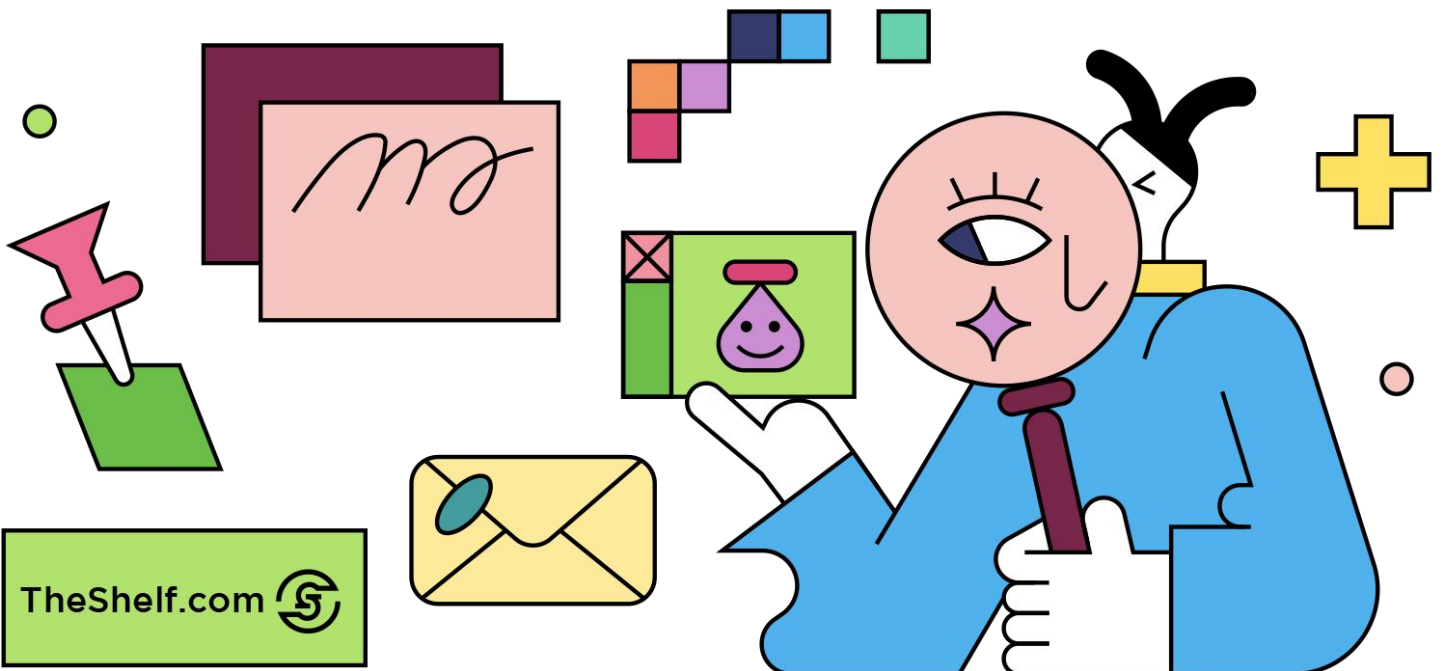


# Blogger Outreach Checklist



Recruit the best influencers for your campaign  
(without coming off like a jerk).



# 1 RESEARCH

Head to the blog. If you scan someone's blog for even a few minutes, you'll get a pretty good idea of the types of topics they cover. Check out the navigation bar and any drop-down menus to see if you can identify categories (such as fashion, travel, food, lifestyle, beauty, kids, DIY, whatever...) that align with your brand or product. It's also a good idea to read through a few of the blogger's posts just so you get a sense of his/her tone, writing style, and thought process. This is an important step because your influencer partner and your product need to seem like a perfect match, a partnership that seems authentic to both your audiences.

This part is also super-helpful for relationship-building because in your outreach email, you'll reference the blog post you read that made you decide to reach out to the influencer. For instance, if the blogger previously raved about a product that's similar to yours, there's a good chance she'll be interested in your product, too. So, feel free to bring that up. Something like: "I saw that a number of your looks have a real vintage flair. I especially liked your last post about that Modcloth denim jacket. We have a number of items that would look great with that very jacket."

**What kinds of topics are covered on the blog?**

**Does the blogger do sponsored posts?**

**Do her posts get quality engagement?**

# 2 BECOME A FAN

This may seem like a weird role reversal, but the fastest way to get on anyone's radar is to become a supporter. There's nothing wrong with brands including fandom in their blogger research. Actually, if you take the time to follow influencer candidates on Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, and Snapchat... or engage with their posts on Twitter, you will get the benefit of really "getting" what they're about. Bonus: they'll appreciate your attention. By the time you approach them (if you decide it's a good fit), you'll be doing so because you already know what they're about. So, go on - get on their radars! This is a tactic you can use before and after you send your cold email.

**Did you follow them on social media channels and engage with their content?**

**Did you read any of their posts and leave comments?**

# 3 TARGETING

Truth bomb: Blasting an email out to every blogger on the planet won't bring you the results you're hoping to achieve. Not only are you wasting everyone's time, but if you do happen to woo some rando blogger, you risk wasting time and money on a collaboration that your actual customers won't even see because they're following somebody else!

*But it's a win if I land a big blogger, right? Not necessarily.*

While some of the bigger bloggers MAY be interested in your thing, most of them will either turn you away or not respond at all if they don't see a match.

It's ALWAYS gonna be worthwhile to do a little research upfront so you don't find yourself earning a reputation for being a pest, or working with bloggers who have zero fit with your brand.

**Has she worked with brands similar to yours?**

**Will your product resonate with her audience?**



## 4 PERSONALIZATION

Always address a potential influencer partner by her first name. If you don't know it, you can usually find it on social media, or her blog (in the About Us, Contact page, or in a signature/bio section of an individual post). You also might find it at the top of the post where there's usually a date and an author name.

Just know that it's somewhere online.

If you want to avoid playing *Where's Waldo?*, our influencer marketing platform, The Shelf can really help you out. Our site does all the research for you so you never have to go on these wild goose chases while assembling your outreach spreadsheet.



## 5 FLATTERY

Flattery goes a long way, ESPECIALLY when it's sincere appreciation. Don't be afraid to tell the blogger how much you LOVE her site... and why. This might sound a little cheesy but of the millions of bloggers and billion-plus blogs out there, you chose that blogger. Tell her why.

Did you like her photo style? Did you like the unique locations where she does her photoshoots? Do you like her personal style or outfit pairings? Do you like the posts where she includes her dog, kids or husband? You know why you chose that blogger, so just take a few more minutes to let *her* know the reason why!



## 6 CREDIBILITY

Bloggers get bombarded by pitches, so it's important for you to establish credibility right from the start. Share a little bit of your backstory.

Something like: "We're the husband and wife duo behind [brand]. We sell handmade educational toys that do pretty well at high-end retailers such as Holt Renfrew and Bloomingdale's. Our toys have been featured by a number of super-cool mommy bloggers like [name a few], as well as a few luxury fashion bloggers [name them] who just LOVE our stuff. We've even landed a few spots on national shows like *Good Morning America* and *The Doctors* (we did a segment during their show on homeschooling). We think you (and your little ones) would really love our brand as well.

**Did you use the blogger's first name?**

**Did you reference her blog or a specific blog post so she knows your email is personalized?**

**Did you tell her what you love about her blog?**

**Did you reference a past post or show an interest in her personal style so she knows you're being authentic?**

**Did you give the blogger a little info on you? Tell her your heroic origin story?**

**Did you establish credibility for your brand or mention any other great bloggers you've worked with?**

## 7 CLARITY

Another super-important part of outreach is being very clear on why you're emailing the blogger. Don't make it a riddle. Make it easy for the blogger to understand what you want from her and how she should even respond.

If you want to be somewhat vague about specific details in your first email (no need to spill your secret sauce all over the place), that's OK, but at least make it clear that you want to work together in some capacity. Pitch emails are often way too vague, or they lack a call to action all together.

For example, one of our influencer account managers once received a pitch from a PR agency that detailed how much they loved her blog and thought she would love some of the brands that they represented. Unfortunately, there was no call to action beyond telling her they loved her blog. So, she didn't know what the next moves were. You always want to include the most useful info in your pitch, and be sure to tell them what to do next.

**Did you make it clear that you want to work with the blogger in some capacity?**

**Did you use a call to action so it's easy for the blogger to respond?**

## 8 BENEFIT

How will this collaboration benefit the blogger? Not just YOU. All too often, brands and PR professionals go into great detail about how the blogger will help them raise awareness, add credibility to their brands, or improve their ROI. But have you taken the time to outline why THIS collaboration will benefit the blogger? Seriously... what's in it for her?

Will you be sharing her sponsored content across your social channels, thus exposing her to a new audience? Are you reusing posts from this campaign as part of your offline ad strategy? Will the collaboration add credibility to the blogger's portfolio? Think of this like a regular job interview in the sense that if you're pitching a collaboration, there needs to be evidence of mutual benefit for both the brand and the blogger.

**Did you outline what the benefit is to the blogger? What's in it for her?**

**Did you put more focus on her needs and value, or are you only interested in your own?**

## 9 A/B TESTING

Once again, don't just blast out the same email to every blogger, all in one shot. Test out two different subject lines to see which one gets a higher open and/or response rate. You can track this with a tool like Yesware (or when using an outreach tool like the one included in The Shelf platform 😊).

How do you A/B test? Well, you could try one subject line that is super clear versus one that is more click baity and intriguing. Or you can test different previews for your email, or different opening paragraphs. Once you've established which one works better, you can conduct an A/B split test on the message, too. Do note, personalizing at least the opening paragraph of your email is ESSENTIAL.

**Did you A/B split test the subject line?**

**Did you A/B split test the contents of the email?**

# Sample Outreach Email



Use first names. →

Hi India,



Explain how you found her →  
and work in some flattery.

I recently came across your blog on Pinterest. I saw your picture of the J.Crew statement necklace that you posted a few weeks ago and loved the photo. You cropped the photo in a really unique way and I always find myself drawn to that more artsy style of photography.



Show that you respect her time →  
Tell her about your company →

Anyway, I know you get tons of these emails, so I'm going to keep this super quick! I started my own jewelry line a year ago. We started on Etsy and are now launching a real store.

Explain why she's a good fit. →

I'm looking for bloggers who have a classic style with a bit of an edge. When I saw your photo on Pinterest, I was positive that you'd be perfect for this! And I'm even more positive after clicking through the last few months of your posts.



A clear ask. →

I wanted to see if you'd be up for collaborating. I'd love to explore options with you. Perhaps we could do a sponsored post or even a giveaway might be fun. Here's a link to my site!



Make it friendly, not formal. →

I can't wait to hear what you think!

Kira