

Influencing the Influencers: Viral Ventures Class Partners with Ling and Lamb



[Photo/Sami Ahmad '20]

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By Melissa Russell

It's a business that didn't exist 10 years ago, but today, people are earning a living just by being themselves online.

The influencer industry, propelled by social media, is shaping economic trends at massive scale. As of 2023, the **global influencer market** (<https://www.statista.com/topics/2496/influence-marketing/>) was valued at approximately \$21.1 billion (up from \$16.4 billion in

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impacts on consumer behavior

(<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20240320786326/en/U.S.-Shoppers-Are-Under-the-Influence-74-of-Consumers-Have-Purchased-a-Product-Because-an-Influencer-Recommended-It>).

The key to an influencer's financial success lies in their ability to build a loyal and engaged following, create quality content, and effectively market themselves and their partnerships. But how do social media influencers turn their online presence into financial success? What do they do to maintain longevity and remain relevant over the long term?



These are some of the questions that Executive-in-Residence **[Jae Williams '08, MA'16](https://emerson.edu/faculty-staff-directory/jae-williams)** (<https://emerson.edu/faculty-staff-directory/jae-williams>) poses to students in the **[Business of Creative Enterprises](https://emerson.edu/academics/cross-departmental-programs/business-creative-enterprises)** (<https://emerson.edu/academics/cross-departmental-programs/business-creative-enterprises>) course **Viral Ventures: The Business of Power, Influence and Attention**. To help them explore the answers during the Fall 2024 semester, Williams invited Taccara and Yinka Lawanson, lifestyle influencers known to their nearly 8 million followers on TikTok/YouTube as Ling and Lamb.



Williams brought in Ling and Lamb to help students explore the business of influence, unpack how the couple is turning their online presence into financial success, and to develop a business plan to ensure the couple's long term online presence.

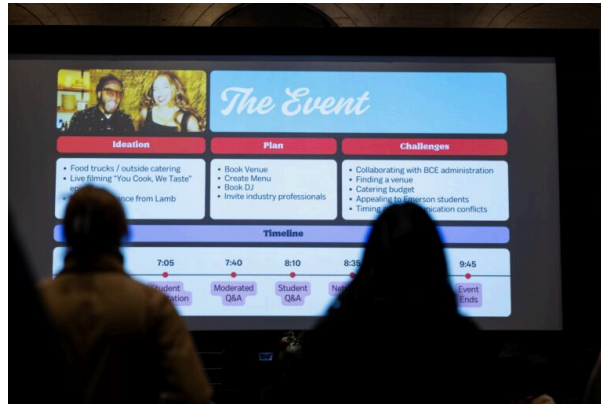
[Ling and Lamb](https://www.lingandlamb.com/)

(<https://www.lingandlamb.com/>) have goals for longevity in their newfound influencer career. An intercultural married couple, they started sharing their everyday moments, antics, pranks, and honest conversations on TikTok during

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followers across their portfolio of social media channels, announced a partnership with Crocs, and launched a podcast, *Keep it Reel with Ling and Lamb*. Their first book, *A Beautiful Foolishness*, will come out in 2025.

With a mission to promote Ling and Lamb's book, brand, and viewership, the Viral Ventures students divided into three teams. One group developed strategies for the book tour, during which Ling and Lamb would partner with local influencers and highlight local businesses at each city they visit. Another team created a concept for a two-season travel series, through which the clients take their personalities and influence around the world.



The third team planned an end-of-semester event in the Bordy Theater, to present their work to their "clients" and the Emerson community. The presentation was followed by an in-depth discussion with Ling and Lamb and their agent, Barbara Jones, CEO and founder of Outshine Talent.

And Ling and Lamb loved it! In an [Instagram post](https://www.instagram.com/p/DDPo9W7JumK/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link) (nearly 6,000 likes and counting), they thanked the class for their work and passion for their business:

"Wow! The students of @emersoncollege @emersonbce class did a case study on LING AND LAMB and did an amazing job presenting us with effective business strategies for growth and how to maximize awareness around our future business endeavors. What an incredible experience we had! Huge thank you to the entire BCE class @emersoncollege for your incredible work, passion for this project and for truly caring about Ling and Lamb."



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