

Under The Influencer

Tech entrepreneur **DR RAVI SINGH** discusses digital disruption, the future of influencer marketing and what's up with #University...

By REILLY SULLIVAN

Dr Ravi Singh knows a thing or two about digital innovation. A Chicago native, Singh founded the ground-breaking marketing firm ElectionMall in the US back in 2000 at the dawn of the digital age. The company specialises in building an online presence for political parties and has been involved in countless successful elections on both sides of the aisle, including in Australia.

"I had the great privilege of coming to Australia and participating in one of the elections, where I helped a political party

create influence as part of their campaign group," he says while artfully declining to name which party utilised his services. It is public knowledge that the so-called "guru" of digital marketing has worked for the likes of the Fine Gael party in Ireland, Brazilian Presidential hopeful Jose Serra and Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos, among others.

Part of Singh's savvy was being an early adopter of online political ads on search engines like Google, which is now standard practice whether you're running for city council or president of the free world.

Before long, the likes of Microsoft sat up and granted Singh sponsorship funds to co-create the first cloud based political software, Campaign Cloud. Now, Singh has decided to take his knack for streamlining e-commerce, marketing, social media and online influence with the new higher learning institution #University, a world-first online school for influencers.

"We started #University to address a significant pain point in the industry," he explains. "Many young people learn about social media and influencer marketing

through trial and error, often by observing others. While this approach can lead to success, it lacks a structured and disciplined format to access comprehensive and accurate information. As solo entrepreneurs, they must handle everything themselves, from contracts and invoicing to negotiations, content creation and staying updated with social media trends, and they need to master various skills to succeed."

The genesis of #University came after Singh, who holds a PhD in social media and technology from Ashford University,

noticed no major universities were offering comprehensive courses dedicated to online influencing. The program also utilises a region-specific approach, so students are using strategies tailored to them whether in Sydney or Singapore. "Influence varies greatly across regions – being an influencer in Indonesia is different from being one in India, Spain, or the United States," he explains. "We aim to incorporate best practices from around the world, recognising that culture, customs and country are crucial factors that affect influencer marketing."

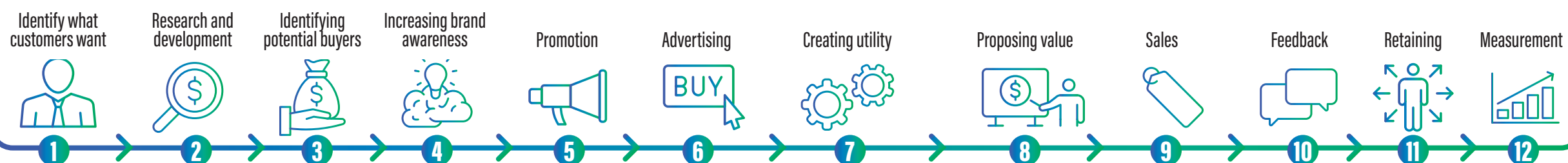
To celebrate its launch, #University is awarding 50 full scholarships – totalling \$500,000 – to promising influencers across the standards. This initiative underscores Singh's commitment to elevating influencer marketing standards and empowering individuals with the tools to turn their passion into a career. While social media platforms continue to rise and fall, Singh believes the principles of influencer marketing will remain integral in the coming decades.

"Influencer marketing is here to stay, and it is essential for us to build strong ties, relationships and collaborations," he adds. "At #University, we are committed to providing the education and support needed to help aspiring influencers succeed ethically and effectively." ■

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For more info on #University go to www.hashtaginfluencer.university