

Spring 2017

# COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS REGARDING BRAND MANAGEMENT THROUGH INFLUENCER MARKETING

Julia Hurt

John Carroll University, [jhurt16@jcu.edu](mailto:jhurt16@jcu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://collected.jcu.edu/mastersessays>

 Part of the [Marketing Commons](#), [Public Relations and Advertising Commons](#), and the [Social Media Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Hurt, Julia, "COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS REGARDING BRAND MANAGEMENT THROUGH INFLUENCER MARKETING" (2017). *Masters Essays*. 69.  
<http://collected.jcu.edu/mastersessays/69>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Essays, and Senior Honors Projects at Carroll Collected. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Essays by an authorized administrator of Carroll Collected. For more information, please contact [connell@jcu.edu](mailto:connell@jcu.edu).

COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS REGARDING  
BRAND MANAGEMENT THROUGH  
INFLUENCER MARKETING

An Essay Submitted to the  
Office of Graduate Studies  
College of Arts & Sciences of  
John Carroll University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

By  
Julia M. Hurt  
2017

The essay of Julia M. Hurt is hereby accepted:

---

Advisor – Dr. Mary E. Beadle

---

Date

I certify that this is the original document

---

Author – Julia M. Hurt

---

Date

## Abstract

The divide between advertising, marketing, and public relations has deteriorated over time, where each has a specific focus but no longer a particular correct way of reaching audiences. With the ever-growing presence of online social influencers, a new marketing practice known as influencer marketing has evolved, where brands connect with consumers in an authentic and meaningful way. Influencer marketing is a form of marketing that identifies and targets individuals through the influence of bloggers and their active voice. Research indicates how influence plays a role through social media to reach consumers. However, there is a gap in research when it comes to social influencers brand management. The purpose of this essay is to compare two, prominent influencer-marketing agencies' influencers, Socialyte and Influencer Marketing Agency (IMA). A random examination of these agencies influencers and their Instagram posts will be provided to indicate how influencers are managing brands and engaging with audiences. Instagram will be studied in order to determine how relationships between influencers and consumers are advancing due to new features added to the platform increasing interactivity. Research has yet to assess how influencer's content on Instagram works to manage and provide services to brands in order to gain more intimate relationships with their consumers. In 2017, influencer marketing is essential for brands to be successful when engaging and communicating with their consumers.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	3
Instagram Terminology .....	4
Literature Review .....	6
Social Media .....	6
Instagram .....	7
Influencer Identification .....	8
Social Media Marketing .....	9
Influencer Marketing .....	10
Influencer Networks .....	11
Brand Identity .....	12
Branding with Social Media .....	13
Interactivity .....	14
User Engagement .....	15
Research Questions .....	17
Methodology .....	17
Research Limitations .....	21
Results .....	22
Discussion .....	26
Recommendations & Future Research .....	32
Conclusion .....	32
Works Cited .....	35
Appendix A .....	41
Appendix B .....	42

## Introduction

The landscape of digital public relations has evolved dramatically with the ever-growing presence of online influencers. Influencer marketing has emerged as one of the rising social media marketing practices, as brands attempt to connect with consumers in a meaningful and authentic way. Influencer marketing can be defined as a form of marketing that identifies and targets individuals with influence over potential consumers of brands (Wong, 2014). The active voice of the blogger creates the relationship between the influencer and his or her followers, as well as establishing the credibility of the influencer.

The purpose of this study is to examine two prominent online influencer agencies, IMA and Socialyte, and their influencers. This content analysis will involve a comparison of online social influencers and how their Instagram content manages brands and engages with audiences. A brief history of the development and changes over time of online social influencers will be provided to then compare how current strategies are succeeding in 2016. Through social media, social influencers often have huge followings across multiple platforms; this strategy is how brands reach their audiences. Relatively new social media, such as Instagram, has offered a multidimensional method for social influencers' audiences to live vicariously through these platforms. This study will also provide an in depth examination of Instagram evolving features. These features encourage followers to feel connected with influencers, as well as to follow their preferences and purchasing habits.

It is evident influencer outreach has become a necessary strategy for brands to be successful in 2017. Currently, research indicates why influencer marketing is successful

for reaching audiences. There is a direct relationship between influencer marketing and how it impacts consumer's preferences for brands and purchasing habits. However, there is less research regarding how these social influencers are managing brands through the content they're posting. As the industry of social influencer marketing continues to grow, influencer agencies have developed to manage and provide services to brands looking to gain a more intimate relationship with their consumers. By observing social influencers' activity and level of engagement on their Instagram accounts, evidence will reveal how they are creating and maintaining relationships with brand consumers. By analyzing the content of the selected Instagram post, an understanding of how customer relations and user interaction can be created through the usage of Instagram. These agencies match influencers with brands to provide the appropriate reach to their target audiences. This is the current tactic of digital marketing. There is a lack of sufficient research regarding the management component between these agencies' influencers and their brands, even though these agencies are major factors in the recent age of digital marketing.

#### Definitions of Instagram Terminology

The following terms are commonly used when describing the usage and platform of Instagram. Each term is defined for reference as this essay continues to define the relationship between influencer marketing and the consumer.

##### **App**

App is the everyday language for application, which is software that can be run on the Internet, Computers, smart phones, and other electronic devices.

##### **Caption**

A title or explanation for a photo posted on Instagram.

##### **Comments**

A comment is a message that a user can leave on another user's photo.

### **Contest**

A competition for Instagram followers to participate in, often the participants receive a prize. This is used for brand engagement purposes.

### **Direct Message**

A private conversation between followers. DM's are best for questions or quick discussions.

### **Feed**

Feed is the automatic photo fetching of the user's subscribed profiles. The photos will be shown on the user's home page.

### **Functions**



**House** – User's newsfeed.

**Magnify Glass** – Search & explore page.

**Camera** – Shares photo with Instagram.

**Heart** – Displays likes and comments on user's own post.

**Human Figure** – User's profile page.

### **Filter**

Filter refers to the 19 pre-modified color modifications Instagram offers its users for an instant photo enhancement. The filter adjusts the photo's color, light, and/or contrast.

### **Follower**

A follower is a user who subscribes to another user's update. The follower person's update will then show up on the subscriber's feed.

### **Geotag**

Geotagging is the process of adding geographical data to a photo. This data can consist of the name and address of the location.

### **Hashtags**

Hashtags are used as a means to create groupings. By the use of the symbol #, followed by a word, users can easily track other posts related to a desired group or subject.

### **Hashtag Penetration**

A collective amount of hashtagged photos.



**Tag**

The user can either tag something by the use of hashtags or tag another user by the use of the symbol @ in front of the other user's username. By doing so, the other user will receive a notification that he/she has been tagged in a picture or comment

**Question**

A promotional strategy used in Instagram captions for influencers to engage followers or for followers to use in comments.

**Spam**

Spam is a comment that is not related to the picture and has been posted with the purpose of promoting an advertising message or in an advertisement to follow a specific user.

### Literature Review

In this literature review, there will be an examination of theories and concepts concerning social media, influencer identification, influencer marketing, marketing, public relations, brand typology, traditional branding strategies, and social media marketing strategies, interactivity, and user engagement. Empirical evidence of how influencers are managing a brand's content is needed in order to evaluate a proper content analysis of influencer marketing. This research is essential in order to review influencers content through the month of December leading up to a major holiday and New Year. An analysis of Instagram will be provided in order to examine how brand content is marketed. This literature review will help discover the current uses of influencer marketing, as well as the future use of influencer marketing for brand management.

**Social Media**

As social media platforms continue to expand and provide new features, the marketing industry is required to adapt in order to reach new consumers. In 2016, the number of social network users amounted to 2.22 billion and is expected to increase to 2.72 billion by 2019 (Statista, 2016). According to Perrin (2015) social networking sites

are prevalent amongst the millennial generation, with 90% of the U.S population being 18-29 years old and active users on social media (Perrin, 2015). There has been an increase in the amount of social media users, as well as an increase in the amount of time spent on social media.

The Global Web Index indicates users are spending 1.72 hours per day on social platforms, which makes up for approximately 28% of all online activity (Bennett, 2015). These statistics reveal multiple audiences are present, as well as the power to influence these audiences. Bennett's (2015) study suggests nearly "74% of consumers rely on social media to influence their purchasing decisions" (p.1). This has caused the manner of marketing to change; marketers are now forced to find exclusive methods of reaching their consumers on social media platforms, which is the strategy of influencer marketing. Pustylnick (2011) theorizes publishing brand photos and videos in social media content successfully enhances the consumer's brand awareness. The advantage of social media content is the purpose of sharing photos and videos on mobile device applications (Pustylnick, 2011). The concept of image sharing as a marketing strategy is most applicable to the mobile app, Instagram, which is a highly prevalent social media platform amongst influencers.

### **Instagram**

Founded in 2010, Instagram is a free mobile application available to Apple and Android products. Instagram is a social network that offers the ability to share and engage primarily with image and video content. Instagram has over 500 million active monthly users, where over 40 billion pictures have been shared to date, with an average of 95 million photos and videos shared per day (Parker, 2016). Instagram's features

include sharing, following, liking, and commenting on content. As well as, the ability to direct message, edit photos with filters, and connect with other social networking sites. As a marketing tool, Instagram generates, connects, and communicates content with consumers (Parker, 2016).

Bjorkgren (2012) explains the communication of Instagram revolves around instantaneous, real time pictures where brands can convey personal and authentic identities while creating a massive following through hashtag influence. Instagram evokes different levels of user interaction. Bergstrom & Backman (2013) explains the utilization of Instagram's inherent qualities allows brands to publish material suitable to the expectations of their consumers, and thus influences their opinion of the brand in a desired way. This study revealed Instagram can increase brands level of interaction with consumers by five times when encouraging users to co-create brand material (Bergstrom & Backman, 2013). According to Laroche, Habibi, & Richard (2012) Instagram users feel as if they can connect with a brand, which serves as a sense of inclusiveness in being a part of a brand community. By posting content connected to a target group, and by utilizing Instagram's features, a brand can affectively impact and influence users, user interactions, and brand trust (Bergstrom & Backman, 2013).

### **Influencer Identification**

Hornsey & Hogg (2000) define social identity as an individual's awareness of self, which comes from perceived membership in relevant social groups. In terms of online social networks and identity, Cheung & Lee (2010) found identity occurs similarly through interactions with other users in personal networks, as well as online social groups. Social identity theory suggests people tend to identify with in-group members (an

individual who identifies him or herself as a member to a common purpose) by sharing their opinions and behaving similarly versus the out-group members (Shi, Sia, & Chen, 2013). According to Reid (1987), social trust is related to groups providing members with information about their social identities. This directly relates to how relationships are established between influencers and followers online.

Based on the social network theory, various studies have been conducted on identifying influencers. A study by Cha, Haddadi, & Benevenuto (2010) identified influencers on Twitter by analyzing the measure of influence which was categorized as the number of followers, the number of re-tweets, and the number of mentions. Similar to Wu, Hofman, Mason, & Watts's (2011) study regarding the network theory classified influencers on Twitter as "elite" versus "ordinary" users based on the measure of influence credentials. Based on a similar framework, Liu, Jiang, Lin, Ding, Duan, Xu (2015) study noted the importance of identifying influencers on social networks, as well as how users prefer to interact with their in-group members and are influenced by these members' opinions. Liu et al's (2015) study acknowledged marketing practices must identify influencers in order to successfully target brand's audiences. It is evident marketing practices need to identify social influencers for they relate and connect to consumers over social media.

### **Social Media Marketing**

Social media provides an inexpensive way to interact and engage with a large number of potential customers, thus making it a valuable tool for marketers to use (Tuten & Solomon, 2015). According to Chen, Fay, & Wang's (2011) study the purpose of social media marketing is branding, promotion, market research, customer service, and

customer relationship marketing. Castronovo & Huang (2012) suggest social media marketing is measured by generated web traffic, clicks, repeat visits, number of new followers, mentions, and recommendations. Paine (2011) study suggest using engagement as a key metric, and divides engagement into phases, starting with clicking and liking, continuing with commenting, following, sharing, hash-tagging, and finally evolving into promotion of the brand.

### **Influencer Marketing**

Social media has fundamentally changed the balance of power between consumers and brands because it enables peer recommendations to play a greater role in purchasing decisions (Wong, 2015). Influencer marketing is essentially a form of word-of-mouth marketing. According to Bughin, Doogan, & Vetvik's (2010) study, word-of-mouth marketing generates more than twice the sales of paid advertising, and these consumers have a 37% higher retention rate (p. 2). Word-of-mouth marketing influences twenty to fifty percent of all purchasing decisions, especially when consumers are buying products for the first time, or when products are relatively expensive (Bughin, Doogan, & Vetvik, 2010). Marketing agencies attempt to capitalize on this by communicating their message through influencers. These influencers are often perceived as trusted friends by followers. According to a joint study conducted by Twitter and an analytics firm Annalect, 56% of users surveyed said they rely on recommendations from friends, while 49% said they rely on influencers (Swant, 2016). The combination of online social influencers relationships with consumers and the ability to post favorable content towards a brands product, is an essential strategy for digital marketing.

Brown's (2008) study examined why the power of the influencer has gone unnoticed until now. The study concluded 1) influencers were originally being targeted as prospective purchasers, and 2) the tools and research were not in place to identify who these influencers were. Brown's (2008) research outlines influencer marketing as an approach where greater selectivity is encouraged when targeting segments, as well as increasing the understanding of each sector. It is evident that the evolution of marketing has generated a new form of reaching audiences through influencer marketing: followers live vicariously through these platforms to seek influencers and brands have the ability to communicate and target specific individual audiences through influencers.

### **Influencer Networks**

Moxie, a modern marketing solutions agency, conducted relatively new research indicating the important role of influencer networks. According to a study by Cantor, Cobb, & Donnelly (2014), "influencer networks are companies that connect influencers with brands" (p.12). Brands and agencies partner with networks to increase efficiencies in identifying influencers who want to work with brands, often serving as their "agents" or brokering their deals (Cantor, Cobb, & Donnelly, 2014). For example, an influencer-marketing agency acts as a consulting service where strategic support is offered towards connecting brands with a suitable influencer, and the use of proper social media to target specific audiences. Agencies facilitate the relationship between the influencer and the brand by communication and incentivizing influencers with money and free products (Cantor, Cobb, & Donnelly, 2014). The influencer then takes these incentives and represents the brand on their social media by promoting the products and services to their followers, encouraging them to purchase them.

According to Page, Perry, & Srikishen (2015) study, “75 percent of marketers are using influence marketing to connect with targeted audiences” (p.2). What started in the early 2000’s regarding blogging has evolved into a more robust brand content oriented movement, where every demographic, topic, and format is communicated. Page, Perry, & Srikishen’s (2015) study theorized how short form content has surged on platforms such as Instagram, Vine, Pinterest, and Snapchat causing a new generation of social media creators. Now influencers have the ability to create innovative, inspiring, and engaging content, which creates these visual marketing platforms for users. The development of social media has ultimately reversed the roles of influencers reaching out to brands to represent products, to now brands needing influencers to connect to their audiences in a more personal and intimate way. The concept of influencer marketing agencies evolved to help brands determine which influencer and social media best fit their needs. This content analysis will examine influencer’s profiles during a specific time period in order to provide insight on how these influencers are managing their representations of brands, as well as their reach towards targeted audiences.

### **Brand Identity**

Brand scholars have developed concepts and theories to understand how brands use various strategies to create a brand identity that relates their consumers. Aaker’s (1996) brand identity model distinguishes four types of brand perspectives: brand-as-product, brand-as-organization, brand-as-person, and brand-as-symbol. A brand as a product is the core element of a brand’s identity and relates directly to the use or service of the product. The brand, as an organization, focuses on the attributes of the organization rather than the product or services it offers (Aaker, 1996). These attributes revolve

around the organizations values, culture, and mission (for example the drive for quality, environmental concern, or innovation). The brand-as-person is the personality of the brand that associates with human characteristics such as gender, age, and socio-economic class (Aaker, 1996). For example, the cigarette brand Marlboro is masculine, while Virginia Slims are feminine; Apple is younger, while IBM is older. Lastly, the brand as a symbol uses structure and cohesion to gain recognition and recall to consumers. An example of how consumers gain recognitions is through their visual logo imagery like Nike's swoosh symbol and the McDonald's golden arches. This brand typology is not ambiguous; brands can be a mix of being a product while at the same time adding symbolic meaning (Aaker, 1996). This information is helpful for influencers to know when marketing brands on social media since it helps relate to the potential consumer.

### **Branding with Social Media**

Influencers use social media to engage in authentic relationships with brand's consumers. According to Ashley & Tuten's (2014) study, branded social media activities can be used to increase brand awareness and brand liking, promote customer engagement and loyalty, inspire consumer word-of-mouth communication about the brand and drive traffic to the brand. Through social media, engaged consumers participate and share content. Fosdick (2012) suggests participation may be passive involving simply consuming the media content or active which such behaviors as submitting consumer-generated stories. Consumer engagement is typically measured by comments, clicks, following, refers others, submits an inquiry, friends, or buys the brand (Falls, 2010). Among these consumer behaviors, those that result in a brand mention to the person's network is called influence impressions (Li & Bernoff, 2008). These influence



impressions are word-of-mouth communication,, a type of earned media on social platforms where brands increase their value. People are inherently social and look to create and maintain relationships with others and with brands on social media. Through user engagement on social media, influencers have the ability to impact follower's opinions, attitudes, and beliefs towards brands.

Research indicates influencer marketing is a key strategy for brands to engage and reach their consumers. Theories concerning the power of influence and individuals feeling inclusiveness to a brand community relates to how social influencers are able to connect authentically with brand's consumers. It is evident there continues to be an evolution of marketing, where social media, specifically the use of Instagram, has a significant role to encourage consumer outreach. Before the age of social media, content could be more controlled, compared to now regular individuals are expressing their opinions, values, and beliefs about products and causing an influence amongst followers. It is important to know how these influencers are managing their brands, whether it is through marketing specific brand identities, user engagement, or the type of content generated.

### **Interactivity**

Peppers & Rogers (2004) identify today to be the "era of interactivity", where technology has changed the way brands and consumers interact. Through social media, a brand can create and develop recognition by posting content that appeals to their consumers. Additionally, social media provides brands the ability to communicate publicly, which creates content penetrating power since all users can access it. According to Ba & Pavlou (2001), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) focuses on setting a

brand apart from its competitors by personalizing communication with consumers. For example, this can be done by targeting a consumer with relevant information, or establishing a personal connection with a specific consumer that then leads to generating word-of-mouth advertising (Ba & Pavlou, 2001).

The utilization of social media as a marketing tool has decreased the focus on selling the product; rather the attention has shifted towards the needs and desires of the consumer. Instagram provides social influencers the ability to give brands a larger perception of the product or services, for example consumers reposting relevant content with the brand (Ba & Pavlou, 2001). According to Lovejoy & Saxton (2012), social media has created opportunities for interpersonal engagement, interactivity, and dialogue that differ from those of traditional media. Interactivity heightens consumer's attention levels, which in return facilitates the strengthening of brand relationships and consumer satisfaction (Simmons, 2007). The higher level of interactivity indicates an increase in followers, likes, and user-comments (Simmons, 2007).

### **User Engagement on Social Media**

Compared to traditional media, engagement on social media can happen instantaneously. From their own free will, users can become active participants, rather than passive viewers. The effect of engagement on Instagram includes likes, comments, and hashtag penetration. According to Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan (2010), the creation of brand communities fosters brand engagement and the appeal of feeling included, similar to research concerning influencer networks. Laroche et al (2010) argues building brand communities on social media further evolves brand trust since

users are sharing information and experiences of the products or services, while also aiding one another.

Evans (2011) defines four factors that create user engagement on social media: consumption, curation, creation, and collaboration. Consumption is the opposite of interaction and concerns only the activity a consumer engages in online, such as, reading, downloading, watching, or listening to content. Since only about 42% of users actively engage and interact on social media platforms, consumption is the most common type of usage (Evans, 2011). Curation is the transition from passive to active usage on social media, where the consumer engages with content by commenting, liking, and rating or with use of a hashtag. Content creation is where users are uploading their own content onto a platform, such as pictures, statuses, and post. Instagram revolves around content creation, where its primary use relies on uploading pictures and interaction with other users. According to Evans (2011), “by creating actives that connect to lifestyles, passions, and causes, the brand, product or service takes on a new relevance for the consumers” (p. 16). Lastly, collaboration describes the process where content can be co-created, for example by users commenting on news articles, on net-based magazines, or uploading hash tagged pictures on Instagram. This level of engagement is most common amongst the social influencer, since often they’re co-creating content with brands to portray the product or service in an authentic way.

Overall, research indicates new features of social media have encouraged the marketing industry to adapt in order to reach new consumers. Instagram’s features revolve around sharing and engage with image and video content. Pustynick (2011) study suggests publishing photos and videos on social media successfully enhances the

consumer's brand awareness. The management component of this has shifted, where brands are hiring social influencers to post their content in order to provide consumers with an authentic voice. Peppers and Rogers (2004) define today as an "era of interactivity" where brand communities are fostered and users appeal to the sense of inclusiveness. Laroche et al (2010) emphasizes building brand communities on social media further evolves brand trust, where users can share experience with each other, while also aiding one another.

Research Questions:

1. What type of content do social influencers post on Instagram? (Content)
2. What effects do selected posts have on audience's level of interaction?  
(Engagement)
3. How are social influencers managing brands through the use of Instagram?  
(Interactivity)

### Methodology

Content analysis was used to examine a social influencer's Instagram content, level of interactivity, and level of engagement during the month of December 2016. The primary focus was how social influencers manage brands and engage followers on Instagram. The content analysis was substantially original, but consistent with methodologies used in Bergstrom & Backman's (2013) study regarding marketing in social media. The methods used from Bergstrom & Backman's (2013) study included the credentials to measure content, engagement, and interactivity. For content, the type of comment was used (positive, negative, neutral, and spam), and if the brand name was visible, tagged, or hashtagged. For engagement, Bergstrom & Backman's (2013) coding

procedures such as recording influencers, number of followers, number likes on each post, and number of comments on each post were used. For interactivity, recording if there was a question or contest was used from their study as well. Original coding consisted of adding details to the codebook such as personal versus sponsored content, geotags, hashtag penetration, the brand name, comment responses, and number of posts per day.

The social networking platform Instagram was used to view content. The social influencer agencies Socialyte and IMA each provided an online roster of their social influencers. Socialyte works with 78 influencers, and IMA works with 107 influencers. Each roster was put into chronological order based on the number of followers each influencer had. Five social influencers with the most number of followers and five social influencers with the least number of followers were analyzed from each social influencer agency roster. Gender was not a consideration in this study; influencers were chosen based on the number of followers they have.

To determine the best time to analyze influencer content, a study conducted by NewsWhip provided validation for month selection. The study revealed online traffic increased during the months of November and December leading up to the winter holidays (NewsWhip, 2016). A study conducted by Beres' (2014) provided validation for date selection, where Wednesday between 2AM and 5PM the most content was posted on Instagram. Therefore, this content analysis examines Wednesdays leading up to Christmas in 2016. The specific dates analyzed were: November 30<sup>th</sup>, December 7<sup>th</sup>, December 14<sup>th</sup>, and December 21<sup>st</sup>. If influencers posted more than one photo or video on one of these dates, the first post was chosen to eliminate duplication. After each

Instagram post was examined, the numerical data was collected to decipher the content influencers posted, their level of engagement, and their level of interactivity.

Social influencer's Instagram posts were individually analyzed by type of content (sponsored, personal, or promotional), level of engagement (total number of followers, total number of likes, total number of comments), and level of interactivity (contest, questions, responses). The analysis of social influencer content, engagement and interactivity will determine if there is a relationship between how social influencers are managing brands, as well as how social influencers engaged followers.

### **Content**

Since Instagram followers follow social influencers for their authentic voice (Carlson, 2015; Bjorkgren, 2012; Peppers & Rogers, 2004), the type of content was important to analyze. The number of posts per each date selected was recorded. The number of brand mentions, brand tags, and brand hashtags was recorded. Social influencers post both sponsored and personal content. Sponsored content was measured when influencers mentioned brands, tagged brands, or used hashtags related to a brand. For example, if social influencers posted a picture of shoes and tagged a brand, as well as mentioned the brand in their caption to promote the brand. Personal content was measured when the influencer did not mention a brand. For example, if a social influencer posted a picture of themselves with a simple caption and no brand was mentioned or tagged. Promotional content was measured when the social influencer used captions to promote the brand's product or service (See page 4 for Instagram definitions).

## **Engagement**

The use of social media as a marketing tool can benefit consumer relationships and create brand recognition (Pepper & Rogers, 2004). Social media marketing can generate active and engaged users, who then interact with the brand or the social influencer from their own free will (Meerman, 2011). To measure influencer's level of engagement, the total number of followers, total number of likes, total number of comments, and total number of hashtag penetration was collected for each post. It is important to note that it is not possible to ascertain whether Instagram users who engage by likes, comments, or hashtags are followers of the social influencers, since social influencers profiles are often public.

## **Interactivity**

The level of interactivity was measured by the social influencer's response actions after content was posted. Interactivity was measured by if social influencers asked questions in their captions, used a contest tagline, responded to followers comments, and or asked followers to direct message them for further inquiries. Research indicates a direct relationship between the amount of interactivity and engagement, when interactivity increase the level of engagement increases as well.

For this content analysis, a total of 40 Instagram posts were viewed from the year 2016. These numbers were formulated from previously mentioned credentials in the methods section. Five influencers with the most number of Instagram followers and five influencers with the least number of Instagram followers were chosen from each social influencer-marketing agency, Socialyte and IMA. Following the coding sheet listed in Appendix A (See page 41), each social influencer's Instagram content was analyzed on

Wednesdays in the end of November and the month of December leading up to December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016. After each Instagram post was examined, the numerical data was collected to decipher influencer's type of content, level of engagement, and level of interactivity. The Tables below indicate the result section.

#### Research Limitations

The analysis of influencer's Instagram posts came from previous coding methods, as well as my own observations, causing the research to potentially include some bias. Because of time limitations, a second coder was unavailable to reassure validity and reliability of the results. A total number of 15 days did not have any Instagram posts to examine, causing a limitation in the results. Another aspect to consider is the limitations caused by some of the influencers, where a total of 15 days did not have any Instagram to examine. Another factor that could have provided more insight is whether the data set included the middle range of influencers based on their followers to provide a well-rounded perspective. Because the agencies are international, some of the influencers Instagram posts were written in a foreign language. Although Instagram provides translations, the data was difficult to interpret correctly when deciphering if their content was promotional or personal. Another limitation that occurred was the influencer agencies did not mention what brands each influencer was directly working with at this time. Therefore, it was hard to interpret if the influencer had sponsored or personal content. Lastly, a potential limitation for this data is how social influencer marketing is instantaneously evolving causing the use of different strategies for influencers to influence, reach, and represent brands to their audiences. The coding methods used in this



content analysis might not necessarily apply to how influencers are representing brands and reaching their target audience today.

### Results

Social influencers representation of brands is important because it affects how influencers reach and influence others. The data was collected through the analysis of each Instagram post and then separated into Tables reflecting the type of content, level of engagement, and level of interactivity. The data was represented by each social influencer agency to portray clear and concise results. The results depict the type of content influencers post, influencer’s level of engagement, and influencer’s level of interactivity. It is important to note the results are not viewing the comparison between each agency, rather the comparison of influencers with the most number of followers and influencers with the least number of followers to determine how influencers represent brands, engage, and interact with followers.

**Table #1A: Measurement of Top 5 Influencers Content**

Content	IMA Total Instagram Posts: 20	Socialyte Total Instagram Posts: 20
Total # of Brand Mentions	11 posts	10 posts
Total # of Tagged Brands	11 posts	17 posts
Personal Content	9 posts	7 posts
Sponsored Content	7 posts	6 posts
Promotional	11 posts	9 posts

**Table #1B: Measurement of Bottom 5 Influencers Content**

Content	IMA Total Instagram Posts: 20	Socialyte Total Instagram Posts: 20
Total # of Brand Mentions	3 posts	10 posts
Total # of Tagged Brands	3 posts	12 posts
Personal Content	13 posts	5 posts
Sponsored Content	0 post	8 post
Promotional	3 posts	9 posts

Table #1A and Table#1B reflect the measurement of social influencer's type of content posted on Instagram. A total of 20 posts from social influencer agency IMA and Socialyte were analyzed. Table #1A indicates influencers with more followers, posted promotional content in comparison to Table #1B with influencers who have fewer followers. Influencers with more followers in Table #1A represented brands by brand mentions, tags, and hashtags. Table #1A indicates influencers with more followers, posted sponsored content. Table #1B suggest influencers with fewer followers posted more personal content. The results indicate influencers with fewer followers post less content regarding brand representation. Table #1B reflects influencers with fewer followers posted less promotional content, and have less content where brands were mentioned and or tagged.

**Table #2A: Measurement of Top 5 Influencers Engagement**

Engagement	IMA	Socialyte
Total # of Followers	1.6M– 3.8M	734K – 3.3M
Total # of Likes	1,293,410 Likes	4,324,932 Likes
Total # of Comments	7,840 Comments	10,630 Comments

**Table #2B: Measurement of Bottom 5 Influencers Engagement**

Engagement	IMA	Socialyte
Total # of Followers	7.818K – 15.8K	19.3K – 43.6K
Total # of Likes	4,357 Likes	11,219 Likes
Total # of Comments	700 Comments	736 Comments

Table #2A and Table #2B represent the level of engagement between influencers with more followers and influencers with fewer followers. The total number of followers, total number of likes, and total number of comments portray level of engagement. The numbers represent collective numerical data where influencers with the most followers from one agency were totaled together for each credential of engagement. Results indicate influencers with more followers have a higher level of engagement based on the total number of followers, likes, and comments. Table #2A suggest influencers with more followers have more engaged followers where they comment and like influencers post more. Table #2B indicates influencers with fewer followers have less engagement, where followers like and comment less on posts. Table #2A and Table #2B indicate a direct relationship between the number of followers an influencers has and the amount of engagement. Table #2 portrays the fewer number of followers, and less engagement

occurred from followers through likes and comments. Table #2A suggest the more followers, the more engagement occurred from followers through likes and comments.

**Table #3A: Measurement of Top 5 Influencers Interactivity**

Interactivity	IMA Total Instagram Posts: 20	Socialyte Total Instagram Posts: 20
Contest	0 post	1 post
Questions	2 posts	5 posts (personal)
Content of Comment	Positive	Positive
Responds to Comments	0 post	0 post

**Table# 3B: Measurement of Bottom 5 Influencers Interactivity**

Interactivity	IMA Total Instagram Posts: 20	Socialyte Total Instagram Posts: 20
Contest in Caption	1 posts	1 posts
Question in Caption	2 posts	2 posts
Content of Comment	Neutral	Neutral
Responds to Comments	5 posts	8 posts

Table #3A and Table #3B represent the level of interactivity between influencers with the more followers and influencers with fewer followers. Results from Table# 3A indicate that influencers with more followers interact less in interactivity, but receive positive praise from their followers. Table #3B suggests influencers with fewer followers interact more, but receive neutral praise from their followers. Table #3B indicates influencers with less followers post more content with contests and questions than influencers in Table #3A. Table #3B suggest influencers with fewer followers interact with followers through comment response compared to influencers in Table#3A, where

influencers did not respond to any follower’s comments. Results indicate there is a difference between influencers with more followers versus influencers with fewer followers and their level of interactivity with followers.

**Table #4: Measurement of Top 5 Influencers Lack of Instagram Post**

Influencer Ranking: IMA & SOCIALYTE	Posts without content
Influencers with more followers	5 posts
Influencers with fewer followers	10 posts

Table #4 represents the amount of content influencers posts on Instagram. Results indicate influencers with more followers, posted more often than influencers with fewer followers. Influencers with more followers did not post content on five of the selected days, while influencers with fewer followers did not post content on ten of the selected days. Influencers with more followers posted more content, which resulted in more engagement indicated in Table #2A. Influencers with fewer followers posted less content, which resulted in less engagement indicated in Table #2B.

#### Discussion

The results of the comparative content analysis indicated the number of followers a social influencer has is related to the amount of content influencers posted on Instagram. Influencers with more followers posted more content daily to engage their followers. Influencers with more followers also posted more sponsored and promotional content than influencers with fewer followers. Influencers with more followers also posted more content with brand mentions, brand tags, and used more hashtag penetration than influencers with fewer followers. For example, IMA social influencer, Sarah

Angius, who has 3.3 million followers, posted four times on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016. In comparison, Socialyte's social influencer Chloe Leenheer, who has 12.8 thousand followers, posted once on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016. This revealed the number of followers a social influencers has is directly related to the frequency an influencer posts on Instagram and the amount of exposure a brand receives.

Influencers with more followers relatively posted the same amount of personal content as sponsored content. For example, Socialyte influencer, Caroline Receveur who had 2.1 million followers, posted on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 with a brand represented image. The post analyzed was a picture of her wrist with a Cluse watch. She mentioned the brand in the post's caption, tagged the brand, and wrote a promotional caption stating "Black mood with the new velvet edition from @Cluse". Receveur also included a hashtag in the picture to create more penetration and brand recognition. Another post on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 consisted of a picture of herself wearing Chanel shoes, with a caption stating, "I follow you." This post tagged the brand, but portrayed her personal choice in shoes. This data suggest influencers with more followers are representing more brands, while at the same time portraying personal content on their profile to depict a lifestyle and authentic voice (Carlson, 2015; Pepper & Rogger, 2004). Influencers with more followers portray content that reveals a desirable lifestyle versus just representing a brand alone. This can be noted as strategy where influencers with more followers incorporated a brand in to their lifestyle to keep their followers interested in their content.

Influencers with fewer followers posted less content regarding brand representation. For example, IMA social influencer Nathalie, known as "Home of a City Mom," had 15.2 thousand influencers. She posted one picture on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 of

her child in her home. The post did not have any brand mentions, rather a caption line regarding what color paint she had used on one of the walls inside her home. Her entire Instagram profile revolved around her home and her child, where some posts consisted of brand tags, but none where the brand was promoted or directly sponsored. This data is consistent with influencers who had fewer followers posted less brand related content.

Additionally, influencers with more followers create Instagram pages that were more aesthetically pleasing to the eye. All of the influencers from both agencies with more followers had Instagram content that was professionally taken compared to influencers with fewer followers. For example, influencer Socialyte, Alyssa Bossio, who had 1.3 million followers, posted on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 a professionally taken picture on the beach representing the shoe brand Reebok Women. While Socialyte influencer, Pixie Acia, who had 23.8 thousand followers, posted a picture on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 of herself through the camera lens on her mobile device with no brand representation. This suggests the type of content is related to the level of engagement influencers had in terms of the number of collective followers.

A significant finding from this study revealed influencers with more followers have similar Instagram profiles and posts to celebrities, where a third party is capturing pictures of them or their lifestyle. For example, celebrity Kendal Jenner had 77.7 million followers and most of her Instagram pictures were captured by a third party with a professional camera. Kendal Jenner's Instagram profile consisted of pictures of her lifestyle, for example makeup, clothes, food, travel, and her model work. The analyzed data revealed influencers with more followers post content related to a desirable lifestyle. The analyzed pictures represented influencers eating habits, clothing, what influencers

buy, and where influencers travel. The data suggest brand representation is then integrated into these posts. Influencers with more followers are selling the lifestyle they live and the brand's product or service is just an extension to the desirable lifestyle.

It is evident from this content analysis, influencers with more followers encountered more engagement from their followers. For example, IMA and Socialyte influencer Adam Gallagher had 2 million followers. His first picture posted on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 had 93,838 likes and 596 comments. In comparison to Socialyte influencer Danny Chung, who had 19.3 thousand followers, and his first picture posted on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 had 904 likes and only 1 comment. This data suggest influencers with more followers have a higher level of engagement versus influencers with fewer followers.

The more content on an influencer posts, the higher level of engagement occurred. For example, a reoccurring pattern from influencers with fewer followers was their lack of Instagram content on the selected dates. Influencers with more followers posted on average two-to-three post per day. Influencers with fewer followers, such as IMA influencer Roi Elmaliah, who had 10.2 thousand followers, did not post on November 30<sup>th</sup>, December 14<sup>th</sup>, or December 21<sup>st</sup> in 2016. This finding was consistent with another influencers with fewer followers, Talun Zeiton, who had 28.5 thousand followers and did not post on December 7<sup>th</sup> or December 14<sup>th</sup> in 2016. However, in comparison to Socialyte influencer Negin Mirsalehi, who had 3.8 million followers, posted five times on November 30<sup>th</sup>, two times on December 7<sup>th</sup>, two times on December 14<sup>th</sup>, and once on December 21<sup>st</sup> in 2016. This suggests the amount of posts per day increased the level of engagement from influencer's followers. A significant pattern discovered from



influencers with more followers was the order of their posts. Influencers with more followers would often have multiple posts on one day, where photographs were both personal and or just brand oriented. The portrayal of a lifestyle (personal content) in conjunction with brand representation is related to the level of engagement an influencer had, where influencers with more followers and more personal content had a high level of engagement.

The analysis of interactivity revealed social influencers level of interactivity does not have an affect on how influencers are managing their brands. Table #3A and Table #3B on page 24, show influencers with fewer followers interact more with users compared to influencers with more followers. The level of interactivity from influencers with more followers is low. This could be because of the amount of content and engagement influencers with more followers receive compared to influencers with fewer followers, where is it not realistic for influencers with more followers to interact. IMA influencer, Negin Mirsalehi, who had 3.8 million followers, posted a brand-sponsored picture on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 of infused scented oil. The picture received 41,399 likes and 196 comments. All of the comments consisted of positive feedback, where followers praised the picture and asked questions about the product. Although influencer Mirsalehi did interact with her followers, it did not affect the level of engagement or her follower's perception of her since the comments were positive. Since influencers with more followers interacted less with their followers, their profiles again seemed to resemble celebrity like profiles on Instagram where interaction was low.

As presented in Table #3A on page 24, none of the influencers with more followers from either agency posted content with contest taglines in their captions.

Previous research indicated contests would have a larger role in both the user motivations and influencer's efforts when interacting with followers (Bergstrom & Backman, 2013). The rarity of contests among all influencer's posts suggests this is no longer a prevalent strategy on Instagram for influencers to create interactivity in order to manage brands. However, Table #3A on page 24, represented influencers with more followers were more likely to use questions in their captions to engage their users. For example, IMA influencer Niomi Smart, who had 1.8 million followers, posted a picture December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 of herself holding a syringe shot filled with liquid from her smoothie drink. The posts caption was "Green 'farmaceutical syringe shot' anyone?" and tagged the brand Pharmacy UK promoting the brand and her lifestyle of drinking healthy green drinks. Apparently, questions in captions are the most common for influencers with more followers when interacting with followers.

The analysis of data revealed influencers with fewer followers are more likely to interact. As seen in Table #3B on page 24, influencers with fewer followers are interacting through contests, questions, and responding to follower's comments. IMA influencers, Talun Zeiton, who had 28.1 thousand followers, posted on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 a picture of men's fragrance with the caption "For me? Thank you!" and tagged the brand Le Labo Fragrances. This picture received 397 likes and 16 comments, and Zeiton responded to his followers. For example, one of his followers commented "pretty!" and Zeiton tagged the followers name and responded back with "thanks!" Out of the 16 comments, Zeiton responded five times to his followers creating a level of interactivity. Both influencers with more and fewer followers had interactive followers who asked

questions about their Instagram posts, however, only influencers with less followers responded to create a personal relationship.

### Recommendations & Future Research

The results from this study indicate social influencers with a large following on Instagram are less likely to interact and engage with followers. Therefore, it would be beneficial to examine the middle range of social influencers with fewer followers to see if they have more interactions. It seemed social influencers with large followings resemble celebrity like profiles; this would be an insightful comparative study. Instead of examining the extreme of influencers with more followers and influencers with fewer followers, it would be interesting to compare top influencers with middle class influencers to determine where the level of engagement and interactivity diminishes. Another aspect to consider is the examination of specific brands and their contracted influencers. By doing so, the data would be more complete on how these influencers are representing and managing their brands. Lastly, since previous research indicates how social influencer marketing is becoming one of the popular marketing tools, future research could also examine the management of the social influencer marketing agencies IMA and Socialyte to offer insight on how social influencers and brands are working together.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this content analysis was to research how social influencers are representing brands and managing their content, level of engagement, and level of interaction with followers. The analysis consisted of 40 Instagram posts, where influencers with the most number of followers and influencers with the least number

followers were analyzed from social influencer marketing agencies, Socialyte and IMA. Furthermore, the study indicated various insights concerning how influencer marketing continues to evolve. The research provided throughout this content analysis suggests that the number of followers social influencers have is directly related to how social influencers posted content, engaged, and interacted with followers on Instagram.

The analysis of the type of content social influencers posted revealed influencers with more followers have celebrity like profiles. These influencers have professionally taken pictures and post two-to-three times per day, compared to influencers with fewer followers who posted less Instagram content. In terms of exposing and managing brand content, social influencers with more followers did not mention brands as often in captions compared to influencers with fewer followers. Rather, the influencers with more followers tagged brands. The Instagram posts did not have the brand name visible unless the follower took the extra step to click on the picture to reveal brand tags. These findings suggest social influencers with a large following use Instagram as a platform to portray their lifestyle and share an authentic voice on how they live their life rather than consistently promoting different brands products and or services.

Influencers with fewer followers used Instagram in a more personal fashion, posting less often and taking pictures from their mobile devices of themselves. These influencers' Instagram content was less likely to have brand mentions, and or hashtag use. Instead, the influencers with fewer followers engaged more with their followers to create a more powerful and personal relationship. These influencers are responding to their follower's comments, while also using contest and questions to engage their audience.

The climate on Instagram from both influencers with more followers and influencers with fewer followers was primarily positive and neutral. The social influencers followers level of engagement and interactivity consisted more of praise or questioning versus negative feedback. Since pictures on Instagram have a limited exposure time, expressing criticism might not have created the same impact as for on different social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. The positive feedback for all social influencers analyzed suggest to be beneficial in promoting the popularity of Instagram being a platform for brands to for communities with users (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard 2012).

Overall, the amount of followers a social influencer has affects how brands are represented on Instagram. It would be more beneficial for name brands, such as Nike or Starbucks, to contract with influencers that have a larger following where engagement and interactivity are not necessarily needed to help the brand. Smaller brands would benefit from strategically choosing social influencers with fewer followers, where engagement and interactivity is high to create more personal and authentic relationships. These types of social influencers have just enough content where they can respond to follower's comments, and engage with their followers more. However, as social influencer marketing continues to change and different strategies arise future research could potentially determine what will be beneficial in managing brands through a social influencer.

## Works Cited

- Aaker, D. (1996). "Building Strong Brands". New York: The Free Press.
- Ashley, C., & Tuten, T. (2014). Creative Strategies in Social Media Marketing: An Exploratory Study of Branded Social Content and Consumer Engagement. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(1), 15–27. doi:10.1002/mar.20761
- Ba, S., & Pavlou, P. A. (2002). Evidence of the Effect of Trust Building Technology in Electronic Markets: Price Premiums and Buyer Behavior. *MIS Quarterly*, 26(3), 243. doi:10.2307/4132332
- Beres, D. (2015). "Here's The Best Time To Post A Photo on Instagram". *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved From [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/25/get-instagram-likes\\_n\\_6751614.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/25/get-instagram-likes_n_6751614.html)
- Bennett, S. (2014). Social media business statistics, facts, figures, & trends of 2014. *Social Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/social-business-trends-2014/498129>
- Bergstrom, T. & Backman, L. (2013). Marketing and PR in social media. *Stockholms University*. Retrieved from <http://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:625012/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Bughin, J., Doogan, J., & Vetvik, O. (2010). A new way to measure word-of-mouth marketing. *McKinsey & Company*. Retrieved from <http://www.mckinsey.com/NotFound.aspx?item=%2fbusiness-&user=extranet%5cAnonymous&site=website>

- Brown, D. (2008). Influencer marketing: Who really influencers your customers?  
Retrieved from  
[https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=\\_IksBgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=_IksBgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- Cantor, J., Cobb, T., & Donnelly, D. (2014). Who's influencing you: Social influence marketing and the brand-influencer-fan connection. *Moxie*. Retrieved from  
<https://moxieusa.com/~media/Files/pdf/Insights/INFLUENCE%20PAPER%202014.pdf>
- Carlson, K. (2015). The Growth of Social Influencers Marketing. *Experticity*. Retrieved from <https://business.experticity.com/the-growth-of-social-influencer-marketing/>
- Björkgren, C. (2012). Communicate Right on Instagram. Retrieved from  
<http://internetworld.idg.se/2.22568/1.455713/guide-kommunicera-ratt-med-instagram>
- Cha, M., Benevenuto, F., & Haddadi, H. (2010). Measuring user influence in Twitter: The million follow fallacy. *Knowl Inf Syst*, 44(3), 559-580. doi:10.1007/s10115-014-0773-8
- Castronovo, C., & L. Huang (2012). Social Media in an Alternative Marketing Communication Model,” *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 6 (1), 117-131.
- Chen, Y., S. Fay, & Q. Wang (2011). “The Role of Marketing in Social Media: How Online Consumer Reviews Evolve,” *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 25 (2), 85-94.

- Cheung, C. M. K., & Lee, M. K. O. (2010). A theoretical model of intentional social action in online social networks. *Decision Support Systems*, 49 (1), 24–30.  
doi:10.1016/j.dss.2009.12.006
- Evans, D. (2011). *Social media marketing: The next generation of business engagement*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publications Inc.
- Falls, J. (2010). What is engagement and how do we measure it? *Social Media Explorer*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialmediaexplorer.com/2010/01/04/what-is-engagement-and-how-to-we-measure-it>.
- Fosdick, M. (2012). The globalization of social media: consumer relationships with brands evolve in the digital space. *Strategic Direction*, 28 (6).  
doi:10.1108/sd.2012.05628faa.006
- Hornsey, M. J., & Hogg, M. A. (2000). Intergroup Similarity and Subgroup Relations: Some Implications for Assimilation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26 (8), 948–958. doi:10.1177/01461672002610005
- IMA: Influencer Marketing Agency. (2017). *Influencer Roster*. Retrieved from <http://imagency.com>
- Laroche, M., Habibi, R., & Richard, M., & Sankaranarayanan, R. (2010). The effects of social media based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust, and brand loyalty. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, (28) 5, 1755-1767. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.04.016>
- Li, C., & Bernoff, J. (2008). *Groundswell*. Boston: *Harvard Business Review Press*.



- Liu, S., Jiang, C., Lin, Z., Ding, Y., Duan, R., & Xu, Z. (2015). Identifying effective influencers based on trust for electronic word-of-mouth marketing: A domain-aware approach. *Information Sciences*, 306, 34–52. doi:10.1016/j.ins.2015.01.034
- Lovejoy, K., & Saxton, G. D. (2012). Information, Community, and Action: How Nonprofit Organizations Use Social Media\*. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17 (3), 337–353. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01576.x
- Meerman, S. (2011). *The Rules of Marketing and PR*. John Wiley & Sons. Hoboken, New Jersey.
- NewsWhip*. (2016). The Top Holiday Instagram Trends 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.newswhip.com/2016/12/top-holiday-instagram-trends-2016/>
- Paine, K. D. (2011). *Measure What Matters: Online Tools for Understanding Customers, Social Media, Engagement, and Key Relationship*, John Wiley & Sons, Westford, MA, US.
- Page, C., Perry, K., & Srikishen, N. (2015). The state of influencer marketing: Practices for brands partnering with today’s social media creators. *Crowdtap*. Retrieved from [http://www.iab.com/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/Crowdtap\\_TheStateofInfluencerMarketi](http://www.iab.com/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/Crowdtap_TheStateofInfluencerMarketi)
- Parker, S. (2016). “A Long List of Instagram Statistics that Marketers Need to Know”. *Hootsuite*. Retrieved from <https://blog.hootsuite.com/instagram-statistics/>
- Peppers, D., & Rogers, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Managing Customer Relationships*. doi:10.1002/9781118371510

- Perrin, A. (2015). Social media usage: 2000-2015. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/>
- Pustynnick, I. (2011). Advertising in Social Networks. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.  
doi:10.2139/ssrn.1976893
- Reid, F. (1987). Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 26(4), 347–348. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8309.1987.tb00799.x
- Shi, Y., Sia, C. L., & Chen, H. (2013). Leveraging social grouping for trust building in foreign electronic commerce firms: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Information Management*, 33(3), 419–428. doi:10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2013.02.001
- Simmons, G. J. (2007). “i-Branding”: developing the internet as a branding tool. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 25 (6), 544–562.  
doi:10.1108/02634500710819932
- Socialyte. (2017). *Influencer Roster*. Retrieved from <https://www.socialyte.co>
- Statista (2016). Number of Social Network Users Worldwide from 2010 to 2019 (in billions). Retrieved from <http://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-socialnetwork-users/>
- Swant, M. (2016). Twitter says users not trust influencers nearly as much as their friends. *Adweek*. Retrieved from <http://www.adweek.com/news/technology/twitter-says-users-now-trust-influencers-nearly-much-their-friends-171367>
- Tuten, T. L., & M. R Solomon. (2014). *Social Media Marketing*, Sage, London, UK.

Wong, K. (2014). The explosive growth of influencer marketing and what it means for you. *Forbes*. Retrieved from

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kylewong/2014/09/10/the-explosive-growth-of-influencer-marketing-and-what-it-means-for-you/>

Wu, S., Hofman, J. M., Mason, W. A., & Watts, D. J. (2011). Who says what to whom on twitter. Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on World Wide Web -

WWW'11. doi:10.1145/1963405.196350

APPENDIX A  
Codebook

	CONTENT	ENGAGEMENT	INTERACTIVITY
CODE ID: 0. Julia 1. Other	Brand Mentioned 0. No 1. Yes	Number of Followers	Contest: 0.No 1. Yes
Date: mm/dd/yy	Brand Name Visible 0. No 1. Yes	Number of Likes	Question: 0. No 1. Yes
	Brand Name	Number of Comments	Responds to Comments: 0. No 1. Yes
	Brand Link 0. No 1. Yes	Number of Follows	Content of Comment 1. Positive 2. Negative 3. Spam 4. Neutral
	Brand Product 0. No 1. Yes	Hashtags 0. No 1. Yes	Hashtag Name: Name of Hashtag
	Information 0. No 1. Yes	Geotags 0. No 1. Yes	Hashtag Penetration: Amount of Tagged Photos of hashtag encouragement
	Personal Content 0. No 1. Yes		Ask to for Direct Message: 0. No 1. Yes
	Sponsored Content 0. No 1. Yes		Promotional 0. No 1. Yes
	Tag 0. No 1. Yes		

Notes:

APPENDIX B  
INFLUENCER ROSTERS

Socialyte Influencers:

1. Sarah Angius – 3.3M followers
2. Adam Gallagher – 2M Followers
3. Wendy Nguyen – 1m followers
4. Alyssa Bossio – 1.3M Followers
5. Zoranna Jovanovic – 737k followers
6. Andy Torres – 732K Followers
7. Marianna Hewitt – 693K followers
8. Jessica Ricks – 645K followers
9. BryanBoy – 609K Followers
10. Holly Nichols – 594K Followers
11. Chris John Millington – 504K followers
12. Blake Scott – 460K Followersd
13. Irene Khan – 375K Followers
14. Marcel Floruss – 352K followers
15. Bethany Marieco – 344K Followers
16. Nathan McCallum – 324K followers
17. Noor de Groot - 312k followers
18. Bridget Bahl – 304K Followers
19. Mary Lauren Gun – 290K followers
20. Ryan Glick – 289k followers
21. Courtney Trop – 282K Followers
22. Julia Friedman – 280K Followers
23. Charlotte Groeneveld – 280K Followers
24. Blake Steven – 280K Followers
25. Emily Luciano – 277K Followers
26. Mustafa Kacar – 275K followers
27. Sam White – 257k followers
28. Justin Livingston – 225K Followers
29. Christie Ferrari – 224K Followers
30. Barrett Pall – 217K Followers
31. Megan Mitchell – 198k followers
32. Eric Christian – 167K Followers
33. Moti Ankari– 161K followers
34. Laurie Ferraro – 158K Followers
35. Nicole Isaacs – 156k followers

36. Pam Hetlinger – 153k followers
37. Rebecca Laurey – 152k followers
38. Ian Elkins – 145K Followers
39. Taylor Morgan- 142k followers
40. Tessa Barton – 140k followers
41. Lillian Babaian – 131K Followers
42. Charlotte Bridgeman – 131K Followers
43. Ryan Clark – 131k followers
44. Gregory Dellicarpini Jr. – 131K Followers
45. Michelle Ressler – 129K followers
46. Luke Ditella – 128k followers
47. Madelynn Furlong – 127K followers
48. Kusa Dengler – 126K followers
49. Sandra Willardson – 125k followers
50. Alana Hadid – 120K Followers
51. Stefanie Kuncman - 118k followers
52. Kristen Bick – 111K followers
53. Chris Brock – 109k followers
54. Adriana Gastelum – 107K followers
55. Maddie Greer – 106K followers
56. Alyssa Ramos – 104K Followers
57. Caitlin Claire- 97.3K Followers
58. Leo Chen – 84.7 Followers
59. Anna James – 83.8K Followers
60. Denny Balmaceda – 82.8K Followers
61. Chris Burt-Allan – 81.5K Followers
62. Naty Michele – 76.8K followers
63. Lisa DiCicco – 76.3 followers
64. Kristin Chambless – 74.2K Followers
65. Perkens bien Aime – 73.8k followers
66. Angela Fink – 71.6K Followers
67. Bobby Hicks - 70.8K Followers
68. Julia Dudko – 69.8K Followers
69. Tim Melideo – 68.1k followers
70. Anthony Urbano – 66.4K Followers
71. Tommy DiDario – 65.6k followers
72. Erin Grey – 57.5K Followers
73. Sabir Peele – 54.3k followers
74. Tienlyn Jacobson – 43.5 followers
75. Penny Pincher Fashion – 32.6K Followers

76. Talun Zeitoun – 28k followers
77. Pixie Acia – 23.8k followers
78. Danny Chung – 19.3k followers

IMA – Influencer Marketing Agency Roster

1. Negin Mirsalehi – 3.8M followers
2. Adam Galla – 2M followers
3. Caroline Receveur – 2M followers
4. Niomis Smart – 1.8M followers
5. Kenza Zouiten – 1.6M followers
6. Alexandra Pereira (Lovely Pepa) – 1.3M followers
7. Pelayo Diaz – 961k followers
8. Anni (Fashion Hippie Loves) – 956k followers
9. Linda Hallberg– 886k followers
10. Betty Autier – 882k followers
11. Mija – 876k followers
12. Mimi Elashiry – 856k followers
13. Josh Mario John (Spizioky) – 850k followers
14. Sara - Collage Vintage – 797k followers
15. Andy Torres (Style Scapebook) – 734k followers
16. Vanessa Hong (Haute Pursuit)– 605k followers
17. Levi Stocke -575k followers
18. Sara Donaldson – 531k followers
19. Rosie Forescue – 526K followers
20. Camille Charrie – 520k followers
21. Lydia Millen- 518k followers
22. Chris John Millington – 504k followers
23. Cailin Russo – 505.3k followers
24. Natalia Cabezas (Trendy Taste) – 481k followers
25. Eugenie Grey (Feral Creature) - 446k followers
26. Veronica Ferraro (The Fashion Fruit) – 409k followers
27. Billy Huxley – 400k followers
28. Mike Madrid & Gabriel Garcia – 378k followers
29. Anna Nooshin – 366k followers
30. Natalie Lim Suarez– 321k followers
31. Linda Tol – 306k followers
32. Erika Boldrin – 290k followers
33. Charlotte Groeneveld – 280k followers
34. Patricia Manfield – 278k followers
35. Sofie Valkiers - Fashionata– 277k Followers

36. Lima Che – 264k followers
37. Adenorah- 250k followers
38. Lizzy Va de ligt – 248k followers
39. Giaro Giarratana– 229k followers
40. Nina Suess – 229k followers
41. Maja Wyh – 218k followers
42. Weronika Zalainska (Raspberry & Red) – 210k followers
43. Carlos Costa – 206.7k followers
44. Shini Park - Park and Cube– 201k Followers
45. Nicoletta Reggio (Scent of Obsession) – 196k followers
46. Roos-Anne Moderosa 192k Followers
47. Kate La Vie – 187k followers
48. Ashley Glorioso – 165k followers
49. Tina Maria – 158k followers
50. Zina Charkoplia (Fashion Vibe) – 156k followers
51. Rebecca Laurey – (Raspberry & Rouge) – 152k followers
52. Alex Closet– 151k followers
53. Sarah Mikaela (Framboise Fashion) – 148k followers
54. Ian Elkins– 145k followers
55. Anthony Bogdan – 136k followers
56. Ebba Zingmark – 135k followers
57. Masha Sedgwick – 131k followers
58. Zoe Suen (Fashion Onymous) – 129.3k followers
59. Natalia Georgala (Twin Fashion) – 129k followers
60. Luke Ditella – 128k followers
61. Marissa Cox – 117k followers
62. Sabrina Meijer – 112.7k followers
63. Sereba Verbon (Beauty Lab) – 108k followers
64. Giotto Calendoli – 104k followers
65. Colourful Rebel – 101k followers
66. Fitgirlcode – 101k followers
67. Anouska Proetta Brandon – 98.9k followers
68. Chicks Love Food – 96.1k followers
69. Darcy Dineen – 95.6k followers
70. Foodie-ness - 91.5k followers
71. Sarah Hagelstam - 5inch and Up– 88.4k followers
72. Pauline - Uit Paulines Keuken– 83.3k followers
73. Rachel Nguyen – 82.9k followers
74. Anouk Yve– 81.6K followers
75. Merel en Tessa - 76.7k followers



76. Audrey Leghton Rogers – 76.6k followers
77. Joel Alexander - 73.9k followers
78. Natascha Elisa – 72.4k followers
79. Fit with Marit– 69k followers
80. Elsa Ekman – 68.2k followers
81. Billie Rose – 64.7k followers
82. Annic Van Wonderen (I Love Fashion News) – 58.9k followers
83. Natacha Steven – 57.3k followers
84. Les Freres Ainsworth – 54.1k followers
85. Lovely by Lucy – 43.2k followers
86. Kay Porter – 42.7k followers
87. Chapter Friday – 42.2k followers
88. Belmodo – 40.6k followers
89. Marlieke Koks (Cotton & Cream)– 40.5K followers
90. Tony Stone– 39.6k followers
91. Denim Daily – 39k followers
92. Annemeren – 33.4k followers
93. Your Little Black Book – 34.5k followers
94. Dandy Dairy – 31.8k followers
95. Culy.nl – 30.5k followers
96. Sarah - Elle Milla – 29.7k followers
97. Monique Van Loon - 21.4k followers
98. Anne- Kathrin Strab – 20.9k followers
99. Francesca Kookt – 20.9k followers
100. Girls Love Healthy – 18.4k followers
101. Marcel van der Steen – 17.8k followers
102. Brenda Kookt – 16.9k followers
103. Celine & Talsia - Totally Two – 15.8k followers
104. Nathalie (City Mom) – 14.3k followers
105. Chloe Leenheer – 12.8k followers
106. Roi Elmaliah (Daily Movement) – 10.2k followers
107. Simone Van Den Berg (Simone's Kitchen) – 7,818k followers

Exclude:

Comme Des Leroi – 0 Followers