

Influencer Trend

April 2026

@nabela



Report

It Started With One Post...

...And then the internet ran with it. From CEO taste tests to nostalgia-driven content and cinematic teasers, trends are forming fast as creators spark and brands scale what takes over the feed.

Culture Takeover Loading

The next wave of culture is incoming, with the World Cup and seasonal moments set to drive conversation, content, and connection amongst brands, creators and audiences.

Built for the Scroll

Updates from Instagram and TikTok make the experience more intuitive, flexible, and aligned with how users actually scroll, search, and engage.

LTK Tightens the Reins

LTK's latest contract updates tighten creator control as stricter terms around monetization, content rights, and platform use push creators and brands to rethink where and how partnerships happen.

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CEO Taste Tests

After McDonald's CEO was caught on camera looking unimpressed mid-bite, creators took off and competitors followed fast. Burger King and Wendy's CEOs jumped into the conversation, with **BK's Whopper taste test pulling 23.1M views and a 7.23% engagement rate**. It's giving Pepsi vs. Coke, reimagined for TikTok. Less polish, more proof. Creators are driving momentum through reactions and commentary, while brands are turning leadership into unexpected on-screen talent. The new battleground isn't the TV spot, it's the feed, where real-time audience response is shaping brand love.

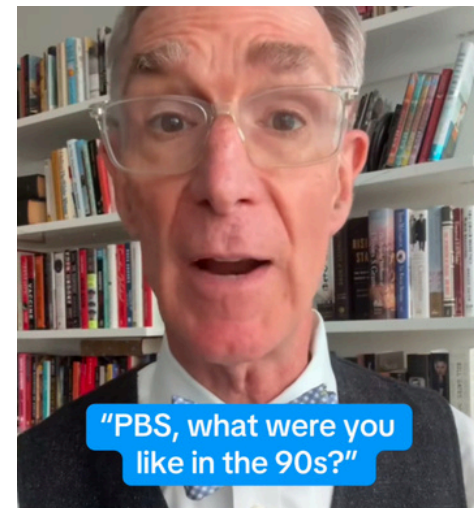
@burgerking



What Was It Like in the 90s?

What started as creators asking their parents about life in the 90s has quickly evolved into a full nostalgia moment. Brands are joining in by resurfacing throwback stores, products, and logos, tapping into real audience reactions to drive engagement. **@pbs** leaned in by sharing their iconic characters and shows from the '90s, with the post pulling in over 2.1M views. The takeaway: creators spark the trend, but **brands earn relevance by showing up in ways that feel native to the conversation**.

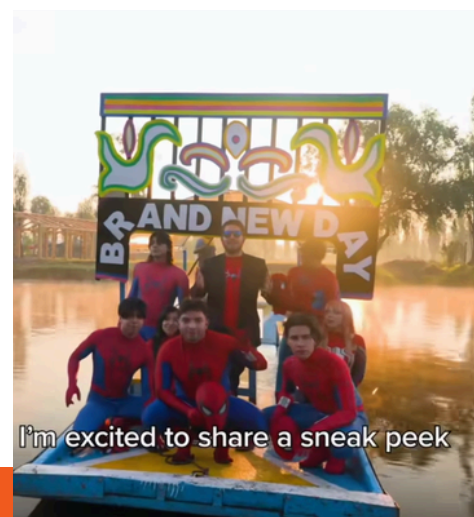
@pbs



Spider Man Teaser Tactics

Marvel flipped the traditional trailer drop into a global creator moment. Instead of releasing a full trailer, *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* first tapped superfans to debut exclusive two-second clips, **turning fandom creators into the first point of access**. Rolled out across the globe, each clip became a piece of the puzzle, driving users to watch, connect, and anticipate what was coming next. By turning anticipation into participation, Marvel built early credibility and momentum through fan-driven voices like **@theamazingalexarellano** and **@osuspidey**, driving 65.7k and 75.7k engagements ahead of releasing the full length trailer.

@theamazingalexarellano



Culture Takeover Loading

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World Cup 2026

The World Cup is always a cultural force, shaping conversations, content, and fandom worldwide. This time, **brands are taking a creator & social first approach**, with athletes stepping into roles as influencers and long-term partners.

Major deals reflect the shift. American Eagle's partnership with Lamine Yamal and Unilever's campaign with Clint Dempsey show brands investing in athletes for their cultural reach, not just their dribbling skills.

Beyond partnerships, the World Cup anthem is becoming its own moment. Early reactions to Jelly Roll and Carín León's track are already being compared to icons like *Waka Waka*, but the question remains: will anything top Shakira's?

For brands, the opportunity extends far beyond professional athletes. Soccer-immersed creators can bring the culture to life, **translating the moment into emotional, comedic, and relatable content that travels across markets.**



Real People, Real Moments

Coachella

Coachella has long been dominated by big-name creators. Now, **smaller creators like @tarynrose are flipping the script, pitching brands directly to take them** and gaining traction across feeds. The opportunity: look beyond top-tier talent. First-time goers bring more excitement, more content, and a perspective that feels closer to the everyday consumer.

Mother's Day

As the day approaches, creators' gift guides and promo codes will flood feeds. Last year marked a shift toward more thoughtful messaging. **Brands like Prose and Heyday introduced opt-out emails and softer campaigns**, signaling a move toward more inclusive, intentional marketing. It's less about pushing product, more about meeting audiences where they are during a deeply personal moment.

Graduation

Graduation is a creator-first moment rooted in nostalgia, and reflection, consistently showing up as a catalyst for viral trends across feeds. It's a **high-volume, cross-regional moment primed for creator-led storytelling** that scales quickly. **@karianahi888's** take on last year's viral trend earned over 250k likes and 1.3M views.

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Instagram Updates: More Control, Better Consumption

What's New

- **Tap to pause Reels:** Easier to read on-screen text, rewatch moments, and consume at your own pace
- **Editable Carousel order (post-publish):** Reorder posts after going live to lead with stronger hooks, reshape the story, or improve performance

Why it Matters

- Better alignment with how users actually consume content
- More flexibility for creators and brands to refine content in real time

Platforms are evolving to be more user-driven and intuitive, putting control and customization at the center of the experience.

TikTok Local Feed: Discovery Gets Hyper-Local

TikTok's reshaping how content is discovered, prioritizing videos tied to specific cities and regions.

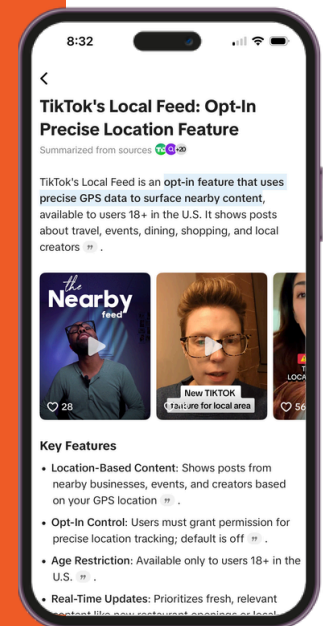
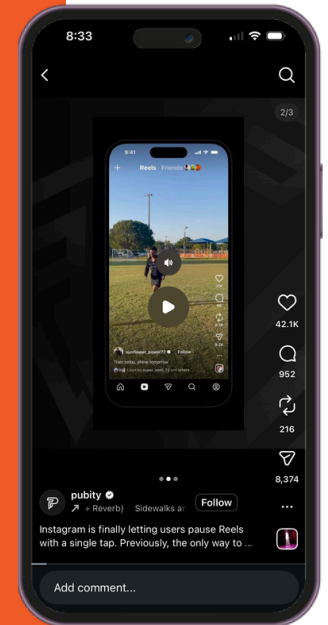
What's Changing

- **For brands:** Greater opportunity for location-driven visibility
 - Content that signals where it's rooted (captions, text, voiceover) will surface more
- **For creators:** Proximity becomes part of the strategy
 - Local audience building and geo-specific partnerships gain importance

Why it Matters

- Regional creator discovery becomes easier, making it simpler to find and cast local talent
- More precise regional targeting, allowing campaigns to reach audiences within specific geographies

Local relevance is becoming a key growth lever, bridging digital discovery with real-world impact.



LTK Tightens the Reins

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Control in the Creator Economy

LTK's latest contract updates are raising serious concerns, introducing stricter **controls that shift power away from creators and back to the platform**. Key changes include:

- Expanded AI usage rights, allowing LTK to use creator content to train and develop AI tools
- Terms that grant LTK broad control over creator content, including rights to use, modify, and distribute it to brand partners
- The ability to terminate creators from the platform while retaining rights to their content
- Limitations on legal recourse, restricting how creators can challenge these terms
- A \$50,000 penalty clause for creators who violate any rules on AI, non-disparagement, confidentiality, or competition

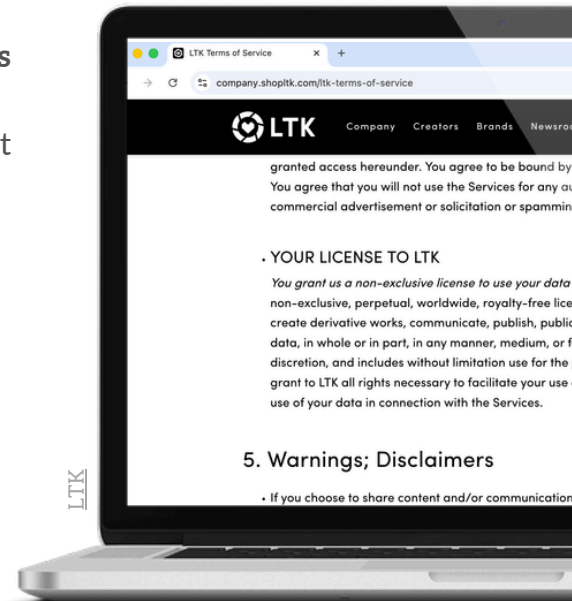
For creators, this means less control over their content and greater risk in how and where they monetize, while **brands face added complexity as platform rules dictate deliverables, usage, and ownership**. As these dynamics intensify, they're actively **reshaping where creators choose to show up, how they structure partnerships**, and which platforms they prioritize for long-term growth.

Ovative's POV

As LTK tightens control, it **risks straining creator relationships**, both with those already on the platform and those hesitant to engage under increasingly restrictive terms.

Rather than relying on rigid ecosystems, **we prioritize partnerships through platforms like ShopMy that offer greater transparency, flexibility, and creator ownership without restrictive terms**.

This approach aligns with where creators are moving and enables our clients to build more sustainable, high-performing creator ecosystems long term.



We are Change Makers

If you're seeking creator
support, reach out!

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