

From Discovery
to Commerce
in the Social
Universe

A CMO's
Guide to
Turning Discovery
into Sales

Minds behind the report



(01)

Camila Tribín

Global Head of Social Media Excellence
at SAMY



(02)

Stef van der Burg

Strategy Lead
at team5pm



(03)

Patricia Aragón

Global Head of Social Commerce
at SAMY



(04)

Frank de Wit

Managing Director
at team5pm



Search for content

(01)



INTRODUCING A NEW SYSTEM: THE DISCOVERY-TO-COMMERCE LOOP

Why the funnel became a loop
The Discovery-to-Commerce Loop

(02)



DISCOVERABILITY: SEARCH ISN'T DISAPPEARING. IT'S MULTIPLYING

Intent: active vs passive
The social search layer (zoom-in)
Search behavior differs by platform
Case spotlights: HEMA, Philips Hue
Social search is feeding AI discovery

(03)



AUTHORITY: FROM BEING SEEN TO BEING CHOSEN

Creators as the trust layer between search and sale
Creator partnerships basics
From creator content to compounding discoverability

(04)



COMMERCE: THE NATURAL OUTCOME AFTER AUTHORITY

Global social worldwide, at a glance
The gap: turning authority into business impact
When social authority meets commerce (Rhode, Tefal)

(05)



SEARCH-TO-SALE ECOSYSTEMS (PLATFORM PLAYBOOK)

Who are the social shoppers?
Meta
Pinterest
YouTube
TikTok / TikTok Shop
Live formats: bol, L'Oréal Group

(06)



CONCLUSION: DESIGNING THE DISCOVERY-TO-COMMERCE LOOP

Embracing a holistic approach

(01)

Introducing a new system: The Discovery-to-Commerce Loop

Why the funnel became a loop

Discoverability, authority, and commerce now live in the same system

Social media never stands still. And neither do the 5.42 billion people using it worldwide. Platforms evolve, consumer behaviors shift, and AI is changing how people discover information. But one change matters more than most for brands in 2026: **the path from discovery to purchase is no longer linear.**

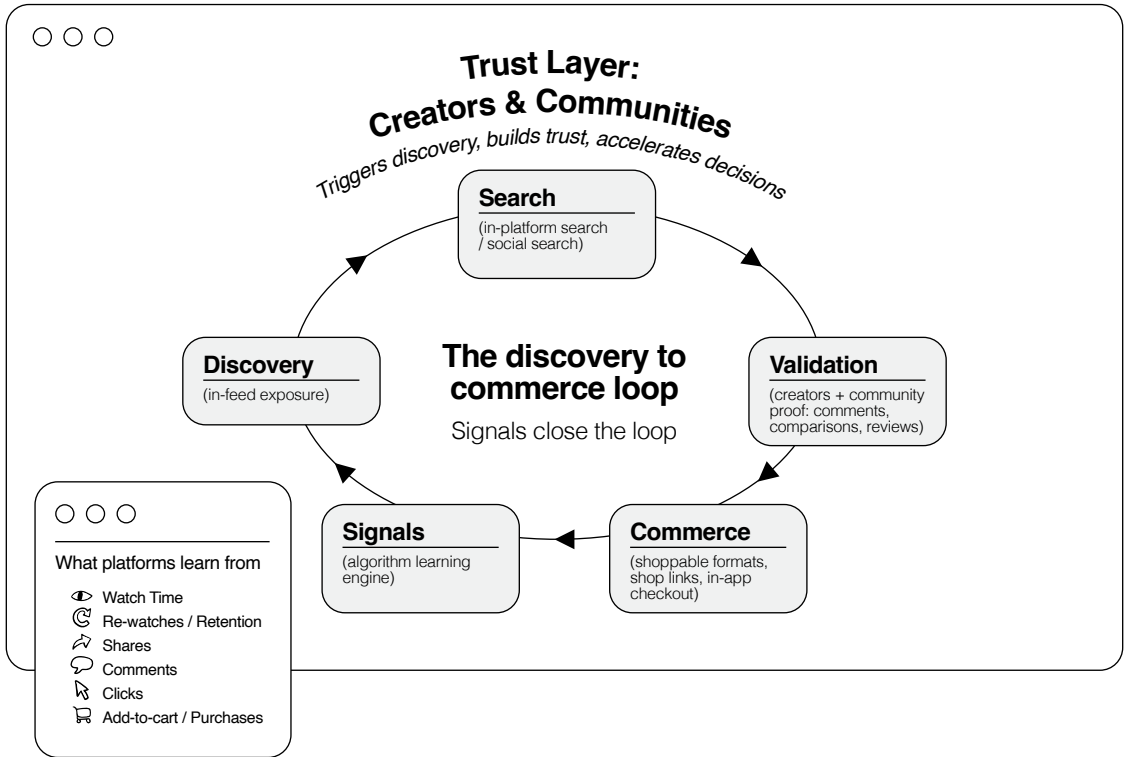
Brand discovery has always been complex, but one thing is becoming increasingly clear: people discover brands while searching for answers, not searching for brands. And those searches don't just happen on Google anymore. They happen in-feed and in-platform, across environments like TikTok, Pinterest, and Reddit, where content, creators, communities, and LLMs shape intent in real time.



The result isn't a funnel. It's a loop. We call it the **Discovery-to-Commerce Loop**: a continuous cycle where discovery triggers search, search triggers validation through social proof, and validation leads to purchase. Each action (watching, saving, sharing, commenting, clicking, buying) generates behavior signals that shape what gets surfaced next.

Throughout the journey, creators and communities act as the trust layer that accelerates decisions.

(01)



This paper explores the three key pillars driving the Discovery-to-Commerce Loop.

You'll learn:

Discoverability: how intent shows up through active search and passive exposure.

Authority: how brands become the trusted answer through creators, formats, and compounding systems.

Commerce: how to close the loop with the right shopping integrations, so commerce becomes confirmation, not persuasion.

Our goal is simple: help brands design for how discovery works now, so visibility compounds into authority, and authority turns into measurable demand across platforms.

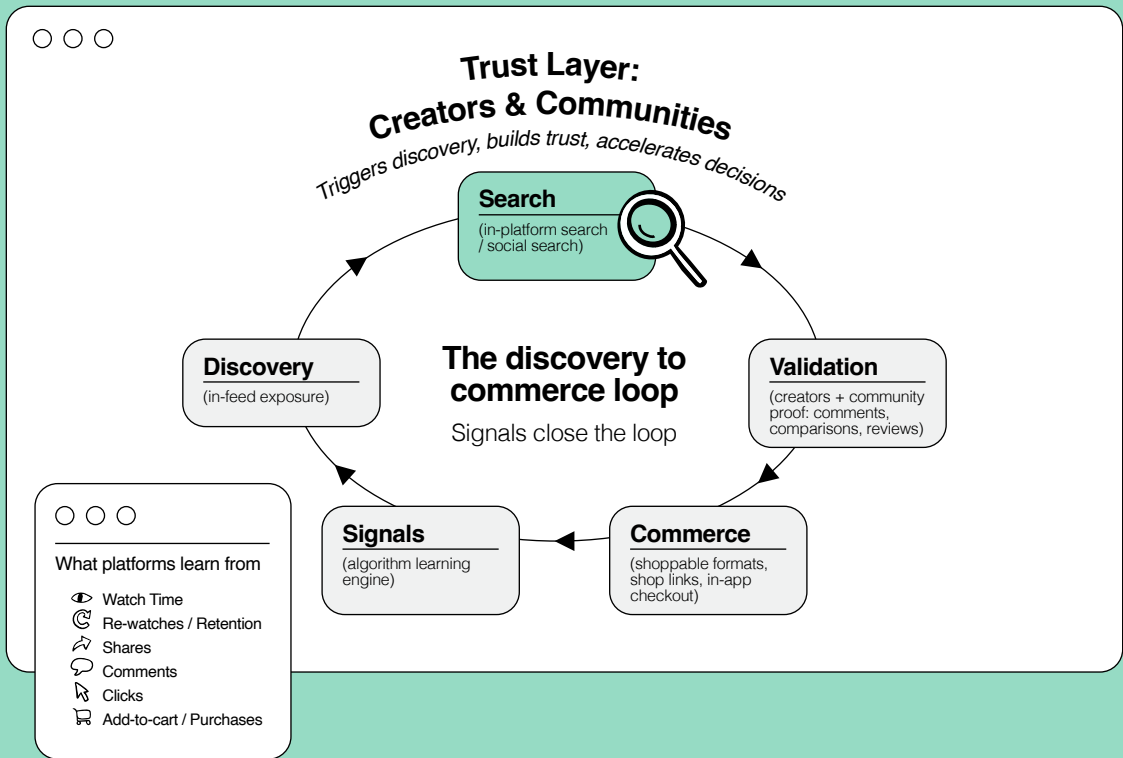
The advantage in 2026 will belong to brands that stop treating search, creators, and commerce as separate efforts, and start designing them as one **connected system**.

Let's get into it.

(02)

Discoverability: Search isn't disappearing. It's multiplying

Inside the loop: Pillar 1

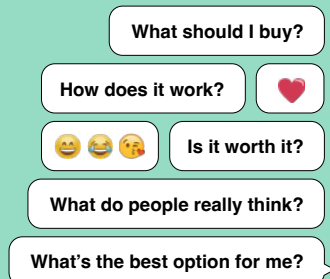


Brand discoverability in the social universe

In 2026, people still use traditional search engines, but they no longer rely on them alone to decide what to buy, what to trust, or what to try next. Increasingly, those decisions are shaped inside social platforms themselves. Not just through scrolling, but through searching, saving, comparing, and checking what real people think.

That shift is what we call **social search**. It's not a single feature or a new tab in an app. It's a behavior. A new default. In this context, brand discoverability is not about being seen once. It's about showing up consistently in the moments where people are forming intent.

That means being present when someone is asking:

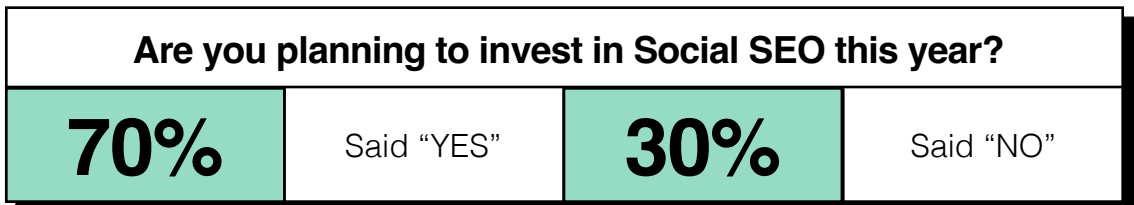
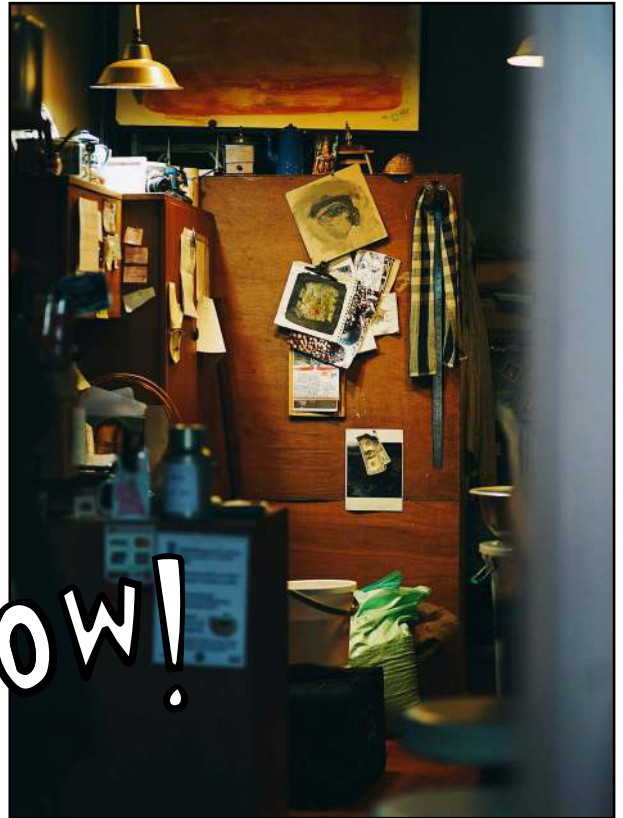


And it means answering those questions in the formats each platform naturally rewards.

CMOs are already shifting budget and focus toward this reality. In a recent SAMY survey, **70% of global CMOs said they would invest in Social SEO in 2026**, and 42% ranked Social SEO as a top brand search priority ahead of AI-powered search engines.

(02)

When discoverability moves into feeds and platforms, your content becomes your search strategy. That means your hooks, on-screen text, captions, and creator formats aren't just creative choices; they're what determines whether you show up when people look for answers.



Social SEO is a priority for CMOs worldwide in 2026 / Source: SAMY Marketing Trends Report.

What is intent? Active vs passive

To really understand social search, we need to understand intent. Not as a keyword, but as a state of curiosity, need, or readiness. It's what shapes how people search.

Intent enters social platforms in two ways:

First, through active intent. People arrive with a question and use platforms like TikTok, YouTube, or Reddit as the search engine. They want answers that feel visual, practical, and human.

Second, through passive intent.

People aren't searching yet. They're scrolling. And this is where algorithms come into play. Platforms learn from behavioral signals such as what you watch, what makes you stop scrolling, what you like, share, save, or comment on. Based on that, they start recommending content that can spark a need you didn't consciously have yet. When curiosity hits, people don't leave the platform. They search inside it to go deeper.

“Intent on social platforms often comes down to two modes: information finding users, or users finding information. In an active mindset, people search because they need answers. In a passive mindset, algorithms do the opposite: they learn from what you watch, like, and stop for, then surface content that can create intent before you even realize you’re looking for it.”



Stef van der Burg, Strategy Lead
at team5pm

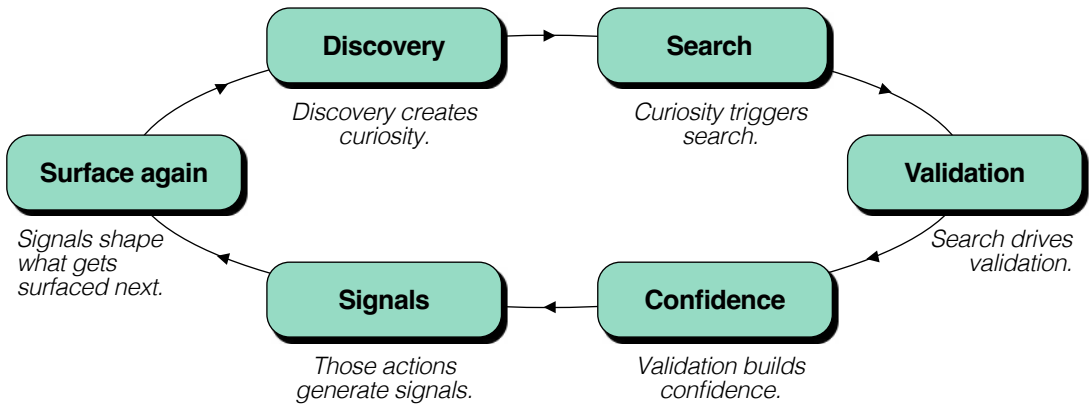


On social platforms, discovery and search happen in the same environment, so intent is shaped and validated in real time. Discovery doesn't sit at the top of a funnel anymore. It triggers a search. Search triggers validation through social proof: comments, reviews, and creator comparisons. That validation shapes decisions. **All in one environment.**

(02)

The Social Search layer (zoom-in)

In practice, it follows a repeatable pattern: discovery triggers search, search triggers validation through social proof, and each action creates behavioral signals that shape what comes next.



Social platforms don't just capture intent. They intercept it and generate it. And over time, that cycle doesn't just drive visibility. **It builds authority.**

(02)

Search behavior differs by platform (so your content must too)

The tricky part is that intent doesn't look the same everywhere. Each platform has its own "search personality." For example:

On TikTok, search often sits close to discovery. People look for quick learning, routines, how-tos, reviews, and real-life use cases. The content that wins is usually direct, visual, and instantly useful.

On YouTube, search leans into deeper research. Viewers come for explainers, tutorials, long-form reviews, and comparisons. It's where people go when they want to understand, not just discover.

On Reddit, search is truth-seeking. People look for lived experience, unfiltered opinions, edge cases, and answers that feel peer-validated. It's less about branding and more about credibility.

Same intent universe. Different expressions. Different formats. Different trust mechanics.

WANT THE PLATFORM-BY-PLATFORM BREAKDOWN OF HOW DISCOVERY TURNS INTO SALES?



Click to explore search-to-sale ecosystems



Case Spotlight

HEMA

Boosting long-term visibility with data-driven video SEO

HEMA wanted to **increase online visibility** across Google, YouTube, and TikTok as search shifted toward video. Using proprietary technology, we identified the highest-potential video topics for each platform and produced the 'HEMA Helps' series—long-form how-tos and short-form life hacks, tailored to platform intent.



[Click to watch](#)



IMPACT

#1 organic rankings across TikTok, YouTube, and Google

2,000,000+ organic views in 2 months

Non-branded CTR **+389%**

TikTok video “gordijnen inkorten” still ranks top 3 after 2+ years, with

400,000+ views and **2,200+** saves

This shows **data-driven video SEO** can create long-lasting, top-ranking content, not just viral moments.

(02)

The algorithm layer: what platforms reward

The shift to social search isn't only about user behavior. It's also about distribution logic.

On social platforms, discovery is mediated by algorithms. And while every platform works differently, the underlying principle is surprisingly consistent: **platforms reward content that creates a better user experience in the moment.** Content that answers, retains, and satisfies.

In practice, this means algorithms tend to amplify content that is:

⊗	Clear about what it's delivering.
⊗	A direct match to a real question or need.
⊗	Easy to evaluate quickly (especially in the first seconds).
⊗	Rich in signals of satisfaction such as watch time, re-watches, saves, shares, and meaningful comments.
⊗	Repeated and consistent enough to become a reliable reference, not a one-off spike.



This is why “posting more” rarely fixes discoverability. Volume can create presence, but it doesn't guarantee relevance. The brands that win are the ones that design content for intent and build repeatable systems that generate the right signals over time.

“We live in the algorithmic age, a world where we can see more, discover more, and consume more than ever before. Media platforms have rewritten the rules of engagement, favoring content that resonates in a limitless space of discovery, and shifting the focus from peer-to-peer sharing to global interaction and exploration.”



Alex Hill, Chief Strategy Officer
at SAMY



(02)

Social SEO basics (the practical advantage)

Most brands know social is a discovery engine. Far fewer are optimizing their content to be discoverable.

Social SEO is the discipline of making your content easy to understand for both people and platforms by using the same language your audience searches with.

A few high-impact starting points:

⊗	Speak in queries , not slogans. Use natural, search-like phrasing in hooks, on-screen text, titles, and captions.
⊗	Name the thing . Clear wording beats clever wording when the goal is discoverability.
⊗	Structure for scanning . Make the “what, for whom, and why” obvious in the first seconds and first lines.
⊗	Make your content readable by systems . Use descriptive titles, strong descriptions where possible, and transcripts or captions for video.
⊗	Design for saves and shares . If a post is useful enough to save, it’s useful enough to surface again.

In short, organic visibility has to win in two worlds at once: social discovery, where people scroll and search inside platforms, and AI discovery, where systems decide which answers are worth surfacing.

Brands don't lose discoverability because they lack content. They lose it because their content isn't built as a system. Social SEO is how you turn scattered posts into compounding visibility, where each piece reinforces what the brand stands for and earns its place in search, feeds, and now AI discovery too."



Camila Tribin, Global Head of Social Media Excellence at SAMY

Instead of “Spring drop is here” do:

“How to style a linen blazer for spring.”



Case Spotlight

Using data-driven video content and SEO best practices to educate and inspire smart home enthusiasts.

PHILIPS
hue



[Click to watch](#)



Within five months, their videos reached:

28,000+

organic YouTube views (≥30 seconds watched per view)

97%

of targeted keywords ranked in the top 3.

15%

increase in purchase intent.

This shows how **discoverability translates into engagement** and measurable business impact.

(02)

Mini call-out: Social search is feeding AI discovery

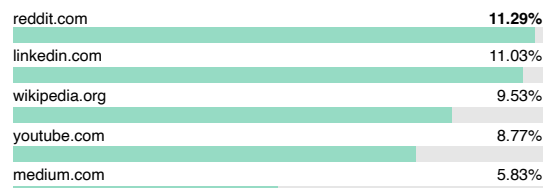
AI-assisted search is increasingly shaping how brands get discovered, described, and evaluated. And the sources AI relies on are starting to look very familiar to social-first marketers.

Multiple recent studies show that across AI models, platforms like **Reddit and YouTube** consistently rank among the most cited sources, and in many professional and B2B queries, LinkedIn also shows up frequently.



Top domains cited by LLMs

(ChatGPT, Search, Perplexity, Google AI Mode)



Source: Semrush

The pattern is the point. AI doesn't only reward popularity. It rewards content that behaves like a good answer: clear, structured, specific, and trustworthy. That's exactly why social video matters.

(02)

Platform perspective

YouTube



“Discovery is evolving through natural language and visual search, making search more of a conversation than a query. For brands, staying discoverable means providing true relevance in these “AI-assisted” moments.”



Rutger Tuit, Director Consumer, Agencies & Partners at Google Benelux

When your content is designed for social search with strong titles, descriptions, and transcripts or captions, it doesn't just become easier for people to find. It becomes easier for systems to understand and reference.

And in the **AI era**, discoverability is no longer only about ranking but about being the source that gets mentioned.

(02)

The brand challenge (and the opportunity)

Most brands are producing more content than ever. Yet many teams still feel like **they're guessing**. Guessing what topics to focus on. Guessing which formats will drive discovery versus purchase action. Guessing what will compound versus what will spike and fade.

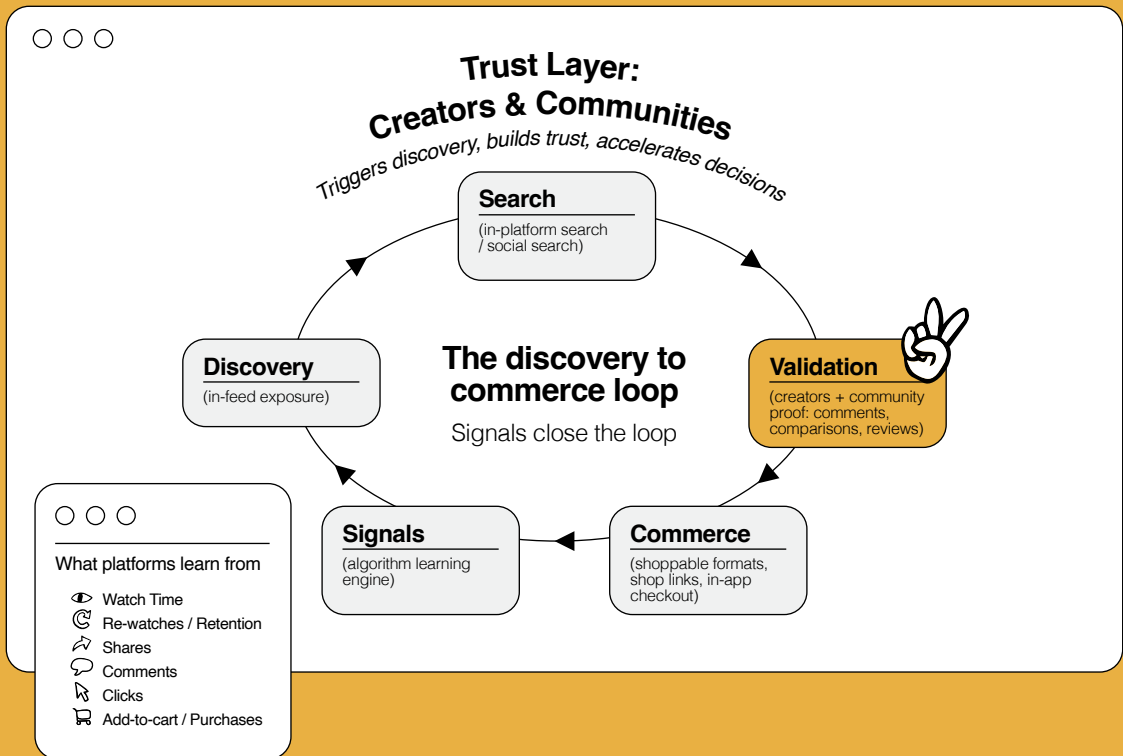
The opportunity isn't choosing between discovery content and search-driven content. It's **designing a system** where both work together.

In the next sections, we'll break down what that system looks like, how authority is built, and how social commerce can be the natural outcome when discoverability is designed intentionally.

(03)

Authority: From Being Seen to Being Chosen

Inside the loop: Pillar 2



When people find you, do they believe you?

Visibility is step one. But in a feed-first world, trust isn't built through brand claims. It's built in-context, through the people audiences already choose to spend time with. Creators do more than just drive reach.

They translate products into real life, answer the questions brands can't credibly answer themselves, and turn search-driven curiosity into confidence. This is where discoverability becomes authority. And in 2026 and beyond, **authority** is what gets surfaced, referenced, and chosen by both people and systems.

(03)

Platform perspective

YouTube

“In 2026, YouTube is a center of gravity for four distinct behaviors: Streaming, Searching, Shopping, and Scrolling. The single most important thing to understand is that ‘creators are the new studios.’ We’ve retired the term ‘user-generated content’ because top creators are now full-scale production houses delivering ‘prime time’ quality. Brands must stop treating YouTube as an ‘add-on’ to other campaigns and start treating it as the primary laboratory where culture, AI-driven search, and big-screen entertainment come together.”



Rutger Tuit, Director Consumer, Agencies & Partners at Google Benelux



(03)

Creators as the trust layer between search and sale

If social platforms have become the new search layer, creators have become the trust layer. People don't just want information. They want interpretation. They want to see how something works in real life, and whether it will work for someone like them. Creators do that work naturally.

Creators demonstrate, compare, translate features into outcomes, and answer the questions audiences rarely ask a brand directly. That's why creator content doesn't just drive reach. It reduces uncertainty. And in a journey that's increasingly shaped in-feed, reducing uncertainty is what moves people forward.

Mini call-out: Creator partnerships basics

A few high-impact starting points:

⊗	Choose creators for the job rather than reach. Map them to roles: trigger discovery, explain & compare, validate publicly.
⊗	Brief in questions, not brand claims. Start from the intent people have ("Is it worth it?", "Which one is best?") and build content around answering it.
⊗	Design for repetition. Turn winning angles into a series so trust and search visibility compound over time.
⊗	Operationalise the winners. Whitelist top posts, cut into FAQs/Shorts, pin best explainers, and add clear CTAs where relevant.
⊗	Measure credibility + business impact. Look beyond views to saves, comment quality, clicks, add-to-carts, and assisted sales.

This is not just theory. In the Netherlands, **67%** of surveyed YouTube viewers **agree that creator content helps them research and discover products** when shopping

(Google/Kantar, Future of Video, NL, 2025).

This is also why creator partnerships shouldn't be treated as a "nice-to-have" add-on or a one-off burst. In 2026, creators are part of your discoverability infrastructure. They seed the language people search with, they shape the narratives communities repeat, and they generate the signals platforms reward.



(03)

*The creator misconception:
“brand safe” is enough*

Many brands still default to one filter: brand safety. But the creators who build trust aren't only safe, **they're credible**. And credibility is not a vibe. It's a mix of category authority, audience fit, and the ability to make a product feel familiar through consistent, real-life presence.

The goal isn't to find the biggest creator in a category. It's to find the creator who can make your brand feel like the obvious choice for a **specific audience** in a specific moment. The strongest creator strategies start with the same question as social search: what are people trying to figure out?

That's why we approach creator selection as a **research problem**, not a casting problem, and not guesswork. Using **behavior signals** (search behavior, comment patterns, recurring questions, engagement quality), brands can identify the creators who already “own” the conversations that matter most in their category.

There are plenty of tools that help make that process repeatable. Instead of relying on gut feel alone, you can map creators to the role they play in the system, for example:

- Creators who trigger discovery and curiosity.
- Creators who do deep explanation and comparison.
- Creators who validate in public through comments, live Q&A, and follow-ups.
- Creators who can carry a series over time and build familiarity.

When creators are chosen for the job they do, not just their follower count, partnerships stop being a campaign tactic and start becoming an engine that compounds.

*Creators who:
Trigger discovery*

*Creators who:
Explain & compare*

*Creators who:
Validate in public (comments /
live Q&A / follow-ups)*

*“Select creators by role in the
system, not by reach alone.”*

From creator content to compounding discoverability

The compounding effect comes when creator content is not only posted, but operationalized.

High-performing creator videos can be repurposed into searchable series, pinned and organized into playlists, cut into Shorts, turned into FAQ-style clips, and amplified strategically once they've proven they resonate.

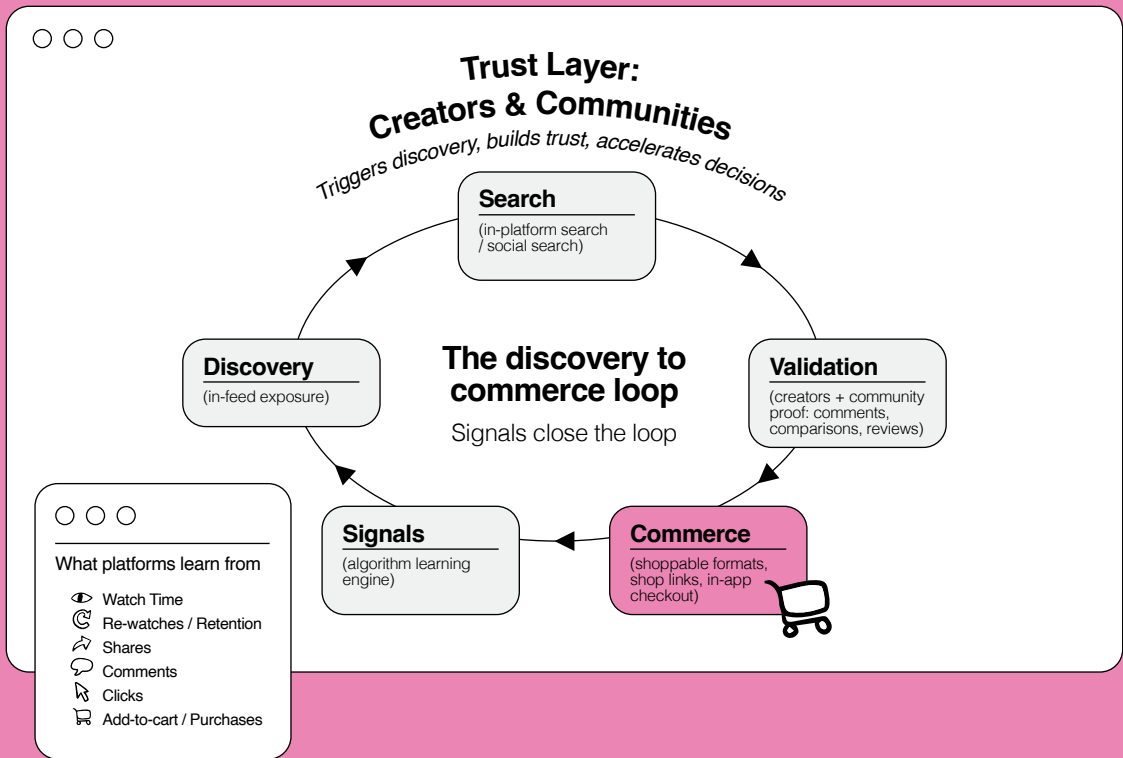
In other words, **creators spark momentum**, and the brand system turns that momentum into something that stays discoverable for months. That is how you move from being seen to being chosen.

Once that authority is built, the role of commerce changes: it becomes the natural continuation of discovery rather than a hard sell.

(04)

Commerce: The Natural Outcome After Authority

Inside the loop: Pillar 3



By now you know that today discovery, consideration, and purchase can all happen within a single scroll, forming an infinite loop driven by real time interactions between creators, communities, and brands.

That shift changes what commerce needs to do. Commerce is not a separate campaign layer added at the end. It is the set of native actions and integrations that let people act on intent in the same environment where intent was formed and validated.

This is why **social commerce is moving from a nice-to-have to a core business capability**. Once authority is established, the question is no longer

how to persuade. It is how to **remove friction** between validation and action. In this context, businesses across industries can blend shopping, entertainment, and inspiration through a strong, always on organic strategy, supported by paid media and creators. Done well, that system does more than drive conversion. It extends discovery, reinforces brand love and cultural relevance, and turns attention into **measurable demand**.

It is authority that changes the role of commerce, from a conversion tactic to confirmation. From being pushed at the end to being available when people are ready.

“The discovery-to-commerce system works simply: signals build authority, authority enables action, and action generates new signals. Social commerce transforms that authority into measurable demand, closing the loop within the very environments where intent is formed.”



Patricia Aragón, Global Head of Social Commerce at SAMY

Social commerce, at a glance

The headline numbers are large, but the pattern is the point. Social commerce is growing because it matches how people already behave on platforms. They discover through feeds, validate through creators and comments, and

increasingly expect to buy without leaving the experience.

A few signals of where the market is heading:



A promising forecast

The social commerce market is estimated at \$2.11 trillion in 2026 and is projected to reach \$7.55 trillion by 2031, growing at a [CAGR](#) of 29.12%.

A generation-driven behaviour

More than 60% of social shoppers globally are Gen Z and Millennials.

A natural fit for live formats

In China, live shopping already generates over \$300 billion annually. In the US, LATAM, and Europe, some of the biggest brands are also leveraging live streaming to drive conversions and engage communities in real time, including L'Oréal, Crocs, Zara and more.

TikTok as a global retailer

TikTok Shop is projected to generate around \$87 billion in global [GMV](#) in 2026, growing by 56% year-over-year, effectively turning the platform into a massive retail engine rather than just a media channel.

Data Sources:
Statista, eMarketer, Mordor Intelligence, Accenture

The takeaway for CMOs is not that commerce replaces brand building. It is that commerce captures the value brand building creates, especially when intent is sparked and validated inside the same environment.

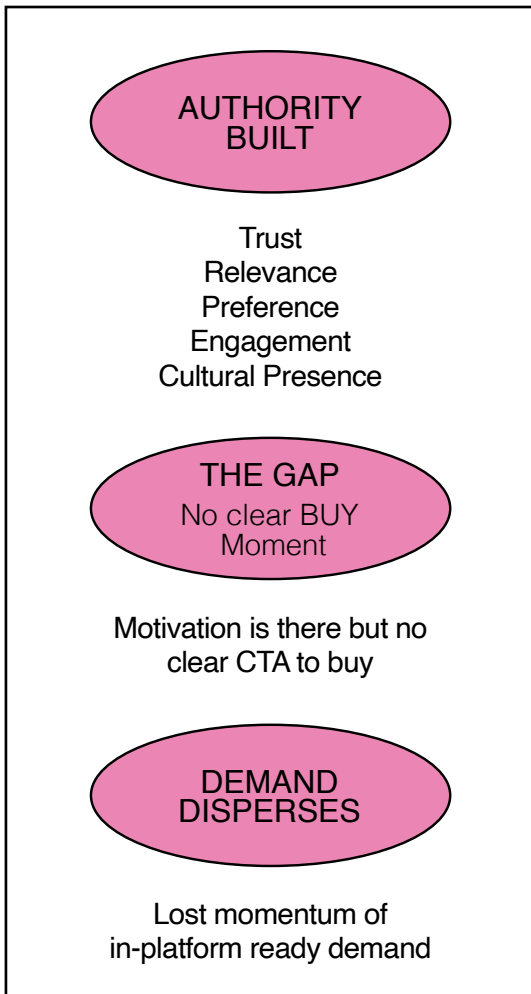
(04)

The gap: turning authority into business impact

Every year, brands invest billions into social ecosystems to build visibility, trust, and cultural relevance. Globally, that includes roughly \$270B in social ad spend, \$30B in influencer marketing, and \$32B in social media management.

Social has become the primary engine of marketing because it is also where consumers spend their time (2+ hours/day globally), share opinions, seek information, and engage with relatable stories that reinforce their perspectives.

The question now is how intentionally that **authority is monetized**.

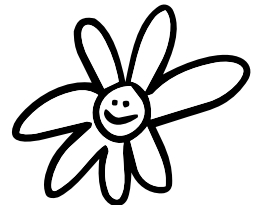


Conversion is still too often treated as a downstream add-on. When that happens, value leaks, momentum fades, and demand has to be re-earned again and again. If attention is a core pillar of any marketing strategy, capturing its economic value should be too.

What truly matters is the orchestration. Value is created upstream through discoverability and authority, but it is not always captured downstream. Integrating commerce directly where intent is sparked and validated turns growth into a continuous cycle.

Industry pain point.
From Search to Commerce

Value is created upstream, but not always captured downstream.



Solution. From discovery to demand. Integrating commerce directly where intent is sparked and validated turns growth into a continuous cycle.

(04)

Mini call-out: Commerce basics

A few high-impact starting points:

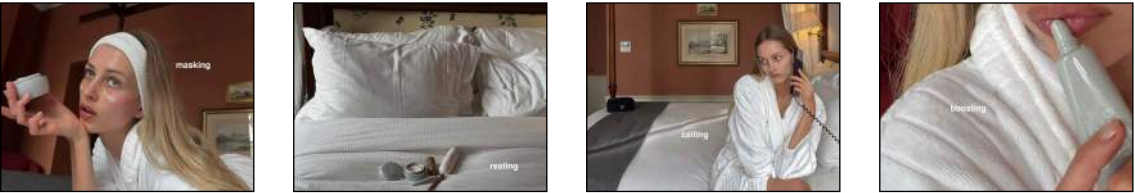

ⓧ	Choose your primary commerce surface per platform. Product tags, storefront, live shopping, or in app checkout.
ⓧ	Make products findable in the moments of intent. Catalog hygiene, consistent naming, accurate availability, and aligned landing pages.
ⓧ	Reduce friction between content and product. Pinned links, clear CTAs, and the shortest possible path to checkout.

ⓧ	Connect creator content to product actions. Ensure every shoppable post has the right product mapped and the right next step.
ⓧ	Scale after validation. Use paid amplification only once a post earns strong signals such as watch time, saves, and high quality comments.
ⓧ	Measure the loop end to end. Product clicks, add to carts, checkout starts, assisted conversions, and repeat purchase where available.

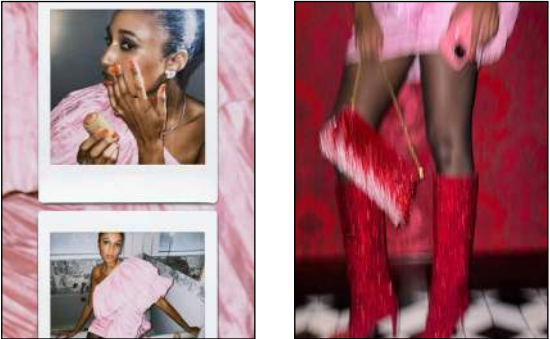
*When social authority
meets commerce*

Brand Example

Building cultural desire rather than pushing products



Its content blends routines, lifestyle, creators, and aspirational aesthetics. By integrating products naturally into creators' real lives, the brand creates intent before the product even appears, allowing commerce to flow naturally.



A strong example of authority → **desire** → **commerce**

Case Spotlight



TEFAL Aerosteam

Solving everyday problems with creators validation

To introduce Aerosteam to Dutch women aged 20–55, the brand tailored content to two **consumer archetypes**: “ironers” saw evidence-based reviews, while “steamers” experienced quick demos and before/after results addressing their key questions. Trust was built through authentic creator experiences in consistent formats that highlighted the product’s benefits, making the content relatable, credible and shoppable (strong CTAs).



[Click to watch](#)



IMPACT

612	add-to-carts
+40%	daily sales
11 ROAS	(return on ad spend) on Meta

The campaign drove a clear **behavioral shift**, shortening the path to purchase, reducing research, and leveraging trusted creator validation.

Search-to-Sale Ecosystems (Platform Playbook)

Earlier, we showed how search intent and validation differ by platform, including environments like Reddit, where trust is built through peer-to-peer proof. In this section, we focus on the ecosystems where discovery can connect most directly to purchase through native commerce features: **Meta, Pinterest, YouTube, and TikTok.**

But first, who are the social shoppers?

For **Gen Z**, social-first discovery is the default. There's a clear behavioral and cultural shift among younger generations toward **social-first discovery.**

Across categories—from apparel and beauty to tech, home goods, and food & beverages—Gen Z and Millennials discover products through community influence, authentic creators, ethical considerations, exclusive experiences, user-generated content (UGC), and trend-driven formats.

This shows up clearly in recent research on discovery touchpoints: **TikTok** (60%) and personal recommendations (56%) rank highest as places where people report discovering products or services, followed by YouTube (33%) and physical shops (32%), according to a SAMY survey conducted among Gen Z consumers.

Marketplaces such as ASOS, SHEIN, Miravia, and Amazon remain extremely popular. At the same time, social platforms have evolved into ecosystems where much of the shopping journey now happens. With Gen Z and Millennials accounting for 60% of all social shoppers, **social media is increasingly the new mall**—and in many cases, the place where the full journey unfolds.

Where have you discovered products or services recently?

TikTok	60%
Spotify	26%
YouTube	33%
Twitch	9%
Streaming platforms	4%
Reddit	4%
Physical shop	32%
Discord & Telegram	6%
Personal recommendation	56%



Younger generations turn to social media for comfort and connection, making these platforms their main point of discovery.

Source: Survey conducted by SAMY with 100+ Gen Z participants worldwide.

(05)

Dominating the social commerce ecosystems

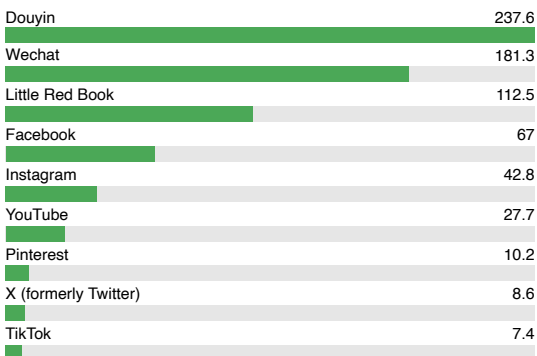
+ inspiring brand examples

Discovery and shopping behaviors vary significantly from one ecosystem to another. Storytelling, community signals, CTAs, formats, creators profiles, aesthetics, tone, and cultural codes are equally distinct. Speaking all the **different multichannel “languages”** is ultimately what enables brands to stay relevant.

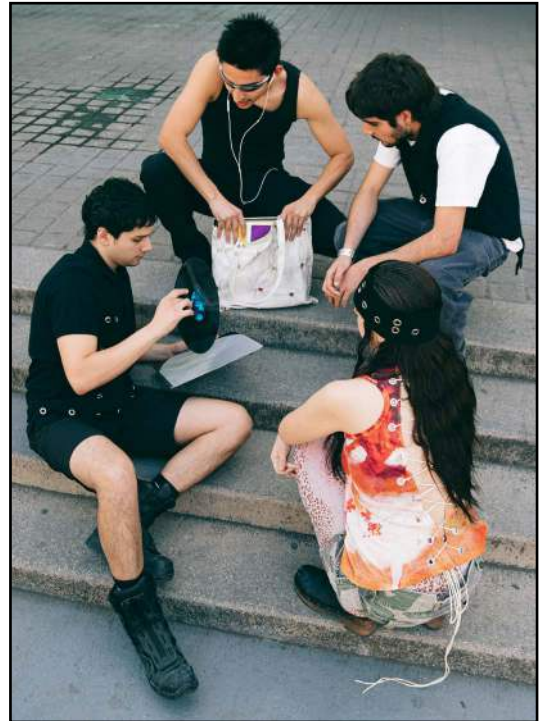
Let’s take a closer look at different platforms now.

Highest revenue-generating platforms in social commerce worldwide

Revenue in billion U.S. dollars



Source: Statista 2025



Chinese platforms like Douyin, WeChat, and Little Red Book lead in revenue, followed by Meta (Facebook and Instagram), YouTube, Pinterest, X, and TikTok.

Social commerce maturity varies significantly by market, with countries such as **China**, the **US**, the **UK**, and **Brazil** leading the way. However, its projected growth in **Europe** is equally striking. According to Statista, social commerce revenue in the region is expected to reach **\$53 billion by 2029**.

It is clear that social commerce is not just a passing trend, but a fundamental shift in how consumers behave. This stems from a new reality where scrolling, searching, and shopping happen online. And therefore, social commerce should be a critical pillar of any social media marketing strategy, where the **feed becomes the funnel**.



Meta

Meta is making a big move in social commerce, rolling out native **affiliate partnerships** across Facebook and Instagram that let creators tag products directly in posts and Reels and earn commission on sales; no link in bio, no redirects, and no third-party tools. The entire journey from content to purchase can now happen inside Meta's ecosystem, keeping users, data, and attribution on-platform while pressuring link-in-bio platforms and affiliate middlemen.

This marks a shift in how Meta approaches distribution. For years, brands relied on Meta primarily for paid media, while creators captured attention but struggled with clunky monetization. Now the loop is effectively closed: creators were already driving performance, and this rollout makes it measurable and directly tied to revenue.

And that changes the operating model. Once creators are connected to revenue, they stop acting like influencers and start functioning like growth engines; testing hooks,

optimizing content, and doubling down on what converts. With built-in analytics, Meta can turn millions of creators into a distributed performance machine.


This affiliate layer is most impactful because it plugs into Meta's existing commerce rails. **Facebook Shops** is one of the strongest social commerce offerings in Western markets: brands can create a single shop accessible via both Facebook and Messenger, showcasing products in one central location. Flexible checkout options, combined with integrated advertising and advanced targeting, make it attractive for brands looking to drive social conversions with lower friction.


Instagram Shopping complements this with seamless, discovery-led commerce. Products can be tagged in posts, Stories, and Reels, enabling purchase without leaving the app. The platform is highly visual and creator-driven, making it particularly effective for fashion, beauty, and lifestyle categories where UGC and short-form content shape intent.



Brand Examples




Spring Party Lives 



Instagram live sessions. Here, discovery happens through creator-led livestreams and community engagement in real-time. Commerce signals are introduced through live CTAs, coupon mechanics and platform engagement features that push viewers towards purchase.

Beauty DOICE & GABBANA



The brand seamlessly blends content (through Reels) with commerce in its **digital storefront**, creating a new luxury retail experience that takes customers from inspiration to purchase.



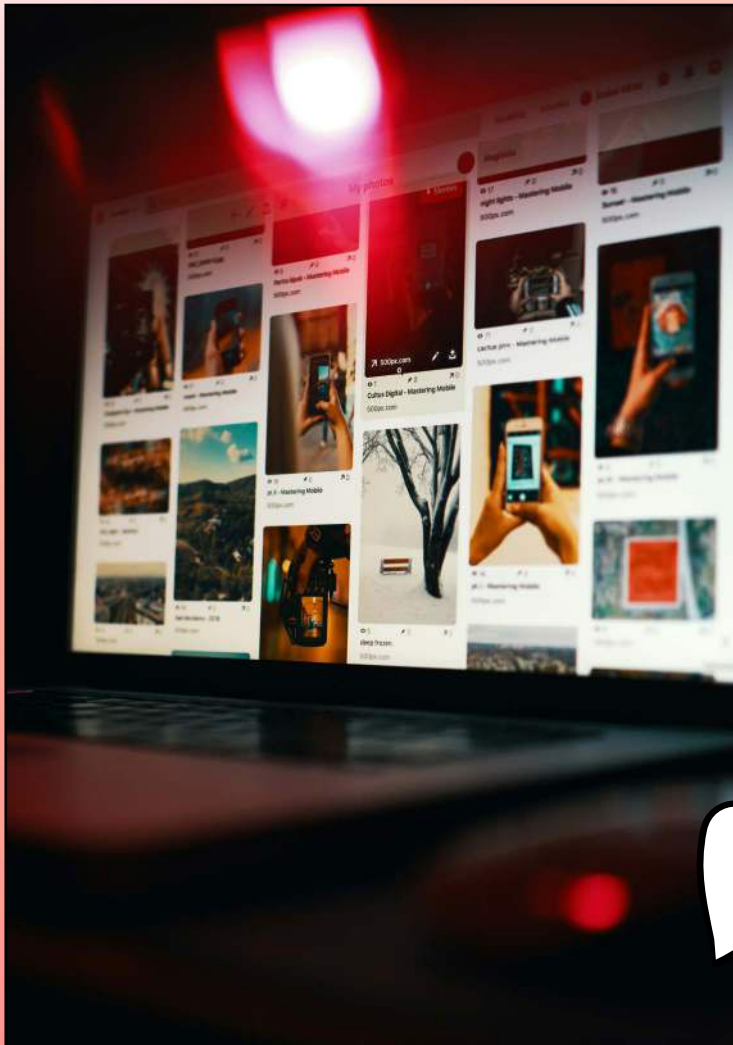
Pinterest

Exemplifies **inspiration-driven commerce**: users are 1.4x more likely to shop after seeing product content (Sprinklr). The platform doesn't aim to own the transaction; it removes barriers to make shopping seamless.

From a mood board to a platform that quietly builds the connective tissue between inspiration and transaction, with cool product catalogs, **AR try-on**

tools for categories for enhancing the online experience in categories such as beauty and home decor, [product pins](#), and other shoppable experiences across the home feed, search results, brand profiles, and curated collections.

All combined with well-integrated, direct checkout options. It's easy to see why [Forbes](#) called Pinterest "retail's best-kept social secret."



Brand Examples

SEPHORA

Fragrance
917 Pins - 5 subtableros - 1 sem

Summer
189 Pins - 1 sem

Sephora Savings Event 2023
15 Pins - 3 sem

Spring
57 Pins - 1 mes

Beauty looks, tutorials and **product-tagged pins** that turn inspiration into action, allowing users to discover and shop products without leaving the platform.



Lookbooks **H&M**

H&M SS26 - Drop II
25 Pins - 2 sem

H&M SS26 - Drop I
91 Pins - 4 sem

Denim Essentials
26 Pins - 3 meses

The Perfect Gift
70 Pins - 4 meses

The retail company uses Pinterest as an **interactive lookbook** with pins linking directly to product pages or categories on the ecommerce site.

[Click to watch](#)

[Click to watch](#)

[Click to watch](#)

[Click to watch](#)

YouTube

YouTube is no longer a single-purpose channel. It's an ecosystem where streaming, searching, scrolling, and shopping increasingly converge. In the U.S., it's now the most widely used platform, with 84% of adults reporting they use it, ahead of Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

What matters most isn't the ranking, but **the range of intent it captures**: discovery through Shorts, deeper

YouTube Shorts

The attention hook

YouTube Shorts are now structured for product discovery, not just a feed. The goal is to spark interest fast, then route viewers to long-form videos, YouTube Live, channel series, or shopping pages. In practice, that means quick "X ideas", before/after, and creator-led mini demos; then linking the exact item via **product tagging** (and scaling winners with **shoppable ads**).

For instance, Shorts featuring creators work perfectly for "X ideas" posts that offer day-to-day solutions, making it easy for viewers to find (and buy) the products creators are showcasing.



evaluation through long-form, trust built via creators, and action enabled through shopping integrations and connected TV.

For brands, that means YouTube isn't a single tactic, it's a **multi-format loop**: Shorts create curiosity, long-form builds confidence, creators provide credibility, and shopping features shorten the path to action.



Long-form Videos

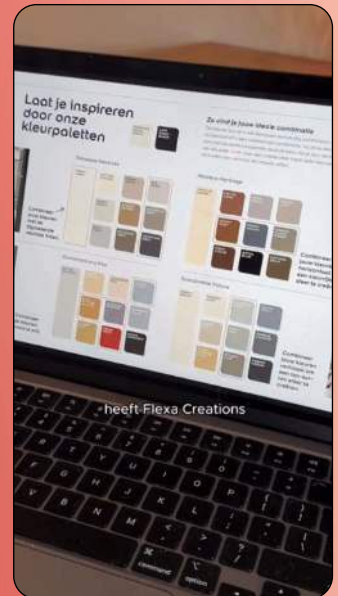
On-demand learning

Shorts do the hook, but long-form is where people stay to compare, understand, and decide. That means tutorials, unboxings, product reviews, and side-by-side comparisons (e.g., "which SPF is best for oily vs dry skin?" or "Model A vs Model B after 30 days of use").

In the "Suncare Live Challenge" example below, creator-led content builds deeper product understanding and trust, especially when that education is extended into live formats. Commerce signals appear through promotional triggers and chat automation driving clicks and conversions, showing how longer-form content can support the discovery-to-purchase journey.

Case Spotlight

The brand stands out in **live activations**: its ‘Suncare Live’ combined creator-led product education with real-time community engagement. Supported by ManyChat integrations, the session drove strong results, including a 70% CTR and 151 chatbot activations (SAM Y data).



YouTube also favors videos that attract clicks (CTR), hold attention (audience retention), and encourage interaction signals that indicate content quality and satisfaction.

TikTok

TikTok is the engagement leader

among all platforms (3.7 average ER vs 0.48% on Instagram), thanks to creator-led content that drives discovery: “how-to” guides, routines, reviews, and real-life problem-solving content having proved to be the most successful.

The purchase feels less like persuasion and more like alignment, authority turns intent into action **without heavy persuasion**, especially when the product:

- 01_ Appears inside trusted creator contexts.
- 02_ Is validated through visible community signals.
- 03_ Feels culturally relevant.
- 04_ Fits into trends, routines or hacks.

TikTok is growing rapidly because commerce is integrated natively, not as an afterthought: TikTok Shop demonstrates how sales can coexist with user experience, culture, and meaningful engagement.

TikTok Shop

U.S. sales on TikTok Shop grow 108% year over year, and for some brands, it has become a real volume driver. Not a test channel or a side hustle but a legitimate **commerce engine**.

‘Before-and-after’ **shoppable videos** with creators (and the brand as part of the solution) or hero products through native TikTok formats are highly effective at driving measurable conversions.

Commerce signals appear through TikTok Shop integrations, product clicks, and creator-led recommendations that enable direct in-app purchases.

Audiences don’t simply move from asking, “Is this product good?” to hitting checkout. Instead, their journey begins with **curiosity**: “What shade is that?” and naturally progresses to, “Where can I buy it?”



[Click to watch](#)



[Click to watch](#)



[Click to watch](#)

(05)



Intent is formed natively within the platform: users are not always actively searching, but are continuously exposed to trends, ideas, and products that spark interest and lead them to use the platform's native search.

Other times, users search with intent ([how to style curtain bangs](#)): here, brands need to be there with clear, visual, how-to content or creator partnerships that seamlessly integrate the product into the solution.

In any case, validation happens long before the product page is opened—through comments, live sessions, and creator replies. **In this ecosystem**, commerce doesn't create demand; authority converts it.



🔍 how to style curtain bangs



Three additional strategies to dominate TikTok Shop

01_

Shape trends powered by insights.

Don't watch culture, be the one who writes it.

Data gives you a powerful edge: the ability to maintain relevance. By understanding your audience and market, and spotting trends, hero products, creator profiles, brand narratives, and content that align with **TikTok logic in real time**, brands gain a clear advantage on the platform.

Intelligent systems provide data, social context, and cultural foresight, but it is ultimately up to brands to shape how they participate. In today's social universe, success demands not just observation, but the ability to build **cultural capital** and foster meaningful, **emotional connections**.

SAMY UK

*Beauty Commerce Trend Letter
Spring Awakening Edition*

Every month, we produce industry-focused trend letters, delivering the latest insights to help brands shape their content strategy or product development—highlighting trends and best-selling products based on social buzz, category interest, and creator authority.

For the beauty sector, one of our latest trend letters was “Spring Awakening.” As consumer confidence grows, TikTok data reveals a strategic shift toward renewal, high-intent spending, and skin-first routines. Golden insights for brands that want to stay top of mind.



Trends from the SAMY Beauty Commerce Trend Letter

(05)



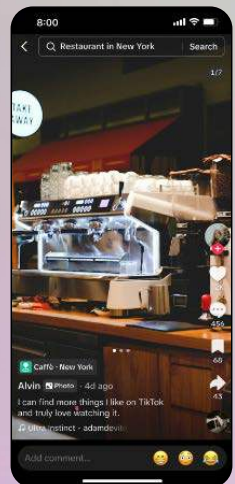
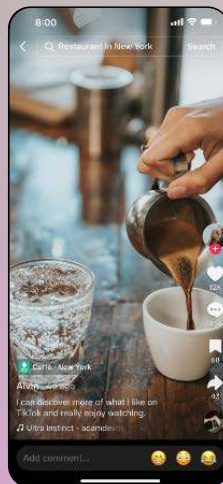
02_

Stay tuned for updates.

The promising Local Feed.

TikTok’s new **Local Feed** feature (**just in the US for now**) bridges the digital and physical worlds. It helps people stay connected to their community and discover nearby happenings, featuring local content on travel, events, restaurants, shopping, and posts from small businesses and creators.

Content is shown based on location, topic, and timing, making it easier to see what’s happening locally. This is just a taste of what’s coming—but it clearly shows that **hybrid discovery experiences** are set to become a major trend.



03_

Surrender to the magic of live formats.

TikTok live shopping creates a direct, human connection between brands and communities. Most importantly, **live interaction builds authority**, and that authority drives purchase action.

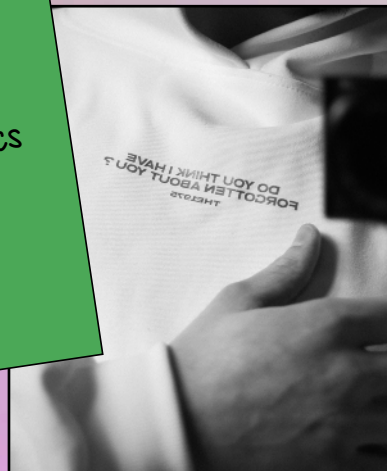
Live formats work for several reasons: it creates genuine, real-time connections between consumers and creators—through Q&A sessions, demos, and the credibility of the ‘before-and-after’ you see with your own eyes—in a format that reduces doubt and drives decision-making.



“Live shopping shouldn’t be treated like a TV commercial with a checkout button. A strong livestream is a brand moment first: interactive, entertaining and genuinely helpful. When creators answer questions in real time and the community participates, you don’t just sell products but measurably move brand metrics like consideration, preference and advocacy.”



Frank de Wit, Managing Director at team5pm



Brand lift research for bol showed the live streams had an overall positive effect on brand preference, with positive signals also visible across consideration, purchase intent, and advocacy.





Leading online retailer & marketplace in the Benelux

Going live during major social commerce events

By running a series of interactive TikTok livestreams during **Black Friday**, anchored by a flagship event on bol.gaming, bol became the frontrunner in Dutch social shopping for the gaming community.

The campaign brought popular gaming creators on board, using Q&As, polls, and interactive games to engage audiences and build credibility, while exclusive real-time offers, in-stream shop links, and a dedicated landing page made shopping seamless.



[Click to watch](#)



IMPACT

86	unique viewers
5.18M	likes and 10.2K comments
+4.1K	new followers for bol.gaming

Top 5 most-viewed brand livestreams on TikTok Netherlands

(05)

L'Oréal Group and SAMY

Lives to share the passion for beauty

L'Oréal is one of the global brands leading TikTok Shop as a creator-driven environment, where generating sales goes hand in hand with building authority, cultural desire and trust.

Over the past few months, SAMY has supported the group in delivering **18 live shopping** events (42 hours live!), in collaboration with **14 content creators**, turning discovery, trends, and consideration into sales, loyalty, and meaningful connections with the community.

Of course, these live experiences are always framed by top influencer events, exclusive opening parties, fashion runways, festivals, and beyond.



Maybelline Station

When **Maybelline New York** turned the NYC subway into a Madrid (Spain) experience, our team made sure the digital impact was just as big as the physical one. From SAMY, we deployed a cross-market squad to cover every angle, turning moments into memories:

Live commerce: 3-hour non-stop live shopping broadcast.

Real-time content: On-the-ground interviews and high-energy social recaps.

Advocacy & Influence: Coordinating top creators and loyal fans who earned access via TikTok.

(06)

Conclusion: Designing the Discovery-to-Commerce Loop

Embracing a holistic approach

Integrating the **discovery-to-commerce system** into an overall brand strategy requires a deep understanding of human behavior, creator dynamics, content signals, algorithmic logic, AI-driven discovery, and commerce mechanics. All while putting **human creativity** at the forefront to build genuine, meaningful connections with audiences.

From tracking real-time social commerce insights on TikTok to designing intent-driven content and strong organic feeds, brands need a new kind of partner: one where diverse profiles, from researchers to Social SEO specialists, social commerce, and influencer marketing experts, feed the system and turn it into a true **competitive advantage for social-first brands**.

The brands that will win next won't be the ones running the most campaigns, but the ones designing systems that convert human signals into **sustained growth**.

If you'd like to explore how this integrated system could work for your brand, we'd love to connect. We help brands turn discovery, authority, and commerce into one continuous growth loop, designed for how people actually search, validate, and buy today.

In the social universe, being seen is only the starting point.

The brands that win are the ones that are chosen.

Get in touch

If you'd like to discuss how this system could work for your brand, we'd love to connect.

[Contact Us](#)



We
Make
Brands
Matter

S L M Y

 team5pm