

Reaching Teen Influencers With Social Messages

Contributed by eMarketer
Tuesday, 29 June 2010

Majority prefer straightforward communication from brands

eMarketer estimates about 80% of US teen Internet users visit social networking sites at least monthly, but it may seem difficult for marketers to reach them there when they've signed on mainly to chat with their friends and post personal updates.

A May 2010 survey by myYearbook and Ketchum looked at the power of teen influencers and how brands can influence them in turn.

About 10,000 myYearbook users were surveyed, with the top 15% most active and engaged members defined as influencers.

myYearbook is the most-visited Website by teens, according to comScore, and Quantcast data shows its users skew female—not unusual for teen social sites—and white.

The most influential users there care a lot about what their friends say, and are down on marketers. Just 5% trusted what they heard from ads most, and another 5% trusted information from companies.

They also expect brands to act differently from their friends. Overall, while influencers most liked to share content that was funny, they preferred brands to be more straightforward.

Still, they also appreciate when a brand can be edgy, funny or shocking—as long as it is done well, according to Ketchum.

Brands hoping to keep up should find unique ways to participate in the things teenagers already care about versus competing with what's already capturing their attention, said Adrianna Giuliani, vice president of creative and strategic planning at Ketchum, in a statement.

Reaching teen influencers will mean taking advantage of earned-media opportunities and word-of-mouth that comes from highly trusted friends.

Influencers are more likely than other teens to recommend a variety of products to their friends.

The top 15% of teen social network users are 70% more likely to share purchase decision information with their friends.

11 June 2010