

## Influencer marketing for common diseases

# Personal, empathic information

It is not uncommon to read about advertising fatigue among consumers, but also about "advertising" aversion among doctors and other healthcare professionals. In fact, any "content" can transform into "rubbish" if the messages are sent past the needs of the recipients and the contextual conditions of the target customers are not taken into account. The great strength of professionally managed influencer marketing in the healthcare environment is to place content according to needs and context via individualisation and perceived familiarity.

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This gives influencers a position that makes them important mediators of marketing messages. With the right choice and appropriate messages, they have an influence on their followers and reach them in the relevant situations of their everyday life. If people affected by complaints or illnesses, trust them, such content gains additional effectiveness: the messages are not only informative and helpful for developing one's own coping strategies, but also convey a feeling of being picked up individually and well understood in the sense of a double resonance.

## Influencers in the healthcare segment

The internet has permanently changed the media landscape across all target groups and social classes: It now serves as the primary information medium, while TV and print media are increasingly taking a back seat. The internet is also a central source of initial information for questions about health: according to Statista, more than two thirds of the German population already search the internet for health-related information. In this context, influencers have an important role to play in the transfer of knowledge and experience as well as in the decision-making behaviour of people affected by diseases that can be derived from this.

Assuming authenticity, their additional information is decoded as personal and comprehensible recommendations and serves as a starting point for further actions and measures. Suitable opinion leaders in the healthcare segment can be patients, affected persons, but also relatives or persons from the circle of friends and acquaintances. Even medical professionals or employees in the healthcare segment have a high impact. The decisive factor is that the persons acting as influencers can contribute credible contributions to indications, therapies or behavioural measures that alleviate complaints.

Large reaches or a particularly large fan base play a subordinate role in the healthcare sector, as it is not uncommon to deal with pointed target groups, unusual or rare experiences. Therefore, micro-influencers with approx. 1,000 to 10,000 subscribers are often the better choice for targeted information transfer. With a still manageable number of followers, those affected feel more connected to the influencers, their comments seem more trustworthy and are also not perceived as advertising. Even in the case of frequently occurring diseases, a look at the internet is obligatory today; "Dr. Google" is consistently the first choice for research, whereby the look is relatively quickly supplemented by other reputable-looking informants "from the field" (netdokter.de, apothekenumschau.de, patienteninformation.de, and many others).

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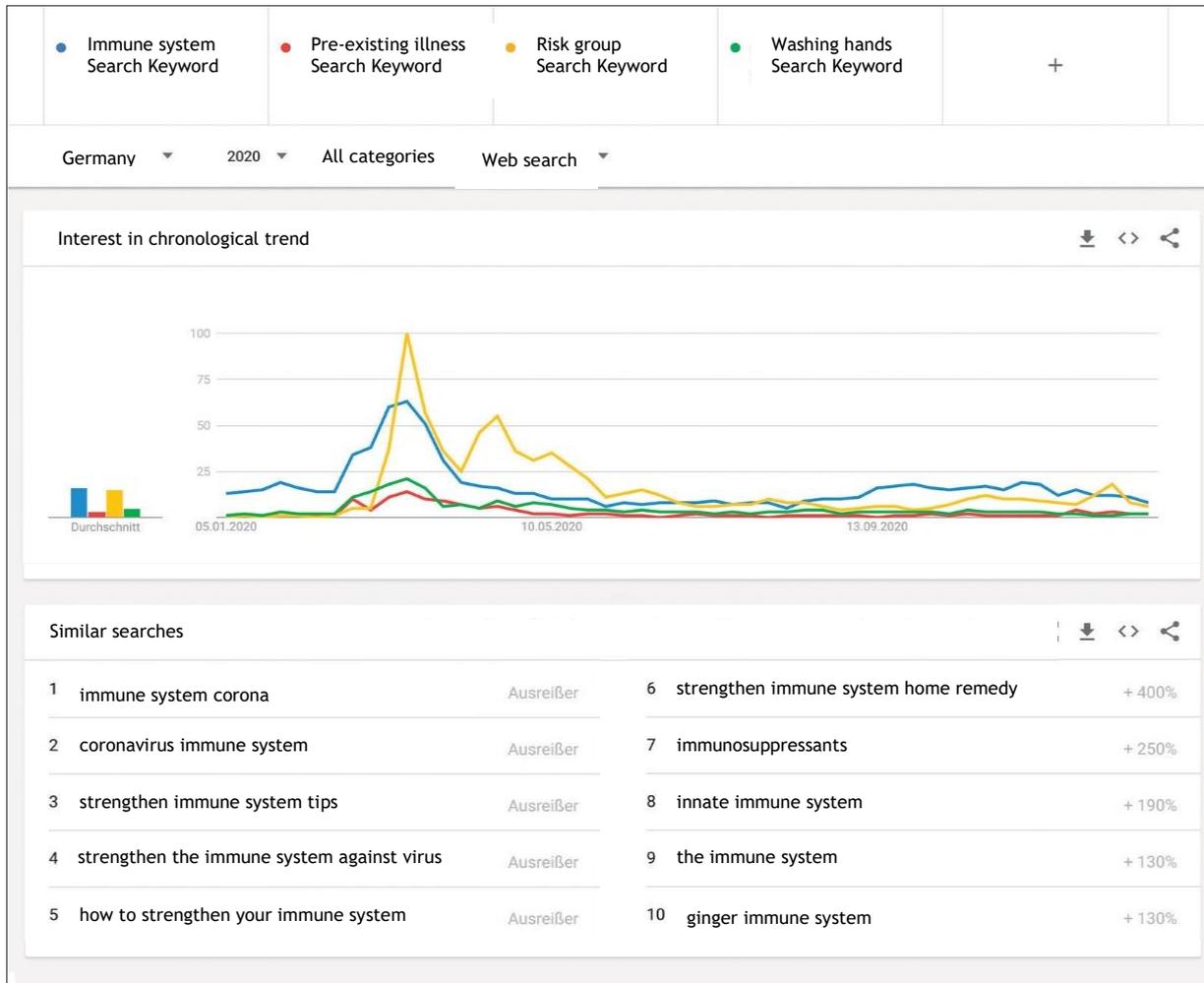


Fig. 1: Google Trends shows increased demand for information on diseases caused by Covid-19 (Source: Schmittgall HEALTH)

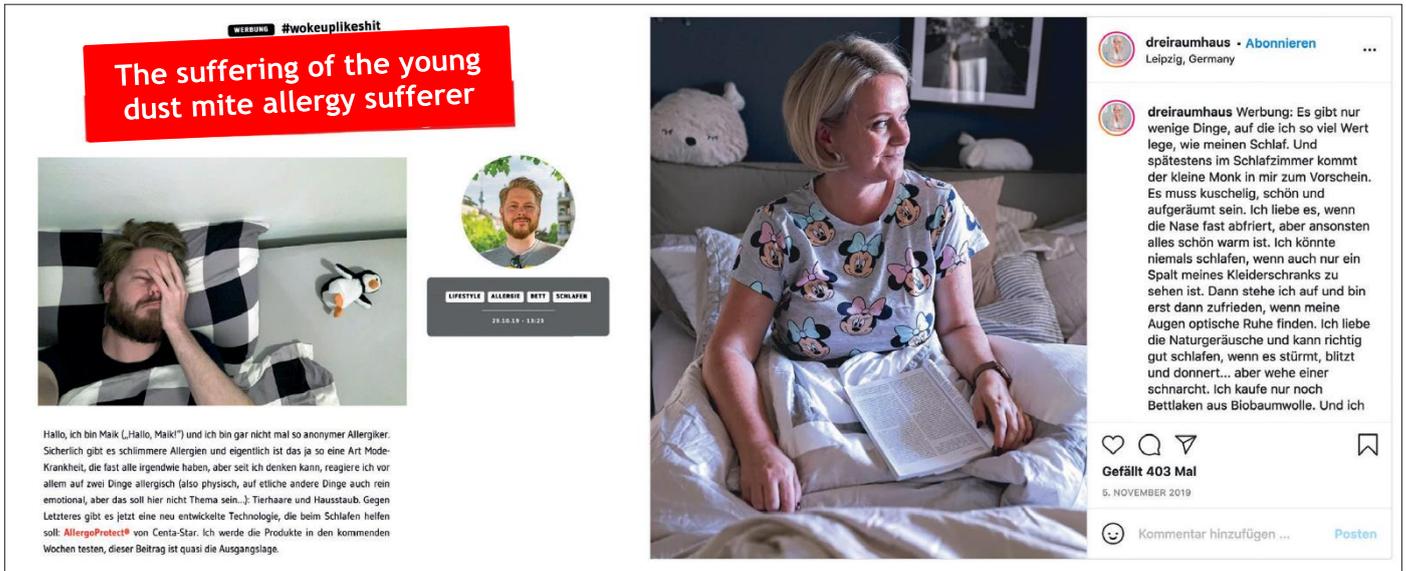


Fig. 2: Case study "Centa-Star" for successful influencer marketing (Source: Schmittgall HEALTH)

The Corona pandemic gave us a very vivid demonstration of how we humans react to inform ourselves about new diseases, which media we trust, what may confuse us and make our early warning system sit up and take notice when it comes to particularly noticeable symptoms and life-threatening courses of disease. Virtually overnight, a large part of the population was "influenced", which can be tracked very well via the Covid-specific calls over time.\*

But even before Corona, there were topics concerning health or diseases that lead to increased activity in specific target groups with greater relevance to society: Influencers are also a welcome source in this broadly effective environment

\* A blog post by the agency t5 content on influencer marketing in times of corona is available at <http://blog.t5content.de/2020/06/05/influencer-marketing-in-times-of-corona/>

personal, empathetic information and inspiration for later decisions and behaviour. For example, pregnancies of expectant mothers hardly ever proceed without impulses from influencers: The more uncertain an expectant mother is (especially first-time mothers), the more she orients herself to the experiences of mothers of comparable age cohorts and their recommendations on how to make everyday life easier for certain issues. Also common diseases such as diabetes, COPD, obesity,

Allergies and digestive problems find their way to digital information, offers and opinion leaders. The more medically restrictive a complaint or indication is, the more important the role of credible, specialist information providers becomes.

House dust allergies are another example of how effectively influencer marketing can contribute to behavioural change. It is estimated that there are over 5 million house dust allergy sufferers in Germany. After sleepless or not very restful nights

sufferers often look puffy and feel uncomfortable. The "Centa-Star" brand provides an efficient solution for allergy sufferers with its bedding. For successful market penetration, house dust mite allergy sufferers were surveyed on the Internet, in which they themselves reported on their suffering and began to test the bedding. The self-reports turned them into influencers themselves, the test results increased the curiosity of those affected and the number of the community, which led to additional awareness for the products. "Centa-Star" and market efficacy-(Fig. 2).

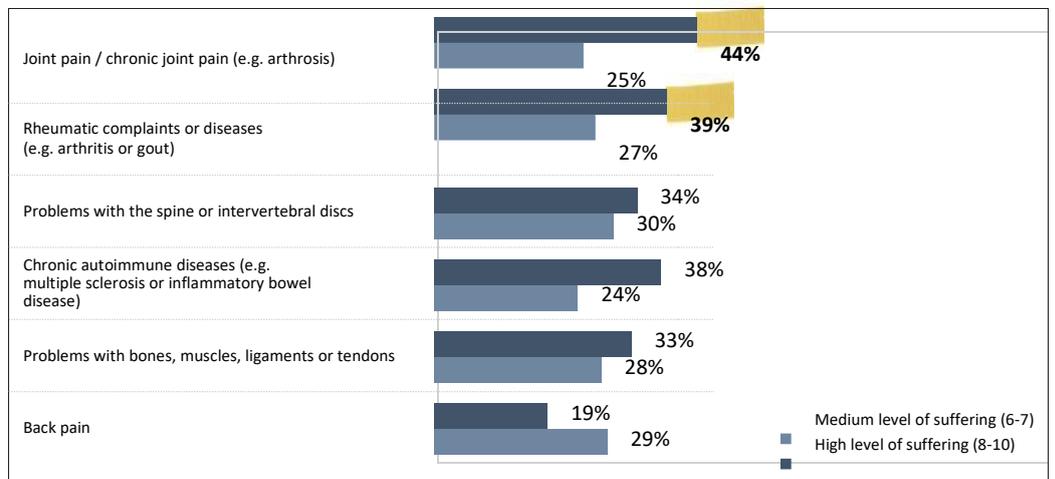


Fig. 3: Suffering pressure according to symptoms of back pain (Source: K&A BrandResearch)

### Influencer effects on back pain

In order to be able to systematise the importance of influencers in health issues, Schmittgall HEALTH, together with K&A BrandResearch, conducted a population-representative study in autumn 2020 on the information behaviour of people with rheumatic complaints (total sample n=1,054). In general, from the patient's point of view, the doctor still has by far the most important role as a provider of information and advice, across all age groups, complaints and diagnoses (including occasional back complaints, arthrosis, scoliosis, multiple sclerosis).

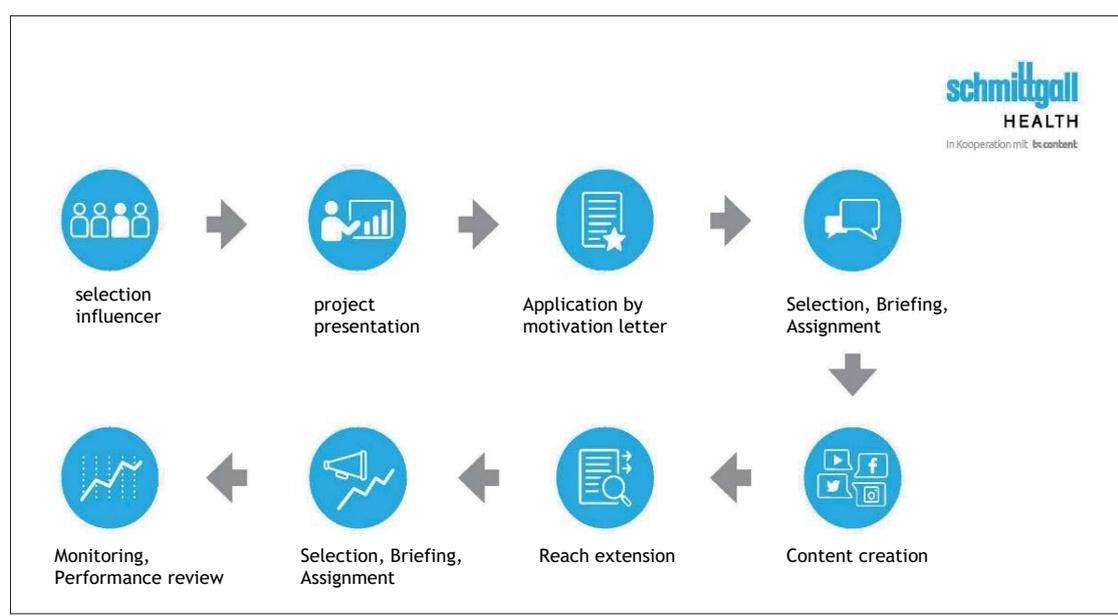


Fig. 5: Workflow Influencer Marketing (Source: Schmittgall HEALTH)

They set the course for subsequent therapies. As long as the doctor has the undisputed monopoly on diagnosis, little will change. With increasing suffering pressure, medical findings are also essential in the treatment of back pain. The degree of suffering varies considerably according to the type of complaint (cf. Fig. 3).

Patients experience particularly high levels of discomfort in chronic joint pain (including osteoarthritis) and rheumatic complaints (including arthritis and gout). A particularly high level of suffering is felt by the

almost 50% and more was found in gonarthrosis, knee joint damage, polyarthrosis, coxarthrosis, soft tissue rheumatism as well as chronic autoimmune diseases (especially Crohn's disease), which almost automatically leads to medical diagnosis and treatment.

Nevertheless, other sources of information are gaining in importance: the more severe the suffering, the more important "personalised" sources of information become. For younger patients, these are often their own parents and other caregivers. At the same time, the importance of numerous social media channels is increasing.

to. Facebook, YouTube and Instagram are actively used several times a week by more than half of all respondents across all generations (cf. Kull, Reinhard, Lebok 2020, in: Context Marketing, Springer Gabler, forthcoming). Podcasts are also growing strongly in relevance and importance.

Due to the increase in demand for additional, trustworthy information beyond the doctor, influencers are becoming increasingly important for people affected by back pain. Since the term influencer has a rather negative psychological effect on a large proportion of patients,

the influencer effect was determined indirectly in the study by adding the use of different information channels. Accordingly, an influencer effect of 25% can currently be measured for people with joint and back complaints (Fig. 4). This means that a quarter of the respondents consider "processed" information from people on the internet as relevant to highly relevant. The relevance share of doctors is currently still significantly higher.

- However, the influencer effect on back pain is already greater than the relevance of pharmacists and just as important as personal advice and recommendations from friends (word of mouth).

#### Context matters

The younger the respondents, the higher the level of suffering or the more serious the diagnosis, the higher the influencer effect. The trust in influencers is greater the better the understanding of everyday worries is perceived, the more individualised and situation-related the advice is.

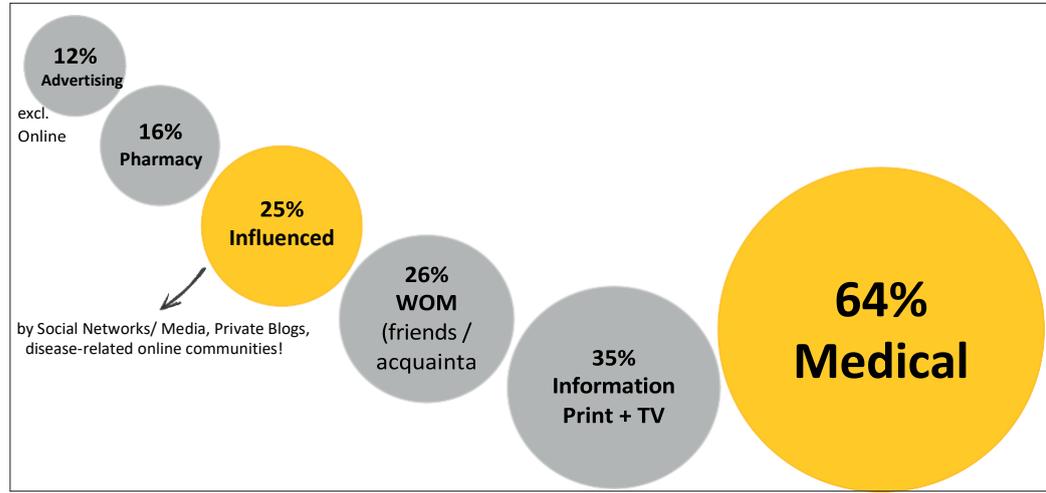


Fig. 4: Impact of influencer marketing compared to other touchpoints (Source: K&A BrandResearch)

It reflects once again that content can only work in the right context. If the context is right, if the receptiveness is high enough, then content can only develop accordingly.

Professionally managed influencer marketing fully takes into account the requirements of situationally oriented context marketing. Influencers become a living part of behaviourist brand management, since the everyday experience of patients and the relevant complaint contexts are in focus, if only for reasons of their own concern. If they are credible and trustworthy, the recommendations to third parties are gladly considered suggestions for more efficient solutions, in order to treat illnesses better if necessary, to possibly stop complaints or to come to terms with them in the best possible way.

### Influencer marketing as an option for successful market strategies

An influencer must fit the brand or product, so that valuable and authentic posts are

that are perceived by the community as credible recommendations. In order to find suitable cooperation partners and ensure performance, impact and conformity, a structured approach by a professional agency is essential. A clear briefing on the planned campaign is the basis. In addition, the application and selection process is particularly relevant because it ensures an optimal match between influencer and client.

High ranges play a role in The selection of an influencer plays a subordinate role, because niche topics usually only affect a very narrow target group. Once the influencer has been commissioned, it is essential to check whether he or she has taken the agreed points and legal framework into account in his or her contribution. Details such as the monitoring of reactions should be regulated in advance in a cooperation agreement.

Subsequently, the posts of the influencers will be accompanied with additional

Media budget extended. This extension is performance-based with corresponding target group targeting and aligned with the defined campaign KPIs, so that an even larger target group can be reached without the need for

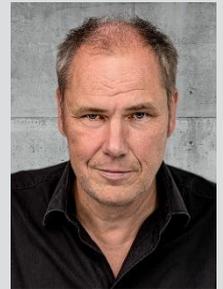
The target group can be addressed without wastage (see Fig. 5).

Thus, influencer marketing helps to implement marketing goals in a measurable and target-oriented way and at the same time to offer the target group real added value. <<

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