

RUNWAY TO THE WEB: THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

0 COMMENTS

The clothes and the styles from the runways of fashion weeks used to take a while to get to customers. They would see them eventually and look forward to buying them when that season approached or other brands would ‘interpret’ them for consumers. Now, customers are able to see images or videos from the runway near instantaneously thanks to influencers in attendance. What impact can these influencers have on the changing landscape of fashion coverage? The team at [Launchmetrics](#) decided to find out. (Launchmetrics, is an influencer marketing company created by the [Fashion GPS](#) and [Augure](#) merger.)

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

during

**NEW
YORK**
FASHION
WEEK

MEN'S F/W 2016

LAUNCHMETRICS

CFDA FASHION
CALENDAR



In their study they've analyzed attendees, who have follower counts in the thousands and millions, from New York Fashion Week: Men's Fall/Winter 2016 shows, looking specifically at their social media impact throughout the world. The introduction to the report explains the importance to studying social media metrics as they have increasingly become a new form of advertising for brands:

Since the advent of social media, analytics on the impact of digital channels have become key. This is particularly relevant for the fashion industry. This study examines the notion that social media is increasingly replacing traditional advertising as a forum to promote fashion. To that end, influencers—i.e. on Instagram, Twitter and blogs are at the focus of fashion brands. Who are these influencers who can reach millions of followers and fans, and how can brands find them? At the same time, what role does traditional media play in this new world? We have placed the ‘influencer’ at the heart of this study to better measure their contribution to the success of a brand.

Who is in the audience at these shows?

Before we can understand the reach of these influencers, we must first analyze the make-up of the audience of these events. Obviously, print journalists make up most of the audience of these shows, totaling to a third (33%). Another rough third are online journalists (27%) and bloggers (5%). Online writers have steadily increased in influence over the years. The study shows that they might be on par with traditional media and that the fashion world has recognized this. The report asks if online journalism might over take traditional media, but also states that, for now, the two are working together:

Digital versions of fashion magazines have become a powerful extension of a print asset while pure digital players like *WhoWhatWear*, *Man Repeller*, and *Business Of Fashion* have served as a compliment to these.

It should come as no surprise that most of the audience of these shows were U.S.-based, with an overwhelming majority being from New York City, and the second-largest section being from Western Europe (56% of the non-US audience). The next largest segment (26%) is from Pan-Asian countries/cities with Japanese publications making up most of that percentage (18%). This is further evidence of an Asian market for these clothes that shouldn't be ignored.

Who is their audience online?

Launchmetrics highlighted four social media influencers: Julie Gilhart, a freelance fashion consultant, *The Fashionisto* blog, Andrew Bevan of *Teen Vogue* and Vanessa Friedman of the *New York Times* based off their large social media imprints. The demographics of their followers loosely match up with those in the front row as there is an overwhelming North American and Northern/Western European presence.

The more interesting and important information lies in the smaller percentages. Again, there is a notable Asian audience, but there is also a significant Latin American and Caribbean audience. There is a smaller audience of African, Eastern European and Middle Eastern following these accounts that are not represented in the front row. While combined this audience doesn't hit double digit percentages, one has to remember that these are percentages of *tens of thousands* of follower counts. The study notes,

Fashion has become globally accessible.

and that engaging with these digital influencers, as well as their followers, brands might be able to engage people in these new markets.

The Importance of Instagram

How are images from fashion shows and fashion week getting around the globe so fast? Instagram, of course, with the report so far as going to call it the “unofficial platform for the fashion industry.” Citing a report from digital think tank L2, it is explained that Instagram—out of all the social media platforms—was the one to receive the most engagements during New York Fashion Week. Specifically there were:

Approximately 55,000 comments, 2.79 million likes and 21,400 publications actively engaging on Instagram.

With that kind of traffic, Launchmetrics highly suggests that influential Instagrammers, who are native to the platform, should have more of a seat at the table—or at least the front row in this case. Using Instagram beyond sharing images but to also build relationships can help encourage direct engagement from consumers (through influencers and consumers themselves) and become a useful source of information.

Conclusion: Getting Closer to the Consumer

In the middle of the report, the Launchmetrics team states that the role of the runway and fashion week are already in the process of changing due to consumers being able to see the show in real time. **(It's something we've noticed too.)**

The power of the consumer and the runway show are being reevaluated. This was the focus of a study the CFDA conducted with the Boston Consulting Group in March 2016. Several designers have tested the idea of in-season relevancy, among them, Rebecca Minkoff in February, as well as Tom Ford and Burberry in

the fall. In-season relevancy is likely to elevate the role of the influencer and potentially to drive business for brands.

Designers who want to get ahead of this change and to more directly engage with their customers should look to digital influencers, especially those on Instagram. While traditional press is still relevant and serves as an authority in the space, online media and influencers will have some more authenticity with consumers. These influencers also have followers in markets not represented by traditional media and can be gateways for new business opportunities.

The report also notes that social networks are the best place to get data for analytics. Developers for these platforms are now providing ways to easily analyze this data and brands should take advantage of this.

Want more details and data? Click [here](#) to download the report.