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# INFLUENCER MARKETING STRATEGY IN SHARIA MARKETING: A REVIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ETHICS AND SHARIA VALUES

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Abstract: A common form of digital marketing today involves promoting products through influencer marketing strategies, carried out by individuals known as influencers. However, the application of influencer marketing often fails to align with Islamic ethical values, as seen in the lack of transparency or honesty, promotion of non-halal products, inadequate product descriptions, exaggerated claims, and the inappropriate appearance or attire of some influencers. These issues can lead to legal disputes and leave consumers feeling harmed. Therefore, clear guidance on the ethical conduct and behavior of influencers is essential. This study applies the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory and uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The data is composed of written words drawn from in-depth phenomena within the relevant context. Secondary data sources include books, academic journals, websites, and online resources. The findings reveal that influencer marketing is effective in building trust and enhancing marketing outcomes. Its effectiveness increases when aligned with sharia principles, such as honesty, transparency, and the promotion of halal and beneficial products. Consumer responses are heavily influenced by the ethics and values demonstrated by the influencer. Hence, in sharia-based marketing, influencers serve not only as promotional agents but also as representatives of Islamic values, contributing to transactions that yield not just economic benefits but also positive social and spiritual impacts.

**Keywords**: Influencer, Influencer Marketing, Islamics Business Ethic, Sharia Marketing

## INTRODUCTION

In today's era, human life is inseparable from technology. Rapid advancements in technology have increasingly facilitated human activities such as communication, information-seeking, learning, working, and beyond. Technology also plays a vital role in almost every aspect of life, including commerce and marketing (Komariyeh & Bari, 2024)

According to the *We Are Social* report (2025), the number of internet users in Indonesia has reached more than 220 million people, accounting for approximately 80% of the total population. This figure represents a significant increase compared to previous years, with 190 million active social media users. On average, Indonesians spend 8 hours and 30 minutes per day online, with 96% accessing the internet via mobile phones. Indonesia is among the countries with the largest number of social media users worldwide. In 2025, more than 190 million Indonesians actively used social media, with the most popular platforms being Instagram (150 million users), TikTok (140 million users), Facebook (120 million users), and Twitter/X (40 million users) (Krisno, 2025).

Currently, digital technology dominates business practices, where entrepreneurs and brands increasingly rely on digital platforms and social media, such as e-commerce, Instagram, and TikTok, to market their products. This shift drives companies to adapt their communication strategies to digital formats. Consequently, Indonesia's

highly active social media population has turned these platforms into effective instruments for enhancing online sales (Komariyeh & Bari, 2024).

Digital marketing serves as a borderless medium, enabling producers and sellers to unleash unlimited creativity in promoting their products. One of the prominent digital marketing strategies is the use of influencer marketing, whereby influential social media figures collaborate with brands to endorse products. The rise of social media has inevitably given birth to influencers, individuals with significant online followings who can shape consumer perceptions and influence purchasing decisions.

Influencer marketing has become common practice in business because it enables companies to penetrate markets more effectively, mobilizing consumers toward purchasing decisions. It has thus emerged as an effective promotional strategy (Komariyeh & Bari, 2024).

The large follower base of influencers is often monetized through promotional services known as endorsements. Endorsements function as a brand communication medium, with influencers acting as spokespersons to promote and support brands using their popularity. Endorsement activities represent an effort by entrepreneurs to boost sales by leveraging influencers' services. When influencers successfully build strong connections with consumers, influencer marketing strategies can significantly enhance brand image. However, entrepreneurs must also be prepared to allocate substantial budgets for such collaborations (Ayuningtyas, 2022).

Nevertheless, the implementation of influencer marketing has not always been conducted properly and has, at times, resulted in legal disputes. For instance, an influencer or celebrity might promote a cosmetic product that later turns out to contain harmful substances such as mercury. As a result, their followers may suffer harm, highlighting the dangers of endorsing products without proper knowledge of their details. Such incidents not only damage consumer trust but also tarnish the reputation of both the influencer and the associated brand. These disputes often escalate into legal proceedings, given their potential classification as fraud (Ayuningtyas, 2022).

Furthermore, influencer marketing practices frequently adopt a hyperbolic approach, exaggerating product features to cultivate positive consumer perceptions. Several studies reveal discrepancies between online product images and their actual forms, with some businesses even using unauthorized visual assets belonging to third parties. In certain cases, promotional content features models in inappropriate attire, raising ethical concerns regarding content presentation (Hidayanti et al., 2024).

Other recurring issues include influencers' failure to disclose product shortcomings, as well as the promotion of products deemed *haram* under Islamic law. Many influencers endorse products without adequately verifying their details, thereby creating risks for consumers and stakeholders alike.

Online fraud cases linked to influencer promotions have also been reported. According to data from Indonesia's Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kemenkominfo), between 2017 and September 2024, there were 572,185 reported fraud

cases, of which 528,415 were related to online transactions and 43,770 involved fictitious investments. By March 31, 2025, reports had risen to 79,969 cases, with financial losses reaching IDR 1 trillion. The scams included illegal social gathering schemes (*arisan bodong*), fraudulent investment promotions by financial influencers, illegal online gambling, unlicensed applications, and deceptive schemes such as "like-for-pay" and false job offers. These fraudulent activities have caused massive financial losses, often amounting to billions of rupiah (Kemenkominfo, 2025).

Such marketing practices that lead to harm fall under *gharar* (uncertainty), *tadlis* (fraud), and *ba'i najasy* (price manipulation), all of which are prohibited in sharia-compliant marketing. Within Islamic economic discourse, particularly under the framework of Islamic business ethics, clear boundaries exist between permissible and impermissible practices. Influencer marketing and endorsements, therefore, must align with factual accuracy and honesty. Sharia marketing strictly requires that commercial transactions be free from elements of gharar, tadlis, and ba'i najasy (Ayuningtyas, 2022).

From the perspective of Islamic economics, this phenomenon is aligned with the Word of Allah in *Surah An-Nisa* [4]:29:

"O you who believe! Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly, but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves. Indeed, Allah is ever Merciful to you." (Q.S. An-Nisa: 29) (Agama, 2022).

According to the interpretations of classical and contemporary mufassirūn regarding Q.S. An-Nisa:29, this verse provides a fundamental foundation for shaping economic systems and business

ethics in Islam. It emphasizes that all forms of transactions, particularly trade, must be conducted fairly, transparently, and in accordance with sharia principles. At least four essential points can be derived from this verse: the concept of wealth  $(al-m\bar{a}l)$ , the prohibition of unlawful means  $(b\bar{a}til)$ , the necessity of mutual consent  $(tar\bar{a}d\bar{t})$  between contracting parties, and the prohibition of self-destruction by pursuing illicit wealth (Wahib et al., 2024).

The Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) Fatwa No. 24 of 2017 on Guidelines for Interaction in Social Media further reinforces these principles by prohibiting the dissemination of hoaxes and false information. It explicitly forbids producing or spreading content intended to legitimize falsehoods, delegitimize truths, exaggerate information, manipulate public opinion to project false success, or conceal the truth in order to deceive the public. Such practices are deemed *harām* due to the inherent element of falsehood, which may cause harm to others.

Islam offers solutions to contemporary challenges in digital marketing through the principles of  $mu'\bar{a}malah$ , which emphasize honesty, transparency, and fairness in every transaction. Manipulative practices such as fraud  $(tadl\bar{\iota}s)$ , fake testimonials  $(bai' naj\bar{a}sh)$ , and misleading advertisements that harm consumers are strictly prohibited. Any promotional activity must reflect factual accuracy and avoid elements of gharar (uncertainty) or maysir (speculation). Moreover, Islam requires  $tar\bar{a}d\bar{\iota}$  (mutual consent) from both parties and places moral responsibility upon influencers to refrain from disseminating misleading information for personal gain. By applying these values, Islam not only prevents harm in online commerce but also fosters a

Influencer Marketing Strategy in Sharia Marketing: A Review from the Perspective ... digital business ecosystem that is ethical, safe, and blessed (Putri,

2024).

Based on the foregoing discussion, the research identifies several key questions:

- 1. How is influencer marketing practiced in digital marketing, and what ethical challenges emerge?
- 2. How can sharia principles be integrated into influencer marketing strategies to ensure compliance with Islamic values?
- 3. What concrete strategies can be applied by brands, influencers, and regulators to establish influencer marketing practices grounded in Islamic values in the digital era?

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explain how influencer marketing strategies can address digital challenges while being integrated into concrete practices based on Islamic values. This research is expected to provide deeper insights into the subject. Therefore, this article will elaborate on and analyze influencer marketing strategies in the context of sharia marketing within the era of digitalization.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach, wherein the data consist of written texts derived from in-depth phenomena within their natural contexts. The purpose of qualitative research is to interpret ongoing phenomena by identifying and narratively explaining the actions taken and how those actions affect human life.

Descriptive qualitative research aims to provide a detailed and comprehensive account of a phenomenon or situation based on systematically collected data. The analysis applied in this study is descriptive qualitative analysis based on library research, in which the primary sources are literature (books, journals, reports) analyzed systematically. This analysis emphasizes the interpretation of concepts and the meaning of phenomena related to influencer marketing within the framework of ethics and sharia values. Accordingly, this research constitutes a conceptual and descriptive analysis that integrates theories, sharia principles, and secondary data from journals, reports, and literature (Rosmita et al., 2024).

The data used in this study are **secondary data**, which are not collected directly by the researchers but obtained from existing sources such as government reports, national surveys, scholarly journals, and academic books (Rosmita et al., 2024). Secondary data are employed because of their strong relevance to the phenomenon under investigation and their comparative strength, enabling the researcher to contrast and integrate different findings, theories, and perspectives to strengthen the overall analysis.

The analytical procedure follows several stages: Identifying research problems by observing relevant phenomena and formulating them into research questions, collecting secondary data from reliable sources, linking theoretical frameworks with the observed phenomena, analyzing the data by identifying and examining research gaps, deriving findings and insights, and drawing implications and formulating conclusions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

## Strategy and Role of Influencer Marketing in Sharia Marketing

Philip Kotler and Gary Amstrong define marketing as a social and managerial process in which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through the creation and exchange of products and value (Evasari, 2020).

In Islamic economics, sharia marketing is a form of *muamalah* practice that fulfills the principles already regulated in Islam regarding business matters. The development of halal product marketing strategies using a sharia economic approach provides the most appropriate solution in line with Islamic religious values and business ethics as guided by religion. According to Rachma, doing business in Islamic economics involves fundamental principles such as the prohibition of interest (*riba*), gambling (*maysir*), and injustice in transactions. These principles must be upheld in business practices, including sharia-based marketing of products.

One important aspect in sharia marketing is halal raw materials. Products being sold, such as food, beverages, medicine, cosmetics, and others, must not contain prohibited elements, both in terms of ingredients and production processes. Halal products must also not be processed using genetic engineering or irradiation prohibited in Islam. Furthermore, halal labeling must be included, with product compositions that offer greater benefit (Safitri et al., 2024)

Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy that utilizes social media platforms, effectively enhancing a brand's image and visibility of a product. It can also be considered a new approach in marketing to build strong communication between the public and the targeted market, where consumers receive information as accurately as possible to achieve sales objectives. Influencer marketing thus serves as a strategy to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, both for companies producing goods or services, and as a foundation for more comprehensive corporate planning.

Within marketing elements, influencer marketing is capable of creating *Word of Mouth* (WOM), a promotional strategy in which a product is recommended to others. The advancement of social media has further supported the creation of engaging and innovative content that attracts many followers. The popularity of influencer marketing is not new—many celebrities, athletes, and public figures in their respective fields act as influencers to promote products (Mulyono, 2022).

Another marketing communication strategy is endorsement, which uses public figures such as celebrities, digital influencers, politicians, or bloggers to attract consumer attention toward products marketed through digital platforms. The most common form is *celebrity endorsement*, a collaboration between a company and a famous figure, formalized in a contract. In this arrangement, celebrities are compensated for using and promoting specific products and are obliged not to cooperate with competing brands during the contractual period (Hidayanti et al., 2024).

Endorsement strategies have now become a common choice in marketing activities undertaken by various businesses, including online ventures—whether well-established or just starting out. Business actors maximize social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and others as the main medium for introducing products to the public.

Among these, Instagram and TikTok are the most frequently used platforms by influencers.

When choosing an influencer, attention must be given to segmentation, targeting, and positioning in line with the intended consumer group. These factors influence social media followers and platform engagement. An influencer can create communities that shape product perceptions. Entrepreneurs must assess expertise, background, and follower characteristics to ensure compatibility with the promoted product. Not all influencers with large follower counts have significant influence; many with fewer followers are more effective at generating sales impact due to stronger engagement (Mulyono, 2022).

The effectiveness of influencer promotion can be measured through the TEARS Model, consisting of:

- Trustworthiness The influencer is trusted and gains credibility through professionalism and achievements.
- 2. Expertise The influencer demonstrates knowledge and skills relevant to the recommended product, recognized by followers.
- 3. Attractiveness The influencer possesses not only physical appeal but also intellectual capacity and a positive lifestyle.
- 4. Respect The influencer gains respect due to quality and achievements, positively affecting brand perception.
- 5. Similarity The influencer shares demographic or lifestyle similarities with their audience, such as age, gender, social class, or ethnicity, which builds relatability (Safitri et al., 2024).

The supporting theory for influencer marketing strategy is the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory, initially developed by John B. Watson in behavioral psychology and later expanded by

Mehrabian and Russell (1974) in consumer behavior. This theory states that an individual's response to a stimulus is not direct, but mediated by internal processes such as perception, attitude, and personal values. In digital marketing—particularly halal product promotion—stimuli may take the form of influencer content. Consumers interpret such content according to their principles and needs. If aligned with expectations and beliefs, a positive response follows, including purchase decisions. This framework underpins analysis of how influencer-driven communication affects consumer behavior (Lestari & Rohman, 2024).

## Explanation of the S-O-R Theory:

- Stimulus (S) External input from the environment, such as advertisements, product reviews, promotions, or social media content.
- 2. Organism (O) The individual's internal processes (psychological or emotional) when receiving stimuli, including perception, emotions, or attitudes.
- 3. Response (R) The reaction or behavior resulting from internal processes, such as interest, purchase decisions, or rejection.

Sharia ethics function as a normative "filter" within every stage of the S-O-R framework: from how promotional content (stimulus) is created, to how it is perceived by consumers (organism), and finally to consumer decisions (response). This ethical filter ensures influencer marketing is not merely directed at achieving commercial effectiveness, such as sales or brand awareness, but also remains morally valid—anchored in honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness—and spiritually valid, by ensuring alignment with Islamic values such as

product halalness, benefit, and blessing in transactions. Thus, sharia ethics act not as an additional layer, but as an integrative foundation that makes influencer marketing both commercially effective and socially-spiritually valuable.

Influencer marketing offers advantages for businesses by maximizing social media use, leveraging viral content created by influencers. When users show affinity for influencers, they are more likely to like, comment, and share posts, which extends brand visibility, reaches wider audiences, and strengthens brand identity. Another advantage lies in the relationship between influencers and their audiences, which increases receptivity to promotional goals. Influencers also build close relationships with their audience, fostering interactive social media environments (Wirapraja et al., 2023).

However, challenges also exist in influencer marketing, particularly regarding the commercialization behaviors and communication quality of influencers. A brand must carefully select the right influencer to ensure compatibility, as the influencer's credibility significantly affects consumer perceptions of the brand. From an Islamic perspective, it is essential that what is promoted aligns with actual product facts. Influencers must possess sufficient product knowledge, adhere to ethical standards, and avoid deceptive practices, thereby maintaining positive brand and influencer reputation.

Consumer purchase intentions through social media are influenced by various aspects, including content quality, influencer credibility, and product relevance to followers. Engaging, honest, and informative content attracts audiences more effectively. Consumers are usually drawn to products aligning with their lifestyles or preferences.

Trust in influencers also plays a crucial role: the more credible the influencer, the greater the likelihood of purchase consideration. Additionally, previous user experiences, particularly positive testimonials demonstrating tangible benefits of halal products, strengthen consumer buying intentions.

Product reviews shared by influencers significantly shape consumer purchase decisions. When reviews are objective and detailed, they help consumers understand product quality, benefits, and compliance with halal requirements. Personal experiences of influencers using halal products and sharing positive outcomes foster audience confidence. Influencer openness and honesty further strengthen consumer trust and purchase intention. Social media influencers often use features like stories, posts, and live streams to deliver reviews, allowing followers to observe real-time reactions and increasing purchase intent (Lestari & Rohman, 2024).

Social media influencers play a strategic role in shaping digital society's behavior and preferences due to their large, loyal followings. They act as primary agents in marketing, education, and public opinion formation through endorsements, reviews, and interactive activities such as giveaways. Additionally, influencers provide up-to-date information and practical guidance in fields like fashion, beauty, culinary, and lifestyle, while inspiring and motivating their audiences (Uyuni et al., 2024).

Influencers also contribute to raising social awareness through public campaigns and advocacy on important issues such as health, environment, and gender equality. Beyond shaping public opinion and policy, influencers play a crucial role in determining consumption patterns and lifestyle trends. In the creative industry, they drive trends, foster cross-field collaborations, and promote innovation in digital culture. Overall, influencers have a significant impact on the social, economic, and cultural aspects of modern digital society.

# Review of Sharia Marketing on the Ethics and Behavior of Influencer Marketing in the Era of Digitalization

Influencer marketing is a marketing activity described by experts or trusted figures in the marketing industry as a way to promote products either through advertisements or reviews of a product or service. A person who has influence in the marketing world and possesses above-average followers on social media is often called an influencer. An influencer can also be described as a content creator. Influencers have the ability to reach consumers on a large scale and drive marketing as a new communication medium, which is known as influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is closely related to social media as it is a technique in marketing activities where influencers with large followings or public recognition are able to influence their audiences.(Wirapraja et al., 2023)

Today, influencer marketing has become a persuasive medium for consumers. Based on 2021 data, investments made by institutions and organizations in applying influencer marketing techniques reached USD 13 million, and by 2028, it is projected to reach USD 84.89 million according to analysis by Influencer Hub (2022). Currently, nearly 60% of brands use influencer marketing techniques to build communication with consumers on social media. (Wirapraja et al., 2023)

A common form of influencer marketing activity is endorsement. Endorsement practices usually involve formal agreements such as contracts or other forms of transactions. Communication between businesses and influencers typically begins with private messages detailing the product, promotional concept, and technical instructions before the agreement is finalized. Once agreed upon, contracts are signed, and the business provides compensation as determined. Promotional content is then published by the influencer on their social media accounts as agreed.

Endorsements are considered an effective form of online advertising, especially through influencers (digital celebrities or public figures) across various social media platforms. Influencers are often associated with millennials and Gen Z consumers, particularly for lifestyle and consumptive products such as clothing, cosmetics, luxury goods, and more. Influencers usually focus on specific niches such as beauty influencers for cosmetics or food influencers for food promotions. (Safitri et al., 2024)

The five main types of influencers on social media are as follows:

- Celebrity Influencers Publicly recognized figures with large followings both on and off social media, often charging the highest rates for brand partnerships.
- 2. Mega Influencers Influencers with over one million followers who often achieve celebrity-like status.
- 3. Macro Influencers Influencers with 100,000–1 million followers, often not celebrities but successful in building

Influencer Marketing Strategy in Sharia Marketing: A Review from the Perspective ... influence with relatively lower rates than mega or celebrity influencers.

- 4. Micro Influencers Influencers with 10,000–100,000 followers, typically more niche and creative in their content.
- 5. Nano Influencers Individuals with fewer followers but offering the highest engagement rates due to closer personal accessibility to their audience. (Sholeha, 2024)

Trusted influencers usually guide and direct their followers in promoting products on social media. Three main factors every influencer must have are:

- 1. Reach The ability to deliver messages to target audiences.
- 2. Relevance The ability to build connections around specific topics.
- 3. Resonance The ability to embody traits that resonate with audiences. (Ahmad Murtaza Mz & M. Riyan Hidayat, 2023)

Behavior reflects whether influencers are seen as good or bad according to Islamic business ethics. Ethics, in general, refers to standards of right and wrong in human thought and actions, including their impact on individuals and society. In Islamic business ethics, several principles guide influencer activities: piety, empathy, fairness, keeping promises, honesty, trustworthiness, avoiding fraud, refraining from degrading others, and avoiding bribery.(Rafianti et al., 2021)

Some ethical behaviors influencers must observe to comply with Sharia include:

- Modesty in Dress Female influencers must avoid displaying aurah or engaging in tabarruj (excessive display of beauty) when promoting products.
- 2. Honesty and Transparency Influencers must avoid exaggeration or false claims about products. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "Whoever deceives is not from us." (HR. Muslim).
- 3. Avoiding Defamation of Competing Products Influencers should not demean competitors but only highlight their product's strengths.
- 4. Promoting Halal and Beneficial Products/Services Influencers must ensure products are halal, safe, and beneficial, avoiding gharar (uncertainty) and fraudulent services.
- 5. Not Endorsing Counterfeit Products Promoting fake products is considered *batil* (invalid) in Islam as it violates the rules of sale and purchase.(Ayuningtyas, 2022)

# **Influencer Marketing According to Islamic Law**

Influencer marketing, or endorsement, is a form of work that must have clear job descriptions, compensation, and conditions. Influencers must ensure that transactions are halal, avoiding promotions of haram products such as alcohol, prohibited foods, illegal drugs, or immoral products. Influencers are accountable for all products they promote since it impacts their followers.

According to the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Muslims must adhere to faith, piety, brotherhood, truth, and moral responsibility in both real life and online. Prohibited acts include gossip, slander, hate

Influencer Marketing Strategy in Sharia Marketing: A Review from the Perspective ... speech, lies, pornography, immorality, and spreading private or harmful content.(Suryaningtiyas, 2022)

Sharia-compliant marketing content builds consumer trust and loyalty by upholding justice, integrity, transparency, and sustainability. Emotional storytelling, inspiring messages, and appealing visuals can foster strong consumer-brand relationships.(Istiqomah, 2023)

Sharia ethics provide solutions for influencer marketing's main challenges:

- 1. Honesty (*Shidq*) & Transparency Preventing manipulative promotion.
- 2. Prohibition of Haram, Counterfeit, & Gharar Products Protecting consumers from harm.
- 3. Avoiding Tabarruj & Exploitation Ensuring promotions focus on product value, not inappropriate exposure.
- 4. Trustworthiness (*Amanah*) & Justice ('*Adl*) Balancing brand interests with consumer rights.

Thus, integrating influencer marketing with Sharia ethics not only builds brand trust and customer loyalty but also creates broader social and spiritual value. It benefits brands (halal reputation), influencers (credibility), and regulators (clear guidelines for Sharia-compliant influencer marketing).

## **CONCLUSION**

Influencer marketing is an effective digital-era strategy that builds trust and increases sales through influencers' social media influence. However, careful selection of influencers is crucial, considering target market alignment, credibility, and audience engagement. Within Sharia marketing, this strategy can expand reach and strengthen consumer relationships, provided it complies with Islamic principles: honesty, fairness, promoting only halal and beneficial products, and avoiding disparagement of competitors.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory explains that consumer responses are shaped by perceptions and emotions, making influencer credibility and integrity essential. In Sharia marketing, influencers must uphold moral responsibility and Islamic business ethics, ensuring content does not contradict Sharia. Done correctly, influencer marketing creates not only commercial benefits but also social and spiritual value.

Academic implications: This study enriches Sharia marketing literature by emphasizing credibility and value alignment in shaping consumer responses, expanding beyond conventional marketing theories.

Practical implications: Brands should carefully select influencers with integrity and alignment to Sharia values, while influencers must prioritize honesty and moral responsibility over mere sales or engagement metrics. Regulators (e.g., MUI and Kominfo) must establish clearer ethical guidelines to protect consumers and preserve moral values in digital spaces.

Ultimately, Sharia-based influencer marketing offers holistic benefits—commercial, social, and spiritual—strengthening trust and sustainable relationships between brands, influencers, and consumers.

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