THE INFLUENCER MARKETING FACTORY

BRAND DEALS REPORT

2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 Top Findings

6 Methodology

7 Paid Content Disclosures

12 Creator Performance by Tier

16 Top Brands & Categories

17 Influencer Marketing Seasonality Trends

A note from our CEO

The data in this report exposes a **quiet inefficiency** at the heart of how **most brands** run **influencer marketing**.

An average of **63% of brand-influencer relationships** in our US dataset are **one-off**. Brands hire an influencer, run one post, and move on. Yet an average of **37%** who **collaborate repeatedly** generate a **disproportionate share** of **total content**, deeper **audience trust**, and stronger **commercial signals**. The pattern is consistent across Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

This is the case against **transactional influencer marketing**. Single-post deals optimize for reach in a vacuum. They underweigh **what actually compounds**: influencer familiarity with the brand, audience recognition, narrative continuity, and the cumulative authority that turns a sponsored post into a recommendation people remember.

The brands **winning** the **next decade** of **influencer marketing** will not be the ones with the longest influencer lists. They will be the ones with the **deepest influencer relationships**. Fewer partners. More posts per partner. Longer arcs. Real strategy.

At **The Influencer Marketing Factory**, this is the shift we are **helping our clients make**.

ALESSANDRO BOGLIARI
CEO & CO-FOUNDER
THE INFLUENCER MARKETING FACTORY

TOP FINDINGS

Platform Playbook

TikTok

- **Best for:** One-off activations, product launches, beauty/CPG creator campaigns.
- **Why:** Highest disclosure (52%), and CPG is a leading brand sponsor category (32.7%).

Instagram

- **Best for:** Sustained brand relationships, ambassador programs, entertainment & lifestyle verticals.
- **Why:** Longest Instagram partnerships (10K-25K tier) are 9.3 months, plus strong M&E (27.1%) and Retail (29.6%) presence.

YouTube

- **Best for:** Long-term ambassadorships, affiliate programs, tech/education verticals, deep audience trust.
- **Why:** Partnership length averages 13.5 months, highest volume of affiliates (52.9%).

Dataset Overview

TikTok

3,156
Creators

90,434
Promoted Posts

Instagram

2,341
Creators

105,939
Promoted Posts

YouTube

2,360
Creators

120,019
Promoted Posts

Top Influencer Marketing Statistics

Disclosure TikTok leads all three platforms at 52% properly disclosed, nearly double Instagram's 29% and ahead of YouTube's 42%. Across all platforms, built-in disclosure tools dramatically outperform hashtags - Instagram's paid partnership flag is a leading method utilized by creators, yet 61% of its posts' disclosure labels remain hidden.

Relationship Depth YouTube averages 13.5-month brand partnerships with a 50.9% repeat rate. TikTok averages 4.9 months, with 71.8% of relationships ending after one collab. The platform you choose determines whether you're building a brand or running an activation.

Seasonality Influencer collab volume doesn't peak at the same time across all platforms. While Q4 accounts for 29-31% of annual volume across all three, YouTube peaks in December (11.4%), Instagram in November (9.9%), and TikTok uniquely front-loads into January (12.1%) before hitting its lowest point in May (5%). A coordinated multi-platform strategy requires three different budget calendars, not one.

Repeat Partnerships One-off relationships dominate everywhere – 68.5% on Instagram, 71.8% on TikTok, 49.1% on YouTube – but YouTube's retention advantage holds at every follower tier, with repeat rates ranging from 36.2-48.9% compared to TikTok's 22-28%. The platform you're on determines your retention ceiling, regardless of creator size.

Deal Structure Affiliate deals account for 52.9% of brand partnerships on YouTube – surpassing paid (41.4%) and unspecified (4.7%) deal types. Unlike the flat-fee structures that dominate Instagram and TikTok, YouTube's affiliate model gives both brands and creators a built-in incentive to extend partnerships beyond a single post, contributing to longer average partnership lengths across tiers.

METHODOLOGY

Data Source

modash covering **350M+** creator profiles across Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

Samples

Instagram

2,341 U.S.-based creators with **105,939** promoted posts on the current platform.
Filters: ER ≥ 2%, English, 30%+ U.S. audience, active in last 60 days, creator accounts, has sponsored posts, audience credibility ≥ 75%.

TikTok

3,156 U.S.-based creators with **90,434** promoted posts on the current platform.
Filters: ER ≥ 2%, English, 30%+ U.S. audience, active in last 60 days.

YouTube

2,360 U.S.-based creators with **120,019** promoted posts on the current platform.
Filters: English, 30%+ U.S. audience, active in last 120 days, has email contact.

Disclosure classification: Posts are classified using platform-native flags, LLM-assisted caption analysis, disclosure hashtags, and commercial intent signals.

Properly Disclosed
platform tag, #ad, or explicit disclosure.

Unclear/Vague
sponsor referenced but disclosure is ambiguous.

Likely Hidden
strong commercial signals (promo codes, brand patterns) but no visible disclosure.

YouTube
uses binary classification (Disclosed/Hidden only).

Collaboration types: Types are classified independently from disclosure status.

Paid
Flat fee/fixed payment.

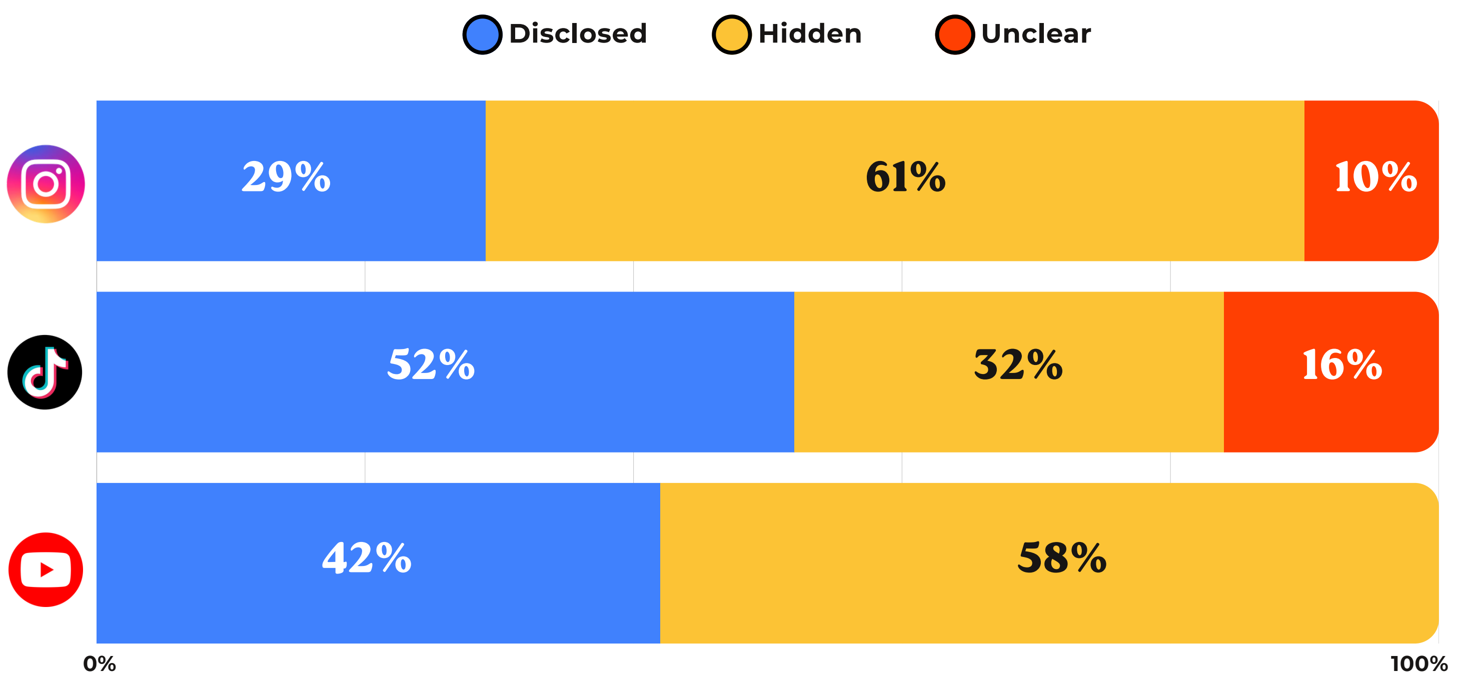
Affiliate
Commission via trackable links/codes.

Gifted
Free product.

Unspecified
Deal type could not be determined.

PAID CONTENT DISCLOSURES

Disclosure Label Split



- **Instagram's paid partnership flag is the #1 disclosure method** among US creators (~18% of all posts).
- While this may be the case, nearly 2 in 3 Instagram posts are likely undisclosed partnerships **(61%)**. Only **29%** are properly disclosed across 105,939 posts.

- **TikTok creators are the most compliant with paid content disclosures:** TikTok has the highest disclosure rate among US platforms: **52%** properly disclosed vs. **32%** hidden across 90,434 posts.

- **YouTube has the highest hidden rate across all platforms: 58%** of 120,019 collab posts are likely hidden and only **42%** are properly disclosed. It is important to note that there is no Unclear/Vague category on YouTube, resulting in the strictly "Disclosed" or "Unclear" split.

2026 INFLUENCER MARKETING FTC GUIDELINES

The **U.S. Federal Trade Commission** has released a **dedicated guide** for disclosures catered to influencers and content creators. The following is a simplified breakdown of FTC guidelines for influencer marketing in 2026.

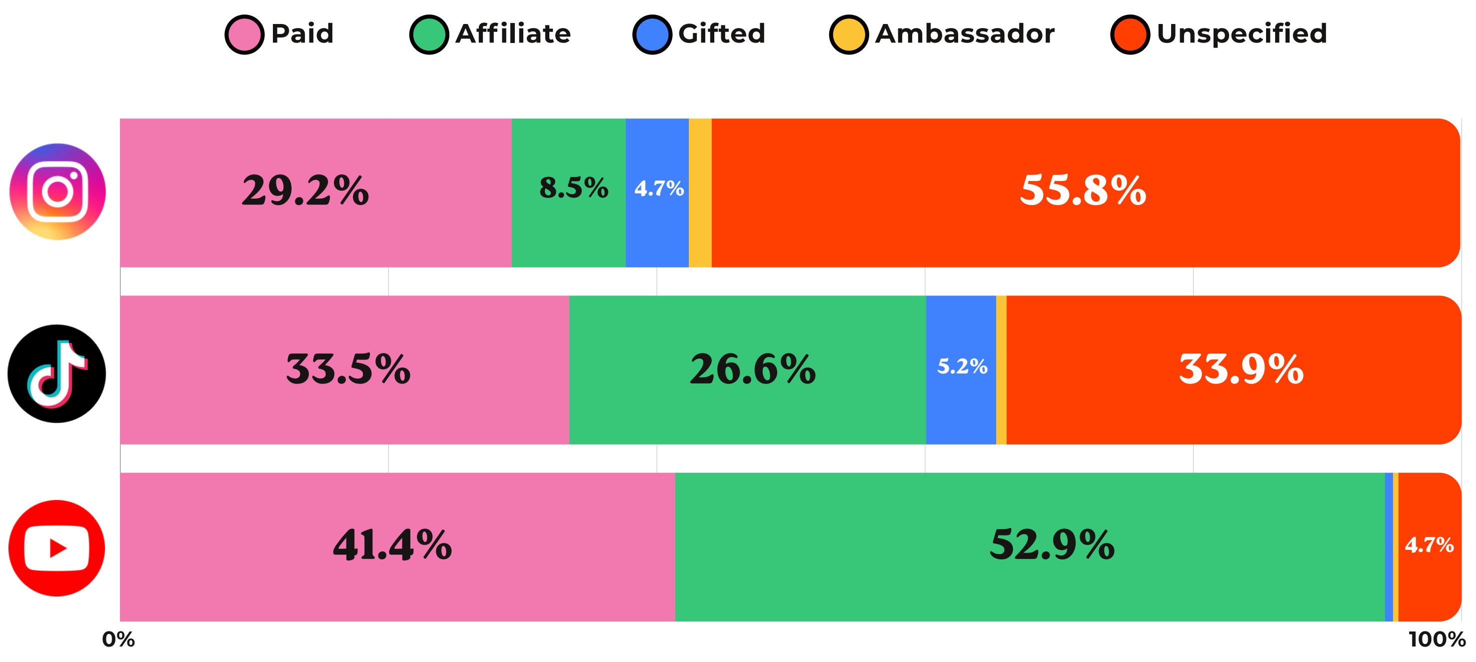
Brand Disclosure Checklist

- [ ] Creators must disclose when they have any **financial**, **employment**, **personal**, or **family relationship** with a brand.
- [ ] The FTC notes that **tags**, **likes**, **pins**, and similar ways of showing you favor a brand or product can be considered as **endorsements**.
- [ ] When creators are posting branded content while **abroad**, the FTC affirms that "**U.S. law applies** if it's reasonably foreseeable that the post will **affect U.S. consumers**. **Foreign laws** might also apply."
- [ ] If a creator **does not have a relationship** with a brand but **voluntarily shares** a positive review of a product they purchased, they **do not need to disclose** that they are not affiliated with the brand.
- [ ] Brand disclosures must be **visible** and **simple to understand**, not hidden in hashtags or places that require additional clicks to view.
- [ ] Creators should **avoid making false claims** about products for brand partnerships, especially if they dislike or haven't tried the product, as this is **misleading information**.

DISCLAIMER: For more information on influencer marketing disclosures, please refer to the **FTC's official website**.

COLLABORATION TYPES

Collaboration Type Split



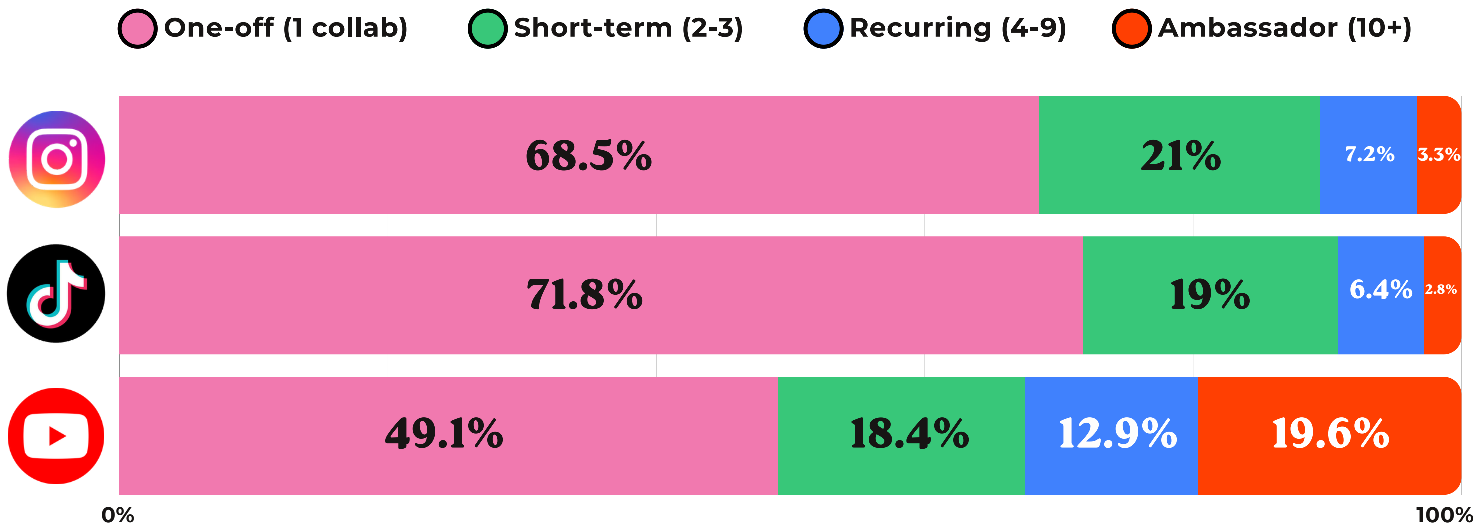
- **55.8% of Instagram posts have no collaboration type label: 29.2%** are labeled as Paid, while **8.5%** are Affiliate, **4.7%** are Gifted, and Ambassador posts make up only **1.8%**.

- **TikTok collaboration split aligns with high rate of disclosures:** TikTok creators' stellar compliance is mirrored by the platform's collaboration type split. Only **33.9%** of promotional content is marked Unspecified.

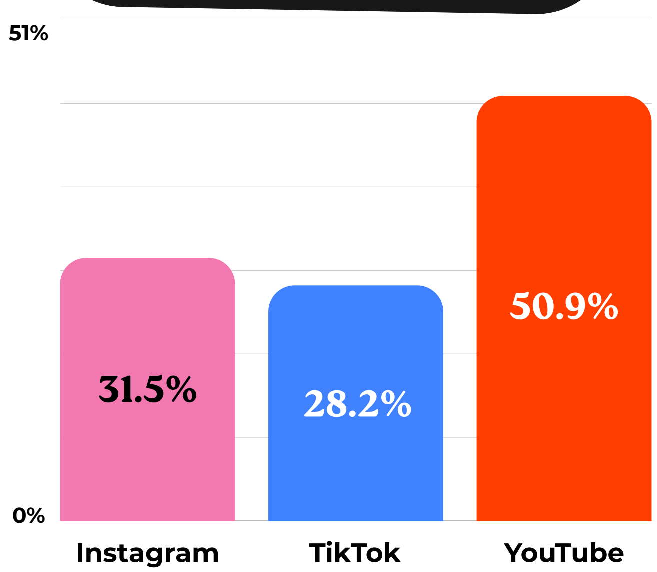
- **Affiliate is the dominant collab type on YouTube at 52.9%,** dwarfing Paid **(41.4%)** and Unspecified **(4.7%)**. This is the inverse of Instagram and TikTok where Paid and Unspecified dominate.

CREATOR & BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship Split by No. Repeat Collabs



Percent of Repeat Brand Collabs*



*Accounts for total percentage of repeat brand collaborations: Short-term (2-3), Recurring (4-9), and Ambassador (10+)

Average Brand Partnership Duration**

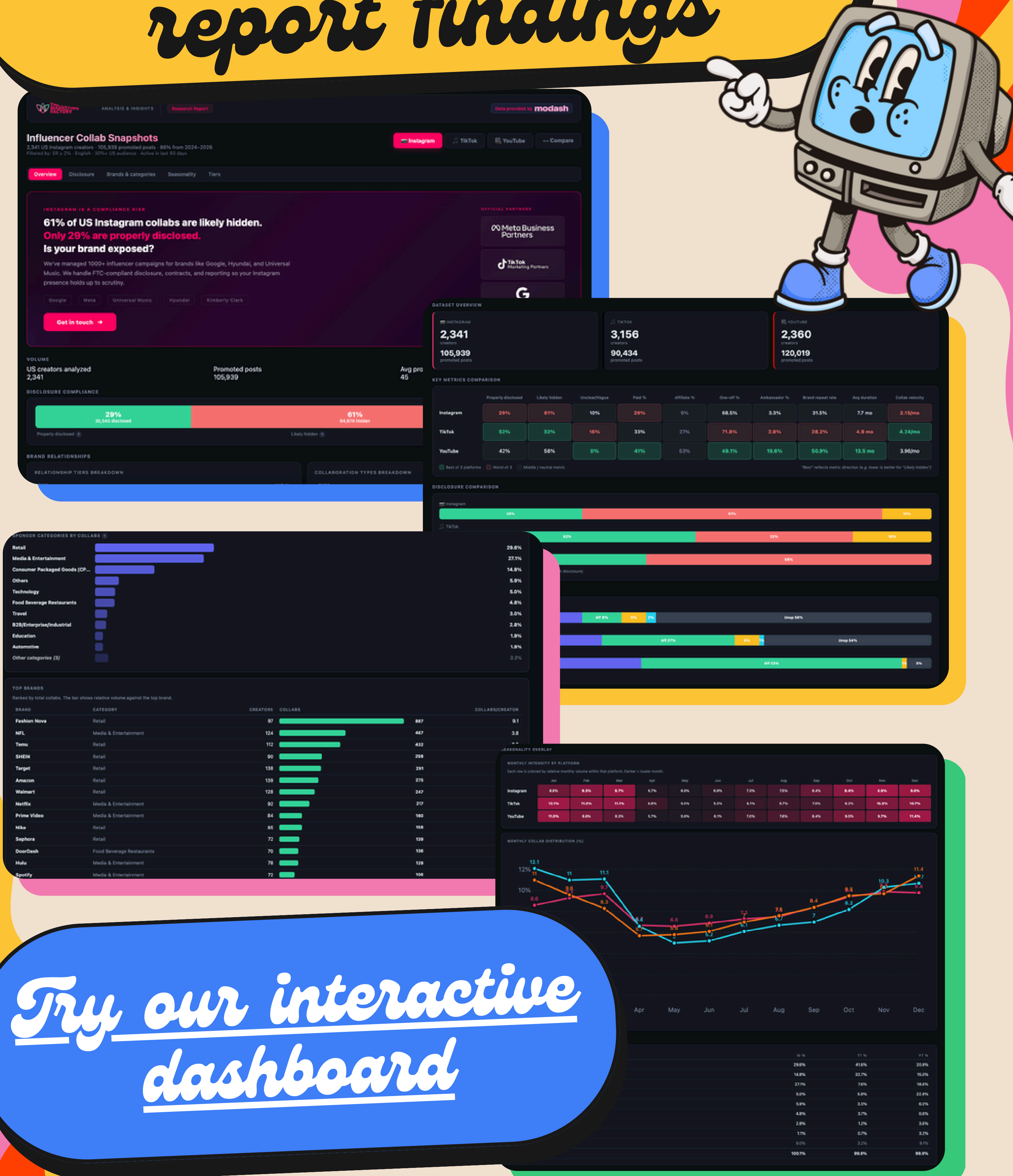
7.7 mo

4.9 mo

13.5 mo

**Data pool only counting repeat relationships: For brands that work with a creator more than once, the average time span between first and last collaboration is X months. Total average is then calculated by social platform.

Explore the full report findings



Try our interactive dashboard

CREATOR TIER COMPLIANCE

TikTok disclosure by creator tier is inverted vs. Instagram:
Nano creators (10K-25K) lead at **62.9%** disclosure, then these disclosures decrease until the 700K-1M tier, where they rise to **33.6%**.

On Instagram, disclosure scales clearly with size:
Nano (10K-25K) creators disclose **23.6%** of posts, climbing to **43%** for 1M-1.5M creators.

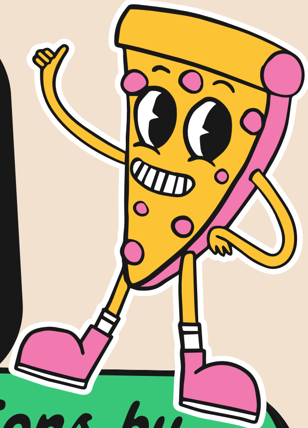
YouTube disclosure peaks at the 2M-3M creator tier (39.2%).
Small creators (10K-50K) have near-zero disclosure, which gradually increases as following increases, similar to trends seen on Instagram.

Disclosures by Creator Tier

Category	10K-25K	25K-50K	50K-100K	100K-200K	200K-400K	400K-700K	700K-1M	1M-1.5M	1.5M-2M	2M-3M
TikTok	62.9%	50.1%	42.7%	28.8%	29.0%	28.2%	33.6%	35.5%	37.2%	37.3%
Instagram	23.6%	29.8%	30.1%	33.9%	33.2%	32.4%	39.5%	43.0%	38.5%	35.4%
YouTube	15.8%	16.0%	18.1%	21.5%	27.4%	29.2%	31.8%	31.0%	36.7%	39.2%

0-20% 20-25% 25-30% 30-35% 35-40% 40%+

REPEAT COLLAB FREQUENCY ACROSS TIERS



Repeat Collaborations by Creator Tier

Platform	10K - 25K	100K - 200K	1M - 1.5M
TikTok	22.2%	23.5%	27.3%
Instagram	32.1%	30.4%	29.9%
YouTube	44%	48.9%	44.6%

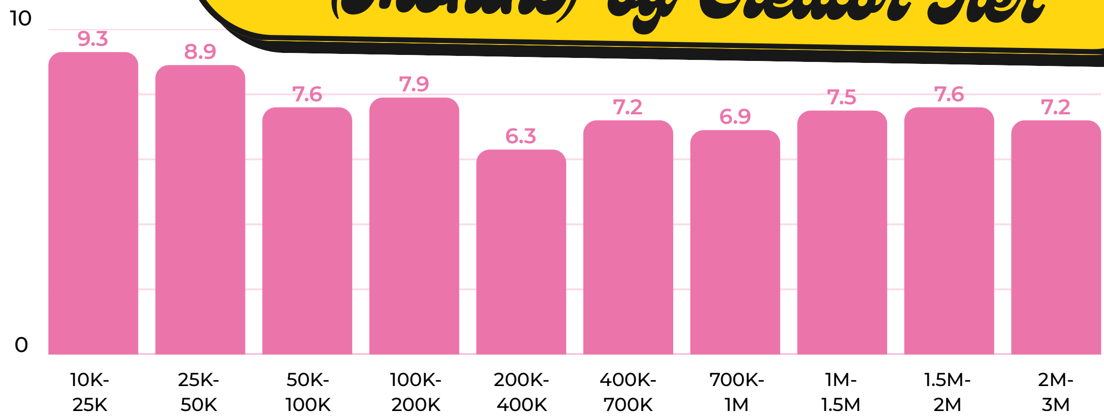
1.5M-2M has the highest repeat brand rate (28%) on TikTok, suggesting these creators build the most loyal brand relationships. Combined with a 6-month avg duration, this tier offers the best long-term partnership potential.

Approximately one-third of collaborations on Instagram are repeat partnerships with brands: Repeat collaborations across Instagram creator tiers span from 29.9% (1M-1.5M) to 33% (50K-100K).

YouTube demonstrates the highest volume of repeat collaborations compared to TikTok and Instagram: Repeat collabs on YouTube peak at 48.9% (100K-200K). YouTube mid-tier creators with 100K-200K followers are the most brand-loyal across any platform or tier.

DOES PARTNERSHIP LENGTH GROW WITH FOLLOWING?

Average Partnership Length (Months) by Creator Tier

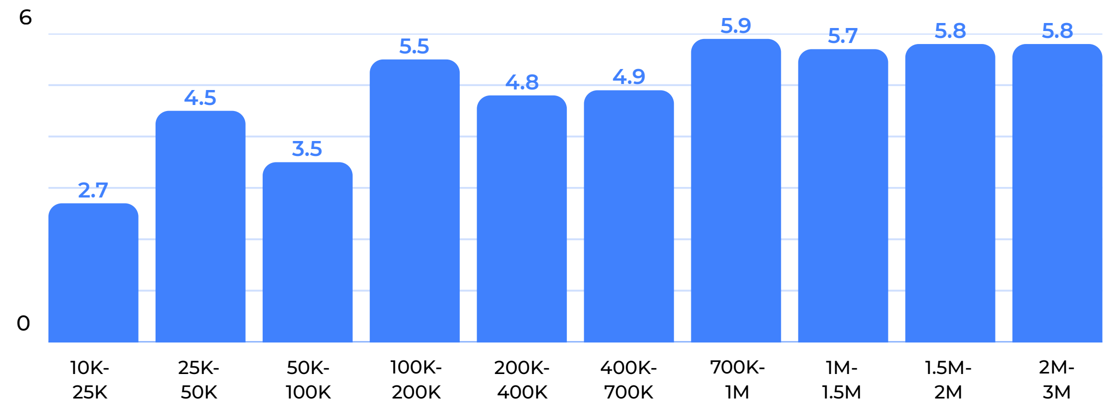


Smaller creators on Instagram commit to fewer, deeper brand relationships:

10K-25K creators build the longest US partnerships at 9.3 months, followed by 25K-50K at 8.9 months.

200K-400K has the shortest partnerships (6.3 mo) on Instagram:

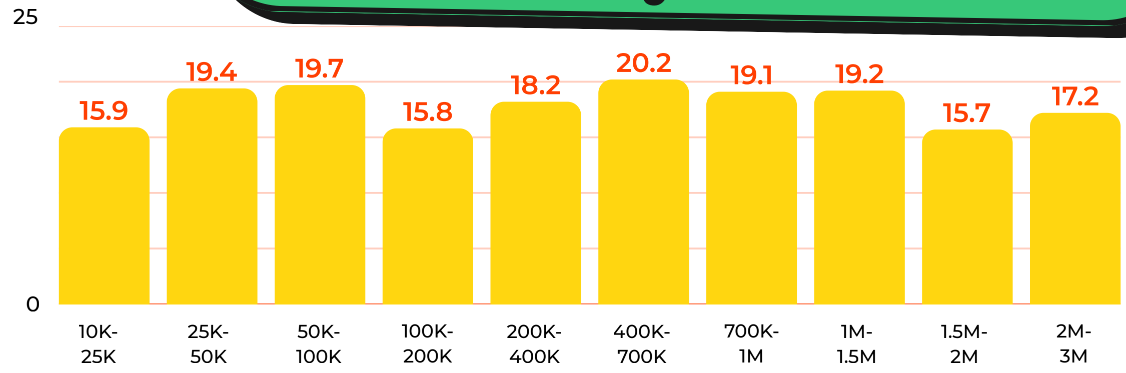
The mid-size tiers, overall, are more transactional, with brands using them for one-off campaigns rather than long-term partnerships. To learn more about middle-class creators and how they monetize, read our official blog **here**.



700K-1M creators build the longest TikTok partnerships at 5.9 months, followed by 1.5M-3M at 5.8 months. TikTok partnerships are shorter than Instagram across all tiers (4.9 mo. average vs 7.7 mo. on Instagram).

DOES PARTNERSHIP LENGTH GROW WITH FOLLOWING?

Average Partnership Length (Months) by Creator Tier



YouTube is the top platform for long-term creator partnerships:
YouTube partnerships are dramatically longer than TikTok and Instagram, with the longest average length being 20.2 months (400K-700K).

TOP BRANDS & CATEGORIES

Top Brand Categories by Collab Volume

TikTok

Retail	41.6%
Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)	32.7%
Media & Entertainment	7.6%

TikTok is the strongest platform for product-heavy categories

Retail (41.6%) and CPG (32.7%), indicating its short-form, discovery-driven format is ideal for driving purchases.

Instagram

Retail	29.6%
Media & Entertainment	27.1%
Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)	14.8%

Media & Entertainment performs best on Instagram

(27.1%) compared to TikTok (7.6%) and YouTube (18.6%), suggesting Instagram's visual and story-driven formats resonate more with entertainment brands.

YouTube

Technology	22.9%
Retail	20.9%
Media & Entertainment	18.6%

YouTube leads in Technology

(22.9%) by a wide margin over Instagram (5.0%) and TikTok (5.9%), which makes sense given YouTube's longer format allows for in-depth reviews and tutorials.

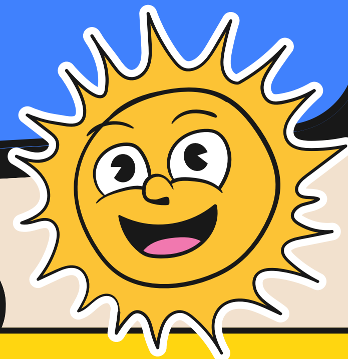
Top Brands by Total No. of Collabs

TikTok		Instagram		YouTube	
FASHIONNOVA	1,109	FASHIONNOVA	887	SQUARESPACE	6,904
SHEIN	996	TEMU	432	PRIZEPICKS	3,706
ISEE HAIR	935	SHEIN	298	SEAT GEEK	3,067
dossier	826	TARGET	291	betterhelp	2,934
Bloom	806	amazon	275	Rocket Money	750

Retail dominates across all platforms, but especially TikTok at 41.6%, the highest single figure in our analysis, suggesting TikTok is the go-to platform for retail influencer partnerships.

Fashion Nova is the #1 brand by collabs on both TikTok (1,109) and Instagram (887), reflecting a cross-platform influencer strategy and further exemplifying the dominance of retail influencer marketing in 2026.

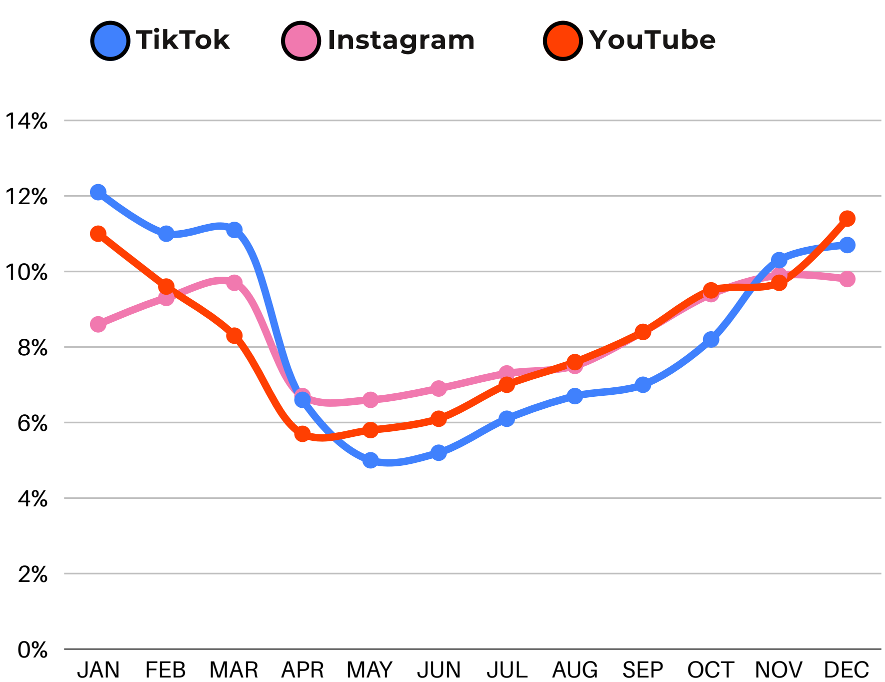
INFLUENCER MARKETING SEASONALITY



Snapshot Stats

12.1%	Peak month: **January**	9.9%	Peak month: **November**	11.4%	Peak month: **December**
5%	Low month: **May**	6.6%	Low month: **May**	5.7%	Low month: **April**
78%	Weekday share	80%	Weekday share	73%	Weekday share
29%	Q4 share	29%	Q4 share	31%	Q4 share

Monthly Collab Volume by %



Holiday collaboration windows vary by platform: January is Instagram's peak month (12.1%) and November peaks for TikTok (9.9%), while YouTube peaks in December (11.4%).

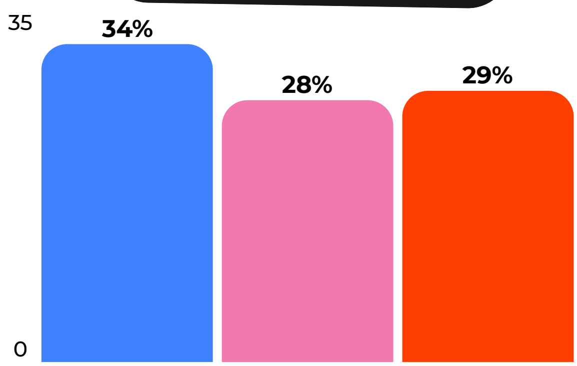
May is one of the slowest months across all three platforms: Monthly collab volume on Instagram drops to 5%, TikTok to 6.6%, and YouTube to 5.8%, making it the clearest lull in the creator economy.

INFLUENCER MARKETING SEASONALITY

Quarterly Distribution

TikTok · Instagram · YouTube

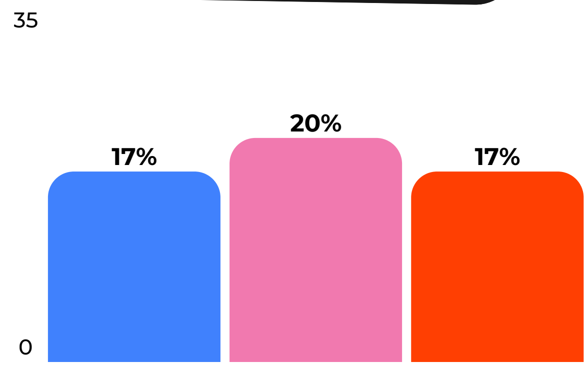
Q1 (Jan–Mar)



Q1 remains surprisingly strong

Particularly for TikTok (34%), likely driven by New Year campaigns, resolutions content, and post-holiday momentum.

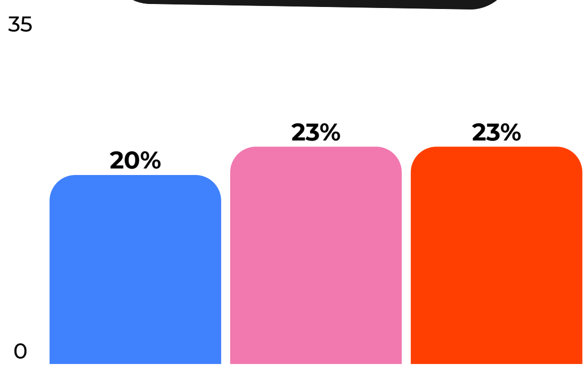
Q2 (Apr–Jun)



Q2 is the weakest quarter universally,

With TikTok and YouTube hitting the lowest monthly collabs across platforms at 17%.

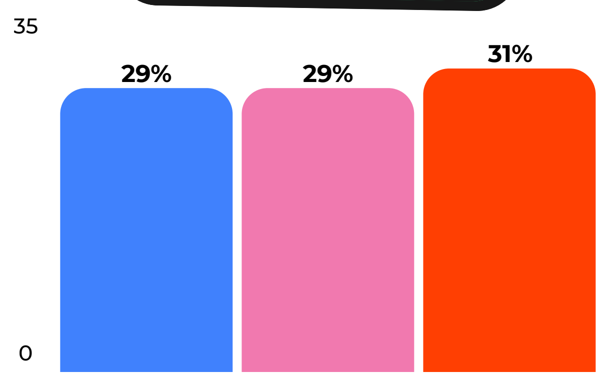
Q3 (Jul–Sep)



Q3 shows a moderate recovery across all platforms

(~20-23%), signaling a back-to-school and pre-holiday buildup.

Q4 (Oct–Dec)



Q4 is the most active period for monthly collabs across all platforms,

with Instagram and TikTok each at 29% and YouTube leading at 31%, aligning with the traditional holiday shopping season.

INFLUENCER MARKETING SEASONALITY

Weekly Distribution

	TikTok	Instagram	YouTube
Monday	15.4%	15.5%	14.9%
Tuesday	16%	16.2%	15.5%
Wednesday	15.8%	16.4%	15.7%
Thursday	15.9%	16.4%	15.3%
Friday	15.2%	16%	11.4%
Saturday	11.1%	9.7%	13.1%
Sunday	10.6%	9.8%	14.1%

Weekday-heavy posting is consistent across platforms

80% of promotional posts are posted to Instagram on weekdays, followed by 78% on TikTok and 73% on YouTube, highlighting a strong preference among brands and creators to publish sponsored content Monday through Friday.

NAVIGATING SEASONALITY:

Influencer Marketing Mini Guide

Implications for Marketers

- **Plan campaigns well before November/December:** Competition and creator rates will spike during peak Q4, so locking in partnerships in Q3 is advisable.
- **Use Q2's lull strategically:** Lower demand may mean more favorable creator rates and less content saturation, making it a cost-efficient window for brand awareness plays.
- **Align posting days with platform behavior:** Schedule Instagram and TikTok collabs midweek for maximum reach, and prioritize YouTube partner content on weekends, when audiences are more likely to consume long-form content.

Want to get a head start? Get in touch with our team at The Influencer Marketing Factory to discuss strategy and seasonality here.

Implications for Creators

- **Expect a feast-or-famine cycle:** The gap between May lows and December highs is significant, so creators should diversify income streams or negotiate retainer deals to smooth out slow periods.
- **Q1 is a strong negotiating window:** Especially on TikTok, where brand activity is high: Creators should proactively pitch partnerships early in the year before budgets are committed.
- **Weekend content on YouTube can outperform:** Sunday viewership is higher on YouTube, giving creators an edge against other platforms if they time their uploads and brand deals strategically.

To learn more about managing your creator journey, download our free Ultimate Creator Guide here!

Need help building your influencer marketing strategy?

The Influencer Marketing Factory is a globally recognized agency specializing in crafting bespoke influencer campaigns for businesses across all sectors.

Our team of influencer marketing experts excels in driving business growth through strategic influencer partnerships.

TRUSTED BY TOP BRANDS

Unleash the Power of Influencer Marketing!

[Contact our team to learn more]