



# Beyond Engagement Rates



How Influencers Are More Than  
Just an Upper Funnel Tactic



## Rise of Social Commerce

**S**ocial commerce — the purchase of products on social media or through links found on social platforms — has become a multibillion-dollar industry that will grow to \$56 billion by 2023, as forecast by Insider Intelligence. Brands are embracing social commerce, including live shopping, in-app purchases and shoppable content, to capture this rising share of retail sales and reach Gen Z and millennial shoppers.

WGSN's Shopper Forecast 2022 report said product scarcity during the pandemic has led “shoppers to new channels including social, video and mobile commerce.” This is expected to continue as social commerce is estimated to grow to 45% of retail sales and the average amount spent by a social shopper will hit \$737.32 per buyer between 2020 and 2025, according to Insider Intelligence.

For an idea of where the future of social commerce might lead, marketers can look to China, where Insider Intelligence says livestream shopping is a \$300 billion industry that accounts for 11.7% of all retail e-commerce sales in the country. U.S. brands are testing out livestreaming shopping as well, as

are social networks like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest. E-commerce giant Amazon has also launched Amazon Live, on which influencers host live shopping events sharing their favorite products sold on the marketplace.

The influencer marketing industry has grown alongside social commerce. Influencers play a key role in leading shoppers to make a purchase. IZEA Insights: Trust in Influencer Marketing, a consumer study, found that 46% of respondents had purchased products promoted by influencers. Insider Intelligence puts the influencer marketing industry at \$3.69 billion in 2021, with more room for growth. The benefit of using influencers in social commerce is that it allows product discovery and brand awareness and motivates potential buyers to move closer to making a purchase. While influencers have traditionally been seen as a top-funnel strategy, when activated correctly, they have a strong low-funnel effect on consumers.



## How Influencers Spark Low-Funnel Engagement

Influencers use a variety of tactics to lead potential customers toward purchasing. Insider Intelligence, citing Advertiser Perceptions, lists examples such as reaching and discovering new target customers, increasing product consideration, and driving sales. Driving purchase intent is also a factor, as is building short-term brand mindshare.

## How Influencers Drive Customers Down the Funnel

### Engaging video

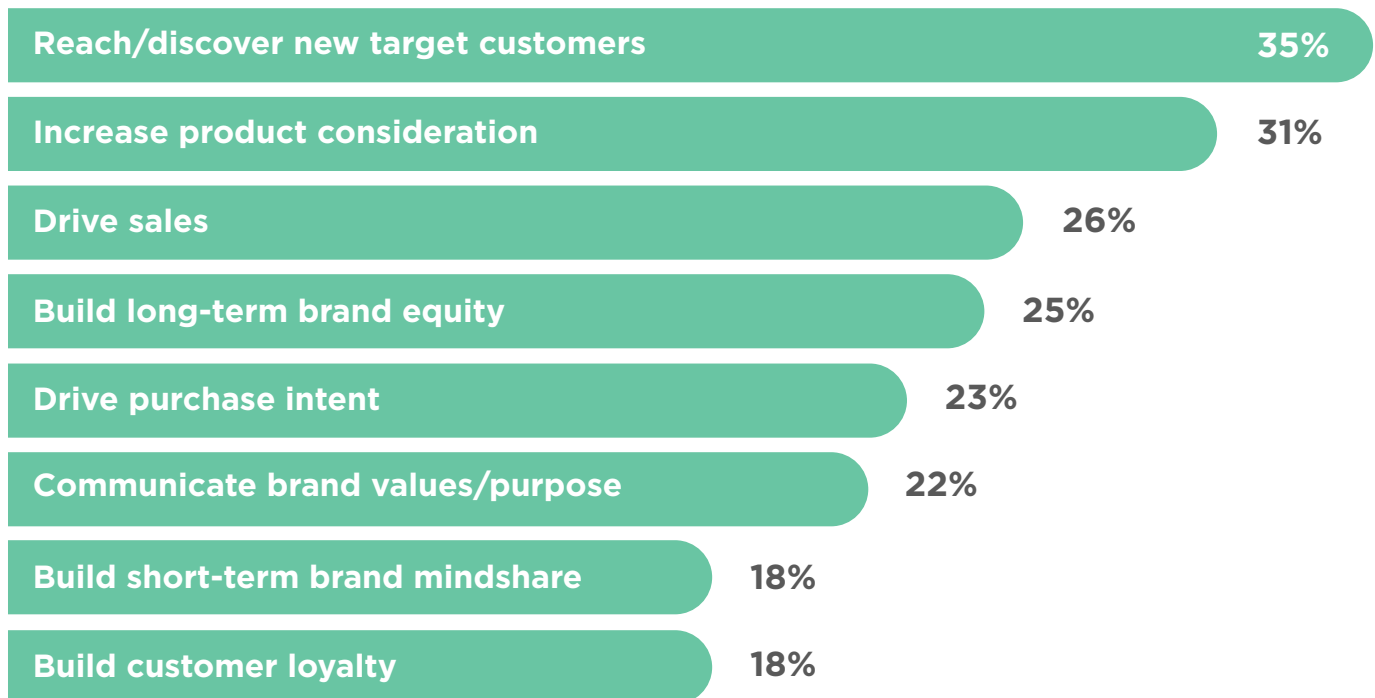
According to Insider Intelligence, video ads are becoming more prevalent and important on social

media as advertisers use creative content to grab attention, build brand relationships, and drive consumers down the funnel. To accomplish this, videos need to capture the audience's attention right away and then deliver the message immediately to "drive momentum toward making a purchase." Influencer videos often do not feel overly staged and the authenticity resonates with viewers. It's more acceptable to have selfie-style influencer video that brands can choose to boost with paid ads.

Additionally, users spend more time on content creators' videos than videos created by brands, according to Insider Intelligence, which cited a Tubular study that found influencer content "accounted for more than three-quarters of the nearly 20 billion hours U.S. internet users spent watching video on Facebook and YouTube in Q4 2021."

## Top Goals/Objectives for Using Influencer Marketing According to U.S. Agency/Marketing Professionals

### % of Respondents



**Note:** n=205; weighted rank 1-3

**Source:** Advertiser Perceptions, "Branded Content and Influencer Marketing Report," April 27, 2021, via eMarketer, InsiderIntelligence.com

## Trust and connection

Influencers know their audiences and have built a rapport with them. That leads to trust in influencers. According to IZEA Insights: Trust in Influencer Marketing, 62% of all survey respondents trust influencers over celebrity endorsements. The U.S. consumer study had 1,237 participants ages 18 and older and examined the effectiveness of influencer marketing in terms of consumer trust and engagement. The survey found 36% of respondents said influencer posts are the best way to get them to try new products.

“A creator knows how to connect with a particular niche audience,” said Addi McCauley, IZEA’s Executive Director, Client Development and Strategy. “Their content is highly targeted organically. As it’s harder to obtain the exact right targeting, it’s important to remember that influencers know their audiences.”

## Longer-term influencer collaborations and ambassadorships

Influencers are increasingly being viewed as ambassadors and that allows them to collaborate with brands in an authentic way and build deeper connections with the influencers’ audiences. Brands are partnering with influencers on longer-term projects.

“The fact that so many brands are starting to work with influencers on a much-more ambassador-esque relationship versus one-off activations shows the value of influencers’ ability to drive results for these brands,” according to McCauley. “We’re seeing a lot of brands lock creators in for months or even full-year commitments, and more brands are doing full-on product collaborations with influencers.”

## Total Facebook and YouTube Video Minutes Watched Among U.S. Internet Users, by Creator Type

### Millions of Hours

	Q4 2020	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Q3 2021	Q4 2021
Influencers	14,252.5	15,160.5	14,180.4	14,243.1	15,243.6
Media companies	5,037.9	5,087.9	4,549.1	4,333.3	4,193.2
Brands	479.1	455.7	420.9	400.1	394.2
Aggregators	162.2	181.8	147.0	146.1	160.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,931.6</b>	<b>20,885.9</b>	<b>19,297.4</b>	<b>19,122.6</b>	<b>19,991.3</b>

**Note:** Influencers are defined as personalities, celebrities, or public figures with a social production and/or distribution of content; brands are defined as organizations that primarily sell nonmedia products/services; aggregators are defined as creators who repost content.

**Source:** Tubular. Jan. 28, 2022 via eMarketer, InsiderIntelligence.com

## Authentic, seamless content

Influencers create content that is viewed as authentic to their followers. They can feature a product or service into their content in a way that fits in seamlessly with their organic, non-sponsored content. Often the content is not overly produced or staged. While product-focused images are typically favored by brands, influencers go beyond these shots to include lifestyle-focused content that shows them interacting with the product and service. These images tend to garner more engagement.

Another key part of authenticity is allowing influencers to exercise creative control over the content, because influencers know how to best communicate with their followers and there is a feedback loop that is often visible in social media post comments. Asserting control over the message in a sponsored post can be a risk to authenticity.

Beyond authenticity, the online ordering process needs to be seamless as well. According to the “Shopper Forecast 2022” report from WGSN, offering a seamless omnichannel experience impacts the bottom line. When customers face friction in the buying process, it can lead to abandoned carts.

An example cited in the WGSN report was Sephora and Ulta Beauty launching same-day delivery with partners including DoorDash to entice consumers. This makes it easier for online shoppers to purchase and get the products into their hands quickly.

“As the opportunities to drive purchase behavior emerge — with things like live commerce and creating experiences in the metaverse — making sure that the content is still authentic and easy to interact with within those platforms is going to be really critical for brand success,” McCauley, IZEA’s Executive Director, Client Development and Strategy, said.

## Follower-influencer conversations

Brands can see positive purchase intent based on the comments left on influencers’ posts. Positive sentiment in the comment section is another way to show the social media users are engaged and moving lower in the funnel. Followers often leave feedback on influencers’ posts when they are interested in a product, such as in these comments for a campaign.

## Social Post Comments Show Followers Moving Down Funnel



**annawagnercarroll** Frozen bfast sandwiches for the win!



**beautyloungesanmarcos** Soooo cute! 🥰



**fabeveryday** These sound so good!



**aprilpiggott** Always easy as delicious is key!!



**hollandmama3** Oh those look yummy (and quick)! I have a tendency to skip breakfast because I am too busy getting the kiddos ready for their day. This looks great!



**samanthakbone** Meijer is where it's at 🙌 Also hooray for waking up at the last minute. All about the extra sleep (even five more minutes)



## Sharing promo codes and links

Promo codes shared by influencers offer their followers an incentive to shop, bringing them closer to purchasing. Giving influencers unique discount codes also allows brands to attribute sales to specific creators and offers another measure of ROI.

Referral links allow marketers to gauge traffic and direct customers into a specific landing page. At the same time, links are a way for influencers to generate affiliate or referral income. Promo codes and links are often used together.

## Enticing viral shoppers

A viral post on an app like TikTok can lead to sold-out products for brands. According to the WGSN's Shopper Forecast 2022, 74% of TikTok users claim the app influences their buying decisions and 67% say it helps them learn more about a brand or product. The hashtag TikTokMadeMeBuyIt has more than 10 billion views on the app as of March 22. The WGSN report suggests that implementing trends and "organically engineering virality around items" will help drive sales.

## IZEA's Measurement and Social Commerce Partners

Engagement rates have been a measure of success for influencer marketing campaigns for years, but there are ways to measure influencers' value beyond comments, likes and shares. As outlined above, there are a number of ways in which influencer strategies can impact a marketer's lower funnel. Beyond engagement rates and other high-level metrics, marketers have access to tools that help show how influencers support low-funnel tactics, targeting people who are about to become customers.

According to Insider Intelligence's "US Social Video Advertising 2022" report from Jan. 11, 2022, "Apple's AppTrackingTransparency (ATT) framework has severely dampened campaign measurement and performance for many social advertisers," making attention-grabbing influencer campaigns more important. Under ATT, users of apps have to opt-in to allow marketers to track them across apps. The U.S. adoption rate for iOS 14+ is at 89%, while about 46% of mobile app users have opted in for ATT, according to AppsFlyer research.

Influencer content can show potential customers that a given product or service will solve a problem for

them in a unique, captivating way. Because influencers' audiences trust the creators, they value their opinions and recommendations, leading to not just more engagement on sponsored content, but more sales, too. IZEA has partnered with companies to provide better ways to measure campaign success. IZEA's Solution Partners offer tools from advanced sales lift studies that measure campaign ROI and impact to creative custom-branded music and video production. Brands that work with IZEA have access to work with multiple partners depending on their goals.

"IZEA's Solution Partners offers brands and agencies avenues to truly understand the impact of their influencer marketing campaigns," said Nick Giannopoulos, Manager of Media and Partnerships at IZEA. "There's never been a greater time to utilize influencers to drive a brand's goals."

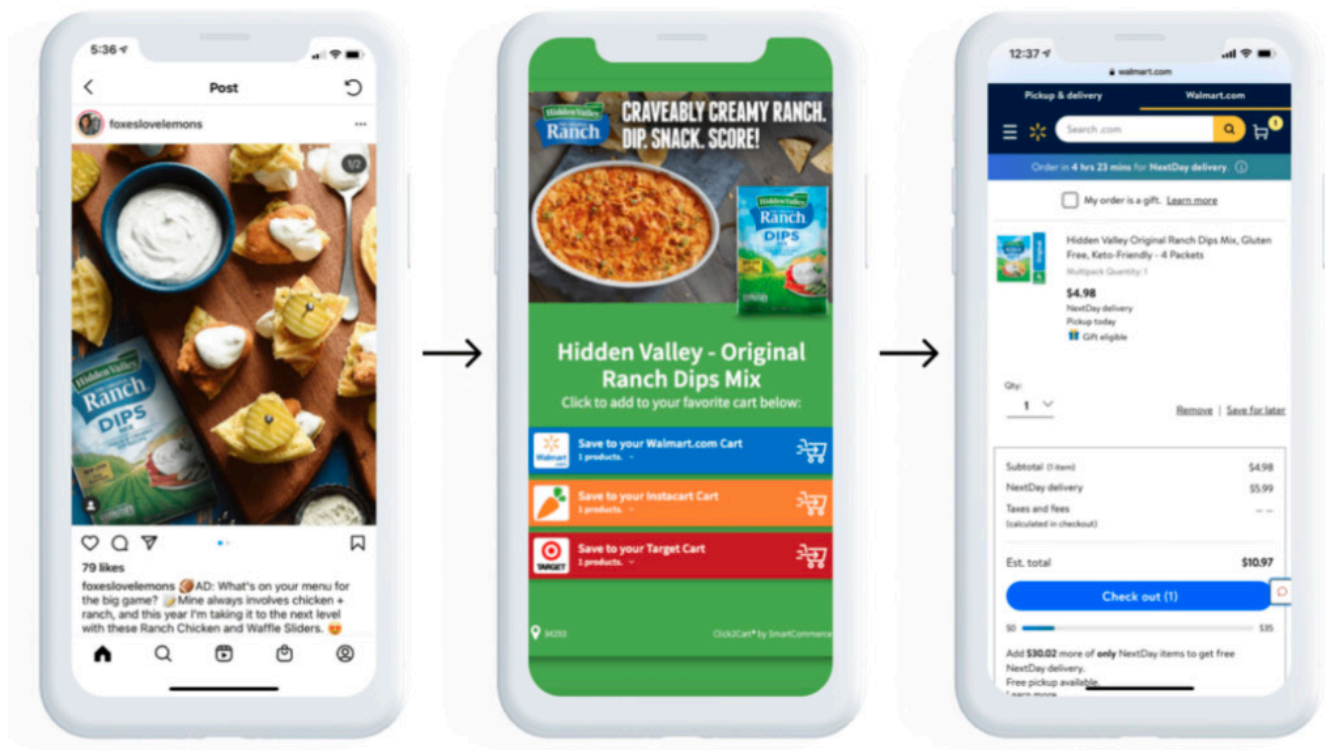
## Solution Partners

### InfluenceImpact Powered by IRI - Retail sales lift

With InfluenceImpact (IRI), IZEA can track an influencer marketing campaign's actual retail sales lift at brick-and-mortar locations. By comparing sales in markets exposed to influencer organic content and paid media to three small excluded markets (dark markets) that act as controls, IRI can determine the actual sales lift of specific SKUs as well as variations on that product (such as different flavors, sizes, and sister products). This partner solution is especially beneficial for consumer packaged goods (CPG) clients. IRI has seen return on advertising spends (ROAS) up to 611% for influencer marketing campaigns.

### PlacelQ (Foot traffic)

IZEA partners with PlacelQ to track an influencer campaign's impact on actual on-location foot traffic. PlacelQ data combined with paid media by IZEA can offer one-to-one matching of individuals who saw content and went to the retail location. Final output of a PlacelQ study can show actual percent lift of visits of individuals exposed to the media vs. those who did not see the content. Marketers also have access to custom audiences based on individuals' past location visits (for as low as a \$1.00 CPM). This partnership benefits clients such as retailers, quick-service restaurants, events, tourism businesses and organizations, and entertainment venues. IZEA has seen a 561% ROI from our influencer campaigns when measured with PlacelQ.



## Click2Cart® - E-commerce sales tracking and attribution

Click2Cart® is offered by Smart Commerce and allows audiences to add up to six products directly to a retailer cart with one click. Since IZEA has partnered with Click2Cart, it has grown to be one of its most popular partnerships offerings.

Clients such as consumer goods, toy, and clothing companies can benefit from this offering, which reduces the total clicks to purchase and drastically increases potential sales. Click2Cart works best when the products are sold at major retailers that are integrated with the Click2Cart and when it is paired with paid media. IZEA has seen return on advertising spending as high as 332%

With Click2Cart, IZEA can give clients information about:

- Total number of cart transfers.
- Monetary value of the cart transfers for the product(s).
- Total number of products transferred to carts.
- Transfers by retailer.
- Transfers by link.
- Transfers by product.

## Multicart - E-commerce

IZEA's partnership with Multicart converts content audiences into buyers by allowing consumers to purchase products directly from social media. A user will click the link directly from a post and be brought to a landing page pre-populated with the product(s) that are part of the campaign.

In addition to a shorter path-to-purchase, sales data is attributed for purchases made directly within the landing page, providing data on the return on advertising spending. This partnership solution works best for fashion, cosmetics, hobby, gift or similar campaigns.

With this partnership, IZEA can provide clients with data including:

- Total sales.
- Number of products sold.
- Abandoned cart value.
- Top products.

## Case Studies Show Value of Working With Influencers

In a campaign with TortillaLand for Cinco De Mayo, IZEA used Click2Cart to convert influencer content into a one-click shopping cart experience that sent the

audience directly to their Walmart.com shopping cart with the advertised products pre-populated.

Between the compelling content and the timeliness of the campaign, IZEA was able to drive a 332% return on advertising spend for TortillaLand.

## TortillaLand Cinco De Mayo

Food CPG

E-commerce

Shopper Marketing

### Overview

IZEA partnered with TortillaLand to get its target shoppers to purchase TortillaLand products at Walmart for their Cinco de Mayo celebrations. This was done by educating them on TortillaLand's ease of preparation, superior taste and availability.

3.32x

ROAS

19.8K+

PRODUCT TRANSFERS

10

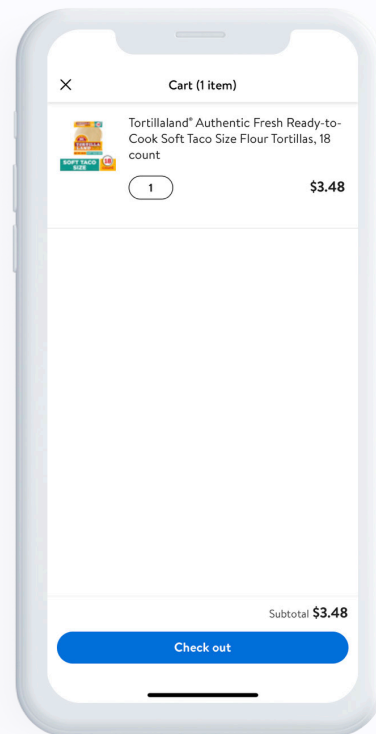
PIECES OF CONTENT

11%

ORGANIC ENGAGEMENT RATE

### Strategy

Creators produced Cinco de Mayo recipes using the TortillaLand tortillas, highlighting their flavor and directing traffic to the SmartCommerce experience. The Click2Cart integration allowed the audience to add products directly to their Walmart cart with a single click. The messaging and this timing resonated strongly with consumers as the campaign drove a 3.32 times return on ad spend (ROAS), or total transfers of more than 19K of product to carts.





In another example with a Fortune 100 Grocer, IZEA partnered with PlacelQ to measure the foot traffic driven to the grocer while promoting its e-commerce app. This campaign saw a 563% return on advertising spend and more than 35,000 store visits.

“Our clients have been thrilled with the successes we’ve been able to show utilizing our Solution Partners,” Giannopoulos said. “IZEA’s team is constantly searching for new and better ways to show the value of influencer marketing to our clients. The Solution Partners do just that.”

## Fortune 100 Grocer

E-commerce App

Location Tracking

### Overview

IZEA and a Fortune 100 grocer partnered with influencers to promote the store’s e-commerce app that allows consumers to place an order online for in-store pickup.

53%

ROAS

\$1.6M+

EST. GROCERY SALES

(BASED ON AVERAGE ORDER SIZE)

18.4M

PAID IMPRESSIONS

35.6K+

IN-STORE VISITS

(WITHIN 7 DAYS OF SEEING THE PAID AD)

PlaceIQ

### Strategy

IZEA worked with millennial mom creators to inform and educate their followers on the grocer’s convenient app.

In addition to engaging with influencers, IZEA partnered with PlacelQ, a leading foot-traffic data provider. Utilizing PlacelQ’s data, IZEA was able to attribute how many consumers were served an ad from the campaign prior to visiting the store within a seven-day timespan. These in-depth analytics assisted IZEA in determining the ROI generated from influencer partnerships.





## Get Started on an Influencer Campaign

The rise of social commerce makes placing trusted influencers at every level of your marketing funnel more practical and effective than ever. From growing your e-commerce footprint to sharing promo codes to increase sales, an influencer campaign can build brand awareness and drive conversions.

**Chat with IZEA**  
to discuss fitting  
influencer marketing in  
your upper- and lower-  
funnel activations.

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