

# A new dawn for influencer marketing in SA is upon us

 By [Zubeida Goolam](#)

20 May 2020

At the beginning of the national lockdown, a tweet by author, Haji Mohamed Dawjee, sparked widespread debate around the relevance of influencer marketing. In the tweet, she says that "this pandemic has made so very clear the absolute irrelevance of celebrities and influencers and that "now is the perfect opportunity to stop being influenced, and start being inspired".

“ *This pandemic has made so very clear the absolute irrelevance of celebrities and influencers.— Haji Mohamed Dawjee (@Sage\_Of\_Absurd) [April 1, 2020](#)* ”

## A new dawn for influencers: what now?

As the impact of the coronavirus outbreak continues to be felt across the South African economy, budgets have been cut, events have been cancelled and pre-lockdown campaigns have taken a backseat in the advertising industry. This has forced influencers to not only shift their focus to alternative revenue streams but to also create content that is helpful, engaging, and sensitive to current times, rather than creating for content's sake.

As more consumers spend time in isolation, the influencer marketing business model is well-suited to a time in which DIY ad content filmed at home remains viable — YouTube has proven this. Vodacom's recent 'Stand Together' TV commercial was produced, directed, shot, and edited entirely from the homes of the cast and crew. This shows the endless possibilities that exist for marketers in adopting technologically-led models to their campaign strategies.

Creators need to carefully consider how consumer behaviour is shifting, how their audience needs' have changed, and how to leverage this new very captive audience. From live Instagram concerts and entertaining Tik Tok challenges to sharing food recipes and home workouts; brands and creators are doing their best to adapt to the changing times and keep their audiences engaged.



Photo by Daria Shevtsova from [Pexels](#).

## Level 4 means it's time to level up on influencer marketing

Now that we are in the midst of the South African national lockdown, spikes in e-commerce sales are expected. Affiliate marketing is a great opportunity for brands to partner with influencers to encourage online sales. In America, click-to-cart has become very popular for online retailers such as Walmart, Target and Amazon.

This technology directly adds an item to the consumer's cart, bypassing the need to visit separate product pages to find items and then adding them to the cart. According to a survey conducted by the marketing firm, Influence Central, as social media usage continues to rise, many influencers have reported an increase in engagement on their organic social media posts, particularly stories, live streams and TikToks.



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## Live content is a hit and many influencers are cashing in

Live videos have gained popularity since the start of the lockdown and creators, marketers, and tech platforms are finding new ways to make money from live-streaming. Influencer-innovation manager at the influencer platform Mavrck, Ellie Jenkins says that people are more likely to spend 30, 60, or 90 minutes on an influencer or branded live-stream versus only seconds on a static image. This extended engagement is a great opportunity for brands to look into investing in digital activations and digital experiences.

Channel O and Hunters Ciders 'Lockdown House Party' is one such example of a digital activation that has gained significant engagement and talkability, bringing viewers a live show every Friday and Saturday on DStv channel 320 that features the best local DJs across a wide range of genres. The show trended at number one on Twitter when it premiered and has continued to do so every week.

Not only does the #LockdownHouseParty bring a 6-hour premium dose of entertainment to a highly engaged South African audience that loves 'groove', but has also given DJs an opportunity to still earn an income during these times of social distancing and staying home. In addition, it has proven to be an incredible platform for new DJs to be introduced to a national audience. Up-and-coming female DJ, DBN Gogo, tweeted that post-lockdown bookings were flooding her inbox following her set on #LockdownHouseParty.

In the international arena, TikTok partnered with six of the UK's most loved TikTok stars to move into their first-ever 'Hype House' in London. The purpose of this campaign was to cross-pollinate TikTok audiences and create engaging content where the stars documented the various cool activities that they were up to during their stay together. Although the squad moved in on Monday, 23 March — when global lockdown measures were being announced — they quickly pivoted their content by partnering with a project developed by Public Health England called 'Rise Above' to share activities that can help lift their audience's spirits during these times of uncertainty.



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### Brands that can keep buying advertising should continue to do so

Kantar and Facebook's recent studies on the current usage of social media prove that while consumers are spending more time on social media, brands that have continued with digital marketing have seen increased engagement on their sponsored posts, particularly on Instagram.

Marketers are challenged to adapt and shift their strategies to deliver digital-first content and products. While many brands are still learning to adopt a more digitised way of working within their internal structures, well thought through tech-driven collaborations, are a new dawn for influencer marketing.

### ABOUT ZUBEIDA GOOLAM

With a rich history and culture, Zubeida had an impressive repertoire, spanning over many years at industry giants, before starting and then dominating with her own company Valiant. Valiant incorporates multiple levels of marketing including but not limited to consulting, social media, storytelling and full content creation. With years of experience and a passion for creating, Zubeida now heads up the storytelling team along with co-founder Wayne Flemming, creating online campaigns that both inspire and drive critical engagement.

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