2 TREND IN COLLABORATION WITH Canopy **Qi** HypeAuditor

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Canopy Qic 🔶

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DECODING BRAND DEALS



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Special thanks to our insight experts for donating their time to share knowledge with our communities: Kristen Bousquet (Your Soulcialmate), Elly Brown (AIC Member), Jamillah Davis Hernandez (AIC Advisor), Lindsey Gamble (Later), Christen Nino De Guzman (Clara for Creators), Giselle Huasipoma (Calvin Klein), Patrick Janelle (AIC Member), Juliann Kane (Klarna), Vik Khagram (Ketchum UK), Reesa Lake (LTK), Jessica Morrobel (AIC Member), Gigi Robinson (Career Creator), Dena Silver (Beauty Pie), and Brandon Smithwrick (Kickstarter).

We appreciate the editorial features from Aliza Licht, Vice President, AIC Board of Directors, and Cynthia Barstow, Senior Lecturer, Teaching Influencer Marketing at the Isenberg School of Management University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

The Canopy for Creators team played an influential role in executing this survey. Thank you to their growing Creator community, both in-app and across social media, along with their strategic partners, who are also building in the space and committed to financial transparency, who shared the survey with their creator networks: Beacons, July, Social Currant, Clara for Creators, CreatorPad, and B&H Creators.

We thank the following HypeAuditor colleagues for their analytical contributions to the report: Nick Baklanov and Anna Komok.

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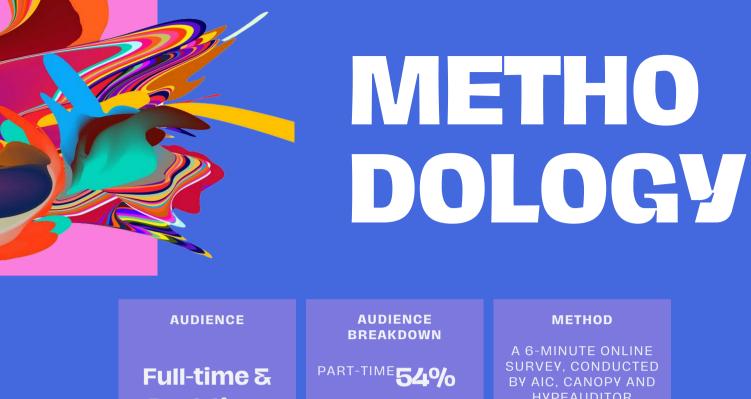
ultivating a culture of equitable and mutually benefiting collaboration between brands and career creators are vital to the sustainability of influencer marketing. In 'The State of Influencer-Brand Deals 2024,' Jasmine Enberg of EMarketer writes, "U.S. marketer spending on sponsored content on social media will rise by 16.0% this year to \$8.14 billion. Most brands are increasing their influencer marketing budgets." This is a nominal figure compared to the \$82 billion marketers are anticipated to spend on social network ad spend by 2025, per Statista. This figure underlies the fact that career creators still have a barrier to entry to make a meaningful income.

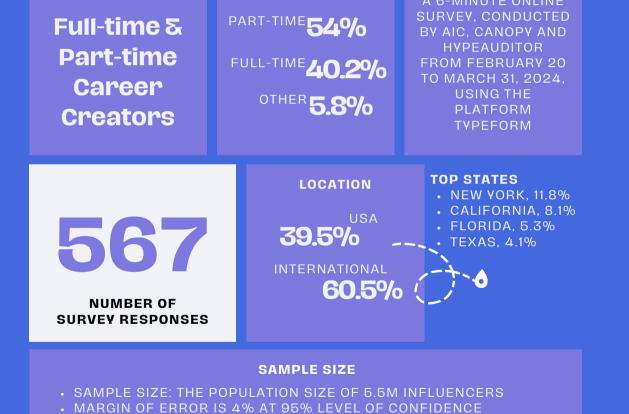
Most creatorpreneurs strive to realize the American dream, which can be defined by the ability to pursue creative passions, enjoy financial independence, and obtain quality of life. The path to financial freedom is highly complex and can be inconsistent. Creators must be resilient in a constantly evolving ecosystem. Social media-first small business owners require a sizeable amount of monthly brand deals to sustain their livelihood. Through creative ingenuity, career creators must also be willing to source income outside brand deals from creator marketplaces, affiliate programs, shout-out services, content or course subscriptions, product storefronts, and more.

Creators need equity advocates within the business community who recognize the unique operational challenges the professionals driving the creator economy face. The demand for authentic user-generated content continuously grows. Professional safeguards for career creators must also mature simultaneously and be prioritized by platforms, brand marketers, casting agents, and creative agencies. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Bill of Rights, "The promise of a profit rewards entrepreneurs' hard work and makes it possible to keep a business going." Let's commit to strengthening economic growth for the career creator workforce.

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BY THE RECAP NUMBERS

ALIGNING VALUES

Most career creators surveyed **prioritize** opportunities that align well with their audience's interests and values, underscoring the importance of authenticity in brand partnerships.

DEALMAKING

Most respondents indicated that **social media platform brand marketplaces are the most popular means of sourcing brand partnerships**, followed by influencer marketing platforms (39.2%) and incoming proposals directly from brands (35.1%).

MONEY MATTERS

Half of the respondents expressed financial uncertainty about managing money from brand deals in the future: just okay (29.15%), uneasy (13.9%), and stressed (7.1%).

MORE IS MORE

Influencer marketing is one of many conversion and awareness tactics for marketers. Career creators compete for paid media dollars. Livable wages are dependent on the frequency of deals. **Many responders indicated they need two to four monthly deals for sustainable income.**

REPEAT WORK

5

Building a book of business is vital for the growth and sustainability of a small business. Less than 10% of those surveyed can convert a one-time brand deal into repeat work. **Brands have an opportunity to build creator loyalty by prioritizing retention.**

79.7% 54.5% 50.1% 46.4% 7.9%

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Brand Collaboration

A mutually beneficial strategic partnership between creator(s) and one or more business(es) to create an online or offline experience, content campaign, product, or service to achieve a business goal or marketing objective. The collaboration leverages the creator's digital footprint, social media audience, and/or personal branding to drive sales, increase website traffic, expand email lists, grow brand awareness, reach new audience segments, and drive user-generated content. It is also referred to as a co-branded advertising partnership.

Full-Time

Career Creator

Self-employed in consistent contract

products, promotion of services, or

(D2C) or business-to-consumer (B2C)

custom content creation, marketing of

ambassadorships with direct-to-consumer

companies. Full-time career creators have built a book of business and have regular clients who generate enough annual income to make a living. File self-employment taxes.

Career Creator

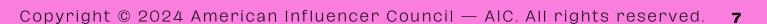
An individual small business owner whose primary income is generated from activities and partnerships related to producing and marketing digital custom content across multiple social media platforms.



Part-Time Career Creator

A 1099 worker who makes passive income on a reduced schedule from social media content creation or other marketing activities. Efforts are intended to be parttime. Receives a minimum of \$600 or more in non-employment income during the tax year.

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AUTHORS



ALEX FROLOV CEO AND CO-FOUNDER HYPEAUDITOR

HypeAuditor is an influencer marketing platform that provides analytical reports and tools for influencer search and in-depth analysis, campaign management, influencer market evaluation, competitor research, and trend analysis. HypeAuditor's main mission is to make influencer marketing transparent and data-powered.



<u>QIANNA</u> SMITH BRUNETEAU Founder American influencer council

As the Executive Director, Qianna provides vision, operational strategy, organizational leadership and day-to-day management of the trade association. In coordination with the Board, she oversees the strategic planning of the policies and programming to advance the AIC mission. She is a two-time Shorty Award winner, seventime finalist and a Webby Awards nominee.



AYOMI SAMARAWEERA FOUNDER CANOPY FOR CREATORS

Ayomi is the Founder of Canopy, a semi-anonymous social app providing a safe space for creators to ask questions and gain industry insights to accelerate their careers. Previously, Ayomi led Global Internal Communications at TikTok and was the Chief of Staff to the President of Jellysmack. She's also a content creator herself with 30k followers across platforms.

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ALIZA

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<u>Cynthia Barstow</u> is a Senior Lecturer of Marketing at the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where she teaches Influencer Marketing, Advertising, and Sustainable Marketing courses. She is also the Founder and Executive Director of <u>Protect Our Breasts</u>, an organization with 60 reps at colleges and in cities nationwide and over 100 organic brand partners committed to a safer marketplace. POB empowers women to make safer choices to protect their breasts during the most vulnerable periods of their lives. <u>Aliza Licht</u> is an award-winning marketer, bestselling author, podcaster, personal branding expert, and career development coach. Licht has been a prominent figure in the fashion and media industries for over 25 years. As the founder of Leave Your Mark, a multimedia brand and consultancy, she advises businesses and individuals on brand strategy. Credited as a social media pioneer and one of the first fashion influencers, Licht was the former anonymous social media phenomenon DKNY PR GIRL.

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INSIGHT EXPERTS



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IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE (L TO R)

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RESULTS

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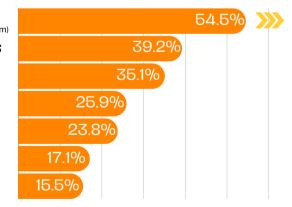


Ι,

Reesa Lake TREND 1 VP and Head of Creator Agency & **Partnerships** <u>LTK</u> LTK provides a safe haven for creators. independent of social entertainment platforms, to build their businesses and engage their shopping D audiences with Collaborative cutting-edge technology, analytics, and tools for their e-commerce empires. Value Creation "

What is your primary mechanism for sourcing brand partnerships?

Social Media Marketplaces (Instagram or TikTok Marketplaces or YouTube Partner Program) Influencer Marketing Platforms (Aspire, LTK or #paid) Incoming Proposals Cold Outbounds (Email Pitching) Cold Outbounds (Social DMs) **Pre-existing Relationships** Talent Management / Agencies



IN FOCUS

Social media brand marketplace s have an opportunity to entice and recruit a diverse brand matrix. as creators are eager to use such tools

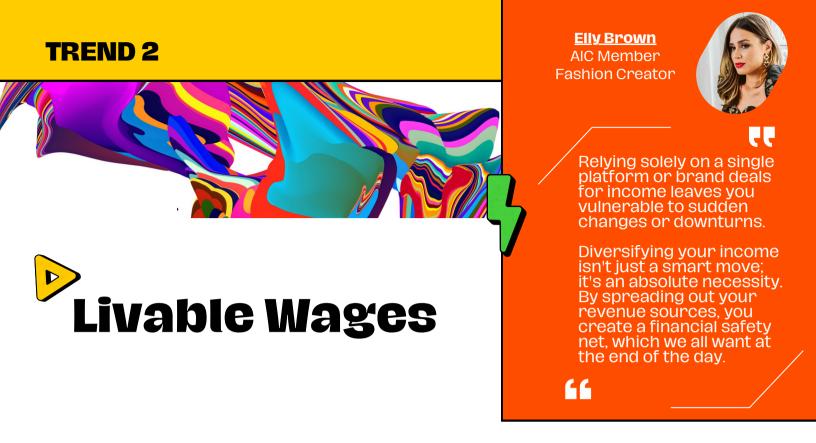
Note: Respondents could select up to 3 relevant options Data analyzed by HypeAuditor

567 career creators responded to the online survey between February 20 to March 31, 2024

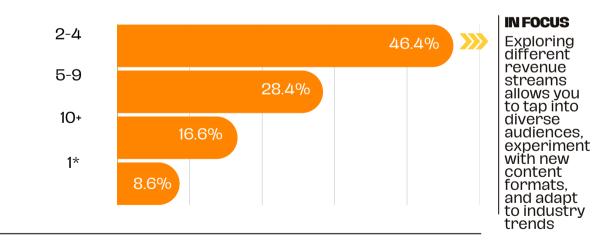
Source: Decoding Brand Deals Survey, International Creator Day 2024

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How many monthly brand deals do you need to have a sustainable income?



Note: Respondents could select up to 3 relevant options

Data analyzed by HypeAuditor

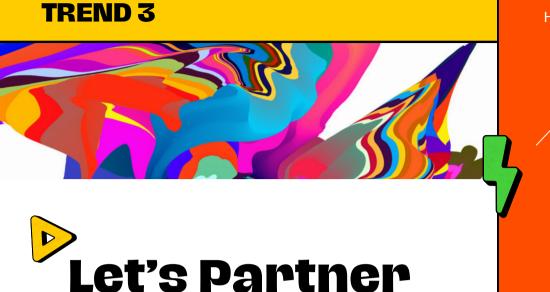
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Source: Decoding Brand Deals Survey, International Creator Day 2024

*Indicates respondents with one or less brand deals a month

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<u>Vik Khagram</u> Head of Influencer <u>Ketchum</u>

66





Once brands see that you are a genuine fan, they can analyze your previous interactions with them and then evaluate what kind of partnership they want to pursue with you. If you love a brand and want to partner, then make sure you are visible to them. If you have worked with them before, then open up the conversation with them again, show interest!

How can a brand build a long-term relationship with you as a creator?

Be responsive and answer all correspondence on time

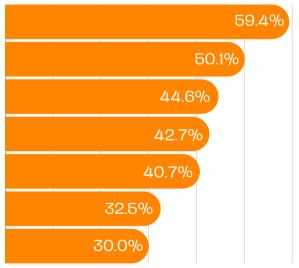
Invitate to a brand event

Personalize all communications

Be open to feedback on the campaign brief Offer an affiliate program

Send a thank you note after the brand partnership is completed

Set up a phone call to introduce themselves and go over the brief



Note: Respondents could select up to 3 relevant options Data analyzed by HypeAuditor

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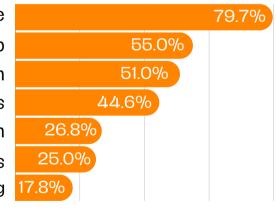
Patrick Janelle AIC Member Founder Untitled Secret



Influencer marketing is built on genuine connections between influencers and their audiences. When branded content resonates authentically, it ensures that both the message and its delivery are in harmony with the expectations and values of both the audience and the brand. This is another way to say: trust influencers and the audiences they know best.

What criteria are most important to you when qualifying a brand partnership?

Brand resonates with my audience Dollar value of partnership Creative freedom Payment terms Interaction with brand team Brand size and awareness Ease of contracting

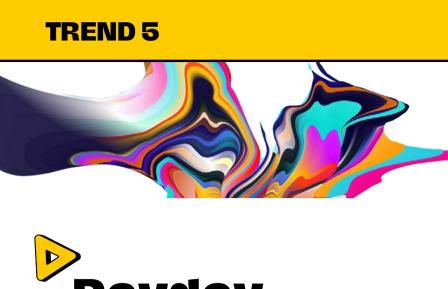


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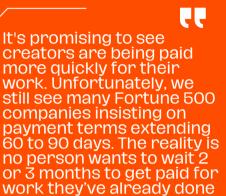
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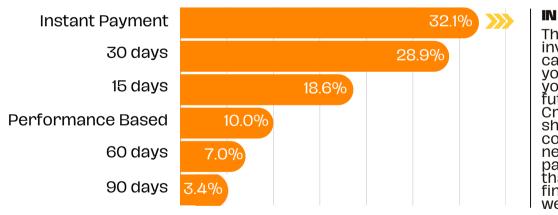
<u>Christen</u> <u>Nino De Guzman</u> Founder <u>Clara for Creators</u>







The most popular/standard payment term you receive from a brand



IN FOCUS

and the prolonged wait undermines the principle

of timely and fair compensation.

"

The best investment you can make is in yourself and your financial future. Career Creators should feel confident negotiating payment terms that support financial wellness

Data analyzed by HypeAuditor

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TREND 6



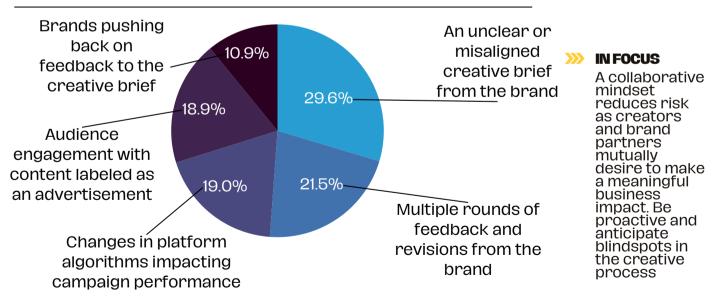
Jessica Morrobel AIC Member Career Creator



Brands should focus on crafting easy-to-scan

crafting easy-to-scan creative briefs, eliminating corporate jargon, and clearly stating goals, needs, and vision. Incorporating examples of the creator's past work communicates, 'This is what we admire in your content!' This approach minimizes misunderstandings and reduces revisions, allowing creators to excel from the start.

The biggest challenges to executing a successful brand partnership



Data analyzed by HypeAuditor

567 career creators responded to the online survey between February 20 to March 31, 2024

Source: Decoding Brand Deals Survey, International Creator Day 2024

An error of 0.1 was lost from rounding up

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Do you track the performance and send a performance summary of your campaign to a brand?



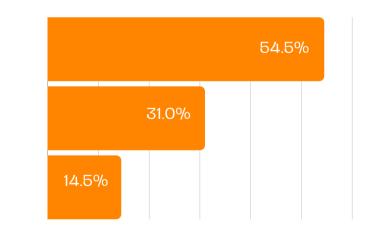
This is best practice as a creator

Sometimes

It depends on if I want to work with the brand again

No

I expect the brand to track performance themselves

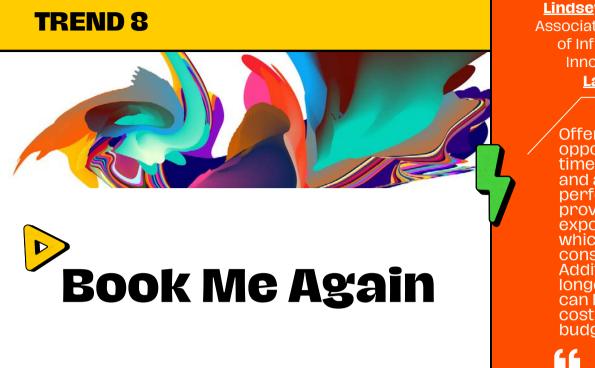


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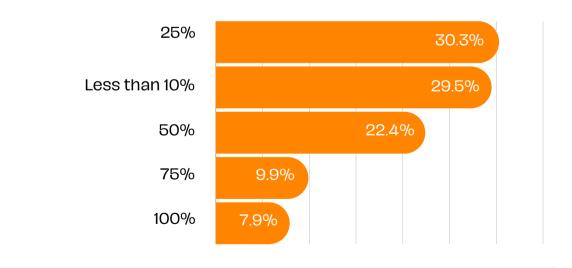


Lindsey Gamble Associate Director of Influencer Innovation Later



Offering creators the opportunity to post multiple times offers a more holistic and accurate view of performance while also providing repeated exposure to audiences, which is often essential for consumer action. Additionally, these longer-term partnerships can help brands be more cost-efficient with their budgets.

Annually, what % of one-time brand partnership opportunities have you been able to convert into follow-up work?



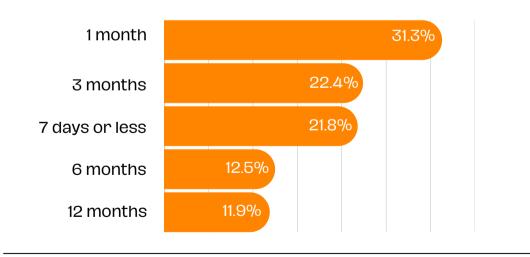
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What is the average length of a brand partnership?



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TREND 10

<u>Dena Silver</u> Senior Marketing Manager <u>Beauty Pie</u>

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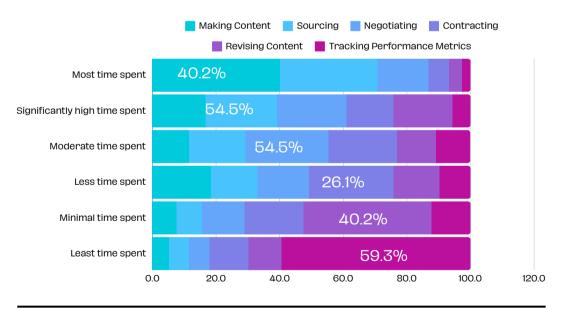
Brands will tie a KPI to your content—and

your content—and that is a fact! Ask your brand partners what data they'll be using to define success.

Understanding how your content can help achieve their goals is paramount to your continued relationship with that brand.

Time Management

When executing an end-to-end brand partnership, where is your time spent?



Note: Respondents were asked to prioritize from most time to least time spent, from 1-6 (with one (1) being most time spent)

Data analyzed by HypeAuditor

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Source: Decoding Brand Deals Survey, International Creator Day 2024

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Giselle Huasipoma Senior Coordinator Global Influence Calvin Klein



As marketers, we should gauge how well a creator will perform based on engagement rate, reach, impressions, etc., to avoid 'make good' posts. The responsibility lies between the brand and the creator to bring something to life that resonates with their audiences. From the brand's side, creating a comprehensive strategic brief while giving the creator creative flexibility.

If a brand asks for a free performancebased post because the campaign has not performed, how likely are you to create a "make good" post?

Sometimes

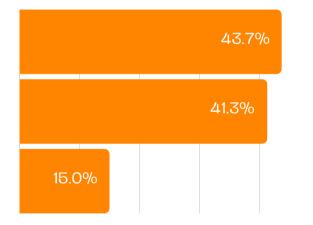
It depends on if I want to work with the brand again

Very Likely

I see "make good" posts as an investment into building a long-term brand relationship

Not Likely

It is not my responsibility to guarantee that a video or photo will perform



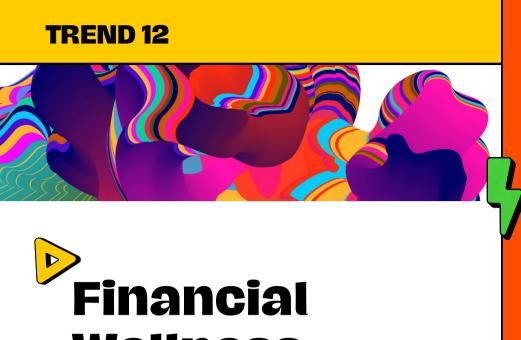
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Gigi Robinson Founder, Author Career Creator

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or post that you

use, and trust! The challenge can sometimes be that brands want to

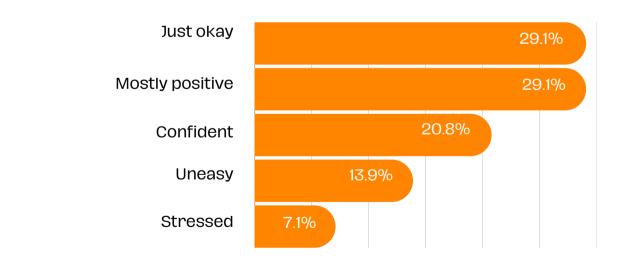
control how you're

creating.

created for a brand hopefully, you love,



When it comes to financial planning, how do you feel about the money coming in from brand deals in the future?



Note: Respondents could select up to 3 relevant options

Data analyzed by HypeAuditor

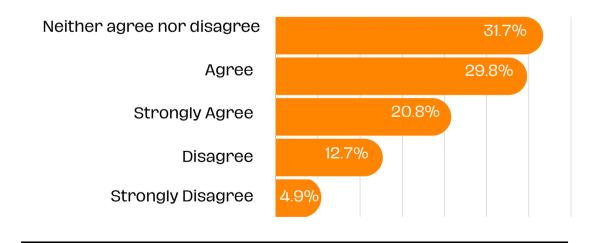
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The creator economy is positioned to help me become financially secure.



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The creator economy is constantly evolving, and

Understanding goals or having a North Star as a

Throughout the process,

there is always room to pivot, so it's important to consider diversification

of content and strategy. Setting clear values and

themselves for success

in the creator economy

we are continually

creator can help

milestones helps

creators position

establish a growth

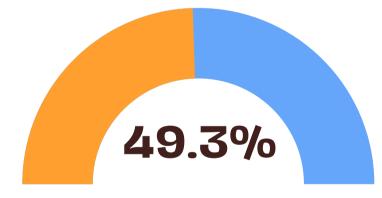
learning.

mindset.

PRO TIP



Closing the gap of uncertainity



The precentage of respondents who expressed uncertainity about the money coming in from brand deals in the future





nts who



"

Strategize to visualize your financial unknowns, then focus on what you can control, like updating your media kit with case studies of past partnerships, allocating more time to adding new connections on LinkedIn, or regularly engaging with the brands you want to work with on social media

Data analyzed by HypeAuditor

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2nd Annual Creator Economy Trend Report



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HypeAuditor



OPIN IONS HAT MATTER

DECODING BRAND DEALS





OPINION PIECE

BY ALIZA LICHT



Vice President, AIC Board of Directors Founder, Leave Your Mark Author of ON BRAND

GOING THE DISTANCE THE IMPORTANCE OF PERFORMANCE METRICS

Does anyone remember when follower count meant something? Gone are the days when it equates to creator validation. Brands can't rely on those numbers anymore (even with high engagement rates) because it's challenging to justify the investment. The truth is that sponsored content performance has been suffering for years due to erratic changes in the algorithm. So, what can creators do to protect their businesses and ensure brand partnerships in the future? The answer is for them to start thinking like a DTC brand.

Where social media has been historically known as a brand awareness tool and, to a large extent, still is, what brands care about is conversion. Focusing your strategy on cultivating an audience conditioned to shop from your links can take work, but proving to brands (with receipts) that you can convert is the most crucial way to grow your business.

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Canopy **Qi**

OPINION PIECE

GOING THE DISTANCE UNDERSTANDING

PERFORMANCE METRICS

latforms like Shop My help brands prioritize creators through monthly recurring revenue rather than follower count. Being a creator who consistently drives thousands of dollars in revenue for a brand is exponentially more important than vanity metrics. Also, it leaves room for micro-creators to have a piece of the pie.

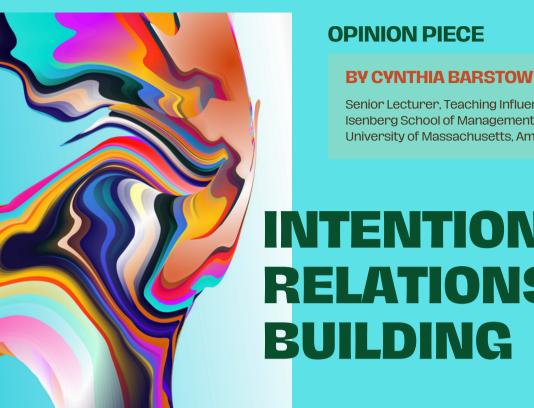
Creators that demand high flat fees with nothing to show for it are in jeopardy

of being an extinct breed when so many creators have already shifted to a high-generating affiliate model. This also makes Instagram Story performance a priority, an area of content strategy that often feels like the stepchild. It's time to change the creator mindset and realize that the real party is where the links are. Your ability to convert your audience is the present. Everything else is just background noise.

CONNECT WITH ALIZA

alizalicht.com

Canopy Q!



Senior Lecturer, Teaching Influencer Marketing Isenberg School of Management University of Massachusetts, Amherst

INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Building relationships often gets relegated to the bottom of the priority list, overshadowed by the constant demand for improved content creation, engagement with followers. and/or the demonstration of authenticity. However, fostering strong connections with brands should not be viewed as an optional task or something a manager handles but as a crucial component of success.

In today's competitive landscape, influencers who maintain transparent and ongoing relationships with individuals at companies or agencies are positioned as top-of-mind for these decision-makers when considering campaign candidates. Established entities with a track record of success

are inherently less risky and more appealing than embarking on new partnerships. So, how does one effectively manage brand relationships?

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OPINION PIECE

INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

t begins with small yet intentional steps, from connecting regularly with brand leaders on LinkedIn and organizing email schedules for regular "check-ins" to ensuring that all interactions are automated in a CRM system like Asana, Hubspot, Monday, or Teamwork. When you have press mentions or new partnerships, share your successes in a newsletter, and be sure to add potential clients and partners to your communication lists. These seemingly minor actions can significantly contribute to fruitful partnerships over time.

By consistently prioritizing brand relationships, career content creators can lay the groundwork for long-term success and sustained growth.

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ABOUT

US



AMERICAN INFLUENCER COUNCIL

Membership trade association devoted exclusively to advocating for the educational and professional advancement of U.S.-based social media career creators.

o americaninfluencercouncil in aic_nyc

CANOPY FOR CREATORS

A new peer-to-peer social networking app for content creators, aimed at increasing transparency across the industry.

O canopy.for.creators in underthecanopy

HYPEAUDITOR

The all-in-one solution for influencer marketers that provides essential tools for successful campaigns and goes beyond the 'standard tool' concept.

in hypeauditor

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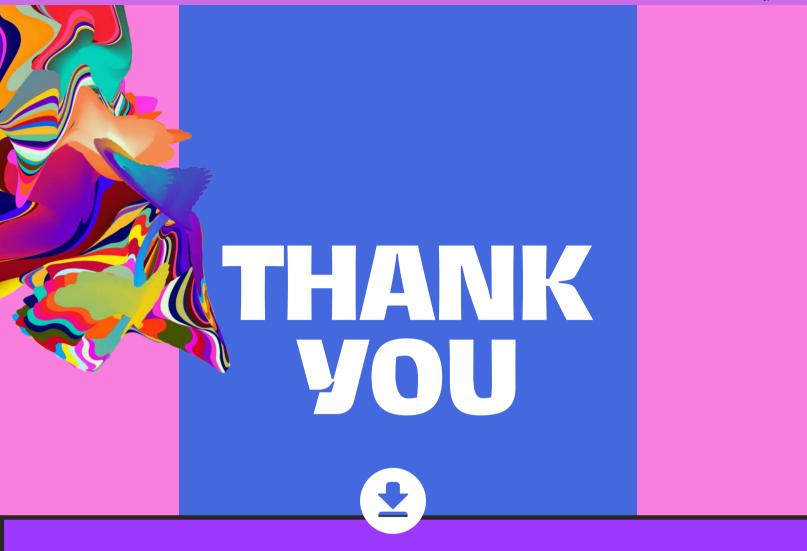
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DECODING BRAND DEALS





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