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Gaming Influencer Marketing

The latest trends

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In recent months, the gaming industry has become more open. Communities are no longer considered «geeky» and influencer marketing campaigns are synonymous with creation and innovation. But that wasn't always the case. **In the 2010s, this community was difficult for brands to access, as it was mainly discussed on forums.** Thousands of people came together on jeuxvideo.com and Gamekult to talk about their favorite games, and more. These spaces were also an opportunity to pick up tips here and there to progress in games.

Then there was a mini-revolution in the industry with the arrival of indie games. In 2009, out of nowhere, Minecraft arrived. The game was an unexpected success. Its popularity, and that of others, is growing thanks to the creation of platforms like Steam. No need to have an Xbox or PlayStation. Players could access thousands of games from their computers.

These new features signaled the arrival of content creators. As they grew with increasingly accessible games, they could share their gameplay more easily. Communities continued to enjoy talking on forums, but also moved to social networks. Enthusiasts then began to use YouTube and Twitter to watch the gameplay of those willing to capture their screens to make videos.

This content was short and simply looked like gameplay clips. But it was clearly a hit if you take into account the number of views they'd rack up. Then content creators began to offer more tips and advice in their videos. At the same time, their subscriber numbers were slowly but surely growing. While during the first years, this sector remained rather closed, today, it has taken an entirely new direction.

How has the sector evolved? What are the new trends? In what ways will it continue to grow? To answer all these questions, we first need to go back in time. We'll start by explaining how the gaming industry has evolved in the influencer marketing domain. We'll then focus on what this market is like today and what it has brought to influencer marketing in recent months.



**Gaming, an
inaccessible
industry for
influencer
marketing?**

Growing social networks

It wasn't video game platforms that allowed these content creators to share more. Social networks developed tools and showed great interest in this sector. The objective: attract and allow these communities to find a forum for exchange. Online video sites like Dailymotion and YouTube were the first to attract these new users. **In 2007, Diablox9 decided to launch «live gaming» on Dailymotion after being inspired by Franck and Rivaol on Jeuxvideo.com.** He filmed his screen before putting these videos online. Then, a few years later, gamers discovered Twitch.

Launched in 2011, the platform competes directly with other sites with a specialty: **the team only offers livestreams.** Users, called streamers, film themselves playing their games live. An open chat on the side allows them to chat in real time with the spectators who come to watch their shows. Over the years, the site has recorded a growing number of users. To give you an idea, the number of viewing hours between the first quarter of 2020 and 2021 has doubled. It has increased from 3.1 billion to 6.3 billion.

With such success, other platforms also wanted to attract these new, web-savvy gamers. In 2015, YouTube launched «YouTube Gaming.» This is now integrated directly into the site, allowing the social network to offer relevant content related to the topic. Users can share their gameplay, but also broadcast live.

YouTube's gaming category is as successful as Twitch's. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of views on videos of this type doubled. Now, the social network records 100 billion hours of views on gaming videos, 10% of which are from livestreams. Other figures that demonstrate the interest in this pastime is the increase in the number of subscribers of some channels. Over the same period, **the site counts 40 million gaming profiles worldwide, who log in regularly. 80,000 channels have surpassed 100,000 subscribers, and 300 have gone beyond the 10 million mark.**

The third and final platform that is experiencing growth in its numbers is Facebook Gaming. Launched in 2015, this space allows you to stream video games like the two competitors mentioned above. «Users will be able to discover game videos on our new platform based on the creators and games they follow, the pages they like and the groups they belong to. We will also feature creators, esports competitions and content from gaming industry events on FB.gg,» the app explained at the time of its launch. These streams appear in the news feeds of those logged in.

The number of views between the first quarter of 2020 and the second quarter has boomed thanks to the lockdowns. The gaming section of Facebook has grown by 75%. Between June 2019 and June 2020, the number of hours increased from 111 million to 334 million.

The first campaigns in the world of influencer marketing

As these numbers continue to grow, gaming brands are starting to pay closer attention to these new ambassadors. Collaborations are carried out around specific campaigns. For example:

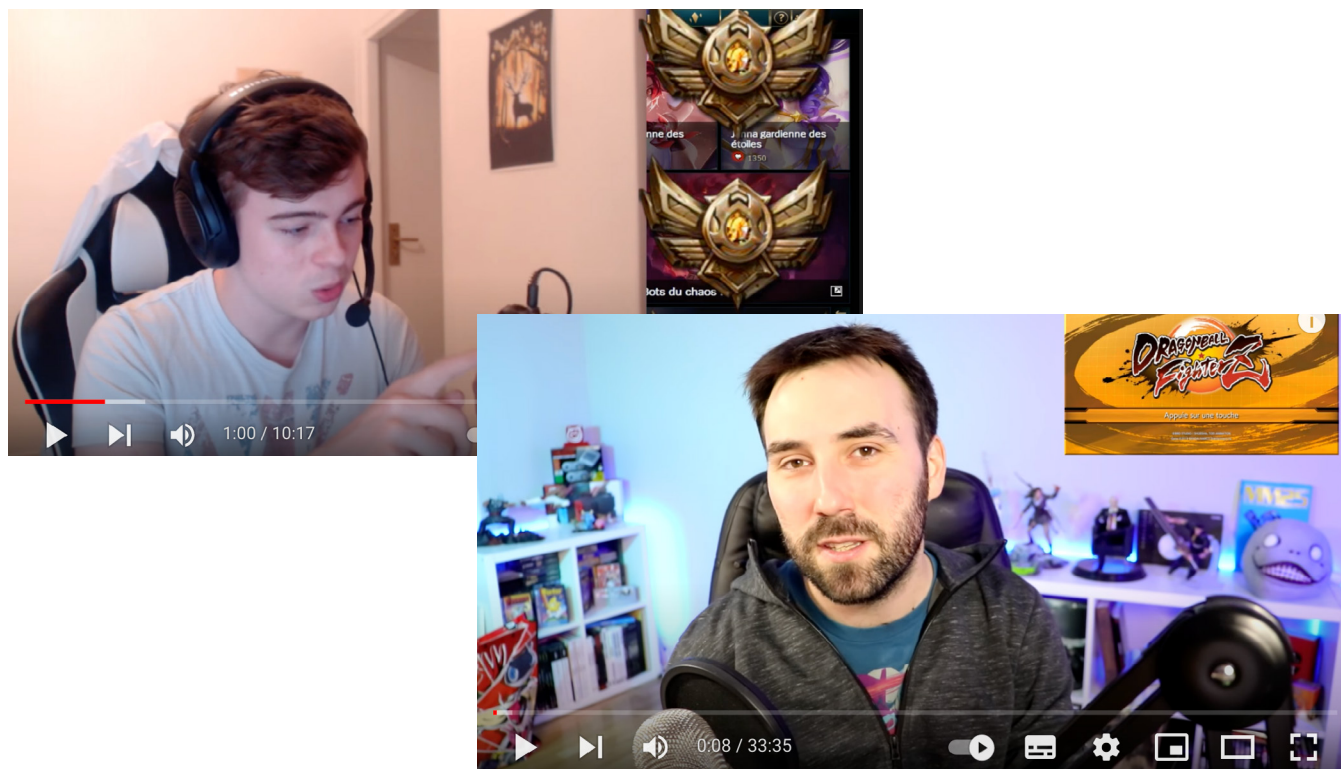
- **live sponsorships** where the company logo appears on screen
- **co-creations of a product**, such as the customization of a controller for example
- **product placements** such as streaming hardware (computers, keyboards, mice, headsets, etc.) with discount codes in the description.

At Influence4You, we have carried out numerous influencer marketing campaigns in the gaming industry. With our platform, you can get set up in a few clicks and find profiles that match your values. Brands like BandaiNamco are signed up to our solution.

To show you what's possible, we'll share two partnerships from a few years ago, before moving on to new types of collaborations.

The first partnership was with the brand Nacon. In 2018, the company unveiled a new controller distributed by Bigben Interactive. To encourage consumers to buy it, the company decided to run a campaign with three content creators specialized in gaming. The collaboration was carried out in several phases.

First, they went to Nacon's premises for a first-hand experience of the controller. A model was left for them so they could test it a little longer. Then, they posted videos on YouTube sharing their feedback on the product after playing. **These three videos have gathered 300,000 views for a reach of 700,000 people.**



The second campaign concerns the game Dragon Ball FighterZ. The brand used the Influence4You platform to find the most interesting profiles for this collaboration. 15 content creators were solicited as a result of this research. The objective for the company was to offer them a preview of the game's beta so that they could tell their communities about it. **15 videos were created on YouTube with a reach of 357,725 people. With this different content, BandaiNamco wanted to attract as many players as possible to this novelty.**

All these campaigns aimed to reach these enthusiasts via some of the most popular creators at the time. Over time, the gaming industry has become more structured to allow for other types of campaigns.

Types of influencers in the gaming industry

Before we focus on these great campaigns, it's important to focus on the types of content creators specializing in gaming. With the development of the sector, not everyone is at the same level.

To differentiate them, terms have been devised. The three main categories are:

- **professional players:** these are people who participate in esports competitions. They are usually part of a team like Vitality or Solary.
- **esporters:** these are professional players, but who have been able to grow their personal careers. One of the best examples is Gotaga. The streamer is part of the Vitality club and has won several competitions. At the same time, he grows his own social networks with his team.
- **streamers:** unlike the other two categories, streamers are not professional players. They are amateurs who host livestreams on Twitch or YouTube. What makes them special? They know how to captivate their audience with their entertaining performances. In France, we can take the example of Le Bouseuh.

This community of content creators has become accustomed to meeting at events such as **Paris Games Week**. It was thanks to these unique events in France that these types of influencers appeared.

The first players in this field helped develop the sector. We can take for example **Eclipsia TV**. Between 2012 and 2018, this site brought together the most popular French streamers. Together, they hosted livestreams from studios in central Paris. A web TV channel specialized in the game League of Legends was launched and became one of the references in France. The first partnerships with brands came one after another before the company disappeared, competing with a whole bunch of new companies.

And today, how do all these developments in the sector translate to social networks?



Gaming, the rising star of influencer marketing

Expanding audiences

As you'll have understood, the arrival of gaming on social networks was made possible thanks to a community of enthusiasts. Forums were the perfect place to discuss their favorite games. Then, platforms like YouTube or Twitch encouraged players to share more. While at the beginning the audience of this content remained niche, judged too geeky, today it's certainly not the case.

These videos have allowed a whole generation to come together to talk about the games they enjoy. Younger children can discover a whole range of entertainment that is much easier to access. Today, the streamer community is quite large. It brings together both enthusiasts and casual players of all ages.

With the lockdowns, this audience has only grown. According to a study carried out by DFC Intelligence in 2020, **out of the 8 billion human beings on the planet, 3 billion are gamers, which is 40% of the world population. Console gamers represent only 8% of these enthusiasts, compared to 48% for PC games and 44% for other tools such as tablets or phones.**

Their use of video games is not casual. According to We Are Social, **one in three people admit to playing daily. Young people are among those most likely to play every day, but they are not the only ones. 2 out of 3 Internet users aged between 55 and 64 also describe themselves as gamers.**

Another finding is that more and more games are being played, whether League of Legends, Call of Duty, The Sims, Gran Turismo or World of Warcraft. Companies wishing to collaborate with one of these profiles must first find out which platform the game is most consumed on and in what ways.

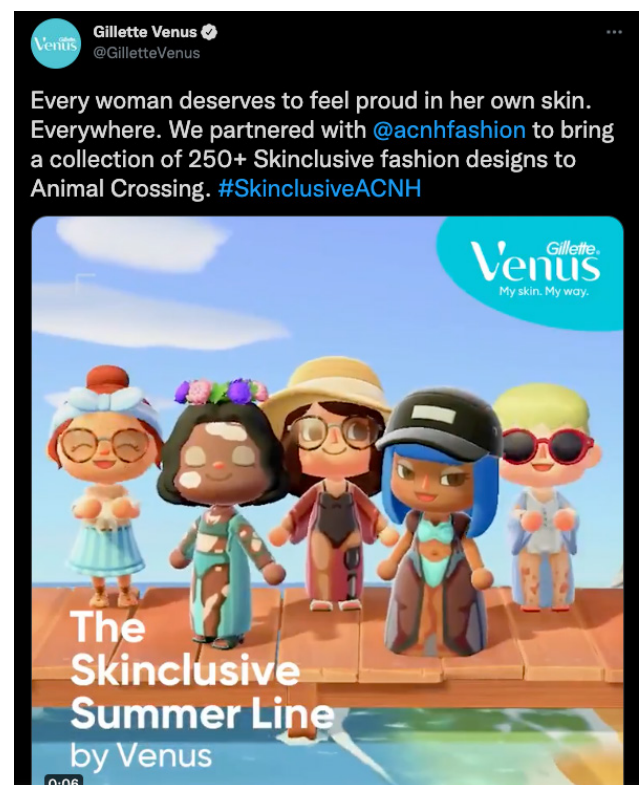
A new kind of influencer marketing campaign

With this ever-growing audience, companies are therefore more interested in these communities that are a bit more accessible than before. For some, it was time to move things up a notch and dream up innovative marketing campaigns. We are going to share with you some recent examples carried out internationally.

To begin, we'll take a look at **Burger King**. The brand wanted to appear in the famous game **FIFA** by sponsoring an existing team called Stevenage Football Club. The players wore T-shirts with the brand's logo. But that's not all. To encourage as many people as possible to play with this club, the company challenged them to make this little-known club the champion of the game by recruiting star players. Streamers were invited to share their high scores on Twitter to encourage other players to do better.

During the pandemic, **Animal Crossing** was a hit. Over 7 million copies were sold. Companies that are a little more 'lifestyle' than Burger King have found an excellent way to address a young audience in this new space. That's what the Gillette brand attempted. With the designer Nicole Cuddihy, the teams designed 19 outfits available in the shop. These can be worn in game. It was also an opportunity for Gillette to share messages. The «skins»

they created were chosen to show diversity. Vitiligo, tattoos, psoriasis, handicaps ... each character had their differences. Gillette's idea was to show that serious messages could be conveyed in a playful way.



Companies entering the gaming world are on the rise. Influencer marketing campaigns in this field are no longer just for specialized brands. Today, the more mainstream ones have found a way to gain visibility with these hard-to-reach but extremely interesting communities for marketing teams.

Influence campaigns are changing. Controller tests and other sponsorships are gradually being left aside, even if they still work, in place of elaborate concepts. Nevertheless, companies wishing to invest in these platforms via games, as we mentioned earlier, must have a certain budget to work on these kinds of projects. We have one last example that shows that influencer marketing in the gaming industry has really evolved. The content creator is now the link between real and virtual worlds. In 2019, Amixem imagined a real-

life medieval adventure to talk about the game *Rangers Of Oblivion*. Through this concept, his community was encouraged to download the game without having seen the videographer actually play it.

The gaming sector is breathing new life into campaigns. And that's not all. Players now have such big communities that they can work on creating bigger and better projects.



The streaming craze on Twitch

Twitch has become a second television.

Squeezie is happy to find families eating dinner in front of his live shows. Audiences are so big and viewers' expectations are changing too. To stay on a live stream, the user expects real entertainment with laughs, screams, lows and highs, so some content creators have moved into a new dimension!

Let's take **Domingo** as an example. This streamer got started in gaming in the 2010s by winning several tournaments. A few years later, once he finished his studies, he returned to the forefront of the scene by concentrating more on entertainment than on pure gaming. After a stint in television, he created his own talk show on Twitch called «Popcorn». Each week, he reviews the week's news with a panel of hand-picked guests. It's also a time for him to take them out of their comfort zones with some wacky and entertaining games. This program was a huge success.

Numerous sponsors solicit Domingo and his team for advertising space. Most of the time, viewers see a logo displayed on the screen. In 2021, Adidas became Domingo's official partner.

The streamer isn't the only one who has created a marketing machine on Twitch. This is also the case with Gotaga. With his own studios, the content creator can hold any kind of livestreams at any time. He is surrounded by a team of about ten people to manage his partnerships, his merchandise and to help him come up with the next big projects.

Streamers have made it big on Twitch, but many can now be found on other platforms too. You can find their replays or highlights of their shows on YouTube or Twitter. They also have Instagram presences. In this way, partnerships are shared across all their social networks and offer real visibility to partner brands. Because to create their future concepts, they need financing!



From streamers to event designers

Today, streamers don't just simply livestream on Twitch, they come up with real events. For example, take **ZeratoR with the Z Event**. Since 2016, the content creator has hosted an annual charity live event. Over a weekend, he invites his most influential friends in a Parisian setting to stream together non-stop. The idea is to offer a new kind of entertainment to their communities, and that's not all.

Their subscribers also compete during these live shows. Because these Z Events are above all designed to support charity. By challenging each other, streamers encourage viewers to donate more. And it works! In 2016, ZeratoR and friends played for Save The Children. 160,000 euros was raised. Four years later, it was Amnesty International's turn. More than 5 million euros were raised in the space of two days. In 2021, the group supported Action Against Hunger and raised over 10 million euros. An exceptional event that showed the general public the true impact of these profiles.



Domingo was one of the guest streamers at the Z Event. But he knows how to think up his own innovative events to livestream on his Twitch channel. For the past two years, he has set himself no limits. He ran the Paris Marathon with a specific goal in mind: to finish in under 2h15. The challenge was successfully met as he crossed the finish line in 1h58 and 32 minutes.

This performance was broadcast live without any technical hiccups. A cameraman followed the streamer during his run. He was accompanied by an experienced runner. The latter gave him advice on how not to get too tired and to have the right technique during the race. A

second cameraman had the role of carrying out street interviews. Live in a studio, the two streamers Doigby and Zankioh were tasked with commentating and hosting the event.

The race was a success for Domingo on a personal level, but also in terms of views. **The livestream gathered more than 2000 viewers at the same time at some moments, with a peak of 3800 people for the moment of his victory. In total, the livestream had more than 35,000 views. The replay on YouTube has racked up more than 229,000 views.**



This event encouraged Domingo to go further. Recently, he was at the French open with ZeratoR. Live, they played for two hours against Gaël Monfils and Benoît Paire. **2000 people were in the audience. On Twitch, the audience was much bigger as a peak was recorded at 85,000 viewers simultaneously.** *"This decision started with a nod to the ZEvent. We followed the event, this challenge put forward by Domingo, so we wanted to offer them the opportunity to play here. This was to be held during the 2021 edition of the tournament, but we were prevented by capacity concerns and*

the pandemic," explains Stéphane Morel, Deputy Managing Director of Marketing and Economic Development at the FFT.

Nowadays, streamers are not limited to video game livestreams. They are also looking for new ways to best entertain their audiences and ensure that they don't get bored. And more importantly, they are looking to get off the Internet and create events in real life.

Committed ambassadors and influencers

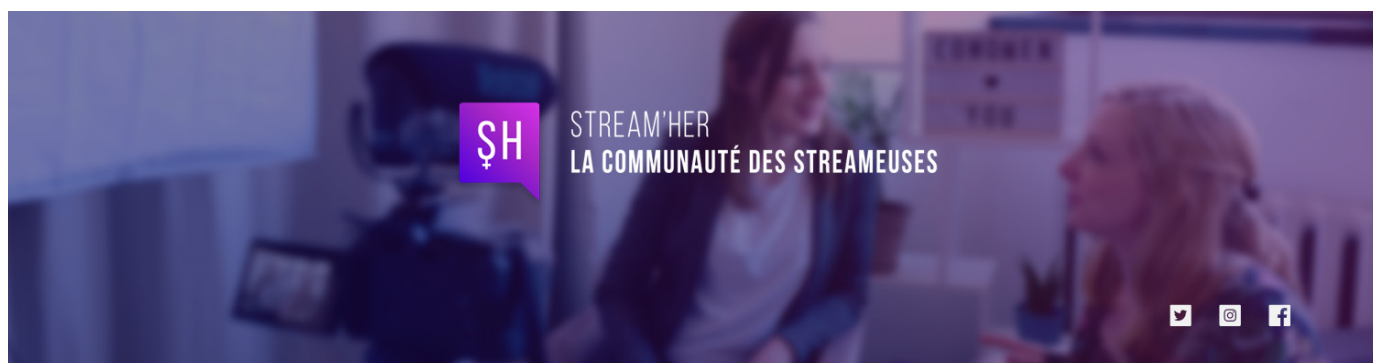
The development of this audience has led to new changes in the way streamers communicate. Until now we've only talked about male content creators, but there are more and more women present on live platforms. And this is not without significance.

In the chat section of Twitch and on other social networks such as Twitter, **female videographers denounce harassment**. This has increased in recent times. Harassed because they play in easy mode, sending death threats, sexist comments that never cease ... these streamers face situations that are increasingly difficult to cope with.

Together, they regularly join forces to put a stop to this kind of abuse. For the moment, short-term solutions have been found by some of them: to call upon moderators to delete messages during livestreams, not to react to these remarks or to denounce as much as possible these practices on all their social networks. They are also waiting for real support from Twitch, which is slow to arrive. These voices are increasingly resonating with their audiences and the media.

A collective has been created to fight sexism on Twitch. It's called Stream Her.

"The project allows (future) streamers to have access to a space dedicated to them, offering them advice, tips, testimonials, articles and discussion spaces," says the team on the overview page of the website. How can future partners of these streamers demonstrate their commitment to this cause? This desire to speak out and become more involved allows brands that share the same messages to surround themselves with these new profiles. Their communities, mostly young and composed of various profiles, could allow companies to build campaigns with strong messages.





Conclusion on gaming influencer marketing

Today, some of the most followed content creators on social networks are in the gaming industry. The communities in this sector are growing, mixing both older people and younger ones just getting started on social networks.

The number of games being played is mind-boggling, as are the latest growth figures released by platforms like Twitch or the gaming category on YouTube. And it doesn't seem to be stopping anytime soon. According to a recent study by the consulting firm Accenture, **the estimated value of the video game industry is now over \$300 billion in revenue. It is bigger than the film and music markets combined!** Half of this amount comes from direct sales of consoles, video games and subscriptions, but also from in-game purchases and mobile advertising revenues. The second part concerns gaming-related industries, such as sales from mobile devices, gaming PCs, as well as peripheral sales related to video games or revenues from eSports.

The health crisis was a catalyst for the gaming industry. In the next few years, we'll certainly find more collaborations in the field of influencer marketing. The latter will have to be even more creative than they are now to attract the attention of this audience.

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