

Ebook

The ultimate playbook for influencer marketing in Southeast Asia



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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: a new digital era

In 2021, [40 million](#)¹ people gained internet access in Southeast Asia. This new stream of users meant a reshaping of Southeast Asia's digital usage and online literacy — including new opportunities to:

- Communicate,
- Learn,
- Shop,
- And build communities.



400M

Now, more than [400 million people](#)² use the internet regularly in Southeast Asia.

¹ “4 tips to grow your influencer marketing campaign in Southeast Asia”. <https://impact.com/influencer/4-tips-to-grow-your-influencer-marketing-campaign-in-southeast-asia/>

² “Internet usage in Southeast Asia”. <https://www.statista.com/topics/9093/internet-usage-in-southeast-asia/#dossierKeyfigures>



Introduction: A new digital era (con't)

Internet resources helped the community stay connected during the pandemic and order essential products.



60M

Since 2020, [more than 60 million people](#)¹ purchased or signed up for services online.

Rising internet access helped many resilient people across Southeast Asia find modern solutions and face oncoming challenges in new ways.

¹ “e-Conomy SEA 2021”. <https://economysea.withgoogle.com/>

² “Internet economy size in Southeast Asia from 2015 to 2021”. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/958419/southeast-asia-internet-economy-market-size/>

These shifts heavily affected business as well. Southeast Asia’s internet economy gains momentum daily.



\$363B

Experts predict the [internet economy will double](#)² from \$174 billion to \$363 billion by 2025.

This expansion means more room to grow for influencers, social media platforms, startups, and established brands.

Influencer marketing: a modern solution

Traditional advertising strategies (like paid social, search, and programmatic display ads) feel outdated for modern consumers. They simply don't respond to it anymore. Marketers need to adapt if they want to thrive and grow.

Influencer marketing consistently proves to be one of the best options. By bringing influencers and high-quality brands together, both parties accelerate the opportunity to reach and drive more revenue. Influencer marketing is infinitely flexible, adjusting for each partnership, industry, region, product, and business model.



In Southeast Asia, more than [847 million people](#)¹ use social media — which means that now is the perfect time to grow your influencer marketing strategy.

In fact, influencer marketing is emerging as a growing revenue channel, boosting business opportunities and brand awareness with a massive [75 percent internet penetration rate](#)² in Southeast Asia.

To grow influencer marketing, online brands and social media creators can connect with audiences by: recommending brands, reviewing products, and promoting worthy causes.

However, marketers need to properly manage, track, and promote their influencer partnerships. By taking the right steps and using the best resources, you'll set your business up for success from day one.

¹ "Number of social network users worldwide in 2022, by region".

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/454772/number-social-media-user-worldwide-region/>

² "4 tips to grow your influencer marketing campaign in Southeast Asia".

<https://impact.com/influencer/4-tips-to-grow-your-influencer-marketing-campaign-in-southeast-asia/>

CHAPTER 2

What is influencer marketing?

[Influencer marketing](#)¹ is a marketing strategy where brands collaborate with influential social media creators who engage with various-sized audiences in different niches. Influencers on social media promote and recommend products and services to their followers — helping brands reach and broaden their audiences.

These partnerships benefit everyone involved when done effectively. Brands create opportunities to expand their reach and potentially connect with their ideal customers. In turn, influencers earn commission through affiliate links, endorsement payments, or tiered incentive models. These details depend on mutual objectives between brands and influencers.



¹ “Ultimate guide to influencer marketing”.

<https://impact.com/partnerships/ultimate-guide-to-influencer-marketing/>

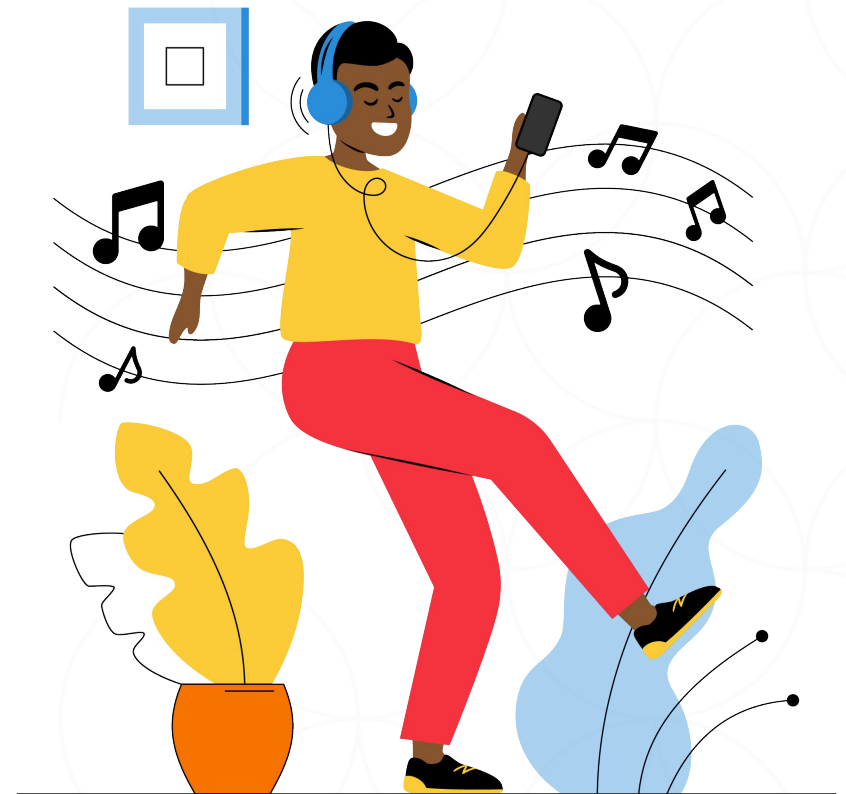
What is influencer marketing? (con't)

With influencer marketing, content creators freely work with brands that match their style and values.

Brands also bring their own specific motivations to the partnership and align with influencers to achieve the same goals. Brands advocating for animal rights could find powerful common ground with influencers promoting those same values. Both sides benefit and make their arguments more powerful.

Audiences also benefit by discovering new brands that fit their values, lifestyle, and interests.

Influencer marketing builds an ecosystem for brands, content creators, and potential customers to nurture authentic relationships.



How influencer marketing strikes the perfect chord with audiences

Influencer marketing offers brands a unique opportunity to connect with audiences through authentic relationships. Traditional [affiliate partnerships](#)¹ reward publishers and review websites for directing traffic towards brands — usually tracking clicks and sales through affiliate links.

Compared to influencer marketing, affiliate marketing often misses out on the personal user experience.

When you work with creators that engage with their followers on a deeper level, you can tap into that connection with someone willing to use, review, and promote your product. You're more likely to strike a chord with audiences when the content aligns with their values.

Influencers are trendsetters or key opinion leaders (KOLs) on social media platforms. They grow an audience by posting thoughts, recommendations, and reviews.

Audience sizes set influencers apart from others on social media.

Many influencers find success by sharing their unique voice, style, and approach to life through their content. As they build trust and authentic connections, they create the perfect opportunity for brands to share products and services without feeling like advertising — and this is what audiences respond to.

Social media creators typically only endorse products they stand behind and know their followers will respond well to.

¹ "Ultimate guide to affiliate marketing".

<https://impact.com/partnerships/ultimate-guide-to-affiliate-marketing/>

How influencer marketing strikes the perfect chord with audiences (*con't*)

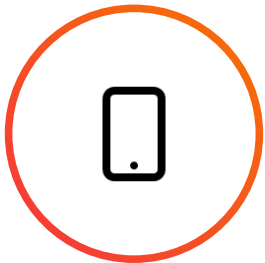
Other marketing avenues such as anonymous product reviews or comparison sites lack a personal touch. The audience has no sense of who this person is or — more importantly — why they should care.

With influencer marketing, people follow and engage with specific personalities and often feel a sense of belonging when they connect with these communities.

Recommendations and reviews come with context and approval from someone they're already familiar with and following.

Social media marketing vs influencer marketing

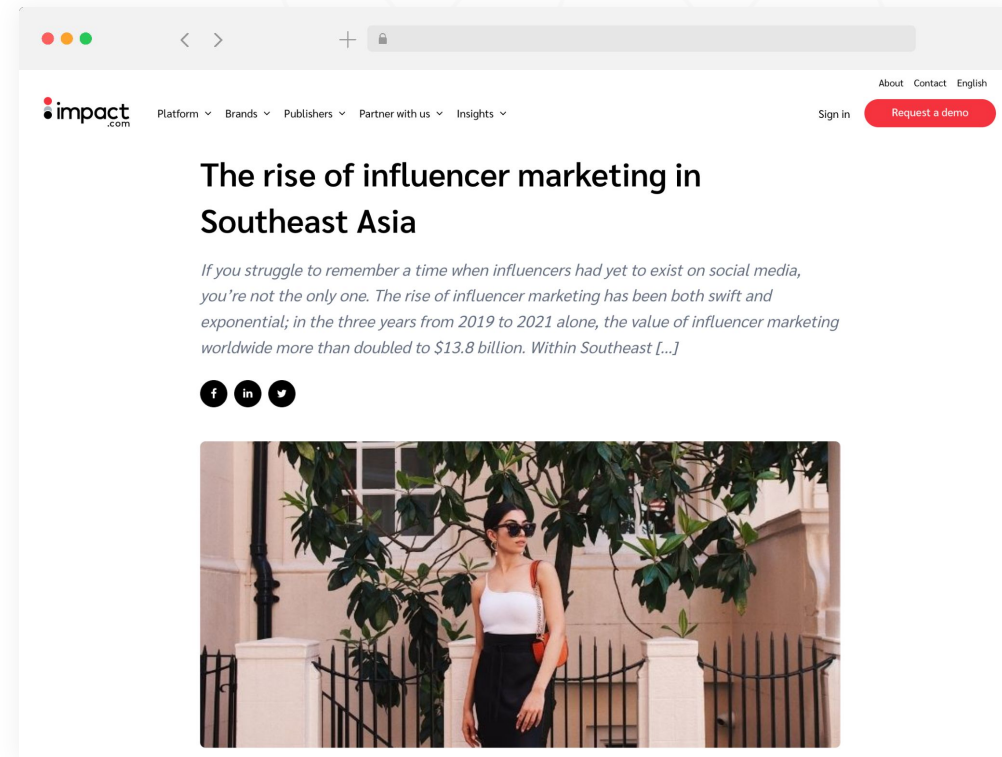
Social media marketing and influencer marketing sound the same in theory — but they're different. With both models, brands connect with audiences and raise awareness. Here are the differences at a glance:



Social media marketing happens when brands market themselves on social channels through official accounts to post about and promote products.



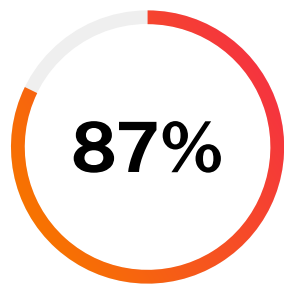
Influencer marketing relies on individual content creators and trendsetters to grow brand awareness. Instead of direct communication, brands partner with influencers to get the word out.



What gives influencer marketing its unique tone?

Changing customer habits and social media trends show that influencer marketing is here to stay [in Southeast Asia](#).¹ Simply put, people spend more of their time than ever on social media. The users are online already. It's just about aligning their attention to your brand, products, or services.

For example, users in Indonesia spend an average of [nine hours daily](#)² online.



An estimated [237 million Indonesians](#)³ — more than 87 percent of its population — will join a social media network by 2026.

With this massive potential audience, brands without influencer marketing strategies will soon struggle to find traction and stay competitive.

Effective influencer marketing depends on the brands' goals. Some brands focus on partnering with influencers with the largest possible audience.

The online shopping platform [Shopee](#) created a social media campaign with famed footballer Cristiano Ronaldo.



After reaching [more than 19 million people](#)⁴, the viral campaign doubled Shopee's gross orders.

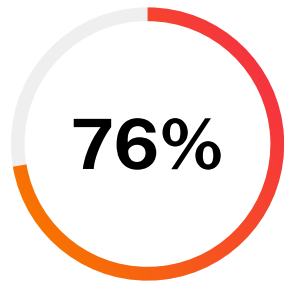
¹ "The rise of influencer marketing in Southeast Asia".
<https://impact.com/news/the-rise-of-influencer-marketing-in-southeast-asia/>

^{2,3} "6 tips to boost your influencer marketing ROI in Indonesia".
<https://impact.com/influencer/6-tips-to-boost-your-influencer-marketing-roi-in-indonesia/>

⁴ Why Shopee's Dancing Cristiano Ronaldo Went Viral".
<http://mileage.com.sg/why-shopees-dancing-cristiano-ronaldo-went-viral/>

What gives influencer marketing its unique tone? (con't)

However, some consumers respond better to influencers they trust and relate to, and those with smaller audiences (nano- and micro-influencers) spend more time engaging and connecting with people. Regional influencers (even with smaller audiences overall) make a substantial difference.



Research shows that [76 percent of people](#)⁵ prefer product recommendations and information in their native language.

Across Southeast Asia, local trendsetters and influencers help brands adjust and fine-tune their marketing to match the native language of each market.

For example, [Zalora](#) (an online fashion and lifestyle retailer), moved to a commission-based model with [no minimum follower count](#) for its influencers.⁶

Anyone could sign up and start recommending Zalora's products, earning commissions right away.

Zalora even boosted its referral program by 150% working with impact.com. Strategies like this help brands find influencers and expand their audience.

Influencer partnerships offer a new spin on one of the oldest forms of marketing: word of mouth.

Instead of relying on interruptive ads, brands now reach their target audiences through partnerships with the people they already like and follow.

⁵ "Survey of 8,709 Consumers in 29 Countries Finds that 76% Prefer Purchasing Products with Information in their Own Language".

<https://csa-research.com/Blogs-Events/CSA-in-the-Media/Press-Releases/Consumers-Prefer-their-Own-Language>

⁶ "ZALORA adopts commission-based model for influencer marketing".

<https://www.marketing-interactive.com/zalora-adopts-commission-based-model-for-influencer-marketing>

CHAPTER 3

Fine-tuning your influencer marketing strategy

Influencer marketing offers many upsides: collaboration opportunities, new audiences, and local expertise. Some brands are joining partnership marketing for the first time in 2022. Others are revamping their existing affiliate programmes, seeing the potential of influencer marketing.

Thankfully, brands don't have to set up influencer partnerships from scratch. With experienced influencer marketing platforms, brands can quickly discover, recruit, manage, and optimise partnerships with KOLs across different regions. With a partnership platform like [impact.com](https://www.impact.com), you can access powerful tools, detailed reporting, and experienced support teams. This leaves room for your brand to focus on network growth and finding the perfect partners for your campaigns.



Choose influencers that resonate with your brand

Successful influencer marketing starts with finding the right partners. First, it's vital to identify your objectives. These vary based on your current goals. Are you trying to drive brand recognition and awareness in a new region? Are you aiming for specific growth in metrics like conversions or return on investment (ROI)?

Clear objectives provide useful context and targets for your influencer partnerships — helping everyone stay on track.

Use this checklist to find the perfect influencers for your brand:

- **Find influencers within a specific niche that fits your product or service.** These influencers should create consistent content that resonates with your target audience.
- **Determine the most successful influencers in each region.** Local, high-engagement content will perform better in the long run than generic posts from large-scale influencers.

- **Consider your brand's style and values — then mirror them to your social platforms.** Generally speaking, influencers take different approaches across various platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. For example, some products will thrive with longer-form content, fitting YouTube more than TikTok. Meanwhile, other influencer marketing strategies work well with shorter posts and clips.

Instagram Stories or Reels and TikTok would fit perfectly here, for example.

Choose influencers that resonate with your brand (con't)

With clear goals in mind, take full advantage of tools from [impact.com's discovery and recruitment](#) and:

- Access a global partnership marketplace
- Connect with influencers of every size
- Compare partner profiles
- Sample different styles and posts
- Track performance statistics

Finally, impact.com's content-based discovery helps you filter through different options and find the most compatible influencers.

Find KOLs that harmonize with your values

Influencer marketing offers many choices for people to find success on social media platforms. Especially in Southeast Asia, potential customers connect with local online communities — bringing people together based on their cultural background, language, and niche interests. Disingenuous or mismatched partnerships between brands and influencers may be easy to set up at first — but they'll struggle over time. Online audiences want authenticity and trust within their communities and to connect with honest influencers.

As brands and marketers reach out to customers in new regions and communities, they should defer to their partner's knowledge and experience.

High-engagement influencers of all sizes already carry a trusted audience. Influencer partnerships thrive when brands empower influencers to keep their unique and authentic voice. These partnerships work best as a relationship with respect going both ways.



Find KOLs that harmonize with your values (*con't*)

Influencers bring experience and a pre-established audience to the table. Meanwhile, brands provide high-quality products, reporting, and marketing assets. Working together, both parties grow audience trust and engagement.

As you consider influencers for your programme, keep an eye out for these key factors:

- **Do they get consistent engagement?** How does the engagement level compare to their overall audience size? It's important to recognise accounts that just repost content or automate their posts. Avoiding bots and scam accounts will save you time and money.
- **Is their quality consistent over time?** Audiences will pay more attention to influencers with a good partnership history. Look at any brand-affiliated posts in their history and see how their audience responded. Long-term quality shows good promise for the future.

- **Would your products fit their content?** Does their built-in audience match your target customer base? Compatibility is key. While they may be successful influencers, not everyone will fit your brand.

Pay attention to their style, tone, and values. Look for people who fit within your brand's messaging without losing their own authentic voice.



Adding micro- and nano-influencers to the ensemble

Audience sizes range from celebrities to niche content creators. The umbrella term “influencer” breaks down into several specific categories:

Influencer type	Audience size	Where they fit
Celebrities	1m+ followers	Known to bring in fans from multiple sources and wider fame. Celebrities work best for brands with high budgets looking to get their products in front of the largest audience possible, especially if the brand has appeal across many segments.
Macro-influencers	10k-1m followers	Macro-influencers are great ways for brands to increase their engagement rates and reach, including brand awareness and building a good reputation.
Micro-influencers	Less than 10k followers	Micro-influencers can bring focused leads from niche audiences to your brand.
Nano-influencers	1k-10k followers	They connect with people positively by discussing brands and products and connecting with the company’s values or message. However, this group does not currently have commission agreements with these brands. Nano-influencers are perfect for small to mid-size brands with a limited budget, brands covering newer niches, or brands in the product launch phase.

Choose influencers that resonate with your brand (*con't*)

Growing brands benefit by working with influencers from all of these categories. While it's tempting to focus on influencers with massive audiences and wide appeal, micro-, and nano-influencers play a key role.

Local influencers are more immersed in their individual cultures, fluent in each language, and aware of what their audiences are looking for. Regional knowledge and experience prove vital for brands of all sizes, particularly if the main goal is expanding and growing brand awareness. Also, these smaller influencers often have close relationships with their followers, building high amounts of social capital and trust with their audience.

As a brand plans out marketing strategies, thinking big and small makes all the difference.

As each influencer has a unique voice, so should every partnership.

If your brand is launching new products or moving into a new region, focus on your potential customer base values. Ask yourself these questions about your audience to gauge the kind of content you and influencers you should be creating:

- What are they looking for?
- Who do they listen to?
- How can you meet their needs?
- How can you boost your sales?

The perfect influencer marketing plan for one part of Southeast Asia may completely fail in a different location.

Choose influencers that resonate with your brand (*con't*)

In 2019, for example, statistics showed that influencers with audiences in the 50,000 to 250,000 range [provided 20 percent better ROI for brands](#)¹ than those with more than a million followers.

Some platforms have even empowered all users to act as influencers.

On [Tokopedia](#), an Indonesian e-commerce platform, users could [leave their own recommendations](#) with Tokopedia ByMe and earn a commission for each purchase.² While smaller influencers may look less valuable on paper, they often bring better engagement, insight, and a personal touch to the table — and give your strategy a crucial head start.



¹ “How to make influencer marketing part of your Southeast Asia marketing strategy”. <https://impact.com/news/how-to-make-influencer-marketing-part-of-your-southeast-asia-marketing-strategy/>

² “Behind the Product: Tokopedia ByMe”. <https://medium.com/life-at-tokopedia/behind-the-product-tokopedia-byme-454323cda73d>

CHAPTER 4

Optimising and scaling your influencer marketing strategy

You're ready to start your marketing campaign once you've laid out your objectives and connected with the right influencers. Brands usually track traditional advertising methods, balancing investment and ROI alongside metrics like clicks and conversions.

Some marketers only look at influencer marketing from a bird's eye view, closely tracking likes and follower counts. However, this shallow approach makes real growth and optimisation difficult. Your brand shouldn't look at these influencers as extensions of your official social media presence.

Treat them as long-term partners by collaborating and building a productive relationship together.



Here are six key tips to scale your influencer partnerships:

1. Treat the influencer marketing model like an acquisition channel

Instead of approaching influencer partnerships as extensions of your brand, think of them as an acquisition channel. Independent influencers promote your products and services, boosting traffic and raising brand awareness. This distinction helps protect your partner's autonomy and authentic voice. Blending together influencers and branded channels will easily confuse and frustrate audiences.

[Ox Street](#), a Southeast Asian sneaker e-commerce brand, provides strong proof for this approach. Their team focuses on Gen Z consumers, relying on influencers and content as the foundation for customer acquisition. Brand awareness, marketing, and conversions all worked through the influencer partnership program, making Ox Street the [leading sneaker e-commerce brand](#) in Southeast Asia.¹

2. Use an end-to-end partnership management platform

Managing and guiding multiple influencer partnerships takes time and effort. Consistent tracking and collaboration tools simplify the entire process — giving you more time and control over performance and planning.

Manual partnership management quickly drains resources and increases the chance of mistakes. Combining outdated workflows or insufficient software solutions will also lead to failure.

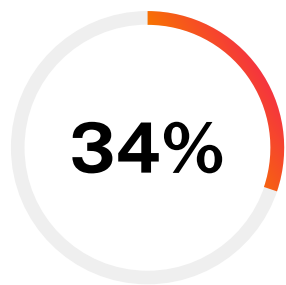
Instead, look for a purpose-built partnership management platform — like [impact.com](#). Here, your team can manage multiple partnerships with clear dashboards and easy controls.

¹ "How Ox Street taps on influencer partnerships to grow its consumer fanbase". <https://insideretail.asia/2022/05/16/how-ox-street-taps-on-influencer-partnerships-to-grow-its-consumer-fanbase/>

3. Scale up with automation

While working with impact.com, you can use automation tools to streamline the onboarding and performance tracking process. Manage more influencers without slowing down and bring in partners of all sizes.

Automation overcomes the restrictions of manual systems, saving time and helping you scale up sustainably.



Brands like [Razer](#) have seen strong results from implementing impact.com's automation tools in the Southeast Asian market, growing their partnership channel [by 34 percent](#).²



² "Razer grows program 34% with diversified partnership strategy through Impact".
<https://go.impact.com/rs/280-XQP-994/images/CSdownload-PC-CD-Razer.pdf>

4. Reward high performers and release low performers

When shown through impact.com's reporting tools, metrics help you filter and refine your influencer partnerships. Over time, use these reports to boost high-performing influencers.

Since this partnership goes both ways, give precise feedback to each influencer. Then, they can make changes and adjustments on their terms.

Plus, if specific influencers don't perform well, let go and move on.

Even if they offer a massive follower count, objective performance metrics matter more in the end.

5. Focus on meaningful metrics

Likes and comments may seem like meaningful metrics at first. However, these numbers don't show the full picture. Instead, brands build solid partnership foundations by following vital metrics like clicks, conversion rates, and brand ROI.

Views and likes don't automatically translate to a conversion and a purchase.



Rather than chasing 'vanity' metrics, focus on numbers with real-world implications for your partnership.

6. Diversify your partnerships

Southeast Asia's variable regions, cultures, and languages should make your influencer partnership portfolio diverse. Keep your objectives top of mind as you reach out to prospective influencers. New voices will keep popping up and gaining traction online as internet access increases. It's easy for brands to stagnate and just stick with influencers they already know. Keep building partnerships and stay ahead of the competition by watching for rising talent and opportunities.

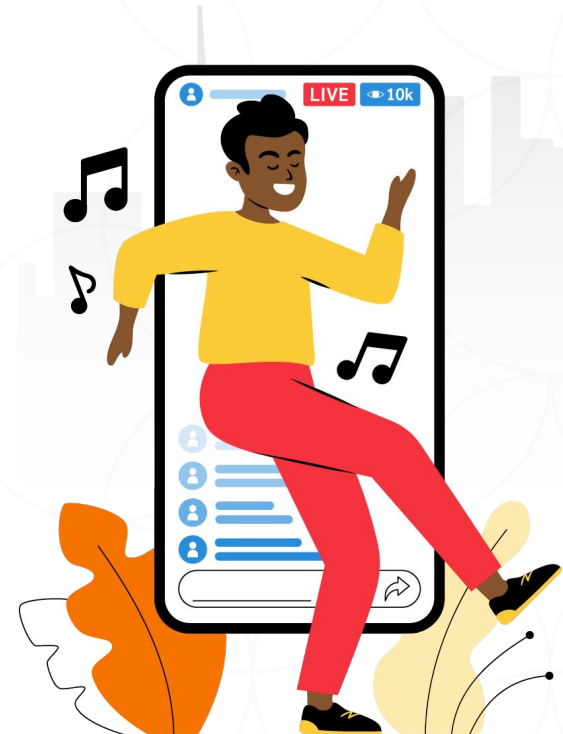
Optimisation takes time. Following the tips above helps you focus on influencer quality and achieve concrete results. Influencer marketing is not one-size-fits-all. Each region and locality will have its challenges and opportunities for optimisation.

³ "6 tips to boost your influencer marketing ROI in Indonesia".

<https://impact.com/influencer/6-tips-to-boost-your-influencer-marketing-roi-in-indonesia/>

Check out this [article](#)³ for more tips on boosting influencer marketing in Indonesia.

Your brand can keep expanding and reaching new markets by using a multipronged approach with huge social media stars and localised niche influencers.



CHAPTER 5

Easy ways to fall out of step with influencer marketing (and how to avoid them)

Influencer marketing opens up new opportunities for brands to connect with their target audiences, partnering with authentic content creators and KOLs across Southeast Asia.

With so many brands and strategists getting into influencer marketing, it's easy to fall into bad habits and make costly mistakes.

Look out for these six key mistakes and how to avoid them (for a more detailed breakdown, check out impact.com's [Your Influencer Program is Broken](#)¹ ebook):

1. Paying for posts without real measurement

Treating each influencer partnership with a “one-and-done” policy makes for a bad precedent.

Some brands stop paying attention after paying influencers for each post. Approaching influencers with a transactional mindset will limit you in the long run.

Without actionable performance metrics, honest feedback, and ongoing collaboration, your partnerships will soon run into problems.

Focus on longevity and authenticity with each influencer to combat this mistake.

Partnerships continue to flourish when influencers have the autonomy to engage with their audiences genuinely while receiving quality feedback.

¹ “Your influencer program is broken”. <https://go.impact.com/rs/280-XQP-994/images/PDFdownload-PC-AW-Your-Influencer-Program-is-Broken.pdf>

2. Lacking micro- and nano-influencers in your programme

Celebrities and macro-influencers often bring large audiences to the table. However, spending more time and effort fostering those partnerships is tempting and could mean missing out on fantastic opportunities.

Micro- and nano-influencers boost your brand's recognition, creating a genuine word-of-mouth campaign.

With local knowledge and language skills, they often build lasting relationships with highly engaged audiences.

3. Wasting time with unnecessary admin

Manual tasks and communication quickly consume your productivity, forcing unnecessary time investment into administrative tasks. Using impact.com's automation tools, your team can manage recruitment, workflows, and emails on a larger scale.

Then, invest time into what matters: boosting productivity metrics and improving influencer relationships.



4. Restricting influencer creativity

Some brands restrict their influencers to traditional marketing strategies and channels. Influencers then feel limited and controlled, harming genuine promotions and authentic engagement.

Your business shouldn't take the same approach for influencer marketing and affiliates. Take a universal approach, leaning on each influencer's knowledge and communications skills. Treat them as creative partners — not just branding channels.

5. Misaligning your objectives and the bottom line

If audience growth and global appeal are your only goals, your marketing objectives will often fail to match your real-world business needs.

Attribution and tracking tools both play crucial roles in solving this problem. You will be able to foster lasting success in influencer marketing by focusing on actionable metrics, like ROI and conversions.

6. Working with influencers who are too good to be true

Some influencers look good on paper, growing a large audience in a short amount of time. However, fake followers and automated engagement can be a real problem on social media platforms.

Take a closer look at larger potential partners: are they getting genuine engagement with unique comments or just generic responses online? Diversified partnerships with influencers also help solve this challenge. Instead of relying on a small number of macro-influencers, expand your partnerships to cover the whole range of social media trendsetters.

In general, take an open and performance-based approach to influencer marketing. Brands and creative influencers both thrive when they rely on each other.

When influencers know that brands have their back, they are more likely to genuinely advocate for your products and services. Audiences can tell the difference.



CHAPTER 6

Finding the perfect audience with influencer marketing

Influencer marketing offers brands of all sizes a way to expand and grow across Southeast Asia. Through partnerships with local experts and key opinion leaders (of all sizes), you connect with people in natural ways. Instead of paying for intrusive commercials or pop-up ads, influencers become your advocates — boosting traffic and engagement.

Brands can set themselves up for success by partnering with impact.com, diversifying their partnerships, and avoiding easy traditional marketing mistakes. As more Southeast Asians are online than ever, influencer marketing keeps opening up new avenues for impact and growth.

Want to get your influencer marketing campaign up and running? Contact the Southeast Asia team at growth@impact.com today.





About impact.com

[impact.com](https://www.impact.com), the leading global partnership management platform, has been transforming the way enterprises discover and manage all types of partnerships — including affiliates, influencers, commerce content publishers, B2B, and more — since its founding in 2008. Its powerful, purpose-built platform helps businesses, including brands, publishers and agencies, to build authentic, enduring and rewarding relationships with both publishers and consumers. By providing visibility across the entire consumer journey they are able to aggregate, orchestrate and optimize the total value of the entire mix of partnerships with ease and transparency, driving growth and creating new value for consumers.

To learn more about how [impact.com](https://www.impact.com)'s technology platform and partnerships marketplace is driving revenue growth for global enterprise brands such as



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