

# Influencer Marketing, Selling Out Costs More Than It Pays

I've refused thousands of dollars for sponsored LinkedIn posts in the past weeks.

I'm not saying that's a lot, I'm telling you this was FREE MONEY.

For now, I said NO because I care about my small audience.

Yes, a few brands have interesting tools at a surface level.

But I would need quality time to test everything.

→ TRUST is arguably the greatest currency.

Your trust means more to me than cash... and ironically, it is your trust that made brands want to pay me in the first place!

Let me be clear: there's nothing wrong with paid posts as long as they add value and don't pretend to be organic posts!

But it has to be TRANSPARENT!

Good cycle:

✅ I add value.

✅ You trust me.

✅ I value your trust.

✅ We've got a relationship!

👂 Brands notice the influence and offer to buy it.

Why? Well, they simply want to increase sales.

They spend money to make more money.

They invest to create brand exposure.

😏 Influencers now have an opportunity: easy cash!

They can suddenly make money without effort.

Sadly, this is often the beginning of the end.

🚫 The vicious influencer cycle?

- ❌ Selling influence
- ❌ Trying to hide it
- ❌ Loss of credibility
- ❌ Loss of influence

Followers can smell the lack of authenticity.

If you lose TRUST, you've lost everything!

## Audience and follower count: does it matter?

Now, I want to share an interesting discussion with a credible brand in the agentic AI space. I tried to discourage them from working with me. I argued that my follower count was too low to be interesting. Here is a short extract from their insightful email reply (their complete message is much longer)...

In the B2B space the follower count isn't as important as the authority and expertise that an experienced pro like yourself brings. B2B marketing initiatives like these thrive on credibility and that's why we are keen on working out a partnership. Before reaching out to experts in this space, we vet their socials thoroughly, so you are well placed in terms of the number of followers/connections you have and other related metrics.

👉 One of my friends posts only sponsored content.

I have no problem with this because he is transparent.

He's clear: 100% of his content comes from sponsorships.

He knows selling influence and hiding it destroys credibility.

If I ever do "influencer marketing", I want to do it correctly.

I think I understand the logic behind personal branding:

1. Followers value truth.
2. Trust powers influence.
3. Influence moves wallets.

→ If you monetize, never break trust! 🤝

🔄 People trust influencers who value people over cash 🔄

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