




The Top Influencer Marketing Trends of the 20s

(So Far)

The Creator Economy Hasn't Been the Same Since 2020.

**That's when CreatorIQ kicked off our annual
Influencer Marketing Trends report.**



Every year since, we've kept you posted on the state of the industry, covering the top marketing priorities and roadblocks, which marketing strategies moved the needle, the latest social media platform trends, and more.

In this report, we track how influencer marketing has evolved during the past three years, what hasn't changed, and what your brand needs to know right now.

Additionally, this report covers:

- Which brands dominated online conversation over the last several years
- Which brands experienced the greatest YoY growth
- How industries from beauty to technology fared from 2020-2023
- Which trends will predict growth over the next several years

Understanding where the creator economy has been provides insights on where it's going next. Read this report to find out how growing enterprises like yours can remain adaptable as the market continues to evolve.

From Influencers to Publishing Powerhouses



The single greatest shift in the creator marketing space from 2020-2023 was the sophistication of the industry, which was in turn fueled by the professionalization of creators. Brands treated creators as serious partners, offering select creators compensation and creative control. The result? Creators evolved from a nice-to-have channel to publishing partners capable of powering business outcomes.

Un-sponsored Content Fuels Sophistication of Creator Marketing Funnel

The vast majority of creator content remains un-sponsored. However, over the past three years marketers have become more targeted in their methods for using un-sponsored content to determine which creators should become sponsored partners.

Back in 2020, marketers would gift products to creators, hoping for the chance to be featured on their grid. Now, brands with mature creator marketing programs treat product seeding as a means of evaluation. By paying attention to which creators move the needle, organizations can be more precise about whom they'd like to invest in.

But product seeding is just one of many ways to reach creators. UGC, which has become increasingly popular in the last couple of years, allows brands to boost engagement and directly test how creator content will perform for their target audience.

As influencer marketing measurement became more standardized, brands cross-referenced creator follower counts and engagement rates with previous performance on un-sponsored channels. The sophistication of the creator marketing funnel led to better fit, improved posting frequency, increased retention, and more campaign wins.

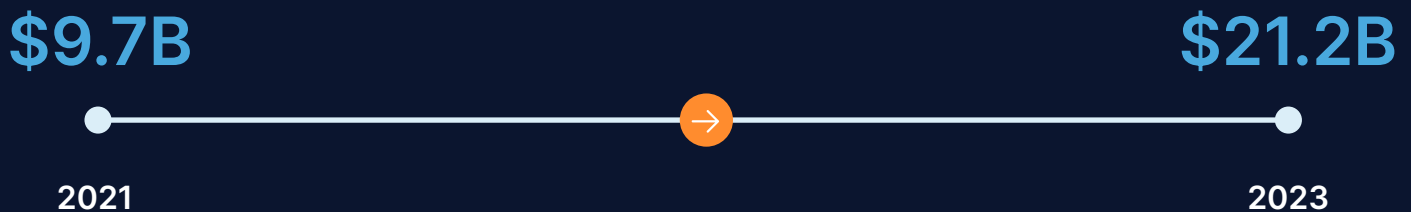
The Pandemic Boosted Creators' Editing Competencies

In addition to health scares and stay-at-home orders, the COVID-19 pandemic forced brands to rapidly pivot how they do business. While both static and video content have their merits, algorithmic preferences for video pressured creators to transform into seasoned video editors. The intimacy that creators developed with consumers as they shared stories about life during the pandemic surpassed the intimacy that marketers on owned channels could claim with consumers. Now creators were acknowledged as the indisputable experts at grabbing attention.



The Expansion of the Influencer Marketing Industry

Estimated Size of the Influencer Marketing Industry



Since 2021, the Majority of Brands Have Reported Increased YoY Investment in Creator Marketing



Unique Posts in CreatorIQ Brand Campaigns



Creator Marketing: A Winning Strategy

Not only has creator marketing expanded from 2020-2023, but it's also proved a more cost-effective strategy. Brands report that traditional advertising got more expensive between 2022-2023, while the cost of running a creator program stayed the same. This might be one reason why across various industries, the amount of creators incorporating brands into their content has grown.

It's not merely about partnering with creators: some brands do it better than others. In fact, influencer marketing leaders are more likely to incorporate creator content into a majority of their digital advertising. As a result, influencer marketing leaders boast:

Influencer Marketing Leaders Boast:



29%

greater YoY improvement
in conversion compared to
digital advertising leaders



27%

greater YoY engagement
compared to digital
advertising leaders



9.1x

the number of YoY
impressions growth
as other brands

2020

Covid Content, TikTok Dances, & Instagram Stories

The threat of illness, stay-at-home orders, and economic instability meant that the purchasing and consumption habits of consumers evolved in 2020.

The desire to get through tough times fostered the popularity of TikTok. At the time, it was primarily the dancing platform—the perfect avenue to learn the choreography to Megan Thee Stallion's *Savage*. However, as TikTok started capturing consumers' attention, brands began to see the platform's full potential.

Instagram Stories also experienced a boost in 2020, with 81% of brand respondents in our survey that year reporting that Instagram Stories had "very significantly" impacted creator content about their brand. This is in part because creators were using Instagram Stories more frequently: in the same survey, 63% of creators reported using Instagram Stories "much more frequently" than they had in 2019.

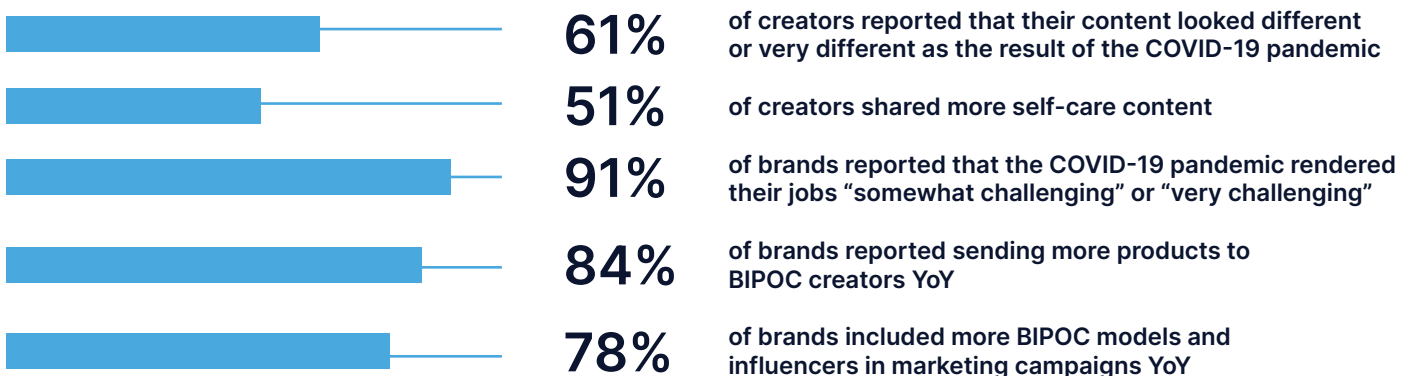
Brands navigated this change primarily by sharing more Instagram Stories content on their owned channels. They also reported encouraging creators to share unsponsored Instagram Stories content about their brand.

The rising significance of Instagram stories underscores the way that both brands and creators influenced each other, and the way that by 2020, creators were starting to be perceived by brands as trusted partners.










In the absence of in-person events and shopping, both brands and creators had to improvise. Per our 2020 survey, 72% of creator respondents shared more at-home content, while 71% of brand respondents did the same.

Beyond the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd in the summer of 2020 sparked protests and inspired brands to re-examine diversity and inclusion in corporate spaces. This racial reckoning led brands to pledge action around issues of diversity & inclusion.

2020 in Numbers



The Most Notable Brands of 2020

Industry	No. 1 Brand (by Earned Media Value)	Most Notable Brand (YoY EMV Growth)
Quick-Service Restaurants	 Starbucks \$226.9M	 Chipotle ↑ 101%
Luxury Fashion	GUCCI Gucci Fashion \$368.3M	BOTTEGA VENETA Bottega Veneta ↑ 126%
Apparel	FASHION NOVA Fashion Nova \$3.0B	SAVAGE X FENTY BY RIHANNA Savage x Fenty ↑ 385%
Alcohol & Spirits	 Luc Belaire \$35.6M	 McQueen And The Violet Fog ↑ 207%
Non-Alcoholic Beverages	 Bang Energy \$426.3M	 Liquid I.V. ↑ 1.7k%
Streaming & Entertainment	 Spotify \$1.3B	peacock Peacock ↑ 1.5k%
Haircare	OLAPLEX Olaplex \$120.0M	BONDI BOOST BondiBoost ↑ 976%
Cosmetics	ANASTASIA BEVERLY HILLS Anastasia Beverly Hills \$1.1B	HAUS LABS BY LADY GAGA Haus Labs ↑ 221%
Travel	 Walt Disney Parks and Resorts \$254.2M	BÉIS BÉIS ↑ 138%
Grocery Items	JELL-O Jell-O \$25.4M	THE ORIGINAL OATLY! Oatly ↑ 141%
Skincare	 TATCHA Tatcha \$148.2M	TULA SKINCARE TULA ↑ 239%

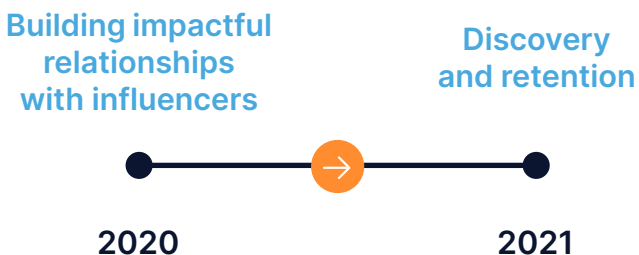
2021

Sponsored Content Becomes a Standard Practice, Improving Executive Buy-In

In 2021, influencer marketing got serious. That was the year when paying creators for content became a standard practice. Nearly all brand respondents compensated at least a portion of their creator partners, reporting that an average of 25% to 75% of their influencer marketing budget went towards compensating creators. Additionally, 50% of brands reported that the proportion of content creators they paid increased from the previous year.

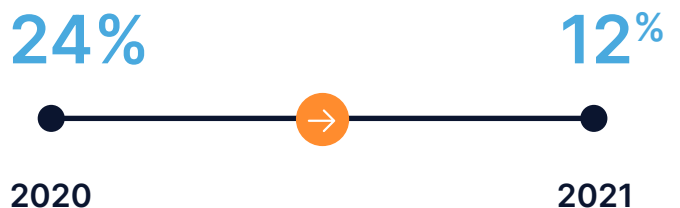
Moreover, 52% of brands reported an increase in influencer marketing team sizes, while 66% enjoyed a budget expansion. These changes, along with increased return on creator marketing spend, meant that marketers experienced fewer issues securing executive buy-in for their programs. Instead of justifying influencer marketing, attention shifted toward measuring it.

Discovery, Retention Overtake Relationship Building as #1 IM Program Priority



Executive Buy-In Has Improved YoY

Marketers who considered lack of executive buy-in a roadblock to IM program success:














 72%

of creators said video content accounted for a "significantly greater" or "slightly greater" proportion of their Instagram content than last year

 10%

of brands spent \$1M or more on influencer marketing annually

The Most Notable Brands of 2021

Industry	No. 1 Brand (by Earned Media Value)	Most Notable Brand (YoY EMV Growth)
Quick-Service Restaurants	 Starbucks \$232.0M	 Arby's ↑ 134%
Luxury Fashion	GUCCI Gucci Fashion \$473.8M	DOLCE & GABBANA Dolce & Gabbana Fashion ↑ 151%
Apparel	FASHION NOVA Fashion Nova \$2.1B	LOUNGE Lounge ↑ 53%
Alcohol & Spirits	 Luc Belaire \$68.6M	 818 Tequila ↑ 4.4M%
Non-Alcoholic Beverages	 Bang Energy \$364.6M	 CELSIUS LIVE FIT Celsius ↑ 134%
Streaming & Entertainment	 Spotify \$1.4B	 Paramount+ ↑ 489%
Haircare	OLAPLEX. Olaplex \$126.5M	 K18 BIOMIMETIC HAIRSCIENCE K18 Hair ↑ 4.5k%
Cosmetics	COLOURPOP ColourPop \$634.0M	 Rare Beauty Rare Beauty ↑ 117%
Travel	 Walt Disney Parks and Resorts Disney Parks and Resorts \$325.0M	UNITED  United Airlines ↑ 67%
Grocery Items	JELL-O Jell-O \$23.6M	Daring. Daring Foods ↑ 1.8k%
Skincare	 TULA SKINCARE TULA \$105.9M	Bath & Body Works® Bath & Body Works ↑ 110%

2022

TikTok Becomes the World's Most Downloaded App, and Video Content Reigns

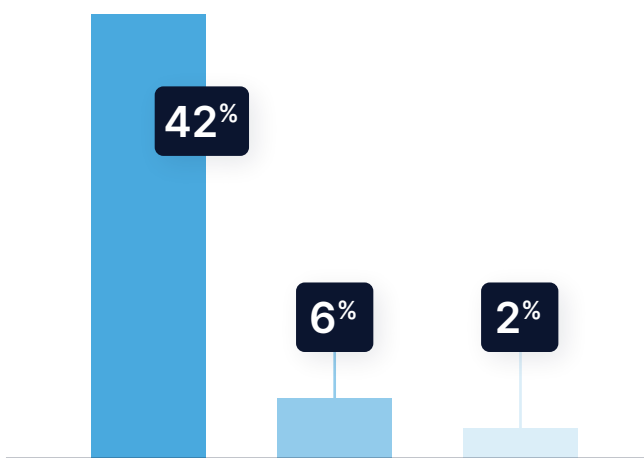
In 2022, TikTok transformed from a hip platform for Gen Z to the most downloaded app in the world. Additionally, the platform crawled from its No. 3 position to the most ROI-friendly platform according to 26% of our brand respondents.

CreatorIQ also surveyed agencies for the first time, discovering that client retention was their biggest program priority, while streamlining workflows was their greatest challenge.

Also of note was the fact that 50% of creators received more compensation than the previous year. Relatedly, compensation was the most important contributor to creators' satisfaction with brand partnerships. However, the choice to partner with a brand still boiled down to product quality.

Overall, 79% of organizations engaged in paid advertising, making it the most frequent influencer marketing activity.

Measuring and Reporting on IM Program Overtakes Discovery and Retention As No. 1 Priority



- Measuring and reporting on the performance of your influencer marketing program
- Discovering new creators
- Retaining creators

Video Content Surged YoY



74%

of creators posted more video content on Instagram than the previous year.

The Most Notable Brands of 2022

Industry	No. 1 Brand (by Earned Media Value)	Most Notable Brand (YoY EMV Growth)
Quick-Service Restaurants	 Starbucks \$322.8M	 KFC ↑ 63%
Luxury Fashion	 Gucci Fashion \$438.4M	 Balenciaga ↑ 89%
Apparel	 Fashion Nova \$1.6B	 YoungLA ↑ 301%
Alcohol & Spirits	 Luc Belaire \$55.7M	 Patrón Tequila ↑ 129%
Non-Alcoholic Beverages	 Red Bull \$251.8M	 PRIME ↑ 887.0k%
Streaming & Entertainment	 Spotify \$1.6B	 Hulu ↑ 109%
Haircare	 Olaplex \$144.0M	 Bumble and bumble. ↑ 143%
Cosmetics	 ColourPop \$477.9M	 Rare Beauty ↑ 92%
Travel	 Disney Parks and Resorts \$613.6M	 Travel Noire ↑ 142%
Grocery Items	 Jell-O \$51.7M	 Kellogg's Rice Krispies ↑ 118%
Skincare	 Glow Recipe \$90.5M	 La Roche-Posay ↑ 89%

2023

Creator Content Remains a Small Slice of Digital Ads—but More Cost Effective

One difference between industry leaders and other brands is the proportion of creator content that makes up their respective programs. A majority of brands used creator content in less than a quarter of their digital advertisements. However, a higher proportion

of industry leaders used creator content in a majority of their creator advertisements.

Behind this stark difference is the reality that the cost of traditional advertisements has risen YoY, while the cost of facilitating creator content production has remained steady.

 **66%**

of brand respondents reported that **creator content drove more ROI** than traditional digital advertising (without creators) over the past year

 **55%**

of brands report that **content production costs** associated with influencer marketing have **stayed the same YoY**

Compensation in 2023

Fewer than 300k followers:

Most likely to make

\$500 - \$2.5k

for a single Instagram post

Greater than 300k followers

Most likely to make

\$10k - \$50k

for a single Instagram post



42%

of marketers at agencies reported unclear campaign goals from clients as a roadblock to program success

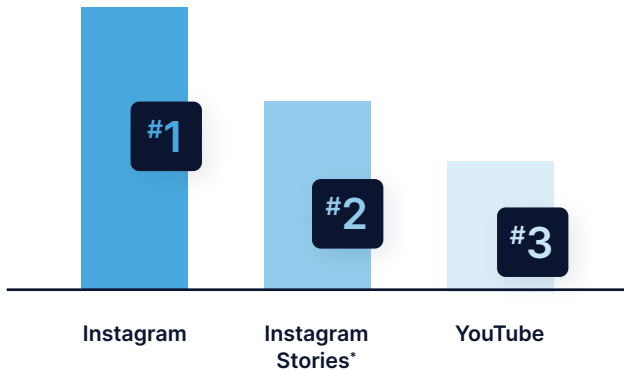
The Most Notable Brands of 2023

Industry	No. 1 Brand (by Earned Media Value)	Most Notable Brand (YoY EMV Growth)
Quick-Service Restaurants	McDonald's McDonald's \$418.8M	 Raising Cane's ↑ 292%
Luxury Fashion	CHANEL Chanel Fashion \$434.6M	LOEWE Loewe ↑ 64%
Apparel	FASHION NOVA Fashion Nova \$1.6B	 Oner Active ↑ 201%
Alcohol & Spirits	 Luc Belaire \$132.5M	 Bud Light ↑ 360%
Non-Alcoholic Beverages	 Red Bull \$331.4M	PRIME PRIME ↑ 463%
Streaming & Entertainment	 Spotify \$2.2B	 Apple TV+ ↑ 53%
Haircare	 K18 Hair \$151.1M	gisou Gisou ↑ 194%
Cosmetics	 Rare Beauty \$618.3M	 Saint Laurent (YSL) Cosmetics ↑ 161%
Travel	 Disney Parks and Resorts \$782.4M	BÉIS BÉIS ↑ 140%
Grocery Items	JELL-O Jell-O \$71.6M	 Califia Farms ↑ 59%
Skincare	 Drunk Elephant \$131.0M	rhode RHODE Skin ↑ 248%

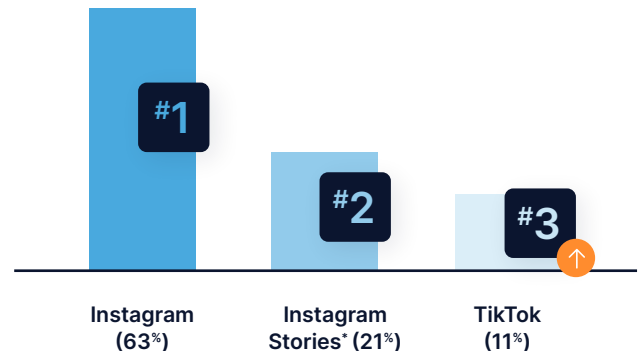
2020 - 2023

Instagram, the No. 1 Social Media Platform for Marketers

2020 Most Integral Social Media Platform



2021 Most Integral Social Media Platform

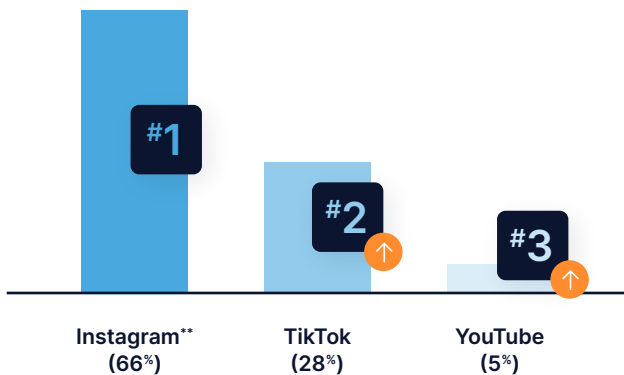


21%
of brand marketers ranked TikTok No. 3, though 0% chose TikTok as their most integral social media platform

Youtube fell to the No. 4 most integral platform for brands, displaced by TikTok
 Facebook became Meta

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

2022 Most Integral Social Media Platform



Twitter became X

2023 Most Integral Social Media Platform



41%
of companies have tried YouTube Shorts for influencer marketing over the past year

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

What Hasn't Changed From 2020-2023?

While industry practices and social media platforms have evolved, some things haven't changed. For example, since the start of our Influencer Marketing Trends Report in 2020, brands have consistently chosen limited personnel and budget as their greatest roadblocks.

Additionally, even as CreatorIQ expanded our Influencer Marketing Trends survey to reach agencies and brands beyond our initial focus

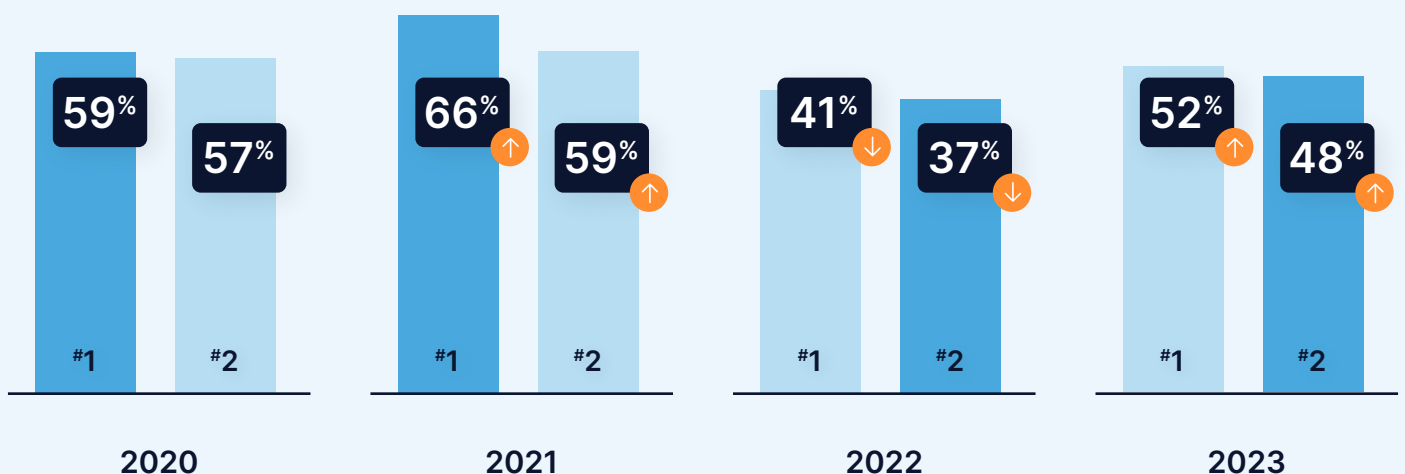
verticals of beauty and fashion, the importance of product hasn't wavered. Every year, product seeding has remained an important strategy. Additionally, the quality of a brand's products is still the single biggest factor affecting whether creators want to take on a brand partnership.

Finally, even as TikTok has steadily risen as a platform of choice, Instagram has consistently remained the No. 1 social media platform for influencer marketing since 2020.



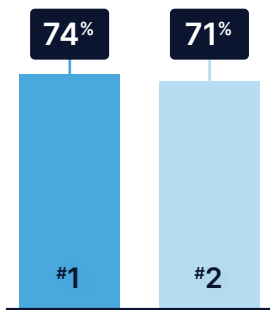
Roadblocks to Program Success

● Inadequate Staff ● Inadequate Budget



From Product Sends to Sponsored Digital Ads: the Evolution of Creator Marketing Strategy

2020



Most Common Strategy

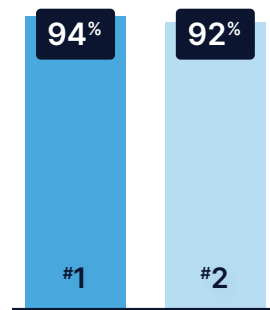
- Product Sends
- UGC



Most Effective Strategy*

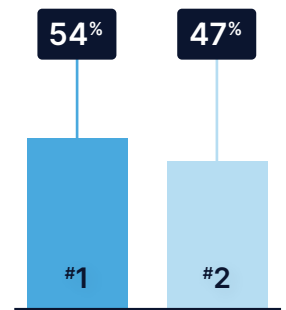
- Product Sends
- UGC

2021



Most Common Strategy

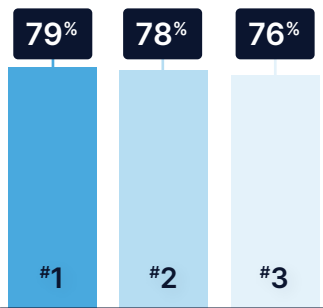
- UGC (↑ 23%)
- Product Sends (↑ 18%)



Most Effective Strategy*

- Product Sends (↓ 17%)
- UGC (↓ 10%)

2022



Most Common Strategy

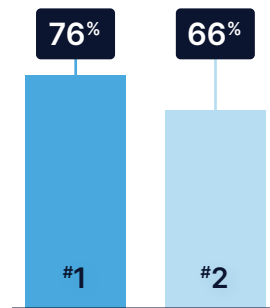
- Paid Advertisements (↑)
- UGC (↓ 16%)
- Gifting & Seeding (↓ 16%)



Most Effective Strategy**

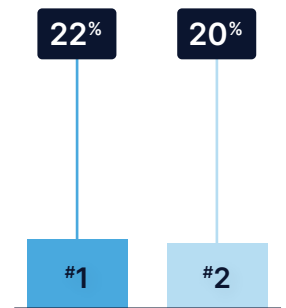
- Gifting & Seeding (↓ 21%)
- Paid Advertisements

2023



Most Common Strategy

- UGC (↓ 2%)
- Gifting & Seeding (↓ 10%)



Most Effective Strategy**

- Sponsored Digital Ads featuring Creators
- Affiliate Marketing

*Reflects respondents who employed these strategies and deemed them "very successful"

**Reflects responses to most effective influencer marketing activation

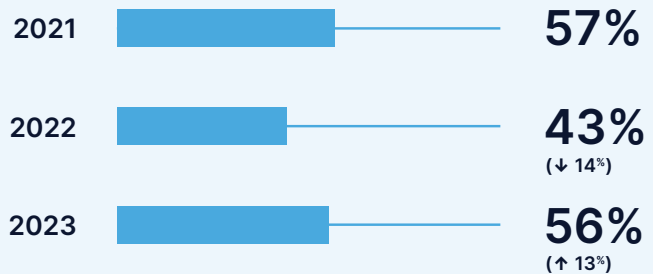
Influencers Aren't For Sale



Product Quality

was creators' No. 1 factor when deciding whether or not to work with a brand between 2020-2023.

Influencers Cared About Product Quality Above All Else In:












Industry Spotlight: Technology

What does the maturity of the creator economy actually look like? Let's dive into an industry that has transformed the world countless times over the last couple of decades: technology, the largest sector of the S&P 500.

In 2020, Apple was the No. 1 technology company monitored by CreatorIQ, raking in \$2.0B EMV, up 10% YoY. One of the top technology brands that fueled the greatest growth that year was Casetify, a company known for its durable phone cases.

Top 10 Technology Brands in 2020 (by Earned Media Value)

Brand	EMV	EMV YoY Change
 Apple	\$2.0B	10%
 Google	\$743.9M	-27%
 Discord	\$656.5M	39%
 SONY	\$597.6M	44%
 Canon	\$392.4M	-14%
 Uber	\$184.4M	-31%
 SAMSUNG	\$107.8M	6%
 Microsoft	\$101.2M	27%
 CASETiFY	\$83.3M	227%
 Adobe	\$50.7M	34%

Industry Spotlight: Technology

Since then, there hasn't been as much movement among the biggest players: Casetify and Adobe lost their Top 10 status, while Roku and DJI swooped in. The industry as a whole has claimed more mentions as time has gone on.

In 2020, brands on CreatorIQ's Technology leaderboard each averaged \$40.1M EMV with an 84% YoY growth. In 2023, this annual average jumped to \$67.0M EMV with a 71% YoY growth.

Top 10 Technology Brands in 2023 (by Earned Media Value)











Brand	EMV	EMV YoY Change
 Apple	\$3.0B	35%
 Discord	\$2.0B	42%
 Google	\$1.0B	28%
 SONY	\$965.6M	34%
 Canon	\$280.9M	-1%
 SAMSUNG	\$242.6M	23%
 Uber	\$205.9M	21%
 Roku	\$193.4M	99%
 Microsoft	\$153.2M	71%
 DJI	\$117.9M	99%



Image source // Cord Cutters News

A Trip to Roku City

The maturation of the technology industry mirrors the growth that other industries have experienced as they've come to treat creators as publishing partners. In particular, Roku's growth over the past three years reveals what it takes to win in an ever-shifting industry.

Founded in 2002, Roku has since become a fixture for smart TVs that seamlessly integrate streaming subscriptions with a push of a button. The technology company secured \$193.4M EMV in 2023, a 99% YoY expansion.

Now reaching a reported 80 million globally, **Roku research** found that two in three Roku users would take a trip to Roku City—the brand's famed screensaver—if offered. Roku took this data seriously, bringing Roku City live

for the first time in 2023 via a rooftop dinner and a Roku City Park stroll available at SXSW.

In 2023, Roku changed its mauve cityscape screensaver. A golden McDonald's arch broached Roku City. Billboards of popular TV shows popped up. What was innovative about the new branded experiences in Roku City is that it tapped into the hyper fixation consumers have over Roku City. Roku TV owners try to spot the Roku easter eggs. They track the cityscape, the giant robot, the peeping monsters, the glow streaming out of the apartment windows. This in-home penetration transferred to online conversation. According to X (formally Twitter) data from 2021-2022, mentions of "Roku City" appeared once every 12 minutes.

2024 and Beyond

The Years Ahead: How to Win in the Creator Economy

We've shown you how influencer marketing has and hasn't changed over the past several years. Now we'll tell you where it's going next, and what your brand needs to do to stay ahead.



Brand-to-Brand Activations

The impact of owned social media channels is dwindling, but when brands work together, they penetrate consumer indifference via novelty. Brand-to-brand collaborations are effective because they boost the reach and engagement of organizations. B2B collabs will increase over the coming years, and brands that approach these collaborations with authenticity and a bit of humor will surpass the competition. By launching branded experiences, Roku capitalized on its intimate reach, but in a way that felt natural. Roku City mirrors a real city: of course it would have a billboard, and a McDonald's.



Subtle Advertisements

Many can still recall their favorite childhood commercials. In modern times, however, consumers are saturated with stimuli, making it difficult to break through the noise. Furthermore, expanded legislation on ad disclosures means that more and more creators are upfront about their brand partnerships. This isn't necessarily a bad thing: ads are fine when they're interesting, and fans of creators want them to get paid as long as they receive entertainment in exchange. Finding subtle ways to showcase your brand's offerings is a tried-and-true long-term strategy for getting in front of consumers without sparking fatigue.



Notable Product Differentiation

It's challenging for brands to stand out from the mix, especially when consumers are spoiled for choice. Differentiating your organization's offerings doesn't require a complete overhaul. Instead, consumers will latch onto subtle differences that generate brand loyalty. Roku, for example, is one of many streaming distribution services. But Roku City offers a unique, familiar element that creates brand affinity and promotes branded experiences.



Internal Creators

While B2B collabs will increase over the next few years, so will the number of brands that build their own internal influencers. Moving away from a standard brand voice and leaning on internal experts with their own unique ways of storytelling will be one means for brands to translate learnings from their creator partners.



Cross-Vertical Pollination

The days of staying in your lane are over! While it was once common for brands to only work with partners in their industry, blossoming brands are getting outside of their comfort zone. Beyond the use of Roku City, Roku has benefited from a consumer frenzy for sports. Roku's top two hashtags for 2023 are #Sports (\$41.9M EMV) and #Tennis (\$41.6M EMV), with this momentum driven by a very small number of creators (five and two, respectively). Similarly one of 2023's greatest creator marketing success stories features a crossover of skincare and food, as Hailey Bieber's Strawberry Glaze Smoothie helped put grocery retailer Erewhon on the map. By leveraging crossover potential, brands stand to reach audiences they wouldn't have otherwise.



Implement the Same Concept Across Channels

In the Roku example, all of the fanfare came from a simple screensaver! Roku took the concept of Roku City beyond the TV by bringing brands into the mix, and by celebrating the campaign in person via a Best Buy partnership at SXSW. Brands that take an integrated approach to creator marketing stand to outperform others, because they're concentrating their efforts on scaling what works.



Artificial Intelligence

It's already here, and there's no going back. Artificial intelligence not only streamlines processes and simplifies content creation, but also allows brands to get better at what they do. Machine learning is already using natural language processing to transform creator discovery, while also improving brand safety.



Grow with Creators. Scale with CreatorIQ.

CreatorIQ is the most trusted influencer marketing platform for organizations looking to advance their creator marketing. Its enterprise-grade technology and industry-leading intelligence facilitates scaled creator discovery, streamlined workflows and robust reporting, while ensuring compliance and brand safety. Thousands of the world's most innovative brands use CreatorIQ, including AB InBev, CVS, Disney, Logitech, Nestlé, Red Bull, Sephora, Unilever and more.

If you loved this breakdown of how the influencer marketing space has evolved since 2020, check out CreatorIQ's 2024 [Influencer Marketing Trends Report](#), which tracks the most popular marketing strategies for the world's leading brands.

Ready to take your creator marketing to the next level?

Learn More at creatoriq.com