

Inside the LAB

INFLUENCER FEST 2026.

**The
Business of
Influence**



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MARKETING

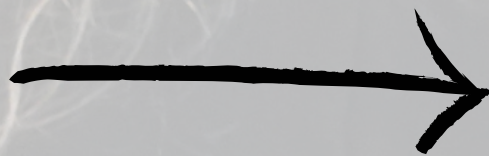
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LESSON 1

**THE BIGGEST
MISCONCEPTION IN
INFLUENCER MARKETING?**

**Brands think they're
buying followers.**

**They're actually buying
TRUST.**



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“You’re paying for a trusted voice.”

JASON DERUSHA,

longtime Twin Cities journalist, former WCCO-TV news anchor, current WCCO Radio host, food/travel storyteller, and one of Minnesota’s most trusted media personalities.

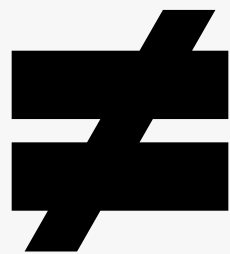


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LESSON 2

Follower Count



Influence

The panel repeatedly emphasized:

- * Engagement matters more than reach
- * Credibility matters more than impressions
- * Audience trust matters more than virality

The creator with the strongest relationship often outperforms the creator with the biggest audience.



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LESSON 3

THE BEST PARTNERSHIPS AREN'T TRANSACTIONAL.

The strongest creator campaigns are built on:

- * Creative freedom
- * Clear communication
- * Long-term relationships
- * Authentic alignment

Trust the creator.

Trust the audience.

Trust the relationship.



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