

## MARKETING IN THE SOCIAL AGE

Offering consumers a filter-free, authentic experience inspires trust—and sales



### AD CONSUMPTION IS CHANGING.

Consumers once captive to commercial breaks opt instead for streaming services offering no-ad upgrades. At the same time, Nielsen reports that people spend between six and seven hours per week on social media—where they can skim (but not skip) advertising, and where there's space for personal connection and storytelling. "It's essential that brands begin to lead with a message that matters to the consumer. Quit advertising—first, be helpful," says Kate Weidner, founder and CEO of SRW, an agency focused on authentically growing natural brands.

Natural brands can capitalize on this shift. With an arsenal of authentic stories and educational information to share, there's never been more opportunity for brands to deliver a tailored and targeted message via social media, influencers and digital storytelling.

### 1. BUILD TRUE CONNECTION

Reach new shoppers with the right content on the right platforms in order to up your marketing game. The stats prove it: consumers are connect with brands through social media. Here's a snapshot.



### SOCIAL IQ

**61% of consumers use social media to find new food and beverage brands:**

 **60% on Facebook**

 **49% on Instagram**

Consumers don't want simple product information or a bland advertisement. Instead, **engage them with content they want:**

 **Recipes: 29%**

 **Discounts and giveaways: 18%**

 **Inspiration: 15%**





## INFLUENCE WISELY

Because just 38% of social media users follow a food or beverage brand directly, **70% of U.S. companies use influencer marketing** to spread the word. **Why get in the game?**



**49% of people say they rely on influencer recommendations.**



**34% of people buy a food or beverage product they learn about from a social media influencer.**



**Influencer marketing can generate 100 times the ROI of traditional advertising.**

But how and who you partner with matters. As a brand, you should place the greatest priority on credibility, not reach.

- Find influencers who are truly interested in your product.
- Build genuine relationships with them.
- Don't create a blatant advertisement. Encourage authenticity, credibility and personality.



## HOW TO PITCH AN INFLUENCER

Finding the right influencer has much to do with your approach. Here are some dos and don'ts.

- ✔ **Do** Address them by name, and introduce yourself.
- ✔ **Do** Explain why you're reaching out to them specifically, and why you think your brand is the right fit for his/her channel (influencers typically want longer term, meaningful relationships with brands, rather than one-off opportunities).
- ✔ **Do** Propose project details like a clear timeline and deliverables.
- ✔ **Do** Pay for the value. Exposure doesn't pay the bills!
- ✘ **Don't** Send a generic form letter.
- ✘ **Don't** Micromanage the authenticity away (dictating copy is a no-no).
- ✘ **Don't** Send stock images (let the influencer create the content).



## INSIDE THE BOTTLE

### CASE STUDY: INSIDE THE BOTTLE #WHATSUPP CAMPAIGN

New Hope Network's #WhatSupp campaign invited influencers to share a blog post and two social media posts about which supplements enrich their lives and why. Thirteen bloggers, with a combined 600,000 followers, were selected. On average, each blogger had roughly **46,000 followers**, a reach of about **2,300 per post**, and roughly **200 people** engaging per post.

**Results: 12 posts on Instagram with an average of 287 likes and 24 comments per post. The top four posts alone garnered reach to 52,500 followers and roughly 12,600 real views.**



@fodmaifre





**2. BE AUTHENTIC AND TRANSPARENT**

**Transparency sells:** According to findings from Label Insight, trust and transparency are no longer a bonus; they're critical components for success for any food or beverage brand.



**More than half of consumers say additional product information inspires more trust in a brand.**



**73% are willing to pay more for a product promising total transparency.**



**94% are more likely to be loyal to a brand when it commits to full transparency.**



**56% say they'd be loyal for life.**



**WHAT IS HONEST MARKETING?**

**Be truthful.** Don't be overly aggressive with marketing or make false claims that will lead to disappointment later. Instead, focus on honest information-sharing.

**Be authentic.** Respect educated consumers' intelligence by convincing with facts not fluff. "Know what you stand for, and stick to it. You probably stand for more than just food. Consumers want to know what matters to you," says Weidner.

**Be decent.** Tell the truth about health benefits, ingredients and production.

**Be transparent.** List nutritional values, health and eco-benefits, info on animal testing, sourcing and country of origin information and more.

**Be smart with social media influencers.** Allow them to give honest opinions in their own voices and be upfront about sponsored posts.



**TRANSPARENCY TAKEOVER!**

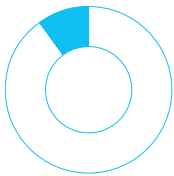
Call on farmers, founders, consumers, influencers and more to tell their personal stories. It puts a human face on the brand and allows a variety of voices to tell the brand story.





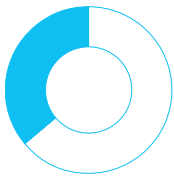
## 2. CREATE STORIES AND EXPERIENCES

**Show, don't tell:** Looking to go viral? Video is a powerful tool, with **92% of mobile video users sharing videos with others**. In fact, social video posts generate 12 times the shares of texts and images combined and, on Facebook alone, this translates to a **135% greater organic reach** for videos than photo posts.



**90%**

of users say product videos are helpful in the decision process.



**64%**

of users are more likely to buy a product online after watching a video.



## THE VALUE OF STORYTELLING

**Emotional connection.** Communicating values through storytelling creates a more personal connection with consumers and elevates the meaning of the brand.

**Education.** First-hand experiences show consumers exactly how a product works — in a format they'll remember. **Eighty percent of people recall a video ad they viewed in the past 30 days.**

**Active participation.** Take it from Organic Valley, where consumers are some of the brand's best marketers. Enthusiastic supporters share their experiences on Instagram stories, while influencers host interactive giveaways — both driving traffic to the brand page and hashtag.



## BEYOND SOCIAL

At Simple Mills, social media is the starting point but never the sole destination. SRW helps companies use social as a launch pad for testing ideas, the best ones are leveraged for print, digital, video and other larger-scale campaigns. "Social media is a highly targeted testing ground — every bit as accurate, and far less expensive than, a focus group. Make small bets on social, and you'll be able to double down successfully anywhere," according to Weidner.

