



National
Programs

National Advertising
Division®

INFLUENCER TRUST INDEX

CONSUMER INSIGHTS

2025



Executive Summary

In 2024, a staggering 82.7% of U.S. marketers leveraged influencer partnerships in creative campaigns, driving the influencer marketing industry to an impressive \$24 billion domestic valuation. This underscores the immense significance of influencer marketing for both brands and consumers alike.



of U.S. marketers use influencers in creative marketing campaigns

\$24B

domestic valuation of the influencer marketing industry

Yet, despite its impact, the industry faces serious challenges. Influencer brand deals can involve questionable practices, partly due to limited regulation in this rapidly growing space and influencer advertisements often fail to follow the law set out by the FTC's Endorsement Guides. In fact, BBB National Programs' National Advertising Division has seen a sharp increase in cases involving influencer marketing, signaling an urgent need for influencers to understand and adhere to the guidelines that promote honest and transparent advertising practices.

The risk to influencer trust is real, especially when influencers are unaware of or neglect the crucial requirements to disclose brand partnerships and provide truthful, transparent endorsements. Trust is the cornerstone of authenticity—when influencers are transparent about their relationships with the brands they promote, they not only build consumer confidence but also boost brand loyalty and overall engagement. As influencers and brands embrace truthful and transparent practices, they strengthen the integrity of the entire influencer marketing ecosystem, fostering long-term success for all.



Who is the National Advertising Division?

The U.S. advertising industry founded the National Advertising Division (NAD) in 1971 as a nonprofit system of independent industry self-regulation to build consumer trust in advertising and support fair competition in the marketplace. NAD reviews truth-in-advertising challenges to national advertising across all media types from businesses, nonprofit organizations, trade associations, consumers, or through its own monitoring of the marketplace. Through NAD's work, thousands of misleading claims have been removed from the marketplace and its case decisions represent the single largest body interpreting advertising law in the country.

Methodology

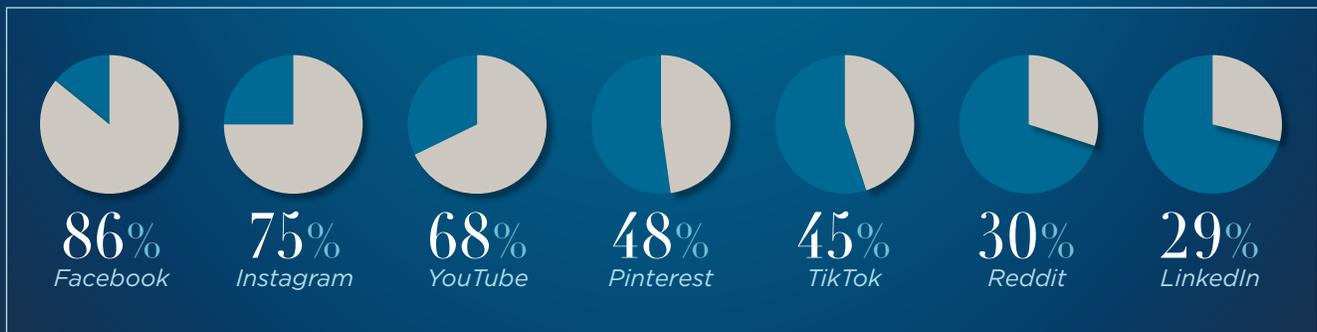
NAD commissioned The Benchmarking Company to conduct a survey of US consumers to explore various topics related to influencer marketing. The purpose of this research was to determine, 1) if there is a demand for more transparency in influencer marketing and, 2) whether a formal certification backed by NAD for influencers would increase consumer trust while helping to ensure truth in advertising.

This survey explored topics including but not limited to:

- » Trust in influencers
- » Expectations of disclosure of material connections
- » Types of influencers consumers follow
- » Amount of time spent daily on social media

The survey consisted of 26 questions and was in the field for 3 days in February 2025. More than 3,720 US consumer ages 18-65 completed the survey, including 235 men, 5 individuals identifying as non-binary and 3,484 women.

The majority of those surveyed indicated they use social media on a daily basis with only 2.4% indicating they do not. 86% of those surveyed use Facebook, 75% use Instagram, 68% use YouTube, 48% use Pinterest, 45% use TikTok, 30% use Reddit and 29% use LinkedIn.



Percentage of survey participants who use each social media platform



Analysis & Takeaways

Takeaway #1

Consumers are looking to influencer marketing.



58%

of consumers have *made a purchase as a result of an influencer endorsement* of a product or service.

35%

of consumers indicated that they have *made 4 - 6 purchases* based on influencer endorsements.



52%

watch content from influencers that come across their social media feeds.



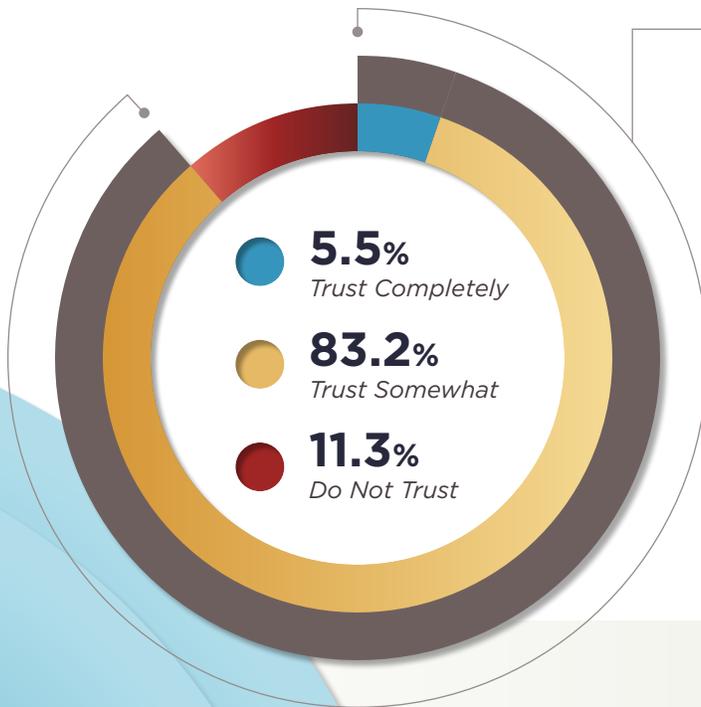
33%

seek out content from influencers to learn more about a product/topic.



Takeaway #2

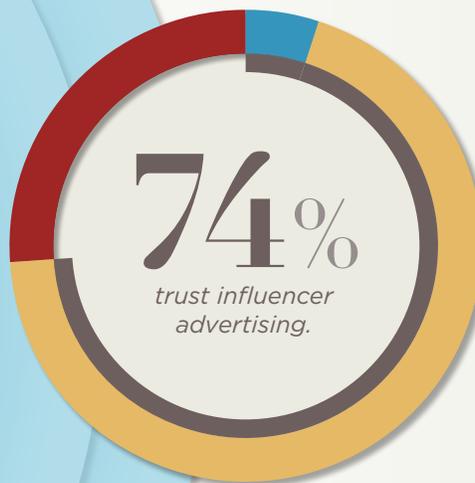
Consumers trust influencers less than general advertising.



87% of surveyed consumers trust advertising.

Overall, 87% of consumers trust the advertising they see, with 5.5% trusting advertising completely and 83.2% trusting advertising somewhat.

Consumers aged 25-34 are least likely to trust the advertising they see (40%), closely followed by consumers ages 65 and older (37%).



When looking specifically at influencers, 74% of consumers trust influencer advertising, with only 5% trusting influencers completely and 69% trusting influencers somewhat.

The level of distrust in influencers is higher than that of regular advertising with 26% of consumers indicating they "don't trust" influencers.

- 5% Trust Completely
- 69% Trust Somewhat
- 26% Do Not Trust



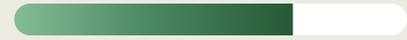


What Drives Consumer Trust of Influencers?

Consumers cited an influencer's transparency and honesty about the product and their brand association as the primary drivers for trust.



71%



Transparency and honesty about brand association



79%



Honest reviews, even if it isn't positive about the product/service they are reviewing



What Leads to Consumer Distrust of Influencers?

The primary drivers of distrust are when an influencer is not genuine, honest, or transparent.

80%



Influencer is not genuine, honest or transparent

71%



Promotes unrealistic lifestyle/body image

64%



Influencer does not disclose relationship to the brand they are promoting



Trust is Hard to Come By How can it be built?

70% of consumers reported feeling negative toward an influencer if they found out an influencer gets paid or receives free product to promote a brand and the influencer didn't disclose it. 37% said they would feel "deceived" and 33% said they would feel "negative towards the influencer."

7 out of 10

consumers don't like when influencers don't disclose a brand partnership.



Does an influencer partnering with a brand make them less trustworthy?



Does adding #ad or #sponsored make influencers more trustworthy?



Who is responsible for ensuring advertising is truthful and transparent?



Interestingly, the mere presence of a brand partnership alone has little to no effect on the perception of trustworthiness, while the standard #ad or #sponsored disclosures do not lead to a feeling of the influencer being more trustworthy.

Consumers believe the responsibility for truthful and transparent advertising is on both the brand and the influencer.

To enhance consumer trust in influencer marketing, make best efforts to ensure that influencers are educated on best practices for truthful, transparent advertising.

About BBB National Programs

BBB National Programs, a non-profit organization, is the home of U.S. independent industry self-regulation, currently operating more than 20 globally recognized programs that have been helping enhance consumer trust in business for more than 50 years. These programs provide third-party accountability and dispute resolution services that address existing and emerging industry issues, create fair competition for businesses and a better experience for consumers. BBB National Programs continues to evolve its work and grow its impact by providing business guidance and fostering best practices in arenas such as advertising, child-and-teen-directed marketing, data privacy, dispute resolution, automobile warranty, technology, and emerging areas. To learn more, visit bbbprograms.org.

Keeping Advertising Honest

Businesses that advertise and market their products and services need to commit to truthful and responsible advertising, allowing consumers to make informed choices and companies to build and nurture valuable consumer relationships. Our advertising self-regulation programs, developed by the advertising industry, monitor the marketplace for noncompliance with truth-in-advertising best practices and seek voluntary compliance by advertisers. This work takes various forms, such as independent monitoring, pledge programs, referrals to regulators, and more.

