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How to find Influencers for Building Product Brands



Who are they?

Influencers by definition, are people who *influence* the beliefs and behaviors of their audiences. For the building and remodeling industry, these influencers are ideally trusted designers, architects and trade industry channel experts. However, we don't discount a great personality who recently has become relevant in this niche. If their brand aligns well with yours, it could be a great, mutually rewarding match.

Why are they important?

Simple: Audiences trust them. The most successful influencers—whether they occupy online, print or broadcast brandscapes—personify the fast-growing word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM) practice. These unique personalities develop a seemingly causal relationship with their audience while helping to convince them to trust their advice... similar to how one might

trust a neighbor, to recommend their plumber. Social proof is critical for buyers. In fact, [Nielsen found that 92% of buyers trust an individual recommendation over the brand](#). Today, brands are shifting from quantity to quality. Whereas, it may have been the general thinking to get as many endorsements as possible in the past. Now it should be about the quality and the trustworthiness of the influencer.

For example, TV personality Mike Rowe has found critical acclaim from the hit show “Dirty Jobs” where he cultivated a unique persona as a trustworthy icon who matches brains with brawn. Since then, he’s leveraged his star power to promote products, companies and trending thought leadership in the construction and design channel. At the 2019 International Roofing Expo (IRE), Rowe teamed up with an exhibitor to give booth attendees the opportunity to take their picture with the star guest. According to IRE’s website, the event turnout was up 30 percent from the prior year.

Or consider an interior design expert like Elle H-Millard, CKD, a National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) editor and Insider. A former contestant on HGTV’s “Design Star,” Millard is one of the highest-profile influencers in the industry. During her tenure as a restaurant designer for several national brands, her creative concepts increased sales of design services by \$5 million in a single year. And just recently, Daltile announced the launch of a new partnership with celebrity Kristin Cavallari—a well-known actress, entrepreneur, author and designer. The brand is looking to heighten the end consumers’ awareness that this tile product line is of course, style-driven. Another leading surfacing brand, Silestone by Cosentino, also just announced a new two-year extension of its campaign with Cindy Crawford, who has worked with the brand since 2017.

Where are they?

After recognizing the importance of influencers, the next question typically is how to find the right one? Before starting the search, make certain that you’re seeking influencers who unite particularly well with your organization and its brand’s standards.

To align best, there are various marketing software platforms to help you search and manage influencers. However, be forewarned; many of these programs are often expensive, and most deliver merely generic results. Rather, we utilize proprietary databases and remain tuned-in to those frequently interviewed in trade magazines, blogs and podcasts. After all, these people are asked their opinion for a reason.

Additionally, look to see who the big personalities are interacting with on social media platforms. Who are they attending events with, to which accounts are they commenting and with whom do they follow? Often, they surround new and innovative brands that represent up-and-coming trends that reflect a fresh view.

Perhaps start with a good old-fashioned Google search. You can find lists of influencers and winnow down the list to those influencers who most closely align with your brand’s vision and

personality.

Once You've Found Them...

Working with an influencer is creative by its very nature. So set up a flexible system, where your marketing team and the influencer can freely engage. Establish an editorial calendar to add ideas, create and edit content as well as to provide a platform for ideation and collaboration. Appoint a chief editor to ensure the results are uniform and that the process remains streamlined.

Even with a freely collaborative environment, it can be challenging to consistently create unique and fresh content. When inspiration is desired, work with your influencer to develop material you can leverage efficiently. For example, brainstorm to develop thought leadership topics, unique blogs or other content and compile them into an "industry roundup." Include the title, author, description and a link to ensure that your brand remains positioned as an industry insider.

Once your content lands into the community, it's important to let some of it simply percolate. The point of involving an influencer is to create organic buzz and WOMM. Responding to every online post or podcast that the influencer mentions your brand, can diminish important authenticity for your vital audiences.

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