What is B2B Influencer Marketing - And How to Use It

B2B influencer marketing is very different from B2C. Businesses do not shop the same ways that consumers do. But for both B2B and B2C, the key is people buy from people. As sales and marketing pros, B2B buyers are not easily influenced by a celebrity social media post. B2B influencers must have industry credibility and the marketing must take place in an industry-respected network or platform.



Types of B2B Influencers: Ashley Zeckman of TopRank Marketing spoke at MarketingProfs B2B Forum and said there are 5 main influencer types and characteristics that B2B brands should consider: https://www.toprankblog.com/2018/11/collaborating-with-influencers

- [ ] Brandividual: Recognizable and increases your reach. Great for bringing in new audiences.
- [ ] Up & Comer: Quickly gaining momentum and notoriety within their industry. Very motivated to collaborate and share.
- [ ] Niche Expert: Very deep expertise on specific topics that resonate with your audience.
- [ ] Internal Expert: Great for building thought leadership and trust for specific members of your brand.
- [ ] Customers: Fits ideal customer profiles and helps your target customers see themselves in the content.

Things to Look for in a B2B Influencer - the 4 Rs: How to find the right influencer is different for B2B than B2C, says Michael Brito: https://marketingland.com/2018-the-year-of-influencer-marketing-for-b2b-brands-240357

- [ ] Reach: How large is their social community across all digital channels — blogs, RSS subscribers, contributed posts, social? Reach is important because you'll want to know that influencers can actually get content in their followers' feeds.

- [ ] Relevance: How often are they referencing topics and keywords that align with your business or describe your industry? Relevance will confirm that the influencer is “on topic” frequently and didn’t just share an article six months ago and then leave the conversation.
- [ ] Resonance: When they create content, how far does it travel on the internet? Are others engaging with it? This metric helps separate real influencers from the ones that have large communities but no engagement. Or, in some cases, the ones that resort to shady tactics that make them appear to be more influential than they actually are.
- [ ] Reference: Are they referenced by other influencers? In other words, are the other influencers in your program sharing, commenting on, liking or retweeting content?

Ideas for B2B Influencer Marketing Campaigns: Influencer campaigns don't have rules, they can use prominent influencers with millions of social followers or nano-influencers who reach a small but ideal target audience on different platforms

- [ ] Guest Blogging: Experts in your businesses field or target audience can provide valuable and relevant information to your audience in a guest blog.
- [ ] Social Media: Brand ambassadors can introduce your brand via Instagram posts, FaceBook Live videos, Twitter and other forms of social media that have successful B2C influencer marketing campaigns.
- [ ] eBooks: Experts in your businesses field or target audience can author eBooks, Guides and Case Studies sharing how they used your product to reach their business goals.
- [ ] Trade Event Speaker: Industry influencers can attract your ideal audience to trade shows, conferences and events.
- [ ] Podcasts: Business sponsorships and influencer guests can introduce your brand to highly targeted audiences.

Examples of Successful B2B Influencer Marketing

- [ ] American Express: American Express advertises in a wide range of media, including influencer marketing on Instagram using its branded hashtag #AmexAmbassadors for its premium services and collaborating with bloggers to encourage small business owners to #LoveMyStore and accept AMEX credit cards.
- [ ] IBM: IBM has the challenge of finding the right influencer for its diverse audience. They use employees as influencers as they are the ones who know IBM's products the best, and encourage employees tweets, including from events such as SXSW, and provides them with curated content to share.
- [ ] LinkedIn: LinkedIn's guide “The Sophisticated Marketer’s Guide to LinkedIn” is written in collaboration with B2B influencers, who are experts in the fields of social media marketing and digital marketing.

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