

The State of Influencer Marketing in the UAE



A Report by **yoqap**



About YAAP's Influencer Vertical

YAAP is a new-age content company that seamlessly blends **technology, data** & **creativity** to deliver high-quality solutions.

Our 3D philosophy: **Design, Discovery** & **Distribution** spans the entire communication spectrum.

Our influencer marketing vertical has witnessed the highest CAGR over the past two years.



Some of our marquee
influencer marketing
clients:





We have partnered with a distinguished
roster of influencers & celebrities:



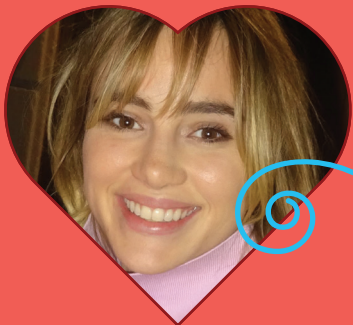
Chris Hemsworth



Priyanka Chopra



Eva Longoria



Suki Waterhouse



Kris Fade



Lojain Omran



Nora & Khalid



Khalid Alameri



Noha Nabil

Influencer Marketing in the UAE

2024 saw a significant increase of over 10% in the marketing budgets brands allocated towards influencers.



This growth can be attributed to two key factors:

- **Effectiveness:** Brands are increasingly recognizing the power of influencer collaborations in boosting engagement, driving social media traffic, enhancing brand perceptions & increasing sales.
- **Influencer Rates:** Influencers have realised their growing impact, leading to a rise in their rates for the same number of deliverables. From 2020 to 2023, influencer rates surged by nearly 30%, partly due to the shift in consumer content consumption from offline to social media, during the pandemic.

Key Statistics from our **2023 Report:**

76.9%

of marketers identified influencer marketing (IM) as a top priority for their brand.

46.2%

reported an increase in their IM budget allocation over the past year.

76.5%

shifted budgets from traditional and other digital marketing channels towards IM.

Does your brand need influencer marketing?

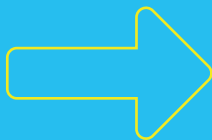
If you're a **customer-facing brand** in the region, whether you're aiming to build brand awareness, enhance credibility, boost app downloads, highlight offers and features, or simply drive sales and footfall, influencer marketing can be one of the most **powerful tools** at your disposal.



In the UAE

71%

female shoppers



said that they primarily follow influencers to stay **updated on trends** & get information.

58%

male shoppers

However, today's consumer is also exposed to a high number of ads & content.

What makes influencer-created content stand out is its **authenticity**. It resonates when it fits the influencer's profile, shows them genuinely enjoying the product, and portrays them as actual users or even **brand advocates**.

Effective content sparks **curiosity**, prompts questions from the audience, avoids diluting the message with too many features, and aligns with current global sentiments through **empathetic storytelling**.



What kind of influencers will work for your brand?

Brands today can choose from a broad spectrum of influencers, ranging from mainstream categories like Lifestyle, Fashion, Travel, and Food to niche segments like Gaming, Savings, Luxury, and Design.

The type of influencer that best suits your brand depends on your campaign objective, the challenges you're addressing, and your budget. Different tiers and categories of influencers can be effective for various goals. Here are the types that tend to work best for different objectives:



Building Awareness

Macro Influencers

Mainstream Categories



Changing Perceptions

Macro & Mega Influencers

Mainstream & Niche Categories



Driving Footfall

Mid & Micro Influencers

Mainstream & Niche Categories



Increasing Sales

Across Tiers - Mix of Influencers

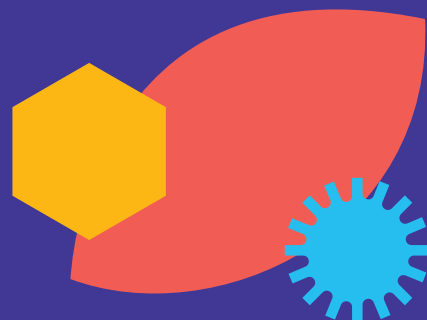
Niche Categories



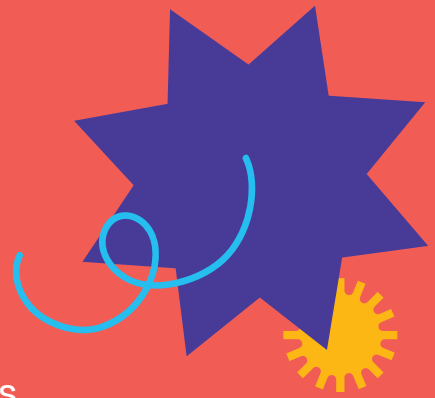
Highlighting Features


Micro & Nano Influencers

Niche Categories



What kind of influencer content performs best?




 **Authentic:** Genuinely reflects the influencer's style and voice.


 **Tailored:** Aligns with the influencer's profile, USPs, and messaging.


 **Creative:** Allows influencers to craft content in their own way.


 **Focused Messaging:** Delivers one clear message without trying to convey too many points at once.


 **Clear CTA:** Features a single, organically embedded call to action.

 **Personal Anecdotes:** Includes personal stories or experiences from the influencer.

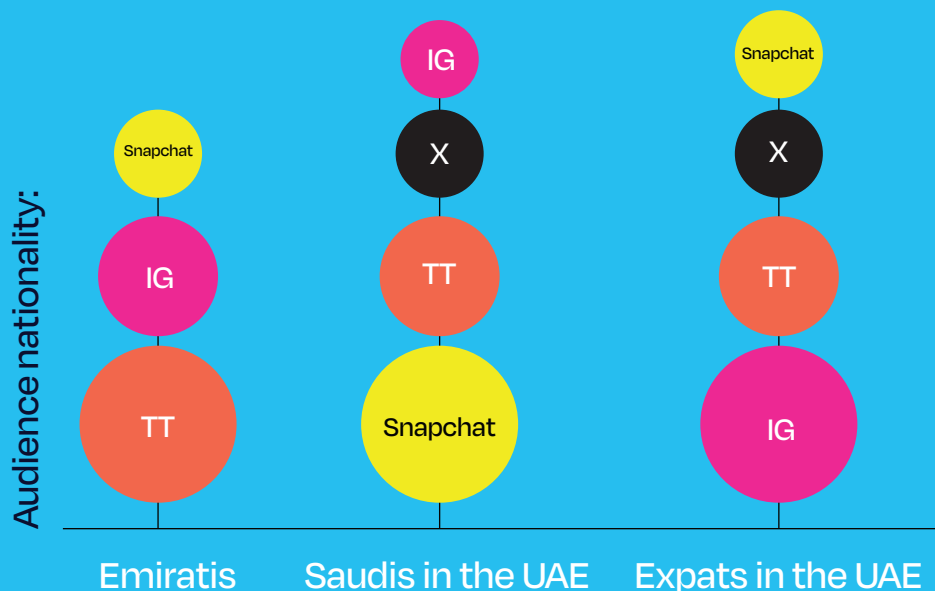
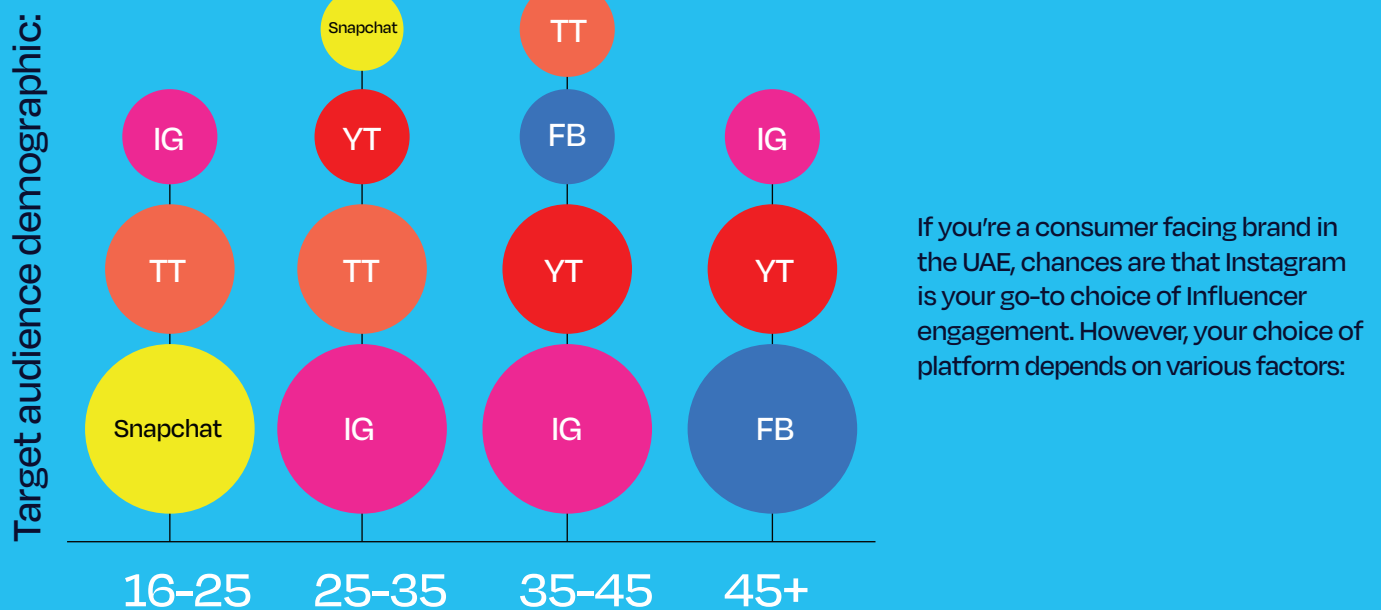
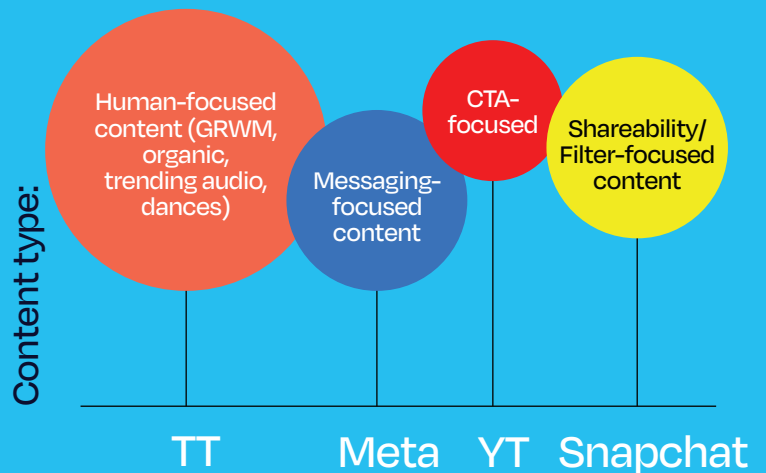
 **Experiential:** Involves onground activities rather than just talking about the product.

 **Topical:** Aligns with current trends, popular songs, and the regional mindset.

 **Engaging:** Prompts a response, often by asking a question more related to the influencer or emotion, than the brand.

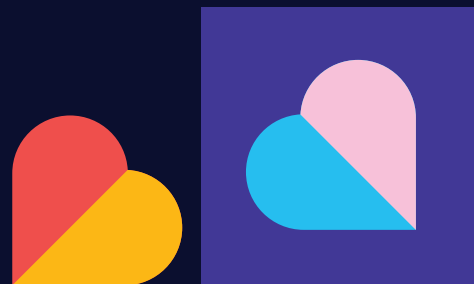
 **Consistent:** Not a one-off—re-engaging with the same influencer enhances authenticity by demonstrating brand loyalty and regular use.

What platform is the best fit for your brand?



What affects how much an **influencer** asks for?

Influencer fees have been rising steadily over the past three years. However, brands can sometimes negotiate costs based on various factors:



Long-Term
Partnership Potential

Past Collaborations

**Agency Association
& Network**

Brand Social Content
& Audience



**Payment
Terms**

**Brand Product
Offering**

**Brand Credibility &
Aspirational Value**

Value to Followers

Brand Campaign
Objectives





Now, let's hear from
the **Influencers &
Content Creators**
themselves



Methodology of Survey



YAAP conducted an in-depth survey of UAE-based influencers across different categories, tiers, cities, and nationalities to gather valuable insights into the regional influencer marketing landscape.

The survey's primary objective was to understand influencers' motivations, priorities, and brand preferences. This information is designed to help brands make more informed decisions about influencer selection and engagement strategies.

Research Tool: Online Survey

51

influencers

08

categories

05

tiers

10

nationalities

04

emirates



This survey has been independently conducted by YAAP. All warranties and responsibilities pertaining to the survey rest with YAAP.

Q1.

What is your primary content creation platform?

a) Instagram

82%

b) TikTok

11%

c) Facebook

0%

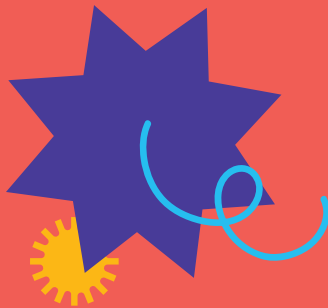
d) YouTube

3%

e) Snapchat

4%

*Instagram continues to be the primary content creation platform for influencers in the UAE, with facebook usage becoming virtually non-existent.



Q2.

What is your preferred content format?

a) Videos

68%

b) Stories

10%

c) Images

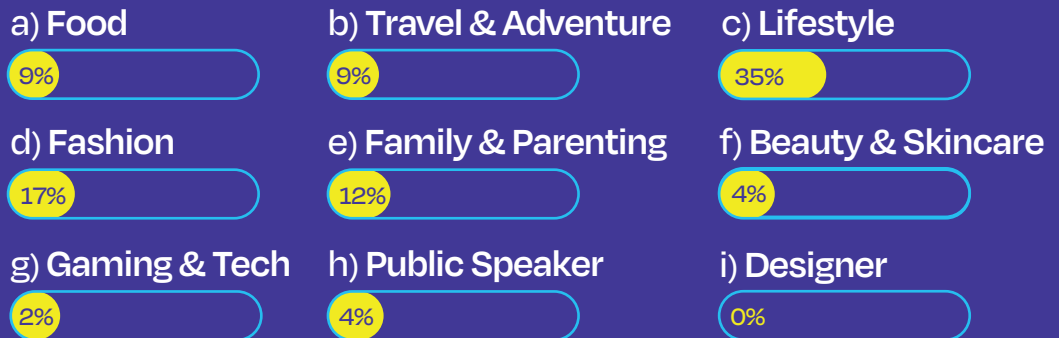
22%


d) Written content

0%

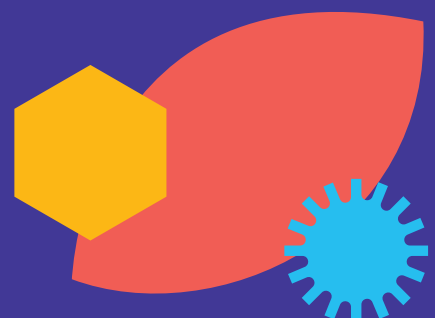
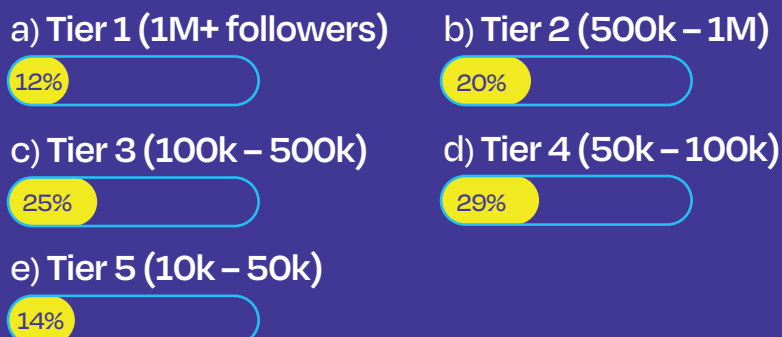
*Influencers and audiences tend to favour video content over written and static formats, inline with global trends.

Q3. What category does your profile fall under?



 *Lifestyle influencers are the most prominent and popular category within the influencer industry.

Q4. What tier does your primary profile fall under?



Q5. What Emirate do you reside in?

a) Dubai

72%

b) Abu Dhabi

18%

c) Sharjah

6%

d) UAQ

0%

e) RAK

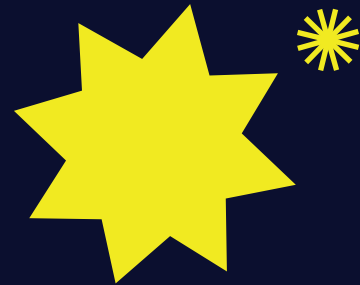
0%

f) Fujairah

0%

g) Ajman

4%



Q6. What is your nationality?

a) Emirati

14%

b) Arab

39%

c) Indian subcontinent

29%

d) Filipino

8%

e) British

4%

f) Russian

4%

g) Chinese

0%

h) American

2%

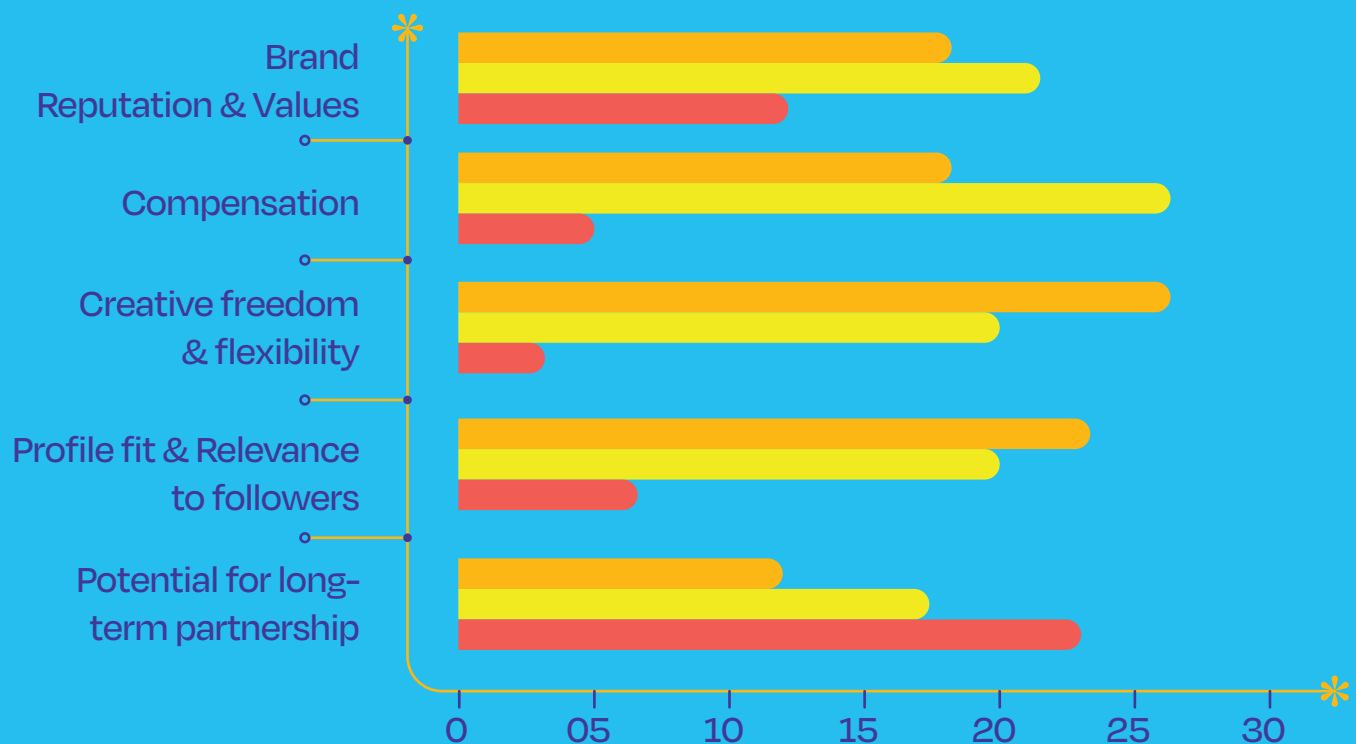
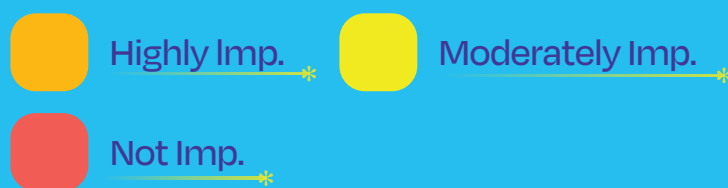
i) Other, please specify



*Influencer nationality split closely aligns with the population demographics of the UAE.

Q7. What factors influence your decision to collaborate with a brand?

(On a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being highly important & 3 being not important)



*Influencers seem to value creative freedom and flexibility in creating interesting content more than monetary compensation when working with brands.

Q8. How do you prefer to be approached by brands for collaboration opportunities?

a) Direct messages/Email

12%

b) Networking events/Conferences

0%

c) Influencer/Talent agency

88%

*Influencers generally prefer to be approached by influencer/talent agencies as it is often a more straightforward and convenient process.

Q9. What influences the compensation you seek for collaborations?

a) None, I have a fixed rate card

24%

b) Relevance of content to followers

61%

c) Previous association with the brand

35%

d) Relationship with intermediary influencer agency

53%

e) Brand reputation & values

10%

*Influencers prioritize content relevance with their followers and may be willing to charge a lower rate than usual for content that would excite their followers and have potential to get them high engagement.

Q10. What type of brands do you prefer to collaborate with?

a) Established and reputable brands

67%

b) Brands aligned with specific values or causes

11%

c) Emerging or startup brands

22%

*Influencers may be more inclined to collaborate with well-established brands due to the fact that these brands often gain more traction with their followers, and the payment processes are typically more streamlined.

Q11. What level of input from brands/agencies do you prefer for content creation?

a) Extensive collaborative brainstorming sessions

8%

b) No input with complete creative freedom

12%

c) Few creative references & suggestions

80%

*Most influencers prefer minimal input, valuing creative autonomy with some brand guidance. This balance allows them to align with brand goals while maintaining authenticity, which resonates best with their audience.

Q12. What support do you need from brands to create effective content for collaborations?

a) Extensive brand guidelines & key messages



b) Production support



c) Editing support



d) Quick content approvals & collaboration acceptance



e) Detailed campaign briefs with expectations



f) Project-specific expenses (e.g., travel, props, wardrobe)



g) None



*Influencers prioritize detailed campaign briefs and quick approvals to ensure clear expectations and timely execution. This allows them to create effective content without unnecessary delays.

Q13.

What strategy do you use to maintain authenticity in sponsored content?

a) Transparently disclose sponsored posts

22%

b) Align brand messaging with personal values

25%

c) Ensure genuine product/service reviews

51%

d) Authenticity is not very important to me

2%



*Audiences are becoming increasingly aware of sponsored content, so influencers now prioritize maintaining authenticity in their content.

Q14.

What format of content performs the best for paid collaborations on your profile?

a) Stories

18%

b) Images

12%

c) Videos & Reels

67%

d) Carousels

3%



*Reels and videos tend to have higher engagement, across both paid & unpaid content.

Q15.

What type of content performs the best for paid collaborations on your profile?

a) Text overlayed on the content piece

24%

b) Verbose

11%

c) Experiential

63%

d) Lengthy captions

2%

*Experiential content is the top performer for paid collaborations, followed by text overlayed on content pieces (which tends to be more favoured by Emiratis).

Q16.

What content approach ends up being the most effective for paid collaborations on your profile?

a) Emotional/Storytelling

16%

b) Fun/Humor-vbased content

21%

c) Featuring family & friends

18%

d) Relatable scenarios

12%

e) Aesthetic content

29%

f) Product/Service usage

4%

*Aesthetic content is identified as the most effective approach for paid collaborations, with fun and humor-based content also resonating well, as both have high shareability.

Q17. What challenges do you face when collaborating with brands?

a) Poor briefing

49%

b) Brand's unrealistic expectations

63%

c) Lack of proper documentation

61%

d) No creative freedom

38%

e) Compensation delay

86%

*Compensation delays and unrealistic expectations from brands are major challenges, as they hinder influencers' efficiency, trust, and creative flexibility.

Q18. How do you primarily measure the success of a brand collaboration?

a) Engagement metrics

61%

b) New followers reached

20%

c) Sales/Conversion metrics from brand

8%

d) Positive sentiment from followers

11%

*Engagement is the top priority for influencers when evaluating the success of brand collaboration.

Q19.

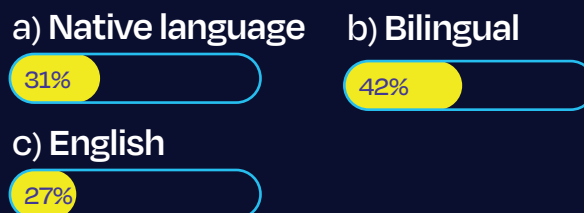
What are the primary challenges you face as a content creator in the UAE compared to other regions?



*UAE influencer market is becoming increasingly saturated, making it more difficult for individual creators to stand out.

Q20.

What language do you mostly create your content in?



*A majority of influencers create content in both their mother tongue as well as in English, to be able to reach a vast audience base.

Q21. According to you, how has the influencer landscape changed in the last 2 years?

a) Growth in the number of influencers in the region



b) Brands recognizing effectiveness of influencer marketing



c) Increase in brands' willingness to pay more



d) Higher demand for authentic content



e) Shift towards long-term partnerships over one-off collaborations



f) Greater emphasis on insights to measure campaign success



g) Rise in micro & nano influencers to target niche audiences



h) Increased focus on short-form video content (Reels/TikToks)

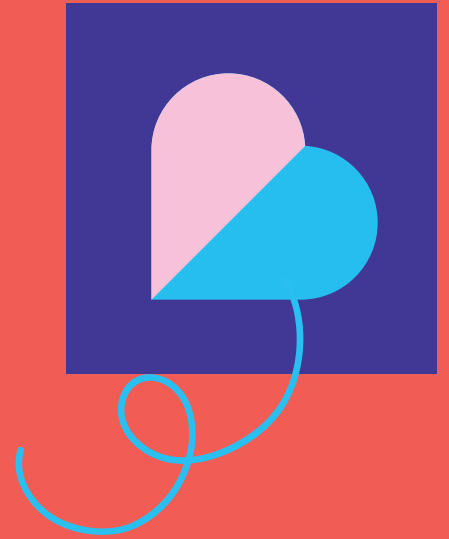


i) Higher preference to influencers associated with a social cause



*The influencer landscape in the UAE has seen rapid growth, increased brand investment, and a shift towards authentic, short-form video content.

Now, let's hear what brands have to say



دبي
الاقتصاد والسياحة
Economy and Tourism

SEA
FORWARD
FOOD
NZD

Google Cloud

Aster
We'll Treat You Well

almaya
supermarket

bayut

APPAREL GROUP
EXCEED EXPECTATIONS EVERYDAY

Emirates NBD

Sharaf
DG
.com

تجميل
TAJMEEL
a burjeel holdings company

babyshop

FORTES
EDUCATION
1981 Enlighten • Empower • Excel

harmanhouse

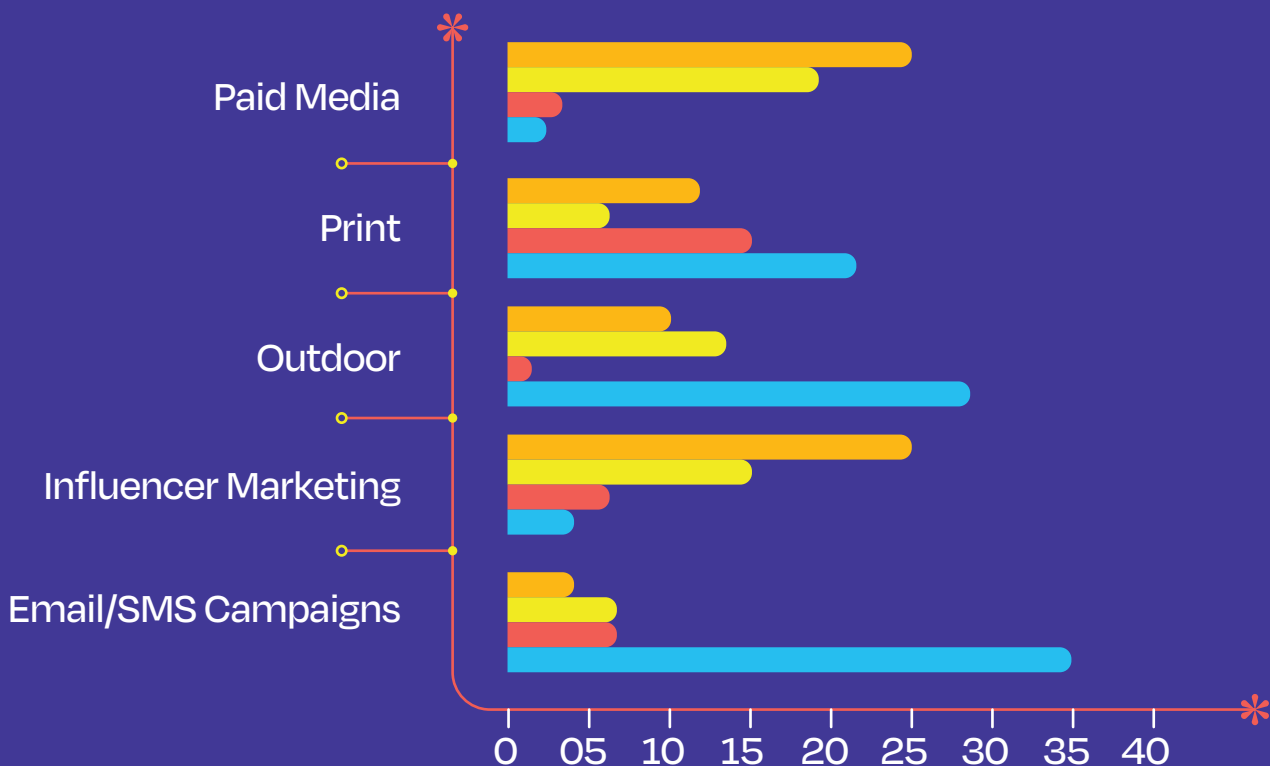
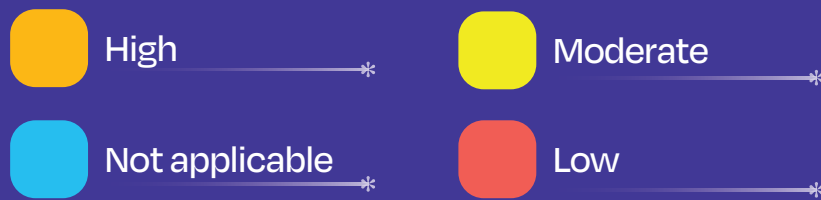
LALS
GROUP

NFI®





Q1. How would you rank the effectiveness of the below paid marketing channels for your brand?



*Influencer marketing & paid media are considered the most effective paid marketing channels by brands.

Q2. Which category of influencers does your brand collaborate with most often?

a) Food

5%

b) Beauty & Skincare

5%

c) Fashion

20%

d) Health & Fitness

5%

e) Lifestyle

40%

f) Gaming & Tech

10%

g) Travel & Adventure

5%

h) Motivational & Public Speaker

0%

i) Family & Parenting

10%

j) Designer

0%

*Brands tend to prefer collaborating with lifestyle influencers, as their content can be easily integrated across various brand categories.



Q3.

Which tier of influencers does your brand collaborate with most often?

a) Macros (500k+ followers)

5%

c) Micros & Nanos (10k–100k followers)

20%

e) Mix of tiers

40%

b) Mid (100k–500k followers)

15%

d) Depends on the campaign

20%



*Brands most frequently collaborate with a mix of influencer tiers to be able to achieve both objectives of wide reach and niche audience targeting.



Q4. How has your brand primarily benefited from influencer collaborations?

a) Traffic on brand's social media

30%

b) Higher conversions /sales/footfall

15%

c) Higher engagement on content

50%

d) No benefits have been observed

5%

*The most direct and visible impact of engaging with influencers comes across as high engagement as they create authentic connections with audiences, leading to increased interaction and interest.

Q5. How often does your brand collaborate with influencers for a campaign?

a) Monthly

45%

b) Quarterly

20%

c) Biannually

0%

d) Annually

0%

e) Seasonally

35%

*Frequent collaborations, especially monthly and seasonally, allow brands to stay relevant and engage audiences consistently, maximizing impact and visibility.

Q6.

What influences the compensation you are willing to give an influencer?

a) Popularity of the influencer

30%

c) Engagement rate of the influencer

60%

e) Influencer's follower demographics

50%

g) Others

15%

b) Other brands the influencer collaborates with

15%

d) We only work on barter

20%

f) Influencer's content

60%

*Brands are moving away from giving importance simply to the size of an influencer's follower base and are instead beginning to prioritize the engagement rate and content quality.

Q7.

How do you manage influencer marketing campaigns?

a) In-house

15%

b) Agency Partners

65%

c) Mix of both

20%

*Managing campaigns majorly through agency partners indicates the importance of specialized expertise in this marketing discipline.

Q8. How do you shortlist influencers for campaigns?

a) Insights from social analytics tools

25%

c) Input from the agency

75%

e) Influencer's content

60%

b) Trending/popular influencers

30%

d) Influencers we have already worked with before

25%

f) Similar to the ones that the competitors work with

30%



*Agencies dominate influencer shortlisting owing to their expertise & influencer relationships, ensuring effective matches while leveraging data driven insights.

Q9. How do you evaluate the success of an influencer campaign?

a) Engagement

30%

b) Leads/Sales-generated

30%

c) Quality of comments

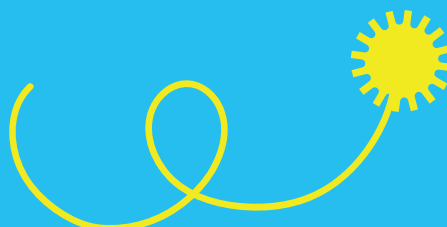
20%

d) Followers gained

20%

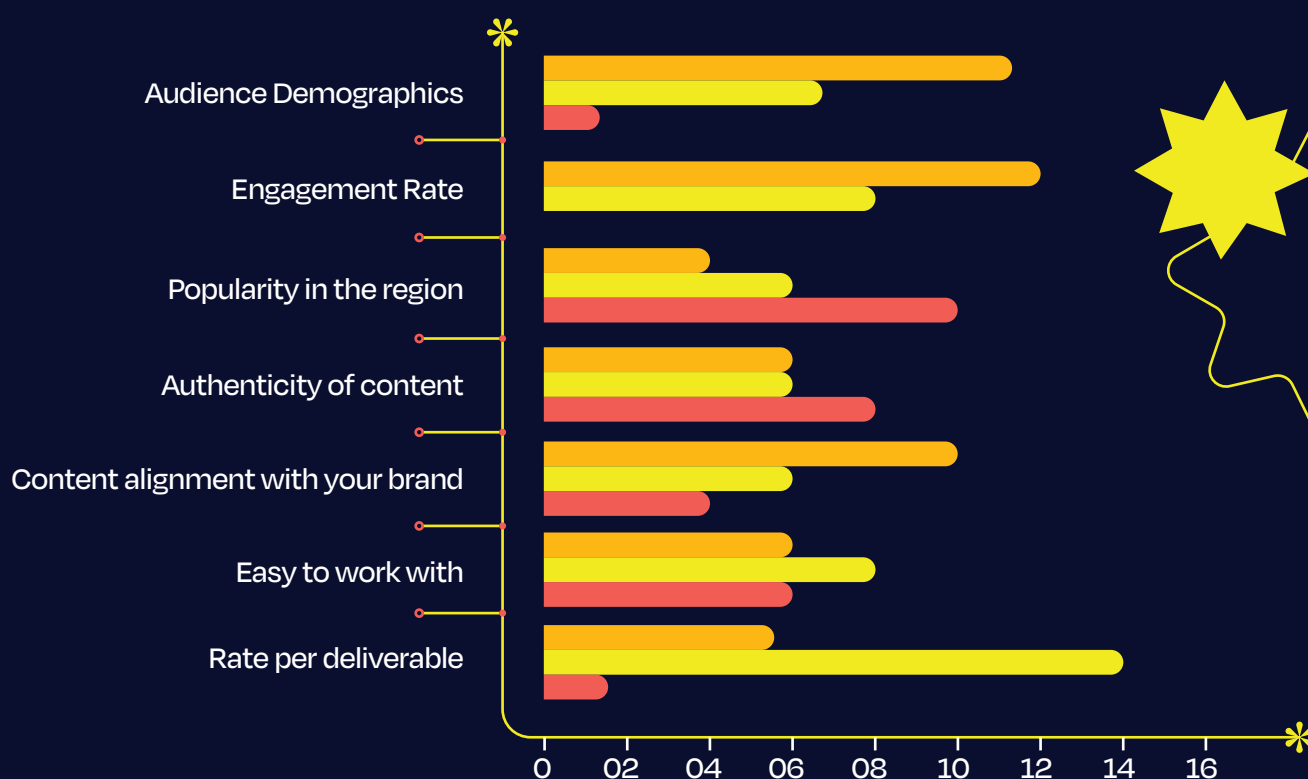
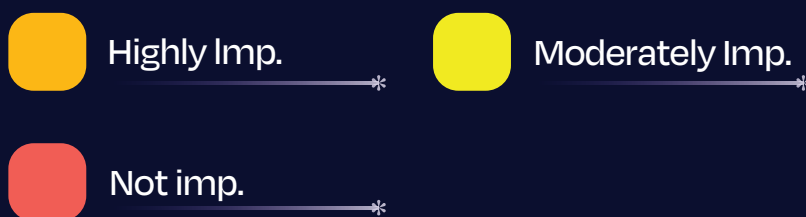


*Brands prioritize both online engagement as well as direct conversions, equally, to measure the effectiveness of an influencer.



Q10.

How would you rate the importance of the following insights while choosing an influencer?



*Brands are now shifting priorities towards influencer audience demographics and engagement rate, over rate per deliverable and popularity in the region.

Q11. How involved do you prefer to be in influencers' content creation?

a) Complete involvement at every step

30%

b) Full creative freedom given to the influencer

5%

c) Initial briefing and visual references

35%

d) We leave it to our agency

30%



*Brands seem to have different approaches & preferences for their involvement in influencer campaigns.

Q12. How do you feel about social analytics tools that measure audience demographics that help in influencer selection?

a) Strongly consider it

70%

b) Unaware of such tools

10%

c) Unsure of the accuracy of such tools

20%



*Brands strongly rely on social analytics tools to assess audience demographics which help them evaluate the fit of the influencer with their own target audience.

Key Learnings

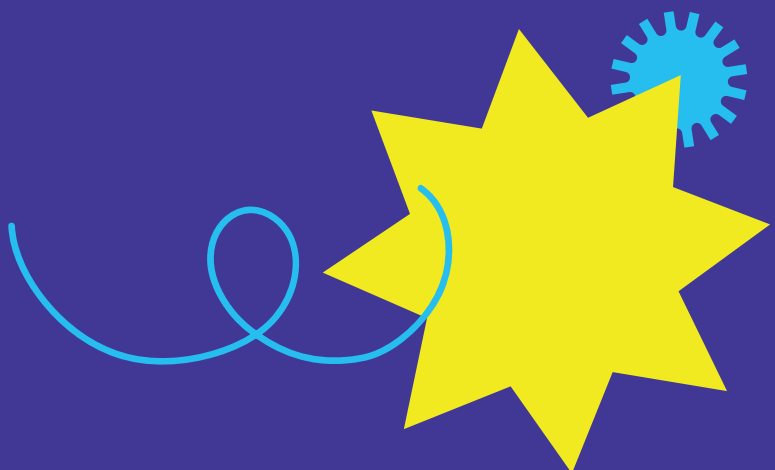
Instagram is the primary platform for 82% of influencers, hence brands should focus on this platform for maximum impact.

Video content is the preferred choice among influencers, brands & audiences alike, highlighting the need for brands to create video-driven campaigns to enhance audience engagement.

Quick approvals and clear briefs are extremely helpful for influencers, indicating the need for brands to take a more streamlined approach, and enhance efficiency and results.

80% Influencers value creative freedom however, a good percentage of brands express a desire for complete involvement. Finding a balance by sharing the brand guidelines, without micromanagement, can foster more authentic and engaging content.

Agency partnerships are preferred by both influencers and brands for smoother collaborations and enhancing overall campaign effectiveness.



Lifestyle influencers are preferred by brands for their versatility, making them a strategic choice for effective campaigns across multiple sectors.

Engagement is the key metric for success for both influencers and brands, highlighting the need to create interactive content that encourages participation.

When determining compensation, influencers consider content relevance to followers and agency relationships—an important factor for brands to consider while negotiating partnerships.



Got influencer campaigns on your mind?

We've got your back & your brand covered!



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