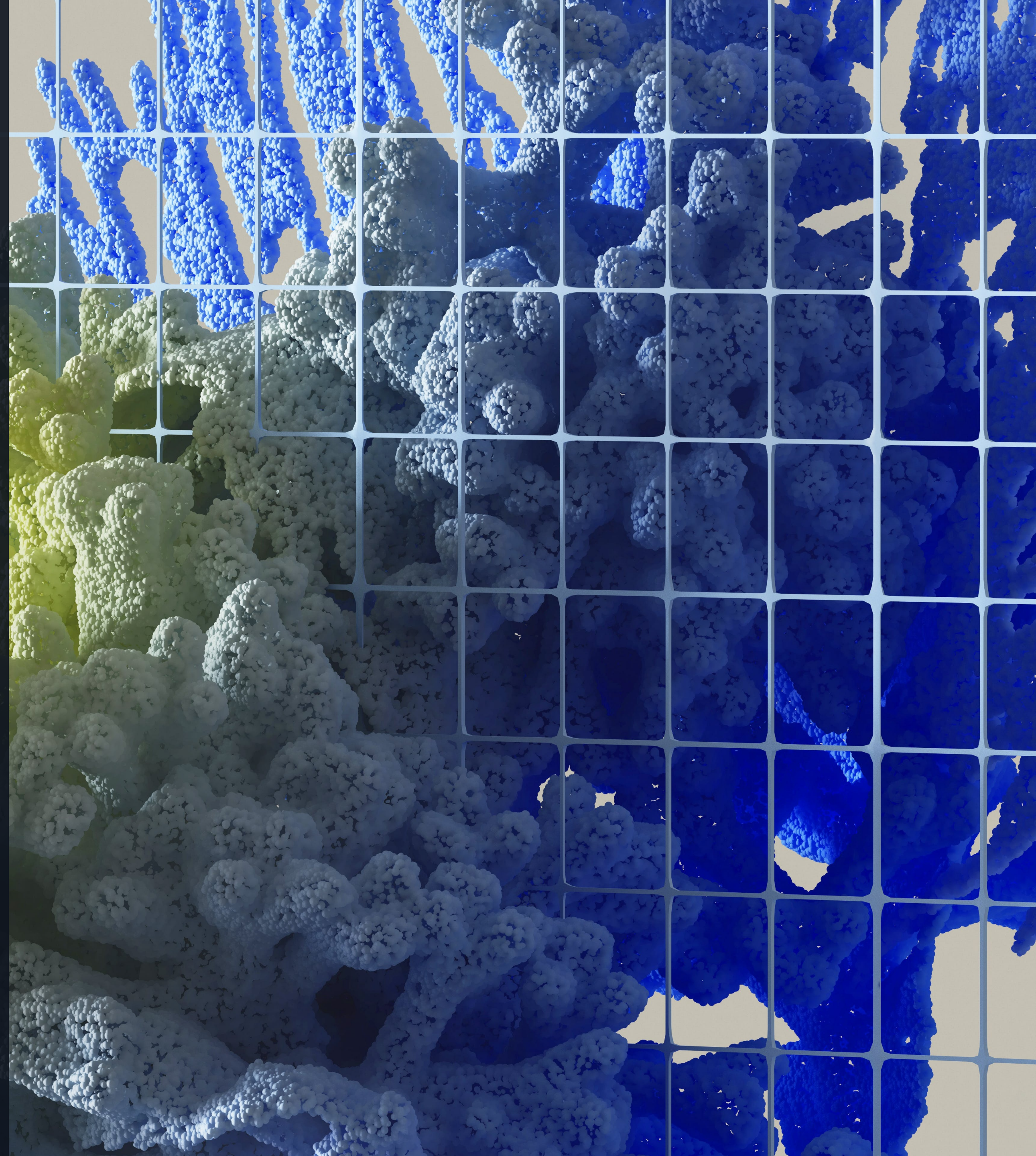


WHITEPAPER

LOOKING AHEAD:
**TRENDS SHAPING THE CREATOR
ECONOMY IN 2024**



DISRUPT 2023





INTRO

AI: CREATIVITY OVER
CHARISMA

THE DECLINE OF
TRADITIONAL INFLUENCER
CULTURE

GOOGLE SGE OFFERS
CREATORS SEARCH
SUCCESS

B2B CREATORS TAKE
CENTRE STAGE

CREATORS MOVE TO THE
MAINSTREAM

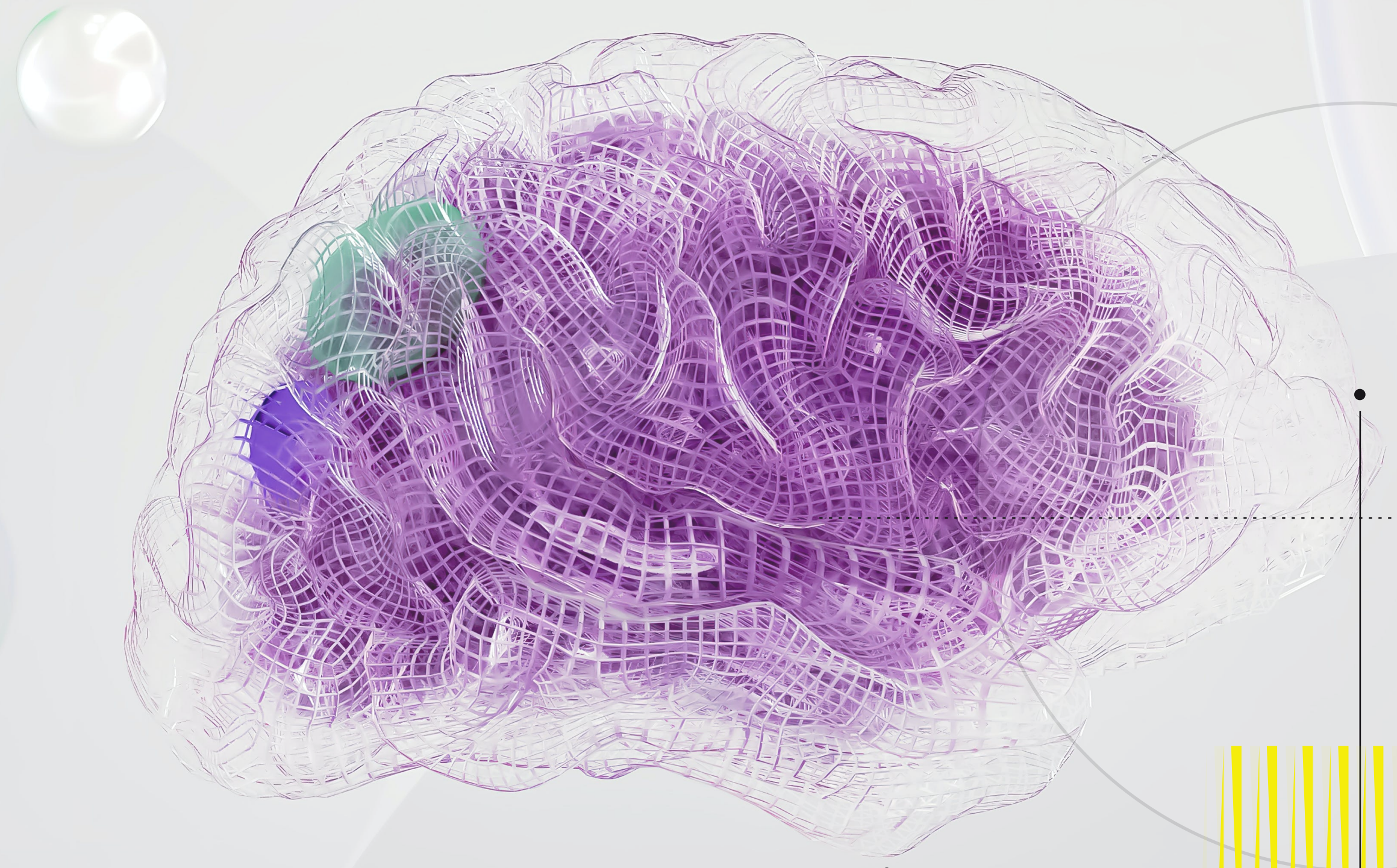
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INTRO

As we bid farewell to 2023 in the world of influencers and social media, the creator economy has continued to evolve to be **bigger and stronger than ever**, now valued at a whopping **\$250bn** (with no signs of slowing down). Throughout the year we've seen new trends, new creators and even new social platforms emerge to the centre stage. From "Tube Girl" to "Girl Dinner", AI to Threads, There's been a lot to unpack and enjoy over the last 12 months.

Though the landscape of our industry is ever-changing and can be difficult to predict, we at **Disrupt** are looking ahead to **2024**, at what trends we think we will see not only shape but dominate our digital feeds over the next year.



'20 TRENDI

AI: CREATIVITY OVER CHARISMA

Perhaps the hottest topic of 2023 was the **emergence of AI**, more specifically, generative AI. Over the last year, we've witnessed this new technology be adopted across all industries, transforming the way we work, but nowhere are we seeing this faster than across content and influencer marketing. The creator economy has always been a rapidly evolving industry, changing structurally every year or two with the rise of new formats like stories, shorts, and reels, and with new platforms emerging regularly.



When it comes to AI's role in influencer marketing, it has evolved from merely facilitating processes to actively **shaping the landscape**. Today, it is integral to content creation, audience engagement, data analysis, and even the creation of influencers themselves – AI influencers.

This will escalate at an even more rapid pace across **2024**. AI is shrinking the barriers between what you can imagine and what you can create, and as a result, influencer marketing is poised to become even more valuable as AI-generated content upends the media landscape.



AI: CREATIVITY OVER CHARISMA

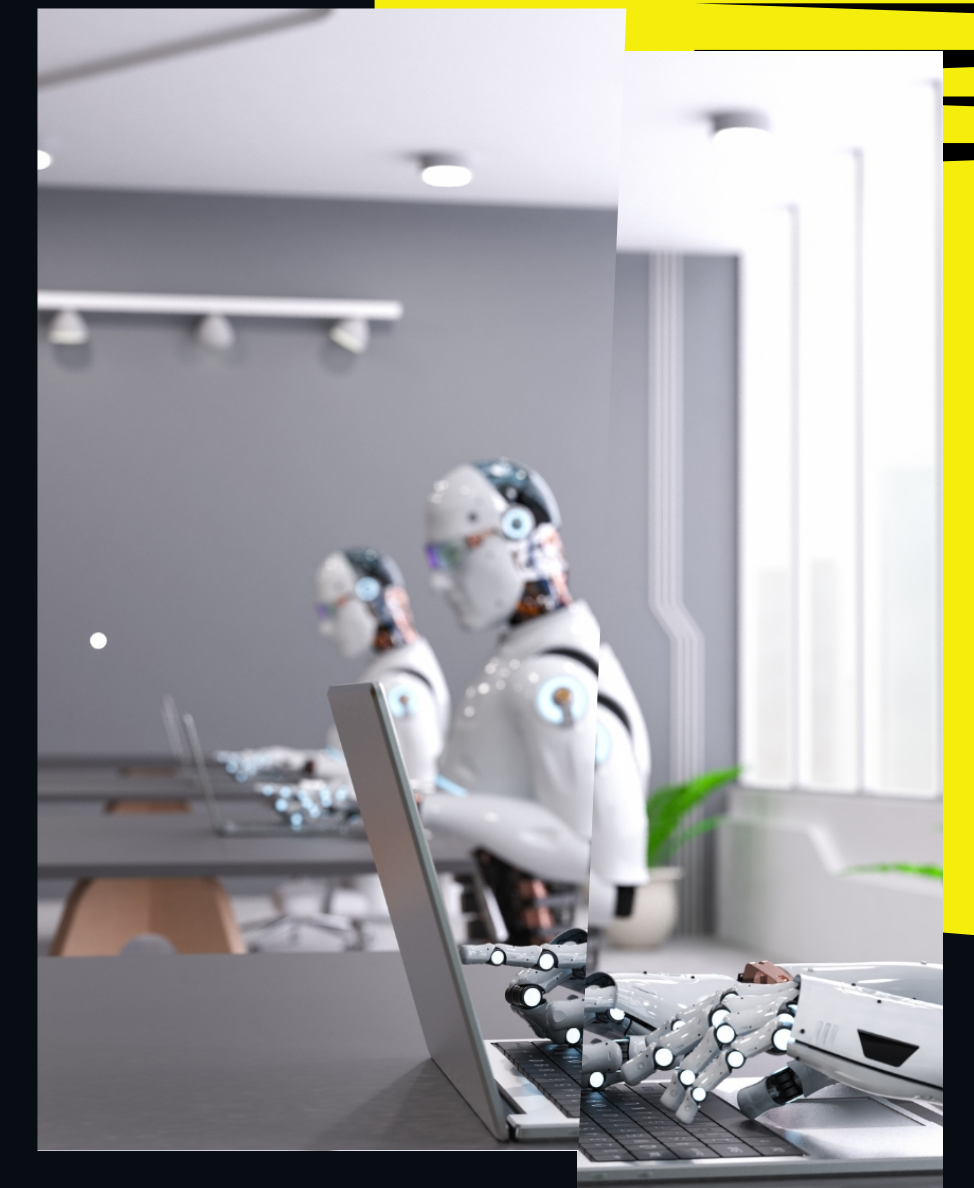
STEVIE JOHNSON

Creators are constantly battling burnout and searching for inspiration to keep up with the never-ending need for new content. But now it has never been easier for creators to bridge the gap between imagination and creation.

Generative AI offers a new set of tools for creators to enhance their creative process and open up new avenues for exploration and innovation. From content generation to inspiration, and even editing and refinement, AI is a creative aid changing the way we work in our industry.

We've started to see it already, with a **YouGov survey in 2023** revealing **92%** of current creators and **66%** of aspiring creators are familiar with AI, with **62** and **68%** respectively already using it in their content creation process. Additionally, **84%** of influencers are likely to use AI if it saves time or money, and **86%** if it positively impacts the creative process.

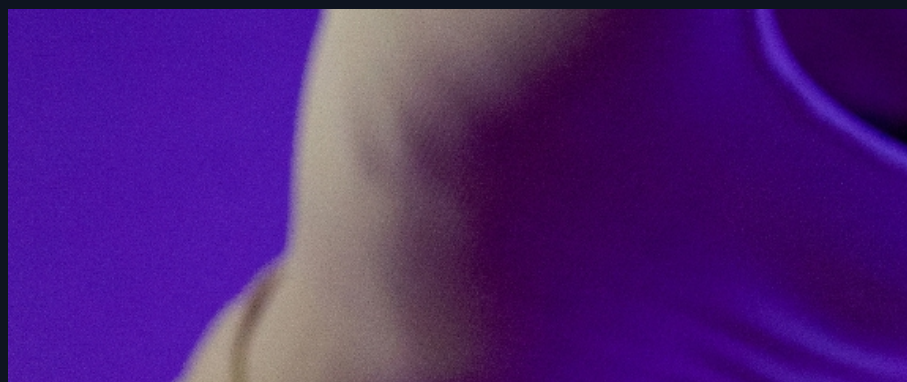
Whilst AI-generated content can be highly effective in influencer marketing and brand partnerships, it is important to remember that human input is still critical to creating effective content. All important authenticity and first-person storytelling will remain integral across 2024 and beyond. By combining the strengths of AI and human creativity and intuition, brands can create highly personalised and engaging content that resonates with their target audience and builds stronger relationships with their customers.



THE DECLINE OF TRADITIONAL INFLUENCER CULTURE

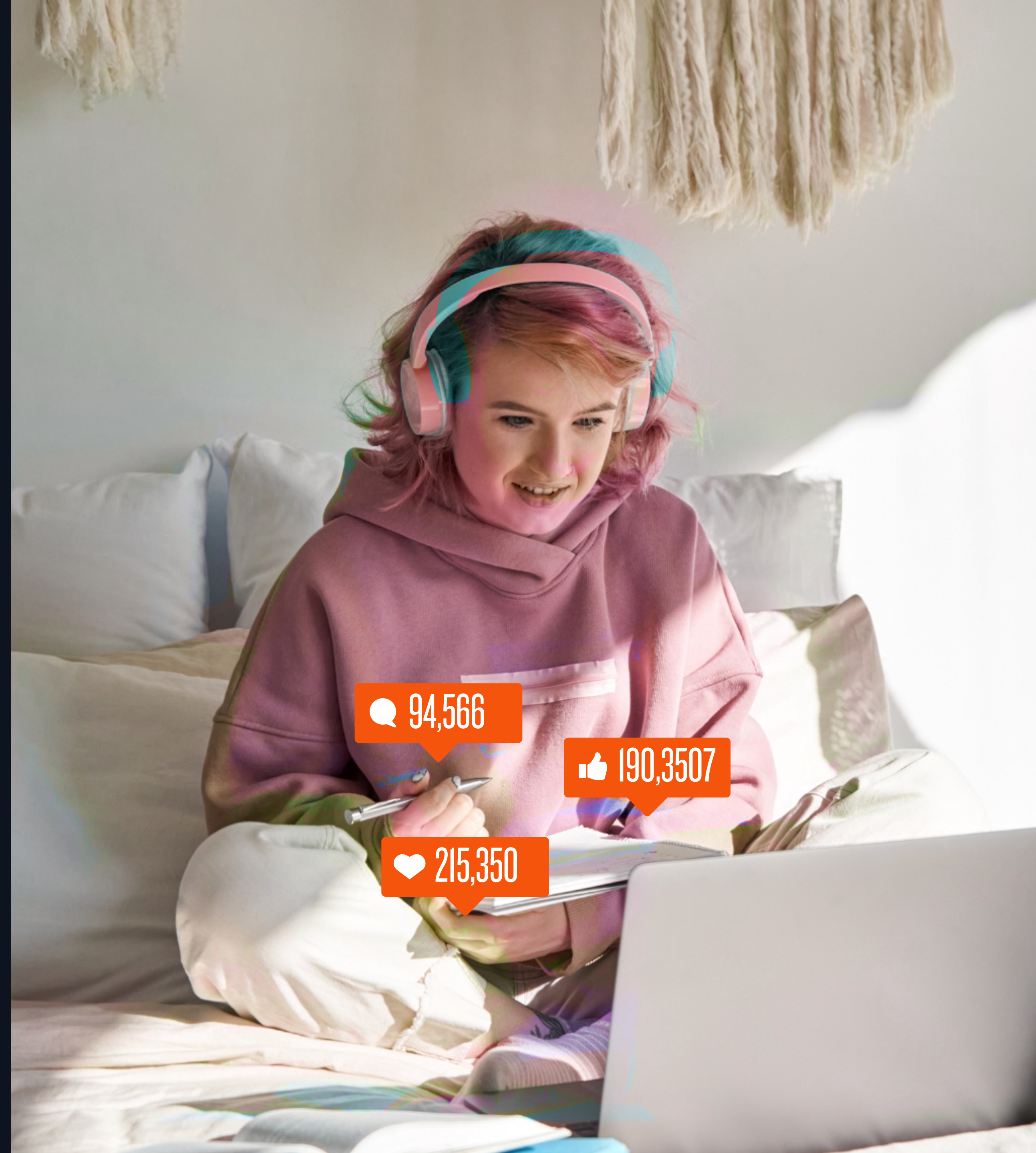
We've seen headlines such as, 'The Death of Influencers' and 'The Era of Influencers is over' for quite a while now. Yet, when we open our social media, there are more sponsored posts and paid partnerships than ever before.

At Disrupt, we believe that the issue doesn't lie with influencers themselves but with the traditional **'influencer culture'** that has dominated the landscape. This era of "copy and paste" influencers celebrating excess wealth, unattainable norms and flooding feeds with generic and out-of-place brand advertisements, is fading fast.



In its place, we're witnessing a shift towards a more authentic and relatable form of creator marketing. This shift is driven by a growing consumer demand for relatability, transparency and genuine connections.

This trend is evident with Gen-Z, who are more discerning and vocal about the impact of content on their **mental health**. They are gravitating towards creators who share their experiences, struggles, and triumphs, creating a more genuine and inclusive online community.



THE DECLINE OF TRADITIONAL INFLUENCER CULTURE

The rise of TikTok and the shift from image-based content to more entertaining short-form video formats have further accelerated this. As audiences demand more engaging and authentic content, micro-influencers and niche content creators are quickly **rising to the top**. This shift from influencer to creator has welcomed new opportunities for individuals who don't fit the blueprint of an 'original influencer' and as such, we now have a far richer, well-represented and varied influencer landscape that gives space to a vast range of personalities, cultures and lifestyles.

These creators possess a closer connection with their audience, fostering genuine engagement and driving meaningful brand impact. Their ability to tailor their content to specific interests and communities makes them extremely valuable to brands seeking deeper engagement with their target audiences.

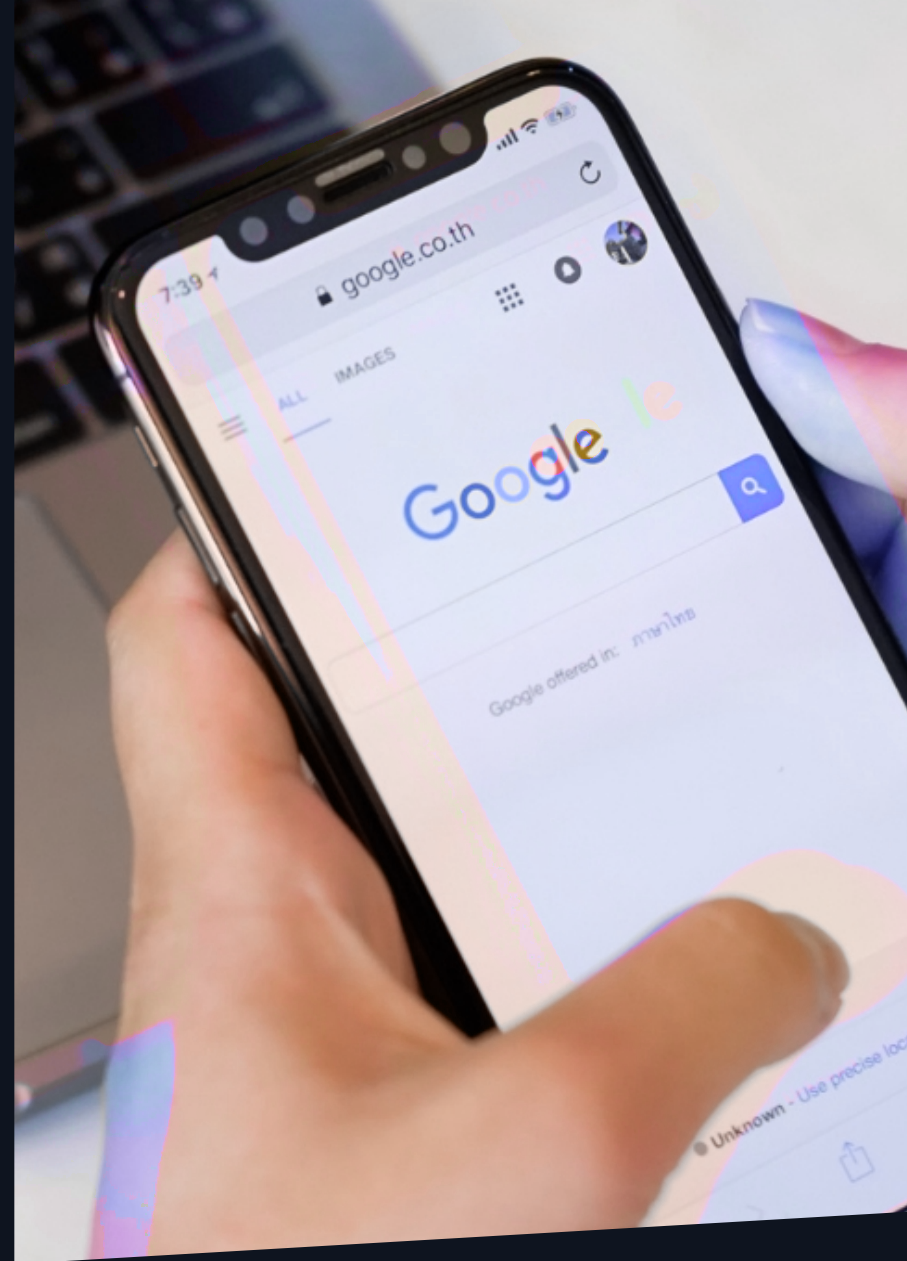
In **2024**, we anticipate this trend to ramp up, with brands across all verticals embracing authenticity and relatability in their influencer marketing strategies. Traditional influencer culture, with its emphasis on perfection and unrealistic ideals, will continue to decline, giving way to a more diverse and authentic landscape of creator-led influencer marketing.



GOOGLE SGE OFFERS CREATORS SEARCH SUCCESS

While we've already touched on the huge impact AI is going to have on creators next year, **Google's Search Generative Experience (SGE)** is set to be a game changer for the creator economy. This new AI has the potential to revolutionise the way we search, and in turn, will significantly impact the way both brands and creators are able to connect with their target audiences and grow their businesses.

SGE's ability to personalise search results and present more relevant content is expected to boost the visibility of creators significantly.



Over **57%** of internet users rely on Google Search as their primary search engine (for now), giving SGE huge reach potential. With **85%** of consumers deeming personalised search results more useful and **45%** expressing a higher likelihood to click on personalised results, the impact of tailored content is undeniable. Ultimately, SGE will allow creators the opportunity to tap into a vast, engaged audience of potential viewers, followers and purchasers with their content featuring more prominently in search results.



GOOGLE SGE OFFERS CREATORS SEARCH SUCCESS

As mentioned in Trend 1, SGE will allow creators to showcase their creativity and narratives in new ways. This AI's ability to seamlessly blend text, images, videos, and interactive elements within a search result will be like nothing we've seen before.



JAMES RIGBY

Found's Head of Paid Performance, James Rigby, says:

*"We've already begun to see Google's search algorithm showcase content from YouTube and TikTok, but with the introduction of SGE (AI Search), this volume could explode in **2024** and really transform the Content Creator space.*

SGE is an immersive search experience that utilises prompts and results to guide the searcher to where they want to be. From a creator perspective, this is massively exciting as it represents an opportunity to seamlessly infiltrate SERPs and become an integral part of intent-led browsing in a way that has just never been possible before."

We believe Google SGE will be a transformative force in the creator economy in 2024. Its ability to enhance discovery to wider audiences, diversify content formats within SERPs, and introduce new monetisation opportunities will empower brands and creators to reach new heights of success and redefine the way they connect with their audiences. Brands that work with creators who embrace SGE's potential and adapt their content creation strategies accordingly will be well-positioned for search success when it becomes widely available.



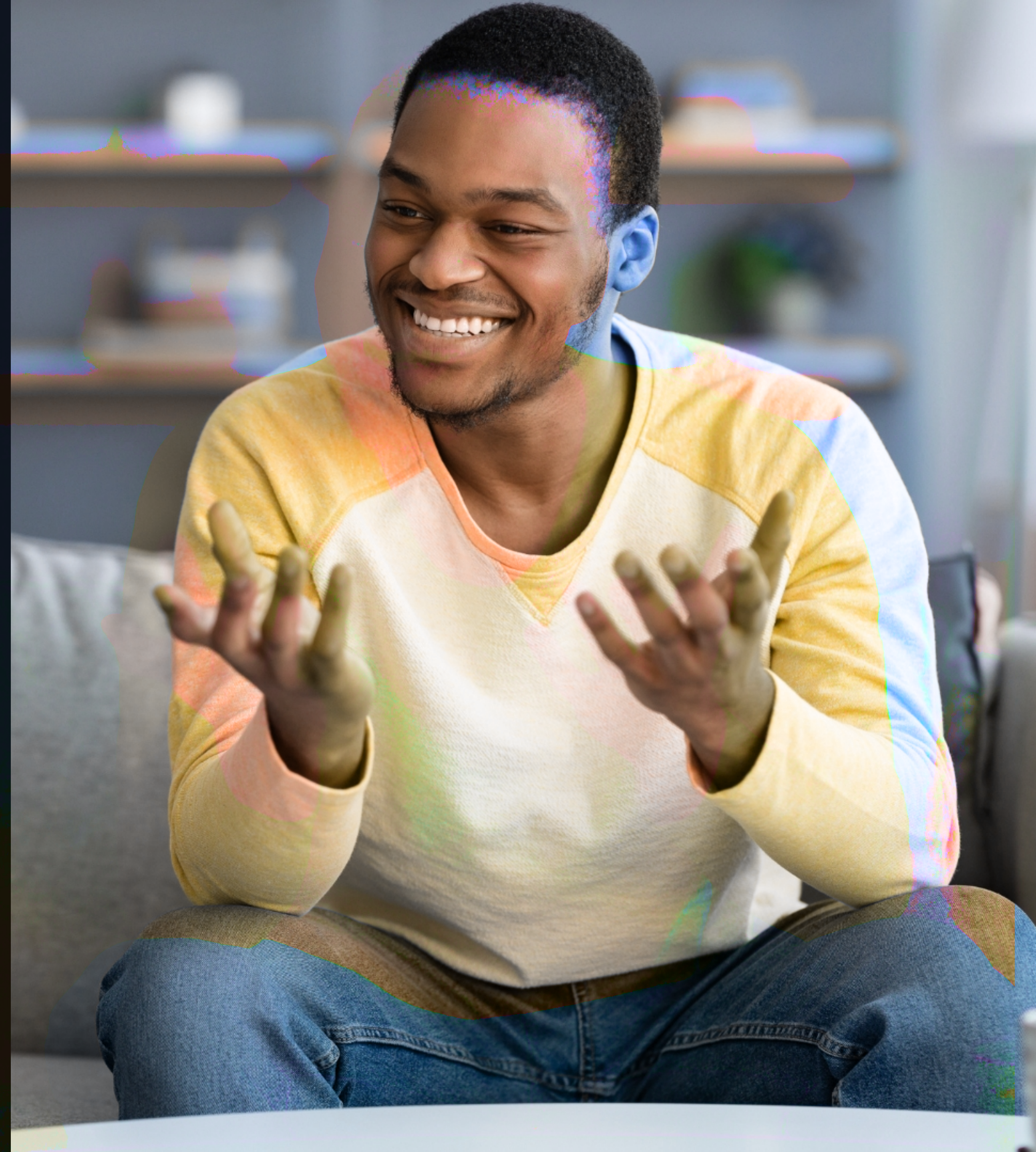
B2B CREATORS TAKE CENTRE STAGE

Often overlooked in the discussion of the creator economy, B2B influencers are carving out a niche as powerful players in driving full-funnel activity for brands. Unlike their B2C counterparts, B2B creators are not just social media personalities; they are industry experts, thought leaders, and trusted voices within their respective industries.

While Gen-Z are often thought of as being **the** young generation, they're growing up. They are now a big part of the workforce and fueling the demand for B2B influencers. We know that this demographic's purchasing decisions are guided and influenced by authentic content, and B2B influencers align perfectly with this.



While B2C and B2B creators share many similarities, a key distinction lies in their motivations. Unlike B2C influencers, who may be perceived as primarily driven by monetary gain, B2B influencers are primarily motivated by a **genuine passion** for their industries and a desire to share their knowledge. These influencers typically build their audiences by creating content within their specific business sphere before attaining 'influencer' status. This authenticity fosters trust, particularly with decision-makers seeking solutions to their business challenges.



B2B CREATORS TAKE CENTRE STAGE

STEVIE JOHNSON

The **tech vertical** remains a significant focus for B2B influencers, as they effectively communicate the benefits of new technologies, educate businesses on their applications, and even conduct hands-on demonstrations, but this is rapidly expanding. Their role extends beyond traditional online social media campaigns. B2B creators are able to offer 'in-person' influencing, which can be in the form of company introductions, talks and webinars, and even participation in product development processes. These personalised interactions enhance engagement and build deeper connections.

As B2B influencer marketing continues to grow and become more mainstream in **2024**, these tastemakers will play an increasingly pivotal role in shaping the way B2B businesses connect with their target audiences, driving innovation, and fostering growth.



CREATORS MOVE TO THE MAINSTREAM

In 2023 we witnessed a shift in the way influencers are collaborating with brands, with digital creators transcending social media and crossing over into the mainstream.

Don't get us wrong, there have been teasers of this in previous years, like **Zoella** and **Alfie Deyes** getting waxed at Madame Tussauds (not there anymore, sadly) and **Joe Sugg** and **Saffron Barker** competing on Strictly Come Dancing.



More recently we saw YouTuber, **Nella Rose**, enter the jungle for I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here and **'Tube Girl' Sabrina Bahsoon** catapulting to fame and becoming the face of Hugo Boss at Milan Fashion Week. Digital creators are stepping into the limelight and getting the opportunity to be seen by broader audiences they previously wouldn't have been exposed to.

Huge brands are now seeking these types of creators to be the face of their campaigns, as they are more relatable than traditional celebrities and resonate more with Gen-Z.



CREATORS MOVE TO THE MAINSTREAM

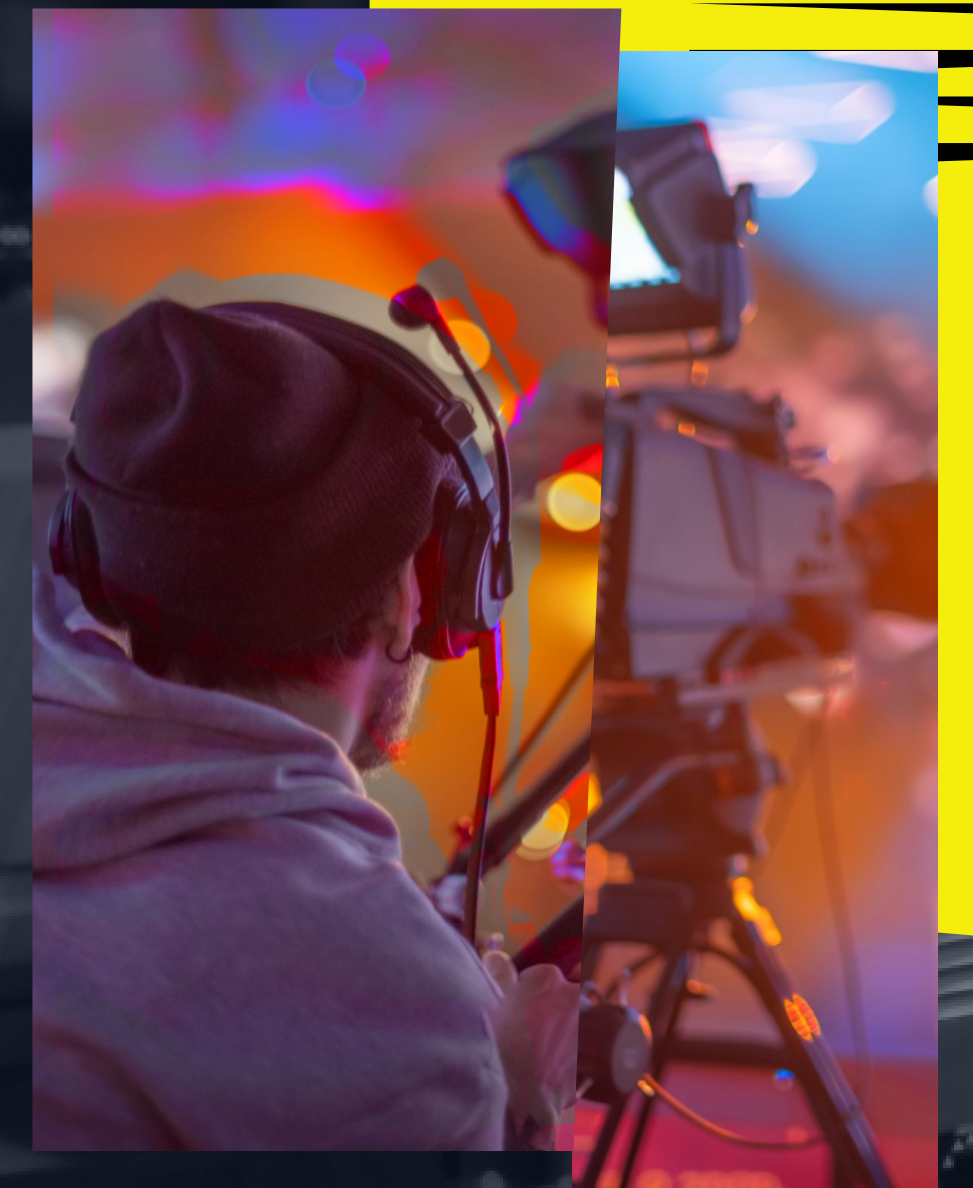
HANNAH TURNER

The bigger a creator gets, the more they want from a brand partnership. They're seeking longevity and broader relationships with brands, to become an ambassador and not just do the odd campaign. Traditional media like television, OOH and radio are what can skyrocket their stardom.

Perhaps one of the most exciting we saw in 2023 was **GKBarry's** partnership with KFC. Grace Beverley, who has over 3m followers on TikTok, starred in KFC's ad campaign for the brand-new Japanese-inspired Teriyaki Burger, playfully named the 'Barryaki burger.' From TV spots to OOH ads across the country, KFC made a bold move partnering with a TikToker for this campaign, but Grace's down-to-earth, straight-talking nature and humour shone through, making the ad campaign a perfect fit.

In **2024**, we anticipate a surge of influencers crossing over into mainstream media, across a wide range of industries, from fashion and technology to beauty and home. 72% of Gen Z are more likely to engage with content that features influencers over traditional celebrities, so it makes sense for brands to incorporate creators into their mainstream campaigns. We believe this is a natural step in the ever-evolving creator economy, as it fosters mutual benefits between both the brand and the creator.

ON AIR



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