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Alyssa Bossio

The Truth About Being An Influencer



In today's day and age, the term "influencer" is more frequently used than the term "celebrity".

People are turning to their favorite influencers to look for a more personal and instant connection – someone they can actually relate to, trust, and build a social media "friendship" with, so to say.

5 Influencers are known for their relatable content and often are well-trusted because they are there to be themselves and influence by being everyday people, just like their followers. But, as time goes on, I'm noticing that more and more people are interested in becoming influencers not to build a brand for themselves while being genuine. Instead, people are focused on being "social media famous", which is far from the reasons I believe influencers developed their own space in the first place.

10 I feel like the new thing is to "be an entrepreneur¹" or a social media "influencer". It's become almost like a trend to not work at a 9-to-5 job and sit in an office cubicle². While having my own career as an influencer is a blessing that I'm truly grateful for, it's not nearly as "luxurious" or as easy as it seems. Most people looking at my Instagram assume I make thousands of dollars a day, can travel wherever I want, and work with any brands I want to work with. So let's break down the truth – because this is far from it.

15 The truth is, a prosperous career path does not come easy to anyone. You can be given certain tools or leverage³, for example, coming from a wealthy background or having a famous parent, but if you don't have the passion, the work ethic, and the skill set, the tools you are provided with are pretty much useless. In fact, I'm so thankful I didn't have any sort of leverage to begin with because it taught me how to work my ass off and be strong mentally in the business world.

20 I spent all 4 years of my college life building my following on social media without a dime in my pocket from it. At the time (about 6 years ago now), Instagram was still extremely "new" to brands, and they

¹ iværksætter

² sit in an office cubicle: (her) sidde ved et skrivebord

³ (her) fordele

would laugh if you asked them to pay you for a post. The influencer space did just not exist yet. On top of going to the gym at 5 AM, attending 7 AM classes until 3 PM in the afternoon, completing all of my assignments which usually took up most of my night, and going to practice for the a-cappella group⁴ I was a part of, I spent the remaining few hours I had left in the day marketing my brand and building a following for myself. I gave up my social life for my phone, which a lot of people thought was an “addiction”, but to me it was my future business. I was pushing out content on my Instagram daily and working as much as I could allow myself to without getting burned out.

Since I was not making any money from social media yet, I didn’t have money to spend on anything really other than college related things like my meal plan and books. I didn’t spend much on food, let alone travel (I actually rarely ever traveled, I don’t even remember if I did at all). [...]

So how did I start and BECOME an influencer? This is no easy question to answer, and there’s really no short version of this story. Building a social media brand for myself took me over 6 years, tons of patience, hard work, lack of sleep, and sacrificing the “fun” in my college years. While most people spent their nights going out to the college bars, I was in my dorm room working on my Instagram page, looking at trends, researching how to grow my audience on social, and networking with other content creators who were building their accounts just like I was.

For the first few years I was working on my Instagram, I received nothing more than a few free boxes of yogurt from a food brand and some free workout clothes (which at the time was extremely cool to me!). But after a market started to develop, fitness companies were reaching out to me, asking me to promote their products for \$100-\$400 per post, depending on what it was. [...]

As more time went on, I learned a ton about the social media market and the power of digital advertising. It was then that I decided to create my own fitness guides and sell a product I actually believed in and knew was effective. [...]

It took me over a year to transition my brand into something much bigger than just fitness. I spent months strategizing⁵ how to incorporate more of my travels and everyday life without scaring my audience away. I know a lot of people definitely unfollowed me, but I know some of them eventually came back and re-followed me too. I answered every message I had from girls who looked to me for fitness inspiration and were distraught⁶ that I decided to change my image. I made sure I was still making an effort to show people I’m exactly the same that I was before, but I’m just showing more of what makes me truly happy. That was all I could do. And it was the best decision I ever made for myself.

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⁴ *a-cappella group*: kor uden instrumentledsagelse

⁵ planlægge

⁶ (her) frustrerede