



SUBCULTURE  
SYSTEMS

# Impact Through Information Influence

# Origin of the Data



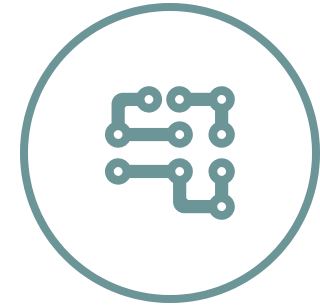
## New Media Research

In partnership with Impact Architects, conducted in-depth research and a literature review focused on agenda setting dynamics of New Media from 2019-2024. Specifically explored the influence of social media platforms, influencers and digital content in shaping public discourse and behavior.



## Research Consolidation

Synthesized the New Media findings with research reports to establish a comprehensive perspective on the impact of new media on key stakeholders.



## Frameworks

Generated testable frameworks to provide strategic direction for the funding and evaluation of new media opportunities.



# New Media Insights

## Hybrid Approach is the Most Reliable

Implementing a blended experience strategy (traditional in-person and digital) strengthens connections and engagement, especially in religious and health contexts.

## Nano and Micro-Influencers Drive Impact

Nano- and micro-influencers (those with fewer than 75K followers) tend to see higher engagement rates due to being perceived as more authentic, accessible and responsive, making platforms like TikTok and Instagram key for brands seeking effective influencer partnerships.

## Institutions Face Assumed Agendas

Partnering and arming influencers with tailored messages and targeted content can increase your chances of reaching your specific demographic. Today, both corporations and the court of public opinion are shaping policy decisions and consumer behavior.

## Declining Organic Reach

Algorithms limit organic exposure from weak ties as the evolving nature of platform algorithms prioritize high engagement and emotionally charged content, perpetuating algorithmic bias and echo chambers.

## Rise of the Expected Transaction

In the digital world, Gen Z expects to be sold to and relate the digital landscape to concepts like commerce, consumerism and consumption. Influencer marketing has shown to reshape consumer behavior via social media, podcasts, newsletters and direct to consumer channels like Twitch and YouTube.

## Generational Differences in Expectations

With entertainment and capitalism being central across the digital attention era, younger audiences expect responsive, real and truthful brand engagement. Gen Z's curiosity stems from the question, 'will this information get me what I want?', while Millennials and Gen X seek authenticity.

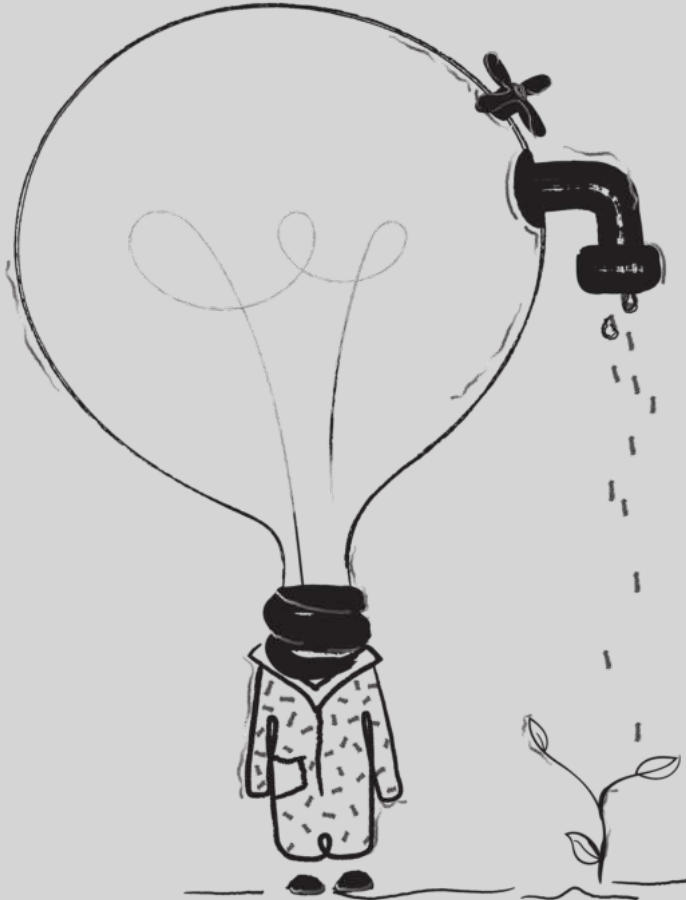


# Audience as Both Creator and Consumer

Today's new media environment allows audiences to act as both creators and consumers, amplifying their influence on behavior, messaging, and change. Research on social media's impact has primarily focused on consumer marketing, though recent studies explore how platforms shape cultural, social, and political landscapes. Social media challenges the agenda-setting dominance of traditional gatekeepers, such as elite publications and institutions, by providing younger audiences with new avenues for conversation, debate, and action.

**The rise of direct-to-consumer channels has lowered barriers for young, non-expert users to become “new drivers of discourse,”** often through viral trends, memes, and music. With social media usage increasing across all age groups, these platforms have become essential tools for marketers.

In fact, 79% of brand strategists track engagement metrics, including likes, shares, downloads, user ratings, exposure frequency, minutes spent on platforms, adoption rates, audience growth, and customer satisfaction.





# The Blurring Lines Between Branding, Politics, and Emotion

As branding, politics, and emotions become increasingly intertwined, institutional brands are diversifying their media strategies. Many now invest in podcasts, newsletters, direct-to-consumer channels, and influencer marketing to build emotional connections with their audiences.

Influencer-driven marketing is particularly reshaping consumer behavior among younger generations, with **37% of adults under 30 regularly consuming news from influencers**. The platforms most commonly used include X (85% of influencers present), Instagram (50%), and YouTube (44%) (Pew Research Center, 2024).





# New Media & Nonprofits

Social media has changed how frequently and easily audiences encounter issue-based messaging, though commercial interests often remain central—whether selling a lifestyle, behavior, or brand.

The attention economy and algorithmic prioritization can limit the reach and impact of philanthropic messages. Despite this, influencer philanthropy is on the rise, with 82% of nonprofits collaborating with paid influencers to shape narratives, persuade audiences, and drive cultural change (Johnson Center for Philanthropy, 2023).

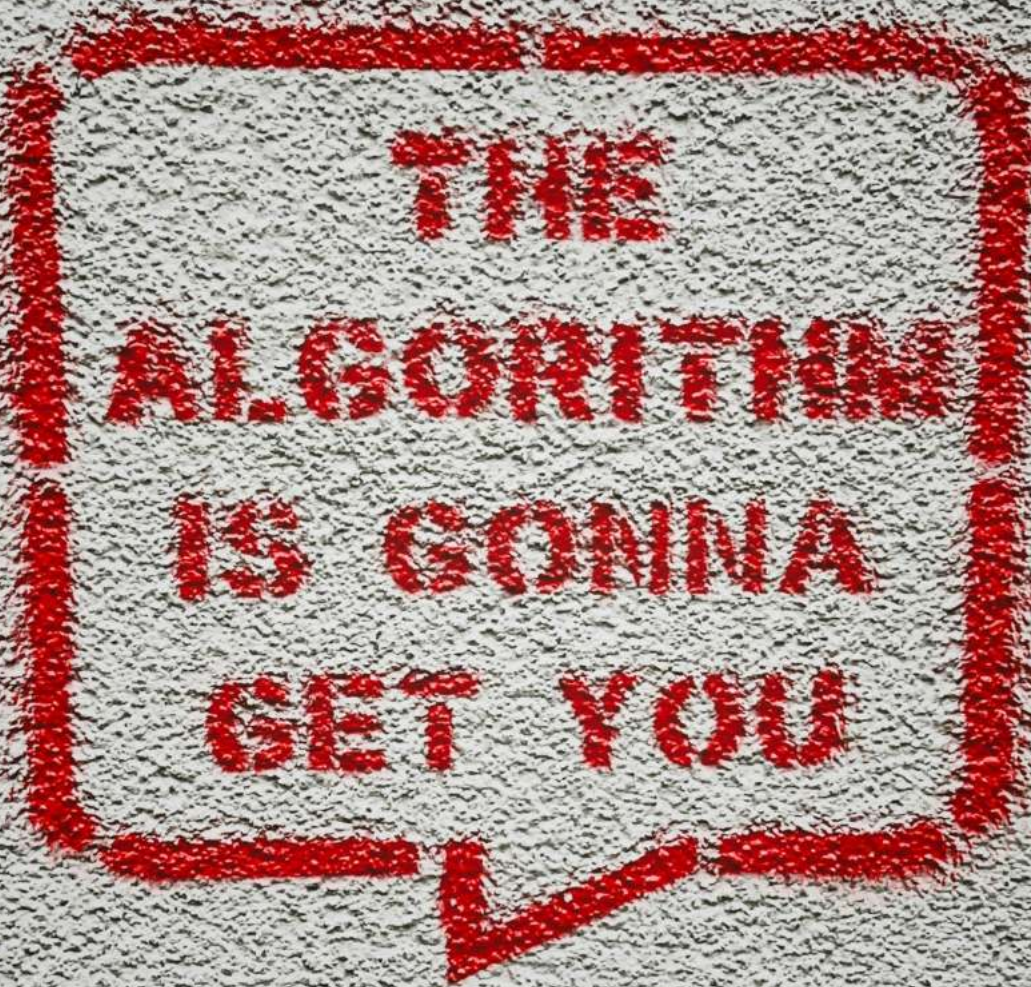
A 2024 survey by the Council on Foundations found that **the public has a superficial understanding of nonprofit work**, with many unaware of their daily interactions with nonprofit-supported services.

A 2022 global survey revealed that while **87% of nonprofits use social media**—primarily Facebook (97%) and Instagram (73%)—**most lack sophisticated engagement strategies**. For example, only 22% use UTM codes to track website traffic from social media. build emotional connections with their audiences.





# Outrage & Algorithms



The structure of new media technologies and algorithmic curation **prioritizes emotionally charged content, limiting organic reach**—especially from weak ties. Influencer marketing is becoming a dominant force, particularly among those under 30, through platforms like social media, podcasts, and YouTube.

While this “networked atmosphere of concern” can help bring attention to critical issues, it also underscores the importance of a hybrid engagement approach. Combining digital and in-person strategies, as well as partnering with nano- and micro-influencers, can lead to deeper, more authentic engagement (Evans et al., 2022).

# Capturing Attention and Driving Impact

## Strategic Partnerships

Collaborate with known sources and existing platforms to leverage their audience and amplify your message.

## Master the Interest Graph

Analyze user-generated content to understand what people care about and provide entertaining, useful content that resonates with their interests.

## Harness Algorithmic Bias

Leverage the power of emotionally charged networks by strategically engaging with trending topics, content, and current events to increase visibility and impact.

## Responsiveness is a Key Influencer Indicator

Look for individuals and brands who engage consistently with their audience, as they are more likely to be viable strategic partners.



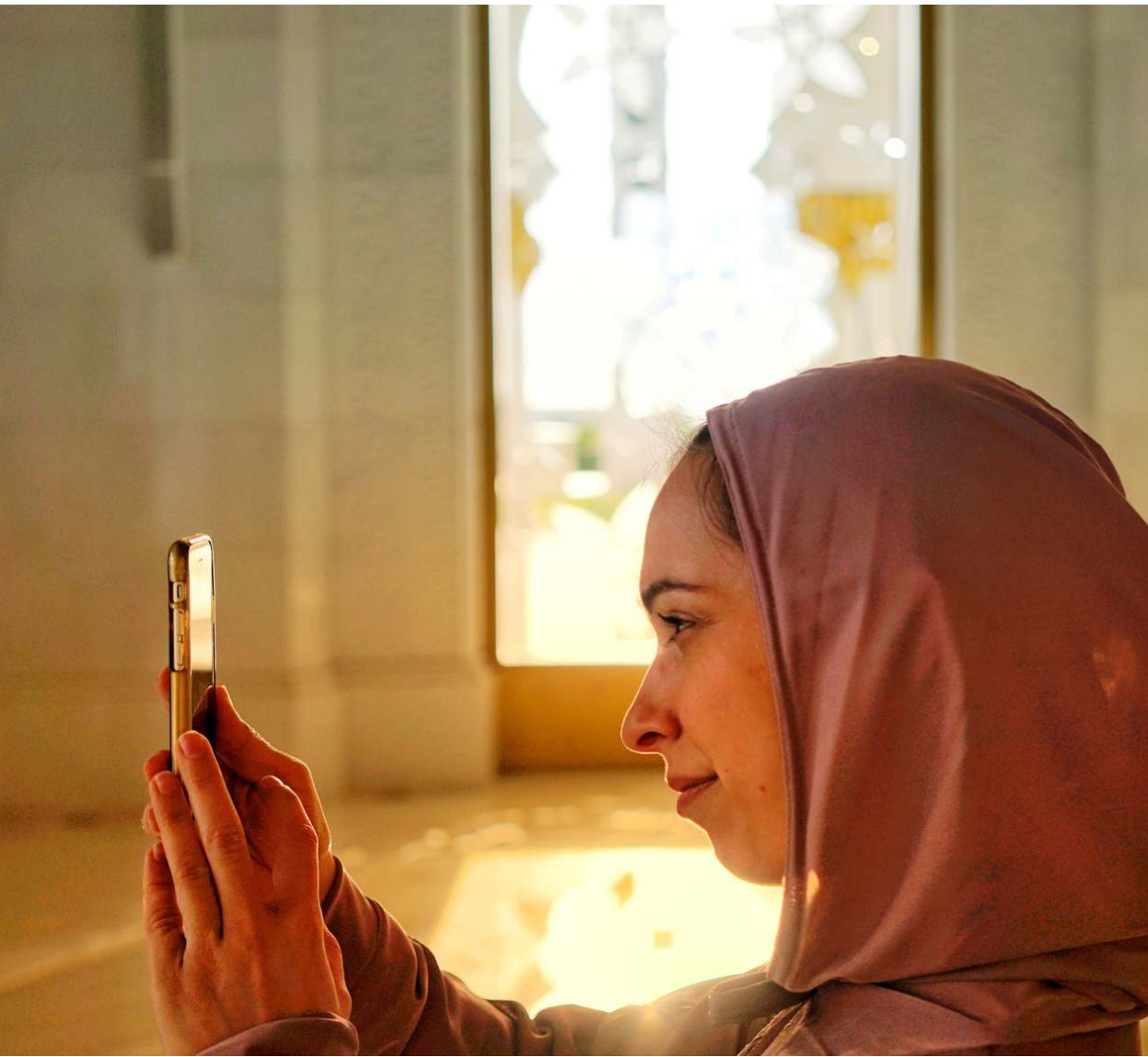


# Think Small Strategy:

Early data suggests a large part Donald Trump's electoral victory in 2024 was driven by an engaged cloud of users with fewer followers.

These are known as micro (<100,000) or nano (<1,000) influencers.

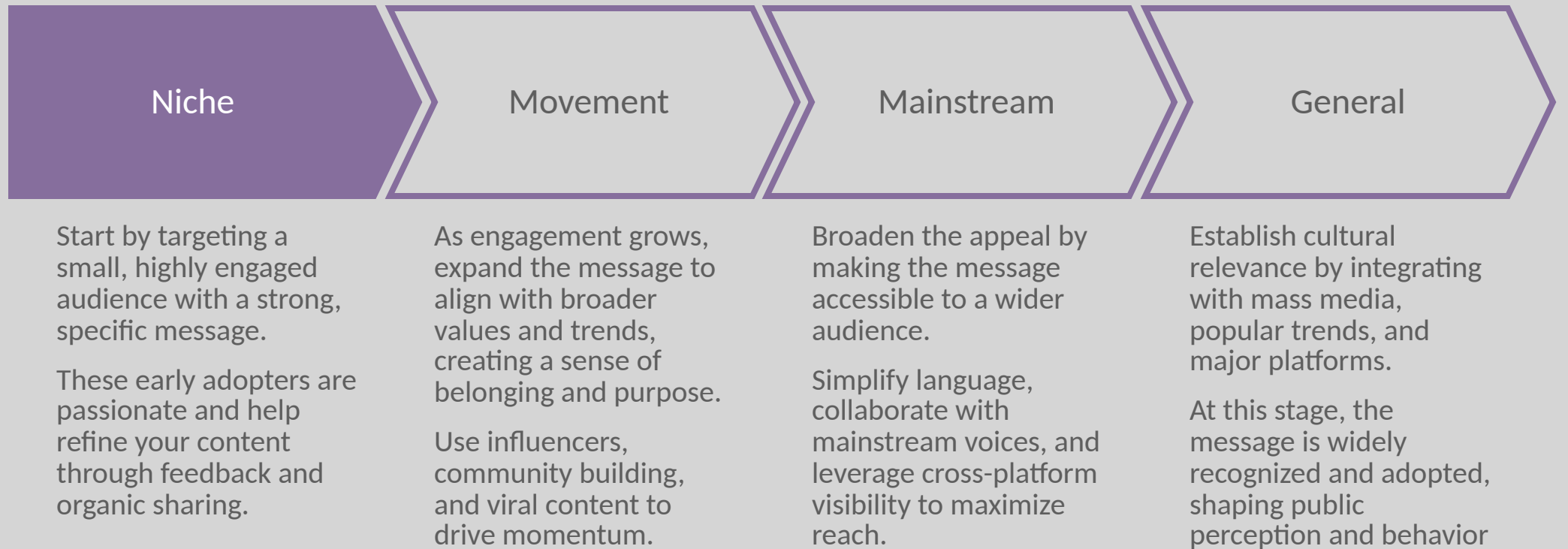




A lot of Tala Siff's will get you a much further than one Taylor Swift.



# Social/New Media Strategy Flow





A photograph of a waterfall with the text "This does not work in reverse!" overlaid. The waterfall is shown from a low angle, with water cascading down a rocky ledge. The water is bright white, contrasting with the dark, mossy rocks. The background is a lush, green forest. The text is in a large, white, sans-serif font, centered horizontally across the middle of the image.

This does not work in reverse!

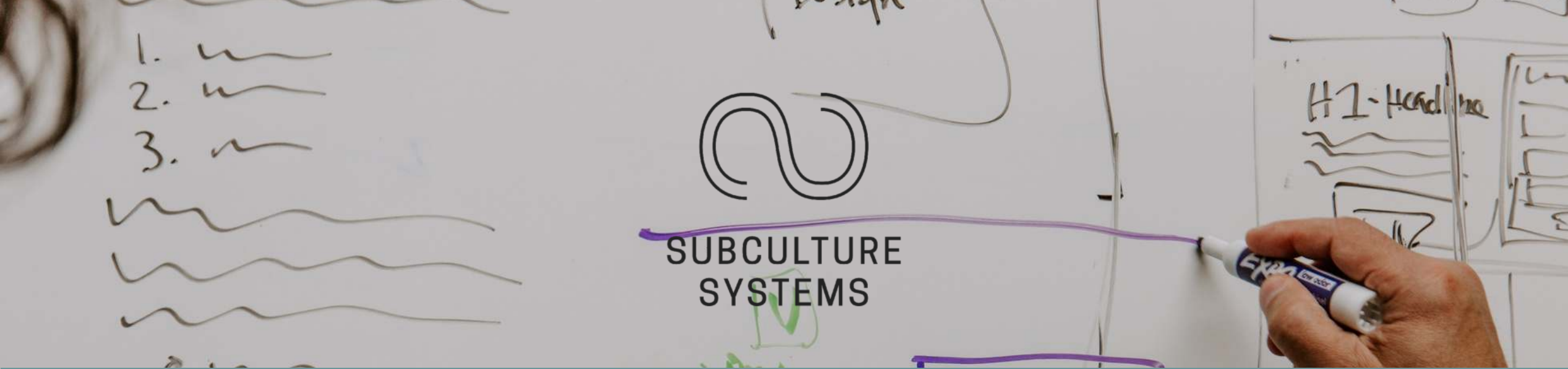
You cannot start with a big message and hope for uptake. Big Media is rapidly diminishing.



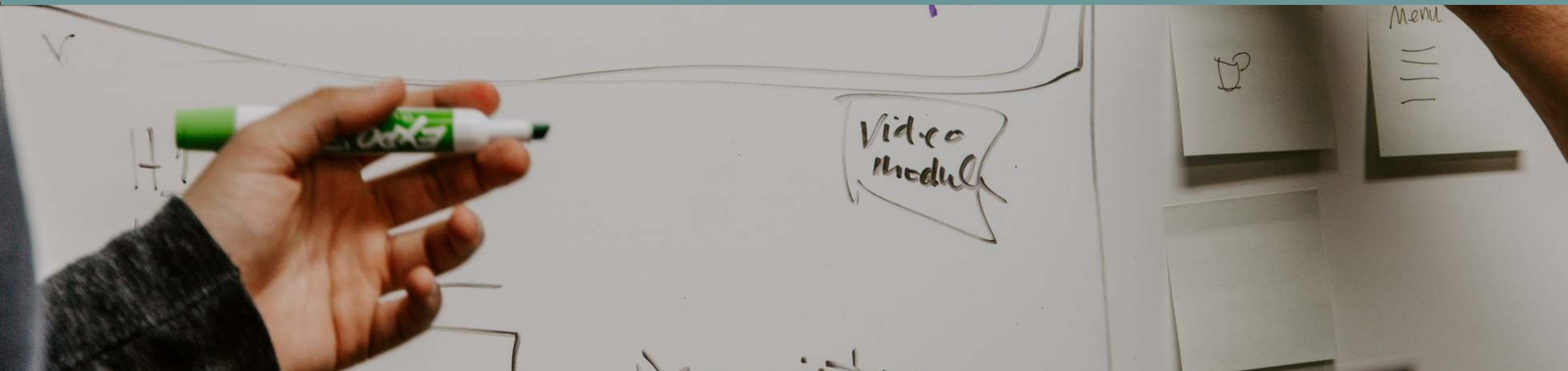
A microscopic image of tissue, likely stained with hematoxylin and eosin (H&E), showing numerous cells with prominent nuclei. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

What was once a one-to-many strategy has been overtaken by the many-to-many approach.





# Our Synthesis and Recommendations





# The Waterfall Strategy

The Dominant, Late 20th Century "Messaging" Strategy of Most Organizations



**Source**

The origin of messaging, where key messages are created and strategy is defined by internal experts



**Stream**

The structured and intentional distribution of information through the organization, affiliates and external partners.



**Cascade**

The step-by-step delivery of messages for larger reach and consistent frequency through paid or earned media.



# The Rainfall Strategy

The Challenger Strategy Disrupting Society and Established Practices



## Amass

Build a broad, loosely connected network of individuals who share a common interest but may not interact frequently.

These diverse connections help ideas gather momentum, much like water vapor forming clouds.



## Infuse

Introduce compelling, thought-provoking content into the community to encourage discussion and engagement.

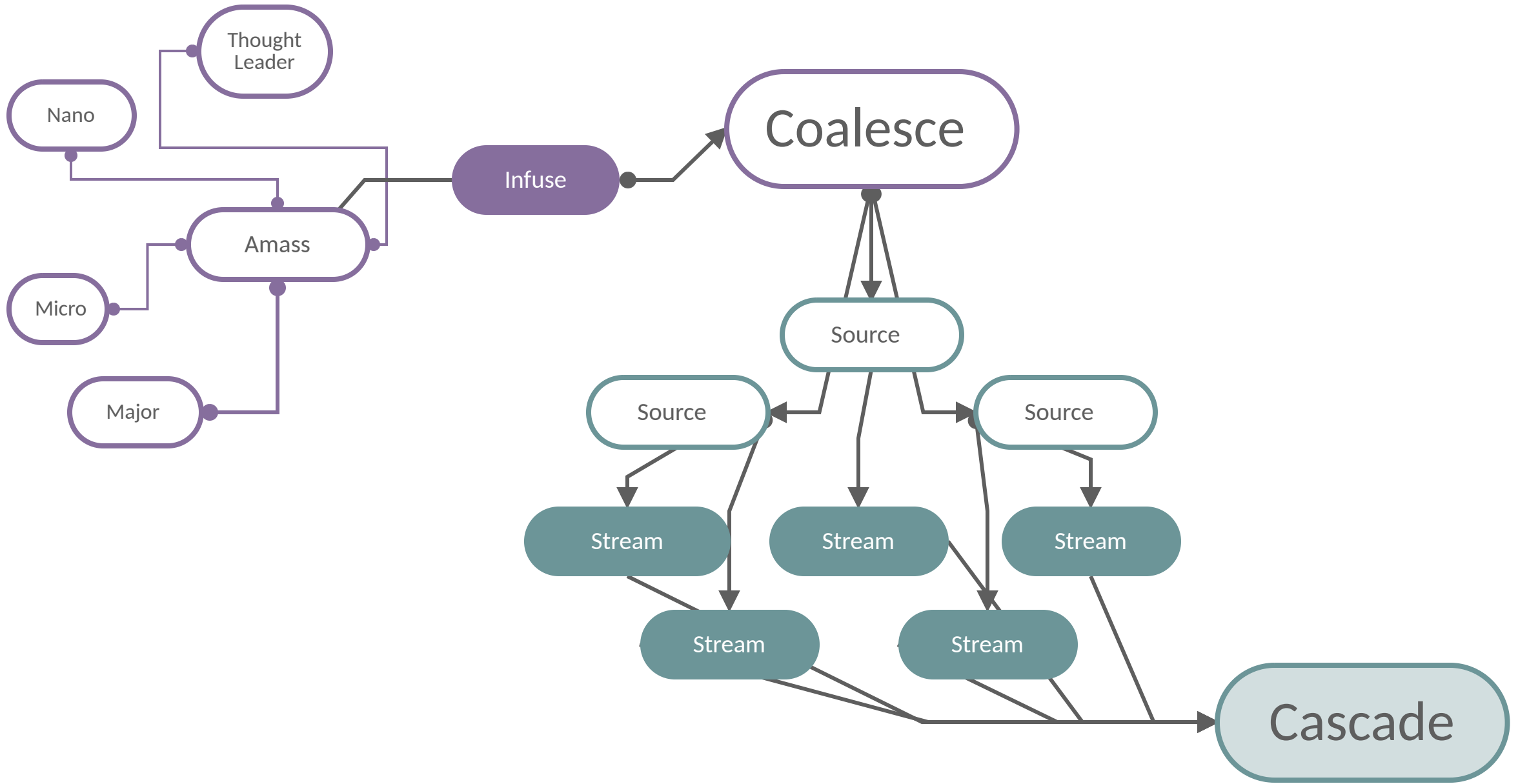
These "seeds" act as condensation nuclei, triggering the formation of meaningful conversations and generating potential idea formation.



## Coalesce

Facilitate deeper engagement and collaboration by nurturing discussions, providing resources, and guiding interactions so ideas solidify into actionable outcomes—just as raindrops grow before they fall.









Organizations born before social media USE the Waterfall Strategy.







Post-social organizations or movements  
ARE the Rainfall Strategy.







Amassing the cloud is more important  
than managing the cascade.

This is the exact opposite of how most organizations invest.



The traditional Waterfall will continue to lose impact because the research demonstrates that the decline of general to general is increasing drastically.



# How To's - BETA







# How To's - BETA

Available with Download



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[strikesthroughinnovation.substack.com](http://strikesthroughinnovation.substack.com)

Full Presentation under Frameworks



Contemporary communication through platforms is using a “**rainfall**” approach:

1. Build a cloud or platform where people interact and contribute
2. Seed the cloud with your messaging or content
3. Users produce/repurpose/personalize the information
4. The more singular the content is, the more attention it receives and the network reinforces the power of its popularity.
5. The more “drops” you have in platforms, the greater the eventual flow in legacy media.

# How to Form a Cloud

## 1. Create a Shared Purpose or Interest

Define a common theme, topic, or interest to attract like-minded individuals.

## 2. Host Virtual and In-Person Events

Casual events like meetups, webinars, or workshops encourage participation without the expectation of long-term commitment.

## 3. Content Sharing and Asynchronous Participation

Share curated content like newsletters, blogs, or podcasts to keep people engaged without needing constant real-time interaction.

## 4. Offer Open Collaboration Opportunities

Initiate collaborative projects where people can join in as their schedule allows.

## 5. Provide Value Without Expectation

Focus on helping members by sharing resources, job opportunities, or educational content.

## 6. Low-Maintenance Membership Options

Allow people to join and leave without friction, fostering a guilt-free, casual engagement environment.

Avoid formal membership structures or mandatory participation.

# Seeding a Cloud

## 1. Curate Foundational Content

Share essential resources that define the group's focus (e.g., research papers, key articles, or thought leadership pieces) from JJF.

## 2. Introduce Thought-Starters

Pose open-ended questions or challenges that invite diverse perspectives on platforms and lists.

## 3. Use Storytelling to Set the Stage

Share personal stories or case studies that resonate with the group's interest.

## 4. Publish Initial Frameworks

Share drafts of frameworks, roadmaps, or toolkits that can evolve over time and explicitly invite feedback and co-creation from the community.

## 5. Highlight Emerging Trends and Signals

Seed discussions by identifying trends, weak signals, or recent developments in the field.

## 6. Develop Resource Repositories

Create shared documents or wikis where people can deposit and categorize information.

## 7. Seed Key Connectors and Influencers

Invite a few well-connected, thoughtful people to start discussions and set the tone.



# Supporting Drop Formation

## 1. **Launch a Challenge**

Initiate challenges that encourage users to reinterpret or expand upon your information, fostering creativity and diverse perspectives.

## 2. **Develop Meaningful Markers**

Create hashtags and graphics related to your content and encourage users to use it when sharing their creations.

## 3. **Feature User Contributions**

Showcase user-generated content on your platforms, giving credit to creators. This recognition can motivate others to contribute.

## 4. **Solicit Feedback and Ideas**

Invite your audience to provide feedback and suggest ideas, making them feel valued and more likely to contribute content

## 5. **Feature User Contributions**

Showcase user-generated content on your platforms, giving credit to creators. This recognition can motivate others to contribute.

## 6. **Leverage Influencer Partnerships**

Partner with influencers to encourage their followers to engage with your content, adding their perspectives and creations.

# Workshop to Create Influencers

There is an opportunity for JJF to help people have more impact in the media space.

By holding workshops or asynchronous training for social media personalities, you can build new influencers who are already part of your cloud.

This simultaneously helps the individual with new skills while creating new “nano-influencers” to promote JJF initiatives.



# Measuring Rainfall

Waterfall strategy has easily acquired metrics like reach and frequency which allows to communicate results and understand impact.

Rainfall strategy should be understood largely by ***adoption***.

JJF should be looking at growth of the network, frequency of mentions, diversity of membership and activity like shares and content production.

For more rigorous measurement, a network analysis could be conducted on a yearly basis.

# The Rain Gauge

There are three fairly simple formulae to use for understanding early impact:

1. Adoption Rate
2. Virality Rate
3. K-Factor

Note: these require gathering data from each platform or the use of a third party tool like Brand24, Keyhole, or Hashtagify).

Can be captured on any time frame - daily, weekly, monthly, yearly.



# 1. Adoption Rate

$$\frac{\text{New Users/Followers}}{\text{Target Audience Goal}} \times 100$$

Example: Goal is 1,000 people.  
Gain 60 new followers per week.  
That is 6% adoption rate.

# 2. Virality Rate

$$\frac{\text{Shares + Comments + Likes}}{\text{Impressions}} \times 100$$

Example: People had 30 responses to a piece of content.

The content was displayed 1,000 times.

That is 3% Virality Rate.





# 3. K-Factor

$$K = i \times c$$

$i$  = Average number of invites or shares each user generates.

$c$  = Conversion rate, or the percentage of invitees who become new users or engage with your content.

Example: A user shares content with 10 friends and 20% the friends engage with the content, then its  $10 \times .02$ , which gives a K-factor of 2. This would be an outstanding outcome.

A K factor or 1 means strong to exponential growth. Less than 1 means it did not resonate.



If you are determining whether or not to give a grant for an asynchronous or virtual activity, you inquire about these measurements.  
You can inquire about their history or back them into expectations.  
If the grantee is not familiar with them, you can choose to educate them or create new conditions for the funding.



# The Interest Graph



Individuals who are good at the Interest Graph:

- 1 **Ability** : originality and personality
- 2 **Agility** : move quickly on emerging trends
- 3 **Acuity** : skilled at digital content creation
- 4 **Acknowledge** : interact with their followers
- 5 **Unashamed** : keeping attention is more important than other considerations

This is the formula for becoming an Influencer.





The sticky part for institutions:

Being “unashamed” is very difficult because they largely operate in the mass media waterfall environment.

You must be niche or novel to stand out.

Also, you're only as good as your last piece of content.



# Links to lit review outputs

- The [literature review](#) document
- The [full deck](#) and the [condensed version](#) of top line findings
- Project [Insights](#)
- Case study: In 2022, the FDA published a [playbook](#) on how to prepare for, vet, and measure the effectiveness of influencer campaigns for health- and behavior-related issues in the United States.
- [Annotated Bibliography](#) with sources and top line findings

