

*Easy Steps to*  
**CONNECTING WITH INFLUENCERS**  
*to Grow Your Business*



# ***EASY STEPS TO CONNECTING WITH INFLUENCERS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS***

We all have people we turn to when we need advice or guidance. It's a vital part of finding answers. It may be a parent, a boss or a friend. But sometimes they don't have the answers we are seeking. That's when we look elsewhere, often using social media. Whether we are an individual or a business, we all listen to the opinions of others about products and services.

The growth of online social influence is affecting the growth of many businesses. Word of mouth marketing or social influence marketing is changing fast with social media. In fact, 74% of consumers rely on social media to influence their purchasing decisions, while 81% are influenced by their friends' posts when making a buying decision.

In the last five years, social media has ballooned from the place where friends connect with each other to a phenomenon where businesses connect with millions of Internet users.

Influence marketing is the process of identifying, engaging and supporting others through conversations that can and do impact your brand, product or service. It's the process of connecting with authorities in your niche.

Partnering with the industry authorities and leaders has been a successful marketing strategy for a long time. Think about how big brands have been marketing with sports figures or celebrities. This same concept can help you grow your business by connecting with the influencers in your market.

A key influencer isn't necessarily the most powerful brand. It is someone who is very active online and is followed by your target audience. They won't be your competitors necessarily, but instead individuals and other businesses who are passionate about their industry.

You want to be aware of who these influencers are and to connect with them. They are the ones who can get you in front of the audiences you haven't been able to reach yet. They can help drive leads to your business and visitors to your site.

## **Why should you use Influence Marketing?**

Connecting with influencers allows even the smallest of businesses the opportunity to increase their trust and gain a larger reach. There are many reasons you should be using influence marketing in your own business.



1. Influence marketing is a great way to drive a ton of hits to your blog as well as increase your own influence in the social networks.
2. Connecting with influencers raises your trust among your customer. Top influencers in your industry can increase your reach to more targeted customers. This gives you brand trust just by association.
3. Consumers and readers trust recommendations from their peers. Again, connecting with those influencers in your niche to gain trust for your blog or business brings in a flood of new readers and potential customers.

Search engines, like Google, are now factoring social influence into page rank - which means the more social influence you have, the better your SEO and SERP.

## Who are you looking for?

Basically you are looking for people who are active online and might be willing to share your content with their own followers. You might want to find bloggers or journalists who write about your business industry.



The important thing to remember, though is you want people who are respected and trusted for their opinion

How do you find these market leaders in your niche? Do you know how to connect with them?

In this report I'm going to share how to figure out who the authorities and influencers are in your market and how to establish a meaningful connection with them. You'll learn what you need to focus on and where and how to connect with them.

## How to Find Influencers

Now you know why you need to be connecting to the influencers in your industry but how do find these connections? There are many ways to seek them out. The social networks and places you already visit online are great places to begin. But there are other ways too.

There are three main strategies you can use to connect with them.

- Social media platforms
- Social influence metric tools
- Search engines

## Social Media Platforms

The top social media platforms is the best way to begin. These sites are filled with influencers. Of these sites, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook are the top three. Use these sites to directly find the authorities in your industry.

- On Twitter, use the search function for finding new influencers. Follow hashtags of others to find who and what is being talked about.
- On Facebook, use the search box to research people in your industry. “Like” those who have a high Fan base and high rate of engagement by checking out their talking about numbers. Join Industry specific groups.
- Search for your specific industry on LinkedIn for Influencers socializing here. Follow them on LinkedIn and in their other social sites. Join groups.
- On GooglePlus, find the industry influencers by searching for their G+ page. Join relevant groups.
- Search for your industry specific keywords on Pinterest. Search for and follow those who frequently engage with your niche keywords. Look for broad Pinterest categories to find those with a lot of repins.

On each site begin by setting up your profile and getting familiar with the sites. Most high level networkers will have at least 500 connections, are very active online and have complete profiles.

Examples of high level influencers might include the executives, decision makers and media as well as people you already know are the authority in the industry.



## Social Influence Metrics Tools

Social influence metrics are tools that crawl the social media sites, collating and analyzing interactions of the users. The tool then ranks each business or person online for their social influence. These tools are gaining importance in social media marketing.

Although there are many social influence tools you can use to find and leverage the most influential people in your industry, the big three are Klout, PeerIndex and Kred.

- Klout is probably the most popular and oldest source for measurements. It measures activity on ten social media sites including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Wordpress blogs and the Klout site itself.

Use the site to find influencers with higher scores (scores range from 1 to 100).

- PeerIndex measures the levels of user engagement and their influence on the social media platform. This tool shows who influencers are influencing, so if you are targeting specific market you can use the data to connect with these top influencers.
- Kred allows you to find the key influencers in your market and gain insights and intelligence about your competition as well. This tool also includes a bonus feature which measures the outreach activity and provides it to you in an easy to read format. This feature tells you how often the influencers are retweeting, sharing and mentioning others like you. Influencers who are engaging often with others are more likely to share your content.
- Followerwonk's key feature is the "Search Twitter bios" that lets you type in keywords. It then lists the Twitter users who have those keywords in their bios. The list is ranked by the number of followers and social authority.

### Search Engines:

Search engines is a quick way to find out who is writing and influencing in your industry. The information will be general, not giving you details like the social metric tools or even the social media sites can. But search engines give you another option for finding more niche leaders.



Doing a simple Google search is a way to find bloggers in your industry. Using the Google search is helpful if you're in a tight niche market or looking for specific topics. For example, maybe you have a bird watching business. You're looking to find the top influencers in your geographic area or your demographic market. You can get an idea of who the top bloggers are doing a Google search.

Other ways to find influencers:

- Google+ Ripples is one of the lesser known ways to connect with influencers. With Ripples, you can see who is sharing your SEO content as well as who your specific influencers are and how you can connect with them. It lets you see who is sharing and re-sharing your content. These are the people you want to connect with.
- Engage in groups and discussions. You can interact on blogs or message boards by taking part in conversations. You can find groups and discussion sites all over the internet and most of the social media sites. Look for the influential members who have a large following, who interact and answer questions regularly.
- Look for blogs in your niche market. Popular blogs will have a lot of commenters and interaction, will rank high and be talked about among their peers. These popular blogs have more than likely been around for a while.
- Investigate your competition. Look at their marketing methods to find out where they are advertising and what social sites they are posting on.

- Search out who is following you. You might be surprised to find influential followers already in your tribe.

There are many ways to find the industry influencers in your market. These are just a few of them.

## Connecting With Influencers

Having just one relationship with an online influencer in your market can have a huge impact on your business. These influencers often have energetic personalities that command respect from other players in their niche.

You should be seeking out relationships with these influencers since they help shape consumer decision by promoting products and ideas across multiple channels. The good news is they are usually fairly accessible.

How do you begin establishing meaningful connections especially if you are an unknown or very small business? Begin by focusing on doing something for them before you ask them to do something for you.

Here are twenty relatively easy ways you can connect with the influencers in your industry who can hopefully help you get your business to the next level.

Begin by building a relationship:

1. Focus on giving something to them first. It's a good rule to give more than you take when connecting with influencers. Determine what you can offer that will be of value to them.

Don't just say "hello," especially on social media. Instead offer to interview them for your blog or a special report. Successful people enjoy telling others about their story. You will benefit from this as well as them. You will most likely take away at least one or two tips in your chosen field. The influencer can benefit by getting additional exposure and access to potential new business partners.

Can you offer them a speaking gig or can you introduce them to your own network influencers if you are involved in some sort of trade or professional organization.

2. Do your research. Once you find an influencer you are interested in connecting with, research their past speeches, any writing they have done, their interests and pet projects. This can all be done with a simple online search. This way you can find common areas where you can connect with them.



3. Build trust but don't pitch. Don't pitch anything to them when you first connect. Instead show a steady flow of interest in what they are saying. For example:

- Join their tribe on all their social networks.
- Engage them on social media by commenting and interacting. Just don't turn into a stalker.
- Comment on their blog posts occasionally. Make sure it has substance and is relevant.
- Share their content with your own networks.

This might seem like a lot of time and effort but the return can be huge. Once you pitch your awesome product or service, you have already established a relationship. You have a better chance of getting their interest.

4. Ask questions. Every once in a while, ask a question of your influencer on the social media sites. Make sure it's targeted at their area of expertise.

5. Become their affiliate. Take the time to market their product or service with good content. In the end, they will thank you and remember you.

6. Ask to reciprocate if someone has helped you in some way. It's possible they may be dealing with a challenge you can help fix. Asking is a form of relationship building, by showing the influencer you care and are interested in giving back.

7. Write a blog post about the influencer. This is a great way to get the attention of an influencer. It works best if you target a single influencer, but can also work with multiple influencers in one post.

8. Link to their content. Read the blogs of influencers you are targeting. When you find a post share it on Twitter and other social sites. Be sure to include their @username in your post or tweet.

9. If they have a podcast, do an iTunes review of their show.

10. Comment on someone else's blog and mention the influencer.

11. Become their customer and send them an unsolicited review. Most influencers will be thrilled.

12. Comment on their blog with the most informed comment for that post. Another option, disagree with them.

13. Present them with gifts or samples. By putting your latest product in their hands, you are encouraging them to share their reactions to it with their friends and followers.

14. Get connected to influencers through someone you know. This can work both online and offline.



15. Connect with influencers at conferences, meetups and webinars. Make relevant comments or ask pertinent questions. Make a point to get introduced to the influencers at the event.

16. Use social media sites like LinkedIn and Twitter to establish contact. Social media posts can sometimes be the easiest and fastest way to connect with influencers. This is because they are already connecting with other like-minded people.

LinkedIn is the largest online network of professional people making it an excellent place to begin connecting. Twitter is especially useful since the “verified” status lets others know an influencer has a following.

17. Tweet your target with an invitation to connect.



18. Blog on other sites with engaging content. Consider reaching out to smaller blogs in your industry first. Then you can move on to the larger sites with examples of your content.

Then you can pitch:

19. Create a product or service that will benefit the blogger’s or social media person’s audience. Clearly state these benefits to them when pitching your idea.

20. Send personal emails. Read their stuff, get to know them and make the email as personal as you can.

With all of those ideas on what to do, here are a couple of warnings of what not to do.

1. Don’t whine and complain. You can see a lot of this on the social media sites.

Resist the urge to do so.

Whining is very irritating. Just ask any parent. If you need to have a pity party, call a friend or family member.

2. Don’t gossip and talk about others behind their backs. You don’t know whether the influencer likes that person. And you’ve damaged your respect from them.

## **What to do next**

Now that you have engaged with them and have started making yourself known, you’ll need to maintain that relationship. Even if they promote your content early in the relationship, keep them interested in you. Ask them to guest post, or share their opinions in an interview on your site.

To find out where you are mentioned online you can use one of several free tools including Social Mentions and Topsy. Simply type in your brand name. Another option is to use a social media dashboard like Tweekdeck to monitor mentions.

Outside of the social media sites you should set up Google Alerts for your brand name and relevant keywords.



In the end, it's about building relationships. Focus on giving more than asking, especially in the beginning of a new connection.

Implement these strategies and use the tools available to you to connect with the top influencers in your market. You will see the number of successful people in your network grow and your content will begin to be shared.