

## BEAUTY IN DIGITAL TIME AND GEN-Z INFLUENCE

E-commerce and digital shopping are constantly growing, as confirmed by the report dedicated to the cosmetics industry which was recently released by *McKinsey & Company*, a multinational strategic consultancy. The report outlines the forecasts up to 2027. According to analysts, between 2022 and 2027 e-commerce will grow with a CAGR of 12 %, and in 2027 it will cover a quarter of the total sales volume.

The development of digital channels has radically transformed the relationship between brand and consumer, with brand equity becoming the core for development. It is essential for companies to emerge and be recognizable on the market by sharing values and distinctive features that help build a corporate identity. The theme was the focus of a round table at Cosmoprof Worldwide Bologna 2023 within the CosmoTalks schedule, [“Cosmetic art: Design your brand difference”](#). The talk was organized in collaboration with **KANTAR**, a data, insights and consulting company, with the moderation of **Jennifer Weil, European Beauty Editor of WWD – WOMEN'S WEAR DAILY**.

During the round-table, **Stephanie Leix, Head of Media & Creative di Kantar**, highlighted the need for brands to be visible, highly meaningful and different: “Brands need to build an emotional connection. Difference is being unique in your presence and setting the trends not only through the product or innovation but also building a strong and specific identity. Any content must be coherent and follow a clearly identifiable approach : in line with the history of the brand, the type of product and the most suitable consumer target”.

Each company should have tailor-made marketing and storytelling, because there are no universal rules. For a fragrance brand, for example, getting the consumer's attention is more challenging than for a skincare brand, because for a fragrance you cannot leverage concepts such as efficacy and performance, as highlighted by **Alice Madar, Brand Manager of Interparfums**. “To date, there are no technologies to smell the product before purchasing. Brands must therefore establish a highly emotional connection with consumers. They have to know who are the customers, convey messages in line with the brand's heritage and its timeless code, and use the right platforms to be recognizable.”

One of the most performing tools today, and at the same time maybe still underexploited, is certainly TikTok. Monthly users on TikTok worldwide are over 1 billion. The #Beauty records 150 billion views, the #makeup is at a stunning 375 billion views, and #fragrance reaches 25 billion views. 67% of users are over 25 years old: the entertainment platform, known for its short videos, is not only the best way to interact with the younger generations, but with adults as well. “The consumer is the key element for the recognition of a brand on the market. A brand equity strategy can be measured by a standard KPI: engagement”, highlighted **Giuliano Cini, Brand Partnerships Director, Italy & Greece** during the round table. “Producing coherent content is the real challenge for brands: it is necessary to share coherent values. Partnering with creators can help you reach the right target audience. Customers can become your brand ambassadors: User Generated Content can be an opportunity to understand what people think about your product. The brand is in the hands of consumers, but at the same time it must lead the narrative as much as possible to guide to audience to correct values”.

## HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH GEN-Z: THE ROLE OF CREATORS

Digital is the reference universe for the younger generations, and is consequently the most important scenario for future growth. The McKinsey & Company report for the cosmetics industry highlights that by 2023 Gen-Z will represent a quarter of the world's population, with a spending power of up to 33 trillion dollars.

Gen-Z is an essential target for companies, and its constant access to digital technologies determines a completely different approach. Gen-Z is particularly attracted by influencers, who are no longer just glossy personalities of the jet-set. The most successful influencers today are ordinary people, with whom consumers can connect because they share the same values. The topic was analysed during Cosmoprof Worldwide Bologna 2023 in the CosmoTalks session entitled [“The beauty of influence: how creators connect with Gen-Z in marketing and communication”](#), moderated by **Emanuela Ghislotti, Beauty Contributor of Italian magazine THE WOM**, and with the participation of the creators invited to Cosmoprof as special guests in collaboration with the agency Open Influence.

“Media have changed. New generations trust on specific creators because they can rely on them. Influencers are normal people, with whom you can have a relationship which is more informal and authentic”, highlighted **Isabelle Kate Goodall-Munroe** (UK - Instagram: @isabellekategm; TikTok: @isabellekategm; 257,900 total followers) during the round table.

“Being reliable and credible is the key point in our activity as an influencer. For me it is essential to share the right collaborations to show that beauty comes from every skin and sizes”, underlined **Carina Chatel** (France - Instagram: @carinachatel; TikTok: @carinachatel; 90,300 total followers).

Thanks to their credit with consumers, influencers are increasingly becoming ambassadors of the brand and its values, but it is essential to respect the relationship of authenticity between the creator and his/her followers. "Trust in building relationships with the brand is strategic. You must like the brand you work with, otherwise your followers can be misled," said **Ashley Masse** (USA - Instagram: @ashley\_masse; TikTok: @ashley\_masse; 136,700 total followers).

"The problem is that brands usually want you not to be transparent, but you want to be transparent with your audience. It's a valuable relationship between customers and creator, I don't want to waste it, and indeed, I am proud of having a brand asking me for a promotional activity, it is a growth for my professionalism, and I want to share this joy with my audience", highlighted **Margareta Graas** (Sweden - Instagram: @margaretagraas; TikTok: @margaretagraas; YouTube: @Margaretagraas; 317,900 total followers). The influencers invited to Cosmoprof highlighted how the attitude of brands is not always functional. Influencer marketing is not just about getting free promotional content, but it is a personal contact, a sharing of information and values on both sides, and a relationship based on mutual respect.

In the future, the role of creators will continue to be strategic. The spread of digital influencers, especially in China, does not seem to be an element that will undermine the need for a human relationship between creators and followers. On the contrary, there will be more and more niche creators, because today they can carve out their own space thanks to a greater awareness of issues such as inclusivity and respect for individual identities. Beauty communication will be increasingly digital-addicted, but authentic human relationships will still be the predominant values in the next future.

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