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Chapter 11

Influence Amplified: Leveraging the Power of Influencer Marketing in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

This chapter will unravel the intricacies of influencer marketing, from its origins to its contemporary significance. Through a meticulously crafted case study, the readers will get the practical implementation of influencer marketing, illustrating how a retail clothing brand leveraged the influence of digital personalities to amplify its reach and resonance. The case study explores the use of influencers and event promotion through social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. The study delves into who influencers are, why and how much people trust them, and how they promote products and services. Using the example of announcing the opening of the Reserved store in Zadar, Croatia, the study analyses the influence of the online campaigns #ReservedforZadar and #Reservedforme on customers to visit and purchasing products from the Reserved store. An interview was conducted with the main organiser, who also holds the CEO position within the prominent LPP Group.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital ecosystem, traditional advertising no longer wields the same impact it once did (Rosen-gren, 2016., Batat, 2022., Harvey, 2021). Consumers are bombarded with myriad messages, making it increasingly challenging for brands to stand out. According to Dahlen and Rosengren, (2016), influencer marketing is a strategy that has revolutionised how products and services are promoted. By aligning with individuals who possess the power to sway opinions and behaviours, brands have unlocked a powerful avenue to engage, inspire, and build authentic connections with their target audience. As a consequence, one of the most effective ways to promote a retail fashion brand online is to collaborate with influencers with large and loyal followers on social media platforms. Sun et al. (2022) found that influencers have established credibility and trust with their audience. They can influence purchase decisions by creating engaging and authentic content featuring the brand's products. Influencers can help a retail fashion brand increase brand awareness, reach new customers, generate traffic and sales, and enhance its reputation in the industry. However, Khan et al. (2022) emphasise choosing the right influencers for a marketing campaign requires careful research and planning, clear communication, and evaluation of the results.

With the advancement of technology and the increasing use of computers and the internet, social networks are becoming an integral part of our daily lives. Online networks are forming on the internet, becoming our online environment where we acquire more and more friends and acquaintances. Therefore, Cohavi et al. (2022) emphasise that while social networks are more popular among young consumers, more adults are transitioning to the "virtual" life. Indeed, the number of social media users increases daily, not only in Croatia but also worldwide. Besides their communication role, social networks also serve as platforms for sharing content such as images, videos, and other forms. On social media, users comment on current news and share their opinions on various topics with other users, such as sports, science, culture, fashion, and many others. According to Mallipeddi et al. (2022), this has led to the emergence of so-called influencers – public figures who promote events or brands of products and services through their profiles on social networks.

Given the rapid development and the multitude of social networks, various managers find opportunities for more accessible and streamlined event promotion. With the evolution of new information technologies, new possibilities arise for sending messages directly to targeted populations, considering this cheaper and more cost-effective than traditional advertising (through television, radio, or print). This has resulted in a cost-effective new form of influencer marketing. This form of marketing refers to promoting a brand, product, or service through social media with the help of influencers – individuals who influence the opinions and attitudes of other users. This type of marketing requires less effort and lower costs than traditional forms of marketing.

Influencers are individuals with many followers interested in the content they post. Their job is based on virtual and informal communication with users or followers, where users can obtain free information about various places, events, products, and services. The rationale for conducting another study on influencer marketing in the context of this chapter lies in several crucial factors. First, influencer marketing continually evolves due to technological changes, consumer behaviour, and the influencer ecosystem. These rapid changes necessitate up-to-date research to capture the latest trends and strategies.

The extent to which influencers can contribute to the media coverage of an event is illustrated through the example of the opening of the Reserved store in Zadar, Croatia. One aspect that makes this case study interesting is that influencers were engaged in the store opening promotion, and all marketing activities were presented through the social media platforms Instagram and Facebook.). In this case, the

study delves into influencer marketing in the context of a retail clothing brand's store opening in Zadar, Croatia, which adds a specific and valuable dimension to the literature. While many studies provide theoretical insights, a case study approach, as undertaken in this research, offers a practical illustration of how influencer marketing is applied, providing actionable knowledge and solutions for practitioners. This study aims to identify gaps in the existing literature and contribute to the broader understanding of influencer marketing by exploring aspects such as campaign strategy, content collaboration, and measuring success specific to a real-world scenario.

In summary, this study aims to contribute by addressing unique aspects of influencer marketing and providing practical insights that can benefit academics and industry professionals, thus advancing the field's knowledge and application. This case study offers innovation and novelty in influencer marketing for several reasons. First, it focuses on a specific and localized context - promoting a retail clothing brand's store opening in Zadar, Croatia. This localized approach adds a unique dimension to the influencer marketing literature, acknowledging that the effectiveness of influencer strategies can vary significantly based on the cultural, geographical, and demographic context. Second, the study incorporates a detailed and practical case study of a real-world influencer marketing campaign. By providing an in-depth exploration of a specific marketing endeavour, it offers insights and lessons that practitioners in the industry can directly apply. Third, the research covers a broad spectrum of influencer marketing aspects, including campaign strategy, content collaboration, measurement of success, and the challenges faced during the campaign. This holistic approach provides a comprehensive view of the entire influencer marketing process, which can guide professionals and scholars alike. Fourth, including an interview with the CEO of the prominent LPP Group, who also organized the campaign, offers a unique perspective. This high-level insight into the planning and execution of an influencer marketing campaign brings expertise and strategic understanding often missing in academic literature. Fifth, given the rapid evolution of influencer marketing in response to changing digital and social media landscapes, this study's exploration of contemporary practices and their impact is particularly relevant.

BACKGROUND

The Impact of the Internet and Social Media on Communication

The widespread use of the internet and social media has transformed interpersonal interactions. More precisely, social networks have altered the traditional communication concept, changing the purpose for which people need to connect. Initially, people used the internet primarily for information-seeking, but in today's era, individuals want to engage in online communication, creating a virtual world. By linking their profiles on social media platforms, users exchange information about themselves, their products, and their services, fostering the development of the contemporary marketing concept. Consequently, social media is increasingly becoming a central tool for promotion. With the advancement of online communication, people are altering how they gather information about various brands and their products and make purchasing decisions. Social media offers an extensive range of information about products, designs, services, and product prices. Through user posts and reviews on social media, content is generated, which becomes the most cost-effective form of promotion (Amoah, & Jibril, 2021). Online promotion is growing in prevalence as many users want to ensure they choose the right product or service, relying on the comments and experiences of others in their decision-making.

The Power of Consumer Influence and Word of Mouth

For customers' purchasing decisions, word of mouth (WOM) has been considered as one of the major influential factors (Mahmud et al. 2020). Sharma & Bajaj (2022) define an opinion leader as a powerful individual who is an expert in a given subject whose opinions influence others on social media is known as an opinion leader. Opinion leaders achieve influence when the mass media cannot. The wider public is attracted by their knowledge, status or activism in the digital environment. They receive attention and trust and can influence others in decision-making. Today, opinion leaders are called influencers and have a specific social influence that causes a change in their audience's behaviour. (Yefanov, 2022). Therefore, the influencer is a special type of public opinion leader. Moreover, authors Biloš & Jaška (2021) state that they promote products or services by mentioning or using them while promoting the brand. Consumers have always shared their opinions about purchased brands with others. There are numerous reasons for this behaviour. One key factor is consumers' desire to convey their positive shopping experiences to others, influencing their knowledge about specific brands. Reducing uncertainty and risk in purchases and the mutual care among consumers in close relationships (relatives, friends) are significant drivers of word-of-mouth communication. Loyalty and emotional attachment to specific brands enhance consumers' inclination to shape others' opinions. Such consumers become brand advocates and promoters. The role and significance of social media in communication urge manufacturers to craft the messages they send and exchange, thus building their reputation. A more intimate and personalised form of communication with consumers is established through social media. Opinions about products, compliments, and criticisms are exchanged on these platforms. Information is shared with customers, and their questions related to products or services are addressed. Many brands utilise social media to inform their followers about upcoming products or services, significant brand-related events such as store openings, or other forms of promotion. This approach provides users with all the necessary information in one place, offering quick and comprehensive updates on innovations. The role of managing social media is complex and demanding. It's not enough to post an image or pay for an advertisement; active engagement in the market, trend monitoring, listening to the audience, and adapting offerings to their desires are all crucial. In an era where the emphasis is on visual impact, investing in a quality product and tailoring it to be visually appealing through design, packaging, and more is necessary. This approach allows for customer feedback through their posts.

Influencer Marketing as a Promotion Tool

Influencer marketing has emerged as a popular new promotion tool, especially on social media. Leung et al. (2022) argue that influencer marketing is increasingly preferred over traditional marketing by brands and can spread brand messages widely and quickly. Tanwar et al. (2021) systematically reviewed the literature and found that influencer marketing is mainly used in the lifestyle, fashion, and beauty industries. Ye et al. (2021) analyzed the academic literature on influencer marketing and found that it is an effective and cost-efficient tool that provides broad reach and high engagement. Vrontis et al. (2021) highlight the influencers' psychological characteristics, such as trustworthiness and expertise. Vodák (2019) argues that influencers have significant power over brand perception and can thus impact reputation. Brag (2019) found that public relations experts see influencer marketing as both an opportunity and a threat, with the danger of image crises being a particular concern. Krisam (2021) proposed five categories of health influencers in healthcare and found weak evidence for their health promotion effects, arguing

that more research is needed. Li (2022) developed a model to identify influential bloggers and found it outperformed other methods. The model uses an artificial neural network to analyse blogs' networks, content, and activity factors. In summary, the literature suggests influencer marketing is a popular and fast-growing promotion tool, especially on social media, that provides broad reach and high engagement. Influencers have power over brand perception and reputation. In healthcare and other areas, influencer marketing shows promise, but further research is still needed on its effects. Existing models can help identify the most influential bloggers and influencers. Influencer marketing seems poised to become a more significant part of the marketing mix.

Influencers

The term “influencer” has become a part of our everyday vocabulary, and the number of influencers continues to grow daily, with their popularity reaching incredible heights. Just a few years ago, people would marvel at those who walked around with cameras hanging from their necks, taking pictures of their food in restaurants or products they bought, and sharing their private lives through social media. This was done mainly by well-known actors, singers, athletes, and celebrities. However, in recent years, social media has transformed all aspects of our lives, significantly reshaping the market and demand for influencers. Samy (2022) emphasizes the power of social media content in revolutionizing practices, norms, and narratives in society. Antunes, (2022) discusses how social media influencers connect consumers and brands, influencing consumer decision-making. Sinnig (2019) acknowledges the permanent impact of social media on consumer behaviour and the preference for social media as a source of information and guidance. Influencers build their careers on social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok. Most of them start their careers on one platform and gradually expand to multiple platforms to reach a more significant number of followers. Followers compare their behaviour to that of influencers and adjust their actions, believing this will keep them “trendy.” Influencers impact people’s opinions and attitudes through their posts and influence their purchasing decisions. Due to these reasons, numerous brands approach influencers to promote their products or services, aiming to introduce their brand and offerings to a more extensive potential customer base. Influencers engage with their followers daily, and their relationship often evolves into a friendly rapport. For this reason, many individuals are more inclined to purchase a product recommended by an influencer than one they saw advertised on television. This personal connection and relatability make influencer endorsements more persuasive and impactful than traditional advertising. In their work, influencers commonly use various “tags,” or keywords, that describe specific information, products, or locations. These tags facilitate more straightforward navigation on social media platforms. They are generally personal and informal, as the individual posting content on the platform assigns them. An increasing number of brands are leveraging influencers to spread positive brand images. While most brands are satisfied with the outcomes, there are instances of dissatisfaction. The latter often arises when the selected influencer is not a good fit for the brand they are representing. Each influencer has their audience and market, making it the responsibility of the brands to identify an appropriate influencer who resonates with their brand and can connect with their target audience. Influencer marketing can be defined as a subset of social media marketing, which is part of e-marketing. It’s a marketing subset that employs social media platforms to create content that users will share among themselves. Social media platforms are excellent avenues for raising brand awareness, connecting with users, and facilitating two-way communication. They are frequently utilised due to their ability to achieve a broad reach for marketing messages at relatively low costs. Most brands utilise influencer marketing to

foster brand awareness growth, enhance brand perception, and encourage consumers to purchase or use products or services. The most crucial channels for influencer marketing are the social media platforms Instagram and Facebook. These platforms allow brands to effectively tap into the influence and reach of influencers to connect with their target audience and convey marketing messages. In traditional marketing, a brand offers its products to potential customers, whereas in influencer marketing, the process is reversed. In influencer marketing, the consumer takes the initiative to seek out the product and gather information about it after seeing a product or service on a specific influencer's page. This information is most easily found on social media, where users inquire about products and recommend them to each other. Through influencer marketing, brands establish partnerships where influential individuals, on behalf of the brand or marketing agency, use their name to promote the brand, product, or service. This form of marketing doesn't require significant costs and can yield a significant impact. Influencers promote products and services in a genuinely authentic manner through their campaigns, seamlessly integrating certain brands into their content in a way that resonates with their followers. This approach allows brands to connect with their target audience in a relatable and natural way.

CASE STUDY: OPENING RESERVED STORE IN ZADAR

Overview of the Reserved Brand

On Wednesday, July 11, 2018, the popular high-street clothing store Reserved opened its doors to its first store in the largest shopping centre in Zadar, Supernova. The first Reserved store in Zadar spans two floors and offers a rich assortment of women's, men's, and children's clothing, footwear, and fashion accessories. Many locals and numerous influencers from Croatia and the region eagerly anticipated the brand's welcome to Zadar. Following the store's opening, a gathering of Reserved brand representatives and influencers was organised at the Garden Lounge bar in Zadar, introducing Reserved's fashion story in Zadar. The Garden Lounge bar was chosen as the venue for its pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. Luka Nižetić, Damir Kedžo, Ana Bacinge, and Lidiya Lešić are just a few of the names that decided to support this brand. In addition to Croatian influencers, Zadar hosted influencers from Serbia, Romania, and the Czech Republic.

The strong connection between the Reserved brand and influencers is hardly surprising, as the brand's designers find inspiration from prestigious fashion runways and original influencers. Most of the Reserved collection follows the latest fashion trends, making the Reserved marketing managers confident that the Zadar location would become a favourite fashion destination for the local population and tourists visiting the city. This event's main organiser and LPP Croatia's director was Ms Ana Babić. The Polish fashion company LPP is one of the fastest-growing fashion retail chains in the world. Its expansion into Croatia began in the fall of 2014, and it currently employs over 250 people. The fashion brand comprises five recognisable brands: Reserved, Mohito, Cropp, Sinsay, and House. The store's opening event lasted for several days. The primary and central event was the opening of the Reserved store in Zadar, which took place on July 11, 2018, starting at 7:00 PM at the Supernova shopping centre. July was an ideal time for a blogger trip around Zadar, as the entire city, not just the city but the entire Dalmatian coast, shone brightly in the summer. The weather favoured organisers and visitors, offering a warm, sunny summer day. All planned activities were able to be carried out without any difficulties. All activities were documented within personalised influencer passports for each guest. The guests and

Figure 1. Official dinner at the garden lounge bar

Source: Private album of the event organiser



the organisational team were accommodated at the Falkensteiner Iadera Hotel & Spa. The hotel boasts a five-star rating and is right by the sea on the Punta Skala peninsula, surrounded by the heavenly blue Adriatic Sea. Many visitors stated that the hotel is situated in one of the most beautiful locations in the Republic of Croatia. The stunning interior design and architecture enhance the Mediterranean ambience. The panoramic view takes visitors' breath away. The influencers' notable locations included the entire Zadar aquatorium, Dugi Otok (Long Island), and the renowned Zadar beach, Sakarun. This comprehensive itinerary allowed the influencers to experience the region's beauty and attractions while promoting the Reserved brand's opening in Zadar. A dinner in the exquisite ambience of The Garden Lounge Bar highlighted the first day. The arrival of the influencers at the event was meticulously planned, ensuring attention to every detail, no matter how small. All guests had organised transportation to Zadar in branded cars with private drivers and a "brunch" package containing a healthy meal and refreshing drink. Upon arriving in Zadar, the guests were accommodated at the Falkensteiner Iadera Hotel & Spa. A surprise gift awaited each influencer's room as a clothing item from Reserved's summer collection, which they could wear at the store's opening. Following a number of the activities above, the official opening event took place in the evening. Following the main event, a night out in Zadar ensued, specifically at "The Garden Lounge" bar. Picture 1. presents the official dinner at the Garden Lounge bar.

This bar, with its stunning outdoor terrace, offers a relaxing view of the harbour and the old city walls of Zadar. A DJ played carefully chosen music in the background to create the atmosphere. The Garden Lounge bar provides a blend of luxury and relaxation. It boasts an excellent selection of local wines, draft beer, and a wide range of fresh drinks and cocktails, making it a perfect choice for warm summer evenings. After breakfast at the hotel, a photo shoot was organized for the influencers, featuring them wearing Reserved's collections at critical locations around Zadar. A boat ride and a photo shoot at sea followed this. The boat tour encompassed cruising through the Zadar aquatorium, visiting Dugi Otok (Long Island), and stopping at the most famous Zadar beach, Sakarun. During the boat ride, influencers were served lunch and could indulge in local specialities such as fresh fish, homemade cheese, and wine.

Of course, the entire experience was captured through numerous photos and posts on social media. The return to the hotel took place in the late afternoon, followed by dinner at the renowned Zadar restaurant “Pasta&svasta.” The dinner menu featured local delicacies, including fish, shrimp, truffles, and a wide selection of Croatian wines. After breakfast at the hotel, the influencers had free time to explore Zadar. Once the sightseeing was concluded, a private transfer to the airport followed. On the third day, their Zadar adventure came to an end.

Event Promotion

In Croatia, there are 1.8 million active users on social media platforms Facebook and Instagram, and numerous brands are vying for their attention. Social media has proven to be an excellent tool for communication and digital advertising. It enables better brand positioning, direct contact with customers, tracking competitors’ activities, and building brand image. With its children’s collection, Reserved aims to attract mothers, the primary decision-makers, when choosing where to shop. On social media, Reserved seeks to encourage engagement among its followers by publishing content and posing questions that prompt them to express their opinions about specific products. The marketing managers at Reserved believe this approach encourages potential customers to take action and become active participants on social media. They emphasise listening to customers’ needs and strengthening their connection to the brand through fresh, daily content. Social media has become an integral part of many individuals’ lives. Its importance is so great that many say, “If it’s not on social media, it’s like it didn’t happen.” Reserved also aims to use social media to inform potential customers about new models, ongoing promotions, and other important events related to the Reserved brand. Effective two-way communication establishes a friendly tone and positive brand perception in the public eye. In the case of the opening of the Reserved store in Zadar, the organizer employed influencer marketing and social media for event promotion. Influencers are perceived as “less aggressive” than brands themselves, and their followers tend to trust them. The organizer and her team thoroughly researched and selected influencers aligned with her idea and campaign. Individuals like singers Luka Nižetić, Damir Kedžo, and singers Domenica and Iva Šulentić represent the Reserved brand. Numerous other well-known figures from the music world, known for their fashion sense, were excellent choices for brand representation. To date, two campaigns have been devised: #reservedforme and #reservedxzadar. The #ReservedxZadar campaign during the store opening generated over 100 posts and was tagged over 1,000 times in stories on social media. The #reservedforme campaign continues to be successful, with over 20 thousand posts. The use of influencers at this event proved to be a “great success,” as an incredible number of visitors attended the opening of the Reserved store to see their influencers “in person.” Influencers ignited social media through perfect organisation and a beautiful atmosphere with posts related to the Reserved brand. Apart from the stunning pictures and posts, attendees also took away unforgettable experiences from the event. The organiser highlighted her plans to continue collaborating with influencers on other brands within the Lpp group.

Influencers as Event Promoters

Engaging influencers for a store opening is expected to raise awareness, attract a targeted audience, boost foot traffic, increase social media engagement, and drive content creation. Potential achievements include a successful turnout at the opening event, expanded online visibility, enhanced social proof, ongoing word-of-mouth marketing, and measurable metrics to assess campaign effectiveness. Clear goals and

expectations were established with influencers, ensuring alignment with brand messaging and store opening objectives. Influencer selection, content quality, and overall marketing strategy were expected to determine the campaign's success. While a significant amount of financial resources is directed towards advertising various products and services today, the influence of "word of mouth" and the power of personal recommendation one person can have on another is still immense. Now more than ever, consumers are inclined to listen to each other and are eager to seek advice about a brand or product. The emergence of social media has dramatically facilitated the entire process. Sharing experiences has become faster, and many individuals have recognised a great business opportunity. Becoming an influencer has become one of the world's most influential and desirable professions practically overnight. An increasing number of people use social media for networking, browsing product and service offerings, hiring individuals, and finding business partners. The Reserved brand came up with the idea to reach a wider audience through influencers. However, caution was essential, as only some influencers are equally influential or suitable for promoting this brand. Just because someone has many followers doesn't necessarily mean they are "real" followers—genuinely engaging with the influencer's content daily—or represent the targeted market. Depending on the objectives to be achieved, companies select influencers to collaborate with. The success of a campaign depends on this choice. In today's world, companies must collaborate with trendsetters who are authentic, young, successful women with significant social media influence and, of course, popular among a broad audience. Reserved aims to create inspiring and original content on social media under the #reservedforme tag and encourages its followers to do the same, motivating more people to purchase their products. Reserved has chosen to collaborate with well-known individuals such as Domenica, Iva Šulentić, Lidija Lešić, Luka Nižetić, Damir Kedžo, and many other lesser-known influencers presented in Picture 2.

Event organizer and her team thoroughly researched influencers they could engage in their project, ultimately deciding on only a few whom they considered ideal for promoting the store's opening and the brand itself. The selection of influencers was carried out by the event organiser and her team, analyzing the followers of the chosen influencers to determine who among them were potential customers and consumers. Some segments they analysed included age, gender, and the followers' activity on social media. Influencers and the atmosphere are presented in Picture 3.

Reviewing Luka Nižetić's Instagram profile, it can be observed that he has a very large following (over 89.2 thousand people). Through an analysis of his social media profiles, the organizing team concluded that Luka Nižetić is highly active on social media, as evident from the significant number of posts. There are twice as many women as men who follow his profile, mainly in the 20 to 30 age range. Luka's posts, presented in Picture 4, are a flurry of likes and comments. Each post gets thousands of likes and hundreds of comments.

Luka maintains excellent communication with his followers, which aligns with the event organiser's objectives. All of the above are just parameters used to select influencers whose followers would be ideal potential customers for Reserved products. Promoting the Reserved store opening using influencer marketing has proven to be highly successful, judging by the number of posts, likes, and followers for the brand. Through their posts, stories, and tags, influencers encouraged their followers to attend the store opening event and take advantage of the many benefits offered on the opening day of the new store in Zadar.

Influence Amplified

Figure 2. Influencers on the event

Source: Private album of the event organiser

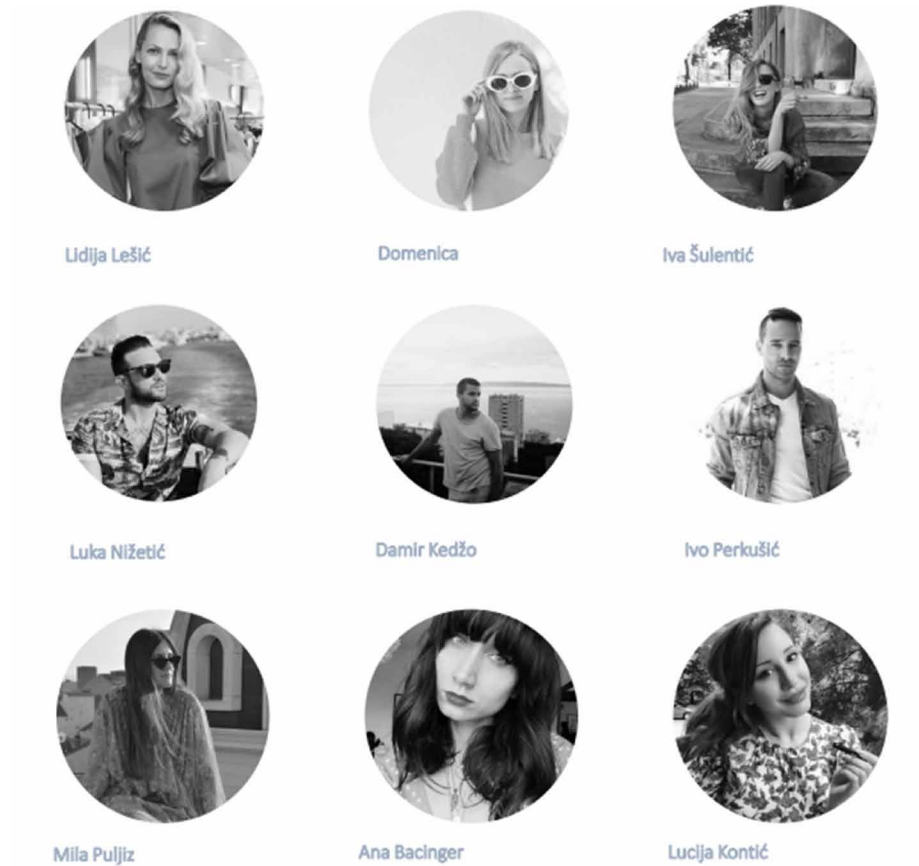


Figure 3. Influencers on the event

Source: Private album of the event organiser



Figure 4. Luka Nižetić Instagram profile

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/lukanizetic/>



CONCLUSION

Influencers have demonstrated to be a highly effective marketing tool in promoting the Reserved brand, and organisers consider the collaboration more than successful. Beyond promoting the Reserved brand, influencers also tagged the city of Zadar, the hotel they stayed at, and the restaurants they visited, promoting much more than just the brand that hired them. In today's world, social media and online platforms have become integral parts of daily life. More and more people are using social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. By sharing photos and posts, users inform their followers about their whereabouts, food choices, clothing, travel destinations, products they use, and much more. Everything is public and easily accessible. Besides personal connections and communication, social media is increasingly used for business purposes. Many brands maintain their pages to interact with users of their products and services. Social media is now frequently employed for promoting products and services, with influencers playing a significant role. Influencers share their opinions about products or services on social media. They post comments about products and services, visible to their followers and other social media users. The role of influencers is crucial for promoting products or services, as many followers blindly follow influencers and their proposed trends. With the rise of influencers, a new concept called influencer marketing has emerged that differs significantly from traditional marketing. Until recently, brands aimed to attract and engage customers through various marketing strategies and tools. However, the process has evolved drastically. Today, customers seek information about a product, search the internet, or look for influencers who can recommend a product that meets their needs. Sometimes, it's even the followers who actively seek out a product based on an influencer's post. This form of marketing has proven to be highly effective in practice, requiring less effort and fewer financial resources. The practical example of the Reserved store opening demonstrates how influencers can be excellent for promoting a brand through social media. The key lies in selecting suitable influencers who accurately represent the brand and its values. In this case, influencer marketing has shown exceptional success, evident from the number of social media posts, media coverage, follower growth, and other indicators. The Reserved brand has aligned with leading global trends in social media promotion through this event and intends to continue utilising influencer marketing for the same purposes. In conclusion, it is essential to note that the nature of this case study inherently limits the generalizability of the findings, as case studies are primarily designed for in-depth exploration rather than broad generalization. Future research in influencer marketing could explore cross-cultural variances, the ethical dimensions of influencer campaigns, the impact of artificial intelligence, and emerging influencer dynamics. Additionally, investigating offline effects, such as physical store traffic, and the influencers' role in promoting sustainability and CSR initiatives present promising avenues for further inquiry.

In conclusion, the innovative aspects of this study lie in its localized focus, practical orientation, comprehensive coverage of influencer marketing aspects, high-level expert perspective, and ability to provide fresh insights and solutions in the ever-evolving world of influencer marketing. The study indeed exhibits innovativeness, but it also has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. The primary limitation of this study lies in its scope. It focuses on one specific case study in a single city, Zadar, Croatia, and relies on just one interview with a key stakeholder. As a result, the findings and insights derived from this single case might not be directly generalizable to broader contexts. The study's localised nature could limit its findings' applicability to other regions, industries, or situations. While the study's contextual specificity is a strength in terms of innovation, it can also be viewed as a limitation in terms of generalizability. The results are most relevant to scenarios closely resembling the context of

the Reserved store opening in Zadar, and the strategies employed may not be transferable to different contexts or settings. The study primarily adopts a qualitative approach with a single case study and one interview. While this approach is valuable for in-depth exploration, it lacks the statistical power and large-scale data typically associated with studies that aim for broad generalizability. The single interview conducted with the CEO of the LPP Group may provide valuable insights from a high-level perspective, but it represents just one viewpoint. A more extensive sample of interviews or surveys with various stakeholders could give a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. In the limitations section of the study, it is crucial to address these issues explicitly. While highlighting the study's innovative aspects, it's equally important to recognize its boundaries and advise caution when applying the findings to broader contexts. This transparency ensures that readers and researchers understand the specific focus of the study and its potential limitations.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Credibility: Credibility is the quality of being trusted, respected, and believed. It measures how trustworthy and reliable a person, source, or information is perceived. Credibility is often based on a track record of honesty, expertise, and consistency.

Influencer Marketing: Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy that involves collaborating with influencers to promote products, services, or brands to their followers. It leverages the influencer's credibility and trust to authentically connect with a target audience and often involves sponsored content or partnerships.

Influencer: An influencer is an individual who can affect a specific target group's opinions, behaviours, and purchasing decisions. They typically have a significant following on social media platforms and are known for their expertise, charisma, or unique approach.

Social Media: Social media refers to digital platforms and websites that enable users to create, share, and interact with content and other users online. These platforms facilitate communication, information sharing, and networking through various features such as posts, comments, likes, and sharing of multimedia content like images and videos.

Trust: Trust is a fundamental concept in human relationships and business. It is the belief or confidence that someone or something is reliable, honest, and can be depended upon. Trust is essential for building strong connections, both personally and professionally.

Word of Mouth: Word of mouth is a form of communication in which individuals share their opinions, recommendations, or information about products, services, or experiences with others in their social or personal networks. It is considered one of the most potent forms of marketing as it relies on personal recommendations and can significantly influence purchasing decisions.