

According to my customer opinion survey, all 100% of respondents use marketplaces, with AliExpress and Wildberries being the most popular platforms. The most searched category online is clothing and footwear — likely because analytics show these items are more expensive in physical stores. Additionally, over 70% said they trust lesser-known brands that have reviews, highlighting the critical role of social proof in building consumer trust today.

In the conclusion, the CIS markets — encompassing Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and beyond — operate under different rules than Western economies. This explains why successful businesses have shifted their focus from building "loved brands" overnight to optimizing what truly matters: conversions, ROAS, and repeat purchases. Interestingly, consumer loyalty follows naturally — because customers respect companies that consistently deliver. The strategic implication is clear: businesses must rely on data, continuously test their channels, and scale only what works. That is the essence of performance marketing — and the key to sustainable growth in the CIS today.

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MICRO- AND NANO-INFLUENCERS VS. CELEBRITIES: THE TRUST CRISIS IN DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Over the past few years, the influencer marketing market has undergone a significant transformation. While brands previously focused on celebrities and large-scale reach, today the key factor is no longer audience size but the level of trust. The paradox of the modern digital environment is that as audience size grows, trust in the influencer often declines. The purpose of our research is to justify the advantage of micro- and nano-influencers over celebrities in digital advertising based on the analysis of audience trust and engagement levels.

One of the main challenges is the declining effectiveness of advertising with major bloggers and celebrities. According to industry research, the average engagement rate for influencers with over 1 million followers is around 1–2%, while micro- influencers (10,000–100,000 followers) achieve 3–6%, and nano-influencers (under 10,000

followers) can reach 8–10% [1]. This means that as reach increases, real audience interaction with content often decreases.

Additionally, the so-called “ad blindness” effect is becoming more pronounced. Users tend to perceive celebrity integrations as just another advertisement rather than a personal recommendation. As a result, click-through rates decline, conversion rates decrease, and customer acquisition costs increase. Many brands in the fashion, beauty, and lifestyle segments have already reported a 20–40% decline in ROI when working with large influencers in recent years, while campaigns with micro-influencers demonstrate more stable and predictable results [2].

Against this backdrop, the importance of micro- and nano-influencers continues to grow. Their key advantage is the “relatable voice” effect. Audiences perceive these creators not as media personalities, but as people with similar experiences — friends, colleagues, or niche experts. This creates higher trust and, consequently, stronger influence on decision-making. For example, a doctor with 8,000–10,000 followers may bring more qualified patients to a clinic than a blogger with half a million followers, while a niche expert on Telegram can generate higher conversion rates than a large, generalist influencer [3].

Another important aspect is the growing tension between authenticity and commercialization. Modern audiences quickly recognize insincere or template-style advertising integrations [2]. As a result, a new logic for evaluating effectiveness is emerging: the number of views becomes less important than trust level and depth of engagement.

Audience inflation remains another challenge. According to analytics platforms, up to 30–40% of followers among large influencers may be inactive or fake accounts [1]. This is particularly common on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. For brands, this creates risks: distorted metrics, inflated expectations, and reduced actual campaign performance.

Under these conditions, the traditional Engagement Rate metric is no longer sufficient to measure effectiveness. Increasingly, brands focus on business-oriented indicators such as Cost Per Engagement (CPE), Cost Per Lead (CPL), Conversion Rate (CR), and depth of engagement reflected in comments, conversations, and repeat interactions [4].

Practical case studies confirm this shift. For example, the Belarusian clothing brand YOS, in cooperation with several micro-influencers, gets a 25–30% increase in sales and a 35% reduction in the cost of attracting a customer compared to placement with major bloggers. In the fashion segment, niche influencers (stylists, lifestyle bloggers) often publish. They give a conversion rate 2 times higher due to the organic demonstration of images and a high level of audience trust. By reallocating its budget from a single celebrity to a pool of micro-influencers, YOS is able to increase engagement, create regular touchpoints with its audience, and ensure a more consistent flow of orders.

As a result of our research, we found that the effectiveness of digital advertising is determined not by reach, but by the level of trust in the influencer, which is achieved through authenticity and proximity to the audience. As the number of followers increases, engagement decreases, and micro- and nano-influencers are perceived by the audience as

"their own," resulting in higher conversion rates. Practical case studies also confirm that switching from a single large blogger to a group of micro-influencers can reduce the cost of customer acquisition by up to 35% and increase sales by 25-30%.

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INTERACTIVE ADVERTISEMENT AS THE NEW LANGUAGE OF BRANDS

In today's world many companies use advertisements as a promotion tool, but the more customers encounter monotonous ads, the more they lose interest in them. Therefore, interactive advertising has grown allowing users not only to learn about products and services but also to interact directly with the advertisement. Interactive advertising is a two-way, digital or physical marketing technique that encourages active consumer participation rather than passive viewing through such tools like clickable videos, augmented reality, quizzes and playable ads.

On this basis, the aim of this study is to identify the key factors influencing the effectiveness of interactive advertising on consumer engagement compared to regular advertising.

There is a sufficient amount of research on this topic. Firstly, the study by Tracy L. Tuten and Michael R. Solomon focuses on media marketing and its role in modern communication [1]. One of their key ideas is the "Four Zones" model, which includes social community, social publishing, social entertainment, and social commerce. The authors emphasize that brands leveraging interactive ad formats on social media platforms can build communities around products, fostering deeper audience engagement. Furthermore, the interactive nature of social media enables users to share their experiences amplifying the reach and enhances the overall effectiveness of advertising campaigns [2]. Based on this investigation, the conclusion can be made that the rapid growth of social media has created new opportunities for interactive advertising.

The next step is to find out the key factors in the effectiveness of interactive advertisements. Based on our research, many aspects of impactful engagement can be