



A white paper by **WARC**

Aligning marketers and influencers

Shifting perspectives on influencer
marketing across the funnel

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.com

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About this report

This report, developed by WARC and impact.com, analyses influencer marketing, exploring how marketers and influencers align and differ in perspective. It will help identify ways the two can create true partnerships to drive marketing effectiveness.

WARC surveyed more than 400 marketers and 400 influencers across Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia to better understand the evolving role of influencer marketing. We also conducted a series of in-depth marketer and influencer interviews. Our team combined the data from this research with a review of WARC's global data, industry knowledge, examples, and expert contributions.

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Foreword from WARC



Aditya Kishore
Director of Insight
WARC

Influencer marketing has grown steadily in importance in recent years. At WARC, we're seeing a growing number of marketers ask an ever-expanding range of questions about integrating influencer marketing into their plans, and the best ways to do so.

That's in sharp contrast to only a few years ago, where non-celebrity influencers were seen more as hobbyists, and influencer marketing was primarily seen as an experiment for the majority of brands. And it's not just marketers whose thinking has evolved – influencers themselves have become more sophisticated in the ways that they engage with brands.

Increasingly, influencers are turning into content creators, offering imagery, advice, opinion, entertainment and even commerce. They are also using new technologies and platforms to generate revenue via different channels. This makes them less reliant on brands to make their living, and changes the equation between the two.

COVID has also played a part in accelerating the significance of influencer marketing. Lockdowns

cut down on the options available to consumers, and the Internet became by far the most important source of entertainment, communication and advice – fertile ground for influencers. Influencers also helped plug a gap while content production became difficult. While lockdowns have ended in most parts of the world now, influencers were able to use that time to create lasting relationships with their audiences. And on the flip side of the equation, engaging with influencers has become an established behaviour for consumers.

With the cost of living crisis upon us, consumers are being more careful with their spending. This is most likely to benefit online platforms. Consumers are more likely to look for deals, and the web is better suited to that behaviour than the high street. And with high fuel prices and lower discretionary income, going out is also going to become less common. So entertainment is once again going to have to be found at home, via inexpensive channels such as influencers.

However, to work successfully with influencers, brands need to make one major adjustment.

Typically, brands tightly control their content and messaging. But with influencers, the key to their relationships with their followers is authenticity. Successful influencers are perceived as genuine and trustworthy by a loyal and engaged fan base. If brands interfere with that relationship by overtly influencing influencer content, both parties will lose out. Brands have to learn to give up control, which is not an easy or comfortable option for many.

Another outcome of this increased professionalisation is the growing complexity of navigating this sector. There are a variety of influencers, some with massive followings and some with small, but extremely tightly-knit bases. Combining size, reach, subject matter expertise and positioning effectively, is becoming a significant challenge for marketers. Working with agencies and platforms that specialise in this space can be useful in maximizing the marketing impact of influencer partnerships.

Enjoy the report!

The view from impact.com



Jaime Singson

Senior Director of Product
and Content Marketing
impact.com



We've experienced a near avalanche of changes in technology, consumer trends, and online shopping (particularly thanks to the pandemic), which has caused considerable shifts in – and toward – influencer marketing. Today, many consumers look to influencers to guide their purchasing decisions, no matter what stage they may be at in their buyer's journey, and their appetite for influencer content continues to grow.

So what do influencers offer that can complement the benefits of other, more traditional advertising channels? Well, consumers identify with influencers more than advertising. Consumers value authenticity from influencers and are willing to purchase what they see as genuine recommendations compared to ads. Influencers rely upon their built-in trust and connections with consumers, which drives sales for brands.

Brands rely on influencers to build brand love and trust with their consumers. Think of it as building a solid bridge to connect a brand to its audience. To create a lasting connection, which many brands value more than just revenue, you need to identify with your audience, show them who you are, and give them what they want. Influencer marketing does all of this.

Effective influencer marketing isn't just about catching the biggest fish in the mega-influencer or celebrity pond. For example, younger audiences gravitate toward micro- and nano-influencers. It brings it back to authenticity and connection – they don't want to feel like they're being sold to.

These days, the spend for influencer marketing is at an all-time high – and we can expect more growth over time. Since marketers and influencers can mutually benefit from working together and influencer marketing's growth, these two parties need to align.

Marketers and influencers both align and differ in their perceptions about influencer marketing,

depending on the topic. The more marketers' perceptions about influencers and influencers' perceptions about marketers line up, the better their partnerships can succeed. However, the disparities in perception prompted impact.com's collaboration with WARC in developing this white paper.

Authentic partnerships drive success and generate lasting brand love and loyalty. When done right, influencer marketing benefits everyone involved, from the influencer to the marketer, brand, and consumer – throughout the buyer's journey. Effective influencer marketing happens when consumers feel they're connecting with people who share their values.

With insights into industry-leading influencer management technology from impact.com and WARC's global data, expertise, and industry knowledge, you can uncover the differing perceptions about influencer marketing. This white paper seeks to align influencers and marketer perceptions so they can better create flourishing partnerships.

Marketing leaders and influencers interviewed for this report



Becky Yeung

Regional Head of Brand Partnerships
Warner Music Asia



Guillermo Font

Marketing Head
FMCG & Healthcare
Mars



Shekinah Monee

Lifestyle Influencer



Michael Flatt

Director of Global
Integrated Marketing
Xbox



Yusuf Chuku

EVP
Client Strategy and Insights
NBCUniversal Media



Adi Adara

Finance Influencer

Executive summary

The influencer marketing sector is experiencing a new wave of innovation. It's evident in how influencers themselves are evolving and the sophistication of some of the tools available to marketers. Consumer social media trends reflect audiences' appetite for influencer content, and ad spend is following that consumer engagement with influencers.

The influencer market was thriving pre-pandemic, but COVID-19 has kickstarted a new wave of investment and innovation. Marketers turned to influencers to deliver content when other routes such as out-of-home, cinema and in-store advertising were inaccessible. Influencers, in turn, responded by further professionalising their content. The rise of the content creator reflects this trend and ushered in a new era with collaborations between marketers and influencers.

This report, developed in association with impact.com, analyses influencer marketing, exploring how marketers and influencers align and differ in perspective. WARC surveyed more than 400 marketers and 400 influencers across Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia to better understand the evolving role of influencer marketing. We also conducted a series of in-depth marketer and influencer interviews. Our team combined the data from this research with a review of WARC's global data, industry knowledge, examples, and expert contributions.



Top findings include:

<p>1</p> <p>Invest in understanding influencer marketing</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Explore partnerships with influencers and external platforms and agencies</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Approach influencer marketing as a long-term opportunity</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Consider how to use influencer marketing across the full funnel</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Communicate your KPIs to influencers</p>
<p>Increasing marketing spend, social media trends, cultural shifts, and industry innovation are all creating new opportunities that other channels may not be able to provide.</p>	<p>Content creators offer authentic relationships allowing deeper connections with customers, while outside agencies provide coordination and measurement, and safeguard brand fit.</p>	<p>Even if you want to use performance-based tactics like affiliate links and voucher codes, test and learn so you can optimise and improve performance over time. Put in place the right measurement programmes to support this.</p>	<p>The trust and positive emotional response that influencers deliver has been linked to purchase intent. Complement performance-based tactics with brand engagement higher up the funnel.</p>	<p>Align their remuneration to your business outcomes. The dissonance between marketer focus on outcomes and influencer focus on authentic content can be resolved by better bringing the two parties together on measurement practices.</p>

Chapter 1

Influencer marketing is shifting



The changing shape of influencer marketing

Technology, consumer trends and the impact of the pandemic have had a significant impact on the field of influencer marketing.

During the pandemic, our home-based lives provided the perfect conditions for influencer marketing to thrive. With brands unable to rely on stores to showcase their products, many turned to influencers instead. Consumers no longer asked beauty consultants for advice. They didn't learn about all the features of the latest Beats wireless headphones in store. Instead, they heard about them from influencers.

As influencers rose to the challenge, their content became more sophisticated, and their marketing expertise grew. Many professionals and experts became influencers within their fields during the pandemic, raising the bar of content creation for all. Marketers saw the savings

in production costs and continued to deploy influencers as part of their ongoing marketing programme.

YouTube, the original influencer platform, launched 17 years ago. Since then, influencer marketing has and continues to become increasingly professionalised. It is now used by global brands such as Microsoft and L'Oréal as an integral part of their marketing programme.



The rise of the content creator

In our influencer survey, 54% of respondents identified themselves as "Content Creators". A full 86% of marketers said they worked with "content creators" (see overleaf).

Our research suggests that influencers are paving the way for the professionalisation of the category. They don't see their influencer status as a hobby-turned-profession but view themselves as experts with unique and engaging content to share. This status differs from the earlier influencer wave that made money from selling access to their audience. In many cases, influencers who trade on both of these assets – followers and content – attract the most lucrative brand partnerships.

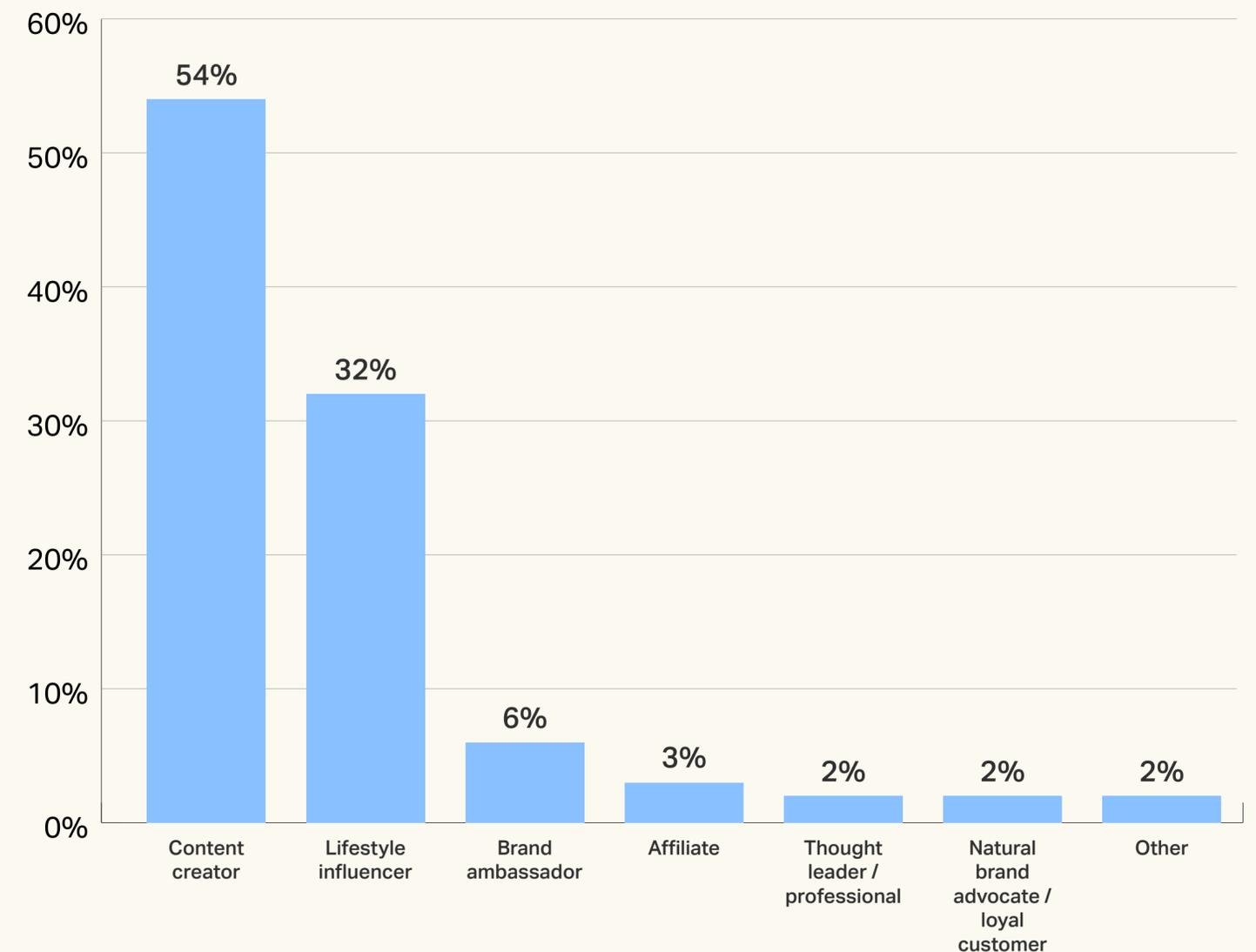
Some content creators have diversified their revenue streams by monetising their content directly, rather than only relying on selling their reach to brands. Influencers who identify as content creators charge

followers via subscription models and merchandising their own products. This has caused a shift in the power dynamic between brands and influencers. Brands could view influencers as a threat as they become less reliant on this form of revenue. However, while influencers build their understanding of how to engage and monetise their audiences, brands can leverage these insights for their brand building and sales conversion purposes.

Though we're seeing a shift, it needs to be noted that 77% of content creator income still emanates from brand partnerships, according to [The WARC Guide to brands and the creator economy](#).

How influencers define themselves

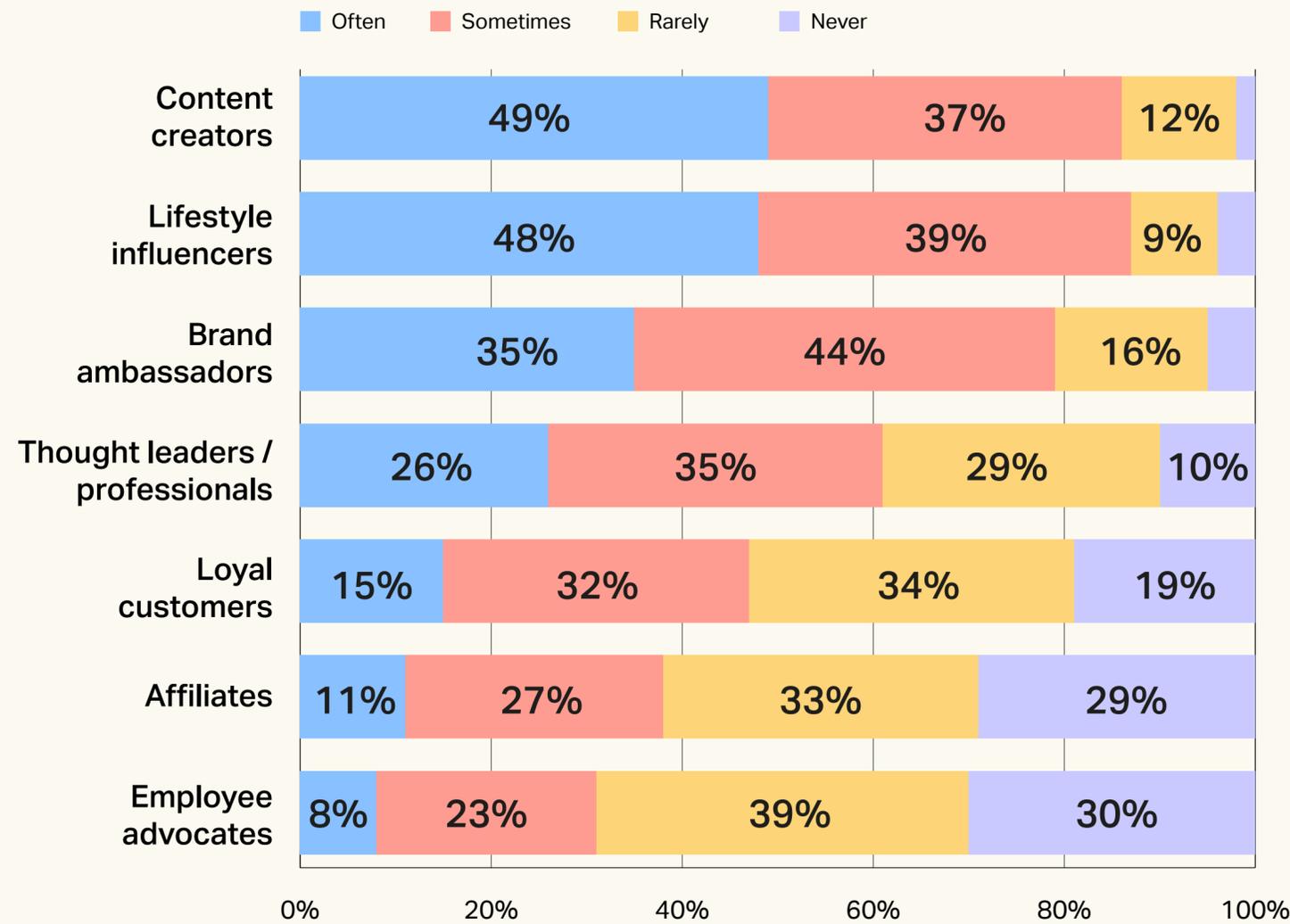
54% identify themselves as Content Creators



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Influencers
 Q: Which of the following do you think best defines what type of influencer you are?

Most popular influencers types for brands to partner with

86% of marketers work with "content creators"

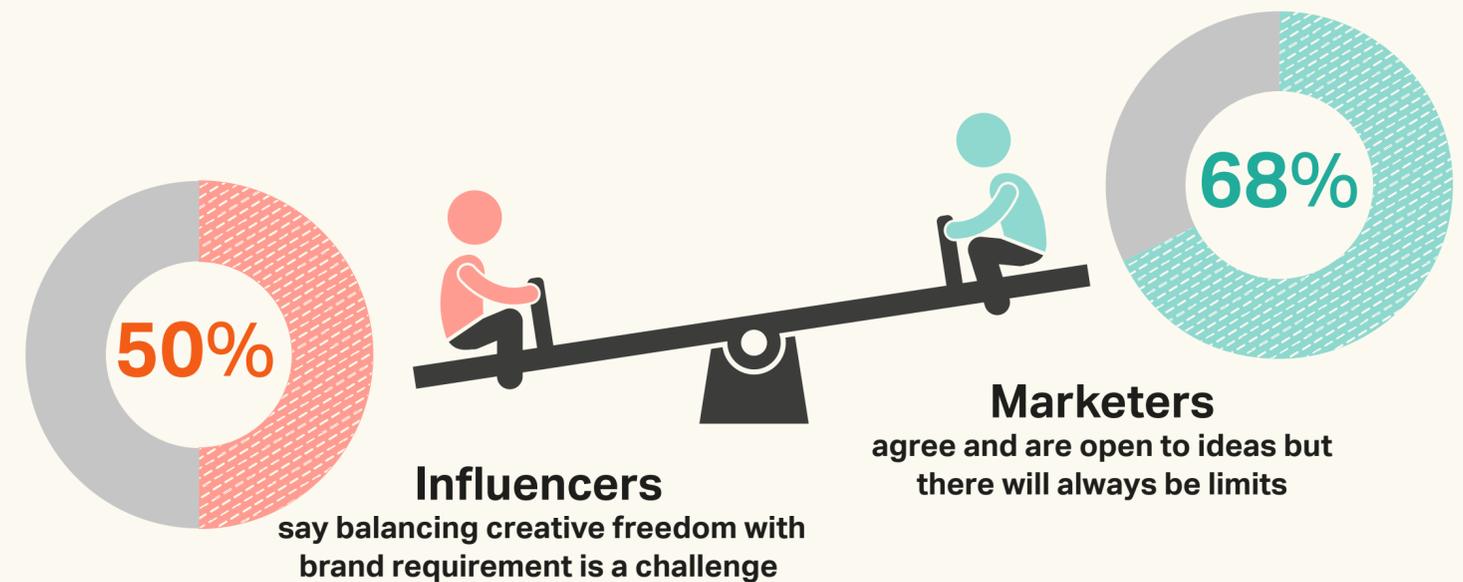


The shift to content creators is changing the shape of influencer marketing. Content creators want more control over the content they create for brands. They expect the relationship to operate like a partnership rather than a simple fee structure. In fact, 50% of influencers say balancing creative freedom with brand requirement is a challenge. 68% of marketers agree and are open to ideas but there will always be limits.

"For me, I'm focused on building an audience, but it's different for some content creators. Logik, aka Julian Gillam, ex-creative at Google, creates art for the likes of Chicago Bulls and Coinbase etc. And he is really on the content creation side."

Adi Adara, Finance Influencer

In marketing literature and industry commentary, the terms 'influencer' and 'content creator' are used interchangeably. Marketers love what is new, so 'content creator' has become a popular term.



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers
Q: What kind of influencers do you / your clients work with?

The value of nano and micro-influencers

Influencers come in all sizes. Macro influencers boast followings in the millions, while nano influencers engage with less than a thousand followers.

Content type also categorises influencers – they are gamers, bloggers/vloggers, photographers. They are also categorised by their niche, for example, specialist knowledge about travel, sports and fitness, beauty, fashion or parenting.

Consider reach, engagement and fit before reaching out to influencers. Macro influencers have a more extensive reach, but working with the right group of nano influencers may fit your marketing strategy better.

“It’s no secret that if you work with micro and nano influencers, you have a higher engagement than when you’re working with a mega or macro influencer. The higher you go in the influencer pyramid, the more awareness you get, but the engagement goes down. Nano influencers bring that extra authenticity to the brand because consumers can see how much they are loving the brand.”

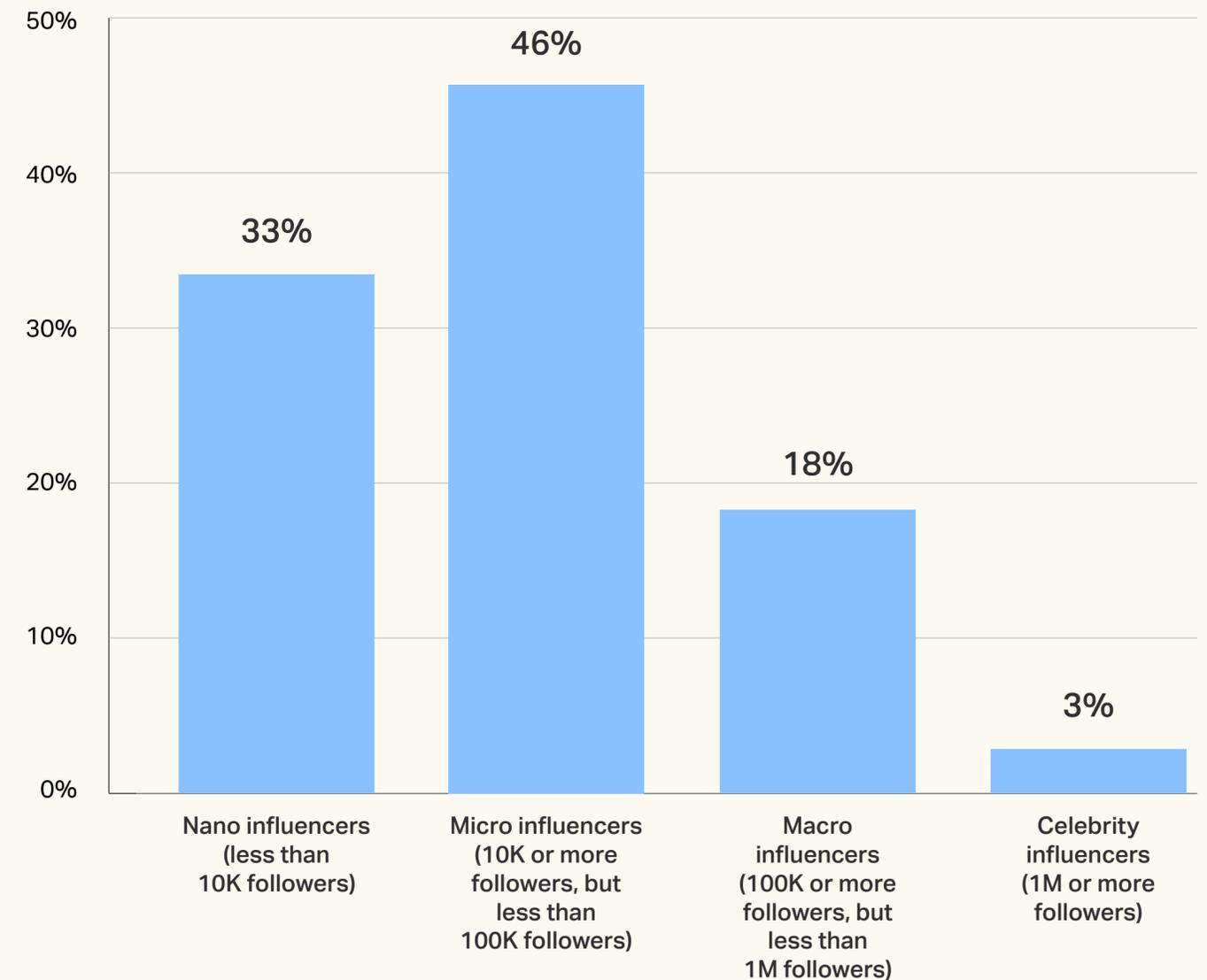
Vita Clausen, Global PR and Influencer Director, Pandora

Brands might prefer to use macro influencers for a big product launch to help them drive awareness. However, where brand advocacy is required, working with nano influencers on an ongoing basis can be more effective. Nano influencers have very active communities of followers, increasing their potential to influence purchase decisions.

Source: [Why nano influencers can be more powerful than influencers with a mega following](#)

Influencers come in all sizes

Micro influencers dominate but nano influencers are also popular



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Influencers
Q: Which of the following tiers best represents the number of your followers?

Lifestyle influencers and brand ambassadors

There are different types of influencers, such as lifestyle influencers and brand ambassadors. Lifestyle influencers, who can be a type of key opinion leader (KOLs), typify a more conventional approach to influencer marketing.

"I try to be as authentic as possible. I try to research before I engage and agree to work with someone. If I'm posting about the brand, I will authentically post what the journey was like for me with them."

Shekinah Monee, Lifestyle Influencer

Partnering with brand ambassadors gives an individual or group of individuals a more official status as a figure representing the brand. These brands collaborate with

celebrities or more well-known influencers in mainstream channels, alongside an influencer marketing programme. Thought leaders follow a similar approach but often take a stance on an important topic. This technique tends to be effective when a brand wants to support an issue such as diversity or the environment.

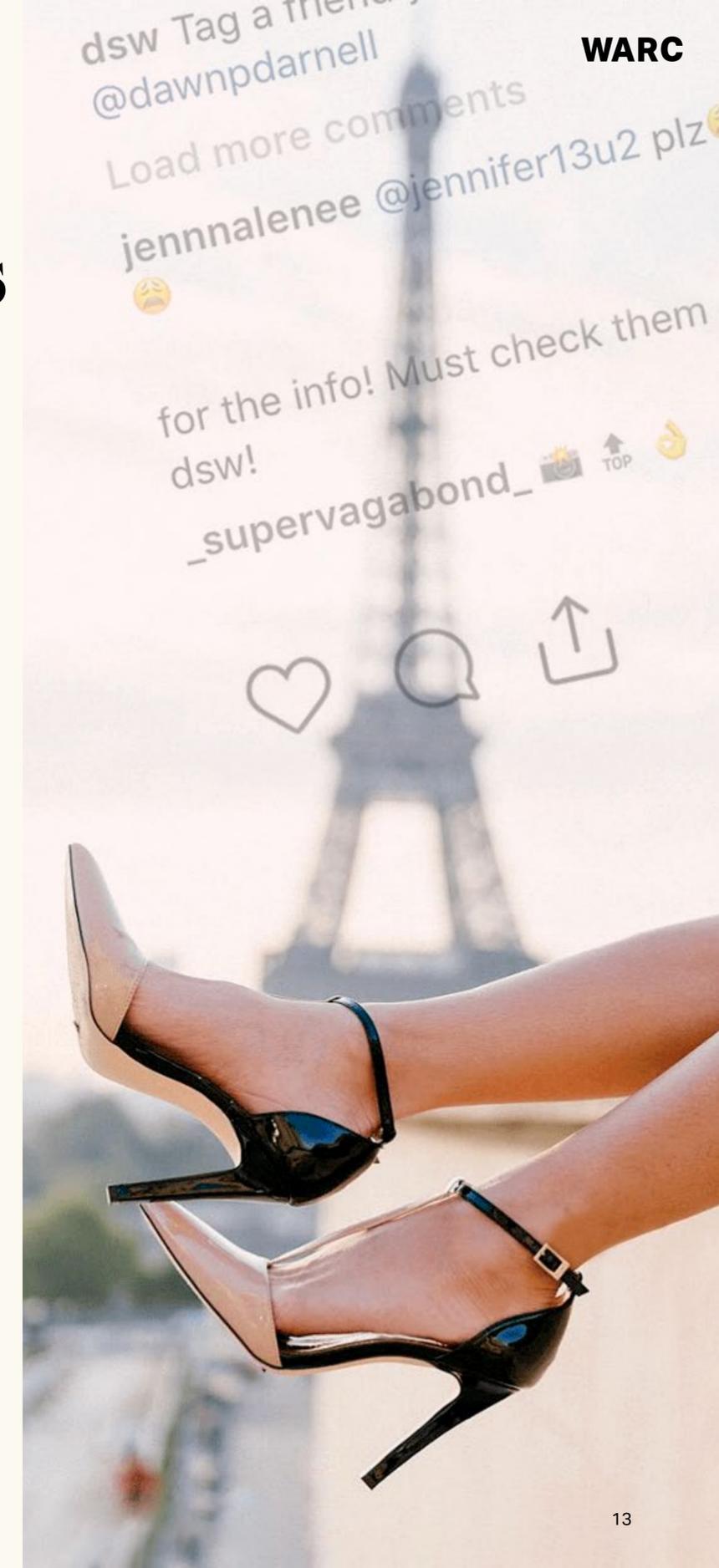
Loyal customers and staff make great influencers because they can speak from experience and provide credibility. British retailer John Lewis took this approach when they rebranded in 2018. According to an article in the [Guardian](#), "John Lewis started working with staff on social media in 2017 and there are now 366 with Instagram accounts linked to their work. The company provides social media coaching and training on how to create engaging content but the staff have full editorial control over what they post".

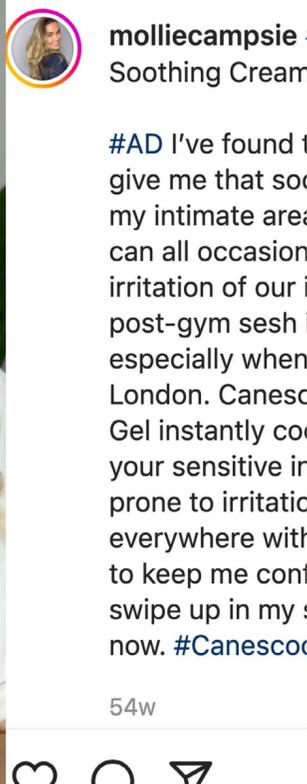
Influencers represent a brand, speak on their behalf and offer an authentic

voice that helps brands connect to their audiences with credibility – regardless of the audience size or creator status.

"You're essentially always trying – when you are advertising – to turn someone else into an advocate. With influencer marketing, you're not talking from your own brand's voice, but rather hearing it from someone else and delivering it with their own opinion."

Becky Yeung, Regional Head of Brand Partnerships, Warner Music Asia





Canesten

Background and objective:

Canesten, the UK's leading intimate health brand, launched a campaign in the UK targeting younger consumers to drive awareness, engagement, and sales of a new product. Knowledge of intimate health conditions such as thrush is low amongst young women. Most of their engagement with the category comes from the use of feminine hygiene products. Though these

products help women feel clean and fresh, they can impact sensitive areas and cause irritation.

Canesten Cool's mission is to empower women to feel more comfortable in their skin without shame or discomfort. In January 2021, they launched Canescool Intimate Care Soothing Cream Gel, providing affordable symptomatic relief from irritations caused by the products women use daily.

Source: Canesten
Canescool-it Influencer Campaign

Activity:

To launch Canescool, Canesten executed a digital campaign on relevant mobile platforms, ranging from the UK's first Canesten TikTok social channel to a creative influencer campaign. Working with leading influencers enabled Canesten to destigmatise the symptoms and bring Canescool into the broader conversation by educating young women about the common causes of daily irritations through relatable and engaging content.

They executed a paid Instagram campaign across multiple verticals with four mid-tier influencers, covering fitness, fashion, lifestyle, and wellbeing, alongside an earned micro-influencer outreach programme. They chose mid-tier influencers because they recognised this was the 'sweet spot' for well-positioned brand awareness and engagement. The team selected Influencers based on their ability to bring Canescool to life via engaging and relevant 'in situ' moments with honest, relatable content.

- Body positivity supporter Victoria Spence communicated the effectiveness of Canescool via a fun and engaging 'dance' workout.

- Curve model Mollie Campsie focused on using Canescool as part of her daily life focusing on instances where she might be wearing tight clothing for shoots.
- Self-love advocate Lydia Dinga creatively positioned Canescool within her day-to-day routine via the ongoing use of sanitary products.
- Demi Donnelly, a body confidence guru, talked about her daily washing regime.

Results:

- Sales for 2021 exceeded internal targets by 91%
- Reach of 617,000 surpassed KPIs
- An average engagement rate of 5.5% surpassed the industry average with 106,000 views, 156,000 impressions, and more than 7,000 interactions

Key takeaways

1.

The pandemic led to increasing sophistication in influencer content. More marketers are working with them as a way to reduce production costs.

2.

The range and type of influencers you can work with is diversifying. Stay up to date with emerging trends in this fast-moving space to leverage these opportunities.

3.

Marketers will need to evolve their approach when working with 'content creators' who expect more of a partnership. Marketers will have to get used to allowing these creators more freedom and control over the content they produce.

Chapter 2

The consumer angle: Growth and opportunity



More platforms for influencers

As social media has grown, influencers have thrived, with many seeing increasing numbers of followers. Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are established platforms, but newer players have emerged in the last five years.

The most significant in terms of reach is TikTok and Twitch. Twitch, a live-streaming gaming and entertainment platform launched in 2011, has grown rapidly in recent years. TikTok usage surged over the pandemic as the platform broadened its demographic reach. More platforms naturally present more opportunities for marketers, especially as their capabilities evolve.

The pandemic further accelerated the proliferation of social platforms as some segments of society experienced more free time to engage in social media. According to a 2020 report from GWI 'The Age of Influence', 72% of consumers who follow influencers in the US and the UK said they were spending more time on social media daily over the pandemic. Additionally, around two-thirds of this group claimed they were likely to continue using social media to the same extent post-pandemic. As people spend more time on social media, the opportunity for influencer marketing grows. However, marketers need to consider which platforms to invest in.



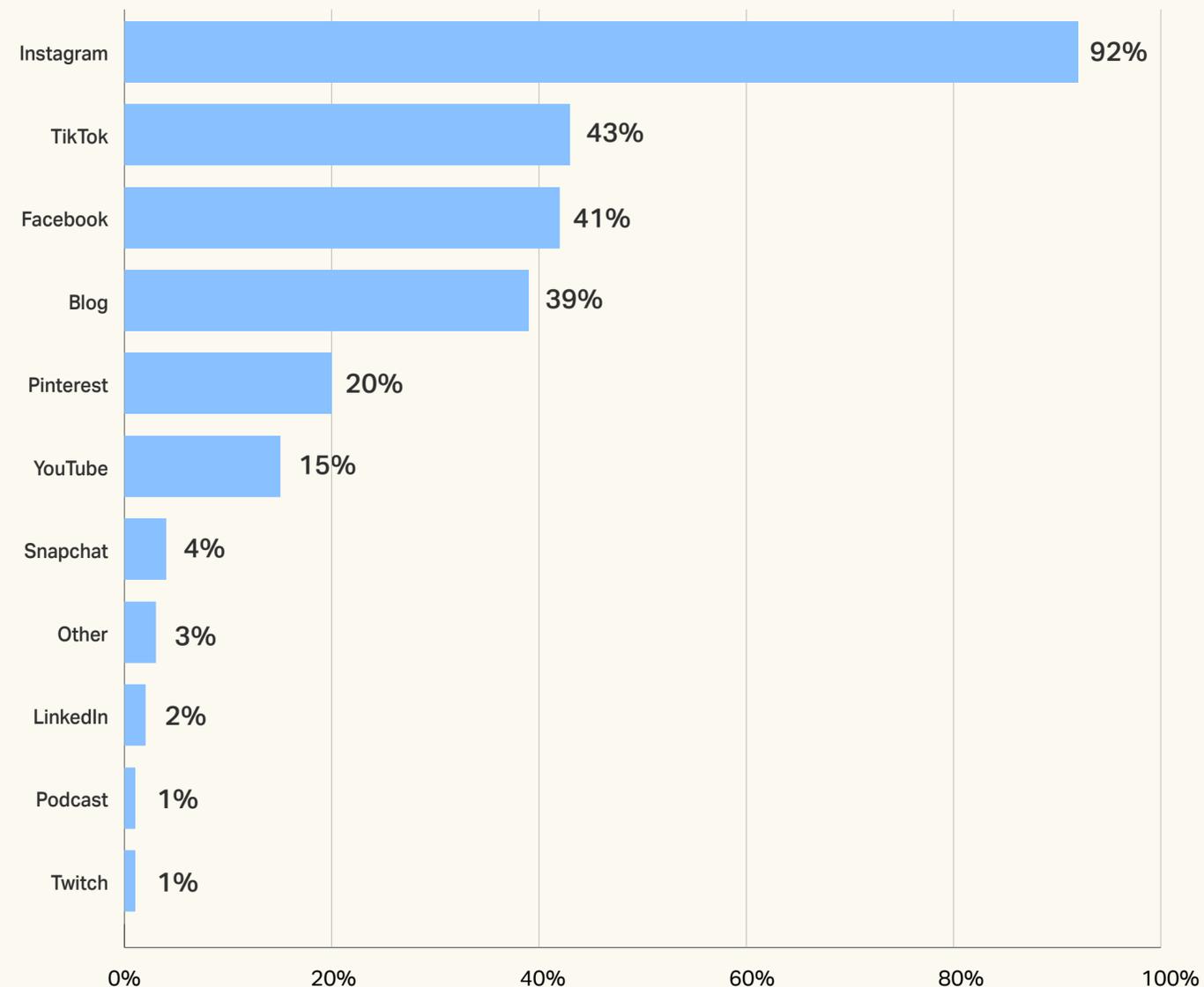
Influencers favour Instagram and TikTok

While YouTube and Facebook command the largest social media audience, influencers favour Instagram and TikTok. Ninety-two percent of influencers said they mostly post on Instagram and 43% said they mostly post on TikTok. With TikTok already overtaking Facebook, it's a platform to watch in terms of influencer marketing.

However, some marketers remain cautious about TikTok as a newer platform that is new to influencers. Others have concerns about brand reputation, given the content nature.

Popular influencer platforms

92% of influencers mostly post on Instagram; 43% mostly post on TikTok



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Influencers
Q: Which of the following platforms do you mainly post on?

TikTok delivers on engagement

The WARC Best Practice guide '[What we know about influencer marketing](#)' found that while YouTube and Instagram are the most marketer-preferred channels for influencer campaigns, TikTok offers the highest engagement rates. According to [WARC data](#), TikTok has an average engagement rate of 7.50%, more than twice as high as second-placed Instagram at 3.22%.

Different social platforms for different audiences

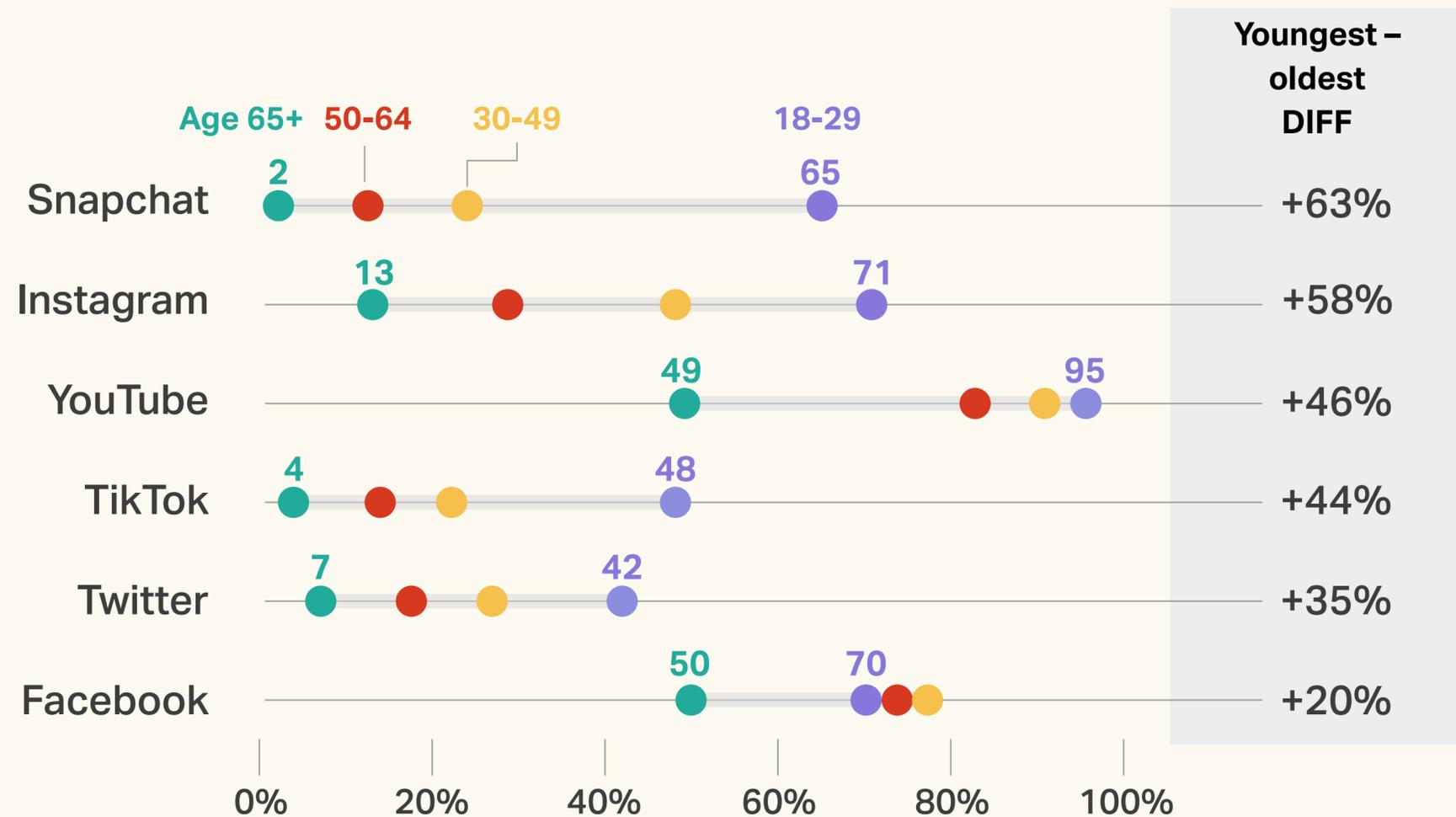
According to the Pew Research Centre, there are stark differences by generation regarding which platforms US audiences favour.

Instagram and TikTok attract younger audiences, whereas Facebook appeals broadly across different age demographics. Younger generations show a clear preference for both static and video image-led social media – an environment in which influencer marketing can naturally thrive. According to CreativeX, more than 84% of brand communication is now visual. As smartphones have allowed consumers to create images and videos easily, brands have had to follow them to inherently visual platforms.

Most favoured influencer platforms in US (by generation)

Age gaps in Snapchat, Instagram use are particularly wide, less so for Facebook

% of US adults in each age group who say they ever use...



Note: All differences shown in DIFF column are statistically significant. The DIFF values shown are based on subtracting the rounded values in the chart. Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan 25-Feb. 8, 2021. "Social Media Use in 2021"

PEW Research Center

Younger generations gravitate towards creators and nano or micro influencers

Teenagers prefer creators over celebrities when it comes to influencer marketing. According to data from [ThinkwithGoogle](#), 70% of YouTube teenage subscribers say they relate to influencers more than celebrities.

Research from [We Are Social](#) backs this up. The study found that using celebrities to target Generation Z is limiting, especially if the celebrities are trying to sell something outside their core area of expertise. Generation Z instead prefers micro influencers – people they see as superfans that bring real, earned credibility to brand endorsements and drive authentic brand love.

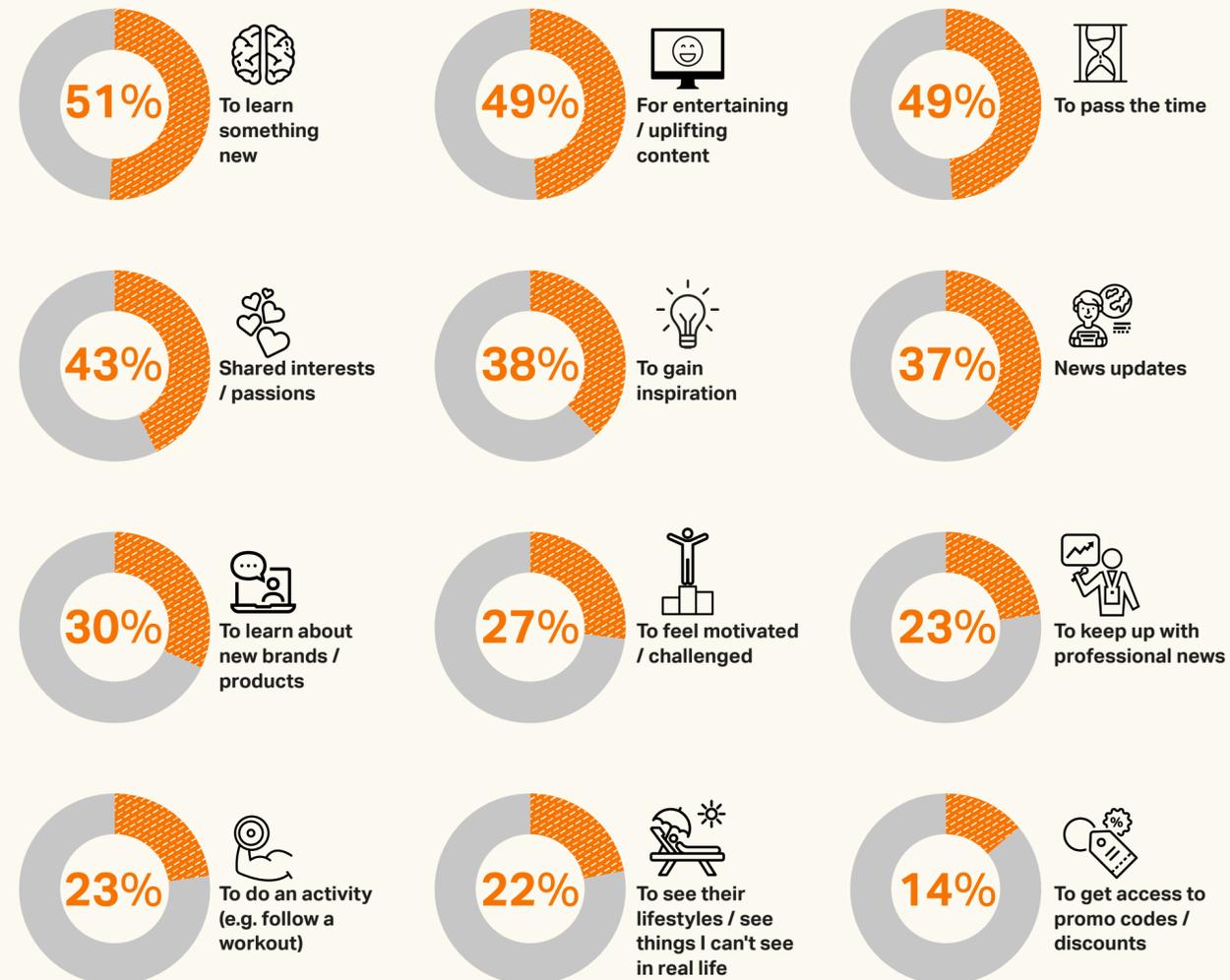


Following for education and entertainment

According to a report from GWI's 'The Age of Influence', 51% of followers are primarily motivated to follow influencers to learn something new, and 49% follow for entertaining / uplifting content or to pass the time. However, Generation Z is more likely to follow influencers to do an activity (i.e. a workout), and Baby Boomers are more likely to cite getting news updates.

Main motivators to follow content creators

% of customers who follow influences that cite those reasons for following content creators



"You only have one or two seconds to catch the viewer's attention. You really want to make sure that it's relevant. I think that you can teach age-old financial concepts, but [by] using new concepts like concert tickets, to teach about stocks and crypto. I would say 'Be relevant, be trendy'. Because when you do a finance hashtag, you are going to get a really finance-focused audience."

Adi Adara, Finance Influencer

Source: GlobalWebIndex Influencer Custom Research, May 2020
 Base: 1,056 (UK) and 1,038 (U.S.) consumers who follow influencers aged 16-64

Brands benefit from the halo effect

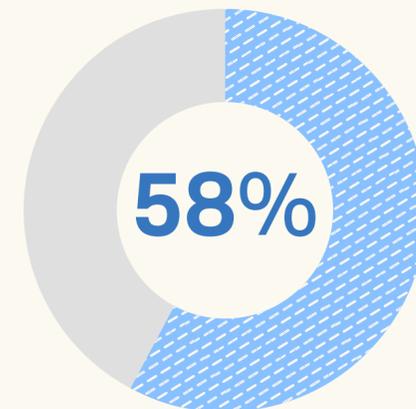
Brands partner with influencers to reach and engage audiences, but also to benefit from a halo effect. Influencer marketing works on the basis of some fundamental psychological principles. Humans are innately social creatures who want to fit in. Influencers represent aspirational figures – following them reflects our desire to be part of what is popular and belong to a broader group of people with shared interests.

Encountering recommendations from an influencer can lead to positive associations with that brand. In the best examples, brands can borrow identity cues from influencers and have a stronger relationship with specialist audiences. For example, brands can work with communities that are active in sharing make-up tips to bring their products and brands to life via tutorials and product reviews.

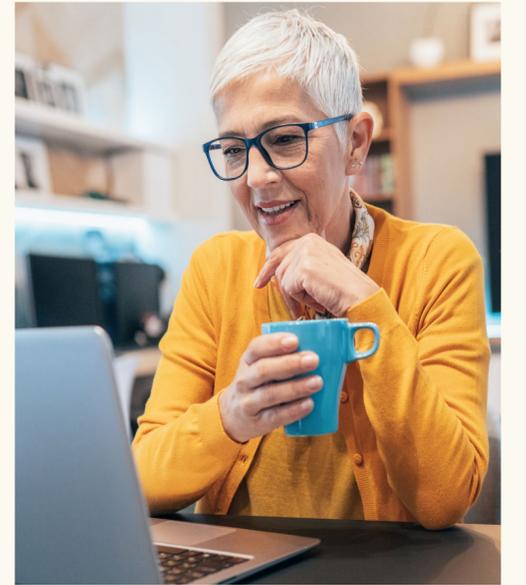
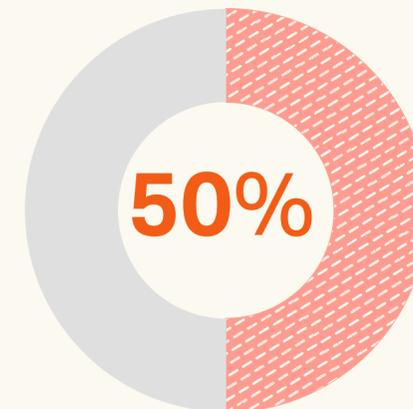
There are differences in the qualities audiences look for from the influencers they follow. According to the GWI report, 58% of Gen Z look for creativity – this is their top desired trait – while 50% of Millennials prefer humour. Lastly, 60% of Baby Boomers look for trustworthiness. Interestingly, trustworthiness has grown for all audiences during the course of the pandemic.



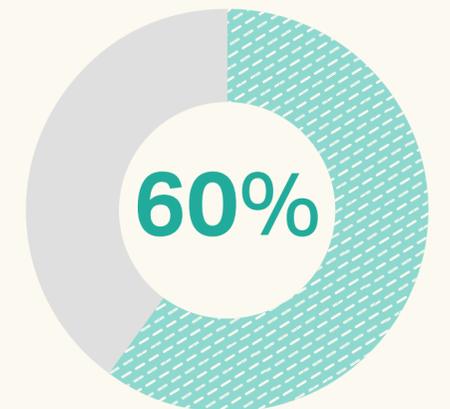
Gen Z
look for creativity



Millennials
look for humour



Baby boomers
look for trustworthiness



Brand discovery and purchase motivation

It's the trusted relationship that followers have with influencers that is really key for brands if they want to have an impact on metrics like purchase intent.

The GWI study digs deeper into this relationship and uncovers that it is based on three important factors:

1. The passion influencers have for their specialist area.
2. The subject matter knowledge they have.
3. The transparency they demonstrate when working with brands.

"The efficacy of influencer content relies on authenticity. Audiences have the right to know that there is a material connection between the influencer and the brand, even if the influencer may genuinely love the product or the brand. And when it happens, that shows. That's the beauty of influencer marketing – when it's well known and when it comes naturally."

Guillermo Font, Marketing Head, FMCG & Healthcare, Mars

The study further found that a third of all consumers discover brands through social channels, especially among younger audiences. Media channel data shows that Generation Z ranks recommendations on social media ahead of search engines and on par with TV.

Which channels complement influencer marketing in the media mix?

	Gen Z (aged 16-23)	Millennials (aged 24-37)	Gen X (aged 38-56)	Baby boomers (aged 57-64)
Word of mouth from family / friends	46%	39%	45%	49%
Brand/product websites	33%	26%	32%	32%
Ads seen on social media	32%	33%	33%	30%
Recommendations / comments on social media	30%	25%	28%	20%
Ads seen on TV	30%	35%	44%	49%
Ads seen on websites	28%	24%	28%	29%
Endorsements from creators / influencers I follow	28%	20%	22%	17%
Search engines	28%	36%	40%	41%
Ads seen before online videos or TV shows start to play	22%	25%	20%	19%
Consumer review sites	19%	24%	29%	29%
In-store promotions	18%	25%	31%	31%
Ads in magazines or newspapers	15%	13%	22%	26%
Ads seen on music-streaming services	14%	12%	10%	7%
Ads / sponsored content on podcasts	13%	15%	11%	8%

Source: GlobalWebIndex Influencer Custom Research, May 2020
 Base: 141 Gen Z (aged 16-23), 804 millennials (aged 24-37), 910 Gen X (aged 38-56), and 239 baby boomer (aged 57-64) consumers who follow influencers

Key takeaways

1.

Newer platforms that are video based are fertile ground for influencers. TikTok is seeing high levels of engagement, presenting opportunities for brands.

2.

The trusted relationship influencers have with their followers not only provides a halo onto brands but can also drive purchase intent.

Chapter 3

Influencer marketing in the mix

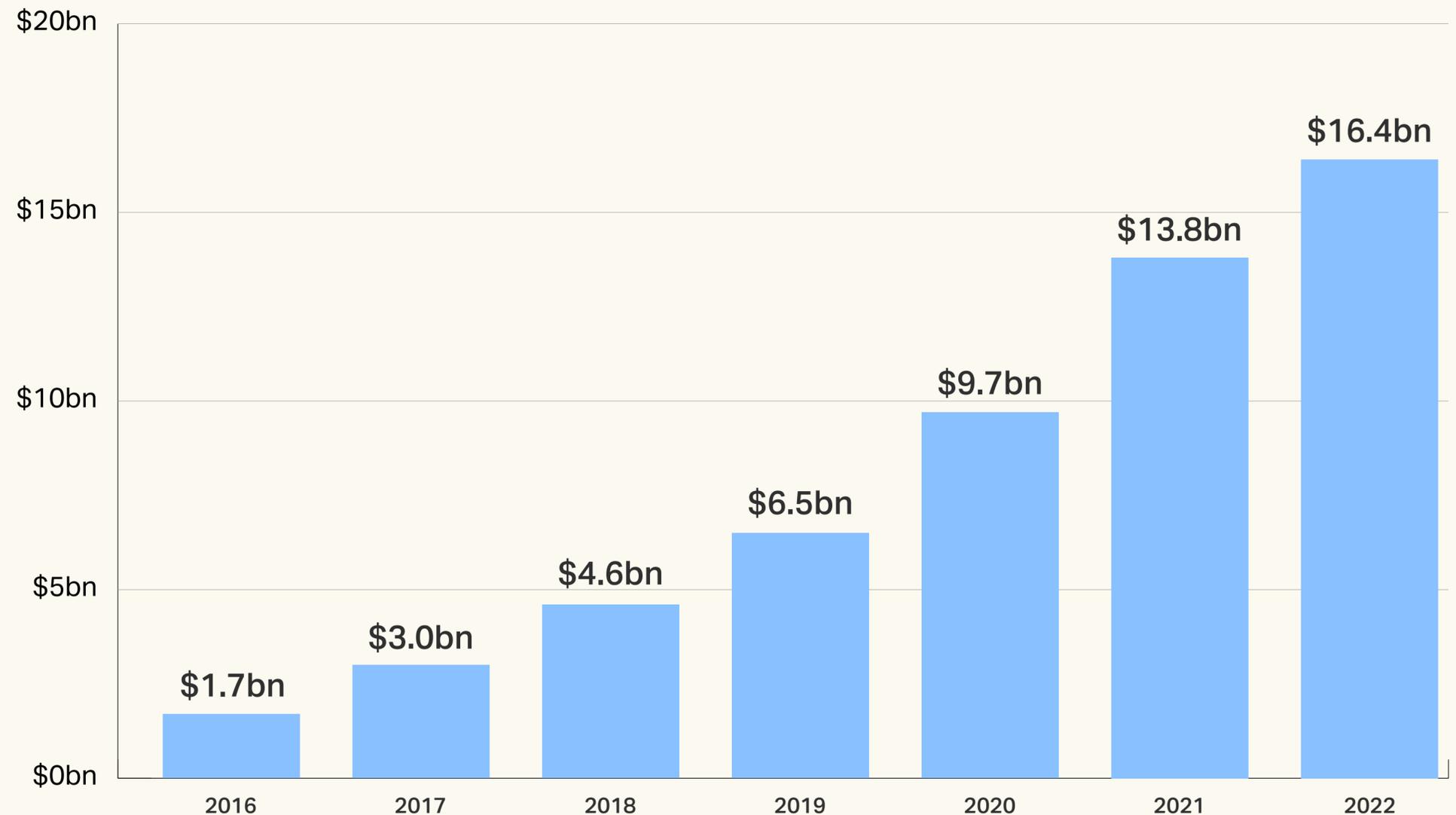


Increasing spend

Spending on influencer marketing is growing significantly. In the US, a report from Influencer Marketing Hub predicts the industry is set to grow to approximately \$16.4bn in 2022, up 26% year on year. More than two-thirds (68%) of marketers plan to increase their influencer spending this year.

Lockdowns very likely helped drive increased spending on influencer marketing. With conventional methods off the table, marketers used influencers to capture video footage of their products in real-life settings. For example, when lockdown restrictions prevented travel, brands used influencers to model swimwear near seaside locations. Many continue to use this approach post-pandemic because of the production costs saved.

Influencer marketing global market size set to grow to \$16.4bn in 2022



Source: Influencer Marketing Hub

This strategy works well in beauty and fashion, but also in other categories.

“We use influencer candidates regularly. We’ve seen an exponential curve in terms of how regularly we use candidates as a part of all of our marketing programmes. They play a part in some form – whether they are extending campaigns or whether they are the focal point. But we’ve got to a point now that all our marketing programmes involve influencers. That wasn’t the case even three to five years ago. I would say that they are a really crucial component of our marketing programme.”

Michael Flatt, Director of Global Integrated Marketing, Xbox

Category ad spend naturally followed consumer shopping baskets. According to a [report by Essence](#), the top categories consumers have purchased or intend to purchase via social media in the next 12 months include apparel, food, and beauty.

Top three purchase categories by demographic cohort

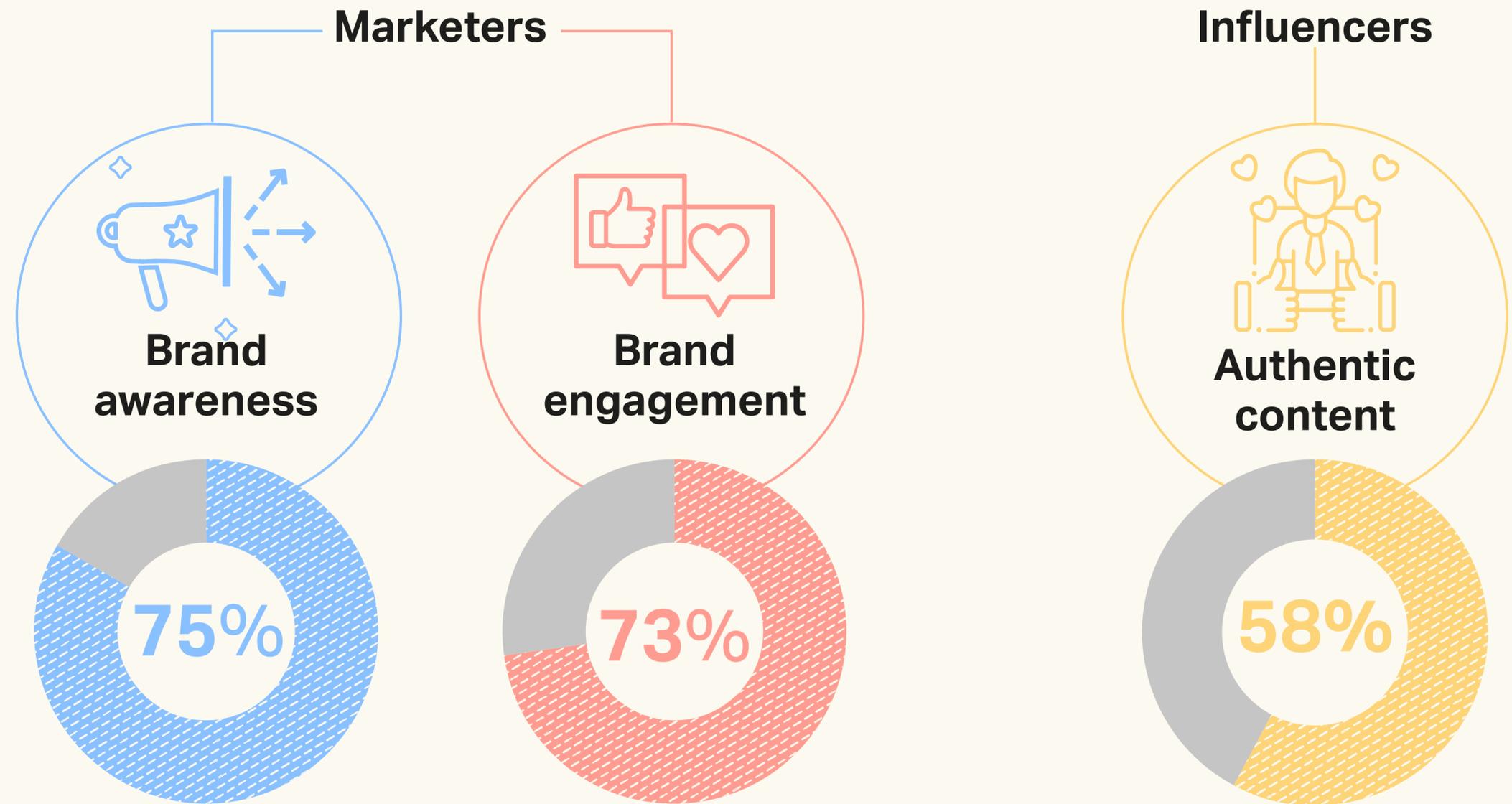
GenZ	Millennials	Women	Men
1 Apparel	1 Household items	1 Apparel	1 Grocery
2 Food – delivery / takeaway	2 Furniture	2 Beauty	2 Hardware
3 Beauty	3 Luxury	3 Food – delivery / takeaway	3 Home electronics

Source: Social Commerce Report, Essence (November 2021)

The influencer appeal for awareness and engagement

As we make room for influencer marketing in the mix, where and when should it be deployed? According to our survey, 75% of marketers use it for brand awareness and 73% for brand engagement. Our survey with influencers sees a different response. Their top reason for working with marketers is to create authentic content (58%).

Marketers are more concerned with brand outcomes, whereas influencers focus on their output. This disconnect is a reflection of varying skill sets. Brands and influencers also see repurposing content through a different lens. Influencers recognise its strength – ranking second – but marketers don't see the same value. Brands have an opportunity to get greater value from influencer content by reusing it to help build authenticity and brand love.



Thinking ahead: Using influencers to drive lower funnel metrics

Our survey showed that marketers mostly focus on top-of-the-funnel metrics such as awareness and engagement.

We also analysed those who use influencer marketing on an ad hoc basis versus those who use it more regularly. We grouped together marketers committed to three-to six-month programmes, annual programmes and commitments that span years.

This analysis revealed that 'converting traffic' is a more significant motivator amongst those using influencers on an ad hoc basis. Forty-six percent of marketers use influencers for a few posts, compared to 22% for those deploying programmes that run from three months to over a year. The challenge is that traffic conversion improves the longer you work with an influencer as they test and learn. This is an example of mismatched expectations between marketers and influencers.

While this expectation may be true of less experienced marketers, it is also a more realistic trend that is reflected in variances by category. Beauty and fashion brands are much more likely to use influencer marketing for lower funnel objectives, particularly in Asian markets. L'Oréal heavily focuses on making influencer marketing work on this basis.

"Many marketers are starting to use influencer marketing to sell on their platforms. Almost like a US infomercial style. L'Oréal has done some really great stuff. When you have someone, who consumers connect with, telling them the benefits and being able to see it on them, it really works. China's definitely leading the way from the e-commerce perspective, utilising different formats to be able to reach audiences."

Becky Yeung, Regional Head of Brand Partnerships, Warner Music Asia

The rise of direct-to-consumer brands (DTC) is also noteworthy since they successfully drive lower-funnel metrics. According to Criteo, DTC trends accelerated over the pandemic, with 28% of global consumers purchasing something direct for the first time.

DTC brands are heavily data-centric and rely on digital touchpoints and first-party data to optimise their spend. Typically, DTC brands use blogs, social media and search, partnering with influencers to tell their brand story.

Renault

Background and objective:

The Renault ZOE has been the best-selling electric car (e-car) in Germany since 2017. In 2019, however, market leadership diminished to only a small margin due to the growing competition in the e-sector. In 2020, the aim was to ensure that the Renault ZOE defends this title and grows back to be the clear market leader in the e-car segment. The topic of electromobility is gaining increasing relevance in the context of climate change.

In addition, the e-car subsidy introduced in the wake of the pandemic is generating

further attention. This is fuelling the launches of high-class competitors, such as the Volkswagen ID 3 or Tesla's Model 3. Furthermore, purchase decision processes in the field of electromobility take longer, are more complex and require more information – the risk of losing customers in the process is enormously high. Many potential buyers are unsure whether an electric car is the right choice for them. Tied to this general question are many other questions regarding details and functionality. What is the range? Where can I charge my vehicle? How do I charge and how safe are electric cars anyway?

Activity:

ZOE's buyers were younger than expected and had fundamental questions about electromobility, for which they turned to YouTube. This led to a campaign strategy that turned information into infotainment. The brand recruited respected YouTuber, Alex Bangula. Alex has been testing products related to electric mobility for years and has built up a high level of credibility. He became the entertaining mouthpiece for a fun campaign which ran on TV, radio, OOH and digital. The highlight: how many hamsters does it take to charge an electric car?

The campaign started at the top of the funnel with attention-grabbing and high-reach media such as TV, radio and OOH. Within the media mix, digital media had a high weighting and included display, social, audio and video. As part of the comprehensive video strategy and in addition to other digital placements, the infotainment videos were programmatically served to users in the middle and lower funnel, who specifically dealt with questions around electric mobility before. The data used for targeting ranged from custom intent (EV* interest mapped via website visits at competitors landing pages, reviews, EV-search terms, etc.) to first-party data (ZOE website- or configurator-lookalikes) to electromobility and small car affinity target groups.

Results:

- The cost per hour watch time of only €1.49 was 59% lower than the value for the control group, showing the user's interest was kept high with precisely tailored content
- Sales were up 39% vs. the previous month, making it the most successful month in the history of the ZOE to date
- They succeeded in their mission to remain the best-selling electric car in Germany
- 30,376 vehicles were sold in 2020, of which almost 50% took place after the infotainment videos began in late 2020
- The already ambitious benchmark from 2017 of a 44% lead over closest rivals VW Golf and Tesla was surpassed with a new 74% lead for the ZOE

Source: Renault ZOE
How many hamsters does it take to charge an e-car?

Authenticity is the biggest strength of influencer marketing

Marketers and influencers align more closely regarding the strengths of influencer marketing. Both cited high levels of trust and authenticity as a significant strength. Influencers felt strongest about it at 85%, and marketers chose it as second at 67%, after engagement. Interestingly, for marketers who use influencers over a longer period, trust and authenticity ranks at 73% – six percentage points higher – demonstrating the value of a partnership.

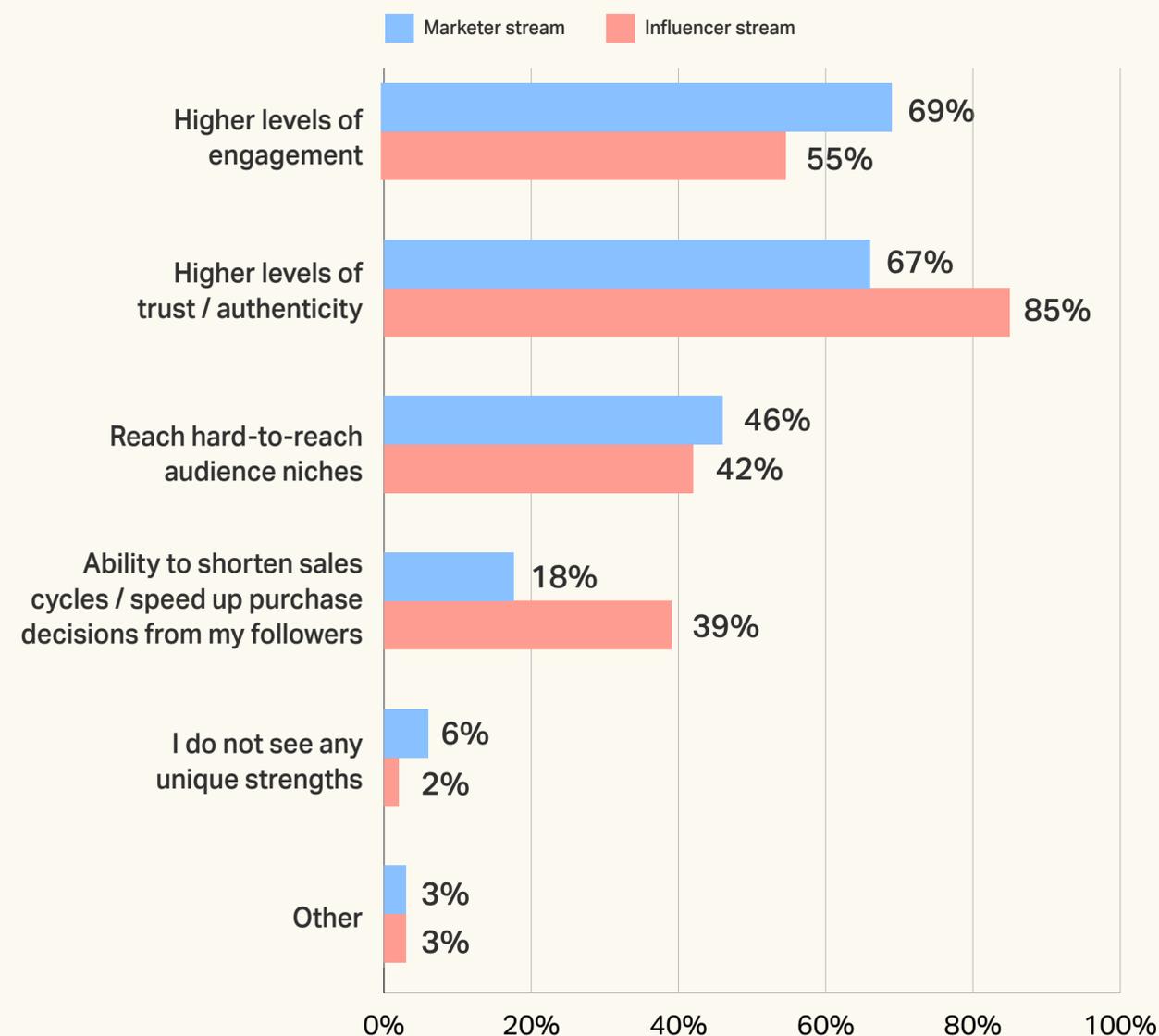
“I think influencers can be the most authentic spokespeople for us. We will often look at their values, but also the content they produce. They are successful in their own right, so far be it from us to interfere with that. It’s all based upon trust and respect. People receive information well from people who they like and trust.”

Michael Flatt, Director of Global Integrated Marketing, Xbox

The two audiences pull apart when citing shortening sales cycles, with 39% of influencers seeing this as a unique strength versus only 18% of marketers. This difference is likely because part of an influencer brief often involves discussing and demonstrating products and services. However, marketers need to see sales uplifts to recognise these benefits fully.

Influencer strengths

Marketers and influencers align on importance of engagement, trust and authenticity

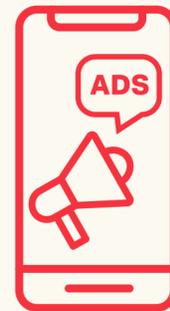


Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers & Influencers
Q: What do you see as the unique strengths of influencers?

Relevance: How influencers help tackle ad avoidance

We see from GWJ data that trustworthiness is a key attribute valued by consumers. Data from the Advertising Association (AA) underlines how important this quality is to marketers. The AA has tackled trustworthiness in advertising in its ongoing study 'Public Trust in Advertising'.

In 2018, the AA found that trust in advertising was affected by the following factors:



Volume

The number of adverts



Repetition

Frequent exposure to the same adverts



Obtrusiveness

Adverts that delay or disrupt the user experience



Irrelevance

In terms of the product or service advertised or the creative execution

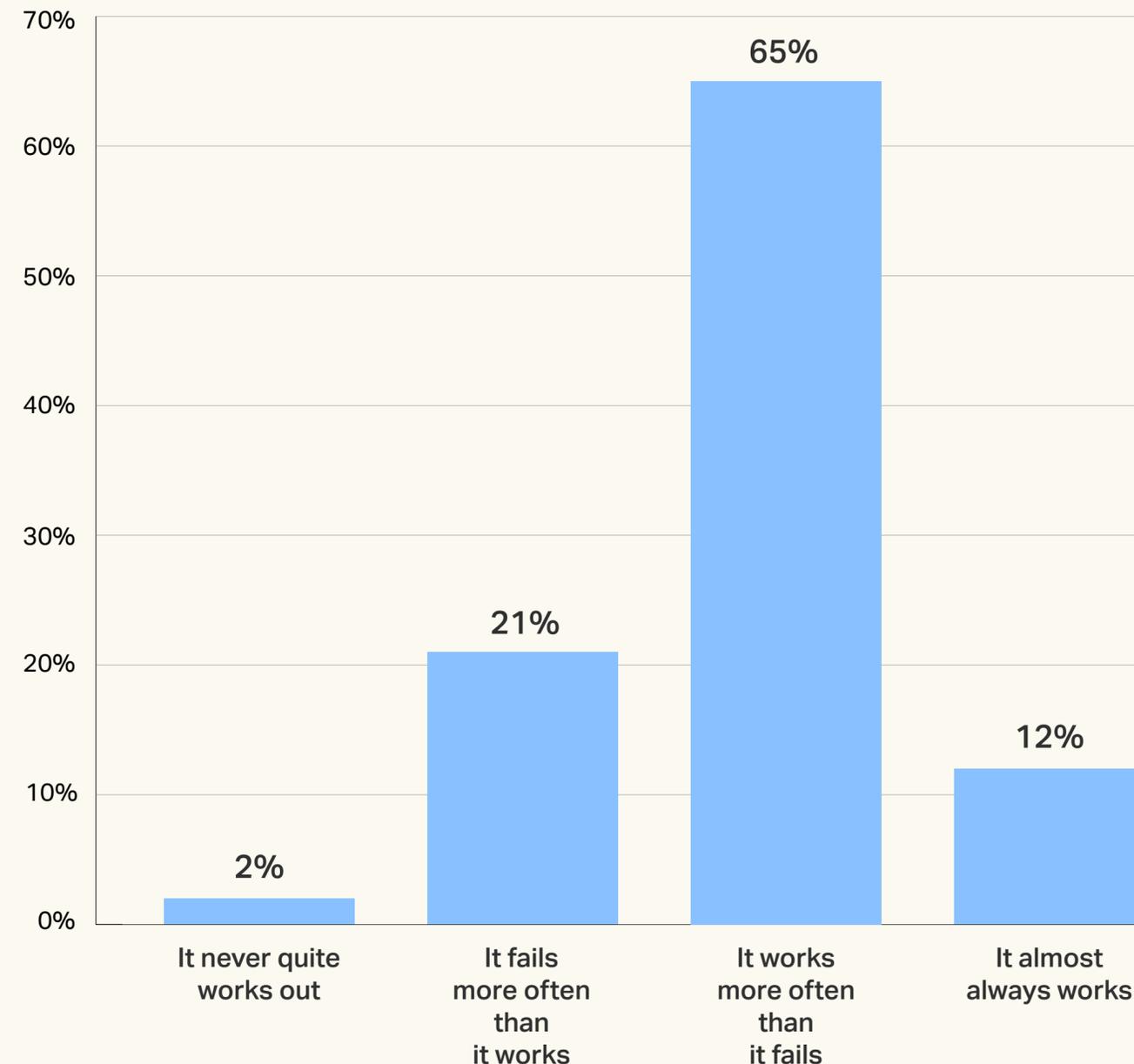
The AA set up a 'Trust Action Plan'. The research it undertook to inform this serves to underline the importance of trust and what the industry must do to maintain and improve standards.

Influencer marketing faces the same challenges. However, in terms of irrelevance and obtrusiveness, it provides an opportunity to avoid some of the pitfalls other marketing channels face. The way that influencer marketing operates naturally lends itself toward highly relevant targeting. As we have seen, it's often used as an authentic way to talk to audiences in a voice that comes from their community and speak to their passions and interests. Irrelevance is often avoided not only in terms of targeting but also in terms of execution. Furthermore, marketers avoid low attention caused by poor frequency capping as, influencers control the frequency of posts, guarding against volume and repetition.

Working with influencers generally steers marketers away from more intrusive tactics, especially when they work collaboratively with these individuals. This tactic may explain why 77% of marketers found that using influencers works more often than it fails or it almost always works – a strong performance in terms of perceived effectiveness.

How often the influencer experience works or fails

77% of marketers find influencer collaborations effective more often than not



Those new to influencer marketing have much to navigate. They see the growing opportunity and understand the potential role in the mix. But they might feel nervous about ceding creative control to influencers. In addition, they may worry about putting brand reputation at risk. Marketers may also feel intimidated by the sheer volume and range of different types of influencers and the different agency types. Then there's the questions about measurement. We address these questions in the next chapter.

Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers

Q: Which of the following statements best describes your experience working with influencers?

Key takeaways

1.

Influencer marketing spend is increasing, with categories such as beauty and fashion benefiting most as marketers follow consumer content behaviour.

2.

Influencer marketing is predominantly used at the top of the funnel for awareness driving. However, forward-thinking marketers are using it for conversion and leveraging full-funnel effects.

3.

Authentic content is a key strength of influencer marketing. There is an opportunity for marketers to leverage this better by repurposing influencer content in broader marketing channels.

4.

Influencer marketing presents an opportunity to resolve some of the challenges facing marketers in general – namely bombardment plus irrelevant and intrusive marketing messages.

5.

For this opportunity to be fully realised, there needs to be a greater link between authentic content and brand outcomes such as purchase intent, turning a key strength into tangible results and resolving the conflict between influencer and marketer perspectives.

Chapter 4

Perspectives from marketers: Partnership and innovation

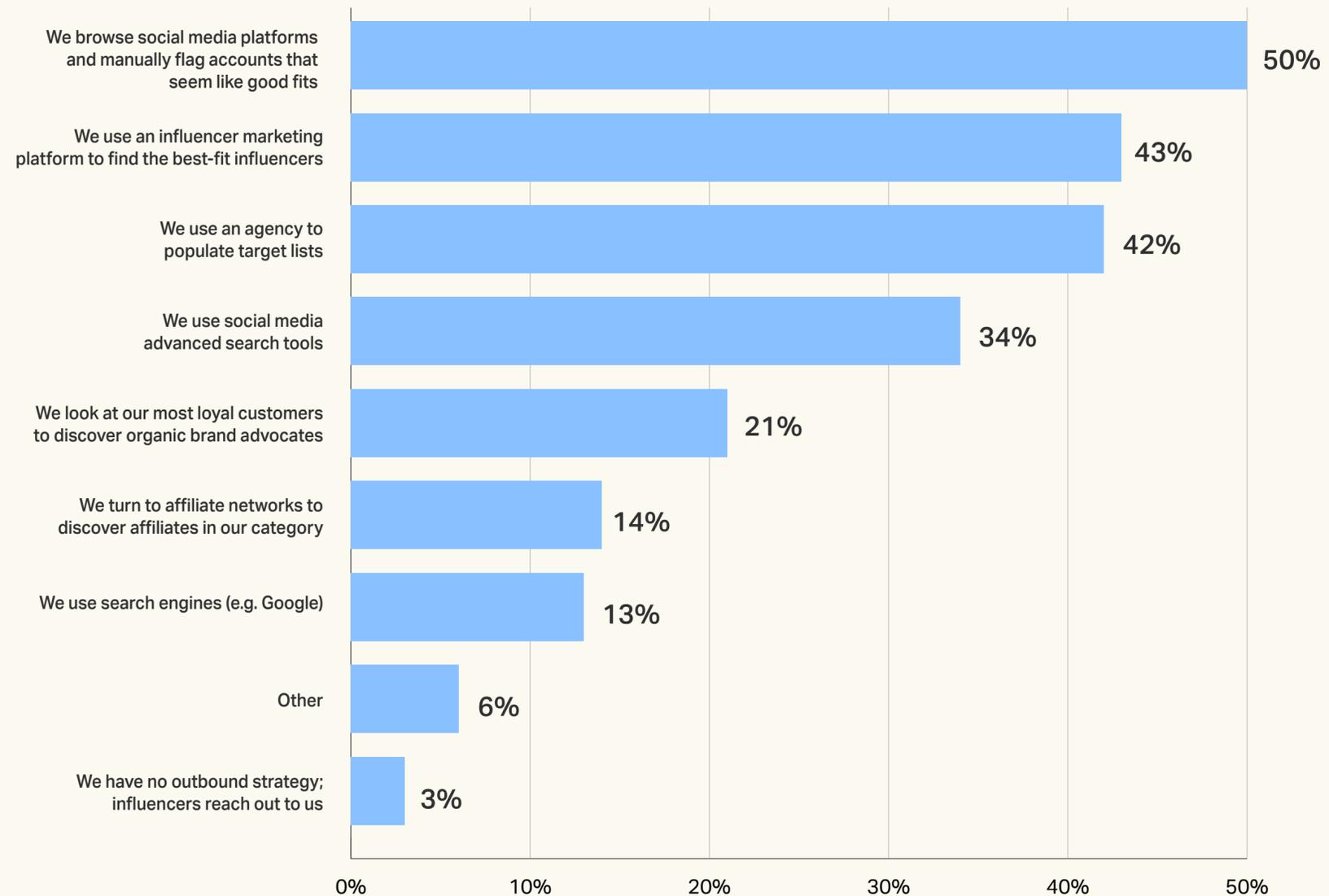


Leveraging experts to navigate the influencer landscape

So, where do you start if you want to embark on influencer marketing? Many marketers work with influencer tools, agencies, or strategists to develop their influencer marketing programmes. Others rely on their in-house teams to build out programming from scratch. Some rely on a combination of both. Our survey found that 50% of marketers use internal teams to search social media platforms for appropriate influencers, whilst 43% work with external platforms and 42% work with external agencies.

How brands identify the right influencer partners

Marketers use internal and external teams and platforms to find the best fit



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers
 Q: How do you / your clients identify the right partner for an influencer marketing campaign?

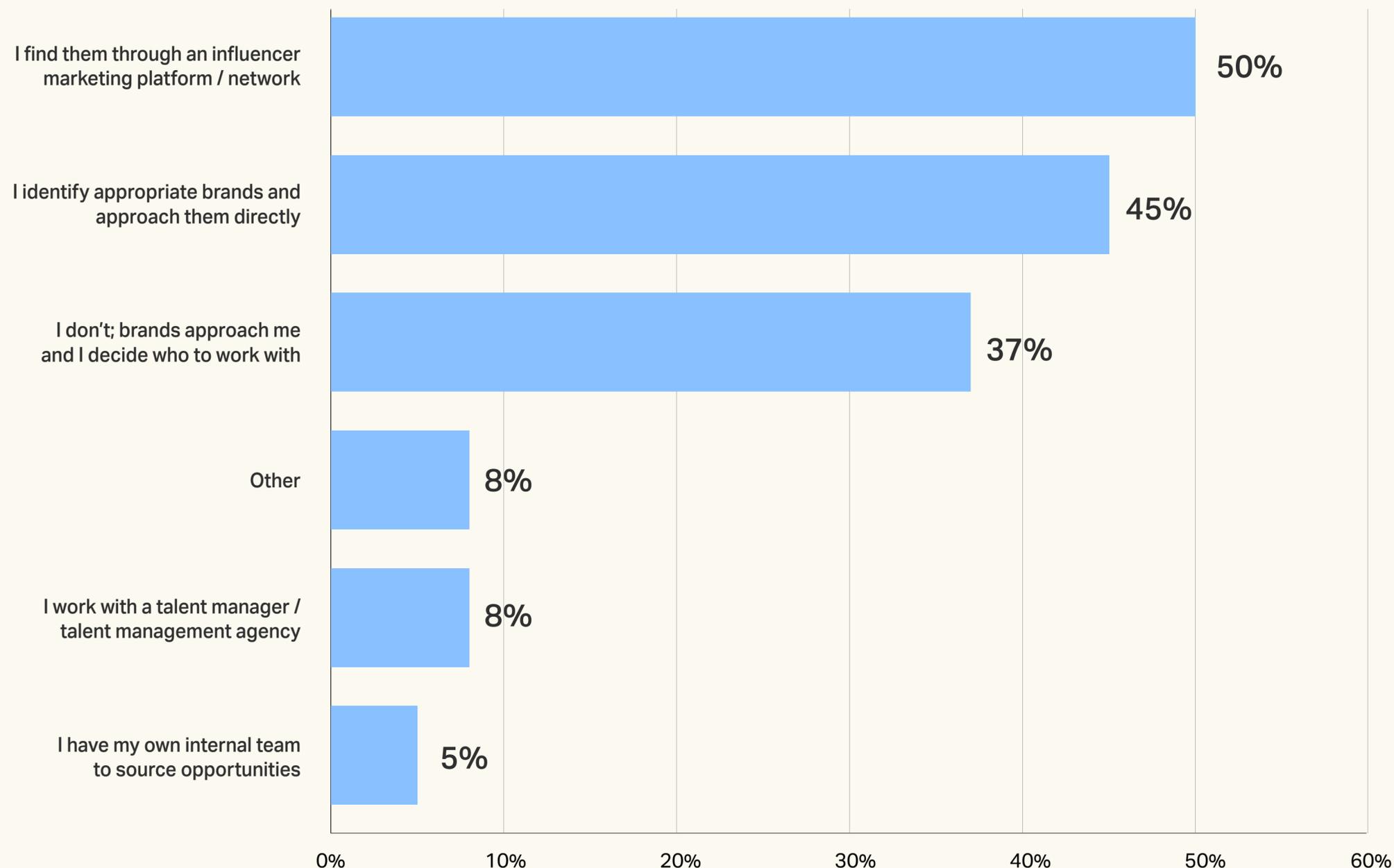
It's important to recognise that working with outside expertise gives you a perspective from both sides, with 50% of influencers relying on companies such as influencer marketing platforms to connect them to brands, whilst 45% of influencers approach brands directly. In a market which is naturally fast moving and driven by trends, working with outside expertise brings continuity to your influencer marketing programme, minimising the risk of a scattergun approach and bringing central coordination and the opportunity for a long-term strategy.

"We have trusted, long standing agency partners that we work with. We have these guys rigorously check the backgrounds of all of the candidates that we're on the verge of working with. So there absolutely has to be checks in place. There have been times in the past where we've had to make a call not to work with candidates."

Michael Flatt, Director of Global Integrated Marketing, Xbox

How influencers identify the right brand partners

Influencers rely on external platforms to connect them to brands



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Influencers
Q: How do you identify the right brand partner?

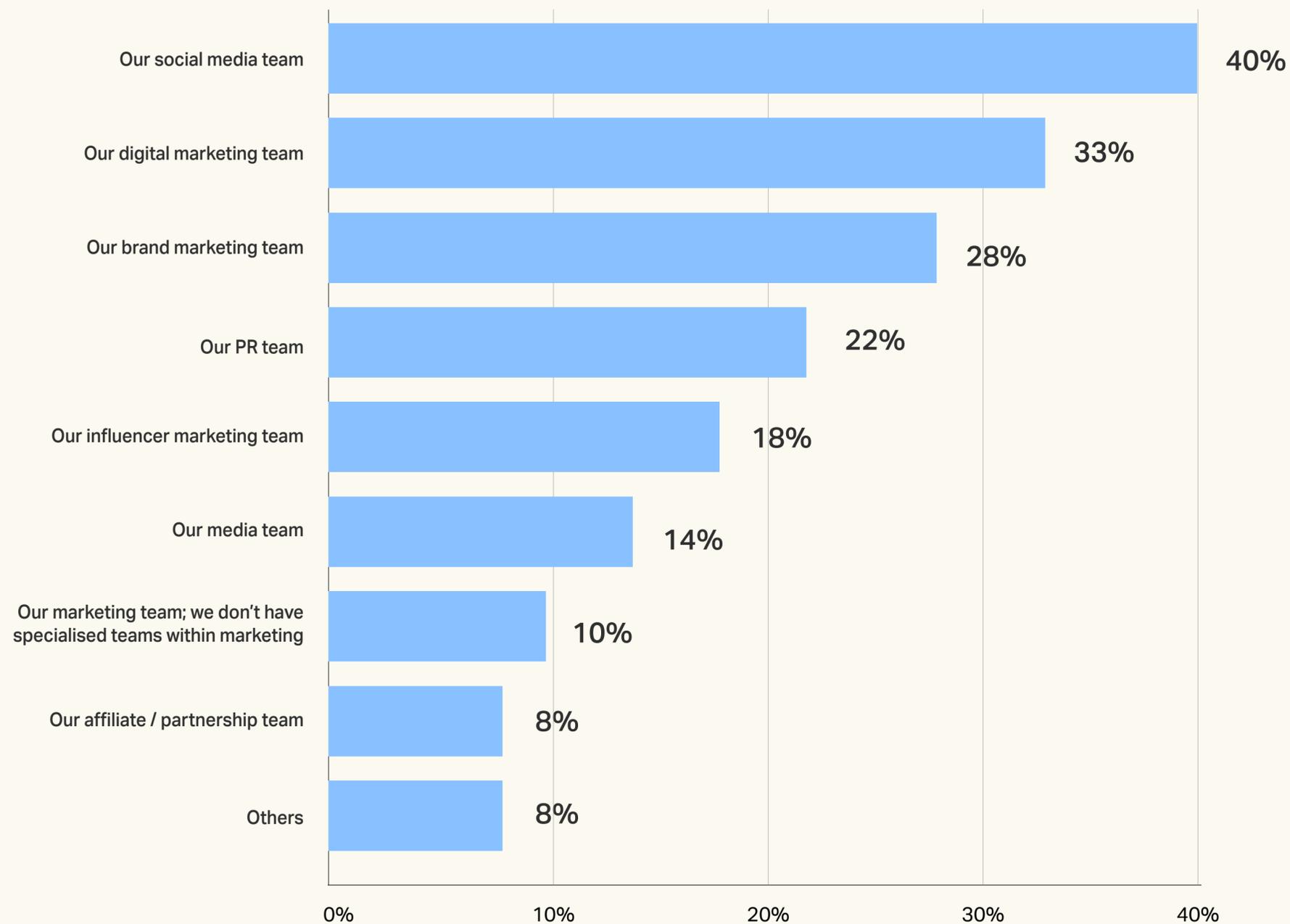
Capitalising on cross-functional benefits

Influencer marketing doesn't naturally align with any specific marketing team. Responsibility can sit within one team or spread across multiple teams.

The specialism can sit in any of the following departments – the social media team in 40% of cases, the digital marketing team for 33% of marketers or even the brand marketing team for 28% of marketers. This disparity could make it challenging to develop holistic approaches to influencer marketing.

Client-side teams in charge of influencer marketing

Social media and digital marketing teams tend to lead the way



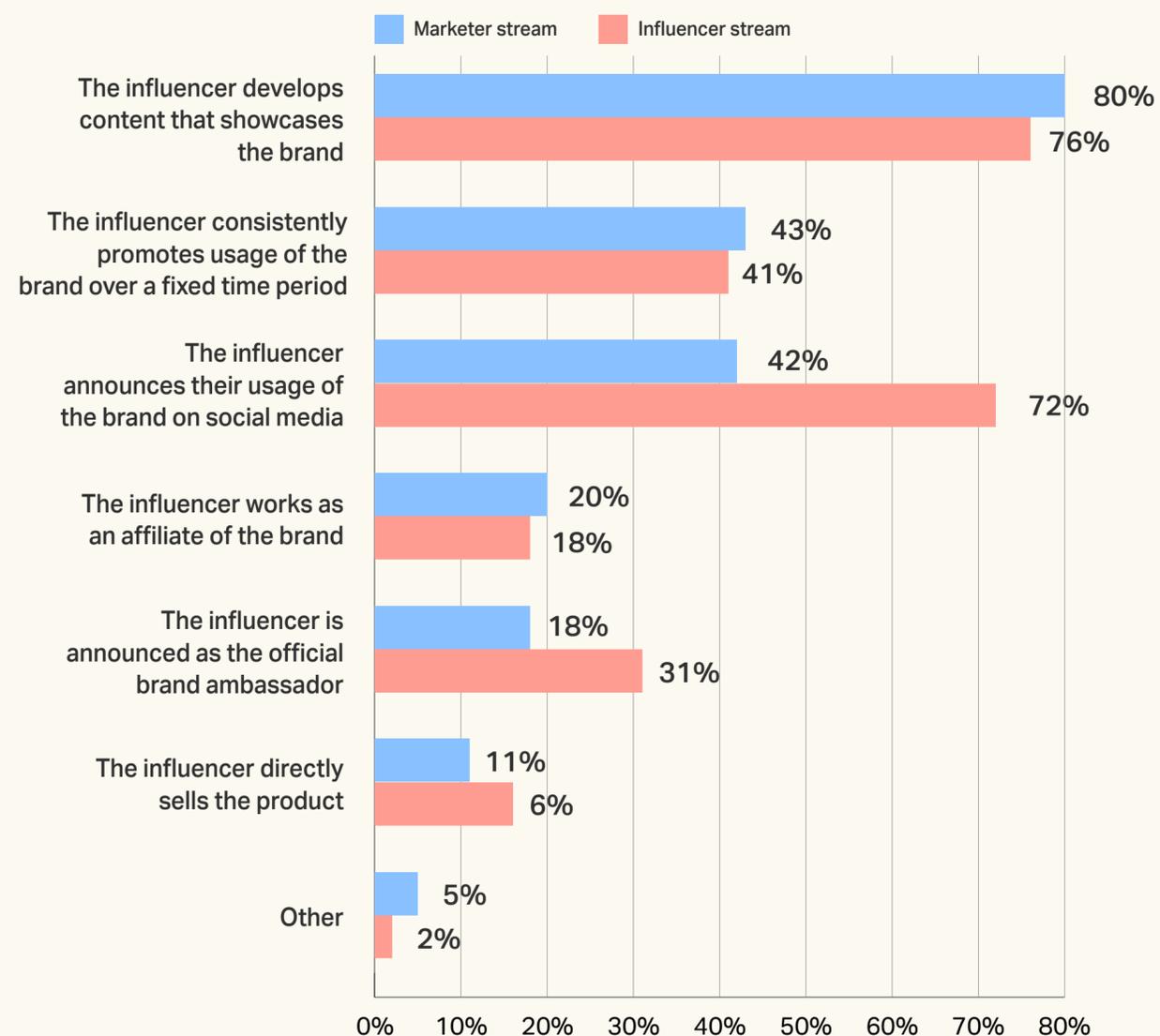
Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers
 Q: Which team is responsible for influencer marketing in your / your client's organisation?

The importance of content that showcases the brand

Once an organisation sets up an influencer marketing programme, the brand must consider the best tactical approach to working with them. Developing content which showcases the brand is the most preferable type of partnership - 80% of marketers find this approach successful.

Marketers & influencers' best ways of working

Developing content to showcase the brand works best for both sides



Alternative tactics include promoting the use of the brand over a period of time – typically demonstrating usage and showing their followers how they integrate it into their routine – which has been great for FMCG products. Some 42% of marketers favour a strategy where they announce their use of a brand’s product or service. Interestingly this announcement-based strategy is seen as much more successful amongst influencers, with 72% of them claiming it works – a full 30 percentage points more than marketers. Similarly, 31% of influencers felt using them as a brand ambassador was effective, while only 18% of marketers agreed.

These differences between the perceptions of the two cohorts suggest opportunities for developing more effective marketing initiatives to maximise the value of influencers.

Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers & Influencers
 Q: What influencer marketing tactics do you see as most successful / well-received?
 Q: In your experience, what type of partnership has worked best with brands?

Innovating influencer payment mechanics

Brands also need to get compensation right. In the early days, an exchange of free products was enough to entice influencers. Although this can still be part of the package, increasingly, influencers require payment. A flat fee ranks highest – 84% of influencers and 59% of marketers find this acceptable.

A hybrid mode of combining a flat fee with payment based on conversion is increasingly popular. Interestingly, influencers prefer this model, revealing that they have confidence in their content to deliver results. Influencers also welcome a stable, monthly fee – but considerably fewer marketers appear convinced about that option.

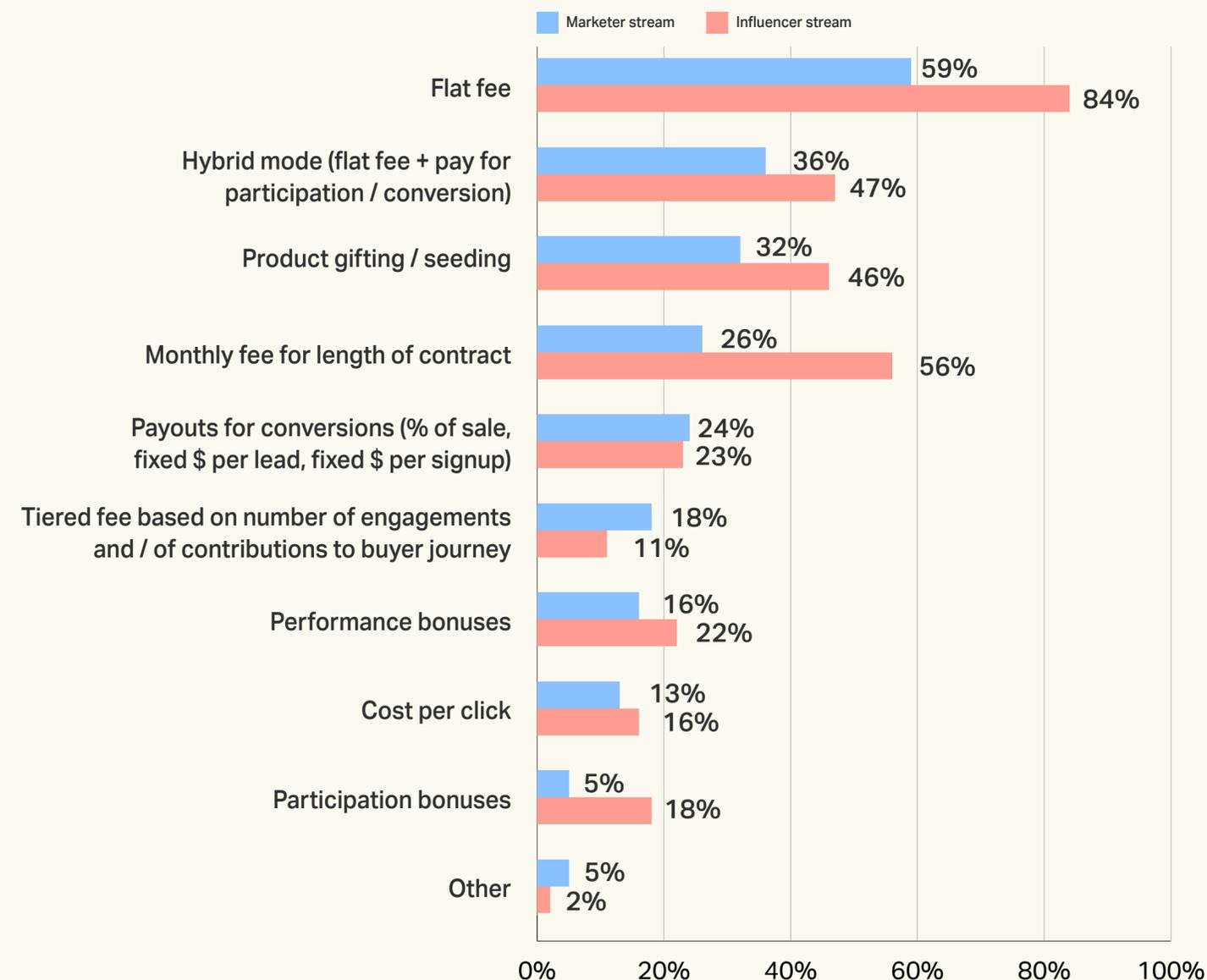
Getting remuneration right ensures marketers attract the best talent and provides the conditions for a high-performing relationship.

“I really like affiliate partnerships as they scale with the influencer. So if the video goes viral, they get paid that proportionate amount and if it doesn't, no worries, they get paid that proportionate amount.”

Adi Adara, Finance Influencer

Most popular forms of compensation

Flat fees appeal to marketers and influencers



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers & Influencers
 Q: Which of the following ways of compensation would you or your clients find acceptable when contracting with influencers / brands?

Influencer marketing can work in the long and short term

Influencer marketing is being used both on an ad hoc basis and for partnerships from three months to several years. Let's dive deeper into some perspectives and examples across the marketing funnel.

Campaigns focused on performance-based metrics often come from the FMCG, retail, entertainment and food delivery categories. This is likely because these are more frequently lower ticket items with a higher propensity to be activated by influencer purchase prompts.

"I've seen great results in e-commerce. If you use an artist, then one part of the campaign might be a live stream performance with no expectations to drive sales. But you might then use that artist in a different area of the 'e-commerce' platform using them to actually do live stream selling."

Becky Yeung, Regional Head of Brand Partnerships, Warner Music Asia





Jägermeister

Background and objective:

Jägermeister, a liquor brand, launched a campaign in the UK to increase off-trade sales over the pandemic, when bars were closed. Jägermeister is a shot-based drink primarily associated with big nights out. They wanted to increase volume and value of the alcohol by increasing at-home drinking.

In 2019, approximately 70% of sales came from late night, high-energy occasions in on-trade venues. Whilst it was vital to keep

Jägermeister's place as a late-night fixture, Jägermeister needed to grow in the off-trade. Even before COVID-19 hit, there had been a long-term decline in the number of UK clubs and pubs / bars – more than one thousand had closed between 2017 and 2019. So this strategy was crucial to the long-term success of the brand. Increasing sales in this area is not easy when you have such a strong image as a late-night icon. Their strategy was designed to get more people buying Jägermeister to drink at home.

Source: Jägermeister
Getting in Early Doors

Activity:

For the 18-24 year old market, the most popular off-trade opportunity is pre-drinking: the drinks you have before you go out to bars and clubs. Pre-drinking is exciting – it's with your friends, your tunes, your food and your drinks. It's also full of anticipation and is often more fun than the night out that follows.

Pre-drinking contains several core elements. Games are crucial and social media is integral: Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube are ever-present sources of interaction and entertainment. Jägermeister invited their audience to 'Pre with us'. They created the Jägermeister lounge where influencers could come to 'Pre with us' before a night out and treat the space like home: kick back, play games and pour ice-cold shots. Jägermeister recruited big names – influencers with 100,000 followers or more (and their friends) – to drop in for a 'chilled one'. To keep things interesting, they recruited a mix of talents, from streetwear vloggers and gamers to comedians and unboxers. During lockdown, when nights out were mandated as nights in, they extended the idea to a perfectly timed partnership with Deliveroo. The activity also included an on-pack shot-glass giveaway.

Results:

- Being well-suited to lockdown life – as the campaign ran between April and July 2020 – it delivered a better than-expected 7% redemption rate and repeated later in the year
- The activity reversed the decline, and increased off-trade sale
- 29% of 18-24s recalled seeing at least one campaign execution
- Two thirds of 18-24s said the creative 'made me feel more positive about Jägermeister'
- 57% of consumers said they were more likely to consider buying Jägermeister
- 46% of 18-24s agreed 'they made me think of Jägermeister as being really different from other social drinking options'

Long-term partnerships with influencers deliver results

Collaborating with influencers for the long term involves letting go of creative control. However, as we shall see in the case studies and marketer perspectives that follow, this comes with brand benefits and can even enhance brand reputation.

“Brands can’t expect an influencer to be scripted or say exactly what they want them to say. I think that there needs to be an understanding that you need to let go a bit and have a bit less control. But the results deliver a lot more than what you could have achieved on your own.”

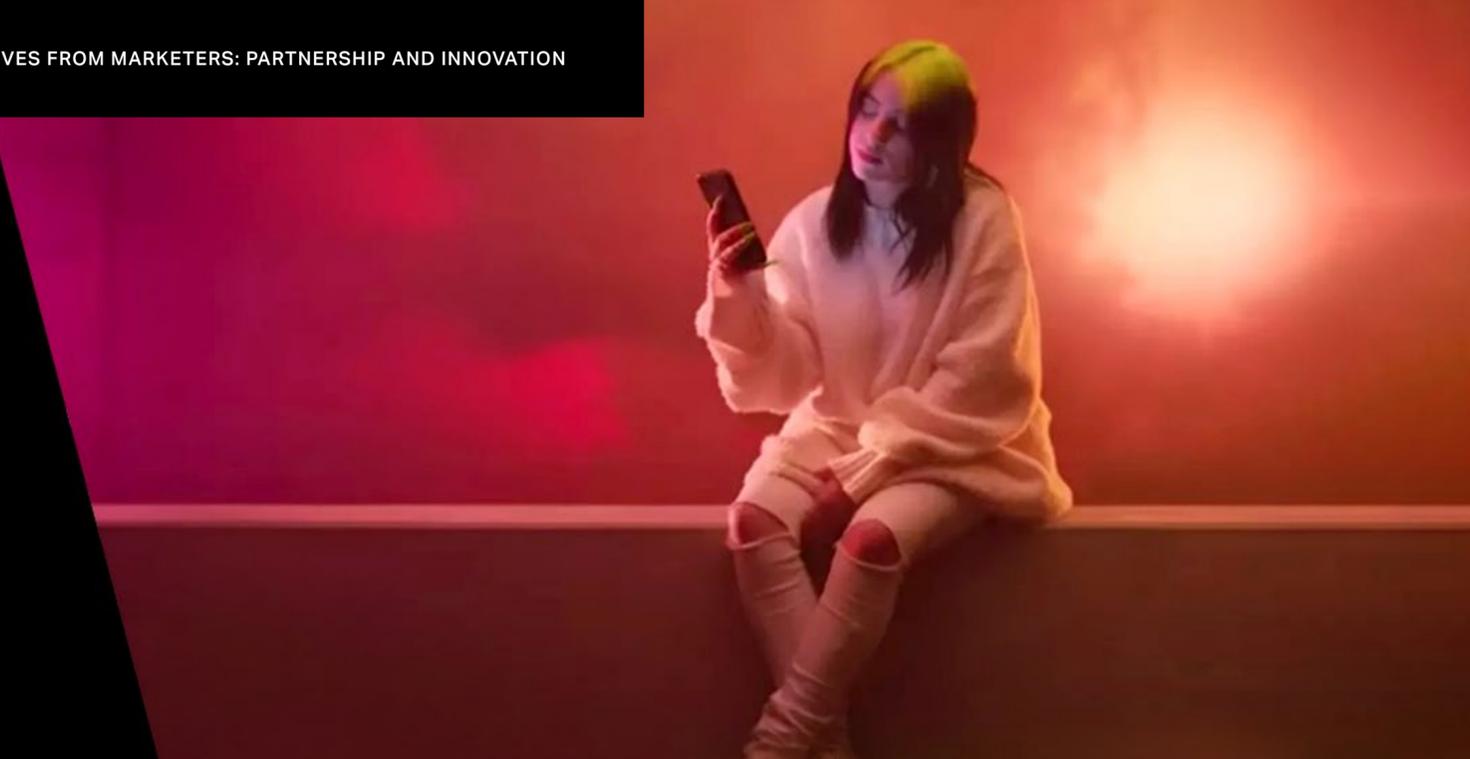
Becky Yeung, Regional Head of Brand Partnerships, Warner Music Asia

“It’s working with people who are credible, who are authentic, who make the right type of content that we’re excited by and have the right following. I think when you have checked out all of those things, you’ve got a really healthy partner who is going to speak naturally about what we’re like as a brand and about the products and the services that we offer. It’s just so much more powerful to reach out to their audience who they have a really strong and trusted relationship with.”

Michael Flatt, Director of Global Integrated Marketing, Xbox

Campaigns focused on long-term awareness, salience, and brand engagement can come from any category. However, categories with less frequent buying cycles and higher ticket prices – for example, automotive, luxury and furnishings – are more likely to rely on longer-term, brand-building approaches.





Deutsche Telekom

Background and objective:

Deutsche Telekom, a German telecommunications company, needed to better engage Generation Z, the most price-sensitive and least loyal age segment. While Gen Z can be loyal to a premium-priced brand, Deutsche Telekom brand values had not resonated with them enough to earn such loyalty. To ensure commercial competitiveness within this group of customers, it was therefore imperative to establish a meaningful connection with this generation, increasing brand favourability

and consideration. Gen Zers were often unfairly accused of being addicted to their phones and disconnected from the real world, so Deutsche Telekom wanted to showcase how important technology was to their achievements.

Activity:

The campaign aimed to tackle social bias, shape a positive discourse around Gen Z's online behaviour, and ultimately help Deutsche Telekom build a strong connection with the generation of the future. Deutsche

Telekom recruited young opinion leaders and influencers who were an embodiment of their tech-positive strategic message. These influencers told authentic stories designed to inspire the younger generation and show that they can make a difference with the power of mobile technology.

The campaign was centred around a film by Billie Eilish and Deutsche Telekom titled 'What We Do Next'. The film showcased the outstanding accomplishments of young people. Accompanied by the voice of Billie Eilish, six young enthusiasts were scouted from different parts of the world to speak about their area of expertise. From advocating gender equality and fighting for human rights to building businesses and campaigning for change, these talented young people all shared the same common goal – to use technology to work towards an egalitarian future.

The campaign was launched across nine European markets on UN International Youth Day (12th August) designated by the United Nations to call attention to youth issues worldwide. Billie kicked off the campaign by sharing the film with her 68 million followers on Instagram and YouTube. Simultaneously,

various Generation Z talents further amplified this by announcing the campaign via their social media accounts. The film was subsequently shared organically by millions of viewers worldwide.

Results:

- 78% target group penetration (vs. 50% benchmark)
- The number of Gen Zers following the brand's Electronic Beats Instagram account and YouTube channel grew by 14% and 9% respectively
- The What We Do Next film was viewed more than 142 million times, with an impressive completion rate of 72%
- A study from Kantar showed that awareness within the target group saw an additional 17.7% increase (vs. 5.3% industry benchmark)
- Brand favourability grew by 6.2% (vs 1.7% benchmark)
- Brand consideration recorded an additional 10.9% uplift – 10 times more than the telecoms industry benchmark

Source: Deutsche Telekom
What we do next? – celebrating Gen Z's online activism

One of the benefits of working with influencers over longer periods is that brands can test and learn, improving performance.

“We are a very data-driven company. We constantly test and learn. If we see something that works, and there’s real impact in terms of reach and engagement, then it’s something that we’re absolutely going to go back to.”

Michael Flatt, Director of Global Integrated Marketing, Xbox

Furthermore, a long-term relationship means an influencer gets to know a brand. That enables the influencer to align their message better and build trust with their followers. There are also opportunities in lower interest categories (e.g. finance) to connect to new audiences via a personality that authentically resonates. Adi Adara does this for various finance brands, including PayPal and Visa. His audience is school

age, and he has a unique approach that the brands themselves would struggle to replicate.

“I teach personal finance content on TikTok, with the main goal of being entertaining and tricking viewers into learning. I find that personal finance as a general topic isn’t exactly what people come to TikTok for. But they do come for entertaining skits and to laugh. And so my goal is to make them laugh and enjoy the video but walk away with ‘Oh wow, I learned something’ and then have that fuel their love for personal finance and continue to work towards financial freedom.”

Adi Adara, Finance Influencer

Influencers are keen to work with brands collaboratively and see the benefits of the long-term partnership for themselves and their followers. However, they recognise that there is a balance regarding their creative freedom – 50% of influencers highlight this as the second most significant challenge when working with brands.

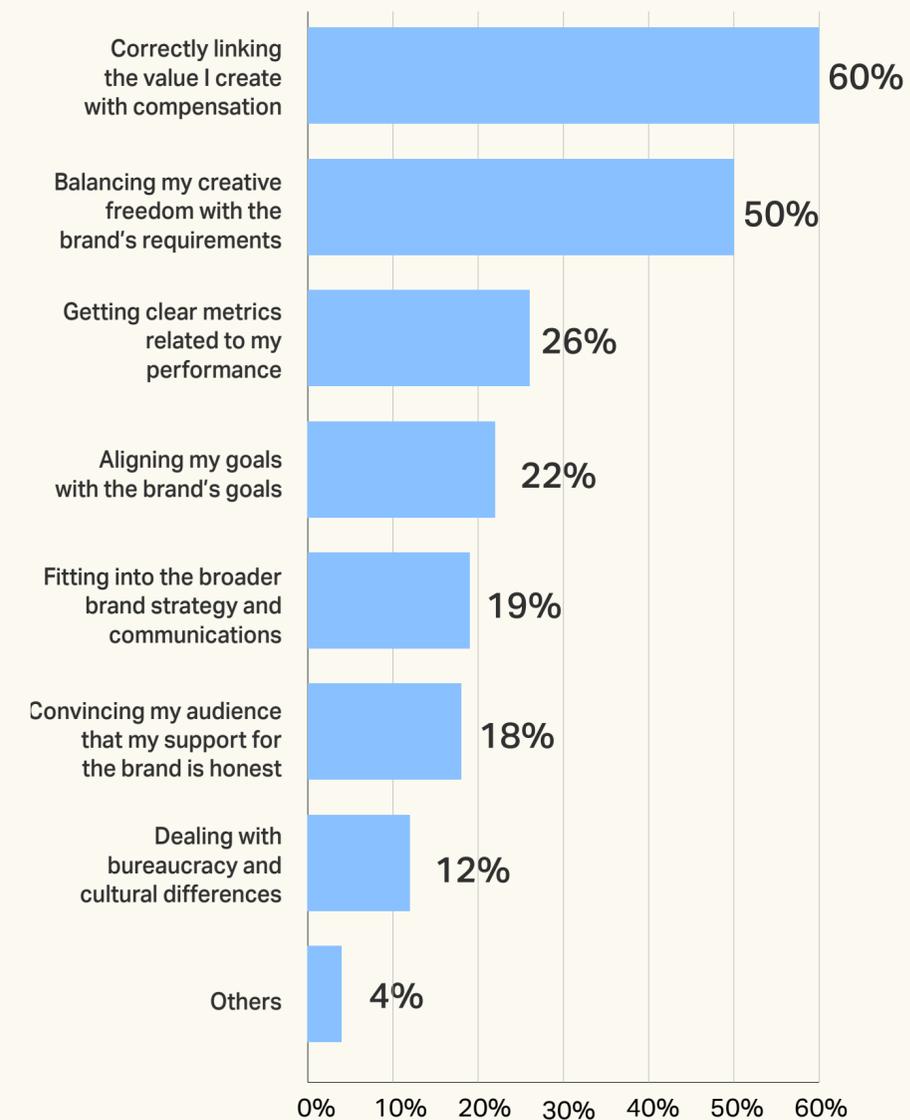
“At the start of my TikTok career I definitely accepted brand deals from a bunch of different brands. I needed to learn to focus on a few key partnerships. Now I’m in the credit space, the stock space and the crypto space – I have one key partner for each and I focus on those relationships.”

Adi Adara, Finance Influencer

Notably, the top challenge for influencers when working with brands is correctly linking the value they create with compensation. This suggests they may welcome more discipline around measurement if it was linked to payment. Incentivising them based on important metrics could help align both parties and deliver improved results from the relationship.

Influencers’ challenges when working with brands

Linking value with compensation plus creative freedom are obstacles for influencers



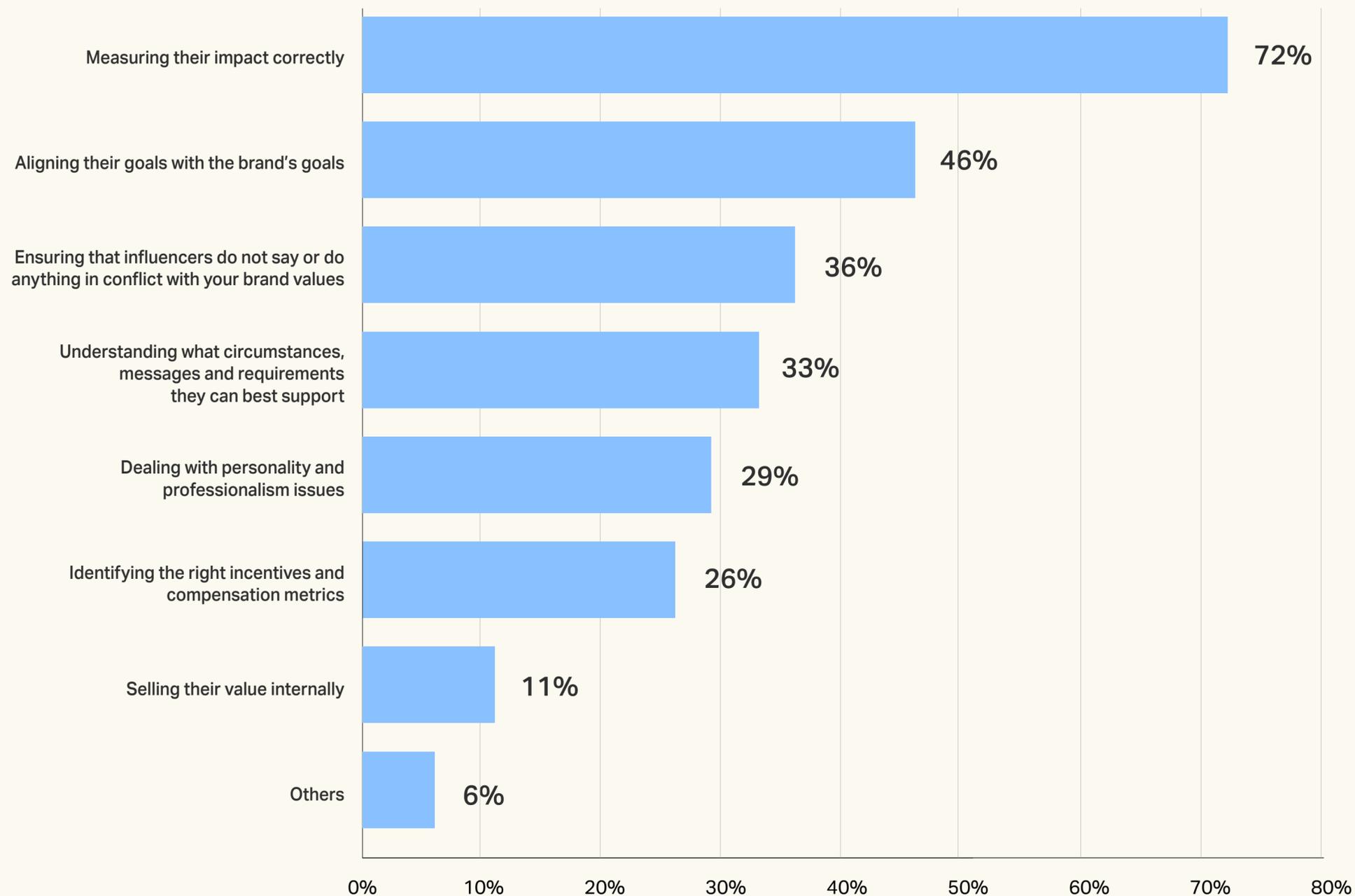
Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Influencers
Q: What are the most significant challenges you have come across when working with brands?

The challenge and opportunity of measurement

Seventy-two percent of marketers said the biggest challenge when working with influencers is measuring their impact correctly.

Brands' challenges when working with influencers

72% of marketers struggle to measure influencer impact correctly



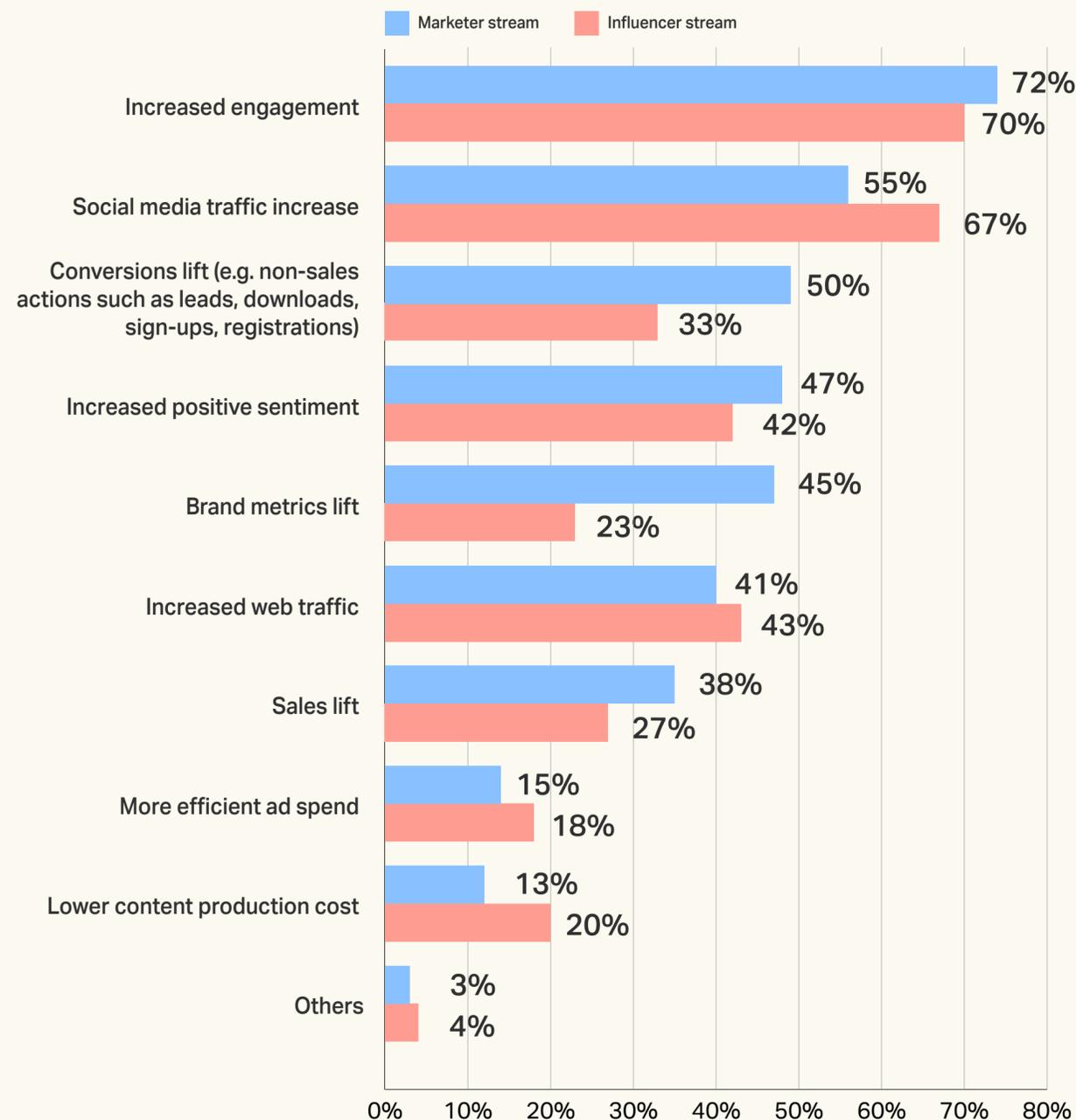
Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers

Q: Regardless of your own individual experience, what do you see as the most significant challenges in working with influencers?

Like any newer marketing tactic, influencer marketing needs to prove its value in the mix, and nowadays marketers rely on data to inform their decision-making. So what type of data is typically used to measure performance? Seventy-two percent of marketers rely on engagement metrics, and 55% on social media traffic increases. There is a high degree of similarity between marketer and influencer responses on engagement, but less so on other listed options, particularly conversions and brand lift. Brand lift ranks fifth with marketers at 45% but recognised less by influencers at only 23%.

How marketers and influencers measure impact

Marketers and influencers align on increased engagement but disconnect on brand lift



For influencers, this may require more education around measurement. Most influencer performance metrics are self-generated by social media platforms. Tracking brand uplift would require more sophisticated tools or an independent study. Not only will influencers be less familiar with this type of reporting, but it also involves them looking at things from a marketer's perspective rather than thinking about their own performance. Marketers have an opportunity to resolve the disconnect by sharing these metrics with influencers so they can understand the value of their contribution more broadly.

Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers & Influencers
 Q: How do you/your clients/brands measure the value of influencer marketing/your contribution?

Perhaps the most critical requirement for success as an influencer is being able to connect with their audiences. No surprise then that engagement is the best-performing metric for influencer marketing. Thirty-two percent of marketers agree that increased engagement is the measure most effectively delivered by influencer marketing.

“We’re no longer just hoping that something’s going to work. It’s so targeted and it’s actually so easy to extract data from the people that you’re working with. You can actually read the data that you get back and it’s so specific in terms of the audience that they’re reaching in terms of the number of views, the likes, the duration, so you can actually learn and you can tweak.”

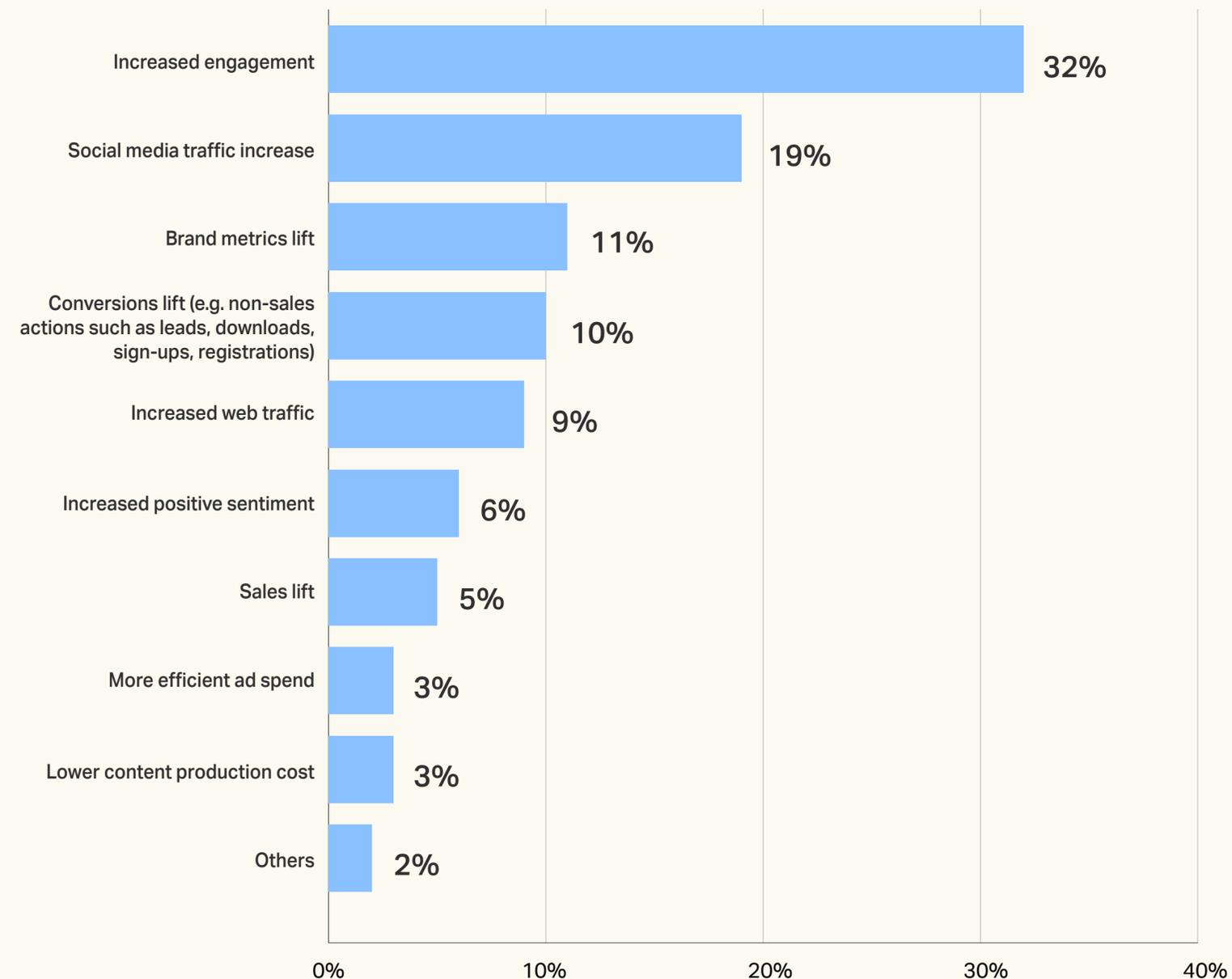
Becky Yeung, Regional Head of Brand Partnerships, Warner Music Asia

“We use a similar approach to what we would do with other media platforms. I consider influencer marketing the same as any other media touchpoint. We use the classics like reach, impressions, CTR, engagement rate. We have a library of results which tell us the sorts of influencer marketing activities that have performed better than others.”

Guillermo Font, Marketing Head, FMCG & Healthcare, Mars

Where influencer marketing scores highest

32% of marketers cite increased engagement as the top metric where influencer has delivered



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers
 Q: Which of these measures have been most effectively delivered by influencer marketing?

Aligning measurement with KPIs

Measurement practices in influencer marketing are incredibly varied. In recognition of this, The Association of National Advertisers (ANA), the advertising industry's oldest and largest trade associations body that represents and promotes influencer marketing in the US, has just issued the first guidelines for influencer marketing measurement.

These guidelines are designed to create more common ground and establish best practices. The 12-page document provides standard definitions for awareness, engagement, and conversion measurement. Marketers are likely to welcome this, given the wide disparity of methodologies and metrics across social media platforms.

Of course, practicalities affect measurement decisions. Brands can only measure what platforms and technology allow. However, marketers should aim to measure based on campaign objectives.

"The best way to assess the value of influencer marketing is to integrate it with other marketing and measure it in an integrated way. If you are using it for awareness, you should measure accordingly. If you are using it to drive purchase, you need to use those metrics."

Yusuf Chuku, EVP, Client Strategy and Insights, NBCUniversal Media

Technology has facilitated improvements in measurement practices, and many platforms and agencies are now offering the ability to measure beyond social media metrics such as engagement. These types of solutions make it possible to be more sophisticated, helping to align a measurement programme with KPIs, supporting full path attribution, and tracking and monitoring performance via automated processes and platforms.



Measurement evolutions will drive effectiveness and credibility

Marketers identified measurement as their biggest challenge with influencer marketing. Meanwhile, influencers cited that correctly linking the value they can create with the compensation/payment they receive was their biggest challenge. The appetite exists for influencers to be rewarded based on their performance, and the measurement tools required have been developed.

The future then lies in linking a measurement with a reward to achieve a virtuous circle that drives effectiveness. It is key to the sector's future that a wider variety of metrics beyond views and engagement are shared between marketer and influencers so that influencers can build their understanding of measurement. These should include metrics that relate to KPIs and more qualitative metrics evaluating the relationship users have with influencer content, how influencers drive participation in the buyer journey and the ability of influencer campaigns to move brand and conversion metrics. This will add credibility to influencer marketing and help to get buy-in from senior brand management.



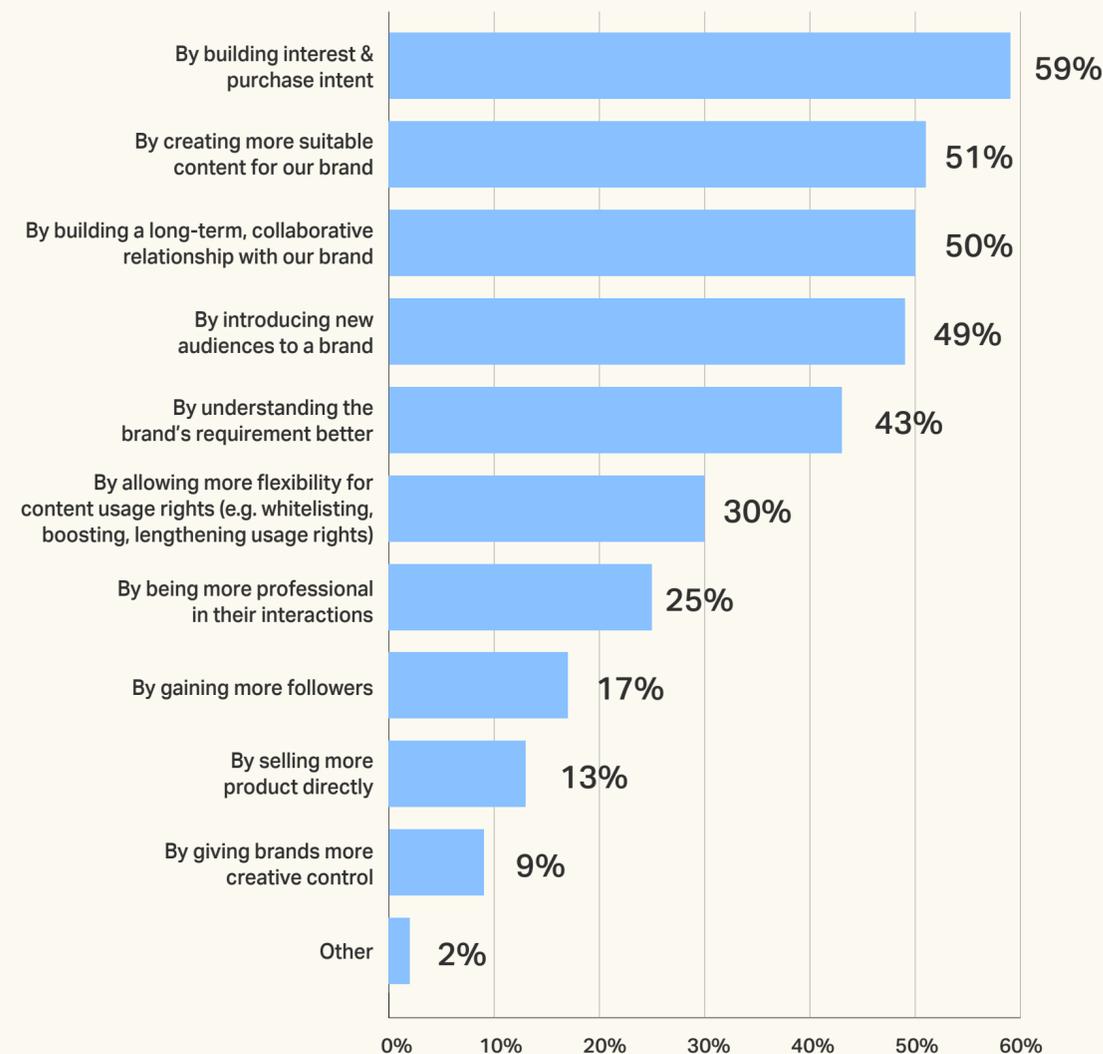
Driving purchase intent is key to the future of influencer marketing

Building purchase intent is the key to increasing the value of influencers, according to 59% of marketers. Incentivising influencers based on a purchase or purchase proxies would be one way to achieve this.

At the same time, it's important to remember the contribution that influencers can deliver at the top of the funnel. They are more focused on this aspect of their value, with 79% believing they can become more valuable by building long-term collaborative relationships with brands.

Where marketers think influencers could become more valuable

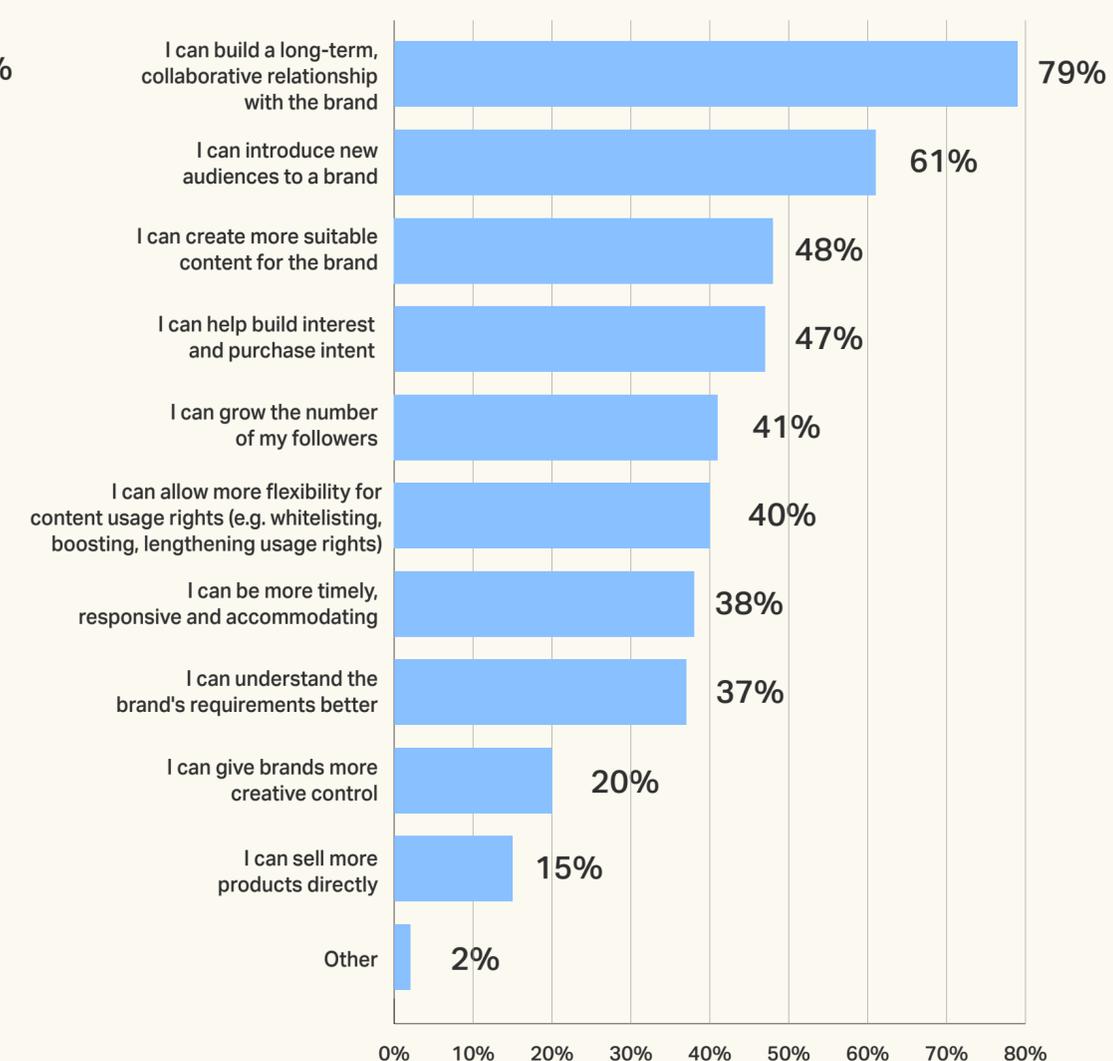
59% believe that building purchase intent is the key to increasing the value of influencers



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Marketers
Q: How can influencers become more valuable to brands?

Where influencers think they could be more valuable to brands

79% of influencers are looking to build a long-term, collaborative relationship with the brand



Source: WARC x impact.com survey – Influencers
Q: Which of the following options do you think would help you become more valuable to brands?

Key takeaways

1.

Influencer marketing needs to be widely understood across functional teams – such as brand and digital – so that it can be better integrated into the broader marketing plan.

2.

Working with influencer marketing experts or leveraging influencer marketing solutions rather than manually browsing social media platforms can provide broader reach and better insight.

3.

Working with influencers over more extended periods delivers the best results. Even with performance-based conversion objectives, the ability to test and learn over time improves performance over the long term.

4.

Influencer measurement should align to objectives, such as awareness amongst key audiences, brand impact, purchase intent, and sales, rather than relying only on socially generated metrics such as engagement.

5.

Influencer remuneration can be designed around these metrics to help incentivise influencers to better align with campaign objectives.

Conclusions

<p>1</p> <p>Invest in understanding influencer marketing</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Explore partnerships with influencers and external platforms and agencies</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Approach influencer marketing as a long-term opportunity</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Consider how to use influencer marketing across the full funnel</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Communicate your KPIs to influencers</p>
<p>Increasing marketing spend, social media trends, cultural shifts, and industry innovation are all creating new opportunities that other channels may not be able to provide.</p>	<p>Content creators offer authentic relationships allowing deeper connections with customers, while outside agencies provide coordination and measurement, and safeguard brand fit.</p>	<p>Even if you want to use performance-based tactics like affiliate links and voucher codes, test and learn so you can optimise and improve performance over time. Put in place the right measurement programmes to support this.</p>	<p>The trust and positive emotional response that influencers deliver has been linked to purchase intent. Complement performance-based tactics with brand engagement higher up the funnel.</p>	<p>Align their remuneration to your business outcomes. The dissonance between marketer focus on outcomes and influencer focus on authentic content can be resolved by better bringing the two parties together on measurement practices.</p>

Who we are

At WARC, our purpose is to save the world from ineffective marketing by putting evidence at the heart of every marketing decision.

We believe that effective marketing is based on facts and not opinions.

Since 1985, we've brought confidence to marketing decisions through the most trusted research, case studies, best practice, data and inspiration.



Today, we help 75,000+ marketers across 100+ countries. Our clients include the world's leading brands, advertising and media agencies, media owners, research companies and universities – including the top-five largest agency groups and top-five largest advertisers in the world.

Learn more about WARC Advisory [here](#).

For more information on bespoke advisory projects contact imaad.ahmed@warc.com or edward.pank@warc.com

About impact.com

impact.com is the leading global partnership management platform and has been transforming the way enterprises manage and optimize all types of partnerships – including affiliates, influencers, commerce content publishers, B2B, and more – since its founding in 2008. Through its integrated end-to-end solution, impact.com accelerates business growth by automating the full partnership life cycle, including discovery, recruitment, contracting, engagement, fraud protection, optimization, and payment processing.

To learn more about how impact.com's technology platform and partnerships marketplace is driving revenue growth for global enterprise brands such as Walmart, Uber, Shopify, Lenovo, L'Oréal, Fanatics, Levi's, and 1-800-Flowers, visit www.impact.com.

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