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COMM 441
Professor Tullis
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Interviews

Interview Objectives:

- Better understand the role influencer marketing plays for each individual company and how it is different than traditional marketing.
- Understand campaign strategies and how strategies change with social and cultural trends.
- Understand how marketing professionals identify incoming trends.
- Identify common challenges when building campaigns, specifically when it comes to legal considerations.
- Better understand how legal considerations change across different industries.
- Understand the importance of proper legal contracts for influencers and companies.
- Better recognize the importance of legal considerations in influencer marketing.

Questions & Summaries:

Interview with Lexi Bretl, Market Owner, Marketing at Veterinary Emergency Group

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1. Can you tell me a bit about your position at VEG? (Veterinary Emergency Group)
2. Can you tell me about one of your successful marketing campaigns and how you incorporate influencers into the campaign?
3. How do you typically identify trends within the industry?
4. Are there specific legal considerations that have proved to be a challenge in any of your marketing campaigns?
5. Are there specific legal considerations that go with VEG that you must ensure in your campaigns?
6. What to you is the key consideration in building a successful campaign?
7. Where do you see the future of marketing going with the consistent technological innovation?

8. I see you majored in communications; how did you find yourself marketing for VEG?
9. I see you were a campus recruiter before being a marketing associate, what is the biggest difference in marketing towards students with a recruiting mindset vs VEG's pet owners?
10. Reading about your roll, how do you change your marketing tactics when dealing with business-to-business vs customer-to-business?

When I got the chance to interview Lexi, I immediately jumped at the opportunity because I had never thought of what went into marketing for a veterinary hospital group and their brand. I focused my questions in this interview on how building influencer campaigns changes when dealing with customers (pet owners) vs clinics as partners. Asking these questions resulted in various highlights that stood out throughout the interview. Lexi shared how one of her most successful campaigns ran through last summer (summer 2023) was titled "Hot Dog Summer." Lexi shared how the campaign utilized a hot dog truck that traveled around to cities where VEG has hospitals nearby to promote its brand. VEG utilized its brand ambassadors and influencers to promote the event weeks before and even be present. Lexi shared that this event was highly successful as it utilized popular pet influencers and played off a summer trend known as, 'hot girl summer.' Lexi entered her current role of dealing with influencers due to her time as a campus recruiter at VEG. She was able to transfer her skills and knowledge from working with campus ambassadors who promoted VEG's mentorship program post-veterinary school into working with influencers.

When asked what her key considerations are in building a successful influencer campaign, she shared the importance of understanding VEG's audience or any audience in general. She discussed how pet owners are a particular type of consumer and how they will do anything to help keep their pets healthy. With this, they look for hospitals that will provide proper care and vets and techs that understand how important a pet can be to someone. She shared how building a campaign around that understanding is her main goal.

I also asked Lexi how she ensures she is keeping all legal considerations in mind and if any legal considerations go along with being a veterinary hospital. She stated, "All legal considerations play a crucial role in how we build our influencer campaigns. There is a lot of work that goes into choosing the right influencers and making sure they have a healthy relationship with their audience to avoid any potential legal discourse. The legal team helps to draft contracts with chosen influencers to discuss proper disclosure. When it comes to marketing for VEG, something that has the potential to be looked over is receiving proper permission to use pictures of pets because pets are technically people's property. However, we have very detailed guidelines and steps we follow to ensure nothing is ever looked over."

Overall, my interview with Lexi was incredibly informative. While it did not focus too much on legal, listening to her share her experience at VEG stressed the importance of understanding your marketing audience. I think hearing the perspective of someone who markets toward pet owners really drove that home.

Interview with Erika Meisel, Senior Account Executive, Culture & Influence at Real Chemistry

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1. Can you tell me a bit about your position at Real Chemistry?
2. Can you tell me about some of your positions successes whether it be a campaign or a challenge you overcame?
3. Are you able to share a time when you've come across legal challenges?
4. Working at Real Chemistry, a healthcare advertising agency if I'm not mistaken, are there specific legal considerations that go with healthcare?
5. Can you give me some insight on how you feel social media influencers influence cultural trends and how that plays into your strategies?
6. Working with culture and influence are there specific ethical and legal considerations you must keep in mind?
7. How do you see the future of influencer marketing changing with the constant innovation?
8. What for you is a key consideration in building successful campaigns?
9. Can you explain in a little more detail what it means to be a part of the culture and influence team?
10. How do you stay up to date on social and cultural trends?
11. I see you have extensive professional experience before Real Chemistry, what was a significant part in your journey?
12. I see on your LinkedIn that you are the co-host of the Crime and Caffeine Podcast, can you tell me more about that?

Erika is a senior account executive on Real Chemistry's culture and influence team, which involves working on different accounts within the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry. She helps build and facilitate influencer campaigns that involve various reviews with medical, legal, and regulatory teams in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries. Her team is responsible for finding the specific influencers using their strict process to find the appropriate influencer. Erika was fascinating to talk to because part of her position is building a case for why a campaign should use a specific influencer. This involves her and her team diving deep into the potential influencer's background and paper trail, ensuring they have never had any legal or disclosure issues. When asked if she has ever run into specific legal challenges, she shared how there have been issues with influencers promoting different drugs at the same time, which obviously resulted in them having to break ties with the influencer.

I asked Erika how she sees the future of influencer marketing changing with constant innovation, and she shared, "I definitely think that AI will have a huge impact on healthcare and pharma along with influencer marketing. I think there are good and bad aspects to it, and

hopefully, as we progress, more of the good will come to light with the help of tapping into different audiences and patients' data to use in a good way. I also think as time goes on, they will be cracking down on regulations and disclosures, which is a good thing."

I also asked Erika, being on the culture and influence team, how she feels culture influences social media trends and how it plays into her strategies when looking for specific influencers. She shared, "TikTok has been a giant game changer. The majority of the campaigns we have focused on in the past have utilized Facebook and Instagram. Still, TikTok has become a platform where the cycle of trends is happening faster than we even realize. It's been a great platform for us to identify cultural and social media trends that help us identify influencers and share the campaign due to the quick story-telling component. We are looking for people to share their journey and day-in-my life that works as a tool to give our audiences a look into how a medication or disease awareness can apply to them on a more personal level."

Talking to Erika stressed the importance of the legal components that go into building an influencer campaign and finding the correct influencer. Being in an industry with as much 'red tape' as the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry does, it felt crucial to me to see how legal considerations make their way into each step of building an influencer campaign.

Interview with Ximena Castro, Zoning Attorney at AcostaEzgar, LLC

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1. Can you tell me a bit about your legal career?
2. Are you currently with a firm?
3. Can you describe what Intellectual Property and Disclosure means to you?
4. Can you share some automatic concerns that come to mind that you think communications professionals and influencers need to be aware of when using digital marketing strategies?
5. From a lawyer perspective, what are some best practices when drafting contracts and agreements to protect both the brand reputation and the influencer?
6. What are some tips on negotiating terms that address content ownership, disclosure requirements, and liability?
7. How do you see the future of disclosure requirements changing with the constant innovation in technology in advertising like AI.
8. What kind of law do you practice specifically?
9. Where did you go to school?
10. What initially drew you to become a lawyer?
11. What are some significant milestones throughout your legal career?

My interview with Ximena identified and defined many questions I had when writing my practice report. As a practicing lawyer, she could discuss in depth many terms and components that must be considered when working with influencers. Ximena's area of expertise is zoning law, a branch within property law. She represents reality developers within Chicago, IL. She has also taken on the role of lobbyist to approve their projects. She is currently with the firm AcostaEzgar. When asked to define intellectual property and disclosure she said, "I think it is a very fine line of coming up with original concepts to promote a brand and your personal brand without overstepping on something that has already been created. If it's already been created, to give the proper credit and ensure there are no violations of visual and property laws." She brought up an interesting point that I did not really discuss within my practice report when it comes to intellectual property laws in influencer marketing, and that is ensuring the influencer's content is original work. Before my interview with her, I mainly focused on intellectual property, defining ownership of the generated content and whether it belonged to the influencer or the brand.

Another critical question I wanted her input on, as a practicing lawyer, was the best practices when drafting an appropriate contract between an influencer and brand to ensure nothing is overlooked. She answered, "Number one, you want to ensure the contract includes a clause that whatever advertising the agency or brand creates for that influencer is not used for any other influencers. You want to make sure the contract has a cancellation clause as well in case a situation arises in which both parties need to walk away from the contract." She goes on to talk about how part of the appeal of influencer marketing is the original and personal content it creates for brands and their audiences. Having appropriate clauses ensures that brands aren't using an influencer's content produced as a template for future influencers to follow. Castro also shared that there are good and bad sides to the future of influencer marketing and that AI will impact disclosure requirements and FTC guidelines. She shares how AI is really an art that needs a creator and changes from creator to creator. However, AI needs to get its content from somewhere, which is how she anticipates disclosure requirements will change.

I thoroughly enjoyed my discussion with Ximena. She gave me great insight into how important the legal components are when dealing with influencer marketing, especially in a constantly changing environment. I asked her various questions about her career as the conversation continued and how she ended up where she did. She shared that something she is proud of in her career is that she is the only active Hispanic female lawyer in the zoning world who appears regularly in front of the city council and different governmental bodies in Chicago. This was very inspiring and motivating to hear, and I am grateful I got the chance to connect with her.

