



# The power of influencers. Quantified.

*WHY RECOMMENDATIONS from  
EXPERTS CARRY MORE WEIGHT.*



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**INFLUENCE IS ABOUT  
AUTHENTICITY,  
ACCESS TO  
INFORMATION,  
*and* THE DRIVE  
TO EMPOWER OTHERS.**

For some time, marketers have suspected that certain opinions matter more than others when it comes to swaying consumer's buying habits. Influence is far from a level playing field, but it isn't necessarily for the reasons you might expect—fame, fortune, and celebrity status. According to author Malcolm Gladwell, more influential individuals are known as mavens or “information brokers” who have a wealth of knowledge and know how to share it. In other words, influence is about authenticity, access to information, and the drive to empower others.





# *How* **MICRO-INFLUENCERS ARE MARKETING'S BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY.**

## **How micro-influencers are marketing's biggest opportunity.**

Savvy consumers often turn to these micro-influencers for advice when making decisions. With a growing distrust for brand-led messaging, they have no choice. Just take a look at [this McKinsey report](#), which shows that two-thirds of touch points in the buying cycle now involve consumer-driven information like online reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family. You can also see this trend of consumers turning away from brand-led messaging with the recent growth in ad blocking. It is currently estimated that publishers lost out in \$22 billion in 2015 due to ad blockers.

Micro-influencers may not have the flashy appeal of celebrities, but they have something even more valuable: their audience's trust. But how much and to what extent, exactly? The answer to this question hasn't been well studied or known.

Setting out to build this bridge, Experticity partnered with Jonah Berger, an industry-leading business professor and word-of-mouth marketing researcher from the Wharton Business School at the University of Pennsylvania and agency Keller Fay. The goal? To look at the impact of a conversation with an influencer as it relates to the final outcome in the mind of the buying consumer. And to better understand the role influencers play in consumers' decision-making cycles and what companies might be missing when measuring influencers' impact on their bottom lines.

Here's what the research uncovered.

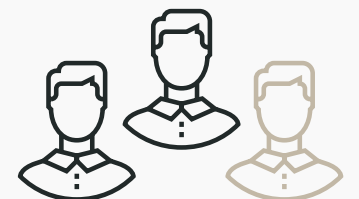
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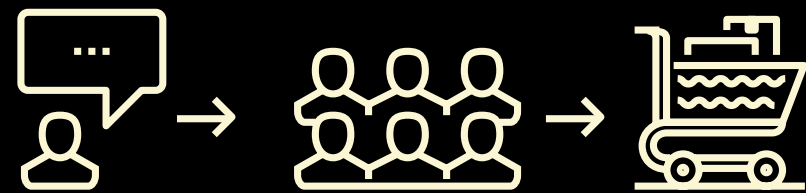
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Two-thirds of touch points in the buying cycle now involve consumer-driven information like online reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family.





# Who ARE THESE MICRO-INFLUENCERS?



## influencer

*“A person who has a greater-than-average reach or impact through word of mouth in a relevant marketplace.”*

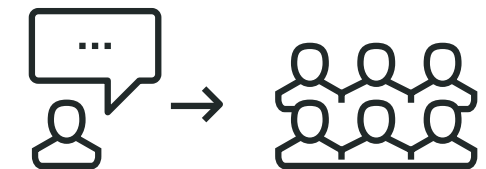
— Keller Fay

### Who are these micro-influencers?

Keller Fay defines an influencer as a person who has greater-than-average reach or impact through word of mouth in a relevant marketplace. Influencer marketing, which is increasingly practiced in a commercial context, comprises a few main activities:

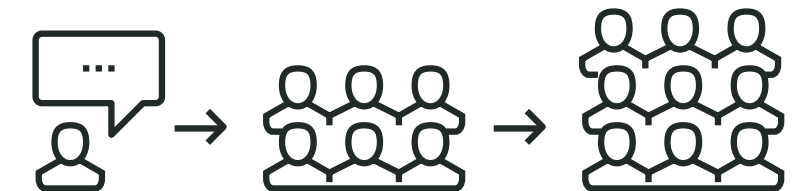
01

Marketing to influencers to increase awareness of a brand within the influencer community.



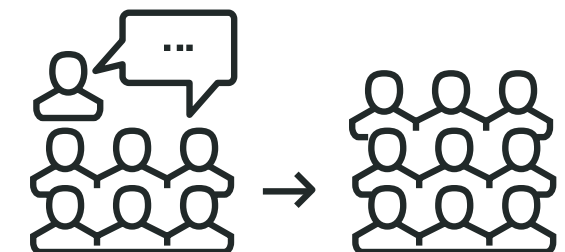
02

Marketing through influencers, using them to increase market awareness of a brand within target markets.



03

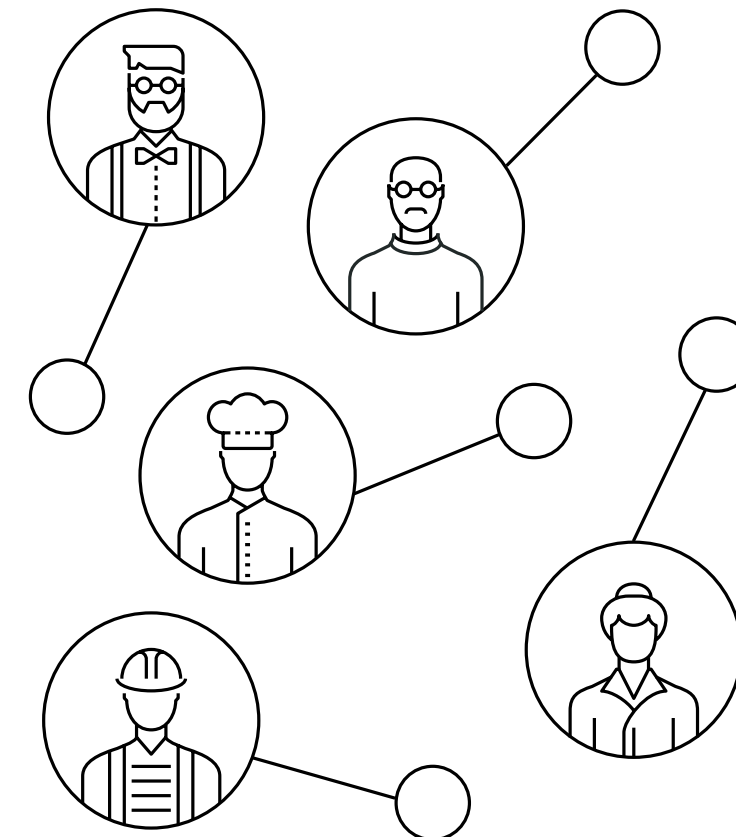
Marketing with influencers, turning them into advocates of a brand.



# More ABOUT MICRO-INFLUENCERS...

## More about micro-influencers ...

Micro-influencers can be less visible than other influencers, but they have significant sway with others through their work or extracurricular activities. They're retail associates who sell your products, industry professionals who use your products to do their job, and other passionate members of your industry's community. And they're everywhere. Many of these individuals join Experticity to learn about new products and brands.



### General population

vs

### Experticity influencer



SO WHAT IS THE POWER OF A MICRO-INFLUENCER VERSUS THE GENERAL POPULATION? AND ARE THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS WORTH MORE THAN THOSE OF THE AVERAGE CONSUMER?

Experticity challenged Berger and Keller Fay to find out. They ultimately designed a research framework and deployed a sample survey of 6,000 unpaid Experticity influencers and members of the general population to understand the role of brand advocacy and word-of-mouth education in consumers' decision-making processes.

The research team asked Experticity members how often they gave buying recommendations and to whom. The team then asked the people who received the recommendations how credible and influential a given recommendation was, and if they had tried or bought the recommended product. The research team then replicated this process with the general population — in other words, non-Experticity members giving recommendations — and followed up with the people who received the recommendations to see how credible they found them and whether they had tried or bought the products.





# MICRO- INFLUENCERS *are* AMPLIFICATION AGENTS.

## Micro-influencers are amplification agents.

What makes micro-influencers unique is that they choose to learn about particular brands and products in-depth. They're true believers in a product's value. They're also influencers who are having lots of conversations with everyday consumers – many right on the retail floor. It's important to educate these influencers and empower them to learn about your products and communicate your brand's value to target customers.

## SO WHAT DOES THAT TREND MEAN, QUANTIFIED?

Berger and Keller Fay found that in just a single week, Experticity's micro-influencers have 22.2x more buying conversations than typical consumers.

## SO WHY IS THIS TREND IMPORTANT?

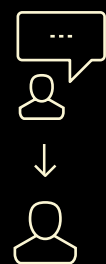
A buying conversion is not a single brand mention in conversation, but rather an active recommendation to buy a specific product, brand, or service. It's a two-way dialogue with a shelf life that's much longer than a brand mention on social media that only lasts a few minutes.

If this stat reflects a week of time, imagine the media channel a given influencer represents over the course of an entire year. And consider how many average consumers you would need to have spreading your brand message to represent the power of just one micro-influencer.

## WHAT'S THE TAKEAWAY?

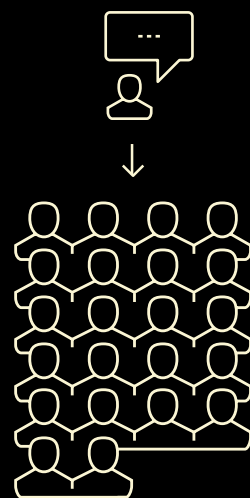
Start thinking about micro-influencers as an ongoing media channel. Don't cut your influencers short by just measuring their one-off posts. Brands need to engage in continuous dialogue, build engaging content, and empower their influencers as strategic partners and content contributors.

General population



VS

Experticity influencer



# 22.2x

In just a single week, Experticity's micro-influencers have 22.2x more buying conversations than typical consumers.





**STRONGER  
RECOMMENDATIONS**  
*drive*  
**TANGIBLE ROI.**

### Stronger recommendations drive tangible ROI.

So what results can a brand expect to have by empowering their micro-influencers through dedicated resources and engagement? Berger and Keller Fay set out to answer this question, too, by comparing micro-influencers in two groups: the general population and Experticity members, who have access to in-depth knowledge about brands and products.

Compared to the general population, Experticity experts provide stronger recommendations that result in “go buy it or try it” moments. In fact, 74% of Experticity influencers have a conversation that results in someone following up on and seriously considering a product recommendation. That’s why 82% of those who receive a recommendation from an Experticity influencer are highly likely to follow the recommendation.

**go buy it**

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# MICRO- INFLUENCE IS A PART *of* THE JOB.

## Micro-influence is a part of the job.

Unlike consumers who tend to talk about their personal experiences with only close friends and family, Experticity micro-influencers amplify their voice to a wider network.

The reason? The motivations for experts to share information are usually different than those of the general population. In fact, 53% of expert influencers' recommendations happen at work, compared to 19% of the general population's recommendations.

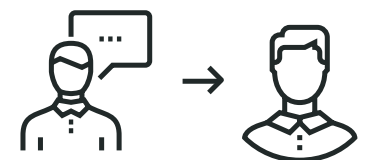
*"...unlike consumers who merely pass information from person to person, micro-influencers actively seek their own sources of information."*

Experts are also more likely to share information that's related to their professional success. Consultants and community organizations become successful when their reputations begin to grow—meanwhile, retail sales associates, consultants, and similar professionals advance in their careers based on the quality of their customer interactions.

Think of your influencer strategy as analogous to broadcasting. You can influence a consumer who will talk to a friend, or you can influence an influencer who has a leadership role within an entire network. While both approaches are important for a successful marketing strategy, one is clearly more efficient, impactful, and education-oriented than the other.

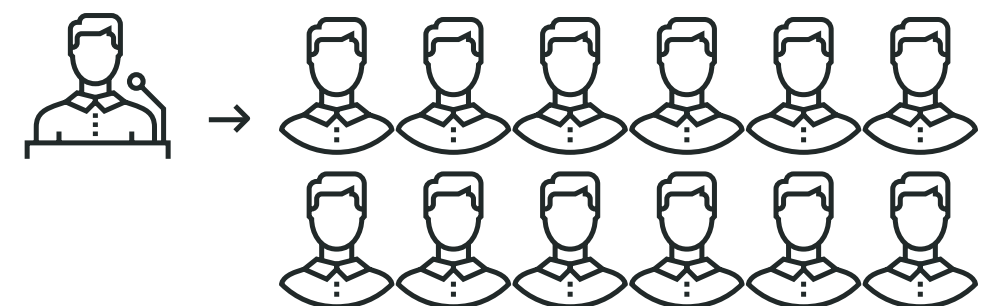
01

Influencing a consumer  
who will talk to a friend



02

Influencing an influencer  
who has leadership role  
within an entire network



## motivation

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**PASSIONATE  
EXPERTS**  
*are*  
**CONSTANT  
LEARNERS.**

# trust

For micro-influencers,  
trust is the ultimate asset.

## Passionate experts are constant learners.

For micro-influencers, trust is the ultimate asset. That's why members of this key audience are more likely to establish their own perspectives than source recommendations from friends and family. While 26% of the general population becomes aware of brands through friends and family, only 15% of micro-influencers find out about brands in this way. This stat suggests that unlike consumers who merely pass information from person to person, micro-influencers actively seek their own sources of information.

They're seeking out products that they can experience for themselves. They're conducting their own field research and learning about new products to use on the job. They're relying on expertise from colleagues. So the bottom line is that brands need to reach these influencers on their terms through valuable learning resources.

# 26%

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# 15%

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## THREE TRAITS *for* OPTIMAL MICRO- INFLUENCE.

## the takeaway

Trust is the currency of influence. So your audiences care more about knowledge and quality than deals and promotions. It pays to educate industry leaders and micro-influencers about your product, value proposition, and brand.

### Three traits for optimal micro-influence.

Some micro-influencer opinions are worth their weight in gold. Others? Not so much. Experticity asked individuals who received recommendations from influencers to shed light on what made a given opinion impactful. Respondents reported that the following traits mattered the most to their opinions and judgment calls. Here's what everyday consumers perceive to be the biggest factors driving micro-influence today:

FACTOR		PERCENTAGE OF SURVEYED RECOMMENDATION-RECEIVERS WHO PERCEIVE AS IMPORTANT
01	More credible & believable	94%
02	More knowledgeable	94%
03	Better at explaining how a product works or could be used	92%





## **METRICS DESIGNED *for* INFLUENCER MARKETING.**

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*“At the end of the day, you’re building relationships at scale, and you can’t sacrifice quality for any of them.”*

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### **Metrics designed for influencer marketing.**

The sooner you take action on building the pillars of your micro-influencer outreach strategy, the sooner you’ll see results. In getting started, you’ll want to focus on three areas for building out your program, driving ROI, and measuring results. Keep in mind that this is a unique marketing channel, so you’ll need to develop a custom set of metrics. It won’t be easy, but you can start by asking questions like these:

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#### **Influence factor**

How do you connect and maximize your presence among top micro-influencers?

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#### **Buying conversations**

How can you best assess the buying-related conversations that are taking place? How do these relate to ROI for your brand?

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#### **Purchase impact likelihood**

Are these conversations causing more purchases in the market? Or are the results you’re observing simply correlations?

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### **AT THE END OF THE DAY**

At the end of the day, you’re building relationships at scale, and you can’t sacrifice quality for any of them. So before you engage with thousands of people on behalf of your brand, make sure that you have the foundation in place for a strong connection.

## **the solution**

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Experticity is your solution. If one expert can make a sale, imagine what a whole network can do. Experticity allows you to do just that: build a network of influencers you can inspire, educate, and engage with for years to come – while also quantifying the ROI of your strategy. **Learn more at [www.experticity.com](http://www.experticity.com).**

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## ABOUT EXPERTICITY

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Experticity is a network for marketing through expert influencers, including retail associates. Experticity has built the world's largest community of influential category experts and connects them with more than 750 of the world's top brands to create a new breed of buying experience — one that is informed, genuine, and mutually beneficial. Experticity's community of nearly 1 million experts comprises industry professionals, category opinion leaders, and influential retail sales associates that are actively sought out for trusted recommendations on what to buy. To learn more about Experticity and how its rapidly growing community of brands and experts are transforming today's buying experience, visit [experticity.com](http://experticity.com).

## ABOUT JONAH BERGER

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Jonah Berger is a marketing professor at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and author of the recent *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestseller *Contagious: Why Things Catch On*. Dr. Berger has spent over 15 years studying how social influence works and how it drives products and ideas to catch on. He's published dozens of articles in top-tier academic journals, consulted for a variety of Fortune 500 companies, and his work is often covered by popular outlets like *The New York Times* and *Harvard Business Review*. For more information, visit [jonahberger.com](http://jonahberger.com).

## ABOUT THE KELLER FAY GROUP

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The Keller Fay Group is the leading market research company focused on consumer word of mouth and social influence — and is now part of Engagement Labs (TSXV:EL), a data and technology company and creator of eValue™ Analytics, the global benchmark for social media scoring. The Keller Fay Group owns TalkTrack®, the only continuous study of consumer conversations about brands across all channels, both online and offline. Founders Ed Keller and Brad Fay are the authors of the award winning book, *The Face-to-Face Book: Why Real Relationships Rule in a Digital Marketplace*, published in 2012 by Free Press. For more information, visit [www.kellerfay.com](http://www.kellerfay.com) or [www.engagementlabs.com](http://www.engagementlabs.com).