

'Influentials' Author Opens Word-of-Mouth Tracking Agency

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Ed Keller, author of the popular word-of-mouth marketing book, *The Influentials*, has announced that he is launching a company to shed light on how everyday, in-person interactions shape consumers' buying behavior, AdAge reports. While it's relatively easy to track online conversations – via blogs, chat rooms, message boards, etc. – the majority of brand “conversations” (to the tune of 80 percent, some of the industry believe) take place offline.

That offline buzz is what Keller, former CEO of research firm RoperASW, hopes to track with his new company, the Keller Fay Group. The group's service, TalkTrack, will ask 100 Americans each day about the conversations they have about brands and purchasing decisions. Keller will also sell TalkTrack directly to marketers after it launches in February. Brad Fay, also formerly of Roper, has joined the firm as its Chief Operating Officer.

Keller Fay's first client is StarcomMedivest Group.

Word-of-mouth marketing has been getting increasing attention from marketers, as indicated by the growth of the Word of Mouth Marketing Association, which recently announced that it had just signed its 250th member in under a year.