

The buy button moved into the feed

For years a creator's job was to send you somewhere else to buy. In 2026 the checkout came to the feed. People watch a video and buy without leaving the app. The money chasing that shift is real. Here is what social commerce actually looks like by the numbers, pulled from public sources and cited, plus why it raises the stakes on knowing a creator's audience is real.

\$20B+

PROJECTED US SOCIAL
COMMERCE SALES IN 2026

eMarketer

18.2%

TIKTOK SHOP SHARE
OF US SOCIAL
COMMERCE, 2025

~\$9B

US TIKTOK SHOP GMV
IN ITS FIRST FULL
YEAR, 2024

58%

US ADULTS WHO
BOUGHT ON A
CREATOR'S
RECOMMENDATION

59%

CREATOR REVENUE
THAT COMES FROM
SPONSORED
CONTENT

Headline figures: eMarketer (US social commerce forecast); Earnest Analytics (TikTok Shop US share); National Advertising Division, BBB National Programs; eMarketer creator revenue mix. Full sources listed below.

What changed, in one line

Discovery and purchase used to be two separate steps on two separate screens. A creator built awareness, then you went to a website to buy. Social commerce collapsed that into one motion. The same video that makes you want the thing now sells it to you on the spot. That is a structural change in what a creator partnership is worth, because the post is no longer the top of the funnel. It is the whole funnel.

Seven things the public data shows.

1 US social commerce sales are set to pass \$20 billion in 2026.

eMarketer projects US social commerce sales pass \$20 billion in 2026 and keep climbing through the decade. This is no longer an experiment, it is a line item brands plan around. (Source: eMarketer.)

2 TikTok Shop already takes roughly a fifth of US social commerce.

TikTok Shop captured about 18.2% of US social commerce sales in 2025, per Earnest Analytics tracking. One app, less than three years after launch, holding a fifth of the category. (Source: Earnest Analytics.)

3 It got there fast: about \$9 billion in US GMV in its first full year.

US TikTok Shop GMV reached roughly \$9 billion in 2024, its first full operational year. Few commerce channels in history have scaled that quickly from a standing start. (Source: Earnest Analytics, as widely reported.)

4 The whole thing runs on creator trust, not the buy button.

58% of US adults have bought a product because of a creator endorsement, per the National Advertising Division. The checkout button only removes friction. The reason someone buys is the creator they believe. Remove the genuine recommendation and you are left with a worse display ad. (Source: NAD, BBB National Programs.)

5 Creators are paid mostly to sell, which sharpens the incentive to look bigger.

eMarketer forecasts 59% of creator revenue in 2026 comes from sponsored content. When a creator's income depends on brand deals that track follower and engagement counts, the incentive to inflate those counts is structural, not occasional. (Source: eMarketer.)

6 Creator content is now a "core media channel," not a social add-on.

The IAB now classifies creator content as a core media channel rather than an experimental line, with brands shifting from one-off posts to always-on programs. Social commerce is a big reason: an always-on creator presence is what keeps the in-feed store open. (Source: IAB, via Marketing Dive.)

7**When the click is a sale, fake audiences cost you instantly.**

This is the part most brands miss. When the goal was awareness, a bot follower just padded a vanity number. When the goal is a purchase, a bot audience converts at exactly zero, while an overseas audience cannot receive a US product. Social commerce turns audience quality from a soft metric into hard revenue math. (Analysis based on the sources above.)

Why this raises the stakes on verification

Social commerce is the best thing to happen to creator marketing in years and the most punishing. Best, because it closes the gap between a recommendation and a sale. Punishing, because it removes the place where fake audiences used to hide. A bought following could quietly waste an awareness budget for months. It cannot fake a checkout. Zero real buyers means zero sales, then the report lands on your desk that way.

So the move is simple. Before you put a creator at the center of a shoppable campaign, verify the audience is real, engaged and, for a US brand, actually in the US. In an awareness world that was good hygiene. In a social-commerce world it is the difference between a campaign that sells and a campaign that just spends.

Methodology and what this report is

WHAT THIS IS

An analysis that pulls together public, third-party data on social commerce into one picture, with our interpretation of what it means for creator partnerships. The framing is ours. The numbers are not.

SOURCE STANDARD

We cite named forecasters and data firms only: eMarketer, Earnest Analytics, the National Advertising Division and the IAB. We deliberately excluded the many inflated TikTok Shop figures circulating on unsourced blogs, which trackers do not agree on.

A NOTE ON THE MESSY NUMBERS

TikTok Shop GMV estimates vary widely between trackers, so we used only the figures that recur across credible, named sources and labeled the rest as contested. Where we cite a single forecaster, we name it inline.

WHAT WE DID NOT DO

We used no private account data of any kind, nor did we generate any figure ourselves. Every number traces to a named public source you can check.

Sources

1. eMarketer (US social commerce sales projected to pass \$20 billion in 2026; 59% of creator revenue from sponsored content in 2026).
2. Earnest Analytics (TikTok Shop captured roughly 18.2% of US social commerce in 2025; US TikTok Shop GMV around \$9 billion in its first full year, 2024).
3. National Advertising Division, BBB National Programs (58% of US adults have purchased due to a creator endorsement).
4. IAB, 2025 Creator Economy Ad Spend & Strategy Report (creator content as a "core media channel"; shift from one-off campaigns to always-on programs).

Figures are reported as published by the sources above as of June 2026. TikTok Shop GMV estimates differ between trackers, so only figures recurring across credible named sources are used here, with forecasts labeled as forecasts. This page links to no competitor and reproduces no third-party report; it summarizes published figures with attribution for industry reference.

Go deeper

Social commerce makes audience quality a revenue problem, which is the theme of [the creator verification gap](#). For the full market picture, see [The Verified Creator Report 2026](#).



About this content

Editorial, verification and review standards for this page.

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VERIFICATION STANDARDS

Every creator on the **KALO IQ database** is hand-verified by our 15-person verification team before being listed. We exclude bots, fake-follower accounts and creators outside the US.

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