PAWSITIVELY POWERFUL: WHY AND WHEN PET INFLUENCERS BOOST ENGAGEMENT AND PURCHASE INTENTION

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Abstract

Influencer marketing is a powerful tool for brands to create connections with target audiences. Naturally, many companies have leaned on human influencers, but the increasing popularity of pet influencers represents a new avenue for brand promotion. This research thus asks the question: Why and when are pet influencers preferrable to their human counterparts in terms of boosting engagement and purchase intention? Across five experimental studies, we demonstrate that pet influencers lead to higher engagement and willingness to buy the product because they are seen as more credible than human influencers. Their greater credibility stems from their cuteness (both whimsicality and kindchenschema dimensions). Effects are stronger for pet-related products and apply regardless of whether people own a pet. These findings enhance the understanding of the mechanisms underlying influencer marketing effectiveness and clarify how to implement more influential social media campaigns.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Marketing Strategy*

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