

COLUMNS

How influencer marketing improves the reach of Instagram photo campaigns

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By **Francis Trapp**

Brands have recognized the power of social media to influence their online consumers for some time, which is why many large corporations to small businesses have adopted some sort of social media into their overall marketing strategy.

Instagram is the frontrunner of social networks with more than 300 million monthly active users uploading 70 million photos and videos daily. As a result, more brands are putting money and resources behind creating campaigns that will appeal to their photo-crazed consumers.

Photo contests and campaigns are a great way for brands to reach consumers where they are with creative and engaging content. However, running a successful photo campaign on Instagram is much more thought-intensive than just posting photos.

The not-so-secret ingredient is using social media influencers to help forge a relationship between brands and consumers on social media. Here are two examples of how influencers helped to elevate brands' photo campaigns:

1. America Unlimited uses influencers to take its brand to new heights

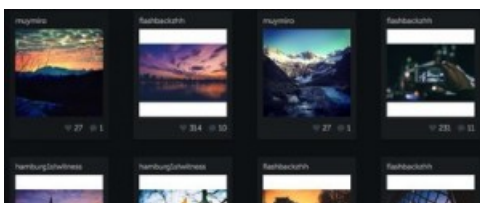
Campaign:

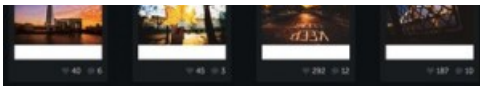
America Unlimited, Germany's leading tour operator for individual trips to North America, ran a photo contest across Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

The contest theme was "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" and it gave the Instagram community the chance to win a trip for two to Nevada.

Using the hashtag #Americaunlimited_Nevada_Contest and the account handle @america_unlimited_gmbH, five top influencers were chosen to post pictures of Nevada provided by America Unlimited or use their own pictures to promote the contest and encourage their followers to participate.

How influencers improved results:





America Unlimited social campaign on Instagram

With only 17 brand influencers participating, contributing 32 photos, the influencers were able to leverage their influence to encourage the Instagram community to post approximately 1,500 pictures, yielding 1,522 new followers for the America Unlimited Nevada Instagram account.

The campaign was so successful that the brand client enlisted the help of influencers for another photo campaign around a more specific theme to win a trip to Utah. The campaign ultimately reached 4.6 million Instagrammers.

2. TUI

Campaign:

Multinational travel company, TUI wanted to gain more followers with the help of their photo contest "Discover Your Smile", which ran in Germany from December to January.

The overall goal was to promote brand awareness and gain more followers for the @meinetui Instagram account.

For their photo contest, the Instagram community was invited to post a holiday picture of a moment that made them smile accompanied by the hashtag #discoveryourmile.

The chosen best four would win a holiday with TUI travel. As a special surprise, TUI also showcased some of the pictures from the contest on a live stream at one of the main streets in Berlin city center.

How influencers improved results:

Thirty-four influencers were chosen for the campaign and were asked to post two or three holiday pictures from their holiday experiences that made them smile.

To promote participation, influencers encouraged their followers to post their own holiday picture that made them happy.



TUI social campaign on Instagram

In total, the TUI account gained almost 3,800 followers in a month and more than 5,540 Instagrammers submitted their pictures to take part in the campaign, which reached more than 17 million people.

Social media users are notoriously intolerant of traditional advertising on platforms such as Instagram, which is why making use of influencers, who already have a trusted audience, is a great strategy to reach consumers organically.

Influencers operate as focus groups reaching a variety of consumers across large demographics all the way down to users with very niche interests, all with one aimed approach.

Selecting influencers who already have an audience that suits your brand helps you reach potential customers and also adds a viral component as well as fear of missing out, thus encouraging more engagement.

All of the responsibility is not on the influencers. Brands are ultimately charged with the challenge of generating photo campaigns that are creative and extremely engaging for fans to participate at the start and throughout the campaign.

It is important to remember that on social media, attention spans are short and there is a lot of competition. What is going to make your campaign stand out is its creativity and strategic execution.

PHOTO CAMPAIGNS are much better received when there are influencers at the helm rather than driven by brands alone.

However, it is necessary to take time analyzing influencer accounts so that you are sure that the influencers you work with are the best fit for your brand. This also helps you better understand the audience and get a feel for the kinds of content your consumers share and respond well to on Instagram.

That way, you can tailor your campaign to make sure it is appealing to your desired consumer base, engaging and consistent.

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