

Can Instagram's 'Swipe Up' Feature Drive Sales?

Nearly half of marketers say influencers have increased revenues

ARTICLE | **FEBRUARY 28, 2019**

Blake Droesch

Influencer marketing is a growing tactic for building brand awareness and driving consumer engagement. But according to a study by Influencer Intelligence and Econsultancy, just 12% of US and UK marketers strongly agree that influencers have increased revenues.

Another 33%, however, "somewhat agree" that influencers have driven revenues, indicating some mixed, but encouraging, success with this marketing strategy.

How Have Influencers Supported UK and US Digital Marketers' Marketing Strategy?

% of respondents, Aug 2018

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Strongly agree					
2 Somewhat agree					
3 Neither agree nor disagree					
4 Somewhat disagree					
5 Strongly disagree					
Influencers have helped build brand awareness of a product launch/campaign	43%	43%	10%	2%	2%
Influencers have increased consumer engagement	32%	47%	13%	5%	3%
They've made marketing messages more relatable	28%	52%	12%	5%	3%
Influencers and their audiences provide valuable feedback to help us improve product/service	15%	36%	28%	18%	3%
Influencers have helped restore a level of trust among our customers	13%	47%	30%	7%	3%
They have increased revenue generation	12%	33%	40%	11%	4%
They've not yet had an impact on our marketing strategy	5%	19%	22%	34%	20%
Influencers have had negative impact on our brand reputation	1%	7%	22%	33%	37%

Note: in the past 12 months
Source: Influencer Intelligence in association with Econsultancy, "Influencer Marketing 2020," Nov 14, 2018

244453 www.eMarketer.com

The new "swipe-up" feature in Instagram Stories, which allows influencers to direct followers to a separate page where they can buy products, likely contributes to this mixed success.

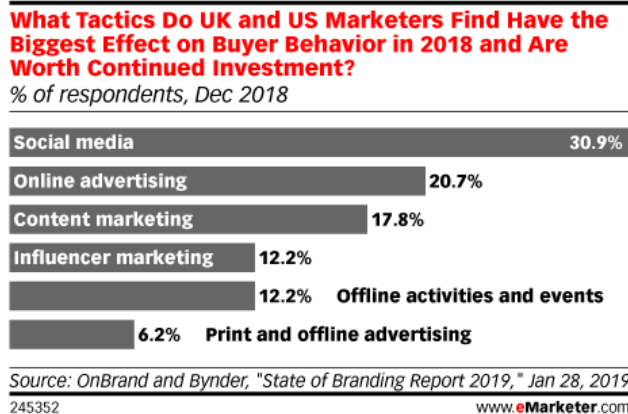
"The ability to link out from Stories provides significant advantages when it comes to lower-funnel marketing objectives," said eMarketer principal analyst Debra Aho Williamson.

The swipe-up feature both directly drives purchases and provides a valuable measurement tool for brands and marketers. Instagram is the most popular platform for influencer marketing in nearly every country, but before swipe-up was introduced, the platform didn't allow web links. They are still not permitted in the feed.

"We are being pushed a lot more [by clients] to think about tracking influencer activity back to performance and back to sales," said Ross McCormack, associate director of strategy at Socialyse.

Swipe-up and other features could make this type of tracking possible. But right now, influencer marketing still lags behind other tactics like social media, online advertising and content marketing in having the

biggest effect on buyer behavior, according to a survey of UK and US marketers conducted by OnBrand and Bynder.



Social media influencers have had some success with swaying high-activity users to buy, especially on Instagram. CivicScience in December 2018 found that 34% of daily Instagram users in the US have purchased something from an influencer/blogger recommendation.

However, few retailers currently use influencer marketing for customer acquisition. A study by Retail TouchPoints in November 2018 showed that just 25% of retailers in North America said they used celebrity influencers, while 20% used microinfluencers.

Many marketers have cautioned against focusing too heavily on revenue generation from influencers, feeling it should not replace the core tenets of what makes them effective.

"What's most important is that consumers see that the brand and the influencer are working together to provide content that actually resonates and that's not just 'Use my code. Swipe up here,'" said Ethan Frame, senior manager of influencer marketing and business development at accessories company MVMT. "I've been trying to shift our efforts into 'Let's tell a story with all our posts. Let's see if we can get influencers to share something about the MVMT brand that resonates with them and their followers.'"

Ken Halvachs, associate content director at Digitas, said he has used the swipe-up feature in his marketing strategy, but cautions that

conversion rates are not always strong, even for influencers with millions of followers.

“At this point, we still use influencers heavily for recommendations and product awareness,” he said. “But in terms of making them a direct-sales vehicle, we look at other tactics over influencers.”