

THE BEST INFLUENCERS are not "Influencers".

There has been a lot of discussion lately about how those in Agency land may be slightly out of touch with regular Australian consumers and our target markets. Let us add another element to this conversation.

While you're checking your target markets' actual presence on the various social media platforms, you might also want to check you've got the facts on who are the **REAL INFLUENCERS** when it comes to Australian mums.

TIP: It ain't those Instagram rising stars you're paying to spruik your wares. It ain't in fact anyone you currently consider an "Influencer".

Mums value product and brand recommendations and are receptive to them in the right circumstances. In fact they are crying out for someone to make their decisions easier and take the guesswork (or actual work) out of decision-making. But brands beware - not all recommendations are equal.

In February 2017 Mouths of Mums surveyed over 3,000 Australian mothers in the third round of the MoM Shopper Diary Project (now running for 5 years). We dug deep to understand their shopping habits, media consumption and what influenced their purchase decisions.

Recommendations from a trusted source are, not surprisingly, an incredibly powerful influence when it comes to the consideration and purchase of household products, grocery and even motor vehicles.

But whom **DO** mums trust? We discovered that there is scale of trust that applies to the various sources.

At the very bottom of the trust scale are brands themselves (their ads, websites and social posts). And among the more common recommendation sources the following rank applies:



Recommendation from family or friends	8.32
Recommendation from other mums	7.69
Recommendation from an "expert"	5.69
Recommendation from bloggers/influencers	5.13

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Weighted Average score on 10 point scale (where 10 = highest and 1 = lowest degree of trust)
Source: MoM Shopper Diary Survey, 2017 (no. of respondents = 3,460)

Recommendations from friends and family are a given, but this is closely followed in importance by peers. When a mum wants advice, most often the first person she turns to is another mum just like her (whether it be face to face or online).

Subject matter experts (whether they be chefs, healthcare professionals or fitness experts) obviously offer a degree of authority (and celebrity) to a product recommendation. However their perceived (or real?) lack of objectivity sees their level of trust significantly diminished in mum's eyes.

This is even more acute with bloggers and social influencers whose level of trust, according to Australian mums, is not much higher than brand websites. Again their lack of objectivity seems to be the main sticking point. Mums know they are being paid to spruik whomever their client that day may be.

Now lets be clear, we're not saying that Influencers serve no purpose; clearly they do or they would not have earned the title. But we must acknowledge that their relevance when it comes to functional type products and services, as opposed to aspirational, is limited.

So what does this mean for marketers?

No-one understands a mum's life better than another mum. She is able to create immediate empathy and as a result - trust. So when planning content led campaigns we should not ignore the power of harnessing other mums' influence in changing behaviour.

Leverage peer to peer conversations and recommendations from the core of your messaging, right through to amplification. Give her proof points she can trust and take away the guesswork. Show you understand her!

This article is written by Nikki Hills, Founder of Mouths of Mums®. Mouths of Mums is a content creation, sharing and online publishing ecosystem with unrivalled levels of influence and engagement. We harness this influence to shape new ideas, launch new products, build brands and grow sales across most consumer categories.

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