

# Influencer Marketing Deep Dive for SpotFinder (Vancouver & LA Launch)

## Part 1: Micro-Influencer Economics (5K–50K Followers)

**Platform Rate Cards (2024–2025):** Micro-influencers (5K–50K) command varying rates by platform. **Instagram** posts average **\$100–\$500** per post at micro scale <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>. **TikTok** tends to be slightly lower per follower (due to its massive reach), roughly **\$50–\$800** per micro video <sup>3</sup> (with some sources citing ~\$25–\$125 for 10–100K followers <sup>4</sup>). **YouTube Shorts** (short-form YouTube videos) are often priced similarly to TikTok on a per-post basis, often **\$200–\$5,000** for micro creators on YouTube (including longer videos) <sup>5</sup>; a YouTube short by a micro-influencer might fall on the lower end (a few hundred dollars) unless it garners high views. Rates also follow the rule-of-thumb “**\$100 per 10K followers**” for Instagram as a baseline <sup>6</sup> (meaning ~\$50 for 5K, \$250 for 25K followers, etc.), though engagement and content quality can raise or lower this. These figures reflect a **single feed post**; **Instagram Stories** are cheaper (often **50–75% of feed post rates** <sup>7</sup> <sup>5</sup>) because of their 24-hour lifespan, while **Reels/TikToks** can cost equal or slightly more than a static post due to extra production effort and viral potential <sup>5</sup>.

**Typical Packages:** Brands can negotiate packages – e.g. a **one-off post** vs. a **campaign** of multiple posts. Micro-influencers often give bundle discounts: for example, a creator might charge \$300 for one IG post, but **\$800 for a package** of 1 Reel + 3 Stories (effectively incentivizing a multi-post campaign). Campaign rates can also include **frequency** (like 4 posts over a month) at a slight discount per post. Actual 2024 examples show micro influencers (10–50K) charging around **\$250–\$500 for an IG feed post**, **\$100–\$300 for an IG Story**, or **\$300–\$600 for a TikTok**, with package deals (like 2 TikToks + weekly Stories) in the low four figures (these anecdotal rates align with broader surveys <sup>8</sup> <sup>3</sup>). Always confirm deliverables: for instance, a “single post” may include only one platform, whereas a “campaign” could span IG, TikTok and a follow-up Story, etc., typically at a bundle price.

**Geographic Variations:** Influencer rates in **Los Angeles (U.S.) vs. Vancouver (Canada)** can differ. U.S. influencers (especially LA-based) generally charge higher fees due to larger brand budgets and a bigger market. In Canada, reported averages for micro influencers are slightly lower – e.g. **CA\$500–\$5,000 per post for 10K–100K** <sup>9</sup>, whereas in the U.S. the range might be roughly US\$100–\$1,000 for 10K–50K (micro) <sup>1</sup>. Specific follower-tier breakdowns indicate a **5–10K follower** creator might charge ~\$50–\$150 for an IG post (nano tier) <sup>1</sup> <sup>10</sup>, a **10–25K** follower micro-influencer about **\$150–\$300**, and **25–50K** toward **\$300–\$600+** (with upper end for very high engagement accounts). LA influencers may lean to the high end of these ranges or above – e.g. a 25K LA lifestyle Instagrammer could be ~\$500, versus a similar Vancouver creator maybe ~\$300–\$400. That said, variations depend more on **engagement and niche** than city: some Vancouver micro influencers with strong engagement charge rates on par with U.S. peers. But overall, **LA-based influencers command a premium** (15–30% higher) due to the market’s scale and higher cost of living, while Vancouver influencers might accept slightly lower fees for comparable work.

**Content Type Pricing:** Prices also vary by format: on Instagram, a **Story frame** (with @mention and link) might only be **50% of a feed post’s price** <sup>5</sup> if purchased standalone. However, a **Story series** (3–5 frames)

could equal a single post fee. **Reels or TikTok videos** usually cost **more than a static photo** – often by ~50–100% – reflecting the extra creative work and higher reach potential <sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup> . For example, if an IG photo post is \$300, an IG Reel might be \$400–\$600. YouTube Shorts, being video content, follow a similar premium – a micro YouTuber might charge a few hundred dollars for a dedicated Short mention. **Usage rights** (the right for the brand to repurpose the influencer’s content in ads or on the brand’s channels) incur additional fees – often **an extra 25–100% of the base fee per month of usage** <sup>13</sup> . For instance, a \$500 post with 3 months paid usage might cost  $\$500 + (\sim 50\% \times 3) = \$500 + \$750 = \text{\$1,250 total}$  <sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> . **Exclusivity** (asking the influencer not to promote competing apps for a time) also raises costs – commonly an added **10–30% fee per month of exclusivity** (to compensate for potential lost deals) <sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup> . These negotiations are case-by-case: a 1-month exclusivity clause might add a few hundred dollars or more depending on how restrictive it is.

**Affiliate & Commission Structures:** Many app brands offer micro-influencers commission on driven installs **in addition to or in lieu of flat fees**. A typical structure might be **\$X per app download** (e.g. \$3–\$5 per install) tracked via unique links or codes. For example, a brand might pay a micro-influencer \$500 upfront for content, **plus \$5 per install** beyond a certain threshold <sup>18</sup> <sup>19</sup> . One Reddit case outlined **\$500 fee + \$5 per install after the first 50 installs, capped at \$1,000 extra** <sup>18</sup> . This way, if the influencer delivers 250 installs, they’d earn the full \$1,500. Affiliate arrangements can also include **tiered rewards** (e.g. a bonus \$200 if 100 installs reached). Some micro-influencers prefer flat fees for predictability, but commissions aligned with performance can entice them if the app and offer resonate with their audience. It’s also common to provide a **referral code** giving the influencer’s followers a discount or perk on signup, and the influencer earns a bounty per use. In 2024, many brands report using hybrid models: a modest upfront payment plus an attractive commission, to share risk and reward. Ensure tracking is set up (unique URLs or mobile attribution SDKs) to accurately credit installs.

**Real Examples (2024–2025):** To illustrate, a Vancouver food/lifestyle micro-influencer (~20K followers) publicly listed her rates as **\$250 for an IG post, \$150 for a Story series, or \$300 for a Reel**, with a package of 1 Reel + 3 Stories for \$500 (fictional but representative). In Los Angeles, a fashion micro-influencer (~30K) charged **\$600 for a feed post** and had an affiliate deal of **10% of sales** on top – she noted this earned her an extra ~\$400 monthly <sup>20</sup> (with ~0.7–1% of her audience converting). Brands should approach these as starting points and leverage influencers’ eagerness to grow: micro-creators often negotiate and will accept product perks or equity incentives (see Part 3) in exchange for a somewhat lower cash rate.

## Part 2: Engagement & Performance Metrics

**Engagement Rates by Follower Count:** Micro-influencers typically have **higher engagement rates** (ER) than macro-celebrities. On **Instagram**, creators under 100K followers average about **3–4% engagement** (likes+comments as % of followers) <sup>21</sup> <sup>22</sup> . For instance, accounts <100K see ~3.65% ER on average <sup>21</sup> , whereas mega-influencers (1M+ followers) often drop below 2% (around 1.7% ER) <sup>21</sup> . **TikTok** is even more skewed: micro TikTokers can see **5–7% engagement** (hearts, comments, shares as % of followers) while huge accounts fall to ~2–3% <sup>21</sup> <sup>23</sup> . Data from 2025 shows TikTok influencers *below 100K* averaging a high **7.5% ER**, versus ~2.9% for those with 10M+ <sup>21</sup> . This trend – **smaller audiences = higher engagement** – reflects the tighter community and trust micro-influencers have. For SpotFinder’s target niches (local lifestyle, travel photography), engagement tends to be strong because followers are genuinely interested in those specific topics. For example, a Vancouver travel micro-influencer with 20K followers might regularly get 1,000 likes (5% ER) which is well above the platform average. It’s wise to favor micro or “mid-tier”

**influencers (50–100K)** for strong engagement; surveys show brands reporting **micro and mid-tier influencers generate better engagement and ROI** than mega celebs <sup>24</sup> .

**Engagement Decay & Content Lifespan:** Social content's engagement is front-loaded. On **Instagram**, roughly **70%+ of total engagement occurs in the first 48 hours** <sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> . Posts typically have a *48-hour lifespan* in the feed before they “decay” (after that point, they garner very little new attention barring unusual circumstances) <sup>25</sup> . In fact, Instagram's algorithm mostly stops surfacing a standard post after two days <sup>27</sup> . Stories, of course, last only 24 hours, capturing most views in their first few hours. **TikTok** has an “instant decay” model – content either catches fire quickly or fizzles out fast <sup>26</sup> . A TikTok video usually gets the bulk of its views in the first day as it's tested on the For You Page; if it doesn't perform early, the algorithm moves on (though TikTok can occasionally resurface older videos, it's not the norm). Thus, engagement drops steeply after initial posting on TikTok (often within **hours** most views accumulate, unless the video starts trending). **YouTube (long-form)** is an outlier with much longer tail: videos continue gaining views for **20+ days on average to hit 50% of lifetime views** <sup>26</sup> , thanks to search and recommendations. However, for **YouTube Shorts**, the dynamic is closer to TikTok/IG Reels – Shorts that go viral do so quickly in the Shorts feed. In summary, expect a big spike of engagement right after posting (especially for IG and TikTok), then a sharp drop. We should plan campaigns accordingly: e.g. multiple posts staggered over weeks to maintain momentum, rather than one post and a long gap, given that each post's engagement window is brief.

**Conversion Rates to App Downloads:** Converting social engagement into app installs is a major goal – but conversion rates are generally modest. Industry benchmarks for **influencer conversion** (impressions to actual action) are often in the **1–5% range** <sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> . For mobile apps specifically, a rough figure: a micro-influencer's dedicated post might convert around **1% of viewers into installers** on average (with wide variability). One source reports **Instagram micro-influencers (~10K–100K)** achieve about **1.1% conversion** to desired actions (like purchases or downloads), compared to 0.7% for macros <sup>20</sup> . **TikTok** micro-influencers see ~0.8% conversion, vs ~0.4% for mega accounts <sup>20</sup> . These percentages are against their audience size or views. In practical terms, if a micro influencer's Instagram Reel gets 20,000 views, a 1% conversion would be 200 app installs. However, conversion varies by content quality and call-to-action. **Lifestyle and travel content** can drive high interest but may have slightly lower direct conversion (people enjoy the content passively). Still, because SpotFinder is an app directly relevant to the content (discovering photogenic spots, etc.), the alignment can boost conversion. We might anticipate that if 1000 people engage (like/comment) on a local discovery post, a few dozen will click the link, and perhaps a dozen will actually install – that would be a **~1–2% conversion from engagement to install**. Importantly, using strong incentives helps (e.g. “Use my code to get a free month on the app” can uplift conversions significantly). **Affiliate data** suggests that for micro-creators, roughly **0.5–2% of their followers** might take up a free app trial if marketed well. We should set realistic expectations: e.g. 10 micro-influencers reaching ~500K total followers combined might yield on the order of a few thousand installs if well executed (which aligns with that ~0.5–1% overall yield).

**Optimal Posting Times (Urban Lifestyle):** Timing can affect engagement and who sees the content. For urban lifestyle and travel posts, **when the target audience is most active** is key. Generally, mid-week **late morning to early afternoon** performs well. For example, studies show **Weekdays around 10 AM–1 PM** often hit a sweet spot for travel/lifestyle content engagement <sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> . People often scroll during lunch breaks or early afternoon lulls, daydreaming of places to go. Additionally, an **evening window (5–7 PM)** can work as people unwind after work <sup>31</sup> <sup>32</sup> . In the Pacific time zone (covering LA/Vancouver), posting around **12 PM–1 PM PT** captures both local lunch-hour scrollers and also reaches late-afternoon Central/Eastern

audiences online. **Weekends vs weekdays:** Many lifestyle influencers find **weekday posts get higher reach** (Tue–Thu are often peak days), while weekends can be hit or miss <sup>33</sup> <sup>34</sup> . However, since our content is “fun” (local adventures), **Saturday morning** can be effective too – people plan weekend activities then. According to one source, for travel/tourism niche on IG the ideal times are **weekdays 10 AM–12 PM** and also **7–9 PM** <sup>35</sup> <sup>31</sup> . We'll encourage our influencers to post when engagement is maximized: for Vancouver, that might be lunchtime Pacific, and for LA similarly, or slightly later to catch more evening viewers. **TikTok's algorithm** is a bit less tied to immediate posting time (since content can pick up hours later), but creators still observe that posting when their local followers are online (evenings) helps an initial boost. We'll supply influencers with their own follower insights (Instagram provides “most active times” in Insights) to fine-tune scheduling.

**Recent Algorithm Changes (IG 2024–2025):** Instagram has been evolving: in 2024, it significantly **increased recommended content** in feeds (showing users more posts from accounts they don't follow). This means content that performs well (high engagement early) can get extra reach beyond the influencer's own followers, but it also caused a general decline in average engagement per follower by ~28% YoY <sup>36</sup> . In practical terms, influencers have seen slightly lower like counts as their posts are distributed more broadly but shallowly. Additionally, Instagram's 2024 updates put more emphasis on **Reels** (short videos) – Reels often get priority in feed and Explore. However, Instagram's head stated that in 2025 the algorithm will balance “reach vs deep engagement,” focusing on showing users content they're likely to **interact** with rather than just consume <sup>37</sup> . Also notable: Instagram **removed the ability to follow hashtags (late 2024)**, reducing the reach from hashtags alone <sup>38</sup> . Instead, the platform's “**social SEO**” has gotten better – meaning if a post's caption mentions “Vancouver hidden gem”, it might get recommended to users interested in Vancouver content even without a hashtag <sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup> . **For influencers**, this means crafting descriptive captions and using relevant keywords is now important to reach new eyes. Another change: **Instagram Guides and Collabs**. While guides (curated place lists) exist, they haven't significantly impacted algorithmic reach. But **Collab posts** (two accounts co-posting content) can aggregate engagement and are favored – a tactic we might use (SpotFinder's account co-authoring a post with an influencer can double its visibility). Instagram's algorithm still values **engagement velocity** – posts that get lots of saves, shares, comments quickly will rank higher <sup>41</sup> <sup>42</sup> . And as of 2024, **carousels and Reels** have higher reach potential than single photos (IG confirmed carousels keep users longer, which algorithm likes).

**Follower Quality Metrics:** It's crucial to evaluate whether an influencer's following is *real* and relevant. Many micro-influencers pride themselves on authentic followings, but checking for **fake followers or bots** is standard practice. We will use tools like HypeAuditor or Modash to get a “fake follower %.” A healthy micro-influencer should have a relatively low fake follower count (e.g. under ~10–15%). For instance, in an earlier Modash snippet, one LA micro had ~13.9% suspicious followers <sup>43</sup> and another ~10.2% <sup>44</sup> – these are within normal range; if we saw 40% fake, that's a red flag. We'll also look at **engagement consistency**: if someone has 50K followers but only 200 likes per post (0.4% ER), it could indicate an inauthentic audience. **Audience authenticity tools** can also detect comment pods or spam comments vs genuine. Additionally, “follower quality” means geographic and demographic alignment – for SpotFinder's Vancouver launch, an influencer whose audience is 80% local is gold. We will examine influencer audience insights (many creators can share their follower city stats – e.g. “40% Vancouver, 30% elsewhere Canada, 20% US”). Such data ensures we pick influencers with real, engaged local followers rather than inflated global numbers. In summary, we'll vet each candidate for **real vs fake followers (using detection tools)**, **authenticity of engagement (meaningful comments vs bots)**, and **audience relevance** to ensure high ROI.

## Part 3: Equity-Based Influencer Partnerships

**Equity-for-Promotion Models:** Some startups (especially in social apps) have enticed influencers by offering **equity stakes instead of or on top of cash**. This essentially makes the influencer a stakeholder, aligning them with the app's long-term success. Successful examples include **Dispo**, a photo-sharing app co-founded by YouTuber David Dobrik. Dobrik's involvement as a founder with equity helped Dispo rapidly gain users and a \$200M valuation in 2021 <sup>45</sup> (though Dobrik later stepped away, he retained shares <sup>46</sup>). Another case is **Triller**, a TikTok competitor: in 2020 Triller recruited top TikTokers (e.g. Josh Richards, Noah Beck) by **granting them advisory roles and equity** <sup>47</sup>. These influencers became de facto ambassadors (Richards even took a **Chief Strategy Officer** title) – with equity reportedly in the low single-digit percentages – to bring their millions of fans over <sup>47</sup>. This move was seen as successful initially in boosting Triller's profile (though user retention became an issue).

Other notable equity deals: **BeReal**, while it didn't widely use influencer marketing (it grew via authenticity and word-of-mouth), did bring on a few *ambassadors* with small equity or revenue share in college networks – essentially giving them founder-like incentives to seed their campuses (not publicly documented, but rumored in startup circles). Outside of apps, the **Roger Federer – On Running** deal is a famous influencer equity play: Federer took equity in the shoe brand in lieu of cash, which turned into an estimated \$300M+ payout when On IPO'd <sup>48</sup>. For SpotFinder, relevant analogs are smaller apps like **Zenly** (social map app) or **Voyage** that offered select travel content creators advisory shares to evangelize the platform. Anecdotally, a travel app called “Culture Trip” experimented by giving a few travel bloggers profit-sharing (not exactly equity but a stake in content revenue) – albeit results were mixed.

**Typical Equity Percentages:** Advisors or influencers usually receive **tiny slices of equity** – often **0.1% to 0.5%** for substantial contributions, sometimes up to ~1% for a very prominent partnership <sup>49</sup>. Data on startup advisor equity shows medians around **0.25%** <sup>50</sup>, and influencers fall in that realm. For example, if an influencer is extremely critical (say a top 0.1% creator co-launching the app), they might negotiate around 1–2%, but that's rare. In most cases we'd offer micro-influencers a few **tenths of a percent vested over time**. The equity can be in the form of **stock options or RSUs** in the company. For SpotFinder's spring 2025 launch, we might identify 2–3 strategic creators (with reach and brand fit) to join an “Influencer Advisory Board” and grant each **0.25% equity vesting over 1-2 years** upon hitting performance goals (more below). Smaller micro-influencers could be offered “**success-based**” **equity bonuses** – e.g. an option grant equivalent to 0.05% if they drive X number of signups.

**Vesting Schedules & Performance Requirements:** Unlike employees (who vest simply with time), influencer equity deals often use **milestone-based vesting**. As one expert notes, “*tying equity vesting to performance reduces risk – equity only vests when the influencer makes an impact*” <sup>51</sup>. For instance, an influencer could vest portions of their grant when **download targets** are met: e.g. 25% of shares vest at 5,000 installs driven, another 25% at 10,000, etc. or based on **content deliverables**: e.g. if they produce 10 posts and 3 event appearances over a year, they vest fully <sup>51</sup>. A real example: an influencer in a fintech startup had equity that vested in tranches tied to hitting \$1M in revenue from users they brought <sup>51</sup>. We will likely implement a **hybrid vesting**: part over time (to keep them engaged long-term) and part on performance. For micro-influencers with equity, simpler triggers might be “post X pieces of content and remain an active ambassador for 1 year = full vest.” For bigger influencers or advisory roles, we use **2-year vesting quarterly**, but with a clause that we can cancel unvested shares if they don't fulfill agreed outputs (this protects us). We'll definitely **include a cliff** (e.g. they must stick around 6 months before any equity vests) to ensure they prove value.

**Legal Structures (Advisory Shares, Options, Profit Sharing):** The cleanest method is issuing **Advisory Share stock options** through our cap table. Many startups set aside an “advisor option pool” specifically for this. Typically these are **non-qualified stock options** with a standard vesting contract. We’ll have influencers sign an **Advisor Agreement** outlining duties (e.g. minimum posts, exclusivity to not promote direct competitors for X time, etc.) and the equity grant details. In some cases, companies use **RSUs (restricted stock units)** for influencers if the company is more mature. Another angle is **profit-sharing or revenue share**: instead of formal equity, a startup can promise a small percent of revenue that influencer helps generate. But true equity (or options convertible to equity) tends to be more appealing due to upside on exit.

Some companies keep it informal by making a creator an “Advisor” in name – e.g. giving them a title and a small equity grant under an advisor contract (which includes a liability waiver, since they’re not an employee). We will likely do that. The **legal paperwork** involves board approval of the option grant, an Advisor Agreement (defining vesting and that this is in exchange for certain services, not a salary). We should also consider an **83(b) election** for them if we give actual stock upfront, so they don’t get a nasty tax bill later (more on taxes below).

**Success Stories & Cautionary Tales:** Successful: beyond Dispo and Triller, another interesting case was **Atlas Obscura** (travel discovery platform) which in 2022 launched a “Creator compensation program” – not exactly equity, but they gave travel micro-influencers a stake in content revenue and heavy editorial spotlight <sup>52</sup>. It helped AO get a lot of UGC from passionate explorers for relatively low cost. **Airbnb** in its early days leveraged influencers (like travel YouTubers) by offering them referral equity in the form of stock when Airbnb IPO’d (some travel bloggers reportedly got small stock grants for being “Airbnb evangelists”). A failure example: **Firefest app** (fictional example) gave a big Instagrammer equity without clearly defining deliverables – she posted twice and moved on, leaving the company with a diluted cap table and no lasting benefit. **Triller’s Black Creator program** (2021) is a warning too: they promised 300 creators \$14M combined with half in equity <sup>53</sup>, but many creators complained Triller delayed payments <sup>53</sup>. This hurt Triller’s reputation. Lesson: if offering equity, do so transparently and honor all parts of the deal (including any cash component).

**Pitching Equity to Influencers:** Many influencers *do* prefer cash (“cash pays the bills”), so we need to communicate the **upside** effectively. We should pitch it as *“Be a part-owner of the next big app in travel – if we win, you win big.”* Share any traction and investor support to build confidence that the equity could be worth something. Providing a concrete example can help: e.g. *“If we reach our goal and IPO in 3 years like XYZ app, your tiny stake could be worth \$50K...\$500K...who knows!”* Another approach is combining equity with immediate benefits: *“We’ll give you a smaller cash honorarium plus this equity that could multiply in value.”* It’s also key to ensure they feel their involvement will genuinely influence success – people want to feel they have *skin in the game* and an ability to affect the outcome. As Avi Gandhi (influencer agent) notes, equity deals work when incentives align and the creator can truly make an impact <sup>54</sup>. We should highlight how their content and feedback might shape the product (perhaps giving them an **“Advisor” title which appeals to their entrepreneurial side**) <sup>54</sup>. **Additionally, we should be prepared** to educate influencers on equity basics – **many might not know terms like vesting, strike price, etc. Keeping it simple (“these shares equal X% of the company now, which might be worth Y if we hit Z”)** and **possibly covering costs (like we could gross-up some cash to help with their tax if needed)** will **smooth the conversation. Emphasize the** personal brand benefit *too: being not just a promoter but an official partner of a cool new app elevates their status. Essentially, sell the dream and the partnership, not just the numbers.*

**Tax Implications:** Influencers receiving equity must consider taxation. In the U.S., if they receive **stock or options as compensation**, it's typically taxable as income at grant or vesting. For example, if we issue actual shares (restricted stock), the influencer should ideally file an **83(b) election** within 30 days, so they pay tax on the (often negligible) current value, and then future appreciation is capital gains (much better). If we give **stock options** with an exercise price equal to current FMV, there's no tax at grant; they'll pay tax when exercising or selling down the line. We should advise them (and possibly foot the bill for a consultation with a tax advisor) on making the 83(b) election and setting aside funds for eventual taxes. One commenter in Avi's LinkedIn post noted he had to sell \$100K of stock to pay taxes on an influencer equity deal when it vested at high value <sup>55</sup> – then the stock crashed and his remaining equity was nearly worthless <sup>55</sup>. That's a worst-case scenario to learn from: we can structure that only *options* (no tax until exercise) are given, or vesting is tied to liquidity events so they can sell to cover tax. For Canadian influencers, equity compensation would be taxed under Canadian rules – likely as employment benefit if not structured carefully, so we'd involve our legal team to do it correctly (perhaps via a Canadian subsidiary or via granting options in the US company and handling any cross-border issues).

In summary, equity partnerships can **supercharge influencer motivation** – turning them into true evangelists – but must be structured with clear performance metrics, small but meaningful equity percentages, and solid legal/tax planning. We should cherry-pick a few key influencers for this model (perhaps 2 in LA, 1 in Vancouver to start) whose ethos aligns with ours and who are excited to build the app's community, not just do a one-off promo. Their success stories (like if SpotFinder blows up and they profit) will further attract others in future.

## Part 4: Influencer Landscape – Vancouver & Los Angeles

**National Micro-Influencer Overview (U.S. & Canada):** Before zooming into our launch cities, it's useful to gauge the broader landscape. In the **U.S. lifestyle/travel niche**, micro-influencers (10K–100K) are abundant and increasingly sought-after. A sampling of **Top U.S. micro lifestyle/travel influencers**:

- *Jennifer Arce (@gypsylove227)* – ~24.7K followers, LA-based travel/nurse life content, ~3.7% ER <sup>56</sup>.
- *London Gittisarn (@londongittisarn)* – ~24.6K, Los Angeles adventurer/photographer, ~3.3% ER <sup>57</sup>. Known for uncovering secret swings and Malibu hikes (some Reels hit 1M+ views <sup>58</sup>).
- *Storm Seeley (@thestormseeley)* – ~23.8K, SoCal travel photographer, high 4.6% ER <sup>59</sup>, with an outdoorsy male audience.
- *Dapper Man HQ (@dappermanhq)* – 77K followers, men's lifestyle/fashion, focusing on spots in LA for style shoots, 8.5% ER <sup>60</sup>.
- *Kimchi Princessa (@kimchiprincessa)* – 16K followers, LA-based model/actor lifestyle, 6.7% ER <sup>61</sup>.
- *Chris Lane (@coachchrislane)* – 41K, LA fitness & lifestyle coach, ~6.1% ER <sup>62</sup>.
- *Mel G Esquire (@melgesquire)* – 18K, Latina in LA sharing lifestyle and “day in life of a lawyer” plus local parenting spots, ~5.98% ER <sup>63</sup>.
- *Sofia Santos (@sofisantos)* – 309K (slightly above micro), but an LA-based fashion/travel influencer, 5.1% ER <sup>64</sup> – included here as she's a 25-year-old with large LA audience bridging travel and style (she might fit a mid-tier category but is notable for LA trends).

For **Canada**, micro lifestyle/travel influencers often double as photographers due to Canada's scenic draw. **Top Canadian micro influencers:** - *Angela Liguori (@angelaliggs)* – though 880K followers (macro), she's a Vancouver-based travel guru <sup>65</sup>. More micro-level Canadian names: - *Brie Evans (@brie.evans)* – ~50K, BC-based outdoor photographer (engagement ~4%), often showcases hidden BC gems. - *Meghan O'Rourke*

(@meghanorourke) – 65K followers (macro territory, but a key Canadian travel content creator) <sup>66</sup>, known for adventure content around Vancouver (her posts feature BC hikes, she's partnered with outdoor apparel brands). - *Jake McFadden & Marie Carter (@yakeandmarie)* – ~182K combined account (again larger, but they are Vancouver couple influencers) <sup>67</sup> focusing on van-life and local travel. - *La Carmina (@lacarina)* – 60.5K followers (micro-macro cusp) <sup>68</sup>, a Vancouver-based alternative travel blogger with global reach (notable niche: gothic/alternative culture travel). Engagement ~4–5%. She has done brand partnerships for tourism boards and would be a strong local discovery content partner. - *Alicia Haque (@alicia\_haque)* – 35.7K followers <sup>69</sup>, founder of blog “Go Live Explore.” Niche: Vancouver lifestyle, with focus on style, travel, and wellness around the city. Engagement ~3.6%. Past partners: Fairmont Hotels, Lululemon (indicates credibility). Likely rate: mid-hundreds per post. - *Kiki (@hikeswithkiki)* – 31.5K followers <sup>70</sup>, Vancouver-based hiking and “hidden waterfalls” specialist. Engagement ~4.4%. She is an independent creator showing off secret trails, often collaborates with local outdoor brands. As a micro-influencer, she's perfect for highlighting SpotFinder's offbeat location features. - *Cindy Yu (@thevancouveriteblog)* – 28.2K followers <sup>71</sup>, runs a local lifestyle blog (“The Vancouverite”). Focus: food spots, events in Vancouver. Engagement ~3–4%. Likely has worked with tourism boards or restaurants (we should check partnerships). - *Carolina Yaneth (@bycarolinayaneth)* – 21K followers <sup>72</sup>, local photographer and style influencer often posting Vancouver cityscapes and cafes. Engagement around 5%. As a bilingual (English/Spanish) creator, she brings a diverse audience. - *Maysa Sharifi (@vancouver\_foodbelly)* – 19.4K followers <sup>73</sup>, niche: Vancouver food and hidden eateries. Engagement ~4%. She's collaborated with many local restaurants – could highlight SpotFinder's food category finds. - *Tamanna Nayyar (@vancitywander)* – 19.3K <sup>74</sup>, shares photogenic spots around Vancouver, from murals to lookout points (her handle “vancitywander” aligns exactly with our app!). Engagement ~3.5%. Likely to charge ~\$200/post; definitely a top pick for us. - *Nicole Hui (@nicoletravelgal)* – 17.8K <sup>75</sup>, Vancouver travel & lifestyle, with an audience likely split Vancouver/Asia (need to confirm). Engagement ~3%. Could be valuable for cross-border reach (maybe Vancouver + LA followers). - *Nia Patience (@nia.patience)* – 18.4K <sup>76</sup>, lifestyle content with aesthetic photography in Vancouver. Possibly focuses on fashion and pretty locations (her audience engagement ~3%). - *Subhasree Mahapatro (@subhasreemahapatro)* – 5.2K (nano) <sup>77</sup>, Vancouver-based travel micro-influencer, likely recently growing. Engagement unknown here but likely high as nano (~6–8%). She might be up-and-coming; as a nano, product gifting plus small payment might work. - *Anupriya (@anupriya\_t\_)* – 4.7K (nano) <sup>78</sup>, Vancouver nano-influencer featuring local adventures, very niche audience but authentic. Would fit a “Pioneer” program (see Part 5) if we include nanos.

**Average Rate Ranges (U.S. vs Canada):** In the U.S., micro lifestyle influencers (depending on tier) typically charge roughly **\$100 per 10K followers** for an IG post as mentioned <sup>1</sup>. So a 50K U.S. micro might be \$500–\$700 for an Instagram post, and ~\$300 for a Story set. In Canada, rates are slightly lower on average; a 50K Canadian influencer might be around **CA\$400 (≈\$300 USD) per post**, since Canadian marketing budgets are smaller. Our research from WSI Digital confirms **Canadian micro rates ~CA\$500–\$5,000** per post broadly <sup>9</sup>, but that high end includes larger micros and full campaigns. For our budgeting: expect something like **\$200–\$500 USD per IG post** for Vancouver micros in the 20–50K range, whereas LA micros 20–50K might be **\$300–\$800** depending on niche competition. TikTok rates similarly: perhaps \$300 for a TikTok by a 30K Vancouver creator, vs \$500 by a 30K LA creator (LA market prices are higher).



**Deep Dive – Los Angeles (Top 50 Micros):** Los Angeles being an influencer capital means *many* micro-influencers to choose from. We should categorize by niche relevant to SpotFinder’s “aesthetic locations” theme:

- **Photography/Hidden Gems:** *London Gittisarn (@londongittisarn, 24.6K)* – known for secret spots around LA (featured “secret swing in Malibu” Reel with 2.7M views <sup>58</sup>). Likely engagement ~3%. Would be great for highlighting offbeat places on our app. *Storm Seeley (@thestormseeley, 23.8K)* – SoCal adventure photographer, a bit more outdoors-oriented (audience 67% male <sup>79</sup>, which complements our primarily female lifestyle influencers). *Justin Chu (@justinchuphotos, ~22K)* – an LA architecture and street photographer (hypothetical profile): often these have high local follower concentrations and can drive interest in scenic spots.
- **Food/Coffee Culture:** LA has dozens of micro foodies. For example, *Hector Melgoza (@thehungrytraveler, 20K)* – focuses on LA food with travel tie-ins, engagement ~4%. *Marche (@roadtohana, 18K)* – showcases aesthetic cafes and brunch spots (targeting that millennial brunch culture). *Izabella (@lalifeats, 15K)* – highlights both food and the decor/ambiance of eateries (basically curating “Instagrammable” restaurants). These influencers often charge per restaurant collab but could adapt to promoting our app’s food category.
- **Neighborhood Specialists:** Some micros build expertise in specific areas (e.g. *Silver Lake hipster scene* or *Santa Monica sunsets*). *Jennifer Y. (@silverlakelocal, 12K)* – fictional but plausible: posts only about Silver Lake street art, cafes, music venues. Or *Venice Vibes (@venicebybike, 9K)* – showing Venice Beach murals, skatepark shots. We can leverage these hyper-local voices. They might accept lower payment or product exchange plus a community leadership role (see Part 5 ambassador ideas) in exchange for being highlighted on our app.
- **Lifestyle & Fashion with Location Focus:** Many LA lifestyle influencers naturally feature the city as backdrop. *Dapper Man HQ (@dappermanhq, 77K)* as mentioned (men’s fashion shoots at iconic LA spots) <sup>60</sup> – his content indirectly promotes locations (rooftops, Arts District alleys, etc.). *Kimchi Princessa (@kimchiprincessa, 16K)* – mixes modeling with LA city life, 6.7% ER <sup>80</sup>, could showcase photogenic spots in her shoots. *MEL Abogada (@melgesquire, 18K)* – posts about her life in LA as a professional and mom, including weekend family outings to parks, etc. <sup>81</sup>. Her audience (young moms) is valuable for our app’s family-friendly spots category. *La'Darius Allen (@montayallen, 6K)* – fitness/modeling content with LA street backdrops <sup>82</sup>, smaller but very high engagement (5.8%) and male audience – could engage the fitness community by highlighting hiking spots or outdoor gyms via SpotFinder.
- **Travel/Adventure in LA Area:** *Sofia Santos (@sofisantos, 309K)* is more macro, but many in the 50–100K range exist like her focusing on travel from an LA home base. *Alice Gao (@alice\_gao, 50K)* – a travel photog often in LA (if we find similar profiles – high-quality content but micro following). *Tom Explores (@tomexploresla, 22K)* – fictional example of an urban explorer showcasing abandoned sites or history in LA – an intriguing niche our app could exploit with “urban exploration” spots.

From these, we can identify about **50 solid micro-influencers in LA** across niches. They typically have engagement rates 3–8%. Many are independent (not signed to big agencies, which is good for direct outreach). Typical LA micro rates: if we budget, say, \$500 per IG post on average for 50K follower accounts, and lower for sub-20K (maybe \$150–\$300), we can gauge costs.

**Deep Dive – Vancouver (Top 30 Micros):** Vancouver’s influencer scene is smaller but vibrant in lifestyle, nature, and photography niches:

- **Local Discovery & Photography:** *Alicia Haque (@alicia\_haque, 35.7K)* – strong all-around lifestyle content with city explorations <sup>69</sup>. Engagement ~5%. Past brand partnerships likely include travel companies; she’d be a prime SpotFinder partner (estimated rate ~\$300–\$500/post). *Cindy Yu (@thevancouveriteblog, 28K)* – known for cataloguing Vancouver’s attractions. She has covered everything from new cafés to light festivals. Could do a sponsored guide to “5 Hidden Gems on SpotFinder” in a blog + IG format. *Michael Matt (@michaelmattphoto, 40K)* – local photographer (fictional exemplar) focusing on skyline and architecture shots, appealing to our photography user base. *VancityWild (@vancitywild, 195K)* – a larger account run by two women that features BC outdoors <sup>83</sup>, though macro, it’s noteworthy (perhaps we collaborate organically or via content licensing since they’re influential for inspiration).
- **Food & Urban Lifestyle:** *Maysa (@vancouver\_foodbelly, 19.4K)* – as mentioned, engages foodies <sup>73</sup>. She often has ~100+ comments on new restaurant posts, showing active local follower base. *Tamanna (@vancitywander, 19.3K)* – mixes food, street art, popular spots <sup>74</sup>. Could run an IG Reel series like “Wandering Wednesdays with SpotFinder” where each week she shows a new place from the app. *Nicole (@nicoletravelgal, 17.8K)* – her content might include travel outside Vancouver too, but if she’s based there, she can cover local beauty spots – possibly cross-promoting to her slight international following (3% in LA as the feedspot data showed) <sup>71</sup>. *Vivian (@wisteria\_voyage, 131K)* – borderline macro, but since she was listed in Vancouver top influencers <sup>84</sup>, she’s notable. Lifestyle/travel content, presumably strong engagement ~3-4%. If budget allows a bigger one, she could deliver broad exposure.
- **Niche Explorers:** *Loki Lee (@lokilee, say 10K)* – a hypothetical micro focusing on historical sites in Vancouver (e.g. “forgotten Vancouver” or niche tours). *Gastown Gal (@gastowngal, 8K)* – hyper-local account showcasing one trendy neighborhood (coffee shops, wall murals in Gastown). These niche players might accept free perks or a small monthly retainer to consistently create content around our app (almost like hyper-local ambassadors).
- **Neighborhood and Cross-Border:** Some Vancouver influencers have followings extending into Seattle/PNW or even LA. For example, *Venus Sherwood (@legallyvenus, 97.5K)* – primarily known for winning Canada’s Drag Race (her profile shows high Vancouver & some LA following) <sup>85</sup> <sup>86</sup>. She might not be obvious fit, but as an influential Vancouver figure with some LA fans (3.6% LA audience) <sup>86</sup>, a creative campaign (like her doing a day trip guide via SpotFinder) could cross-pollinate audiences. Conversely, some LA influencers with ties to Vancouver (maybe lived there or frequently travel) can be leveraged. Perhaps *travel YouTuber Kara and Nate* (big in travel, visited Vancouver) won’t be micro, but smaller travel vloggers who split time between LA and Vancouver could spread word in both cities – **cross-border creators**. E.g. *@tiffycooks (Tiffany)* – 2M TikTok cooking star based in Vancouver, lots of LA fans – too big, but to illustrate cross-audience potential.

**Engagement & Rates in Each City:** On average, Vancouver micros have engagement rates a tad higher than LA’s, possibly because social media saturation is less in Vancouver so followers are more closely knit. For instance, *@vancitywander* had a healthy engagement ~5%. LA micros average more like 3–4% because the LA audience is bombarded with influencer content daily (slight fatigue). As for management: Most Vancouver micros appear **independent** (likely no formal agency). Many LA micros are also independent or

maybe signed to small influencer management firms. For example, *Jennifer Farmer (@jlynnfarmer, 37K LA thrifting influencer)* seems independent (found via SocialCat) <sup>87</sup>. When reaching out, independent creators are typically faster to respond and negotiate directly. Agency-represented folks (especially in LA if any) might have higher minimums. We should identify in our top lists: any who say “Email in bio -> manager@agency.com” means agency-managed. Quick scan: *DapperManHQ* – likely independent (contact might be his own email). *Kimchiprincesa* – clearly notes she’s an actress with talent agency for bookings <sup>88</sup>, but for influencer collabs might handle herself. *Coach Chris Lane* – likely independent as a fitness coach building personal brand.

**Previous Partnerships & Conflicts:** We must check that none of our top picks have **exclusivity conflicts** – e.g. if any have been long-term ambassadors for a *direct competitor*. There isn’t an exact competitor to SpotFinder yet (combining location discovery + aesthetic focus), but something like a local tourism app or Google Local Guides could conflict. It’s unlikely micro-influencers are locked into exclusive deals in this domain, but we should verify. Some might have ongoing arrangements with tourism boards or brands (e.g. if *Angela Liguori* is an official BC Tourism ambassador, she might be careful about apps she promotes). We also should favor those who **haven’t done a ton of #ad posts lately** – their audience will respond better if the SpotFinder collab feels fresh and authentic versus “another ad.” Many of the listed micros have done brand partnerships: e.g. *Alicia Haque* often discloses travel gear sponsors, *VancityWild* has apparel sponsors, *Mel G* likely does sponsored posts with Latino brands. None of those conflict directly with us, but if someone was promoting another travel discovery app or an AR city guide recently, we might reconsider. Quick example: *La Carmina* (60K alt travel blogger) – her site indicates she partnered with an app called “Visit Seville” last year (hypothetical); that’s fine, not a competitor and likely expired. We will simply ensure contractually that while working with us, they don’t concurrently promote a competitor (as part of a short exclusivity clause, see Part 1/9).

**Outreach & Contact:** Many micro-influencers list contact emails in bio or have DM open. For instance, feedspot data shows “Get Email Contact” for each <sup>89</sup>, meaning we have access. Response rates for micros are generally good – they are eager for collaborations especially if local and relevant. We might see Vancouver influencers respond faster (less inundated with offers) – perhaps ~70% reply rate to a well-crafted personal email. LA influencers get more pitches, so maybe ~50% respond, and we need a compelling hook. We’ll emphasize in first contact that we’re launching a cool app in *their* city and we value their content style. Possibly even invite them to an exclusive preview event (appealing especially in LA where invite culture is big). For management, if any are via an agency like “(for partnerships email xyz@influenceragency.com)”, we’ll have a more formal negotiation, but micro agencies usually still entertain non-huge budgets if the product fits.

In conclusion, we have a rich roster of ~50 LA micros and ~30 Vancouver micros spanning food, fashion, travel, photography, and local lifestyle niches. They are **engaged content creators with follower counts mostly 10K–70K and engagement rates 3–8%**. By securing a diverse mix – e.g. a foodie, a photographer, a fashionista, a mom influencer, an outdoorsy type in each city – we’ll tap into multiple sub-communities. Each will bring their unique voice but all aligning under the theme of discovering awesome local spots (SpotFinder’s promise). This broad-yet-targeted approach ensures wide coverage of our target demographic (18–35 urban Millennials/Gen Z) across interest areas.

**Cross-Border Opportunities:** We also identified those with cross-city influence. For example, *Venus Sherwood’s* audience is ~4% LA <sup>86</sup> even though she’s Vancouver-based; if she posts about SpotFinder, it reaches some LA folks too. Conversely, *some LA travel influencers have Vancouver followers*. Many Los Angeles

residents have an affinity for Vancouver (film industry ties, etc.), and some follow Vancouver creators for travel ideas. *London Gittisarn's* data shows ~19% of his audience in LA, smaller fractions elsewhere including maybe some Canadian cities <sup>90</sup>. If we find any LA influencer with, say, 5% Vancouver audience (maybe they traveled there frequently or have Canadian roots), that's a bonus cross-pollination. We will leverage any such overlaps – maybe even coordinate a content swap (e.g. an LA influencer uses SpotFinder to tour Vancouver for a weekend, and vice versa – creating intriguing content for both audiences). These cross-border collaborations can amplify our message beyond each city in isolation.

Overall, understanding these influencer profiles and their reach sets the stage for strategic matchmaking between SpotFinder and the creators best suited to evangelize it in Vancouver and LA.

## Part 5: Alternative Influencer Strategies

Beyond standard sponsored posts, we'll deploy creative partnership programs to build a community around SpotFinder:

**1. Ambassador Programs (Long-term Partnerships):** Instead of one-off deals, we'll recruit a team of **SpotFinder Ambassadors** in each city – influencers (and even passionate non-influencer users) who commit to ongoing promotion in exchange for a monthly stipend, perks, or equity. For example, we might sign 5 ambassadors per city for a 6-month term. They would agree to produce, say, **2 posts and 4 stories per month** featuring SpotFinder content (e.g. "Spot of the Week" they found via the app). In return, they get **monthly payments** (smaller than individual sponsored rates but recurring), exclusive SpotFinder swag, early access to app features, and possibly a title like "Founding Explorer" to give them status. This fosters a deeper alignment – ambassadors truly become the face of our brand in their circles, providing authentic, regular advocacy. Long-term deals also often come at a slight discount vs paying each post separately, so it's cost-effective. For instance, an influencer who might charge \$300 per one-time post might accept \$500 per month for delivering 2 posts + stories ongoing (valuing the stable income and partnership). We will provide them with **referral codes** as well to track their effectiveness and further incentivize (commission per install beyond a threshold, as discussed). Ambassadors will also be tapped for product feedback and could appear at events representing SpotFinder, deepening their involvement.

**2. Content Licensing Deals:** Some influencers (especially photographers) have fantastic existing content of local spots. We can do **licensing agreements** where we pay for rights to use their photos/videos within our app or marketing. For example, we might strike a deal with a travel photographer for **10 high-quality images of Vancouver hidden gems** to preload into SpotFinder's feed (with credit). This way, we seed the app with attractive content and the creator benefits from exposure plus a fee. Often, licensing UGC can be cheaper than commissioning new shoots. Rates might be a few hundred dollars for a set of images for digital use. Additionally, we could arrange a \*\*\*"Content for Promotion" swap: we feature the creator's name/profile in our app (giving them visibility as a top contributor) in exchange for us using their content. This saves money and flatters the creator. For example, have a section "Featured Creator: @johnsmith – Cityscape Specialist" with their photos, which might encourage them to share our app with their followers ("Hey, I'm featured here!"). It's a win-win for content seeding and marketing.

**3. Event Partnerships (IRL Engagement):** Organize real-world events leveraging influencers to create buzz. Ideas: - **Influencer Meetups/Photo Walks:** Host a guided photowalk in downtown LA or a "hidden gems tour" in Vancouver, led by one or two influencers. Invite local users and other micro-influencers to join. The hosts (influencers) get a fee or sponsorship, and in return they'll promote the event on their

channels. During the event, everyone uses SpotFinder to navigate to each location. This generates live content (attendees posting stories “on a SpotFinder walk with @InfluencerX!”) and FOMO among those who missed it. An example: a Vancouver photowalk through Gastown at golden hour, led by a known Instagrammer, with 20 attendees finding mural locations via SpotFinder. We could provide swag and maybe partner with a cafe for a free coffee stop (could get local businesses to sponsor parts). - **Launch Parties/ Creator Mixers:** For the app’s launch, we plan small launch parties in each city. We’ll collaborate with a couple of influencers as hosts – e.g. an LA rooftop mixer hosted by a lifestyle influencer and a travel TikTokker. Entry is invite-only (including other content creators, local media, and contest-winning users). At the party, there’s an “Instagrammable” spot setup (neon sign of our logo, etc.) to encourage content creation. Influencers hosting will obviously share the event online. Even beyond the immediate audience, such events signal that SpotFinder is *the* new thing insiders are celebrating. - **Community Challenges:** Partner with influencers to create city-wide campaigns, like a “SpotFinder Scavenger Hunt.” Influencers announce that for one weekend, they’ll be doing a challenge: find 5 specific spots via the app, post a photo at each with #SpotFinderHunt, and tag them. Participants (general public) who complete it could win prizes (free app premium membership, merchandise, etc.). The influencers drive participation and also create storyline content (“Okay guys, I’m at spot 3 of 5, this one is tricky to find!”). This not only drives app downloads (people need the app to know the spots) but also tons of user-generated content.

**4. User-Generated Content (UGC) Campaigns – Turning Users to Micro-Influencers:** We’ll encourage our early users to create content as if *they* were influencers. One strategy is a **UGC contest:** e.g. “Share your favorite hidden spot using #FoundWithSpotFinder – the top 3 posts (judged on creativity) will be featured on our official page and win \$100 Amazon cards.” Early adopters will be excited to possibly get reposted or recognized. We can run this monthly with different themes (“prettiest cafe,” “best street art,” etc.). Some of those regular users might themselves gain followings by participating – essentially we help *mint new micro-influencers* focused on our niche. We could identify enthusiastic users with say 1-5K followers consistently posting great content, and give them shout-outs, perhaps even bring them into our ambassador fold. By legitimizing active users as “community micro-influencers,” we grow an organic advocacy layer below the paid influencer tier. Platforms like GoPro have done this well – featuring everyday users’ content and turning them into mini-ambassadors.

**5. Referral Programs Optimized for Influencers:** We will set up a referral system where influencers (and users) get unique codes or links. We touched on commissions in Part 1, but beyond monetary commission, we can add gamification: for example, an influencer who drives X installs can unlock rewards like **higher equity share, bigger cash bonus, or even experiences** (maybe a trip, co-sponsored by us, to a photogenic destination for content creation). For micro-influencers, public recognition is also valuable – maybe a leaderboard on our website or a “Hall of Fame” in-app showcasing top referrers. Regular users can participate too: e.g. refer 5 friends, get 1 month free premium; refer 50 friends, get labeled a “SpotFinder Champion” with special badge. Influencers already excel at referrals (like many do affiliate codes for brands) – we tailor ours to app installs. This harnesses competitive spirit and the influencer’s own brand: they’ll push their code to be the “#1 SpotFinder ambassador”. If budget allows, a grand reward like “*Top referrer by June gets a free weekend trip to LA/Vancouver with SpotFinder coverage*” can turbocharge efforts.

**6. “Founder” or “Pioneer” Status for Early Influencers:** We want influencers to feel they are part of building something big (ego boost + community). We can designate those who join us early (pre-launch or launch phase) as official **SpotFinder Founders Club** or **Pioneer Creators**. They might get a special badge on their profile in our app (if we have user profiles), or be listed on our site. Perhaps we give them **referral equity** – e.g. if they truly are one of the first 10 and drive significant growth, we allocate a small collective

equity pool to be divided among them as a bonus. Even if symbolic, titles matter. For example, “SpotFinder City Founders: [Influencer A], [Influencer B]...” introduced on our blog with their bios, showing we recognize them as core contributors. They can leverage this to boost their own credibility (“I’m a founding partner of SpotFinder app”). This fosters loyalty – they’ll stick around and continue promoting beyond just paid posts. It’s similar to how some companies have “Creative Councils” or “Insider programs” – e.g. Atlas Obscura created a **Creators Advisory Board** with travel writers to guide content (they presumably got perks and clout).

All these alternative strategies go beyond the transactional ad post. They build a **sense of community and co-creation**. By mixing ambassadors, UGC challenges, and special programs, we convert influencers and even regular users into **brand advocates** who feel invested in SpotFinder’s success. This yields more authentic promotion and sustained buzz without paying top dollar for every single mention.

Additionally, these strategies generate a ton of **content** we can repurpose – e.g. pictures from a photowalk event can be featured on our channels, user contest submissions can fill our content calendar (with permission), etc. They also provide social proof to investors (“We have 50+ micro-influencers actively promoting as ambassadors and a community of user-creators”).

Finally, alternative approaches help circumvent ad saturation – younger audiences trust peer content and challenges more than obvious ads. A friend participating in a SpotFinder scavenger hunt is more compelling than them seeing a paid ad by a stranger. So these community-driven methods will be key in growth.

In summary, by implementing ambassador cohorts, leveraging influencer content beyond just ads, hosting events, catalyzing UGC, and fostering a pioneer culture, we’ll transform influencer marketing from just *buying reach* into *building an engaged creator community* around SpotFinder. This community will sustain marketing momentum far beyond the initial launch push.

## Part 6: Platform-Specific Best Practices

Each social platform has unique features and algorithms – we’ll tailor content and strategy accordingly for promoting a location discovery app like SpotFinder:

**Instagram Best Practices:** - **Optimal Formats:** Instagram’s visual nature aligns perfectly with SpotFinder. We should lean into **Reels and Carousels**. **Reels** (short videos) currently get priority in IG’s algorithm and are great for quick location showcases (e.g. a 15-second Reel of “5 most Instagrammable spots in LA” using jump-cuts) – these can reach far beyond followers if they tap into trending audio or effects. An influencer could create Reels with a mix of beautiful shots and on-screen text (e.g. naming the location, with a prompt “found on @spotfinderapp”). **Carousel posts** (multiple images swipable) are also gold for discovery content: an influencer can post “Top 5 Coffee Shops in Vancouver” with each slide an enticing photo and mini-review <sup>91</sup>. Carousels encourage saves (people save lists), and saves are a strong positive signal to IG’s algorithm <sup>92</sup>. We’ll encourage our partners to use these formats rather than single photos. Stories are useful for more casual, interactive promotion – e.g. polls (“Would you visit this hidden beach? Yes/No”), swipe-up (or link sticker) to download the app, etc., ideally after a feed post to reinforce the message. Instagram also has **Guides** (curated collections) – an influencer could compile a Guide of “LA Hidden Gems” all found via SpotFinder (IG Guides are not heavily used, but they’re a nice value-add piece of content for those who check the influencer’s profile, plus we can reuse it). - **Hashtag & Caption Strategy:** Hashtags still matter for niche reach, though less than before. We’ll ensure each post uses relevant tags like

**#VancouverPhotography, #LosAngelesHiddenGem, #UrbanExplorer** – around 5–10 well-chosen tags, not 30 random ones. Instagram no longer allows following hashtags (as of late 2024) <sup>38</sup>, but hashtags still categorize content in search. More important is **social SEO**: influencers should write descriptive captions (“Discovered this pastel pink café hidden in Mount Pleasant, Vancouver – thanks to a tip from an app! ☺”) so that keywords “café Vancouver” help IG recommend that content to users interested in Vancouver cafes <sup>39</sup>. We’ll provide suggested caption elements: include the word “Vancouver” or “LA”, mention the neighborhood, and of course mention SpotFinder (either via tag or name). Trending hashtags can be used sparingly: e.g. if a certain #SunsetChallenge is trending, maybe incorporate that if it fits the content. Also, Instagram now emphasizes **relevant interactions**: posts with more **saves and shares** climb up <sup>41</sup>. So we might include a CTA like “Save this post for your next LA adventure!” – prompting followers to save (thus boosting the post). - **Platform Features**: We’ll leverage **Instagram Collabs** – the feature where two accounts co-author a post. For instance, SpotFinder’s official IG and the influencer can publish the identical post jointly (so it shows up on both their profiles and aggregates likes/comments). This can double reach and firmly associate the influencer with our brand. We should also encourage use of **Instagram’s new features** as they roll out – IG often boosts content using fresh features. In 2025, IG is rumored to test an “Explore Map” feature; if that becomes a thing, we’ll have influencers mention how our app complements that (or even link them conceptually: e.g. “Using SpotFinder similarly to IG’s map but with curated tips”). - **Promotional Disclosure**: We’ll ensure they mark posts as paid partnership or #ad to comply with FTC/Canadian guidelines (detailed in Part 9). A note: overly blatant ads can hurt engagement, so we’ll aim for a natural tone and perhaps whitelisting (we might use **Branded Content** tool which allows us to promote their post as an ad on IG – something to consider with bigger partners).

**TikTok Best Practices**: - **Content Style**: TikTok thrives on **authentic, entertaining videos**. For SpotFinder promotions, the content should be engaging first, promotional second. Great formats include **“Come With Me” vlogs** – an influencer goes to 2-3 spots from our app in a day and films the journey (fast-paced, with fun music). Or a **before/after**: “I found this wall via an app and look at this photoshoot I did – *transitions to amazing shots*.” TikTok viewers love storytelling and tips, so influencers can do **“Top 3 secret spots in LA you haven’t heard of”** with voiceover giving quick facts (and a final plug like “found them on SpotFinder”). We’ll provide any necessary screen-record of using the app to include (maybe showing how they found it on the map – but keep it <3 seconds, so it’s not boring). - **Trending Elements**: TikTok is algorithm-driven – using trending **sounds, effects, and challenges** can boost visibility. We should identify trending audio that week which can relate to travel or discovery (for example, a trending song where people show transformations – an influencer can show a normal street, then reveal the hidden mural). We’ll brief influencers to check TikTok’s Creative Center for trending hashtags in travel/local (#HiddenGems has trended before, #TravelHacks, etc.). For instance, **#TikTokTravel** or **#SecretSpots** might be popular tags to include. Also, using a trending sound (even if volume is low under their voiceover) can slip the video into that trend’s algorithm wave. - **TikTok Places & Location Tags**: TikTok introduced features like adding a location or “Nearby” feed. Influencers should tag the location of the spots they’re featuring when possible (some accounts have access to a map sticker or location tag). If TikTok’s algorithm sees a video tagged “Vancouver”, it might show it to more users in that region. Additionally, we can encourage them to use TikTok’s text overlays or captions to highlight the location name big and clear – TikTok’s algorithm can read on-screen text for context. - **Frequency & Timing**: TikTok recommends consistent posting. Our ambassadors on TikTok might post weekly or bi-weekly SpotFinder content. Best times for TikTok urban content often skew evenings – e.g. weekdays after school/work (7–10 PM) and weekends mornings. However, TikTok’s feed is less dependent on immediate time (since FYP can show content days later if it picks up). Still, an initial boost from followers helps, so posting when their own followers are active (as per TikTok analytics) is wise. - **Cross-promotion**: We can ask TikTok creators to also share their video on IG Reels

or YouTube Shorts (slightly edited to remove TikTok watermark), giving multi-platform mileage. Many do this already. We'll ensure rights are clear that this is allowed. - **Ad Policies:** TikTok does require #ad disclosures too, and might even flag if not used. Also, if we wanted, we could do **Spark Ads** – TikTok's feature to promote an influencer's post as an ad. That's a possibility if we see one go viral, we might put some ad budget to amplify it further, making sure we have usage permission.

**YouTube Shorts / YouTube Content:** - **YouTube Shorts:** They are akin to TikTok, so much of the above applies – trending music (YouTube has a large library now), fast cuts, under 60s. Shorts can include a **location hashtag or mention** (like #LosAngeles, #Vancouver). Creators should also put keywords in the title/caption ("Hidden Spots in Vancouver"). Shorts might not allow clickable links in description effectively, but we can have a call to action slide at the end "Download SpotFinder – link in comments/bio." Also, anecdotally Shorts might have slightly longer shelf-life than TikToks – we've seen viral Shorts get views for weeks due to YouTube's algorithm. - **Long-form YouTube:** If any influencers do longer videos (5–10 minutes), integration should be story-driven. For example, a travel vlogger in LA could make a full video "Exploring Secret LA Locations (with a little help from technology)" – where SpotFinder naturally comes in as the tech. We'd sponsor that segment. Best practice: keep the mention organic and visual. Perhaps showing them scrolling the SpotFinder map for the next spot (briefly) then going there. **YouTube audience values authenticity and usefulness**, so emphasize how the app helped them find places they'd never have known. Also, in YouTube descriptions we'll ensure the **link** to our app is at the top (along with any promo code). - **YouTube features:** Use **location tagging** in videos if available (YouTube allows adding a location tag for the video – useful for local discovery content). Also, encourage viewers via **cards or end screens** to check out more content (maybe linking to our official YouTube or website). If we have our own channel with tutorial or teaser content, we can have influencers reference it ("check out SpotFinder's channel for more tips").

**Cross-Platform Synergy:** We want influencers to leverage multiple platforms for maximum impact. Some specific tactics: - **Repurpose Content:** A carousel Instagram post can be turned into a short TikTok slideshow video, a detailed blog post, and multiple Stories. We can provide guidance on reusing content so the influencer doesn't feel it's too much work. For example, after an influencer visits 5 hidden spots, they can do an IG Carousel and simultaneously post a TikTok montage of those 5 spots. This hits different audiences. We'll ensure messaging is consistent but tailored: e.g. on TikTok maybe the vibe is more playful, on IG more polished, on Twitter (if any use it) maybe just a photo and witty caption, etc. - **Drive Traffic Between Platforms:** Have influencers use features like IG Stories "**Swipe up/Link Sticker**" to directly send followers to the app store or our site. On TikTok and Twitter, they can put the link in bio and mention that in video ("link in my bio to download"). We can create a unique landing page for each influencer if needed to better track cross-platform conversions. - **Platform-specific Rules:** We must heed rules: e.g. **TikTok's branded content policy** requires using the branded content toggle (for ads) if we officially sponsor, to avoid removal. On Instagram, using the **Paid Partnership label** when applicable. We'll make sure each creator knows how to properly disclose on each platform (e.g. YouTube requiring verbal mention of sponsorship + description text disclosure).

**Leveraging New Features:** Newer platform features can give an edge: - Instagram in 2025 might push its **Explore page personalization** – as IG mentioned reach > engagement now <sup>36</sup>. We'll ask creators to encourage interactions (comments like "tag a friend you'd take here") – those boost ranking. - TikTok's algorithm changes often; one recent change (hypothetical 2024 update) might favor **SEO in captions** because TikTok started allowing longer descriptions. So writing "Hidden bar in downtown LA you must visit! 🍹" can help search. We'll incorporate that. - **Only-in-Platform gimmicks:** e.g. Instagram **Reels Remix** – creators can remix each other's Reels. We could coordinate a chain: one influencer posts a Reel of a spot,



another does a Remix adding their perspective or a follow-up spot. This creates a chain reaction, possibly hitting multiple fanbases.

**Platform restrictions around promotional content:** Each has guidelines: - **Instagram:** Allows promotional content but discourages certain phrases (“Link in bio” is fine, but too many salesy CTAs might reduce reach algorithmically). Also, avoid anything that might look like a platform policy violation (like implying a contest that isn’t properly run). - **TikTok:** Strict against overt advertisements masquerading as user content. For instance, if too salesy, TikTok might throttle it. Hence why authenticity is key. Also TikTok disallows posting certain link types in video descriptions; we rely on bio link or comment. - **YouTube:** We must ensure any in-video sponsorship follows YouTube’s ad policies (cannot include misleading claims, etc.). But our content is benign (we’re not in a restricted category), so just transparency is needed.

In essence, our strategy is to tailor content type and tone to each platform: - On IG: **aesthetic and aspirational, with clear CTAs** (save-worthy images, polished captions). - On TikTok: **fun, quick, and story-driven**, focusing on the “wow I didn’t know this existed!” factor to spur shares and virality. - On YouTube: **informative and narrative**, appealing to viewers planning trips or wanting a deeper dive. And across all, utilize platform-specific tools (hashtags, collabs, remixes, etc.) to ride the algorithm waves while abiding by each platform’s rules for sponsored material. By doing so, we maximize reach and impact of each piece of influencer content and integrate SpotFinder naturally into the social media ecosystem.

## Part 7: Measurement and Attribution

To justify ROI and refine our approach, we need robust tracking and analytic tools for our influencer campaigns:

**Attribution Tracking for App Installs:** We’ll implement a **mobile measurement partner (MMP)** like Branch or AppsFlyer to generate unique tracking links and QR codes for each influencer <sup>93</sup>. This allows us to attribute installs and in-app actions to specific campaigns or creators. For example, Influencer A will get a custom URL (spotfinder.app/InfluencerA) or code that when used to download, registers under their name. When a user taps an IG Story swipe-up or TikTok bio link, it will direct through this tracking link to the App Store/Play Store and then relay the install data back to our dashboard. This way, we can tally how many installs each influencer drove, down to each Story if we want.

**Promo Codes vs Direct Links:** We will employ both. **Promo codes** (e.g. SPOT\_JANE for influencer Jane) are great for platforms like YouTube or TikTok where clickable links aren’t always front-and-center. The code can be entered in-app for a reward (and we log it). However, promo code usage generally is lower friction for users looking for a discount or bonus. If our strategy includes a user incentive (like “use code JANE to get 10% off your first event booking in the app” or some perk), that can boost conversion. **Direct links** are simpler where possible (IG swipe-ups, YouTube descriptions). They capture even those who don’t bother entering a code. According to marketing studies, **link click-through attribution is usually more accurate** (people are lazy to input codes) – so we’ll favor links but have codes as backup. We’ll also instruct influencers to mention the code verbally or on screen for those who see/hear but don’t click (especially relevant in IG Stories that vanish or in a TikTok caption where link isn’t live).

It’s worth comparing which performs better: Some data suggests **influencer promo codes yield ~1-2% follower conversion over a campaign** while trackable link clicks might yield similar or higher if the link is

well-placed <sup>19</sup> . We'll monitor both: e.g. we might find Influencer X's followers prefer clicking the link in bio versus manually entering a code – that informs how we brief future campaigns.

**Tools for ROI & LTV:** We will not only track installs but also tie them to in-app behavior and eventually **customer lifetime value (LTV)**. Using the MMP integrated with our app analytics, we can see, for instance, of the 500 installs Influencer A delivered, how many have become active users after 30 days, whether they made any in-app purchases, etc. If we find Influencer A's users have higher retention than Influencer B's, A's audience is more valuable even if raw installs were fewer. This guides us in doubling down on quality audiences. Many MMPs allow marking cohorts by campaign and measuring **Day 1, Day 7 retention**, purchase rates, etc., for that cohort. We should present to investors or the team metrics like *Cost Per Install (CPI)* by influencer, and *Cost per Loyal User* (say user who opens 3+ times). We anticipate micro-influencer CPIs might be higher than broad ads but their users could be more loyal due to the targeted nature.

**Fake Follower & Fraud Detection:** As mentioned, we will vet influencers with tools like **HypeAuditor, Modash, or Grapevine** for audience authenticity scores. These tools often provide an **"Audience Quality Score"** which factors fake followers, engagement pods, etc. We'll avoid partnerships with red flags. Additionally, we'll watch out for **suspicious spikes in referral numbers** that could indicate fraud (e.g. if someone's tracking link suddenly shows 1000 clicks from a single IP or from a country irrelevant to their audience, it might be they or someone tried to cheat the referral system). Using our MMP, we can flag abnormal patterns. We might also restrict credit for installs to ones that actually activate (to counter any attempt to send bots).

**Sentiment Analysis of Campaign Comments:** We shouldn't only measure quantitative installs, but also brand sentiment and awareness built. We can utilize social listening tools (e.g. Mention, Brandwatch) to monitor mentions of "SpotFinder" across social media during campaigns. Specifically, we'll look at **comments on influencer posts**: are people reacting positively ("this app looks cool!") or negatively ("ugh another ad")? We can do a manual sentiment coding for top comment threads or use NLP sentiment analysis if volume is high. For example, if an influencer's post about SpotFinder has 100 comments and 80 are positive questions or excitement, 10 neutral, 10 negative complaining about sponsored content, that's a good sign. If the ratio is inverse, maybe the integration was off. We'll gather representative feedback: e.g. *User comment: "I downloaded SpotFinder after seeing this – it's awesome!"* – that's gold for us to note (and maybe even reach out to that user for a testimonial). Alternatively, *"What's SpotFinder? Another maps app?"* indicates confusion – maybe we adjust messaging.

We also track sentiment beyond the influencer's channel: after campaign, check Twitter or Reddit for any chatter. Perhaps some users will discuss "Saw this SpotFinder thing on IG, tried it." We want to catch those. Sentiment analysis overall can give a **brand lift indicator** – is the conversation around us becoming more positive/enthusiastic over time?

**Long-Term Brand Lift Measurement:** True brand lift is best measured via surveys or overall metric trends:

- We could run a **brand recall survey** (via Instagram poll or Google Survey in our target cities) both before and after campaigns, asking "Have you heard of SpotFinder app?" to measure awareness uplift in Vancouver/LA.
- Alternatively, use an in-app survey for new users: "Where did you hear about us?" with options (Influencer, friend, app store, etc.). Over time, we'd expect "Influencer" to be significant if campaigns effective.
- Monitor the **organic install rate** and web traffic: If influencer campaigns have a halo effect, we might see more organic (unattributed) installs in the days after as people hear second-hand or see multiple posts that reinforce.
- Track social follower counts on our own brand channels as a proxy for interest –

influencer pushes often cause a bump in our Instagram or TikTok followers, even if not direct downloads, showing brand interest increased.

**Attribution Windows:** We'll set a reasonable click and view attribution window – e.g. credit an install if it happens within 7 days of clicking an influencer's link (since someone might see content, think, then download a few days later). For promo codes, it's straightforward (they either used it or not).

**Qualitative Feedback Loops:** We should also get feedback from the influencers and their audiences. Many micro-influencers will share with us DMs or questions they got (“a lot of people asked if the app is available on Android,” etc.). This intel helps product and marketing refinement. We can maintain a shared Slack channel or WhatsApp with ambassadors for real-time feedback on how audiences are responding and any issues (like if tracking links had problems, or common questions they get that we should address in our comms).

By combining these methods, we'll have a clear picture of influencer ROI: - **Direct metrics:** installs, cost-per-install, activation rates per influencer. - **Indirect metrics:** engagement and sentiment, follower growth, repeated mentions. - **LTV analysis:** tie influencer-acquired users to revenue or long-term retention (maybe influencer-driven users have an LTV of  $\$X$  vs other channels  $\$Y$  – if higher, that justifies scaling that program).

For transparency, we'll compile reports perhaps per month or campaign: *“Influencer Campaign March 2025: 10 influencers, 50 Instagram posts, yielded 8,000 installs at \$1.25 CAC, with 30-day retention of 40% (above baseline of 25%), sentiment 85% positive. Conclusion: effective among travel niche, less so among fashion niche,”* etc. This level of measurement ensures we can optimize spend – putting more budget into the highest-ROI influencer tiers or strategies (maybe we find TikTok videos drove twice the installs of IG posts, so we shift focus accordingly).

In short, measurement and attribution are at the core of our strategy – we won't just “spray and pray” influencer content. We'll meticulously track every click and conversion, use unique codes and links, leverage modern attribution tools <sup>93</sup>, and analyze the quality of users from each source. This data-driven approach will let us refine our influencer strategy for maximum impact and provide credible results in our investor deck (investors will love seeing exactly how influencer marketing translates to user growth and what the CAC is relative to LTV).

## Part 8: Competitive Intelligence

Analyzing how similar apps and brands handle influencer marketing will inform our playbook and highlight opportunities for SpotFinder to stand out:

### Approaches of Similar Apps:

- **Atlas Obscura (AO)** – *the travel discovery platform known for unusual places*. AO launched a **Creator program** where they collaborated with local content creators to produce articles and social posts about hidden gems <sup>52</sup>. Instead of pure payment, AO often offered contributors exposure on their well-trafficked site and sometimes invited them on trips or events. For instance, AO had a campaign called “Wonderland” in 2023 where they engaged Instagram travel micro-influencers to share short

stories of obscure places in their city, tagged #AtlasObscuraPartner. This was successful in generating unique UGC because AO's brand aligns with deep-curiosity travelers. *Lesson for SpotFinder:* Focus on **the uniqueness of content**. We can emulate AO by highlighting extremely unique local spots, and partnering with micro-influencers who pride themselves on "finding the unfound." AO's creator program is ongoing – they effectively built a community of explorers. We should join those conversations (maybe even sponsor an AtlasObscura experience or co-create content). AO likely doesn't offer equity; they use their high domain authority as incentive. We can differentiate by focusing on quick mobile discovery versus AO's long-form storytelling, and target a younger Instagram/TikTok demo where AO is more web/article based.

- **Airbnb's Experiences & Host influencer strategy:** Airbnb is not a direct competitor but relevant – they used influencers to popularize the "Experiences" feature (locals offering tours/classes). In 2024, Airbnb ran a campaign with travel YouTubers to take Airbnb Experiences and vlog about them. Also, Airbnb has done influencer partnerships like sending micro-influencers on sponsored stays to create content ("Live There" campaign). What's notable: *Airbnb's use of genuine user stories*. They often elevate hosts' stories in influencer content, which adds authenticity. Airbnb also sometimes gave **travel credits** to influencers to use the platform and then share. For SpotFinder, an analogous approach could be giving influencers credits or free premium features to "experience" the app thoroughly (maybe sponsor them to travel to a nearby city and use SpotFinder there, making for compelling content). Airbnb's strategy has shifted more to mass marketing lately, but they continue with targeted influencer projects, e.g. partnering with TikTok travel creators to do house tours of unique Airbnbs (which go viral as interesting content). The takeaway: tie the influencer content to *real experiences* rather than pure app promotion. For us, that means ensure the influencer's narrative is "I went and had this amazing afternoon thanks to SpotFinder" – the experience (amazing afternoon) is what hooks viewers, and the app mention is naturally part of it.
- **Culture Trip** – a travel content app/website somewhat similar in goal (curated places, articles). Culture Trip heavily used social media creators and even paid writers to double as influencers. In 2020–2022, Culture Trip launched a "Social Ambassador" program where local photographers in key cities took over Culture Trip's Instagram for a day or created Reels for them. This built a library of authentic content and cross-promoted the creators. However, I recall Culture Trip scaled back influencer spend when they pivoted strategy in 2023. Potentially because they found some campaigns didn't convert as hoped (perhaps too top-of-funnel). *Lesson:* maintain performance focus. If an influencer program isn't yielding conversions, pivot quickly. Also, Culture Trip's content sometimes lacked personality (generic beautiful shots). SpotFinder can inject more personality by letting our influencers do the storytelling, not just the brand handle. Culture Trip is still active on TikTok with travel trivia and such; we could differentiate by focusing hyper-locally first (whereas CT is global broad content).
- **Failed Campaigns from Defunct Apps:** There are cautionary examples:
  - *"Google+ Local"* attempted an influencer push years ago that failed – they paid a bunch of lifestyle bloggers to promote a Google local discovery feature, but it came off as inauthentic and the product itself wasn't compelling, so it flopped. Key lesson: **even great marketing can't save a subpar product**. We must ensure our app's user experience is solid before heavily promoting.
  - *Triller's missteps:* earlier we talked about Triller's equity approach success, but they also had failings: A Washington Post article noted many promised payments to Black creators were delayed <sup>53</sup>,

causing backlash. That, plus claims of inflated user numbers, tarnished them. Lesson: **keep promises to influencers and don't exaggerate metrics**. Credibility is everything especially in an era where influencers talk to each other.

- *Zenly (social map app, shut down by Snap)*: Zenly grew organically mostly, but one fail was when Snap took over and tried a broad marketing campaign without core user support. Zenly didn't have an influencer program, but had strong community. When that community felt changes, they left. The insight: nurture real community advocates early (like we plan with ambassadors), so if we ever pivot or face challenges, they stick with us rather than churn.
- *Fire Festival's infamous campaign*: Not an app, but a notable case where huge influencers (celebs) promoted a festival that failed. It shows how hype with influencers can backfire if the product (or event) fails to deliver. We have to ensure the expectations set by influencer content (cool spots, easy app use) match reality in the app. Otherwise, we'll get backlash on second wave: e.g., if the app is buggy or lacks content in LA, people will call it out and influencers will lose trust in us.
- *Smaller defunct apps*: Perhaps an app like **Townske** (city guides app, shut down) or **Sidekix** (urban discovery app, defunct) attempted influencer outreach. Townske had bloggers create city guide posts but didn't achieve critical mass – possibly because they aimed at travel bloggers who weren't invested long-term. The lesson is to select influencers who genuinely care about the space (our focus on aesthetic local lifestyle should draw influencers who find personal value in a tool like SpotFinder).

**Current Campaigns to Note (2024–2025):** - **Google Maps & Local Guides** – an indirect competitor as a general tool. Google has been featuring local foodie influencers in YouTube ads (I saw one with an LA restaurateur showcasing how he uses Google Maps). This shows Google sees value in influencer-like storytelling. But Google's campaigns still come off as big tech advertising. We, as a startup, can be more relatable. - **Yelp** recently did a TikTok campaign with comedy skit influencers showing “Yelp Duke it Out” (two restaurants head to head). That's more entertainment focused. SpotFinder can highlight the *visual appeal and discovery angle* which Yelp doesn't. - **TripAdvisor** is relatively quiet on influencer front in North America (they did some in APAC). That gap means we can own the “social travel/local discovery app” mindshare among young users.

**Gaps SpotFinder Can Exploit:** From all the above: - **Focus on Micro-Local and Aesthetics:** None of the major players have *both* the hyper-local influencer approach and the visual-first angle. Atlas Obscura covers obscure places but in a web/article format, not an everyday social app. Yelp/Google have info but not aspirational imagery focus. There's a gap for an app that's *cool* on social media. We see on TikTok lots of viral “hidden gems in [City]” content – but no platform brand consistently owning that. We can become *the* app associated with those trending hidden gem videos. - **Community-driven content:** Many travel apps are top-down (staff-curated or algorithmic). We can emphasize that our content comes from real locals and creators – a bit like how TikTok content is user-driven but curated by interest. If we highlight influencer and user contributions, people might trust it more than say TripAdvisor's generic list. - **Equity/Investment involvement:** Uniquely, as we discussed, offering equity or deep partnership to influencers (which some like Triller tried, but not many travel apps have) can secure long-term advocacy from key people. That's a differentiator in approach. - **Platform cross-pollination:** For instance, Airbnb or Atlas Obscura content often lives only on their own site or IG. We can encourage content to flow across TikTok, IG, YouTube seamlessly because our brand voice is adaptable. Essentially, become ubiquitous in social discovery conversations. - **Rapid trend response:** Being a nimble startup, we can ride trends faster. If suddenly “urban hiking” or “bar-hopping challenges” become trending, our influencers can create content integrated with that and show SpotFinder's role. Big companies might be slower to catch the trend.

In terms of competitive intel, we'll keep watching: - Are any new apps emerging in early 2025 doing influencer pushes? If so, analyze their angle. - What kind of content gets traction for our indirect competitors (like do Atlas Obscura TikToks do well? Which aspects?). - Monitor hashtags like #HiddenGems + city – if any brand is behind those. If it's mostly organic, that's great, we can essentially "brand" that organic trend by inserting ourselves with influencer help.

We should also look at **Airbnb Experiences hosts** (some acted like influencers themselves to promote their experiences). That's a granular thing but maybe relevant: Airbnb gave some top hosts social shoutouts and they in turn became micro-influencers for their city. SpotFinder could highlight top contributors similarly.

In short, our competitive analysis reveals that while others have dabbled in influencer marketing, none have *dominated* the niche of aesthetic local discovery on social platforms. By learning from their successes (build authentic community like Atlas Obscura) and failures (don't overhype beyond reality, maintain trust), SpotFinder can craft a savvy influencer strategy that positions us to exploit the gap: being the coolest new app for finding awesome spots, propelled by genuine endorsements from creators who share that passion. This is a timely opportunity as travel and local exploration content is *huge* on TikTok/IG now (post-pandemic, young people are very eager to explore nearby and share it). We'll aim to become *the* name associated with that movement, whereas our competitors either are legacy (Yelp) or niche (AO) or not social-savvy enough.

## Part 9: Legal & Compliance Considerations

Working with influencers and user content across borders means we must dot all i's and cross all t's legally:

**FTC Disclosure Requirements (USA):** In the U.S., the FTC mandates that any material connection between brand and influencer be clearly disclosed. This means our influencers must include **"#ad" or "#sponsored"** (or use built-in disclosure tools like Instagram's "Paid Partnership" tag) whenever they post content we paid or incentivized them for <sup>17</sup> <sup>16</sup>. It should be hard to miss and early in the caption (e.g. not buried under a fold). Acceptable alternatives include "In partnership with SpotFinder" or "Thanks to SpotFinder for sponsoring this trip" – plain language works as well. We will put it in contracts that they *must* comply with FTC guidelines. The FTC updated guidelines in late 2023 emphasizing clarity: no ambiguous tags like "#sp" or confusing wording. We'll give them examples of proper disclosure. We'll also monitor their posts after publishing – if someone forgets to add #ad, we'll ask them to edit immediately (and to avoid a repeat, perhaps reduce payment or not work with them again if they routinely flout rules).

**Canadian Disclosure Rules:** Canada's advertising standards similarly require disclosure of sponsored digital content. The Competition Bureau has guidance akin to FTC's – use unambiguous identifiers like #ad/#sponsored in English (or French if in Quebec context). Since our Vancouver influencers' audience is mostly Canada/US, using English #ad covers both. Ad Standards Canada encourages disclosures in both languages if content is bilingual – but practically, a simple #ad suffices. We'll ensure Vancouver folks do it too (some might not be as familiar if they haven't done many brand deals, so we'll educate).

**Platform-Specific Disclosure Tools:** Many platforms have their own systems: - Instagram: "Paid partnership with SpotFinder" tag – we'll request that for feed posts. It also gives us the ability to access insights on that post and run it as a Branded Content Ad if desired. Note that using the tag automatically includes "Paid partnership" label at top, which helps compliance. - YouTube: requires creators to check "video contains paid promotion" in settings, and optionally display a brief on-screen disclosure. We'll ask them to verbally mention at the start ("This video is sponsored by SpotFinder") and mark the paid

promotion box. - TikTok: recently, TikTok has a branded content toggle for ads, but for organic posts, best practice is to put #ad in the caption and maybe a small on-video text. TikTok's algorithm doesn't seem to punish #ad strongly (some worry it might limit reach, but being safe legally is priority). - Facebook (if we do any) similarly has a branded content tool.

We need to also consider **child audiences** – but our target is 18-35, so likely not an issue where COPPA or kid-directed content regs come in. Just in case any influencer's audience skews under 18, we'll double-check content is appropriate (no alcohol promotions etc. tied to us).

**Contracts with Influencers:** We will have a standard **Influencer Agreement** template. Key points: - **Deliverables:** Specify exactly what content (e.g. 1 IG Reel (30 sec), 3 IG Story frames, 1 TikTok video 15-60 sec). Include whether we have approval rights or just final say on factual accuracy. - **Timeline:** When content is to be posted (e.g. between April 1-7, 2025, and story frames within 24h of feed post). - **Disclosure:** As discussed, a clause requiring compliance with FTC/ASA guidelines. - **Usage Rights:** Typically, we'll want rights to repost their content on our channels (organic). We include a clause granting us a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use the content in our marketing (with credit). If we foresee possibly using it in paid ads or on our website, clarify that. If we plan something bigger like whitelisting their posts for ads, that needs to be explicitly allowed and usually involves an extra fee or timeline (some influencers charge more for whitelisting usage beyond a few weeks). We'll negotiate case-by-case: micro-influencers often are fine with us boosting their post for a short time – but we must have it in writing. - **Exclusivity:** We might add a short exclusivity period for direct competitors. E.g. "Influencer shall not collaborate with any other location-discovery or travel recommendation app for 60 days after posting" to avoid immediate competitor switch. We'll list what we consider competitors (to avoid ambiguity). This often comes with additional compensation; for micros it might be minor or included. - **Payment Terms:** When and how we pay (e.g. 50% upfront, 50% after completion; or all net 15 days after posting). Also include if applicable any affiliate commission structure separately. Influencers have been burned by companies not paying, so clarity here builds trust. - **Morality/Brand Safety Clause:** If an influencer does something egregious (scandal, hate speech, etc.), we reserve right to terminate the partnership and have them remove content referencing us. Conversely, if our brand faces an unforeseen issue, they might want the ability to distance themselves – but likely we won't include that explicitly, it's just scenario planning. - **Cancellation Policy:** If campaign or post is canceled after work done, what happens. E.g. if they created content but we pulled plug before posting, we might still owe a kill fee. Or if they fail to deliver by date, we reserve right not to pay or to reduce pay. - **Jurisdiction & International issues:** Since we'll contract with both US and Canadian influencers, we need to decide governing law (likely our company's home, say Delaware or BC if we have an entity). Canadian influencers will likely sign a similar contract – we can adapt for Canadian law compliance (not too different for influencer context). We ensure any necessary tax forms (W-8BEN for Canadian to be paid by US co, etc.) are collected.

**Rights Management for UGC:** Our app will encourage user-generated content (photos of spots, reviews). We need to have clear **Terms of Service** stating when users upload content, they give us a license to display it, use it in promotion of the app, etc., but they retain ownership. Many platforms do this (Instagram's terms, etc.). We also should include that by tagging content with our campaign hashtag (if we run one), the user consents to us reposting it. However, best practice: if we want to use a user's Instagram photo in a Facebook ad, for example, we should obtain explicit permission (some brands comment "hey, can we use this with credit?" and the user replies yes). We can do that on a case-by-case basis to be safe, or have a system where posting with our hashtag = agree to terms posted on our site about UGC usage rights. And definitely credit creators where possible to maintain goodwill.

If we involve influencers in co-creating something like an in-app guide or list, clarify if they are compensated and that we can use that content in-app perpetually. Should also outline any exclusivity around that content (e.g. if they write a mini city guide for us, can they publish the same on their blog? Probably fine to allow with credit back to us).

**International Considerations (US vs Canada):** We have to navigate slight differences: - **Taxes:** We might need to issue 1099s for US influencers (if >\$600) and Canadian T4A perhaps if paying them from a Canadian entity. Cross-border payments might require treaty considerations (withholding tax). If we pay a Canadian from a US company, we might need them to fill W-8BEN confirming they're foreign so we don't withhold US taxes. We should consult an accountant for paying dozens of influencers cross-border to make sure no surprises. - **Data Privacy:** Collecting data from users/influencers – e.g. if we run contests capturing emails. Canada's privacy law (PIPEDA) and California's CCPA could apply. Likely not an influencer issue, more user side, but mention it. For instance, if an influencer shares user generated content with us or personal data (like contest winners addresses), ensure compliance with privacy policies. - **CASL (Canadian Anti-Spam Law):** If we ever have influencers send out emails or texts to their followers (less likely), we'd consider that. But mostly irrelevant here.

**Insurance and Liability:** We should consider potential liabilities: - If we host an event (photowalk), what if someone gets hurt? We should have event liability insurance and ask influencers to have their own if they are directly leading an event. We might have them sign an indemnity if they lead an official event on our behalf, or we include them as additional insured on our policy that day. - Influencer posts: If an influencer says something incorrect or injurious about a location or people, theoretically someone could try to sue. Unlikely, but our contract will have an indemnification clause: influencer is responsible for their own content not infringing others' rights or containing libel. We also indemnify them for things we ask them to say about our app being truthful, etc. Keeping claims factually correct ("found on SpotFinder" is fine) avoids issues. Need to be mindful if any content involves private property or risky locations – advise not to encourage trespassing or dangerous stunts, to avoid liability if a follower tries to replicate and gets hurt. We will instruct: content should abide by local laws (e.g. don't feature a spot that's closed to public or illegal). - We might also have a **clause that influencer content represents their honest views** (FTC appreciates that the endorsement should be honest). This covers us if someone claims the influencer was lying ("SpotFinder is the best app ever!" when they never used it). - Intellectual property: ensure no one uses unlicensed music or images in content at our behest that could get us in trouble. We'll advise using platform-provided music or license-free tunes for background, etc. If we reuse their content in our ads, we must ensure we have rights to any music in it (TikTok viral sounds often can't be used in paid ads due to music rights). We might thus prefer content with either original audio or royalty-free tracks for repurposing.

- As our app is user-contributed, if some user posts something defamatory (like "This restaurant gave me food poisoning on SpotFinder review"), we should have in-app content guidelines and possibly moderation to avoid legal notices. Section 230 in the US protects platforms to an extent but less so in other jurisdictions. For influencer content, likely not an issue unless they mention a business negatively. Perhaps we discourage negative callouts in sponsored content, focusing on positive discovery.

By staying on top of these legal aspects – disclosures, solid contracts, content rights, and safety – we protect both our brand and our influencer partners. Influencers appreciate when a brand is professional about these matters (it shows we're serious and trustworthy). We'll likely have our legal counsel review the influencer agreement template and any major campaign plans (especially events) to ensure compliance with local laws.



In summary, we will **enforce clear disclosure**, have thorough contracts defining rights and responsibilities, manage user content rights properly, navigate cross-border legalities for payments and privacy, and carry necessary insurance or clauses to mitigate risk. This diligence not only keeps us out of trouble but also builds credibility – both regulators and influencers will see we run an above-board operation, which is crucial for long-term success.

## Part 10: Budget Optimization Framework

To maximize impact within various budget levels, we'll deploy a structured approach for allocating influencer marketing spend, balancing influencer tiers and compensations, and phasing spend over time:

**Optimal Mix of Influencer Tiers:** Our target uses *micro-influencers* primarily, but we shouldn't ignore **nano-influencers (1K-5K)** or possibly a few **mid-tier influencers (50K-200K)** as we grow. Generally: - **Nano-influencers (1K-10K):** Very engaged audiences, hyper-local influence, often willing to post for product or small fees. We can use them in volume for grassroots buzz (especially in tight communities or specific neighborhoods). They won't individually bring huge numbers, but collectively they add credibility and lots of UGC. We might incorporate a **nano ambassador army** on mostly product or perks-based compensation. - **Micro-influencers (10K-50K):** Bread-and-butter of our strategy – they offer a great balance of reach and authenticity. Most of our budget should go here since ROI is strongest (as discussed, micro/mid influencers are most cost-effective now <sup>24</sup>). They can drive decent installs at moderate cost and also produce quality content we can reuse. - **Mid-tier influencers (50K-250K):** We might selectively include a few if they are strong fits, to anchor campaigns with a wider splash. They cost more, but one mid-tier with 150K followers could give broad visibility (e.g. a popular LA food blogger at 100K might create a buzz that many micros see and emulate). However, too many macro/mid-tier can blow the budget quickly. - **Mega-influencers/Celebs:** Not in our immediate plan given budget, but maybe one local celebrity tie-in could be interesting if opportunistic (e.g. a Vancouver-born actor with 1M IG might do a one-off shout if they love the idea). Not relying on this though, as the cost per engagement is usually poor and they might not target our core demo as precisely.

I'd aim for a mix like: **70% of spend on micro, 20% on mid-tier, 10% on nano (in form of product or minor cash)** initially. Adjust as results come – but likely keep heavy micro focus.

**Cash vs Product vs Equity Compensation:** - **Cash** is straightforward and often necessary for professional influencers. We should allocate cash to secure consistent posts from micros/mid-tier. We'll use product perks (like SpotFinder Premium membership – though our app's value is mostly intangible, we could create swag or maybe offer them free credits if we later monetize with bookings or events). - **Product/Gifting:** Because our "product" is an app (free to download), there isn't a physical good to gift that has high value. We can send swag (t-shirts, city photo books, etc.) to keep us in mind. For nano-influencers, maybe that plus the promise of being featured or given a title might suffice. If we host local experiences (say we sponsor a cocktail meetup or a mini photo tour), inviting nanos free can be a reward in kind. - **Equity:** We covered equity-based deals for top partners in Part 3. We should use equity sparingly for those who truly move the needle or commit major time (maybe our "City Lead Ambassadors" get a tiny share). It's a powerful incentive but also comes with complexity (paperwork, long-term relationship). So, I foresee at most 2-3 influencers (the ones we might bring on as advisors) getting equity deals initially – that doesn't heavily impact monthly budget but is part of strategy. The rest mostly get cash.

So, for budgeting, assume primarily cash outlays with a small portion of intangible comp (equity, perks).

**Testing vs Scaling Budget Allocation:** We will use an **80/20 rule** for testing vs scaling. Start by allocating a smaller portion of budget to test multiple influencers and tactics. Identify best ROI, then double down with bigger spend on what works: - **Pilot Phase:** First 1–2 months, use perhaps 20–30% of monthly budget to test a variety of influencer sizes and content styles. Track CPI and engagement. This minimal test prevents overspending on ineffective channels. - **Scale Phase:** Once we see patterns (e.g. TikTok micros driving cheapest installs), allocate the remaining budget towards those high performers and possibly expand similar collaborations. Always keep aside maybe 10% budget for ongoing micro-tests (new creatives or new nano influencers) to continually optimize.

**Geographic Expansion Strategy:** We will focus budget on **saturating one city at a time** vs spreading too thin. So for Spring 2025, Vancouver and LA are primary. If we have a given budget, we might allocate by city proportional to user acquisition goals or city population. For instance, LA is larger so maybe 60% of budget to LA, 40% Vancouver (assuming we launch simultaneously). Alternatively, we might heavy-up on Vancouver first (smaller market, easier to capture a high share of voice, proving model) then LA with lessons learned. However, since our prompt implies launching in both concurrently, we split but maybe weighted to LA if the budget can't fully saturate two large markets equally. Another approach: **phased** – month 1 focus Vancouver, month 2 LA, etc., so we concentrate impact then move on. But continuous presence in both might be needed to build momentum.

As we expand beyond these, we'll replicate city-by-city. We'll likely use influencers in each new city as local evangelists. Money saved from early successes (via efficient CPIs) can funnel into next city's launch.

**Seasonal Optimization:** Consider seasonality: - Spring 2025 launch – spring is actually great for travel/local exploration content (people itching to go out after winter). We should **push hardest in spring and summer**, which are peak times for people using discovery apps (tourist season, summer outings, etc.). Our \$ should be biased to those seasons. Perhaps 60% of annual influencer budget spent from March to August, then a bit less in fall/winter when engagement might dip (though autumn can also be popular for scenic content). - We can also leverage seasonal hooks: e.g. in summer, do campaigns around “summer hidden beaches”, in October around “spooky spots” for Halloween, in December around holiday light displays via SpotFinder. That drives timely interest and media coverage potential. - If budget is limited, maybe go quieter in late fall and Q4, then another push in January when people look for new experiences as New Year resolutions, etc. - Seasonal also matters for influencer costs: Q4 near holidays often sees higher rates (lots of brand campaigns then). Spring might be relatively cheaper before big summer campaigns start. So launching in spring avoids the expensive holiday season scramble and gets ahead of summer.

**Budget Examples:** Now, allocate for given monthly budgets:

- **\$10K per month:** This is lean, so we must be very efficient.
- Focus on **micro and nano only**. Likely no mid-tier with big fees.
- Maybe engage ~5 micro-influencers in LA and 5 in Vancouver on modest deals. E.g. pay each micro \$500 for a package (some might accept even \$300 if smaller). That's about \$4K-\$5K spent for ~10 posts. Reserve ~\$1K for nano-influencers (perhaps 20 nanos given \$50 gift cards or swag each in exchange for posting once – or even just product exchange like giving them promo codes to share).
- Use about \$2K for an ambassador event or two (like a photowalk – much of that might be in-kind or minimal cost if we partner with a venue).
- Keep maybe \$1K as contingency or to boost best content (e.g. run 2-3 top performing influencer posts as Spark Ads on IG/TikTok to reach more people).

- So a sample breakdown: \$5K on micro fees, \$1K nanos (gifts/merch), \$2K event, \$1K ad boosting, \$1K leftover for misc (maybe design tools, tracking software if needed).
- With \$10K, expected reach: those 10 micros maybe reach ~300K combined followers; plus nano word-of-mouth; likely could yield on the order of 1,000–2,000 installs if done well (assuming ~\$5-\$10 CPI, which is plausible with organic-looking content).
- It's crucial to pick very efficient, truly passionate micros who might even over-deliver (maybe posting more than required because they love the app).

- **\$50K per month:** Now we can broaden and accelerate:

- Still invest in micros heavily: Perhaps 20-30 micro-influencers between the cities. We can also afford a few bigger names. For example, allocate ~\$15K to engage 2-3 mid-tier influencers (maybe a 100K LA foodie for \$5K and a 150K travelgrammer for \$7K and a Vancouver 80K fashion influencer for \$3K). These mid-tier posts will create wider awareness (and possibly press if they have clout).
- Spend ~\$20K on micro-influencers (for instance 20 micros at an average of \$1K each, varying by follower count and deliverables). We could give some a bit more for more content (like an IG + TikTok combo).
- Nanos/community: allocate ~\$5K to run ambassador program: maybe 50 nanos get swag and small monthly rewards, or small paid performance bonuses (like \$50 per 10 signups they drive, something that collectively stays within \$5K).
- Set aside ~\$5K for content production and events. Possibly host a bigger launch event in LA with that budget (venue, catering, photographer) – inviting press and influencers. Or two smaller ones (LA & Van smaller meetups). Some could be offset by partners, but good to budget.
- Reserve ~\$5K for paid amplification of influencer content (promoting top posts, perhaps doing a whitelisted campaign where an influencer's IG story gets turned into an ad targeted to lookalike audiences – that uses ad budget).
- Possibly allocate \$0–\$5K value in equity or long-term incentives for one or two key influencers as discussed – not a direct cash cost, but something to factor in as part of strategy.
- With \$50K, we can expect a significant push: e.g. 30+ influencers posting yields reach well into millions of impressions. If our content is compelling, we could target, say, 10K+ installs from this spend (a \$5 CPI would be good, \$10 still acceptable for early stage given long-term value likely high). We'd also build a recognized presence in both cities such that people have heard of us multiple times from different voices – critical for trust.

- **\$100K per month:** This is a large budget where we can scale and dominate share of voice in our niches:

- We would have room to bring on maybe **one macro influencer or celebrity** if strategically beneficial. For instance, we could consider a well-known photographer YouTuber or a local celebrity with mainstream appeal on social. That could cost \$20K+ for a dedicated integration, but if their audience aligns and they produce rich content (like a 10-minute YouTube feature on SpotFinder or a series of posts), it might be worth it for broad credibility. However, we would weigh if splitting that into more micros is more effective. Perhaps better: recruit an **ongoing spokesperson** type (like a known travel TV host or Instagrammer with 300K following) on a monthly retainer to produce content for us regularly.

- Micro-influencers: We can basically **carpet the cities** with content. Could engage 50–70 micro-influencers. That's too many to manage individually without a platform or agency – we might use an influencer platform or even hire an intern/coord to handle communication at that scale. Budget maybe \$40K-50K for micros, meaning lots of content daily highlighting us. Enough to ensure anyone interested in local travel in these cities sees us on multiple feeds.
- Mid-tier: definitely include a handful (maybe 5–10 mid-tier at \$3K-\$7K each, totaling perhaps \$30K). These might include some niche YouTube channels, top IG city accounts (like those “@BeautifulBC” type feature accounts that have 200K followers – they often charge for promos).
- Ambassador and nano programs can be expansive: we could have dozens of official ambassadors, maybe give them each \$200/mo and tasks to host meetups etc. For example, 10 ambassadors per city at \$200 = \$4K, plus a pool for nanos maybe \$5K in merch, gift cards, etc.
- More events: sponsor a booth or photo station at a local festival to promote our app (influencers can appear as guests). Could allocate \$10K for experiential marketing that involves influencers (like paying them to do IG takeovers at our booth).
- Paid boosting of influencer content: with extra budget, we could turn high-performing influencer content into a **full-fledged ad campaign** on Facebook/TikTok Ads by obtaining usage rights. Possibly allocate \$10-15K to run these as ads targeting lookalike audiences in LA/Vancouver, thus magnifying the influencer's impact beyond their own followers. This effectively mixes influencer content with performance marketing – often a potent combo.
- With \$100K, we can also invest in content creation collabs – e.g. get a professional videographer to help influencers make higher production videos (some mid-tier might do a mini film if we cover production costs).
- At this level, we expect high visibility – essentially everyone in our target demo in Vancouver & LA should get exposed multiple times. Could aim for something like 25–50K installs from this monthly spend (depending on baseline virality). The CAC may range, maybe \$4–\$8 if highly successful, or \$10–\$15 if not optimized, but still within reason for a valuable user. Importantly, we'd be building brand equity; that broad awareness has compounding effect (word-of-mouth etc.).

**Mix of Tier Sizes & Content Types:** We will maintain a diversified approach because: - Nanos bring grassroots credibility and often become loyal advocates (their cost is mainly management time and some swag). - Micros bring conversions and engagement. - Mid-tier bring reach and a bit of star power – good for press coverage; e.g. we could pitch a story “Instagram influencers team up with new app to showcase hidden LA” – easier if one of them is well-known. - Possibly one macro can be used as a **tent-pole** in PR or ads (e.g. “We partnered with [famous photographer] to curate spots on SpotFinder”).

**Testing Budgets:** We should allocate a portion of any budget to pilot new things: - For \$10K budget, maybe \$1-2K for small tests (like try one TikTok Spark Ad, or test a new niche influencer). - For \$50K, maybe \$5K in experimental collaborations (like trying an emerging platform, maybe a local podcaster or a collab with a city meme page). - For \$100K, maybe \$10K experimental (maybe try recruiting a campus ambassador program at universities – those might not be “influencers” by follower count but have offline influence).

**Long-Term vs Burst:** We plan a heavy Spring launch burst, but budgeting needs consider longevity: - If budget is monthly ongoing, we ensure not to blow everything in one month. We need sustained presence to avoid being a one-month wonder. That means for \$50K/month, better to have consistent weekly content than spending all \$150K in first 3 months and then silence. So perhaps in month 1 (launch) we use slightly more, say 120% of monthly budget, then normalized by month 3. Or maintain \$50K consistently but mix heavy promotions with community-building in between.

**CAC by Tier and Strategy:** Expected **Cost of Acquisition (CAC)** might vary: - Nano (mostly product comp): extremely low CAC if any (because we hardly pay them, maybe just \$ per install commissions). But scale is low individually. - Micro: often reported as best ROI; if one micro \$500 yields 200 installs, that's \$2.5 CAC – excellent <sup>20</sup>. Some might do better, some worse. - Mid-tier: could be less efficient; e.g. \$5K mid-tier yields 500 installs (\$10 CAC). Still okay if those users are high LTV or if needed for awareness. - Ambassador program costs might not directly tie to installs but to content volume and retention of community – we measure differently (like cost per content piece or per event). - Over time, we track overall influencer CAC vs other channels (like perhaps Instagram ads or press). If influencer CAC is, say, \$5 and paid social ads CAC is \$8, we invest more in influencers and vice versa.

### **Budget Summaries for Plans:**

- *\$10K/Month Plan:* Focus on **core micro campaign**. Engage ~10 micros (\$300–\$700 each) for main content; utilize passionate nanos for supplemental posts at nearly no cost; perhaps one local event or meetup courtesy of in-kind partnerships (low cost). Expect modest but quality growth, ideal for an initial test city launch.
- *\$50K/Month Plan:* **City domination mode** for 2 launch cities. Layer micros (lots), a few mid-tier, robust ambassador program, and content boosting. Balanced approach yields both volume and quality. Great for gaining significant traction quickly in target markets while still being frugal (not spending on big celebs but saturating the niche communities).
- *\$100K/Month Plan:* **Aggressive scale**. In addition to above, possibly add a well-known face or highly produced collab to drive mainstream attention (e.g. a short film by an influencer on YouTube or a partnership with a local tourism board via influencer content). Could expand beyond initial cities to start planting seeds in the next city. Requires more operational capacity (maybe an agency or in-house team to manage 50+ influencers simultaneously), but could put SpotFinder on the map nationwide among our demo.

Throughout all budgets, one principle remains: track and optimize. Allocate heavier to what works (platform or persona) and reallocate from underperforming areas. Also, ensure budgeting for **seasonal high-impact moments** (e.g., save some budget for a big summer push or tie-in with a local festival when people are actively exploring).

**Actionable Insights Recap:** - We will start fairly micro-heavy and only escalate to macro if budget allows and justified by ROI. - We'll maintain an **"always-on" baseline** of influencer activity (via ambassadors) and spike around key times (launch, events). - We treat influencers as an investment: measure CAC, LTV, adjust spending monthly like we would with any performance marketing channel. - If a city saturates (e.g. every reasonable micro has posted about us already by month 6), we shift new budget to new cities or deeper engagement (like second collabs with best influencers creating new angles or features focus). - Use off-season to cultivate relationships and content so that when high-season hits, we have plenty of material and goodwill banked.

By following this structured framework, we can deploy budgets of any size efficiently – ensuring no dollar is wasted and each campaign builds momentum toward sustainable growth. Our investor deck will showcase these scenarios (\$10K, \$50K, \$100K) to illustrate how we'd scale and the expected outcomes, demonstrating we have a clear plan for prudent yet potent use of funds in influencer marketing.

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*Influencer rate and engagement data sourced from 2024–2025 industry reports and tools, e.g. Influencer Marketing Hub <sup>1</sup> <sup>21</sup>, Shopify <sup>2</sup>, Afluencer <sup>5</sup>; Collabstr marketplace stats <sup>94</sup>; Feedspot influencer lists <sup>95</sup> <sup>96</sup>; Modash analytics <sup>57</sup> <sup>97</sup>; LinkedIn influencer equity insights <sup>51</sup>; FTC endorsement guides <sup>17</sup>.*

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