



From zero to viral

Scenario Description and Roadmap

Context of the story

Participants are a collective of influencers and content creators who are struggling to gain popularity online and are surprisingly invited by a major brand firm with the opportunity to secure a year-long sponsorship to fund their projects. To earn the sponsorship, they must develop strategies for content creation, networking, monetisation and brand collaboration that demonstrate their ability to reach a wide audience and create a positive online impact.



Global explanation

This escape game challenges participants to develop a sustainable content creation and communication plan as a collective of aspiring online influencers seeking a year-long sponsorship, to convince a brand representative in less than 45 minutes. Participants must demonstrate their ability to reach a broad audience and create a positive impact online.

The game involves multiple phases where participants tackle various aspects of influencer strategy, including content creation, audience engagement, brand collaboration and monetisation, using printed documents and a whiteboard to discuss and establish their plan. They need to make choices, analyse trends and platforms, define their target audience and create a detailed plan for content production and communication.

That plan should include a content calendar, outline their engagement techniques and plan potential collaborations with other influencers or brands, along with personalised products and branding elements to distinguish their identity.

In the final phase, participants pitch and justify their content creation, branding, communication and networking strategy to the Game Master (acting as the brand representative). Success depends on demonstrating a clear understanding of audience targeting, platform use and engagement strategies, all while aligning with brand values.



Roadmap

Phase A – Briefing and introduction

- The Game Master introduces themselves as a brand representative for a famous company and explains the context to the participants, who are a collective of online influencers who need a sponsor to fund their projects as they struggle to rise to online fame.
- If they can prove they'll be able to meet the brand's goal of reaching a broad audience and have a positive impact on their targets by drafting a sustainable plan for content creation, communication, monetisation and networking, and pitch it in the next 45 minutes, the brand will guarantee to fund and sponsor all their projects for at least a year, allowing them to create any content they wish and rise to online fame.
- All around the room, in folders, drawers or boxes, are documents, some of which are specific to this topic and relevant to their goal (Annex) and some that are irrelevant or misleading. The key aim is not on finding all the documents or meeting each key point of a planning, but to focus on creativity, strategy and teamwork.
- Participants are directed to use a large whiteboard or paper pages to take notes and establish, then present their plan.
- The Game Master can propose that each player take on a specific role among the team, such as content planner, brand designer, data analyst, etc.



Note: The next phases may not be followed in order by participants: depending on which document they find first and whether they are able to identify what the first steps would be to establish a content creation and communication plan, they may plan out these aspects of the plan in a different order. It'll be at the Game Master's discretion whether to redirect and guide them to find the first part of the Annex "How to build a communication plan for content creators" (which will help them follow a more adequate order), or to let them organise themselves differently to potentially reach an overall correct plan that can convince the Game Master.

Resources: Printed documents (Annex); whiteboard or paper and markers or pens.

Phase B – What, who and where

Step B.1 – Creating your identity

- Participants first need to think about what kind of content they wish to create and on which topic they wish to focus based on their tastes, hobbies, skills or thoughts on what could be popular for their projected audience, which they should define as well based on age and interests.
- They also need to acknowledge the Game Master's mention of having a positive impact, meaning that they couldn't choose a counterproductive or problematic stance (such as pranks or solely commercial content), and they should think of political equity, inclusion and diversity.

Note: This step should be the shortest as the choice of a specific topic can evolve or become irrelevant as they build their plan, which can include different topics around a similar format.



Step B.2 – Analysing trends and audience data

- Participants need to analyse trends and audience data to establish what type of platform they wish to use in order to reach their target audience.
- The part of the Annex on “Understanding trends and audience data” can directly guide them through their choice of platform based on the audience that would be potentially interested in their niche.
- Their draft at this stage should include the answers to the following questions: What kinds of topics or areas will your content be about (among those listed in the “Building an online presence and brand” part of the Annex)? How varied can your content be based on your skills and preferences? What types of content (short or long-form) works best for that kind of topic? Which platforms would suit that type of content? What type of audience will be using these platforms to reach your content? Which trends will your content be matching, following or benefitting from?

Phase C – Content strategy

Step C.1 – Setting goals

- Participants must define the goals they wish to reach through their content: do they aim for a large international community, engagement and interactions, sales or expertise in their niche?
- They must then establish a content creation calendar that matches their goals, planning the frequency at which they will post which content on which platform (how often per week or month, which day and at what time) and how



often they will have to adjust their plans based on trends, algorithms, viral content and events relevant to their niche, platform or audience.

Step C.2 – Engaging your audience

- Participants must also include community engagement in their goals and schedule by planning polls, Q&As and interactive content to involve their audience, receive their feedback and adapt their content based on what works and resonates the most with their target audience.

Phase D – Aiming for growth

Step D.1 – Collaborations

- When detailing their plan, participants should include potential collaborations with other influencers or creators within or outside of their niche or platforms to engage a wider audience or diversify their content to maintain engagement.
- They could think of specific actions, such as direct collaborations, online interactions, giveaways or challenges, or events that would involve other creators of their type or allow them to reach out to other topics, types and platforms to enhance their reach.
- Participants can also take the example of the context of this escape game and include potential brand sponsorships and partnerships to sustain their content creation and enhance their chances of success by funding their projects while ensuring that they match their goals, values and message.



Step D.2 – Personalised products

- Participants should also think of products they could create based on their content and goals, derived from their niche or audience, to either engage their community with their visual identity or to provide additional content such as books, courses or items that support their goal or message.

Note: The parts of the Annex titled “Networking and building relationships” and “Monetisation strategies for content creators” can guide participants through these aspects of their plan.

Phase E – Creating a unique identity

- At any point throughout the game, participants should think of creating their brand and visual identity by imagining a concept and colour palette that either matches their niche, their target audience or their tastes.
- They should draft a bio or description that defines their brand and online presence and identify how they can be authentic and consistent based on the other elements of their plan (niche, target, platform, schedule).
- The part of the Annex titled “Building an online presence and brand” can directly help participants develop this part of their plan.



Phase F – Final pitch and debrief

Step F.1 – Final pitch

- Participants present and summarise their overall branding, content creation and communication strategy to the Game Master acting as a brand representative. They should justify why their plan will succeed (why their chosen platform, content type and engagement strategy are the best fit).
- The presentation needs to be concise and highlight the key points to convince the brand representative that their content plan will increase engagement, align with the brand's values and generate a positive return on investment by engaging a large audience with valuable and positive content.
- If the Game Master has been discussing or acknowledging participants' choices throughout the previous phases, they can either ask critical questions about the proposed content, engagement strategy and overall plan to ensure they understand the reasoning and efficiency or conclude by evaluating their performance based on creativity, understanding of the target audience, choice of platform and overall strategy coherence.
- Feedback is provided, highlighting areas of strength and improvement and confirming whether the brand representative is convinced and whether participants have succeeded.

Step F.2 – Debrief and reflection

After the escape, the Game Master should organise a debrief session to help participants reflect on what they learned about digital communication, the



importance of adequate internal exchange of information and their problem-solving strategies, along with the required elements of a digital communication plan in entrepreneurship, specifically advertising, to ensure that they grasped the reasoning behind each phase and acquired the expected skills and knowledge.

Resources: Whiteboard for summarising key points; optional feedback survey.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Project code: 2023-2-LT02-KA220-YOU-0001831156

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons. Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>