

Lesson: Working with creators



Who's in charge when brands and creators work together? It can be a balancing act. Trust happens when everyone's up-front about their goals.

Build trust

Viewers and creators love when brands act more as patrons than as sponsors: when they provide creators with tools or access that allows influencers to keep making the same type of content that fans love, but to do it on a bigger scale.

Collaborations between brands and a creators should be mutually beneficial relationships, characterized by discussion, collaboration, and understanding. Everyone should be included in everyone's goals and goal-setting strategies.

But brands and creators aren't the only players in this relationship. Creators trust their audiences, and those audiences have to be able to trust them. The trust between creators and viewers sustains this entire ecosystem: if it is breached by creators on behalf of a brand, or if viewers don't like the content that comes from a collaboration, everyone loses.

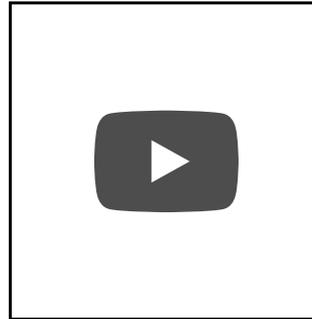
Creators consider factors like how viewers will react to sponsored content, and how frequently they can include branded content in their programming before agreeing to any collaboration or branded content campaign.

See it in action



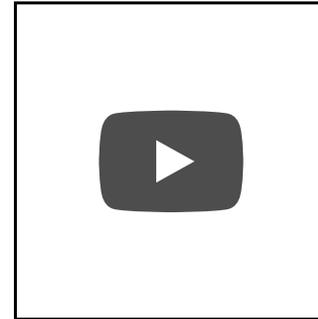
Have a Hart Day

Hannah Hart's focus on volunteerism takes her to New York City in a vehicle provided by sponsor Subaru. She spends the day collecting donations with her fans, then visits an ASPCA shelter for kittens that are too young to be adopted.



Creators make it count

Nike's branding is traditionally very heightened and polished in tone; YouTube influencer Casey Neistat goes in a different direction here. (Note that YouTube does not recommend creators spend their budgets on around-the-world trips.)



Kid President adds happy to the internet

When Coca-Cola considered partnering with a YouTube creator on their #MakeltHappy campaign, SoulPancake's "Kid President" character was the obvious candidate to highlight the internet's potential for optimism and connection.

Find the right creators

So how do you decide which creator to work with? Well, try not to decide right away. Your brand should explore different categories of influencers, and choose a type of creator, rather than decisively picking one certain person from the start. It's generally helpful to investigate backups -- creators who produce content with a similar tone and style as a "first-choice."

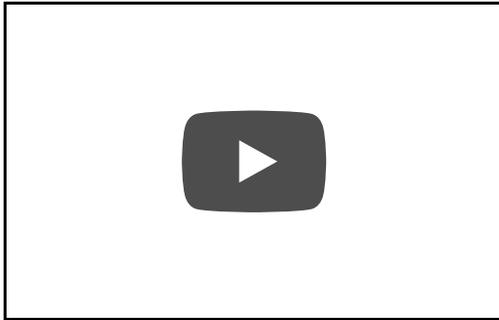
A specific creator may be unavailable, too expensive, unable to deliver, or uninterested in partnering. If your first-choice creator can't work with you, the expansiveness of the YouTube community means they may be able to recommend someone else who's in a better position to do so.

Partnering with creators who share the same values and purpose as your organization is one of the best ways to demonstrate a brand's authenticity. It's not sufficient to partner with creators because they are popular or because you personally like their videos.

But before initiating contact, determine the fit for the creator and the brand's objectives. Most of the following are easily discoverable by looking closely at a creator's:

- **Viewership:** Are their views, watch times, and engagement levels sufficient to meet the brand's campaign goals?
- **Audience:** Does creator's audience correspond to the campaign's target audience? Think bigger than demographic data, to include passion points, competencies, and affinities.
- **Safety:** Are there messages on the creator's channel that could harm the brand? Is family-friendly content a consideration for the campaign?
- **Production quality:** Is the content quality on the creator's channel something that the brand can be integrated with?
- **Professionalism:** Is the creator easy to work with? Have they done brand deals before? Do they have a team in place to handle contracts and project management?
- **Additional promotional levers:** Are there opportunities to tap into creator's network or larger audience beyond YouTube?
- **Cost:** Is the creator's regular content on the high or low end of the production scale? Does it require locations and special effects? Popular creators can be more expensive to work with.
- **Brand affinity:** Is the creator a good fit for the brand, and will they be a compelling brand ambassador? Are there overlaps in voice and tone? Do they like the brand? Would they want to work with the brand?

See it in action



Learn to work together

Lucy Tate works with brands and top creators to facilitate brand campaigns on YouTube. In this video, she discusses best practices for brands when determining which creators to work with, and outlines how to collaborate effectively.

Steps in a collaboration

Once a brand chooses a creator and decides on the scope of the campaign, here's how the process typically proceeds:

1. **Step 1:** Connect. The brand reaches out to a creator, sometimes with a preliminary request for proposal or a creative brief. Discuss involvement levels of all parties, ownership of final product, media promotion, viewership targets, expenses, payment schedules, and creative alignment before proceeding.
2. **Step 2:** Develop the concept. The brand and a creator decide on the video concept and what the final product will be.
3. **Step 3:** Produce the campaign. This process may be 100% in the hands of creators, or there may be representatives from a brand or agency on set. The brand may be responsible for some aspects of production, such as props or

locations.

4. **Step 4:** Conduct evaluations. The brand's legal or public relations teams may need to approve campaign before launch. Be sure to [follow YouTube's paid product placements and endorsements guidelines](#), as well as applicable local laws on disclosing these financial relationships.
5. **Step 5:** Launch! The video campaign is live. If it appears on the creator's channel, be aware that most countries have laws requiring disclosure in the video's title or description if a creator was compensated for making it.

See it in action



How creators work with brands

Three creators share how they are typically approached by brands, how they pitch themselves to brands, and describe their processes and experiences creating brand campaigns.

Try it

If you've worked with creative briefs in the past, what strikes you as the biggest

differences between briefs you've seen or written and the recommendations for working with creators?

Which part of releasing control to creators do you feel your organization might struggle with? Think of 1-2 ways you might try to avert those problems.

Check your knowledge

How are YouTube creators' video campaigns for brands most similar to agency-created campaigns.

- Creator-led campaigns will lean heavily on a narrative or focused message to succeed.
- Creator-led campaigns follow a result-driven, repeatable process.
- Creator-led campaigns are polished and driven by successful past projects.
- Creator-led campaigns are designed to please important stakeholders

Who should brands deliver a brief to?

- Any creators that they are considering working with.
- Specific creators they have decided to work with.
- Specific creators as part of a binding work contract.
- Committed creators after signing all work contracts.