

# INFLUENCER MARKETING REPORT:

Compensating Influencers while  
Maintaining Consumer Trust



**GroupHigh**

## How did we gather this data and why are we so excited about it?

The same question gets brought up in marketing circles and brand meetings all the time. “If I pay influencers to post cool things about my brand, will consumers trust brand recommendations?”

The long answer is yes, but, relationships have to be built and content authenticity needs to be established if a brand is going to pay for posts. The short answer is, maybe.

To tackle such an intricate topic with so many moving pieces we decided to break this HUGE QUESTION into 6 smaller questions and go straight to the content creators. After all, they’re the ones who have the relationship and trust with the consumers you’re trying to reach, they know best!

With a mission to learn more about how influencers want to be compensated for great content and if paid for posts have an effect on consumer trust, GroupHigh sent out a survey to 5,000 influencers.

We factored in many criteria to define influence including size of reach, social footprint and post topics. The verticals surveyed encompass the most sought after genres such as parenting, fashion, DIY, tech, food and more.

We aren’t ones for fluff or “too many words” here at GroupHigh so the questions were short, sweet and to the point. At the end of the day, influential content creators are replacing traditional advertisement in terms of what works for marketing and marketers are figuring out where to divert their budgets and how to earn sincere and valuable word of mouth content. Equipped with the results of this survey, influencers and marketers and consumers can work together.

Enjoy and as always, the team here at GroupHigh is here to answer any questions you may have about influencer marketing strategies!

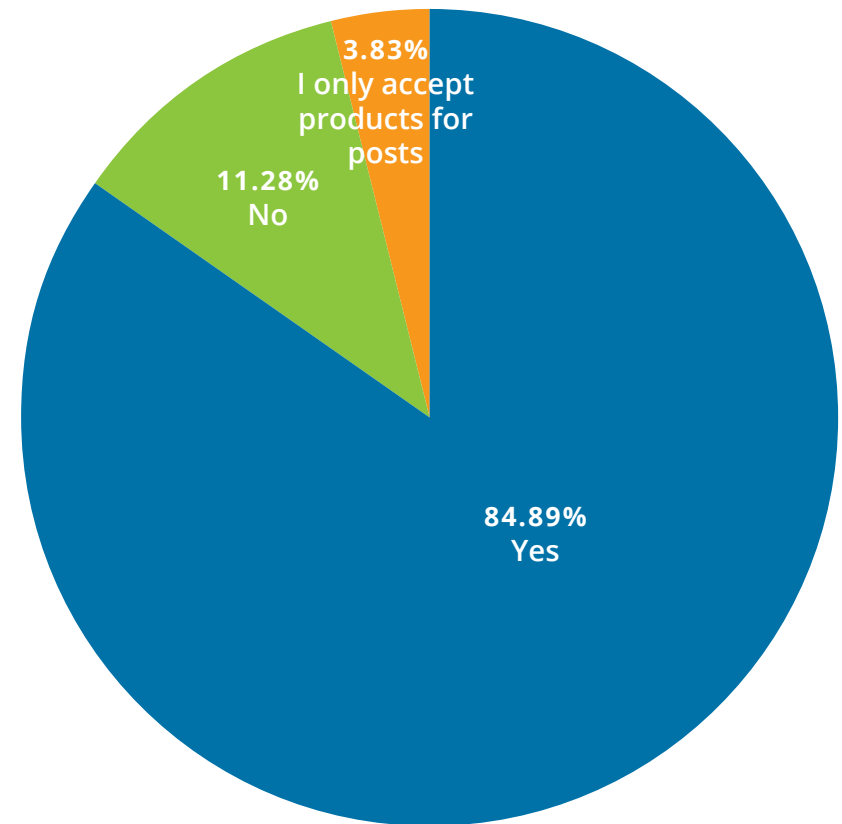
## 1. Do most influencers want to be paid for posts?

85% of influencers surveyed report that they accept monetary compensation for posts.



« CLICK TO TWEET

*Do you accept monetary compensation for posts?*



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*“We work hard to ensure that the brands we choose fit with our style and our readers interests, and from our reader surveys and comments we know our followers appreciate that! We want sponsored content to be a win for us, the brand, and especially our readers!”* - JESSICA & SARAH, PRETTY PROVIDENT

*“The key to being an effective digital influencer is having an authentic voice. It’s completely okay for influencers to accept money for paid sponsorships, so long as those paid posts accurately reflect that influencer’s persona in a genuine, non-salesman way. Every influencer is responsible for finding his/her right balance between organic and sponsored posts.”*

- JENNY BAKOS



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### SOMETHING MARKETERS SHOULD CONSIDER:

Re-evaluate where marketing dollars are being used. A topic that is heavily debated is whether or not influencers take money to talk about brands. With over 86% of influencers reporting that they accept monetary compensation, marketers should align their outreach plans and strategic partnerships accordingly. The budget that was once used for traditional advertising tactics is arguably better used when put toward influencer marketing.

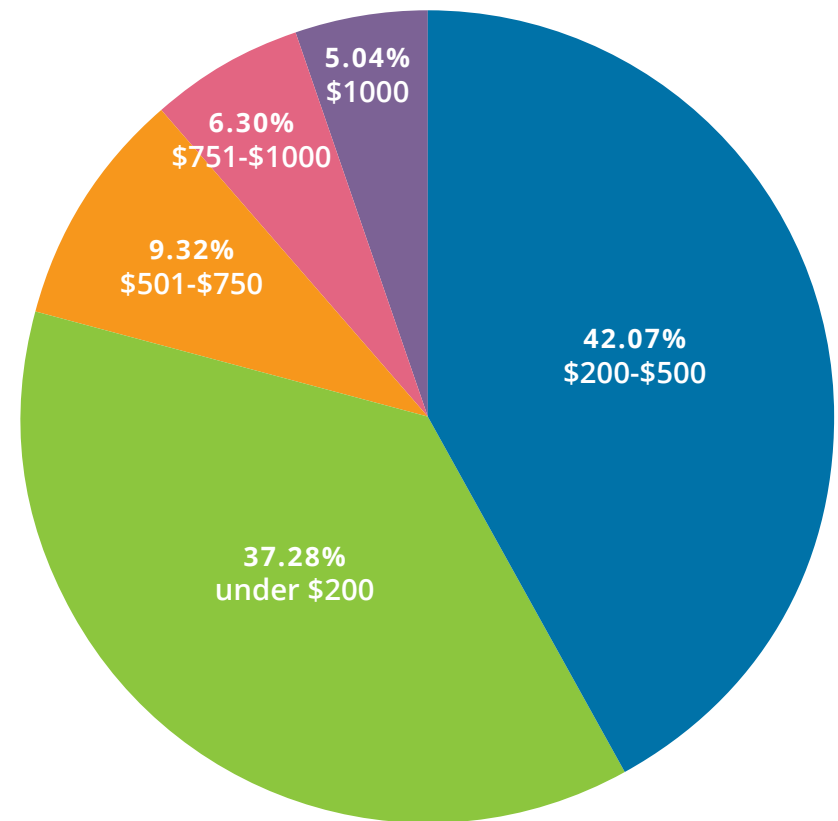
## 2. How much should I budget for an influencer marketing strategy that involves sponsored content?

On average, a mid-level influencer charges a brand \$200-\$500 per post.



« CLICK TO TWEET

### *How much do you charge for sponsored content?*



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*“I can justify taking money from brands because over the years I have built my reputation as an expert in cooking, food photography and restaurant reviews.*

*When I’m working with a brand, I always give my readers the same care in an original recipe, photography, and information that will help them navigate their kitchen or life style. I maintain my own voice, style and quality. I only choose to work with brands that offer products synergistic with my own brand of healthy, hearty approachable recipes.” - ANGELA ROBERTS, SPINACH TIGER*

*“I never ask for payment for a post, but if an advertiser asks for a sponsored post, I have a fee. As a veteran motorcycle journalist I am often given free samples (to keep or return) and my reviews are always honest. If not, I wouldn’t have 230,000+ monthly readers.”*

**- MARK  
HINCHLIFFE,  
MOTORBIKE  
WRITER**



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### **SOMETHING MARKETERS SHOULD CONSIDER:**

Influencers are aware of their power to cause brand lift. Naturally they are wanting to be compensated by brands for the consumer awareness they have created that turns into dollars for brands.

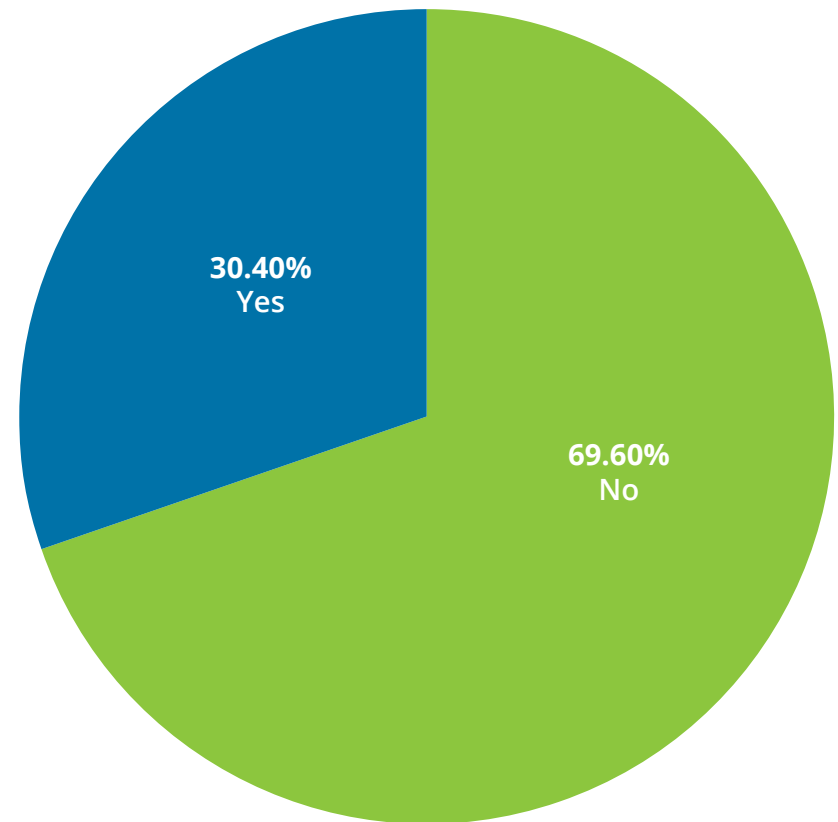
### 3. Does a post labeled “paid” or “sponsored” mean that audiences will not trust the brand recommendation?

When done transparently, most influencers report that content labeled “paid” or “sponsored” doesn’t affect how much a consumer trusts their brand recommendation.



« CLICK TO TWEET

*Do you think your audience questions your authenticity when you produce content that is labeled “sponsored” or “paid”?*



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*“Balancing authenticity and paid sponsorship is a delicate balance. For me, I only accept agreements from brands that I truly believe in, being genuine and real is what my blog is based on. I’ve turned down very well paid programs due to not feeling in-tune with the message or product.”* - JESSICA, SAVORY EXPERIMENTS



*“I think most readers now understand that they are getting free content {no need to buy a book or magazine} when they read blogs. That author obviously needs to somehow get paid for their hard work. It’s either a sponsor or a DONATE now button. I’m sure readers would rather see a sponsor than have to donate money. I think it’s best when bloggers pick and choose sponsors who mesh with the message they are sending.”* - JULI NOVOTNY GODDARD, PURE MAMAS

*“Balancing authenticity is difficult to do when you are mixing in paid posts. Your followers are naturally turned off by it. That’s why I think, and I’m probably in the minority here, that it’s important to refer or promote products/places/ things you like and enjoy regularly without being paid as well.”* - DANTE THE DON



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### SOMETHING MARKETERS SHOULD CONSIDER:

The key to a successful marketing relationship is transparency. If you are going to pay influencers for posts, make sure they are clearly labeling the post and make sure they authentically align with your brand.



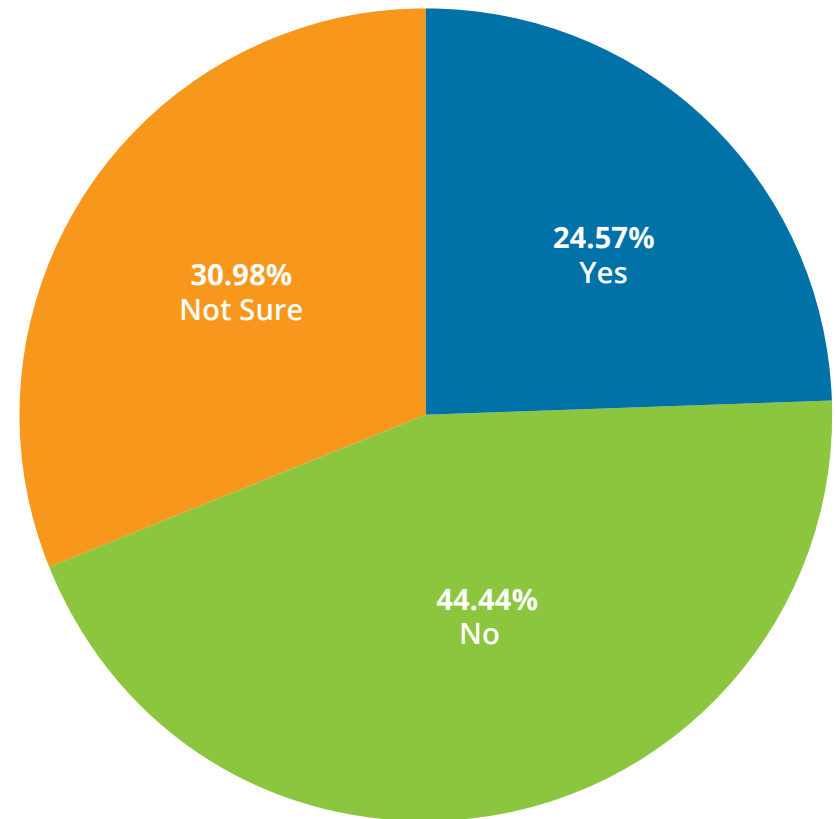
#### 4. Do influencers feel valued and compensated by other marketers?

Almost half of influencers report that they don't feel like brands are offering fair compensation for posts.



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*Do you think you're being fairly compensated by brands?*

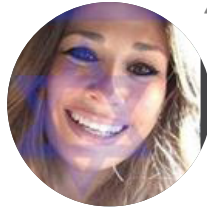


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*“I believe that you can strike the right balance between authenticity and making money from posts, if you create content that has as much value for your reader as it does for your bank account. When one is greater than the other the model falls apart.”*

**- DAWN SANDOMENO**



*“I think it’s about time that bloggers are fairly compensated for their work. In order for this to work we must remain authentic to our brand and promote products that are consistent and true to our image. Sometimes a blogger will have to turn down a sponsored post, but when she accepts one she should ask for compensation that is fair value for her work and her following.”*

**- SHARON LANGERT, FASHIONISHA**

*“It’s a wonderful feeling to get paid for doing what I love to do and helping my audience at the same time! As influencers, we can’t forget that we are a gold mine to companies because of our targeted audience who trusts and values our advice. We deserve to get paid very well for all the hard work that went into creating our brand trust and loyalty.”*

**- KELLY WINTERS, PRIMALLY INSPIRED**



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### **SOMETHING MARKETERS SHOULD CONSIDER:**

Whether it’s through sponsored posts, free product or a combination of both, make sure that the influencers who write about your brand know they are valued. The key is open lines of communication to ensure influencer relationships are healthy and mutually beneficial.

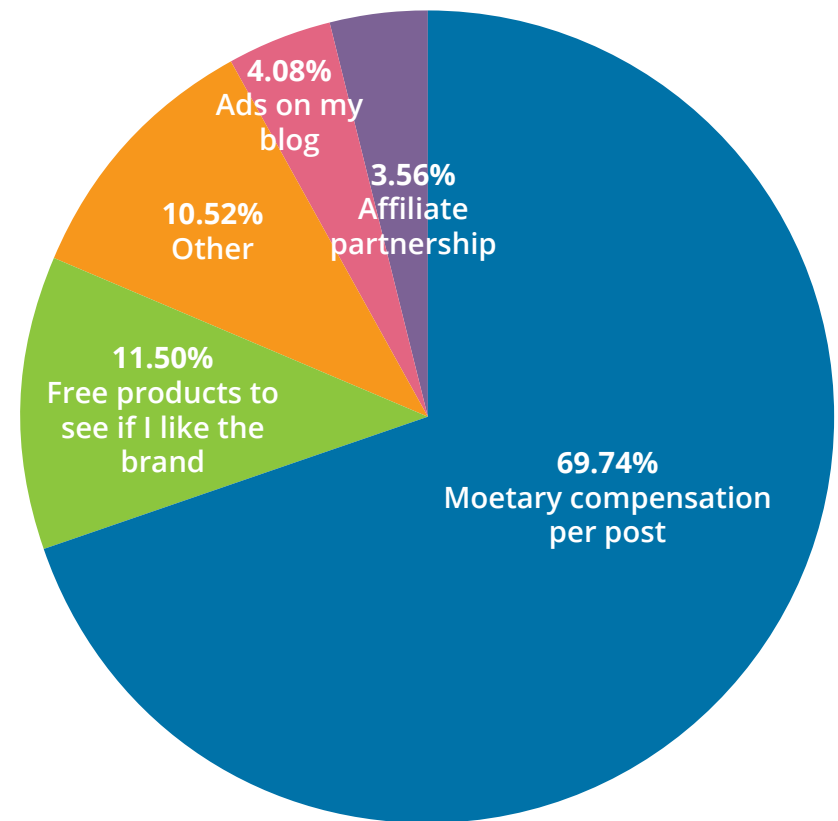
## 5. How do influencers want to be compensated by my brand?

When given the choice, influencers prefer monetary compensation for the shout outs they give to brands.



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*How do you prefer to be compensated by brands?*



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*“Brands sponsoring engagement via contests / activation (ticket giveaways, product) is more effective than paying to place content that isn’t necessarily relevant to the social community. Allowing a brand to seamlessly integrate through the voice of the community leader(s) is stronger than forcing the nature of the post.”*

**- TAB BAMFORD**

*“Coming from the PR world, there \*still\* are practitioners that are dead-set against paid posts. The reality is that with the media changing, earned needs to be joined by paid media to get the fuller client story out there. And while pricing has gone a bit out of control in certain segments, everything always corrects.”*

**- JEREMY PEPPER**



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### **SOMETHING MARKETERS SHOULD CONSIDER:**

There are many ways to support influencers and content creators. The majority of them prefer monetary compensation over free products, ad buys or affiliate partnerships.



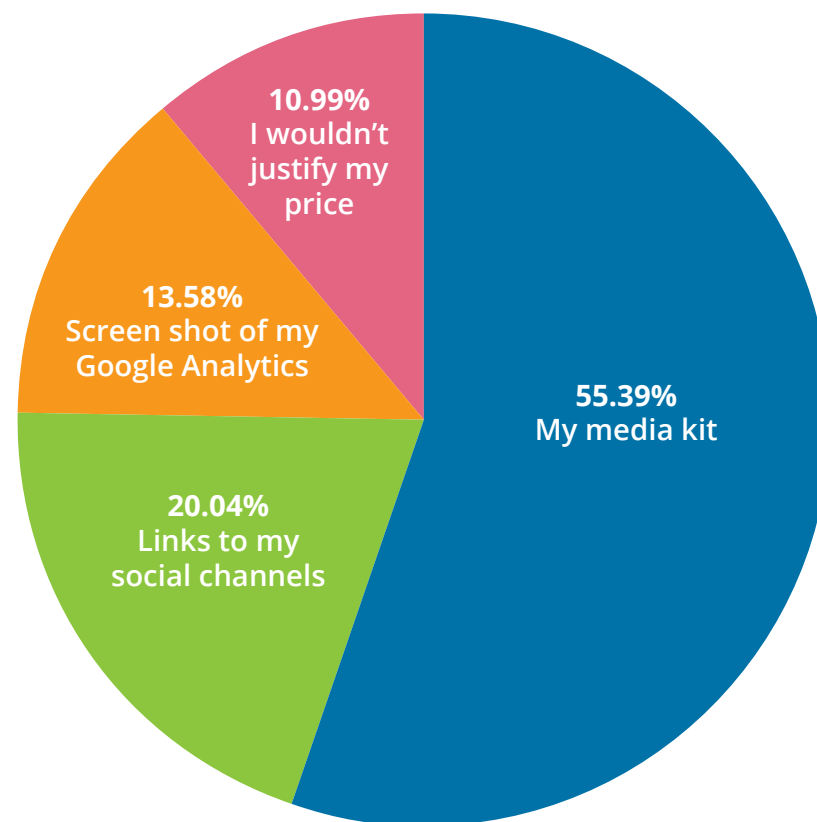
## 6. How do influencers convey their value to marketers and justify the prices they charge for sponsored content?

Over half of influencers send brands a media kit to justify the price they charge for sponsored content.



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*If a brand asks you to justify the price you charge what would you send them?*



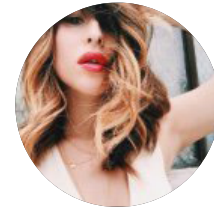
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*“The important piece for me with sponsored posts is the ability to weave them into a true story, which is why I vet each advertiser before giving them my rates &/or agreeing to placement on my site.”* - ZIPPY SANDLER

*“Social Media is the new frontier of advertising. It’s a democratic platform where creative people with a point of view are thrust to a position of leadership by their followers. When a celebrity or brand ambassador represents a product, they are able to negotiate fair compensation without any way to prove the success of the partnership. With social media, there are ways to prove the success of partnering with influencers through analytics. and thus, influencers should be compensated fairly by brands depending on their follower count, engagement, and level of influence.”*

- KATIE ROSE ARNOLD, THE STYLE RIOT



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### SOMETHING MARKETERS SHOULD CONSIDER:

Determine what criteria equals influence for your campaign before you search for and reach out to influencers. When vetting for influence, use an identification tool like GroupHigh to pull important data for content creators such as social following, blog traffic and post topics so you can gauge how much you are willing to spend on a paid post.

# About GroupHigh

Through a state-of-the-art index and innovative software, GroupHigh powers influencer marketing for hundreds of brands and agencies.

We value our position as a thought leader in all things influencer marketing so check out our blog and find us on Twitter.

If you want to see if GroupHigh software is a good fit for your marketing, you can register for a demo and trial here.

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