

## **INFLUENCE MARKETING AS A PR TOOL IN MODERN COMMUNICATIONS**

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**Annotation** The article is devoted to influencer marketing as an important PR tool in modern communications. Its advantages, such as precise targeting, audience trust and creative content, as well as risks associated with high cost and possible reputational losses are considered. Current trends are discussed, including the growing popularity of micro- and nano-bloggers and the use of platforms for selecting influencers. The conclusion highlights the role of influencer marketing in improving the connection of brands with their audience.

**Keywords:** Influencer marketing, PR strategy, bloggers, targeting, engagement, reputational risks, micro-influencers, marketing effectiveness, social networks, content, influence, audience trust.

Influence marketing has become an important and integral part of brand promotion strategies. The essence of this approach lies in collaborating with opinion leaders (bloggers, celebrities, experts) who, through their platforms, help promote goods and services. Influencers have trusted relationships with their audience, allowing the brand to "win" it in an unobtrusive and organic manner. People are more likely to trust the recommendations of those who are perceived as close and understandable than traditional advertising that can be perceived as intrusive and insincere. One of the most obvious advantages of influence marketing is targeting. Companies can choose a blogger or influencer whose audience fully matches the target audience of the brand. For example, fitness brands often turn to fitness bloggers to attract people interested in a healthy lifestyle. "Influencers not only inform but also create an atmosphere of trust, making them more effective in promoting products," write experts from Skillbox Media[1]. This approach allows not to spend budget on audience that is not interested in the product. Trust and authority of influencers Relationships between influencers and their followers are built on trust. People perceive recommendations from their favorite bloggers as advice from friends, making advertising significantly more effective. Unlike traditional advertising campaigns, where everything is

subordinate to promoting the brand, influencers strive to create harmonious content that naturally integrates into their daily lives and helps their audience solve pressing problems or meet their needs. However, despite many advantages, influence marketing faces several risks. First, the cost of collaborating with popular bloggers can be very high. Influencers with millions of followers can demand enormous fees, which may not justify the expenses if the campaign results do not meet expectations. Second, there are reputational risks. As Stik.pro[2] experts warn, "Mistakes in the choice of leader of opinion, especially if a blogger is connected with political or social scandals, can affect the image of the company, even if the product itself is qualitative». Influencers whose views or actions are contrary to the brand's values can damage its reputation. Analysis of campaign effectiveness" Another issue is measuring the effectiveness of influence marketing. Unlike traditional advertising, where results can be assessed using specific metrics (e.g., the number of sales), the results of influence marketing can be more challenging to analyze. One way to evaluate effectiveness is audience engagement, including likes, comments, and shares. However, even these metrics do not always provide a clear picture of actual influence. Sometimes an influencer may have a large audience but low engagement, which indicates inactive or even fake followers. As the experts of Skorozvon.ru[3] note, "The audience engagement and quality analysis of the influencer helps the brand avoid disappointment from poor results". Trends and future of influence marketing Trends indicate that brands are increasingly choosing micro- and nano-bloggers, who have a much smaller audience but are easier to engage. These influencers can be less expensive, and their audience is often more loyal. The use of platforms for finding and analyzing influencers is also increasing, allowing brands to reduce costs and improve the accuracy of partner selection. According to experts from Reg.ru[4], "The main trend in influence marketing is collaboration with bloggers who not only influence their audience but also actively shape opinions and change consumer behavior."

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