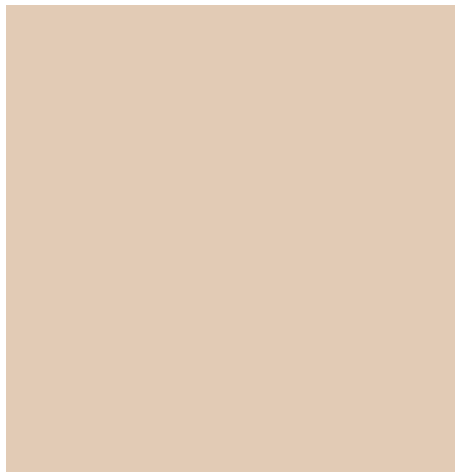


TRENDS REPORT: THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON INFLUENCER MARKETING

by Obviously

April 2020



obviously.ly

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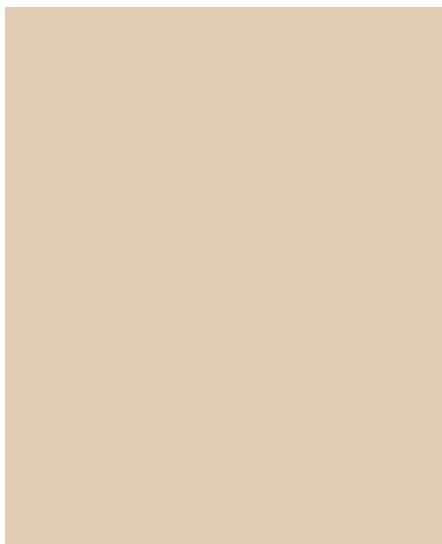
BACKGROUND

In late March 2020, we surveyed more than **1,000 Obviously influencers** to gauge the sentiments and content that are most important in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

We also **analyzed Obviously data** that included 7.5m Instagram posts, 260 campaigns, and 2,200 TikTok influencers.

Our goals were to...

- Better understand the changing ways people are using social media in this unprecedented time
- Develop new strategic insights about the evolution of influencer marketing in the months to come
- Offer recommendations and best practices for brands and influencers navigating this new landscape alongside us



TOP INSIGHTS



INFLUENCERS AS PRODUCTION AGENCIES



VIDEO CONTENT IS EXPLODING



NICHE VERTICALS GO MAINSTREAM



TIKTOK GAINS GROUND



COMMUNITY AND THE COLLECTIVE GOOD

1

INFLUENCERS AS PRODUCTION AGENCIES



INFLUENCERS AS PRODUCTION AGENCIES

Shelter in place provisions across the country have forced creative and production agencies to temporarily shutter, and made traditional photo and video creation all but impossible. With studios closed and shoots cancelled, brands are turning to influencers to create their marketing assets.

These creative professionals are already set up to work from home, and have a ready-to-show portfolio of engaging, high-quality content made without a full production team or a big budget. There's an added bonus: many influencers, excited to work with a brand they love, post their work for additional exposure and authentic brand awareness.



“

Necessity is the mother of invention. During coronavirus, one thing I've been doing for a brand partner who needs more photography: virtual photoshoots.

OUR FINDINGS



increase in brands looking to hire influencers to create their photo and video assets.



reduction in creative costs on average when working with influencers in place of a production studio.



increase in ad performance of influencer-created content in social ads.



2

VIDEO CONTENT
IS EXPLODING



VIDEO CONTENT IS EXPLODING

It's hard to overstate the recent increase in demand for video content and associated apps. The coronavirus outbreak has accelerated the movement of IRL online, and with people staying home, they are actively seeking out video for all aspects of their lives -- education, exercise, socializing, wellness, and of course, entertainment. Facebook recently reported a **50% increase** in people using Facebook Live and a **70% increase** in people using Messenger Live, and has announced they're rolling out a new set of tools and features for live broadcasters, including allowing anyone to view Facebook Lives, even if they're not signed into the platform.

Facebook's investment in Live is a harbinger. It's unlikely people are going to fully go back to the old way of doing things, even when life resumes more normalcy. As users consume more video and creators become more comfortable making it, the shift to video as the dominant medium, which was already in place, will accelerate too.

The bottom line is that video was already on the way to becoming the most effective way to reach audiences, and now it's become absolutely essential.

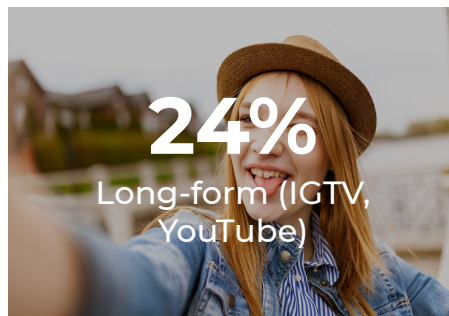
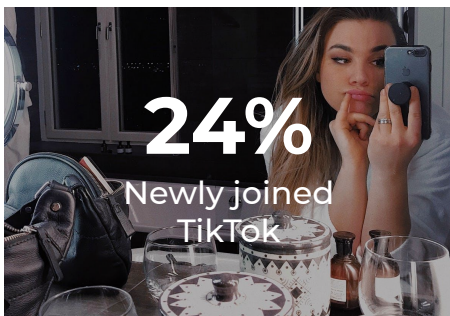
92%

of influencers said they would create a type of content that's new to them, like hosting a live stream.



OUR FINDINGS

Percent of influencers who said they're creating this type of video content



My insights have gone through the roof! People are really using social media lately to the point where my impressions have hit 9 million. It's really important to go live and post Stories regularly and continue to give people some normalcy in their feeds.

3

NICHE VERTICALS
GO MAINSTREAM



NICHE VERTICALS GO MAINSTREAM

Gyms and restaurants may be closed, but people still need to exercise and eat. Virtual workouts are no longer just for fitness buffs, and domestic content is no longer just for stay-at-home parents. We're seeing two macro trends here: influencers who previously focused on one or two verticals are broadening the types of content they create, and people who previously consumed a narrow set of content are seeking more from their social media.

The verticals where we've seen the most growth are home life, which is comprised of cooking, cleaning, DIY, home improvement, and organizing, and the fitness and wellness category, which is comprised of mental health, workouts, meditation, and nutrition.

With influencers diversifying their content to reflect the changing times, brands will have a greater pool of talent to draw from.

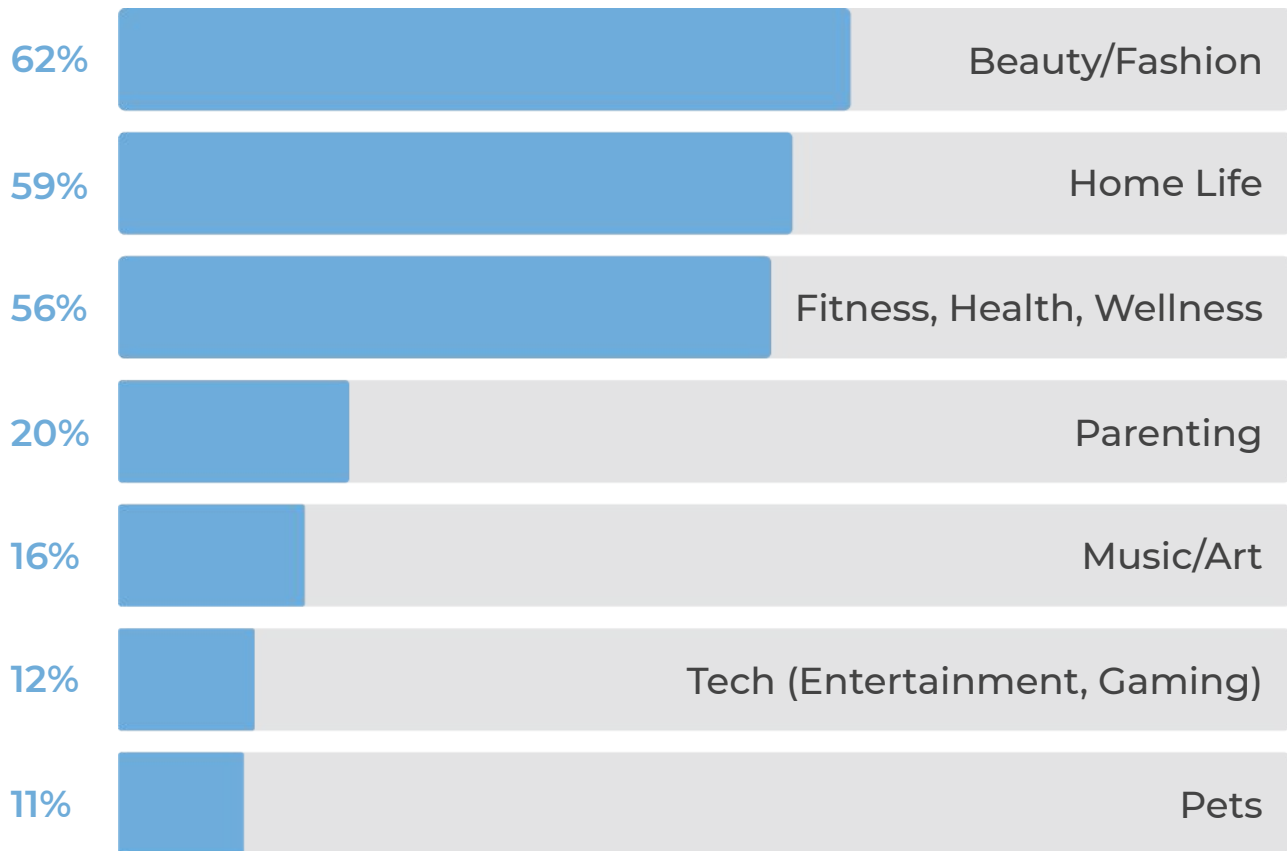


Influencers can have a huge impact right now. People are stuck in their homes and are scrolling more than ever. I hear from a lot of people that they're going through a hard time and are discouraged. I'm trying to make new and different content because I love to be a positive influence in their lives at this time - I love my followers!

OUR FINDINGS

Key Statistics

Influencers identified their top two content verticals.



New Opportunities

The growth of the Home Life and Fitness/Wellness verticals brings these content areas almost even with Fashion and Beauty, the two verticals that have long dominated influencer marketing. The upshot: as influencers diversify their content, there are new opportunities for a growing range of brands to diversify along with them and reach wider audiences.



OUR FINDINGS

Key Statistics

72%

of influencers report consuming fitness and wellness content.

#1

Exercise, meditation, and wellness checks through live streams, apps, and online classes are the **number one way influencers reported practicing self care.**



4

TIKTOK GAINS GROUND



TIKTOK GAINS GROUND

It's no surprise that video app TikTok is emerging as a go-to app for comedic relief in trying times. In our sentiment analysis, influencers called out TikTok for not only offering up a few laughs with lighthearted challenges, but also for fostering a sense of community and support.

People said they loved learning dances, seeing families create quarantine content together, and said that they generally found themselves turning to the video app for a much-needed mood lift.



“

I think the family videos have been really cool. I've seen so many families that are stuck at home together and parents making TikToks with their teenagers. This is encouraging to see and definitely one of the most positive trends.

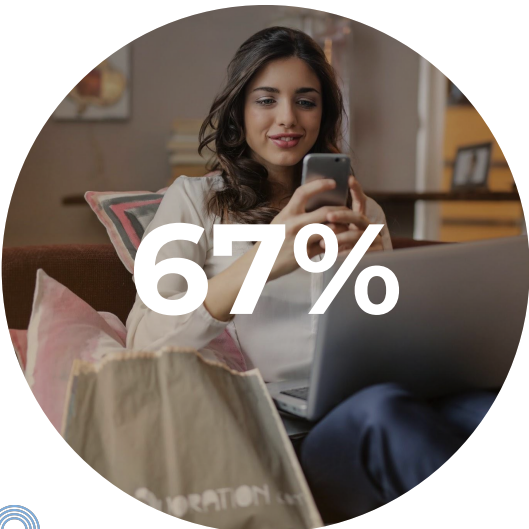
OUR FINDINGS



increase in engagement
on TikTok from February
to March 2020.



of influencers report joining TikTok
during coronavirus quarantine.



of those surveyed reported
creating or consuming
TikTok content.



5

COMMUNITY AND THE COLLECTIVE GOOD



COMMUNITY AND THE COLLECTIVE GOOD

The collective fight against COVID-19 has given way to a strong sense of community. Businesses of all kinds have taken to social media to drive charitable giving, often in the form of now-ubiquitous challenges. Though some brands initially paused their marketing in mid-March as lockdowns began, we're now seeing that brands are successful with content oriented toward the well-being of their customers and communities.

Similarly, and in keeping with the verticals where we're seeing growth, influencers are focusing on their wellness and that of their followers. Our sentiment analysis overwhelmingly shows that influencers love the proliferation of community content - challenges, live streaming, online classes and concerts, and PSAs - and are eager to work with others who are seeking ways to emphasize the collective good right now. They also care a lot about supporting local businesses and smaller brands.



People want to learn about ways to give back and to listen to positive messages during this time. Influencers play a major role...using our platforms we can raise money and reach people around the world who need help.

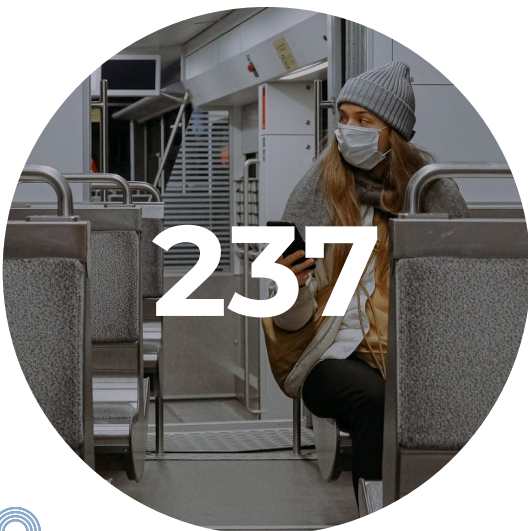
OUR FINDINGS



of influencers would post about brands and causes they care about.



of influencers would participate in a charitable campaign without compensation.



Number of Influencers who volunteered to participate in our first **#ObviouslyForGood** charitable campaign about coronavirus.



TOP TRENDS

Our survey and sentiment analysis revealed the issues, content, and messages that are resonating with audiences.



TOP 5 CURRENT SOCIAL TRENDS



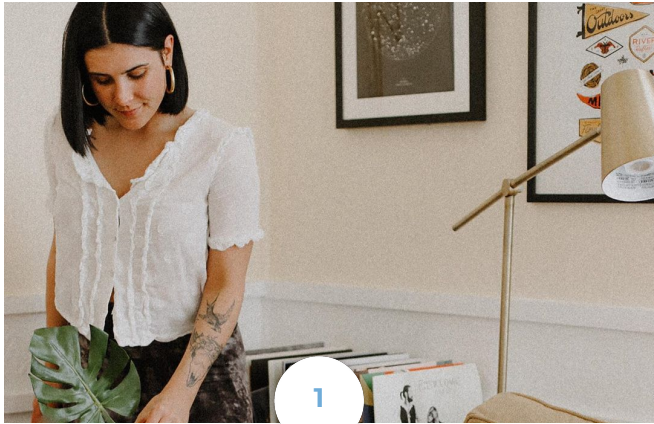
TOP 5 CHARITABLE CAUSES AND ISSUES



TOP 5 WAYS INFLUENCERS ARE PRACTICING SELF CARE

TOP SOCIAL TRENDS

Top 5 Current Social Trends



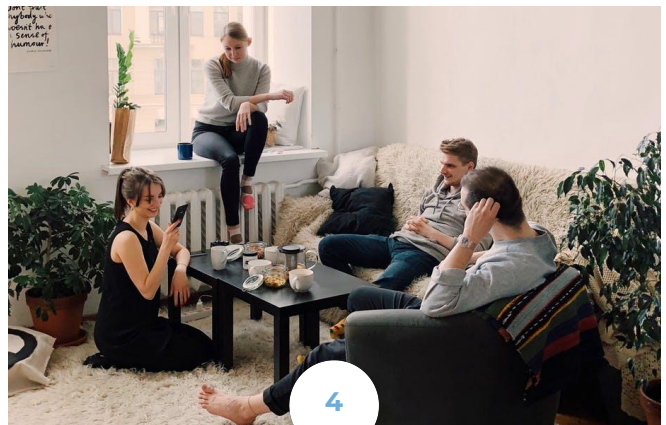
Challenges (e.g. [#StayAtHome](#), [#WhatWouldIWear](#), [#CreativityAtHome](#)).



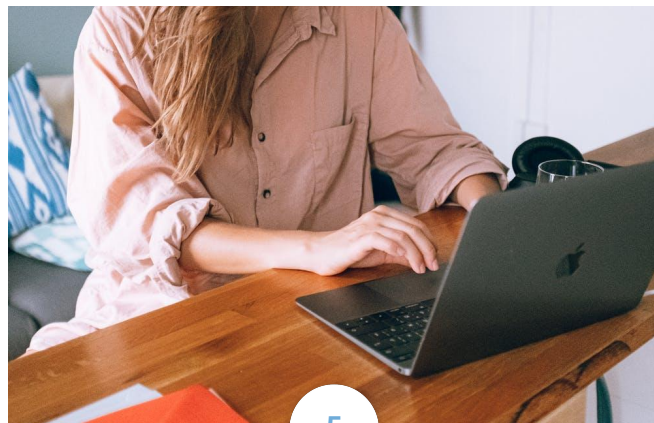
Live Streaming (including live concerts, workouts, classes, virtual hangouts, celebrity channels, etc).



Meditation and Mental Health (including live Q&As, live meditation sessions, teletherapy).



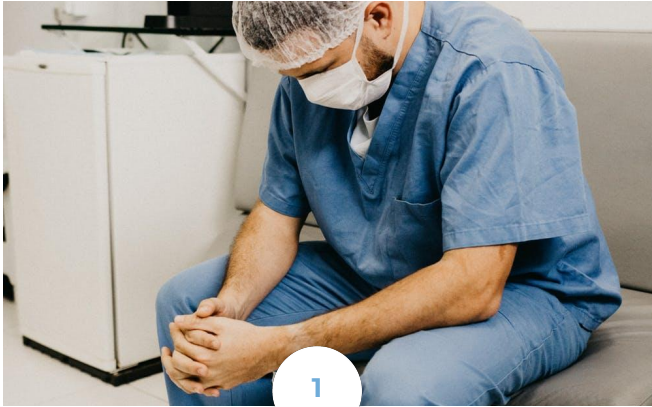
Families spending more time together and creating more content around QT.



Growing sense of community via social media.

TOP CHARITABLE CAUSES

Top 5 Causes



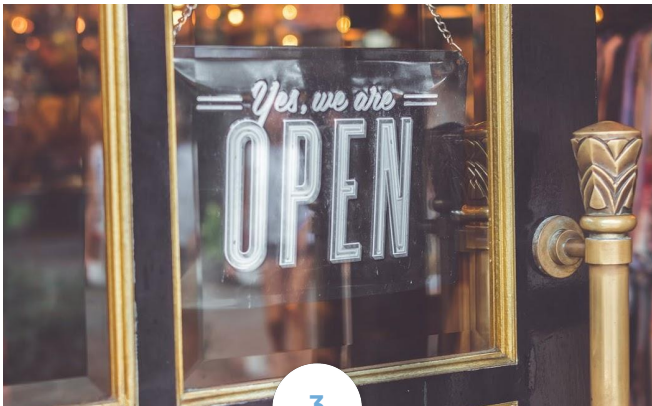
1

Healthcare and hospitals.



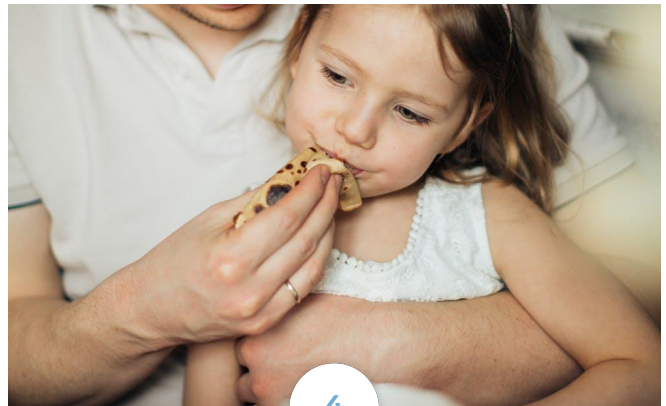
2

Giving back and volunteering in the fight against coronavirus.



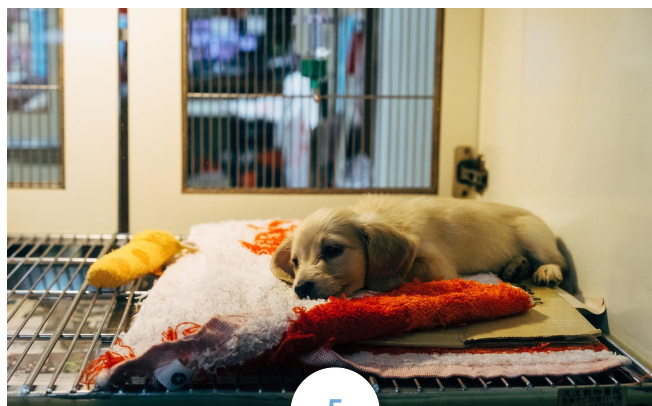
3

Supporting small and local businesses.



4

Children and adequate food assistance.

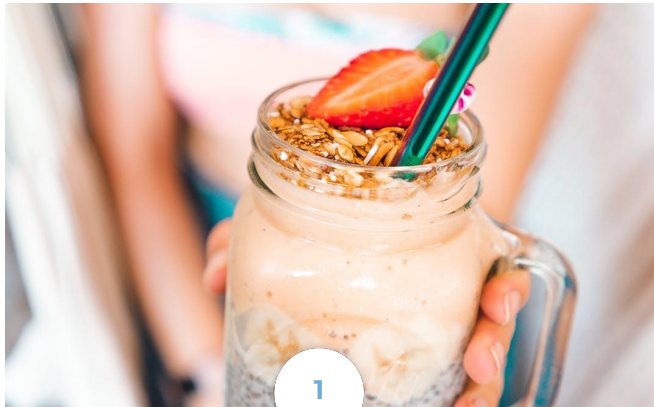


5

Dogs, animal shelters, and other issues related to animal welfare and pets.

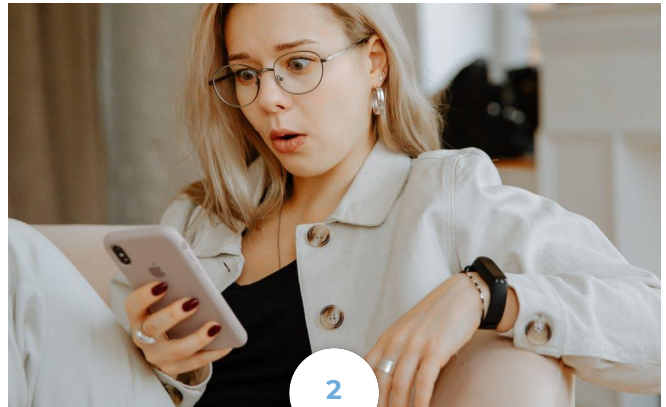
SELF CARE

Top 5 Ways Influencers Say They're Practicing Self Care



1

Focusing on their health and wellness.



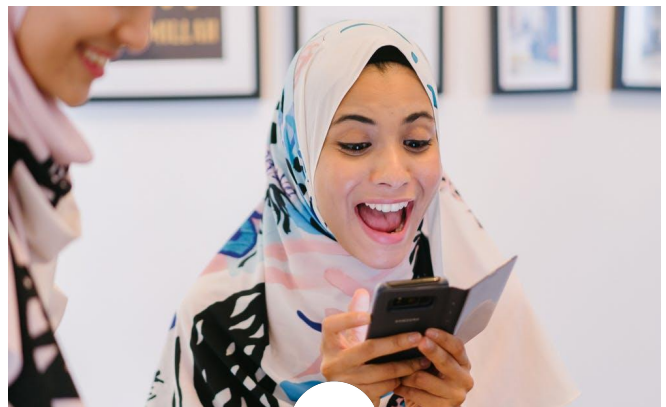
2

TikTok and partaking in online challenges.



3

Streaming education and entertainment like live concerts, shows, classes, DIY, tutorials, and games.



4

Virtual hangouts with friends and family.



5

Fashion and beauty content.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The coronavirus has upended life across the globe, creating widespread hardship and economic uncertainty. In the face of this turmoil, people have relied on the internet and social media more than ever to connect, share ideas, collectively solve problems, and support their communities.

Navigating these new challenges requires flexibility and creativity. **Here are some of our recommendations** for brands and influencers on how to adapt and continue to grow in the influencer marketing space.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Put people first.

Find ways to give back to the community that supports you. Authentic investment in others and the collective good is one of the most powerful messages you can communicate right now, even if it's as simple as creating content that brings a smile.

Now is the time to experiment and expand.

Whether it's running a trial TikTok campaign, offering a live streaming service, or hosting a charitable challenge, now is the time to test out new ways to engage your community. In Obviously Instagram campaigns, **we saw a 76% increase in daily accumulated likes on #ad posts during the middle two weeks in March, and campaign impressions were up 22% in Q1 2020 from Q4 2019.** And again, TikTok engagements increased 27% on average from February 2020 to March 2020. Engagement across the board is up, and audiences are eager for - and need - new types of content in their daily lives. **This is also a great time to run a focus group with influencers,** who are tapped into what their followers want and need in changing times.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus on video.

While influencers surveyed reported that photo posts are holding steady (84% said they are still regularly posting in-feed on Instagram), the biggest area of growth is video. Video was already well on its way to becoming the most efficient way to reach audiences, and the coronavirus outbreak has irreversibly accelerated the need for this type of content across the board.

Brand ambassadors are the best allies.

With influencers increasingly creating content from formerly niche verticals, brands have never had more diverse talent to draw on. This is a chance for both brands and influencers to identify new partnerships that are in step with their values, mission, aesthetic, and audiences. It's also become more strategic than ever to form long-term relationships that are natural alliances in tough times. Influencers are invaluable sounding boards for brands, offering up-to-the-minute insights into how their followers are doing, and create content that's on par with professional creative and production agencies.



Obviously is the leading full-service influencer marketing agency and tech platform for Fortune 500 companies. We aim to be the global gold standard of influencer marketing by providing the best full service client experience, managing complexity and scale of influencer work, and using data analysis to inform all our strategies. We strive to crack the code on influence and to harness this power to shine a light on great companies and people.

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