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What Does Instagram’s Like Ban Mean For Influencer Marketing?

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Instagram **announced in May 2019** that **the number of likes** and **viewers on the platform will be removed**. According to this change; people will be able to see who likes their post, while others will not see who likes their post. It is still unclear when this update currently being tested in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Japan and New Zealand will be implemented around the world.





With this change, Instagram wants people to share and follow content that they really like, make sense of, rather than focus on the number of likes and follow more likes. In this way, it aims to prevent the social pressure on people by a social comparison based on the number of likes [1].

One of the most debated issues in this update was the reflection of the change on Influencer Marketing, as influencers in the countries where the change was being implemented indicated that their engagement rate and follower growth rates had decreased [2].

Evaluating the social media interaction rate, which has traditionally been one of the factors affecting the brand value and sales rates of brands, is generally based on the number of likes; influencers and the brands that cooperate with them are concerned about this [3]. But; in addition to some people who have negative thoughts about this issue, there is also a lot of people who think that Influencer Marketing will go through a very positive process in the future.

Quynh Mai, founder and CEO of Moving Image & Content, said the removal of likes on Instagram meant more work to produce **more impressive and original content** for influencer and brands working with them. He added that the number of likes is a shallow method to measure interaction. He said that influencers, and hence brands, should create a world of content in which **people (especially the Z generation) can find meaning in order to attract attention**, and feel that they can touch that brand or influencer [4]

[Econsultancy's Influencer 2020 report] reveals that 61% of consumers prefer influencers that produce original, interesting content more. The same study also found that 70% of marketers see authenticity and transparency are the most important keys to Influencer Marketing's success [5].

One of the positive aspects of this change is the fact that brands' social media performances can be measured with **different KPIs** that are more than shallow. This change will allow more in-depth analysis with meaningful KPIs such as comments, shares, change in website traffic of the brand, increase in followers in the brand's channel, new follower rate [1] .

In summary; although the like ban in Instagram is thought to affect brands and influencers negatively, it encourages **more diverse and unique content** for influencers and brands, also **decline in click-bait posts** (content whose main purpose is to attract attention and encourage visitors to click on a link to a particular web page), thus providing opportunity for more meaningful content. In the near future, we will see how brands that want to build **a stronger customer-brand relationship quickly adapt to this change and how to turn this implementation into their favor with the right influencer collaborations.**

References:

[1] https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2019/10/31/will-the-like-ban-kill-instagram-influencer-marketing/#5e5

[2] https://econsultancy.com/influencers-say-instagrams-like-ban-has-resulted-in-lower-engagement-and-follower-growth/

[3] https://econsultancy.com/what-will-instagrams-like-count-ban-mean-for-influencers/

[4] https://www.cnbc.com/2019/07/19/what-instagram-hiding-likes-means-for-influencer-marketing.html

[5] https://econsultancy.com/reports/influencer-marketing-2020/

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