

BEN

BE ENTERTAINMENT



The CMO's Guide to Full-Funnel Influencer Marketing

Since the earliest days of social media influencer marketing, so much has changed. The breadth and number of creators with massive followings is vast. But social media platforms that support influencer marketing now offer much more sophisticated tools. And the budgets marketing executives devote to influencer marketing have grown in the U.S. from \$2.76 billion in 2020 to an expected \$4.14 billion in 2022, according to eMarketer.

But one thing has stayed consistent: many CMOs think influencer marketing is a tactical effort instead of a core marketing strategy. They view it as either a top of the funnel awareness strategy to get the word out about a new company or product, or a bottom of the funnel conversion tactic to encourage consumers to click and buy.

With all of the advancements and innovation in influencer marketing—predictive AI, precise measurement, stronger creator relationships—it can now nurture prospects throughout the entirety of their customer journey, across the full funnel. By making strategic choices about the creator, platform, content and audience, marketers can tap into the full potential of influencer marketing from awareness to consideration and action. Full-funnel Influencer marketing is here.



A Bigger Opportunity Than Marketers Think

THE POWER OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IS NO SECRET

According to eMarketer, more than **86% of marketers** are expected to use influencer marketing by **2025**, up from **74.5% in 2022**. Despite this near ubiquity, most companies only use it to meet very specific campaign goals and target individual stages of the funnel.

But with anywhere between six and 50 customer touchpoints leading up to a single sale, influencer marketing presents a huge new opportunity to fill a void where traditional touchpoints are crumbling. The effectiveness of TV and streaming advertising is decreasing as viewers skip commercials. Even online, more than 47% of users now have an ad blocker. And most recently, Apple's introduction of the "Ask App Not to Track" feature has decimated the targeting data available to marketers on apps and social media platforms.

Influencer marketing is different. It meets consumers on their social platforms as an integrated part of the content they have opted-in to view. And consumers, especially in younger demographics, trust influencers: more than 50% of Gen Z and Millennials say they believe influencers give good advice about brands and products they promote. A key reason is the way influencers can deliver authentic messages to their audience: in the same study, 58% of respondents said authenticity was the most important trait for influencers.

As a result, influencer marketing represents a more authentic, relatable, and effective marketing strategy than most traditional channels. It's also less intrusive and delivers marketing messages in context and in a more entertaining and engaging way. Extending it to span the full funnel provides more opportunities for marketers to reach consumers and transform them into customers. In this whitepaper, we will provide strategies for targeting consumers at each stage of the funnel with real success stories from brands across industries.

More than 86% of marketers are expected to use influencer marketing by 2025...



The Influencer Marketing Strategy Guide for Each Stage of the Funnel

As with any form of full-funnel marketing, influencer marketing requires a unique strategic approach at each stage of the funnel. And once marketers have run campaigns, they can analyze results and continue to refine that strategy using a combination of human expertise and technology.

While humans have an innate ability to develop relationships and make connections, technology, namely AI, can scale that expertise in three ways:

1 CAMPAIGN RESULT PREDICTIONS:

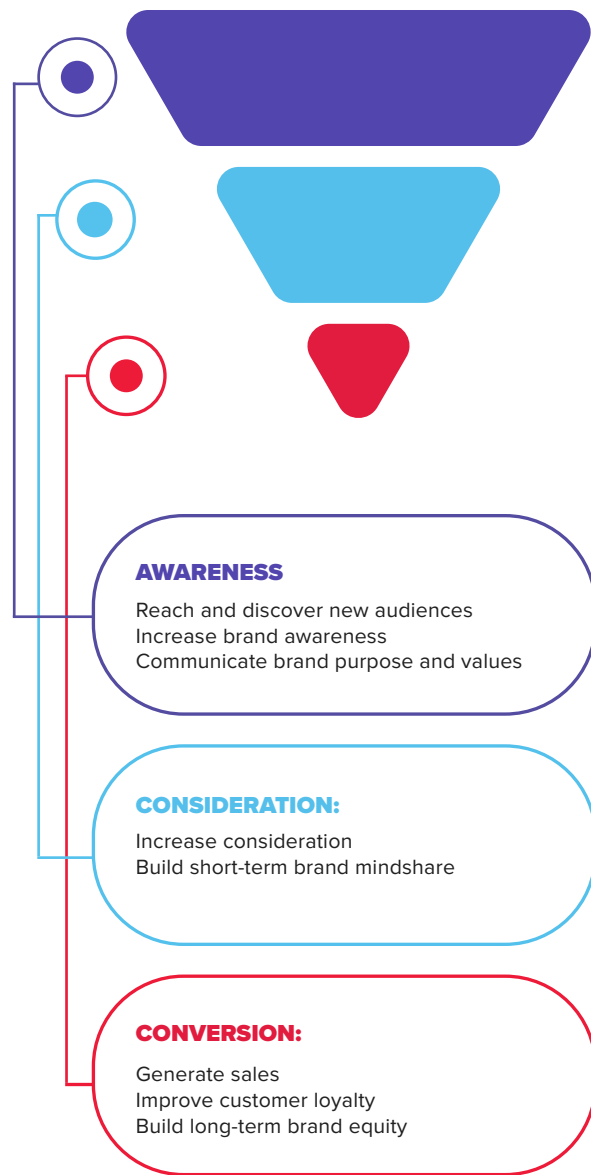
AI can predict results at every stage of the funnel so marketers know the return they will get on their influencer marketing spend. BEN's AI is at least twice as accurate as humans at predicting whether an audience will engage with a brand's sponsored content.

2 CREATOR SELECTION AND BRAND SAFETY:

Finding a few relevant influencers does not require AI, but scaling a campaign across a broader set of influencers and audiences that align with a brand requires the power of AI tools.

3 BOT IDENTIFICATION:

Part of accurate campaign predictions and creator selection is knowing the number of bots influencers have in their followings. Using AI is the only way to achieve this at scale.



The BEN Influencer Philosophy

At BEN, we combine human expertise and machine learning to develop effective collaborations between creators and brands. With 10+ years of experience and relationships in the industry and our AI tools, BEN makes data-informed decisions that help brands scale successful influencer marketing campaigns.

Top of Funnel: Brand Awareness

The goal of awareness influencer marketing is to expose a broad audience to your brand and educate it about your products or services. The goal is not only to reach consumers, but also ensure the campaign has an impact and is memorable.

Building a Brand Awareness Campaign

Strategy, creative, and content recommendations for an influencer campaign focused on brand awareness:

CREATORS:

Awareness is all about reach, so go big. Marketers can opt for a smaller number of influential creators with large followings, or, a larger set of micro influencers who often have more engaged, relevant, and targeted audiences. Reviewing their past brand partnerships will indicate if they will represent your brand in an authentic way.

CONTENT:

Creator content should be credible and genuine by fitting seamlessly into their feed in a way that feels natural to their audience. Creators should also ensure that conflicting logos don't interfere with the message, and that the brand is mentioned within the first two minutes of the video. For brand awareness campaigns, stay away from a strong call-to-action to avoid any too-much-too-soon feelings from consumers. Resulting content shouldn't feel like an ad—it should feel like an enthusiastic recommendation from a friend.

PAID MEDIA STRATEGY:

Social media users today have “banner blindness,” so boosting quality influencer marketing content from the creator's account can help ads stand out. If the content is engaging and well targeted, by the time users notice an ad, they're likely already enjoying it.

SCALING WITH AI:

In the awareness stage, AI tools predict impressions, quality views, and audience relevance so you know the value of your awareness investment before the campaign even starts.



Hulu's How I Met Your Father Reaches a New Generation of Fans With Influencer Marketing

Finding love just isn't what it used to be—meet cutes might soon be a thing of the past when it comes to TV shows and movie story lines. That's why when Hulu set out to produce *How I Met Your Father*, the streaming giant introduced a modern twist on love: dating apps. The new sitcom takes a fresh approach to the central storyline—so Hulu took a fresh approach to promoting it, too.

No stranger to influencer marketing, Hulu partnered with BEN on a campaign to raise awareness and create buzz around the upcoming show. Creators had a straightforward task: share their reactions to the series' storyline and capture their at-home viewing setups. The target audience? Millennials, Gen Zers, fans of Hillary Duff (one of new show's stars), and anyone that uses online dating.

When it came to choosing creators, Hulu knew that it wanted to re-engage with lifestyle creator Elyse Myers after she delivered outstanding engagement in a previous campaign. Additionally, BEN used its AI platform's lookalike modeling capabilities to identify other creators that could meet Hulu's reach and engagement goals. Relatable, lighthearted content was central to this campaign, and creators exceeded Hulu's expectations for promoting the sitcom, driving more than 5 million content views and about 10,000 clicks to Hulu's landing page for HIMYF.

hulu

Middle of Funnel: Consideration

You have caught a consumer's attention. Now it's time to move them further down the funnel by giving potential customers reasons to believe by sharing your story, value, and benefits. The goal here is favorability: increasing customer affinity for your brand or product.

Building a Consideration Campaign

Strategy, creative and content recommendations for an influencer campaign focused on consideration:

CREATORS:

At this stage, it is important to either work with creators you have long-term relationships with for consistency, or, focus on creators with content and audiences relevant to your brand or product. Think trusted brand ambassadors that can communicate a specific message, like new product features or benefits.

CONTENT:

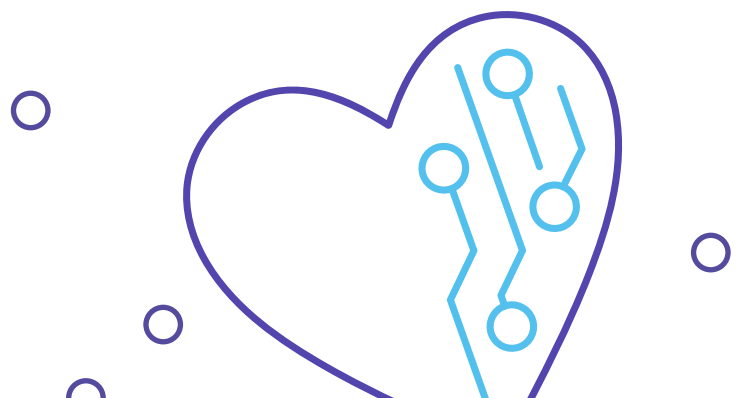
Content focused on consideration should showcase the appeal and functionality of the product or services being promoted. That means the creators showing their audience how they use a product in informative, entertaining ways that highlight the benefits.

PAID MEDIA STRATEGY:

Paying to boost an influencer post means the target audience does not follow the influencer and may not recognize them. But, if influencers truly believe in the product and their content is authentic, they can still help drive higher consideration among non-followers.

SCALING WITH AI:

In the consideration phase, AI can predict how many clicks your campaign will receive. Customized machine learning models powered by AI can also help predict how much consideration an influencer will create for your brand.



From Performance to Awareness, BEN Pivots to Drive Results For Noom

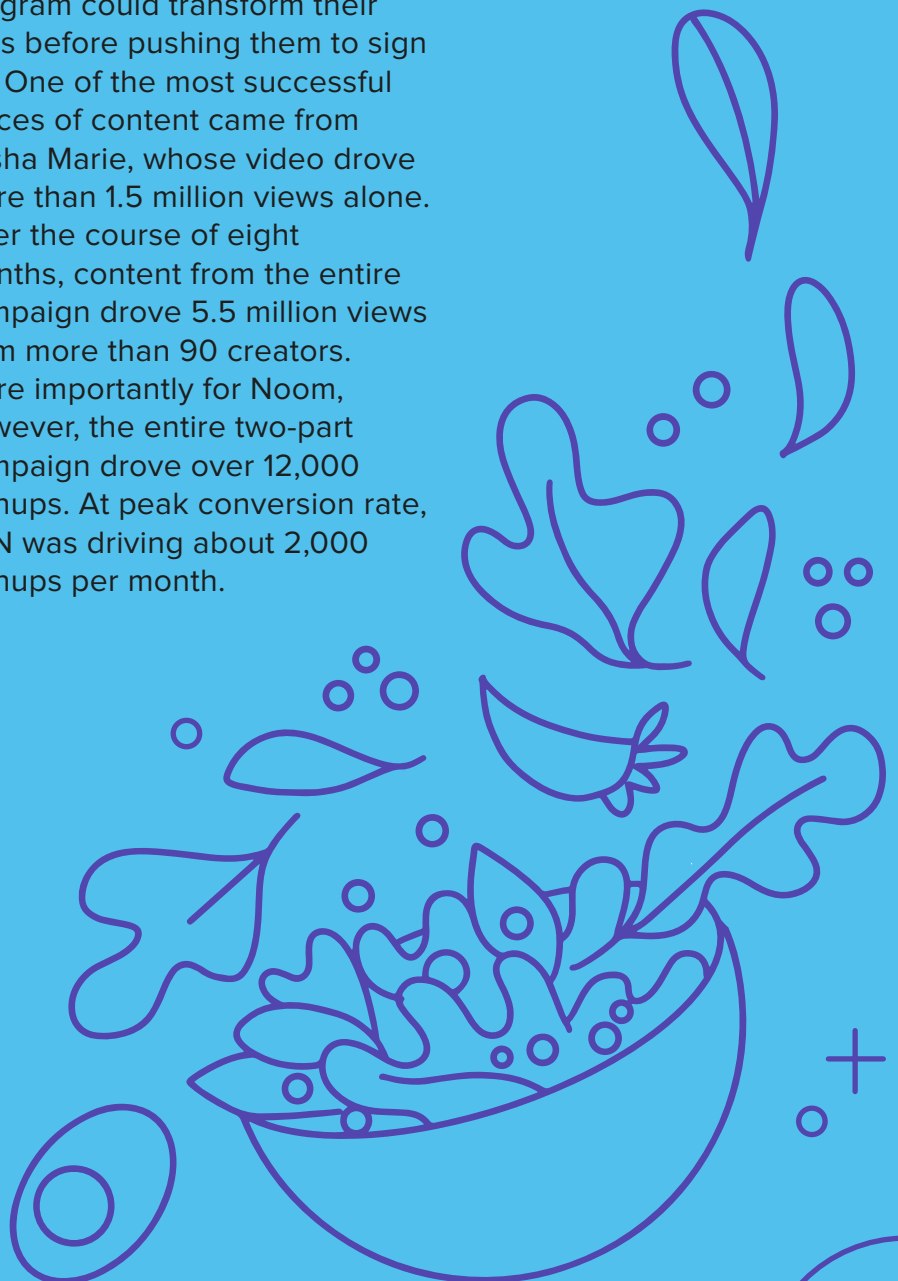
Health is about more than a number on a scale — it is dependent on making healthy choices each day that have a positive impact on one's overall lifestyle. That's why Noom built its digital health platform to help people everywhere make small behavioral changes that eventually add up to big transformations.

Given BEN's long roster of relationships with lifestyle and fitness creators, Noom selected it as a partner for a campaign aimed at directly driving sign-ups for Noom. But, over time—and in spite of the impressive conversions that BEN's AI platform predicted and drove—BEN saw an opportunity to deliver greater long-term results by pivoting away from conversions (namely sign-ups) and recentering the campaign on raising awareness about Noom.

BEN predicted that shifting the campaign to be more informative (rather than sign-up driven)

would increase brand affinity by better showing users how the program could transform their lives before pushing them to sign up. One of the most successful pieces of content came from Alisha Marie, whose video drove more than 1.5 million views alone. Over the course of eight months, content from the entire campaign drove 5.5 million views from more than 90 creators. More importantly for Noom, however, the entire two-part campaign drove over 12,000 signups. At peak conversion rate, BEN was driving about 2,000 signups per month.

NOOM



Bottom of Funnel: Action

Social media platforms have made it easier than ever for users to convert. With new features in Instagram Shopping and the launch of TikTok Shopping, for example, there's much less friction involved in buying through social media. As a result, total social commerce revenue in the U.S. is expected to grow from \$27 billion in 2020 to almost \$80 billion in 2025, according to eMarketer. So how can marketers use influencer marketing to drive this key action?

Building a Action Campaign

Strategy, creative and content recommendations for an influencer campaign focused on action:

CREATORS:

While brands can share conversion goals and messaging with creators, it's the creators that know best what will resonate with their audience and lead to conversions. A great way to find those creators is to be data-driven, using predictive technology (AI) to evaluate the quality of the match between a creator's audience and the brand's.

CONTENT:

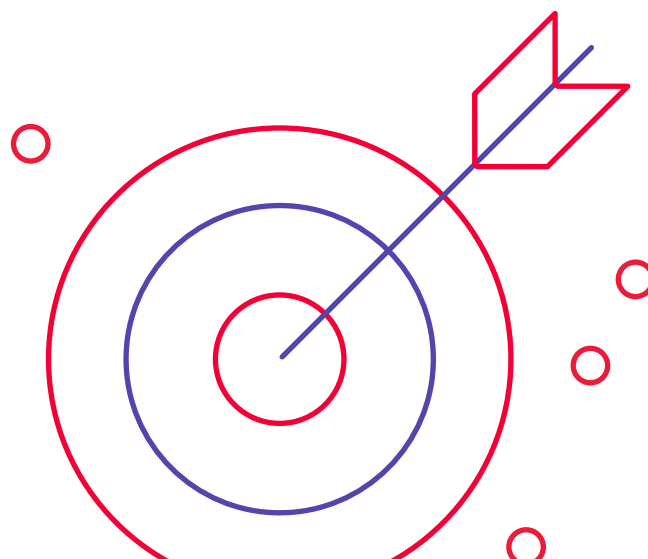
While content should be left up to creators who know their audiences best, AI can help them optimize it throughout a campaign through things like effective keywords or features to highlight. Also, urge creators to include embedded links and use shopping features on each platform to make the conversion process as easy as possible.

PAID MEDIA STRATEGY:

Optimizing paid budget for conversion means testing different variations of content, copy, and landing pages. This will help identify which combinations are driving conversions. Marketers should also test different audiences to see where the content is resonating best. With these insights, brands can confidently scale their campaigns.

SCALING WITH AI:

In the action phase, AI can predict conversions and conversion rate. And campaign data from the AI engine helps marketing teams make recommendations on how to increase ROI by optimizing the campaign and future campaigns.



How Consistent ROI Drove BlendJet to Go All-In on Influencer

The BlendJet 2 helps people live longer, healthier lives by making healthy options more convenient, cost-effective, and fun—anytime, anywhere. To grow its audience and boost sales, BlendJet invested in influencer marketing to target a fitness audience—the natural match for the brand’s health and wellness mission. BlendJet tapped BEN to build and execute the campaign.

When BEN kicked off its testing and optimizing period, however, the team made a critical discovery in the process: interest in BlendJet was much wider than the fitness community. In fact, the most engagement on Instagram Stories was actually coming from lifestyle and family creators who were using the product at home in their kitchen.

From the testing phase, BEN built out a campaign model that would scale to meet BlendJet’s growth targets, adjusting the verticals, talking points, and mentions based

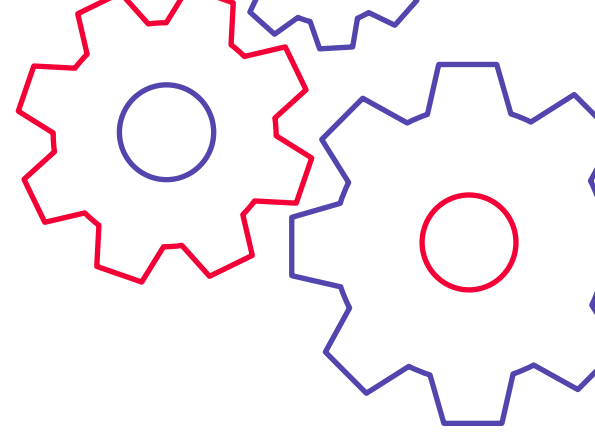
on what was performing best. As a smaller startup company, BlendJet had a strict customer acquisition cost target. BEN’s initial campaign was able to outperform that target by the second month of the campaign. This proven ROI spurred BlendJet to increase its influencer marketing budget by 500%.

BEN’s ability to deliver consistent results laid the foundation for an ongoing partnership with BlendJet. In late 2020, BlendJet was ready to release its newest product—the BlendJet 2. BEN used its AI to source additional creators to reach key engaged lifestyle audiences. The resulting campaign for the BlendJet 2 drove over 8,000 sales in the first two weeks from the product’s launch, ultimately bringing in more than 28,000 purchases and generating \$1.7 million in revenue.

BlendJet trusts BEN’s influencer expertise to drive success, whether to reach new audiences or to drive new product releases.



Measuring the Impact of Full-Funnel Influencer Marketing



Influencer marketing measurement technology has come a long way. Metrics are no longer as nebulous as they once were. Not only is campaign performance measurement more accurate, but AI technology can also ensure those metrics are legitimate and not driven by bots or fake followers. While there is no specific threshold for the ideal influencer’s bot-to-human follower ratio, it is an important metric to take into account when predicting campaign results. BEN uses AI to analyze a sampling of an influencer’s followers and determine an accurate number of humans and bots.

In a full-funnel influencer marketing strategy, each stage of the funnel has its own metrics to assess the success and ROI of a campaign. Before a campaign runs, AI can predict many of these metrics to accurately assess the ROI ahead of time, and post-campaign measurement—including KPIs, post-campaign surveys and brand-lift studies—becomes a verification, providing more specific analysis of performance.

TOP OF FUNNEL: AWARENESS

Awareness metrics focus on how many people are familiar with the brand and also how many recall a brand and campaign they just saw. Awareness measurement uses reach, brand sentiment and attribution metrics to help marketers understand if they are reaching the right audience with the right message.

MIDDLE OF FUNNEL: CONSIDERATION:

Consideration metrics are about engagement and evaluating how much a consumer tried to learn or explore about a certain brand or product after exposure. Measurements include brand affinity and sentiment metrics so brands can understand if they are getting credit for the influencer ad versus key competitors.

BOTTOM OF FUNNEL: ACTION

Action metrics measure whether a user clicked, shared, or took another action that brought them close to buying or signing up for a product. By using post-campaign brand-lift studies in conjunction with more traditional action metrics, brands can measure the likelihood consumers will purchase the advertised product and analyze the impact the influencer marketing had in shifting purchase intent.

“AI technology can also ensure those metrics are legitimate and not driven by bots”

Influencer Marketing Leads a New Era of Audience Engagement

It's no secret that marketing and advertising through external media platforms has changed dramatically in the past few years. What was once a guaranteed strategy, like conversions through social display ads, for example, has now become cost prohibitive and unreliable for many companies and audiences. At the same time, influencer marketing has grown dramatically and filled the void.

Unlike traditional strategies, influencer marketing puts brands and creators much more in control of the content, cost, audience, and the results, which is a dream scenario for marketers. **The key is shifting the mindset from influencer marketing being a single-campaign, single-use case tactic to a reliable full-funnel, always-on marketing strategy.** As companies start to make that shift, they'll get the benefits of so many key marketing goals: precise segmentation, spend efficiency, performance predictability, and brand authenticity.

Social media platforms and creators are only getting more sophisticated in what they offer brands. Now is a better time than ever for brands to start to make full-funnel influencer marketing a core part of their marketing plan.

Social media platforms and creators are only getting more sophisticated in what they offer brands.