

USING SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS TO PROMOTE YOUR PRACTICE

Brandi Musgrave and Keri Layne-Tarman

When you think of social media influencers, your mind probably goes directly to names like the Kardashians, Cristiano Ronaldo, Taylor Swift, etc.

However, not all influencers are mega-celebrities—nor are they all millennials (don't discount grandfluencers—those over age 50). An influencer is someone who has

- The power to affect the purchasing decisions of others because of their authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with their audience
- A following in a distinct niche, with whom they actively engage

Most likely there are influencers in your geographical area with whom your practice can collaborate to achieve your marketing objectives: endorse your brand, boost leads, increase surgeries, promote special events, etc. These influenc-

ers could be bloggers, YouTubers, TikTok-ers, podcasters, etc., of any age and experts on any subject matter.

5 CATEGORIES OF INFLUENCERS

The categories of influencers are determined by their audience size on social media:

1. Nano: 1,000–10,000 followers

These individuals have a strong influence in their immediate community (loved ones, family, friends, co-workers). They typically have high engagement rates because they respond to comments and followers trust them.

2. Micro: 10,000–50,000 followers

These influencers tend to be everyday people who are authentic, credible, and trustworthy. They create high-quality content that isn't over-produced, but they could help improve brand awareness,

IN A BLINK

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- Create a contract to clearly outline your expectation
- Trust is a two-way street

drive lead generation, and increase sales.

3. Mid-tier: 50,000–500,000 followers

These individuals tend to have fewer relationship-based followings, so they may have a more diverse audience.

4. Macro: 500,000–1 million followers

Normally macro-influencers are considered reliable ambassadors for brands because they are likely to have considerable experience. They appeal to a large cross-section of the popu-

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lation but will be more affordable than a mega influencer.

5. Mega: more than 1 million followers

This is where you will find big names with a broad diversity of followers. Not surprisingly, these influencers will be very expensive, so they are best suited for large brands that can afford their price.

Note: Do your due diligence to check the authenticity of the influencer and verify that the followers are real. Free online tools can help you identify fake followers.

HOW TO FIND INFLUENCERS

An influencer doesn't need to be someone who only talks about wearing glasses or contacts. They can be experts on topics that have an indirect connection to your services. For example, a skiing blogger could benefit from having LASIK; a senior gardening blogger could benefit from restored vibrancy to their vision after cataract surgery. If you can encourage them to have surgery at your practice and talk organically about their experience, they could become amazing brand-backers for your practice.

Before you can find the right influencers for your practice, you need to identify the audience you are trying to attract. An influencer for cataract surgery will be vastly different from an influencer for LASIK. With your audience in mind, try these tips:

- Use influencer search tools such as Modash, Collabstr, Tagger, and Fourstarzz
- Search “influencers in [your city]” and look for individuals

who have 30% of their followers in your city

- Think creatively and search local hashtags (ideas: #austinlife; #atlantafashion; #snowboard Colorado; #foodieinSeattle)
- Ask your patients whom they follow

ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS

Once you have identified influencers, decide how you want to engage them before you make contact. Do you want to offer them a free or highly discounted procedure? Pay them a flat fee for promoting your services? Set up a commission-based system for referrals? Offer a promo code for the influencer to pass on to their followers? Invite them to attend special events?

Next, decide what you want from the influencer in return. Do you want them to boost your brand awareness? Encourage their followers to book a surgery? Post live feeds of them during surgery? Have them talk honestly about their experiences with your practice?

When you have these questions answered, have been in contact with the influencer, and have both decided to move forward, draft a contract that clearly outlines your expectations and terms of use for any video content created. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has specific rules for disclosure on sponsored posts. You will be responsible for ensuring that the influencer includes both verbal and written disclosure that it is a paid partnership. You will want to monitor all posts to ensure the partner relationship is being honored.

In this type of marketing tactic, trust is a two-way street: You must trust the influencer and they must trust you. Collaborate as much as possible to ensure you are both on the same page.

TRACK THE EFFECTIVENESS

To track the effectiveness of your relationship, look beyond likes and comments. Provide the influencer unique landing page codes to share with their followers so you can see direct results. Use Google Analytics to see if traffic to your website increases after the posts go live.

Track other metrics, too, such as

- Impressions
- Reach
- Video views
- Engagements
- Link clicks
- Shares

The information compiled will let you know your return on investment and help you make changes for future campaigns. Successful partnerships will ultimately help you increase awareness of your practice, boost your SEO, and increase your surgeries. **AE**



Brandi Musgrave (brandi@fast-trackmarketing.com; 303-

731-2634) is the director of business development at Fast Track Marketing in Broomfield, Colo. Keri Layne-Tarman (keri@fast-trackmarketing.com; 303-447-9192) is a copywriter at Fast Track Marketing.