



CREATOR ERA VOL.2

THE NEW WAVE OF CREATOR
AND SOCIAL MARKETING TRENDS



GO

billion,dollar,boy

THE NEW WAVE OF CREATOR & SOCIAL TRENDS

We've been tracking the early signals that point to the creator and social trends shaping the future of the industry.

Each of these trends are rooted in a clear shift: as feeds become increasingly saturated, audiences are growing tired of disposable content and are gravitating toward storytelling, continuity, and genuine connection.

As creator influence continues to scale, these trends will shake up tried-and-tested creator marketing methods.



How do we spot the signals?

Behavioral Signals

How audiences consume and engage

Structural Signals

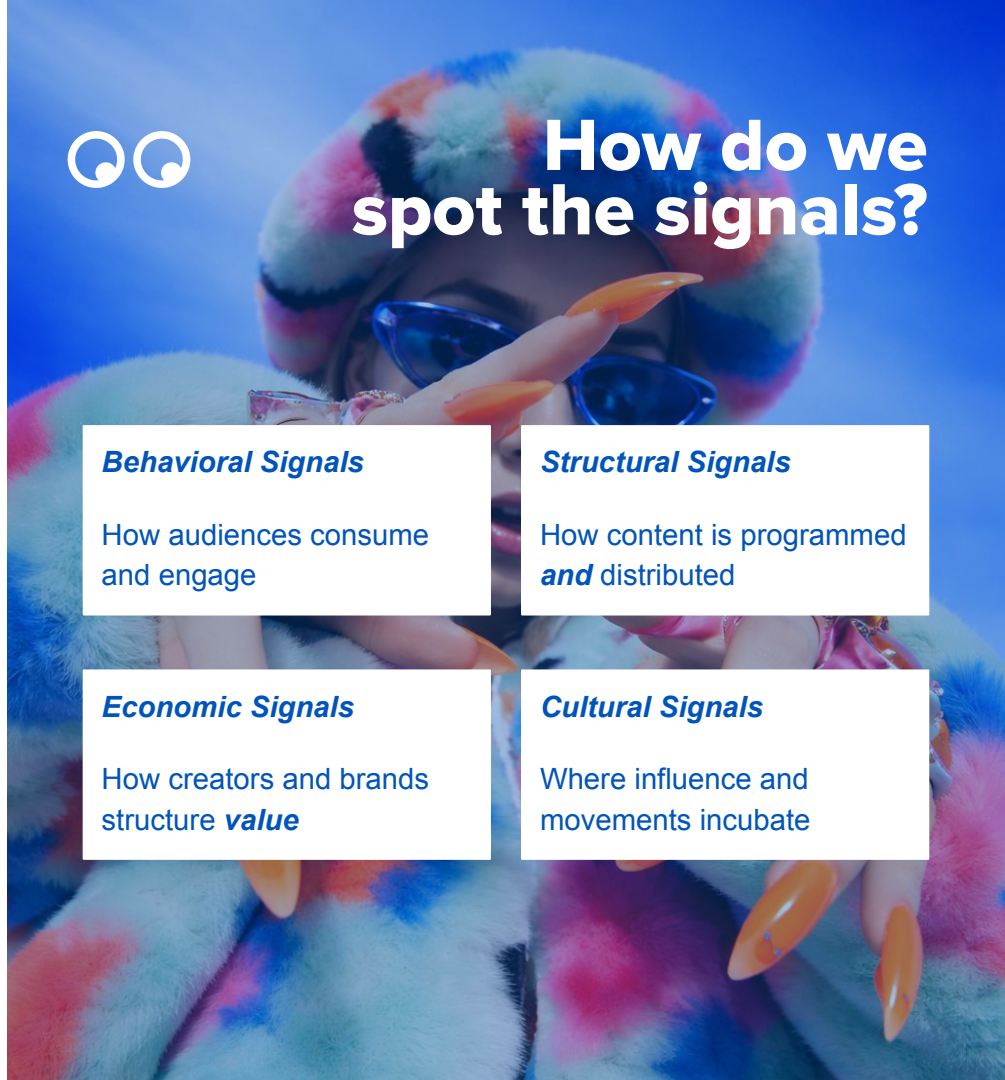
How content is programmed **and** distributed

Economic Signals

How creators and brands structure **value**

Cultural Signals

Where influence and movements incubate



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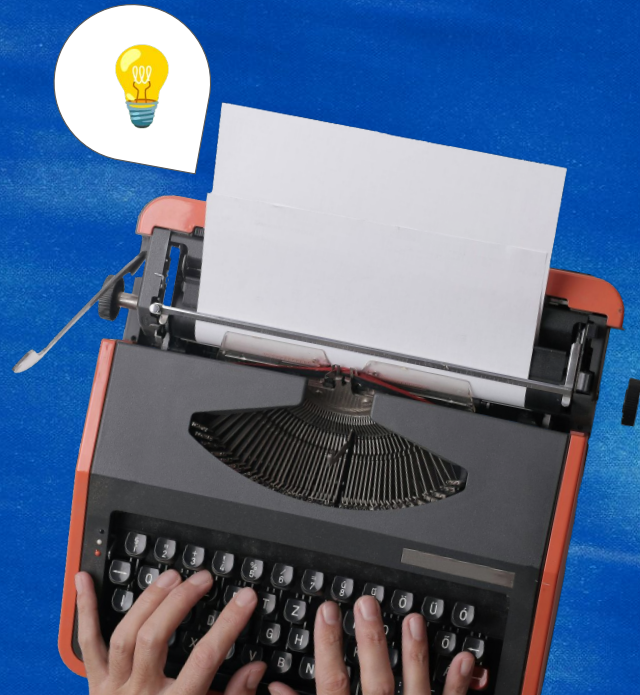
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Trends on The Horizon

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1

Episodic & Entertainment-Led Storytelling





Brands will continue to move beyond one-off creator posts toward fully scripted, soap-style, serialized creator content on TikTok and Instagram.

They'll leverage creators to build worlds, including unique characters, arcs, and cliffhangers that create emotional investment and sustained anticipation.

The anticipation built between episodes fosters community rituals, driving earned engagement and attention for the brands that are buying in.

Even platforms are responding to the trend, with Instagram launching Instagram for TV, an app designed to display Reels on connected TVs.



THE DATA

TikTok reports multi-part series get **3X HIGHER** complete rates than single videos - TikTok For Business 2024.

72%

of marketers are increasing long-form production.

41%

of Gen Z use social media primarily for funny or entertaining content.



EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Argos Arghaüs

Argos, the leading UK retailer, partnered with Billion Dollar Boy Group to launch Arghaüs, a mockumentary-style social series that turned everyday items into art installations in a stockroom-turned-gallery.

The comedy series drove more than 15M impressions, 90% positive sentiment, an 18% awareness increase and 228% increase in engagement on the retailer's social media channels.





EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

King Candy Crush Unwrapped

[King](#) partnered with Billion Dollar Boy Group to help launch it's annual Candy Unwrapped 2025 campaign.

The hero social format was a new competition series filmed on the NYC subway by [Tiffany Baira](#) - creator and host of the viral [Fallen Media](#) social series, [Love Train](#).

Merging popular man-on-the-street format with episodic storytelling, the campaign drove 11m impressions.



2 Out-of-Category Collaborations





Every brand is chasing the same influencers, the same audiences, the same trends. As saturation rises around traditional creator partnerships and content formats become more predictable, brands will increasingly look outside their categories and conventional talent pools for unexpected partnerships.

These unique creator-brand collisions don't just spark cultural talkability by feeling fresh and new, they earn attention and loyalty. Stepping outside the category also means stepping outside of the noise.

Today, brands are chasing the same influencers, the same audiences and the same trends. With category competition and creator costs rising, difference and uniqueness is becoming a premium asset.



THE DATA

Assets with high levels of ‘Showmanship’ (built for entertainment) saw a **39% HIGHER** lift in memory vs. assets with high levels of ‘Salesmanship’ (built for sales).

42%

of marketers report price inflation in creator partnerships due to scarcity in specific niches*.

*WARC Creator Economy Report 2025



EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Burberry Rocking Horse Bag

Burberry wanted to raise awareness of the brand's new Rocking Horse bag in unexpected, striking ways on social. They partnered with eight craft-led creators from a range of creative niches outside of fashion.

The campaign drove 19m impressions and 16m video plays.



BURBERRY





EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Lipton x Cruel Pancake: That Summer Feeling Campaign

We redefined Lipton Ice Tea's brand identity and engaged a new generation of consumers by creating an out-of-category partnership with creator-founded streetwear brand, Cruel Pancake.

The campaign drove 4.3m organic impressions and earned the heritage tea brand cultural credibility.



3 A Year of Sports Activations





From the Super Bowl and Winter Olympics in February to the first 48-team FIFA World Cup in June, 2026 presents an unprecedented concentration of global attention in sports. While audience attention will be high, so will competition for it.

Creators will be the essential filter for brands to navigate this noise, contextualizing the hype and ensuring investment delivers a real marketing outcome.

Expect to see more social briefs using creators to natively integrate brands into this sporting year.



THE DATA

90%

of fans engage with additional sports content beyond games.

93%

of 18-24 year-olds engage with sport on social media at least weekly.

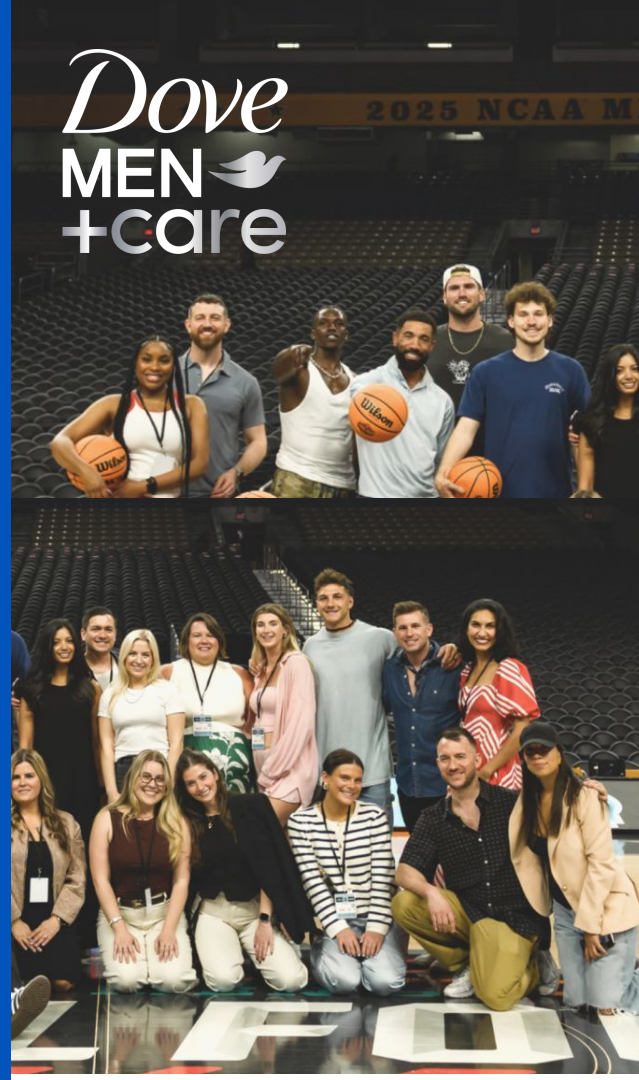


EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

DM+C March Madness: Final Four Weekend Experience

For March Madness Final Four Weekend, Dove Men+Care, the official personal care partner of the NCAA, partnered with Billion Dollar Boy Group to host 10 creators for a packed experience in San Antonio.

The campaign, which merged creator power with cultural relevance, resulted in 2x the expected amount of content, resulting in millions of impressions.





EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Mas+ by Messi

Mas+, Lionel Messi's global hydration drink partnered with Billion Dollar Boy Group for a creator-driven activation around the 1v1 World Crown Final in Miami. This was Messi's first creator collaboration for the brand.

The campaign drove 5.1m impressions and 480k engagements.

mas+
BY MESSI™



4 Equity Over Creator Fees





As competition intensifies, brands will increasingly explore deeper stakeholding opportunities to secure loyalty and long-term partnership - moving beyond purely transactional campaigns to more experimental partnership opportunities such as royalty or equity-based deals.

Creators are becoming co-architects of a brand's long-term growth, not just short-term campaign talent. They will seek partnerships that reflect their contributions to a brand's success.

Brands will stop viewing creators as media channels and start treating them as co-creation partners with shared values.



THE DATA

40%

of marketers lost creators to competitors within the last 12 months.

58%

of marketer say competition for the right creators has “significantly increased”*.

*WARC, Creator Economy Report 2025



EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Poppi

Business-minded Alix Earle took an equity stake in Poppi and supported the brand through ongoing creator-led moments, from Coachella content and RushTok videos to a prime-time Super Bowl commercial.

The partnership proved to be a win-win. As long-term creator partner, Earle's genuine affinity for the brand came through in the content she created. And when Poppi sold for nearly \$2B in 2025, her decision to take equity over one-off posts clearly paid off.





EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

OWM

New businesses are popping up to support this shift. One platform, [OWM](#), is looking to disrupt traditional brand-creator relationships by offering creators equity partnerships rather than one-off deals.

Acting as a matchmaker between creators and brands, OWM is built on the idea that when creators have skin in the game, the partnerships last longer and feel more authentic.

WHAT IS OWM



INFLUENCE FOR EQUITY

Test drive the most advanced AI matching engine and see who influences your customers.

Enter your company website or social link

FIND CREATORS





5 IRL is Making a Comeback



As follower counts become less indicative of actual reach, and consumers demand more from the brands they choose to pay attention to, brands are incrementally investing in high-touch in-person experiences to bridge the gap.

Digital burnout and rising demand for more mindful, human-centered connection have also fuelled the resurgence of in-person community building from: creator meetups and open-invite brand events to consumer-first experiences.

The priority will shift to deep community investment - using in-person moments to secure the brand advocacy and earned media that algorithms alone can't deliver. While also giving creators more ownership of their audiences.

Expect to see consumer-first experiences sitting at the heart of brand worlds and social briefs.



THE DATA

41%

of US consumers attended an in-person influencer event in the past year.

67%

are open to attending one in the future.



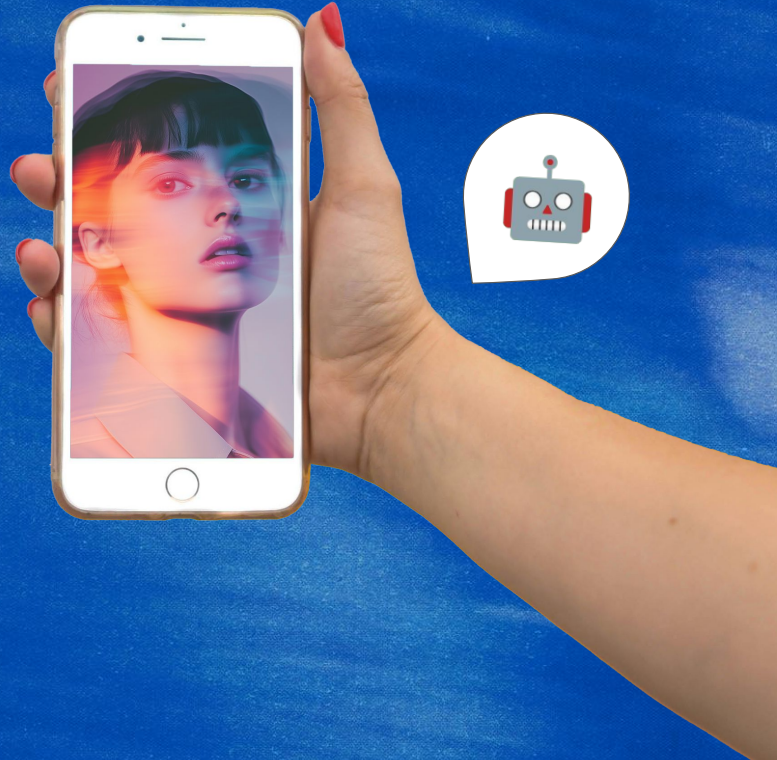
EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Career development creator [Colin Rocker](#)'s professional meetup club, [for the firsts](#), brings together individuals who are the first in their families to pursue their careers, creating a space for networking and connection. Each event, which take place in NYC, draw up to 70 attendees.

On the other hand, the British YouTube group the Sidemen hosted a charity soccer match at Wembley Stadium that [attracted 90,000 in-person attendees](#), drew over 14 million viewers on YouTube, and ultimately raised £4.7 million (approximately \$6.3 million). This shows creators of all sizes are launching and hosting community-led events and seeing value from this format.



6 The Rise of AI-Resistant Content





The novelty of AI has faded, and audiences are increasingly rejecting mass produced AI-generated content that feels automated, repetitive, or emotionally thin.

In response, brands will look to "strategic humanism" to reclaim attention.

By doubling down on traditional production methods and unpolished storytelling, marketers are recalibrating their output to prioritize the tactile craft and human connection that drives cut-through, serving as a welcome antidote to the sameness of AI synthesis.

The mandate for brands is clear: AI can scale output, but only human creativity sustains trust, relevance, and craft. Find out how AI is reshaping the creator economy in our [research report](#).



THE DATA

26%

Just one in four consumers now prefer generative AI creator content to traditional creator content - down from 60% in 2023.

2 IN 5

consumers agree that AI has the ability to improve the quality and diversity of creator content when used intentionally.



EVIDENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Merit

2025 was the year of the clean girl aesthetic, but a rejection of overly polished and AI-generated content is accelerating a resurgence in the messy girl aesthetic in 2026. Consumers are yearning for content that feels real - warts and all.

Beauty brand, Merit, has adopted this trend serving up rebellion with a dash of chaos, with its [close-up shots](#) of used and bruised products. Imperfect, yes. Chaotic, tick. Relatable and eye-catching? 100%.

Expect more. Think Brat Summer energy, Kim Kardashian's lo-fi vlogs, and Rachel Sennott glamorizing messy-girl.



TRENDS ON THE HORIZON



The Rise of UGC Content Series

Expect more man-on-the-street style formats, including subway interviews, street chats, and quickfire check-ins.



So what's your take?

* SubwayTakes with Kareem Rahma

Brands Embrace The Unserious

More brands are leaning into bizarre, chaotic storytelling. Think Coors Light's "Case of the Monday," Loewe's weirdcore energy, and Liquid Death's unapologetic chaos. Quirky content stands out in saturated feeds.



* Loewe's FW22 women's runway collection photographed by David Sims



LET'S CHAT

Explore the creator economy with us.

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