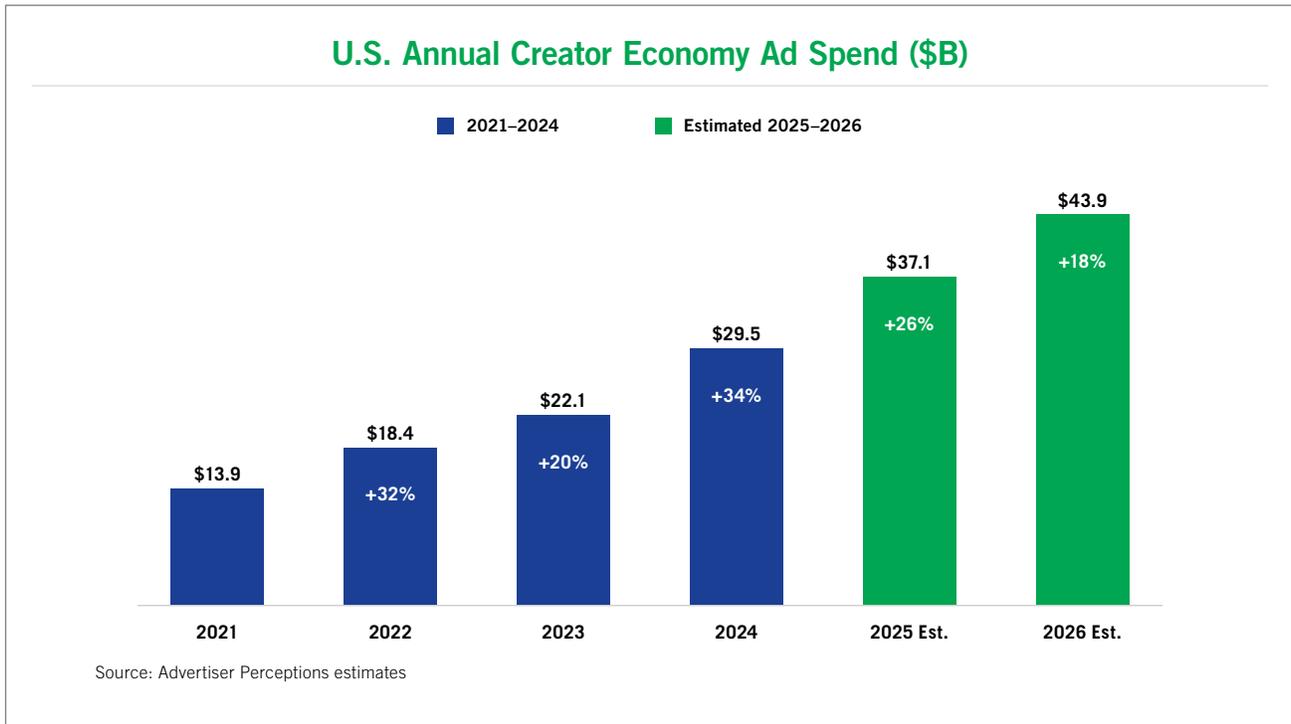


BACKGROUND

Influencer/creator marketing continues to grow. According to the [IAB's 2025 Creator Economy Ad Spend & Strategy Report](#), U.S. creator ad spend was projected to reach \$37 billion in 2025, up 26 percent year over year and nearly four times faster than the media industry's overall growth. Furthermore, 18 percent growth is expected in 2026.



See the appendix for a breakdown by the four different types of creator ad spend.

For the first time, the ANA, working with [JLB + Partners](#), has conducted a comprehensive study on influencer marketing agency compensation. This report also covers key KPIs and in-housing. Our work here was initiated by the following:

- In early 2025, the ANA launched a working group with the purpose to identify areas of waste in influencer marketing and then remedies to reduce that waste and optimize spending. That working group has covered areas including selecting influencers, vetting influencers, models for influencer management, governance/compliance, and measurement. Influencer marketing agency compensation emerged as a significant and ongoing challenge for marketers and an opportunity for additional learning, given widespread concerns around transparency, consistency, and alignment to performance. A full report from this working group is expected later in the first half of 2026.

BACKGROUND

- In November 2025, the ANA published the [Trends in Agency Compensation Report, 19th edition](#). For more than 50 years, the ANA has fielded this unique and comprehensive agency compensation trend survey among client-side marketers, typically every three years. For the first time, that included questions on influencer marketing agency compensation. There were two questions on that topic:
 - Does your contract with your agency give you full visibility into exact payment amounts used for creators and influencers in your campaigns?
 - In your agency contract(s), what percentage of spending goes towards agency services versus talent?

Responses to those questions (covered later in this report) also sparked our interest to go deeper and learn more.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative survey was in the field between October 1 and December 1. It had two screener questions up front:

- In the past year, has influencer/creator marketing been part of your company's overall marketing strategy?
- Do you have at least a working knowledge of your company's use of influencer/creator marketing?

The survey instrument is [here](#).

There were 106 respondents who started the survey, and 84 got through the screeners. Respondents were exclusively client-side marketers. See the appendix for detailed results of the screener questions.

About the respondents:

- Job level: 87 percent are manager or director; another 13 percent are VP or more senior.
- Annual U.S. media budget: Half have a budget of \$100 million or more; half less than \$100 million.
 - It's interesting to note that respondents have media budgets of all different levels, indicating that influencer marketing is used by advertisers both big and small.
- Primary business: 49 percent are B-to-C, 10 percent are B-to-B, 41 percent are both.

Details are in the appendix.

Qualitative interviews (20 total) were conducted in December and January with interested survey respondents for added depth and insight.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Half the respondents (52 percent) manage their influencer marketing both in-house and with an external partner. About one-third (32 percent) do so primarily with an external partner. Although only 16 percent currently manage their influencer marketing primarily in-house, that percentage appears to be growing.

Various agency types are used by respondents for influencer marketing. The most common are:

- Influencer/creator agency which is part of an agency holding company
- Influencer/creator agency which is not part of an agency holding company
- PR agency
- Full-service agency (creative and media)

Project-based and retainer-based relationships are about equally used, with a slight skew (55 percent) towards project-based.

Only half of the respondents have full visibility into the exact payment amounts provided to influencers; many also do not have full visibility into agency compensation.

Among those with transparency, the allocation of spending between agency services and talent varied widely and averaged 30 percent for agency services and 70 percent for talent.

Respondents were asked, “Does your agency employ non-transparent compensation methods for your influencer/creator marketing services?” and examples were provided. There were 39 percent of respondents replying “no.” Meanwhile, 31 percent responded “yes” and the remaining 30 percent don’t know. It is likely that those who don’t know have agencies that employ non-transparent compensation methods.

When asked to comment on non-transparent compensation arrangements, representative open-ended responses were:

- “Agency will not disclose exact influencer fees nor will they give the ratio of agency fees to influencer fees.”
- “The influencers are purchased in a non-transparent fashion. We pay one fee for influencers and agency fee. We don’t know what we pay for influencers.”

One-quarter (25 percent) are very satisfied with their current agency compensation agreements for influencer marketing; another 48 percent are somewhat satisfied. The remainder (27 percent) are either not very satisfied or not at all satisfied.

For those somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, and not at all satisfied, the lack of transparency was the key issue. The lack of industry benchmarks was also mentioned multiple times.

More than half are likely to change their current compensation approach in the next 12 months. Reasons for doing so via open-ended responses were about transparency, followed by the likelihood of moving influencer marketing in-house.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The most important KPIs for influencer marketing are engagement rate (i.e., likes, comments, shares), impressions, reach, and video views,

Among those who primarily have influencer marketing in-house (representing 16 percent of the respondent base), almost two-thirds have always done so. The remainder previously used an agency prior to going primarily in-house.

The top benefits of in-house influencer marketing are better knowledge of brands, greater control, and cost efficiencies. Our qualitative discussions uncovered a key benefit of in-house influencer marketing not included in the answer options provided to survey respondents: having direct relationships with key influencers. Note, however, that the administrative burden of in-house work can be significant.

CONCLUSIONS

This is the ANA's first comprehensive report on influencer marketing agency compensation and provides a benchmark for the industry.

The ANA has historically been a strong advocate of transparency in client/agency relationships and in media in particular. Past reports include work on [media transparency](#) (2016), [programmatic media transparency](#) (2023 to the present), and [principal media](#) (2024).

There are parallels between current influencer agency compensation practices and principal media.

- Historically, an agency acted as an agent/fiduciary for its clients, buying media transparently and fully disclosing the cost of the media from the seller. Now, with principal media, the agency acquires the media with its own funds and then resells that media to clients without disclosing the original purchase price. Clients therefore don't know the agency markup/profit.
- Today, in influencer marketing, many of the compensation arrangements are not transparent. The client does not know the allocation between fees paid to the influencer talent and fees paid to the agency. Therefore, as in principal media, the client does not know the agency markup/profit.

This report shares the experiences of client-side marketers with knowledge of influencer marketing at their organizations and highlights that when balancing the trade-offs between cost efficiencies, control, capacity, and results, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. The following provides practical guidance for marketers seeking clearer value exchange and more confidence in their influencer marketing agency compensation arrangements.

- Marketers working with external agencies for their influencer marketing need to understand the transparency (or lack thereof) of the compensation agreements with those agencies. Marketers who value fee transparency should ask for it up front and require it as a condition of partnership in their services agreement. Furthermore, marketers must have internal alignment on their tolerance for non-transparent compensation structures should they exist with their respective agencies.
- Visibility into contracts, transparency around creator fees, and fee splits between agencies and talent varied immensely among survey respondents. Knowing what matters to you and negotiating terms accordingly with agency partners is key. This may include disclosure of any mark-ups or bundled pricing structures. Transparency should always be documented contractually and never assumed.
- Wherever possible, marketers should seek a clear separation between agency compensation and influencer talent payments. Itemized fee structures enable more informed decision-making, support benchmarking, and allow marketers to assess the value delivered by agency services compared with the value delivered by creators. Note that for many respondents, (a) agencies bundled the talent and agency compensation fees or (b) agencies only provided the total amount paid to all talent used for a campaign, not the individual amounts paid to each creator. If knowing the exact amounts paid to creators is important, that should be negotiated up front.

CONCLUSIONS

With influencer marketing expected to continue to grow and become an even more important part of the arsenal of marketers, those marketers are advised to review, understand, and if necessary, reassess their agency management model (i.e., external, internal, or hybrid) as well as their agency compensation agreements.



“Your survey prompted me to ask some questions, which was interesting. I think the onus is on marketers to understand what we’re buying and how the agencies are doing the work. Senior marketers need to be more involved here. Influencer marketing is one of those things that has the tendency to get pushed down to a more junior social media person. Senior marketing people need to ask the different and sometimes difficult questions to help maximize value for our investments.”

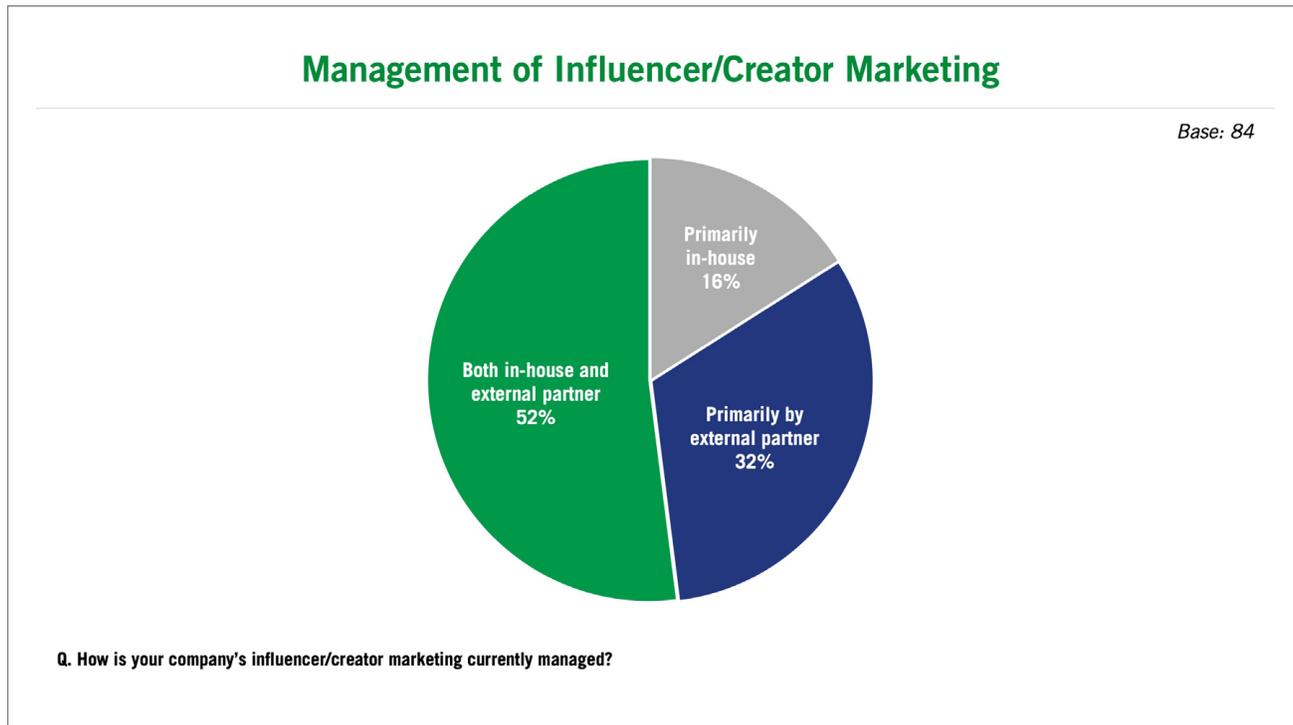
— A LONG-TENURED CMO WITH EXPERIENCE IN BEAUTY, CPG, RETAIL, TRAVEL, AND QSR WHO WAS A QUALITATIVE SURVEY RESPONDENT AND QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWEE

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Management of Influencer/Creator Marketing

Half the respondents manage their influencer marketing both in-house and with an external partner, a hybrid approach. About one-third do so primarily by an external partner.

Although only 16 percent currently manage their influencer marketing primarily in-house, that percentage appears to be growing (more on that later in the report).

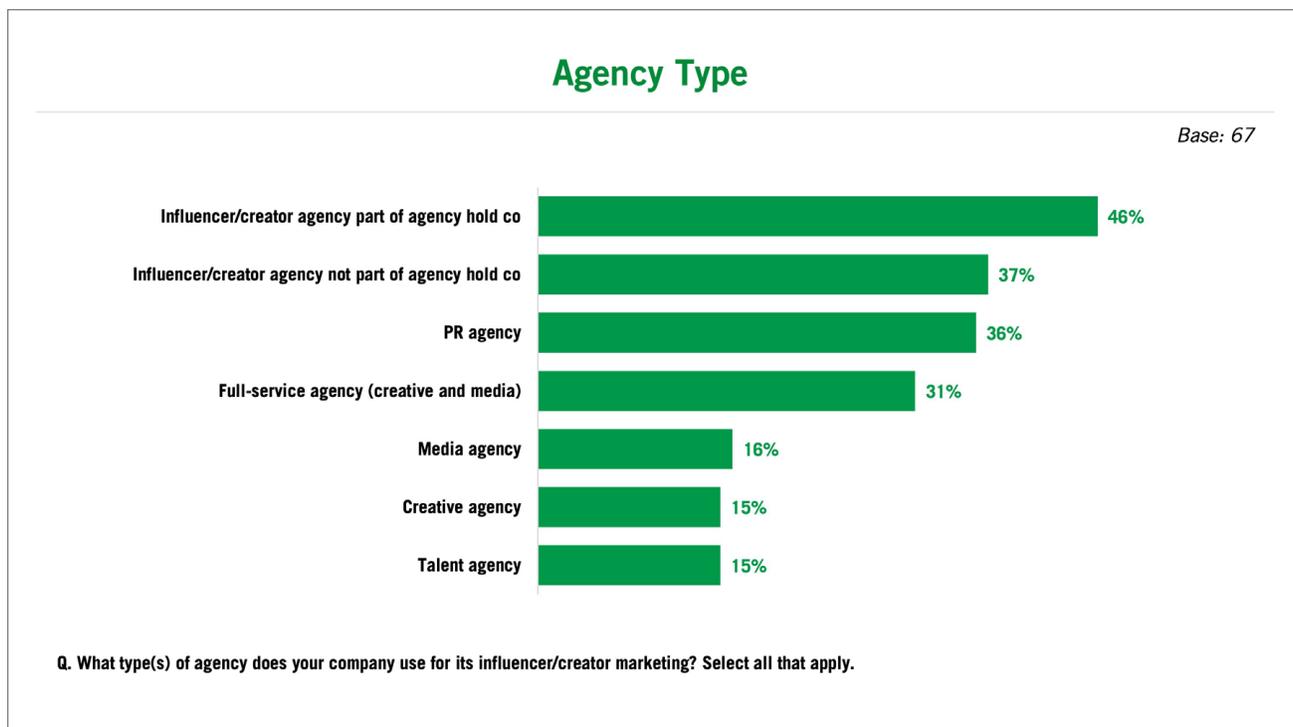


DETAILED INSIGHTS

Agency Type

Various agency types are used by respondents for influencer marketing. The most common are:

- Influencer/creator agency which is part of an agency holding company
- Influencer/creator agency which is not part of an agency holding company
- PR agency
- Full-service agency (creative and media)



“Everyone — every type of agency — seems to work with influencers nowadays,” according to a qualitative interviewee.

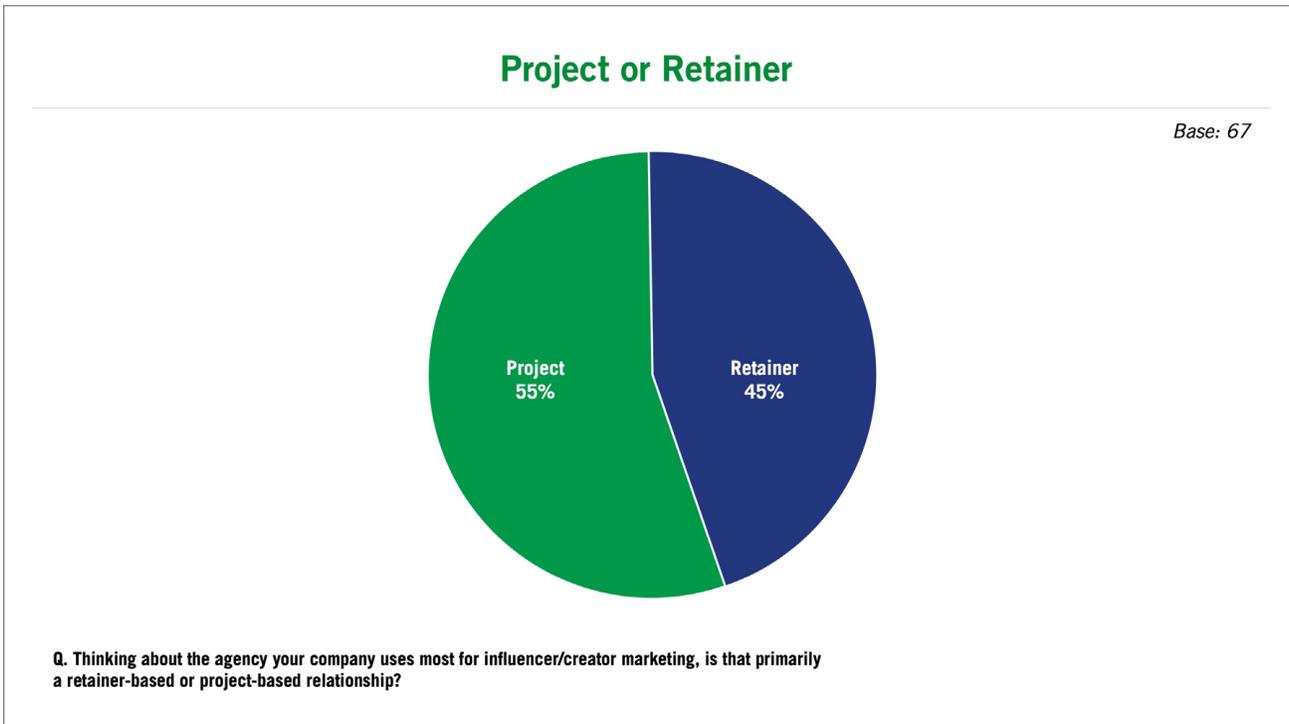
Another interviewee noted that a decentralized organizational structure led to multiple agencies and agency types:

- “In our organization, brand teams recognized that there was a need for influencer marketing and everybody ran out and got solutions. It’s been a brand-by-brand decision. Now we find ourselves in a situation where we have more agencies doing work on our behalf than we need. There’s been a bit of a turf war regarding who should be really driving this stuff.”

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Project or Retainer

Project-based and retainer-based relationships are about equally used, with a slight skew towards project-based.



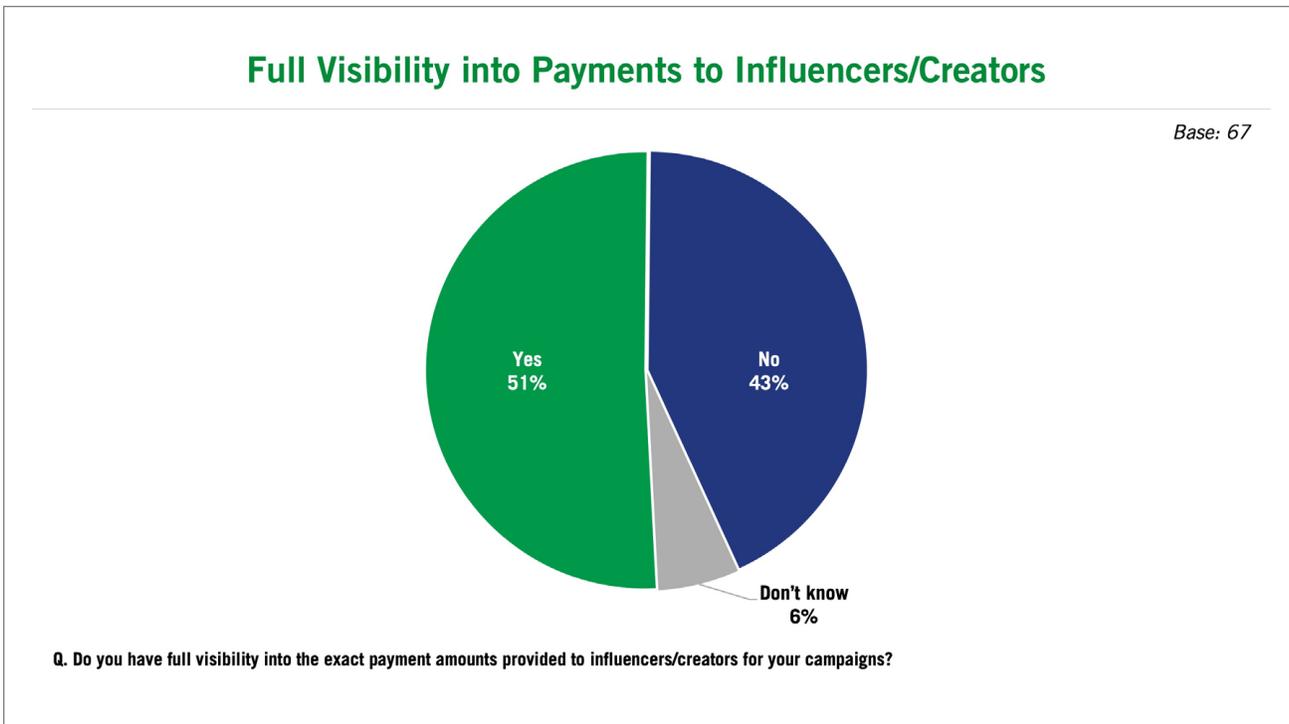
When evaluating the merits of project-based versus retainer-based compensation, consider:

- Project fees can be easily agreed on for one or two projects, but renegotiating compensation for numerous campaigns can become cumbersome and inefficient.
- While retainer-based fees lock a marketer into a level of spending, the timeframe is flexible (e.g., quarterly, every six months, annually).
- When negotiating a retainer-based fee with an agency partner, a marketer can often expect some efficiencies on a per-campaign basis.
- As influencer marketing campaigns become a growing part of the budget, a marketer may want to contract specific agency talent to lead the efforts, and a retainer allows the marketer to agree on staffing at the outset of the time period.

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Full Visibility into Payments

Only half have full visibility into the exact payment amounts provided to influencers.



This question was asked in the ANA [Trends in Agency Compensation Report, 19th edition](#). That survey was conducted a year prior to this current work (between November 2024 and January 2025). Note that the base was lower (28 respondents), so the results should be used directionally. At that time, 64 percent claimed to have full visibility into the exact payment amounts provided. Meanwhile, 29 percent did not and another 7 percent did not know.

There is no statistical significance between the 51 percent (n=67) and 64 percent (n=28) of these respective studies.

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Full Visibility into Payments

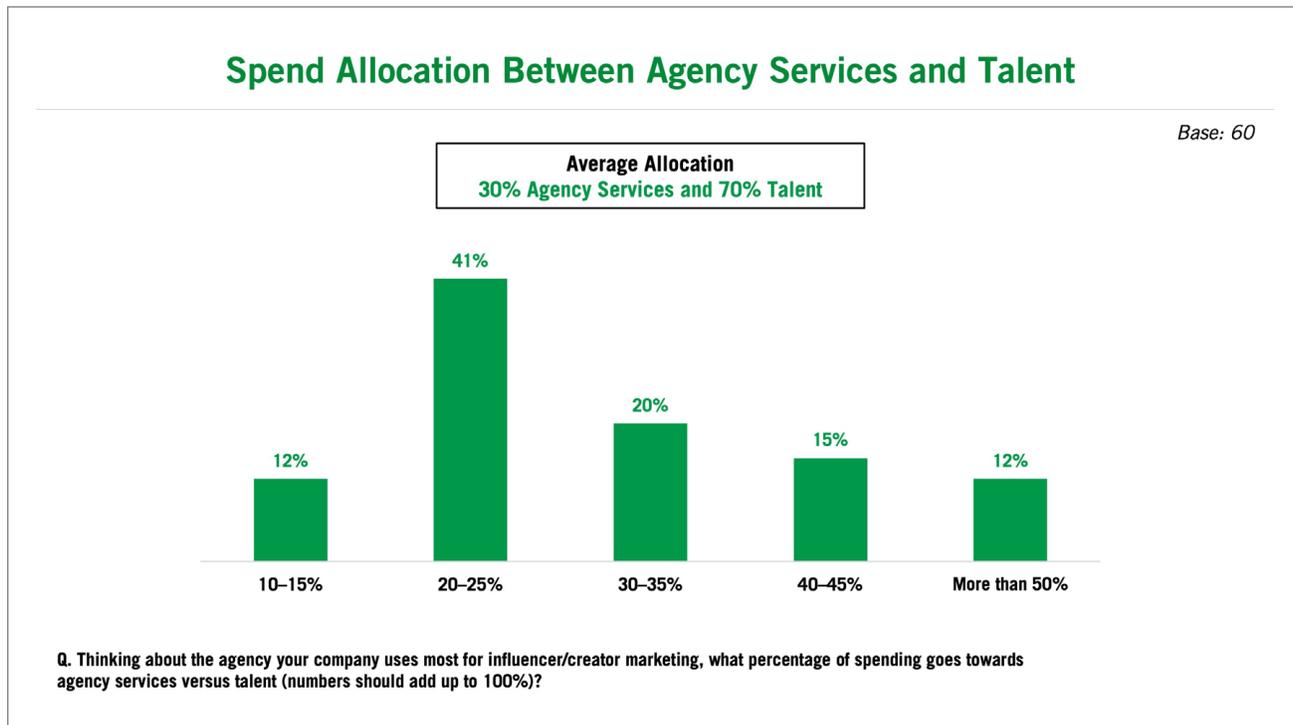
Qualitative interviewees with full visibility into their influencer payments told us:

- “Payment is based on the set amount of hours (the agency’s time) dedicated to the program. I always request copies of the signed contracts with each individual influencer. I see exactly what we’re paying them for each set of work, whether it’s a post, multiple posts, paid usage, all that.”
- “As a non-profit, the stewardship of donor dollars is a core value. We need to be able to explain where every dollar goes. There is no reality in which non-transparent agency compensation could possibly happen.”
- “Full transparency is something we asked for and negotiated.”

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Spending Allocation Between Agency Services and Talent

Respondents were asked, “Thinking about the agency your company uses most for influencer/creator marketing, what percentage of spending goes toward agency services versus talent?” That allocation varied fairly widely and averaged 30 percent for agency services and 70 percent for talent.



This question was also asked in the ANA [Trends in Agency Compensation Report, 19th edition](#). Again, that survey was conducted a year prior to this current work and the base was lower (28 respondents), so those results should be used directionally. At that time the allocation averaged 59 percent for agency services and 41 percent for talent.

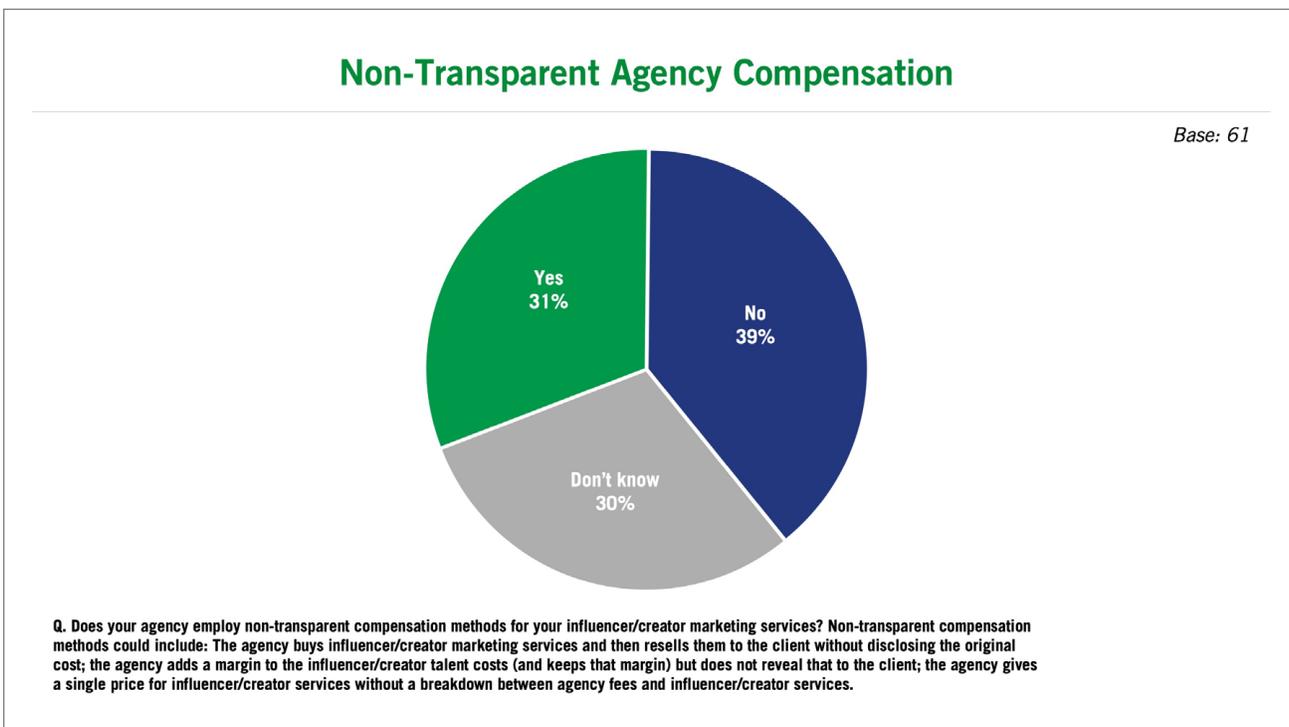
This would suggest that marketers are paying more attention to influencer agency compensation.

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Non-Transparent Agency Compensation

Respondents were asked, “Does your agency employ non-transparent compensation methods for your influencer/creator marketing services?” and examples were provided (see those in the question below).

There were 39 percent of respondents replying “no.” Meanwhile, 31 percent responded “yes” and the remaining 30 percent don’t know. It is likely that those who don’t know have agencies that employ non-transparent compensation methods.



When asked to comment on non-transparent compensation arrangements, representative open-ended responses were:

- “Agency will not disclose exact influencer fees nor will they give the ratio of agency fees to influencer fees.”
- “The influencers are purchased in a non-transparent fashion. We pay one fee for influencers and agency fee. We don’t know what we pay for influencers.”
- “The agency gives us a single price for working with influencers, and we don’t know how much of that is the agency fee.”

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Non-Transparent Agency Compensation

- “While we know the total budget that’s going toward talent fees vs. agency, we don’t get a breakdown of fee by creator/influencer. We sometimes ask about specific people and might get the visibility, but it’s not usually freely communicated.”
- “Depending on the agency we use, we don’t always know what the exact fees are to the creator.”
- “We do not see the creator’s rate or what they are ultimately paid. Instead, they parse out the total dollars allocated to creator fees for the entire campaign.”

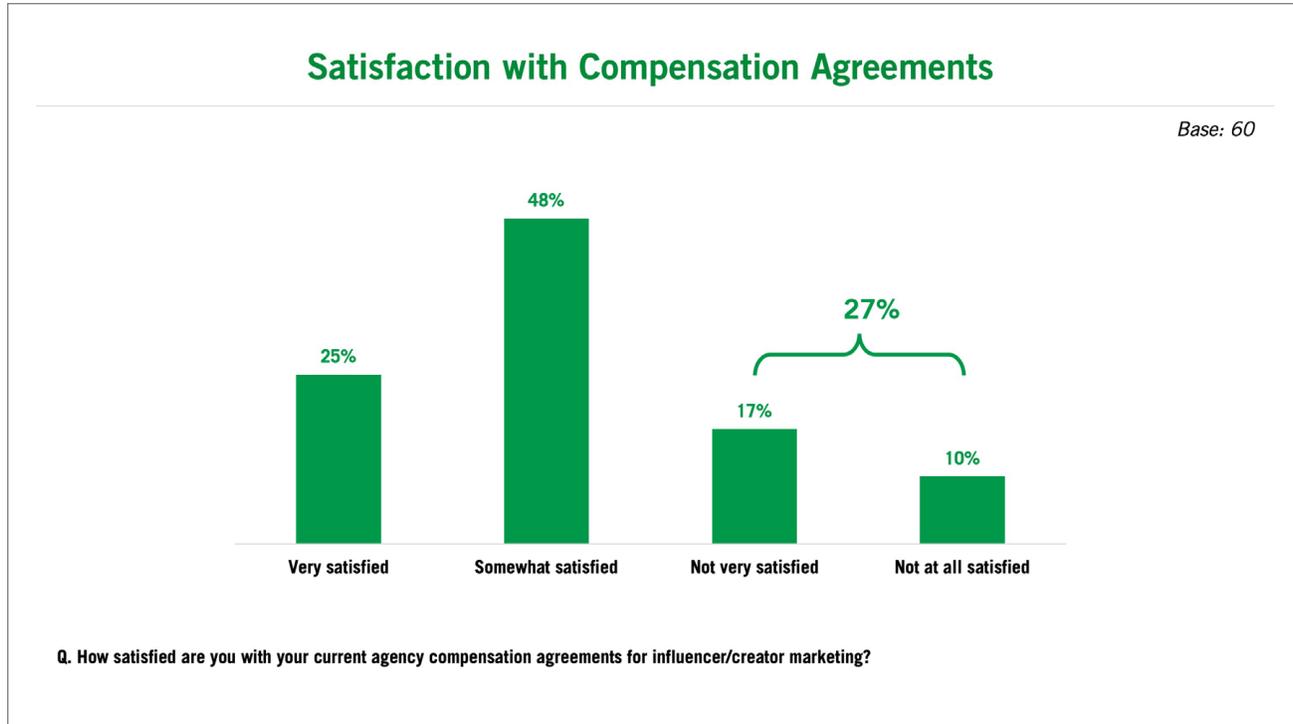
Qualitative interviewees provided the following perspectives on their non-transparent arrangements:

- “At the end of the day, it’s principal media. At some point, the total compensation model has got to implode because there’s no other business where every solution is non-transparent. That’s bad.”
- “Our agency model for influencers is totally external. The agency gives a single price for the influencer services without a breakdown between agency and talent fees. We don’t know what goes to the influencers. We don’t know what goes to the agency. We don’t know the agency margins. We don’t know anything about this. If the agency makes a buck on me and I don’t know what it is, I’m okay with that, at least currently. Influencers are still a very small percentage of our overall media mix. When you look at the various priorities in my role, this falls all the way to the bottom. That’s the honest truth. My other headaches are so much bigger. Ideally, I’d have sourcing go in and scrutinize this model. But I don’t have that resource available at my current company. That’s why good procurement is so important. Would I want to change the compensation and make it more transparent? Sure. However, since this is not a significant percentage of my media spending, I likely will wait until next year to drill down.”
- “We don’t use external agencies much; it’s mostly internal. I don’t have transparency with external agencies. I just know I’m able to evaluate if the CPM is fair for the scale I’m getting across the various platforms for the influencer’s custom content. The question is: Is this a fair price for what I’m buying? And that’s where I focus my attention.”
- “I’m comfortable not having full visibility. We’ve had situations both with and without full visibility. Lack of visibility doesn’t bother me because I communicate, ‘I want this much to go to media and this much to go to creators.’ And they work that out. As long as the results are good, I don’t really care. I say, ‘Here is the budget, you deliver, and as long as we’re happy with the influencer and the ROI, we’re good.’ On the media buying side of influencer campaigns, we’re buying CPI (Cost Per Impression), we’re buying results, and that’s really all that matters.”
- “We didn’t have ANY visibility into specific contracts with our talent — just a breakdown of the total talent budget. We asked to see the contracts several times and the agency said ‘no.’ We are now changing agencies and this will not be the case with our new agency.”

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Satisfaction with Compensation Agreements

One-quarter are very satisfied with their current agency compensation agreements for influencer marketing; another one-quarter (27 percent) are not satisfied. The remainder are somewhat satisfied.



For those “very satisfied” with their current agency compensation agreements for influencer/creator marketing, representative open-ended responses were:

- “We were able to gain transparency into the agency fee versus the talent costs.”
- “Our agency provides strong recommendations for influencer partnerships across a range of budgets.”
- “We work in lockstep. I know how much we are paying each creator. I know when we are able to negotiate a better rate, etc. We have full transparency into the creator talent fees.”
- “We established a price grid by type of creator and social media channel. There is full transparency on what is being paid to the creator and on whether we are paying above/below the market.”
- “The level of agency fees and the work that goes into that is substantial. They are managing all contracting, negotiation, and campaign management, while our internal team still handles overall strategy, and has full oversight, to whatever level we need.”

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Satisfaction with Compensation Agreements

- “We like the working relationship we have with our agency partner, as well as how we execute in-house and self-serve on behalf of our brands.”
- “We have full cost transparency.”

For those “somewhat satisfied,” the lack of transparency was the key issue for many. The lack of industry benchmarks was also mentioned multiple times.

- “There is always room for improvement. One of the influencer agencies took months of negotiations before they agreed to give transparent pricing.”
- “Lack of full visibility into compensation to agency.”
- “There aren’t enough benchmarks to know if this good or bad.”
- “There is more to be done in terms of full transparency.”
- “Looking to have a more streamlined agency partner which can help with a bigger talent portfolio across celebs, influencers, and creators.”
- “We don’t have visibility into the fees paid out.”
- “I wish it was more transparent. But the reach and quality of the work we’re getting is solid, so I’m less concerned than I would be if we were struggling on that front.”
- “It’s clear and transparent on what we are paying for, but we don’t have great benchmarks for creator fees.”
- “This is newer for us; we don’t have a previous point of reference, but overall think we are seeing fair pricing. We do appreciate the transparency in influencer costs.”
- “Would like more transparency.”

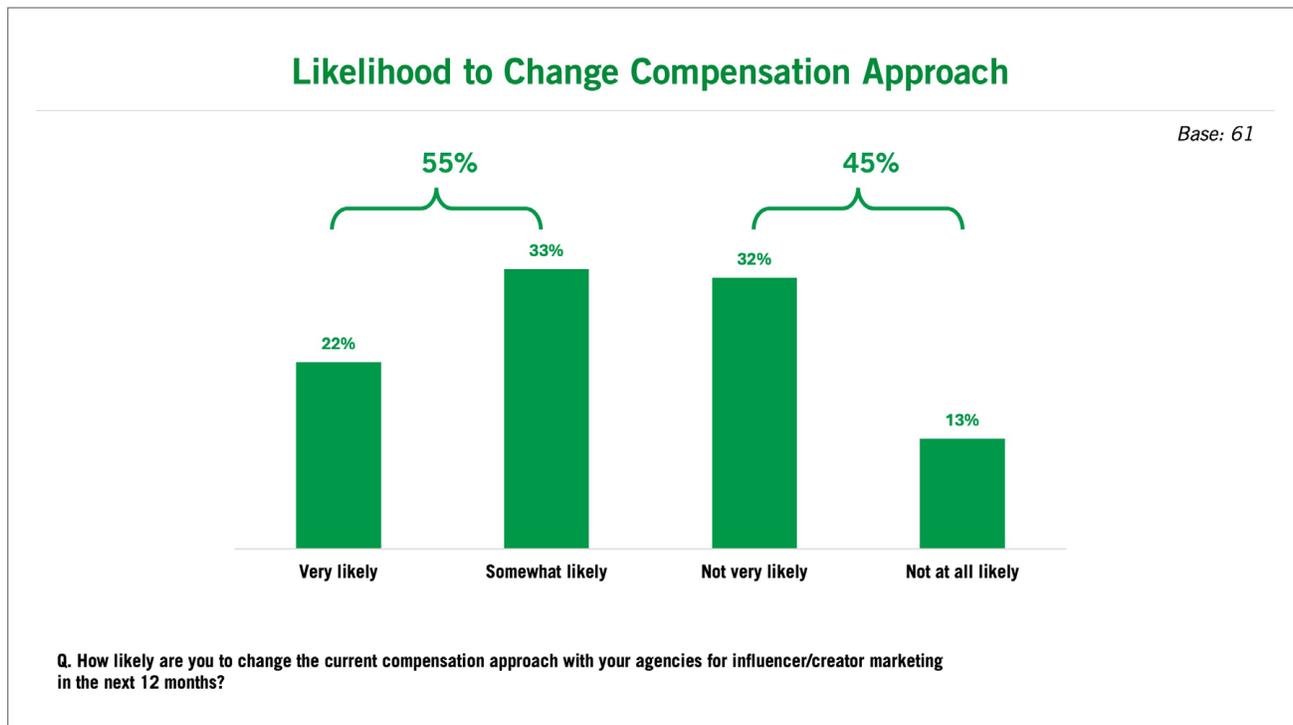
For those “not very satisfied” and “not at all satisfied” all the open-ended responses were about transparency.

- “Need more transparency and detailed spending information.”
- “There is no transparency between agency fee and influencer compensation.”
- “Transparency in influencer spend should be a given, and it isn’t.”
- “Agencies should be transparent about all costs passed through to the client. It makes absolutely no sense that this one line item does not have to be disclosed, which makes it difficult to develop benchmarks and analyze ROI.”
- “We are being swindled by our agency, but it’s difficult to extricate ourselves from the projects. They refuse to give us rate cards or tell us how many hours of work we have left because it is their opinion that ‘rate cards for agencies are obsolete.’ Which is NOT true.”

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Likelihood to Change Compensation Approach

Despite respectable levels of satisfaction with their current agency compensation agreements for influencer marketing (the prior question), more than half are likely to change their current compensation approach in the next 12 months.



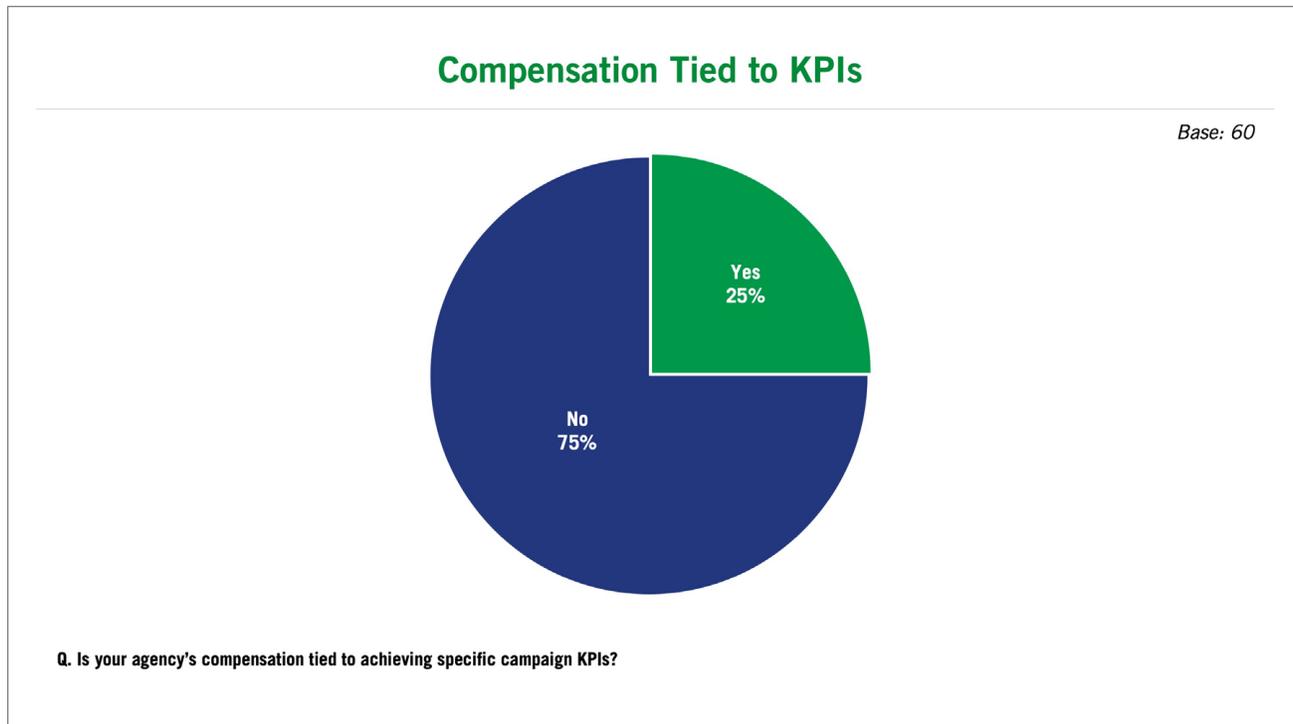
If “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to change the current compensation approach, most open-ended responses were about transparency followed by the likelihood to in-house influencer marketing.

- “We are implementing a new compensation approach that provides more transparency.”
- “Not happy with current transparency.”
- “Our business model has shifted to a managed service and influencer will be a tactic in the campaign model; therefore, we need to address this as an end-to-end marketing solution.”
- “We are looking at a global consolidation strategy to assess cost efficiencies.”
- “Because we will require more transparency into the spending.”
- “We are trying to move more in-house.”
- “I would like to implement a transparent approach.”
- “We plan to shift more of our activity in-house.”

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Compensation Tied to KPIs

Only one-quarter have their agency's compensation tied to achieving specific campaign KPIs.



While only 25 percent of respondents report tying agency compensation to specific KPIs, there is an opportunity to reward the agency for specific and critical campaign outcomes:

- Delivery against audiences (e.g., volume and audience profile)
- Measures of audience engagement (i.e., likes, comments, shares)

Tying KPIs to specific business outcomes such as sales or share gains may be more difficult.

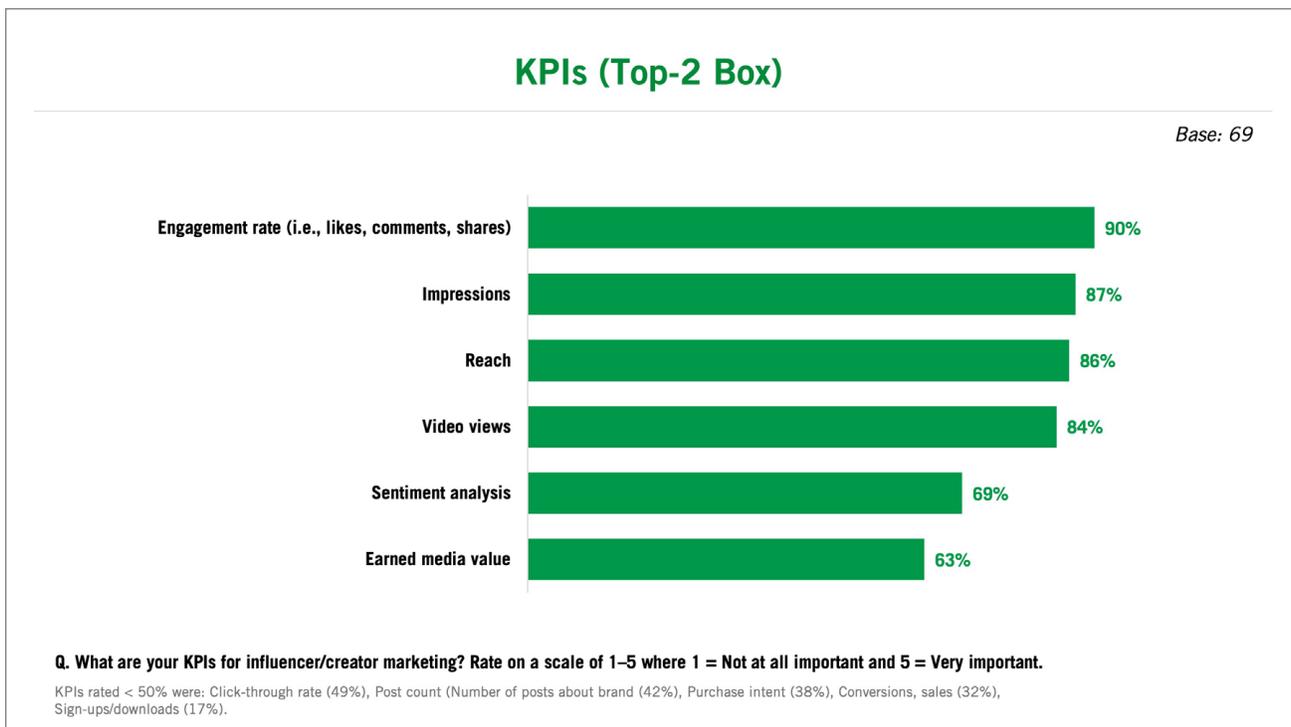
The above would require additional effort from the agency and marketing teams, which should be weighed against the benefits of measuring, analyzing, and implementing KPI-based agency compensation.

DETAILED INSIGHTS

KPIs

The most important KPIs for influencer marketing are:

- Engagement rate (i.e., likes, comments, shares)
- Impressions
- Reach
- Video views



Engagement rate was rated top box (very important) by 55 percent of respondents, followed by reach (52 percent) and impressions (49 percent).

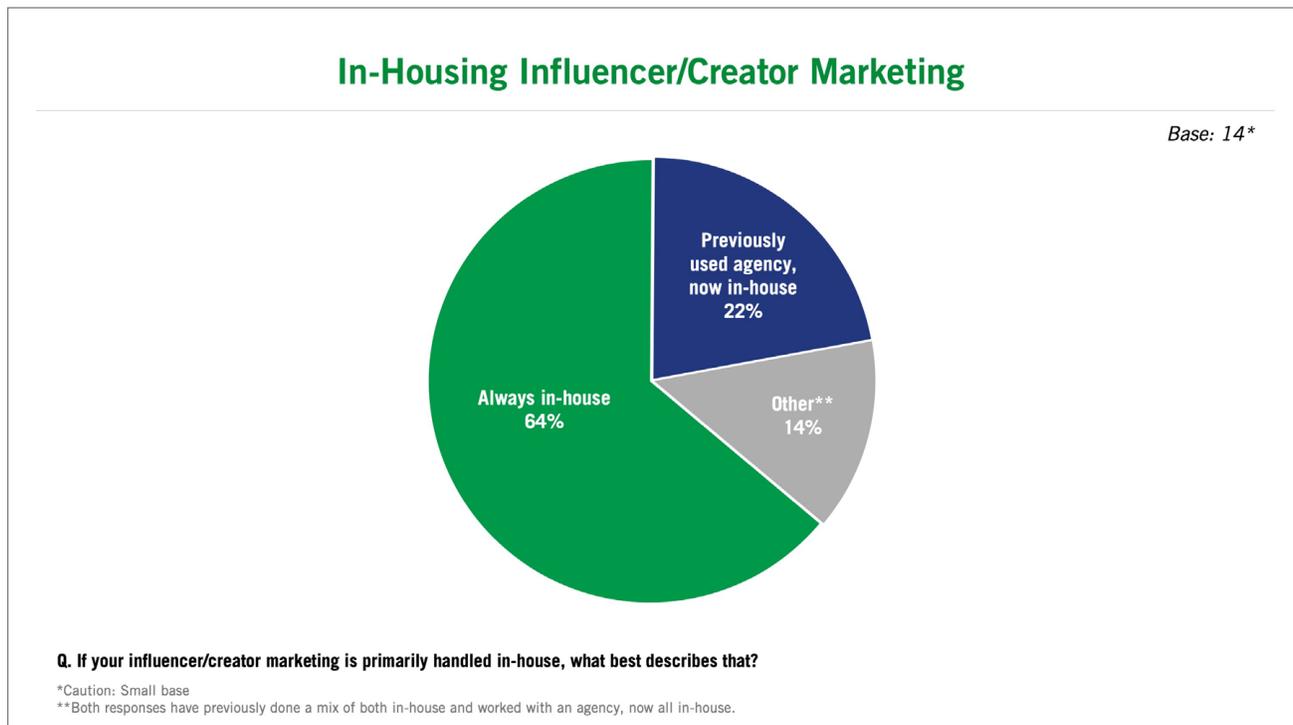
Interesting qualitative feedback on KPIs:

- “Typically, we provide very specific vanity links to our talent. We can then exactly track metrics such as awareness and revenue back to those vanity links. We also have campaign links to look back at the actual content itself and see exactly how much time people are spending with the content, and that helps guide future activity.”
- “I look at sentiment because reputational risk is very important to us and the tone sometimes outweighs the engagement.”
- “It’s that creator, their community, and their ecosystem of friends and fans that I want to get my brand’s eyeballs on. It’s always going to be about new audiences for me.”

DETAILED INSIGHTS

In-Housing Influencer Marketing

Among those who primarily in-house influencer marketing (representing 16 percent of the respondent base), almost two-thirds have always done so. The remainder previously used an agency prior to going completely in-house.



Interesting open-ended responses from two different survey respondents:

- “We tested an in-house approach that saved us a lot of money. Total budget was \$42,000, and the agency wanted \$30,000 in agency fees, leaving \$12,000 for talent and allowlisting¹. I took the project in-house and used all \$42,000 for talent and allowlisting. We got more deliverables than ever before, our timelines were quicker, and our content was approved more quickly with fewer rounds of edits.”
- “We started in-house but we are only a team of two, so that became burdensome. We started looking for an external agency partner and wanted a dedicated influencer agency. But we still do our ambassador campaigns, four or five times annually, in-house.”

¹**Influencer allowlisting** (formerly whitelisting) is a paid marketing tactic where an influencer grants a brand direct advertising access to their social media account, letting the brand run ads through the creator’s handle, not its own, boosting reach, authenticity, and targeting by combining creator trust with brand paid media control. It turns influencer content into performance ads, allowing brands to use the influencer’s voice, audience, and established trust to reach more people effectively.

DETAILED INSIGHTS

In-Housing Influencer Marketing

A qualitative interviewee is adding an external agency to supplement the work of the in-house agency, where responsibility for influencer marketing “is an ancillary duty for a handful of different people.”

- “We’re going to be making a material investment in influencer engagement next year. It’s a milestone anniversary for the company and we’re launching our first brand campaign. We realize we don’t have the capacity in-house to meaningfully manage this.”

Another qualitative interviewee offered:

- “Anytime we’re doing things at scale (i.e., requiring 50 or more influencers or 20 or more celebrities), that’s when I’ll usually engage an agency.”

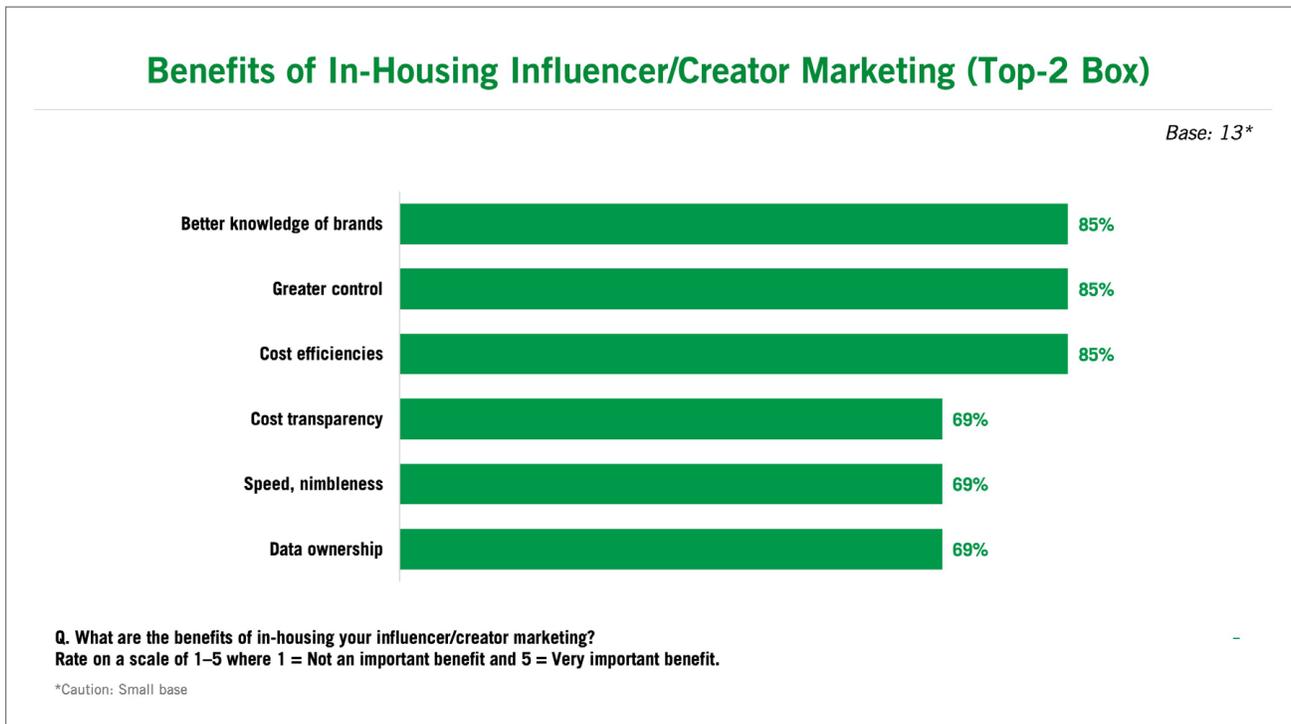
DETAILED INSIGHTS

Benefits of In-Housing Influencer Marketing

The top benefits of in-housing influencer marketing are:

- Better knowledge of brands
- Greater control
- Cost efficiencies
- Having direct relationships with key influencers

Also important are cost transparency, speed/nimbleness, and data ownership.



Our qualitative discussions uncovered a key benefit of in-housing influencer marketing not included in the answer options provided to survey respondents: having direct relationships with key influencers.

- “When direct relationships matter, especially with celebrities, that requires more of a white glove treatment and we handle it in-house.”
- “We feel we can have the right conversations with the talent. There’s nothing lost in translation. We can vet the talent and brand alignment better than the agencies. We’re focused on what is right for the brand, not who the influencer group has to push, so our brand is always the priority. There is simply better alignment with the influencer when we’re having direct conversations.”

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Benefits of In-Housing Influencer Marketing

- “A direct relationship is always going to be best for us. For a high-value creator, we want to cultivate those relationships. Direct relationships also have cost transparency and cost efficiencies.”
- “We do a better job building long-term relationships when managing influencers in-house.”
- “Ensuring creators are ‘in the know’ on product specs and functionality, which leads to better content. Also getting direct feedback from creators on product strengths and weaknesses to guide new product innovations.”
- “Building relationships directly with creators provided a better bang for the buck. We negotiate better rates, and also creators tend to go above and beyond because we’ve built the relationships ourselves and our brand is one they want to work with.”
- “The process the agency wanted to pursue was more transactional with the influencers and we wanted to build more of a long-term ambassador-relationship approach.”

Other benefits of in-house management mentioned in qualitative discussions:

- “There’s greater cost efficiency, control, and transparency. As a highly-regulated drug company, this also gives us more control to follow the regulatory rules.”

“

“I think one thing that marketers need to realize is if they don’t have insight into fees or other terms with their influencers, then it can affect them down the line should they ever handle things internally or want visibility or input into those fees. Influencers are becoming more sophisticated, and the majority of them now have agents. Agents know what brands have agreed to before with one influencer, and they use that to negotiate with all the influencers they represent. Thus, one bad deal or concession could affect all future negotiations. For small brands that don’t do a ton of deals, this may not be a big problem. But for large companies that have many brands that all have their own influencer programs, this could have a big impact in the end.”

— KERI BRUCE, PARTNER, REED SMITH LLP

DETAILED INSIGHTS

Other Insights from Qualitative

Challenges of In-House Influencer Marketing

The challenges of in-house influencer marketing were not part of the quantitative survey. However, some were noted in qualitative discussions:

- “Very labor intensive and tedious, especially the administrative headache of contracting and payments.”
- “It’s a ton of work administratively!”
- “Our biggest challenge is that it’s a huge time commitment to handle in-house.”

The administrative burden of in-house work here can be significant. Managing influencers internally requires extensive time and team capacity for selecting and vetting influencers, negotiating contracts, handling payments, and leading project management, which can be a barrier for smaller teams.

Paid Media

There were a handful of comments in qualitative discussions regarding use of paid media:

- “One of the top benefits of working with creators is amplifying content on their channels with paid media. So having a media lens is critical.”
- “From past roles, I know the value of using paid media for post amplification, and we are slowly increasing our paid media spend. In my prior company, I saw seven times ROAS for paid media.”
- “Originally, we start with all organic, no paid media. As we’ve evolved, we’re moving more into paid.”

Number Influencers Used

Multiple qualitative interviewees volunteered information regarding the number of influencers they use:

- “In a year, we work with 40 to 60 influencers.”
- “Number of creators we work with per year is approximately 80 to 85.”
- “Number of creators per year... about 50 in our portfolio total, but at very different tiers. Ten to 15 are ambassador style. About 20 are compensated based on mentions; each mention builds points and they get compensated on a points basis. Most of our partners are not full-time content creators as they all have other jobs.”
 - “Ambassador works better than one-off. We get way more and better content. The engagement rates tend to be better as well, because ambassadors are better informed on the products.”
- “Number of creators used per year is approximately 50. We try to double the number every year. Next year we’ll aim for 100.”

PERSPECTIVE FROM JLB + PARTNERS

“ As noted in the title of this report, there is a need for greater transparency around agency services and influencer payments within the increasingly important influencer marketing industry. With only half (51 percent) of respondents reporting that they have full transparency, there is clearly an opportunity for marketers to have better visibility as to where their budgets are being spent, and what they’re receiving as a return for that investment.

As an agency relationship consultant and industry veteran with over 30 years of experience, I can confidently say that the above is actually not surprising. Influencer marketing is still a relatively new marketing channel, so the market is still being established for ‘what’s fair’ in terms of both influencer payments and agency fees. Anecdotally, one respondent reported agency fees (as a percent of the program budget) of 40 to 60 percent with one agency partner and 15 to 25 percent with another, due to the differing level of services provided by each agency.

In this way, influencer marketing is very similar to the early days of digital advertising and social media marketing, when costs varied widely from agency to agency and project to project. Over time, and with this study as a strong first step, industry benchmarks and best practices will be established for marketers to rely on and help ensure they are receiving fair cost/value for their influencer marketing investments.

With that as context, we’d also like to highlight a few key items that stood out during our work on this report:

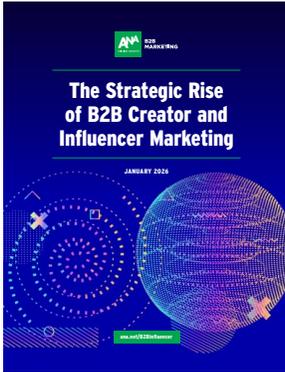
- The type of influencer agency, and the decision whether to handle it in-house or not, often depends on the initiative itself. Respondents found that external agency partners were better suited to larger initiatives that were part of a fully integrated campaign, while smaller, stand-alone initiatives are often handled by marketers in-house (often with the help of a third-party platform).
- As with any agency services, there may be an opportunity to competitively evaluate your agency partner(s) to ensure that you’re receiving the best services at the right price. One member who shared their experience employed a closed RFP process with their three influencer agency partners, which resulted in a reduction of agency fees by 40 to 50 percent.
- Another related opportunity for transparency is for marketers to ensure that they have access to the data and analytics resulting from their influencer marketing campaigns. Depending on their agency agreements, respondents reported different levels of access to the data, once again mirroring the early days of digital/social.

With the proven impact and increasing importance of influencer marketing, it is likely that this channel will receive an increasing share of marketing budgets in the years ahead. And, as greater funds are dedicated to these efforts, greater transparency will be required to ensure fair cost/value to both marketers and their agency partners.”

— Tom Browning, President and CEO, JLB + Partners



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

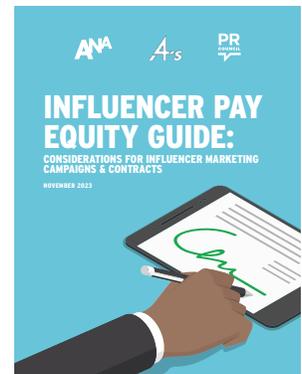


[The Strategic Rise of B2B Creator and Influencer Marketing](#) (January 2026)

Influencer marketing has become a powerful force within B2B marketing. This paper shares comprehensive insights on the types of B2B influencers, examples of influencer marketing initiatives, proposed best practices, and ways to minimize waste.

[Influencer Pay Equity Guide](#) (November 2023)

The ANA, 4A's, and PR Council released an Influencer Pay Equity Guide to address the lack of transparency and the 29 percent pay gap between white and BIPOC influencers. The culmination of a year-long collaboration, the Guide was authored by ANA marketers to propel systematic change by providing standards and considerations that marketers can use to ensure equitable experiences and pay for the creators they partner with. The Guide offers an actionable roadmap for marketers committed to equitable compensation and greater transparency across every stage of partnership in the influencer industry.



[ANA Influencer Marketing Measurement Guidelines](#) (June 2022)

These guidelines were created to bring greater clarity and consistency to key influencer marketing performance metrics and engagement rate calculations.

The [ANA Creator and Influencer Marketing Committee](#) provides a regular forum for members to exchange knowledge, learn from subject matter experts, tackle pressing challenges, and shape the industry's agenda. Committee meetings feature innovative case studies, the latest trends, and meaningful opportunities to connect with peers. The committee meets regularly both virtually and in-person.

ABOUT THE ANA

The Association of National Advertisers (ANA) is the definitive voice of the marketing industry. Since 1910, we have set and advanced the agenda for marketing transformation, connecting over 1,600 member companies to an influential global network, insights, and resources that drive growth. Our members represent 20,000 brands and \$400 billion in annual marketing investment. Through industry-leading research, the CMO Growth Council, and our proprietary Growth Agenda and Practices, the ANA empowers marketers to shape the future of marketing and create lasting impact for their organizations and the industry.

ABOUT JLB + PARTNERS

Founded in 1972, [JLB + Partners](#) is the original client-agency relationship consultancy. Thousands of client engagements covering every business category have given us unparalleled experience with companies large and small — from local to regional, national to global. Our consulting is focused solely on issues of client-agency relationships and performance management. Whether sourcing a new agency partner, more effectively managing an existing agency relationship to improve performance, or structuring a more effective agency contract and compensation plan, you will work with consultants who know the subject inside and out. JLB + Partners has worked with the ANA on its agency compensation reports for decades.

THE ANA MEDIA PRACTICE OVERVIEW

The [ANA Media Practice](#) is a community for media leaders committed to advancing accountability and growth in a rapidly changing landscape. At its core are committees, the Media and Measurement Leadership Council, and national industry conferences, which bring marketers at all levels of the organization together to share insights, set standards, and drive progress.

We focus on helping media professionals navigate the complexities and opportunities of AI, advancing creator/influencer marketing, shaping retail media strategies, and driving programmatic transparency — delivering guidance, benchmarks, and tools that strengthen decision-making and maximize the value of every media dollar.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Key contributors to this report:

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- **Bill Duggan**, Group EVP
- **Leah Marshall**, VP, Digital and Influencer Marketing
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JLB + Partners

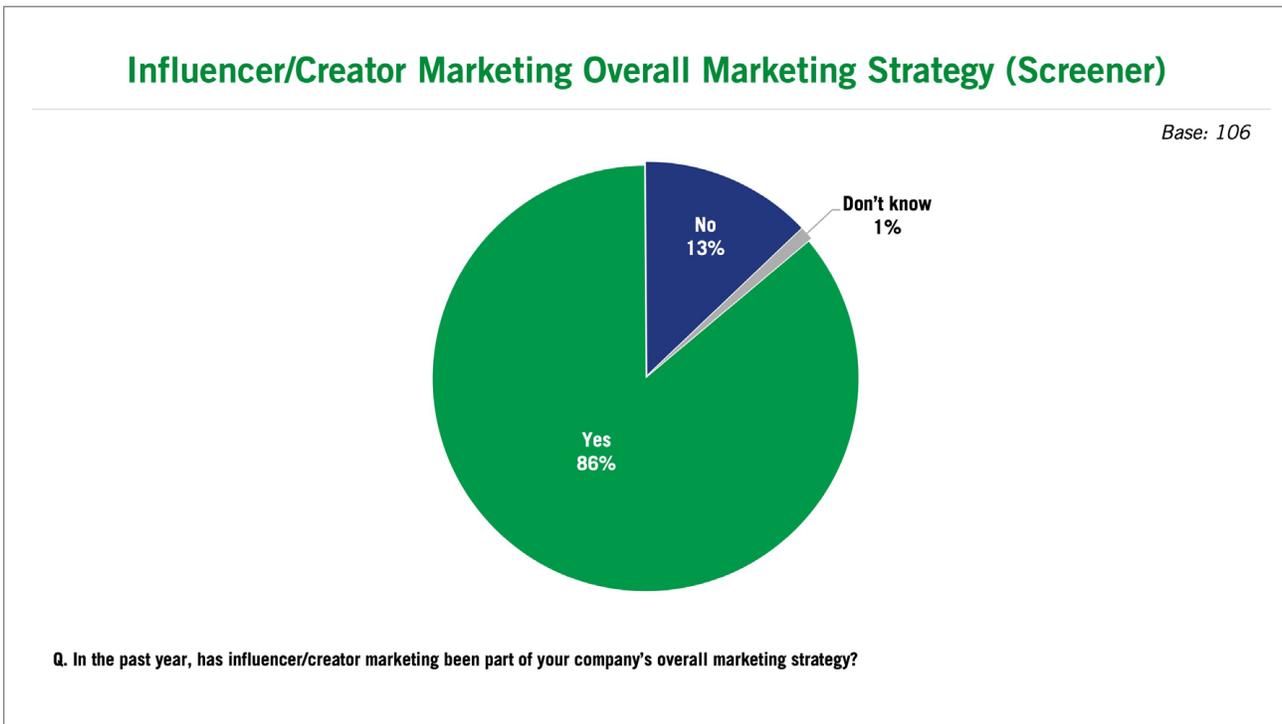
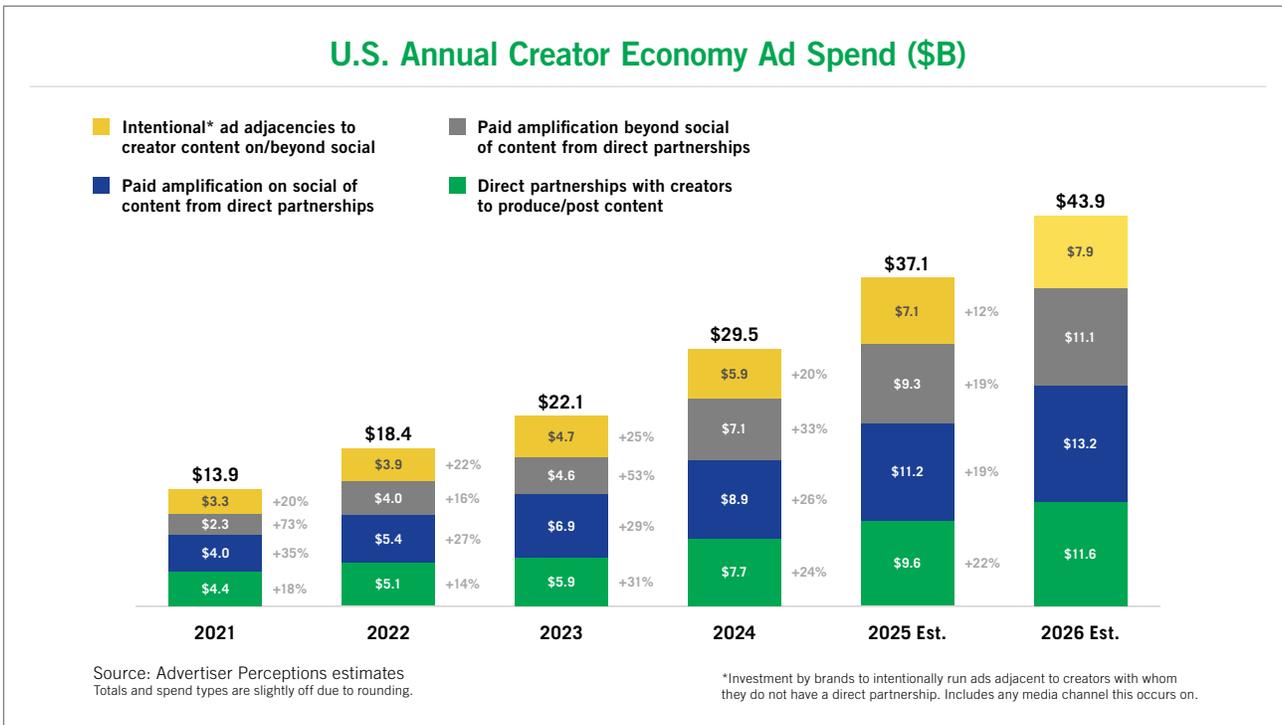
- **Tom Browning**, President and CEO

Reed Smith LLP

- **Keri Bruce**, Partner

APPENDIX

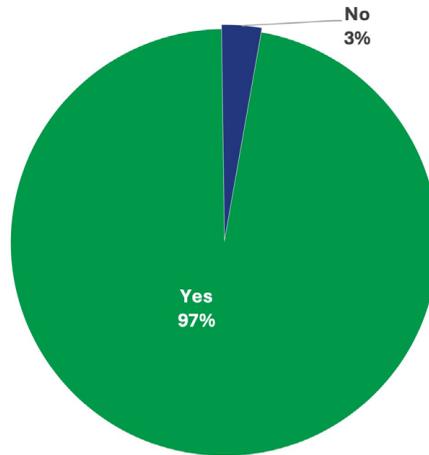
APPENDIX



APPENDIX

Working Knowledge (Screener)

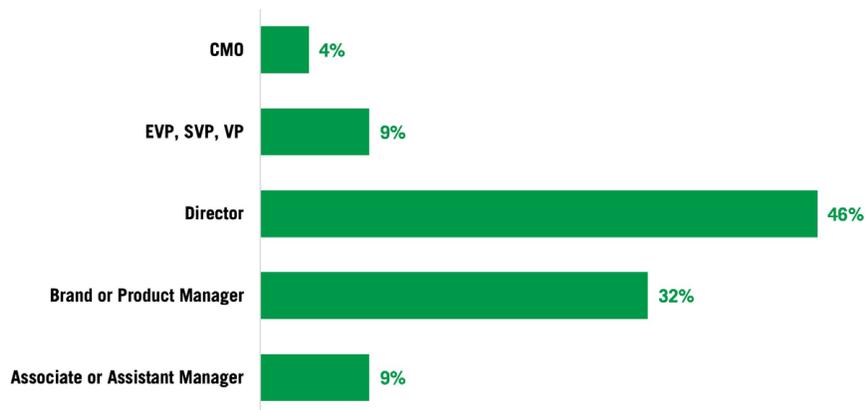
Base: 87



Q. Do you have at least a working knowledge of your company's use of influencer/creator marketing?

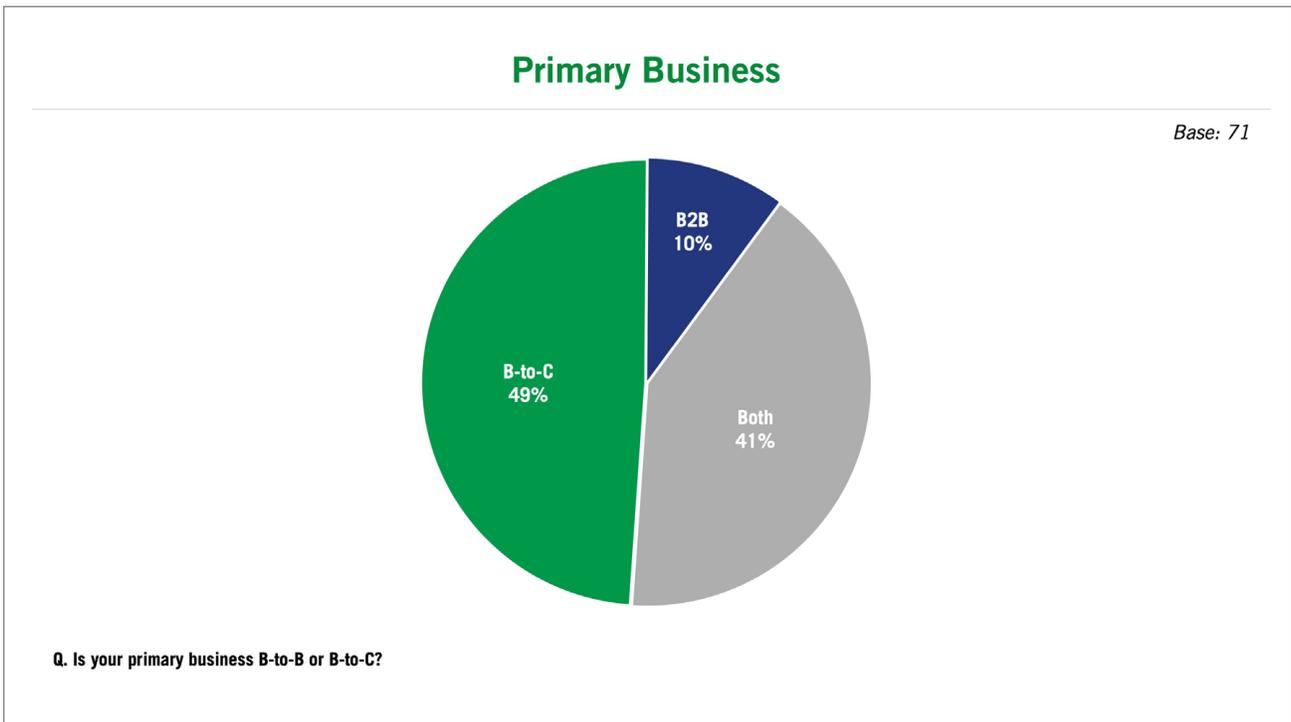
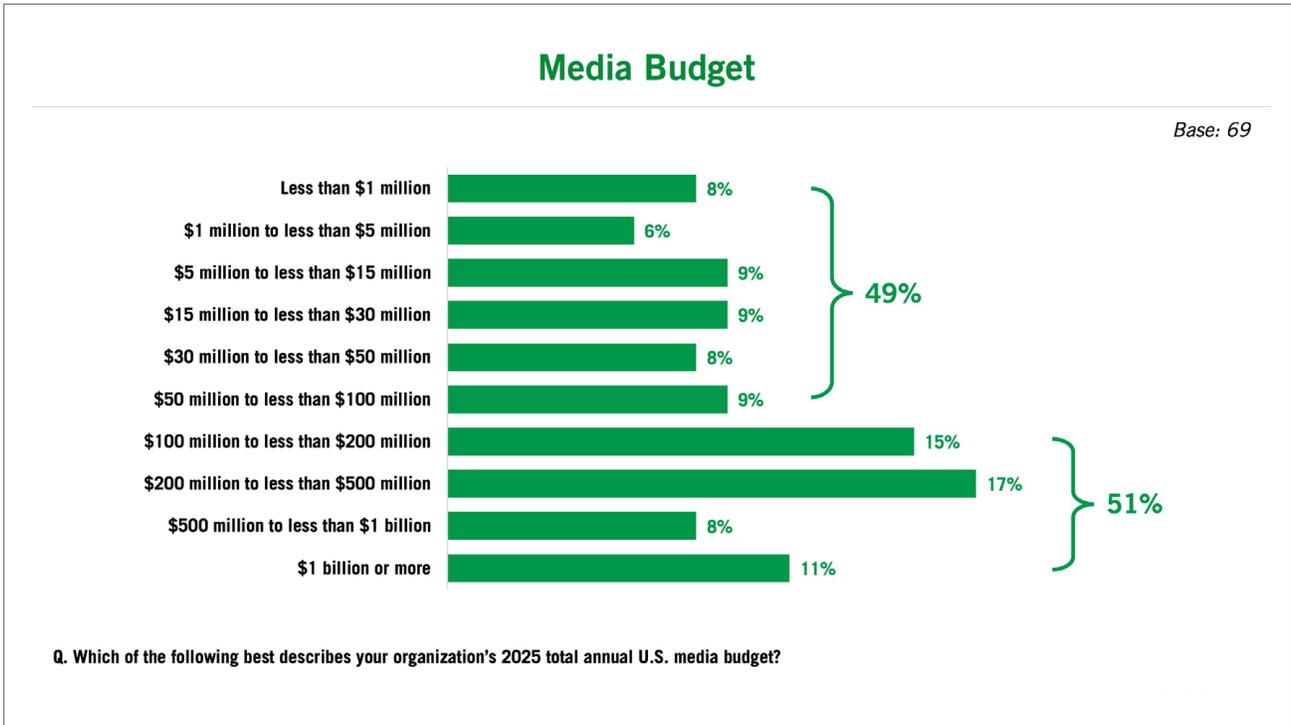
Job Level

Base: 69



Q. What is your job level?

APPENDIX





Influencer Marketing Agency Compensation

An Opportunity for Greater Transparency

FEBRUARY 2026

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