

“THE BRANDS NOW UNDERSTAND GOOD BLOGGER RELATIONS COST MONEY”

Bloggers are part of day-to-day business at Karkalis Communications. André Karkalis reveals how the business ticks.

Mr. Karkalis, how does one find the right blogger or Instagram star for a fashion brand?

One needs to keep a close eye on the blogosphere. Who is friends with whom? What are the blogs doing? In our capacity as an agency, we conduct such research continuously. When we start evaluating whether a collaboration would be sensible for our client, we look at which co-operations the blogger has been part of in the past and which styles she wears in general. If the focus is solely on reach and clout score, it lacks the necessary qualitative factor. In terms of rankings of the most

important blogs, I believe the target group definition is not factored in sufficiently. Journalles has different followers than Stefanie Griesinger.

How has the remuneration situation developed?

The brands now understand that good blogger relations cost money. However, there are no benchmarks. I can't say that a co-operation is only possible with a specific budget if the follower count is higher than 50,000. The entry-level prices for an Instagram post range from 200 to 300 Euros, but it doesn't take much to add a zero to those sums. I would also like to take the opportunity to speak out in favour of the influencers. This is a full-time job for those who curate their channels professionally and also maintain excellent relations with their community. They should be paid well for their efforts.

What does it take to make marketing with bloggers successful?

My first tip would be to identify a circle of influencers who show a passion for the brand and try to strike up a long-term partnership with them. That would lead to the bloggers not only writing about products selectively, but also attending events and possibly even producing content for the brand's communication channels. The top priority always has to be that the brand, product, and blogger suit each other. When Long Tall Sally, which specialises in clothing for women who are taller than 1.75 metres, opened a store, we teamed up with tall bloggers for the event. In this case, the brand values and the needs of the bloggers were truly congruent.

How does work with blogs differ from working with traditional magazines?

Although today's fashion bloggers have media kits, many of them are more concerned about how much a brand or product appeals to them. The keyword is affinity. At a fashion magazine, there is a division of labour between the advertisement and editorial departments. On the one hand, advertising clients can be favoured when it comes to selecting a t-shirt for a styling - on the other hand, the editorial team ensures brands that haven't booked ads get mentioned too. This is how the diversity in the magazine doesn't suffer. Bloggers are mostly editors and advertising executives at the same time, thereby mixing both interests. This means it can happen that bloggers reject a brand despite its large budget and incorporate other brands without any charge at all.

Where do you see the boundaries between fashion marketing and bloggers?

The industry is very interested in this topic and some market participants are already investing significant budgets. However, I have not yet witnessed the huge watershed moment, when someone who had a two million budget for TV commercials suddenly decides to invest it all in blogger relations. Most brands still have a Google advertising budget that exceeds the budget for blogger relations. ■

