

Keep it Brief:

The right splash of data for effective
influencer content



Introduction

Influencer content is now a multi-billion-dollar industry, but the numbers tell a different story. With more than 7 out of 10 influencer partnerships still failing to deliver¹, marketers are being forced to answer tough questions:

- Was this the right influencer for the campaign?
- Was the brief too loose, or too restrictive?
- What does successful influencer content even look like?

We already know that creative quality is the biggest controllable factor in a campaign's success. Yet, what if there was also a surefire way to predict what will work—before your content creator even hits record?



What if the secret wasn't intuition, but Influencer intelligence?

Influencer Intelligence is the perfect mix of creator know-how, brand alignment, paid media expertise, and a deep understanding of creative data to craft content that doesn't just meet, but exceeds expectations.

By transforming thousands of creator assets into a structured data set, we're now able to accurately pinpoint features driving successful brand/influencer partnerships.

The engine behind this process is, of course, AI. Using a data-first approach and behavioral science to unlock insights that have historically been fragmented and difficult to obtain, it is now possible to marry creator choices with campaign performance at lightning speed.

Now is the time to be curious about how effective your product hooks are, if those deadpan expressions will land, or if your music choice is enough to cut through.

Influencer Intelligence is a transformational approach. It's a booming economy and brands need to grasp how to leverage it.

¹ <https://www.launchpointhq.com/blog/why-73-of-influencer-campaigns-fail>



A quick glimpse at the social/influencer market

\$23.8 billion

increase in social media revenues
from 2023 to 2024²

\$88.8 billion

total social media advertising
revenues in 2024³

\$480 billion

estimated value of the creator
economy by 2027⁴

Keep it Brief by SmartAssets shows you how to optimize influencer partnerships and create more impactful content. Whether you're a brand, agency, or influencer; this is an effective blueprint on how to harmonize and maximize collaborations for better creative effectiveness. This report looks at:

- Top tips to kindle the right partnerships
- Creative practices to turn influencer partnerships into a growth engine
- Why AI and a new data set should be your top priority
- The impact of competitive intelligence on your strategy
- How a best practice framework is the key to locking in influencer success

² https://www.iab.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/IAB_PwC-Internet-Ad-Revenue-Report-Full-Year-2024.pdf

³ https://www.iab.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/IAB_PwC-Internet-Ad-Revenue-Report-Full-Year-2024.pdf

⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lowes-creator/2025/06/16/how-the-creator-economy-is-reshaping-modern-marketing--and-why-brands-are-paying-attention/>

Riding the tidal influencer boom

The good news?

The creator market has never been bigger

The bad news?

The creator market has never been bigger

60%

of marketers say finding the right influencers has become a challenge.⁵

The growth of social media has hailed a new generation of content creators, a population that has exploded to more than 1 million⁶ on TikTok alone, with YouTube boasting over 69 million⁷.

That's not a talent pool, it's an ocean. And with this many creators to choose from, finding the right one is a gargantuan task. So, how best to choose?

	Followers	Avg. ER Instagram ⁸	Avg ER TikTok ⁸
Nano influencers	1k - 10k	1.73%	10.3%
Micro influencers	10k - 50k	0.68%	8.7%
Mid-tier influencers	50k - 500k	0.54%	7.5%
Macro influencers	500k - 1m	0.61%	7.1%
Mega influencers	1m+	0.68%	7.1%



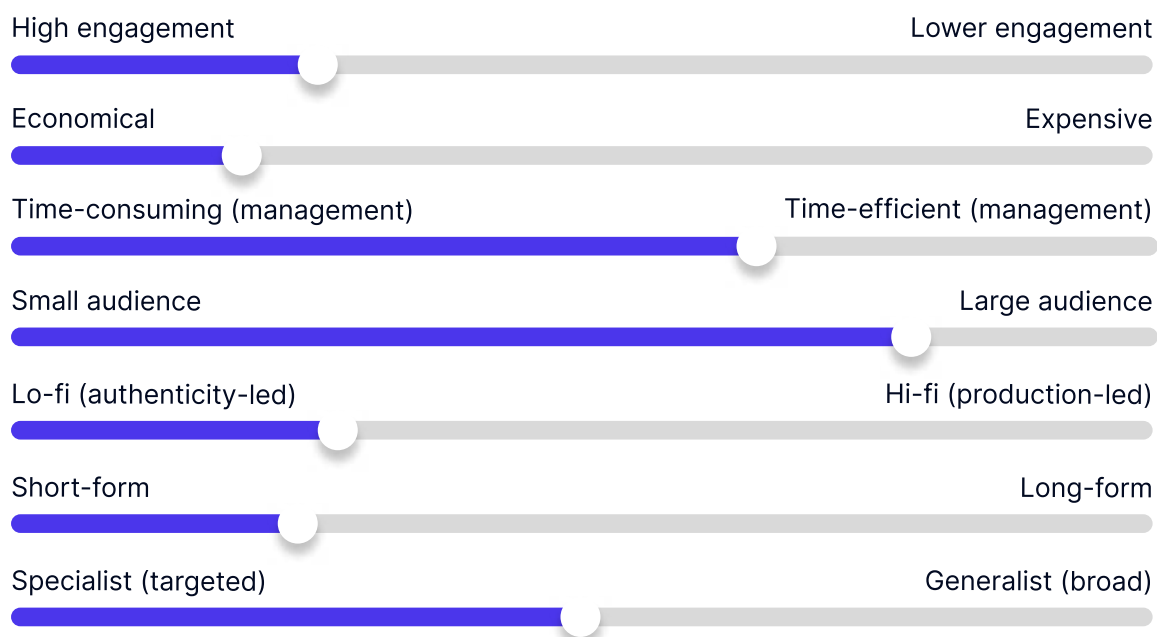
⁵ <https://www.warc.com/content/feed/influencer-marketing-impact-continues-to-be-largely-unproven/en-GB/10912>

⁶ <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/tiktok-creator-stats>

⁷ <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/youtube-creator-stats>

⁸ <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report/>

The creator market presents a clear trade-off: nano-influencers offer high engagement and cost-effectiveness, while mega-influencers provide wider experience, enhanced credibility, and a massive audience. But simply selecting a creator based on top-line metrics isn't enough. Getting the perfect fit requires looking beyond the numbers and considering other factors that align on your brand goals:



“When brands begin their search, there are usually two angles to explore: brand fit and target audience. With a tool like IMAI, you can filter by keywords and past partnerships to ensure alignment with the brand, while also filtering by demographics such as age, location, and gender to make sure you’re reaching the right consumer base.

The goal is to find creators who meet both criteria—authentic brand partners who also connect with the intended audience. From there, it’s about diving into the data—making sure performance is strong and that the influencer will deliver both on KPIs and on brand image.”

Limor Cohen

VP Global Partnerships, LEADERS

Get the right voices in the room—and set the right volume

Anybody who has worked in an office knows collaborations aren't always rainbows and butterflies. And it's no different for the creative process. The brand is the host, creators are the guests, and agencies the stewards—at a *noisy* party.

With so many cooks, lots of subjectivity and loud voices, it's easy to lose track of the big picture. But, one voice in particular shouldn't go unnoticed—*the creator's*. While brands talk about their last hero campaign, and agencies boast about their last great idea, it's time to rope in:

- **Creators** — for content creation experience and knowledge of their audience.
- **Technology** — for objective data across creative, media performance and ad platform.

And increasingly, marketers are rethinking what that 'tech' can and *should do*.

According to Influencer Marketing Hub, there's a major shift in what brands are looking for from AI + Machine Learning.

Whereas last year the focus was on influencer discovery and selection, this now only accounts for 10.5% of the demand.⁹

What marketers are looking for now are tools that address broader needs, such as **predictive analytics**, **campaign optimization**, and **content curation**.

Influencer Marketing Benchmark
Report 2025



⁹ <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report/>

What marketers say about their challenges...



52%

say content quality is their biggest challenge¹⁰



20%

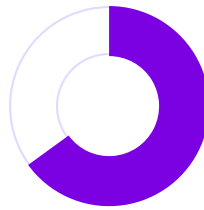
are searching for better predictive analytics¹¹



28%

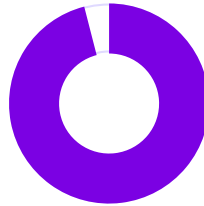
believe evolving trends is their main challenge¹²

And how content creators are feeling...



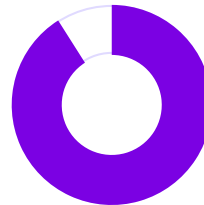
65%

want to be involved in the creative process earlier¹³



96%

are facing challenges with content creation¹⁴



91%

say AI is now crucial in their creation process¹⁴



¹⁰ <https://www.shopify.com/uk/blog/influencer-marketing-statistics>

¹¹ <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-statistics/>

¹² <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report/>

¹³ <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/how-to-find-the-right-influencers/>

¹⁴ <https://www.epidemicsound.com/business/future-creator-economy-report-2025/>

How to make sure the price is right



Successful partnerships start with fair compensation, because for many creators, this is no longer just a side hustle—it's a full-time role requiring *expertise* and *time*.



Today, **only 5%** of content creators make more than \$100,000 USD per year¹⁵ from their content activity. A reality born from a system where brands—motivated by a surge in influencers and lack of guidelines—have been encouraged to pay influencers on intuition or rely on gifting models.

But that era is reaching a close...



~30%

increase in influencer fees since last year¹⁵



59%

of influencers want clear budgets¹⁶

The value of creator content is impossible to ignore, with companies such as Unilever announcing **half of its ad spend**¹⁷ will be invested on social channels, and it will look to collaborate with 20x more influencers. And it's no wonder why: creator-led campaigns are delivering a powerful **20-30%**¹⁸ **uplift in sales**, with even greater returns in industries like fashion and beauty.

But, how does this value translate into a final payment across social and advertising channels?

¹⁵ <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2025/07/28/after-unilever-s-influencer-pivot-creator-rates-jump-30>

¹⁶ <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/how-to-find-the-right-influencers/>

¹⁷ <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2025/03/13/50-unilevers-ad-spend-will-go-social-media-will-influencer-first-strategy-work>

¹⁸ <https://www.thedrum.com/opinion/2025/07/31/creators-are-the-new-touchpoint-we-need-link-arms>

The fee-per-post guide to creator compensation

	Nano	Micro	Mid-tier	Macro	Mega
Instagram	\$10 - \$100	\$100 - \$500	\$500 - \$5,000	\$5,000 - \$10,000	\$10,000+
Youtube	\$20 - \$200	\$200 - \$1,000	\$1,000 - \$10,000	\$10,000 - \$20,000	\$20,000+
TikTok	\$5 - \$25	\$25 - \$125	\$125 - \$1,250	\$1,250 - \$2,500	\$2,500+
X	\$2 - \$20	\$20 - \$100	\$100 - \$1,000	\$1,000 - \$2,000	\$2,000+
Facebook	\$25 - \$250	\$250 - \$1,250	\$1,250 - \$12,500	\$12,500 - \$25,000	\$25,000+

19

Creator fees are less of a rigid price list and more of a fluid equation. Think of the above figures as a rough guide, as many variables can turn a flat fee into a final price. Brands also need to consider the following, and add it to the final bill:



1. Niche Audience
with hyper-engaged
communities



5. Performance incentives
such as affiliate and other
commercial models



2. Content complexity
from a single static post to
a dynamic video series



6. Campaign scopes
including content usage and
boosting rights



3. Content quality
and the creator's production
value



7. Fine print
such as gifting and
exclusivity clauses



4. Engagement rates
that prove true resonance
with the content



8. Creator credibility
expertise that makes their
endorsement powerful

¹⁹ <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-rates/>

From organic to panic

The golden age of organic reach has ended, and brands are feeling the panic as platform algorithms now prioritize paid content. Marketers are trying to navigate this new reality in a multitude of ways. The two main ones:

- **Method 1)** Purchasing the rights and running content as an ad from the brand's channels.
- **Method 2)** Amplifying content through the influencer's channel itself.

Spoiler alert: The latter is usually more powerful since it allows brands to target the influencer's audience, and their own lookalike audiences. An organic post may only reach a fraction of their followers, but a paid media post could propel messages to 100%—and far beyond.

What this looks like across social and advertising channels²⁰

YouTube: Organic reach on YouTube is highly competitive and difficult to quantify, as it functions more like a search engine than a social feed. With 500+ hours of video uploaded each minute, success relies on a brand's ability to win the SEO game.

X: Since switching to an algorithmic timeline, X's overall engagement has dropped significantly, with an average reach of just 3%. Without immediate engagement, a tweet is likely to be seen by only a small fraction of a brand's followers.

Instagram: Organic reach is declining, with a typical post reaching fewer than 1 in 10 followers. In 2024, the average reach fell to just 4%, highlighting the increasing difficulty for brands to gain visibility without paid promotion.

LinkedIn: Organic content can still thrive, particularly for individual user posts which can reach 20–30% of a network. However, organic content from official company pages struggles immensely, often getting buried and reaching only a tiny fraction of user feeds.

TikTok: While earning a reputation for massive organic reach, it's becoming difficult to sustain as the platform matures. Despite a dip in engagement in 2024, organic views are no longer guaranteed, and competition is fierce with over 16,000 videos uploaded every minute.

Facebook: Organic page reach is notoriously low, with an average post reaching around 5.9% of a brand's fans. This means perhaps only 1 in 20 (or even 1 in 40) followers will see a post.



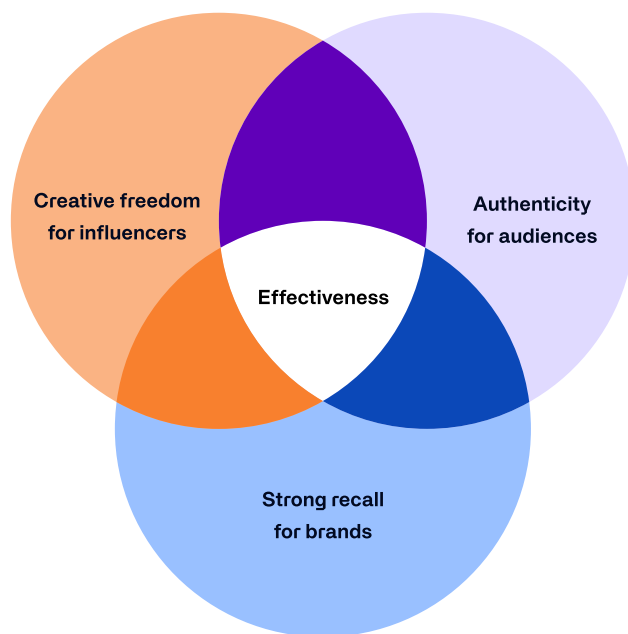
Increasing fees and decreasing reach: Standing out with organic content is a challenge across all platforms. SmartAssets enables brands to better understand organic performance drivers from a much broader data set and cherry-pick which features need to be amplified to improve reach and engagement.

²⁰ <https://addictedigital.co.uk/the-decline-of-organic-reach-on-social-media/>

The ingredients for a successful campaign brief

Once you've settled on the perfect influencer and fair remuneration, it's finally time to think about making effective content for your audience. And getting it right means *picking your battles*.

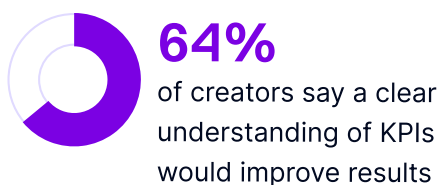
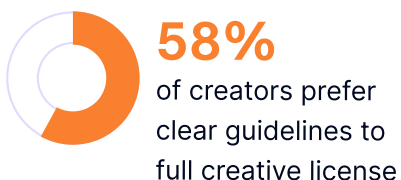
On one side, you have the brand's need for strong brand recall. While on the other, you have the influencer's need for creative freedom, and the audience's demand for genuine authenticity. *But the trick is hitting the mark on all fronts.*



If you're unsure where to start, a good first step is to figure out what you don't want to do...

How creating effective content starts with a “what not to do” list

The worst thing a marketer could do is to hand a complex script to the influencer without consulting them first. Not only is it a bad idea to create *off-sounding* non-native content, it's also a guaranteed recipe for a campaign flop. But that isn't to say creators don't want guidelines...



The reason that creators want more ownership of the content creation process is that it feels *more authentic*. They know far better what resonates with their audience—which, ultimately, is what brands are paying them for.

Creators consistently drive lifts from awareness to consideration—think CeraVe, e.l.f., Stanley. And the ultimate proof: influencer-founded brands like Skims and Rare Beauty didn't just create buzz, they built billion-dollar businesses. As Gen Z comes of age in a cord-cutting, fragmented media world, social has become the stage—and influencers command the spotlight. This isn't a passing trend. It's a core lever of modern advertising, and something our clients have to track.

Justin Pincus

Managing Director Product, QuestBrand

²¹ <https://www.netinfluencer.com/research-highlights-vital-gaps-between-creators-and-brands/>

SmartAssets' winning framework for high-performing authentic content:

1 Leverage AI to analyze top-performing features from UGC, creator, brand and competitor content, then synthesize and correlate these findings in a report.

2 Highlight the most effective and important brand features, then introduce these in **brief guidelines**, instead of word-for-word scripts, to foster authenticity. Limit any USP spiel and encourage influencers to talk about products in their own words.

3 Give the creators space to do the rest—request that creators show how products fit into their everyday life—how they can be used, the time of day, etc.



We operate in a media landscape where the idea of influencers and collaborations are incredibly native to consumers. Audiences know the difference between co-creation and co-option, and can innately tell the difference. This means that influencer work that lacks alignment doesn't just have a heightened risk of poor performance, but also carries the reputational risk of the brand being seen as a transactional interloper trying to buy their way into fandoms they don't belong to - in other words, "cringe".

Yash Murthy,
Executive Director, Social, Create Group



Humanization: It's not just follower demographics that can tell when your content sounds non-native—*AI can too.*

SmartAssets offers a direct response to combat this. The platform analyzes whether your content meets your own brand guidelines, while also ensuring you hit the personalized zingy notes that make influencer content unique.

Why storytelling is your most powerful engagement strategy



55%

people more likely to remember a story than a list of facts²²



30%

storytelling boosts a product's perceived value by 30%²³



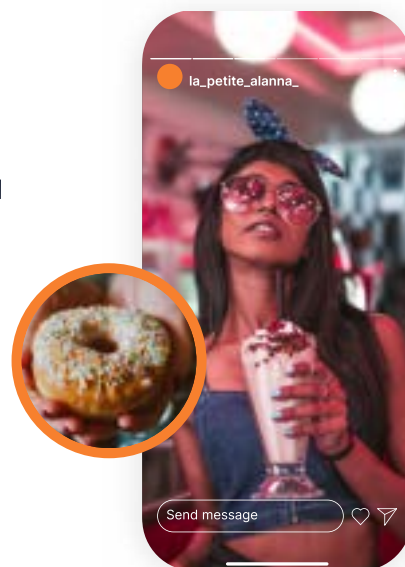
20%

Compelling stories can boost customer loyalty by up to 20%²³

If the stats aren't enough—there's even more to why you should bother with effective storytelling.

All relationships are based on trust, but they're also enhanced by refined storytelling abilities. Research of over 50,000 brains, conducted by Neuroscientist Dr. Paul Zak, shows that we have a preference for well-crafted narratives.

Storytelling activates oxytocin, the hormone linked to empathy, trust, and emotional connection. When an influencer tells an engaging story, their audience doesn't just watch—they feel something. And that emotional connection is what ultimately drives action.²⁴



78%

bought a product after seeing a TikTok recommendation²⁵



75%

millennial TikTok users think creators like the products they post²⁵



67%

of consumer think the best collabs are honest + unbiased²⁶

The pursuit of this emotional connection is why **reliability has become the new currency**. Whether you're looking to create a connection, build awareness, or sell more—it all starts with being noticed. And to get there, you need to appeal to consumers.

"It's really about wielding emotion well, more than following a blueprint."

Vitaly Boitelet

Chief Product Officer, SmartAssets

²² <https://www.cim.co.uk/content-insights/webinars/member-exclusive-bringing-brands-to-life-through-storytelling/>

²³ <https://www.cim.co.uk/content-insights/webinars/member-exclusive-bringing-brands-to-life-through-storytelling/>

²⁴ <https://futureofstorytelling.org/case-study/the-neuroscience-of-good-storytelling/>

²⁵ <https://ads.tiktok.com/business/en/insights>

²⁶ <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/influencer-marketing-statistics/>

The real power is nailing the narrative — not just reaching the numbers.

Building an effective narrative starts with a 7-step checklist that prioritizes great STORIES.

S

Strive for authenticity

Your storyline is one of your greatest assets. When creating branded content, share your genuine product experiences, passions, affinities and vulnerabilities. People connect with real people, not polished performances.

T

Target your audience

Most content creators know this better than anybody—but never forget who you're speaking to. Consider their interests, pain points, and aspirations, then tailor your narrative to resonate with them. Make them feel seen and understood.

O

Outline your narrative arc

Even short-form content can have a hero's journey. Introduce a problem or a goal, show the journey and the effort it takes, and then reveal the resolution or outcome. This structure keeps your audience engaged and invested.

R

Relate through emotions

The most powerful stories evoke feelings. Whether it's joy, frustration, humor, or inspiration, tap into emotions to create a memorable and impactful connection with your audience.

I

Introduce a call-to-action

A good story doesn't just entertain; it inspires action. Whether it's to like, comment, share, or check out a link, guide your audience on what to do next to continue the conversation.

E

Engage with your community

Your followers are not just an audience; they're co-authors. Respond to comments, ask questions, and incorporate their feedback. This interaction builds a loyal community and makes your story a shared experience.

S

Show, don't just tell

Use visuals, a dynamic voice, and specific details to bring stories to life. Instead of saying, "It was a difficult day," show a clip of your struggle or the mess you made while filming. This makes content more compelling and relatable.

Struggling to hit all the points?



SmartAssets' automatic QA ensures that your content is following this framework, your brand guidelines and advertising best practices to get the most out of your influencer partnerships. The platform also measures storytelling and emotional resonance, as well as creative effectiveness.

Creating a formula for success with best practices

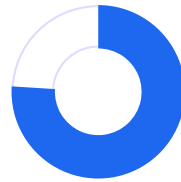
An uncomfortable truth: influencer content is advertising, and like all advertising, it has rules and formulae for good reason. After all, humans are wired for patterns. We are drawn to these in everything, from a blockbuster movie to a viral piece of influencer content—and the most successful ads leverage this fundamental truth.

While the formula is simple, the execution is anything but.

Even with the perfect brief and a great storyline, marketers still need to ensure their content is meticulously optimized for each platform.

This is a monumental task that influencers—and their agencies—know all too well.

While most influencers are getting smarter with creating bespoke content, many are still failing to meet crucial best practices. A 2025 study by the ASA found that **34% of influencer ads**³² failed to adhere to partnership disclosure guidelines—a problem that doesn't just undermine trust, but could also lead to sanctions. Fixing this isn't just a 'nice to have', it's *essential*.



76%

of creators tailor content for each platform²⁷



76%

of creators say brands underestimate the effort involved²⁷



"When influencer content misses the mark, the biggest cost isn't just wasted spend, it's the erosion of trust. Audiences today are hyper aware, and they can sense when something feels inauthentic or disconnected. If a brand gets that balance wrong, the damage is deeper than performance metrics; it risks breaking the emotional connection that turns casual viewers into true fans."

Dia Hassan

Chief Creative Officer, Create Group

²⁷ <https://www.cim.co.uk/content-insights/webinars/member-exclusive-bringing-brands-to-life-through-storytelling/>

²⁸ <https://www.asa.org.uk/news/influencer-ad-disclosure-on-social-media-instagram-and-tiktok-report-2024.html>

Forget about hitting a strike and aim for the top 5 pins

A powerful mix of AI, strategy, data and techniques, all infused into one tool can now analyze years of creative content and uncover the biggest performance drivers to successful campaigns. But, this is where the real challenge begins. While thousands of creative best practices exist, expecting an influencer to hit them all is unrealistic. After all:

- They don't know your brand guidelines as intimately as you do
- They don't have the time to read all of your literature for a single post
- They have their own audience to cater to, without having to worry about brand demands

This is why it's important to identify the sweet spot—the few non-negotiable, high-impact features that will drive the best results for your campaign objective. *Wrapped up in a brief, data-based brief.*

Best practices are a great starting point, but can be massively improved with your brands' own creative and media data. By understanding your own performance drivers, and whittling these down, your chances of success improve greatly. Digestible chunks are easier for content partners to follow, making it less likely they'll miss a step.



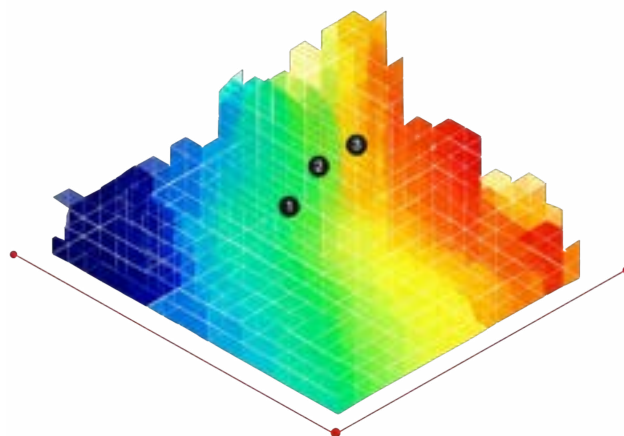
	High-impact feature #1	High-impact feature #2	High-impact feature #3
Story arc	The story arc follows “the hero’s journey”	On-screen text builds suspense...	Foreshadowing that spikes curiosity
Hooks	Emotional triggers in the first 5 seconds	Dialogues used to engage the audience	The # of scenes optimized in opening
Ad break	Seamless integration into content style	Brand alignment in wider narrative	Brand natively mentioned
Brand mention	Brand mention in the first 3 seconds	Brand mentioned in the voiceover	Brand mentioned in on-screen text
Call-to-action	Clear introduction to a call-to-action	Visual inclusion of a call-to-action	Verbally mentioned call-to-action

How to trim brief features for greater creative impact

While there are plenty of features that affect your influencer campaign performance, some will hang heavier in the balance.

By correlating quantitative creative data against media performance, you can strategize more easily and focus on the bigger picture, confident that your execution is engineered for maximum impact.

Instead of drafting a long brief, such as the one on the previous page, concentrate on making it concise and infusing the brief with best practices and learnings that are attuned to your own brand data. For example, some brands may find discrepancies when analyzing best practices:



Data-based briefings: Prioritizing features that optimize results

- 1 Top-ranking feature for story arc
- 2 Non-negotiable feature for hook
- 3 Most important brand feature

Brand mentions

Best practices suggest a brand mention in the first 3 seconds, whereas your brand's own sweet spot could be 2 seconds.

Logo placement

Top-center is usually the best placement for recall. But bespoke data shows exactly where and when your logo is most effective.

Product visibility

Best practices recommend a product shot be 25% of the video length. However, an audit tells you the right angles and % close-ups.



The brain has a bouncer—a subcortical region that determines what we do, or don't, pay our very tiny limited attention towards. Like if you hear your name at a crowded party, your ears will instantly pick up. This bouncer has a VIP list, and creator content can hijack it to engage emotionally: we pay attention to the personal (and some things, like memes and celebrities, are personal to lots of people), the primal (like food, faces, and sex), the new and weird and surprising, and the emotional.

We're also more likely to engage with content that has some element of mystery or intrigue (think clickbait headlines), tells a story, is cognitively easy to process (one study found TikToks that use sensory language get more engagement), and has a 'what's in it for me' for the viewer, like social capital, interesting facts, or reinforcement of their world view.

Patrick Fagan

Author & Behavioural Scientist

SmartAssets partnered with leading behavioral scientist, Patrick Fagan, to develop a powerful framework that breaks down formulaic success into three key categories: attention, engagement, and value.

We didn't just learn from this framework—we built those learnings directly into our influencer analysis tools. The integration of behavioral science was fundamental to ensuring our influencer analyses moved beyond simple metrics, capturing the emotional and psychological triggers that truly influence consumer mentality.

Attention	Engagement	Value
Triggers	Fluency	Wishes
Arousal	Story	Relevance
Creativity	Curiosity	Positivity
Contrast		Persuasion
Incongruence		

Summary

The traditional approach to creating influencer content isn't cutting it anymore, and the numbers prove that the lack of creative strategy is costing brands millions. Fortunately, the answer to the issue is relatively simple—*uniting the art of the creator with science and data*.

This often feels like the clash of two worlds. Yet, by making a strategic choice to align these two sides, brands can turn influencer collaborations into a formula for creative success. Choosing data over intuition, synergy over silos, and strategy over scripts.

The key is being able to see the wood for the trees, and that starts with the brief. By moving past complex briefs and focusing on the non-negotiable, high-impact features that actually work for your audience, you can simplify the creation process and elevate the quality of your content.

In a noisy market, clarity is your ultimate competitive advantage. And with the influencer space estimated to grow to a **\$480 billion industry** by 2027, that truth is more important than ever. The brands that win will be the ones that find the most effective ways to collaborate and cut through that noise.

About SmartAssets

SmartAssets solves the challenge of creative inefficiency in marketing by turning creative content into a measurable, optimisable asset. Blending machine learning, computer vision, and natural language processing to deeply analyse ad creative—both visual and written—SmartAssets is the first fully data-driven, AI-powered solution for optimizing creative effectiveness.

While traditional platforms focus on media delivery and targeting, SmartAssets addresses the most overlooked variable in performance marketing: the creative itself.

The platform has transformed creative strategy for some of the world's biggest advertisers across FMCG, retail, luxury and tech.

Across clients, SmartAssets has boosted ROAS by up to 300%, saved 500+ hours per campaign brief, and helped teams consistently produce high-performing content. It's not just a tool, it's becoming the industry standard for creative decision-making.

+300% boost

in **ROAS** for a leading luxury cosmetic brand.

+89% increase

in **click-through-rate** for a global electronics client.

500+ hours

time saved **per brief** for a global fintech company.



SmartAssets

Unlock the intelligence behind
the influence.

www.smartassets.ai