

**BREAKING DOWN  
THE DIFFERENCES  
BETWEEN CREATORS  
AND INFLUENCERS**



ISSUE #01

S E C T I O N

# 01

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## **THE EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL INFLUENCE**

In the dynamic world of brand marketing, understanding the nuances of key players is more than a necessity—it's an opportunity to form strategic advantage. This white paper aims to clarify the differences between two such players, creators and influencers, offering a clear distinction to sharpen the lexicon of interchangeability for those exploring possible collaborations with each.

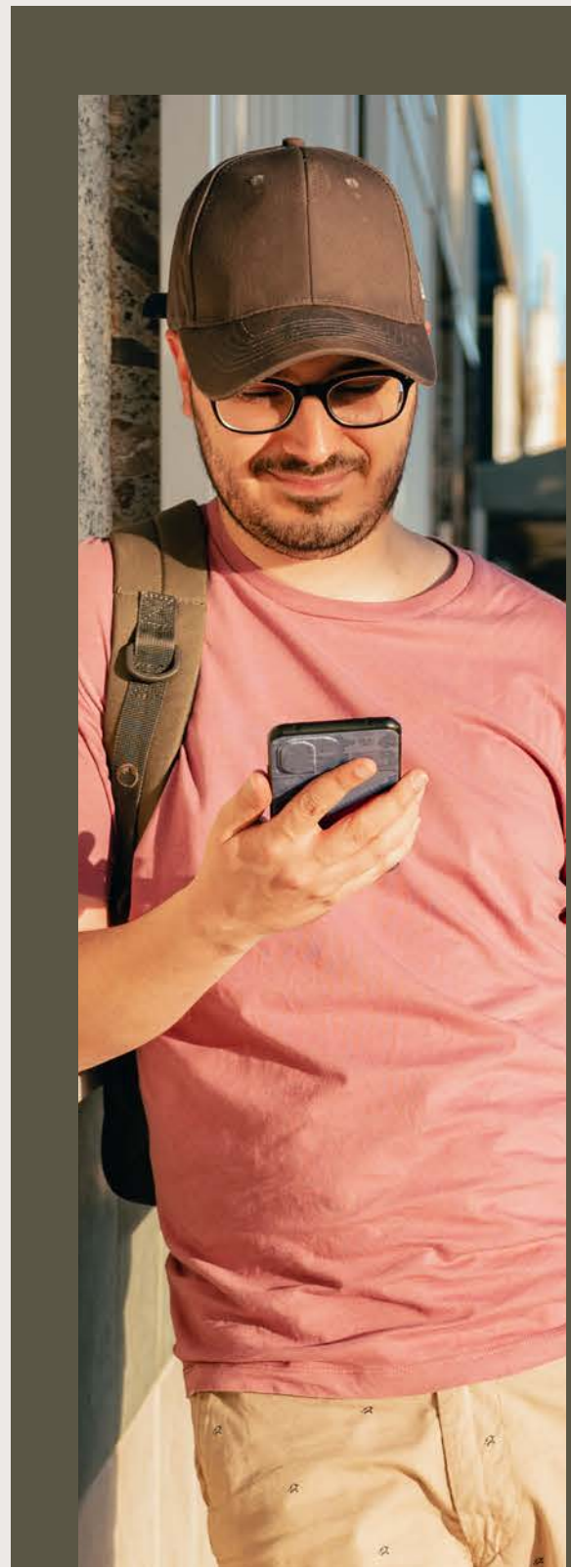
# THE EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL INFLUENCE

**In the early days of social media, influencers were the primary drivers of online opinions.**

They were individuals who had amassed large followings on social media platforms and had the power to sway their followers' opinions and behaviors. Brands quickly recognized the potential of influencers and began partnering with them to promote their products and services.

Some influencers began to focus more on creating original content, engaging with their followers in more meaningful ways, and building communities around shared interests or values. These individuals came to be known as creators.<sup>1</sup>

**However, as social media platforms have matured and become more sophisticated, so did the individuals who used them. These individuals came to be known as creators.**



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The audiences of creators and influencers also have fundamentally different motivations. The creator's audience is looking to be entertained or informed by engaging with authentic, resonant content. In contrast, the influencer's audience is often motivated by a desire for a detailed view of someone's life and lifestyle, living vicariously through the influencer's experiences.

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## S E C T I O N

# 02

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## **CREATORS VS INFLUENCERS: KEY DIFFERENCES**

While both creators and influencers hold sway in the digital landscape, they differ in several key aspects. Understanding these differences and the implications of these shifts are crucial to aligning marketing strategies with the evolving digital landscape and formalizing partnerships or collaboration and co-creation opportunities.

# AUTHENTICITY AND CONTENT CREATION



## CREATORS

Creators are known for their authentic and resonant content.<sup>2</sup> They often have a unique voice or perspective that resonates with their audience. They are content producers first, often with skills in writing, video production, photography, or other creative fields. Their content is often original and unique to their personal brand.

# VS

## INFLUENCERS

Influencers, by comparison, may not necessarily create original content. They often share curated content from other sources or personal lifestyle content. Their influence is often derived from their personal lifestyle, to which their followers aspire.

# CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES

All in all, the influencer is about self-promotion, while the creator is about the craft. The influencer is often motivated by ego or an interest in promoting themselves; whereas a creator is driven by a passion to create engaging content. Let's illustrate this difference with a hypothetical example.

Imagine a situation where a hotel wants to use organic social media posts to promote its services. Here's how an influencer versus a creator would generally operate in this scenario:

## INFLUENCERS

Influencers, whose primary focus is promoting themselves and their social channels, often leverage their popularity for non-monetary compensation such as free stays at hotels or other services in exchange for a social media post. In this case, the influencer spends the night and posts a "day-in-the-life" type video of their experience the next morning. This post likely has some creative constraints applied by the hotel as part of this non-monetary exchange. This type of quid pro quo contributes to the perception of influencers as inauthentic, as their profiles become filled with superficial semi-sponsored content.

# VS

## CREATORS

In contrast, a creator is more likely to partner with the same hotel, but not just for a free stay. They are paid to make a video in their distinct style, featuring the hotel as a narrative vehicle for the comedy sketch or bit that the creator's video revolves around. Furthermore, the creator's content is more likely to be evergreen as it contains an entertainment and educational value that transcends the given fad or trend of the time. This difference in motivation and approach is a key distinction between influencers and creators.



# MONETIZATION



## CREATORS

Creators often have diverse income streams. They may monetize their content through platform revenue, brand partnerships, merchandise, patronage platforms, and more.<sup>3</sup> This diversity allows them to maintain their creative freedom and authenticity, as they are not solely dependent on brand partnerships for income.

**VS**

## INFLUENCERS

Influencers primarily earn through brand partnerships and sponsored content. This can sometimes lead to a perceived lack of authenticity, as their content is often seen as being swayed by the brands with whom they partner.



# AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIPS

## CREATORS **VS** INFLUENCERS

Creators build communities around shared interests or values. Their audience values their opinion and trusts their recommendations.

This relationship is built over time through consistent interaction, quality content, and engagement.

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Their influence is often derived from their personal lifestyle, to which their followers aspire.



# BECOMING A CONNECTED BRAND

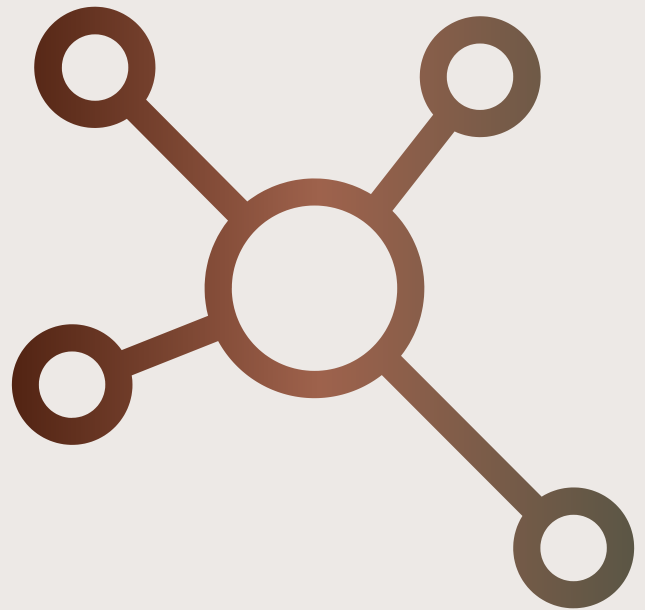
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**In 2023, you're either a connected brand or you're not.<sup>4</sup>**

A "connected brand" is a term used to describe a brand that establishes meaningful and authentic connections with its consumers or audiences. These brands are typically proactive in engaging with their audiences on social media, creating content that resonates with them, and fostering a sense of community.

A connected brand doesn't just broadcast its messages to consumers; instead, it involves them in a dialogue, listens to their needs and feedback, and creates a two-way relationship. This brand approach can lead to deeper customer loyalty, as consumers feel seen, heard, and valued by the brand.

In the context of creators and influencers, becoming a "connected brand" involves engaging with the communities that creators have built, listening to, learning from, and actively participating in the conversations, and being responsive to the feedback and discussions happening in these spaces.



**It also involves building long-term partnerships with creators that align with the brand's values and resonating with them and their audience. It means infusing relevance into everything you do, even beyond sponsored social media, to meet them where they are and show up as a brand reflecting empathy and genuine community.**

S E C T I O N

# 03

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## **STRATEGICALLY NAVIGATING THE CREATOR VS INFLUENCER DISTINCTION: WHY IT'S A MUST FOR BRANDS**

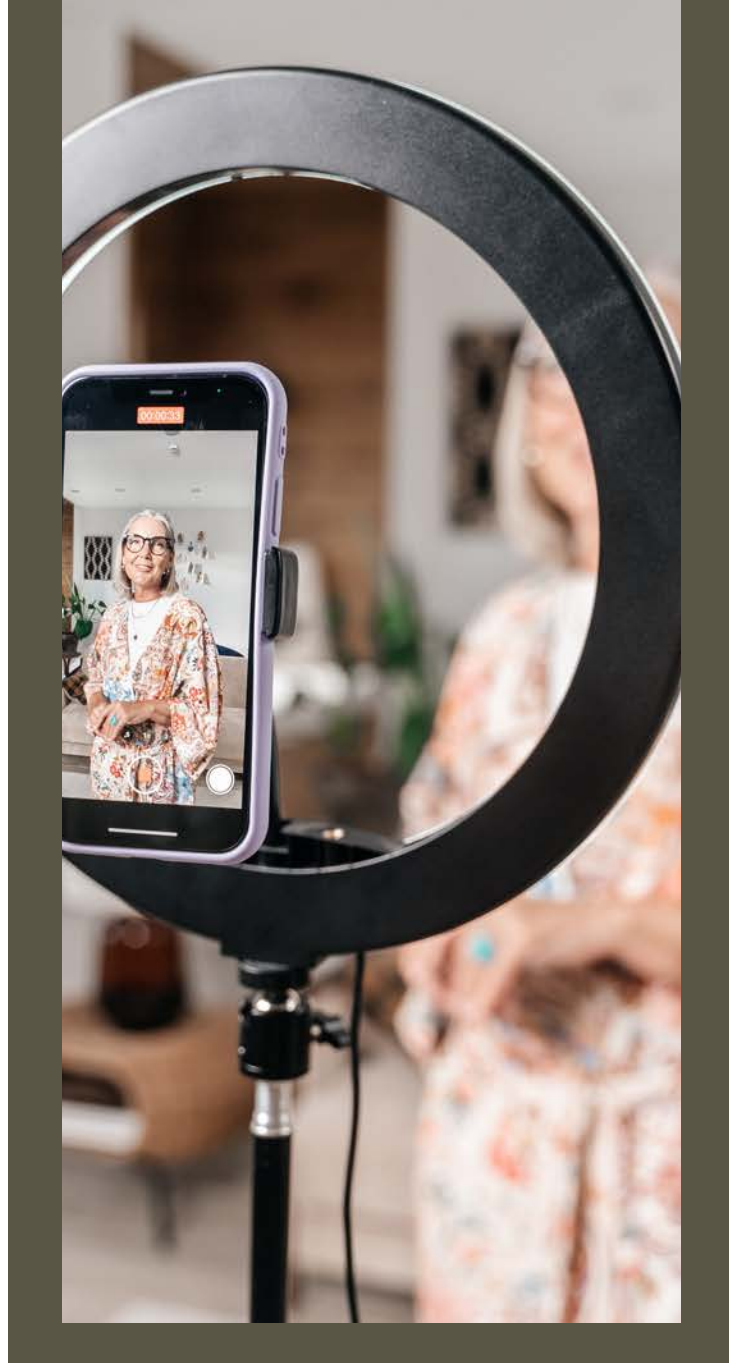
Understanding the nuanced differences between creators and influencers isn't merely about semantics—it's a critical strategic decision for brands. As the digital landscape shifts from the age of influencers to the era of creators, brands must recalibrate their marketing strategies.



# ACHIEVING HIGH CONVERSION RATES

Creators, due to their focused and authentic content, tend to build communities that are more deeply engaged, leading to potentially higher conversion rates.<sup>5</sup>

When a creator endorses a product or service, it is viewed as a genuine recommendation from a trusted source. This trust, born out of consistent interaction and high-quality content, can significantly boost a brand's conversion rates. Moreover, brands can leverage creators' deep audience insights to create more personalized and effective campaigns. Creators know their audience's preferences, pain points, and desires, which can be invaluable for crafting compelling brand messages.



Comparatively, influencers often present a broad yet captivating appeal, attracting a larger but potentially less engaged following. Their content focus might not be as specialized, which can lead to lower engagement and conversion rates.

Brands partnering with influencers should be cognizant of this distinction and adapt their strategies accordingly. For instance, instead of deep-dive product features, broad lifestyle integration might work better. This approach could involve showcasing how the product fits seamlessly into the influencer's lifestyle, thereby making it more relatable and appealing to the audience.

# ESTABLISHING LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

**Creators often seek partnerships that closely align with their personal brand and values, creating an opportunity for brands to establish long-term relationships that are beneficial for both parties.**

These relationships offer consistent and effective brand messaging over time, reinforcing brand recall and customer loyalty among the creator's engaged audience.

Respecting creators' creative freedom is vital to the success of these partnerships. Creators have honed their unique style and voice over time, which resonates deeply with their audience. Allowing creators the freedom to integrate brand messages into their content in their own unique and organic way fosters authenticity. This authenticity can significantly enhance audience engagement and the overall impact of the campaign.



**For instance, instead of prescribing rigid promotional content, brands could give creators a brief and let them weave the brand story in their unique way.**

This could involve product placement in a vlog, a themed social media post, or an innovative DIY project using the product. Such a flexible approach ensures that the promotional content does not feel forced or out of place, and instead blends seamlessly with the creator's usual content.

**By comparison, influencers, who are more trend-driven, might produce content that is timely and buzzworthy, but may lack the same longevity.**

This could involve product placement in a vlog, a themed social media post, or an innovative DIY project using the product. Such a flexible approach ensures that the promotional content does not feel forced or out of place and instead blends seamlessly with the creator's usual content.

# EXPLORING DIVERSE MONETIZATION OPPORTUNITIES

**Creators often juggle various income streams, expanding beyond sole reliance on brand partnerships.**

These may include platform ad revenue, merchandise sales, crowd-funded support through platforms like Patreon, online course offerings, or event appearances.

This diversity not only provides creators with financial stability but also lends an authenticity to their brand endorsements that can't be achieved otherwise.

**In contrast, when brands partner with creators who already have diverse revenue streams, their product promotion is seen as an extension of the creator's genuine interest and not solely a financial transaction.**

The transparency and authenticity inherent in such partnerships can help brands connect more deeply with their target audience, leading to a more profound and lasting impact.



# CONCLUSION

**In the constantly shifting digital landscape, a strategic understanding of the distinct roles of creators and influencers is critical.**

Influencers, characterized by their lifestyle-centric, trend-driven content, continue to hold a place in the digital ecosystem. Their content, while more surface-level, still possesses an appeal that can command attention in sectors where aspirational and lifestyle-based content resonates.

**Alternatively, creators, with their authentic, original content, engaged communities, and diverse monetization strategies, stand at the forefront of the current digital age.**

Their deep-rooted authenticity and genuine connections with their audiences bring about high conversion rates and meaningful collaborations, setting the stage for brands to foster a more organic relationship with their customers.

**The digital landscape is visibly tilting toward creators. Their rise indicates a paradigm shift where values, authenticity, and community engagement are becoming increasingly crucial for brand success. As this transition unfolds, understanding and harnessing the unique strengths of creators will become even more essential.** This evolution isn't about discounting the value of influencers, but rather about strategically utilizing the strengths of both creators and influencers to forge more effective engaging content that resonates deeply with audiences. As we venture further into the era of creators, brands must adapt, not just to keep pace with these changes, but to pioneer and lead in this new age.

**By doing so, they can maximize their resonance with their audiences, driving their success in the ever-evolving digital sphere.**



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Havas Voice is a data-informed creator agency focused on socially-conscious brands seeking to find their own voice and accelerate relevance by |connecting and collaborating with those creators who are using their voices and empowering:

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MEANINGFUL CENTRICITY