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We're All Influencers Now



Adi Ignatius

I BEGAN MY career in magazines in the pre-influencer era. As editors, we spent most of our time choosing and shaping articles for each edition, and just sort of hoped the ideas would find their way to our readers. We still do the curating and editing, of course, but we now spend considerable time trying to garner attention for what we're publishing. Much of that happens on social media.

Today an organization like ours has editors dedicated to crafting editorial strategy on Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, and other social media platforms. When HBR's book publishing division signs new authors, one critical question we ask ourselves is: Do they have the following necessary to get attention for their books? We've all arrived in the influencer era.

On a grander stage, industries such as cosmetics and fashion now rely heavily on influencer marketing. Does your business need to do so as well? In this issue's Spotlight, we examine how brands are navigating this increasingly essential channel. Should you consider enlisting a

college athlete influencer? Or perhaps an AI-generated virtual one? And how can you ensure that your influencers behave transparently and authentically?

In one article, authors from Harvard Business School explain how celebrities are increasingly moving beyond endorsing existing brands and are creating their own direct-to-consumer brands, which they market primarily through their own social media. When Kim Kardashian came to HBS last year to speak to a class about how she and her cofounders built the clothing brand Skims, the news went viral—a crisp display of the new power of the influencer.

We hope this issue gets (and holds) your attention.

Thanks for reading,

ADI IGNATIUS
Editor in chief

Robyn Twomey

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