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Introduction

Welcome to Style ID Africa's trend forecast – our insights on the influencer marketing landscape in Africa and beyond. This forecast looks at technology, culture, and people to provide brands, marketers and creators with an understanding of changing consumer attitudes, wants, and needs in order to better create, connect and communicate.

Through careful analysis of the past 6 months, the patterns and changes amongst our pool of 35,000+ influencers across 10 African countries, and the changing landscape, we've found the top trends shaping the rest of 2023.

At the beginning of the year, we reported on how social media has become an entertainment channel more than a social one. Today's influencers and creators aren't just popular personalities or emerging celebrities. Instead they're performers, educators, creative agencies and much more. They're no longer vying for validation or acceptance but looking for ownership, community and value.

Read on to learn about the changing creator landscape, discover how TikTok stars are leading the education revolution and why nano-creators remain on the rise.

None of this exists in a vacuum of course; we also explore our changing culture and technologies. From the AI-boom to the sharing economy for everything, our guide is here to keep you ahead of the curve and prepared for success in the coming year.

About Style ID Africa

Style ID Africa is a fully integrated influencer marketing agency and technology platform. We provide end-to-end performance driven influencer strategies and solutions that drive sales and business growth.

Our data-driven tools and omni-channel strategic approach will provide you with the best influencer marketing services across the continent.



Creator Economy

The creator economy is the ecosystem of online content creators, platforms and technology which enables influencers, content creators, artists, curators, and community builders to monetise their audiences through paid partnerships, ad revenue, subscription services, and product sales.





Ownership and Revenue Diversity



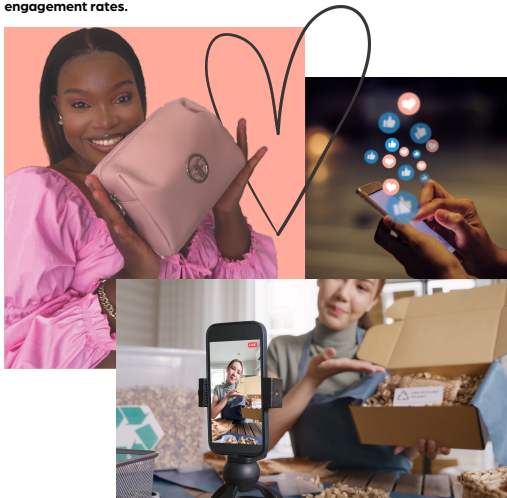
Creators are looking to social media as a gateway to platforms they own themselves.

Instagram, TikTok and Twitter are not the channels upon which their content lives but instead the tools they use to promote self-owned channels such as newsletters, websites, or subscription services like Substack and Patreon. The majority of creators cannot rely on brand deals and paid partnerships for income so ownership of their own platforms means alternative revenue such as affiliate commissions, subscriptions and tips, and selling their own digital or physical products. Third-party monetisation (brand deals) is no longer a priority for influencers and creators.

They want the ability to connect directly with their audience, whether by owning their data or through platforms offering enhanced features that allow for virtual engagement and closer relationships with fans.

This doesn't mean the end of paid partnerships and brand deals however—instead self-ownership for creators means greater credibility for brands. Being able to build subscriber bases is evidence of how creators can move people to action—something highly valuable for any brand wanting to see business results in marketing campaigns.

Moving forward, showing newsletter subscribers or subscribed audiences will be a greater currency for partnerships than Instagram followers or TikTok engagement rates.



Creator Platforms

TA turbulent social media landscape with changing algorithms and legislation has led to creators becoming increasingly open to the idea of new channels and platforms.

Creators are looking for:

- **Ownership.**

Being able to control their intellectual property and migrate their content in spite of any platform changes or losses.

- **Community growth.**

Creators want to diversify their income through brand partnerships, affiliate commissions, e-commerce options, and receiving subscriptions and tips.

- **Generative AI.**

These tools are growing in popularity—offering operational efficiency and convenience to busy creators.

- **Operations**

Having oversight over what's happening in their businesses and the ability to develop them.



Part-Time Creators



Because anyone can be an influencer, now everyone is an influencer—just no longer always in a full-time, professional or serious capacity.

When influencer marketing exploded, it became common for online creators to abandon their 9–5 jobs to pursue content creation full time. Now with increased competition and a saturated market, content creation has become a part-time gig for the majority of online creators. Even for those with 9–5 jobs, content creation has become an attractive form of additional income or a hobby.

How to provide creators with security?

Long-term partnerships, influencer loyalty programs and affiliate commissions can provide permanence for part-time creatives—meeting their growing desires for control and stability.

Creators want to know that they are valued by brands—and this works in brands' favour as the more creators are valued, the more motivated they are to deliver high quality work.

The Creator-Educator

Creators are split into two categories: **creator-performer** and **creator-educator**.

- **Creator-performers** are what we most typically associate with the economy—comedians, dancers, gamers etc whose content is entertaining.
- **Creator-educators**, who can also be creator-performers, are distinct because of their emphasis on valuable content over entertaining content. Creator-educators are eager to share (and monetise) their unique passion, expertise or knowledge. Their expertise can cover an infinite amount of niches and industries—from business to health to academia. Their audiences are highly engaged and involved, and more likely to trust recommendations and advice because of this expertise and authority.



The Hometown Creators

Traditionally, it has been the mega stars—the influencers with millions of followers—who deliver a strong return on marketing campaigns and brand deals. This has now changed. Nano-influencers or the “hometown heroes” are the ones who will outperform marketing campaigns. They have a closer relationship with their followers, they know who they are and what they want, and typically have niche audiences allowing the creators to be a leader in the categories they are promoting.



Professional/creator

Professional adults have become authoritative influencers and creators online but because of their full-time professional jobs and trades. From doctors and lawyers to marketing managers and tech consultants, these creators build audiences and communities around their earned and practised expertise.

Many of these creators are not Gen Z, often being older Millennials or Gen Xers. Their content also speaks to the often overlooked older generations online while also remaining relevant and informative to younger audiences. This is part of the greater shift of social media as an entertainment platform to an educational one.



Technology

Influencer marketing is undergoing a technological revolution, empowering brands and influencers alike. From AI-powered analytics to advanced campaign management platforms, technology is reshaping the industry, enhancing targeting, measurement, and engagement.





The Rise of AI tools

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used for business automation in South Africa and across Africa. Companies are deploying AI chatbots for customer support, AI-driven recommendation engines for personalised product suggestions, and AI algorithms for data analysis and insights. In turn, content creators now have a number of AI tools at their disposal that can assist them with idea generation, content creation and text optimisation.

Moving forward, both marketers and content creators will have to strike a balance between using AI for optimisation while still proving their value through their soft skills such as community building, understanding human psychology, and creativity.

At Style ID Africa, we've leveraged AI tools for data analysis, insights and campaign management in combination with human skills to boost strategy and management.



The global AI market is expected to grow from \$21.5 billion in 2018 to \$190.6 billion by 2025, according to a report by MarketsandMarkets.

The South African Metaverse Boom

This trend opens up opportunities for influencer marketing, as brands collaborate with gaming and tech influencers to reach tech-savvy consumers in innovative ways.

First-mover influencers in particular—influencers known for introducing new trends to their followers—are key for bridging the gap between brands and consumers in the metaverse.

In line with this trend, **Sanlam**, a leading financial services group in South Africa, made history with South Africa's first media launch in the metaverse. By leveraging the metaverse, Sanlam aimed to create an immersive experience for users, enabling them to interact with the brand and its offerings in a virtual environment. This initiative demonstrates how companies are exploring the metaverse's capabilities to connect with tech-savvy consumers in innovative ways.





What's the takeaway?

Consumers are ready for new technologies but they've grown accustomed to ignoring brand-controlled messaging. With growing concerns over security, safety and privacy, it only makes sense to rely on those consumers already trust—particularly in a risk-riddled environment. Influencers and creators already know the fears and insecurities of their audiences and moreover, they've already built loyal relationships.



Africa Loves Gaming



Thanks to increased internet penetration—with South Africans spending an average of 10 hours online every day (the highest in the world), growing consumer markets, and the African preference for mobile, gaming and gaming influencers are a powerful driving force across the continent.

Additionally, the African gaming industry is benefiting from the increasing number of international game developers and publishers that are entering the market to take advantage of the large and growing consumer base. Other opportunities include the development of new game genres and content that is tailored to the African market, as well as the expansion of mobile gaming into new markets.

AR Technology's Impact on Retail and Marketing

Augmented Reality (AR) is revolutionising the retail and marketing industries, providing immersive and interactive experiences for consumers. Retailers are leveraging AR technology to enhance customer engagement and boost sales. For instance, AR-powered virtual try-on solutions allow customers to visualise how products such as clothing, accessories, or cosmetics would look on them before making a purchase. Companies like IKEA and Sephora have implemented AR solutions to enable customers to virtually place furniture in their homes or try out different makeup looks.



The global AR market is expected to grow from \$10.7 billion in 2019 to \$72.7 billion by 2024, according to MarketsandMarkets.

The Internet of Things

The proliferation of smart home devices has led consumers to embrace a deeply interconnected digital world. From refrigerators, TVs, and washing machines linked to smartphones, to watches connected to smart speakers, individuals are increasingly immersed in a technological biosphere. Marketers recognize the immense potential in tapping into this ecosystem to engage their audiences and foster brand advocacy. With seamless integration and connectivity, marketers can leverage these smart devices as platforms to deliver personalised and immersive brand experiences. From targeted notifications to interactive voice commands, smart home devices offer novel opportunities for marketers to captivate their audiences and establish meaningful connections in the digital realm.



Media Social & Digital

Statistics from a survey conducted by NeoReach indicate that Instagram takes the lead as the most favoured monetisation tool for creators, followed by TikTok and Youtube. The Economist finds that American social media users will spend on average \$67 dollars a year on transactions through TikTok versus \$200 dollars a year through Instagram.





Multi-sensory Social Media

In the upcoming era of the "Internet of Senses," there will be a heightened emphasis on delivering content in diverse formats, aiming to enhance accessibility and user experiences.

To captivate social media users, brands will strategically integrate various formats, including audio, video, and text, across their social media channels. Investing in sensory elements such as gamification and immersive digital environments will become a priority for brands, as consumers anticipate these experiences to become commonplace by 2030. This evolution signifies a shift towards more engaging and immersive social media interactions.



Accessible Media



Q3 sees even more growth in the notable social media trend towards creating content that is accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes the implementation of features such as subtitles, alt-text descriptions, and audio descriptions.

Recognizing the importance of inclusivity, content creators and brands are actively striving to make their social media content more accessible to a wider audience. Subtitles, in particular, have gained significant traction, allowing individuals with hearing impairments to engage with video content.

By embracing these accessibility measures, social media platforms are becoming more inclusive spaces, fostering equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities to access and enjoy the content shared across these platforms.

Zeroing on Value

The economic landscape in Q3, marked by inflationary pressures, has led to shifts in consumer behaviour. As people face new reasons to be cautious with their spending, subscription-based media is likely to encounter additional challenges. Streaming video providers, in particular, may face hurdles as mounting costs frustrate consumers across all age groups.



In light of these circumstances, individuals are reevaluating the value they derive from their expenditures in terms of both time and money. Consequently, they are making necessary adjustments to their preferences and consumption patterns, seeking alternatives that offer better value for their resources. This trend highlights the growing importance of affordability and value-driven choices in the current economic climate.

SUBSCRIBE

Culture & Community

The African Consumer

Social media has emerged as one the top tools through which these consumers are discovering products and brands—at least 40% of the consumers first—discover brands through social media followed by Google Search.

Despite Africa being one of the youngest continents, it is Kenyans over the age of 55 who are the most likely to make online purchases signalling that brands should not overlook Gen X consumers in their marketing. In South Africa, app-based purchases dominate over website-shopping.

According to Google, online shopping remains a priority for consumers in South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria.

84% of consumers in South Africa
85% in both Kenya and Nigeria

The Sharing Economy

With an economic downturn on the horizon and a world made smaller by the internet, consumers are turning to the sharing economy.

The sharing economy, characterised by platforms that enable people to share resources, has gained significant popularity. Consumers are embracing services like ride-sharing, home-sharing, and co-working spaces, valuing affordability, convenience, and reduced environmental impact over ownership. This also speaks to the desire for community in the wake of the pandemic.

Shift towards sustainable and ethical consumption

Consumers are increasingly concerned about the environmental and social impact of their purchases. They are actively seeking out eco-friendly and ethically produced products, such as those made from recycled materials or produced under fair labour conditions – this can also look at the rise of second hand stores in Africa as it has become a new source of income generation in economies with low income opportunities.

Brands and campaigns seeking to connect with consumers will need to prioritise the environmental and social impacts of their efforts in meaningful, authentic ways.

Personalisation

Consumers are seeking personalised experiences that cater to their unique preferences and needs. This trend is driven by advancements in technology, which enable companies to gather and analyse consumer data to offer customised recommendations, personalised marketing, and tailored products or services.

Once a nice-to-have bonus, personalization is now essential for standing out in an increasingly competitive ecommerce landscape. Customer expectations around personalization are also on the rise—73% of shoppers expect brands to understand their unique needs and expectations.

Key trends in personalisation:

- **Machine learning**

Companies are feeding customer data into AI to deliver product recommendations tailored to consumer's preferences as well as create automated baskets and carts based on historical habits. For consumers, these recommendations not only save consumers time but allow them to experience the sort of attentive customer service not common to e-commerce.

- **Privacy conscious personalisation**

The rise of web browsers and smartphone companies eliminating third-party cookies, reveals growing consumer concern over privacy and data protection. In a cookie-less world, brands are relying on first-party data which prioritises consumer consent while allowing brands the data they require. This is realised through loyalty programs, quizzes and surveys, and incentivised email marketing—such as offering points, rewards and vouchers in return for providing personal information.

- **Personalised rewards**

Rewards and points systems have always been a key part of retail but in 2023, brands are taking this further with rewards and points personalised to consumer's preferences and habits. Creating rewards based on information from shopping history, quizzes, and surveys allows consumers to feel valued and cared for and inspires brand loyalty and repeat purchases.