

**CUSTOMER STORY**

# Ruggable

## How a home decor brand leverages influencers to foster community

Ruggable is an innovative company that specializes in a unique, two-piece rug system that features a machine washable cover and a non-slip pad. Its rugs come in more than 150 designs and are spill-resistant and non-toxic, which appeals to the accident-prone consumer who still wants to invest in quality furnishings — namely moms and pet owners.

Since getting stains out of traditional rugs can be such a challenge, Ruggable prides itself on creating products that solve a problem. By building and engaging with a community of people who can benefit from its rugs, the brand boosts brand awareness, increases customer loyalty and retention, and differentiates itself from competitors.

Dmitri Cherner, the brand’s Influencer and Strategic Partnership Manager, focuses on scaling an influencer marketing program that is comprised of loyal fans who highlight why real people value Ruggable products. Influencers act as brand evangelists in the Ruggable community. They tell their audiences about Ruggable on their own channel, directly to their own audience, and in their own words.


**RUGGABLE**


**460+**  
Relationships

**36.9M+**  
Impressions

**2,385+**  
Live Posts

**32%**  
Higher ROA

**63.7K+**  
Clicks

**9,000+**  
Pieces of Content

**166K+**  
Followers Gained

**25%**  
Lower CPA

## The Challenge

When Dmitri first joined the company, there was no influencer marketing process in place. Between checking DMs and emails, vetting influencers, and understanding how they performed, it was nearly impossible to scale. At first, he was only able to work with 5-10 influencers a week — when his goal was five times that amount. Vetting influencers is particularly important to Ruggable because the brand hoped to build a community based on authenticity. But without the proper tools, there were three big challenges:

1. A way to identify influencers who were genuinely interested in the brand and had an audience that aligned with Ruggable’s core audience.
2. A way to assess follower authenticity and audience demographics, and then build vetting criteria. Dmitri noticed that most of the influencers who reached out to the brand were clearly paying for likes and followers.
3. A way to manage hundreds of influencer relationships in order to build community, without losing the human touch.

“After researching multiple influencer marketing solutions,” he says, “I found AspireIQ to be the most robust platform among competitors that allowed me to find authentic influencers, manage relationships, and track the results I was looking for.”

# The Solution

## IDENTIFYING BRAND EVANGELISTS

Dmitri started by identifying four key categories of influencers that best matched their existing customer base: moms, pet owners, interior designers, and lifestyle influencers with an engaged audience who would find value in Ruggable products. By testing various verticals, Dmitri can get Ruggable in front of a diverse audience and understand why different demographics value the brand. He uses AspireIQ Connect to search for influencers by relevant hashtags and creates watch lists that allow him to identify influencers who mention relevant brands in the home decor space. Each influencer's engagement rate, comment sentiment, follower authenticity, as well as their audience's location and brand affinity, is clearly marked so that Dmitri feels confident knowing everyone he works with has a genuine audience that is located in the countries where Ruggable ships.

## CREATING LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS AT SCALE

AspireIQ allows Dmitri to chat directly with influencers in a more relaxed fashion than email, but a more organized way than Instagram DMs. This allows his team to have 1:1 conversations with influencers at any time, despite how many people he's working with.

Once an influencer is identified, Dmitri runs a test campaign to see how their audience responds. Influencers who love the product and have high engagement are then added to an "MVP program". MVP influencers are long-term partners that collaborate over a span of three, six, or 12 months. These influencers become brand evangelists who remain loyal to the brand, even outside of one-off collaborations.

AspireIQ Manage has helped Dmitri centralize influencers' conversations, campaign history, and performance. And despite the length of the collaboration, he can standardize contracts, deliverables, content guidelines, and licensing rights, allowing him to scale exponentially.

## SCALING CONTENT THAT ENCOURAGES COMMUNITY

Influencers lead the charge in community. It's one thing for the brand to post about itself, but when an influencer shares their love for Ruggable, they provide social proof that encourages their fans to get excited about what the brand has to offer.

For example, one of the first partnerships in the platform was with @asher.ashy, an Instagram account dedicated to two corgis with about 30K IG followers at the time. The photographer sent more than 100 pieces of content that were such high quality that Ruggable repurposed the images on its homepage, paid ads, emails, social accounts, and more. When the brand reposted the content on its own social channels, it received comments such as "Such a cool concept!! Our dog has had so many accidents... a washable rug would make our life so much easier!" and "Such a genius idea! Especially for those of us with pets!"



## The Solution Cont.

### REPURPOSING CONTENT TO LOWER CPA

Since implementing influencer content in paid ads, the brand has seen a 32% higher return on ad spend (ROA) and 25% lower Cost per Engagement (CPA).

The key to Facebook ads success is relevancy and every image or video Ruggable has generated tells a unique story that resonates with diverse community members. Plus, if the Ruggable Paid Ads team is running a test to target a specific audience, the brand can request a certain type of content which appeals to the targeted audience member. Dmitri can then tap into his community for people who fit this criteria and can speak authentically to the problems, closing the loop between consumers needs, content creation, and marketing goals.

Because the Ruggable audience is so receptive to influencer-generated content across paid ads, Dmitri repurposes it across several marketing channels in order to add third-party validation to customers at each point of the purchase journey. All of the content that influencers create is automatically stored in Ruggable's Content Library. With Google Drive integration, anyone across the creative, paid ads, or graphic design teams has access to the content and can share it across any channel because usage rights are built in.

## The Results

In less than 6 months on AspireIQ, Dmitri has identified and partnered with over 400 influencers that meet all of Ruggable's specific vetting criteria. They share similar values, have authentic followers, and of course, are fans of Ruggable products. Most importantly, Dmitri can scale his program, without losing the personal touch. The brand went from working with 10 influencers each week to working with an average of 45. Through these relationships, the team has generated more than 2,300 posts, 36 million impressions, nearly 1 million engagements, and 166,000 Instagram followers.

Dmitri has plans to diversify his community even further. He has begun to work with influencers who have expertise in politics, entertainment, tech, beauty, and fashion, because all these people have homes, and many of them have families or have pets. Dmitri also wants to partner with customers who might not have a large following, but create beautiful



*"We're constantly testing the boundaries of what we think might work with influencers, and being really meticulous about tracking results. AspireIQ allows us to get the data we need to test, analyze, improve, and scale." – Dmitri Cherner, Influencer & Strategic Partnerships, Ruggable*

Regardless of follower size, repurposing user generated content gives community members a place to interact with the brand and other community members. Ruggable has seen an influx of comments from moms who want a clean surface for their children, to pet owners who no longer have to worry about little accidents. Interactions like these are what keeps the Ruggable community going and allows the brand to grow as a whole.