

Micro-influencing: How big is too big? A PR Analysis

By: Vanessa Turner

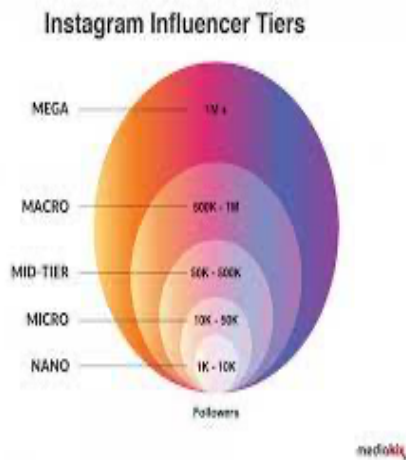
In the world of public relations and [social media marketing](#), influencers and brand ambassadors are one of the best tools that a company can possess. By [definition](#), social media influencers have a large amount of followers on their social media accounts. They use this advantage to influence or persuade their following to buy certain products or services. Companies that work with popular internet personalities such as [Charli D'amelio](#) and [Addison Rae](#) are much more successful in their PR, marketing and advertising pursuits than companies that don't. These influencers are tasked with acting as the bridge that connects an audience member to a company's message by adding their own seal of approval.



Charli D'amelio, social media influencer

The typical social media influencer, sometimes known as a '[macro-influencer](#)' or just an 'influencer,' has no less than 500,000 followers on any given social media platform. The tricky part about having a large social media following comes from finding the distinction between who is a celebrity and who is not. To combat this, companies have started to implement the use of '[micro-influencers](#)' into their campaign strategies.

Being bigger isn't always better



Influencer Tier chart

Micro-influencer marketing is the same as [influencer marketing](#), in that they both involve companies partnering with individuals who have active social media followings to promote products through sponsored content. A micro-influencer is a small-scale social media influencer with a follower count ranging from 10,000 followers to 50,000 followers. Hiring an influencer to appear in part of a PR campaign isn't going to guarantee that company instant success.

By choosing to work with a micro-influencer instead of a macro-influencer, companies are working with an individual who has a much smaller, more niche audience that's more likely to be receptive to their messages. Macro-influencers don't always have the trust and [positive reputation](#) that micro-influencers have, because they tend to be impersonal and disingenuous. Micro-influencers have smaller, more intimate followings, and tend to be more transparent and honest about their perception and experience of a product or company that they are contracted to represent.

Rising in popularity



Glossier logo

According to [PRWeek](#), the rise in social media micro-influencers has increased since 2018. Micro-influencers have surpassed celebrities as the most viable option for brand endorsement and commercial collaborations. Having a smaller, more receptive audience means a lot more than having a large, passive audience. Having a large following means that it would be difficult to target 100% of mainstream social media influencers' audience, which is why micro-influencers have become more popular.

[Glossier](#), a popular online beauty and skincare company, has had the most success when it comes to utilizing micro-influencers. In 2014, Glossier's marketing strategy, '[people first, products second](#),' led them to find that 70% of their online sales came from peer-to-peer referrals. This caused Glossier to focus less on reaching out to macro-influencers and celebrities, and to focus more on creating relationships with those who speak positively about the company and their products regardless of their online presence.

Glossier created an environment where it's audience and social media followers could share reviews of their products directly to the official [Instagram](#) account. If one consumer stood out above the rest, Glossier reached out to them with a chance to be featured on the official Instagram account, as well as receive free products and coupon codes. This quickly caused Glossier and its unique social media and PR tactics to rise in popularity. Popular beauty, makeup and skincare micro-influencers such as [Eden Grinshpan](#), [Mecca James-Williams](#), [Jaya Nashae](#) and [Beverly Nguyen](#) have all been featured on Glossier's official Instagram account due to their positive reviews and content featuring Glossier products. These micro-influencers all have smaller follower counts with receptive and intimate audiences.

Niche markets are not always easy to target

Micro-influencing heavily utilizes [niche marketing](#), where micro-influencers create content about very specific topics of interest. Successful micro-influencers are seen as experts in the eyes of their target markets which is how they gain their following. Macro-influencers are at a loss in this category because their audience tends to be very broad, making it difficult to appeal to all their followers. Micro-influencers and their niche markets are great for companies that create similar content and products in those niche markets.



Parade Underwear logo

[Parade Underwear](#) is a sustainable, size-inclusive women's underwear company, and is one of the most popular users of micro-influencing. Parade quickly gained popularity on Instagram and

has a wide range of audience members that exist in niche markets. Some of Parade's most-featured micro-influencers are [Talaya-lay](#), [Vanessa Caine](#) and [Ellie Rudy](#). These micro-influencers all have very different target markets in niche areas, but they all share a common denominator – an interest in Parade's products.

Micro-influencing is dominating the influencer industry and changing how companies implement their PR, social media marketing and advertising campaigns. By using a smaller scale social media personality with a niche audience, companies are successfully adhering to the PRSA definition of public relations and creating a mutually beneficial relationship for companies and its stakeholders.

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About the author

Vanessa Turner is a senior Journalism student at the University of North Texas. Born and raised in Dallas, Turner plans to graduate in May 2022.

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