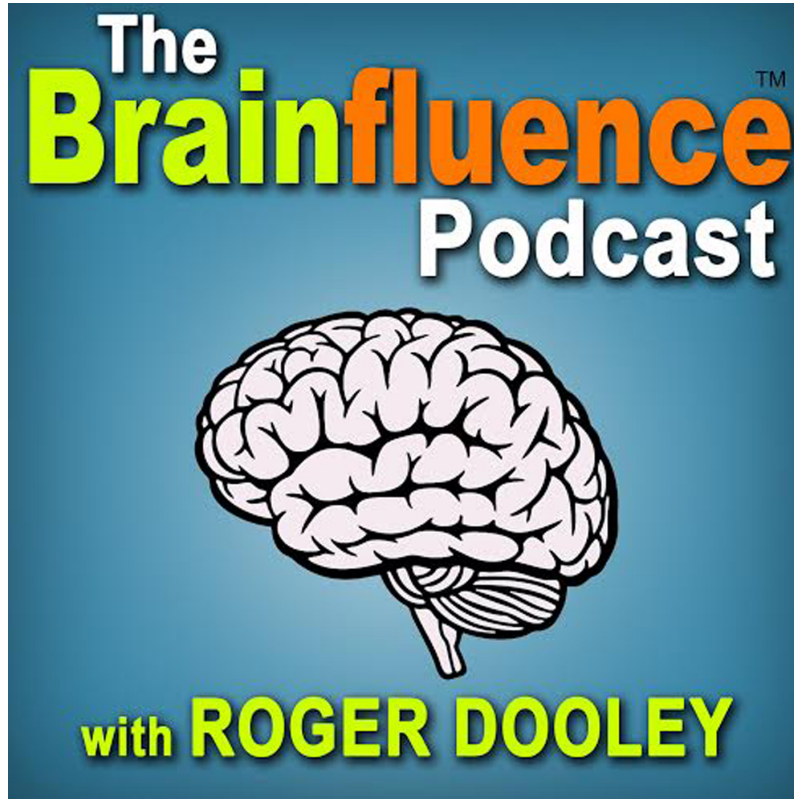


**The Age of Influence and Influencers with Neal Schaffer**

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**Roger Dooley**

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# The Age of Influence and Influencers with Neal Schaffer

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Welcome to Brainfluence, where author and international keynote speaker Roger Dooley has weekly conversations with thought leaders and world class experts. Every episode shows you how to improve your business with advice based on science or data.

Roger's new book, *Friction*, is published by McGraw Hill and is now available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and bookstores everywhere. Dr Robert Cialdini described the book as, "Blinding insight," and Nobel winner Dr. Richard Claimer said, "Reading Friction will arm any manager with a mental can of WD40."

To learn more, go to [RogerDooley.com/Friction](http://RogerDooley.com/Friction), or just visit the book seller of your choice.

Now, here's Roger.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to Brainfluence, I'm Roger Dooley. And today joining me is Neal Schaffer, and I'm going to let him introduce himself and explain who he is and what he does.

Neal Schaffer: Hey, Roger. Hello, everybody. It's an honor and a pleasure to be here today. My name is Neal Schaffer. I am a digital marketing author, speaker, consultant. I teach executives as part of the executive education program at a Rutgers Business School in the United States, the Irish Management Institute in Ireland and the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. They have a program called the Avance Executive Education program in Helsinki. And I am the recent author. I mentioned that I am the author, I published a few books on digital and social media marketing. My latest book is called the Age of Influence,

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and it's really about hopefully redefining in some ways this concept of digital influence and how I believe marketers have in many ways most recently, vis-a-vis social media influence, I believe have been somewhat miseducated.

And I think there's a lot of opportunities for businesses once they redefine what digital influence is and the many different ways that they can collaborate with other social media users. So I thought this would be great, Roger, and this podcast would be a great arena to discuss those issues and hopefully help a lot of the people that are listening.

Roger Dooley: Well, definitely our listeners are all about influence and now they're coming at it from a little bit different standpoint. They're coming at it from the Robert Cialdini influence standpoint in many cases, which is sort of a broader way of influencing the way people think. But at the same time, Cialdini definitely deals with the kind of influence that you write about, Neal. And I've been reading Age of Influence, and it's a great read, very practical and very useful advice that any size brand or company can use, but even Bob Cialdini talks about social proof and authority, both of which are different kinds of interpersonal influence. Social proof, in the case, if you see a lot of people doing something, then you may do that thing yourself. And authority, more, if a person who should know about something recommends it, then you're likely to be persuaded because that person is an expert and that can even translate into celebrities.

So if LeBron James recommends a particular brand of refrigerator, then that's still going to influence quite a few

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people to check out that brand. So anyway, it's a fun read. And I think that we're really going to get some interesting ideas for our audience. And one thing I like, Neal, is that you point out the history of influence marketing goes way back before the internet and probably 300 plus years ago, there was the queen of England who began letting her brand be used on things like Wedgwood earthenware. I don't know if you've done that at all, but I would guess that you could probably go back to Roman times or even Egyptian times and find examples of how this is the whatever that Caesar used or the pharaohs preferred something. And it's just a natural tendency for people to want to know what other people are doing. And particularly people who they respect.

Neal Schaffer: Yeah. It very much is human nature. And obviously influences the book that really dives deep into that. And really is-

Roger Dooley: And we did not set that up either. I'll add that was...

Neal Schaffer: Yeah, but that really is the framework.

Roger Dooley: You came prepared, Neal.

Neal Schaffer: Yes. And my approach is really more from the marketing practitioner. And we talked about Mark Schaefer who wrote the Return on Influence. And he wrote that about a decade ago. Obviously influence was written a few decades ago. And my approach is really from the marketing perspective that obviously this book was written before the coronavirus pandemic, but with that pandemic marketers now understand that they really

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need to be digital first in order to be where our customer's at and reach them. My approach was looking at just this evolution of digital and more and more social media marketing and realizing that one big area where it just becomes more and more difficult for companies to compete in is this organic social media space. And really, I think the promise to all of us marketers when social media began was this viral word of mouth marketing that would be easy to do.

We have a Facebook page, we get lots of engagement and friends of fan see the content, and then it ties into everything that's an influence and authority and social proof. What have you. And I remember back in the day, I think smartwater was one of these iconic brands that actually forwarded their domain to their Facebook page because it was such a powerful way of inciting. We don't do that anymore. And there've been a few other trends that have really driven businesses to have less and less influence in social media and driven individual people, what we would call content creators, to have more and more influence to the point where if you were to ask younger people, our generation, Roger, baby boomers, Gen Xers, I'll never forget after Top Gun came out, one of my best friends suddenly started riding a motorcycle with a black leather jacket and like the Tom Cruise look. These days, the people that influence younger generations are not these traditional celebrities that we're used to seeing. Their people on YouTube or maybe TikTok or Instagram that we've never even heard about.

So that's really where the journey in writing the book began. But as I began writing and doing more research, I

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realized that it's not just for iconic consumer brands, that the same principles can be leveraged for B2B brands could be leveraged for non-profits, even government organizations. And that's where it really fascinated me and where I realized that there was sort of a disconnect between what the mass media and even what bloggers, when they talk about influencers, they're talking about these celebrities. And what I realized was that just being able to, what I call, leverage the other, or being able to collaborate with other social media users is really, I feel one of the best. And if not, the only way to truly insight word-of-mouth marketing. How are you going to get other people to talk about your brand in social media or your business? It's really by collaborating with others and facilitating that. And that's really the heart of what the book is about.

Roger Dooley: I think one thing that has changed over the years is that, as you say, anybody can be an influencer. Even a few years ago, before the internet was huge, you really had to have some kind of a platform. Michael Jordan could endorse sneakers and that would be very a credible influence. But today you can be a 16-year-old putting makeup on or something and have a million followers, and most of us haven't even heard of these people, but they have their devoted audience. But I'm curious about trust because, to me, if I see somebody that I follow on Instagram or Facebook or someplace, and they're recommending a particular product, and if they've got just a hundred or 200 followers and I figured, "Okay, they're probably recommending that not because they are paid by the brand to do that because brands don't pay people

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in most cases, if they don't have much of an audience. But if I see somebody who's got a million followers then, okay, I'm thinking that whatever they're doing is going to be colored by money. And so is that the case and how do you build trust with an audience, particularly if they know that you're getting paid by the very brands that you're talking about?

Neal Schaffer: Yeah. This is where the neuro marketing approach to this becomes a very valid. So I think that there are what I would call social media influencers, and then we have celebrities. So when Shaquille O'Neal, better known as Shaq, does a commercial for Buick. We understand that he may have never owned a Buick, but he's getting paid to do that. It doesn't necessarily make us lose trust in Shaq or Buick. And we're exposed to this Buick automobile that even a tall basketball player can fit in. So there is human nature that says in the same way with an influencer before they've become a celebrity. Charlie is an example of a, now I think she recently turned 16 on TikTok, that came out of nowhere and she was already on Super Bowl TV commercials this past year. At that point, when you're in traditional media, you are a celebrity.

You're no longer a what I would call traditional social media influencer. So when we get below that people that have built communities based on creating content and offering information or engagement or entertainment around a subject. I think that today it is natural that these people will, from time to time, collaborate with companies and they will say, "This is sponsored by..." Or "Thanks to this brand for allowing me the opportunity to do this." And I think that it is a tricky thing for influencers to do because

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at the end of the day, if their community stops engaging with them and doesn't listen to them anymore, they lose their influence. So they need to be careful that they're working with brands that are aligned with who they are and brands that are also aligned with the community and that any type of collaboration offers ideally a win, win, win. A win for the brand, a win for the influencer and a win for the community.

So you do have obviously influencers who don't do this well. And I think those are the influencers that really lose a lot of this engagement. And what marketers and brands are getting smarter and smarter is that they're not just chasing after vanity metrics anymore. Some still are, but it's not a matter of how many likes something gets or how many comments, it's what actions the true definition of influence is really, we talk about persuasion, but at the end of the day, there's an action that occurs. So what action occurs after someone sees that post? Did they click on a link? Did they follow another channel or whatever is? And if you do not have that influence over your community, if you don't have that trust, that is sort of the bedrock of all of this.

At the end of the day, you will not get that action and brands will not see you as being an influencer. And this is why it's really interesting, Roger, we've seen in the influencer marketing industry, it used to all be about the number of followers. Well, now they talk more about what we call micro-influencers, or even nano-influencers. Micro-influencer, there's a lot of different definitions, but minimum 10,000 followers. And now with nano-influencers, they look at people with only a thousand

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followers. And just that there's a mathematical law here, Roger, but the bigger the audience, the more broad interests they tend to have, and the more broad interests that the influencer will talk about in order to better engage a broader audience. And you also have some fraud potentially of buying fake followers and fake engagement, but when you get smaller and smaller, the conversations tend to be more niche.

And the engagement tends to be more niche. And the engagement tends to be higher on a percentage basis when you work with someone that has actually a smaller community. So, and they have more trust with their community. So the bigger you get, it's really hard to maintain that trust. As you tend to work with more businesses, more collaborations, the smaller you are, the easier it is to maintain that trust. So it is something that I think every influencer has to think about. And I know that question you pose to me, Roger, is something that a lot of marketers pose to me as well. Kept people see through the fact that they're getting paid to this. So the really good influencers, when a brand reaches out to them, they'll see if it's a natural for them in their audience or not.

And hopefully they're only pursuing those things that are natural, because if it's not natural and I am sort of a B2B influencer, I've had a lot of brands reach out to me for that. And one fine clothing company reached out to me because all of my social media profiles, I'm wearing a suit jacket and a nice dress shirt. And they wanted to offer me a free suit and "Will you post this on Instagram?" And I don't talk about fashion and social media. It would be really weird to my community if I showed up promoting a

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soup company. So obviously that's not something I would collaborate on.

Roger Dooley: It's not in line with your brand.

Neal Schaffer: Exactly. And every influencer has to have this sort of meter that says this is in alignment, this is not in alignment. And if they're not doing that, then they're making a critical mistake and they lose the trust. Because if I would have talked off brand, then it becomes really, really glaringly apparent that this is just for the money. And that is the key thing here. Right.

Roger Dooley: We should make it clear that you were wearing a suit when we started, but before we started the cameras rolling, I made you change into a tee shirt.

Neal Schaffer: Yes, I am in Cal t-shirt here.

Roger Dooley: Is there a ratio perhaps of sponsored or paid content to other content that helps build that credibility. In other words, every post is sponsored by a brand, is that person way less credible than somebody who mostly posts unsponsored stuff and then occasionally slips one in.

Neal Schaffer: Yeah. I believe so. And it's really interesting. There are tools in the influencer marketing industry that will say that will basically compare the performance of your ad or things that you use, like hashtag ad or hashtag sponsored with your organic content. And I've been flagged because I don't post enough hashtag ad content that maybe brands don't want to work with me. And it's weird that in some ways brands want to work with influencers that have a track record. That are are collaborating with other

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brands. But on the downside of that is absolutely, Roger. There has to be a ratio. If every post was sponsored by a different brand, it really raises a lot of questions of trust that you brought up. So I think we're seeing a lot of success, and this is something that I talk about in the book as well, of more of a brand ambassador, brand advocacy approach, a long-term approach where maybe you're just sponsored by one brand, similar to how podcasts are sponsored by brands.

And with every beginning of a podcast, you mentioned that brand. That is aligned. But when you talk about a different brand with every post, it just, it does create this potential Pandora's box of issues. And in terms of trust and credibility, what have you. So if I was an influencer, I would be really worried. I'd really want to maintain that relationship. And I think this is where it comes down to at the end of the day influencers or content creators, they have a passion about something and they began, they should have begun 100% organic content, assuming that they are that passionate individual that began this journey, they still have that passion.

They should still want to create a lot of organic content naturally because it's who they are. So if they suddenly become someone that doesn't publish any more organic content, and generally speaking, the organic content will perform better than sponsored content on average. They're going to lose obviously their followers because there's a lot of influencers out there. And when we include micro-influencers and nano-influencers, just the volume of people that you might consider to be an influencer now jumps from zero 1% of any social network to maybe 1%

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or 2% or 3%. So they have competition now, and over time, they may lose that influence to others. And when they lose that influence, they lose the credibility, the trust, not only with their community, but with the brands that they hope to work with.

Roger Dooley: So I know that there are a ton of influencers in the beauty space and fashion and so on. That's where a lot of... People think of Instagram influencers. And that's the person that comes to mind. But I know in your book, you've got some examples. What are some examples of brands that don't fit that mold either smaller companies or industrial companies, what places that you would not think of as naturals for influence marketing?

Neal Schaffer: Yeah, so it's funny, I guess, in the... We'll look at it industry by industry. So B2C space, and I speak Japanese and Chinese and I do, I'm glad you have an international audience because, before the lockdown, I traveled a lot internationally, and what have you. And I'll never forget presenting in Japan to a group of small business owners and in Japan, for those of you that may not know, they're very far behind in terms of social media marketing and digital marketing in general, which is actually surprising to a lot of people. On the other hand, you have countries like China or in Southeast Asia that are very advanced, especially in influencer marketing. But when I talk to these small business owners, overwhelming majority did not even have a social media presence. And I asked them, "Well, how did you grow your business?"

And the ultimate answer from everybody was word of mouth marketing. And when they saw that they didn't

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even have to have a social media presence. If people talked about them, that they could insight word of mouth just by leveraging other people, they immediately saw the light and immediately started to build influencer marketing programs. And I've done business with some Chinese brands who do very little organic social media, but they have a ton of budget in influencer marketing. It's sort of the same concept. So if you are a B2C brand, if you're in fashion and beauty, great, but at the end of the day, if people are not talking about your product in social, you miss out on an opportunity. And the only way to get people to talk about your product on social, is to actually seed the market with your product.

And we see a lot of this happening. A lot of startups, small businesses are giving away product in hopes that people that have influence in social media will talk about them. And many people at this micro- or nano- influencer level, they will because they want to serve their community. They want to find out about the next greatest product or service. So this is really universal, even B2B, of tools companies reaching out to me, "Neal, we'd love it if you could try a new marketing tool. We'll give you lifetime access. We'd love to get your feedback. And if you like it, if you could write a blog post, great, if not, we'd like to keep in touch." That's a great way. So just giving free product without even giving any money is a universal thing that regardless of industry you should use. I'll give you another example.

The B2C I think is very easy to understand. I'll never forget. About two years ago, Roger, I presented in front of one of the big five pharmaceutical companies, and there

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were 50 brand managers in the room. And I went through the whole scope of what you can do in digital and social media marketing. And the one thing that really caught their interest was influencer marketing. And they realized that who, who influences your community? They realized that it was the non-profits that influenced the communities that they're trying to reach with their pharmaceuticals. So by collaborating with non-profits as influencers, they can then reach their objective. And this began a new launch for them. So your influencers are sometimes people, sometimes there are other entities.

Roger Dooley: Neal, dig into that a little bit. What did that look like? How did these pharmaceutical companies work with non-profits as influencers?

Neal Schaffer: As I was doing research before I presented to this pharmaceutical brand, there already is a lot of offline partnerships between pharmaceuticals and non-profits. I think that it's taking it online. It is in terms of, obviously there's a lot of regulatory issues regarding pharmaceutical brands and what they can and can't do on social media and digital media, but it could just be sponsoring community conversations. It could be having their members contribute to a blog for patient or doctor education on the issue. There are a lot of potential things. They were at the very beginning. I was really there to present to them various ideas that they're then going to go and implement.

I don't know how they ended up implementing, but if you think about it, if non-profits are influencing those people, and I do know one of my friends actually has a non-profit

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in the diabetes space and they definitely have a B2C sort of fundraiser aspect where they work with people, but they have also a B2B aspect where they work with pharmaceuticals in terms of case studies and acquiring data from obviously the people that they serve. So there's a lot of different avenues in which the collaboration can take place. It could be very upfront in social or in digital media. It could also be in the background or could just be, like I said, sponsoring an event. And now those events are going to be virtual sponsoring an online community, or what have you.

Roger Dooley: Yeah. Another example that you had in the book was the giant shipping company Maersk. And they're the last company that I would think of as having a social media presence, because basically the only place to see these name is on giant container ships and on these containers that you see stacked up in ship yards around the world, but probably the sort of least social type of business you can possibly imagine. But what do they do that earn them actually some acclaim?

Neal Schaffer: Yeah. So I think that they were very early on in this. And when I talk about these trends that have made it very difficult for brands to compete in organic social media. One of the biggest trends is visual social media. So we have the emergence of Instagram, of Pinterest, of Snapchat, of TikTok. These are purely visual entities. So if your brand has never been able to visually represent yourself, as most B2B brands, now we get to the B2B side, how do you visually represent yourself? And I have actually consulted with companies where their advertising department was in charge of making visuals for

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Instagram. So you can imagine every Instagram organic posts literally looked like an advertisement. So when you scroll through your Instagram feed, you can almost see which posts are done by brands and which are done by people. And influencers have become influential because their content is aligned with people, not businesses.

So this is a very challenging thing still today for business. How do we visually represent ourselves? And what Maersk realized was they never had a visual brand, but their containers were everywhere. And a lot of people just like you and me, even though we're not in the industry, we know their containers. So they began to when we get outside of just the visual container, we have the ships that carry the containers. We have the ports of call where all these containers go. After they arrived there, we have the trucks that carry those containers anywhere in the world. So you begin to have a type of visual storytelling based around your core product, but how it evolves once people start to use it. But what they did, which was really brilliant, which a lot of companies have replicated, is basically more and more social media platforms when it comes to visual content, they're not going to publish their own content.

They are purely publishing what we call UGC or user-generated content. They're looking for people that are talking about Maersk and, with permission, they're re-publishing their content. So if you were to hashtag Maersk or you can use visual recognition tools that Amazon and what have you have available for marketers to look for your logo anywhere on Instagram, ask for permission and republish that post. So we have iconic brands like Ritz-

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Carlton Hotels, Disneyland that do not publish their own content on Instagram. They purely use other people's content. And this is really the ultimate, because then you don't have to create your own content. Let what other people say about you, be your social proof, your credibility. And in the art and act of doing that you're building a deeper relationship with this person.

And, by the way, if we have 10 different people talking about us, why don't we pick the one that we feel is most influential? And now we have a way to begin a relationship with an influencer by saying, "Thank you so much for posting this picture of our company," or "You came to our event," or whatever it might be for B2B, "Can we republish this on our account?" And most people are thrilled because those of us have grown up where brands want to have distance with people. And I think now more and more younger generations, they want brands that relate to who they are. They want a brand to be part of their life. And brands are realizing that they actually want to minimize that distance.

They want to become one with consumers and users. And this is a great way to do that. But, above and beyond, Roger, that this visual aspect, for other B2B brands where Maersk is a case where you could make it visual, there are a lot of other B2B brands where you can't. And this is where we see the role of collaborating with influencers over content. And in this case, it's not visual content, it's blog posts. It might be interviews. It might be podcasts. It might be videos. It might be webinars. It might be eBooks, white papers, events, any content marketing initiative.

And I believe that B2B marketing, the stats that I see from

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my friend Joe Pulizzi it at the Content Marketing Institute that marketing spend for B2B brands, 30, 40% sometimes is based on content by bringing in influencers into your content, inviting them to your events.

And there's a study in the book about the Adobe Summit and the amount of tweets generated by the influencers that attended that event was worth millions of dollars in advertising spend. It becomes very content centric. And it's something that I think a lot of B2B brands have been doing, inviting influencers to their events to speak, to host panels, to do webinars, to interview them. So once you see it in this light, you begin to be a little bit more strategic about it. And I think with COVID-19 we see more of this actually, because B2B companies need events for lead generation and they can't do physical events right now. They're doing or more online and they're doing more and more with influencers. So hopefully that's where the concept is the same. The social network, the content medium is different. I collaborated with FedEx recently for a small business contest and I posted on LinkedIn.

That's where their audience is. That's who they want to influence. And for another brand, it might be Instagram and even a B2B brand might pick Instagram for whatever reason, but it's regardless of social network and it's regardless of content medium. The principle, similar to this concept of influence, the principal of digital influence knows no boundary. And once you understand that concept, you begin and to believe as I believe that it should be a line item on any marketing budget. If you have an organic social media presence, you should also

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be investing in relationships and collaborations with other social media users.

And then we finally get out of, Roger, I don't know if you see this, I see a lot of brands that still think of social media as a one-way advertising channel. We get out of that loop and begin to see social media as a way to collaborate, as a way to humanize our brand and truly collaborate with others. It becomes a big user focus group. And now we have our own team. We have our own army of influencers that become that user focus group, that are our ears to the community that we're collaborating with, not just on amplifying our content, but helping us create content, giving us feedback and really becoming a more and more valuable extension of the brand, digitally.

Roger Dooley: Yeah. One thing I want to sort of reemphasize from that lengthy discussion was the importance of sharing your customer's content. A lot of brands simply don't do that. I'd love to pick on United Airlines for a variety of reasons because when we were traveling, used them a lot. A hundred thousand miles a year, typically. And so I tend to point out some of their flaws and, but on social media, I will fairly often tweet at them if I'm traveling and have either a very good or very bad experience. And the good ones are actually quite... They will always reply. It used to be it was like tweeting into a black hole, but now they've gotten much more savvy in that respect. Now they do respond and either take it to a private conversation if it's a problem, or thank me for the feedback publicly or something.

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But what if I said something really nice about them and they retweeted me to their audience? Now they couldn't do a thousand of these a day. That would be really annoying. But I think that a very small percentage of those kinds of things would make those customers feel good. And would cement relationship, as you say, with somebody who may have a large following of their own. So I think there's a lot of benefits. I think it's not that a brand doesn't want to do that necessarily just, they don't think about they think, "Well, this is our channel. So we've got to create all the content on it," instead of saying, "Well, when are our customers saying things or doing things that might be interesting to share?" And one of the examples I tend to throw out for a really boring type of product, and I apologize to industrial shelving manufacturers, but like what are you going to do with industrial shelving? But when you think about it, I bet some customers are doing some pretty interesting things with industrial shelving. They're putting live animals on them or something and that would probably make a great visual for something. What you don't want to do is have the advertising department create a bunch of different angles on industrial shelves. That would be boring after about the second one, but what are your customers doing?

Neal Schaffer: We talk about in marketing more and more. We talk about CX customer experience. But marketers, especially in social and on websites, what have you, they're really good about talking about product. They're not about talking about that experience because they themselves are not experienced in it. Only your customers are. So

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when you reset your mindset and you understand that customer experience like that industrial shelf that might have animals on it, or those unique use cases experiences, and the fact that people are sharing more and more of these on social media, to me, it's a natural formula for significantly improving everything you do digitally by leveraging the voice of the customer and all the fringe benefits that come with doing that.

But it requires a different mindset. And I found when I wrote my book as well, the first part is just trying to reset that mindset of just looking at things extremely holistically. Where are we? We're in the second decade of social media marketing now. These are not new platforms. Are we still doing things that we did 10 years ago when the market of today and the consumer today is just completely different. So hopefully that book and this conversation is a wake up call to some that may not have realized that that are listening.

Roger Dooley: One sort of last topic I want to cover. And I want to turn it around from the standpoint of becoming an influencer. We talked about Mark Schaefer, your fellow Rutgers teacher, and your not quite namesake, almost namesake, unrelated. He wrote a book called Known, and it was about how to become known in a particular space as an expert. I'm curious, and there was a lot of good advice in that book. What about any of our audience members who want to become an influencer themselves? Maybe they have a passion about something, whether it's a hobby. Maybe it's related directly to their primary work, maybe they love industrial shelving or something, or maybe it's something else, digital cameras but how does one go

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about achieving that even micro- or nano-influence, I guess nano-influencer would be a good place to start. How do you get to that point?

Neal Schaffer: Right. So it's interesting because one of the trigger points for me writing the book was speaking at a marketing class for MBA students at USC a few years ago. And up until that time, I've been getting some questions about influencer marketing once I finished my speech. But on that day, I got as many questions about not just influencer marketing from a marketing perspective, but how do I become an influencer? And that's when I realized that there's any marketer listening, I think that the biggest Instagram account in Japan is run by a marketer who saw the power of Instagram influence and decided to create an account for their dog, which now is like the number one account. And he's using all the marketing techniques he's used for his company to leverage that account. So I think it's natural that marketers would want to become more influencer.

So it's actually one of the final chapters in the book. I'm a big believer that the more getting back to a lot of the concepts in the original book on influence of social proof and authority, that the more influential your business accounts in social media, the easier it becomes for you to actually collaborate with influencers. And it actually becomes more advantageous of a relationship when you build more influence. So extending off of that, obviously building influence, if you were to reverse engineer all of the advice for marketers and reverse engineer what do brands look for when they work with people, it comes down to, first of all, content creation and it comes down to

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a, in marketing, we often refer to this as to a niche. I don't necessarily think you have to have an extremely narrow niche, but the more focused you are on a topic and the more consistent you are of talking about that topic, just the way that the algorithms work and some work better than others in terms of, I want to find people talking about such and such.

I'll do a hashtag search on Instagram, I'll do a Twitter search, I'll do a LinkedIn search. Over time, we begin to find people that we're interested in and we begin to follow them and we get to see more and more of their content. So definitely it's a combination of content creation, of consistency, of really sticking to a certain niche. And I do believe as part of that, and we see a lot of this in podcasting of people that I've never heard of that reach out to me that want to interview me, because at the end of the day they are using influencer marketing. They are assuming that if they interview me that I'm going to share that episode with my audience and therefore it's going to attract new listeners to their podcast.

So you'll have a lot of up and coming nano-influencers or content creators want to collaborate with people that are bigger than them that are attracting the same audience. This is influencer marketing. I'm trying to find others that you can collaborate with, whether it's in terms of a blog or an Instagram shout out, there's a lot of different ways. So I think that a lot of influencers, when they work their way up what I would call this influencer pyramid of sorts, you got collaboration with other influencers in their industry, or perhaps in related industries is another important aspect of really yielding a bigger digital footprint. But after that,

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like I said, it does come down to consistency. It comes down to engaging your community, of reaching out to others that might be interested in what you have to say.

It could be blog comments, it could be podcast reviews. It could be retweets. There's a lot of different ways of doing this, but it requires time. It requires somewhat subject matter expertise or experience. And it requires passion because this does not happen overnight. And it has to be something you want to be committed to for the next few years. So if it's something that you do for a living like I do, or like you do Rog, it is a natural that we will podcast every week, because there's so much we want to talk about whether or not we have a guest or not. And that is the same mentality you need to have because you need to be checking in. As you build a community, you need to be checking in on them. You need to be helping them. And if you don't have passion for something, it's just not going to last. So that would be my advice.

Roger Dooley: It reminds me of for years, I was in the community building space, online communities, and you would find people who wanted to start a community because they felt a particular area was hot. It was going to be a good marketing vehicle for them. And like after two months it's, "This is not working at all. We've got so few members. This isn't good." It's not working because it doesn't happen that quickly. We really have to play the long game. I'm sure there's some people who hit it instantly for whatever reason, but by and large I think it is a long game that you've got to create that body of work and show that you're really passionate about it. If you're bringing a

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commercial mentality to it, it's probably not going to work. But anyway, I want to be respectful of your time.

Neal Schaffer: Roger, I just wanted to add on to that, sorry. I don't want to interrupt you, but...

Roger Dooley: Sure. Go ahead.

Neal Schaffer: ... It comes down to know, like and trust. And just because we live in a digital world, doesn't mean that it's going to be any quicker to develop a relationship with someone and truly know, like and trust them. That takes time to develop relationships, whether it's offline or online. And that's the key thing that people need to remember.

Roger Dooley: Well said. So Neal, how can people find you and your ideas online?

Neal Schaffer: Well, I am Neal Schaffer and N-E-A-L, the real Neal, S-C-H-F-F-E-R. So I am that handle everywhere on social media. I have a website where I blog nealschaeffer.com. I also have a podcast which is called the Maximize your Social Influence podcast, if you're interested in what we've been discussing. And my new book, the Age of Influence is available everywhere fine books are sold offline and online.

Roger Dooley: Awesome. Well, we will link to those places and any other resources we talked about on the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast. Neal, thanks for being on the show.

Neal Schaffer: Thank you so much, Roger.

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And remember, Roger's new book, *Friction*, is now available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and book sellers everywhere. Bestselling author Dan Pink calls it, "An important read," and Wharton Professor Dr. Joana Berger said, "You'll understand Friction's power and how to harness it."

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