

# How Should a Tourist Organization Optimize Working with Social Influencers?

## Case: Switzerland Tourism North America

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Student : Lauriane Zosso

Thesis advisor : Roland Schegg

Department of study : Tourism & Management

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## Abstract

Tired of being bombarded with marketing messages, consumers have lost trust in brands. Paid advertisement is no longer effective and brands have to find new marketing practices to connect to consumers with more authenticity. Influencer marketing is an increasingly popular method in which a brand partners with key individuals who exert influence over an online community. Brands can thus tap into a network of trust. Influencer marketing is digital word-of-mouth: it is based on recommendations from someone consumers align with.

The purpose of this paper is to find out how a tourist organization can optimize working with social influencers. The paper focuses on the case of Switzerland Tourism North America (ST NA). The market has just started working with influencers, but faces several challenges and needs recommendations to go further. This problem is solved with empirical research: to complement the existing literature on the topic with practical insights, a qualitative survey was conducted on national tourist organizations, destination management organizations and social influencers.

Based on the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the results, a step-by-step guide was created. The featured recommendations, which were validated by experts in the field, are sorted into key phases: the incorporation of influencer marketing at the core of the company, the implementation of an influencer campaign, and the following-up of the campaign. These recommendations are tailor-made for ST NA, but can also be used by any other tourist organizations.

**Keywords:** influencer marketing, digital influencer, social media, tourist organization

## Foreword

Trends and technologies have evolved, and influencer marketing has become the new hot topic among marketing circles. The author has always had a great interest in digital marketing. During her bachelor studies at the School of Tourism and Management, she specialized in e-tourism. During her internship at Switzerland Tourism North America, the author wanted to understand how the company could be more proactive and implement new marketing methods in order to keep up with trends and industry changes. As influencer marketing seems to be one of the most efficient marketing practice nowadays, the author decided delve deeper into the topic and find out how it should be optimized at Switzerland Tourism North America. The aim of the paper is to give recommendations in the form of a practical step-by-step guide. Previous research have been done on the topic of influencer marketing but few are specific to tourism. However, while this paper was being written many studies have been conducted. This represents one of the main difficulties of the work, the topic was constantly evolving.

The research question “How should a travel organization optimize working with influencers?” was answered based on empirical work. To complement the existing literature with practical insights, a qualitative survey was conducted on national tourist organizations, destination management organizations and social influencers.

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## List of abbreviations

DMO	Destination Management Organization
DTTT	Digital Tourism Think Thank
GCC	Golf Cooperation Council
HO	Head Office
KAM	Key Account Management
KMM	Key Media Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NTO	National Tourist Organization
ROI	Return on Investment
SoMe	Social Media
ST	Switzerland Tourism
ST NA	Switzerland Tourism North America
TO	Tour Operator
UGC	User Generated Content
MTP	Medium-Term Planning



## Introduction

Consumers are increasingly exposed to advertisements to a point that they now unconsciously tune this information out. They have developed so-called “ad blindness” and have slowly lost trust in brands, tired of being constantly bombarded by marketing messages. Paid advertisement is no longer effective and this is a new challenge marketers need to overcome. Brands have to change their marketing practices and find ways to connect to consumers with more authenticity.

When it comes to making a purchase decision, consumers trust people rather than brands, a concept known as word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth is not a new phenomenon and has been happening for a long time. However, the dynamic has been largely empowered through the rise of social media. Among these new extended social circles, key individuals have gained strong voices and have been defined as social or digital influencers. These influencers have built communities based on trust and common interests. They have the power to deliver messages that have a strong impact on their audience. And this is where influencer marketing – a new word-of-mouth form of advertising – comes into play. Brands have found a way to reach consumers through the people they love and align with: they can leverage the power of influencers to tap into this network of trust.

Influencer marketing has become the current hot topic among marketing circles and the tourism sector is no exception. When it comes to travel, social media has a significant impact on the path to decision and purchase. Indeed, it is the place where consumers look for recommendations and inspiration. Social media platforms rely heavily on visuals and lend themselves especially well to capturing experiences – the core of tourism. Influencer marketing opens a world of possibilities to travel brands, however, it has to be done right for a successful outcome.

Switzerland Tourism is the national tourist organization which markets Switzerland worldwide as a country for holidays, travel and congresses. The North American market of Switzerland Tourism acknowledges the potential of influencer marketing and has just started working with social influencers. The market would like to get recommendations on how to incorporate and implement this new form of marketing most effectively. This leads to the research question, *“How should a tourist organization optimize working with social influencers?”* with the case study of Switzerland Tourism North America.

This paper is organized as follows. Firstly, chapter one explores existing literature related to the research topic and reviews the key aspects of influencer marketing. Then, chapter two

sets the context of the research question, presents Switzerland Tourism North America and analyses its current use of influencer marketing. Based on the problems detected, the research question will be formulated at the end of the chapter. To understand how the research question will be answered, chapter three outlines the methodologies applied in this work and describes how the study will be conducted. Next, chapter four presents the data collected in form of a table, which will then be analyzed and interpreted in chapter five. The following section – chapter six – discusses the results of the study compared with the literature review. Eventually, the essence of the work will be chapter seven, which presents the empirical work; recommendations on how Switzerland Tourism North America could optimize working with influencers will be formulated. A line is kept throughout the paper with the help of a *key-phases chart*, which evolves chapter after chapter according to the empirical work.

# Chapter 1 - Literature review

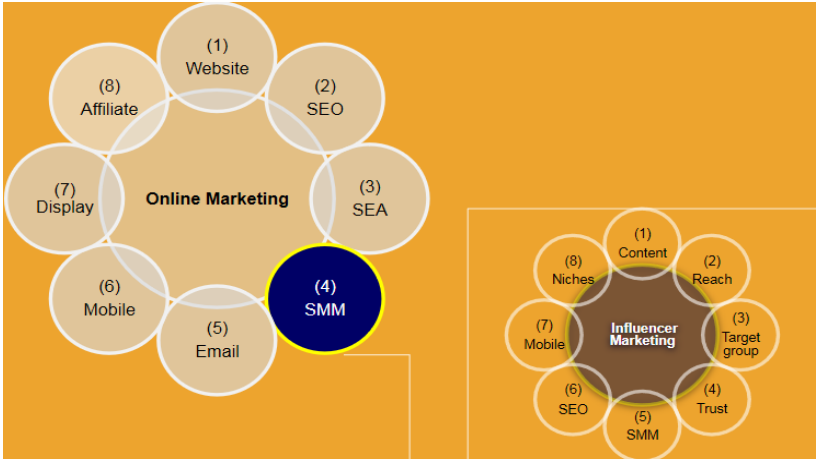
This section explores the existing literature on influencer marketing. The goal is to understand the research problem better and to know which studies have already been produced. The author defines influencer marketing and the social influencer, presents the challenges of influencer marketing, and explores the key steps of an influencer program. At the end of the section, figure 3 summarizes the section and highlights key phases detected.

## 1.1 Influencer marketing: a new and growing practice

### 1.1.1 Definition of influencer marketing

Before the digital era, social influence was being exerted among circles of friends through word-of-mouth. In today's hyper-connected world, these circles have extended to become social networks generating entire communities. Word now travels faster and reaches a greater amount of people. (Moxie, 2014, p. 3) They enable some individuals to gain a stronger voice and become influential among a certain community. These key individuals started to draw the attention of marketers, who saw the opportunity to access a specific audience and to communicate marketing messages. (Galeotti & Goyal, 2009, p. 509) Influencer marketing was born. It can be defined as a form of marketing that "identifies and targets individuals with influence over potential buyers" (Wong, 2014) and as the practice of "providing compensation to a social media influencer in exchange for mention, promotion or review through that influencer's channels." (Murphy & Schram, 2014) As shown in figure 1, influencer marketing belongs to online marketing, more specifically to social media marketing (SMM) and has key elements: content, reach, target group, trust, SMM, SEO, mobile and niches.

Figure 1: The online marketing sphere



Source: (Fischer, 2016)

### **1.1.2 Benefits of influencer marketing**

Influencer marketing provides considerable benefits to brands. First and foremost, brands can gain credibility by tapping into a network of trust. Indeed, consumers' trust towards brands has declined: people have become skeptical of advertisements and ads blockers have been developed. Nowadays, consumers trust people rather than brands. (Morin, 2016) As evidence, Nielsen's survey of 28,000 consumers in 52 countries reports that 92% of the consumers said they trust earned media, such as recommendations from friends and relatives, more than other types of advertising. (Aquino, 2013, p. 32) Influencer marketing is a way to build better connections and introduce affinity and emotions into the brand-consumer relationship. Li, Lin and Lai's study reports that people are more likely to be influenced by subjective expressions with emotional component rather than objective statements when it comes to a purchase decision. (2010, p. 295) When working with influencers, brands can not only gain trust but also loyalty and advocacy. Brand reputation can be boosted, messages can be amplified, and brand awareness can be raised. (eMarketer, 2016) To goal is to drive customer engagement and purchase decisions. Moxie, who did an online survey on fans, reports that 81% of fans purchased a product based on an influencer's recommendation. (2014, p. 11) To summarize, influencer marketing is a way to get "unique branded social content from a trusted influential source (...), syndication of content through all platforms, the ability to target micro niches at scale, higher click-through rates and lower cost per clicks than traditional display, fresh and lasting content and loyal partners that care and share" (Murphy & Schram, 2014, p. 35)

### **1.1.3 The current state of influencer marketing**

Influencer marketing has become a central topic for brands. TechnoratiMedia, which produced a major survey on more than 6,000 influencers, 1,200 consumers and 150 top brand marketers in 2013, reports that brands' investment in social advertising is increasing and that 65% of the surveyed brands claimed to do influencer marketing (2013, p. 11). Influencer marketing will grow. According to Social Media Today "74% of global marketers reported they will use 'influence marketing' as part of their marketing strategy in the next 12 months." (Cited in Ritchie, 2013, p. 4) Apparently influencer marketing bears fruit. In 2015, Augure carried out another survey on a sample of more than 600 communication and marketing practitioners from 3 main markets (France, Spain and the UK) and reports that among the surveyed, 93% claim their influencer marketing strategies have brought more visibility and have increased fame, 76% gained the loyalty of their customers and 27% created new business opportunities. (2015).

#### **1.1.4 Influencer marketing in different industries**

Working with influencers has attracted interest among many sectors, especially fashion and beauty. (Maspoli, 2016) But tourism also follows the trend and is actually the fourth sector using influencer marketing most heavily, according to RhythmOne's benchmark. (2014) Indeed, a study done by RadiumOne shows that 73% of people, mainly millennials, get their vacation ideas from social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. (Dahan, 2015) Social media platforms are visually strong and lend themselves especially well to capturing experiences. Influencers share personal stories, give travel recommendations and inspire their community. (Dahan, 2015) May it be airlines companies, hotels or tourist offices, the travel industry is increasingly working with digital influencers. (About DCI, 2016)

### **1.2 The social influencer: a key individual**

#### **1.2.1 Definition of the social influencer**

Everyone can be an influencer. However, the impact of the influence varies according to the number of people influenced, the kind of influence exerted and the media used. (Bakshy, 2011, p. 1) Social influencers are self-made; they have built their own audience over time based on their expertise and smoothly become opinion leaders. Influencers have established a relationship of trust among their networks, and developed connectivity and centrality. They have the power to exert influence over their communities. (Bakshy, 2011, p. 1) Influencers are content creators and storytellers, and they know how to create enthusiasm. (Bakshy, 2011, p. 1) They usually have good photography, videography, writing or speaking skills. They share relevant opinions that generate authentic conversations. (Appinions, 2012, p. 8) They operate on blogs and social media (SoMe) platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest or YouTube. Influencers are also influenced, mainly by blogs and other colleagues. (TechnoratiMedia, 2013, p. 20)

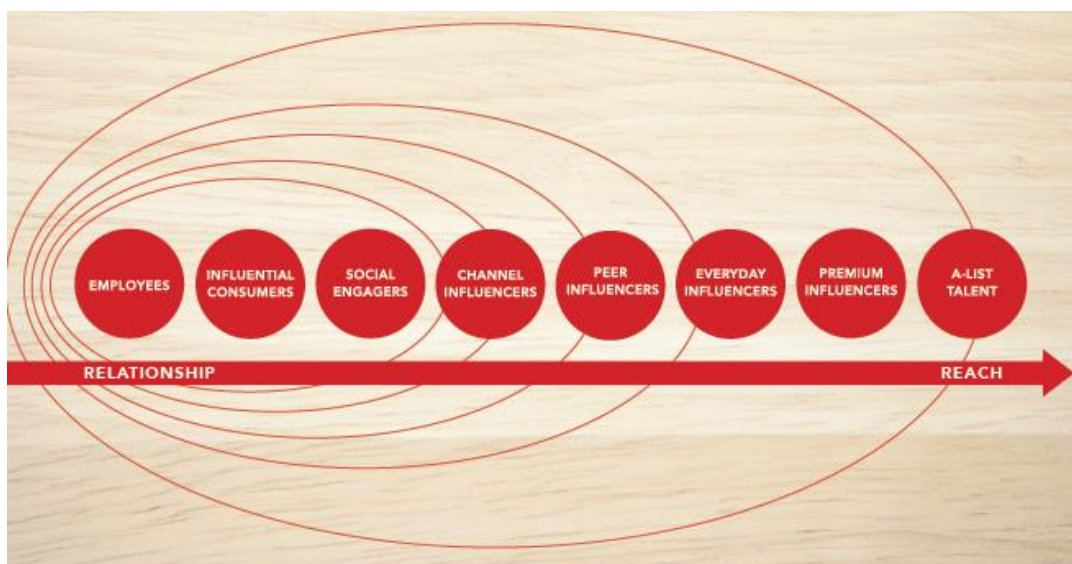
#### **1.2.2. The influence**

Social influence is not a new concept. Back in 1944, Lazarsfeld published *The People's Choice*, which studies the influence when it comes to political votes. At his great surprise, the survey revealed that an individual's opinion was more likely to be influenced by a neighbor than by the propaganda broadcasted on a radio show. (Brown & Fiorella, 2013, p. 82) This statement leads to Brown and Fiorella's theories: true influence operates in a dyadic relationship, which refers to "discussions or communication between two people involving their mutual ideas, thoughts, behaviors or ideals." (2013, p. 81)

### 1.2.3 The types of influencers

Figure 2 classifies influencers based on the quality of the relationship with the audience and the number of people reached. Micro-influencers have a close relationship with their audience. They engage, establish conversations, and exert a true influence over the customer's decision-making process. In other terms, they have a deep reach. Macro-influencers focus on the width of the reach rather than the depth: they broadcast to a wider and more general and loosely defined audience (Brown & Fiorella, 2013, p. 90) According to Brown & Fiorella, marketers have the tendency to focus on the influencer and his popularity rather than on the relationship (2013, p. 77). This is a natural reflex that comes from traditional media. However, social media's essence is interactive communication and not reach (Francalanci & Hussain, 2016) Brown & Fiorella state that partnering with macro-influencers is a beginner mistake (2013, p. 90) and explain: "Today's influence marketing strategies are typically based on identification of influencers with high scores on social influence platforms. While this model might be quicker and require less effort, it's also less effective. The value of broad amplification is lessened by the unidentified quality of relationship, context or conversations". (2013, p. 82) They acknowledge that if a brand wants to raise awareness, it might want to engage with macro-influencers and warn that this may not generate purchases. The consumers themselves share this point of view: 54% of consumers agree that the smaller the community, the greater the influence (TechnoratiMedia, 2013, p. 12).

Figure 2: The influencer spectrum



Source: (Moxie, 2014, p. 8)

Figure 2 illustrates different types of influencers: *Employees* are close to the people they influence, they can educate them and become genuine ambassadors. As an example, Procter & Gamble has formal employee influencer programs. *Influential consumers* are buyers before being influencers. They write about a brand without being involved in a partnership because they are personally convinced. Brands should thank them and suggest endorsements. (Moxie, 2014, p. 13) *Social engagers*, in contrast, are not current buyers. They mention the brand in their platforms if there is a partnership. Brands should try to turn them into advocates. *Channel influencers* are passionate fans of a brand. They are well known by the community manager as they actively converse on the brand's content. *Peer influencers* raise their hands to be registered in marketplaces. They seek fresh content and want to be the first to know about a new product. They look for rewards or samples in exchange for basic tasks. *Everyday influencers* have just started out or have quickly risen up the ranks. They are not so selective about brands but care about how the brand can affect their reputation. *Premium influencers* are expertized and professional influencers, create content of high quality and can afford to be represented by agents. They are highly selective about the brands. Finally, *A-list talent* are celebrities and only partner with big names who will pay millions to create mass awareness. They engage less with their audience and focus on numbers. (Moxie, 2014, pp. 7-8).

#### **1.2.4 The platforms**

Too often, marketers defaulted to calling influencers “bloggers”. Influencers do have blogs as 86% of influencers blog. (TechnoratiMedia, 2013, p. 19) However, they share content on multiple channels, a phenomenon called “influencer porosity”. (Engauge, 2013, p. 22) Table 1 presents the most important platforms according to various sources: Engauge conducted a survey on 780 influencers and 1,000 fans as well as qualitative surveys on focus groups. (2013) TapInfluence conducted a survey on 1,700 influencers and 100 marketers with an anonymous online questionnaire. (2016) TechnoratiMedia produced a survey on more than 6,000 influencers, 1,200 consumers and 150 top brand marketers. (2013) Table 1 shows divergent results. In general, Facebook is the top platform. However, recently, influencers put more importance on blogs than Facebook, a fact that confronts brands' opinion. TapInfluence explains: “An interesting discrepancy and influencer frustration surrounds the emphasis and implied overvaluing of social shares (...) This is bothering influencers, many of whom have built their audience through their personal blogs”. (2016) It is interesting to see that consumers mention blogs as most likely to influence their purchase after retail sites. They link blogs with trust, popularity and influence. (TechnoratiMedia, 2013, p. 4) Maspoli mentions that, since 2014, YouTube and Instagram have taken a prominent place among social media channels. (Maspoli, 2016) This is also illustrated in table 1; Instagram has become more important.

Table 1: The key platforms

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
Influencers			Consumers			Brands	
<b>Most used social channels</b> (blogs included)	<b>Most important channels</b> (blogs included)	<b>Most used social channels</b> (blogs excluded)	<b>Most used online channels</b>	<b>Most trusted online channels</b>	<b>Most likely to influence a purchase online channels</b>	<b>Most used channels</b> (blogs included)	<b>Most important channels</b> (blogs included)
1. Facebook	1. Blogs	1. Facebook	1. Youtube	1. News sites	1. Retail sites	1. Facebook	1. Facebook
2. Youtube	2. Facebook	2. Twitter	2. Facebook	2. Facebook	2. Brand sites	2. Twitter	2. Twitter
3. Twitter	3. Instagram	3. LinkedIn	3. Retail Sites	3. Retail sites	3. Blogs	3. YouTube	3. Youtube
4. Blog	4. Twitter	4. Google+	4. G+	4. YouTube	4. Facebook	4. Pinterest	4. Instagram
5. G+	5. Pinterest	5. Pinterest	5. Blogs	5. Blogs	5. Group/Forums	5. LinkedIn	5. Blogs
6. Insta		6. Instagram	6. News sites	6. G+	6. YouTube	6. Blogs	
7. LinkedIn		7. YouTube	7. Twitter	7. Forums	7. LinkedIn	7. Instagram	
8. Other			8. Forums	8. Online Magazines	8. G+	8. G+	
9. Pinterest			9 LinkedIn	9. Brand sites	9. Online Magazines		

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources

a: Engauge (2013, p. 22)

b. (TapInfluencer, 2016)

c: TechnoratiMedia (2013, p. 22)

d: TechnoratiMedia (2013, p. 13)

e: TechnoratiMedia (2013, p. 14)

f: TechnoratiMedia (2013, p. 16)

g: TechnoratiMedia (2013, p. 6)

h. (TapInfluencer, 2016)



### 1.3 Challenges of influencer marketing

According to Augure, identifying the right influencer is the number one challenge of professionals. (2015) TapInfluence backs up Augure and reveals that 68% of marketers mention selecting relevant influencers as main challenge. (2016) Ferguson brings up another challenge: “tracking ROI for word-of-mouth marketing campaigns remains a difficult science.” (2008, p. 180) As internal challenges, marketers cite budget. (TapInfluencer, 2016)

### 1.4 The influencer campaign: the key steps

#### 1.4.1 In-house or agency

An influencer program can be run in-house or through an agency. According to TapInfluence’s survey, 74% of brands are working directly with influencers with 21% stating that they work with agencies. (2016) Talavera argues: “not only does this outsourced model cost you high, non-transparent commission fees, it also prevents you from owning your influencer relationships, resulting in content that is less authentic and effective.” (Talavera, 2016) Some famous agencies are Niche, Instabrand, theAmplify, Evolve and Socialyte. (Hulyk, 2015) According to influencers, agencies are the best source of branding opportunities (TechnoratiMedia, 2013, p. 31)

#### 1.4.2 Selecting the influencer

Identifying the right influencer for a brand is crucial. But before, a brand has to clearly define its goals: “A critical element of success in any social media initiative is the strategy that drives the larger plan”. (Booth & Matic, 2012) Influencer can be found via web exploration, online tools, media databases or agencies. (Hulyk, 2015) The most important criteria are reach, relevance and resonance. (Steizner, 2016) The brand’s values should align with the influencer’s. Table 2 shows the criteria influencers look into. Indeed, influencers view the brands they represent as a reflection of their personal brand. (Moxie, 2014, p. 16)

Table 2: Top criteria for working with brands

<b>a</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>c</b>
1. Affinity to the brand	1. Common values	1. Common values
2. Brand’s audience	2. Affinity to the brand	
3. Campaign type	3. Past relationship with brand	

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources

a: TechnoratiMedia (2013, p. 31) b: Moxie (2014, p. 18) c. (TapInfluence, 2016)

**1.4.3 Compensating the influencer**

Various studies have been done to understand how an influencer should be compensated for his work. Among influencers, opinions are very divided, as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Top ways influencers want to be incentivized

<b>a</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>c</b>
1.Money	1.Support with content creation	1.First look for new products
2.Free products for influencer	2.Exclusive information	2.Prizes, samples or giveaways to audience
3.Free product for audience	3.Monetary rewards	3.Money

Source: Table by the author with multiple source  
 a: Moxie (2014, p. 14)  
 b: Augure (2014, p. 20)  
 c: TechnoratiMedia (2013, p. 31)

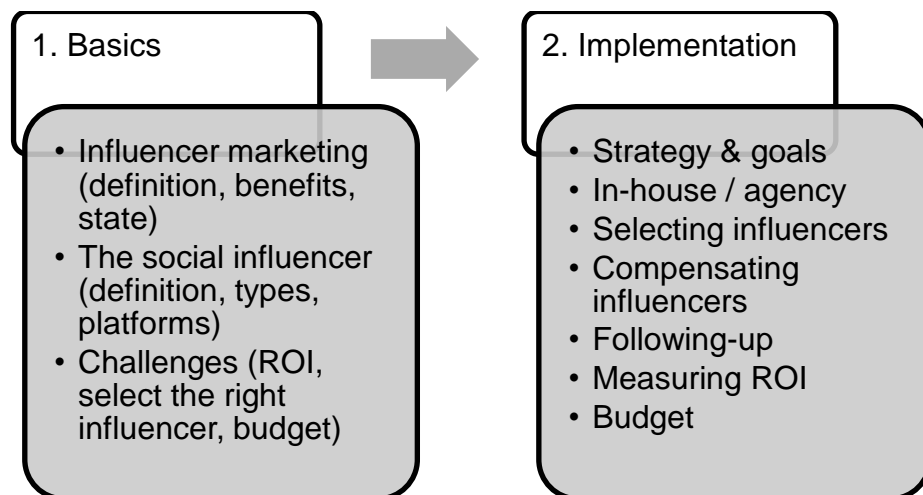
Moxie shows that money is by far the first way influencers want to be incentivized and argues that influencers put a significant amount of time, resources and effort into building audiences and maintaining a presence on SoMe. Brown backs it up: “trust can’t be bought but it deserves to be rewarded.” (cited in Moxie, 2014) Indeed, independent influencers support themselves: 64% of influencers make revenue from blogging. (TechnoratiMedia, 2013) Furthermore, TapInfluence’s survey reports that 74% of the influencers state that brands offering inadequate compensation is the biggest mistake being made today. (2016) There is a clear gap between how the influencers would like to be incentivized and how they actually are. Influencers say they are mostly being incentivized with free products for themselves, to a lesser extent with money. (Moxie, 2014, p. 16) Indeed, Augure’s study explains that brands “feel that influencers tend to be more receptive to receiving benefits that will enable them to enhance the quality of their own contents rather than money rewards, gifts”. (Augure, 2014, p. 20) Rob Fuggetta, CEO of the social media firm Zuberance, goes further by saying that paying influencers for recommendations is bad business. Consumers would be reluctant to buy a product if they know that the person who recommends it is getting money in exchange. (Aquino, 2013, p. 33) According to Richtie, influencers should be compensated case by case according to what they produce. (2013, p. 15) According to Aquino, remuneration should be defined based on the type of influencer: popular bloggers like to receive free samples, brand advocates would rather receive recognition or special treatments. (Aquino, 2013, p. 33)

### 1.4.3 Following-up

An influencer marketing program is “far more complex than having a brand simply reach out and cut them a check”. (Engauge, 2013, p. 4) The brand-influencer relationship starts before and goes beyond the actual campaign. “Influencer marketing requires a long-term commitment from you, because that’s what you want form your influencers.” (Brown & Hayes, 2008, p. 87). Social influencers should be treated like friends, with a one-to-one relationship. (Aquino, 2013, p. 34)

To conclude this section, figure 3 summarizes the important concepts detected in the existing literature. These concepts are classified under two key phases defined by the author. The first phase is named *Basics* and focuses on definitions. Brands have to understand the value influencer marketing, must know what kind of individual influencers are and how they work and must be aware of the different types of influencers there are. The second phase is named *Implementation* and focuses on the steps and brand has to follow to launch an influencer program. This *key-phases chart* will evolve during this empirical paper.

Figure 3: Key phases-chart 1



Source: author's data

## Chapter 2 – Research Question

In this section, the case - Switzerland Tourism North America (ST NA) - comes under intense scrutiny to formulate a precise research question. The company is described and the relevance of influencer marketing for the market is explored. The potential and challenges that the company face in regards to influencer marketing are identified by numbers throughout the section. They are summarized in table 4 at the end of the section to have a better overview. To conclude the section, the *key-phases chart* (Figure 4) is complemented with new insights.

### 2.1 Case Study

#### 2.1.1 Switzerland Tourism

Switzerland Tourism (ST) is a marketing organization that exists since 1917. It is charged by the Confederation to promote Switzerland as a vacation, travel and congress destination nationally and internationally. With headquarters in Zurich, ST has 240 employees in 27 markets worldwide. ST is financed 55% by the Swiss Confederation, 30% by key tourism partners and 15% by other sources. (Switzerland Tourism, 2016) ST strives to “project Swiss tourism as a strong brand that stands for authenticity, sustainability and a modern approach coupled with natural beauty.” (Switzerland Tourism, 2007) The company develops and implements marketing programs that generate demand on the basis of a client- and market-oriented approach. ST’s philosophy is to be open-minded, creative and unconventional, courageous and refreshing in its communication (1). (Switzerland Tourism, 2011)

ST’s strategic orientation is directed by medium-term planning (MTP), which is revised every three years and contains “a comprehensive analysis of overall economic, social and tourism conditions and trends”. (Switzerland Tourism, 2007) A yearly business plan derived from the MTP determines activities and operational guidelines and serves as a basis for the local business plan of the different markets. ST’s activities are ruled by key performance indicators (KPIs) reported per market, and distributed according to the four-wheel drive (4WD). (Switzerland Tourism, 2007). The 4WD (Figure 4) is ST’s marketing model and is composed of four key elements: eMarketing, Promotion, Key Account Management (KAM) and Key Media Management (KMM).

Figure 4: Switzerland Tourism's 4WD



Source:

(Switzerland Tourism, 2015)

According to figure 4, SoMe seems to be well integrated in the 4WD. SoMe reports to two departments: the eMarketing with SMM and the KMM with SoMe content. This decision seems to be relevant (2). However, SoMe seems to be neglected in ST's official documents (3). In KMM, SoMe is almost invisible. First, it is not part of the official definitions featured in the MTP. (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 27) Second, it has no related KPIs. Furthermore, in its official KPIs document, ST claims "we do not count the reach of the posts and tweets". The only SoMe aspect is five lines on the topic of Instagram: "Count Instagram likes of Instagrammers only if you invited them pro-actively to Switzerland, only if they posted a minimum of 10 images and only if they have a minimum of 25'000 followers." (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 29) In eMarketing, SoMe doesn't have specific KPIs. This is going to change, as in 2017 two new KPIs related to SoMe will be introduced: Fans & Followers and Fan Engagement Rate (4). (Switzerland Tourism, 2016) The SoMe activities are based on the *White Paper*. This official document dates back to 2011, which is thoroughly outdated for the SoMe world (3). Despite lacks in official documents, ST is performing very well at SoMe (5). It is present on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Vine and Google+ and boasts a consistent growth in all of its social media channels. (Switzerland Tourism, 2015)

## 2.1.2 Switzerland Tourism North America

ST breaks down its markets into priority markets, active markets, strategic growth markets and development markets. Switzerland Tourism North America (ST NA) comprises the US, Canada and Mexico and is a priority market, generating about 75% of all overnight stays together with the six other priority markets (6).

## 2.1.3 Social Media at Switzerland Tourism North America

At ST NA, SoMe is handled by one dedicated employee (7). In his daily activities, the SoMe coordinator reports to both KMM and eMarketing, which corresponds to the 4WD. ST NA is active and successful on its SoMe platforms. It has two Facebook pages, one targeted for the US and the English-speaking part of Canada and the other one for French Canada. It also shares a Twitter account with the UK. (5)

## 2.1.4 State of influencer marketing at Switzerland Tourism

To be able to formulate the research question, it is crucial to understand where and how influencer marketing is currently incorporated at ST. In order to do so, the official documents and strategies, the SoMe department at HO and in the market are examined.

As observed previously, the MTP is a key document, on which ST bases its marketing activities. In chapter three of the MTP, ST indicates that “the realities of modern information transfer and social media call for a fundamental reconsideration of marketing and the marketing mix.” (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 11). This statement demonstrates that SoMe is significant (8). Then, ST identifies nine major marketing trends for which it developed solutions in the following chapter of the MTP. Seven of these nine trends are related to the key concepts of influencer marketing (9):

*"BtC to CtC. Sharing is a lifestyle. Visitors tweet and post their impressions. They support advertising. Social media provides classic word-of-mouth advertising with a huge multiplier. Product quality is therefore becoming even more important."* (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 11) **Influencer marketing is CtC and does provide classic word-of-mouth advertising with a huge multiplier on SoMe.**

*"TMI to Trusted content, recommendation / tip. Customers are overtaxed due to shortage of time combined with the tidal wave of information. Too Much Information ("TMI") is the new buzz word. What visitors require is credible travel content of high quality, increasingly in the*

form of visuals and film. There is demand for recommendations (trusted content).” (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 12) **Influencer marketing is based on trusted content as opposed to paid media.**

“*Mass marketing to Precision marketing*: More and more often, a focus on precisely defined segments and communities is replacing mass tourism advertising targeted at the general public.” (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 11) **The influencer does have a specific expertise and a community with one or more common interests.**

“*Information processing to User-generated content*. The roles of sender and recipient are becoming one. The processing of tourism information has to include visitor content.” (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 12) **Influencer marketing is UGC.**

“*Product marketing to Experience marketing*. Visitors are buying experiences, not products. Traditional forms of communication and organisation are challenged.” (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 12) **Influencer marketing does provide experiences and not products.**

“*Push promotion to Promotion on demand*. Mass interruption marketing is being succeeded by permission marketing. Customers want to be informed rather than wooed.” (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 11) **Customers decide whether to enter an influencer’s community or not.**

“*TV spot to Viral spot*. Smart TV (such as Swisscom TV 2.0) allows viewers to skip advertising spots. New ways of communication must be sought out.” (Switzerland Tourism, 2016, p. 12) **Influencer marketing is earned media and is an alternative to paid spot ads.**

These findings suggest that influencer marketing should be part of the solutions developed in the later chapters of the MTP. Surprisingly enough, influencer marketing is mentioned nowhere, neither in the MTP nor in the activities outlined in the business plan (10). As a matter of fact, no official KPIs are related to influencer marketing (11).

It is now interesting to delve deeper into the SoMe department of HO, the core of the company, to see how influencer marketing is incorporated. The *White Paper* doesn’t mention anything about influencer marketing (10). The SoMe manager released an internal document called *Blogger Relation Guidelines* in 2015 (12). (See Appendix I) However, this brief document focuses only on bloggers, and is not up-to-date with the existing literature and theories of influencer marketing (13). In order to get deeper insights, the SoMe manager at HO was interviewed (See Appendix II). When asked about the situation of influencer marketing at HO, she answered: “Influencer marketing is an important topic (14), but it is not considered as a priority (15)”. Indeed, two small initiatives involving influencers have already been attempted.

The first one is a project of Instameets for Switzerland Tourism Jubilee (100 years). The second one is an initiative coming from the Swiss Historic Hotels team and consisting of a blogger trip. Apart from that, they are no corporate influencer marketing. When the SoMe team gets requests of influencers, they forward them to the markets: "It is the job of the markets to evaluate whether they are worth the investment". HO doesn't provide any help to the markets with regard to influencer marketing (16). When asked about the future, the SoMe manager thinks "the wish or necessity to incorporate influencer marketing into campaigns and projects will grow." She mentions the obstacles they face "influencer marketing has its rights but needs to mature. Our main issue is to know whether an influencer is worth the investment." (Schmitt, 2016).

After having examined the core of ST, it is interesting to look at influencer marketing activities of the North American market. ST NA is very interested in influencer marketing and thinks it is a good way to reach their specific target audience better (17). (Beamish-Mader, 2016) Indeed, it has recently started working with social influencers. Initiatives have been done and seem to be increasing (18). In 2015, a prototype project has been put together for a key partner, Zurich Tourism, did not get realized, but has then been adjusted for the future. In June 2016, ST invited a travel influencer, Kelly Rizzo, in a group media trip of eight traditional journalists. (Lunardi, 2016) In 2015, ST NA was able to benefit from the expertise of its strategic premium partner Swiss International Air Lines and gain experience in a joint project (19). A famous American landscape photographer, Chris Burkard, travelled to Switzerland and promoted the country through his different platforms. This project turned out to be very successful and a second campaign took place in September 2016 in collaboration with ST NA key partner Ticino Tourism. The influencer became a true advocate of Switzerland (20). (Lunardi, 2016)

ST NA receives many requests from influencers (21). The SoMe manager checks the reach, the engagement and the style of the influencer. Sometimes asks peers whether they have worked with them before. If the influencer looks interesting, the SoMe he checks whether he can integrate the influencer into an existent press trip. (Lunardi, 2016) The ST NA media department mentions a few challenges when it comes to including influencer marketing in their activities. One of the main challenges is the reluctance of the key partners, who buy ST NA's marketing services (22). (Lunardi, 2016) This fact leads to another challenge, which is the budget. ST NA doesn't have get a specific budget for influencer marketing yet (23). It is important to mention that during the process of this paper, ST NA has taken a step forward in regards of influencer marketing. Indeed, for the first time, it incorporated an Influencer Social Media component in its activities listed in ST zum Mitmachen (24). At the time this work was written, one key partner bought this component. (Switzerland Tourism North America, 2016) Another challenge is to know which budget should be used and how it should be used: should



the influencer be paid or not (25)? How can paying an influencer and not a traditional journalist be justified (26)? If paid, does the influencer still belong to the earned media or should he be considered as a paid media (27)? (Beamish-Mader, 2016) ST NA also wonders about the lack of metrics to evaluate an influencer (28) and how a campaign could be reported (29). (Beamish-Mader, 2016) Finally, it is important to take a step back and have a look at ST NA's 4WD. Indeed, no other department has done influencer marketing before at ST NA but the KAM shows interest in incorporating an influencer marketing component it in its activities (30). (Prinz, 2016)

## 2.2 Research question

As summarized in table 4, ST NA shows great potential when it comes influencer marketing, but faces several challenges. ST NA has already initiated influencer programs and has some know-how, but there is room for improvement. ST NA expresses the wish to work further with influencer marketing and integrate it on a regular basis. ST NA would like to receive directions on how to work best with social influencers and run efficient influencer programs. This leads to the research question: *How should Switzerland Tourism North America optimize working with social influencers?* The objective of this work is to create know-how and to formulate relevant recommendations tailor-made for Switzerland Tourism North America. These recommendations would use the present potentials and give solutions on how to overcome the challenges of table 4. The results are intended to be applied by ST NA in the first instance, but any findings could also be used by ST HO, other ST markets or any other tourist organizations.

Table 4: Potential and challenges of influencer marketing at ST NA

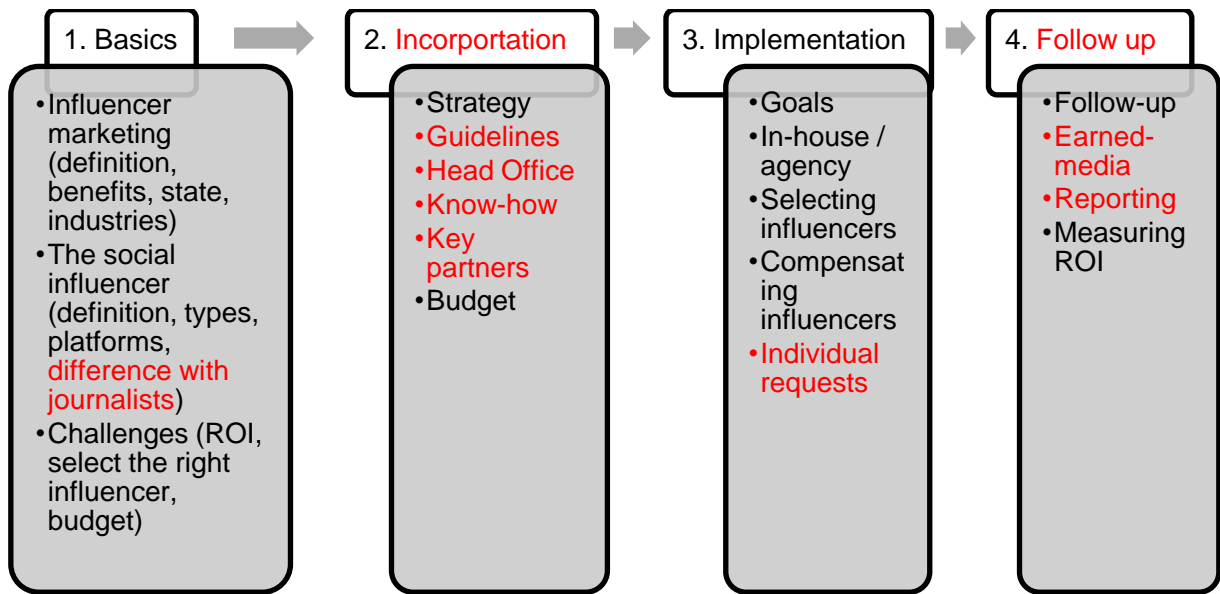
Potentials	Challenges
(1) ST seeks an unconventional, courageous and refreshing communication	(3) SoMe is not well represented in ST's official documents and ST's strategy
(2) SoMe is adequately integrated in 4WD	(10) The MTP, the business plan and the <i>White Paper</i> ignore influencer marketing
(4) ST will introduce new KPIs for SoMe	(11) Influencer marketing doesn't have any related KPIs
(5) ST and STNA are performing well at SoMe	(13) The <i>Blogger Relation Guidelines</i> is not relevant for influencer marketing
(6) ST NA is one of the best markets	(15) Influencer marketing is not considered as a priority at HO and there is no corporate initiatives
(7) ST NA has the necessary human resources at the right place	(16) No support from HO to the markets
(8) ST NA acknowledges the significance of SoMe nowadays	(22) Key partners are reluctant or are not aware of influencer marketing
(9) Influencer marketing could be a perfect solution to the marketing changes that ST wants to achieve	(23) No budget allocated yet

<p>(12) HO released the <i>Blogger Relation Guidelines</i></p> <p>(14) HO is aware of the significance of influencer marketing</p> <p>(17) ST NA has the willingness and sees potential in influencer marketing</p> <p>(18) ST NA is proactive and initiate influencer programs</p> <p>(19) ST NA can get expertise from its strategic partners in joint projects</p> <p>(20) ST NA's first major influencer campaign was a great success</p> <p>(21) ST NA gets many requests from social influencers - Switzerland is an attractive country for influencers (visual, inspiring)</p> <p>(24) An Influencer Social Media project has been added to ST zum Mitmachen</p> <p>(30) Influencer marketing could be integrated according to ST's 4WD model</p>	<p>(25) Should ST NA pay influencers or not?</p> <p>(26) How can ST NA justify paying influencers and not journalists?</p> <p>(27) Is influencer marketing paid or earned media?</p> <p>(28) What are the metrics to evaluate an influencer?</p> <p>(29) How can a campaign be reported?</p>
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Source: author's data

To conclude this section, the *key phases-chart* (Figure 5) is complemented by the insights of the case study (in red). Firstly, a key phase seems to be missing in the chart: the incorporation-phase. This phase takes place before the actual campaign and focuses on how influencer marketing should be incorporated the roots of a company. The case study mentioned the importance of strategy, guidelines, KPIs, HO, key partners and know-how. Secondly, another key phase seems to be missing in the chart: the follow-up phase. This phase takes place after the actual campaign and focuses on the results. The case study mentioned the importance of earned media and reporting. Moreover, the case study mentions the difference with journalists and the individual requests, added respectively in phase 1 and 4.

Figure 5: Key phases-chart 2



Source: author's data

## Chapter 3 – Methodology

### 3.1 Explanation of methods and techniques

In order to answer the research question and reach the objectives of this work, the author proposes the following methodologies. A literature review on influencer marketing has been done in chapter one. It provided the important concepts, up-to-date knowledge and the existing findings on the topic. The literature review is accurate but theoretical. In order to balance the lack of practical information, insights from experts and practitioners in the tourism field will be collected. This is why exploratory research will be conducted.

Three relevant groups specific to tourism will be examined. This method has been chosen in order to get in-depth information as well as a deeper understanding of the specific problem. Individual qualitative interviews will be conducted. This method has been chosen in order to get ideas, concepts and attitudes, more relevant to answering the research question than quantitative data. The technique chosen is semi-structured. Indeed, the interviews will be guided by a script but there will be flexibility to skip some parts of the script or to focus on interesting issues. This technique ensures reliable and comparable data. The interviews will be held one-on-one. The interviews will be developed and conducted according to interview guidelines (see Appendix III).

The three groups have been chosen according to relevant insights to answering the research question they are likely to provide. The first group to be examined is composed of National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) or Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). Their structure is similar to ST and ST NA structures and they face the same kind of challenges on a national or regional level. To put it simple, they are ST NA's competitors. The second group is composed of ST NA's key partners. They are very important as they are the ones who buy the marketing services. To put it simple, they are ST NA's clients. Finally, the third group is composed of social influencers, who are most relevant to the core topic.

After the data has been collected, the interviews will be transcribed and the results will be presented in chapter four, analyzed and interpreted in chapter five. In the following chapter, a discussion will compare the findings with the existing literature. Based on this discussion, recommendations will be formulated.

## 3.2 Sampling

Due to the limited resources and timeframe available for this study, the size of the sampling is small. The samples are selected adequately to get the answers needed for the research question.

### 3.2.1 Sampling of the first group

The samples for the first group is selected based on different criteria to get valuable input for the final recommendations. The DMOs and NTOs have to have completed successful influencer programs and be considered as exemplary in the field. The selection is made based on three relevant reports and rankings in the digital tourism industry. The first one is the Digital Tourism Think Tank (DTTT), an initiative that “aims at providing thought leadership to the tourism industry in digital marketing best practice.” (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2015). DTTT released a major report called The European NTO Digital Benchmark which “investigates the use of digital marketing by the European tourism sector, and benchmarks best practice.” (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2013, p. 3) The second report is from iAmbassador, an organization that “spearheads business development, branding and nurturing and expanding partnerships with regional blogger groups and the tourism industry” and won the Travel Media Awards in 2015. (iAmbassador, 2016) And finally, the third report is from ETourism Monitor, who conducts industry studies within the framework of the Research Institute of Tourism (ITO) of the University of Applied Sciences Valais (HES-SO Valais). (Schegg, s.d.) Tourism and the web is an online magazine which promotes tourism and travel businesses on the Internet. (Roberts, 2015) Ten NTO’s and DMO’s have been selected as ideal candidates for the interviews. (See Appendix IV) Out of the ten, four accepted the interview: Visit Flanders, Promote Iceland, Visit Jordan and Emilia Romagna Turismo.

### 3.2.2 Sampling of the second group

The sample of the second group, ST NA’s key partners, has been selected regardless of whether they had previously run influencer campaigns or not. If they had, the interview was conducted in a way to gain their insights and to understand their level of expertise. If not, the focus was shifted to understanding the obstacles they face. ST NA works with 12 key partners: Geneva Tourism and Conventions, Lake Geneva & Matterhorn Region, Valais/Wallis, Lucerne Tourism, BE!, Interlaken Region, Jungfrau Marketing, Jungfrau Railway, Bern Region, Gstaad Tourism, Zurich Tourism, Ticino Tourism, Basel Tourism and Engadin St. Moritz. Four of them have been approached and have accepted the interviews: Geneva Tourism & Conventions, Lucerne Tourism, Zurich Tourism and Bern Tourism.

### 3.2.3 Sampling of the third group

The sample of the third group consists of influencers who are open to working with destinations and match the ST brand. Having their insights will help to formulate the recommendations. The selection was made based on the expertise of ST NA media department, on the list of the Top 8 Digital Influencers for Travel done by DCI in 2014, (DCI, 2014) and on The Social Travel Summit (STS). STS is an “exclusive annual 2-day gathering of travel & tourism professionals, leading travel bloggers & online influencers from around the world”. (The Social Travel Summit, 2015, p. 0) It is an initiative of iAmbassador in collaboration with Reiseblogger Kollektiv and Traveldudes, and the bloggers and influencers in attendance “are specially selected based on the high quality of the content produced, online reach and track record in working with the tourism industry.” (The Social Travel Summit, 2015, p. 0) 13 influencers have been selected as ideal for the interviews (see Appendix IV). Out of the 13 subjects contacted, three accepted the interview: Scott Kranz, Rob Sese and Erin Faherty.

### 3.3 Construction of the questionnaires

Three different questionnaires are constructed for the three different groups (see Appendix V A, B, C) but all of them follow the same structure. The questions are based on the concepts of the *key phases-chart 2* (Figure 5). Each interview has an average of 15 questions, which will vary in the course of the interview according to the time available and the attitude of the interviewee. In order to get the best insights possible, the questionnaire starts with general and factual questions, which are easy to answer, in order to make the interviewee confident. It will then move to more personal and smart questions. The questionnaires has three parts. The first part focuses on the functioning of the company. The second part goes deeper into the topic and is meant to get insights on experience, opinion, feelings and knowledge. The last part is more personal and focuses on recommendations and tips the interviewee could provide to ST NA. The main goal of the questionnaire is to get insights and suggestions on how ST NA can optimize working with social influencers.

### 3.4 Data collection

The data will be collected and gathered by the author. All the interviews will be recorded and transcribed manually (See Appendix VI). The author will transcribe everything that is linked to the topic and helps to answer the research question. Answers unrelated to the topic will be left out. The final transcript is an organized and cleaned-up version of the interviews.

## Chapter 4 – Presentation of results

This section presents the data collected. A manually approach is considered as the best way to sort out the data in order to obtain usable information. The data were reduced a first time, to key sentences. (See Appendix VIII) Then, the data were reduced a second time to keywords, as shown on tables 5-6-7-8-9. The data are sorted into a framework. The groups of interviewees are featured on the X-scale. The second group - the Swiss key partners – is divided in two sub-groups (active and non-active in influencer marketing) to avoid false interpretation. The topics are classified on the Y-scale according the *key-phases chart 2* (figure 5). During the interviews, new relevant topics were mentioned. They were added in each key-phase. Each data that is relevant to answer the research question is classified in the framework. The author opts for a tabular presentation in order to have an understandable form and a better overview of related ideas. The objective of this table is to reduce data, summarize, and identify elements of each source corresponding to the concepts. In order to simplify or group similar pieces of information, some data will be coded. (See Appendix VII)

Table 5: Simplified results - Basics

		DMOs	ST Swiss key partners	
			Active in influencer marketing	Non-active in influencer marketing
<b>1. Basics</b>	Influencer marketing: <b>definition</b>	A1: Work with intermediary/ambassador with expertise and reach to influence specific target group. A3: People as power of media.		
	Influencer marketing: <b>campaigns</b>	A1: Blogger trip AA1, inf. for special events. Focus on experiences rather than destination. Joint campaigns. A2: Instagram takeovers, digital talks, joint campaigns. A4: Blogger campaign AA4 repeated every year	B1: Instameet with big inf. with 1 day open to public. 2 editions. B3: Bloggers trip to promote a package	B2: Nothing so far B4: Nothing. Just support city Instameets.
	Influencer marketing: <b>benefits</b>	A1: People tell your story. Cheap. Added value. Niche A2: Great ROI. A3: Other people tell your story.		
	Influencer marketing: <b>state</b>	A1: Raise of awareness + initiatives after AA1 among TB.	B1: Slow growth, contacted by other TB for advice. B3: Uneven growth. Good overall.	B2: Low awareness internally, will grow. B4: Low awareness internally.
	Social influencer: <b>diff with journalist</b>	A1: Inf. shouldn't replace journalists, diff attitudes, needs A4: Inf. need more freedom, time, flexibility. Increase of inf-journalists.	B1: Difficult because inf.-journalists. Difference of approach, input, output.	B2: Big question B4: Similar, few differences.
	Challenges	A1: Measuring ROI, collaboration with partners A2: Bureaucracy, saturated market, select the right inf.	B1: Who is the biggest B3: Collaboration with partners	B2: Limited HR, lack of strategy, select a good inf, measuring ROI, quality check, different markets. B4: Limited HR+budget, top-down decisions, lack of SoMe, know-how and support

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources  
 A1: (d'Haen, 2016) A2: (Jervis, 2016) A3: (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4: (Montemaggi, 2016)  
 B1: (Seitz, 2016) B2: (Gerardi, 2016) B3: (Fredricks, 2016) B4: (Schaffner, 2016)



Table 6: Simplified results - Incorporation

		ST Swiss key partners		
		DMOs	Active in influencer marketing	Non active in influencer marketing
<b>2. Incorporation</b>	Turning point	A1: Change of strategy, AA1, look for people to tell our story A2: Arab Spring. A3: Volcano eruption. Need to find a quick solution. A4: Example of Costa Brava, AA4, inspiring people.	B1: New employee	
	Strategy	A1: New strategy with content & conversation dept. A3: New organization: use people as the power of media. A4: Be proactive, approach HO, adjust strategy.		B2: Still no strategy.
	Head Office	A1: Model role to partners, share learnings, bigger budget. A2: Improve communication and mutual understanding A4: Crucial: leader, proactive, educate. Bring IM from market		
	Know-how	A1: co-worker, conferences, industry reports, learning by doing, keynote speakers, consultants, agencies, guidelines A2: partners, travel associations, no guidelines A4: employee, no guidelines because small but big should	B1: Instameets, learning by doing, internet, conferences, employee, no guidelines, cbc B3: conference, internal meeting, internet, guidelines, cbc	B2: peers, no guidelines would like some B4: conferences, peers
	Partners	A1: Educated and aware thanks to AA1 A2: No partners. A4: Intense collaboration to know their ROI	B3: Partners to educate	
	Departments	A1: Content & Conversation Dept, intense collaboration. A2: Communication & PR. Integrate trade ! A4: Digital media dept, intense collaboration. Integrate trade!	B1: Media and SoMe dept, confusion, lack of collaboration B3: Media dept, intense collaboration with digital dept	B2: Media and digital dept, not enough collaboration B4: Limited HR (1 online, 2 traditional press)
	Budget/ HR	A2: If limited budget, be creative. A4: Try, invest, shift budgets	B1. Good budget, more to come	B4: Limited budget+HR: work with inf.- journalists.

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources

A1: (d'Haen, 2016) A2: (Jervis, 2016) A3: (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4: (Montemaggi, 2016)

B1: (Seitz, 2016) B2: (Gerardi, 2016) B3: (Fredricks, 2016) B4: (Schaffner, 2016)

Table 7: Simplified results - Implementation

		DMOs	ST Swiss key partners
			Active in influencer marketing
<b>3. Implementation</b>	Goals and objectives	A3: Fight decline of tourists, fight seasonality, emotional connection, fight regionality, sustainability.	B1: Say thank you to community.
	KPIs	A1: Content, tweets, reach, fans, engagement, conversations, actions, emotional reactions, media value A2: Images, samples, links, videos, engagement, impressions, views, clickthroughs, sweepstakes, sign ups, traffic, content A3: Likes, comments.	B1: Fan, followers, likes, reach (selection of inf. based on KPIs) B3: Engagement, content, depends a lot on the platforms.
	In-house /Agency	A1: Agency for AA1 because lack of expertise and network. Challenge: markets want to get involved A2: Never, waste of money. A4: In-house when AA4 small. Agency when AA4 big.	B1: SoMe dept in-house or inf. Media Dept both. B2: Both.
	Vetting the influencers	A2: Keep them on file, seek them out	
	Approaching influencers	A1: Approach inf. in the same way if groups. Easy going, first match per email, than meet in real life.	
	Selecting influencers	A1: Crucial for success. Hard because standards fluctuate. Quality over quantity, relevance & reach, no cloudfare, match, engagement, conversations, analytics, kind of content, amount of content, quality of content, style, understand the value, language (not market!) A2: Crucial for success. Quality over quantity, engagement, focus, niche, followers, experience with tourism, reputation in industry, qualification for, final report delivery, no general inf. A3: Anybody who loves Iceland: friends, locals, dreamers. Locals are the best storytellers. Quality over quantity, matching topics, common sense. A4: Hard to standardize criteria. Quality over quantity, style, quality of content, professional, business-orientation, commitment, true interest, added value, niche, analytics, no media kit.	B1: All about numbers, followers, engagement, quality of content. Does the inf. is famous, has agent, ask for money? No small inf. B3: Assessment, Alexa.com, Followerwonk, interests, fit guidelines, target audience, segmentation, not too demanding, type of content, no political conversations, small (not huge) engagement

Agreement	A1: Yes, together with inf., expectations, input, output, flexible A2: Yes, right for pictures, videos etc... A3: Flexible, inf. are creative. A4: Yes important, deliverables, expectations	B1: Yes, if big inf.
Run-down	A1: Booklet with hashtags, storylines, did you know's, phone numbers. Goal: nice moments, feel welcome, flexibility. Meet other inf., locals for insider tips A2: Depends, road trips, personal guide A3: Flexible, not too many restrictions A4: Flexible, nice moments, platform to share, bring people together.	B1: Photo spots, no tight schedule, time of sunsets/sunrises. B3: If campaign, we come up with concept. If individual inf., no specific concept, flexibility
Compensating the influencer	A1: Big question. No money but strong on-site experiences, flights, ground expenses. Reason: true ambassadors, no bought spokespeople. If no money, not too high expectations A2: No money but flights, ground expenses, additional costs. Reason: we provide them content/stories. Inf. should get money from private sectors A3: Money, flights and ground expenses. A4: Process in evolution. In the past, just accommodation. Now inf. have the right to be paid. Reason: inf. are their own brand, good work, professional, to say thank you, right to require quality and deliverables, establish long-term relations. Stay flexible. Money is not to push them to tell smthg but to give them a framework.	B1: Big inf.: money, flights and ground expenses. Small inf.: no money, accommodation, pay everybody in 2017 if more budget B3: No money but on-site experiences, ground expenses and flights depending on the partners. Reason: no budget.

		ST Swiss key partners	
		DMOs	
		Active in influencer marketing	Non active in influencer marketing
Individual requests	A1: Accept only if fits calendar and niche. Refuse general bloggers. Provide public transportation/free entrances for already planned trips. A2: Accept only if niche. A3: Great added value to campaign of the year. A4: Go through evaluation process.	B3: Cbc	B2: Ask ST markets for advice. B4: Accept if from ST markets. Integrated in press groups.

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources  
A1: (d'Haen, 2016) A2: (Jervis, 2016) A3: (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4: (Montemaggi, 2016)  
B1: (Seitz, 2016) B2: (Gerardi, 2016) B3: (Fredricks, 2016) B4: (Schaffner, 2016)

Table 8: Simplified results - Follow-up

		ST Swiss key partners		
		DMOs	ST Swiss key partners	
			Active in influencer marketing	Non active in influencer marketing
4. Follow-up	Relationship	A1: Crucial. Keep network alive, transfer contacts. A2: Depends because understaffed. Some inf. become ambassadors by themselves. Be consistent, maintain partnerships, re-share inf.'s content. A4: Crucial. Cultivate relationships, long-term.	B1: Not long-term except for local inf. B3: Re-share inf.'s content	
	Reporting	A2: Reporting from inf + own reporting with tool. A4: Inf. should do reporting if smart enough. Sometimes hard because constantly traveling.		
	ROI	A1: Formula: sum of contents + media value + score on Facebook + conversation value / total cost. A2: Not 100% accurate. Final report with engagement, posts, analytics. A3: Very hard. How to evaluate stimulation of a demand? In process. A4: Added value: corporate content, feedback to adjust offers, new ambassadors, conversions seen by partners Not immediate. Numbers: hashtag trackers, advertising value equivalent, impressions.	B1: Manually calculate likes. B2: Specific tools.	
	Earned or paid media	A4: IM is paid media		

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources  
A1: (d'Haen, 2016) A2: (Jervis, 2016) A3: (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4: (Montemaggi, 2016)  
B1: (Seitz, 2016) B2: (Gerardi, 2016) B3: (Fredricks, 2016) B4: (Schaffner, 2016)

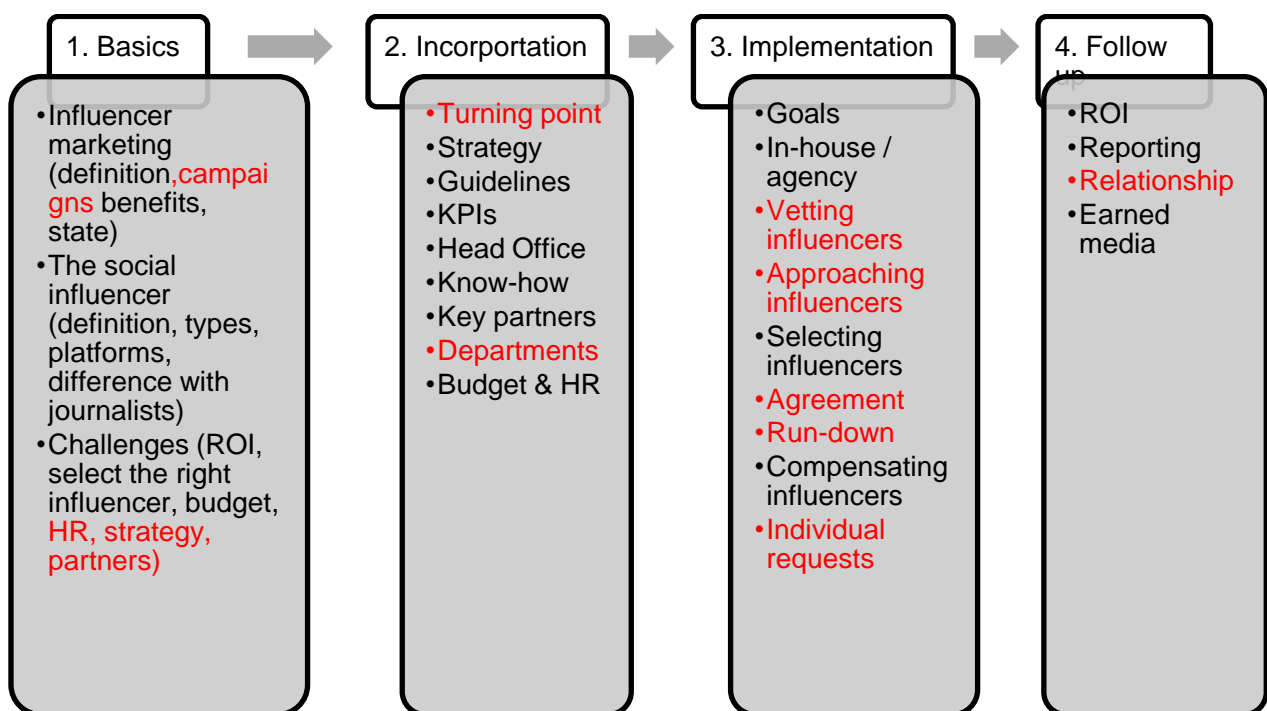
Table 9: Simplified results - Influencers

		Social influencers
1. Basics	Campaigns	C1: Area exploration, pictures licensing, SoMe posts, articles on blog with regional and local TB. C2: Instagram takeover for regional or national TB, picture licensing for travel brands (backpack, watch, apparel, etc.) C3: Articles for cruise company, posts for hotel group.
	The influencer	C1: From attorney to full time photography and writing. Influence came along with works gaining quality. Create a brand. Freelance photographer rather than influencer. C2: Photographer, started to travel, new audience caught. Will move to full-time photography. C3: Private blog, travel to new places, caught audience, attend events, connect with peers, strong personality, moved to full-time blogging.
	Expertise	C1: Still images of mountain landscapes, action sports, outdoor sports, astro photography C2: Travel, lifestyle, dramatic, dark, mysterious, emotions, cinematic vibes. C3: Females in their thirties. No specific topics, any hotels, activities, country.
	Platforms	C1: Instagram. Also Facebook and Twitter. Signed up on other platforms but not very active. C2: Tumblr, Instagram. C3: Blog, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Flipagram, but particularly Twitter because short and brief
Partnerships	Relationship with audience	C1: Consistent theme in imagery, keep private life away. C2: Commenting back, be polite, genuine, natural, don't be pretentious C3: Always commenting back. My media kit: numbers, benefits of partnering with me, articles or reviews, works
	Accept a partnership	C1: Fits travel plans, meet brand's needs, familiarity with area, kind of geography, activities, scenery, expenses, short drive understanding of professionalism. C2: Flexible. Don't care of numbers, focus on my work, but business want numbers.
	Good partnership	C1: Good cooperation, mutual understanding, make agreement together, let me select content published on my channels, enough time an no packed agenda
	Compensation	C1: Usually seek money. Reason: professional, full-time freelance photographer C2: Usually get free products. Part-time photographer. C3: Usually get free products in exchange, accommodation and tours. Money would be appreciated because full-time but not main goal. Goal is to travel and write.
	Follow-up	C3: Brands should share content produced

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources  
C1: (Kranz, 2016) C2: (Sese, 2016) C3: (Faherty, 2016)

While conducting the study, a few new key topics were addressed. This topics (in red) complement the key-phases chart (Figure 6). First, ideas of campaigns and a few challenges are added to *Basics*. In the incorporation-phase, the subjects interviewed mentioned the importance of a turning point and of the different departments. In the implementation-phase, they mentioned the importance of approaching and vetting the influencer, of the agreement, they gave insights on the run-down of a campaign and talked about how to handle individual requests. In the follow-up-phase, they addressed the crucial element of the brand-influencer relationship.

Figure 6: Key phases-chart 3



Source: author's data

## Chapter 5 – Analysis and interpretation

In this section, the data presented in last chapter will be broken up, analysed and interpreted. The goal of the analysis is to compare variables, highlight relationships or differences between variables and identify recurrent patterns. The goal of the interpretation is to give a sense of the data, to draw conclusions, summarize findings, identify expected and unexpected findings and theorize if many related figures. The order of the topics will follow figure 6. At the end of each topic, a conclusion in bold will highlight the main findings.

### 1. Basics

#### 1.1 Influencer marketing

##### 1.1.1 Definition

Defining influencer marketing is the first step needed to make sure everyone is on the same page. A1 gives the following definition: “Get a bunch of people on board to influence a specific target group in which you are interested, seek an intermediary or ambassador with a certain expertise focusing on specific themes or topics and disposing of a certain reach”. (d’Haen, 2016). A3 observes that influencer marketing is basically “using the power of people as media”. (Guðjónsson, 2016) **Conclusion: influencer marketing is a marketing technique in which a brand uses influential people to communicate its story to a very specific target audience.**

##### 1.1.2 Campaign examples

In order to understand concretely what an influencer marketing campaign might look like, the subjects interviewed were asked to relay a few campaigns they have run. A1 organized *Flanders is a Festival*, an influencer campaign featuring 100 bloggers who traveled to Flanders to experience their variety of festivals. In another campaign, A1 used digital influencers to promote cycling in Flanders. In future, Visit Flanders plans to work with influencers on the opening of a new innovative brewery, the opening of an art museum and the World War I memorial. (d’Haen, 2016) A2 put together various influencer trips, organized Instagram takeovers, invited influencers for digital talks and set up a major campaign with National Geographic to promote 99 things to do in Jordan. (Jervis, 2016) A4 launched Blogville; a campaign where various bloggers live together in a single apartment while exploring the city. (Montemaggi, 2016) B1 ran a four-day instameet featuring Instagram stars with an opened-to-public day. B3 did different blogger projects. One of them was the Girls’ Guide; a package for women including local tips, which was put together by

brand ambassadors. This campaign focused on mysteries and surprises. (Fredricks, 2016) A3 shows how Promote Iceland has a more global approach to influencer marketing with yearly campaigns. Their first campaign, *Inspired by Iceland*, consisted of a platform where everyone could share their story about Iceland. Then, they launched *Iceland Invites*, where locals would invite tourists to their home. The year after, they created the campaign *Iceland by another name* to get the personal perception of tourists. Last year, they launched the *Secret Campaign*, which aimed to unveil secret places of Iceland. In addition to these annual campaigns, they invited individual influencers as bloggers or instagrammers. (Guðjónsson, 2016) B2 and B4 haven't done any concrete campaigns so far except for supporting an instameet. C1 has participated in various campaigns as an influencer; he has explored regions and documented it with imagery licensing, SoMe posts, and blog articles for mountain TB. (Kranz, 2016) C2 has done an Instagram takeover for regional and national TB, picture licensing for other travel brands (backpacks, watches, shoes, etc.) (Sese, 2016) C3 has done posts and articles for a cruise company and posts for a hotel group. (Faherty, 2016) **Conclusion: an influencer campaign can take any kind of form, for example Instameets, which are recurrent. Campaigns can be done with a unique influencer, with a small group or with a massive group of influencers. They can be punctual or yearly. They can be run exclusively by the brand or together with other partners. They are mainly based on experiences rather than on a destination. It can be surmised that influencer marketing is open and flexible and that creativity is the key.**

### 1.1.3 Benefits

Absolutely all of the interviewees, may it be NTO's, DMO's or influencers, give a highly positive feedback of their influencer campaigns. Only A2 reports one very bad experience with an influencer who produced content with political judgements. (Jervis, 2016) All of the interviewees plan to go further with influencer marketing. B1 mentions he will get more budget in 2017. (Seitz, 2016) Indeed, influencer marketing has considerable benefits. A1 says that the main advantage of influencer marketing is that the brand's story is told by other people, a method which replaces paid advertisement. (d'Haen, 2016) A3 agrees and explains that it is more effective if somebody else pays a brand compliments than if a brand compliments itself. A2 agrees as well: "social media is the greatest ROI you can get". (Jervis, 2016) A1 adds that influencer marketing is perfect for small budgets because it is cheap and is a good way to reach niche markets. (d'Haen, 2016) **Conclusion: influencer marketing is an efficient marketing technique. The impact is greater if other people recommend a brand than if the brand boasts of its own greatness.**



#### 1.1.4 State

More and more tourism brands are starting to work with digital influencers. When it comes to DMO's, some of them are ahead like B1 and B3, others are behind like B2 and B4. A1 states that thanks to the impact of *Flanders is a Festival*, awareness about influencer marketing was raised across Flanders. Indeed as of 2011, other members of the tourism sector started to change their strategy and to initiate influencer campaigns. (d'Haen, 2016) As for Switzerland, B3 thinks that the level of awareness varies but that the country is going in a good direction overall. (Fredricks, 2016) B1 is a bit more negative and thinks that influencer marketing is just starting in Switzerland. He reports that some DMO's contacted him for advice because they didn't know how to approach it. (Seitz, 2016) Indeed, B2 states that awareness is pretty low in their own company, except for the media department which has a good understanding. However, she thinks that awareness will grow in a near future. (Gerardi, 2016) B4 states that the media department is pretty much aware of the importance of influencer marketing but that no initiatives have been started yet. (Schaffner, 2016) B1, B2, B3 and B4 report the ST markets from which they receive influencer requests: B1 mentions mainly the UK and Germany but also Brazil, Italy, North America, Asia and Middle East. (Seitz, 2016) B2 mentions mainly North America as well as the UK, Asia and GCC. (Gerardi, 2016) B4 mentions the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, GCC and North America. (Schaffner, 2016) **Conclusion: influencer marketing is not established in all countries yet but awareness of it is growing. The results show that in Switzerland a few DMO's are leaders in the field while others are still behind.**

### 1.2 The social influencer

#### 1.2.1 Types

Can everyone be an influencer? In the data collected, A2 answers to this question: "The market of bloggers nowadays is saturated. Everybody is an influencer now, you have to look out carefully who they really are." (Jervis, 2016) Therefore, it makes it crucial to find the right one. A3 highlight how locals can be good influencers: "include locals in your campaigns; they are authentic and they are the best storytellers". (Guðjónsson, 2016) C1 and C3 are different types of influencers. On one hand, C3 seems to have quickly risen up the ranks. She seeks for influencer opportunities and fresh content. She doesn't seem to be selective about brands. (Faherty, 2016) On the other hand, C1's process to become an influencer was a longer. The influence arrived along with the high quality of his works and his consistency: "I've never really identified myself as an influencer although I have been involved in works influencer marketing. I am first and foremost a freelance photographer." (Kranz, 2016) **Conclusion: there are different types of influencers and it is important to identify them.**

### 1.2.2 Platforms

The data collected show a variation of perceptions and habits. Firstly, we can see that some of the interviewees still focus on one single channel. In their dialogues, A1, A4 and B2 focus on bloggers and B1 on instagrammers. However, influencers operate on multiple channels. The influencer C1, who is a landscape photographer, uses mainly Instagram but also Facebook and Twitter. (Kranz, 2016) C2 uses Tumblr, where he gets the most engagement, and Instagram. (Sese, 2016) C3 uses her Blog, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Flipagram, but particularly Twitter because it is short and brief. (Faherty, 2016) **Conclusion: influencers don't operate on a single platform but on a mix of platforms, which they select according to their expertise.**

### 1.2.3 Experts

In its definition, the influencer has a specific expertise. C1 focuses on still images and generally photographs mountain landscapes, action & outdoor sports and astrophotography. (Kranz, 2016) C2 is specialized in travel and lifestyle and seeks to involve emotions with his photography style, which is dramatic, dark and mysterious. (Sese, 2016) C3 has females in their thirties as target audience but doesn't have a specific topic; she doesn't want to limit herself to some types of travelling. (Faherty, 2016) **Conclusion: most of the influencers have a certain style and are experts in certain areas.**

### 1.2.4 Difference with journalists

Influencers tend to be compared to traditional journalists. B1 speaks of this issue: "Their purpose, input and output are very different. The approach should be different as well." He thinks that "influencers should be handled more as marketing campaigns." (Seitz, 2016) B1 and A4 highlight that sometimes the difference is hard to define as more and more journalists become digital influencers. (Montemaggi, 2016) B4 explains that their current practice is to work with journalists that are also influencers. (Schaffner, 2016) A1 adds an important point: even if influencer marketing is a great added value, it shouldn't replace classical media work: "Influencers have different attitudes and needs" (d'Haen, 2016) **Conclusion: influencers shouldn't be compared to traditional journalists, as it is two completely different concepts.**

A4 explains that influencers should be treated differently than journalists when it comes to an influencer trip: "Influencers should definitely get more freedom, time and flexibility than journalists." (Montemaggi, 2016) A1 and A3 fully agree with A4 on the importance of freedom and flexibility. (d'Haen, 2016) (Guðjónsson, 2016) B4 agrees as well but is not as categorical: "For the moment,

we treat influencers like classical journalists. We give them itineraries but with fewer or shorter city tours and we add suggestions with picture points.” (Schaffner, 2016) The influencer C1 considers not having enough time for scouting at the destination and packed agenda as his main issue. (Kranz, 2016) **Conclusion: influencers should be given more freedom, time and flexibility than regular journalists during trips.**

### 1.3 The challenges

The subjects interviewed were asked to mention the challenges they face in their influencer marketing. A1 reports measuring ROI as a challenge, which is shared by B4. A1 and B3 mention the collaboration with local partners who don't understand the value of influencer marketing, as challenging. (d'Haen, 2016) (Fredricks, 2016) A2 and B2 mention the selection of the right influencer. (Jervis, 2016) B1 reports that his challenge is to know whether the influencer is big enough or not. (Seitz, 2016) Finally, B2 and B4 share the same challenges: limited human resources and budget, lack of know-how and strategy, lack of external support. (Gerardi, 2016) B4 adds lack of tools for SoMe and top-down decisions. (Schaffner, 2016) **Conclusion: Measuring ROI, selecting the right influencer and dealing with partners seem to be recurrent challenges. Other challenges are internal: strategy, limited human resources and budget, lack of know-how and external support, top-down decisions.**

## 2. Incorporation

The question of where and how influencer marketing should be incorporated in a company seems to be one of the main issues of groups A and B, which testifies to its complexity and importance. Matters like strategy, budget, human resources, awareness, role of HO and other departments will be presented in the following paragraphs, based upon the data collected.

### 2.1 Turning point

In the data collected, a recurrent issue was highlighted: most interviewees started influencer marketing after a specific turning point. A1 says that their major campaign *Flanders is a Festival* was a turning point for their organization: “Before 2012, there were some small initiatives with influencers. But in 2012, we launched *Flanders is a Festival* and since then influencer marketing has been officially part of our strategy.” (d'Haen, 2016) A2 explains that they started working with bloggers after the Arab Spring in 2011: “When the Arab Spring hit the region, it was important to keep Jordan positive in the media”. (Jervis, 2016) A3 explains that for them, everything started after the volcanic eruption in 2010: “When the irruption took place, our Prime Minister came on

TV and told everybody to take one hour off, open the computer and tell their love story with Iceland. One third of the country did it.” (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4 explains that they tried their first blogger trip in 2011 based on the example of Costa Brava: “We wanted to give it a try. First it was like a traditional press trip and then we decided to work in a different way with this new kind of media. The idea of Blogville came up and has been done each year until now.” (Montemaggi, 2016) B1 explains that they officially started in 2015 when he arrived in the company. (Seitz, 2016) **Conclusion: most organizations started to launch influencer marketing after a certain turning point, may it be a crisis, a need for innovation or a new employee.**

## 2.2 Strategy

Based on interview partners A1 and A3, the very first step to incorporate influencer marketing in a company is to change the strategy. A1 says: “We decided to use other people to tell our story rather than to do paid advertising” (d'Haen, 2016) and explains: “We have a brand new content and conversation department, which came with our new strategy two years ago.” A3 explains that they decided to “use people as the power of media”. (Guðjónsson, 2016) Also, B2 explains why they don't do influencer marketing: “The problem is that we still don't have a strategy.” (Gerardi, 2016) A4 gives recommendations: “You need to be proactive and believe in new things, at first the investment is close to zero.”, “I think that what you firstly need to do at Switzerland Tourism is to go to your Head Office and talk about the strategy.” (Montemaggi, 2016) **Conclusion: the very first step to incorporate influencer marketing in a company is to work on the strategy.**

## 2.4 Head Office

The subjects interviewed share their opinions about the role of HO. A1 and A4 are convinced that HO should take the lead as it can function as a role model. A1 explains: “After our initiative with *Flanders is a Festival*, all local tourist boards became eager to learn about influencer. I started to see them at the same congresses. I am really happy to see that what we took the lead and inspired them. As we have more budget we can invest more.” A1 thinks that HO should also be responsible for sharing learnings: “After *Flanders is a Festival*, we set up some lessons learned and guidelines, which we shared to our offices abroad.” (d'Haen, 2016) A4 adds that it is the most important thing; HO should take the lead and educate the regions. He shares the success story of Visit Britain North America who managed to bring the know-how to HO. A4 recognizes that it is more difficult for bigger entity than smaller ones. A4 gives some recommendations: “You need to test, push and invest. Be proactive and believe in new things.” (Montemaggi, 2016) A2, who works in the NA market, shares insights on their collaboration with HO: “We try to recommend good

influencers to HO and try to take part in the process. But, our issues is the lack of communication with HO. It has happened that both of us reached out to the same influencer without noticing. If you belong to one organization, you have to be connected and communicate frequently otherwise it looks unprofessional.” (Jervis, 2016) All the subjects of group A agree that it is crucial that HO takes the lead. Group B goes in the same direction. B2 and B4 explains that they would appreciate to get help from ST HO: “It would be good if ST could do something about that and help us, brief us, explain to us, give us guidelines and tips.” (Gerardi, 2016) (Schaffner, 2016) **Conclusion: HO plays a role model and needs to take the lead. It has the responsibility to educate and support the regions and should share learnings and guidelines.**

## 2.5 Know-how

All of the subjects interviewed explain that they acquired know-how from different sources. A1 mentions inspiring coworkers, renowned keynote speakers, consultants, digital agencies conferences of the Europe Travel Commission and reports. (d'Haen, 2016) A2 mentions partners like National Geographic. (Jervis, 2016) B1 mentions Instameets, blogs, online searches and conferences. (Seitz, 2016) B3 mentions the Digital Travel Summit, Digital Think Thank, internal exchanges and online searches. (Fredricks, 2016) B2 and B4 mention peers. Many of them explains that it is also a matter of learning by doing. (Gerardi, 2016) (Schaffner, 2016) **Conclusion: know-how can be acquired from coworkers, partners, peers, keynote speakers, consultants, agencies, conferences, reports, online searches and blogs. Learning by doing is an important factor.**

A1 and B3 explain that they used their know-how to establish guidelines for their company. A1 reports that their guidelines are based on learnings and tips of agencies. (d'Haen, 2016) B3 explains that they usually work on a case-by-case basis and that guidelines are meant to give a framework. (Fredricks, 2016) A2, A4, B1 don't have any guidelines. B1 says “not yet”. (Seitz, 2016) A4 explains that they don't need any as they are a small organization. (Montemaggi, 2016) B2 says that they don't have any but would appreciate some guidelines. (Gerardi, 2016) **Conclusion: guidelines are meant to give a framework and tips. They are not crucial for small organizations but important for bigger ones.**

## 2.6 Local partners

Depending on partners can limit a company's activities. A1 and B3 explain that it takes a lot of effort to educate partners that don't understand the value of influencer marketing. (Fredricks,

2016) A1 explains that their major campaign *Flanders is a Festival* did a big impact on the local partners' education. She stresses the fact that it is important to set borders of partners aside and join forces. (d'Haen, 2016) A4 emphasizes that it is important to collaborate intensively with partners for better results. (Montemaggi, 2016) **Conclusion: Educating partners is key to facilitate a campaign and get better results.**

## 2.7 Departments

Influencer marketing takes place online, mainly on SoMe, but also offline with the influencer trips. To the question "Which department is taking care of influencer marketing?", answers are very heterogeneous. A1's company opted for a new setup. They created entirely new departments such as the "Content & Conversation" department, which is in charge of the influencers. (d'Haen, 2016) Most of the interviewees (A2, A4, B1, B3, B2) explain that influencer marketing is handled by both, the media and the digital department and that the cross-departmental collaboration works very well: "The natural process was that the media and digital departments merge together when it comes to a project with influencers". (Montemaggi, 2016). The only exception is B1 and B2, who seem to suffer from this unclear set up. B1 states: "The influencer requests land mainly on the media desk but sometimes they land on my desk. It is not clear." B1 explains that the collaboration between both departments is not ideal: "It's not easy because we are not working in the same departments". B2 adds that they do work together with the digital department but that cooperation is not as intense as it should be. (Gerardi, 2016) **Conclusion: No matter to which department influencer marketing reports to, cross-departmental cooperation is key and should be as intense as possible.**

A2 and A4 reveal how other departments could be involved in an influencer campaign. Indeed, the trade department shouldn't be overlooked. A2 shares her success story: Jordan Tourism sent an influencer on a trip covered by a local TO and the NTO. The influencer explored the destination and put together an itinerary based on his personal experiences and expertise. Then, the TO took over this itinerary and transformed it into a package. The influencer, the TO as well as the NTO promoted the new product on their various channels. It turned out to be very a successful way to generate bookings. **Conclusion: influencer campaigns can be done together with the trade department to drive bookings effectively.**

## 2.8 Budget & HR

The topic of limited budgets and human resources was recurrently mentioned in the interviews with B2 and B4. A4 says that he knows "the budget is always a problem but you need to shift

budgets. At the beginning, the investment for an influencer campaign is close to zero.” (Montemaggi, 2016) A2 is a good example of company with limited budget which nevertheless does influencer marketing: “Our budget is very limited therefore we have to get very creative with marketing.” (Jervis, 2016) **Conclusion: many organizations have limited budgets. Even with small budgets, influencer campaigns can be initiated. The solution is to shift budgets or to be creative.**

### 3. Implementation

#### 3.1 Goals

An influencer campaign can have different goals. A1 reports using the influencer marketing technique for important events like the opening of a new brewery, the opening of a modern art museum or the World War I memorial. (d'Haen, 2016) A3 reports using influencers for a different goal each year. The first year was to fight the decline in tourism because of the volcano eruption, the second year was to fight seasonality, the third year was to create an emotional connection, the fourth year was to fight regionality and the fifth year was to make tourism more sustainable. (Guðjónsson, 2016) B1 reports doing Instameets to say thank you to the community for being loyal. (Seitz, 2016) **Conclusion: goals have to be clearly defined prior to a campaign. An influencer campaign can help reach a wide variety of goals.**

#### 3.2 KPIs

In order to measure the various quantitative goals, it is important to set KPIs. B1 explains that he selects his influencers according to the number of the KPIs. (Seitz, 2016) Each interviewee has defined his own KPIs. A1 mentions number of content, tweets, fans, reach of content, engagement, conversations created, actions taken, emotional reactions created, overall media value of the project. (d'Haen, 2016) A2 mentions images, samples, links, videos, engagement, impressions, views, clickthroughs, sweepstakes, sign ups, traffic driven to our website, content created. (Jervis, 2016) A3 mentions likes, comments, and says they haven't come across any better measurements. (Guðjónsson, 2016) B1 mentions the number of fans and followers acquired, the number of likes and reach, B3 mentions engagement, content shared for big campaigns. **Conclusion: There are plenty of possible KPIs and engagement seem to be the most important one.**

### 3.3 In-house / agency

Brands sometimes hesitate as to whether or not they should outsource their influencer campaign. Interviewees' responses to this issue are heterogeneous. A1 worked with an agency for their first project in order to balance the lack of expertise in-house and to tap into a wide network of influencers. This partnership turned out to be a win-win situation as the agency could expand its network. A1 reports the challenge she faced when outsourcing the project: the offices abroad were offended about not being able to recommend their own influencers. A1 justified the decision by explaining that the goal was to have a uniformity of influencers, selected by the same list of criteria. (d'Haen, 2016) A4 explains that they first started to run the Blogville project in-house and that, as the demand increased, they decided to hire an agency to have more structure. (Montemaggi, 2016) A2, for his part, categorically states that they don't work with agencies and consider it a waste of money. (Jervis, 2016) B3 sometimes works with an agency and sometimes not. (Fredricks, 2016) B1 explains that he works with an influencer rather than an agency; the influencer has a good network and knows his turf. (Seitz, 2016) **Conclusion: the organization has to evaluate the size of the campaign and define its resources to decide whether to run a campaign in-house or outsource it. An idea can be to work with an influencer instead of an agency.**

### 3.4 Vetting and approaching the influencer

A1 and A2 give quick insights on how to vet and approach an influencer. A2 explains that it is important to keep influencers on file and seek them out. A1 states influencers should be approached the same way with the same criteria when it comes to a group campaign. She says that the first match should be an easy-going email, and it is good to then meet them in real life. (d'Haen, 2016) (Jervis, 2016)

### 3.5 Selecting the influencer

Selecting the right influencer seems crucial for a successful campaign. A1 and A2 argue that the research process is key. If the influencer is carefully selected, the company can give him the freedom he needs without risking bad surprises. However, according to A1 and A4, it is hard to have fixed criteria as standards fluctuate. All of the interviewees agree that quality is more important than quantity. The only exception is B1, who thinks it is all about the numbers. His criteria are whether the influencer is famous, is represented by an agent and asks for money. He doesn't consider small influencers. Besides the reach, he also checks the engagement and the quality of the pictures. In contrast, A1, A2 and B3 rather go with small influencers: they are less demanding, have better engagement rate and are cheaper. A1 emphasize that it is smart to work



with an influencer who just started out and is still affordable. A3's criteria are rather qualitative than quantitative; he states that the influencer should be in love with Iceland. He goes further saying that on a global scale they would use anybody who loves Iceland: friends, local people and dreamers. He checks whether the influencer has matching topics with the brand. A4 goes this way and adds that finding the perfect partner is also a question of intuition. Then, he brings up the topic of professionalism: the key is to have an influencer who is business-oriented, who did background research and reaches out with a concept in mind. A good influencer is someone who tries to cultivate relationships. This means that the influencer has true interest in the cooperation and can bring added value. A1, A2 and A4 agree on the following criteria: reach, engagement, relevance, type and quality of content, style, focus and matching topics. A1 and A4 also look at the analytics of the influencer. A2 accentuates the importance of the audience and the segmentation. She reports doing a background check to see with which brands the influencer has worked in the past and if he has experience with tourism. She checks his reputation within the industry. For example, an influencer with political conversations is a no-go. A1 adds that she looks at the conversations the influence is able to create and whether the influencer understands the value of the experience he will get. She stresses the fact that the origin of the influencer is not relevant: the criteria should be language specific rather than market specific. She explains having left out the Klout score, which isn't relevant anymore. In contrast, B3 still considers the Klout score. On the side of the influencers themselves, C1 says that to be a good influencer he tries to keep a consistent theme in his imagery and to keep private life separate from his work. C1 says that he selects a brand based on his familiarity with the area, the kind of geography, activities or scenery he needs, the possibility of the expenses being kept to (Seitz, 2016) (Fredricks, 2016) a minimum, the ease of getting to the place and whether he meets the needs of the brand. C2 explains that to be a good influencer he tries to reply to comments, to be polite, genuine, natural and unpretentious. He explains that he is flexible and that it depends on the content of the agreement. He adds that he focuses more on the quality of his work than on numbers, but acknowledges that most brands want numbers. C3 says that to be a good influencer she tries to always comment back and to have a solid media kit showing her numbers, followers, benefits of partnering with her, articles and reviews she has written or other works she has done. (d'Haen, 2016) (Jervis, 2016) (Guðjónsson, 2016) (Montemaggi, 2016) (Kranz, 2016) (Sese, 2016)(Faherty, 2016)

**Conclusion: The research process is key for a successful campaign. Despite the tons of criteria, there is a tendency to consider quality over quantity and to go with small influencers. The most recurrent criteria are reach, engagement, quality of content, style and matching topics. Interesting criteria are the professionalism of the influencer, his familiarity with the tourism industry, and his reputation in the industry.**

In the interviews with group A, the importance of the influencer's expertise and niche is emphasized. A1 state: "We decided to set up a global campaign with influencers on niche topics." and "We think that for a travel organization with a small budget, influencer marketing is a very good way to work on a niche." (d'Haen, 2016) A2 observes: "We look at their focus, how specific they are, if it is a niche (...) we try to do fewer general blogger trips and focus more on specific niches. We try to find a specific type of blogger for specific themed trips" (Jervis, 2016) A3 reports: "If the influencer doesn't have big numbers but is niche, for example bicycles, you should go for it." (Guðjónsson, 2016) In the interviews with group C, C1 is a good example of a niche influencer. He focuses on mountains, action sports, outdoor sports and astro photography (night sky and stars). (Kranz, 2016) C3, on the other hand, is a good example of a general influencer as she does not cover specific topic. "I don't want to limit myself to some types of travelling" she says. (Faherty, 2016) C2 is balancing both. He has general topics like lifestyle and travel but has a very strong identity and style "I like whatever is dramatic, dark, mysterious, foggy, what involves emotions. Also, I like to have a cinematic vibe that can evoke emotions." (Sese, 2016)

**Conclusion: niche and expertise are crucial criteria.**

### 3.6 Agreement

Every interviewee agrees that it is important to make a written agreement prior to the campaign with clear inputs and outputs. A1 explains that the agreement should come from both parties and that it is important to stay flexible, an opinion shared by A3. The organization shouldn't give orders but ask the influencer how much he is able to produce. (d'Haen, 2016) The influencer C1 also stresses the importance of doing the agreement together in order to: "set up a mutual understanding on both sides and define each party's goals, what they want to achieve and how it fits into each sides larger scheme". (Kranz, 2016) **Conclusion: the agreement should be done by both parties with mutual respect and flexibility.**

### 3.7 Run-down

All of the interviewees (A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, B3) agree to say that flexibility is key for the run-down of an influencer campaign. Influencers are independent and creative people and shouldn't be facing too many restrictions or tight schedules. C1 argues that "an unfavorable experience would be not to have enough time to do some scouting and research. If it is a packed agenda, sometimes the results are not as good as I could hope or as good as they could have been". (Kranz, 2016) A1 explains that they produced a booklet with hashtags, storylines, did you know's, emergency phone numbers, phone numbers of the other influencers so they could meet up. In

addition to this, they set up a buddy system, where the influencer could hang out with a local. (d'Haen, 2016) A2 explains that some of her influencers refuse organized tours and prefer to take road trips on their own. She tends to recommend a guide to accompany the influencer, which is also a way to do a quality check. (Jervis, 2016) B1 explains that he is helped by an influencer, that he prepares a list of photo locations for Instagrammers with the time of sunsets and sunrises. (Seitz, 2016) A1, A3 and A4 highlights the importance of creating moments or creating a platform to bring people together and to enable influencers to share their stories. (Guðjónsson, 2016) (Montemaggi, 2016) (d'Haen, 2016) **Conclusion: flexibility is key when it comes to the run-down of a campaign. Brands shouldn't put restrictions or plan tight schedules. They should create a good working environment and give the influencer the tools he needs: wifi, a private guide, a buddy, photos spots, a booklet or a platform.**

### 3.8 Compensating the influencer

When asked about paying the influencer, all of the subjects interviewed has strong and divergent opinions. On one side, A1, A2, B2 and B4 claim not to believe in paying influencers. A1 thinks that influencers should be true ambassadors with freedom of speech rather than spokespeople. In exchange for his work, the influencer should get strong experiences, flights and ground expenses covered. (d'Haen, 2016) A2 shares this point of view: she doesn't believe in paying influencers. She rather pays for the flights, the ground expenses or any additional costs. She justifies it by saying that influencers get access to a whole world of content and stories to feed their channels or to sell to private brands. She thinks that influencers should charge private travel brands such as hotels, but not public companies such as tourist offices. (Jervis, 2016) **B3** goes in the same direction; she doesn't pay influencers but provides experiences, covers ground expenses and flights whenever possible. However, her justification is different; it is related to her limited budget. (Fredricks, 2016) On the other side, A3, B1, A4 and C1 are for paying the influencers. A3 is paying influencers in addition to the flights and ground expenses. B1 pays big influencers in addition to flights and ground expenses but doesn't pay small influencers, for whom he only pays accommodation. He mentions that he might have more budget in 2017 to pay everybody. (Seitz, 2016) A4 goes deeper into the topic and provides justifications. He explains that paying influencers is a process in evolution. When influencer marketing started, brands didn't pay influencers because there were not too many. They would rather be treated like journalists. However, differences with journalists started to be highlighted. Influencers are their own brand and don't get a salary from newspapers or magazines like journalists. Nowadays, being an influencer is a job and influencing a living. They have the right to be paid if they are professional. (Montemaggi, 2016) C1 agrees with this statement and adds that brands should make a difference

between a professional and a vacationer. (Kranz, 2016) The statements of A4 are seconded by the answers of group C. C1 was an attorney and became a full time freelance photographer in 2012. (Kranz, 2016) C2 is a part time photographer and has an office job on the side but hopes to transition to full time photography with a new opportunity in Washington D.C. (Sese, 2016) C3 was a banker and became a full time traveler and blogger in 2016. (Faherty, 2016) According to A4, paying an influencer is not only a way to say thank you but also to invest in professional people and to establish long-term business relations. If paying an influencer, the brand has the right to expect a certain number of articles and quality content in return. A4 thinks that both parties should stay flexible about the money. Even if influencers with agents do have daily rates, they should leave the door open if a tourist office approaches with an interesting project and vice-versa. A4 recommends not to be scared whenever an influencer asks for compensation. He suggests to accept to pay an influencer if he is business oriented, shows interest, looks for long-term relationships and promises good work. The ideal would be to pay everyone who produces good work. An alternative would be to not pay the influencer for the first project and if the outcome was good, to promise compensation for the further projects. (Montemaggi, 2016) On the side of the influencers, C1 says he usually seeks compensation as it is what he does for a living. (Kranz, 2016) C2 explains that he usually gets free products in exchange without mentioning his satisfaction (Sese, 2016) C3 explains that she gets products, accommodation and tours in exchange for her work. She says that, as she makes influencing a living, being payed would be nice even if compensation is not her main goal. (Faherty, 2016) The answers of group C are not too money-focused. **Conclusion: Both parties have valuable arguments. The party arguing against monetary compensation give different justifications: influencers should be true ambassadors and not influenced by money, influencers should charge private organizations and not public ones, influencers get content to feed their channels. The party arguing for monetary compensation agree on the justification: things have changed, influencers are professionals and good work deserve to be compensated. No matter what the decision is, partners should stay open for negotiations.**

### 3.9 Individual requests

In the data collected, the interview subjects explain how they handle influencer requests. A1 and A3 consider a request only if it fits the campaigns that are planned. A1 and A2 only accept influencers that are niche. A1 adds that if an influencer is planning a trip to Flanders anyways, they help him with public transportation or free entrances. (d'Haen, 2016) (Jervis, 2016) (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4 and B3 handle individual requests case by case. (Fredricks, 2016) (Montemaggi, 2016) B2 and B4 rely on ST to know whether to accept an influencer or not and B4

tries to integrate it in a group press trip whenever possible. (Gerardi, 2016) (Schaffner, 2016) In group C, C1 neutrally receives reasonable requests from tourism groups and gives them full consideration. He accepts or refuses a request depending on the amount of travel already planned to have a good work-life balance. (Kranz, 2016) **Conclusion: Individual requests should be accepted only if they fit the campaigns planned. Any requests coming from general influencers should be refused. Influencers that come to visit the destination anyway can be supported.**

## 4. Follow-up

### 4.1 ROI

To know whether the goals have been reached, ROI is evaluated at the end of a campaign. To the question “How do you calculate the ROI?”, interviewees provide heterogeneous answers. A1 replies that they put together a formula including the sum of content, media value, number on Facebook, conversation value divided by the total cost of the project. (d'Haen, 2016) A2 explains that they do a final report with engagements, posts, and analytics from the influencers. He is aware that no ROI is 100% accurate. (Jervis, 2016) A3 says it is hard to evaluate the stimulation of a demand. They work with other comparable Nordic offices to find an answer to this issue. (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4 says that they use trackers like hashtags with a sort of advertising value equivalent, and check the impressions and the number of people that read the articles. He adds that numbers in business are always important but that they should only be used to have an overview, nothing more. A4 explains that the real ROI for him is when private partners of a destination see a concrete conversion, which means it is the spinoff of an influencer campaign. He explains that the ROI is not immediate and is difficult to track but not more so than with another print ad or marketing in general. He recommends working closely with private partners so that they share the ROI. He concludes by saying that the added value is the most important. (Montemaggi, 2016) B1 manually calculates likes. (Seitz, 2016) B2 has specific tools but doesn't explain further. **Conclusion: Answers to the question of measuring ROI are heterogeneous, which can lead to some confusion. Some interviewees put together their own formula, some check whether they have reached their KPIs, some focus on the added value and check with the partners whether they saw a conversion. Brands have to keep in mind that marketing activities have always been hard to evaluate; results are difficult to track and not immediate.**

## 4.2 Reporting

At the end of a campaign, reporting needs to be done. A2 asks the influencer a final report and does her own reporting using a media monitoring tool. (Jervis, 2016) A4 does says that smart bloggers should be the ones doing the reporting and giving updates on the published articles. This can be sometimes hard because they are constantly traveling. (Montemaggi, 2016) **Conclusion: Reporting seems to be the influencer's task.**

## 4.3 Relationships

A1 and A4 consider the follow up as crucial. Relationships should be maintained and cultivated, networks should be kept alive. A1 recommends to transfer the contact of the influencer to the respective market. (d'Haen, 2016) A2 explains that they don't always follow up because they are understaffed but that fortunately some influencers become ambassadors by themselves and reach out to them again. She adds one shouldn't forget that influencers influence other influencers. (Jervis, 2016) B1 doesn't really believe in long-term relationships with influencers, unless it is with local influencers. He thinks that once an influencer leaves the destination he doesn't want to post about it anymore. (Seitz, 2016) **Conclusion: Influencer marketing goes beyond the actual campaign. Cultivating relationships between brand and influencer is key. Influencers should become business partners and contacts should be passed internally.**

## 4.4 Paid or earned media

A4 mentions that influencer marketing is paid media. He explains that influencers hare not paid to say something specific but to be able to do their work. A4 says that it is very important to think long-term because influencers occasionally keep posting months or years after a campaign. (Montemaggi, 2016) **Conclusion: Good and long-term relationships can lead to great earned media.**

## Chapter 6 - Discussion

In this chapter, the findings of the survey are compared to the literature review to see whether they align or not. The goal is to understand how the results compare with other literature in order to be able to draw the best recommendations in chapter 7. The order of the topics will be the same as in chapter 5, which corresponds to the key-phases chart 3 (figure 6). It is necessary to keep in mind that the literature review is theoretical and general while the current findings of the survey are concrete and bring specific insights. Having said that, it is no surprise that, in the following section, the literature review seems to lack realistic insights. The incorporation-phase is not part of the literature review, which means it is left out in the following section.

### 1. Basics

#### 1.1 Influencer marketing

##### 1.1.1 Definition

According to the findings of our survey, influencer marketing is defined as a marketing technique where a brand identifies influential people to communicate its story to a very specific target audience. This definition is concise and corresponds entirely to Wong's and Murphy & Schram's definitions. In this respect, the definition can be validated.

##### 1.1.2 Campaigns

The findings of the survey give concrete examples of influencer campaigns. These insights stimulate ideas. Indeed, creativity is key when it comes to an influencer campaign, as a campaign can take any kind of forms. With these realistic and practical insights, the findings of the study complement the literature review where it is lacking.

##### 1.1.3 Benefits

The existing literature focuses to a large extent on the benefits of influencer marketing and how this practice is efficient. In our survey, absolutely all of the interviewees, may it be brands or influencers, provide highly positive feedback of their experiences. This establish the fact that influencer marketing is an efficient practice. This concurs Augure's study. Our survey mentions the benefit of tapping into a network of trust, confirming Morin and Aquino's findings. It also fit with Li, Lin & Lai's study, which report that people have the tendency to be responsive to subjective expressions with an emotional component rather than objective statements.

#### **1.1.4 State**

The paper's survey shows that influencer marketing is not yet established in all countries and unevenly established in tourist organizations. However, TechnoratiMedia's reports seem more positive. It can be argued that the literature's insights have to be interpreted with caution because the brands surveyed have different backgrounds. Indeed, TechnoratiMedia did a survey on brands coming from different industries as opposed to our survey, which was done exclusively on the tourism industry.

This survey finds that influencer marketing is going to grow among tourist organizations. Indeed, the subjects who are active in influencer marketing indicate that they plan to keep on doing it and doing more of it. The subjects who are not active in influencer marketing report that they think it will increase in a near future. This confirms Social Media Today's survey.

### **1.2 The social influencer**

#### **1.2.1 Definition**

In the present survey, the definition of what constitutes an influencer is developed throughout the interviews, without a specific question related to it. However, it goes in the same direction of the definitions and concepts presented in the literature review

#### **1.2.2 Types**

In the literature review, Brown and Fiorella state that influencer marketing has the tendency to focus on the influencer and his popularity rather than on their relationships. This diverge with our study. Indeed, our interviewees are aware of the importance of the relationships and know that popularity is not a relevant criteria. According to Brown and Fiorella, true influence comes from micro- rather than from macro-influencers. This theory is confirmed by the findings of our own survey. Indeed, the subjects interviewed share the exact same point of view, except for B1.

In the literature review, Moxie lists different types of influencers. In our survey, the influencers correspond to some types of Moxie's types. C1 could be a *Premium Influencer*, C2 could be an *Influential consumer* and C3 could be a *Peer Influencer or Everyday Influencer*.

#### **1.2.3 Platforms**

TechnoratiMedia reports that too often marketers defaulted to calling influencers "bloggers" and that they neglect influencer porosity. This is corroborated by the findings of our survey, where subjects interviewed tend to focus on bloggers or instagrammers. When it comes to platforms, the



literature review features several studies. As our sample of influencers is too small, no deductions can be drawn. C1 and C2, both photographers, outline the relevance of Instagram and Tumblr. Instagram seems to have significant importance as Maspoli stated, but Tumblr isn't feature in table 1. C1 and C3 also use Facebook and Twitter, and C1 mentions the importance of her blog, fact which correspond to the literature review.

#### **1.2.4 Experts**

As briefly mentioned in the literature review, "influencers have built their own audiences over time based on their expertise." This statement is confirmed by this survey's findings, which show that influencers have their own styles and expertise.

#### **1.2.5 Difference with traditional journalists**

The survey conducted in this paper emphasizes the importance of the differences between influencers and traditional media. This topic was completely left out in the literature review. It is, however, relevant for the case study.

### **1.3 The challenges**

This survey suggests that one of the main challenges of brands, when it comes to influencer marketing, is measuring ROI. This confirms what Ferguson stated. Also, it appears in our survey that selecting the influencer is another major challenge. This finding fits entirely with TapInfluence and Augure's findings. TapInfluence also cites the lack of budget. This topic seems to be a challenge for three of our interviewees. The other big challenge highlighted in our survey are the local partners. This practical insight is not present in the existing literature. It might be related to the fact that NTO's and DMO's tend to depend on local partners.

## **2. Incorporation**

The question of where and how influencer marketing should be incorporated in a company was totally left out in the literature review. Indeed, the existing literature tends to focus on how a campaign should be run rather than how influencer marketing should be incorporated at the roots of the company. The interviews conducted for this paper, however, do give the needed insights. Topics like strategy, collaboration with the HO, cross-departmental collaboration, budget and human resources are addressed in the findings and fill in the gaps in the available literature.

## 3. Implementation

### 3.1 Goals

Influencer marketing can help reach many different goals. The goals mentioned in chapter one correlate with the goals mentioned by the interviewees. Indeed, the literature review reports that influencer marketing can raise brand awareness and amplify messages. A1 explains she would use influencers to raise awareness when it comes to important events like the opening of a museum. The literature review reports that another goal of influencer marketing can be to create affinity and bring emotions into the brand-consumer relationship. A3 argues that the campaign's goal *Iceland by another name* was all about getting people to express their feelings about Iceland. The literature review explains that a brand can boost its reputation and gain trust thanks to influencer marketing. A2's statements confirm this, as they used influencer marketing to boost the reputation of Jordan after the Arab Spring and to gain back the trust of travelers. It is the same with A3 and the eruption of the volcano in Iceland. The literature review reports influencer marketing can help build better brand-consumer relationships. B1 uses influencer marketing to say thank you to his SoMe community for being loyal and organizes an instameet. It is a way for him to build better connections.

### 3.2 KPIs

The literature available does not focus on the topic of KPIs. However, the interviewees have a good understanding of the issue and present concrete KPIs.

### 3.3 In-house / agency

Our study finds that both options, running an influencer campaign in-house or outsourcing it, can be relevant, depending on the size of the campaign or the resources. However, the literature review leans towards the in-house option. TapInfluence's findings report that most of the brands do it in-house.

### 3.4 Selecting the influencer

The findings presented in the literature review and the findings of our survey generally convert. Steizner states that the most important thing for a brand should be to look for a combination of reach, relevance and resonance. These three criteria are recurrently mentioned in our survey and confirm Steizner's finding. The literature review highlights that brands should focus on micro-influencers rather than macro-influencers. We can see that there is a strong tendency to agree

with this statement among the interviewees. However, the literature diverges from the interview findings in one important aspect: the niche of the influencer. The study findings recurrently mention the niche of the influencer as being the most important criteria of selection and it isn't mentioned in the existing literature. Another point which should be discussed is raised by group C. Indeed, when it comes to deciding whether to work with a brand, C1 and C2 seem to focus more on the content of the campaign rather than on the brand itself. TechnoratiMedia and Moxie report that the number one criteria for an influencer is his affinity to the brand. This study also shows that criteria are relative as the digital world is in constant change.

### **3.5 Agreement and run-down**

There is a gap in the literature review as it doesn't cover these topics. This gap is filled with the findings of the present survey.

### **3.6 Compensating the influencer**

The literature review reflects the same picture as our study: there are strong divergences of opinions about monetary compensation. Among our interviewees, those who are against monetary compensation give justifications that align with Augure and Aquino's findings. Those who are for monetary compensation give reasons that align with Moxie and Brown's findings. Moxie reports that influencers would like to get "money" first, Augure reports "support in content creation" is the preferred compensation and TechnoratiMedia reports that influencers "first look for new products". This divergence is represented in group C; some claim they want money and other free products. The literature review mentions a study that says that influencers are being incentivized with free products in the first place and money in second place. This reflects the tendency among our interviews. The literature review adds that the compensation plays a crucial role when the influencer decides to work with a brand or not. However, this wasn't mentioned in the interview of group C. Both, the literature review and our findings, suggest to compensate the influencers case-by-case according to their work. However, TapInfluence's survey, which reports that 74% of the influencers state that brands offering inadequate compensation is the biggest mistake being made today, could be making the balance tilting.

## 4. Follow-up

### 4.1 ROI

All the findings agree on one point: ROI is not an easy and precise science. This can lead to confusion. However, interviewees give leads. Some put together their own formula, some check whether they have reached their KPIs, and some focus on the added value the influencer campaign has brought. Brands have to keep in mind that marketing activities have always been hard to evaluate; the results are difficult to track and not immediate.

### 4.2 Reporting

The literature review doesn't cover this topic.

### 4.3 Relationship

When it comes to the brand-influencer relationship, our study resonates with Brown & Hayes' findings: influencer marketing is about long-term relationships, it should start before a campaign and continues beyond the campaign. Cultivating relationships is key and following up is crucial. However, Aquino considers an influencer as a friend while our findings suggest to consider the influencer as a business partner.

### 4.4 Paid or earned media

The literature review doesn't cover this topic.

To conclude this chapter, it can be said that the findings of our survey tend to go in the same direction as the findings presented in the literature of chapter one. However, they add more practical experience and provide specific insights to the travel industry, which is very important to answer our research question.

## Chapter 7 – Recommendations

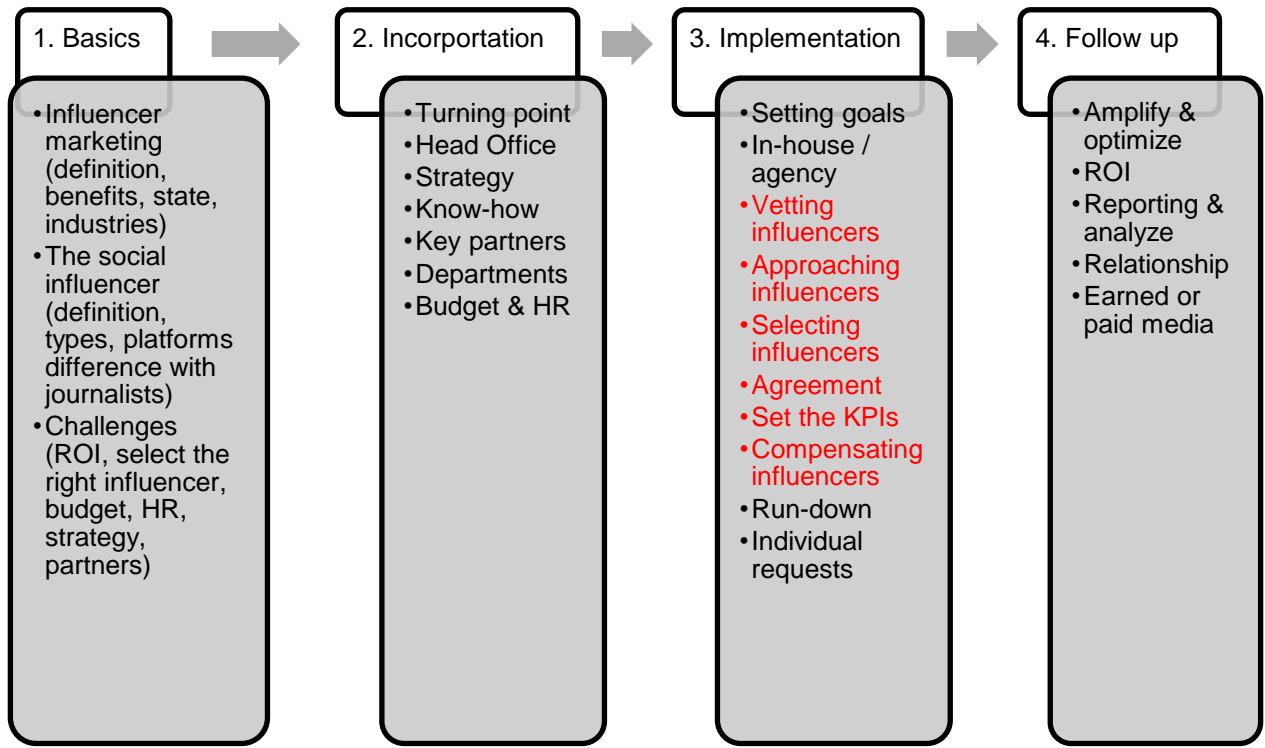
In this chapter, specific recommendations on how to optimize working with social influencers are formulated. They are meant to provide a solution to the challenges outlined in table 4. The recommendations are sorted into the four key phases of the *key-phases chart 4* (Figure 7): basics, incorporation, implementation and follow-up. They represent step-by-step guidelines. The recommendations are tailor-made for the media department of ST NA. However, they can be useful for other departments, for ST HO, for other ST markets and for any DMO or NTO. The recommendations aim to be as concrete, realistic, targeted and accurate as possible. They are based on empirical research; the literature review as well as the challenges of table 4 have led to the interviews. The survey has brought data, which have been analyzed and interpreted to draw conclusions. These conclusions have been discussed and adjusted to the realities faced by ST NA to formulate the present recommendations. In order to complement and validate the recommendations, the following additional sources have been used:

- **Steps from the *Official Roadmap for Influencer Marketing*** (see Appendix IX) This chart presents 10 key steps to running a successful influencer campaign. It has been put together by the leading influencer marketing agency MediaKix, (MediaKix, 2016) and recommended by Frederic Gonzalo, a SoMe marketing specialist, blogger and consultant who knows the tourist industry very well.

- **Validation by Catharina Fischer.** Catharina Fischer is a Social Media/Online consultant, who specializes in influencer marketing and who has worked for the German Tourist Board. She went through the recommendations and gave inputs on the order of the steps (Figure 7 in red) and on the difficult questions of departments, ROI and paid/earned media. (Fischer, 2016)

- **Final validation by Paolo Lunardi.** Paolo Lunardi is the SoMe Coordinator at ST NA and has coordinated different influencer marketing campaigns. He is the most concerned person by this paper. He review the recommendations and evaluated them to make sure they are realistic. (Lunardi, 2016)

Figure 7: Key-phases chart 4



Source: author's data

## 1. Understanding the basics

### **What is influencer marketing?**

Influencer marketing is a technique where a brand uses digitally influential people to communicate its story to a specific target audience. Influencer marketing is very flexible. An influencer campaign can take any kind of form, can be conducted with a single influencer, a small group or with a massive group of influencers, can last a few days to a whole year and can be conducted exclusively by a brand or together with partners. Influencer campaigns should be based on experiences rather than a destination. Be creative!

### **What are the benefits of influencer marketing?**

Tired of being bombarded by advertisements, people lost trust in brands and became skeptical of advertisements. With the arrival of social media, they started following digital influencers with whom they share common interests and values. These influencers give their followers and fans what they are looking for: inspiration and recommendations. Influencer marketing is a way to tap into this network of trust, authenticity and emotions. At the beginning, influencer marketing is paid media but it can lead to very good earned media if it is done correctly and if the relationship is nurtured.

- Paid advertisement is less efficient than it used to be: people developed ad-blindness
- Influencer marketing is cheaper than paid advertisement and is more comprehensive
- People trust other people rather than brands: recommendations have more impact than advertisement
- Influencer marketing is word-of-mouth with a huge multiplier: it takes place on social media and blogs
- Influencer marketing is based on trusted content: recommendations from someone people align with are trusted
- Influencer marketing is precision marketing: it targets specific segments and niche
- Influencer marketing is UGC: it is created by the customers rather than by the brand
- Influencer marketing is experience marketing: it is based on the experience around the product
- Influencer marketing is promotion on demand: customers decide whether to enter an influencer's community or not
- Influencer marketing is content marketing: it is meant to produce high quality content

### **How is influencer marketing evolving?**

Influencer marketing is a booming practice among professionals. It is a perfect tool for the tourism sector as it is based on visuals, inspiration, experience and emotions. Many NTO's have become experts at influencer marketing and have conducted outstanding campaigns. In Switzerland, a few DMO's have followed the trend, while the majority are still sticking to traditional marketing methods. However, awareness and interest in influencer marketing is increasing overall. To stay efficient and competitive, tourist organizations have to keep up with the trends. Influencer marketing is very dynamic and standards change every month.

### **Who is a social influencer?**

An influencer is a self-made opinion leader who has built his own community around his expertise. He operates on blogs or social media. He is a storyteller, a content creator and knows how to create enthusiasm, share relevant opinions and generate conversations. There are different types of influencers. Influencers can be locals, tourists, employees, social engagers, channel influencers, peers, premium influencers or famous people.

### **What are the most relevant platforms?**

The platforms depend on each influencer and his expertise. Facebook, Twitter and blogs are the main ones, but Instagram and YouTube are catching up. Indeed, images and especially videos are becoming more and more important. A mix of platforms should be considered.

### **What is the difference between an influencer and a journalist?**

Influencers and journalists are two different concepts and shouldn't be compared. Their purpose, input, output, needs and attitudes are very different. Influencers are their own brand with a community they have built around it. They belong exclusively to the online and Social Media world.

### **What are the challenges of influencer marketing?**

The main challenge of influencer marketing is to find the right influencer. Indeed, research process is key. Generate the satisfaction of every party of the project and measuring ROI can be other challenges. Moreover, incorporating influencer marketing into an organization needs some internal efforts: Decision-makers have to be convinced, corporate strategy has to be adjusted, partners have to be educated, resources have to be increased or shifted, and know-how has to be created.



## 2. Set the stage

### 2.1 Be on the lookout for a trigger

A major turning point, like a challenge that has to be overcome or a new employee, can stimulate a previously reluctant organization to launch an influencer marketing campaign.

- Think ahead: is there a unique event coming up or an imminent crisis to overcome?  
For example, ST NA could launch a major influencer campaign to bring Canadians back to Switzerland. Indeed, because of the strong Swiss franc, Switzerland has lost attractiveness among Canadians at the beginning of 2016. An opportunity would be the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canada in 2017.

### 2.2 Approach Head Office

ST HO is supposed to be a role model and to take the lead. ST HO is responsible for guiding and educating ST markets and Swiss DMO's. It should be open-minded and proactive.

- Set up a meeting with the SoMe manager at HO and set up a pilot group
- Bring the experience gained in the market into HO
- Communicate intensively with HO: ST markets and HO shouldn't work independently

### 2.3 Work on strategy

In order to be most successful, influencer marketing has to be incorporated at the roots of an organization. Influencer marketing belongs to the Social Media department, which is part of Online Marketing.

- Complement the E-Marketing and KMM official definitions with a social media component
- Incorporate influencer marketing in the MTP and the business plan
- Complete the KPIs of E-Marketing as follows:  
Blog articles and visits, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram posts, reach and engagement, YouTube videos with views, in addition to Fans & Followers on SoMe, Fan Engagement Rate which are already in.
- Update the *White Paper* and add an influencer marketing component
- Replace the *Blogger's Guidelines* by the present recommendations
- Leverage the opportunity to have an influencer social media component in the ST zum Mitmachen.

## **2.4 Build up know-how**

Know-how is easy to build as it can come from many sources. Learning by doing is an important factor.

- Learn from inspiring coworkers or partners  
Example: Swiss International Air Lines, National Geographic, Travel+Leisure
- Attend relevant conferences  
Examples: Influencer Marketing Days, Digital Travel Summit, Social Travel Summit, Digital Tourism Think Tank Global
- Hire consultants  
Example: Catharina Fischer, Nicholas Montemaggi, Frederic Gonzalo
- Get recommendations from peers  
Example: Visit Britain, Visit Norway, Tourism New Zealand, Tourism Australia, Germany Tourism
- Take part in webinars

## **2.5 Educate key partners**

ST NA's marketing activities depend highly on its key partners. In order to sell its services, to facilitate an influencer campaign and to get better results, ST NA has to educate its key partners.

- Launch an education program with key partners: organize workshops and host webinars
- Present influencer marketing, its benefits and best practices at the Vacation Day and invite influencers
- Invite social influencers to media or trade events like the Best of Switzerland, Road to Switzerland or Extravaganza, where key partners are present
- Adjust the present recommendations and share them with the key partners
- Launch a major influencer campaign in Switzerland with many influencer to create impact and raise awareness

## 2.6 Collaborate intensively between departments

The 4-Wheel Drive should always be kept in mind for any marketing activity, including influencer marketing. Cross-departmental cooperation is key.

- Incentivize other departments to systematically send information related to influencers to the social media coordinator
- Educate other departments: share best practices and lessons learned at staff or team meetings
- Try to include other departments when planning a campaign, especially KAM  
Example: Together with a Tour Operator (TO) specialized in adventure, send a famous mountain biker to Switzerland. In addition to his posts and articles, the influencer will select the best mountain biking routes and put together an itinerary. This itinerary will be turned into a package by the TO. This new product will be sold by the TO and pushed by ST and the influencer on their respective social media channels.
- Launch a series of B2B posts in the B2C social media channels  
Example: the tip of the month from an influential travel agent like Valerie Wilson

## 2.7 Find resources

Limited resources tend to be a challenge for many organizations. However, through influencer marketing big things can be achieved with small budgets.

- Be creative and give the influencer strong added value (experiences on site) if you can't pay him
- Shift budgets: less paid advertisement such as online banners or ads
- Partner up with partners (e.g. SWISS), strategic partners (Nikon, BMC, ...) to reduce costs
- Learn to negotiate with the influencer

### 3. Plan your campaign

#### 3.1 Set global objectives and goals

To get a bigger picture and to know where you are heading, define qualitative objectives and goals. Quantitative goals will be defined later on.

- Define campaign objectives

Examples:

- Launch a new product like the hut to hut hiking tours
- Promote an event like the opening of the Burgenstock Resorts
- Promote a webinar like the first webinar with Gruyère
- Overcome a challenge like the decline in visitors from Canada

Other objectives could be: increase Instagram followers, increase engagement rate on Facebook, create content for a specific niche, reach a new target group

- Set goals that align with campaign objectives

Examples:

- Amplify a message to promote hut to hut hiking tours
- Drive bookings for the Burgenstock Resorts
- Raise awareness of Gruyère cheese
- Regain trust and credibility with Canadian tourists

Other goals could be: create affinity for the brand, create an emotional connection, create loyalty with customers, etc...

#### 3.2 Determine the target audience

Keep in mind that reach only makes sense if it is targeted.

- Out of the ST segments, select the groups you want to reach

#### 3.3 Have a framework in mind

Have a global idea of your campaign in mind. But stay global, otherwise you risk to kill opportunities. Keep in mind that, to get the most out of an influencer campaign, you need to stay flexible.

- Think about the available budget, the ideal platforms and schedule but don't plan anything yet! These points will be confirmed later on.

### **3.4 Vet your influencers carefully**

Vetting influencers is an ongoing process that should be part of the daily activities of the Social Media Manager.

- Be out there digitally: follow influencers on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram on their blogs and other relevant platforms
- Do organic research (search, images, news) : web exploration is a good way to have a bigger picture of what the influencer has been up to
- Be out there physically: join Twitter parties, events, conferences, talks
- Stay up-to-date: read the latest industry reports and participate in webinars
- Keep track of the influencers you come across in a document. Be aware that influencers might shift focus.
- Get in touch with influencers without pitching: build a close network of interesting influencers before working on a specific campaign. This is a way to build authentic relationships.  
For example, connect with influencers on LinkedIn
- Interact with the influencers: comment on their blogs or posts, write private messages, mention them in posts, recall souvenirs.

### **3.5 Decide whether to run the campaign in-house or hire an agency**

The decision on whether to run an influencer campaign in-house or to outsource it depends on the size of the campaign and the resources available. However, it is preferred to run a campaign in-house.

- If you have the resources, run the campaign in-house: the product “Switzerland” is a complex product, hard to understand for an external agency. Also, it makes the campaign more authentic and will allow you to build better relationships with the influencers. Last but not least, it is cheaper.
- Don’t overlook the advantages of an agency: they know niche influencers, they can share know-how
- If you decide to work with an agency, do background research and ask peers.  
Be careful, some agencies are aggressive.
- Hire an influencer instead of an agency: he also has knowledge and a good network and can help you to put together a campaign.

### 3.6 Select the influencer

The research process for selecting the right influencer is crucial for a successful campaign. Combination of reach, relevance and resonance is key.

- Take the necessary time
- Look into influencers you already know
- Look into influencers that influencers follow
- Don't forget that influencers can be locals, employees, peers, experts in a very specific field, etc... Example: a famous architect or art collector
- Do a background check: follow him on his blog and SoMe platforms, look at his content, do organic searches, check his reputation with peers and other influencers, check the brands he has worked with
- Select an influencer based on his language and not his location
- Pick an influencer...
  - who is a micro-influencer: higher engagement rate, they are easier to access and to deal with, more reliable, cheaper, have a more authentic community, and the potential to grow, they can become an ambassador or an advocate. Macro influencers are best if you need to create buzz.
  - who is niche: influencers with specific expertise have the most engagement
  - who corresponds to your target: reach only makes sense if it is targeted
  - who resonates with ST. The influencer's voice should align with brand messaging. Switzerland should match his personality, style and values. The influencer should have a personal affinity to Switzerland and be passionate about it.
  - who has a good engagement rate: it means he nurtures his relationship with his audience, he interacts with his fans and followers, is good at generating conversations
  - who was an expert before becoming an influencer. If somebody became naturally influential because of his talent, it means that he is genuinely good at what he does
  - who is trustworthy and has a good reputation in the industry
  - who creates high-quality content: is he consistent, does he tell good stories, make good pictures/videos, does his content resonate with his audience?
  - who has industry knowledge: the influencer must know how the tourism industry works and be aware of the challenges of a private/public tourist office

- who is business oriented. An influencer who did a background research, who reaches out with a concept in mind, who tries to cultivate relationships and gives regular updates he has a true interest in making the campaign succeed. A good way to check if he is business oriented, is to ask for his media kit.
- who doesn't have political or religious conversations
- Use the following tools:
  - Cision: ST NA uses Cision on a regular basis to get journalist's contact details and circulation numbers. However, it also has a major database of influencers, which should not be neglected. The research can be filtered by beat, outlet focus, location, country, market and more. Detailed contact information, social media accounts, outlets and topics are featured. The results are classified by Cision's Influencer Rating going from 0 to 100 and based on a mix of 40 criteria of influence including outlet circulation, page views, unique visitors, Facebook likes, retweets, blog comments etc.
  - Engagor: ST uses Engagor on a regular basis to monitor social media. However, Engagor's services go beyond simple monitoring; it has a great feature for influencer marketing: go on Insight, People and then select your Facebook page for the corresponding market. The current Facebook fans can be filtered by their engagement on your page (like, comments, shares, clicks), by their influence (how influential they are) or by their followers (how many followers they have). This great feature makes it possible to find influencers who truly align with the brand.
  - Klout Score: This rating is well known in the field of influencer marketing and is a bit controversial. It measures people's influence on a scale from 1 to 100 across all platforms with more than 400 signals. Be careful when considering this score because it is not industry related. For example, Justin Bieber has one of the biggest scores but wouldn't be of any relevance for Switzerland. The score can be useful when the company hesitates between two candidates. No need to download the Klout software, this score is featured on Engagor as well.
  - Buzzsumo and Followerwonk are free tools, easy to use and relevant but focus on Twitter only. They are useful as a side tool.

### 3.7 Approach the influencer

To maximize chances that the influencer agrees to work with you, reach out carefully.

- Reach out individually and make it as personal as possible: show that you know them and respect what they do
- Make old-school phone calls
- Suggest a collaboration, don't ask for a favor
- Don't mention budget
- Mention the added value you can offer (e.g contests, press coverage, ...)

### 3.8 Prepare the agreement

Prepare a written agreement with clear input and output, requirements, talking points, and compensation. Do it together with the influencer: he has experience and knows what works for his audience. Mutual respect is key.

- Don't force him to do something: it will not sound authentic
- Add gamification if possible: organize sweepstakes, contests, promotional events
- Be transparent: don't make the influencer hide that he works for you
- Define the platforms: Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Instagram, and YouTube are the best. Be aware of the importance of images and especially videos
- Define the content: number of posts, tweets, articles, pictures, videos
- Define the referrals: hashtags, links, tags
- Determine the timeline: check the best season, consider daylight hours for photographer and videographer
- Ask for corporate content and image/video copyrights
- Require full reporting at the end of the campaign including analytics
- Define salary and compensation (hotel category, flights, ...)

### 3.9 Negotiate compensation

Influencers are professionals; they are their own brands, they have built their own community, they create and distribute content for you. Paying influencers is acknowledging the value of their work.

- Pay the influencer, if you can: influencers are professionals
- Set the salary based on the quality of his work
- Keep in mind that if you pay him, you are allowed to expect more and better quality



- If you don't have the budget, be creative and give him strong added value (experiences on site, extra exposure like paid campaign, buzz, contests)
- Stay open for negotiations

### **3.10 Determine KPIs**

Determine how the performance of the campaign will be evaluated with a selection of KPIs that align with your campaign goals. Make sure to have a balance between qualitative and quantitative goals. Don't forget: engagement is the most significant KPI.

- Facebook: engagement (likes, shares, comments), link clicks , reach, impressions, views for videos, increase in fans, conversations created (tags and mentions), emotional reactions created
- Twitter: number of posts, audience reach, impressions, engagement (retweets, favorites), increase in followers, link clicks, conversations created (mentions and hashtags)
- Blogs: visits, link clicks, comments, Google analytics, referrals to ST website, website visits, social shares of blog posts, comments on blog posts,
- Instagram: engagement, conversations created (hashtags), reach, impressions
- YouTube: views, shares, comments, dislikes & likes, subscribers, Estimated Minutes Watched (EMW)
- Bitly and hashtag trackers

Other KPIs can be of interest, such as traffic driven to the website (possible to track with a tool called HubSpot), the number of registration for a sweepstakes, media value, the questions answered or comments passed on for a product improvement and so on. Make sure the influencer uses a trackable URL to the ST website. Not to forget conversion, which is the most wanted KPI as well as the hardest to track.

### 3.11 Rundown of the influencer trip

Influencers are creative and independent people, so don't make the mistake to plan a packed, strict and tight itinerary.

- Give the influencer time, flexibility and freedom: you need to leave room for creativity and personalisation
- Put together a booklet (guidelines): include hashtags, storylines, did you know's, phone numbers, addresses, contact of the other influencers so they can meet up, sunrise and sunset times, best photo or video spots etc...
- Organize a private guide or a buddy system: local people are always appreciated
- Find a way to provide him continuous wifi: it is vital for an influencer
- Organize press coverage like a small press meet-up or conference: it will be appreciated by all parties: the influencer, the partners and ST
- Be careful with videographers: a stricter itinerary has to be planned along time in advance. Allow a lot of extra time, involve the influencer in the planning, consider light, sunset and sunrise. Allow time at leisure. Book private visits, early access and don't plan public tours. Plan one person on spot

### 3.12 Be picky with influencer requests

You might receive many influencer requests, but don't feel you need to accept everyone.

- Accept only if the request fits your plans and campaigns
- Refuse if it comes from a general influencer
- Update the *Blogger Profile* that already exists with more relevant information

## 4. Collect the results

### 4.1 Amplify and optimize

Get the most out of your influencer campaign, it will make everybody happy.

- Comment, like, share the influencer's posts, articles and tweets
- Feed your website with the content he created
- Use the influencer's pictures for your invitations or social media channels
- Use the influencer's videos for your events or social media channels

### 4.2 Evaluate your ROI

Before the campaign you defined goals, objectives and KPIs.

- Check whether you have reached your goals, objectives and KPIs
- Consider the added value of your campaign  
Example: the content the influencer created, the satisfaction of the partners (do they see a conversion)
- Be aware that ROI is not immediate

### 4.3 Report results

Results deserve to be reported in your database as much as any other marketing activity.

- The influencer is responsible for providing you with reports on the campaign
- Set guidelines for the reporting
- Adjust the database to Social Media reporting

#### **4.4 Nurture your relationships**

Cultivating the brand-influencer relationship beyond the campaign is key. Even if influencer marketing is paid media at the beginning, it can be turned into great earned media. The influencer can become an advocate or an ambassador of the brand, and might keep posting months or years after the campaign.

- Keep your influencer network alive after the campaign

Examples

- invite the influencer to your events or press conferences, where he can give speeches
- use him to inform a guest list or send invitations
- integrate him in webinars
- give him social media love
- ask him to communicate the launch of a new product
- transfer the contact to other departments or markets

#### **4.5 Leverage feedback**

Don't neglect the importance of feedback, it should be entirely part of a campaign

- Write down learnings
- Adjust your guidelines accordingly
- Share your feedbacks with departments, HO, key partners and other ST markets
- Ask for the feedback of the influencer: he is a travel expert and can provide constructive feedbacks that can help improve your products or your brand.
- Get the partners' feedbacks

## Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to understand how a tourist organization should optimize working with social influencers. Recommendations derived from empirical research. They are tailor-made for ST NA, but can be used by any other travel companies.

In order to answer the research question, a qualitative survey was conducted. The findings show that influencer marketing is a growing practice among NTO's and DMO's, but that it is not entirely established yet. Many travel organizations started working with influencer marketing after a turning point. For those who haven't started influencer marketing yet, interest is growing. However, obstacles like traditional marketing thinking, limited resources, top-down decisions, strategies and know-how have to be overcome. For those who are already working with influencers, feedback is very positive. According to them, influencer marketing has considerable benefits and helps reaching goals efficiently by using the power of people as media. It seems to be the perfect way to reach niche segments. To be successful, brands need to select the influencer carefully based on criteria like expertise, engagement, resonance and professionalism. When it comes to the actual influencer campaign, flexibility, creativity and mutual understanding are key. Despite all these positive elements, influencer marketing has nevertheless some areas of confusion like monetary compensation, ROI measurement and departments in charge.

The recommendations that follow the results consists of a step-by-step guide for ST NA. As a very first step, ST NA needs to work on the incorporation of influencer marketing at the core of the company in order to get the foundation right. First, ST NA should approach HO and adjust strategies. Second, key partners need to be educated and understand the value of influencer marketing. Third, ST NA has to keep in mind the 4WD model and set up a good cross-departmental collaboration. This will give an appropriate basis for ST NA to move on to the next step and implement influencer marketing. To conduct an influencer campaign, ST NA has first to set qualitative goals. Then, the influencer should be selected based on significant criteria. Later, an agreement has to be set up between both parties to clarify the input and output of the campaign. ST NA can then plan the influencer trip, with enough flexibility. After the trip, collecting results and following up is crucial. Indeed, influencer marketing goes beyond the actual campaign and ST NA should cultivate its relationships with influencers.

In order to properly interpret and evaluate the relevance of the work, an accurate context is provided and the study's limitations are acknowledged:

- Limited time and resources: this paper was written in the framework of a Bachelor Degree, which involves limited time and strict deadlines. This lack of flexibility has limited the author when

it comes to delving into certain topics and certain chapters. As a matter of fact, the literature review had to be kept to a minimum and samples were rather small.

- Lack of prior research studies specific to the tourism sector: the existing literature focuses on influencer marketing in general without being specific to an industry. However, tourism is a special sector and some findings of the literature don't correspond to it.

- Tensions at HO: during the process of this work, internal tensions around the topic of influencer marketing at HO have been felt by the author. Some information has been kept back. The author had no other choice than to take what she had, which might have biased some results.

- Participation issues with the influencers: influencers are highly sought after people who are constantly travelling. Out of 13 influencers contacted, only three accepted the interview. Out of these three, only one gave interesting and relevant insights. The consequence is that the input of the influencers weren't as useful as expected to answer the research question and help formulate recommendations.

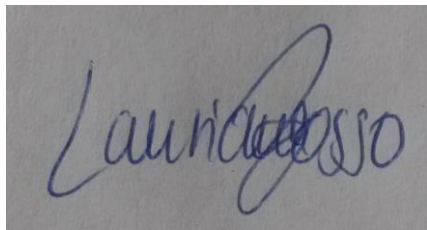
- Self-reported data: the author has conducted a qualitative research study, which brought data that can't be independently verified. This fact might have led to biased data.

- Study case in progress: during the writing of this work, ST NA has conducted other influencer marketing campaigns and has gained more experience. Some statements that have been written at the beginning of the work weren't relevant anymore at the end of the work.

- Influencer marketing is a fast paced environment: influencer marketing theories change very rapidly, which makes it hard to stay up-to-date. Some statements seemed relevant at the beginning of the work and lost their validity at the end.

There are perspectives for further research. Indeed, the existing literature lacks of research on the tourism industry, especially on the influencer marketing activities of NTO's and DMO's. Further research should be conducted via quantitative surveys on NTO's and DMO's in order to fill in the gaps of the existing literature.

I hereby declare that I have carried out this final research project on my own without any help other than the references listed in the list of references and that I have only used the sources mentioned. I will not provide a copy of this paper to a third party without the permission of the department head and of my advisor, including the partner company with which I collaborated on this project, with the exception of those who provided me with information needed to write this paper and whose names follow: Tama d'Haen, Janine Jervis, Daði Guðjónsson, Nicholas Montemaggi, Adrian Seitz, Sibylle Gerardi, Kuno Schürch, Zulfah Fredericks, Nicole Schaffner, Katrin Schmitt, Scott Kranz, Rob Sese and Erin Faherty.

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "Laurinda Jervis".

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## Appendix I: Blogger Relation Guidelines

# Blogger Relation Guidelines

MySwitzerland.com

Compiled by: Corporate Communications & Media (CCM) and eMarketing

Date of compilation: May 2015, version 1.0

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## BACKGROUND.

In the field of media work, Switzerland Tourism collaborates selectively with bloggers (by issuing invitations to media events and trips, and through specific blogger projects, etc.). The intensity of this collaboration and the prerequisites for it are inconsistent in most of the markets. In isolated cases, bloggers have been integrated into ST's media work; the cost-to-benefit ratio in such instances has been critical, due in particular to low numbers of followers.

The purpose of these Blogger Relation Guidelines is to define valid guidelines that will govern collaboration with bloggers for all the markets. The focus is on quantitative and measurable criteria.

In order to define appropriate prerequisites, experience from the markets developed by ST and from other tourism organisations, ST's partners and social media experts has been incorporated into our considerations (sections 7 and 10).

## DEFINITIONS OF "BLOG" AND "BLOGGER".

A blog (which is an abbreviated form of the outmoded term "weblog") is an online diary or journal kept in a chronological sequence. Most blogs are written from a private or personal perspective, so this type of blog is not necessarily subject to the general journalistic standards that apply in classical media.

Examples: <http://www.travelita.ch/>, <http://www.swiss-miss.com/>

A distinction should be made between the blogs just described and the official personal blogs kept by journalists. Examples: <http://digitalnomad.nationalgeographic.com/>, <http://www.spiegel.de/reise/europa/das-pisten-blog-das-warten-auf-den-schnee-a-1006415.html>.

In addition to the original blogs such as those hosted on WordPress or blogger.com, the following platforms are also used for both private and official/personal blogging:

Instagram – photo blogging via the Instagram app (speciality: photo filters)

Vine – video blogging (vlog) via the Vine app (speciality: 6-second clips)

Twitter – micro-blogging (speciality: 140 characters per tweet)

### Common features

All blogs use the hashtag to make the content easier to locate (contextualisation). Backlinks (cross-references between blogs) ensure strong networking in the form of a "blogosphere" to promote the popularity of search engines and contextual networking.



Bloggers of all types are therefore online multipliers with networks of different sizes on different platforms. Classical bloggers distribute their posts (articles) via platforms such as Twitter and Pinterest as well as LinkedIn.

## Strategic considerations

Due to the rapid pace of developments in the blogosphere and the possibilities for blogging on different platforms, ST has opportunities not only to work with "found content" (i.e. content that has been found online), but also to arrange for the production of dynamic content of this sort, or to support it on a targeted basis. The growing number of enquiries received by the markets and at ST's headquarters clearly shows that there is now demand among bloggers for these services – either via Instagram or classical blogs.

The demands and expectations of these "online media professionals" only differ from those of media representatives working in classical formats in a few respects.

Accordingly, ST channels its concerted efforts to develop relations with bloggers ("ST Blogger Relations") in two or three different directions: on the one hand, classical bloggers who meet the criteria (see section 3) are integrated into classical media work (information, support, invitations), and are given online support by the ST Social Media Marketing Manager (agreement on hashtags, Google Analytics tracking code, conceptual support, distribution of content).

The third direction is followed (for example) during project-based collaboration among ST project owners (Marketing/Product Managers).

## Transparency

As a general principle, ST does not pay bloggers. In line with its established support for the media, ST provides support for research (e.g. expenses such as public transport, meals, internet – if these are not paid by the partner).

On a project-specific basis, ST can also act as an intermediary for partners (such as hotels). In all cases, bloggers are obliged to refer to ST's services under their articles in order to ensure maximum transparency.

In this regard, ST is guided by the travel bloggers' code: <http://reiseblogger-kodex.com/reiseblogger-kodex/>

# CRITERIA, PROCESSING AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES

As of 1 March 2015, the following minimum requirements and guidelines, which can be measured quantitatively and are binding for all markets, apply to the integration of bloggers into media work. At the same time, each market is free to adjust the defined minimum requirements upwards in order to accommodate the characteristics of the specific media landscape in that market.

## Day-to-day media work, media events in the markets

The blog reaches at least the following numbers of readers directly each month:

- Europe: 20,000 readers (defined as unique visits per month),
- Overseas: 40,000 readers (defined as unique visits per month).

This key statistic is reported in the media data for the blog or can be called up directly from the blogger.

There is no requirement for an agreement with ST's headquarters in order to provide support for bloggers in the course of day-to-day media work, or for invitations to on-site/local media events.

## Participation in media trips

### Criteria and support services

The blog reaches at least the following numbers of readers directly each month:

- Europe: 25,000 readers (defined as unique visits per month),
- Overseas: 50,000 readers (defined as unique visits per month).

This key statistic is reported in the media data for the blog or can be called up directly from the blogger.

No payments are made to bloggers for media trips. Support is limited to payment of the costs of outbound/inbound travel, accommodation, meals, local transfers, programme design, etc.

The market confirms to the organising departments that these minimum requirements are met. Otherwise (if there are serious reasons) the market applies for the bloggers' participation in writing (section 3.2.3).

## Registration

As a new feature, registration of bloggers for media trips with the organising department is handled with the help of a separate "blogger profile" (stored on the ST intranet, in the CCM section); this has been closely modelled on the existing "media profile". In this profile, the individuals with responsibility for the market confirm that the minimum quantitative requirements for bloggers to participate in ST media trips (section 3.2.1) are met, and they provide a brief portrait of the blog (key figures such as direct/indirect reach, target groups, qualitative criteria from section 3.2.3) and the planned posts.

## Procedure if minimum quantitative requirements are not met

If a blog fails to meet the minimum quantitative criteria stated above (in section 3.2.1) but the market nevertheless considers that there is a significant reason for the blogger to take part in the media trip, the justification for this must be stated in the blogger profile and a request for an exception must be submitted at [media@switzerland.com](mailto:media@switzerland.com). The CCM department will after consultation with eMarketing promptly reach a decision on the request and will inform the market in question.

The following qualitative assessment criteria provide the framework for the evaluation of a blog in addition to the minimum quantitative requirements cited above (in section 3.2.1):

**Segmentation and relevance to target groups.** The blog targets opinion leaders for visitor segments and niches that have been defined as strategically relevant.

**Relevance to issues.** The blog deals with issues of relevance to tourism, and inspires its readers to travel and to enjoy leisure experiences.

**Design, usability.** The blog features impressively appealing design and contemporary user-friendly architecture.

**Concise and clear.** Posts on the blog get to the very heart of an issue and provide readers with all the relevant information.

**In-depth treatment of subjects.** Posts on the blog are based on serious research by the author, and they shed light on the subject in an appropriate and adequate manner.

**Style, spelling and grammar.** The blog displays quality and care in terms of linguistic craftsmanship.

**Continuous activity/regularity.** The blog publishes posts at regular intervals and reacts promptly to its readers' suggestions or posts.

## Project-based, paid collaboration

### Differentiation

ST's Blogger Relations distinguishes between two main strategies for collaboration with bloggers:

Bloggers as participants in media trips with no dedicated service requirement  
– similar to classical media participants (note the approval criteria, see section 3.2)

Project-based collaboration with a service agreement and a service requirement.  
– Example: project for Swiss Historic Hotels, May 2014

### The service agreement approach

Which costs are borne by ST/the partner?

Which costs are borne by the partner/partners?

Which services does the blogger/ST provide? (see Annexe 3)

number of blog posts/pins

number of tweets/retweets (RT)

number of FB posts/shares

number of Instagram pics/reposts

number of vines/revines

similar definition for other platforms (Google+, travel forums, etc.)

Agreement on rights to use content for ST platforms.

## Information to headquarters

Employees with responsibility for the markets are requested to inform the Corporate Communication department (mediawatch) and the eMarketing/Social Media departments (further distribution) about specific paid marketing blogger projects.

## Considerations regarding potential impact on budgets

Blogs with smaller audiences (as compared to classical media) often address niches with high strategic relevance, thereby opening up attractive opportunities. If several bloggers are invited in order to compensate for this reach (measured by media contacts), this should be taken into account as regards the budget, and also in connection with providing Swiss Travel Passes.

# REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

## Entering a blog in the media database

Two criteria on the "Company" level of the media database are crucially important when entering a blog:

We assign the "online" media type (marked "1") in the screenshot) to blogs as online media.

For online media, the number of media contacts ("Media Contacts" field, marked "2)") shows the number of visits per day. For this purpose, simply divide the number of unique visits per month for the relevant blog (as mentioned in section 3.2) by 30 to obtain the number of visits per day.

Function	Priority	Media Type	Range	Frequency	Media Content
<input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Freelance <input type="checkbox"/> Photographer <input type="checkbox"/> Editor <input type="checkbox"/> Producer <input type="checkbox"/> Newsagency <input type="checkbox"/> Various Partners <input type="checkbox"/> Sonstiges...	<input type="radio"/> Key Account Media <input type="radio"/> Second Priority <input type="radio"/> Third Priority	<input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Books/Movies <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media/Mobile <input type="checkbox"/> TV/Cable/Video	<input type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Sonstiges...	<input type="radio"/> Daily <input type="radio"/> Weekly <input type="radio"/> Every two weeks <input type="radio"/> Monthly <input type="radio"/> Sonstiges...	<input type="radio"/> General information <input type="radio"/> Trade news <input type="radio"/> Special interest <input type="radio"/> Tourism <input type="radio"/> Sonstiges...
			<input type="text"/> Circulation	<input type="text"/> Multiplier	<input type="text"/> Media Contacts

Figure 1: Entering blogs in the media database. [Sonstiges = Other]

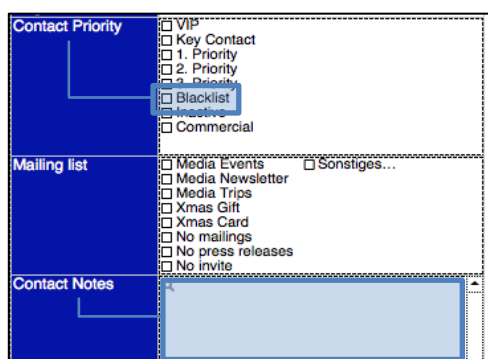
Blog posts are often communicated via peripheral social media channels. To carry out comprehensive success measurement, an eye should be kept on key figures such as these:

- number of posts following the media trip/event
- number of likes/retweets (RTs)
- total number of persons reached (unique visitors to the page containing the post)
- number of shares via additional social media platforms
- qualitative analysis of the report and its reception by the readers

However, these statistics are not entered in the media database; the number of media contacts mentioned above continues to be the key figure for reporting purposes.

## BLACKLIST

In the event that media representatives repeatedly publish nothing (or publish material that is not in line with expectations) following a media trip or event, the collaboration with the individual in question must be reconsidered and consequently terminated. For such cases, ST keeps a "blacklist" of media representatives who have failed to produce reports despite participating in the aforementioned media platforms. This applies equally to bloggers – including those who set excessive requirements, make negative public comments about ST that are disproportionate or unjustified, or otherwise violate blogger netiquette.



Individuals with responsibility for the media in the markets are requested not only to enter media representatives and bloggers of this sort in their local blacklist, but also to flag them accordingly in the **media database**. For this purpose, there is a "Blacklist" checkbox at the "Contacts" level ("Contact Priority" section – see the area marked "1") in the screenshot). Also, please leave a comment with the reason for the blacklisting in the "Notes" field of the relevant blogger contact ("Contact Notes" – see the area marked "2)").

Figure 2: Media database – the "blacklist"

## ANNEXE 1: ADDITIONAL LINKS

<http://reiseblogger-kodex.com/>

<http://reiseblogger-kollektiv.com>

**STS Code of Ethics** <http://www.iambassador.net/about/code-of-ethics/>

**10 tips for travel bloggers and DMOs** <http://fredericgonzalo.com/en/2013/06/02/10-tips-for-working-with-travel-bloggers-and-destinations/>

**9 criteria for selecting travel bloggers** <http://www.wilhelmus.ca/2013/01/9-criteria-for-selecting-travel-bloggers.html>

**How can the work of bloggers be measured?**

– <http://www.wilhelmus.ca/2013/01/how-can-destination-measure-the-value-of-travel-bloggers.html>

– [http://fr.slideshare.net/wilhelmus/tbex-day-1-lessons-learned-working-with-bloggers-destinations?from\\_search=3](http://fr.slideshare.net/wilhelmus/tbex-day-1-lessons-learned-working-with-bloggers-destinations?from_search=3)

– <http://www.wilhelmus.ca/2013/06/8-lessons-learned-for-dmos-when-working-with-bloggers.html>

### **Montreal Builds a Blueprint for Modern Destination Marketing**

<http://skift.com/2014/02/14/montreal-builds-a-blueprint-for-modern-destination-marketing/>

### **L'évolution des blogues de voyage [The development of travel blogs]**

<http://veilletourisme.ca/2013/07/22/levolution-des-blogues-de-voyage/>

### **Le marketing de l'influence [Influencer marketing]**

– Concept and examples <http://veilletourisme.ca/2014/07/16/le-marketing-de-linfluence-concept-et-exemples/>

– Practical guide <http://veilletourisme.ca/2014/09/10/marketing-de-linfluence-guide-pratique/>

**The Ultimate Guide to Content Marketing & Influencer Strategy** [http://traackr.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Traackr\\_Ultimate\\_Guide\\_Content\\_Marketing\\_Influencer\\_Strategy.pdf](http://traackr.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Traackr_Ultimate_Guide_Content_Marketing_Influencer_Strategy.pdf)

### **The Complete Guide to Influencer Marketing: Strategies, Templates & Tools**

[http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Influencer\\_eBook\\_june\\_rev.zip](http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Influencer_eBook_june_rev.zip)

### **Beginners Guide to Working With Brands, for Bloggers**

<http://www.brandmeetsblog.com/for-beginners/a-bloggers-beginner-guide-to-working-with-brands/>

### **The low down on bloggers, disclosure and ethical blogging**

<http://www.brandmeetsblog.com/for-beginners/the-low-down-on-bloggers-disclosure-and-ethical-blogging/>

### **The Impact of Identifying & Measuring Influencers in Marketing**

<http://get.simplymeasured.com/rs/simplymeasured/images/InfluencersSimplyMeasured.pdf>

**Guide pour la mise en place de votre stratégie d'influence [Guide to setting up your influencer strategy]** <http://www.augure.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Guide-strategie-Influencers.pdf>

**ROI Calculator Online** <http://www.onlineroicalculator.com/>

### **How to deal with travel writers**

[http://hotelmarketing.com/index.php/content/article/how\\_to\\_deal\\_with\\_travel\\_writers](http://hotelmarketing.com/index.php/content/article/how_to_deal_with_travel_writers)

### **Working with Bloggers and Influencers for Destinations**

<http://www.destinationmarketing.org/blog/working-bloggers-and-influencers-destinations>

## **ANNEXE 2: ANALYSIS OF MARKET SURVEY**

### **Parameters**

On 14 October 2014, ST CCM ZRH wrote to all markets in order to ascertain the situation in individual countries and regions. An [online survey](#) with a response deadline of 31 October 2014 was launched for this purpose.

## Results

The detailed results of the survey can be viewed [here](#).

The Google spreadsheet showing the most important bloggers in the markets (including additional information) can be viewed [here](#).

The main results are presented here, and section 7.3 contains outlines of the situations in the individual markets/regions.

The survey confirms that in most of the markets, no guidelines for collaboration with bloggers have been drafted as yet.

The survey confirms that bloggers participate regularly in media trips (for 2013 and 2014, this question was only answered with "No" in two instances). Bloggers from 5 markets (in 2013) and 8 markets (in 2014) took part in media events.

"Bloggers only" trips were arranged in 3 markets (in 2013) and 6 markets (in 2014).  
"Bloggers only" events were reported by 4 markets in both of the last two years.

### The blogger scene in individual markets/regions

As this document aims to provide a general overview, feedback from the markets has not been included at this point. However, we shall be glad to provide this feedback on an individual basis to anyone who is interested (please send enquiries to: [media@switzerland.com](mailto:media@switzerland.com)).

## ANNEXE 3: EXAMPLE OF A PROPOSAL FROM A BLOGGER

### Proposal

Anita Breland (writer) & Tom Fakler (photographer) – Expats in Switzerland

Blog trip: Swiss Historic Hotels - six nights

### About Anita's Feast

Anita's Feast travel blog focuses on cultural travel, food and art. We are experienced communications professionals, and since 2010, we have been blogging our travel experiences around the world, from our base in Basel, Switzerland. Our readers are affluent mid-lifers, with the means to obtain individualized services when they travel. They research their travel options online, seeking information from travel narratives and social media. For more information please see our media kit.

### Our proposed travel

A seven-day, six-night trip to Ticino, between 11 and 17 April. Our goal is to have 'capsule experiences' that reveal the food, art and culture of Ticino through our stay at three Swiss Historic Hotels. Proposed hotels and dates:

Hotel	Check in	Check out
-------	----------	-----------

Romantik Hotle Villa in Carona	11 April	13 April
Albergo Monte Verità in Ascona	13 April	15 April
Palazzo Gamboni, Comologno	15 April	17 April

### **Support required**

Your support would include six nights half board accommodation and a Swiss Rail Pass valid from 11 through 17 April. We would also need an introduction to hotel management about our involvement in your project, prior to our arrival at each hotel.

### **Deliverables**

Social media announcements of our travel, arrival and events of our stay, via Twitter and Instagram (social media during the trip assumes Wi-Fi coverage in the hotel).

Online posts about our stay in Ticino, featuring extraordinary experiences sure to pique the interest of our readership. Posts will be published on Anita's Feast blog, or Facebook, or as destination highlights for AFAR Media (the No. 1 North American travel site). At least one posts will be published on Anita's Feast within the timeframe of your theme week (19 - 24 May).

During your theme week we will post previous and/or new content as follows:

One article on Anita's Feast

12 FaceBook posts (or small photo galleries)

12 tweets about our trip

6 Google+ photos

12 'latergrams' on Instagram

12 photos pinned to Pinterest boards

Tweets of AFAR Media Highlights

Anita's Feast travel photo galleries are also available for our sponsors to use with social media.

## **ANNEXE 4: EXAMPLE OF A PROPOSAL FROM AN INSTAGRAMER**

<http://instagram.com/laurenepbath> – Australia

As a solo influencer I charge \$500/day and include the following -

4 Instagram posts daily with average engagement of 10,000 impressions

Instagram posts branded with your @username #hashtag and geotag

Facebook and Google+ posts

An "Insta-Diary" on TravelThereNext.com



All images in high resolution for you to share on your social media platforms (with credit)  
(Editorial use is on a case by case basis and joint copyright is sold extra for \$150/image if you want an image for print)

A report on reach and media value with a spreadsheet of likes and comments recorded plus feedback on content that is working and content that isn't working

Optional social media workshop on Instagram for marketing (1 1/2 hours total)

These are the links to my social media assets and an example of what an "Insta-Diary" looks like on TravelThereNext.com

Instagram <http://instagram.com/laurenepbath>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/PirieBathPhotography>

Google+ <https://plus.google.com/110298170326040955071/posts>

Insta-Diary <http://www.traveltherenext.com/instadiary/item/542-instadiary-quebec-in-winter>

My rates are increasing by 25% next year but will be honored for work locked in before the end of this year.

In addition to solo influencer work I also do campaign management, consultancy and education. On the consultancy and education side I run workshops on Instagram for marketing and photography/ social media photography.

As a project manager I run multiple influencer campaigns which include the following -

### **Project pitch and KPI's**

Influencer lists supplied based around client needs and target markets

All influencer communications and negotiations

Pre campaign support including itinerary and logistics

In region co-hosting and expense management

Project wrap up, reporting and image curation

Payment of influencers

Pricing is dependent on the scale of the campaign. I have run numerous campaigns here in Australia and International clients include Dubai Tourism and Travel Alberta. Happy to share results if you were looking to do a campaign down the track.

For bigger campaigns I am working with a Canadian business partner and our area of expertise is Tourism and Social Strategy.

## ANNEXE 5: VIEWS FROM ELSEWHERE

### Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus (German National Tourist Board (GNTB))

Selection criteria for bloggers:

30,000 followers as the minimum (BtC bloggers)

In general, the figure that counts for us is UVM (unique visitors per month). In addition, all the other social media channels used by the blogger are considered (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc.)

Quality check (references, interaction rate, quality of presentation, conformance to target groups, etc.)

Whether a blogger is paid or unpaid, he should always have a number of followers that is in line with or above the market average in order to work with us. Every representative office is in the picture about the bloggers in its country, and knows their approximate numbers. All the others are measured against this average.

Additional criteria: awareness level on the "scene". Has another representative office already gained some experience with the bloggers? Is he a vlogger? If so, how many clicks do his videos get?

Trips for bloggers are organised separately from media trips

They are campaign-based

Contractual arrangement with the blogger

Payment of a daily rate, usually EUR 400, but no purchase of rights to content, plus payment of travel costs as for classical media trips

Quality check is carried out centrally (check-calls in countries)

2-5 contracts per market

Differences from classical press trips: procedure/programme is rarely fixed, constantly online (guaranteed access), different rights of use, etc.

### Österreich Werbung (Austrian Tourist Office)

One of the best bloggers in the market has 24,000 unique visitors

"A wine blogger is likely to have fewer readers than a travel blogger but to make up for that, his readers may precisely match the target group that is to be developed."

Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / shares / comments are also relevant. The network is more critical than the number of unique visits per month

If there are some good bloggers among the followers, the content produced can also be shared by them, so a larger number of readers will be reached

The blogger scene differs from one country to another. In the UK, for instance, payment of bloggers is a major issue and in some cases, they will only take part in trips if they are paid.

Evolution of the blog: should have existed for two years, and should already have become established

It should also be noted that in most cases, readers cannot be allocated to one country only.

### Atout France (French Tourism Development Agency)

No precise regulation at present. It seems difficult to define a minimum number of readers because this depends on market size. US bloggers, for example, probably have the most professional and modern approach, and key figures for their Chinese counterparts are impressive

Criteria such as commitment and interaction must also be incorporated into the analysis of bloggers

Bloggers who have little traffic as yet may nevertheless be worth supporting ("things can come full circle")

For these reasons, the employees responsible for the markets each decide individually, but they submit regular reports

## SOMEX

Somexcloud, a community of "practice-based social media experts", has submitted the following comment on the questions. Because it is only active in Switzerland, it could not offer any information on conditions abroad.

3,000-4,000 readers is a good figure for the Swiss blogger scene. 2,000 Twitter followers also indicates a good reach for the Swiss market.

To measure "indirect reach", Somexcloud recommends <https://followerwonk.com> (retweets).

Other criteria that can be measured qualitatively (but in this case, only by the blogger himself and not externally) in order to assess the relevance of a blog are:

page impression

length of stay by readers

bounce rate

path taken by readers to reach the blog (Google, links on social networks, direct)

## SWISS

A discussion with Nadja Walraff, Social Media Manager, revealed that SWISS does not have an official blogger relations concept with standard criteria. Enquiries from bloggers (which are relatively few) are looked at and answered individually. As a general rule, sponsorship enquiries for inbound and outbound flights are rejected.

## Travel blogger's code

### **Travel bloggers' code – since January 2013**

**Source:** <http://reiseblogger-kodex.com/reiseblogger-kodex/>

### **Preamble**

We are a community.

To some extent, every travel blogger also represents the others and in the public perception, every good and bad experience with one blogger affects all of us.

This applies, on the one hand, to the reader or user, who must be taken seriously – for example, by making a clear distinction between paid and unpaid content.

It also applies to contact with the tourism industry and other potential partners, with whom professional relations are important.

These are the ethical principles to which we feel committed.

## **1. Content**

1.1 Credibility and individuality are our greatest assets.

1.1.1 We write about experiences and ideas that we have actually had while travelling.

1.1.2 Blog posts are vitally dependent on the authors' subjective views, and our own opinions are essential.

1.1.3 Advertising, advertorials, sponsorship, competitions (with prizes), product tests and posts based on press releases must be clearly identified as such in the post, and any clients must be named.

1.1.4 We respect the copyrights and privacy rights that are in force.

## **2. Cooperation arrangements and advertising**

2.1 Cooperation arrangements with businesses, PR measures and advertising are appropriate and effective ways of earning money with travel blogs.

2.1.1 Our journalistic freedom remains unaffected by any cooperation arrangement.

2.1.2 We reach clear and unambiguous agreements with partners on the objectives and limits of the cooperation.

2.1.3 We endeavour to ensure that our services are compensated appropriately in the long term.

## **3. Invitations and support for travel/events**

3.1 Invitations such as those for press trips, bloggers' trips and events, and support for individual travel, are appropriate and effective means of undertaking travel for research purposes.

3.1.1 Our journalistic freedom remains unaffected by any support/invitation.

3.1.2 Support or an invitation is not a form of payment. It is the basis on which we are able to go about our work.

3.1.3 We clearly identify content that has been produced on the basis of support or an invitation.

3.1.4 For research travel, we clarify both parties' expectations in advance with the party providing the support.

3.1.5 If disagreements or complications arise during a collaboration, we first seek personal contact with the cooperation partner in order to clarify the circumstances and find a solution.

3.1.6 In exceptional cases and for valid reasons, we reserve the right not to report and inform the inviting party about the reasons.

Overview of participating bloggers: <http://reiseblogger-kodex.com/reiseblogger-verzeichnis/>

## Appendix II: Interview with Katrin Schmitt

Type: NTO

Name: Katrin Schmitt

Company: Switzerland Tourism

Position: Social Media Manager

Date: September 8, 2016

### **Could you please describe the situation of influencer marketing at head office?**

Influencer marketing is an important topic, but it is not considered as a priority. Nevertheless, we are doing smaller initiatives within our main campaigns.

### **When have you started talking about it?**

In June 2012 when I arrived in the company.

### **What is your personal opinion about influencer marketing?**

Social media is about dialog, UGC and owned content. It is important to appreciate the value of UGC and to accept that there are such things as these types of media like blogs, YouTube, Instagram. It is not traditional media but it is an extension, a new perspective, it is a new version of word of mouth marketing, which absolutely has its rights and adds interesting aspects to it. I think you need to make up your mind, how to strategically use it. As print magazines have numbers and figures and can show you data, influencer marketing should mature and come up with something like that as well.

### **According to you, should it be incorporated in the Social Media or the Media department?**

Influencer marketing has a lot of different interfaces within a company. It is part of the communication mix, of corporate communication, customer care, customer service, it belongs to the media team as well as to the social media team, or to market services when it comes to ST. These influencers are not classical journalists but they are making use of the new possibilities, they are multipliers. When it comes to inviting them to media trips, the media team is in charge. When it comes to organizing Instameets for media projects, it is more the social

media side. When it comes to organizing social media trips to Switzerland from NY or Mumbai for example, Market Services is in charge.

**What influencer campaigns have you done so far?**

We are doing one for Switzerland Tourism Jubilee (100 years), where we are working with influencers. This is an on-going project. We organized instameets within the preparation of this jubilee. The other one was with our partners, the Swiss Historic Hotels. It is actually our Hotels Team who took care of this project together with the hotel corporation. We researched three bloggers for them. These bloggers didn't get paid, but we did a contract and the bloggers were hosted by the hotels. We have a couple of projects but they are always attached to partners, projects, or campaigns, there are no corporate instameets or so.

**Do you get influencers requests? How do you handle them?**

We get a lot of requests from all over the world here at Head Office and forward them to the markets. It is the job of the markets to evaluate whether they are worth the investment. The markets have to know themselves if they can reach their KPIs with influencers. When it comes to Swiss influencers, we like to work with them, but only work with them if we have special projects.

**Do you think of doing it more in the future?**

I think the wish or necessity to incorporate influencer marketing into campaigns and projects will grow. I think it is also gaining importance with #inLOVEwithSWITZERLAND and UGC.

**How did you get your knowledge about it?**

Just being a professional social media manager basically, keep myself up to date with many different communication tools. As influencer marketing didn't just pop up. but evolved, it is a matter of following the evolution and make sense out of it. It is also a matter of benchmarking and learning by doing.

**Do you feel the employees in your company are sensitive to influencer marketing?**

Sensitivity is definitely growing. Our #inLOVEwithSWITZERLAND has raised awareness for UGC and for influencer content as well.

**Can you talk about the guidelines you have?**

We have influencer guidelines published last year. In our guidelines we mention two sides, the qualitative and the quantitative sides. When it comes to quantitative, we put in our guidelines that we consider an influencer as of a couple thousand readers per month. In terms of quality, if an influencer is smaller but is in the perfect niche of what we are looking for, like the Swiss Historic Hotels, or if he has the name, the reputation, the contacts, then we can argue to have this person because he is dedicated to a specific topic.

**What main issues are you facing?**

Our main issue is that we need to know better, how to evaluate an influencer, to know whether if she or he is worth the investment. How do you scale? How do you evaluate their reach? Which ROI do you expect? How do you get the ROI? Finding the right arguments on who we support and why don't we support others.

# Appendix III: Interview guidelines

## 1. Interviewee outreach

The Media Manager, Social Media Manager or Community Manager of each NTO or DMO has been contacted. Their contact information has been obtained via the network of ST NA's employees, the Yellow Pages of ST NA's internal database and advanced research on LinkedIn. The influencers were contacted per e-mail. Their contact information was found thanks to the network of the SoMe manager, or on their own SoMe platforms and blogs. In the email the author will introduce herself, explain the goals of her bachelor thesis, mention the topics that will be covered and suggest a time schedule.

## 2. Interview course

Also, a background research will be done beforehand in order to personalize the questions.

During the interview, the interviewer will make sure to:

- Set a climate of trust, encourage to talk freely and openly
- Listen, make eye contact, encourage
- Avoid impatience
- Repeat the question if asked
- Don't force to answer a question
- Understand the response. If not, ask it again indirectly
- Thank the respondent and repeat the original question if answer not clear
- Pilot the schedule
- Thank for the valuable input

The steps taken during the interview will be:

- Thanking for accepting the interview
- Asking for permission to record
- Explaining how the interview will be conducted
- Explaining the follow up: when the results will be available
- Writing a thank you email and sending some chocolate if located in the US
- Evaluating the interview on the basis of:
  - o Duration
  - o Questions: too hard? too easy? clear? Which ones worked / failed?
  - o Where more detailed could be asked



- Do I talk too much rather than listening
- Relationship with the interviewee
- Are relevant data for my research question

Source : (Zuber, 2015)

## Appendix IV: Samplings

### A. Ideal candidates for group one

1. **Visit Flanders:** DTTT devoted a spotlight article on Tourism Flanders in its best practice section. The NTO conducted a major influencer program named Flanders Festival with 100 key influencers from 13 countries (D'Haen, 2012)

2. **Promote Iceland:** Icelandic tourism breaks the records: since January 2011, every single month has shown an increase of foreign visitor guest nights in every region of Iceland (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2016) In the DMO studies of DTTT, Visit Iceland is pointed out for its practice of using the power of people as media. (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2016)

3. **Emilia Romagna Turismo:** iAmbassador did a case study on Emilia Romagna Tourism and its successful BlogVille project involving more than 180 bloggers from five continents for five years in a row (iAmbassador, 2016)

4. **Visit Jordan:** Visit Jordan has extensive experience in influencer marketing and has partnered with important influencers in the framework of big media brands like National Geographic or Yahoo Travel. Visit Jordan has been recommended by the director of ST NA.

5. **Visit Norway:** In the European NTO Digital Benchmark, Norway Tourism is mentioned as a best practice under the chapter “Engaging via promotional campaigns”. (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2013, pp. 22-23) It is also praised in the Social Media part for its successful use of Facebook, where the tourism board shows a high level of visitor engagement (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2013, p. 42) and YouTube, where it ran the Scream campaign, an ambitious UGC campaign with more than 2,326,844 views through press coverage and video views (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2013, p. 45) Moreover, DTTT voted Visit Norway as the Best In Class in social media. (Digital Tourism Think Tank, s.d.)

6. **Cape Town Tourism:** DTTT devoted a spotlight article on Cape Town Tourism which partnered with iAmbassador in 2012 for its #LoveCapeTown campaign, involving Cape Town citizens as well as for well-known travel bloggers. (Digital Travel Think Tank, 2013)

7. **Tourism Ireland:** in The European NTO Digital Benchmark, Tourism Ireland is in first place in the Facebook Top 20 Leaderboard and third place in the Twitter Top 10 Leaderboard (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2013, p. 38)

8. **Visit Britain:** Visit Britain tops the Twitter Top 10 Leaderboard in The European NTO Digital Benchmark (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2013, p. 38) with a remarkable 133,343

followers. DTTT highlights a consistent stream of great travel ideas, high quality photography and links to high quality content. (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2013, p. 43)

9. **Tourism New Zealand:** In one of its articles dedicated to the value of influencer marketing in tourism, the magazine *Tourism And The Web* declares Tourism New Zealand as a best practice example mentioning the Air New Zealand safety video featuring the All Blacks, the video escapades of the social media star and extreme sports adventurer, Devin Graham (aka Devin Supertramp), which got more than three million views, the Room 753 campaign that brought 22 high profile bloggers, Instagrammers and videographers in a deluxe ocean view suite, as well as an Instameet led by Tourism Wanaka (Roberts, 2015)

10. **Tourism Australia:** In a study from 2013, eTourism monitor notes that Tourism Australia “hosts the world’s most popular destination social media sites, with over 4.6 million fans on Facebook, dominating the followers UK (1.1 Mio), Mexico (0.885 Mio), Croatia (0.815 Mio) and New Zealand (0.815 Mio) clearly in terms of community size” (Schegg, 2013) In the European NTO Digital Benchmark of DTTT, Australia is mentioned as an example eventhough it is outside of Europe, as it represents the world’s most popular destination Facebook page with its 4.1 million fans. (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2013, p. 46) It also explored the approach Tourism Australia used to turn their social media fans and followers into brand ambassadors. (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2013, p. 47)

## **B. Ideal candidates for group three**

1. Rob Sese is a “29 year old lifestyle and travel photographer born in Chicago, Illinois. His love for photography began in 2010. Some clients he has worked with: Nike Chicago, Travel and Leisure, Canon, Amazon, MVMT watches, Brevite Design, Hotel Tonight, JBTV Studios” (Sese, 2016)

2. Scott Kranz is a full-time freelance photographer, writer, videographer, and content creator based in Seattle, Washington since 2015. He is passionate about the outdoors, mountains, action sports and astro photography. Scott runs a blog and has 217k followers on Instagram, which is his main platform.

3. Erin Faherty has recently shifted from half time to full time blogger. She has 1,382 followers on Twitter.

Other ideal candidates: Kirsten Alana, The Cultureist, Christie and Scott from Ordinary Traveler, Cole Rise, Ken Kaminesky, Zach Glassman, Alex Strohl, Jeff Namkcaps, Vagabrothers, Laurel Robbins.

# Appendix V: Questionnaires

## A. Interviews with NTOs or DMOs

### Part 1 – Get to know your organisation

1. How are your media department and your digital department organized?
2. Have you done influencer marketing before? If yes, which department is taking care of it?
3. Do you have freedom in regards of developing your own campaigns? Are you depending on your partners? Do you get help from Head Office?
4. How do you feel influencer marketing is perceived in your country?
5. How is influencer marketing integrated in your company (outsourcing, in-house, agencies, who is taking care of it, ...)
6. Do you have clear guidelines of how to handle social influencers? What is your basis?

### Part 2 – Your experience with influencers

1. When have you started talking about influencer marketing?
2. Can you explain roughly one or two interesting campaigns you have had?
3. Do you reach out to the influencers or do they reach out to you?
4. How or where do you find the influencers?
5. Based on what criteria do you select the influencers?
6. How do you handle the individual requests you get?
7. What is the importance of the reach for you?
8. How do you agree of a content of the campaign?
9. How do you incentivize the influencer?
10. What are your KPIs?
11. How did you track the ROI?
12. How do you do the follow-up?

### Part 3 – Your feedback

1. What issues have you faced?
2. What is a good partnership according to you?
3. How did you get your knowledge about influencer marketing?
4. What would be your recommendations for a travel organisation that just started out?
5. Do you have any other inputs, did I forget something which would be important?

## B. Interview with the Swiss key partners

### Part 1 – Get to know your organisation

1. How are your media department and your digital department organized?
2. Have you done influencer marketing before? If yes, which department is taking care of it?
3. How do you feel influencer marketing is perceived in your country?
4. Do you feel the employees in your company are sensitive to influencer marketing?
5. How is influencer marketing integrated in your company (outsourcing, in-house, agencies, who is taking care of it, ...)
6. Do you have clear guidelines of how to handle social influencers? What is your basis?

### Part 2 – Your experience with influencers

1. When have you started talking about influencer marketing?
2. Can you explain roughly one or two interesting campaigns you have had?
3. Do you reach out to the influencers or do they reach out to you?
4. How or where do you find the influencers?
5. Based on what criteria do you select the influencers?
6. How do you handle the individual requests you get?
7. What is the importance of the reach for you?
8. How do you agree of a content of the campaign?
9. How do you incentivize the influencer?
10. What are your KPIs?
11. How did you track the ROI?
12. How do you do the follow-up?

### Part 3 – Your collaboration with ST markets

1. From which markets do you get requests for travel influencers?
2. Based on what criteria do you refuse / accept an influencer coming from a market?

#### Part 4 – Your feedback

1. What issues are you facing?
2. What is a good partnership according to you?
3. How did you get your knowledge about influencer marketing?
4. What would be your recommendations for a travel organisation that just started out?
5. Do you have any other inputs, did I forget something which would be important?

## C. Interview with influencers

### Part 1 – Get to know your « company »

1. How/when did you started to become an influencer?
2. Do you consider yourself as an influencer?
3. What is an influencer according to you?
4. Are you full time or part time influencer? How do you make a living?
5. What are you specialized in/what are your topics?
6. What is your favourite platform and why?
7. What relationship do you have with your audience? How do you develop their trust, their loyalty? How do you engage with them?

### Part 2 – Partnering with a travel organisation

1. Could you explain roughly what interesting campaigns you have done so far?
2. Do you reach out to the travel organisation or do they reach out to you?
3. Based on what criteria do you accept/ask for working with a travel group ?
4. How do you agree of a content of the campaign?
5. How do you want to be incentivized?
6. How do they suggest to incentivize you?
7. Do you stay in touch with the company afterwards?

### Part 3 – Your feedback

1. What was your favourite/worst experience and why?
2. What is important in a good partnership according to you?
3. Do you have any other inputs, did I forget something which would be important?



## Appendix VI: Interview transcripts

### A. Interviews with DMOs

Type: Destination Management Organization

Name: Tama d'Haen

Company: Toerisme Vlaanderen (Visit Flanders)

Position: Project Manager Flanders is a Festival

Date: June 28, 2016

#### **Q1: How is the tourist organization of Belgium organized?**

R1: There is no national tourist office for Belgium. Flanders and Wallonia are separated for almost everything and it is also the case for tourism. Visit Flanders does the promotion of Flanders - the Dutch and northern part of Belgium – and of Brussels as well even if it is also partly French speaking. It is part of our mission. Visit Wallonia takes care of Wallonia, which is the French speaking part of Belgium and also takes care of Brussels. It is a bit of a tricky situation. In addition to that, Brussels itself has its own tourist office as well. Our headquarters are in Brussels with 100 employees. We have a department focusing on product development and another one on promotion. We also have a marketing office that takes care of research. On the side of the destination promotion part, we do this dispose of an international network. We are present in other markets like in Paris, London, Köln, Barcelona, Milano, Vienna, Tokyo, New York, Beijing. Depending on the size of the market, there are about four or five people in each office. We also have country managers for Russia, Scandinavia and Brazil as well.

#### **Q2: How is your media and digital department organized at Visit Flanders?**

R2: We don't call it the media department but the content and conversation department, it is brand new, it came with our new strategy two years ago. We have 15 people working full time completed by freelancers depending on the campaigns. There are people taking the lead in projects or keeping an eye on the strategy but I feel that everyone seating in this office should be or is a kind of media or digital executive and conversational person. You can't keep it separated in a company. We work on an independent way, we have our own budget but we cooperate intensively with our destinations, the local tourism boards. In our new strategy, we

try not to focus on the destinations or cities but more on the experiences of Flanders like chocolate, beer, heritage, cycling or festivals. These are themes that are covering all the regions, everybody feels concerned about these topics, so we try to promote it that way. However, we try to fit as many destination as possible. We do include the regions in our campaigns but it is not anymore the most prominent thing we promote.

**Q3: What position do you have in this department?**

R3: Officially I am not in the conversation and content department. I am in the back office of the offices abroad. I am a liaison for the French and Italian market. In 2012, they announced this new project Flanders is a Festival and I became the project and product manager for this campaign, which was a great opportunity.

**Q4: Now let's get into the topic of influencer marketing. I would like to get your perception of influencer marketing. How would you define it?**

R4: It is all about getting a bunch of people on board who are capable to influence a specific target group in which you are interested. It is seeking a kind of intermediary or ambassador with a certain expertise focusing on specific themes or topics and disposing of a certain reach. The influence doesn't come from you but from another person on you. As a DMO, you don't really have a specific product but you should find people wanting to talk about your product. In the strategy that we recently developed, we had the aim to focus on influencers and not paid advertising. We dropped that and decided to look for other people who should be our ambassadors and tell our story.

**Q5: How did you get your knowledge about influencer marketing?**

R5: There was a lot of knowledge here in-house. We had a very inspiring co-worker who recently left the company. We have Europe Travel Commission in-house and they use to organize interesting online marketing conferences. I use to visit conferences as well. It is also a matter of learning by doing, reading reports, listening to world- known keynote speakers, we learned a lot from consultants that have restructured our organization two years ago and digital agencies with whom we have worked.

**Q6: How is influencer marketing perceived in Flanders/Wallonia?**

R6: Sometimes we have common projects, if there is an opportunity we really try to set borders aside and join forces, especially when it comes to Brussels. For example, with the opening of the Magritte Museum, it is ridiculous that a journalist in Paris gets an invite form Visit Flanders and from Visit Wallonia at the same time. Actually, I think that Brussels and

Wallonia are working with influencers as well. In 2012, our big project Flanders is a festival, which involved almost 100 bloggers, changed many things in Flanders. Before there were some small initiatives of influencer marketing coming from the local tourist boards like Visit Bruges with a kind of a bloggers campaigns. But as of 2012, all local tourist boards started to seek for influencers, I started to see them at the same congresses, so they became really eager to learn about influencer marketing and taking that direction. I am really happy to see that what we inspired them, we took the lead in influencer marketing and it worked. We have more budget we can invest more and they can learn from us, from our mistakes and our successes. Also, it is important to do it on a large scale to have an impact, like to invite 100 bloggers and not only 3 or 4. Festival was a perfect theme, it is not a complicated issue, and there are theme that are more complicated.

**Q7: When have you started working with influencers?**

R7: So as I said there were some small initiatives before 2012, then there was this major campaign Flanders is a Festival and as of this point we really included it in our strategy.

**Q8: Do you have clear guidelines of how to handle social influencers at Visit Flanders?**

R8: Yes, we do. With the campaign Flanders is a Festival we collaborated with an agency and they already gave us a lot of tips. Plus, after the campaign we set up lessons learned, from which we set up some guidelines. We shared these guidelines to our offices abroad. From now on, this is the way we are going to work with key influencers. We kept in mind some lessons and try to learn of our mistakes. For example, these guidelines include that we don't pay influencers but give them strong experiences in return and cover their expenses. It says that a sort of service agreement has to be clearly set with the bloggers, that expectations have to be managed, that is has to be clear what the input will be and what the output should be, that we should maintain a relationship with the influencers after a campaign. Also we included the KPIs and mention criteria for the selection of influencers. We indicate a kind of reach but this point is not fix because it is very fluctuating. You can fix criteria right now and within a year the standards will change. For example, we used to use the Klout score a couple of years ago but now it came out that it is not an important indicator anymore.

**Q9: Let's talk more about Flanders is a festival. So how did you find the influencers for this campaign?**

R9: We hired an agency for that. We absolutely wanted to take the direction of influencer marketing but we realized that we did not dispose of the expertise, where to find influencers,

so we hired an agency and it was Think Social Media, a company based out of Vancouver. The founder is William Bakker and they have a small department in Amsterdam.

**Q10: A question about the agency, did they have the names that were matching what you were looking for?**

R10: They already had some names but they also needed to work on their side to find what we were looking for. Then it is really about using your network, the agency itself was working also with other influencers so they tapped into this network too. Thanks to our campaign they could also develop their network so it was really a win-win situation.

**Q11: And did you want to attract an international audience?**

R11: Yes, so our first aim was to attract influencers who are located in the markets we are active in. But this is an interesting point. I just want to mention another lesson learned. We have our strategy, we have our different markets abroad and then we decide to set up a global campaign with influencers on a specific topic and it is a niche topic. An influencer can't be kept within market borders. If you have a famous American blogger, his followers are not only from the US but from the whole world, so your target group is international, and sometimes I was a little bit frustrated because we needed to find an influencer that lived in our markets but it didn't make sense because it could be a Swedish that lives in London and has an American audience. It is not fix. In influencer marketing borders don't exist anymore. We were so eager to find influencers from each market we are active in but in the end it didn't make sense. For example, if I am looking for someone to send to a Reggae festival, I should look for an influencer in Jamaica even if it is not one of our market, he writes in English – what they mostly do – and could have a American audience. Sometimes it is better to catch a bigger fish in a market where you are not necessarily, if it is a niche campaign. That is also what we experienced last year in our cycling campaign and in the first step you should look in your influencer are and not look in their market to find influencers. That's a kind of conflict. You should not work market specific but language specific.

**Q12: Do you think the influencers have a tool to know from where their followers are?**

R12: No, I don't think they do.

**Q13: Based on what criteria did you select the influencers?**

R13: We decided to have a mix of 50% travel bloggers and 50% music bloggers. As a DMO, you should really see what the DNA of your country is and if there is a match with the influencer you are inviting. Engagement is an important issue, the influencers should be able to set up a

conversation between him and his followers. It is not only about his numbers. One of our criteria before inviting them was to have their analytics. The two most important things are relevance and reach. What is the influencer's network and the number of followers. You can be influencers but you have to have a presence on Social Media and have a certain network. We also looked for quality, better to have one journalist who just start out and SoMe account or a blog, but we know that he is a kind of personality but in a few years we can't afford him anymore. We were looking for people with high level content meaning good writers, good creators, good photographers or videographer. For the music bloggers, our criteria number one was that they should be music geeks. Do they get the value of the experience we are offering them? It is also a matter of managing expectations. Sometimes you will disappoint an influencer because you have to turn him down or give him another festival but it is better to do so instead of disappointing everybody in the end.

**Q14: Who approached or selected the influencers?**

R14: It was challenging because we took the decision of hiring an agency to find influencers even if we had markets around the world that could have done it. Actually what I wanted is to have uniformity and to have the influencers being approached and juggled in the same way. I thought this was important for the campaign we were planning. The agency had their list of criteria to choose the influencers. When they learned about the campaign, the markets said "we have our network too and we could send you some influencers". I said "let's be clear, we don't doubt that you can send us some good influencers, it is just that we want a line for this campaign".

**Q15: And who decided of the numbers of influencers? Because you could have invited 6-8... 100 is a huge number.**

R15: We decided it here, myself together with the marketing director, as it was a learning project and the first project applying to our new strategy. We also had to show the example in the sector. We thought we should make an impact and raise the numbers. Also, the product we had - the festivals – was big. And in the end we had 94 influencers.

**Q16: And are you the one who set the content of the campaign?**

R16: Yes. We provided some storylines. The agency tried to do a first match with the influencers asking them the questions: Are you willing to come over to Flanders for this period and are you interested in seeing this festival? Then we tried to make some appointments but very easy-going because we didn't want to make it too strict as we were not paying them. So we presented them the experiences. We didn't only want them to talk about the festival but

also about the destination, we wanted them to enjoy a market or a museum during their free time. This was also a way to keep the local tourist offices satisfied because at the end they also wanted to have their name mentioned during the campaign. This is an important issue.

**Q17: How did you incentivize the influencers?**

R17: This was a big question: do we need to pay an influencer or not? And we said from the beginning no, we are not going to do that. Our reason is we are looking for ambassadors but not for spokesperson. We didn't want them to become a kind of advertising page. We wanted to leave the freedom of speech and looked for those kind of persons who have the same ambition. But what we offered them was a lot. From the moment they left their homes until they were back, everything was on us. It is a good deal I think. Plus, during the whole summer we looked for experiences-money combine. For the festival for example, we had a really big influencer from a very popular Rock Magazine, we send him to Rock Werchter, one of our biggest rock festival and I convinced the festival director to guide the influencer behind the scenes. And this is really an experience that he will never forget. We should be honest, we are not New York, we are not in the top five of people's mind. We should give them experiences rather than giving them the money. Otherwise, it looks like you are buying the people.

**Q18: How did you handle them once in Flanders?**

R18: We made a kind of booklet for them with the hashtags we wanted them to use, with storylines, some did you know's, little guide with emergency phone number but nothing very strict. We did not made appointments and asked them "are you coming or not" and did not tell them "you should write two articles, tweet this and that between, afterward, ..." We just wanted them to make feel very welcome, they knew what it was all about and what we tried to do is creating moments together, so that they understand that they were planned of a bigger picture. There is a festival here in Brussels called Couleur Café. We invited two or three influencers - from Germany, the US and the Netherlands - and they knew who the other influencers were present as well, we gave them their names, phone numbers and Tweeter accounts so that they could meet each other. We also organized dinners together. Because they were not allowed to bring family or partners. That's how we tried to make connections between them.

Also we created a buddy system. Everybody was willing to help because it was about festivals and it is exciting. I wanted to have one Visit Flanders buddy for each influencer. We tapped into our networks, it was people working at Visit Flanders or in the local tourist offices, or other "ambassadors" of Flanders. In that way the influencers had a local friend who could talk about the destination, show them hidden gems, and take them to a nice restaurant or to a specific

shop. And this was very much appreciated from the influencers. If you can create that kind of experiences, influencers are not considering it as work anymore.

**Q19: It is great to give them a lot of flexibility, but how can you make sure that they don't just enjoy free festival and holidays?**

R19: From the 94 persons, 93 of them produced content. The key is the research process. They are not children, they are very responsible. Of course sometimes they skipped some meetings or guided tours. They need to feed their blogs too so they are eager to find interesting stories to tell and it was also our role to give them storylines. If the content was less or not what we expected, it was mostly because they didn't have a great experience for some reason. They were kind enough to call me and explain me why they didn't have a good experience at this restaurant or at this festival and they post about these bad experiences. I was quite satisfied about that.

**Q20: How did you track the ROI? What were your KPIs?**

R20: It was a big discussion between the offices abroad, the local tourist boards and me. In the guidelines now we indicate that we should make agreement in the beginning. What is normally the kind or amount of content you produce, do you have the habit to tweet on the spot or not. What can we expect from you? We had many KPIs for this project. It was the number of content produced, an important one, the number of tweets, the reach of the content, the number of Facebook fans on the special page, the engagement of the fans of the key influencers, the conversations created, do they take action, is the influencer capable to create a kind of emotional reaction and the last KPI was the overall media value of the project. For the ROI, we put together a formula. We took the sum of their contents, the media or advertising value, the score on Facebook, the conversation value, we created a formula expressed in euro and divided by the total cost of the project and the result was positive. I put together a report about the campaign and I am happy to send it to you.

**Q21: What are the main issues you faced during this campaign?**

R21: The biggest issue was to measure the return on the big investment we were about to do and to know if it was worth the effort. We knew that we had to find a solution for that from the beginning. It was really hard to find a formula. Another issue was the collaboration with the local partners as we don't always have the same goals. We asked the local tourist offices to cover for the accommodation of some influencers that were attending festivals in their cities and they answered that they would be ok to cover the expenses only if the influencer would write about their city. We can make ourselves clear to the bloggers but at the end we are not

holding their hands while they are writing the article. You should buy an advertising page if you want this article with this picture and this tone of voice. It is the risk to take when working with influencer because you don't have the whole control.

**Q22: What is your general feedback of the campaign?**

R22: I was very satisfied and we are convinced that it was a very good approach. We think that for a travel organization with a small budget, it is a very good way to work on a niche.

**Q23: Have you kept in touch with the influencers that took part in Flanders is a Festival?**

R23: This is a crucial question. I find very important to keep this network alive. I follow them on Twitter, they follow me, if there is a kind of opportunity to talk about the topic festival I get in touch with them. I also asked to our offices abroad to get in touch with them, I gave them as many details as possible and some of them said "ok, that is great I am going to reach out to Mike and have a coffee with him because his result were so great I really want him to work on other project with us in the future"

**Q24: After Flanders is a Festival, do you plan on doing further influencer marketing campaigns?**

R24: Yes, some small campaigns. We are always looking for new opportunities. Last year, we did a beer battle for the opening of a new innovative brewery in Antwerp. In 2018, there is the opening of a modern art museum in Brussels. We will try to set up a new campaign. And this is also what we plan to do for the World War I remembrance and also for the Flemish Masters as there will be some exhibitions.

**Q25: How do you handle the influencer inquiries which you get per email?**

R25: If it doesn't fit with the plans we have, we turn them down. General bloggers are not interesting anymore for us. If you have a niche blogger who used to work for a big cycling brand, this is interesting. It should fit in our calendar. It also depends on what they need. If somebody is coming anyway to our destination, we will help them with public transportation or entrance to museums. If it is a big one that fits in our strategy, theme (like chocolate) or calendar, we will help him more.

**Q26: According to you, what is important for a successful partnership with influencers?**

R26: Good preparation, starting on time, research is crucial, visiting some blog events and meeting them in real life to start socialising, clear appointments and managing expectations.



**Q27: What would be your recommendations for a travel organisation that just started out?**

R27: I really consider influencer marketing as an added value but it can't replace your classical media approach or strategy. You still need the classical media or mass media because there are people who want to visit Flanders who are not part of a niche but who are still reached only by traditional media. It is true that influencer marketing took an important place in our strategy but we keep traditional media. Another recommendation is that if you organize a traditional press trip it is fine to include one or two bloggers but if you do an influencer campaign like a Blogger House or anything, you should not include traditional journalists because they have another attitude and are looking for other stories.

Type: National Tourism Board

Name: Janine Jervis

Company: Visit Jordan

Position: Deputy Director

Date: June 24, 2016

**Q1: How are your media/social media/digital departments organized at Visit Jordan North America (NA)?**

R1: Here in NA, it is very unconventional, no proper structure or setup, but we do differentiate by department. We have five full time employees. Because it is a small office, it is difficult to have structures and hierarchy. We cover the US, Canada and Mexico. I oversee the communication and PR departments. Our budget is very limited therefore we have to get very creative on marketing.

**Q2: What is your relationship with Head Office?**

R2: Head Office (HO) is in Jordan and has other offices around the world. Visit Jordan NA is like a branch of HO and is only government office outside of Jordan for Tourism. At HO there is more structure and more employees. They have SoMe and digital marketing departments. The campaigns are usually run globally. For example Instagram is done from HO.

**Q3: If your HO plans an influencer trip with NA influencers would you be involved?**

R3: We would recommend them good influencers. We would try to take influence to be able to follow the trip, promote it on our NA SoMe platforms. One of our issues is the lack of communication between HO and us. It happened that HO would reach out to a NA influencer without telling us and we would then reach out to the same bloggers to invite them for a trip. If you are a tourism office, you have to be connected and to communicate right otherwise it looks unprofessional. Our global internet page is [visitjordan.com](http://visitjordan.com) but in NA we have [myjordanjourney.com](http://myjordanjourney.com). We came up with that branding because we wanted to create a platform to enable people to post about their journey on SoMe platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. That is the website that we promote here. Visitjordan has still a lot of information but specifically for NA there is more info on [myjordanjourney.com](http://myjordanjourney.com). Our HO doesn't understand our marketing here much. Therefore it is too difficult to have a common page. For us it is good to

have instant access to our page. We are working with an assistance company here that helps us with our website and with our blog.

**Q4: Does Jordan Tourism NA represents destinations here in NA? Do you depend on them? Or are you independent in doing your campaigns?**

R4: No, we don't represent specific destinations or partners. Visit Jordan is partly private, partly governmental. We have a membership fee, which is our budget to market Jordan. That's why we have to promote the entire country and not specific destinations, we cannot show any preference to any destination. Jordan is a poor country and destinations don't have the funds to market themselves. However, we can make some exceptions, sometimes we work very well with certain destinations and might help them with benefits and ask them to participate in media events.

**Q5: Do you feel you have more freedom since you are not dependent of the destinations?**

R5: To some degree, yes. However, we have to get the approval from Head Office.

**Q6: When did you start with influencer marketing?**

R6: Jordan has been working with influencers since some time. I would say since 2011 with bloggers. When the Arab Spring hit the region, it was important to keep Jordan positive in the media. We are very open. HO has done Instagram takeovers with the global account, talks, and so on. At HO they know how to work with influencers. In NA we are about to launch campaigns with National Geographic, which has some influencers. For example, a SoMe influencer did a campaign with the 99 things to do in Jordan, she supported it all and pushed it to her audience.

**Q7: Where do you find the influencers?**

R7: We never used agencies or paid lists. We think it is a waste of money, we can reach out to the people ourselves. We are part of different associations like Adventure Travel Association. They give us access to some of these influencers. However, once we worked with a media agency, who picked two influencers to send to Jordan and produce two testimonial videos. Sometimes we do networking at events. We met the Editor-in-Chief of Yahoo Travel and out of networking within six months we were planning a trip to Jordan.

**Q8: Do you reach out to the influencers or do they reach out to you?**

R8: Most of the time they reach out to us also because we are understaffed. We also found out that influencers influence other influencers to come to us and this is important in building our networks. I would say that is one of the main reasons why influencers reach out to us.

**Q9: Based on what criteria did you select the influencer? How do you know they are a perfect match?**

R9: If they have huge followership, that is a plus. But not only followers, the engagement and the interest rate is important. We look at their focus, how specific they are, if it is a niche. For example, if the influencer is in the backpacker industry and has 20,000 followers we would consider him because for backpacking 20,000 followers is good. We want to get an influencer who is working with a lot of retail brands for outdoor because this year our campaign is based on outdoor adventures. We also look at their reputation within the industry, we reach out to other tourism boards. We do a lot of research before we decide to collaborate with them. Then they have to fill in a media qualification form, it is the same as for the journalists.

**Q10: Is it still interesting for you if they have worked for other tourism boards before?**

R10: Yes, it is still interesting to have influencer. They don't especially have to be committed to Jordan. It is actually a good point if they have experience in working with other tourism boards. Generally, if they have worked with lots of tourism boards it means that they know how to promote a destination and we can avoid bad surprises.

**Q11: Have you ever had bad experiences?**

R11: We have had some unfortunate situations like with the Yahoo Travel experience, which turned out to be a disaster and we couldn't use the material. We try not to involve any political discussions in our media. We take a step back if it starts to be political. We had an influencer from Yahoo Travel and she did more damage than benefits. She was supposed to promote Jordan in videos but one of her episodes, which was meant to highlight how woman in Jordan can do great achievements, turned out to be hurtful for women. The journalist showed only the „partying“ aspect, speaking about alcohol or Tinder and nothing about her career or achievements. Now if you google “Tinder in Jordan”, the first thing that comes up is this video. She was more a journalist wanting breaking news than an influencer. Sometimes, it can backfire. It was a big learning for us. You have to be careful to pick the right person.

**Q12: Do you pay the influencer? How did you incentivize him?**

R12: We require the influencer to pay for the domestic flights. We cover the costs to Jordan and back as well as ground expenses in Jordan (meals, accommodation, special experiences,

interviews...). We work closely with Royal Jordanian. As its hubs are New York City, Chicago, Detroit and Montreal to Jordan, the journalists have to cover their domestic flights if not located in these cities. In NA, we would never pay an influencer, however our HO has done that before. What happened is that other influencers were told about this and they approached us and asked us for salary. But we would not pay them. We would pay for their trip. Influencers and bloggers should not be charging tourism boards for trips. They can charge hotels or private travel brands but not tourism boards.

**Q13: But how do they make a living then?**

R13: They take advantage of our content and sell the stories they could catch in Jordan through different channels. They can get paid by hotels and brands but not by destinations. Destinations give them access to a whole world of content. That's how they make money. For example, if an influencer works with GoPro to take pictures, he would get payed from GoPro for taking pictures with it. We don't believe in paying influencers. It is a challenge now because that is what they are asking for. What we consider is if they do videos, we would pay them for the production and the additional costs. We would then ask for the raw footage for our use. Also with pictures, we negotiate upfront if we can own them and have the right to use the material. For example, 60 photos without any credit and 20 photos with credit but we can't share them.

**Q14: Can you have the pictures they take?**

R14: Yes, we own them. We send a media form and negotiate about the use of content with the influencers. We also ask them if they give us the right for pictures, videos etc. Sometimes photographers would give us 50 photos that we can use without credits. Sometimes they would give us pictures but for our use only, not to share them with others.

**Q15: Do you have clear guidelines of how to handle social influencers? On what basis are you working?**

R15: No, we don't have any here in NA and I don't think our HO does.

**Q16: How do you agree on the content of the trip or the campaign?**

R16: There are some influencers that take a road trip on their own because this is how they attract their followers. So they would refuse an organised tour. So we would help them to rent a car if it makes sense and support them. But financially we have a lot of bureaucracy. If we don't have anybody controlling the finances it can get out of control. If you have an influencer on the road on his own it is hard to reimburse him for his expenses. Then we would tell them

that it is better to take a guide because Jordan is different. That is how we would be able to escort the influencer. We don't try to control things too much but it is a bit of quality control, to make sure it also doesn't go into politics or is inappropriate.

**Q17: How did you get your knowledge about influencer marketing?**

R17: Mainly from our partners like National Geographic or Afar. It is part of the contracts we have with them to send influencers to Jordan.

**Q18: How did you track the ROI? What are your KPIs?**

R18: No ROI is 100% accurate. We usually require influencers to give us a final report with the engagement, their posts, the analytics. If they don't accept we don't go further with them. Other than that our ROI is measured by the images, samples, links, videos, engagement, impressions, views, clickthroughs, sweepstakes, sign ups, traffic driven to our website, content created. We have to be very strategic within the campaign. We always want to capture leads. Whatever an influencer does, we put it on our website as well. Then we can also lead traffic to our website and to our SoMe platforms. It makes people come to your digital platforms. So we get the report from them and do our own reporting. We use a media monitoring company for general media (not specifically for influencers). This would be included in the media ROI. So we use that as well. For special campaigns we require a reporting from them and we do our own reporting.

**Q19: What issues have you faced when working with influencers?**

R19: The market of bloggers is nowadays saturated. Everybody is an influencer now, you have to look out carefully who they really are and if they are good at what they are doing. We keep them on file we seek them out. We try to do less general blogger trips, but focus on specific niches and try to find specific type of bloggers for specific-themed trips. Another point I want to mention is, with influencers, we do not do individual trips. If they are National Geographic influencers we would consider that because we know they are good. But that is an exception. With Instagram influencers e.g. it is not worth our money getting them to Jordan individually. Paying for a trip from NA costs a lot for one person.

**Q20: How do you handle the follow up after an influencer trip?**

R20: It depends and it varies. Sometimes after these trips we would follow up. But sometimes not. Follow up is poor because we are understaffed. Once somebody goes to Jordan they become ambassadors of the destination. They fall in love with it and come back, and keep publishing over the following years about it. Even if we are not constantly in contact, some

influencers that have been in touch e.g. with our HO now reach out to us and want to go back, want to do a campaign etc. Sometimes when something happens in Jordan they would write us to show their sympathy.

**Q21: What would be your recommendations for a travel organisation that just started out?**

R21: Working with the media is the greatest ROI you can get, freelance and influencers especially. And it is also important to be consistent and remain present. Every time there is an attack in the Middle East we have to maintain our presence. Go to events, be present, be visible, and maintain partnerships. Also be creative with partnerships. If you are a new tourism board, become member of associations. Because once you are in these associations, it helps to build up a network. Also, support the trade as much as possible, too. Don't ever announce a trip online because everybody wants to get a free trip. I have another interesting tip for you. Another way we worked with influencers is with Tour Operators. It is cooperative marketing. We have our coopmarketing form and we would ask TO's how we can help them. We would do marketing proposals. There was a TO that we did a marketing campaign with and the TO covered the whole trip of the influencer and we covered the air fare. When the influencer came back from the trip we did an event at the office to promote the trip the influencer just did to Jordan and then to promote it for the TO. With the influencer campaign we also want it to drive to bookings. Because for the TO it is good if the influencer goes on one of his trips and talks about it.

Type: National Tourism Board

Name: Daði Guðjónsson

Company: Promote Iceland

Position: Project manager for tourism & creative Industries

Date: July 6, 2016

**Q1: Promote Iceland is the national tourism board of Iceland, correct? What is the difference between before 2010 and after?**

R1: Before 2010 it was a different division with different kind of projects and the emphasis was on nature. Now we decided to allocate all the resources into one place. Promote Iceland is a kind of a private identity. It is where the government and businesses can come together as a platform and work together in marketing Iceland. We support the main export industries. I work for tourism and creative arts. We also have a food fish and agriculture mission and then we have foreign direct investment and industries. Our main goal is to support them and market the destination in a holistic way. It is a good place for them to do business investment.

**Q2: Is Promote Iceland represented around the world? Do you have offices in other countries?**

R2: We used to have offices before the crisis (volcano irruption). We stopped this offices and now Promote Iceland operates mainly in Iceland. We do have PR offices that support us in France, UK, NA and Germany.

**Q3: Your organization is mainly based on the power of people as media but you also use traditional media, correct?**

R3: Yes, we combine both. We also do B2B marketing, trade shows, events, road shows, the traditional way as well. But the consumer marketing is mainly based on PR and social media because we don't have big budgets. In 2010, it started as a crisis and we didn't have a lot of time and the only way to media a message in that kind of environment was to use people to motivate them to tell stories. What started as crisis management marketing ended up being the most successful thing, bringing people in the forefront.



**Q4: In your campaign Inspired by Iceland, you are using the people as storytellers to spread the word about Iceland. Who are these people? Locals, bloggers, regular travelers?**

R4: We basically motivated anybody that loves Iceland, friends of Iceland, local people, those who have visited Iceland or who are dreaming of visiting Iceland. In 2010, when the volcano eruption took place, everything started with our Prime Minister. She came on TV and told everybody to take 1 hour of from work, sit at the computer and tell its stories about why one loves Iceland. 1/3 of the country did it.

**Q5: How do you organize all these campaigns you did?**

R5: It is all about creating a moment and a platform and making people want to take part in the moment, let's bring everybody together and share a story. This was the first campaign in 2010 called Inspired by Iceland. The next year we had this campaign called Iceland Invites. The goal was to fight seasonality. The concept is if you come to visit Iceland in the off season you automatically become a lonely tourist so we asked Icelanders to invite tourists to their home. Icelanders would take part in the story and the tourists would share their stories and the connections they have. After that, we had the campaign Iceland by another name. We wanted to work on the perception the people have of Iceland. Because when you hear Iceland, it is rather cold. We wanted people to give other names to the country, to express their feelings about Iceland. The year after that we did the secret campaign. We saw a phenomenal growth and the seasonality was decreasing but it was mainly for South regions and the capital. Our new objective for that year was for the tourists to travel further in the country and we thought secrets was a perfect tool. It was really about unveiling secrets. We collected the secrets all over Iceland and put them on a map. There are so many things to do in Iceland that are secrets. When you read brochures or guides about Iceland it is always about the most popular things and not about secret places. We wanted to build up more destinations for the tourists to go to because it is sustainable. We asked Icelanders to share their secrets and also tourists.

**Q6: So you always include the locals in your campaigns?**

R6: Yes, yes, yes always include the locals, they are the best storytellers and you keep it authentic as well. It is a mix and match, we want the locals and tourists to connect together. It is not this typical push broadcast campaigns, it is more about creating authentic stories.

**Q7: Do the locals play the game?**

R7: It is easier when you have a crisis. It was a moment where everybody wanted to help each other and there was a strong companionship. We have been reaching our goals ever since and we have seen a growth every year.

**Q8: Do you also work with individual influencers?**

R8: Yes, we also do this. Iceland is a trendy place for instagramers and visual artists because it is a visual place. It has been quite easy to get collaboration with great influencers and it has been a brilliant added bonus to the campaigns. We do influencers trips as well with bloggers and instagramers.

**Q9: When did you start?**

R9: We started in the fall of 2014. We started to do Instagram tours and instameets.

**Q10: Do you reach out to them or do they reach out to you?**

R10: Both, it was a reactive thing. We knew that some influencers were coming to Iceland. We also spotted out other influencers that were in line with our target group and we reached out to them.

**Q11: What is the importance of the reach for you?**

R11: The quality of the reach is more important than the quantity. If you have an instagramer with 200,000 followers but with a topic that is right on point with what we are trying to say, then we will rather pick him than an instagramer with 1 million followers and not a lot of engagement.

**Q12: Other criteria you look into?**

R12: Well yes, usually it is just common sense. We have our objectives and these objectives show us the direction of what kind of topics we want to talk about and who is the right person to select. It goes into negotiations, we don't want to give them too many restrictions, they are creative people, they know what they are doing, but we want to get the most out of the trips, and to try to express a story that is in line.

**Q13: How do you incentivize the influencer?**

R13: Usually it is different. If you have a high quality instagramer you will have to pay a fee and this depends on the instagramer. Usually the fee is not the problem. Usually we cover the travel expenses.

**Q14: How did you track the ROI? What are your KPIs?**

R14: It is a really hard question and we have been working with other comparable Nordic offices about this topic. People want to see a ROI of the marketing efforts, but it is always hard because we don't own the product and we don't sell anything. Our main objective is to stimulate a demand. In some cases, we can measure how much the demand goes up with influencers, we look at engagement. But it is hard because we can't say this many engagement leads to these many tourists, to that quality of engagement. Likes and comments are the main KPIS. I haven't come across any better measurements. Usually people don't have a clear answer.

**Q15: What would be your recommendations for a national tourism board that just started out?**

R15: Use people to tell the story of your brands. Other people compliments you not you yourself, being personal, authentic, fun and informative.

Type: Regional Tourist Board / private digital company

Name: Nicholas Montemaggi

Company: previously Emilia Romagna Tourist Board, currently iAmbassador.net

Position: Previously digital PR and International Online Media Relations, currently Director of Marketing and Project Management

Date: July 27, 2016

**Q1: How are your media department and your digital department organized?**

R1: The Emilia Romagna tourist office was originally founded in 1997. There is the regular media department, which is still taking care of traditional media today. In 2009, they decided to set up a digital media department and basically it was made out of a SoMe manager taking care of the first Facebook and Twitter and they decided to have an in-house IT and developer and not to rely on an external agency anymore. That's how it started. I started to work there in 2010. Just to give you a brief overview of my background, I come from PR and communication but I have always worked for marketing and press for smaller tourist boards. When I started there I was taking care of the German accounts, I was as well involved in the PR department when it was about journalists or TV crews coming from out of Italy and I was as well taking part in the marketing department, going to fairs around the world, especially in Germany because I am half German. The natural process was that the media and digital departments merge together when it comes to a project with influencers. When I created the concept of Blogville in 2012 I established the role of PR and bloggers relations, which wasn't very common at that time. In Europe along with Costa Brava we were one of the first to do that. I was of course part of the digital team, which works very close together with the media team.

**Q2: When have you started talking about influencer marketing?**

R2: In 2011, we had our first experience with bloggers and digital influencers. We organized our first blog trip because we saw that other tourist boards in Europe and around the world were doing that, especially Costa Brava in Spain, who were really active. We said let's give it a try. We invited over five bloggers from Germany and the UK. It was basically like a traditional press trip, there was not really a lot of differences. And that's where we decided to work in a different way with this new kind of media compared to traditional media. We were talking with

one of the bloggers and the idea of Blogville came out, it is a concept that was then applied in 2012 and every year until now.

**Q3: Let's talk more about Blogville. How did it started ?**

R3: As I said it was an idea that came out from our first blog trip in 2011 with Melvin Boecher at TravelDudes, Kash Bhattacharya at BudgetTraveller, and me at Emilia Romagna Turismo. We were on this trip together and at the end we realised they could be more potential but we needed to make some changes. We needed more time to take photos and to cover our niche and we came up with the idea "why shouldn't we give an apartment to bloggers instead of a press trip? We could provide the bloggers with an apartment so that they have a platform to exchange and share information and updates, and they explore the destination like a local and not like a press trip where a bus takes them from A to B with a big and long meal etc... It was about finding a way for more time and flexibility. So we launch this project the next year. At the beginning we were getting in touch with bloggers, checking what their focus was and we set up some appointments. They had to apply on an online form and then we went through an evaluation process based on how do they write, which market do they cover, how do we like their style. At the beginning, we just provided them with accommodation and the rest was on them. But then there was a huge demand of bloggers coming in. So in 2013 we decided to collaborate with an agency, iAmbassador, to give a bit more structure to the concept. The bloggers of iAmbassador would get a compensation not only because the created content but also because they were the right arm of the agency, they did small workshops in the apartment, comparisons, exchanges about platforms. This is how it evolved. This year was the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Blogville.

**Q4: You were lucky that Emilia Romagna was so open. It is not always the case, the regional tourist offices often complain that they don't have the budget.**

R4: Yes, they were very open even 20 years ago it was one of the first regions in Italy which set up a room for the TVs so that they could come, film and create videos and send them to HO. The region has always been proactive and it also helped me because they believed in me. The money invested in the beginning was close to zero and then of course it developed. I know the budget is always a problem and they get less and less but you need to shift the budget from somewhere else to try new things.

**Q5: What criteria did you look at when you selected the influencer?**

R5: It is not only the numbers, you also need to have a look at the style, how the influencer writes and what is the quality of the content he posts. Sometimes, I rely a lot on whether the

person comes to you and has already an idea of what he wants to do. It is not only “hey I’m a blogger and I want to come to Switzerland” They need to give you more, they should say “hey I’m a blogger I want to go to the mountains, I want to write about Zermatt and whatever” If you see that they already did research and have a true interest and if you feel something with them, that’s a plus. Of course, it is a bit difficult to standardize it and write it in guidelines. At the beginning, we could select the influencers based on whether they had a media pack or not, because not everybody had one and we could then see who was more professional. Nowadays, we can’t only rely on a media pack so we ask the influencers to send us a screenshot of their Google analytics of the last month. It is interesting to see from what markets and countries the audience comes from. You also have to follow your heart. If you think you like the style of someone, even if he doesn’t have big numbers but you see it is a niche, for example if you are targeting the niche of bicycles, then you should go for it. You also need to test, to try and to invest, which I know is difficult because we are public founded. It is important to try things out, it is not a lot of money. This digital world is changing every day and this is also why I am now in the private sector because I have more time to try things out. Another hint I can give you is that if you have a digital influencer that tries to cultivate relations with you and updates you, it is a good one and that is how it should be. I know it is difficult because it is very hype and everybody wants to be a digital influencer but you need to look through the lines and ask him what is the added value that he can give you. Another very important thing is to think long-term when you are working with influencers. Working online is a long process, you need to cultivate the bloggers, the content they write about you is online forever not like a prints, it goes further than the just the five days they spent in Switzerland. To give you an example we had a big Brazilian blogger that wrote articles a few years ago and still now almost every 2 months she still reposts the articles. You need to train well the influencers, to help you push it.

**Q6: Do you have clear guidelines of how to handle these digital influencers?**

R6: At the time I was working at Emilia Romagna, it was basically me following everything and I was the only one responsible for that. Whenever a colleague had a request from a blogger or digital influencer, he would sent it to me and I was handling it directly. I didn’t write sort of guidelines on how to do that also because we were a regional tourist board and we had only our office there. It is not like if we were a national tourist board like Switzerland or Germany for example that have guidelines and they send them out to their offices in other countries. I kind of trained the people around me, working with me like Silvia with whom you talked to.

**Q7: So what are the main differences between a classical journalists and an influencer?**

R7: It is mainly the freedom and the time, the influencers need flexibility. However, nowadays journalists also understand digital is important. Newspapers are closing down, cutting budgets or switching to digital only. The influencers we don't need to take them by hand like we need to do with journalists. However I am sure that some journalists would also appreciate to be treated like an influencer and give him this freedom but press trips have always been like that. Sometimes you show a journalist something that he doesn't really care of and then he doesn't write about it. The regions should be aware that the journalists won't write about everything. The regions should tell them "this our region and this is what you can do. What are you interested in?"

**Q8: Do you pay influencers?**

R8: It is a process that evolved. When we first started we were not paying the influencers. There were not many influencers, we were working with them like we work with journalists. But the thing is that a journalist gets a salary from the newspaper or from the magazine when they are sent out on a press trip. Bloggers are their own brands and don't get paid by anyone. In the following years, we started to pay them not only as a thank you but also as investing in people that provide quality content, people that are professional and with whom you can establish long-term relations. Of course now there are companies like iAmbassador, which have networks of travel influencers, and these influencers get compensated because they have their daily rates. Some influencers have their own rates and as a tourist boards you can also approach them and say this is the budget that we have, what could you provide and find a common ground. It comes from both sides. You shouldn't be scared when someone approaches you and say I want to be compensated, you should say ok but it depends how you work, what kind of work you provide and if I see a long-term relation with you. Maybe the solution is to do a mix of both, to compensate some and not others. If they show interest, if they are business oriented, they become business partners and you can compensate them. I was in my ideal world I would pay and compensate everyone if they provide good work. We had 180 bloggers and it maybe happened twice where they didn't produce. Also sometimes what you can do is not paying them the first time you work with them and then if it works well you can consider to compensate them. But I think that in 2016 it changed a lot and you need to pay them. Try to build a true business relation with the influencer, and if it is like this the salary comes along. It is important to have an agreement and a contract with the deliverables and you clearly know what to expect in return: we want these kinds of photos, these kinds of videos.

**Q9: If you pay them it shifts from earned media to paid media, how should you handle your budgets?**

R9: You have to understand that the budget of Emilia Romagna tourist board is not strictly separated between departments. Of course it is divided but the collaboration is very close. It is not like a bit fight for the budget like it could be for a national tourist board. Yes, it is paid media but you don't pay the people to write an article about something, you pay the people to help them, to give them a frame.

**Q10: How do you agree of a content of the campaign?**

R10: If we pay them we can ask for deliverables. We ask videos, like 15 HD photos of the trips that you give me, we ask them not only to write on their blogs but also on the website of the destination. This is very important because tourism boards are struggling for content. I am not saying that people working at HO are not good, but I want to say that is always the same people working there, it is an office job and they don't have time to travel around and experience the destination. You can turn the travel influencers into ambassadors and have them creating content that they can give to you. The crucial point is to avoid doing influencer marketing just because everybody else does it. Sometimes I see tourist boards that don't even read what the bloggers wrote, sounds a bit crazy but it happened. It is very important to read the articles, you can learn from the feedbacks of the influencers and adjust your offers.

**Q11: How did you track the ROI?**

R11: The private partners offering the activities could see a conversion. They invited some influencers to do their activity and a few months after they got new kind of clients and they could tell they came because they read a specific article of a blogger. Of course they know that it is not immediate. We had a lot of cases like this and this is for me the real ROI.

**Q12: But how do you track it?**

R12: It is difficult to track it but it is the same for an advertisement in a newspaper, how do you know it brought people to your destination? What is important is to work closely with the private partners so that they tell you whenever they see conversions. They know it by talking to their clients and they can feel if they get new kind of clients. For example, a TO would have customers coming to their offices with an article in the hand saying I read that on this blog and I want to do this activity. It is a good start but of course it takes a lot of time and you need to create a sort of collaboration of all the levels of the DMO. I know that it is not always easy when it comes to public and private collaboration. Other than that, other DMOs certainly use the classical trackers like the hashtags with a sort of advertising value equivalent, the impressions, the number of people that read the articles. It is also important but for me the most important thing is the development of the collaboration. Another example is that we had different bloggers



that promoted the itineraries of TO and this is a very interesting idea. Inviting influencers also helps you create content in other languages. Once we had a very funny story, it was Finnish tourists that went to a little cooking school in the middle of nowhere in the region of Emilia Romagna because when they looked up Google what to do in the destination in Finnish, a blog came first and it was a Finnish blogger that went once to this cooking school.

**Q13: How do you do the reporting?**

R13: It was the same for classical journalists as for bloggers. We take all of what they wrote, not only on their blogs but also on other websites like National Geographic and so on, put it together and report it.

**Q14: Do you do the work or do you ask the bloggers to do it?**

R14: Usually the good and smart bloggers should do it themselves, they would send you updates of what articles they published and posted. Sometimes as a destination you have to chase them and it is difficult because some of them travel constantly. At the moment at iAmbassador we are developing our own internal reporting tool. All of our digital influencers connected to our database and we have a deeper access into their information than an usual tracker. At the moment we are collaborating with a company in South Africa, we do with them the tracking of our campaigns. We basically do a hashtag and this tool automatically reports all the information around the campaign. It also has a sort of advertisement value equivalent figures that they developed. Of course I always say we have to be careful when looking at these numbers. It gives a good overview and numbers in business are always important but it is not only about that. As you may have seen, there is a lot of confusion about this topic, how to do, where to look at, but in the end what is important is really the added value.

**Q15: What would be your recommendations for a travel organisation that just started out?**

R15: I think what you firstly need to do at Switzerland Tourism is to go at Head Office and talk about their strategy. It is the role of Head Office to educate your internal regions and destinations. We saw the same issue at Visit Britain North America, but then they could sort things out and they managed to bring in the knowledge of influencer marketing from the markets into head office and now we are working with their HO. Sometimes the smaller tourist boards have more success because they can try to do more things. Once you have a lot of offices around the world it is more difficult because everybody wants a piece of the cake and it is not easy so I get your position but you need to try it, to push it and you will get the boss to try it and to apply it.

**Q16: Do you have any other inputs, did I forget something which would be important?**

R16: No, I think we pretty much went through everything.

## B. Interviews with ST Swiss key partners

Type: Destination Management Organization

Name: Adrian Seitz

Company: Zurich Tourism

Position: Social Media Manager

Date: July 7, 2016

### **Q1: How is your social media / digital marketing department organized at Zurich Tourism?**

R1: There is just one person doing SoMe in the marketing department, which is me. I have part time contract of 80%. And then we have the market or sales department, which handle the media requests, including influencers, bloggers, in addition to journalists. We have more and more influencers. There is something I want to change because I feel I should take care of influencers as I am the SoMe Manager. On my side I also do influencer trips, I am inviting influencers to Zurich.

### **Q2: So it is divided between you and the media team?**

R2: It is not divided on paper. It is basically their topic but influencer marketing became a big issue in SoMe marketing. On my side, I do influencer marketing more proactively. But if the influencers contact us "Hey I am coming to Zurich, what can you offer me" it is something that the media department is handling.

### **Q3: So you are the one who would launch an influencer campaign but once an influencer is reaching out to you it is going on the desk of the media department?**

R3: Exactly. But the media or the sales team they also do campaigns in their market. For example, Aurelia who is responsible for the American market she organises influencer campaigns together with the market. The campaign that I am running is more based on Instagram, the one my colleagues are working on is more blogs, Twitter, Pinterest but also Instagram. Yes, so basically we are two departments handling influencers. We are aware of that. It is in working progress to see how we are going to handle it in 2017. When they do a

campaign they have to really involve me and it's not easy because we are not working in the same departments.

**Q4: Just to understand it correctly, you are not integrated in the media department?**

R4: No, I am not. I am part of the marketing department. Then, I get my social media budget. With this budget I can organise my campaigns.

**Q5: How do you handle the influencer inquiries you get?**

R5: Sometimes they land on my desk, sometimes they land on the media desk. The limit between the two departments is not very clear. Sometimes the influencers reach out to the tourist information, sometimes to me, sometimes to the media department, sometimes the media team forwards me a request. Sometimes I see it and sometimes I don't. It is the big question, you can see the problem. I would like to see them all, to check out their accounts, to know whether they are in Zurich or not. The big question is where does SoMe belong?

**Q6: How do you define the difference between an influencer and a classical journalist?**

R6: Thinking that if we hire or support an influencer it is like supporting a classical journalist, it is partly true but not completely because their purpose is completely different. The input, how to handle them and the output is completely different. With influencers you get some posts for sure, as with a journalists you don't know if they are really going to produce prints or not. The whole approach to an influencer is different than to a journalist. I do understand the media team wants to handle it because they are used to but I feel like it should be now linked to the Marketing team. We'll see because you can always guide an influencer and say why don't you go there and shoot something like this, shoot a sunset right there because I need some pictures of Lake Zurich with sunset. I think we should handle them more as marketing campaigns rather than regular journalists. Where do you draw the line between journalists and influencers? Because sometimes the classical journalists they are really active on Social Media as well, they have huge Twitter accounts, actually they are both so it is hard to know how to handle them. We should also be aware of a traditional journalist being an influencer. It is not easy to draw this line.

**Q7: When have you started talking about influencer marketing at Zurich Tourism?**

R7: Officially beginning of last year (2015), so it is more than a year now. We have always done a type of influencer marketing, but before it was not called like this. It was more "let's bring some famous bloggers or digital celebrities to Zurich"

**Q8: You would always do it in-house or would sometimes hire an agency or use paid lists?**

R8: Not completely. For the Instameet I organised last year, I did it together with another influencer, just to get in touch with other influencers. And because it is a lot of work. I am doing it again that way for a campaign in September. So I do have some help externally. Me as a SoMe Manager I have never worked with an agency yet but the media department did, for other campaigns. It is two different perspectives.

**Q9: Do you use database or paid lists on the internet?**

R9: Yes, I am using them.

**Q10: Do you have clear guidelines of how to handle social influencers?**

R10: No, not yet. And the media department doesn't have it neither. They contact me sometimes to get my opinion about influencers. So I handle inquiries one by one.

**Q11: Could you explain roughly what major campaigns you had so far?**

R11: Last year we had a big Instameet, it was a four day event where influencers from all over the world were invited to Zurich to take pictures. They had big accounts. On Sunday, I opened up the event so the local instagramers could join. We did a walk and attended a cultural event. They could meet the Instagram stars. This year, we will do the same kind of event. It is also to say thank you to the community because I use their pictures. I also have a famous influencer who came to Zurich, I welcomed her, paid her a hotel room, we exchanged some e-mails to see how many pictures she would post, there was no contract. With the bigger ones we would have a contract saying we will pay you this amount of money.

**Q12: Do you also use Swiss influencers?**

R12: Yes, of course. They also come to the Instameet. I am using their pictures if they are using my hashtags. I am giving them credits. I am also myself taking part in Instameets to meet other influencers. I try to give our handle a face. It is quite appreciated from the community so they know who is behind the accounts. This is why I am doing my own events and attending other events. There are a few meets I attended.

**Q13: How do you get to know the influencers you work with, how do you select them?**

R13: They are selected by the amount of followers they have so the reach, the engagement, the quality of pictures they do, and of course social factors like the group mix, so that they get along well together.

**Q14: How did you agree of a content of the campaign?**

R:14 I will put it together with the influencer who is helping me. We will put together a list of photo spots. We are not doing any tight schedule anymore like last year. With the photo spots they can chose where they want to go, what corresponds to their style, what they want to shoot (sunset, sunrise, traffic, water, ...). With a schedule like when is exactly the sunset, sunrise. In the end I want to leave them the freedom to choose and to do their job.

**Q15: How do you incentivize the influencer?**

R15: The big ones get flights, accommodation, food, and salary if they have management. If they are smaller I am going to pay them accommodation. If it is a campaign I am ok to bring a salary but then I do a contract.

**Q16: So how do you decide whether they are big or small?**

R16: I don't really have a number, it is really by feeling. I think they know if they have huge accounts or not, they are very famous, they have agents and they ask for money. If the influencers contact me, it means they are not that big because they are the ones reaching out. But no salary because it is not a campaign. But my challenge for 2017 is that I might get a budget for influencers so I could pay influencers on a regular basis.

**Q17: Don't you think it would be a better investment to start working with a small influencer who will grow in the further years and become a real and authentic ambassador of Zurich rather than investing a lot of money in a huge influencer that works with many other brands?**

R17: I think it is all about numbers. If you have a bigger one of course you pay for it but the reach is much bigger than a few smaller ones, you get more likes and more comments. If I hire a smaller one and he falls in love with Zurich I don't think he is going to post of Zurich if he is not living here. A local influencer able to shoot pictures on a weekly basis it is a different story. I don't think I can invest in a small influencer and he or she will keep on posting pictures because she fell in love with Zurich. I want the reach, I want to show the beauty of Zurich to as many people as possible. But on the other hand I do local events like instameet where I invite a local community that is a long investment because I want them to post picture of Zurich without necessarily putting our hashtags.

**Q18: How did you track the ROI?**

R18: I calculated the likes, manually I go through their accounts.

**Q19: Do you have KPIs**

R19: I do have KPIs for the instameet that is going to take place. I set the KPIs myself. I want to grow my account, double the amount of followers, to have a certain number of likes and reach. I set the KPI first and then I chose the accounts according to the numbers I need.

**Q20: From what markets do you get inquiries for influencers?**

R20: They mainly reach out to the media department but I know there is UK and Germany. All the markets we cover I think they are considering influencer marketing like Brazil, Italy, UK, US, Asia. We also had an influencer from Middle East recently.

**Q21: Based on what criteria do you refuse / accept an influencer coming from a market?**

R21: The influencer himself, how big she or he is. If it is a small influencer it is not worth supporting.

**Q22: How do you feel is influencer marketing perceived in Switzerland?**

R22: They are just starting now. I talk to other SoMe managers and influencers and they get more and more requests since 2016. Is more getting more important.

**Q23: What about other tourist offices?**

R23: Some of them contacted me to see how I was handling it. I know that Lucerne is still not sure how to handle it. I don't know about the others.

**Q24: How did you get your knowledge about influencer marketing? Learning by doing, took part in conferences, webinars?**

R24: Step by step by being out there, learning by doing, reading blogs, monitoring what is going on out there. I also take part in conferences where I get some inspiration or meet other influencers but it is not where I learned how to do it.

**Q25: What are the main issues you face when considering an influencer marketing campaign?**

R25: To know whether the influencer is big or not.

Type: Destination Management Organization

Name: Kuno Schurch and Sibylle Gerardi

Company: Lucerne Tourism

Position: IT and media manager

Date: June 28, 2016

**Q1: How are your media and digital departments organized at Lucerne Tourism?**

R1 KS: In the digital department, we have three people: one responsible for SoMe, one for website campaigns, sites, micro sites, landing pages and one for IT, which is me.

**Q2: Have you done influencer marketing so far?**

R2 KS: Here in the online department we don't do any influencer marketing. The media team takes care of bloggers, online media and classical media. However, there is no clear borders between our two departments. We do work together but it is not as intense as it should be.

R2 SG: We have never done proper influencer marketing campaign so far. We do work with media bloggers or social media journalists, but no concrete campaigns.

**Q3: Do you think the employees of Lucerne Tourism are sensitive to influencer marketing?**

R3 KS: I think they are not that sensitive because we don't do a lot yet. Influencer marketing is important and will become bigger. We are thinking about it, I think it will grow a little bit in the future, we have done and will do progress on digital channels but it is very complicated for the moment.

R3 SG: No, not really yet. The media department is a bit more sensitive. We are a little bit a step behind, but we all know it is getting more important.

**Q4: What about the people who take decisions?**

R4 KS: Yes, the board is aware of influencer marketing. It is a decision that comes from higher above. We are a bit old fashion we only do classical marketing for the moment.

R4 SG: It is the media department that should take the decision.



**Q5: What are the obstacles you are facing in regards of integrating influencer marketing in you work?**

R5 KS: The main issue we face is limited human resources, especially in the online. There will be changes but I don't know when.

R5 SG: The problem is that we still don't have a strategy or a concept on influencer marketing itself, which would tell us who is our target, what is the strategy, what media relations we should develop. We have mentioned it, we have thought about it, we will do it but so far no concept is existing. It is also a question of human resources. About the influencers themselves, it also difficult to know whether it is a private person or a professional person who is on SoMe. For example we had a request of somebody who had his whole holiday booked in Switzerland with flights, destinations etc, and he approached us to ask for tickets for a festival. It was hard for us to know his honesty, if he just wanted to enjoy the festival for himself or really promote Lucerne. It is difficult to know whether influencer marketing is worth it or not, what the benefit is, you can do a numbers or quality check but it is not very clear. It is hard to understand what the different with a classical journalist are.

**Q6: From what market do you get requests?**

R6 SG: We mainly get requests from the NA market, I would say 80% of the requests. Also if we get a request directly to us I then ask the media representative in the market if it is worth it, who this person is, etc... We also get some requests from UK, from Asia and from the GCC, they were very professionals. We are active in 20 markets and every market is very different. In some markets the influencers are very professional like a classical journalist and in other markets they are not. From NA we have some very professional ones. It is hard for us to think differently for each market.

**Q7: How did you get your knowledge about influencer marketing?**

R7 SG: I asked ST in Zurich if they had anything to help us and they gave me this bloggers guidelines. I think it is nothing very official but it is all they had. I talk to my colleagues in the destinations, actually you have to do it all by yourself. It will not be not a bad idea if ST could do something about that and help us or brief us, explain us how the different market are going to include that in their media work, give us little guidelines, some tips and explain the differences with classical media.

Type: Destination Management Organization

Name: Zulfah Fredricks

Company: Geneva Tourism & Conventions

Position: Digital Marketing Manager

Date: July 22, 2016

**Q1: How is your media and digital department organized at Geneva Tourism?**

R1: Digital tourism is fully integrated at Geneva Tourism. We work with all departments on very different projects. I lead the digital team. If a member of a certain department would have a business requirement, he would approach me via a brief or a meeting to tell me what his business requirement is and I would work on the digital brief to see who of our team should be involved. Most of the times we are all involved. In our team we have a content manager, a community manager, an image and visual manager, a digital project manager and another project manager dedicated to the CRM.

**Q2: And when it comes to influencers, who takes care of them, is it the media department or the digital team?**

R2: It is the media department that leads the influencer programs, they have a whole process they go through but they work very closely with us. The content manager will help if they need images and the community manager will definitely work with them. We have a process that if we have an influencer in the destination we follow and share whatever he is sharing about the destination.

**Q3: Does this collaboration work well?**

R3: Yes, it works very well, we don't have a lot of budget, we are pretty small. We utilize the SoMe tool and we collaborate with the media team because they have a bigger budget for SoMe monitoring and listening. They have a specific budget, for social media monitoring. We will work with them and share information.

**Q4: When have you started talking about influencer marketing at Geneva Tourism?**

R4: Many years ago, before I started which was 3 years ago

**Q5: Do you have clear guidelines, which tell you how to handle social influencers?**

R5: Yes, we do have guidelines. As influencers are very different it is also a case by case but we have a framework. The guidelines are very specific: what type of influencers it is, what we want to promote in the destination. We tailor the experiences through these guidelines. We use to go with smaller influencers rather than huge because generally speaking the bigger the followers the lower the engagement rate. So if you have a small blogger you will have a bigger engagement rate. We do do an assessment. We look at their profile, what type of content they have. Sometimes they are travel influencers but sometimes they might have political conversations and we stay away from influencers like that. In the guidelines it says what we need to do to check that the influencer fits to our positioning paper.

**Q6: Can you explain roughly one or two interesting influencer campaigns you have done so far?**

R6: Last year we had a blogger project. We invited a few bloggers. We created a challenge between different bloggers. The challenge was what they were experiencing in Geneva, it was on Social Media. It was a great success. They had lots of fun and we got lots of interesting original content from them. We don't tell them what we want to post but through the experiences they post what we want. Each one has a different style so we had a nice diversity of interpretation of the experiences. Another project that we did was the Geneva Girl's Guide, a guide targeted for women. It was very specific local tips created by our ambassadors in Geneva so it wasn't recommendations coming from us. We have ambassadors in Geneva like people from fashion, fine dining, golfing and so on. It was tied in one of our packages called the Glam Girl. It was really successful, we invited a few influencers and journalists, we had live twitting throughout the event, we created some mystery behind because they actually didn't know what it was all about, it was a surprise.

**Q7: How did you reach out the influencers?**

R7: Sometimes we partner with digital agencies or PR agencies and sometimes we don't.

**Q8: Do you usually reach out to the influencers or do they reach out to you?**

R8: We get many many inquiries so it's both. We work on a case by case basis.

**Q9: Based on what criteria do you select the influencer?**

R9: We evaluate them. If they have a website we check the ranking with Alexa.com, we also work with Followerwonk, for Twitter we are aware of the Klout score but it is not the only factor. We use not only one tool but many and this is also in the guidelines.

**Q10: How do you agree on a concept of the campaign?**

R10: When we launch a campaign, we come up with the concept. But if it is few individual influencers that are coming, we don't specifically have a concept or tell them what to do. When they approach us, we ask them to fill in a document so we get to know what their interests are and then we tailor a media trip. It is through these experiences that the key messages are coming out, when we meet them we talk to them but we never force them to talk about something.

**Q11: Do you handle classical journalists and influencer differently?**

R11: There is a difference between the two and it is also based on the type of content.

**Q12: How do you incentivize the influencer?**

R12: We don't pay them at all because we don't have the budget but we offer the experiences and accommodation for free. Regarding the flights, it depends if we have a partner on board like SWISS, they may offer the flights.

**Q13: How do you track the ROI? What are your KPIs?**

R13: There are specific tools that the media team uses. We always agree on the KPIs before a campaign: number of engage, uses, how many content they will be able to share with us. But that's usually on big campaigns. How they share the content created is very different. Some of them have blogs, some of them have instagram and some of them will write an article in their blogs later on.

**Q14: How do you handle the reporting on the coverage?**

R14: If it comes from an agency, the agency would provide us with a report on coverage. If it comes from us, we do our own reporting.

**Q15: From what markets do you get inquiries for travel influencers?**

R15: Almost all markets I think.

**Q16: Based on what criteria do you refuse / accept an influencer coming from a market?**

R16: We check if it fits in our positioning paper. Depending on what content they naturally produce, we always check in our positioning paper, does it matches our target audience, does it cover our segmentation. We do refuse influencers sometimes and this is mainly based on the one that are too demanding. We have a preference not to go for influencers that are only big. The bigger the audience the lower the engagement rate and this is one of our key things in the evaluation process to say whether or not we will get the most out of them. And also the bigger expect to be paid and we don't have budget for that.

**Q17: What are the main issues you face when considering an influencer marketing campaign?**

R17: The main issue is that when they travel they want to bring their partner and families and at the end of the day it costs too much for our partners. The other main issue is with our partners, not all of them understand the value of digital. When we want to do an experience with them there ones that are not digitally savvy, it takes a lot of effort for us to explain them why they should partner with us. This is also a main issue for us.

**Q18: How do you deal with that? How do you educate them?**

R18: The media team meet the partners and try to get them on board. And in general we do a partners meeting where we share what we have done or are doing, product launches, we share that content with them, it is a way of educating them.

**Q19: How do you feel influencer marketing is perceived in Switzerland?**

R19: Overall in Switzerland I think we are going in the good direction but as it is so many product offerings the level of expertise is different. Some are very forward thinking and digitally involved but some are less.

**Q20: How did you get your knowledge about influencer marketing?**

R20: It is a combination of everything. There is the Digital Travel Summit, Digital Think Thank as well once a year. It is also about training the team. Some people have more experience in one area and some in another, so we share and train each other. It is also online by reading a lot.

Type: Destination Management Organization

Name: Nicole Schaffner

Company: Bern Tourism

Position: Public Relations Manager

Date: July 22, 2016

**Q1: How are your media and digital marketing departments organized at Bern Tourism?**

R1: There is the PR department with two people full time. We handle traditional media and we started to do some SoMe as well on Facebook and Instagram. We don't have any tool for monitoring so we only post. The Marketing department has an online manager, who will get a new intern in fall. As we will have a relaunch with a new website, we will try to sort things out with a new tool for the monitoring. We are still thinking about how we are going to handle SoMe in the future.

**Q2: Have you done influencer marketing so far?**

R2: No, we have never done any campaign. We only welcome influencers as part of our partnerships with the markets of ST. We welcomed an influencer from the Netherlands, from Belgium, from Germany, from GCC, and might be from the United States as well. We are not organising anything, we really trust ST. In Bern, we supported the Bern instameets. The club of instagramers of Bern approached us to sponsor and we agreed to help us.

**Q3: Do you think the employees of Bern Tourism are sensitive to influencer marketing?**

R3: We know about it, we know how important influencers are but we don't have the resources to initiate it. In the PR and the online marketing we don't have the financial resources. It is a decision that would come from higher above. In the near future we would get one. As we are only two employees in the PR department, we would have to do less media trips and we don't want to do that because we are only two and it is already limited. The best way for us it to combine traditional journalists and influencers. Sometimes the journalists write for a print magazine but also have strong accounts on SoMe so they are both. So for us this is the best case if we can combine both.

**Q4: What are the obstacles you face to integrate influencer marketing in the company?**

R4: Limited resources, limited budget, no tool yet to monitor SoMe, we would need a good tool, we also need to find someone who could monitor during the weekend, we would need somebody who has the know-how. We also need help internationally like from ST to tell us this person is important or not. If we get request from somebody, we always ask the corresponding ST market.

**Q5: When you welcomed the influencers you mentioned before in Bern, how did you handle them? Like a classical journalist?**

R5: For now, we handled influencers like classical journalists. I have the feeling that the influencers don't need that many city tours. We gave them an itinerary and city tours but shorter ones. We gave them suggestions with picture points. They were part of a group press trip, when they are on a press trip they don't like to move individually. For the accommodation we paid them same.

**Q7: How did you get your knowledge about influencer marketing?**

R7: A bit of everything, we had a conference from ST at the Vacation Day. It was more on hashtags and tagging and not really about influencers. We also talked to other tourism boards, shared personal experiences. It is also a lot about trying out, if we personally are on SoMe and follow influencers. We also had brief workshops with the agency that helped us start our SoMe channels but it was nothing about influencer marketing.

## C. Interviews with influencers

Type: Travel influencer

Name: Scott Kranz

Handles:

Twitter: @scott\_kranz

Facebook: @scottkranzphotography

Instagram: @scott\_kranz

Blog: <http://www.scott-kranz.com/>

Date: July 21, 2016

**Q1: I read your life story, which I found very interesting. Let's talk about you being an influencer. How and when you would say that you became an influencer?**

R1: I've never really identified myself as an influencer although I have been involved in works as an influencer. I am first and foremost a freelance photographer, but there is a connection between both and I jumped on opportunities and I have done creative works. Originally, I was practicing attorney but three years ago I decided to switch things up and try something new, I decided to change gears and try full time photography and writing. Not to long after that social influencers opportunities arose.

**Q2: How did you build up your audience?**

R2: That's a good question and there is not any one thing and any trick. I definitely started using social media as a personal thing for family, friends and coworkers. Leading up to the time I started to do creating work, I saw a value in putting professional, high quality imagery up there and consistently try to creating a brand. Sometime in 2014 I realised having a polished portfolio would be a value if I would ever jumping in creative work and it turned out to be very helpful.



**Q3: What relationship do you have with your audience? How do you develop their trust, their loyalty? How do you engage with them?**

R3: I engage with them by trying to have a consistent theme in my imagery, mountains, scenery. For example I am not posting pictures of my food, no offense to the ones who do. It kind of reflects my personality, even though I am connecting with a lot of people I try to keep my private life. I want to be on the side of the camera that's taking the photo and not on the other side.

**Q4: I know that you are an outdoor photographer, that you love nature, and mountains in particular. How would you define your style?**

R4: I would say it is a combination of photography. It is capturing still images of general mountain landscapes, action sports, outdoor sports, which is hiking, trail running, backpacking. Another category of what I do is taking imagery of night sky and stars, which I call astro photography.

**Q5: So you have a blog, you are active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Which one is your favourite platform and why?**

R5: I've signed up on other platforms but I am not very active on them. The ones you mentioned are the main ones. I would say Instagram because it is more simple and visually attractive than Facebook and Twitter. It definitely involves the most traffic for me. It is just focuses on imagery as opposed with Facebook which is more social. I really enjoy that it is mainly visual.

**Q6: How you ever partnered with travel brands?**

R6: I have worked with several tourism groups, destinations, a few US states and Canadian provinces, a few regional and local tourism communities. For example Travel Alberta (Canada), with the State of Idaho, Montana, Colorado, and an example of a more regional tourism group Lake Chelan in Washington. It is mostly regions with mountains.

**Q7: Have you ever been to the Alps?**

R7: I have never been to the Alps. I have been to Geneva. Hopefully I will get there someday.

**Q8: Could you explain one or two interesting campaigns you have done?**

R8: Idaho for example, was a combination of different things. It involved imagery licencing, a series of Social Media posts on my channel and blog article which I wrote. I explored that particular area and basically documented it and went from there.

**Q9: Do you reach out to the travel organisation or do they reach out to you? Who does the first step?**

R9: Both or either, it really depends. I've done formal pitches for licencing assignments or SoMe projects. I've also been contacted by them.

**Q10: Based on what criteria did you select the travel organisation? Why them and not somebody else?**

R10: If I'm aware that they do these types of projects, if they is a need for imagery or social media marketing. Another factor is my familiarity with the area, what kind of geography, activities or scenery there is. Another factor would be how expenses can be kept to a minimum, is it a short drive, I am always considering somewhere that is close.

**Q11: How do you handle all the inquiries you get?**

R11: I try to be very reasonable, I try to looking for neutrally receiving reasonable request, good collaborative cooperation within myself and the other part. I am mindful of how much I travel at the same time, my wife is here and works here. Although I love to travel and being on the road I try not to do too much of it so this is a reason why I would select or not select to work for a tourism group. If I think I am travelling enough and I don't want to increase the amount of travels that would be a decision. In terms of managing inquiries, I guess for tourism I don't get so many that it is a difficult thing to manage. It is totally manageable and I can give full consideration to opportunities that arise.

**Q12: How did you agree of a content of the campaign? Who decided?**

R12: That's a good question. For any content that's pushed through my channels I am generally asking for the ability to select those images. Of course I am working within a framework that we worked out with the other party. They obviously seeing what they are hoping to get. When I am doing a more traditional licencing imagery for a client that's destination I am often giving a larger selection of which the tourism group selects a smaller number and that's all agreed in advance.

**Q13: How do the tourism group usually suggest to incentivize you?**

R13: At this point of the time, because I am doing full time freelance work I am almost in all cases seeking paying compensation. It is not in every case but because it is what I do for a living.

**Q14: Could you think of a positive and negative experience you have had and tell me why?**

R14: I've had a lot of positive experiences, and they were positive for a lot of reasons. I guess doing work with certain groups I have brought a lot of experiences that I wouldn't have experienced otherwise. Whether that's a particular activity in a very unique setting. It is an opportunity to have a truly unique that I wouldn't have experienced. An unfavorable experience would be not to have enough time to do some scouting and research, plan the imagery, scout out some good places to photograph on site when I am at the destination. If it is a packed agenda, sometimes the results are not as good as I could hope or as good as they could have been.

**Q15: What is important in a good partnership according to you?**

R15: What is important is a mutual understanding of both sides and each other goals, what they want to achieve and how it fits into each sides larger scheme effects.

**Q16: What should a travel brand do or avoid to do?**

R16: Once thing that comes to mind when approaching creatives influencers or photographers is to be upfront and ask how the individuals work because there's a lot of people that do these projects for vacationing and other that do this as part of their work and expecting payment as compensation, so I think to not assume a particular person is working one way or not working one way, asking the question and gaining the understanding of how that person works and how they would want to work on a project.

Type: Travel Influencer

Name: Rob Sese

Handles:

Twitter: @robsesphoto

Facebook: @rob.sese

Instagram: @rob.sese

Blog: [www.robsese.com](http://www.robsese.com)

Date: June 24, 2016

**Q1: How/when did you started to become an influencer?**

R1: It started with my love for photography four years ago. I took a trip to Europe and I started to be passionate about travelling. I liked it because it was something new, fresh. People started to travel through me and they were asking me a lot of questions. Thanks to photography, I fell in love with travelling. I started to catch an audience, western people. People from Chicago they don't or can't travel a lot so they started to talk about where I have been, my pictures and so on.

**Q2: Do you have another job next to it or do you make it a living?**

R2: I do part time photography and I have an office job on the side. I hope to move to full time photography I have an opportunity in D.C.

**Q3: How would you define your style? What are you specialized in?**

R3: It is travel and lifestyle. I like whatever is dramatic, dark, mysterious, foggy, what involves emotions. Not necessarily sad but something that let you see what you want. Also, I like to have a cinematic vibe that can evoke emotions.

**Q4: On what social media are you active and why?**

R4: So I have Tumblr, to share travel and nature, it is where I get most engagement on. Instagram for visual arts it is an easy one.

**Q5: What relationship do you have with your audience? How do you develop their trust, their loyalty? How do you engage with them?**

R5: Answer their questions back for sure, being polite, genuine, natural, don't be pretentious, I think genuine and authentic are the most important and be yourself.

**Q6: What is the importance of the reach for you?**

R6: I don't care of high numbers, I focus more on the works but business want numbers only.

**Q7: Have you ever partnered with a travel group?**

R7: Yes, I did some minor projects. I worked for British Columbia and for Ireland. They paid for the flights and the hotels and I did an Instagram takeover. Then I also traveled to Norway, Sweden and Denmark but I didn't partner with any tourist office, I just shared my experience. I have reached out a few times but didn't come to anything concrete. I partnered with other brands like Amazon, Kindle and Travel + Leisure.

**Q8: Based on what criteria do you accept to work with a brand?**

R8: It really depends on the agreement, I am very flexible and I would go anywhere.

**Q9: How did they suggest to incentivize you?**

R9: Usually I get free products in exchange of photo content, I worked for brands like a backpack brands, watches or Nike.

Type: Travel influencer

Name: Erin Faherty

Handles:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/10milesbehindme/>

Twitter: [@erinfaherty](https://twitter.com/erinfaherty)

Instagram: [@10milesbehindme](https://www.instagram.com/10milesbehindme)

Pinterest: [10milesbehindme](https://www.pinterest.com/10milesbehindme)

Flipagram: [10milesbehindme](https://www.flipagram.com/10milesbehindme)

Date: July 21, 2016

**Q1: I saw on your blog that you started blogging in 2010, how has it evolved during the further years?**

R1: Yes, first it was friends and family who were reading my blog. Three years ago, I changed blogged and it became more a travel community. I started going to travel events and meetings and to connect with other bloggers. Now it is more like a travel blog. Firstly I was doing NY city which is my city but then it became broader, I am open to the whole world.

**Q2: So you said you just resigned from a corporate job to do blogging full time, how did it happen? How are you going to make a living?**

R2: Yes, so before I had a part time corporate job and I didn't have the time to do a lot of blogging so I decided to resign from my job and do full time travelling and blogging.

**Q3: Do you consider yourself an influencer?**

R3: I do, I think anybody that has a sort of followership on SoMe and has a certain kind of strong personality can be considered as an influencer. When I meet people at a restaurant or a bar or anywhere else I feel that I am always promoting something in our conversation like "oh you need to see this place or you need to go there or you need to do that" or I tell them that I read that article about this or that. I think it is important to talk about what you saw and tell them where they need to go.

**Q4: What are you specialized in? What are your main topics?**

R4: I don't have specific topics. I don't want to limit myself to some types of travelling. Sometimes I like to go in a fancy hotel, sometimes I like to hike. I don't have specific countries where I want to go to, I would just go anywhere else without thinking whether my audience will like it or not. I guess I can say that my topics are female in their thirties oriented.

**Q5: I saw that you are active on your blog as well as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and Flipagram. What is your favourite channel and why?**

R5: That's a good question, I think that it depends. I love reading Twitter. As an individual I like Twitter more than any other platforms because it is short and brief, you can say something very funny or very interesting in only one sentence, and it is easy to find my path as an individual. I like Instagram as well but sometimes I have the feeling we only see the popular posts they want us to see and this is not what interests me the most.

**Q6: What relationship do you have with your audience? How do you develop their trust, their loyalty and engage with them?**

R6: In the beginning, it was a majority of family and friends so it was easy to engage with them because they liked the comments, they would give me a lot of feedbacks in personal as well. But I guess now it is really about commenting back always. I know bloggers that would comment other bloggers so that they feature their names or posts but I don't do that kind of thing.

**Q7: How you ever partnered with travel brands?**

R7: I haven't worked with a tourist office but with tour groups and hotels. I recently went on a cruise in a Dominican Republic and posted for the cruise. When I saw that cruise I said I want to do that I found it great so when I saw that they were looking for bloggers I took the opportunity. I also worked for a hotel. I am hoping to do more of that now that I am a full time blogger.

**Q8: You mentioned media kit, what did you feature in there?**

R8: Yes, so I have my numbers, my followership, the benefits of partnering with me, the articles or reviews I've done and other works.

**Do you reach out to the travel organization or do they reach out to you?**

I reached out to them because the market is oversaturated and I think you need to reach out. It has always been me reaching out so far. Sometimes company want to work with big time

bloggers that have good connections and company, it is a bigger product but it costs more money.

**How did you agree of a content of the campaign? Who decides?**

I kind of said this is what I can do for you, I can post this and this and they accepted that way.

**How did they incentivize you?**

It was an exchange of products, free tours and free nights

**How do you want to be incentivized?**

Even if I would like to be paid in the future, paying is not my main goal. My main goal is to travel with the writing coming along. Being paid would be nice, especially if the is reaching out to the bloggers.

**What are your feedbacks? What is important in a good partnership according to you?**

I haven't had any negative experience so far. What I think is important is that the companies repost, retweet or comment what you have posted because sometimes they don't do it.



## Appendix VII: Coding of the data

Table X: coding

<b>DMO's and NTO's</b>	<b>A</b>
Vist Flanders	A1
Flanders is a Festival	AA1
Jordan Tourism North America	A2
Promote Iceland	A3
Emilia Romagna Turismo	A4
Blogville	AA4
<b>ST Swiss key partners</b>	<b>B</b>
Zurich Tourism	B1
Lucerne Tourism	B2
Geneva Tourism & Conventions	B3
Bern Tourism	B4
<b>Travel Influencers</b>	<b>C</b>
Scott Kranz	C1
Rob Sese	C2
Erin Faherty	C3
<b>Recurring terms</b>	
Case-by-case	cbc
Department	dept
Influencers	inf.
Influencer Marketing	IM
Influencer Trip	IT
Tourist Board	TB

Source: author's data

## Appendix VIII: Presentation of the results

Table X: Presentation of the basics-phase

		DMOs	ST Swiss key partners	
			Active in influencer marketing	Non active in influencer marketing
<b>1. Basics</b>	<b>Influencer marketing: definition</b>	A1: Get people on board to influence a specific target group in which you are interested, seek intermediary/ambassador with certain expertise focusing on specific themes and disposing of certain reach. Good fit for travel organization with small budget. Good for niches. A3: Use people as power of media. Personal, authentic, fun and informative.		
	<b>Influencer marketing: campaigns</b>	A1: Bloggers for AA1, inf. for cycling campaign, opening of new innovative brewery, opening of modern art museum, World War I remembrance. Focus on experiences rather than destination. Set borders of partners aside and join forces. A2: Instagram takeovers, digital talks, campaigns with National Geographic. A4: Blogville (apartment for inf.) every year, adjustments after first IT 2011 : more time/flexibility, niche, platform to share information /updates, explore destination like locals	B1: Four-day Instameet with big international inf. (Instagram stars), one day opened to public with walk and cultural event. Two editions. B3: Bloggers project Geneva Girl's Guide: local tips for women created by ambassadors (fashion, food, golfing) with mysteries and surprises.	B2: Nothing so far B4: Nothing. Just support of the city Instameets.

<b>Influencer marketing: benefits</b>	<p>A1: Use other people to tell your story rather than paid advertising</p> <p>A2: Media is the greatest ROI you can get, freelance and influencers especially.</p> <p>A3: Use people to tell the story of your brand. Other people pay you compliments, not you yourself.</p> <p>A4: Do cooperative marketing and involve trade: campaign with TO: TO covers IT and we cover flights. Event to promote the IT and TO: drive bookings. Another example: bloggers promote itineraries of TO</p>		
<b>Influencer marketing: state</b>	<p>A1: Raise of awareness after AA1 among TB. Before AA1: small initiatives, after AA1: many projects, changes of strategy.</p>	<p>B1: Has just started, more requests since 2016. Contacted by other TB for advice.</p> <p>B3: Different levels of awareness among partners (hotels, museums,...), good direction overall in the country.</p>	<p>B2: Low awareness overall in the company, more awareness in media dept, awareness will grow.</p> <p>B4: Awareness in media dept.</p>
<b>The social influencer: influencers VS traditional media</b>	<p>A1: Inf. are added value but shouldn't replace classical media.</p> <p>A4: Inf. need more freedom, time, flexibility. Increase of journalists considering digital.</p>	<p>B1: Difficult to draw a line. Partly same but very different: different purpose, input, output, inf. post for sure while journalists not sure, inf. should be handled as marketing campaigns. Sometimes journalists are inf. as well.</p>	<p>B4: For the moment same but itineraries with less or shorter city tours, add suggestions with picture points.</p>

Challenges	A1: Measure ROI, collaboration with local TB A2: Bureaucracy, saturated market (everybody is an influencer), select the right influencer.	B1: Know whether influencer is big enough or not. B3: Collaboration with partners who don't understand the value of IM (efforts to explain and educate them)	B2: limited human resources, no strategy or concept, how to differentiate professionals to vacationers, be sure of his honesty, ROI, quality check, difference with classical journalists, differences between ST markets. B4: Limited HR, no budget, top-down decisions, don't want to do less classical media, no SoMe monitoring tool, no knowhow, need support from ST.
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Source: Table by the author with multiple sources

A1: (d'Haen, 2016) A2: (Jervis, 2016) A3: (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4: (Montemaggi, 2016)  
B1: (Seitz, 2016) B2: (Gerardi, 2016) B3: (Fredricks, 2016) B4: (Schaffner, 2016)

Table X: Presentation of the incorporation-phase

		DMOs	ST Swiss key partners	
			Active in influencer marketing	Non active in influencer marketing
<b>2. Incorporation</b>	Turning point	A1: Thanks to AA1 in 2012, fully incorporated in strategy A2: After Arab Spring in 2011, need to find ways to keep Jordan positive in the media. A3: After volcano irruption in 2010, not much budget/time, need to recover, idea came from Prime Minister who asked Icelanders to tell the world why they love Iceland A4: Interested by the example of Costa Brava (first in Europe), launched first blogger trip in 2011.	B1: Officially since 2015 but worked with blogger or celebrities before (wasn't called inf. yet). B2: Earlier than 2013.	
	Strategy	A1: Change strategy two years ago: use other people to tell our story rather than paid advertising. New content and conversation department. A3: New organization: use people as the power of media A4: TB or NTO needs to be proactive and believe in new things, first investment in close to zero. Go to HO and talk about strategy.		B2: Still no strategy or concept.
	Head Office	A1: HO has model role, needs to take lead, inspire local TB, share learnings and guidelines with markets, has budget. A2: Our HO does IM, we try to get involved, sometimes lack of communication (both reach out to the same inf.), difficult for HO to understand our market. A4: Most important thing: HO needs to take lead, educate region and destinations. Possible to bring IM from market into HO. Easier for smaller and private organizations. Need to give it a try and be proactive.		

	Know-how	<p>A1: inspiring co-worker, conferences of Europe Travel Commission, learning by doing, reading reports, listening to world-known keynote speakers, consultants restructured our organization, digital agencies we worked with, guidelines based on our learnings</p> <p>A2: partners (National Geographic, Afar), travel associations, no guidelines</p> <p>A4: No guidelines because small organization with few employees. NTO should have guidelines and send them to offices abroad.</p>	<p>B1: Instameets, learning by doing, step by step, reading blogs, monitoring the internet, conferences for inspiration. No guidelines yet, case-by-case, rely on SoMe manager</p> <p>B3: Digital Travel Summit, Digital Think Thank, internal exchanges, monitoring the internet.</p> <p>Guidelines as a framework (does the inf. fits our positioning paper, criteria of selection), also case by case.</p>	<p>B2: Ask ST HO for help (they gave us the <i>Bloggers Guidelines</i>, nothing official but all what they had), ask other TB, all by ourselves, would appreciate to get appropriate guidelines from ST</p> <p>B4: conferences, other TB, follow influencers personally.</p>
	Key partners	<p>A1: Hard to make TB understand that they have to promote experiences rather than destinations. More aware and educated thanks to AA1. Do an IM campaign on a large scale to have a big impact on them.</p> <p>A2: We don't have specific partners, we promote the entire country (with exceptions). Reason: poor country and destinations don't have money.</p> <p>A4: Important to collaborate to be able to get the ROI.</p>		

Departments	<p>A1: IM handled by the "Content &amp; Conversation" Dept, separate budgets between dept but intense cooperation.</p> <p>A2: Unconventional, no proper setup. Reason: small office.</p> <p>A4: Media Dept for traditional media and Digital Media Dept since 2009. Work very closely together when it comes to IM.</p>	<p>B1: Marketing Dept with SoMe and Sales Dept with Media. No clear boarder when it comes to IM but in working process. SoMe is more proactive, organizes IT /Instameets. Sales Dept handles media inquiries (journalists, bloggers, influencers) and campaigns in the markets (blogs, Twitter, Facebook). In the future, SoMe should take care of IM. Reason: demand increases, inf. are not press. Challenge: sometimes classical journalists are inf.</p> <p>B3: Digital Dept works with all depts based on business requirements, Media Dept in charge of inquiries/campaigns. When it comes to IM, Media Dept leads and collaborates closely with Digital Dept, share budgets.</p>	<p>B2: Inf handled by Media Dept, work together with digital dept but not as intense as it should be</p> <p>B4: Marketing Dept with online manager (website), PR Dept handles traditional media, SoMe on Facebook and Instagram (no monitoring, only posting).</p>
Budget/ Human resources	<p>A2: If limited budget, be creative.</p> <p>A4: Budget is always a problem because public founded etc. But you need to try, test, invest, shift budgets.</p>		<p>B4: If limited human resources or budget, work people who are both: inf. and journalists.</p>

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources

A1: (d'Haen, 2016) A2: (Jervis, 2016) A3: (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4: (Montemaggi, 2016)

B1: (Seitz, 2016) B2: (Gerardi, 2016) B3: (Fredricks, 2016) B4: (Schaffner, 2016)

Table X: Presentation of the implementation-phase

		DMOs		ST Swiss key partners	
				Active in influencer marketing	
3. Implementation	Goals and objectives	<p>A1: Opening of a new brewery or museum, special event like World War I remembrance.</p> <p>A3: Different campaigns with goals: <i>Inspired by Iceland</i>: share stories, fight the volcano crisis. <i>Iceland Invites</i>: locals to invite tourists to their home, fight seasonality. <i>Iceland by another name</i>: perception of tourists, express feelings. <i>Secret campaign</i>: unveil secrets places, fight regionalism, sustainability.</p>		<p>B1: Say thank you to community for their pictures.</p>	
	KPIs	<p>A1: Number of content, number of tweets, reach of content, number of fans acquired, engagement, conversations created, actions taken, emotional reactions created, overall media value of the project.</p> <p>A2: Images, samples, links, videos, engagement, impressions, views, clickthroughs, sweepstakes, sign ups, traffic driven to our website, content created.</p> <p>A3: Likes, comments, haven't come across any better measurements.</p>		<p>B1: Number of fan and followers acquired, number of likes and reach (selection of inf. based on the KPIs).</p> <p>B3: Engagement, content shared (depends a lot on the platforms, some inf. post later on, etc.) usually for big campaigns.</p>	



	In-house /Agency	<p>A1: Agency <i>Think Social Media Vancouver</i> for AA1. Reason: not enough expertise in-house, agency has good networks. Win-win situation: agency needs to work to find what is needed, opportunity to expand network. Challenge: markets don't understand and want to recommend their inf. Decision: keep a line, same list of criteria, uniformity, inf. need to be approached and evaluated the same way.</p> <p>A2: Never, waste of money.</p> <p>A4: In-house for first edition of AA4 (reach out, focus, market, style check, appointments, online application form) Evolution: increase of demand, hire an agency for more structure.</p>	<p>B1: SoMe Dept in-house, Media Dept sometimes hire agencies. SoMe Dept works with other inf. who take the role of an agency. Why: have a bigger network, reduce amount of work.</p> <p>B2: Sometimes in-house, sometimes outsource.</p>
	Select the influencer	<p>A1: Research process is key, find the right inf. to give him freedom and avoid bad experiences. Hard to set criteria because standards fluctuate. Criteria: reach, no cloudfire anymore, DNA of DMO matches with inf., engagement, inf. able to create conversations with followers, analytics of the inf., kind of content produced, amount of content produced, quality of content (writing, photographing, video graphing, level of expertise), style. Key: relevance and reach, quality over quantity (better have an influencer that just started out and is affordable, might grow later), does the inf. understand the value of the experience. Origin of the audience: not work market specific but language specific (inf. can't be kept within borders)</p> <p>A2: Research process is key and helps avoiding bad surprises. Criteria: not only followers but also engagement, focus, niche (if it is backpacking with 20'000 it is very good), brands he has worked with in the past, reputation within the industry, reach out other TB, fill in a media qualification form (same for the journalists), deliver a final report.</p> <p>Focus on niches and specific-themed and forget about general inf. Build networks, become member of associations</p> <p>A3: On a global scale, everybody is an influencer. Use anybody who loves Iceland: friends, local people, those who have visited or those who dreams of visiting Iceland. Locals are the best storytellers. For individual inf.: quality of reach more important than quantity, matching topics. Key: common sense.</p>	<p>B1: Key: amount of followers (no small influencers) also engagement, quality of pictures, social factors. If you have bigger ones you will get more like and comments.</p> <p>B3: Evaluation process, ranking with Alexa.com, followerwonk, other tools of the guidelines, fill in a document for their interests</p> <p>B3: Assessment, fits in positioning paper, match target audience, cover segmentation, not too demanding, profile, type of content, no political conversations, not huge (the bigger the audience, the lower the engagement rate, and expectation to be paid). Key: smaller inf. rather than huge inf. because generally the bigger the followers the lower the engagement rate.</p>

	<p>A4: Hard to standardize criteria. Not only numbers, also style, quality of content, whether the inf. comes to you and already has a concept/did research/has true interest, niche, screenshot of Google analytics of last month to see which markets they cover (media pack not reliable anymore), feeling/follow your heart, read through the lines, added value. Key: an inf. who cultivates relationships, gives updates, is business oriented.</p>	
Agreement	<p>A1: Yes, expectations, clear input and output, stay flexible, no orders, comes from both parties.  A2: Yes, right for pictures, videos without credits or for our use only.  A4: Yes important, with deliverables, clear expectations in return (photos, videos, posts, corporate content, blogs, etc...)</p>	B1: Yes, if big inf.
Run-down	<p>A1: Booklet with hashtags, storylines, did you know's, emergency phone numbers. Goal: create nice moments together, make them feel welcome, not strict appointments, lot of flexibility. Meet other influencers and have a good time, buddy system with locals for insider tips (much appreciated, not considered as work anymore).  A2: Some inf. refuse organized tours and take road trips on their own because this is how they attract followers. Sometimes private guide to escort the inf. and do a quality control (avoid anything inappropriate)  A3: Not too many restrictions, inf. are creative people, create a moment and a platform to share, bring people together.</p>	<p>B1: Helped by an influencer, list of photo spots for Instagramers, no tight schedule anymore, time of the sunsets/sunrises.  B3: If campaign, we come up with concept. If individual inf., no specific concept, never force them to talk about something</p>
Compensate the influencer	<p>A1: Big question. Don't believe in paying but give strong experiences, cover flights and ground expenses. Reason: true ambassadors with freedom of speech rather than spokesperson or advertising page.  A2: Don't believe in paying, cover flights and ground expenses, pay for additional costs (e.g. video production). Reason: inf. should charge hotels/private travel brands but not TB/public founded brands. We give them access to whole world of content/stories to feed their channels and sell to private brands  A3: No problem to pay them, cover flights and ground</p>	<p>B1: Big inf.: pay, cover flights and ground expenses. Small inf.: don't pay, only accommodation. Might have more budget to pay everybody in 2017.  B2: Don't pay, give experiences, cover ground expenses and flights depending on the partners on board. Reason: no budget.</p>

		<p>expenses</p> <p>A4: Process in evolution. First edition of AA4 run in-house: just accommodation. Reason: not many inf., inf. treated like journalists. Second edition of AA4 with agency: pay some inf. Reasons: inf. are their own brand and don't get salary from newspapers/magazines like journalists, inf. create content, run workshops, right arm of agency. Pay to say thank you, to invest in professional people, to require quality content and deliverables, to establish long-term relations. Both parties should stay flexible and find common ground. Don't get scared when someone wants to be compensated. Do a mix of both. Accept if inf. shows interest, are business oriented, promise good work, want long-term business relations. Ideally would be to pay everyone if good work. Idea: don't pay inf. the first time and if good work, pay him for further campaigns. Nowadays, inf. have right to be paid.</p> <p>A4: Paid media, not to tell something specific but to give a framework</p>		
			<b>ST Swiss key partners</b>	
		<b>DMOs</b>	<b>Active in influencer marketing</b>	<b>Non active in influencer marketing</b>
<b>3. Implementation</b>	Individual requests	<p>A1: Accept only if fits calendar, refuse if general bloggers, focus on niche bloggers. If an inf. is coming anyway, help with public transportation/free entrances.</p> <p>A2: Accept if niche.</p> <p>A3: Accepted if match the big campaign of the year</p> <p>A4: Go through evaluation process.</p>	B3: Case by case	<p>B2: Ask representatives of ST markets for advice.</p> <p>B4: From ST markets, accepted because we trust ST, or integrated in group presstrips.</p>

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources  
A1: (d'Haen, 2016) A2: (Jervis, 2016) A3: (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4: (Montemaggi, 2016)  
B1: (Seitz, 2016) B2: (Gerardi, 2016) B3: (Fredricks, 2016) B4: (Schaffner, 2016)

Table X: Presentation of the follow-up-phase

		ST Swiss key partners		
		DMOs	ST Swiss key partners	
			Active in influencer marketing	Non active in influencer marketing
4. Follow-up	Relationship	<p>A1: Yes crucial, maintain relationship after campaign, keep network alive, follow on SoMe, transfer contact to markets</p> <p>A2: Depends because understaffed. Some inf. become ambassadors by themselves and reach out to us again. Try to be consistent, remain present/visible, maintain partnerships, systematically re-share influencer's content.</p> <p>A4: Yes crucial, cultivate relations, think long-term, long process, cultivate bloggers, goes further than the IT. Train the inf. well, push it. Inf. content is online forever not like prints.</p>	<p>B1: International and small inf.: can't become ambassadors and keep posting after IT, not long-term. Local inf.: can become ambassadors, long-term.</p> <p>B3: Sistematically re-share inf.'s content</p>	
	Reporting	<p>A2: Own reporting with a media monitoring tool</p> <p>A4: Same as with classical journalists, smart bloggers should do it themselves and give updates (published articles/posts), however sometimes hard because constantly traveling.</p>		

	ROI	<p>A1: Formula: sum of contents plus media value plus score on Facebook plus conversation value divided by total cost.</p> <p>A2: Final report with engagement, posts, analytics from the inf. No ROI is 100% accurate.</p> <p>A3: Very hard question, how to evaluate stimulation of a demand. Work with other Nordic offices about this issue.</p> <p>A4: Make best use out of IT: use content for website, get feedbacks, adjust offers, turn inf. into ambassadors. Real ROI is added value. Work closely with partners and ask if they see conversions (new kind of clients = spinoff of an IT), not immediate, difficult to track but as difficult as another marketing activity. Use trackers like hashtags, use advertising value equivalent, calculate impressions. Numbers are important but use them as overview, not all about the numbers.</p>	<p>B1: Manually calculate likes.</p> <p>B2: Specific tools.</p>	
	Feedback	<p>A1: Great success with spinoff, further influencer marketing programs planned.</p> <p>A2: Many successful campaigns, one very bad experience.</p> <p>A3: Best success ever, constant growth of tourism since then.</p> <p>A4: Great success, regional TB became a model</p>	<p>B1: Successful campaigns, adjustments for future editions, maybe shift IM to SoMe Dept, more budget to pay all the inf. in 2017</p> <p>B3: Great success, diversity of interpretation of experiences, ambassadors</p>	<p>B2: Incorporate IM slowly in the future</p> <p>B4: New monitoring tool, new way to handle SoMe (reorganization), more budget</p>

Source: Table by the author with multiple sources

A1: (d'Haen, 2016) A2: (Jervis, 2016) A3: (Guðjónsson, 2016) A4: (Montemaggi, 2016)

B1: (Seitz, 2016) B2: (Gerardi, 2016) B3: (Fredricks, 2016) B4: (Schaffner, 2016)

Table X: Presentation of the influencer's results

		Travel influencers
1. Basics	Influencer marketing: <b>campaigns</b>	C1: Exploration of area and documentation with imagery licensing, SoMe posts, articles on blog with regional and local TB. C2: Instagram takeover for regional or national TB, picture licensing for travel brands (backpack, watch, apparel, etc.) C3: Posts and articles for cruise company, posts for hotel group.
	The social influencer: <b>expertise</b>	C1: Combination of still images of general mountain landscapes, action sports, outdoor sports (hiking, trail running, backpacking), astro photography (night sky and stars) C2: Travel, lifestyle, dramatic, dark, mysterious, foggy, emotions, cinematic vibes. C3: Females in their thirties. No specific topics, don't want to limit myself to some types of travelling. Any hotels, activities, country without thinking whether my audience will like it or not.
	The social influencer: <b>platforms</b>	C1: Instagram is the main one because focus on visual. Also active on Facebook and Twitter, signed up on other platforms where I'm not very active. C2: Tumblr where I get most engagement, Instagram for sure C3: Blog, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Flipagram, but particularly Twitter because short and brief
	Turning point	C1: From attorney to full time photography and writing in 2013, switch things up and try something new. Freelance photographer rather than influencer (connection between both/opportunities). SoMe for personal life, friends, family, coworkers. Then, works gained quality, decided to put best imagery online, try to create a brand, creative portfolio in 2014. C2: Since 2012 with love for photography, trip to Europe, passion for travelling, new, fresh, people started to travel through me, western people don't or can't travel a lot, caught an audience C3: Blog for friends and family about NYC, changed blog in 2013, more travels, caught a travel community, going to travel events/meetings, connect with other bloggers. I am an influencer, anybody with strong personality and followership, I influence everyday, always promoting something in my conversation (you need to go there and see this)

<b>2. Incorporation</b>	Accept a partnership	<p>C1: If I meet their needs, my familiarity with the area, what kind of geography, activities or scenery, how expenses can be kept to a minimum, is it a short drive Ask how the inf works and gain the understanding because big difference between professionals and vacationers</p> <p>C2: It really depends on the agreement, flexible. Don't care of my numbers, focus more on my work, but business want numbers</p> <p>C1: Keep consistent theme in my imagery (mountains/scenery), keep private life away, no (pictures or of my food)</p> <p>C2: Answer questions back, being polite, genuine, natural, don't be pretentious</p> <p>C3: Always commenting back. My media kit: numbers, followership, benefits of partnering with me, the articles or reviews I've done and other works.</p>
	Agreement	C1: Make agreement together, for content on my channels I want to make the selection of images. Set up mutual understanding of both sides, understanding of goals, what they want to achieve and how it fits into each sides larger scheme effects.
	Run-down	C1: If not enough time for scouting and research at the destination or packed agenda: results not good as it could be
	Compensation	<p>C1: Usually seek for compensation. Reason: what I do for a living, full time freelance photographer (former attorney). Brand needs to ask and understand how the inf. works because difference between professionals and vacationers.</p> <p>C2: Usually get free products in exchange. Part-time photographer and office job on the side. Hope to move to full time photography.</p> <p>C3: Usually get free products in exchange, accommodation and tours, paying would be nice. Reason: compensation is not my main goal, I want to travel, write, but I need to make a living. Just moved to full time traveler and blogger (former banker)</p>
	Individual requests	C1: Neutrally receive reasonable requests, good collaborative cooperation within myself and the other part, depends on the amount of travel already planned (mindful for my wife). From tourism, I get a reasonable amount of request that I can manage and give full consideration
<b>4. Follow-up</b>	Relationship	C3: Don't forget to repost, retweet or comment what you have posting
	Feedback	<p>C1: Only positive experiences so far</p> <p>C2: Only positive experiences so far</p> <p>C3: Only positive experiences so far</p>

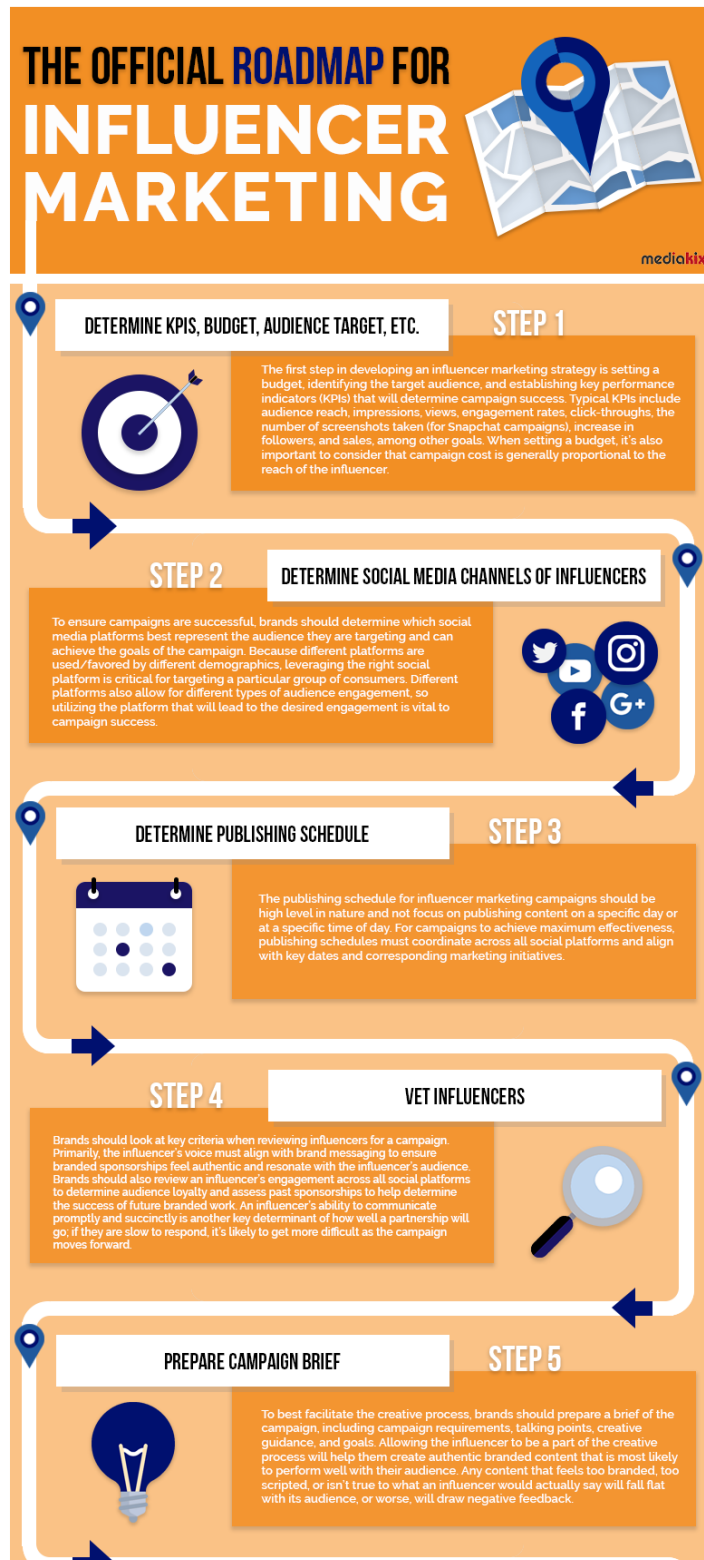
Source: Table by the author with multiple sources

C1: (Kranz, 2016)

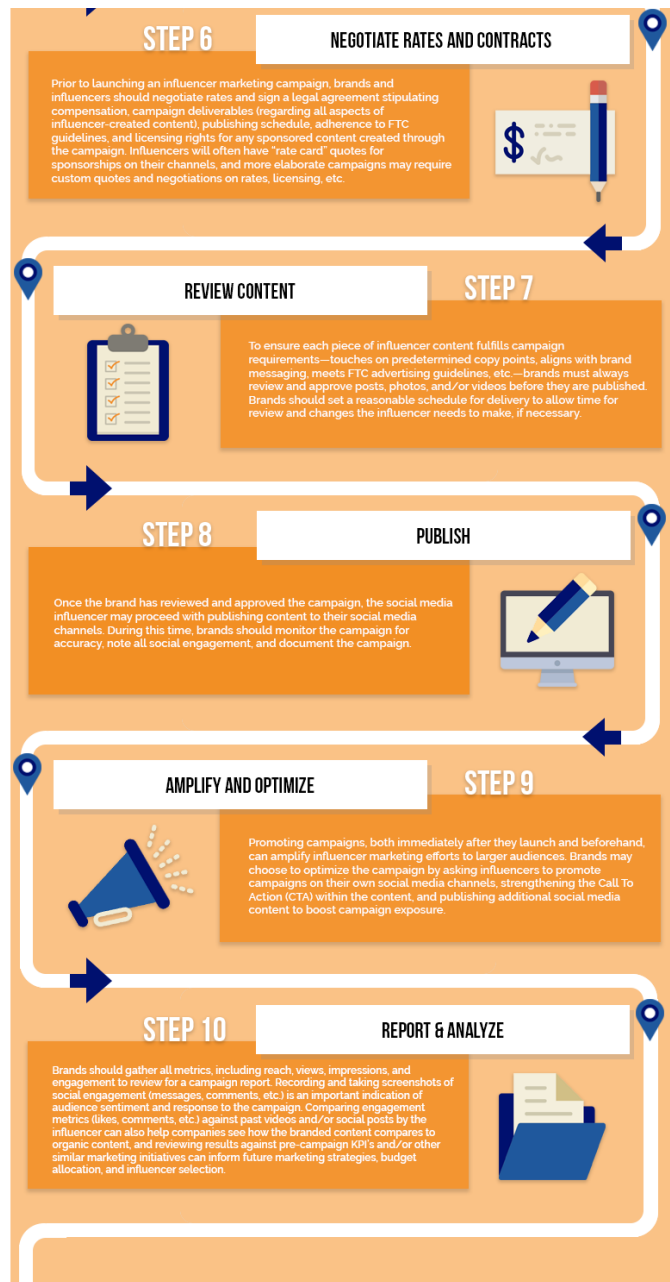
C2: (Sese, 2016)

C3: (Faherty, 2016)

## Appendix IX: Official Roadmap for Influencer Marketing







**CREDITS**

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Infographic design by:



Contact us:

- www.mediakix.com
- 1-310-450-1999
- inquiry@mediakix.com
- twitter.com/mediakix

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