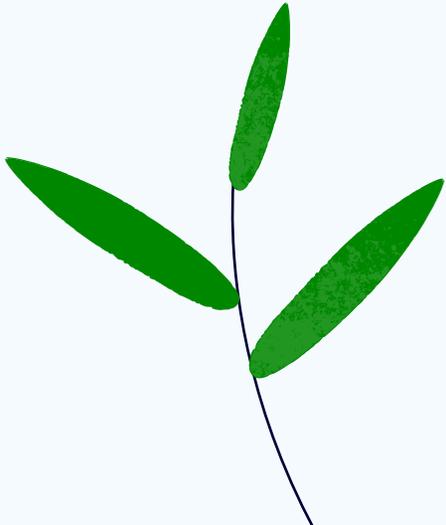


Measuring the Value of



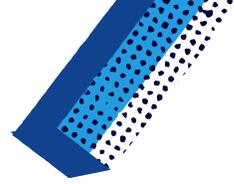
# Your Influencer Program Using Bitly



bitly

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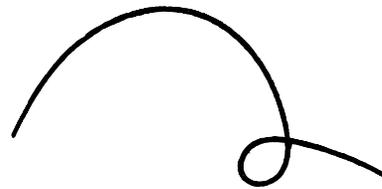
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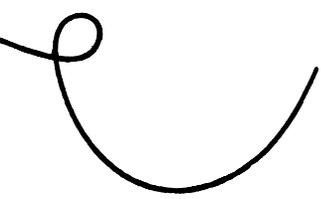


Today's marketing landscape mirrors the complexity of the buyer journey. Businesses have to juggle many different tactics to stand out from competitors, nurture their prospects and eventually get them to convert.

For a growing number of brands, influencer marketing has proven to be a very effective way to do this. By collaborating with influencers, brands can get their content to break through the noise, helping them establish trust and deepen relationships with their target audiences.

Like other marketing initiatives, an effective influencer strategy requires iteration to achieve optimization. Marketers face mounting pressure to prove ROI as they grow their programs in scale and complexity. For many businesses, that's where Bitly comes into the picture.





According to a survey of more than 800 brands and marketing agencies, being able to measure clicks is the most important criterion for evaluating the success of their influencer programs.<sup>1</sup> Beyond number of clicks, there are many other metrics and features in Bitly that businesses use to understand and improve the effectiveness of their collaborations with influencers.

**In this ebook, we'll show you how to measure the ROI of your influencer efforts and highlight how different businesses already leverage Bitly to do this.**

**You'll learn how to:**

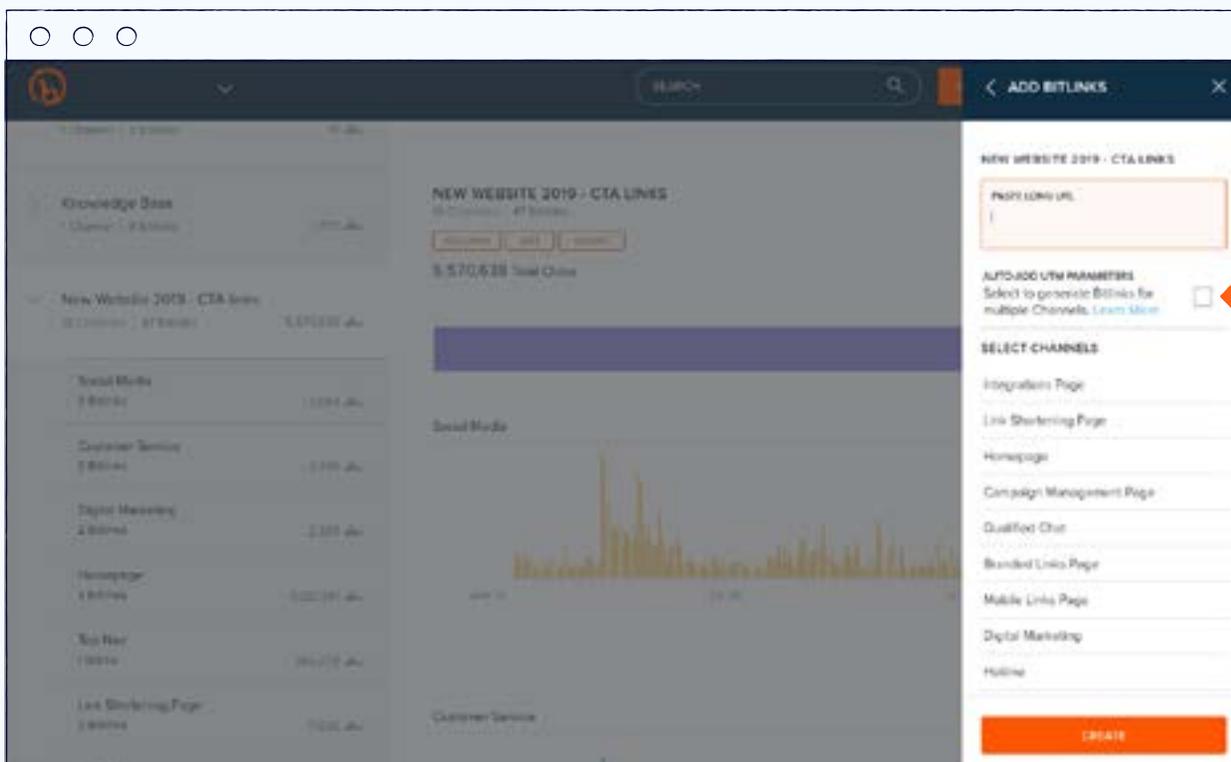
- ✓ Create unique links for your influencers
- ✓ Organize those links to gain better insights on your influencers' performance
- ✓ Leverage Bitly's branding features to build audience trust and boost click-throughs
- ✓ Use metrics in Bitly to evaluate and improve your influencer program

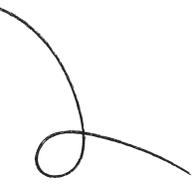
<sup>1</sup> <https://bitly.is/2NgP6VY>



## Creating Unique Tracking Links

One of the biggest benefits of using Bitly for influencer marketing is that you can generate unique tracking links quickly and easily in the *Campaigns* section of your account. This ensures that no matter how many links you need to create pointing to the same destination page, each one is unique.

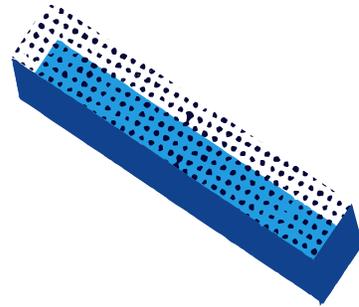




Adding UTM parameters in Bitly saves time and means you can avoid the cumbersome process of having to do it manually. (Goodbye spreadsheets!) When you go to shorten a link, you have the option to automatically generating one or more short links that include UTM source and campaign parameters.

Whenever someone interacts with one of your links, you'll see that activity reflected in Bitly in real-time—from the total number of clicks, to referrer information and geolocation data. This link-level data allows you to take a close look at what's engaging your audience and where your team can optimize its communications.

**There are many ways you can organize your links to take advantage of Bitly *Campaigns*. Below, we'll show you six of the most popular use cases for influencer marketing.**



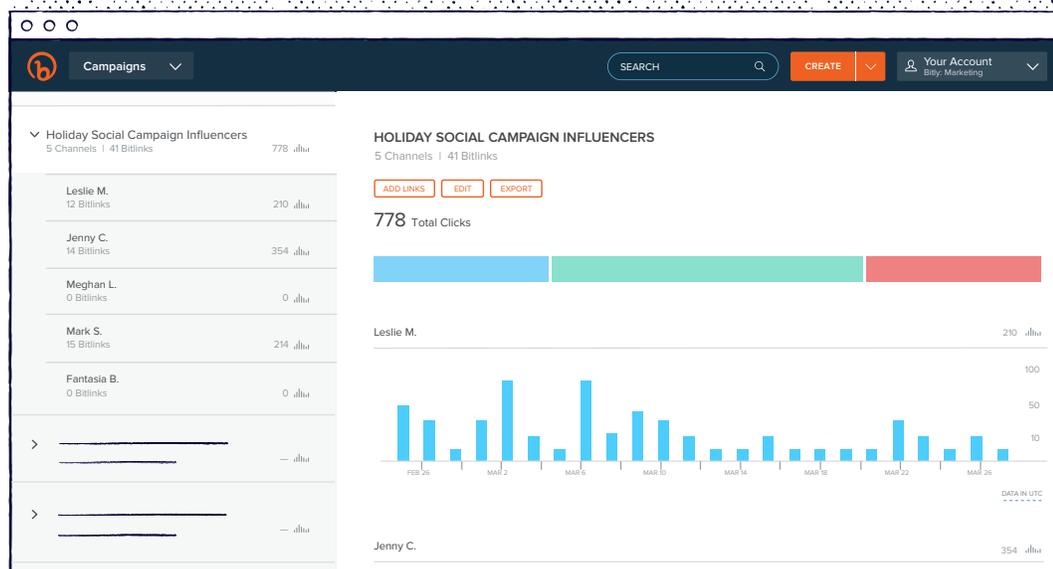
<sup>2</sup> <https://bitly.is/2LiNieh>

# 6 Ways to Organize Your Influencer Efforts using Bitly Campaigns



## By Influencer

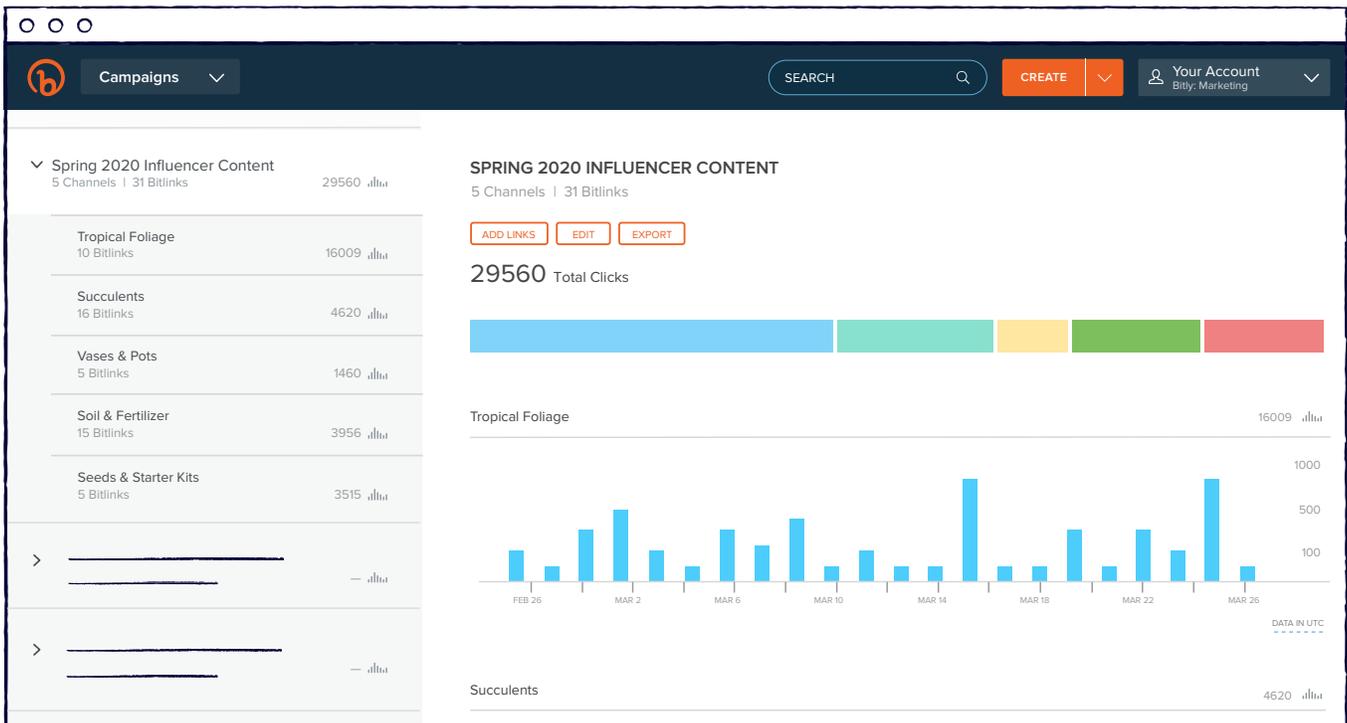
We'll start with one of the most popular use cases of UTM-enabled Bitly links: identifying top-performing influencers. You've vetted them, spent time building relationships with them and now you're working with them to help your brand meet its goals. Don't you want to know if your efforts are paying off? Many businesses use Campaigns to get an apples-to-apples comparison of how each of their influencers are performing and who is driving the most value for their brand.





## By Topic

Another way brands organize their influencer campaigns is by content type to see which topics receive the most engagement.

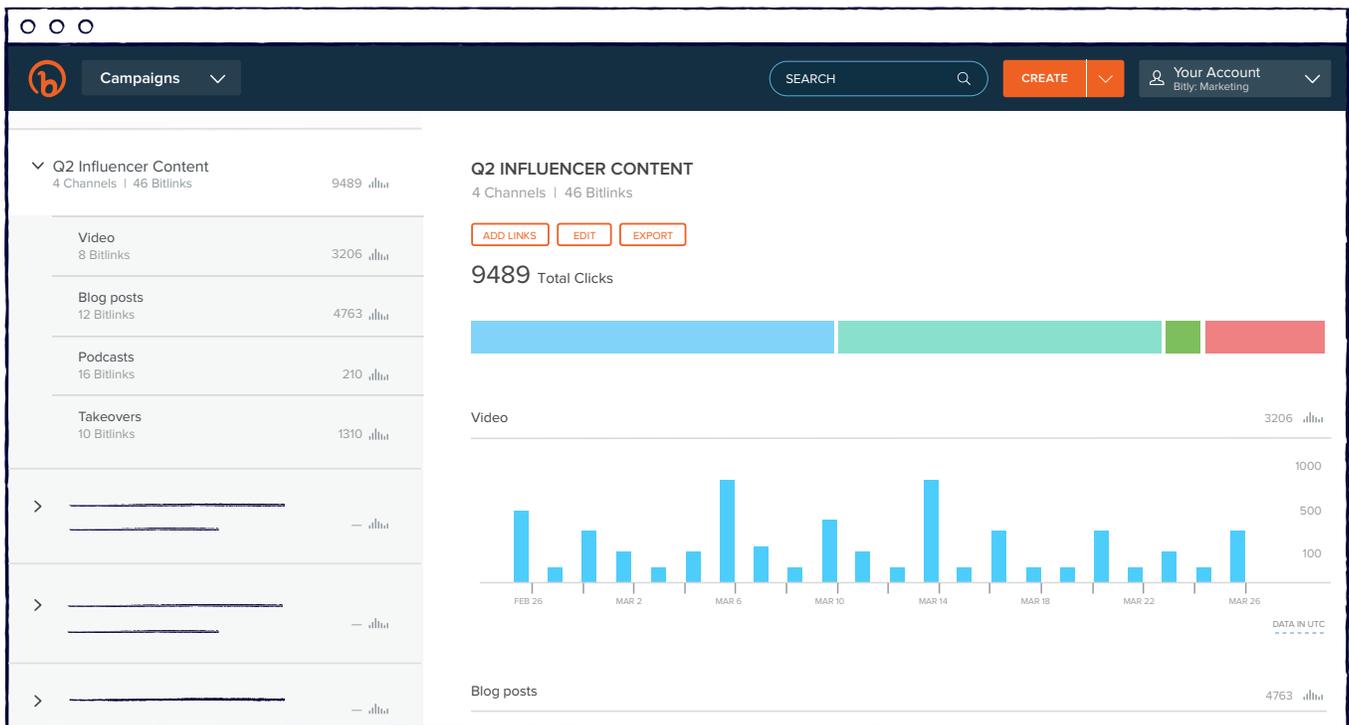


Knowing what topics your influencers' followers—AKA your target audience—want to engage with means you can focus your team's efforts on producing what's most likely to help meet its goals. Plus, when your content hits the mark with your influencers' followers, you're better positioned to gain new advocates of your brand.



## By Content Type

Similarly, by organizing your influencer content by type you can see which content mediums garner the most engagement and conversions.

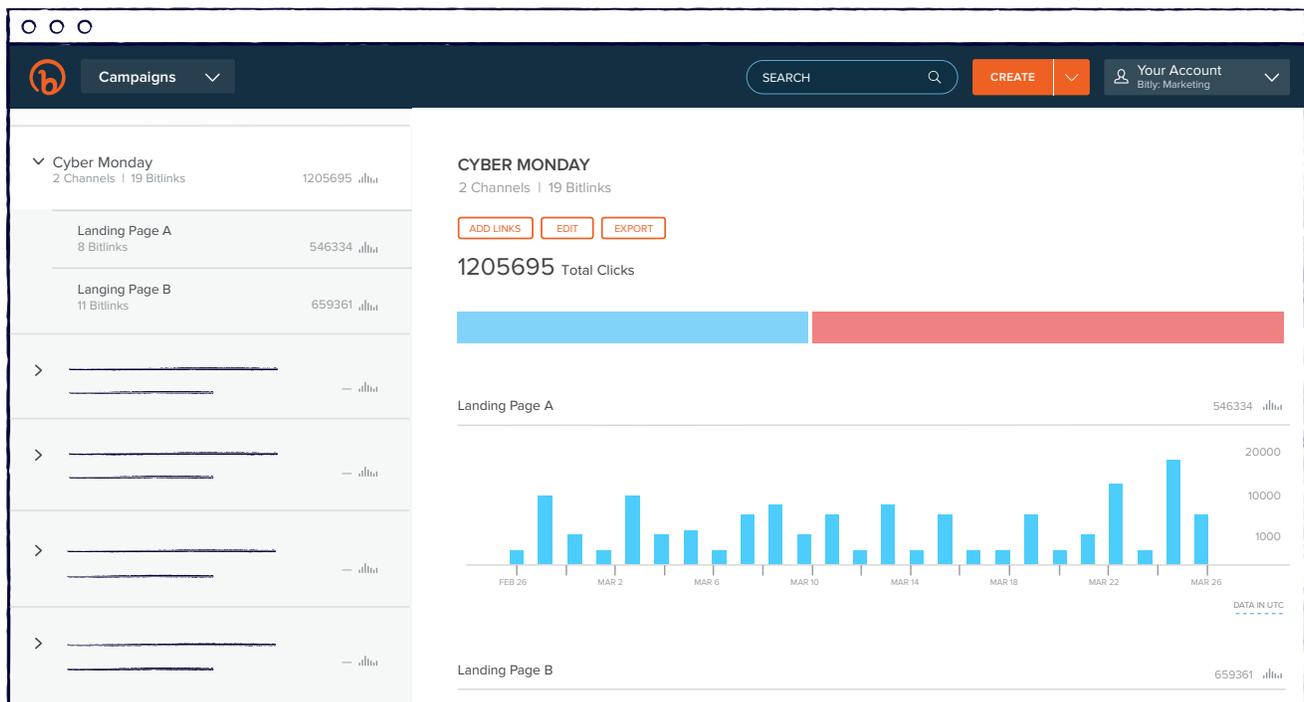


This helps eliminate wasted effort on content that doesn't perform well. Some content types, such as video and podcasts, take a lot of time and effort to produce. If your blog posts are proving higher ROI and they're quicker to spin up than a podcast episode, think of how much more blog content your team could produce!



## By Test

Some brands use *Campaigns* to track the results of their A/B tests on links driving to or existing on their website. For example, say your brand wants to split test two different landing pages.

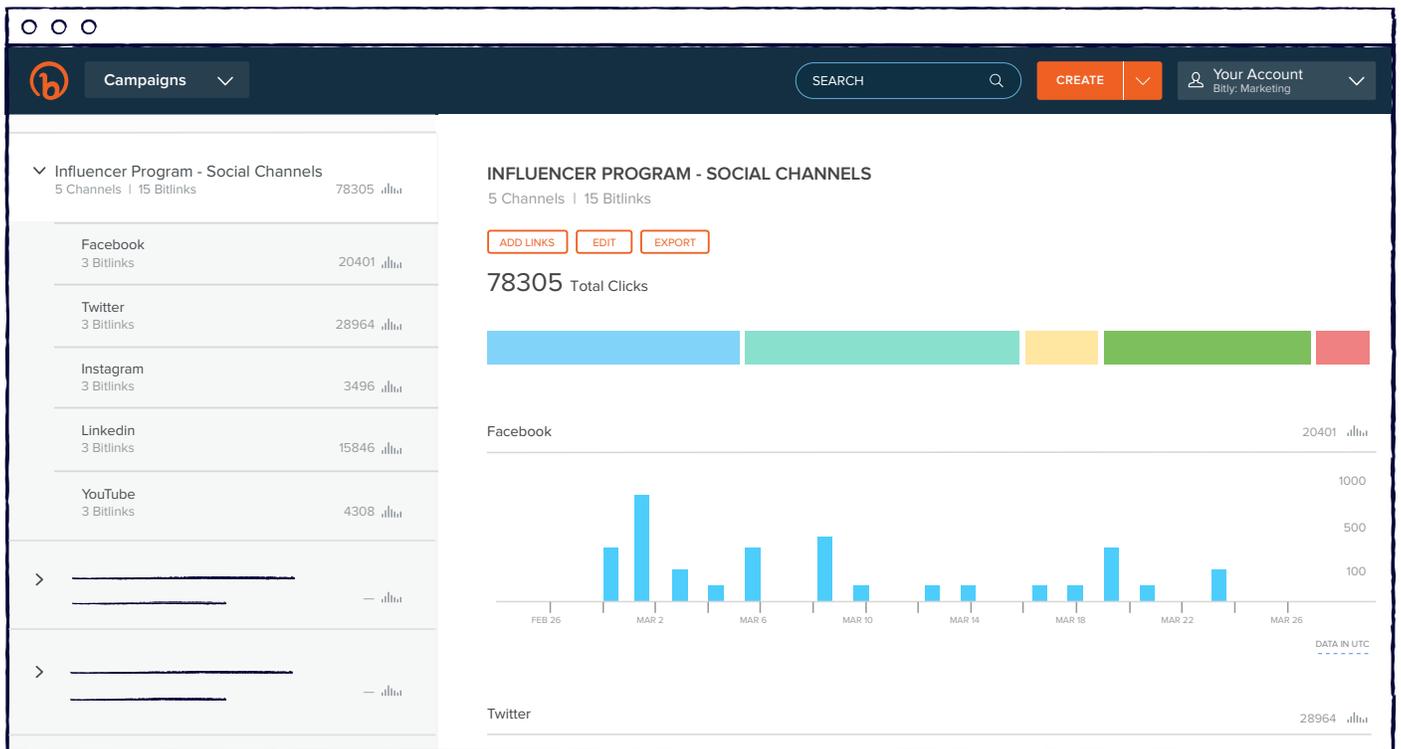


You can create two channels (e.g., “Landing Page A” and “Landing Page B”), then provide half of your influencers unique tracking links pointing to one landing page and the other half pointing to the other. You can analyze the click metrics on each landing page and use the insights to make further optimizations to your campaign.



## By Social Media Channel

Brands also organize their campaigns in Bitly by social media channel. Social media is a critical part of many brands' influencer marketing programs.

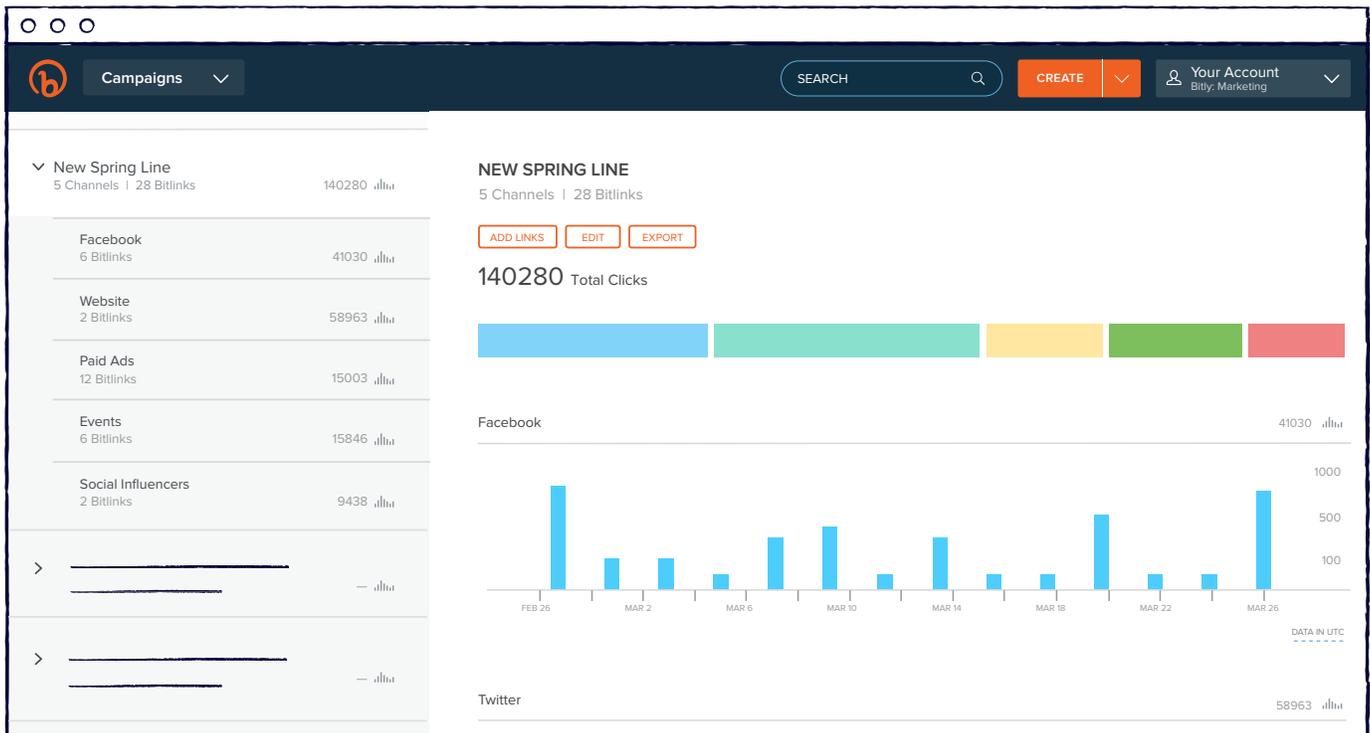


Different platforms will drive different results, depending on your industry and business's niche. Using Bitly, you can see which channels are top drivers for your business and can expand your influencer efforts to include individuals who are power players on the channels that perform best for your brand.



## By Marketing Channel

And finally, brands use Bitly *Campaigns* to measure how their influencer marketing efforts stack up against their other marketing channels.



Say, for example, your retail business wants to promote a new line of clothing and has a multichannel campaign planned to help raise awareness of it. Using Bitly, you can see which marketing initiatives are driving the most results for your campaign, and can adjust your strategy and optimize your team's efforts accordingly.



## How One Coffee Company Uses Bitly to Identify Top Influencers

A growing coffee company was focused on creating awareness of its unique brand through a variety of different marketing programs and tactics. One of these tactics included leveraging their social media presence to power their new influencer marketing program. As a small company still operating in startup mode, understanding where to focus their team's limited resources is critical. So, they turned to Bitly for a solution.

Using Bitly, they can create unique links with UTM parameters for each of their influencers and organize their campaign channels in their preferred way: by individual influencer. This enables the business to see how each influencer is performing, track clicks on their content and understand the user journey post-click. With these insights, the company's lean marketing team can focus on building relationships with the influencers that are creating the most value for the business.

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## Leveraging Bitly for Branding

So far, we've discussed how businesses use Bitly to create unique tracking links for their influencers and to organize their influencer marketing campaigns to gain better insights into how their initiatives are performing. Another way businesses leverage Bitly for influencer marketing is for branding. But before we discuss how, let's take a step back to talk about why branding is important to begin with, and why every business should care about building a consistent brand across its channels and communications.

A consistent brand can help remove friction from your customer touchpoints, directly impacting your teams' performance—from your marketing team's capacity to generate and nurture new leads to your sales team's



ability to quickly and effectively close deals. Put simply, brand consistency is an incredibly important factor to your bottom line. Today's consumers often have complex buying behaviors. Before making purchasing decisions, they may research your brand, read reviews, chat with others—even try out your competitors. The less work prospects have to do to decide if your brand is trustworthy, the more your teams can focus on the solutions you have to offer them.

This is why maintaining a consistent, distinguishable brand experience across all of your communications plays such an important role in getting your customers to understand your value proposition and, eventually, decide to purchase. Now that you understand the value of a consistent brand, let's talk about how Bitly helps businesses to build and maintain theirs.



# Fully Customized Links

With Bitly, you can connect a custom domain to your account to create branded links. A custom domain—like Nike’s swoosh and BuzzFeed’s bzfd.it—replaces the “bit.ly” with your brand. Every time someone sees one of your branded links, your brand gains an impression. Below are some examples of brands that have connected a custom domain to their Bitly accounts in order to leverage branded links.



swoosh.sh

BuzzFeed

bzfd.it

ESPN

espn

amazon

amzn.to

You may be thinking, “OK, branded links look good. So what?” Beyond impressions, branded links help to:

**Drive results:** Research shows that branded links drive up to 34% better results vs. non-branded links<sup>3</sup>

**Build trust:** With more clicks, comes more recognition—which in turn leads people to have more confidence in your content, further accelerating their engagement with it

**Take control over your communications:** You are fully in charge of how your links look and where they point to

<sup>3</sup> <https://bitly.is/2NgP6VY>



## Auto-branding

Businesses can really take advantage of the benefits of branded links with a premium Bitly feature called auto-branding. With auto-branding, any branded link shortened by a third party using Bitly will automatically use the custom domain for that brand.



For example, say Amazon provides one of its influencers an amzn.to link to share with their following. If the influencer’s followers decide to shorten that link using Bitly, the link will maintain the “amzn.to” domain rather than generating a “bit.ly” link. This means no matter who shares your branded links, your custom domain will remain intact.

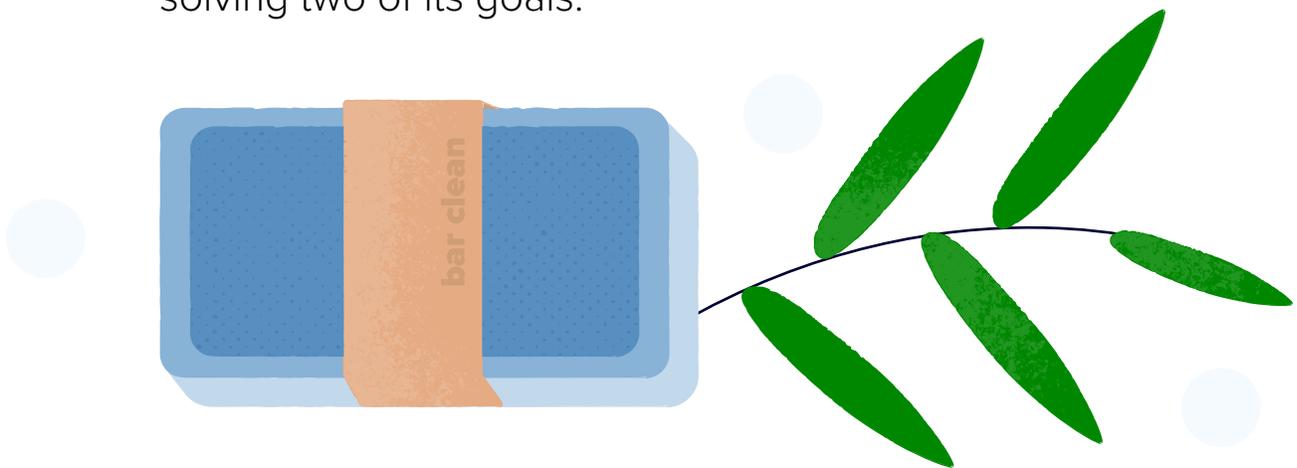
This is a powerful way to build trust between your brand and target audience. When influencers share your branded links it tells their followers that your links are safe and can be trusted. Over time, your links will become recognizable and your content trusted, boosting click-throughs.



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## How a Personal Care Company Leverages Branded Bitly Links to Optimize the Returns of its Influencer Program

A leading personal care company was struggling to measure the impact of its paid influencer program so its team turned to Bitly for a solution. By connecting a custom domain to their Bitly account, this business's team can now create and provide its influencers unique branded links, simultaneously solving two of its goals.



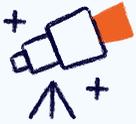
First, the branded links allow the business to maintain better control over how its brand is represented by influencers. This helps to establish brand consistency across many different channels—even on channels they don't own. Second, by using Bitly links, the company can track influencer activity and assess the ROI of its influencers' efforts in a centralized dashboard. With



this insight, the marketing team can optimize the returns of its influencer program and invest more in the influencers that create value for the business.

As an added benefit, thanks to auto-branding, even if someone shortens one of their links, the business's brand remains front and center—meaning they get more brand impressions with every share. As people click the links and see that they point to trusted content, over time the links help build the brand's authority in its space, as well as establish trust between the brand and its target audience.





## Gaining a Complete View of Your Influencer Activity

As valuable as data is at the link-level, measuring and optimizing your influencer efforts also requires access to a high-level overview of your link metrics so you can see your top links and activity. You can do exactly this in your Bitly dashboard.

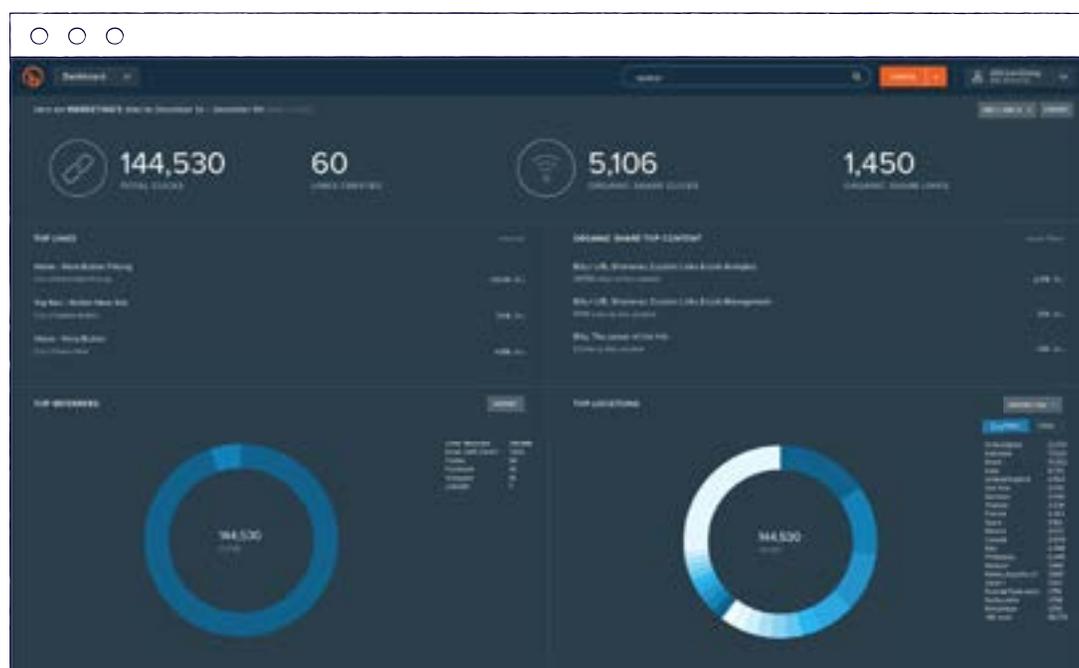
In the dashboard, you can see metrics like your top Bitly links, top organic share content, top referrers and top locations. You can set a date range, export data and drill down to specific details as you navigate the page. In this section of our guide, we'll call out three important metrics in the dashboard that businesses use to drive their influencer programs forward: *Organic Share* clicks, *Organic Share* links, country-level data and city-level data.



## Organic Share Clicks & Links

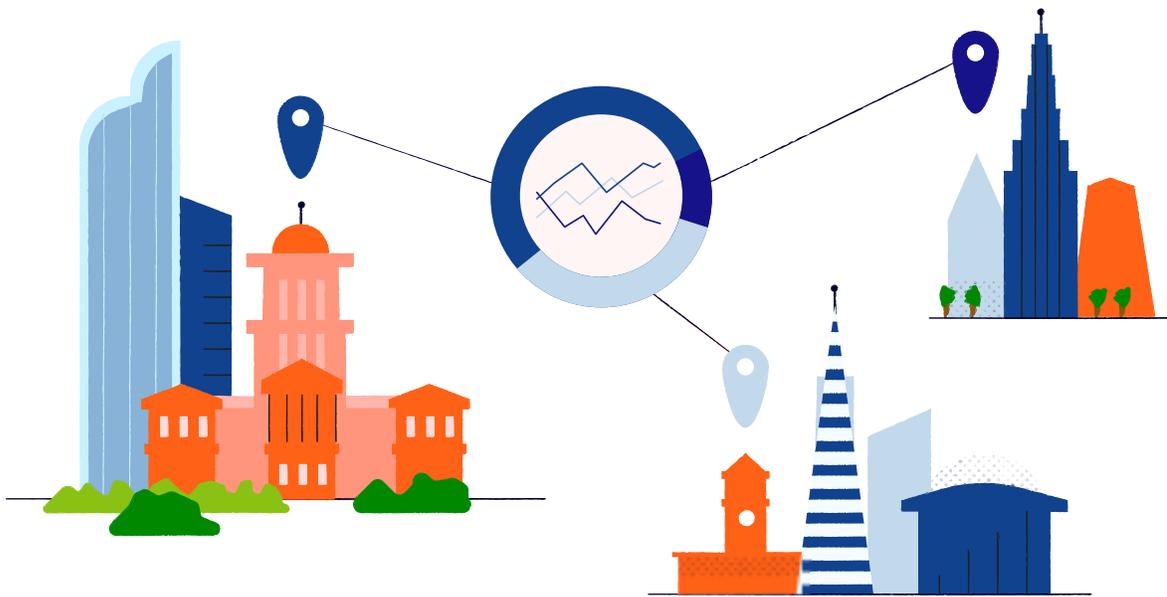
In your Bitly dashboard, you have metrics on *Organic Shares*, including *Organic Share* clicks and *Organic Share* links. The *Organic Shares* metrics display traffic driven to your domains by people creating short links through Bitly. For example, if an influencer copies a link from your site and shortens it in Bitly, that will be reflected in *Organic Shares*. You can see the number of links created through Bitly and the clicks those links have received within your selected date range.

Looking at these metrics, businesses can see the product and brand content that's getting the most engagement and shares—even the ones they may not be actively promoting. This is useful because it shows you what content you may want to consider asking your influencers to share with their networks.



## Country- and City-level Data

In addition to more than 20 other data points, with a premium account, you can access country- and city-level data on individual and overall links. Both metrics give you a quick visual snapshot of your link engagement, providing actionable, geo-specific insights into where your brand's communications are making an impact.



Country-level data shows you in what countries people clicking on your links are located, whereas city-level data tells you this information at the—you guessed it—city level. With city-level data, you can get even more granular with location information.

Let's say you create unique links for your influencers and ask them to share them across their social media channels. In Bitly, you'll be able to see the top city locations of the people clicking those links—whether that's New York, San Francisco, Hong Kong, London or—surprise!—Topeka, Kansas.



Here are some of the actions these insights enable your team to take:

- ✓ Double-down on targeted media spend in high-performing cities
- ✓ Make more informed decisions around investments in local events
- ✓ Understand what communications and content are resonating in which cities so you can better target your messaging and offerings

Finally, you can dive even deeper into your country- and city-level link data by exporting a CSV file of detailed results.



## Wrapping it Up

Thriving in the highly saturated landscape of influencer marketing requires a strong hold of your target audience's wants and interests. It mandates constant communication and relationship-building with the people who have the ability to engage your audience and capture their attention with your brand's messages—the influencers themselves. And finally, it demands rich and organized metrics that allow your team to be agile to improve its strategy. Using Bitly, our customers are able to accomplish all of the above.

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**Ready to learn more about how Bitly can help your team prove the ROI on its influencer efforts?**

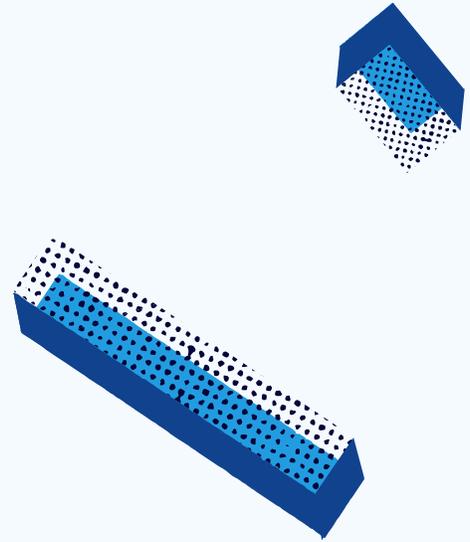
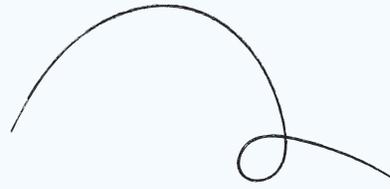
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*If you're already an Enterprise customer, connect with your dedicated account manager.*



# About Bitly

Bitly is the world's leading Link Management Platform. Businesses of every size, as well as influencers, use Bitly to embed short, branded call-to-action links in their customer communications and use Bitly's tools, analytics, and insights to maximize the performance of their marketing programs.



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