

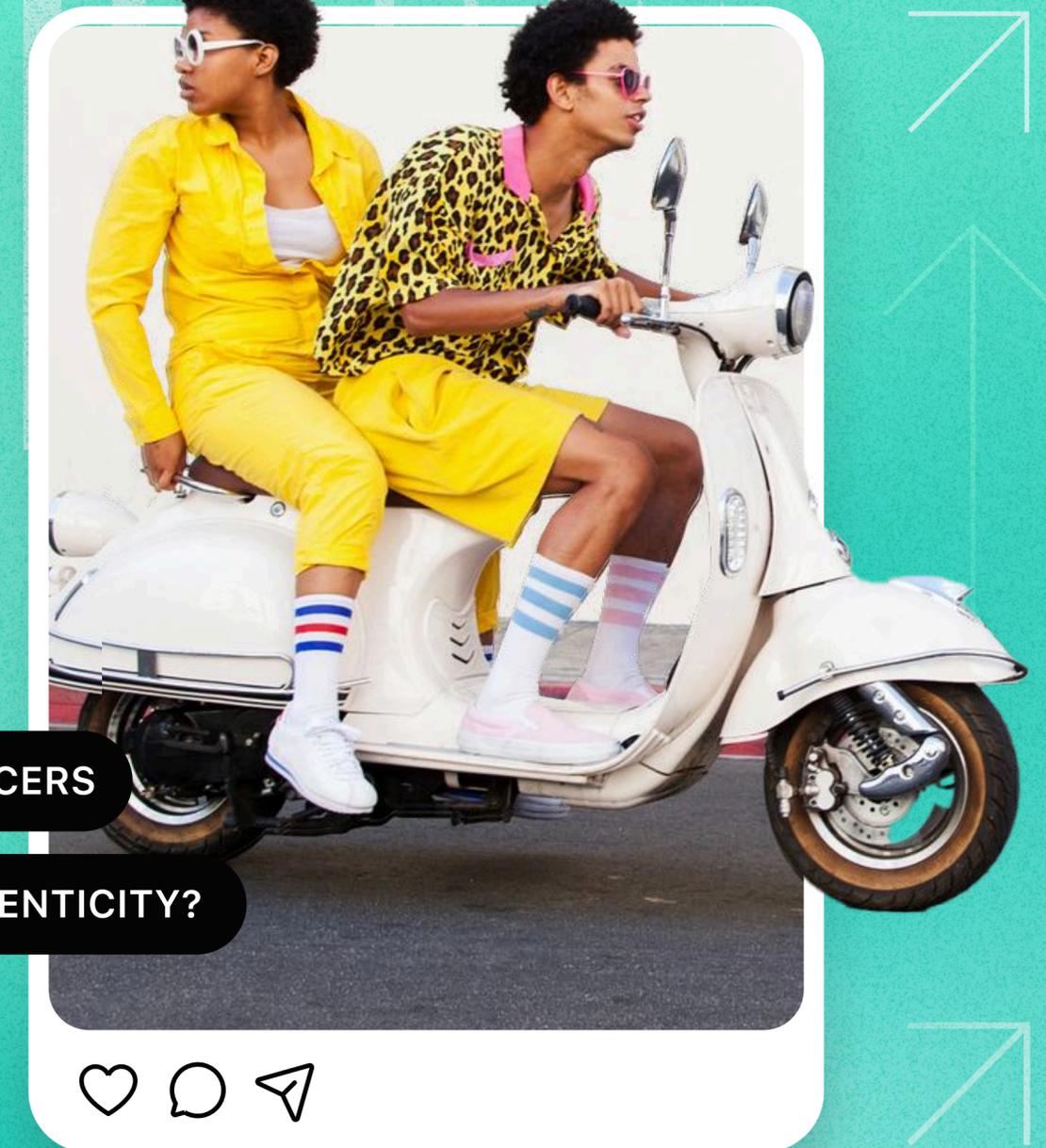
Industry Predictions

# Influencer marketing in 2027

The definition of who constitutes an influencer and where they activate will expand

sproutsocial

 The future



AI INFLUENCERS

AUTHENTICITY?

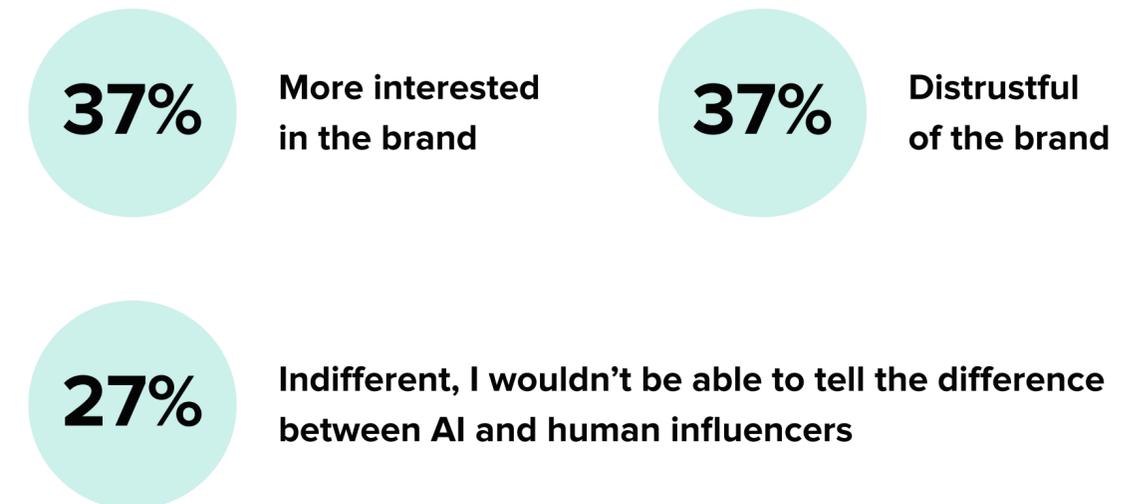
# 1

## AI influencers will complement & coexist with human influencers

Consumers and influencers aren't ready for AI influencer marketing...yet. Over half of consumers indicate that AI influencers would make them distrustful of a brand, or they wouldn't be able to discern an AI influencer from a human one.

### Consumer attitudes toward AI influencers

If brands used an AI influencer it would make me feel...



**Only 37% of consumers say they're more likely to be interested in a brand who uses an AI influencer, although this rises to 46% among Gen Z.** Influencers are also weary of AI influencers for fear they could take brand partnerships away from humans. But a select few (17%) see how AI influencers could actually create better brand partnerships in the future.



**Georgina Whalen** 

Founder of The Influence Atelier

I would definitely be interested in consuming a brand's ad knowing they used AI or virtual influencers because they have created an entire being, personality and look.

It makes me wonder why they chose each detail. It allows me to focus solely on the brand and their generated creative vs. the brand and an external party. I would not prefer a virtual influencer over a real influencer, but I do support their mutual existence.



2

## “Authenticity” will be more of a buzzword than strategy

While we see that overall trust in influencers is on the rise—especially with younger consumers—the next generation cares less about “authenticity.” **Only 35% of Gen Z value influencer authenticity compared to about half of Millennials, Gen X and Baby Boomers.**

“



**Melo Meacher-Jones** 

Head of Social and Influencer at Accenture Song

Authenticity is overrated. We follow influencers not because we believe in their authenticity but because they entertain or interest us. It's a mutually beneficial relationship.



Younger generations who grew up with influencer content on social media understand that influencers provide a service on behalf of brands—there is a transactional element to the entire dynamic. Instead, they see value in the way influencers interact with products, and demonstrate how they could use them in their lives.

**Which is why Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to make weekly or monthly purchases based on influencers' recommendations (compared to older generations).**

“



**Brendan Gahan** ✓

Co-founder and CEO, Creator Authority

Marketers have long parroted authenticity as the cornerstone of influencer success. Clearly most have not bothered to ask fans if they feel like that's the case.

Attributing creator success to authenticity is like calling both the Empire State Building and Mars 'big'—it's a descriptor that lacks the depth of true understanding and overlooks the nuances of influencer marketing.



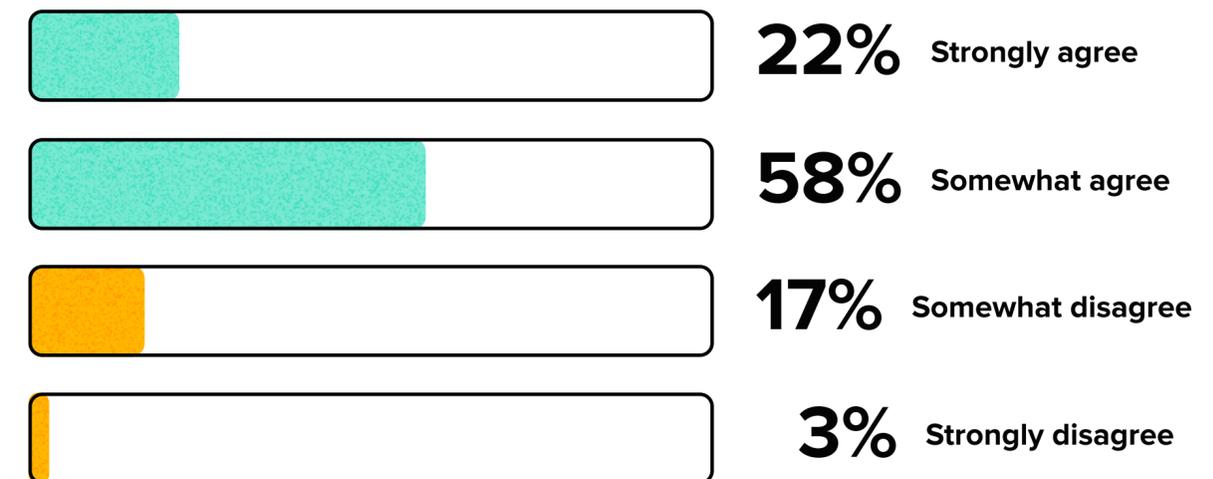
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## Influencer marketing will go beyond social media

Most consumers agree they're more likely to buy from brands who partner with influencers on projects beyond social media content—like in-person events, brand trips or multichannel ad campaigns.

As what it means to be a spokesperson and celebrity changes, influencers will slide into roles formerly held by actors, athletes and other pop culture icons.

**80% of consumers would be more willing to buy from brands that partner with influencers beyond just social media content**



## The bottom line

As prominent as influencer marketing has become, it's still only in its early stages. The future holds new technology, preferences and forms of collaboration that will take influencer marketing to new heights. As you think ahead, ask yourself:

- ✓ How could emerging tech complement our existing influencer partnerships?
- ✓ What do our influencer marketing activations offer beyond “authenticity”?
- ✓ What will it take to bring influencer marketing efforts to other channels? In what ways will that change how we work?



## About the data

This research cited in this report was conducted online by Cint on behalf of Sprout Social. Consumer participants included 2,000 respondents across the US and UK who have at least one social media account and follow at least five brands on social media. Influencer participants included 300 respondents across the US and UK who identify as social media influencers, with an audience of 10,000+ followers on at least one social network, who earn at least half of their annual income from brand partnerships on social media. The consumer and influencer surveys were conducted from February 13, 2024 to February 20, 2024.

For questions about the data, please contact [content@sproutsocial.com](mailto:content@sproutsocial.com)

## About Sprout Social

Sprout Social is a global leader in social media management and analytics software. Sprout's intuitive platform puts powerful social data into the hands of more than 30,000 brands so they can deliver smarter, faster business impact.

With a full suite of social media management solutions, Sprout offers comprehensive publishing and engagement functionality, customer care, influencer marketing, advocacy and AI-powered business intelligence. Sprout's award-winning software operates across all major social media networks and digital platform.

Learn more at [sproutsocial.com](https://sproutsocial.com)

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