

A "Prime" example of the strength of influencer marketing

By  Danette Breitenbach

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A worldwide sensation, the US-based zero-sugar beverage, Prime Hydration (Prime) has partnered with Checkers, retailing the drink at R39,99 as opposed to the R400 that fans have been paying.



Source: Instagram [Instagram](#) Logan Paul and KSI founders of the global hydration drink phenomenon, Prime

Checkers announced on 30 April that the brand would be available in most of its stores from midday on 1 May and that customers could place advance orders on the app Checkers Sixty60 from 10am, 30 April.

The online stock was sold out in one and a half hours. In-store purchases were limited to eight per customer – two per flavour (Ice Pop, Blue Raspberry, Lemon Lime, and Tropical Punch).

Previously in South Africa, at one time the drink, at its most expensive, cost R1,200 on a local e-commerce site (today the price ranges from R98 to R119,00), while consumers have also been able to purchase the drink at Clicks for R70,00, but stock runs out almost immediately.

So how does an energy drink brand that can be brought for just under R40, retail globally on average for R400 a bottle?



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A Gen Z craze

Prime, which launched in the US, UK and Australia last year, became the most sought-after energy drink when YouTube content creators, Logan Paul and KSI, promoted it.

With a subscriber list of 47 million, the brand began to trend, with Gen Z especially keen to get their hands on the drink, leading to thousands of people happy to queue overnight to get a bottle.

The result has been the drink's elevation to a viral collector's item, with people willing to pay R400 for a bottle. While many parents have complained about the cost of the drink, the drink has remained popular.

Using YouTube's algorithmic networks

In an article in [The Conversation](#), by Hantian Zhang, senior lecturer in media, Sheffield Hallam University, he says one of the reasons is the two Youtubers' and their influence.

However, Zhang says it is also due to their use of YouTube's algorithmic networks, which link together videos with similar content. As a result the YouTubers dominated the platform's recommendation algorithm, making their videos more visible, which in turn results in more similar content being recommended to viewers.

Warc pulls together some of the key points Zhang makes on how they did this in the article:

- By inviting other well-known YouTubers to sample their new drink in their own videos, such as Markiplier (34 million subscribers) Logan Paul and KSI increased the likelihood of YouTube's algorithm recommending further Prime-related content to viewers.
 - Both YouTubers also responded to fans' comments and questions about the drink, increasing engagement.
 - Concerns have been raised about the levels of caffeine in Prime and whether the electrolytes in Prime are suitable for children.
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The power of influencers

The power of YouTube influencers, as well as other influencers, has been on the rise.

An article by Digital Glue in 2021 states that YouTube influencers are highly influential through their ability to make the viewer feel like they know them; they are your 'friend'. "They feel authentic and genuine, far more so than actors and actresses. The authenticity factor is so important to their ability to sell or recommend a product to their audience."

The article also says that with this comes high audience engagement, and an increasing intent to purchase by 5.2 times. "Their perceived accessibility is also important. They aren't glossy and unreachable like celebrities; they feel, to many viewers, like them."

The article adds that even smaller influencers with less reach will have an "even greater engagement rate and influence, as they truly know their following. "This can offer a brand a lower cost and more effective alternative to traditional media endorsement".

As Zhang states: "Their [Logan Paul and KSI] win may form something of a blueprint for other content creators as YouTubers become more professional and look to harness the platform's algorithm for their commercial success." It has been reported that worldwide the drink has generated R4.5bn (\$25 in retail sales. In January this year alone, the drink generated R818.3m (\$45m).

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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