influencer marketing strategy](#)

[What is influencer marketing?](#)

[BuzzSumo - Find influencers](#)

[Global micro-influencer report 2019](#)

[Packaging - Influencer gift boxes](#)

[Instagram-ready packaging](#)

[Chanel cotton - TikTok](#)

[Consumer perception of tactile packaging](#)



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