

PREDICTING THE FUTURE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

How Public Relations Experts perceive and measure the impacts of Influencer Marketing in their organizations. A Critical Study reflecting the discussions and future thinking of this particular phenomenon

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ABSTRACT

The body of marketing is drastically changing, pushing frontiers in numerous of domains, geographically, behaviourally and strategically with much enhanced technology in an increasingly globalized world. As this phenomenon pushes forward on many fronts, it is worthwhile to ask what will happen in the near future in this field. In today's society 'Influencer Marketing' is known to be an incredibly popular and successful marketing tool, where one might be wondering: What is a plausible future in this area? What are the potential threats and challenges (if any) that we may encounter? What drives Influencer Marketing in organizations and what questions do they have about its impacts and measurements? I am hoping to fulfil this gap with the assistance of Critical Future Studies, Inayatullah (1990,1998) Luke Goode, Michael Godhe (2017,2018) in analysing the various facts and information that are being addressed and most importantly critically assess what is being missed. This Master thesis is a critical study, reflecting the future thinking and strategies relating to Emotional Branding, Danny Brown, Sam Fiorella (2013) made by experts in the fields of Public Relations, using a quantitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews. The chosen methods demonstrate two distinctive results, the content analysis showing a rather positive overview whereas the semi-structured interviews unpack the complexities and challenges in Influencer Marketing and has a negative stance towards its future.

Future Studies, is a rigorous branch of study, where unfortunately no one can know for certain what the future holds, however I believe that it is important that we acknowledge values and invite scholars to join this critical dialogue about possible futures and the way we can imagine and discuss the future. The results in this thesis also further demonstrates the necessity in studying this branch of study due to the contradicting answers that are being addressed in the analysis. This thesis also intends to signify that it will not be closure but an encouragement to consider the impetus for a much larger conversation.

INTRODUCTION

Influencer Marketing is the popular marketing tool used to sell and promote various brands on the Social Media platform 'Instagram.' There is a lack of a specific definition of the term "Influencer Marketing" in academia due to its recent entry in the literature. However, it is widely understood as a tool in leveraging and supporting brand awareness and established as a highly effective method for brand building and engage with audiences on Social Media platforms. Some authors argue that it is a misused term in today's society. At its core meaning 'influence is a force created by one person or entity that causes a reaction in or by another.'¹ (Brown, Fiorella 2013) In plain language this could mean a parent to a child could be described and perceived as an influence or a fashion designer influencing retail trends. However, in the Marketing and PR world on the other hand, an 'influencer' are the ones exerting influence over customers, including desires and purchase decisions. Influencer Marketing is not an entirely new concept as for many years, celebrities, athletes and other 'leaders' have been the sole of influencers in their fields and brands would collaborate with them in order to promote their products and services to the public. What has changed is that in our digital age 'the average person' is now an influence. As we live in a hyper-connected world with fast access to multiple source engines, information overload, the Internet and Social media have created this virtual world where anyone can be a source, from news to advertisement, opinions and ultimately anyone's voice can be added to a collective.

This thesis heavily relies on secondary resources, such as insights, blog posts and interviews made by PR experts as a result of Influencer Marketing being a recent entry in academia. There are three common themes that will be discussed when speaking about the future of Influencer Marketing: its strategies, target group and the emotional aspect. Three key themes, which will be carefully assessed in this thesis.

R1 – What tools and strategies are PR firms using to persuade their audience?

¹ Danny Brown Sam Fiorella (2013) – Influencer Marketing, How to Create, Manage and Measure Brand Influencers in Social Media Marketing, Logic and Reason or How we Learn p1-20

This will be investigated looking at top 80 Global PR firms, ranked by the Holmes Report² a premium subscription platform charting PR firms around the world focusing on predicting its future. These 80 PR firms are specifically chosen, as these were the only firms out of a Global ranking of 250 PR firms (made in 2018 by the Holmes Report) where information was made available online. Insights and blog articles made by these PR Agencies have been carefully picked, which will be critically assessed using a quantitative content analysis method, with the assistance of the software Atlas.ti. This analysis will also look into more closely 12 PR firms for a deeper qualitative study, referring to Critical Future Studies, Emotional Branding theory and PR firm's implications towards younger generations. The qualitative analysis will involve insights and blog articles including their Facebook Page and Instagram accounts to gain a broader overview of their company. Insights and blog article are purposefully picked, as the main area of interest in this thesis is to analyse and critique the vision and strategies viewed by the agencies. The authors of the collected insights and blog articles are all written from their company's perspective, which is also key for this study. The Holmes Report platform is used as guidance and referral to the Global ranking of the most renowned PR firms. The PR companies are mainly from the USA but also involves PR firms coming from the UK, Canada, Spain, Sweden and Germany. Interestingly, these collected PR firms have also different specialities, areas of expertise and different brands they partner with. They cover wide ranges of areas such as Technology, Fashion, Lifestyle, Sports, Food, Education and Healthcare. This is an important aspect for this study, as a major interest is to analyse PR firms from a Global perspective covering different areas of expertise.

This question will also involve semi-structured interviews with experts in the PR scene in Stockholm, Sweden. The interviews will be analysed qualitatively. This question will also seek if there are any major differences in terms of strategy and target groups.

R2 - What is the role of emotional branding in Influencer Marketing?

This question will also be referred to the selected 80 PR firms using theories of Word of Mouth, Emotional Branding and Critical Future Studies. More specifically, this question will seek to analyse in what ways these PR firms relate to emotions and why they think it is important. This question will also assess the key strategies these PR firms use to reach out to

² The Holmes Report Website: <https://www.holmesreport.com/>

their audience and their implications towards young consumers, teenagers and adolescents better known as ‘Generation Z.’ This question will also refer to Critical Future Studies and seek to analyse which future vision is prioritised, who benefits from it and who’s future is excluded and missed.

R3 – What is the role of Social Media

Naturally, major PR firms and business companies want to make profit to be able to sell their products to wide ranges of potential buyers. As Influencer Marketing and word of mouth strategies have shown to be extremely powerful and a successful tool in brand awareness as well as sales, PR firms keep seeking new ways to further expand and enhance their marketing strategies to achieve more gains, not necessarily prioritizing consumer’s well-being and health. Parallel studies on Social Media effects on the impacts of Influencer Marketing are on the rise stating negative side effects on its users and in how draining these platforms can be to our health.

A major concern is towards a younger generation, who have grown up with Social Media platforms. Recent studies explain that spending too much time on Social Media such as Instagram can be the root cause of depression and anxiety, essentially clashing the vision and beliefs of PR firms. ‘Researchers have proposed a new phenomenon called Facebook Depression, defined as depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, such as Facebook and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression.’³ (Selfhoud, Branje, Delsing, ter Bogt & Meeu, 2009, Juszczuk 2015:82) ‘The intensity of the online world is thought to be a factor that may trigger depression in some adolescents.’⁴ (Juszczuk, 2015:82) This question will be based on the interviews with PR Agencies and in-house PR consultants from both larger brands as well as smaller businesses’ such as start-up companies on their vision and strategies on influencer marketing and future plans, and seek to find out whether a healthier balance with Social Media is possible.

The quantitative content analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews are chosen to ultimately complement each other. The first method will pick up key sentences from PR insights that discuss the future trends of Influencer Marketing – and with the assistance of

³ Stanislaw Juszczuk (2015) Fields of Impact of Social Media on Youth, Methodological Implications p82

⁴ Stanislaw Juszczuk (2015) Fields of Impact of Social Media on Youth, Methodological Implications p82

Atlas.ti, sentences will be further broken down into key words, hence ‘codes’. Coding will collect the most repeated terms among the reports, which will give clear statistical results. In post-structural future studies this is also known as ‘deconstruction’, meaning sentences are broken apart in a text asking what is visible and what is not.

Future Studies is a broad field of study, this thesis will specifically assess the discussions made by the PR companies on their vision and what they expect of the future trends in Influencer Marketing. ‘Critical Future Studies investigates the scope and constraints within public culture for imagining and debating different potential futures. It interrogates imagined futures founded – often surreptitiously – upon values and assumption from the past, present as well as those representing a departure from current social trajectories.’² (Good, Godhe 2017:108)

Studying and predicting the future is since ancient: Already in ancient civilization, ‘experts’ made calculations on agricultural products, made rational planning, and the idea of progression was central for future use and needs. The Bible is a typical example of written texts predicting the future of human kind.

In other words, forecasting, predicting and writing about the future are as old as human history.

Why we study the future and future thinking simply put is for survival purposes and in large part the desire to steer our society in a preferable direction. In history we study the past and the idea of learning from it in order to shape a better future and avert catastrophes.

Deconstruction is of course vital in the work of Critical Future Studies, however it does not solely rely on the limitations of futuristic texts and imaginings, but also dedicates to ethical commitments by critically asking questions such as: ‘Which future is privileged? Which assumptions of the future are made preferable?’⁵ (Inayatullah 1999:2) ‘Who can speak with authority and legitimacy about the future? Who’s imagined futures are deemed possible or plausible, and whose are silenced or dismissed as unrealistic and impractical? Who benefits

⁵ Sohail Inayatullah (1999) Critical Futures Research – The Communication Centre, Queensland University of Technology (p1-5)

from promoting particular visions of the future?⁶ (Gidhe, Goode 2018:153) A content analysis also does not analyse everything in a text. Instead it relies on certain dimension or aspects in a text by making a *subjective choice*: ‘ indicating that the dimensions chosen for analysis are more important than others not chosen.’⁷ (Hansen, Machin 2013:88) In this particular case, this study will rely on the software Atlas.ti to find the most repeated key words and themes amongst the 80 PR firms.

The semi-structured interviews are a continuation of the first part and essentially deepen the findings from the content analysis. The five Swedish interviewees will be PR experts/consultants in the Fashion, Beauty and Lifestyle sectors selected from renowned PR firms and in-house PR and marketing experts in Stockholm, Sweden.

The authors and theories that will be relied on in this thesis are Goode Luke, Michael Godhe⁸ (2017, 2018) and Sohail Inayatullah⁹ (1999) from the Critical Future Thinking field. I will also refer to ‘Electronic Word of Mouth’ Bandura, the social-science theorist wrote: ‘...in the social learning system, the new patterns of behaviour can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behaviours of others.’ (Bandura,3) This explanation can help us understand why influencers are so ‘influential.’ Electronic word of mouth refers to any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual/former customers about a specific product or company online.

Word of mouth is known to be one of the most credible and trusted sources of marketing and Instagram influencers seem to be masters at Electronic word of mouth. ‘Word of Mouth Marketing’ already began in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s ‘pre-social media’, where marketers quickly learned that the power of recommending customer products and services to relatives and friends demonstrated to be more credible.

⁶ Michael Godhe & Luke Goode (2018) Critical Future Studies – A Thematic Introduction, Cultural Unbound, Vol 10, Issue 2, 2018: 151-162

⁷ Anders Hansen & David Machin (2013) Media and Communication Research Method p88

⁸ Michael Godhe & Luke Goode (2018) Critical Future Studies – A Thematic Introduction, Cultural Unbound, Vol 10, Issue 2, 2018: 151-162; Goode, Luke & Michael Godhe: “Beyond Capitalist Realism – Why We Need Critical Future Studies” Culutral Unbound, Vol 9 p108-129

⁹ Sohail Inayatullah (1999) Critical Futures Research – The Communication Centre, Queensland University of Technology (p1-5)

Emotional branding is a theory that links to Influencer Marketing, which will be referred to throughout in this thesis. Danny Brown and Sam Fiorella (2013) have researched this phenomenon thoroughly in their study ‘Influence Marketing: How to Create, Manage, and Measure Brand Influencers in Social Media Marketing.’ Influencers infuse everything from love, humour, guilt and sex into emotionally charged photographs across their Instagram accounts to persuade and encourage their audience to purchase and spread the word about the featured products placed in their photos on their profiles.

We have become emotional creatures, where ‘we make decisions based on logic yet allow these decisions to be overridden when emotion comes into the equation.’¹⁰ (Brown, Fiorella:2013) More than ever, we need to understand these emotional dynamics triggering decision making before we can apply influential paths and strategies. Today’s influencers are at a critical state, where in the early 1990’s the practice of ‘Influencer Marketing’ was relatively straightforward as actresses or renowned people in the public eye were the faces of specific brands and products.

Social technologies have disrupted this direct communication path between brands, influencers and the audience, where so many voices, views, and information are weaving into consumers decisions makings where any individual with an Instagram account is allegedly its very own PR firm. Now that everyone has become influential how are PR experts identifying influential personalities to execute ‘Word of Mouth’ campaigns? As the rise of Social Media has opened up new tactics and impacted business’ interaction with their customers, this has forever changed the way we approach marketing campaigns and consume products and services.

As widely repeated throughout the collected PR and Marketing insights, this phenomenon is likely to stay and ‘no longer a fad’¹¹ (Ketchum, 2019) and likely to continue to grow even further in the future - A statement, which will be critically assessed.

¹⁰ Danny Brown, Sam Fiorella (2013) Influence and the Human Psyche, pp 21-37

¹¹ Amit (2019) KETCHUM Social Digital and Influencer Marketing Trends in 2019
<https://www.ketchum.com/social-digital-and-influencer-marketing-trends-in-2019/>

PURPOSE

The advancement of Social Media has opened up a lot of opportunities as we live in a hyper-connected world with direct messaging and easy access to information. On a personal level, Social Media and Influencer marketing has allowed us to communicate, get inspired, gain skills, knowledge, develop an interest and essentially getting entertained. On a professional level Social Media has helped broaden our knowledge and expand our professional network in different industries. At the business level, social media has allowed us to have a conversation with an audience, receive customer feedback and improve your brand. However due to this rapid rise we have also experienced negative side effects as we have become incredibly dependent on these technological devices, and have developed throughout the years a form of need and in some severe cases an addiction, which unfortunately is becoming more frequent among younger generations, putting their health and well-being at risk. It is becoming clear that social media has become a significant part of our lives. People are also becoming a lot more pressured to showcase their lives and accept different lifestyles. The area of interest in this thesis is to analyse PR expert's vision about the present and future of influencer marketing, and critically assess their marketing strategies and seek to understand how they perceive their 'audience' and a plausible future in this area. I would like open a discussion about the rise of Social Media and Influencer marketing on Instagram and assess whether there is a solution in finding a healthier balance in consuming it, especially towards Generation Z who is the first and youngest generation to have been born and raised with Social Media. Previous studies on the effects of Social Media have also mainly been studied from a user-based angle, this thesis on the other hand would like to unpack the views and the discussions made by experts in this particular field, as they are essentially the ones executing and advertising marketing campaigns on Social Media platforms. Individuals spend more and more time on Instagram than any other similar sites, suggesting it is of importance to research this media type (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Instagram reported more than 400 million monthly active users (Statista, 2016).¹²

¹² Statista 2016 <https://www.statista.com/>

BACKGROUND

This chapter serves as a historical background on the evolution of advertising and marketing to further accentuate the continuous presence of influence and what it means to us. This chapter also address key definitions and clarifications regarding popular Social Media platforms that are used in Influencer Marketing, which are also terms that are mentioned throughout this thesis.

The evolution of advertising and marketing:

‘Marketing must be regarded not merely as a business practice, but as a social institution. Marketing is essentially a means of meeting and satisfying certain needs of people. It is a highly developed and refined system of thought and practice characteristic of a period in the development of market economy. A latent presumption in the practice of marketing has been that marketing gives to society more than society gives to it. The fact is that marketing is but one of several means of accomplishing a social objective. Dr. Chuck Hermans“ PhD

The power of influence and inspiring people with ‘goods’ has existed for centuries. It is widely believed that even as early as the early civilization of Egypt, *tradesmen* would make paintings of goods on the walls for people to see and this would as a result spread awareness to the citizens. Improving people’s lives with goods has in fact always have been an important aspect to human kind.

i - Early civilisations:

‘Advertising began as soon as commerce began. Evidence of outdoor advertising (such as tradesmen’s signs and tavern signs) has been found from the early civilization of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome, as have literary references to services ranging from booksellers to brothels (Nevett, 1982)

‘Advertising from its earliest days served to inform, persuade (sell) and remind consumers just as it does today. But it was less pervasive than today because of the limited media and the limited number of goods available from trading.’ (Norris 1981)

*'Up to industrial revolution, advertising and production remained primarily a local phenomenon. Items such as land, slaves, and transport were advertised with these messages being usually akin to classified or outdoor ads than the elaborate electronic advertising today. Furthermore it was primarily local.'*¹³ (McDonaldm, Scott 2007:18)

Interestingly in 2019, there seem to be a new wave on the rise where brands have shifted towards hyper-local advertising with the assistance of micro and 'nano' influencers, who are people that promote brands locally within their inner circle of friends and family as a 'word of mouth' strategy as well as on their Instagram accounts.

ii - The industrial revolution: 1760 - 1830

*'The huge economic changes together with mass transportation resulting from the industrial revolution provided the need and means for mass, non-local marketing, which in turn led to mass advertising.'*¹⁴ (McDonald, Scott 2007:18)

This is probably the most significant shift in the history of advertising, as major newspaper industries were created back then, which as a result created this movement in spreading awareness and information to the public.

iii - The mid-19th century onwards:

*'The American Civil War in the 1860's and the World Wars that followed in the first half of the 20th century created a need for vast amounts of military equipment and uniforms on short notice. This further stimulated the mass production of industrial goods, but perhaps more importantly it took consumers away from their roots and to some extent homogenized societies.'*¹⁵ (McDonald, Scott 2007:18)

This also meant that military employment forced the women in the households to do most of the shopping, which lead to the creation and innovation of change of goods and products that

¹³ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p18

¹⁴ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p18

¹⁵ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p18

would make life easier such as sewing machine and kitchen appliances. As a result, this wave encouraged women in purchasing goods for the family and the home to create a better lifestyle.

iv - Post World War II:

The post war saw an economic boom - 'which saw consumers making up for postponed purchases, especially in the US and Europe as economies were rebuilt.'¹⁶ (McDonald, Scott 2007:19) 'From an industry perspective, marketing began to be seen as a company function separate from the sales department and industry was boosted by the arrival of television. Television made access to the mass market easier and was particularly beneficial for developing brand names and introducing new products.'¹⁷ (McDonald, Scott 2007:19)

As a result new technology, changed the way advertising messages were structured and delivered to the public. The Internet in the late 1980's also created a new kind of media and a whole new way of reaching out and engaging markets and audiences. 'The Internet is the fastest-growing new medium ever (Leckenby, 2004)

v - Appearance of the Agent:

In the mid – nineteenth century, mass producers were able to deliver and advertise nationally. Newspapers was a great medium in advertising various brands and products, however manufacturers realized the difficulty in tracking the successes of their ad placements, as the circulation of the newspapers were uncontrolled and extremely varied. Gathering lists of newspapers was very costly and time-consuming. As a result, this was when the creation of Agents came into existence.

*'This was responsible for a change in the role of the advertising agent from working primarily for the media to representing the consumer to the brand owner, i.e. working for the client.'*¹⁸ (McDonald, Scott 2007:27)

¹⁶ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p19

¹⁷ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p19

¹⁸ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p27

Agents would work hand in hand with various brands and essentially create the ads for them and place them into various newspapers. As agencies developed great power, major companies heavily relied on their knowledge in rating and tracking ads, they also gained in size and experience and began to offer more services. In the early stage in the 1980's few companies had a marketing department, which Agencies facilitated by filling the gap in reaching out and attracting potential consumers. 'They extended to market research, promotions, and overall marketing strategy.'¹⁹ (McDonald, Scott 2007:28)

It is also mentioned in the literature, that advertising is meant to adapt to current culture, pressures and conditions. [...] 'At the same time, advertising is more regulated and advertisers are expected to respect social goals, such as reducing childhood obesity or excessive consumption of products deemed dangerous.'²⁰ (McDonald, Scott 31:2007) Perhaps in the recent decade, it was much easier to control certain ads, as they were formed and regulated by the companies. Today, with Influencer Marketing in place, where anyone with an Instagram account can promote and advertise various brands, this has made it more complex as consumers are bombarded with messages more than ever before and have built with time mechanisms to cope. 'Consumers become vulnerable because of uncontrollable conditions related to physical cognitive, motivational or social characteristics.'²¹ (McDonald, Scott 2007:430)

vi - The evolution of advertising content:

'From the 90's to the early 20th century, advertisements were nearly all classified, un-illustrated offers made to all citizens in order to sell something specific.' (Philipps 1992) [...] nearly all print ads were what we now call informational, what was for sale, the price, and where to find it.'²² (McDonald, Scott 2007:30)

Marchand (1985) notes that advertisers increasingly viewed human nature as instinctive and non-rational with growing beliefs that audience members would respond more to emotional

¹⁹ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p28

²⁰ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p31

²¹ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p430

²² Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p30

appeals than logical arguments and reasons.’²³ (McDonald, Scott 2007:30)

Popular Social Media Websites:

What is Social Media?

Social Media is an online platform, where people build networks or relations with other people who share similar interests, careers, activities or real-life connections. “The impact of Social networks on young people is significant.”²⁴ (Akran, Kumar 2017:347) Social Media has become part of people’s daily lives where people constantly check the latest updates on their accounts from friends and family. Social Media platforms have different forms such as blogs, networking sites and instant messaging sites such as Facebook and Instagram, video and photo sharing sites and more. “Billions of people around the world use Social Media to share information and makes connections.”²⁵ (Mahmoudi Sidi Ahmed et al. 2008)

Instagram: Instagram is a photo sharing/networking platform, with more than 400 million users. A significant number of its users use it to post about their travels, form, events, animals, food, fashion and lifestyle and comparable subjects. The platform is also recognized by its channel’s, together with photos and videos. About 95 per cent of Instagram users use Facebook as well.

Facebook: The largest social media network, both in terms of number of users and name recognition. Facebook came into existence in 2004, “Facebook has within 12 years managed to collect more than 159 billion monthly active users and this automatically makes it one of the best mediums for connecting people from all over the world with your business.”²⁶ (Akram, Kumar 2017:348)

²³ Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007) The SAGE Handbook of Advertising p30

²⁴ W. Akram, R. Kumar (2017) A Study on Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media on Society p347

²⁵ Mahmoudi Sidi Ahmed et al. “Detection of Abnormal Motions in multimedia” chania ICMI-MIAUCE’08 Workshop, Crete, Greece 2008

²⁶ W. Akram, R. Kumar (2017) The Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media on Society p348

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter looks at existing literature to combine the building blocks for this study the role of emotional-branding and the rise of the negative impacts of Influencer Marketing in Social Media. Due to Influencer Marketing being a recent entry in Academia, especially studied from a future perspective, previous research is extremely limited, which is a missing gap I would like to fulfil in this thesis.

The Role of Emotional Branding:

Emotional Branding – Danny Brown and Sam Fiorella (2013)

Emotional branding is a consumer-centric, relational, and story-driven approach to forging deep and enduring affective bonds between consumers and brands.²⁷ (Roberts 2004)

As Gobe (2002:21) writes, “consumers today not only want to be romanced by the brands they choose to bring into their lives, they absolutely want to establish a multifaceted holistic relationship with that brand, and this means they expect the brand to play a positive, proactive role in their lives.”²⁸ Thus, the strategic objective of emotional branding is to forge strong and meaningful affective bonds with consumers and, in so doing, become part of their life stories, memories, and an important link in their social networks²⁹ (Atkin 2004).

‘In the emotional branding literature, consumers are commonly portrayed as enthusiastic partners who engage in intimate dialogues with other brand users and brand managers to create mutually beneficial, identity-enhancing, community-building, and loyalty-sustaining meanings.’³⁰ (Atkin 2004; Gobe 2001; Roberts 2004).

‘Emotional branding is anticipated as unique, inimitable branding strategy which binds the hearts, thoughts and feelings of consumers to a brand by positioning that brand into the core

²⁷ Kevin Roberts (2004) *Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brand* New York, Powerhouse Books.

²⁸ Marc Gobe (2002) *Citizen Brand*, New York: Allworthpress p21

²⁹ Douglas Atkin (2004) *he Culting of Brands: When Customers Become true Believers*, New York: Portfolio

³⁰ Douglas Atkin (2004) *he Culting of Brands: When Customers Become true Believers*, New York: Portfolio, Marc Gobe (2001) *Emotional Branding – The New Paradigm for Connecting Brands to People*, New York: Allworthpress p21

of consumers lives³¹ (Jawahar and Maheswari, 2009) and by creating a self-congruence by allowing the consumer to identify him/herself with the brand.’³² (Malar et al. 2011)

From an Influencer Marketing perspective, PR experts discuss the importance of ‘engagement’ in social media content, such as on Instagram. An influence ought to engage with its followers not only through the various pictures that are being shared on the Social Media platform, but also engage through the comments that are being made by Social Media users in replying back to them directly in a positive friendly manner.

The concept of emotional branding has been studied from a variety of perspectives in the literature, including: emotions in brand attitude formation (Yoo, MacInnis 2005), emotions in B2B branding (Lynch Chernatony), emotions in building brand relationships (Wyner, 2003), emotional content in advertising (Heath et al., 2006; Holbrook, 1987) emotions in brand value and purchase intention (Tsai, 2005), vi-) emotions in service brands (Jawahar, and Maheshwari, 2009; Morrison and Crane, 2007), the role of emotions in brand attachments (Orth et al., 2010), and emotions in customer loyalty (DeWitt et al., 2008). Despite the wide amount of the evidence in the literature on the importance of using emotions as a strategy to build strong ties and attachment between the consumer and the brand, there is a fundamental gap extending this phenomenon of emotional branding deepening our understanding of the possible nature of our emotions towards brands in general.

The rise of Influencer Marketing further demonstrates the importance of Emotional branding in marketing and advertising. We have become emotional creatures: ‘we make decisions based on logic yet allow these decisions to be overridden when emotion comes into the equation.’³³ (Brown, Fiorella:2013) Attracting potential customers through various emotional tactics seems to be very much an going trend, and more specifically story-telling seems to have major impacts on people which will be further discussed in this thesis.

³¹ Jawahar, P.D. & Maheswari R (2009) Service Perception: Emotional Attachment As a Mediator of the Relationship Between Service Performance and Emotional Brand The IUP Journal of Marketing Management 8, 2, 7-22

³² Malär, L., & Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W.D., & Nyffenegger B. (2011) Emotional Brand Attachment and Brand Personality: The Relative Importance of the Actual and the Ideal Self, Journal of Marketing, 75 (July) 35-52

³³ Danny Brown, Sam Fiorella (2013) Influencer Marketing – How to Create, Manage and Measure Brand Influencers in Social Media Marketing – p21-37

Specifically, emotional-branding gurus challenge the benefit-driven approach’s fundamental claim that brand managers must establish a clear, consistent, and distinctive benefit position in the mind of the consumer (Aaker1996; Ries and Trout 1981). In Influencer Marketing, working around a strategy and planning is key. The PR companies that are mentioned in this thesis heavily discuss the importance of initiating clear strategies that will attract a specific target group as well as programs that measure the impacts from the various campaigns. This way will further bring more sales, as well as marketers are able to direct and work more creatively where they can trigger people with stories emotionally. ‘It is highly evident that intense psychological bonds with the brands referred as emotional brand connections leads to higher levels of firm performance and competitive advantage.’³⁴ (Malar et al. 2011) As collected from the PR blog posts, the words authenticity (coded x32 times – see appendix with coding) credibility (x11 codes) and relations (x20 codes) were words that were repeated throughout, suggesting the value of forming an emotional connection and bond towards its potential consumers. PR firm call this ‘Influencer Relations.’ PR firms use Influencers as a tool to build a connection with the consumers. David Ogilvy called this ‘Brand Personality’ already in the early 2000’s using renowned people that would represent a specific brand and essentially form a brand ambassador. This will be further discussed and demonstrated in this thesis.



³⁴ Malaär, L., Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W.D. & Nyffenegger, B (2011) Emotional Brand Attachment and Brand Personality: The Relative Importance of the Actual and the Ideal Self, Journal of Marketing 75 (july) 34 – 52.

Influencer Marketing:

- What is Influencer Marketing?

According to Brown and Hayes (2008), Influencer Marketing is defined as: ‘the identification and use of specific key individuals who hold influence over potential buyers of a brand or product to aid in the marketing activities of the brand.’³⁵ In other words, people with a big following on Social Media platforms such as Instagram, have the possibility to influence other people’s purchase decisions. ‘This marketing technique has proven itself very efficient and has shown to increase sales and retention’³⁶ (Kumar et al. 2010). Over the past two years, influencer marketing has grown to be a multibillion-dollar industry (Schmidt 2018) and is nowhere of slowing down.³⁷ (Duffy Agency, 2019)

‘Consumers are accustomed to seeking useful information from people with a high online status in an Online Social Network.’³⁸ (Liu et al. 2015:34) It is noted that in today’s society, people tend to trust their peers and inner circle more than ads. This phenomenon is known as ‘Word of Mouth’ as a means of transmitting and exchanging information to others. In our digital world, we call it ‘Electronic’ Word of Mouth, as a result of having influencers and users sharing content and information online on Social Media platforms.

According to Nielsen’s 2012 ‘Global Survey of Trust in Advertising’, 92% of consumers worldwide said that they trusted word-of-mouth recommendations from their trusted influential peers such as friends and family, vastly exceeding any other form of marketing, such as advertising or branded communications. In this context, trusted influencers could potentially lead consumers to accept recommendations and persuade them into making purchase decisions. Therefore, identifying trusted influencers has become an incredibly popular trend.

Furthermore, corporations are not only interested in whether a user is currently an influencer

³⁵ Duncan Brown, Nick Hayes (2008) Influencer Marketing – Who Really Influences Your Customers

³⁶ Kumar, V., Lerzan Aksoy, Bas Donkers, Rajkumar Venkatesan, Thorsten Wiesel and Sebastian Tillamsn (2010) ‘Undervalued or Overvalued Customers: Capturing Total Customer Engagement Value’ Journal of Service Research, 13 (3) 297-310.

³⁷ Duffy Agency (2019) <http://duffy.agency/brandbase/understanding-negative-implications-of-influencer-marketing/>

³⁸ Shixi Liu, Cuiqing Jian, Zhangxi Lin, Yong Ding, Rui Duan, Zhicai Xu (2015) Identifying effective influencers based on trust for electronic word-of-mouth marketing: a domain-aware approach p34

but also in whether the user will maintain his/her influential power into the future.’³⁹ (Liu et al. 2015:35) Hence it is important to study this research critically and seek new dimensions of the potential missing gaps.

As an important social concept, social trust is referred to as ‘‘a commitment to an action based on belief that the future actions of a person will lead to a good outcome.’’⁴⁰ (Golbeck:2005) Trust is context specific in its scope, and it dynamically changes in accordance with the evolution of a related social network⁴¹ (Golbeck:2005, Battiston, Schweitzer: 2009). Social trust is related to the role of groups in providing members with information about their social identities⁴² (Turner et al 1987) There is a significant relationship between trust and a willingness to accept decisions when a strong identity-relevant tie exists between an individual and a group. Social-grouping strategies for building trust can be attained by leveraging an individual’s social identity ties.⁴³ (Watts et al, 2007)

As a result, Influencer Marketing also heavily relates to Social Identity theory. ‘People follow a fundamental motivation to gain or maintain positive social identities that contribute to their self-esteem and ego.’ (Turner 1982) ‘Social identifications can be defined as the process in which an individual psychologically consolidates his or her self with a social group to attribute group-defining characteristics (Van Knippenberga et al, 2004, Hogg, 2003, Sedikides and Brewer, 2001, Turner et al. 1987.) ‘An individual who defines himself or herself as a member of a specific social group will often assimilate the main characteristics of the social group, enticing the individual to take the collectives’ interest to hear, also in terms of buying behaviour.’⁴⁴ (Langner, Hennings, Wiedmann 2013:32) Essentially, with Influencers in place promoting various brands this could also further reinforce individual’s endorsement and create a sense of approval in belonging to a specific social group. ‘A social category contains social elements that originate from culture, social networks, social groups and society as a

³⁹ Shixi Liu, Cuiqing Jian, Zhangxi Lin, Yong Ding, Rui Duan, Zhicai Xu (2015) Identifying effective influencers based on trust for electronic word-of-mouth marketing: a domain-aware approach p35

⁴⁰ J. Golbeck, Computing and Applying Trust in Web-Based Social Networks, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Maryland, 2005

⁴¹ J. Golbeck, Computing and Applying Trust in Web-Based Social Networks, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Maryland, 2005

F.E. Walter S. Battiston, F Schweitzer, Personalized and Dynamic Trust in Social Networks (2009) p197-204

⁴² J.C. Turner, M.A. Hogg P.J. Oakes S.D. Reicher M.S. Wetherell Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory (1987)

⁴³ D.J. Watts, P.S. Dodds, Influentials Networks and Public Opinion formation J. Cons Res 34 (2007) 441-458

⁴⁴ Sascha Langner, Nadine Hennings, Klaus-Peter Wiedmann (2013) ‘Social Persuasion: Targeting Social Identities through Social Influencers.’ Vol. 30 Issue: 1 pp31-49 p32

whole.’⁴⁵ (Langner, Hennings, Wiedmann 2013:32) ‘Social identity can also be defined as ‘the individual’s knowledge that he/or she belongs to a certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him or her of this group membership.’⁴⁶ (Tajfel, 1972) This could further reinforce people’s need in belonging to a certain group and feel socially accepted and ‘approved’ by society as whole.

Because the competition in eWOM marketing has become fierce, and social networks are now the most important marketing channel, identifying influencers is vital to increasing the efficiency of social network-based marketing.⁴⁷ (Liu et al. 2015:36)

Influencers are usually novel information contributors who have the ability to affect the behaviour and attitudes of others.⁴⁸ (Liu et al. 2015:36)

‘Online media, is moreover, an exceeding consumer-centric space, because individuals actively and autonomously seek out the resources they are most interested in, and therein lies ‘the need’ for self-branding.’⁴⁹ (S. Khamis et al, 2016:194)

The rise of new technology developments has also created a form of need, where essentially users view their devices as an essential part in their daily routines and lifestyles.

The rise of influencer marketing – a possible threat to our health and well-being?

As the industry continues to rise, numerous studies on the negative side effects of Social Media are equally growing, questioning our health. Bryant et al. (2006) were one of the first ones to study the effects of Social Media in the early ‘Facebook’ days through network data analysis suggesting that ‘when spending too much time on the platform has shown a significant increase in teen depression, self-mutilation, dysfunctional families, and

⁴⁵ Sascha Langner, Nadine Hennings, Klaus-Peter Wiedmann (2013) ‘Social Persuasion: Targeting Social Identities through Social Influencers.’ Vol. 30 Issue: 1 pp31-49 p32

⁴⁶ Tajfel (1972) ‘La catégorisation Sociale,’ in Moscovici, S. (Ed.), Introduction a la psychologie Sociale (Vol.1) Larousse, Paris.

⁴⁷ Shixi Liu, Cuiqing Jian, Zhangxi Lin, Yong Ding, Rui Duan, Zhicai Xu (2015) Identifying effective influencers based on trust for electronic word-of-mouth marketing: a domain-aware approach p36

⁴⁸ Shixi Liu, Cuiqing Jian, Zhangxi Lin, Yong Ding, Rui Duan, Zhicai Xu (2015) Identifying effective influencers based on trust for electronic word-of-mouth marketing: a domain-aware approach p36

⁴⁹ Susie Khamis, Lawrence Ang and Raymond Welling (2016) Self-Branding, Micro-celebrity and the Rise of Social Media Influencers p194

promiscuity in today's youth than ever before.⁵⁰ 'Even though social media sites seem to connect more people and make them stay up to date, it leads to isolation socially according to a BBC News report [...] An evaluation from a number of studies done by various scientists show that social isolation can cause a number of effects such as physical, emotional, mental and psychological issues in these youths. This can in turn lead to depression, anxiety and many other problems.'⁵¹ (Mageto 2017:1) Some researchers have gone as far as referring this particular phenomenon to "Facebook depression," defined as depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, such as Facebook, and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression.'⁵² (Schurding et al, 2011)

Currently there seem to be two major debates occurring in the literature. The Emotional Branding theory, suggesting that 'we are emotional creatures' meaning our emotions and feelings plays a fundamental part in our purchase decision makings and is believed by PR experts to be nowhere slowing down. On the other side of the debate, we have data and studies suggesting that advertisement through Social Media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook affect users from all around the world quite negatively and most importantly the younger generations. Gen Z, the generation born between 1995 and upwards are the ones who researchers within Media and Psychology studies believe to be the ones who are the most vulnerable towards the effects and the impacts of Social Media use, due to their young age and being born and raised into it. As a result of being overwhelmed by campaigns and online advertisement this could also lead them into feeling self-conscious, unmotivated and depressed. This will also be further analysed in the collected content and interview analysis.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Why we need Critical Future Studies:

'Critical Future Studies interrogates visions of the future (or futurescapes) from potentially any domain of culture, from popular science to science fiction to Future Studies itself. And it's critically concerned with the 'Future Industries' that is, institutions that enjoy the greatest

⁵⁰ Bryant et al (2006) Teens and Social Networking Sites p4

⁵¹ James Mageto (2017) Impacts of Social Media on the Youth p1

⁵² Gwenn Schurding O'Keef, MD Katherine Clarke-Pearson MD, and Council on Communications and Media (2011) The Impacts of Social Media on Children Adolescents and Families, Volume 127 issue 4

powers of agenda-setting, horizon setting and problem-defining in terms of the way society thinks and talks about the future.’⁵³ (Goode, Godhe 2017:110) Earlier Future Studies scholars, also known as ‘Mainstream Future Studies’ ‘are matters of periodic contestation rather than neat consensus’ (Sardar 2010) for instance, ‘questions arise as to whether Future Studies is primarily interpretive or empirical, whether it should focus on forecasting, ‘backcasting’ (how actions in the present might bring about specific futures) or foresight (envisioning alternative future scenarios) or who closely Future Studies should align with institutional strategic planning interests.’⁵⁴ (Goode, Godhe 2017:110)

Hyeonju Son (2015) a Future Study Scholar presents in her study ‘The History of Western Futures Studies’ an exploration of a ‘three phases’ within Future Studies. She explains that the intellectual tradition within the fields of Future Studies are reviewed as philosophical and historical contexts that affect: religion, utopias, historicism, science-fiction and system thinking. The first ‘phase’ in the Future Studies literature was between 1945 and 1960, known as the era of ‘scientific rationalization of the future’ characterizing technological forecasting, separated from the traditional approaches such as utopia, science-fiction, religion and mystical orientation. In the second phase, between 1970 and 1980 saw the formation of a global institution within industrialization in the future. ‘This era marked by the rise of worldwide discourse on global futures, the development of normative futures, and the deep involvement of the business community in future-thinking (...) future studies-industry ties were growing and the future oriented thoughts extensively permeated the business decision-making process.’⁵⁵ (Son 2015:120) The third phase, the 1990 – the present, reviews the ‘neoliberal’ view and the fragmentation of the futures. This phase advances the critical aspect and intensification of fragmentation. ‘This phase represents the era of neoliberal globalization and an emergence of future uncertainty in the world of risk society.’⁵⁶ (Son 2015:128)

Traditional Future Studies mainly look at prediction, forecasting, scenario building and rely on empirical and external data. Slaughter (2004) was one of the first scholars to develop the critical aspect in Future Studies. Critical Studies on the other hand stresses ‘the importance of

⁵³ Luke Goode, Michael Godhe (2017) Beyond Capitalist Realism – Why We Need Critical Future Studies p110

⁵⁴ Luke Goode, Michael Godhe (2017) Beyond Capitalist Realism – Why We Need Critical Future Studies p110

⁵⁵ Hyeonju Son (2015) The history of Western Futures Studies: An exploration of the intellectual traditions and three-phase periodization p120

⁵⁶ Hyeonju Son (2015) The history of Western Futures Studies: An exploration of the intellectual traditions and three-phase periodization p128

the inner meaning in understanding the outer world.’ (Curry, 2007) Inayatullah (1990) also made a significant contribution in Critical Future Studies. His outlook was mainly derived from Foucault among other post-structuralists and used ‘deconstruction’ as a tool in examining how the future is constructed in the present discourse and in how future discourses essentially shape the future. (Inayatullah, 1990) He also created the ‘Casual Layered Analysis’ in order to achieve deeper insights of on-going trends and ‘problems’ to look at the different meanings and explanations of data to yield ‘transformative spaces for the creation of alternative futures.’ (Inayatullah, 1998) There are diverse areas in which ‘Casual Layered Analysis’ can be applied and used, business (Saul, 2008), forestry (Ariell, 2010) and social reseach (Grbich, 2004).

Inspired by the Critical Future thinking by Inayatullah (1990,1998) and Luke Goode and Michael Godhe (2017) this thesis will seek to unpack a plausible future from a business perspective, more specifically in the area of Influencer Marketing studied from a PR perspective.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis will be using two methods, a quantitative and a qualitative method with the purpose to complement each other as well as compare and contrast their results. The first method is a quantitative content analysis ‘coding’ reports made by top 80 PR firms mainly coming from the USA but also involves the UK, Canada, Germany, Sweden and Spain.

A content analysis per definition is a quantitative method, where the purpose is to identify and count characteristics words or dimensions in a text and through this diagnose its wider significance. In contrast to other quantitative methods, a content analysis follows specific procedures where texts are essentially ‘dissected’ and examined in detail. It is also uncommon and even undesirable to examine all coverage of a subject. In a semiotic method for instance, it examines all parts of a media, which in many cases have no added value or purpose to the research. A content analysis is then more practical in the sense that it helps in narrowing a subject down to a specific coverage.

Sentences stating key facts and future trends of Influencer Marketing are firstly picked up from the PR insights, as well as words describing and defining Influencer Marketing from the collected PR perspectives. Sentences are then broken down into shorter sentences ‘codes’ using Atlas.ti to find the most repeated terms among the PR firms and seek to find if there is a common pattern among the chosen companies.

The second method is a qualitative semi-structured interview ‘one to one’ sessions with PR experts in the Stockholm scene. The main goal with the interviews is to expand on the collected results from the coding analysis, and an invitation to the discussion about the trends within influencer marketing and their take on the consumers and the future in this area. This is also a way to keep the interviewee focused on the desired tone, which ultimately will further improve the interview guide. ‘People talk with others in order to learn about how they experience the world, how they think, act, feel and develop as individuals and in groups...’⁵⁷ (Brinkmann 2013:1)

⁵⁷ Brinkmann Svend (2013) Qualitative Interviewing p1

The aim is to achieve personal knowledge from professionals working in the industry, based on their relations to Influencer Marketing, and uncover rich descriptive data. As Mulhall (2007) said ‘we are linguistic creatures and language is best understood in the context of conversation.’⁵⁸

The aim is also to test whether PR expert’s perspective would be any different in a conversational manner than from the written blog posts and insights. As the philosopher Rom Harré argued: ‘The primary human reality is persons in conversation.’⁵⁹ (Harré, 1983:58) The semi-structured interview method is selected as a means of data as it is well suited for the exploration of perception and vision regarding this rather complex and sensitive issue of influencer marketing, which will help in gathering more clarification of answers.

During the interviews, the PR consultants will be asked probing questions to gather as much information as possible. The interview sessions will be focused on the main domains of Influencer Marketing with the aim to unfold in a conversational manner and the chance to explore issues the interviewees feel is the most important. The questions asked will also be standardized and the same for each interviewee to reassure that any difference in the answers are simply due to the different visions among them rather than in the questions asked. In terms of validity and reliability this is key when using a semi-structured interview method and will also facilitate comparability.

The interview sessions will be recorded, as hand written notes could potentially risk missing out important points. The recordings will also be an excellent tool in re-listening through more in depth after the interview sessions and focus on the content and the verbal prompts. Interview’s has the advantage and potential to overcome poor response rates of a questionnaire survey⁶⁰ (Austin 1981) it is well suited to the exploration of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives.⁶¹ (Richardson et al. 1965 Smith 1975) It also has the opportunity to

⁵⁸ Mulhall (2007) *The Conversation of Humanity* - mentioned in Brinkmann Svend (2013) *Qualitative Interviewing Chap1 – Introduction to Qualitative Interviewing* p3

⁵⁹ Rom Harré (1983:58) mentioned in Brinkmann Svend (2013) *Qualitative Interviewing Chap1 – Introduction to Qualitative Interviewing* p3

⁶⁰ Austin E.K. (1981) *Guidelines for the Developing of Continuing Education Offerings for Nurses*. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York.

⁶¹ Richardson S.A., Dohrenwend B.S. & Klein D. (1965) *Interviewing*. Basic Books, New York. Smith H.W. (1975) *Strategies of Social Research: Methodological Imagination*. Prentice Hall International, London.

assess the validity of the interviewee's answers by looking at non-verbal indicators, which is particularly practical when discussing sensitive issues.⁶²(Gordon 1975) This can also help ease out the comparing process in ensuring that all set of questions are answered by each interviewee.

The personal interview technique will also ensure each respondent to avoid any assistance or influence from others while formulating a response.⁶³ (Bailey 1987) Also as Krueger and Casey (2000) argued, interviews are not only about 'talking' but also about listening and paying attention: 'It is about being careful and systematic with the things people tell you.'⁶⁴ (2000: 11) This study is heavily relied on a PR's perspective and vision and intends to find out whether the two methods differ in a written form than a 'face to face' dialog.

⁶² Gordon R.L. (1975) *Interviewing Strategy, Techniques and Tactics*. Dorsey Press, Illinois.

⁶³ Bailey K.D. (1987) *Methods of Social Research* 3rd edn. The Free Press, New York.

⁶⁴ Krueger, Richard A. and Mary Anne Casey (2000) *Focus Groups* 3rd edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

This chapter will refer research question 1 and 2:

What key tools and strategies do PR experts use to persuade their audience? What is the role of Emotional Branding in Influencer Marketing?

This chapter will critically assess 12 PR firms, qualitatively, taken from the content analysis. This chapter will also assess the possible futures that are mentioned by the PR experts referring to Inayatullah (1999) 'deconstruction' work in Critical Future Studies, and critically ask: 'Which future is privileged? Which assumptions of the future are made preferable?'⁶⁵ (Inayatullah 1999:2) as well as 'Who can speak with authority and legitimacy about the future? Who's imagined futures are deemed possible or plausible, and whose are silenced or dismissed as unrealistic and impractical? Who benefits from promoting particular visions of the future?'⁶⁶ (Gidhe, Goode 2018:153)

Major businesses in the fashion, beauty and lifestyle industries are constantly evolving and changing their business strategies to adapt to consumer trends. It is a rather common procedure as evolving businesses and future thinking is essential for growth. In fact, the key is to be ahead of consumer trends and needs in order to make a shift in the market. Better yet, 'influence' consumers in a direction towards new products and services. 'Influence is always a key factor in informing the next steps of customers in all journeys.'⁶⁷ (Marketing Hub, 2018)

In today's society we have 'Big Data' a circumstance that puts us in favourable position of collecting measured consumer data stored by organizations. However, due to the limited software tools, it is rather complex in properly capturing, managing and processing this data. Absurdly, the rise of technology has created a system where we produce and collect data much faster than permitting us in properly store and analyse data. A prominent issue is that

⁶⁵ Sohail Inayatullah (1999) Critical Futures Research – The Communication Centre, Queensland University of Technology (p1-5)

⁶⁶ Michael Godhe & Luke Goode (2018) Critical Future Studies – A Thematic Introduction, Cultural Unbound, Vol 10, Issue 2, 2018: 151-162

⁶⁷ Marketing Hub, November 2018 – Influence 2.0 The Future of Influencer Marketing <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influence-2-0-future-of-influencer-marketing/>

marketers and business executives focus on short-term goals instead of long-term value. PR agencies measure followers, and number of ‘Likes’ as their measurable sales drive and brand awareness. However, these simple measurements cannot measure feelings and emotions triggered by followers through these numbers. ‘Steve Woodruff, president and founder of Impactiviti, a professional pharmaceutical and health-care industry network, states that too few marketers pay attention to the trend currents [...] He warns that the current trends most businesses focus on are merely metrics that contribute to much larger trends currents.’ ‘We’re seeing more and more businesses crippled under the weight of Big Data and more and more marketers – faced with so much online data – jumping on the bandwagon of quick-fix social media solutions instead of doing the requisite work for success.’ ‘The conversation around influence marketing have typically been debates over the accuracy of the ‘numerical scores’ assigned to individuals based on their social reach and engagement or the merits of one platform over the other.’ However, measuring and scoring social media platforms are not entirely useless, only basing on influencer marketing campaigns is simply not enough. This is currently a major challenge mentioned in the collected insights and articles, that measuring the engagement and reach rates is rather complex as well as the number of ‘clicks’ on Instagram posts. Engagement meaning, the way influencers communicate with their followers, usually in form of replying to comments. ‘Reach’ stands for the number of ‘likes’ and ‘shares’ a post receives by an influencer, this also refers to the amount of followers an Influencer has. The higher these numbers are, the *better off*. In other words, the higher the reach the more awareness and publicity your brand is able to make.

The number of clicks is a rather new phenomenon where PR firms are able to see the amounts of ‘clicks’ in other words ‘views’ a post may receive, with the assistance of special programs. PR firms also have different ways in measuring their net profit and costs and the way they charge Influencers in exchange for making sponsored content. Payment is nearly always the exchange form, however some Influencer are willing to receive products for free in trade, such as furniture, jewellery, clothes, travel accommodation from the brand itself. As the Influencer Marketing industry is constantly growing trade agreements are becoming trickier as an ‘Influencer’ in today’s society is more or less regarded as a profession. Typically, the role of PR agencies is to ‘guard’ and track influencers in terms of their number of ‘reach’ and ‘engagement’ and the number of ‘clicks’ on the various posts they publish on their Instagram accounts, by adding and multiplying these numbers together with their number of followers in order to calculate the influencer’s value and cost. In return, PR firms usually receive between

20-30% of the total costs. This further explains why for instance Macro influencers have been so popular in the recent years as they post ‘content’ which typically receives a lot of ‘likes’ ‘shares’ and ‘clicks’ as a result of their huge amount of following. However, from a Critical Future stand point, in order to measure more effectively, perhaps business executives and PR experts ought to understand the consumer at a much deeper level and make decisions based on the different stages of ‘the purchase cycle’, which ultimately could add a new dynamic into the influencer marketing strategy. At the end of the day, it is the customer who makes the purchase decision and not the Influencer. ‘Influencers, along with business brands and their marketing messages, are simply planets circling the customer, vying for his attention.’⁶⁸ Instead, the paradigm of ‘Influencer Marketing’ is currently the influencer at the centre of the universe, and perhaps this should be reversed within their future thinking strategies.

This chapter will study 12 PR companies coming different branches of expertise such as the health, lifestyle, fashion and technology sectors from a Western World perspective. These 12 PR firms are purposefully chosen, smaller and bigger agencies, to further pinpoint the common ‘Global’ culture that is taken place in today’s society. This chapter will more specifically look into their relation to Emotional Branding together with the assistance of Critical Future Studies.

12 PR Insights – studied qualitatively:

Amongst the analysed PR insights and blog posts, ‘authenticity’ and ‘credibility’ were extremely popular terms used when discussing the present and future trends of influencer marketing. PR Marketers typically seek to match an influencer with a brand that showcase and fit their personality. *Micro* Influencers are widely believed to be more valuable, as they are more likely to be trustworthy and give honest opinions and reviews about a specific product. ‘Finding a micro-influencer that resonates with your brand can be heaven sent as their followers are more likely to trust their recommendations, as well as resonate with your brand.’⁶⁹ (5WPR, 2018) This is also according to PR Marketers are likely to portray more validity towards their audience and followers on Instagram. The key is to engage their

⁶⁸ Danny Brown, Sam Fiorella (2013) Influencer Marketing – How to Create, Manage and Measure Brand, Influencers in Social Media Marketing P76

⁶⁹ 5WPR, January 2018 Five Influencer Marketing Trends Marketers Should know
<http://www.5wpr.com/new/influencer-marketing-trend/>

potential consumers and make them relate to the products. ‘Ideal content and engagement strategies connect customers with trusted sources paired with authentic content and information.’⁷⁰ (Solis 2018:32) In the recent year, macro and micro influencers are also two popular terms that have been heavily used in the PR scene. Macro influencers are believed to be Instagram influencers with a ‘high reach’ typically around 100 000 and/or more followers on their profile. A micro influencer on the other hand has typically around 10 000 followers more or/and less. Micro influencers in the recent year of 2018 have demonstrated to be extremely successful and even believed to more influential than macro Influencers. Because of their smaller amounts of followers, they are able to engage and respond and communicate more actively, build relations with their followers.

As Amit Wadehra from Ketchum, the Lifestyle PR firm from the USA, explains in his article on Social Media trends ‘it is easy to think the ‘forest’ of everyone online can be a tangible audience [...] trying to reach a lot of people at once isn’t effective.’⁷¹ The term ‘Influencer Relations’ is also a frequent term used amongst the PR insights stating that a key future trend in Influencer Marketing is building relationships with the potential consumers (x37 codes see appendix for the coding) ‘Among marketing practitioners, this relational, communal, participatory, sensory and emotive view of consumer-brand relationships is increasingly heralded as a central pillar of market differentiation and sustainable competitive advantage.’⁷² (Atkin 2004, Gobe 2001, Lindström 2005, Roberts 2004) Relationships are more likely to connect and create trust between people, and ultimately this is believed to further raise brand awareness and give a whole new dimension of brand experience, by sponsoring brands in a more intimate and personal way. ‘What if the challenge was to find the next 5,000 people who haven’t heard of your product instead of the next five million? Often, the biggest movements and ideas start with a small, single audience who are strong advocates to help you reach (or find) another, adjacent audience.’⁷³ (Wadehra:2019) Amit Wadehra also stresses the

⁷⁰ Brian Solis (2018) Marketing Hub (2018) Influence 2.0 – The Future of Influencer Marketing p32 <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influence-2-0-future-of-influencer-marketing/>

⁷¹ Amit Wadehra, January 17th 2019 Ketchum – ‘Social, Digital and Influencer Marketing Trends to Watch in 2019’ <https://www.ketchum.com/social-digital-and-influencer-marketing-trends-in-2019/>

⁷² Douglas Atkin (2004) *The Culting of Brands: When Customers Become True Believers*, New York: Portofolio
Marc Gobe (2001) *Emotional Branding: The New Paradigm for Connecting Brans to People*. New York: Allworth Press

Martin Lindström (2005) *Brand Sense: Build Powerful Brands Through Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight and Sound*. New York: The Free Press

Kevin Roberts (2004) *Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands*. New York: Powerhouse Books

⁷³ Amit Wadehra, January 17th 2019 Ketchum – ‘Social, Digital and Influencer Marketing Trends to Watch in 2019’ <https://www.ketchum.com/social-digital-and-influencer-marketing-trends-in-2019/>

formation of a new up and coming ‘type’ of influence, where brands will turn more and more into ‘hyper-local’ influencers, which he calls ‘Nano Influencers’. These influencers are even narrower than micro-influencers –who influence their local community and essentially ‘in real life’ towards their friends and family. He explains, this will not only affect real action, but will be much easier to measure by strategically watching a specific geographical area. This particular system seem appropriate as relations could be built easily through ‘Nano’ influencers as a result of their smaller amounts of ‘followers’ they are able to engage directly with their peers. However, keeping an eye on ‘local-influencers’ will most certainly take a lot more effort and work for PR Agencies. How they are going take action and what tools and strategies they are going to use were not mentioned. This is a major missing gap, as this particular strategy would certainly involve a lot more employers to be able to measure the various impact more effectively, as well as appropriate tools and programs to collect the data.

Data measurements seem to be a common challenge among many of the PR firms and Marketers as a result of not providing the amount of time in fully grasping the algorithms and being critical enough towards its results. Ketchum seem to be falling into that category where its focus is mainly on short-term goals and essentially ‘quick social media fixes’ such as relying on ‘micro’ and ‘nano’ influencers who seem to be an up and coming trend, rather than focusing on the consumer itself. One might ask who are going to be the ‘local influencers’? And how are PR firms going to choose and partner with ‘Nano’ influencers? Again, the number of ‘followers’ an influencer may have, in other words its ‘score’ still seems to be the main starting point. As this could essentially mean that anyone with an Instagram account could be considered an Influencer.

Another key take-away is that ‘Nano’ Influencers also would need to have ‘open’ profiles so that anyone, anywhere would be able to see and access their posts, otherwise PR firms will not be able to track and measure them properly. In the PR world they call this ‘Dark Social Media.’ ‘The challenge of measuring the impact of Social Media outside of analytics programmes.’⁷⁴ (Lanson, 2018) This will certainly be a future problem or at least quite complex, where PR and Marketing experts will have difficulties in tracking Influencers with a ‘smaller’ amounts of followers and essentially ‘closed’ profiles on their Instagram, meaning not everyone will be able to access their content.

⁷⁴ Lanson PR, Novemeber 2018 - 7 Content Marketing Tips for The Future of B2B, 7 Content Marketing Tips for The Future of B2B <https://www.lansons.com/content-marketing-7-tips/>

Traditionally sponsorship is a practice that has involved branding at events such as sporting events like the Olympics showcased on television, usually involving a high price together with a number of rules and restrictions. Influencer Marketing has proven that the sponsorship for a particular brand can be processed in a much clever way where brands can still be involved in events, stories, reaching out to wider branches of audiences without having to invest into an event through sponsorship. The ‘Story’ experience on Instagram which, are images and videos that are only available for 24 hours, has tremendously increased in popularity and growing 15x faster than traditional news feeds.⁷⁵ (Wadehra:2019) This means, more than ever brands can leverage an effective blend of videos and images on the app. Amit Wadehra (2019) from Ketchum also stressed that Influencer Marketing is clearly here to stay and ‘no longer a fad’ – however due to its acceleration, standards, benchmarks and guidelines ought to be implemented as it is projected to reach \$5-\$10B by 2020. It is believed that the year of 2019 is expected to experience a lot of pressure to fully prove its worth in investment according to Amit Wadehra’s article. This also suggests major uncertainties as companies heavily invest in this area, Influencer Marketing has to be proven worthwhile. As a result, this further question its reliability and time expectancy.

Edelman PR also stresses the importance of initiating strategic and actionable plans to leverage business’ success, however they explain that they need to be customer-centric, which sometimes, they explain, marketers fail to address. ‘Knowing what drove a customer to purchase is a critical insight for a successful marketing program.’⁷⁶ (Edelman:2018) Data and analytics are therefore extremely important, to further assess, target and build stronger connections with audiences, they explain. The rise of AI and Machine learning will definitely be a change driver leaving much simpler opportunities in the future, to be more time-efficient with data, no matter the size. However, Edelman stresses the collected information is essentially worthless without a proper plan and guiding principles in utilizing it. Staying true to customer experience will ultimately lead to sales, engagement and retention, rather than channel specific reach, performance and number of ‘clicks.’ Interestingly, Edelman writes

⁷⁵ Amit Wadehra, January 17th 2019 Ketchum – ‘Social, Digital and Influencer Marketing Trends to Watch in 2019’ <https://www.ketchum.com/social-digital-and-influencer-marketing-trends-in-2019/>

⁷⁶ Edelman Trend Report – 2018 p9 <https://edemandigital.com/trends/authenticity-influencer-marketing-impacting/>

‘use humans to derive insights from your data to inform customer-centric content strategies’⁷⁷ suggesting that today’s PR Marketers mainly rely on computer-based insights. ‘We are in the midst of a turning point in Influencer Marketing. Brands need to commit to educating themselves on the metrics that matter and know how to leverage data to drive maximum ‘ROI’ (Return on Investment) from Influencer Relationships. Selecting key Influencers to create custom, engaging content and amplifying that content across owned, earned, and paid is the key to success. In practice, it’s *part art and part science*.’⁷⁸ (Edelman, 2018) Katherine N. Lemon and Peter C. Verhoef (2016) explain thoroughly in their article on ‘Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey’ the value of data collection that helps marketers leading into new approaches, however researchers should also measure the customer experience in more specific touch points such as calling them directly or via emailing. They explain, ‘these approaches could be used to predict traditional survey feedback metrics or even replace them if they perform well as predictors.’⁷⁹ (Lemon, Verhoef 88:2016) As well serve as additional data that can add on and expand the data analysis. Overall, Edelman strongly stress that ‘*a one size does not fit all*’ and Marketers need to study and assess carefully which strategy suits best for each brand.

Among the collected PR insights, they all tend to use the same tactics and strategies for all their brands by simply jumping into the trend wagon and not thoroughly assess and implement exclusive strategies towards a particular brand. Time also seems to be PR firm’s key challenge where they are more willing in taking risks rather than taking the time in setting a strategic plan. At the same time the faster and quicker you are the less risk a key competitor has in getting your ideas and plans ahead of you. However, if the plan fails it will become extremely costly for the firm. Therefore, they do stress the importance in managing and using each tool measurements properly. These arguments may seem logical and appropriate, however what is lacking in Edelman’s insight is an explanation to who their consumers/customers and target groups are. They only mention, which strategies ought to be implemented in order to measure metrics effectively, however nothing is mentioned about their customers and target group. For instance, which category are they referring to, such as

⁷⁷ Edelman Trend Report 2018 p14 <https://edelmandigital.com/trends/authenticity-influencer-marketing-impacting/>

⁷⁸ Edelman Trend Report 2018 p14 <https://edelmandigital.com/trends/authenticity-influencer-marketing-impacting/>

⁷⁹ Katherine N. Lemon and Peter C. Verhoef (2016) Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey p88

their, age, gender, ethnicity or nationality? This is certainly vital in a business to be sales effective. Here they also do not mention the value of emotional branding. On the other hand, they only refer to the importance of data analysis.

The Marketing Hub (USA) trend report, written by Brian Solis, a renowned digital analyst, speaker and author of numerous books about the future of Business, talks about the upcoming trend of human relations in influencer marketing. He states in the report that there is a significant rise and need for human interaction, where essentially ‘they expect to be understood as individuals and to be treated like people.’⁸⁰ (Troian 2018:10) In other words, the future of influencer marketing is all about creating relationships and where people feel that they can connect to an influencer personally. In addition, he also states that firms ought to invest in long-term relationships with Influencers. This will not only create better dialogue between the company and the influencers, which will bring valuable feedback between campaigns and events, but essentially gain a deeper understanding of the consumers. ‘Many marketers are tackling this conundrum by approaching influencer marketing first at the campaign level, in order to prove its value and justify larger investments.’⁸¹ Campaigns certainly serve a purpose and represent key opportunities for brands. However, these campaign strategies often recruit influencers to push out content through various social media channels and moves onto the next campaign very quickly and oftentimes quite abruptly. As a result, this does not foster any meaningful relationships. The key according to Brian Solis is to pursue long-term collaborations with Influencers, which will create more authentic understanding, quality and trust, and essentially build a storyline and a form of attachment to the influencer, as people will be able to follow their journey through campaigns over long periods of time. ‘It’s about relationships that add value to our customers, create new and exciting opportunities and relationships that are symbiotic. We’re not interested in taking a well-known face and giving them a cheque, as we are always centered on authenticity and being true to our brand.’⁸² (Martin 2018:17) ‘Make Your Customer The Hero of the Story.’⁸³ – (Handley 2018:26) Marketing strategists also ought to learn more about how customers make decisions, what influences them and why. Building relationships serves as the

⁸⁰ Michael Troian (2018) Chief Marketing Officer Actifio – The Marketing Hub p10

⁸¹ Brian Solis – Marketing Hub (2018) Influence 2.0 – The Future of Influencer Marketing p7

<https://influencermarketinghub.com/influence-2-0-future-of-influencer-marketing/>

⁸² Aston Martin Chief and Marketing Officer Marketing Hub – p17

<https://influencermarketinghub.com/influence-2-0-future-of-influencer-marketing/>

⁸³ Ann Handley Chief Content Officer MarketingProfs, Marketing Hub p26

<https://influencermarketinghub.com/influence-2-0-future-of-influencer-marketing/>

foundation of Influence in the future. ‘The true power of Influence marketing is coming from: network connections of the individual, long-term collaboration that results in authentic understanding and advocacy, quality, trusted content that is seen and shared by a relevant audience, and face-to-face and word of mouth advocacy.’⁸⁴ (Schaefer, 2018:7) Again, Brian Solis also stresses the importance of relations and influencers portraying authenticity, however a narrower description of the influencer per say is missing. Who can be an authentic influencer? Which personality traits are they looking for? Which audience are they targeting? The Marketing Hub truly value the importance of initiating relations with their customers, however how they are willing to build long-term relations and impact their audience/consumers is missing. Emotional Branding plays a major role at the Marketing Hub as a result of wanting to build relations as a key strategy. However, in what way they want to trigger people emotionally is missing here.

At JPA Health Communications, a PR firm also based in the USA, specialized in the Health sector portrays a rather positive overview on the impacts of Influencer Marketing. They suggest that in ‘the age of Influencer Relations’ business companies ought to embrace Social Media and convert its marketing strategies into this *powerful* phenomenon. They also stress the benefit in collaborating with micro-influencers as they are more relatable, trustworthy, engaging and more likely to persuade potential customers in purchasing decisions. Interestingly, JPA being a ‘health’ oriented PR firm working within biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and medical devices strongly support this marketing form. Perhaps one would have expected otherwise as studies on the impacts of Social Media in the recent years has had quite a negative stance, especially within the health sector. That being mentioned, the firm itself is not entirely ‘socially’ active on their Social Media channels with an extremely low presence on its Instagram account, with very little posts and only about 95 followers. Their Facebook page on the other hand is more active with more regular posts and articles with 861 ‘likes’ their page. This is certainly a higher reach however perhaps it is not enough to support its statement in their blog post: ‘Rather than ignoring its powerful presence, we must embrace the endless opportunities for brand and company success. Social media influencers are an excellent gateway to a successful campaign that garners a large audience

⁸⁴ Mark Schaefer (2018) Executive Director, Schaefer Marketing Solutions LLC Marketing Hub p7 <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influence-2-0-future-of-influencer-marketing/>

reach.⁸⁵ (Hitch, 2018) Although they do mention the importance in using appropriate data metrics tools, where they have developed their own software ‘Gretel’ which, uses millions of data on Influencers, and effectively assists them in reaching customized audiences within the health sector. Similar to the previous PR firms stated in the above, there is a lack of defining the key traits and aspects of an influencer and their target group and how they are going to reach them with what tools and strategies more specifically. Yet they do mention the value in partnering with micro-influencers who are believed to be more trustworthy and reliable. From an emotional branding stand point ‘brand strategists should focus on telling stories that inspire and captivate consumers (...) these stories must demonstrate a genuine understanding of consumer’s life styles, dreams and goals and compellingly represent how the brand can enrich their lives.’⁸⁶ (Roberts, 2004) Essentially, JPA Health Communications explain that micro-influencers are great candidates in promoting authentic content and story-telling. However, why they believe so is never mentioned.

At Levick, a lifestyle PR firm based in the USA draws their attention towards a more specific consumer market, as they call the next ‘up and coming’ generation who are also the youngest on the market ‘Generation Z.’ Unlike the previous PR firms stated at the above, Levick generates a strong stance towards Generation Z, who is the first generation to have been exposed with Social Media and shareable content their entire lives. Generation Z is *the* consumer group to watch out for according to Levick. As they have been brought up to instant access to resources, messaging and sharing their entire lives publicly on the Internet, Levick advises that business companies ought to build around ‘Gen Z’s’ preferences in order to be successful. On the other hand, studies on the impacts of Social media on youth have demonstrated to be quite negative. Social Media channels such as Instagram display advertisement, behavior ads (based on the basis of your behavior web-browsing) demographic ads (based on your age, gender, education, material status) that not only influences their purchase decisions but also shapes their view in what is normal and accepting. As a result of ‘Gen Z’ being heavy users of Social Media, Levick believes this makes them an easy target to persuade them even further, and essentially even more than any previous generation before. From an emotional branding point of view, Levick fails to explain why Gen-Z is a better target group to persuade. This specific generation may be born and raised with Social Media platforms, however this does not necessarily make them an ‘easier’ target group to influence,

⁸⁵ Allison Hitch (2019) JPA Health Communications <https://www.jpa.com/blog/2018/12/21/age-of-influence/>

⁸⁶ Kevin Roberts (2004) Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands. New York: Powerhouse Books

as they state in their insight. Gen-Z may certainly be more active than any older generation on Social Media, however why companies ought to concentrate exclusively on Gen-Z is missing in Levick's blog post.

M&CSaatchi PR (USA) also draws on 'Gen Z' in their blog post. They stress that 'Gen Z's are quite complex and difficult to label, as they equally enjoy Social Media as much as they value real life experiences, and the importance of brands in personally identifying them in order to fully build a significant connection. Authenticity is also something which, according to M&CSaatchi PR, Gen Z's are particularly tuned into, where the brand needs to align with their values and market something they trust. A key marketing strategy at M&CSaatchi PR is using the right influencers that resonate with their audience. 'Gen Z crave a personal, authentic connection. Beauty brand Glossier nailed this by building its brand on Instagram, with the founder using the platform to ask followers what they thought of logos and packaging.'⁸⁷ (M&CSaatchi PR, 2019) Interestingly they explain the importance in getting their audience involved and essentially part of the marketing process of the brand itself. As a result, this creates, they believe, a sense of 'belonging' and a community for the people who can relate and identify to the brand. This links to the theory of Social Identity, where people want to be involved and belong to a Social Group. In contrast to Levick, M&CSaatchi PR explains the importance in getting 'Gen-Z' involved within brand's marketing strategies, which will make them feel *important* and as if they belong to something. Their Social Media channels such as Instagram have a relatively high reach – as an internationalized agency with offices in London, Sydney, Kuala Lumpur Geneva, Istanbul, Milano, Berlin (to name a few) each one of their work accounts have up to 5 000+ followers. Their UK Instagram account for instance, showcase a lot of visuals with young influencers profiles with beauty and fashion brands, which seem to attract a younger audience.

At M&CSaatchi PR, the key tools and future thinking strategies is attracting the next generation. As they explain, Gen-Z are likely to be more prone towards influencers who are authentic and true to one-self, and essentially feel involved and part of the creation of campaigns. This relates very much to emotional branding, in triggering people emotionally through authentic personalities, which a younger generation could potentially relate to.

⁸⁷ M&CSaatchi PR – Inside The Mind Of Gen Z (2018) https://mcsaatchipublicrelations.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GenZ_OnePager_v10.pdf

However, what is missing is an explanation or referral to what specific emotions they want to use in their campaigns, which was also missing in the previous PR firms.

At PAN Communications, a PR agency integrated in Marketing for B2B tech and healthcare brands explains that integrating “Influential people” in campaigns are extremely vital, as their level of expertise around a specific topic will bring more value to the brand. “Influencers aren’t necessarily celebrities who have millions of followers. They’re influential because they have some degree of expertise in a topic, validated by the number of relationships they have built in the space.”⁸⁸ One might ask what makes an influencer valuable? According to Josh Bernoff⁸⁹ to be a powerful and valuable influencer it all starts with a powerful idea, which must be executed right, new and simple to understand. To bring awareness properly, the idea must be convincing, new or old directing into a new dimension, he explains. At the end of the campaign, measuring its impacts are also extremely vital. A strategic plan in how to measure the metrics by the “type” of influencer is also necessity. All influencers have different ways of engaging with their audience therefore using right tactics needs to be implemented carefully and strategically. For instance, they explain that some influencers tend to be very engaging with their audience, in replying back to comments, whereas some influencers on the other hand post pictures on their Instagram account, or simply add URL links on their profiles. Ultimately, whichever way or strategy an influencer chooses to promote and advertise a brand, it certainly needs to be tracked down accordingly.

PAN Communications being a health-care oriented agency, Influencer Marketing seems to be a phenomenon in which they believe is a necessity and creates value for their brands. Both their Instagram and Facebook accounts do not have that many ‘followers’ with only a number of 677 on Instagram and 853 “likes.” Surprisingly, despite being quite keen on the benefits of Social Media, they do not seem to be portraying it themselves. However, at PAN Communications, they explain the value and importance in using ‘influential’ people as a marketing strategy. In other words, people that inspire and have a talent could be seen as role models. As Fournier (1998) explains, ‘the ways that consumers can experience brands as relationship partners can help them accomplish personal goals and resolve dilemmas in their

⁸⁸ PAN Communications (2019) Pan Influencer Relations p8
file:///Users/gustavabrag/Downloads/PAN_Influencer_Relations_eBook_2019.pdf

⁸⁹ PAN Communications (2019) Pan Influencer Relations p12
file:///Users/gustavabrag/Downloads/PAN_Influencer_Relations_eBook_2019.pdf

everyday lives.’⁹⁰ From an Emotional Branding perspective, this is vital to be able to impact people at a personalized level. A key future thinking strategy at PAN Communication is investing in influential personas with a specific talent that will create more value towards their brands.

At Cure Media, the Swedish PR agency stress the importance in strategically getting to know the Influencer you are partnering with when doing a campaign on Social Media. In other words, identifying which preferred social media channel they use, assess what type of person they are and match their personality traits with the brand itself is a strategic way in achieving the most optimal results as possible. This will not only increase the validity of the campaign but also trust towards the brand itself. Influencer Marketing should also be considered as any other channel and essentially it is just as valuable as any other investments. However, based on this, a set plan must be initiated stating how influencer marketing is going to contribute and its purpose– is it to increase brand awareness or drive conversion? “Brand awareness” is definitely a term, which has been overused by many PR firms when referring to Influencer Marketing strategies. In what way are brands creating brand awareness in posting images on Instagram and how are they connecting with their consumers emotionally? On Cure Media’s Instagram account, they have made posts about their influencer marketing strategies stating businesses ought to invest in micro influencers as they are believed to more credible and experts in their ‘niche.’ They also mention to build a dedicated project team, who will entirely focus on Influencer Marketing full-time.

OSK PR a German Agency, mentions that there soon ought to be an Influencer Marketing discipline within the fields of PR and Communication programs at University level. As this phenomenon is constantly growing, they believe that the next generation should study it more closely as part of their degree to be able to deal with it later on professionally. ‘After all, influencer communication will continue to establish itself as part of PR work, which is why junior staff should be familiar with the laws of the area at the time of job entry.’⁹¹ (OSK 2019)

At Kaltwasser, another German Agency also stress that Influencers ought to be studied more closely as it is becoming a multidisciplinary form of communication. On another note,

⁹⁰ Susan Fournier (1998) ‘Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationships Theory in Consumer Research’ *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (March) 343-74

⁹¹ OSK (2018) Influencer in the study - why the junior PR needs to know the industry
<https://www.osk.de/blog/influencer-im-studium>

Kaltwasser discuss the importance of ‘storytelling’ in which they believe is likely to continue to grow in popularity as of 2019. As Gobe (2002) wrote, ‘consumers today not only want to be romanced by the brands they choose to bring into their lives, they absolutely want to establish a multifaceted holistic relationship with that brand and this mean they expect the brand to play a positive, proactive role in their lives.’⁹² Another major theme in their blog post is about the strong influence of Micro and Nano influencers, which was also mentioned at Ketchum PR. Micro influencers and Nano influencers are believed to be more credible as they share their personal lives to fewer followers and thus a smaller reach, and as a result are more associated to the brand and act more frequently with their followers. Not only will this portray more authentic and credible content, but this way will also trigger an emotional connection to its audience.

At WE Communication they discuss the influence of emotional and rational drivers of brands towards consumers rather than influencers as promoters. In a study they discuss ten emotional drivers: Customer experience, overall impression, defend/shame, social impact, disappeared, love/hate, forgive/not forget, shared values, life impact, buzz. And rational drivers: executive behavior, intent to purchase, necessary, innovative, financial performance, easy to work with, industry leader, value provided, responsible, quality. In comparison to the previous agencies stated in the above, they primarily focus on brands as key drivers and essentially an influence rather than personas. ‘Consumers want stability in these uncertain times, and they’re looking for less promise and more proof from brands and industries.’⁹³ (We Communication, 2018:5)

They also discuss that brands need to tick three key aspects: First and foremost, functionality, in other words, what the brand delivers. If the brand does not provide a functional product or service, the consumers will not be interested. Secondly, ethics and responsibility are also two key factors, in how brands do and in what they do while keeping their customers safe at the same time. And lastly, its purpose, essentially why a brand is doing what it is doing. They stress, consumers expect more and more from brands. Consumers also tend to be more open in showing their appreciation for a particular brand as well as sharing critical feedback and ‘shaming’ as mentioned among the emotional drivers consumers experience. Interestingly, this PR firm focuses on the consumers emotional drivers and not the influencers per say in

⁹² Marc Gobe (2002) Citizen Brand New York: Allworth Press

⁹³ WE (2018) The Grounding Forces in a World of Motion <https://we-worldwide-arhxo0vh6d1oh9i0c.stackpathdns.com/media/444253/bim2018-whitepaper-web-final.pdf>

comparison to the previous PR firms stated at the above.

RED Agency (USA) is the only firm among the other PR firms mentioned in the above who acknowledges the negative impacts of Social Media on our health and well-being when consuming too much time on Social Media platforms. They explain in their Report on the Future of Social Media, that people nowadays experience 'FOSO' in other words, 'Fear Of Switching Off' as a result of living in a hyper-connected world. They also mentioned that in a near future, brands will develop a slowing down movement encouraging users to take the time off Social Media and live in the moment.

*'Excessive screen time takes a toll on physical and mental health, neurological development and personal relationships, from eye strain, 'text neck' and obesity, to sleep, learning and attention disorders, as well as anxiety, depression and chronic loneliness, especially among Millennial's.'*⁹⁴ (Red Sky Predictions 2018:4)

They also state in their study that the average person touches their smartphone over 2 600 times a day and almost one in two people cannot live without their smartphone. They also discuss how the rise of digital media has become a dangerous place where campaigns with Influencers has increasingly a lack of transparency and accountability, essentially leading to 'Word of Doubt' than 'Word of Mouth.' Therefore as micro influencers are becoming more popular, stricter standards of accountability and transparency ought to be initiated. Red Agency also mentions the planning of launching new metrics system where consumers will be able to give feedback and review micro-influencers for credibility and authenticity in order to keep the reality of their recommendations in check. For instance, what do they consider as trustworthy, what kind of messages are believed to be genuine? This system will certainly be extremely useful and helpful, which will not only provide customer insights but also guide PR experts into creating more customer centric campaigns.

Analysis:

In summary, these 12 PR agencies all stress the importance in building relationships between the brand and their customers. They also heavily rely on the value of data collection and the

⁹⁴ Red Sky Predictions 2018 p4 https://redagency.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/RedAgency_2018_Predictions.pdf

use of various programs that are able to detect the impacts of Social Media posts, and essentially being able to assess whether a campaign has been successful or not by looking at the various numbers. The theory of Emotional Branding certainly plays a major role in their marketing strategies where they stress the importance of using influencers that resonate with their brands authentically. However, an aspect that is often left out and extremely vague is PR's explanation to the ways in which they are promoting and advertising campaigns authentically through the use of influencers. One might ask which emotion are they seeking to portray? The PR firms discuss a lot about implementing 'relations' with influencers to the brands as a key strategy, which they also fail to explain how they are going to go about in creating relationships.

They all have a rather positive stance, towards the future of Influencer Marketing, where only one PR firm out of twelve, had more of a critical overview towards it, stating that it is harming the younger generation's health and general well-being. As mentioned in the literature review, there are tremendous studies stressing the importance of having Emotional Branding as a marketing strategy, however, there seems to be a lack of research regarding its outcomes and the ways in which PR firms want to forge emotional connections to the public.

Referring to Inayatullah (1999) and Gidhe, Goode (2017) from Critical Future studies, the future vision that is privileged in this particular area are essentially the marketers and PR experts themselves who execute these strategies that trigger sales as well as the influencers who in return receive a tremendous amount of visibility and endorsement via their Social Media profiles and payment through the PR firms. It is clear, depicted from the 12 PR firms that the PR organizations are the ones who benefit from the future of Influencer Marketing strategies as they get rewarded through sales. A future that is made preferable among the 12 PR firms is their assumption in making major investments in this particular phenomenon worthwhile, by further implementing new programs that will give more accurate and precise results on their marketing campaigns and essentially further sales. The future that is silenced are marketing strategies involving older and previous generations. On the other hand, they heavily rely on the importance in creating relations with a younger generation as Gen-Z and Millennials. Previous and older generation's future vision is completely left out and not mentioned at all, which is also a rather questionable aspect where many could wonder why this is the case. In short, PR and Marketing Experts are the ones who benefit from this particular future vision as their key goal is to drive sales and use tactics that will further influence customer's purchase

decision. The customer's well-being and wellness is also not prioritized, not thinking about the negative impacts of advertisement overload and consumption behaviour. Another aspect is their positive attitude towards Influencer Marketing, stating that it is a successful and strategy which ought to be heavily invested in and hardly mention any possible challenges or complexities within this particular area. This is also a future vision that is rather unrealistic. No one can know for certain what the future may hold. In this major business area such as the strategy of Influence, PR experts ought to further include and mention the potential risks and challenges they may confront and perhaps several strategies as back up plans. These 12 PR firms portray a rather narrow future vision, that involves targeting the same social group which is a younger generation and focus on 'niche' marketing campaigns by investing in Micro and Nano influencers who are believed to be more authentic and personal with their audience, and essentially programs that will create more accurate data.

INTERVIEWS

This chapter will assess key strategies Swedish PR firms use in Stockholm in reaching out to their audiences and their implications towards young consumers, teenagers and adolescents. What tools and strategies are PR firms using to persuade their audience? What is the role of emotional branding in Influencer Marketing? This Chapter also address the PR's future visions and strategies on influencer marketing and seek to find out whether a healthier balance is possible for social media users.

The interviews involved five Swedish PR/Marketing expert's vision on the future of Influencer Marketing in the Stockholm market. The companies that have been interviewed are: Patriksson Communications a Fashion, Food, Technology, Music & Lifestyle agency. Geelmuyden Kiese Group also working with Lifestyle, Fashion and Music. Relatable working with Fashion, Technology, Lifestyle and Sports. Reebok working with Sporting clothes and health. Finally, Sniph an online discovery service for perfumes. This chapter relies on the final research question – What is the role Social Media and Influencer Marketing, what does this mean to us as society, as well as what are the impacts and side-effects of it. Is a healthier balance possible for social media users, and what can be said about the future? Below, are the questions that were asked during the interview sessions.

Interview questions:

1 - In your own word, how would you describe an influencer on Instagram? What are their key traits? Do you refer them to their Engagement rate? Reach? Personality? Do they have a talent? Are they famous people? Someone who runs their own business? A blogger?

2 - Who is your key target group when doing a PR campaign on Instagram and why? Is generation Z a key target? If so why?

How do you get into the Generation Z's/(Millennial's) DNA/understand them? (What is the age group in your company, are there a lot of "young" people working at your company?)

3 - What key tools and strategies do you use when doing a campaign on Instagram?

4 - How is the “Swedish PR” market in comparison to international ones – do you follow US/UK market trends –compare target groups? Are they any different? Why? (do you need to consider/adapt to “Swedish culture” to be politically correct/more on trend?)

5 - What channels do you think are most relevant to your business? why

6 - What role does Influencer Marketing play into our society? Would you consider them as effective/bringing value to our society?

7 - In comparison to previous media channels such as broadcasting, television, reaching out to wider audiences (such as different age groups, class, gender, ethnicity) – today is all about micro and “local” marketing and essentially very narrowed down - what works better today and why? How do you see advertisement today in comparison to 10 years ago?

8 - What are the key challenges or potential threats with Influencer Marketing in the future?

9 - What metrics do you use to measure the success of your social media/Influencer marketing campaigns? How do you collect data and analyse it?

10 - What makes a piece of social media content on Instagram successful? Could you give me an example - What is a “good” campaign on Instagram – Do you look at number of ‘Likes’ mainly – hashtags, comments?

11 - What is the process when picking an Influencer for a campaign, what are the key traits you are looking - What do you value in an Influencer (Is it their number of followers, personality, previous campaigns that have been successful, authenticity?)

12 - Heated debates are on the rise regarding our health and well-being when consuming/spending too much time on Social Media – What are your thoughts on that (and especially towards younger generations who are known to be heavy users)

13 - Is Influencer Marketing here to stay? Why?

Analysis:

The interview sessions with the PR firms and companies in Stockholm portrayed different views in regard to Influencer Marketing in comparison to the collected insights from the US, Canada, Germany, Spain and UK. At Patriksson and Relatable, two PR firms based in Stockholm within the Fashion, Lifestyle and Beauty sectors mentioned that they are not specifically targeting a younger generation such as Generation Z when doing PR campaigns. As a matter of fact, seeking to reach out to a specific target group is not what they are looking into at first. Instead Patriksson and Relatable work the other way around where they seek to understand and get into the brand's DNA first, which would then naturally drive them to a specific target group who will in return relate and connect to the brand itself. Secondly, once the Brand has been properly distinguished and fully understood, both the Patriksson and Relatable consultants explained that they would seek to match an Influencer with the brand as a key strategy to further accentuate and bring more value and credibility to the campaign, essentially forming an emotional connection to their audience.

'Every Brand has a different audience.' (Relatable, 2019) Appendix p73

'There is no one fits all.' (Patriksson, 2019) Appendix p69

Target groups according to Relatable and Patriksson seem to differ a lot depending on the brand. Interestingly, the PR consultant at Relatable mentioned that despite the fact that they are not looking into targeting a specific group at first, they still seek to influence any individuals above the age of 20 years old through Instagram campaigns.

'Millennial's yes because they have the money [...] the older ones would be the ones who actually make the purchase.' (Relatable 2019) Appendix p73

Interestingly at Reebok Nordics, the renowned sports company owned by Adidas Group, the Marketing Manager mentioned that they are on the other hand targeting their campaigns towards a younger audience hence 'Generation Z.'

'By 2020 next year nearly 40 per cent of the human population will be Generation Z. It is a

massive massive massive target group and they have money to spend' (Reebok, 2019)

Appendix p80

At Sniph, a discovery service for scents based in Stockholm, also mentioned that they are targeting a younger generation:

'I think right now it is definitely a younger generation and Instagram itself is mainly attracting a younger group – because they are easily swayed – at least when they see something, yes that speaks to them and so I think that is part of the reason and they are very attracted to visual forms and it is easy to persuade them with beautiful pictures.' (Sniph, 2019) Appendix p83

At Relatable, Reebok Nordics and Sniph, sales seem to be the key driver whilst promoting an Influencer Marketing campaign whereas at Patriksson on the other hand it is more about spreading brand awareness to the public.

Instagram is also the most popular channel used among the Swedish PR firms and the 'in-house' Marketers. Facebook and YouTube were also brought up at Patriksson, Relatable, Geelmuyden Kiese Group and Reebok Nordics. According to Patriksson and Reebok, Facebook is a good channel to reach out to an older audience, as the 'millennial community' have moved on from the platform to Instagram instead. YouTube is also another channel in which Relatable and Reebok Nordics benefits from. At Relatable, YouTube 'clips' is a great way to share longer messages, where influencers talk more in depth about a specific brand, product or service. Instagram 'Story' has only the ability to showcase videos that are no more than 30 seconds. As the consultant at Relatable explained, an Influencer could post several videos followed by each other one by one, however it is believed that users tend to skip them and do not watch them entirely. On YouTube on the other hand, the Relatable consultant explained, people have stronger tendencies to watch longer videos, and especially younger generations such as Gen Z. At Reebok Nordics, the Marketing Manager also explained that moving content, in other words videos tend to have a much stronger footprint and a lot more people want to record or watch video content, as long as it is short and interesting. At Sniph, the marketing expert mentioned Podcasts, which was not brought up among the other companies that were interviewed. Podcasts are 'voice recordings' by people, which also

seems to be an occurring future trend in Marketing. Amongst the collected 80 PR companies the term ‘voice’ was mentioned several times.

‘We do also have influencers that we work with, that use podcasts that are a bit older – at least 30 + because they have a reach and engagement rate that makes them reliable – a lot of our customers that are above 30-35 have been hearing about us through Podcasts - so I think that is something that is definitely working too.’ (Sniph, 2019) Appendix 83

At Relatable, the consultant also mentioned *‘Everything has an expiry date’* in other words, Influencer Marketing is a trend, which may be incredibly successful as of today but could be out of fashion tomorrow.

‘We may not respond to it as much as when you watch TV today for instance, as soon as the commercial goes on you do not watch it, you go somewhere else and do something else. We will eventually stop looking at Instagram as well, with Social Media fatigue, a lot of people and lot of brands know this – this might not work in six months or in three years, we do not know, that is why we should make the most of it now.’ (Relatable 2019) Appendix p73

At Patriksson the consultant had a different stance and explained that on the other hand influential people will always be a trend and always has been. However, the consultant still added at the very end of the interview that Influencer Marketing will certainly become a lot more complex and challenging to deal with, as a result of the of the rapid rise of micro influencers, this will make it more difficult to track and measure properly.

The Stockholm based PR firms and in-house PR/Marketing experts all agreed on the fact that the definition of today’s ‘Influencer’ is rather complex and ‘fussy.’

‘An influencer is anyone with an influence really.’ (Relatable 2019) Appendix p73

They also all agreed on that being an influencer today has definitely changed and evolved overtime and especially from what it was believed to be in the past.

'In the early days it was rock stars, royalties, it was always someone that had a talent – today it is different because anyone can be an influence, people write about their life and post nice pictures.' (Relatable, 2019) Appendix p73

'With the current landscape and change in human mentality I have come to accept that as a marketing director at Reebok that an influencer is someone that has a big channel that speaks to his/her followers – in today's world a more corporate definition of an influencer would be someone with a big following.' (Reebok Nordics, 2019) Appendix p77

'Today an influencer can be anyone who runs an Instagram account, has a fun personality and do not mind posting daily about their everyday life.' (Geelmuyden Kiese Group, 2019) Appendix p83

At Sniph, a major focus was on the reach and engagement rate to be even considered an Influence. She explained the importance of having a good engagement with their audience, meaning being responsive to comments and messages on their profiles. This will further enhance their authenticity and reliability. She also added that influencers have always existed however what has changed is that there are some influencers that do not necessarily have a talent:

'There are a lot of people that are influencers because they are famous, however there are some that are influencers that do not have an actual talent, which I think is one of the main reasons why people make fun of influencers but the professional ones are the really good ones their talent is the fact that are an influence on people and running that business very professionally.' (Sniph, 2019) Appendix p80

Strikingly, even PR and Marketing experts cannot seem to provide a specific definition of today's 'Influencers.'

When speaking about the future of today's Influencers and Influencer Marketing the interviewees were quite sceptical. Due to new technologies that are constantly evolving, they believed that either a new communication platform will come into existence and essentially 'take over' Instagram and Facebook and offer a new communicational channel. Another argument was referring to Social Media fatigue, people will eventually stop using Social

Media as a result of being drained and overwhelmed with the amount of various campaigns on Instagram. People will as a result lose interest and influencers will become less credible and trust worthy.

'The big challenge that has risen is that there is too much collaborations and the influencers have lost their credibility. And that is dangerous because that is the only reason influencer marketing exists, because the brands want to be more personal. So a lot of large influencers will fall and new smaller ones will arise.' (Geelmuyden Kiese Group, 2019) Appendix p83

'Influencer marketing is just the same as commercials but in another platform. Today influencers do so many collaborations that it's almost like watching TV sometimes.' (Geelmuyden Kiese Group, 2019) Appendix 83

At Reebok, the Marketing Expert also explained that people are becoming smarter and will eventually start to see through blogs and Instagram posts and become pickier when it comes to following an Influencer on Instagram. The interviewee also mentioned that people have already started to become a lot more conscious and mindful about their Social Media usage, where in some cases some users have gone as far as deleting their Instagram accounts due to being too overwhelmed by Social Media content. The interviewee also added that Social Media has created a lot of negative side effects such as depression, anxiety and even in severe cases suicide.

'From a humanity point of view, Influencer Marketing is a threat to our society, from a business point of view, not so much, especially for Generation Z. According to data measurement is it important for them that brands that take a standpoint that is bigger than the product. We will have a continuous rise of suicide, depression and it will come to a point, just like in general life everything goes in circles, there might come to a point where there will be anti-social media age. I do not think that will actually happen, but we see tendencies and pockets of that. There might come to a point where at parties you will have to put your phones away into a bag where you have to socialize physically with a person. You can see pockets of that, you can see people deleting their Instagram for instance but it is just small pocket, there will still continue to be many more years of social media dominance, but people will become be more aware of the consequences and act upon it.' (Reebok, 2019) pp Appendix 77

'Social media paints an unjust picture of reality where you only post pictures that look fabulous, which 99 per cent of the population may not be able to do. [...] If you also are a young person and you are on social media and you constantly see dreamy images of people flying first class, travelling to the best resorts, you are living the lush life and the person watching it might be a stuck in smaller apartment or in an office that they do not really like, because they see another reality that they would like to be part of, that is what makes them depressed. So what social media has caused, the good side is that you have information freedom, everyone can be a voice, but it has side effects like depression, anxiety and sometimes suicide.' (Reebok, 2019) pp Appendix 77

'Instagram has definitely a big effect on how you are feeling, everyone will see what you are doing on Social Media, you do not want to feel left out or less worthy. You see super models working out, and you might think 'I can't live up to those standards' and you always compare yourself to others. You do not want to feel less valuable and so you always feel pressured. Influencers, post luxury photos for one day but then again they might be staying at home eating noodle for a month, but they do not show that.' (Relatable, 2019) Appendix p 57-62

During the interview sessions, the PR and Marketing experts portrayed quite a negative stance towards Social Media, despite working within that sector. Strikingly, they are all fully aware of the various consequences when spending too much time on Social Media, yet they are constantly seeking new strategies to keep their audiences interested.

At Sniph, the marketing expert mentioned that she does not believe in a future where 'Influencers' will be used as a marketing tool due to the huge amount of them that are out there. She explained that as of today there are already too many potential risks in this particular sector that makes its future even more uncertain. There must be very clear set marketing strategies in order to produce a successful influencer marketing campaign. She also stressed the difficulty and challenges as of today as marketing experts entirely focus on the conversion and engagement rate. As a result, this could potentially force the influencers in pushing and promoting a brand in certain way, which leads them into being less authentic, as they are essentially not being their true self. Consequently, their followers are then being pushed into purchasing a product and will then lose their reliability and trust towards the influencer. She also explained that it is hard to know whether an influencer is brand building

as it does not confirm that immediately.

LIMITATIONS

This thesis has assessed collected insights, blog posts and interviews made by experts in the field of Public Relations and Marketing. Due to Influencer Marketing being a recent entry in our society, the interviewed PR firms were quite protective in sharing specific information about their work as a result of the tremendous competition that is currently taking place in the industry as well as company confidentiality. The process of reaching out to PR firms, were also at times, quite difficult, as their availability and time was very limited. The five interviewees provided well enough information on the topic, however this thesis could have been further deepened with the contribution of more experts in this area. The expert's limited time and availability also demonstrated the major pitfalls and flaws within the field of Public Relations, where time management seems to be highly valued, which also in many ways seem to cause them a lot of stress. This particular study has mainly focused on the present and future of Influencer marketing strategies and on youth's health, however it was noticeable that the interviewed PR and Marketing experts were equally impacted on the effects of Social Media as a result of using Influencer Marketing for their work. They hinted throughout the interview sessions that they are at times overworked and constantly under pressure in keeping up to date with the latest trends. Most of the interviewed experts agreed at the very end of the interview sessions that influencer Marketing is a complex phenomenon, which ought to be consumed in a balanced manner in order to avoid negative side effects, such as depression and anxiety. However, as the Marketing expert from Reebok Nordics suggested, it is not their job to understand why they need to promote various trends with social media campaigns, the goal is to execute and to sell. Therefore, user's health on Social Media platforms is not prioritized on the other hand sales is essentially the ultimate driver in moving forward. Collecting the insights and reports made by the PR firms was also rather challenging, as a result of PR firms being extremely protective in sharing key information due to confidentiality reasons, just like the interviewees were. The initial plan was to collect annual reports published by PR firms however, blog posts and insights were the only information that was made available online. Although, the collected insights and blog posts turned out to be more useful as they were all written from a more personal approach and angled by their company's perspective. As this

thesis focuses on the future thinking viewed from a PR angle the blog posts and insights were shown to be extremely valuable.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Today's Marketing strategies are extremely narrowed down in comparison to previous eras with major broadcasting firms with the aim to reach out to a wide audience, essentially connecting to a globalized culture 'a global identity, to think and to act as a 'citizen of the world'⁹⁵ (Tomlinson 1999:184) and belong to a wider public and community. With Influencer Marketing in place, PR firms are looking into market brands at a personalized level to form deeper connections with different target groups and audiences. A key theme found among the reports and interviews were 'Influencer Relations.' According to the analysed insights, blog articles from the USA, UK, Germany, France, Spain and Canada together with the interview sessions with the Stockholm based PR firms, building relationships with consumers/customers is a major key trend and believed to be extremely valuable for brands. A key future thinking strategy is to build and form deeper relationships between the brands with the consumers, using Influencers as 'personas' and tools to trigger and impact people emotionally. It is not enough in the marketing and advertising world to be able to sell a *story* and spread it to the mass media, on the other hand marketers need to evolve and update their strategies into deeper and meaningful campaigns. 'A recent Brand-Z report notes that the biggest growth in 2018 was achieved by brands that "have a purpose that meets consumer needs in relevant ways that go beyond a functional benefit to form an emotional connection."⁹⁶ (Four Communication, 2019) A German PR firm spoke about creating a new discipline within influencer marketing at University level so that future graduates feel more prepared professionally.

The way people consume and purchase products in the recent years has also dramatically changed. Today's consumers have pivoted their interests towards 'micro' influencers, Instagram profiles with smaller amounts of followers, who are believed to be authentic and true to their-self. 'Micro-influencers are considered to be more of a 'normal' person, and they

⁹⁵ Tomlinson, John (1999) Globalization and Culture. Cambridge: Polity. P184

⁹⁶ Consumer Trends (2019) FOUR Communications <https://fourcommunications.com/consumer-trends-2019/>

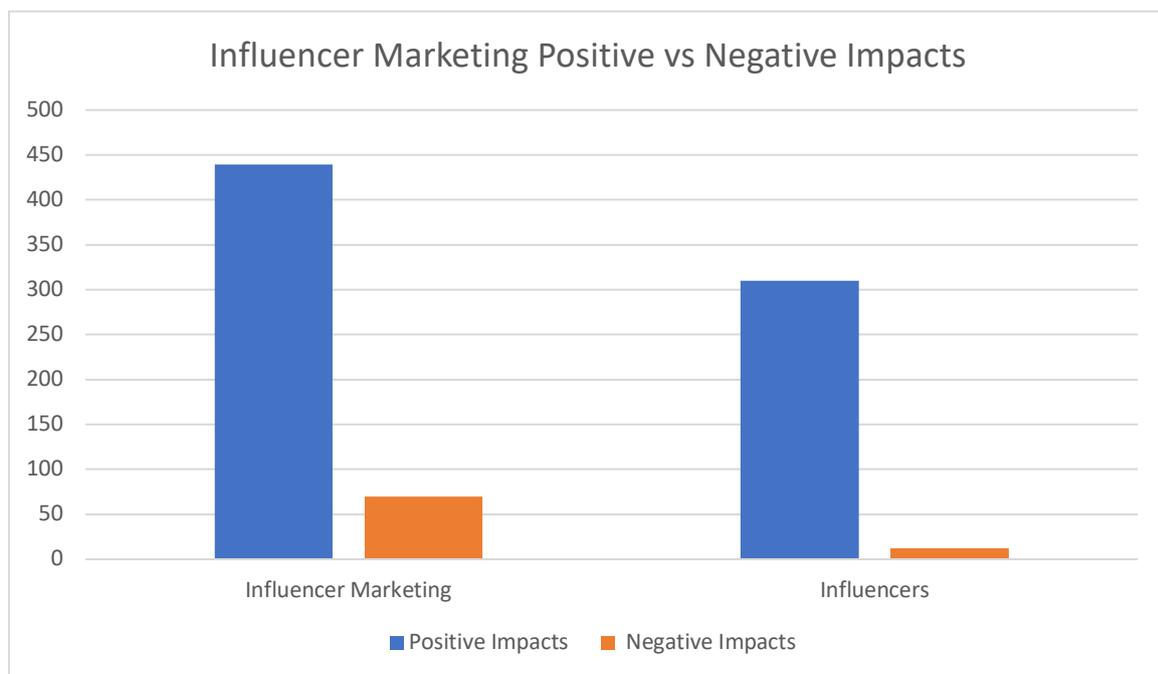
engage more directly and frequently with their followers (...) As a result their audience views them as more authentic and relatable.⁹⁷ (5WPR, 2018) Authenticity was one of the most repeated terms among the PR insights, with 32 codes relating to Influencers being authentic, trustworthy and credible people. However, a lack of a clear definition and explanation to what is really meant by authenticity was truly missing within the PR blog posts and interviews. Essentially, being authentic means staying true to oneself and being a genuine person. It seems as if the term has a different meaning in the world of Social Media. Essentially being authentic from a Social Media point of view means being extremely personal and open towards your audience/‘followers.’ In other words, constantly sharing and updating your daily lifestyle and routines in the most natural and *effortless* manner. A key trend is to post images and videos that are not too edited and touched up in order to stay as *credible* and *genuine* as possible and as close to reality as possible. It has been a key theme for decades in the advertising world to sell a product or service that is appealing to the eye and essentially ‘selling a dream.’ Today this seems to be the very opposite, as consumers have figured with time that picturesque images are quite unrealistic and unachievable. Additionally, as a result of micro influencer being on the rise, PR firms bombard them with products so that they can in return promote their brands in a personal way on their profiles and trigger up-sales. However, this could also give quite an unauthentic approach as they sometimes advertise too many different brands, which could lead them into losing their credibility instead. This phenomenon seems to be slowly occurring as people are experiencing Social Media fatigue. ‘Prior research has defined social media fatigue as a situation whereby social media users suffer from mental exhaustion after experiencing various technological, informative and communicative overloads through their participation and interactions on the different online social media platforms.’⁹⁸(Bright, Kleiser, & Grau, 2015; Lee, Son, & Kim, 2016; Ravindran, Kuan, Chua, & Hoe Lian, 2014; Zhang, Zhao, Lu, & Yang, 2016) Scholars argue that social media fatigue has significant negative implications for both users as well as the businesses and service operators (Oghuma et al., 2016; Shin & Shin, 2016). On a user level, social media fatigue results in deterioration in both mental and physiological strengths whereby users are likely to develop unhealthy behaviours. (Choi & Lim, 2016; Shin & Shin, 2016; Sun et al.,

⁹⁷ 5WPR (2018) Five Influencer Marketing Trends Marketers Should Know

<http://www.5wpr.com/new/influencer-marketing-trend/>

⁹⁸ Bright, Kleiser, & Grau, 2015; Lee, Son, & Kim, 2016; Ravindran, Kuan, Chua, & Hoe Lian, 2014; Zhang, Zhao, Lu, & Yang, 2016) Online social media fatigue and psychological wellbeing—A study of compulsive use, fear of missing out, fatigue, anxiety and depression Amandeep Dhira,b,* , Yossiri Yossatornc , Puneet Kaurb,d , Sufen Chene,d (2018) 141-152

2017).⁹⁹ From a PR perspective, negative impacts and side effects were rarely mentioned in the blog posts, if even at all. Naturally, as major business firms it is rather expected that they would not write any negativity about Influencer Marketing as they reach out to thousands of online readers. These PR firms also want to grow as a company and meet their targets. Only 70 codes describing negative impacts on Influencer Marketing were found of a total of 439 codes mentioning Influencer Marketing from the 80 PR firms. Whilst 369 codes describing positive impacts on Influencer Marketing out of 439 codes were found. As well as 310 codes stating positive effects of a total of 322 codes relating to ‘Influencers’ as a profession and 12 codes referring to negative effects. This further accentuates the Western World’s PR vision’s ignorance in consumers health and well-being and prioritizes sales.



On the other hand, the interview sessions with the PR/Marketing experts were able to open up a lot more and deepen their thoughts on the future of Influencer Marketing and discuss what a plausible future could lead us to as users spend a lot of time on Social Media platforms such as Instagram. Interestingly, every interviewee (Patriksson, Geelmuyden Kiese Group, Reebok,

⁹⁹ (Bright, Kleiser, & Grau, 2015; Lee, Son, & Kim, 2016; Ravindran, Kuan, Chua, & Hoe Lian, 2014; Zhang, Zhao, Lu, & Yang, 2016) Online social media fatigue and psychological wellbeing—A study of compulsive use, fear of missing out, fatigue, anxiety and depression Amandeep Dhira,b,* , Yossiri Yossatornc , Puneet Kaurb,d , Sufen Chene,d (2018) 141-152

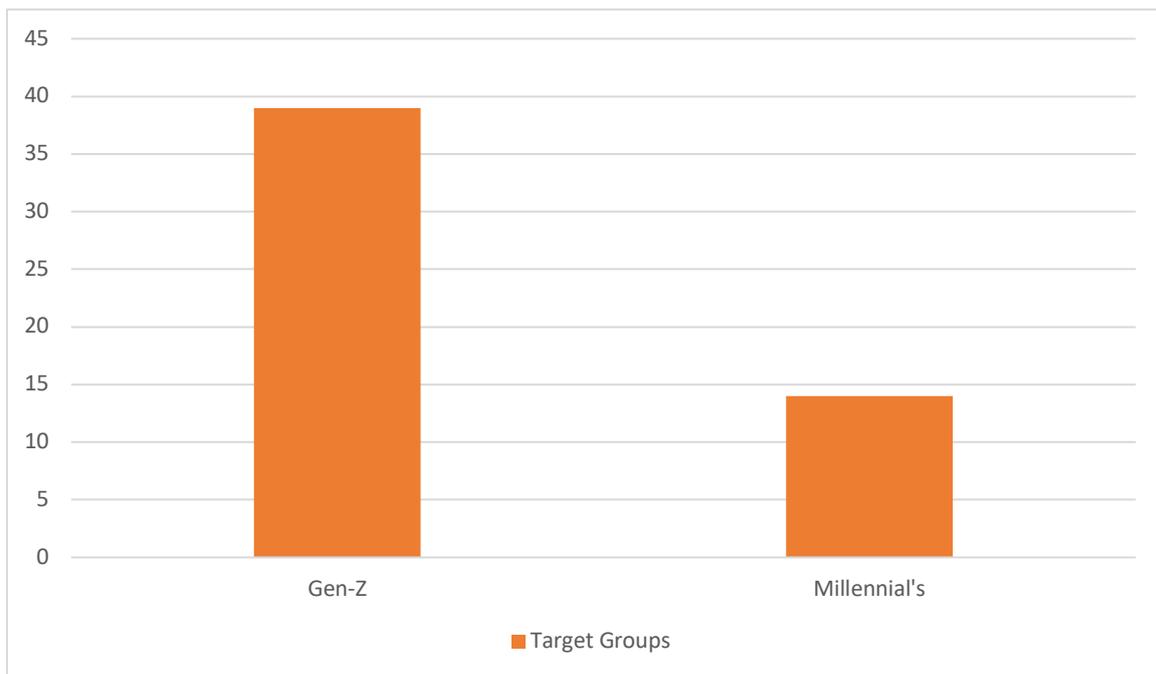
Relatable and Sniph) all mentioned their worry and uncertainty towards the future of Influencer Marketing. This suggests, that not only scholars within Media and Psychology studies are concerned with people's Social Media use, but even experts within the PR field are very much sceptical and rather pessimistic. Yet, they still practice these Influencer Marketing strategies, which do not seem to be slowing down any time soon. This gives a rather contradicting vision and hypocrisy, and perhaps an area where users of Social Media ought to be critical towards and not fully trust. Perhaps a solution towards Social Media usage should also involve information regarding the negative side-effects from these platforms. Perhaps younger generations ought to be educated in schools about the side-effects.

Another striking theme found in the content analysis amongst the 80 PR firms was their eagerness in initiating strategies that is meant to target a future audience and generation, which is Generation Z, also known as 'Gen Z'. Generation Z is known to be the first and youngest generation to have been born and raised with Social Media. One might think that this makes them easy target, as they do not know a life without Social Media, as well as also due to their young age this could lead them into making the wrong decisions and choices that would, and perhaps should, require parental advice. 'Using social media becomes a risk to adolescents more often than most adults realize. Most risks fall into the following categories: peer-to-peer; inappropriate content; lack of understanding of online privacy issues; and outside influences of third-party advertising groups.'¹⁰⁰ (Schurgin O'Keefe, Clarke-Pearson 2011:801)

On the other hand, the interviewed Swedish PR/Marketing experts had quite varied approaches regarding target groups in general. Patriksson and Relatable for instance work the other way around where they firstly focus on the brand itself rather than seeking to reach a specific target group. In house Marketing experts on the other hand, such as Reebok Nordics, discussed that they are specifically looking into targeting the next generation 'Gen Z.' The trend insights, particularly the ones from the USA were also heavily discussing new strategies and ways of thinking to approach and appeal to a much younger audience, and the creation of future professions within the Social Media and Tech sectors. Surprisingly these analysed PR firms heavily stressed how difficult this specific target group is, as they are believed to be unpredictable and hard to define. 'They're an open-minded, non-traditional generation who

¹⁰⁰ Gwenn Schurgin O'Keefe, MD, Kathleen Clarke-Pearson, MD Council on Communication and Media (2011:801)

are unwilling to accept stereotypes. They're a generation we can't put a label on.'¹⁰¹ (M&C Saatchi PR 2018) They also explained that a typical Gen Z follows and chooses 'a brand that takes a stand.'¹⁰²(Reebok, 2019) This could mean politically, environmentally, or simply put an organization that has a true meaning and is making an impact, changing and transforming our society into a better place. This was a common theme found in the content analysis. They also mentioned that a typical Gen Z is also believed to not be very loyal towards brands, on the other hand they consume multiple brands and products on different occasions, which makes it extremely complex for companies to promote and sell their other products on offer. Millennial's were also mentioned, the generation born between 1984-1994. Millennial's are also in many ways raised with new technology, the creation of the Internet and Social Media platforms. However, despite representing almost more than 70% of the global employees by 2020, as stated by ROI Communications, only 14 codes out of the 80 PR firms mentioned Millennial's in comparison to 39 codes referring to Generation Z.



¹⁰¹ Inside the Mind of Gen Z – M&C Saatchi PR (2018) https://mcsaatchipublicrelations.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GenZ_OnePager_v10.pdf

¹⁰² Reebok 2019 Interview pp62-66

It therefore seems as if Gen-Z is a key a future trend within Influencer Marketing. It is not enough to entertain a present audience, on the other hand, it is more valuable and worthwhile to start thinking about the next generation. Again, these PR firms fail to explain why this is an important target group to focus on. On the one hand, one might assume that the reason why PR firms want to focus on Gen-Z is to be ahead of time, however this leaves out many other generations that are still very active on Social Media platforms and a large part of the population. It seems as if today's PR firms have an extremely narrowed down mindset towards specific niche target groups, where a huge amount of money is invested towards future programs and data measurements. 207 codes were found referring to the importance in creating bonds and relationships with the consumers, setting clear strategies, targeting specific groups of people as well as going beyond traditional PR campaigns by personalizing advertisements to consumers. And 39 codes referring to the development in technological programs and tools such as Artificial intelligence and the rise of using audio techniques and voices towards specific programs. As we live in a digital world that is constantly changing and growing, PR firms seem to believe that marketers ought to invest in AI-tools that will further support their marketing strategies in terms of numbers and measuring the impacts to be as accurate and precise as possible. Numbers will certainly help accentuate an area or a problem, however, what is lacking is their time to fully grasp and analyse what the numbers truly mean. For instance, numbers cannot measure user's emotions or feelings, perhaps a significant high number of 'likes' on an Influencer's post could be perceived as positive however, it is still extremely vague to be able to say how successful a campaign or post has been just by looking at the numbers.

What can be done?

Overall, the interviewees were able to open up a lot more about their vision and thoughts on the future of Influencer Marketing. In comparison to the content analysis, the coding results suggested a rather positive overview on Influencer Marketing in general. What was missing from the 80 analysed PR firms was any detailed explanation in how they were going pursue their future strategies. They all had quite similar views in regard to which target groups they want to focus on such as Generation Z and Millennial's. However, no clear set strategies were ever mentioned amongst the analysed insights and blog posts. From an Emotional Branding point of view, all PR firms heavily relied on the importance of using authentic influencers as

key tools. However, they failed to explain in what way or what was ever meant by authenticity. Another missing gap depicted from the content analysis was perhaps PR expert's vision on their customers/users. The customers portrayed by the PR firms were extremely generalized, for instance stating that Generation Z's are hard to read or a complex target group. They also failed to explain why these PR agencies ought to entirely focus on the next future generation and not older/previous generations and essentially 'the present' audience. It also seems as if today's citizens expect to be treated a certain way. Due to the rapid technology rise people have also changed in the way they consume information, entertainment and communicational platforms. It is clear that people seem to move forward very quickly and are becoming more passive by the advertisements they come across as mentioned by the marketing expert at Sniph. A major focus depicted from the content analysis was on PR expert's analysis on Influencers and not necessarily on consumer behaviour and needs. The use of emotions through influential personas is certainly an on-going trend, however, it is also noted that the use of stories and story-telling and essentially giving the customer an experience also seems to be a major future trend.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this thesis has studied future thinking trends within Social Media, more specifically looking at PR firm's Influencer Marketing strategies on Instagram from a Western World point of view. This thesis has collected insights from blog posts made by PR firms coming from the USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Spain and Sweden as well as interviewed experts in the Stockholm scene in Sweden. The analysed data suggests two results: the content analysis suggesting a rather positive overview of the future of Influencer Marketing and the semi-structured interviews suggesting a rather pessimistic vision and worry towards the future in this area.

The chapter on the qualitative analysis on the twelve PR firms demonstrated the importance of emotional branding and in how firms are looking into connecting with consumers in a more personal approach. One of the key take-aways in this thesis is how advertisers and marketers has changed in the way they target their consumers. Today they are looking into niche target groups, such as Generation-Z, where PR firms see them as a generation that follows and enjoys brands that has a deeper meaning and takes a stand-point either politically, environmentally or any form of organization that focuses on improving society as a whole. They also mentioned how difficult it is to label this target group, as they are believed to not be brand loyal. The content analysis and interview sessions also differed in the ways in which PR firms communicate and target their consumers.

The content analysis heavily relied on a younger generation – mainly Gen Z. However, the interview sessions with the Swedish PR/Marketing firms explained that it very much depended on the brands itself. Although, the interviewees still suggested that the younger generation is still a key focus. The interviewees were also able to address challenges and the major uncertainties towards the future of influencer marketing. Because it is incredibly addicting and harmful towards our health, the interviewee explained that this will eventually reach a point where people will stop using Social Media platforms. They also explained that we are already experiencing 'Social Media fatigue' where users are deleting their social media profiles, as well as new applications on iPhones have been launched stating the amounts of hours a person spends per day browsing on their phone, which only suggests the seriousness and extremity these technological gadgets has towards us, as was mentioned by

the Marketing expert at Sniph and Reebok. It was clear, that the Swedish PR/Marketing experts were pretty sceptical and in many ways against Social Media platforms and Influencer Marketing as a whole. However, as major business companies, it is comprehensible that these PR firms want to grow and be able to sell their products.

Despite the awareness of the various side effects of Social Media use towards younger generations – they are still looking into executing marketing strategies that will increase sales and profit. This gives a rather unethical approach. It also seems as if, PR firms are looking into the future in a very narrowed down angle, not thinking about other potential future happenings, such as the exchanges between cultures and ethnicities and other Social groups in general. As we live in a more or less Globalized world, where people from different backgrounds travel and move to different countries, perhaps this should also be included in future thinking strategies within Social Media, as anyone with a mobile phone has the accessibility to Social Media.

The interviewees also mentioned positive effects of Social media, stating the freedom in raising our voice, staying in touch and communicating with family and friends across the world, the access of different sources of information. There is certainly not only negativity about Social Media platforms. However, it is clear by looking at the data results in this thesis, that PR firms will seek to evolve influencer Marketing even further by implementing and investing new programs that will measure impacts more precisely and more effectively. Perhaps, PR firms should also look into alternatives, as the Swedish PR/Marketers suggested, we do not know for certain how long this Influencer Marketing trend will last.

This further demonstrates the flaws within PR organizations for not thinking or including other options than Social Media. Hence their future vision is also as a result extremely narrowed down. This also suggests that users ought to be more aware of the consequences and the marketing strategies PR companies use to trigger them in their purchase decisions, especially the younger generation. We will never know what the exact future may hold. This thesis has been able to unfold important questions regarding the future of Influencer Marketing and is definitely an area which ought to be further studied due to its recent entry in academia as well as within major corporate companies that involves and affects a lot of users in various ways around the world. This thesis is not a closure but an encouragement to a larger discussion in finding a healthier balance in our society.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEWS IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN SPRING 2019

PATRIKSSON COMMUNICATION

1 How would you describe an “influencer” what are their key traits?

- Engagement rate? Reach? Personality? Do they have a talent? Are they famous people? Someone who runs their own business? A blogger?

All of the above – especially for us, preferably work with somebody who is perhaps talented or well versed – as it brings more credibility – quite frankly it is valid to question the credibility of the ones who are just known as influencers but then again I think people just follow these influencers anyways.

Increasingly we are looking at the engagement rate and the quality of the influencer as well. However, first and foremost what is most important is the target group.

2 Who is your key target group when doing a PR campaign on Instagram and why? (let them say first)

Follow up

Is generation Z a key target? If so why?

Follow up

How do you get into Generation Z's/(Millennial's) DNA/understand them? (What is the age group in your company, are there a lot of "young" people working at your company?)

Depends who you want to reach – and the limitations you have if you have an assigned target group for a client that makes it easier, otherwise trying to find influencer that targets a specific target group – there is no fits all - it is up to each assignment and project and what you want to attain

Gen Z – not specifically looking at Gen Z – such a fussy term. As far as I am concerned what is even the age group for Millennial's? I would say I am probably part of the Millennial movement as well. If not, more and more people are more influenced by Millennials and become Millennials by proxy. For me it is too fussy to find an interest in focusing on specific age group such as Gen Z. For the clients that we need to target specific target groups or age groups then that is what we do – I mean you have other parameters like educations that you can consider as well.

We are influenced a lot by what we have seen and what other people do – I think it is inevitable for us to be influenced by that. It becomes a mixture from previous campaigns previous successful categories, as well as campaigns from outside of Sweden – we take a lot of inspiration from other countries and brands – because that is our job, it is also inevitable not be influenced by that. That would be the main inspiration I suppose.

We are more – that is also our strength – we are so brand focused and "brand building" sometimes I am afraid that we could potentially miss the target for just selling stuff. Some clients definitely have another customers, so sometimes we need to kind of zoom out and see what is 'on brand' and what influencer is best associated to the brand that will drive sales for the people that follow them. Rather than choosing someone that is completely unattainable

3 What key tools and strategies do you use when doing a campaign on Instagram? – Could you give me an example – What is the process when you partner with an influencer -

4 How is the "Swedish PR" market in comparison to international ones – do you follow US/UK market trends –compare target groups? Are they any different? Why? (do you need to consider/adapt to "Swedish culture" to be politically correct/more appealing?)

Global clients that we have they consider Sweden as a first move market in terms of communication. Some of the Global clients we have often think that whatever we do here resonates quite well in other markets as well. So it is usually what we do here and they tend to copy that to other countries that are second movers.

5 Which Social Media channels are most relevant to your business? Why

Work mostly with Instagram - Facebook to some extent

Instagram is the biggest channel for us – I think a lot of whatever work we would do start with Instagram first – and could be put to Facebook afterwards. It depends on the on assignment, if a client wants us to target a specific group for that but usually – a lot of us think Instagram first. Instagram is the most natural channel for us to be brand building. I think a lot of companies, a least to this point has perhaps Facebook for an older target group which speaks to us a more younger target group perhaps. Instagram is also more sales driven. Mostly our clients use us for their brand building than sales drive. More brand awareness.

6 What role does Influencer Marketing play into our society? Would you consider them as effective/bringing value to our society?

7 In comparison to previous media channels such as broadcasting, television, reaching out to wider audiences (such as different age groups, class, gender, ethnicity) – today is all about micro and “local” marketing and very narrowed down - what works better today and why? How do you see advertisement today in comparison to 10 years ago?

More challenging today - increasingly more challenging for us to communicate. You need to set up specific plans – It is just different and as far as authenticity and credibility goes- it gets warned down. With the new Instagram features of being able to purchase directly in the app – this is going to make you question even more, it is nice to be able to see the product however this can lead us into start questioning ourselves if this a paid advertisement or are they trying to be nice and make it accessible for people to purchase it directly. At the same time people are getting more and more used to this kind of communication to some extent – take it for what it is. Influencers have become curator at some point you can always trust them for curating something because they think it is nice.

More and more difficult, more and more complex – however this will get us more into the point. More targeted

8 What are the key challenges or potential threats with Influencer Marketing in the future?

The challenges are the presence of measurable tools – the way have measured historically the value of a press clip – it has been broken down to numbers but then again what does it really say? You have no idea whatsoever what the result is. So today, there is no real difference in terms of measuring the impacts – it has always been numbers. Measurement makes you even more anxious in way. We are getting more and more numbers – hopefully this will make us even more accurate.

We need to remain agile – always evaluate – whatever you do. Some of the clients we work for we manage their Social Media accounts. In that way we have a possibility to re-evaluate.

There is always more and more information – we still have to find what is relevant and what we should spend our time on.

9 What metrics do you use to measure the success of your social media/Influencer marketing campaigns? How do you collect data and analyse it?

10 What makes a piece of social media content on Instagram successful? Could you give me an example - What is a “good” campaign on Instagram – Do you look at number of ‘Likes’ mainly – hashtags, comments?

*Engagement is really interesting – very much depending on the client
Click rates also a good way to measure engagement. Likes and comments are always the easiest way to measure the success. However, I think companies are getting more and more sceptical towards these numbers, also organic reach, you need to put a lot effort to be credible. And almost always have to count on ‘buying’ likes and comments.*

11 What is the process when picking an Influencer for a campaign, what are the key traits you are looking for - What do you value in an Influencer (Is it their number of followers, personality, previous campaigns that have been successful, authenticity? What do you by authenticity?)

12 Heated debates are on the rise regarding our health and well-being when consuming/spending too much time on Social Media – What are your thoughts on that (and especially towards younger generations who are known to be heavy users)

*There will be a backlash at some point – especially for the ones that have grown up with Social Media on other hand they do not know any different.
But every trend and movement there is retaliation and revolution so – we have already started seeing that with some people –When we reach to that point we will have to start educating on healthy balance. It is only after a certain time with data about the side effects – however we have not gotten to that point yet. The dopamine you get from likes is of course a vicious circle. And we will have to think about finding a healthier balance.*

13 Is Influencer Marketing here to stay? Why?

*Is it definitely here to stay – its been here forever
Basically association through people which has been key pillar in marketing forever - It’s a ground pillar to use ambassadors in the way that we do, utilizing their channels in different ways.
Before it was word of mouth – now it is other possibilities such as Instagram.
It is here to stay – but it is going to be interesting to see what will happen.
That is way we mostly work with influencers that have a talent and who are known for*

something. Not just being simply an ‘influencer.’

RELATABLE

1 How would you describe an “influencer” what are their key traits?

- Engagement rate? Reach? Personality? Do they have a talent? Are they famous people? Someone who runs their own business? A blogger?

I would say – it is a hard question to answer in that way - nowadays anyone can be an influencer – In my point view from the beginning influencers were people that were able to influence other people by either being famous for something or it would not matter if they were a designer, or an artist or coming from a pop band.

But nowadays micro influencers, macro... and all those kinds of different spectrums – I think that to say now what an influencer is today anyone can be it – it does not have to be anything specific – it has changed – you take really nice photos, you have good looking content on your feed. But it might as well be you at home and you are not anything. You are a normal person working at Sniph. But you post pretty pictures on your Instagram and therefore people follow you because they think ‘I like your couch – where is that from?’ It does not have to be anything with you in particular. But then you can sort of drive people to see your content and feed because it is ‘pretty.’ So nowadays it does not have to be people that are famous for something – or someone you look up to in that way. I think today is broad. It is hard to define specifically. In my mind – it would be someone that is famous or well known for something. Either way if they are famous or not – it is someone you look up to.

2 Who is your key target group when doing a PR campaign on Instagram and why? (let them say first)

Follow up

Is generation Z a key target? If so why?

Follow up

How do you get into Generation Z’s/(Millennial’s) DNA/understand them? (What is the age group in your company, are there a lot of “young” people working at your company?)

It has been very different – as I have worked with many different brands.

Every brand has a different audience – normally the brand tells us what their audience is. For instance a sporting brand might have a specific target group whilst a SONO speakers may have another. It depends very much. Depending on their audience and essentially who are buying their product – normally – those are the ones we want to target. And then we target them through influencers who have the same age – and match them with the brand.

Gen Z – not a key target

Millennials –yes because they are 18 years old and over and have the ability to purchase

products. Usually the brand we work with want to do sales and therefore you need money. Usually you do not target anyone under 20. Under 20 they do not have their own money. If you compare 15-18 year old to 20 to 30 years old – and show the exact same content to both groups, even if both a 100 per cent love it – the older audience will be the ones who make the purchase because they have the money and they can afford it. That is why we try not to target that young – because of that reason.

3 What key tools and strategies do you use when doing a campaign on Instagram? – Could you give me an example – What is the process when you partner with an influencer – Skip

4 How is the “Swedish PR” market in comparison to international ones – do you follow US/UK market trends –compare target groups? Are they any different? Why? (do you need to consider/adapt to “Swedish culture” to be politically correct/more appealing?)

We work globally at Relatable – so we do a lot of campaigns in the USA, UK, Italy so Europe and USA are mainly the same.

In Europe I would say it is more or less the same - But in the US it was a little bit different – they do not have the same look at quality. In Europe you have more standards in terms of quality. We always need to explain what we want to do in the USA – ‘if you do it this way (post better quality photos) you could achieve better results’ – they are always be more afraid to accept and go forward with our advice.

In our case we also have two offices in the USA – a really important point is that when you do an influencer campaign is to find influencers who are actually good at what they do – have a good reputation, good numbers good CTR – looking from Sweden on people on the USA could be quite tricky - as you do not fully know their reputation. No one wants to work with an influencer that has a bad reputation. We just look at their photos and look at their numbers and think this could be a good match – but we do not know them, which is why partnering up with an Influencer from abroad is trickier. You have to have more knowledge about the influencer market, who they are – are they trust worthy... You may know the ones with the bigger names – but you do not know all of the micro influencers. In Europe is very much the same - you can quickly see whether an influencer does too many sponsorships or stories. For us for instance, if we were to do a campaign with an American influencer and they are going to get paid they are not allowed to do any other sponsorship with other companies for 24h. In the USA they do not think like that at all.

5 Which Social Media channels are most relevant to your business? Why

Instagram – is the biggest channel

Youtube: Vlogs – especially if you are going to target younger generations – they look at youtube a lot. They are not as much on Instagram and Facebook. We discovered that YouTube is completely different – it is more unique because everyone is already on Instagram and Facebook and you can record longer videos.

Stories on Instagram – only short videos, you can post 15clips but no one is going to watch

them – on Youtube on the other hand people tend to watch longer videos than on Instagram. You could do a video – either talking about the brand during the whole video, or at the beginning or at the end. People tend to watch them fully. So if you want to send a longer message Youtube is a good format.

6 What role does Influencer Marketing play into our society? Would you consider them as effective/bringing value to our society?

Yes and No

It is effective – the last of couple of years it has become more effective than the papers and TV, because I think people have also in a way gotten used to that. They oversee it - when you watch TV and the commercial goes on you do not watch and go somewhere else and do something else. Even if you are sitting there in front of the TV and watching it – you have gotten so used to it that you do not actually respond it as an ad is supposed to. It does not make you want to purchase something. You do not respond to it as much as whereas if it is an ad on instagram with an influencer is has more of an effect.

That being said , I also think that everything has an expiry date – in the same way we have stopped watching TV - we will eventually stop looking at Instagram as well – with Social media fatigue. There are too many ads. A lot of people and lot of brands know this – this might not work in 6months or 3 years – that’s why we should make most of it now. That’s why there are so many ads out there right now on Instagram. And people are already stopping looking at the ads because everything is sponsored by brands.

I think there will always be a new app or something else where you can share messages - but it probably will not be the same way as it is today in a couple of years.

7 In comparison to previous media channels such as broadcasting, television, reaching out to wider audiences (such as different age groups, class, gender, ethnicity) – today is all about micro and “local” marketing and very narrowed down - what works better today and why? How do you see advertisement today in comparison to 10 years ago?

8 What are the key challenges or potential threats with Influencer Marketing in the future?

9 What metrics do you use to measure the success of your social media/Influencer marketing campaigns? How do you collect data and analyse it?

10 What makes a piece of social media content on Instagram successful? Could you give me an example - What is a “good” campaign on Instagram – Do you look at number of ‘Likes’ mainly – hashtags, comments?

We look at likes and comments – you can see if people essentially ‘like’ the content. The influencer needs to have a really good content and post nice photos – it does not have to be taken by a professional photographer- however it needs to fit in with the rest of your feed. It has to look ‘natural’ in your feed. There needs to be a ‘red thread’ in your account so that your followers think you are credible and authentic enough. Of course the numbers are very

important as well. If you have high quality photos on your feed then the actual sponsorship should be the same level

11 What is the process when picking an Influencer for a campaign, what are the key traits you are looking for - What do you value in an Influencer (Is it their number of followers, personality, previous campaigns that have been successful, authenticity? What do you by authenticity?)

You pick an influencer based on both on the way their feed looks – does it suit the brand we work with. And also we look at look the statistics – how many likes do they usually get with sponsored content? Is this good numbers? And the followers – how do they respond to the sponsored ads

Target group – for instance if we would like to target mothers on Instagram- the influencer would have to be a mom of course – the most important is that the followers are also mothers, so that they would be interested in the product the influencer promotes - Because we want to be able to sell

12 Heated debates are on the rise regarding our health and well-being when consuming/spending too much time on Social Media – What are your thoughts on that (and especially towards younger generations who are known to be heavy users)

A healthy balance is of course possible - However the standard these days is that people spend most of their days on their phone and computer and young kids for instance get their first iPad at the age of 2.

It is an asset – if the kids are crying then it is an easy fix to keep them entertained However with Social Media, in particular Instagram has definitely a big effect on how you are feeling and you feel as if you always have to live up to something. It is not only now your parents or friends who can ‘judge’ you for what you are doing. The whole world who follows you will see what you do on Social Media.

You do not want to feel let out or less worthy to other people.

You see models working out and you think ‘I can’t live up to those standards’ this affects you badly in many ways.

You always compare yourself to others

You do not have to feel less valuable – you always feel pressured in posting nice pictures on your Instagram account.

Influencers – post luxury photos for one day but then again they might be staying at home eating noodle for a month - they do not show that – because who wants to see that? Influencer show a fake reality – that is bad to our mental health

13 Is Influencer Marketing here to stay? Why?

Everything has an expiry date

Blogs were super big for 10 years – then they died and have not made a comeback

Now its influencers mostly on Instagram and YouTube (YouTube is a little bit behind at the moment)

I think it will be the same – I think Instagram will also die soon as well

And something else will happen and fill the gap

Influencers - in the early days it what rockstars, royalties

Today it is different because anyone can be an influence

People who write about their life and post nice pictures

There might be an app coming up later or go back to the way it was before

There will always be someone who influence's someone

But the way it is today will definitely change

REEBOK

1 How would you describe an influencer on Integra, what are the key traits?

- Engagement rate? Reach? Personality? Do they have a talent? Are they famous people?

Someone who runs their own business? A blogger?

Personal point of view an influencer is a person that inspires me and a person that is good at something, and therefore has a specific a talent sports, music politics – essentially someone that inspires me - an inspiration is an influence.

Now with the current landscape and change human mentality I have come to accept as my role as a marketing director at Reebok that an influencer is someone that has a big channel that speaks to his followers – in todays world a more corporate definition of an influencer would be someone with a big following.

2 Who is your key target group when doing a PR campaign on Instagram and why? (let them say first)

Follow up

Is generation Z a key target? If so why?

Follow up

How do you get into the Generation Z's/(Millennial's) DNA/understand them? (What is the age group in your company, are there a lot of “young” people working at your company?)

It very much depends on the product

But in general, our target group would be 20 to 25 active living in the city, out going daring people

Generation Z - by 2020 next year nearly 40 per cent of human population will be gen z

It's a massive massive target group they have a pretty strong power either by their parents

It's a big group they also have money to spend

*Wide range of factors hiring young people is important it is not necessarily the answer what we is we inspire, and we use experts, agencies to keep us up to date
We get trend insight reports
Social media trends these are strong values for influencers
We conduct our own consumer surveys quant and qual so we would have focus groups to better understand how a person reasons when it comes to brand purchase decisions.*

3 What key tools and strategies do you use when doing a campaign on Instagram? – Could you give me an example

In a global headquarter we do not need to understand why = we just need to execute. And then we tell our media agencies it is important that 80 per cent of our media spend goes to 20 to 25 year olds women that live in Stockholm that works twice a day and has purchased a sporting goods last month. We do not need to understand why it is not our job to understand why

4 How is the “Swedish PR” market in comparison to international ones – do you follow US/UK market trends –compare target groups? Are they any different? Why? (do you need to consider/adapt to “Swedish culture” to be politically correct/more appealing?)

I think there are a lot of differences between markets just looking at social media habits just in the Nordics are pretty big. Swedes are extremely digital savy and vast spectrum of influencers where brands utilize. Whereas in Finland you don't for instance. Norway not as much but you can see that it is growing. You have a lot more influencers in Sweden, that cost a lot more money, then what you do in Norway Denmark or Finland.

Obviously there are major differences when it comes to consumer behaviour from a geographically behaviour, but I would not say that it differs in terms of wants or needs. Scandinavians for instance would have the same needs but that might differ from latin America, Asian or and American in terms of trends.

5 What channels do you think are most relevant to your business? Why

This has changed overtime and evolved because consumer behaviour has evolved. The older generation tends to use facebook a lot, whereas generation Z would perhaps use more apps such as the app Tik Talk more. A good marketer needs to understand how that consumer landscape changes and evolves. In our case the bulk of our investments today when it comes to social media would go towards instagram, and instagram that both in tails our own spending but also collaborations with influencers. Snapchat has simply really been not utilized as much. Snapchat has become better at advertising than before. Facebook is really easy to also measure, have a swipe up. I think tik talk is a very interesting platform – there will definitely have generation z. We have not used it but I would like to try it.

Youtube, what we noticed is that moving content hence videos have stronger footprints, a lot

more people want to record their or watch video content as long as it is short and interesting. We have spent a lot of ad buy on youtube

6 What role does Influencer Marketing play into our society? Would you consider them as effective/bringing value to our society?

This is thesis that I have - depression among younger people can lead a lot of to that of social media. Social media paints unjust picture of reality where you only post pictures that look grand and fabulous., which 99 per cent of the population may not be able to do. So you kind of paint a false picture. If you also are a young person and you are on social media and you constantly see dreamy images of people flying first class, travelling to the best resorts, you are living the lush life and the person watching it might be a stuck in smaller apartment or in an office that they do not really like because they see another reality that they would like to be part of and that makes them depressed. So what social media has caused the good side is that you have information freedom, everyone can be a voice, but it has side effects which is depression, anxiety.

7 In comparison to previous media channels such as broadcasting, television, reaching out to wider audiences (such as different age groups, class, gender, ethnicity) – today is all about micro and “local” marketing and essentially very narrowed down - what works better today and why? How do you see advertisement today in comparison to 10 years ago?

8 What are the key challenges or potential threats with Influencer Marketing in the future?

From a humanity point of view: yes

Business: not really especially for generation Z, according to data measurement for them is it important that brands that take a stand point that is bigger than the product.

We will have a continuous rise of suicide depression it will come to a point, in general life everything goes in circles there might come to a point where there will be anti social media age, I do not think that will actually happen, but we see tendencies and pockets parties where you will put your self-phones into a bag where you have to socialize physically with a person. You can see pockets of that, you can see people deleting their instagram for instance but it is just small small of pockets, there will still continue to see many more years of social media dominance. People will become be more aware of the consequences and act upon it.

9 What metrics do you use to measure the success of your social media/Influencer marketing campaigns? How do you collect data and analyse it?

10 What makes a piece of social media content on Instagram successful? Could you give me an example - What is a “good” campaign on Instagram – Do you look at number of ‘Likes’ mainly – hashtags, comments?

When you do a social media campaign you have different KPI's, you for instance reach, engagement, likes. Personally, I am not a big fan of that type of measurement a lot of likes can be bought. Using metrics where we can see how much a collaboration or a post has lead

to purchase. That is what you should utilize having an influencer posting a picture of a shoe on instagram without a link – I do not really care about the likes or the engagement, what really matters to me is that we sell the shoe, that is the only KPI that should matter. Even if people has seen it a million times, if no one has bought it, it is useless. At reebok we prefer measuring the metrics of sales rather than anything else.

11 What is the process when picking an Influencer for a campaign, what are the key traits you are looking - What do you value in an Influencer (Is it their number of followers, personality, previous campaigns that have been successful, authenticity?)

12 Heated debates are on the rise regarding our health and well-being when consuming/spending too much time on Social Media – What are your thoughts on that (and especially towards younger generations who are known to be heavy users)

13 Is Influencer Marketing here to stay? Why?

People that inspire will always stay and be relevant but will it remain as the essence of influencer marketing is today – I am not too sure I think people are becoming smarter and will see through more of blog posts and be a lot more pickier that people that they choose rather than someone taking a lot of pictures. I think something new will come, where people become a lot more conscious mindful you can see a spiritual bubble happening and that effect will be the next trend, and that will affect social media – I think from a company perspective we will buy less from influencers in a few years. Yes it will go down, but we will always use inspiring people, inspiring causes. The trend that companies will buy into and follow more is something that supports well being of this planet environmental causes, a person who's mission is to save planet that is something companies wants to be associated with stuff like that will have more of an impact.

SNIPH

1 How would you describe an “influencer” what are their key traits?

- Engagement rate? Reach? Personality? Do they have a talent? Are they famous people?

Someone who runs their own business? A blogger?

It is a combination of a number of factors. First of all reach you have to have some kind of reach – does not really matter if its 100 000 or 2 000 because they can still be an influencer – but also the engagement rate. Of course you cannot just look at reach because reach can be faked but the engagement rate if you look at it more closely you can see that the engagement rate is very important because it is very important what they write too. There are a lot of people that are influencers because they are famous, however there are some that are influencers that do not have an actual talent, which I think is one of the main reasons why people make fun of influencers but the professional ones are the really good ones their talent is the fact that are an influence on people and running that business very professionally.

2 Who is your key target group when doing a PR campaign on Instagram and why? (let them say first)

Follow up

Is generation Z a key target? If so why?

Follow up

How do you get into Generation Z's/(Millennial's) DNA/understand them? (What is the age group in your company, are there a lot of "young" people working at your company?)

I think right now it is definitely a younger generation and Instagram itself mainly sort of a younger group – because they are easily swayed – at least when they see something yes that speaks to them and so I think that is part of the reason, they are very attracted to visual forms and it is very easy to persuade them with beautiful pictures.

A lot of young people working at my company – we do also have influencers that we work with that use podcasts that are a bit older – at least 40 + because they have a rate reach and engagement rate that makes them reliable – a lot of our customers above 30 35 have been hearing about us through Podcasts so I think that is something that is definitely working too.

3 What key tools and strategies do you use when doing a campaign on Instagram? – Could you give me an example – What is the process when you partner with an influencer -

Instagram very short texts – more visuals

4 How is the "Swedish PR" market in comparison to international ones – do you follow US/UK market trends –compare target groups? Are they any different? Why? (do you need to consider/adapt to "Swedish culture" to be politically correct/more appealing?)

Usually swedes tend to be a little more polite – the younger generation have changed that as we tend to see them as more and more spoiled as they are expected to receive goods in exchange, in the UK perhaps even more there are a lot of more UK influencers that reach out to a wider audience. The UK are can expect certain things whether it is payments or goods in exchange, treatments. Because the UK market is bigger there is more money basically

5 Which Social Media channels are most relevant to your business? Why

Snapchat no perhaps we should. Instagram and Facebook. Twitter we are not very active. But mainly instagram

6 What role does Influencer Marketing play into our society? Would you consider them as effective/bringing value to our society?

There have always been influencers in some way. Celebrity endorsement has always been around, whether it has been Hollywood stars from the early 40s and 50s selling facial soaps or soaps or something else so we have always attached we inspire to resemble in some way someone that we look up to or someone that we become like them in a way. So to me we have always seen, the influencer industry itself we have seen who do not have that special talent that are just marketing tools. I think is really – it really does not bring any value it is an

interesting marketing tool in social media, but for me personally I do not see the value the influencers bring.

From a business point of view: we really need to have a good strategy a good mix in order to maximize sales. It is hard sometimes to know whether some influencers are brand building because that does not confirm immediately. Today we focus entirely on the conversion rate and the engagement rate and that makes it very hard especially as we are super focused on the conversion rates, it makes the influencers less valuable in a way as they need to push harder when they know that are followers are buying something and when the followers are pushed into buying something they feel that their influencer is promoting too many brands too many different things and you loose that authenticity.

7 In comparison to previous media channels such as broadcasting, television, reaching out to wider audiences (such as different age groups, class, gender, ethnicity) – today is all about micro and “local” marketing and very narrowed down - what works better today and why? How do you see advertisement today in comparison to 10 years ago?

A lot of people today when you look at TV ads they would be a very big thing and people would relate to them. Ads today they loose a lot of their reach in a way but at the same they are still major like the super bowl ads are kind of the big thing, but I suppose to getting your message only across television ads I think influencers in social media is definitely in the smaller way definitely the way to go to reach people – more approachable and more authentic. I like it how you compare advertisement with influencers as advertisers and not as journalists or media which most people tend to see them as because they are to perceive themselves in that way too- they are a marketing strategy and tool. The answer is if you can combine them that would probably a great way of doing it. If you have someone that is trust worthy together with a really wide reaching because the big advertisement they are often, if they are well done, they are brand building in themselves in way that is it really hard for companies to get the vision across and when its done well you want to get your message across – because there is so much that you can control for instance we have seen that with influencers, you may demand them that they do certain things you cant really control that they are totally on brand or doing exactly what you want. So that way doing your own directed media campaign is in combination. Influencers cannot just replace traditional media advertising.

8 What are the key challenges or potential threats with Influencer Marketing in the future?

9 What metrics do you use to measure the success of your social media/Influencer marketing campaigns? How do you collect data and analyse it?

10 What makes a piece of social media content on Instagram successful? Could you give me an example - What is a “good” campaign on Instagram – Do you look at number of ‘Likes’ mainly – hashtags, comments?

11 What is the process when picking an Influencer for a campaign, what are the key traits you are looking for - What do you value in an Influencer (Is it their number of followers, personality, previous campaigns that have been successful, authenticity? What do you by authenticity?)

It is the number of followers, engagement rate and also personality. Most importantly it also needs to relate, it has to be on brand and be relatable to the brand. To know for instance a person that does not like perfume should not promote it – it needs to make sense

12 Heated debates are on the rise regarding our health and well-being when consuming/spending too much time on Social Media – What are your thoughts on that (and especially towards younger generations who are known to be heavy users)

I think its absolutely terrible. Because it is so addictive. We are so addictive to our screens and I think especially the younger generation who are doing things that are more passive, you are not really reading you are not really engaging in that way – it is just passive viewers, such as Tik Tok, very passive thing to watch. I think that it is definitely doing damage to our mental health as well as their physical health as we spend a lot time sitting down. But also mental as because they are exposed to a lot of messages but at the same time the democratization of media you see a lot of figures, plus size models, different account that are perfect model accounts there at least from every 10 accounts there might be at least one account that speaks to you that you can relate to – women that are speaking out and can be role models and I think social media you can read social media almost anywhere where you are in the world and in Sweden it does not matter if you live in a big or smaller city you can still access it pretty much anywhere with the same information so if you do feel left out it is easier with social media today to find someone who shares your interests. Its not all bad.

13 Is Influencer Marketing here to stay? Why?

Not in the way it is now – I think people who mainly making money or the only ones to stand to really earn from this are the big influencers because it is so much or a wildwest everyone wants to make money, companies are afraid they are not enough ‘hip’ so the popular influencers may make as much money as they can however there is of course a risk that so many things that make this uncertain future. There might be a new social media, there might be a new trend in something legislative tax, so for a couple of years I think it is going to be a little bit of a wild west, some may make a lot of money but in the long run I don’t think it is a thing of the future.

GEELMUYDEN KIESE GROUP

1 How would you describe an “influencer” what are their key traits?

- Engagement rate? Reach? Personality? Do they have a talent? Are they famous people? Someone who runs their own business? A blogger?

Today I would say that an influencers traits are personality and reach, looking back 5 years it was mostly famous people and bloggers, today an influencer can be anyone who runs an

Instagram account, has a fun personality and don't mind posting daily about their everyday life.

2 Who is your key target group when doing a PR campaign on Instagram and why? (let them say first)

Follow up

Is generation Z a key target? If so why?

Follow up

How do you get into Generation Z's/(Millennial's) DNA/understand them? (What is the age group in your company, are there a lot of "young" people working at your company?)

The key target all depends on the customer. Today anyone uses Instagram, my mom, grandmother and my younger brother. Tho generation z and millennials are the most active you can still use influencers to reach +40.

When we target different generations, we do research and look at statistics on influencers accounts, we can see who follows who and where in the world. So, with the right tools you can find all the information you need. And yes it's a lot of young people working at our company but also a part of being a PR person is knowing what the kids like so you always haft to read the things they read and follow the people they follow to stay to date.

3 What key tools and strategies do you use when doing a campaign on Instagram? – Could you give me an example

You usually use Instagram/facebooks own tools. It's the easiests and they do know their services. You can also use other companies like Zalster that has developed an AI service.

4 How is the "Swedish PR" market in comparison to international ones – do you follow US/UK market trends –compare target groups? Are they any different? Why? (do you need to consider/adapt to "Swedish culture" to be politically correct/more appealing?)

Yes of course, and we do work across the countries so it's important to understand different markets. But Sweden is almost always ahead of everything, so people look at Sweden more than we look at them. On the influencer scene it's a huge different, it's much more professionalized here and more expensive. Almost everything is more expensive here, having events, influencer marketing and so on. We always adapt everything we do to the Swedish market otherwise it wont work.

5 Which Social Media channels are most relevant to your business? Why

Facebook, Instagram, Youtube mostly. It's the largest platform and that everyone knows. Snapchat it great for younger generations but we don't work with that as much.

6 What role does Influencer Marketing play into our society? Would you consider them as effective/bringing value to our society?

Not sure if it brings value to the society, does commercial ever bring value to society? Influencer marketing is just the same as commercial but in another platform. Today influencers does so many collaborations that it's almost like watching tv sometimes.

7 In comparison to previous media channels such as broadcasting, television, reaching out to wider audiences (such as different age groups, class, gender, ethnicity) – today is all about micro and “local” marketing and very narrowed down - what works better today and why? How do you see advertisement today in comparison to 10 years ago?

I think it's because of the enormous amount of commercial, there is no way a personal can take in all the commercial that's everywhere around them. So, what companies have to do today is to be way more personal and make sure you touch your target audience in some way. In 10 years it's impossible to say, I mean it's a digital landscape absolutely everything can happen and probably will.

8 What are the key challenges or potential threats with Influencer Marketing in the future?

The big challenge that has arisen is that there is too much collaboration and the influencers have lost their credibility. And that's dangerous because that's the only reason influencer marketing exists, because the brands want to be more personal. So a lot of large influencers will fall and new smaller and more thematised ones will arise.

9 What metrics do you use to measure the success of your social media/Influencer marketing campaigns? How do you collect data and analyse it?

Today we measure reach and ROI, in the future it will probably almost only be ROI (return of investment). We receive the data from the influencers, only they can see how many have engagement, watched a story and so on.

10 What makes a piece of social media content on Instagram successful? Could you give me an example - What is a “good” campaign on Instagram – Do you look at number of ‘Likes’ mainly – hashtags, comments?

Depending on the campaign's purpose, if it's only to get more followers we look at that, but mostly it's to sell something and then we measure ROI. A good campaign is when we've reached our KPI and the customer is satisfied with the results. Regarding the actual content it's hard to say what's good or bad, depends on the influencer and products.

11 What is the process when picking an Influencer for a campaign, what are the key traits you are looking for - What do you value in an Influencer (Is it their number of followers, personality, previous campaigns that have been successful, authenticity? What do you value by authenticity?)

It depends a lot on budget, if we have 150.000 SEK we can get one of the larger ones and then we know we would get good results, but depending on what the customer's target audience is and their goal we do research and try to find who fits the best.

12 Heated debates are on the rise regarding our health and well-being when consuming/spending too much time on Social Media – What are your thoughts on that (and especially towards younger generations who are known to be heavy users)

I think people spend way, way to much time on social media. Just like I mentioned earlier it's just like commercials, perfect people in perfect environments and that's not how life looks like. Of course there are exceptions but mostly its perfection and who need that?

13 Is Influencer Marketing here to stay? Why?

Yes and No, it will change and the largest once will probably fall and new more personalized once will arise.

CODING

P87-110

NAME OF THE COMPANY	ARTICLE	DATE	COUNTRY	URL LINK
Marketing Hub	Influence 2.0 – The Future of Influencer Marketing	nov-18	USA	https://influencermarketinghub.com/influence-2-0-future-of-influencer-marketing/
E-Consultancy	Influencer Marketing 2020	nov-18	USA	https://econsultancy.com/reports/influencer-marketing-2020/
EDELMAN	Edelman Digital Trend Report	jan-19	USA	https://edelmandigital.com/trends/authenticity-influencer-marketing-impacting/
Ketchum	Social Digital and Influencer Marketing Trends in 2019	jan-19	USA	https://www.ketchum.com/social-digital-and-influencer-marketing-trends-in-2019/
Golin	7 Media Trends to Watch out For	jan-19	USA	https://golin.com/2019/02/14/move-over-micro-influencers-make-room-for-nano-influencers/
Weber Shandwick	Influencers for Influence	juli-16	USA	http://webershandwick.scot/influencers-for-influence/
WE Communications	WE Brands in Motion	sep-18	USA	https://we-worldwide-arhx0vh6d1oh9i0c.stackpathdns.com/media/444253/bim2018-whitepaper-web-final.pdf
FOUR Communications	Consumer Trends	feb-19	USA	https://fourcommunications.com/consumer-trends-2019/
Fleishman Hillard	Trend Report 2019 The Fads, The Fears, The Future	jan-19	USA	https://fleishmanhillard.com/wp-content/uploads/meta/resource-file/2018/tech-trend-report-2018-the-fads-the-fears-the-future-1544811036.pdf
Ogilvy	Digital Social Trends 2019	jan-19	UK	https://ogilvy.co.uk/news/digital-social-trends-2019
USC Annenberg	2018 Global Communications Report	dec-18	USA	http://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/2018-global-communications-report-evolution-of-ethics.pdf
Red Agency	Red Sky Predictions 2018	jan-18	USA	https://redagency.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/RedAgency_2018_Predictions.pdf
M Booth	Influencer Marketing	jan-18	USA	https://www.mbooth.com/expertise/influencer-marketing/
Brands 2 Life	Addressing IOT'S Biggest Communications Challenges	jan-18	USA	https://brands2life.com/us/our-insights/addressing-iots-biggest-communications-challenges/
Chamelon	5 Marketing Trends to Actually Follow	jan-18	USA	https://www.madebychameleon.com/what-we-think/industry-insights/http://www.madebychameleon.com/2017/08/31/5-marketing-trends-actually-follow/
PAN Communications	Pan Influencer Relations	jan-19	USA	file:///Users/gustavabrag/Downloads/PAN_Influencer_Relations_eBook_2019.pdf
ZENO	New Rules Of Engagement Preventing Influencer Fraud	jan-19	USA	https://www.zenogroup.com/new-rules-of-engagement-preventing-influencer-fraud/
Cure Media	5 Influencer Marketing Trends to Watch For in 2019	jan-19	SWE	https://www.curemedia.se/en/5-influencer-marketing-trends-to-watch-for-in-2019/
IFC Next	12 Predictions for 1to1 Marketers in 2019	jan-19	USA	https://www.icf.com/blog/marketing-and-strategy/twelve-predictions-1to1-marketers-2019?next=1%20
Finn Partners	Trends and Takeaways From founder-made Consumer Discovery Show	okt-18	USA	https://www.finnpartners.com/perspectives/blog/trends-and-takeaways-from-founder-made-consumer-discovery-show.html
Hill+Knowlton + Branwatch	Interview-Hillknowlton-Future-Influencer-Marketing	juni-16	USA	https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/interview-hillknowlton-future-influencer-marketing/
Clockworkmedia	3 PR Trends To Watch Out For in 2018	feb-18	USA	http://www.clockworkmedia.co.za/3-pr-trends-to-watch-out-for-in-2018/
W20 Social Scoop	W20 Social Scoop	aug-17	USA	https://www.w2ogroup.com/millennials-social-media-chain-reaction-catalyzing-engagement-action/
APCO	Look Ahead to 2019 with views from APCOS Global Team	dec-19	USA	https://apcoworldwide.com/blog/a-look-ahead-to-2019-with-views-from-apcos-global-team-2/
FARNER	Social Media and the Media Crisis" Small Recipe for Modern Media Relations	jan-19	USA	https://www.farner.ch/en/2018/01/mediarelations-multichannel-marketing/#.XIDhkVnkjOO

HAVAS PR	Give 'em Something To Talk About: 4 Tips For Successful Influencer Relations	may-18	UK	http://havaspr.com/us/give-em-something-to-talk-about-4-tips-for-successful-influencer-relations/
Lewis	The Global Marketing Engagement Index 2018	jan-18	USA	https://www.teamlewis.com/the-marketing-engagement-index/thank-you/
PROSEK	Is Your Company Ready to Protect its Reputation From Deep Fakes?	nov-18	UK	https://hbr.org/2018/11/is-your-company-ready-to-protect-its-reputation-from-deep-fakes
Race Point Global	Inside Authentic Marketing	dec-17	UK	https://www.dssimon.com/inside-authentic-marketing-larry-weber/
Carmichael Lynch Relate	Influencer Marketing: Let's Stop the Free-For-All	maj-17	USA	http://www.carmichaellynchrelate.com/influencer-marketing-lets-stop-the-free-for-all/
5WPR	Five Influencer Marketing Trends Marketers Should know	jan-18	USA	http://www.5wpr.com/new/influencer-marketing-trend/
Fahlgren Mortine	Influencer Relations: Destination Marketing Organizations on Thin Legal Ice	dec-18	USA	https://fahlgrenmortine.com/media/docs/dmo-survey.pdf
Jackson Spalding	Top Marketing Trends That Are (Digitally) Transforming Your Business	aug-18	USA	https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2018/08/08/top-marketing-trends-that-are-digitally-transforming-your-business/#2ec02c704fd9
Pardillaco	Audience-First, Influencers And Trust: 3 Social Trends	juni-18	USA	https://buzzbinpardillaco.com/audience-first-influencers-trust-3-social-trends/
Shift Comms	Measuring ROI On Social Continues To Be A Major Challenge For Marketers	feb-19	USA	https://www.shiftcomm.com/blog/measuring-roi-on-social-continues-to-be-a-major-challenge-for-marketers/
Levick	Will Generation Z Topple Social Media	March-18	USA	http://levick.com/blog/digital/will-generation-z-topple-social-media/
Ink House	Social Media Digest: The In's and Out's of Influencer Marketing	apr-18	USA	http://blog.inkhouse.com/the-ins-and-outs-of-influencer-marketing
Get Proof	Purpose & Authenticity: The Dual Strands of PR's DNA	nov-18	Canada	https://www.getproof.com/thinking/purpose-authenticity-the-dual-strands-of-prs-dna/
Lanson	7 Content Marketing Tips for The Future of B2B	apr-18	USA	https://www.lansons.com/content-marketing-7-tips/
This Is Pegasus	Generation Z: The Future Of Health And Wellbeing	may-18	UK	http://thisispegasus.co.uk/content/themes/pegasus/build/images/genz.pdf
M&C Saatchi PR	Inside the Mind of Gen Z	dec-18	USA	https://mcsaatchipublicrelations.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/GenZ_OnePager_v10.pdf
Kaplow	How To Create a Future-Focused Brand Wth Emotional Appeal	jan-19	USA	https://medium.com/@kaplow/how-to-create-a-future-focused-brand-with-emotional-appeal-a1b7a0a7ff84
Nebo Agency	How to Master Social's Secret Weapon: The Instagram Story	dec-18	USA	https://www.neboagency.com/blog/how-to-master-socials-secret-weapon-the-instagram-story/
Exponent PR	Three PR Realities to Watch in 2019	dec-18	USA	https://www.exponentpr.com/news/three-pr-realities-to-watch-in-2019
Batman Group	The Month in Digital: 3 Trends for Marketers to Watch	july-18	USA	https://www.batman-group.com/banter/the-month-in-digital-strategy
RF Binder	Driving Impact: Behavior, Purpose, Activism	june-18	USA	https://www.rfbinder.com/driving-impact-behavior-purpose-activism/
Merritt Group	4 B2B Marketing Trends to Watch in 2019	jan-19	USA	https://www.merrittgrp.com/mg-blog/4-b2b-marketing-trends-to-watch-in-2019
RBB Communications	Influencers Uncovered: 5 Tips for a Successful Influencer Partnership	March-19	USA	https://rbbcommunications.com/influencers-uncovered-5-tips-for-a-successful-influencer-partnership/
Evoke	Leveraging the Power of Microinfluencers in Healthcare	oct-18	USA	https://www.evokegroup.com/thought-leadership/leveraging-the-power-of-microinfluencers-in-healthcare/
Max Borges Agency	How to Effectively Use Digital Marketing to Increase your brands footprint	jan-19	USA	https://www.maxborgesagency.com/insights/how-to-effectively-use-digital-marketing-to-increase-your-brand-footprint/
Day One Perspective	5 Trends Predictions for 2019	jan-19	USA	https://dayoneperspective.com/5-trend-predictions-for-2019-c9672e3cd6b8

Veritas	Canada Roudtable: Is Confluence The Key To The Future of Influencer Marketing	feb-18	Canada	https://www.holmesreport.com/long-reads/article/canada-roundtable-is-confluence-the-key-to-the-future-of-influencer-marketing
ROI	Are You Making These Mistakes in Your D&I Communications?	feb-18	USA	https://roico.com/2018/02/22/making-mistakes-di-communications-2/
JPA Health Communications	2019: The Age of Influencer Relations	dec-18	USA	https://www.jpa.com/blog/2018/12/21/age-of-influence/
Gregory FCA	3 Ways Influencer Marketing Will Elevate Your Brand	dec-18	USA	https://thenewshackers.com/why-influencer-marketing-works/
360 PR	5 PR Trends That Matter In 2019	jan-19	USA	https://www.360pr.plus/news-and-insights/entry/5-pr-trends-that-matter-in-2019
Lou Hammond Group	5 Key Qualities For Successful Influencer Partnership	nov-18	USA	https://louhammond.com/2018/11/09/5-key-qualities-for-successful-influencer-partnership/
MP&F	Trends to Look For in 2019	jan-19	USA	https://mpf.com/happy-new-year-trends-to-look-for-in-2019/
Walker Sands Communications	Influencer Marketing Trends in B2B Tech	jan-19	USA	https://www.walkersands.com/influencer-marketing-trends-in-b2b-tech/
Nyhus	Top Trends to Invest in For 2018	jan-18	USA	https://nyhus.com/top-trends-to-invest-in-for-2018/
Lambert	Digital Strategies to Maximize the Value of Events As a B2B Brand	aug-18	USA	https://lambert.com/blog/client-spotlight/digital-strategies-events-b2b-brands/
The Moore Agency	What's Hot in 2019: Marketing Trends to Capitalize On	jan-19	USA	https://themooreagency.com/blog/whats-hot-in-2019-marketing-trends-to-capitalize-on-1
Harvard PR	Six Media Trends To Watch in 2018	feb-18	USA	https://www.harvard.co.uk/six-media-trends-watch-2018/
Fullyvested	Rising Stars of Financial Marketing to Explore Trends for 2019	dec-18	UK	https://fullyvested.com/katie-spreadbury-named-rising-star-in-financial-marketing/
Sevenhills Communications	Small Business Marketing & PR Advice	juli-18	USA	https://www.sevenhillscommunications.com/blog
Tunheim	Social Trends 2018	nov-17	USA	https://tunheim.com/digital-content-blog/social-trends-2018-content-formatting/
Mullenlowe	Staying Ahead of the Curve - Three Megatrends Set to Gain Momentum in 2019	dec-18	UK	https://mullenlowesalt.com/blog/2018/12/staying-ahead-of-the-curve-three-megatrends-set-to-gain-momentum-in-2019/
Kalt Wasser	Communication Trends - What can we expect in 2019?	jan-19	Germany	https://www.kaltwasser.de/en/newsinfo/kommunikationstrends-was-erwartet-uns-20190/
Kiterocket	Consumer Brands Take Note: Shopping Intentionally poised change purchase behaviors	okt-18	USA	https://www.kiterocket.com/shopping-intentionally-poised-change-purchase-behaviors/
Talk Global	What Does The Future of Influencer Marketing look like?	okt-18	UK	http://talk.global/blog/what-does-the-future-of-influencer-marketing-look-like/
Havas Just	Just Predicted Social Media Trends 2016	feb-16	USA	http://www.havasjust.com/just-predicted-social-media-trends-2016/
Teneo Holdings	Is 2019 the year of voice marketing?	jan-19	USA	https://www.teneo.com/is-2019-the-year-of-voice-marketing/
Fischer Appelt	Our Experts Hannah Grempe & Maria Broberg on Influencer Marketing	feb-19	Germany	https://www.fischerappelt.de/blog/social-media-week-2019-hamburg/
Grayling	Six Things Every Professional Communicator Needs to Now for 2019	nov-18	UK	https://www.grayling.com/global/en/insight/six_things_every_professional_communicator_needs_to_know_for_2019
DKC	Engagement Isn't Everything Lessons Learned Lift Conference	dec-16	USA	http://dkcnews.com/engagement-isnt-everything-lessons-learned-lift-conference/
GC Health	2019 Trends Forecast Healthcare	jan-19	USA	https://gcihealth.com/article/2019-trend-forecast-healthcare/

OSK	Influencer in the study - why the junior PR needs to know the industry	dec-18	Germany	https://www.osk.de/blog/influencer-im-studium
Global Strategy Group	Will Influencer Marketing Survive Increased Scrutiny?	jan-19	USA	http://www.globalstrategygroup.com/2018/07/will-influencer-marketing-survive-increased-scrutiny/
Atrevia	Digital Marketing Trends 2019	jan-19	Spain	https://www.atrevia.com/digital/tendencias-de-marketing-digital-2019/

INFLUENCER MARKETING AS A POSITIVE PHENOMENON

1 Aspirational
1 Attractive
9 Authenticity
6 authentic
1 authentic content is easier to engage and relate to
1 authentic passion
2 authentic stories
11 authenticity
2 beneficial
1 beyond classic marketing
1 changing the relationship between brand consumers
1 build a story
1 changing the way they access and use information
5 community
1 community engagement
1 compelling
1 complement
1 complementary channel
1 connecting the dots between influencers and consumers
1 consistency
2 consumer and brand opportunities
1 consumer consciousness
3 consumer engagement
1 consumers build relationships
1 consumers control and direct their own experiences
2 Consumers Influenced
1 create and measure campaigns and a clear of communicatin success

INFLUENCER MARKETING AS A NEGATIVE PHENOMENON

1 'Social Media Fatigue' : 71% considering most content is repetitive lacking original thought
1 addictive
1 challenge
1 challenge connecting with influencers
8 Challenges
3 Challenging
1 complex
1 concern for marketers
1 consumer complaints
1 consumers are bombared with new products
1 Consuming Social Media is unsustainable
2 dark social media
1 Digital Media is dangerous
1 influencer fraud and fake followers
1 influencer has become a bad word
1 influencer market has become a saturated word
1 influencer marketing becoming known as unreality
1 influencer marketing can increase fraud
1 influencer marketing growing challenge of trust
1 influencer marketing has no clear answer
1 influencer marketing is staged
1 influencer marketing need more transparency
1 Influencer marketing needs an upgrade for the future
2 Influencer Marketing needs to evolve
1 influencer marketing question of credibility
2 influencer marketing tiring
1 influencer marketing useless

3 cross-functional
1 cross-functional discipline
1 curiosity with engaging content
14 customer journey mapping
4 customer-centricity taking influence to the next level
1 customers most open to influence and engagement
1 data is more actionable it allows brands to create tailored experiences for consumers
1 data is most valuable when its used to enhance customer focused campaigns
2 different communication areas
1 discerning
1 drive business impacts
1 drive visibility
4 effective
3 Effective Management
1 effectiveness of video engaging
1 efficient
2 elaborated strategy for influencer marketing
1 elusive
14 engagement
1 enhance jobs
2 evolving rapidly
1 evolving
1 Evolving Future
11 Exchange mutual value
1 expand beyond marketing
4 Expand go beyond marketing
1 Expanding
1 Future of Influence is more significant

3 influencer marketing when used improperly disaster
1 influencers trading outfits for sponsorship is leading to death of style
1 Influencers: fake accounts have proved an easy way to increase value of their product
1 lack of accountability
1 Lack of strategy
1 lack of transparency
1 Limitations
2 marketers are confused by influencer marketing
1 not a direct correlation between likes and comments and one's business objectives
1 Not a one size all audience
1 particular metrics by particular data may not speak directly to strategic long-term goals
1 Problem from the widespread practice of buying followers
1 problematic
1 question of ownership
1 raises ethical questions
1 scale of fake followers is a huge problem
3 security threats
1 skepticism in the influencer space
1 the over saturation of fashion has made it more difficult to decipher who to follow on instagram
1 There is only one form of marketing that has ever been consistently successful
1 this growing dynamic opens the door for unconventional health
1 threats
1 Unrealistic images lead to unnecessary negative feelings about themselves
1 we are constantly under pressure to demonstrate that we know and understand and reach the right consumers
1 we are not 'yet' surrendered our lives to instgram
1 we should expect greater skepticism from brands
1 when content is unmeasurable
1 widely criticised for portraying an unrealistic filtered and edited version of the truth

1 future of influencer marketing is very promising
1 Future of Influencer Marketing more integrated
6 Growing
1 growth
3 Helping Companies
4 improvement
1 influencer campaigns has grown into a \$6.3 billion business
1 improving
2 Influence is the change agent
2 influencer collaborations connecting and engaging target audience
1 influencer marketing a 10 billion market by 2020
3 Influencer marketing a necessity
4 Influencer Marketing a priority
1 influencer marketing a trend you need to pay attention to
7 influencer marketing as an instrument
2 influencer marketing built communities
5 influencer marketing business
1 influencer marketing buzzword to standard marketing plan
1 influencer marketing campaign engages and connects customers
2 influencer marketing credible
1 influencer marketing increase customer experience
18 Influencer Marketing digital transformation
1 Influencer marketing essential part in marketing
1 Influencer marketing explore new horizons
1 influencer marketing extremely successful
2 Influencer Marketing has evolved
1 influencer marketing important marketing strategy
2 Influencer Marketing integrated

70/439

4 Influencer Marketing integrated in all marketing activities

1 influencer marketing is a perfect complement to your PR strategy

1 influencer marketing is an important factor however traditional media is still where we see the most value

1 Influencer Marketing is evolving

1 influencer marketing is expecting to increase

1 influencer marketing is that it is not the brand that talks about itself, but relevant, influential individuals talk about the brand

5 Influencer Marketing is very Promising

1 influencer marketing more important than ever

1 influencer marketing multidisciplinary

2 influencer marketing must be trusted

1 influencer marketing on the rise

1 influencer marketing part of the marketing mix of many brands

1 influencer Marketing Partner

4 influencer marketing plays a major role

4 Influencer Marketing primary area of digital investment

1 influencer marketing significant

2 Influencer Marketing will expand

2 Influencers perfect partners to brands

3 Influencers that resonate with audience is key

2 innovation

2 Integrated in all marketing activities

3 Investing time

1 influential voices are the ultimate foundation

1 Leveraging influencers

1 Low investment

2 More companies engage with influencer

2 more imporant

1 Much more than promote messages

1 New standards
1 Not slowing down
3 opens up an entirely new world
5 Opportunity and transformative
1 positive impacts
2 reach
3 Relationship business
3 relationships serves as foundation of influence
1 retention
1 return on investment
2 sales
1 satisfaction
1 stories are fast to check and entertaining
2 storytelling increasing
13 success
2 successful
1 they way we work with influencers has changed
1 Upgrade for the future
1 well-established social media

=369/439

Total codes positive and negative = 439

INFLUENCERS AS A POSITIVE PHENOMENON

2 accessibility
1 accommodating
3 advocacy
1 affordable
4 awareness
1 believable and experts
1 biggest building blocks
1 boast superior engagement
1 brand interaction
2 brand relevancy
8 Build Credibility
1 Building and nurturing
1 capture consumers imagination
1 community of influencers
5 connect with users
1 connect on a personal level
1 connecting to consumers
2 connection
1 consumers look to influencers for life inspiration, entertainment and connection
10 better customer experience
1 customer engagement
1 Customer intimacy
2 customers trust influencers they can relate to
1 deep connection to the brand
1 developing close relationships
2 driven by relationships technologies
2 driving force

INFLUENCERS NEGATIVE IMPACT

1 consumers are fatigued by influencers
4 Fakefluencer
1 influencers can be dishonest
1 mega influencers are less interactive and approachable
1 overused
1 Such images can be damaging for this generations wellbeing
1 the scale of fake followers is huge
1 fatigue around the large, very expensive influencers
1 Word of Doubt

12/322

1 driving impact drives profit
1 driving impact through consumer behavior
1 emotional
2 empathy
1 engage
3 Engage Consumers
1 engage in empathetic communications
1 engage target audience
3 engaging
2 enhance your story by taking a stand
1 essential
1 exciting
1 facilitate
1 filling the gap
1 'Nano' Influencers Follower are real
3 Foster Relationships
1 friend of friend type of mentality
1 genuine
1 greatest impact
2 help build brand credibility
2 help drive purchase
9 help make decisions and form opinions
2 hero of the story
2 high engagement rate
1 highly focus on specific audience groups
1 honest
3 human approach
1 human to human

4 Human-centered change

2 humanization

3 Impacts

3 important

2 influencer generated content creates value

2 influencer marketing profession

21 Influencer Relations

1 influencer relations help conversion

1 influencer relations the hottest topic in our industry

2 influencers achieve awareness

1 influencers are a form of media

1 influencers are an excellent gateway to successful campaigns

1 influencers are content creators

1 influencers are endorsing too many brands

1 influencers are influential

1 influencers audience trust their judgement on products and services

1 influencers bring value

2 influencers can push your strategy over the finish line

1 influencers come from a wide range of backgrounds and industries

1 influencers create an authentic connection

1 Influencers degree of expertise

1 influencers engagement rate is important

1 influencers extend engagement

1 influencers purpose driven marketing

1 Influential

1 influential voices

1 instant

1 instant messaging

1 Instrumental role
2 large audience
1 less stages with micro influencers
6 loyalty
3 meaningful
5 micro influencer are more credible
1 micro influencer are more relatable
12 Micro influencers
1 micro influencers 10 000 followers
2 micro influencers are more connected to the lives of their followers
1 micro influencers are more genuine
2 micro influencers are more profitable
1 micro influencers are the future
1 micro influencers audience more likely to trust recommendations
1 micro influencers audience views them as more authentic and relatable
1 micro influencers can more easily engage and develop a close relationship
1 micro influencers for healthcare brands
7 micro influencers most successful
1 micro influencers positive impacts for brands
1 Micro influencers take the stage
1 micro-influencers are considered normal
1 micro-influencers have a big impact
1 Nano influencers are more influential than micro influencers
1 Nano influencers are more real
1 Nano influencers are more relatable
3 Nano influencers are most successful
17 nano influencer
1 new level of transparency

1 organic storytelling
1 positive feeling
1 power of microinfluencers
1 quality
1 reach millinnials through instagram and twitter
1 reaching
1 relatable
14 relationships
1 relevancy
1 relevant
1 reshape
1 respond in a meaningful way
1 scalable intimacy
4 secure
1 sharp-shooting snipers
1 target niche audience
1 the eveyday person
1 The profession will continue to grow
3 transparency
1 true to brand
17 Trust
1 truth
1 unique
1 value
1 willing to derive their own content for longer periods of time
5 Word of Mouth success

KEY STRATEGIES AND TRENDS

- 1 55% plan to spend more next year
- 1 2019 is all about integrating digital technology and experiences into our everyday lives as consumers
- 1 2019 is set to be the year that sustainability truly goes mainstream
- 1 2019 marketing strategies should prioritise how success is measured before getting bogged down in social media followers or website views
- 1 2019 will be the year the debate around how we further expand US healthcare coverage
- 1 2019 will be the year we see the first real operationalization of a big new disruptive initiative from a non-incumbent
- 1 agencies need to adopt a data-centric approach to truly understand how influencers can have a measured impact on their client's business
- 1 audience centric measurement and operations are key to making this trend stick
- 1 audience engage with influencers that are meaningful
- 1 audience first
- 1 audience guides purchasing decisions
- 1 audience metrics data is key
- 1 audience want to be inspired
- 1 audiences are at the heart of what we do and the decisions we make everything
- 1 audiences are more important than ever
- 1 audiences should be targeted
- 3 augmented reality
- 1 authenticity is at core of what brands desire
- 1 Blog great way to target audience
- 1 Blog: cover topics you know your audience is interested
- 1 brand experience expertise
- 2 brand value, why and purpose
- 1 brands and agencies working closely more together
- 1 Brands and consumers adapt to new rules in Social Media
- 1 brands are acknowledging the impact of social on their consumers and their desire for authentic truthful realistic representations

GROWTH IN TECH AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

- 1 acceleration in the growth of health tech companies
- 1 ad platforms under increased pressure
- 1 adapt websites to mobile phones
- 1 advertising video
- 1 affecting businesses around the world
- 12 AI technologies
- 4 AI technologies will enable marketers to understand their audience and consumers better
- 1 AI technologies will enable marketers to understand their audience and consumers better
- 2 AI will not transform the enterprise in the near future
- 2 audio represents a big opportunity in 2019
- 1 automated
- 1 brand's responsibility to use technology ethically
- 9 customer behavior and preferences
- 1 Influencer marketing recent phenomenon
- 1 invest in technology
- 3 marketing automation
- 1 marketing automation is expected to exceed 25 billion dollars by 2013
- 1 marketing programs ought to build influence find their own voice
- 1 media firms are investing in AI
- 1 new expertise in social media
- 1 new metrics will review influencers credibility
- 1 previous predictions about AI have been overblown
- 1 programmatic advertising
- 1 rising use of data intelligence in healthcare
- 1 store data more than humans can

1 brands are in motion
1 brands can bring stability in uncertain times
1 Brands have a lot impact on the consumes
1 brands increasingly link themselves to social issues
1 Brands needs to be ethical, offer discounts, an experience
1 brands that found their voices
1 brands to engage customers
1 brands will use more social media accounts
1 brands with different philosophies can eliminate authenticity
1 marketers are using influencers as campaigns
1 campaigns are not total influence they are oart of an overall relationship
1 celebration of style is declining, replaced with strategies to convince people to buy products and follow current trends

1 Chatbox
1 choose right influencers
1 comapnies have responded by embracing sustainability
4 communication disciplines
1 communication is key
1 communicators ought to bridge the gap between social media and real life for millennials
1 Companies are moving to video content
1 companies heavily invest in social media platforms
1 comprehensive data program
1 when partnering with an influencer consider the person
1 consumer change behavior
1 consumer data is the most valuable tool your company possess
1 consumer protection will be at the forefront
1 consumer safety
1 consumers are bringing their health online

1 tech advancements in healthcare have facilitated incremental advancements
1 technology advancement
3 technology and software important
1 technology is still developping
1 the industry has changed
1 the industry moves quickly
1 to protect growth
1 voice activated technology
1 voice activity
1 voice marketing
1 VR driven video help better engage audiences
1 we believe that tech companies will continue to move into the health space and offer more innovations and transformation in 2019
1 we believe voice will be a big part of the future

=39

2 consumers are conscious about their technology use
1 consumers are craving customized and high touch experience
1 consumers at the center
1 consumers expect brands to be open about what they stand for
1 consumers increasingly want to buy from brands that are environmentally responsible
2 consumers needs to feel emotionally connected to the brand
1 Consumers review micro influencers
1 consumers say its important for brands to take a stand
1 consumers want brands that stand for something
1 consumers want more stability
1 consumers wants to hear founder stories
1 consumers will stand against fake, unauthentic campaigns
5 control of data
1 convenience, transparency and rapid access has never been more important
1 corporations has the responsibility to take a stand on certain issues
1 creating better customer experience is the future
1 crucial to achieve impact in today's media world
1 Cue algorithms that reward relevance, prioritise personalisation,
1 cultural capital
1 customers and employees expect brands to take a stand
1 customers are more likely to buy for a high price with a good storytelling
1 customers informed
2 customization of content to experiences
1 data needs to be contextualized
1 debates regarding our wellbeing in social media
1 diversity and inclusion are back in the spotlight
2 embrace social media
1 embrace sustainability

2 engage with influencers

1 engagement alone does not drive enough results

1 engaging content

1 eventually marketing is just going to be about presenting your story in transparent way in a thoughtful narrative way and visual way

1 Everyone buys fake followers

1 explosion of voice technology

1 extend campaigns across multiple demographic areas

1 facebook advertising platform

1 gather insights from their behaviors to deliver value when you connect influencers with them.

1 PR Firms have a unique role to play in influencer marketing

1 having your content introduced to the user through a familiar and trusted voice has real power and is unlikely to change

1 hyper-localised approach

4 Identifying

1 illustrating a narrative is powerful to customers

1 impact humans

1 impact of good instagram strategy

1 Transparency in Social Ads

1 increase in conversation such as self-care, mindfulness, wellness and mental health

1 increased competition

3 individual conversation

1 individualized approach

1 influence can change depending on the subject

1 influence consumers behavior through thoughtful product design

1 influencer engagement is key

1 influencer marketing cause effect or change behaviour with their audience

1 influencer marketing must provide clear indication of endorsement

1 Influencer Marketing requires dedication

2 Influencer marketing: quality not quantity

1 influencer marketing new marketing tool

5 Influencer programs

1 influencers must be credible

2 Influencers must match the brand

1 Influencers need to be passionate

1 influencers need to be relevant to the brand

1 influencers needs to be influential

1 influencers no longer fit a common mold

1 influencers should maintain the same voice throughout their feed

1 influencers tell the brand's story

1 influencers tend to attract niche audience that resonates with their brands

2 insights and truths

1 Instagram stories more comprehensive than facebook

1 Integration is the main theme in 2019

1 integration of content

1 invest in influencer marketing

1 its important to understand retarget and refine marketing strategies

1 keep close eye to the future

1 learn more about customer decisions

1 live stream on the rise

3 Long-term approach

1 loyalty marketing

1 make brands more transparent to consumers so people can align their purchases with the change they want to see in the world

1 making organizations more intelligent

5 Marketers invest more and more

1 marketers must ensure they use digital channels to provide the right answers

1 marketers must invest in social media

2 Marketers need to be more aware of the upcoming trends

1 marketers need to be more creative

1 Marketers need to be more flexibel and creative

2 marketers need to be more open and willing to experiment new ways of doing things

19 Marketers need to change their approach

1 marketers need to prepare by thinking abouthowthey acquire new prospects it the digital world

1 marketers need to understand their customers wants, needs and pains like never before

1 marketers need tobuild digital relationships with existing customers

1 marketers tend to have misaligned expectations with social media

3 mature companies are finding new ways to integrate influence management, content strategy and customer experience

4 measure digitally

1 measure engagement

1 measurement is always a key part of the conversation with our clients and advances in technology have allowed us to look differently at engagement and success

1 Measuring

1 measuring ROI

1 merged media is the new trend

1 understand your target's mindset and their passion pillars – and who they view as trusted resources

1 narrative should be about why we want to do something for our planet, which will bring authenticity

1 need for more data and analytics more thanever

1 niche interests

1 pay attention to youth culture

1 personal brands

1 personal brands gives credibility

3 personal connection

7 personal interaction

1 personal investment

5 personalized

1 political dialogue is a trend

1 PR firms to be successful have to be authentic from the beginning

1 Pr must go beyond earned media

1 Public relations offer authenticity, influencer relationships

1 Public Relations will evolve

1 reducing screen time is becoming more common

1 relationship based communication is key

1 Respond to customers quickly

1 rise in editorial news featured on social media

1 secure the right influencer in order to build good relationships

1 select influencers who are authentic

2 shift towards audience-centricity

1 shift towards a small group with specific content that will resonate and prompt measurable action with quality customers for our clients

1 stop view influencer marketing as a transactional media buy and instead seek to forge long-term relationships with a number of cherry picked creators

4 strategic content

3 strategic planning

1 strategically shape communication activities, reaching the right audiences with the right messages at the right time

2 stricter standards

1 take a stand

1 target audience

1 the brand has to have the relationship with the influencers in order for it to be authentic

1 the cause must be aligned with the brand purpose

1 The future not so narrowly defined

1 the mix between media sources has increased steadily around the world

1 the narrative has to be told thoughtfully with strength

1 the rise of brands taking a stand

1 today everyone is an influencer in some way

1 today's consumers are smarter and dig into research

1 today's consumers expect personalized experiences

1 Today's consumers respond to human brands

1 Today's consumers want to be efficient

2 treat influencers as client

1 Trends are constantly changing, we need to adapt

1 trends will impact the work how the end customer feels about the brand and product

9 Understand Consumers

1 understand how their audience matches up to your targets

2 Understanding customers

1 video content on the rise

1 virtual influencers are a 'thing' now

1 virtual influencers on the rise

1 virtual reality

5 voice

1 we need to look at how long people visit websites equally

1 we need to rethink how we're communicating going beyond how they are playing an active role in their care and well-being

1 business partners they want to see quick KPIs

GEN Z

- 1 'Fear Of Switching Off'
- 2 'the generation we can't put a label on'
- 1 1 in 4 Gen Z and Millennials actively seek stories of products
- 1 29% of Gen Z use social media for health advice and information
- 1 40% of Gen Z feel jealous
- 1 40% of Gen Z feel unconfident
- 1 47% of Gen Z feel pressured to lose weight or tone up
- 1 48% of Gen Z say they feel sad when looking at images on social media
- 1 70% of Gen Z watch stories on Instagram
- 1 88% of Gen Z are willing to take medicine for anxiety and depression, concerned about losing themselves or their personality
- 1 95% of Gen Z use Youtube and 1 billion people actively use Instagram

- 1 A significant amount of Gen Z visit a counsellor or therapist
- 1 Almost a third of Gen Z indicate that they try stay fit so that they can look like the people on Social Media
- 3 change agents
- 1 Expected to represent 25% of all consumers in the US
- 1 follow influencers/celebrities
- 5 Gen Z
- 1 Gen Z are looking for brands with common values, shared behavioral set and a commitment to community
- 1 Gen Z crave authenticity
- 1 Gen Z driven and motivated group that understands the merit of hard work
- 1 Gen Z feels or experiences more pressure
- 1 Gen Z is most active on Instagram stories
- 1 Gen Z negatively impacted by social media
- 1 Gen Z places a stronger emphasis on maintaining positive mental health
- 1 Gen Z practice mindfulness
- 1 Generation Z active on social media

MILLENNIALS

- 1 60% of millennials consume stories
- 1 a generation that needs to take the time out due to feeling stressed or overwhelmed by their workload
- 1 companies need to consider how millennials view their content
- 3 Millennials
- 1 millennials are focused on authenticity
- 1 millennials audience is growing in importance as a powerful of the consumer economy
- 1 millennials expect companies to do more to create diversity
- 1 millennials feel overwhelmed by balancing their double life: social media presence and real-world presence
- 1 Millennials need engagement and action
- 1 millennials will represent more than 70% of global employee by 2020
- 1 millennials: content that inspire both in social realm and action realm of reality
- 1 travel is an area where millennials find social media to be actionable

=14

- 3 Generation Z born with Social Media
- 1 Generation Z career progression is more important than money
- 1 Generation Z culturally diversified
- 1 Generation Z excluding brands
- 1 generation Z faith in influencers
- 2 Generation Z good for brands
- 1 Generation Z grew up with Social Media
- 1 Generation Z individuality
- 1 Generation Z open-minded, non-traditional
- 3 generation Z social media fanatics
- 2 Generation Z want to collaborate with brands
- 1 Generation Z want to express themselves
- 4 Generation Z want to feel connected to brands
- 1 Gen Z turn to the internet for health questions
- 1 Less brand loyal
- 1 more likely to write product review online
- 1 turn of attention generation Gen Z
- 1 value of experience over material possessions

= 60

SOCIAL MEDIA POSITIVE IMPACTS

- 1 Social Media accused of creating pressure to achieve perfection
- 1 social media and digital strategy are transforming content formatting
- 1 social media apps are feeling the pressure to keep users on their sites
- 1 social media as the second strongest force driving millennials action
- 1 social media changing the digital world
- 1 social media content resonates with millennials because it allows them to take informed action in the market place while still satisfying their inner craving for authenticity
- 9 social media digital change agent
- 1 Social Media entertaining
- 1 social media firms charge more for video which is why they are encouraging brands to invest in video
- 1 social media strategies will help pave successful and sustainable business
- 1 Social media has helped pharmaceutical industries to educate and communicate their work
- 1 social media is a powerful tool
- 1 social media is addictive
- 1 Social Media primary means of communication
- 1 social media is de-centralising
- 1 social media is going through its teenage years its downsides but its eventually going to have an even more impact on sharing visual stories
- 1 social media is not going away
- 1 social media is showing no signs of slowing down
- 1 Social Media play a powerful role in setting standards and expectations oh how Gen Z should look
- 1 social media transforming the communication business
- 1 social media users are looking into semblance of control
- 1 social media users want to engage and create a connection to brands
- 1 social media: easier to identify audiences
- 1 social media: we must embrace the endless opportunities for brand and company success
- 1 through social media marketers have access to better audience targeting

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SOCIAL MEDIA NEGATIVE IMPACTS

- 3 Social media fatigue
- 1 social media is creeping into our lives more frequently
- 1 the rise of dark social media
- 1 unexpected health issues companies need to be prepared for

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