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# TRUST, INFLUENCE & CHECKOUT: THE NEW RULES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CYPRUS

JUNE 2026

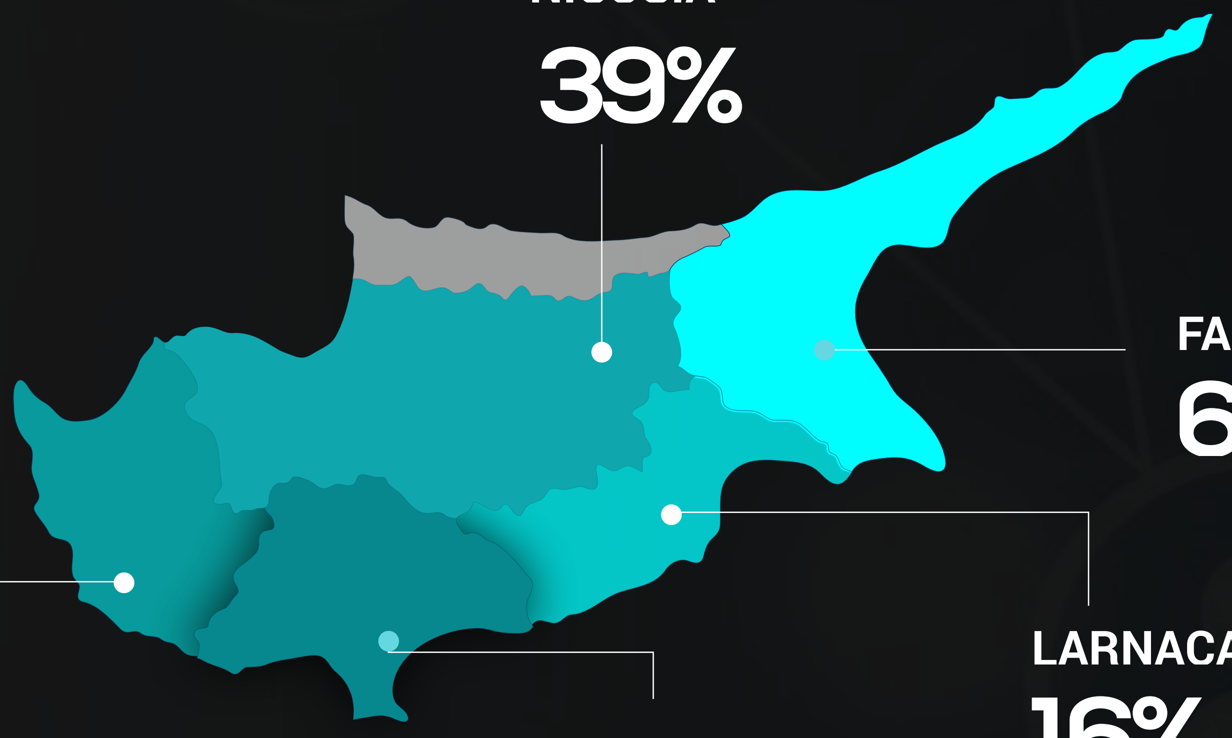
# Sample Characteristics: Understanding the Social Consumer Across Generations

**1000** PEOPLE

GENERATION

| GEN Z [18-27] | MILLENNIALS [28-43] | GEN X [44-59] | BOOMERS [60+] |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 16% | 31% | 25% | 28% |

CITY

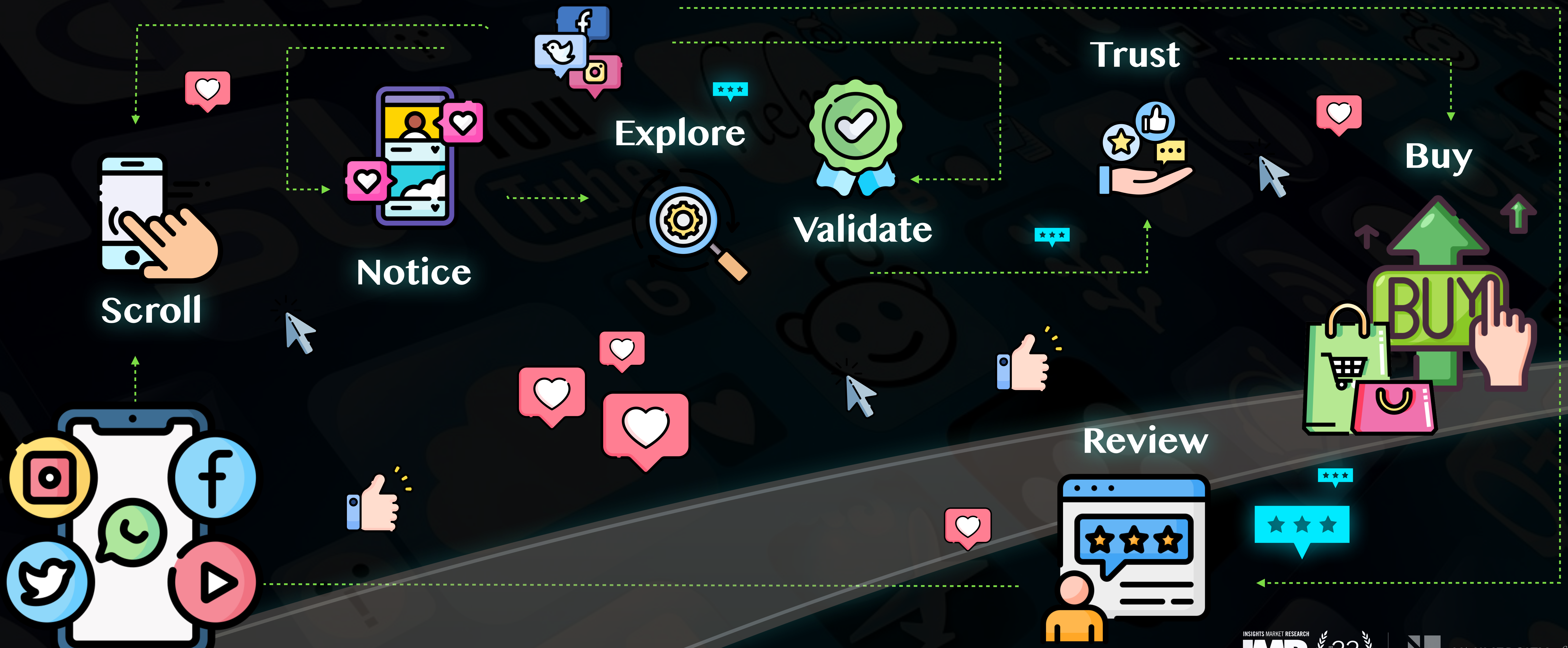



GENDER

50% (male) 50% (female)

# Social Media Journey

The social journey in Cyprus is no longer linear. It is **emotional, visual, peer-validated and trust-sensitive.**



# Executive Insight: Cyprus Has Entered the Social Decision Economy

The strongest finding of the research is not simply that people use social media. The stronger finding is that social media is now embedded into the way people **notice, evaluate, trust and buy**.

**73%**

say short videos / reels / TikTok videos are most likely to **capture their attention.**

**75%**

agree that social media makes them **interested in brands or products** they may not have noticed otherwise.

**77%**

agree that posts, comments and reviews **can change the way they see** a brand, product, place or service

**71%**

have **bought products or services** they found on social media at least occasionally

**73%**

usually **search for comments, reviews** or other users' experiences **before buying** something seen on social media.

**89%**

want brands **to clearly disclose when AI is used** in advertising or content.

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# 01

## Generation Profile

# The Generation Social Map: Every Generation Is Social, But Not in the Same Way

Social media **has reached every generation**, but its role changes dramatically by age. For **younger audiences**, social media is a s**pace of discovery, entertainment and identity.** For **older audiences**, it is **more selective, more functional** and **more dependent on credibility.**

| Social Media Usage | Social Media Usage | Social Media Usage | Social Media Usage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **100%** | **94%** | **84%** | **61%** |
| **Gen Z** | **Millennials** | **Gen X** | **Boomers** |

***The question is no longer whether generations are social. The question is what social media means to each generation.***

# Gen Z: The Discovery-Native Generation

Gen Z is **the most visually driven** and **platform-fluid generation.** For them, social media is not only a place to communicate or be entertained. It is a **discovery environment** where **brands, trends, places and products become visible.**

**For Gen Z, discovery happens inside the feed.**

| | Instagram | TikTok | Facebook |
|---|---|---|---|
| Media Usage | 98% | 79% | 61% |
| Time Spent Per Day | 144’ | 159’ | 25’ |

FUN FACT

**89%** agree that social media **makes them interested in brands** or products they may not have noticed otherwise.

**89%** say **short videos** / reels / TikTok videos capture their attention.

**80%** have **bought products** or services they found on social media

# Millennials: The Conversion Bridge

Millennials are the **bridge between social inspiration and practical purchase behaviour**. They are **highly present** on both Facebook and Instagram, increasingly exposed to TikTok, and **strongly influenced by convenience, reviews and usability.**

**Millennials are the generation where inspiration meets verification.**

| | Facebook | Instagram | TikTok |
|---|---|---|---|
| Media Usage | 86% | 83% | 41% |
| Time Spent Per Day | 67’ | 85’ | 76’ |

FUN FACT

**75%** use social media for **news / information / current affairs.**

**83%** agree that **social media content** is likely to be **checked before going** to a restaurant, trip, event or destination.

**87%** usually **search reviews** or other users’ experiences **before buying** something seen on social media.

# Gen X: The Trust-Filtered Adopters

Gen X is not absent from social media. In many cases, they **are active and highly responsive,** but their behaviour is filtered through **credibility, usefulness and practical value.**

**Gen X does not just scroll. Gen X checks, compares and verifies.**

| | Facebook | Instagram | TikTok |
|---|---|---|---|
| Media Usage | 70% | 51% | 32% |
| Time Spent Per Day | 52’ | 45’ | 33’ |

FUN FACT

**77%** use social media for **news / information / current affairs.**

**65%** say **positive comments** or reviews **make them more interested** in a brand, product or service.

**93%** usually **search comments,** reviews or other users’ experiences **before buying** something seen on social media.

**81%** are **more likely to buy** through social media when there is an **easy link to complete the purchase.**

# Boomers: Selective, Cautious, But Still Reachable

Boomers are the least social generation, but they should not be ignored. The data shows a more selective form of social media engagement, led mainly by Facebook, information and credibility.

**Boomers can be reached through social media, but not through hype. Through credibility.**

| | Facebook | Instagram | TikTok |
|---|---|---|---|
| Media Usage | 60% | 32% | 18% |
| Time Spent Per Day | 81’ | 24’ | 15’ |

**91%** of social media users in this group use social media for news / information / current affairs.

FUN FACT

NEWS

**53%** say news or informational content is most likely to capture their attention.

**47%** have never bought products or services they found on social media.

# 02

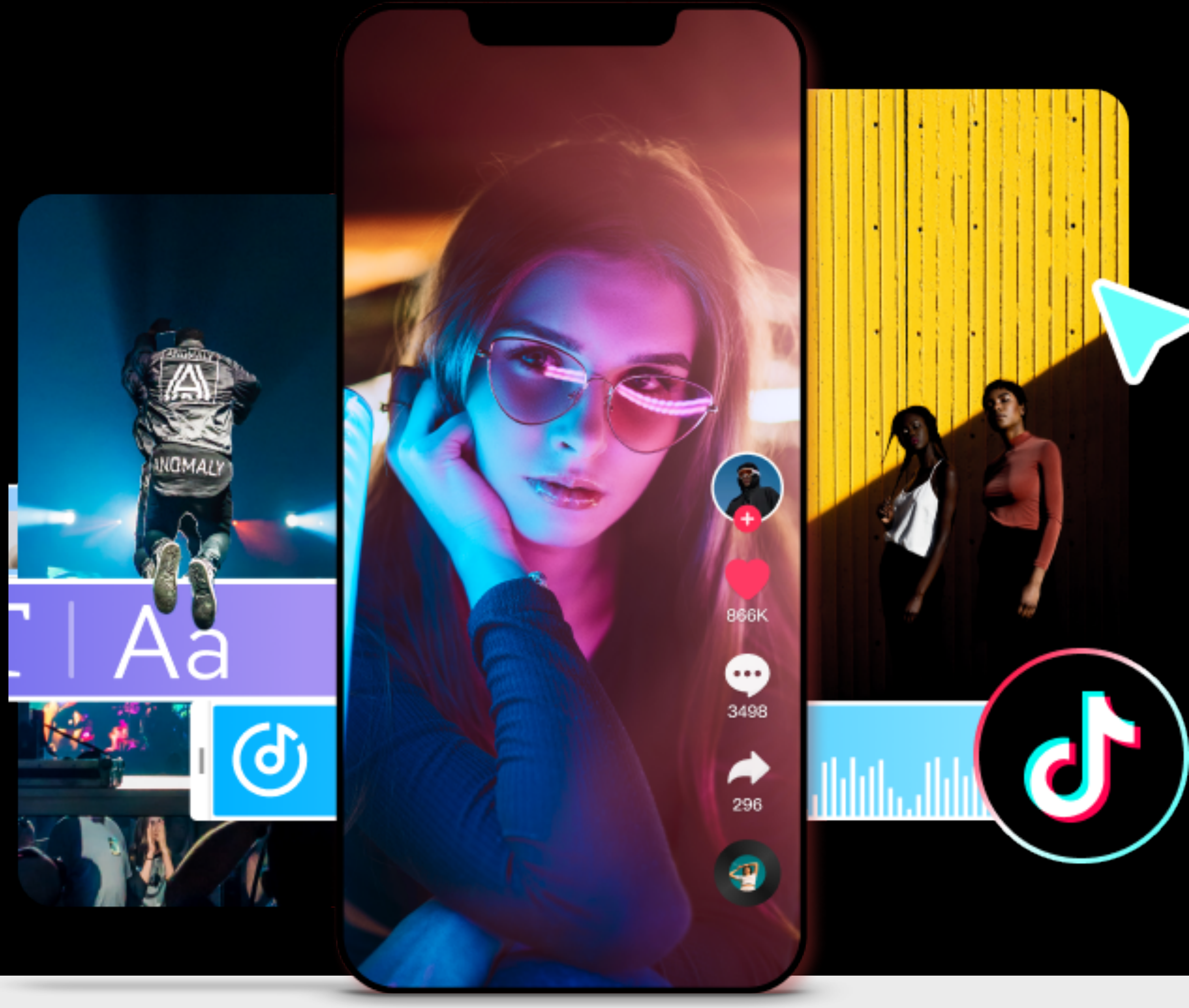
## Attention & Discovery

What Stops the Scroll?

# The Attention Battle:
# Short Video Is the Dominant Attention Format

The clearest attention signal in the study is **the dominance of short-form video**. Across the total sample, short videos / reels / TikTok videos are the content format **most likely to capture attention.**

| 89% | 79% | 61% | 44% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomers |




***The first battle is not for loyalty.***
***It is for the pause.***

# Social Media as a Discovery Engine
# From Search to Scroll: Discovery Is Becoming Social!

Social media is **increasingly used as a discovery layer** across everyday categories, especially travel, restaurants, technology, fashion and entertainment.

*People no longer only search for what they want. They discover what they want while scrolling.*

Social media as source of information by category:

| Entertainment | Restaurants / Bars | Travel | News / Information | Technology | Fashion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 70% | 61% | 59% | 57% | 53% | 45% |

# 03

## Trust & Credibility

What Makes People Believe?

# The Trust Equation: Consumers Want Evidence, Not Just Exposure

When people see a brand, product or service on social media, the factors that drive further interest are rooted **in realism, reviews and usefulness.**

**What makes consumers more interested in a brand, product or service:**

| Factor | % |
|---|---|
| Real images | 49% |
| Positive reviews | 47% |
| Looks useful | 37% |
| Clear information | 34% |
| Offers/discounts | 25% |
| Attractive presentation | 22% |
| Recommendation by influencer | 12% |

*The consumer is not only looking for inspiration. The consumer is looking for proof.*

# The Brand Perception Effect: Social Media Does Not Only Create Awareness. It Changes Judgement.

Social media can **shift the way people evaluate** brands, places and services.
This gives brands **opportunity**, but also **risk**.

## 75%

agree that social media makes them **interested in brands/ products** they may not have noticed otherwise. Brand discovery reaches **89%** among Gen Z.

## 79%

agree they are likely to **view social content before going** to a restaurant, trip, event or destination. Pre-visit social checking reaches **89% among Gen Z and 87% among Gen X.**

## 77%

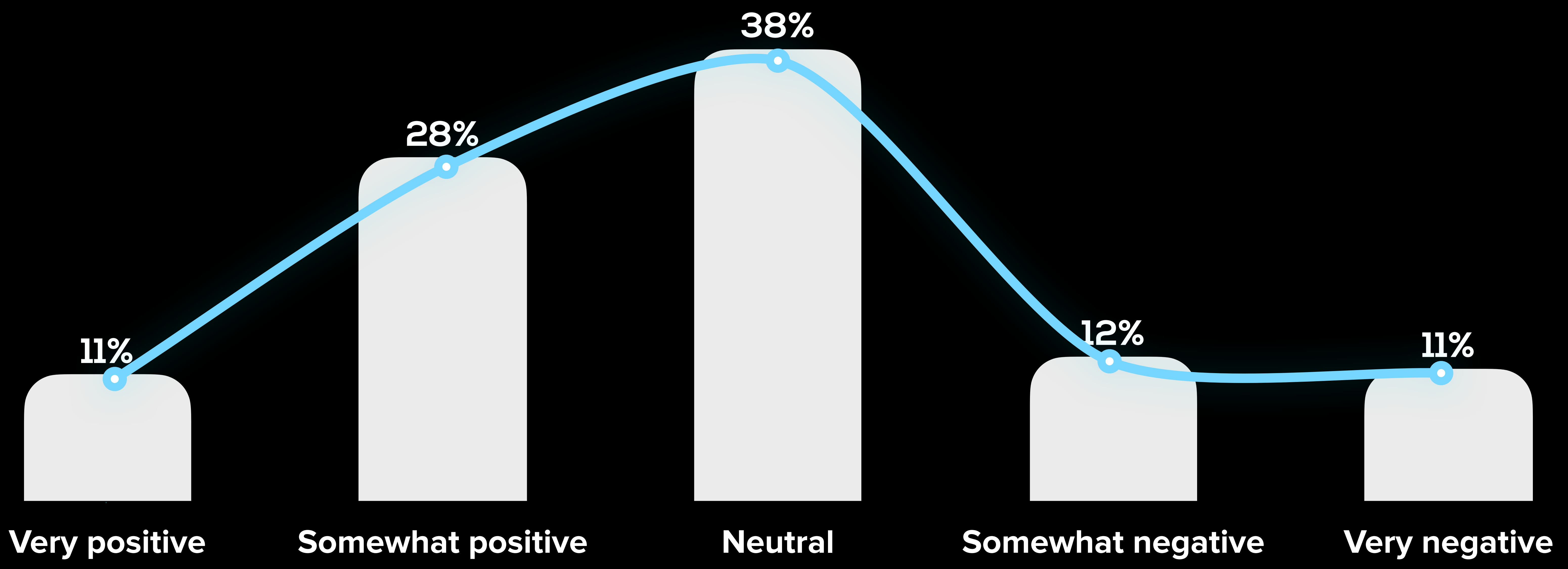
agree posts, comments and reviews **can change how they see a brand,** product, place or service. Brand perception influence reaches **82.6% among Millennials and 82% among Gen Z.**

## 56%

agree they **discover fashion and beauty trends through social media** that **influence their purchases.**

# Advertising Sentiment: Advertising Is Not Rejected, But It Is Being Re-Evaluated

The audience is not overwhelmingly negative toward advertising. However, neutrality is high, which means that **brands must work harder to earn relevance.**




**Positive sentiment by generation:**

| Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomers |
|---|---|---|---|
| 36% | 41% | 48% | 21% |

# AI & Authenticity: AI Can Modernise a Brand, But Transparency Protects Trust

AI is already visible to consumers. Most respondents believe **they can recognise AI-generated advertising at least sometimes**, but the expectation is clear, **brands must disclose it.**

## 36%

say they **can always recognise** an **AI-**generated ad, and **54%** say they can recognise it **sometimes**. Combined recognition reaches **95%** among **Gen Z** and **96%** among **Millennials**

## 89%

agree brands should **clearly disclose when AI is used** in advertising or content.

## 70%

agree AI can make a brand look more **modern and innovative.**

## 81%

agree AI can make a brand **look less authentic** and negatively affect its image. Among **Gen Z,** concern about **reduced authenticity reaches 91%.**

# 04

## Influence & Creators

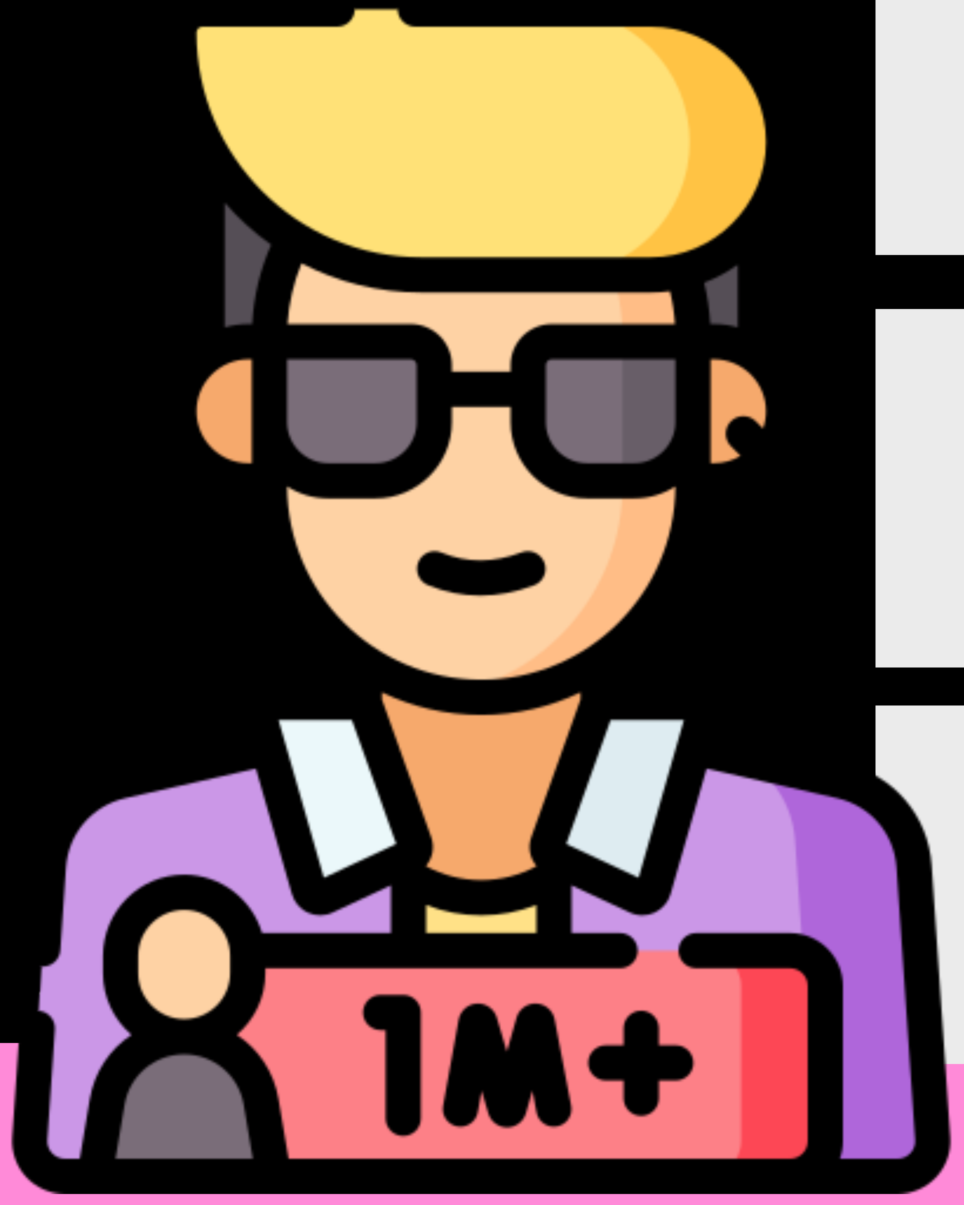
Who Really Influences Purchase Decisions?

# The Creator Paradox: Influencers Matter, But Their Influence Is Not Automatic

Direct self-reported influence appears modest, but behavioural and attitudinal indicators show that **creators become powerful when trust is present.**

### Direct influence on purchase decisions:

| Gen Z | Millennials |
|---|---|
| 35% | 17% |
| **Gen X** | **Boomers** |
| 13% | 3% |




### But the deeper picture is stronger:

**63%** agree influencers and creators **influence** how they see brands/products **more than traditional ads.**

**75%** agree that when a **trusted influencer recommends** a product, they are more **likely to search for it.**

**70%** agree they **often struggle to tell** whether an influencer is **speaking honestly or because they are paid.**

# Creator-Led Purchase: Creator Influence Converts Most Strongly Among Younger Audiences

Among relevant creator-aware respondents, creator-led purchase is **especially strong among Gen Z.**

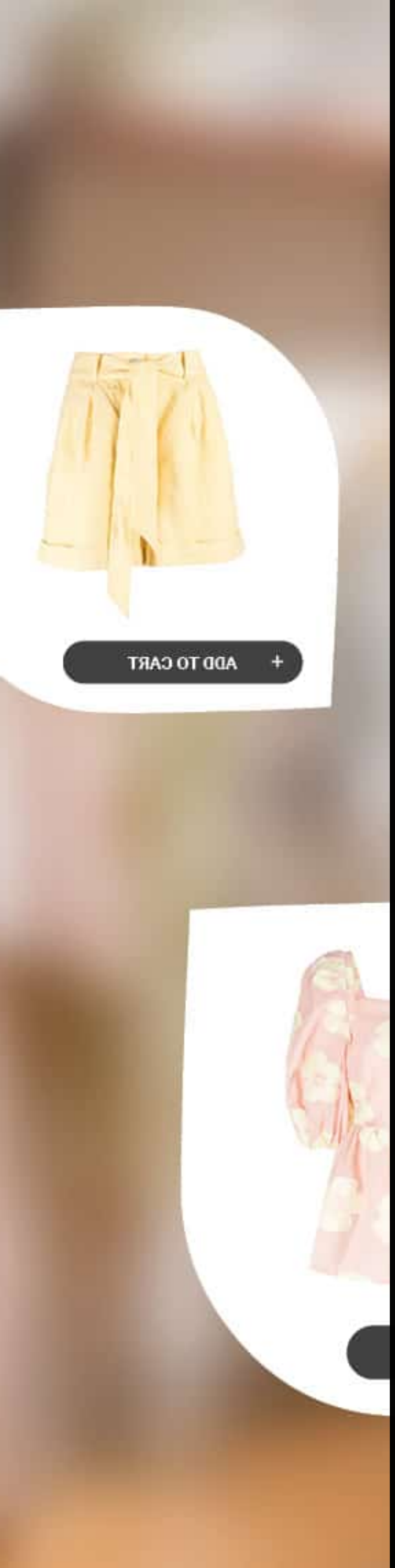
**Bought because they saw it or it was recommended by an influencer**

| Gen Z | Millennials |
|---|---|
| 63% | 41% |
| **Gen X** | **Boomers** |
| 24% | 5% |

**Influencer trust preference**

| Cypriot | International | Both | None |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10% | 21% | 35% | 33% |

*Among Gen Z, 48% trust both Cypriot and international creators equally, while only 15% say they trust none.*



# 05

## Checkout & Social Commerce

From Inspiration to Purchase

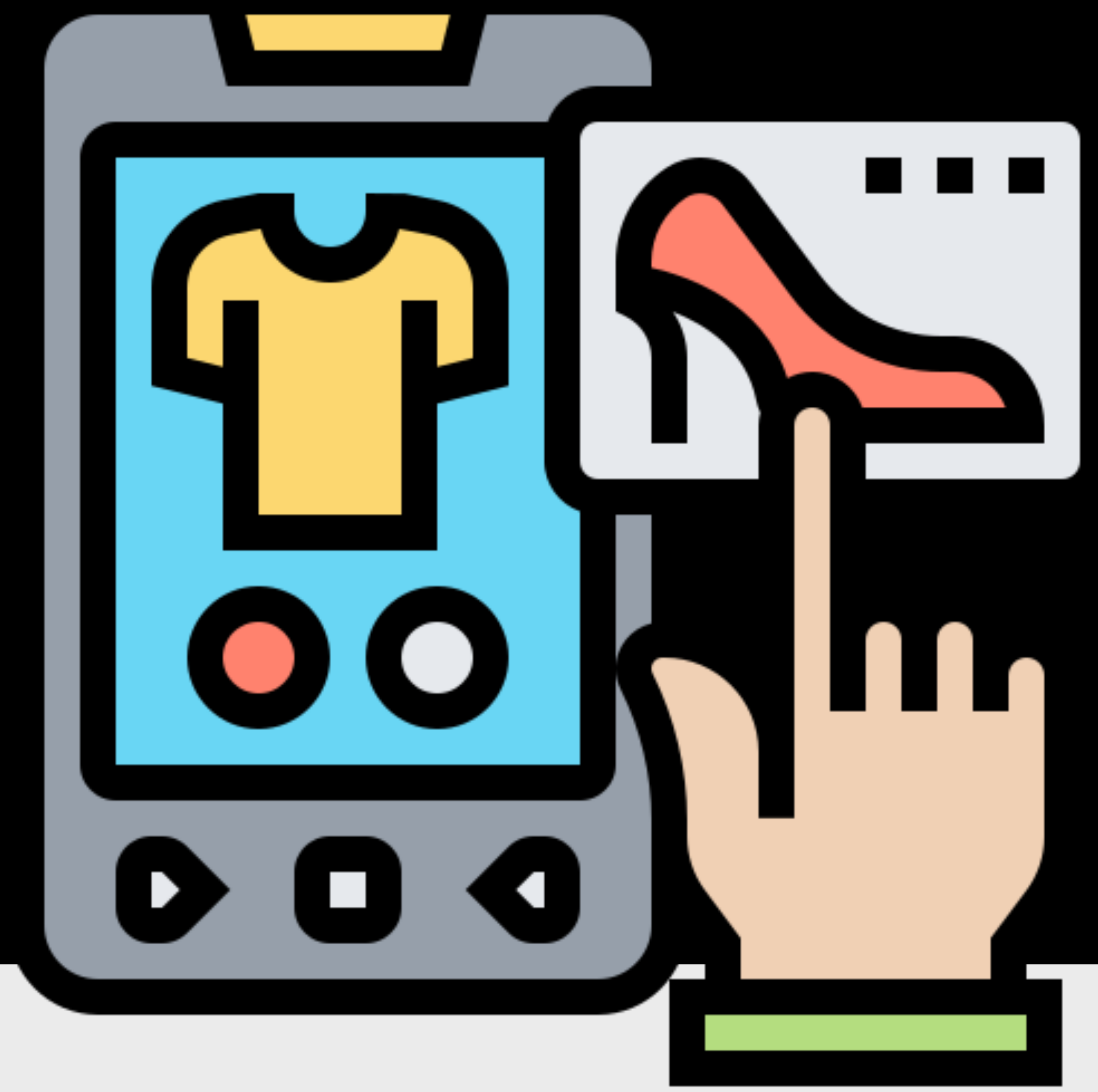
# Social Commerce: Social Media Is Now Part of the Purchase Journey

Social commerce in Cyprus should **not be seen only as direct checkout inside an app.** It includes discovery, enquiry, link-clicking, marketplace behaviour, brand account purchases and creator-triggered action.

**Social media is not just above the funnel. It is now inside the transaction path.**

**Purchase from social media:**

| Gen Z | Millennials |
|---|---|
| **80%** | **76%** |
| **Gen X** | **Boomers** |
| **71%** | **53%** |



# Where Social Purchases Happen: Brand Accounts Lead, But Commerce Pathways Are Fragmented

Among social buyers, **the most common route** is **through the account of a company** or brand they already follow. Sponsored advertising, marketplace behaviour, creators and direct links also play important roles.

**The checkout journey is fragmented. Brands must make every path credible and easy.**

**49%**
Brand/company account followed

**36%**
Sponsored ad

**27%**
Influencer/ content creator post

**22%**
Facebook Marketplace or similar

**19%**
Link from story/post/ video

**16%**
Direct message with business

# Generational Purchase Pathways: Each Audience Converts Differently

**Generational highlights:**

## Gen Z

# 59%

bought from a **brand/company** account they follow and **39%** from an **influencer**/ content creator post.

## Millennials

# 42%

bought from a **brand/ company** account they follow and **35%** bought from a **sponsored ad**

## Gen X

# 33%

bought from a **sponsored ad, 25%** bought via **link from story/ post/video** and via **marketplace.**

## Boomers

# 41%

bought via **marketplace** and **35% from sponsored ads.**

# What Converts Social Attention into Purchase: Reviews, Trust and Ease Are the New Conversion Drivers

The strongest purchase-related behaviour is not impulse. It is **verification**.

**Before buying something seen on social media:**

**73%**

usually **search for comments, reviews** or other users' experiences.

**66%**

are more likely to buy when the brand, seller or creator **appears trustworthy.**

**61%**

are more likely to buy when they can **easily click a link and complete the purchase.**

**53%**

say an **offer**, discount or promo code can make them **buy faster.**

# 06

## Strategic Playbook

What Brands Must Do Next

# The Generational Playbook: One Social Strategy Is No Longer Enough

Each generation requires a **different social media logic.** The same platform, message or creator strategy will not perform equally across all audiences.

### Gen Z

Lead with **short video**, **creators**, **visual proof** and **discovery** content. They respond to **Instagram** and **TikTok**, but they still **validate** before purchase.

### Millennials

Build a strong **bridge** from **inspiration to action**. They need **reviews**, **clear links, useful information** and **convenience**.

### Gen X

Prioritise **credibility**, **clarity** and **practical value.** This generation is highly responsive to **reviews**, **easy checkout** and **trustworthy information.**

### Boomers

Do not over-rely on trend-driven content. Use **Facebook**, **informational content, clarity**, **reputation** and **trust-building.**

# The New Rules of Social Media in Cyprus: The Five Rules Brands Need to Understand

**The strongest social brands will not be the loudest. They will be the most trusted.**

1

**Rule 1: Attention is video-led.**

**Short-form video** is the **dominant** attention format, especially for Gen Z and Millennials.

2

**Rule 2: Discovery is social.**

**Consumers discover** brands, restaurants, travel ideas, technology, fashion and lifestyle choices **in the feed.**

3

**Rule 3: Proof beats polish.**

Real images, reviews, usefulness and clear information **matter more than aesthetic** presentation alone.

4

**Rule 4: Creators need credibility.**

Influencers can **create interest and search** behaviour, but the audience is alert to paid or inauthentic endorsement.

5

**Rule 5: Trust converts.**

**Reviews, brand credibility, easy links** and **transparency** are the elements that move consumers from interest to purchase.

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