

Is The Influencer Marketing Bubble About To Crash Down To Earth?



Jennifer Sanchis, Senior Account Executive, [PRIME Research](#)

It is a fair question. Recent news on the topic have caused quite a stir in the digital world so the value of influencer marketing is under scrutiny.

I recently reviewed the matter in [a Twitter chat](#) with various practitioners. CIPR board and council member Ella Minty started the debate: Is the influencer marketing bubble actually about to burst?

Let's rewind a little bit.

The influencer marketing discipline has been going through a lot recently. The recent [Paul Logan case](#) raised deep concerns towards 'brand safety'. In the background, criticism about [fake followers](#) was rumbling while social media audiences have been asking for higher ethic standards and transparency from online ambassadors. In addition to this, a completely new form of influencers, Computer Generated Influencers (CGI), have emerged and reshaped the image of online authenticity. Within a short period of time, brand and creator content have dramatically evolved.

However, it has to be said that the influencer marketing backlash is beneficial for the discipline as there's plenty of room for improvement. Its main activity revolves around relationship building and places the role of [PR](#) at a central place. If the discipline doesn't address the issues around the perception of lack of regulation, transparency and authenticity, audiences will ultimately move away from those platforms.

So, how are brands adapting to those changes? They are taking action. [Unilever](#) has recently expressed its will to improve the integrity and transparency of influencer marketing and tackle influencer fraud. Elsewhere, the Body Shop is capitalizing on its digital network more than ever to drive social change and sell its product by refining their selection criteria when it comes to working with influencers: "We have very strict criteria when it comes to working with influencers to promote our brands or social causes. We always say it's not just about another pretty face it's about finding someone who stands for something" explained [Charlotte Amouy Adjchavanich](#), Body Shop Integrated International Brand Communications Director.

To help us understand those changes, Scott Guthrie, strategic advisor at [CampaignDeus](#), shared his thoughts about the state

of the industry: “Is the influencer marketing bubble about to burst? No, but there will be correction. All nascent industries enjoy growth spurts and suffer growing pains and influencer marketing is no exception.” He also emphasized the role of PR in its evolution: “I think much of influencer marketing sits very neatly within our PR skillset as building mutually-beneficial long-term relationships is our bedrock skill.”

PR should be at the forefront of the influencer marketing redefinition, clearly separating it from influencer advertising’s transactional and short-sighted goals. Success should be defined through long-term and mutually beneficial relationship building rather than highly visible one-hit campaigns.

So, to answer our first question: no, influencer marketing isn’t dead, but its purposes need to be clarified. Being popular isn’t the same as being influential so best practise strategies should not only drive awareness but also result in actions and measurable outcomes. Something PR excels in.



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