

Creators remain key to YouTube's commerce strategy, but livestreaming may play a larger role

Article

Under the influence: A huge part of YouTube's success is attracting and retaining content creators. In fact, 25% of US social network users say that YouTube is the best platform to promote a product through an influencer, more than Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, according to a December 2022 survey by Izea.

To maintain those relationships, YouTube recently updated its creator offerings:

- In March, the platform announced that over 100,000 creators, artists, and brands had **connected their own stores to YouTube channels**, enabling users to more easily find and purchase featured products.
- Also in March, the **platform expanded its affiliate shopping capabilities** to all creators after a successful test and “clear feedback” that creators are interested in the revenue opportunities the program provides.
- **YouTube has expanded eligibility** for its YouTube Partner Program, enabling both Shorts creators and creators early in their journey to participate.
- The platform has also partnered with over 50 brands (including Nordstrom, Sephora, Ulta Beauty, and Wayfair) to allow their products to be featured and tagged in videos or Shorts.

Taking care of business: But it's not just B2C consumers turning to YouTube for recommendations. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of B2B buyers worldwide say that YouTube has influenced a recent B2B purchase decision, per a December 2022 survey by Gartner.

US B2B ad spending will reach \$31.72 billion this year, according to our forecast. While LinkedIn remains a tried-and-true platform for B2B advertising, marketers should also focus on YouTube, according to our **B2B Social Media Marketing** report. On YouTube, B2B influencers share expert opinions, research, and analysis while viewers can learn more about new technologies or get an inside scoop on what it's like to work at a certain company.

Go with the stream: **YouTube shut down its Indian live social commerce app**, Simsim, less than two years after acquiring it, per TechCrunch. But the platform's livestreaming ambitions aren't dead. In June, YouTube announced it would launch its **first official shopping channel for live commerce** in South Korea, according to Yonhap as reported by Reuters.

It doesn't seem there are plans to launch live shopping channels in the US, but considering retailers like **Walmart**, **Fanatics**, and **Amazon** are also investing in livestreaming, it wouldn't be surprising if YouTube brought its program stateside.

- As of April, only 18% of US adults have participated in live shopping, per Bizrate Insights and Insider Intelligence.
- However, YouTube is the most popular platform where US internet users watch creator- or influencer-led livestreams, according to The Influencer Marketing Factory.

The bottom line: With US retail social commerce sales growing to \$130.10 billion by 2026, per our forecast, it's easy to see why YouTube has social commerce on the brain. We expect the platform to continue doubling down on its creator relationships while also experimenting with new capabilities (like livestream commerce) that could open up new revenue potential.

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