

Q&A: Tapping the power of Gen Z consumers with social commerce platform LTK

Article

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Influencers hold a strong grip on young consumers. By 2026, the vast majority of marketers (88.7%) will rely on influencer marketing, according to **our forecast**. Kristi O'Brien, general

manager of the Brand Platform at LTK, spoke with Insider Intelligence about targeting Gen Z consumers, the prevalence of social commerce, and back-to-school trends.

Insider Intelligence: How is the Gen Z consumer shopping?

Kristi O'Brien: Gen Z is mobile-first. In a recent study, we saw that 73% of Gen Z do the majority of their shopping on a mobile device, and they don't use a desktop at all. Additionally, 83% of Gen Z reports that some or all of their shopping originates with social media. When we look at what's influencing their purchase decisions online, Gen Z says creators have the most influence on social media, outranking sponsored ads and celebrity posts. Creators have a massive impact on the Gen Z consumer and influence what they decide to buy.

II: Why should brands collaborate with influencers?

KO: Creators are the new retail shopping model. They bring a level of authenticity that is unmatched. We call it “creator commerce,” and LTK pioneered it more than a decade ago, giving consumers a way to discover and shop products tried and styled by real people they follow and trust. Creators can reach audiences so much better than other platforms. While they're very good at driving sales, creators are also extremely good at driving awareness and changing brand sentiment.

Once you get a consumer shopping from a creator, they don't stop. Following a creator is the single most efficient and powerful way to discover products. We are overwhelmed by choices on the internet, and creators serve as a guide to help navigate those options. Gen Z is embracing it faster than anyone else, but as soon as you get a creator's shopping guide into consumers' hands they adopt it and become addicted to it.

II: What back-to-school trends do you predict?

KO: Price is the single most important factor, coming before convenience and selection. It's not unique, but we're seeing it much stronger this year than previously.

Secondly, consumers are shopping earlier and shopping windows are expanding so it's similar to the holiday season. Nearly a third of shoppers planned to shop between late June and early July, meaning a lot are done. Gen Z is a little bit different as their shopping will peak in August. We're telling creators to focus their content on what's important to shoppers during these time frames depending on who your audience is. For example, that August time frame is great for college content.

From a back-to-school perspective, buying online is the second best money-saving strategy. With current gas prices, we see this strategy will be very strong, especially with Gen Z, 65% of whom said they will shop online to save money.