

Clicks, Controversy, and Crisis:

Navigating Influencer Marketing Safely

In 2023, the creator economy
was **\$250 billion**.

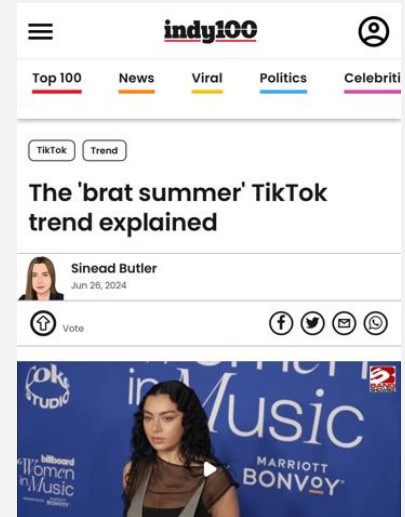
In 2023, the creator economy
was **\$250 billion**.

It is projected to reach **\$480 billion**
by 2027.



96% of the creator economy is untapped, we can expect a tidal wave of new influencers.

TikTok was the
highest grossing app last year
and it's designed for virality.





There's incredible **tension** **out** there around influencers, and around brands.

Culture > TV & Radio > News

TIME

ENTERTAINMENT • INTERNET CULTURE

How the Shein Brand Trip Became a Disaster for a Group of Influencers

8 MINUTE READ

SHEIN

BY MORRIS MENDENHALL X
JUNE 26, 2022 3:10 PM EDT

The Chinese clothing company Shein, known for its incredibly low prices and popularized by influencers trying on "hauls" of their clothing items on TikTok, has been the subject of numerous reports criticizing its business practices. A detailed *Wired* investigation published last year cited an audit conducted of its suppliers which found that 12 percent "had committed tolerance violations," which could include underage labor, forced labor, or poor health and safety issues." The Swiss watchdog Public Eye issued a report in 2021 stating that the company had "committed serious violations, including the violation of Chinese labor laws. And a documentary released by

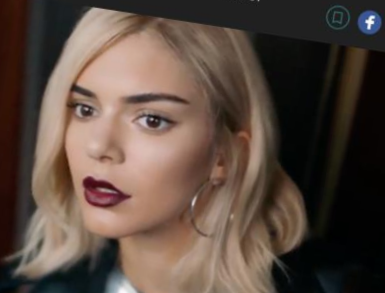
Culture > TV & Radio > News

Pepsi advert with Kendall Jenner pulled after huge backlash

'We missed the mark and we apologise'


Tom Batchelor, Christopher Houston • Wednesday 05 April 2017 18:15 BST

Comments



influencers dodge backlash while speaking up about Israel and Gaza

In a hyperpolarized social media environment, influencers have faced intense criticism for engaging in what many view as an information war.



Justine Good...

What have you got veneers?' TOWIE star Chloe Sims and Bobby Norris face backlash from fans over their Oral B whitening toothpaste adverts - while dentist brands them 'disingenuous'

By Hayley Richardson For Mailonline
15:52 27 Oct 2020, updated 00:04 28 Oct 2020



phishhaker2020 This is funny because you have veneers so toothpaste does not fit 😂

vortex_tnt_fireworks But you've got veneers?

Share or comment on this

Do we really need more examples before we invest properly in this?



Little Mix

7,720 likes

Littlemix How's this copy jade: so surreal...we're on the side of a taxi who's got their bottle of #LMWISHMAKER? Let us know what you think! Launch event tomorrow 🥰👍

The Guardian
News website of the year

News Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle



LGBTQ+ rights

'Panic and rash decision-making': ex-Bud Light staff on one of the biggest bores in US history

Rolling Stone

SCROLL AWAY

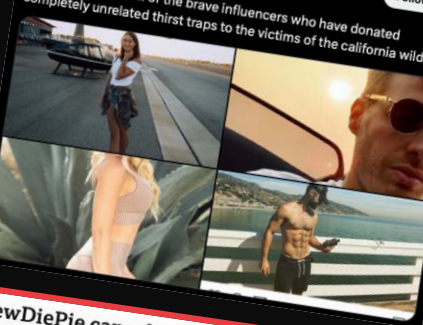
Weight Watchers Is Pivoting to Ozempic. Influencers Aren't Following

For decades, the company has earned loyal customers by offering a sustainable alternative to crash diets — now, they're adding the option of a drug that's been hailed as a quick fix

BY CT JONES
JULY 30, 2023

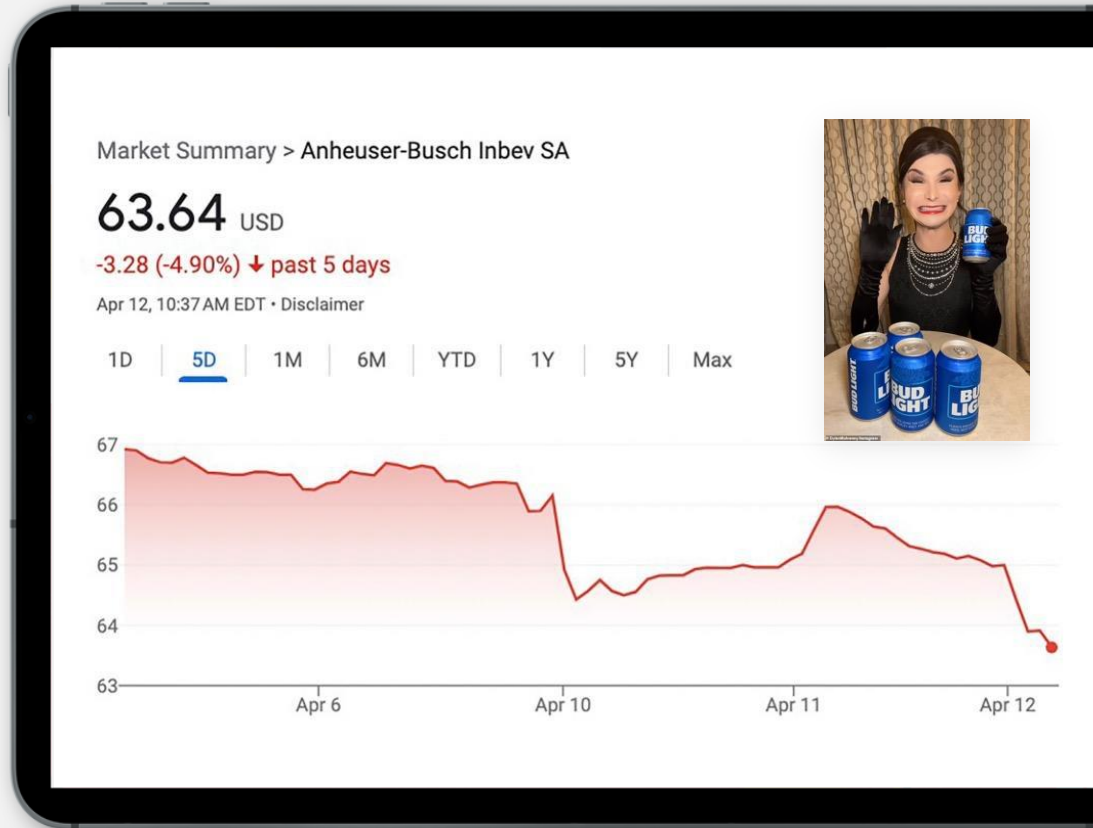
Like and Subscribe @likeandsub

we want to thank all of the brave influencers who have donated completely unrelated thirst traps to the victims of the california wildfire



PewDiePie cancels \$50,000 donation to anti-hate group: 'I messed up'

The business cost
of getting it
wrong can be
very high



Israel-Hamas
conflict

Russia-Ukraine
conflict

Sustainability

Influencers
criticised

Influencer
activism

Non-compliant
content

**How do you make campaigns safer
in all the chaos?**

**How do you make campaigns safer
in all the chaos?**

Some practical tips.

**First, you need to understand the
psychology of risk.**

Principle 1

**AVAILABILITY
BIAS**

Principle 2

SUNK COST FALLACY

Principle 3

**OPTIMISM
BIAS**

Principle 1

**AVAILABILITY
BIAS**

Follow a process, don't
pushed of course.

Principle 2

SUNK COST FALLACY

Use people outside the
campaign team.

Principle 3

**OPTIMISM
BIAS**

Follow the data (don't get
distracted from it!).

**Do risk management from the very start,
and all the way through.**

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and all the way through.**

(it's not just vetting and responding)

ASSESS AND ADVISE

1. Assess the campaign
2. Vet the influencers
3. Check the creative strategy

PREPARE

1. Agree triage process
2. Write a response plan
3. Onboard influencers

MANAGE

1. The right analytics
2. Risk + social + creative
3. PR response

**Go broad and deep in your
vetting.**

**Go broad and deep in your
vetting.**

(there's usually something).

POLITICAL

- Do they have strong political or geopolitical views?
- Do their geopolitical views conflict with the interests of the brand?
- Do they back a political party?

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC

- Do they own a business?
- Are they a company director?
- Have they made insensitive comments about wealth or privilege?

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Are they outspoken on issues?
- Do their views align with ours?

SOCIAL

- Have they ever made any comments about a person from another race, gender, ethnic group, or sexuality?
- Have they been reported making comments about a person from another group (third party information)?
- Do they have any religious leanings?
- Do they have tattoos?

TECHNOLOGICAL

- Do they get into disagreements in the comments of posts? Have they commented on the creator economy?
- Have they ever been critical of a particular platform or owner of a technology company?
- Have they ever been critical of another creator or a commenter?

COMPLIANCE

- Have they ever filed for bankruptcy?
- Do they have any tax issues?
- Have they ever been arrested or cautioned by the police?
- Is there any record of them taking illegal drugs?
- Do they always tag adverts or sponsored content on their social media accounts?

ACTIVISM

- Groups active in criticising the brand may attack the campaign and/or our influencers
- May run counter to goals of specific campaign groups adjacent to the campaign topic (alcohol, sugar, etc.)

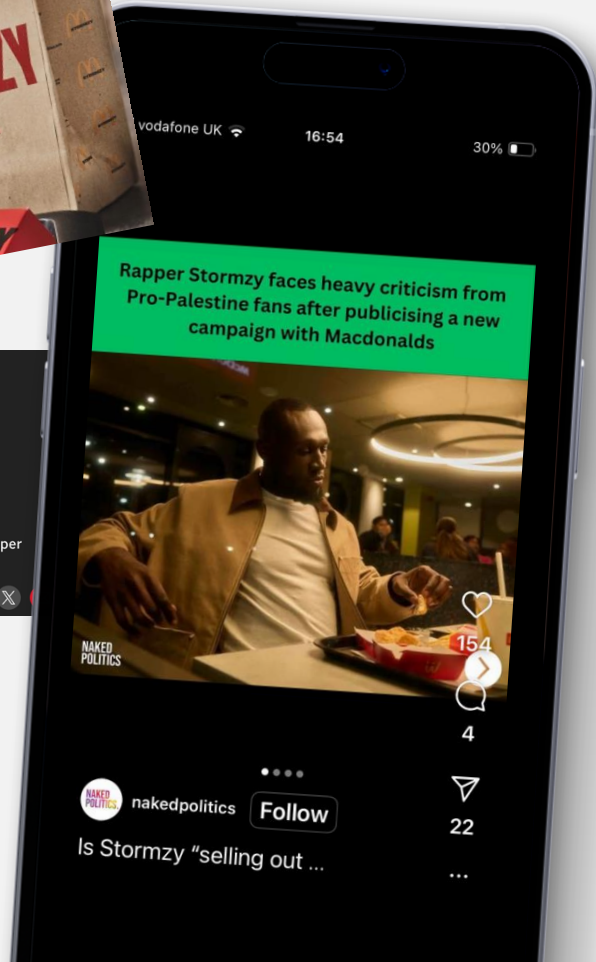


Lifestyle

Stormzy issues statement after 'deleting' pro-Palestine tweets amid McDonalds collab

'I spoke about #FreePalestine, oppression and injustice and my stance on this has not changed,' the rapper insisted

Maira Butt • Saturday 22 February 2025 09:43 GMT • [Comments](#)



Treat influencers like partners.

Treat influencers like partners.

Not like media space.

ONBOARDING

Show how you will look after them to build trust.

CARE ABOUT THEIR BRAND

Because if they feel like a partner, they will behave like one.

OFFBOARDING

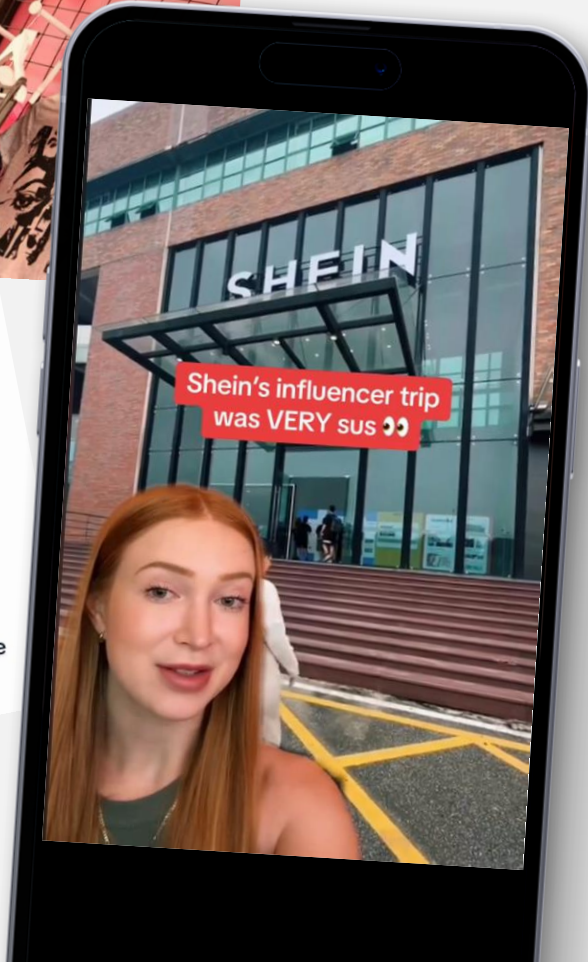
Debrief on issues.
Tease out any grievances.



Home > Life > Digital Culture

Shein exploited marginalized women for their influencer trip. It worked.

Non-white creators are offered fewer opportunities than white creators and make less money. Shein knew they were grateful to be included.



**Move very quickly in response to
an issue.**

**Move very quickly in response to
an issue.**

But don't lose perspective.

THE MESSAGE

Relevance

How does it directly relate to the brand

Sensitivity

How controversial is it

Mobilisation

Will it encourage others to criticise us

Velocity

How fast is it growing

THE MESSENGER

Reach

How many people might see this

Authority

How much authority does this person have

Aggression

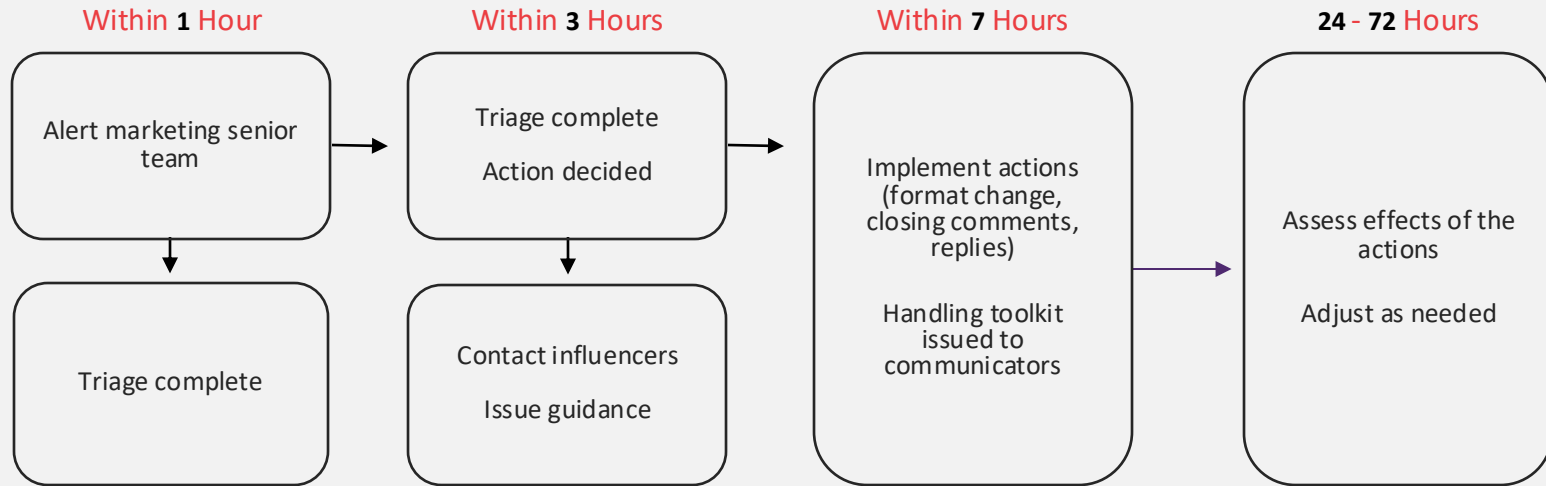
How hostile is this person or group to the brand

Audience

How influential is the audience seeing this



A global issue for a global company



Monitoring – reach, influence, quantity, velocity

But the rewards of doing it well?

Safety.

Safety.

Confidence.

Safety.

Confidence.

Experimentation.

Safety.

Confidence.

Experimentation.

Effectiveness.

Ask me anything.