

INFLUENCER ECONOMY 2.0

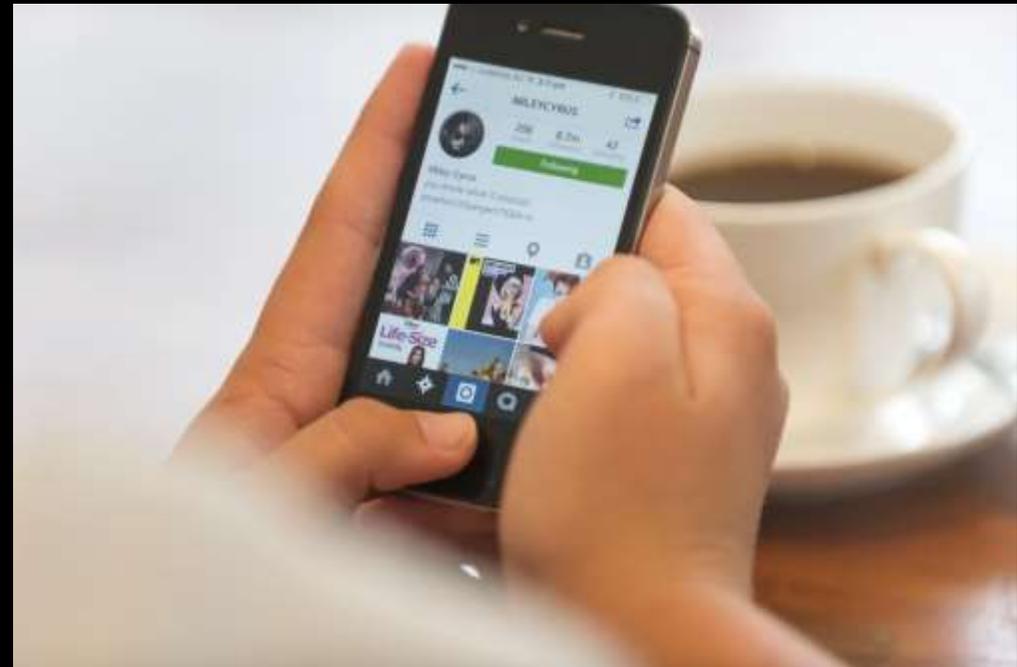
AFRICA'S DIGITAL SPACE



I See Africa Report

INDEX

- Cultural Influencer
- Nano Influencer
- Gamefluencer
- Kidfluencer
- Healthcare Influencer
- Digital Communities



INTRODUCTION

The rise of influencer marketing in Africa can be attributed to the growing number of internet and social media users. According to a study conducted by Collabary titled 'Gone Global', which looks at the role of influencer marketing in regions outside of Europe and the West. Out of the 1.32 billion people living in Africa currently 521 million are internet users and 216 million (17%) are active social media users. Though the continent's social media usage is relatively small it is expected to grow parallel with the influencer market.

The second factor guiding the adapted influencer economy is the need for authenticity and transparency. The growth of the influencer economy, though satisfying, has unfortunately been met with a lack of trust between influencers and their followers. According to Forbes, the increase in awareness about influencers that buy followers, hire click farms, as well as promote products that they do not use has made collaborations between influencers and brands seem insincere, and resulted in a decrease in engagement.

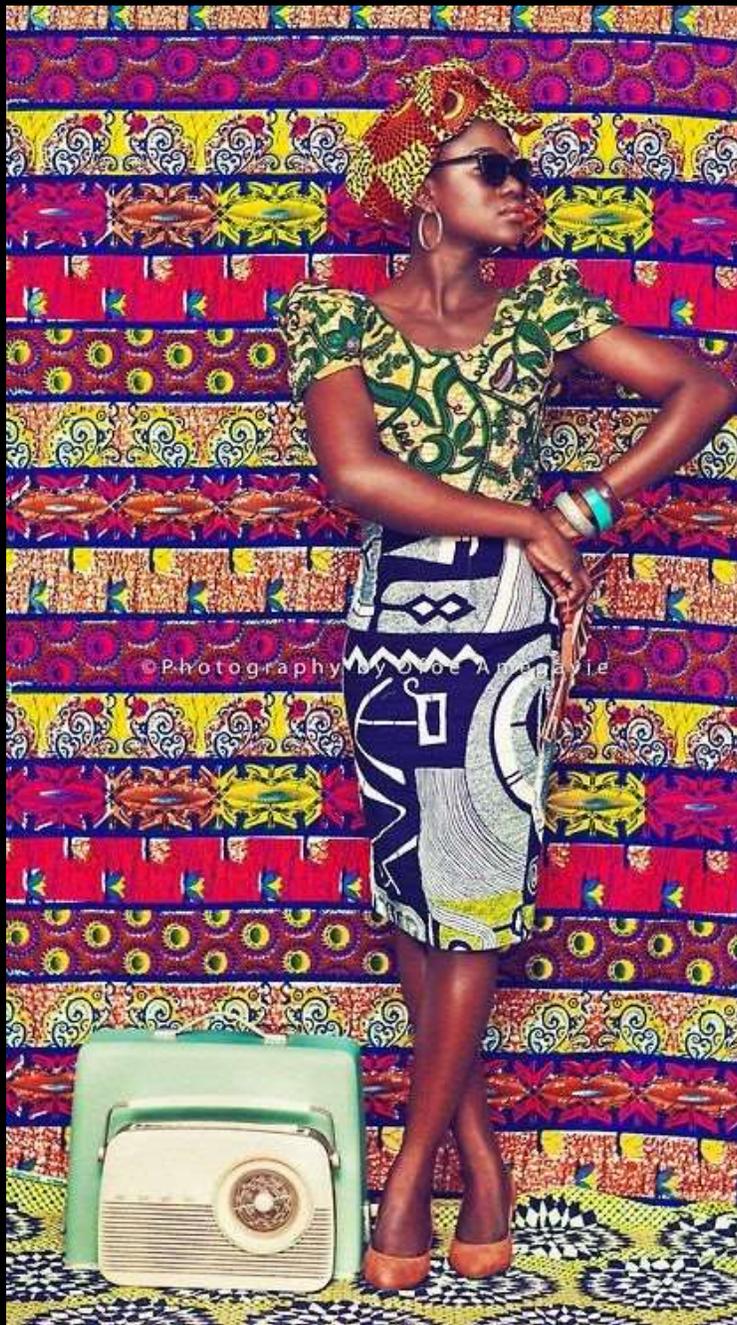
In addition to this, influencers with fake or suspicious followers pose a problem for brands who choose to collaborate with them, especially if the influencer was selected because of their following; further increasing the lack of trust in the industry.

The regulatory body of South Africa's Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB) and the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), have raised concerns over the number of influencers that do not disclose whether or not their posts had been sponsored and deem the lack of transparency as misleading. These bodies have called for influencers to clearly state if they are promoting a brand, whether they are being paid, receiving free products, or using promotional products which are to be returned after their campaigns.

As the industry continues to grow more regulations will be put in place to drive a focus towards transparency and authenticity among influencers and their followers. In an African context the lifestyle influencer is expanding. We now see influencers that are trailblazing in industries such as female gamers in esports. The sector is acknowledging the importance of people's health, with this we see health professionals as people to admire and follow outside of hospital duties. The Influencer economy 2.0 sees influencer created content based on their hobbies and profession verses the glitz and glam lifestyle persona typically expected from the Influencer sector.



CULTURAL INFLUENCER



CULTURAL INFLUENCER

Trailblazers, innovators, and thought-provoking creative leaders are some of the words that can be used to describe these individuals. Unlike commercial influencers cultural influencers (artists, musicians, and creatives) do not necessarily have a huge following and do not always promote products or services for brands, this making their influence very organic and authentic. Their influence comes from their creative work, and their ability to challenge/change the status quo, push boundaries and innovate through their work.

“They don’t necessarily have a huge following and they are not selling anything, but they are often paramount for the start of a trend/movement as they really capture the zeitgeist. They are the innovators and early adopters within the trend curve (after that we have the early majority, late majority and finally the laggards), so they are a different sort of “influencer”, more “cultural influencers” I would say.”

Sara Maggioni - Director of retail and buying at WGSN



CULTURAL INFLUENCER

Africa's cultural influencers are forward-thinking, unapologetic, sincere and unique creative spirits. Their ability to seamlessly produce work that is inspired by their rich history and cultural backgrounds, township culture, experiences of the modern world. As well as the raw, uncensored, and untold stories of their realities (from their perspective) makes them intriguing and authentic. Not only is their work an expression of their inner thoughts and emotions, it is meant to have a cultural impact and forge new and creative paths for generations to come, as well as evoke feelings of appreciation for their continent.



CULTURAL INFLUENCER: KWENA BALOYI

Cultural Ambassador Kwena Baloyi creates content and uses her style to celebrate and tell stories about the African continent. Her bold, eclectic and afrocentric style inspired her natural hair movement *Afrikankrowns* which acknowledges and appreciates African woman's natural hair. #Fixkonversations is another initiative generated by this South African Cultural Ambassador. The drive behind #Fixkonversation is to gather people with similar interests and challenge them to thought provoking, in depth discussions about various topics. In an attempt to find solutions and make a change (fix) collectively. Baloyi refers to people that attend these engagements as a tribe.

"Tribe... is a group of people, or a community with similar values or interests, a group with a common ancestor, or a common leader, however you want to describe it... I am and I will create safe spaces for any group I'm lead to, with similar even different values with hope that by the end we are all one and share the same under fix konversations."

- Kwena Baloyi



CULTURAL INFLUENCER: OSBORNE MACHARIA

East African Cultural Influencer and Afrofuturist photographer Osborne Macharia has used his platform to reframe the typically broken, distorted African narrative and enriched it to an empowering and genuine narrative. That draws attention to important conversations about issues faced in Africa such as gender abuse, ivory poaching and victims of war-torn regions. This multiple award winning Kenyan photographer's life-like photography has led him to work with big brands such as Coca-Cola, Mercedes, and Samsung. In 2018, Osborne partnered with Absolute Vodka, and other creative leaders in the continent in a social movement that called for greater distribution, authentic and fair representation of African art on the internet, as opposed to visuals of a poor and broken continent.

The self-taught photographer describes his photography as:

“An artistic repurpose of the post-colonial African narrative through integrating historical elements, present culture and future aspirations of people of colour by using Narrative, Fantasy and Fiction to re-imagine a new Africa.”

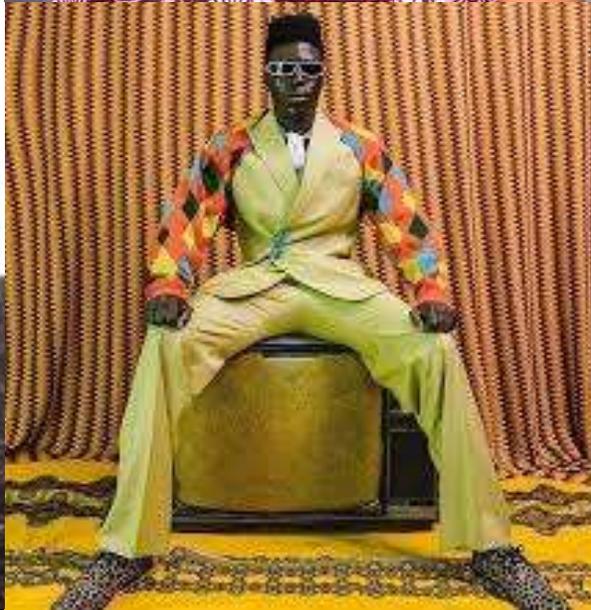
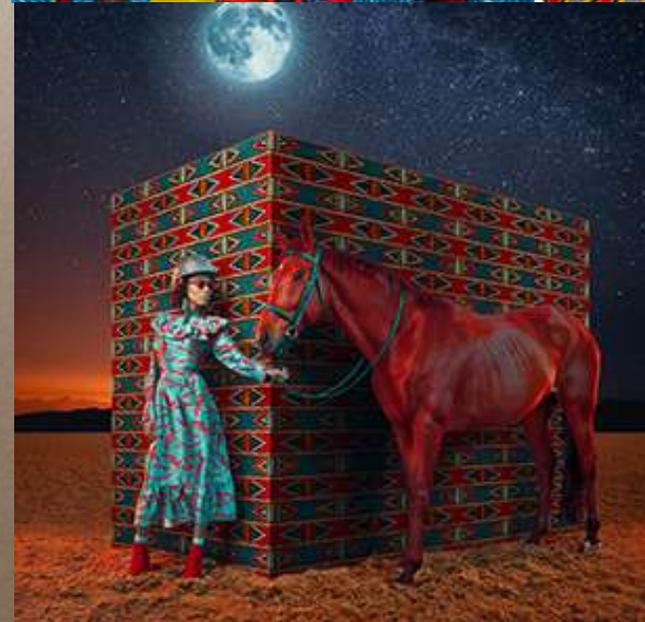


CULTURAL INFLUENCER: NANA KWASI WIAFE

West Africa's Nana Kwasi Wiafe is a model, stylist, and creative director whose creative work has been featured on platforms such as OkayAfrica, Vogue, and BET International. Ghanaian born Wiafe is the founder of styling brand *Thouartkwasi* and founder of clothing brand 'Very Ghanaian' which encourages a spirit of patriotism, love, and appreciation for his home-country Ghana. This young man identifies as a cultural shifter that seeks to showcase the creative talent and great potential in his continent, and is inspired by the people and stories that he comes across every day.

"It's important for me to show the world that regardless of all our challenges as Africans, we are talented, super-creative and hardworking people and we have a lot to offer as a continent. So I try to show that in the best way, in my work by telling great and inspiring stories."

– Nana Kwasi Wiafe





NANO INFLUENCER



NANO INFLUENCER

The buzz around social media influencers has been due to their ability to draw in a large amount of followers that relate and connect with the content they create. This in turn pulls in brands to want to work with them, which draws in more followers and so the cycle continues. Macro influencers have over 50 000 followers and these were the 'go to' people for brands. However there has been lack of trust amongst followers towards macro influencers, especially those who portray a large flamboyant lifestyle which is seen as unauthentic.

The focus has now shifted to nano-influencers (1000 – 4999 followers) and micro influencers (5000 – 10 000 followers) who are not only relatable and authentic, but are increasingly receiving more engagement on their social media content than mega influencers, according to African Star Communication director Farah Fortune. In 2019 fashion retailer Zara launched its online store in South Africa and saw the opportunity to create awareness by making use of micro influencers in its influencer marketing strategy. In the campaign #DearSouthAfrica 60 micro influencers were given Zara online shopping vouchers in exchange for posts on their social media accounts. The campaign not only created a buzz on Twitter, but the fashion retailer was also praised for not using the popular and celebrity-like influencers that are typically used by big companies.



**NANO
INFLUENCER
OLUPEKAN TIJESUNIMI
&
GUGU MAHLANGU**

Olupekan Tijesunimi, is a Nigerian lifestyle blogger with approximately 8 700 followers, he has been featured in Vogue’s online fashion platforms for his colourful and bold fashion sense. He has also collaborated with alcohol brand Budweiser on a responsible drinking campaign and worked with beverage brand Wilson’s Lemonade. South African fashion and lifestyle influencer Gugu Mahlangu, has collaborated with personal care brands such as Clere and Nivea, petroleum brand Caltex and menstrual hygiene brand Always to market to her more than 11 800 followers.





GAMEFLUENCERS



GAMEFLUENCER

Gaming consumer insight firm Newzoo has reported that the global video game sector in 2019 generated close to \$152.1 billion and this is expected to increase to \$196.0 billion by 2022. Sited as the Africa tech ecosystem architect, market operations firm Ingressive has documented the growth of the e-game sector in the continent. The number of video game players in Africa has significantly increased from 23 million in 2014 to 500 million in 2018. In addition to this, the African gaming market is said to have grown from \$105M to \$570M between 2014 and 2018. Though the African gaming industry is relatively small in comparison to other countries, the industry has seen rapid growth over the past four years and is already presenting great opportunities for African brands.

“As the gaming universe diversifies and the up take in users continues, brands are turning to gaming influencers to engage with this growing audience... Gaming is shaping up to become the next frontier for brand activations—and esports stars are becoming the newest class of celebrities.”

- JWT: The Future 100 report: 2020



QUEEN ARROW

Best **TEKKEN** Gamer?



GAMEFLUENCER: SYLVIA GATHONI & JULIO BIANCHI

Nielsen's Esports playbook for brands 2019, speaks about the young individuals in this industry that avoid and block adverts and are not big fans of traditional media and advertising. It is for this reason that brands need to find new ways to approach this group of youngsters, which are said to be between the ages of 16 and 29. Brands are collaborating or partnering with gaming platforms, gaming teams, and gamers with great influence in order to increase their brand awareness and engagement with this young and growing consumer group.

As the African gaming industry grows and brands start to see the great opportunities it presents, gamefluencers (influencers in the gaming industry) will shift from being gaming teams and gaming platforms to being individuals who are respected and admired by other gamers in the industry. Kenya's Sylvia Gathoni (also known as Queen Arrow in the gaming industry), is one individual who has gained much praise after signing with US-based professional eSports group XiT Woundz. She is the first Kenyan to be signed to a major international Esports company. South Africa's next big FIFA star Julio 'Beast' Bianchi, is a member of the Goliath Gaming organisation and has been ranked 24th globally in FIFA. While earning 1st place in the "rest of world region" category, He has gained much respect and recognition for this achievement.



GAMEFLUENCER:

In 2018, one of South Africa’s fast food chain Debonairs Pizza took a brave and bold step in entering the gaming space. The company has increased its brand awareness by partnering with South African gaming hub IGN, gaming tournament platform Arcade X, as well as gaming teams White Rabbit and Sinister 5. In its partnership with gaming platform Arcade X tournament, contestants stood a chance to win Debonairs food vouchers and battle points that could be used to enter raffles where one could win food vouchers too. Debonairs’ success in the gaming space in 2018, led to its decision to partner with two more gaming teams: Goliath gaming as well as Ekasi Esports in 2019. In addition to this, the fast food franchise will be sponsoring ACGL tournaments in which R1000 worth of monthly prizes that will be given to gamers.



KIDFLUENCERS



KIDFLUENCER:

The youngest of the influencer economy are the kidfluencers (children influencers). From babies who have not managed to utter their first words or walk to teenagers who love to share their interests to their followers on social media mostly through Instagram and YouTube. These kidfluencers have the ability to exert the same influence as their older counterparts. Make the same amount of money, except that their target audience is generally children and parents.

Various brands such as toy companies, boutique stores or retailers that sell kids wear, as well as brands that focus on personal care products and diapers for children have noted the rise in kidfluencers and, as part of their influencer marketing strategy and have started collaborating with them. The brands and social media accounts of these influencers are managed by adults, generally their parents or a family member, and all that is required for these kidfluencers is their presence, opinions, and personalities.



KIDFLUENCER:
KAIRO FORBES
 &
IMADE ADELEKE

South African kidfluencer Kairo Owethu Forbes took the internet by storm from the moment she was born. 4 year old Kairo is the daughter of celebrity mom and entrepreneur DJ Zinhle and celebrity and musician dad AKA. Kairo is known not only for being a cute young girl but also for her confidence and fun personality, which she shares through her Instagram stories, photos and videos. She currently has over 800 000 followers on her Instagram account, managed by her grandmother Lynn Forbes, and has used her influence to work with brands such as iPhone through an iStore collaboration where she was seen walking into an iStore purchasing gifts for her parents. In addition to this, she has worked with children’s fashion retailers Earthchild and Naartjie, as well as DisneySA.



Imade Aurora Adeleke a kidfluencer who is not only adorable but fashion-forward too, has a following of over 200 000 followers. Nigerian born Imade is the child of well-known celebrity dad and musician Davido and influencer mom and fashion connoisseur Sophia Momodu, and has used her large following to promote her own haircare brand. Aurora by Imade is Imade’s organic haircare brand which is sold through its own online store, and currently sells a mango shampoo and lemon conditioner.



HEALTHCARE INFLUENCERS



HEALTHCARE INFLUENCERS

DR. SIVUYILE MADIKANA

Health care professionals are being embraced in the influencer economy. These influencers use their medical knowledge, expertise and experience to advise people through social media. Healthcare influencers educate their followers on medical issues and try to normalise and encourage conversations about ‘taboo’ health issues.

Dr Sivuyile Madikana is a qualified medical doctor who strongly believes in the power of social media and believes that it is a tool that can be used to drive change in Africa’s public health care. South African born Dr Madikana has used his influence to initiate and facilitate important conversations about medical health care issues with South African students on Twitter and Facebook using the hashtag: #Varsityconvos

“I’ve used social media to engage with young people and to make awareness on health issues, communicable diseases and lifestyle related ones,”

-Dr Sivuyile Madikana





**HEALTHCARE
INFLUENCERS**
DR. NANDIPHA MAGUDUMANA
&
GOGO DINEO NDLANZI

Influencing the dermatology, plastic surgery, and pharmaceutical sphere in Africa is Dr. Nandipha Magudumana. Listed in Mail and Guardian’s top 200 young South Africans list in 2018, this health care influencer has over 100 000 Instagram followers and uses this platform to not only educate her audience about medical solutions related to what she specialises in, but also uses her influence to promote her Optimum Medical Aesthetics business.

South African traditional doctors, also known as traditional healers or ‘Sangomas’ are growing their influence on social media platforms. By using these spaces to educate and share their expertise about how their audience can heal their bodies, minds, and souls and connect to the spiritual world and their ancestors. Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi a traditional doctor and spiritual coach has over 38 000 followers on Twitter alone. She uses her influence to educate her followers about African spirituality and philosophy. Gogo Dineo Ndlanzi is also a regular speaker at the University of Witswatersrand in Johannesburg, and uses her platform to teach medical students about her knowledge relating to African healing practices. In addition to this, Gogo Dineo has found her very own Institute of Spiritual Healing where she trains other traditional healers and participates in public talks centred on African spirituality, its evolution, and role in the 21st century.





DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

The online audience has become wary of the increase of influencers who buy followers and promote products they do not use. Some social media users are now starting to turn away from the recommendations of influencers and are looking to niche communities on their social media platforms. The Wunderman Thompson Intelligence's Future 100 report: 2020 calls these communities 'the new digital communities', who are brought together because they are like-minded and have common interests. These communities can either be open to public. Or offer a membership which would require a request to be added to the group. In these groups, members can share content about their opinions, recommendations, and experiences related to the topic that has brought them together. These groups come across as being more authentic simply because the members share their honest opinion about products and services, and present this information in the way that they want to without financial rewards or incentives from the brands they may be talking about at the time. Digital communities exert great influence over their members and foster honest, open, and authentic engagement. For brands, these communities could give great insights into consumer sentiment on the experience of the service or product.

The digital community platforms provide recommended advertising space for brands. Digital communities are often created by social media users who want to engage with of similar interests. However, brands could also facilitate or create their own communities by encouraging their customers to share photos, videos, and opinions relating to the brand's products under one group, hashtag, or platform. In order for these communities to remain authentic and trustworthy, brands should not offer financial incentives to members or try to control the content shared by members of the community. Fashion retailer Mr Price, has done a great job in bringing together Mr Price fashion lovers through its hashtag #MRPSTYLE. Using this hashtag the Mr Price community shares content (photos and videos) of themselves in their fashion-forward Mr Price merchandise. The retailer facilitates this community by sharing pictures of community members who have used the hashtag in their captions on their brand's page, and links some of these posts to their official website too. By doing this, the retailer gives full control to members to post whatever content they want to post under the hashtag and share their honest opinions about the brand and what they think about its merchandise. Through the online Mr Price community the brand gets to genuinely engage with its customers and build relationships with them.

"As consumers shift into smaller, tight-knit, like-minded groups, brands will have new opportunities to make more deliberate and genuine connections in these online spaces." - The Wunderman Thompson Intelligence, Future 100 report: 2020

INFLUENCER MARKET PERFORMANCE



One of the biggest problems faced by African companies in implementing influencer marketing strategies is their inability to accurately measure their success and ROI (return on investment) as well as detecting influencer's organically gaining followers that they interact with. This problem is faced by companies across the continent, including South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria. According to Influencer Intelligence's report titled: Influencer Marketing 2020, noted that 84% of marketers say that proving ROI is very challenging. This means that in most cases they cannot directly link the success of their influencer marketing campaigns to sales and ROI. In addition to this brands find the process of manually selecting and verifying influencer accounts to be a time-consuming and daunting task. However tracking their performance and verifying the authenticity of the influencer is vital for the success of their campaigns.

Humanz, is an international technology start-up company recently launched in South Africa. The company was created with the purpose of assisting brands with influencer marketing strategies by verifying influencers. By investigating their content, the authenticity of their followers. While tracking the possible short and long term ROI with a collaboration with the selected influencers. In addition to this, the analytical consultancy, in its State of Influencer Marketing in SA 2019 report, found that the average influencer account has 20%-27% of suspicious or fake followers which further speaks to the urgent need for brands to thoroughly verify its influencers to avoid disingenuous influencers.

IN CLOSING



As the influencer economy continues to grow and diversify brands and audience will be drawn to more authentic and transparent digital communication with influencers. Brands and influencers will need to move forward cautiously, ensuring that the content they share is honest, relatable, purpose-driven, and genuine as opposed to being heavily structured or controlled, disingenuous, and driven by money and profits alone.

Today's consumer is well informed and values authenticity, diversity and sustainability. They expect brands and influencers they interact with to pull from similar value chains. Therefore, moving forward brands will have to focus more on collaborating with influencers and implementing influencer marketing strategies and content that will build trust with their customers through authenticity and transparency. Influencers will have to be mindful and strategic about the brands they choose to work with and ensure that their collaborations and partnerships are organic and fit in well with their brand image. It is important that both brands and influencers do not take for granted their customers and followers' ability to identify disingenuous brand collaborations. In addition to this, remembering that the often young audience do not like being bombarded with advertisements and do not like being sold to at all times, which is why they initially put their trust in influencers whose recommendations as they are trusted and relatable. Therefore, maintaining this relationship of trust is paramount to the success of the influencer and the brands they work with too.

ISA CONTACT



By trendspotter: Lesego Motshela
For more on this report or ISA please contact us on:



info@iseeafrica.co.za

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