

HubSpot thetilt ↗

The Business of Creators Report

Data + Insights for Brands and Content
Creators Navigating the Creator Economy



INTRODUCTION

Creators and Brands are Building a New Digital Economy Together

Creators are dominating online and growing highly engaged, niche audiences. It makes sense — people listen to people they trust.

Now, more and more brands understand the value of community-led growth. Our [2022 State of Inbound Marketing Trends Report](#) found that 88% of brands have a dedicated budget for working with influencers and creators, and community is a top priority for marketing strategy in the year ahead.

Who are content creators? And how can brands organically tap into their audiences? Content creators are “social media influencers” in the sense that they have an engaged audience, and they consistently create and share high-quality, original content for their audience. Content creators typically educate and inspire, prioritize partnerships, and can make a full-time living through their personal business.



We partnered with The Tilt to survey 300+ marketing and business-specific content creators to learn more about who they are, how they can win the space, and how brands can partner with creators to develop successful campaigns. Let's dive in.



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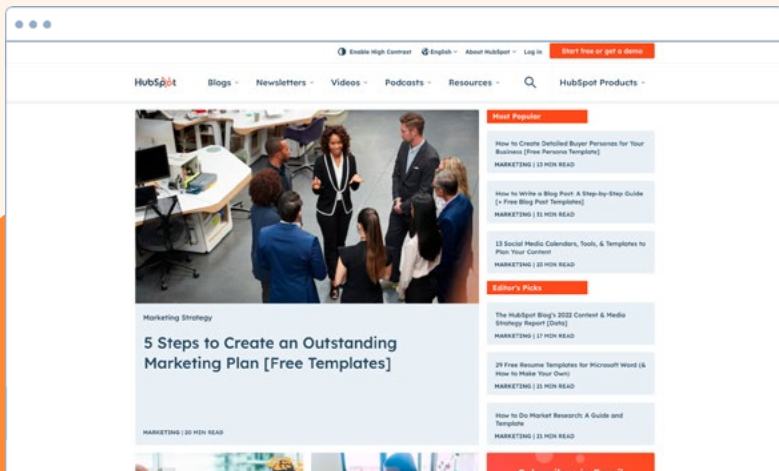
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Who Are Content Creators?

The Marketing + Business Content Creator Profile

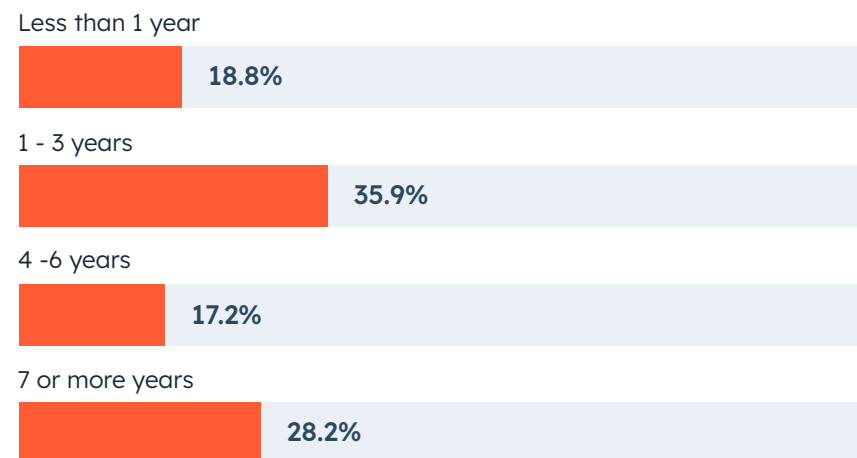
Content creators represent a hardworking bunch of passionate people who love to share their knowledge with others. Some creators have transformed a hobby into a full-time job, while others say their creator business is a side gig in addition to another full-time role.

Seventy-seven percent of creators in this space say they're earning money, but only a little over 25% are fully supporting themselves from their creator income.

Twenty-eight percent have been in the biz for more than seven years, but **more than half are fairly new**, having started their creator business within the last three years.

The creator space is growing quickly and showing potential for anyone to find their place in it.

How long ago did you launch your creator business?

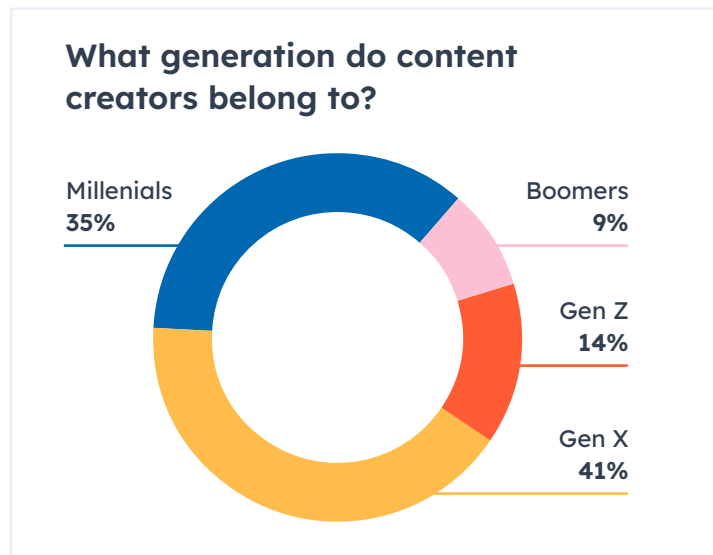


Who Are Content Creators?

Content creators, or [content entrepreneurs](#) as The Tilt defines them, are independent content creators who have built, or are building, a business around their content creation skills and engaged community.

Content creators for business and marketing skew millennial and Gen X, with a growing group of Gen Zers.

86% of content creators do not believe a four-year degree is necessary to succeed as a creator.



Talkin' 'Bout My Motivation

Creators are motivated to grow their business to become financially independent, embrace freedom and flexibility in their job, and be creative professionally. And others are simply passionate about what they do and want to help others do the same.

Creators see many benefits in running their content businesses. An overwhelming **84% create content because they enjoy their work**. On the other side, audiences want to see who they authentically are. It's what pulls people in and gets them hooked — an individual's voice and unique style. Brands who work with creators in their space can connect with these communities via a warm welcome from a creative partner who aligns with the brand mission.

Content creators on what motivates them

"I love what I do and would like to share my passion with others."

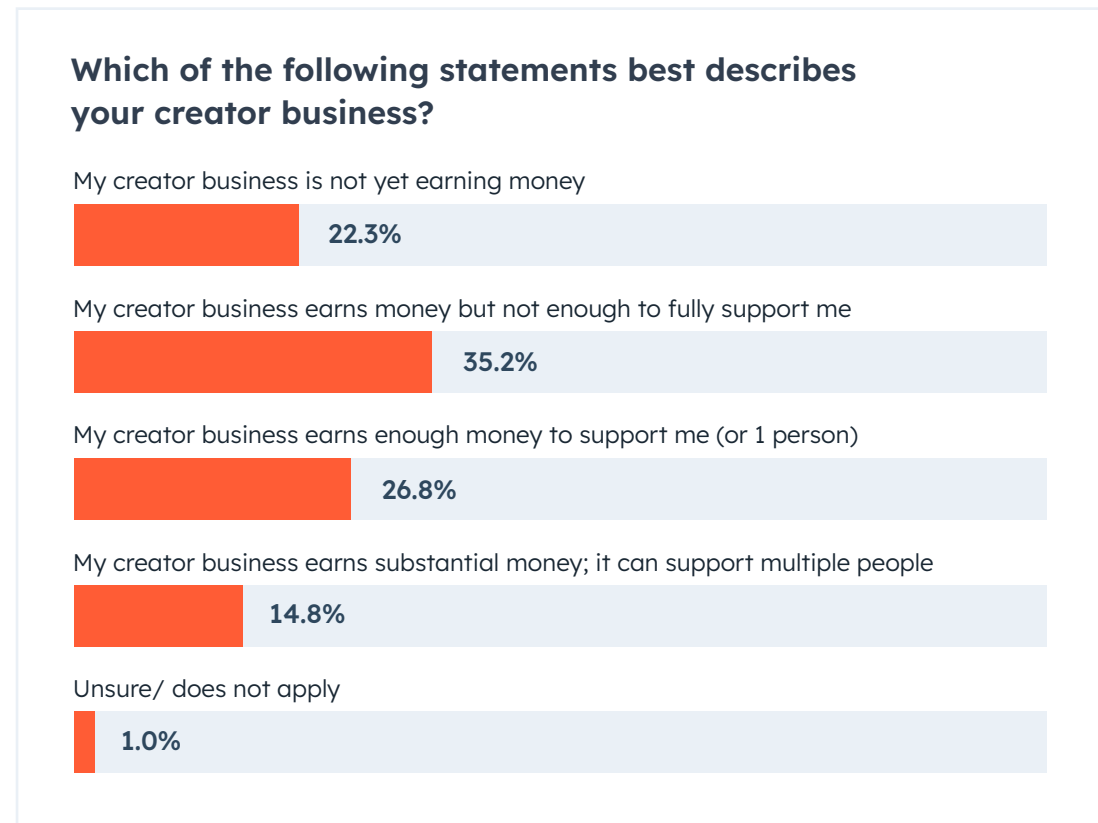
"Freedom of expression and passion to create something of my own. It's my own media channel."

"Freedom to do what I want, while helping create a place for others to succeed."

The Business of Content Creators

Being a professional content creator requires business management savvy and excellent organization. Creators negotiate contracts with clients, vet which brands to partner with, maintain their own personal brand and website in many cases, and keep up with a busy content creation and publishing schedule.

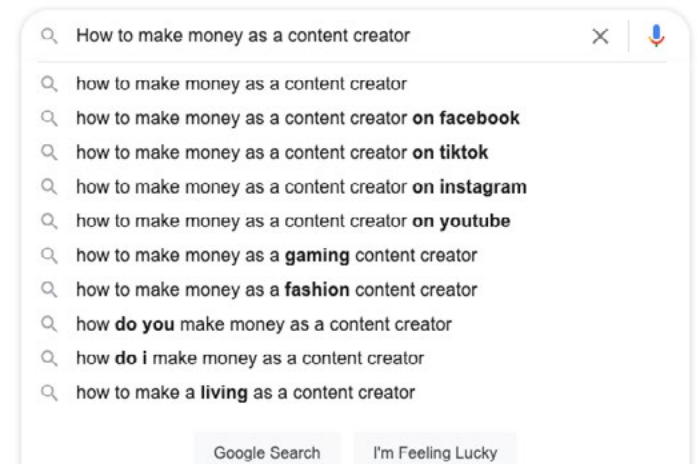
More than half of creators don't earn enough money to sustain themselves or their creator business. And most plan to keep their business small, either with a few employees or contractors, or as a solopreneur.



When will I start earning money as a content creator?

On average, it takes creators about six months to start bringing in revenue, and a little over a year to earn enough to support themselves as a full-time creator.

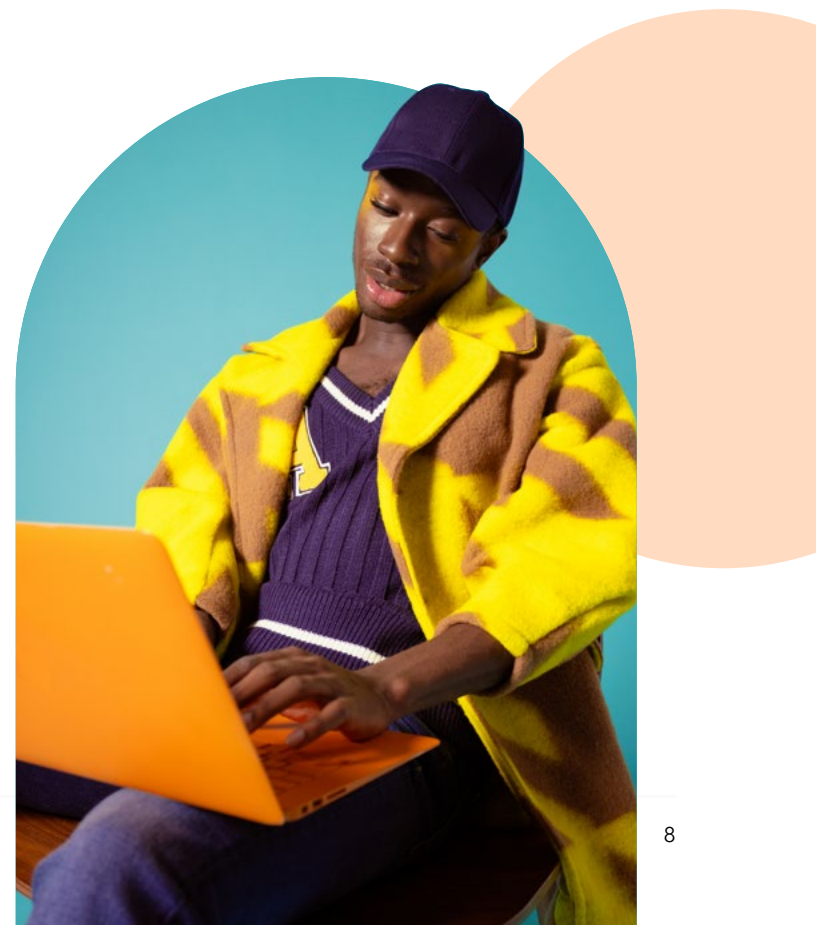
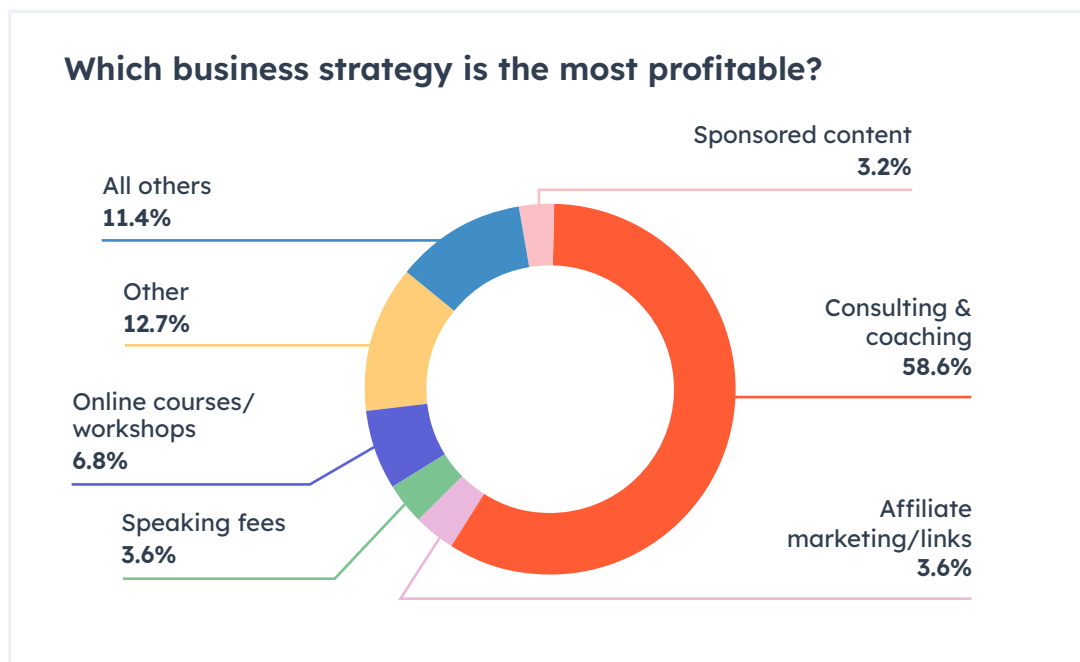
Later, we'll review how content creators kick start their businesses (hint: most people start while they work another full-time job) and how to set yourself up for financial success as a creative entrepreneur.



How to Succeed as a Content Creator

Creating is more than just a side hustle to most who do it: **64% of creators consider it a full-time job** while 35% consider it a side gig or hobby. Being a content creator requires a significant commitment of time and resources. Successful creators keep up with trends, publish timely, high-quality, produced content, and regularly publish to multiple social media platforms.

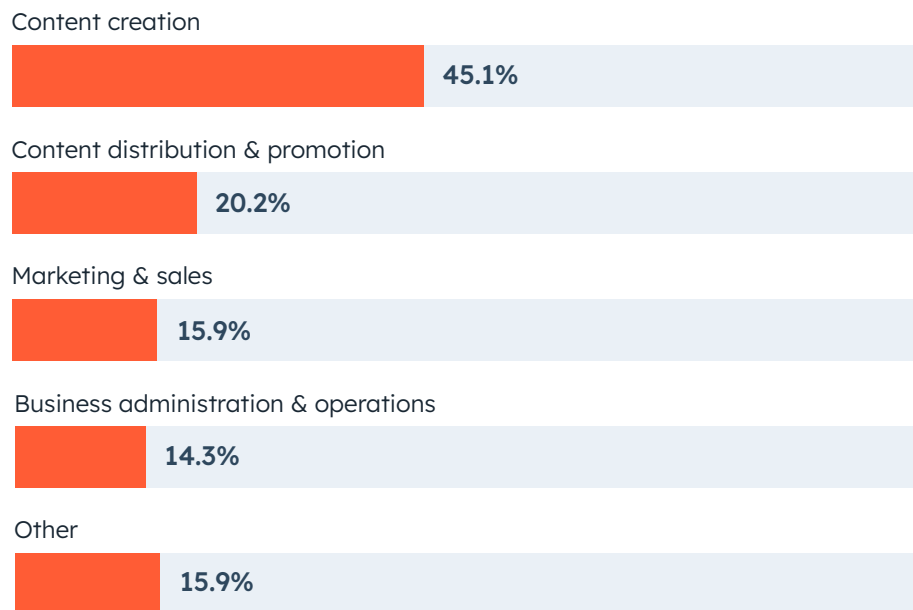
For full-timers, virtual assistants and project management software are key to building a sustainable business. As individual creators begin accumulating subscribers and an increased demand for content than they alone can handle, many turn to teams. **More than 50% of creators report that they want to grow their business to support a small or larger team.**



But growing a creative team isn't for everyone. Almost 40% of content creators want to grow as a solopreneur and aren't interested in hiring employees or contractors. And another 7% want to continue content creation as a hobby, rather than grow their business.

To grow either way, creators need to figure out their most profitable services, optimize their creative workflows, and focus their efforts on winning strategies. **The number one most profitable growth strategy for content creators is consulting and coaching.** But when it comes to business activities, creators spend most of their time [creating content](#) (as the name suggests). The most successful content entrepreneurs prioritize the highest value activities and automate those that are too time consuming.

How much of your time do you spend on these business-related activities each week?



Turning Passion into Revenue — How Creators Can Strategically Grow Their Businesses

To take a knack for connecting with others and sharing great content and monetize it, creators need to understand the value of their time. They need a clear picture of how much time it takes to run and grow their business and learn the best ways to partner with brands to make a steady stream of income. And operating a business is no small feat. As a brand, take the time to explore potential creator partners' business workflows and challenges, then find solutions to those problems before they arise.

Some ways that content creators earn money are:

- Sponsorships
- Consulting + coaching
- Public speaking
- Affiliate programs
- Advertisements
- Online courses + workshops
- Selling their content business

These range in terms of earning potential, time and effort needed to make money, and ability to scale. To grow a large enough audience to sell courses (or their entire business), creators first have to build a business, which requires budget, resources, know-how, and time.

The top challenges that creators are facing in 2022 are:

- 1 Making sure their content gets found
- 2 Monetizing their content
- 3 Publishing regularly

As a brand, if you're able to extend the reach of a campaign using your own channels, pay creators for their time and work, and support them with creative resources, you'll both benefit. Creators can grow their audience and business while introducing your brand to their network.

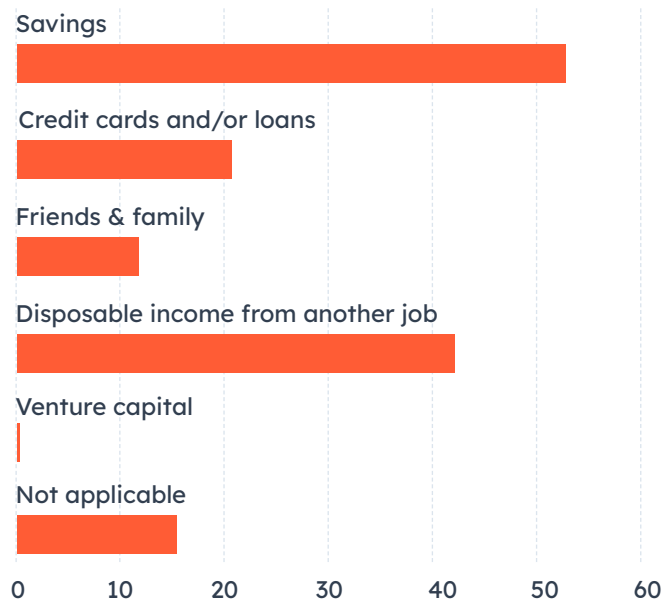


Starting + Growing a Creator Business

It takes strategic planning for creators to grow their business, achieve their goals, and scale their revenue. If creators are pursuing a full-time career as a content entrepreneur, they need to cover expenses like rent or mortgage payments, utilities, healthcare, content creator equipment and subscriptions, and other everyday overhead costs. **Most creators report that they have to earn over \$15,000 in annual revenue to meet their needs.**

But, how do they even get started? For many, creator businesses are born out of a side gig or hobby. Creators tend to use their savings or disposable income from another job to pay for startup and operations costs, with some (just over 20%) using credit cards or loans. Very few creators work with VCs to fund their businesses — likely due to the typically low overhead required to create videos, podcasts, articles, and other types of media content.

How do creators fund their businesses?



Since most content creator businesses are funded by savings and disposable income, it's important to write a detailed business plan before you get started. Map out financial projections, goals, and how you'll get there, and how to evaluate your progress along the way. Making it as a creator requires a lot of trial and error, testing, and flexibility — if something isn't working, try a new strategy.



Before you commit to the creator journey and invest significant time and resources into starting a creator business, decide if it's right for you. The [ring light market](#) has grown rapidly over the past few years with continued growth predicted through 2031. If that's any indication, **people want to get in on the creator economy.** They're buying content creator accessories and software, taking courses, and trying to make a living as a creative entrepreneur. But it takes time, effort, and more time and more effort to break through and build a business. Sixty-eight percent of creators aren't satisfied with how much money they're making, but 96% don't regret their decision to become a content creator.

96%

of creators don't regret their decision to become a content creator.

CHAPTER 03

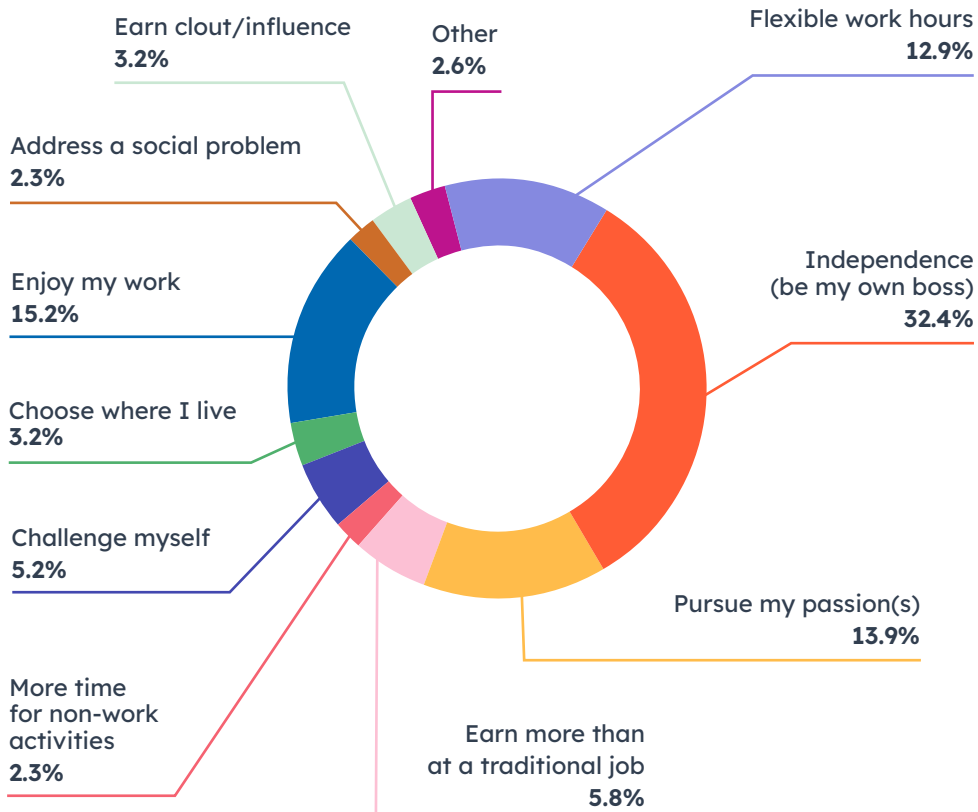
How Brands and Creators Are Helping Each Other Grow Through Partnerships

Creators have their choice of which brands to partner with. The creator is the one with the audience and the influence over that audience. If they don't believe in a brand's mission, or the relationship is difficult right from the start, they can find other organizations that are interested in a different campaign. Creators won't compromise their happiness for anything they don't agree with — most want to “be their own boss”, and it's what makes them appealing and successful.

The survey results showed that creators most often choose this lifestyle and career choice because they want their independence, so brands should involve creators from the very start of the campaign and consult them on strategic planning and any decisions that will impact their creative work. After independence, creators prioritize flexible work hours and enjoying their work, so brand teams should strive to make the experience creative and fun.

Dos and Don'ts of Working with Content Creators	
Do	Don't
Treat creators with the same respect that you do any other business entity	Treat creators like they're your employees or interns (cringe)
Provide detailed briefs and expectations	Micromanage during collaborations
Share payment details up front	Forget to pay creators or pay late
Prioritize creativity and fun	Be a pain to work with
Be efficient and conscious of the creator's time, and leverage asynchronous communication	Create unnecessary approval processes or set extra meetings

Which benefit of being a creator is most important to you?



Finding Influencers in Business + Marketing

The best brand-creator partnerships start with getting aligned on goals, audience, and brand mission. Without an authentic connection, you'll risk damaging your brand name and hurt the content creator's audience trust. For different brands, goals, and campaigns, you'll need to work with different folks.

As a refresher, micro and nano [influencers](#) tend to have under 1,000 followers, and mega influencers tend to have 1M+ followers. The budget, scope, and requirements for working with creators with different audience sizes can vary widely, so don't take your brand out of the running just because you have a smaller budget or a more niche vertical.

Eighty-four percent of business and marketing creators have under 10,000 followers or subscribers, and 39% have under 1,000. The higher the follower count, the higher the campaign price (most of the time).

Brand tip: Consider the reach that you want for your campaigns, and find an influencer (or a few) with the right audience size. For larger campaigns or [localized campaigns](#), consider multiple micro influencers over one mega influencer — it'll extend your reach.

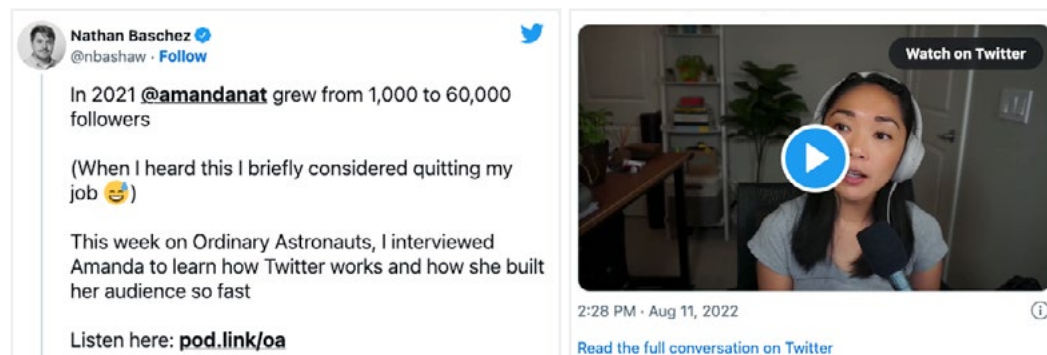
How do creators reach their target audience?



Business Creators Are Reaching New Audiences

The top channels business and marketing creators use to reach their target audience are social media platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn. [Gen Z uses TikTok as a search engine more often than Google](#), and social media is becoming the go-to place for education and growth.

For business audiences, the other most common channels influencers use are email newsletters, blogging (both a personal blog and guest blogging), online events, educational materials, and podcasts. The least popular channels are print media and paid promotions.



Source: [Twitter](#)

Start by looking at your program goals and seeing where your audience lives online, and experiment with a multi-platform project to start. Then, you can analyze which channel was the most effective and determine which initiative will become the main audience-driving platform for your program.

Tips for Brands: How to Scope a Creator Partnership

- 1 Vet creators in your space through an influencer marketing database, word of mouth, or audience suggestions.
- 2 Make sure the channels that the creator uses align with your marketing strategy and that the creator's voice, tone, and overall "vibe" will resonate with your audience.
- 3 Align on goals and expectations.
- 4 Show examples of similar campaigns that have worked with your target audience.
- 5 Agree on an influencer/content creator contract that details timelines, budget, promotional efforts, deliverables, approvals, copyright and content permissions, and publishing agreements.

Tips for Creators Working with Brands

The more you invest in your relationships with brand partners, the more successful your campaigns will be.

- Always follow any brand guidelines.
- Review the brand voice, tone, and target personas to understand how they align with your audience.
- Communicate early and often — many full-time creators work with project managers or virtual assistants to help them manage their brand partnerships.
- Agree on goals and deliverables before the start of the campaign.
- Don't be afraid to create great content for a brand you love, then reach out and share it with them — aim high!
- Review analytics after each campaign to improve your own content and your business growth.

CHAPTER 04

Building the Creator-Brand Community

Influencer marketing has evolved, and the creator economy is opening up opportunities for marketing and business leaders to work together to grow their respective communities.

The more creative, unique, and personal content creators get, the more engaged their fans are. The future is for individuals, and content creators are poised for serious growth in the business and marketing space in the months to years ahead.

What are you waiting for? Find a content creator partner, plan a fresh, new campaign, and have fun along the way. It is the future of marketing, after all.



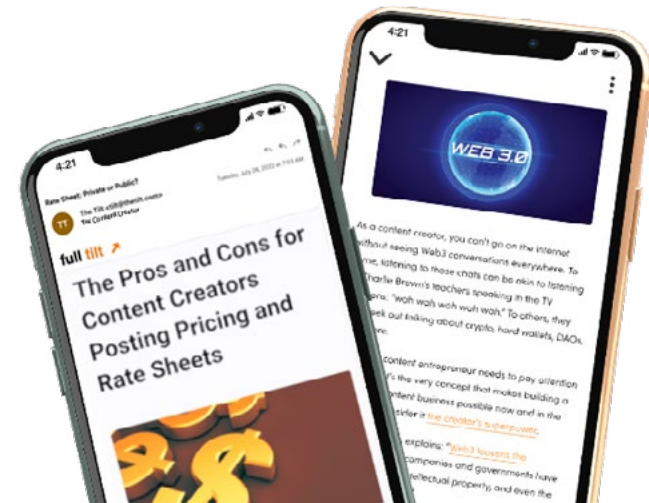
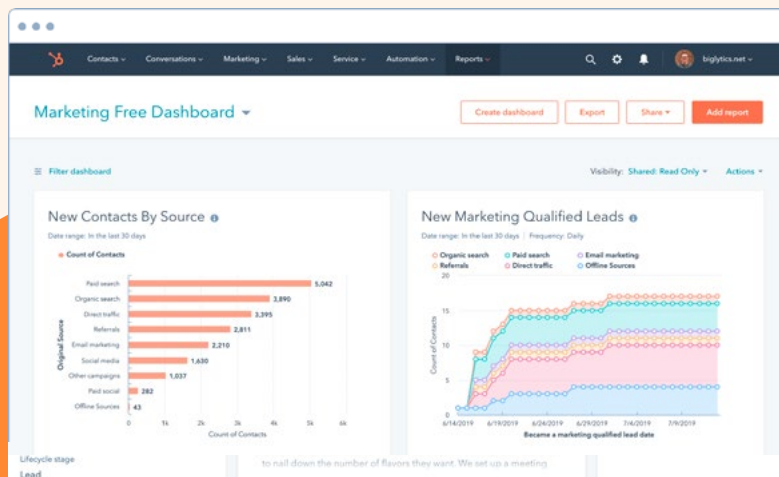
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