


Chapter 13

Self-Promotion Strategies on Instagram: A Case Study of a Digital Micro-Influencer

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to provide an overview of the main self-promotion strategies used on Instagram. It considers the case study of a digital influencer, analyzing her activity on this social network, as well as her relationship with brands, agencies, and followers. A mixed methodology was used, combining qualitative techniques, with interviews with a digital micro-influencer, her advertising agency, and a partner brand, and quantitative techniques, with a questionnaire to the followers (n=927). It was possible to conclude that several self-promotion strategies prove to be effective for the success of digital influencers and, consequently, for digital marketers and brands. The main strategies for self-promotion through Instagram that were found to be effective were: awareness, honesty, sincerity, and a spirit of work; authenticity (being different from other influencers); dedication to their audience; a very well-defined content strategy aimed at their target audience; consistency; one-way communication; and sharing reality.

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, social media, and more specifically social networks, are channels that are increasingly used daily, impacting people's personal and professional lives. According to Kemp (2023), there are 4.76 billion social media users in the world population. One of the most widely used social networks today is Instagram, a social media platform that allows users to promote their personal brand through their photo or video posts (Mukhlisiana, 2019). According to Vasconcelos (2024), Instagram is one of the most used social media platforms, ranking fourth ahead of Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp. WhatsApp is the most popular social media platform among active users aged 16 to 64, followed by Instagram (Kemp, 2023). As more and more individuals use social networks, organizations need to be present on these platforms to connect with their target audience and optimize their resources. Investing in promoting products on social media is a major strategy for brands and marketing professionals to reach their desired audience. Thus, social media plays a vital role in the digital strategy of any organization. In this context, one of the big bets for brands on social networks, especially Instagram, is influencers' use to promote their products and services. Through their group of followers, influencers can reach many people in a single publication that reaches the brand's target audience. According to Gross and von Wangenheim (2022), the influencer marketing industry is booming on social networks. In their study, the researchers discovered that sponsored posts lead to increased user engagement on social media platforms. However, there is no research available in the literature that directly addresses the issue of brand self-promotion strategies utilized by influencers, particularly micro-influencers, on the social network Instagram. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to provide valuable insights and knowledge on the subject, which can benefit the scientific, academic, and business communities.

Thus, the main objective of this research is to identify the best self-promotion strategies on Instagram and those that prove to be the most effective from the point of view of digital micro-influencers, brands, marketing professionals (who work in influencer marketing agencies), and followers. It was decided to conduct a study on the perspective of a digital micro-influencer, the influencer marketing agency managing her, and a brand collaborating with the influencer and her followers. The study aims to understand the influencer marketing strategies applied on Instagram. Specific objectives were set to identify the influencer's self-promotion strategies, analyze the effectiveness of these strategies, understand how the influencer creates engagement with her followers, determine what makes her followers loyal, find out what brands seek from the influencer, and understand why brands look for digital influencers to promote their products. The study will also explore the requirements of influencer marketing agencies and analyze the type of content on the influencer's Instagram.

Social media influencers engage in collaborative practices (e.g., reposting content and partnering with other influencers and brands) (Thomas, Fowler & Taheran, 2024). In recent times, digital influencers have become increasingly popular, and to reach their target audience, brands have started collaborating with influencer marketing agencies. These intermediaries help brands to effectively communicate their message and promote their products to their followers. Hence, it is crucial to determine the most effective self-promotion strategies for digital influencers. This will ensure that these influencers remain profitable for both brands and marketing professionals and captivate their followers. Specifically, for Instagram, where the number of digital influencers is on the rise, it is important to identify the most accurate and profitable strategies. This article is divided into three sections. The first section contains a theoretical framework about the social network Instagram, influencers, and micro-influencers, as well as influencers' self-promotion strategies. The second section discusses the definition of the problem and

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