

HOW TO BUILD AN
**INFLUENCER MARKETING
PROGRAM**

HOW TO BUILD AN INFLUENCER MARKETING PROGRAM IN 2017

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HOW TO BUILD AN INFLUENCER MARKETING PROGRAM IN 2017

Almost all consumers (92%) trust recommendations from strangers and influencers over those from brands.¹ Most brands are aware of the power of influencer marketing and have doubled down on their spend over the past two years – with budgets ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000.² Spend has increased so much that some marketers are now asking whether the likes and shares are worth the investment.

So how do you track and prove the ROI of your influencer marketing efforts? How do you build relationships that not only drive reach but also engagement and conversions?

IN THIS GUIDE, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to build an influencer marketing program from the ground up
- How to grow influencer relationships that turn them into ambassadors
- How to track and prove ROI

¹<http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2012/consumer-trust-in-online-social-and-mobile-advertising-gr-ows.htmlk>

²<http://www.business2community.com/marketing/2016-influencer-marketing-budget-trends-stack-01570106>



CHAPTER 1

A LOOK BACK AT 2016...

Before we jump into how you can build a profitable, engaging influencer marketing program in 2017, let's first take a look back at how influencer marketing evolved in 2016.

There were tons of new features released that help marketers build stronger relationships with influencers. Several major social media channels also released updates that reward influencers for posting.

Here are the three biggest developments from last year:



1

VIDEO IS BIG AND IT'S ONLY GETTING BIGGER.



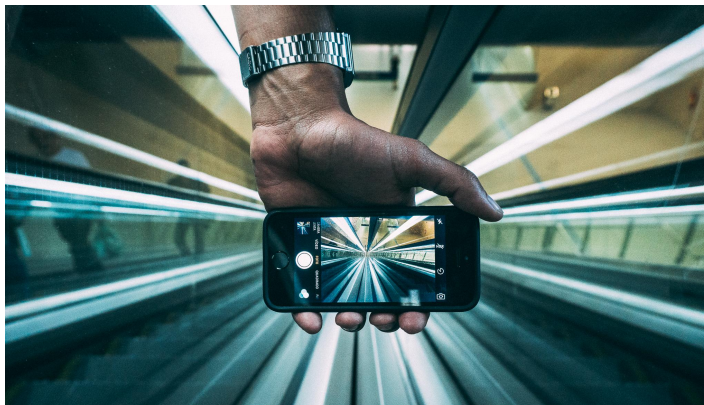
All last year, Facebook made moves to double down on video. Live streaming is set to be a major ad opportunity for the channel. After all, video ad spending in the U.S. is already at \$10.30 billion, representing 14.3% of total digital spending. And that number is expected to grow to 15.1% by the end of 2017.³

To encourage influencers to create video content for Facebook Live, Facebook partnered with notable publishers, celebrities, and social media stars and paid them to create content. Guess how much Facebook has paid these influencers so far? Over \$50 million dollars.

³ <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/US-Digital-Ad-Spending-Surpass-TV-this-Year/1014469>

2

WE SAW THE RISE OF MICRO-INFLUENCERS.

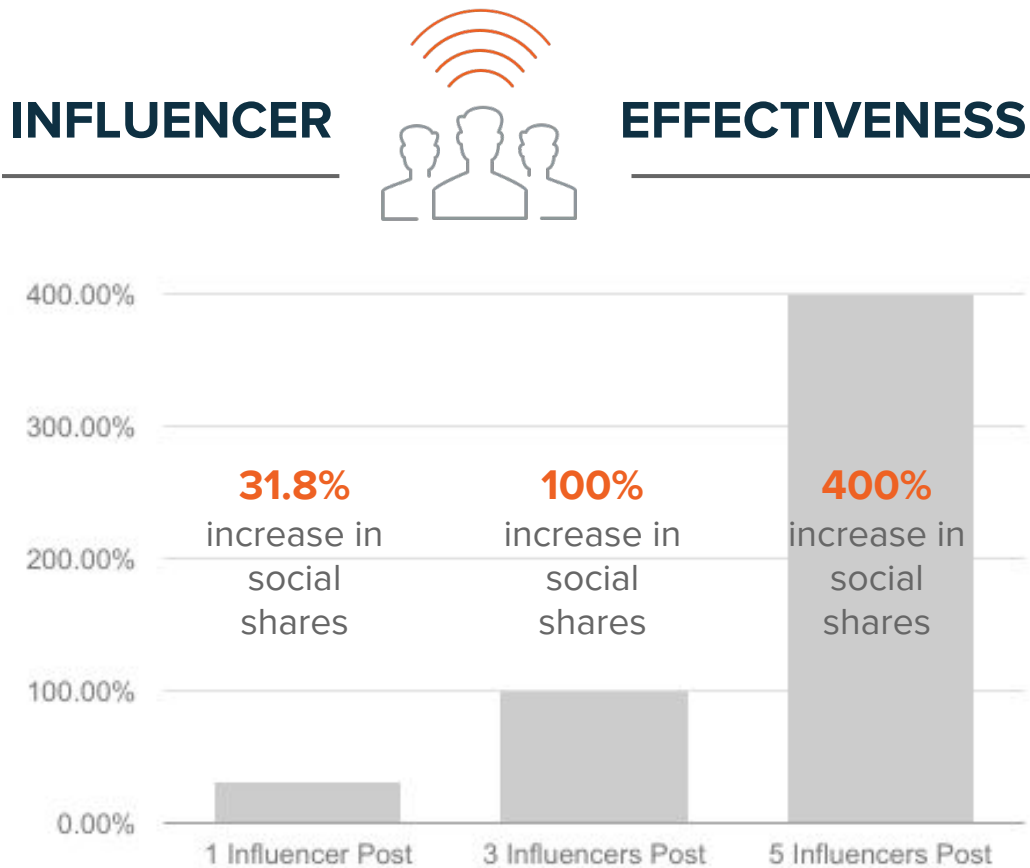


A lot of brands are now opting to tap micro-influencers instead of big-name celebs. Depending on the campaign, brands will target micro-influencers with between 100K to 200K followers or even 10K and below.⁴

Instead of activating one larger influencer, brands team up with 30 to 40 smaller influencers for the same amount of budget. As a result, these campaigns convert at an even higher level.

⁴ <http://digiday.com/marketing/micro-influencers/>

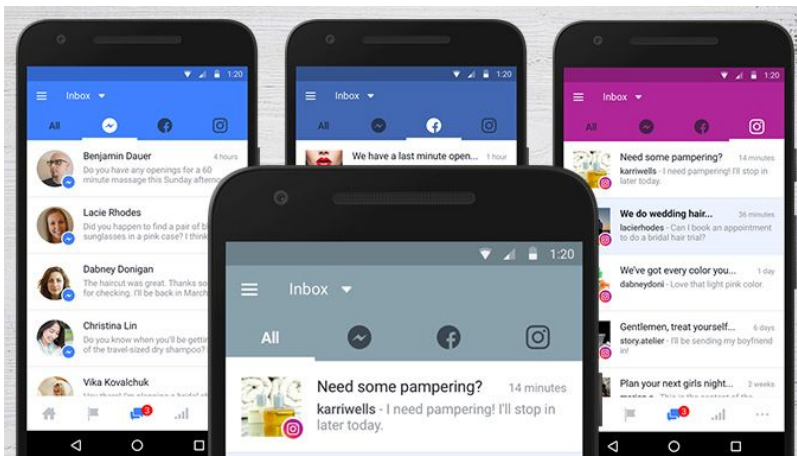
A recent BuzzSumo study showed that one influencer sharing a post can lead to a 31.8% increase in social shares. When three influencers shared a piece of content, it doubled the total number of shares; five influencers quadrupled it.⁵



⁵<http://okdork.com/why-content-goes-viral-what-analyzing-100-millions-articles-taught-us/>

3

SOCIAL CHANNELS ARE BRINGING EVERYTHING INTO ONE APP.



In November, Facebook rolled out an update to their Pages Manager that integrates Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger interactions all in one place. Page admins can now see and reply to all messages across these three platforms from one central inbox.

Social channels are aware that brands can't just choose one channel to invest in anymore. Consumers are everywhere. Not only is it important for brands to build a presence across all of the major channels, but they also need to be present.

Influencers can help you build up credibility on channels where you're just starting out, or drive engagement on platforms where you might lack the resources or expertise.



This week, we sat down to chat with independent artist and country singer, Elizabeth Lyons, about her music career and how she's been using Bitly to track her work.

A Chicago native, Elizabeth moved to Nashville a few years ago to finish up her college education at Vanderbilt University and jumpstart her career in music. During her senior year of college, she released her self-titled debut EP, currently an Album All-Time Bestseller Under \$8 on iTunes. Elizabeth now runs her own record label and publishing company out of her apartment in Nashville.

Here's her story:



@Bitly links are bc I can see wh shows there 🚀 #BitlyNetwork



This interview with @denisechan26 is definitely a favorite! ❤️ y'all read here why I LOVE @bitly and more fun stuff!

How Singer Elizabeth Lyons Uses Bitly To Track Her Music...
This week, we sat down to chat with independent artist and country singer, Elizabeth Lyons, about her music career and how she's been using Bitly to track her work. A Chicago native, Eli...
bitly.com

RETWEETS 113 LIKES 11

3:14 PM - 11 Jul 2016

A while ago, we partnered with free user and independent singer Elizabeth Lyons to produce and promote this blog post. Elizabeth helped promote the interview from her Twitter account and the post drove almost two times the amount of clicks our average interviews drive. The interview also led to several other partnerships where Elizabeth helped promote the Bitly brand across her social channels.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT'S NEXT IN 2017?

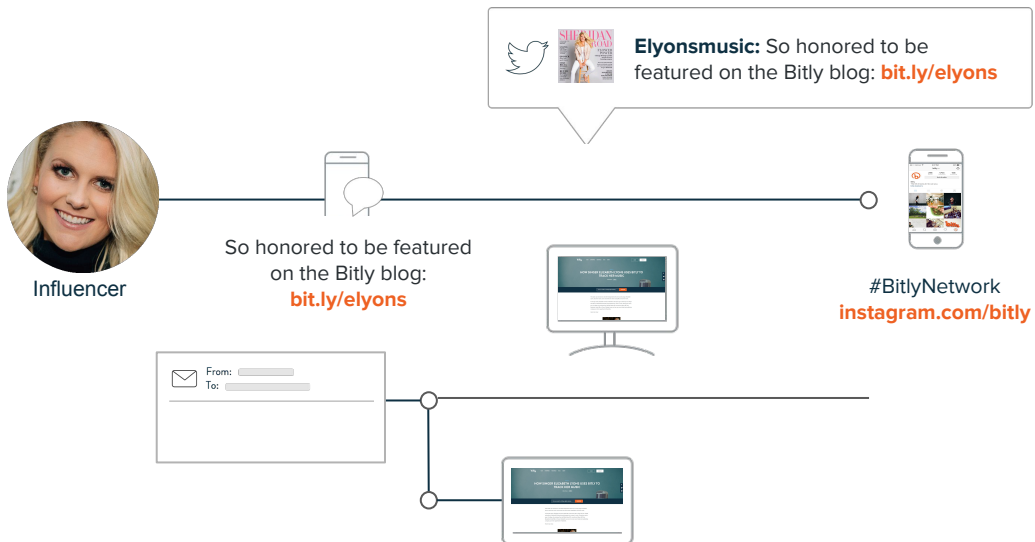
Tapfluence predicts that traditional celebrity endorsements will crack this year and influencer marketing will play a bigger role in agencies, B2B, and the martech stack.

Because of this, brands will start testing out new influencer marketing tactics and place more importance on measurement and optimization.

Whether you already have a polished influencer marketing program or you have yet to hop on the bandwagon, it's time to think about fresh ways to target your audience and move the needle in 2017.



THE LANDSCAPE



The customer experience is more fragmented and complicated than ever in 2017. We're in an age where the average consumer owns 3.64 connected devices.⁶ The opportunity cost of not being omnichannel is 10% in lost revenue.⁷

Influencer marketing will help you reach new audience groups and build long-lasting relationships. Influencer content can also be repurposed across multiple channels and distributed over time.

At Bitly, after interviewing an influencer and featuring them on our blog, we include the interview in our newsletter and social channels. We also encourage influencers to share across their own channels. We've seen quite a spike in traffic from influencers sharing our content with their network and their network sharing with their friends.

⁶<https://www.globalwebindex.net/blog/digital-consumers-own-3.64-connected-devices>

⁷<https://cybra.com/10-omnichannel-retail-statistics-you-cant-avoid/>

CHAPTER 3

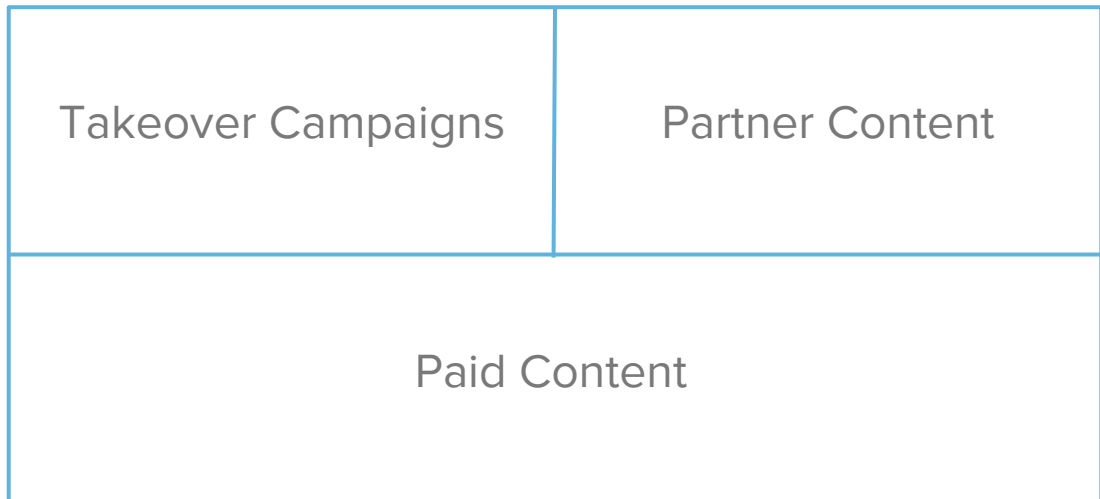
LAUNCHING AN INFLUENCER MARKETING PROGRAM

Not sure where to get started? We've got you covered with this step-by-step tutorial.

We'll take a look at the most popular types of influencer marketing campaigns, ways to get in touch with influencers, and how to create a campaign brief.



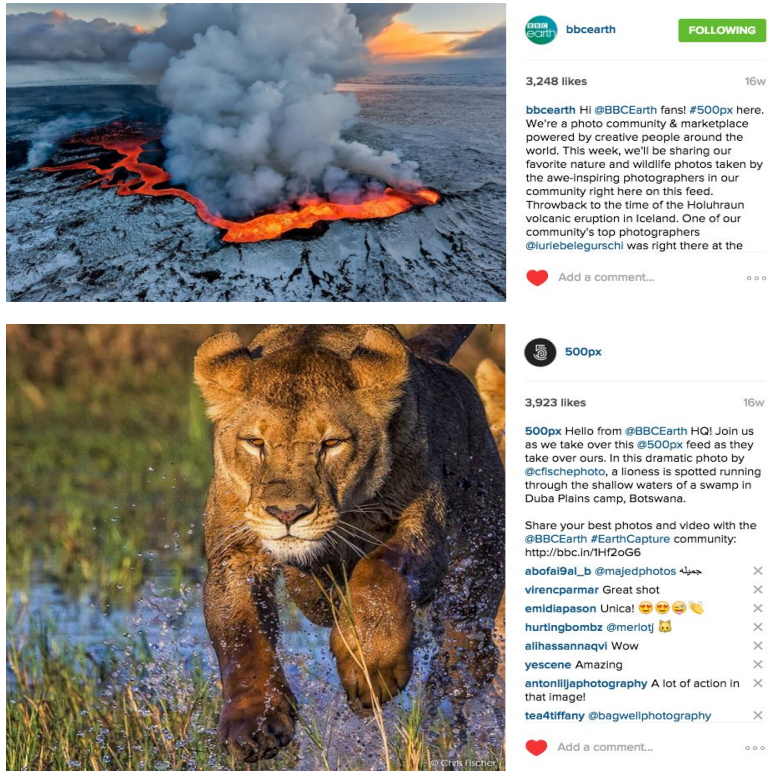
ESTABLISH A STRATEGY



Before you get started, you'll want to identify your goals and map out the best strategy that will get you there.

Influencer campaigns come in all different shapes and sizes, but you can usually divide them into three different buckets: takeover campaigns, partner content, and paid content.

TAKEOVER CAMPAIGNS



Takeover campaigns are when you give an influencer access to post from your social channel.

The influencer will hop on your account and post for a set period of time, whether it's a day, a week, or more. They will also announce the takeover to their followers, often encouraging them to follow along on your account. This way you can create an experience that resonates with the influencer's audience and encourages them to follow your account and ultimately purchase or use your product.

PARTNER CONTENT

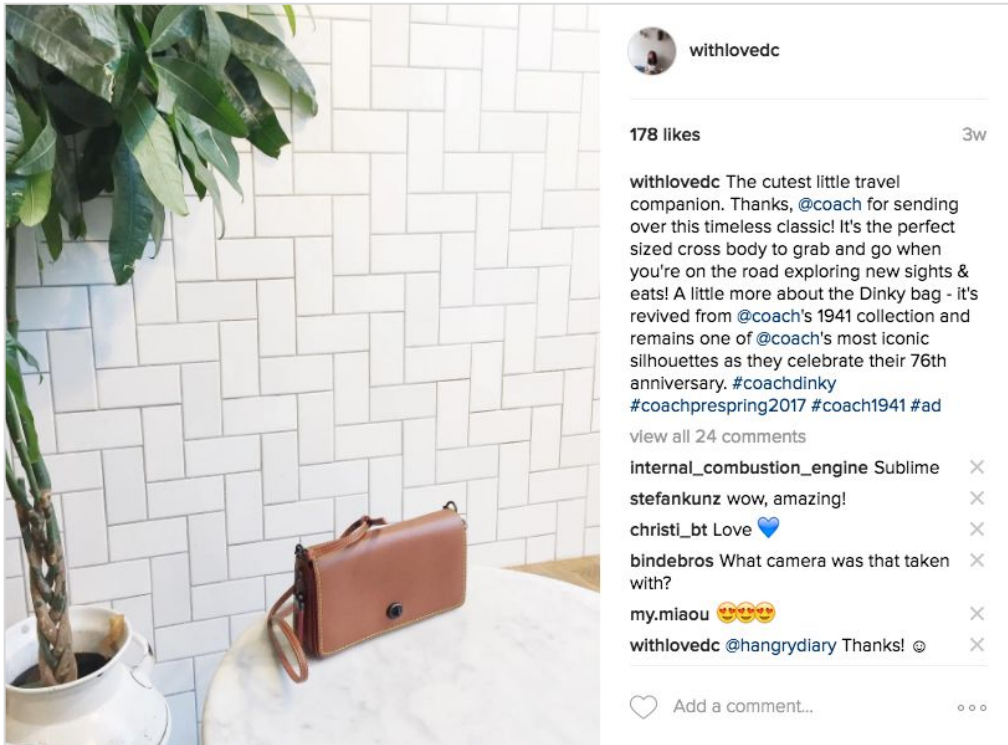


Partner content is when two or more companies build a campaign or content together. This could be a shared social media campaign or just a joint piece of content like a webinar, a Facebook Live event, or an eBook.

This expands your reach since the agreement would likely drive more product demo sign-ups, eBook downloads, or even drive more calls with the sales team.

The last webinar we ran with our partner, AdRoll, drove more than 2,300 registrations, a 150% increase in registrations compared to the ones we run alone.

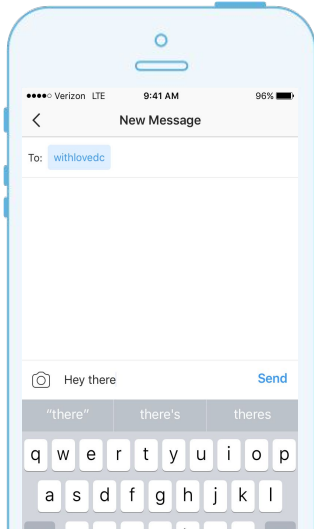
PAID CONTENT



Paid content is a relationship where the influencer is compensated. That means hiring a thought leader, a blogger, or a celebrity to help create compelling content.

But if you're just starting out or low on budget, compensation doesn't always have to be money. Some influencers may be interested in posting content in exchange for a free product or a free trial. Influencers may prefer this sometimes, since it keeps their reviews honest and authentic.

REACH OUT & SAY HI



Next, you have to identify the right influencers. Since our influencer marketing program at Bitly is still fairly new, a lot of the strategies we've tested out are still fresh in our minds. Here are some of the channels that we've found to be most effective in finding the right influencers:

- Searching through hashtags (For us, we look through branded hashtags and industry hashtags such as #BitlyNetwork, #CustomerExperience, #SocialMedia)
- Posting queries for expert advice at HelpAReporter.com
- Seeing who our existing influencers follow
- Asking influencers to recommend friends

CREATE A CAMPAIGN BRIEF

At the center of any successful influencer marketing campaign is strong communication and execution.

You're already partnering with these select influencers because their aesthetic reflects your brand, they're passionate about your product, and you dig their style. But still, a lot can happen from conception to execution. How do you ensure their content matches your vision?

This is where a campaign brief comes into play.

The campaign brief doesn't need to be long. The best ones we've seen have been around two to three pages long, full of visuals and bullet points.

CREATE A CAMPAIGN BRIEF *continued*

1. DOS AND DON'TS

Let the influencers know exactly what they are committing to and you can streamline the project's objectives. A great dos and don'ts list is specific enough to be helpful, but still gives influencers enough room for creative autonomy.

2. VISUAL INSPIRATION

Fill a page or two with examples of what you'd like your influencer's posts to reflect or represent. You'll want to make sure there's a cohesive theme that the influencer can take away, whether it's a color, shooting style, mood, or personality.

3. CONTENT CHECKLIST.

Full-time influencers are juggling multiple partnerships. Even part-time influencers often receive plenty of inquiries a week. Make it easier for your influencer to keep track of everything they need to create content that will deliver results. A checklist saves a lot of potential work on your end and guarantees a shorter production turnaround time.

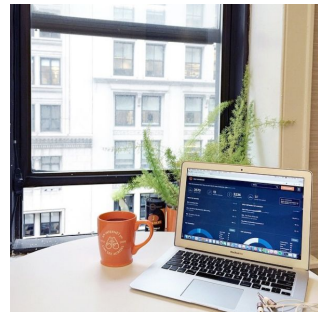
CREATE A CAMPAIGN BRIEF *continued*

SAMPLE BRIEF

bitly

Our newest customer experience product, Product X,
Is a **simple, effective** way for teams
to see clear across the internet.

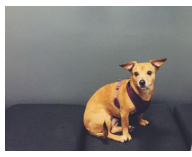
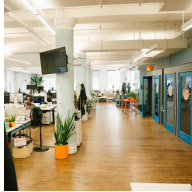
**YOU'VE BEEN CHOSEN TO BECOME A
#BITLYNETWORK PARTNER!**



Help us launch our newest customer experience product, Product X.



CREATE A CAMPAIGN BRIEF *continued*



CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES

- **DO** try to include branded colors in your visuals (blue and orange)
- **DO** tag @bitly & #bitlynetwork in all of your posts
- **DO NOT** use special effects or multiple filters
- **DO NOT** include identifiable products or logos from SaaS competitors

DATES

3/6 - Receive your campaign brief and materials in the mail

3/12 - Submit first photo & caption

3/18 - Submit second photo & caption

HASHTAGS

#bitly, #bitlynetwork, #customerexperience

COPY GUIDELINES

Keep it short and informative. But above all, have fun & tailor the copy for your audience.



CHAPTER 4

INFLUENCER MARKETING IN THE WILD

Now we know the top three steps to kicking off an influencer marketing program: plan, pitch, and organize.

Let's see how some of the best players in the space put this into action.



DANIEL WELLINGTON



*Grew brand awareness
and built a \$220 million
business from influencer
marketing alone.*

Daniel Wellington, a young, five-year old watch brand, passed up traditional marketing and invested heavily in influencer marketing. The company gives away their product to social media stars and personalities, sometimes paying high-profile celebrities or influencers.

By doing this, they grew their Instagram account by 1.2 million followers in one year. Daniel Wellington now has over 2 million followers on Instagram.

EVERLANE



Last year, a fashion photographer tweeted at Everlane asking if they would ever make a white loafer wedding shoe.

A few months later, Everlane asked a few of the photographer's friends to tweet at Kima saying that Everlane would have a surprise for her at a certain time of the day. She checked back on Twitter in the afternoon and found that Everlane had made those white shoes exclusively for her! Everlane got Kima and her friends excited to be part of something special by going above and beyond her request and other Twitter followers were impressed by the brand's personal touch.

KATE SPADE



The “Saturday Is...” campaign invited influencers to interpret & create their own branded content on Pinterest.

After learning from third-party research that over half of Pinterest users earn \$50,000 a year, and 81% of users are female, Kate Spade knew that the social platform would be the ideal environment for an influencer marketing campaign.

They launched a campaign around the catchphrase “*Saturday Is...*”, inviting Pinterest users to create boards on their own accounts around whatever this phrase meant to them.

This type of user-generated content is powerful. Pinterest users created fun, authentic, and branded content that their own followers would then see and organically discover Kate Spade through. The campaign yielded **1.2 million new followers** for Kate Spade.

BITLY



Cubby Graham
Social Media Strategist,
charity: water



Elizabeth Lyons
Independent Artist
& Country Singer



Danielle McFadden
President & CEO,
Greater Lowell Chamber
of Commerce

At Bitly, we've been working on featuring users that are using our product in unique and interesting ways.

At Bitly, every few weeks we sit down with a member of our community to learn more about what they do and how they use our product.

We've learned some really cool things about how our product is used to track video marketing campaigns. Nonprofit charity: water uses Bitlinks to track the effectiveness of their paid social ads. Through this tracking, they were able to see the funnel in a way that they wouldn't be able to from just looking at the analytics in the in-app dashboard.

BITLY *continued*

They saw that the videos drove a lot of eyeballs – with 3 million views on Facebook and 1 million views on Snapchat –but ultimately didn't see that many people coming through the website and donating.

The team learned that certain ad campaigns are good for generating awareness, but not necessarily donations. While ads like these are great for branding, the return probably wasn't high enough for them to invest heavily in it in the long run.

CHAPTER 3

PROVING THE VALUE OF YOUR PROGRAM

Brands and have doubled down on their influencer marketing over the past two years - with budgets ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000.⁸

Spend has increased so much so in 2016, that some marketers were asking whether the likes and shares are worth the investment. One social media exec recently confessed in a Digiday article that they spent “too much money, too fast” on influencer marketing.

So how do you track and prove ROI? How do you build relationships that drive impact beyond one post?

⁸<http://www.business2community.com/marketing/2016-influencer-marketing-budget-trends-stack-01570106>



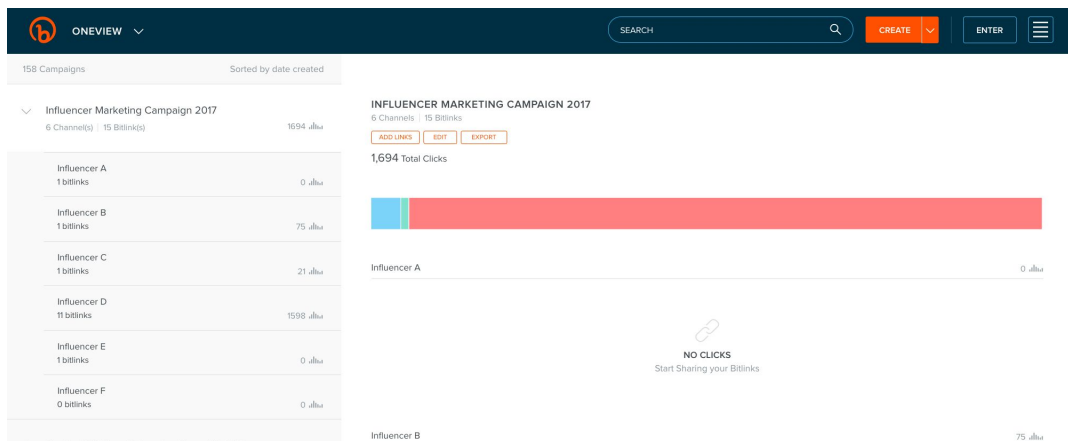


CREATE CUSTOMIZED TRACKABLE LINKS

The link is used in all of your channels. If you use it in all of your channels, including giving one to each influencer, you can then track how your consumers are engaging across the entire user journey.

We use the link to brand, to drive engagement, track hard-to-track channels, and measure micro and macro efforts.

At the beginning of every campaign, we hand an individual customized Bitlink to each influencer and we're able to see how their content is performing and then how each individual post rolls up into the campaign as a whole.



CREATE CUSTOMIZED TRACKABLE LINKS *continued*

With Instagram campaigns, brands will often ask influencers to share a link in their bio and direct followers to their “link in bio,” because links in captions aren’t clickable on Instagram. They can also include a link in the caption, which followers can then write out in their browser. Instead of including a long url, it’s better to shorten the link using Bitly, which also helps you track traffic from Instagram.

Here’s an example of how Lucasfilm and HP used Bitly to track a sweepstakes they were running as part of a bigger campaign to promote the release of “Star Wars: The Force Awakens.”



CREATE CUSTOMIZED TRACKABLE LINKS *continued*

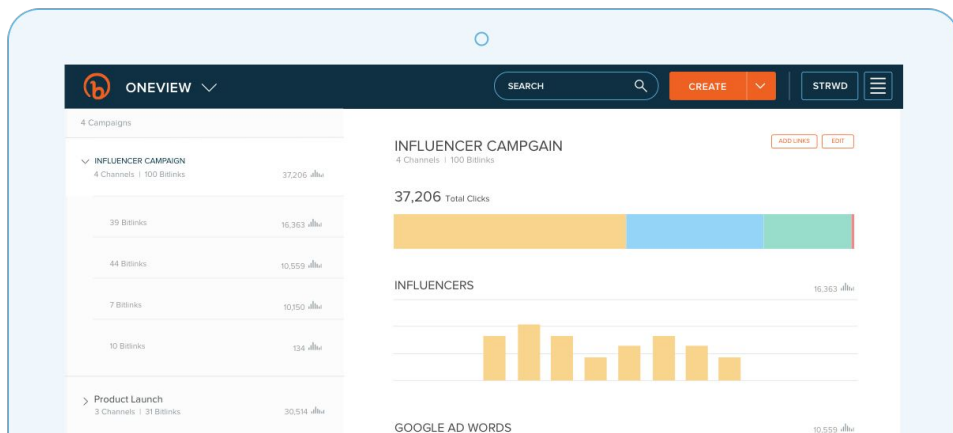


Lucasfilm and HP used a Bitlink in their Instagram campaign to brand and drive followers to a targeted landing page.

HP asked their Instagram influencers, a mix of musicians, artists and tech professionals, to promote the #AwakenYourForce sweepstakes, which offered followers a chance to win a Star Wars Special Edition notebook and a movie ticket voucher. The influencers shared galactic-inspired posts with a dedicated Bitly link in the caption that drove to the sweepstakes landing page.

2

COMPARE ACROSS CHANNELS



By asking influencers to share Bitly links, brands are able to see how much total traffic influencer marketing is driving back to their site or landing pages, and also compare the success of social channels, paid, and organic content for an influencer campaign.

Here's an example of how a brand can use OneView across multiple channels and track influencer marketing on Instagram.

While paid search generated more total clicks, the lifespan of an influencer marketing campaign is longer. When we look at the 'Influencers' graph, there are multiple spikes, most likely coinciding with each time an influencer...

COMPARE ACROSS CHANNELS *continued*

influencer posts an update, whereas Google AdWords only has one spike at the very beginning of the campaign. This suggests that the next time the brand runs an influencer marketing campaign on Instagram, they would want to look into testing and optimizing the time of day or day of week to further boost those spikes in traffic.

Ultimately, there is no one right way to define success.

By opening up your tracking parameters beyond likes and shares, you give yourself more flexibility to dig into the true impact of influencer marketing. Beyond the number of engagements influencers drive, the quality of these relationships is just as, if not even more, powerful. You might be surprised at some of the results you see behind the scenes, because likes do not necessarily equal conversions.

3

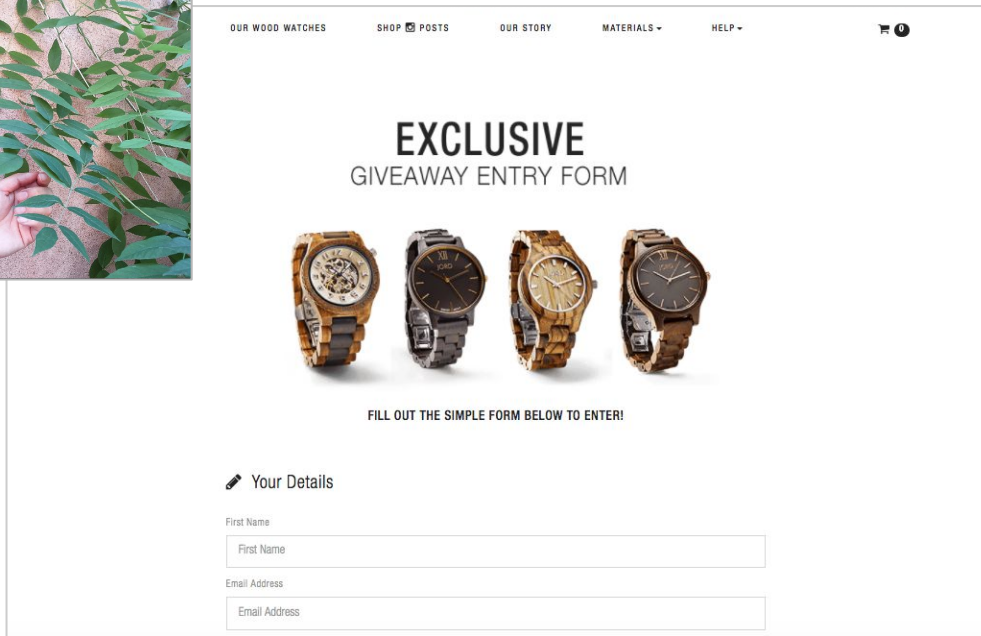
APPEND UTM PARAMETERS

www.example.com/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=influencermarketing&utm_campaign=fall2016influencers

Depending on the software your team uses, you can integrate Marketo, Salesforce or Google Analytics to tack on custom UTM parameters at the end of each link you give to an influencer. This helps you track exactly how much traffic each influencer is driving to your site, and allows you to get more granular and even see how many conversions each influencer is driving.


4

USE CUSTOM LANDING PAGES




OUR WOOD WATCHES SHOP POSTS OUR STORY MATERIALS - HELP -

EXCLUSIVE GIVEAWAY ENTRY FORM



FILL OUT THE SIMPLE FORM BELOW TO ENTER!

 Your Details

First Name

Email Address

<https://www.woodwatches.com/g/withlovedc>

You can even create custom landing pages for each influencer, so that it's branded which looks more credible to their followers. You can use Bitly to build custom links as well. You can set up a Branded Short Domain that reflects your company's name and also customize the back half to reflect the campaign.

5

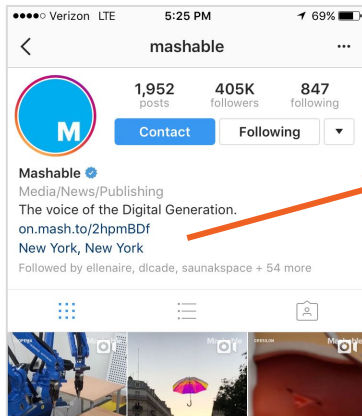
PROVIDE INDIVIDUAL PROMO CODES



Watch brand Daniel Wellington does this a lot, where they give influencers personalized promo codes to offer to their followers. The exclusivity makes the influencer feel special, but it also makes it easier for followers to remember the code, and it's easier for you to track and attribute sales to each influencer on the backend.

6

TRACK WITH INSTAGRAM



on.mash.to/2hpmBDf

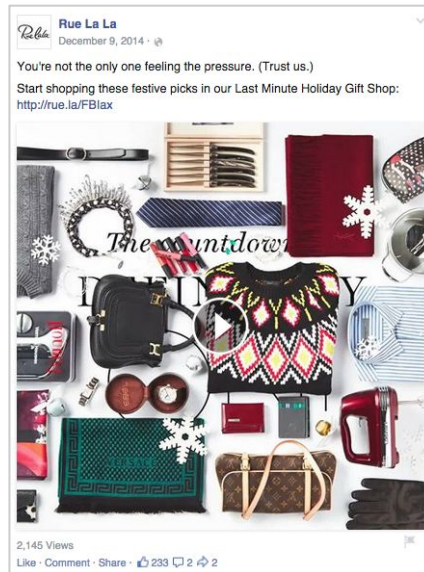
Here's how Mashable uses a custom link to drive users to read their content. Each individual Instagram post corresponds to a new piece they've written on their site and they end each caption by saying something like "head on over to our bio to read more."

Then in the bio, Mashable uses their branded short domain, "on.mash.to" so that it's nice and clean - showing the user the brand they recognize and trust.

Mashable is also a Bitly Enterprise user, the paid premium version of Bitly, which allows them to redirect the same link to a new page every day. This means they don't have to constantly go back into Instagram to change the link, they can just change it from the back end in Bitly where they're also tracking results in real-time.

7

TRACK WITH FACEBOOK

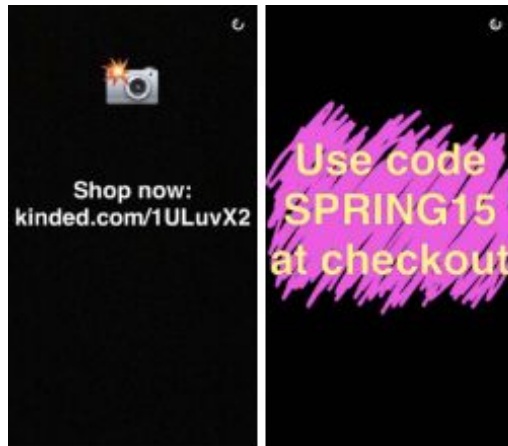


You can do the same with Facebook, creating dedicated Bitlinks for each influencer so that you can track engagement on the platform and how it compares to the rest of your social channels. You see all of your results in one view and you're not dependent on aggregating metrics from a bunch of third-party channels.

Here's an example of Rue La La using a Bitlink in a video ad. They promote their "festive picks" for their holiday gifting campaign. The winter season is packed with holiday promotions, so this was a very clever way of cutting through the noise.

8

TRACK WITH SNAPCHAT



Snapchat's often thought of as a black hole because you can't link out anywhere in the app and the content disappears. But we've seen come across some pretty clever hacks here at Bitly.

KIND recently used Bitlinks to both drive followers to shop their site and track engagement. KIND posted a snap calling followers to shop using the branded short domain shown here, along with a promo code, "SPRING15." Followers, driven by the urgency, can then quickly and easily remember this shortened URL and type it into their browser to land on the product page.

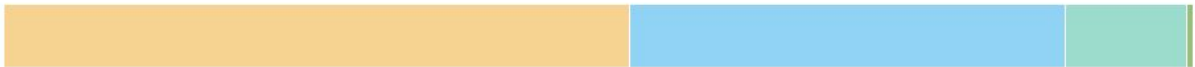
TRACKING: SNAPCHAT *continued*

SNAPCHAT MARKETING

6 Channels | 8 Bitlinks

[ADD LINKS](#) [EDIT](#) [EXPORT](#)

1,837 Total Clicks



Spring Promo

968 clicks



On the back end, it looks like this. Using Bitly Campaigns, a feature of Bitly Enterprise, KIND would be able to see both the macro and micro view of how all of their efforts on Snapchat are performing.

The team can see that they received for example, a total of 7.8K clicks across all of their Snapchat marketing. This number is pulled in in real-time, showing both the performance over time but also by day and hour.

From the data above, it looks like the Snapchat campaign saw a spike in performance in the middle of February. The KIND team might want to look into what drove that engagement and replicate it at a later time.

CHAPTER 3

BUILDING LOYAL BRAND ADVOCATES

Congrats! You've wrapped up your first influencer marketing campaign.

Loyalty is hard though. With all these brands entering the market trying to woo influencers into partnering with them, how do you keep your influencers engaged? The key is to make your influencers feel like a part of a greater community.



BUILD A HOME BASE



One of the ways to do this is by finding a home base that works best for you and your influencers; Slack, Facebook Groups or LinkedIn Groups. Last year, Sprout Social launched a customer advocacy program called Sprout Social All Stars.

These loyal customers help us reach a wider audience, educate others about the platform and advocate for them in speaking gigs, classrooms, and of course on social. The team also recently built a Slack community for All Stars to meet, collaborate, and learn from each other, which is incredibly valuable for them in their professional development and advancement. Over just the past five months of All Stars, Sprout Social noticed a 7% increase in monthly spend. Not only are they retaining customers, but also seeing customers upgrade their subscriptions.

STAY ORGANIZED



Denise Chan, our Senior Content and Community Manager, is considered a micro-influencer. On her free time, she partners with a range of consumer brands to promote content on her personal Instagram account.

Here are some of her experiences of ways brands have gone the extra mile: “This photo was the outcome of a partnership with Natalie’s OJ. I really loved working with them because they were so organized. They sent over a contract and timeline a few hours after I agreed to the partnership,” says Denise.

Putting together a contract, can help define your ask for influencers and hold both parties accountable to complete the project.

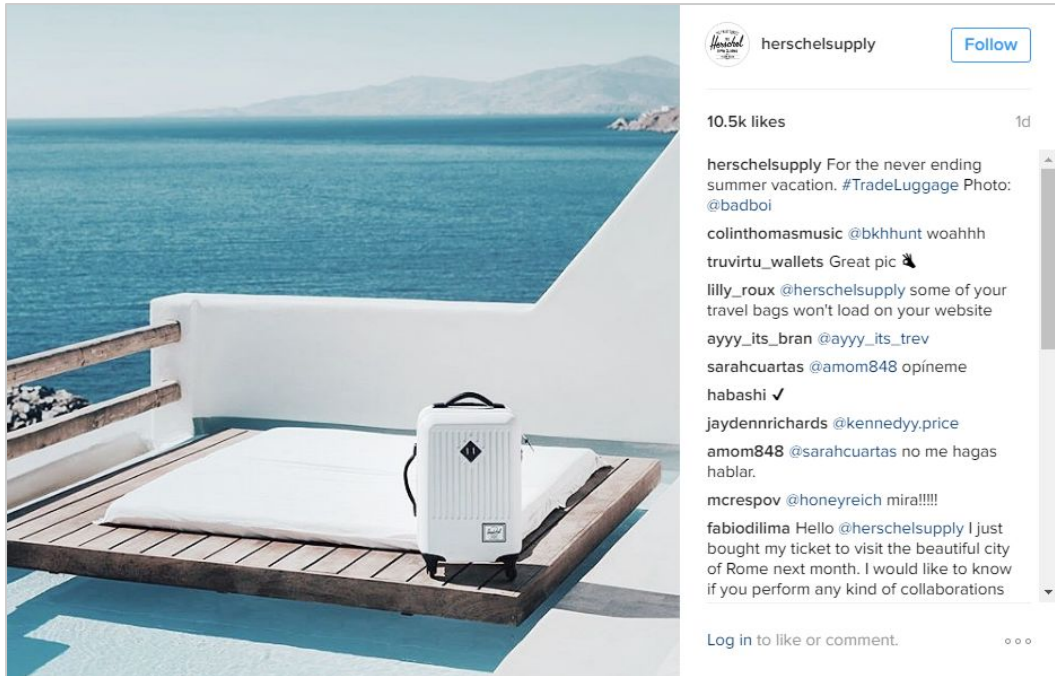
SURPRISE THEM WITH EXTRAS



Another way brands can differentiate themselves from their competitors is by personalizing the experience for influencers or surprising them with extras.

Natalie's OJ packaged the juice well with dry ice which was really neat. They also included a nice handwritten thank you note, and an extra coupon for more juice. Opting for a handwritten note can go a long way. Above is also an example of my partnership with Coach where they surprised me with extras like a keychain and a handwritten card.

SHOWCASE THEIR WORK



Herschel activates their community and builds loyalty with two simple hashtags: #Welltraveled and #CityLimitless. They encourage shoppers to post photos of their products by regularly searching through photos with those hashtags and featuring it back on the main account.

Shoppers want to post more to the hashtag out of the excitement of potentially having their photo posted up for thousands to see. On the flip side, Herschel gets a steady stream of organically created content that showcases the lifestyle they're trying to sell: adventure and travel.

CONCLUSION

HOW TO BUILD AN INFLUENCER MARKETING PROGRAM IN 2017

Ultimately, influencer marketing takes time. It might take some time to find the right influencers that reflect your brand and understand your vision. It might take some time to build up rapport with influencers and win their trust. And it might take some time to prove to your boss that influencer marketing is worthwhile.

Like anything else, a strong influencer marketing program takes a lot of testing. It doesn't have to be painful though. It all starts with collecting the right data and tracking and measuring what's working over time.

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN USE
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