

The Influencer Campaign Pre-Flight Check

Six things to verify before a single creator posts — from Sherri Langburt, founder of BabbleBoxx, on the Unscripted Small Business podcast with Jeremy Rivera.

THE PLAY — ONE LINE

Walk your own campaign the way the creator will — criteria, inventory, geos, landing pages, promo, and the search result — before anybody posts. Every point of friction the influencer hits is a point of friction your customer is about to hit.

Why this matters

In Sherri's words: *"The brand says, it's available in these 10 stores in this geo. And the influencers are... going from place to place to place. And if it's happening to the influencer, it's happening to the consumer."* The creators you paid are your first cohort of real customers. They hit the broken link, the empty shelf, the discount code that does not exist — a week before your paying customers do, and while you can still fix it.

THE FAILURE CASE — TOLD BY HOST JEREMY RIVERA

A speaker at MozCon described a brand that *"hired... a dozen influencers to promote these pink pants. The problem was that the e-commerce site wasn't ready and they ran out of pink pants in the first 10 minutes. And so Google delisted their e-commerce listing and popped up their competitors because they were out of stock."* A multi-million-dollar campaign handed a slice of its own demand to the competition — not because the creators failed, but because nobody pre-flighted the store.

12

creators already live
when the site broke

10 min

how long the
inventory lasted

10

stores in a geo claim
nobody had verified

6

checks that would
have caught it

When to run it

Once per campaign, in the window between **signing the creators** and **the first post going live** — ideally 5–7 days out, while inventory, pages and promo codes can still be changed. Re-run steps 3, 4 and 6 the morning of launch. This is not a quarterly audit; it is a checklist you complete and date, once, before you let go of the rope.

WHAT YOU NEED IN HAND BEFORE YOU START

The creator brief (every claim, code and URL it tells creators to say) · **Store-level inventory** for every geo named in that brief · **The promo calendar** and the **product rollout calendar** · **A phone**, because that is what the customer will use · **One named owner** who signs off that all six checks passed.

The Six Checks

1 Name your criteria before you name a creator

Decide what this campaign is actually for — sales, ratings and reviews, or awareness. Each one implies a different creator and a different measurement. Do not let “it went well” be defined after the fact.

“I think the first thing is really realizing your criteria and understanding what your criteria are.”

2 Match the creator to the purchase, then ask for the sales data

Some creators are awareness and top-of-funnel and will never move a unit. If the sale is your metric, ask for trackable sales data before you sign — high-consideration purchases need a different creator than impulse buys.

“Selling a pool is a lot harder than selling mascara.”

3 Verify inventory and geos store by store

Pull real, store-level stock for every location named in the brief. If a creator drives to three stores and finds nothing, that is exactly what your customer is about to do.

“So understanding where your inventory is based... making sure that the geos are correct.”

4 Open every landing page in the brief yourself

Click each URL as the consumer, on mobile. Confirm the page exists, is in stock, and says the same thing the creator is about to say. One dead or off-message page silently converts paid reach into a bounce.

“Making sure that all of your landing pages are correct.”

5 Make the promo identical everywhere

The discount the creator announces must be the discount the consumer finds — on site, in store, in email, in the app. A promo that exists only in the brief reads to the customer as a bait and switch.

“The influencers are here talking about this and there’s a discount, and then consumers go somewhere else and there’s no discount.”

6 Get the internal teams in one room — and check the search result

Line the product rollout calendar, the promo calendar and the creator brief up against each other so they cannot contradict. Then search the product the way a viewer will: social gives no hard URLs, so people Google the thing the creator was wearing. Your organic result is the silent dependency of the whole campaign.

“Any groups that need to be talking to each other are talking to each other to make sure it’s all cohesive.”

Run it on your next campaign

Campaign / product: _____

Primary criterion (sales · reviews · awareness): _____

Launch date — pre-flight completed by: _____

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|---|---|
| ☐ Criteria written down and agreed | ☐ Creator matched to the purchase type |
| ☐ Trackable sales data requested | ☐ Store-level inventory confirmed |
| ☐ Every geo in the brief verified | ☐ Every landing page opened on mobile |
| ☐ Promo identical across all channels | ☐ Product, promo & brief calendars aligned |
| ☐ Organic search result checked & in stock | ☐ Restock / sold-out plan in place |