

The Rise of the ‘Instagram Economy’ phenomenon in a South Africa: An
exploration of How Conspicuous Consumption on Instagram Contributes to
Brand Value Creation.

Alyssa Kleintjes

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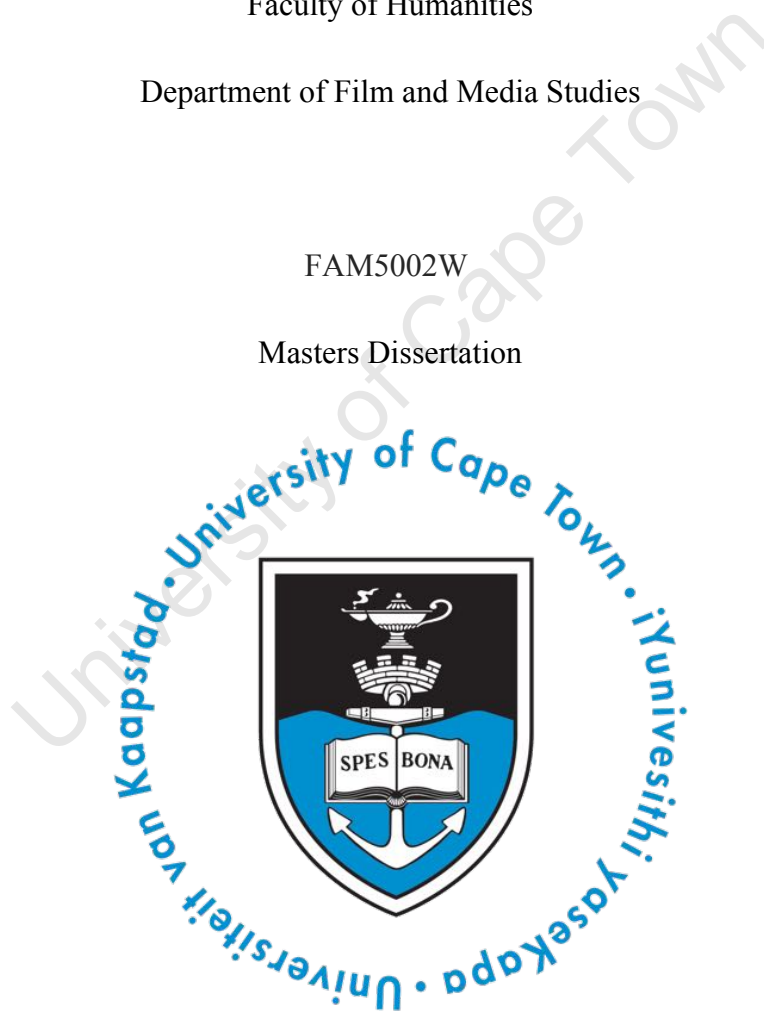
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CENTRE FOR FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

ESSAY/PROJECT COVER SHEET

FULL NAME: Alyssa Kleintje

STUDENT NUMBER: ICLNALY001

CONTACT NUMBER:

COURSE CODE: FAMS0002W

TOPIC: Masters Dissertation

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Lecturer/Supervisor/Marker: Ronald Irwin

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Abstract

The number of brands using Instagram as a branding tool is steadily rising and so too is the rate of brand related consumer Interactions on social media. The sociocultural shifts in behavioural norms on Instagram have facilitated an increase in social word-of mouth that is surpassing traditional media advertising as the primary influence on consumers' purchase decisions. This revolution in Instagram marketing has facilitated the development of the Instagram Economy. This research aims to draw actionable insights into the South African Instagram Economy, which brand managers can use to inform their Instagram marketing strategies in order to leverage the economic capabilities of this platform. In order to draw actionable insights the study focused on each of the three main role players of the Instagram Economy: brands, Instagram influencers and consumers. The method of research for each of these three components of study was: a case study of a brand Instagram account, a quantitative content analysis of Instagram influencers' brand sponsored posts and lastly a closed, fixed response consumer questionnaire which prospective respondents could voluntarily participate in. This research identified that in order to develop successful brand presence on Instagram and increase the rate of brand related Instagram interactions that influence consumer purchase decisions, brands need to develop the right content for their target audience, partner with influencers that match the brand's values and know their audience's Instagram usage habits in order to reach them effectively.

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3. Introduction

With 70.7% of all global brands expected to be using Instagram in 2017 (L2, 2017) this social media platform has become an imperative brand communication tool.

In addition, the exponential adoption rate of this platform by consumers mean brands are recognising the importance of Instagram to convey their brand identity, maintain their brand image, interact with their target audience as well as influence consumers' purchase decisions. With a community of more than 600 million users (Instagram, 2016) Instagram is the perfect branding tool. The unique functionalities of mobile social media, such as Instagram, enable new forms of brand and consumer communication and interaction as well as the production and consumption of information in new ways. Consumers sharing opinions of a brand on Instagram contribute to the promotion of the brand image and constitute the co-creation of brand value (Aksoy et al., 2013).

Moreover, as social media platforms become more embedded in consumers' daily lives, consumers' brand related practices on social media have become a substantial source of brand information (Muntinga, Moorman and Smit, 2011) with the authority to influence other consumers' brand perception and purchase intentions. The rapid increase in the volumes of social word-of-mouth (sWOM) and the growing influence of consumers on Instagram present viable opportunities for brands to increase brand awareness (Ashley & Tuten, 2015), create a demand for their products and direct consumers purchase decisions. Instagram branding helps brands to ultimately increases sales, improve consumers opinion of the brand and foster brand loyalty (Lee & Workman, 2015) in a media saturated environment where brands are struggling to reach consumers as they have become desensitised to traditional modes of advertising (Moody, 2011). The revenue generation possibilities of Instagram, either as direct sales channel or through influencing consumers' purchase intentions, represents a worthwhile source of income for brands to capitalise on (Hardey, 2015).

3.1 Research Problem

Consumers expect readily available and instant access to product information. Social media platforms have become consumers' go-to resource to share information about brands as well as their experiences of brands and products (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media

platforms give consumers access to information on the brand through conversations with other consumers before, during and after the purchase experience (Schultz & Peltier, 2013). The visual nature of Instagram has allowed users to seamlessly promote brands through incorporating branded content into the narratives of their daily lives (Carah & Shaul, 2015; Abidin, 2013). In addition, consumers' perception of the brand's value is affected by their experiences of the brand on social media (Barnes, 2014). Thus a brand's social media presence (officially created by the brand or brand related content and experiences shared by users) is a significant factor determining consumers' perception of the brand.

The shifts in consumers' socio-cultural behaviour and preferences on social media (Gabielli, Baghi, & Codeluppi, 2013) have changed the way brands communicate (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014) and the way consumers formulate their brand opinion as well as make their purchase decisions (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). The evolution of Instagram practices into an influential resource of brand information has given rise to a revenue stream that has been termed the 'Instagram Economy' (Hardey, 2015). A brand presence on Instagram, is an effective way to engage consumers and affect their purchase decision, however, in order to do this effectively brands need a thorough understanding of consumer culture on Instagram, well thought-out strategic objectives that are proven to work, and an effective evaluation technique to continuously measure the success of their efforts.

However, research has shown that most brand managers are still unsure which Instagram branding strategies yield the best results and how to effectively measure their performance on the social media platform (Augure, 2015, Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016; Stelzner, 2016). Therefore, research on the e-commerce capabilities of social media platforms like Instagram is needed (Lai & To, 2014) to highlight how brands can develop an effective presence on these networks in order to capitalise on the economic capabilities the new forms of social media communication have enabled. This research aims to contribute to brands' understanding of the earning potential of Instagram as a branding tool (Hardey, 2015), through highlighting insights from the three main components of the Instagram economy: brands, influencers and consumers.

3.2 Research Question

In order to improve brands' understanding of the 'Instagram Economy' (Hardey, 2015) phenomenon in South Africa, which will help brands to leverage the economic opportunities on Instagram, this research seeks to answer the question: How do brand related Instagram practices affect consumers' purchase intentions and consumers' perception of the brand and how does this contribute to brand value? To effectively answer this question it was divided into three parts to answer it from the perspective of each of the three main role players of the Instagram economy. Thus, this paper has three sub research questions:

RQ 1.1: How do brands' Instagram practices affect consumers' purchase intentions and consumers' perception of the brand and how does this contribute to brand value?

RQ 1.2: How do Instagram influencers' brand related Instagram practices affect consumers' purchase intentions and consumers' perception of the brand and how does this contribute to brand value?

RQ 1.3: How do consumers' brand related Instagram practices affect consumers' purchase intentions and consumers' perception of the brand and how does this contribute to brand value?

3.3 Aims and Contribution of this Research

The aim of the study is to allow marketers to leverage the brand value building capabilities of using influencers on Instagram as a branding strategy. In addition, this research should highlight whether influential Instagrammers have significant influence over consumers' perception of the brand and purchase decisions in South Africa. This study aims to fill a gap in South African branding research as most of the studies looking at how social media can contribute to brand value have been done internationally with a focus on global brands such as Chang, (2014) and Frey, (2012). Given that social media has become an important branding tool (Hajli, 2015) that allows brands to reach a large audience, the study will contribute to the knowledge of local brands' Instagram performance, insights to collaborate with Instagram influencers effectively as well as consumers' reactions to influencers and brands on Instagram.

4. Literature Review

Social media is one of the greatest developments to date in the history of branding (Booth & Matic, 2011). In order stay relevant and maintain a successful brand presence in the current highly competitive market, successful brands need to know how to gain the attention of consumers who turn to social media platforms for entertainment and information (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Brands generate consumer engagement through “share of mind”- the way consumers think about a particular brand in relation to other brands within a product category - gained from the company’s own media channels, such as the company's Instagram account, in addition to earned media, such as word-of-mouth and influencer collaborations and recommendations (Corcoran, 2009; Erkan, 2015). Cultivating a successful Instagram marketing strategy is an effective way for brands to demonstrate the brand’s personality, products and/or services in an appealing manner, transmit brand messaging through a relevant and popular platform, increase brand awareness, and expose the brand to a large number of new consumers (Carah & Shaul, 2015; Tuten & Ashley, 2015; Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins & Wiertz, 2013).

Moreover, social media, and Instagram in particular, have become important communication tools for brands (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). Changes in behavioural patterns on social media (Senft, 2013; Pookulangara & Koesler 2011) and the development of social media sites and mobile technologies have facilitated the development of the ‘Instagram Economy’ (Hardey, 2015). Since Instagram is the social media platform of choice for teenagers and young millennials (Becker, 2016), brands who develop effective Instagram marketing strategies now and successfully foster brand loyalty among this younger demographic will have an advantage in reaching future generations who will have more purchasing power as they get older.

This paper seeks to investigate, analyse and illustrate the sociocultural practices and trends embedded in the constant flow of visual information on Instagram and how these practices contribute to brand value (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012). This paper will also highlight the benefit of Social Media branding, give an overview of Instagram usage globally and in South Africa, outline the shifts in the social media

ecosystem, explore the development of the ‘Instagram Economy’, analyse the conspicuous consumption culture driving it and lastly look at the brand community of consumers and how this promotes branded interaction among consumers.

4.1 Social Media Branding Introduction

“Social media platforms are sites of speaking where individuals express themselves and social justice groups operate—but they are also sites of knowing, where businesses use individuals’ speech in order to understand markets and make predictions” (Carter, 2016). Consumers’ mass adoption of social media channels (Meeker, 2016), and the magnitude of cultural consumption that these channels facilitate (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011) have garnered brands’ attention. Brands worldwide have recognised the value of a social media brand presence and the significance of using consumers’ social media practices as a source of market information (Carah & Shaul, 2015; Tuten & Ashley, 2015).

The exponential growth of social media channels in the past five years, has established social media as a highly favourable branding medium across the world for consumers and brands alike (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). Due to their inexpensive and user-friendly nature, social media channels and mobile-based technologies that allow for the sharing of user-generated material have become a key part of branding strategies to reach consumers (Georgios & Dimitriadis, 2014). Li & Li, (2014) contend that a social media brand presence is the most progressive form of brand presence since it allows both the brand as well as the consumers to be involved in the creation of brand meaning. Social media branding allows for multidimensional communication where consumers can integrate the brand into the daily narratives of their lives (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Abidin, 2016). Brands create social media marketing strategies to build consumers’ trust, share brand information and provide consumers with an enjoyable brand experience (Hajli, 2015). Attracted by the large number of users, companies have created brand communities in social media.

Social media provide new opportunities for consumer interaction, they also open up new possibilities for marketing research to get close to the consumers and collect info about their preferences, desires, and needs (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). The dynamic,

ubiquitous, and often real-time interaction enabled by social media has significantly changed the landscape for brand management (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). Much Research has been done on the benefits of having a social media brand presence and researchers and branding practitioners agree that using social media as a branding tool is invaluable (Gensler *et al.*, 2013; Tuten & Ashley, 2015; Hajli, 2015). While the benefits are recognisable, marketers are still unsure which social media branding strategies yield the best results (Stelzner, 2016) and research on the effectiveness of specific social media branding tactics is still in its exploratory stage. In addition, the new forms of cultural consumption, where consumers' integrate brands into their identity building practices has given rise to new marketing and business opportunities for brands and consumers alike on social media (Abidin, 2016; Hardy, 2015 & Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). However, much research is needed to shed light on this phenomenon and allow brands to effectively leverage these opportunities.

4.1.1 *Benefits of SM Marketing*

The significance of Social Media branding is that it facilitates the social interaction of consumers and in turn the information generated in consumer exchanges impacts the consumer's' brand perception as well as their purchase intentions (Hajli, 2015). Through a Social Media brand presence, brands can successfully develop and enrich interactions with consumers (Schau, Muniz & Arnould 2009). Social media strengthen the existing firm-to-customer and customer-to-firm relationships, as well as enable new forms of established communication patterns, increasing the brand's ability to participate in brand to customer dialogue (Kaplan, 2012). Social Media have fundamentally changed the ease of contact, volume, speed, and nature of brand to customer and customer-to-customer brand related interactions (Gensler *et al.*, 2013).

Furthermore, since social media are not geographically constrained, brands can reach a wider audience that traditional media would not reach (Hajli, 2015). In addition, social media transmit brand messages to a more diverse audience range compared to the demographics of mass media (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie 2014). This creates a "small-world" network (Newman, 2003) where brand content is effectively disseminated to a large number of consumers. This network is formed through voluntary connection and requires fewer steps for sharing information (Gensler *et al.*,

2013). Social Media enhance brand-building capabilities (Tuten & Ashley, 2015; Berthon, Pitt, Plangger & Shapiro, 2012, Hajli 2015). Through social media branding strategies brands grow, develop their reputation and establish a larger sphere of influence. On a global scale, social media enables brands to reach an international audience, and gain popularity among a worldwide consumer base (Li & Li, 2014).

Social media have been recognised as potentially the most powerful medium for brands to build relationships with consumers (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). The opportunity to connect with customers using richer media, with a greater reach, is a key benefit of social media branding (Hajli, 2015). The interactive nature of digital media enable brands to share and exchange information with consumers and also allows consumers to share and exchange information with other consumers (Carah & Shaul). Through social media, brand communication with consumers has now shifted from dialog to ‘trialogue’, in which consumers engage in meaningful relationships with the brand and brand related relationships with one another (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Using social media, brands are able to strengthen relationships with existing as well as new consumers and form communities of branded interaction in which consumers share their brand experiences with each other (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016). Such social brand related interactions alter the traditional model of exchange between the brand and consumer in a purchase relationship (Schau, Muniz & Arnould 2009). Consumers add value to the purchase interaction by generating content, and influencing the purchase decisions of other consumers in peer-to-peer interactions (Schivinski & Dabrowski 2016).

Benefits of Social Media marketing that research has identified include an inexpensive source of market research, improved communication, and an effective channel for sales promotion, relationship development and loyalty programs (Kaplan, 2012). Since popular social media sites have millions of users on a daily basis, a brand presence on these networks familiarise and inform consumers about the brand, creating brand awareness (Hajli, 2015). Social media tools give brands access to an audience of millions of people and strong social media relationships with consumers enhance brand loyalty and boost sales (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Consumers visiting a brand’s social media account create traffic for the web site and as a result the opportunity to generate more sales (Gensler *et al.*, 2013).

4.1.2 Social Media and WOM

Social media has not only changed consumers' conversations about products and services it has changed the way consumers gather information to make their purchasing decision (Fan & Gordon, 2014). The term word-of-mouth or WOM applied to a marketing context is any face-to-face interaction between consumers concerning a product, brand or service (Arndt, 1967). The emergence of internet-based media has facilitated the development of online word-of-mouth or electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) that occurs on various online channels, such as blogs, forums, virtual communities, and social networks (Thoumrungroje, 2014). "Electronic WOM is any WOM communication facilitated by electronic means." (Gosh, Varshney & Vengopaul, 2014: 295).

Social media are ideal tools for eWOM, as users freely create and spread brand-related information in their networks of friends or followers (Hajli, 2015). Brand related consumer exchanges on social media are considered a credible source of customer-to-customer word-of-mouth. Consumers have an indirect brand experience through e-commerce and use social media to augment their experience by searching for first hand feedback such as reviews and user experiences from consumers' who have already purchased the product (Hajli, 2015). Consumers' product reviews on social media are regarded as a credible source of product information as they are from a consumer who has directly experienced the product (Lee & Workman, 2015).

The practice of consumers sharing reviews, recommendations and user experiences on Social Media has given rise to a new form of WOM termed 'social word of mouth' (sWOM) (Do-Hyung, Jumin, & Ingoo, 2007). Do-Hyung, Jumin, & Ingoo (2007) define social word-of-mouth as a consumers' evaluation of a product posted on a social media platform. Product information on social media generating word of mouth is considered more influential than brand generated information (Thoumrungroje, 2014). There has been much research establishing consumer-generated information as more credible and more widely accepted by consumers than information from the brand (Hajli, 2015). Traditionally WOM was geographically limited, but social media has erased the limitations and increased the reach and influence of consumers (Labrecque, 2014). The unique advantage of sWOM is that it will remain online for

an unlimited time, where other consumers can have access to it when they need it (Hajli, 2015).

Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, (2011) have developed the concept consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRAs) as a form of sWOM. The COBRA concept (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011) is a framework to conceptualise brand related consumer activity on social media platforms. The construct combines separate concepts of online behavioural phenomena into one useful category for ease of analysis (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). According to Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, (2011) concepts such as 'electronic word-of-mouth' (eWOM) which is associated with online consumer-to-consumer interactions about brands, and the term 'user-generated content' (UGC) used for the content produced and uploaded by consumers can now be combined into one concept. COBRAs have a real impact on brands on social media platforms as well as in offline retail (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011), thus brands need to know how to effectively leverage the brand value adding capabilities of this phenomenon.

4.1.3 Social Media Brand Management

As brands begin to recognise the business risk of ignoring social media marketing as well as comprehend the inherent opportunities of this form of brand communication (Kaplan, 2012), the top questions continuously plaguing social media marketers (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016; Stelzner, 2016, Meeker, 2016) demonstrates how much remains unknown in the field (Fan & Gordon, 2014). Consequently, the main challenge for brands is that while they recognise the need to have a social media presence, they do not know how to do it successfully, what engagement metrics they should be measuring and how these should be measured (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011). Understanding consumers' social media behaviour and practices is essential to developing effective social media marketing strategies (Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ognibeni & Pauwels, 2013). How people communicate on social media sites, new forms of social interaction and the factors that motivate social commerce and positively influence purchase decisions are critical determinants that should inform a brand's social media marketing strategy (Hajli, 2015).

Since social media has become entrenched in consumers' daily lives, the way brands communicate with consumers have changed (Hajli, 2015). "With the advent of social media, brand managers have lost their pivotal role as authors of their brands' stories." (Gensler *et al.*, 2013) Social media based brand conversations enable consumers to integrate their own brand-related experiences and thoughts into the brand story and integrate brand related content into the narrative of their daily lives (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). Social media has made branding a collaborative effort between brands and consumers. Brands co-own, co-direct competitive strategies, and co-define symbolic meanings with consumers (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). Branded content on social media has seen decreased engagement because consumers' newsfeeds have become too saturated and posts from other consumers are seen as more credible (Gensler *et al.*, 2013).

As a result of this decreased consumer engagement, brands now need to use new strategies to get consumers to engage with their content such as paying to get the reach and engagement they want (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). Social media optimisation (SMO) has become as critical as search engine optimisation (SEO) for brands (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Employing strategies to increase a website's ranking in search engine results increases traffic to the website which improves brand awareness as it makes the brand more visible online. Currently brands are now taking a similar approach to social media, employing strategies to optimise their social media presence and increase engagement.

Furthermore, social media is increasingly being used as a Corporate Reputation Management (CRM) tool (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Brand Managers can use social media sentiment to inform business strategy and product innovation, serving as a far more fundamental piece of the business puzzle than just a communications function (Peters *et al.*, 2013). Employing social media analytics tools to explore what consumers' perceptions of a brand are, allows brand managers to use this data to develop successful social media marketing campaigns (Gensler *et al.*, 2013; Peters *et al.*, 2013).

According to the 2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, the top social media questions stumping brand managers relate to the following areas: tactics, engagement,

measurement, audience, and tools. These questions and their order have remained the same since 2014 (Stelzner, 2016). Below are the top issues marketers are facing today with social media marketing. At least 86% of marketers surveyed felt they're struggling to answer all of the following (Stelzner, 2016):

Questions According to the 2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report (Stelzner, 2016: 6):

1. Tactics: What social tactics are most effective?

The number-one question marketers' want answered (92%) is which tactics work best. This isn't a surprise, given the constant changes taking place across many social networks.

2. Engagement: What are the best ways to engage my audience with social media?

Figuring out how to best connect with people remains high on the list of questions marketers' want answered (90%). Engaging with customers is becoming a unique competitive advantage.

3. Measurement: How do I measure the return on my social media marketing?

A significant 86% of marketers want to know how to measure their return on investment for social media activities.

4: Audience: How do I find my target audience with social media?

Locating ideal customers and prospects is a big concern for marketers (86%). Marketers are looking for guidance on sifting through enormous social networks and connecting with the right people.

5. Tools: What are the best social management tools?

Marketers want better tools to simplify their social media tasks. A surprising 86% don't know which tools are best. A significant 90% of marketers said that social media is important to their business. Only 41% agreed they're able to measure their social activities. The ROI (Return on Investment) issue has plagued marketers for years. In 2015, 42% indicated they could measure ROI and in 2014, it was 37% (Stelzner, 2016).

Thus, in order for brand managers to develop effective communication strategies and leverage the economic opportunities of Instagram, more research is needed to investigate the best tactics that generate engagement as well as effective social media analytics and measurement techniques to consistently run a successful Instagram account that engages the audience.

Despite the relatively high organic engagement rates brands currently enjoy on Instagram, the swift rate of advances in the social media landscape makes social media platforms increasingly difficult for brands to successfully incorporate into their communication strategies (Peters *et al.*, 2013). The recent change in Instagram's algorithm has initiated decreased organic engagement on the platform (L2, 2017; Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Since the rapid rate of changes to social media platform's advertising options is on going, in order for brands' social media marketing strategies to remain successful they need to continually reevaluate their social media marketing strategies (L2, 2017; Stelzner, 2016). Likewise, 40% of South African marketers agreed that social media marketing has become more difficult in the last 12 months (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). A large percentage (74%) of brand managers reported using visual assets in their social media marketing, which is up from 71% in 2015 (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Effective Social Media strategies include: Integrating brand activities into consumers' personal narratives of their daily lives they share on social media while avoiding overexposing the consumer with too much content, tailoring brand messaging activities to consumers' interests and preferences, involve consumers' with engaging conversations, and lastly encourage the creation of user-generated content (Kaplan, 2012; Peters *et al.*, 2013).

Conclusion

Much of the initial research on social media as marketing tool has centred on employing social media platforms as a virtual focus group to engage consumers in the concept development and product design stages (Georgios & Dimitriadis, 2014; Schau, Muniz & Arnould, 2009). Most of the relatively early academic studies consider social media as a new marketing tool that increases marketing communication effectiveness (Kozinets *et al.*, 2010), and very few focus on how firms may benefit from them (Dong-Hun, 2010). There is a lack of studies examining

the expected benefits and the strategy that firms use for their corporate fan pages on a social medium like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube.

4.2 Instagram Background

In 2016 the global number of social network users reached 2.22 billion, and this number is expected to rise to 2.72 billion by 2019 (Statista, 2016). Founded in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger (Instagram, 2016), Instagram is a mobile application that allows new modes of storing, editing, sharing, and scrolling through images. Today the community of Instagram users function in a media saturated environment, which delivers the technological telecommunication framework to mediate everyday life (Carah & Shaul, 2016).

4.2.1 Instagram Overview

Instagram's popularity is increasing rapidly; a third of the world's Internet users are expected to be using the photo-sharing social media platform by 2018 (Hitz, 2015). Currently the social media platform has more than 600 million users of which over 300 million are active on a monthly basis and 95 million of the social media platform's users are active on the app daily (Instagram, 2016a). The app has gained popularity globally, with 70% of Instagram's users being people outside the U.S.A. To date over 30 billion photos have been shared, at a current rate of 70 million per day and Instagram users like 2.5 billion posts daily (Instagram, 2016a). The site is more popular among a younger audience with 41% of Instagram users aged between 16-24 years (Becker, 2016). The social media platform made a \$600 million revenue in 2014 and this is set to increase as more brands flock to the site. In 2015, 86% of top Global Brands were using Instagram (Hitz, 2015).

4.2.2 Brands on Instagram

Image-centred by nature, fashion and beauty brands are increasingly capitalising on the social media platform as its popularity increases (Pathak, 2015). According to the Digital IQ Fashion Index 2016 (L2, 2016) 98 per cent of the top fashion brands currently have an Instagram account, and 95 per cent of beauty brands have a

presence on the platform and these figures have increased from 75 per cent and 78 per cent respectively in October 2013. In addition, fashion and beauty brands have also increased the frequency with which they post, by 17 per cent for fashion brands and 42 per cent for beauty (L2, 2016). Since Instagram opened its Application Programming Interface (API), which allows access to the functionalities and data of the application, to all advertisers in September 2015 these posting rates are projected to increase continuously (L2, 2016). Instagram advertising affords brands that have been struggling to successfully grow an audience on the platform, a cost-effective opportunity to break into a popular social platform and engage its audience (Pathak, 2015). Fashion and beauty brands on Instagram also generate higher rates of engagement and interactions (figure 1) compared to other social media platforms (Pathak, 2015). The 67 top fashion brands on social media have recorded a 77 per cent increase in engagement for the second quarter of 2015, and their frequency of posting has risen to approximately 8 posts a week to 10 posts a week over the same period (Pathak, 2015).

According to the 2017 Social Platforms Intelligence Report (2017) Instagram generated \$595 million in mobile ad revenue in 2015 and by the end of 2017, Instagram’s global mobile ad revenue is projected to reach \$2.81 billion. Ninety per cent of Instagram users are younger than 35 and 48.8% of brands are using the platform (L2, 2017). The number of brands using the social media platform is anticipated to rise to 70.7%, by the end of 2017. Thus, brands are increasingly recognising the potential of Instagram to reach its target audience.

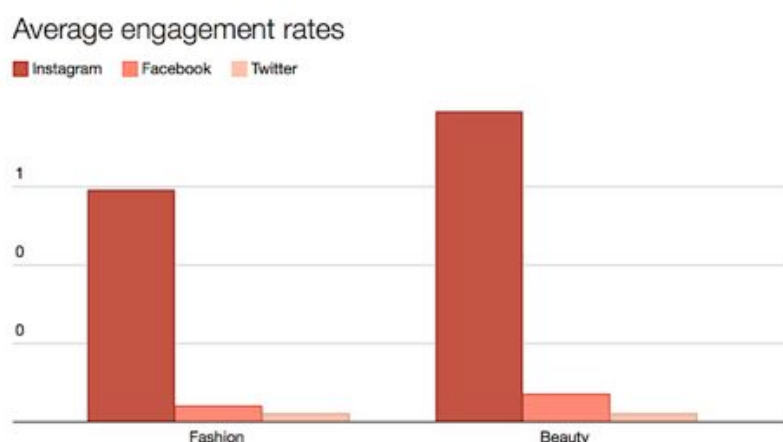


Figure 1: Shows the average engagement rates of Instagram, Facebook and Twitter for Fashion and Beauty Brands (L2, 2016).

4.2.3 Instagram in South Africa

According to the South African Social Media Landscape report of 2016, Instagram is the social media platform that has shown the highest first time use by brands (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Additionally, Instagram has been the fastest growing social network of in South Africa over the past year, logging a 133% rise; from 1,1-million to 2,68-million users. Instagram was also ranked as the social network most sampled brands plan to use, that they do not currently use, with 24 per cent of brands indicating that they plan to join the social media platform in the coming year (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Instagram's exponential adoption rate means the platform is reaching the mass market sooner than typical adoption curves have predicted with local celebrities and television presenters currently leading in terms of follower count (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016).

Moreover, 42 per cent of major local brands currently have a presence on the platform, with Mr Price and Mercedes Benz generating the highest levels of engagement for individual posts (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). According to the 2016 Social Media Landscape Report 71% of South African brands acknowledged social media as an essential component of their marketing strategies and 53% of

South African brands specified that they are developing strategies to incorporate social media influencer marketing.

In addition, Mr Price is the retailer with the number 1 most popular brand shared Instagram image in South Africa and an additional 10 images on the list of 25, more than any other brand (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Instagram is also the fourth most downloaded mobile app on IOS and Android app stores in the country. The average time South Africans spend on social media is 2 hours and 43 minutes, and 24% of the country's population, 13 million people, actively use social media platforms (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016).

Research has shown that consumers in developing markets are more likely to be influenced by social media (92%) than those in established economies (66%) (Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), 2016). Locally, 81 % of consumers that had an interaction with their favourite brand on social media indicated that it caused them to respect or value the brand more, compared to 64% globally (Pricewaterhouse Coopers

(PwC), 2016). Despite the promising statistics only 10% of local respondents indicated that their favourite retailer has a prominent brand presence on social media platforms (Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), 2016).

4.3 The Social Media Ecosystem

The evolution of Web 1.0 to the collaborative Web 2.0 sphere of interactive digital media has changed the traditional paradigm of brand-consumer communication (Berthon *et al.*, 2012). Consumers are now dictating the nature, extent, and context of marketing exchanges (Hanna *et al.*, 2011). Georgios & Dimitriadis, (2014) define Web 2.0 as “a collection of open-source, interactive and user-controlled online applications expanding the experiences, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business and social processes. Web 2.0 applications support the creation of informal users’ networks, facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing/refining of the informational content.” According to (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008), there are five main categories of Web 2.0: blogs, social networks, forums, content aggregators, and communities.

4.3.1 New modes of Communication

Dramatic developments in interactive digital media are revolutionising marketing, and social media has fundamentally altered marketing’s ecosystem of influence (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). The advances of Internet technologies and extensive consumer adoption rates have altered the way in which society converses personally as well as professionally, and the rapid rate at which new communication mediums are emerging, underscores this transformation (Dimofte, Haugtvedt, & Yalch, 2015; Hajli, 2015). Consumers can now access more information, quicker and easier than ever before using digital communication channels (Çizmecci & Ercan, 2015). Ubiquitous smartphones and other mobile devices, Facebook and YouTube channels devoted to companies and products, and hashtags that make it easy to share experiences instantly combine to create a social media landscape that is quickly becoming part of the fabric of everyday business operations (Fan & Gordon, 2014).

Brands are adopting a social media-driven business model facilitated by consumers' increased connectivity and interactivity (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). The content of consumers' daily lives has become synonymous with social media, fundamentally changing the way brands influence current and potential consumers' perception of the brand and their purchase decisions (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). The growth of Web 2.0 has catalysed the progression and popularity of social networks, shaping a new model of collaborative communication (Hanna *et al.*, 2011). Web 2.0 technologies; especially social media apps play a vital role in consumers' shopping experience (Berthon *et al.*, 2012). Content in the form of social networks and blogs that enable individuals to create, share, and recommend information is extending the spheres of marketing influence (Abidin, 2016 Hardey 2015), and a wide variety of social media platforms are providing the tools necessary for these influential and meaningful firm-customer exchanges (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). Brand related consumer conversations on social media significantly influence consumers despite the fact that consumers aren't consciously seeking brand opinions (Khattri & Sharma, 2013).

Shopping is considered as social experience (Campbell & Pasi, 1997) and social networking has extended the social experience of shopping by enabling consumers to interact with their network of followers, many of whom are only connected via social Media (Hanna *et al.*, 2011). Consumers trust peer consumers more than brands, and are likely to use information provided by fellow consumers to evaluate products/ services before they make a purchase decision (Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2014). Social networks have not only transformed the research and purchase consideration phase of marketing (Hajli, 2015), but it also provides shoppers a platform to advocate for the products and stores they love. Advocacy has always existed, but social networking has made this stage even more accessible, amplifying the size of the audience reached (Hanna *et al.*, 2011).

4.3.2 Social Media Altered Brands' Sphere of Influence

The increased popularity and penetration of social media into consumers' daily lives has democratised brand communication (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011). As social media becomes more embedded in consumers' daily lives, consumers' expectations of

brands rise, as recent research indicates that more than half of consumers now anticipate brand responses to consumer comments (Labrecque, 2014). In other words, marketing can no longer solely be about capturing attention via reach; instead, marketers must focus on both capturing and continuing attention via engagement¹ (Peters *et al.*, 2013). Communication about brands on social media happens with or without the brand's permission (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011). The new social paradigm calls for a combination of conventional and social media marketing efforts (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

Corcoran (2009) divides the social media ecosystem into three media types: owned media (controlled by the marketer; e.g., company website), paid media (bought by the marketer; e.g., sponsorships, advertising), and earned media (not controlled or bought by the marketer; e.g., word-of-mouth, viral). Through social media, consumers have the power to actively influence brand messaging and meaning, consumers' brand perception help dictates product and service assortment, and consumers' online activities represent an invaluable source of market information brands can use to determine future product or service initiatives (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

Current trends for original content have left brands in a responsive state to fall in line with the influencers (Hardey, 2015). Furthermore, bloggers growing regard as trend setters and their ability to influence their connected network of followers has become a popular communication channel for brands to introduce consumers to their products (Uzuno & Kip, 2014). In addition, a distinct consequence of social media is that brand activities have become highly transparent (Habibi, Laroche, & Richard, 2013).

“Social networks aren't about web sites - they're about experiences”(Wyshynski, 2009). Positive brand experiences on social media arise when marketers are able to incorporate reach and engagement as part of the brand's communication strategy through the interconnectedness of online media combined with traditional media (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

The participatory nature of social media shifts brand communication from a patriarchal to a participatory paradigm (Hardey, 2015; Labrecque, 2014). Congruent

¹ Brand Engagement on social media refers to consumers brand related behaviour such as

with this change, brand managers move from a position of control in traditional media to one of influence in social media (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie 2014). Another consequence of this participatory nature is that brand discourse on social media may take place without the brand as a protagonist (Peters *et al.*, 2013). Brand-consumer relationships on social media facilitate new forms of collaboration that interactively identify problems and develop progressive solutions (Kaplan, 2012). These interactions change the traditional roles of seller and consumer in value exchange transactions (Hajli, 2015). Consumers add value to these exchanges through user-generated content, and their capacity to influence fellow consumers' purchase (Georgios & Dimitriadis, 2014).

4.3.3 *Word-of-Mouth vs. World-of-mouth (eWOM)*

Through advances in communication technology and the advent of social media, WOM has shifted from the 'organic inter-consumer influence model', in which WOM influence transpired on a one-on-one basis between two consumers without any intervention from marketers, to 'the network coproduction model' where WOM is directly elicited by marketers and aided by the effective co-production of online consumer networks (Thoumrungroje, 2013). Research has shown that a popular form of interaction on social media is a consumer sharing their shopping experience with friends (Hanna *et al.*, 2011). The practice of consumers sharing their shopping experiences and latest purchases on social media is a key driving force of the 'Instagram Economy' (Hardey, 2015), since it allows other consumers to gain information from these posts which influences their purchase decision (Hajli, 2015). Not all content generated by marketers achieve a similar response from users: whilst some content achieves a high response from customers and widely spreads through electronic word of mouth (eWOM), others do not (Erkan, 2015). There may be many factors affecting customers' engagement on social media platforms; however, this study focuses on sectoral differences. Marketers seek to engage with more users since more engagement means more visibility for brands amongst customers, and, consequently, more eWOM (Erkan, 2015). Social media websites have made eWOM more enjoyable. In addition, consumers increasingly apply social media in an effort to acquire information relating to the brands they do not know very well (Erkan, 2015).

4.4 From e-commerce to social commerce: the ‘Instagram Economy’ phenomenon explained

Changes in consumers’ online behaviour and social media practices catalysed the development of e-commerce into social commerce (Hardey, 2015). The co-creation environment of social media (and Web 2.0) engages consumers as part of the value creation process of a brand and enables consumers to generate income (Hajli, 2015; Dimofte *et al.*, 2015). According to Hardey (2015: 4): “The Instagram Economy is defined by the earning potential of brands and users who have influence. The potential revenue is highly fluid because the share of national influence going to users has increased considerably over the past 12-18months”.

4.4.1 Social Commerce Explained

Social networking sites have gained increasing popularity and have become substantial networked groups with millions of users (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Considering the network externalities embedded in the social system, the purchasing powers of these network groups can be effectively harnessed (Kim, Gupta, & Koh, 2011). Hajli, (2015) defines social commerce as “social media facilitating transactions between consumers and brands by enhancing the consumer-brand relationship, influencing consumers’ purchase decisions, motivating sales and increasing brand loyalty”.



Figure 2: Shows the share of e-commerce adoption by fashion brands from 2014 to 2016 (Niziak et al., 2016)

Social Commerce is based on the premise that consumers trust their peer consumers and consider the knowledge of their social network as a valuable resource to make purchase decisions (Goldstuck, 2015). Users as well as brands are realising that earning potential can be significantly increased when promoting commercial content (Abidin, 2016; Hardey, 2015). It is expected of influential Instagrammer to declare full disclosure of sponsored product featured in their posts, either through the use of a hashtag or by mentioning the brand in the post (Abidin, 2016). The influential Instagrammers usually have the creative license usually although certain brands have exact guidelines of how they want the sponsored content to be posted about (Hardey, 2015). While social media has the capability to function as a direct sales channel, current research suggests it is far more effective as a tool to drive direct sales through creating brand awareness and engaging consumers to share and create brand related content (Goldstuck, 2015). The current revenue generation trends indicate that social media networks could yield a further \$940 billion in annual revenue for brands (Fan & Gordon, 2014).

Research on social commerce is still a relatively new development and many brands have only recently established a social media presence or are still planning to (Goldstuck, 2015; Fan & Gordon, 2014). Although many brands have yet to join social media, researchers and brand managers are trying to find ways to maximise the revenue generation potential of social media channels (Kim *et al.*, 2011). The majority of current research on social commerce investigates criteria that make users in the network more credible to consumers, ways to measure the direct impact social media content has on consumers' purchase intentions and the overall social commerce landscape on specific platforms and in specific locations (Goldstuck, 2015).

4.4.2 The Rise of the Instagram Economy

The model of e-commerce has been enhanced and applied to social media as businesses realise the income generating potential of social media channels (Hardy, 2015; Hajli, 2015). Previously, social media was regarded as a way of connecting with consumers and creating brand awareness much like traditional media channels (Çizmeçi & Ercan, 2015). However, social media now has the ability to facilitate commerce either as a direct sales platform or indirectly as the result of the brand's

awareness and communication campaigns on these sites (Hajli, 2015). Instagram users are 60% more inclined to buy a product on if they can purchase it directly from a social media platform (GlobalWebIndex, 2015) and nearly 50% of Instagrammers use Instagram as a source of market information to research a brand or product.

Instagram in particular, has been highly conducive to social media commerce (Carah & Shaul 2015; Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016; Hardey, 2015). Due to the site's visual nature, large number of users and a network hierarchy of influence, it has become key a resource for brands to generate sales and a source of revenue for both brands and users (Hajli, 2015). Although many brands' employ social media strategies across a variety of social media channels, Instagram is becoming a very popular tool to reach consumers and influence their purchase decision (Carah & Shaul, 2015). While social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter have been around longer and have more users than Instagram, they do not have the network capabilities to induce the mass consumption culture and models of consumer influence that Instagram has (Abidin, 2016; Carah & Shaul, 2015; Hardey 2015).

The revenue generating potential of brands and Influential Instagrammers drives the 'Instagram Economy' (Hardey, 2015). The earning potential from Instagram has surpassed that of other more established social media channels such as Facebook (Hardey, 2015). The evolution of consumers' socio-cultural practices on social media has caused brands to collaborate with prominent Instagram users regarded as influencers (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). This new marketing communication channel is linked to increasingly effortless purchase decisions as well as the norms of a digital culture (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). The new paradigm of influence on Instagram has made it possible for the top influencers to earn middle to high-level incomes from brands paying them to promote their products on Instagram (Hardey, 2015). Paying influencers for product promotion on Instagram is a small price to pay for brands as the right influencer can influence the purchase decision of hundreds of thousands of followers in their network (Abidin, 2016; Hardey, 2015). While most research focuses on which influencers consumers find more credible, more research is needed in establishing the exact scope of influence and how the consumer's' purchase decision is affected by promoted brand posts on Instagram.

4.5 Digital Influencer Brand Communication Model

4.5.1 What is a digital influencer?

Social media influencers are a new type of authority with the power to inspire consumers' perception of the brand through their brand related social media activities (Booth & Matic, 2011). Digital influencer is a notion that conceptualises the prominent Internet microcelebrities (Senft 2008) as influencers irrespective of which online platform they have a following on. Influencers are normal, average Internet users that have accumulated a sizeable amount of followers on blogs and social media sites by documenting their daily lives and lifestyles (Abidin, 2016). Many influencers have monetised their prominence on social media through incorporating “advertorials”, or promotions of products and services for a fee, on their blogs and social media accounts (Abidin, 2016; Hardey 2015).

Since the Internet has become worthwhile marketing tool, it has facilitated the democratisation of information affording companies, public or private; brands, small or big; and people local or celebrity, equivalent capabilities to disseminate information and as result everyone can be a content producer with the potential to accumulate substantial influential authority (Booth & Matic, 2011). Researchers and brand managers have recognised the importance of collaborating with Social media influencers to promote the brand (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). Disseminating brand messages via social media influencers opens up new opportunities for brand communication that yield more engagement and noticeable positive effects on consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions (Brown & Fiorella, 2013).

The visual nature of Instagram has been particularly viable for this social behavioural phenomenon (Carah & Shaul, 2015). Brands have tapped into this cultural phenomenon paying influential users to seamlessly weave sponsored product placements into the narratives of their daily lives (Abidin, 2013). Brand sponsored posts on social media are highly personalised, opinion-laden endorsements of products and services, which influencers have experienced first hand post about for payment (Abidin, 2013). Since, influencers are social media users with a large

number of followers and the power to influence consumers within their network of followers (Carter, 2016), they are significantly more likely to share brand information, ideas, and recommendations on social media. Keller & Fay, (2016) refer to influencers as ‘conversation catalysts’. Influencers instigate brand related interactions on social media by sharing opinions about products and services, and as their influence grows consumers turn to them for their advice, information and brand knowledge (Freberg *et al.*, 2011).

Consequently, some influencers are more effective at instigating brand conversations on Instagram. The diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 1962), states that a small percentage of consumers are effective at persuading others and initiating word-of-mouth consumer interactions. According to Rogers, (1962) these opinion leaders mediate the flow of communication from the mass media to the public. Research has shown that influencers are involved in more than double the amount of brand related interactions than other consumers, on social media as well as offline (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016). Keller & Fay (2016), suggest that social media Influencers are likely to have brand related conversations on Facebook (+21%), YouTube (+32%), Pinterest (+77%), Twitter (+69%), and Instagram (+90%). In addition, influencers are 30% more likely to mention real world brand experiences when they are discussing brands on social media (Keller & Fay, 2016). Thus, influencers are encouraging consumers to engage in brand related interactions on social media by sharing their own brand experiences (Kavanaugh, Zin, Carroll, Schmitz, Perez-Quinones & Isenhour 2006; Keller & Fay, 2016).

Influencer marketing evolved from the premise that consumers have become desensitised to traditional advertising, so brands have turned to product specialists and other influential social media users to promote their products (Kim, Gupta & Koh 2011). These influencers are regarded as credible sources of brand information trusted by large audiences (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). Sponsored brand promotions on social media take the form of posts for which the influencers are compensated, such as a blog post reviewing a product, a photo of a branded product posted to Instagram or a YouTube video promoting products (Abidin, 2016). Compensation for brand sponsored social media posts ranges from a free sample of the product in exchange for a promotional post to thousands of dollars for a sponsored YouTube video (Carter, 2016).

Brand ‘ambassadors’ or social media influencers on Instagram gain the attention of brands once they reach 10,000 followers (Hardey, 2015). Social media influencers’ compensation for promoted posts is determined by the degree of influence the influencer is considered to have in their network and the strength of their overall social media presence (Carter, 2016; Hardey, 2015). Carter (2016) suggests that influence isn’t only linked to an influencer’s ability to reach their followers but also their status in the greater network of other social media influencers and users. Social media users function as central ties between two otherwise unrelated groups (Carter, 2016). While such users do not necessarily possess a lot of influence among their followers and may have quite few followers, their location within the overall network’s structure allows them to reach a large number of total users.

4.5.2 Influencer Marketing

As a result of the recent changes in Instagram's algorithm it has become harder for brand created content to reach audiences. Thus, influencer-marketing collaborations are currently one of the most effective methods for brands to enable their social media content to be seen by large numbers of interested consumers (Hardey, 2015). Influencer marketing is a brand communication channel that identifies individuals on social media who have influence over the brand’s target audience and potential consumers to produce collaborative marketing activities with them (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). Additionally, the influential power of selected individuals is harnessed in influencer marketing and decoded as promotional efforts that focus on recognising and engaging social media users that have influence over possible consumers (Abidin, 2016). Influencer marketing is a marketing technique that has developed from word-of-mouth marketing. Despite being a relatively new phenomenon, conceptually it is similar to the traditional way of recommendation through WOM (Thoumrungroje, 2014).

Accordingly, word-of-mouth is regarded as one of the most influential elements that influence consumer behaviour online, hence the increasing popularity of social media influencers as a marketing tool for brands (Hajli, 2015). “Influencer commerce has experienced an exponential growth, resulting in new forms of digital practices among young women.” (Abidin, 2016: 86) It has become common practice for social media

users to follow influencers in order to discover relevant content and customise their social presence to fit in with the network to raise their profile and increase their popularity (Hardey, 2015). Since ordinary users in the network look to influencers for inspiration (Abidin, 2016), influencers are a crucial method for brands to encourage other users to purchase products and increase brand awareness. Sponsored brand posts comprise more than 80% of the promoted posts on Instagram and will shape the future of influencer marketing (Hardey, 2015).

Social media influencers play a direct role in determining the nature of new forms of content (Abidin, 2016; Hardey 2015). Through effective influencer promotions, identifying significant posts, causes and new products as well as implementing targeted social media strategies brands can stand out in content saturated social media feeds (Hardey, 2015). Due to the shift in consumers' online behaviour influencers have a higher status in the network (Booth & Matic, 2011). Brands reach out to influencers that best fit the brand based on the target audience the brand wants to reach. Instagram connects brands with a mix of celebrities and Instagram influencers to use as product endorsers through sponsored posts (Hardey, 2015). Social media influencer marketing was also ranked as the most rapidly growing online customer engagement method, generating higher ratings than organic reach², paid reach as well as email marketing (Augure, 2015). Brands that have cultivated a community of more than a million Instagram followers, such as Chanel, Benefit Cosmetics, and Estée Lauder, developed their large network of followers through collaborating with prominent social media influencers on the social media platform (MediaKix, 2016).

Industry reports indicate that influencer marketing is a fast growing communication avenue for brands (Carter, 2016). According to the 2015 State of Influencer Engagement Report (Augure), 84% of interviewed brands were anticipated to launch influencer campaigns in 2015. This boom in influencer marketing is consistent with reports of strong growth reported by a variety of research and industry reports (Carter, 2016; Goldstuck, 2015). Partnering with well-known Instagram influencers, offers brands an established, strategic method to accelerate their social media growth to optimum levels, that has a proven capacity to yield high ROI (Brown & Fiorella,

² The total number of social media users who see a particular post through unpaid distribution

2013; Hardey 2015). Brands need to identify relevant social media influencers to develop and sustain their influence on social media (Peters *et al.*, 2013). A large group of influencers is not necessary, but the identified users need to be influential within their network. The influencers' social roles within the network should allow them to influence other users' brand perceptions (Peters *et al.*, 2013). The context of which users, said what, to whom on social networks determines the influence of the interaction (Labrecque, 2014).

Furthermore, identifying the right influencers is a major problem for brands (Carter, 2016; Augure, 2015). Influencers' authority on Instagram is measured through their Influence Factor (IF) (Hardey, 2015). Instagram opinion leaders with the highest degree of influence have more than one hundred thousand followers and constitute approximately 0.1% of current Instagram users (Augure, 2015). Social media influencers share of influence can be used to determine the income they can generate from promoting brands in sponsored posts (Carter, 2016). The current approach is to measure an influencers' total engagement (i.e. likes and comments) for the influencers' latest posts and total number of followers (Hardey, 2015). However, an alternative metric to quantify influence is needed. According to Carter, (2016) brand managers should consider social media influencers' position in the network instead of focusing solely on the number of followers.

Since Instagram's inception in 2010 influencer commerce has grown exponentially, giving rise to new forms of digital social practices among young women in particular (Abidin, 2016). Influencers are a form of microcelebrity (Senft, 2008) who amass a large following on social media platforms through the textual and visual narration of their personal, everyday lives (Abidin, 2016; Hardey 2015).

Influencer branding is a new form of advertorial persuasion that disseminates information and inspires followers to generate similar content to raise their own influence (Abidin, 2013). This aspirational recreating of influencer content allows followers to become a network of brand message disseminators in their efforts to duplicate the Influencer content, which amplifies the brand message to their own network of followers and friends (Carter, 2016). Thus, brand managers collaborating with influencers should aim for follower-centred Instagram campaigns to magnify the

reach of the post beyond the influencers' network (Hardey, 2015). In follower-centred campaigns, brand messages are distributed from influencers to consumers and from consumers to consumers (Abidin, 2016). This practice capitalises on the free labour (Abidin, 2013) of followers who in an attempt to recreate influencers' content become advertising 'billboards' for brands on social media. To further engage with the brand and to direct consumers to the brand's Instagram accounts influencers are required to tag the brand in sponsored posts (Hardey, 2015). Followers have also begun imitating this practise tagging the brands when they post pictures of their branded purchases (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). This practise creates a branded interaction narrative between brands and consumers on Instagram that can easily be seen by other consumers who can choose to join the interactions (Abidin, 2013).

Since brands have realised the persuasive power of social media influencers and the positive effect it has on consumers' purchase intention and brand perception, tools have been developed to identify and track the influencers most relevant to the brand (Keller & Fay, 2016). The most common criteria currently used to identify relevant social media influencers are number of daily hits on a blog, number of times a post is shared, or number of followers and number of likes or views a post receives (Freberg *et al.*, 2011). Researchers have identified the importance of engagement over high amounts of likes or followers thus these approaches to quantifying influence should be considered as an initial part of understanding this phenomenon and more substantial metrics are needed to quantify users' influence and its economic impact (Abidin, 2016; Augure, 2015; Hardey, 2015; Keller & Fay, 2016).

In addition, there was an almost five-fold increase in monthly influencer marketing activities in last 6 months of 2015 (Augure, 2015). This figure has greatly improved since 2014 where marketers' interest in influencer marketing also increased five-fold but across a twelve-month period (Augure, 2015). There has been a steady decline in television viewer numbers, in marketers' target demographics, thus this ad spend has to be redirected to reach the target audience more effectively (Nielsen, 2015). Additionally, 2015 was the first time that consumers' time spent on mobile applications exceeded their time watching television (Meeker, 2016). Corresponding to the decrease in television viewer numbers is the increase in digital ad spend, that is forecasted to surpass television ad spend in 2016 (Meeker, 2015).

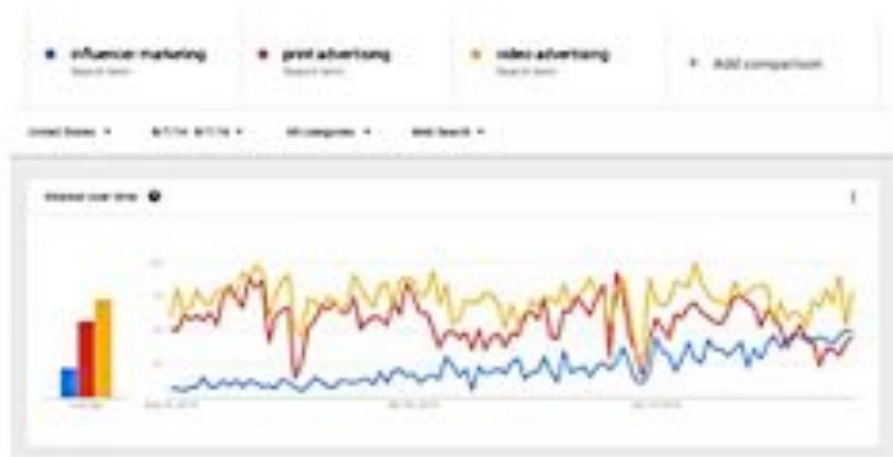


Figure 3: Shows the increase in ad blocking (Google Trends, 2016)

According to the *PageFair* 'The cost of Ad blocking Report 2015' (PageFair, 2015), in 2015 ad blocking (using software to block advertisements on a web page) was calculated to have cost marketers \$22 billion dollars and in 2016, this figure is anticipated to rise to \$42 billion. The amount that brands spend on influencer marketing is calculated to be around \$500 million dollars (August 2015). Based on the redirection of ad spend accessible from ad blocked channels, and the current growth rate of influencer marketing, the total ad spend in influencer marketing is estimated to reach between \$5 to \$10 billion dollars over the next 5 years (PageFair, 2015).

4.5.3 Social Media Influencers as a form of Micro-celebrity

Micro-celebrity is an approach and a collection of self-presentation practices prevalent on social media, in which users strategically formulate a profile, reach out to followers, and reveal personal information to increase attention and thus improve their online status (Senft, 2013). Micro-celebrity is linked to the increasingly widespread concept of "self-branding," a self-presentation approach in which social media users view themselves as a consumer product and promote this image to other users (Abidin, 2016; Senft, 2013). Celebrity or Influencer status can be attained by any social media user with a smartphone, tablet, or laptop (Abidin, 2013). Increased access to the internet, ubiquitous nature of smartphones and the "always-on" nature of social media encourages celebrities and those aspiring to be famous to continuously post details of their daily lives (Abidin, 2015). In addition, the conspicuous metrics of

social media success—the number of followers or “likes” attached to a piece of content—motivate social media users to actively develop and grow their network (Carter, 2016).

Due to its participatory nature traditional celebrities and micro-celebrities alike, use social media to construct endless content feeds, contending for the most engagement (Abidin, 2013). Although micro-celebrities are not traditional celebrities, they construct themselves as brands and are regarded in many of the same ways as traditional celebrities by social media users (Carter, 2016). Current research revealed that teenagers and millennials connect with their preferred social media influencers more and that social media celebrities were ranked higher than traditional media celebrities in accessibility, authenticity, and credibility (Augure, 2015).

In order raise their social media status, everyday Instagram users are beginning to model themselves after Influencers, adopting the branded ‘cultural scripts’ (Banet-Weiser, 2012) influencers’ display through tags, reposts, and hashtags. This social practice produces large amounts of free advertising content that is welcomed by brands and drives the ‘Instagram Economy’ (Abidin, 2013). By pairing the positive attributes of an influencer with a constant flow of aspirational lifestyle content to generate high levels of engagement from their followers, Instagram influencers have become the compelling role models, consumers from various key target demographics endeavour to imitate (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016). These influencers from the sector of lifestyle blogging are mainly women between the ages of 15 and 35 years, the age range expands as younger Influencer aspirants join the industry while veteran Influencers gradually shift into parenting and homemaking (Abidin, 2013). Research reveals that roughly 70% of followers are women, in the age range from 13 to 40 at the time of writing (Abidin, 2013).

Brands should recognise the value of consumers’ brand building promotional efforts and reconnaissance work on social media (Abidin, 2016). Consumers endorse brands by integrating branded content into the social streams of their daily lives, and undertake reconnaissance, generating streams of data that enable media platforms to respond to them (Carah & Shaul, 2015). Although brands welcome followers sharing brand related content in their daily narratives, followers do not get any direct

compensation from brands (Abidin, 2013). Brands benefit greatly from follower-anchored Instagram campaigns, in which advertorial posts published by Influencers instigate followers to produce volumes of visibility labour and magnify the dissemination of branded content on social media (Abidin, 2016, Hardey, 2015).

4.5.3.1 Bloggers as a form of Microcelebrity Influencers

The emergent power of bloggers to sway their connected network has developed into a new communication approach for brands (Uzuno & Kip, 2014). Bloggers are considered as the online opinion leaders with the most influence online (Li & Du, 2011). It is an indispensable resource for brands to collaborate with bloggers and online influencers, in order to maintain an authentic and trustworthy presence in social media settings (Hardey, 2015). The advent of digital technologies has affected the model of early adoption and diffusion of innovation, and given rise to the new model of adoption where digital influencers disseminate brand messages on social media (Carter, 2016). Brands now acknowledge the influence of bloggers to effectively influence their associated network through sponsored recommendations, which may result in the search for, purchase and use of products (Abidin, 2016). Recognising the prospects blogger collaborations provide, brand managers seek to benefit from the bloggers' perceived credibility and expertise (Abidin, 2016; Hardey, 2015; Carter, 2016; Uzuno & Kip, 2014).

Moreover, due to the interactive nature of social media, facilitating consumer-to-consumer dialogue, brand managers find it tough to directly influence the brand discussions on Instagram (Hajli, 2015). However, by employing bloggers and influencers as mediators, brands have the opportunity to shape the branded discourse online (Uzuno & Kip, 2014). The word-of-mouth and informal style of blogs makes it a desired media platform to cultivate the casual influence favoured by current thought leaders (Kavanaugh *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, bloggers are identified with the influential role of opinion leaders (Kavanaugh *et al.*, 2006) in brand communication through digital media. Developing a relationship with relevant bloggers and influencers to leverage their endorsement allows brands to gain the influence necessary to distribute messages virally, on social media (Hardey, 2015; Uzuno & Kip, 2014).

In addition, as a result of the technological progression and the wealth of information available online, consumers are more knowledgeable and well informed, thus brands have to work harder to get consumers to internalise and act on their messages (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). The shifts in consumers' online social behavioural patterns have given consumers an increased knowledge of their influence (Carter, 2016).

Consumers are no longer merely passive recipients of advertising messages but prefer to communicate in an interactive way (Labrecque, 2014). Rather than simply accepting traditional top-down brand communication, consumers consider the opinions of social media users who appear to be similar to them more credible (Abidin, 2016). Consequently, social media accounts and blogs that form virtual communities around common interests are one of the leading drivers and enablers of the shifts in consumer brand interactions and the Instagram economy (Uzuno & Kip, 2014).

An influencer's perceived credibility depends on consumers' perceptions about how much an endorser likes, uses, and truly values the endorsed product (Khattri & Sharma, 2013). Vital to understanding endorser influence, regardless of which influencer or what platform brands are engaging consumers on, is how credible consumers perceive the influence to be (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016). In order to more effectively engage consumers brand managers are employing sponsored recommendation posts on social media, a type of online consumer review (Keller, & Fay, 2016). Brands provide reimbursement for social media influencers in exchange for posting a consumer review on the online platform (Hardey, 2015). Consumers regard sponsored endorsement posts on social media as advertisements since these posts are often not based on influencers' genuine experiences but as a paid recommendation (Reza, Laroche & Richard, 2014). Despite this, sponsored social media endorsements remain an effective communication channel for brands to reach online users (Lu *et al.*, 2014).

Furthermore, Sponsored recommendation posts are a type of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) since it has similar characteristics to eWOM, namely it's quick, saveable, and anonymous (Thoumrungrroje, 2014). The practice of consumers posting product reviews on social media platforms, where other consumers can immediately see the brand information offered by peer consumers, have become widespread (Lu *et*

al., 2014). Promotional social media posts are an effective marketing communication tool and a vital resource for brands to affect the process of consumer purchase-decision making (Hardey, 2015). Social media endorsement posts generally portray a positive attitude toward the product being promoted since such posts are driven by the compensation the influencer is receiving from the brand (Lu *et al.*, 2014).

Since they capture the engagement of millions of followers and have fostered relationships with thousands or even millions of their followers, the top Instagram influencers are in an exceptional position to partner with brands to make a living through producing and distributing great content to their loyal network of fans across their social media platforms (Hardey, 2015). Moreover, establishing precisely how much an Instagram influencer is paid for a single post may be impossible, but the predicted value of a sponsored post is projected to be close to \$700–\$900 for Instagram influencers with more than 100,000 followers, between \$2,000–\$3,000 for Instagram influencers with at least 500,000 followers, and more than \$50,000 for collaboration with a big brand for Instagram influencers with more than a million followers. Below are some of the top Instagram influencers who earn thousands or even tens of thousands of dollars per brand-sponsored post (MediaKix, 2016):

Song of Style - 3.4 Million followers
Sincerely Jules - 3.4 Million followers
Luanna90 - 2 Million followers
We Wore What - 1.4 Million followers
Fun For Louis - 1.3 Million followers
Wendy's Lookbook - 934K followers
Gal Meets Glam - 848K followers
Chriselle Lim - 611K followers

Conclusion

Most Influencer Research assesses the perceived credibility of social media influencers and factors that contribute to credibility and positively influence purchase decisions (Alghamdi, Mackay & Lawson, 2013; Gunawan & Huarng, 2015; Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). However, more research is needed

on the broader contribution of Influencers to the Instagram economy, to understand the full scope of Influencers effect on consumers purchase decisions and brand perception (Keller & Fay, 2016). Whereas much research has focussed on conventional media influencers, such as celebrities and professional athletes, endorsing brands, Instagram influencer marketing, although comparable to celebrities' endorsements of brands in traditional media, are inherently distinct and require additional research. Another noticeable subject in social media research is the best methods and characteristics to identify appropriate influencers for brand collaborations and how to determine their Influence so that brand managers can select the most appropriate influencers, which fit the brand's message and campaign (Keller & Fay, 2016).

4.6 Subcultures of Consumption: Conspicuous Consumption as a form of Self Branding

As a result of the more interactive nature, social media sites and mobile communications have expanded the range of identity spaces where consumers can productively engage in self-presentation practices (Mascheroni, Vincent, & Jimenez, 2015). Research has shown that more than half of young Instagram users (between the ages of 13–24) use Instagram as a means for them to define their personal identities (Dimofte *et al.*, 2015), including realising new interests, discovering new products and brands through the social media platform's discovery feature, social dissemination of their daily lives, as well as through the influence of Instagram influencer marketing efforts of brands (Becker, 2016). "Everyday users are beginning to model after influencers through tags, reposts and #OOTDs (Outfit Of The Day), unwittingly producing volumes of advertising content that is not only encouraged by influencers and brands" (Abidin, 2016: 86) The lines between online and physical spaces are blurring, evidenced by the fact that 14 per cent of the surveyed respondents adopting the "see now, buy now" purchase attitude (Niziak *et al.*, 2016).

Consumers sharing their shopping experiences with friends on social media has become one of the most popular forms of interaction (Abidin, 2013). Social interaction is an important part of self-enhancement through brand associations (Jennifer Edson Escalas & Bettman, 2003b). The practice of consumers sharing their shopping

experiences and latest purchases on social media is a key driving force of the Instagram Economy, since it allows other consumers to gain information from these posts which influences their purchase decision (Hajli, 2015). Brands play a vital role in this process, functioning as a connector between Instagram and real-world cultural spaces (Nicholas Carah & Shaul, 2016). New forms of brand- or consumption-focused sociality have developed through blogs and social media (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016).

4.6.1 The Honeycomb model of Social Interaction

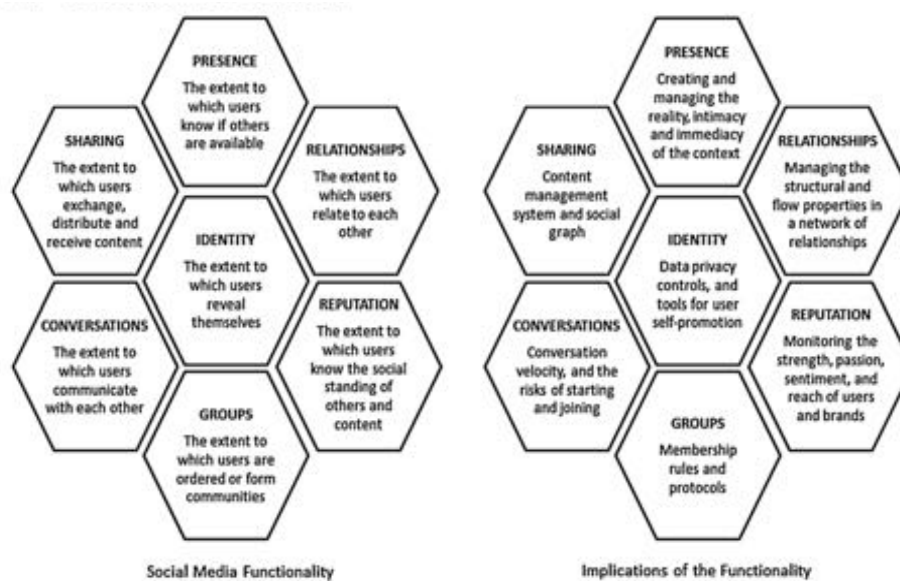


Figure 4: Shows the honeycomb of social media model developed by Kietzmann *et al.*, (2011) to illustrate social media functionality and its impacts

Kietzmann *et al.*, (2011) have developed a honeycomb model to illustrate how the seven building blocks of social media impact consumers' functionality on social media platforms. Each block of Kietzmann's *et al.* (2011) model represents a specific facet of a social media user experience. This model allows researchers to conceptualise consumer behaviour on social media and effectively assess the impact of each type of behaviour, in order to develop successful audience-centred social media branding strategies (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016). Moreover, this model can be applied to understand consumers' conspicuous consumption practices (Abidin, 2016; Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014) on social media platforms. The reputation

block refers to the extent to which users recognise the status of other users and themselves on social media platforms (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011). Consumers' conspicuous consumption practices are part of their reputation management (Goffman, 1959) on social media.

While the honeycomb of social media interaction model developed by Kietzmann *et al.*, (2011) presents a framework to understand social interaction, the model was developed before the shift in consumers' online behaviour and only a year after Instagram was launched. Hence, the new forms of social interaction Instagram has facilitated cannot be effectively interpreted through this social interaction framework. The popularity of Instagram influencers was not as high thus, it was not considered a viable marketing channel then, but now Instagram influencers have changed consumers' identity formation practices on social media (Abidin, 2015) and these influences cannot effectively be quantified through the honeycomb of social media model Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011).

4.6.2 *Visibility Labour*

In a mode of branding that is open-endedly social and data-driven, the labour of curating the branded self (Senft, 2013) on social media involves the work of generating, arranging, and contributing to an exploration of data created through the interaction between the consumer and social media platform (Carah & Shaul, 2016). Abidin, (2013) terms the acts of individuals to present and curate their presence in order to be noticeable and positively prominent to prospective employers, clients, the press or followers and fans, among other audiences, 'visibility labour'. 'Visibility labour' or the efforts to demonstrate self-conspicuousness in digital or physical spaces with the intention to raise their profile has given rise to a culture of visible consumption on Instagram (Abidin, 2016). Although this practice exists offline it is more prevalent on social media and has more economic impact for brands in digital spaces (Hardey, 2015).

Social media users construct complex polysemic 'networked performances' (Papacharissi, 2012) of themselves on Instagram that combine multiple semiological references to generate an articulate presentation of themselves, which various

audiences can relate to (Abidin, 2013; Papacharissi, 2012). Due to the aspirational nature of this ‘visibility labour’ system social media users continue to be occupied by the highly conspicuous consumption of branded goods (Abidin, 2013). Consumers construct their self-identity through branded purchases (Dimofte *et al.*, 2015; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Escalas & Bettman, 2003) lending the concept of self-branding a marketing perspective (Senft, 2013) that brands can effectively leverage in their social media branding activities (Hardey, 2015). The social media luminaries of self-branding manifest a branding media nexus that drives the Instagram economy (Abidin, 2013; Hardey, 2015). The stimuli that motivate engagement on social media platforms, are categorised into the following: factors that are linked to the post’s creator, such as the poster’s gender, age, number of followers, the post’s contextual features such as, time and location as well as certain features of the post’s content, such as textual, visual and audio content (Jaakonmäki, Müller, & Vom Brocke, 2017).

4.6.3 Brands and Visibility Labour

Brands primary motivation on social media is to engage with consumers, influence consumers’ brand attitudes, share information, and gain valuable consumer insights, while consumers derive value from the brand related practices they perform online and offline to improve their social status (Abidin, 2016; Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016; Hardey 2015). For consumers, the primary motivation to use social media is as a way to cultivate their strategies of self-presentation (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016). Although the majority of social media sites encourage users to construct accurate representations of themselves, participants do this to varying degrees (Ellison & Boyd, 2008). Social media users not only replicate brands’ and influencers’ preferred depictions of bodies, but also willingly make their bodies accessible to the increasingly materialistic nature of these media platforms (Carah & Shaul, 2016).

Brand activations on social media are campaigns that call for the production of branded content by consumers (Abidin, 2016). These activations have created a digital marketplace on social media, which facilitates the interaction between consumers and brands (Carah & Shaul, 2016). Although social media and mobile technologies are media and market devices, they function in a representational sense to transfer explicit brand messages, as well as encourage social culture of

consumption (Abidin, 2016; Papacharissi 2012; Senft 2013) that intertwine the brand into continuous streams of consumer generated content on social media (Carah & Shaul, 2016). Brand activations such as the creation of designated brand hashtags and requests for the consumer to tag the brand can turn ordinary Instagram posts into branded discourse.

4.6.4 Visibility Labour on Instagram driving the Instagram Economy

The construct of the branded self (Senft, 2013) on Instagram encompasses more than consumers embedding brands into images of their daily lives or reproducing the brands content in the way they communicate on social media (Carah & Shaul, 2015). The construction of the branded self (Senft, 2013) on social media also involves using the body as an 'image machine' (Wissinger, 2007). Instagram facilitates business interactions to form in everyday life and cultural spaces through the creation and sharing of images (Carah & Shaul, 2016). When an Instagram user puts on clothing they purchased from an apparel brand in the private space of their bedroom and then takes a selfie to post on Instagram and tags the brand, the Instagram user's bedroom and body become part of the promotional apparatus of the brand (Carah & Shaul, 2016).

Conclusion

The cultural phenomenon of sharing branded posts online has given rise to new forms of brand communication, that present new forms of revenue generation for both brands and consumers. Consumers create cultural content with the prescribed norms of influence of social media platforms as their primary consideration (Carah & Shaul, 2016). This image culture, proliferated by the technological advancements of the Internet and mobile media as well as urban spaces and cultural practices, has facilitated the development of social media commerce (Carah & Shaul, 2016). The recurring practice of identity construction creates behavioural patterns of consumption that brands can predict and effectively leverage (Hardey, 2015; Kim, Gupta & Koh, 2011). Social media users follow customary practises and in adhering to these discourses they generate repetitive and predictable streams of data that allow brands to effectively predict influence (Carah & Shaul, 2016).

4.7 Brand Communities on Social Media: Brand Community vs. Brand Public

The notion of brand community is employed to describe how consumers create value around brands in online settings (Schau, Muniz & Arnould 2009). Brand researchers have begun to deliberate the applicability of this theory to conceptualise brand-related interactions on social media (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016). The concept of brand community has afforded a practical framework for understanding how brand related social interaction is a source of value (Schau, Muniz & Arnould 2009). Brand related interactions on social media show similar characteristics to virtual brand communities in that they facilitate a publicity-oriented consumer culture, centred on users' presence and conspicuousness (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016). Brands instigate various forms of interactions on social media, which add value to the brand. Arvidsson & Caliandro, (2016) describe these interactions as brand publics. These researchers state that brand publics have three fundamental differences from brand communities. Firstly, brand communities are sustained by interaction, whereas brand publics are facilitated through mediation (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016).

While communication in brand communities is facilitated by discussion or deliberation, in brand publics, participation is structured either through the desire for visibility, the inclination to share an opinion or experience, or through collective effects that inspire mass replication (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016). The brand public resounds brand-related meanings and identities on social media that are articulated elsewhere (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016). These brand messages are from the brand's own marketing communications as well as through the varied meanings that consumers link to brands from the range of practices and that proliferate throughout their everyday lives (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016).

Consumers derive value from these practises in different ways (Schau, Muniz, & Arnould, 2009) including an enhanced consumer-brand experience, as well as finding support and solutions in using the products associated with the brand. The most significant consequence of consumers' interaction in social media communities is that they develop "linking value" (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016) from a collective identity and derive social support from the group. For brand managers the value of consumer communities on social media lies in using it as a source of product and brand

information, brand experience co-production, and a tool to facilitate word-of-mouth marketing (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016). Brand communities on social media platforms turn consumers sociocultural practices into a source of value for both brands and consumers (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016).

4.8 Conclusion

Since social media are relatively new technological developments, research is in its infancy stage. Although social media branding research has established that in today's society a social media brand presence is essential, more substantial research is needed to determine effective social media brand management strategies (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger, & Shapiro, 2012; Goldstuck, 2015; Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016) and how specific branding opportunities on social media affect brands (Alghamdi, Mackay, & Lawson, 2013; Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Booth & Matic, 2011). Yet, thorough quantitative research on social media content, specifically centred on electronic commerce and information management, are limited (Lai & To 2014).

Studies such as Manikonda, Hu, & Kambhampati, (2014) that explore alternative ways of analysing Instagram user activities, demographics, network structure and user-generated content on Instagram are establishing theoretical frameworks for researchers to quantify behavioural shifts and branding implications Instagram has facilitated. More work like Jaakonmäki, Müller, & Vom Brocke, (2017) and Gunawan & Huarng, (2015) is needed to analyse consumers' response of brand messages on Instagram and big data research projects such as the works of Chang, (2016), Hochman & Manovich, (2013) Farseev, Nie, Akbari, & Chua, (2015) and Ni, Zhang, Han, & Pang, (2016) that draw insights from large volumes of Instagram posts is necessary to advance the understanding of Instagram's effects on consumer choices.

5. Rational of Methods

Consumers increased use of social networking platforms means a substantial database of valuable consumer insights is available online (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). Brands who want to develop substantiated, informed communication strategies have to take social media data into account (Veeck, 2013). Analysing social media data contributes to the understanding of electronic commerce as well as brands' understanding of trending topics that emerge in social media (Hanna *et al.*, 2011). The user information generated from social media allows researchers to draw substantial conclusions about social media users' preferences, attitudes and perceptions in terms of the effectiveness of certain types of content and brand attitude development (Hajli, 2015). Accordingly, this information assists brand managers and marketers to measure the brand perceptions of consumers and inform communication strategies (Lai & To, 2014).

Moreover, social media data is available on a large scale in a wide variety of formats, such as API's being able to generate streams of metadata from millions of posts (Bakhshi, Shamma & Gilbert 2014). Therefore, a methodical approach to social media research is essential. Social media is one of the central mechanisms of e-commerce as well as communication management (Lai & To, 2014). The substantial rise in the amount of social media data and consumer reviews on a brand's products and services significantly affects consumers' purchases decisions and as result the brand's value is impacted (Lai & To, 2014). The substantial value of analysing social media platforms in order to improve our understanding of information distribution, communication, consumers' brand attitude formation, and brand related interaction has been recognised (Lai & To, 2014). Thus, extracting usable information such as branding insights and cultural themes is imperative for gaining knowledge to formulate successful social media management strategies.

The fundamental objective of this research is to provide a knowledge foundation of the 'Instagram Economy' (Hardey, 2015) phenomenon in South Africa for marketers to inform Instagram branding strategies. Since this is a relatively new phenomenon, and few of the existing research on Instagram focuses on its capability as an economic driving force, a broader research approach was chosen to provide a more holistic

representation of the ‘Instagram Economy’ (Hardey, 2015) phenomenon in South Africa. Additionally, the three main role players of the ‘Instagram Economy’ phenomenon as per Hardey, (2015) namely, brands, influencers and consumes were selected as the three avenues of investigation for this research. Since each of these groups have distinct norms, practices, preferences and ways of using the social media platform a mixed method approach was selected to enable the best method of analysis for each of the three units of study. The method chosen for each unit of study selected is as follows:

1. Brands: Brand Interview Case Study
2. Instagram Influencers: Content Analysis of Instagram Influencer posts
3. Consumers: Consumer Survey

The choice of method, sampling procedure, data collection system and technique of analysis will be outlined individually in the following sections for each unit of study.

5.1 Brand Case Study Methods

5.1.1 Theoretical Framework of Methods

In order for this research to effectively gain insights into the role brands play in the South African Instagram Economy, a case study method is employed, to study a specific brand’s use of Instagram, to serve as a blueprint for brands. According to Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, (1991) a case study is defined as “an in-depth, multifaceted investigation using qualitative methods, of a single social phenomenon”. Choosing one brand as a representative of South African brands on Instagram allows the researcher to illustrate the anatomy of a successful Instagram brand presence, and gain actionable insights into a brand’s successful use of Instagram. Case studies are seen as an instance of a broader phenomenon (Feagin *et al.*, 1991) thus, choosing one brand with a successful Instagram presence as an example of the Instagram Economy phenomenon, and employing it as a component of study, enables the researcher to illustrate which Instagram practices and content strategies make a brand an effective role player in the Instagram Economy.

Moreover, in-depth qualitative interviews are a research technique where the researcher conducts an interview with respondents to investigate their perspectives and patterns of use of a specific notion, phenomenon or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Conducting interviews allows the researcher to control the flow of primary data collection. Since this research aims to quantify a specific phenomenon, i.e. the South African Instagram Economy, an interview was chosen to allow the researcher to gain specific data around how the brand selected as a case study uses Instagram. Interviewing is a well-matched research technique when the research has a clear interest in a specific subject or them (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). A qualitative interview was conducted with the chosen brand to discern their use of Instagram from a first hand source and understand the factual as well as meaningful themes (Kvale, 1996) in the brand's use of this social media platform. Furthermore, there are three main forms research interviews can take, namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured. A structured interview is where the interviewee answers a set of predetermined questions (Boyce & Neale, 2006). For the purpose of this research a structured interview format was employed, since this research needed specific data around the brand's use of Instagram. An open-ended question was added at the end of the structured questions to allow for the brand to give personal insights into their Instagram use.

5.1.2 Sample Selection Procedure

A fashion brand was selected for analysis since research has established that the visual nature of Instagram makes it the ideal social media platform for fashion and beauty brands to engage with their consumers (Brown, 2016; Pathak, 2015). Fashion and Beauty brands are also the main type of brands making use of the economic capabilities on Instagram and have higher numbers of followers (Brown, 2016). From the world's top 15 most followed brands on Instagram, 7 are fashion brands (Statista, 2017). Mr Price was selected as a brand case study since the brand was ranked as the most followed South African fashion retailer on Instagram (Blacksmoke Digital Agency, 2016). In addition, a brand that has been established on Instagram was needed for analysis as research has shown that brands using social media for more than a year reported higher engagement and improved search engine rankings

(Stelzner, 2016). Mr Price has been active on Instagram for more than 5 years and has more than 200 000 followers. In addition, the brand has a well-established content strategy, frequent posts and high levels of engagement.

5.1.3 Data Collection System

The brand chosen for analysis, namely Mr Price, was contacted via telephone to arrange an interview. After being directed to the brand's social media manager it was agreed to do the interview via a set of emailed questions for the brand to answer. This method was selected since more substantial answers can be provided via email as the brand manager has time to develop an appropriate response. A set of questions was emailed to the brand's Online Fashion Editor, Tarryn McLuckie and she responded to the questions via email.

5.1.4 Data Analysis

Once the brand's responses were obtained this data was cross-referenced with Mr Price's Instagram account statistics such as engagement rates, post frequency, types of content and hashtags used to highlight how the brand's Instagram marketing strategies generate engagement and which strategies were more effective. In addition, this process demonstrates whether specific strategies or insights disclosed in the brand's responses had an effect on the brand's Instagram performance metrics.

5.2 Content Analysis of Instagram Influencer Posts Methods

A quantitative content analysis of brand-sponsored posts was done on the selected influencer's timelines to highlight the influence of the textual and visual features of brand-sponsored content on user engagement, while accounting for variables related to the posts' creator. This research approach focuses on classifying themes and links among the identified themes of the influencer posts.

5.2.1 Theoretical Framework of Methods

A content analysis is defined as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1969: 14). Content analysis is a research process that summarises themes that emerge from the quantitative examination of messages based on a scientific method and is not restricted by the categories of variables that can be gauged or the context in which the messages are produced and disseminated (Neuendorf, 2002). Generally a quantitative content analysis comprises of the following steps: 1) choosing a research topic, 2) determining the sample selection and size, 3) Identifying the codes 4) collecting the data, 5) coding the data 6) analysing the data and finally 7) presenting the findings (Neuendorf, 2002). Moreover, undertaking a content analysis of consumer-generated information on social media, directed by a targeted purpose, yields tangible strategic insights into consumers’ Instagram behaviour, for brands to inform their social media strategy. When employed in combination with the on going monitoring of social media analytics, and as an enhancement of traditional analytical methods, social media content analyses deliver new strategic guidelines to inform brands’ social media communication strategies (Veeck, 2013).

In addition, employing content analysis as a research method has numerous advantages (Lai & To, 2014). The knowledge from this research method provides a deeper level understanding into a phenomenon (Neuendorf, 2002). Since this technique is not restricted by current perspectives and practices, it allows original notions on the research subject to be revealed (Holsti, 1969). Likewise, content analysis is extremely effective when other applicable modes of research do not yield effective results (Neuendorf, 2002). Doing a quantitative content analysis on influential Instagrammers’ brand-sponsored posts illustrates tangible consumer data, such as consumers’ reactions to the sampled posts, which brands can use to inform their influencer marketing strategies (Lai & To, 2014). Thus, a quantitative content analysis is an effective method to investigate the brand-sponsored communications on Instagram influencers’ accounts since it allows themes of consumers’ Instagram preferences to be identified.

Additionally, a sentiment analysis was carried out on the comments of the sampled Instagram influencers' brand sponsored posts. Sentiment analysis has been an integral tool for brand managers to analyse consumers' brand perceptions (Fan & Gordon, 2014). This research method has several advantages. It enables the brand to respond swiftly to crisis situations, rectify consumers' bad brand experiences as well as pinpoint consumers' difficulties with products and customer service concerns (Pang & Lee, 2008). In addition it provides the brand with way to manage their online reputation by taking appropriate actions informed by consumer sentiment (Zabin & Jefferies, 2008). Another practical use of sentiment analysis relates to consumer reviews (Zabin & Jefferies, 2008). In the current social media landscape consumer reviews on social media are an important source of branded related information informing purchase decisions (Hajli, 2015), therefore brands need to analyse the sentiment of brand related interaction on Instagram. Through employing sentiment analysis as a social listening tool, brands are alerted of negative consumer reviews as they happen, allowing a quick response (Pang & Lee, 2008).

Accordingly, through sentiment analysis, brands can influence the direction of consumers brand related interactions on social media (Liu, 2010) when they have identified the trends, and nudging it in a positive direction. In addition, brands can gain the trust and loyalty of consumers through reacting to consumer feedback timely, as it shows consumers their feedback matters to the brand (Zabin & Jefferies, 2008). It also helps the brand gauge the success of a specific ad or campaign by tracking how many consumers are talking about it and what they are saying (Liu, 2010). Brands can also compare how their product measures up against the product offering of their competitors, which helps inform product development and marketing strategies. Lastly, brands can determine their virtual popularity to developing an improved social media footprint. Thus, consumer sentiment analysis is a significant source of market research that brands can use to continuously improve their social media campaigns while they are running to yield better results.

5.2.2 Sample Selection

5 of the top South African Instagram influencers were identified. Influencers were selected according to the following criteria, well-established Instagram presence, frequent collaboration with brands, more than 20 000 followers and being active on Instagram for more than 2 years. Instagram accounts of bloggers were chosen, as the South African Instagram influencer industry is not that developed yet (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016) thus individuals who have established themselves as online influencers before they joined Instagram were selected as they already had a following. Furthermore, 10 brand-sponsored posts were selected from each influencer's feed, over a period of time. Selecting posts over a period of time allows consumer response patterns to be seen over time. It also allows for a more diverse range of brand-sponsored posts in the sample. Tracking engagement on a per post basis enables the marketer to gauge the audience's level of interest in the content of each post, thereby informing the creation of future posts (Lai & To, 2014). As an aggregate measure, engagement can also indicate the overall level of consumer interest in a brand's message (Jaakonmäki, Müller & Vom Brocke, 2017). Selecting 10 posts from each influencer's Instagram feed brings the sample to a total of 50 Instagram posts.

5.2.3 Data Collection

The ten images from each influencer's Instagram feed were identified over a period of 2 years and coded in an Excel spread sheet. The posts' metadata, namely number of likes, number of comments, caption, hashtags and tagged brands were captured. After which the data was coded according to the selected codes.

5.2.4 Data Analysis

The founding of an organised research methodology is imperative in the collection of, analysis, and classification of the meaningful data available on social media platforms

into usable insights, which inform brand strategies, such social reputation building, content posting strategies and measuring consumer engagement (Lai & To, 2014). The following codes were employed in this quantitative content analysis: the type of brand collaborated with, type of post, type of campaign, local vs. International brand, brand visibility in the post and lastly the post's comments sentiment. The posts were coded according to the type of brand collaborating with the influencer in the post, and categories included: Apparel, Beauty, Jewellery, Accessories, Automotive, Alcohol, Pharmaceutical, Beverage and Consumer Goods.

Accordingly, the 'type of post' code refers to the type of brand-sponsored image the influencer used to showcase the brand or product on their Instagram account. The available categories were 'product shot' which referred to an image of the brand's product the influencer wants to promote and 'shot of influencer with the product' which refers to an image of the influencer and the product, 'shot of the event' which refers to an image taken at a brand event that the influencer was invited to and lastly 'shot of influencer at the event' which refers to an image of the influencer at a brand event. The type of post was determined to investigate the levels of consumer engagement per post. In addition, the type of influencer marketing campaign the post was part of was tracked to determine which type of campaigns audiences reacted more favourably to. The categories for type of campaign included: event, press drop³, promotion, Instagram takeover⁴, In-store promotion, competition, collaboration and trend forecast⁵. Sampled posts were also coded according to whether the brand influencers were collaborating with was a local brand or an International brand. Since this research aims to draw insights into the South African Instagram Economy, the rate of International and local influencer brand collaborations were measured.

Additionally posts' brand visibility was determined and coded into the following three categories: product (a clearly recognisable brand product is visible in the post), logo (the brand's logo is clearly visible in the post) and None (no visible brand name,

³ The public relations practice of sending influencers a curated sample of products for them to post about it on social media.

⁴ A Instagram branding strategy whereby and influencer posts from the brand's Instagram page

⁵ Brands collaborate with influencers to share their opinion of what the next season's trends will be.

product or logo in the post). The product category refers to a clearly recognisable brand product, thus products in the image, which were not clearly identifiable as being of a specific brand were not coded as having a visible branded product. For example, the pair of shoes in figure 6 are a general style that is not distinct of a certain brand with no logo thus it was not be coded as a visible branded product despite the post containing an image of a product from the brand. The image in figure 5 contains a pair of shoes that are a distinct style of shoes from footwear brand Adidas thus it was coded as a visible branded product.



Figure 5: An Instagram post from the Trevor Stuurman sample with a visible branded product

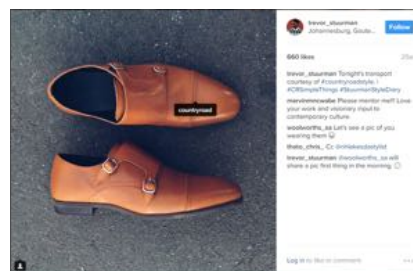


Figure 6: An Instagram post from the Trevor Stuurman sample with a product that is not visibly branded

5.3 Consumer Survey Methods

5.3.1 Theoretical Framework of Methods

Surveys are a useful tool to measure public opinion and a valuable source of market research (Fowler, 2013). Factual data on the behaviour and preferences of people can be obtained by asking a sample of people questions about themselves (Fowler, 2013). A special purpose survey was carried out to ensure that the researcher could gain insights about specific consumer practices on Instagram to examine the relationship between brands, influencers and consumers and how this contributes to brand value. Additionally, the consumer survey was done in the form of a questionnaire which potential participants could voluntarily respond to.

5.3.2 Sample Selection Procedure

For the purpose of this research a multi-stage sampling approach was used to ensure a representative sample meeting the research criteria. A combination of convenience sampling and purposive sampling methods were employed. Initially, convenience sampling was used to identify potential participants by sending out the questionnaire link, via email to University of Cape Town students. Since research has shown that the demographic most active on Instagram is young adults (Ho & Dempsey, 2010) the survey was sent out to university students. Recording the responses of all volunteers who clicked on the link and answered all questions. Since participation is voluntary, respondents were allowed to opt out of the survey at any time and not have their responses recorded.

Furthermore, since convenience samples are not always representative (Watters & Biernacki, 1989), all the responses collected through convenience sampling were screened using the purposive sampling method. The purposive sampling method is used to ensure that there are sufficient respondents with specific characteristics. Since this research aims to quantify consumers' brand-related Instagram behaviour purposive sampling was used to identify suitable participants. Participants needed to have an Instagram account in order to answer the questions about Instagram practices. Accordingly, the first question in the questionnaire was a filtering question to screen out participants who did not have an Instagram account. Participants who indicated that they did not have an Instagram account's responses were discarded from the sample.

5.3.3 Data Collection System

A standardised, closed, fixed-response questionnaire was sent out to potential participants via an email link encouraging voluntary and anonymous participation. The survey contained 30 questions that allowed respondents to select answers from a set of fixed options on a rating scale. Rating scales allow uniform responses to be measured, making it easier to quantify a phenomenon. Two of the questions contained

open ended follow up questions to allow respondents to provide a reason for their answer. Where applicable, some of the questions also contained an 'other' option for participants who did not agree with any of the available options to provide their unique motivations for the questions.

In addition, the survey was set up to ask initial profiling questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012) to determine participants level of Instagram use and demographic information, after which questions were asked about participants level of interaction with brands and secondly Instagram influencers. Filtering questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012) were also asked to determine participants' eligibility to answer subsequent questions, which required participants to have performed a particular action on Instagram such as unfollowing a brand's account. The eligibility criteria for survey participation were 1) being over the age of 18 years and 2) having an Instagram account. Participants below the age of 18 were excluded from the study due to ethical reasons. In addition, since the focus of this research is investigating consumers' interaction with brands and influencers on Instagram, individuals who are not on Instagram are not eligible. Lastly, the survey was hosted on the platform, SoGoSurvey. Hosting the survey on an online platform allows for standardised measurement where the survey administration is consistent for all respondents (Fowler, 2013). Standardised measuring ensures the data collected is comparable and allows meaningful insights to be drawn (Fowler, 2013). Once the survey was live for a sufficient period of time the responses were downloaded into an Excel spread sheet for data analysis.

5.3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The sampled Instagram users responses were analysed to draw insights from the statistical significance of consumers' answers (Fowler, 2013). Meaningful patterns of consumers' usage frequencies were extracted from the reported response. The frequencies of consumers Instagram habits and the levels of interaction with brands and consumers were used to draw actionable insights for brand managers to implement in the Instagram and influencer marketing strategies.

Chapter 1:

6. The Anatomy of a Top Brand's Instagram Profile:

A Case study of How Mr Price became South Africa's top fashion brand on Instagram

6.1 Mr Price Instagram Background

Stuart Cohen and Laurie Chiappini started the Mr Price Group in 1986 (Mr Price Group, 2016). Since then the brand has evolved into a successful, fast growing South African fashion value retailer, incorporating seven well-known retail trademarks selling apparel, homeware and sportswear. Recently, the retailer underwent a rebranding by European visual merchandisers Dalziel and Pow (BizCommunity, 2011) to be more youthful and appealing to its trend conscious younger target market. The business is growing rapidly, not only in South Africa but also internationally, with Mr Price's online store available globally and their international expansion to other African countries (Mr Price Group, 2016).

A key part in the brand's growth and great share of mind among consumers is through its social media strategy (McLuckie, 2016). The South African fast fashion retailer joined Instagram on 27 September 2012 (@mrpfashion, 2016). To date Mr Price's official Instagram account @mrpfashion has just over 239 000 followers and 2853 posts. Mr Price's Instagram account has also received a total of more than 1.5 million likes and just over 41 000 comments (@mrpfashion, 2016).



Figure 7: Shows Mr Price's Instagram account bio, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

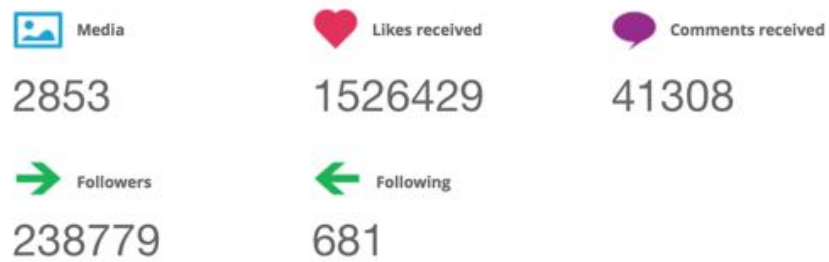


Figure 8: Shows Mr Price's Instagram account statistics, 2016, Ink361.com

Mr Price is the most followed South African fashion brand on Instagram (Blacks smoke Digital Agency, 2016). According to the Social Media Landscape Report, the most popular Instagram image shared by a South Africa brand in 2015 was an image shared on Mr Price's Instagram account on 18 Jul 2015 (Goldstuck, 2015). In addition to having posted the top image, among the top 25 Instagram images brands posted in 2015, 10 were by Mr Price. Mr Price has more Instagram images in the top 25 than any other South African brand on Instagram (Goldstuck and Wronski, 2016).



Figure 9: Shows Mr Price's most commented images, 2016, Ink361.com



Figure 10: Shows Mr Price's total tagged images, 2016, Ink361.com

Figure 11: Shows Mr Price's yearly distribution of Instagram posts, 2016, Ink361.com

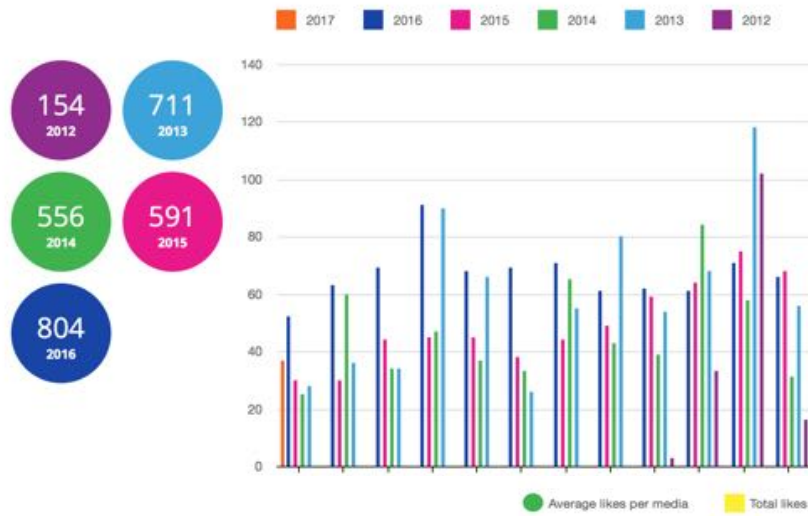
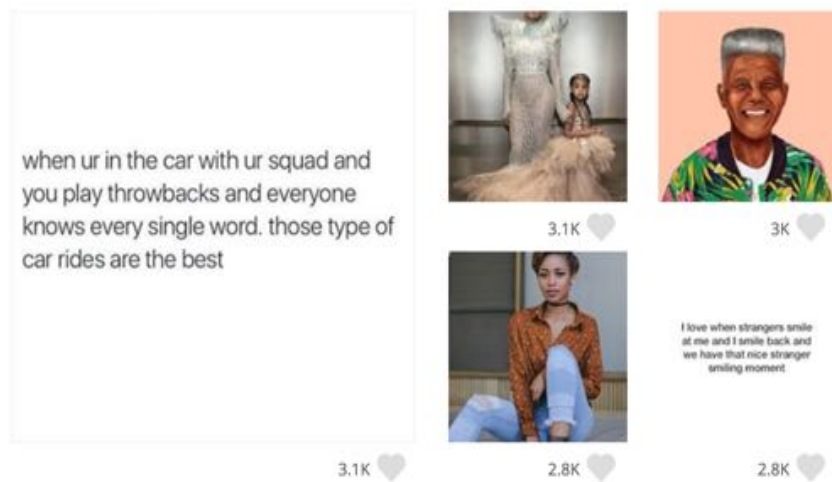


Figure 12: Shows Mr Price's average likes per post, 2016, Ink361.com



Figure 13: Shows Mr Price's most liked images, 2016, Ink361.com



6.2 Why Mr Price uses Instagram as a Branding Channel

The brand recognises the potential of this social media channel to create brand awareness and share its brand values with its target consumers. “Instagram, although in SA is still preliminary low on penetration levels, it is gaining momentum - jumping from 1,1 million - 2, 68 million in one year ” (McLuckie, 2016). Instagram’s popularity among South Africans is growing as barriers to access smartphones and the Internet are decreasing. Mr Price recognises the opportunities of using this network as a branding channel (McLuckie, 2016). Since Mr Price is a fashion retailer the visual nature of Instagram makes it the most suitable social media platform for the brand to authentically convey its brand identity with consumers. Brands on social media have often been criticised for entering consumers’ personal space (Kaplan, 2012; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). However, Instagram is the ideal platform for the fashion retailer to showcase products, as images with branded content have become a key part of Instagram users’ practices (Pathak, 2015).

Moreover, Instagram is the most popular social media channel among Mr Price’s younger target audience (McLuckie, 2016). The brand’s ethos is fun, fast fashion targeted at a younger market (McLuckie, 2016). Research has shown that millennials continuously prefer Instagram as their social media platform of choice and that users are online daily (Becker, 2016). Hence, the brand has invested in a well thought out Instagram marketing strategy to reach and engage its target audience on a platform they prefer (McLuckie, 2016). In addition to Instagram users constituting a large part of South African social media users (Goldstuck & Wronski), the social behavioural norms on Instagram have affected consumers’ brand perceptions and purchase decision-making process. Social norms mean consumers use Instagram as a source of inspiration to curate their digital identities (Abidin, 2016; Senft, 2013). This means that Instagram plays an important part in dictating consumers’ consumption preferences and Mr Price understands the power their content has to inspire a certain lifestyle in their consumers (McLuckie, 2016). The brand’s Instagram content reflects popular trends and social capital, which consumers want to see and aspire to recreate on their Instagram feeds (McLuckie, 2016).

Mr Price's content team has a well thought out strategy that is on par with current Instagram norms and what interests its audience. "Mr Price utilises Instagram to showcase a personal side to the brand and highlights what we love. It is carefully curated with trends; user generated content, pop culture and product. This platform reaches a certain type of MRP fan. We do not use Instagram to do a hard-sell brand job" (McLuckie, 2016). The brand team has made sure they reach their audience on the most appropriate platform with content they find relevant since the brand understands the important role Instagram plays in constructing consumers' online identities, how their target audience uses the social media platform and what kinds of content they prefer and respond to (McLuckie, 2016). Since the brand recognises the importance of Instagram in the daily lives of its target audience it has chosen to connect with them on this platform. Mr Price's fresh and trendy content reflects the aspirational lifestyle and goals of its target audience accurately (McLuckie, 2016). The brand's content resonates with its audience hence Mr Price's high Instagram following and consistent engagement (Blacksmoke Digital Agency, 2016; Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016).

6.3 Mr Price's Instagram Audience Demographics Analysis

A fundamental part of the success of Mr Price's content strategy on Instagram is because the brand knows who their audience is and what kind of content they want to see (McLuckie, 2016). The demographics of the brand's Instagram users are an important part of what informs the content strategy (Taylor, 2013). They take into account the age, gender and location of their Instagram followers in order to create content that engages and connects with their audience (McLuckie, 2016).

6.3.1 Age

Mr Price's fast fashion retail model calls for a target market of young, millennials. The majority of the brand's Instagram users are between the ages of 18-29 years old (McLuckie, 2016). This is congruent with the most common age of Instagram users in South Africa as the South African Instagram community is predominantly between the ages of 18-24 (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). In order to continuously engage their young audience on Instagram the brand ensures their messaging is always fresh

and on trend. “This audience has formed authentically. We make sure our content strategy on this platform caters to a junior digitally savvy market” (McLuckie, 2016). Through pop culture, humorous memes and aspirational lifestyle content the retailer targets younger customers in the mid to upper LSM categories (McLuckie, 2016). Since the brand’s audience is a younger demographic that tends to be early adopters of trends and social media norms, such as selfies, the brand engages them on their level by incorporating trending hashtags and colloquial language in their captions.

6.3.2 Gender

There is 60-40% female/male split of Mr Price’s Instagram audience (McLuckie, 2016). Hence the brand’s content is predominantly directed at its female audience (McLuckie, 2016). More female products are posted and the pop culture and aspirational content primarily appeal to a female audience. Research has shown that image based platforms have more female users than male users (Seligson, 2015). The brand does take its male fans into account; occasionally posting menswear but their content strategy is definitely designed to appeal to the higher ratio of female Instagram followers (McLuckie, 2016).

6.3.3 Regions

Instagram users are mostly from urban areas, because of the increased access to the Internet and smartphones in urban areas (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). The most common demographic on Instagram is millennial women, in the mid to upper LSM category living in urban areas (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). This is a perfect fit with Mr Price’s target audience. Mr Price also takes its audience’s location demographic into account in social media campaigns for pop up stores and events. The brand mostly targets these campaigns at audiences in the main cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban (McLuckie, 2016).

6.4 Mr Price’s Instagram Goals

Mr Price primarily uses its Instagram account as a way to create brand awareness among its target audience and engage the audience to build a relationship and foster brand loyalty (McLuckie, 2016). Through knowing its audience and what drives them,

Mr Price is able to offer content that stimulates their audience on Instagram. The retailer also uses the platform to connect with its consumers and share the brand's identity. Through targeted Instagram posts Mr Price familiarises its audience with the brand and its product offering.

6.4.1 Create Brand Awareness in Emerging Markets

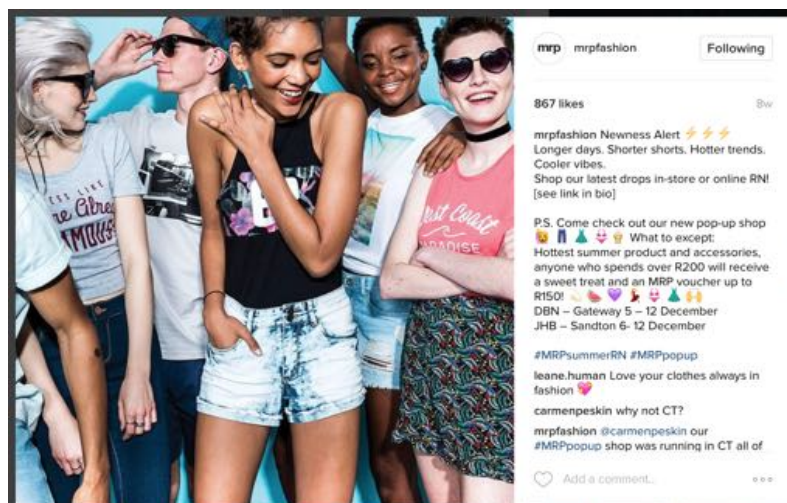
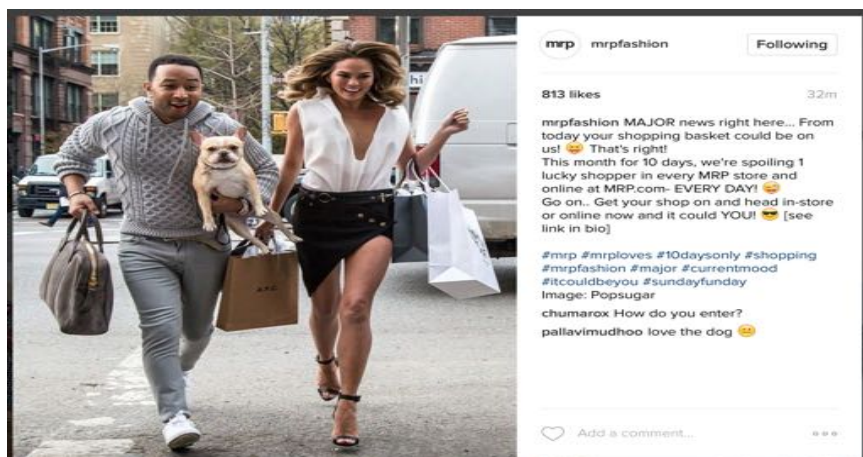
One of the retailer's' growth strategies is to expand into African markets as well as Australia (Mr Price, 2016). The brand already operates retail stores in several African countries including Nigeria, Botswana and Namibia (Mr Price, 2016). A multicultural Instagram following allows Mr Price to gain brand recognition in potential markets so consumers are already familiar with the brand once MRP enters the market with retail store. In addition, showcasing products on Instagram directs customers from countries where MRP does not have a physical store presence to Mr Price's online store (McLuckie, 2016). In addition, the retail group's expansion in Australia was also tested with an Instagram account. The Australian consumers responded favourably to the brand's content on Instagram giving the brand a reliable and cost-effective source of consumer sentiment before entering the market (Mr Price, 2016).

6.4.2 Reach their target audience on a platform they like

Research has shown that consumers visit social media platforms daily and South African Instagram users have increased exponentially thus this is an effective platform to reach MRP's trendy, millennial target market (Goldstuck & Wronski; McLuckie, 2016). In order to reach the tech savvy, young and fashion forward audience the brand wants to engage they need to target them on the correct social media platform. Instagram's visual nature and the fact that it allows users to negotiate their identities make it an effective platform for the brand to reach its target audience (Carah & Shaul, 2015). Mr Price's audience informs the brand's Instagram content strategy (McLuckie, 2016), hence the brand's high engagement rates (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). The content managers keep up with current trends and popular culture to ensure they give their audience the freshest content (McLuckie, 2016). This strategy has worked for the brand as it has one of the highest Instagram followings of a South African fashion retailer (Blacksmoke Digital Agency, 2016).

6.4.3 Create awareness and encourage participation for competitions, in-store activations and promotional offers

Mr Price seeks to engage their consumers and motivate sales with competitions, campaigns, discounts and special offers (McLuckie, 2016). Despite the brand not using their Instagram account as a direct sales channel yet, Instagram is a crucial promotional channel to create awareness around the brand's marketing activities and direct consumers to enter competitions, visit the brand's popup stores and shop online to access discounts and special offers (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Instagram posts encouraging consumer participation in the brand's competitions have the most engagement on Mr Price's Instagram page (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). The brand continuously aligns their Instagram content with in-store promotions, competitions and online discounts to drive consumer engagement (McLuckie, 2016).



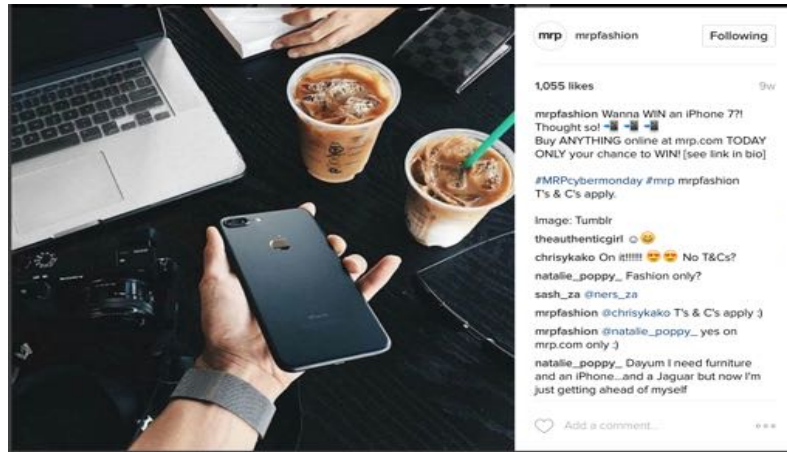


Figure 14: Shows examples of Mr Price’s Instagram posts that encourage follower participation of online and in store promotions and competitions 2016, Instagram. Images courtesy of @mrpfashion

6.5 Mr Price’s Successful Instagram Strategies

The fashion retailer employs several successful strategies to manage an successful brand presence on Instagram. Through a well thought-out Instagram presence the retailer increases brand awareness fuelling its local & international growth and intrigues the consumers with glimpses of their fashionable offering at great value (McLuckie, 2016). Additionally, the brand’s Instagram strategy serves to communicate the brand’s values and sustainable business practices (Mr Price, 2016). Mr Price’s Social Media marketing creates a mixture of sales driven content, culturally impactful content and interactive content. The brand’s Online Fashion Editor, McLuckie states: “It is carefully curated with trends; user generated content, pop culture and product. This platform reaches a certain type of MRP fan. We do not use Instagram to do a hard-sell brand job” (McLuckie, 2016).

The brand continuously strives to develop interactive strategies to boost audience engagement. “We are in the process of launching ‘Shoppable Instagram’ - making our content instantly stoppable for our fans. We have also launched a user-generated campaign - #mrpmystyle which invites fans to upload pics of themselves in MRP and stand a chance to be featured online”(McLuckie, 2016). In addition, the brand is also constantly keeping up with shifts in consumer culture in order to keep its content relevant and engaging to its audience. “We continuously try to reinvent our content

and come up with new and exciting concepts, campaigns, design and competitions to keep them hooked.” The brand messages portray the retailer as fun, trendy and accessible and showcases the “latest trends at affordable prices” (McLuckie, 2016).

6.5.1 Mr Price’s Successful Approach

The following factors are what sets Mr Price’s Instagram account apart and continuously drive high levels of consumer engagement.

- Leveraging Social Hype of Popular Content

Through posting about pop culture and the latest trends the brand is using content that its target audience is familiar with and has a keen interest in. This practice creates familiarity between the audience and the brand. The audience also associates the popularity and social capital of this content with the brand thus improving brand awareness, loyalty and the target audience’s perception of the brand. This type of content informs and inspires the brand’s audience, which increases the brand’s following.

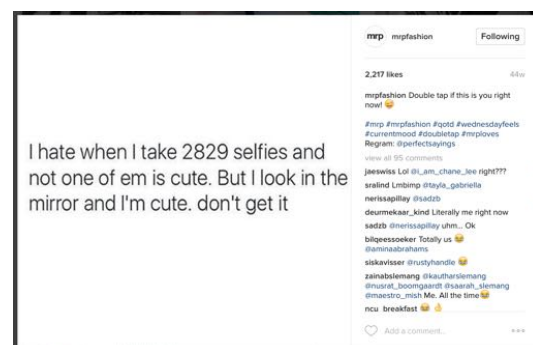
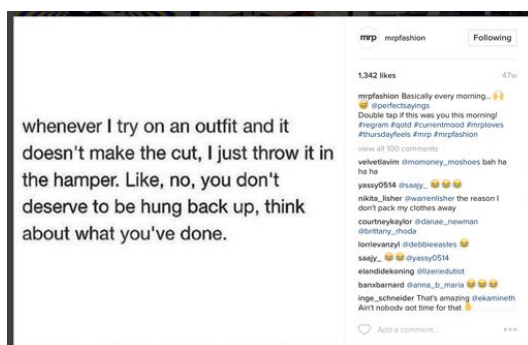
- Aspirational Lifestyle Content/Social Capital

Another prevalent social media content strategy that Mr Price uses is posting aspirational lifestyle content. The most popular form of content on Instagram is inspirational content, which is a key theme in the brands Instagram content. Aspirational content adds a long-term approach to the brand’s social media content. Since consumers use social media to commodify aspirational lifestyle content (Abidin, 2016; Hardey, 2015; Senft, 2013) they follow and engage with the brand to gain cultural capital, defined as social assets that promote social mobility (Abidin, 2016). Through sharing a variety of content and not just giving users a feed of sales driven content the brand earns loyalty on social media (Labrecque, 2014). Consumers are not following the brand to constantly be sold products to but rather to have an inspiring brand experience, and Mr Price knows this, as the brand’s Online Fashion Editor states: “We do not use Instagram to do a hard-sell brand job” (McLuckie, 2016). Even though Mr Price is a value retailer, sharing aspirational content on

Instagram allows the consumers to associate the brand with the lifestyle they aspire to (McLuckie, 2016). Establishing a lifestyle centred brand identity on social media has given Mr Price long-term results such as steady increase in followers and continuous high engagement rates. Mr Prices Instagram posts continuously rank among the most liked Instagram posts by a brand in South Africa (Goldstuck, 2015; Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Mr Price positions the brand as an integral part of achieving the trendy, fun lifestyle its target consumers' lead (McLuckie, 2016).

- Relatable Memes

Memes⁶ are a ubiquitous part of social media and have the ability to grab consumers' attention (Shifman, 2013). Relatable, funny and familiar memes are an effective way for brands to connect with their audience on social media (Shifman, 2013). Mr Price uses humorous memes to connect with its audience in a human way. It is way for the brand to initiate non-brand related discussions on Instagram that allows Mr Price to connect with their followers (McLuckie, 2016). It also fits in with the brand's fun, spontaneous identity on Instagram. Memes appeal to a wide audience and have high engagement rates, since audiences tend to share content they can relate to. This content also makes the audience more likely to remember the brand and have higher rates of brand recognition.



⁶ Internet memes are a cultural element or behavioural system in the form of an image, video or text, typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread by internet users (Shifman, 2013).

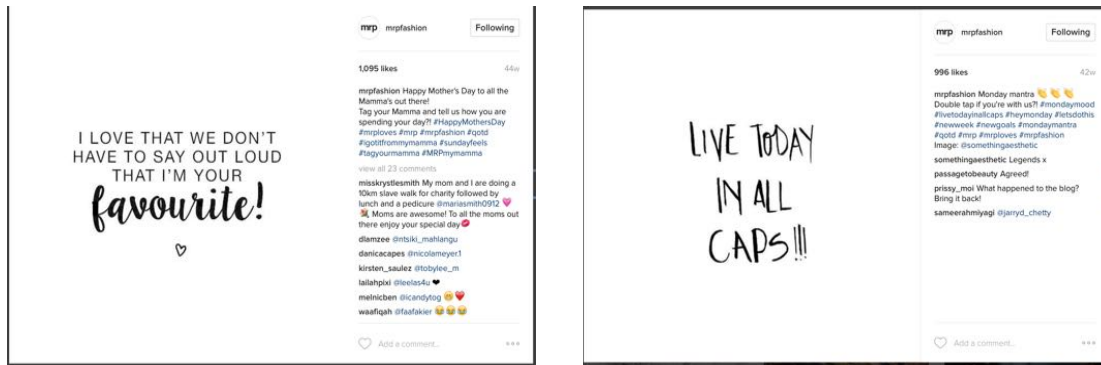


Figure 15: Examples of the humorous and relatable memes the brand incorporates in its Instagram Content, 2016, Instagram. Images courtesy of @mrpfashion

- Curated Product Shots

Instagram's visual nature makes it the perfect platform for Mr Price to show off its products (Carah & Shaul, 2015). Although Mr Price does not use its Instagram as a direct sales channel, beautifully curated product shots do form an integral part of the retailer's Instagram strategy (McLuckie, 2016). Mr Price's product shots are cleverly curated to seamlessly fit in with the rest of its content to form a cohesive visual narrative (See Figure: 16). The retailer commonly uses product shots to showcase the latest arrivals and promote seasonal campaigns such as summer essentials (McLuckie, 2016).



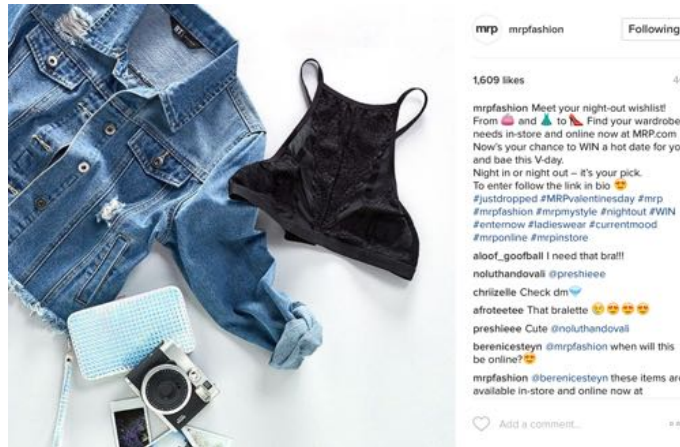


Figure 16: Shows Examples of the carefully curated product shots Mr Price seamlessly incorporates into its Instagram content, 2016, Instagram. Images courtesy of @mrpfashion

- User Generated Content

Findings from the Ipsos Millennial Social Influence Study, 2015 show that user generated content is 20% more influential in consumers' purchase decisions and 35% more memorable than other types of media (Ipsos, 2015). The brand encourages users to share images of themselves in Mr Price apparel and selects the best of these to use on its Instagram page (McLuckie, 2016). User generated content allows the brand to show its Instagram audience how other consumers benefit from the retailer's products thereby inspiring them to purchase (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Seeing other consumers satisfied by and enjoying the brand's products also builds consumers' trust in the brand (Labrecque, 2014). In addition, sharing branded content created by loyal users can strengthen the brand's relationship with its consumers (Jaakonmäki, Müller & Vom Brocke, 2017). Communication between brands and consumers on social media is often indirect and by employing user generated content Mr Prices makes the communication with its consumers more personal (McLuckie, 2016). User generated content has allowed the brand to gain a source of market information, connect with its consumers on a more personal level, increase consumers' brand perception and increase audience engagement (McLuckie, 2016).

6.5.2 Highly curated, targeted, strong visual presence

Top brands have started curating their Instagram feeds to resemble a high-end digital magazine (Kilgour, Sasser & Larke, 2015). Mr Price's Instagram account follows this international trend of popular accounts that prioritise quality images and a strong visual aesthetic (McLuckie, 2016). Beautiful Images are carefully selected and posted in a curated way to create a visual continuum of the brand's feel (McLuckie, 2016). Well designed content is one of the biggest ways to grow an audience on social media and keep them engaged (Erkan, 2015; Jaakonmäki, Müller & Vom Brocke, 2017) and this is one of the reasons MRP has gained such a large following and their content continuously ranks among the top images posted by brands in south Africa (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016).

The retailer's social media team not only choose visually appealing content but their content is always on par with social trends and popular on social media such as quotes and celebrity culture (McLuckie, 2016). Mr Price's Instagram feed also makes use of great content presentation strategies such as flatlays (a curated layout of products photographed from above for social media), which showcase its latest products in an appealing and trendy way (McLuckie, 2016). The product post images are carefully styled and staged with trending props to make the products seem more appealing to the brand's followers.

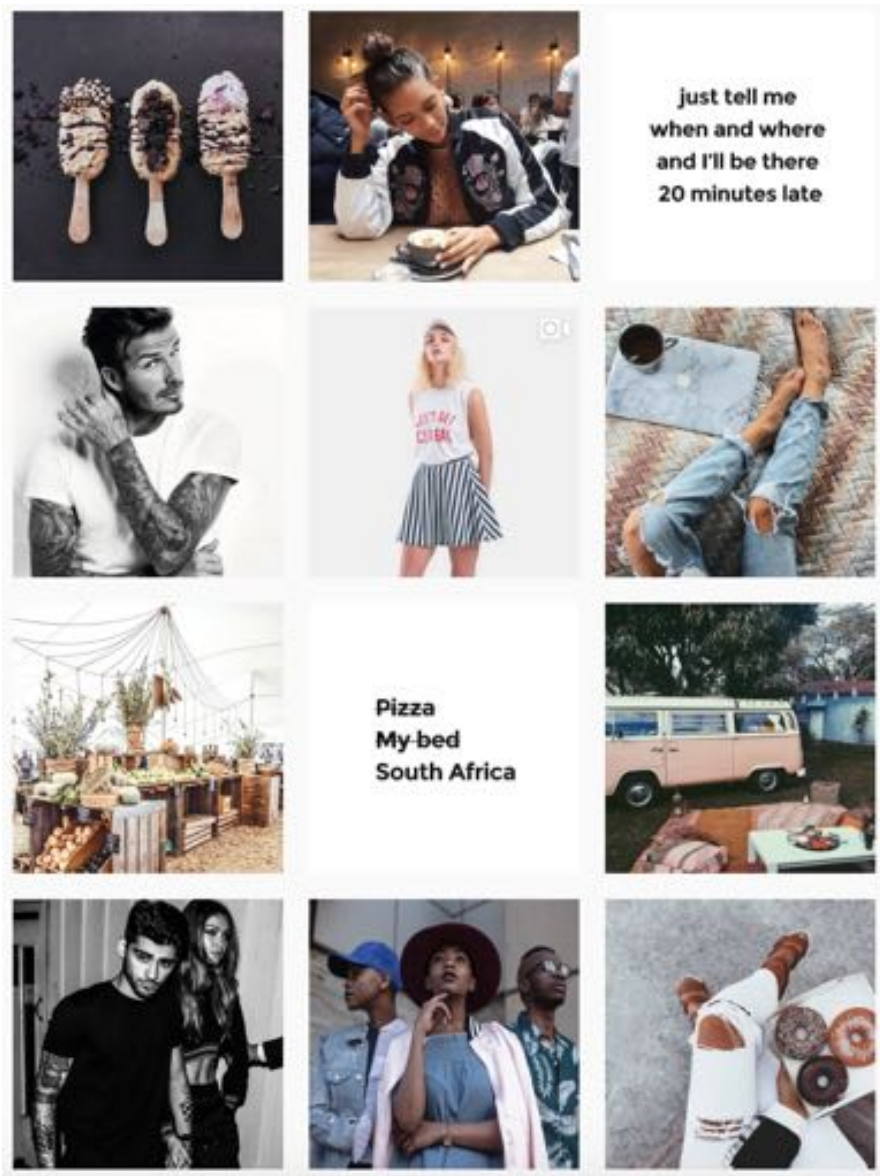


Figure 17: Shows an example of the curation of posts on Mr Price's Instagram feed, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

Moreover, MRP's Instagram content incorporates popular content with social capital (McLuckie, 2016). Through using popular social content and trendy pop culture elements Mr Price successfully targets and engages its intended audience. According to McLuckie MRP's Online Fashion Editor, "we like to keep up with global trends so we incorporate them into our posts and campaigns. For example: text talk such as IRL, FOMO, TBT" (McLuckie, 2016).

6.5.3 Effective and engaging use of hashtags

The most common practice for brands to effectively use hashtags on Instagram is to create a unique branded hashtag and encourage consumers to use it when they post branded content to social media (Carah & Shaul, 2015). 70% of the most used hashtags are branded (Hitz, 2015). Mr Price created the #mrpmystyle hashtag and encourages consumers to use the hashtag when they share posts of their outfits featuring Mr Price products. The brand then features the best of these images on its Instagram account (McLuckie, 2016). This branded hashtag allows the brand to organise its content in a searchable feed as well as create a visible brand presence among their consumer network (Carah & Shaul, 2015). Instagram posts with at least one hashtag gain 12.6% more engagement than posts with no hashtag and including another hashtag generates 56% more engagement (GlobalWebIndex, 2015). Mr Price incorporates a mix of branded hashtags and trending hashtags in the caption of every post increasing the engagement of its content (McLuckie, 2016).



Figure 18: Shows an example of the hashtag #mrpmystyle in the caption of a post on Mr Price's Instagram account, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

Furthermore, through encouraging consumers to use the #mrpmystyle hashtag Mr Price is encouraging its consumers to perform 'visibility labour' (Abidin, 2016) which gives the brand a valuable source of user-generated content. Mr Price's Instagram brand manager, McLuckie notes that user-generated content performs exceptionally

well on their Instagram page. “Fan content is by far the best performing content on Instagram. This is because it’s real, authentic and customers trust the word of friend and real people over a brand” (McLuckie, 2016). User-generated content also allows the brand to engage with consumers in a more meaningful way, as consumers feel more valued when the brand takes note of their efforts to produce branded content (Labrecque, 2014).

6.5.4 *Using Instagram to build relationships*

Mr Price uses a variety of strategies to build relationships with their followers on Instagram. Encouraging consumers to share branded content using their custom hashtag #mrpstyle allows the brand to engage its consumers in a significant way (McLuckie, 2016). When the brand features consumers’ branded posts on their Instagram feed, the brand is giving consumers the opportunity to raise their social profile by exposing them to the brand’s large network of followers (Abidin, 2016; Hardey, 2015). This in turn allows consumers to derive a sense of value from their interaction with the brand (Hajli, 2015; Hardey, 2015). “We always aim to make our fans the hero so we feature them on our platform all the time. This has helped to increase our brand love and in turn our engagement and following” (McLuckie, 2016). This consumer centric strategy has helped the brand increase its brand loyalty and consumer engagement on Instagram. Another way Mr Price develops a connection with its audience on Instagram is through relatable content (McLuckie, 2016). The brand posts content that its audience can easily relate to and is already somewhat familiar with, such as: pop culture, celebrities, quotes as well as current trends (McLuckie, 2016). Through leveraging consumers’ familiarity with celebrities and trends consumers resonate with the brand messages more and become loyal, engaged consumers (Abidin, 2016; Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011; Jaakonmäki, Müller & Vom Brocke, 2017). When an audience easily relates to a brand’s content they feel the brand understands them and it fosters a connection with the brand (Labrecque, 2014).

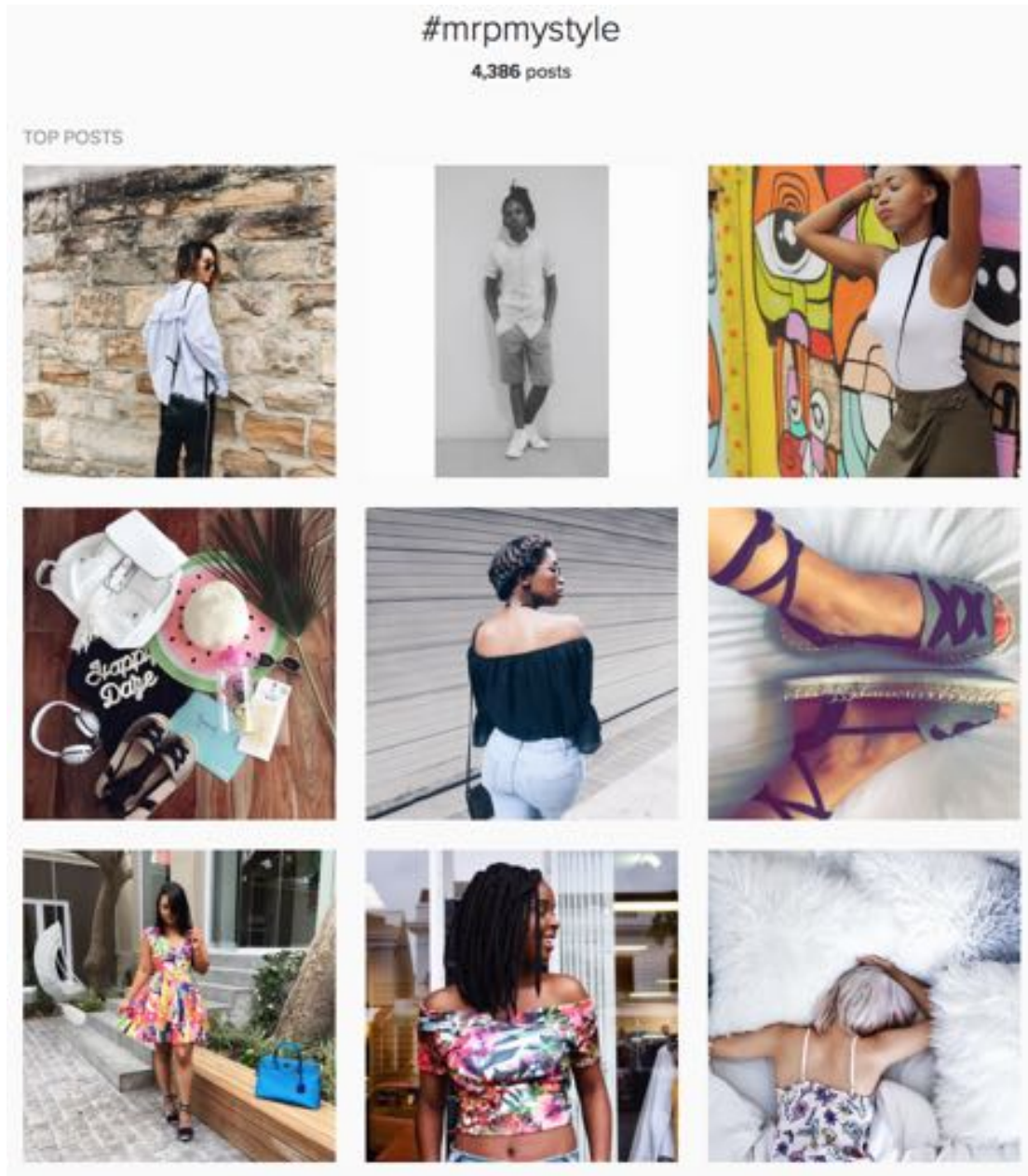


Figure 19: Shows the feed of the top user generated images with the hashtag #mrpmystyle, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

6.5.5 Optimal Posting Frequency

One of the key way ways to maximise the reach and efficiency of a brand’s Instagram account is to determine the optimal posting times and frequency that would best resonate with its target market (Union Metrics, 2014). Since Mr Price targets a younger audience that is online multiple times a day the retailer also posts frequently (McLuckie, 2016). Although studies have shown that posting more frequently does

not necessarily translate to increased audience engagement, and in some cases could even lead to decreased engagement as consumers start ignoring posts in content saturated feeds (Union Metrics, 2014). However, frequent posts have worked for the brand as it mimics the always-on stream of consciousness nature younger Instagrammers subscribe to (McLuckie, 2016). On average the brand posts twice a day, a few hours apart (McLuckie, 2016). Mr Price's regular posting schedule has contributed to the brand's large following and high rates of engagement (comments and likes) on Instagram from South African consumers.

6.5.6 Posts consistent with brand feel and image

Moreover, a consistent aesthetic and content that authentically and coherently reflects the brand's character and values is crucial to a brand's success on Instagram (Carah & Shaul, 2015). Mr Price seeks to communicate a fun, fresh and trendy brand character through its Instagram content to target a younger audience (McLuckie, 2016). Content posted on the brand's page can be categorised into specific themes of celebrities, quotes, user generated branded images, product shots and trendy images sourced online (McLuckie, 2016). The brand further maintains a cohesive aesthetic through using a similar colour pallet and recurring visual elements such as food, memes and celebrities (McLuckie, 2016).

6.5.7 Optimise page

Lastly, effective page optimisation is one of the key ways a brand can ensure an enjoyable and unique customer experience on Instagram (Union Metrics, 2014) as well as allowing the brand to achieve optimal benefits from its Instagram presence. Linking to the brand's website in the Instagram bio is a key way to direct traffic to the brand's website (Landsverk, 2014). Another recommended practice is to make sure users know it's the official company profile (Landsverk, 2014). Creating brand specific hashtags (#mymrpstyle) also motivates consumer engagement. Since Instagram introduced ads in late 2013 (Instagram, 2016), using Instagram ads to increase a brand's reach and grow the audience is an effective way to successfully generate better results on Instagram (Carah & Shaul, 2015; McLuckie, 2016) Mr Price does make use of Instagram ads to improve the reach of its content (McLuckie, 2016).

In order to derive the maximum benefits from a brand presence on Instagram brands need to employ well thought out strategies to manage their profiles effectively and engage consumers (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). Mr Price's Instagram account clearly does make use of strategies to optimise its performance on Instagram (McLuckie, 2016).

6.6 Exploring Mr Price's Influencer Collaborations on Instagram

Mr Price is one of a handful of local brands that have recognised the influence and social currency influencers' yield and in so doing they have found meaningful ways of connecting with Instagram influencers and bloggers. The retailer regularly collaborates with Instagram Influencers for campaigns, activations and features influencers and bloggers in Mr Price merchandise on its Instagram account (McLuckie, 2016). Likewise, Mr Price creates experiences for these influential social media users to share with their network of followers and as a result the brand garners high engagement and a large following on social media (McLuckie, 2016). Giving influential Instagrammers a memorable reason to share their brand experiences on Instagram captures the true essence of social media: conversation (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016). It also gives the bloggers exciting content and in so doing facilitates a mutually beneficial relationship between the brand and influencers. Mr Price collaborates with top influencers and bloggers and in order to leverage the authority these figures hold among their network of followers (McLuckie, 2016). Through creating great brand experiences with Instagram Influencers Mr Price motivates them to post about the brand without having to pay them. Since, Mr Price recognises the importance of Instagram Influencers in the fashion Industry, the brand continuously seeks to create meaningful brand experiences with influencers and leverage the benefits from this method of brand communication (McLuckie, 2016).

6.6.1 Mr Price Instagram influencer Collaboration Case Studies

Mr Price uses influencer collaborations to showcase their brand values to consumers in a creative way. Following are examples of the brand's successful influencer collaborations on Instagram.

6.6.1.1 Mr Price Instagram Influencer Collaboration Case Study 1: Collaborating for Content



Figure 20: Shows an example of the influencer content collaboration post on Mr Price's Instagram account, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

The brand regularly collaborates with South African Instagram Influencer Niquita Bento, who has over 14 000 followers on Instagram (Elle, 2016a). The brand asked Niquita to style Mr Price's apparel and share it on her Instagram to show consumers how to creatively incorporate Mr Price clothing into their daily outfits. Since consumers trust peer consumers and influencers more than brands this campaign showed consumers how an influential consumer enjoys the brand's products. Collaborating with an influencer was more effective for the brand than simply sharing a post of an unknown model wearing the clothing. Since consumers use Instagram as a source of inspiration to construct their identities and gain social capital, by replicating influencer posts (Abidin, 2016; Becker, 2016) the brand has tapped into this influencer's authority to inspire consumers. Consumers replicate popular posts in

order to gain social capital (Abidin, 2016) and by tapping into Niquita's social capital as a style influencer the brand is allowing consumers to associate this social capital with the Mr Price clothing. This post encourages consumers to purchase Mr Price apparel to recreate the post and transfer the social capital and aspirational qualities to their own Instagram profiles, as is evidenced by the comments on the posts. The brand's followers are encouraging their followers to take a similar photo with the shirt on and buy the shirt featured (see figure 21).

graca_de_deus Take a pic like this
@beyoutiful_cr ❤️❤️
monique_mEEK ❤️
voteforpedro__ @meghann_claire I
wonder if this is comfy..
taztoes @yasmeen_jakoet15 check this!
arwen_ct Looove this!!!
tebomahlo @mntungwa84 I need this!!
rebecca_arendse Great styling by
@xx_niquita_xx!
alookintomycloset Love 😍😍💛💛
dimalukhele Wow!
keegs_crawford Feeling brave?
@courtsk97
taztoes @yasmeen_jakoet15 let's do it!
simz_zulu I want this shirt @wiz_molefe
wiz_molefe Nice shirt @simz_zulu u must
have indeed 🙌

Figure 21: Some of the comments on the posts from Mr Price's Instagram collaboration with Niquita Bento that show the followers want to replicate the post and buy the shirt featured, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

In addition, collaborating with Instagram Influencer Niquita Bento has given the brand unique content that the brand did not need to create. Partnering with the influencer has given the brand a credible source of trendy, high quality, engaging content to use on its Instagram page. Mr Price has shared the images Niquita created as part of the campaign on their Instagram account. The 3 images the brand shared on their Instagram account for this collaboration received over 3000 likes and more than 40 comments. The comments by the audience clearly show that these images have

inspired them to buy the shirt and wear it in a similar way. This content was published on Elle magazine's website as well as on Niquita's Instagram account, exposing new audiences to the brand. Sharing the branded content on other platforms directs consumers towards the brand's Instagram page and creates brand awareness among the Influencer's follower network. This Influencer collaboration has allowed Mr Price to tap into the influencer's follower network and create brand awareness.

6.6.1.2 Mr Price Instagram Influencer Collaboration Case Study 2:

Influencers and Events

Another effective way Mr Price uses influencer marketing is to make the influencers part of the brand's events. Inviting influencers to the brand's events not only allows Mr Price to build a relationship with the influencer; it also gives the influencer a branded experience to share with their followers (McLuckie, 2016). In addition, it attracts more consumers to brand events if they get to meet the influencers. In this instance the brand partnered with photographer Alessio La Ruffa, who has more than 30 000 followers on Instagram (@alessiolar, 2016), to organise an Instagram meet up with fans 62 weeks ago, which increased foot traffic to the event and gave the influencer as well as the consumers a unique brand experience to share on Instagram.



Figure 22: Shows an example of the influencer collaboration for an event post on Mr Price's Instagram account, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

The event is centred on taking beautiful Instagram images, thus the brand is giving consumers a branded experience and encouraging them to share the experience on Instagram. The brand is using the influencer as a mediator to build a relationship with consumers (Booth & Matic, 2011). When the brand collaborates with influencers, consumers associate the familiarity and social influence of the influencer with the brand (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). Collaborating with influencers for events is the most successful influencer collaboration method for marketers according to the State of Influencer Engagement Report 2015 (Augure) as this allows brands to make the event a more memorable experience for audiences when it involves their favourite Instagram influencer.

6.6.1.3 Mr Price Instagram Influencer Collaboration Case Study 3:

Using influencers as part of existing campaigns

Likewise, collaborating with influencers as part of the brand's existing campaigns is an effective way to increase the engagement and follower participation of Instagram campaigns (Augure, 2015).



Figure 23: Shows an example of the influencer collaboration as part of an existing campaign post on Mr Price's Instagram account, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

This is especially effective if the campaign is continuous. Mr Price's branded hashtag campaign #mrpmystyle encourages consumers to tag the brand in Instagram posts of themselves in Mr Price clothing and the brand reposts the best images (McLuckie, 2016). Since this campaign has been running for a while consumers tend to forget about it or only participate once. In order to increase consumers' participation in the campaign, the brand shares posts of influencers using the #mrpmystyle hashtag in their branded posts on Instagram (McLuckie, 2016). Using influencers to participate in Instagram campaigns, as an example to show consumers how to participate is an effective motivator (Keller & Fay, 2016). Consumers may recreate influencers' behaviour on Instagram thus seeing their favourite influencer participate in a brand campaign may inspire consumers to do the same (Abidin, 2016). Influencers' social media practices have become trending behaviours on these platforms (Abidin, 2016; Hardey, 2015) thus, seeing an influencer participate in the campaign will convince consumers it is trendy to participate.

6.6.1.4 Mr Price Instagram Influencer Collaboration Case Study 4: Sponsored Posts



Figure 24: Shows an example of the sponsored post influencer collaboration on the influencer's Instagram account, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @fashionbreed

Furthermore, brands sponsoring posts about products on an influencer's Instagram account is one of the most popular forms of brand-influencer collaborations on Instagram (Augure, 2015). Mr Price sent this customised purse to influencer, Aqeelah Harron-Ally for her to post about. The purse is part of a limited edition, capsule collection where the brand collaborated with international designer Henry Holland. This item was sent to the influencer as a gift for her to post about the new limited edition collection. Sending an influencer items from a new collection for them to post about allows the brand to harness the influencer's status as a trendsetter to draw their followers' attention to the new collection. Consumers go to the social media platform as a source of inspiration to learn about new trends and how to wear new items of clothing (Abidin, 2016). Thus, using an influencer to introduce consumers to a new collection is an effective way to familiarise consumers' with the brands new clothing and create a demand for it (Abidin, 2016).

6.7 Mr Price's Instagram Brand Management Approach

Having an effective Instagram management strategy in place is imperative to running a successful brand page on this platform (Carah & Shaul, 2015). Mr Price employs several procedures to measure the success of its content and track consumer engagement (McLuckie, 2016).

6.7.1 Mr Price's Instagram management strategy

Mr price's audience is at the centre of the brand's Instagram strategy and part of managing the page effectively is researching who their audience is what kind of content they prefer. "We continuously try to reinvent our content and come up with new and exciting concepts, campaigns, design and competitions to keep them hooked" (McLuckie, 2016). In addition to carefully planning content the brand employs analytics tools to track the performance of their page. Ensuring their Instagram audience remains engaged is a key part of the brand's evaluation process. "We use Fanpagekarma⁷ to continuously analyse our posts, reach, engagement etc. and track their success"(McLuckie, 2016). The brand also tracks its talkability and brand sentiment to measure the ROI of its Instagram account (McLuckie, 2016).

⁷ A social media analytics tool.

Mr Price tracks consumers' engagement with the brand on Instagram in order to determine the success of their brand presence on Instagram.

6.7.2 Mr Price's Instagram Account Customer Service and Reputation Management

Additionally, social media, and Instagram in particular, have become customer service tools for brands (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011). Since consumers take to Instagram to share their brand experiences, good or bad, brands need an effective strategy to manage complaints and customer service on Instagram (Jaakonmäki, Müller & Vom Brocke, 2017).



leannedavids #feels ...waiting for assistance for my refund for an online order that did not go through!!! #mrponline #websiteissues... very slow to rectify!!!

mrpfashion @leannedavids please pop a mail to help@mrp.com with your contact number so we can contact you directly. Thanks

Figure 25: Shows an example of the brands responsive approach to customers' Instagram comments, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

Mr Price's approach to customer service on Instagram is to be as helpful and efficient as possible. "We believe in effective customer services and our objective is to reply to every Instagram comment" (McLuckie, 2016). While the brand has not been responding to every single Instagram comment, there has been a distinct effort to respond to enquiries and complaints on Instagram (McLuckie, 2016). Evident from figures 25 and 26, the brand has taken the approach of directing consumers to their customer service department taking the complaint or request offline and out of the public domain. Thus the consumers get a public response on Instagram validating their query but the problem is solved in private (McLuckie, 2016).

firdous_m Hi! I am looking for a certain beanie which I have seen in store at the Southgate MRP, i cannot find it at any other store near to me and it does not seem to be on the MRP online store! Please help thanks

mimixqueen @tanya_kleinsmith fav winter colour 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

de_sylvester Love it, so amazing! 😊💙

meganngoedeman @mrpfashion are these boots in all the stores?

chaneltodd Are these boots from mrp? @mrpfashion

mrpfashion @firdous_m please may you pop a mail to help@mrp.com so we can contact you directly to assist. Thanks :)

mrpfashion @chaneltodd @tshidiso_m the boots will be online at MRP.com tomorrow at R239.99 :) Thanks

Figure 26: Shows an example of the brands responsive approach to customers' Instagram comments, 2016, Instagram. Image courtesy of @mrpfashion

Furthermore, consumers frequently post comments inquiring about the availability of specific items and Mr price responds to these queries efficiently as these interactions can lead to sales (Kim, Gupta & Koh, 2011). The brand takes a similar approach as it does with complaints, by validating the consumer's request with a response but directing the consumer to customer service to resolve the request in private. This is one of the most common types of comments Mr Price receives on Instagram (McLuckie, 2016). Instagram followers inquiring about the availability of products shows the brand that consumers are interested in their products and do want to see it on Instagram (Peters *et al.*, 2013).

6.7.3 Using Instagram Ads

The brand uses Instagram ads to improve the reach of their content (McLuckie, 2016). Instagram ads also allow the brand to direct its posts at a targeted audience. Audience targeting opportunities are similar to Facebook allowing the brand to select location, demographics, interests, behaviour, custom audiences and lookalike audiences (Wang, Kim & Malthouse, 2015). Through target ads on Instagram the brand is able to reach new audiences that are more likely to interact than on other platforms (McLuckie, 2016).

6.8 Conclusion

Mr Price's approach to their Instagram account is evidently working, as the brand is the most followed South African fashion retailer on Instagram (Blacksmoke Digital Agency, 2016; Goldstuck and Wronski 2016). The brand continuously garners high levels of engagement on its posts, and its posts continue to rank among the top Instagram posts shared by South African brands (Goldstuck and Wronski, 2016). Moreover, the brand's consistency, high quality aesthetic, trendy content and strategic collaborations with influencers have made it the top South African fashion retailer on Instagram (Blacksmoke Digital Agency, 2016) and consistently generated high levels of audience interaction (Goldstuck and Wronski, 2016). Lastly, research has shown that the following posts receive more engagement; human faces (preferably close up), real customers using the brand's products, light colours perform better than darker colours and photos tend to outperform videos (Bakhshi, Shamma & Gilbert, 2014). Mr Price regularly incorporates all of these types of content on their Instagram account and it clearly generates high engagement levels for the brand (McLuckie, 2016).

6.9 Practical and Managerial Implications – What brands can learn from Mr Price on Instagram

6.9.1 Know your audience and the content they want. It is imperative for brands to inform their content strategy based on the preferences of their target audience. A brand's success on Instagram depends on how well they reach their audience, thus brand managers have to keep abreast of current trends that their audience will find interesting.

6.9.2 Leverage the influence popular content. One of the reasons Mr Price's Instagram content performs so well is because the brand incorporates pop culture trends and celebrities which audiences love. In addition, posting about trends and the latest crazes means the audience associates this fashion forwardness with the brand in a positive way, which increases engagement.

6.9.3 Collaborate with influencers effectively. Another effective Instagram strategy that has yielded effective results for Mr Price is effectively collaborating with the right influencers. Collaborating with influencers to encourage consumer participation in campaigns and events and has allowed the brand to grow its audience and increase participation in the campaigns.

Chapter 2:

7. Brand Sponsored Influencer Posts Content Analysis

Brand sponsored posts on influencers' Instagram accounts have emerged as a viable marketing channel to influence consumers' purchase decisions (Augure, 2015). Five top influencers that regularly collaborate with brands were identified and ten sponsored brand posts over a period of several months were selected for analysis from their feeds. The posts' metadata was captured and then the posts were coded according to the following categories: brands tagged, type of post, type of campaign, local or international brand, brand visibility and comments sentiment. Furthermore, the comments mentioning the brand were also coded according to type of brand mention and sentiment of the brand mention.

7.1 Influencers Background

7.1.1 Baked the Blog – Aisha Baker-Parnell



Figure 27: Aisha Baker-Parnell from Baked the Blog's Instagram bio, 2016, Instagram. @bakedtheblog

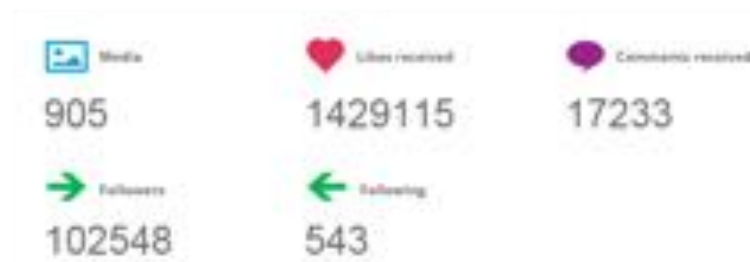


Figure 28: Aisha Baker-Parnell from Baked the Blog's Instagram account statistics, 2016, Ink361.com

With an Instagram following of more than 100 000, Aisha has been nominated for the Nickelodeon Kids Choice awards and exclusively partnered with international cosmetics brand L’Oreal to launch a product (Elle, 2015). She also has international collaborations with big brands such as the Dubai Tourism Industry and E! Entertainment Africa. The blogger joined Instagram in 2013 and her Instagram account has a 1.54% user engagement rate for likes.

7.1.2 Trevor Stuurman



Figure 29: Trevor Stuurman’s Instagram account bio, 2016, Instagram, @trevor_stuurman

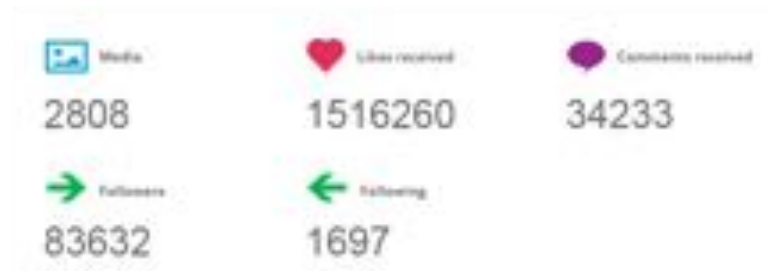


Figure 30: Trevor Stuurman’s Instagram account statistics, 2016, Ink361.com

Trevor joined Instagram in 2013 and, since then his followers have grown to more than 80 000 followers and he has partnered with high-end international brands such as Cartier, Prada and Gucci. The influencer also frequently works with local brands, such as Woolworths, to forecast trends and shoot campaigns. He has been featured in magazines such as Elle and GQ South Africa (GQ, 2016). His current user engagement for likes is 0.65%.

7.1.3 Fashionista CT – Lauren Campbell



Figure 31: Lauren Campbell from Fashionista CT's Instagram bio, 2016, Instagram, @fashionista_ct



Figure 32: Lauren Campbell from Fashionista CT's Instagram account statistics, 2016, Ink361.com

Since joining Instagram in 2013, has been featured on Vuzu TV's show, Rich Kids and is the brand ambassador of Racing it's a Rush. She has amassed a following of more than 40 000 fans on Instagram. The influencer has a user engagement rate of 1.13% for likes.

7.1.4 Fashionbreed Blog – Aqeelah Harron



Figure 33: Aqeelah Harron-Ally from Fashionbreed Blog's Instagram account bio, 2016, Instagram, @fashionbreed



Figure 34: Aqeelah Harron-Ally from Fashionbreed Blog's Instagram account statistics, 2016, Ink361.com

Aqeelah started her blog Fashionbreed in 2010, and joined Instagram in 2012. She frequently collaborates with international and local brands, and has magazine features and TV appearances. She is one of the South African influencers of choice for global apparel brand Adidas Originals (Elle, 2016b) and her Instagram account has a user engagement rate of 1.09% for likes.

7.1.5 Just Jade Blog – Jade Robertson



Figure 35: Jade Robertson from Just Jade Blog's Instagram account bio, 2016, Instagram, @justjadeblog



Figure 36: Jade Robertson from Just Jade Blog's Instagram account statistics, 2016, Ink361.com

Jade started her blog in 2012 and joined Instagram in 2013. She is the South African influencer of choice for international brands such as Paul's Boutique and Steve Madden. She presents her own radio show and has been featured in local magazines and frequently collaborates with international alcohol brands like Skyy Vodka and Belvedere. This influencer's user engagement rate for likes is 0.76%.

7.2 Findings

7.2.1 Type of Brands

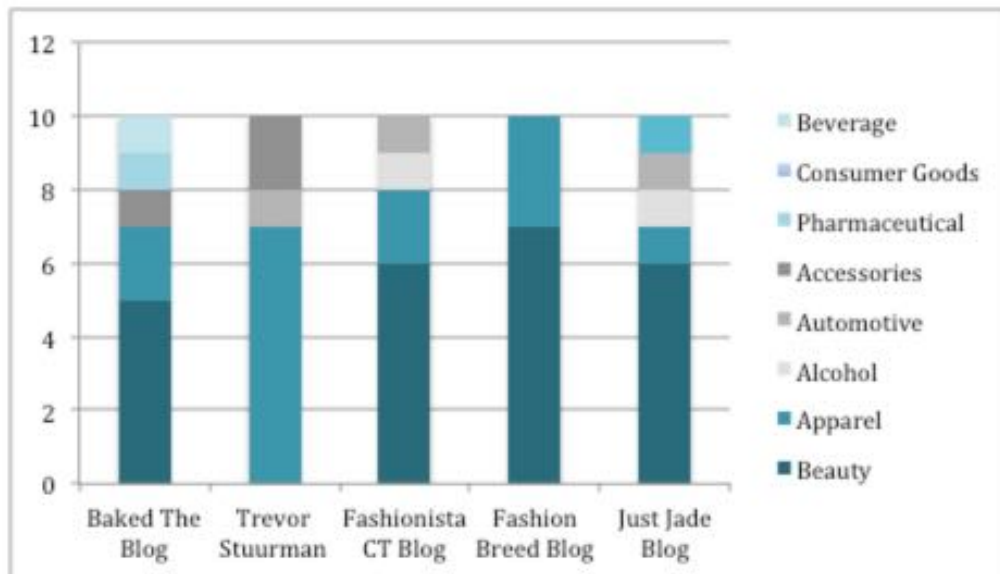


Table 1: Shows the type of brands each influencer collaborated with

The baked the blog sample had 5 posts of a beauty brand, 2 posts of an apparel brand, 1 post of an accessories brand, 1 post of a pharmaceutical brand and 1 post of beverage brand. Trevor Stuurman's sampled posts had 7 posts of an apparel brand, 2 posts of an accessories brand and 1 post of an automotive brand. The posts from the Fashionista CT Blog had 6 images of a beauty brand, 2 posts of an apparel brand, 1 post of an alcoholic brand and 1 post of automotive brand. Sampled posts from Fashion Breed Blog contained 7 images of a beauty brand and 3 images of an apparel brand. The posts selected from Just Jade Blog consisted of 6 images of a beauty brand, 1 image of an apparel brand, 1 image of an alcoholic brand, 1 image of a consumer goods brand and 1 image of an automotive brand. (See table 1).

In total 24 posts were images featuring a beauty brand, 15 images featuring an apparel brand, 3 images of an accessories brand, 3 posts of an automotive brand, 2 images of an alcoholic brand and 1 image each of a beverage brand, a pharmaceutical brand and a consumer goods brand. The most prevalent brand influencers partnered with in the sponsored posts was Beauty brands. Fashion Breed Blog's sampled posts contained the most images featuring a beauty brand and Trevor Stuurman's sampled posts contained the most images of an apparel brand.

7.2.2 Type of Post

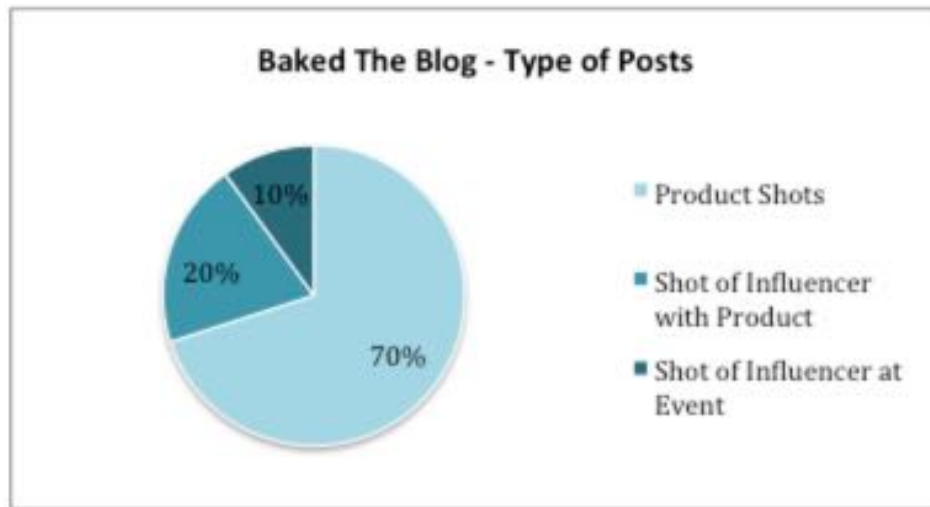


Table 2: Shows the total breakdown of the type of influencer posts for Baked the Blog's Instagram account

From the ten posts selected for analysis from Baked the blog, 7 were product shots, two were posts of the influencer with the product and one image was of the influencer at a brand event (see table 2). The most common type of brand sponsored post from the 10 Baked the blog posts was Product shots. The type of post with the most likes from the Baked the Blog sample was a shot of the influencer with the product that received 4592 likes (Appendix 3.1: 138 -139).

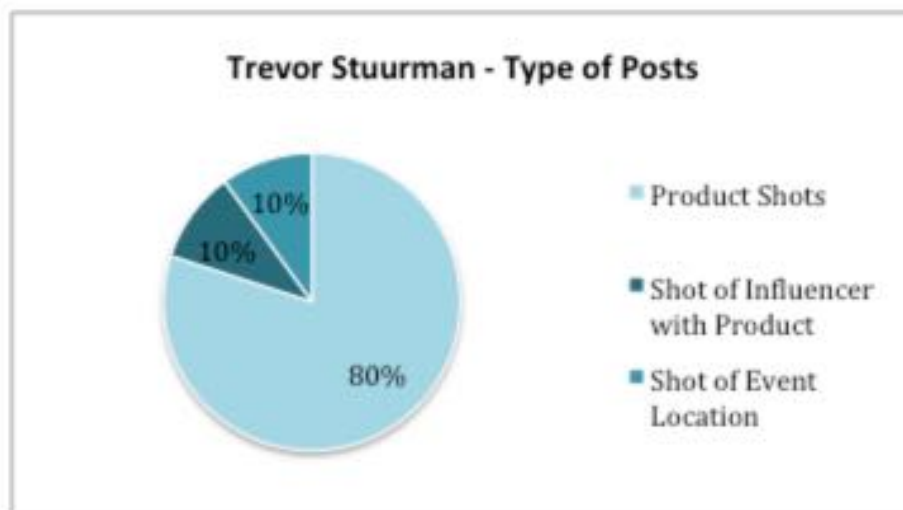


Table 3: Shows the total breakdown of the type of influencer posts for Trevor Stuurman's Instagram account

The ten sponsored brand posts selected for analysis from Trevor Stuurman’s Instagram account yielded 8 product shots, one post of the influencer with the product and post of the event location (see table 3). Similarly the most common type of post of the 10 images was product shots. The type of post from Trevor Stuurman’s sampled posts that had the most likes was a shot of the influencer with the product that received 1852 likes.

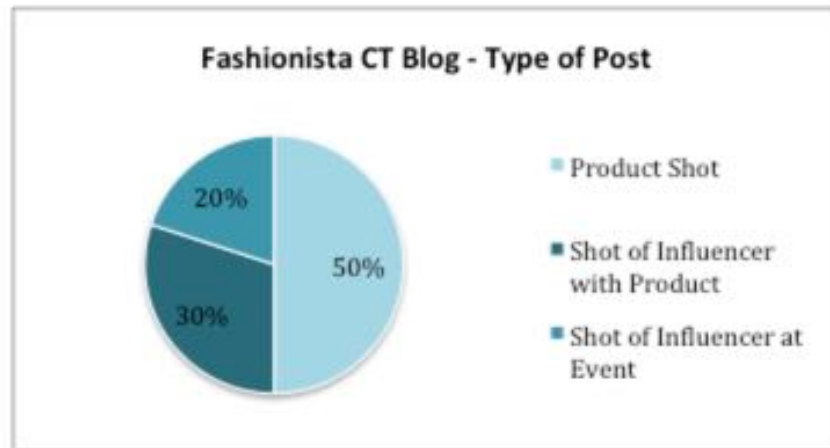


Table 4: Shows the total breakdown of the type of influencer posts for Fashionista CT’s Instagram account

Likewise, the ten posts analysed from Fashionista CT blog’s Instagram account had 3 product shots, 5 shots of the influencer with the product and 2 shots of the influencer at the event (see table 4). Shots of the influencer with the branded product were the most common type of brand-sponsored post for this influencer. The type of post with the most likes from the Fashionista CT Blog sample was a shot of the influencer with the product, which had 7637 likes.

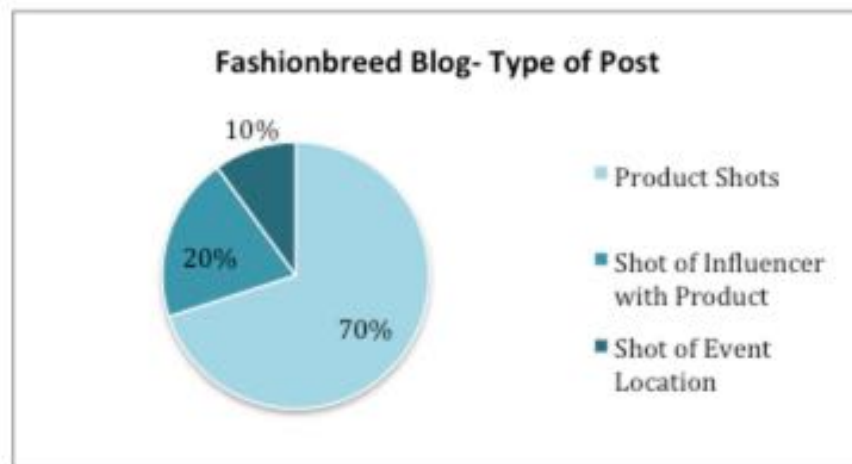


Table 5: Shows the total breakdown of the type of influencer posts for Fashionbreed Blog’s Instagram account

In addition, the ten posts from Fashionbreed Blog’s Instagram account contained 7 product shots, 2 shots of the influencer with the product and 1 post of the Brand’s event location (see table 5). From the 10 brand sponsored posts selected for analysis, product shots was the most prevalent type of post. The type of post with the most likes from the Fashionbreed Blog sample was a shot of the influencer with the product, which received 941 likes.

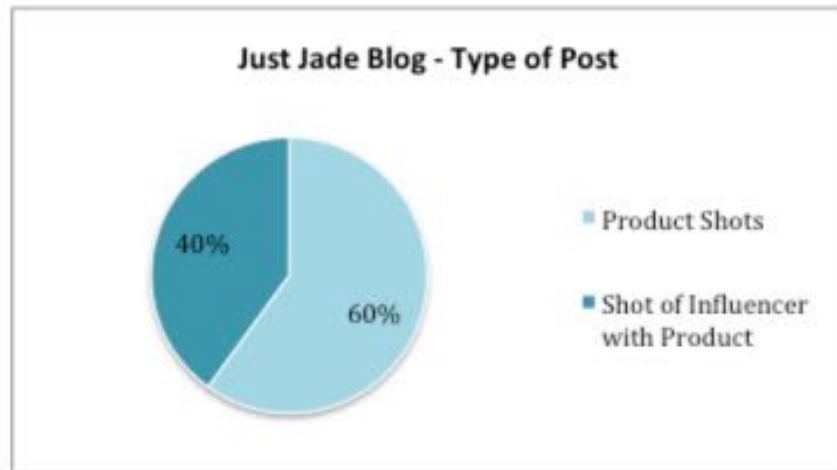


Table 6: Shows the total breakdown of the type of influencer posts for Just Jade Blog’s Instagram account

Lastly, the ten posts analysed from Just Jade Blog’s Instagram feed had 6 product shots and 4 images of the influencer with the product (see table 6). The type of post with the most likes from the Just Jade Blog sample was a shot of the influencer with the product, which received 739 likes.

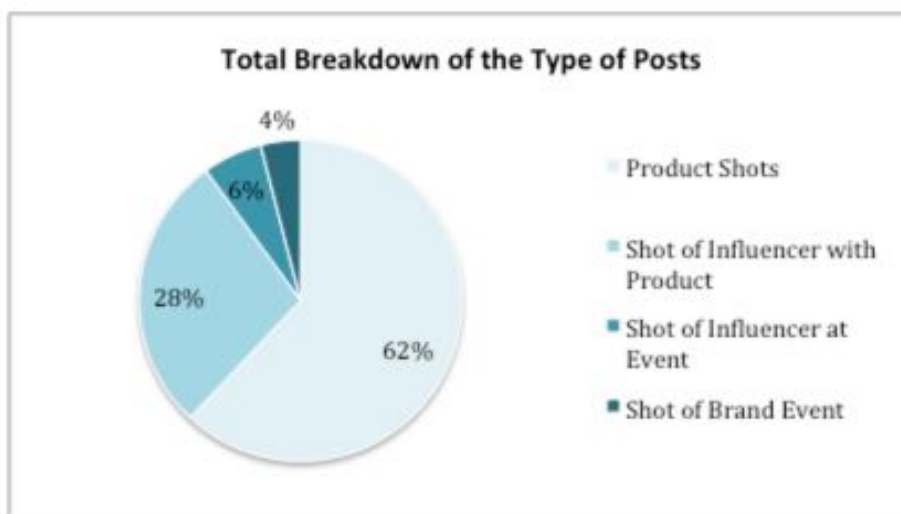


Table 7: Shows the total breakdown of the type of influencer posts for all the sampled influencer’s Instagram accounts

In total there were 31 product shots, 14 shots of the influencer with the product and 3 shots of the influencer at the event and 2 shots of the brand’s event (see table 7). The most common type of brand sponsored post from the influencers’ Instagram posts selected for analysis was product shots.

7.2.3 Type of Campaign

From the sampled posts of Baked the Blog’s Instagram feed, 5 were post of press drops, 4 of the posts were taken at a brand event and 1 post was to let her followers know that she would be taking over the brand’s Instagram account. The ten sampled posts from Trevor Stuurman’s Instagram account contained 5 press drop posts, 3 posts taken at a brand event, 1 post of collaboration and 1 post informing his followers that he would be participating in a trend forecast with the brand. Fashionista CT Blog’s sampled posts encompassed 2 posts of press drops and 8 posts taken at brand events. The Fashionbreed sample of posts contained 1 press drop, 3 posts taken at brand events, 2 posts to inform her followers of a specific brand promotion such as a special offer or new product, 2 posts to create awareness and encourage participation in the brands’ competition, 1 post of a collaboration with the brand for content and one post of an in-store promotion. Sampled posts from Just Jade blog had 3 press drops, 2 posts promoting special offers, 2 posts taken at brand events and 1 post each to encourage participation in a brand competition, let her followers know about an Instagram takeover and an in-store promotion.

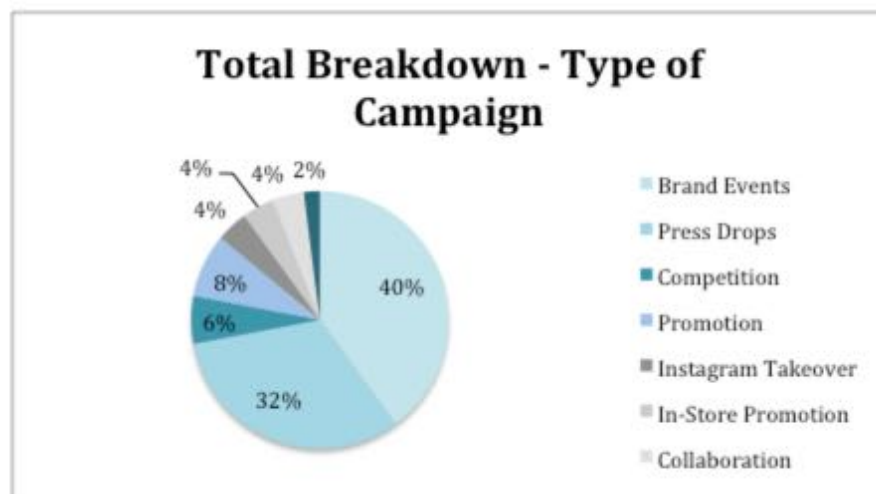


Table 8: Shows the total breakdown of the type of campaign of the influencer posts for all the sampled influencer’s Instagram accounts

The total sample had 16 posts that were part of a press drop campaign and 20 posts taken at brand events, 3 posts of a brand competition, 4 posts of brand promotion, 2 posts of an influencer taking over the brand's Instagram account, 2 posts of collaboration, 2 posts of an in-store promotion and 1 post of a trend forecast (see table 8).

7.2.4 Local vs. International Brands

The post sample from Baked the Blog had only one post where the brand she partnered with was a South African brand, namely Voost, 66 weeks ago. From the ten sponsored posts sampled from Trevor Stuurman's Instagram account 2 were from local brands, namely Woolworths (15 weeks ago) and Pichulik Africa (54 weeks ago). Sampled posts from the Fashionista CT blog had no posts featuring a local brand. The Fashionbreed Blog sampled posts had 1 post partnering with a local brand, namely Old Khaki (2 weeks ago). The sampled posts from Just Jade Blog contained 1 post by a local brand: Woolworths (23 weeks).

According to the posts sampled, the most common local brand collaborating with South African influencers is Woolworths. The international brand collaborating the most with influencers in the sampled posts was Revlon and secondly MAC Cosmetics and Benefit.

7.2.5 Brand Visibility

The Baked the Blog sample had 6 posts with a clearly recognisable branded product visible in the shot, 2 images with the brand's logo and product visible and 2 images with no visible logo or product. Trevor Stuurman's sampled posts had 3 posts with a visible branded product, 3 posts with a logo and branded product visible in the image and 2 posts with only the brand's logo and no product and 2 posts with no visible logo or product. The sampled posts from Fashionista CT blog had 2 posts where the brand's logo was visible on the product, 1 post with a clearly visible branded product, 6 posts that contained a visible brand logo and one post with no visible brand product or logo. Sampled posts from Fashionbreed Blog had 2 posts with a branded product visible in the image, 5 posts with a logo and product visible, 2 posts with a visible

brand logo and 1 post with no recognisable brand presence in the image. Posts sampled from Just Jade Blog’s Instagram account had 1 post with a visible brand product, 4 posts with a visible logo and branded product, 4 posts with a visible brand logo and 1 post with no visible brand presence

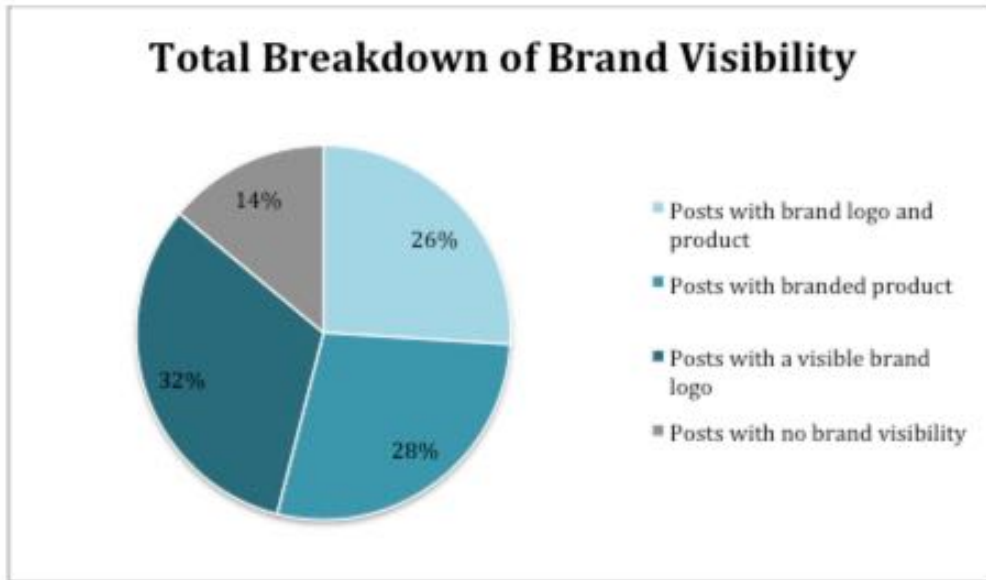


Table 9: Shows the total breakdown of the brand visibility of influencer posts for all the sampled influencers’ Instagram accounts

In total there were 13 posts with a logo and product visible in the image, 16 posts with a recognisable branded product, 7 posts with no visible brand presence and 14 posts with a visible brand logo (see table 9). The most prevalent type of brand presence from the sampled posts, were posts with a branded product.

7.2.6 Comment Sentiment

The comments of the sampled posts were analysed to establish the overall sentiment, in order to highlight consumers’ perception of the posts. The comments were coded as positive, neutral or negative. Posts where the total amount of positive and neutral comments were more than negative comments were categories as having an overall positive sentiment. In addition, the frequency and sentiment of brand mentions were analysed to determine the capacity of brand-sponsored posts to initiate brand related discussions among consumers.

7.2.6.1 Baked the Blog Comments Sentiment Analysis

BAKED THE BLOG									
POST	COMMENTS			SENTIMENT	BRAND MENTION				
Post 1	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	4
	32	-	-			4	Admiration	Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 2	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	5	8	-			2	Product Inquiry Response	Neutral	2
								Negative	-
Post 3	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	2
	13	1	-			2	Admiration Mention	Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 4	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	3
	5	5	-			4	Product Inquiry x2 Response x1 Admiration x1	Neutral	1
								Negative	-
Post 5	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	1	-	-					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 6	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	7	3	-					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 7	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	5	1	-					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 8	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	2	6	-					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 9	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	-	8	1					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 10	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	1
	4	1	-			1	Admiration	Neutral	-
								Negative	-
TOTAL	74	33	1	POSITIVE	5	13		10	3

Table 10: Shows the Comments Sentiment Analysis of Baked the Blog's sampled Instagram posts

From the sampled Instagram posts from Baked the Blog, 2 posts had only positive comments, 7 posts had positive and neutral comments and 1 post had neutral comments and 1 negative comment. In total 74 positive comments were made, 33 neutral comments and 1 negative comment. All the Baked the Blog sampled posts had a positive sentiment. The sample contained 5 posts with no brand mention in the comments. The most common type of brand mention in the comments was admiration, with 6 comments mentioning the brand in an adoring way. Three posts

mentioning the brand were consumers inquiring about the brand or product in the image and 1 brand response to the post. From the 13 comments mentioning the brand 10 were positive and 3 were neutral.

7.2.6.2 Trevor Stuurman Comments Sentiment Analysis

TREVOR STUUTRRMAN									
POST	COMMENTS			SENTIMENT	BRAND MENTION				
Post 1	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	5	2	-					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 2	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	18	2	-					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 3	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	10
	35	4	-			10	Admiration	Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 4	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	1	3	-					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 5	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	1
	34	3	-			1	Admiration	Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 6	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	12	1	-					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 7	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-
	7	1	-					Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 8	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	1
	32	2	-			1	Brand Response	Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 9	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	1
	5	3	-			1	Admiration	Neutral	-
								Negative	-
Post 10	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	2
	9	1	-			2	Admiration Brand Response	Neutral	-
								Negative	-
TOTAL	158	22	-	POSITIVE	5	15		15	-

Table 11: Shows the Comments Sentiment Analysis of Trevor Stuurman's sampled Instagram posts

The sampled posts from Trevor Stuurman's Instagram account all had only positive and neutral comments. Overall there were 158 positive comments and 22 neutral comments and no posts had negative comments. All the posts from the Trevor

Stuurman sample had a positive sentiment. From the sampled posts 5 had no brand mention in the comments. There were 15 comments mentioning the brand, of which 13 were consumers' expression of admiration and 2 were brand responses to the influencer's post. All 15 brand mentions were positive.

7.2.6.3 Fashionista CT Blog Comments Sentiment Analysis

FASHIONISTA CT										
POST	COMMENTS			SENTIMENT	BRAND MENTION					
Post 1	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	1	
	8	-	-			1		Admiration	Neutral	-
									Negative	-
Post 2	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	60	2	-						Neutral	-
									Negative	-
Post 3	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	43	3	-						Neutral	-
									Negative	-
Post 4	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	36	7	-			1		Mention	Neutral	1
									Negative	-
Post 5	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	40	6	-						Neutral	-
									Negative	-
Post 6	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	48	2	-						Neutral	-
									Negative	-
Post 7	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	4	
	20	2	-			4		Admiration x3 Recommendation x1	Neutral	-
									Negative	-
Post 8	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	15	-	-						Neutral	-
									Negative	-
Post 9	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	4	4	2			2		Product Inquiry Response	Neutral	2
									Negative	-
Post 10	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	31	2	-						Neutral	-
									Negative	-
TOTAL	313	28	2	POSITIVE	7	8		5	3	

Table 12: Shows the Comments Sentiment Analysis of Fashionista CT's sampled Instagram posts

The Fashionista CT Blog sample had 2 posts with only positive comments, 8 posts with positive and neutral comments and 1 post with positive, neutral and negative comments. In total 313 positive comments, 28 neutral comments and 2 negative comments. All posts sampled from Fashionista CT Blog's Instagram account had a positive sentiment. There were 7 posts that did not contain any brand mention in the comments section. From the 8 comments that mentioned the brand 4 were admiration comments, 1 mention, 1 product inquiry and 1 response to the product inquiry. In addition, 5 of the comments that mentioned the brand were positive and 3 comments were neutral.

7.2.6.4 FashionBreed Comments Sentiment Analysis

The Fashion Breed Blog sample of posts had 6 posts with only positive comments, 1 post with only neutral comments, 1 post with positive, neutral and negative comments, 1 post with positive and neutral comments and lastly 1 post with positive and negative comments. Collectively the influencer's followers made 29 positive comments, 5 neutral comments and 2 negative comments. One post had a neutral sentiment and 9 posts had a positive sentiment. Among the posts sampled from Fashionbreed Blog's Instagram account 3 had no brand mention in the comments section. There were 8 comments that mentioned the brand, of which 5 were consumers' expression of admiration and 1 brand response, 1 product inquiry and 1 complaint about the brand. In total, there were 6 positive, 1 neutral and 1 negative comment mentioning the brand in the sampled posts.

FASHIONBREED BLOG										
POST	COMMENTS			SENTIMENT	BRAND MENTION					
Post 1	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	Admiration	Positive	1	
	8	-	-			1		Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 2	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES		Positive	-	
	60	2	-					Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 3	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES		Positive	-	
	43	3	-					Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 4	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	Mention	Positive	-	
	36	7	-			1		Neutral	1	
								Negative	-	
Post 5	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES		Positive	-	
	40	6	-					Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 6	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES		Positive	-	
	48	2	-					Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 7	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	Admiration x3 Recommendation x1	Positive	4	
	20	2	-			4		Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 8	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES		Positive	-	
	15	-	-					Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 9	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	Product Inquiry Response	Positive	-	
	4	4	2			2		Neutral	2	
								Negative	-	
Post 10	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES		Positive	-	
	31	2	-					Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
TOTAL	313	28	2	POSITIVE	7	8		5	3	-

Table 13: Shows the Comments Sentiment Analysis of Fashionbreed Blog's sampled Instagram posts

7.2.6.5 Just Jade Blog Comments Sentiment Analysis

The posts sampled from Just Jade Blog's Instagram account had 6 posts with only positive comments, 2 posts with no comments, 1 post with positive and neutral comments and 1 post with positive, neutral and negative comments. This influencer's sampled posts yielded 66 positive comments, 22 neutral comments and 1 negative comment. The 8 posts that had comments all had a positive sentiment.

JUST JADE BLOG										
POST	COMMENTS			SENTIMENT	BRAND MENTION					
Post 1	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	5	
	6	2	-			6	Admiration x4 Mention x2	Neutral	2	
								Negative	-	
Post 2	P	N	N-	-	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	-	-	-			-	-	Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 3	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	4	-	-			-	-	Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 4	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	3	
	5	-	-			3	Admiration x3	Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 5	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	34	20	1			-	-	Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 6	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	1	
	4	-	-			2	Admiration Product Inquiry	Neutral	1	
								Negative	-	
Post 7	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	2	-	-			-	-	Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 8	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	2	
	2	-	-			2	Admiration x2	Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 9	P	N	N-	Positive	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	1	
	18	-	-			1	Admiration	Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
Post 10	P	N	N-	-	NO	YES	TYPE	Positive	-	
	-	-	-			-	-	Neutral	-	
								Negative	-	
TOTAL	66	22	1	POSITIVE	3	15		12	3	-

Table 14: Shows the Comments Sentiment Analysis of Just Jade Blog's sampled Instagram posts

There were 3 posts from the Just Jade Blog sample that did not mention the brand in the comments section. From the sampled posts' comments 15 mentioned the brands. Among the comments mentioning the brand 12 were consumers expressing their admiration for the brand, 2 mentioned the brand and 1 comment was a product inquiry. Collectively the sampled Instagram posts from Just Jade Blog had 12 positive brand mentions, 3 neutral brand mentions and negative brand mentions in the comments section.

7.2.6.6 Total Breakdown of Comments Sentiment Analysis

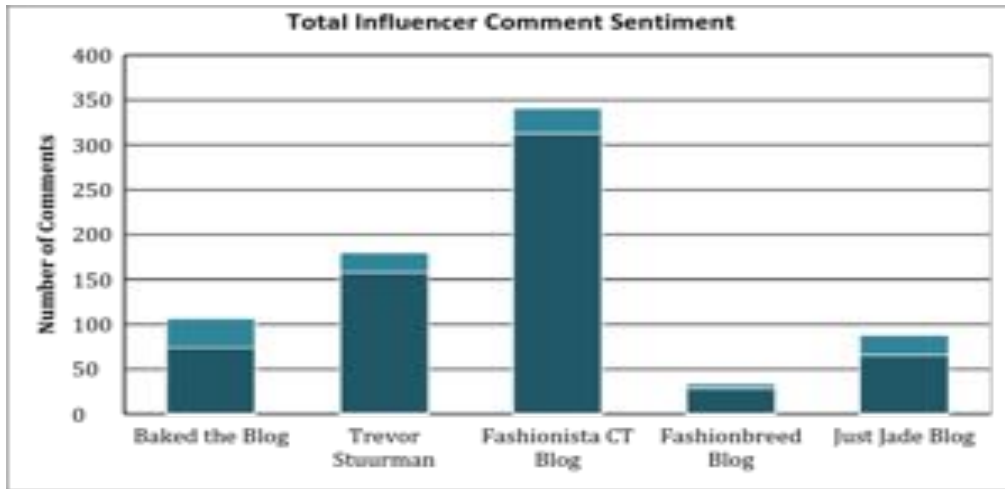


Table 15: Shows the total breakdown of the comments sentiment of the influencer posts for all the sampled influencers' Instagram accounts

From the 108 comments of the Baked the Blog sampled posts 68.5% were positive comments, 30.5 % neutral comments and 1% negative comments. The 180 comments of the Trevor Stuurman posts were 88% positive and 12% neutral and no negative comments. Fashionista CT Blog's sampled Instagram posts had 343 comments, of which 91% were positive, 8 % were neutral and 1% of comments were negative. The 36 comments from the Fashionbreed sample of posts were 80% positive, 14% neutral and 6% negative. Among the 89 comments from the Just Jade Blog sampled posts 74% were positive, 25% were neutral and 1% were negative. Fashionista CT Blog's sampled posts had the highest percentage of positive comments and the Fashionbreed Blog had the highest percentage of negative comments

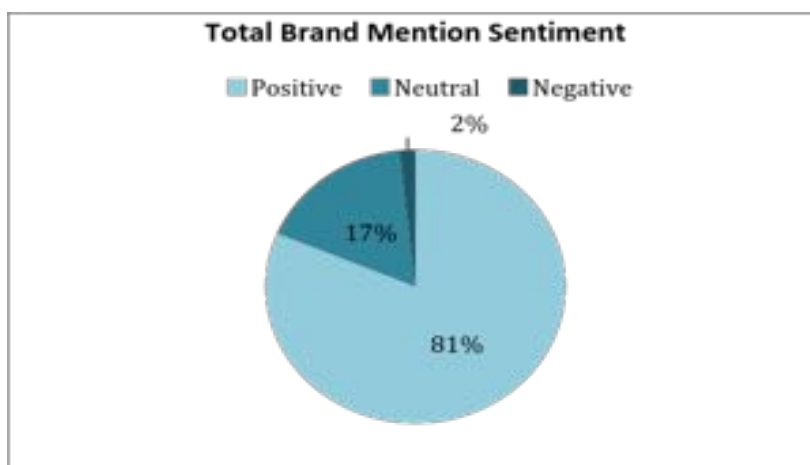


Table 16: Shows the total brand mention sentiment of the influencer posts for all the sampled influencers' Instagram accounts

From all the sampled posts there were 756 comments, of which 59 comments mentioned the brand. Among the comments mentioning the brand 48 (81%) were positive, 10 (17%) were neutral and 1 (2%) was negative.

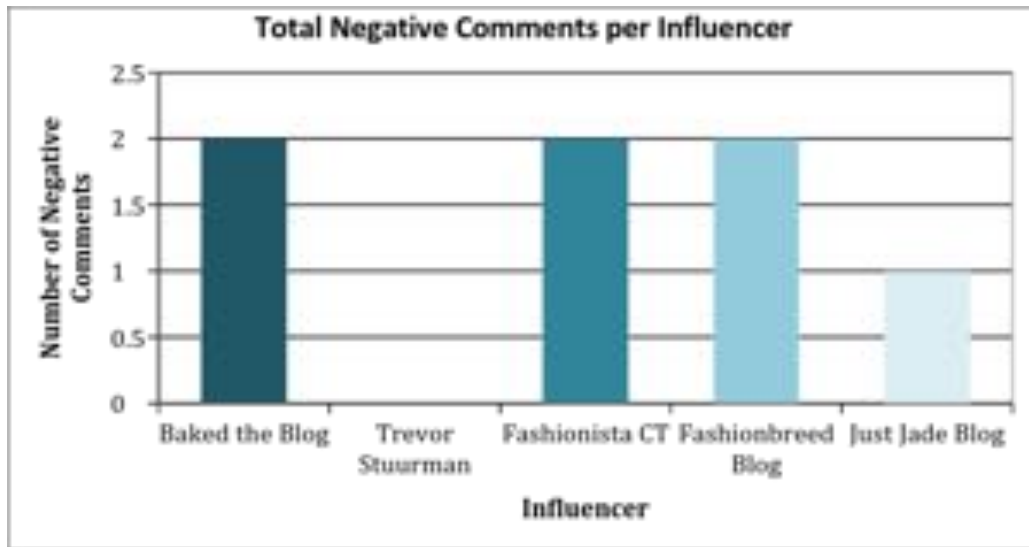


Table 17: Shows the total breakdown of negative comments per influencer of the influencer posts for all the sampled influencers' Instagram accounts

There were a total of 7 negative comments on the sampled posts from all the influencers. Among the comments from the posts of Baked the Blog, Fashionista CT Blog and Fashionbreed Blog there were 2 negative comments each. Just Jade Blog's sampled Instagram posts had 1 negative comment and Trevor Stuurman's sampled posts did not contain any negative comments. The negative post was a consumer complaint on of the posts from the Fashionbreed Blog sample.

There were 41 consumer expressions of admiration, 6 product inquiries, 4 brand mentions, 3 influencer responses to consumers' brand related queries, 3 brand responses to the influencers' posts and 1 recommendation and complaint among the comments mentioning the brand. The most common type of brand mention in the influencers' sampled posts was consumers' expressions of admiration, followed by product inquiries. Among the comments from the posts the Baked the Blog sample 12% mentioned the brand. The Trevor Stuurman sample of posts had 8% of comments that mentioned the brand.

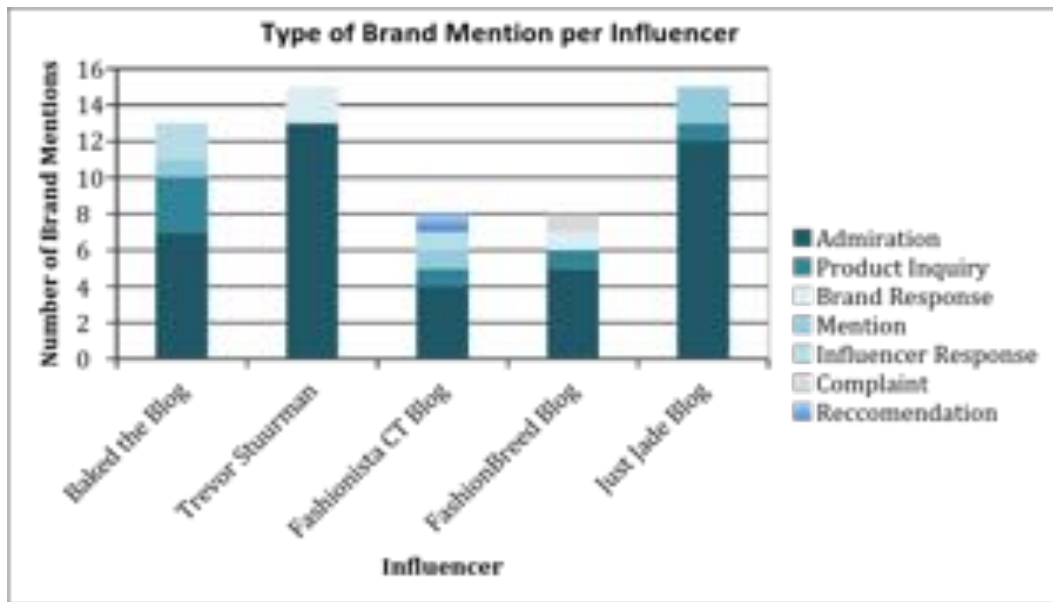


Table 18: Shows the total breakdown of the type of brand mention per influencer of the influencer posts for all the sampled influencers' Instagram accounts

From the comments on the Fashionista CT Blog sampled posts 2% mentioned the brand. Fashionbreed blog's sampled Instagram posts had 22% of comments that mentioned the brand. From all the comments made on the Just Jade Blog sampled posts 16.8% mentioned the brand. Fashionbreed Blog's posts had the highest rate of brand mentions in the comments section.

7.3 Discussion

7.3.1 Type of Brands

The most common type of brand partnering with the sampled South African influencers was beauty brands and the second most prevalent was apparel brands. Nearly half of the sampled posts (48%) featured a beauty brand and 30% featured an apparel brand. Since beauty and fashion brands find the visual nature of Instagram makes it the ideal platform to showcase their products, they are more likely to work with Instagram Influencers (Pathak, 2015). Nearly 60% of fashion and beauty brands employ an influencer marketing campaign and an additional 21% of brands are set to roll out an influencer marketing campaign over the next 12 months (Hardy, 2016).

All 4 female influencers' sampled posts featured a beauty brand in half or more than half of the images. Beauty and Fashion brands have higher rates of consumer interaction and engagement on Instagram, than other social media platforms (Pathak, 2015). Fashion and beauty brands have also spent more money on their Instagram marketing strategies, as this is the platform of choice for their target consumers and 40% of all brands that use user generated content on Instagram are beauty brands (Niziak, Makhija, & Yan, 2016). Since the product lines of beauty brands have to be displayed visually to show consumers the effect of the product the visual nature of Instagram is the ideal platform to reach its consumers (Pathak, 2015). The aspirational nature of Instagram content also appeals to more high-end beauty brands such as Benefit and MAC Cosmetics that partnered with the sampled influencers. Thus, the beauty brands partnering with the sampled influencers are employing an established Instagram marketing tactic that has proven successful globally.

Furthermore, among the influencers selected for analysis, Fashion Breed Blog had the most posts featuring a beauty brand. Since she works in the beauty industry and is the beauty editor of an online magazine she is more likely to work with and promote beauty brands on her Instagram page. Trevor Stuurman had more posts featuring an apparel brand than the other influencers sampled. His unique style and ability to combine items of clothing in creative ways is part of his online identity and he is regarded as pioneer in men's fashion (GQ, 2015). As a result he tends to post about clothing more, and more apparel brands partner with him to showcase their products on his Instagram account. Baked the Blog and Just Jade Blog's sampled posts had the most diversity among the type of brands they collaborated with, each partnering with 5 different types of brands. Since both these influencers' online identities are about an aspirational lifestyle and they post about more diverse themes, a wider range of brands have sought to use them as promotional apparatus on Instagram. Likewise, other brands also collaborating with South African influencers on Instagram include alcohol brands, automotive brands and accessories brands.

7.3.2 Types of posts

The most common type of post was product shots - 62% of all the posts sampled were product shots. Product shots are a relatively simple way for influencers to incorporate

branded content on their Instagram accounts and by curating the products they can integrate the aesthetic feel of the content into their Instagram feeds. Most of the branded product shots that influencers post on Instagram are carefully staged. The more the brand-sponsored image reflects the influencer's digital identity and blends in with the existing content on the influencers Instagram account, the more credible consumers may perceive the influencer's endorsement of the brand to be (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016). Thus, the more the influencer engages with the brand product in the post; the more likely consumers are to regard the recommendation as credible and the more likely the sponsored post is to positively influence the consumer's' purchase decision.

Additionally, the second most prevalent type of post was a shot of the influencer with the product. This type of post represented 28% of the sample. Although influencers used this type of brand collaboration post less frequently than product shots the influencers' followers engaged more with images featuring the influencer with the product. Consumers respond better to branded posts where the influencer is engaging with the product. According to Bakhshi, Shamma, & Gilbert, (2014) photos that contain a human face receive significantly more likes and comments than photos without a face. Likewise, most of the brands partnering with the influencers sell experience goods i.e. products that consumers can only gain the full knowledge of through personal experience (Huang & Lurie, 2009). Marketing experience goods relies heavily on brand reputation, word-of-mouth as well as demonstrations and reviews. Research has identified that consumers' perceived credibility of the influencer is an important factor determining consumers' reception of the sponsored brand message (Keller & Fay, 2016). This suggests that consumers find brand-sponsored posts more credible if the influencer is actually using the product in the post. Thus, credible product recommendations by influencers are an effective method of giving potential consumers the necessary information to reduce consumers perceived risk of purchase (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Keller & Fay, 2016; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014).

Moreover, the 2 types of brand-sponsored content (images of the influencer at the brand event and images of the brand event) in the Instagram posts sampled were the least used type of post. Only 2 of the images (4%) from the 50 sampled posts were of

a brand event without a visible branded product or the influencer in the image. Brand managers partner with influencers at events in order to spread brand awareness and involve consumers in the event (Augure, 2015), yet very few influencers posted an image sharing the event with the consumer without the influencer or product visibility. In order for consumers to more authentically connect with the brand through the brand event, influencers could share more posts of the brand events that allow consumers to experience the event (Augure, 2015). Brands need to design event experiences to make them more shareable for influencers and more aspirational to consumers.

7.3.3 Campaign of Post

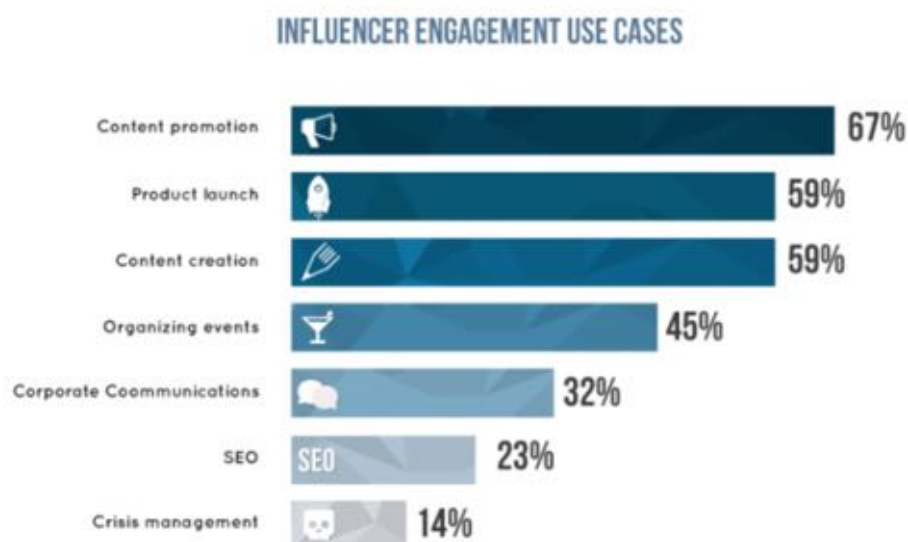


Figure 37: Shows the most common type Instagram influencer collaboration campaigns marketers employ according to the State of Influencer Engagement Report 2015 (Augure, 2015)

The most common campaigns brand managers employ in influencer marketing is brand events; with 40% of the sampled posts being part of a brand event campaign. Inviting influencers to brand events is an easy way to involve influencers in the brand's marketing activities and is an effective way to solidify the brand's relationship with consumers and the influencers (Augure, 2015). Despite this, few brands created custom brand experiences specifically for the influencers such as vitamin brand Voost inviting blogger, Aisha Baker-Parnell to skydive.

In addition, the second most used influencer collaboration campaign was press drops – 32% of sampled posts were posted as a result of press drops. Sending influencers products to post about is an inexpensive and effective way to create brand awareness (Keller & Fay, 2016). Brands collaborating with influencers typically send them a sample of their products to review and post on Instagram. This is a cost-effective and easy way for brands to partner with influencers and show consumers their products (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). The more unique and aesthetically appealing the package and delivery are, the more likely the influencer is to post about it (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016). In addition, brand managers usually solicit an understanding that the influencers are obligated to post about the product if they agree to receive the package, resulting in a higher post rate than other methods of partnering with influencers on Instagram (Hardey, 2015). Conversely, very few brands chose to partner with the sampled influencers for competitions. Since competitions are an established marketing tactic and competition posts on brands' Instagram pages receive the highest engagement (Landsverk, 2014), it is surprising that the brands partnering with influencers have not run more competitions in collaboration with an influencer.

Similarly, another widely used marketing tactic is for influencers to take over the brand's Instagram account. Instagram takeovers is an effective way for brands to direct the influencer's followers to the brand's account (Tratt, 2014), however only 2 of the sampled posts were part of an Instagram takeover campaign. Instagram takeovers also lend a personal feel to the brands Instagram account and boosts engagement (Tratt, 2014). Global cosmetics brand, Benefit partnered with the influencers from Baked the Blog and Just Jade Blog to take over their Instagram account. The two posts informing the influencers' followers of the Instagram takeover received 1105 likes and 9 comments (Appendix 15.4.1). This type of campaign is ideal for the brand to strengthen its relationship with influencers, since the authenticity of the influencer-brand relationship affects consumers' trust of the brand-sponsored post (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011).

Additionally, creating awareness for brand promotions and special offers via Instagram influencers is a successful method for brands to encourage consumers to participate in the brand's promotional campaigns (Keller & Fay, 2016). It is also easy for the brand to measure the success of this type of influencer collaboration, since

direct metrics such as the amount of clicks of the promotional offer link or the number of uses of the discount code in the influencer's post (Augure, 2015). Seeing an influencer participate in brand promotion or associating the influencer as part of the brand promotion motivates consumers to participate (Abidin, 2016, Hardey, 2015). This method of influencer collaboration also amplifies brand awareness and increases the reach of the promotional brand message to a new audience that may not have heard of it yet through the brand's traditional communication channels (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016).

7.3.4 Local vs. International Brands

In the sampled posts, international brands collaborated with South African influencers more than local brands. From all the posts sampled, 92% featured an international brand. Influencer marketing is more established globally and International brands have higher budgets to spend towards engaging influencers (Augure, 2015). Since many of the global brands use influencer marketing in other countries and already have established influencer marketing strategies it is natural for them to do the same as part of their marketing efforts in South Africa. In contrast, only 4 (8%) posts from the total sample featured a South African brand. The influencer industry is not as established in South Africa as it is abroad (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016) thus local brands may be more apprehensive to spend money on partnering with influencers. According to the Social Media Landscape Report 2016, Instagram has seen the biggest adoption rate compared to other social media platforms in South Africa, with its user base growing by 133% (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Despite the fact that the report also states that Instagram is the platform, that the highest number of brands, intend to use in the next year (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016), many local brands have yet to recognise the branding potential of Instagram.

In addition, the majority of South African brands on Instagram have only recently joined the platform and are still in the initial stages of establishing their brand presence and finding out which Instagram marketing strategies yield better audience engagement (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016). Currently only 42% of major South African brands are using the social media platform (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016) for marketing purposes, compared to the over 60% of major global brands having an

active brand presence on the platform (L2, 2017). As South African brands become more familiar with the platform, they will employ more diverse marketing strategies and use Instagram as a branding tool more effectively and the number of local brands collaborating with Instagram influencers in South Africa will increase (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016).

Research shows Instagram is an effective marketing tool for smaller brands and brands wanting to reach niche audiences, as it allows brands to target a segmented audience (Gensler *et al.*, 2013; Peters *et al.*, 2013). Since many local brands are niche brands, establishing an Instagram presence and partnering with the right influencers can help boost their brand awareness and build a community of loyal, engaged consumers (Gensler *et al.*, 2013). With 2.68 million local users (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016), Instagram has become an invaluable part of South Africans lives, and with the photo-sharing apps' user base showing immense growth (Goldstuck & Wronski, 2016) there is increased opportunity for brands in South Africa to partner with influencers as part of their Instagram marketing strategies.

7.3.5 Brand Visibility

The majority of the posts featured a clearly visible brand presence. 86% of the sampled posts contained some form of visible branding. The most common type of brand presence in the sampled posts was the occurrence of a branded product. From the posts sampled 32% contained a clearly recognisable branded product. Staged products and the brand's logos were clearly visible in these posts. The effectiveness of a sponsored post on an influencer's Instagram feed is affected by the prominence and style of presentation of the product/ brand in the image (Keller & Fay, 2016; Uzunonglu & Kip, 2014). Although prominent product placement and high brand visibility result in higher consumer recall rates, consumers also tend to perceive prominently displayed and overtly staged product placements as inauthentic while subtle product placements are perceived as more credible (Liu, Chou, & Liao, 2015).

7.3.6 Comments Sentiment

Nearly all the sampled posts had a positive comments sentiment; only one post had a

neutral sentiment. Only 0.9% of the comments were negative. Since consumers follow influencers because they are interested in the influencers content and look to the influencers for inspiration (Abidin, 2016; Hardey 2015) the influencers posts are generally well received by the followers as indicated by the overall positive sentiment of the comments.

In addition, the majority of the posts mentioning the brand were positive. Only one of the brand mentions was negative. The negative brand mention was a customer complaint on one of the sampled posts from Fashionbreed Blog. The most common type of brand mention in the sampled posts' comments was consumers' expressions of admiration for the brand enforcing the research that consumers perceive brands promoted by influencers in an aspirational way (Abidin, 2016, Hardy 2015). Likewise, the second most prevalent way consumers mentioned the brand in the influencer posts' comments was product inquiries.

Fashionbreed Blog was the influencer with the highest rate of brand mention in the comments. This is congruent with the influencer marketing industry norm that micro-influencers garner more engagement (Montecchi & Nobbs, 2017). Using micro-influencers that have fewer followers allows brands to reach a more engaged audience rather than a large quantity of followers. Through using a few micro influencers brands can leverage the qualitative aspects of social media influence. Since Instagram changed its algorithm to give more reach to quality content, as influencers' number followers rise their engagement drops (Montecchi & Nobbs, 2017). Thus, micro influencers posts are more effective at reaching a targeted and engaged audience organically. According to Montecchi & Nobbs, (2017) micro influencers get 2 to 5 times more organic likes than mega influencers. Collaborating with micro influencers is also more cost effective than collaborating with mega influencers who charge much higher rates to feature a sponsored post on their feed (Montecchi & Nobbs, 2017). A targeted network of followers, more and engaged audience, cheaper rates and the increased ability to connect authentically make micro influencers an effective Instagram influencer-marketing channel for brands.

Trevor Stuurman was the only influencer who did not get any negative comments on the posts sampled from his Instagram account. This influencer also had the highest

rate of appreciative brand mentions. Despite the fact that Fashionista CT Blog's posts had the highest volume of comments and the highest ratio of positive comments, this influencer's posts had the lowest rate of brand mentions of all the Instagram influencers' posts sampled.

7.3.7 Overview

Influencers have their own digital identities and brand presences to curate thus they are more likely to collaborate with brands in certain type of campaigns that fit their brand (Hardey, 2015; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). For example, Fashionbreed blog strives to cultivate an authentic identity, only promoting brands she loves. She diligently discloses which posts are sponsored or not through incorporating hashtags such as #sponsored #notsponsored and #ad to avoid mistrust from her followers. Consumers tend to regard the sponsored post as unfavourable if they think that the influencer is only promoting the brand or product to receive compensation (Hardey, 2015). In order to maintain her honest identity Fashionbreed Blog had the least amount of press drop posts among her 10 sampled posts.

7.4 Conclusion

The content analysis of the 5 influencers' posts showed that consumers mostly responded positively to the brand sponsored posts. Most of the influencers employed a product shot when doing a brand-sponsored post. However, the images with a shot of the influencer and the product received the most engagement from the influencers' followers. Thus, the content analysis of the South African influencers' posts is congruent with the research that demonstrates brand sponsored posts on influencer's Instagram accounts are more effective when the influencer engages with the product in the post (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Keller & Fay, 2016). Inviting influencers to brand events was the most common method brands used to collaborate with the sampled influencers. Moreover, very few of the sampled posts were collaborations with local brands thus there is an opportunity for more local brands to partner with influencers.

Furthermore, less than 10% of the comments on the sampled influencer posts contained a brand mention. While the majority of the posts were received positively, very few of the brand-sponsored posts on the influencer's timelines initiated brand related interactions. Thus, despite generating high levels of engagement, very few of the sampled posts had brand related engagement. The majority of comments mentioning the brand were consumers expressing their admiration. Despite the low volume of brand mentions, the overall sentiment of the comments on the sampled influencer posts mentioning the brand were positive.

Lastly, brand sponsored influencer posts on Instagram are an effective tool for brands to reach their target audience but brands should approach influencer collaborations with a clear strategy (Augure, 2015; Brown & Fiorella, 2013; Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Keller & Fay, 2016). The influencer posts content analysis findings suggest that brand sponsored posts on influencers' Instagram accounts should clearly show that the influencer uses the product and has a positive experience with it, as consumers perceive these influencer endorsement posts more credible. In order for brands to successfully partner with Instagram influencers the fit between the brand, product and influencer need to be apparent to consumers (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Keller & Fay, 2016).

7.5 Recommendations for Brands Managers on Collaborations with Influencers

7.5.1 Brand managers should make brand events more shareable experiences.

Although brand events were the second most prevalent type of brand sponsored post on Influencers' Instagram feeds, in order to gain more awareness and engagement from these events brands need to make the events more 'Instagrammable'.

7.5.2 In order for the collaboration to be effective brand managers should select the influencer that best matches the brand's values and persona. Brands should do research so they can choose the right influencer to partner with, invite to the event or send a sample of their products to since influencers have their own brand presences to curate. Influencers strive to create a consistent feel so they will mostly do more of one type of collaboration such as attend events and not so readily accept press drops or vice versa.

- 7.5.3 Brand managers should take into account that influencer collaborations are not limited to certain industries. The lack of diversity among the type of brands partnering with influencers suggests that there is an opportunity for a more diverse range of brands to partner with Instagram influencers in South Africa.
- 7.5.4 Brand sponsored posts should make the fit between the brand and influencer clear to the audience. The influencer's perceived engagement and satisfaction of the product affects consumers' response to the brand message. Brands need to specify that the influencer should post an image of them using/ engaging with the product rather than an image of only the product.
- 7.5.5 Brand managers should collaborate more with influencers on competition posts. Since competition posts typically have higher engagement rates on social media, there is an opportunity for brands to partner with local influencers for competitions more often.
- 7.5.6 The findings suggest there is an opportunity for more local brands to partner with influencers. There were few brand-sponsored posts from local brands thus; as more South African brands join the social media platform they can incorporate Instagram influencer marketing as part of their Instagram branding strategies.
- 7.5.7 Brand managers should aim to cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with influencers. Developing long term relationships with influencers and turning them into brand advocates leads to more successful influencer marketing campaigns.
- 7.5.8 Brand Managers should consider a targeted group of micro influencers rather than one major influencer. This research has highlighted that micro influencers more effective at reaching consumers. Collaborating with multiple influencers, who a smaller number of followers and a more targeted audience is more effective than collaborating with a single influencer with a large number of followers who are less targeted.

Chapter 3:

8. An Analysis of Consumers' Reaction to Brands on Instagram

Consumers are an essential part of the Instagram economy and this section aims to highlight insights of consumers' brand related activities on Instagram. A survey consisting of 30 questions was sent to participants to gain a better understanding of their interactions with brands and Instagram influencers and its effect on purchase decisions and brand attitudes. The survey was designed to collect insights into Instagram users practices that affect brand value on Instagram. Questions were structured to investigate whether participants engaged in certain brand interactions on Instagram as well as measure the frequency with which participants who give a positive response perform these interactions. The results were measured qualitatively and the results of open-ended questions where participants were asked to provide a reason for their answer were analysed qualitatively to gain in-depth insights of sampled Instagram users' explanations. The subsequent results are based on the responses from the 124 voluntary survey responses. Findings from similar questions measuring a related variable were grouped together for ease of analysis.

8.1 Findings

8.1.1 Survey Respondent Demographics

There was no set age, thus all responses of participants over the age 18 with an Instagram account, were recorded. The ages were grouped into 18 - 24, 25 - 30, 30 - 40, and 40+. The age distribution of the participants was as follows: 40+ = 1, 30-40 = 7, 25-30 = 24, and 18-24 = 92.

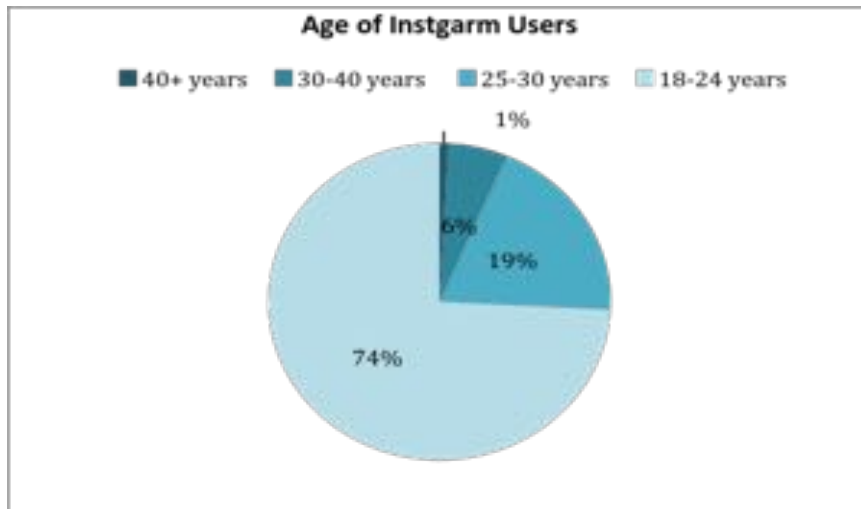


Table 19: Shows the total age distribution of the sampled Instagram users

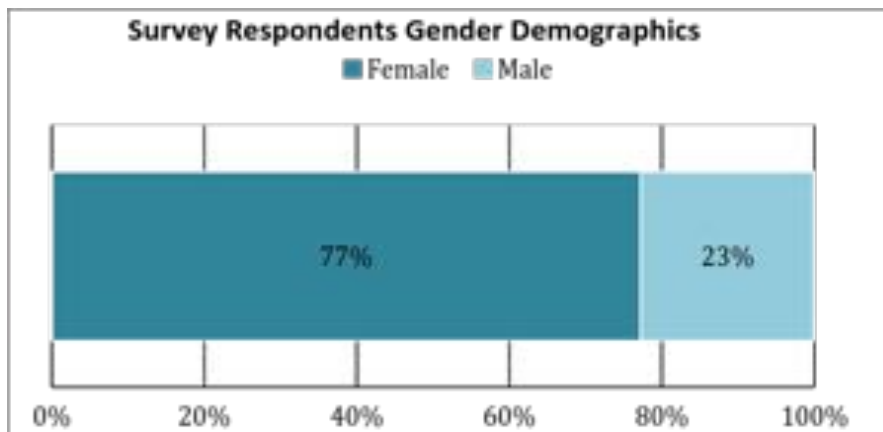


Table 20: Shows the gender distribution of the sampled Instagram users

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their gender as either male or female. 28 Respondents were male and 95 female. More than half of the survey respondents (58%) were females' aged 18-24. Males' aged 18-24 represented the second highest segment of the sample with 17% sampled users falling into this category. After 18-24 year olds the next most common age group was 25-30, with 15% of females and 5% of sampled males falling into this category. There were no males aged above 30 in the sample. Females between 30 to 40 years old represented 5% of the sample and females older than 40 years 1% of the total sampled Instagram users.

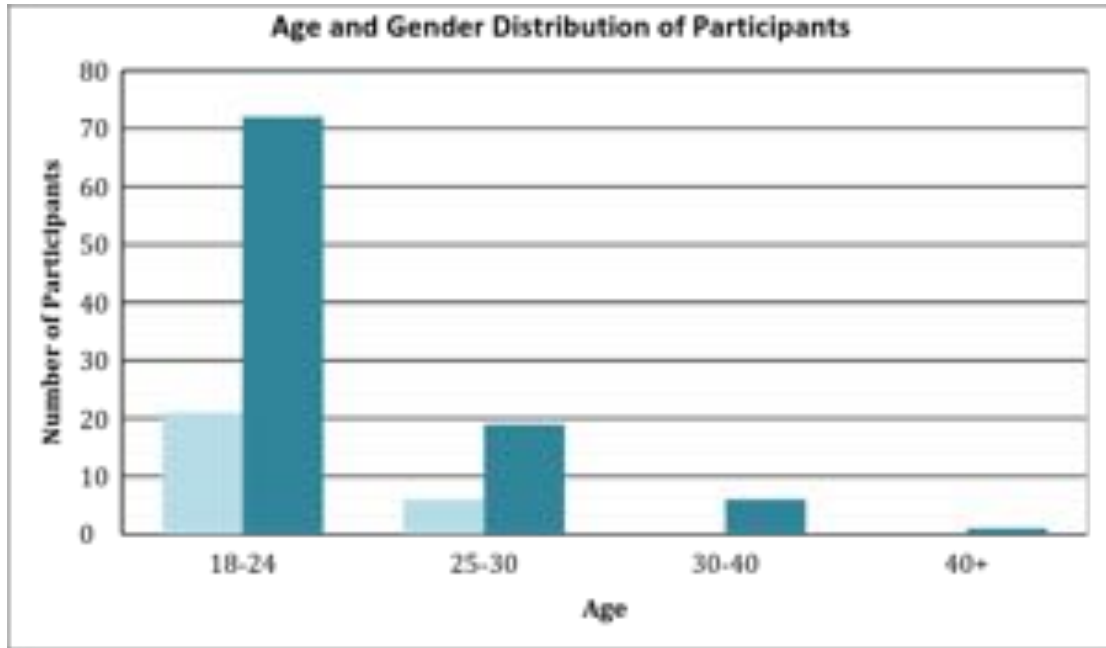


Table 21: Shows the total age and gender distribution of the sampled Instagram users

8.1.2 Time spent on Instagram

The following series of questions were designed to draw quantitative insights about survey respondents' usage patterns. The first question measured respondents' Instagram use frequency to determine the level of use.

INSTAGRAM VISIT FREQUENCY	
Never	1
Less than Weekly	3
3-5 times Weekly	15
Daily	105

Average time spent on Instagram per visit	
More than 2 hours	9
1 - 2 hours	7
1 hour or less	15
30 min or less	55
10 min or less	88

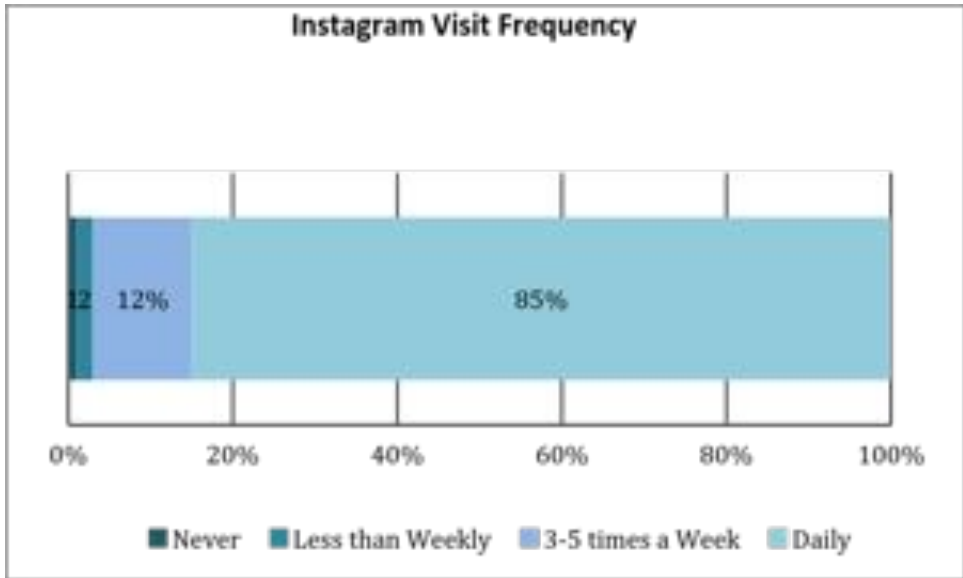


Table 22: Shows the total Instagram visit frequency of the sampled Instagram users

8.1.3 Instagram User Account Profiling

The following questions investigated survey participants level of Instagram participation. Survey Participants were asked a series of profiling questions to establish their user characteristics on Instagram.

Number of Instagram accounts followed	
More than 500 Instagram accounts	25
Between 300 – 500 Instagram accounts	30
Between 100 – 300 Instagram accounts	51
Less than 100 Instagram accounts	18

Timeframe Participants have been on Instagram	
Less than 6 months	5
Between 6 months to a year	9
Between 1-2 years	36
Between 3-4 years	52
Between 4-5 years	22

Type of Instagram accounts participants follow	
More Instagram Influencer Accounts	37
More Brand Accounts	7
More Other Instagram User Accounts	67
All Three Type of Accounts Equally	13

Which of these do you regard as the most credible source of information on a product?	
Review or post on the brand's official Instagram page	33
Review or post by an Influential Instagrammer or blogger	30
Review or post by another Instagram user you know	46
Review or post by other Instagram user you do not know	15

8.1.4 Brand Interaction on Instagram

The following series of questions measured consumers' level of interaction with brands on Instagram. The first question served as a filtering question to determine which survey participants follow brands on Instagram, making them eligible to answer the ensuing questions about brand related activity on Instagram.

Do you follow brand accounts on Instagram?	
Yes	93
No	28

Number of Brand Instagram Accounts Participants Follow	
Between 1 – 5 Brand Instagram Accounts	45
Between 5 – 10 Brand Instagram Accounts	19
Between 10 – 20 Brand Instagram Accounts	18
More than 20 Brand Instagram Accounts	14

Participants' Reason for Following Brand Accounts on Instagram	
Inspiration	47
To see the brand's products	60
To exclusive get special offers, deals and discount codes	40
To connect with the brand	9
You like the brand's Instagram account's content	43
To connect with other people who like or follow the brand	1
Other	3

Type of Brands Participants Followed on Instagram	
Lifestyle Instagram Accounts	54
Fashion Instagram Accounts	71
Food Instagram Accounts	42
Fitness/Sports Instagram Accounts	37
Business Instagram Accounts	17
Consumer Instagram Accounts	19
Other Instagram Accounts	

Do you differentiate between Instagram posts from the brand and other Instagram users?	
Yes	103
No	21

Do the Instagram posts of the brands you follow influence your purchase decision?	
Never	25
Rarely	33
Sometimes	65
Often	1
All the time	0

Have you ever used any special offer or discount codes offered by brands or Influential Instagrammers and bloggers on Instagram?

Never	93
Sometimes	26
Often	5
All the time	0

Do you search for brands on Instagram to follow them?

Never	48
Sometimes	64
Often	9
All the time	1

Do other Instagram user's posts introduce you to brands you were previously unaware of?

Never	14
Sometimes	82
Often	27
All the time	1

Do you ever post pictures of your branded purchases on Instagram?

Never	96
Sometimes	24
Often	4
All the time	0

Have you ever purchased a product after seeing it on Instagram?

Never	63
Sometimes	54
Often	6
All the time	1

Have you ever purchased or consumed a product just to post it on Instagram?

Never	107
Sometimes	14
Often	3
All the time	0

How does a brand's Instagram presence affect your opinion of the brand?

More Favourably	67
Less Favourably	8
Does not affect your opinion	49

Have you ever unfollowed a brand's account on Instagram?

Yes	81
No	43

Do you research a product or brand on Instagram before you make a purchase?

Never	46
Sometimes	53
Often	14
All the time	11

Does seeing products on a brand's Instagram post motivate you to purchase the product?	
Never	32
Sometimes	86
Often	6
All the time	0

8.1.5 Influential Instagrammer interaction on Instagram

The following series of questions investigated survey participants level of interaction with influential Instagrammers. The first question served as a filtering question to eliminate survey participants who do not follow any influential Instagrammers on Instagram.

Do you follow influential Instagrammers on Instagram?	
Yes	108
No	16

Do the posts of influential Instagrammers influence your purchase decision?	
Never	27
Rarely	40
Sometimes	47
Often	9

Have you ever unfollowed an Influential Instagrammer or blogger on Instagram?	
Yes	84
No	40

8.2 Discussion

8.2.1 Instagram User Demographics

Through considering the Instagram user base's demographic data marketers can gain insights into their behaviour and preferences (Gensler et al, 2013; Peters *et al.*, 2013). One of the research objectives is to demonstrate how consumers' interaction with brands on Instagram contributes to brand value. For the purposes of this research participants 18 years and older were specifically targeted. Anyone under the age of 18 was not eligible to participate in this research. The majority of survey respondents (74%) were between the ages of 18-24 years old. Survey respondents in the 25-30 years age category represented 19% of the sampled population. Participants over 30 represented only 7% of the sample, with only one respondent registering their age as 40+.

Since Instagram is the social media network of choice for millennials and the age group with the highest spending power (Meeker, 2016), marketers are targeting this age group through Instagram. Millennials are highly visual and early adopters on social media and millennials are also the most easily reached demographic on social media, this demographic spends on average 558 minutes longer each month than 35+ consumers on social media (Meeker, 2016). Since social commerce is a relatively new phenomenon and the social media network has only recently begun to tailor its features to commerce (e.g. the release of Instagram ads, contact buttons as well as the anticipated release of Instagram analytics tool, Insights and buy now buttons to enable shoppable posts coming soon) millennials are likely to be the first Instagram users to engage with these functionalities (Meeker, 2016; Becker, 2016). Thus, understanding millennials' Instagram usage habits and preferences is key to the success of marketers' future Instagram strategies and successfully leveraging business opportunities presented by the 'Instagram Economy' (Hardey, 2015, Meeker, 2016).

Moreover, the sampled Instagram user base reported a higher number of females than males. Research has highlighted that visual social media platforms have higher female user bases; currently 58% of Instagram users are female and 42% male (Seligson, 2016). Survey respondents identifying as female represented 77% of the sampled user

base and survey respondents identifying as male 23%. Although the sampled user base had a higher gender split ratio, this finding is congruent with the gender ratio of the general user base on Instagram, which has a 60 to 40 male to female split. Since the visual nature of Instagram attracts more Fashion, Beauty and Entertainment brands that predominantly appeal to females Instagram has more active female users (Pathak 2015; Seligson, 2016).

However, As Instagram expands its features to attract a more diversified range of brands the gender gap between users on this platform is closing (Pew Research Centre, 2015). The percentage gap between male and female users on Instagram has shrunk from 36% in 2014 (Business Insider, 2014) to 16% in 2016 (Seligson, 2016). Although the percentage gap between genders on Instagram is still in the double digits, according to research from the Pew Research Centre the gender gap on Instagram is closing and the gender distribution of overall social media users is now comparable (Pew Research Centre, 2015). Thus, marketers need to anticipate the shift in gender demographics of their Instagram audience and tailor their content to appeal to both genders.

8.2.2 Time spent on Instagram

Measuring consumers' usage habits allows marketers to tailor their Instagram content strategy to their target audience's preferences (Gensler *et al.*, Peters *et al.*, 2013). Research has shown that posting at optimal times and consistent posting frequencies is critical to reaching the target audience as well as to allow the brands' Instagram content to generate higher levels of engagement (Union Metrics, 2014). Instagram's new algorithm means content appears in users' feeds based on the probability that they will be interested in it thus, posts with more likes and comments appear higher up in users' feeds (Instagram, 2016b). Due to Instagram's new way of filtering content, posting at optimal times and frequencies is even more critical for brands.

Which Days Have The Best Instagram Engagement?

The differences are slight, but average Instagram engagement -- "likes" and comments divided by a user's number of followers -- does shift depending on the day, according to scheduling service Latergramme.

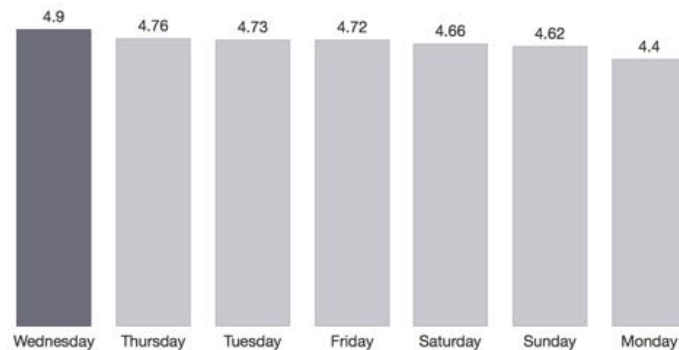


Figure 38: Shows which days of the week have the best Instagram engagement (L2, 2016)

The majority of survey respondents (85%) indicated that they check their Instagram accounts on a daily basis. This supports findings that Instagram users are active daily. In addition, 12% of respondents checked their Instagram accounts 3-5 times a week. Only 3% of the respondents specified that they check their Instagram accounts less than weekly to never. Respondents were also asked how much time they spent on average per Instagram visit. The most popular time frame users spend on Instagram was between 10 -30 minutes. Respondents who said they spend more than 10 minutes but 30 minutes or less on Instagram per visit represented 44% of the sample. The second most popular time spent per visit was 10 minutes or less, representing 31% of the sampled respondents. Only 13% of respondents reported spending more than an hour on an Instagram visit. This suggests that sampled Instagram users check their Instagram feeds in short bursts of time more frequently as opposed to spending more time and checking less frequently. Since the majority of respondents are active on Instagram daily and spend an average of 10-30 minutes on Instagram frequent posts would reach them more. Posting at the right time for a brand's specific target audience and finding the optimal posting frequency that resonates with followers is a key part of optimising the brand account's performance (Union Metrics, 2014).

8.2.3 Instagram account metadata

The number of Instagram accounts respondents followed was measured to get an indication of the sampled user base's level of interaction and interconnectedness on

Instagram. The majority of respondents (51%) indicated that they follow between 100 to 300 accounts on Instagram. The second most popular number of accounts followed by the sampled user base was 300 to 500 Instagram accounts. 24% reported that they follow between 300 to 500 accounts on Instagram. Users indicating that they followed more than 500 Instagram accounts represented 20% of the sample. The remaining 15% of sampled respondents indicated that they follow less than 100 accounts on Instagram.

In addition, respondents were asked how long they have been active on Instagram. Since it takes time to become familiar with a social media platform's norms, develop a follower network and discover other users to follow (Labrecque, 2014), tracking how long respondents have been active on Instagram allows researchers to understand their usage patterns. The longer a user has been active on Instagram the more accounts they are likely to follow (Landsverk, 2014) The majority of survey respondents (42%) indicated that they have been active on Instagram for a period of 3 to 4 years. The second most prevalent timeframe sampled respondents have been active on Instagram was 1 to 2 years, with 29% of the survey respondents having been on Instagram for 1 to 2 years. Users that have been active on Instagram for 4-5 years represent 18% of the sample. The findings suggest that there were a few early adopters among the sampled respondents and the majority of the sampled user base joined the social network as early majority in the adoption curve.

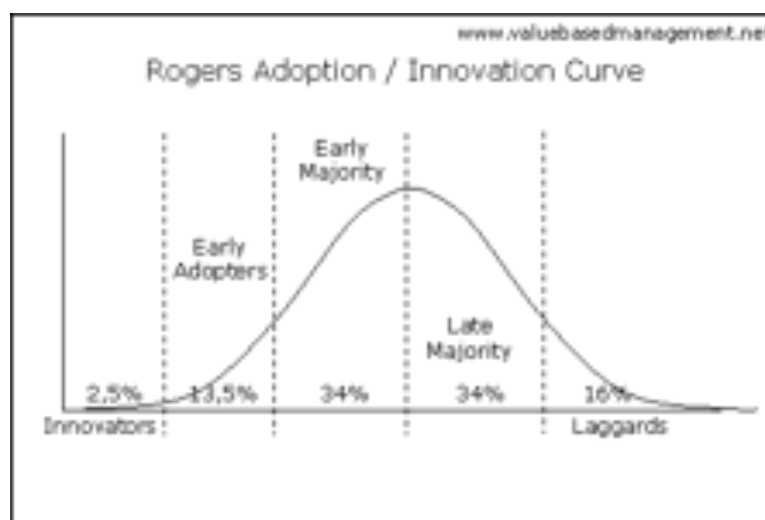


Figure 39: Shows an adoption curve (Value based management, 2016)

In contrast users that have been active on Instagram for less than a year represent the minority of the sample, with 7% of users being on the platform for 6 months to a year and 4% only having used the social network for 6 months or less. This is congruent with research that establishes younger age groups as earlier adopters of social media platforms. Since the majority of the sampled user base is from the millennial age group they have joined Instagram earlier. The following questions were asked to determine consumers' interactions on Instagram. Survey respondents were asked to indicate which type of accounts they followed. More than half of the respondents (54%) said that they follow more other Instagram users. The second highest type of account respondents indicated that they follow was Instagram influencer accounts, with 30% of respondents indicating that they follow more influencers than other type of accounts on Instagram. In addition, 10% of users indicated that they followed all three types of accounts equally. In contrast, only 6% of users said that they follow more brands than any other type of account on Instagram.

Furthermore, survey participants were asked which type of Instagram accounts they regard as the most credible source of information on a product, in order to determine the consumers perception of the source credibility of the different types of accounts. The type of Instagram account that respondents consider the most credible source of information on a product is an ordinary Instagram users' account that they know. The amount of users that indicated they consider product information on an ordinary user's account that they know the most credible source of product information on Instagram was 37%. According to survey respondents the second most credible source of product information on Instagram are posts on the brand's official Instagram page. 27% of respondents indicated that they consider product information on the brand's official page the most credible source of product information on Instagram and 24% of respondents said that they regard influencer posts as the most credible source of product information. Conversely, the source of product information survey respondents regarded as the least credible, was posts from Instagram users they don't know. Only 12% of respondents indicated that they consider posts from users they don't know as a credible source of product information on Instagram.

8.2.4 Brand Interaction on Instagram

Most of the survey respondents indicated that they follow brands Instagram. 77% of survey respondents indicated that they do follow brands on Instagram. Among the sampled Instagram users, 23% indicated that they do not follow brands on Instagram. Since Instagram has a large number of users and many brands are creating a presence on this social media channel it is only natural that most users would follow their favourite brands (Gensler *et al.*, 2013; Hanna *et al.*, 2011). Survey respondents were asked how many brands they follow on Instagram to investigate of how willing the sampled users are to interact with brands on Instagram. The most popular number of brands participants followed on Instagram was between 1 and 5. Participants that follow between 1 and 5 brands on Instagram represent 47% of the sample. A further 20% of participants indicated that they follow between 5 and 10 brands on Instagram. Survey participants who follow between 10 and 20 brands on Instagram, represent 19% of the sampled user base. Lastly, 15% of the survey respondents indicated that they follow more than 20 brands on Instagram. Despite market research establishing Instagram as the social media platform with the highest rate of brand engagement (Stelzner 2016), consumers who follow more than 20 brands on Instagram represent the minority of the sampled user base. Thus, the findings suggest that consumers prefer to follow fewer brands on the platform but they engage more with the brands that they do follow.

Accordingly, consumers advance through a process of four stages in their interactions with brands on social media platforms (Carah & Shaul, 2015). Firstly, a consumer is as a bystander with regards to a certain brand; in this stage the consumer sees references to the brand on social media networks, but they do not actively seek out the brand's posts. The second stage of interaction, involves the consumer progressing to the role of follower; where they seek out the brand's communication by choosing to follow the brand on social media platforms. In the third phase, the consumer has become a contributor, interacting with the brand and the brand message on social media platforms (Carah & Shaul, 2015). This interaction scale ranges from passive involvement to active types of involvement (Labrecque, 2014).

Survey respondents were asked what their main reason for following brands on Instagram was. Most of the respondents indicated that the primary reason they follow brands on Instagram is to see the brand's products. Respondents, who follow brands on Instagram to see the brand's products, represent 30% of the sampled users. The second most prevalent reason sampled users followed a brand was for inspiration. The percentage of survey respondents who said that they follow brands as a source of inspiration, represent 23% of the sampled user base. An equally prevalent reason sampled users follow brands was because they like the brand's Instagram account's content. The percentage of survey respondents that indicated they follow the brand for this reason represent 21% of the sampled Instagram users. Likewise, users also followed the brand to get special offers/ deals/ discount codes, with 20% of sampled users indicating this is the main reason they follow the brand. Conversely, The segment of the total sampled Instagram users, who follow brands on Instagram to connect with the brand, represent 4% of the sample. Less than 1% of respondents indicated that they follow the brand to connect with other people who like/ follow the brand. Users who provided unique reasons they followed the brand represented 1% of the sample.

Survey participants were also asked which type of brands they follow in order to understand which type of brands Instagram users are more likely to engage with. The type of brand that most sampled users indicated that they follow was fashion brands. Sampled users who follow fashion brands on Instagram represent 29% of the sample. Types of brands respondents who indicated the other category listed include; religious, environmental as well as art and design brands. The second most prevalent type of brand sampled users indicated that they follow was lifestyle brands (54%), followed by food brands (42%). The survey respondents who follow fitness & sport brands represent 15% of the sample. Sampled users who follow consumer goods brands and business brands represent 8% and 7% respectively. Consumers that listed a brand in the other category represent 1% of the sample. Subsequently, this finding echoes the research that the visual nature of Instagram makes it the preferred platform for fashion and lifestyle brands (Pathak, 2015). Since the sampled user base is predominantly female and fashion and lifestyle are predominantly female interests more users sampled would follow these brands.

Furthermore, consumers were asked whether they differentiate between Instagram posts of the brand and Instagram posts of other users. The majority of sampled users indicated that they differentiate between the Instagram posts of a brand and the Instagram posts of an ordinary user account. Survey respondents who differentiate between brand Instagram posts and posts from ordinary users represent 83% of the sample. The remaining 17% indicated that they do not differentiate between Instagram posts of brands and Instagram posts of ordinary users. Consumers have become desensitised to advertising and Instagram users perceive brand posts as advertising (Moody, 2011). Respondents who follow brands on Instagram were also asked whether the posts of brands they follow influence their purchase decision. More than half of respondents (52%) indicated that brand posts influence their purchase decision sometimes and only 1% of respondents said that the Instagram posts of the brands' that they follow influence their purchase decision often. None of the sampled Instagram users indicated that brands' Instagram posts influence their purchase decision all the time. In contrast, 27% of the sampled Instagram users indicated that Instagram posts from the brands they follow rarely influence their purchase decision and 20% of survey respondents indicated that brands' Instagram posts have never influenced their purchase decisions. Thus, brands' Instagram posts do have the ability to influence consumers' purchase decisions somewhat frequently.

Likewise, respondents were asked whether they search for brands on Instagram to follow them. Measuring the frequency of consumers searching for brands on Instagram shows to which extent consumers are willing to engage with brands on Instagram. More than half respondents (52%) indicated that they search for a brand on Instagram to follow the brand sometimes. The second most prevalent response was respondents who indicated that they have never searched for a brand on Instagram to follow the brand. Respondents who have never searched for a brand on Instagram represent 39% of the sampled users. Only 7% of consumers said that they search for a brand on Instagram often and only 1% of respondents indicated that they search for brands on Instagram all the time. The surveyed consumers' responses suggest that while consumers are likely to search for brands sometimes most consumers do not frequently search for brands on Instagram. Thus, brands need to find creative ways to generate traffic to their Instagram accounts and grow their network of followers.

Accordingly, survey participants were asked whether other Instagram user's posts introduced them to brands they were previously unaware of. Knowing how likely Instagram users are to follow brands they discover through the posts of other users demonstrates the importance of consumers' interaction with brands on Instagram (Carah & Shaul, 2015). Two thirds (66%) of survey respondents indicated that they are sometimes introduced to new brands through the posts of other Instagram users. A further 22% of respondents indicated that they are often introduced to brands they were previously unaware of through other users Instagram posts. Only 1% of survey respondents reported that they are introduced to brands they were unaware of through other users' Instagram posts all the time. Conversely, 11% of survey respondents indicated that they have never been introduced to a brand through the posts of other Instagram users. The posts of other Instagram users are an effective channel through which the sampled Instagram users are introduced to brands they were previously unaware of. Since consumers are not very likely to search for brands but are open to engage with brands they discover via other users' posts, brands should find ways to encourage consumers' brand related activities on Instagram. Consumers' Instagram follower network is a valuable resource of potential consumers for brands (Carter, 2016). The consumer survey findings show that a significant number of brand introductions made via other users posts.

Since conspicuous consumption on Instagram is one of the main ways consumers interact with brands on Instagram (Abidin, 2016; Hardey, 2015), the frequency which Instagram users post brand purchases was measured. In response to the question whether they post pictures of their branded purchases on Instagram the majority of survey respondents (77%) indicated that they never post pictures of their branded purchases on Instagram. Only 22% of consumers reported that they post brand pictures on Instagram, with 19% indicating that they sometimes post brand pictures and 4% indicated that they often post brand pictures. None of the participants indicated that they post pictures of their brand purchases all the time.

In addition, respondents indication of the question have you purchased or consumed a product just to post it on Instagram, were equally negative, with 86% of sampled Instagram users indicating that they have never purchased or consumed a product just to post about on Instagram. Only 13% of sampled Instagram users admitted to having

purchased or consumed a product solely for the purpose of posting about it on Instagram, with 11% of participants reporting that they sometimes do it and 2% indicating that they do it often. Through measuring respondents likelihood to purchase or consume products for the purpose of Instagram posts, researchers can determine to what extent consumers aim to gain social capital by posting about aspirational brands on Instagram (Abidin, 2016; Senft 2013) as well as the extent to which users online identities are curated versions of themselves (Papacharissi, 2012).

Moreover, survey participants' likelihood to purchase a product they see on Instagram was determined. More than half of respondents (51%) reported that they have never purchased a product after seeing it on Instagram. The second most prevalent response was sometimes, with 44% of survey respondents indicating that they sometimes purchase a product after seeing it on Instagram. A further 5% of survey respondents indicated that they often purchase a product after seeing it on Instagram and only 1% indicated that they purchase a product after seeing it on Instagram, all the time. With many brands taking the approach of not making their products too prominent in their Instagram content, there is less direct effect on consumers purchase decision (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014).

Despite the fact that brands' Instagram posts did not have a significant direct impact on sampled Instagram users' purchase decisions, having a brand presence on Instagram did positively affect respondents' perception of the brand. More than half (54%) of the sampled Instagram users reported that a brand's Instagram presence makes them perceive the brand more favourably. A further (40%) of the sampled respondents indicated that a brand's Instagram presence has no effect on their opinion of the brand. Moreover, the majority of the sampled Instagram users (65%) have indicated that they have unfollowed a brand on Instagram. Thus, the findings corroborate the research that suggests brand managers need to maintain a consistently appealing Instagram presence to keep consumers engaged (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011). Survey Respondents who indicated that they have never unfollowed a brand on Instagram represent 35% of the sample.

Additionally, research has shown that Instagram has become a valuable source of market information for consumers (Hajli, 2015). Survey respondents' probability to research a product or brand on Instagram before purchase was measured. The majority (63%) of survey respondents indicated that they have used Instagram to do research on a product or brand before purchase. The number of survey respondents who said that they research a brand or product on Instagram before purchase, all the time, represented 9% of the sample and the percentage of sampled Instagram users who do this often were 11% of the sample. The majority of sampled Instagram users who indicated that they do research a product or brand on Instagram before purchase (43%) reported researching a brand sometimes. Conversely, 37% per cent of sampled Instagram users indicated that they have never researched a brand or product on Instagram before purchasing.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to what extent does seeing products on a brand's Instagram post motivate them to purchase the product. The majority of survey respondents (74%) indicated that seeing the brands products on Instagram does motivate them to purchase the product. Additionally seeing the brands products on Instagram often motivates 4% of respondents to purchase the product and motivates 69% of respondents to sometimes purchase the product. None of the participants indicated that seeing the brands products on Instagram motivates them to purchase the product all the time. The majority of sampled consumers said they follow the brand to see products, thus the survey indicated that when a consumer follows a brand they are interested in the brand's product.

Lastly, survey respondents use of special offers and discount codes offered by brands and Influential Instagrammers or bloggers on Instagram was investigated. The survey respondents who indicated that they have never used a discount code or special offer on Instagram represented 75% of the sampled Instagram user base. The remaining quarter of respondents who have used discount codes or special offers indicated their frequency of use as follows: sometimes 21% and often 4%. None of the sampled participants who said that they use special offers or discount codes offered by brands on Instagram indicated that they use it all the time. Since three quarters of the sampled Instagram users indicated that they do not use special offers or discount codes offered by brands on Instagram, brands need to rethink their Instagram promotions. Special

offers need to be made more relevant to their consumers. Instagram is the social network with the highest rate of consumer brand interaction (Hollebeek, Glynn, Brodie 2014).

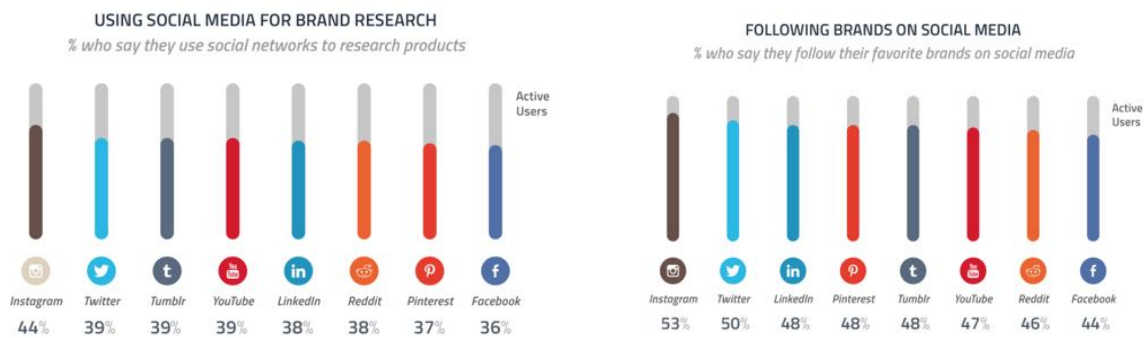


Figure 40: Shows the percentages of consumers' brand related interaction per social network

8.2.5 Influential Instagrammer interaction on Instagram

Since influential Instagrammers are an important mediator in brand to consumer communication on Instagram (Brown & Fiorella, 2013) the sampled Instagram users' interaction with influential Instagrammers was investigated. The first question in this category filtered out participants who do not follow influential Instagrammers. The majority of participants indicated that they do follow influential Instagrammers. Only 13% of participants indicated that they do not follow influential Instagrammers. The high number of sampled users who follow influential Instagrammers on Instagram confirm that this is an important communication channel for brands on Instagram.

Sponsored brand posts on influential Instagrammers accounts have emerged as a popular marketing method (Augure, 2015). To measure the effect of sponsored posts on participants' purchase decisions they were asked whether the posts of influential Instagrammers influence their purchase decision. The majority of the surveyed Instagram users (78%) indicated that the posts of an influential Instagrammer have influenced their purchase decisions. The frequency with which influential Instagrammers posts influenced survey respondents' purchase decisions was sometimes (48%), rarely (32%), often (7%) and all the time (1%). The remaining

As mentioned above, influencer marketing has become an important social media-branding avenue for brands. One of the most common Instagram marketing concerns brand managers face is selecting the most relevant influencer to collaborate with. Determining the factors that cause the sampled Instagram users to unfollow influential instagrammers will allow brands to choose more appropriate influencers to work with and demonstrate which types of influencer posting practices survey participants found undesirable. Similar to sampled users' reasons for unfollowing brands, the most prevalent reason respondents unfollowed influential Instagrammers was due to unappealing content. Uninteresting, boring, annoying and repetitive were the most prevalent words sampled Instagram users cited in their reasons for unfollowing influential Instagrammers.

Likewise, the sampled Instagram users who follow influential Instagrammers dislike content that is too promotional, obviously sponsored and advertisements. Respondents unfollowed influencers they felt were constantly filling their feeds with ads and products. Celebrity endorsement research has established that the consumer's perceived match between the celebrity and the brand affects their perception of the advertisement (McCracken, 1989; Silvera & Austad, 2004). This principle applies to influencer brand endorsements on Instagram as well. Sampled respondents indicated that they unfollowed influencers who they considered to post about brands and products without genuinely using or liking the products. Additionally, consumers' perception of the influencer has a significant effect on their reception of brand messages from the influencer. The source credibility states that the effectiveness of an advertisement depends on consumers' perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness of the influencer (Erdogan, 1999). The sampled Instagram users indicated that they unfollowed influencers they perceived as narcissistic, self absorbed, fake and inauthentic. Influencers portraying unattainable standards make users feel pressurised to conform to a lifestyle they cannot afford.

8.3 Conclusion

The consumer survey yielded several actionable insights into the sampled Instagram users' demographic distribution, level of interaction with Instagram influencers and level interaction of interaction with brands. Firstly the sampled Instagram users were

mainly between the ages of 18-24 and there were more females than males. These findings echo the research that Instagram is more popular among younger audiences and that the social media platform's visual nature makes it more appealing to females (Becker, 2016; Meeker, 2016; Pathak, 2015; Seligson, 2016). In addition, the majority of sampled respondents have been active on Instagram for at least 3 years and follow an average of between 100 to 300 accounts on Instagram, thus they are familiar with the norms of the social media platform and have had significant amounts of interactions to provide valid insights.

Moreover, the majority of sampled Instagram users indicate that they check their Instagram accounts daily and the most popular average timeframe sampled users spent on the platform, per visit, was 10-30 minutes. This suggests that sampled Instagram users tend to use Instagram in short daily bursts of activity. Thus brand managers need to adapt their scheduled posting frequencies and timeslots to take consumers pattern of Instagram usage into account, especially now that Instagram has changed its API so posts no longer appear chronologically in users' feeds (Instagram, 2016b). Since the sampled users spend short amounts of time on Instagram it is highly unlikely that they scroll through their entire feed thus older images at the bottom of the feed tend to be missed. Brands need to post at the times and frequencies that their target audience is most active otherwise the post they spent time and money on creating get buried at the bottom of their followers' Instagram feeds (Union Metrics, 2014).

Additionally, the type of Instagram accounts sampled users tend to follow more was determined in order to ascertain sampled users level of interaction with different entities on Instagram. The majority of Instagram users stated that they follow more accounts of other users and the second most prevalent type of accounts that sampled users followed was Instagram influencers. Since less than 10% of sampled users indicated that they follow more brand Instagram accounts, word-of-mouth is an effective and necessary channel for brands to reach consumers on Instagram. In addition, the majority of sampled Instagram users indicated that they do follow Instagram influencer accounts. Thus, Instagram influencer marketing is an important communication channel for brands since a comparable amount of sampled users follow more influencer accounts than other type of Instagram accounts.

Likewise, the majority of sampled Instagram users indicated that they consider the accounts of Instagram users that they know personally as the most credible source of product information on Instagram. Similarly, two thirds of Instagram users indicated that they have been introduced to brands they were previously unaware of through the posts of other Instagram users. Thus, consumers brand related activities on Instagram increase brand awareness and grow the brand's audience. This further emphasises the need for brands to direct the social word of mouth in a positive direction. In addition, brand managers need to find ways to encourage ordinary consumers' brand related interactions by increasing campaigns that motivate consumers to create user-generated content, incorporate branded hashtags in their posts and share their positive brand experiences.

Moreover, nearly half of the respondents indicated that they only follow between 1 and 5 brands on Instagram. Thus, brand managers need to develop effective content strategies to grow their audience and retain their brand loyalty and engagement on Instagram. Accordingly, the main reasons sampled Instagram users indicated that they follow brands on Instagram for, is to see the brand's products and to be inspired. While connecting with consumers is one of the primary reasons brands tend to develop social media presences, only 4% of sampled Instagram users indicated that they follow brands' Instagram accounts to connect with the brand. Thus, brand managers need to develop a mutually beneficial relationship with consumers on Instagram through allowing them to derive value from following the brand such as gaining access to inspiring and relevant content. Brand Managers need to develop Instagram accounts that connect with consumers in an informal way, on a subconscious level, as consumers tend to shut out official brand messages, which they perceive as advertising.

Furthermore, this finding is echoed by the analysis of consumers' primary reasons to unfollow brands on Instagram. A large number of consumers indicated that they unfollow brands on Instagram when the brand's content becomes annoying, uninteresting and irrelevant to them. Thus, the sampled participants expect to gain value from their relationships with brands on Instagram.

However, Instagram does have the potential to make a tangible effect on consumers purchase decisions and positively affect their perception of the brand. As more than three quarters of the sampled Instagram users indicated that they follow brands on Instagram and more than half of the sampled Instagram users indicated that brands' Instagram posts have influenced their purchase decision. In addition, more than half of the sampled Instagram users indicated that they do search for a brand to follow the brand on Instagram and more than half of the sampled users indicated that a brand having an Instagram presence makes them perceive the brand more favourably. Also, nearly two thirds of the sampled Instagram users indicated that they have researched a product or brand on Instagram before purchase and nearly three quarters of the sample indicated that seeing products on Instagram motivates them to purchase these products.

Finally, ordinary user accounts play an important role in the habits and preferences of the sampled Instagram users and represent a viable marketing channel for brands to reach their audience by encouraging user participation through hashtags and user-generated content. Also, while consumers are wary of advertising centric brand approaches on Instagram consumers do want to engage with brands on Instagram, in a way where they can derive value from the exchange.

9. Limitations

9.1 Brand Case Study Limitations

9.1.1 Geographical Constraints: The brand chosen as a case study, Mr Price, is based in Durban and the researcher is based in Cape Town, thus the interview had to be done via email. More information could have been obtained had the interview been done in person.

9.1.2 The brand could not disclose any sensitive information: The brand's Online Fashion Editor, Tarryn McLuckie, who manages the brand's Instagram account stated that she cannot disclose any sensitive information that could inform competitors' Instagram accounts.

9.2 Content Analysis of Local Influencers' Instagram Posts Limitations

9.2.1 Social Media data changes over time: the selected influencers' patterns of brand collaborations changes over time as the influencer hones their digital identity and defines their own brand on Instagram. Thus, the types of brands and types of posts they use to show the collaborations will change.

9.2.2 Different influencers have different results: Despite the fact that the 5 influencers were chosen to be representative of the influencer industry in South Africa, if this research were to be replicated with a different set of influencers' brand sponsored posts different patterns of brand collaborations and consumers' responses to these posts will be recorded.

9.2.3 The engagement metrics on Instagram changes over time: The more recent brand sponsored posts have more likes and comments as the influencer's followers increase and the posts will continue to receive likes and comments that could yield important insights after the period of data collection.

9.2.4 Data may be removed or edited: The influencers could have deleted brand sponsored posts that would have added value to the sample and the followers may have deleted their comments on the sampled posts which could have affected the sentiment of the sampled posts' comments.

9.3 Consumer Survey Limitations

9.3.1 Voluntary participation equals low response rates: Since the survey was sent out to potential participants and interested parties could voluntarily respond the response rate was not as high. A higher response rate would change the data recorded from the survey respondents' responses.

9.3.2 Participants supplying false information: The survey cover email assured participants of anonymity and ethical clearance of this research thus it is assumed participants were truthful when answering the questions but since the questionnaire was administered anonymously and online the possibility exists that some of the participants could have supplied false information.

10. Future Research

This research focused on the three main role players of the 'Instagram Economy' in South Africa: brands, Instagram influencers and consumers to give an overview of how each of these components' practices on social media contributes to brand value. Accordingly, several research directions have emerged for each these units to gain in depth knowledge of each section specifically.

10.1 Instagram Branding Research Directions

Big data mining tools, the advancement of Instagram analytics tools and machine learning open exciting possibilities to the use of Instagram as a source of market information, more effectively. These tools make large volumes of data easily retrievable, sortable and storable as well as allowing in-depth analysis. For example, brands can effortlessly generate millions of Instagram posts around a certain theme and correlate these to variables they are interested in; such as generating posts with a specific hashtag and cross-referencing the findings with location tags, statistics and population data. This data allows brand managers to identify trends and socio-cultural shifts of their audience such as which day of the week or time Instagram users tend to post more about specific products or which type of product among a range the population of city prefers. Moreover, additional research is needed about the economic opportunities social media platforms afford brands. The shift from e-commerce to social commerce needs more research in order for brands to effectively capitalise on the economic capabilities of Instagram.

Lastly, the recent advent of live stories on Instagram in August 2016 (Instagram, 2016c) present a new and more personal way for brands to connect with their consumers (Tang, Venolia & Inkpen, 2016). There has been a departure from the highly edited and carefully stylised brand presence on social media in favour of a more conversational approach. Instagram's (and other platforms such as Facebook's and Snapchat's) live-streaming capabilities offer brands the ability to connect with their followers in real time and this opens up noteworthy research possibilities to quantify how this new way of communication affects brands' relationships with consumers.

10.2 Instagram Influencer Research Directions

Much of the research on Instagram influencers has centred on source credibility in order to determine which influencer characteristics consumers find more favourable and trustworthy, hence more research is needed to establish concrete guidelines based on consumer preferences for brands to identify the right influencers to collaborate with. In addition, the consumer survey showed that factors relating to the brand's content on Instagram plays a large role in determining consumers' satisfaction with their brand experience on social media thus 'content credibility' is worth examining to give brands proven guidelines to inform their content strategies. Lastly, consumers are not only influential among their own network of followers but have the capacity to disseminate the message to the followers of their followers. Thus a social network analysis (Carter, 2016) of influencers will help to effectively quantify an influential Instagrammer's influence by showing their position relevant to the larger network of followers and other influencers.

10.3 Consumer Practices on Instagram Research Directions

Firstly, the consumer practice survey yielded interesting results into consumers Instagram usage patterns and preferences thus replicating the study with a larger sample set would result in even more actionable insights to be drawn. Since Instagram has given rise to new social paradigms and changed consumers' identity formation practices (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016; Hanna *et al.*, 2011, Hardey, 2015) both online and offline a Netnography (Kozinets, 2010) study is needed to quantify this cultural shift. Netnography is an interpretive research method, which adapts the traditional anthropological techniques of doing ethnographic research to study the cultures and communities in online settings. Employed as a marketing research technique a netnographic study uses the public information available in online groups to recognise and conceptualise consumer preferences and the factors influencing purchase decisions in the online groups that consumers are part of (Kozinets, 2002).

11. Conclusion

The main insight from looking at a successful brand Instagram account is that in order to cultivate a successful brand presence on Instagram brands need to have content strategies with relevant, current content their audience wants. Mr Price's approach of trendy, pop culture content yields consistent levels of high engagement, as it is relevant and interesting to the brand's target audience. The brand has clearly honed its content strategy to figure out which types of posts its audience responds better to and has continued to post more of those posts.

Similarly, the influencer post's content analysis has shown that consumers respond better to sponsored brand posts on influencer's Instagram feeds when the influencer is actually engaging with the product. Thus, brands need to select the right influencer that best fits the brand's values, to collaboration with and the influencer needs to clearly demonstrate that they use and love the product being promoted. The consumer survey has highlighted that consumers want content they find relevant and interesting. Consumers don't want to follow brands that clutter their feed or have an advertising centric approach on Instagram. Thus, brand managers need to figure out what type of content their audience finds most interesting and when the best times are to post this content is. Brand managers also need to encourage consumers to create brand related content as consumers consider brand information from peer consumers more credible.

Thus, the key to a successful brand presence on Instagram that allows brand's to leverage the economic capabilities on this platform is; to reach their target audience through the right channels, with the right content and at the right time.

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12.1 List of Instagram Accounts

@alessiolo [Instagram Account] Retrieved from:
<https://www.instagram.com/alessiolo/>

@bakedtheblog [Instagram Account] Retrieved from:
<https://www.instagram.com/bakedtheblog/>

@fashionista_ct [Instagram Account] Retrieved from:
https://www.instagram.com/fashionista_ct/

@fashionbreed [Instagram Account] Retrieved from:
<https://www.instagram.com/fashionbreed/?hl=en>

@justjadeblog [Instagram Account] Retrieved from:
<https://www.instagram.com/justjadeblog/?hl=en>

@mrpfashion [Instagram Account] Retrieved from:
<https://www.instagram.com/mrpfashion/>

@xx_niquita_xx [Instagram Account] Retrieved from:
https://www.instagram.com/xx_niquita_xx/

@trevor_stuurman [Instagram Account] Retrieved from:
https://www.instagram.com/trevor_stuurman/

12.2 List of Instagram Influencer Content Analysis Post URL's

Baked the Blog Posts:

Post 1: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BNg9W7-BVyw/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en>

Post 2: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BL0w8-MBeHH/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en>

Post 3: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BKNl4l0AXpg/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en>

Post 4: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BIuc7Z0gFuC/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en>

Post 5: <https://www.instagram.com/p/4Q8BowrqDJ/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en>

Post 6: <https://www.instagram.com/p/-Eim23rqJV/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en>

Post 7: <https://www.instagram.com/p/9yTxxbLqAv/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en>

Post 8: <https://www.instagram.com/p/9a--3vLqBq/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en>

Post 9: https://www.instagram.com/p/9YbG_mLqED/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en

Post 10: <https://www.instagram.com/p/6-SDLIrqHE/?taken-by=bakedtheblog&hl=en>

Trevor Stuurman Posts:

Post 1: https://www.instagram.com/p/BMUAfStgSWH/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Post 2: https://www.instagram.com/p/BMDzFC2gCwx/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Post 3: https://www.instagram.com/p/BKszmTyAmCq/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Post 4: https://www.instagram.com/p/BJk_oXCgOIj/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Post 5: https://www.instagram.com/p/BIAk5Xggc6m/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Post 6: https://www.instagram.com/p/BGpQav_hUD3/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Post 7: https://www.instagram.com/p/BF4bIIXBUM-/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Post 8: https://www.instagram.com/p/BDLPzAyhUJ_/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Post 9: https://www.instagram.com/p/BDATPdYhUOF/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Post:10 https://www.instagram.com/p/BBevKwNhUCx/?taken-by=trevor_stuurman&hl=en

Fashionista CT Blog Posts:

Post 1: https://www.instagram.com/p/BQip_94BM10/?taken-by=fashionista_ct&hl=en

Post 2: https://www.instagram.com/p/BP0InN4ld1z/?taken-by=fashionista_ct&hl=en

Post 3: https://www.instagram.com/p/BMJ-4x3lODr/?taken-by=fashionista_ct&hl=en

Post 4: https://www.instagram.com/p/BLi90OtA_JB/?taken-by=fashionista_ct&hl=en

Post 5: https://www.instagram.com/p/BJiSUPEg98R/?taken-by=fashionista_ct&hl=en

Post 6: https://www.instagram.com/p/BG6r-mToANF/?taken-by=fashionista_ct&hl=en

Post 7: https://www.instagram.com/p/BBkEfejIAK8/?hl=en&taken-by=fashionista_ct

Post 8: https://www.instagram.com/p/BBDFCGDIAEH/?taken-by=fashionista_ct&hl=en

Post 9: https://www.instagram.com/p/-jRGwnoAKu/?taken-by=fashionista_ct&hl=en

Post 10: https://www.instagram.com/p/-WUVUxoANH/?taken-by=fashionista_ct&hl=en

Fashionbreed Blog Posts:

Post 1: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BL1FV71BIev/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en>

Post 2: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BLqyIHBh55d/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en>

Post 3: https://www.instagram.com/p/BLbPG_VBTU7/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en

Post 4: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BG9aNPLktNI/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en>

Post 5: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BFec50CktNf/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en>

Post 6: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BBsIu9HktFk/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en>

Post 7: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BAgj72TktMD/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en>

Post 8: <https://www.instagram.com/p/-lV0w9EtPp/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en>

Post 9: https://www.instagram.com/p/7p_KrIEtMg/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en

Post 10: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BQa3SxwDq7n/?taken-by=fashionbreed&hl=en>

Just Jade Blog Posts:

Post 1: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BQNibCqFQ2G/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

Post 2: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BQe46GklWWM/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

Post 3: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BPIUaa2gTB6/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

Post 4: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BORPprbg-mn/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

Post 5: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BN6YOsUgUkS/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

Post 6: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BLbrmdNA7OR/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

Post 7: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BJNq6q-gJUM/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

Post 8: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BKYetJkA9q1/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

Post 9: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BJU2rfZACVi/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

Post 10: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BHRi3ghADNn/?taken-by=justjadeblog&hl=en>

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15. Appendices

15.1 Appendix 1: Brand Interview Questions Email Exchange

From: Alyssa Klintjens
Sent: 30 September 2016 10:41:33 AM
To: tmckuckie@mrp.com
Subject: Instagram Research Questions

Dear Tarryn,

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my research. I'm doing my Masters in Media Studies at UCT and my thesis is on Instagram Branding. I'd like to do a case study of the MRP my thesis and once completed the thesis will be handed in, to my supervisor and external moderators for marking. The content of my thesis is not allowed to be submitted to any

if you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or my research supervisor: Mr Ronald Irwin at ronald.irwin@uct.ac.za (021 650 2853).

Herewith a list of the questions:

1. Why has MRP chosen Instagram as one of the social media channels to have a brand presence on?
2. What is MRP's Instagram Marketing strategy?
3. Who is MRP's target audience on social media (Instagram)?
4. How do you target that audience on Instagram?
5. What are some of the new things you've tried this year on Instagram?
6. Have these new strategies worked? effectively engaged your Instagram audience?
7. How do you manage to keep your followers engaged?
8. How do you keep your content fresh and engaging in a content saturated Instagram environment?
9. Have you used any specific strategies/ campaigns to grow the MRP Instagram account following?
10. How do you evaluate your Instagram posts' effectiveness?
11. How do you measure the ROI of the MRP Instagram account?
12. Does the Instagram account motivate direct sales?
13. Why does MRP collaborate with bloggers/ influential Instagrammers for Instagram content?
14. What has the followers' response been to blogger/influencer collaboration on Instagram?
15. Has blogger/ influencer collaboration on MRP's Instagram account translated into sales?
16. Has blogger/ influencer collaboration increased MRP's Instagram following?
17. What is your policy on responding to comments/ complaints on Instagram?
18. What type of content does better/ receives more likes and comments?
19. Do you use any Instagram trends e.g selfies or trending hashtags in your Instagram posts?
20. What would you say is the primary purpose of MRP's Instagram account? To connect with your customers/ build a relationship or to market your products?
21. What calls to action does MRP use on Instagram?
22. Do you use user-generated content on MRP's Instagram account?
23. Does MRP make use of Instagram ads?
24. Has the MRP Instagram account increased sales?
25. How has MRP used its Instagram account to communicate its brand identity to consumers?
26. Anything you'd like to add about MRP's Instagram account/ Instagram Marketing Strategy?

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Thank you again.

Kind Regards,
Alyssa



Tarryn McLuckie <TMcLuckie@mrp.com>

Tue 2016-10-11, 04:26 PM

Alyssa Kleintjes

Reply all

Inbox

Action Items

Hi Alyssa

See below answers. Let me know if you want me to expand on any points for you.

Thanks

Tarryn

X

[www.mrp.com]



Tarryn McLuckie

Online Fashion Editor

Mr Price Apparel

T: +27313679334

E: tmcluckie@mrp.com

W: <http://www.mrp.com>

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From: Alyssa Kleintjes <KLNALY001@myuct.ac.za>

Date: Friday, 30 September 2016 at 10:41 AM

To: Tarryn McLuckie <TMcLuckie@mrp.com>

Subject: Instagram Research Questions

Dear Tarryn,

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my research. I'm doing my Masters in Media Studies at UCT and my thesis is on Instagram Branding. I'd like to do a case study of the MRP Instagram account. All the information supplied will be strictly used for my thesis and once completed the thesis will be handed in, to my supervisor and external moderators for marking. The content of my thesis is not allowed to be submitted to any media for publishing, according to university rules.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or my research supervisor: Mr Ronald Irwin at ronald.irwin@uct.ac.za (021 650 2853).

Herewith a list of the questions:

1. Why has MRP chosen Instagram as one of the social media channels to have a brand presence on?

Instagram, although in SA is still preliminary low on penetration levels, it is gaining momentum - jumping from 1,1 million - 2, 68 million in one year. MRP utilises Instagram to showcase a personal side to the brand and highlights what we love. It is carefully curated with trends, user generated content, pop culture and product. This platform reaches a certain type of MRP fan. We do not use Instagram to do a hard-sell brand job.

2. What is MRP's Instagram Marketing strategy? See above comment.

3. Who is MRP's target audience on social media (Instagram)? The majority of our Instagram users are between the ages of 18-29 years old, with a 60-40% female/male split.

4. How do you target that audience on Instagram?

This audience has formed authentically. The Instagram SA community is predominantly between the ages of 18-24. We make sure our content strategy on this platform caters to a junior digitally savvy market.

5. What are some of the new things you've tried this year on Instagram? We are in the process of launching 'Shoppable Instagram' - making our content instantly stoppable for our fans. We have also launched a user-generated campaign - #mrpmystyle which invites fans to upload pics of themselves in MRP and stand a chance to be featured online.

6. Have these new strategies worked/ effectively engaged your Instagram audience? Yes - fan content is by far the best performing content on Instant. This is because it's real, authentic and customers trust the word of friend and real people over a brand.

7. How do you manage to keep your followers engaged? We continuously try to reinvent our content and come up with new and exciting concepts, campaigns, design and competitions to keep them hooked.

8. How do you keep your content fresh and engaging in a content saturated Instagram environment? See above comment. _____

9. Have you used any specific strategies/ campaigns to grow the MRP Instagram account following? We never wanted to 'buy' our audience in any way, so our strategy for growth and engagement is a purely authentic one. We always aim to make our fans the hero so we feature them on our platform all the time. This has helped to increase our brand love and in turn our engagement and following.
10. How do you evaluate your Instagram posts' effectiveness? We use the analytics programme –Iconosquare and Fanpagekarma to continuously analyse our posts, reach, engagement etc and track their success.
11. How do you measure the ROI of the MRP Instagram account? We track our talkability and brand sentiment to do this.
12. Does the Instagram account motivate direct sales? Yes it does play a role in converting traffic to our online site but it is a small percentage. Sales is not an objective for this platform.
13. Why does MRP collaborate with bloggers/ influential Instagrammers for Instagram content? See above comments.
14. What has the followers' response been to blogger/influencer collaboration on Instagram? See above comments.
15. Has blogger/ influencer collaboration on MRP's Instagram account translated into sales? There is no way of tracking this but influencers help to elevate your brand as their peers trust their opinion.
16. Has blogger/ influencer collaboration increased MRP's Instagram following? There is no way of tracking this but influencers help to elevate your brand as their peers trust their opinion.
17. What is your policy on responding to comments/ complaints on Instagram? We believe in effective customer services and our objective is to reply to every Instagram comment.
18. What type of content does better/ receives more likes and comments? User-generated posts, pop culture posts and trend posts.
19. Do you use any Instagram trends e.g selfies or trending hashtags in your Instagram posts? Yes, we like to keep up with globally trends so we incorporate them into our posts and campaigns. I.E Text Talk – IRL, FOMO, TBT
20. What would you say is the primary purpose of MRP's Instagram account? To connect with your customers/ build a relationship or to market your products? To connect with customers and to showcase our brands personality, products might be layered in this but our main objective is to represent our values in this platform.
21. What calls to action does MRP use on Instagram? We don't push her engagement, we prefer for it to be natural but we do use 'double tap', 'comment' or hashtag if engagement is required on posts like competitions.
22. Do you use user-generated-content on MRP's Instagram account? See above comments.
23. Does MRP make use of Instagram ads? Yes
24. Has the MRP Instagram account increased sales? Not sales, but it helps with follower growth and campaign/ promo/competition awareness.
25. How has MRP used its Instagram account to communicate its brand identity to consumers? See above.
26. Anything you'd like to add about MRP's Instagram account/ Instagram Marketing Strategy?

tmcluckie@m

1 of 6 - -

15.2 Appendix 2: Consumer Questionnaire Cover Email

Dear UCT Students,

I am a master's student at the University of Cape Town. I am conducting research on conspicuous consumption on Instagram and how this contributes to brand value creation. This study is towards the completion of my master's degree. It would be greatly appreciated if you participate in this research by completing an online questionnaire.

Eligibility: Anyone over the age of 18 with an Instagram account

Kindly note your participation in this research is voluntary and all information collected will be treated as strictly confidential. You may withdraw from this questionnaire at any period without subsequent consequences since participation is voluntary and should you withdraw your responses will not be recorded. Your responses will be treated as strictly confidential and will remain anonymous. No identifiable information will be asked for. This research has been approved by the UCT Ethics in Research Committee (Humanities Faculty).

The questionnaire will take between **5 – 10 minutes** to complete. To participate please click on the link

below: <http://survey.sogosurvey.com/k/RQsWRWTQsRsPsPsP>

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me on klnaly001@myuct.ac.za

Thank you in advance for your time

Kind regards

Alyssa Kleintjes (Researcher)

klnaly001@myuct.ac.za

15.3 Appendix 3: Online Consumer Questionnaire

1. Do you have an Instagram account?

- Yes
- No

2. How old are you?

- 18-24
- 25-30
- 30-40
- 40+

3. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

4. How often do you check your Instagram feed?

- Daily
- 3-5 a Week
- Weekly
- Less than Weekly
- Never

5. How much time do you spend on average when checking your Instagram feed?

- 10 min or less
- 30 min or less
- 1 hour or less
- 1-2 hours
- more than 2 hours

6. How many Instagram accounts do you follow?

- Less than 100
- Between 100-300
- Between 300-500
- More than 500

7. How long have you been on Instagram?

- Less than 6 months
- Between 6 months and 1 year
- Between 1-2 years
- Between 3-4 years
- Between 4-5 years or more

8. Do you follow any brands on Instagram?

- Yes
- No

9. If yes, How many brands do you currently follow on Instagram?

- Between 1-5
- Between 5-10
- Between 10-20
- More than 20

10. Why do you follow brands on Instagram?

- Inspiration
- To see the brand's products
- To get special offers/ deals/ discount codes
- To connect with the brand
- You like the brand's Instagram account content
- To connect with other people who like/ follow the brand
- Other (Please specify)

11. Which type of brands do you follow on Instagram?

- Lifestyle
- Fashion
- Food
- Fitness/ Sports
- Consumer Goods
- Business
- Other (Please specify)

12. Do you follow any influential Instagram accounts or bloggers on Instagram?

- Yes
- No

13. Do you follow more influential Instagrammers/ bloggers, brands or other users?

- More influential Instagrammers and bloggers
- More brands
- More other users
- All three equally

14. Do you differentiate between posts from other Instagram users and posts from brands' official Instagram account?

- Yes
- No

15. Do the posts of brands you follow influence your purchase decision?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

16. Do the posts of influential Instagrammers/ bloggers influence your purchase decision?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

17. Have you ever used any special offers/ discount codes offered by brands or influential Instagrammers/ bloggers on Instagram?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

18. Do you search for brands on Instagram to follow them?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

19. Do other Instagram user's posts introduce you to brands you were previously unaware of?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

20. Do you post pictures of your branded purchases on Instagram?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

21. Have you purchased a product after seeing it on Instagram?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

22. Have you purchased/ consumed a product just to post it on Instagram?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

23. How does a brand's Instagram presence affect your opinion of the brand?

- More Favourably
- Less Favourably
- Does not affect your opinion

24. Have you ever unfollowed a brand on Instagram?

- Yes
- No

25. If yes, please give a reason for your answer?

100 Characters Remaining

26. Have you ever unfollowed an Influential Instagrammer or blogger on Instagram?

- Yes
- No

27. If yes, please explain briefly why you unfollowed the Influential Instagrammer or blogger?

100 Characters Remaining

28. Which of these do you regard as the most credible source of information on a product?

- Review/ post on brand's official Instagram page
- Review/ post by Influential Instagrammer/ blogger
- Review/ post by other Instagram user you know
- Review/ post by other Instagram user you don't know

29. Do you research a product/ brand on Instagram before purchase?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

30. Does seeing products on a brand's Instagram post motivate you to purchase the product?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

15.4 Appendix 4: Influencer Content Analysis Codebooks

Appendix 4.1 Baked the Blog Codebook

Image	Brand	Caption	Hashtags	Likes	Comment	Type of Influence	Pr Campaign	Tags	Type of Brand	Local/ Global	Brand Visibility
	Michael Kors	Wearing @michaelkors to the first ever MK store launch in South Africa super excited to have one of my favourite brands in SA 🎉🎉🎉🎉	#thesurteegroup #nawaterfront #givekors	4592	65	Shot of influence with product	Event	michaelkors	Apparel	International	Product
	Urban Decay	Apparently 🎉🎉🎉🎉 #YouLookBetterNaked so excited about the new all matte Naked ultimate basics palette check my snapchat for more AshaBakerKo #850 online www.urbandecay.co.za	#YouLookBetter Naked	1618	13	Product shot	Press Drop	urbandecaycosmetics	Beauty	International	No
	Revlon	Taking selfies with my mascara, didn't realize I had loose powder all over myself! 🙄🙄🙄🙄 #LoveSquadSA #ChooseLove.p.s check out my video on my channel YouTube.com/BakedTheBlog #BakedOnBeauty	#LoveSquadSA #ChooseLove #BakedOnBeauty	2238	14	Shot of influence with product	Press Drop	revlonsa	Beauty	International	Product
	Kardashian Beauty	Rose gold is my jam right now and so is @kbeautyhair's hair straightener & dry oil combo. I have a few faves from the collection but loving the rose gold trim on these tongs. 🎉🎉🎉🎉 #BakedOnHairCare	#BakedOnHairCare	1027	10	Product Shot	Press Drop	kbeautyhair glamitsa	Beauty	International	Logo Product
	MAC Cosmetics	Excited to play with these new natural shade products! Check out the #MacInstantArtistry stand at the try #BakedOnBeauty & A waterfront this week 🎉🎉🎉🎉 #BakedOnBeauty	#MacInstantArtistry #BakedOnBeauty	798	1	Product shot	Event	MAC Cosmetics	Beauty	International	Product
	Voost	If you look closely you can totally spot my nerves... Skydiving is not for the faint hearted 🙄🙄🙄🙄 Check my snapchat for more #voostexperience 🎉🎉🎉🎉	#voostexperience	1287	10	Shot of influence at Event	Event	voost_sa	Pharmaceutical	Local	No
	Citron	So excited to be at my favorite event of the year #CitronPinkPolo@raybansummer squad 🎉🎉🎉🎉 #BakedOnBeauty #BakedOnBeauty	#CitronPinkPolo #raybansummersquad #BakedOnBeauty	823	6	Product Shot	Event	pink_polo_squad	Beverage	International	Logo Product
	Puma	Vintage feeb Puma boxing boots and a good vinyl. #goodforthesoul 🎉🎉🎉🎉 #BakedOnBeauty #BakedOnBeauty	#goodforthesoul #eskia #pumairihanna	536	8	Product shot	Press Drop	puma	Apparel	International	Product
	Ray-Ban	Legendary sunnies #RayBanSummerSquad #endywarhol 🎉🎉🎉🎉 #BakedOnBeauty	#RayBanSummerSquad #endywarhol	781	9	Product shot	Press Drop	rayban	Accessories	International	Product
	Benefit	Taking over the @benefitsouthafrica Instagram account today! 🎉🎉🎉🎉		719	5	Product shot	Instagram takeover	benefitsouthafrica	Beauty	International	Product

Appendix 4.2 Codebook 2: Trevor Stuurman

Image	Brand	Caption	Hashtags	Likes	Comments	Type of Post	Campaign	Tags	Type of User	Local/ Global	Brand Visibility	Comment	Sentiment
	Woolworths	Tune into @afternoonsexpress - taking all things #StyleBySA and Summer footwear trends with @Woolworths. #StuurmanStyleDiary	#StuurmanStyleDiary	528	7	Product Shot	Trend Forecast	afternoonsexpress woolworths	Apparel	Local	Logo Product		
	Superga	More from our @superga_sa collaboration. Read about in the Marie Claire November Issue. Big love to @marieclaire's fashion team for the all love and support. #StuurmanForSuperga #StuurmanStyleDiary	#StuurmanForSuperga #StuurmanStyleDiary	1852	21	Shot of Product	Influencer with Product	superga_sa marieclaire	Apparel	International	Product		
	Prada	And it's not even my birthday...With love from @prada. #StuurmanStyleDiary #HappyFriday #W16	#StuurmanStyleDiary #HappyFriday #W16	580	39	Product Shot	Press Drop	prada	Apparel	International	Logo Product		
	Country Road	Tonight's transport courtesy of #countryroadstyle. #CRSimpleThings #StuurmanStyleDiary	#countryroadstyle #CRSimpleThings #StuurmanStyleDiary	660	4	Product Shot	Press Drop	countryroad	Apparel	International	No		
	H&M	Today's transport courtesy of #HMSouthAfrica. #StuurmanStyleDiary	#HMSouthAfrica #StuurmanStyleDiary	1079	38	Product Shot	Press Drop	HM	Apparel	International	No		
	Cartier	About Tonight: @cartier Welcome Dinner. #drivedcartier #whatdrivesyou	#drivedcartier #whatdrivesyou	609	13	Product Shot	Event	cartier	Jewellery	International	Logo		
	Gucci	Night out with @gucci #StuurmanStyleDiary	#StuurmanStyleDiary	558	8	Shot of event location	Event	gucci	Apparel	International	Logo		
	Mini Cooper	When hard work meets opportunity... Meet my new best friend. @JohnCooperWorks. @mini_southafrica #StuurmanStyleDiary #GoodSunday #TheCumbacolective #MyFirstMINI	#JohnCooperWorks #StuurmanStyleDiary #GoodSunday #TheCumbacolective #MyFirstMINI	684	34	Product Shot	Event	mini_southafrica	Automotive	International	Product		
	Adidas	Transport. #StuurmanStyleDiary	#StuurmanStyleDiary	483	8	Product Shot	Press Drop	adidas	Apparel	International	Logo Product		
	Pichika Africa	Never go to war without weapons. #StuurmanStyleDiary #Chulaa #PichikaAfrica	#StuurmanStyleDiary #Chulaa #PichikaAfrica	856	11	Product Shot	Press Drop	pichikafrica	Accessories	Local	Product		

Appendix 4.3 Codebook 3: Fashionista CT Blog

Image	Brand	Caption	Hashtags	Likes	Comment	Type of Po	Campaign	Tags	Type of In	Local/ Global	Brand Visi
	Tom Ford	Thanks @Tomford for the new #scapetown #southafrica #fashionblog Boys in my life 🍷 Ben #lifestyleblog #blogger #blog #fashion Cristiano #fashionblogger #miami #dallas #london See 📷 Snapchat FashionistaCT #paris #LA #joo #helle #newyork for more #flipsandboys #johannesburg #luxury #curves #curvy #blessed #fashionistaCT	#flipsandboys #tomford #makeup	799	8	Product Shot	Event	Tomford	Beauty	International	Logo
	Guess	Chilling in the @Guess lounge 🍷 Enjoying the @SunMet Tr Dressed by @Guess #Guessinfluencer #Racingtarush #GuessSA #LoveGuess #Sunmet	#Guessinfluencer #Racingtarush #GuessSA #Sunmet #LoveGuess	1739	62	Shot of influencer with product	Event	Guess Sunmet Apparel	International	No	
	New Balance	Had such fun @nbc_za chilling in the New balance lounge. My whole outfit @newbalanceza Sneaker 998 #newbalanceSA #sneakerexchange #nbcCPT #NBSA #newbalanceZA	#newbalanceSA #sneakerexchange #nbcCPT #NBSA #newbalanceZA	1072	48	Shot of influencer with product	Event	nbc_za newbalanceza	Apparel	International	Logo
	Ciroc	Out at @CirocSA Apple Affair 🍷 Dressed by @jacques_lagrange_couture #TheBromwell #VivianLaw #CrocLifeSA #AppleAffair #TheBromwell #VivianLaw	#TheBromwell #VivianLaw #CrocLifeSA #AppleAffair #TheBromwell #VivianLaw	993	45	Shot of influencer at event	Event	CirocSA jacques_lagrange_couture thebromwell	Alcohol	International	Logo
	The Body Shop	Casual outfit from @thebodyshopsouthafrica event. See snapchat FashionistaCT for more #junglebelisa Dress @vadabyivada	#junglebelisa	7637	48	Shot of influencer with product	Event	thebodyshopsouthafrica vadabyivada	Beauty	International	Logo
	Revlon	Guess who's blonde 🍷 for the day 🍷 Out at the @revlonsa event #revlonsa #chooseLoveSA See snapchat FashionistaCT for more Wearing @vadabyivada	#revlonsa #chooseLoveSA	1015	52	Shot of influencer at event	Event	revlonsa vadabyivada	Beauty	International	Logo
	Lux	Just A Little LUX 🍷 @lux_southafrica #hoursofGold #sheertwilight #relaxation #curvy #curves #scapetown #london #miami #loveLife #blessed	#sheertwilight #relaxation #curvy #curves #scapetown #london #miami #loveLife #blessed	454	22	Shot of influencer with product	Press Drop	lux_southafrica	Beauty	International	Product
	Benefit	Thanks @benefitsouthafrica for the gifts 🍷 🍷 Fashionistas should definitely visit their brow bar in @edgarsfashion in the @vandawaterfront or the one nearest to you 🍷 See their page for more! #eyebrowsonfeek 🍷 See snapchat FashionistaCT for more on Mac trends event #macaw1 #trends Am candy by @erabydipinle thanks for the personalized bracelet @dipinle #eralone 🍷 #macocosmetics #runningoutthepagesinyourpassport #benefitcosmetics #makeup #lifestyleblogger #scapetown #southafrica #miami #sanfrancisco #curves #curvy #fashion #fashionistaCT #loveLife #blessed #benefitSA	#runningoutthepagesinyourpassport #benefitcosmetics #makeup #lifestyleblogger #scapetown #southafrica #miami #sanfrancisco #curves #curvy #fashion #fashionistaCT #loveLife #blessed #benefitSA	330	18	Product Shot	Press Drop	benefitsouthafrica edgarsfashion vandawaterfront	Beauty	International	Logo Product
	MAC Cosmetics	See snapchat FashionistaCT for more on Mac trends event #macaw1 #trends Am candy by @erabydipinle thanks for the personalized bracelet @dipinle #eralone 🍷 #macocosmetics #macocosmetics #makeup #makeupartit #scapetown #johannesburg #joo #fashionblog #lifestyleblog #blogger #blog #fashion #fashionblogger #ootd #curves #curvy #style #luxury #versace #prada #glamorous #glam #loveLife #blessed #blogging #fashionistaCT #macocosmeticsza	#macocosmetics #makeup #makeupartit #scapetown #johannesburg #joo #fashionblog #lifestyleblog #blogger #blog #fashion #fashionblogger #ootd #curves #curvy #style #luxury #versace #prada #glamorous #glam #loveLife #blessed #blogging #fashionistaCT #macocosmeticsza	530	10	Product Shot	Event	erabydipinle	Beauty	International	Logo
	Mercedes Benz	Snapchat FashionistaCT! Such fun off roading with this beast! #vip #AMGtourSA #mercedesbenzSA #joo #johannesburg #g63 #scapetown #southafrica #africa #redcarpet #fashionblog #lifestyleblog #blogger #blog #fashion #fashionblogger #ootd #curves #curvy #style #luxury #design #dubai #glamorous #glam #loveLife #blessed #blogging #fashionistaCT	#vip #AMGtourSA #mercedesbenzSA #joo #johannesburg #g63 #scapetown #southafrica #africa #redcarpet #fashionblog #lifestyleblog #blogger #blog #fashion #fashionblogger #ootd #curves #curvy #style #luxury #design #dubai #glamorous #glam #loveLife #blessed #blogging #fashionistaCT	986	34	Shot of influencer with product	Event	mercedesbenz #mb_inspire #mbfashionweek	Automotive	International	Logo Product

Appendix 4.4 Codebook 4: Fashionbreed Blog

Image	Brand	Caption	Hashtags	Likes	Comments	Type of Post	Campaign	Tags	Type of Item	Brand Value	Local/Global
	Urban Decay	When @urbandecaycosmetics sends nudes 🍑 the Naked Ultimate Basics palette is available online NOW on the Urban Decay pop up online store! Stocks are limited so hurry - www.urbandecay.co.uk #YousoAbletoTakeIt #NakedUltimateBasicsPalette	#YousoAbletoTakeIt #NakedUltimateBasicsPalette	135	2	Product Shot	Promotion	urbandecaycosmetics	Beauty	Logo Product	International
	Elixir	Had the best Monday at @12apostleshotel spa with @elimeissouthafrica! They treated me to a Pro-Collagen Age-Defy Facial and a Targeted Tanning Tightener massage. Look out for my full review next week 🍷🍷 #InMyNature #sp	#InMyNature #sp	408	4	Location shot	Event	12apostleshotel elimeissouthafrica	Beauty	No	International
	Dior	My new beautiful highlighters from @diormakeup - I don't know if I should use them or hang them on the wall as artworks 🍷 How insanely beautiful is the sequined and textile finish on both powders?! (Dior's Splendor Illuminating pressed powder on the left / Dior's Nude Air Shimmering Sculpting powder on the right) #Diorbeauty	#Diorbeauty	129	3	Product Shot	Press drop	diormakeup	Beauty	Logo Product	International
	Smile Brilliant	I finally received my custom teeth impression trays from @smilebrilliant and my #teethwhitening journey has officially begun! Can't wait to #smilebrilliantly pe; don't forget you can win your own teeth whitening kit by subscribing to Fashion Breed on Youtube and entering your details here: http://www.smilebrilliant.com/contest #st	#smilebrilliantly #teethwhitening #st	200	1	Product Shot	Competition	smilebrilliant	Beauty	Logo Product	International
	Country Road	I just picked out this knitted girl, these sweet suede pumps and a few other pieces from @countryroad, can't wait to show you how I styled them wif #countryroadstyle #st	#countryroadstyle #st	349	1	Product Shot	In-store	countryroad	Apparel	Logo	International
	Revlon	The winner of the #RevlonFashionBreedVD is @shayaluke! Please direct message me 🍷 thank you to everyone for entering! #ChooseLove	#RevlonFashionBreedVD #ChooseLove	170	11	Product Shot	Competition		Beauty	Product	International
	Adidas	Throwing it back to the last time adidas Performance invited us out and surprised us with a full outfit and made us run to test it all - @luz_photography and I are off to #IB for the day with @adidas for the launch of the new Stella McCartney collection at Bounce trampoline park, so excited! 🍷 #adidasstella #st	#adidasstella #st	123	8	Shot of influencer with product	Event	adidas	Apparel	Product	International
	Smashbox	It's all about lashes and lips this morning with @smashbox! 🍷		137	2	Product Shot	Event	smashbox	Beauty	Logo Product	International
	Juicy Couture	It's finally here, I Am Juicy Couture, the new fragrance by @juicycouture 🍷 sweet, spicy and obviously sexy 🍷 "I am not ordinary, I am not subtle, I am not conventional, I am not typical, I am not modest." #IAMJUICYCOUTURE	#IAMJUICYCOUTURE	170	2	Product Shot	Promotion	juicycouture	Beauty	Logo Product	International
	Old Khari	Helping my man #khari in @oldkhari 🍷 I love that he always goes out of his way to look good for me 🍷 #st	#khari	91	3	Shot of influencer with product	Collaboration	oldkhari	Apparel	Logo	Local

Appendix 4.5 Codebook 5: Just Jade Blog

IMAGE	BRAND	CAPTION	HASHTAGS	LIKES	COMMENT	TYPE OF POI CAMPAIGN	TAGS	TYPE OF BR/LOCAL/INT	BRAND			
	SneakerLab	GIVEAWAY Morning! Hit the link in my bio and check out the review I did on @sneakerlab. To win a deluxe kit, their magic wipes and the new sneaker protector. All you have to do is: 1. Follow @justjading & @sneakerlab 2. Post a picture of your favourite sneakers (download or original image) 3. Use the #sneakerlab Winner announced the 23rd, good luck! The best Valentine's @maccosmetics - Happy Valentine's Day everyone! In the spirit of Valentine's Day, @MACCosmetics is sharing the #D by giving away a free full-size Refine Matte Liquid Lipcolour in Dance With Me with every purchase of 2x or more MAC products on www.maccosmetics.co.za. The offer is valid from 3PM yesterday afternoon until midnight tonight. #ValentinesDay #MAC	#sneakerlab	220	8	Product Shot	Competition	SneakerLab	Consumer Goods	International	Light Product	
	MAC Cosmetics	IT'S BE taking over the @benefitsouthafrica account tomorrow. Give them a follow to find out all about my review basically sent me Christmas! How beautiful is this package? & I'll be in boxing it on my snapchat and Instagram story tonight #RevlonSA #RevlonChristmas	#ValentinesDay #MAC	301	0	Product Shot	Promotion	maccosmetics	Beauty	International	Light Product	
	Benefit South Africa	review basically sent me Christmas! How beautiful is this package? & I'll be in boxing it on my snapchat and Instagram story tonight #RevlonSA #RevlonChristmas	#BenefitSA	386	4	Shot of influencer with product	Takeover	BenefitSouthAfrica	Beauty	International	Light Product	
	Revlon South Africa	Stand a chance to win a 1 of 4 sets of double tickets to the #KoronaSummit happening this Friday! Click the link in my bio to find out how. #ThisIsLiving #KoronaSummit #KoronaSummit - please make sure your profiles are	#RevlonSA #RevlonChristmas	347	5	Product Shot	Press Drop	revlon	Beauty	International	Light	
	Korona Summit	Stand a chance to win a 1 of 4 sets of double tickets to the #KoronaSummit happening this Friday! Click the link in my bio to find out how. #ThisIsLiving #KoronaSummit #KoronaSummit - please make sure your profiles are	#KoronaSummit #ThisIsLiving #KoronaSummit #KoronaSummit	489	17	Shot of influencer with product	Promotion	korona summit	5/13/2017	7/3/2017	International	Light
	GHD South Africa	About a week ago when I did some shopping at @spitzshoes, I ended up leaving with a pair of @kurtgringer heels. I'll share them with you guys soon enough #KurtgringerSA #Spitzshoes	#GHDSouthAfrica	418	4	Product Shot	Press Drop	ghd_southafrica	Beauty	International	Light	
	Spitz Shoes	About a week ago when I did some shopping at @spitzshoes, I ended up leaving with a pair of @kurtgringer heels. I'll share them with you guys soon enough #KurtgringerSA #Spitzshoes	#KurtgringerSA #Spitzshoes	416	2	Shot of influencer with product	In-store	spitzshoes kurtgringer	Apparel	International	Light	
	Woolworths	From the 19 Sept to the 20 Oct @woolworths_za will be giving you the opportunity to shop your favourite beauty brands on sale. You'll get even bigger discounts if you're a W!wards member and a further discount if you pay with your WOOLWORTHS card. Make sure you get to a counter before spring is over, that way you'll be ready for summer. #D		131	2	Product Shot	Press Drop	woolworths_za	Beauty	Local	No	
	Mercedes Benz	What a freaking experience it was driving in the @mercedesbenz @eng_performance Japan, I'm GT3, talk about G-Force! #mercedesbenzeng GT3 #gforce #kuortown	#GTS #gforce #kuortown	298	18	Shot of influencer with product	Event	mercedesbenz eng_performance eng_performance	Automotive	International	Light Product	
	Tresemme South Africa	I'm at the @tresemme Beauty full volume reverse wash system launch, follow my snapchat for all the info on the product and event. This is a new product and it's amazing! #MyVolumeRevolution	#MyVolumeRevolution	174	0	Product Shot	Event	tresemme	Beauty	International	Product	