

# **Influencer Marketing in the Digital Age: Analyzing Strategies, Consumer Behavior, and Brand Communication**

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**Abstract:** In the digital era, the market price of social media networks is constantly being developed. In the field of marketing, influencers such as Internet celebrities, bloggers, stars and opinion leaders can effectively publicize, organize and implement brand marketing activities by virtue of the communication advantages of social media, which is of great significance to the survival of enterprises and market competition. Therefore, this paper mainly analyzes the importance of consumer behavior and brand communication to influencer marketing in the digital era, constructs an influencer marketing model, and on this basis, puts forward specific strategies of influencer marketing, so as to facilitate the high-quality development of enterprises' digital transformation.

**Keywords:** Digital Era; Influencer Marketing; Consumer Behavior; Brand Communication

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

According to data statistics, by June 2023, the number of Internet users in China has reached 1.079 billion, and the Internet penetration rate is as high as 76.4%. With the development of digital and information technology, social media develops rapidly, and more and more people use social media to become popular and become influencers of a class of groups. In recent years, the market economy has developed into a digital, fan-based feature, and the influencer value has also been developed. More and more enterprises seek influencers for cooperation, and use the influence effect of influencers on social media networks to spread brand value and selling points, so as to improve marketing coverage and accuracy.

## **2. THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND BRAND COMMUNICATION FOR INFLUENCER MARKETING**

First, from the perspective of consumer behavior, it is the cornerstone

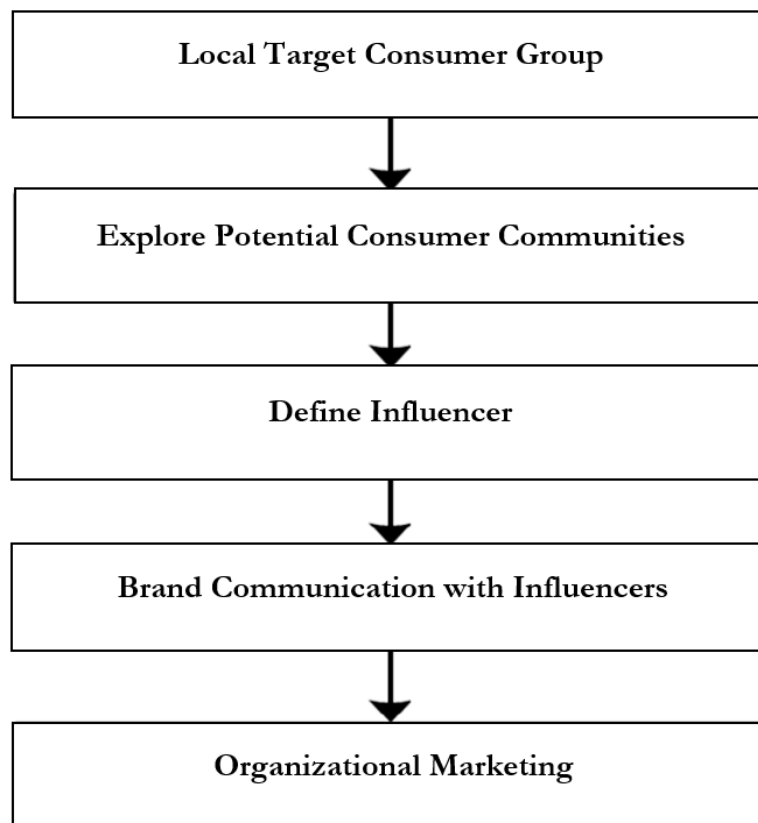
of marketing. Consumer behavior covers various behaviors of individuals in the process of finding, buying, using, evaluating and handling products and services. This behavior is affected by many factors, such as individual economic situation, social factors, psychological attitude, and consumer information processing and decision-making ability. In influencer marketing, a deep insight into consumer behavior can help enterprises more accurately target consumer groups and predict their reactions, so as to design more attractive marketing strategies (Yesiloglu & Costello, 2020). Secondly, brand communication plays an important role in influencer marketing centers. In the digital era, brand communication is not only about delivering information to consumers, but more importantly, establishing deep emotional connections with consumers. An effective brand communication process should be characterized by consistency, relevance, authenticity and participation. In brand communication, enterprises should not only accurately convey their core values and unique selling points, but also ensure that the content of communication is consistent with consumers' expectations and interests, so as to improve the relevance and effectiveness of information reception. At the same time, influencers should be given enough creative space to present brand information in an original and personal way, so as to enhance the authenticity and appeal of the message (NGUYEN, 2020). Finally, influencers can use their influence to turn brand messages into catalysts for consumer action. Influencers, as information ports, bridge brands and target consumers, and consolidate consumers' positive emotions and loyalty to brands through customized content creation (Gabhane et al., 2023). It follows that consumer behavior and brand communication are crucial for influencer marketing. Only when consumer behavior analysis and brand communication are effectively combined, the relationship between brands and consumers can be strengthened through influencer marketing, consumer trust can be enhanced, and purchase behavior can be stimulated, so as to improve the marketing performance of enterprises.

### 3. INFLUENCER MARKETING MODEL CONSTRUCTION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

In the digital era, influencer marketing has become an important means for enterprises to promote products and services, which can help enterprises better understand and meet consumer needs, achieve "consumer-oriented" marketing, and thus improve brand influence and

market share. Influencer marketing in the digital era is a systematic process that requires positioning target consumer groups, mining potential consumer communities, defining influencers, communicating with influencers for brands, and organizing marketing (Grafström et al., 2018). Among them, locating target consumer groups is the first step and the most basic link of influencer marketing. Enterprises need to use data mining techniques such as cluster analysis and association rules to analyze the consumption characteristics of consumer groups, accurately locate consumer groups, and then understand the basic information of target groups such as age, gender, region and consumption preference in detail, so as to provide reliable basis for enterprises to adjust the content and form of marketing strategies. Mining potential consumer communities is to find out the agglomeration communities of consumer groups by exploring the mutual relationships among individuals in the consumer groups after finding the target consumer groups. In the digital era, it is easier for consumer groups to gather in specific platform communities and form groups with common hobbies. For example, topics on Weibo, hashtags on Douyin, etc. Enterprises can find a large range of target groups through a small number of target groups, which lays a good foundation for subsequent definition of influencers and marketing (Tram, 2022). Defining influencers is a key link in influencer marketing. Influencers refer to people with great influence in a specific community or field. Influencers may be representatives of ordinary users, celebrities on social media, well-known bloggers, Internet celebrities, stars, opinion leaders, etc. (Zhou & Liu, 2022). On the one hand, enterprises need to select influencers related to their brands and able to influence target consumer groups based on their product and service positioning and market development direction. On the other hand, businesses need to determine which people are real influencers based on their influence, number of followers, interaction rate and other factors. Brand communication with influencers means that enterprises need to deliver brand value, product features and advantages and other information through effective communication with influencers, while discussing the possibility of cooperation, as well as the specific details of possible cooperation, including formulating cooperation plans, determining the content and form of cooperation, and agreeing on cooperation fees. During this period, enterprises should not only clearly and explicitly convey their brand image and values, but also pay attention to communication methods and skills, respect the personality and style of influencers, and provide targeted cooperation programs and returns to attract the interest and participation of influencers (da Costa, 2019).

Organizational marketing is the last step in marketing for marketers. Enterprises and influencers organize and implement marketing activities according to their cooperation plans. For example, it conducts online and offline joint promotion interactions with influencers, publishes advertisements and organizes interactive activities to improve brand awareness and reputation and attract more consumers to pay attention to and purchase products and services of enterprises. At the same time, enterprises also need to monitor and evaluate the effect of marketing activities in order to adjust strategies and improve the effect in time.



**Figure 1:** Influencer Marketing Model in the Digital Era

#### 4. INFLUENCER MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

##### 4.1 Locate Target Consumer Groups Based on Big Data Technology

In the digital era, big data technology is used to collect, clean and sort out consumer consumption behavior data, and analytical tools are used to more accurately understand consumer needs, preferences and behavior patterns, so as to formulate more accurate marketing strategies (Usta, 2023). First of all, enterprises should strengthen cooperation with e-

commerce platforms such as Jingdong, Taobao, Suning and Vipshop, as well as social media platforms such as wechat, QQ, Weibo and Douyin in the digital era, and collect relevant information such as consumers' personal information, purchase behavior, search record and browsing history under the premise of legal and compliant operation. Web crawler technology can also be used to conduct targeted collection according to keywords or themes to collect consumer behavior records for certain products and services. At the same time, relevant tools are used to preprocess the collected consumer behavior data, including data word segmentation, word removal, word frequency statistics, inverted index generation, feature value extraction and text vectorization. Data also needs to be standardized and formatted for subsequent analysis and application (Draganova, 2018). Secondly, K-Means clustering algorithm and association rule algorithm are used to cluster, associate and classify vectorized texts, and the behavioral pattern characteristics of this kind of consumers are obtained. For example, clothing enterprises use relevant algorithms to sort out the clothing category, size, style, price, color, personal age, gender, family members and other relevant information that consumers often buy. They can analyze and find the characteristic information of such consumers, and divide them into different groups according to the analysis results. For example, high-end elite customers are generally over 30 years old. The unit price of purchasing clothing products or services is more than 5,000 yuan. There are also active customers, these customers are between 25 and 40 years old, the unit price of clothing products or services is between 200 and 500 yuan, and the consumption frequency is more (Hurt, 2017). The above steps can help enterprises find the target groups more intuitively and efficiently, and accurately extract the consumption characteristics of the target groups, so as to "find the right medicine" and adjust the marketing strategy.

#### 4.2 Platform-Based Consumer Community Mining

Mining consumer community is an important link to find out and expand the target group. In the digital era, various e-commerce platforms and social media platforms are the main carriers of consumer community mining, which can provide reliable basis for enterprises to find potential consumers and consumer communities. Based on the characteristic information of consumer behavior, the characteristics of enterprise consumers and potential consumer groups are summarized, so as to help enterprises better understand the characteristics of consumers. For example, the big data technology is used to analyze and sort out the characteristics of the target consumer groups of the apparel enterprises

mentioned above, such as frequent shopping on Jingdong platform, having a family, frequent receiving evaluation, and mainly buying clothes for adult men and children.

#### 4.3 Reasonable Selection of Influencers Based on Influencer Factors

Selecting the right influencer is the key to the success of influencer marketing. First of all, whether the influencer audience matches the target market of the enterprise is the primary consideration of the enterprise. The audience group of influencers is the main object of influencer marketing. Once the matching degree between the two is low, it is likely to lead to the phenomenon of "not answering the question" in influencer marketing, and the marketing content of enterprises is inconsistent with the needs of marketing objects (Zhang, 2023). Therefore, enterprises need to ensure that the selected influencers have a high degree of match with the target audience of the brand. For example, if the audience of a garment enterprise is the young consumer group between 20 and 25 years old, the enterprise can CHOOSE the Internet celebrity and famous blogger "Dong Yuhui", "LIU GENg HONG" and "Wu Jing" who have high visibility and influence in the young group as influencers. Secondly, companies need to consider the influence of influencers in the target consumer group. The influence of influencers directly affects the success or failure of enterprise influencer marketing to a large extent. The greater the influence of influencers is, the wider the coverage of enterprise marketing is, and the more conducive it is to improving enterprise marketing performance. To this end, companies can measure the influence of influencers by looking at the number of social media followers of influencers, the number of likes and shares of posts, and the popularity of topics (Hu & Ruolin, 2022). Thirdly, enterprises need to consider the image of influencers and the quality of the content created. On the one hand, enterprises should choose influencers with good market reputation and personal image. On the other hand, enterprises also need to scientifically evaluate the quality of the content created by influencers by reviewing their historical creation content, and select influencers who can provide high-quality and innovative content, so as to effectively attract and influence audiences. Finally, companies also need to consider the willingness of influencers to cooperate and the cost of cooperation. It is necessary for enterprises to communicate with influencers in advance to understand their views on corporate brands and their willingness to cooperate. On this basis, the enterprise based on its own financial budget to formulate the possible cooperation mode, time, cost and so on, to achieve a win-win situation.

#### 4.4 In-Depth Brand Communication Based on Enterprise Products and Services

In-depth brand communication between influencers and enterprises is the most important thing to achieve effective marketing of influencers and build brand consumer community.

This communication process is not only related to the surface image building, but also involves the transmission and recognition of the core value of the brand. Therefore, it is necessary for enterprises to be goal-oriented, deepen communication and interaction with influencers, show brand charm and deepen brand connotation (Bakri, 2023). First of all, enterprises should establish deep cooperative relationships with influencers and clarify common goals. The cooperative relationship between the two sides is not only a superficial endorsement relationship, but also a deep brand sharing and value transfer. When signing contracts, influencers need to have a deep understanding of the brand positioning, development concept, product and service features of the enterprise. Companies also need a detailed understanding of influencers' external image, creative content style and fan base. On this basis, the common goal is clarified, and under the guidance of this, the joint force is formed to effectively transmit the brand information to the target consumer groups in the subsequent marketing activities. Secondly, we should explore brand fit points and strengthen emotional connection. Enterprises and influencers should further analyze the connection between corporate brands and the content created by influencers, dig into the similarities between each other in terms of brand concepts, and take appropriate measures to emphasize and enlarge the brand similarities, so as to enhance the brand identity of target consumer groups. At the same time, under the background of modern society, the introduction of product and service functions is not the only focus of marketing. In the context of influencer marketing, it is necessary for enterprises to establish emotional connections with target consumer groups through emotional content, and further consolidate the brand position in the hearts of consumers with the help of influencers (Moussa Elmi, 2022).

Finally, continuous interaction and feedback. In-depth brand communication is a continuous process that requires close interaction and feedback from both parties. By collecting and analyzing market feedback in a timely manner, the communication strategy can be adjusted to better match the personal image of influencers with the communication strategy of the brand, so as to achieve the best communication effect.

#### 4.5 Influencer Marketing Based on Brand Consumer Communities

Success in influencer marketing requires a range of specific marketing strategies. Firstly, the marketing strategy is formulated according to the product type. Different product types may require different marketing strategies. Enterprises need to develop their own influencer marketing strategies based on their product types and target markets. For example, for products with high engagement, such as cars and home appliances, influencer marketing should focus on demonstrating the functions and advantages of the products. Brand A's high-end car brand can choose to cooperate with well-known car bloggers to attract potential consumers through their professional reviews and recommendations. For products with low engagement, such as daily necessities and FMCG, influencer marketing should focus on creating emotional connections and stimulating consumers' purchase desire with the help of influencers' word-of-mouth and recommendation. For example, brand B fast-food enterprises can effectively promote product sales by using the form of online celebrities' live delivery (Verplancke & Gelati, 2022). Second, pay close attention to the needs of consumers and provide high-quality content. Consumers are the core of influencer marketing. Therefore, it is necessary for enterprises to have a deep understanding of the needs and interest points of the target audience, so as to provide targeted content creation guidance for influencers. At the same time, high-quality content is also key to attracting and retaining consumers. Enterprises should encourage influencers to create high-quality, interesting, and useful content to stimulate consumer interest and engagement. For example, beauty brands can cooperate with well-known beauty bloggers to jointly launch skin care and beauty tutorials for different skin types and age groups to meet the personalized needs of consumers. Through high-quality content creation, brands can effectively enhance consumers' awareness and favorability of products. Third, enrich and improve the social content published by influencers themselves. Influencers' social media is an important channel for influencers' marketing and the most basic way for their audiences to obtain brand information. Therefore, influencers should regularly create and release high-quality content to root brand information in it, so that audiences can receive effective brand information under positive emotions. For example, after influencers cooperate with fashion brands, influencers can post fashion matching tips, trend information and other contents on Weibo, Douyin and wechat, and actively respond to fans' comments and questions to enhance the interaction and stickiness between brands and fans (Ji et al., 2023). By continuously optimizing your social media content, you can



better establish your brand image and enhance your brand influence. In addition, enterprises should also strengthen the interaction with influencers, forward the content created by influencers, and comment, as well as maintain good interaction with consumers, so as to attract the attention of more target consumer groups (Munsch, 2021). Finally, take diversified forms of marketing. Influencer marketing is not just limited to influencers Posting product information and recommendation links. In the digital era, influencers can adopt diversified marketing forms to improve marketing effects.

1) Live with goods. Influencers use Douyin, Kuaishou and other live streaming platforms to show and introduce the functions and use effects of brand products to consumers, enhance consumers' purchase confidence and improve the conversion rate (Zuo & Li, 2023).

2) Offline activities. Influencers can cooperate with enterprises to organize various offline activities, such as product launches and experience activities, and invite media and potential consumers in various industries to participate in them to increase brand exposure.

3) Joint promotion. Influencers can conduct joint promotion with other brands or influencers, jointly launch preferential activities or co-branded products, and expand the influence and market share of both parties.

4) Cross-border cooperation. Cross-border cooperation with brands or influencers in different fields can achieve win-win results through the complementary advantages and resource sharing of both partners. For example, C sports brand can cooperate with influencer fitness bloggers to carry out online live classes and offline fitness activities to attract more fitness enthusiasts to participate. At the same time, it cooperates with health food brands to launch co-branded products to meet consumers' needs for healthy life. Through diversified marketing forms, enterprise and influencer marketing can better cover the target audience and improve the marketing effect.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing is a means of marketing with the help of influencer market image and influence. In the digital era, the development of Internet technology and information technology provides strong support for influencer marketing. Consumer behavior analysis and brand communication are the key links of influencer marketing, which requires enterprises to analyze the characteristics of potential consumer groups

based on big data technology and provide reliable basis for positioning consumer communities. At the same time, we should strengthen in-depth brand communication with influencers, and effectively transmit brand value and information to consumers on the basis of fully understanding brand connotation and achieving common goals, so as to improve marketing effects.

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