# The rise of petfluencers: how animals are changing marketing strategies



In a notable shift in marketing strategies, the rise of "petfluencers" – animals with substantial followings on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok – is drawing increasing attention from brands looking to enhance their consumer engagement. Research indicates that endorsements from these animals can significantly impact consumer responses, proving more effective than their human counterparts in various advertising scenarios.

The findings emerged from a study where researchers compared the effectiveness of animal influencers against human endorsers in fictional advertising campaigns, including products like wine and peanut butter. The results demonstrated that advertisements featuring pet influencers garnered higher consumer approval, particularly when the messages aligned with themes of immediate pleasure and satisfaction.

According to Dr Laura Lavertu, a lead researcher and lecturer in Marketing at the University of Strathclyde, the growing trend showcases unique advantages petfluencers hold over human social media influencers. “Petfluencers offer distinct advantages compared to human SMIs,” she stated. “While the persuasiveness of human influencers often stems from their relatability or aspirational appeal, petfluencers are seen as more genuine and sincere. Because they are pets, they have no hidden agenda. They don’t come with the baggage or scandals that sometimes follow human influencers, which makes them seem more trustworthy.”

This perspective aligns with recent data highlighting that UK pet owners spend approximately £8 billion annually on their animals, a market that is increasingly being targeted by advertising agencies leveraging the popularity of pet influencers.

In the course of the study, researchers noted that the perception of authenticity is markedly different between human and animal endorsements. While audiences tend to view frequent sponsored posts from human influencers with skepticism, pet endorsements are perceived as sincere, thereby fostering consumer trust.

The phenomenon has given rise to a number of popular pet influencers, with notable examples such as Nala the Cat, who boasts a following of 4.5 million and endorses a range of products from cat food to mobile games, and has reportedly generated a fortune exceeding £80 million.

These developments reflect a broader trend in marketing strategies, where brands are increasingly recognising the value of captivating the audience through the charm and sincerity of pet influencers, reshaping the landscape of consumer-brand interactions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/42092> - This research explores the effectiveness of pet endorsements in digital marketing, highlighting that pet influencers can be more effective than human influencers due to their perceived sincerity and authenticity.
* <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00218499.2025.2463707> - The article supports the idea that petfluencers offer a unique form of endorsement, with their sincerity making them appealing for brand advocacy.
* <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/mar.22000> - Influencer marketing, including pet influencers, has become a powerful tool for brands to engage with audiences, leveraging the charm and sincerity of animals in advertising.
* <https://www.statista.com/topics/6403/pet-ownership-in-the-united-kingdom-uk/> - Pet owners in the UK spend significantly on their pets, making them a lucrative market for brands to target through pet influencers.
* <https://www.petmarketresearch.com/> - Research on pet marketing indicates that leveraging pet influencers aligns well with the growing pet care market, fostering consumer engagement through both charm and authenticity.