

A man with a beard and short hair is looking down at a laptop screen. He is wearing a dark sweater over a light-colored collared shirt. The background is a blurred grid pattern, possibly a window or a wall. The entire image has a dark blue overlay.

THE 2018 INFLUENCER MARKETING REPORT

The Rise of Micro-Influencers
& How Consumer Trust Drives Sales

 cpcstrategy

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Introduction

Influencer marketing isn't a new concept.

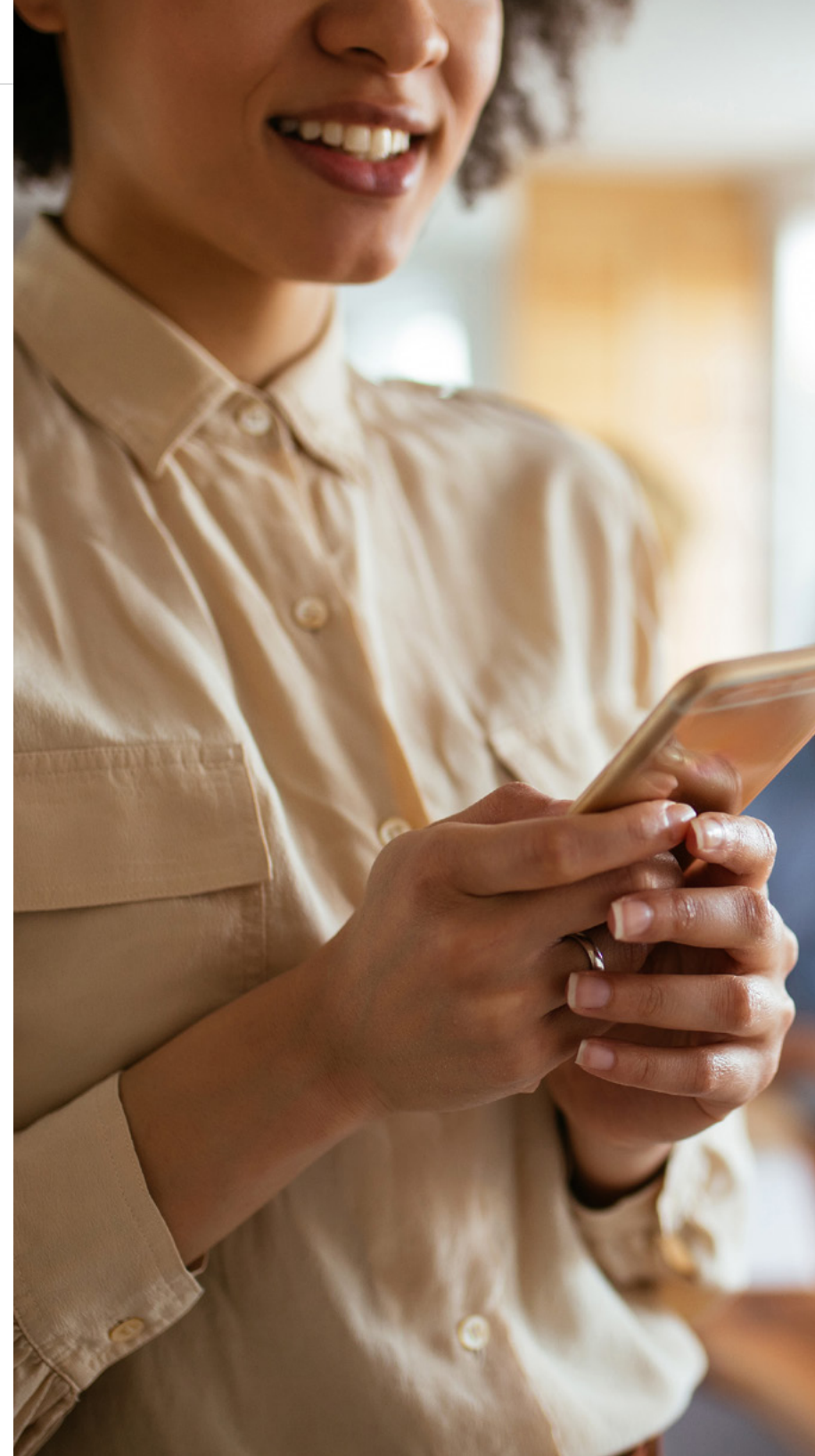
Brands have been using influential people to promote products and services for a long time. But there are two big ways the game has changed.

First, these campaigns are driven via social media (adiós, TV).

Secondly, today's consumers aren't entirely celebrity-influenced.

They favor the opinions of the mommy bloggers, beauty bloggers, tech-obsessed, and mechanical engineers of the world. People you probably wouldn't recognize on the street, but have thousands following them on YouTube.

That's just the beginning of consumer expectations for your influencer marketing campaigns, driven by our 2018 survey of 1500 Americans.





Key Takeaways

- Only 19.2% of Consumers Define “Influencers” on Social Media as Celebrities
- 30.5% of Consumers Value Influencer's Trustworthiness over Number of Social Media Followers
- Nearly 40% of Consumers Can't Tell if a Social Media Post is Sponsored
- Nearly 70% of consumers are most likely to hear about new products, services, or events from people they follow on Facebook
- 22% of consumers reported they were most likely to purchase products (Beauty Products, Clothing, Electronics, etc.) from influencers



How Consumers Define Influencers

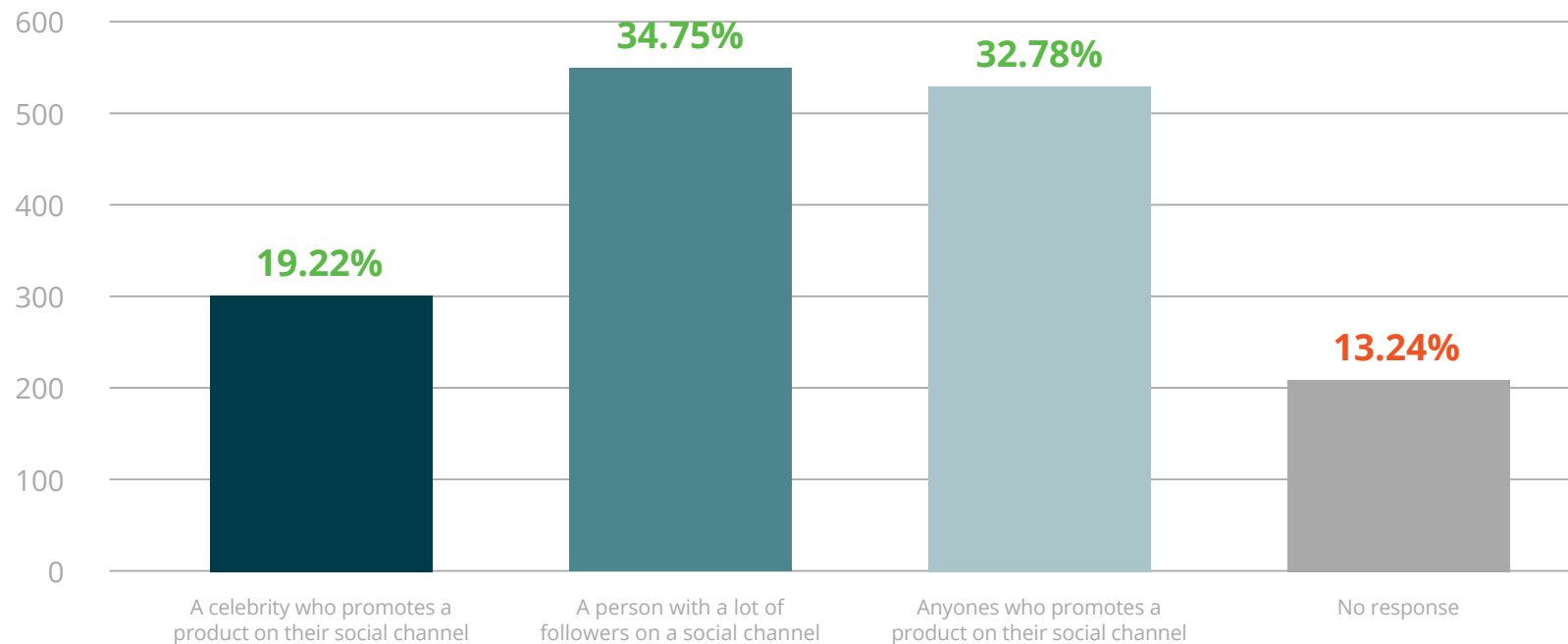
How Consumers Define Influencers

The day of the celebrity-endorsed product is far from over, but it's slowly becoming overshadowed by the rise of micro marketers—individuals with a smaller but more engaged and trusting follower base.

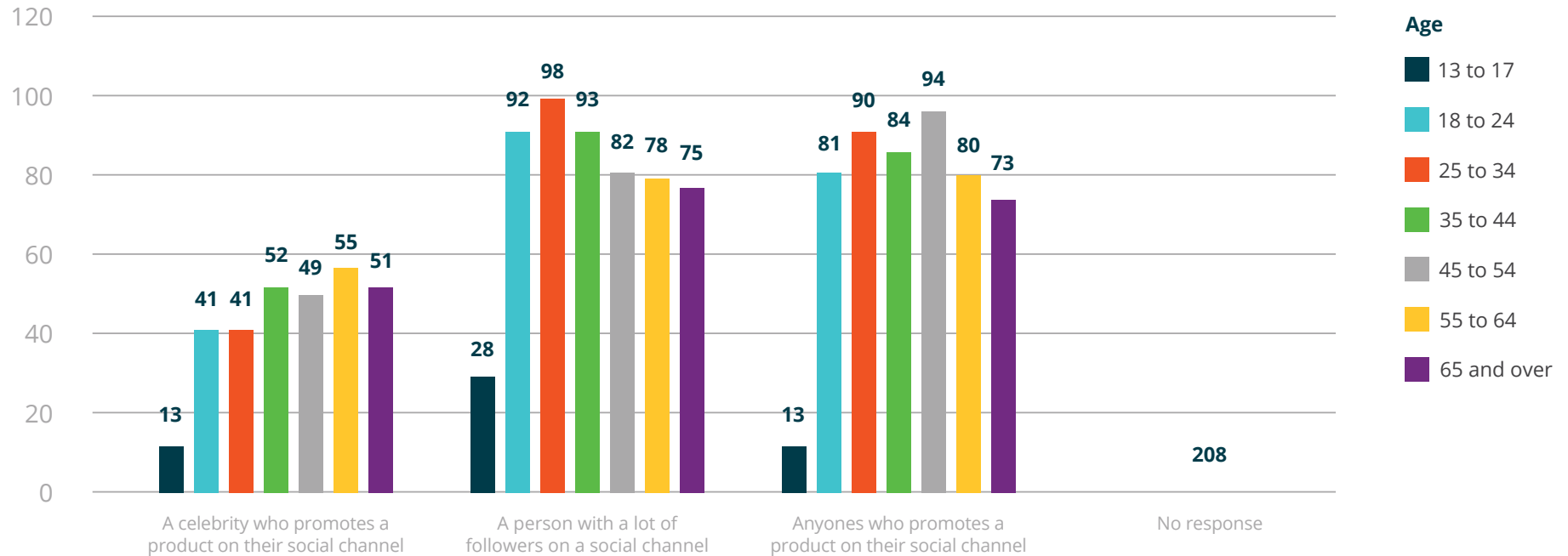
Fewer than 20% of our survey participants defined influencers as celebrities, while the the remaining ~80% defined an influencer as one of the following:

- A person with a lot of followers on a social channel
- Anyone who promotes a product on their social channel

Which one of these statements best describes an 'influencer' on social media?



Which one of these statements best describes an 'influencer' on social media?



When we break this down by age, we find that 13-17 year olds tend to define influencers as people with lots of followers—not just anyone who promotes a product.

Other responses include:

- “Friends who promote”
- “Personal friend endorsement”
- “People I know saying it's a good item”

To put it bluntly: Trust means everything in influencer marketing.

This is particularly true for [Gen Z-ers, who will soon make up 40% of all consumers](#)—but less important to older generations, who still lean towards the celebrity definition.

But how far does that trust go?

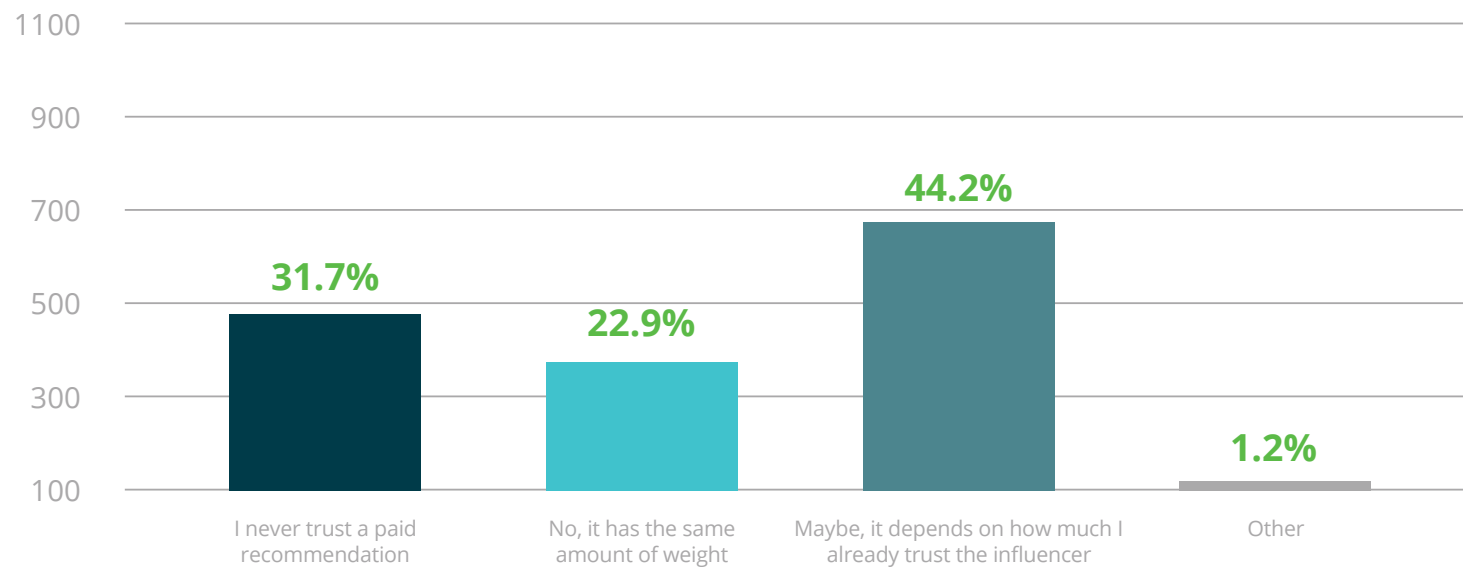


Consumer Trust in Influencer Recommendation



Consumer Trust in Influencer Recommendation

When you know someone is being paid to promote a product, are you less likely to trust their recommendation?

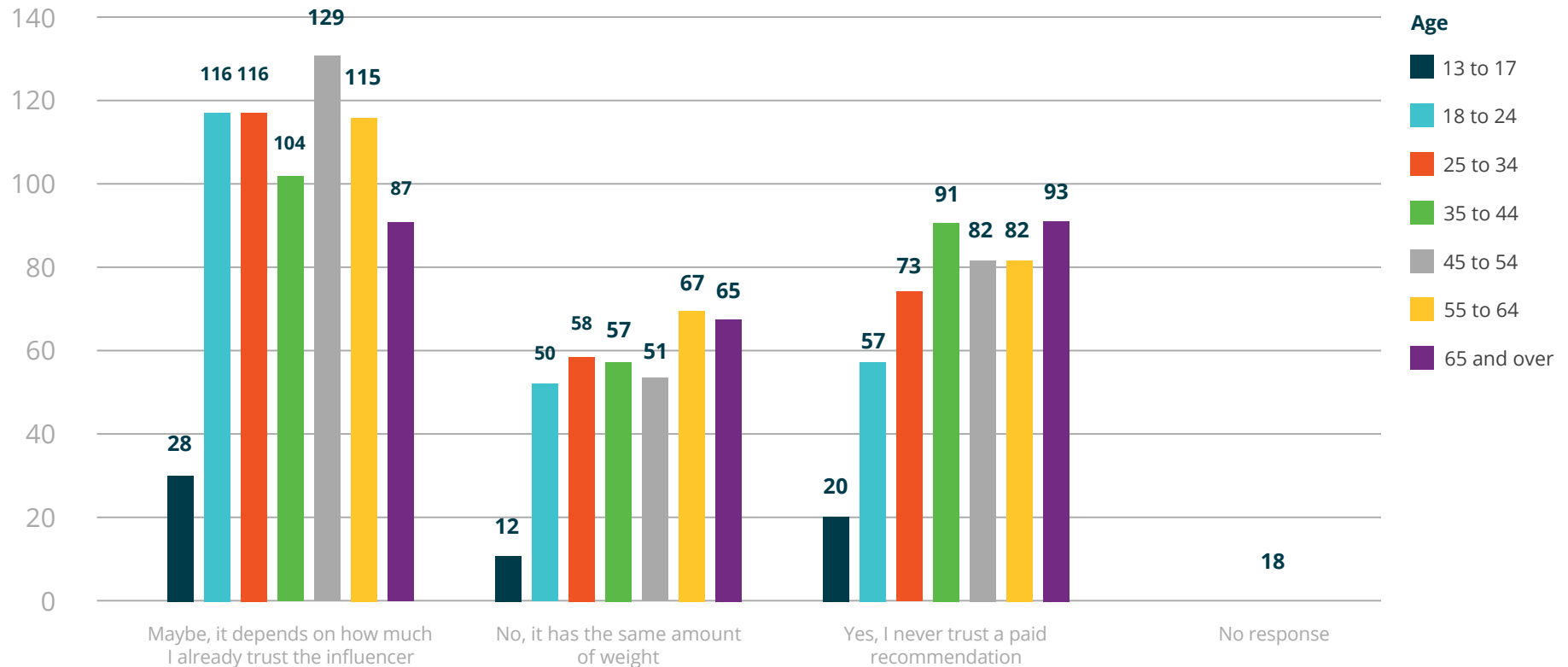


To 44% of our respondents, this was impossible to answer without further information—mainly, it depends on how much they already trust the influencer.

This further illustrates the idea that a consumer's relationship with an influencer matters.

However, this data varies slightly when we look into age ranges. Gen X and Baby Boomers (45-65+) are the most likely to state they "never trust a paid recommendation", a far cry from Gen Z-ers.

When you know someone is being paid to promote a product, are you less likely to trust their recommendation?



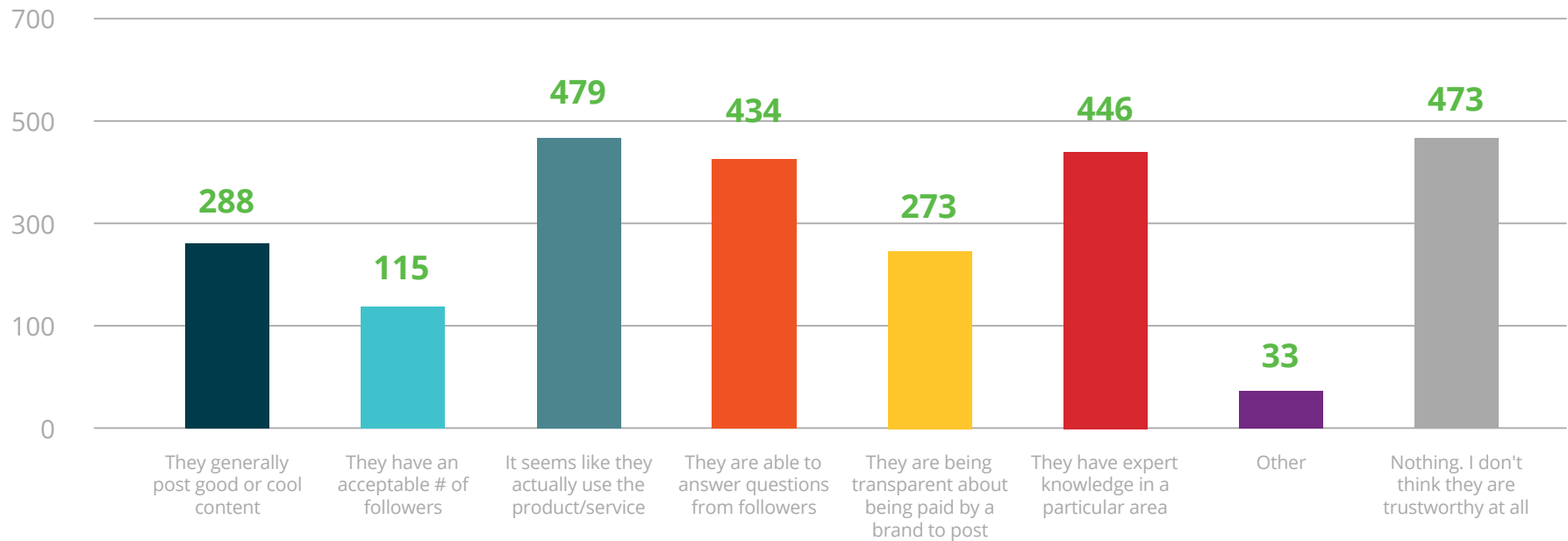
Do Consumers Notice Influencer's Ads?



Do Consumers Notice Influencer's Ads?

It's not a shock that consumers value transparency. However, there were two standout points from the following chart.

What makes a recommendation from someone you don't know personally but follow on social media trustworthy?
(Multi-Select)





It's not just about the number of followers an influencer has, or whether they disclose that their post is sponsored by a company. Consumers sway towards:

- Influencers who actually seem to use the product they're recommending (30.5%)
- Influencers who are actually experts in a particular area (28.4%)

To illustrate this point, one survey participant wrote: "They give honest feedback about a product right before our eyes."

Beyond this, several respondents chose to "trust but verify," paying attention to recommendations, but doing their own research and browsing reviews before making a purchase.

Either way, consumers will have a more positive view of an influencer's paid promotion if they have deep expertise or experience in a particular area.



Top Social Platforms to Reach Consumers

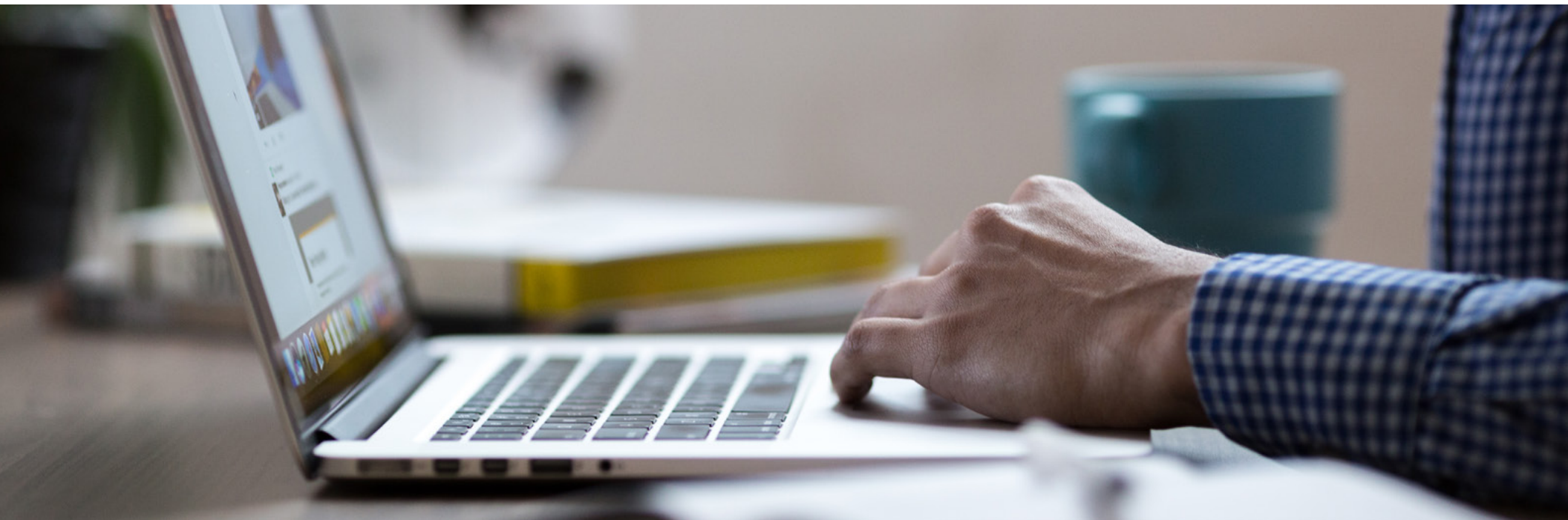
Top Social Platforms to Reach Consumers

There are definitely some savvy consumers out there who can spot a sponsored post in the three seconds it takes to scroll past it. You can spot them in the responses below.

How do you determine if a post by someone you follow is being sponsored (paid for) by a brand?

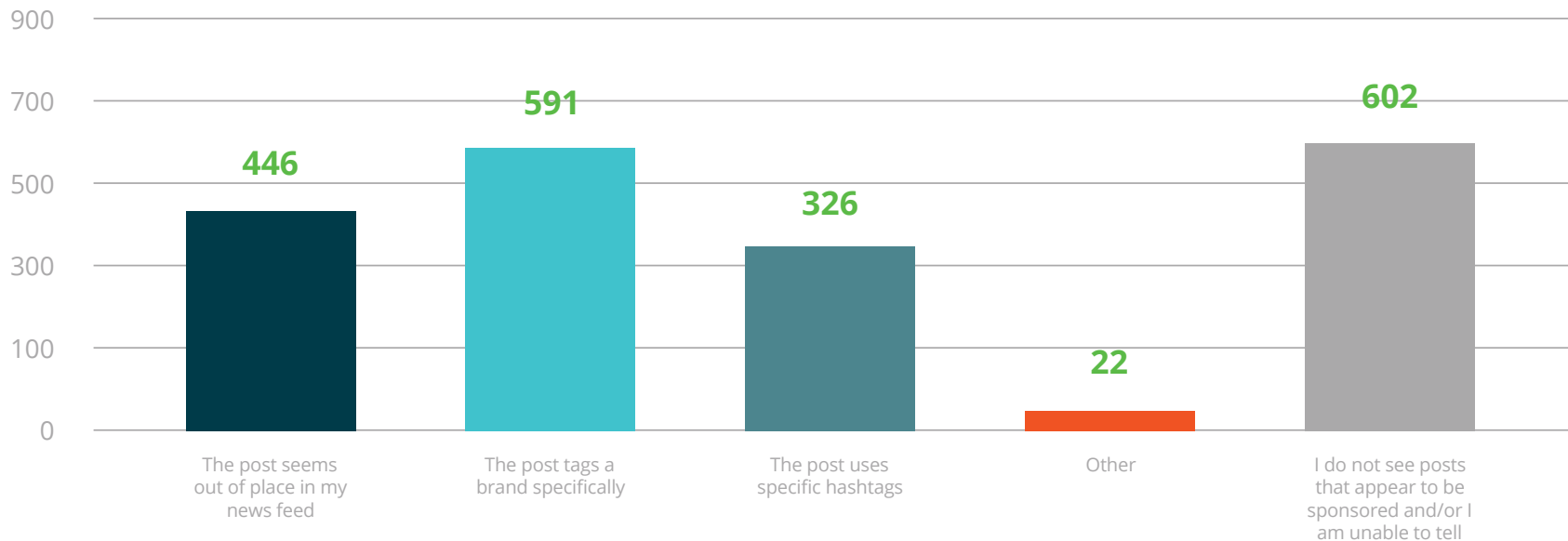
- "I just assume"
- "Common sense"
- "I figure almost all are paid for"

However, 40% of consumers can't tell at all when an influencer's post is sponsored by a brand.



How do you determine if a post from someone you follow is being sponsored (paid for) by a brand?

(Multi-Select)



There are two reasons this might be happening:

1. Influencers aren't disclosing paid promotions
2. There isn't a widely known standard for disclosing paid posts on social media

Both of these could be true. There are definitely various methods out there—whether it uses specific hashtags such as #spon or #ad or it tags a brand specifically—but there are bound to be outliers.

Considering most consumers aren't distrustful of paid promotions by influencers they trust, the lack of ability to differentiate may not be a bad thing.

The stat that's keeping us up at night (and should keep you up, too) is that 28.4% of consumers feel that a paid promotion seems out of place in their news feed. That's a sign of either poor targeting, creative, or both, which are detrimental to your influencer marketing strategy.

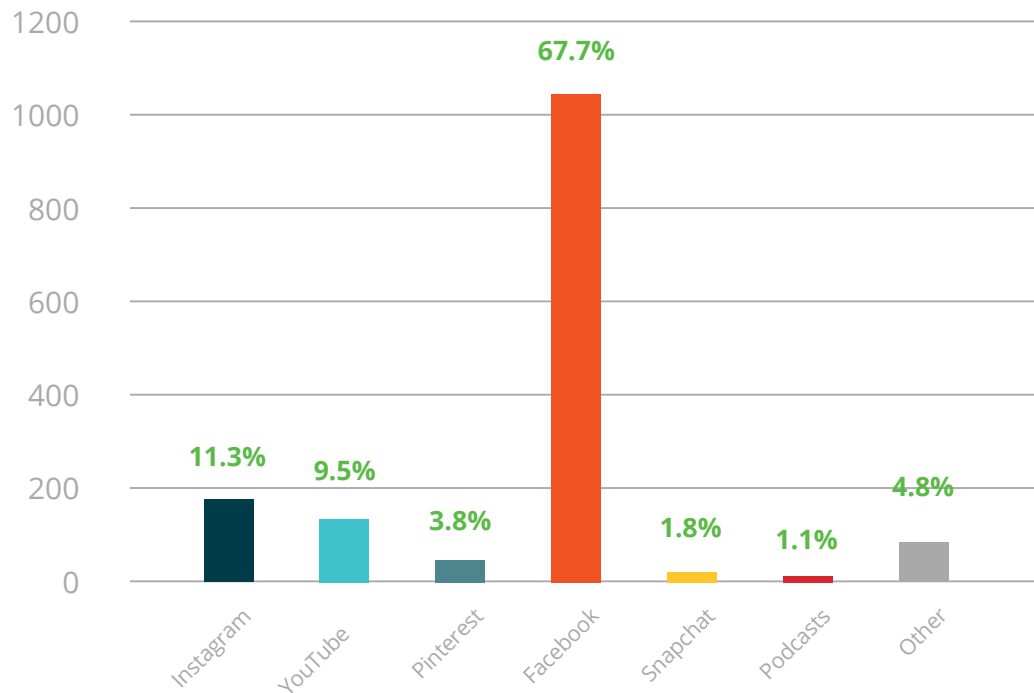




Facebook is the best place to reach consumers over 25, Instagram is the best place to reach Gen Z

Nearly 70% of consumers are most likely to hear about new products, services, or events from people they follow on Facebook.

Where are you most likely to hear about new products, services, or events from people you follow?

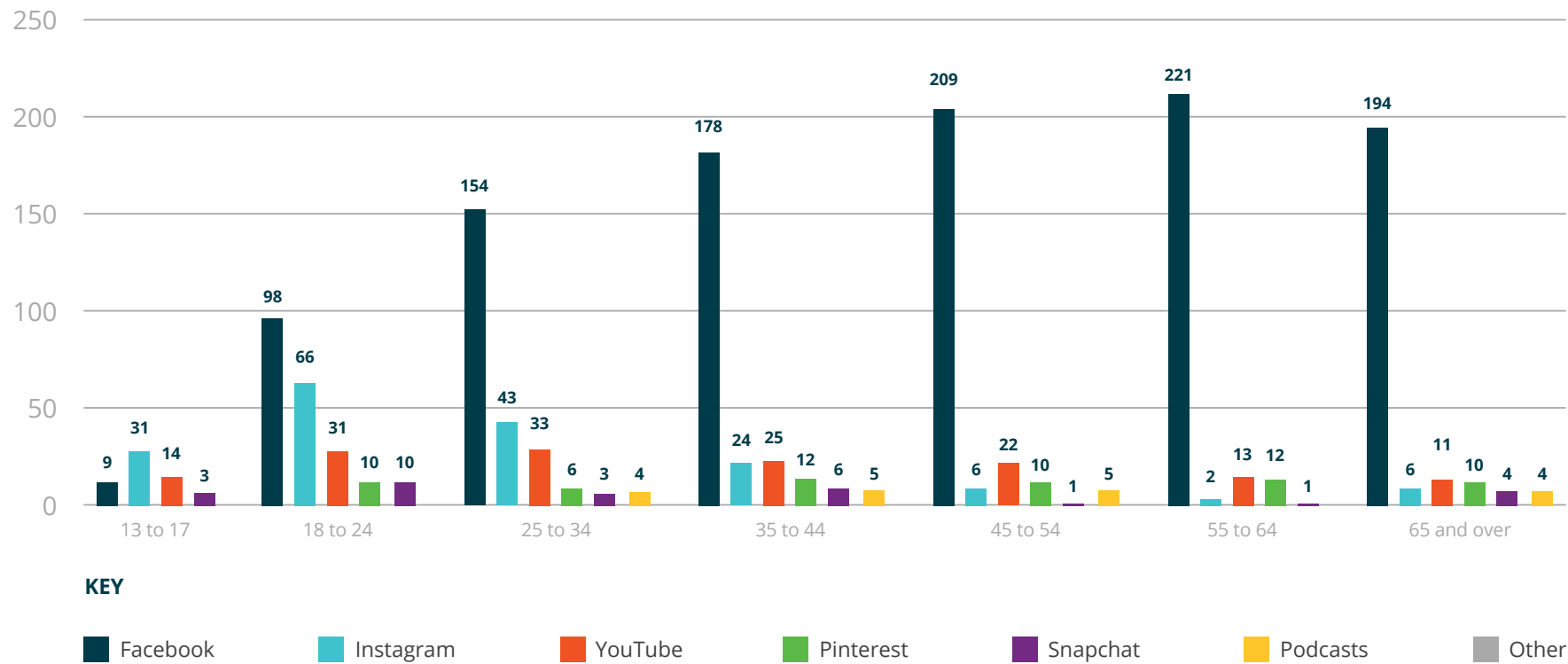


We must account for the wide split between Facebook users in this survey when compared to, say, podcasts. (See methodology for more information about the social networks respondents use).

When we cross reference ages, we find that Facebook is the best place to reach consumers over 25 and Instagram is the best place to reach the Gen Z set (13-24 year olds).

Coming in second and third place, we have two very popular spots for macro and micro influencers: Instagram and YouTube.

Where are you most likely to hear about new products, services, or events from people you follow?





Genders reveal differences as well.

Men are more likely than women to learn about new products, services, or events via YouTube or Snapchat compared to women. Women are more swayed by Pinterest. See the chart below for breakdowns across channels. creative to drive those sales.

Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube are well suited for an influencer marketing strategy, as they rely heavily on networks of a user's friends, powerful targeting options, and compelling creative to drive those sales.

	FEMALE	MALE	% of TOTAL
Instagram	11% 105	11% 73	11% 178
YouTube	8% 76	11% 73	9.5% 149
Pinterest	5% 44	2% 16	3.5% 60
Facebook	69% 642	65% 421	68% 1063
Snapchat	1% 9	3% 19	2% 28
Podcasts	1% 10	1% 8	1% 18
Other	4% 39	6% 36	5% 75



Products & Events Come Out on
Top for Influencer Marketing



Products & Events Come Out on Top for Influencer Marketing

22% of consumers reported they were most likely to purchase products (Beauty Products, Clothing, Electronics, etc.) from influencers.

Which of the following have you purchased as a result of seeing a social media post from someone you don't know personally?

(Multi-Select)

	FEMALE	MALE	% of TOTAL
Event (Concert, Show, Music Festival, etc.)	15% 191	18% 164	16.5% 355
Travel (Destination, Hotel, Attraction, etc.)	11% 140	13% 119	12% 259
Product (Beauty Products, Clothing, Electronics, etc.)	25% 326	18% 165	21.5% 491
Service (Dining, Photography, Hairdressing, etc.)	12% 156	12% 116	11% 272
None of the above	38% 497	40% 371	39% 868



Women accounted for the largest segment of product purchasers when compared with men (25% vs 18% respectively), while events such as shows and music festivals came in second (16%) across all ages.

Gen Z & Gen Y are more likely than any other age groups to purchase event tickets as a result of seeing a social media post by someone they don't know personally, whereas ages 45-65+, reported they were the most likely to make travel/destination/attraction purchases.



The Bottom Line



The Bottom Line

We hate to say it, but consumers will most likely trust an influencer's ad more than they'll trust a newly introduced brand's direct ad. That's why you have to carefully select influencers who will continue to foster that trust to reach your target audience.

Micro influencers are nearly at the peak of their popularity, and brands that don't create a strategy around social media influencer campaigns will miss out.

The movement towards micro influencers pose a cheaper investment for brands, but don't be fooled. Hunting influencer marketers in a particular niche is far more difficult than it sounds. On top of this, brands must build and maintain relationships with said influencers.

The good news is that when influencer marketing works, it *really* works. A [recent study](#) showed that 82% of consumers have a higher likelihood of acting upon recommendations from micro-influencers than average influencers.

What are you waiting for?



Ready to dive in?

CPC Strategy's Paid Social Evaluation is a complimentary 60-minute analysis and assessment of a retailer's existing social advertising strategy, campaigns, targeting settings, audiences, profitability metrics, and more.

[SCHEDULE YOUR PAID SOCIAL EVALUATION](#)

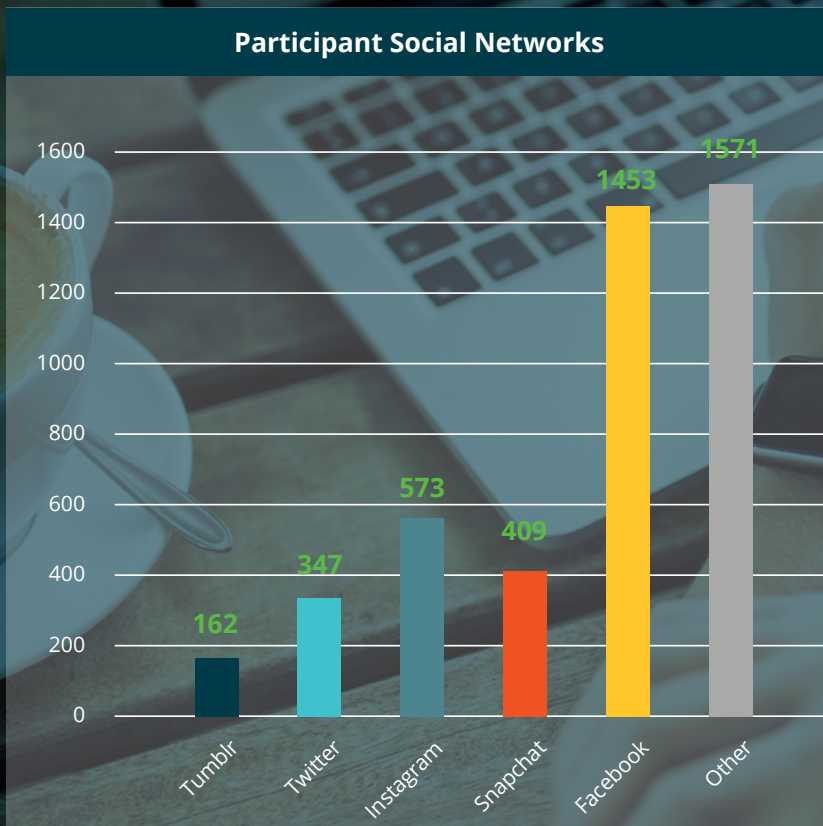


We Turn Browsers Into Buyers

Methodology Details

This survey was commissioned by CPC Strategy and conducted by Survata, an independent research firm in San Francisco. Survata interviewed 1571 online respondents between April 23, 2018 and April 24, 2018. Respondents were reached across the Survata publisher network, where they take a survey to unlock premium content, like articles and ebooks. Respondents received no cash compensation for their participation. More information on Survata's methodology can be found at survata.com/methodology.

Participant Ages	
Row Labels	Count of Age
13 to 17	60
18 to 24	223
25 to 34	247
35 to 44	256
45 to 54	268
55 to 64	268
65 and over	249
Grand Total	1571



Participant Genders	
Row Labels	Count of Gender
Female	925
Male	646
Grand Total	1571

