



IAB SA Digital Influencer Marketing Committee

Document on definitions

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DEVELOPING A COMMON SET OF DEFINITIONS AND TERMS FOR THE INDUSTRY

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 practices, 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.

While the IAB SA strives to guide and support its members, it also has a mandate to “uphold the best interests of the consumers”. The end-users audience is as important and as in need of protection as our members.

After intense collaboration between the IAB SA, IAB Global, various industry stakeholders and thought leaders from around the country, initial proposals were set out. Round-table discussions that incorporated comments from businesses and influencers led to the formation of this – a concise guide to the definitions and categorisation for the influencer marketing industry.

Having an approved and agreed upon set of definitions and terms for our industry will protect those within it as well as our clients and their brands.

This allows us, as a young and growing marketing segment, to formalise our way going forward. With the IAB SA as the lead, our industry will be able to negotiate from a position of strength as we present a united front with a common set of definitions and a common purpose: the continued growth and success of influencer marketing.

“... [assisting members] to make empowered digital decisions”

THE IAB SA DIGITAL INFLUENCER MARKETING COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

To provide clearly defined and commonly agreed guidelines, standards, best practices, definitions and benchmarks, based on research by and consolidated feedback from all the 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.

“... best practices, definitions and benchmarks, based on [research and feedback]”

DEFINITION OF 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.

In simplified terms: it's a form of marketing that uses influencers to promote a brand or message to a larger market.

Influencers are opinion leaders with a social following, regarded as experts or trustworthy by their followers.

**“... to leverage
an influencer's
own audience
and voice”**

DEFINITIONS OF INFLUENCER CATEGORIES AND TIERS

An IAB SA 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.

It was noted in the survey results that while industry uses similar terminology, the clarification of categories and tiers with a “glossary of terms” would be a useful base guideline. The categories and tiers that follow were generated with the input of the committee members (who include influencers’ representatives) and data from the survey.

Note: 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.

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 IAB SA set to defining clear categories that can be aligned with global reality, and to ensure that these categories are separated from the tier-related impact measurement.

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 these numbers would not be uncommon in the USA.

Ultimately, tiers and categories should be utilised together; for example, a tier 3 influencer in the celebrity category.

The category segmentation required extensive discussion. A summary of these discussions appears on the following page.

“Categories and tiers aim to enable terminology consistency”

“... defining clear categories that can be aligned with global reality”

DEFINITION OF INFLUENCER CATEGORIES



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

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 whereas 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.



CUSTOMERS

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.

DEFINITION OF INFLUENCER TIERS

Tiers are central to the nano, micro and macro conversation. A tier is a classification of an influencer's reach: the number of people they can be expected to engage with.

Actual data analysing the differences between performance and engagement rates across the numbers was provided. These tiers were divided 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 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. There is a need to adapt to the current industry reality.

No limit was set 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.

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+

“The objective is to apply these tiers to each market/country”

WITH THANKS

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