



How to Identify & Engage Your Influencers

 Attentive.ly **FISSION** 

Overview

Influencers are message catalysts. They are people, sometimes celebrities or powerful figures in your sector, sometimes just ordinary citizens, who are passionate about what you do and have a lot of friends on social networks, with the power to amplify your message and marketing campaigns.

Influencers have an audience of their own. Some charge for access, such as teen YouTube or Snapchat celebrities, but most are willing to work with groups they support who reflect their own values and passions.

This Quick Guide is about the planning and content stage of your influencer strategy, and will show you the best way to win influencers' support. It is for nonprofits, brands and content creators who want to inspire their audience, drive engagement and generate higher returns from their marketing campaigns.



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Why Influencers Are Game Changers

The general public doesn't trust marketing messages nearly as much as they trust friends, colleagues and family.

When it comes to advocating your message, there is no one, not on your team or in any agency, who can deliver and promote your message as effectively as your supporters. Word-of-mouth marketing is the original social media platform. As such, we all understand how it works and why it works. Below are some recent findings that prove its effectiveness.

A McKinsey Study cited in Forbes¹ notes that word-of-mouth marketing is twice as valuable (from a revenue perspective) and generates a 37% higher retention rate than paid advertising. Intuit CEO Scott Cook said that, "A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is — is what consumers tell each other it is."

Influencers work because they are using the most effective type of marketing — Word of Mouth.

Cultivating influencers does mean there's extra work involved, but there are proven benefits:

- According to Nielsen, 92% of consumers believe recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising.
- Zuberance² found that for every \$1 spent, there's a \$10 return in conversions when influencers are engaged effectively.
- BzzAgent found that influencers are 70% more likely to be seen as a trusted source and 75% more likely to share great experiences about organizations online, creating twice as much content as non-influencers.

Influencers work because they are using the most effective type of marketing — Word of Mouth. If you could leverage the most valuable marketing strategy, one that people trust above all others, would you try it or hope your conversations take off organically?

First, let's define what an influencer is. The Word of Mouth Marketing Association characterizes an influencer as: "A person or group of people who possesses greater than average potential to influence due to attributes such as frequency of communication, personal persuasiveness or size of and centrality to a social network, among others."

Why Influencers Are Game Changers

Influencers Extend Your Reach

Attentive.ly's research has found that the top 5% of your database, on average, has a reach 200 times larger than your entire email lists. These are the people — excluding professional and VIP influencers — whom you need to engage on a more regular basis. Whenever there's an important campaign or announcement, your citizen influencers should always be a factor in the marketing mix. Why? Because they are the people who can help share your content and massively extend your network reach.

“Top 5% of your database, on average, has a reach 200X greater than your entire email list”

What does a high-value influencer look like?

Influencers are game changers because of their reach and the trust their audience has for what they say and who / what they endorse or promote. They almost always have a large Twitter following, lots of Facebook friends, and a blog. The goal here is to expand your network reach by tapping into other people's networks.

When it comes to influencer marketing, consider this equation first as the basis for whom to approach and how they drive message amplification: **Influence = Audience Reach (# of followers) x Affinity (expertise and credibility)**

This means taking the following into consideration:

- While everyone has influence, the difference here is understanding which of your existing supporters you should spend your limited time cultivating in order to extend your network reach.
- A large audience isn't enough if the audience isn't relevant to your group's values.
- Approaching an influencer when it is clear that they wouldn't endorse your values and message is a waste of time.

Influencers can amplify. Influencers can endorse. But they can't add value to your marketing campaigns without a clear direction and some way of measuring their impact. Working with influencers means thinking about this strategy in the same way you think about other elements of the marketing mix.

Types of Influencers

The often quoted Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) 2013 Influencer Guidebook³ identifies five main categories of influencers:

- Celebrities / VIPs
- Professional / Occupational Influencers
- Citizen Influencers
- Brand Advocates
- Brand Ambassadors (usually paid)

According to the WOMMA, an Influencee is a person or group of people who change their opinion or behaviour as a result of exposure to new information.

While we agree with their definition, to make things simple, we will stick to three main categories which you can build from:

- VIPs
- Professionals
- Citizens



Types of Influencers: Citizens



Let's start with Citizen Influencer.

This is by far the largest and most accessible group. Our definition of Citizen Influencer brings together and clarifies WOMMA's influencers, Influencers, Citizens and Ambassadors.

From a broad marketing perspective, anyone who isn't a celebrity or professional, is a Citizen Influencer, though with fewer connections. This generally means: current supporters (those in your email lists) who have 500+ social media connections with 40 Klout score. We love this group because they are often overlooked, yet constitute a powerful force as a group.

Examples of Citizen Influencers:

- Volunteers/Donors/Activists
- Customers/Subscribers/Fans
- Casual Blogger (vs paid)

Cynthia Mackey

@cmackey. Digital strategist by day, STEM advocate by night. Cynthia is a strategist with about 1200 followers on Twitter as of this writing. Her day job, so to speak, is a digital marketer and industrial engineer by degree. She's also champion for STEM and is ready to use her social accounts to help spread the word. There are many people like Cynthia who are advocates for issues outside of their immediate professions. Someone like Cynthia who is passionate about an issue likely to help and just needs to be asked (and thanked).

Types of Influencers: Professionals



12,000
connections

Professionals

68



Even if you aren't the CEO of T-Mobile, those with a certain professional standing will usually carry a level of influence comparable to their position.

The litmus test for members of this category is either credibility (doctor approved!) or access to a target community (C-suite, educators, tech). Their follower base is built around their expertise, so they have real skin in the game.

Examples of VIP Influencers:

- Media/Bloggers
- Partners/Affiliates
- Sector leaders (Founders, C-level, Exec Directors, Doctors)

Clay Johnson

With a Klout score of 68 and 11,000 connections, Clay is a great example of someone you'd want to enlist as an influencer if you're looking to deepen reach in the government community.

Types of Influencers: VIPs



Whether long-term social icons like Hillary Clinton, Van Jones or the latest American Idol winner, VIPs/celebrities have and always will have influence. This tends to be about 1% of your user base.

Examples of VIP Influencers:

- Musicians/Actors/Authors
- Athletes
- Movement leaders

Baratunde

This social media celebrity could massively expand your network reach if his affinity and past interactions match up.

An Instagram account with 2 million followers is merely a modern extension to the age-old idea of "celebrity." Statements on Twitter, partly thanks to the media treating it as a verifiable extension of the Fourth Estate, can have as much impact as a press release, especially when someone has the power to influence an industry or sector.

How to Identify Influencers

Influencers aren't elusive. They are everywhere, including your database.

They aren't difficult to spot either. There's a good chance you have dozens or even hundreds in your email lists already, which is where we recommend beginning. Influencers might be tweeting about your efforts already, and you haven't noticed. Here's how to spot them and take notice, so that the next time they tweet it doesn't go unnoticed.

Here's how we unpack that to identify your influencers (regardless of classification: VIPs, Professional and Citizen Influencer).

Our basic formula for Influencers is:

+ Klout
+ Connections
+ Relevancy
+ Prior Interaction
= Influencer

How to Identify Influencers

Klout Score:

Klout is now about more than just scoring your digital influence out of a 100 score. It has recently made a pivot towards helping its millions of users post relevant content in order to keep your audience engaged and influenced.

of Connections:

The number of connections is a good indicator that they are an influencer, especially for those who have opted out of Klout scores. For localized efforts, fewer connections work fine if it's in proportion to the population. VIPs, by virtue of a 70+ Klout score, also have the 5,000+ connections that come with a high score.

Topics:

What topics are they talking about? More importantly, from a marketing perspective, do they intersect with your campaigns? Are they writing about things that matter to your audience? Using Attentive.ly, you can easily see what your people are saying about your campaigns.

Prior Interactions:

Though not required, it's far more likely influencers will engage with a personalized ask if they have already been involved and taken action. When starting an influencer program, go for the low-hanging fruit and look for influencers in your existing CRM, sorted by group (i.e. donors, petition signers, etc).

Bio:

When searching for professional influencers, look for keywords such as blogger, doctor, VP, musician, author, etc. These descriptions are self-identified so can be trickier to find.

(A note on Bloggers: Using Attentively, one client found 2,500 [self identified bloggers](#) within their CRM. Some would be great for a long-tail drip feed campaign. Others were A-list bloggers with millions of followers.

Insiders Tip: The best place to start identifying influencers is in your database.

Creating an Influencer Program

Now that you've identified influencers, whether this means VIPs, high-value professionals or citizen influencers, you need a program to engage them.

Treat these people as VIPs and take a different approach for each category of influencer, as outlined in the rest of this Quick Guide.

Before designing a campaign, the most important step to take is to define your key evaluation metrics which can be as simple as: What do you want to accomplish? What can be measured?

We've separated this section into three parts:

Design an Influencer Program, Part I: VIPs

Design an Influencer Program, Part II: Professional Influencers

Design an Influencer Program, Part III: Citizen Influencer

Design an Influencer Program, Part I: VIPs

This is a high-touch, long-tail program which can take months to bear fruit. Chances are, you aren't the only organization or agency fighting for the attention of a celebrity or VIP.

Depending on the celebrity and the relationship they have with your organization, it might be necessary to pay for the endorsement if it's not cause related (the positive ROI on conversions, according to academic studies, shows this approach is still worthwhile⁴).

Do they represent your values: VIPs and professional figures can bring tremendous attention to your campaigns, provided they are talking about things that matter to your audience. Justin Bieber might be great for selling perfume to teenage girls, but would make a terrible influencer for asking people to join the AARP.

The 10 steps to VIP success:

1. Start with your current contacts. Identify your VIPs by running a social match with the emails in your CRM.
2. Segment your list for high Klout scores, prior interactions and relevant social mentions.
3. Outline what you want / what you can give them before making contact.
4. Reach out. Make contact. Don't give up after one attempt. (But stop if asked!)
5. Engage in direct negotiations with the gatekeeper (agent, publicist, etc.).
6. Come to mutually-agreeable terms for what both parties will deliver within a suitable timescale for a campaign focused around the endorsement(s).
7. Create two groups for VIPs in your CRM and Attentive.ly (yes/prospects).
8. Generate content & creative assets for the campaign.
9. Launch on the date when the endorsement will go live.
10. Inform them of the results including key metrics. They will be more likely to participate in future campaigns if they are thanked and kept in the loop.

Design an Influencer Program, Part II: Professional Influencers

This program is dealing with influencers who are unlikely to ask for money in return for an endorsement.

With professionals who are influential it's all about acknowledging their expertise and making a friendly easy to implement ask. Their participation will depend on how they already feel about your group, based on the relationship they already have.



The 8 steps to success with the professionally influential

1. Identify the target group (e.g. 100 people who meet your criteria, such as self-identified bloggers). Are they talking about your issues? What are their prior interactions?
2. Craft a few versions of an outreach email (acknowledge their value, remind about relationship, make the ask (CTA) very clear: for example, send three tweets on a certain day about a certain thing, and even include the specific task in the email).
3. Follow up with modified versions of the first email, or simply change the subject, depending on open / click rates for the first.
4. Create two groups in your CRM and Attentive.ly (yes/prospects).
5. Give those who will participate a quick, friendly phone call to thank them for taking part. Think long-term cultivation.
6. Follow up with materials for the only channels they use such as tweets, Facebook posts, blog content, images, videos, etc. Make it as SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE!
7. Launch the campaign on the agreed date.
8. Inform them of the results including key metrics. They will be more likely to participate in future campaigns if they are thanked accordingly and kept in the loop.

Design an Influencer Program, Part III: Citizen Influencer

Not everyone is an influencer, so take care not to pick too large a percentage of your database; otherwise the influencer to influence[e] ratio will be out of balance.

Also, our formula isn't a hard science, so try your own formula. This is especially true if you work on state issues or have a niche audience without national reach. Your advantage is that you don't need big numbers.



The 6 steps to success with Citizen Influencers:

1. Identify the target group (e.g. 40+ Klout, 500+ connections, etc).
2. Craft an outreach email to be sent in mass. Acknowledge their value, remind about relationship, and make the ask (CTA) very clear: for example, send three tweets on a certain day about a certain thing, and even include the specific task in the email.
3. Follow up with modified versions of the first email, or simply change the subject, depending on open / click rates for the first.
4. Create 2 groups for citizen Influencers in your CRM and Attentive.ly (yes/prospects).
5. Since this is a larger group, send them a bulk email with content for the campaign.
6. Thank and report on the results.

Insider's Tip: Send an automated email to this group with a CTA when key search terms are mentioned.

Engaging Influencers

Every kind of influencer and every campaign will need a different approach.

This is all about building relationships, and it depends on your organization and the previous interactions the person you are contacting has already had. We will therefore outline the best framework for your content for each influencer group. This sample email can be used as a template for your copy, creative and unique calls to action.



ATTENTION GRABBING SUBJECT

Hello [name],

Re-introduce your relationship with them.

Explain why you are reaching out. (“We would like your help promoting x. It would make a huge difference to y.”) Be honest about this early on, also be sure to give a reason. You need two reasons: why this is important to your organization and why they should take part.

Make them feel special, important. That’s why you are reaching out after all, so make sure they know that.

All you have to do is make the ask very clear and very simple. Usually a simple: “Share this Facebook post & three Tweets on Earth Day”.

[If they agree then send the content needed in subsequent emails and ensure automated reminders go out in the days running up to the launch.]

Thank them for their time and thinking of taking part in your campaign.

Best,

[name]

[footer: with social links etc]

Engaging Professionals

The Professional and Citizen Influencer approach emails are very similar.

The only difference is to keep these shorter, still personalized, keeping them along the lines of emails they would receive in a professional context.

Again, make the ask clear and let them know you are reaching out to them due to their professional reputation, which in turn can be the natural opening sentence to flatter them, which is as important when it comes to making an ask like this as any incentives you can offer.

If they agree then send the content needed in subsequent emails and ensure automated reminders go out in the days running up to the launch. Afterwards, make sure to send a thank you email and tell them how the campaign went.

Try combining outreach emails and tweets to reinforce your message. Here are a few sample outreach tweets:



Need more experts like you talking about x. Thank you! Love to tell you more about our campaign.



Love your expertise on x. Interested in spreading the word? Can we connect soon?

Engaging VIPs

This is different from the other two.

Although a similar content formula can be applied, you will normally need to go through the same contact route as potential sponsors or the press (and like sponsors you may need to pay a fee, depending on the celebrity and their relationship with your brand/group).

The other crucial way this is different is a VIP already knows their social value. You gain nothing by telling them that an endorsement can help your organization; after all they've heard these kinds of asks dozens if not hundreds of times. You still need to say that however, but move past it into talking about how much you admire their work, how you or an important figure in your organization is a big fan. But be sincere. Fake flattery won't help. So when it comes to celebrities/VIPs, make sure to do your homework.

In terms of your initial approach, send a personal email and/or tweet and follow up several times if you don't hear back.



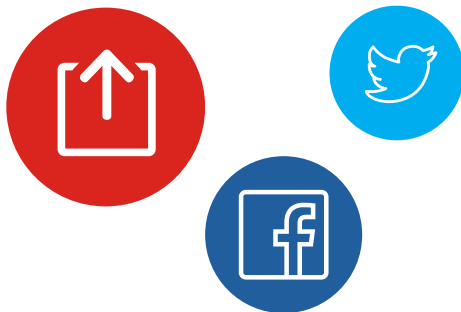
Your interest in X makes a huge difference! Can we talk about our campaign & how you can help spread the word?

Sample Calls to Action

Call to Action for Influencers: Recruit or Share Content

- Don't ask them to buy, donate or take action
- Reward their participation when appropriate
- Ask to share content or recruit

Instead of asking them to buy or donate, you can ask them to promote your brand or organization to their network (providing they are talking about the keywords / affinities you are tracking) in return for a similar kind of reward you are giving to citizen influencers. This approach is working well for e-commerce platforms like Groupon and Uber.



Sample Calls to Action: Citizens

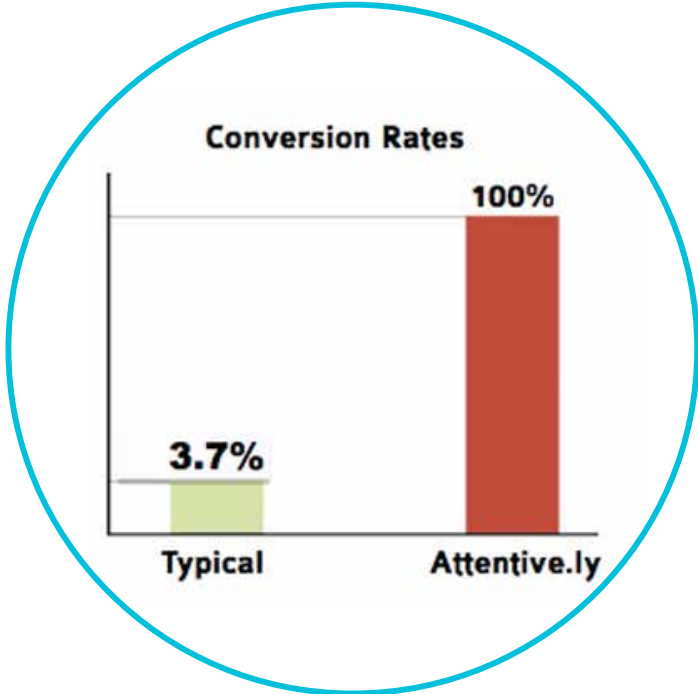
Citizen Influencer



MomsRising asked 200 of their citizen influencers to back up their lobbying week in DC with with tweets that reinforced their message.

“We searched our supporters’ Tweets and Facebook posts to find out who really cared about environmental health. We then asked those members to commit to 3 Tweets per day or 1 Facebook post per day during the campaign. The Result: We had 100% conversion. Everybody we reached out to was super excited to be part of the campaign.” [Read more](#)

Insider’s Tip: Citizen Influencers are a perfect group to help share the results of an initiative.



Insider’s Tip: Get the attention of your citizen influencers through Facebook ads. Download our Quick Guide: [Create the Perfect Facebook Ad from Real Time Social Listening](#)

Sample Calls to Action: VIPs

VIP Influencer

Earthjustice and Fission worked together on the Mountain Heroes campaign to raise awareness about mountaintop removal coal mining in Appalachia. Part of the strategy to reach new audiences involved reaching out to VIPs like Edward Norton, Woody Harrelson, Daryl Hannah, and celebrity blogs Ecorazzi and Fit Perez who discussed the celebrities involvement. This image below got over 300 likes when Edward Norton shared this post about mountaintop removal.

Earthjustice ultimately presented a photo petition with 13,696 submissions (exceeding the goal by 270%) to the Obama Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency on the National Mall. As a result of the campaign, Patriot Coal announced that the company would stop mountaintop mining in one state.

More Info



Contact Us

We hope you found our Quick Guide useful. If you have any questions, we'd love to hear from you!

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