

Creators are
Cultural Catalysts

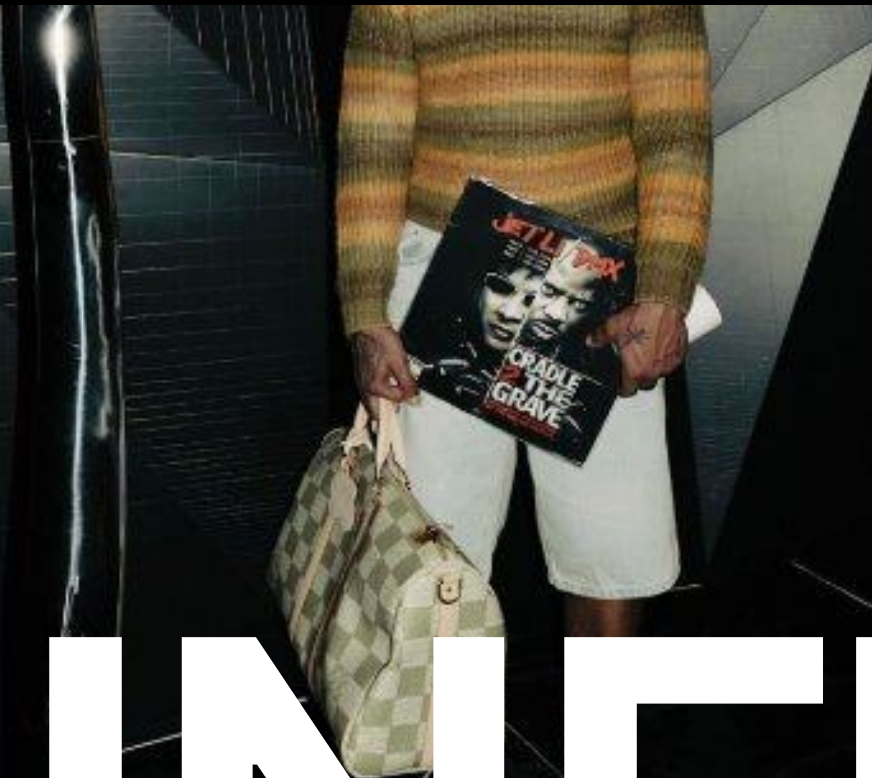
THE



The Power
of Niche

STATE

OF



Content Value
Over Volume



2025

INFLUENCE

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Unless you're living under a rock, you'll know that the Influencer Marketing landscape is growing at an extraordinary pace. By 2027, the industry is projected to reach a staggering \$480 billion, which signifies the scale of opportunity that lies ahead.

We've released The State of Influence 2025 Report to share the key trends that we know will define the next chapter, and provide insights on how to succeed in this evolving industry. Our Strategy and Insights team have identified three core themes that will determine the scale of influence next year.

Deeper Cultural Engagement –

Creators are powerful cultural catalysts, and now more than ever, they are leading behaviors both online and offline. To create deeper connections, brands must collaborate with creators who resonate with their audiences.

Strategic Community Targeting –

Niche communities have the power to build loyalty and engagement at scale. It's not enough to produce scripted influencer content. Brands must prioritize value over volume and be strategic and creative with influencer partnerships. This approach will align perfectly with the growth of B2B Influencer Marketing and the desire for tailored strategic content and campaigns.

Data-Driven Decisions –

Technology will also play a pivotal role in driving innovation and enhancing engagement.

AI-led campaigns and insights (like those gathered through Digital Voices' tech tool Composer) are set to become a cornerstone of successful marketing strategies, enabling brands to deliver personalized, impactful content to target customers.

Platforms are also evolving. Long-form, deeper storytelling is driving renewed interest, with YouTube poised for a resurgence. At the same time, TikTok continues to redefine search and discovery for Gen Z, underscoring the shift in how audiences seek out information. To capitalize on these changes, it's critical to have the right tools, data, and teams to measure and refine impact effectively.

At Digital Voices, we understand that the path to success lies in embracing these transformative trends. With a sharp focus on quality, personalization, and data-driven decision-making, we celebrate the power of communities to build authentic connections. Throughout this report, you'll see outstanding campaigns from across the industry – including some of our own!

Let's move forward boldly, equipped with insights and examples from this report, to continue driving innovation and success in the world of influence.

Here's to 2025,

Jennifer Quigley-Jones
CEO & Founder, Digital Voices

The Creator Economy is to reach \$480 billion in value by 2027.

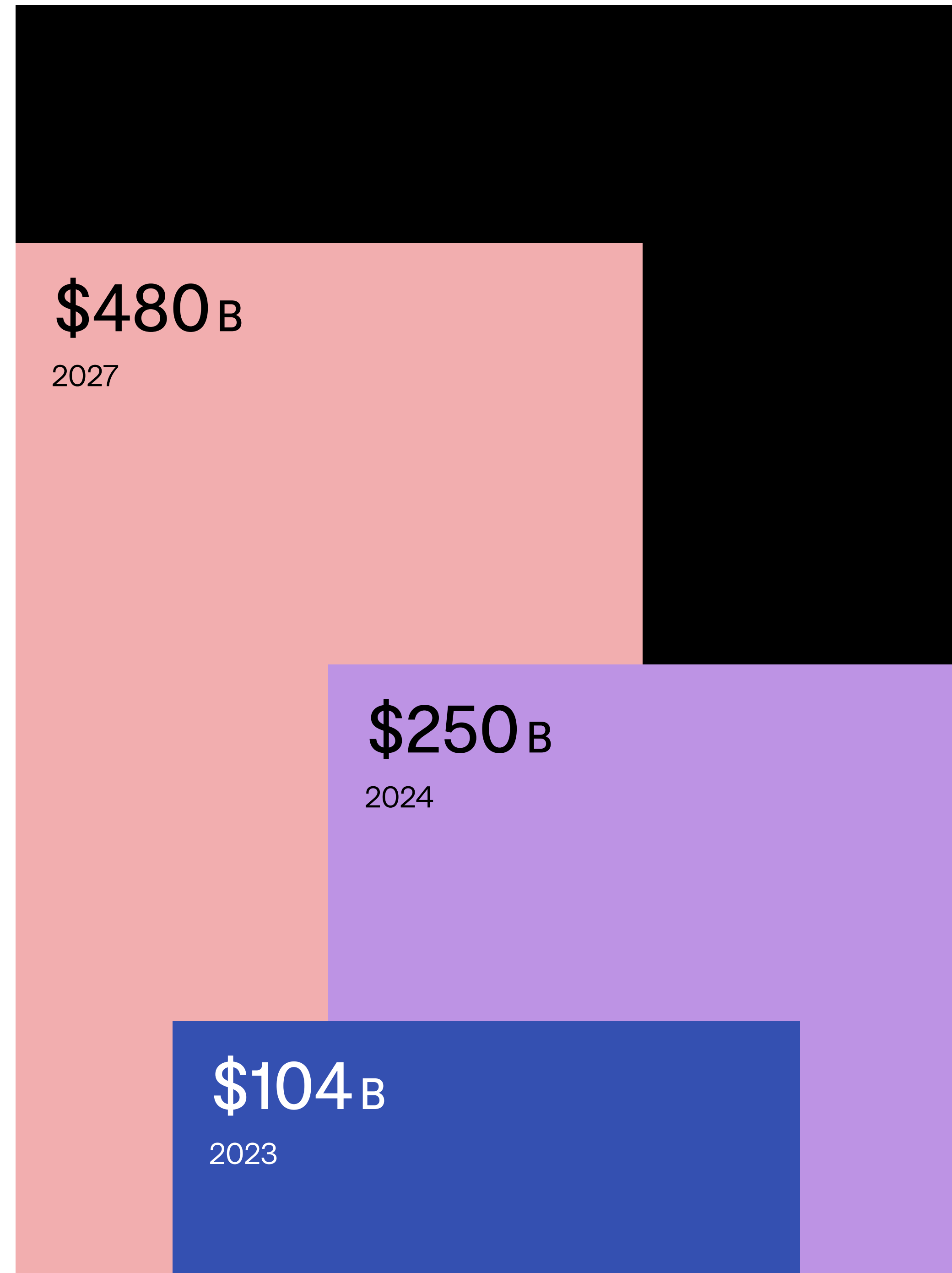
Creators today hold the kind of influence that brands used to associate with entire media channels. They control community norms, dictate trends, and influence buying behavior in highly trusted ways.

Creator content generates up to 12x more engagement than brand-produced content.

48% of U.S. consumers have made purchases directly through social media platforms, largely driven by creator endorsements and content.

Sources:
[Forbes](#), [CreatorIQ](#), [Digital Marketing Institute](#)

The Big Picture



SECTION 01

CREATORS ARE CULTURAL CATALYSTS



From setting fashion and lifestyle trends to amplifying social causes and redefining brand engagement, influencers are shaping the cultural fabric of the content-driven era.

Image:
Amy Stockwell Instagram

In 2025 social media's influence on consumer culture will be undeniable, driving brands to align marketing strategies and spend accordingly. Platforms like TikTok have become epicenters for creator-driven culture and viral conversations that influence consumer behavior on- and offline. In fact, 27% of organizations named TikTok their most integral platform in 2024.

There's a clear shift toward creator-led strategies where authentic content engages audiences the most. Brands working with creators are seeing significant uplift, with creator content generating 12x more impressions and 17x more engagements than owned content according to a recent study of Fortune 100 brands.

12x

creator content generates 12x more impressions

Digital Voices collaborated with Lionsgate to reignite interest in the Hunger Games franchise by partnering with influencer "Tube Girl" for a red carpet event, sparking viral conversations and excitement for the new movie.

**Creators are more than influencers.
They're culture-makers.**



Sometimes, culture-makers just have to eat an entire cucumber...



Logan Moffitt (aka "the cucumber guy") tapped into summer 2024 with cucumber salad tutorials that transcended typical food content, sparking a cultural phenomenon that led to increased cucumber sales, nationwide shortages, and millions of views across social media platforms.

What started with a mandolin and deli containers caught the attention of brands like DoorDash, Chipotle, Sephora, NYX Professional, and K18 Hair - proving how creator-driven trends now move fluidly across categories.

Was Canadian influencer Logan Moffitt responsible for Iceland's cucumber shortage thanks to his viral salad trend?

Creator Content Drives Market Behavior

The impact hit supply chains globally - from OXO's 30-600% mandolin sales surge to FreshDirect's 172% YOY cucumber spike - demonstrating how creator-led culture tips people into purchase.

Production Value ≠ Cultural Value

A communications grad filming with basic tools from his kitchen (and yes, sometimes a lake) proved that relatability trumps production value in driving cultural impact.

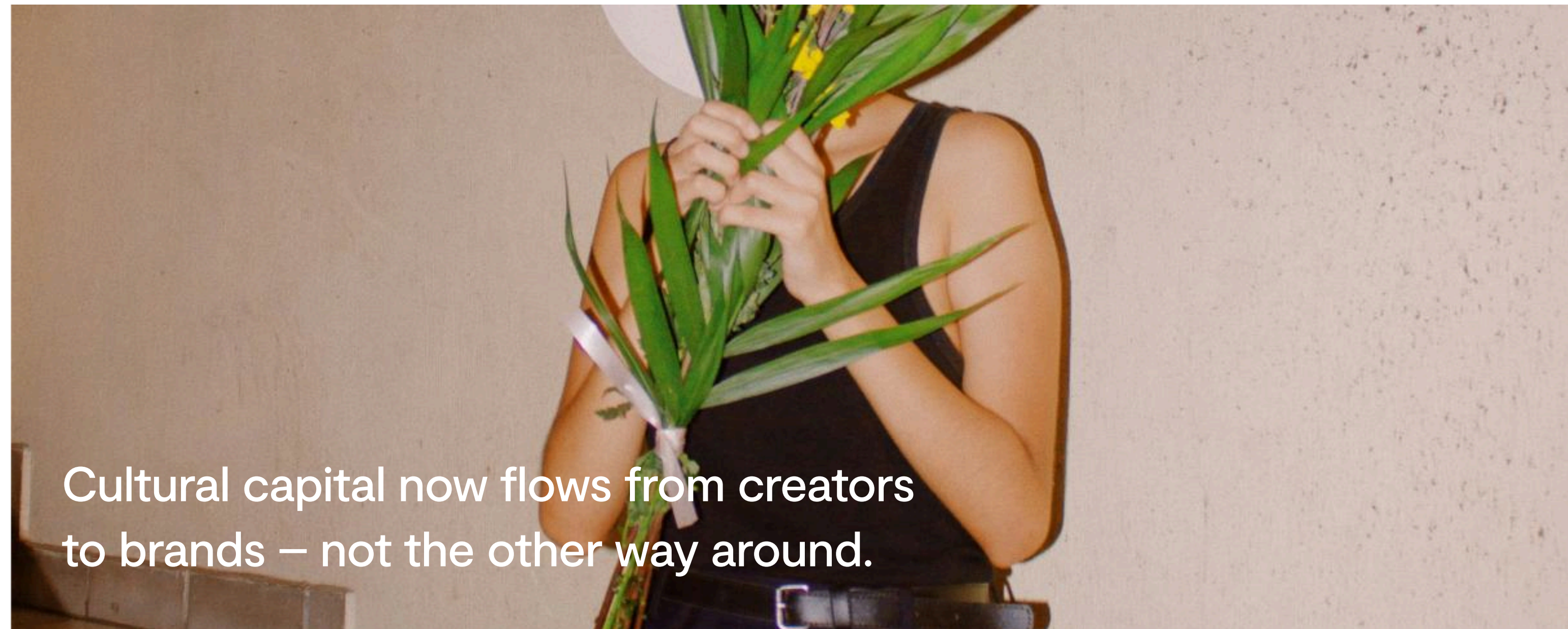
Cultural Shorthand

"Sometimes you need to eat an entire cucumber" transcended beyond catchphrase status, becoming shorthand for a whole movement as millions participated in the trend.

Creator Influence Flows Across Categories

The phenomenon expanded past grocery and kitchenware into beauty and personal care, establishing a new model for how creator influence flows across traditional market boundaries.

The new rule of influence.



Cultural power play— Gen Z takes the edit button

When a real estate agent's Gen Z intern edited a standard marketing video into nothing but dramatic breathing sounds and chaotic zooms, it racked up over 50 million views and sparked two viral trends: "Gen Z edited my video" and "Gen Z wrote my marketing script." Soon, businesses everywhere were letting Gen Z employees edit their videos and write their marketing scripts, with content ranging from luxury property tours to history museums to 880-year-old British manors describing their gardens as "giving relaxation."

Soon, businesses everywhere were letting Gen Z employees edit their videos and write their marketing scripts

Northumberland Zoo's take on the trend has gained over 8 million views, The Royal Armouries Museum has surpassed 9 million, and Fyfield Manor is approaching 12 million. More globally recognizable brands, like LEGO, are jumping on the trend too, yet haven't made as much of a significant impact as their marketing typically already aligns with Gen Z preferences.

These trends mark a fundamental shift in how culture is made: internet culture, shaped by young creators, has become so dominant that traditional institutions are adapting to their language and aesthetic to stay relevant.

The new rule of Influence

Creators don't need brands
to build cultural capital.
Brands need creators who
already have it.

Best in class

A Cultural Moment

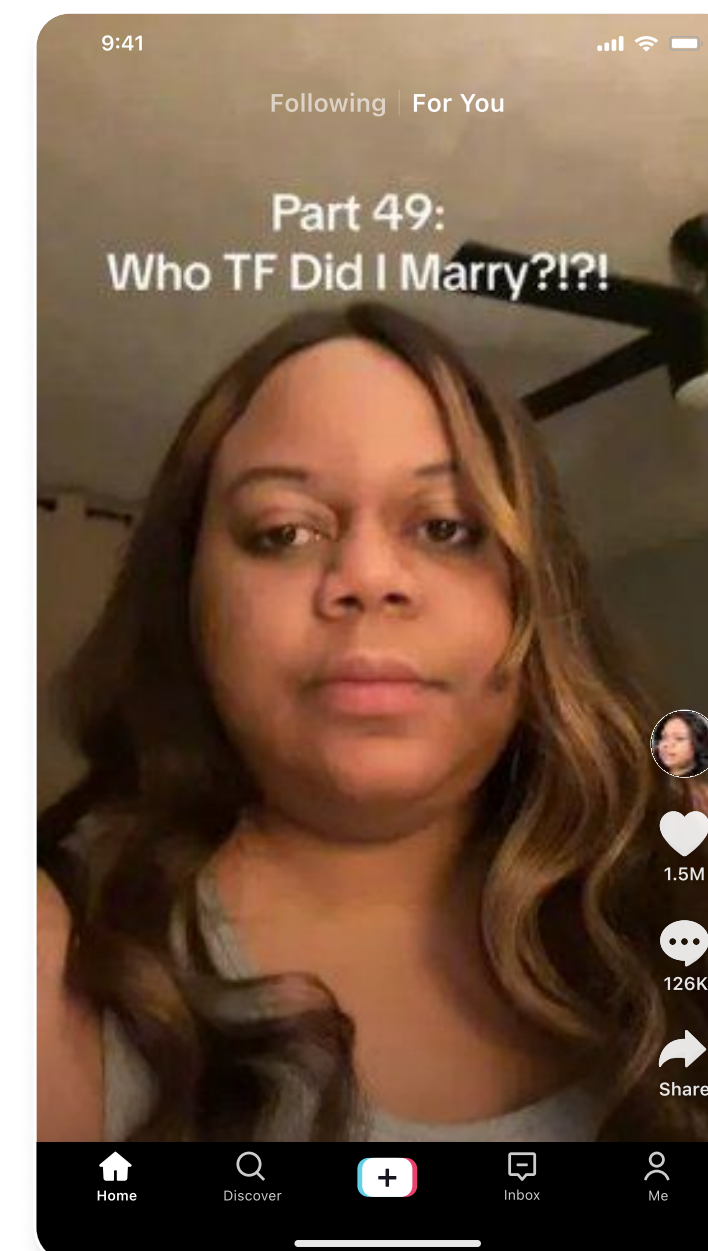
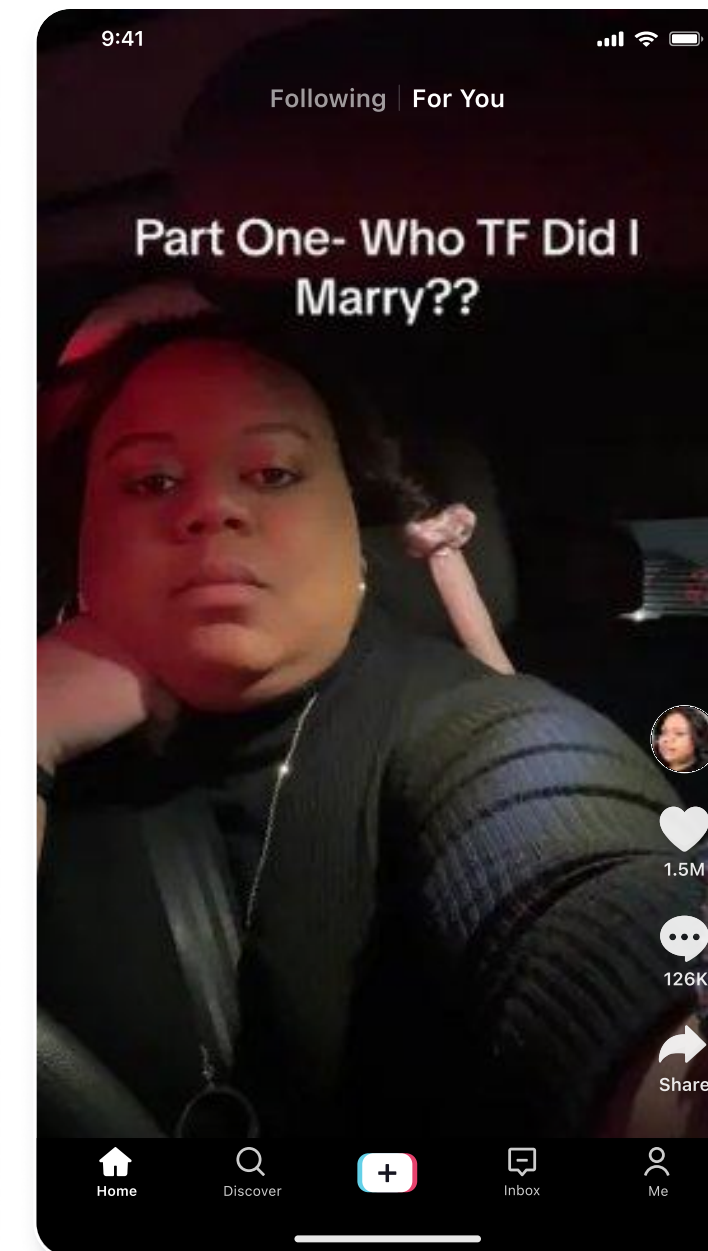
ReesaTeesa's "Who TF Did I Marry" TikTok series was another major cultural moment online in 2024, showing the power of individual creators to captivate massive audiences without initial brand backing. Her 52-part series, spanning nearly eight hours of content, reached millions of views and grew her follower count to over 2.7 million in just one week.



Chime Financial capitalized on this cultural moment by bringing @ReesaMTeesa onboard for an informative, on-brand ad about how to spot red flags in a relationship – in ReesaTeesa's signature style, of course.

Marketer Tip

Want to make sure you're not missing the mark when tapping into cultural moments and themes that your audience care about? Involve your influencer partners earlier in the process! Invite influencers to brainstorm to share ideas or jump on a call to learn more about what works for their audience.



SECTION 02

RICHES ARE IN THE NICHE



Image: Savage P Instagram

ERB WE ALL FAM POV LET HIM COO
NG ME PAID ACTOR IN DA CLERB S
SIDE QUEST RIZZ IN MY ERA
CHAT IS THIS REAL IT'S GIVING
E PAID ACTOR VERY DEM
LULU IT'S GIVING RIZZ IN DA CLE
FAM POV LET HIM COOK SENDING
R IN DA CLERB SENDING ME WE
RIZZ IN MY ERA VERY DEMURE POV
HIS REAL IT'S GIVING LET HIM CO
ACTOR VERY DEMURE I LET HIM

Art of the niche

Brands are mastering the art of cultural fluency to build audience trust



Image:
Ahnesti Monet McMichael Instagram

With the fragmentation of social media into endless content bubbles, we've learned that hitting niche audiences often outperforms going for mass appeal. Micro-cultures have their own language, memes, and traditions that influencers are fluent in, offering authentic entry points for brands. Brands are leaning into the unique language these communities create, turning niche trends into global conversations. Phrases like "let him cook" or "delulu", which started in specific regions or communities have sparked widespread interest. Savvy brands are now diving into comment sections and using these trends as inspiration, replying directly or creating videos to keep the conversation going. This shift has transformed how brands interact, showcasing personality and building trust through authentic engagement.

Marketer Tip

Using cultural lingo can feel forced without audience trust. Collaborating with creators builds credibility while staying authentic to your brand. Engage in comment sections and trending sounds to join the conversation naturally.

Niche communities and subcultures are increasingly influencing consumer behavior.

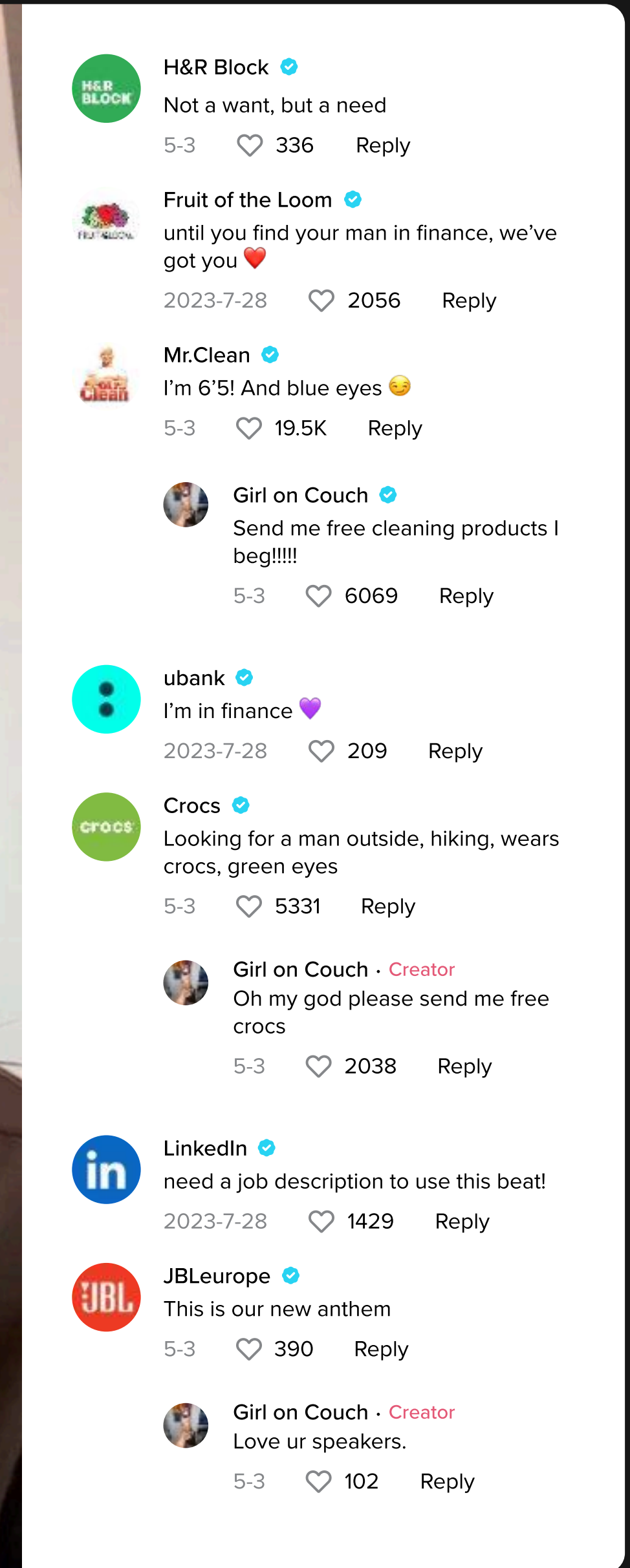
TikTok’s content-first algorithms represent a step away from the creator-first strategies that defined the Web 2.0 era of social media. Unlike Instagram or YouTube, where follower counts and personal brands often dictated visibility, TikTok prioritizes engaging and relevant content over the creator’s social capital. This means any video, whether from a seasoned influencer or a new account, has the potential to go viral if it resonates with the audience.

74%

of TikTok users appreciate personalized brand responses in the comment section, signaling the value of authenticity when brands engage in familiar, relatable language.

Megan Boni’s mega-viral "I'm looking for a man in finance" video is a prime example of how niche moments are exploding into mass culture. A humorous, hyper-specific TikTok turned into a viral sensation, inspiring DJ remixes, prompting hundreds of thousands of spinoffs, and sparking collaboration from brands like Fruit of the Loom, Crocs, and Mr. Clean (source)

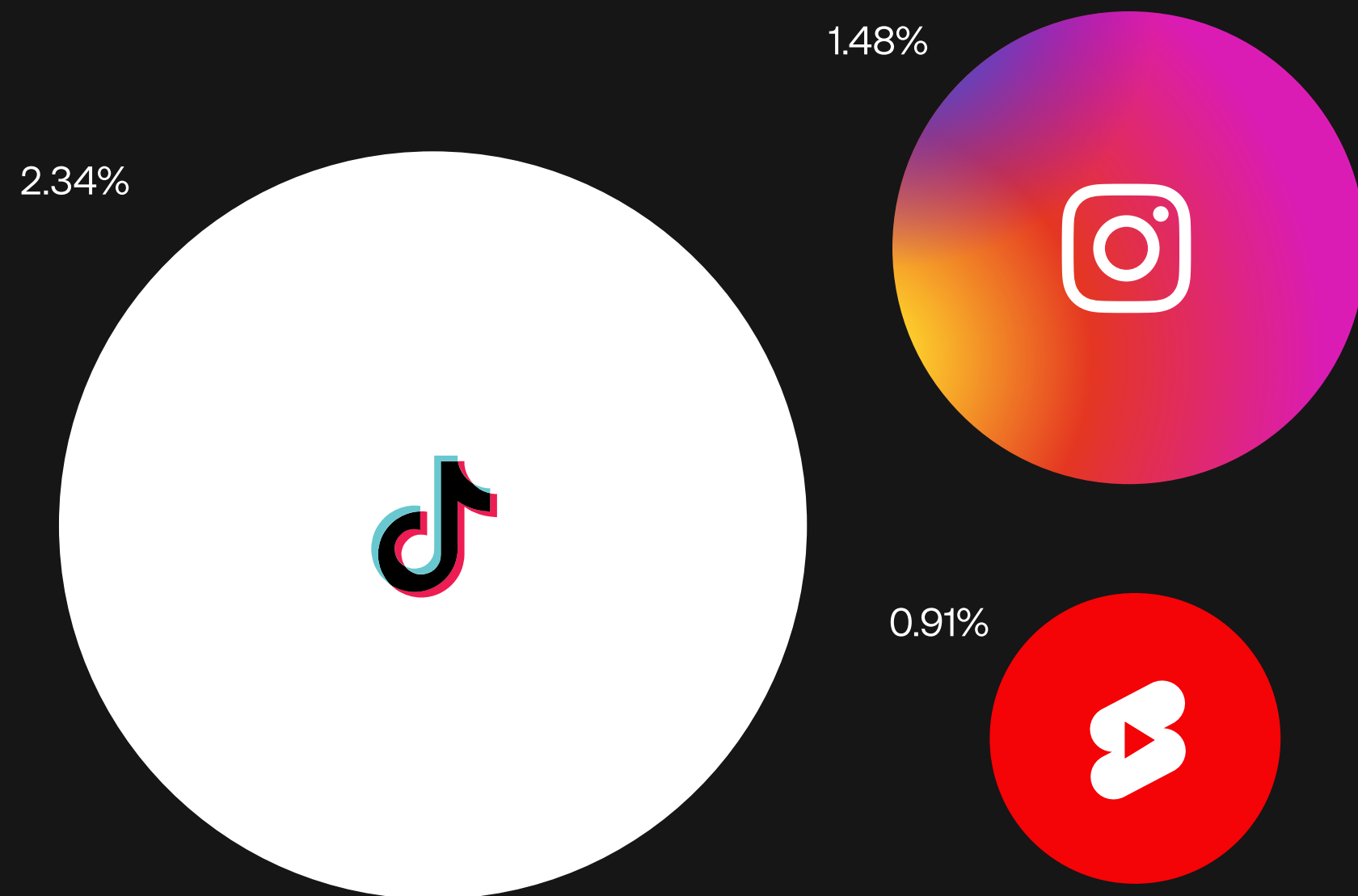
Video memes will continue to serve as a form of cultural shorthand, allowing brands and influencers to tap into shared experiences and emotions quickly. Some examples:



Content first [Not creator first]

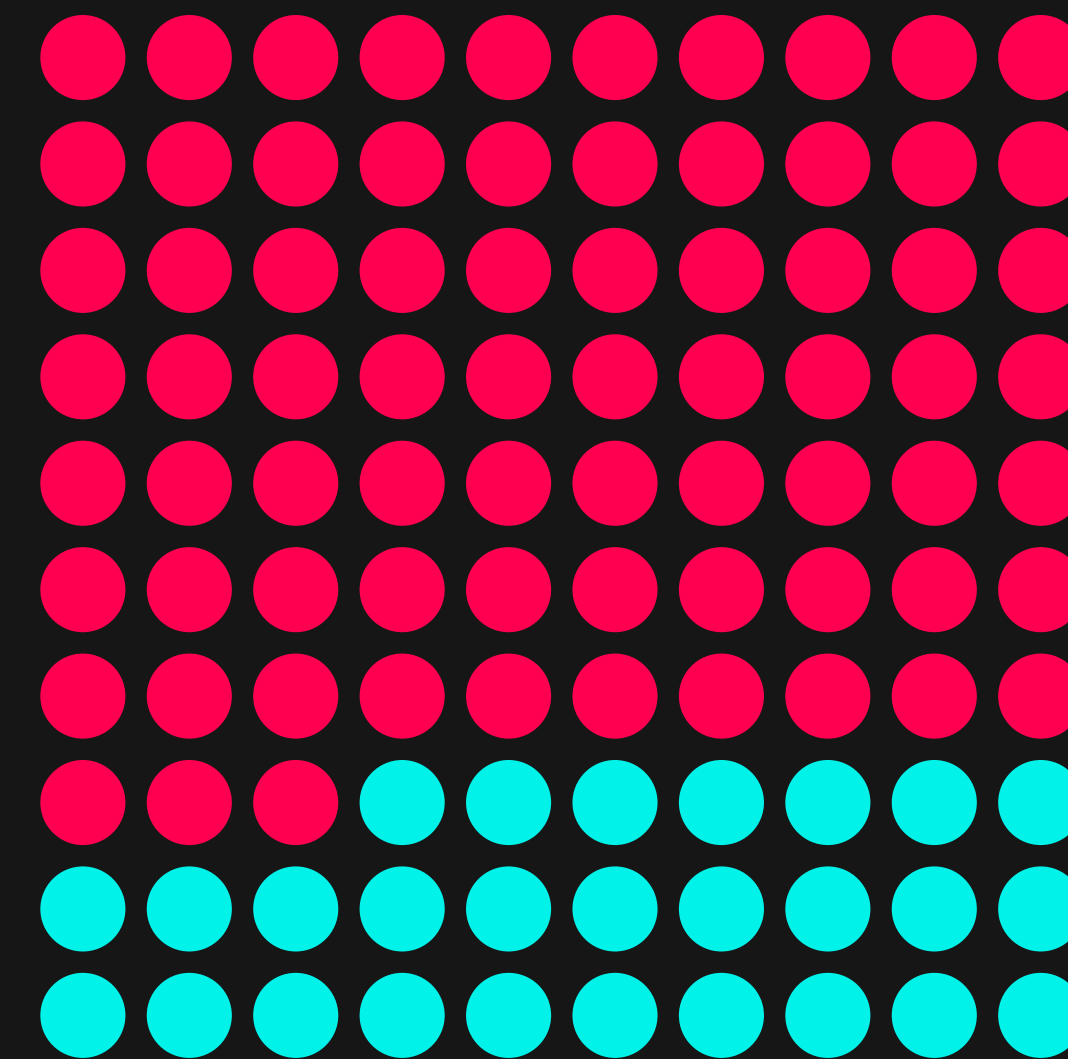
TikTok engagement tops the charts

With 2.34% average Engagement Rate vs. Instagram Reels (1.48%) and YouTube Shorts (0.91%) — TikTok is the most shareable platform for niche content with viral reach.



Source: [TikTok for Business](#)

TikTok consumption is algorithm first



73% of TikTok users watch whatever the algorithm suggests rather than primarily choosing to consume content from the creators they follow.

Source: [TikTok for Business](#)



Image: Keith Lee Instagram

#fortnite

665B views

#booktok

323B views

#NBA

311B views

#studytok

37B views

#moneytok

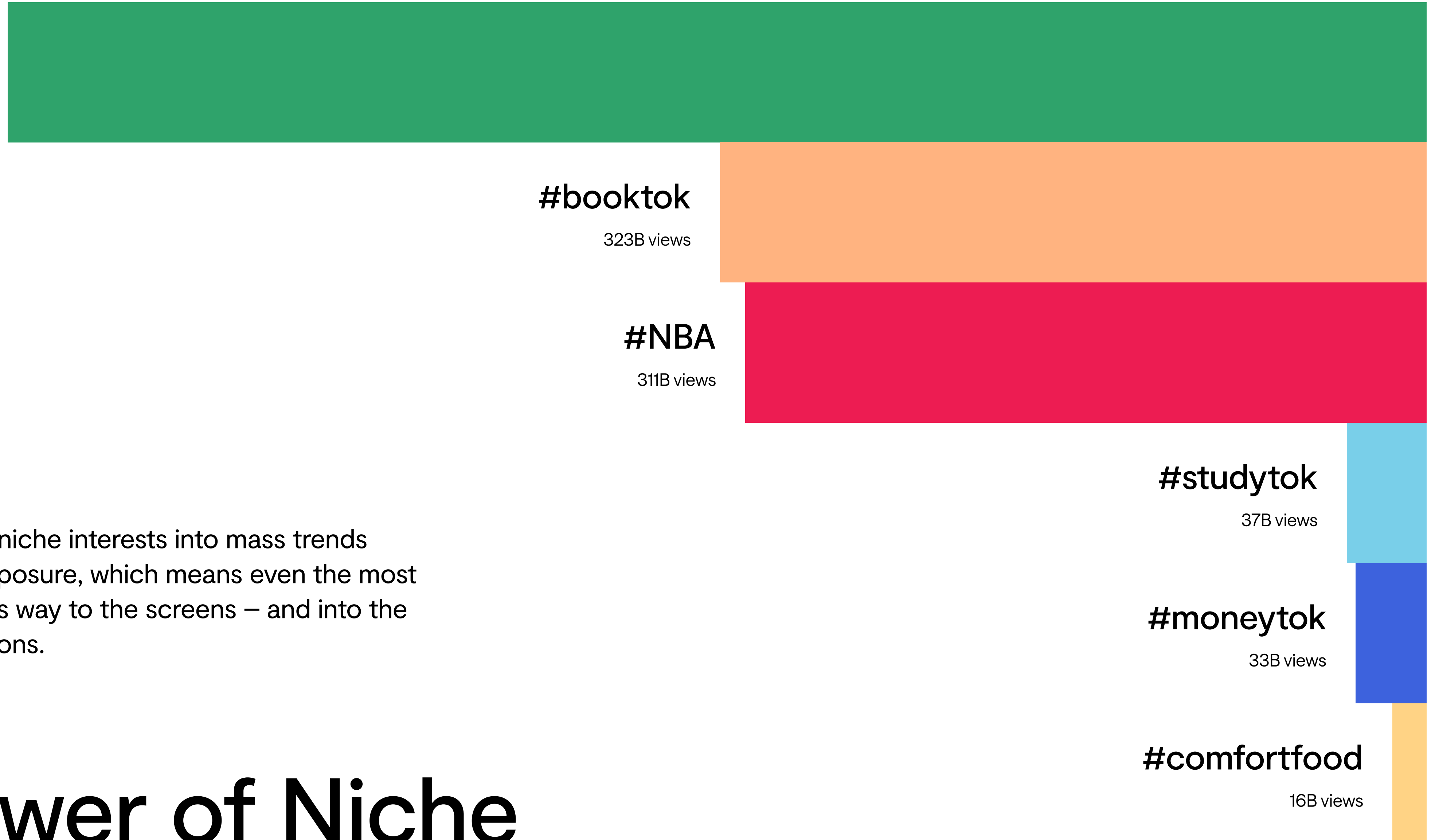
33B views

#comfortfood

16B views

TikTok's algorithm turns niche interests into mass trends through personalized exposure, which means even the most obscure content finds its way to the screens – and into the shopping carts – of millions.

The Power of Niche



Niche creator content builds *stronger connections* and *deeper impact* than mass-market messaging.

Brands are shifting from trying to create universally relatable campaigns to engaging tighter-knit communities with more specific storytelling – a response to changes in how audiences engage with content. Consumers today are highly attuned to authenticity, immediately recognizing (and often rejecting) content that feels manufactured for mass appeal. They value transparency and genuine interactions over polished advertising, and show stronger engagement with content that feels specific to their communities and interests.

Nissan partnered with STEM creators like @AsapSCIENCE to build awareness for their ARIYA electric vehicle. By targeting a curious and learning-oriented audience, they provided educational value that resonated with the platform's science and technology community, turning passive viewers into active participants.

Source: [TikTok, What's Next 2024?](#)

Marketer Tip

Don't use influencers as megaphones. The shift towards content over creators signals the importance of embracing a community-first approach over the traditional demographic-first strategies. Rather than narrowly targeting traditional demographic markers, brands should focus on creating content that aligns with the interests, behaviors, and cultural nuances of specific communities. TikTok's algorithm connects content to people based on shared values, humor, or trends, making it a powerful tool for brands to connect with their audience.

Image: [Ruggable.com](#)

Source: [Marketing Profs](#)

We love...

Ruggable x Bridgerton

By creating a Regency-inspired rug collection tied to Bridgerton's aesthetic and launching it ahead of the show's third season, Ruggable tapped into the "Regencycore" trend. The campaign proved that cultural alignment and audience relevance drives results.

7.6M

TikTok views

155%

engagement rate

\$1M

earned media value

SECTION 03

DEEPER CONNECTIONS



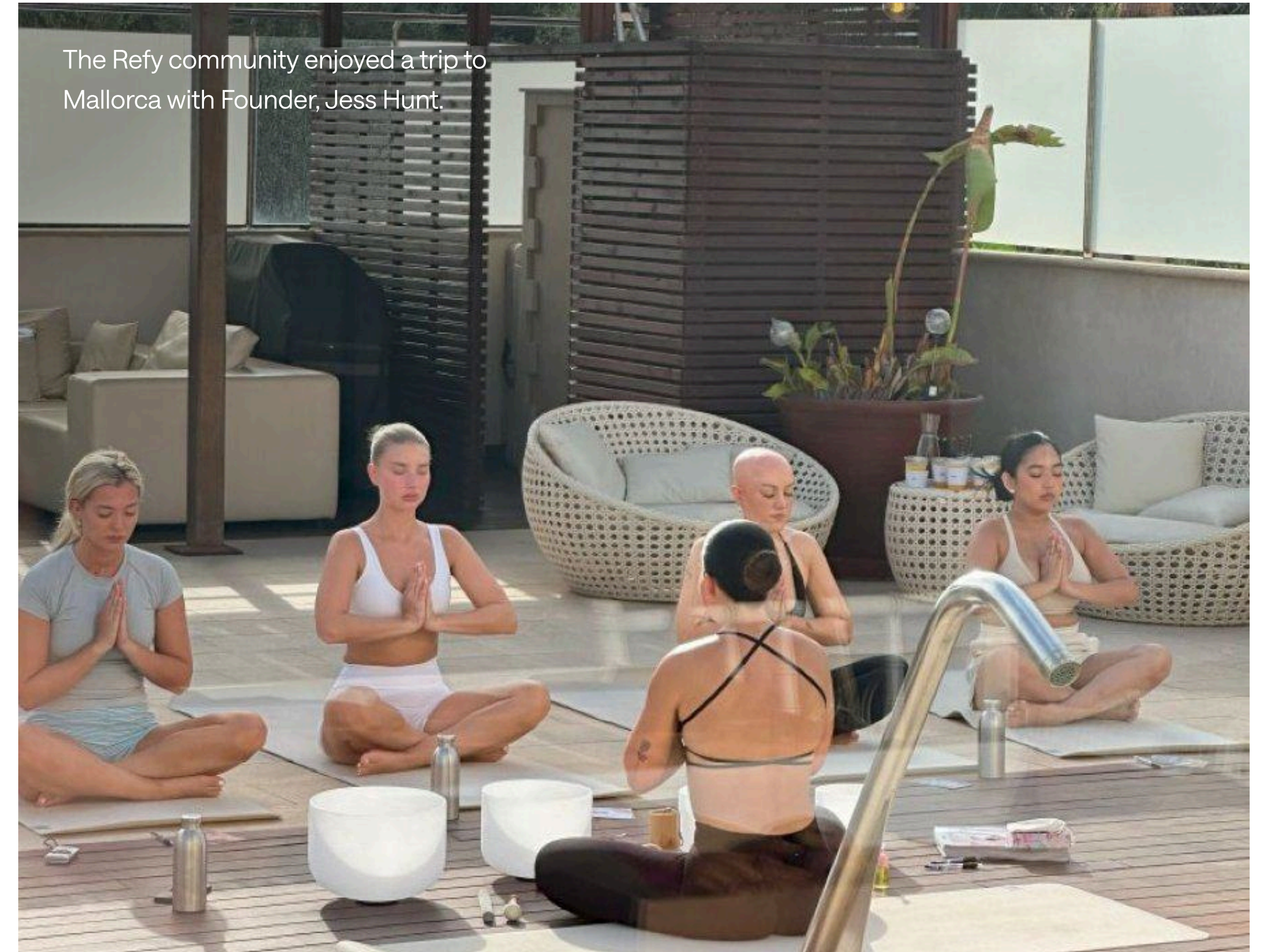
Image: REFY Instagram

When online & offline worlds *collide*

By turning online followers into real-life advocates, brands are creating memorable offline experiences.

Consumers preferences are changing. They want brands to celebrate their true fan communities and values - beyond spending ludicrous money on luxury exclusive influencer experiences. Tarte Cosmetics has been sending influencers on paid trips since 2013. Some say that the lavish trips are tone deaf and fail to read the room in the current economy. In February 2024 the brand flew influencers to Bora Bora for a trip that included private jets, a stay at the Four Seasons Resort, and gifts. While the group of influencers was more diverse than previous trips, the extravagant display was heavily scrutinized by social media audiences who found this marketing approach outdated.

Leading brands are reimagining community. Refy Beauty's summer 2024 brand trip was inclusive and customer-focused. Instead of inviting influencers on a mega trip, the brand chose to invite a select group of their dedicated and valued consumers to a stunning villa in Mallorca. The brand's founder, creator, Jess Hunt, attended the trip, spending time exploring the island and engaging in wholesome activities with the guests, who naturally enjoyed using their favorite Refy beauty products throughout the stay. The trip received lots of positive engagement on the brands social channels and the guests shared beautiful UGC that highlighted the effectiveness of brands investing in their communities.



The Refy community enjoyed a trip to Mallorca with Founder, Jess Hunt.

Marketer Tip

Invest time and resources into engaging directly with your loyal customers – they're the ones purchasing your products and shaping your brand's success. Use events or experiences to gather genuine feedback from your community. Ensure your influencer partners align organically with your brand values, as audiences can easily spot inauthentic partnerships. Building trust with your consumers starts with listening to them and collaborating with influencers who genuinely share their passion for your brand.

SECTION 04

VALUE OVER VOLUME



Image: Jack Edwards Instagram

In an era of audience fatigue and heightened expectations, true collaborations and impactful content are essential for building trust and loyalty.

Creative strategies are shifting

Influencer Marketing is maturing into a complex ecosystem where the traditional metrics (reach, polish, production value) are becoming less reliable indicators of success for brands. The real opportunity lies in understanding and leveraging the new drivers of performance: creator dynamics, community engagement, and strategic content execution - enhanced but not replaced by AI.

9x

User-generated content drives 9x higher engagement than brand-created content

81%

81% of marketers still list macro-influencers as their top choice, revealing a significant disconnect between strategy and results

The performance paradox

There is an emerging trend of marketers shifting back to celebrity and mega influencers due to their higher reach and ability to cut through social media noise. However, opportunities like user-generated content, consideration and conversion campaigns, and affiliate marketing still offer immense value for mid-tier, micro, and nano influencers. Micro and mid-tier creators consistently generate the highest engagement rates.

\$5.78

Brands are receiving \$5.78 in earned media value for every \$1 spent on influencer marketing—but this ROI skews heavily toward smaller creators

74%

74% of organizations increased creator marketing budgets year-over-year, with a 143% increase over four years. Enterprise brands allocate an average of \$1.7M annually

“

To connect with niche or emerging communities, you need to build genuine connections with audiences. Focus on nano and micro-influencers who often achieve higher engagement thanks to their dedicated audiences.

Craft campaigns that resonate with the community's values, and give influencers the creative freedom they need to truly connect – no one knows their audience better! Longer-term partnerships are also a strong way to build trust and credibility within these spaces.

Anastasia France
Creative Strategist, Digital Voices

Volume → **Value**

Source:
[Business Insider](#)

We're *champions* of weirdly refreshing content



5.6K

creators posted

↑ 16% growth (year on year)

17K

posts produced

↑ 9% growth (year on year)

2.8B

impressions

↑ 100% growth (year on year)

\$96.6M

EMV growth

↑ 3000% growth (between 2018 & 2023)

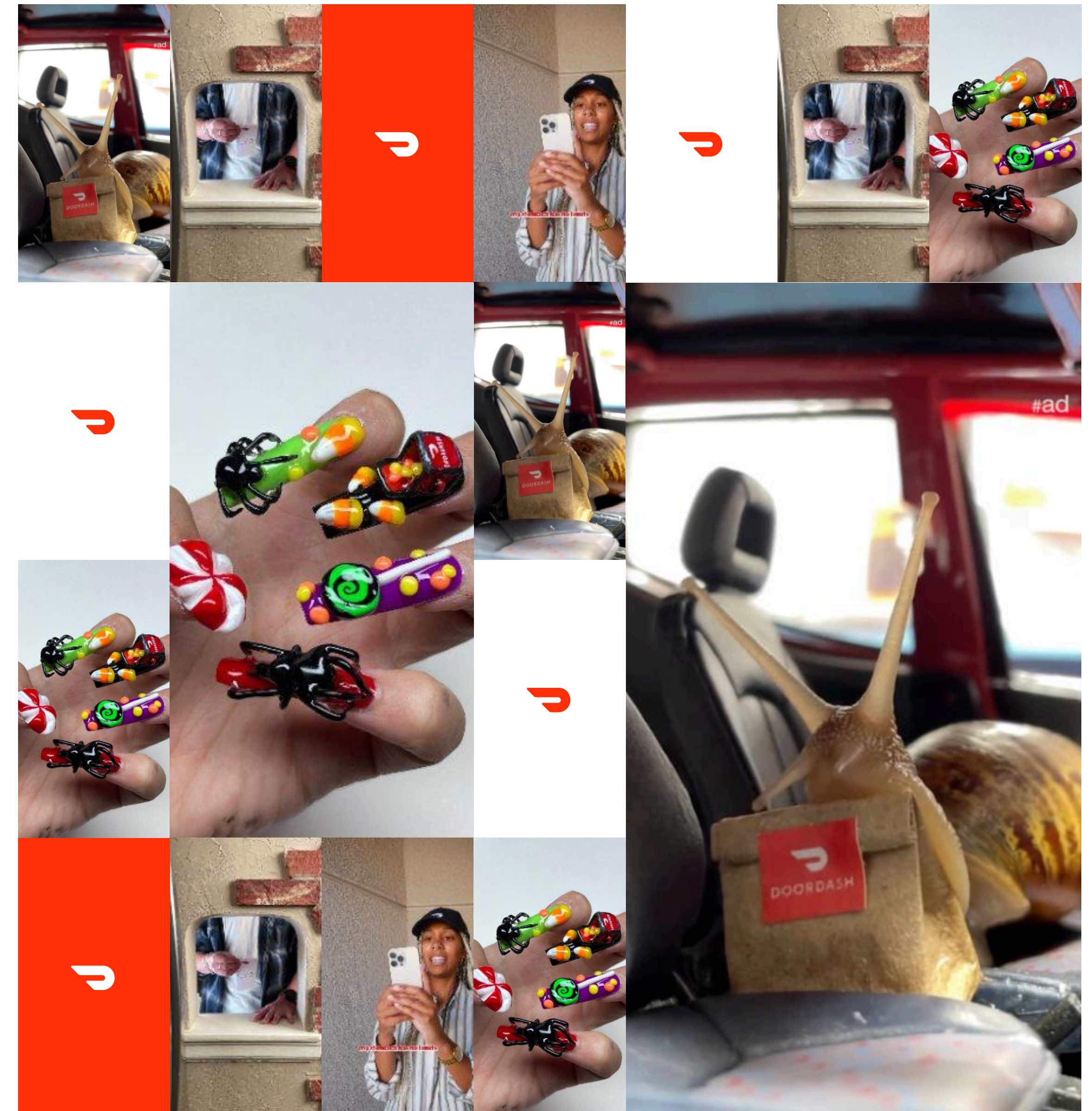
May 2023 → Apr 2024

Digital Voices have been working with DoorDash to position the app as a beloved Gen Z brand through scroll-stopping creative content. By strategically collaborating with fewer creators across different verticals – and empowering them to lead creatively – we’ve seen the content outperform predictions, and contributing to the brands 3000% EMV growth between 2018–2023.

You might assume, given DoorDash’s impressive growth, that the brand dramatically expanded its creator community over the last year. However, from May 2023 to April 2024, 5.6K creators authored 17.5K posts about DoorDash, figures that proved respective 16% and 9% YoY improvements. Given the delivery service’s 55% YoY growth, that’s really not so much.

The difference came in the viral impact of those creators who did post about DoorDash. By strategically partnering with some of the big names in its rolodex like Keith Lee, and forging new partnerships with creators who possessed greater viral potential, DoorDash garnered 2.8 billion Impressions, a clean 100% YoY increase.

Source: [CreatorIQ](#)



DOES SIZE MATTER?

The creator landscape of 2025 will shatter old assumptions that bigger followings equal bigger results. As brands mature in their creator strategies, they're discovering that the most successful partnerships aren't determined by follower count alone, but by a creator's ability to genuinely connect with and mobilize their community.

This shift is reflected where brands are seeing their highest returns: while 38% consider established creators (300K-1M followers) most critical for business impact, it's telling that 35% report their highest ROI comes from mid-tier partnerships (100K-300K followers).

An influencer's follower number isn't important, it's about impact.

Digital Voices have been guaranteeing impressions results for 8 years to every brand we work with. An influencer's follower number isn't important, it is about impact.

In 2025, we hope to see other agencies and brands follow suit and focus on engagement results.

Source: [Creator IQ](#)

Partnership Value by Tier

Nano Influencers (1K-10K followers)

- Attractive for small and emerging brands
- Tap into highly localized communities
- Flexible and agile for quick campaigns
- A lower traffic spike compared to other tiers

Micro Influencers (10K- 100K followers)

- High engagement rates
- High audience trust
- Strong community connections
- Cost-effective for brands

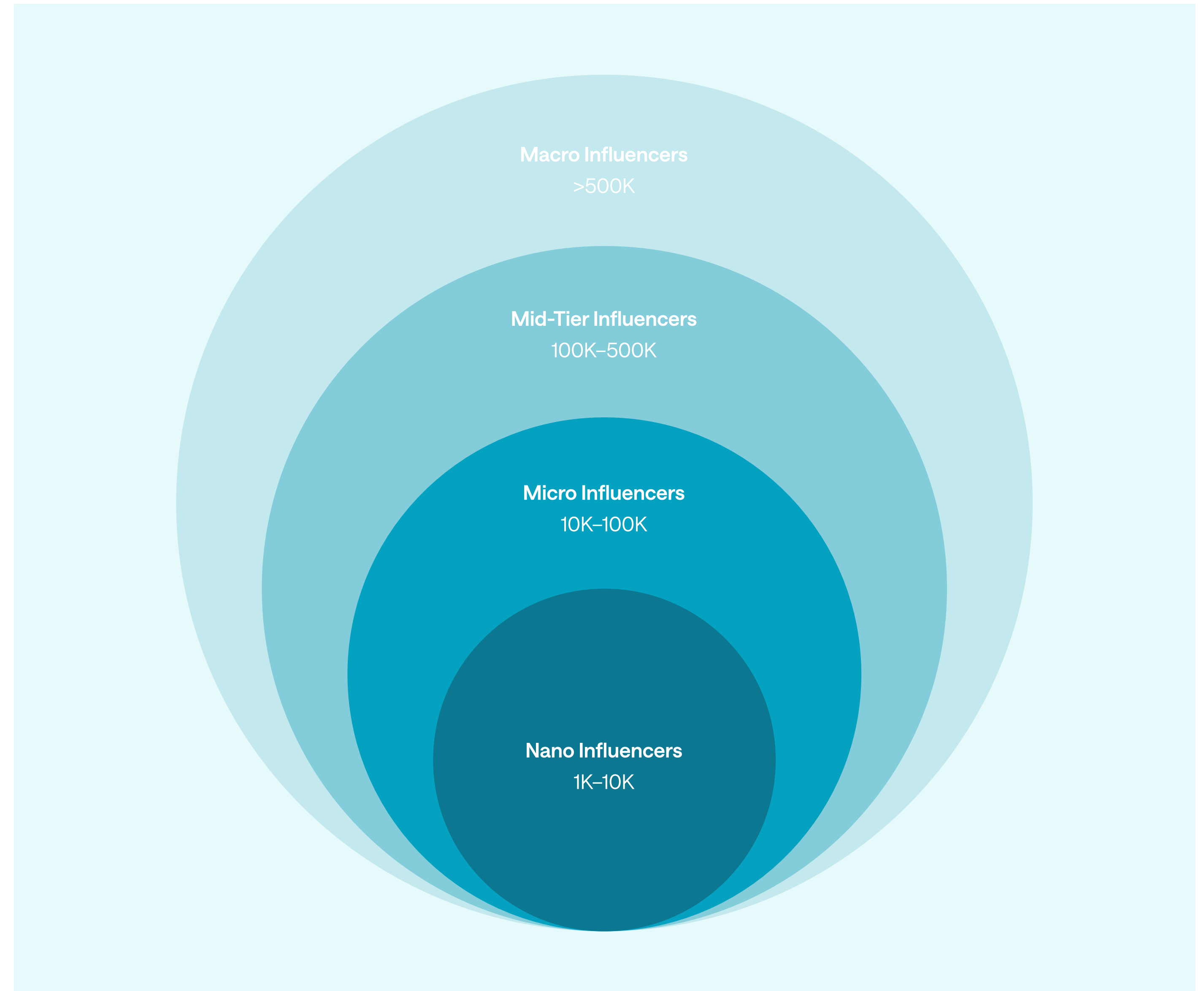
Mid-tier Influencers (100K-500K followers)

- Balance both reach and engagement
- Impact and authenticity
- Strong vertical expertise
- Professionally savvy yet authentically connected

Macro Influencers (500K+ followers)

- Broad reach but declining engagement
- Higher production values
- Brand safety advantage
- Best for awareness plays

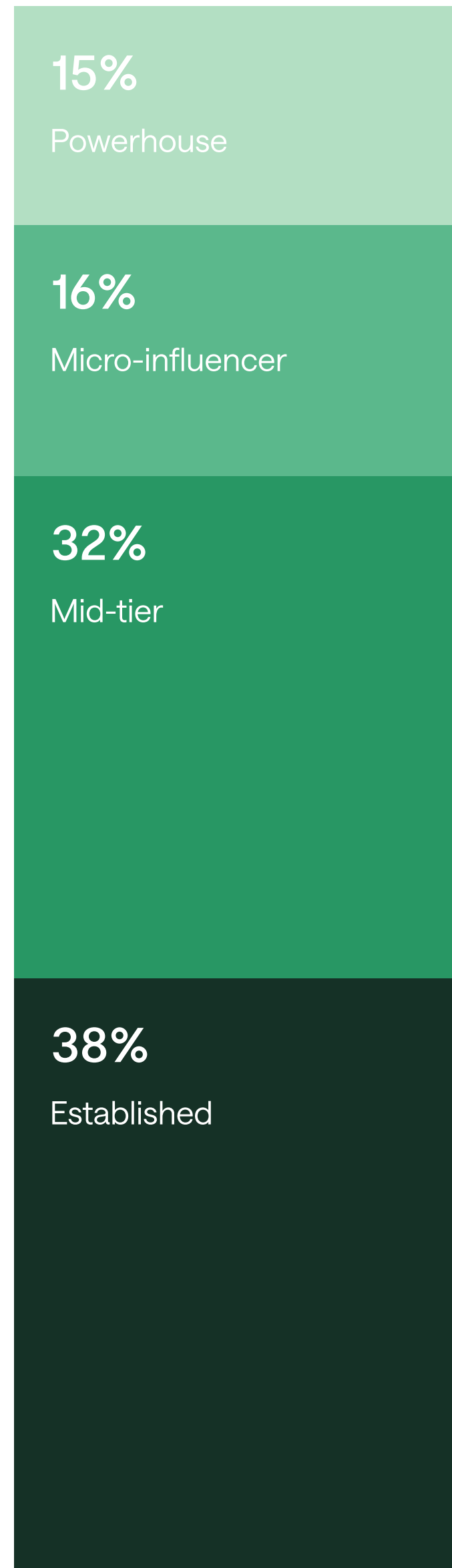
Source:
[Business Insider](#),
[Influencer Marketing
Hub](#), [Creator IQ](#)



We're seeing a shift in strategy

We're seeing brands shift from asking "how big is their audience?" to "how deep is their impact?"

Graph showing most important creator tiers in 2024 for ongoing partnerships vs delivering high ROI (pictured right). Brands can drive greater impact and engagement by partnering with creators who have moderately sized audiences but high engagement rates, as they often offer a more authentic and cost-effective connection with their followers. Building long term relationships with your most successful creator partners, and turning them into your brand ambassadors will enhance audience trust as they will view you synonymously.

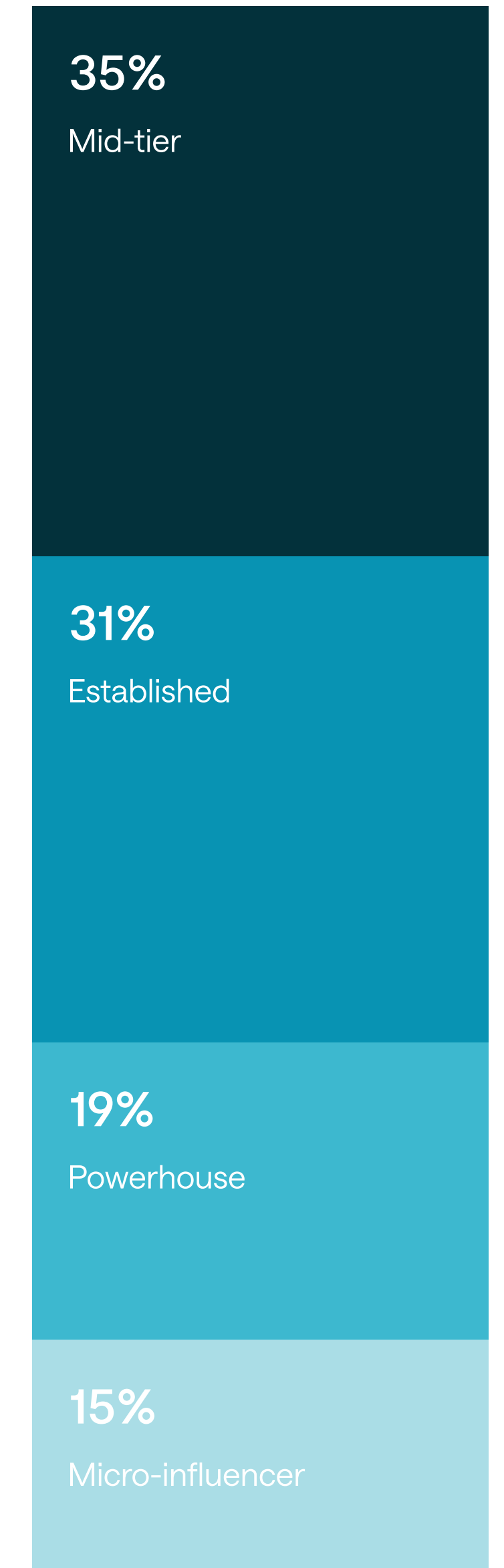


Most important creator tier for ongoing partnerships

Established tier creators (300K-1M) are rated most critical by 38% of brands for ongoing partnerships

Most important creator tier for delivering high ROI

Mid-tier creators (100K-300K) deliver highest ROI according to 35% of brands



SECTION 05

AI DRIVEN CAMPAIGNS



Image: Miquela Instagram

AI has graduated from a content tool to a strategic engine in influencer campaigns

While 2023-2024 is considered AI's mainstream breakthrough, 2025 shows a marked shift: AI tools have moved beyond the hype cycle into practical, strategic integration across the Creator Economy. Industry leaders predicted AI would drive transformative change on par with mobile and internet revolutions - but the real story is how it's reshaping creative workflows and brand-creator relationships.

AI has transcended basic content enhancement to become integral to creative strategy and campaign execution. With 92% of influencer marketers commissioning AI-enhanced creator content and 70% planning to increase investment, we're seeing sophisticated applications that drive both creativity and scale. [\(Source\)](#)



92%

of Influencer Marketers have commissioned creator content that's been designed in part or fully using generative AI

82%

of creators report AI accelerating their content development process - not by replacing creativity, but by streamlining ideation and production.

74%

of creators report AI tools improve both quality and diversity of their creative assets

79%

creator efficiency gains are significant: 79% report reduced workload on routine tasks, enabling more focus on creative strategy

The AI hype cycle has settled into something more valuable: practical integration.

Best in class

For their Million Dollar Whopper campaign, Burger King turned AI tech into a creative springboard for influencers.

Rather than using AI solely for content creation, they built an AI-powered interactive experience that became the strategic foundation for creator partnerships. Food creators including [Eatwitzo](#) and [Mariandcandicee](#) transformed this tool into compelling content, demonstrating how AI can create genuine participatory moments in influencer campaigns.



Image: Burger King Newsroom



Trust & Transparency

87%

of stakeholders support clearer AI disclosure regulations

61%

of consumers are unsure if they've engaged with AI-enhanced creator content

The data is clear: when brands find the right balance between AI efficiency and human authenticity the results are compelling. In 2024, 81% of creators surveyed reported higher engagement rates with AI-enhanced content. In a report from Sprinklr, 63% of marketers said they plan to use AI in executing their influencer campaigns – and of these, 55% would use AI specifically for identifying influencers.

However, consumer sentiment reveals tension. While industry adoption soars, only 34% of consumers feel positive about AI in creator content. This gap highlights a crucial truth for 2025: AI works best when it enhances rather than headlines creator partnerships.

The Human-AI Value Equation

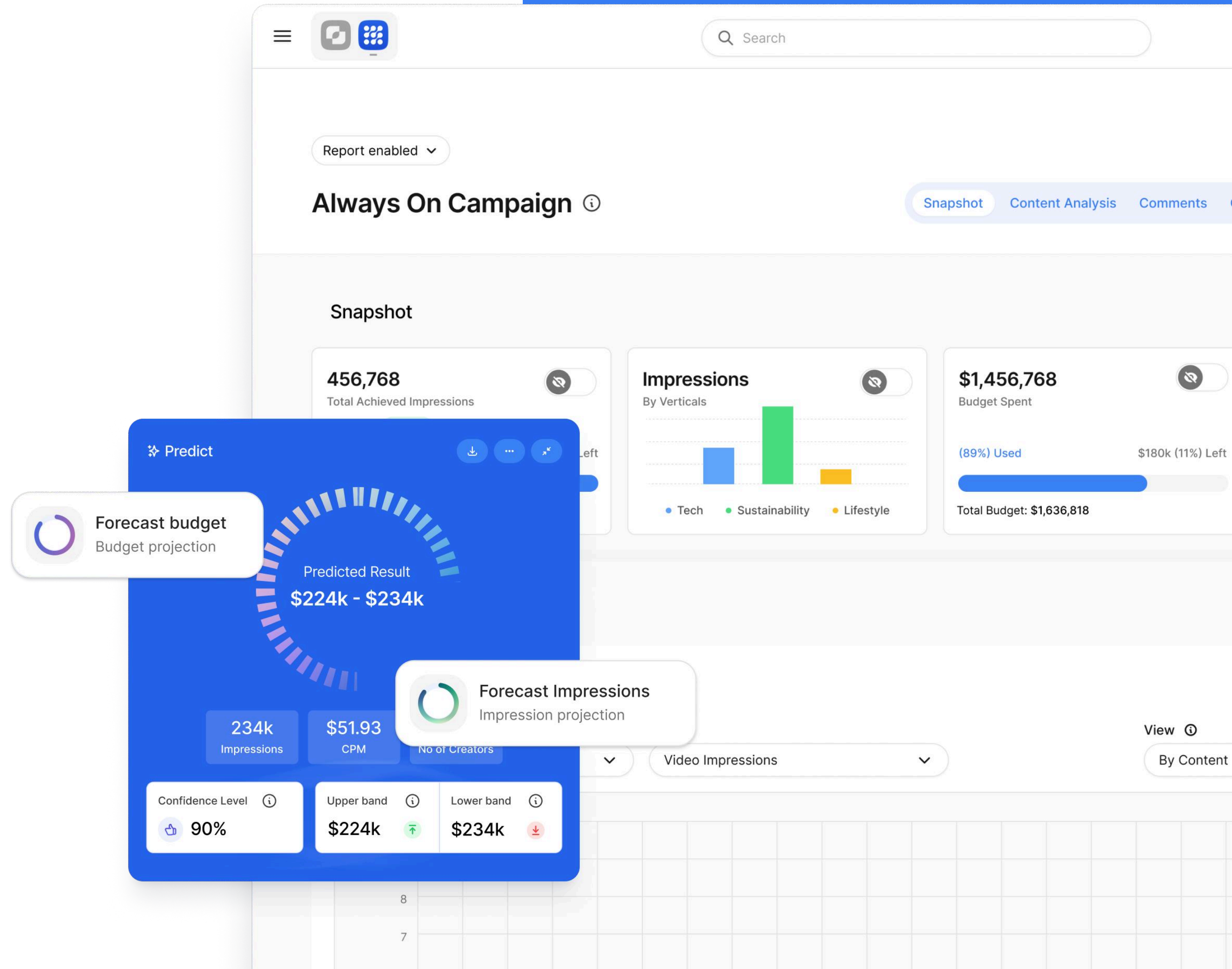


Key Takeaway: Transparency in AI usage will become a competitive advantage

Composer

Digital Voices built our own proprietary AI tool, Composer, to design smarter campaigns. Composer harnesses the power of Google Gemini and our historic data, to offer generative insights, strategy recommendations, comment sentiment analysis and benchmarking. Composer is all about using AI to drive innovation and exceptional results for clients.

Using GenAI & data to build the best campaigns



The screenshot displays the 'Always On Campaign' dashboard. At the top, it shows 'Report enabled' and a search bar. The main section is titled 'Snapshot' and includes several key metrics:

- Total Achieved Impressions:** 456,768
- Impressions By Verticals:** A bar chart showing Tech (blue), Sustainability (green), and Lifestyle (yellow).
- Budget Spent:** \$1,456,768 (89% Used). Total Budget: \$1,636,818. \$180k (11%) Left.

A blue forecast overlay is positioned in the foreground, titled 'Predict'. It features a circular progress indicator and the following data:

- Forecast budget:** Budget projection. Predicted Result: \$224k - \$234k.
- Forecast Impressions:** Impression projection. 234k Impressions, \$51.93 CPM, No of Creators.
- Confidence Level:** 90%.
- Upper band:** \$224k (indicated with a green up arrow).
- Lower band:** \$234k (indicated with a red down arrow).

Additional elements in the background include a 'Video Impressions' dropdown menu and a 'View' button.



Samsung's 2024 campaign with AI influencer Lil Miquela alongside Millie Bobby Brown and Steve Aoki showcases this balance – literally.

We love... By strategically blending AI capabilities with human authenticity, the campaign generated 126 million organic views and drove a 12% increase in Instagram mentions.



Digital Voices partnered with Adobe Firefly as an AI industry-leading tool on an award-nominated campaign, to use AI to drive engaging creator content and stop the scroll.

We created... We collaborated with micro and macro influencers who showcased Adobe Firefly's capabilities within a huge variety of use cases, from gaming streams, fashion and street style and photo editing. The campaign received engagement far above the industry benchmarks, with content achieving an average ER of 7%.

SECTION 06

YOUTUBE IS MAKING A COMEBACK



Image: Patricia Bright Instagram



Long-form content is back, and YouTube is the GOAT

While quick clips catch attention, there's a growing audience hungry for deeper, longer format content. Podcasts, detailed tutorials, and storytelling series pull in engaged audiences who want more than a quick fix. TikTok now allows for longer content uploads, and creators are posting multi-part series' to entice viewers to come back to consume their full story. However, this can be frustrating for consumers who want to get locked into a lengthy video.

YouTube is the OG platform for building deep connections with audiences because its long-form content allows for detailed storytelling, creating trust and emotional engagement. The platform's searchability ensures content remains discoverable over time, encouraging lasting relationships, while features like Comments, Live Streaming, and the Community Tab promote interaction. Additionally, YouTube supports higher-quality production, diverse content formats, and strong monetization options, incentivizing creators to consistently deliver valuable content.

As of November 2024, MrBeast has over 330 million subscribers, making him the most-subscribed channel on YouTube. His most popular video – [\\$456,000 Squid Game In Real Life!](#) – is 25 minutes long and has upwards of 670 million views. MrBeast is now set to release a reality competition show based on his Beast Games series on Prime in December, after cutting a \$100M deal with Amazon.

64%

of creators have increased long-form content creation. With 72% planning to do more.

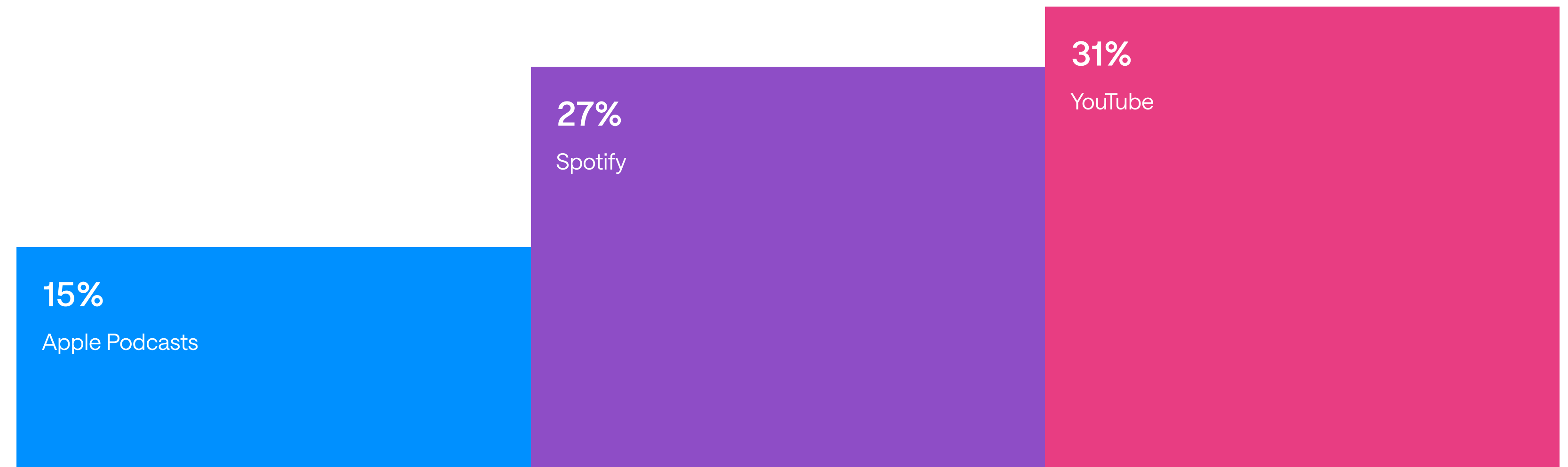
2x

YouTube mobile users are 2x as likely to pay close attention while watching YouTube compared to TV users while watching TV.

Podcasts are a popular long-form content format on YouTube.

31% of weekly podcast listeners age 13 and up choose YouTube as the service they use most to listen to podcasts, surpassing Spotify (27%) and Apple Podcasts (15%).

Source: [Edison Research](#)



The top two reasons viewers watch YouTube are “to relax” and “to feel entertained”

68% of YouTube users watched YouTube to help make a purchase decision

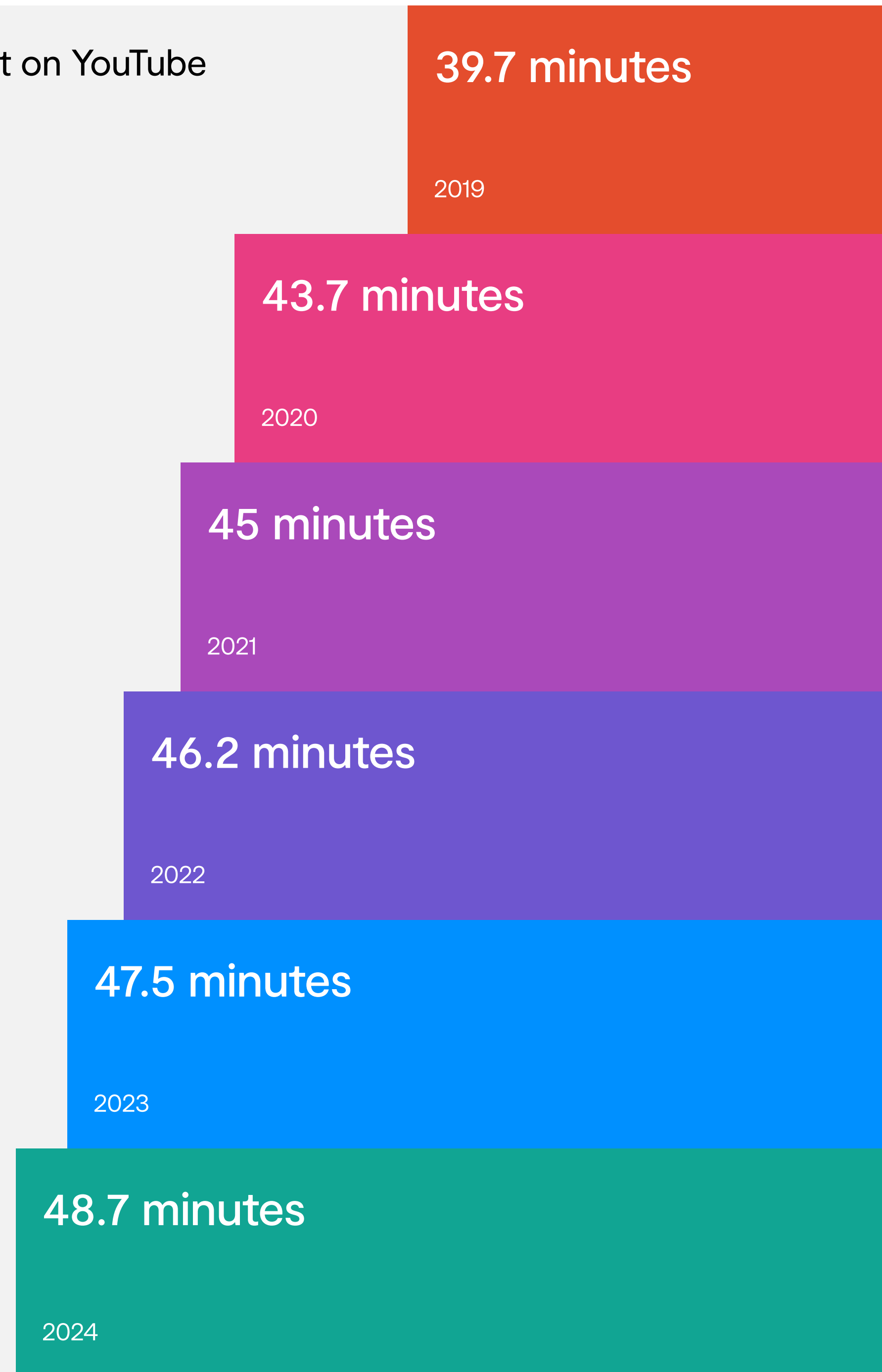
The top four content categories watched by YouTube users are comedy, music, entertainment/pop culture and “how to”

Source: [Think With Google](#)

Consumer preferences on YouTube.

Average time spent on YouTube

——— 2019 – 2024



Source: eMarketer

YouTube continues to be a top platform for in-depth content where viewers can genuinely connect with influencers and experience seamlessly integrated brand partnerships. With the rise of Connected TV (CTV), more users are streaming YouTube on their televisions, and 65% of YouTube viewing happening on CTV is on content above 21 minutes.

65% of content streamed on TV is above 21 minutes

This shift opens up new opportunities for innovative product placements, similar to what we see in TV shows. For example, influencer Saffron Barker's recent collaboration with Lancôme featured AI-powered product placement, blending into the background of her content, yet capturing the attention of her viewers. This format allows brands to reach audiences with impactful messaging that integrates smoothly into their favorite creator's content.



Source: [Saffron Barker YouTube](#)

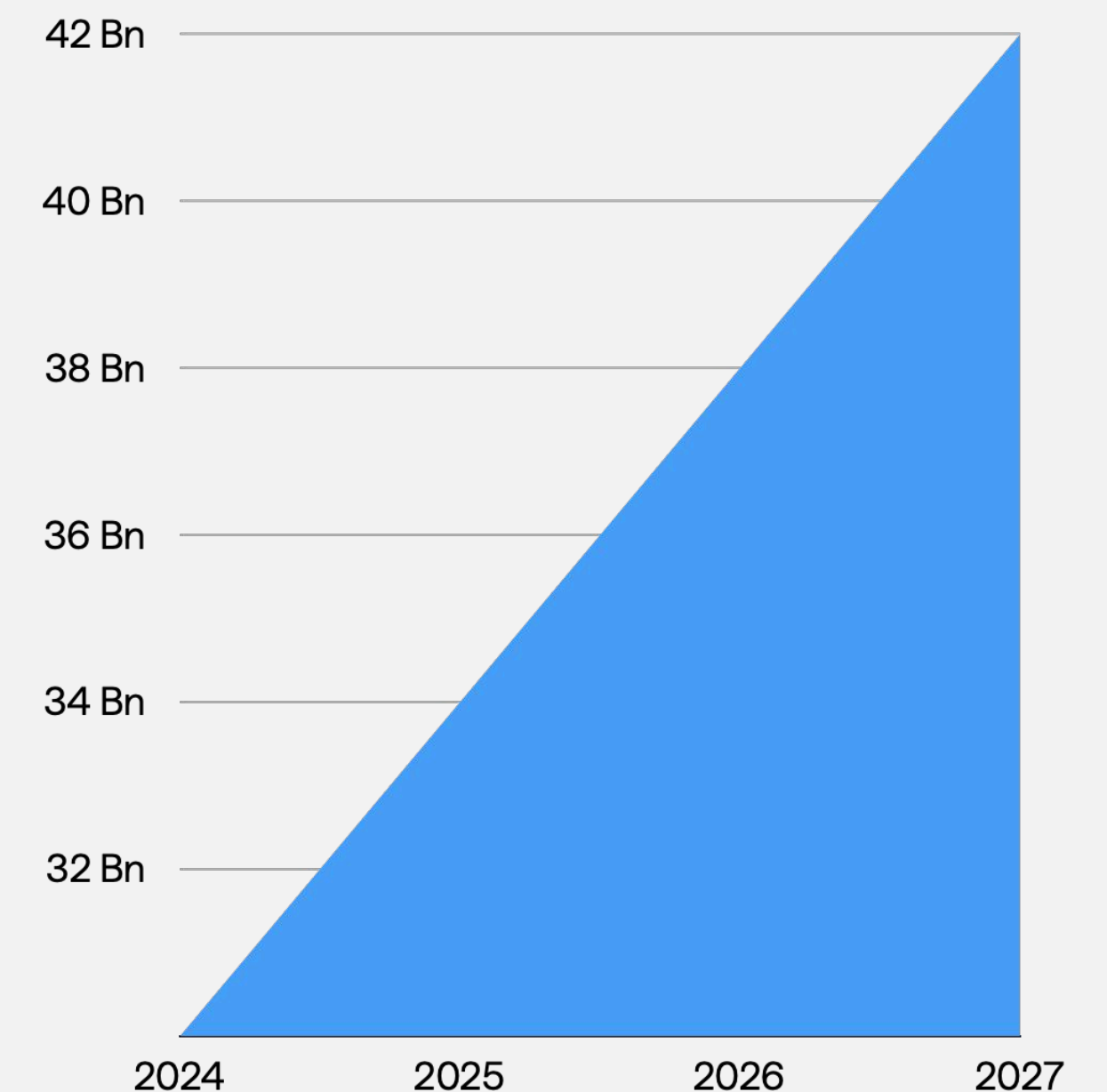
Gen Z don't watch TV, they watch YouTube.

Projected CTV Ad Spending Growth

2024-27 · Gen-Z

CTV platforms offer more tailored and interactive advertising experiences than linear TV, and by 2027 CTV ad spending in the U.S. is forecasted to hit around \$42 billion.

About 58% of U.S. adults already prefer streaming on connected TVs rather than mobile or desktop options. Source: [Media Group Online](#)





Source:
CreatorIQ

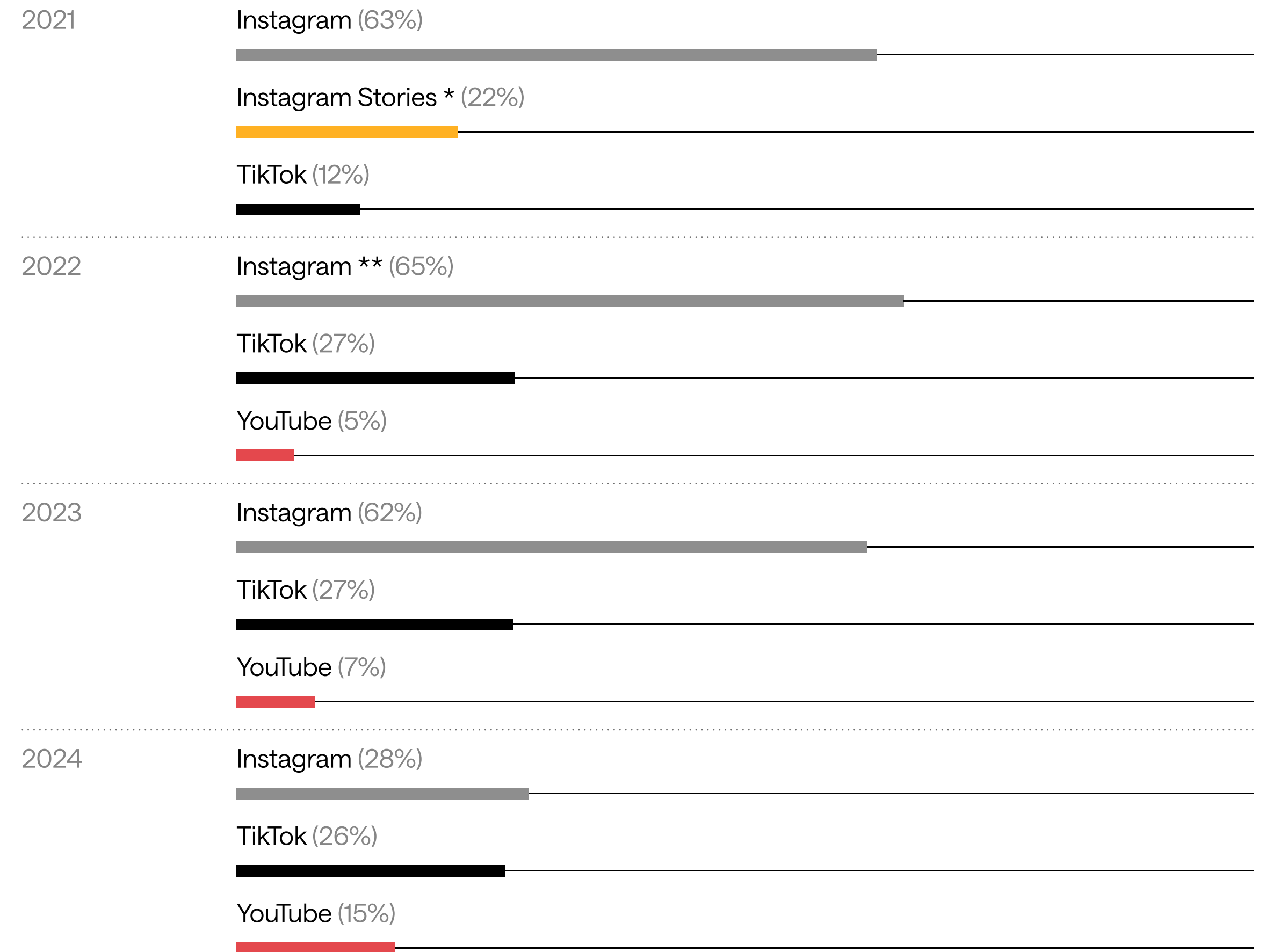
YouTube has grown as an integral social media platform over the past 5 years.

*
In the first two Influencer Marketing Trends surveys, Instagram Stories and Instagram were treated as separate platforms.

**
Instagram and Instagram Stories are collapsed for the first time in CreatorIQ's Influencer Marketing Trends survey

Percentage of marketers who have stated their most integral social media platform

How YouTube has grown as an integral social media platform over the past 5 years.



SECTION 07

B2B IS GROWING



Image: StevenBartlett.com

Influencer Marketing for business is growing, with 85% of B2B brands embarking on Influencer Marketing partnerships in 2023*

The rise of the B2B Influencer

B2B brands had been initially slower to understand how influencers could drive impact for business. But partnering with experts in a targeted sector helps companies to connect with professional audiences in a more humanized, engaging way. B2B influencers are often people such as Thought Leaders, Academics, Business Owners and Journalists and can drive new leads, sales, and even launch new products and businesses.

*

This compares to only 34% in 2020.

40% of B2B marketers stated that warmer leads, increased leads or increases in sales were the success factors they experienced when implementing an Influencer Marketing strategy.

LinkedIn has continued to be an integral part of millennial's daily social media usage. 50.6% of LinkedIn users are 25–34 years old, making the platform the prime place for brands to reach professionals with purchasing power in their masses.

We're seeing the influence of other social media styles redefine how businesses communicate. From eye-catching visuals to storytelling through short form video akin to TikTok and Reels, the lines between personal and professional social sharing are blurring, proving that education and inspiration can thrive in every scroll.

The *TikTok-ification* of LinkedIn

93%

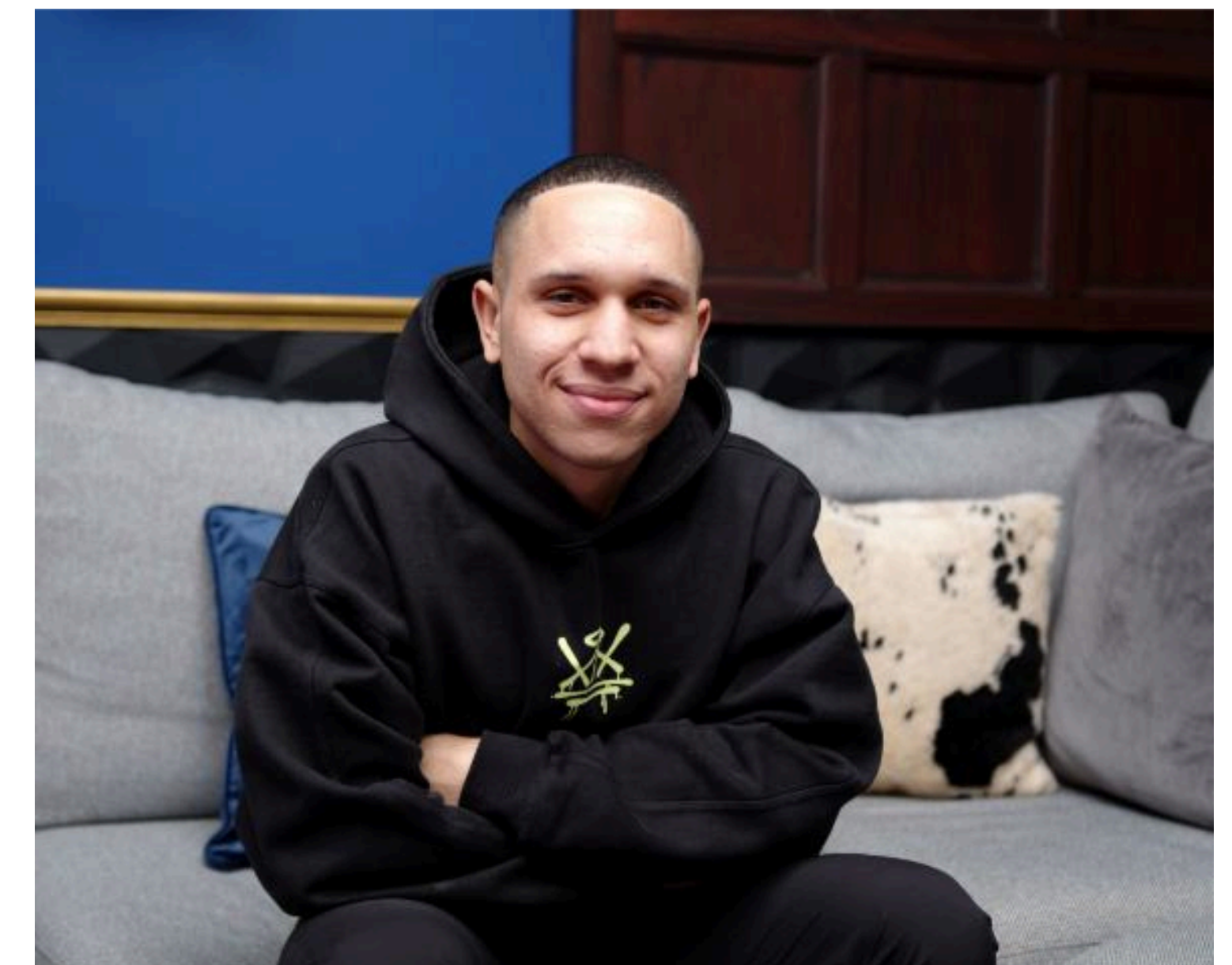
of B2B CMOs are planning to increase their usage of Influencers

90%

of industry marketers believe that B2B Influencers on social media are an important source of staying up to date with their industry.

Jordan Schwarzenberger is the manager of UK's biggest YouTube group, the Sidemen. He's successfully built a brand around the Sidemen and is now applying this to his LinkedIn channel.

Jordan posts daily short-form videos where he shares Influencer Marketing tips, trends, and commentary on cultural moments within the industry. Applying the same consistency and value that influencers bring to their audiences on other social platforms, Jordan has established himself as an influencer in his own right on LinkedIn.



To win attention in the B2B space, it's about having a sophisticated influencer strategy. Competitions, comedy and celebrating B2B decision makers helps you cut through.

Case Study:

Meta Deserve to be Found

Digital Voices worked with Meta for Business by partnering with creators to inspire SMB's to enter a competition for a chance to gain large exposure. Entrepreneur and influential figure, Steven Bartlett spoke to his audience of over 2 million about Meta's 'Deserve to be Found'.

3.6M

organic impressions

13K

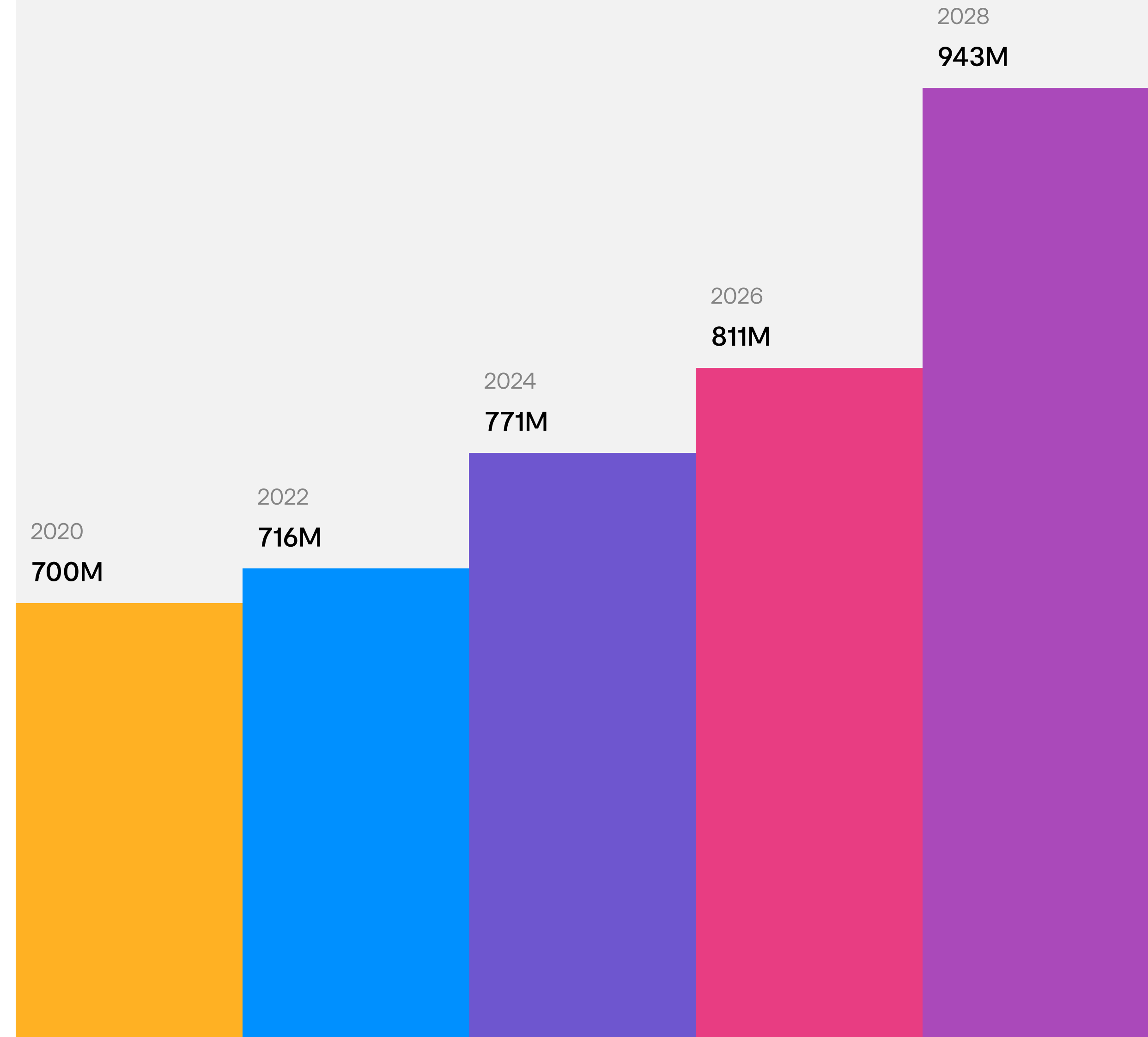
competition entries



Image: StevenBartlett.com

The LinkedIn user base is estimated to reach 942.84 million users in 2028.

Source: [Ogilvy](#)



TikTok is *no longer* just about entertainment

Source: [Ogilvy](#)

Image: [Campaign](#)

More of us than ever are claiming insights and data based on a piece of content on TikTok, often trying to cover up our admission with the guise of an article. But this trend goes to show that TikTok is becoming a fountain of knowledge, where you can learn anything, from motherhood tips to financial tricks. The platform and its creators have it covered.

90% of the industry see social media as an important source of business information

This year there has been a recent introduction of a STEM feed – which focuses on science, technology, engineering, and maths – offering a unique space for brands to share informative, value-driven content that builds credibility and educates audiences. Heading into 2025, it's not just fashion, FMCG, and beauty brands thriving on TikTok – brands in sectors like business services, marketing and tech have rising opportunities as more users join TikTok looking for answers.



Lauren Spearman

50.6k followers

Lauren creates content on finding roles in marketing, career progression tips and tricks, and has paid partnerships with brands like Godaddy.



Rob Mayhew

160.8K Followers

Rob creates comedy sketches on advertising agency life and has paid partnerships with brands such as TikTok for Business.

SECTION 08

GEN Z'S SEARCH ENGINE



Image: Amelia Dimoldenberg Instagram

Over half of Gen Z now uses TikTok as their preferred search engine.

This shifts the SEO focus for brands from Google to TikTok if they want to target a younger audience. Gone are the days when Google was the go-to for finding the best places to eat for an upcoming trip. Now Gen Z and a growing number of millennials are using TikTok to find new holiday destinations and food spots, as well as using the app for a shortcut to the best new fashion buys. This trend has often created huge lines at culinary hotspots or sold out leather jackets in a matter of hours. To effectively reach this audience, brands must understand TikTok's SEO strategies, including keywords, hashtags, and trending content formats that align with Gen Z's search behavior on the platform.

Marketer Tip

Research trends

Use TikTok's "Discover" page and tools like the Creative Center to track trending hashtags and formats.

Optimize content

Incorporate relevant keywords into captions and lean on TikTok SEO for discoverability.

Engage influencers

Partner with influencers who can seamlessly use trends, hashtags, and formats that resonate with their audience and your brand.

Experiment

Test various formats and track performance metrics to refine strategies based on what works.



JUST ~~GOOGLE~~
TIKTOK IT!

SECTION 09

SHOW ME THE DATA



Image: Unsplash.com

Influencer Marketing is moving beyond likes and shares to clear KPIs that will shape future strategies such as custom acquisition costs, view to cart ratio, and ROI.

73%

of marketers are using advanced analytics tools, including AI, to gain deeper insights into their Influencer Marketing performance and optimize their strategies.

1.5x

Businesses that measure performance across all stages of the marketing funnel are 1.5 times more likely to achieve marketing goals than those that only focus on a single stage.

90%

of marketers plan to increase their Influencer Marketing budgets in 2025, with an emphasis on more precise, data-driven measurement methods.

Source: [Emarketer](#)

Source: [Hubspot](#)

Source: [CreatorIQ](#)

Data is more valuable than gold.

Tracking the success of your Influencer Marketing campaign can take many forms, depending on your goals. There's no such thing as "bad" data – every insight you can gather is valuable and helps you learn more about what resonates with your audience.

If your goal is to build brand awareness and reach new audiences, metrics like impressions, reach, and engagement can help measure your version of success. On the other hand, if you're aiming to drive sales and move products off the shelf, more direct metrics like views-to-cart, affiliate link clicks, and conversions will be crucial. The key is to define what success looks like for you and track the right data to help achieve your specific objectives.

“

Data and analytics can be used to assess the impact of our Influencer Marketing campaigns on their own as well as their attributed contributions towards other channels such as organic and paid – providing a fuller picture of Influencer Marketing involvement in other channels too.

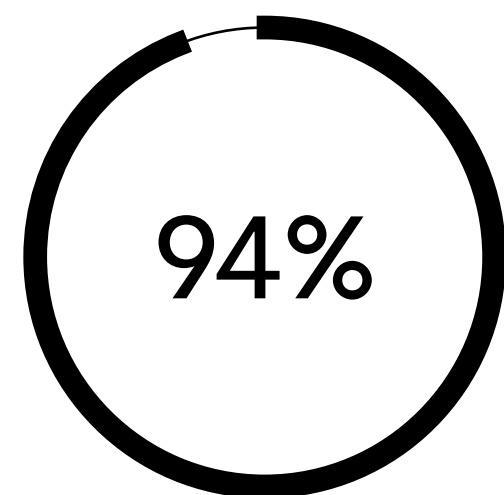


Trent Yunus
CTO, Digital Voices

How can you determine the impact of your influencer collaborations?

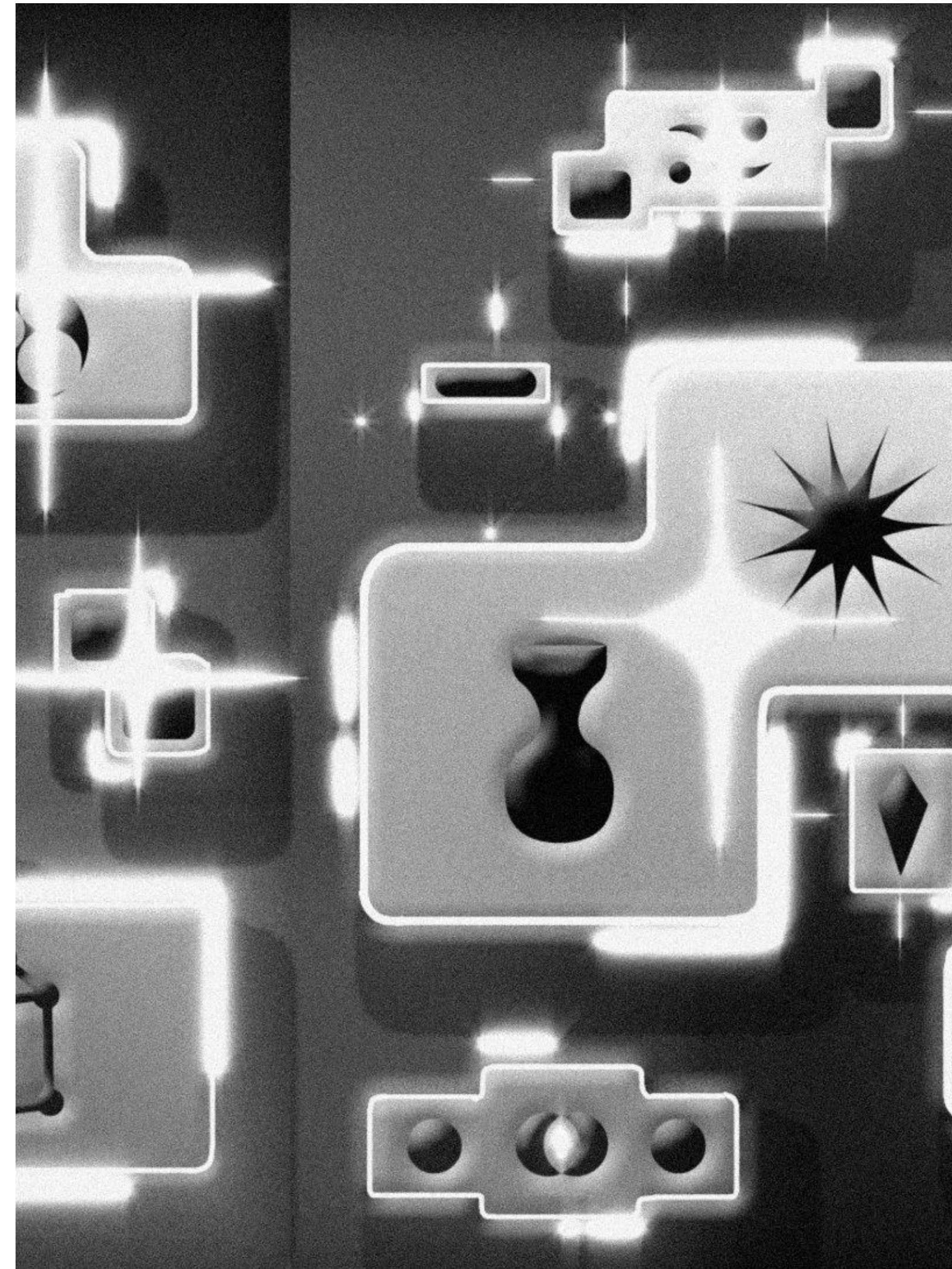
Quantifying the return on investment (ROI) isn't always straightforward for Influencer Marketing. But using the Marketing Mix Modeling (MMM) can be a powerful tool to understand its impact within your overall marketing strategy.

MMMs analyze historical data to determine the sales uplift or brand awareness driven by Influencer Marketing compared to other channels, and helps brands see a clearer picture of the return from each influencer collaboration.



94% of organizations believe that creator content drives more ROI than traditional digital advertising

↑ 20% growth since 2020



Influencer Marketing will continue to span the entire measurement funnel, moving beyond likes and shares to clear KPIs that will shape future strategies such as custom acquisition costs, view to cart ratio, and ROI.

As social platforms evolve, expect new, platform-specific metrics and AI-powered analytics that enable brands to measure engagement, sentiment, and conversion rates more accurately.

Upper Funnel

Awareness

Impressions

Reach

CPM

Middle Funnel

Consideration and Interest

Engagement Rate

Click-Through Rate (CTR)

View-Through Rate (VTR)

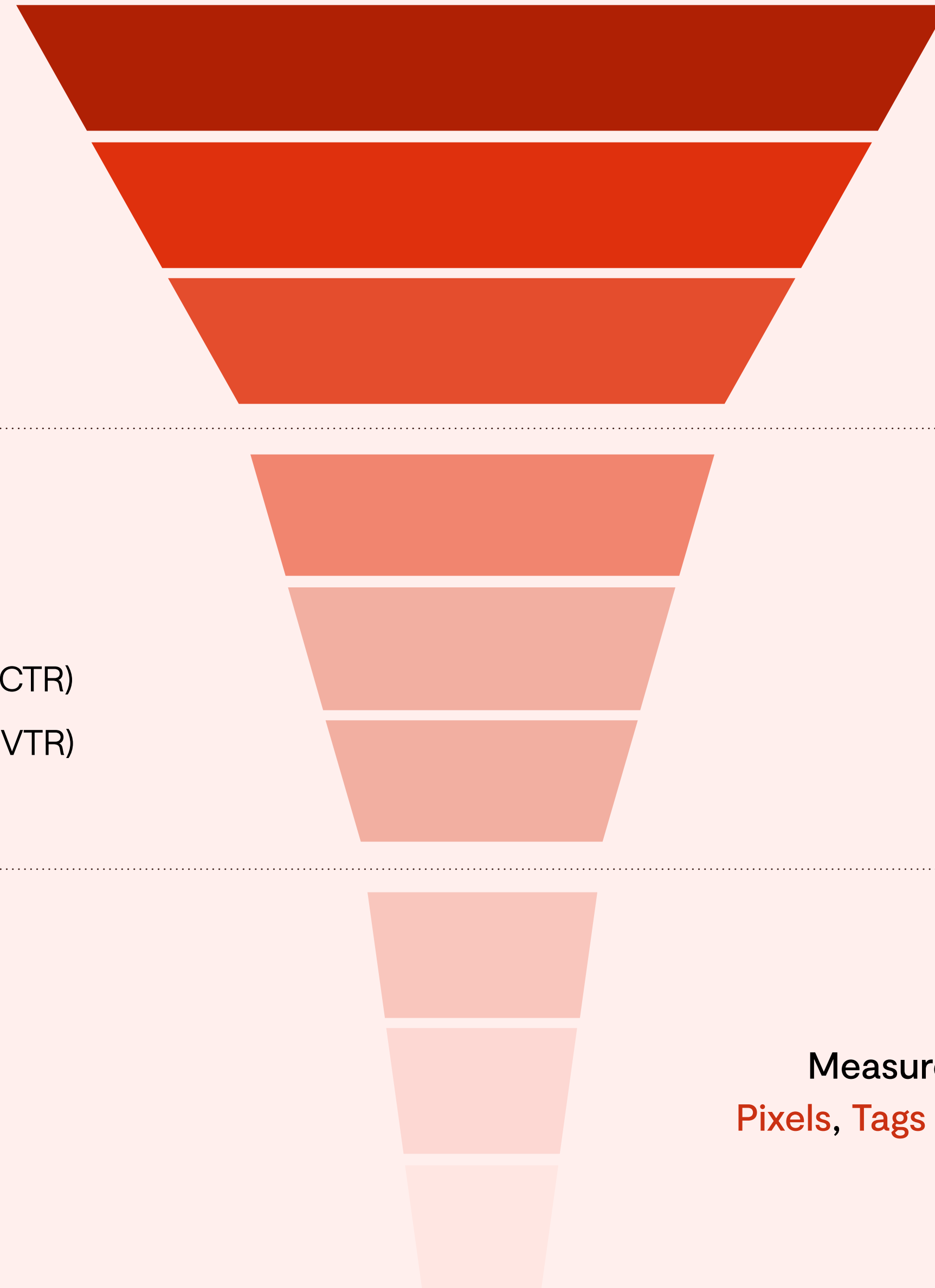
Lower Funnel

Conversion

Purchases

Subscriptions

Downloads



Measured using
Ads Manager
Pixel Tracking
Tags

Measured by implementing
Pixels, Tags and Tracking (GTM)

TikTok and YouTube are key platforms for building lasting customer relationships. On TikTok, tracking brand lift metrics like increased followings and shares signals community engagement, while YouTube's focus on watch time helps gauge long-term viewer interest.

Platforms like X drive EMV through organic reach and brand mentions. Tracking trending hashtags, mentions, and sentiment in comments reveals both media value and public perception.

Snapchat and Meta Ads leverage AI tools for precise audience targeting and data-driven strategies. This is where partnering with an agency like Digital Voices with proprietary tech tools and historic data will lend you a helping hand.

Instagram's features (Stories, Reels, Feed posts, and Ads) allow targeting across the funnel. Reels' reach measures top-of-funnel success, while clicks on product tags in Stories track bottom-of-funnel conversions. Insights will help refine strategies to improve engagement.

On TikTok, engagement matters more than views. Monitoring completion rates, comments, brand mentions and shares help measure interactions and viewer endorsement.

The halo effect occurs when an influencer's positive reputation boosts trust, awareness, and favorability for a brand. It can be measured through pre and post-campaign surveys on brand sentiment, tracking engagement metrics, analyzing spikes in website traffic or search queries, and assessing conversions or repeat engagement to gauge lasting impact.

Marketer Tip

The full-funnel approach helps measure the true impact of your campaigns on your business goals. Human power is great, but tech will take you to the next level. Leading Influencer Marketing agencies like Digital Voices have measurement woven into the campaign process from start to finish. Sit back, and let us generate your campaign report and detailed post-campaign analysis. With these advancements, your brand will be better equipped to evaluate performance across platforms, understand Influencer Marketing's unique impact on each stage of the consumer journey, and refine strategies in real-time for maximum ROI.

Full-Funnel Results



SECTION 10

SO, WHAT NOW?

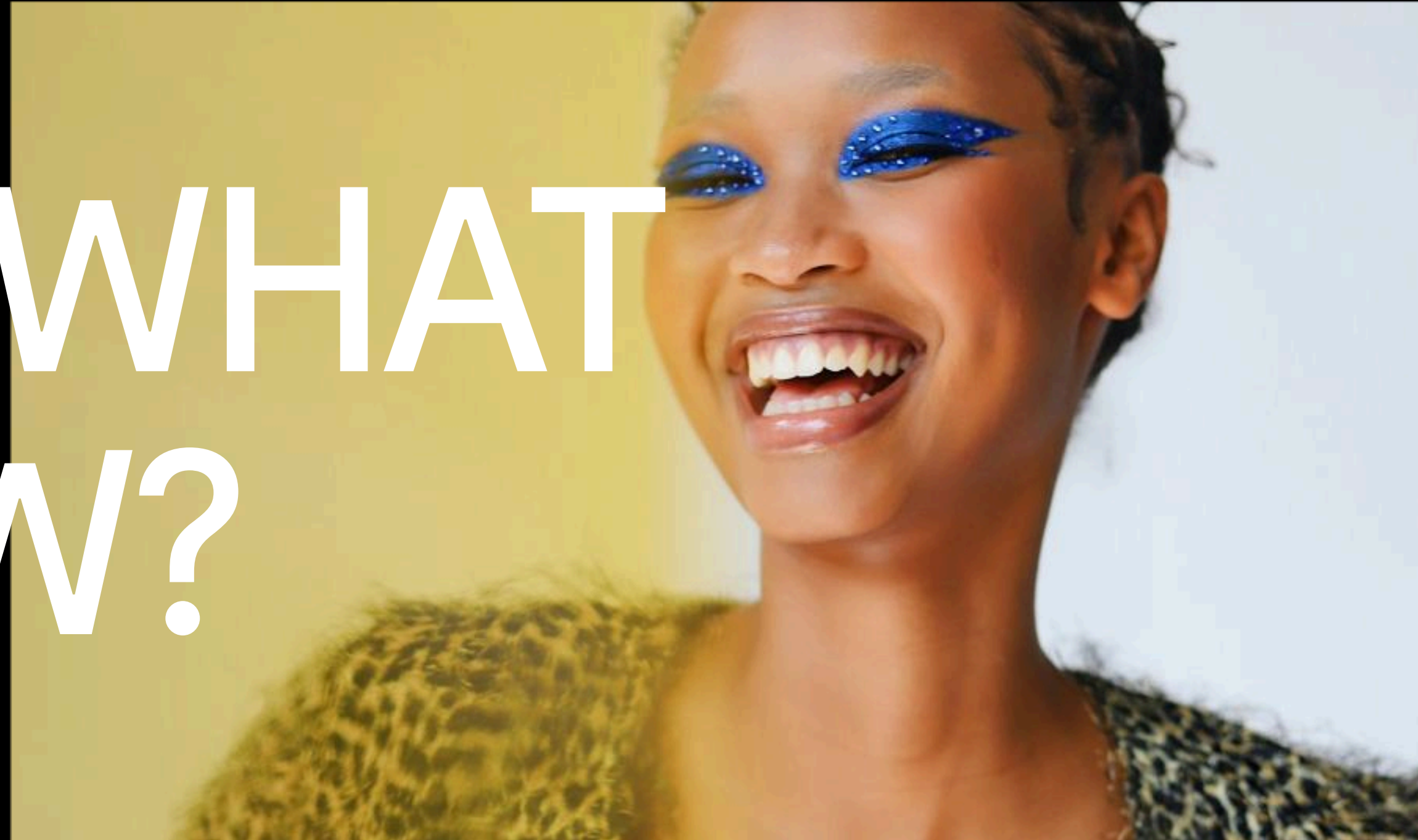
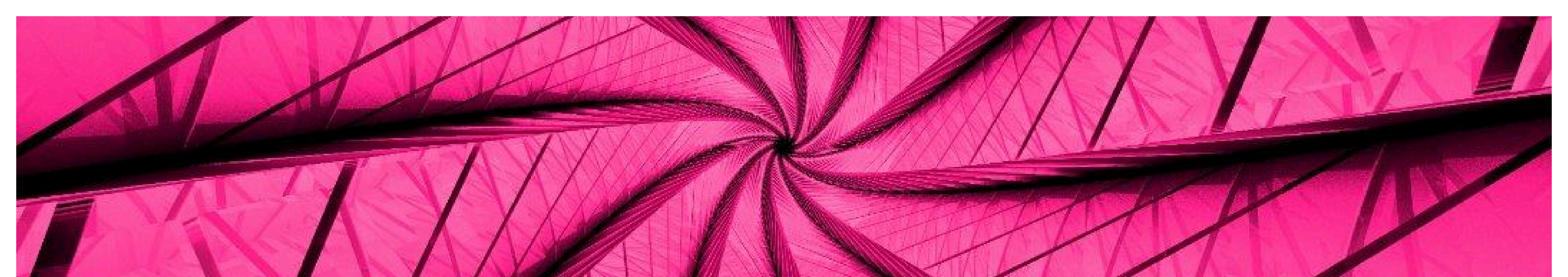


Image: Unsplash.com



Creators are the catalysts of modern culture.

No longer just influencers, creators hold the kind of sway brands once attributed to entire media channels, shaping how people discover, think, and buy. And when Gen Z uses TikTok over Google and trusts creators more than traditional advertising, it's clear the rules have changed.

Marketing success now hinges on cultural fluency and the ability to adapt to fragmented audiences. Brands should go beyond chasing mass appeal by engaging directly with audiences through the lens of shared values and interests.

It's not just about big names and glossy campaigns anymore. While many brands still chase macro-influencers, the data tells a different story: micro and mid-tier creators consistently deliver higher engagement, deeper connections, and often a stronger ROI. The Creator Economy's maturation demands a pivot away from size and towards substance.

Audiences are gravitating toward post-ironic humor and raw storytelling, rejecting overly polished content in favor of relatable narratives that meet them where they are. Context, not just content, will define creative performance. It's about how you deliver your message – through humor, vulnerability, or shared values.

AI isn't going away. Tools have moved beyond the hype cycle into practical, strategic integration across the Creator Economy. Brands should find the sweet spot between AI efficiency and human authenticity to drive results. Our innovative tech provides data transparency and campaign effectiveness – not to be missed.

Influencer Marketing is no longer a guessing game – it's data-driven. By defining clear objectives, brands can measure success with precision. As AI-powered analytics become the norm, the ability to track metrics like sentiment, acquisition costs, and view-to-cart ratios will empower brands to refine strategies in real-time.

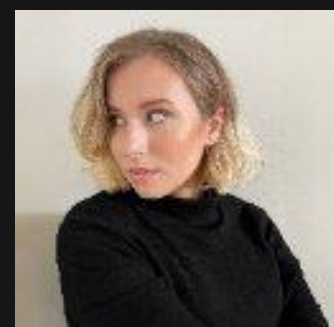
In 2025, this creator-driven revolution will redefine the way brands engage with audiences, pushing marketing strategies toward authenticity, cultural fluency, and community-building. All backed up by data.

The Creator-Driven Revolution

Digital Voices is an global award-winning Influencer Marketing agency.

Digital Voices was founded by Jennifer Quigley-Jones in 2017. Jennifer, who previously worked at YouTube, launched Digital Voices to address the gap in brands' understanding of influencer partnerships. Renowned for our award-winning work with industry giants such as DoorDash, Unilever and PepsiCo, Digital Voices designs and executes campaigns that succeed at every stage of the marketing funnel.

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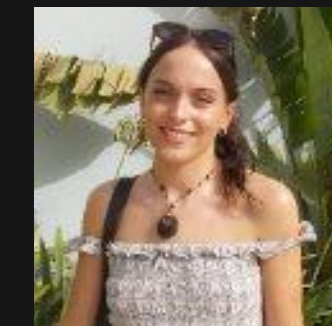
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Do you want to drive success in 2025? Well, drop us an email. We guarantee results...

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