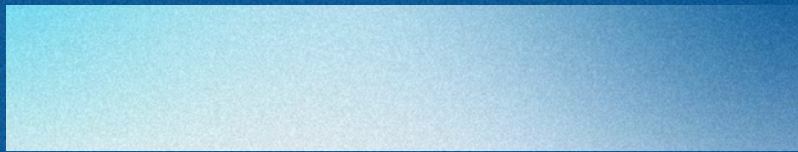




# HOLIDAY GUIDE

FOR



***INFLUENCER  
MARKETING***



# INTRO DUCTION

From dazzling fireworks to stockings over the fireplace, the holiday sentiment is tied to feelings of excitement and celebration: a time that reminds people of the joys in their lives. With so many cherished memories and family traditions in the making, it comes as no surprise that spreading the holiday spirit is encouraged on social media, giving businesses the opportunity to create targeted marketing campaigns that embody the holiday spirit. As the festive season approaches, it is common for brands to experiment with marketing strategies that drive holiday sales and, with the rise of the digital age, the popularity of implementing influencer marketing for the holidays has skyrocketed.

Last year, 34% of holiday shoppers planned to use social media to assist their purchasing decisions, a trend that has shown a consistent annual rise in social media holiday shoppers, and 2024 is forecasted to be no different. For brands that seek to use the opportunity of holiday marketing to take their business to the next level, it is of utmost importance to develop an impactful marketing plan. This holiday guide will explore how businesses can effectively leverage influencer marketing to maximize their holiday campaigns, providing insights into strategies, trends, and case studies that highlight successful holiday influencer collaborations.

# BACKGROUND



Influencer marketing has evolved significantly over the past few years, becoming a cornerstone of digital marketing strategies, and one specialty that sets influencer marketing apart from other strategies is its ability to adapt to ongoing media trends. This overlaps well with the holidays, where celebratory sentiment surges in social media: during the holiday season, influencer marketing becomes even more impactful as consumers are actively seeking gift ideas, holiday inspiration, and seasonal promotions. Understanding the basics of influencer marketing and its application to holidays is essential for crafting successful campaigns.

# THE HOLIDAY *INFLUENCE*

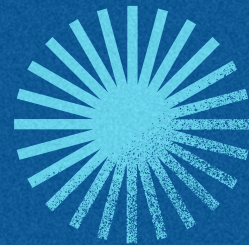
The holiday season, spanning from the family-oriented spirit during Thanksgiving through New Year's, represents culture more than anything else: rather than being limited to more personal celebration, the holidays not only encourage socialization but also consumer spending. Brands can capitalize on this peak time period by launching holiday-themed campaigns designed to increase brand visibility. Influencer marketing adds a layer of authenticity and relatability to these campaigns, helping brands to connect with consumers on a personal level, which is critical during times as meaningful as the holiday season.

# PLANNING YOUR



# HOLIDAY

## *INFLUENCER CAMPAIGN*



### **1. Setting Clear Goals**

Before launching a holiday influencer campaign, it is crucial to define clear goals. These might include increasing brand awareness, driving website traffic, boosting sales, or growing social media engagement. Having specific, measurable objectives will guide the campaign strategy and help evaluate its success. When everyone is on the same page – from goals, to tracking reach, to outreach – the campaign is more likely to be successful and impactful for your brand.

### **2. Choosing the Right Influencers**

Selecting the right influencers is vital to the success of a holiday campaign. Brands should look for influencers whose audiences align with their target demographic and whose content style matches their brand ethos. Micro-influencers often have highly engaged audiences and can be particularly effective for niche markets such as specific holidays – and of course, can be more accessible to brands with specific audiences, products, and services.

For brand campaigns focusing on reach over engagement, macro-influencers often provide better results – crafting tailored content toward their larger followings, often resulting in greater brand awareness and visibility. Mid-level influencers, nested between the two, often have significant followings – ranging from 60,000 to 200,000 – with a better balance of engagement and reach. Depending on your campaign goals and intended audience, choosing the best influencer isn't solely determined by following – especially if you're more interested in measuring engagement and clicks over reach.

### 3. Crafting Engaging Content

The content created by influencers should be engaging, authentic, and relevant to the holiday season. This could include gift guides, holiday recipes, or festive fashion tips. Visual content, such as photos and videos, tend to perform well on social media platforms during the holidays, as consumers tend to be more drawn to decorative and engaging material.

In alignment with your intended campaign goals, including metrics of engagement and reach above, crafting engaging content can look different for every brand. However, one thing remains the same – it should be authentic, aligned with your brand mission, and relevant to the holidays you've chosen to cover. For the holiday season, gift guides, holiday recipes, and festive fashion tips could all perform well – depending on your chosen platforms.

Visually engaging unique content tends to perform best, regardless of platform, but if you're primarily creating short-form content, consider Instagram Reels, in-feed posts, stories, or even YouTube shorts. To target younger generations, prioritize video content – as video-centric social platforms like YouTube and TikTok are most popular with Gen Z audiences.



Over the last few decades, marketers have become obsessed with the "consumer funnel", where shopping on or offline was linear. This predetermined path to purchase followed conventional stages:

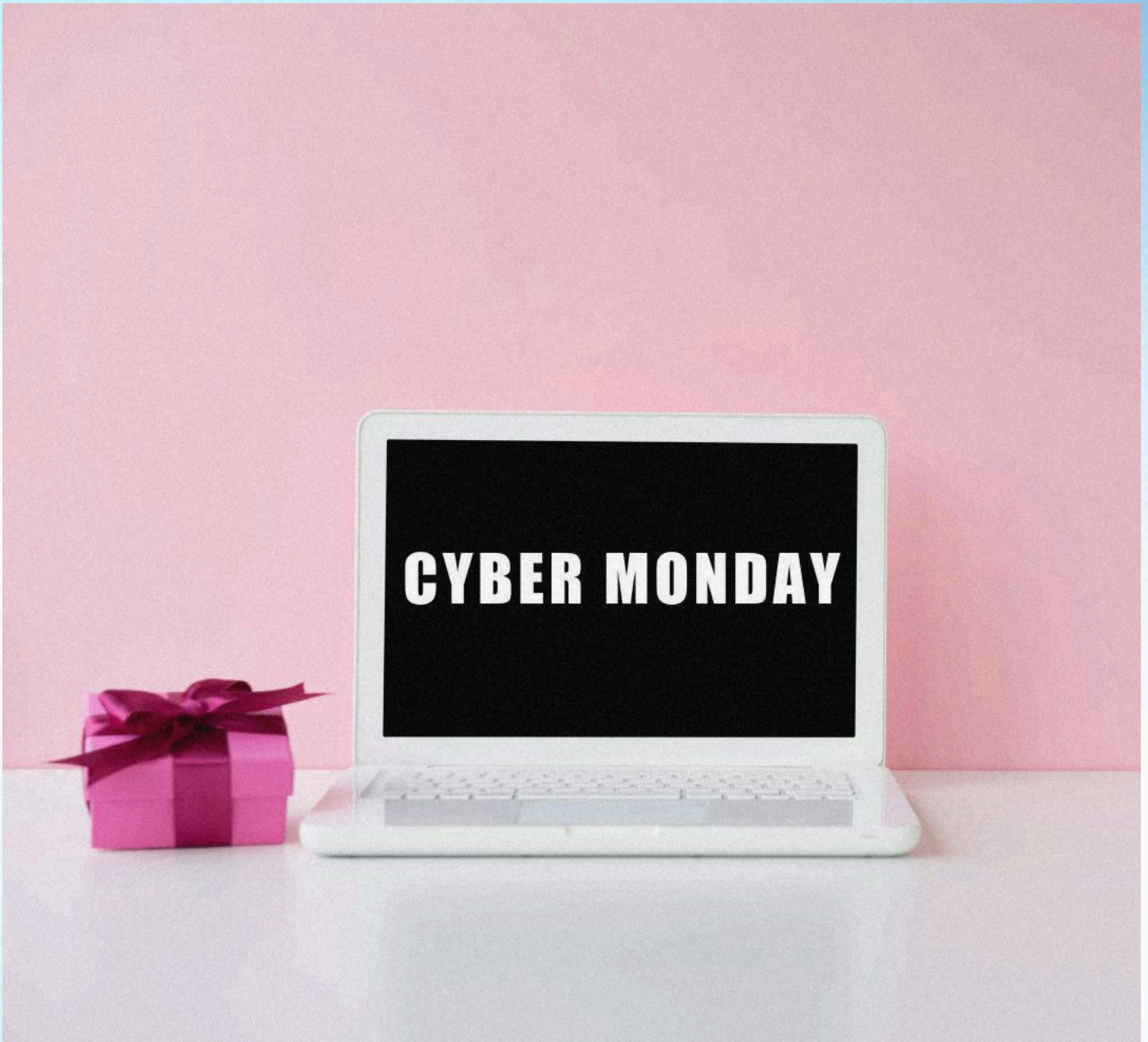
Especially when targeting new audiences yearning for connection online, visually engaging content has radically transformed – consider Vogue Business' "infinite consumer loop," as an alternative to the traditional funnel, where users are inherently drawn to content that fosters community and individuality with product/service advertisement, rather than funnels consumers. Platforms like TikTok, whose comment sections are equally valuable to original posts, can both reach audiences, while keeping them engaged – instead of traditional advertising campaigns that have been shown to "turn off" many generations of online consumers and users.



#### 4. Execution and Optimization

Timing is critical for holiday campaigns. Brands should plan their campaigns well in advance, considering key shopping dates like Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and the days leading up to Christmas. Coordinating with influencers to ensure timely posting can maximize the campaign's impact, as demand for consumers can be highly variable in the days approaching holidays. Depending on your specific campaign goals, consider the ideal time you'd want your consumers to see your post – whether that means posting in the days before a holiday, to catch last-minute shoppers, or inspiring the host of an [Olympics watch party](#).

Meeting consumers and users where they are will optimize your entire campaign – ensuring that all your planning, preparation, money, and effort is best utilized for your goals. The content timeline below not only prepares you for the work needed to craft and optimize your content, but also advises on when to post, how to track its metrics, and when to report on its success.



#### 4. Execution and Optimization

Timing is critical for holiday campaigns. Brands should plan their campaigns well in advance, considering key shopping dates like Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and the days leading up to Christmas. Coordinating with influencers to ensure timely posting can maximize the campaign's impact, as demand for consumers can be highly variable in the days approaching holidays. Depending on your specific campaign goals, consider the ideal time you'd want your consumers to see your post – whether that means posting in the days before a holiday, to catch last-minute shoppers, or inspiring the host of an [Olympics watch party](#).

Meeting consumers and users where they are will optimize your entire campaign – ensuring that all your planning, preparation, money, and effort is best utilized for your goals. The content timeline below not only prepares you for the work needed to craft and optimize your content, but also advises on when to post, how to track its metrics, and when to report on its success.



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Phase 1:</b></p> <h1 style="text-align: center;">PLANNING &amp; STRATEGY</h1>	<p><i>Week 1:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define objectives and set campaign goals.</li> <li>• Identify target audience. Determine demographics and interests.</li> <li>• Allocate budget.</li> <li>• Choose your social platforms.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Week 2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and shortlist influencers.</li> <li>• Develop a consistent campaign theme.</li> <li>• Plan content types and key messages.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Week 3:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete influencer outreach and present briefs.</li> <li>• Discuss terms and compensation for influencers.</li> </ul> <p><i>Week 4:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize and sign contracts.</li> <li>• Complete detailed creative briefs with influencers.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Phase 2:</b></p> <h1 style="text-align: center;">OUTREACH &amp; CONTRACTING</h1>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Phase 3:</b></p> <h1 style="text-align: center;">CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT</h1>	<p><i>Week 5:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan your content with influencers.</li> <li>• Review initial content drafts.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Week 6:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage influencer content production.</li> <li>• Provide feedback, review content, and request revisions.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Week 7:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and schedule content rollout.</li> <li>• Launch your campaign &amp; start posting content.</li> </ul> <p><i>Week 8:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and engage with your audience.</li> <li>• Boost top-performing content with paid promotions.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Phase 4:</b></p> <h1 style="text-align: center;">CONTENT LAUNCH &amp; PROMOTION</h1>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Phase 5:</b></p> <h1 style="text-align: center;">MONITORING &amp; OPTIMIZATION</h1>	<p><i>Week 9:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track content performance by monitoring KPIs.</li> <li>• Gather &amp; organize performance data.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Week 10:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust campaign goals and optimize strategy based on performance.</li> <li>• Collect and analyze audience &amp; team feedback.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Week 11:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile final performance report.</li> <li>• Complete post-campaign review &amp; discusses successes and improvements.</li> </ul> <p><i>Week 12:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save/Archive content and data.</li> <li>• Start planning for the next campaign.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Phase 6:</b></p> <h1 style="text-align: center;">POST-CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS &amp; REPORTING</h1>	

## 5. Monitoring and Engagement



Throughout the campaign, it is important to monitor performance metrics such as engagement rates, website traffic, and sales. Engaging with the audience by responding to comments and messages enhances the campaign's effectiveness by expressing a sense of inclusivity and community. Another important extension of evaluating a campaign's importance is data analysis and adjustment. Understanding post-campaign data—like ROI and visibility—is essential to concluding what was effective. Brands should analyze data to gather insights on experimental strategies, which can shape future marketing efforts.

# CASE STUDY 1:

## IKEA'S "TAKE A HOLIDAY FROM THE HOLIDAYS"

Cemented as one of the most popular and important annual traditions for brands and influencer marketing plans, the holiday season wouldn't be complete without sentimental storytelling and emotional advertisements. However, only some brands are successful in catching the eyes of consumers and viewers alike, bolstering high engagement amidst a highly saturated advertising industry. IKEA's 2023 Christmas and holiday campaign did exactly that – urging consumers to “take a holiday from the holidays,” by relaxing with self-care, comfortable furniture, and household essentials.



## **STRATEGY: PRIORITIZING CONNECTION**

Instead of focusing on the typical consumer funnel – one that prioritizes driving engagement, click-through purchases, and “selling” their products – IKEA crafted an aura of relatability with their 2023 holiday campaign. With the message to “relax” amidst the chaos of the holiday season, they not only provide grace to their consumers, but urge them to take care of themselves. The film captures a variety of characters, from Santa Claus to the average mom, escaping from their busy and loud dinner tables or family events to seek solace.

Especially given the already consumerist-driven holiday culture, having a brand take an opposing, relatable, and considerate angle to their advertisements served as a breath of fresh air for viewers and consumers. Not only did IKEA do their research talking to consumers about their holiday struggles and qualms, they also crafted a campaign that demonstrated their commitment to listening.

## **IMPACT: CORPORATE RELATABILITY**

While it’s somewhat of an oxymoron to many consumers, especially those chronically online, for a brand to prioritize humanity – like IKEA’s holiday advertisement – those who can tend to be cherished by their viewers. From relatability, to graceful mentions of worldly issues, to heart wrenching personal stories, a brand’s ability to craft connection and emotion is one of the main drivers for successful reach and engagement.

“The holidays are one of the busiest times of the year, and as much as we anticipate and treasure celebrating with family and friends, at some point, we all need a little break,” said IKEA Canada’s head of marketing, Jonelle Ricketts. “[2023’s] holiday campaign is all about showing how IKEA can help create those spaces within any home that are perfect for taking a little breather from the mayhem of the holiday season.”

Not only did IKEA’s 2023 holiday campaign successfully capture that aura of relatability, they did so in a way that transformed into a greater trend throughout the season – “give yourself grace.” From numerous creators’ holiday content to large-scale shifts in consumerist values, this aura of grace during the stressful season was perfectly relayed by the campaign – giving them a sense of credibility in the industry at large.

# CASE STUDY 2:

## SPOTIFY WRAPPED



An annual tradition that most Spotify users are anticipating all-year-long, Spotify has taken the cake when it comes to famous holiday campaigns. Despite being an incredibly famous yearly tradition bolstering an incredible reach and engagement, even outside of its holiday metaphor and timeline, “Spotify Wrapped” follows macro-level trends that most brands can take note of. From shareability, to visual narratives, to personalized and well-planned content, the campaign evolves every year with something new and exciting for users.

Typically released in late November to early December, Spotify Wrapped is a personalized summary of user’s listening data – serving as a “present” to reveal their top artists, albums, podcasts, and general listening habits.



## **STRATEGY: PERSONALIZATION & SHAREABILITY**

Not only are each of the Spotify Wrapped "presents" received by users incredibly anticipated by users, they're personalized to reflect their listening habits throughout the years – making them uniquely sentimental. Utilizing data analysis and AI technology to summarize users' listening habits, they're able to produce unique, share-worthy, visually appealing cards – often shared on a mass-scale on social media by their users, without Spotify ever having to advertise the tradition.

## **IMPACT: VIRALITY, HIGH ENGAGEMENT, LOYAL USERS**

Not only is the event a tradition alongside the holidays each year for Spotify's users, it's also commended for its incredible engagement. Whether they're boasting about their favorite artist or looking forward to receiving a personalized message as a fan – they're going to be returning to the app to show their support, listen to their favorites, and anticipate the Wrapped season.

# CONCLUSION

In 2024, influencer marketing continues to be a powerful tool for brands to connect with their audience in an authentic and engaging way, which is indispensable to catering to the intimate nature of the holiday spirit. Key steps for success include sufficient preparation of goals and influencers, production of well-timed and quality content, and thorough analysis of business results to gather insights.

Successful case studies from reputable brands like IKEA and Spotify demonstrate the potential of well-planned influencer campaigns to drive significant engagement and sales. By merging the popularity of the holidays and social media with the authentic feel of influencer marketing, brands can reach communities organically through relevant and customized content, allowing them to both promote the holiday spirit and achieve their marketing objectives.

By enlisting the support and expertise of a marketing agency, brands can take a more polished approach to crafting their holiday campaigns – giving them the freedom and opportunity to hyperfocus on the unique content, missions, and products they're passionate about sharing.

# SOURCES

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/248037/usage-of-social-media-for-holiday-gift-ideas/>

<https://www.fastercapital.com/content/The-Importance-of-Analytics-in-Influencer-Marketing.html>

<https://www.designrush.com/news/macys-launches-summers-greatest-hits-campaign-from-mono>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/essentials/what-is-amazon-prime-day-how-it-works/>

<https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/02/marketing-to-millennials>

<https://www.voguebusiness.com/story/consumers/gen-z-broke-the-marketing-funnel>

<https://lbbonline.com/news/ikea-canadas-festive-spot-invites-you-to-take-a-holiday-from-the-holidays>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-spotify-harnesses-ai-your-2023-wrapped-experience-advancio-eybqf/>

<https://artists.spotify.com/en/get-ready-for-wrapped#:~:text=Get%20personal%20with%20a%20Wrapped%20video%20message&text=Speak%20directly%20to%20the%20fans,meant%20to%20you%20in%202023>