

inzpire.me

# #WhitePaper

Peeking behind the influencer curtain to mark the 10th anniversary of Instagram in 2020.



## OSLO, NORWAY

2020 marks the 10th anniversary of the photo and video-sharing social networking service, Instagram: over 40 billion Instagram posts have been made since company co-founder, Mike Krieger, created in 2010 the first Instagram image (of San Francisco's South Beach Harbor at Pier 38). As Instagram enters its second decade, the influencer industry which has grown around the platform, moves out of its infancy and into its formative years.

To shed light on this often misunderstood professional sector, **inzpire.me** ([www.inzpire.me](http://www.inzpire.me)), the global influencer marketing platform that uses tech to improve transparency between brands and content creators, is publishing **#WhitePaper**: the most extensive review of influencer attitudes to date, revealing insights ranging from payment to demographics, working hours to ethics.

Analysing data from 10,000 content creators/influencers, more than 3,000 registered businesses globally which use the inzpire.me platform, over 12,000 pieces of content created since the company's inception in 2016, and qualitative data from 350 global influencers operating in English with a combined follower reach of 9,455,750 people - #WhitePaper provides the clearest picture yet on the state of the industry going into the new decade.

## Key Headlines

- 1 The average age of an influencer is 28 years old and the majority (77%) are female
- 2 42,575 Instagram followers is enough for an influencer to earn the average UK salary
- 3 Over two thirds of influencers are turning down branded work (i.e. posts paid-for by a company) 'for ethical reasons'
- 4 A quarter of influencers feel their parents 'don't understand' what they do for a living
- 5 71% of influencers are educated to undergraduate level or higher

“Many talk about our industry as though it’s witchcraft. For those who didn’t grow up with platforms such as Instagram, it can be hard to quantify. Many people don’t understand the marketing potential available. For that reason, we wanted to shine the spotlight on our industry. It’s a sector that is constantly discussed, often debated or misunderstood, but can no longer be ignored.”



**Marie Mostad**  
Co-Founder and COO  
inzpire.me

“At first, influencer marketing might not have been taken seriously, but things have changed. Companies, agencies, and the influencers themselves, now understand what works and what doesn’t. The industry, though still young, is considerably more professional, and this is reflected in the rise of longer term relationships between brands and influencers. As long as we continue to make quality, unique content for people to enjoy then the industry will continue to flourish.”



**Tobias Becs**  
Influencer with 388K  
followers on Instagram

## #WhitePaper contents:

- 1 Influencing: The Numbers
- 2 Who are influencers?
- 3 Ethics
- 4 The Industry
- 5 Conclusions and Predictions

## Influencing: The Numbers

### Working hours

Based on insight from over 350 influencers operating in the English-speaking world, the time spent per week 'maintaining a personal brand' averages at 30 hours - equivalent to the minimum hours required for a job to be classed as 'full-time' in the U.K.

Within this, the average influencer spends 17 of their 30 hours per week working on 'brand collaborations' (as opposed to maintenance of their own personal brand). This means that 57% of an influencer's working week is dedicated to projects which directly generate income.

### Working hours

Using the inzipire.me [Instagram pricing calculator](#), the following can be deduced:

- To earn the National Living Wage (£16,010 per year)<sup>1</sup> from branded collaborations on Instagram, an influencer needs:
  - 19,050 Instagram followers if creating 8 posts and 8 stories per month
  - 48,650 Instagram followers if creating 4 posts and 4 stories per month
- To earn the UK Average Salary (£29,009 per year)<sup>2</sup> from branded collaborations on Instagram, an influencer needs:
  - 42,575 Instagram followers if creating 8 posts and 8 stories per month.
  - 108,200 Instagram followers if creating 4 posts and 4 stories per month.

### Team-size

The majority of influencers work alone (70%), while 14% work with one other person. 13% work with two, and just 3% are operating with teams of three or more (team members typically being people operating cameras, helping with hair, makeup, background settings etc.).

### iPhone remains the device of choice

When it comes to smartphone devices, 81% of influencers on the inzipire.me platform use iPhones, which is significantly higher than the percentage of the general global population (22.85% according to [Macworld](#)).

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<sup>1</sup> According to the [The Pensions Regulator](#)

<sup>2</sup> According to [Office of National Statistics](#)

## Who are influencers?

Based on demographic data from over 10,000 influencers, the average age of an influencer is 28 years old, with the gender balance being 77% female to the 23% male.

### Is 'influencer' a dirty word?

While, according to figures from marketing research company [Morning Consult](#), 50% of millennials (and 52% of Gen-Zers) 'trust' social media influencers to give good advice, there is a wider speculation about the validity and trustworthiness of the industry from businesses and the wider media.

Over two-thirds (67%) of influencers surveyed feel there is currently a negative stigma around the word 'influencer'.

Social media influencers are conflicted on how they would refer to their job title, with 34% preferring to be seen solely as 'influencer', while 28% preferring to be referred to as a 'content creator' (with 38% comfortable with both).

### Three-in-five influencers are degree-educated

When it comes to completed level of education, the majority of influencers (71%) have a University-level qualification. Over 56% have received an undergraduate degree, with 15% having completed a Postgraduate degree as well.

27% finished school but did not attend university, leaving only 2% of influencers who have not received any qualifications.

This level of undergraduate and postgraduate employment (71%) which is slightly less than the UK's graduate employment rate (82%), according to the [Office of National Statistics](#) (2017).

### Over three-quarters have other jobs, but more than half see influencing as the long-term option

76% of influencers admitted to working other jobs, with just 24% working solely as an influencer.

However, 57% plan to be influencers for 'the rest of their working life', while 43% view influencing as a temporary career choice.

## **Look, Mum, I'm an influencer**

The rise of the influencer over the last decade has led to many a confused conversation around the dinner table and a generational divide, with 1 in 4 (25%) feeling their parents do not 'understand' their career choice or what their job entails.

## **Ethics**

### **The majority of influencers are making ethically-conscious decisions**

As the number of brands looking to make the most of the growing power of influencer marketing continues to expand, so too do the moral questions that influencers face regarding which brands they are willing to work with.

67% are turning down opportunities to work with brands 'for ethical reasons'.

### **Impact of the influencing industry on mental health and body image**

With concerns over the constant consumption of social media affecting mental health, it might be unsurprising to learn this extends to content creators too.

Nearly half (47%) felt that working as an influencer has had an impact on their mental health, while less than a third (32%) said it had not.

While 24% believe that the influencer industry has a 'positive' effect on body image, 32% are willing to concede that the impact on body image was 'negative'.

### **Influencing as a family business**

The role of children in influencer marketing has become the subject of debate in recent years, with questions around royalties and image rights having developed as the 'parent-and-child influencers' market has grown.

Despite these issues, 56% would be 'happy' for a child of theirs to become an influencer in the future, while 39% remain 'unsure'. However, only 6% rule out the idea of their children following in their footsteps.

## The Industry

### Fashion remains prominent

When it comes to the most popular category for influencers to define their brand, inzipire.me's data suggests fashion remains the most popular overall (29%), followed by lifestyle (28%), and travel (9%).

### Brands are struggling to find the right match

Brands are still in the dark when it comes to identifying the right spokespeople. 79% of influencers have received requests from brands which are irrelevant to their social media profile.

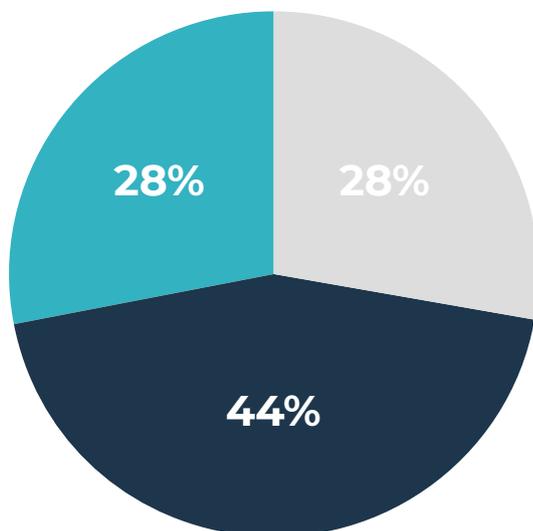
### Influencer solidarity

When it comes to advocating for employee rights, 58% of influencers are in favour of an industry trade union, while just 8% would be against it.

### The rise of the machines

The growth of 'virtual creators' (such as [Lil Miquela](#), a computer generated influencer with 1.7m Instagram followers) shows that the industry is open to the growing development of automation.

28% of influencers do see these virtual influencers as a 'threat' to the industry, while 44% are unconcerned.



**28% of influencers see virtual influencers as a 'threat' to the influencer marketing industry, while 44% are unconcerned.**

Yes (28%) | No (28%) | Don't know (44%)

## Conclusions

The findings of #WhitePaper throw into light a number of issues which the industry has to take on board going forward; from wellbeing of content creators to the standards of the industry as a whole.

Drawing on the data, **Marie Mostad, Co-Founder and COO** of **inzpire.me** can put forward the following conclusions.

### **An ethical approach**

“Our industry has grown at an unprecedented scale, with questions around the effect that rise has had on the people involved having been left unanswered, until now.”

“With 47% of influencers admitting that their career choice has had an effect on their mental health, more needs to be offered by agencies/social media platforms in order to offer support for those working within a marketplace that can lead to ‘burnout’.”

“The impact on mental health can also be linked to the findings that over two-thirds (67%) of influencers surveyed feel there is currently a negative stigma around the word ‘influencer’.”

“From this, we would advocate offering mental health support and counseling for those working in the industry - to help foster a sense of pride in their work and encourage healthy practices to avoid burnout. Action must be taken to solve this.”

### **An influencer’s charter**

“One of the most surprising findings of #WhitePaper is the number of influencers who are making choices related to the stances of businesses approaching them, with 67% admitted to turning down work based on ethical reasons. Influencers are actively taking care of their credibility, which is a testament to their relationships with their followers and their commitment to responsible promotion.”

“Alongside this, influencers and content creators are also increasingly aware of the industry’s effect on consumers (32% stating that influencers had a ‘negative impact’ on the culture of body image) meaning guidance on these moral concerns have to be taken seriously.”

“Drawing from these findings, inzpire.me proposes a charter for the influencer marketing industry

(covering brands, agencies, and influencers), which provides set guidelines for all parties involved around transparency and ethical promotion.”

## **Trade unions and employment rights**

“With the majority of influencers operating as sole traders (70% of influencers are working alone), it can be difficult for individuals to push forward with making sure their employment concerns are properly addressed (from fair pay, to contracts with businesses, to percentages of earnings paid to external agencies).”

With more than 58% of influencers actively in favour of a trade union setup, we would advocate that this is properly addressed in 2020.”

## **A legitimate graduate option**

“One of the most striking findings that #Whitepaper has revealed is that, in contrast to public opinion, the influencer marketing industry is very much a graduate’s pursuit with 71% of influencers educated to degree level, and 15% of those having completed a postgraduate.

“Just 2% of influencers have yet to receive any qualifications, which is a potential warning to any children considering leaving education to become full-time influencers. The average age for an influencer is 28, suggesting someone with life experience is most likely to succeed.”

“Figures also indicate that the majority (57%) plan to continue working as influencers for the majority of their working life (compared with 43% who consider it as a temporary stepping stone).”

“From this, we can see that many graduates are already making the steps from academia to influencing, and that more information should be offered to higher education institutions on how to correctly advise those considering influencer marketing and content creation as a career choice.”

The influencer market has now reached a point where those operating in specific areas (micro-influencers, those with fewer than 10k followers, and nano-influencers, those with 1-5k followers, alike) can also feasibly earn significant amounts from brand collaborations.”

## **About inzipire.me**

inzipire.me is the Norwegian influencer marketing platform using tech to improve transparency between brands and content creators, working with brands such as Coca-Cola, Vespa, Nestlé,

# inzpire.me

Yoplait, Boots, Simple, and Universal Music. Agencies such as Carat, Mindshare, isobar, Zenith, and Mediacom, as well as non-profits like WWF, Unicef, and the Salvation Army.

Understanding that audiences are tired of being presented with generic posts on Instagram and other social media platforms, the company is on a mission to facilitate impactful, authentic content via its one-stop-shop platform.

[www.inzpire.me](http://www.inzpire.me)

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