

Retailers lean into cost-conscious influencer strategies

Article

As retail spending slows down, consumers are increasingly using the same feeds that fuel impulse shopping to bond over the collective desire to curb their spending. This makes an influencer strategy embedded in value and relatability crucial.

- US consumer spending rose just 1.8% YoY in Q1 2025—a drop from 4.0% in Q4 2024, per the US Commerce Department. 45.6% of consumers say a similar lifestyle makes them trust an influencer’s opinion, compared to 19.8% who trust those with a high follower count, per a 2025 Grin survey.
- The top reason consumers are “deinfluenced,” or talked out of buying something based on [social media](#) content, is because they don’t trust the influencers who promote the products (32%), per a July 2024 Credit Karma survey.

“With recession trends on the rise, consumers are becoming more cautious with their spending and, in turn, more sensitive to extravagance on social media,” said Victor Valle, social media [marketing](#) and community manager at GRIN. “Brands need to adjust their messaging and influencer strategy to remain empathetic during economic downturns, as audiences want more transparency than ever before.”

How retailers are approaching partnerships with value in mind

Major low-budget retailers are recognizing how influencers can help them reach value-oriented consumers, emphasizing the connection between influencer marketing and cost-consciousness.

- Dollar Tree has recently formed partnerships with creators like Rebecca Shobat (@dollartreedinners), who built a following of over 3 million on TikTok following by sharing unpaid content featuring affordable recipes created with ingredients from the retailer.
- Influencer marketing agency Obviously joined Walmart's [retail media](#) network last year, indicating the value of first-party data on cost-efficient shoppers in the influencer marketing space.

55% of consumers say discount codes are what compels them to purchase based on influencer recommendations, according to Sprout Social’s 2024 Report.

- In H1 2024, 32.3% of influencer affiliate conversions included a coupon, up from 8.8% the prior year, according to Awin data.

Discounts also have the added benefit of sales attribution for marketers, who now prioritize sales over awareness in their influencer campaigns, according to a January Influencer Marketing Hub report.

The case for influencer partnerships amidst budget cuts

While consumers demand trust and relatability from influencers, most aren't deterred by paid partnerships. Only 16.5% of consumers said they are less likely to buy from a paid partnership because they prefer organic recommendations, per the Grin study.

Switching to less expensive brands or product alternatives is the most common step US adults said they have taken to prepare for potential price increases related to tariffs (28%), according to an April 2025 Collage Group report. Instead of deprioritizing influencer marketing in a period of tightened spending, brands can focus on value-driven messaging and partners that reflect their target consumer, opposed to those with aspirational lifestyles.

Offering explanations on their pricing is another way brands can maintain this engagement, said Valle.

“Breaking down costs and showing what goes into pricing are great ways to build trust,” he said. “For luxury brands, highlighting quality and value will be especially important for maintaining consumer trust amidst economic uncertainty.”

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