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smartlab : REPORT

influencer marketing

THE INDUSTRY THINKS IT'S THE NEXT BIG THING—
BUT WHAT DO CONSUMERS THINK?

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Research among “paying players” indicates that **social media influencers** are revolutionizing the way we shop.

Just take a look at this **extensive study**, published by *Relatable*, which surveyed 351 marketing teams and agencies, or **this study**, published by *Influencer Marketing Hub*, which surveyed 800 marketing teams and agencies.

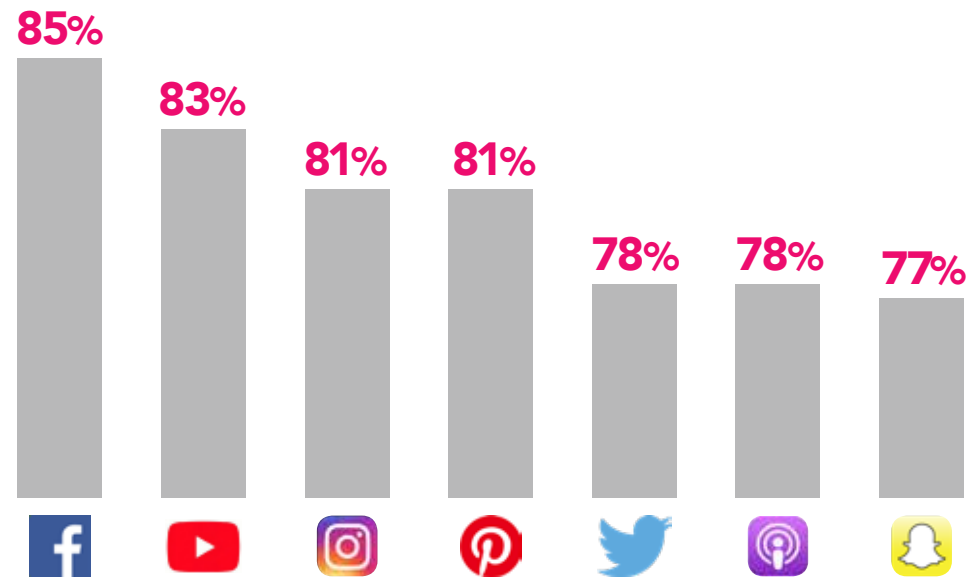
But, what do consumers think?

Few have studied the impact of social media influencers from the consumer perspective—including what gives an influencer “influence.” We designed our research to find out!

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Social shopping is here to stay.

Consumers confirmed sustained or increased impact on purchases across social platforms as compared to the previous year.




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the broader social shopping landscape

"I bought shapewear advertised (on Facebook)." 

"I bought protein shakes advertised (on Instagram)." 


"I tried out a beverage that I saw advertised (on YouTube)." 

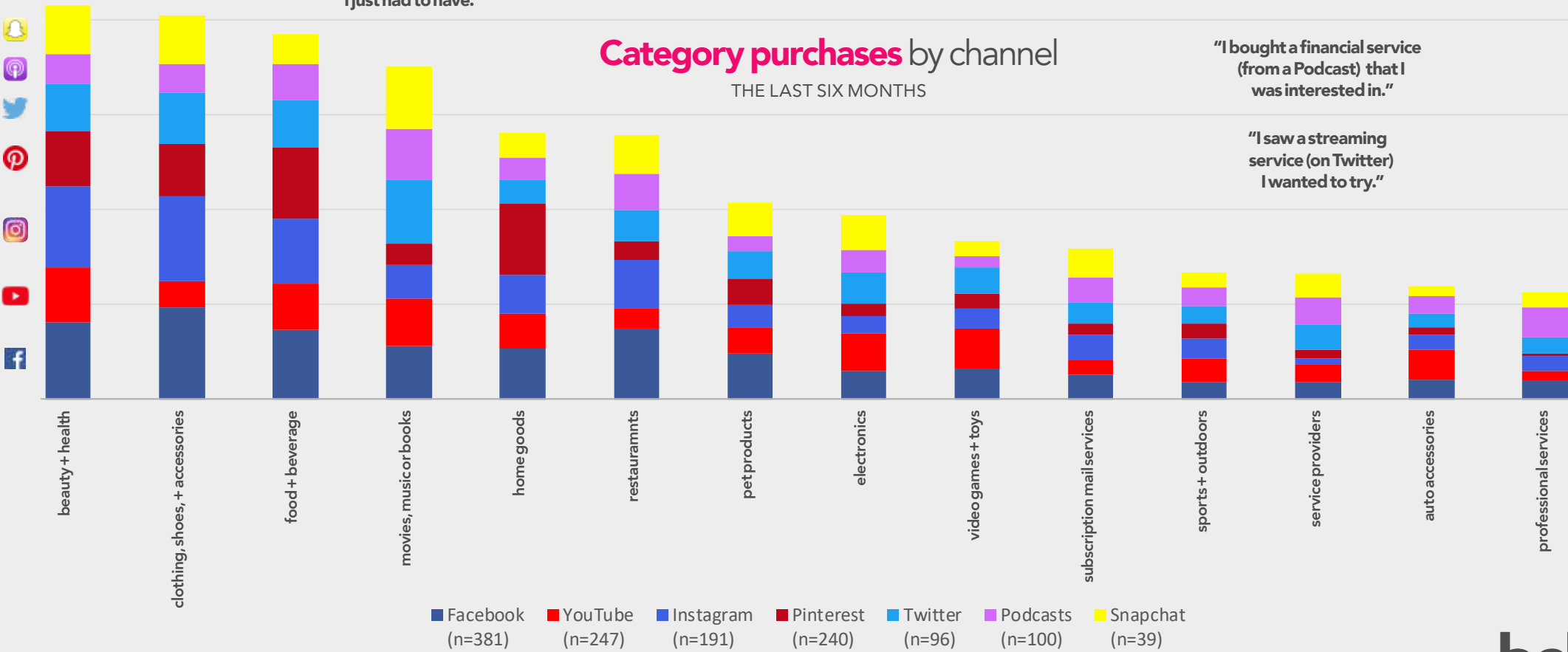
"I saw an outfit someone was wearing (on Snapchat) and went to buy it." 

"I saw a home decorative item (on Pinterest) that I just had to have." 

Category purchases by channel
THE LAST SIX MONTHS

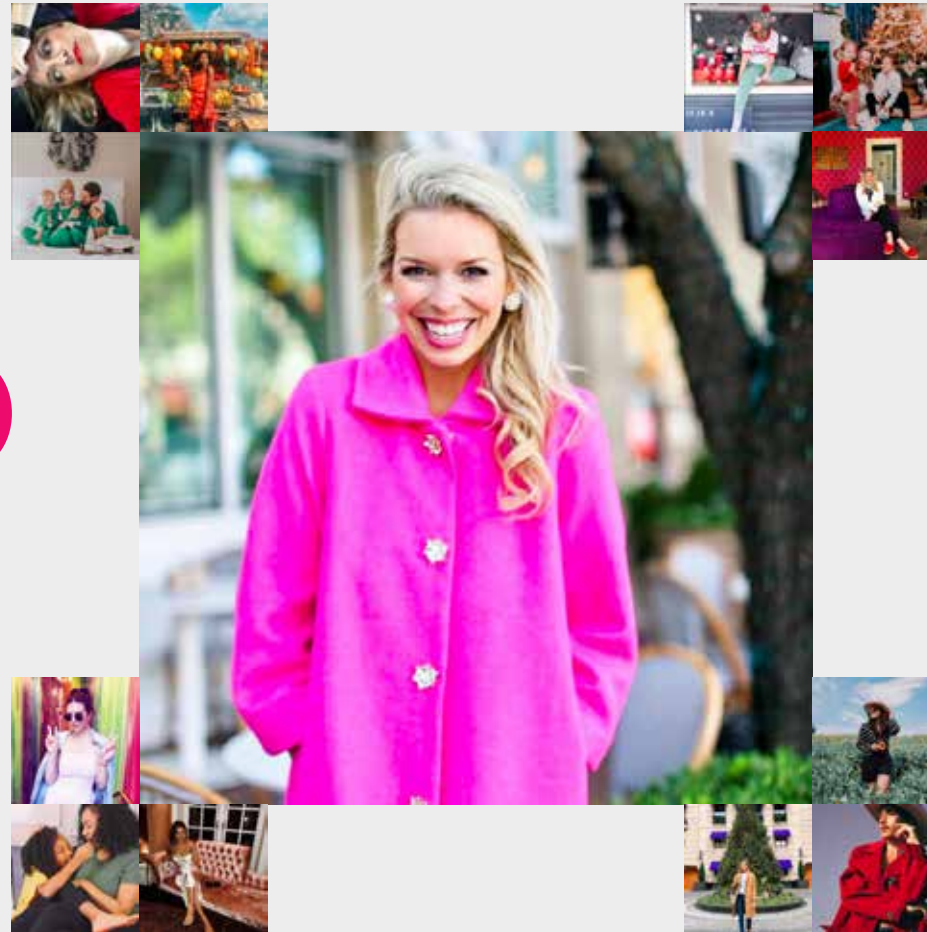
"I bought a financial service (from a Podcast) that I was interested in." 

"I saw a streaming service (on Twitter) I wanted to try." 



peer reviews + authenticity

are favored by the social shopping landscape



9 out of 10

admit to being influenced by a review

Reviews and comments currently have an instrumental role in online purchase decision making. 90% say it influences them to some degree, with 20% saying it greatly influences them.

With consumers becoming more dependent on reviews, influencers—or professional reviewers—have a captive audience.

sponsored content

has minimal impact

Only 6% of respondents say “sponsored posts” have any considerable influence, with 56% saying they have no influence at all. Companies looking to target new audiences are likely to see less success by posting their own content and paying to have it boosted to new viewers.

The dreaded “sponsored” label can be circumvented by partnering with an influencer account to tap into their already-committed followers.

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reviews. **visuals.** deals.

These three factors increase social impact on purchases



29%

say video demos have
considerable influence

reviews

REAL reviews + more details

"Rarely does an ad influence my purchase. If I am in the market to purchase, I will read the reviews from several sites to make a smart purchase."

"I use YouTube to look at reviews and demonstrations of every major purchase I make."

visuals

picture quality + demos

Pictures influence purchases 30% considerably, 60% at least moderately

Video influences purchases 29% considerably, 58% at least moderately

deals

+ scarcity tactics

"Price is very important; I follow several sites that post deals that must be purchased quickly before they sell out due to low price."

"Coupon/deal posted with video/Extra discounts or referral codes."

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Influencers authentically
magnify exactly those things
that increase purchase impact:
reviews, visuals, and deals.



The dictionary definition of influencer is
"a person or thing that influences another."
On social media, it's exactly that: a person
who has built trust and credibility and is
able to influence people by recommending
products and services.

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influencers have gained **trust**

Consumers impacted by social content from influencers often **trust influencer content more than brand content**

46%

said a product ad or review from an influencer/blogger/trendsetter is more compelling than an ad from the product company



50%

said they were more likely to try new products and services based on reviews from influencers/bloggers/trendsetters



40%

said they make purchase decisions more quickly after seeing an ad or review from an influencer/blogger/trendsetter



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consumers connect with influencers

often in ways they can't with a brand—sometimes, it's like looking in a mirror



Influencers build trust through their reviews

"YouTubers I follow that I already feel a connection to are who I trust to recommend things."

"I was familiar with the non-celebrity blogger from another platform and trust his advice and recommendations since he is in a similar business to mine."



They demonstrate products—especially powerful for clothing

"I follow petite bloggers for fashion and it changes the way I shop because I like seeing clothing on similar body types. If it looks good on them, then it's more likely to look good on me as well. They also choose clothing that I would not normally pick out myself which also influences what I purchase."

"Tons of Blush is one of them. She has a lot of fashion sense as a plus-sized woman and shows off lots of style."

"I like accounts that deal with food and makeup. They usually feature pictures of food and/or beauty products that I want to go out and buy or make."

They're real people who humanize the brand

"Jeffree Star and Shawn Dawson are my favorite accounts because they are totally crazy, acknowledge it—but are very intelligent and knowledgeable about products and the world at the same time. They help me learn how to better myself, especially in regards to my physical appearance and keep me uplifted and entertained."



They truly offer great deals

"I have found amazing deals through bloggers, like Ashley Hart and Krazykouponlady, they have deals that are too amazing to pass up."

"I love Freebie Guy because he tells us about freebies, contests, and giveaways."



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instagram + millennials

where influencers are gaining the most traction

instagram
+ influencers

61%

of people who say
Instagram is impacting
their purchases also
follow influencers

45% of those followers
say they've bought
more on Instagram
compared to last year



instagram
+ millennials

22%

of Millennials say
Instagram influences
purchases, with 30%
saying this has increased
from last year

millennials
+ influencers

20%

of Millennial respondents said influ-
encers are impacting their purchase
decisions considerably—and trust
influencers as much as brands

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men + gen x are also under the influence

—particularly on YouTube and Facebook

Men and women are just as likely to follow influencers, but men are showing an interesting trend on YouTube, specifically



22%

of men say YouTube has impacted their purchases more this year compared to last. In fact, 39% of men use YouTube—second most popular behind Facebook

To better capture men, companies should partner with influencers with a strong YouTube presence



22%

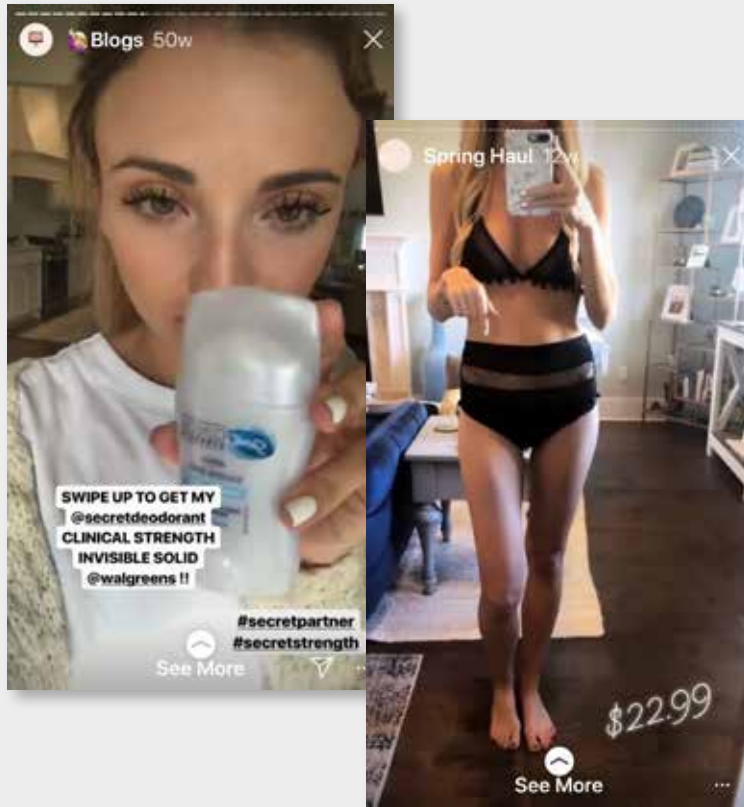
of Gen X respondents say Facebook has impacted purchases more this year compared to last year

To better capture Gen X, companies should partner with influencers active on Facebook

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direct links + swipe-ups

Consumers love convenience, making these options game changers



40%

of Instagram users said they've used a link to make a purchase without doing much additional research



"A quick link makes for faster purchase decisions."

"Before, you could not use links directly to products on IG, so this was harder to do. Now, there are a ton with links, especially in the IG Stories, so it's easier to click and buy."

"Walmart and Amazon are SO good at this! Because they have direct-to-purchase links right in the post, I can go straight through and buy, using my existing accounts at both sites." "I like when brands I already know and love do ads that are albums of products that you can swipe through with links for each one directly."

"If an influencer/spokesperson uses and reviews the product so I can see it in person, I'm much more likely to purchase, especially if there's a swipe-up link."

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What's next for this trend?

Platforms are evolving so consumers can make purchases even easier, ensuring continued adoption.



Forget direct links that open up in a separate app or browser window. Instagram is already testing features that will allow users to buy products directly in the app



YouTube is testing shopping links under videos that will allow users to purchase products featured in the video or related to the content in the video

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authenticity may be harder to achieve

as influencer marketing grows

Now that influencers are ubiquitous, consumers are becoming more selective

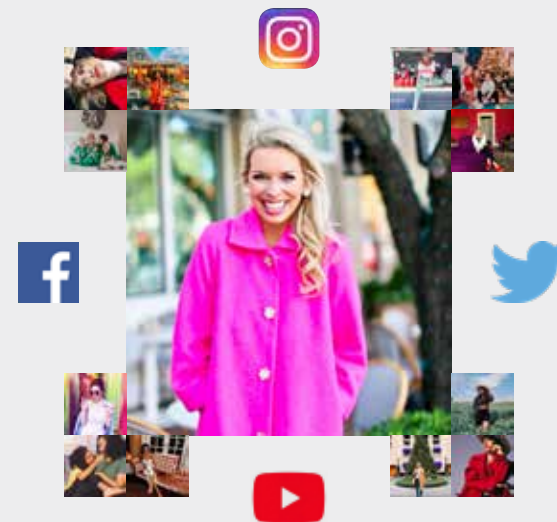
"I used to rely on product reviews, but now I take into consideration the experience and expertise of influencers."

"The reason I love @thesisterstudioig is because the outfits/pieces she highlights AREN'T sponsored—and, if they are, she does a great job of making them feel organic."

"I like honesty. And I want to see a non-doctored ad for the product. Not a slick marketing campaign. I'm skeptical of corporate ads and seasoned bloggers because they use influence whether the product is crap or not. I trust a few bloggers—who aren't celebrities—with recommendations."

The disillusioned safeguard final purchase decisions by doing their own research

"I think these sources make me consider new products, but I don't buy solely on their recommendation or reputation. I still have to do my homework!"



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now what?

Jump on the influencer bandwagon—but have a strategy!

33%

of those surveyed said if a company wants their business, they would advise them to partner with an influencer/
blogger/trendsetter

Ask yourself the following:

What audience are you trying to target?

What platforms would be best for your product or service?

Which influencer(s) should you partner with?

How will you maintain authenticity?

Who are you trying to reach?

Age, gender, ethnicity, size/
body type, life stage, etc.

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Smartlab by Bellomy

Our proprietary panel is comprised of 2,600 respondents available for quick-turn research, including traditional surveys, video responses, online qualitative, and other techniques

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Bellomy's Smartlab panel—or your own proprietary panel we create for you—can be used for deeper and more customized insights

Contact Bellomy at info@bellomy.com /// 800.443.7344

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