INFLUENCING PERCEPTIONS GLOBALLY WITH EFFICIENT PROCUREMENT

Abstract

Companies often struggle with implementing effective influencer marketing strategies on a global scale due to local-first strategies and non-streamlined procurement processes. However, when Ella, a Strategic Sourcing Manager at a global CPG company, was confronted with a similar situation she decided to approach Infosys BPM for support. This case study outlines how her close collaboration with Infosys BPM's procurement experts realised better influencer campaign outcomes as well as 12.5% in savings on marketing spends.

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The need to expand influence

With operations spread across over 190 countries, a leading global CPG company was facing significant obstacles in aligning its global and local influencer marketing strategies. To address the rising concerns, the company asked Ella, one of its Strategic Sourcing Managers responsible for identifying and managing influencers' partnerships, to identify workable influencer strategies to enhance brand visibility and engagement worldwide. Yet, though Ella as part of her role had

been developing sourcing strategies, negotiating contracts, and maintaining long-term relationships with influencers' agencies, implementing a coordinated strategy on a global scale would be no easy task.

In the influencer service sector, there are various levels of expertise among agencies, with many services being delivered by non-specialists or through subcontracting to other agencies. Such discrepancies further result in fragmented

spends, non-negotiated contracts with suppliers, and lack of control of payment terms, amongst other woes. Thus, Ella found it very challenging to ensure the authenticity of influencers and select only those who truly believed in and used the products they promoted. This was crucial to further the acceptability of the company's marketing messages and engender trust among consumers, as any wrong choice would have significant potential to threaten the brand reputation.

And then despite her best efforts, Ella soon discovered other challenges that made her mandate even more difficult than it already was. She found that quantifying the return on her investments for influencer campaigns was not easy due to the varying impact of influencers and the indirect nature of some of the benefits realised. So, she needed to investigate and deploy reliable methods and metrics to measure the return on investments on her influencer spends. Then, when operating campaigns globally there were a host

of complex contract issues to navigate through, apart from ensuring compliance to data privacy and legal regulations. All this was exacerbated by the saturation of the influencer market, which made identifying and securing partnerships with the most effective influencers a difficult task.

Considering the magnitude of the change she needed to bring about, Ella quickly realised the need for external support and immediately thought of the

procurement experts at Infosys BPM. The company had a long partnership with Infosys BPM since 2018, and Ella was aware of their dedicated sourcing team led by Project Lead Kasia, which had been working tirelessly to provide superlative procurement support in Europe over the years. So, without wasting any time, she reached out to Kasia and discussed with her how she could leverage the team's expertise and efficiency to streamline and enhance the procurement process for influencers globally.
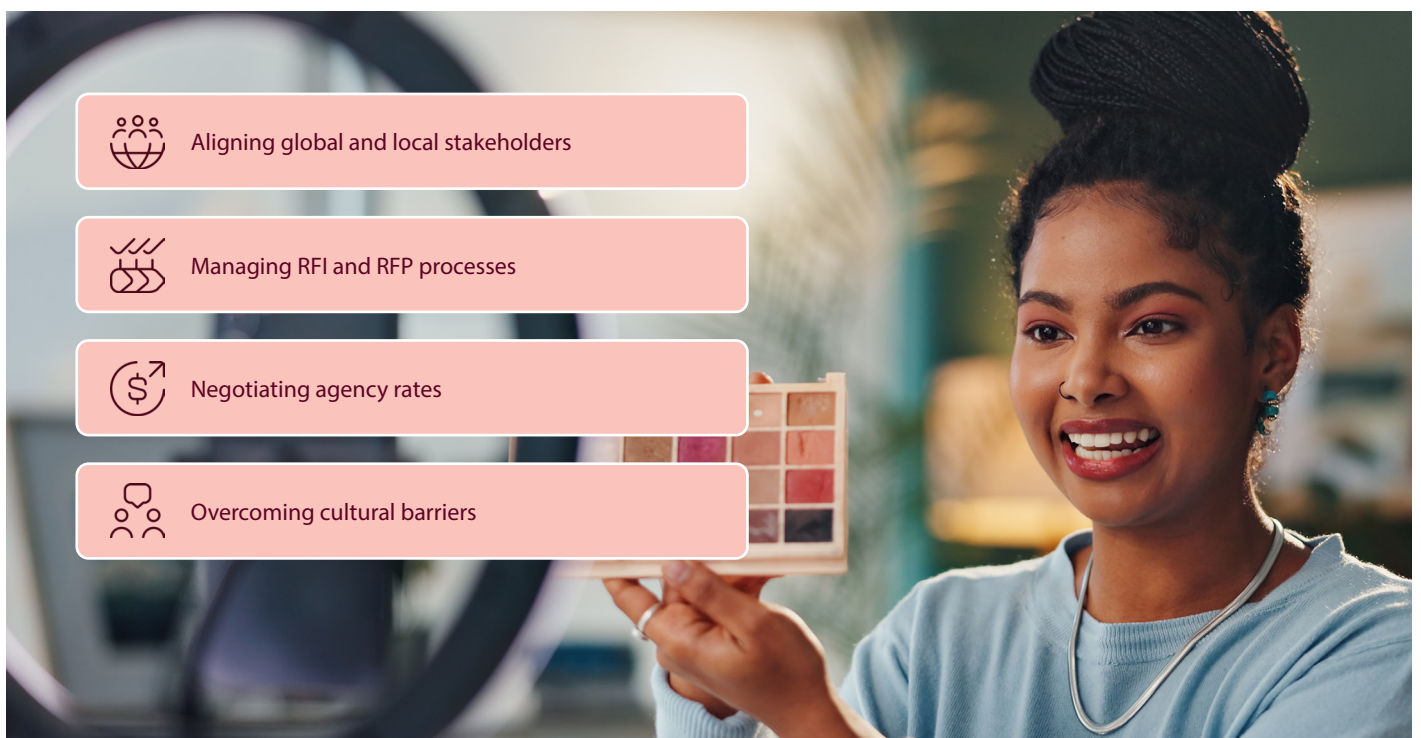
Cutting across borders and boundaries

Through her discussions with Ella, Kasia realised that the task at hand would involve identifying and selecting preferred suppliers, negotiating rates, finalising contracts, and establishing effective procurement processes. So, she quickly rounded up some experienced members from her team and assigned them to work on the mandate.

As initially, the project was being discussed only with global stakeholders in the company, it had led to some dissatisfaction among local teams due to their lack of involvement. So, for the European phase of the project, Kasia decided to also engage local stakeholders. This approach ensured that those familiar with regional agencies, processes, and working methods were included, leading to a more tailored and

effective execution. However, this was easier said than done, as the goals of both global and local stakeholders needed to be aligned to ensure that the project's objectives and their expectations were in sync. Kasia accomplished this through integrating local insights into the broader project strategy without losing the overall vision that was paramount.

Approach summary

- Aligning global and local stakeholders
- Managing RFI and RFP processes
- Negotiating agency rates
- Overcoming cultural barriers

Then, because Ella had handed her the end-to-end responsibility for managing the project, Kasia proceeded to define the project requirements and scope, prepared RFI documents, and distributed them to potential influencers' agencies. Based on their responses, her team evaluated the agencies' capabilities, created a shortlist of qualified suppliers, and sending them a detailed RFP. They then proceeded to evaluate the proposals they received in response to the RFP, based on criteria such as influencer capability, experience, and

cost, and Kasia accordingly carried on negotiations focused on hourly rates and agency fee caps. Throughout these stages, Ella supported her by evaluating the process and ensuring the selection of the best agencies from a quality perspective.

However, the journey was not without its fair share of challenges. During their interaction with the local suppliers, Kasia's team struggled with communication barriers that arose due to differences in languages and communication

styles, leading to misunderstandings. Additionally, cultural differences required great sensitivity and adaptation of local customs and business practices. Resource allocation also posed difficulties for Kesia, as balancing resources between global and local teams was necessary to ensure fair distribution of work and to avoid conflicts. Yet, Kesia and her team soldiered on, adapting to the challenges with innovative resourcefulness, and ultimately delivered on the project's objectives.
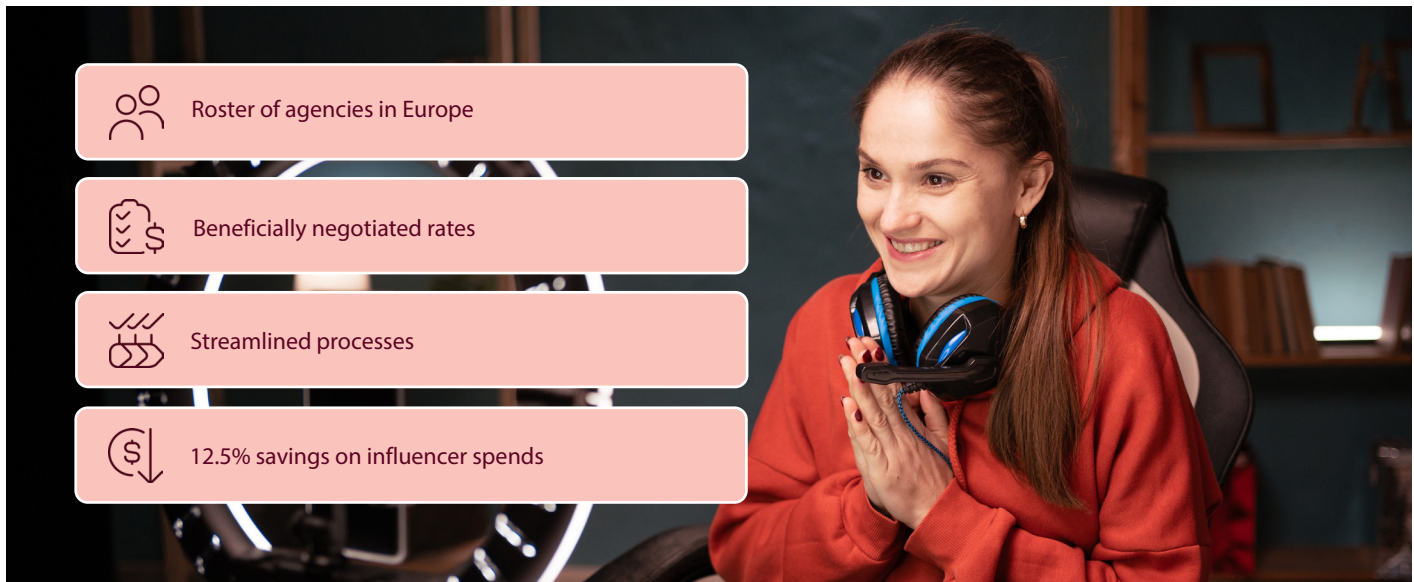
Influencing outcomes

Kasia's well-defined project goals, comprehensive planning, and structured approach not only provided her team with a clear direction and focus but also enabled them to ensure that all aspects of the project were covered. Further, her close partnership approach with Ella facilitated comprehensive evaluation and informed decision-making, resulting in successful project outcomes.

Thus, at the end of the project, Kasia shared with Ella a roster of agencies for each country in Europe, with whom she had negotiated the rates, discussed the contract terms as well as streamlined the processes for Ella's ease. Ella was more than delighted especially because the team's efforts had additionally delivered savings of 12.5% on her influencer spends.

- Roster of agencies in Europe
- Beneficially negotiated rates
- Streamlined processes
- 12.5% savings on influencer spends

Kasia's and her team's effective procurement efforts eventually led to highly effective influencer marketing campaigns and in turn new growth opportunities for the CPG company. These outcomes are a testament to the power of collaboration, attention to detail, and unwavering commitment to excellence that, as the Infosys BPM team has long realised, always delivers.

Names have been altered to preserve the identities of the people involved.

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