

Influencer Trend Report





Passing the Vibe Check

The internet is fixated on three very different things: what's worth the money, Jimothy the racoon, and the word "chic." Each revealing how users signal taste, find joy, and express identity.



Creator Economy Live

Ovative's Influencer team hit Creator Economy Live to bring back what's actually working. Search starts on TikTok, one-off posts don't cut it, and briefs don't need to be over-engineered.



Fashion Forecast

We're unpacking Pinterest's fall fashion data, and what the surge in search across these three fashion codes says about styling for the season ahead.



The Authenticity Audit

Three creators called out the same thing: brands claim they want "authentic" but provide briefs that completely disallow that. We break down what's happening and when to loosen the reins.

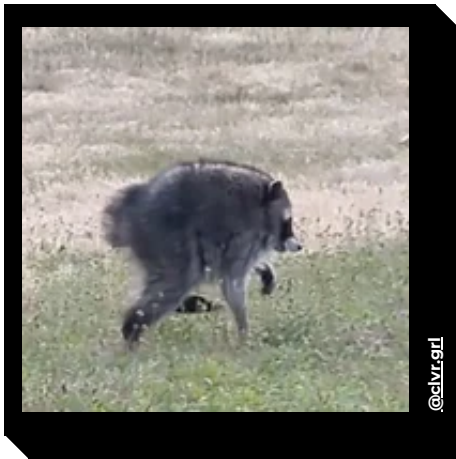
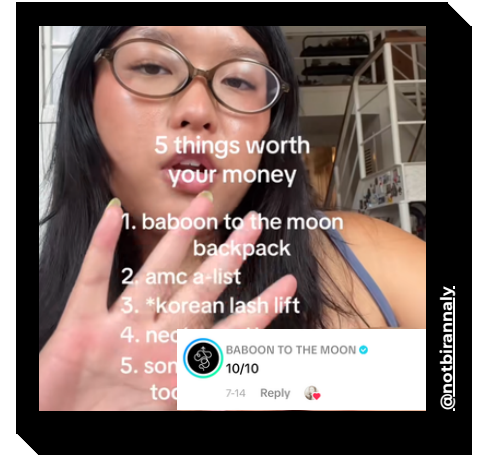
Passing the Vibe Check

August 2026

5 Things Worth the Money

Creators are ditching the haul video for something more editorial: a tight, opinionated list of exactly five things they'd defend as worth the price tag. Some go pure product rec like a camera, sneakers, and good moisturizer. Others get more philosophical, romanticizing necessary costs, like rent being "worth it" for the life and city it buys you. The format is catching on across every tier, from mega creators sharing takes to smaller accounts going viral off one contrarian pick.

The brand opportunity is earned inclusion. It reads as a *genuine* opinion, so **a product that lands on someone's list unprompted may be worth more than a dozen sponsored posts**. Brands, keep an eye out for these organic mentions of YOUR company, **showing up in the comments is an easy way to turn a moment of genuine praise into real community**.



Meet Jimothy

Jimothy, an unusually shaped raccoon from Seattle's Ballard neighborhood, has become the internet's latest superstar hero after Kiana Hall posted a viral video of him scurrying across the park. His distinctive shape stems from a congenital spinal deformity, but the internet's response has been less pity and more pure affection: fan art, memes, a [Google search](#) Easter egg, and a cameo in [Roku City](#) have turned him into a symbol of collective, oddly wholesome joy.

In a feed environment that sometimes feels fractured or cynical, **Jimothy is the reminder that the internet loves to rally around something wholesome and entertaining**. The brands didn't create him, and there's no clean narrative arc, just an unbothered raccoon living his life while the internet decides to love him for it.

Kinda Chic To...

"Chic" has become the internet's favorite catch-all, **slapped on everything from a \$400 coat to eating cereal for dinner alone**. Users aren't just saying it, they're searching it; "chic things to do" is up over 1000% in the last 30 days on TikTok's Creator Search Insights. **Creators use it to reframe their choices with total confidence**: it's chic to start over in your 30s, chic to stay in, chic to use cash. What started as a style word has become shorthand for conviction; it's a way to say "This is me, and I'm owning it." It stretches from the surface (the latest cool-girl sneaker) all the way to the profound (living your life to the fullest, on your own terms), and that range is exactly why it resonates.

For brands, it's less about the word and more about what it signals. So the real question is: what does chic look like through your brand's lens, and are you giving your audience permission to own it?



Creator Economy Live

 August 2026

Straight from New York City

Two days, fifty-plus speakers, and one clear signal: **creators are quietly powering search, discovery, and retention.** Ovative's Influencer team was on the ground at Creator Economy Live to unpack where influencer is headed. Here's what's worth implementing in your strategy.

1. The Default Path to Discovery has Changed

74% of Gen Z searches on TikTok before Google, ChatGPT's referrals are already out-converting organic search and social, and the way creators talk about a brand matters. **Brand names, product claims, and problem-solution language need to show up clearly in voiceovers, on-screen text, and captions** if brands want content to be found, understood, and repeated.

2. One Post Won't Save You

Forget the one big creative swing. The real formula is **frequency + consistency + a mix of sources.** No single post or campaign is carrying your brand anymore. The winning brands are building always-on systems, showing up with enough frequency and variation that they become culturally familiar over time. In today's environment, consistency is what creates recall.

3. Let Creators Do What They Do Best: Create

The best line from the brief debate: **if it can't fit on one page, it's too much for a creator to retain.** Brands are learning the hard way that over-scripting *the concept* kills the exact thing that made the creator worth hiring in the first place. But the move isn't always a shorter brief, it's knowing what kind of content each creator makes, and leaning into that instead of forcing brand perspective onto it. **Less brief means a tighter, more collaborative one, not a lighter touch.**



Content Format Shoutout: Long Form Video

Many sessions made a point of leveling up on one format in particular: long-form video. A prime example shared at CEL was the Chicago Bulls NBA team using long-form YouTube content to pull triple duty: reach international fans, hit partnership deliverables natively, and stretch singular events across days instead of losing it to a 24-hour news cycle. **One livestream pulled 64K+ peak concurrent viewers and 30+ minutes of average watch time.** Long-form isn't fighting short-form for attention, it's doing a job short-form structurally can't.

Fashion Forecast

 August
2026

Pinterest's Fall Dress Code

Pinterest's Fall 2026 report shows fashion getting more specific this season. With 631 million people using the platform to plan ahead, Pinterest is catching these shifts *before* the new season buying peaks. Rather than one overarching "fall aesthetic," **three specific outfit codes are leading the charge**, and the search numbers prove it.



1. Polished Prep

Prep is getting a grown-up refresh, led by campus and work-wear creators building "get ready for class/the office" content around modular, crisp pieces instead of nostalgic school-uniform styling.

- "Polo shirt outfit" ↑ 84%
- "Button down shirt outfit men" ↑ 96%

2. Sport Social Club

This one's being built almost entirely by creators dressing for the *experience* around sport, not the sport itself: tailgate fits, tournament outfits, post-game hangs.

- "Baseball game outfit women" ↑ 491%
- "Pickleball outfit" ↑ 134%

3. Scarf Situation

One accessory is unlocking multiple outfit moves. Pinner are using scarves and bandanas not just as finishing touches, but as styling tools: shaping a silhouette, personalizing a bag, or giving a basic outfit a more intentional twist.

- "Scarf around waist outfit" ↑ 322%
- "Head scarf outfits" ↑ 113%

Pinterest isn't just a place to advertise, it's where the tastemakers are already deciding what's next, and brands showing up early help to set the pace instead of chasing it.

The Authenticity Audit

August 2026

The Script behind the 'Unscripted'

Three creators, one week, the same core complaint: brands say "authentic," and mean something else entirely.

[@dumbrblnd](#) said the word "organic" needs to be retired from brand briefs, because it rarely describes what's actually being asked for; she's told to sound casual while hitting every product benefit, then survives a review round that rewrites her hook, clip order, and captions until nothing sounds like her. [@jacimariesmith](#) backed it up independently, pointing to AI-reviewed edits as the accelerant: "*the creativity is getting stripped day by day*". [@bran_flakezz](#)'s take came from the other side of the table: the PR he actually posts about is the PR that's personal and something that proves brands *know* his life; It's not just a mass seeding blast.

Different complaints, same root: **authenticity is getting engineered out at the exact moment brands are asking for more of it.**

O/g's POV

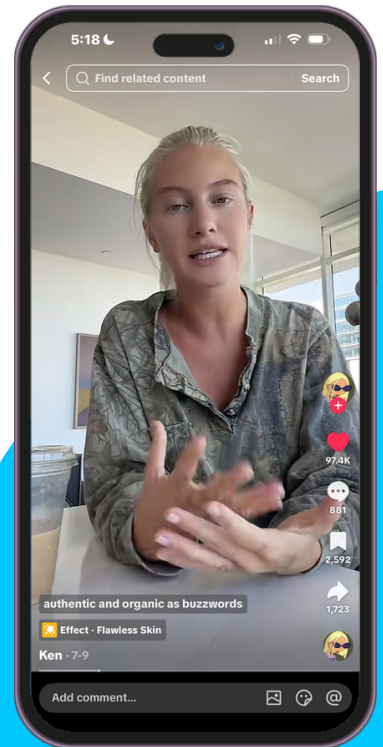
They're right to feel it, but there's a nuance worth sitting on: all three of these voices are macro, lifestyle creators. That's not a coincidence, and it matters for how we read this trend.

Authenticity isn't one-size-fits-all. It shifts by archetypes. A haul or Amazon-storefront creator jumping straight into product talk *is* being authentic since that's their genre, but a comedy or storytelling creator hard-cutting to "I partnered with..." breaks the format. So the brief has to flex: high-intent creators can take direction well while entertainment creators need autonomy.

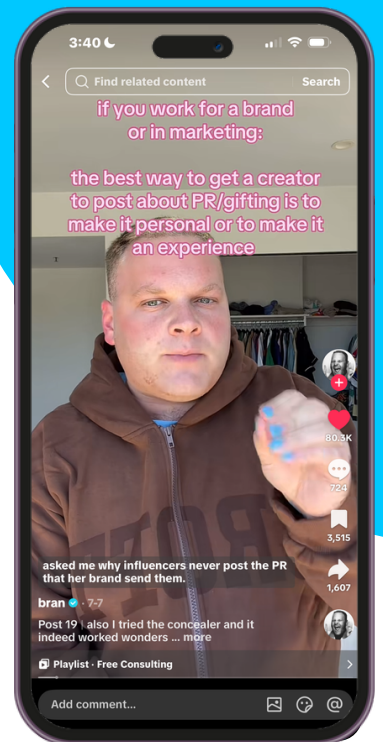
Creator tier adds a second layer. For an emerging creator, the brand deal itself is the win and excitement lives in the opportunity. For a mega creator, partnership requests aren't rare, so the friction shows up as a demand for creative control to ensure they show up to their large, carefully built audience *authentically*.

It's not just a feeling, it shows up in the numbers.

For one O/g client, we tested it: we loosened creative restrictions and must-have talking points in the brief MoM. **The result: ER +188% MoM across Meta & TikTok and revenue +217% MoM on ShopMy.** More creator ownership made posts feel native, not scripted.



[@dumbrblnd](#)



[@bran_flakezz](#)

Fearlessly Unlocking Potential for your creator program.



**If you're seeking creator
support, reach out!**

influencer@ovative.com

NYC | CHI | MPLS