

HOW TO:

# EFFECTIVELY WORK WITH MICRO INFLUENCERS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS



Micro influencers have quickly become some of the most sought-after creators online. Not celebrities, not famous YouTubers, but people more like you and me that have built small, tight-knit communities online.

Over the past five years, influencer marketing has proven to be one of the most effective ways for brands to reach their goals—whether it's increasing awareness, extending reach, or most importantly, boosting sales.



As influencer marketing spend is forecasted to reach \$4.14 billion in 2022, competition in this space is only growing.<sup>1</sup>



But as competition rises, so do the costs—and brands both big and small are turning to micro influencers to maximize their budgets.



With their highly engaged audiences, access to niche communities, and trustworthy content, micro influencers are a more cost-effective approach to traditional influencer marketing that still produces significant returns. While there's no denying the benefits, working with micro influencers is often easier said than done. **Throughout this guide, we're breaking down the value of micro influencers, the overlooked challenges, and how to effectively incorporate them into your next social media campaign strategy.**

<sup>1</sup>Insider Intelligence, 2022.



# WHAT IS A MICRO INFLUENCER?

As the name suggests, a micro influencer is an online creator with a following much smaller than a traditional influencer—typically between 10,000 to 100,000 followers.

Despite their smaller following, micro influencers have highly engaged audiences with more authentic connections. These creators are more like friends than online celebrities, making their recommendations more genuine and trustworthy.



Recent studies show that

**70% of millennial consumers** are influenced by the recommendations of their peers when making a purchase, making micro influencers a valuable asset to any brand.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Cassidy, Peter, "Survey Finds Consumers Crave Authenticity - and User-Generated Content Delivers." Social Media Today, 2017.



# INDUSTRY INFLUENCER TIERS AND ASSOCIATED ENGAGEMENT RATES



# IN A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE, WHY SHOOT SMALL?

The rise of influencer marketing has brought with it a wave of paid promotional material, causing many social media platforms to become saturated with advertiser content.

To combat declining engagement rates and rising influencer costs, brands are turning to micro influencers to bring a fresh spin to their social media marketing strategies.



Let's look at soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo as an example.

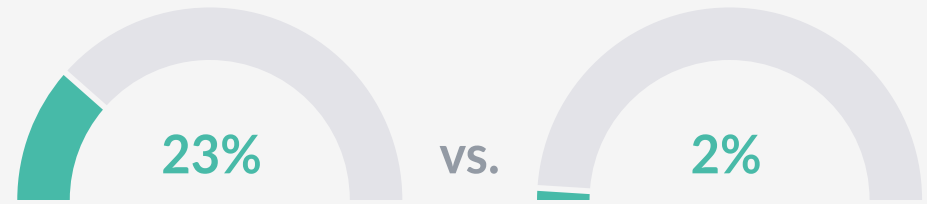


And for good reason. Micro influencers are producing returns far beyond what is achievable on both an organic and paid level.

# EXAMPLE

## CRISTIANO RONALDO VS. DANTE POLVARA

With a following of **over 400 million** on Instagram, Ronaldo currently has the largest reach on the platform. So if you are looking to attract some serious brand awareness, partnering with Ronaldo would make sense. But if you were to compare Ronaldo to former Georgetown men's soccer player, Dante Polvara, the difference in engagement rates is significant.



With just **6,000 followers**, Polvara has an average engagement rate of **23%**, compared to Ronaldo's **2%**. You should also consider that Ronaldo's audience is extremely broad, and some of his followers may have no interest in soccer at all. So if you're looking to target young adults interested in soccer, your best bet is to go with Polvara.

**Now, imagine if you were to partner with all of the NCAA's top soccer athletes.** You would have a much higher chance of reaching your target audience at just a fraction of the cost of partnering with Ronaldo. If you're still not convinced, there are a few other factors to consider when working with a celebrity influencer over a micro influencer.



**Celebrity endorsements typically don't come across as authentic.**

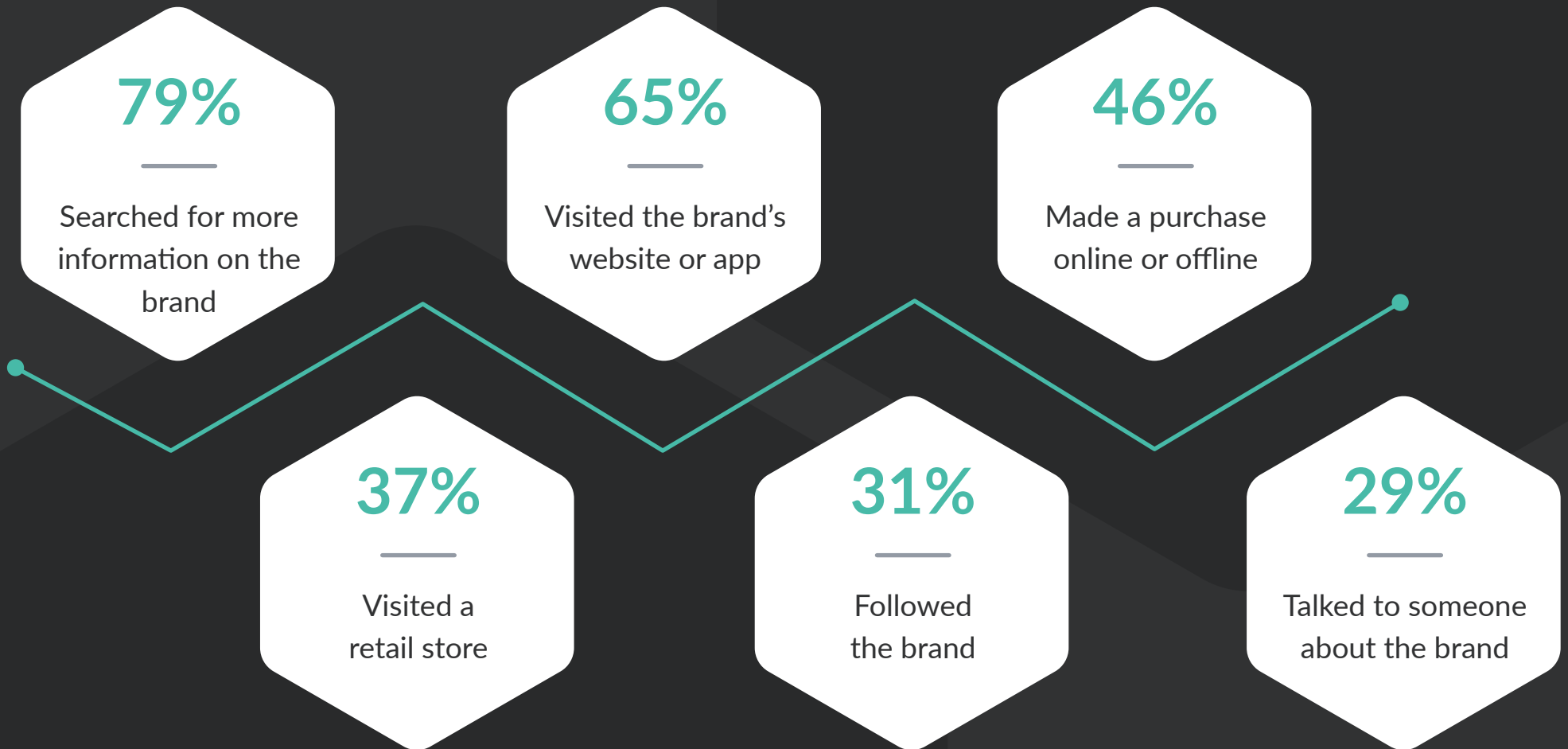
Most of us understand they are getting paid to endorse the brand, so do they really use and love the product, or is it just a business transaction?



**Celebrities aren't as engaged with their audience.**

Comments are unlikely to get a reply, whereas micro influencers are highly engaged with their audience. If you comment on a micro influencer post, you can expect a response.

# HOW AUDIENCES INTERACT WITH MICRO INFLUENCERS





# THE VALUE OF MICRO INFLUENCERS

## Higher Engagement Rates

More followers should mean higher engagement rates, right? In most cases, the exact opposite is true. The more followers an influencer has, the lower engagement rate they typically generate.

1.3%

The average engagement rate for Macro influencers is **1.3%**—which is 3x lower than Nano and Micro influencers.

4%

On the other hand, influencers with 10,000 followers or fewer have an average engagement rate of **4%**, with an average feed post generating a reach of nearly **34%**.



With today's algorithms prioritizing content that users engage with the most, maximizing engagement is key for brands to reach target audiences.



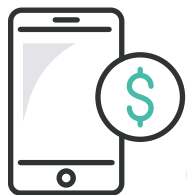
# THE VALUE OF MICRO INFLUENCERS cont.



## Authentic Audiences

Finding authentic influencers with authentic audiences has been an ongoing challenge for many marketers.

As an influencer's audience increases in size, the account naturally becomes more prone to bots and other inauthentic followers. Authenticity becomes less of an issue with smaller influencers as most of these audiences have a personal connection with the influencer or their content.

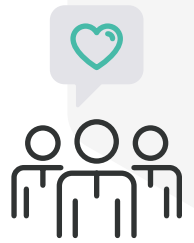


## Cost-Effective

Working with well-established influencers is not cheap and you run the risk of spreading your budget thin if you decide to focus on a few key creators. Micro influencers, on the other hand, are a great way to maximize your budget as many small creators will produce content in exchange for product samples. Creators receive product samples and, in return, brands receive awareness and user-generated content. This strategy is especially lucrative for small brands looking to boost awareness on a budget. Not to mention, gifting tends to elicit more authentic recommendations over paid promotion.

## Niche Communities

Not only are smaller audiences more authentic but they also have stronger community connections. When you partner with a celebrity influencer, their audience is extremely broad—with followers scattered across different countries with varying demographics. Whereas with micro influencers, you can target creators in specific communities with specific interests. This also becomes valuable for tracking and reporting the success of campaigns, as you can test how your content is performing across several communities rather than guessing how it performs with one creator.



# COMMON CHALLENGES WHEN WORKING WITH MICRO INFLUENCERS

Of course, nothing comes without its challenges, and micro influencers are no exception. Despite the immense value they can bring to your social media marketing, there are several overlooked challenges when incorporating micro influencers into your strategy.



## Finding the Right Niche

Knowing the communities you want to target is one thing. Actually going out there and finding them is a completely different story. Many brands get hung up on utilizing micro influencers because they don't know where to find them. There is plenty of software out there to help assist you with finding influencers, but working with a micro influencer-specific marketing agency allows you to reap the benefits of small creators without the large workload that comes with it.



## Vetting for Authenticity

Fake followers and fake engagement continue to be an ongoing issue for marketers. While certain software and tools exist to help combat this issue, like most technology, it's not perfect. These tools overlook some key factors when vetting influencers, such as account and content history. Striking a balance between technology and human expertise will ensure your brand is working with the most authentic creators.

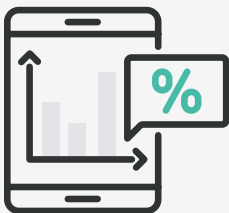


# COMMON CHALLENGES WHEN WORKING WITH MICRO INFLUENCERS cont.



## Contracting and Content Rights

How much should you pay your influencers? What about gifting? Do you have the rights to influencer content if it was compensated for with a gifted product? Compensation and content rights are some of the most confusing areas of influencer marketing for brands. It's always important to understand an influencer's rate before working with them to ensure they are being compensated fairly. If you want rights to the content after it's been posted, this will also need to be considered in the contracting phase.



## Reporting

Much like outreach and management, reporting for micro influencers can quickly become a large time constraint. This process usually entails your team individually asking each creator for post analytics—and it's not always guaranteed you'll get the most accurate results. Proper management via an agency will take the stress of reporting off your team's plate.

## Outreach and Management



Because many micro influencers operate independently, it's not always easy to connect with them. While Instagram and Tik Tok have begun rolling out their creator community platforms, the technology poses challenges depending on the scale of your campaign. It's one thing to manually manage a handful of creators, but if you're working with hundreds of micro influencers, a campaign can quickly eat up your internal team's time.



# 5 BEST PRACTICES WHEN WORKING WITH MICRO INFLUENCERS

## 1. Engage and interact with your influencers

After all, social media is meant to be social. When an influencer posts about your brand, be sure to engage with their content by reposting it on your story to show your appreciation for their work.

## 2. Listen to feedback

Pay close attention to comments and any other feedback from these small audiences. You might uncover segments or opportunities you hadn't otherwise considered.

## 3. Educate your influencer like a customer

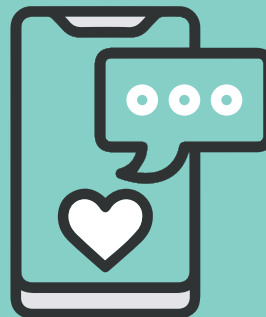
Take a moment to educate your influencer on your brand and product. If you leave a positive impression, they'll likely pass that positivity on to their audience.

## 4. Let your creators be creative

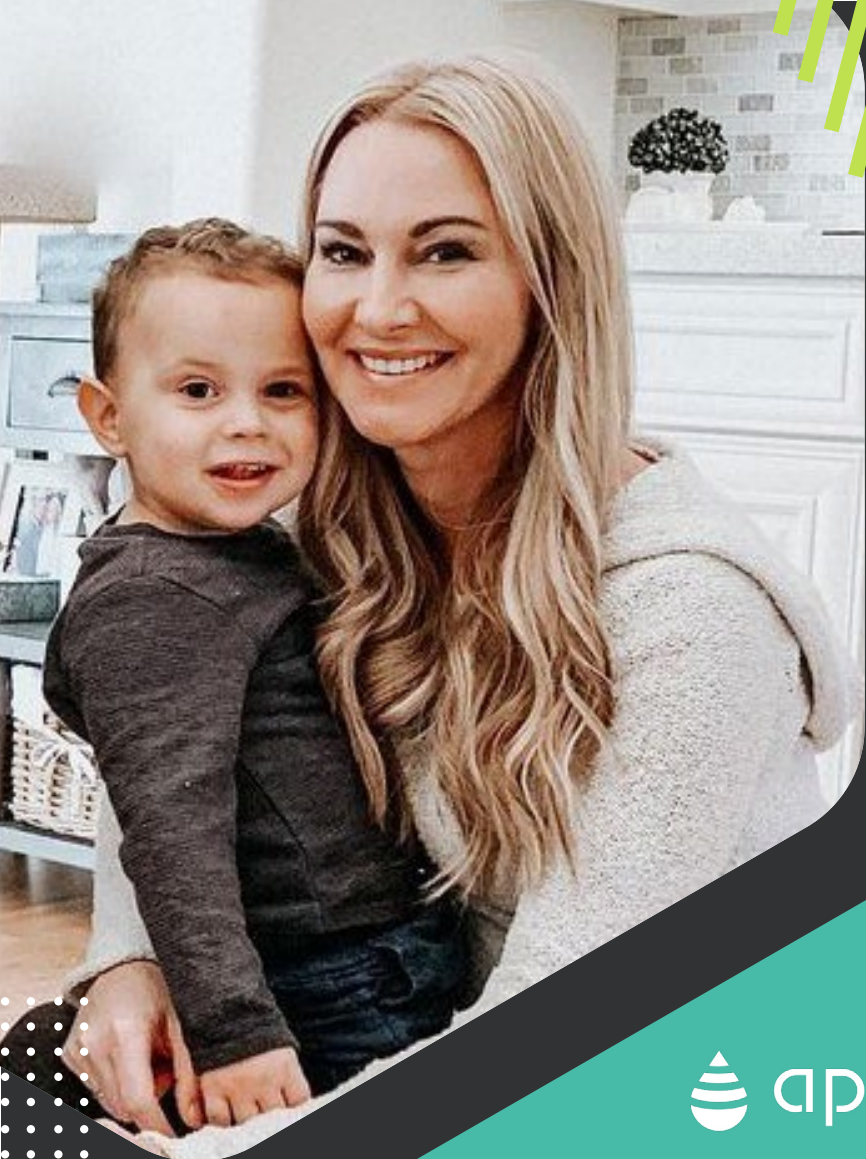
Your creators know their audience best. Allow your influencers to be creative with their content to ensure the partnership is as natural and authentic as can be.

## 5. Focus on forming lasting relationships

You might be in the presence of the next Macro or Celebrity-tier influencer. Forming a great relationship now can lead to a lasting brand ambassador in the future.







# ABOUT APEXDROP

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ApexDrop is the leading micro influencer agency in the United States helping brands build influencer communities that last.

We build our offerings around one simple philosophy: trust is not a commodity. We work to build trust within the influencer community so they will believe in your brand, your business, and your story.



Connect with our team to discover the opportunities micro influencers can bring to your social media marketing and business goals.

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