

7.3 Becoming an Influencer

Stacey Sansom

BYU-Idaho

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the topic of becoming a brand influencer. This includes selecting a brand, researching their requirements and what the brand's industry considers an influencer. There is an implied process of improving social media skills and learning new tools to help automate social media posting. The paper illustrates how to schedule appropriate social media posts as an influencer. While the brand is real, the author is not a brand influencer for the brand, and everything is written for educational purposes only.

Keywords: brand influencer, social media

7.3 Becoming an Influencer

Preface

In my research for this assignment, I discovered that an influencer can mean different things in different industries, and it is important to know exactly what it means in your chosen industry before acting. Some industries are more regulated than others globally, but especially in the United States.

Since I am in the US, my regulatory guidelines are established by the FTC. They have published their own guidelines for doing business with specifics on endorsements both online and offline. Established by the FTC Act of 1914, these guidelines were intended to prevent business fraud and ultimately protect the consumers. They have evolved over time as technology has changed how we do business, however, there is still much left to be interpreted in our current technology and business states.

I highlight these points because they change the way I can and should approach being an influencer in the sewing industry where I currently work. This research has proven to be insightful as a professional who will one day be seeking influencers to help market my own products and services.

What is an Influencer in the Sewing Industry?

The question that I needed to answer before digging deeper on how to become an influencer, was figure out what the sewing industry considers to be one. What is required to become one also

varies widely, but in the sewing industry it is widely accepted that anyone with a blog, website, any social media account, or YouTube channel where either products or services are shared with followers is considered an influencer. This sharing can be favorite products, techniques, skills, or knowledge to any platform with followers. By that definition, I am already an influencer in the sewing industry.

The list of influencer types is not all inclusive, but I discovered that the *pattern making segment of the sewing industry* uses three primary types – brand ambassadors, pattern testers, and affiliates. They each serve a different primary job at sharing and marketing the products, but in the end, they are still considered influencers. This serves as a warning that I need to change my own personal and business approach because as an influencer, the FTC has plenty to say about endorsements. It is one thing to personally buy the product and have no business relationship with the brand, it is another when you are compensated in some way, either money or goods. This is compensation changes the rules and, in most cases, requires clear, precise, and full disclosure of the business relationship to all consumers and followers.

Becoming a Brand Ambassador

For this assignment, I selected the influencer type of brand ambassador. I thought that finding the information required to become one would be a lot easier. I made this selection for a few reasons.

First, in the sewing industry, brands hold a very tight grip on what is involved in essentially becoming a representative for them. I am still waiting to receive an email from Brother

International about becoming a brand ambassador or influencer for Brother Sewing Machines. It has been two days since I was told that I would be emailed the information (for research purposes). I had to search for another brand to do this assignment.

Second, they typically put out the equivalence of casting calls for the positions. Once they close the call, they close the requirements so you cannot see many of the details anymore. This is their screening process. They don't want just anyone representing them. They may not be requiring 10,000 followers, but they are requiring a certain level of skills and communication abilities. This screening varies from industry to industry.

Third, it is the position with the most production to postproduction influence in my opinion. Affiliates simply promote after production. They do not have anything to do with the production process. Pattern testers and brand ambassadors are endorsing the product based on their own knowledge, skills, experience, etc. They physically make personal products made by the product or service provided to them, they then share the experience and the makes with others. They are more invested in the results than affiliates.

Selected Brand

I selected the brand, Rebecca Page, Ltd. It is an independent pattern making company founded in 2018 by Rebecca Page and her mentor, Janine Manning. As a B2C company, it sells its products direct to the consumer via the Rebecca Page ecommerce website. Their mission is "to change how the sewing and making community is served" (rebecca-page.com).

Rebecca Page requires at least 2 active and consistently used social medial platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, and a website or blog. All brand ambassadors must demonstrate strong sewing skills, present quality work in high quality photography, have excellent oral and written communication skills, and have reliable time management abilities.

The contracted position is compensated via product, commissions, account credits, and other benefits. As such, any sharing by US located ambassadors must fully disclose their business relationship according to the FTC endorsement guidelines. The responsibilities include actively supporting the brand on social media, posting sewing makes at a frequency of 2 per annual quarter, teaser posting before launch of full sharing, tagging the brand at least once a month in shares on social media, displaying the brand ambassador logo with links back to the brand's website, and granting the brand to license the photography of your makes.

Target Audience

As a brand ambassador, and a sewing professional myself, my target audience is primarily beginner to intermediate sewers. For me, this is all ages but primarily my followers are between 20-65 years old. The target audience is gender inclusive and non-discriminatory based on size.

This is a brand that I can personally align my own career goals, professional mission, and vision with and embrace their purpose and motivation. This is an ideal characteristic when endorsing products because the message is typically more authentic and sincere.

Planning Content

The content can include any variety of posts from production to post-production. The endorsement is for the sewing pattern created and produced by Rebecca Page. The method of endorsement is through making an item(s) from the pattern provided and sharing your completed product on any social media platform. This process includes a variety of methods to entice and attract followers including hashtags and imagery. Posting would be divided into three primary categories – preview posts, product posts, and follow-up posts.

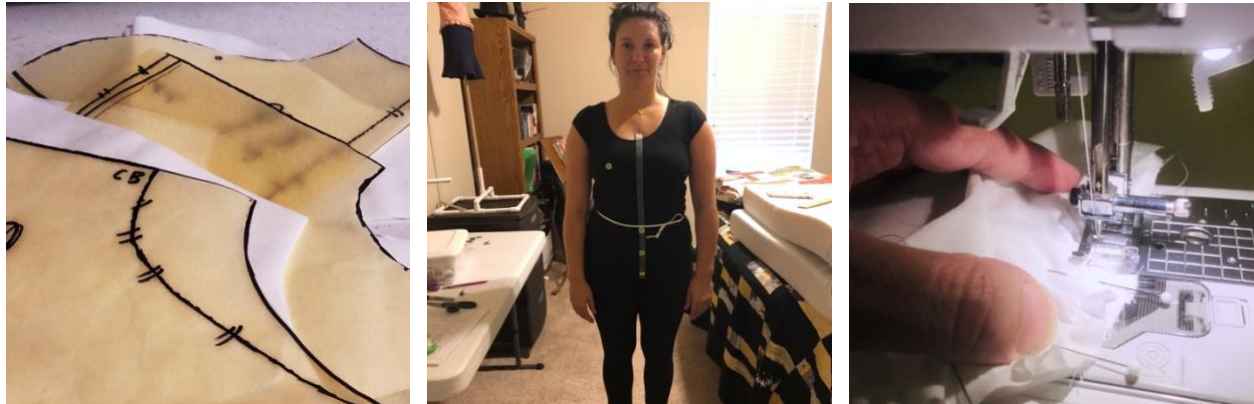
Preview posts would include the behind the scenes “teaser” of the sewing process.

This type of post is required by the brand before releasing the final production. These sneak peeks can include steps like preparing the pattern to fit your measurements, cutting out the pattern, and constructing the final garments in either still images or video clips that are only a few seconds long.

There would be multiple of these posts demonstrating the progression of the garment using the pattern over the construction process. Post scheduling would be used to post every 2-3 days on the various platforms over a period of 7-10 days.

This series of posts would occur on Instagram, Facebook, and a blog. They would include hashtags such as #rebeccapage, #brandambassador, #pdfpatterns, #sewing, #sewingprocess, and #dfwmaker.

Imagery such as below that represent the process at different phases of construction would be used and sized to the ideal recommended image size for sharing on each platform to maximize visibility.



Post example using the center image above:

I am working on a project from #Rebecca-Page at rebecca-page.com. Taking proper measurements isn't always fun, but it is necessary to make sure the final product fits like it should. Follow me for more sewing tips. #rebeccapage #brandambassador #pdfpatterns #sewing #dfwmaker #sewmywardrobe

Product posts would include final garment sharing that link to a blog post that documents the experience using the patterns.

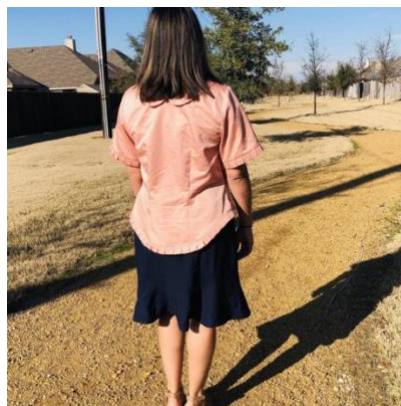
This series of posts would present appealing pictures and videos of the final product(s) on myself or another model (or both if multiple garments are created) in settings ideal for photographing and videoing head to toe such as a park, hiking trail, lakeside, etc. These could even be lifestyle pictures showing the usefulness of the finished works from the patterns.

Alternative pictures would be closeup pictures of the finishing details such as seamlines, hems, etc to show off the quality of work completed. People are not viewing my feeds to see another pretty make, they are viewing to see what details I have added or to check to see if I have sewn perfectly straight (confession, I don't). To me, the details matter in selling the patterns because it encourages people with what can be done.

There would be multiple of these posts demonstrating the finished garments. Post scheduling would be used to post every 2-3 days on the various platforms over a period of 5-7 days.

This series of posts would occur on Instagram, Facebook, and a blog. They would include hashtags such as #rebeccapage, #brandambassador, #pdfpatterns, #sewing, #sewmywardrobe, and #dfwmaker. Each post would link to a blog write-up of the process and finished makes as well as tag Rebecca Page and link where appropriate.

Imagery such as below that represent the process at different phases of construction would be used and sized to the ideal recommended image size for sharing on each platform to maximize visibility. Ideally, images would not crop part of the models out.



Post example using the video above:

I just finished this make using a pattern from #Rebecca-Page at rebecca-page.com. Doesn't Vanessa look stunning and ready for an evening date night with her hubby? He's going to have to up his game from jeans this week. This pattern is available for immediate download in sizes including tweens, juniors, womens, and plus-sized womens. Get yours today, but using this link [insert affiliate link] and save 10% off your order. #rebeccapage #brandambassador #pdfpatterns #sewing #dfwmaker #sewmywardrobe

Follow-up posts would include favorite features of the garment created by the pattern.

While the job is not specifically about the quality of the product, as a seamstress, I tend to have a bit more clout when I say I like or do not like a pattern – people listen because I have the appropriate skills to make these judgements.

There would be multiple of these posts that talk about the highlights of the making process.

Typically, these would be video posts as it is better to portray proper tone and emotion via video.

Post scheduling would be used to post every 2-3 days on the various platforms over a period of 5-7 days.

This series of posts would occur on Instagram, Facebook, and a blog. They would include hashtags such as #rebeccapage, #brandambassador, #pdfpatterns, #sewing, #sewingprocess, #sewinghacks #patternhacks #patternreviews #sewingtips #patterntips and #dfwmaker.

Imagery would be used and sized to the ideal recommended image size for sharing on each platform to maximize visibility.

Post example using a live video above:

I love this pattern from #Rebecca-Page at rebecca-page.com. My model, Vanessa, loved it too!

This pattern is available for immediate download in sizes including tweens, juniors, womens, and plus-sized womens. Get yours today, but using this link [insert affiliate link] and save 10% off your order. Make sure you hit like and follow for more helpful pattern and sewing tips.

#rebeccapage #brandambassador #pdfpatterns #sewing #dfwmaker #sewmywardrobe #followme
#sewingtips

How to Grow Following and Make Money as an Influencer

Growing my following is an area where I have struggled continuously and is largely why I am taking this class. I would be remiss if I did not confess that I am at a loss for how to truly grow my following as a service business, especially on Instagram.

Being an influencer for the sewing industry is not your typical show the product, say a few nice words, and encourage people to buy at a given link. There is a process and there is no magic pill that you can take that instantly provides you with a finished product. I think this is where content that plays with follower's pain points enters heavily into this industry. Unfortunately, there are not as many garment sewers out there in the world today. Even those that do sew, they may not know how to properly read a pattern or know proper technique so their finished product does not

look professional. Being an expert in the industry helps me touch those pain points and offer solutions to them.

Here are some things that I would do to help catch attention and gain more followers:

1. Make sure pictures are superior even if it means changing lighting and setting.
2. Increase post frequency based on platform such as increase daily posting to 3-6 posts on Instagram and 2-4 posts on Facebook spread across both posts and stories.
3. Invest in Instagram and Facebook Ads and other promotions and sponsorships.
4. Do a monthly challenge or giveaway of a related product that helps followers complete their sewing tasks.
5. Do a weekly live video that illustrates a technique such as selecting the right fabrics, cutting techniques, proper button sewing, etc. This list could go on a while.

The reasoning behind these things are that visibility is increased by content frequency. While continual posting of the “buy me now” is considered spammy, I have the skills to increase quantity and quality at the same time. People are more likely to buy something they feel confident in the use of. Illustrating these things in live videos helps build confidence that followers can do this as well.