



## **IAB SA Digital Influencer Marketing Committee progress and proposed process to develop a common set of definitions and terms for the segment.**

The Interactive Advertising Bureau South Africa (IAB SA) Digital Influencer Marketing Committee, formed in October 2019, has been working towards generating clearly defined and commonly agreed guidelines, standards, best practice, definitions and benchmarks, in collaboration with IAB Global, to assist IAB SA members to make empowered digital decisions in this growing segment of the industry. The Committee's mandate is also to "uphold the best interests of the consumers", as although the guidelines will be serving stakeholders; consumers are the end audience. This is part of an exercise on a larger scale and quarterly updates on the work of the Committee will be released. Discussions include the addition of influencers in a second phase of the process to ensure that the work of the Committee is aligned with influencer's realities.

**The industry is invited to review the draft proposal of definitions below and to share their feedback by Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October at 4pm. All feedback is to be itemised within the document below and emailed to [Hello@iabsa.net](mailto:Hello@iabsa.net).**

The IAB SA will review the feedback in the first week of November. The findings will be presented in an open workshop on Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> of November from 10 – 12 noon via Zoom Video Conference. Post which a timeline will be shared for the definitions toolkit from the committee.

**The following milestones have been achieved.**

### **Generation of the IAB SA Digital Influencer Committee Mission Statement**

To provide clearly defined and commonly agreed guidelines, standards, best practice, definitions and benchmarks, based on research by and consolidated feedback from all the following industry stakeholder representatives (including, but not limited to, brands, creative, advertising and media agencies, PR and communication agencies, influencer platforms, Influencer Marketing agents, as well as the social-media platforms where the majority of this type of marketing takes place), while upholding the best interests of the consumers.

#### ***Background:***

The mission statement was generated through discussion amongst all of the committee members. There are some pertinent discussions to be noted:

The reference to “all stakeholders” is fleshed out to detail “including, but not limited to, brands, creative, advertising and media agencies, PR and communication agencies, influencer platforms and their agents, as well as the social-media platforms where the majority of this type of marketing takes place”. The rationale for detailing the various stakeholders is to ensure that it is understood that the Committee represents the digital marketing industry, with the aim of achieving buy-in from the various sectors and ultimately alignment with the various guidelines that the committee is generating. Again to note that discussions include the addition of influencers in a second phase of the process to ensure that the work of the Committee is aligned with influencer’s realities.

### **Generation of the definition for Influencer Marketing:**

Influencer Marketing’s principal objective is to leverage an influencer’s own audience and voice to achieve specific marketing, and / or communications, and / or advertising objectives.

#### **Background:**

This one-liner definition is deceptively simple. A number of discussions were undertaken that unpacked the various platforms for campaigns that influencers could participate in. These included radio, television, events, advertising or via their own social media channels. It was therefore decided that platforms would not be detailed in this definition and that *intention* was to be highlighted, i.e. “to achieve specific marketing, and/or communications, and/or advertising objectives”. This statement will be part of the proposal for approval in phase 2 of the project.

To further detail above:

A fully scripted commercial with an influencer is designed to achieve a different objective to a campaign where the influencer is the content creator, shares it in his/her own style and voice, on his/her own social media page.

Both approaches have their own objectives, utilise different best practice structures, employ different measurement metrics and are usually allocated from different budgets.

The Committee therefore differentiated the two based on the principal objective, the content creator and the audience.

### **Generation of Influencer Categories:**

#### **Background:**

An IAB South Africa member survey was undertaken in May 2020 to gain a clearer understanding of the current landscape and expectations, broken down by category of industry player and job function. This data was used as the groundwork to start the analysis below.

It was noted in the survey results that whilst industry use similar terminology, that the clarification of categories and tiers with a “glossary of terms” would be a useful base guideline. The categories and tiers below were generated with the input of the Committee

members (which include influencers' representatives) and data from the survey and will be discussed in the phase 1 workshop and part of the phase 2 proposal for approval

It is to be noted that these categories and tiers bear no relationship to fee discussions. The categories and tiers aim to enable terminology consistency and are not intended for use as criteria for price brackets.

- **Celebrities:** A celebrity is an individual who has achieved fame through what they do. They are in the public eye, in the media eye and able to influence individuals through people's desire to emulate who they perceive that person to be. This is fame based.
- **Social Media Influencers:** A Social Media Influencer is an individual content producer or group of producers who has gathered a social media following because of their personality, lifestyle, content style, writing and/or opinions on owned social media channels.
- **Experts:** Experts are thought leaders who users look to for advice on specific subjects based on their academic or professional expertise.
- **Customers:** Customers are brand advocates who use word of mouth to advocate positively within their peer circles in a formalised collaboration with the brand or agency.

### **The process:**

It was decided to commence with the definition of influencer categories, and from there, to unpack the definition of influencer tiers. At present, categories and tiers are discussed with one voice. For example, the most discussed categories at present are celebrities, macro, micro and nano - which in reality, are a mixture of impact metrics and categories.

The Committee therefore decided to work on defining clear categories that can be aligned with global reality, and to ensure that these categories are separated from the tier related impact measurement, which will then be unpacked at a local level.

A primary rationale for this model is that many brands are global and should be able to work and centralise decisions based on a harmonised understanding of the categories. The tiers, however, are more localised, for example, there are only a tiny number of influencers with more than 1 million followers in SA, and they would be the top celebrities, but this would not be uncommon in the USA.

Ultimately, tiers and categories should be utilised together. i.e., a tier 3 influencer in the celebrity category.

The category segmentation required extensive discussion. A summary of these discussions is below.

### ***Celebrities***

Some celebrities may be famous on television or radio, but have a lower number of followers than macro-influencers as their fame is not social media based but based on their fame.

### ***Social media influencers***

Social Media Influencers on the other hand, grew their social media following due to their social media activity, not because of who they are in the media. They may have become famous at a later stage, but fame was acquired through social media first.

### ***Expert***

The expert category was well-debated. Ultimately, it was decided that this category should be created due to the differentiation that is necessary between, for example, a beauty blogger and a dermatologist. The former does not have academic or related professional knowledge, but is acknowledged as being well-versed in beauty. The beauty blogger is therefore a social media influencer whilst the dermatologist is an expert.

The same applies to the owner of a specialised wine page unless s/he is a winemaker or an oenologist, in which case s/he would fall under the Expert category.

### ***Customer***

The customer category exists due to the growing trend of brands using customers as ambassadors for their brand. This category however is restricted to some form of formalised relationship. For example, strategies aimed at activating a large and growing number of customers to endorse the brand would not fall under the influencer marketing category; those on the other hand who have been personally selected and have entered into a formalised relationship with the brand would fall into this category. This does not mean that there is a financial transaction, it means that there is a formalised engagement protocol/discussion that has been had with the selected individuals, who are activated to achieve specific objectives for the brand.

### **Generation of Influencers Tiers:**

The recommended tier numbers are represented below and will be discussed in the phase 1 workshop and part of the phase 2 proposal for approval.

1. 0 – 2,000
2. 2,000 – 10,000
3. 10,000 – 50,000
4. 50,000 – 250,000
5. 250,000 – 1,000,000
6. 1,000,000+

### ***Background:***

Actual data analysing the differences between performance and engagement rates across the numbers above was provided. The Committee then divided this into tiers according to the performance behaviour.

While the 50-250 category might look like having a large gap, the current performance behaviour remains the same.

The tiers still require naming and the objective is to be able to apply these tiers to each market/country, with a need to solely adjust the numbers per country and per year, to align with the continuous evolution of social media.

Multiple discussions have been had around the real nature of a tier based on the number of followers that does not reflect the actual influence or conversion capacity.

While it was agreed that a large number of followers does not necessarily mean a vast potential to drive conversions, the current market reality is that the terms macro, micro and nano are globally used as a measure of audience size. The Committee therefore needs to adapt to the current industry reality, and the topic of measurement is currently being addressed as the next milestone.

We have also decided not to limit it per social media platform because the landscape is quickly evolving, and different platforms have different standards. The tiers will therefore apply to an audience size on any platform.