

Activate November 2016 Consumer Survey

We Asked, They Answered: The Global Power of Influencers

Based on the analysis of responses from over 20,000 digitally savvy women worldwide, we looked at how and why women engage with influencer content and what this means for brands.

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Our Global Power of Influencers survey presents a firsthand look at how and why digitally savvy women engage with influencer content. We asked women why they follow influencers, what would stop them from engaging with an influencer's content, on which platforms they are most likely to follow influencers, and many more questions.

In this study, we found that influencers offer powerful inspiration—they introduce new products, host tutorials, and inspire action in the personal and professional lives of their followers—we explore how this behavior may change when an influencer's post is sponsored by a brand.

In the following report, we surveyed over 20,000 digitally savvy women in Bloglovin's global user base to gain insight into three key areas:

1 Best practices in influencer marketing
We asked women which platforms they are engaging with influencer content on, what keeps them from engaging, and what makes an influencer's sponsored post feel fake/inauthentic

2 How to make best use of social channels
We analyzed which platforms women are most likely to follow their influencers on, how many different platforms women follow influencers on, and how many platforms they are engaging with influencer-sponsored content on

3 Branding and purchasing power
We asked women what their favorite influencers inspire them to do, what they would be willing to give up to spend a day with their favorite influencer (more than you would think!), and whether or not they follow brands directly from influencers' posts

Who We Talked To

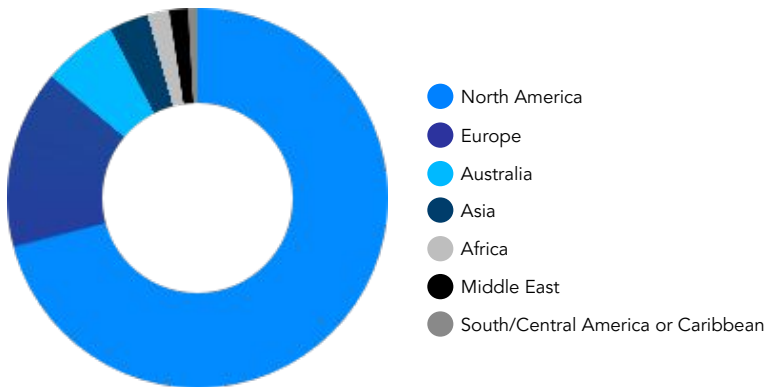
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20,000+

digitally savvy women*

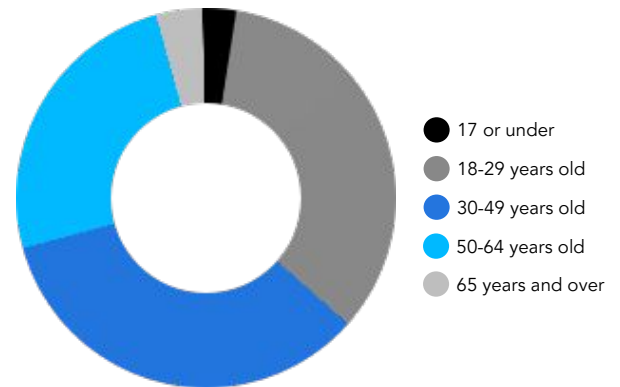
Over 69% of women surveyed are based in North America and between the ages of 18 and 49

Geographic Breakdown



source: Activate

Age Breakdown



source: Activate

What They Said

“I have followed an influencer because I like the way they promote sponsored content.

Freya, 18-29, Australia

“I check my favorite influencers Instagram nearly every time I am on social media.

Aishlyn, 17 or under, Africa

“EVERYTHING!!! I would give up everything I like doing to be with my favorite influencer!

Naomi, 17 or under, North America

“My favorite influencers have helped me to teach my four year old and prepare him for kindergarten.

Tacosha, 30-49, North America

“I follow influencers who always give their HONEST personal opinion, no matter what.

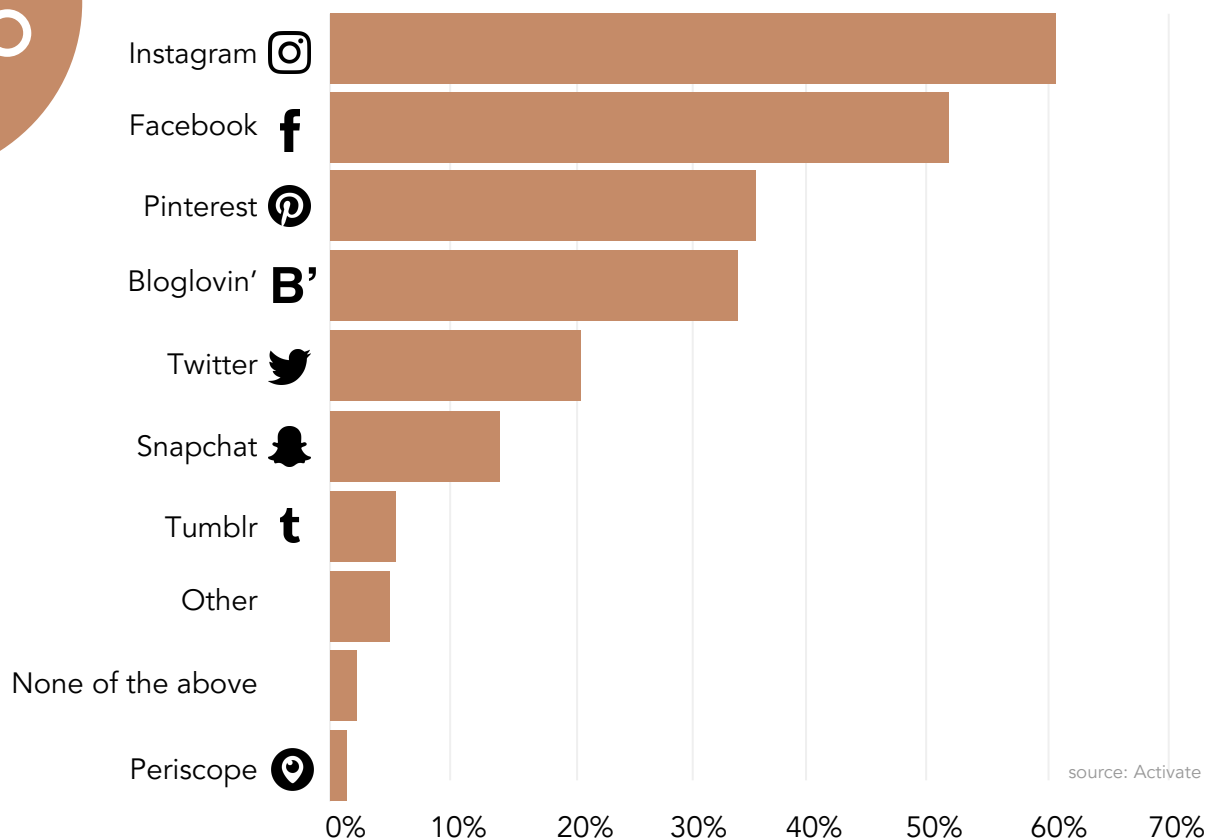
Jaynee, 30-49, North America

*Activate conducted this survey by polling 22,000 digitally savvy women from their global user base. Fieldwork was undertaken in November 2016. The survey was carried out online.

Instagram and Facebook: Preferred Platforms for Following Influencers

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61%



What does this mean for brands?

Not surprisingly, Instagram is the leading platform to follow influencers with over 60% of women saying they follow influencers on the photo and video sharing platform, and Facebook is close behind with 50%. However, Pinterest and Bloglovin' are strong contenders with roughly 35%. Brands looking to work with influencers should strongly consider working with influencers across these key channels.

Women Follow Influencers Across Multiple Platforms

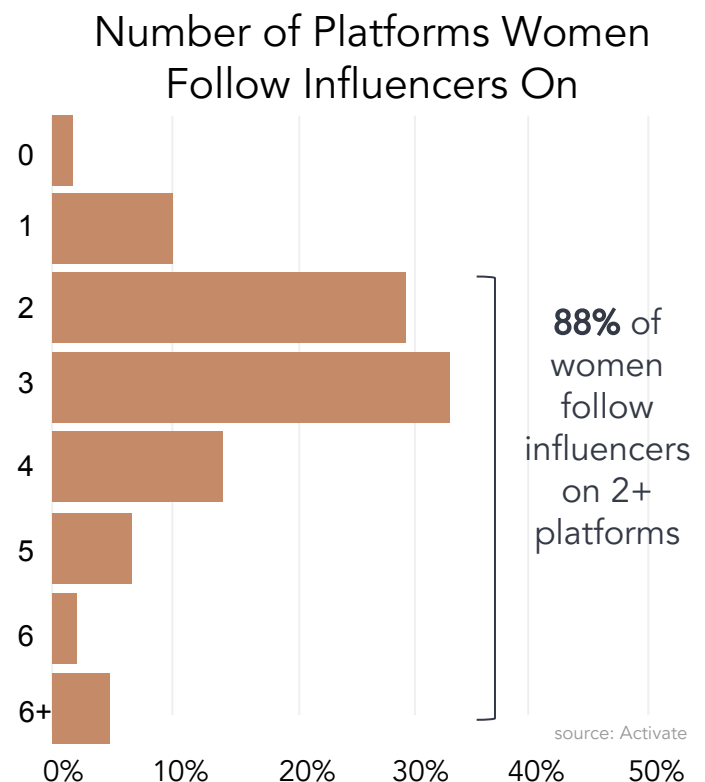
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Cross-platform Marketing Strategies Best Target Influencers' Full Audiences

We polled women to determine the number of different social channels on which they were willing to follow their favorite influencers. The results indicate that brands working with influencers should execute a cross-platform strategy to reach their target audiences.

Our [*2016 Micro-Influencers & Omni-Social Strategy Report*](#) found that specific categories perform better on certain social channels:

- “**Food** is the #1 vertical on Facebook and #2 on Twitter”
- “The visual nature of Instagram lends itself well to visually-focused **Fashion & Beauty**. There is also a correlation between Fashion & Beauty micro-influencers' use of Instagram and Twitter”
- “**DIY** micro-influencers have an average of more than 3,000 followers on Pinterest, which is the vertical's strongest social channel”



What does this mean for brands?

Brands executing influencer campaigns, especially those that blend more than one vertical (i.e., food and travel, fashion and home decor), should work with influencers to create and execute campaigns that leverage platforms where those types of content perform best.

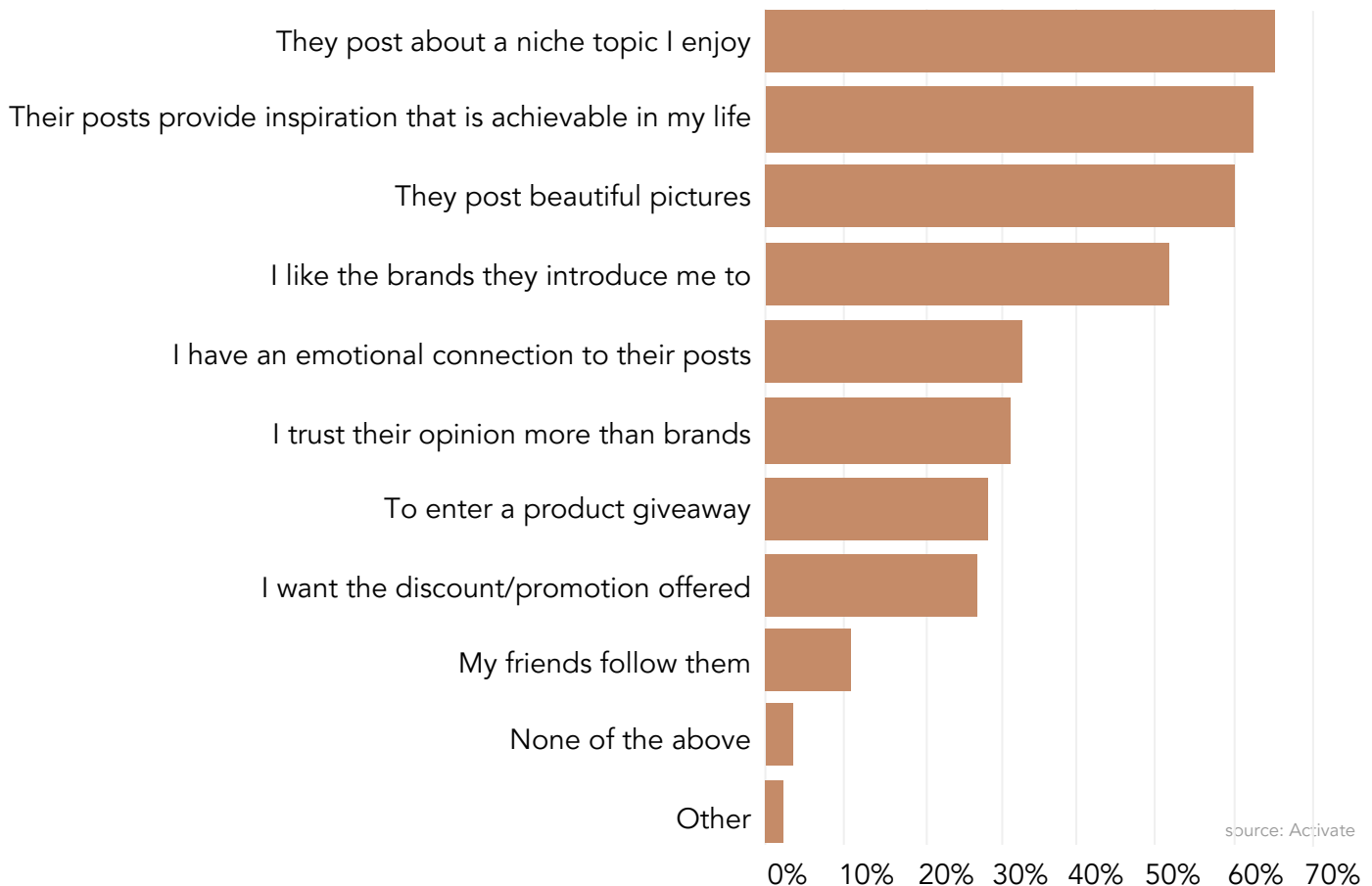
Working with an influencer on multiple platforms also provides additional consumer touch points without the risk of oversaturation.

Why Women Follow Influencers

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64%

of digitally savvy women follow influencers on social media for **niche topics**.



“What does this mean for brands?”

Go niche! Brands should consider working with influencers who cover niche topics to tap into influencers' highly engaged followers and communities, which presents unique targeted marketing opportunities, particularly when a number of these influencers are aggregated together for a campaign.

Brands should always keep in mind the end user when formulating their content strategy; 62% of women follow an influencer because their posts provide inspiration that is actually *achievable* in their own lives.

Where Are Women

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Engaging with Influencer-Sponsored Content?

Instagram and Facebook: highest engagement on influencer-sponsored content on social networks*



57.1%



48.4%



31.4%



24.6%



20.5%



7.0%

source: Activate

**The survey question stated only social networks as options, and excluded blogs*

“What does this mean for brands?

When it comes to engagement on social networks, Facebook and Instagram continue to dominate, further reaffirming that a cross-platform strategy is best for influencer marketing.

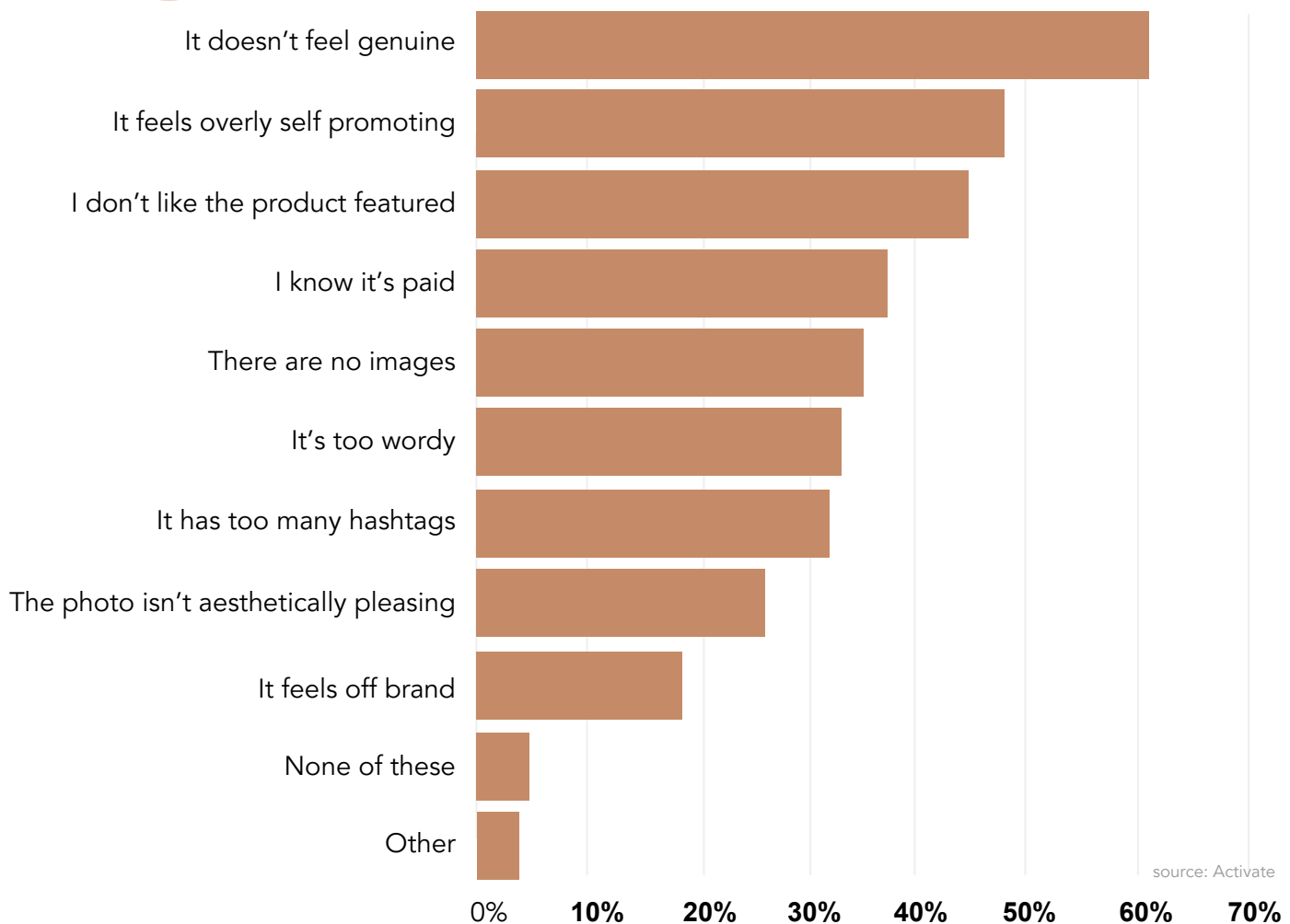
When Does Influencer Marketing Fail?

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61%

Authenticity Is Key

of digitally savvy women said, *"It doesn't feel genuine,"* when asked **what would keep them from engaging with an influencer's sponsored social posts, proving authenticity is imperative for influencer campaigns.**



What does this mean for brands?

Genuine messaging is the #1 driver of engagement on branded influencer content. Brands should seek influencers who have already mentioned their product(s) organically to make the collaboration feel authentic. Audiences are more likely to engage and support sponsored content if they have seen it before or it closely resembles content previously posted by the influencer.

What Makes an Influencer's Post Inauthentic?

We know that over 60% of digitally savvy women do not engage with influencer-sponsored social posts if the posts do not feel genuine, but what exactly makes a sponsored post feel fake or inauthentic?



Consistency Is Key

of digitally savvy women say sponsored posts feel fake/inauthentic when the content is inconsistent with an influencer's feed

36%

The #paid hashtag

34%

The same product is on other influencers' feeds on the same day

31%

Brand messaging is in the post

31%

The #ad hashtag

“What does this mean for brands?

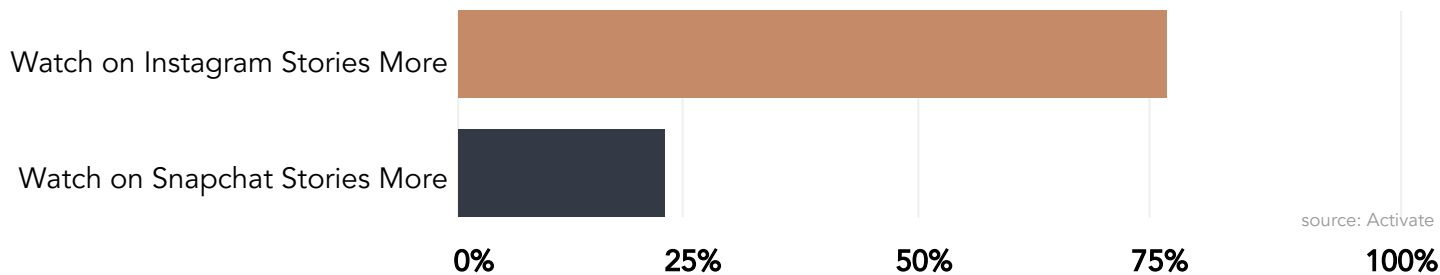
Influencers know their audience best. Work with the influencer to incorporate brand messaging, but let the influencer have creative control over sponsored content to ensure highest engagement.

Brands should focus on consistency in written messages—over 52% of digitally savvy women say they will not engage with a sponsored post if the writing is inconsistent.

Engagement Behavior: Instagram Stories vs. Snapchat Stories

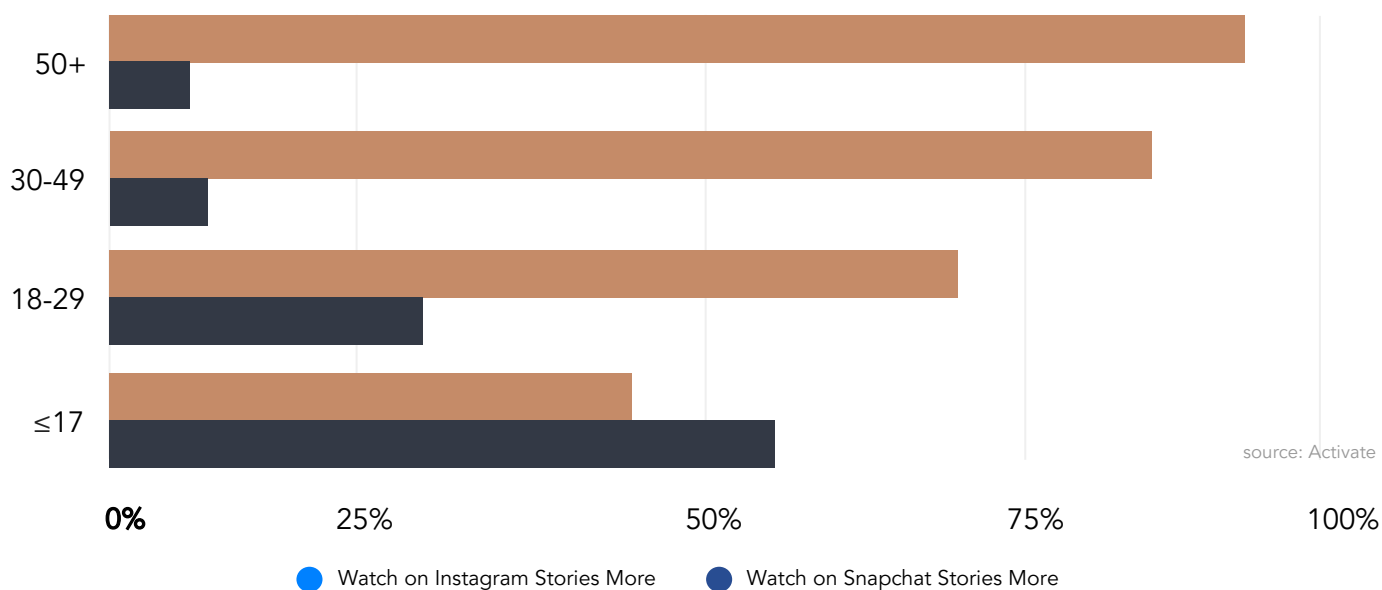
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When asked where they are more likely to watch their favorite influencers' stories, women overall prefer Instagram Stories.



Age Plays A Factor

When we look at this behavior by age group, there is a shift in the 17 and under bracket. Post-Millennial women*—women born after Millennials—are more likely to watch influencers on Snapchat Stories than on Instagram Stories.



*Women 17 years of age or under

“What does this mean for brands?”

For brands targeting audiences 18 years of age or older, Instagram Stories is the stronger option, particularly when you consider the additional measurement data available on Instagram vs. Snapchat.

For a younger audience (≤17), both Instagram Stories and Snapchat Stories are viable options.

Influencers Are Today's Celebrities

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We asked women what they would be willing to give up to spend a day with their favorite influencer, and *the results show they would give up some of the most popular conveniences for an entire week:*

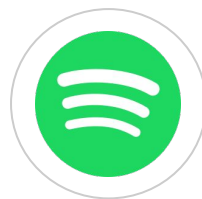
39% are willing to give up food delivery services like Seamless & Delivery.com.

36% are willing to give up car services like Uber, Lyft & cabs.

32% are willing to give up streaming movie and television services like Netflix & Hulu.

30% are willing to give up streaming music services like Spotify & iTunes.

27% are willing to give up social media.



“What does this mean for brands?”

Female consumers look to social influencers for inspiration that relates to their everyday lives, they trust influencers' taste, recommendations, and opinions so much so that they are willing to sacrifice everyday conveniences to spend in-person time with their favorite influencers—proof that there is a real connection between influencers and their audiences.

*None of the above 30.7%

*Other 3.1%

Influencers Drive Purchases and Boost Brands' Social Followings

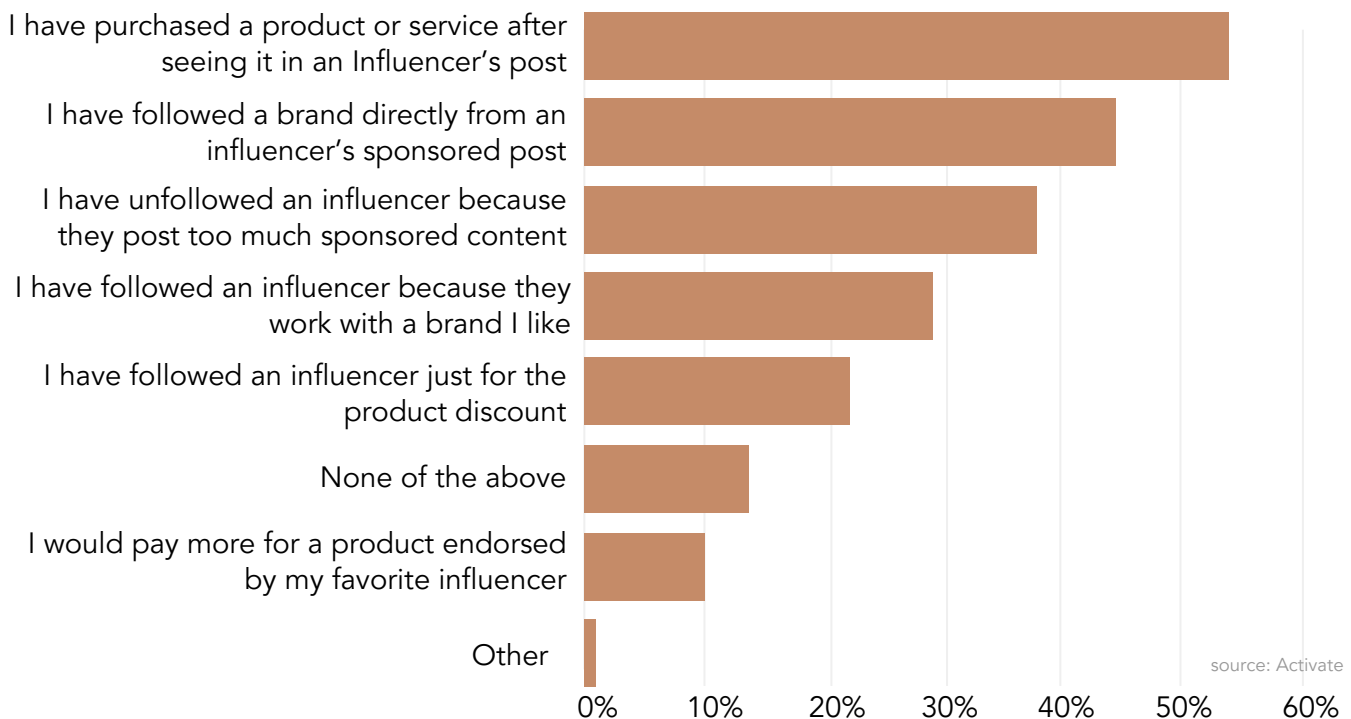
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54%

of women have purchased a product or service after seeing it in an influencer's post

45%

of women have followed a brand directly from an influencer's sponsored post



source: Activate

“What does this mean for brands?”

Brands can work with influencers to drive purchases. Women trust their favorite influencers' product/service recommendations; over 50% of women make purchases based on what they see in social posts.

Brands can also work with influencers to grow their social media presence. Women continually look for new and interesting brands to follow, and they turn to influencers for inspiration.

Influencers Inspire Action

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When asked what their favorite influencers inspire them to do, actionable items top the list.

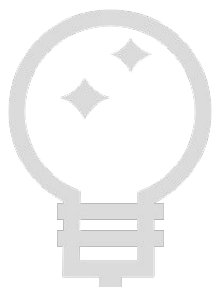
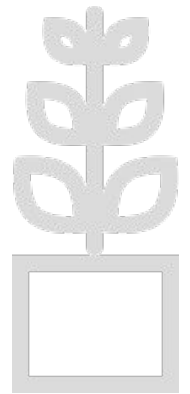


63%

Use a new product/brand I would not have considered.

Take action or plan a new experience (decorate my house, revise my beauty routine, take an online class).

63%



58%

Use a product in a different way.

“What does this mean for brands?

Beyond introducing new products, influencers are great for inspiring new ways to use existing products. Brands can work with influencers to develop tutorials & how-to's to teach consumers new ways to use products. There is value in combining experiences with product marketing. Brands should consider experiential campaigns that tell a story alongside products.

Capturing the Power of Social Influencers

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Go niche!

- Women follow influencers to see posts about niche topics and inspiration that is achievable in their own lives. Access to these niche communities is a valuable asset that brands can utilize.

Cross-platform strategies yield best results

- 87% of women follow influencers on two or more platforms. Brands that create campaigns that work on multiple platforms get the most value out of influencer marketing.
- Brands executing cross-platform strategies will benefit from multiple consumer touch points without oversaturation.

Not all social platforms are created equal

- Digitally savvy women follow and engage most with influencer-sponsored content on Instagram and Facebook.

Genuine messaging & consistency are key

- Authenticity is vital when it comes to creating content with influencers; 61% of women will not engage with an influencer's sponsored post if it doesn't feel genuine and consistent within the influencer's social feed.

Influencers inspire action

- Brands looking to expand their social presence can work with influencers to grow their brand awareness and following—45% of women have followed a brand featured in an influencer's post.
- With 55% of women buying products after seeing them in an influencer's post, influencer marketing can be an effective way for brands to introduce new products.
- Influencers also inspire new ways to use existing products—58% of digitally savvy women have learned to use a product in a different way by an influencer.

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