

THE FUTURE TRENDS AND CHANGES OF INFLUENCER MARKETING

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Influencer marketing, also known as «social media influencer marketing», has rapidly evolved over the past decade, transforming from a niche strategy to one of the most prominent methods for brands to connect with their audiences. With the rapid growth of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, influencer marketing has proven to be an effective way to engage consumers. This paper explores the future trends and changes in influencer marketing, examining emerging technologies, evolving consumer behavior, and new marketing strategies that are reshaping the industry.

Keywords: influencer marketing; trends; artificial intelligence; micro-influencers; virtual influencers.

БУДУЩИЕ ТЕНДЕНЦИИ И ИЗМЕНЕНИЯ В МАРКЕТИНГЕ С УЧАСТИЕМ ИНФЛЮЕНСЕРОВ

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Маркетинг с участием инфлюенсеров, также известный как «маркетинг через социальные медиа-инфлюенсеров», стремительно развивался за последнее десятилетие, превращаясь из нишевой стратегии в один из самых популярных методов связи брендов с их аудиторией. С быстрым ростом таких платформ, как Instagram, TikTok и YouTube, маркетинг с участием инфлюенсеров доказал свою эффективность в привлечении потребителей. В данной статье рассматриваются будущие тенденции и изменения в маркетинге с участием инфлюенсеров, исследуются новые технологии, изменения потребительского поведения и новые маркетинговые стратегии, которые переопределяют индустрию.

Ключевые слова: маркетинг с участием инфлюенсеров; тенденции; искусственный интеллект; микро-инфлюенсеры; виртуальные инфлюенсеры.

Initially, influencer marketing began with celebrities endorsing brands. Traditional advertising in magazines and TV were the primary vehicles for such endorsements. With the rise of social media, smaller "micro-influencers" began gaining traction, leading to a shift in how brands approached marketing. The growth of Instagram (2010), YouTube (2005), and later TikTok (2016) shifted the landscape for influencer marketing, with influencers gaining direct access to their followers. According to Statista, in 2020, the global influencer marketing industry was valued at approximately \$9.7 billion and is projected to reach \$16.4 billion by 2023 [1].

Micro-influencers (those with 10K to 100K followers) and nano-influencers (under 10K followers) are becoming increasingly popular for their higher engagement rates and more authentic connections with their followers. A 2021 survey by Influencer Marketing Hub found that 61 % of marketers believe that micro-influencers provide the highest ROI [2]. With platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels dominating, short-form video content has become a key format in influencer marketing. HubSpot reports that video content is 1200 % more likely to be shared than any other type of content [3]. Consumers are becoming increasingly skeptical of influencer-sponsored content. As a result, there is a strong push for more authenticity, with influencers focusing on sharing personal experiences and opinions rather than just promoting products. The 2019 Nielsen Global Trust in Advertising report showed that 63 % of consumers trust influencers more when they disclose sponsored content [4].

AI tools are now being used to analyze influencer data, track audience engagement, and predict trends. AI can help brands identify the most relevant influencers based on audience demographics, engagement metrics, and past campaign performance. Tools like Influencity and Upfluence are already leveraging AI for better influencer selection. Virtual influencers, such as Lil Miquela, are gaining popularity. These AI-created personas can be programmed to align with a brand's values and engage with a specific audience. This opens up new avenues for brands to create digital avatars to represent them. A report by Business Insider in 2022 showed that virtual influencers could command as much as \$1M per campaign [5]. Blockchain technology could potentially bring greater transparency to influencer marketing by providing a decentralized platform to track payments and verify the authenticity of collaborations. Platforms like BitClave are exploring blockchain to ensure transparency and fair compensation for influencers.

Consumers are increasingly demanding that brands take a stand on social and environmental issues. Influencers who align with these values are more likely to attract brand deals. A Sprout Social study found that 70 % of consumers believe it is important for companies to stand up for social causes [6]. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is highly active on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. They prefer content that feels organic and personal rather than overly polished. According to a McKinsey report, Gen Z spends 60 % of their time on social media watching videos, with influencer content being a primary focus [7].

As the number of influencers grows, brands will face challenges in standing out in a crowded market. They will need to carefully select influencers whose audiences align with their target demographics. Data-driven strategies will become even more crucial to measure the effectiveness of influencer campaigns. As influencer marketing continues to grow, issues related to disclosure, authenticity, and transparency are likely to become more regulated. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the U.S. has already issued guidelines on sponsored content, and similar rules may appear worldwide. Brands and influencers must maintain ethical standards to avoid legal challenges and protect their reputations.

The future of influencer marketing is promising, with new technologies, evolving consumer preferences, and changing media landscapes offering both challenges and opportunities. As the industry continues to mature, brands must adapt to these trends by focusing on authenticity, leveraging AI, embracing new digital personalities, and staying attuned to the values and interests of their target audiences. By doing so, they will be well-positioned to succeed in this dynamic and ever-changing field.

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