

Evolving Influencers: Towards a New Empirical Typology for Influencer Roles in Marketing

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Abstract

Social media influencers (SMI) have become an efficient marketing tool. However, technological and strategic changes have affected the way SMI present their generated content and create their role in relation to the marketed brands. Besides being simply spokespersons and billboards, SMI now acquire more nuanced positions as co-creators and co-owners. Addressing the lack of conceptualization of influencer roles, this paper seeks to bring an understanding for how the role of SMI has expanded. We conducted an inductive netnographic study, offering an empirical influencer typology that contributes to conceptually shape the general mind-set of the practitioner concerning the advanced influencer roles. Our findings show that SMI constantly evolve their creativity and entrepreneurship, supporting the notion that the influencer role has expanded due to the role-modifying and power-shifting processes in relation to marketed brands based on the degree of creative control bestowed by the brands.

Keywords: *Social Media Influencers; Typology; Influencer Marketing*

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media