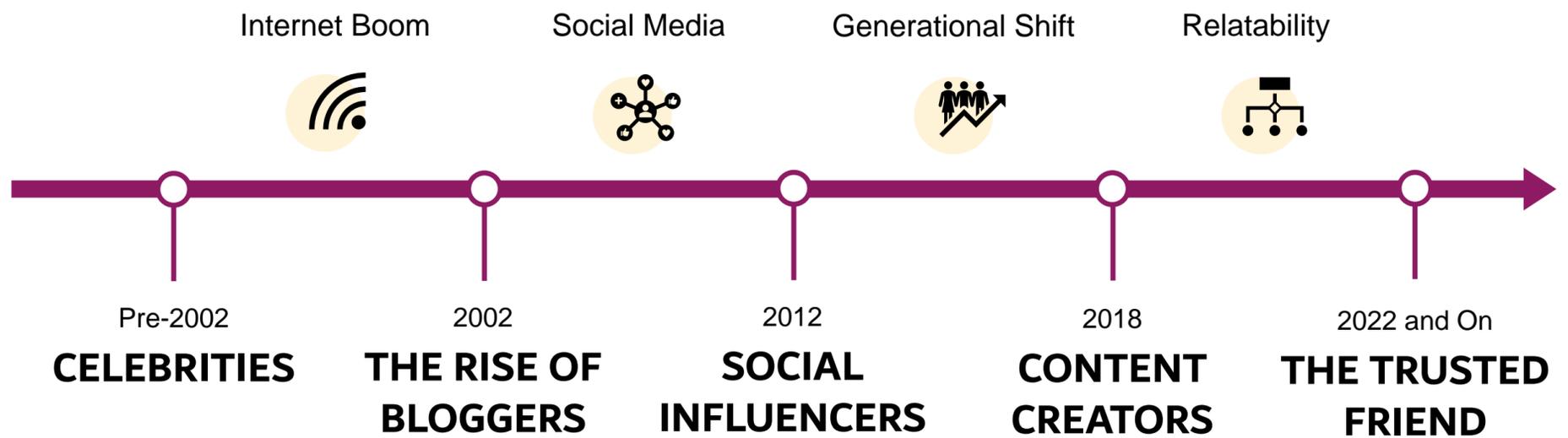


# HISTORY OF INFLUENCER



## PRE-2002: CELEBRITIES

### THE CONTEXT

Celebrities have long had an impact on the way that people dress, act, buy, and more. The influence of celebrities can be seen in their ability to change the mainstream. Prior to social media, the number of celebrities with such an affect on society was limited when compared to today. In what seems like an unconnected world compared to the present, celebrities like The Beatles, Oprah, and Princess Diana all had an impact on what brands were trendy, and popular for the time. Celebrities were icons that people aspired to be like, and their influence could be seen purely in mainstream culture.

### THE INFLUENCE

Celebrities had limited opportunities for brands to influence mass audiences. Whether the celebrity was seen wearing branded clothing, drinking Coca-Cola, or present in a commercial, most of the time these were expensive endorsements with limited ROI measurability when compared to today.



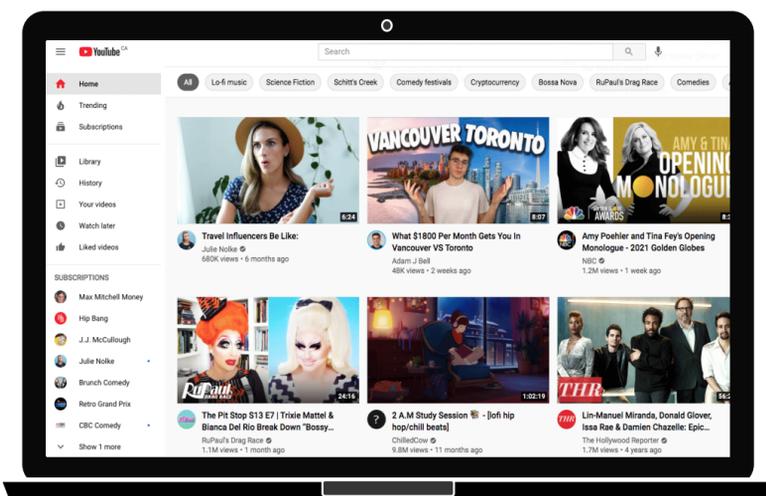
## 2002-2012: THE BLOGGERS AND VLOGGERS

### THE CONTEXT

2002 saw the semi-mainstream adoption of the blogger. With the internet exploding in popularity, anyone with expertise in anything from motherhood to engineering could post their thoughts online. Advancements in technology gave birth to the vlogger with the creation of YouTube in 2006. This changed the game around offering content to a viewer, and the endorsements that came with it.

### THE INFLUENCE

Bloggers and Vloggers were able to influence more niche communities. People with specific interests could learn about products and services that spoke to them specifically. However, these endorsements also had an extremely limited ability to be tracked by companies for ROI and were used sparingly by few brands.



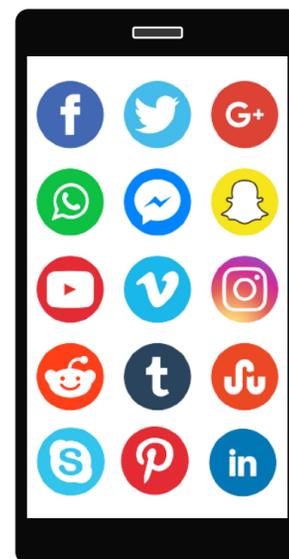
# 2012-2018: INFLUENCERS

## THE CONTEXT

Social media aided in the creation of the influencer. Celebrities and popular social media profiles recognized their ability to sway the public into buying various products and services. Social media gave celebrities a platform on which they could grow their own brand and sell someone else's at the same time by targeting their followers.

## THE INFLUENCE

Social media became the wild west of marketing. Products from every industry were promoted through influencers between 2012-2015 with nearly zero FTC guidelines. It was the true awakening of influencer marketing and advertisers were only getting started. However, during this time, advertisers typically only used influencers with some sort of celebrity status. Likes and follower count could be used as a baseline estimate of anticipated ROI for campaigns that leveraged influencers, but attribution was still severely lacking.



## FTC CRACKDOWN

In 2015, The FTC began to place guidelines onto influencers for how they could promote products. These rules originated from laws already in place at the time that pertained to endorsements in general. Because influencer marketing has exploded since then, new rules and regulations have been put into effect that specifically pertain to advertisers on social media. In the beginning, an influencer could be paid to post a picture wearing sunglasses and no one would know it was a paid-sponsorship. This and other posts like it were considered "native advertising". Native advertising was content that people can't necessarily differentiate from other non-sponsored posts. Now in 2022, influencers must put special disclaimers on all content that they were paid to post. The FTC does not allow for hidden or native advertising any longer, but rather ensures that consumers know that they are being marketed to. Should they violate these guidelines, influencers can face hard sanctions that may threaten their livelihood.

# 2018-2022: CONTENT CREATORS

## THE CONTEXT

It is extremely difficult to be famous for being famous like the Kardashians. Individuals today will find it difficult to become famous on social media without offering something that will truly provide value to their viewers. This phenomenon gave rise to the content creator. These creators offer more to their followers by providing them with videos and content that they are interested in. They are not famous for being famous, but rather are popular for entertaining, educating and engaging their followers.

## THE INFLUENCE

Content creators develop original media that speaks to an audience. These audiences can be widespread, niche, or anything in between. People follow channels that speak to them personally. Regardless of the type of content, these creators develop a pseudo-personal connection with their viewers. This connection creates more trust in endorsements from content creators than with traditional influencers. By 2018, consumers caught on to the fact that influencers are trying to sell them something by leveraging their brand. With FTC guidelines tightening, and native advertising no longer being so subtle, traditional influencers have found it more difficult to leverage their brand in a meaningful and "honest" way. Content creators have been able to combat this by not hiding endorsements or making them subtle, but rather having ads as part of their viewing experience. Content Creators give advertisers enhanced targetability, branding capabilities, and connections with their chosen audiences. Because YouTube is one of the most popular websites in the world for both creators and viewers, there is content for everyone's unique tastes and brands that are willing to target those interests.

# 2022 AND BEYOND: THE TRUSTED FRIEND

## THE CONTEXT

While many content creators have amassed a large following, some have transformed their platform into a community. Logan Paul has his LoGang, Dax and Monica from Armchair Expert have the Arm Cherries, and Alex Cooper from Call Her Daddy has the DaddyGang. The communities that have formed around these creators are die hard fans who identify and align themselves with their chosen influencer. The followers in many cases affix their personas to these creators and often use their mannerisms, sayings and more. Most importantly, they view the creators as a personal friend, whom they know a great deal about.

## THE INFLUENCE

These trusted friends are often part of many aspects of their viewers' lives. From listening to their podcast on a commute to school or work, to watching their YouTube content at home, to reading articles about them in the news, the creator's connection to followers is always present. This has given advertisers unique opportunities to attach themselves to these platforms and their following. Because of the level of trust their following has, creators' endorsements transform from an advertisement to a recommendation from a friend. These endorsements are more likely to see better ROI's because their following believe that if their friend likes a product or service then they will too. With communities like these popping up more often than ever, there has never been a better time to attach a brand to one or multiple creators. Now, with greater influence on consumers, better ROI, even more targetability, high customization of content, and increasing levels of attribution capabilities, these types of influencers will be key for brands looking to connect with their audience in a meaningful way.



## IN SUMMARY

"Influencer marketing has come full circle. Word of mouth connects consumers to new influencers based upon their likes and what they and their friends relate to. Influencer marketing today has a more organic feel than traditional advertising since many consumers view the people they follow as friends that they trust and want to support rather than seeing them simply as celebrities. When friends recommend a brand, the effect is much more powerful on the likelihood of buying the product, when opposed to a traditional commercial. Influencers can be highly leveraged to create a personal connection with a brand that leads to a lifelong customer."

Rachael Kellar  
Associate Director of Influencer Marketing  
Havas Edge

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rachael Kellar is the Associate Director of Influencer Marketing at Havas Edge. With over 5 years of marketing experience, she prides herself in being on the forefront of new trends and capabilities in the industry. Her specialty in influencer has once again brought her to the forefront, where she is leading brands to success in the growing channel.

## CONTACT US

We would love to hear from you. To get in contact with us about your campaign goals, use the information below. We at Havas Edge are excited to connect with you! Email: [growth@havasedge.com](mailto:growth@havasedge.com)