

# Creator Earnings - Benchmark Report 2021



# Table of Contents

	Notable Highlights	-----	03
	Executive Summary	-----	04
	Research Methodology	-----	05
	Creator Economy Analysis	-----	07
	Survey Findings	-----	10
	Take Action	-----	23

# Notable Highlights

Why should you care? We'll tell you...

- **\$800 million in venture capital has been invested into Creator Economy startups** since October 2020.
- **46% of Creators** who have been building an audience for **4+ years** **earn over \$20k annually** across their monetized channels.
- We estimate the **total Creator Economy market size to be around \$104.2 Billion** and on par with a substantial growth trajectory similar to the Gig Economy. That's a future valuation of TRILLIONS of dollars.
- **72% of Creators prefer Instagram and identify it as their primary content platform.**
- Of the surveyed Creators that considered themselves full time Creators, ie. content creation is their main source of income – **78% make more than \$23,500 annually.**
- The power of sponsorships should not be underestimated. **77% of Creators depend on brand deals, that's 3x as many as every other revenue source combined.**
- **There is not a definite correlation between follower count and income.** Between the \$50-100k and \$500k-1M reported income levels from creating content, there is **half a million dollars in income difference, but a difference of only 1.8K more followers.**

# Executive Summary

The Creator Economy has emerged as the leading marketing and business leader. **\$800 million in industry growth was recorded from only 31 startup capital investments since October 2020.** That type of cash injection into the Creator Economy is sending strong signals confirming the Creator Economy is not only legit, but a force to be reckoned with.

Since its inception, individuals in the Creator Economy can count on income generated online from their content. Traditional influencer marketing from sponsored posts and brand deals is just a fraction of the existing monetization opportunities for Creators through social media and digital platforms. In fact, **43% of surveyed Creators report making a liveable wage from their content** at \$50k in annual income or higher.

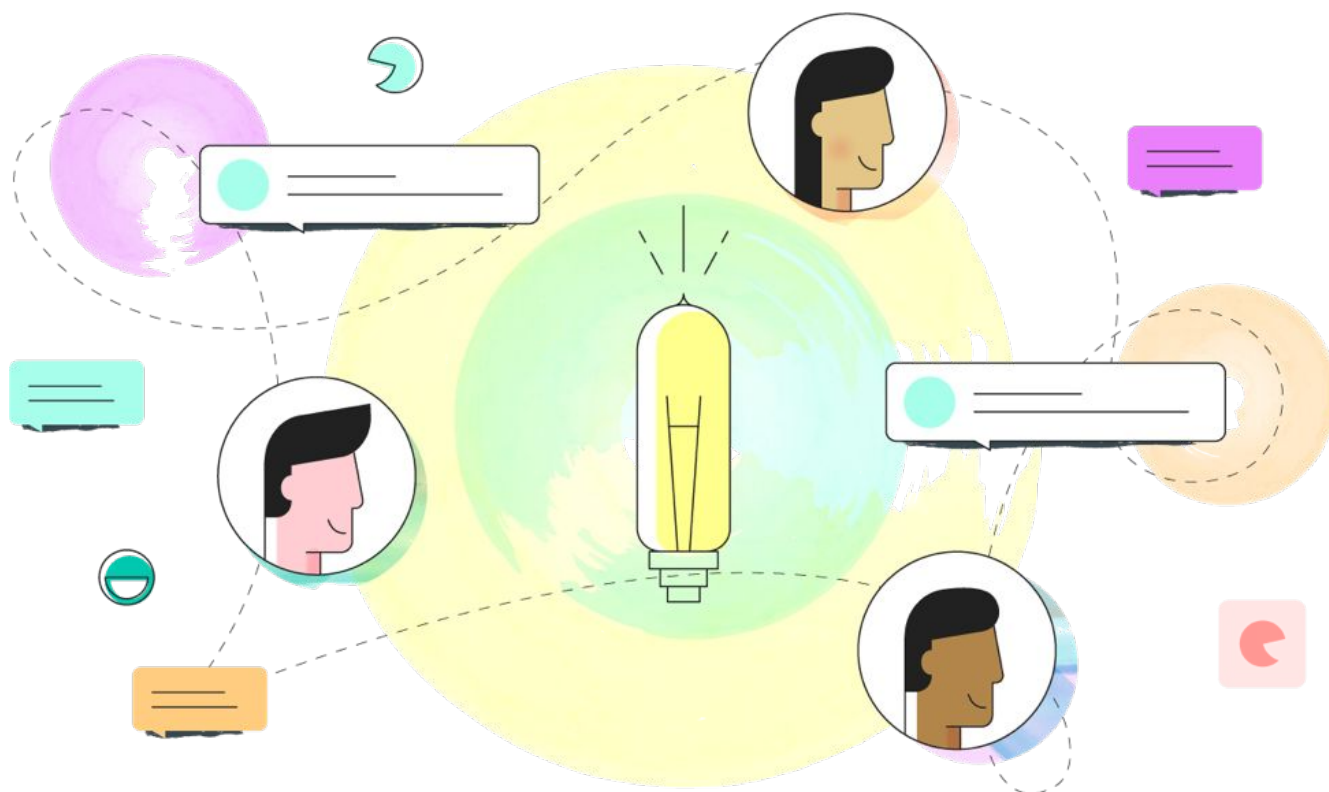
**TikTok burst into the scene a little over a year ago and secured the #2 place for Creator platforms behind Instagram.** One of the top three monetizable platforms for Creators, along with Instagram and YouTube, TikTok gave us a scare last summer, but they are definitely not going away.

In this report, NeoReach in partnership with Influencer Marketing Hub did extensive research to uncover the Creator Economy from the Creator's perspective. Through data collected from over 2,000 surveyed Creators in our combined network and one-on-one interviews, we are uncovering the Creator Earnings Benchmarks as the industry is now, and as it evolves into what Creators hope it can become.

Starting with an analysis of the economy, we're looking at startups, VC funds, and market size. Then, we dive into the earning power of Creators through their existing content channels and understand how they define success in the profession of content creators. We break down the platforms for monetization, analyzing which channels are most popular, most profitable and garner the largest Creator following.

Altogether, this report provides a holistic view of the Creator Economy as it pertains to the Creators themselves and their earning power. Where it is headed and how we can elevate it to the next level is what this report will help decide.

# Research Methodology



In a time sensitive, open survey, NeoReach and Influencer Marketing Hub contacted our network of Creators to collect information on the Creator Economy, Creator monetization, and Creator sentiment towards making money through their content. These Creator survey submissions ranged from nano to supernova Creators to cover the spectrum of opportunity available for Creator earning power.

The data presented in this report was collected from more than 2,000 Creators who submitted the survey and whose information was verified through NeoReach's data team. Additional statistics and information contained in this report were captured by the NeoReach Social Intelligence API in conjunction with Influencer Marketing Hub's suite of resources. Our analysis included survey results and data findings submitted and approved between the months March to April 2021.

Therefore, the following report does not include all Creator data on sponsored content and other forms of Creator monetization on social media and digital platforms. However, it does include a varied selection of different Creator following sizes, income levels, social media platforms, and more to depict the state of the Creator Economy and showcase the earning power and monetary success of Creators.

# Editor's Note

Hello from the NeoReach family!

It's official, the Creator Economy is BOOMING! In the last year alone, over \$1B in fresh venture funding has poured into the market. You've heard of YouTube, Snapchat, Twitch, and, more recently, OnlyFans and Patreon, or maybe even Cameo. These social networks allow Creators to monetize directly. Create an account, grow an audience, make compelling content, and get paid!

*But can this lifestyle really provide a sustainable living? How many followers do you really need to do this full time?*


*Is there real money in being an "influencer"?!*

Yes, definitely. Still don't believe me? Not only are those companies listed above paying out hundreds of millions of dollars per year to tens of thousands of Creators, but there are over 100 newly funded companies entering the space. So again, it's safe to say that the Creator Economy boom has hit full stride in 2021 with an estimated \$104.2B market size (as of May 2021).

NeoReach & Influencer Marketing Hub conducted a Creator survey to answer the burning questions about the industry. Keeping respondents anonymous, we spoke with over 2,000 Creators to learn more about how they actually "monetize their followers." Upon finishing this report, you'll learn that there are countless pockets around the internet where viable opportunities exist for any Creator to make content creation their livelihood. Not to mention some very interesting cold hard numbers on what this new generation of entertainers & entrepreneurs are actually making. It's impressive, we'll leave it at that.

Old media feels *really* old now. The migration to digital media is well underway. Stay tuned as we continue to cover the backbone of this new market – the Creators themselves. Our goal is simple, to shine a positive spotlight on the very people we all watch on our phones everyday.

More to come!

NeoReach 

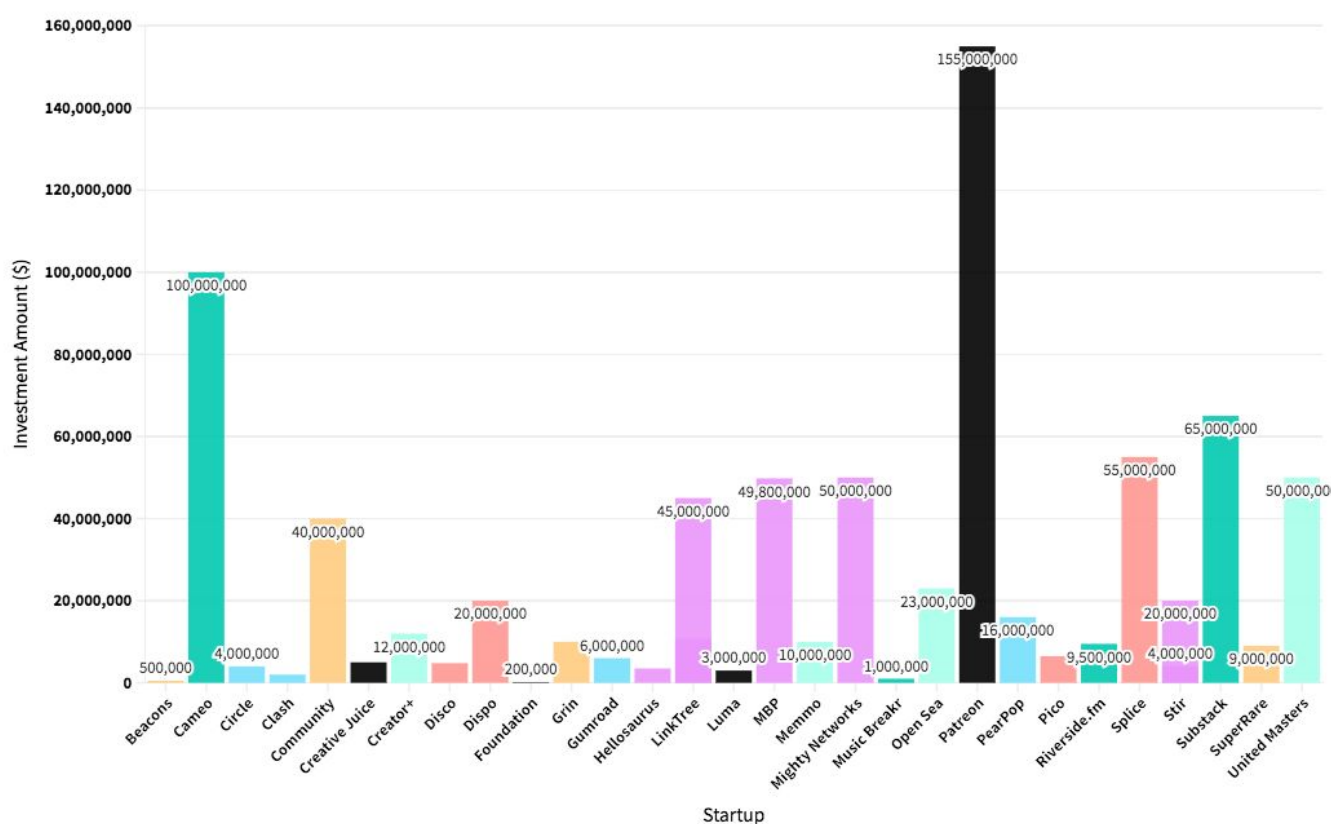
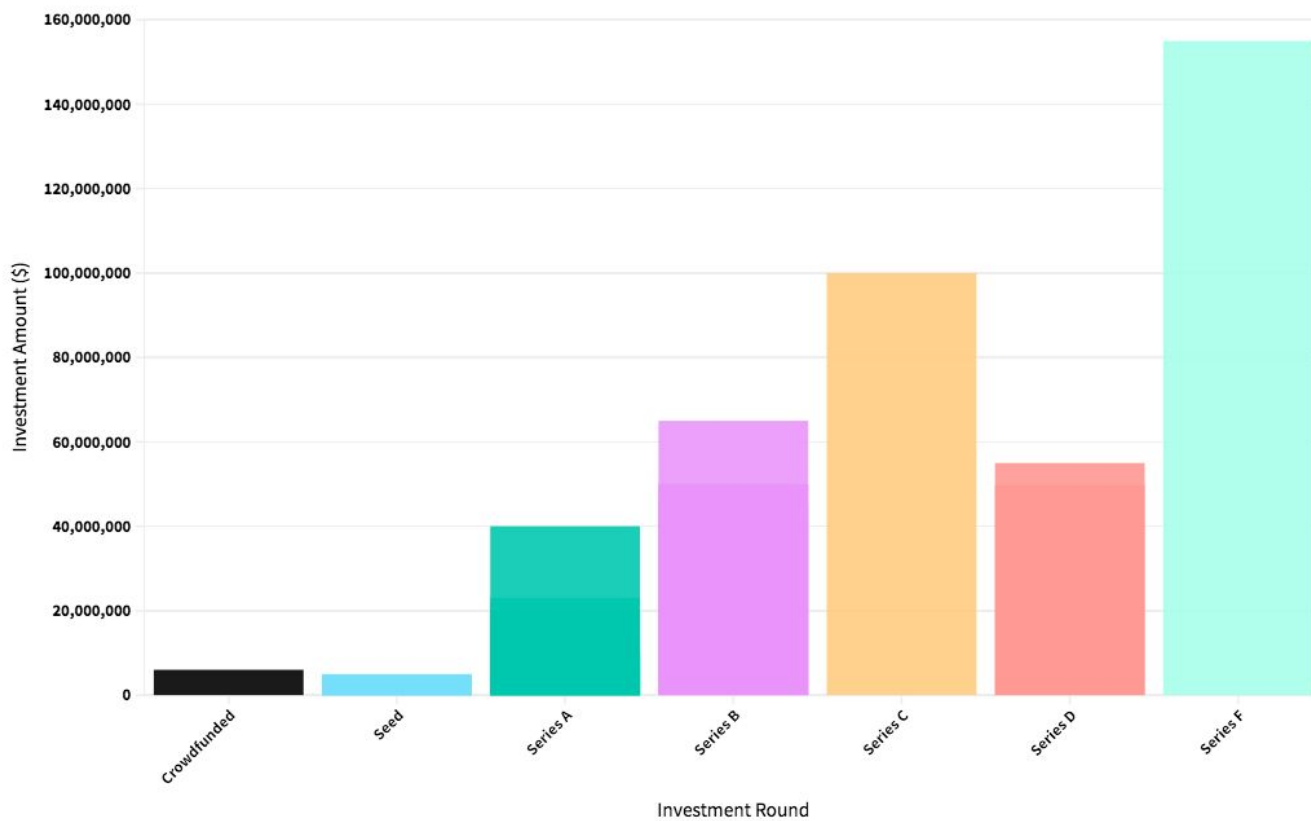
*Since 2013 NeoReach has been an active contributor to the Creator Economy. Our software and services have generated over \$100M for Creators across all of social media.*



# Creator Economy Analysis

# Creator Economy Startup Analysis

In the past three quarters dating back to October 2020, **\$850 million** in venture capital has been poured into the Creator Economy space in startup investments. The funds raised in the past seven months have contributed to the growth of a number of different startups in the space. April 2021 towers over the other months with the highest investment contributed at a total of **\$338.8 million** invested in fundraising rounds from Series A to Series F.





# Creator Market Size

With the recorded **additional \$850 million** invested into the industry since late 2020, the Creator Economy is growing at an unprecedented rate. Paired with an influencer marketing industry size of **\$13.8 Billion in 2021** and the hundreds of new startups in the space, we predict the total Creator market size to be at least **\$104.2 Billion** and growing by the day.

If you consider that the Gig Economy is estimated to be valued at anywhere between **\$1-4.5 Trillion by 2023** and the Creator Economy is on a similar trajectory, then we've got some bold growth ahead of us – to \$1 Trillion, and beyond! **Creators are businesses themselves.** The faster you realize that, the quicker you can jump into this exploding market.

What is the Creator Economy? It is everything in the market map and then some. We didn't even attempt to include merch sales. **From social media platforms to other industries like Influencer Marketing to the more than 50 million Creators themselves to the 500+ new startups joining the scene, the Creator Economy is attracting multi-billion dollar attention.**

Companies Powering the Creator Economy Marketmap



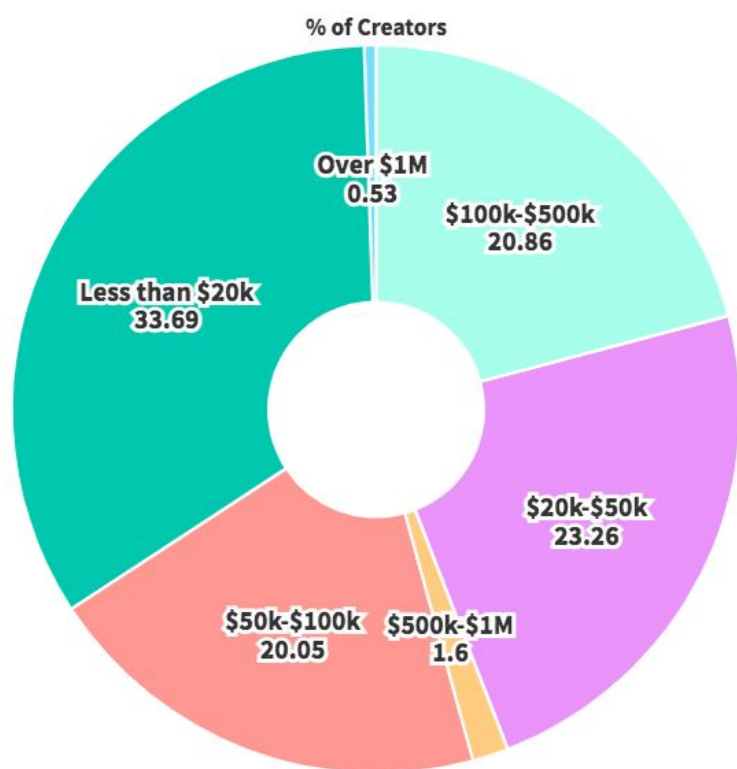
# Survey Findings

NeoReach and Influencer Marketing Hub surveyed over 2,000 social media Creators to collect information on the Creator Economy, Creator monetization, and Creator sentiment towards making money through their content. The data presented in this report was collected from those 2,000+ Creators who submitted the survey and whose information was verified.

# Creators' Earning Power

## Income Distribution

■ Less than \$20k 
 ■ \$20k-\$50k 
 ■ \$50k-\$100k 
 ■ \$100k-\$500k 
 ■ \$500k-\$1M 
 ■ Over \$1M



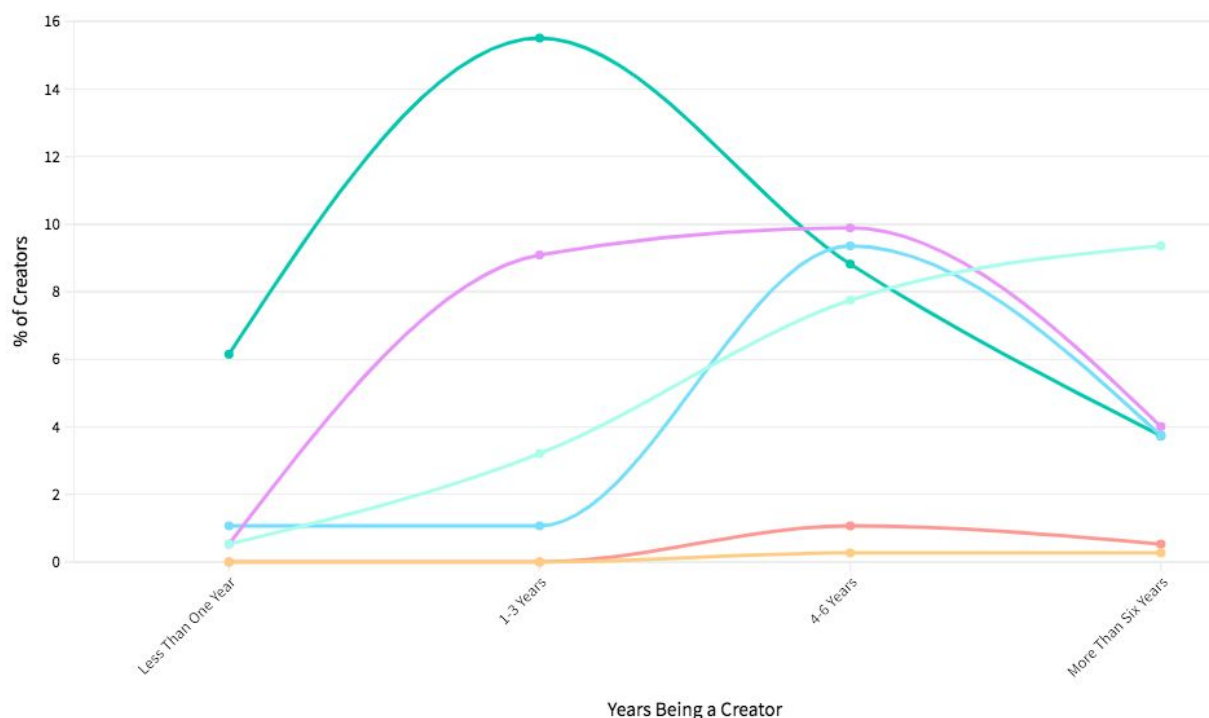
Content creation can be a full or part time job depending on the platforms and amount of content a Creator produces. We analyzed how much Creators are making annually just from their content. **Only 0.53% of the Creators surveyed** make over \$1M, but **43% of Creators who participated in our survey** make a livable wage above \$50k in annual income doing content creation work within the industry of influencer marketing.

The side by side comparison of Creator size, income, and engagement shows the rising control Creators have over their accounts as full time occupations and outlets for passion.

Earning power increases with time in the industry. **46% of Creators** who have been building an audience for **4+ years** earn over \$20k annually across their monetized channels.

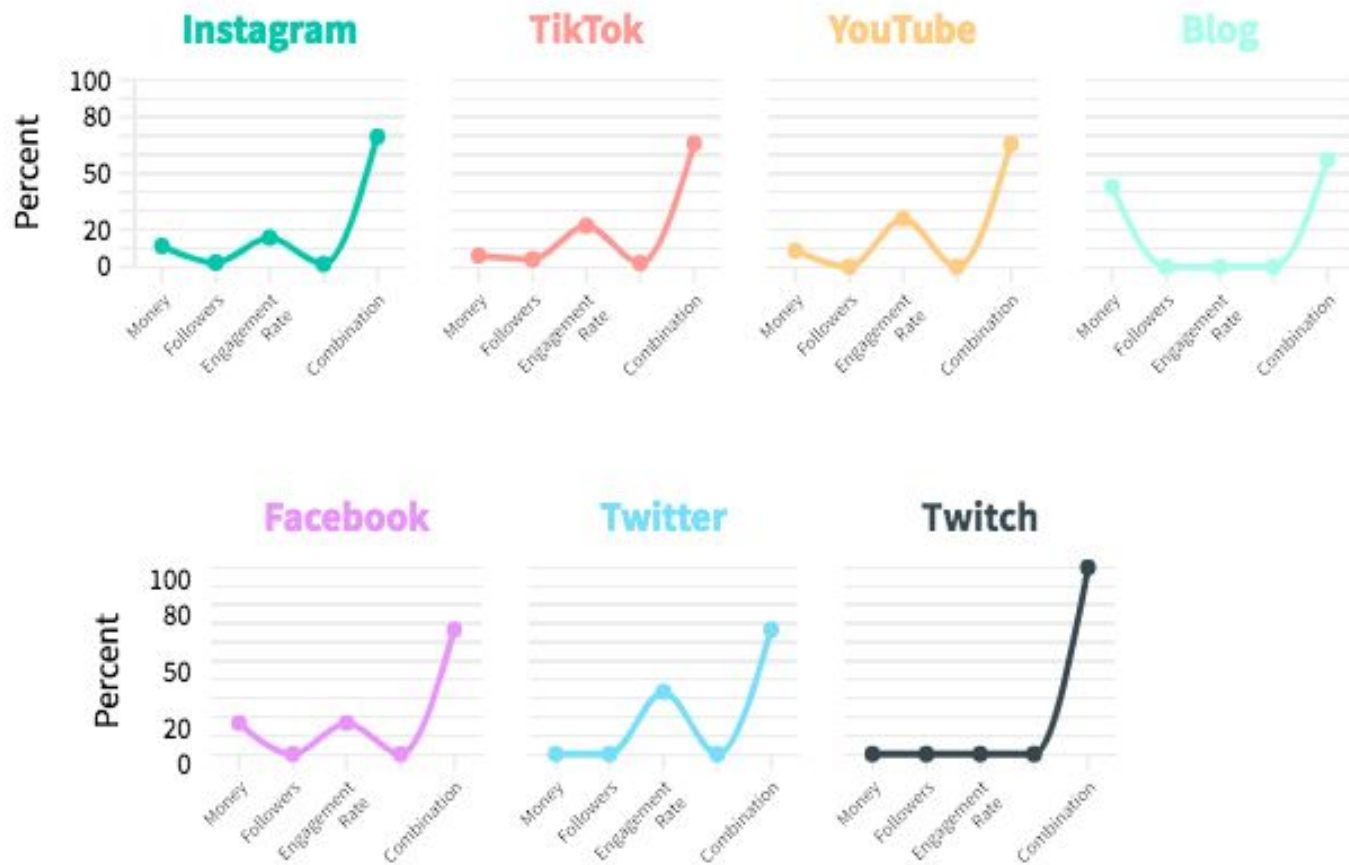
## Income by Years in the Industry

■ Less Than \$20K 
 ■ \$20k-\$50k 
 ■ \$50k-\$100k 
 ■ \$100k-\$500k 
 ■ \$500k-\$1M 
 ■ Over \$1M



# Measuring Success

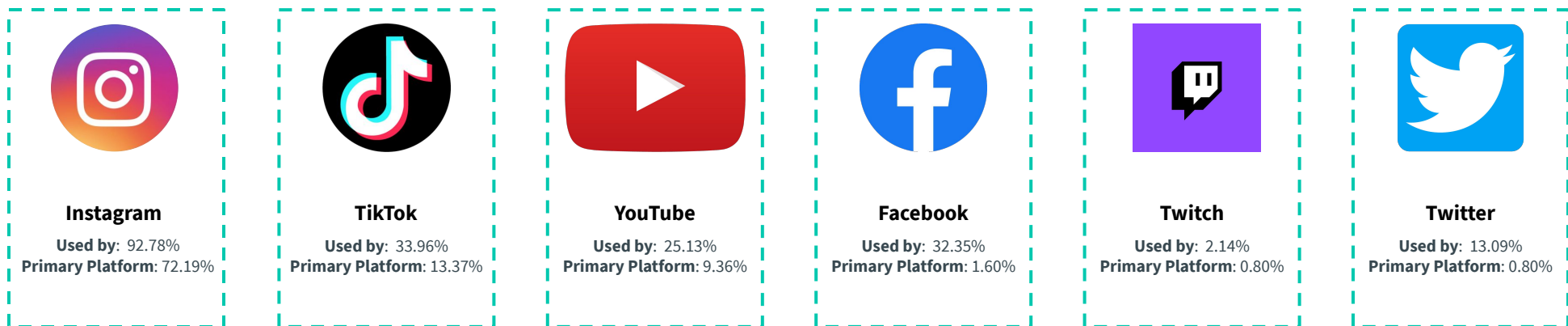
How The Different Platforms Measure Success



How Do You Measure Success?	% of Total
Money	10.70%
Followers	2.14%
Engagement Rate	17.11%
Positive Impact	1.34%
Combination	68.72%

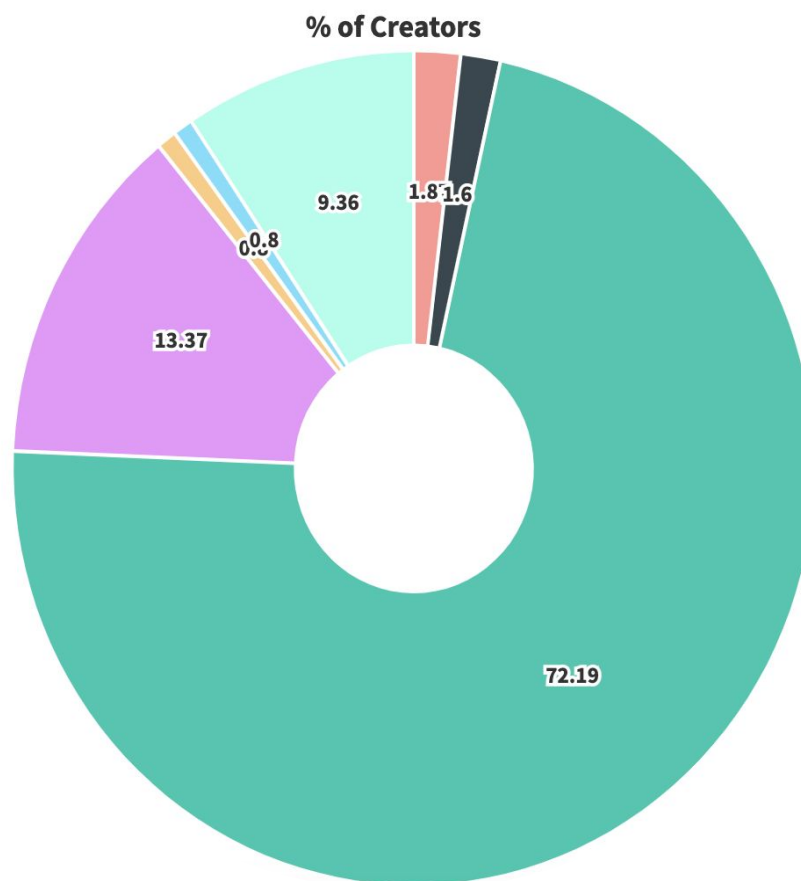
Though income is most important for living costs, Creators on **4 out of 7 platforms listed Engagement Rate as their top measure of success**, if they had to pick just one. Given the importance of reach for personal branding and sponsorships, it's no surprise that **17.11% of the Creators** key in on engagement.

# Platforms for Monetization



## Creators' Primary Platform

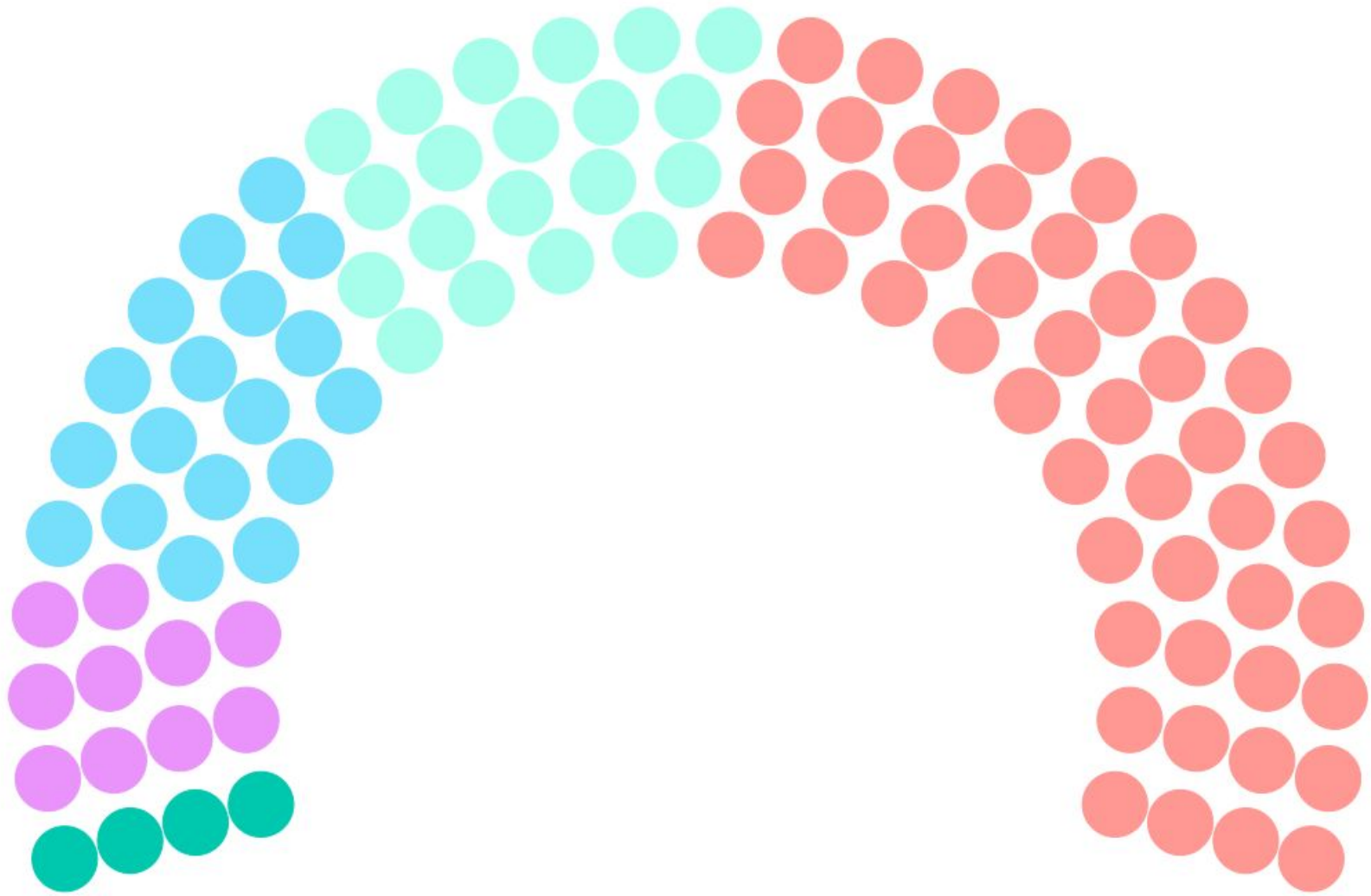
Platform ■ Instagram ■ TikTok ■ YouTube ■ Blog ■ Facebook ■ Twitch ■ Twitter



Though it is not uncommon for Creators to have accounts on multiple digital platforms, **Instagram is by and large the most popular social media platform.** Instagram took the throne as the number one platform for content monetization. **72% of Creators prefer Instagram** as their primary content channel, a huge lead compared to the second and third place platforms: **13% for TikTok and 9% for YouTube.**



# Creator Follower Tiers

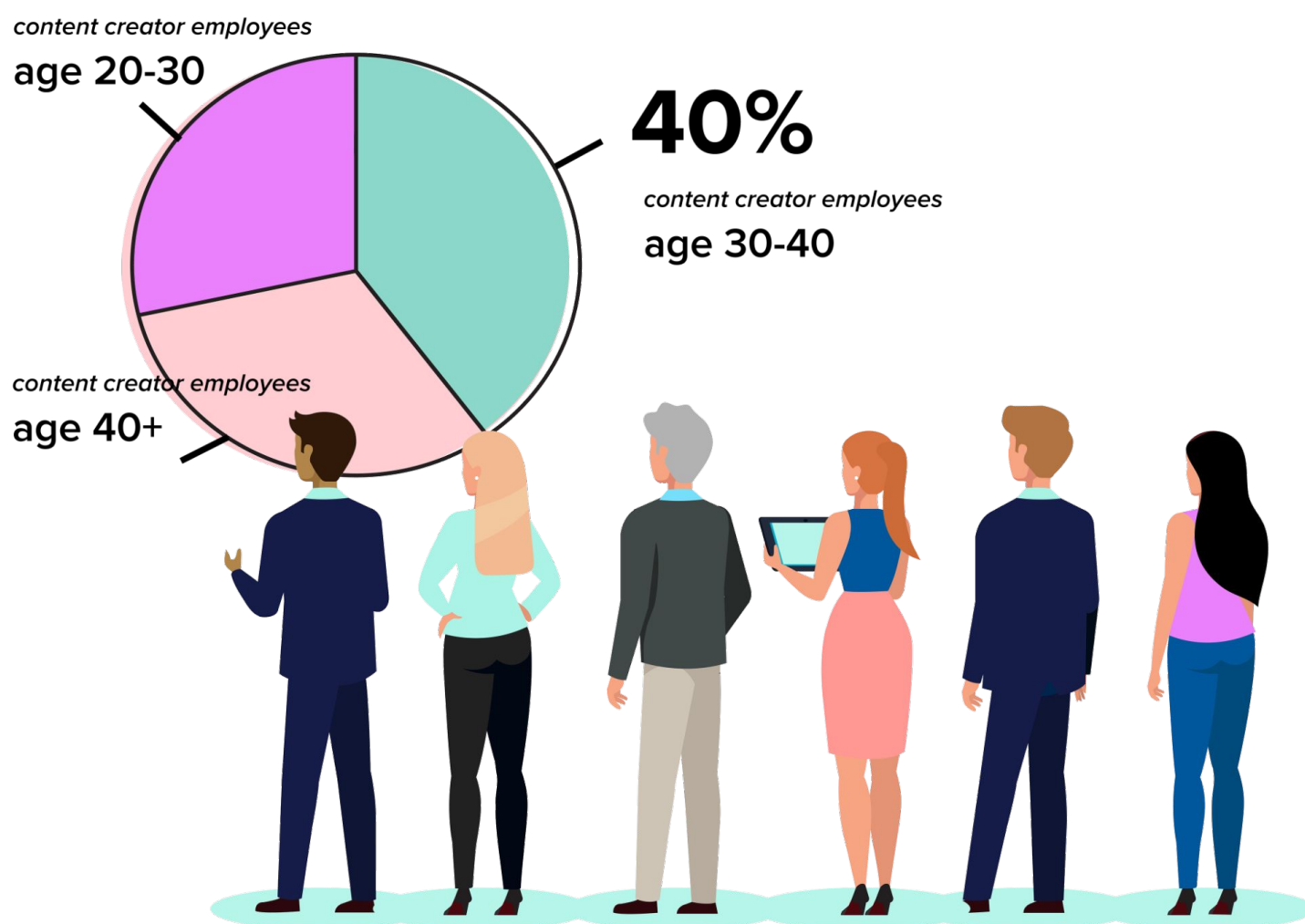


Follower Tier	Creators
● Supernova (10M+)	4%
● Macro (1M+)	10%
● Mid Tier (500K+)	18%
● Micro (250K+)	20%
● Nano (100K+)	48%

Bigger might seem better, but only **4%** of Creators surveyed rank in the topmost Supernova tier with **over 10M followers**. Nearly half of all Creators are categorized as nano-Creators, with followings starting at 100k. **Larger followings usually sacrifice engagement, one of the most important indicators of success.** With smaller followings, nano and micro Creators can lead more successful campaigns.



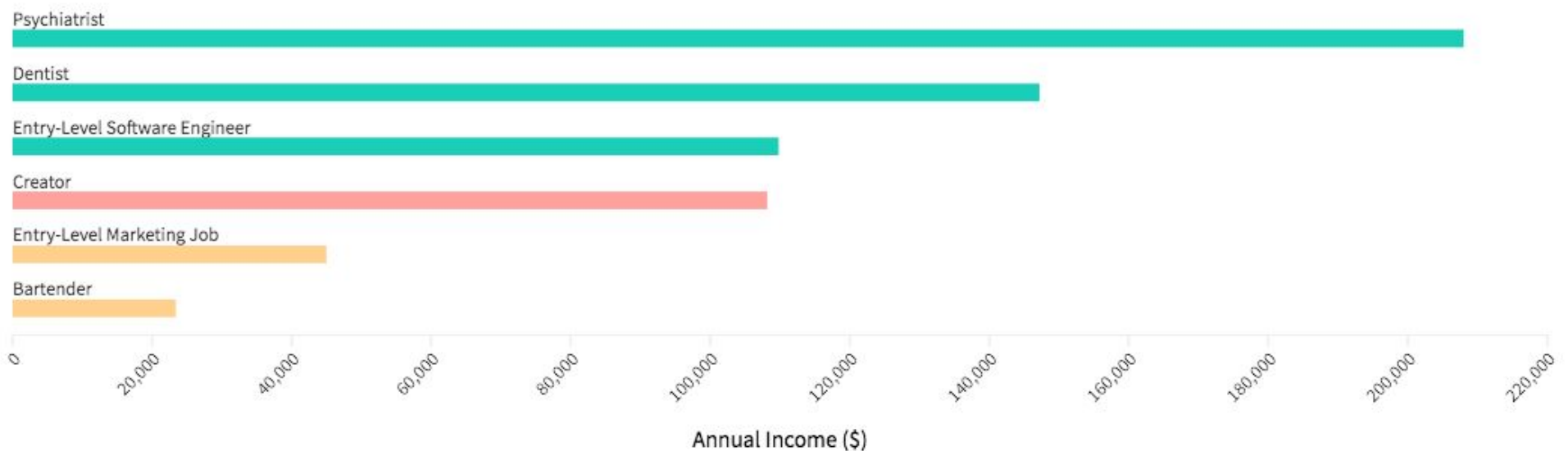
# Content Creator Employees Age Breakdown



Brands are hiring in-house content creators today and they are an integrated part of social media and marketing teams. But, these aren't your typical content creators that you would think of for non-company-owned social media channels. The age breakdown of content creator employees is much older with an **average age of 30-40 years old** – definitely not Gen Z. Within the 30-40 year old age bracket, this group accounts for **40% of the employee content creators**. Should more brands be skewing younger?

# How Creators' Annual Income Compare to Salaries in the U.S.

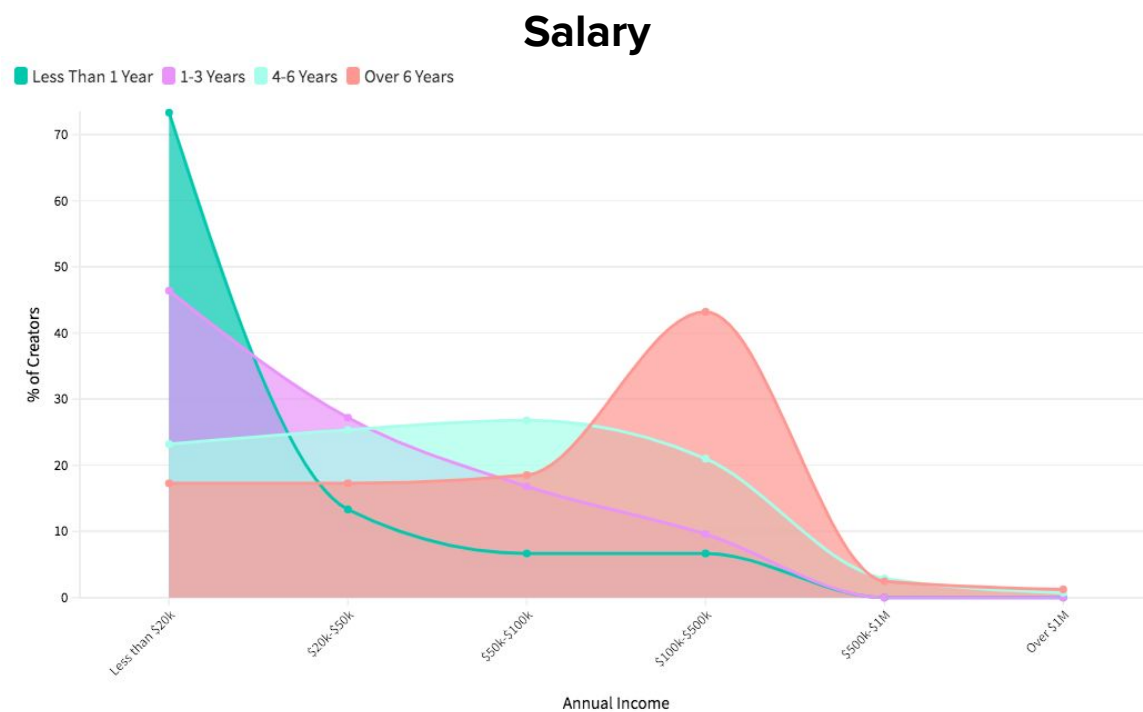
Average Creator Income Compared to Career Salaries



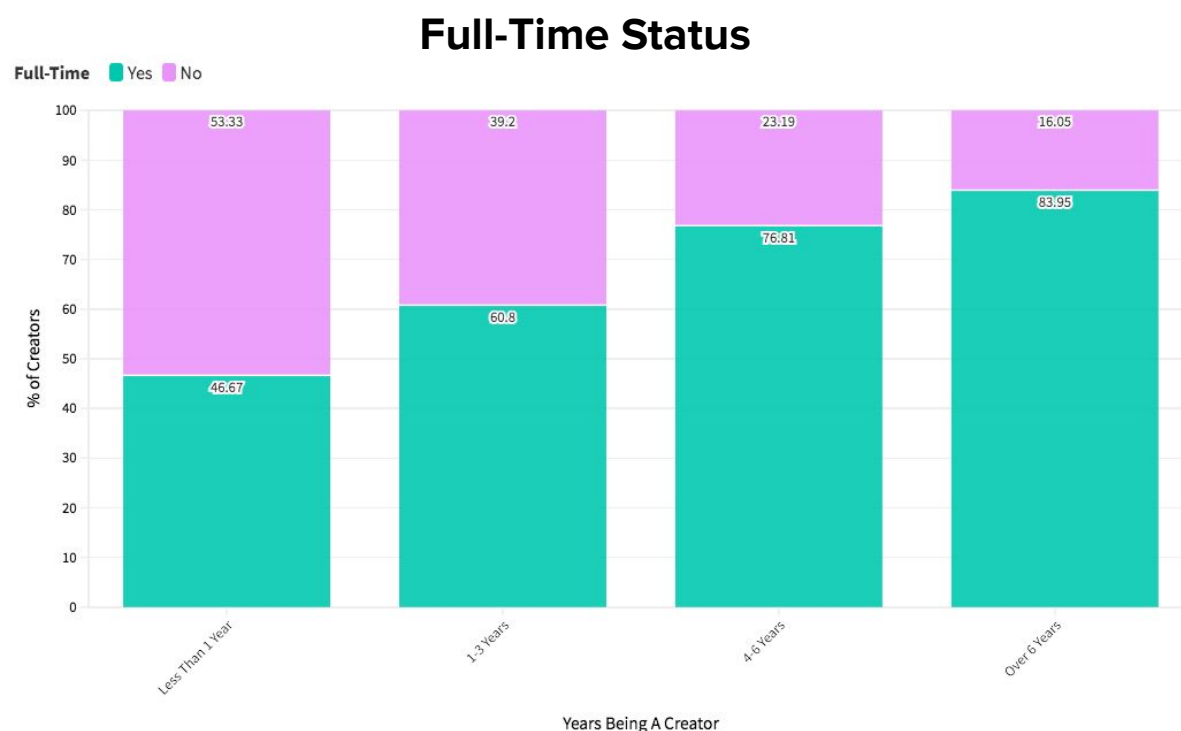
Career	Avg. Annual Income
Psychiatrist	\$208,000.00
Dentist	\$147,200.00
Entry-Level Software Engineer	\$109,800.00
Creator	\$108,182.00
Entry-Level Marketing Job	\$45,000.00
Bartender	\$23,400.00

Though being a Creator is not often recognized as a legitimate job, **70% of the Creators surveyed commit to social media work full time.** That means it is their primary source of income AND where they spend the most of their time in order to earn a living. Of the Creators that considered themselves full time, **78% make more than the average bartender.** The average annual income of a Creator is on par with that of an entry-level software engineer.

# Time Spent Being a Creator in Relation to Salary

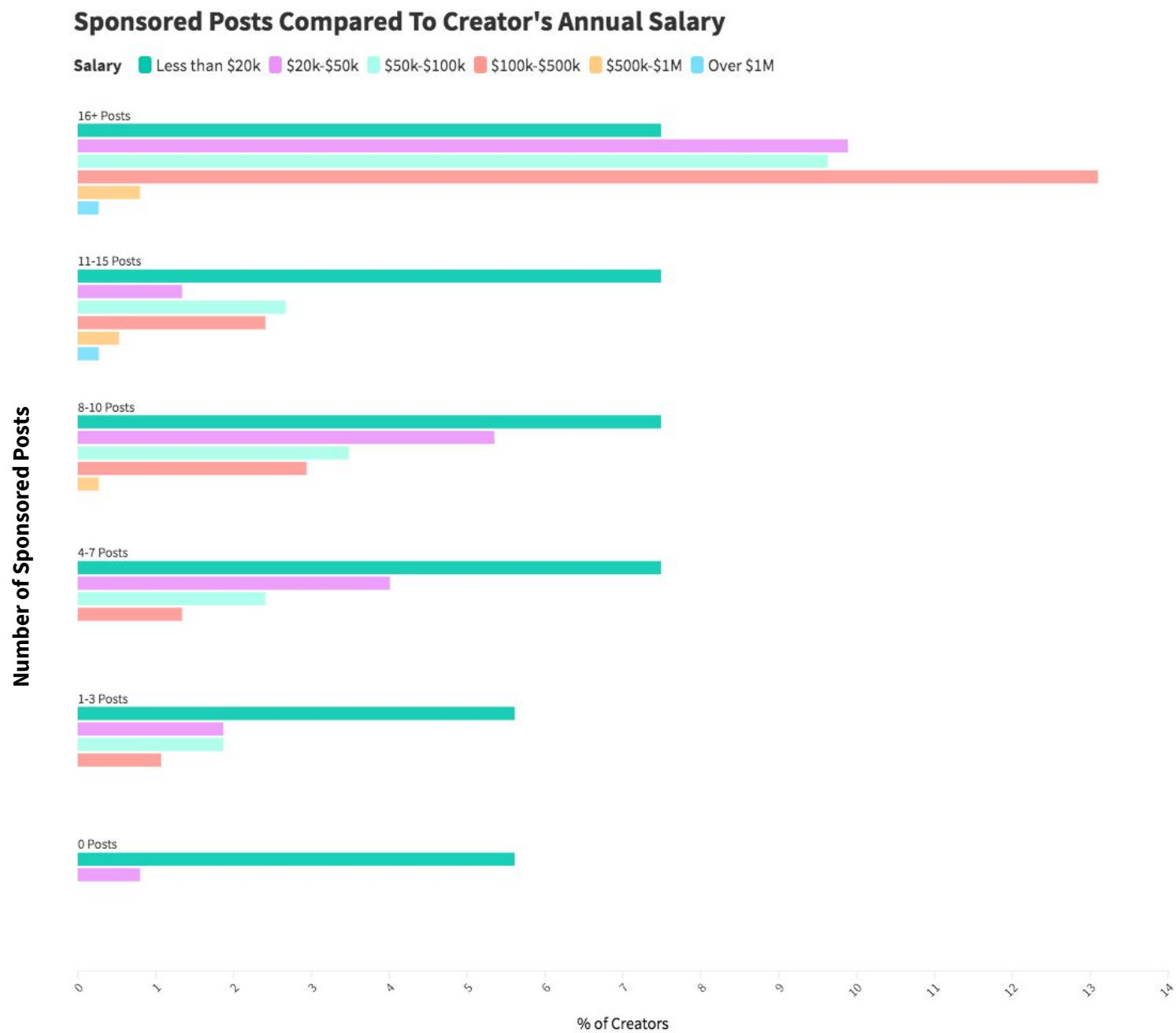


The ability to support yourself off of social media content creation becomes easier with time and dedication. **51% of Creators working for 4+ years make a livable wage over \$50k each year.** More than a quarter can support themselves after three years, and only 17% make under \$20k after 6 years.



The longer Creators work in the industry, the easier it is to take that passion and turn it into full time employment. **Even after only two or three years, the majority of people choose to create full time.** By the 6 year mark, **almost 84% of Creators work full time as Creators.**

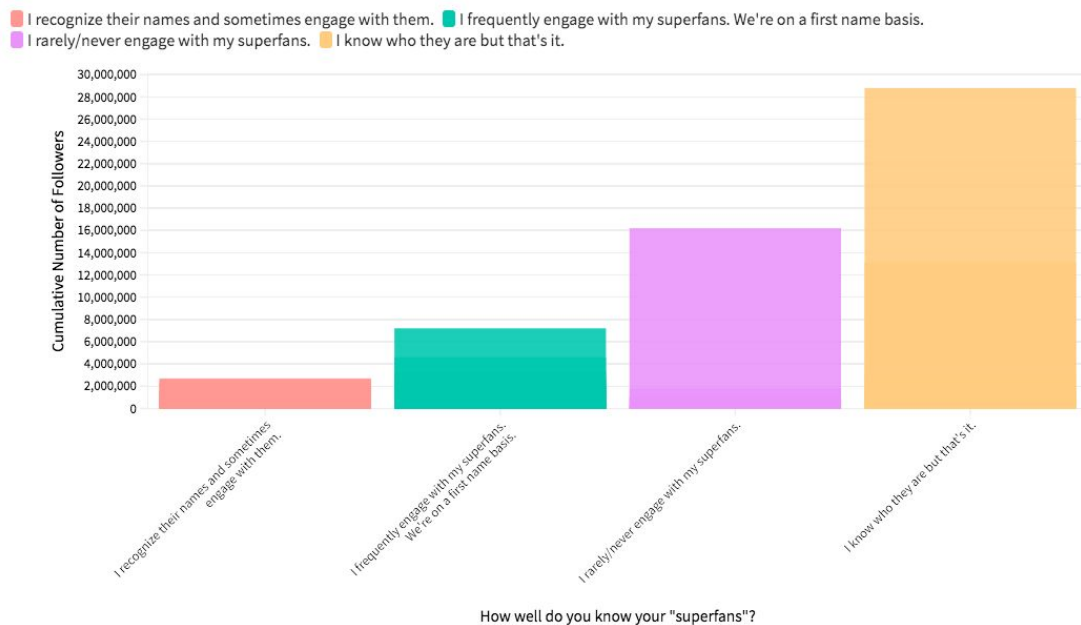
# Sponsored Posts vs Creator Income



Sponsorships bring in the bulk of Creator income, with **94% of Creators having made at least one sponsored post this year**. Those that reported zero sponsored posts were either Creators not yet monetizing their platforms or rely on forms of monetization other than sponsored posts. Regardless of income bracket, **42% of Creators reported uploading 16 or more sponsored posts** – more than one every month.

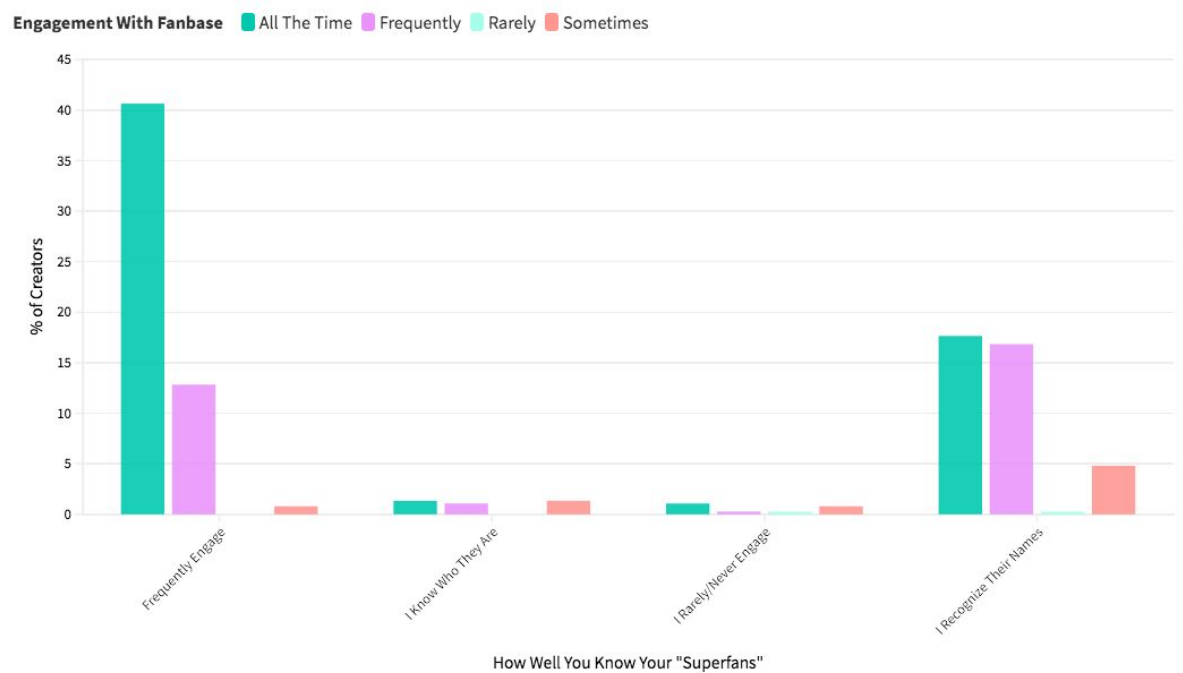
# Engagement With Fans

## Cumulative Number of Followers Compared to How Well Influencers Know Their Superfans



Creators with a reach in the millions are probably familiar with the term “superfan”, but the amount of followers affects how well Creators actually know them. **Though 54% said they frequently interact with superfans, Creators above 8M followers answered rarely to never.**

Superfans or not, Creators are almost certain to interact with their followers regularly. In fact, **91.7% of Creators in this survey engage with fans multiple times a day.** This is the type of engagement that builds close knit, trusting communities that make Creators so invaluable to campaigns.



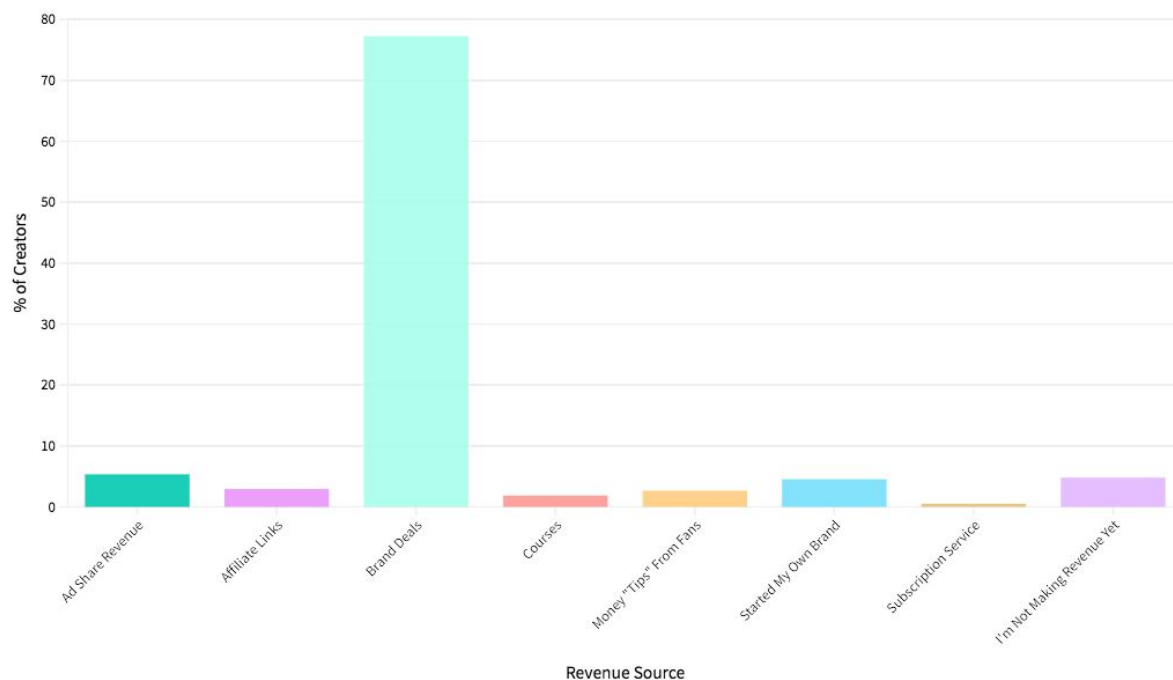
### How Often Do You Engage With Your Fanbase?

### % Of Creators

All the time. I'm constantly responding to messages and comments.	60.70%
Frequently. I reply to comments and DMs for a certain amount of time each day.	31.02%
Sometimes.	7.75%
Rarely.	0.53%

# Revenue Sources

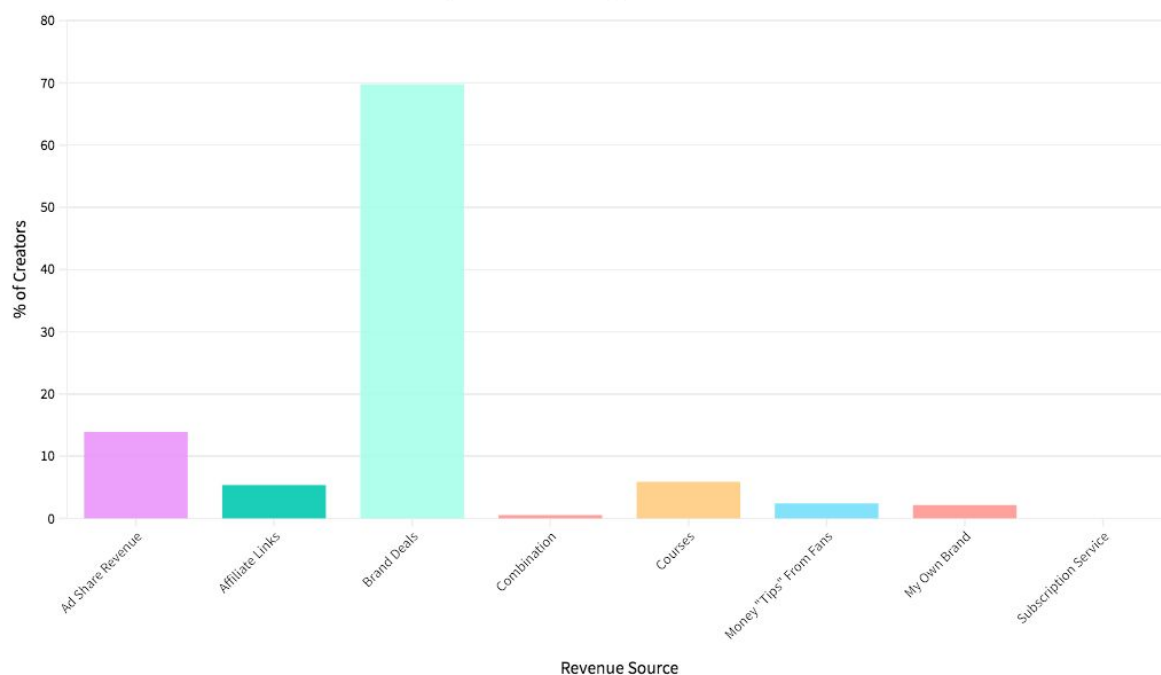
Actual Highest-Earning Revenue Source



The power of sponsorships should not be underestimated. 77% of Creators depend on brand deals, that's **3x as many as every other revenue source combined.**

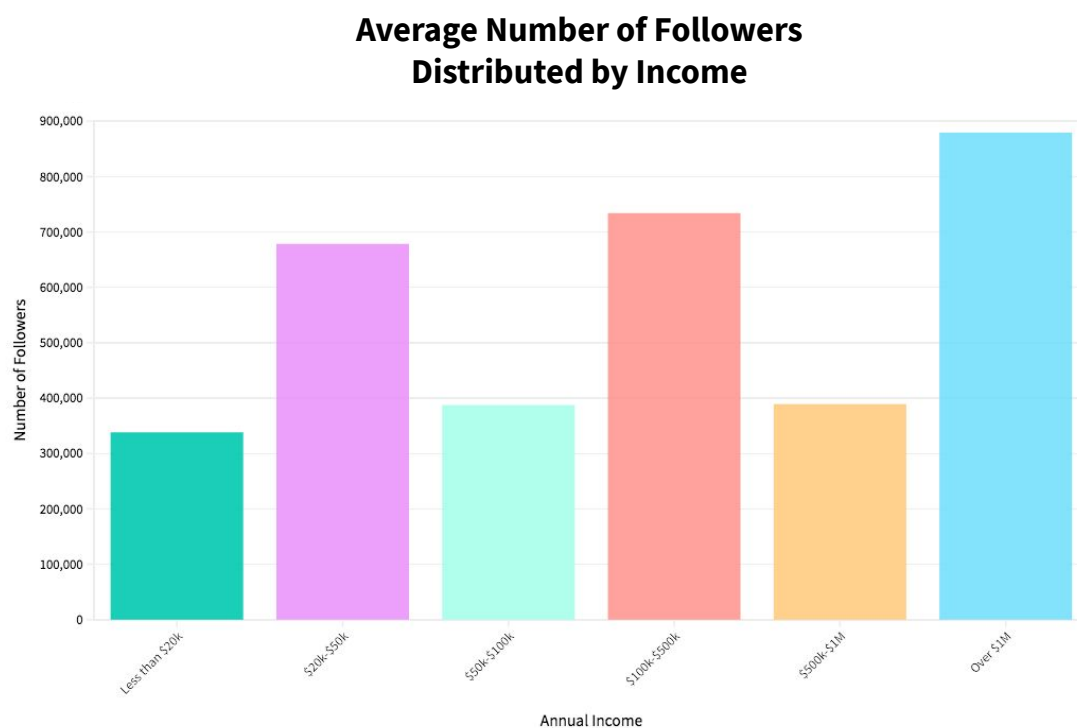
Luckily, the dream is not much different from the reality. **70% of Creators agree that, in a perfect world, Brand Deals would still be their highest source of revenue.** However, there was an 8.5% increase in responses for Ad Share Revenue, indicating that some Creators would like to rely on a less active form of revenue.

Ideal Highest-Earning Revenue Source

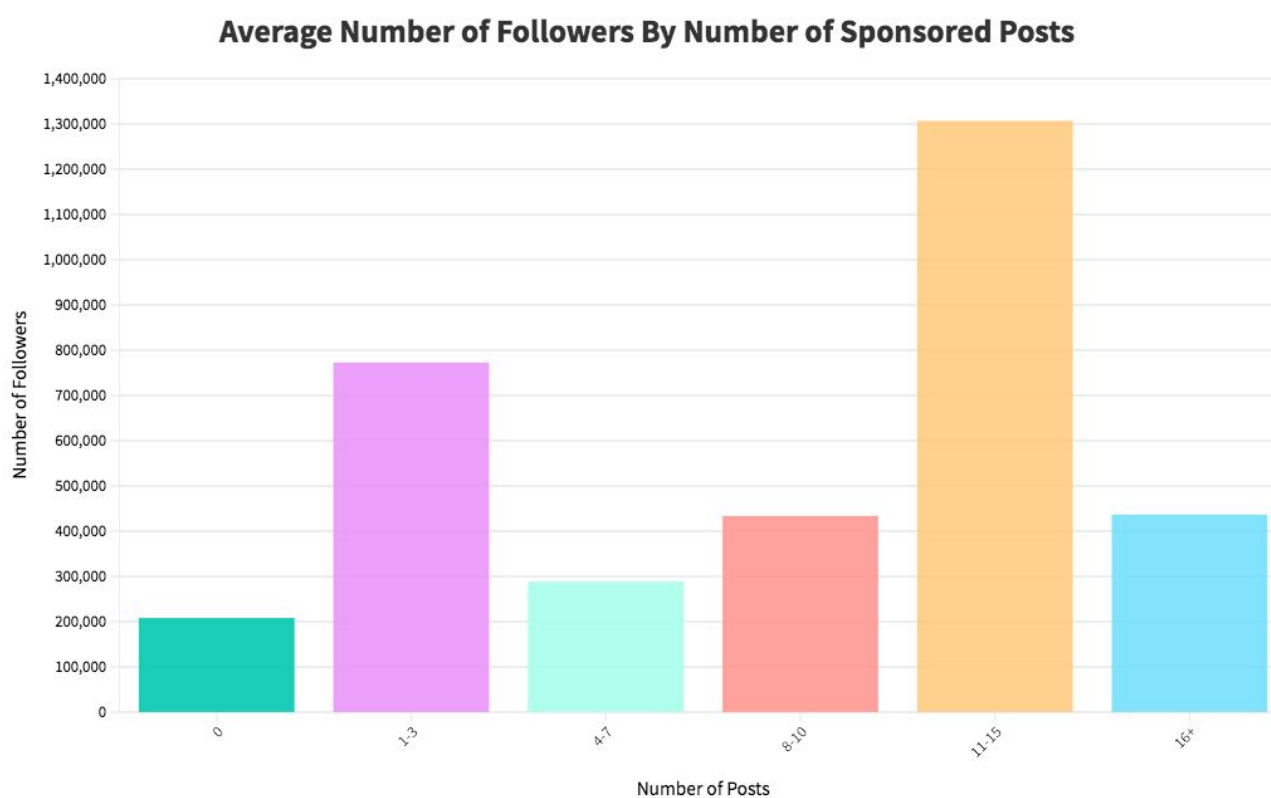




# Sponsored Posts & Income



Dividing Creators by their annual income, you might be surprised to see **there isn't a definite correlation between follower count and income**. Between the \$50-100k and \$500k-1M income level brackets, there is half a million dollars but a difference of only 1,800 more followers.

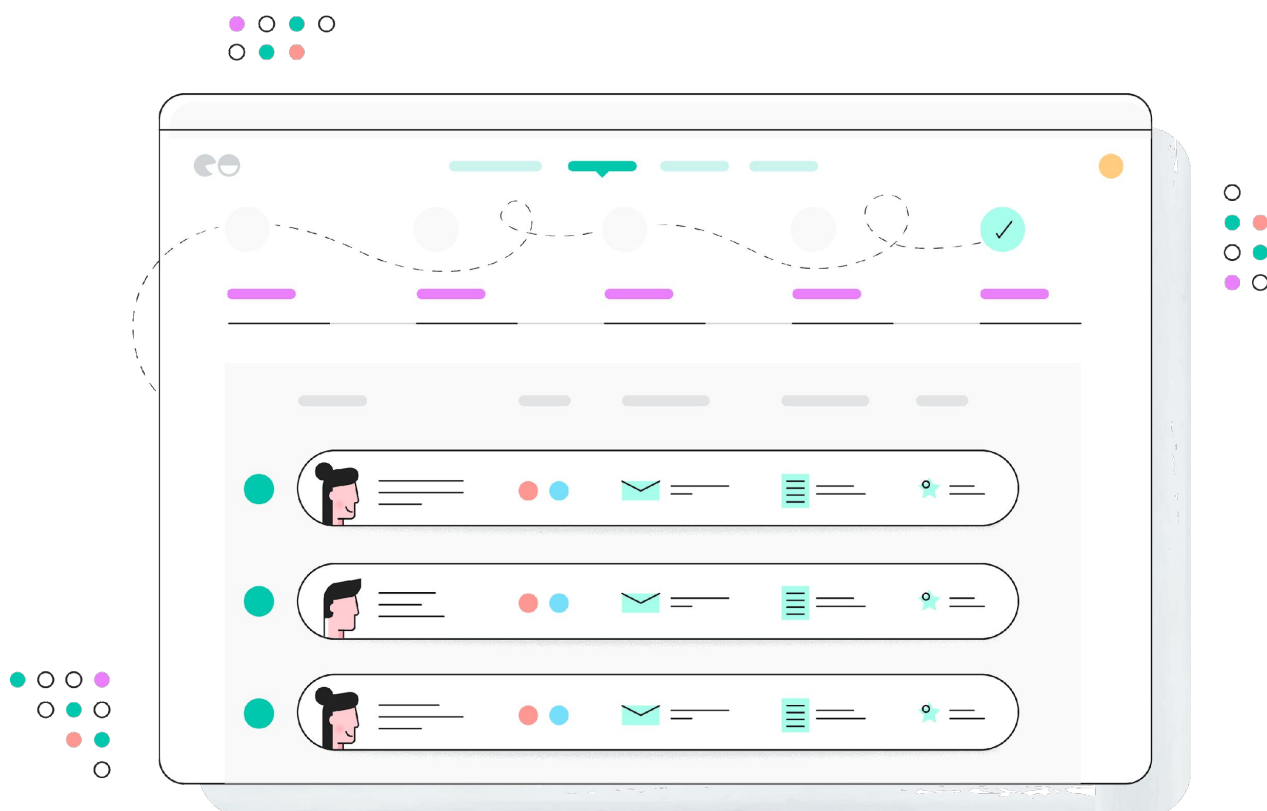


**Although 42% of Creators create over 16 sponsored posts a year, those with 3x as many followers opt to post less, creating around 11-15 sponsored posts annually.** But it's also true that the highest earners have lower comparative followings. In the end, all this data supports the value of the Creator and their connection to an audience.

# Get in Touch!

**Ready to launch your most lucrative marketing campaign ever? Are you prepared to go viral with your biggest powerhouse Creators on social media?** NeoReach has the software and data capabilities for your brand to tap into the most strategic influencer initiatives. Discover how the NeoReach Social Intelligence tool can help your brand reap the benefits of influencer marketing.

To learn more, email us at [steph@neoreach.com](mailto:steph@neoreach.com) to schedule time with our influencer specialists for out-of-the-box influencer campaigns, custom reports, and more!



# Our Creator Specialists

Meet the people behind the scenes



**Steph Payas**  
**VP of Operations**



**Gabrielle Sinacola**  
**Head of Content & Social**



Thank You!