

Snapchat, Instagram and Influencers

How to Know What's Best for Your Brand

By Natalie Ghidotti, APR

In this ever-changing digital world, it's hard to know which platforms you should be using when it comes to elevating your brand.

Social media apps are constantly adding new features that create overlap between portals. With so many options, it can be difficult deciding what's best for your specific brand. And among these social opportunities, how should influencers be worked into the mix?

Snapchat

With more than 100 million people using Snapchat daily and sending more than 10 billion videos a day, this is a major tool used to access that millennial age group.

Snapchat offers multiple ways to advertise including classic video ads, sponsored geofilters and sponsored interactive lenses. Brands can upload 10-second clips to their "My Story," where the videos are available for viewing for 24 hours. With the introduction of Memories, you can now upload content from your camera roll, which allows for higher-quality images and video.

Cosmetics brand bareMinerals recently used Snap Ads to promote its Blemish remedy. Ads were targeted toward female Snapchatters, and the company saw huge results. The company reached more than 1.9 million Snapchatters, achieving more than 5 million views. Three in 10 women "swiped" to learn more about the product.

Fox's hit show, "Empire," also experienced major play after creating a sponsored lens. The lens allowed Snapchatters to create video messages in a virtual recording studio they could then send to their friends. The lens averaged 20 seconds of playtime and users played it a total of 33 million times with more than 61 million views.

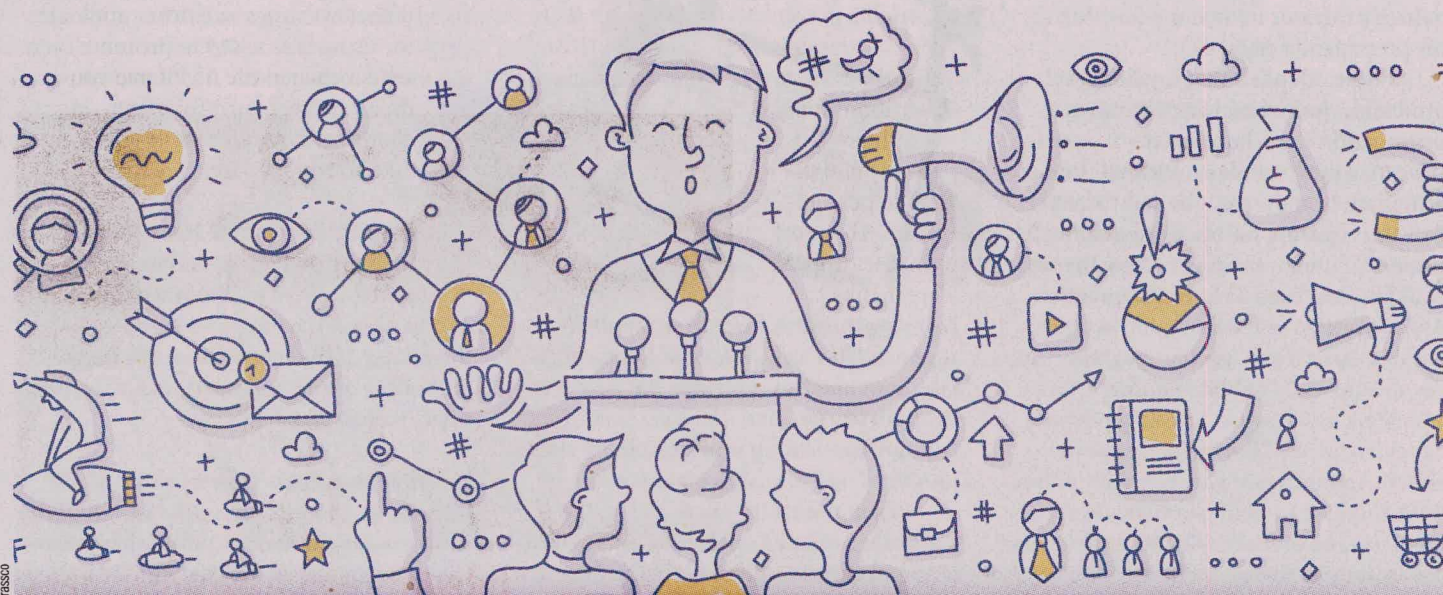
Snapchat isn't just for brands with big budgets. Small companies can give followers a behind-the-scenes look at events, a glimpse into products in development or any other inside look at how the company works. Most important, have fun and be authentic!

Instagram

There are more than 600 million people on Instagram who share photos and videos with friends and followers. Brands can purchase both photo and video ads that will show up in their target audience's "feed."

Business Instagram accounts are a major player in a brand's social media strategy. Beyond purchasing ads, brands can — and do — create content, run campaigns and interact with followers on a day-to-day basis.

Under Armour recently ran ads



aimed at motivating millennials to "#RuleYourself," — a campaign meant to encourage "personal growth through will and internal motivation." At the end of its nine-week campaign, the company saw a five-point increase in purchase intent and a seven-point increase in ad recall.

Instagram recently introduced "Stories," where users can post images, video or Boomerangs to their profile. People can view these stories at any time for 24 hours — extremely reflective of Snapchat's "Stories" setup. Brands are likely to have more followers on Instagram than Snapchat due to the app's content format and search ability. Many brands and influencers have made the switch to Instagram stories for "real-time" content for the higher viewership numbers.

Snapchat still has a unique advantage over Instagram due to its wide range of customizable features, from stickers to locale filters and more. Brands should select their desired platform based on the organization's goals. Want high viewership? Try Instagram. Looking for unique tools to create individualized content? Snapchat is your best bet.

Influencers

Influencer marketing has gone from a creative tactic to a necessity in social media strategy. Influencers help brands connect with a very specific set of consumers via influential bloggers or Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat or Instagram users with large followings. And the strategies you deploy on social media need to be reflected in your efforts with influencers. Integrated campaigns are the most successful and will move the needle in a greater way.

People follow influencers because they are interested in the content these individuals create and share. Studies from Nielsen and TapInfluence show that word-of-mouth or influencer marketing returns

11 times greater ROI than the traditional advertising efforts that we're accustomed to. People will ignore ads, but they won't ignore posts, mentions and blogs by influencers who they have willingly followed and routinely engage with.

As the owner of a PR firm, I incorporate influencer marketing into almost every pitch or plan. One of our clients is McDonald's of Central Arkansas Co-op and they tasked us with creating an integrated campaign to help customers feel good about purchasing the many McDonald's menu options for their families, while also helping tell the local story of food quality, economic impact and local ownership. We engaged six Arkansas-based influencers to serve as McDonald's Brand Ambassadors.

The yearlong campaign resulted in 72 blog posts, 645 social mentions and 1.3 million Twitter impressions. For the Central Arkansas Co-op, the receipt-based customer feedback survey increased from 49.2 percent in December 2014 to 56.9 percent in November 2015 — a 16 percent increase, more than the five percent goal.

As a brand, there are several ways to incorporate influencer content in other PR strategies. Brands should use social portals to amplify the influencer-created content, which essentially doubles the exposure. You can use that content in e-marketing efforts, event marketing and even in your own blogs. By sharing the content internally, you are also putting a face to influencer marketing efforts across all

levels of the organization. Media relations staff members should also consider using influencers in traditional media relations.

Influencer marketing is here to stay — at least for a while, and PR practitioners should be in the driver's seat when it comes to making the most of this in 2017. We build relationships, and influencer marketing is all about relationships. Influencers want to know that you understand their

following and respect them and their audiences. They are more than willing to work with brands if it makes sense for their audiences and, as PR pros, we know how to work together with influencers to come up with a winning campaign.

The key is taking that great content created and giving it legs. Don't just count your blog posts and mentions.

No matter what platform you use to share your message — Snapchat, Instagram or influencers — create ways to keep that content living and working for you for a long time after the initial share or post. **T**

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