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Canopy by Hilton introduces itself by showcasing local culture via social influencers

By Alex Samuely

Hilton Worldwide's Canopy by Hilton subsidiary is ramping up brand awareness by unrolling a three-month social media campaign that showcases local tastemakers' food, art and designs on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook in locations that will soon become home to new properties, displaying the potency of social influencers.

The Canopy by You campaign will run for three months, and will reinforce the hotel marketer's commitment to curating neighborhood experiences and highlighting the plentiful local culturally inspired activities that guests can enjoy. An influx of brands has been tapping social media influencers, known as individuals who have large followings on social networks, to increase their consumer outreach and reach more on-the-go mobile users.

"It can be very beneficial to use social media influencers to promote a new hospitality brand but it has to be done with consideration of who those influencers are," said Nadine Spuls, director of business development at [Atimi](#), Vancouver, Canada. "Best results are achieved when a company connects with influencers who are aligned with the brand's social messaging.

"By choosing influencers that believe in and promote similar values and community awareness they will be able to authentically speak about the brand while being a trusted representative. Social media influencers who have very large numbers of followers have the ability to lift up and promote a brand in a more organic way than most traditional advertising can achieve."

Storytelling on mobile

Hilton is essentially pushing storytelling via social media, thanks to its Canopy Guest Enthusiasts. These individuals will leverage mobile to tell neighborhood stories while exploring three of Canopy's upcoming property destinations, all of which are culturally rich locations.

The influencers are encouraged to interact with fans on social media, as well as locals, using the brand's channels. In turn, visitors or residents are asked to also upload their city or town's hidden gems.



Users can catch a glimpse of neighborhood hotspots on Instagram

Uploaded posts may inspire Canopy by Hilton’s hotel offerings, including featured art, welcome gifts, designs, fitness options and food and drink outlets.

The campaign is beginning in the North Bethesda suburb of Washington D.C., to be followed by areas in Portland and Indianapolis. The first Canopy hotel is slated to open in early 2016.

Social media influencers

Holly Thomas, a design editor at creative agency Design Army, is set to be one of North Bethesda’s Canopy Guest Enthusiast on social media. Photographer Kate Warren of Go Kate Shoot will also be adding complementary photos and posts to the Canopy by Hilton social channels, with two new pairs of influencers taking over in Indianapolis and Portland.

Consumers interested in following along with the influencers’ documentations may follow Canopy by Hilton on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Photos will be uploaded via the #CanopybyYou hashtag.

Pinning enthusiasts can visit the brand’s Pinterest page at @canopybyhilton.



Canopy by Hilton is gaining fans by interacting with social media users

More hotel brands are leveraging social media influencers to offer consumers a unique view of cultures and locales in which they have properties. This past December, Marriott International introduced a branded Snapchat programming campaign in conjunction with popular content creators to augment awareness, making it the first hospitality brand to use the social media application as the center of an advertising campaign.

Retailers and manufacturers are also getting in on the social media action.

A Schick executive at the 2015 Mobile Marketing Association Forum New York affirmed that tapping social media influencers on YouTube catapults the effectiveness and reach of mobile video advertising, provided that the influencers are allowed creativity to expand on the brand's message.

"Consumers today have a lower response rate to traditional advertising, peer referrals are a growing trend in purchasing patterns," Ms. Spuls said. "Tapping into the influence of popular social media personalities can be an excellent way to connect local and likeminded consumers that will showcase the local culture through the online community."