Executive Summary/Analysis

Influencer marketing, as we forecasted in our 2019 marketing trends report, has become a behemoth in the digital marketing world. Everyone wants to know how to get started with influencer marketing, and what expectations they should set.

However, influencer audience sizes do matter. Across all networks, the larger the influencer’s audience, the lower the engagement rate. Brands seeking engagement should read this report and find the right balance of quantity of engagements needed versus cost to engage an influencer.

Additionally, be extremely wary of stock formulas for valuing influencers such as the recently cited “$100 per 10,000 followers” guidance from companies like Hootsuite. If you were to pay a top-tier Twitter influencer with a median audience of 8.4 million followers the recommended fee of $84,000, that influencer would likely only generate the median of 101 engagements, or the PPC equivalent of $840 per click.

Decide in advance what business goals and metrics you’ll measure influencer marketing with, and compare the value you receive to other channels to find the most effective spend for your marketing dollar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Median Engagement Rate</th>
<th>Median Top Tier Audience</th>
<th>Maximum Engagement Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>0.013%</td>
<td>8.26M</td>
<td>0.161%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>0.009%</td>
<td>8.35M</td>
<td>0.019%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>0.960%</td>
<td>4.95M</td>
<td>2.250%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodology

Trust Insights used Facebook’s Crowdtangle software service to extract social media posts from identified influencers per social network. Facebook’s Crowdtangle service provides curated lists of thousands of influencers, typically based on audience size, for each platform. Influencers are a mix of B2B and B2C accounts across major topic areas such as news, sports, fashion, B2B, consulting, food, travel, music & entertainment, etc. While influencers were not mapped 1:1 across each platform, every major topic area was analyzed on all 3 platforms.

Sample sizes: 51,086 Facebook Influencers, 53,095 Twitter Influencers, 51,415 Instagram Influencers, ~4 million posts per platform. Due to the Terms of Service for Crowdtangle, we are unable to provide the source data.

All posts by influencers were pulled week by week, de-duped, and consolidated using the R statistical programming language. The time frame of the study is January 1, 2019 through March 9, 2019. Due to changes in various network APIs (most notably Instagram) we chose this calendar year’s data for the most current metrics.

We’ve chosen to use medians as our measure of central tendency because in the data, outliers are significant and cause serious skewing.

Each dataset was sorted by total followers on each platform and divided into deciles (10% segments/tiers) by descending order to that each 10% of the dataset had an equal number of posts in it.

When reading the charts, decile 10 (the top row in any chart) are the largest, top-tier influencers.
What we see in Facebook’s more detailed analytics is that influencer effectiveness drops off dramatically as audience size increases. Even at the largest audiences, with a median of 8.3 million followers, the median number of engagements is 461.

What this says is that Facebook Pages are generally a poor vehicle for influencer marketing. If you’re working with Facebook influencers with more than 50,000 followers, expecting more than 1 in 10,000 followers to engage at all is a reasonable benchmark.
The chart of followers versus engagement rate isolated for greater ease of reading and greater granularity/precision on the actual engagement rates.

The fundamental message here: the larger an influencer’s audience is, the less engaged the audience will be - and influencers hit significant diminishing returns between 20,000 and 50,000 followers, making 50,000 followers the cap for purchasing influence.
We see similar analytics for Twitter as we do for Facebook. With a median follower count at the highest 10% of influencer audiences of 8.4 million, only 101 followers reacted in any capacity to the biggest influencers’ content.

Compared to Facebook’s data, it’s not inaccurate to say that the top tier of Twitter influencers are 4x less effective at creating engagement than their peer Facebook influencers.
The chart of followers versus engagement rate isolated for greater ease of reading and greater granularity/precision on the actual engagement rates.

In this chart we see Twitter’s influencer engagement effective only in deciles 2-5, for people with 6,000-60,000 followers. Purchasing influencer marketing with larger audiences will not likely improve program performance.
Instagram is the belle of the ball in influencer marketing, and with this data, we see why. Instagram influencers reap engagement levels that are orders of magnitude greater than Facebook or Twitter.

At the top tier, even though the median audience is half that of Facebook or Twitter’s top accounts, we see engagement levels that are nearly 100x Facebook’s top influencers and nearly 400x Twitter’s top influencers.

If you’re going to spend money on influencer marketing to broad audiences, Instagram is where you should spend.
The chart of followers versus engagement rate isolated for greater ease of reading and greater granularity/precision on the actual engagement rates.

Note the lower influence "decay" rate for Instagram - unlike Twitter or Facebook, after the decline at the first decile, influencer tapers off rather than falls off sharply.

This means that working with larger influencers won’t have substantially lower ROI on Instagram compared to Twitter or Facebook.
A Word on Micro/Nano Influencers

A key recent concept in influencer marketing is the idea of the micro-influencer or the nano-influencer. CMSWire recently defined micro-influencers as people who have audience sizes between 1,000 and 100,000 followers, corresponding to the lower middle deciles in our charts. Nano-influencers tend to be even smaller audiences, under 1,000 followers, corresponding to the first decile in our charts.

What you’ve no doubt noted in each social network is that the smaller the audience, the better an influencer’s content tends to perform.

- On Twitter, engagement drops off precipitously after decile 5, corresponding to about 60,000 followers.
- On Facebook, engagement drops off at decile 3, corresponding to about 20,000 followers.
- On Instagram, engagement doesn’t drop off as radically, but still declines more sharply after decile 3, corresponding to about 50,000 followers. There is a very large decline after decile 1, at about 6,000 followers.

What these data points suggest is that the movement towards micro and nano influencers is a valid one if engagement is a key outcome of influencer marketing. Brands would do better to engage 10 micro-influencers rather than put all their spend into one large influencer.
# Marketing Data Problems We Solve For You

## Find Insights in Your Data
- CRM data analysis
- Call center/customer service conversation analysis
- Digital market research
- Customer journey analytics

## Predict and Forecast
- SEO Keyword/topic research
- Predictive forecasts
- Content calendars
- Ad budget planning
- Attribution analysis

## Expertise on Demand
- General consultation
- Half/full day workshops
- On-demand training
- Conference & meeting speakers / trainers

## Analytics Fundamentals
- Google Analytics best practices
- Tag Management setup / validation
- Interactive digital marketing dashboards
- Website / landing page optimization
- SEO audits
- Social media audits

## Analytics Fundamentals, Cont’d
- Social media analytics
- Influencer analytics & identification
- Process management
- Content marketing analytics
- Data/marketing technology governance
- Data preparation for machine learning/AI
The Trust Insights Team

Katie Robbert is an authority on compliance, governance, change management, agile methodologies, and dealing with high-stakes, “no mistakes” data. As CEO of Trust Insights, she oversees the growth of the company, manages operations and product commercialization, and sets overall strategy. Her expertise includes strategic planning, marketing operations management, organizational behavior and market research and analysis. Prior to co-founding Trust Insights, she built and grew multi-million dollar lines of business in the marketing technology, pharmaceutical, and healthcare industries. Ms. Robbert led teams of Microsoft Partner Software Engineers to build industry-leading research software to address and mitigate pharmaceutical abuse. She is a published researcher in the Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety Journal, and a noted public speaker.

Christopher S. Penn is an authority on analytics, digital marketing, and marketing technology. A recognized thought leader, best-selling author, and keynote speaker, he has shaped four key fields in the marketing industry: Google Analytics adoption, data-driven marketing, modern email marketing, and artificial intelligence/machine learning in marketing. As Chief Innovator of Trust Insights, he is responsible for the creation of products and services, creation and maintenance of all code and intellectual property, technology and marketing strategy, brand awareness, and research & development. Mr. Penn is a 2019 IBM Champion in IBM Business Analytics, and co-host of the Marketing Over Coffee marketing podcast. Prior to co-founding Trust Insights, he built the marketing for a series of startups with a 100% successful exit rate in the financial services, SaaS software, and public relations industries.

John J. Wall speaks, writes and practices at the intersection of marketing, sales, and technology. As Partner and Head of Business Development, he is responsible for managing all aspects of sales and customer success. He is the producer of the Marketing Over Coffee podcast, a leading show about marketing and technology. His work has been profiled by Forbes, CBS Evening News, The Associated Press, NECN, The Boston Globe, Boston Herald, DM News, and more. Prior to joining Trust Insights, Mr. Wall was Vice President of Marketing at EventHero. He has held positions specializing in Customer Relationship Management, Marketing Automation and sales support systems at both venture-funded and privately held businesses, working with clients such as Microsoft, Oracle, and Salesforce.com.