



# From Online to IRL: How to Organise an Event for Social Influencers

SEO can seem like a contradiction at times: we rely on personal connections to respond to our outreach emails, post our shared content and get us the links we need, yet we rarely *connect* with the people behind the many emails face to face.

Having a positive experience with a social influencer in real life can actually help you online, whether it's growing your brand identity, increasing your social followers or generating hype for your product.

A great way to establish lasting and mutually beneficial relationships for your brand with online influencers is by hosting an event. It demonstrates your professional expertise, it reinforces your commitment to sharing knowledge with the online community and it contextualises the work you do within an audience.

Recently, Tug hosted an evening of marketing presentations and networking for online influencers in the fashion community. We wanted to equip them with the necessary SEO and social media skills to improve their blog, and we also wanted to make partnerships that we could contact for future campaigns with our clients.

I want to take you through our process, from the beginning concept to the outcomes, to highlight the benefits of organising a similar event for your agency.

## BEHIND THE SCENES: THE CONCEPT

Before starting any of the prep work, you need to have a clear goal of what you want to get out of this event. In our case, we wanted:

- To position Tug as experts in digital marketing and increase our brand awareness
- To establish lasting relationships with prominent online influencers so they will respond positively when outreached by Tug

It's important to keep these guidelines in mind as you continue planning: you don't want to get so caught up in the little details that you lose sight of your original vision.

## FIND YOUR NICHE...

Now that you have your objectives set, you need to think about the best way to achieve them. In other words, find your niche and use it to your advantage: what can your company or agency do for online influencers? Why should they show up to your event?

Since we wanted to demonstrate Tug's authority in digital marketing, SEO and social media marketing was (is) our niche, and we emphasized how our insights would help bloggers develop their site.

### **...AND USE IT TO ATTRACT AN AUDIENCE**

Connecting with social influencers is about creating a sense of community: yes, you want them to interact with your brand/company/agency, but you also want them to interact with each other. It's important to pick a specific audience so you can tailor the event to their interests.

*TIP: Twitter is a great way to tap into your audience. Use a tool like Followerwonk to sort users by location and bio, and find the ideal people to invite.*

For our event, we decided to target London-based fashion bloggers. Here is an example of an invitation email:

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

Hope you are well. I wanted to make you aware of an upcoming free event that I think you might be interested in.

On 19<sup>th</sup> Feb at 6:30 PM, Tug will host a free event for fashion, beauty and lifestyle bloggers. As an agency who works with influential UK brands like House of Fraser, Barbour and Harrod's, we want to share all our knowledge with bloggers looking to grow their online presence.

Attached is your formal invite which has RSVP details and you can read our blog post with more information on the event. **Please note:** we have some amazing one-on-one site audits for you to get some personalised advice for your blog from our Head of SEO and SEO Director. These spaces are limited and the slots will go on a first-come-first-serve basis. If you are interested, please RSVP with your blog URL and 2-3 questions you'd like answered during your session so our team can prepare accordingly.

This promises to be an incredible evening: with talks on hot SEO topics from some of our in-house specialists – including our Social Media Director and many of our SEO executives, free one-on-one audits and a fantastic rooftop penthouse to network over drinks and nibbles, it would be criminal to miss out on this free event.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Kind regards,

No one is going to want to read a lengthy email, especially not bloggers, many of whom juggle a full-time job in addition to their site, so keep your invite short and sweet.

*Tip: Publish a post on your company blog or write a press release in conjunction with your event. It will draw attention to your brand and help make the event more official.*

With our email, we attached a personalised invite:



#### **DEVELOP YOUR THEME**

Based on your intended audience, think of a common theme to tie the event together. For our fashion blogger event, we chose 'style':



# #TUGTALKS

But whatever your theme, whoever your audience is: think about presentation. What do you want your appearance to say about your agency? Since we wanted to keep to our theme of 'stylish SEO', we served champagne,

Bloggers, social influencers and other media figures love to take photos, so give them opportunities to do so.

## CREATE YOUR CONTENT

Every event will be different, because every event has different goals. However, in any situation you should try to find a balance between learning and socialising. Give your audience something to take away, and show them a good time.

We created Stylish SEO as a two-part event: a balance between learning and socialising. The first half featured presentations from our team members on various aspects of SEO and social media, and the second half was a relaxed networking session over drinks and nibbles.

*Tip: When giving presentations, keep them very specific. Speaking for 10 minutes on a niche aspect of your field (for example: how to create a content calendar) will be more useful than a general overview. Give them actionable points rather than theory.*

One of our attendees, Manita Rughwani of The Rebirth of Fashion ([www.therebirthoffashion.net](http://www.therebirthoffashion.net)), posted about our event:

Recently, I was at an SEO event that **Tug Agency** held for bloggers. It was such a good experience as I got to learn from experts in the field about their tips on having a worthwhile social media presence and building a following.



Can you spot me? I look half-asleep but I promise I was engaged!

It was so interesting to me that I took away something that everyone (including myself) is missing out on: social media = SOCIAL interaction. It works best when people talk to each other and tap into people's personal lives instead of sharing boring information on their brand or merely tweeting a blog post/new product and hoping somebody reads or buys it. I thought I would mention the event as it has really got me thinking about the power of social media, especially in light of #TheDress frenzy.

For full post, click [here](#)

Not only does her post include a link back to our agency for all her readers to potentially see, it picks up on this blend of learning and socialising: 'social media = SOCIAL interaction.' So make sure that you leave enough time for chit-chat!

## HAVE A SOCIAL STRATEGY

One of the most important aspects of an event for online influencers is planning your social media strategy. For our event, we wanted attendees to engage with us on Twitter, so we crafted a three-tiered approach:

### 1) Create a hashtag

Hashtags are a great way to measure the social impact of your event. For example, we used #TugTalks - something short and easy to remember - and we encouraged guests to use that when tweeting us before, during and after Stylish SEO.

## 2) Engage early

We tweeted at all guests who RSVP'd attending a few days before the event to generate buzz and build up an awareness for #TugTalks. Here are a few examples:



*Tip: include something personal: although it's more time-consuming to look through the person's blog, find something to comment on and craft the tweet, it increases engagement even before the event and demonstrates your attention to detail.*

This chart below shows the impact of the #TugTalks:



As you can see, there are two main peaks in engagement (182 tweets, 392,648 timeline deliveries). The bigger spike is the event itself, but the peaks prior to that come as a result of engaging with attendees before the event.

## 3) Give incentives

In addition to interacting with attendees before the event, give your guests good reasons to tweet with your hashtag. We offered our guests prizes, and chose one winner at random of every #TugTalks tweet.

Another way to encourage social interaction is by turning Twitter into a Q&A platform. Instead of answering questions in person, tell your guests to tweet their questions using your hashtag. This will not only boost social engagement, it will prevent your event from running too long.

### **IN SUMMARY**

The three key things you need to remember before you plan your next event:

- 1) Establish your goals – what do you want out of this event? What do you want people to take away from this event?
- 2) Find your niche – market your strengths and use them to entice an audience.
- 3) Create a social media strategy to increase engagement

----- Ends -----

### **THE TUG LIGHTHOUSE**

Tug is an award-winning, search marketing agency, and the Lighthouse is our new knowledge sharing hub. The purpose of The Lighthouse is to guide and enlighten our fellow Search, PPC, Social Media, Display and Affiliate marketing professionals. As the online marketing field evolves, we aim not only to keep up, but stay ahead in our thinking, and share knowledge with one another. Our collection of white papers provides up-to-date insights in an easy-to-digest format. Founded in 2006, Tug is an original silicon roundabout company that breaks the mould by taking a left-brain-right-brain approach to digital marketing. Our bespoke programme builds brand awareness, new media opportunities, strong ROI and business growth for clients like Aon, Wonderbra and Dairy Crest. Tug's combination of robust planning and execution with creativity has earned us seats on the IAB and DMA search councils.

[www.tugagency.com](http://www.tugagency.com)

For more information please contact James Cragg  
[james.cragg@tugagency.com](mailto:james.cragg@tugagency.com) or 0207 033 6933