



THE IMPACT OF INFLUENCE

A QUANTIFIABLE MEASURE

ALLISON+
PARTNERS



Our mission at Allison+Partners is to harness the power of influence in order to break through the clutter and noise, so that it can positively impact our clients' communications goals. We seek to understand the dynamic nature of influence to qualify and quantify the potential impact of conversation in channels to help build affinity between brands and consumers.

At the core of our efforts is a differentiated approach to managing media and influencer relations programs. We call this **Influence 360**. It's a holistic view of communications strategies, understanding that anyone who has the ability to carry our client's message, regardless of channel, is an influencer and someone we should recommend building a relationship with.

The complexities of effective influencer relations programming cannot be measured and evaluated simply by circulation, reach or even engagement. What good is reach or circulation if it isn't in those channels that effectively facilitate influence? What use are engagement metrics if they aren't consistently from influencers who can impact perceptions and change thinking?

To that end, we created a proprietary scoring system to evaluate and measure the potential

influencers can have to have an impact. This allows us to more effectively target and reach those who activate and inspire others throughout their process of consideration, purchase or advocacy. We bring this to life through a scoring system as well as our relationship-driven approach to targeted influencer activities.

A true 360-degree approach means looking beyond engagement and evaluating the potential impact of influencers to more effectively reach those who activate and inspire throughout the consumer's process of consideration, purchase or advocacy.

INFLUENCE IMPACT SCORE

- + Developed to identify, qualify and rank influencers based on potential impact
- + Used as both a diagnostic tool for evaluating existing programs and a means to qualify the effectiveness of future influencers programs
- + Based upon proprietary data from Allison+Partners' 2016 Influence Impact Report to create the optimal mix of channels
- + Created in conjunction with data scientists and mathematicians

The equation: (Reach + Authenticity) x Power

Influence is not an end in itself – it is the means to affinity and advocacy.

The term “influence” is often misused. Marketers regularly combine paid blogger engagement, social media marketing, celebrity endorsements, content creation and more under the umbrella of “influencer marketing,” “influencer relations” or “influencer engagement.” While these are tactics that might aid in the creation of influence, they don’t deliver on the implicit promise of influencer relations as a channel to deliver content, carry a narrative or generate advocacy.

In fact, the notion of advocacy as the intended product of influence is frequently lost as marketers suggest programming where “influence” is positioned as the end result. In truth, the goal is not to achieve influence, but to use it as an avenue for cultivating brand affinity and, ultimately, advocacy.

Influence is an ecosystem.

Influence happens naturally, whether or not brands play a part. It is an ecosystem comprised of two forces best defined as the “who” and the “what.” The “who” is made up of both influencers and the consumers who are being influenced, while the “what” is the content and narratives carried on various influence channels. Allison+Partners’ 2016 Influence Impact Report takes a look at this dynamic ecosystem to track consumer behavior throughout the purchase journey and the potential for impact these forces have along the way.

The inaugural report revealed a core truth relevant to marketers:

“Influence is no longer something hidden and mercurial that impacts consumers beyond their control, but rather a conscious, informed decision consumers make to willingly and consensually allow brands the opportunity to change or reinforce their thinking.”

Data from the report indicated that influence begins with the consumer, and is a pull, not push. In other words, an individual must be already actively seeking information and open to being influenced for the message to land. This makes understanding “impact” essential as a measure of effectiveness for influencer relations efforts.

Measuring potential impact is a must.

Today, most influencer programs are evaluated by reach (e.g., circulation, visitors, fans) and the variable engagement of influencer posts. While it is important to consider reach, it is baseless without understanding the optimal channel mix. Engagement doesn’t objectively speak to the power and potential of an influencer, but rather works to measure the content produced.

Allison+Partners worked in conjunction with data scientists and mathematicians to create an optimal channel mix and a formula that measures the potential impact of any ‘influencer.’

$$\text{Influence Impact} = (\text{Reach} + \text{Authenticity}) \times \text{Power}$$

REACH

A multi-point quantitative indicator of an individual’s personal network and includes the number of channels they utilize to communicate a message and/or narrative.

AUTHENTICITY

The qualitative evaluation of bias, or lack thereof, and an assessment of original content. It is a multi-point determination of the credibility of the source and quality of content.

POWER

The X-factor that relates directly to net potential impact based on a number of variables, ultimately determining strength and expertise. It is an evaluation of quality and the cascade of influence from one influencer to another. It has a premium value attached to it.

Harnessing influence requires focus and comprehension.

We first identify the right mix of influence sources, both digital and off-line. This includes traditional media, social/digital influencers, online media, online communities companies or corporations, professional experts, celebrities, government organizations and leaders, NGOs, faith-based communities, and more. We then combine our proprietary Influence Impact ratio mix and scoring system to determine the best mix of influencers to maximize the potential for impact.

We recently applied this approach to audit a global entertainment client's influencer relations program. Analysis of more than 120 influencers, made up largely of book reviewers, mommy bloggers and other family-oriented social influencers, uncovered ineffectiveness in areas essential to storytelling. We scored and ranked them in order of highest to lowest and conducted a qualitative review of various insights that were driving the scores. Those who scored well in all three elements of the equation (reach, authenticity and power) were ranked in the top 25 to 50.

Interestingly, we found that a number of high-reach mommy bloggers, who would have reflexively been considered the primary option to push out family-friendly content, scored incredibly low due to a lack of true authenticity. Our analysis revealed that many of these bloggers acted solely as a paid media channel – almost exclusively posting sponsored, controlled content with minimal personal experience or context. The sheer number of paid posts from varying brands was cause for questioning their authentic interest in what they were promoting, ultimately compromising the intended communication. In fact, more than 50 percent of influencers analyzed were deemed ineffective.

By looking at those who had solid scores in reach, authenticity and power, we were able to identify the

most effective 25 to 50 influencers for the brand. We also uncovered that numerous influencers who were actively engaged in the program were collecting a check, but not necessarily performing as hard as they could be. This was due to saturation of paid postings, lack of original content and the influencer not maximizing their most active social channels for paid content, instead using less active channels as a place to dump brand content. As a result, the client can now recast their influencer relations program to find greater efficiencies and maximize the potential impact of this program within their current marketing mix.

IN SUMMARY

- + The overuse of, and confusion around, the term “influence” does not diminish the importance of utilizing influence to create lasting advocacy.
- + Many influencer programs focus on digital influencers and celebrities, which is a limited influencer worldview.
- + Understanding influence and factors to evaluate and assess influencer relations programs can, and should be, grounded in the notion of *potential* impact.
- + Being loud and everywhere doesn't necessarily mean that the message is landing and certainly doesn't mean people are being influenced.
- + Taking steps to create influencer relationships grounded in authentic interaction and have the greatest potential to connect with consumers are essential. The key to creating lasting influence lies in the trust and inspiration fostered among like-minded individuals.
- + Influencer relations programs should be measureable and accountable to a ROI that can have a real impact on communications objectives and business results.





The Golden Influencers

From Mary Lou Retton to Michael Phelps, history has proven that winning athletes from global games who embody the American spirit can sell products, engage consumers and create connections that few other celebrities can.

As this year's summer games come to an end and we look forward to what might happen in another four years, we see many athletes at their peak of glory and influence, and brands are looking to attach their names to these golden stars.

While recognizable names like Phelps and NBA superstars already carry tremendous amounts of influence, many brands are looking to engage with those new names and faces that stole the spotlight and our hearts.

To help brands make a more informed decision on athlete engagement, we at Allison+Partners employed our proprietary, data-driven, 'Influence Impact Score' to rank all 121 gold medal winners on the scoring system that applies an evaluation of $(\text{Reach} + \text{Authenticity}) \times \text{Power}$



As additional proof points, Twitter growth* and online media mentions** over the course of the games were calculated to help show immediate momentum and identify emerging influencers. The scoring system, developed in conjunction with data scientists and mathematicians, allows Allison+Partners to more effectively target those who inspire others throughout the process of consideration, purchase or advocacy. It is differentiated as it moves beyond simple metrics like engagement; a measure that we believe is more effective at evaluating content.

FOLLOWING THE SCORING OF 121 ATHLETES, KEY FINDINGS EMERGED:

- + Swimming, gymnastics, basketball and track and field athletes generally carry the greatest amount of influence. All of the top 25 athletes came from these sports, and four of the five U.S. gymnasts were included in the top 25.
- + Carmelo Anthony and Michael Phelps are the most influential athletes, and both received the highest score possible (100).
- + Simone Biles (96.3) rounded out the top three. Her teammates, Aly Raisman (92.5) and Gabby Douglas (92.5), also ranked in the top 10, beating out a number of players who enjoy promotional support and media attention from the NBA, making their ascent and success even more astounding.
- + More women are influential, overall. Of the top 25 athletes, 52 percent are women. Allyson Felix, the most decorated female track and field athlete, scored an impressive 92.5.
- + Outspoken swimmer Lilly King (1551.49 percent) and Simone Manuel (1537.66 percent), the first African-American woman to win an individual gold medal in swimming, are the only two athletes who experienced more than 1000 percent growth on Twitter over the course of the summer games.
- + Michael Phelps, Simone Biles and Katie Ledecky were the most prominent names in online media coverage, showing an ability to dominate the summer games' news cycle.
- + A number of first-time category winners, including shot putter Michelle Carter (87.5), triathlete Gwen Jorgensen (80), and wrestler Helen Maroulis (77.5), posted high scores. Carter was in the top 25 of all athletes.



*Twitter growth calculated over the span of the Olympics.

**Online media mentions in the U.S. during the span of the Olympics. Print and broadcast mentions not included.

Name	Sport	Influence Impact Score	Twitter Growth	U.S. Online Media Mentions
Carmelo Anthony	Basketball	100	3.68%	9,602
Michael Phelps	Swimming	100	26.92%	61,274
Simone Biles	Gymnastics	96.25	642.41%	39,189
DeMar DeRozan	Basketball	95	2.10%	1,743
Harrison Barnes	Basketball	95	4.48%	1,214
Klay Thompson	Basketball	95	5.29%	4,581
Ryan Lochte	Swimming	95	19.40%	*14,375
Allyson Felix	Track and Field	92.5	11.77%	10,423
Aly Raisman	Gymnastics	92.5	76.08%	17,035
Gabby Douglas	Gymnastics	92.5	16.56%	12,846
Kevin Durant	Basketball	92.5	2.76%	11,370
Kyrie Irving	Basketball	91.25	0.40%	5,425
DeMarcus Cousins	Basketball	90	1.76%	4,349
Draymond Green	Basketball	90	4.10%	2,410
Missy Franklin	Swimming	90	15.44%	6,549
Nathan Adrian	Swimming	90	43.32%	9,423
Jimmy Butler	Basketball	89.25	2.41%	3,062
Seimone Augustus	Basketball	88.75	2.70%	830
Laurie Hernandez	Gymnastics	88.3	502.80%	8,115
Sue Bird	Basketball	88	17.37%	3,425
Elena Delle Donne	Basketball	87.5	8.43%	2,494
Katie Ledecky	Swimming	87.5	236.43%	25,152
Katie Meili	Swimming	87.5	294.21%	3,809
Michelle Carter	Track and Field	87.5	119.77%	2,649
Tamika Catchings	Basketball	87.5	3.77%	1,730
Brittney Griner	Basketball	85	2.95%	2,396



Marketers should consider more than the top-tier influencers. Consider mid-tier influencers – those scoring in 65 to 78. These are incredibly strong scores that suggest powerful reach, effectiveness through credibility and authority, and showcase a proven ability to influence others. Every athlete on the list has marketing value, but resources, brand tone and category relevance must fit.

Kyle Lowry	Basketball	85	1.88%	1,898
LaShawn Merritt	Track and Field	84	9.90%	5,451
David Verburg	Track and Field	82.5	17.50%	708
Kelsi Worrell	Swimming	82.5	62.04%	451

Name	Sport	Influence Impact Score	Twitter Growth	U.S. Online Media Mentions
Morolake Akinosun	Track and Field	82.5	817.67%	1,061
DeAndre Jordan	Basketball	81.25	0.83%	4,576
Ashton Eaton	Track and Field	80	37.01%	6,066
Bethanie Mattek - Sands	Tennis	80	3.98%	2,322
Brianna Rollins	Track and Field	80	63.46%	3,588
Francena McCorory	Track and Field	80	12.69%	164
Gwen Jorgensen	Triathlon	80	17.60%	2,069
Jack Sock	Tennis	80	6.44%	3,136
Kyle Snyder	Wrestling	80	31.51%	1,374
Lilly King	Swimming	80	1551.45%	11,089
Matthew Centrowitz	Track and Field	80	12.84%	1,393
Maya Moore	Basketball	80	1.91%	2,045
Ryan Murphy	Swimming	80	316.64%	7,570
Diana Taurasi	Basketball	79	10.67%	4,887
Claressa Shields	Boxing	78.75	46.00%	3,192
Connor Fields	BMX	78.75	9.82%	1,655
Elle Logan	Rowing	78.75	n/a	96
Emily Regan	Rowing	78.75	56.84%	259

Marketers should look at niche athletes that could provide great value for specialized campaigns. An athlete's authenticity can't be understated. A high authenticity score and an athlete with relevance to a brand that is intrinsic to his or her achievements at the games, life story, obstacles overcome or personal passions may mean greater relevance and ability to impact your target consumer.



Tina Charles	Basketball	78.75	2.88%	1,686
Allison Schmitt	Swimming	77.5	26.50%	3,616
Anthony Ervin	Swimming	77.5	50.18%	5,992
Helen Maroulis	Wrestling	77.5	82.53%	1,373
Jenna Prandini	Track and Field	77.5	31.77%	457
Kayla Harrison	Judo	77.5	22.51%	2,675
Kevin Cordes	Swimming	77.5	80.19%	1,162
Madeline Dirado	Swimming	77.5	860.91%	521
Maggie Steffans	Water Polo	77.5	30.40%	1,235
Melanie Margalis	Swimming	77.5	200.69%	622
Paul George	Basketball	77.5	1.34%	4,781
Kaleigh Gilchrist	Water Polo	75.6	58.51%	304

Name	Sport	Influence Impact Score	Twitter Growth	U.S. Online Media Mentions
Abbey Weitzeil	Swimming	75	169.09%	3,151
Ariana Washington	Track and Field	75	27.47%	75
Breanna Stewart	Basketball	75	8.48%	1,846
Caeleb Dressel	Swimming	75	235.75%	4,775
Conor Dwyer	Swimming	75	34.17%	5,722
Dana Vollmer	Swimming	75	15.82%	5,947
English Gardner	Track and Field	75	61.18%	4,380



Someone can have big influence, but not necessarily the right influence for your brand. Look beyond the score to the context of their actions, statements or public perception. While Ryan Lochte received a high score of 95, his experience during the latter half of the games was tainted by controversy. In all likelihood, Lochte's score may tumble as his credibility and authority to speak credibly is significantly diminished as a result of character issues.

James Feigen	Swimming	75	30.81%	*590
Kerron Clement	Track and Field	75	n/a	2,579
Kerry Simmonds	Rowing	75	67.40%	273
Leah Smith	Swimming	75	232.85%	4,232
Tony McQuay	Track and Field	75	7.50%	767
Tom Shields	Swimming	74.2	46.19%	680
Kyle Clemons	Track and Field	73.3	53.67%	65
Taylor Ellis-Watson	Track and Field	72.8	n/a	169
Angel McCoughtry	Basketball	72.5	4.25%	952
Blake Pieroni	Swimming	72.5	102.59%	416
Christian Taylor	Track and Field	72.5	8.24%	2,757
Gunnar Bentz	Swimming	72.5	188.52%	*698
Natasha Hastings	Track and Field	72.5	13.69%	1,740
Rachel Fattal	Water Polo	72.5	n/a	626
Townley Haas	Swimming	72.47	268.29%	2,695
Sylvia Fowles	Basketball	72.1	15.96%	1,142
Cody Miller	Swimming	72	834.05%	4,393
Simone Manuel	Swimming	71.5	1537.66%	13,849
Lindsay Whalen	Basketball	71.2	2.46%	1,110
Courtney Okolo	Track and Field	70.85	37.63%	913
David Plummer	Swimming	70.85	122.41%	3,390
Maddie Musselman	Water Polo	70.5	84.21%	391
Arman Hall	Track and Field	70.25	15.59%	722

Name	Sport	Influence Impact Score	Twitter Growth	U.S. Online Media Mentions
Caroline Clark	Water Polo	70.25	96.83%	11
Courtney Mathewson	Water Polo	70.25	65.26%	383
Kathleen Baker	Swimming	70.2	300.71%	4,542
Gil Roberts	Track and Field	70	n/a	837
Jeff Henderson	Track and Field	70	158.22%	2,741
Phyllis Francis	Track and Field	70	108.33%	2,077
Ryan Held	Swimming	70	635.76%	4,304
Ryan Crouser	Track and Field	70	273.68%	2,319
Sami Hill	Water Polo	70	148.03%	140
Amanda Polk	Rowing	68.75	107.69%	208
Tori Bowie	Track and Field	68.55	371.66%	5,989
Cierra Runge	Swimming	68	127.92%	486
Ashleigh Johnson	Water Polo	67.625	120.66%	878
Aria Fischer	Water Polo	67.5	333.06%	137
Makenzie Fischer	Water Polo	67.5	215.17%	518
Kami Craig	Water Polo	67.33	138.88%	238
Melissa Seidemann	Water Polo	65	25.37%	123
Katelin Snyder	Rowing	64.14	31.38%	432

When engaging an athlete, examine the channels in which they are most active and how that relates to your core audience. For example, nearly 10 percent of these athletes did not have a Twitter handles, while many used Instagram in a limited manner. Ensuring that athletes are leveraging their full potential to impact consumers by maximizing their reach across all online and offline influence channels will translate to brand success.



Dalilah Muhammad	Track and Field	62.5	935%	2,462
Olivia Smoliga	Swimming	62.5	173.83%	30
Tianna Bartoletta	Track and Field	57.62	277.88%	4,786
Lauren Schmetterling	Rowing	57.58	80.28%	190
Amanda Elmore	Rowing	55	139.78%	240
Kiley Neushul	Water Polo	55	n/a	775
Kristin Armstrong	Cycling, Road	55	21.17%	3,190
Meghan Musnicki	Rowing	55	8.94%	335
Madison Kocian	Gymnastics	42.5	333.57%	7,647
Jack Conger	Swimming	35	n/a	*722
Tessa Gobbo	Rowing	30	n/a	177
Clark Smith	Swimming	21.5	n/a	265
Virginia Thrasher	Shooting	20	n/a	1,846

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