



Episode 27 Are Influencers Trustworthy?

Karan: [00:00:00] Are influencers trustworthy? I feel like this is a big question to tackle, I'm ready for it. Are you ready to find out where you sit on the [00:01:00] trustworthy scale?

I'm going to start off with some background here and set the scene for trustworthiness of influencers. I want you to think about the fact that we live in a world where 80% of consumers are swayed by influencer endorsements – 80%! And in 2024, influencer marketing is expected to deliver a mind-blowing 420% on investments for brands.

In other words, for every \$1 a brand spends on influencer marketing, they can expect \$5.20 back in return. The power of influencers in shaping consumer behaviour undeniable.

So how does that relate [00:02:00] to trust? When we look at the dynamics of social media, authenticity and brand partnerships, the trustworthiness influencers is a topic of big debate. Do you stand proud when you say that you are an influencer or are you a little bit apprehensive when saying this out aloud outside of the influencer community?

In today's episode of The Business Of Influence Podcast, I'm going to discuss the relationship between influencers, brands and consumer. And together we'll have a look at how transparency, authenticity and genuine engagement are shaping how trustworthy you're considered to be as an influencer.

And you know what? I'm also going to give you some nifty stats and [00:03:00] info to share with brands when you're at the negotiating table to demonstrate how trustworthy and influential you are.

First up in the trustworthiness discussion, I'd like us to take a look at the state of influencer marketing and why it's important for you to understand the state of play for where we sit in the market.



We all know that the influencer marketing space has seen massive growth, especially on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. These dominant platforms are the playground for influencers. That's where we connect, create, and we convert followers into customers.

Also, let's talk about diversity. The influencer landscape is no longer just about the big names. We are [00:04:00] seeing a significant rise in micro influencers who are making a massive impact. What's their strength? It's authentic connections with their audiences. They're not just influencers, they're trusted voices within their community. And this shift is changing how brands approach influencer marketing, making it more genuine, more targeted and incredibly effective.

Understanding all of this in terms of trustworthiness is important because knowing the dominance of platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube helps you choose where to focus your content strategy effectively.

Knowing about the rise of micro influences underscores the value of authenticity. Influencers who cultivate these genuine [00:05:00] connections with their audiences or their audience are seen as more trustworthy.

Being aware of trends helps you stay relevant and trustworthy in the eyes of both your audience and potential brand partners. So, understanding these dynamics of a brand collaboration strategy align with brands that value your authenticity as well their own. And this enhances your trustworthiness. I actually speak about this way back in [Episode 2, Pricing Your Influencer Campaign](#).

Now let's have a look at the influencer impact on consumer behaviour. In marketing terms, an influencer is someone who has a reputation of authority or expertise and uses that authority to [00:06:00] engage and influence potential buyers of a product or service by promoting or recommending it on social media - that sweet, sweet authority and influence.

Wear the title of influencer proudly. Times have changed. If you're an influencer and you're doing the right things, stand proud.



Enough about you for a moment though. Let's look at how you influence consumer behaviour. Did you know that 80% of consumers are influenced by your recommendations on social media?

We opened the podcast episode with that stat. Can you see how important your role is in shaping purchasing decisions? You're not just influencing, you're driving real results. And, also remember at the top of the episode, how I mentioned influencer to marketing is [00:07:00] delivering an impressive average return on investment of 420% to brands? 420% is massive! And it isn't just a statistic. It's a powerful demonstration of the trust and credibility influencers have established with their audience.

Righto. I've mentioned some impressive stats about how much Influence influencers have on consumer behaviour.

How do you stack up as an individual? The importance of being transparent and authentic cannot be overstated here. The success of influencer campaigns heavily relies on these two pillars: transparency and Authenticity. Authenticity is not just about being genuine in what you endorse. It is [00:08:00] about aligning with brands and products that resonate with your personal values and those values that your audience hold.

Transparency, on the other hand, is about clear communication. It's about disclosing partnerships and being upfront with sponsored content. I'm going to talk about transparency and disclosure in next week's episode, because it's a pretty big and chunky topic. It's a good one though. So, we'll park that discussion until next week.

Going back to trust. The recent Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report, which is like the MVP of trust reports, it's the big gun, and when we talk about trust and market analysis, it's what we read; this references evolving consumer expectations. Today's consumers or customers or buyers are looking for more than just a transaction.

[00:09:00] They want a relationship that extends beyond the initial purchase. They value ongoing engagement and a sense of trust that develops over time. This means that your interaction shouldn't end at that point of sale. Engaging with your followers, addressing their concerns and maintaining a consistent, truthful narrative is key to building and



sustaining this trust. With this in mind, it's no surprise that [live shopping experiences are a forecast trend for influencers in 2024](#). So, Brands are looking to do more of these live shopping experiences. So it's a try on or an unboxing or whatever it is. And you'll be on camera as the face of the brand to discuss all of these things, engaging with your audience, [00:10:00] building the trust, addressing their concerns. It's a great space to be in. It also means that video is going to become more important.

Let's get back to the trust discussion. I'm a Gen Xer. Now please don't hit stop on this podcast. Me being a Gen Xer is good for you because I was around when this whole influencer marketing thing started, right? It's how I have more than 10 of experience working in the space and getting to work with celebrities and influencers around the world. Yes, I could be the person getting you a big fat paycheck.

Why are generations important though? Going back to that MVP Trust Report, the Edelman Trust Barometer, Gen Z are rewriting the rules of purchasing. What does that mean for brands? And what does it mean for influencers and [00:11:00] trust? For brands, it means they are going to be realigning their strategies to resonate with Gen Z values.

It's not about a hard sell, it's about creating a brand story that aligns with the ideals of Gen Z. **And this is where you come in.** If you understand and share Gen Z's values, you can create a deeper connection with this audience. This Gen Z audience are a generation that look beyond the product. They're looking for brands that stand for something. And this shift is going to demand a new approach to influencer collaborations. One that's really rooted in authenticity and trust.

So, are influencers trustworthy? We know that you have significant influence on consumer behaviour. And this is a power [00:12:00] that comes with challenges and responsibilities. On one hand, you're able to sway opinions, drive trends and impact purchasing decisions.

Your recommendations are powerful and they're often seen as peer advice rather than traditional advertising. And this level of influence is built on the trust your audience has in you. A trust that you have to continually earn and maintain. And on the other hand, you need to constantly navigate that fine line between authenticity and SponCon [00:13:00] **If your audience are misled or sense a lack of authenticity, trust can be very quickly eroded.**



Another challenge lies in maintaining consistency. Your audience expects a certain standard from you in terms of content quality, the values you stand for and the brands you choose to collaborate with. Straying too far from your audience expectations can lead to a disconnect from your audience.

Many influencers successfully manage these challenges by being selective about the partnerships, prioritising brands that align with their values, and being open and honest about sponsored content. This approach will help you maintain trust and will also strengthen your own brand in the long term. [00:14:00]

So, while the trustworthiness of influencers is complex, and it's marked by both positive influence and challenges, the key to trustworthiness lies in striking the right balance. By prioritising authenticity, transparency, and alignment with personal values, you can sustain and grow the trust of your audience, which is the foundation of your influence.

And with that, you can proudly say, influencers are trustworthy. Stand proud. You are trustworthy. There will always be the outliers and a rogue few, but you know what? For the most part, lean into your trustworthiness, your influence, and what you do in terms of creating this incredible [00:15:00] relationship that brands want to leverage.

You can check the show notes for all the links, find episode resources and other recommended listening on building your career as a professional influencer in the expanded show notes at thebusinessofinfluence.com/ep27. And join the discussion in the [MOOTS Facebook group](#) too.

Next week let's chat about transparency and disclosure. Love it, hate it, or accept it - understanding and practicing transparency is a key element of being a professional influencer. I do hope you'll join me.

Until then, stay creative.

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Episode 2 Pricing Your Influencer Campaign

<https://thebusinessofinfluence.com/ep2/>

10 Key Trends for Influencers in 2024

<https://thebusinessofinfluence.com/10-key-trends-for-influencers-in-2024/>