

# SAGEA TOOLKIT SERIES



Using ambassadors and influencers to maximize your reach

## Using ambassadors and influencers to maximize your reach

Our most recent SAGEA Employer Benchmarking research\* tells us that of the 16% of employers who are utilising campus or brand ambassadors as part of their attraction strategy, 62.5% found this to be “very effective”, with the remaining 37.5% saying they are “quite effective”. 84% of employers indicated that this is not part of their marketing mix!

But WHY NOT, when those who do use ambassadors are saying it is an effective form of marketing that **costs between R1 000 (at the lowest end) and R41 000 at the higher end?**

Should you be considering the use of ambassadors and/or influencers as part of your young talent attraction strategy? In this toolkit we will contrast Brand Ambassadors and Social Media Influencers, when and how you should use them and all the tips and tricks for making this a meaningful and effective part of your young talent attraction strategy. We also share insights from a law firm who have made effective use of social media influencers.



## Why use ambassadors or influencers?

There are numerous options when considering the marketing mix for young talent attraction. You will need to consider which students you are targeting – either at specific institutions, across disciplines, or a single discipline.

**Whether your desired reach is small or large, it is arguable that the use of Brand Ambassadors, Influencers – or both, will be beneficial for the following reasons:**

- ✓ Compared to many other forms of attraction, these are relatively low-cost options.
- ✓ It is easy enough to set up either of these interventions with assistance from your marketing department – or use of an agency.
- ✓ Both are easy to manage and measure – you can closely monitor both Brand Ambassadors and Influencers and you can tweak activities and messaging with relative ease.
- ✓ Students with whom you already have a connection, such as bursary holders or recent graduate employees are ideal candidates for either of these roles.



## The difference between brand ambassadors and social media influencers

The table, below, compares Brand Ambassadors and Social Media Influencers to highlight what some of the nuances are. There is, of course, no reason to choose one versus the other and it is very possible to adopt a hybrid approach that combines the two into one.

Brand Ambassadors	Social Media Influencers
Will tend to be more “in-person” representatives and will represent a brand in lectures, on campus, at events etc. Though they may also make use of social media, depending on the task at hand.	Usually have a digital presence which could be on any of the social media or networking platforms - TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn.
Usually selected based on some sort of relationship or use of the product or brand.	Usually selected based on the area/areas in which they have a following or are seen to have a valued reputation or valued opinions.
Intensive training on the brand and are fully immersed in the brand's identity.	Might not use the product, service or brand but are briefed on the brand and key messages to share.
Have more loyalty.	Less loyal to brands and require the brand they are promoting to align with their brand, might be working with other brands.
Can be incentivised with opportunities and rewards.	Expect to be financially compensated along with rewards or gifts.
May or may not have a strong or wide following of individuals that they influence.	Usually have an engaged or large audience of people that they influence.
Can work with scripted messages.	Prefer to relay messages in their own ‘voice’ and personal brand language to sound more authentic.
Achieve results based on relationships.	Achieve results based on a trusting and engaged followership.
Although less clearly defined, there are different levels of Brand Ambassador, ranging from celebrity ambassadors to employees.	Types of Influencers are usually determined by the magnitude of their following: <b>Mega influencer</b> - Celebrity status - Bonang, Kylie Jenner, tend to be more “famous” than influential. Provide a lot of reach - Over 1 million followers.
In the young talent space, use is frequently made of bursary holders as Brand Ambassadors. They already understand and are tied to your brand, they are familiar with the types of students your brand wants to attract and they will usually have “connections” with like-minded students through their class network.	<b>Macro influencer</b> - grown from internet fame, tend to be subject matter experts between 100 000 to 1 million followers - brand awareness and reach. <b>Micro influencer</b> - 1000 - 100 000 followers - more invested followership. Very specific genres of interest, their followers place a lot of trust in them, and they have very strong influence as a result. Most usually yield results for a brand.



## How to select ambassadors or influencers

### Selecting Brand Ambassadors

The selection of ambassadors can be run just like any other recruitment process – define exactly what it is you are looking for and design an application and selection process to find the right talent.

Selection criteria will probably include the following qualities – “magnetic”, “influencer”, “credible”, “strong social standing in class” and “excellent communicator and networker”.

You want your ambassadors to resonate with your brand. If using students, second, 3rd or 4th year students make better ambassadors/influencers as they are more established on campus – they know their way around and know how things work

Depending on your requirements, you should choose students who already have a link to your business through a signed contract or bursary.

### Selecting Influencers

Clearly define the purpose for which you want to use Influencers, and the kind of reach you need to achieve. This will help you determine whether you require the services of a micro, macro or mega influencer, as defined above.

Visit the social media pages of your proposed Influencers and evaluate whether the type of messaging and language they use resonates with your brand.

Do your homework on the best media or networks to use for an influencer campaign! Find out which media your target audience are following and get some expert advice in this regard.

It is an option to use students you are linked to as your Influencers – provided they have the type of presence you are looking for on your chosen media.



## Preparing brand ambassadors and influencers

The better your preparation and briefing, the more likely you are to achieve the results you are looking for. Below are some key considerations for preparation.

### Prepping your Brand Ambassadors

Provide clear guidance on what you expect your Ambassadors to deliver and ensure that they have the appropriate tools and resources they will need.

Provide input about your brand, your values, your EVP and your graduate employment targets and selection criteria – or the specifics of a campaign or competition for which you have engaged them.

Address required conduct, etiquette, and professionalism!

If using your Ambassadors on campus, to assist at career fairs, presentations etc. it is a great idea to provide them with branded gear. This can also be used outside of specific events to encourage an ongoing association between your Ambassador/s and your brand.

### Prepping your Influencers

Provide guidelines and messaging that allows Influencers to be creative and add their own “flavour” to their posts, but in line with tone of your campaign.

It is preferable to arrange to have a briefing session with Influencers, particularly if you are using students / micro-influencers.

Clearly define the goals and purpose of your campaign or drive e.g. receiving more applications for a young talent vacancy, increasing traffic to an event, or an increased following on specific media.



## Setting goals and measuring performance

Bearing in mind that you are probably working with students, it is of utmost importance to be clear on what deliverables you expect. You need to set specific goals, tasks and outputs for your Ambassadors and Influencers.

Examples of specific goals may be as follows:



Present to all first year Accounting students during the second semester.



Set up 3 mini events on campus and ensure that at each event you engage a minimum of 100 students.



Sign up x number of students on our social media or LinkedIn sites.



Increase traffic to a Career Fair or presentation.

It is also important to define what your boundaries are – you will probably want your ambassadors and influencers to drive students to your application process, but you won't want them to be making job offers to students!

If you are specific about the goals you set, then measurement is easy. A key measure will be the number and quality of applications you receive from the campus, faculty, or media in which they are operating.



## Remunerating or rewarding ambassadors and influencers

There are many ways to approach remuneration. This will be dependent on your budget, the objectives of your ambassador/influencer programme and whether you are using students who already have a defined relationship with your business, or professional Influencers.

Examples of forms of remuneration which have been used successfully are shopping vouchers, a laptop, cell phone, data allowance – or straightforward cash remuneration based on either a monthly stipend or a project fee. In some cases, ambassadors are not remunerated but receive other benefits such as elevated status in class, training and work experience or increased chances of being hired.

The same principles apply to the remuneration of influencers, though you will easily be able to measure engagement via specific social media campaigns and you can link rewards directly to your engagement stats.



## Using influencers - a case study among the legal fraternity

**One of our colleagues in the legal fraternity has made frequent use of social media influencers to drive various campaigns and competitions.**

For example, they ran a competition to source and select bursars who would each win an award of R10 000 towards their studies. To do this, they engaged the services of an agency who assisted in the sourcing and selection of appropriate influencers. Before selecting the most appropriate influencers, the firm in question evaluated each student's social media handles, following, where they were studying etc. Influencers were then selected based on which universities they had an influence at. In reviewing potential Influencers, criteria such as the risk of unsavoury content and the extent to which their values resonated with the legal firm's brand were carefully considered. Ten Influencers were selected, based on these criteria and to ensure national reach across several universities.

Together with the agency, the goals and parameters of the project were clearly agreed - including the importance of some sort of call to action among the following. Influencers were briefed and provided with creative wording and message guidelines, though it was felt that some flexibility should be allowed to guarantee the authenticity of messages coming from each Influencer.

The beauty of using Influencers is that there is plenty of data available to monitor and measure the effectiveness of this type of campaign. Influencers can share their data with you on reach, number of impressions, following etc. Use can be made of this data to tweak campaigns, as necessary. And, of course, remuneration can be based on the achievement of certain measurable targets!

Overall, the use of Influencers has been a positive experience - the campaign would not have reached the number of impressions any other way and the content reached the desired target audience. They even achieved "trending status" on a few occasions!



## Why not give it a go?

If you are not already using Ambassadors or Influencers, why not give it a try for your next campaign?

**As a relatively low-cost option, you can do wonders for your employer brand, whilst maintaining control of your campaign.**

**sagea** | South African Graduate  
Employers Association



**Synergy | Ingenuity | Insight**

**[www.sagea.org.za](http://www.sagea.org.za)**