



A checklist for managers to enhance influencer partnerships and avoid potential pitfalls

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Opportunistic behavior;
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Abstract Influencer marketing continues to be popular with marketing managers because of its effectiveness as a marketing tactic for raising brand awareness and ROI. To date, much of the literature on influencer marketing focused on its benefits, but it also bears potential risks: not all influencer marketing experiences are positive. While influencer marketing is still emerging in the digital space, managers should not forgo supplier managerial principles when hiring influencers. This article provides a checklist to help managers navigate this marketing tactic and avoid potential mistakes by encouraging the same due diligence they would with other suppliers. The checklist asks nine questions during the life cycle of an influencer relationship—including selection, performance and contract management, and reputation management—and is corroborated by the marketing literature but should be applied by managers. To demonstrate this, several case studies were examined in which managers should have considered supplier management when engaging with influencers. By employing the checklist amid influencing marketing efforts, managers can avoid the mistakes identified in the case studies.

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1. The promise and perils of influencer marketing

While influencer marketing is not new—with firms engaging with influencers such as physicians and celebrities to sell products since the beginning of product marketing—influencer marketing in the

digital era is a growing business (McMullan et al., 2022). Influencer marketing represents a \$13.8 billion industry that is only increasing in size (Leung et al., 2022; Santora, 2022).

Many firms, including small businesses to international corporations across all industries, are interested in leveraging this marketing tactic to drive awareness and sales by accessing the large and authentic followings that social media influencers (SMIs) possess (Farrell et al., 2022). SMIs are

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individuals with large social media followings that are paid to promote firms on social media by generating online content (Lou & Yuan, 2019). As content creators of text, video, and imagery, influencers act like mini creative agencies (Leung et al., 2022).

SIMs provide valuable digital word-of-mouth (WOM) endorsements (Campbell & Farrell, 2020), which are often seen as more authentic than advertisements (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Leung et al., 2022; Schindler & Bickart, 2005). This authenticity comes from influencers' ability to layer sponsored endorsements into their personal stories and unique personal brands they have cultivated over time (Lee & Eastin, 2020; Leung et al., 2022). Influencer marketing can also increase the effectiveness of firms' advertising efforts, especially in certain product categories (Gräve et al., 2021; Steils et al., 2022), and support corporate reputation management (Kim et al., 2021).

However, not all influencer marketing results in positive outcomes. To date, while online influencer marketing has attracted increased attention from marketing researchers (Hughes et al., 2019; Leung et al., 2022; Valsesia et al., 2020), there has been little written in the literature about partnerships between firms and SIMs having unintended negative outcomes caused by poor partnership choice or management. More research is required to understand firm investments in influencer marketing and how to manage these evolving relationships (Haenlein et al., 2020; Voorveld, 2019). In addition, managers need more insight into issues with information asymmetry and objectives misalignment, or the potential negative outcomes of influencer marketing (Leung et al., 2022). As marketing managers allocate an increasing amount of their marketing budget for influencer marketing, they must not forget the principles of good supplier management, simply because working with SIMs is an emerging and evolving supplier relationship.

Drawing on agency theory, this article focuses on good practices of supplier management regarding SIMs and influencer marketing, as these behaviors are critical to ensuring partners are properly vetted, contracts are structured in alignment with goals, and reputations are managed (Hoeckel et al., 2019; Kannan & Tan, 2002; Nair et al., 2015). It also provides a checklist to help managers collaborate with the SIMs they work with. First, a case study is presented that illustrates the possible positive outcomes of influencer marketing, and then the aforementioned checklist for managers to use. Following the

overview of the checklist, a series of case studies that outline the potential downsides of poor supplier management is provided. Asking the questions included in the checklist can help managers avoid similar costly mistakes, both in budget and reputation.

2. The promise of the right influencer partnership

In 2015, Meghan Markle—at the time, an actress and influencer with lifestyle blog *The Tig*—partnered with Reitmans, a Canadian clothing retailer (Krashinsky Robertson, 2017). Markle worked with the retailer as an ambassador, appeared in its advertisements, and lent her name to several capsule collections designed to reach younger consumers (Greer, 2019). One of her campaigns for the brand was released at the same time her relationship with British royal, Prince Harry, went public. This link to the royal family was fortuitous timing for the Reitmans brand and created additional interest in its products (Krashinsky Robertson, 2017). Meghan Markle's social proof—or how people make decisions based on that of another (Cialdini, 1993)—is referred to as the Meghan Markle Effect. Social influence regards the ability of an influencer to engage in actions that alter others' thoughts and behaviors (Ouvrein et al., 2021; Raven, 2008). For example, when the Duchess of Sussex wears something in public, it will often quickly sell out around the globe. In 2019, her outfit selections led to an average 216% increase in online searches for similar pieces (O'Malley & Murray, 2019). When firms work with influencers, they coningle the firm's reputation and values with that of the influencer—often in a positive way (Kintu & Ben-Slimane, 2020; Tsimonis et al., 2020). This is the benefit of influencer marketing. However, just as firms can have their reputations rise with an associated influencer's growing popularity, the reverse can also occur, causing reputational damage or disappointing outcomes due to partnering with the wrong influencer (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Kintu & Ben-Slimane, 2020).

3. A checklist for managers

The internet, and especially social media, has changed how marketers use influence and social proof to sell products. Using social media influencers as a marketing tactic will likely continue to increase in popularity for the foreseeable future, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. While

positive results are probable, marketers must also be aware of the potential downsides of influencer marketing. With online influencer marketing still being referred to as the wild west because of its emerging nature and lack of definite practices, firms must understand the risks (McMullan et al., 2022) and counteract them by using a framework—in the form of a checklist—that can help guide decision-making.

Having a checklist is important, as firms hire influencers to promote their products, resulting in innumerable complex relationships within business interactions that can cause tensions (McMullan et al., 2022). Firms must also release control of their message to grant influencers a high level of freedom to create content that integrates the brand message in a way that they do not with other forms of marketing (Leung et al., 2022). This creates both opportunities and risks. Information asymmetry (i.e., an imbalance in the information available to both parties; Shapiro, 2005) exists in the influencer relationship because the practice still emerges as digital technologies and social media platforms change. To create the checklist, insights were drawn from agency theory to better understand potential areas for opportunistic behavior.

Not all influencers work to ensure a firm's success, and safeguards must be put into place to protect the organization from opportunistic influencers. Like any supplier relationship, when a firm hires an SMI to complete a task (an agent), how can it ensure the chosen partner always acts in the firm's best interest? In practice, this is very difficult to assess (Chohan, 2021; Shapiro, 2005). Ideally, both the firm and the agent's goals align (Tate et al., 2010), but they often do not (Chohan, 2021; Shapiro, 2005).

Although agency theory has been applied to various marketing relationships, the discipline has changed due to the advent of social media. As such, agency theory should be applied to new contexts—particularly those based online—such as influencer marketing (Chohan, 2021). Agency theory proposes that the agent may engage in opportunistic behavior if their goals conflict with the firm's (Bergen et al., 1992). *Opportunistic behavior* is when the firm or agency can withhold, misrepresent, or manipulate information, or fail to meet their commitments (Jap & Anderson, 2003). As information asymmetry can exasperate this type of behavior, managers should look for ways to

decrease it (Chohan et al., 2019; Dawson et al., 2016).

The proposed managers' checklist is a tool for decreasing information asymmetry and ensuring proper planning to anticipate and control opportunistic behavior. Illustrated by six cautionary tales of influencer marketing, the checklist supports managers as they engage in influencer marketing. The checklist encourages managers to consider value and brand alignment when selecting influencers, have structured compensation that incentivizes influencers to fulfill their obligations, allow the influencer to have creative freedom while clearly outlining key campaign elements and timelines in the contract, consider working with fewer trusted influencers over a longer time to more easily manage and conduct due diligence, understand the risks of disproportionately associating with any one influencer, prepare for negative influencer attention, and have a plan in place to react.

The checklist managers should refer to before hiring an influencer is presented in Figure 1. The questions from this checklist are segmented into partner planning and selection, performance and contract enforcement, and reputation management.

Partner planning and selection:

- Is there value and brand alignment between the firm's brand and the influencer's brand?
- Have I conducted due diligence on the influencer?
- Do the benefits of working with a new influencer outweigh the benefits of increasing work with a trusted influencer who provided good service in the past?

Performance and contract enforcement:

- Have I structured incentives in a way that ensures the influencer fulfills their contractual obligations?
- What steps will my firm take if an influencer does not fulfill their contractual obligations? What are the downsides of this action?
- Have I clearly outlined the key creative

Figure 1. The influencer marketing checklist

Partner planning and selection	Performance and contract management	Reputation management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there value and brand alignment between the firm's and influencer's brand? • Have I conducted my due diligence on the influencer? • Do the benefits of working with a new influencer outweigh those of increasing work with a trusted influencer who has provided good service in the past? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I structured the incentives in a way that ensures the influencer fulfills contractual obligations? • What steps will my firm take if the influencer does not fulfill their contractual obligations? What are the downsides to this action? • Have I clearly outlined the key creative deliverables in the influencer contract and project brief while allowing for creative freedom? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have a plan in place to react to negative influencer reviews? • Am I prepared to act quickly and decisively in the event of an influencer scandal? • Am I tying my brand too closely to one or a small group of influencers?

deliverables in the influencer contract and project brief?

Reputation management:

- Do I have a plan to react to negative influencer reviews?
- Am I prepared to act quickly and decisively in the event of an influencer scandal?
- Am I tying my brand too closely to one influencer or a small group of influencers?

Some managers may not believe a checklist is necessary if they conduct due diligence. However, the checklist can provide a helpful guide to ensure that the manager follows good supplier management practices—especially amid the excitement of working with a prominent influencer.

4. The checklist in practice

Some of the downsides of influencer marketing—such as influencers boosting follower counts with bots or not posting consistently—are well known to marketers. However, some practices are even more opportunistic (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Ellis, 2019). To help protect the firm and reinforce good supplier management principles, the checklist's practical use is illustrated via six case studies. The six case studies examined throughout Section 4 show influencers engaging in a range of opportunistic behaviors. While marketers can never be fully protected from

bad actors in the influencer space, the checklist can be a resource for managers to stimulate preparation for navigating an influencer as they might other suppliers. This is especially true given the very public nature of influencer partnerships.

4.1. Partner planning and selection

The checklist has three questions to help firms understand their influencer needs and select the right influencers. Unlike other marketing tactics, brands lose a degree of control when engaging with influencers, so they must weigh the benefits and risks (Martínez-López et al., 2020). Choosing influencers involves assessing their professionalism and commitment to the industry (Haenlein et al., 2020). In the agency-client context—like the influencer-firm relationship—trust and commitment support a better working relationship (Chohan, 2021).

Influencers are typically chosen based on their power type. French and Raven's (1959) *power theory* refers to how power is based on various power bases (e.g., expert and reverent). Someone with an expert power base derives their power from their expert knowledge or skills in a specific area, whereas reverent power refers to someone that others want to emulate because they embody aspirational characteristics (Kupfer et al., 2018). Firms often look for influencers that others either see as an expert (e.g., influencers with expertise in the areas of fitness or cooking) or influencers that are aspirational for their followers (e.g., lifestyle or celebrity

influencers; [Campbell & Farrell, 2020](#)). Individuals who follow influencers because of their reverent power generally want to emulate the appearance and lifestyle of the influencers they follow ([Farrell et al., 2022](#)). In addition, consumers were interested in different types of influencer power depending on their position in the marketing funnel ([Hughes et al., 2019](#)). Regardless of whether firms choose an influencer for their reverent or expert power, it is critical to determine if the firm's and influencer's brands and values are truly aligned. Firms must also conduct proper due diligence and ensure that the benefits of working with a new SMI outweigh that of working with a trusted SMI.

4.1.1. Do the firm's brand and values align with those of the influencer?

Choosing the right SMIs is one of the biggest challenges when engaging in influencer marketing ([Simpson, 2016](#); [Valesia et al., 2020](#)). There is often a tension between choosing influencers for fit versus reach ([McMullan et al., 2022](#)). However, ensuring alignment and congruency between an SMI and a firm's brand, as well as their values, is necessary ([Breves et al., 2019](#); [Leung et al., 2022](#)). This affects the strength of the influencer as a marketing tactic and prevents opportunistic behavior. As exemplified in the Meghan Markle example, strong alignment can have significant benefits and makes influencer marketing tactics appear more authentic. Selecting a popular influencer is unlikely to result in the desired marketing benefits if it is not a natural fit ([Torres et al., 2019](#)). Misalignment can lead to consumers feeling that the influencer marketing efforts are inauthentic ([Lee & Eastin, 2020](#)). Even if the messaging is positive, the difference between the SMI and brand message may cause confusion or distrust among consumers ([Berthon et al., 2008](#); [Leung et al., 2022](#)).

In many of the case studies examined below, the lack of alignment between the firms and the influencer acts as a core problem. Typically, influencers will also screen for partners with shared values, as a nonaligned sponsored post can harm the influencer's brand and connection to their followers ([Leung et al., 2022](#)). While not an example of purposefully opportunistic behavior, the case of Volvo partnering with a fashion and lifestyle influencer, who had not previously shown a high interest in cars, provides a lesson in the dangers of misalignment of brands. The campaign was largely criticized as disingenuous and resulted in the influencer apologizing to her followers,

as well as negative attention for Volvo ([Breves et al., 2019](#); [Salzman, 2016](#)).

4.1.2. Have I weighed the pros and cons of working with an influencer?

The influencer marketing space is increasingly experiencing bad actors who pretend to be larger influencers to get free products from brands. These influencers fraudulently reach out to brands with the premonition that they will post using the handle (i.e., the username of a social media account) of an influencer with a larger following. In reality, these bad actors are not associated with such an influencer and post under a different, much smaller handle than the one proposed to the brand. For example, one clothing brand believed it was sending products to a lifestyle influencer with a large following, but instead had its products posted by a different influencer with a smaller following ([Lorenz, 2019](#)).

Falling for influencer deception can be difficult to prevent. However, managers should conduct their due diligence to confirm an SMI's identity and credibility before moving into the contract negotiation stage of the relationship. Enacting new protocols may even be necessary to confirm SMIs' identities ([Lorenz, 2019](#)). Managers should also consider whether working with a new influencer would be more beneficial than working with previously vetted and trusted suppliers. When a firm limits the number of SMIs it must manage, it is easier to prevent opportunistic behavior. Managing numerous one-off or short-term influencer contracts can be difficult and time-consuming, so investing in long-term relationships with few, trusted influencers can be beneficial ([McMullan et al., 2022](#)). Engaging with a high volume of influencers prevents firms from always conducting due diligence, leaving them exposed ([Lorenz, 2019](#)).

4.2. Performance and contract management

Even with safeguards, such as contracts and nondisclosure agreements, opportunistic behavior is an ongoing problem in a client/agency relationship ([Chohan et al., 2019](#)). This is particularly true in the influencer marketing space—in which the relationship is still new with high information asymmetry—so it can be hard to predict the proper safeguards necessary in a contract. In addition, 67% of brands are concerned with influencer fraud ([Geyser, 2021](#)). The performance and contract management section of the checklist includes three questions designed to help managers

ensure expectations are met. Monitoring performance—while still allowing for creative freedom—affects supplier relationship strategies (Heide et al., 2007) and can help managers balance the tension between influencer marketing's risks and rewards (Leung et al., 2022). Such monitoring can reduce information asymmetry between parties and increase the firm's control (Eisenhardt, 1985; Heide et al., 2007). In this section, we examine two case studies that illustrate the importance of these questions.

4.2.1. Have I considered all repercussions of influencer incentives—especially if they do not fulfill contractual obligations?

The first case study describes how Snapchat could have applied the contract enforcement checklist questions as they negotiated a partnership with Luka Sabbat. After Snapchat hired influencer Luka Sabbat to promote the company's Spectacles sunglasses—which were designed to work with the social platform—Luka Sabbat did not deliver everything that was agreed to in the contract, on Instagram nor at Fashion Week. To fulfill the agreement, the influencer was required to post several Instagram stories and one in-feed post of himself wearing the glasses, as well as wear them at Fashion Week and deliver social media analytics (Kitterman, 2018). After failing to deliver several key components of the agreement, the public relations company that arranged the agreement sued Luka Sabbat for the contract fee plus damages (Constine, 2018).

Snapchat denied any involvement in the lawsuit, as a contract breach puts companies in the unenviable position of deciding whether legal action is worth potential negative publicity and reputational damage (Constine, 2018). Taking legal action can also call more attention to how a campaign that is meant to feel like authentic, word-of-mouth marketing, is rather highly commercial. Followers' trust in the SMI and their perceived independence is critical (Martínez-López et al., 2020). The more the brand seemingly controls the message, the more trust is lost between the audience, the brand, and the influencer (Woods, 2016). Indeed, consumers penalize SMI posts that are viewed as inauthentic or commercially motivated (Martínez-López et al., 2020). Snapchat received negative publicity when it was revealed that it had asked the influencer to post on a competitor's platform instead of its own, as well as online ridicule because even SMIs who were paid refused to wear the glasses (Constine, 2018). This is why partnering with SMIs that are a natural fit and have a symbiotic relationship is so

important to the success of an influencer marketing campaign, as stated in the partner planning and selection section (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Martínez-López et al., 2020).

Amid negotiations with SMIs, it may be better to have milestone payments (i.e., when the payment is released after certain milestones are met or all negotiated deliverables are received) to prevent unwinnable situations (Constine, 2018). As advocated by agency theory, firms must understand what mechanisms or incentives it can leverage to ensure the SMI is working in the firm's best interest (Chohan, 2021; Krafft, 1999). Having systems to control behavior can ensure a good partnership among parties with differing objectives (Ouchi, 1979). If an SMI does not fulfill the agreement, the hiring organization must seriously consider the potential reputational damage before seeking legal action.

4.2.2. Have I clearly outlined the key creative deliverables in the influencer contract and project brief?

Within influencer marketing, there is often a tension between providing SMIs with the creative freedom to make content that feels authentic and appeals to their followers and ensuring contract specificity by providing clear and enforceable expectations for influencers (McMullan et al., 2022). Due to the high creative control firms often provide SMIs, quality can be inconsistent (Leung et al., 2022). Even while allowing SMIs creative freedom, briefings in which expectations are outlined are still necessary (Haenlein et al., 2020). It is also important for contracts to clearly outline key deliverables and timetables without being overly prescriptive (McMullan et al., 2022).

One example in which such a relationship went awry regarded Bethany Mota, a young vlogger with over 10 million YouTube subscribers. In her case, Mota was sued by a media company that pairs SMIs with brands after the company said that she did not include critical components that were agreed upon in her posts—including footage from Kauai, Hawaii, where she had been flown to film the content (Cullins, 2017). As part of the agreement, Mota was tasked with promoting a skincare brand while getting ready for her day in Kauai. The media company also accused the vlogger of only providing the content for review two days before the launch. Furthermore, the company claimed that the content did not contain the key creative elements that had been agreed to (Jenkins, 2021), yet Mota's lawyers accused the media company of trying to avoid payment to their client (Cullins, 2017).

Often, when SMIs report having a bad experience partnering with a firm, it is because of poor communication (Caro, 2013). If there are important elements that the firm believes must be captured in the content (e.g., clear focus on the product or a clear image of the influencer's face), these stipulations should be explained and listed in the contract and project brief (Haenlein et al., 2020). For larger, more expensive campaigns, firms can also ask SMIs for approval of a concept or an example of the type of posts they are going to create before the SMI creates them, so there are no surprises. As such, content approval prior to posting is a commonly accepted contract enforcement practice (Haenlein et al., 2020; Leung et al., 2022).

4.3. Reputation management

Many firms add influencer marketing to their marketing tactics without appreciating the potential risks, including reputationally (Leung et al., 2022). Related to firms conducting due diligence before working with an SMI is the risk of reputational damage posed by closely associating a firm with one or a small group of SMIs. This is especially true for firms with lower consumer awareness, in which the association with the SMI is a defining attribute of the firm in consumers' minds (Till & Shimp, 1998). To ensure a firm is prepared for potential reputational damage, managers must have a plan in place that allows them to act quickly and decisively in the event of a scandal and assess whether their connection to the SMI(s) is too close.

4.3.1. Am I prepared for a potential scandal caused by influencer relationships?

As seen by Meghan Markle's partnership with Reitmans, a close association can have positive impacts on a firm's reputation—but the reverse is also true. The stronger the association between an endorser and a firm, the more negative perception of the firm amid negative SMI publicity (Kintu & Ben-Slimane, 2020; Till & Shimp, 1998).

For example, the beauty brand Morphe was known for its close collaborations in the form of product partnerships and affiliate code programs with high-profile YouTube stars (Bergman, 2021; Strugatz, 2022). However, in 2018, some of the most prominent SMIs working closely with Morphe were involved in various public scandals involving racist comments and sexually explicit online communications, which damaged the company's

reputation (Strugatz, 2022). As a result, some consumers and other influencers accused the company of not speaking out regarding the scandals (Bergman, 2021). The company eventually had to distance itself from its highest-profile influencers and, in 2020, went through a reinvention and became Forma Brands (Strugatz, 2022).

While conducting proper due diligence can help protect a brand, it cannot predict every potential future event—firms have no control over an SMI's future behavior (Till & Shimp, 1998). What brand could have predicted the U.S. college admissions scandal, in which several high-profile celebrities were caught improperly bribing admissions workers to secure their children's positions in prestigious universities? For example, Olivia Jade, a lifestyle SMI and university student whose mother was implicated in the scandal, lost several brand partnerships as a result (Kintu & Ben-Slimane, 2020). The risk to brands is the spill-over reputational damage, in which consumers or other stakeholders reevaluate their purchase decisions or relationships with a firm based on the negative association of a scandal, even if the firm was not directly involved (Fong & Wyer, 2012; Jourdan et al., 2019). Following the news of the admissions scandal, various firms reacted to their partnership with Olivia Jade in different ways. HP quickly released a statement and distanced itself from the SMI, whereas other brands did not respond publicly. In their analysis of how brands responded to their partnerships with Olivia Jade after the admissions debacle, Kintu and Ben-Slimane (2020) found that to avoid negative criticism from the media and the public, firms must be quick and decisive in their public statements and actions following an SMI scandal. As discussed in the section on partner planning and selection, it can be hard to conduct due diligence when a firm engages with SMIs. However, there is also a risk of tying a firm's reputation too closely with one or a small group of SMIs if the SMI suffers reputational damage.

4.3.2. Do I have a plan in place to react to negative influencer reviews?

It is critical for marketing managers to have a plan in place on how to respond if an SMI speaks negatively about their brand. In 2018, Lashify, a novel purveyor of cosmetic false eyelashes, reached out to an SMI and make-up artist with almost 5 million followers to offer them free products (Martineau, 2018). The SMI did not accept the product but purchased some several weeks later. This should have raised a red flag for the company that the SMI likely wanted more freedom of expression in their

review or had an exclusivity agreement with a competitor. Instead, the company noticed the order and included additional free products and a handwritten note with their package. The SMI then posted a negative review of the product and referenced multiple affiliate codes (i.e., codes that followers could use to purchase discounted competitor products). SMIs often receive a commission from affiliate codes, and some firms pay influencers to post negative reviews of competitors' products. There are rules requiring SMIs to disclose if they are being paid to promote a product. However, it can be hard to tell if a negative post has been paid for (Wischover, 2018), and studies have shown that negative reviews online receive more attention than positive ones (Pee, 2016; Sen & Lerman, 2007). In response to the negative review that included affiliate codes to competing products, Lashify engaged in a public online fight with the SMI, resulting in more negative publicity that further damaged its brand and reputation (Martineau, 2018). Sometimes, not engaging is the better strategy—especially since it can be hard to publicly compete with a prominent SMI that has a large audience. The firm should have immediately done the due diligence referenced in the partner planning and selection portion of the checklist in Section 3 before approaching the SMI. The firm should have checked for value and brand alignment and ensured that the SMI was not already working with competitors—especially considering they refused the free product and purchased it instead. It is also clear that Lashify likely did not have a reputation management plan to deal with negative online reviews, and instead took actions that exacerbated the problem.

5. The future of supplier management in the SMI context

Influencer marketing affords firms tremendous opportunities to provide audiences of SMIs with interesting and authentic content that can drive awareness and ROI. When engaging in influencer marketing, all firms hope for the same success that Reitmans found when it hired Meghan Markle to promote its brand. However, managers should not be so blinded by the promises of influencer marketing that they forget potential downsides or good supplier management. Instead, we should draw on the same lessons managers learn while managing other suppliers and apply them to this emerging space. A series of case studies articulated how the checklist can work in practice to avoid similar scenarios via thoughtful, informed

partnership planning and selection, contract enforcement, and reputation management.

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