



India Influencer Marketing Report

2025



INFLUENCING WITH >>>



INTEGRITY >>>

POWERED BY
KANTAR

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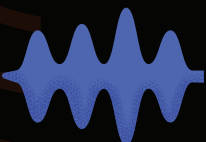
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FOREWORD

We live in a world that's in a state of flux, the lives we lead professionally and personally keeps throwing opportunities and challenges. We also lead a highly connected life, one that gives us access to people and resources across the world and influences the decisions we make!

As we seek guidance, advice, direction and opportunity there is an increasing impact of the personalities we follow on social media, consume content or interact with to make our day-to-day decisions. This fundamental shift in the way we take decisions is getting recognised by brands and that is reflected in the increasing investments they are making to work with influencers to leverage this trust and connection.

At WPP Media we constantly seek answers to navigate this ever-changing landscape, and this regard, the annual state of the influencer marketing industry is captured by the 'Goat India Influencer Marketing Report 2025'. The Goat agency is WPP Media's solution that works with brands and creators to connect with consumers in a meaningful manner.

This year Goat in collaboration with Kantar has sat down with marketers to understand how they are looking to invest in working with influencers, what are their concerns and challenges? In addition, we initiated the largest ever and most comprehensive survey of about 60,000 people across urban and rural India to understand consumers and their relationship with experts and influencers.



Ashwin Padmanabhan

Chief Operating Officer,
WPP Media South Asia

I am sure the 'Goat India Influencer Marketing Report 2025' will not just size the industry but will answer fundamental questions of a marketer: why, how, when and what does influencer marketing do for my brand and my business?

I would like to thank the teams at WPP Media, Goat and Kantar for putting together this extremely rich and detailed state of the influencer marketing industry in India.

FOREWORD

In today's hyper-digital world, brands operate in an environment that is both rich with opportunity and fraught with complexity. While digital platforms enable precise audience targeting and real-time engagement, they also contribute to a highly cluttered media landscape. Such an environment has made it increasingly difficult for marketers to ensure message clarity, maintain brand safety, and build lasting consumer trust.

Against this backdrop, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful and strategic lever for brands—both established and emerging—to connect meaningfully with their audiences. Over the past five years, it has evolved from a niche tactic to a mainstream marketing pillar, enabling brands to foster dialogue, gather organic feedback, and build credibility in an 'always-on' digital ecosystem. To better understand the scale, impact, and expectations surrounding influencer marketing, we conducted structured interviews with 105 CMOs and senior marketing leaders across sectors, such as FMCG, BFSI, retail, and manufacturing. These insights were further enriched by data from Kantar's Target Group Index, which surveyed 60,000 consumers across urban and rural India. The findings are compelling: 95% of marketers consider influencer marketing critical to their brand strategy. It plays a pivotal role across the purchase funnel—especially in the upper and middle stages—by driving product discovery, shaping consumer preferences, and amplifying brand narratives.

The influencer ecosystem is increasingly diverse. While macro-influencers offer scale and brand-safe messaging, micro and nano influencers are gaining prominence for their authenticity and more profound engagement



Puneet Avasthi
Director, Specialist Businesses,
Kantar

within niche communities. Trust, rather than celebrity status, is the true driver of influence—particularly among Gen Z, women, and metro audiences. Affluent urban males aged 35–44 also emerge as a highly persuadable segment for targeted campaigns.

Platform preferences are evolving too. Instagram and YouTube remain dominant, but short-form video content—such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts—is proving especially effective in capturing attention and driving engagement. Influencer categories like fashion, Sports, and Food continue to attract strong interest, particularly among affluent and metropolitan users.

This report, developed in collaboration with WPP Media's GOAT, offers a comprehensive view of how marketers are leveraging influencer marketing—not just for tactical promotions but as a long-term brand-building strategy. It also highlights sector-specific nuances, ROI expectations, and the evolving role of influencers across the consumer journey. We hope this compendium serves as a strategic guide for marketers navigating the dynamic and ever-evolving influencer marketing landscape. Dive in to explore insights that can shape your next big brand move.



BEYOND *THE* BUZZ

**Decoding the Influence
Economy**



BEYOND THE BUZZ

Decoding the Influencer Economy



Quick recap

Remember the Page 3 parties of the early 2000s? Featured in the glossy pages of newspaper supplements, these beautiful individuals influenced our clothing choices, determined the best places to hang out, and potentially defined the parameters of success and happiness. Today, a variety of personalities draw the sphere of influence through a mix of content, platforms, and creativity, making Page 3 a thing of the past. We call them influencers.

Through the years, influencer marketing has become an essential exercise for brands. Valuable collaborations, industry trends, and a wave of new technology have powered the creator economy year on year, only to grow stronger by the years.

But why does influencer marketing work so well? What was once 9.6 lakhs influencers in 2020, has grown a staggering 322% to 40.6 lakhs in 2024, and they range through the board. With over a million odd creators, most fall under the nano creator list, whereas approx. 30,000 influencers fall under the mega influencer or celebrity category list.

Why are influencers followed?

Goat Kantar Report 2025 observes that 59% of users follow between 1 to 5 influencers, 18% follow 6 to 10, and 13% follow more than 20 influencers not just for product discovery, information but also for knowing what the influencers recommend and checking out offers.

On the total base of people on social media, an average of 7.6 influencers are followed.

People from town with a population of <10 L follow more influencers than town with a population of 10-40 L and above and on an average, follow more than 11 influencers.

Fashion, Sports & Food dominate the influencer interest with strong traction from among the youth (15-24), affluent NCCS A and top metros.



What do brands want?

Brands see real returns as consumers trust recommendations from their favourite online personalities. Influencers can impact the success across the purchase funnel and the brands are willing to invest more to leverage this.

Awareness:

63% of the total product discovery across all categories are driven by influencers with



62%
Female



63%
Gen Z



60%
NCCS A



60%
>40L population
Metro

people relying on the influencers.

Consideration:

63% of the total people use influencers for product information across categories with



62%
Female



64%
Gen Z



62%
NCCS A



59%
(>40L) people
Metro

people relying on the expertise of influencers.

Desire:

69% of the people observe that influencers drive recommendations prior to purchase with



69%
Female



71%
Gen Z



67%
NCCS A



74%
(>40L) people
Metro

people stating how important the recommendation of influencers is to them.

Action:

60% of the people are likely to click on the promo link shared by influencers and check the promo code.



The shift in the Market: What's Changing?

In 2024, people spent 50% of their time on mobile phones browsing social media.

While celebrities from entertainment and sports largely dominate the scene, marketers are now looking at a mix of mega/macro and micro/nano influencers equally to strike a balance between driving awareness, brand loyalty and engagement.

92% of Indian brands push the boundaries of influencer marketing investments as it increasingly becomes an integral and 'most important' element to their marketing strategies.

Platform Innovations

The vast user base of Meta and YouTube in India has indeed made these platforms the central pillars of the influencer marketing ecosystem. 65% of Facebook followers, 61% of Instagram followers, and 54% of Youtube subscribers make for influencer followers.

It is no wonder that these platforms are continuously innovating by rolling out new features to enhance user engagement, create new monetisation avenues, and improve the overall user experience.

For example, on Instagram, Subscriptions allow creators to offer exclusive content to paying followers, while the Shopping feature is already a hit in the other markets. Additionally, Partnership Content lets creators and brands promote sponsored content through ads.

Similarly, Super Thanks on YouTube allows viewers to donate money to creators for regular videos. Channel Memberships give fans access to exclusive perks, and Super Chats and Super Stickers provide live streamers with additional revenue by allowing viewers to interact and support creators.

YouTube has recently allowed creators in India with more than 10k subscribers to directly showcase products from e-commerce websites like Flipkart and Myntra in their videos, earning commissions on sales. This shopping affiliate program supports creators to diversify their income channels while also facilitating the viewers with direct link to product recommendations.

Shifting Categories of Influencers

The influencer landscape is also finding ways to be more segmented. While fashion (23%), sports (22%) and food influencers (20%) continue to dominate, other niche categories such as gaming, sustainability, and financial education have seen massive growth in India. However, our study indicates that 51% of marketers are looking to invest in niche micro-influencers in 2025.

The rise of macro influencers

In addition to the trend of rising demand for niche influencers in the last few years, there seems to be a growing interest for macro influencers as well. Our comprehensive industry survey notes that macro influencers are

particularly popular with the automobile, electronics and handset sector in India who overwhelmingly invest in marketing with this category. Not just that, the report concludes that 95% of brands exclusively engage with macro influencers on different platforms.

Funding, Mergers, and Growth of Startups:

The last 12 months saw a sharp rise with over 20 mergers and acquisitions taking place in the media and marketing sector in 2024 alone, with many traditional and digital-first agencies strengthening their influencer marketing capabilities. These strategic moves indicate that the industry is amping up to optimise on the growing creator economy.

On the startup front, influencer marketing platforms that offer campaign management, analytics, and ROI measurement have caught the attention of investors. Several such startups secured multi-million dollar seed and Series A rounds in the past year, underscoring the potential of tech-driven influencer solutions.

Adding to this momentum, the Indian government has also stepped in with a \$1 billion fund to support content creators—boosting innovation, production quality, and reach. All signs point to the influencer ecosystem evolving rapidly with better tools, smarter tracking, and stronger ROI assurance for brands.

Changes in the Industry Landscape:

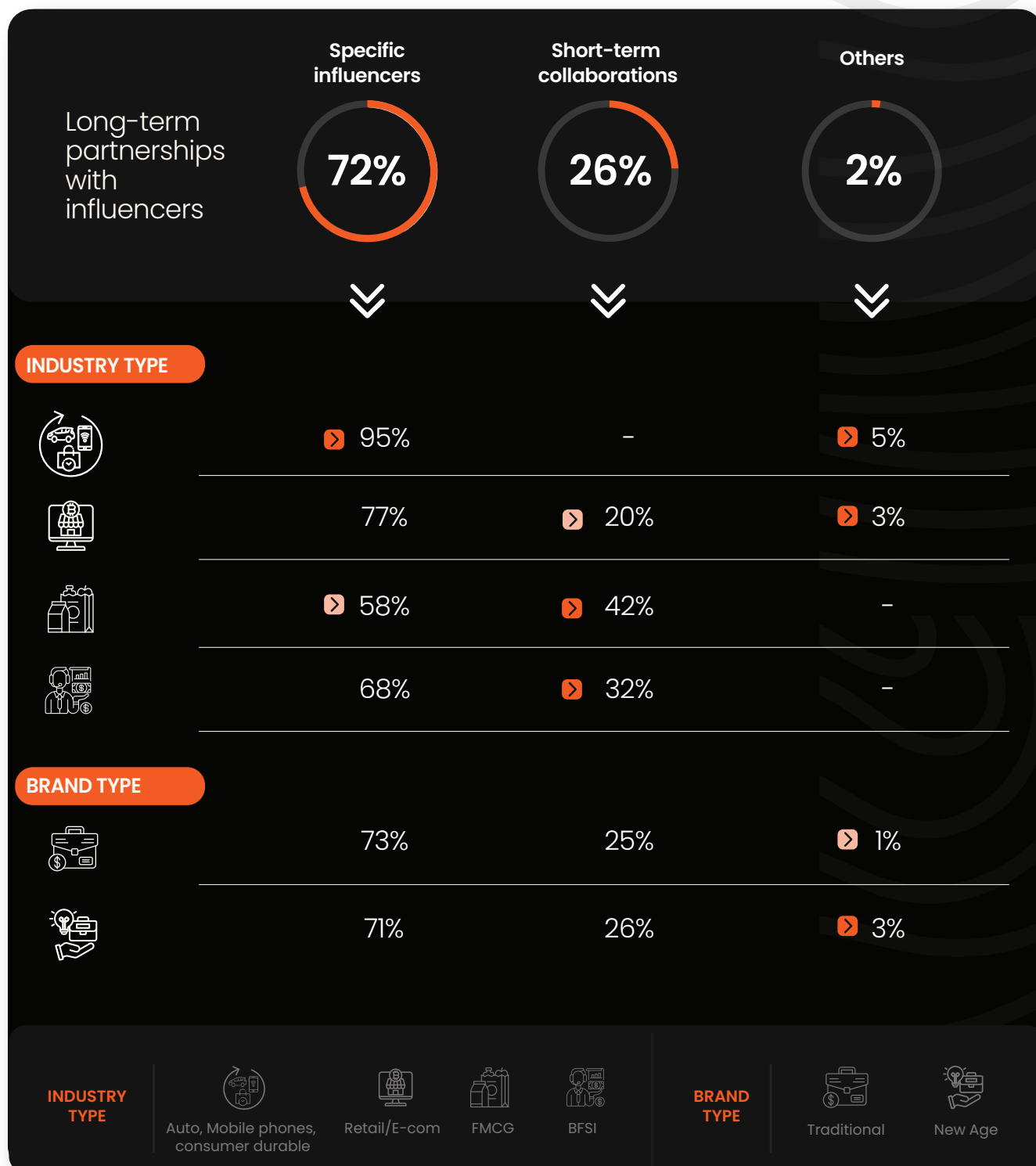
As influencer marketing continues to boom, the industry has also seen major shifts in how influencers are compensated and collaborate with brands. More brands are opting for long-term partnerships instead of one-off promotions, leading to a more sustainable and effective marketing approach.

The Rise of Consumer Protection Laws:

Moreover, the push toward transparency and authenticity has led to clearer regulations regarding sponsored content. With the Ministry of Consumer Affairs releasing guidelines for celebrities, influencers, and virtual influencers on social media platforms, the ecosystem has become more transparent, accurate, and consumer-friendly today. Creators are required to provide full disclosure, conduct due diligence, and state cautions wherever necessary.



Close to 3 in 4 marketers prefer long term partnerships with preferred influencers



Total Base (n=105); Manufacturing (n=20); Retail/E-Comm (n=30); FMCG (n=33); BFSI (n=22);
Traditional Brands (n=67); New Age Brands (n=38)



THE INFLUENCER EFFECT

What Influencers bring
to brands and success
parameters

THE INFLUENCER EFFECT

What Influencers bring to brands and success parameters



Influencer marketing thrives on authenticity, relatability, and trust.

This shift is significant in India. Influencer-led marketing has delivered surprises to many brands that are looking to build trust and connect with consumers on a deeper level. Brands like Dr. Reddy used influencer marketing as a tool to create awareness and drive credibility for their Mintop product – a hair loss solution in West Bengal.

Rather than relying just on traditional storytelling and marketing, the brand used influencers to not only showcase the product but also integrate them into real-life routines, making them more relatable and accessible to their audiences.

An excellent example of this is Volvo's influencer campaign highlighting its USP – safety. The brand promoted its safety feature and built its identity using macro influencers like Ranveer Brar, Kalki Koechlin and Bani J. The brand used their real-life stories and linked the same to Volvo's USP and philosophy.

Trust, Transparency, and Relatability

Unlike traditional marketing, authenticity and trust are a few of the key factors that play a huge part in the success of influencer marketing. Marketeers have realised the power of the 'trust element' and are thus banking on influencers because they do not just promote the product but provide recommendations, personal experience, advice and insights to their audiences.

When an influencer you follow swears by a product—whether it's a skincare item, tech gadget, or eco-friendly product—you're more likely to believe it. It's like getting advice from a friend you trust, making it more personal and relatable.



Brands are seeking to build consumer trust and salience through Influencer marketing, according to our comprehensive industry survey

Over 70% of brands have chosen this medium to increase credibility through influencers



77%
of the Banking &
Financial brands



76%
of the beauty and personal care
brands rely on influencers to build trust
& credibility on the products being
sold.



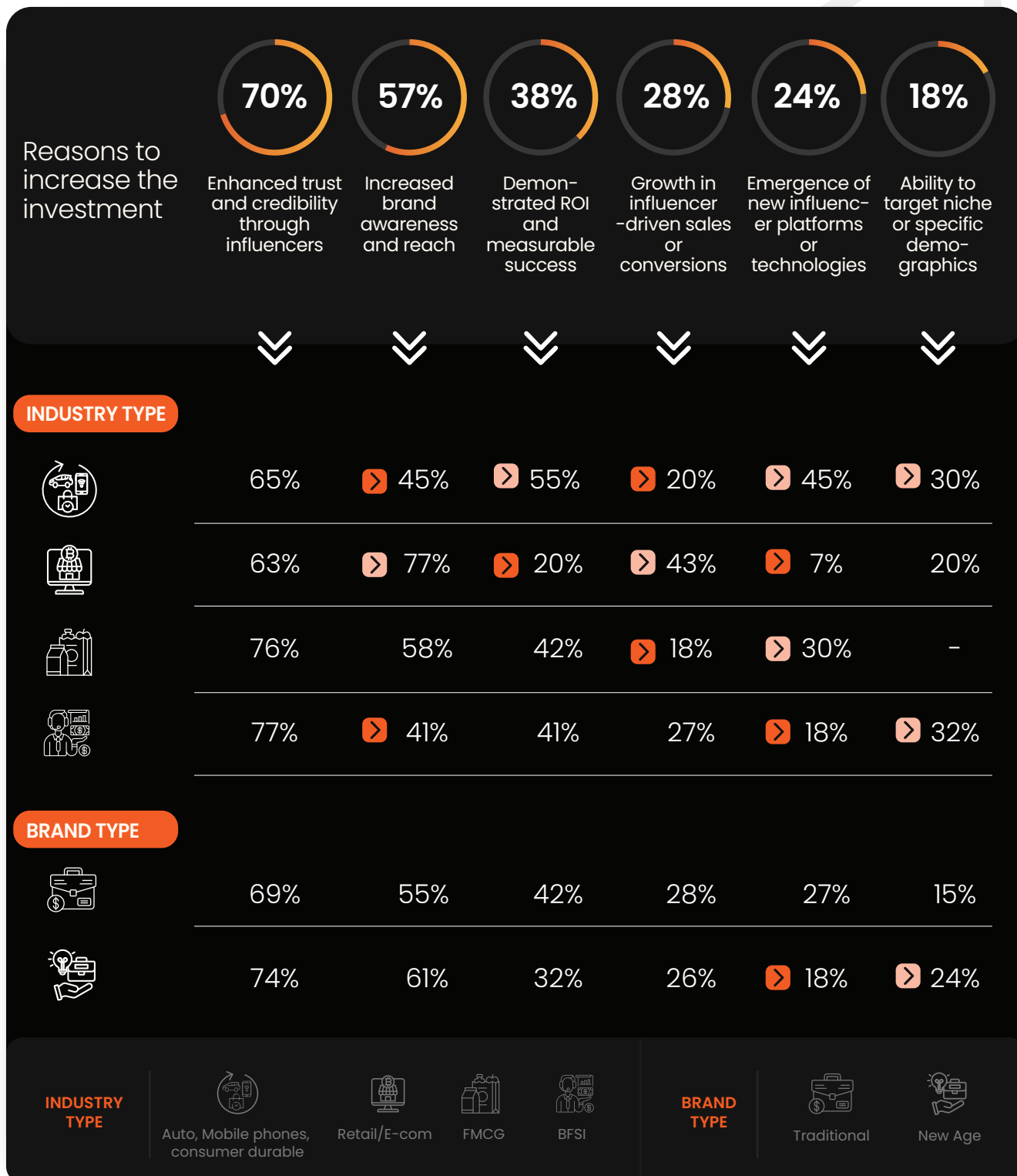
77%
of the e-com/q-com brands rely
on influencers to create
awareness about the offers.



74%
of the traditional brands interestingly
believe that influencers can enhance
brand trust.



Over 2 in 3 brands seek to build Consumer Trust and Salience through IM



- > Over indexed to overall average by 20%
- > Under indexed to overall average by 20%

Total Base (n=105); Manufacturing (n=20); Retail/E-Comm (n=30); FMCG (n=33); BFSI (n=22);
Traditional Brands (n=67); New Age Brands (n=38)

Followers v/s Bots: The Fight for Authenticity Continues

The challenge of fake followers is real—and growing. Over 4-5% of all Facebook accounts and 9-10% of Instagram accounts are fake. This means that millions of followers on social media could belong to bots or inactive accounts, distorting the actual reach of influencers. In fact, a report by cybersecurity firm CHEQ estimated that \$1.3 billion in marketing spend is wasted on fake followers every year. This makes distinguishing real engagement from fake interactions more important than ever for brands. Platforms are responding to this crisis. Instagram alone has implemented machine learning-based tools that can detect fake followers and accounts with impressive accuracy, and other platforms like YouTube and X have adopted similar systems.

The Goat Agency was the first in the industry to recognise this as a potential crisis. To address the issue, Goat introduced a score-based system called the Genuity Score back in 2019. This proprietary algorithm calculates what percentage of an influencer's audience is genuine versus suspicious. The scoring also serves as a crucial tool for brands and agencies to assess the authenticity of creators and to help shortlist influencers for campaigns. The Genuity Score ensures that brands are reaching genuine followers.



High Engagement and Relevance

Influencers are often able to spark more meaningful interactions than traditional advertisements or celebrity endorsements because they target highly specific, niche audiences. By focusing on these communities, influencers create content that resonates deeply with their followers that also enhances the chances that their recommendations will convert into real consumer action.



Banking & Finance brands invest on influencer marketing driven by the engagement rates that influencers offer with

50%

of the brands stating that it is the most important parameter for investment.



45%

of the beauty, personal care and food brands.



43%

of the e-com brands consider the engagement rate of influencers as a crucial metric.



55%

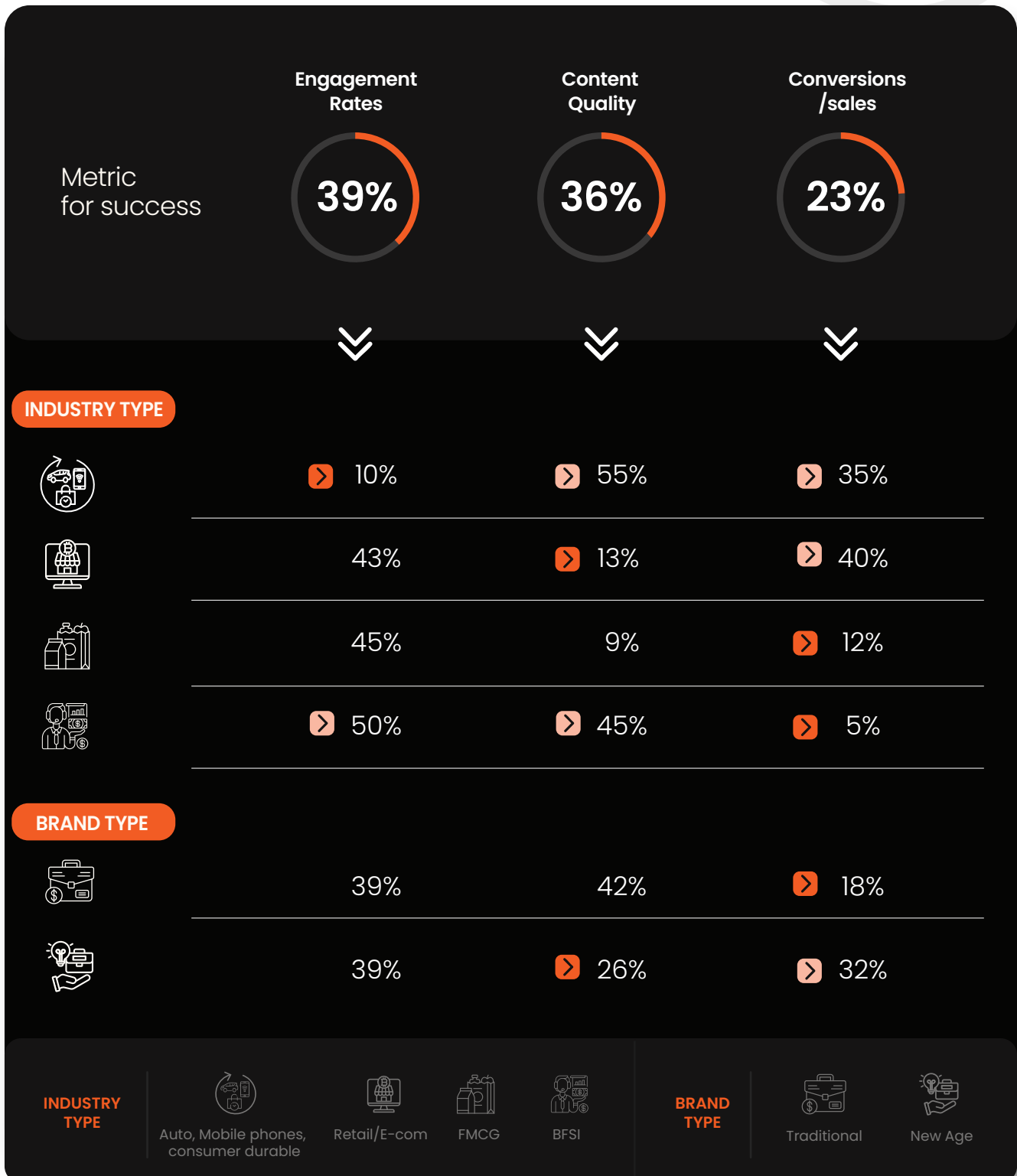
of the Auto and electronic (including mobile phone) brands invest basis the quality of the content made by influencers.



40%

of the e-com brands also want influencers to drive sales conversions and many are incentivizing influencers for the conversions.

Key metrics of success for Influencer Marketing Campaigns are defined in terms of Engagement Rates and Content Quality



- > Over indexed to overall average by 20%
- > Under indexed to overall average by 20%

Total Base (n=105); Manufacturing (n=20); Retail/E-Comm (n=30); FMCG (n=33); BFSI (n=22); Traditional Brands (n=67); New Age Brands (n=38)

Platform preference

98% of all brands across category prefer Instagram and 94% YouTube.

Category wise preference of platform and format:
Reels, Short Videos, Posts, Long form Videos

Selection of influencers by brands:

91%
of the banking and finance,
83%
of the auto and mobile phone brands feel getting the right influencer is crucial for achieving their objective.

63%
of the e-com brands consider brand safety and exclusivity with influencers crucial for the success.

48%
of the beauty and personal care brands consider maintaining consistency across longer duration of time to be extremely important.

To achieve the same,
86%
of the banking and finance brands,
80%
of the auto and mobile brands expect a thorough background check on influencers before collaboration.

80%
of the auto and mobile brands also prefer including legal clauses in the influencer contracts to mitigate risks.

53%
of the e-com and
52%
of the beauty & personal care brands endorse strict guidelines of engagement with influencers.

**49%**

of the beauty and personal care brands prefer influencers to communicate transparently with the audience in case of any controversy.



Majority of the beauty and personal care brands want to work with different influencers across campaigns

**95%**

of auto and mobile brands and

73%

of the e-com, banking and finance brands prefer to engage with the same influencer across campaigns.

**95%**

of the auto and mobile brands,

77%

of the e-com brands prefer to engage in a medium term/long term partnerships with influencers.

"We leverage influencers to amplify a brand message using storytelling that's in line with the influencers' creative language. The influencers are selected using multiple criterias and basis the objective at hand. what's important though is to tell an engaging story, in a fun and relatable way with the brand message integrated seamlessly in it. This leads to the content receiving high organic traction while effectively landing the message. The results speak for themselves — high engagement, authentic storytelling, and truly memorable campaigns."

**Jessin Roy**

VP – Brand and Social, Vodafone Idea



THE DIGITAL STAGE

Platform, Content, and Creators

THE DIGITAL STAGE

Platform, Content, and Creators



Influencer marketing is a dynamic ecosystem that thrives across various platforms, driven by engaging content and the creativity of creators. These three pillars drive and shape the industry.

Platforms: Where Influencer Marketing Happens

It's no secret that Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat are where influencers thrive. These platforms allow influencers to be candid and post anything, from an off-the-cuff selfie to a messy behind-the-scenes video. These raw, unpolished moments with their audience make the connection feel real. LinkedIn, on the other hand, is emerging to be a powerhouse for campaigns targeted to B2B and thought-leadership influencer campaigns.

Instagram's focus on high-quality media – photos, reels, and stories – makes it ideal for influencers to showcase products and talk about them authentically. With over 2 billion monthly active users, the platform helps both creators and brands drive real conversions with its features. Influencers can create immersive narratives using polls, Q&As, and links.

Meanwhile, Snapchat garner popularity, making the platform a hotspot for targeting Gen Z and millennials. Influencers use Snaps, AR lenses, brand filters and spotlight videos to create raw, in-the-moment content, giving off best friend vibes that resonate with this demographic.

Influencers on LinkedIn are often industry experts or executives who share long-form posts, articles, or videos in their area of expertise and subject matter to establish credibility and connect with their target audiences. LinkedIn as a platform also allows creator to engage with their audience and spark conversations with tools like polls and live features.

YouTube is a key platform for influencer marketing, especially for long-form storytelling, product reviews, tutorials, and in-depth brand integrations. Creators build strong communities and trust, making it ideal for driving consideration and purchase intent—especially for high-involvement or lifestyle products.

Case in point of how YouTube has turned Tulsi, a village in central India, into a digital powerhouse known as 'Youtube Village'. What began in 2018 with a few villagers experimenting with content has grown into a movement, with over 1,000 locals now working on the platform.

YouTube has created new livelihoods, especially for women who previously had limited opportunities. More than just a source of income, YouTube has sparked cultural change in Tulsi.



PLAYBOOK FOR BRANDS

To leverage influencer
partnerships
on social platforms



Playbook for brands to leverage influencer partnerships on social platforms:



Instagram



Massive Reach:

Over 500 M+ daily active users on Stories and Reels.



Visual-First: Perfect for product discovery through engaging photos & short videos.



Trust Factor: 90% of users follow a brand or creator, giving credibility to branded content.



Commerce-Ready: Native tools like Shops, Tags, and Link Stickers drive direct action.



Content Formats

Reels	Short-form, vertical videos (15-60s)	Trends, tutorials, UGC, quick reviews
Stories	24-hour content with interactive tools	Polls, Q&As, countdowns, swipe-ups
Static Posts	High-quality images or carousels	Product highlights, testimonials
Live	Real-time interaction with followers	Launches, Q&A, BTS sessions
Collab Posts	Co-published content between brand & creator	Official endorsements, co-visibility
Format	Description	Use Case



Instagram



Campaign Objectives

Awareness: Wide reach through Reels, Lives & Collab Posts.

Engagement: Story polls, AMAS, interactive Stickers.

Education: Deep dives via Carousels, Stories, Lives.

Conversions: Link Stickers, Tags, Instagram Shops.



Paid Amplification via Meta Ads

- › **Boost Posts:** Extend reach to your audience lookalikes.
- › **Branded Content Ads:** Run creator posts as dark ads.
- › **IG Shop Integration:** Tag products, drive checkouts.



Key Metrics to Track

Views/Reach

Content exposure

Engagement Rate

Likes, comments, shares

Saves

Indicates content usefulness

Clicks/Swipe-ups

Direct action taken

Conversions

Sales, signups, or traffic to a landing page

Follower Growth

Organic impact from the creator campaign



Best Practices

- › Let creators keep their authentic voice
- › Prioritise Reels & Stories for visibility
- › Use interactive features like polls and Q&As
- › Always include clear CTAs (tag, link, swipe)
- › Use brand tags and relevant hashtags
- › Build long-term creator relationships
- › Track results with unique links or codes

Playbook for brands to leverage influencer partnerships on social platforms:



YouTube



High Discoverability: YouTube is the 2nd-largest search engine, with 2x more active search behaviour vs. other platforms. Hashtags eg: #Meeshohaul boost visibility, and Shorts benefit from up to 30% organic views via search.



Evergreen Content: Unlike trend-driven social media content, videos remain discoverable and relevant long after posting.



Audience Trust: Gen Z and Millennials perceive YouTubers as more authentic due to long-form, in-depth content.



Versatile Campaign Objectives: Short-form videos drive topical engagement, while long-form videos build deeper brand association.



Actionable Audience Insights: Brands can capture and target both paid and organic viewer segments for better ROI.



Content Formats

Format	What It Means	Use Case
Dedicated Video	An entire video about your brand	New launches, tutorials, and product education
Integrated Mention	The brand is mentioned within the video	Subtle awareness, product seeding
YouTube Shorts	60-sec vertical video	Quick engagement, trends, teasers



YouTube



Campaign Objectives

Awareness: Boost reach with Shorts & viral content

Consideration: Educate through reviews & vlogs

Conversion: Drive sales or traffic with strong CTAs

Brand Loyalty: Build long-term affinity via storytelling



Paid Amplification via Meta Ads

- > Boost influencer videos as YouTube ads from the creator's channel
- > Maintains authenticity while enabling precise targeting
- > Supports custom CTA buttons (e.g., Shop Now, Learn More)
- > Enhances both organic and paid reach
- > Increases ROI by scaling top-performing content
- > Ideal for brand discovery and conversion-led campaigns



Key Metrics to Track

Views

Top-of-funnel reach

Watch Time

Indicates content quality & audience interest

Engagement Rate

Likes, comments, shares = impact

Click-Through Rate

Are viewers taking action?

Conversions

Ultimate goal: sign-ups/sales

10s Views (Paid)

Better proxy for true brand exposure



Best Practices

- > Co-create the brief:
Let creators stay authentic.
- > Use a clear CTA:
Tell viewers what to do next.
- > Build series, not one-offs:
Repeated exposure builds trust.
- > Use unique codes & links:
Essential for tracking.
- > Leverage Partnership Ads:
Scale proven content.



Snapchat



High Engagement: Snapchat is designed for real-time, authentic content, driving high audience engagement.



Younger Audience: 65% plus Snapchat users are under 30, making it ideal for brands targeting Gen Z & young millennials.



Personal & Direct: Influencer content feels intimate, with a 'best friend' vibe, making brand recommendations more relatable.



Content Formats

Stories	Short, engaging photo/video sequences	Product reveals, tutorials, day-in-the-life
Spotlight	Short videos are shown to a broad audience	Viral challenges, product trends
Snaps	Direct messages to friends/followers	Exclusive sneak peeks, personalised messages
Lenses & Filters	Custom AR filters created for campaigns	Gamified product experiences
Format	What It Means	Use Case



Snapchat

Campaign Objectives

Awareness: Drive visibility through organic creator stories & brand takeovers

Consideration: Use interactive formats like polls, Q&A, and lenses

Conversion: Leverage tutorials & product demos in stories

Brand Loyalty: Include 'Swipe Up' links for instant product page visits

Partnership Ads (Paid Amplification)

Once influencer content is created, it can be boosted via Snapchat Ads Manager to reach a larger, targeted audience. This ensures:

- > Guaranteed reach & impressions
- > Precision targeting (age, interest, location)
- > Driving traffic directly to product pages or app downloads

Key Metrics to Track

Views

Total reach of the content

Screenshots

Indicates interest in saving product info

Swipe-Ups

Direct action taken (product page visits)

Story Completions

Shows engagement & content quality

Filter/Lens Uses

How many people actively used the branded filter

Shares

Organic word-of-mouth spread

Best Practices

- > **Keep It Real:** Snapchat thrives on raw, unfiltered content — polished ads feel out of place
- > **Use Platform Language:** Use native stickers, text overlays & creative effects
- > **Leverage Trends:** Partner with creators who understand Snapchat culture and trends
- > **Drive Action:** Always include a clear CTA (Swipe Up, Try Lens, etc.)
- > **Frequency Matters:** Consistent posting over a few days works better than a one-off post

LinkedIn



Professional Audience: Reach decision-makers, industry leaders, and working professionals.



High-Intent Users: Users are in a mindset of learning, networking, and career growth.



Thought Leadership-Friendly: Ideal platform for expert opinions, deep dives, and B2B narratives.



Better Organic Visibility: Content has a longer shelf life due to slower feed churn.



Precise Targeting: Leverage job titles, industries, seniority, and company size.



Content Formats

Text Post	A short, written update (up to 3,000 characters).	Thought leadership, perspectives, conversation
Image/Carousel	Visual static post or multi-slide PDFs.	Storytelling, case studies, product features
Native Video	Uploaded videos (ideal: 30–90 seconds).	Demos, interviews, behind-the-scenes
Poll	A one-question interactive post with multiple choice answers.	Market sentiment, engagement triggers
Event Page	Native event feature with RSVP functionality.	Virtual events, meetups, thought leadership
Format	Description	Use Case



LinkedIn

Campaign Objectives

Brand Awareness: Boost visibility in relevant professional circles.

Thought Leadership: Position your brand through expert narratives.

Lead Generation: Drive traffic to gated content or lead forms.

Employer Branding: Showcase workplace culture via authentic voices.

Paid Amplification

Boosted Posts: Promote high-performing influencer content for broader reach.

Sponsored Content: Collaborate with influencers and run content through brand channels.

Lead Gen Ads: Pair creator-led messaging with LinkedIn's native lead forms.

Key Metrics to Track

Impressions	Total views of the post/ad
Engagement Rate	Likes + comments + shares ÷ impressions
Click-Through Rate (CTR)	Link clicks ÷ impressions
Video Views	Number of users who watched the video
Watch Time/Completion %	Depth of video consumption
Follower Growth	Brand or influencer page growth over campaign period
Lead Form Submissions	Number of lead captures via ads or CTAs

Best Practices

- > Choose the Right Voices: Prioritise credibility, niche expertise, and content style over follower count.
- > Engage in Comments: Encourage influencers to reply and keep the conversation going.
- > Use Visuals Smartly: Data, graphics, and branded carousels perform well with professionals.
- > Repurpose Creator Content: Use top posts in ads, newsletters, or thought-leadership hubs.
- > Always Disclose Partnerships: Transparency builds trust and aligns with LinkedIn's guidelines.

Content: The Fuel Behind Influencer Impact

Influencer marketing is not merely 'who' sends the message or 'where' the message is sent—it's also the way in which the message is created. With increasing demand for authentic, visual storytelling and narrative style content, the content has truly become the king – driving impact, making it a powerful tool for brands to grow in the digital space.

Succinct And Clear

For brands looking to win attention and trust, the formula is clear: keep it short, make it real, speak the language, and stay relevant.

It's no secret, short-form content dominates the feed. With the rise of Reels on Instagram and Shorts on YouTube – 96% of brands prefer short-form content over long-form and static content.

Relevancy. Recency. Relatability

To truly resonate, influencer content usually passes the three R's: relevancy, recency, and relatability. The most engaging content is often fresh and relevant to current events or trends, while also relatable to the real lives of the consumers. When creators share raw moments—it allows viewers to connect on a human level.

Rooted and Authentic

This has also led to a shift in content's aesthetics – from overproduced and polished campaigns to raw, unfiltered, and rustic content that feels 'shot on phone' and honest. This realness makes influencers more relatable, and in turn, the brands they represent more believable.

Vernacular content has emerged as a key growth lever to reach audiences of a specific demography. Regional-language content builds authenticity, trust, and creates an inclusive, powerful and stronger emotional connection, especially when it reflects local culture and voice.

At its core, content-to-influencer marketing flips the script: brands lead with great content, and influencers amplify it with their authenticity and reach, making the influence even stronger.



Creators: The Heart of Influencer Marketing

It might seem obvious, but selecting the right influencers for a brand isn't just about follower counts. Metrics like engagement rate and authenticity are a few of the most sought-after metrics of successful campaigns. Sure, influencers with over 100k followers might have a typical engagement rate of 1-3%, but micro-influencers—those with smaller, more niche followings—can have engagement rates that soar to 5-10%. That's a huge difference for brands looking for genuine connections.

But even more surprising is how intangible factors, like authenticity, can drive success. How genuine does the influencer seem? Is their brand aligned with the values and tone of the campaign? These subtle cues are pivotal in determining how well an influencer resonates with their audience, and ultimately, how likely they are to convert.

And here's where it gets really interesting: industry experts are now emphasising the emotional connection between influencers and their followers. It turns out that influencers who share relatable stories, unfiltered moments, or personal experiences aren't just being 'authentic'—they're generating stronger brand loyalty and driving a significantly higher ROI.

How Influencers are progressing beyond the Industry

Many top influencers have taken their influence one step further by launching their product lines or brands. For example, global beauty influencers like Huda Kattan (Huda Beauty) have turned their massive followings into multi-million-dollar businesses. In India, Beauty influencers like Mrunal Panchal launched her beauty line Mrucha Beauty,

Lifestyle creator Sarah Sarosh runs her Coffee Brand (Impulse Coffee), and Travel Influencer Aakash Malhotra (wanderwithsky) launched a clothing brand, Awra, suitable for outdoor activity and treks. This shift from influencer to entrepreneur shows the power influencers have to drive not just sales but also create their brands. Which is why brands by Bhuvan Bam (youthiapa), Parul Gulati (nishhair), and Madhura's Recipe (Madhura's spices) have managed to leverage an existing client base with their products.

Crossovers

And then there's the surprising trend of crossovers. As influencers are gaining more popularity, they are also getting opportunities to appear on the big screen. We have also seen celebrities posting their personal life on YouTube and Instagram and venturing out into the influencer space. Influencers like Kusha Kapila, Prajakta Koli, and Dolly Singh are stepping into Bollywood, while film personalities like Shilpa Shetty have built a strong digital presence, especially in the fitness and yoga space.



INFLUENCER MIX WITH SUCCESS STORIES

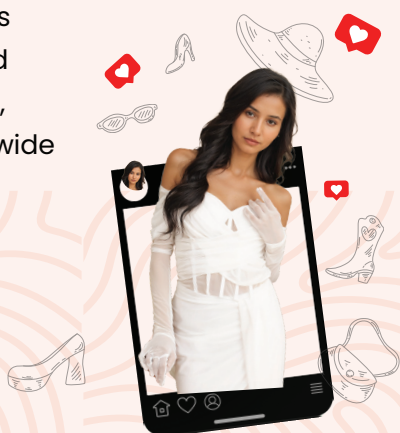
Here's a breakdown of popular categories of influencers in India, along with inspiring success stories of how they've expanded their influence into other industries.



a. Fashion & Lifestyle Influencers

Nancy Tyagi

Nancy Tyagi, a prominent fashion and lifestyle influencer with over 2 million followers on Instagram, rose to fame through her popular "Outfits from Scratch" series. Known for designing and stitching her creations, she often puts a unique spin on recreating celebrity looks. Her content stands out for its authenticity and resourcefulness, appealing to a wide and diverse audience.



Komal Pandey

A celebrated fashion influencer with over 2 million followers on Instagram, gained widespread recognition for her bold and experimental approach to styling. Komal's content emphasises creativity, storytelling, and self-expression, making her a trendsetter in the digital fashion space.

**b. Food & Health Influencers**

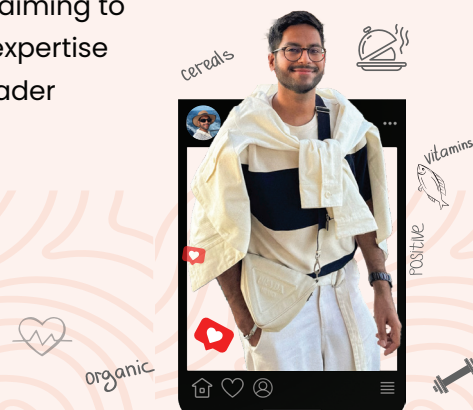
Siddharth Batra

A fashion and lifestyle influencer with a distinctive style, rose to fame through his playful yet sophisticated approach to gender-fluid fashion. With a following of over 1 million on Instagram, Siddharth's content often features expressive outfits and beauty looks.



Shivesh Bhatia

A self-taught baker and food content creator from Delhi, India, Shivesh has garnered a substantial following on social media. He began his journey by sharing baking recipes and has since authored five cookbooks. Shivesh has expanded his influence by launching a baking class on Skillshare, aiming to share his expertise with a broader audience.



C. Travel & Adventure Influencers

Anunay Sood

Anunay prominent travel influencer and entrepreneur from India, renowned for his captivating Instagram reels and vlogs that document his journeys across more than 30 countries. His engaging content has earned him accolades such as the 'Travel Influencer of the Year' at the Exhibit Awards. Anunay has collaborated with esteemed organisations including Switzerland Tourism, Visit Saudi, and the New Zealand Tourism Board.



"My tryst with content goes back to 2015, At the time, I was also working a full time job trying to save every buck to travel and click pictures.

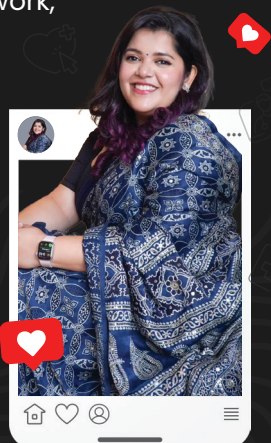
Eventually, I saw an opportunity in the travel space, something I've always dreamt about. Having travelled in India and abroad extensively, I saw that there is more that can be added on to the experience."

- Anunay Sood

d. Health

Dr. Tanaya Narendra

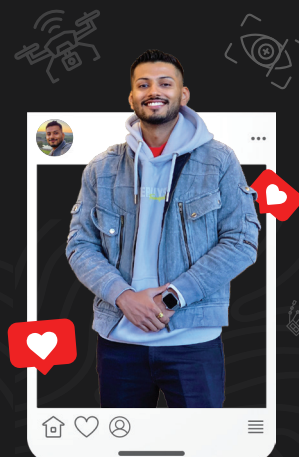
Known as Dr Tanaya is an Oxford-trained medical doctor and influencer renowned for simplifying sexual and reproductive health topics. With over a million followers on Instagram, she educates through engaging content. Her work, recognised by awards like Health Influencer of the Year, continues to empower audiences with accessible medical knowledge.



e. Tech & Gadgets Influencers

Shlok Srivastava

Widely known as Tech Burner, Shlok co-founded Layers in 2022 - marking his entry into the creator-led business space with the launch of mobile skins. Recognising the growing influence of digital creators and the trust they command among niche communities, Shlok leveraged his tech-savvy persona and massive YouTube following to transform content influence into commerce.



f. Entertainment Influencers

Bhuvan Bam

Known for his comedic YouTube channel BB Ki Vines, he has gone from a viral entertainer to a multi-industry success. Starting by creating comedic sketches and characters, Bhuvan quickly became a household name, attracting millions of views.



"The creator economy is no longer just about views and likes, it's about building platforms that reflect who we are and what we stand for. As creators step into entrepreneurship and storytelling at scale, we're shaping culture in real-time. With Peppy, I've gone beyond content to co-create a brand that's fresh, fearless, and for everyone."

- Bhuvan Bam

g. Beauty & Makeup Influencers

Ankush Bahuguna

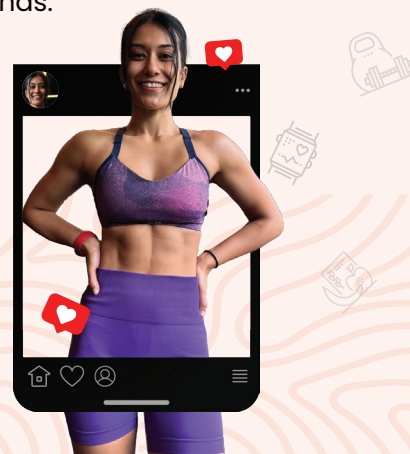
An Indian content creator and Ankush known for his comedic sketches and beauty tutorials. Initially pursuing architecture, he transitioned to content creation, gaining popularity with his humorous character 'Pankaz' and collaborations with celebrities.



h. Sports & Fitness Influencers

Radhika Bose

Popularly known as yogasini, is a yoga enthusiast and fitness blogger Radhika has one of the most successful fitness influencer stories in India. With her approachable style and commitment to wellness, Radhika has attracted more than half a million followers and has collaborated with numerous leading brands.





THE ART OF ALLIANCE

Trends observed
with Brands & Creators

THE ART OF ALLIANCE

Trends observed with Brands & Creators



As influencer marketing continues to rise in prominence, several key trends and shifts are shaping its trajectory in India. The evolving nature of this sector, combined with growing spending and valuable learnings, presents brands with new opportunities to engage audiences in more authentic and effective ways.

Brands moving monies

In 2024, an estimated ₹3600 crore was spent on influencer marketing, moreover, 92% of brands are planning to increase their IM spends in 2025. And almost all brands stating Influencer Marketing as their top / strategic priority. This signifies a growing shift towards digital-first strategies, with more brands recognising the effectiveness of social media influencers in driving sales and engagement.

Looking ahead, the influencer marketing sector in India is expected to continue growing with projections indicating a 25% annual growth from 2024 to 2026.

In fact, brands across diverse industries—including beauty and skin care, automotive, and e-commerce—are expected to increase their influencer marketing budgets in 2025. This growth is driven by the increasing demand for authentic content that resonates with younger, tech-savvy audiences who are spending more time on social media platforms.

The Shift Towards (niche) Micro and Macro Influencers

One of the most notable trends in 2024 is the increasing significance of niche micro influencers in India. Micro-influencers—those with 10,000 to 100,000 followers—are gaining traction for their ability to foster deeper connections with highly engaged, superniche audiences. These influencers often create more relatable, authentic content, leading to higher engagement rates compared to macro-influencers. Notably, a majority of the micro influencers are also from non-metros (Towns with <40 lacs population). Moreover, macro-influencers—those with 100,000 - 1M followers are proving invaluable due to their wide community. Given the need for brand safety, building trust and saliency, marketers prefer to work with macro-influencers.

In 2024, authenticity is paramount. Brands are looking for real connections.

Brands that collaborate with influencers who have a genuine rapport with their audience—rather than just focusing on follower counts.



Micro-Influencers, Influencer Trustworthiness, Integrations With Social Commerce And Diversification Of Platforms Will Be Critical In 2025

Future Trends Driving IM



Industry Type

	> 45%	> 85%	35%	> 30%
	> 83%	> 33%	33%	33%
	73%	48%	36%	52%
	> 64%	50%	> 55%	36%

Brand Type

	67%	54%	43%	37%
	71%	47%	32%	42%

INDUSTRY TYPE

Auto, Mobile phones, consumer durable	Retail/E-com	FMCG	BFSI

BRAND TYPE

Traditional	New Age

- > Over indexed to overall average by 20%
- > Under indexed to overall average by 20%

Total Base (n=105); Manufacturing (n=20); Retail/E-Comm (n=30); FMCG (n=33); BFSI (n=22);
Traditional Brands (n=67); New Age Brands (n=38)

Influencer Marketing in B2B

While influencer marketing has largely focused on B2C (business-to-consumer) campaigns, 2024 saw an increase in B2B influencer collaborations. In 2020, only 31% of B2B marketers used influencer marketing. This has moved up to 82% with B2B marketers

emphasizing the importance of influencer marketing. It is increasingly becoming a crucial part of the B2B marketing mix. 94% of B2B marketers also said influencer marketing is a successful strategy.

"Over the past two years, our partnership with Goat has played a pivotal role in bringing our #SecondBirthDate initiative to life. Their deep understanding of the influencer ecosystem and strategic approach to storytelling has helped us connect real-life experiences with heartfelt gratitude. Whether it was onboarding voices like Manisha Koirala, Chhavi Mittal or Rahul Roy, GOAT seamlessly integrated the campaign's narrative and ensured every story resonated with authenticity. Together, we've not only honoured the heroes in white coats but turned a topical opportunity to an event of significance, celebrating empathy and appreciation for doctors. GOAT has truly been a force multiplier in making this campaign a meaningful movement."



Ankeet Gandhi

DGM – Corporate Marketing,
Sun Pharma

Data-Driven Campaigns Are Key

Brand.AI (previously known as INCATech) was the first tech platform that introduced data-driven influencer planning when we launched, back in 2019. The platform helps marketers optimize creator mix basis several data points including each creator's platform & performance data, audience data including gender, location, etc. Brand.AI also has several other unique data points including a Genuity score, which gives us visibility of what percentage of the creators' audience is genuine and what portion is suspicious. The platform also has scores for brand safety (analysing the creator's past content & flagging off unsafe content) and trending creators, making it easy to choose the correct creators for each brief.

Besides influencer discovery, Brand.AI helps marketers understand what kind of content is deployed around a topic, what competition brands are doing on their social media - what platforms & formats are working in the category and what content works well in the category. The platform helps present data-backed analyses of otherwise "subjective" content decisions.

Once the right creator mix and ideal content/format has been identified, Influencer.AI steps in to complete the circle of automation. Influencer.AI aids creator outreach, creative iterations, final creative, deployment schedule, contracting, payments - all on a unified dashboard.

While the current market has several tools that aid creator discovery as a function, there is an increasing demand for automation across every aspect of influencer marketing campaigns - from brief to billing.

Full funnel solution

Brands are also shifting their approach along the customer journey funnel. Historically, influencers were primarily used for top-of-funnel brand awareness. However, as data analytics evolve, influencers are now a critical part of the middle and bottom of the funnel as well. They will not only raise awareness but also drive lead generation, sales conversions, and customer retention through direct engagement, discount codes, affiliate links, and product reviews.



Discovery of Influencers in Ads: Do Brands Need Traditional Advertising Anymore?

The increasing reliance on influencers is raising the question: Do brands still need traditional advertising? While traditional channels like TV and print will not disappear entirely, their role will diminish as digital-first campaigns become more powerful. As consumers in India increasingly bypass banner ads and TV commercials in favour of engaging with influencers on platforms like Instagram and YouTube, the power of influencer-led campaigns will only grow. Brands will focus on more integrated campaigns where influencers weave brand messages seamlessly into their content, moving away from overt advertising towards native, influencer-driven communication.

Long term association

We are witnessing another clear trend.

Companies that relied heavily only on short-term activations are now contemplating possibilities of medium-term investments. This change is very noticeable, notably in the Food and Auto sectors, where the speed of consumer expectation has reached a certain level, and brand-building has become more critical than quick virality.

For instance, both Yoga Bar and One Plus India, which were traditional discovery-driven brands, have now transitioned to a narrative-based format and are building sustained creator relationships. On the other hand, Maruti, who has come up with Grand Vitara and Jimny launches, demonstrates an understanding of the regular customer requirement through their consistent creator-driven content that goes along with the customer journey strategy.

Moreover, lifestyle brands like The Souled Store, Boat, Sugar, and Nykaa have become more aggressive in the use of creator-led strategies that are not only aimed at the launch spikes but throughout the product's life cycle—engaging them in dialogue throughout the changing seasons and product launches. Brands across categories are spotting raw talent and turning them into influencers through structured training and mentorship.





UNLOCKING INFLUENCER MARKETING IMPACT

**A Practical Guide
to Smarter
Measurement**

UNLOCKING INFLUENCER MARKETING IMPACT



A Practical Guide to Smarter Measurement

Shilpa Desai¹

Dinesh Sharma²

Arti D. Kalro³

WPP Media

goat



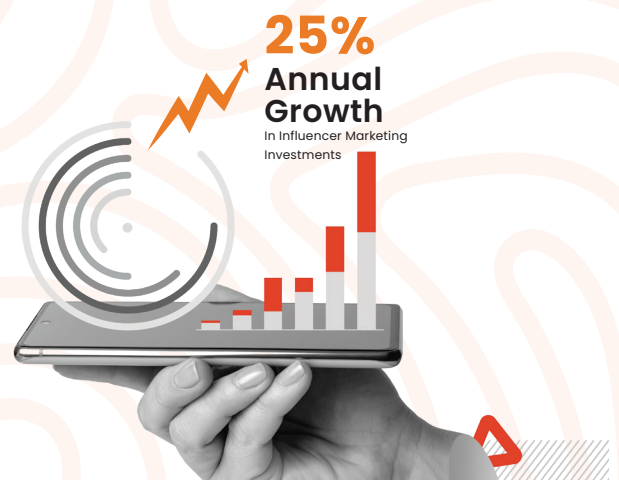
Why Influencer Marketing Measurement Matters?

In today's digital-first world, influencer marketing has become a cornerstone of brand strategy. With its rapidly expanding digital ecosystem, India has become a key market in influencer marketing, experiencing an impressive annual growth rate of 25% (Statista Research Department, 2023).

In contrast, the global influencer marketing industry was valued at USD 21.1 billion in 2023, reflecting a 29% growth from USD 16.4 billion in 2022 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024). This indicates that while India is experiencing significant growth, the global market is also expanding substantially.



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The Complexity of Measuring Influencer Marketing

While metrics such as reach and impressions dominate performance evaluation, they fail to account for deeper engagement dynamics that drive meaningful brand outcomes (Haenlein et al., 2024). Existing but scant research highlights the limitations of these metrics, pointing to the need for more sophisticated approaches that capture the interplay between content quality, audience relevance, and engagement depth (Keller, 2016). In India, these challenges are further amplified by unique market conditions. Traditional metrics such as follower count (a.k.a. indegree) and likes fail to capture the complex dynamics of consumer engagement, leading to misaligned strategies and suboptimal outcomes (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017)

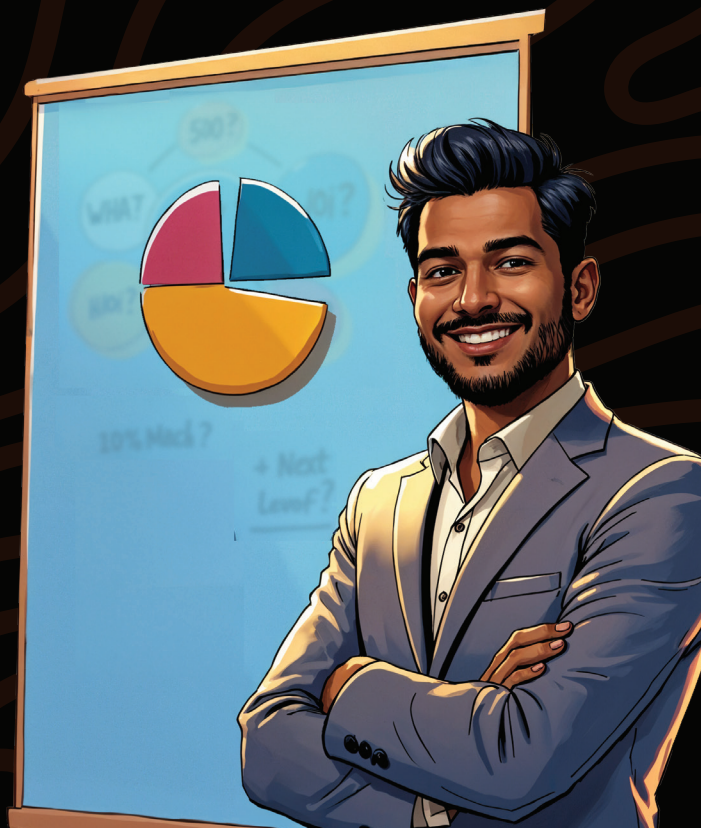
Hence, to unravel these complexities, WPP Media in collaboration with researchers from IIT Bombay created a framework from the existing field data of 52 brands to bridge the measurement gap and empower brand managers with actionable insights.

Research Design

This extensive dataset comprises over 60,000 influencer posts of 52 brands across eight sectors for campaigns undertaken from April 2022 to March 2023. Key variables considered in this research include audience demographics, content formats, engagement metrics, content genres, and follower size, and integrates qualitative inputs from structured interviews with 12 marketing managers, two media agencies, and 350 followers to provide a multi-faceted perspective. As world-renowned marketing researcher Keller (2016) suggested, this combination of quantitative and qualitative insights lends academic rigor to the findings while ensuring practical applicability for industry professionals.



Source: Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024



KEY COMPONENTS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

- › Audience demographics
- › Content formats
- › Engagement metrics
- › Content genres
- › Influencer follower sizes

SCOPE



› **60,000**
influencer posts

› **52**
brands

› **8**
categories

QUANTITATIVE DATA



QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS



› Interviews with
12
brand managers

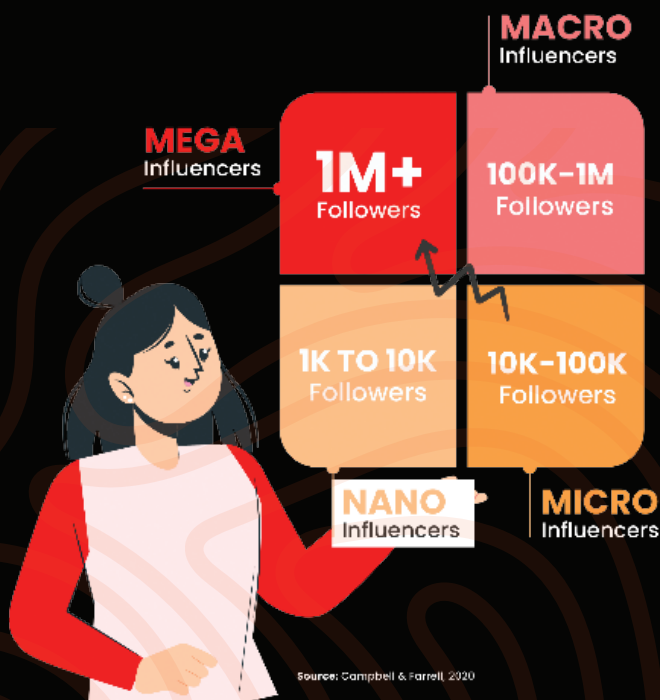
› **2**
media agencies

› Feedback from
350
followers

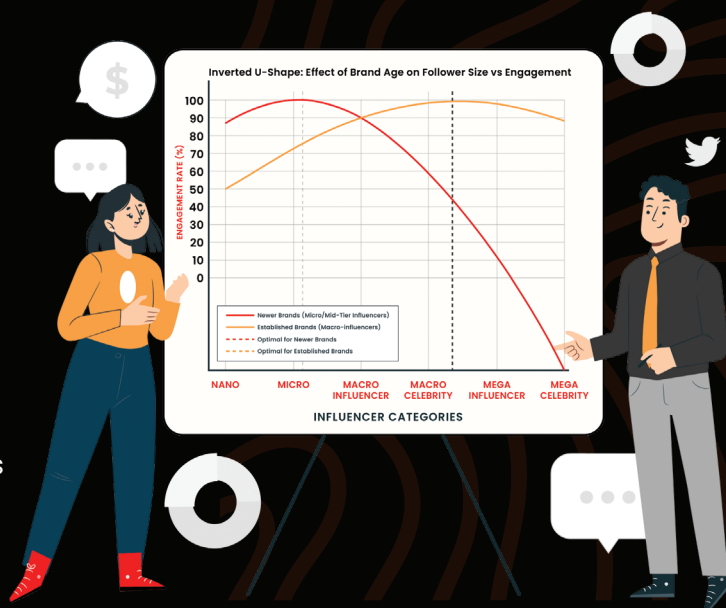
Key Insights

Brand managers often select influencers with a larger follower size with the assumption that followers equate to greater reach and visibility, often interpreted as a direct correlation to campaign success. However, our research finds a more complex dynamic: the relationship between follower size and engagement follows an inverted U-shaped curve, as suggested by Weis et al. (2023) in their study using simulation data. We further find that engagement rates initially increase as follower size grows (as shown in the figure below), reflecting the influencer's ability to reach larger audiences, while maintaining personal connections

Types of Influencers



Impact of Brand age on Engagement



Beyond a certain threshold, however, engagement begins to decline. This drop can be attributed to the dilution of personal interactions as the influencer's audience becomes less niche and more heterogeneous. Our research shows that authenticity, domain expertise, and audience alignment are critical factors. For instance, influencers with strong authenticity can mitigate the decline in engagement even as their follower size grows, as audiences perceive them as genuine and relatable (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). The brand's age, further influences this relationship. As shown in the adjoining table, for newer brands, micro and mid-tier influencers are particularly effective because their smaller, niche audiences foster trust and relatability. Established brands, on the other hand, often benefit from macro-influencers, who can amplify visibility and reinforce existing brand equity.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE STUDY

- › Authenticity
- › Domain Expertise
- › Audience Alignment

**FOLLOWER SIZE VS.
ENGAGEMENT:
IT'S NOT LINEAR**



**BRAND
AGE MATTERS**



**WHAT DRIVES
SUSTAINED
ENGAGEMENT?**

- **Newer Brands** ›
 - Perform better with micro and mid-tier influencers
 - These influencers offer more trust and relatability
- **Established Brands** ›
 - Benefit more from macro-influencers
- These partnerships help amplify visibility and reinforce brand equity

Practical Framework for Managers:

Managers can adopt a structured, data-driven approach to enhance the effectiveness of their influencer marketing campaigns. The first step is to define clear, measurable objectives that align with broader brand goals. For instance, brand awareness campaigns should prioritize reach and share of voice, with specific targets such as increased impressions over a specific period. For engagement-focused campaigns, meaningful interactions—such as an uplift in positive sentiment—are more valuable than superficial metrics like likes.

Conversion-oriented campaigns should employ advanced tracking mechanisms, such as unique affiliate codes or pixel-based attribution, to precisely quantify ROI. Fostering long-term partnerships with high-performing influencers provides sustained value. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, managers must adopt sophisticated frameworks for measurement. This research demonstrates that traditional metrics are insufficient in capturing the full impact of influencer marketing. Managers can drive meaningful outcomes and ensure sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive digital ecosystem by aligning strategies with market segments, brand lifecycle stages, and engagement quality metrics.



KEY TAKEOUTS FROM THE STUDY

- › Prioritise **quality of engagement** over likes and views.
- › Monitor **authentic interactions**, **brand mentions**, and **share of voice**.

SET CLEAR, MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES



GO BEYOND VANITY METRICS

- › **Brand awareness**
- › **Engagement**
- › **Conversions**
- › Focus on **reach** and **impressions**.
- › Track **sentiment uplift**, **comments**, and **shares**
- › Use **affiliate codes**, **pixel-based tracking**, and **custom CTAs**

BUILD LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP



- › Foster **ongoing partnerships** with high-performing influencers.
- › Long-term collaborations tend to improve **trust** and **campaign ROI** over time.

CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing measurement must evolve beyond basic KPIs. This research underscores the importance of nuanced metrics that consider:

Key content tips



**AUDIENCE
DYNAMICS**



**CAMPAIGN
GOALS**



**INFLUENCER-
BRAND FIT**



**LIFECYCLE OF
THE BRAND**

By aligning measurement strategies with these variables, managers can drive meaningful business outcomes and ensure sustained growth in a competitive digital landscape.





INFLUENCE WITH INTEGRITY

INFLUENCE WITH INTEGRITY



Shift in Brand Perception: Humanising Brands and Creating Emotional Bonds

In 2025, brands will increasingly focus on humanizing their image, using influencers to forge emotional bonds with their audiences. Consumers today are more inclined to connect with brands that feel relatable and authentic, making it essential for companies to move beyond just product promotions and delve into deeper, more personal narratives. Influencers are the ideal partners for this shift, as they often embody the human side of brands, bringing a personal touch that traditional advertising struggles to achieve.

Brands like Nike and Coca-Cola have already tapped into the power of influencer collaborations to share stories of inspiration, perseverance, and individuality, resonating on an emotional level with their target audiences. In 2025, this emotional connection will become even more important, with brands striving to foster authentic relationships and tap into consumers' values, ultimately creating a sense of belonging around their products and services.

Impact of Regulation on Influencer Marketing

As influencer marketing becomes a larger part of the advertising ecosystem, regulations surrounding transparency and ethical practices will also become more stringent. In India, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) and Department of Consumer Affairs (DOCA) has already set guidelines requiring influencers to clearly disclose paid promotions. New ASCI guidelines now hold influencers to higher standards when promoting health and financial products on digital platforms. However, as the market matures, brands and influencers will face increased scrutiny to ensure authenticity and transparency.

In 2023, the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, released the 'Endorsements Know-hows' guideline for creators, influencers, celebrities, and virtual influencers on social media. Influencers will need to be more transparent about their affiliations, and brands will have to stay ahead of the regulatory curve to safeguard consumer trust. The 'Endorsements Know-hows' guideline by the GOI aims to ensure that individuals do not mislead their audiences while endorsing products or services and that they comply with the Consumer Protection Act.



Localized and Personalised Communication

While national influencers are key for reaching large-scale audiences, local and regional influencers are carving out an incredibly valuable space, particularly for region-specific campaigns. The growing importance of hyper-local targeting allows brands to connect with smaller, highly engaged communities.

Payal Raut from Pune is known for her comedy content in Marathi language. Her content is deeply inspired by Maharashtrian culture and aims to target that specific region. Parul and Yogesh, a fun-loving Gujju couple are popular for their relatable reels in Gujarati language. As regional and local influencers started gaining traction, multiple top brands like Parachute, Colgate, and Meesho are targeting regional influencers to build relevance and reach in specific markets.

In the beginning, the influencer landscape was dominated by urban areas, but that's quickly changing. Thanks to the rapid penetration of internet access. For brands aiming to tap into these emerging markets, regional influencers who have deep, authentic connections with their communities are key partners.

Varsha Dahiya, an artist from a village in Rohtak, is promoting handmade art and traditional techniques. Her deep-rooted love for Hindi and handmade art and traditional techniques has inspired many, helping her gain more than 500K followers on Instagram. On the other hand, creators like Kapil Kanpuriya and Rajiv Kumar have gained popularity by creating content with humour that resonates with that region-specific audiences.

Personalization will be the cornerstone of influencer marketing in 2025. As AI and data analytics improve, brands will leverage these tools to craft localized and personalised content that directly addresses the needs of individual consumers.

Content Ecosystem: Creativity Over High Production, Diverse Engaging Media Formats

In 2025, the content ecosystem will prioritize creativity over high production value. As audiences continue to demand more relatable and authentic content, the emphasis will shift away from highly polished, corporate-style advertisements and towards raw, creative, and often user-generated content.

Brands will continue to work with influencers who can harness their creativity to deliver diverse media formats that engage their followers in new and exciting ways. We will likely see even more dynamic formats emerging, including live streaming, interactive polls, and user-generated content, all of which encourage active participation from followers.



“Influencers today are not just a powerful cultural force, but also an important marketing lever. Unilever’s recent announcement to increase the investment in influencer marketing manifolds is just another testimony to the rising influence of influencers.

Besides reach, they are also being leveraged by brands for meaningful engagement with their audience. But not many have been able to crack that elusive code that unlocks the right blend of brand, authenticity and creativity in the influencer content.

In my experience, a truly effective influencer content is created when brands and agencies give the control of creativity to the influencer themselves. They know their audience and what they watch the best. They know why that audience pays the influencer back with their extremely precious attention. Smart marketers find a way to get a part of that attention by subtly weaving their brand narrative with the influencer’s authentic style of storytelling. Marketers should find those organic moments in the story for their brand to play its part. They should avoid making brand the story itself.

That makes the choice of influencer equally important. Brands must be careful about who they entrust their brand narrative to. Find a voice that not just authentically resonates with the brand’s desired audience but also aligns with brand’s own tone of voice and style of communication. It doesn’t mean that a comedy influencer can’t deliver a serious message. They can, if it is delivered in the distinct style of that influencer.”



Rahul Pahwa

Lead, StudioX,
India and South West Asia

Emphasis on Diversity, Sustainability, and Ethical Movements

With the rise of conscious consumerism, brands are increasingly prioritizing social responsibility and sustainability in their marketing campaigns. In 2024, we saw more brands partnering with influencers who champion causes such as eco-friendly products, social justice, and inclusivity. The demand for purpose-driven marketing has grown, with consumers, particularly the younger generation, expecting brands to align with their values. For instance, influencers advocating for sustainable products, like eco-conscious beauty brands or green tech solutions, are gaining momentum in India. These partnerships not only resonate with the audience but also create a sense of trust and loyalty. Brands that demonstrate authenticity in their commitments to sustainability and ethical causes are likely to see long-term success.

Cultural Sensitivity and Regional Focus

India's immense cultural diversity requires brands to take a regionally tailored approach to influencer marketing. Understanding regional preferences, languages, and cultural nuances is essential for creating impactful campaigns. Influencers who are in tune with local cultures and trends can drive higher engagement and resonate more deeply with their followers.

This regional focus is especially important in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, where digital consumption is increasing rapidly, offering brands the opportunity to reach new markets and audiences.

“Collaborating with Goat has significantly enhanced PC Chandra Jewellers’ brand visibility. Their regional market expertise and creator collaborations brought our in-store experience to life across cities. The precision-led storytelling resonated with audiences, strengthening customer trust and elevating our brand. All PCCJ campaigns, with Goat’s seamless execution and local insights, authentically showcased our collections, service, offerings and store charm.”



Oushnik Chandra
CEO, P.C. Chandra Jewellers

CONCLUSION

The influencer marketing (IM) industry is growing rapidly. It is increasingly becoming a critical part of brand and marketing strategy with over 92% of the brands mentioning that Influencer Marketing is of strategic importance in their marketing mix.

The market size of Influencer Marketing in India is estimated to be ₹3,600 crore and is predicted to grow 25% in 2025.

In a major shift in brand preferences, we have witnessed the below trends:



Preference to the quality of the content

36%

and engagement rate

39%

over the number of followers showing more maturity in the use of influencers, not to be just seen but believed and remembered



Pivot towards niche micro-influencers is another striking trend, with overall

51%

of brands and

85%

of manufacturing brands – including auto, consumer durables, and handsets- are planning to engage and create deeper audience connections using micro-influencers



Focus on long-term partnerships with over

72%

of brands overall, and by a remarkable

95%

within manufacturing sectors, indicating a major shift from transactional campaigns to long-lasting relations with influencers

CONCLUSION

At a deeper level, the rise of influencer marketing reflects a broader societal shift and a recent shift in consumerism. Over two-thirds of consumers now rely on influencers for product discovery, understanding, and action.

Influencers are no longer peripheral—they are central to the consumer journey and are helping in all stages of the purchase funnel. This long-lasting relationship with their audience is especially critical for high-trust categories like BFSI (77%) and FMCG (76%), where influencers serve as conduits of credibility in an information-saturated landscape.

Ultimately, as 71% of brands integrate influencer marketing throughout their annual marketing calendar, Influencer Marketing is being redefined as a strategic imperative. In this complex ecosystem where data meets storytelling, the Indian influencer landscape is poised to become both a mirror of consumer trust and a driver of brand transformation.





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