Marketing d'influence : Le modèle du pêcheur VS le modèle centré sur le client

Influencer marketing : The Fisherman's model VS the Customer-centric's

model

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Abstract

The way people communicate with each other has changed dramatically since the advent of the Internet, allowing people from different countries around the world to exchange ideas, information, and opinions on a whole host of topics, regardless of the boundaries that used to hinder these exchanges. This communication latitude has allowed branders a significant strategic improvement, thanks to the identification of so-called influential people, followed by a wide spectrum of Internet users, thus allowing the selection of a specific audience, supposedly interested in the promoted product or service. The present study sheds light on how branders should design these changes and succeed in their influencer marketing campaigns according to the two models of Brown and Fiorella (2013).

Keywords : Audience ; Branders ; Campaigns ; Influencer marketing ; Identification ; Influential ; Strategic improvement.

Introduction

The rise of social networks has revolutionized the world of marketing, especially with the appearance of the influencer phenomenon. Therefore, understanding the influence of these changes on marketing strategies and what brands can do to properly take advantage of these advances has become essential.

In brand marketing strategies, celebrity collaborations have existed since the 1800s (Erdogan, 1999). Perceived as attractive and likable, these celebrities are considered influential people (Atkin & Block, 1983), transferring their qualities to products or services through endorsement (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; McCracken, 1989), thus creating attention around the brand in question, thus improving its memorability (Erdogan, 1999; Friedman & Friedman, 1979). As a result, a positive attitude is manifested on the part of consumers, towards the endorsed brand (Kamins, Brand, Hoeke, & Moe, 1989) which increases the likelihood of purchasing it (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995).

Indeed, in order to attract the maximum number of consumers, brands design marketing strategies allowing them to gain a competitive advantage over their rivals. With the advent of social networks, influencer marketing has proven to be the most promising in an increasingly connected world. That's why, in recent years, the influencer phenomenon has overtaken endorsements via so-called "traditional" celebrities like comedians, movie actors, athletes, models, etc.... to focus on those ordinary people who are perceived as opinion leaders by their respective communities.

Their strength lies in this image of ordinary people and accessible to the public, they share content made by them, operating in different areas such as fitness, beauty, fashion, lifestyle, food, they were able to gain a large base of followers, allowing them to exercise their influence.

Indeed, the influencer is considered as an intermediary between the consumer and the brand, endowed with an extended potential via his number of followers provoking a tempting influence in a world oriented more and more towards social networks and the digitalization of social relations. However, we must not forget that influencer marketing strategies must be taught around the consumer and not the influencer (Brown and Fiorella, 2013) since the latter is only a marketing tool in order to attract final buyers.

To that end, the purpose of this study is to shed light on two models of influencer marketing illustrated by authors Brown and Fiorella (2013), to guide brands in the outcome of their marketing campaign. Thus, they propose two configurations, the sinner's model of influence marketing and the customer-centric model, which demonstrate the difference between putting the influencer or the customer at the center of the marketing strategy.

We will first define the concept of influence marketing and influencers, and then present the two models mentioned above and compare them to each other in order to highlight the importance of the influencer in marketing strategies but also the need to focus on the consumer who remains the main decision maker. We will then present two case studies of a company that has chosen both models to promote a new product, and the different steps to follow depending on the strategy chosen.

2 Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is the emergence of a new form of marketing in which brands and social media influencers collaborate to promote their products (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

Before defining this concept, it is crucial to understand the word "influence." it can generally be defined as « the power to affect a person, thing, or the course of events » (Brown & Hayes, 2008). In the following table we propose a multitude of definitions of the concept of influence marketing according to several authors.

Table 1: Definitions of the concept of « influence marketing »

Definitions of the concept of « influence marketing »	Authors
An effective and undeniable practice for marketing strategies.	**Ki & Kim (2019)**
« **I**s to compensate individuals for posting about a product or service on social media. »	**Campbell & Farrell (2020)**
« **I**s to identify key decision makers in a target audience and encourage them to use their influence to spread the WOM. »	**Jaakonmäki, Müller, & Vom Brocke (2017)**
Variety of recent practices and studies in which « the focus is on specific individual targets rather than approaching the entire market ».	**Brown & Fiorella (2013)**
« **R**epresents a new marketing strategy that uses influencers (celebrities or regular people) who are active on social networks and the company uses their influence to make consumers aware of the brand and/or encourage them to make purchasing decisions. »	**Lou & Yuan (2019)**
« **U**ses opinion leaders or people with large followings to increase brand awareness, form favorable brand attitudes, and increase purchase behavior. »	**Jang & al. (2020)**

Source: Personal elaboration

3 The Influencer

3-1- Definitions

With the advent of social networks and the overabundance of these platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube, have emerged people called "influencers" who are

increasingly used to disseminate information about products and the latest promotions to their followers online (Lim, Radzol, Cheah, & Wong, 2017).

In the following table we offer a multitude of definitions of the influencer concept according to several authors.
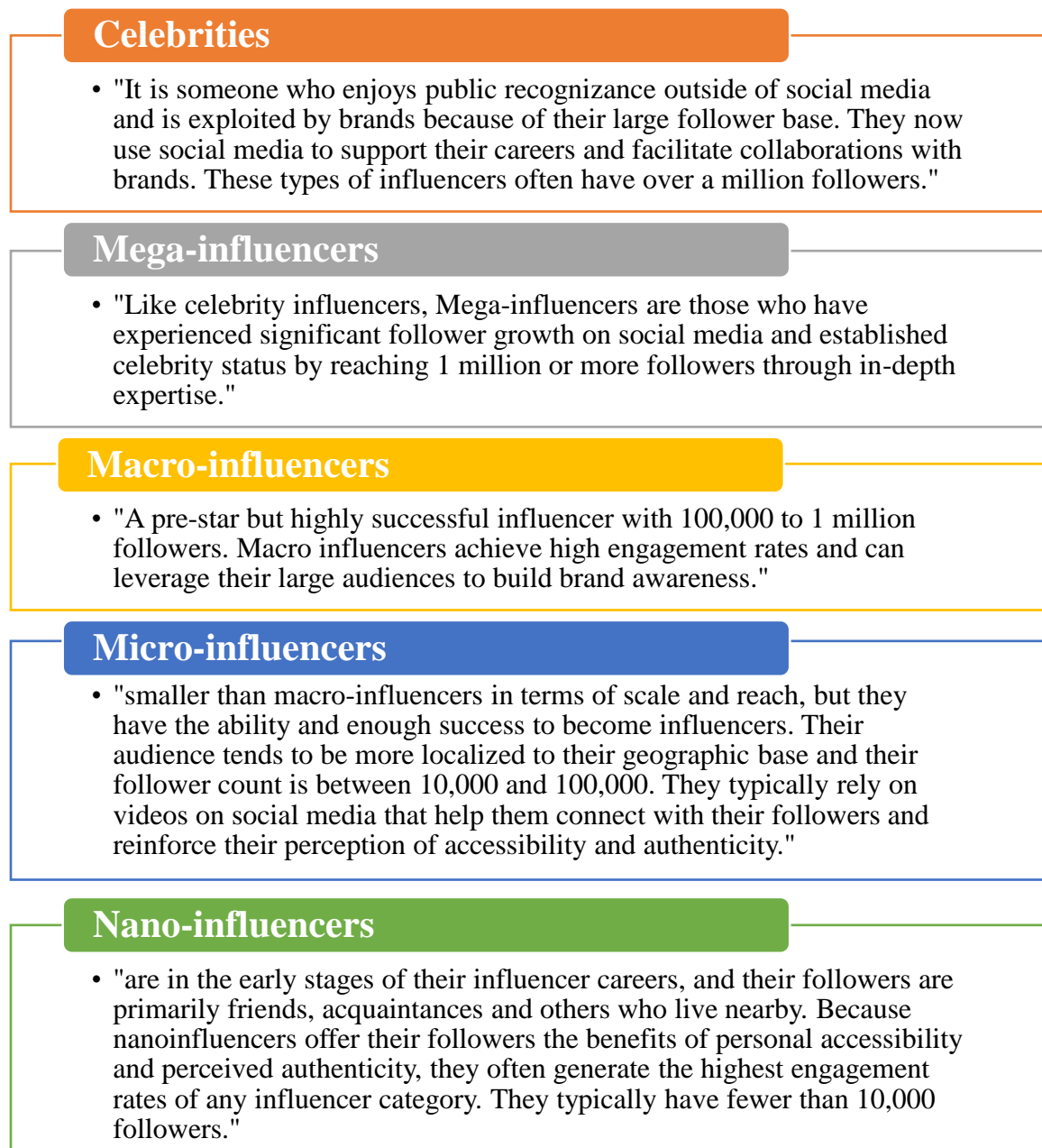
Table 2: Definitions of the « influencer » concept

Definitions of the « influencer » concept	Authors
« A third party that significantly influences the customer's purchase decision ».	**Brown & Hayes (2008)**
« He or she is first and foremost a content generator: someone who has expert status in a specific field, who has cultivated a significant number of captive followers - who have marketing value for brands - by regularly producing valuable content via social media ».	**Lou & Yuan (2019)**
« They are social media opinion leaders who receive information about products and services and try them out earlier than other social media users. »	**Yılmazdoğan et al. (2021)**
« a new type of independent, third-party endorsers who shape the attitudes of an audience through blogs, tweets and use of other social media channels ».	**Freberg et al. (2011)**
« Independent third-party endorsers who influence public attitudes based on their experiences and opinions by creating and sharing brand-related content (e.g., posts, photos, blogs, videos) on their personal social media channels ».	**Ge & Gretzel (2018)**

Source: Personal elaboration

3-2- Types of influencers

In order to present the types of influencers, we relied on the findings of authors Campbell and Farrell (2020) who drew, in turn, on various sources (Association of National Advertisers, 2018; Launchmetrics, 2018) to develop these five distinct categories of influencers, illustrated in Figure n°1.

*Fig 1: The 5 categories of influencers according to Campbell and Farrell (2020)*

Celebrities

- "It is someone who enjoys public recognizance outside of social media and is exploited by brands because of their large follower base. They now use social media to support their careers and facilitate collaborations with brands. These types of influencers often have over a million followers."

Mega-influencers

- "Like celebrity influencers, Mega-influencers are those who have experienced significant follower growth on social media and established celebrity status by reaching 1 million or more followers through in-depth expertise."

Macro-influencers

- "A pre-star but highly successful influencer with 100,000 to 1 million followers. Macro influencers achieve high engagement rates and can leverage their large audiences to build brand awareness."

Micro-influencers

- "smaller than macro-influencers in terms of scale and reach, but they have the ability and enough success to become influencers. Their audience tends to be more localized to their geographic base and their follower count is between 10,000 and 100,000. They typically rely on videos on social media that help them connect with their followers and reinforce their perception of accessibility and authenticity."

Nano-influencers

- "are in the early stages of their influencer careers, and their followers are primarily friends, acquaintances and others who live nearby. Because nanoinfluencers offer their followers the benefits of personal accessibility and perceived authenticity, they often generate the highest engagement rates of any influencer category. They typically have fewer than 10,000 followers."

Source : Campbell & Farrell (2020)

4 Influence marketing strategy according to the two models of Brown & Fiorella (2013)

4-1- Fisherman's model of influencer marketing

In the book "Influence Marketing" by Brown & Fiorella (2013), the **Fisherman's model of influencer marketing** places the influencer at « the center of the marketing universe through the multitude of social influence platforms » (Brown & Fiorella, 2013) as presented in the figure below:

Fig 2: Fisherman's Influence Marketing Model by Brown and Fiorella (2013)
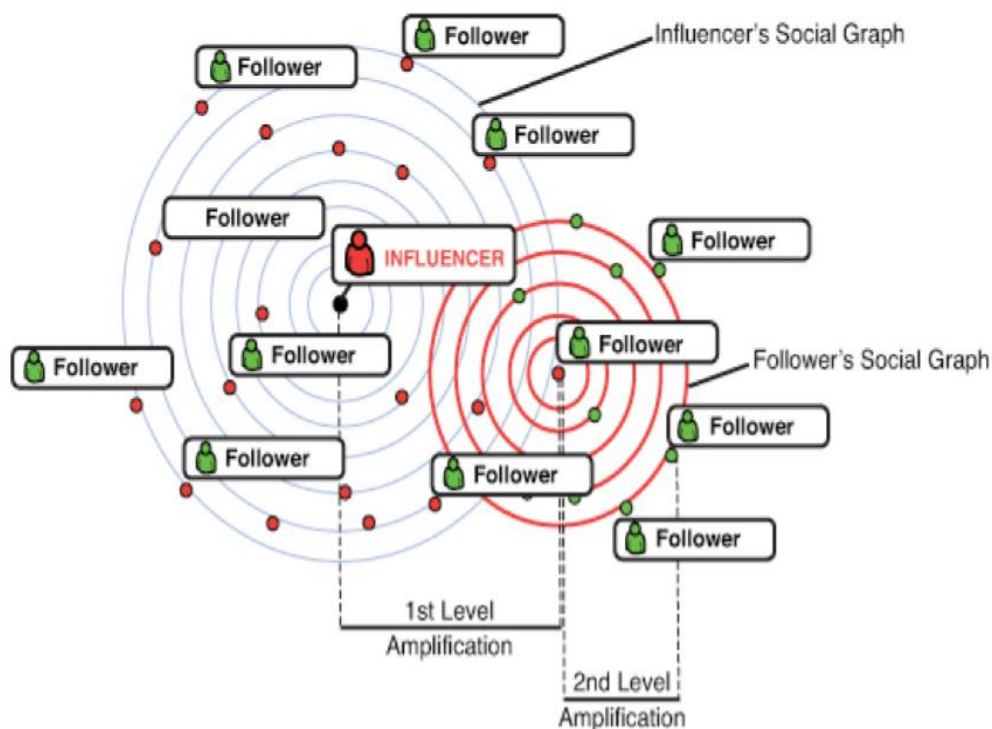
Source : Brown et Fiorella (2013)

The concept of the fisherman's model of influencer marketing is based on "casting a wide net to catch the most fish" Brown & Fiorella (2013), this influencer marketing strategy is about tapping into those who have the most followers and reach among large social communities, thus resulting in widespread brand awareness leading to a purchase.

This approach involves identifying the most influential people in communities focused on specific interests or keywords, then trying to define the role that the influencer can play in each of these communities. The latter amplifies the propagation of the brand's message by recommending its products on a large scale, thus targeting a large audience, in the hope of convincing the maximum number of them to adopt it and consequently recommend it to their entourages.

The fisherman's influence marketing model is considered only as a first step in the marketing plan, which consists of identifying potential influencers and their communities, which will serve as a basis for in-depth research and analysis of the brand's potential customer profile.

4-2- Customer-centric's model of influencer marketing

Brown and Fiorella (2013) cite a second model, the Customer-Centric Influencer Marketing Model, shown in Figure #3. They prioritize the customer over the influencer, and place the customer at the center of the marketing strategy, stating that « it is the customer who makes the purchase decision, not the influencer » (Brown and Fiorella, 2013).

Fig 3: Customer-centric model of influencer marketing (Brown and Fiorella 2013)
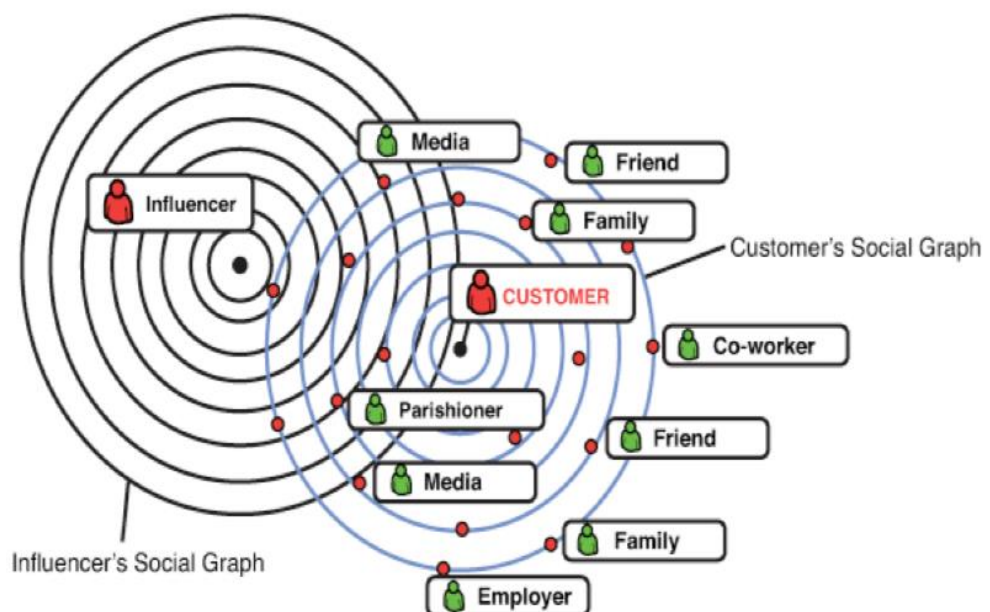
Source : Brown et Fiorella (2013)

The customer is surrounded by a multitude of actors who impact his purchasing decision. The influencer is considered as one of these actors whose role is to guide the consumer to propagate the brand's message by influencing the community of which he is a part. Therefore, the two models clash, in the first model, by focusing on the influencer, brands underestimate the consumer's buying process, mainly the importance of his network (Brown and Fiorella, 2013).

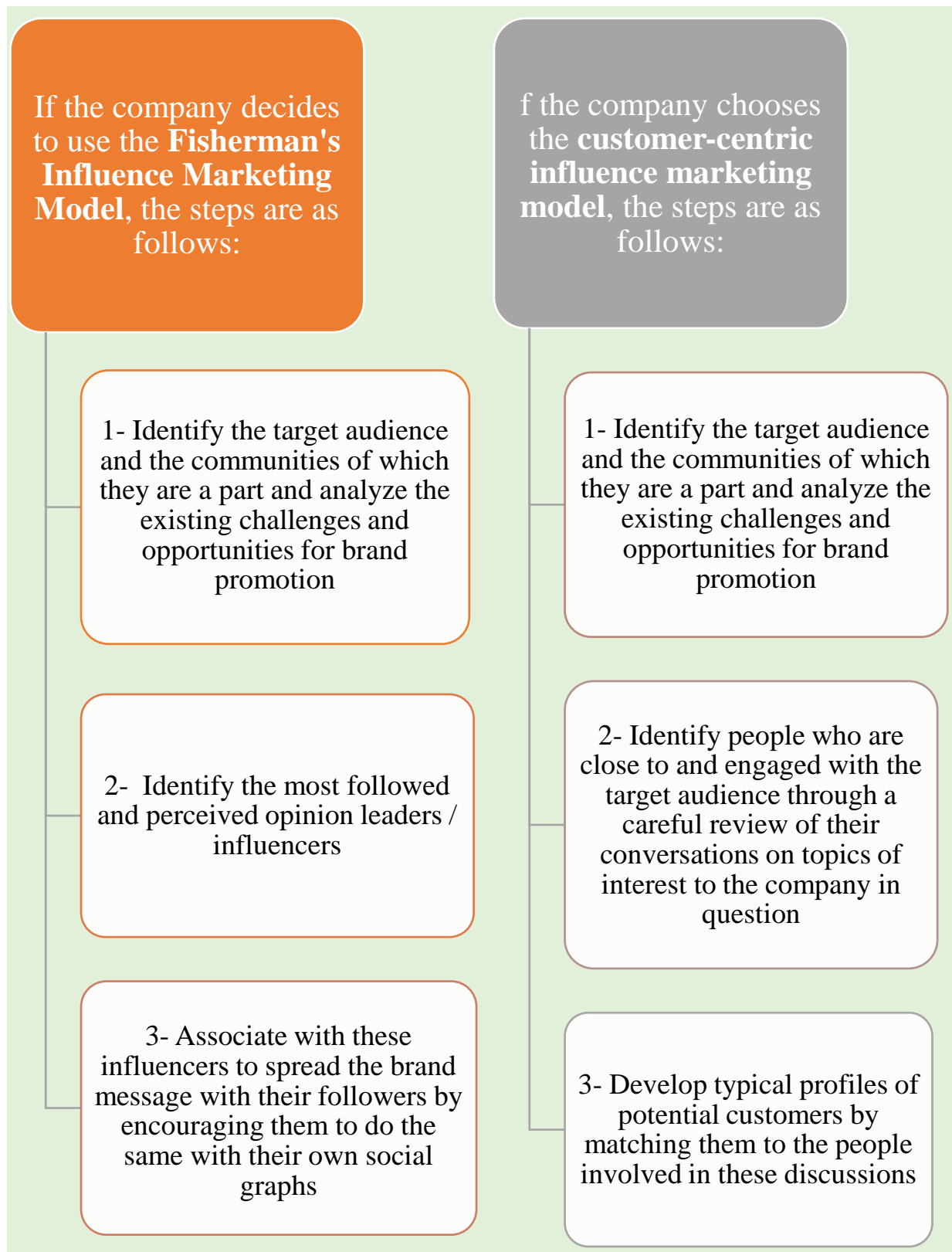## 4-3- confrontation of the two models

The authors focus on what differentiates the two models in terms of the decision process and explain that if a company decides to focus its campaigns on the influencer, the goal is to raise awareness or try to influence purchase decisions, rather than addressing the decision process.

In contrast, putting the customer at the center requires the company to reexamine its decisions by encouraging it to pay more attention to the people who interact directly with decision makers when they make purchasing decisions. Therefore, in this model, influencers can be seen as « contextual relationships, not just broadcasters » (Brown and Fiorella, 2013). The authors emphasize the divergence of the two models at the strategic level, in the fisherman model (Fig 2), the strategy is focused on « push-communication to the influencer's social graph » (Brown and Fiorella, 2013). In the customer-centric model (Fig 3), it focuses on « identifying the context and impact of influence from different actors in the customer's social graph » (Brown and Fiorella, 2013).

4-3-1-Cases of figures

To better understand the two models, here are two case studies of a company choosing both models to promote a new product (fig 4).

Fig 4 : The steps to follow for the realization of the two models

If the company decides to use the **Fisherman's Influence Marketing Model**, the steps are as follows:	f the company chooses the **customer-centric influence marketing model**, the steps are as follows:
1- Identify the target audience and the communities of which they are a part and analyze the existing challenges and opportunities for brand promotion	1- Identify the target audience and the communities of which they are a part and analyze the existing challenges and opportunities for brand promotion
2- Identify the most followed and perceived opinion leaders / influencers	2- Identify people who are close to and engaged with the target audience through a careful review of their conversations on topics of interest to the company in question
3- Associate with these influencers to spread the brand message with their followers by encouraging them to do the same with their own social graphs	3- Develop typical profiles of potential customers by matching them to the people involved in these discussions

Source : Personal elaboration inspired by Brown et Fiorella (2013)

The authors of both models favor the customer-centric influence marketing model, citing that this model shows that true influence, the one that « affects a purchase decision is based on dyadic relationships that refer to discussions or communication between two people involving their mutual ideas, thoughts, behaviors or ideals » (Brown and Fiorella 2013). The authors suggest that « the impact of personal interactions between two people sharing the same culture, ideals, or circumstances is greater than reading another person's blog » (Brown and Fiorella 2013). Individuals who spend a lot of time together and share an intense emotional bond create a powerful influence on each other.

The authors Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1968) stated in their book "the people's choice" that individuals are more influenced by their close circle than by media personalities.

In the customer-centric model, the authors give the term « micro-influencers » to those individuals with whom potential customers are « most closely connected at the time a purchase decision is made » and cite that they are « key to a successful influencer marketing effort in a hyper-connected digital world » (Brown and Fiorella 2013).

5 Discussion

In the fisherman model, the influencer is put at the center of the marketing strategy in order to attract the attention of his first and second level followers, who in turn influence a specific community. On the other hand, in the second model illustrating the consumer who is at the heart of the strategy, a multitude of actors impact his purchasing decisions and the role of the influencer is simply to guide the customer to exert influence on these communities of which he is a part. As a result, by focusing solely on the influencer, brands neglect the consumer's network as well as their buying process (Brown and Fiorella, 2013).

The Customer-Centric Influence Marketing Model (Brown and Fiorella 2013) causes a significantly more significant influence than the Fisherman Model, as it comes from the social circle existing in the real world. These people are considered micro-influencers, thus having a significant impact on the decision-making process. Brown and Fiorella (2013) explain this connection perfectly in their customer-centric influencer marketing model by directing branders to the concept of micro-influencers for a successful influencer marketing campaign.

6 Conclusion

Before the advent of social networks, brands had control over the information communicated to the public, since word of mouth between consumers was limited and restricted. With the advent of social networks, brands face an uncontrollable outburst on their communication (Neal, 2017), based on comments that can be both positive and negative, thus impacting the brand image and its reputation.

Several researchers have shown that consumer-generated feedback significantly influences purchase intent by being perceived as more credible and authentic than any messages from brands (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Lawrence et al., 2013). Consumers trust each other, therefore, favoring the customer-centric model of influencer marketing is the best alternative for a successful influencer marketing campaign, without neglecting the fisherman model as the first step in the strategic process.

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