



Attitudes Towards Influencer Marketing

February 25, 2026



CADDLE

Ad Standards™

What is Caddle?

Caddle is a leading Canadian consumer panel leveraged by the largest brands and retailers for over 10 years.

Caddle's mobile-first insights platform rewards Canadians for sharing data and engaging with brands.

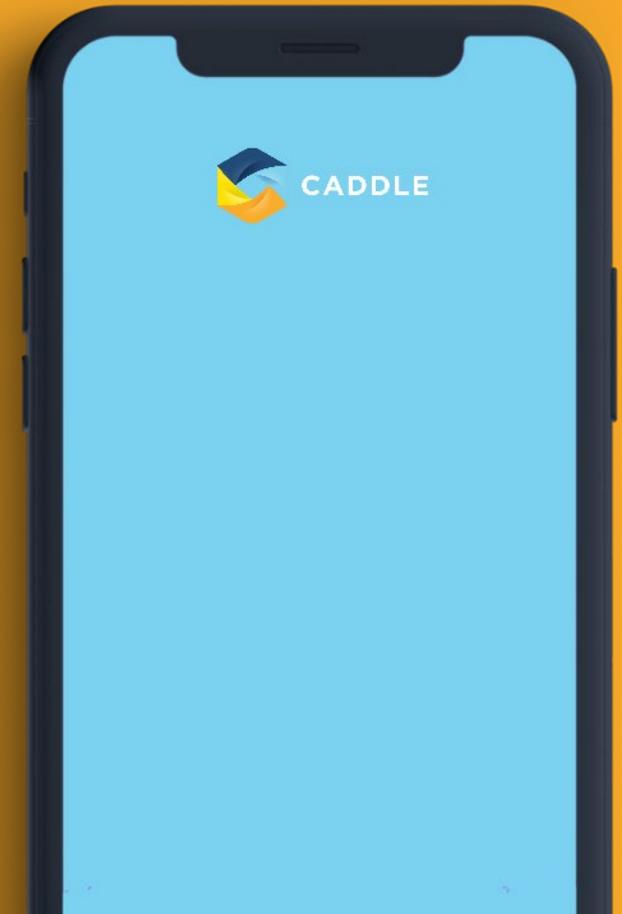


Methodology

National tracking survey conducted every two years:

Wave	Dates	Number of surveys
3	October 29, 2025	2,242
2	February 28 – March 1, 2023	3,348
1	September 9 – 13, 2021	3,000

** Percentages throughout this report may not appear to add up to 100% due to rounding.*





INFLUENCERS

Influencers are online personalities who are influential over others.

Influencers might be athletes, celebrities, bloggers, content creators, lifestyle experts, models or experts on a variety of subject matters.

Influencers may even be individuals you may know or be connected with who can influence the purchase decisions of others.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(1) Influencer marketing is mainstream in Canada, but persuasion is plateauing.

Nearly half of Canadians (48%) are familiar with influencers and ~50% follow at least one, while 53% say they trust influencer recommendations. However, only 30% are interested in learning about products from influencers (+5 pts) and just ~20% say they are likely to purchase from an influencer in the future (+6 pts), signaling softening intent.

(2) Younger audiences power the influencer economy.

Gen Z (71%) and Millennials (64%) are far more likely to follow influencers compared to Gen X (36%) and Boomers (22%). Purchase behaviour follows the same pattern: 81% of Gen Z and 73% of Millennials have purchased due to an influencer, versus 56% of Boomers. Familiarity is also sharply divided (Gen Z 69% vs. Boomers 29%).

(3) Disclosure improves comfort, but skepticism remains high.

Comfort with disclosure requirements has increased +12 pts since 2021, and 54% recognize “Paid Promotion” labels while 48% recognize #ad/#sponsored. Yet 76% believe influencers are paid for their posts, and 47% think most posts are paid, reinforcing ongoing skepticism.

(4) Content relevance matters more than reach - micro-influencers outperform larger creators.

65% say they learn about products from micro-influencers (vs. 48% macro, 44% nano, 38% celebrity). Additionally, 91% say follower size does not materially impact whether they learn about products. Content quality is the primary reason for following, with product learning ranking second.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(5) Influencers are a strong discovery engine and trial driver.

73% learn about products from influencers weekly and 32% daily. Approximately 73–75% have purchased due to an influencer recommendation, and roughly one-third (34%) purchase at least monthly, indicating habitual trial behaviour.

(6) Platform roles are diverging.

Instagram remains the leading conversion platform (61% of purchases attributed), while TikTok continues to grow in influence (rising from 20% to 31% over time). Facebook has declined steadily (52% → 35%).

(7) AI influencers lack credibility and require transparency to gain acceptance.

63% are unaware of AI influencers, and only 24% feel confident distinguishing AI from human creators (42% not confident). A majority view AI influencers as less relatable (65%) and less effective (58%). 78% believe AI influencers must clearly disclose their identity, and 57% say AI reduces their likelihood to purchase.

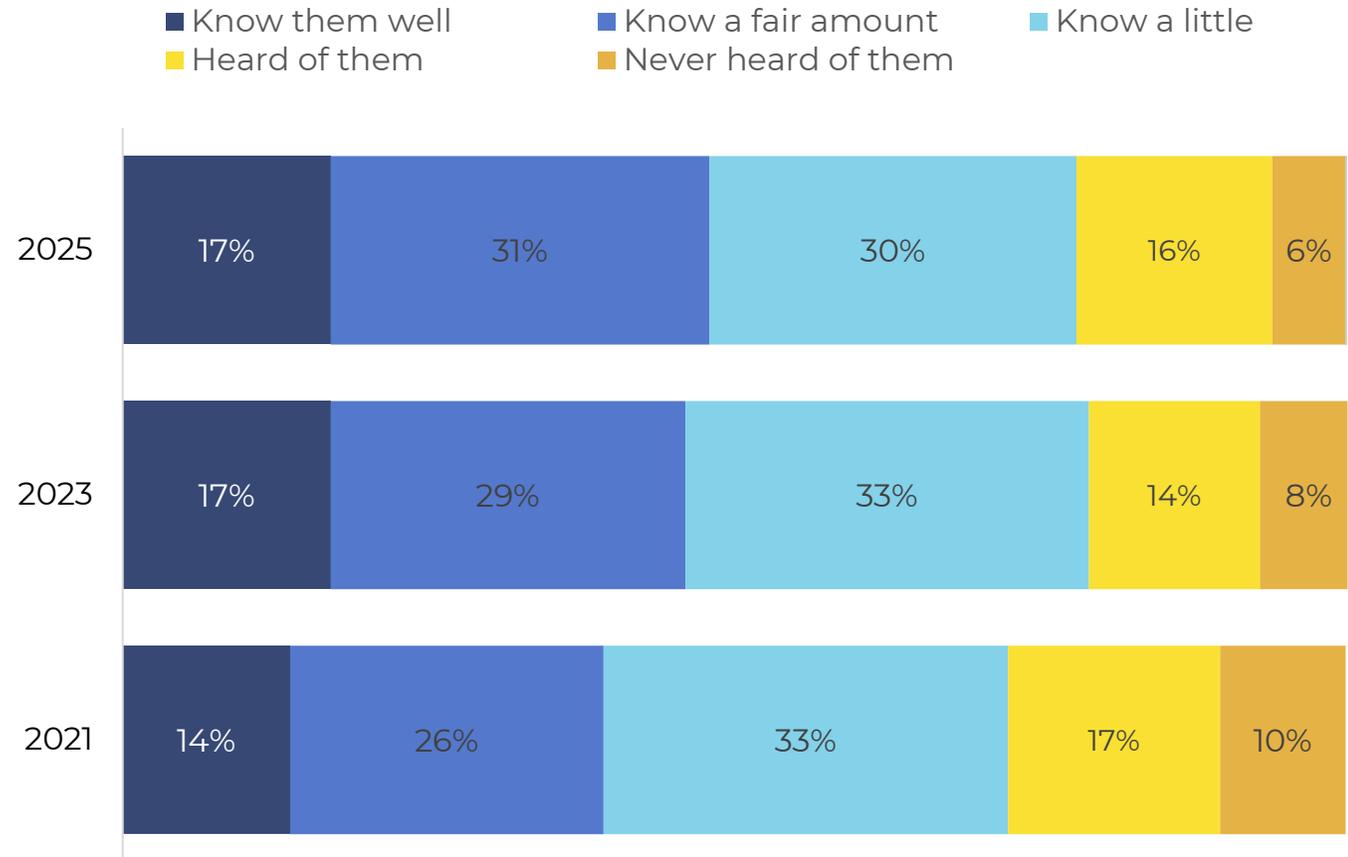


Familiarity with Influencers and Disclosures

**Half of
Canadians
(48%) are
quite familiar
with
influencers**

*This is up slightly (+2%)
from 2023*

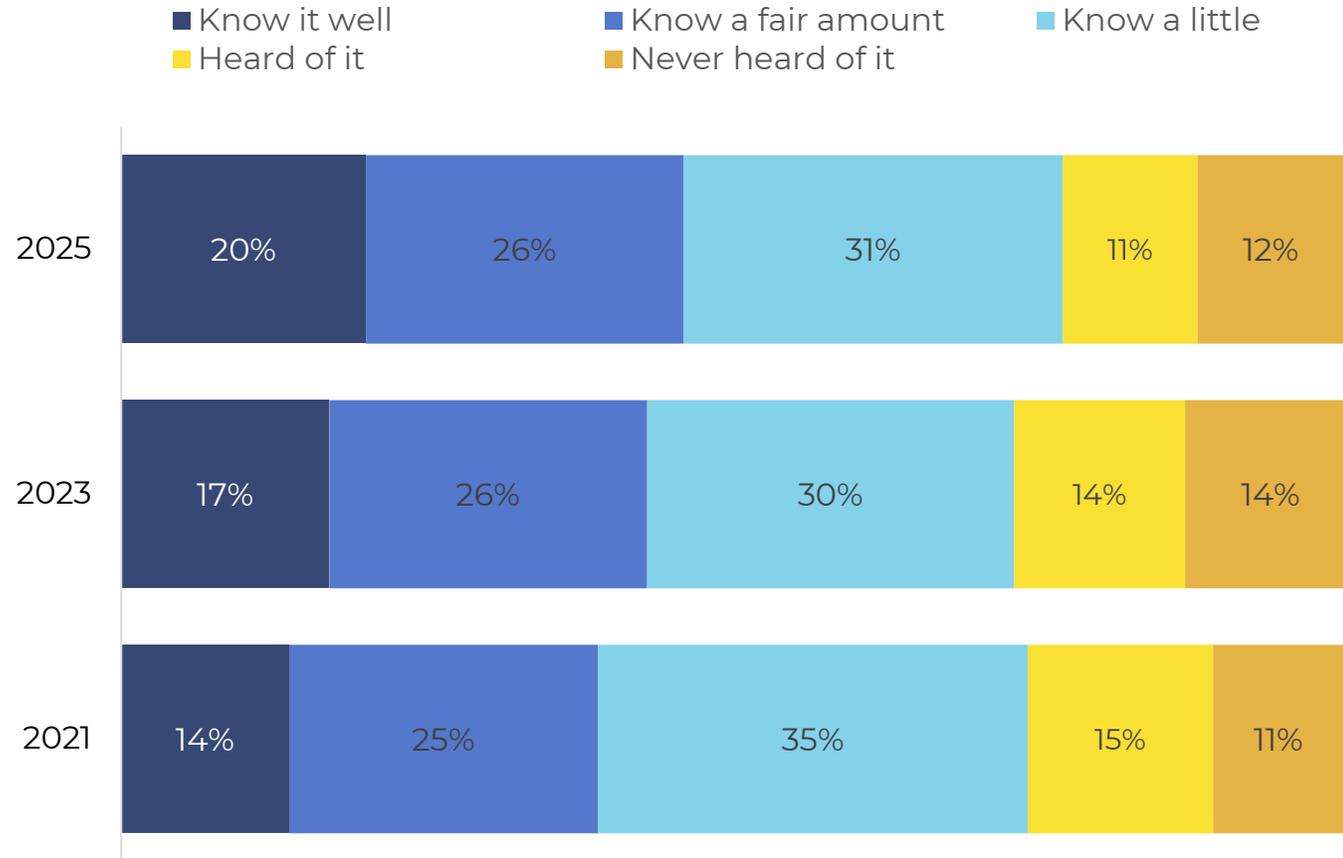
How familiar are you with influencers?



Canadians are increasingly familiar with the differences between sponsored and non-sponsored content

+3% from 2023 and +17% from 2021

When it comes to Influencers, how familiar are you with the differences between sponsored and non-sponsored content?

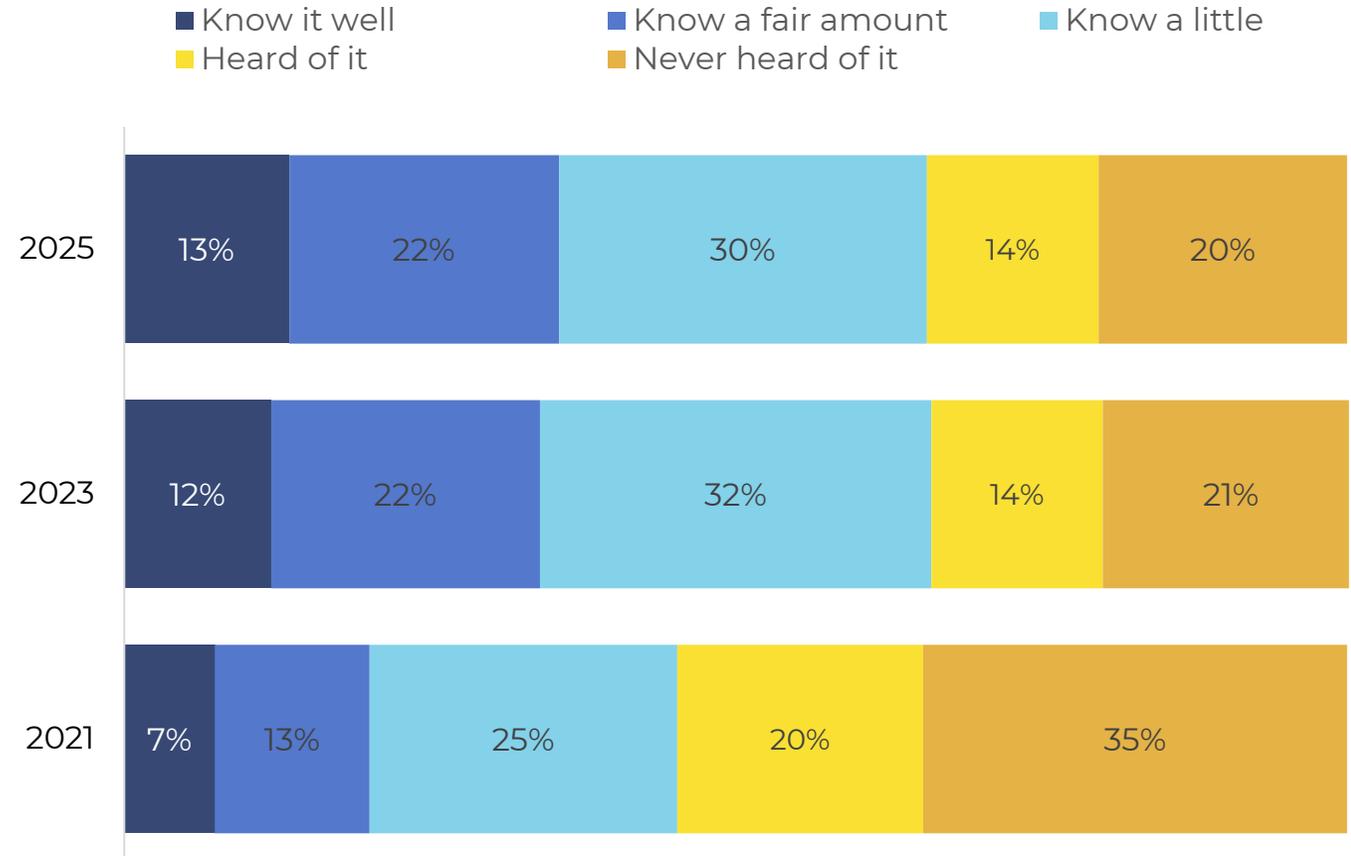


Base Total: 2025 n=2242; 2023 n=3348; 2021 n=3000

Just over a third of Canadians (35%) are quite familiar with disclosure affiliation

(Virtually unchanged since 2023 – 34%)

How familiar are you with the requirements that influencers disclose their affiliation with a Brand / Company?*

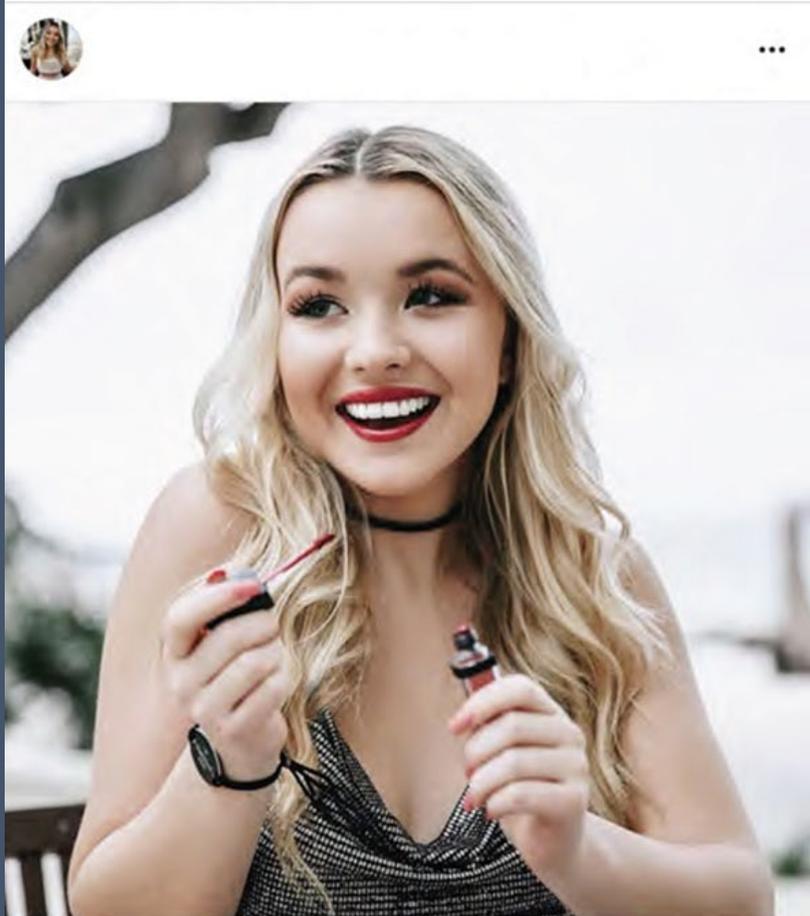


* 2021 question wording: "How familiar are you with regulations on influencer ad disclosure?"
Base Total: 2025 n=2242; 2023 n=3348; 2021 n=3000

GENERATIONS



- Younger generations—especially Gen Z (69%) and Millennials (64%)—are far more familiar with influencers than Gen X (40%) and Boomers (29%), while the Greatest Generation shows very low familiarity (14%).
- Gen Z (68%) and Millennials (61%) understand the difference between sponsored and non-sponsored influencer content much more than Gen X (39%), Boomers (26%), and especially the Greatest Generation (16%).
- Gen Z (53%) and Millennials (48%) are most aware of disclosure rules for influencers, compared with moderate awareness among Gen X (30%) and much lower awareness among Boomers (19%) and the Greatest Generation (16%).

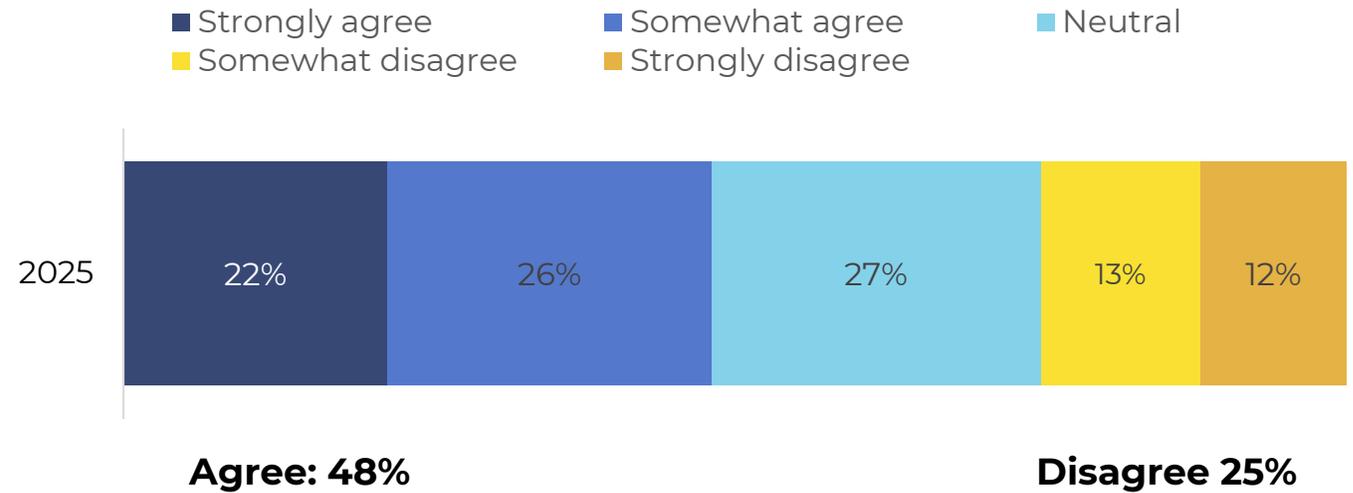


Liked by 7,972 others

#ad love comes in many shapes and forms, and makeup has always been a serious love of mine... ❤️ This year, to celebrate Valentine's Day I wanted to share my love for cosmetics and #GIVEAWAY the brand new Estée Lauder Pure Color Envy Paint-On Liquid Lipcolor! All in celebration of the LAUNCH of @esteelaudercanada 🍷 Want to re-create this perfect lip? Here's how to WIN:

1. Follow @esteelaudercanada
2. Follow @
3. Tag two besties who would rock the Estee Lauder Paint on Liquid Lip!

(2025) Agree/Disagree: "I've noticed or heard the disclosure for #ad or #sponsored in social posts of influencers **before**?"

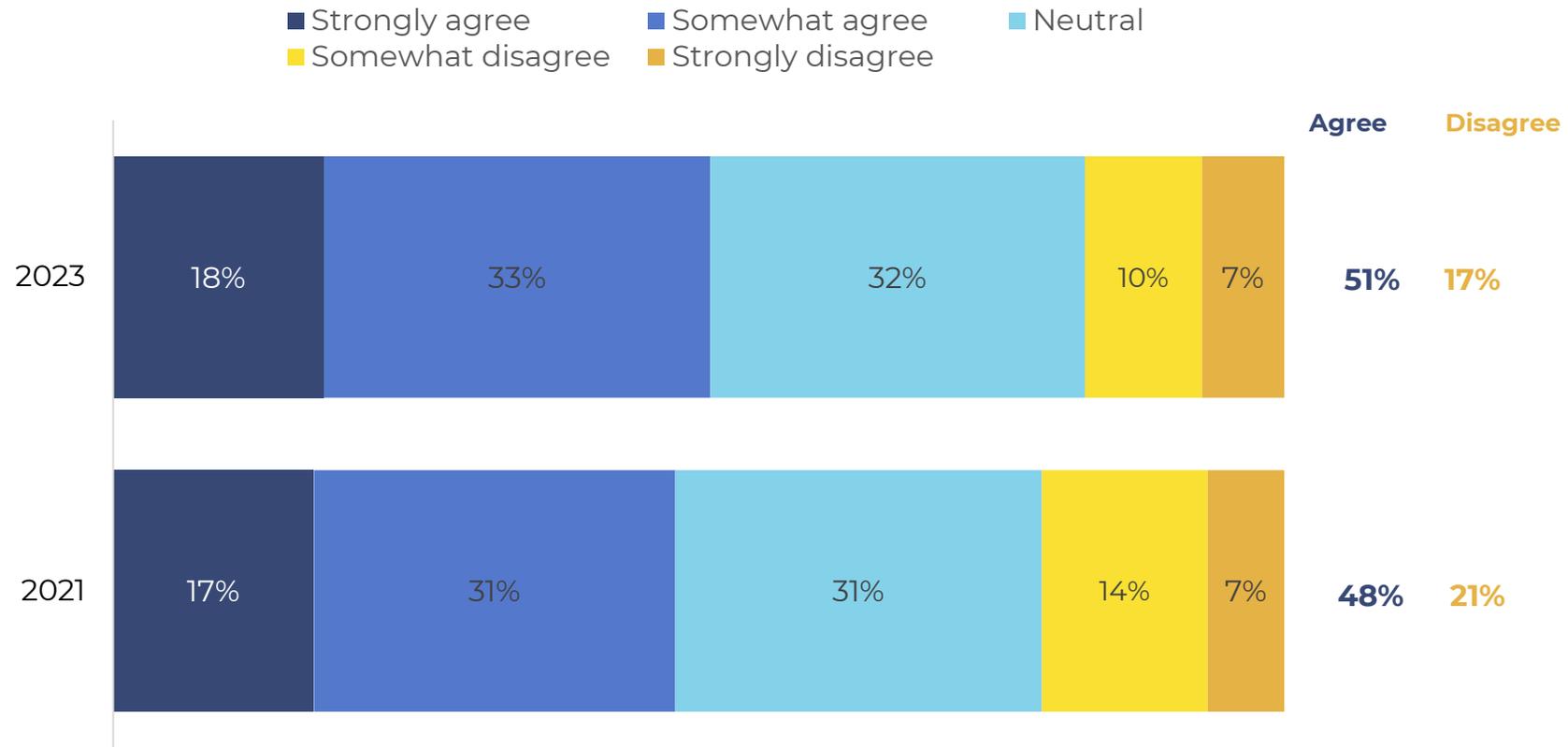


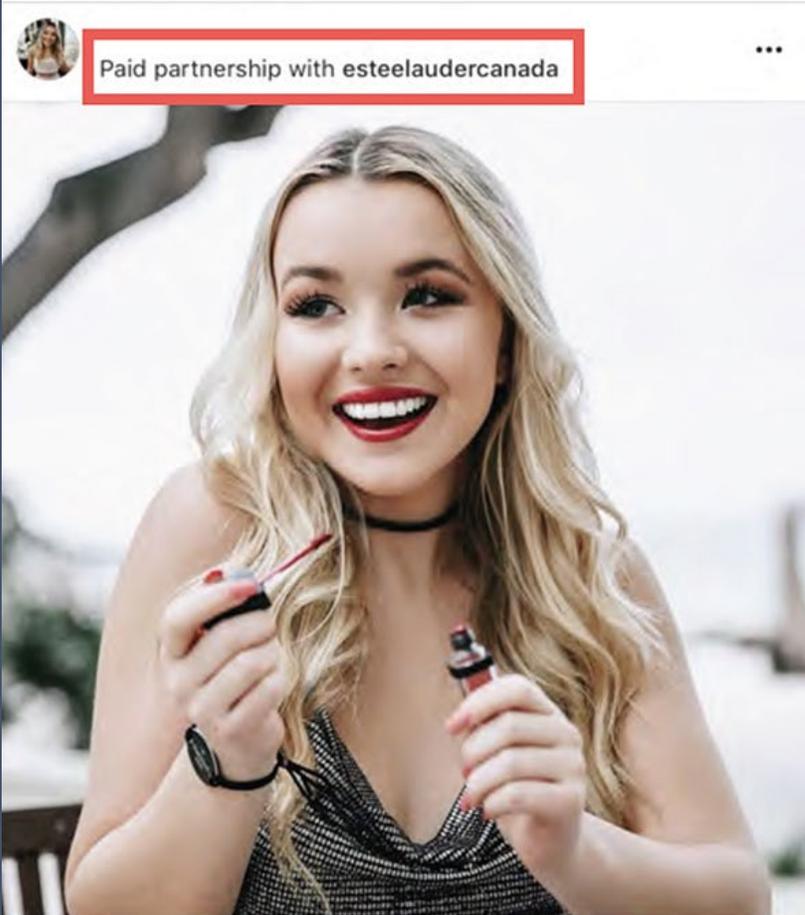
After seeing an example post with #ad, half of Canadians agree they have noticed this (or #sponsored) before. A quarter aren't sure and another quarter had not noticed them.

Without seeing an example, half agree they had seen disclosures

51% in 2023 and 48% in 2021

(2021+2023) Agree/Disagree: "I've noticed or heard the disclosure for #ad or #sponsored in the blogs / social posts of influencers"

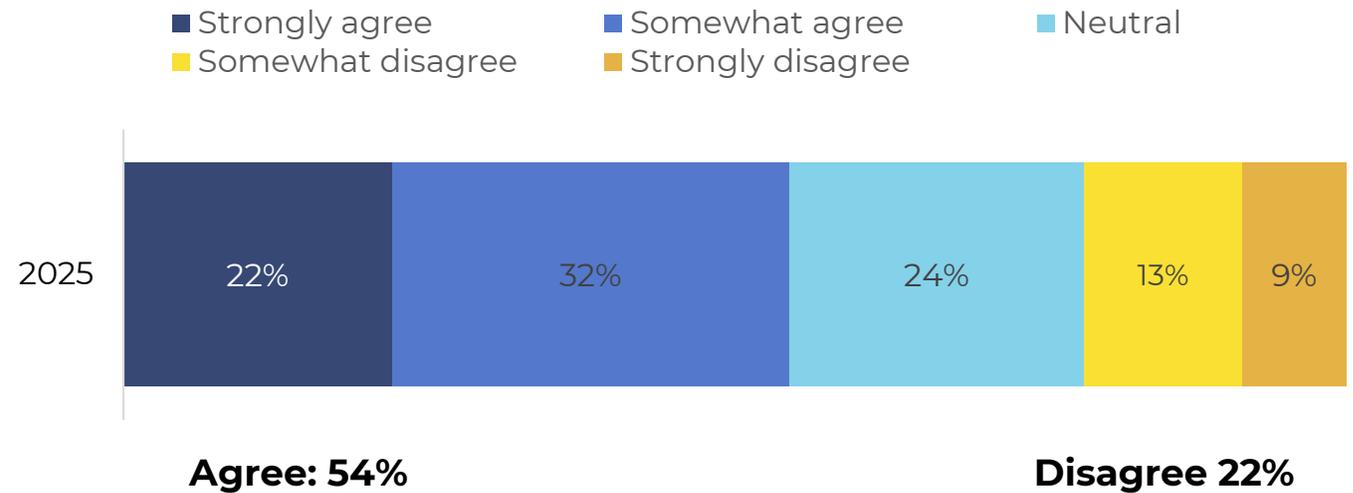




Love comes in many shapes and forms, and makeup has always been a serious love of mine... ❤️ This year, to celebrate Valentine's Day I wanted to share my love for cosmetics and #GIVEAWAY the brand new Estée Lauder Pure Color Envy Paint-On Liquid Lipcolor! All in celebration of the LAUNCH of @esteelaudercanada 🇨🇦 Want to re-create this perfect lip? Here's how to WIN:

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(2025) Agree/Disagree: "I have noticed **before** that some social media influencers mark their posts with 'Paid Promotion' or 'Paid Partnership With' or similar wording?"

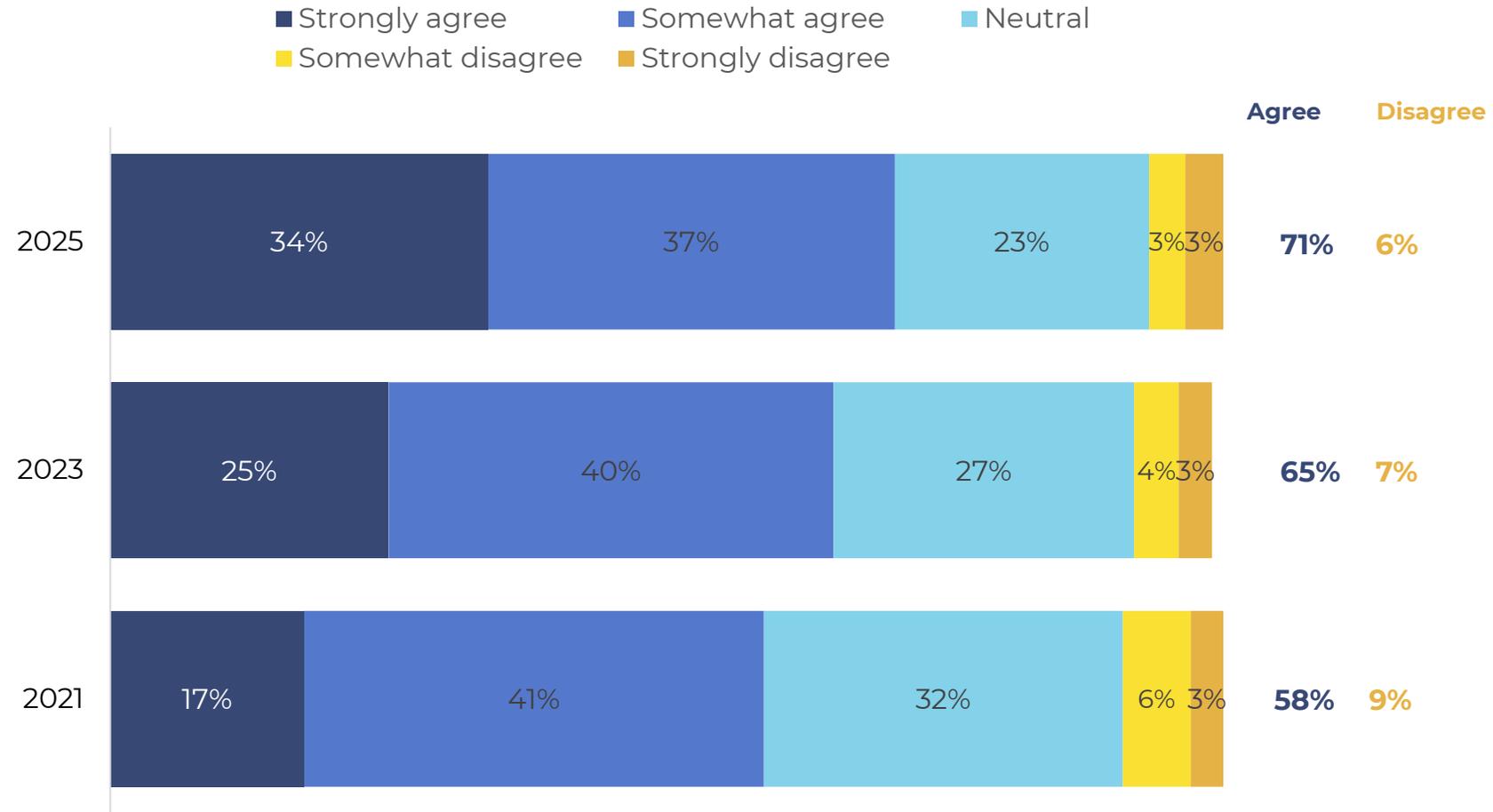


After seeing an example post with **paid promotion**, over half of Canadians agree they have noticed this (or “paid partnership with”) before. A quarter aren’t sure and one in five had not noticed them.

Disclosure is important, with the majority being comforted by this requirement

This sentiment has grown by 12 pts since 2021 and by 6 pts since 2023

Agree/Disagree: "I'm comforted by the fact that influencers are required to disclose their connections with brands / companies?"*

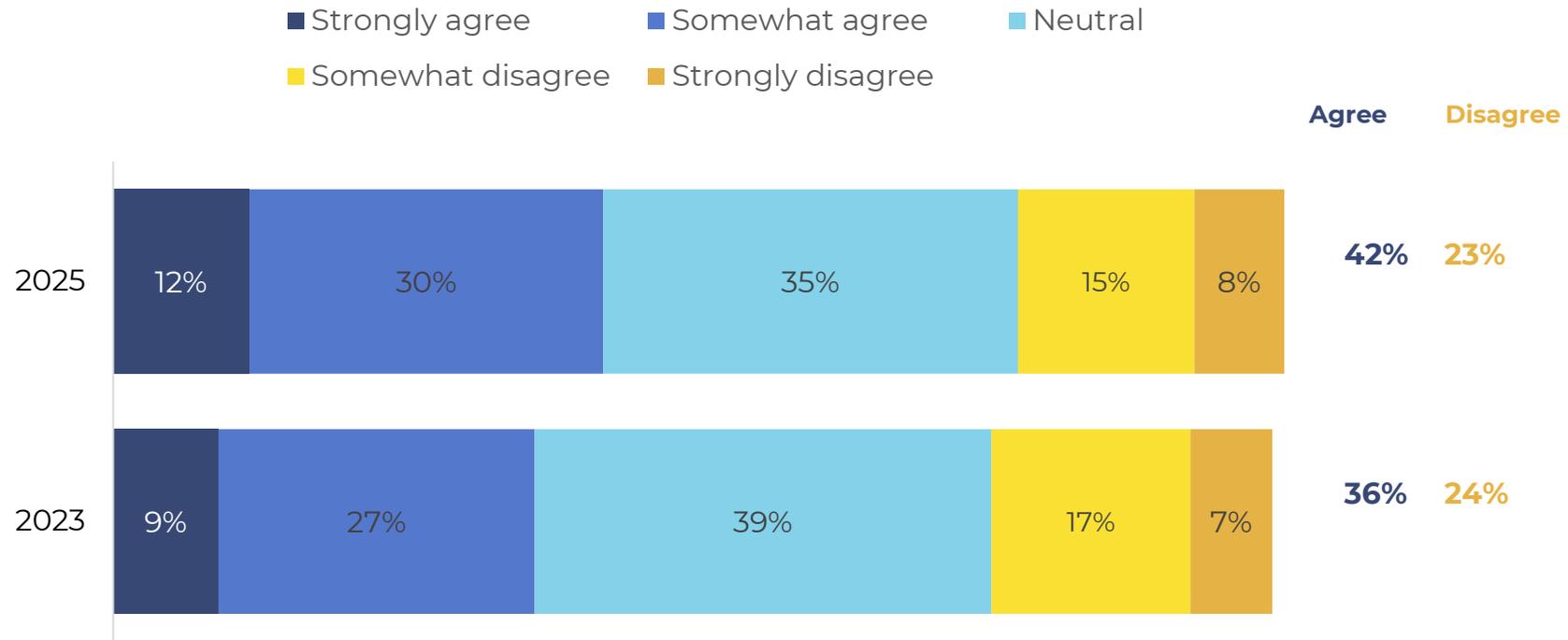


* Note: change in methodology between 2021/23 and 2025 with addition of images shown; 2021 question: "I'm comforted by the fact that there are regulations in place for influencer marketing"
Base Total: 2025 n=2242; 2023 n=3348; 2021 n=3000

Canadians are divided, and many unsure, about whether influencers know about disclosure requirements

However, agreement with influencers knowing is up 6 pts since 2023

Agree/Disagree: "I trust influencers know that these requirements are in place?"



* Note: change in methodology between 2023 and 2025 with addition of images shown
Base Total: 2025 n=2242; 2023 n=3348

GENERATIONS



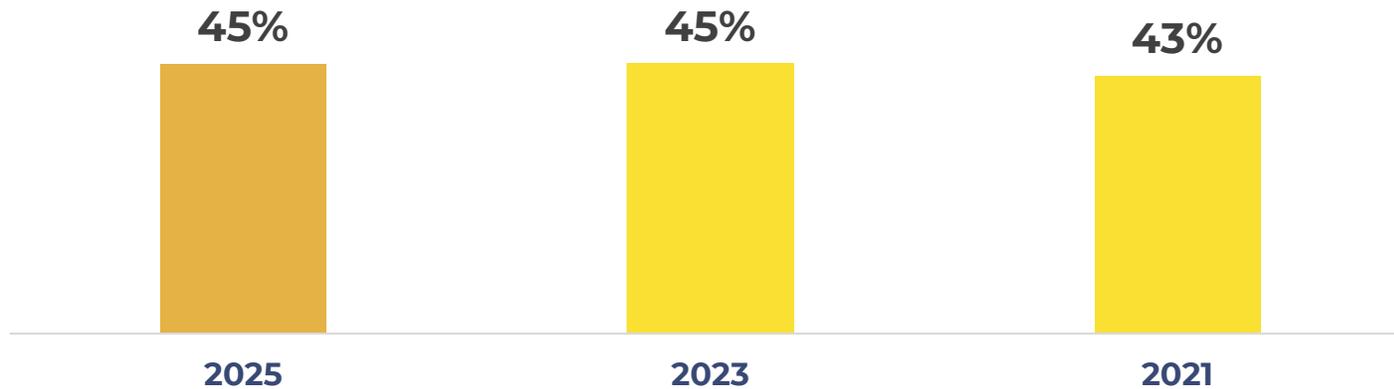
- Most Millennials (69%) and Gen Z (64%) report noticing disclosure hashtags, far more than Gen X (39%), Boomers (28%), or the Greatest Generation (16%).
- Awareness of “Paid Promotion” or “ Paid Partnership With” peaks among Millennials (73%) and Gen Z (68%), remains moderate for Gen X (48%), and is much lower for Boomers (35%) and the Greatest Generation (16%).
- All generations show relatively high comfort with disclosure requirements, though Millennials (79%) are slightly more reassured than Gen X (68%), Gen Z (68%), Boomers (65%), and the Greatest Generation (69%).
- Gen Z (57%) and Millennials (52%) trust influencers’ knowledge of the rules more than Gen X (35%), Boomers (29%), and the Greatest Generation (47%).



Following Influencers

Do you follow influencers on social media?

% Yes

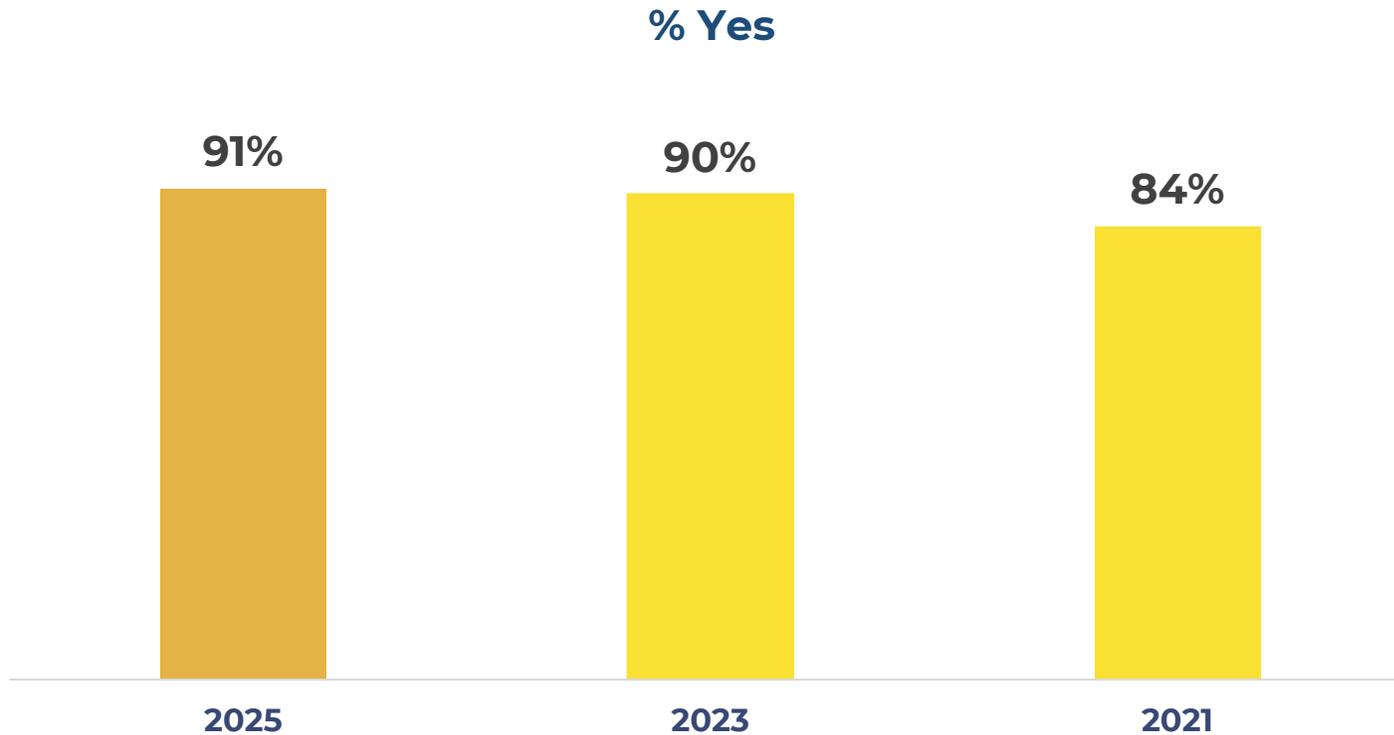


**Just under half
of Canadians
follow
influencers on
social media.**

*This has remained stable
since 2021.*

Base Total: 2025 n=2242; 2023 n=3348; 2021 n=3000

Do you learn about new products from influencers,
regardless of their following size?



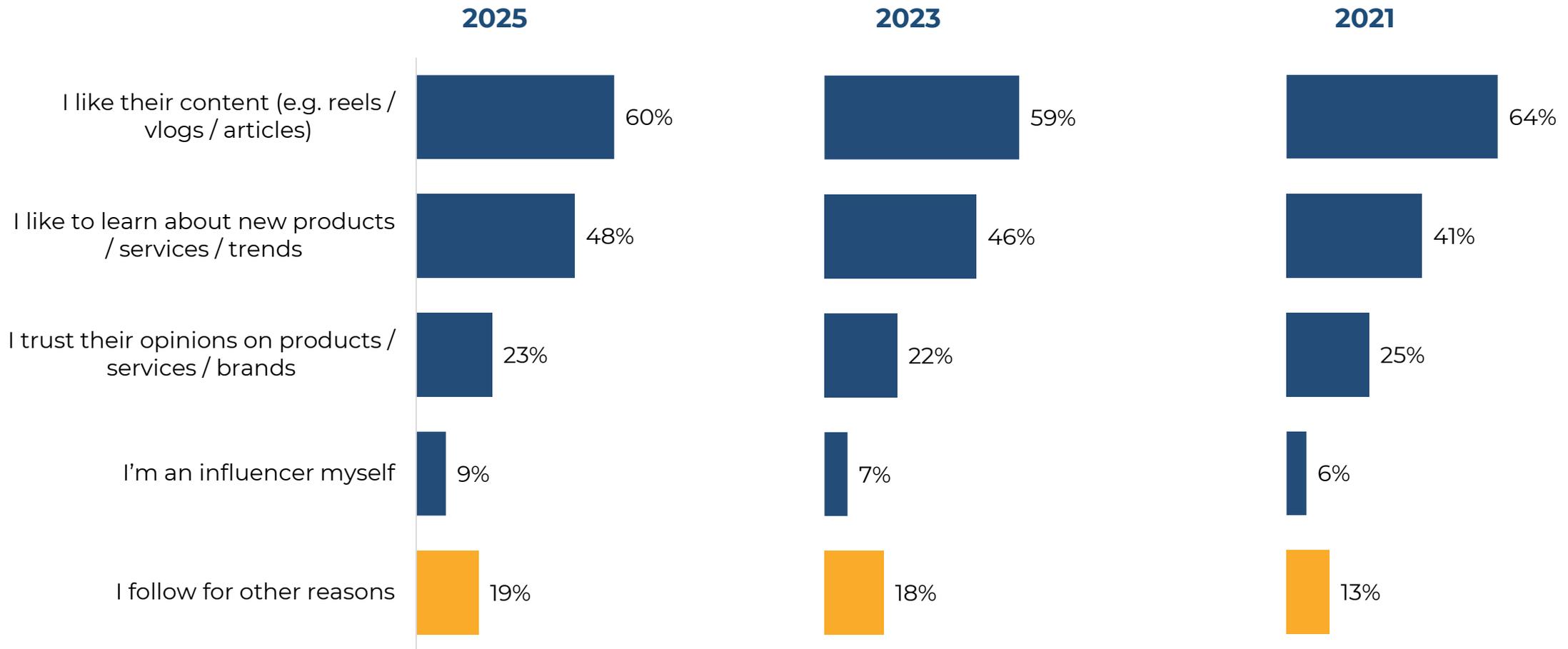
**Following size
rarely impacts
whether
Canadians learn
about new
products from
them.**

Base Those who follow Influencers: 2025 n=1014; 2023 n=1511; 2021 n=1290

Content the number one reason for following influencers

Learning about new products or services is second-most important, and growing in importance

Why do you follow certain influencers on social media?

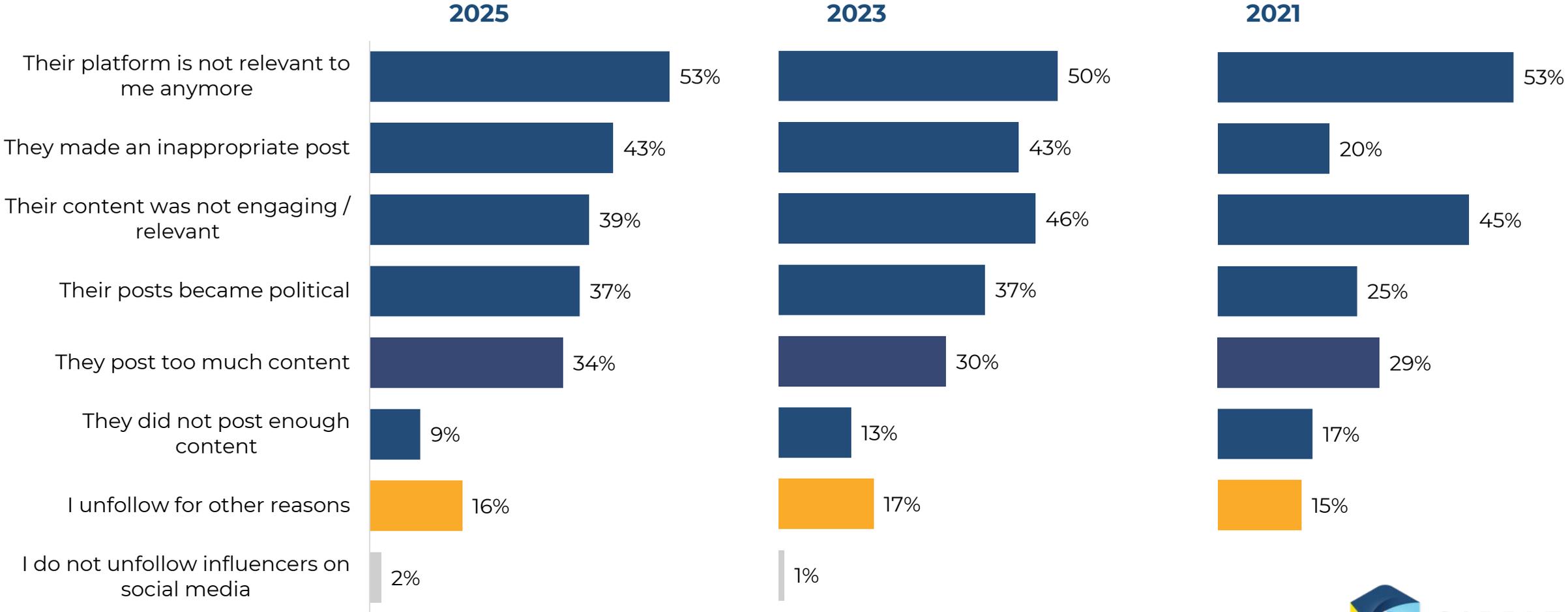


Base Those who follow Influencers: 2025 n=1014; 2023 n=1511; 2021 n=1290

Unfollowing mainly happens when platforms become irrelevant

Inappropriate posts and content critiques second and third-most important reasons

What reasons would you have for **unfollowing** influencers on social media?



Base Those who follow Influencers: 2025 n=1014; 2023 n=1511; 2021 n=1290

GENERATIONS



- Following influencers is most common among Gen Z (71%) and Millennials (64%), somewhat common for Gen X (36%), and rare among Boomers (22%) and nonexistent for the Greatest Generation (0%).
- Millennials, Gen X and Gen Z largely follow for content and learning about products, while Boomers are just as likely to follow to learn. Among Gen Z, twice as many than average (14%) say they are influencers themselves.
- Generations differ only modestly when looking at reasons to unfollow, though Boomers more often unfollow due to inappropriate or political posts, while Millennials are more likely to unfollow due to irrelevant or disengaging content
- Gen Z (39%) and Millennials (25%) are far more likely to join live influencer events than Gen X (14%), Boomers (6%), and the Greatest Generation (0%).

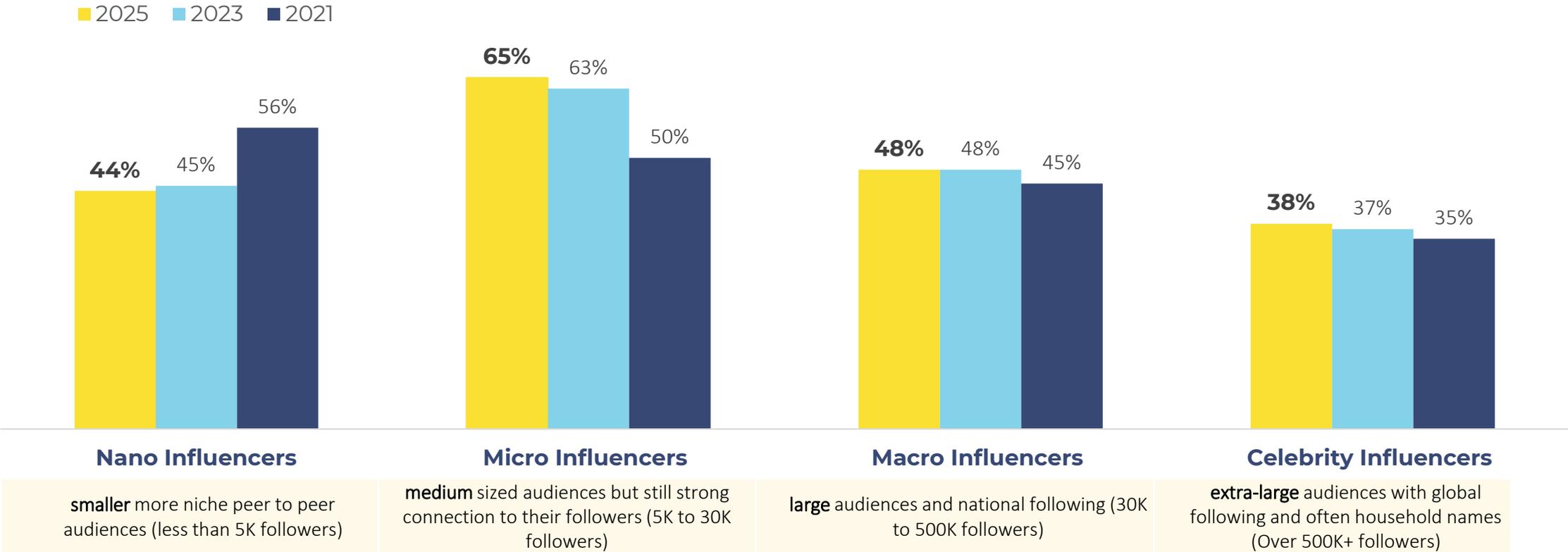


Product Discovery and Purchases

Micro influencers are most influential in product discovery

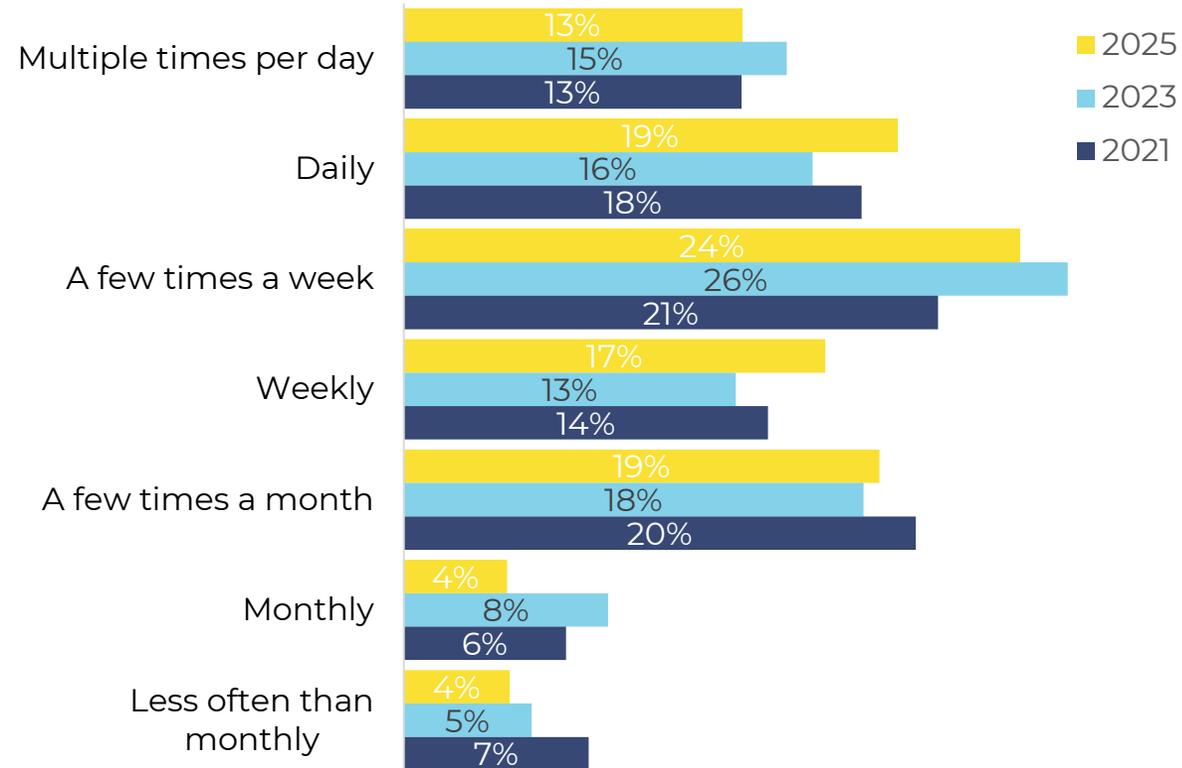
They have gained in popularity over time, while nano influencers have waned

What type of influencers do you learn about new products from?



**A third (32%)
learns from
influencers at
least daily;
three quarters
(73%) at least
weekly.**

How often do you learn about new products or services from influencers?

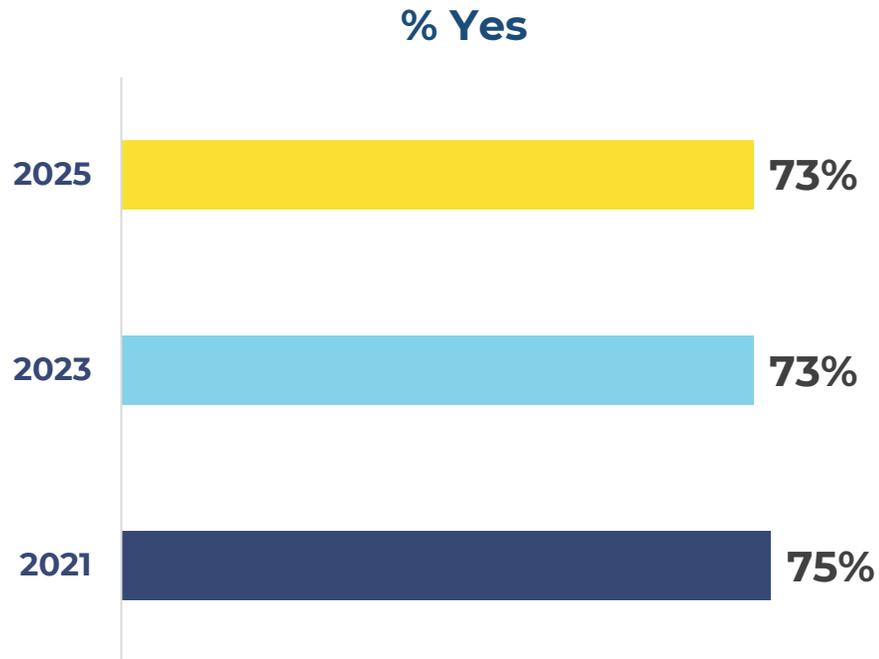


Base: Those who learn from influencers regardless of their following size 2025 n=919; 2023 n=1356; 2021 n=1081

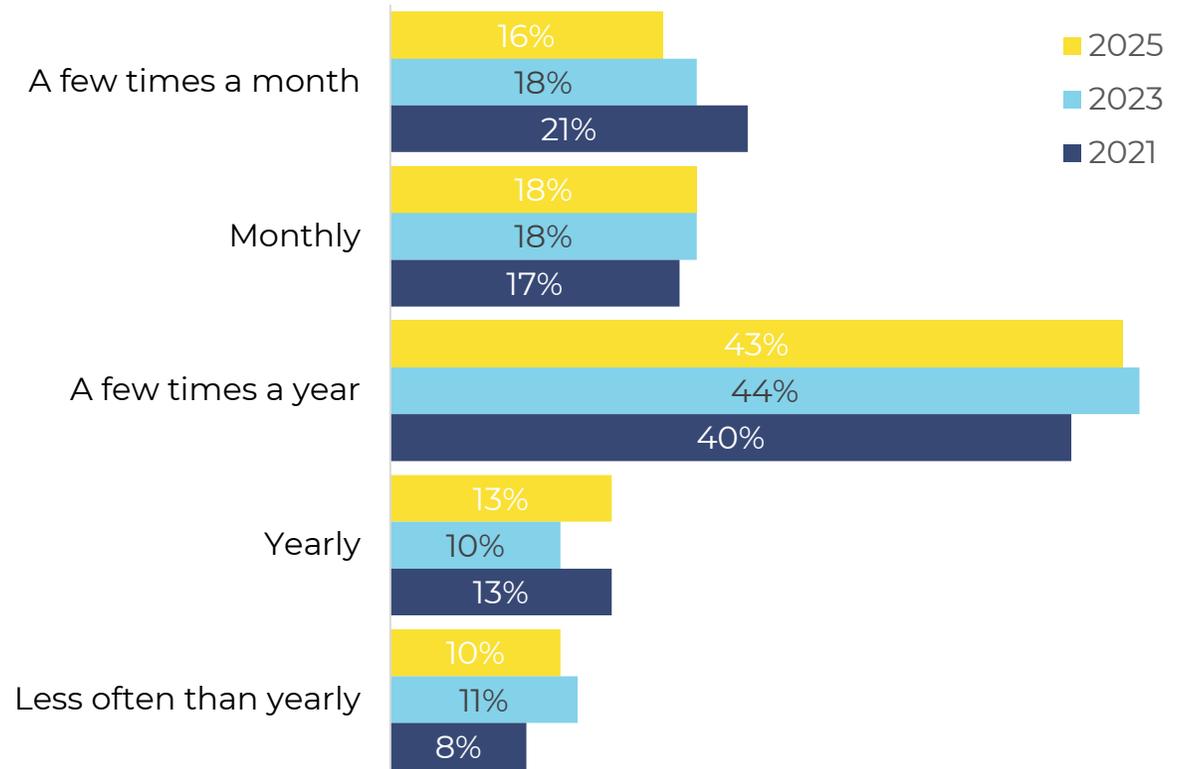
Three quarters purchase based on influencer recommendations

While a third does this at least monthly, most do so a few times per year or less

Have you ever purchased a product based on a recommendation from an influencer on social media?



(IF YES) How often do you purchase a product because of an influencer's recommendation?



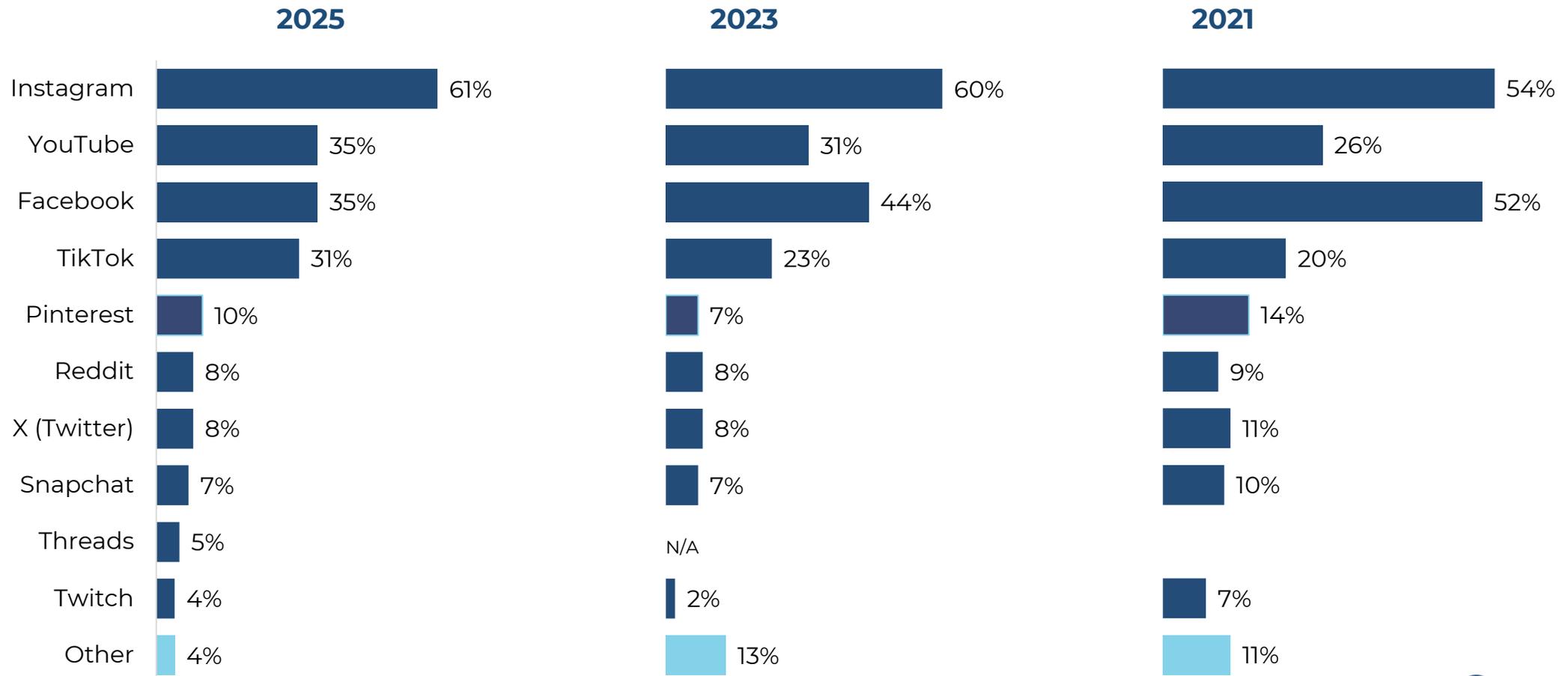
Base: Those who learn from influencers regardless of their following size
2025 n=919; 2023 n=1356; 2021 n=1081

Base: Those who have purchased on recommendation
2025 n=669; 2023 n=995; 2021 n=806

Instagram has solidified its #1 position for purchase conversion

TikTok influence is growing; Facebook has significantly dropped in importance since 2021

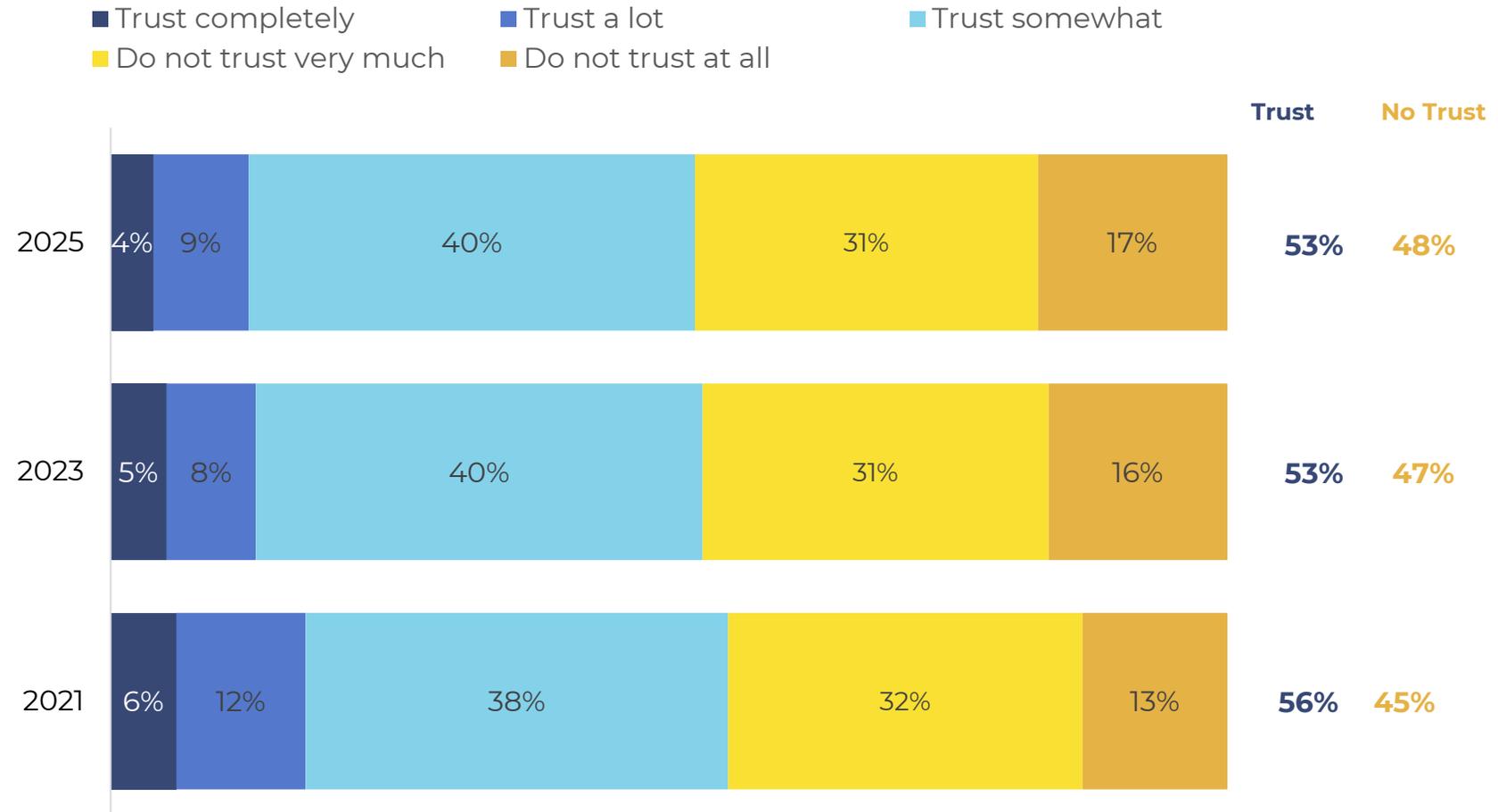
Thinking about when you have bought a product as a result of an influencer's social media post, on which site did you see that post? (Please select all that apply)



Canadians are split in their trust in social media influencer recommendations

Just over half (53%) trust them, down 3pts since 2021

How much do you trust recommendations made by influencers on social media?



GENERATIONS



- While all generations show the strongest reliance on micro-influencers, Gen Z leans slightly more toward celebrity influencers than average and fewer Boomers learn from nano-influencers.
- Gen Z (38%) learn about products daily at higher rates than Gen X (33%), Boomers (33%) and the Greatest Generation (20%).
- Purchasing based on influencer recommendations is very high for Gen Z (81%), slightly lower for Millennials (73%), and Gen X (73%), lower for Boomers (56%), and non-existent among the Greatest Generation.
- Millennials (41%) and Gen Z (37%) purchase monthly due to influencer recommendations more than Gen X (30%) and Boomers (14%).
- While Instagram is the main app for all generations, Millennials and Gen Z are more likely to purchase from TikTok and Snapchat exposure, while older generations are more influenced by Facebook and Pinterest.
- Gen Z (26%) and Millennials (17%) trust influencer recommendations more than Gen X (8%), Boomers (4%), and the Greatest Generation (0%), who show much higher distrust.

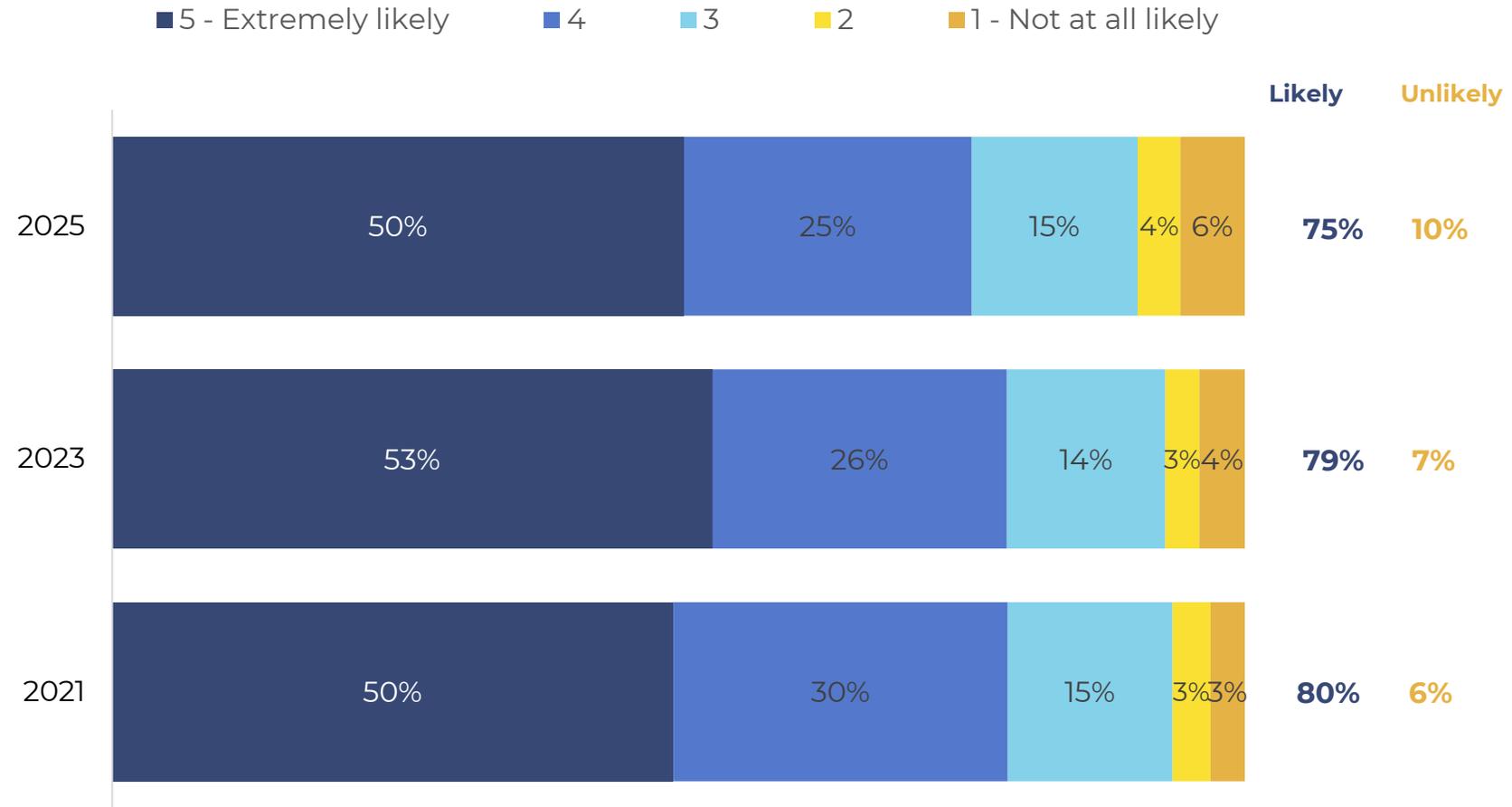


Paid Influencers

The majority of Canadians believe influencers are likely paid (76%)

This is down slightly from 79% in previous waves

How likely is it that influencers are paid to make certain posts or recommendations?

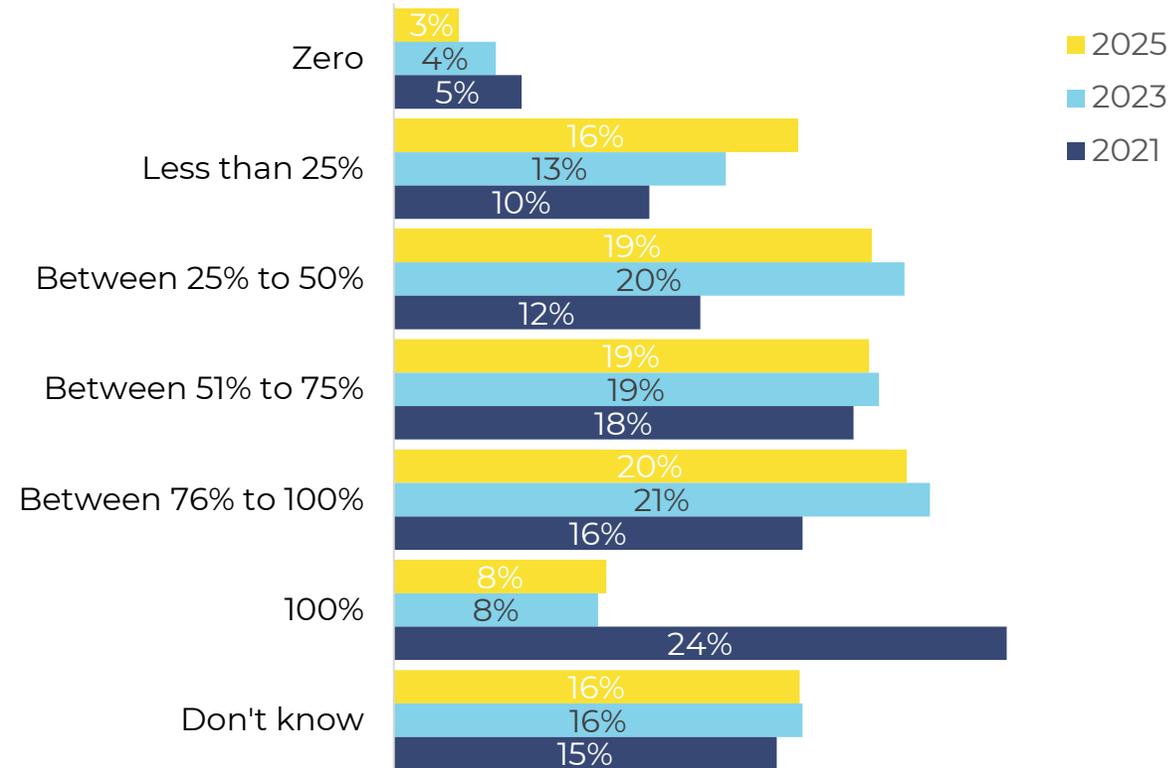


Base Total 2025 n=2242; 2023 n=3348; 2021 n=3000

Canadians are divided on the percent of posts that are paid

Nearly four in ten (38%) believe it's half or less; nearly half (47%) believe it's more than half

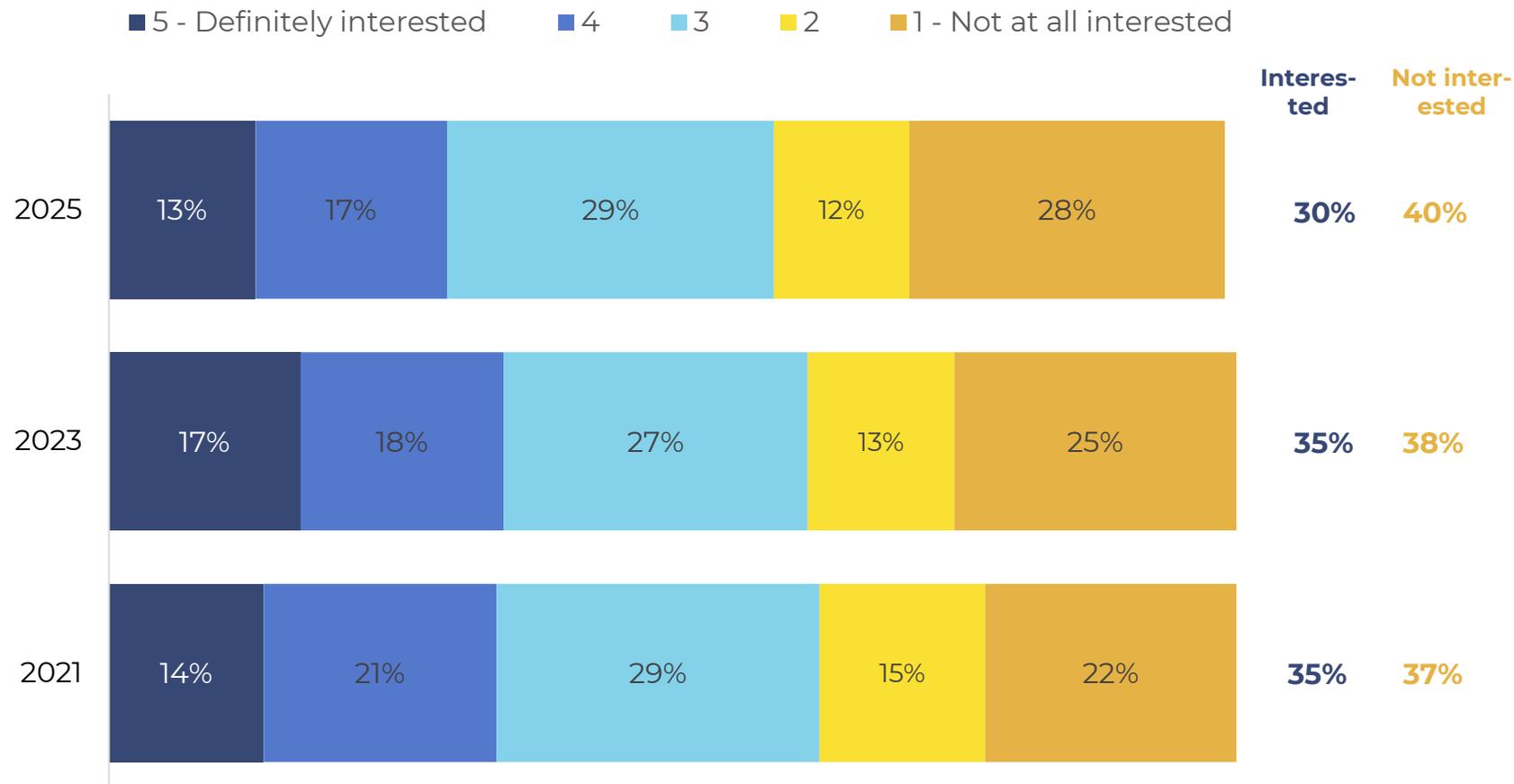
In your opinion, what percent of an influencers' posts are paid or sponsored content?



Interest in learning from influencers remains mixed

Three in ten (30%) are interested, down 5pts since 2023, and four in ten (40%) not, down 2 pts

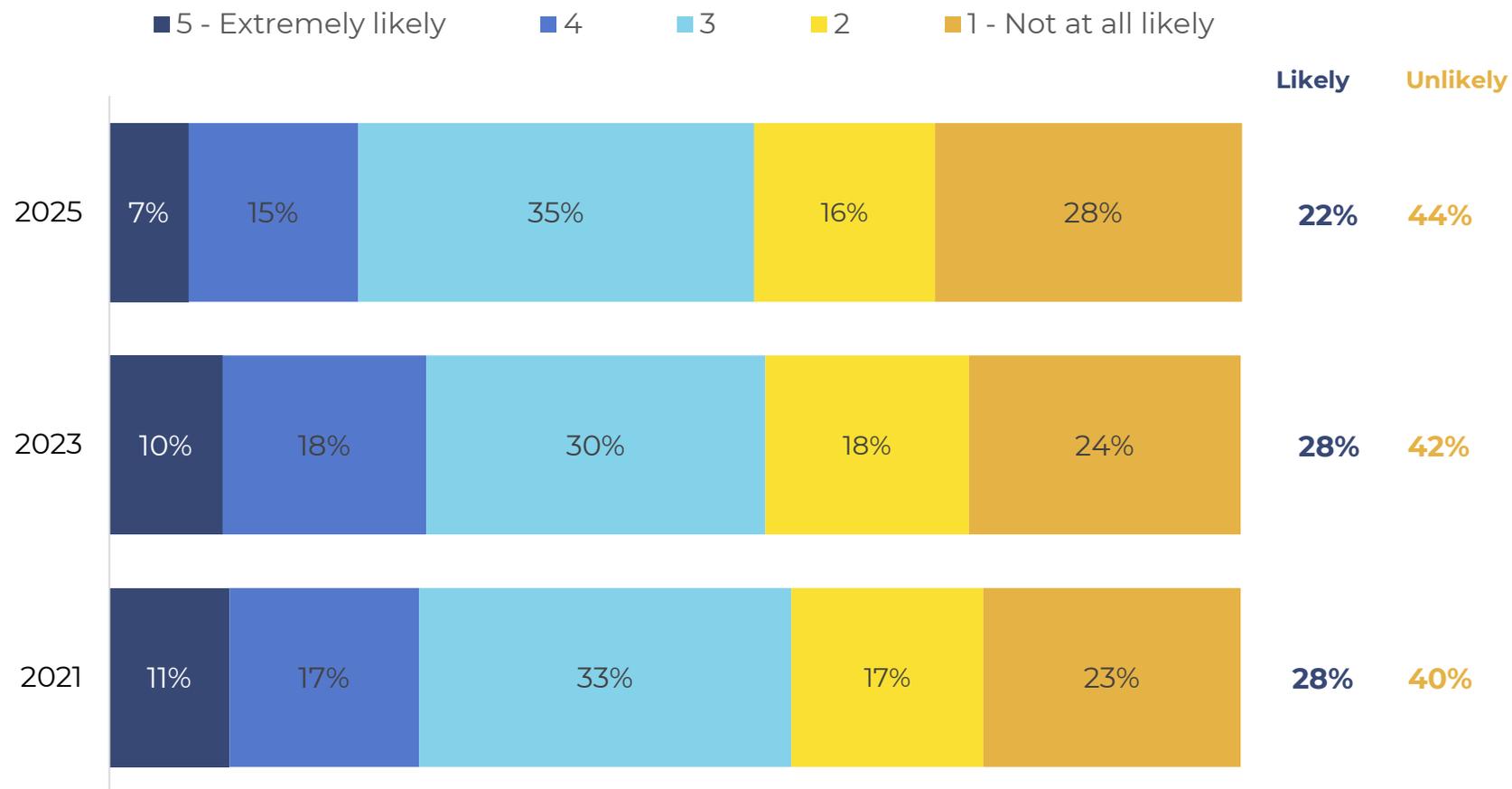
Now we want you to think about what kind of interaction you would like to have with influencers.
How interested are you in learning about new products or services from influencers?



One in five Canadians are likely to buy on influencer reco in the future

Purchase intent is down 6pts since 2023

How likely would you be to buy something in the future based on a recommendation from an influencer?

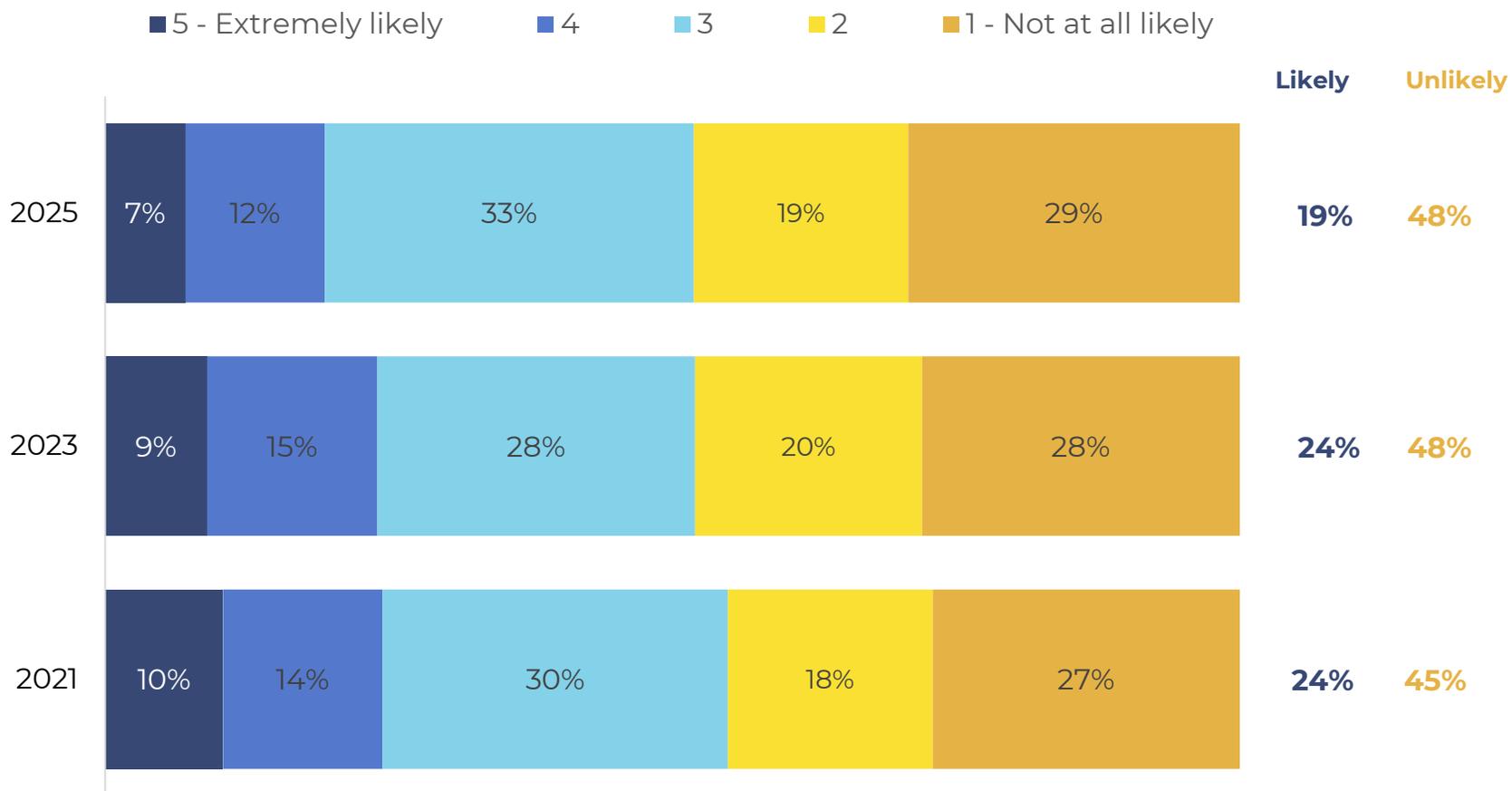


Base Total 2025 n=2242; 2023 n=3348; 2021 n=3000

One in five also likely to buy if paid promotion

Paid promo purchase intent is down 5pts since 2023/21

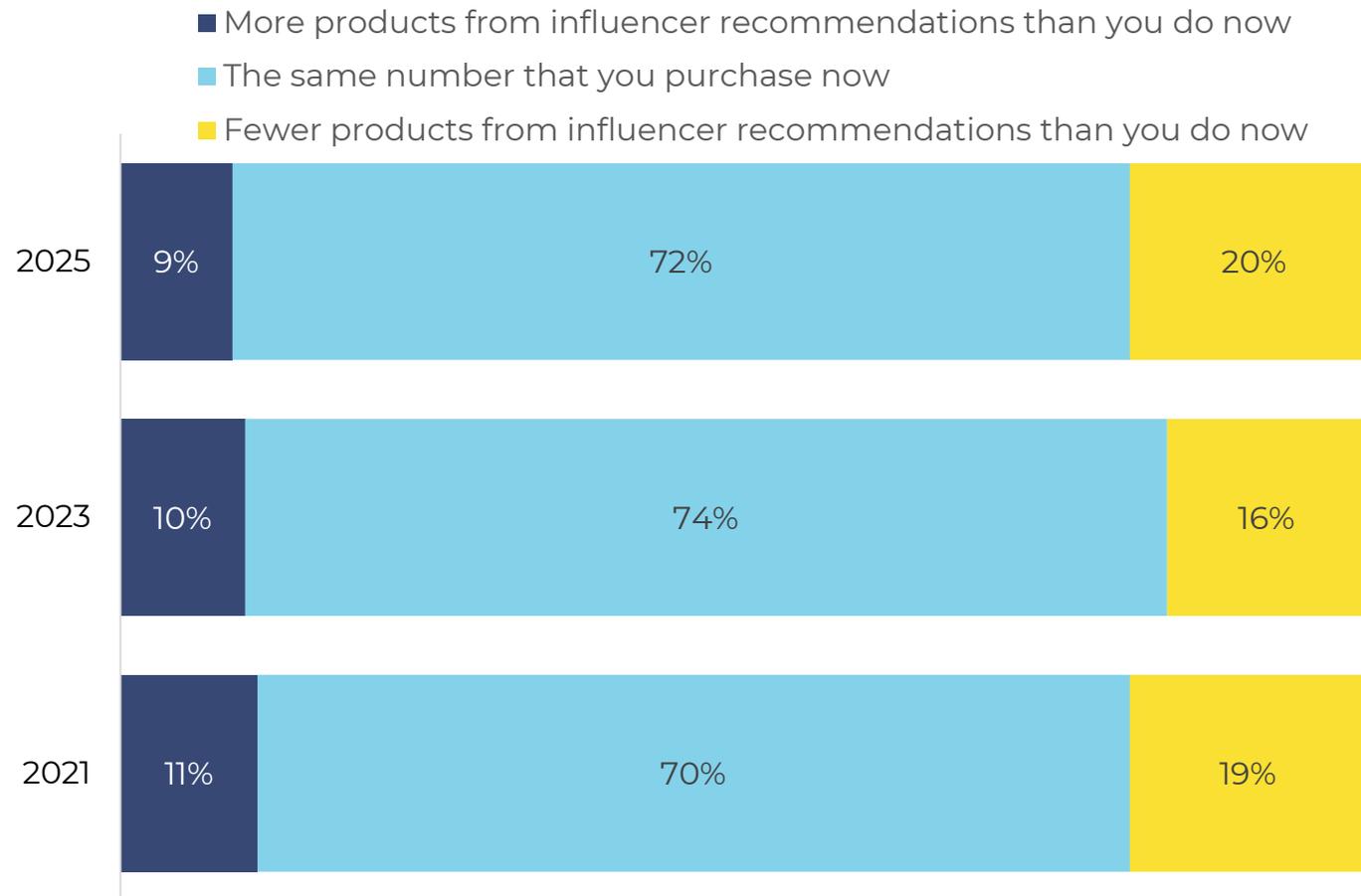
How likely would you be to buy something in the future if it was a paid promotion from an influencer?



Majority doesn't anticipate purchase behaviour change in future

One in ten (10%) will buy more, twice as many (20%) say it will be less. Proportions are largely unchanged.

In the future do you think you will buy...?



GENERATIONS



- All generations believe influencers are likely paid, but this perception is strongest among the Greatest Generation (92%) and Millennials (79%), and relatively lower among Gen Z (69%).
- Boomers (51%) and Gen X (50%) are more likely to think most content is paid compared with Millennials (46%) and Gen Z (34%), while the Greatest Generation is highest (69%).
- Gen Z (50%) and Millennials (40%) show greatest interest in learning about products and services from influencers, compared with moderate Gen X interest (27%) and much lower interest among Boomers (13%) and the Greatest Generation (16%).
- Gen Z (42%) and Millennials (30%) are most likely to buy based on influencer recommendations, while Gen X (16%), Boomers (9%) and the Greatest Generation (0%) are least receptive.
- Gen Z (35%) and Millennials (25%) are more open to purchasing from paid promotions than Gen X (13%), Boomers (10%), and the Greatest Generation (8%).
- Gen Z (17%) and Millennials (11%) are somewhat more likely than older groups (Gen X – 14%; Boomers – 6%; Greatest Generation – 0%) to anticipate buying more through influencer recommendations in the future.

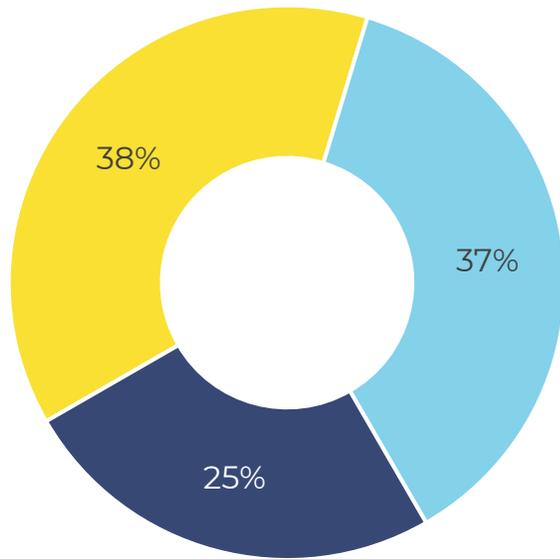


AI Influencers (NEW 2025)

Majority (63%) is not aware of AI influencers

They are generally seen as less relatable and less effective at promoting products than humans

Are you aware of AI influencers - digital personalities created using artificial intelligence?



■ No ■ Yes ■ Unsure

Base Total n=2242

If yes: How **relatable** do you find AI influencers compared to human influencers?

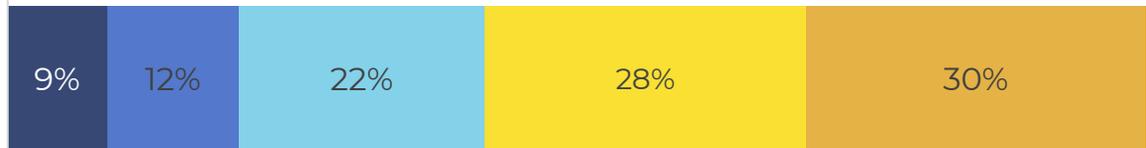
■ AI Influencers are much more relatable ■ Somewhat more relatable
■ Equally relatable ■ Somewhat less relatable
■ AI influencers are much less relatable



More **Less**
17% **65%**

If yes: How **effective** do you find AI influencers in promoting products compared to human influencers?

■ AI Influencers are much more effective ■ Somewhat more effective
■ Equally effective ■ Somewhat less effective
■ AI influencers are much less effective



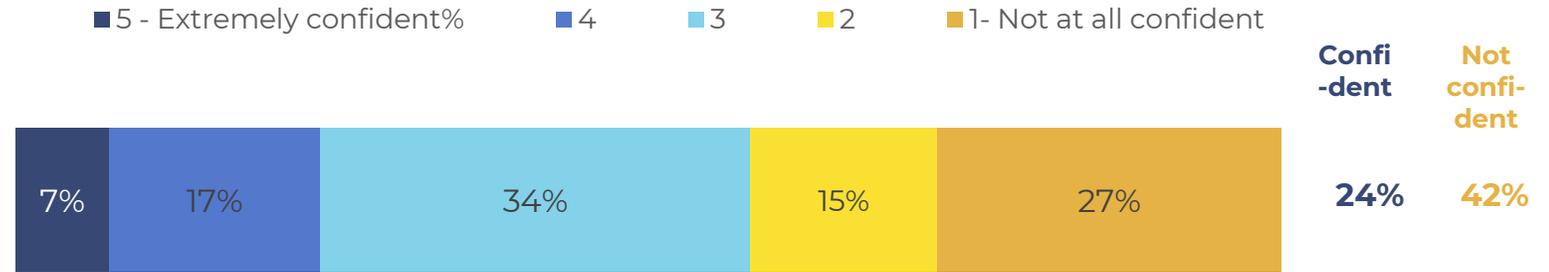
21% **58%**

Base Total n=2242

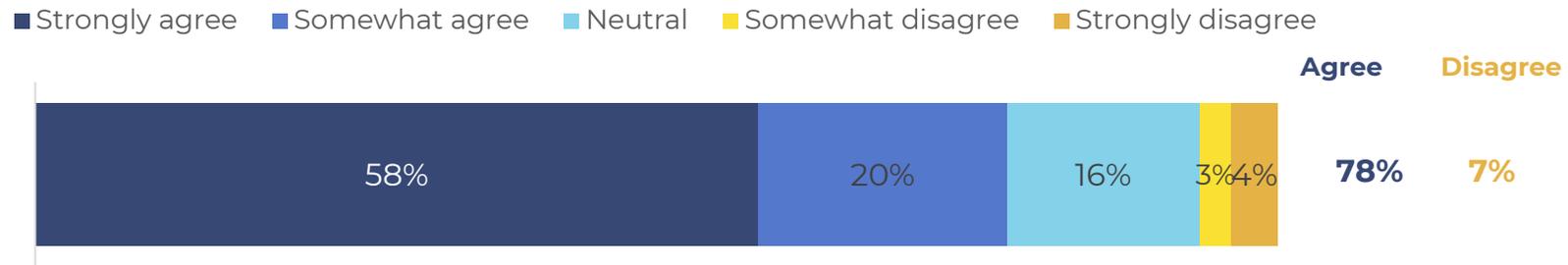
Only a quarter of Canadians are confident they'd see the difference between AI and human influencer

There is strong agreement that clear disclosure is important

How confident are you that you can distinguish between AI-generated influencers and human influencers?

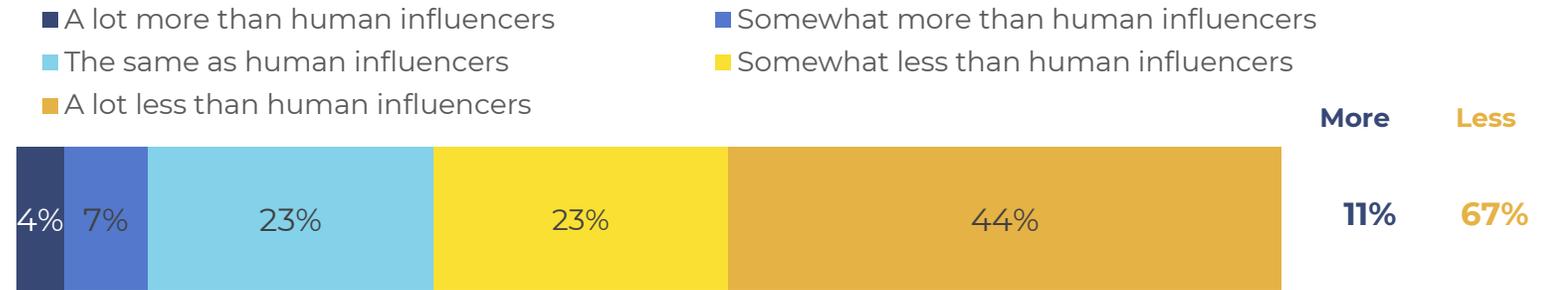


How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: "AI influencers should clearly disclose their AI nature"

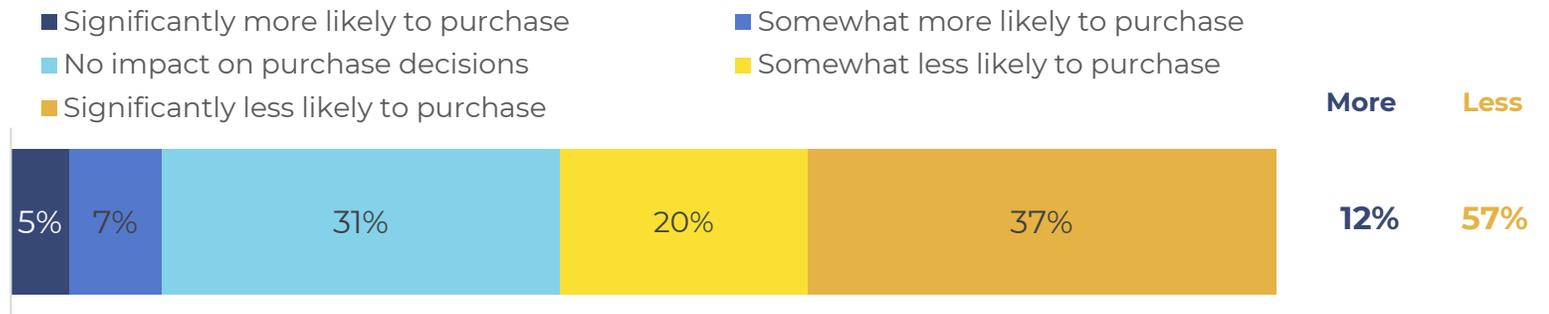


AI influencers are generally less trustworthy than humans, and see decreased purchase likelihood

To what extent do you trust AI influencers' recommendations?



To what extent would knowing that an influencer is AI-generated impact your purchase decisions?



GENERATIONS



- Millennials (47%) report the highest awareness of AI influencers, followed by Gen X (37%), Gen Z (36%), Boomers (30%), and the Greatest Generation (16%).
- Millennials (24%) find AI influencers somewhat more relatable than older generations, but overall relatability remains low across all age groups.
- Gen Z (33%) and Millennials (23%) are more likely than Gen X (15%) and Boomers (14%) to view AI influencers as more effective than humans.
- Millennials (35%) and Gen Z (35%) feel substantially more confident distinguishing AI from humans than Gen X (20%) and Boomers (11%).
- Gen Z (18%) and Millennials (15%) are slightly more open to trusting AI influencers' recommendations more than humans than Gen X (9%) and Boomers (4%), while the Greatest Generation shows no such trust (0%).
- Millennials (17%) and Gen Z (15%) are more likely to say AI status makes them more likely to purchase, while older generations show little such openness (8-9%).
- While support for AI influencers disclosing their AI nature is high across all generations, it is strongest among the Greatest Generation (92%) and Boomers (83%), compared with Gen Z's comparatively lower 68%; Gen X (78%) and Millennials (79%) land in the middle.



For More Information

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