

Bella Clark and Thuy Le: To Be Authentic or To Send a Birkin?

Taylor Rodriguez:

You're listening to the Fast Traack Podcast. Hear the stories, strategies, and insights for the change makers of the creator industry. I'm Taylor Rodriguez, global head of customer success at Traackr, and I'm back with another great episode of the Fast Traack.

A few months ago, Traackr hosted its IMPACT conference in London, talking about the importance of brand and creator relationships. A few of the speakers at the event included Bella Clark, head of influencer partnerships at Lipton, and content creator Thuy Le. Now, both of these ladies were such powerful speakers that we wanted to continue the conversation on the Fast Traack.

Naturally, a large part of the conversation surrounds what makes an engaging creator event. From Bella, you'll learn about the process of creating innovative activations like getting Paris Hilton to DJ an event. From Thuy, you'll learn what creators actually want when coming to a brand event. Hint, it revolves around connection and authenticity. With that, I hope you enjoy this episode as much as I enjoyed recording it.

Thank you both for coming on the Fast Traack Podcast. We're delighted to have you on the Fast Traack and to continue some of the conversations that we started at IMPACT London. Before we get into that, I'd love to understand your journey on how you got to where you are today. Bella, let's start with you. Can you share a little bit about your journey of becoming the head of influencer and partnerships at Lipton? Rumor has it that you've moonlighted as Vanessa Hudgens on a shoot earlier on in your career.

Bella Clark:

Yes. That is true. Hi, everyone. I'm Bella Clark. I'm currently the head of influencer and partnerships at Lipton Teas and Infusions. As Taylor mentioned, my career has been a roller coaster, to say the least. I started my career in New York actually at a tech startup.

I was doing, let's say wearing every hat within influencer, PR, and events, and it was for really high-end concierge service. We did private events for our members. We once did a Coachella event where we had a house and we did the whole shebang, and we had hired Vanessa Hudgens to be in our show reel.

We had Shay Mitchell, we had Vanessa Hudgens, we had Ellie Goulding, Rita Ora, all these really awesome stars and of course, amazing influencer celebrities. Vanessa Hudgens was going to be in this show reel that we were making for the company, and we were in the desert.

Imagine at Coachella, you're in the desert, and we had rented this really cool convertible that was in this teal blue. The shot was meant to be her driving in this convertible in the desert, going to Coachella, hair in the wind, and the car broke down in the middle of the desert. Hours of filming and whatnot, and eventually she had to leave set and we didn't get the shot.

When the car finally started working, my CEO was like, "Bella, you kind of look like Vanessa Hudgens. You got the dark hair. You got it going. Let's get you in that car. We're just going to do the back of your head so you just see the hair." That takes me to me being a stunt double for Vanessa Hudgens.

Taylor Rodriguez:

That's amazing. I need to see this photo.

Bella Clark:

I need to get ahold of the show reel. That was the start of my career, let's say. I started really high on a high note and then throughout my career I moved to agency, actually. I was at an agency in New York working for Broadway musicals, which is totally different, and started to enter the beauty world there as well.

Then I moved to Amsterdam six years ago. I'm originally from Texas, but been here for six years now. I started my career here at Coty, so working for Rimmel, which Thuy has also worked on Rimmel before with us in the UK. Prior to that I had done consulting work for a number of brands in Amsterdam, one of them being Bloomeffects, which is this beauty brand that's based off of tulips.

It's made of natural ingredients, made of tulips. Thuy also was one of the amazing talent that we flew over for our first ever influencer event where we took all the influencers to the tulip fields here, which was just such a magical experience. So beautiful.

Thuy Le:

So beautiful.

Bella Clark:

Yeah. I was at Rimmel for a while heading up also influencer and partnerships there with all the beauty creators. I was on a global side of things, so doing all the strategy work, and then moved over to Lipton almost a year ago now. Heading up also the global side of things, so really focusing on strategy of influencer and partnerships for over 80 markets.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Incredible. What a fun story. I love it. Now, Thuy, let's turn it over to you. We want to hear your full story about how you've become a massive content creator. Can you tell us just a little bit

about how you started to become a professional makeup artist and how you've landed major deals like the NYX brand partnership? Our audience needs to know how you came to your massive stardom.

Thuy Le:

Oh, my God. Well, firstly, I just have to say thank you so much for having me on this podcast. It's my first ever podcast, so I'm so honored to be here. But honestly, I feel like whenever I watch these podcasts, compare yourself like, "Oh, my God, how did this person get here?"

But when I think all the way back, I have just always been one of those average C minus students. I remember I failed my driving test four times. I didn't pass math until the fourth time, and I was just always one of those students that was just never really good at anything until I discovered the world of beauty.

I feel like that was always one of my happy hobbies and one of my biggest passions. I basically got started into beauty because I was really insecure about my skin, and I felt like I was just always one of those people that would always just browse through booths and just try to buy everything for acne and spots and pimples and stuff.

I've kind of always loved makeup. My older sister, she was always into makeup and hair, so I used to steal her makeup and put them on in school. I feel like ever since then, that's when I really realized how much I just love beauty and how much it can just transform you and just make you feel so confident.

I actually started being a makeup artist by walking past a makeup counter and someone approached me saying how much they love my makeup and would I want to interview for a job. I was like, "Oh, my God. Yes." I was 17 at the time, and honestly, I just felt as soon as I just started working as a makeup artist, I was like, "This is what I'm meant to be doing for the rest of my life."

I feel like it's evolved. I've been in beauty now for over 14 years, which is crazy, but I always have loved doing makeup, but especially on myself. I remember whenever I would have a call time at 5:00 in the morning, I would wake up at 3:00 AM to do my makeup.

I've always been that type of person to really enjoy doing my makeup. I feel like it's such a nice time to get ready for the day and spend that self-care time on yourself. I basically started posting content about my clients, but then whenever I'll do my makeup nice, I'll post it online and then I'll just get so much more comments of people asking me, "Oh, how did you do your makeup?"

I actually used to be a super shy person. I never wanted to speak. I was almost really quiet. I wouldn't really speak unless I was spoken to, and I feel like that's really evolved over the years. I started my journey actually on Snapchat, because there wasn't Instagram stories at the time.

I was like, "Okay. Let me just start going on Snapchat," because I felt like the stories expired after 24 hours. Then I'll just get so many comments and questions saying, "Oh, can you upload this onto YouTube?" The stories don't expire and they can re-watch the tutorials. Then that was a good seven years ago and I've just kept posting on YouTube ever since.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Well, I guess it's a good thing. Thank goodness the math and the driving didn't work out, right?

Thuy Le:

Exactly, exactly. If anyone is watching this and you're not good at driving, just know there's a passion out there for you somewhere.

Taylor Rodriguez:

That's exactly what we need to hear. I love it. I also love how at IMPACT London, you said that if you want a longterm career as a creator, you have to be thinking about your brand image and ask yourself when someone comes to your page, what do you want to be known for?

As you started posting some of your videos, were you thinking about what you wanted your brand image to be, or did it unfold organically? How do you think about all of your years of experience and all of that posting? Do you ever look back and think things are cringey, or how did you create your brand image? Because personally I look back at stuff that I posted years ago.

Thuy Le:

Oh, my God. Definitely.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Oh, my gosh. It's horrifying.

Thuy Le:

Yeah. Even last week I'm like, "What was I thinking last week?" I've definitely gone through the stages. Social media has just grown so much from different platforms, but I do feel like when everyone is starting out, I feel like everyone starts off like a hobby. It's a little side thing, a little side hustle.

But I think until you actually take the time to really make that leap where you actually really want this to be something and you take it a little bit more seriously. I think that's when you start to think a little bit more about brand image and think a little bit more, I guess you could call it now strategy wise.

But back then it was just me sitting down with a notepad like, "What do I want to be known for?" I feel like if anyone is watching this and you're thinking, "Oh, do you leave your job? How do you know when it's time to leave your job?" When you take the time to really realize that.

One of my biggest sayings is that your business gives you what you give it, and if you treat something like a part-time job, it only ever stays something like a part-time job. I think when I made that mental switch of like, "No. I'm actually going to try to put all my eggs in one basket and just take that leap of faith," I think that's when I realized that you just have to keep going.

That is when I really started to realize that the more you show up, the more you realize what the videos that you actually like doing, what are the videos that resonates with people. Then you use your community and you see what video they engage with most, and then a lot of times the community actually tells you what they want. You work into and then just keep showing up. I think that's the biggest thing that I've learnt, especially doing this for so many years now.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. It's amazing. What about, do you feel like your brand partnerships have impacted that as well?

Thuy Le:

Yes. I definitely think so. I actually feel like a lot of my brand partnerships has happened just from my organic. I always feel like that's when the best partnerships always happen, when I just feature the product just naturally myself. A couple weeks later you get an email pop through, or maybe you can also use the brands that I feature a lot.

Then I can also use that as like, "Oh, maybe we can see if we can set up a partnership together." I always try to only really accept any partnerships that I like their products, and I feel like if anything that has probably molded more of my content rather than the other way around, if that makes sense.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. Totally makes sense. Very interesting. Awesome. Thank you for sharing. I think personally one of the most fun and exciting aspects about the industry is the fact that it moves very quickly. I think every year there's new social channels, new mediums, different trends that are happening.

I think that we can say that both creativity and adaptability are some of the biggest superpowers that both marketers and creators can have in the space. Bella, I'm curious to hear about how your team at Lipton builds innovative campaigns and events. I know you've hosted some amazing influencer events. What is the creative process that goes behind that?

Bella Clark:

Yeah. Definitely. I think it's really hard to stay up to speed, especially as a brand. Things do change so fast. I think making sure that you're set up for success as a brand. I like to take a step back when I join a brand and go, "Okay. What is the overarching cultural strategy of the brand?"

Because you're going to have proactive moments and reactive moments. Proactive is obviously the moments that you know exist and are going to happen. It's the product launches that are set in stone. It's the Christmas, the New Year's, all of these things, Ramadan, everything that's set in stone that you know you're going to do something for.

Then there's the reactive moments where you never know when something is going to... Brat Summer or demure, all these things you need to hop on right away, because if you're too late, you're too late. You can't do it now. You know? You needed to do it then. It's first of all, setting up the structure, I think, of the company, of the brand, of the teams.

Making sure that you have all strategies in place for the proactive and the reactive, which I don't think a lot of people realize how much work that takes and how big sometimes the teams need to be. It's a lot of work to make sure you've dotted the Is, crossed the Ts.

When something comes up, like for instance, what we did with Lipton for green tea, for instance. This was a proactive moment more, because we knew that we had green tea. We had our, let's say tagline and we had the TVC, so the TV commercial that we were running, and we had this tagline of two cups of goodness and talking about the health benefits of green tea.

But then the issue was that it wasn't really resonating with digital culture. TikTok, Instagram influencers. No one really understood what flavonoids are, which is a compound that's found in green tea that's really good for you, for those that don't know. Think about an antioxidant like a blueberry.

It was like how do you get this message across to the digital world of what this is in a really cool, fun, easy to digest way. Took that back and said, "Okay. What can we do to make this cool? What could we make this so people want to drink green tea for their health?" Because it's maybe not the sexiest subject, but it is, because health is great.

I thought, "Okay. Let's get influencers to talk about it. Let's get wellness influencers to talk about it. Let's get lifestyle creators. Let's go to LA." That is the hub of health, wellness, influencers, creators. We had Paris Hilton come and DJ, because she's just amazing.

All these other thought leaders in the industry come and talk about health and wellness in general. There's this whole sober curious movement as well, so how can we tap into that? I think that's how that came to life very quickly as well. That came to life in three months, which anyone that comes from corporate world knows that that is groundbreaking. Usually, we plan nine months, a year in advance. I planned that whole event from start to finish in three months, which was crazy.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Get contracts done and everything and space. That's insane. Incredible. Bravo.

Bella Clark:

We didn't even have an agency of note. Usually if you're listening as a brand, you would typically have an agency that you have on a retainer or something. I actually had to also pitch to agencies and have RFPs back from three different creative agencies. Bringing in a creative partner to help me bring this to life is also crucial.

On the brand side, I think having creative partners is just really invaluable. You have your internal team that's also amazing, but sometimes you need that outside perspective of like, "Is this cool? Is this creative? Will this land with the audience we're going after?" I think also having that outer soundboard is invaluable.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Amazing. It's like you were able to take culturally relevant people and moments and pair it with your brand message to make it resonate, which I think that's the exact point of having creators, right?

Bella Clark:

Exactly. How do you insert yourself into pop culture and be relevant? I think creators are of course, at the helm of that. You see huge brands doing it so well these days. It's hard to keep up and it is constantly moving, so you also need to find the creators that are super authentic, like Thuy was saying.

Brands that she authentically just talks about go after you, because of course, us as brands, we're listening to everything that you're doing. Any creators out there, if you want to work with a brand, authentically use it, and then trust me, they're listening. We're watching, we're

listening, and we see if you really like our product, hey, let's open the conversation and start that relationship, because that's what we want as brands nowadays is authenticity. We want people that really resonate with the brand.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. I love it. We talk a lot about the balance between authenticity and creativity, and so it's always super interesting to hear both the brand and the creator side. Thuy, I'd love to hear from your perspective. As a content creator, obviously you're getting invited to a ton of events or different brand campaigns. What are your favorite partnerships that you like to be a part of?

Thuy Le:

I've definitely been on some amazing brand events and brand trips and stuff, but the thing that I really think about why I actually go to events, because I've been doing this for a while now. I realized the reason why I go to a lot of events is because of the people actually behind the brand.

That's probably the biggest reason actually, because we built a relationship and we go out for dinner sometimes. A lot of times actually, because I've built such a good relationship with them, that I just want to show up and support them, especially when it's a brand that I love already and then I love the team behind it.

Those are my favorite events to go to, because I feel like sometimes there's a mixture of events. There's some events where there's 300 people at the event. Those are the ones that sometimes I feel like I don't lean towards those the most. But when it's an intimate lunch or a dinner where you can actually have time to spend with the brand behind the team, those are the ones that I really make an effort to go to those ones.

Because sometimes when you go to the ones where there are so many people, I don't feel like the PR even knows I'm there. It's like you're just another number. That's how I feel. I really do value the events that I get to spend time with the team. Then also, we also love as a creator a good photo opportunity or a photographer there trying to get content for us as well. Those are what I really value and that's probably how I pick what events I go to these days.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Okay. That makes sense. Do you feel like that offers you the opportunity to get to know not only a little bit more about the brand, but maybe part of their creative process as well? Things that they're thinking about or ways that you can collaborate together.

Thuy Le:

Yes. You know what? I actually think it's really important to go in there and mingle as much as you can. It's an amazing space to go to and there are so many walks of life and it's so nice to network. I think that is always the best, and to also know the people behind the brand.

Because sometimes when you go to those, you just think, "Oh, this has just happened and it just popped up here." But even just hearing that it took you three months just to plan an event, and that's classified as quick. I'm like, "Oh, my God. As a creator, you don't even get to know these type of things." It's so nice when you get to talk about brands and talk to them and get to know the behind-the-scenes of everything. I find it so interesting.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Thuy, you didn't know that Bella has been slaving away to get you at these events, but now you know she's been working.

Bella Clark:

I love it. It's an amazing point though. I think that for anyone listening, too, every PR box that you guys get, it's someone like me or someone on my team handwriting notes. I think sometimes people forget that it's literal people behind these campaigns.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. But it's hard. I think it's difficult to make those connections. Actually, events are an interesting way where you can start to build those connections and you can learn a little bit more about the brand and they can learn a little bit more about you and what you're interested in, the type of content that you want to be creating.

At the center of everything is really the relationship that you guys are building, which is why I think this podcast is obviously super interesting, because that's what people want to learn more about. Thank you guys for sharing. Super interesting and I love it. We have some rapid fire questions about the industry. First question is for both of you guys. I know there's a lot of trends on social, but what trend are you seeing right now that you think is too hyped?

Thuy Le:

I'm over the clean girl makeup trend. This is a beauty trend focus, but get a bit more foundation. Put a little bit more powder and a little bit of concealer. I'm a bit over that trend, especially for winter now. I feel like it's time for party season. We want the glitter to come back. We just want to have a little bit more fun with makeup. That's on me personally. What about you, Bella?

Bella Clark:

I don't know. I love that though. I have minimal makeup on now, because I came from a work day, but I love full glam as well. Full glam, girly. I totally couldn't agree more.

Gosh. I don't know. I can't think of anything right now. I feel like there's maybe not trends, but something that I'm seeing that I'm a bit, I don't know if it's kosher to say on this.

But I see a lot of brands sending influencers really extravagant gifts. I don't know. I feel like it doesn't feel right. I won't name names, but I see a lot of people getting Hermes bags or blankets that's not their own brand. I don't know. Maybe it's not a trend but I am seeing a lot more of from big brands. I don't know, too, if you have a perspective on that. Hey, that would be amazing if I'm sending you a Birkin.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. Bella, send me a Birkin, please.

Bella Clark:

Send me Birkin. [laughter]. I don't know.

Thuy Le:

Yeah. No. I definitely agree with you. I feel like even as a creator sometimes, obviously it's so amazing. Sometimes you just come over and like, "Oh, it's Christmas." It's so cool, but at the same time, sometimes I feel like with PR packages they're so big and extravagant and sometimes we get foundation, which I do understand.

They want to show that, oh, my God, there's so many foundation shades. But also as a creator, sometimes you're like, "Oh, my God. What am I going to do with all these products?" You just can't help but feel guilty. You just feel like it's a little bit wasteful.

I don't know if it is a trend again, but that's something I think anyone watching us working in the PR department may be a little bit more mindful of that. Because I think as a creator sometimes you're like, "Oh, my God. I don't know." We end up doing giveaways and go to my family and stuff, but even my family, they're like, "I just need one blusher." I'm like, "Oh, take these."

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. Actually, it's interesting. I've definitely seen a lot of the sustainability piece about how wasteful the packaging can be, and so I know that there's definitely conversation about that and I think that's existed for a while. But I've also interestingly seen some content recently about some of these massive PR packages that have gone out and people just critiquing to be

like, "Hey, did you see that X brand sent all of this stuff out, and this week no one is using their products?"

I think maybe it's a question of how do you effectively do mailers in a way that feel authentic and aren't over the top, and you know that the people who are going to receive those mailers are actually really excited to get that product. Which I think is tough, especially if you maybe don't have that relationship with the creator.

Bella Clark:

Totally. Oh, my gosh. I would love to hear that from your side, Thuy, too. I don't want to send something that no one wants... It's a tough one.

Thuy Le:

I think it's one of those things that I think a lot of PR people are a bit more, they email first to let you know if you want to opt in or opt out of mailers. Me as a creator, I love trying the products. I'm like, "Yes." But I do really appreciate when brands do email or let you pick the shades as well, because sometimes I can imagine some poor girl behind the screen trying to color-match me. I'm like, "Oh, that is not my color."

Bella Clark:

Yeah. We used to have to do that and email your agents or managers like, "What color?" Because we don't want to send you 25 colors.

Thuy Le:

Exactly. Yeah.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Okay. Pro tip right there. Ask your shade before sending.

Thuy Le:

I think there's also another thing where they also send a Google form, and then on that form it's just literally you just quickly click and it has the photos there of either swatches or color references on there. Then we can just say, "Can we try these shades?"

Because sometimes I like my foundation a little bit darker, even though it might look lighter online because of the cameras and stuff. I think it must be so hard for you guys to color match, but I think the little Google form was also really helpful for me anyways.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. Shameless Traackr plug. We have a functionality where you can ask creators those types of questions and they can be saved so that as you're managing those relationships, you always have that on record and you know exactly what to send your creators so that you're not sending them a bunch of different shades that aren't going to work for them.

Thuy Le:

Oh, my God.

Taylor Rodriguez:

It is possible and it's more savvy than a Google form. No offense to Google. I love Google, but it's better.

Thuy Le:

Just put a suggestion out there for anyone on the Traackr team listening. Can there be something like that, but for the influence perspective? Because sometimes I'm like, "I really want to try a new vitamin C, for example." Then I'm like, "I don't know what brand." I would love as a creator to maybe go on Traackr and be like, "Oh, is there any brands that you cater towards someone with oily, acne-prone skin or something like that where we can submit things as well?"

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. Okay. I'm going to submit this to my product team. It's great feedback. I think we're getting there, because ultimately we know how important these relationships are, so it's good feedback, because if you are looking for something or you do want to try something and you are in the space, what a wonderful way to actually get the products that you're really interested in. I will share that idea. So many pro tips coming from this podcast already. Moving onto our next question. Back to trends. What trend do you think people are missing out on?

Bella Clark:

Ooh, I've got one. I am a huge wellness girly. I'm obsessed with wellness and my new favorite thing is mouth taping. If you guys do not mouth tape, you got to start mouth taping. It helps you sleep so much better and it helps with your jaw line. It forces you to breathe through your nose, so chisels your jaw, nice face structure, and it helps you sleep. I have an aura ring and so I track my sleep every night, and literally my sleep goes up so much every time I mouth tape. That's my favorite.

Thuy Le:

Oh, my God. I love that trend. I've got an Ultrahuman ring and I love my Ultrahuman. It tracks your sleep at nighttime, but you don't have to pay a monthly subscription for this.

Bella Clark:

What?!

Thuy Le:

I know. New technology. I would say something that I feel like is missing and I feel like could be tapped into a little bit more is that human touch element to a lot of campaigns or strategies and stuff. Sometimes I feel like these days I think people are over seeing everything as perfectly curated and stuff.

I think people these days crave that human element where they feel like something is relatable. The brands that I really pay attention to is when I go on their TikTok, and it's like you can see the behind-the-scenes of making the event or showing what it's like when they try the fit model on.

Rather than just showing the product, product, product all the time, it's more about building that connection with the brand. That's something that I definitely look into. Even when I'm buying products, sometimes before I used to just go to Instagram and look at the pretty photos, but nowadays I actually discover a lot of brands through the personality and the behind-the-scenes and seeing the team together and just making silly videos and stuff.

Then if anything, that's when I'm like, "Oh, I just lightly see the product in there," and then that sparks my interest. Rather than something that is very much focused on the product, if that makes sense. I definitely feel like that personal element is missing a little bit and I feel like that could be tapped into a little bit more, especially from the brand side, I think.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. Bella, you can film all of your nine months of slaving away and doing the packaging and doing the planning. Film the RFP process.

Bella Clark:

If I had time to film all of it, I would. Maybe I should hire someone to film me at work. I try. I'm trying to do the day in the life at work for my personal TikTok. I agree more, too. I think the brands need to be more authentic and show more, flip the camera on themselves. There's just a lot of red tape in companies. But I totally agree with that, too. I second it.

Taylor Rodriguez:

I love it. Okay. Now, Bella, if you were given \$1 million for your influencer marketing budget tomorrow, what would you spend it on?

Bella Clark:

Ooh, gosh. So much I want to do. I have so many things I want to do. Everything. I would say if I didn't already have in place an always on strategy with having a cohort of influencers, creators to consistently post for my brand, that would be my number one. Finding authentic creators that resonate with my brand, with whoever my target demographic is, and then have long contracts.

I'm a big fan of ambassador programs, so having a year or two relationship. Really foster a relationship with these creators and bring them into everything, like Thuy was saying. We had this on Rimmel, actually. We had creators that actually helped with our innovation as well.

Asking them "Hey, what product should we launch? What should we name it? What color should we do?" I think bringing creators more into the brand and seeing what we do and helping each other, and then having that constant conversation, I think, is so important, and I would definitely put my money there if I didn't already have a program in place for my brand.

Taylor Rodriguez:

I love it.

Thuy Le:

I love that. Yeah. I love that. I always feel like even for me, whenever I get campaigns I'm like, it'd be so cool if we did something a little bit more long term." Obviously, it's nice when you just get that one video for that product to shine.

But I did read somewhere that it takes someone to see a product seven times before they make the purchase. I feel like if there's a long-term partnership there, it doesn't have to be a full-on video all the time. It's more integrated into quite a few videos, and then I feel like that always looks so much more authentic as well.

Bella Clark:

Yeah. Totally. I think as a brand, that's the gold standard. At least that's what I preach at every brand that I'm on. Exactly. Brand and videos. Not every video. You're just authentically using it and maybe you're doing a different style video and it's just there. It's not super ady. It's more often your typical content.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Love it. Thuy, if a brand came knocking on your door begging to work with you, which brand would it be and why would you want to work with them?

Thuy Le:

Oh, my God. There are so many brands that I love so much. I think thinking about that question actually, the one brand that I am a die-hard fan for is Apple. I feel like everything Apple does, even when there's stuff that Apple does, I'm like, "Why did they do that?" I'm just always going to be an Apple girlie.

I love everything when it comes to their iMac, their iPhone, their iPad, and I love how it just seamlessly links together. And their branding, their style, the way that they've changed. I love that so much.

I love their products, but I would love to be able to even help maybe consult them and maybe do workshops with them and maybe help other creators on how to shoot content and how to edit the content. That would be my ultimate dream, or anything like that where it's a workshop and other creators where we share all of our tips and ideas and how we do things. I feel like especially as a creator sometimes this is the way that I do it, but how do you do it? Is there a quicker way to edit? Anything that's collaborative is my ultimate dream.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. That's amazing. If you think about it, so many creators are probably using their products to do their day-to-day work, so it would be such a logical partnership. I'm throwing that into the universe for you so that hopefully that partnership comes to life for you.

Thuy Le:

I'm manifesting. We're manifesting, guys.

Bella Clark:

Manifesting for you.

Taylor Rodriguez:

2025 is the year for you and Apple. Okay. Final question for both of you guys. What is your main prediction that you have for influencer marketing and the creator industry in the next one to five years?

Thuy Le:

For me, I actually think that, I actually saw this the other day. The idea of social commerce where it's basically a lot of buying products and selling products through the actual app itself. I recently just done a TikTok live for NYX Cosmetics, and it was in their lawyer head offices and it was so amazing.

They had the whole camera crew and everything, and we actually launched products on the live, and they've done limited discounts and free shipping and stuff. I think it's an amazing way to get that instant feeling like, "Oh, my God. You can't miss out on this."

I think that's the next wave. I even feel like there's probably another app that's going to come out where you just go on there to buy products and look at reviews. I feel like there's something really special about live that it's probably not utilized enough, because I think there's only a certain type of content creator that can do that type of content, because it's very full on.

But I think that it's such an amazing way to connect with your audience. Even I know there's a lot of content creators that actually just go on lives and they just do their makeup on lives and just chat with them, and they build a new audience just through lives. That's where I think it's going in the future. I did hear that YouTube is now launching, we can buy products through YouTube now as well, so that's where I think things are going. E-commerce type situation.

Taylor Rodriguez:

It's interesting, because I think in Asia, we see a lot more about, I think, the lives are much more common, but it'll be interesting to see if we see some of those trends come. I hope they do, because I think they're super interesting to watch. I think it's a different dynamic than heavily edited content or content that you have time to produce.

The live is definitely a different dynamic, and I think social commerce, we're seeing it with a lot of different customers, but I think obviously working with creators on that piece. I totally agree with you. I think it's going to change in the next few years.

Thuy Le:

Yeah. The problem that I'm finding right now with a lot of these lives is that it's very selly, selly, selly. You have to keep repeating yourself all the time. I think there should be a little switch where it does bring back the human element where it's literally like, "We're just doing our makeup together and I'm going to link all the products."

I'm going to talk about them and maybe ask the audience, "What products do you want to see?" More that style. I think right now, they're trying to push it, but it's very, "Buy this product. Oh, this product, 20% off." I feel that's a little bit down people's throats. I definitely feel like the more natural content will lean in where you do get that human touch again. I feel like that is definitely where we should be pushing it, I think.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Totally agree. Totally agree. You don't want it to feel too salesy or like an infomercial or something like that.

Bella Clark:

It's giving QVC.

Thuy Le:

It is. It is.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Bella, what about you? What do you think?

Bella Clark:

Yeah. I totally agree with that, and I think at least on my side of things, I see a massive impact of AI on content creation and creators. I think both from how creators use AI tools to create content at scale and on the brand side of how we manage campaigns and how we analyze data and drive better data-driven insights.

I think really niching down. I feel like influencers moving into more hyper niche and really community-driven marketing. I think it'll be interesting. This is more of I don't have the answer and I don't know, but with the whole rise of AI influencers, which I personally find scary and I'm not a fan of. I'll say it right here, right now. I don't like it.

I think that there's that authenticity that you're losing. Then you're really just trying to sell something. There's absolutely no authenticity. I don't know how the landscape will change, but it will change with AI influencers, AI in general, with data reporting and how creators are making their content. It'll be super interesting, I think, over the next few years as AI is rapidly changing the game every day.

Taylor Rodriguez:

Yeah. I agree, too. I'm super interested in seeing where it goes, because I think for content creators, obviously creating content is so difficult. There's probably elements that can make it a little bit easier, which makes sense. But the authenticity, I think it's a big question about how do you actually keep that? How do you make it sounding and feeling like your own content? Agree with you on the AI creators. I feel like it's bizarre to me, but I guess we'll just have to see what happens in the next few years.

Bella Clark:

Scary. You guys see that Coca-Cola released an all AI TV commercial?

Taylor Rodriquez:

No.

Thuy Le:

No.

Bella Clark:

Yeah. My personal opinion. I don't know. I don't like it. It just feels so inauthentic. Then it's also, I don't know if we can talk about it on the podcast right now, but that it's a lot of jobs as well. This is a creative industry. We're writing the commercial. The producers, the directors, the talent, the makeup artists.

It is a huge production, so I get it from a brand wanting to save money and finding cost efficiencies, but at the same time, you're losing that human element and the authenticity of the actual production. I don't know. It's quite sad, but I'm very interested to see the next few years how it evolves.

But I will keep fighting the fight of real humans, real creators, and that authentic connection and the community, I think, is so important. I'm hoping that element remains and continues to grow even, especially with community driven initiatives and really niche communities.

Taylor Rodriquez:

I couldn't agree more. Well, we will all watch and see what happens, but thank you both for joining us today. It was wonderful to chat with you, and I know that our audience is going to be super excited and love all the tips and tricks and insights that you shared, so thank you both and we'll see you soon.

Bella Clark:

Thank you so much for having me.

Thuy Le:

Thank you so much, guys.

Taylor Rodriquez:

Thanks for listening to this episode of the Fast Traack. I hope you enjoyed the conversation as much as I did. If you did in fact enjoy this episode, brighten someone's day by sharing this episode with a friend. If you want to keep up to date on what's happening in the influencer marketing industry, follow Traackr on social. That's at T-R-A-A-C-K-R on any social platform.

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