



The Creator Playbook

**A step-by-step guide for the
United Nations to activate
impactful, creator-led
campaigns.**



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Why work with creators?

Today's creators have the power to shift culture in real time. They've become the storytellers of the young generation – rivalling traditional journalists, entertainers and even the friends we turn to for advice. They do more than generate content, they influence our opinions and values. They're organizers, cultural translators and trusted voices.

Big brands have figured this out. But the social impact world is still catching up. Too often, campaigns miss the opportunity to build transformational partnerships with creators - diminishing their potential to drive meaningful change.

Social media is built on preference. Everyone's feed is different. So when we drop one-size-fits-all messaging into those spaces, we shouldn't be surprised when it doesn't land. To reach the communities that matter most - especially those ignored or underserved by traditional media - we need messengers who are already trusted in those spaces.

But here's the trap: campaigners tend to partner with creators who already care about the issue. That's great for surface-level engagement, but it rarely moves the needle. Instead, we risk preaching to the choir or staying inside the echo chamber.

This playbook is here to change that - and help you create campaigns that connect, inspire and spark something real.

5B⁺

Number of global social media users

Statista Research Center

84%

of Gen Z in the US get their news from social media

Kadence International

40%

of Gen Z in the US trust influencers more than they did a year ago

Sprout Social

2

Define your strategy

Start broad and then narrow down. Some questions to help:

1 What is the main mandate or goal of your agency?
Is there a specific focus for this year?

2 How would social media messaging and online advocacy support the above?

3 What audiences do you most want to reach with this messaging? What does this messaging/information provide to audiences?

4 What is the desired result? Direct sign-ups, awareness, behaviour change or something else?

Example:

Spotlight Initiative and Social Good Club's goal with the #WithHer Champions Programme was to expand dialogue online about the issue of violence against women and girls (VAWG). We wanted to expand the variety of creators speaking about the issue in a way that was authentic to different online communities and to reach a range of audiences with one programme. Influencers could bring their own connection to the issue, which expanded the pathways into the conversation – from parents speaking about how they raise their children to survivors sharing their experience with the legal process. We aimed to create positive change by inspiring the creators themselves to become highly invested advocates, in turn bringing their audiences on a longer journey of education and dialogue. Finding “unlikely” voices for this issue has also shown many new ways of approaching the narrative on VAWG.

2

Define your strategy

Establish a clear campaign goal:

“Our campaign will do X, so that Y happens” or “Our campaign will engage X, so that they Y”.

Example:

“The #WithHer Champions Programme will expand online dialogue on VAWG, so that new audiences find their connection to this issue and can feel empowered to make changes in their local communities.”

2

Define your strategy

Set success metrics

Return to the question of what positive change looks like. Is it raising awareness, shifting narratives, learning from audiences or inspiring action?

Example:

Depending on your goal, virality or reach (views, likes, shares) may only scratch the surface of your intended impact. Consider qualitative indicators like audience sentiment shifts, advocacy growth and sustained engagement post-campaign.

For a lower-cost solution, we recommend posing these questions to the creators themselves in the context of longer-term relationships. For example, checking in with creators some weeks and months after the content activation to get their assessment of their audience's continued curiosity about the issue.

Include the creators' change journey as part of your success metrics, as their own connection to an issue often correlates to their impact with audiences.

Put some qualitative research checkpoints in place at the beginning and end of their process. To start, assess their relationship to the issue at hand, their knowledge and ownership of the issue and their ability to make sense of it from their own point of view. Check in on these elements at the end of their experience, and leave room to truly listen to their point of view. Answers to questions you wouldn't have considered may show up!

3

Selecting and curating creators

Important:

Creators will be far more likely to commit and meaningfully engage if they are paid. If your budget is not high, many creators will take lower rates for work that feels purposeful, including the value of joining the UN ecosystem.

Green Flags (Ideal Creators)

✓ Authentic desire to make a positive impact with their channel.

✓ History of engaging with their audience on meaningful topics.

✓ Openness to learning and collaborating.

✓ Clear personal alignment with campaign values, even if they haven't previously discussed the issue.

Red Flags (Potential Risks)

✗ Overly transactional (i.e. Only willing to do the campaign if they're paid as if it were a high-value brand deal.)

✗ Mismatch between their voice and the campaign goals (Not to be confused with an untapped or unexpected audience.)

✗ History of misinformation or controversy that could harm credibility.

✗ Reluctance to adapt messaging for authenticity and impact.

3

Selecting and curating creators

Curation Tips:

- 1** Balance trusted voices (who already talk about related issues) with new messengers who can reach fresh audiences.
- 2** Check engagement beyond follower count – look for meaningful interactions, thoughtful comments and shareability.
- 3** Bigger is not always better! Often it's micro-influencers (50,000 - 100,000 followers) that have a deeper relationship with their online community.
- 4** Consider long-term partnerships to build sustained advocacy instead of one-off posts.
- 5** Bring on 1-2 more creators than you'll need, forecasting that at least 1 will either drop out or not fulfil the intended commitment.

Outreach Tips:

- 1** It's easiest to reach creators when engaging a creative group that already has access and established relationships. Otherwise, creators are either reachable through their representation or directly on the platforms.
- 2** Be clear about your most important messaging and vision for the campaign, as well as the timeline for delivery.

Example:

Spotlight Initiative and Social Good Club curate a group of creators each year that includes previous “alumni”, as well as creators who are new to the issue and the programme. That way, there's a variety of experimentation with narrative depth and accessibility, and a community of learning among the creators. As we connect with each prospective creator, we get a sense of their connection to the issue – knowing that it doesn't need to be fully established, as long as they are curious and open to learning.

Creative development process

Empower creators to shape the content:

- Start by providing the core talking points and facts, but allow flexibility in how they are presented. Also, stay open to learning from creators whether your talking points resonate with audiences in their current verbiage.
- Then, get curious about the creator – What strikes them about this issue, how do they relate to it? What is their voice and superpower in connecting to their audiences?
- Instead of prescribing messaging, co-create a narrative with the creator that fits their style and audience, and challenges them (within reason).

Ensure content is digestible and engaging:

- Avoid jargon-heavy scripts. Let creators translate complex topics into relatable storytelling.
- Use story-driven approaches – personal experiences, case studies and interactive content work best.

Address platform-specific strategies:

- Each platform (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube) has its own algorithm. Creators know best how to tailor content accordingly.
- Collaborate with creators on distribution – boost high-performing content with paid promotion when needed.

Example:

#WithHer Champion Kahlil Greene, known as the “Gen Z Historian” came to the issue of VAWG with the lens of unique or hidden tales from history. He really cared about sharing something that would relate to U.S. political culture, so our task was to align with his values while staying compliant with UN guidelines, as well as Spotlight Initiative’s goal of global messaging. He decided to tell the story of “welfare queens,” a narrative trope that paints single mothers as women who take advantage of government support. This was used as an entry point to discuss economic instability, VAWG and showcase how cultural narratives and policy can help and hurt progress. We were pleasantly surprised to discover that what we thought was a U.S. narrative had a more global footprint. Finding the “third door” led to a really unique and resonant story for Kahlil’s audience.

Support the creator's process:

- Provide educational resources early in the engagement. Creators need context, data and insights to confidently talk about the issue.
- Build trust-based relationships – creators should feel comfortable providing feedback on messaging.
- Provide additional value in the UN ecosystem where applicable, whether it's attending events or connecting with other partners. This will create a more long-term relationship.

Mitigate risks and challenges:

- Political and economic risks: Some creators face backlash when discussing social issues. Support them in navigating potential algorithm suppression or online harassment.
- Compensation and value alignment: Avoid expecting free work. Fair pay ensures commitment and sustainability.

Measuring success and scaling impact

Immediate indicators:

- Reach and engagement (views, shares, comments)
- Direct messages to creators from audiences
- Sentiment analysis (qualitative shifts in discussion) which can be measured using third party technologies such as Tambor.ai.
- Call-to-action success (sign-ups, donations, etc.)

Long-term impact metrics:

- Are creators continuing to engage with the issue post-campaign?
- Have new audiences been reached outside traditional advocacy circles?
- Did the content drive institutional, policy or cultural shifts?

Post-campaign follow-up:

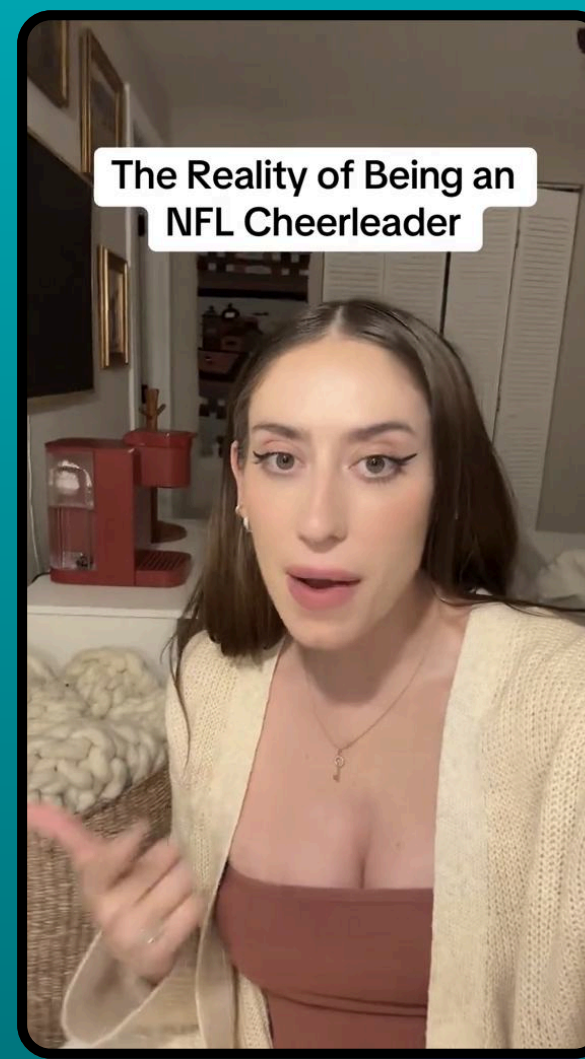
- Keep creators updated on progress – report back on their impact.
- Offer continued engagement opportunities to sustain advocacy momentum.

Example:

#WithHer Champion Charles Michel has been engaged with Spotlight Initiative since 2022. His connection to the issue of VAWG stems from his professional experience in the fine dining and food industries, and from observing the way women are treated in them, as well as his personal values. His first engagement explored VAWG within fine dining, food and farming. After this, he already had aspirations of creating deeper collaborations and we continued the dialogue between programme cycles. When we picked up our next fellowship cycle, Charles jumped in to continue the conversation with his audience, creating a longer continuum of education and deepening engagement. New followers were directed to previous content, and strategic, influential partners of his were inspired to comment and share their own experiences.

7

The 2024 #WithHer Spotlight Champions



#WithHer Champions

Over the course of 2024, Spotlight Initiative partnered with the Social Good Club to create the Spotlight Initiative #WithHer Champions Programme. This fellowship programme worked with influential content creators to strategically expand awareness, dialogue and action on violence against women and girls in mainstream culture.

The 2024 #Withher Spotlight Champions



Tiffany Yu
@imtiffanyyu

Tiffany Yu is a disability advocate and entrepreneur focused on intersectional representation. She founded Diversability, an award-winning social enterprise, and is a recognized TikTok API Trailblazer. Tiffany is a three-time TEDx speaker and has spoken at the World Economic Forum.



Liv Pearsall
@Liv.Pearsall

Liv Pearsall is a content creator known for her engaging and humorous videos on platforms like TikTok, where she shares creative skits and relatable content that resonates with a wide audience.



Laysie B.
@laysieeb

Laysie B is a TikTok content creator who shares engaging videos that often feature dance, music and creative expressions that appeal to a diverse audience.



Daisy Foko
@daisfoko

Daisy Foko is a digital influencer who creates content focusing on lifestyle, beauty and personal growth, inspiring her followers with her authentic and empowering messages.



Shira Lazar/What's Trending
@whatstrending

Shira Lazar is an Emmy-nominated host and creator, known for "What's Trending," a platform highlighting social media trends. She voices digital culture, covering technologies and well-being.



Charles Michel
@charlesxmichel

Charles Michel is a culinary artist and educator who is passionate about the intersection of food, art, sustainability and science. His projects explore the sensory and cultural aspects of gastronomy, aiming to inspire a deeper connection to food.



Kahlil Greene
@kahlil.greene

Kahlil Greene, known as the "Gen Z Historian", creates educational content on TikTok, where he shares insightful commentary on history, culture and social issues to educate and engage younger audiences.

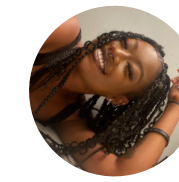


Brian Cohen
@briantylercohen

Brian Cohen is a TikTok creator recognized for his entertaining and informative videos, typically covering U.S. politics, often blending humour with insightful commentary.



Liv Pearsall
[@Liv.Pearsall](#)



Laysie B.
[@laysieeb](#)



Tiffany Yu
[@imtiffanyyu](#)



Daisy Foko
[@daisfoko](#)



Brian Cohen
[@briantylercohen](#)



Charles Michel
[@charlesxmichel](#)



Kahlil Greene
[@kahlil.greene](#)


13M

Total Followers!



**Shira Lazar/What's
Trending**
[@whatstrending](#)

The Reality of Being an NFL Cheerleader



Daisy Foko
@daisfoko

1M+ followers

#WithHer
CW: violence against wo

The Anti-Ableism Series
Part 299

Do you want to be a better ally to disabled people?

The Anti-Ableism Series
Part 300

CW: violence against some

#WithHer 2/

Do you want to be a better ally to disabled people?

The Anti-Ableism Series
Part 301

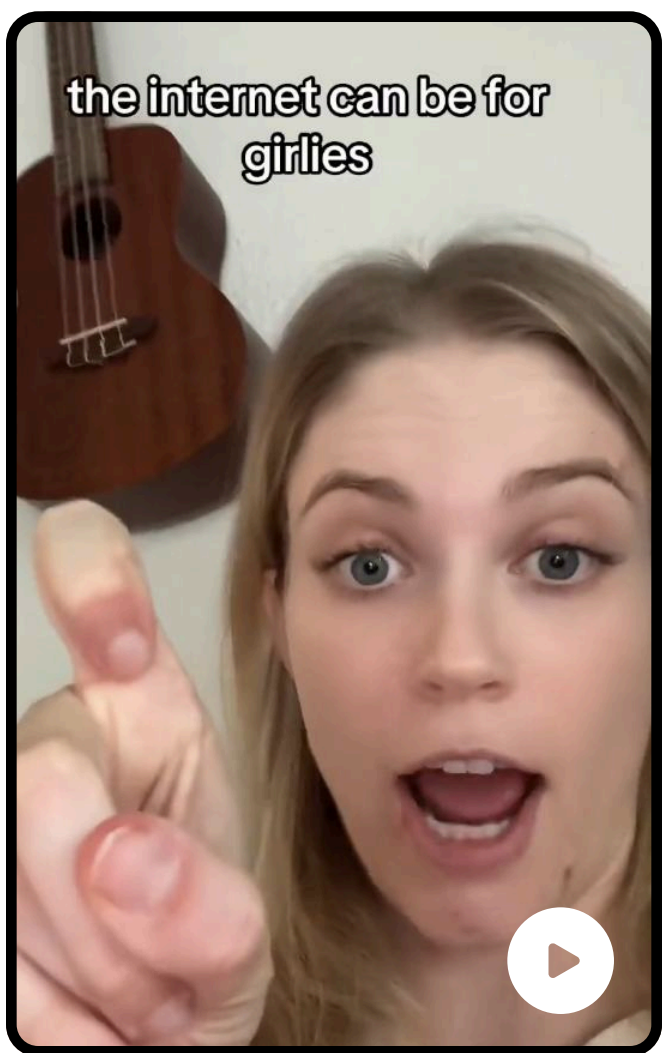
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#WithHer 3/

Tiffany Yu
@imtiffanyyu

54k followers


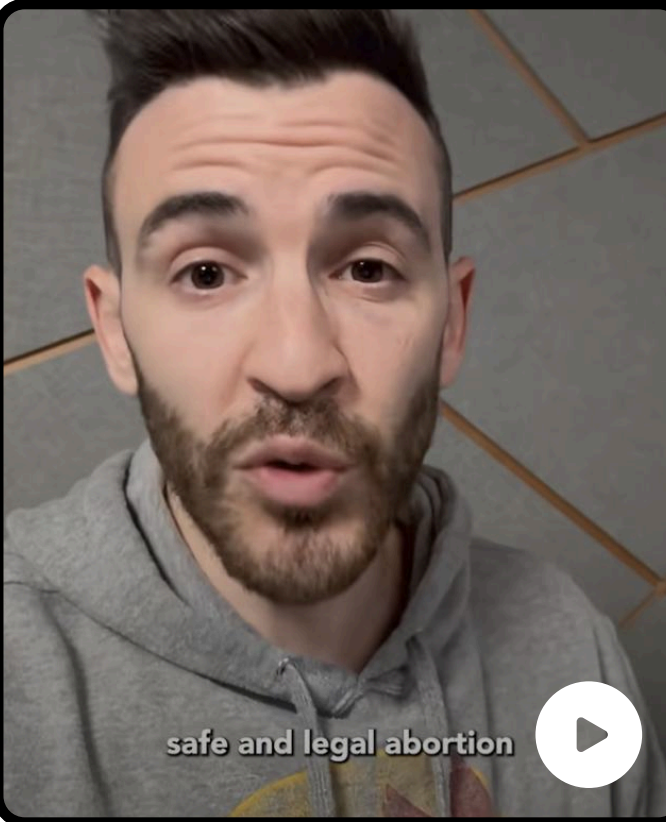
the internet can be for girls



Liv Pearsall
@Liv.Pearsall

912k followers

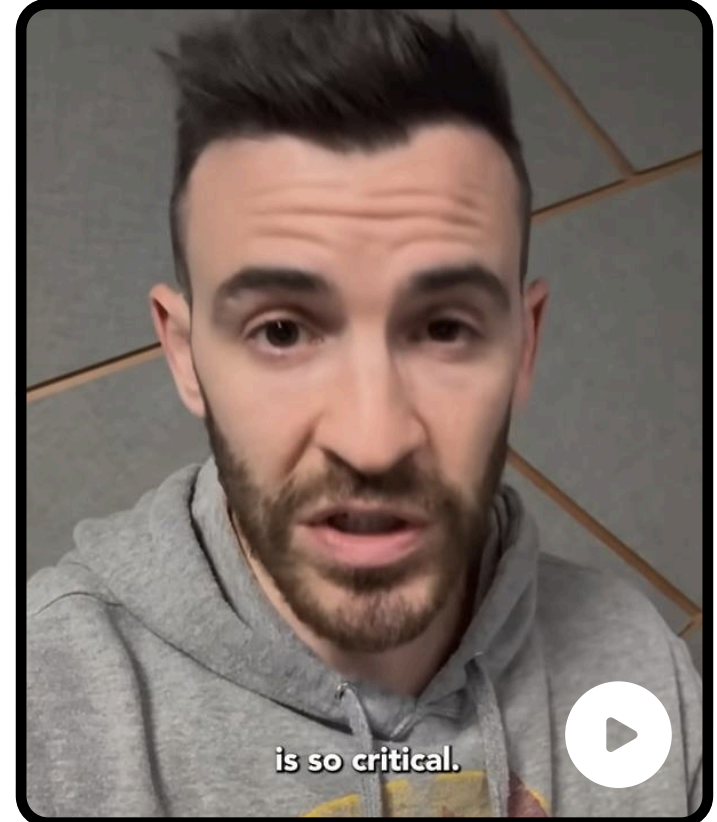
that is that the internet

Brian Cohen
@briantylercohen


5m+ followers

safe and legal abortion



is so critical.

912k followers

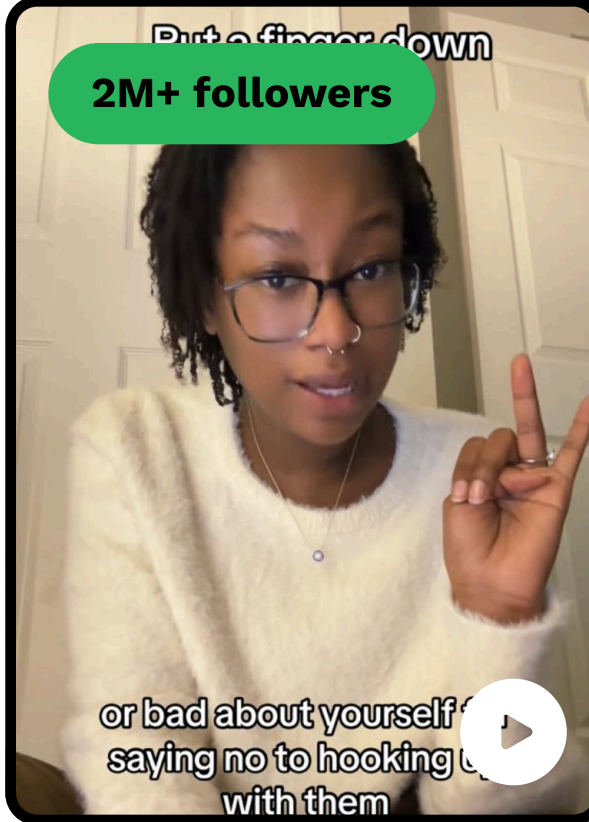


Kahlil Greene
@kahlil.greene

TO JUST GET MORE MONEY AND DO LESS WORK

Put a finger down

2M+ followers

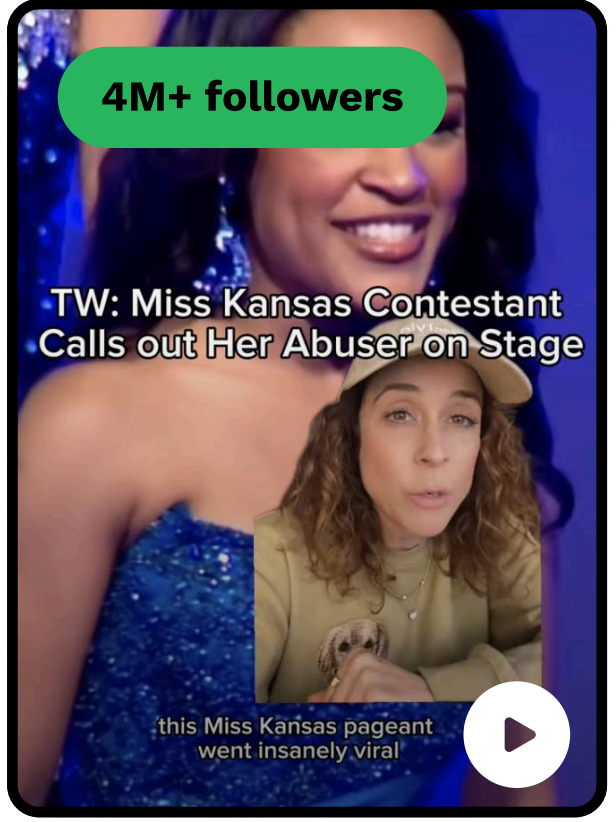


Laysie B.
@laysieeb

or bad about yourself saying no to hooking up with them

4M+ followers

TW: Miss Kansas Contestant Calls out Her Abuser on Stage

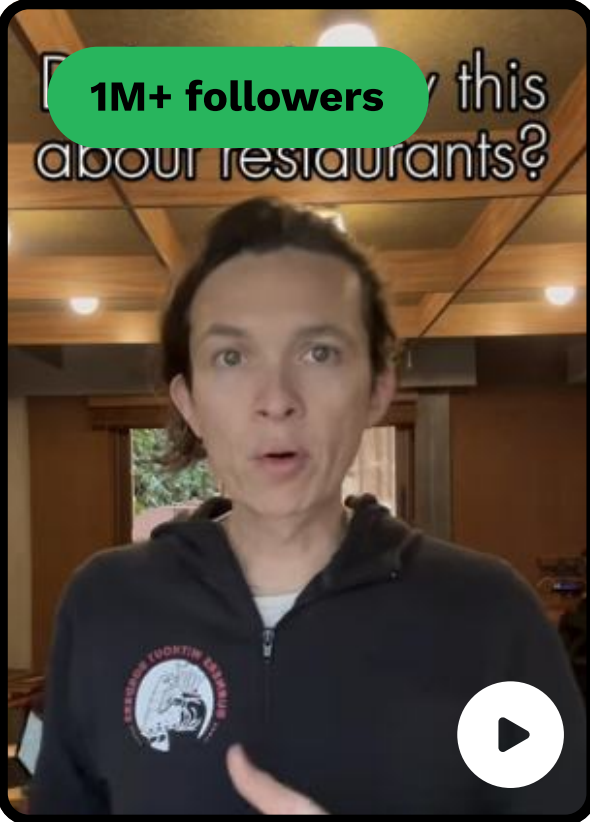


Shira Lazar/ What's Trending
@whatstrending

this Miss Kansas pageant went insanely viral

1M+ followers

this about restaurants?



Charles Michel
@charlesxmichel

8

Metrics

8

Creators across Instagram, TikTok, Youtube and X.

13.1m

Followers reached across Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and X.

14

Videos posted

421,595

Views (watched to the end of the video)

1,710

Comments on posts

2,479

Shares of posts

1,365

Saves of posts

57,692

Likes on posts

Viewership by gender:

30% Male / 67% Female / 3% Unknown

Viewership by age:

13-17 - 3.7% / 18-24 - 11.5% / 25-34 - 9.9% / 35-44 - 7.0% / 45-54 - 8.0% / 55+ - 10.5%

- 1. Strategy: start broad, narrow down**
- 2. Nurture a group of creators, and pay them**
- 3. Trust the creators, they know more than you**
- 4. Measure impact, revise, repeat**



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls



**Funded by
the European Union**

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 @GlobalSpotlight

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