



How to Work With Influencers (Without Wasting Your Money)

*A guide for STRs and
boutique hotels.*

The Weber CO.

Hey there, I'm Steph

My branding agency was created out of a need I saw as an influencer.

Before I was building brands and micro resorts, I was on the other side of the partnership—pitching, creating, and delivering content as an influencer in the fashion, beauty, and travel space. I worked with brands to bring their products and experiences to life in a way that felt natural, engaging, and worth paying attention to, not just another post in the feed (and reels weren't even a thing yet...)

That experience is exactly what shapes how I approach influencer marketing today. I understand what makes a collaboration feel effortless versus forced, what influencers actually need to do their best work, and what brands should be asking for (but often don't). I've seen firsthand how the right partnership can build trust, drive real revenue, and create content that continues working long after it's posted—and I've also seen where things fall flat.

Now, I bring both perspectives together—helping short-term rental owners and boutique hospitality brands create influencer strategies that are rooted in storytelling, backed by data, and designed to turn content into bookings.



Let's Bust Some Myths

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You've probably heard influencers don't drive bookings. Or that giving away free stays never pays off. Here's the truth:

NOT TRUE:

- "Influencers only want free vacations."
- "You have to spend thousands to see results."
- "No one books from Instagram anymore."
- "You can't track ROI from influencer posts."

ACTUALLY TRUE:

- Influencer marketing is a strategic tool, not a gamble.
- With the right match and backend setup (email funnels, website, and social), it drives long-term ROI.
- People plan trips over time—bookings may come 30, 60, or even 90 days later.
- Engagement, content usage, and follower growth are also valuable KPIs.



The Influencer Marketing Blueprint

STEP 1: KNOW YOUR BRAND + BUDGET

Before you reach out to creators:

- Get clear on your ideal guest, branded experience (beyond your amenities), and location draw.
- Know what stories you want told (family retreat, pet-friendly, wellness stay, etc.).
- Create a simple 1–2 page PDF with:
 - Property highlights
 - Amenities
 - Brand values + talking points
 - Website + Instagram links
 - Ideal guest snapshot

This makes pitching and onboarding easier.

Set a realistic budget. If you're asking someone to create content that helps you earn revenue, it's marketing and it should be treated (and budgeted) that way.





STEP 2: Sourcing the Right Influencers

Search Instagram with relevant keywords:

- “Nashville travel blogger”
- “Dog creator Florida”
- “Family content creator Tennessee”
- “Weekend trip influencer Kentucky”

Then vet them:

- Are their followers your ideal guests?
- Are comments real and authentic?
- Do they get shares and saves, not just likes?

Look at:

- Quality of storytelling
- Video/picture quality
- Audience location



STEP 3: Pitch + Negotiate Like a Pro

When you reach out:

- Be clear on what you're offering (typically a hosted stay including cleaning fee)
- Be clear on what you're asking for (example: 1 Reel, 3 Stories, link + code, raw content if needed)

You can ask for:

- Media kit
- Sample posts from past stays
- Engagement stats

Pro tip: Only pay in full once deliverables are completed. Or do 50% upfront, 50% on delivery. Always have a signed agreement in place.



Deliverables That Drive Value

Ask for (at minimum):

- 1 Instagram Reel (can be a giveaway or stay highlight)
- 3–5 stories with swipe-up link and code
- Use of trackable promo code (ex: ZEPHYR15) and UTM code to track web traffic
- Optional: Raw content files or usage rights (paid)

Timeline: Deliverables due within 7 days of their stay.



What to Track + Why It Matters

Your ROI goes beyond bookings:

- New followers (who are they?)
- Comments, DMs, shares, saves (interest and intent)
- Website traffic (have a great landing page! and/or UTM code)
- Email subscribers (offer something in exchange!)
- Bookings (especially within 30–60 days)

Pro tip: DM new followers with a "thanks for following!" message and special code (can be automated in ManyChat)





Real Results We've Seen

- A one-night giveaway led to a 14-night booking.
- One brand grew 340% followers in 30 days after hosting 3 influencers.
- Another got \$22,000+ in direct bookings after working with influencers.
- 0 to 45% direct bookings happened for another brand
- Email list growth = better off-season marketing.
- Pro-quality content = months of use across socials and emails.



Final Thoughts

Influencer marketing is one of the most powerful tools to grow your brand when done right. Know your story. Know your audience. Track your numbers. And most importantly, treat it like the strategic marketing channel it is.

Want help creating your influencer strategy or setting up your backend to convert traffic into bookings?

Book a call >>



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