

Ekimetrics.

Influencer Marketing Measurement for the Next Era

**Rethinking marketing measurement to capture
the world's largest digital advertising channel**



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Introduction

Influencer marketing has rapidly evolved into a cornerstone of digital advertising, with global investment projected to exceed \$32.5 billion globally in 2025. Influencer marketing has emerged as a strategic imperative, offering what traditional tactics often lack: trust, cultural relevance, and authentic engagement- delivered at scale. In a marketplace where differentiation is key to survival, influencers play a vital role in shaping brand identity and consumer connection.

Despite its meteoric rise, the industry faces increasing pressure to prove return on investment (ROI), especially as macroeconomic conditions demand greater accountability. Influencer impact spans the entire funnel: building awareness through compelling storytelling and aspirational lifestyles; driving consideration via product reviews and tutorials; boosting conversion through affiliate links and promotional codes; and fostering loyalty through sustained community engagement. As paid media costs continue to rise, influencer-led campaigns increasingly deliver stronger ROI—especially when amplified across paid and owned channels.

• This white paper synthesizes insights from global best practices and case studies, framed through a lens that reflects Ekimetrics' values: scientific rigor, data integration, advanced analytics, and practical business impact. The goal is to empower marketing leaders with a comprehensive and intelligent approach to influencer measurement that supports long-term brand and business growth.



Executive Summary

1 Measurement must evolve in tandem with the channel's growing complexity. Traditional last-touch or impression-based approaches are insufficient.

2 A comprehensive measurement model should include metrics throughout the funnel. Representing a unified view of Brand and Conversion KPIs.

3 Measurement maturity begins with data readiness. AI and machine learning are becoming foundational to scale influencer analytics and insights.

4 Case Studies show that Influencer Activity can be optimized in the overall channel mix as well as creating synergies with PR / paid media campaigns

5 Building measurement-literate teams and investing in the infrastructure to continuously improve performance are key to successful influencer strategy

1. The State of Influencer Marketing in 2025

Influencer marketing has surpassed paid search to become the world's largest digital advertising channel. This evolution is fuelled by the growing prominence of short-form video, social commerce (like live steaming) and increased consumer trust in creators over traditional ads. According to the Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report 2025, the global influencer marketing industry is projected to grow to \$32.5 billion, a 35.6% year-over-year increase. Nano- and micro-influencers are key growth drivers, now representing most of the influencer engagement on platforms like Instagram.

In the United States, influencer marketing is estimated to be a \$10 billion industry, integrated into broader omnichannel and performance-based marketing frameworks. Strategic partnerships, rather than sporadic campaigns, define the approach of leading U.S. brands.

The UK, meanwhile, is set to become one of the top five global influencer marketing markets, forecasted to reach \$24.15 billion by 2033. UK-based marketers are particularly focused on ethical influencer partnerships, community engagement, and authentic storytelling—principles that align closely with Ekimetrics' emphasis on meaningful, data-informed narratives.

As global platforms face geopolitical uncertainties (e.g., a potential TikTok ban in the U.S.), marketers are adopting a diversified portfolio approach—allocating spend across multiple social platforms and influencer tiers to mitigate risk and ensure continuity.



Top global advertisers are significantly scaling their investment in influencer marketing, integrating it as a key component of media and brand strategy.

These examples underline a structural shift: influencer marketing is a performance and brand-building engine central to modern advertising:

- Unilever has committed to increasing its influencer media investment from 30% to 50% of its total advertising spend.
- Amazon is expanding its Amazon Influencer Program, blending affiliate commissions, livestreaming, and social integrations into commerce.
- Netflix led all brands in earned media value (EMV) in 2024 with \$718.9 million through creator partnerships.
- Spotify generated \$213 million in EMV and achieved an 83% creator retention rate.
- Fashion Nova retains 89% of its creator network and dominates fast fashion influencer marketing.
- Saint Laurent delivered \$14 million in EMV at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival alone.

"Creating marketing activity systems where others can speak for your brand at scale is incredibly important. Influencers, celebrities, TikTokers – these are the voices that matter," Fernando Fernandez, Unilever CEO*



(c)T. Schneider / Shutterstock.com

**PR Week, 24 Mar 2025 - Unilever influencer focus – are creators leaving PR in the dust?*

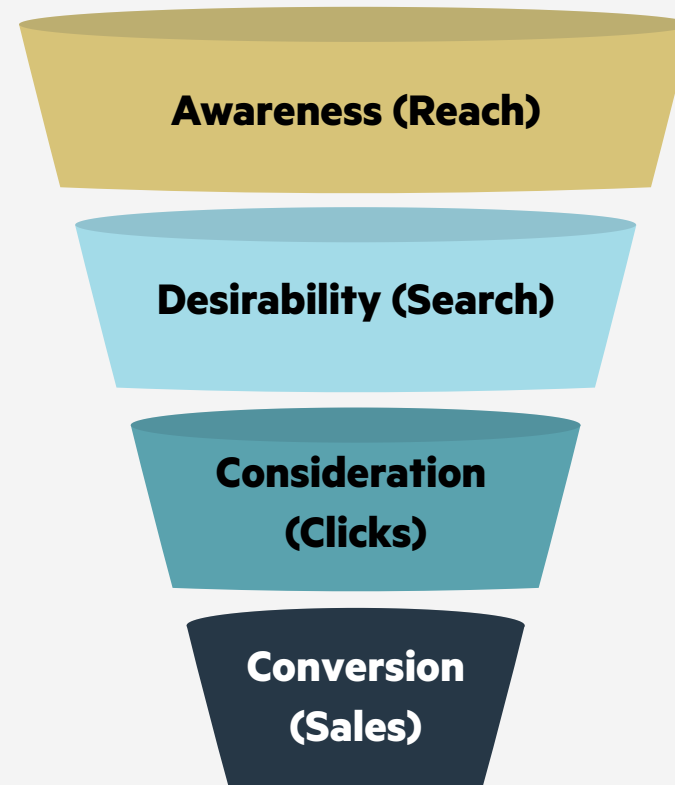
2. Strategic Imperatives for Measurement

Measurement must evolve in tandem with the channel's growing complexity. Traditional last-touch or impression-based approaches are insufficient. At Ekimetrics, we champion measurement frameworks that reflect the complete customer journey, including upper- and mid-funnel brand effects and their delayed impact on conversions.

Estée Lauder Companies' transformation of its Marketing Mix Modelling (MMM) program exemplifies this shift. It updated the MMM framework to capture desirability (e.g., search behaviour), consideration (e.g., traffic uplift), and conversion (e.g., wholesaler and DTC sales)—to more accurately and effectively measure influencer marketing effects. This methodology aligns closely with Ekimetrics' brand equity and incrementality modelling capabilities. This is particularly useful for capturing lagged effects, and cross-channel synergies—essential components of a unified measurement strategy.

Advanced multi-touch attribution (MTA), when supported by robust data governance and identity resolution, can allow enable brands to trace the effects of creator content.

Influencer Marketing Impact Funnel:



3. Core Metrics to Monitor

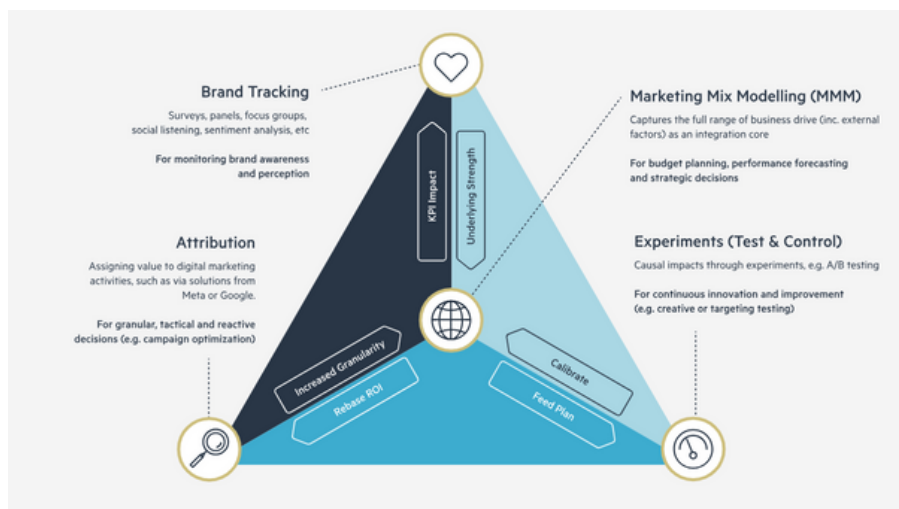
A comprehensive measurement model should include:

- Engagement signals
- Brand KPIs
- Conversion rates
- Incremental revenue

Additional benefits from including:

- Customer lifetime value (CLV)
- Profit KPI
- Retention / Customer Loyalty KPIs

At Ekimetrics, we enhance these measures using unified marketing measurement techniques, combining econometrics, attribution, and uplift testing to ensure validity and business alignment. Our modeling can distinguish between noise and causality, unlocking a clearer ROI narrative for influencer spend



Brand KPIs

- Aided/unaided awareness
- Sentiment lift
- Brand perception
- Earned media value (EMV)

Qualitative & Strategic Metrics

- Content quality / emotional resonance & perception
- Brand fit and authenticity
- Influencer tier effectiveness (macro vs micro vs nano)
- Platform performance (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube)
- Format effectiveness (Reels, posts, videos, livestreams)

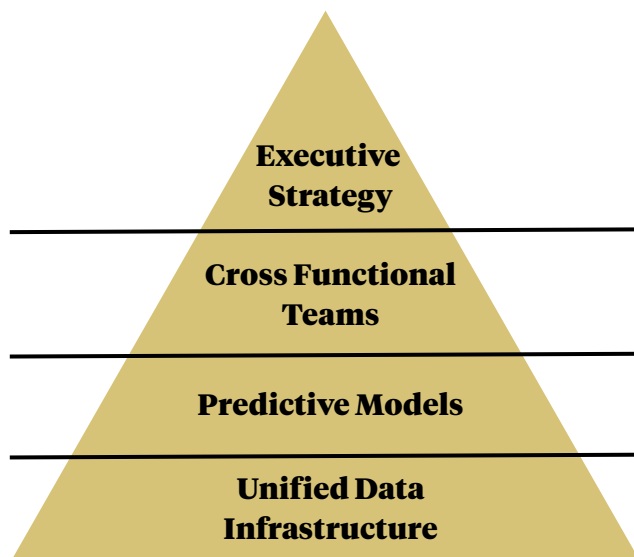
Performance Metrics

- Impressions (organic and paid)
- Reach / Clicks / Views / Watch time
- Engagement rate (likes, comments, shares, saves)
- Estimated Media Value (EMV)
- Cost per Mille (CPM)
- Influencer ROI
 - $\text{Sales generated by (organic + paid impressions)} / (\text{paid investment} + \text{seeding cost})$

4. Building a Measurement-First Organization

Measurement maturity begins with data readiness. We partner with clients to break down silos between influencer, media, CRM, and commerce data. Our experience with Fortune 500 brands shows that the most successful organizations create cross-functional centers of excellence with data scientists, marketers, and commercial leads working together. AI and machine learning are foundational to scaling influencer analytics. These tools help identify best-fit influencers, forecast performance, optimize content mix, and cluster audiences for precision targeting. In the UK and U.S., marketers increasingly use real-time tools to align influencer investments with in-market signals.

Influencer Analytics Capability Model:



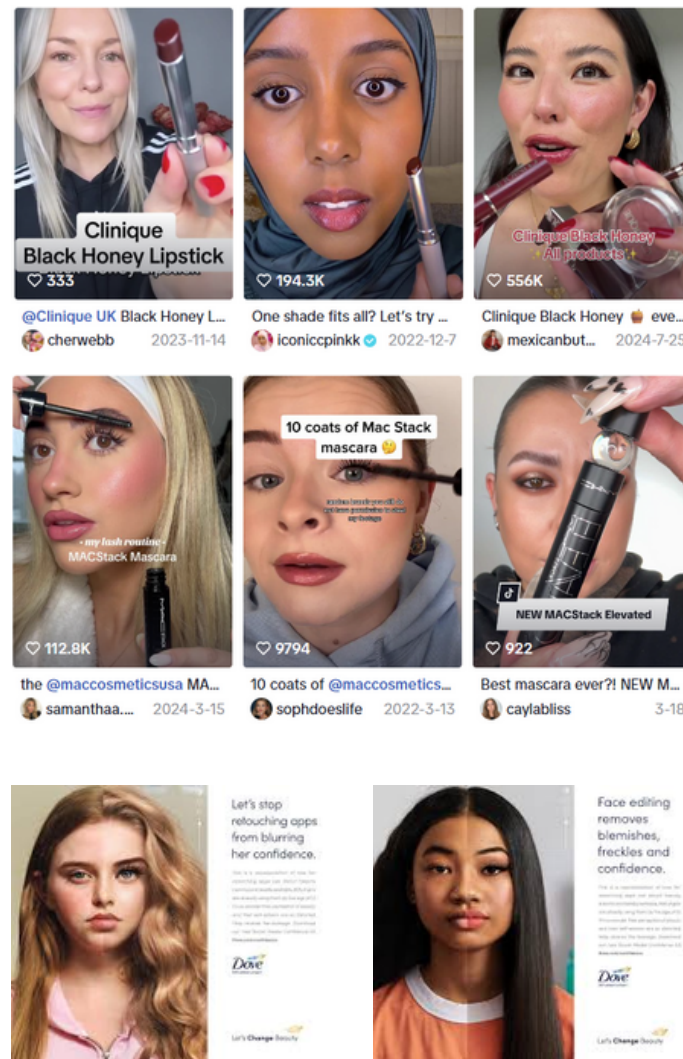
5. Case Study Highlights

Clinique's Black Honey campaign exemplifies the power of organic advocacy. Launched in 1971, the lipstick experienced a resurgence on TikTok. Estée Lauder Companies' MMM measurement framework quantified the campaign's effects across awareness, web traffic, and conversions. EMV (source: CreatorIQ's Tribe Dynamics) increased from \$6.4 million to \$8.7 million in two years.

MAC's success with MACStack mascara—where TikTok drove over 73 million views—illustrates the speed and scale of social commerce. The campaign's integration of mega-influencers with in-house content and paid support demonstrates best-in-class orchestration and cross-platform impact.

Unilever UK's "Voices That Matter" shows a values-based approach, using diverse creators to amplify inclusive narratives. This long-term strategy strengthened brand equity while maintaining cultural relevance, proving that measurable brand health uplift can result from purpose-driven influencer investment.

Social posts referenced - copyright details pg 14



6. Key Insights for Influencer Marketing Effectiveness

1. Brand-Tiered Strategy (Global Beauty & Skincare Brand)

Their approach spans paid, seeded, and event-based influencer content. However, performance varies significantly by tier, format, and platform. Data and other tools often lack the granularity needed for efficient optimization. So we recommend a disaggregated MMM by tier, format, and platform, enabling CPM-adjusted impact comparisons and content investment strategies.

2. Organic vs. Boosted Content (Large Beauty Brand)

Despite doubling investment in influencer and advocacy channels over two years, they report stable ROI (>1x). However, concern is rising around saturation of boosted influencer content. We modelled organic reach and paid amplification separately to reflect distinct saturation dynamics and use non-linear response curves.

3. Desirability & Brand Equity Modelling (Luxury Fashion Brand)

Their MMM approach included brand models within transaction models, capturing both long-term desirability and short-term collection impact. Their strategy emphasizes the value of influencer relationships over time and warns against aggregating organic and paid impressions. We supported this by modelling influencer contribution across both halo (brand) and call-to-action (conversion) pathways.

4. Influencer Tier Mix and Lifecycle Strategy

Macro-influencers offer reach but often less trust, while micro-influencers deliver authenticity and engagement. Engagement decreases as follower count increases. Modelling must incorporate tier-based impact curves and prioritize relevance and resonance. Lifecycle timing also matters: ROI depends on catching influencers at their engagement peak.

5. Category and Market Maturity Benchmarks

Influencer ROI is category-dependent: emotional categories like beauty and fashion show stronger impact. Maybelline's livestream campaigns delivered 2X category growth and ROAS up to 3.5X benchmarks. NYX's Barbie collection attracted 56% new-to-brand consumers. Saturation is evident in markets like China, where ROI has fallen despite high investment. Ekimetrics benchmarks ROI by tier, channel, and market to advise brands on optimal allocation.

6. Towards Measurement Maturity

Across brands, there is a call for more actionable measurement—moving from isolated EMV and impressions to integrated ROI frameworks. We recommend structuring influencer measurement into modular components (paid vs. organic, awareness vs. conversion, influencer vs. ambassador) with unified modelling that links brand equity to performance.

These insights reinforce the need for a measurement-first, platform-aware, and tier-optimized approach to influencer strategy. Brands that model impact holistically will unlock higher returns and long-term strategic advantage.

Best Practices for Influencer ROI Optimization

1 Establish a unified data framework to integrate influencer, sales, and media data

2 Prioritize long-term, high-fit influencer partnerships aligned with brand equity

3 Implement multi-touch attribution and econometric models to measure true incremental value.

4 Use uplift tests and synthetic control groups to validate results.

5 Design feedback loops to continually optimize strategy based on learnings.

7. Evolving ROI in the Age of Influence

Insights from recent influencer campaigns reveal valuable lessons in measurement and strategic design, aligned with Ekimetrics' philosophy of data integration, strategic flexibility, and outcome-based marketing investment.

- Maybelline's TikTok-first strategy in Indonesia showcases the power of livestreaming and creator engagement in turning views into transactions. The brand achieved 1.1 billion views, TikTok Shop sales outpacing the category by 2X, and ROAS that exceeded benchmarks by 2.7–3.5X. This illustrates the value of measuring beyond impressions, integrating content-to-commerce analytics, and leveraging unified attribution.
- NYX's Barbie collaboration achieved viral traction through macro-influencer pre-hype, a compelling retail activation, and high PR kit shareability, attracting 56% new-to-brand consumers and achieving the top Share of Influence in Europe. Ekimetrics supports similar strategies by modeling the impact of brand partnerships and optimizing tiered influencer portfolio value across funnel stages.
- MediaMonks and WARC emphasize the need to rethink ROI frameworks in the age of influence. Influencer lifecycle timing, authenticity, and brand-value alignment are essential dimensions of ROI today, especially as saturation erodes the effectiveness of boosted influencer content.
- Meltwater's study reinforces the rising role of micro-influencers and the importance of setting custom KPIs per campaign objective. This directly aligns with Ekimetrics' data stack that enables campaign-specific model calibration, incorporating social listening and engagement prediction.
- Boston Consulting Group's Precision Influencer Marketing framework outlines a transformation roadmap that mirrors Ekimetrics' core operating principles: strategic planning, real-time consumer insight, influencer mapping, content orchestration, and performance modelling. Brands that operationalize this framework saw 6x better efficiency and 20% higher sales performance.

Ekimetrics clients are encouraged to adopt lifecycle-aware ROI planning, advanced testing frameworks, and scenario-based budget planning to maximize return across awareness, consideration, and conversion goals. These cross-industry case studies support our granular, dynamic, and insight-driven approach to influencer marketing measurement.

We turn influencer activity into accountable, growth-driving investment through unified, business-focused measurement. By linking brand equity and performance, we help brands move beyond vanity metrics to unlock the full strategic value of influence.

Conclusion

Influencer marketing is no longer a speculative investment—it is a strategic lever that requires the same analytical rigor and integration as paid media or CRM. At Ekimetrics, we believe that only by embedding advanced measurement into influencer marketing can brands unlock its full business value. This means adopting unified marketing measurement practices, building measurement-literate teams, and investing in the infrastructure to continuously improve performance.

By aligning business goals with influencer strategy, and coupling creativity with scientific evaluation, brands can elevate influencer marketing from an awareness tool to a growth engine.

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Ekimetrics is a global leader in data science and marketing analytics. Ekimetrics operates across three continents with a team of more than 500 experts in data science, Marketing Mix Modelling (MMM) and AI. At Ekimetrics, our mission is to support businesses with AI solutions adapted to this rapidly changing context, to help them anticipate the future and strengthen their competitiveness. We put our expertise to work to optimize revenue, profitability, and operational efficiency, combining AI powered solutions and business expertise.

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