

# 'Tis the season for online shopping

By [Greg Bailie](#)

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Instead of idly walking through malls and hoping to find the perfect gift, much of this year's discovery by consumers will be done online.



Source: © Antonio Guillem [123rf](#)

With consumers gearing up to spend their hard-earned cash, we are already surrounded by festive season décor and most brands have been promoting their Christmas deals for weeks.

Traditionally, this was done in stores, across billboards and festive-themed advertising but today the number one place brands need to be seen is on social media.

## Online shopping is fun

This is partly because of the ongoing pandemic, which continues to influence foot traffic through shopping centres, but mostly because how consumers engage with social media has shifted and social commerce is the result.

Shopping has always been fun – it's not called retail therapy for nothing – but social platforms have added an entirely new layer to the full retail experience.

These platforms use videos to blend our visual and auditory senses to tap into the thrill of discovering new brands and watching creators share their favourite things. Then the loop is closed because platforms are now enabling both brands and creators to create their own shopping storefronts.

Using shoppable content, our favourite content creators can now inspire us with a specific summer look or product review and at the tap of a screen we can instantly purchase and checkout right from the creator's account.

## Purchasing off content creators' platforms

This isn't the future – it's right now. With 88% of Gen Z and Millennials turning to social for guidance on their purchasing decisions, eight out of 10 consumers have purchased off the back of seeing it on a content creator's platform.

It's a phenomenon that's changing the way brands engage with consumers.

Take the partnership between Dunkin Donuts and Charli D'Amelio, the most popular TikTok star in the world with 125 million followers. Charli is 17 years old, and in 2020, when Dunkin Donuts collaborated with her to launch a signature cold brew drink with her name (the Charli), the result was a 20% increase in all cold brew sales on the day the collab was announced, followed by a 45% increase the following day.

No other form of advertising can trigger hundreds of thousands of people to suddenly want to try a new product.

## No place for advertising

Why does influencer marketing result in such big bumps in sales? The success of influencer campaigns come down to the creators themselves, who work extremely hard on building their own brands and cultivating an organic and engaged online following.

The best creators obsess over fun and creative ways to create content that people will love – and we do.

How many TikTok videos are shared through your WhatsApp group chats each day? What about your Instagram newsfeed and reels? This is all user-generated content and we love it!

What's particularly interesting about social commerce, however, is that users don't feel that advertising has no place in their social media feeds. Instead, they want to hear which brands influencers like and why.

We aren't opening our social media apps just to see what our friends are doing, we are using them for almost every aspect of our lives, from keeping up with current affairs, to entertainment to shopping.

## Four ways your brand can leverage influencer marketing this festive season:

1. **Determine if your sector will benefit from working with influencers:** According to a *Prosper Insights & Analytics' 2021 Media Behaviors & Influence Study*, digital media has the highest impact on electronics (37.5%) and clothing purchases (31.7%) followed by home improvement (25.6%) and beauty products (25.3%). This effect is multiplied by influencers.
2. **Find influencers who are genuine consumers of your product:** People trust the authenticity of influencers. This means that influencers are careful which brands they work with because a product, food or service needs to genuinely suit their values and lifestyles. The best way to partner with an influencer is through tech platforms like Webfluential & theSalt who are able to utilise deep level data and insights to match the right influencers (and their audiences) to your brand.
3. **Plan your platforms:** TikTok is exploding locally and brands are already seeing incredible results on the platform, but

great campaigns leverage multiple channels. For example, Charli D'Amelio is a TikTok star, but Dunkin Donuts leveraged Instagram to encourage her fans to post themselves with a Charli cold brew. Having a cross channel strategy can ensure you are reaching your audiences in their preferred platform, possibly in a different format.

4. **Ensure correct measurements are in place:** As always, we want to measure the real return an influencer or creator delivers. These are not brand building strategies – they need to deliver actual sales results. It's critical to ensure that you have considered the entire user journey and where you are directing your customers to ultimately checkout, whichever platform your influencers are using. Having the correct measurements in place will allow you to measure a true return on investment and will help you determine how your influencer campaign has delivered compared to other channels.

## Don't miss December and January

Most brands make a big marketing push in October and November and hope that it will carry them through the December and January period. While this is true, do not forget that users are on their social media platforms throughout the festive season and content creators will continue to do what they do best - create awesome content.

By working with influencers, you can ensure that your brand remains front and centre as the year draws to a close and the new year approaches.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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