

Connections that click.



*BUILD BRAND LOYALTY WITH
CREATOR CONTENT AND
MARKETING SCIENCE*



Engaging buyers while scrolling.

DON'T SCROLL past this page. Not if you're itching to attract the attention of American consumers — especially younger generations, who have mastered the art of the scroll. Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) puts social and entertainment apps at the center of their worlds, and they turn to influencers and creators for laughs and lessons. New to the workforce, they have more disposable income at their fingertips.

Brands want to connect and engage — and build long-lasting relationships — and one of the most effective ways to do that is with creative.

The power of creative to move consumers and drive purchase decisions is such a well-accepted fact that there is an entire festival devoted to it. The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity is a global event — and it is the perfect opportunity to explore the factors that drive advertising success.

Just before the 2024 festival, we surveyed American consumers to learn how they feel about advertising and creator-generated content. For marketers, understanding what consumers like is a key first step in campaign planning. But to know exactly how effective their advertising is, they also need to measure campaign performance.

IN THIS E-BOOK, we'll dive into our consumer survey results and bring you sage advice — all the way from the French Riviera — about how a marketing science approach to creativity and advertising can help you drive brand growth.

NCS specializes in measuring campaign tactics at a granular level, helping brands understand how each tactic — whether it's branded content vs. influencer-generated content, or different types of audience targeting — drives incremental sales. This precision allows brands to optimize their strategies effectively.

During Cannes Lions 2024, Dan Malmed, NCS's chief revenue officer, shared the stage with TikTok's Measurement Lead for North America, Casey Hamlyn, and content creator and influencer, The Rapping Chef, Joshua Williford.



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Trending voices in the attention economy.



The concept of an influencer isn't new. Marketers have long tapped celebrities to endorse their products in advertising campaigns. But much has changed as social media and entertainment apps emerged and became vehicles for, well, everyday people like us. You no longer have to star in a major motion picture to share your expertise with the world - and catch the attention of the brands you use.

Today's influencers are content creators. With each reel, video or blog post they produce, they must think about what type of creative twist to add to engage their audience. **When their content connects, they build a loyal fanbase – one that will act on their recommendations.**

Smart marketers are increasingly partnering with influencers and content creators.

To better understand what Americans think about both influencers and advertising – and in the spirit of the Cannes Lions 2024 International Festival of Creativity – we asked them. Sprinkled throughout this e-book, you'll find insights and advice taken from our consumer sentiment survey. These findings provide valuable lessons for future campaigns.



I LIKE TO SEE THE PRODUCTS THEY ARE ENDORSING. I THEN RESEARCH THE PRODUCT AND READ OTHER REVIEWS TO SEE IF THE PRODUCT IS WORTH THE HYPE.

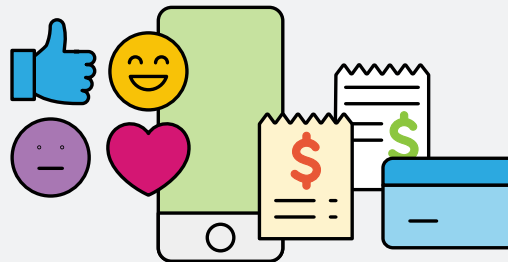


Survey Respondent

TRANSFORMING BROWSERS INTO BUYERS

48%

OF CONSUMERS
Purchased a product after seeing creator-generated content.





Creators pass the vibe test with Gen Z.



Creator-generated content is booming. And while consumers of all ages engage with it, it's most popular among younger Americans. Generation Z views influencers more favorably than previous generations.

More than one-third (37%) appreciate when influencers share personal aspects of their lives, an indication of just how much they value authenticity.

They're also more likely to feel strongly connected to influencers – like they're friends – compared to other generations.

These close connections reinforce the value of working with content creators to build loyalty among younger generations.



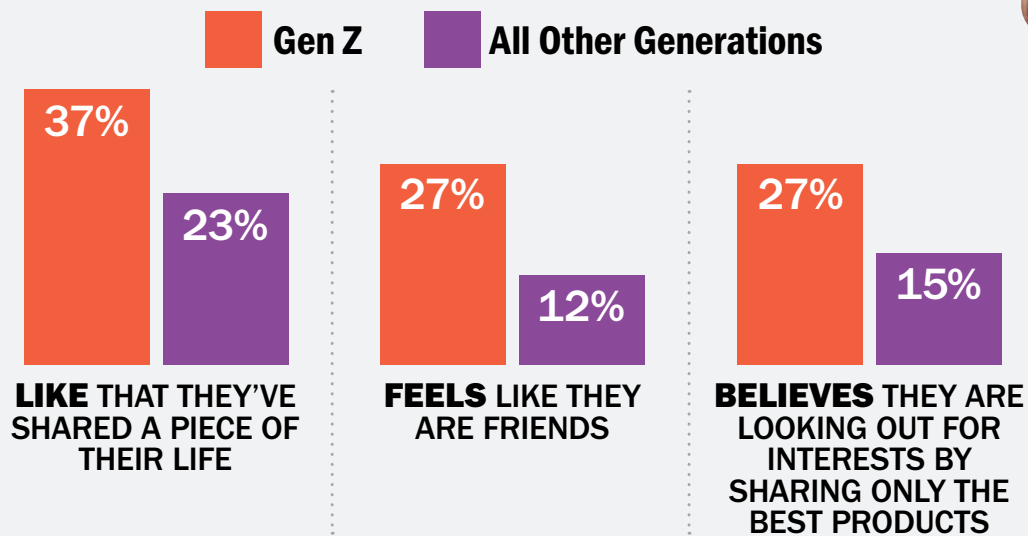
AS BRANDS SEEK TO BUILD LOYAL LONG-TERM CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS, FINDING YOUNGER BUYERS IS A STRATEGY THAT ENABLES CONTINUED GROWTH. ADVERTISING ON SOCIAL OR ENTERTAINMENT PLATFORMS IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO WAY TO FIND GEN Z BUYERS AND DRIVE INCREMENTAL SALES.



Deirdre McFarland
Chief Marketing Officer, NCS



HOW GEN Z FEELS ABOUT CREATORS



SOURCE: NCSolutions Consumer Sentiment Survey, May 2024

66% OF GEN Z have purchased products featured in creator content vs 40% of all other generations



This marketing science is lit.

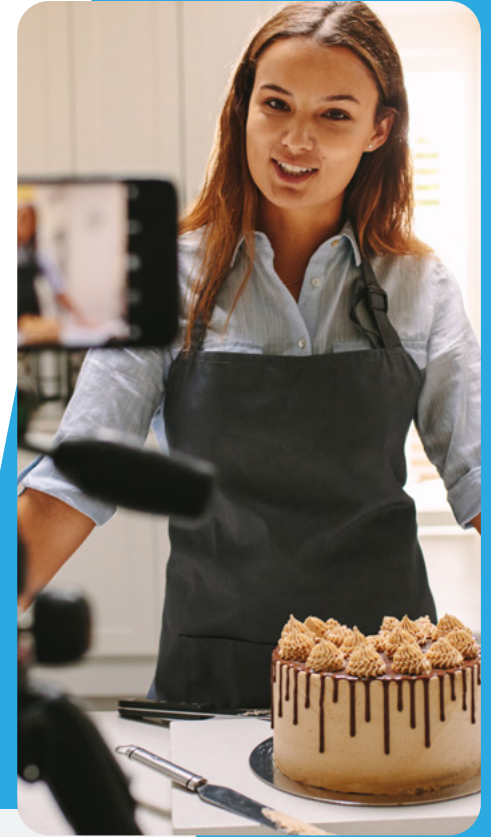
The power of exceptional creative to drive incremental sales is a consistent and mighty factor. But according to one of our large-scale advertising effectiveness meta-studies, “The Five Keys to Advertising Effectiveness,” creative impacts nearly 50% of sales lift. However, marketers still have another 50% of influence they can tap into.

These factors are brand, targeting, recency and reach. Of these, the influence of brand factors is the most impactful. When we revisited the “Five Keys” last year to see what had changed since we first conducted the research in 2017, we found brand was the only factor that had increased (at the expense of reach) since our original study.

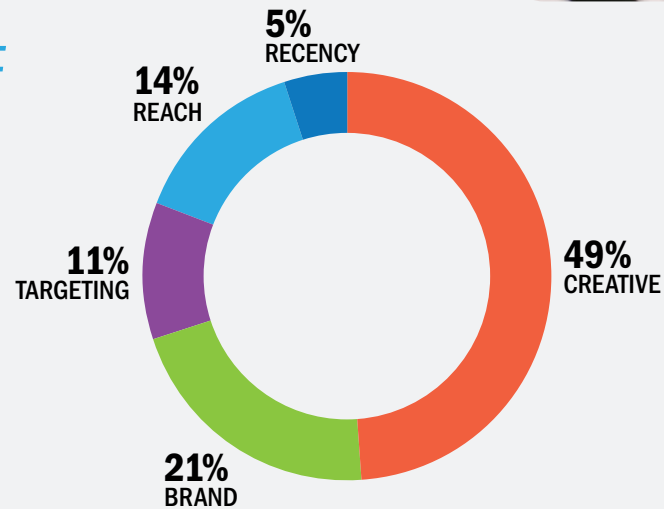
Brand now contributes to 21% of incremental sales, and most of this gain is due to loyalty. On its own, brand loyalty contributes 11% to incremental sales. Our study also found that brands with the highest levels of consumer loyalty had twice the incremental sales as brands with average or low loyalty levels.

How do advertisers harness this knowledge? Marketing science.

- **Pairing your brand with the right creator raises the power of creative and helps you reach new audiences. But to make lasting impressions with consumers you can also leverage other factors, especially brand loyalty.**
- **Measure your campaigns to get granular insight into all factors driving sales lift. By knowing which tactics are most effective – for instance, branded content vs. creator content – you can make data-driven decisions to improve results.**



CREATIVE
LEADS
WHEN IT
COMES
TO SALES



Consumers have a POV on the ads they see.



We'd like to give brands some advice here on how to make this work. But we think it's better to hear it directly from the source.

In our survey, we asked consumers to provide their POV on both ads and creator content. Five key themes emerged from their responses.

- ▶ **LESSON 1:**
Click or skip.
Get inside the viewer's head.
- ▶ **LESSON 2:**
Laugh, listen, entertain.
Humor grabs attention.
- ▶ **LESSON 3:**
Educate to engage.
People are eager to learn new things.
- ▶ **LESSON 4:**
Stories that stick.
Authenticity is a valuable asset.
- ▶ **LESSON 5:**
Prompt and powerful.
Be respectful of the consumer's time.



KEEP SCROLLING for our
insightful revelations about each!

LESSON 1

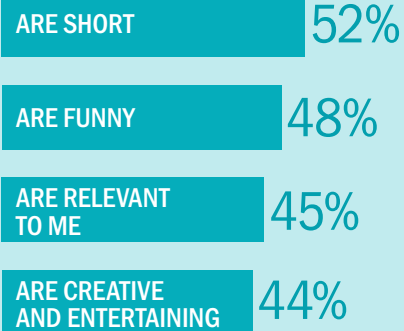
Click or skip. 👍👎

Every day, consumers are presented with a steady stream of content.

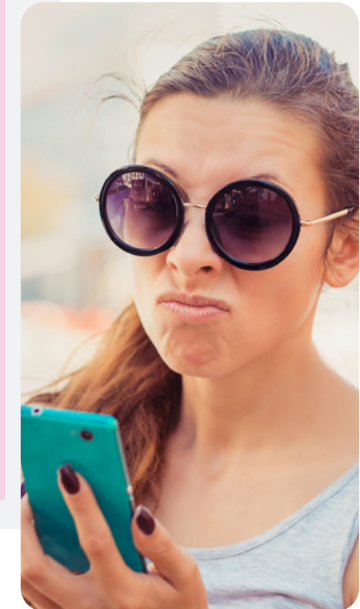
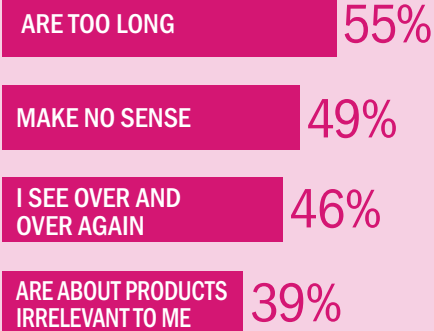
Getting them to pause the scroll and pay attention to your creative is both art and science. An easy way to gain an edge? Get inside their heads to learn what makes them click or skip. Here are the attributes that are hits - and those that are misses.



I LIKE ADS THAT:



I DISLIKE ADS THAT:



KEEP IT SHORT, TRY TO PUT IN AS MUCH ENTERTAINMENT AS POSSIBLE IN A SHORT SPAN OF TIME.



Survey Respondent



MAKE SURE TO SAY WHAT THE AD IS. BEFORE YOU GET INTO THE STORYLINE, I DISLIKE ADS WHERE I HAVE TO GUESS WHAT IS BEING ADVERTISED.



Survey Respondent



LESSON 2

Laugh, listen, entertain.



Consumers enjoy creative ads that entertain them, and this can significantly impact a brand's bottom line.

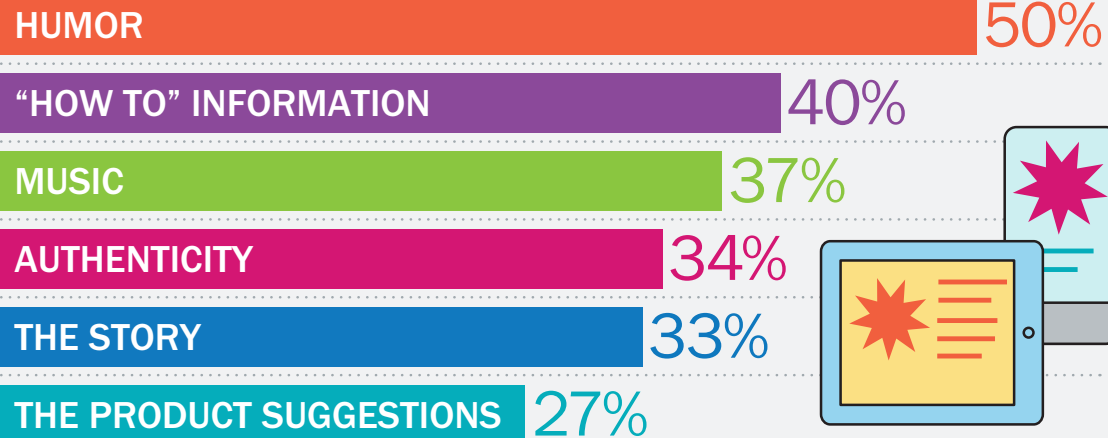
Creating the kind of content that consumers enjoy is the first step toward building loyalty. One of the most effective ways to capture and hold the attention of your target audience is to be entertaining. In fact, when we asked about their reactions to influencer-generated content, 47% of Americans say they feel entertained – the top response.

Half of Americans say humor is what they like best about advertising on entertainment app or social media platforms, while 40% said they liked 'how to' information.

Influencers and content creators know how to serve up the laughs and teach new skills. That's a real opportunity for brands.



STRIKING THE RIGHT CHORD



SOURCE: NCSolutions Consumer Sentiment Survey, May 2024



LESSON 3

Educate to engage.



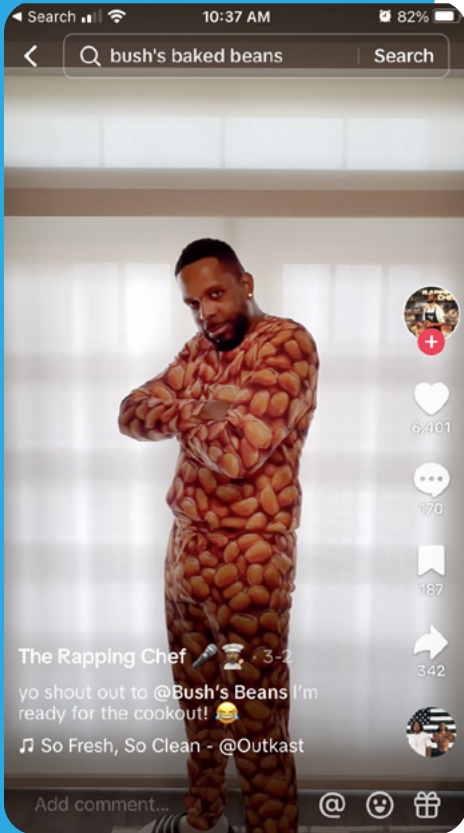
How-to and instructional videos are powerful tools to teach and engage consumers.

Influencers and content creators may bring their audience to the table, but brands bring the goods. Together, they're the ultimate combo.

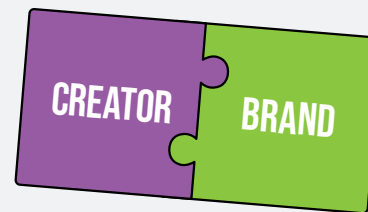
Consumers want to learn new skills, an ideal opportunity for CPG brands. They'll turn to social media or entertainment apps to learn how to bake a cake or the best way to deep clean their homes. Influencers will walk viewers through each step, and they'll often mention brands they use. For instance, a content creator like the Rapping Chef may use a specific brand of beans in his dish – a decision that drives his viewers to research and purchase.

To fully maximize the impact of their content creator collaborations, CPG brands should measure and compare campaigns on every platform they use.

For example, NCS worked with TikTok to analyze tactics used across dozens of campaigns on the entertainment app. In this study, NCS found creator content came out on top, with a 32% higher sales response compared to branded content. When brands used a combination of creator and branded content, the incremental sales response was 23% higher than using branded content on its own.



When brands use a combination of creator and branded content, **THE INCREMENTAL SALES RESPONSE IS 23% HIGHER THAN USING BRANDED CONTENT ON ITS OWN.**



BE OPEN AND HONEST ABOUT THE PRODUCT. DON'T USE SCRIPTED LINES OR SPEAK WHILE READING A TELEPROMPTER. SPEAK HONESTLY TO ME FROM YOUR HEART ABOUT THE PRODUCT.



Survey Respondent



LESSON 4

Stories that stick.

Creators who offer a glimpse into their lives build trust and loyalty and drive sales for brands.

Trust. It's the foundation of loyalty, but it takes time and effort to create.

More than one-third of consumers value authenticity in ads. Authenticity is a quality they also like to see in influencers. One in four Americans enjoy it whenever a content creator shares a slice of their own life.

When brands and influencers consistently keep it real and share their values, they make it easier for consumers to trust them. This is one of the most powerful approaches to building loyalty and driving sales.

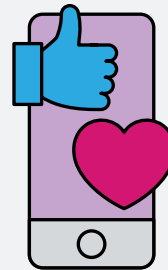


**BUILDING
CONNECTIONS
THROUGH
AUTHENTICITY**

25%

OF AMERICANS

Like that creators
have shared a piece
of their lives



**I LIKE CREATORS ON TIKTOK FOR
THEIR RELATABLE CONTENT,
CREATIVITY, AUTHENTICITY, AND
THE SENSE OF CONNECTION THEY
CREATE THROUGH ENGAGING AND
ENTERTAINING VIDEOS.**

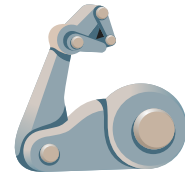


Survey
Respondent



LESSON 5

Prompt and powerful.



Consumers prefer ads that are short and to the point. This has big implications for brands.

Consumers value their time - and they don't like to waste it. More than half (52%) of Americans told us they like ads that are short - and 55% say they DISLIKE long ads.

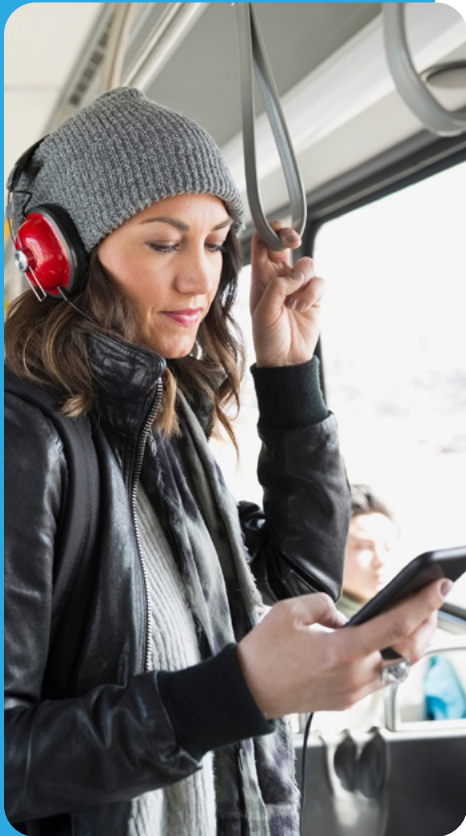
Get right to the point, in other words.

To see how this sentiment of short and sweet matches up with campaign data, brands can measure incremental sales across videos of different lengths and compare.

For instance, NCS conducted a study for TikTok, looking at how long consumers view videos with ads on the platform and what the sales response is for different view lengths.

The results show that the incremental sales response is 66% higher when the video is viewed for two seconds or more.

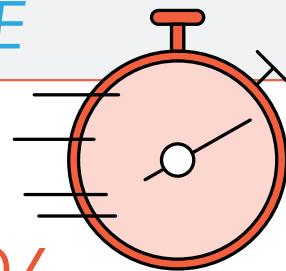
We also found the sweet spot is six to 10 seconds, where the response is 72% greater than video views under two seconds.



OPTIMAL VIEW TIME

**ENGAGE ON VIDEO EARLY,
CAPTIVATE LONGER**

6-10 SECONDS = 72% MORE SALES



GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT, DON'T WAIT TO TELL THE STORY, TELL IT WHILE YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF ADVERTISING.



Survey Respondent

4 ways to build stronger consumer connections.



MEASURE TO BOOST EFFECTIVENESS

Identify the factors driving incremental sales so you can improve future campaigns. With more granular and precise insights, you'll know exactly what tactics to optimize.



LISTEN TO CONSUMERS TO CONNECT

Short. Funny. Educational. Consumers are clear about what type of advertising they like, providing valuable guidance for marketers.



TAP INTO THE POWER OF CREATIVE

Identify the right mixture of advertising creative and creator-generated content to find and reach new audiences.



BE REAL TO BUILD BRAND LOYALTY

Consumers buy from brands they trust, and they value authenticity highly. Prioritize authenticity and trust when planning campaigns.

ABOUT THE NCS CONSUMER SURVEY

NCSolutions commissioned the consumer sentiment survey of 1,124 Americans in May 2024. Results were weighted to be representative of the U.S. population by age, gender, region, ethnicity, marital status, education level, and household income.

ABOUT THE NCS NORMS FOR TIKTOK

NCS ran a meta-study of 90+ TikTok advertising campaigns. This analysis looked at various campaign tactics used in CPG campaigns run on TikTok, to establish norms for how each tactic performed from a sales lift perspective.

ABOUT NCSOLUTIONS

NCSolutions (NCS) makes advertising work better. Our unrivaled data resources powered by leading providers combine with scientific rigor and leading-edge technology to empower the CPG ecosystem to create and deliver more effective advertising. With NCS's proven approach, brands are achieving continuous optimization everywhere ads appear through purchase-based audience targeting and sales measurement solutions that have impacted over \$25 billion in media spend for our customers. Visit us at ncsolutions.com to learn more.