

How can celebrities become popular on social media? The importance of self-disclosure and endorsement

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Cite as:

Klostermann Jan, Meißner Martin, Max Alexander, Decker Reinhold (2021), How can celebrities become popular on social media? The importance of self-disclosure and endorsement. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 50th, (93429)

Paper from the 50th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, May 25-28, 2021



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Abstract

Alongside a professional career, celebrities nowadays act as popular social media influencers. While current research shows that brands can profit from the social media popularity of a celebrity endorser, the question of how celebrities can get popular on social media has rarely been approached in the marketing literature. The aim of this article is to enhance our understanding of factors that build celebrities' social media popularity, with a strong focus on self-disclosure and endorsement. The authors analyze both visual and textual data from a sample of 1,443 celebrities on Instagram. The results are in line with theory and show that celebrities can increase popularity by nearly equally self-disclosing in professional and personal contexts, increasing the share of personal self-disclosure over time, and strong depth of self-disclosure. Too many endorsements, however, can hurt popularity while the social media popularity of the sponsoring brand can boost the celebrities' popularity.

Keywords: *Celebrity; Self-disclosure; Endorsement*

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media