

INFLUENCERS

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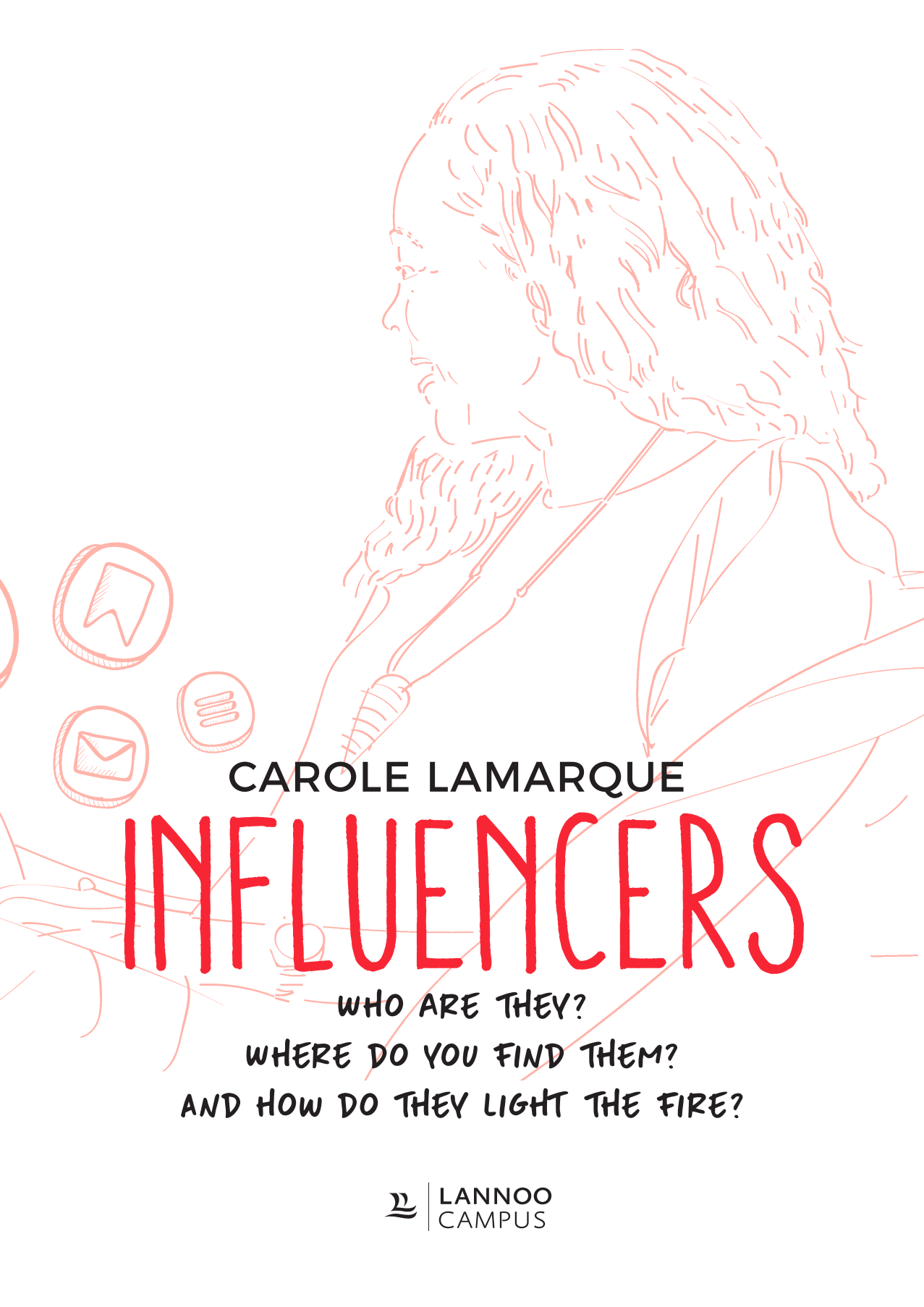
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CAROLE LAMARQUE

INFLUENCERS

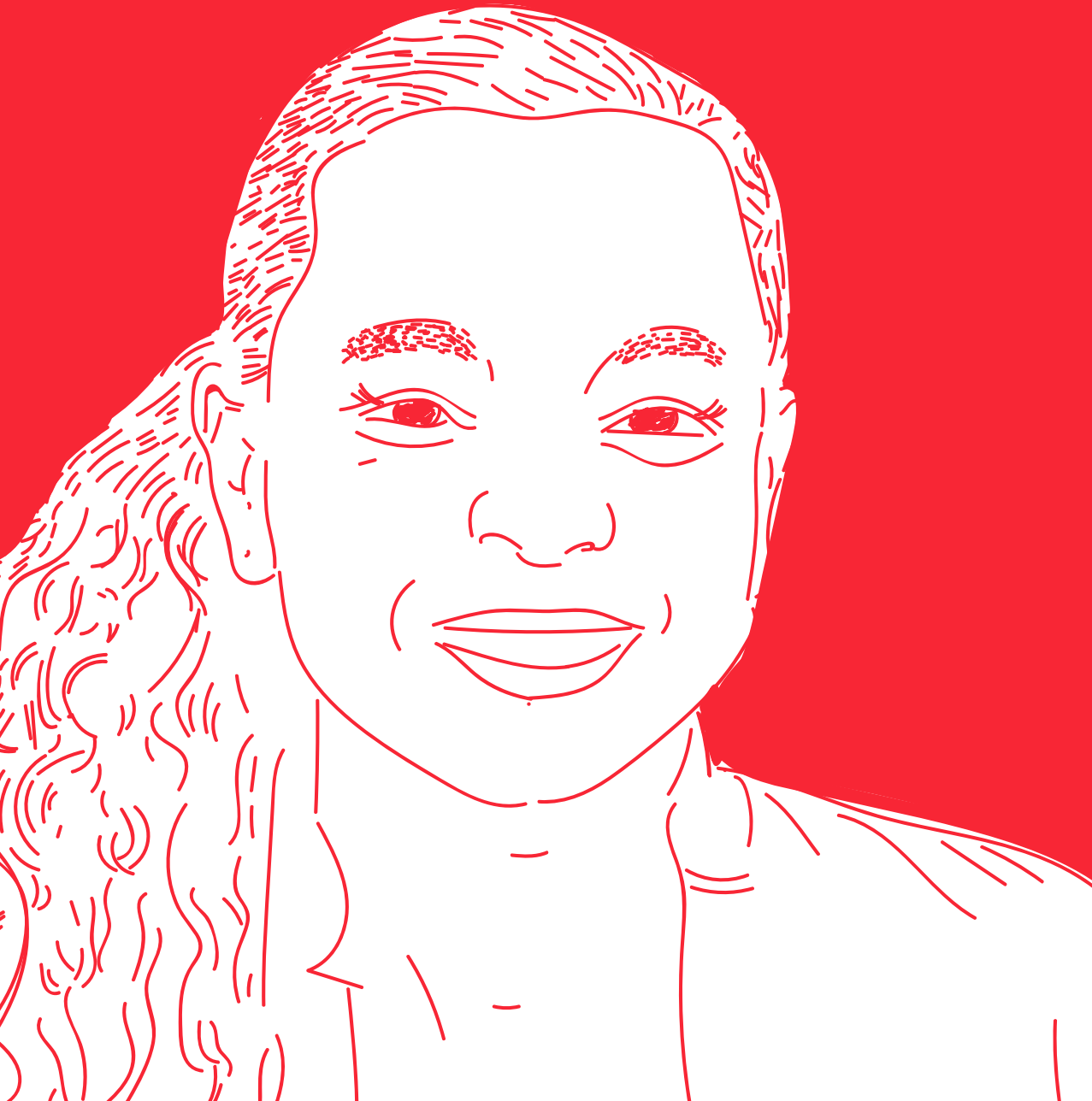
WHO ARE THEY?

WHERE DO YOU FIND THEM?

AND HOW DO THEY LIGHT THE FIRE?



LANNOO
CAMPUS



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PROLOGUE



In this book I, Carole Lamarque, will tell you everything you need to know about influencer marketing. Together, we will look at the theory, the strategy and the implementation. But there is more. Here and there you will find boxes with a more specific content:



MIRROR IMAGE

These boxes look at influencer marketing through the eyes of an influencer. You will read how you can build up a personal brand, approach companies and produce valuable content as a (prospective) influencer.



CASE

Various case studies will show how influencer marketing is used today in practice. You will learn about the return on investment that influencer campaigns can offer and find inspiration for your own campaigns.



INSIGHT



The insights of external experts add depth to the content of the book. Respected business leaders, marketers, influencers and academics will share their huge knowledge and experience with you.



DO IT!

These 'do'-tasks will give you a gentle push in the back to get you properly started with your own influencer marketing.

01



INFLUENCER MARKETING: WHAT AND WHY?

- 🔥 WHAT IS INFLUENCER MARKETING?
- 🔥 HOW DID INFLUENCER MARKETING ORIGINATE?
- 🔥 WHAT IS THE VALUE OF INFLUENCERS?



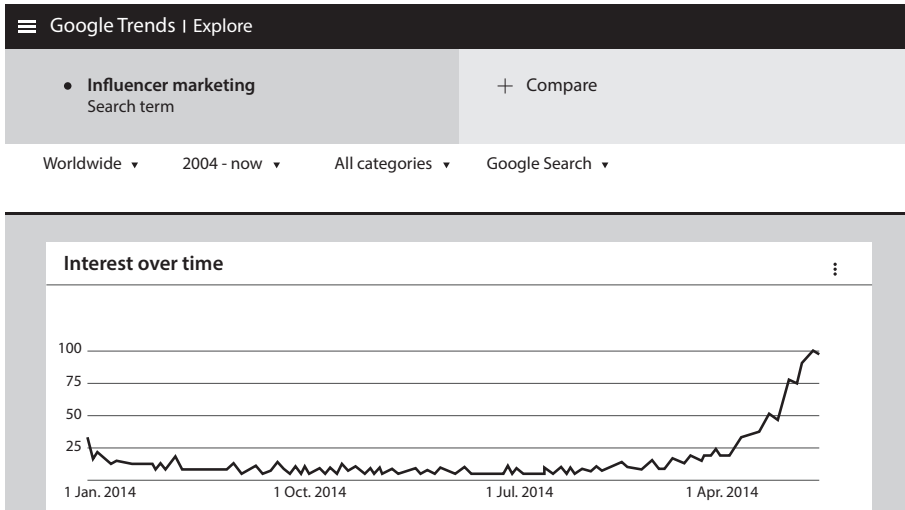
*"Every euro a company invests
in influencer marketing yields
an average return on investment
of 65 euros."¹*

Shall I give away the big secret of this book right from the start? If you think you are already at home in the world of influencer marketing, you are almost certainly mistaken. Because everything you read about America won't necessarily work in Europe. The slogan needs to be 'think small' instead of 'think big'. And that's exactly what we are going to do in the coming chapters.

Influencer marketing will be put in its proper perspective. It will be given a role in the wider whole of your innovative marketing strategy. Company leaders, Chief Marketing Officers (CMO's) and operational marketeers will learn step by step how by thinking small in Europe they can have a really huge effect with their influencer marketing.

Let's start at the beginning. There has always been mouth-to-mouth advertising. But until the start of the 1990s consumers, experts, celebrities and journalists simply didn't have a channel that allowed them to reach a large group of people independently. What's more, consumers suffered less from advertising fatigue than they do today and these were different times. People used to be told: 'Only give your opinion when someone asks for it'. Amongst other things, the arrival of social media means that nowadays it is easier and more socially acceptable to give your opinion 'unasked'.

In other words, influencer marketing is not a traditional marketing domain. Even so, it deserves a place in your marketing and media mix. The proof? All you need to do is look at Google Trends. Since the start of 2015, the interest in influencer marketing has skyrocketed.



GOOGLE TRENDS - RESULTS FOR 'INFLUENCER MARKETING'

WE MYTHS, WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE, SALUTE YOU!

There are lots of myths about influencer marketing. This is normal in a relatively young marketing domain that is still experiencing some growing pains. Certainly if it is both overhyped and underestimated. This book will debunk the most persistent myths with logical arguments, hard figures and clear, practical examples. Here are seven myths that are going to die in the following pages. So say goodbye to them now!

1. You always need to pay influencers.
2. You need celebrities for effective influencer marketing.
3. The return on investment (ROI) of influencer marketing is not measurable.
4. Influencer marketing does not work for business-to-business companies (B2B).
5. In small markets you don't reach enough via influencers.
6. You can't trust influencers with 'your' communication.
7. You can't organize influencer marketing on a large scale.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Influencer marketing is a child of its time, raised to prominence by the internet. The digital revolution has democratized communication. Today, everyone is in contact with everyone else, as both sender and receiver.

Every day, we all type more than three billion search tasks in Google to find the information we need at the moment it is relevant for us.² On social media, we are able to churn out our own information in astronomical quantities. Every minute we upload 300 hours of video content on YouTube³ and we send 350,000 tweets.⁴ In addition, we build up networks that allow us to reach half the world in a matter of seconds. In this way, ordinary consumers grow to become 'content creators' who influence a large public. And that's how the influencer was born.

New technology gave influencers a serious boost in scope at precisely the same time that old-style marketing patterns were creating a need for their kind of influence. How many adverts do you see each day? Let's skip the contradictory research figures and assume that it is somewhere between a few hundred and a few thousand. This mass bombardment leaves its scars – at least, on ordinary people. As a professional, your interest in advertising is probably (way) above average. But I'm sure you know lots of people with banner blindness. And even some with chronic advertising fatigue.

This is why more and more people are installing ad blockers on their computers and why they fast-forward the adverts on television. It is also why the recommendations of other consumers are gaining ground in importance. According to McKinsey,⁵ mouth-to-mouth recommendations are the key determining factor in 20 to 50% of all purchasing decisions. Why? Because we are all sick and tired of mass communication, but still attach great weight to the opinions of others. This means that via influencers you can speak to people that other media can no longer reach. What's more, you can speak to them in the right way.

INFLUENCER MARKETING VS. WORD OF MOUTH

Is influencer marketing just another way to describe word-of-mouth marketing? No, but they do have things in common. In contrast to the mass communication of companies, they are both about human-to-human (H2H) communication. This communication can be business-to-consumer (B2C) or business-to-business (B2B).

However, influencer marketing is different from word-of-mouth on the receiver side. Word-of-mouth usually involves one-to-one relationships. Your new neighbour tells you which is the best bakery in your neighbourhood. Or your new colleague tells you about the supplier she prefers to work with. But via a single Twitter account thousands of followers can discover who is the best baker in town. This turns influencer marketing into word-of-mouth on steroids!

In short, a good influencer combines a personal message with reach. In this way, he succeeds in investing non-stop in his personal branding. In fact, he really communicates PB2C (personal brand-to-consumer). With the emphasis on personal. Because 'the personal approach' – his own personality – is his trademark.

INFLUENCER MARKETING VS. COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Similarly, community management and influencer marketing are not the same, although they do sometimes work in tandem. Many decision-takers are now familiar with community management. On vibrant communication platforms (for example, a forum or a Facebook page) community managers try to start a conversation with their customers and followers on behalf of their brand or company. These managers give their organization a voice, answer consumer questions and strengthen the bond between customer and company.

It is not the task of influencers to moderate in this kind of interaction. Their role comes a stage earlier in the process. Take a look, for example, at the fan page of the Belgian Football Association on Facebook (facebook.com/belgianfootball). It has more than half a million followers, but the level of engagement is limited. Many of the posts elicit almost no reaction. This is where the influencers can make a difference. Their input can create a snowball effect in large and passive communities. Once they get the ball rolling, the community manager comes into his own, channelling the flood of reactions to the benefit of his organization.

INFLUENCERS VS. STAKEHOLDERS

Elke Jeurissen, co-founder of Glassroots, is a specialist in stakeholder engagement. She defines a stakeholder as follows: "A stakeholder is a person or organization who has a positive or negative impact on your organization. For a town council, all the town's inhabitants are its stakeholders. But only a few of the more vocal residents have a role as influencers in the town."

In addition, Jeurissen also sees a difference between the objectives of influencer marketing and stakeholder engagement: “With influencer marketing, the objective is already defined in the term itself. You want your efforts to achieve marketing results. Stakeholder engagement operates over a wider field. You build up good relations with your stakeholders to develop a competitive advantage. Sometimes, that can be marketing return, but you can just as easily engage your stakeholders in company strategy. Their external input makes you stronger.”

“The example of the town council makes things more concrete. Does the Councilor for Public Works want to build a new park in a particular district? His first step is to make use via influencer marketing of a number of leading citizens from that district to create a broad consensus for the proposal. Only then will he consult all the affected residents to ask for their opinions about how the park should be laid out. In this way, he engages all the stakeholders.”

INFLUENCERS VS. BRAND AMBASSADORS

Once again, there is a meaningful distinction to be made between brand ambassadors and influencers. By definition, brand ambassadors always communicate positively about your brand. A good CEO must always be a brand ambassador. This is something that Steve Jobs (in the past) and Tim Cook (in the present) at Apple have understood perfectly. Sometimes, companies find and develop their own external ambassadors, who become your ‘evangelists’, preaching the good news about your product to the waiting world (in talks, on the internet, in the press, etc.).

In this way, for example, Guy Kawasaki was first a ‘software evangelist’ and later ‘chief evangelist’ for Apple. Today, he is doing the same for the design tool, Canva. Evangelists have a strong personal brand and a wide reach. As a result, they can sometimes acquire influencer status through their role as a brand ambassador. In other words, an ambassador can also be an influencer. But the reverse is not always true – as a simple example will show. If a leading environmental activist is constantly criticizing your company for its fracking activities, you can hardly call her an ambassador. But she is certainly an influencer, whose opinions and their effect on others you will need to take into account.



REED MIDEM LETS SPEAKERS CREATE BUZZ ABOUT THEIR EVENT

Reed MIDEM organizes (amongst other things) MIPCOM, an annual international trade fair about entertainment content (for example, television programmes). In 2014, they decided for the first time to use some of their most influential speakers to drum up interest for the fair in advance. Via the Social Seeder tool, the speakers were invited to share ready-made posts on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. Reed MIDEM estimated that in this way they reached an additional 15,000 prospects. A year later, they moved up a gear, allowing everyone to register as a 'fair ambassador' (which entitled them, amongst other things, to a free ticket). These ambassadors reached no fewer than 61,000 additional people.

DEFINITION TIME!

Different researchers view influencer marketing in different ways. This book is based on my own definition, which immediately sets out the broad guidelines for my concrete approach to the concept, an approach that will allow us to move easily from theory to practice. We will start with the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of 'influence'.

'Influence is the capacity to have an effect on the personality, development, or behaviour of something or someone, or the effect itself.'

This leads to my interpretation of influencer marketing, as used in this book.

'Influencer marketing is an action plan by which you strengthen marketing messages from consumer-to-consumer through people who communicate in a manner that is so contextually relevant and meaningful that they persuade others to take action.'

Or to put it in slightly different terms: as a marketer, you influence how influencers influence their public about your brand, product or service. And you do this in a variety of different ways. For example, by making them happy with exclusive infor-

mation, providing them with ready-to-use content, creating new content together, etc. The possibilities are almost endless.

Do you want to know how you can best deal with this? Look at the case studies further on in this book and read chapters 5 to 8 about the concrete implementation of influencer marketing. Do you like to base your actions on strong theoretical foundations? Or do you have a strategic role in your organization? Read on, so that you can later guide your colleagues with the crucial knowledge you will acquire in the following pages.

WHAT CAN INFLUENCER MARKETING DO FOR YOUR COMPANY?

The way influencer marketing developed was proof of the need for its existence. Traditional advertising is increasingly losing its grip on consumers. Its place is being taken by influencer marketing. By using influencers, a brand can get to where it wants to be: at the heart of the purchasing decision. A few key statistics make clear the potential impact of influencer marketing.

1. 28% of the time of the average online user is spent on social media.⁶
2. 47% of all millennials say that social media influence their purchasing decisions.⁷
3. 63% of all mobile display ads will be native advertisements by 2020.⁸
4. 67% of all purchases of consumer goods are based on user-generated content.⁹
5. 90% of consumers read online reviews before they buy a product.¹⁰
6. 91% of people already make purchases based on personal recommendations.¹¹

These impressive figures are a consequence of the unique and innovative nature of influencer marketing. Influencers engage in authentic person-to-person relationships. By definition, this is impossible for a company. In other words, influencers are not only taking over part of the role of mass communication, but are also doing it better. Because even during the golden years of traditional advertising, consumers never had so much confidence in brands as they now have in influencers today.

This relationship of trust is of immense value. An influencer's public hangs on his every word and attaches huge importance to his opinions and recommendations. Do you convert people's confidence in influencers into belief in your product? If you do, you will build up a lead over your competitors that they will never be able to make up for. And the role of a good influencer is crucial. Because he knows what works in his network and when.

In addition, an influencer can bring you into contact with other influencers. If you can get the five to ten most influential people in your domain on board, you will frustrate your competitors' influencer efforts before they ever get started.

SO WHY DOESN'T EVERYONE DO INFLUENCER MARKETING?

Can you hear that little voice in your head? The one saying: "If influencer marketing is so powerful, why isn't everyone doing it?" There are various reasons for this. Not every marketer is willing to go through a brand-new learning process. Others are not happy with the lack of control over the end marketing product, since it is the influencer who decides what message he or she wishes to spread. In addition, influencers in Europe, especially in smaller countries, have a much narrower reach than in America, so that some marketers question whether it is really worth the effort.

But are these really disadvantages? Too much trouble to learn? You've already got this book in your hands. This means you are not one of those lazy, can't-be-bothered marketers. Congratulations! A lack of control? Do you really think that without influencer marketing you will be able to find some other way to regulate what influencers say about you? Those conversations will take place whether you like it or not, so you might as well join the conversation partners at the table: that way, you will at least have some say. The limiting European context? This is actually a blessing in disguise, because it means you are less likely to opt for quantity and reach, which is a major temptation in the truly mass markets. In smaller markets, you are more instinctively drawn to the parameter that can really make all the difference: quality.

You should count yourself lucky: influencer marketing is so valuable precisely because so few people are doing it. That is the real key to business success: seeing the potential of something new before other people can see it as well. The sooner you can get started, the greater your return is likely to be. This vision is what sets the top entrepreneurs and most innovative marketers apart from the crowd.

Can you imagine what it would be like if every company invested in influencer marketing? And if each influencer collaborated with ten, fifteen or twenty brands? Confidence and trust in influencer opinion would soon be eroded, while the number of marketing messages would increase. In short, we would soon find ourselves back in the world of traditional advertising. Faced with an excess of content, consumers would develop influencer fatigue, just like they now suffer from advertising fatigue. And within X years from now, a book would appear proclaiming that influencer marketing had had its day and needed to be replaced by... whatever.

Fortunately, this is a challenge for future generations of marketers. Do you currently see any signs of influencer marketing in your sector? You don't? That's good; it means your potential return on investment is still safe. Read this book and learn how you can swallow the entire influencer cake, without needing to share it with your rivals. We will start in the next chapter by introducing you to the world of the influencers.



INFLUENCER MARKETING VOOR B2B

Influencer marketing is most firmly rooted in the field of consumer goods. Think, for example, of the Belgian international footballer, Eden Hazard, who shares his Nike football boots with more than eleven million followers on Instagram ([instagram.com/hazardeden_10](https://www.instagram.com/hazardeden_10)). In B2B sectors, the use of influencer marketing is less self-evident. Even so, as a company leader you must dare to surrender part of your creative control to the influencers, as is already the case in B2C markets. And remember to prioritize content quality, not quantity and reach. If you do this, you have a better chance of exploiting your influencers successfully, since there is currently still much less influencer competition in your B2B world.

Your products and services don't even need to be sexy. Just take a look at Tech Page One (techpageone.nl). This is a blog set up by Dell for IT professionals. The tech-giant uses experienced IT journalists to blog about applications like cloud computing: not exactly the most popular subject in the world and not one that lends itself to the making of a jazzy YouTube clip. But it doesn't have to be. Cloud computing is of huge importance for many IT managers. This is sufficient motiva-

tion for them to read the blog's complex articles. As long as purchasing decisions are made by real people and not by machines, you can use influencer marketing with success.

summary of chapter 1

INFLUENCER MARKETING: WHAT AND WHY?

origins

Developments in three areas explain the rapid rise of influencer marketing.



technology

Via social media consumers now collect their own information from reliable sources and also have the ability to reach a large number of people independently.



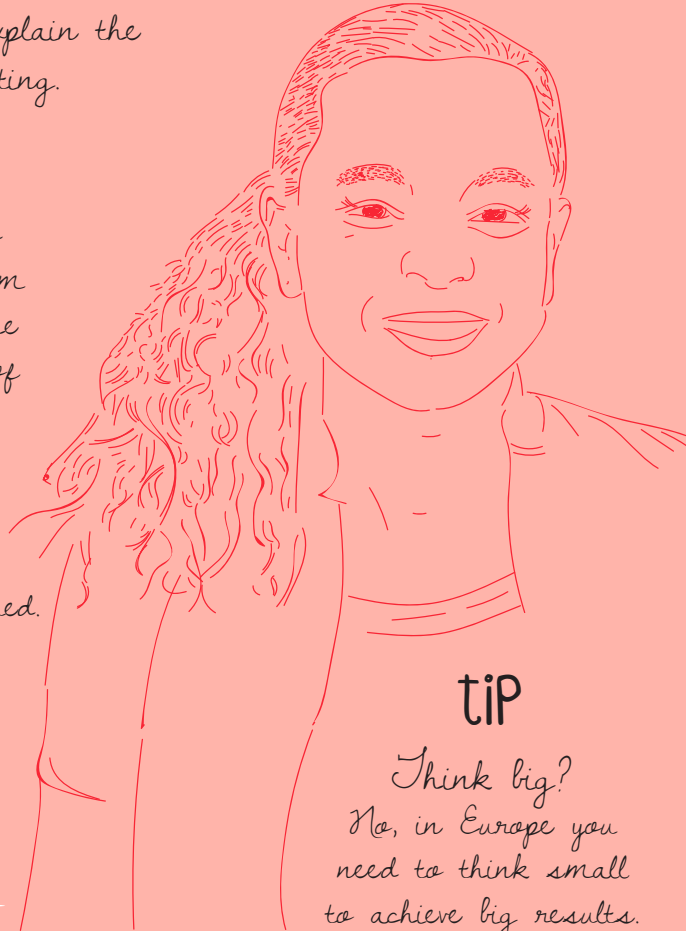
culture

Unasked-for advice is no longer shunned, but is accepted and valued.



advertising

Consumers are sick and tired of the mass communication of companies.



tip

Think big?
No, in Europe you need to think small to achieve big results.



definition

Influencer marketing is an action plan by which you strengthen marketing messages from consumer-to-consumer through people who communicate in a manner that is so contextually relevant and meaningful that they persuade others to take action.



02

WHAT DO INFLUENCERS LOOK LIKE?

- 🔥 WHO IS AN INFLUENCER?
- 🔥 HOW AND WHY DO YOU SEGMENT INFLUENCERS?
- 🔥 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MICRO- AND MACRO-INFLUENCERS?

