



When my friend’s thirteen-year-old daughter was approached by a major brand to be an influencer for them, I knew things were changing. Cynically, I wondered what did a thirteen-year-old or any kid have that a brand wanted? The obvious answer is a young following that can easily be led to make purchases. But just what are these influencers doing to build their audiences and how can we get a little of that for our own businesses without directly hiring them?

5.5 *Epic Lessons from Influencers*

No, they’re not *really* epic but that is your first half lesson from influencers—everything is amazing, epic, awesome, fantabulous, extreme, thick, or whatever other word describes something in a totally over the top way. Our English teachers used to call it hyperbole and influencers use it A LOT!!!!!! (Along with an extraordinary amount of exclamation points. You can take or leave that lesson, but it definitely gets people excited about what you’re excited about.)

Be Yourself

Be yourself, whoever that is. If you are the forgetful mom, let it show on camera. If you love to tell cheesy jokes, tell away. Let people into your life. Share things with them. Show your personality. Help them get to know, like, and trust you. Soon they will start caring about you and asking about more than your product or service. One of our local weathermen shares his “addiction” to a certain soda and he gets both applause (from those who agree) and comments (from those who think it’s terrible for his health). Either way, he receives a ton of engagement every time he takes a picture of his drink and shares it with his audience.

That’s when you know your brand is part of their life.

Don’t Overproduce

Influencers use their phones for videos, and they do quick takes, using maybe only a filter or two and a couple of quick edits. What they create is not overly produced in a studio. (But you do want good lighting and sound quality.)

Part of the fun in these videos is feeling like you've been invited behind the scenes and into their office or home. Don't stress with hours of editing. Go live and embrace the experience. So what if your kid or your dog wanders into the shot. Those types of "mistakes" are endearing to most audiences.

Imitate

I hate to say it, but in today's world, copying really is the highest form of flattery. Now, that does not mean plagiarizing. That's still a no-no. But it's okay to copy an idea. For instance, if you see someone do a cute video with a Halloween theme and you want to do the same for your business, go ahead. (Just use your own script). Take a look at TikTok. That whole site is predicated on copying other people's ideas. In fact, a recent Applebee's commercial used a TikTok format, although I'm sure Applebee's was forced to clear the rights to use the song, unlike the TikTokers. Speaking of...

One word of caution: keep in mind things like song lyrics and book passages are subject to copyright laws. While the teenager down the street might be able to get away with a moving rendition of "Let It Go" on TikTok, know that Disney won't be as understanding when you use it as a jingle for your dry cleaning company.

Make the Ask

Every YouTuber, Instagrammer, and other video producer does one thing on EVERY video (besides saying "Hey guys" as part of their intro). They ask you to subscribe and like their videos. They are unabashedly determined to get that and will offer to do a crazy stunt when they get to a certain number of likes. Sometimes they give something away.

They ask for the like even when the videos are so bad, I wouldn't ask my own mother for it. These influencers understand the power of the audience and most people are conditioned to do what's asked of them, especially when it's as easy as clicking.

Use Hashtags

Hashtags help people find you, but they can also serve as a form of entertainment and snarky comments. Use them for both. And don't forget the theme hashtags like #TBT, which stands for Throwback Thursday. This ingenious hashtag can be used to share a funny glimpse into what you (or your business) used to be. It can be a great way to get some laughs and to educate your audience on how things have changed.

Businesses can learn a lot from influencers. While you may not be able to hire influencers yourself (it's not always in the budget), you can use how they operate and amass large followings to make stronger connections with your audience.

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Christina hates exclamation points and loves road trips. Say hi on [Twitter](#) or reach out on [Facebook](#).