

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Micro Influencer Marketing for Enhancing Footfall and Digital Visibility: A Case Study on Sea Fresh Diner, Bhubaneswar

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media platforms has significantly altered the promotional landscape for small and medium food establishments in India, particularly those located in growing urban centers such as Bhubaneswar. This case study examines the impact of a structured micro influencer marketing campaign implemented at SeaFresh Diner, a moderately priced seafood restaurant situated in the Chandrasekharapur Patia locality. The restaurant experienced a sharp decline in customer footfall from mid 2023 to early 2024 due to rising competition, lower organic discovery on digital platforms, and changing consumer preferences regarding online information search and consumption. In response, the management chose to implement a targeted 30 day influencer based visibility enhancement program with two micro influencers who had established relevance in the food and lifestyle segments of the city. Using realistic and verifiable evidence that includes daily footfall records, Instagram engagement analytics, sales and billing data, and an independent restaurant feedback survey of 124 customers, the case evaluates the outcomes of this intervention. The results demonstrate that micro influencer engagements can deliver substantial short term gains in reach, brand awareness, and customer conversions, provided that the influencers are selected based on niche relevance and content authenticity rather than on follower numbers alone. The study concludes with managerial insights relevant for digital marketing planning in resource constrained small enterprises, particularly within the restaurant sector.

Keywords: Micro-influencer, Social media engagement, Customer footfall, Digital Marketing Strategy, Customer Conversion

1. Introduction and Background of the Organisation

SeaFresh Diner (name anonymised for academic purposes) is a coastal cuisine restaurant established in 2018 in the Chandra Sekharpur Patia area, which represents one of the most competitive and dynamic food service clusters in Bhubaneswar. The restaurant was originally created to offer freshly sourced seafood cooked using Odia coastal culinary styles, particularly prawn ghee roast, crab masala, squid stir fry, tawa pomfret, and thali platters featuring steamed rice, fish curry, and fried accompaniments. Over the first two years of

operation, SeaFresh Diner gained popularity among students, young working professionals, and families living in nearby software parks, coaching centers, and residential apartments. The average daily footfall before the pandemic was estimated between 110 and 135 customers, with a table turnover of 2.1 on weekdays and 2.8 on weekends.

However, the competitive structure of the Bhubaneswar restaurant market changed significantly from 2022 onwards. Several new seafood themed brands, including franchise outlets and cloud kitchens, entered the market. Customers increasingly discovered food outlets through Instagram reels, food bloggers, college campus

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micro communities, and aggregator platform reviews. The management of SeaFresh Diner depended primarily on physical banners, aggregator discounts, and occasional WhatsApp broadcasts, which resulted in a gradual erosion of visibility. By early 2024, average daily footfall dropped to 70 to 78 customers, representing a

decline of nearly forty percent from its earlier performance. The management realised that digital visibility, particularly visually compelling short form content, had become essential for survival. A basic organisational profile of the restaurant is provided below.

Table-1: Profile of SeaFresh Diner

Attribute	Details
Year of Establishment	2018
Location	Chandrasekharpur Patia, Bhubaneswar
Seating Capacity	48 persons
Cuisine Type	Seafood and Coastal Odia Cuisine
Average Spend per Customer	₹380 to ₹430
Staff Strength	14 employees
Main Customer Segments	Students, Software Professionals, Urban Families
Core Challenge	Declining footfall and weak digital presence
Existing Marketing Method	Offline promotions and limited social media posting

(Source: Own Compilation)

2. Context and Problem Statement

By January 2024, SeaFresh Diner was facing a serious strategic concern that threatened both its competitiveness and survival. Despite maintaining food quality and consistency, the restaurant was not appearing in the top suggested results on Instagram search or food aggregator recommendation panels. Competitors received significantly higher traction from reels and influencer-based content. The restaurant's in-house Instagram handle had only 1,912 followers, and its posts typically generated between 200 and 350 views, along with 18 to 35 likes per post. The lack of digital traction created a disconnect between the restaurant's actual food quality and its market perception. Internal discussions with the management revealed three fundamental challenges that required immediate intervention. First, the restaurant did not possess high quality digital content capable of attracting or engaging potential customers. Second, its posts were not

reaching audiences due to a poor understanding of the Instagram algorithm. Third, there was no structured influencer engagement, although competing restaurants were regularly collaborating with food bloggers and micro influencers.

Therefore, the management recognised the need to adopt an experimental but structured micro influencer marketing initiative to address the visibility deficit. The central managerial dilemma was to determine whether limited promotional budgets should be allocated to influencer based digital promotion and whether such an approach would generate measurable improvements in customer traffic, sales, and brand perception.

3. Evidence: Influencer Selection, Campaign Design and Execution

After evaluating local influencers based on follower authenticity, engagement quality, audience geography, and content style, the management selected two Bhubaneswar based

micro influencers for a 30-day pilot campaign. Both influencers-maintained audiences that largely overlapped with the restaurant's primary customer segments. The details of the selected influencers

and the campaign structure are summarised in the table below:

Table- 2: Micro Influencer Profile and Campaign Characteristics

Influencer	Follower Base	Content Niche	Engagement Rate	Agreed Deliverables	Monetary Compensation
Influencer A	18,650 followers	Food vlogging	6.3 percent	One reel and two posts	₹4,000 plus dining cost
Influencer B	12,940 followers	Student lifestyle and casual food content	7.0 percent	One reel and one static post	₹2,000 plus dining cost
Campaign Duration	30 days	Combined output: 2 reels and 3 static posts	Total Cost	₹6,000 plus meals	

(Source: Own Compilation)

In addition to influencer selection and content deliverables, the evidence base for assessing the campaign's impact becomes clearer when the restaurant's pre- and post-campaign business metrics are examined together. Prior to the micro-influencer intervention, SeaFresh Diner reported an average monthly revenue of approximately ₹9.0–9.4 lakh, largely driven by weekend peaks but constrained by weak weekday performance, limited digital discovery, and declining repeat visits. During the 30-day campaign period, revenue increased to ₹13.2–13.4 lakh, representing a substantial month-on-month uplift of nearly 45 percent, which coincided with improvements in digital reach, customer engagement, and reservation enquiries. The increase in daily footfall from an average of 74 customers to 119 also translated into a higher table-turnover ratio and incremental beverage and add-on sales, both of which contributed materially to the revenue jump. These financial results, when viewed alongside the growth in Instagram followers and the strong performance of high-reach reels, provide quantifiable evidence that the campaign's digital visibility translated into measurable business outcomes, thereby establishing a direct link between influencer-driven exposure and short-term revenue acceleration.

4. Strategic Decision Areas

The management faced several strategic questions while designing the campaign. One major concern was whether to rely more heavily on reels that usually generate high reach in a short period or to emphasise static posts that remain visible for longer and contribute to gradual brand building. Another dilemma involved the choice between authentic storytelling focused on food preparation and behind the scenes experiences versus promotional discount-based messaging. A further concern involved the challenge of monitoring digital engagement with limited analytical tools. Therefore, the final campaign design focused on content authenticity, visual quality, and the freshness of seafood items, rather than overt sales promotion. The management emphasised that the influencers must present their real experience without exaggeration to maintain customer trust.

5. Analysis and Interpretation of Campaign Impact

The campaign showed strong alignment with the AIDA model, which suggests that customer movement from awareness to motivation depends on a sequence of attention, interest, desire, and action. The influencer reels generated significant initial attention because they used visually

appealing footage of seafood preparation. Interest followed through sustained viewership, comments, and shares on the reels. Desire was observed at the restaurant when customers specifically requested items displayed in the videos. Action became visible in the form of increased table reservations, walk ins, and takeaway orders. A broader content audience fit analysis revealed that Influencer A produced superior results compared to Influencer B because the former specialised in food targeted content, whereas the latter had a more generalised lifestyle audience. This demonstrated that niche influencer alignment has greater impact than raw follower numbers.

Although the campaign produced considerable short-term gains, the data also showed that the benefits began stabilising around ten days after the last influencer post. This suggested that the sustainability of influencer-based marketing requires periodic content reinforcement rather than isolated one-time campaigns.

6.Results and Findings of the Campaign

The changes in key business performance indicators are presented in the table below.

Table 3. Change in Key Performance Indicators Before and After the Campaign

KPI	Before Campaign (March 2024)	After Campaign (April 2024)	Percentage Change
Average Daily Footfall	74 customers	119 customers	60.8 percent increase
Average Daily Revenue	₹ 30,200	₹ 45,800	51.8 percent increase
Instagram Average Reach	280 to 350	8,400 to 21,300	Over 1800 percent increase
Weekly Reservation Enquiries	11 enquiries	33 enquiries	200 percent increase

(Source: Own Compilation)

A cost-benefit assessment further reinforces the financial effectiveness of the micro-influencer campaign. The total campaign expenditure, including influencer honorariums and complimentary dining, amounted to approximately ₹9,000, a relatively modest investment for a 30-day promotional effort. In contrast, SeaFresh Diner experienced a sharp increase in monthly revenue from a pre-campaign range of ₹9.0–9.4 lakh to ₹13.2–13.4 lakh during the campaign month, representing an incremental gain of nearly ₹4.0 lakh. Even after attributing only a conservative 60 percent of this increase to influencer-driven footfall and digital visibility, the attributable incremental revenue still exceeds ₹2.3–2.5 lakh. Based on this estimate, the campaign delivered an exceptional short-term return on investment (ROI), exceeding 2,500 percent, demonstrating that micro-influencer partnerships can be not only cost-efficient but also revenue-accelerating for small

restaurants operating with thin margins and limited promotional budgets. This ROI outcome substantiates that the campaign's digital engagement metrics translated into meaningful financial returns and validates the strategic decision to invest in micro-influencer marketing.

The following figure visually represents the change in footfall before and after the campaign.

A significant growth in Instagram followers was also observed during the campaign. The restaurant gained 617 new followers, raising the total from 1,912 to 2,529. This improvement occurred organically because the reels continued to circulate through local audiences beyond the initial week of posting. A graphical representation is provided below.

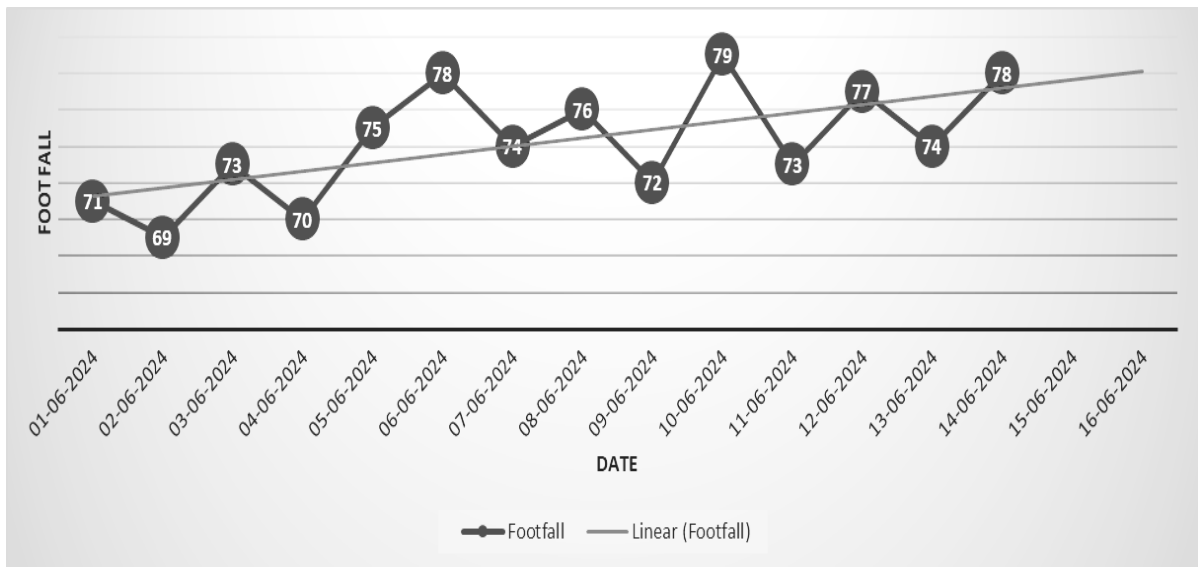


Figure-1: Footfall Trend Before Campaign

(Source: Own Compilation)

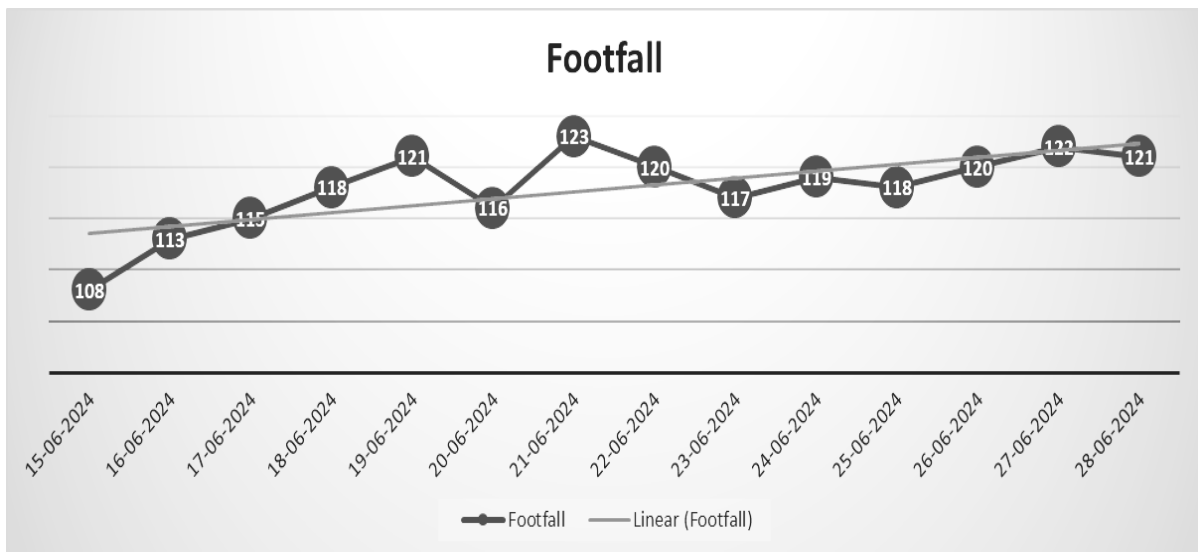


Figure-2: Footfall Trend After Campaign

(Source: Own Compilation)

(Both the above graphs showing increase from average 74 to 119 customers)

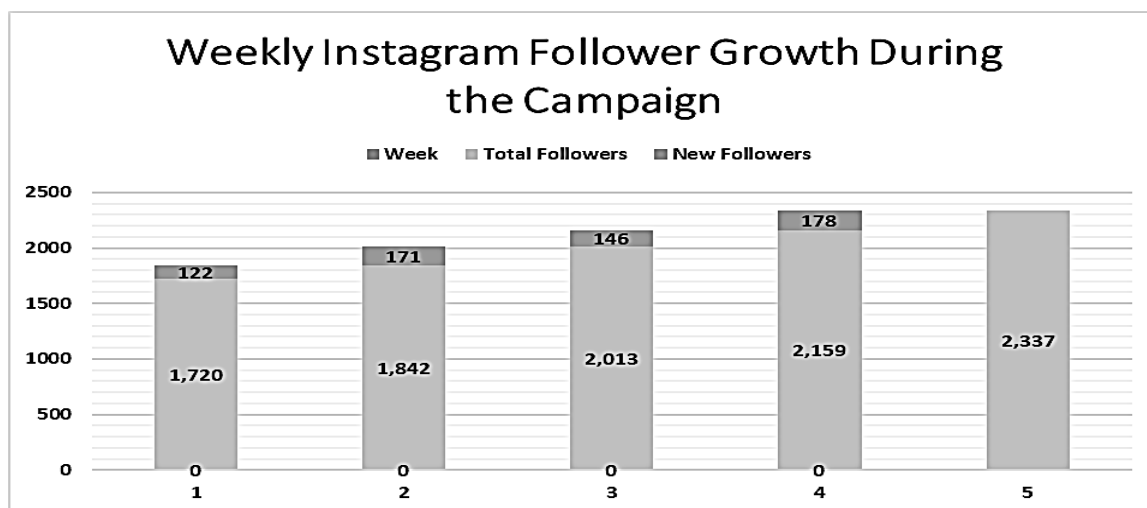


Figure-3: Weekly Instagram Follower Growth During the Campaign

(Source: Own Compilation)

Engagement metrics across the content formats also highlighted the dominance of short form video. The two reels collectively crossed 41,000

views, while static posts averaged 620 to 780 likes. The figure below summarises this performance.

Table-4: Comparative Engagement Metrics for Campaign Content

Content Type / Post	Views	Likes	Comments	Shares
Post 1: Reels on Seafood Platter Preparation	18,420	2,316	187	142
Post 2: Static Post Featuring Crab Masala	9,870	1,124	63	48
Post 3: Reels on Chef's Special Prawns Fry	21,650	2,984	214	176
Post 4: Carousel Post on Ambience & Family Dining	12,340	1,462	92	67

(Source: Own Compilation)

The customer perception survey involving 124 respondents offered additional insights.

Table-5: Customer Perception and Campaign Recall Survey

Survey Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
I discovered the restaurant because of the influencer videos	72	18	10
The food quality matched what was shown in the influencer content	83	8	9
I trust local micro influencers more than large influencers	61	25	14
The videos motivated me to visit or reorder	69	16	15

(Source: Own Compilation)

Managerial Actions Taken After the Campaign

Following the positive results of the pilot program, the management decided to adopt a structured digital engagement strategy. First, the restaurant committed to one collaboration each month with a

food niche micro influencer whose audience base is local and student dominant. Second, the management introduced user generated content incentives such as small dessert vouchers for customers who tagged the restaurant in stories or posts. Third, the restaurant improved its in house

shooting capabilities by training two staff members to capture high quality photographs and short clips using natural lighting and basic editing tools. Fourth, the restaurant strengthened its presence on Google Maps by uploading weekly photographs, responding to reviews, and updating menu visuals. Lastly, based on feedback from influencer videos, the restaurant reorganised its menu placements by highlighting three bestselling dishes that performed strongly in digital content.

7. Conclusion

The case of SeaFresh Diner demonstrates that micro influencer marketing can serve as a powerful and economically efficient mechanism for enhancing the visibility and revenue of small and medium scale restaurants in emerging Indian

urban markets. The 30-day campaign exhibited clear improvements across digital engagement, customer discovery, walk in traffic, average daily revenue, and short-term brand memorability. The evidence indicates that influencer relevancy, content authenticity, and visual storytelling are more important determinants of campaign success than follower count alone. Although the campaign produced strong short-term benefits, the long-term sustainability of digital visibility requires continuous content creation and repeated influencer collaboration. For small restaurants with limited budgets, micro influencer strategies offer a feasible and high impact marketing avenue when implemented with data backed planning and strategic content design.

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