



## How vloggers like Zoella can boost your brand

Written by [Josh Russell](#) on Thursday, 07 April 2016. Posted in [Social](#), [Sales & Marketing](#)

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With some vloggers bringing in audiences of millions, few brands can afford to ignore the opportunities partnering with a YouTube star can bring



It can hardly have escaped anyone's attention that vlogging has become big business. Currently no end of talented vloggers are making their names on online video platforms like YouTube, with many such as Zoella and Alfie Deyes becoming celebrities in their own right and drawing in subscribers in the millions. Unsurprisingly, brands have begun to cotton on to the massive potential this has for promoting their products and services.

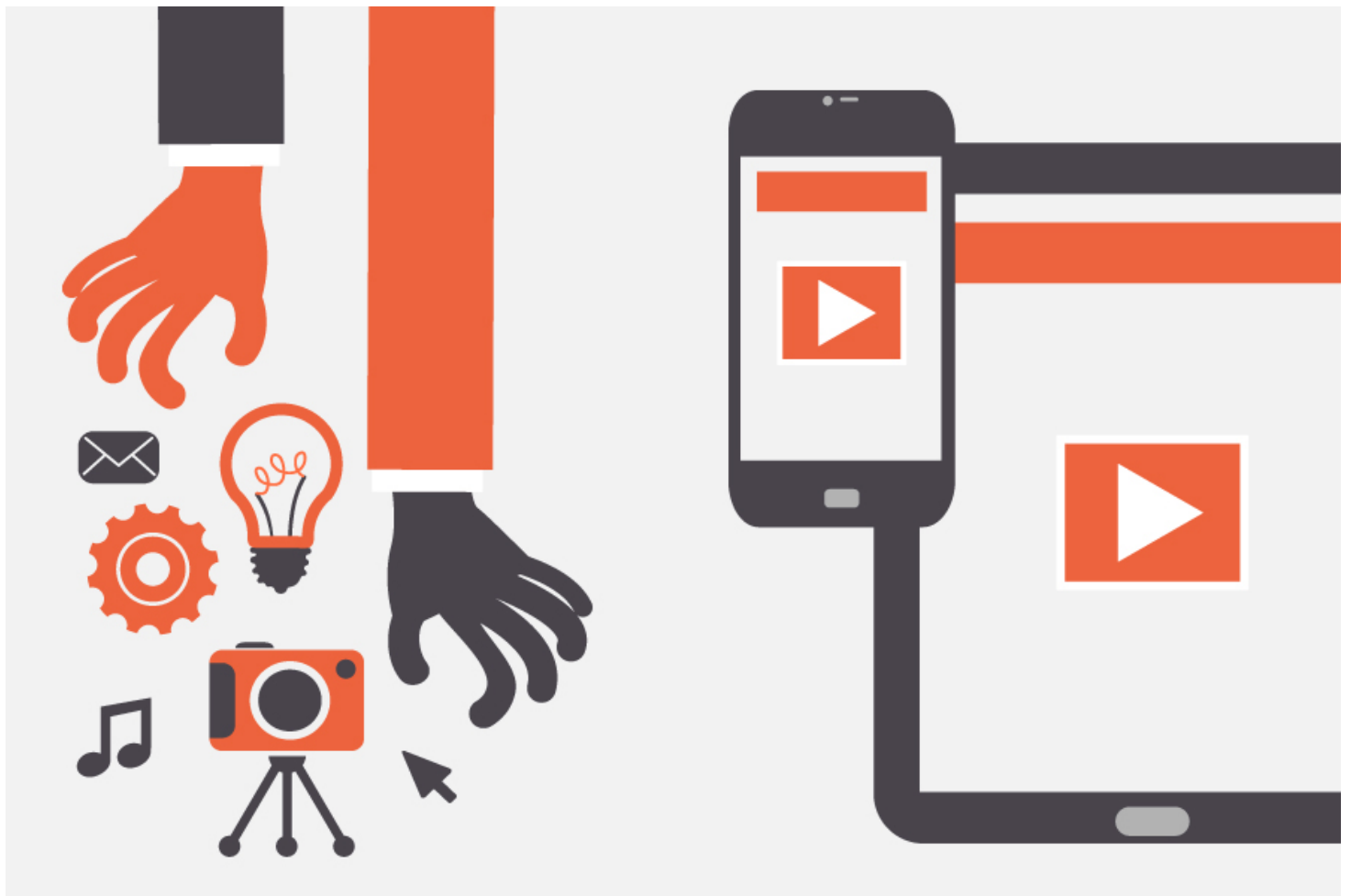
The changing way that audiences are consuming media is part of the reason why partnering with vloggers has

become such a vital avenue for brands. “Millennials are very hard to reach: they don’t watch TV, they don’t use traditional media as such, so they’re very hard for brands to find,” says Paola Marinone, co-founder and CEO of [BuzzMyVideos](#), the multi-channel vlogger network. The changing media landscape has meant that brands have been forced to go where audiences are going: in an age where online video is coming to dominate, forming relationships with the medium’s superstars has become something of a no-brainer.

But it’s not all just a question of reach; utilising vloggers’ talents can also lead to much greater sales. Marinone refers to research conducted by the company that revealed 47% of users are more likely to investigate a product they’ve seen in an online video, whilst 52% are more likely to purchase it. “The conversion rates for products that have been shown in online videos is extremely high,” Marinone says. “They are much higher than any other means of communication.”

One explanation for this is that vloggers have an asset at their disposal that few other mediums have: an inbuilt community of highly engaged followers. “Audiences place a premium on what these vloggers say and the recommendations that they make,” says James Stafford, senior vice president Europe at [StyleHaul](#), the multi-channel vlogger network. Traditionally, the focus in verticals like fashion and beauty has been on selling an ideal or an aspiration by highlighting the difference between models and the general public. But vloggers catering to these industries are thriving precisely because their audiences can easily identify with them. “The influencer making that content is revealing not just their taste in clothing and fashion but they’re also opening up their lives to people,” he says. “It’s a much more conversational thing.”

Evidently there are clear benefits to working with vloggers but this doesn’t mean that brands can afford to charge in with little thought or preparation. In the early days of the medium, many marketers would pay a famous vlogger a small fortune to namedrop their brand. “There was no strategy, measurement or framework around whether it actually did anything for them,” Stafford says. Fortunately, the industry has since matured a great deal and it has become much easier to formulate and analyse the success of a strategy. “It’s a far more sophisticated market,” he says. “The way in which you identify, execute and measure a vlogger partnership looks exactly as it would for any other media choice.”




Rather than purely aiming for vloggers with the largest reach, the key to running truly successful campaigns comes down to inquiring how the nature of their audience aligns with the brand's goals. "Brands need to ask themselves: 'Does this channel reach the desired target audience by age, gender, demographic and location?'" Stafford says. Drilling down a layer, the next step is identifying what proportion of this target audience has an affinity with a certain company's product; this can be done by assessing the brands they typically engage with. And then, perhaps most importantly, startups need to look at how likely that audience is to share videos with others in their networks. "That's absolutely the holy grail," says Stafford.

However, finding the right vlogger to work with is only half the battle: perhaps more important is how a marketer keeps them on board and rewards them for their work. "Most people accept now that this is their career; they've built up a very sizeable audience and they deserve to be compensated for their work," Stafford says. But financial remuneration is only the bluntest tool in a marketer's arsenal. They should also be looking to add value to the relationship by offering vloggers resources that might otherwise be beyond their reach, whether that's backstage passes to events or giving them access to a high-end production suite. "It's about providing them the tools to create something that they couldn't on their own," Stafford says.

Additionally, if a brand wants to build a long-term relationship with a vlogger – not to mention secure the best results – it's important to recognise the value of their creative input. "Many companies start out with a need for absolute control, thinking it must be pixel perfect and scripted in the same way all their other communication is," says Stafford. But one of the real strengths of working with a vlogger is having access to their knowledge of the medium. By ceding a little of their editorial control, brands can ultimately achieve much better results. "Brands are becoming much more collaborative and relinquishing some of the control over how the videos are created," he says. "That's where the absolutely perfect content comes from."

But whilst it's a good idea to craft a paid vlog as editorial content, this doesn't mean that marketers or vloggers can afford to gloss over the commercial nature of the relationship. "The audience needs to know if something has been paid for by a brand," says Marinone. "That's rule number one." Not only has the ASA previously banned campaigns that have failed to properly disclose commercial relationships but trying to dupe audiences can backfire massively, alienating them from both influencer and brand. Conversely, being upfront and honest about the nature of the content costs brands nothing. "If the audience knows that the video is paid for but can see the creator genuinely believes in the product, then it still proves really effective," Marinone says.

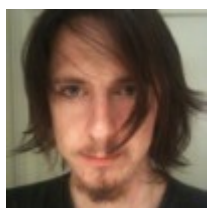
Ultimately, as long it is done with authenticity and transparency, partnering with vloggers to promote products can pay real dividends. And, given the fact that media landscape is evolving rapidly, there's no time like the present. "There's such a huge space to innovate, which means brands that embrace vlogging can actually get more of a first-mover advantage," says Marinone. "The revolution is here and it is now." 

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## About the Author



### Josh Russell

As editor, Russell is the man in charge of properly apostrophising our publication and ensuring Oxford commas are mercilessly excised. Our digital doyen, he's also a Photoshop Pro, a dab hand with InDesign and the man to go to if you need a four-hour soliloquy about the UK's best silicon startups.

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