Your Five-Minute Guide to Becoming an Influencer

- SPECIAL REPORT -

An influencer is someone that has the power to influence. More specifically, that means someone that can encourage sales of a product or service, that can help to direct the general conversation around a topic or idea, and that can set trends.

Online, this tends to be the Instagram star, the YouTube creator, or the big blogger. These are the people we turn to for online content, whose opinions and intuitions we trust above others.

Understandably, big businesses want to work with influencers. They recognize that they offer the opportunity to not only increase awareness, but also to gain endorsement from someone whose opinion *matters*.

A successful influencer can earn as much as $1,000 per 100,000 followers on a given account, and if they promote their *own* products, then they can stand to earn even more!
So, the question is, how do you go about becoming an influencer?

Starting Out

The first thing to do is to decide a niche, decide the type of content you want to create, and start getting to work building that.

Where do you begin?

The answer is by picking the niche and your "mission statement." When choosing a niche, you might be tempted to presume the best strategy would be to go for the most popular niche with the most searches and broadest appeal. The problem with that approach is that it is likely to mean facing a huge amount of competition.
Moreover, with a fairly generic and broad target niche, your content will likely fall into the same category.

That's where the mission statement comes in: knowing what you are going to bring to the table that makes it different. Who *precisely* are you aiming your content at? What is the ethos of your business? What are you hoping people will learn from you? What sets you apart from the competition?

This often comes down to choosing a sub niche. For instance, you might not just be a fitness brand, but rather a "fitness for over 50s brand." Similarly, you might not just blog about comics and films, but speak specifically about Marvel comics and films. Or maybe you'll speak specifically about *60s* comics.

Great examples of unique niches that still have broad appeal include:
- The Art of Manliness – A blog all about being a "man" with a very old-timey feel to it
- Nerd Fitness – Fitness but for nerds
- T-Nation – A strength and fitness blog that focusses a lot on the lifestyle of being a serious heavy lifter

By finding your own specific niche this way, you sidestep a scenario where you're up against huge competition, and you create a brand with a stronger identity. This will also create easier marketing opportunities, as you'll know precisely *who* your content is for and what they're looking for.

The next step is to make sure that your logo, your photography style, and even your website will fit the same tone. Ideally, you want someone to look at your Instagram account or website and know instantly what it is about and whether or not it is really for them.

For example, this might mean designing your website in a specific way.

Targeting Web Design at Your Specific Niche

A lot of web designers seem to be under the false impression that they can just "cut and paste" effective web designs across any site. Research shows which colours are most likely to illicit clicks and which are most likely to keep visitors on your page, and we all know where visitors *expect* to find their links and their logos. For this reason, we will tend to go about web design in a relatively formulaic manner regardless of the intended use. This is a mistake though, as web design should always reflect the intended purpose of the site: a business site should be different from an online magazine, which should be different from a personal website.

Likewise, web design should also vary depending on who it is aimed at. If you build a website aimed at the general public, then you should aim to make your website look like it was aimed at the general public. If it is aimed at dog lovers, then it should look like it's made for dog lovers.

A great example of this is the site "Menprovement." This is a site aimed at men that teaches them about power, success, and getting women. The website is black in many places with white text. This is considered *bad design* by most standards, but in the context it works well. The same is true for the site T-Nation which is aimed at hardcore bodybuilders as mentioned. This one uses black and *red*.

But both create a certain "feeling" in the reader. That feeling makes them seem as though they've found something secretive and powerful, something masculine. This has a HUGE impact on the way they perceive what they're reading.

Creating your web design based on what you know about your niche is a great way to ensure that your site will have a great chance of being a hit. People with the same taste in hobbies will often have the same taste in colours and designs, so using this information you can create a site that they enjoy looking at. Let's see how you can go about achieving that.

Think About the Niche

First of all, you should think about how you can include elements of the niche *itself* in your design. If someone is a fan of trains, then they'll probably appreciate a web design that incorporates trains into the look and feel. Don't do this at the expense of clarity, or logical navigation, but otherwise alluding to your chosen niche is only logical and will help communicate the topic of your site to visitors.

Think About the People

At the same time, you should also examine what you know about your typical viewer. You should have an idea what kind of demographic your niche appeals to for instance – if it's action films then you'll get mostly young (not exclusively), while if it's Bingo you might get mostly get older women. Using this information, you can then design your site *for* that group – young males might enjoy a more modern looking website and are likely to be tech-savvy so shouldn't need hand holding through the navigation. Older women on the other hand are more likely to struggle with technology and more likely to appreciate a more classic and more ornate looking layout.

Think About Your Identity

What's important though is to avoid becoming an amalgamation of related images. While you should allude to your niche and cater for your audience, you should also make sure that you have a strong brand of your own and you should look at ways of making that clear throughout your site. Of course, coming up with your logo itself might also require you to have a look at your niche and how you can work within it.

Applying This Logic to Social Media

This same logic applies to an influencer using social media. For the YouTube star, you should think in a similar way when creating your thumbnails for instance, and also your editing style. The YouTube channel Captain Midnight does this expertly by having clear yellow thumbnails on every video, and by using clips from old and humorous Marvel films in between "scenes." Consistent tweaks like this set a tone and create excellent consistency across the brand.

When you do this, you create a strong sense of who your brand is aimed at and you ensure that your audience knows what to expect.

For social media accounts, you should think carefully about your logo – does it express what your account is about – as well as the style of image that you upload and the type of language you use. Be consistent and make sure it is all aligned with your mission statement, your brand, and your target audience.

Why This All Matters for the Influencer

So why does this all matter for an influencer?
The answer is that a successful influencer is someone that has a clear voice, a clear audience, and SOMETHING TO SAY.

Too many creators will build a website in a niche that they know nothing about – fitness, money, dating – and will then hire writers who also know nothing about the topic to fill it with content. They'll use a generic design, and they'll write broadly on the topic without aiming for anyone in particular.

How many times have you seen articles like:
"How to get six pack abs"
Or
"How to earn money online"
Or
"Tips for talking to women"
These posts are so overdone, so generic, and so unexciting that they won't get any traction.

The same goes for just sharing randomly any picture to an Instagram account that vaguely relates to your niche.

But if you really know and love a topic, then you'll be able to say something genuinely NEW on that subject. And you'll be able to say it in a way that speaks directly to the right audience – that gets them excited for what you're promising and that is new and intriguing.

How about:
"The Secret of Pro Bodybuilders – How to Increase Androgen Receptors"
Or

"How to Make Money Online By Selling Courses for $1,000+ CRAZY RESULTS!"
Or
"Is Emotional Intelligence Lacking In Your Relationship? Take This Test to Find Out"

These posts aren't for everyone, but they are things that the *right person* will really respond to. They are things that have *some kind* of emotional reaction. They are NEW things that people who are interested in those topics might want to find out more about.

For an Instagram account, the equivalent is posting images that show hardcore bodybuilders with chalked up hands and chains hanging off their neck – or posting images of couples reading together in the evenings and gazing lovingly into each other's eyes. Again, this strong "style" will be off putting for some. But that is a *good thing*.

Try and please everyone and you'll please no one.
If you want to be a thought leader, you need to *lead*.

Your Personal Brand

If you do all this and you create a personal brand, where you are *living the lifestyle* you are promoting, then the people who respond to that will start to follow you. If you then engage with them, and if you continue to live the lifestyle that they want, they will begin to listen to you. And at that point, you'll be an influencer.

Perhaps the hardest part then, is making sure that your persona in your images, blog posts, and videos will gel with the lifestyle you're pedalling. That means you need to become a role model. The good news is that you can use a little Hollywood magic. You can post old images for instance, meaning you can take a whole bunch in a batch and then share them.
You can use a little careful editing of your images, and you can use things like quotes and stock imagery to further help sell the idea.

But at the end of the day, the best way to create a personal brand and to become an influencer, is to *genuinely be* the person you want to promote. And to do that, you'll need to create a brand that is true to you, and that speaks to your values.

The best part of this is that as you strengthen your brand and build your following, you will also go on a journey of self-improvement in order to become the best version of yourself. Your audience will be there every step of the way with you, and as they see *your* transformation, they'll believe they can do the same.