THE RISE OF INFLUENCERS

And the Importance of Them in Marketing And PR

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THESIS
Abstract

Field of Study			
Social Sciences, Business and Administration			

Degree Programme			
Degree Programme in Business Administration, International Business			

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Title of Thesis			
The Rise of Influencers			

Date	10.03.2019	Pages/Appendices	37

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Client Organisation /Partners			
-			

Abstract

This thesis project was implemented to deepen the author's understanding of the topic of influencers, with a further aim to facilitate the general public's understanding of what and who are influencers, what exactly is their role, why are they so widely discussed and why exactly are they so important for the marketing and PR practises nowadays? To reach this objective, this study provides basic and general knowledge of the marketing and PR practises used nowadays, what and who influencers are, as well as information on Social Media, as well as the most widely used platforms and their purpose in the online marketing sphere.

The information gathered to write the thesis was found throughout internet research, and by reading many books and articles dealing with marketing, online marketing, influencers, influencer marketing and Social Media. As the topic is so current, there is plenty of information available for those interested in deepening their knowledge. Thus, the primary purpose of the research was to provide as broad, current and viable information on the topic as possible, for the author to be able to make well-reasoned and substantiated statements and conclusion on why and how the influencers became the royalty of marketing.

The issues discussed in this thesis are mostly observed on a general level, but the conclusion, however, is clear: influencers as a profession are slightly unappreciated and minimized, yet crucially important for the future and progression of the marketing and PR industries.

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

The word influencer seems to be causing a lot of stir nowadays. The stigma around the subject, people and whether their work is seen as "real" or not seems to divide people to different camps – to people who understand their role, people who admire them, people who are jealous of them and people who don't understand, or don't want to understand.

As a concept they have been around for quite some time now, but the development and eventually their impact on the consumer market and how marketing and PR campaigns are now run has made influencers a force to reckon with.

With this thesis I will be looking into the history and development of marketing, PR, and influencers – to highlight and explain why exactly influencers are as important to companies now as they are, and what is the reason for the past few years' massive development within the field.

I hope I will manage to cover what is the topic, why I have chosen it, what exactly does the headline mean and what exactly do I want to conclude with this thesis. The structure of the thesis is divided into three main parts; the introduction chapters where I will talk about the objectives and structure, the theory part where I will be looking into the history and development of marketing and PR, media, branding and the new reality of all that, with going deeper into the term influencer itself and different Social Media channels and the differneces between them, and lastly the conclusion part where I will be cover the ethical part of writing a thesis and the conclusion of the work.

In the intoruction chapters I will be talking more closely of the methodologies used to write this thesis: narrative analysis mixed with touches of virtual ethnography.

1.1   Objectives and purpose

The objectives of this thesis are to understand, explain and highlight the new rules of Social Media in regards to PR and marketing, and why exactly influencers are such a big thing nowadays. The purpose is to research on a deeper level what and who exactly are influencers, what makes a person an influencer and why is their existence so valid for the companies in regards to their marketing practices. At the end we will also have an understanding and an explanation for why influencers are so effective in their field, how the future looks like and what will be the next step in the evolution of marketing and PR from the influencer point of view.

The fact that according to studies over the years the number of hours adults spend on media per day has been steadily growing and was nearly 8h on 2017, as can be seen on the Figures 1 and 2 below. This is 9% increase from 2016 alone, and 13% increase from 2005 (IPA 2017-09-15). This

supports the fact that we are spending more and more of our time on our phones and scrolling through different media channels and online.

Weekly Media Reach
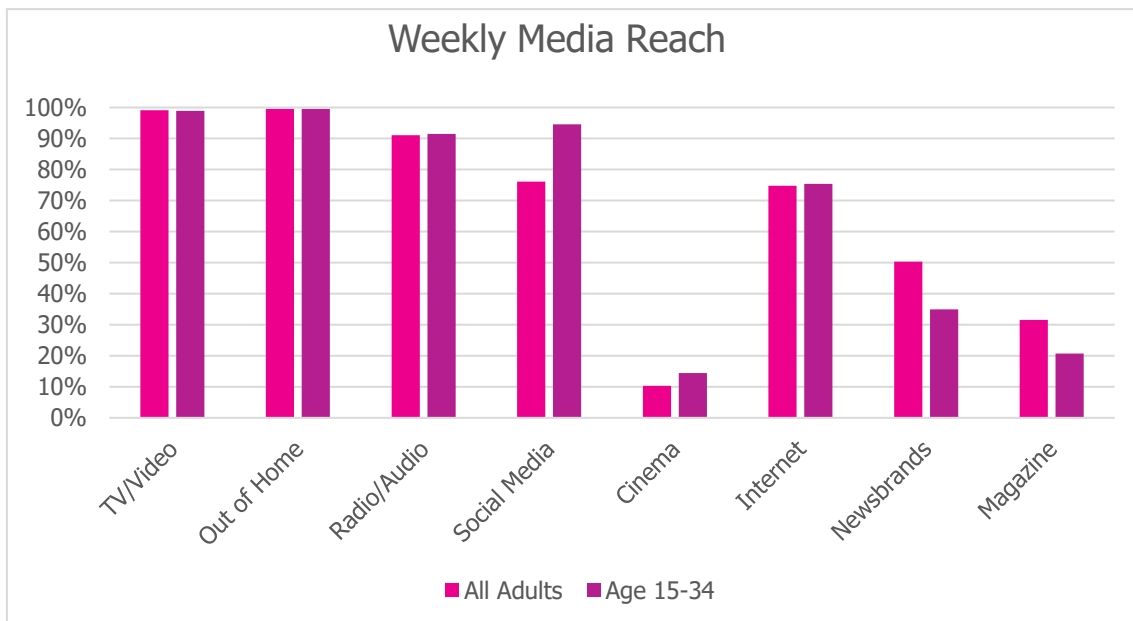

FIGURE 1. Weekly Media reach of different age groups in Great Britain in 2017

(IPA 2017-09-15)

*Any internet use such as shopping, searching etc. but not media consumption, or social or communications activity
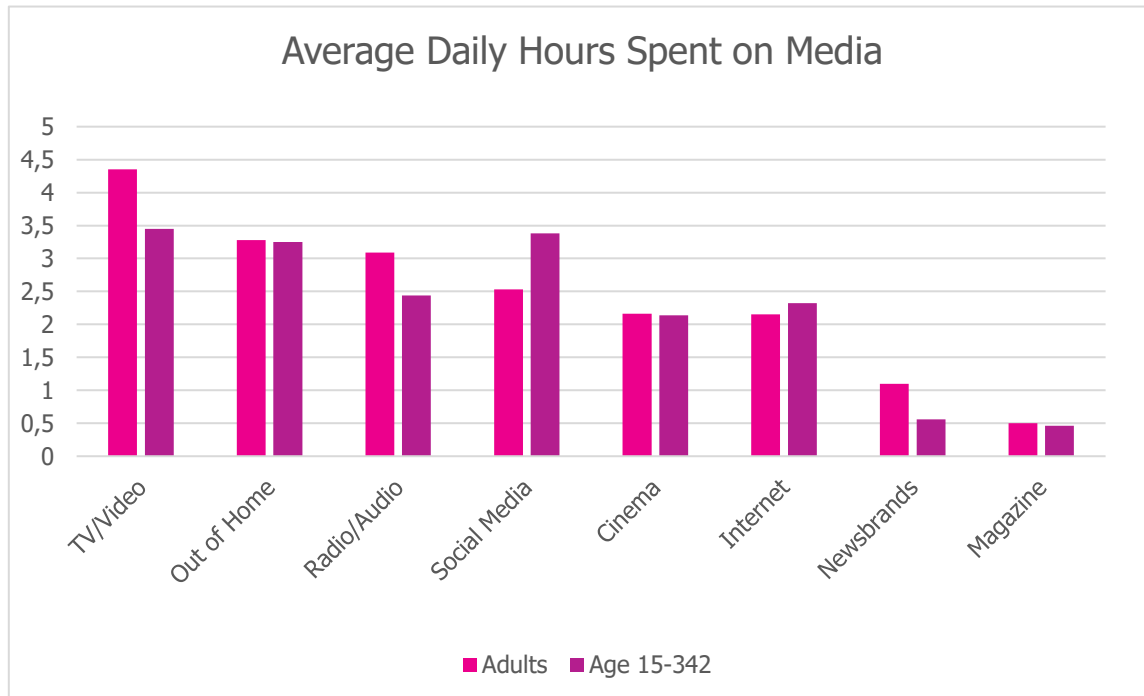
Average Daily Hours Spent on Media

FIGURE 2. Average daily hours spent on different media by age groups in Great Britain, 2017. (IPA 2017-09-15.)

2   METHODOLOGY

When started to write this thesis the initial instinct was that this thesis would be a development work, where it would be explained what influencers are, what is their meaning to marketing an PR nowadays and how exactly to build and maintain a list of influencers relevant to your company. After all that is what the author was doing during their internship and what sparked the idea of writing the thesis on the topic. However, quickly after starting the writing the process, it took a natural turn and started shifting more towards research-oriented work – as the number of hours it took to search, find and go through the what seems like endless list of resources to write anything made it clear that it could indeed not be a development work.

The change of implementation method came rather naturally, even though it was a little bit difficult to determine what methodology or methodologies would be used in help of writing this thesis. After determining what it was that this thesis wanted to target proving with theory, it was easier to determine also the methodology used.

As the target with this thesis is to explain the new rules in digital marketing regarding influencers, what and who they are, why exactly they are so efficient in what they do, and why their input in companies and brands' marketing is so enormous and successful this day, it was easy to narrow the methodologies used to two: narrative analysis with some help from virtual ethnography.

Narrative analysis is a qualitative research method that can also be classified as phenomenon under study. The idea of narrative analysis is that the researcher is trying to study, and after understand, what is being told by the object under the research. The target of narrative analysis can be anything from a conversation to a piece of text, picture, music or even an environment that can be understood as a story. After studying the object, the target is to analyse the data collected and form a suitable answer to the research question or to the problem in hand. Narrative analysis does not necessarily focus on absolute truths, but rather leaves room for more analyzing and observation. (Qualitative Research Guidelines Project 2008; Atlas.ti 2019).

3   MARKETING AND PR

Marketing and PR are actions closely connected to each other, but they are also key elements of any thriving business. The way companies plan and execute their marketing and PR actions have gone through some major changes during the last decade, and they are going towards more and more customer-centric approach – mostly due to the impact of online and Social Media. (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Johnston and Mayer 2006; Theaker 2016; Czinkota, Ronkainen and Zvobgo 2011.)

3.1   Marketing

Marketing is one of the key elements of any business, and it can be classified as one of the major processes within a company's value chain. It is the activity and process of creating and delivering value for products or services for the targeted audience and clients, partners and society. (Keegan and Green 2017, 24-25.)

The marketers must understand the customer needs and desires and satisfy them. According to Peter Drucker, the aim is to "make selling unnecessary". The definition is described as getting value from customers in exchange for the process of creating value and building customer relationships. (Kotler and Armstrong 2014, 27.)

The second World War is seen to be the starting point for globalization and development of the modern-day marketing practises. During the last 50 years civilisation and our industries have taken massive leaps in development, and everything – including marketing practices – has changed a lot. Going back five decades, everything a company did was on a national level. Now everything a company does, needs to have at least an overall view of what is happening wihin their market field globally, even if they were focusing working only on a national level. (Keegan and Green 2017, 23.)

This was due to the fact that online world, the internet, and more importantly Social Media, didn't exist. The only way for a company to reach and target their audience was through one of the two: pay for expensive advertising, or get someone - a third party, to write about you and your product on the media. (Scott 2017, 17.)

Marketing used to mean simply advertising that would appeal to the masses. It was like a one-way street, meant to only advertise and sell a product or service. One of the biggest problems was that the success of any campaign was highly dependant on getting the focus and attention of the audience. The second problem was that all the campaigns were relatively short-lived, as they only had a limited time on display so the results of said campaigns might not have been as good as they could have been. (Scott, 2017, 20.)

Nowadays marketing is more than previously mentioned. It is not "just" short lived campaigns, advertising and carefully thought-out and excecuted plans, but more like participating and being where

your target audience is. It is more strategy, constantly and steadily creating and publishing great content as well as being present on Social Media and being visible on the web's search engines. (Scott 2017, 37.)

This new era of marketing and the oblicatory need to have strong online presence has ensured that the lines and distinctions between marketing and PR have blurred and are not as straightforward as they used to be (Scott 2017, 37). Regardless of all the changes, the marketing mix and the four Ps remain relevant and are a good basic guideline to use when planning any marketing actions (Mindtools, 2016; Czinkota et al. 2011.)

3.2   PR

PR has always been around, even if it hasn't always had the same form or even the name. The pre-history of PR has been around since the history of mankind, although then it was more inter-personal communication rather than enhancing the public image of a person or a company. As a field of business and occupation it was born in the 19th century, and by the 20th century it has grown and developed to be a social system, that just keeps on growing and evolving, offering occupation and profession for many and enabling the globalization. (Theaker 2016, 10.)

PR used to be seen as just a small part of marketing, rather than an entity of its own. The concept of it has always been very blurred, and it seems that a lot of people have a hard time grasping what exactly PR means and what the people working in the field do. "PR is all spin, smokescreen and lies", as Rich Leigh has named one of the chapters in his book Myths of PR – All publicity is good publicity and other misconceptions. According to Leigh, the most common misconception of working in PR is that people think you lie for a living. (Leigh 2017.)

The definition of PR is more vague than the definition of marketing, but it is still easy to grasp if one knows few facts of the industry and is given the right tools for it. PR is a service industry that uses some of the tools and means of marketing. The goal – as with marketing – is to find and reach the correct people relevant to your product or service. Once you know your target audience, you must know what they consume, read, listen and watch – to have a clear plan of the channels you need to target. After that, the next step is to define what you want the target audience to think about the product, service or company. (Leigh 2017, 14-15.)

Marsha Friedman, the CEO of EMSI PR, once said that "PR is not where sales are closed, but rather, it's where sales begin" (Leigh 2017, 14-15.)

PR is not directly about the promotion nor sales. It is all about the education and branding of the products, services and the company. It is not a direct sales venue and it is rather difficult to measure the effectiveness of PR as it is not as straightforward as marketing for example. This might be the reason some people don't consider PR as such an important concept for their organization and

company image, but the fact is that it is also rather difficult to make sales without PR, as the whole idea is to gain visibility and trust from the target audience. (Leigh 2017, 14-15.)

For many years PR was dependant on media and journalists for any kind of coverage or air time, and the only way to communicate with them was through press releases. However, there were certain rules with the press releases that one had to follow, regarding how they were supposed to be (include some third-party quotes from customers, analysts or experts) and when you were supposed to be sending them out (only when the company had some important news). Even then, the only way for the audiences to learn about your new, important company changes or products was if the media decided to write about it, and that was never certain. Having good media relations is still extremely important for PR, but as the sole publicity and image of a company is not relying on the shoulders of the press anymore, the role of Social Media platforms has made the implementation of PR easier than what it was before. (Scott 2017; Bussey 2011, 33.)

In today's world PR is more than just operating behind the scenes for companies and your clients seeing your work on TV. It is also not so dependant on other people, and more specifically the traditional media and journalists. It is about being present online and your clients and target audience finding and seeing you where it matters, 24/7. (Scott 2017, 37; Leigh 2017, 14.)

There are a few elements to PR that distinguish it from marketing. PR is management function, that enables two-way communication in a completely different way than marketing does. However, even if the previously mentioned separates PR from marketing, there are also some features that are important features for both, such as the fact that they are both planned activities, research-based social sciences and socially responsible. This explains why PR is somewhat detached concept from marketing, but also why they are often talked about in the same entity and go hand in hand to an extent. (Thieker 2016, 7.)

3.3   Media

Media is a wide concept, and it might mean different things to different people. In a nutshell media means communication through television, print and radio – with the newest and latest additions of online and Social Media. (Granados 2016-10-03.)

Even with online and Social Media taking and gaining more and more secure foothold in the marketing and PR world today, the mainstream and trade medias are still relevant and important components of any good marketing plan. (Scott 2017, 22.)

The online and Social Media have created an opportunity for any kind of creative or professional content to be published, no matter who has provided and published it and how. With this, people have grown to be critical of the information found from the internet, as anybody could have posted it and there is sometimes no way of knowing of how reliable something is. The information in the online world can be divided to two extremes on a scale: professional content and amateur content,

where the professional content can be said to be the media and the amateur content can be used to be described as one's shared thoughts and opinions. In the vast abysmal of the online world, where do we draw the line of what is professional content and therefore – media? According to Melva Be- not all content online is media, was it of great quality or not. (Granados 2016-10-03.)

Traditional and mainstream media is considered to consist of newspapers, magazines and press, radio and TV; local, regional, national and trade. All driven by the same purpose: letting people know the newest and most interesting events happening in their area, country and worldwide. The scope of and scale of your news determines which media to go for, and the approach you take on is the key element that determines whether the journalists and press will be interested in publishing your story or not. (Bussey 2011, 33-47.)

With marketing traditional media used to be the most wanted option, as it was the way to ensure as many people saw your brand and message as possible. In marketing there is always a price tag though, and the more visible and wanted the slot you would want to promote your product or ser- vice on is, the higher it will go. On the other hand, from the PR point of view reaching and conquer- ing the press to gain visibility is even harder, as every journalist is different, and trying to please other people in a way that they will be interested in what you have to say whilst maintaining your own brand identity and message is not an easy task. (Bussey 2011, 33-47.)

As the world wide web, online world and Social Medias emerged, developed and became more pop- ular over the years, it turned everything upside down for marketing and PR. People were now able to share and connect in a way that was not possible before and maintaining the quality of the public image and reviews became vital. However, it also opened new possibilities as now companies were able to create their own accounts, profiles and webpages to be visible to people in a way they wanted to be themselves. The emerging of Social Media channels also made it possible for "normal" people to become well-known in a way it was only possible for Hollywood actors, actresses and singers before. This is how and why the concept of influencers as we know it today, was born. (Ryan 2015; Khamis, Lawrence and Welling 2017.)

With influencers the power age of online and Social Media really begun, and currently we are at a point where many are wondering if traditional press will diminish completely, as the hours spent on media is growing constantly and smaller and lots of smaller local newspapers and magazines are being shut down. The reliability of traditional, scripted and staged advertisements seen online, TV, and roadsides and on public transportation has been compromised compared to visbility gained through influencers: influencers are seen as more trustworthy as they are so relatable – that is also one of the main reasons they are so popular. (Ryan 2015; Khamis et al. 2017; IPA 2017-09-15.)

3.3.1 Understanding Social Media

Not too long ago, Social Media was seen as a free space, where you could create and share your content and use influencers without having to pay them, so that the content would be organic and

therefore extremely cost efficient for the company. It was the time when influencers started to be more videly known concept, and when people started to understand how effective the content they created could be in regards to sales. Not many years later, and now we are at the point where most of the experts in the field would use the words "organic reach/ organic content is dead". And in a lot of the cases it is true. There is only a very few companies who don't pay any insentives for any of their influencers, who still only go for organic reach. This is due to the competition within the the markets, but also the competition within the influencers with highest reach. (Social Report 2018-07-20.)

Now, the companies always need to be at least one step ahead on their Social Media strategies if they want to be successful. People do not follow passively, they share deliberately, and you can only get people to care about what you are doing if you really understand them – what motivates them, what challenges them and what triggers them and so on. Social Media is about the people and inter-action, not about the product or service. People and the followers want authentic communication between the companies and their clients, not corporate sharks trying to trick the people into buying more. The reality of Social Media engagement is that it is participation. The companies need to be present online, and they need to participate and engage their customers and followers with another level apart from just marketing and tyring to raise the numbers. (Weinberg 2008-07-08; Hemley 2014-11-24.)

3.3.2 The differences between traditional media and Social Media

The traditional media and Social Media might be very similar at their core, as they are all just chan-nels and ways of communicating. However, they are also very different and the nature and the basic interactions through them are very different, mostly for the reason that with traditional media the interaction is only one-way whereas Social Media is a two-way communications platform and it's all about being in touch with your audience. Online media has also different means for marketing – So-cial Media is not the only one. Content marketing and search engine marketing are also important tools when one considers what kind of online practices would be the best fit for their company. (Scott 2017; Leigh 2017; Lyfe Marketing 2018; DeMers 2018-05-04.)

Basically, anyone working in marketing or PR will now tell you the same: the future is in influencer marketing and Social Media, although it is not believed that the traditional media would disappear completely. The reason for this is simple: online, and especially Social Media, platforms are way cheaper and straightforward when compared to traditional media on reach and effectiveness, the two most important aspects of any marketing and PR practices. (Lyfe Marketing, 2018; Rodriguez, Vanessa 2018; DeMers 2018-05-04.)

The "old media" and "new media" as Sachin Kamdar (2016-04-13) references, have a few major differences between eachother. Firstly, they measure success completely differently. Whereas old media relies on how many copies of an issue has been sold or in circulation, how many people were

watching the TV in the moment when their advertisement was shown, on average to how many listeners was a radio show broadcasted and so on, the new media focuses on the platform-specific metrics. How many likes, comments and shares did an update on a specific platform get, how long was a viewer watching a video, and how much conversation exists around the topic in hand and how many app-users opened the app and read an article. (Kamdar 2016-04-13.)

The new and online media also focuses on building communities, which is something the old media couldn't do as effortlessly and efficiently. Celebrities turned influencers and influencers turned celebrities are one of the biggest differences that the medias could have. A lot of the best-known celebrities have taken the advantage of having a huge following on Social Media to spread their own lifestyles and beliefs. To name a few examples, Lena Dunham and Jenni Konner are the founders of a new media site promoting news stories supporting beliefs important to them, Gwyneth Paltrow has created a newsletter promoting anything from recipes to fashion pieces approved by herself, and Kylie Jenner – one of the most influential 20-year olds has created a YouTube channel (and her Instagram profile) where she is making videos of her everyday life, but which includes promotion for her makeup brand and other paid promotions for different brands. (Kamdar 2016-04-13; YouTube 2018; Rohwedder 2018-05-04.)

Besides being more cost effective and more diverse, Social Media and online platforms have one thing that seems to be ruling the marketing and PR world currently: influencers. The future of marketing and PR is strongly reliant on influencers, and there is no wonder there either. Influencers are seen as more trustworthy, authentic and transparent than traditional advertisements amongst the consumers.
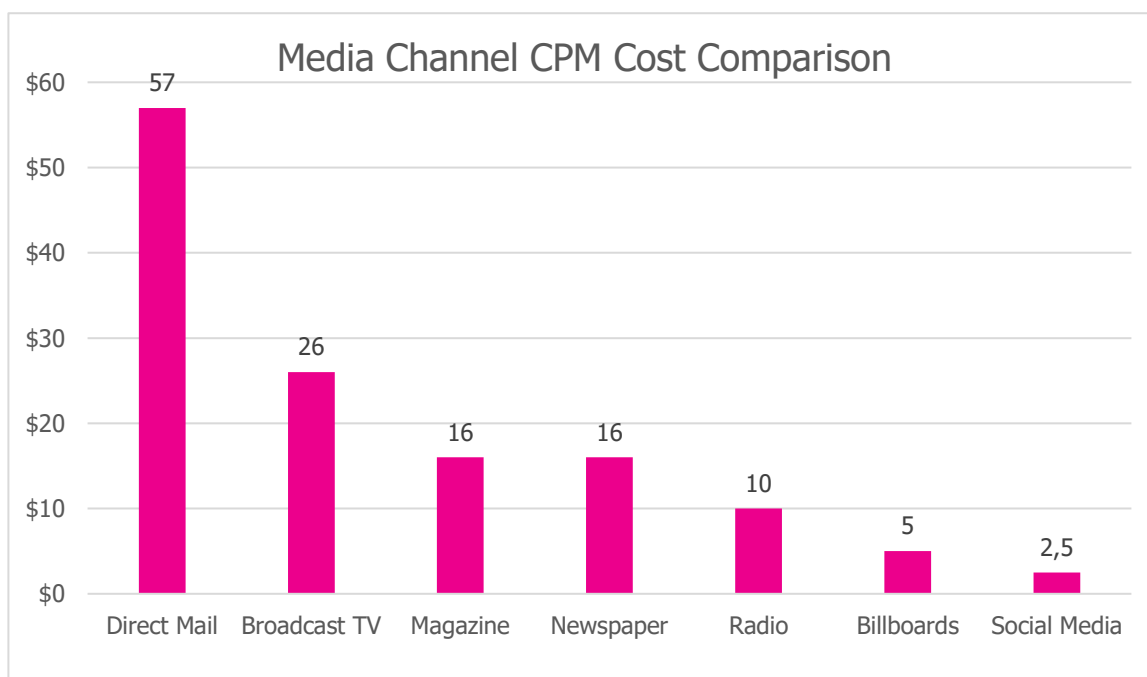

FIGURE 3. The cost comparison between different media channels in relation to CPM – cost per thousand impressions. (Lyfe Marketing, 2018)

3.4   Branding

The concept of branding is as follows: creating a unique name and image for the product or service with a consistent theme. It aims to establish a significant and memorable existence in the markets that attracts, brings in and retains loyal cutomers. While branding is dependent on the customer perception, it is the aim of the company to create the desired perceptions through their actions. The customer perception is influenced by the added-value charasteristics of the product or service, and they need to be sustainable. And with this moment in time and the share of influencer marketing strategies growing larger, branding is now more important than ever for a company, product or services success. (BusinessDictionary 2019; Lake 2018-12-23; Chaffey et al. 2006.)

In traditional marketing the branding was about the company or product and the image of that, but with the influencers in the picture, there is a completely new tyoe of branding: self-branding. The reason why the most successful influencers are where they are now, and why they are as successful as the are is because they have managed to build and create such a strong and recognisable brand and image of themselves. "Influecers are the golden children of marketing strategies right now", as Deborah Weinswig excellently summarizes. (Weinswig 2016-10-05; Lake 2019-01-17; Llopis 2013-08-08.)

4 MARKETING AND PR IN THE NEW AGE

Nowadays marketing and PR is more than previously mentioned. With the development and popularity of the web and Social Media, almost everything a company does needs to be considered through the eyes of the public, and how will it affect their image – anything and everything can affect the consumers view and opinion of the company and product and therefore the purchasing decision.

4.1 Important metrics and analytics tools

Key performance indicator (referred to as KPI going forward) and return on investment (referred to as ROI) are the key figures any company and business uses to have a sense of how the business is doing. Before it used to be rather straightforward to see if you met your set KPIs and whether your ROI was on a good level or not, but with the influencers and Social Media in the picture, it is more difficult to see the direct effect coming of using them to the figures mentioned. (Chaffey et al. 2006; Ryan 2015.)

Before setting KPIs for your company you need to have a clear idea and objectives of what is your target with the set KPIs. They often focus on brand building, building loyal and strong community, gaining visitors to your stores (on street or online), creating transactions and improving the customer experience (customer service). There are a lot of different kind of tools to help you understand the met targets and analyse the received data further, and they are usually rather easy to install and use – was it then in an app or a website. The most common ones used are Google analytics, Flurry, Adobe Marketing Cloud and Yahoo Web Analytics. (Ryan 2015, 60.)

Other important social metrics used to measure one's success in Social Media are followers, likes, comments and social shares; which can be grouped to engagement, brand mentions and brand conversations, bounce rate, unique page visits, page views, referrer URL and traffic leads, membership level and their activity, how much time did a person spend on the webpage or watching a video and virality. All these metrics are important up to a certain extent, as with Social Media precense and marketing getting more and more popular, a lot of fake and spam profiles and therefore followers exsist. (Ryan 2015, 63-64, 94; Evans and McKee 2010, 144.)

Return on investment is the tool that focuses on the monetary value of the invested money. On Social Media however, it is important to focus on the sentiment rather than the monetary value, as online and on Social Media everything works a bit different than offline. (Chaffey et al. 2006, 178; Ryan 2015, 88-91.)

Whereas followers, engagement and sentiment are important for the KPIs, they have no affect or relevance on and for the ROI. Metrics that are relevant and have high importance for the ROI are URL tracking, share of voice (SOV – number and amount of conversations about your brand), share of conversation (SOC – what topics do your customers talk and care about, not necessarily brand

related, but most likely market related), unique landing pages as well as community insight data. The marketing and PR are more strategic now, but they are also more effective – as well as cheaper, thanks to the possibilities created by online and Social Media. Figure 4 below showcases an example of how powerful a well planned socia media campaign can be after just 7 days, not to forget the long-term effects it can have as well. (Ryan 2015, 88-92; Rodriguez, Vanessa 2018.)

COMPANY X (PRODUCT LAUNCH) TOPLINE INSIGHTS

Social Media prospecting :: 3 week cross channel campaign (Facebook, in Snapchat)
- 916K impressions
- 10K clicks to site

*Results based on 4 full days of the campaign

Instagram insights (lead channel for the re-powered campaign)
- +6.66% growth in community size in 7 days (actual: 1,092 new followers vs. average growth rate 5-10 new followers per week)
- +113% reach (actual: 106,380 per post vs. 50,000 average benchmark)
- +1,025% engagement (actual 4,500 per post vs. 400 average benchmark)
- +1,800% visits to site (actual 475 per post vs. 25 average benchmark)
- + 335% visits to Instagram profile (actual 870 per post vs. 200 average benchmark)

FIGURE 4. Company X's new product launch Social Media insights from the first 7 days. (Placement company 2018)

Understanding Social Media is the one thing most companies are focusing on at the moment, and if they are not – they probably should, just purely based on the fact of how much an average person spends consuming media per day, and how much of that time is spent online (as seen in FIGURE 1 and FIGURE 2). Social Media and PR is about brand awareness and public eye, and as it has become the place people will go and share their experiences at, companies need to be aware of it's power: Social Media is nowadays central to customer experience, where people will go and share their frustration if they had a poor experience with you, but also let others know if they had a great experience. When you add the follower base and the impact of an influencer to this equation, you can have a big problem or a great result – it is only up to the company to decide on which side of this equation they want to be. (IPA 2017-09-15; Ryan 2015, 118-121.)

With the follower amount and engagement rate being one of the biggest factors affecting the decision of which influencer to contact about collaboration, brands should be aware of the reality of the rates (follower and engagement). With the rise of influencers and their share in marketing practises and popularity, the capital that is connected and associated with influencer marketing and the seemingly "easiness" of not having a regular 9-to-5-job and publishing nice pictures of yourself on Social Media made being an influencer very appealing to masses and a desired path to take in life. With this, the bots and fake users and profiles stepped into the picture. If one wishes to do so, they are able to buy followers, likes and comments in a bunch or separately, to make one's profile seem

more appealing to companies and brands. Bought followers and likes are changing the true engagement rate of influencers and diminishing the work of influencers who have worked hard to gain their followers and engagement rate. (Magrath 2018-10-08.)

This gives the wrong impression to not only consumers, but also to brands as it will seem that an influencer has a lot of followers (more potential customers) to see the product or service, when in reality only a small percentage have seen, liked or sommented on the content. Not only that but influencers buying any of the previously mentioned will make it seem like a campaign or content has been successful, even if in reality it was not. This puts the brands in danger, as they could have a neutral or even negative impact on their sales when they thought it would be the opposite. (Magrath 2018-10-08.)

The possibility of having false figures in followers or engagement has given a negative impact on the approach for digital and influencer marketing, so there had to be a way to find out which influencers had a real and genuine follower base and engagement, and which ones did not. With the negative there is always positive, and therefore different ways, websites and programs were created to find out the percentage of real followers. The brands are now able to find out whether an influencer they doubt might have bought some of their followers, likes or comments, which should undo some of the damage and problems fake followers and numbers have created for the industry. (Magrath 2018-10-08.)

Selling power of influencers
Have you ever purchased a product after learning about it from an influencer?

- Yes, I have
- No, I haven't
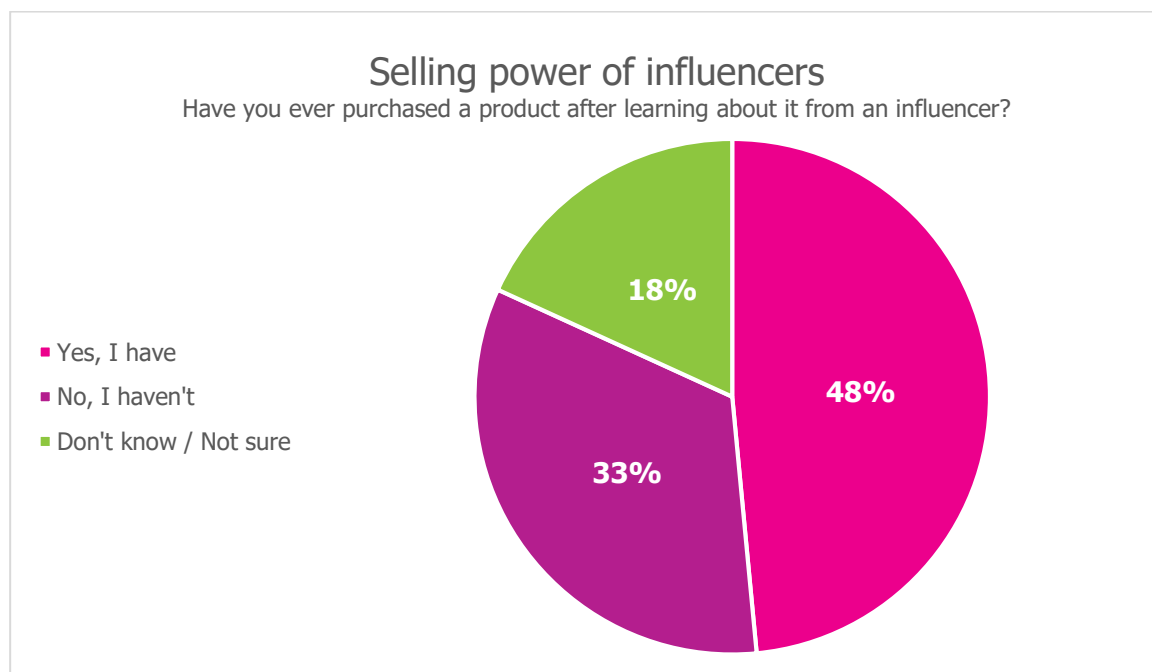- Don't know / Not sure

48%
33%
18%

FIGURE 5. Selling power of influencers (% of US adults who consume influencer content) (YouGov 2018).

4.2   Laws

After the growing concern of people's and their privacys safety was growing with every passing day due to several online breaks and password/ user detail leaks, European Union was due to set boundaries and create a new law protecting people's privacy online.

EU General Data Protection Regulation (referred to as GDPR from here on onwards) law was officially put into practice in the spring of 2018. The core idea of the law was that any website that has, collects, keeps or reuses any personal data from internet users had to update their terms and conditions and ask every single user or website visitor if they give the website their permission to collect data of the user. It does not matter what kind of personal data and information is or has been collected, kept or used, they had to have permission for it and protect ones privacy. (Your Europe, 2018-12-13.)

The only exceptions allowed to collect, reuse and share information about someone without consent is if they have a contract with the person (for example an employee contract), there is a legal obligation for the information (employer sharing the salary information with the social security authority), it is vital for one's interest or to complete a public task (to protect your life or something related to public administartions such as schools, hospitals and municipalities), or when there is a legitimate interest, for example bank using one's personal data to check their eligibility for a savings account or for a bank loan. (Your Europe, 2018-12-13.)

The GDPR also changed some of the rules regarding children, as nowadays the amount of children being present in at least some kind of online platform is enormous. With children being the users and having the accounts under their names, the websites are therefore collecting and using their information which was an issue for many. In order for children under the age of 16 to use certain websites and online / Social Media platforms, they need the approval and consent from their parent or legal gurdian. (Your Europe, 2018-12-13.)

The law also included that as the websites are collecting information about real people, they have the right to know what kind of information the company has collected. A person has the right to request access to any personal data a company or organization has collected, free of charge and in an accessible format. The companies are to answer to any requests within 1 month and give the person a copy of the personal data as well as any relevant information about how the data has been or is being used. A person can also request "to be forgotten", which means that any personal data no longer needed or used unlawfully is to be erased. The website also needs to include a list of all the other websites one's data has been shared with and links to them to be deleted. (Your Europe, 2018-12-13.)

As influencers have now been recognised as a major advertising group, there are more often than not questions rising about the correctness of the content they are creating for and with brands and companies. The Advetising Standards Authority (referred to as ASA from here on onwards) is the

advertising regulator, The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) is the representative of advertisers and media owners and agencies and The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is the primary consumer and competitor authority (in the UK). These three entities are the ones to make the rules about marketing and PR and are the ones anyone, more closely in this case influencers, will be dealing with if there are any complaints or questions about the created content considering different collaborations and advertising posts. (ASA 2018-09-28.)

ASA and CAP have created rules for influencers about their collaborations and the posts, regarding if and how they should their followers know something is not organically posted. According to their Influencer Guide (ASA 2018-09-28) there are a few ways something an influencer posts counts as an advert;

1. Paid-for space, which means posts that are sponsored or promoted
2. Own advertising, which means promoting one's own product or service, or even an event they are hosting or organizing
3. Affiliate marketing, where an influencer creates content of a certain product or service containing a hyperlink or discount code from which they get paid for every 'click-through' or sale that can be tracked to their content
4. Advertorial, which means content where the influencer has received a payment and directions (control) about the content they are expected to create. Payment can be a freebie, or even money, and control in this case means editorial control of the post, was it just a final approval of the post itself or something else.

The change of Social Media being a platform to connect and share pictures easily and quickly with your friends anywhere and everywhere to a market place where it seems that everybody is promoting the same perfect life illusion happened in a way that consumers didn't really even notice the change happen until it was too late in a sense. Even if it was happening right in front of their eyes – and on their feeds. It's been so sudden, that even the field professionals are still trying to catch up on understanding the power of Social Media. That could also be one of the reasons why in the UK the ASA and CAP created the new guidelines for influencers, forcing them to mark all the collaborational posts as ads, so that consumers realise how big the percentage of paid posts is and to make sure there is transparency. From a consumer point of view, it is important to see the difference between an ad that you know for a fact that is an ad, for example commercials in TV and so for, and an ad that you don't even know is an ad – for example influencer posts that are promoting a product and you don't know if they have genuinely bought the item or service or whether they have been gifted the product or service and/ or paid to do so.

4.3   Controversy

There are a lot of cases that have created examples in the business world regarding influencers. One of the biggest and well known was between an influencer and a hotel owner. It all started when the influencer had emailed the hotel owner suggesting collaboration, where the influencer

would stay in the hotel free of charge or with a discount, and in exchange for the free stay she would talk about the hotel and its services in her Social Media platforms, recommending and promoting it to her followers. The hotel owner did not like it, and published her email in a public Facebook post, laying out the details of her name and how much he disapproved of this and "these so called influencers and people like her asking for free things". This caused a lot of mayhem between people and was probably the first case that openly begun the discussion of the importance of influencers world-wide. (Horton, 2018-01-11.)

The public then was divided to two: people whom resonated with the influencerand agreed she had done nothing wrong and that her email was very professionally drafted and was a normal collaboration suggest. They thought the hotal owner was being unreasonable and insulted her privacy and dignity by publicly publishing the email and dragging her name. The other side was with the hotel owner, they thought that "this young generation and people like her" are simply asking for free things instead of working and getting money to pay for things, and that it was ridiculous and rude for her to even suggest such thing, as exposure in Social Media doesn't cover the running costs of the hotel such as staff salary that would still run, if she had stayed there. (Horton, 2018-01-11.)

5 INFLUENCERS

Influencers. The magic word that has been on marketing and PR professinals' lips for more or less the past decade, but the industry has skyrocketed during the last few years. But what exactly is an influencer, what does it mean to be one and how do brands benefit from using influencers in their marketing and PR activities? (Ehrhardt, Janna 2017-10-19.)

An influencer is someone who is so engaged with their audience that it gives them the potential to affect on their audiences views on basically anything (within the field the influencers are working in). Most often and usually shared and executed through Social Media, they have become respected in their own niche field and therefore they are able to influence on other people's purchasing decisions – hence the word influencer. (Infleuncer Marketing Hub 2018; Pixlee 2018.)

Often influencers are divided to different cathegories, and many companies have their own way of doing so. The two most common ones are to either divide them to four different groups; celebrities, industry experts and thought leaders, bloggers and content creators, and micro influencers, or then just simply to micro (5,000-100,000 followers), mid (100,000 – 1M followers) and macro influencers (1M+ followers). (Influencer Marketing Hub 2018; YouTube 2017-04-10.)

'Influencer' became a word, a concept, that many young people wanted to become – the traditional jobs don't seem as glamorous and desirable as an influencer who gets paid to travel around the globe and visit beautiful places for free, while being gifted products and services worth thousands – in any currency. And the appeal is easy to see. Why would one want to live ordinary life and work, sometimes even in a dangerous or challenging job, when you could live care free and just travel around, and basically be on holiday all year around and all you had to do was post beautiful pictures, videos and stories of your life? (McGoogan 2018-09-04.)

5.1 Brief history

In some sense influencers have always been around. In the old days the most known and influential people used to be people who were in a great and respected position of some sort, such as a King or a Pope for example. In the marketing world influencers can be found already in the early 20th century, when few companies started to create personas for their product or service to invoke peoples purchasing decisions. The most famous ones – that are also still used today – are Santa Claus (for Coca-Cola) and Tony the Tiger (Kellogg's). Of course at the time, they were not called influencers, but it does not mean they were not ones as they had the same effect. Characters like this were created so it would make the consumer symphatize and relate to the company and product more. (Ehrhardt, Janna 2017-10-19; Mechem, Brian 2018-03-09; Wallace, Brian 2017-09-05.)

Influencers nowadays work the same way as the previously mentioned characters worked then: creating neutral stimulus constantly, paired with potent stimulus means that the sense of pleasure

would make one symphatize more for the influencer and therefore the brand as well. (Ehrhardt, Janna 2017-10-19.)

The influencers as we know now, came to be through celebrities and using them as marketing and PR tools. Michael Jackson for Pepsi, Christiano Ronaldo for Nike, Selena Gomez for Coach – and the list goes on. Many of the bigger companies and brands have used celebrities in their marketing activities and campaigns throughout the years, and they have turned out to be successful due to the fact that celebrities are often seen as idols and role models and therefore have a great influence on people. In a way, celebrities gave their name to the brand and product, and vice versa. This way, the publicity of the celebrity would attract people to try the promoted product or service. (Ehrhardt, Janna 2017-10-19; Wallace, Brian 2017-09-05.)

Influencers started becoming popular at the 21st century, and especially halfway through the second decade. Currently we have influencers, star influencers and influential stars, and there is a difference between all of them, although there are also some similarities. A good example of an influencer is Zoe Sugg – Zoella, a UK based young woman, who started as a beauty focused YouTuber and has managed to make a name for herself through it. Kylie Jenner could be used as an example of a star influencer, where she is a celebrity and has her own makeup brand but is also used by other brands to promote their products. And last but not least, Taylor Swift is a good example of an influential star: on Sunday the 8th of October 2018 she posted on Instagram urging young people and her followers to have a voice and vote on the upcoming (US) election, and mere 24h later 65,000 people had registered to vote. 48h later more than 240,000 people had registered. For context it should be said that in the whole month of August 56,669 people registered to vote, and in September the amount was 190,178. Even if many celebrities (like Taylor Swift) don't really post for brands, their ability to influence on needs to be taken into account, as there are clear proof how how powerful one person with the right follower base and product, service or matter can be. (Bridges, Frances 2018-10-12; Ehrhardt, Janna 2017-10-19; Wallace, Brian 2017-09-05.)

The influencers are becoming popular, purely due to the fact that their affect can be seen in so many different levels. Many companies are now focusing on the micro-influencers, who's following is anything between 5,000-100,000. Their followers are often more active and there is usually more engagement involved with the influencer and their followers, which makes them cheaper – for being organic – and nearly equally as effective as influecers with higher following. (YouTube 2017-04-10; YouTube 2018-11-09.)

5.2   Usage

The rise of influencer markets could be said to have officially started around 2010, when Facebook had been around for few years and Amazon wanted to connect it with their brand – so people could see what others (friends and family) were buying. There are plenty of studies showcasing the effect of friends and family recommendations, and it was a good idea to start using this through Facebook. Once Amazon started to make suggestions of gifts based on the purchases that your close ones had

made, people started to see and realise the serious potential of influencer marketing. (Mechem, Brian 2018-03-09.)

The point of influencer marketing and PR, and their effectivity is the fact that influencers – bloggers, vloggers and others – are seen as "normal" everyday people, more so than celebrities for example. It is easier for consumers to relate to someone who could be them, their neighbor or their friend, rather than to someone whom has been in many Hollywood films, has a very exclusive lifestyle and seems to live in a completely different world. The ability to relate to them is the catch that makes influencers so effective in marketing and PR. (Mechem, Brian 2018-03-09; Gallegos, Jose Angelo 2016-09-19.)

The influencers are being used in many different ways, to many different purposes by many different brands and companies. There are so many niche fields for influencers, that it is quite likely that no matter what product you are trying to sell or promote, it is more than likely that you will find an influencer that fits the image to do so. The diversity of the fields is almost endless, but usually people divide influencers to main divisions: fashion, beauty, lifestyle, family, sports, travel, food, home, health, music – the list goes on. Basically, almost anything that you have ever been interested in is very likely to have someone blogging, vlogging, writing and posting about it. Within these fields there are of course a lot of subcathegories and divisions, and also a lot of influencers that fall under more than just one cathegory, but keeping things simple and straightforward, the previously mentioned cathegories could be said to be the main ones. (YouTube 2018-11-09; Prant, Dara 2018-11-10.)

Even if only 2.8% of Instagram users are considered micro-influencers, there are still a lot of infleuncers to choose from for every company. 2.8% as a percenteage sounds low, but considering the fact that Instagram has over 800M users, the reality is something else. With nearly 200M influencers in Instagram alone it is clear that there is a lot to choose from. (Wallace, Brian 2017-09-05; YouTube 2017-04-10; YouTube 2018-11-09.)

COMPANY Y – ONLINE CAMPAIGN STATISTICS

- Total number of Influencers: 15 – 5 paid and 10 unpaid
- Total number of Social posts: 62
- Total potential reach: 158,688 (people)

- Total paid engagement: 8,049
- Total unpaid engagement 10,991

FIGURE 6. Company Y's influencer campaign statistics – how many influencer were paid and unpaid in the campaign and how many people it reached. (Placement Company 2018.)

The influencers have been seen in many different kinds of campaigns, and there are a lot of collaborations that have been made between a brand and an influencer. If wanted to use just one example, it could be mentioned the collaboration between Desi Perkins, Katy DeGroot (aka LustreLux) and the makeup brand Dose of Colors, where the two very popular makeup and beauty influencers Desi and Katy collaborated with Dose of Colors to create their own exclusive makeup line. The first collaboration was announced in August 2017, the collection went on sale a while later and sold out within the same day it was put online. As the first one was so popular, sold out so quickly and the fans demanded more, it was only a matter of time until the makeup brand would announce the second collaboration. The second collaboration was announced a bit over a year later, and was equally successful, as the fans of the two mega-influnecers had to get their hands to everything they created. (Abelman 2018-09-17.)

COMPANY Y – ONLINE CAMPAIGN STATISTICS: **PAID INFLUENCERS**

Person A
- Followers: 9,492
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 12
- Total engagement: 4,206
- CPE*: 9p

Person B
- Followers: 13,800
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 12
- Total engagement: 821
- CPE: 30p

Person C
- Followers: 28,900
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 7
- Total engagement: 1,475
- CPE: 14p

Person D
- Followers: 8,836
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 5
- Total engagement: 693
- CPE: 29p

Person E
- Followers: 22,200
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 7
- Total engagement: 754
- CPE: 40p

*CPE = Cost per Engagement
Results in GBP £

FIGURE 7. Company Y's influencer campaign insights – paid influencers, their reach and cost. (Placement company 2018.)

COMPANY Y – ONLINE CAMPAIGN STATISTICS: **UNPAID INFLUENCERS**

Person F
- Followers: 7,487
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 4
- Total engagement: 326

Person G
- Followers: 13,900
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 8
- Total engagement: 6,279

Person H
- Followers: 5,240
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: - had not yet posted at the time
- Total engagement: -

Person I
- Followers: 5,460
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 1
- Total engagement: 1,120

Person J
- Followers: 5,904
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 1
- Total engagement: 264

Person K
- Followers: 5,669
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 1
- Total engagement: 712

Person L
- Followers: 2,616
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 3
- Total engagement: 368

Person M
- Followers: 10,600
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 1
- Total engagement: 1,161

Person N
- Followers: 5,735
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 1
- Total engagement: 560

Person O
- Followers: 1,105
- Total number of Social posts across all channels: 1
- Total engagement: 201

Results in GBP £

FIGURE 8. Company Y's influencer campaign insights – unpaid influencers and their reach. (Placement company 2018.)

This is just one example of extremely successful collaborations between influencers and brands as there are already quite a few, and it showcases brilliantly how effective the right people for the right

brand can be. See Figures 7-9 showcasing another brand's influencer collaboration campaign results and insights. However to be mentioned, some creative industries, such as the makeup and beauty industry for example, are naturally better suited for the influencer and Social Media marketing than others, maybe in some way "boring" industries. (DeMers 2018-05-04.)

The biggest question and doubt with the whole influencer marketing amongst the consumer was this: what exactly is organic content and how can I be sure if the influencer has been paid to promote something or not? Before the UK's ASA and CAP set an example of how the influencers are to mention the paid for content clearly as an ad, the consumers were put in a position where they had to trust the people they followed to be transparent of what was paid or not, as seeing someone being paid to promote a product or service takes at least to some extent away some of the credibility of said content – how can I be sure this person I look up to actually likes this said product or service, or if they are just doing so because they get paid to do so? See below Figure 10.
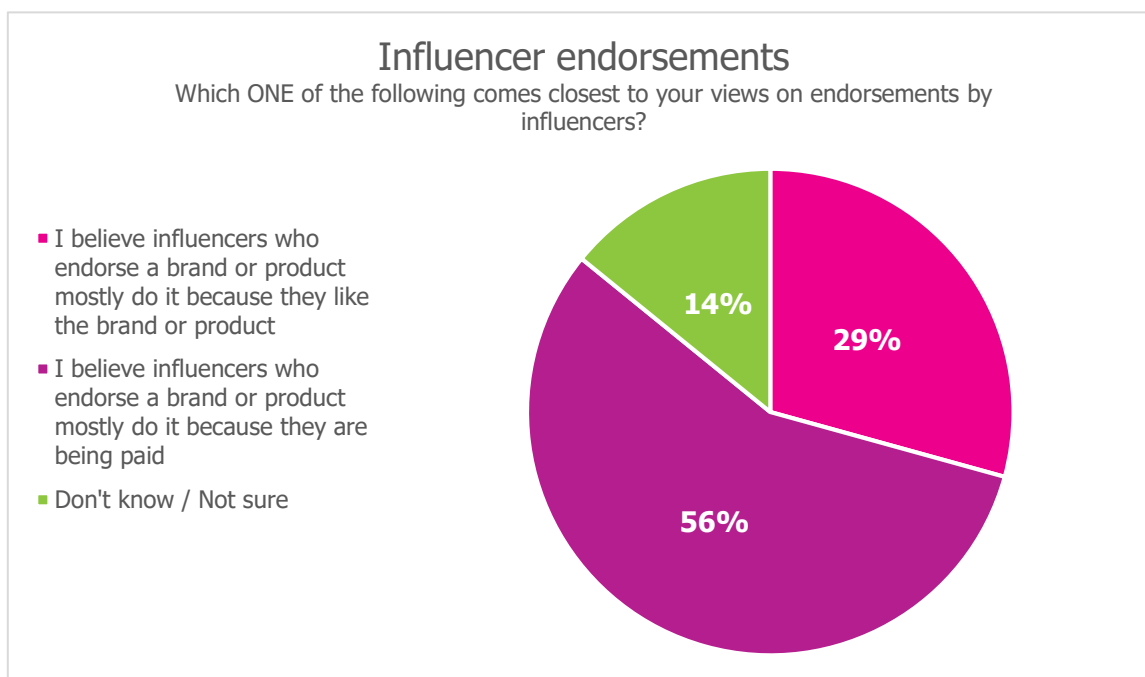

FIGURE 9. Showcasing the percentage of people who believe influencers promote a brand or product because they are getting not getting paid vs. paid (% of US adults who consume influencer content). (YouGov 2018).

6   SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Social Media platforms come in many shapes and forms. The main ones are YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter, but there are plenty of other ones that are used by different groups. With this thesis the main focus is on the main Social Media channels, and the way they work and what kind of culture is within them is the next focus. The Figure 10 showcases which Social Media platform is the most popular in different age groups.
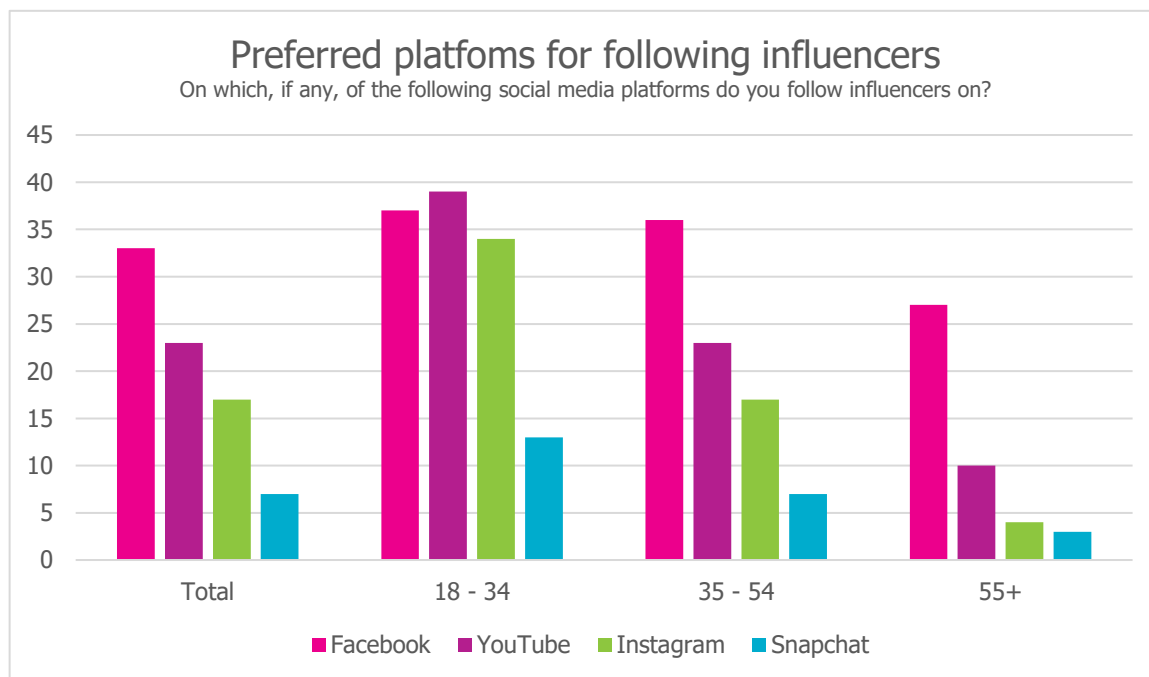

FIGURE 10. The preferred platforms used to follow influencers on (% of all US adults). (YouGov 2018).

6.1   YouTube

YouTube is an online video sharing and streaming platform that was found in 2005. The idea was to create a platfrom where people could create, share and watch videos whenever and wherever they wanted. YouTube is like Google – you can basically find anything you want from it, with minor limitations. It is one of the biggest and most popular Social Media channels to date, and according to a study made in 2018 people searched more on YouTube than on any other site (after Google). With billions of views per day, it is no surprise that still majority of the most successful influencers started their career from this platform. (Keller, Michael H. 2018-08-11; Webwise 2018a.)

6.1.1 Examples

As mentioned previously, there are many stars whom have started their career from YouTube, and many of them are still pursuing the video / content creating career amongst other things. On the list of 2018 highest earning YouTubers, there were a various mix of creators from different fields, that shows just how diverse and even surprising the world of YouTube is.

In 2018, the no. 1 earner was a 7-year old boy Ryan, who makes review videos of toys for other kids. With his channel of Ryan ToysReview and 17 million subscribers, he made earnings of $22 million, which is the double compared to his earnings of $11 million in 2017. Not an average income for a 7-year old, but this is what YouTube and Social Media enable: the ability for whomever to be successful. (O'Kane, Caitlin 2018-12-04; Robehmed, Natalie and Berg, Nadeline 2018-12-03.)

Other successors on the list are gamers, whom stream or upload videos of them playing different video games, makeup gurus and groups of guys who make trick shot videos. The scale is grand and the number of views is enormous, but that just proves the power of Social Media. The rest of the list include a makeup mogul Jeffree Star with $18 million of earnings in place 5 and a gamer and content creator known as PewDiePie (real name Felix Kjellberg) with $15.5 million in place 9. (O'Kane, Caitlin 2018-12-04; Robehmed, Natalie and Berg, Nadeline 2018-12-03.)

With the earnings this high, one can only imagine how many other YouTubers are successful as well, if looking at the statistics. Lots of these people on the Forbe's 2018 list are doing other things besides YouTube, and there are a lot whom are not even on the list as they have been prioritizing other projects over YouTube, but are just equally if not even more successful. One example of the successful vloggers that did not make the list but is worth mentioning is the British YouTube beauty guru turned entrepreneur Zoella (real name Zoe Sugg), with 11 million subscribers on YouTube alone along with 4 published books and her own beauty range amongst many other collaborations. She is just one example in many, where YouTube opened the doors for them for other opportunities in other fields. Below Figure 12 showcasing how many people have actually unfollowed someone for their paid promotions. (Campbell 2018-11-22; Biography.com 2017-11-14.)
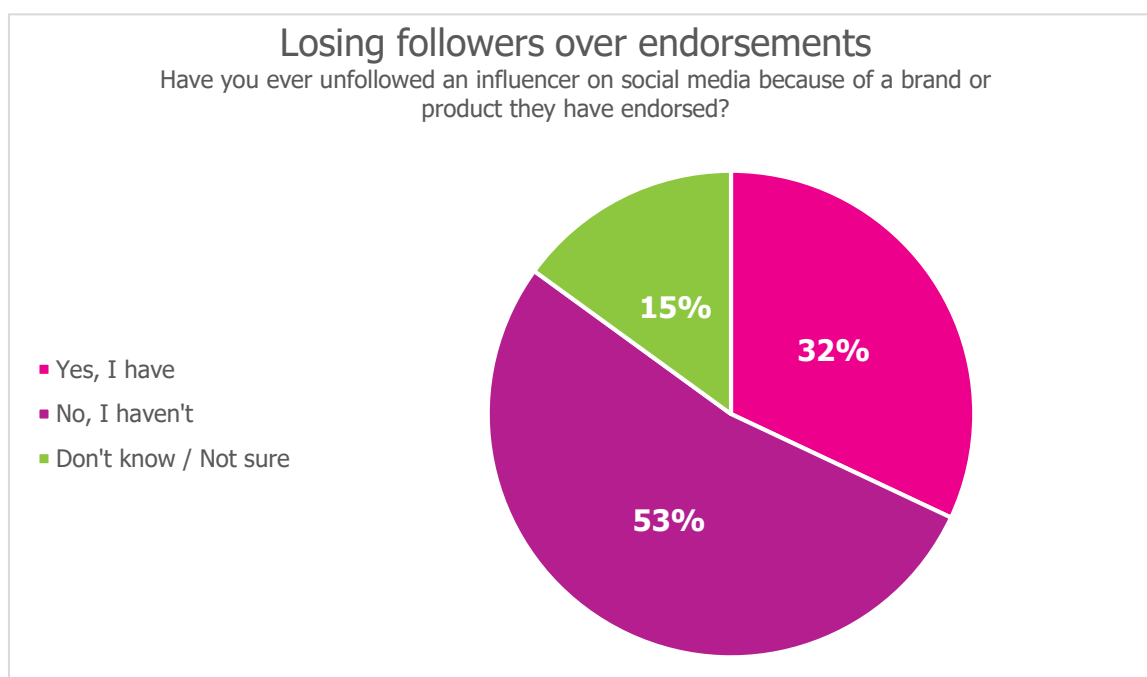

FIGURE 11. Presenting how many people have unfollowed an influencer due to a brand or product they have endorsed (% of US adults who consume influencer content). (YouGov 2018).

6.2   Instagram

Instagram is a mobile app established in 2010, later on bought and currently owned by Facebook. It is a platform meant for sharing pictures and videos in an easy and simple way. Since coming to the markets, Instagrams popularity has just been on a rising upwards curve. Currently it is estimated that it has over a billion active users in a month. (Statista 2019; Webwise 2018b.; Moreau 2018-11-19.)

6.2.1   Examples

Instagram was created five years after Facebook and YouTube, and at first people were doubtful of the usage and traffic it would get, as most of the people were already keen and active users of one of the two platforms, if not both. As a big share of the overall Social Media users were active on Facebook as well as in YouTube, it made them doubt of the third platfrom, that at first was only available as an app unlike Facebook and YouTube, which both had also a browser version and were able to be used in other devices and not just mobile devices – the first web browser version of Instagram was released almost two years after the initial release, in 2012. (Wikipedia 2019.)

However, against all doubts, the story and path of Instagram has only been one upwards curve since it's launch and is currently thought of as the most popular and profitable Social Media channel. After the beginning, a lot of people saw the potential and idea of Instagram, and people started to migrate there. People who had gotten "famous" or popular through Facebook and Youtube, wanted to show their followers more of their life behind the scenes so to say, and the hook for Instagram users and Social Media marketing was born.

With Instagram being in the picture, more and more people started to be, or seem to be, successful. And as it seemed so easy to do the same with Instagram, naturally many people started to try and grow their following through the app, too. Whereas some influencers had already loyal followers from other platforms and therefore grew their following quickly, there are also quite a few people whom have made a name of themselves purely via Instagram. Previously mentioned Zoella, amongst her other YouTube originated peer were now met with other equally successful people, such as Victoria Magrath, Callie Thorpe, Madeleine Shaw and Zanna Van Dijk, whom all got popular through Instagram and their feeds, and are now owners of many other platforms in the forms of blogs, YouTube channels, podcast and so on. (Vincent 2018-09-23.)

6.3   Facebook

Faceook was the boggest game changer of Social Media platforms. Before Facebook there were MSN Messenger and MySpace, and other similar local platforms, but when Facebook came to markets it changed everything. Originally meant to be just for some college kids to stay in touch after graduating and leaving the campus, it quickly became one of the largest Social Media platforms in the world. (BBC 2012-10-10.)

The last few years have not been easy for Facebook. The other Social Media channels that seem to appeal to the younger people better than Facebook, are taking over the reigns it used to hold, and many online safety and information-breach scandals have shaken the giant to it's core. James Titcomb reported in October 2018 that 'Facebook investors are braced for another decline in European users', which meant that in Europe the number of people logging in monthly had fallen by a million. It will be a tough climb for Facebook to do and stop the decline in users, but unless they make major changes, only time will tell if it will be staying in the league of Giants of the Social Media era. (Titcomb, 2018-10-28.)

6.4 Other platforms

Besides the three Social Media channels that have been mentioned so far, there are many more that could be mentioned. Snapchat, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, Vine.. The list goes on and seems to be endless, with lots of new platforms popping up like mushrooms in the rain. They are all grouped as Social Media channels as the core idea stays the same (connecting with people), but they all have very different taget groups and are in a way all very niche platforms. (Spencer 2019.)

Blogs have been around for as long as Facebook has, if not even longer and their appeal seems to stay the same amongst a group of people. The blogs are seen as people's personal journals mixed with a magazine feel posts and are authentic platforms for communities to discuss with like-mided people without necessarily the pressure of the big Social Media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, blogs are slightly closed with their targets groups and even with thousands of readers, the athmosphere seems more relaxed and open.

Podcasts are the latest new thing on the block and are getting more popular with each growing day. Many influencers, celebrities or professionals from almost all the fields one could think of, are now setting up podcasts where they discuss either alone or with co-hosts or visitors about the hot topics and life in general.

7 ETHICS, CONCLUSION AND LEARNINGS

The ethical problems that have occurred when writing the thesis have been wide and plenty. The variety of different kinds of issues that one is faced with when writing about such current topic is challenging.

One of the biggest problems was how to write a professional style text, when the topic itself is such relaxed and multicultured context. Staying professional whilst trying to describe matters as accurately as possible without losing any touch-feel of the topic was on of the most demanding issues that had to be overcome in order for the thesis to be valiable.

Working in a field that is using influencers in marketing and PR practices every day and being able to access and use detailed data was extremely interesting yet extremely challenging at the same time – the data that could be accessed was very classified, company- specific data and it was very difficult to use it in such a public text whilst maintining the anonymity of the company and not revealing too many specifics of numerical figures.

7.1 Conclusion and learnings

The conclusions of the thesis are that with such a big variety on different kinds of Social Media channels and the number of influencers available, the industry will keep growing and become more essential part of marketing activities across all fields. However, the rules applied when it comes to transparency of paid vs. organic content, it needs to be made clear what is what. It is extremely important that the paid content is to some extent treated and seen as what it is – advertising. It might strip down the effectiveness of the content compared to organic content, however the author still believes that influencer marketing and influencers will play a vital role in the future of marketing and that it will still be more effective, than for example TV, radio or roadside advertisements.

With Social Media being so widely spread and there is a platform for everything, it's hard to imagine or believe that the traditional media would disappear completely. The numbers of printed newspapers and magazines might drop, but the author believes it is also important to have them around and that they will be around, for the same purpose that they now are or not. We will have to wait and see where the development of things will take us.

As the field of influencer marketing practices is still so new and in it's babysteps, the amount of information available is overwhelming. There are plenty of sources for both sides of the battle "are influencers good or bad for the marketing industry", and it would take a lifetime to go through them all. On the other hand, it made the research for this thesis extremely interesting, as you could soak up as much information as you wanted and think you had seen and read it all, just to find 10 more pieces of information or new statistics showcasing the effectiveness, reach and what not of influencer marketing behind every corner.

One thing is for sure though. No matter how much research you do, no matter how much or little a company spends on the influencer content, no matter how good the idea behind a campaign is – it will never bring you the results you want if the influencer is not right for your company image and reputation. The author believes that is where the next development of the industry is going. Finding and targeting the correct audience with correct approach, with the right kind of influencer who plays the part.

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