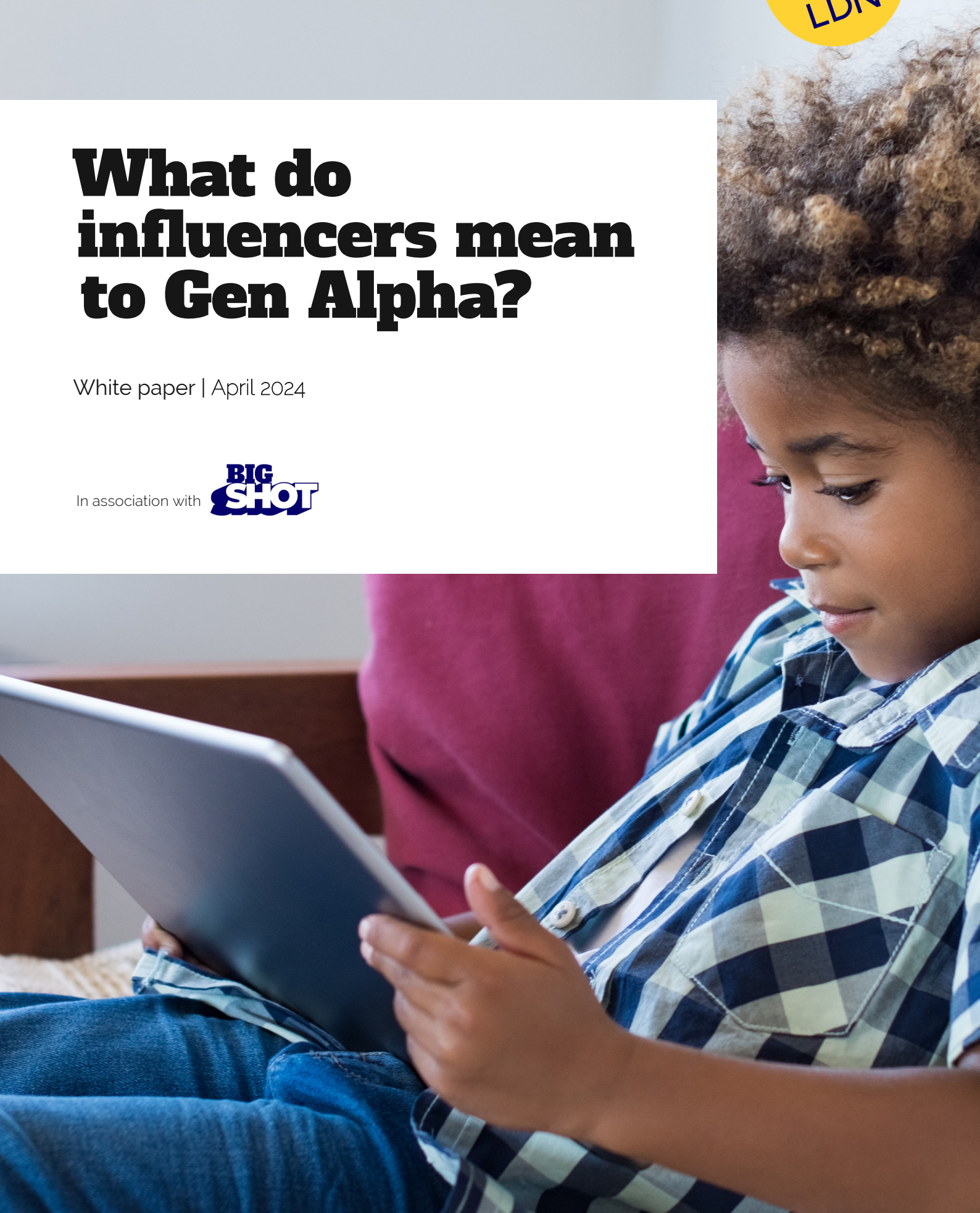




What do influencers mean to Gen Alpha?

White paper | April 2024

In association with 



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Emma Critchley-Lloyd and Holly Eddleston	

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Synopsis

Gen Alpha are the youngest amongst society represented by anyone born after 2010. Growing up in a completely digital environment with connected devices rarely out of reach, they only know a world where the answer to most questions is just a click away.

While today, the oldest Gen Alpha is only just the legal age to use social media (13), that doesn't prohibit younger children from accessing these channels. We spoke to the parents of BIG Shot, our community of young people born after 1997, to find out what sort of relationship Gen Alpha have with social media and to understand the role influencers play in their lives.

We wanted to understand:

To what extent can Gen Alpha be reached through influencer marketing and what's the future of influencer marketing as it grows up to become cemented in marketing plans for all businesses?

The parents we spoke to have children between the ages of 5 and 12 years old.



About the authors:



Emma Critchley-Lloyd
Founder

Emma Critchley-Lloyd founded award-winning agency BIG little London to give brands more bang for their buck in brand strategy, PR, social media and influencer marketing.

Prior to BIG little LDN, Emma spent several years in-house and most recently as the Head of PR for two global agencies. It was during her role within these agencies that she experienced the operational and financial inefficiencies that was making the services of these agencies unaffordable for so many businesses.

That's when she set out to demystify marketing and PR and make it accessible to the masses, through a lean, agile agency model where the senior expertise clients need is in hands reach, not arm's length - and doesn't cost the earth for the privilege.

Emma is also a long-standing member of the DMA B2B Council, an awards judge for The Drum and The Institute of Promotional Marketing, the 2023/24 Co-Head of Marketing and Comms for Bloom and an experienced panellist and keynote speaker - most recently at the Influencer Marketing Show 2023.

Contact emma@biglondon.com to find out more.

What do influencers mean to Gen Alpha?



Holly Eddleston
Head of Influencer Marketing

Holly has worked in the Influencer Marketing sector for over 12 years, before Instagram's conception - if you can imagine a world without it. She recalls the wild west days when Revlon was trading lipsticks for Zoella posts and #Ad didn't exist. In fact, the term "Influencer Marketing" didn't even exist.

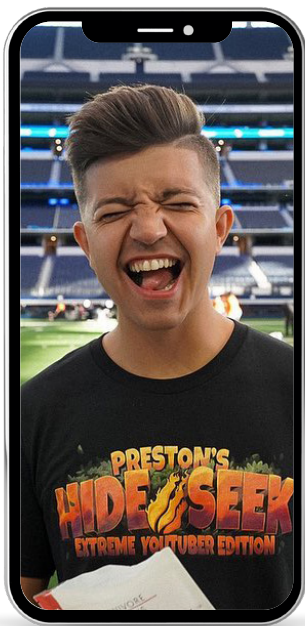
Holly started her career at Red Bull and since then has worked at a range of digital, advertising and influencer tech agencies. The role of influencer marketing has evolved massively within the last decade and become an integral part of the marketing mix across business in all industries.

Holly is a data nerd which means she loves going through campaign results, analysing the learnings and using them to improve future strategies. She's a keen advocate for effective reporting to show that influencer marketing is extremely important at delivering company objectives, from driving downloads, creating sales and changing brand perception. She loves how the results shape future campaigns just as much as she loves all the influencer sourcing, vetting, negotiating, contracting and management.

Contact holly@biglittlelondon.com to find out more.

1.

What is the potential of influencer marketing to Gen Alpha?



Preston Arsement
Millennial gamer

The potential of influencer marketing to Gen Alpha is huge and unlike any other generation before it. Even Gen Z. We spoke to the parents of the Gen Alphas in our BIG Shot community, ranging from the ages of 5-12, all of them consume content on social media in some form. The main channel - YouTube, particularly YouTube Shorts - a favourite of them all, but from the age of about eight, TikTok is also added to the mix, more so for those who have older siblings also in the Gen Alpha category - who were all still not of the legal age to use TikTok.

Most of the content Gen Alpha watch is presented by influencers of all different age groups. There is a real mix of influencers their own age, Gen Z and even millennials.

FGTeeV is a millennial YouTuber with almost 22 million followers and was mentioned a number of times as a favourite. Best known for playing games with his kids, he shares tips, tricks and 'secrets' for accessing different in-game features and level ups. The high energy, cleverly produced and scripted content is not much different to the mayhem that was on our screens in the 80s and 90s - Tiswas, Live and Kicking and SMTV Live - it's just seems that advances in technology has changed the type of content that's interesting to young people - less pies in faces and more avatar emotes - but still essentially adults being silly with kids.

There was definitely a strong gaming theme amongst everyone we asked - 83% of which were females. Preston Arsement, another millennial gamer, with a likeness to a children's TV presenter, is also a favourite for his Minecraft videos that reveal hidden features and help his followers understand the game better. His most watched video, "5 WAYS TO PRANK YOUR LITTLE BROTHER'S MINECRAFT HOUSE!" (67 million views), still shows off the features of the game, but is more about the relatable ways you can wind your siblings up - and in his case - his younger Gen Alpha sibling.

It does seem that when content includes millennial influencers, the draw for Gen Alpha is having other Gen Alpha children in the video.

What do influencers mean to Gen Alpha?

Naturally, with influencers creating engaging content that reveals more in-game features, it influences requests to make in-game purchases and where we might have asked our parents for a Lucky Bag, Top Trumps or pack of Spice Girls photos, Gen Alpha are asking for trainers for their avatars, Toca Boca festive packages and Minecraft Disney Magic Kingdoms. However, it's not always a face-to-camera that influences purchase - screen recordings of gaming experiences are uploaded to YouTube with no presenter or voice over and these are also influencing requests to parents to make in-game purchases.

But it's not all gaming, Kidz Bop is a YouTube channel made for Gen Alpha by Gen Alpha. It teaches dance routines, song lyrics and recreates music videos which of course influencers purchase of their merchandise. Definitely more polished than what you would see on TikTok, Kidz Bop feels like YouTube's answer to Hannah Montana.



KIDZ BOP
techbehindit.com

In summary, it seems Gen Alpha are being influenced from a younger age and even from the age of five, are making conscious choices about what they want to watch and the brands they want to be associated with. This isn't a whole lot different to what we've seen in previous generations, but the difference is this time, it's not TV ads and actors, it's YouTube, TikTok and real-life people which in turn, makes it easier and cheaper for brands to access and influence children.

2.

Is Gen Alpha's authenticity radar more acute and what extent can they be reached through influencer marketing?

The fundamentals are the same for Gen Alpha as any other generation before them. Relevance to their world, their interests and using people in the videos that look like them. It's no different to how anyone is influenced to do anything.

From our research, it appears that spammy looking content is still spammy looking content when trying to target Gen Alpha and from the age of nine, their authenticity radar is much more acute than those younger than them.



Rhea
Age 10
London

"I don't really get content in my feed that I don't like anymore because I just scroll through it, but sometimes I see Roblox people start videos by saying this is how you get free Headless or Korblox - which are the most expensive things on the platform. I obviously know it's not true so I just scroll past. Also, you have people that tell you how to get free slime or how to make slime using just glue and water, which I know isn't true because I've tried it and you need activator."

Speaking to Rhea it's clear she feels certain about how to filter out content that isn't relevant or authentic to her. Already at the age of ten, she is able to confidently speak about her use of social media, using the same terminology as a marketing professional with years of experience would, but starkly contrasted with the innocence of knowing when someone is trying to fob her off on how to make slime.

3.

What's the future of influencer marketing as it grows up to become mainstream and cemented in the marketing plans of all businesses, no matter the sector?

63%

**HIGHER
CONVERSION
RATE THAN PPC**

As influencer marketing grows in understanding and becomes cemented in marketing plans for all businesses, it'll be people like Rhea managing the campaigns. Those who have grown up with social media and influencers native to their childhood.

Influencer marketing is going to become completely integrated into the marketing mix, just like paid media or using social media as part of a campaign and it's not necessarily going to be a bolt on. It'll naturally be part of that marketing mix because it has been proven time and time again that when done well, it can generate higher ROI's than any other medium. BIG little LDN ran an influencer campaign for ALA Insurance and the results showed that our campaign generated a 63% higher click to sale conversion rate than their PPC campaign..

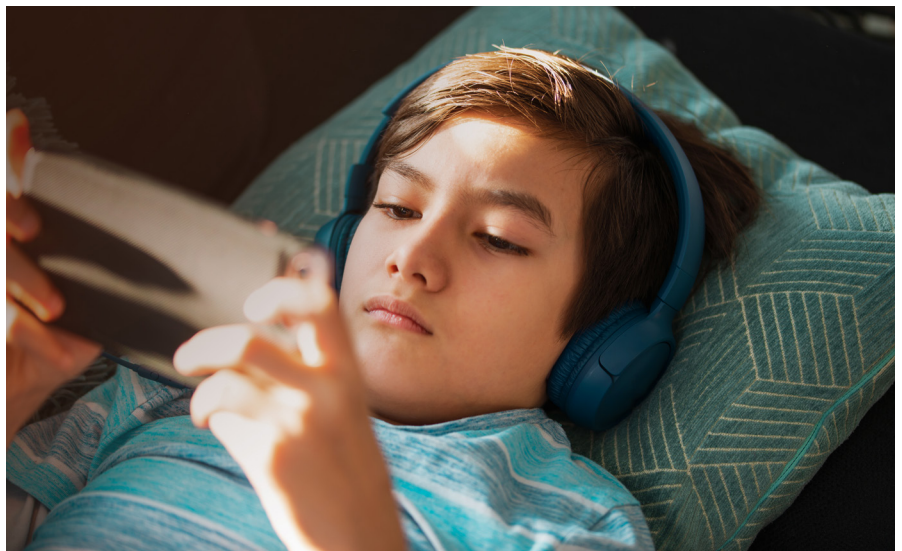
It will also get even smarter, for example, you can do this now but not many do, which is retarget those who watched your branded influencer content with paid media, which makes it more slick from an operational perspective, provides more data for marketers to get even smarter with their targeting and messaging and ultimately drive even higher ROI.

We'll also see more verticals embracing influencer marketing. B2B companies is an interesting one. They haven't typically been the first to adopt new social channels or invest in influencer marketing but as more realise that TikTok isn't just a place for dance routines and we see more industry bodies like Campaign, the DMA, Marketing Week and The Drum championing best practise B2B examples, then adoption of social media and influencer marketing amongst B2B companies will increase.

Similarly, five years ago you wouldn't have seen an insurance company use a social media influencer to promote their brand, but we've proved with ALA Insurance that it works and it drives the same, and in some cases, better conversations than more well established, tried and tested customer acquisition methods.

Our hope for the future is that brand managers and agency directors who are inexperienced in running influencer marketing campaigns stop trying to do it themselves. There is a fine balance between talent and management when that isn't properly understood brands literally throw money down the drain. This is nothing new, but still time and time again we're seeing UK brands work with mega and macro influencers because of their following, but don't realise that less than 60% of their followers are based in the UK and they have an engagement rate of less than 1%. Which essentially means, their product isn't being viewed by anyone who can buy it.

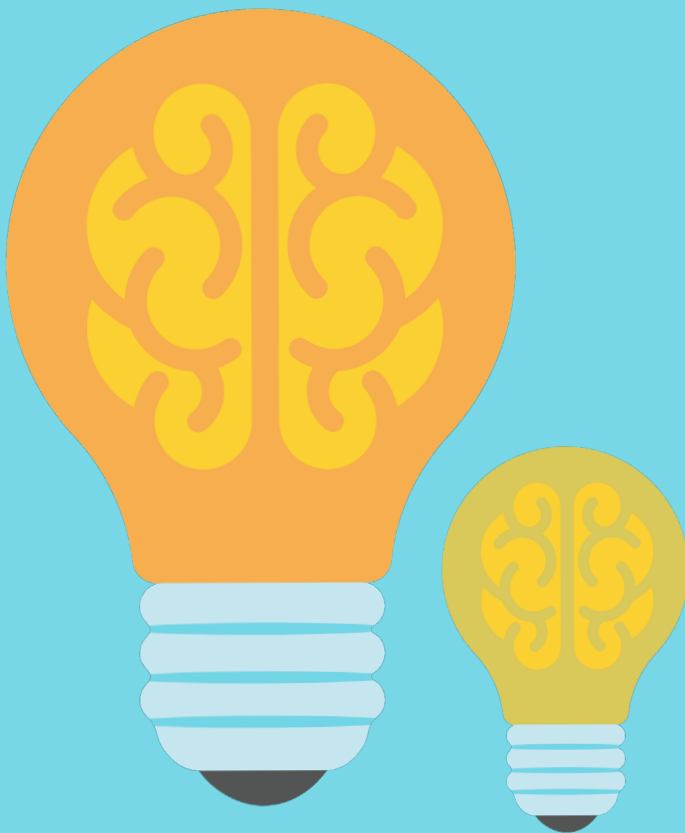
If you haven't sourced the right person, looked at their data, written a watertight contract, or properly managed the influencer and/or campaign, it results in a campaign that doesn't return, everyone feeling deflated and thinking influencer marketing doesn't work. It's like any marketing channel. Paid media, SEO, CRM, they all need specialists and just because there are platforms out there that make it easy to source influencer content - just like anything - you get what you pay for.





BIG Shot is our collective of young people born after 1997 whose job is to help brands tap into the consideration and purchasing mindset of Gen Z and Gen Alpha. Advisory boards are usually made up of experienced senior professionals, but in today's world, the short-lived experiences of under 18's is just as valuable in business. So far, they've helped brands like Birds Eye, Forbidden Planet, Luna Daily, Tails.com and Spontex while gaining valuable real world marketing experience in the process.

Email talk@biglittlelondon.com to find out more.



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