

Influential Raises \$5M Series A for Intelligence-Fueled Influencer Marketing

By Patience Haggin

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Influencer-marketing startup Influential has raised \$5 million in Series A funding led by Australian venture-capital firm Capital Zed.

The Beverly Hills, Calif.-based company helps brands to find social-media influencers based on the demographics of their fan base. It also allows clients to learn whether the influencer has a criminal record or has previously referenced a competitor, along with other qualities associated with the influencer's public profile.

As a developer partner of IBM Watson, Influential uses the artificial intelligence technology to tag influencers with 52 different traits, including adventurousness, altruism and hedonism, based on keyword searching their social feeds.

“If Gatorade is adventurous and imaginative, then they're going to want influencers that are also perceived as being the same,” said Influential Chief Executive and co-founder Ryan Detert.

Influential has 82 employees, Mr. Detert said. In the next eight months, the company plans to raise that number to 100 or 110. Its hires will include doubling its developer and data team, Mr. Detert said.

The company has raised a total of \$9 million to date.

Write to Patience Haggin at patience.haggin@wsj.com