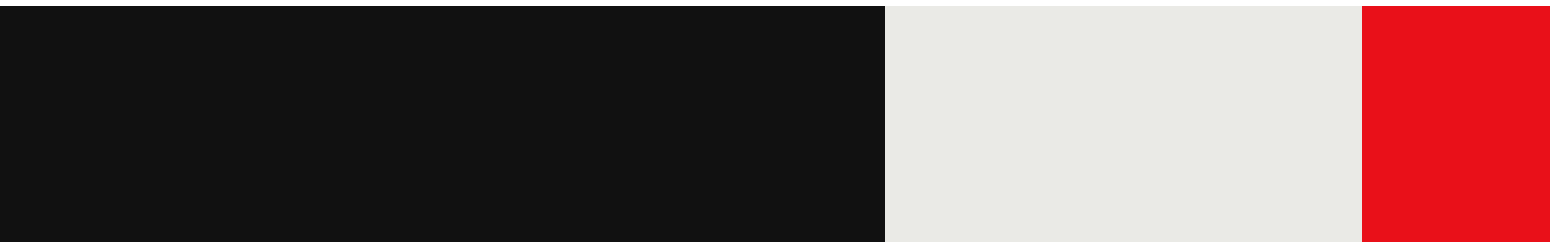



3 shifts and opportunities in the creator economy

Article



“The creator economy is at an inflection point,” our analyst Jasmine Enberg said on our [“Beyond Brand Deals: How Marketers Can Navigate the New Creator Economy”](#) webinar. “We’re at a moment now where it seems like every marketer has recognized that they need to be working with creators.”

Nearly four in 10 US marketing decision-makers expect to increase their budget on creator and [influencer marketing](#) this year, according to January 2024 data by the Interactive Advertising Bureau and Advertiser Perceptions. Here’s what marketers need to know about the evolving [creator economy](#).

1. Marketers have the upper hand in their pick of creators

Among US [Gen Zers](#) who are active online, 65% consider themselves video content creators, according to May 2024 data by YouTube. In addition, as of July 2023, the US had 27 million self-identified income-earning creators, per the Keller Advisory Group. “You can just see how big the creator pool really is—and that means there’s inevitably going to be a lot more competition for ad dollars and consumer spending,” Enberg said.

The opportunity: The saturation of [social media](#) creators means marketers have an advantage in selecting the right personality—with the right audience—to represent their brand and negotiating contracts. That may make it easy for marketers to focus on the biggest and smallest creators, while neglecting the mid-ranged ones.

“It’s a marketer’s mistake if they’re ignoring both the middle-class of creators as well as the middle of the [marketing funnel](#) because there’s a lot of value there. These middle creators can really help bring a splashy campaign to life in a way that’s more relatable and less transactional than an affiliate marketing deal,” Enberg said.

2. Brands are signing deals with fewer influencers

In 2023, the majority (46%) of US marketers were working with one to five influencers per campaign, per an August 2023 report by Linqia. That’s a big drop compared with 2021, when the most common number of influencers per campaign was between 11 and 20.

“Brands are getting more sophisticated about how they’re partnering with creators. We’ve moved from this era of one-off campaigns, with a lot of creators, to prioritizing more long-term relationships with fewer brand ambassadors,” Enberg said. That’s why we’re seeing an increase in the number of campaigns, yet a decrease in the number of creators brands are working with.

The opportunity: Influencer budgets are rising, but they’re favoring “always-on” deals with creators that have developed deeper, more long-standing brand relationships. These relationships set the stage for omnichannel campaigns that go beyond social media. Marketers should consider ways to extend their creator partnerships to TV ads or live in-person events, for example.

3. Performance has become first and foremost

“Marketers now have more data, tools, and other resources than ever before, and they’re leveraging it to inform their strategies and optimize campaigns,” Enberg said. This is pushing marketers to work toward measurable results, playing at the two extremes: “They are tapping big creators for brand awareness campaigns and smaller ones for affiliate marketing deals,” Enberg said.

The opportunity: The rise of TikTok Shop and new native features on YouTube are fueling the growth of affiliate marketing, which will be more than a \$1 billion market for creators in the US this year, per our March 2024 forecast. For marketers looking to prove the value of their influencer investments, affiliate deals are an easy way to drive lower-funnel goals because affiliate sales are [attributable](#).

[Watch the full webinar.](#)

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