

Is influencer marketing still relevant?

By [Sylvester Chauke](#), issued by [DNA Brand Architects](#)

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Mention the term "influencers" and you are bound to receive a polarising response depending on who you speak to. Thing is, for many marketers, there has been a big question about the influencer strategy and perhaps even more of a discussion of its efficacy in light of fake news and everyone becoming an "influencer".



Sylvester Chauke

In recent years, we have seen the term "influencer marketing" at the forefront of boardrooms across the world, and in recent months, we have seen companies like Unilever take a stand on their approach to influencer marketing. There seems to be a need to regulate the space in order to ensure that the advertising standards across the world are being adhered to. Be that as it may, as marketers we have the obligation to fully interrogate and understand the what and the why before we start implementing, because as they say in these streets, a catch phrase starts and soon we are all singing to the tune, but do we truly understand?

With each marketing tactic, whether new or traditional, a clear strategy and understanding and the best application of a medium is still the root of success.

I read an interesting quote that read "the trusted voice of an influencer is now a Vogue" and as amusing as that was, it rang true because at some level it's the bigger platforms that give an added stamp of approval on who are the influencers are to 'listen' to.

Truth is, this space is in a constant state of flux and it goes without saying that we may be singing a different tune in the next few months. So our job as marketers is to be flexible and keep our eye on the movement so our brands are not left behind.

There is an undeniable growing impact of social media around the world – the tactics are however changing. While there is currently over 3.028 billion people actively using social media and ultimately basing their purchase decisions on their social media engagements and opinions, the "how" is what needs a constant look into.

In my view, the influencer approach is centered around social relationships that bring human elements to how people interact with products. At best, it needs to be authentic and based on a real connection with the influencers and brands involved

We are seeing so many brands dabble into this space and many speak of great successes while others not so much. One of South Africa's most popular influencers, Siya Bunny better known for her fashion and lifestyle opinions has collaborated with incredible brands in the past and her recent partnership with proudly South African mixer Clark and Sons- seem to be hitting the sweet spot with content that get consumers gagging for more.

When asked on her partnership with Clark and Sons, Siya mentioned falling in love with the brand before collaborating with them and was impressed by their variants of mixers that make delicious cocktails with the cherry on top being the brand is proudly South African.

Siya is one of the influencers that are a pleasure to watch online and how she controls her content and incorporates the Clark and Sons brand into her life which speaks to credibility, personal experience and trust.

I use this particular example as an example of a partnership that is mutual and does not seem forced. Many brands get it wrong by assuming that the big name is a sure way to make the brand connect on social – that is not the case.

It has been proven over the years that consumers are more likely to act quickly on an opinion of a peer as opposed to that of a brand especially through traditional methods such as advertising. So the conversation of who to partner with needs that little extra double click.

Technology has created new careers and ended them, as marketers and brand experts, we need to be in tune with the world and be able to forecast trends before they quickly sweep us up. The way to do this, it not to get too married to our plans. We need to allow room for tweaks and changes as we navigate our brand performance.

These are interesting times with many possibilities for brands to excite and inspire consumers through good old fashioned relationship.

ABOUT SYLVESTER CHAUKE

Sylvester Chauke is an award-winning entrepreneur and cascade of the Stand Against Bland movement in marketing amongst other fun things. He is founder and Chief Architect of DNA Brand Architects, sits on the Advisory council for WEF Global Shapers and is a Board Member of the South African State Theatre.

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