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Radio and Magazines are “Original Influencers”, Critical to Selling Products Amidst AI Slop



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Are Media's Jane Huxley, CRA's Lizzie Young, and Fabulate's Nathan Powell joined TrinityP3's Darren Woolley to dig into trust, attention, and influence, LBB's Lilya Murray reports



The internet is awash with content, AI slop, and a “proliferation of influencers”, but that isn't what sells a product, according to Are Media CEO [Jane Huxley](#).

“A proliferation of influencers isn't going to help anybody sell a product. Because where do you go? Who do you listen to? Are they real? Are they human? Have they actually used the product?”

We've experienced that era before, she continued, and “we've just had it again”.

“Brand, reputation, trust plus loyal customers, [and] extraordinary content powered by data” have created a very different landscape from “thousands of influencers”.

While mixing both traditional and influencer media is still critical, she said, the difference for magazine business Are Media is “9 [out of] 10 women in Australia will do what our editors ask them to do or recommend they do,” because of the perceived level of trust “original influencers”.

Jane and Commercial Radio Australia CEO [Lizzie Young](#) referred to these “original influencers” as magazines and radio.

Instead of viewing social channels as, “I've got a product and I'm going to bring it to market and then I do marketing,” Jane added we're seeing more use of “content and brands to create demand [which] create the opportunity for the product that your company might actually then bring to market.”

She provided the example of a ‘Colour of the Year’ campaign run with Better Homes and Gardens. “We took it out to the market and we sold

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out a whole retail range of burnt tangerine product. The demand was created by the content," she said.

"You need an ecosystem to be able to bring something like that to market, whether it be in print, in digital, in social, a podcast, a vodcast, [or] an event."

Lizzie emphasised the importance of creating a "content ecosystem" that translates into a point of purchase.

"We see how many people are in the car, on the move," and wearing and listening to their Meta sunglasses and watches. "It's incredible now that it really is every path to purchase that people are listening to audio on."

Jane and Lizzie were speaking on a panel in Sydney on Wednesday titled 'Trust, Attention, and Influence – The Media Forces Shaping Retail in 2026' at the Australian Retail Council's Retail Media Leaders Forum.



They were joined by [Fabulate](#) co-founder and chief product and strategy officer, [Nathan Powell](#), and David Roddick, general manager of Active International Australia. The panel was hosted by [TrinityP3](#) founder and global CEO [Darren Woolley](#).

Nathan said despite Australia not currently dominating in the space of "social commerce", it is vital for brands to start building towards it.

"You've got creators ... who effectively become [brands'] sales force, your experts that would be in store," except they are live on camera and accessible worldwide, remaining authentic in their delivery but "acting like publishers in a lot of ways.

"They're still protecting their own brand. They're scheduling all of their production schedules and their content schedules," and their live streams mean consumers can "hop in and hop out [and] ask questions directly" in real time.

The benefit, he said, is it's "all powered by an algorithm that knows so much about you [and] the content you want," and even the specific products people are looking to buy.

One stream with one creator in China generated US\$2.9 billion, he said. "If you're not thinking about social commerce and live streaming, that should be the number that haunts you."

Nathan continued the "speed of the feed" was both a creative challenge and opportunity. It is "always on", with many variables: "the right creator, the right narrative topic, or heck, the sound to be using at that point in time can be the difference between a significant reduction in cost per acquisition."

Jane argued the traditional funnel is outdated because consumers are exposed to so much more information. "What brings it together is a cohesive narrative driven by content with a trusted brand and a retailer."

"We're finding that the power of our brands with the legacy of [other] brands, plus the power of our content is really starting to turn the dial," she added.

"It's not enough to tell your consumers that your product is the best."

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