

The role of trust in influencer marketing when promoting two competing brands

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Abstract

Influencer marketing has become increasingly important in the way companies promote their new products and their own brand. In a collaboration, all involved parties could benefit from it, the influencer, the company as well as the followers. Influencers need to try to get to the bottom of the following: how to gain and maintain trust among the customers. Before signing collaborations, many aspects have to be taken into account: they have to fit in the influencer's overall feed, they have to match with the influencer's specialization and they have to differentiate from previous collaborations. But handling this might represent a hurdle in the influencer's job tasks. This thesis intends to answer the question how the difference between promoting in the same compared to in a different product category is perceived by customers.

A field experiment tested the different perceptions of customers in the same compared to the different product category. Three scales namely trustworthiness, expertise and attitude were measured to find out an answer to the research question. According to the, in the field experiment, tested theoretical developed hypothesis, the analysis approved that the three scales trustworthiness, expertise, and attitude are higher in the different product category and lower in the same category. Leading to the conclusion, influencers should pay especially attention to which brands they work with and which products they promote, to avoid a decrease of trust among their followers.