

A Big Agency

Transform Influence Strategies **by Partnering
with Creators & Influencers as Consultants**

Research & Advocacy by **A Big Agency**

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About **A Big Agency**

A Quick Introduction

A Big Agency is a Creator Economy think tank, consultancy, and agency that builds better businesses fueled by creators and influencers. We do so by:

- Advocating for personalized, integrated strategies targeting creators & influencers as a high-value target audience.
- Expanding the role of creators & influencers in business as consultants.
- Elevating integrated creator & influencer marketing as a higher-priority business strategy.
- Enhancing marketing literacy among creators to help them grow their income.



Think Tank

- Research
- Creator Economy Advocacy
- Policy Development
- Education



Consultancy

- Measurement
- Operations
- Strategy
- Technology
- Innovation



Agency

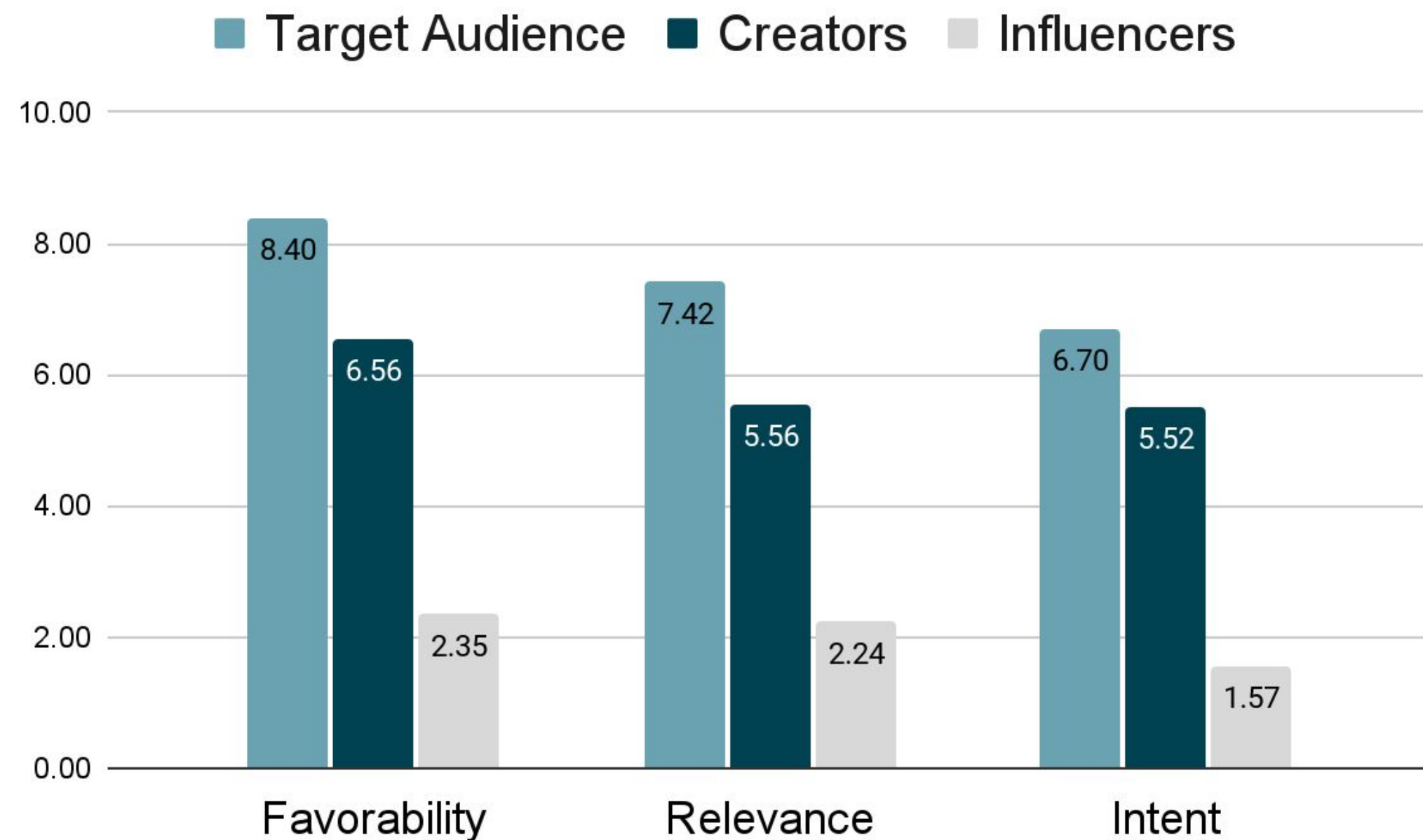
- Managed Campaigns
- Talent Management
- Specializing in:
 - Performance Creator Marketing
 - B2B Creator Marketing

Executive **Summary**

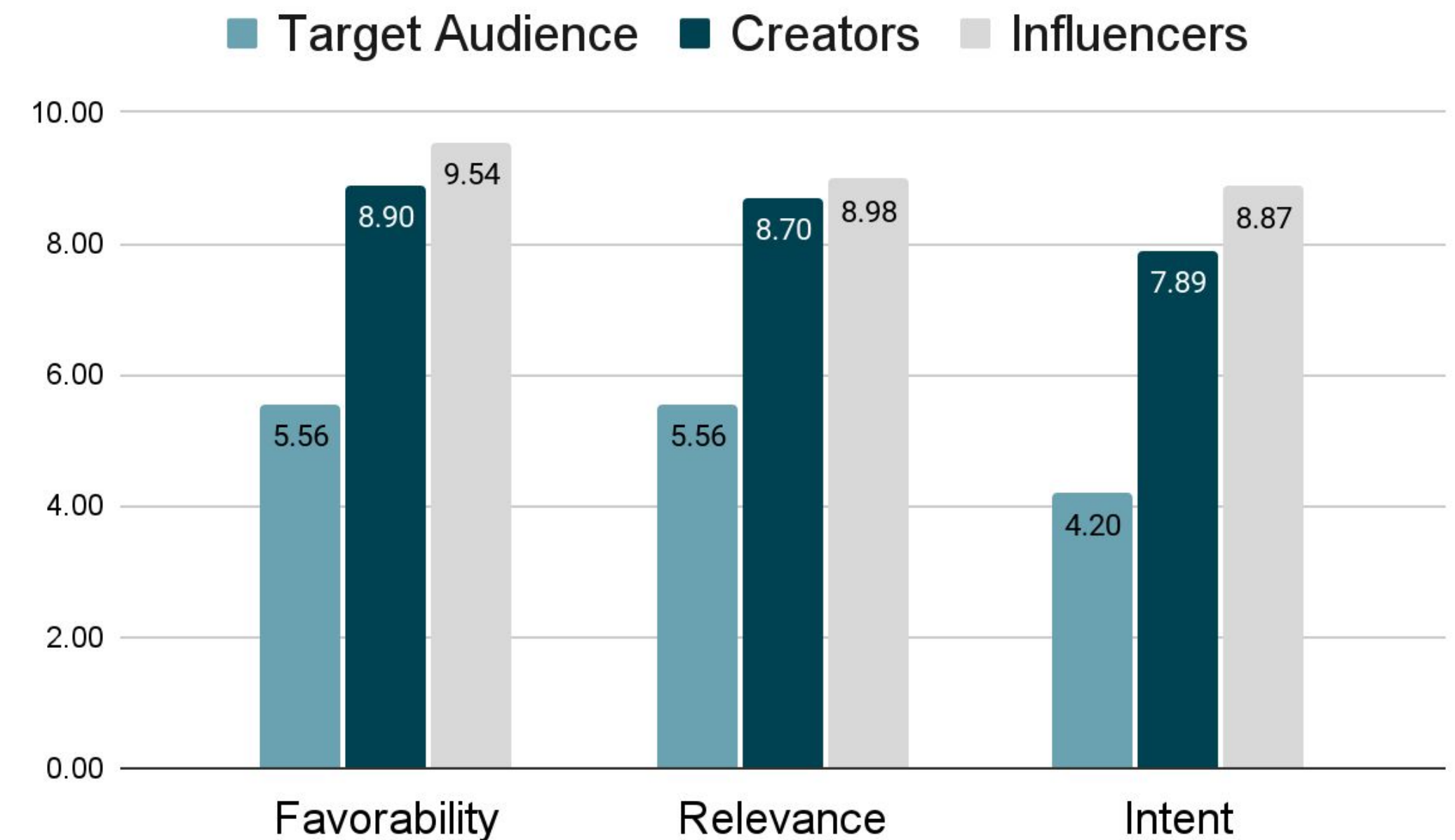
Set the Stage: Creators & Influencers are a High-Value Audience

Targeting Creators & Influencers: Based on our conversations with creator industry practitioners, businesses are recognizing that merely renting an influencer's time and followers is becoming outdated. Instead, there's a shift to holistically targeting creators and influencers as a strategic, high-value audience through integrated and innovative strategies.

Addressing Poor Creator & Influencer Brand Health: Imagine a business that assesses creator and influencer perceptions along with their current audiences only to discover poor brand health. What should the business do next to course-correct?



Excellent Creator & Influencer Brand Health: Consider a scenario where the opposite is true: creators and influencers adore the brand even more than the core target audiences do. What steps should the business take next to capitalize on this brand passion?



Creators & Influencers as **Multi-faceted Consultants**

- **Creators & Influencers by the Numbers:** According to a study by Adobe¹, 26% of the U.S. population are considered creators. Of those creators, 16% are influencers, making up 4% of the U.S. population, or approximately 14 million U.S. influencers.
- **Enter Creators & Influencers as Consultants:** As businesses target millions of creators and influencers as high-value audience, they need to co-develop strategies to help evolve and personalize products, services, marketing, support, and more.
- **The Bigger Impact:** When creators and influencers collaborate with businesses as strategic consultants to help target fellow creators & influencers, the strategies are likely to resonate with broader target audiences as well. Our research later reveals that 45.6% of the U.S. population is more likely to purchase from a company that employs influencers they admire as consultants.



Sources:

- 1: Adobe-'Future-of-Creativity'-Study_Creators-in-the-Creator-Economy
- 2: Forecast for April 2024, using the 2022 Adobe study data

The Research Goal & Executive Summary

Research Goal: We aimed to understand the US population's perception of influencers serving as consultants to assess the opportunity and risk of the emerging practice for businesses seeking to implement or expand it as a strategy.

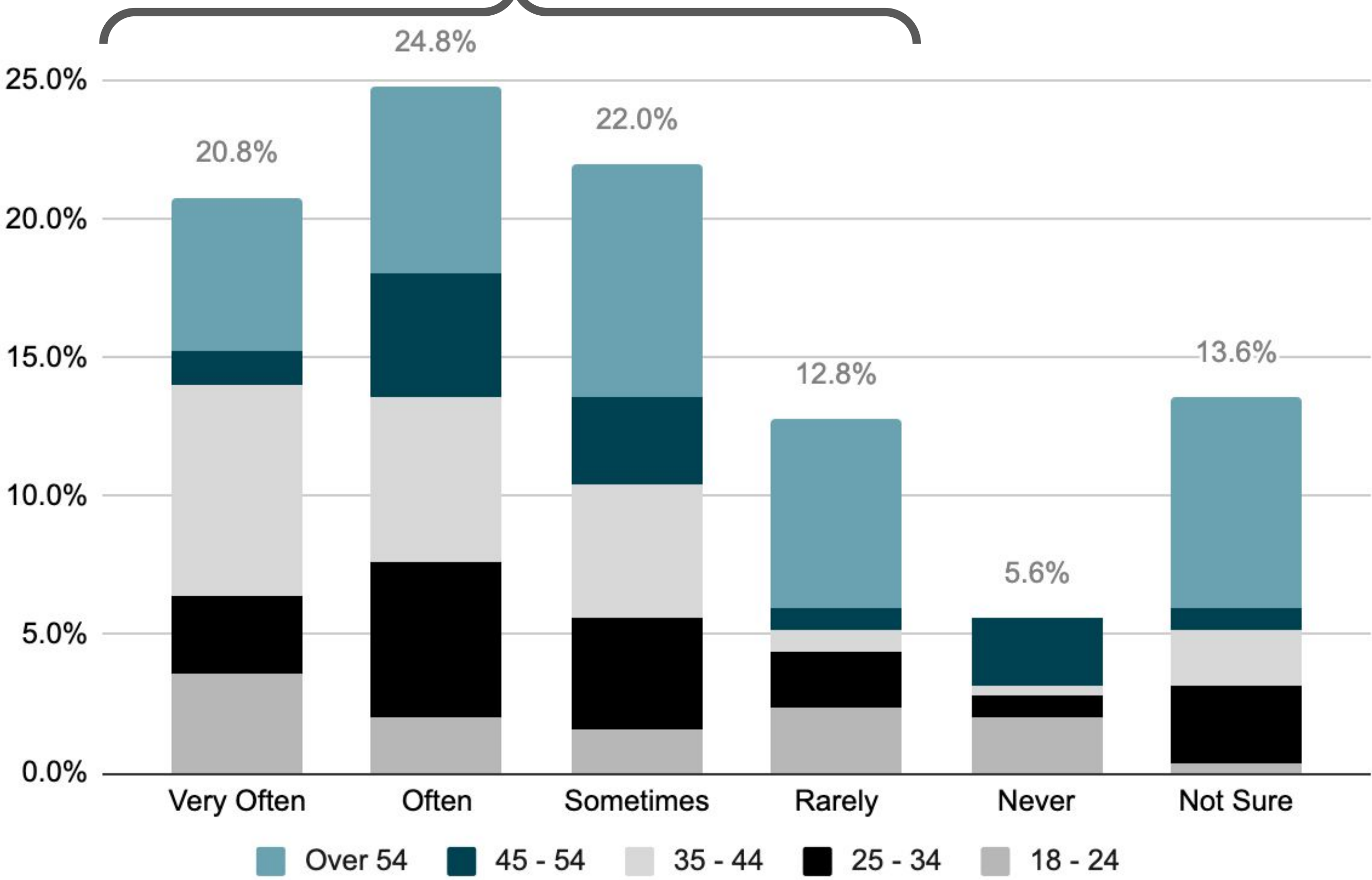
Executive Summary:

- The survey results were surprisingly consistent across different age groups regarding their views on influencers as consultants. Contrary to our expectations, there wasn't a significant difference in responses between younger and older demographics, even though we had anticipated that younger people would have a better understanding of the potential for influencers to serve as consultants.
- Interestingly, less than 6% of the U.S. population believes that businesses have not yet started to engage influencers as consultants. In contrast, a substantial 80% perceive it as a common practice already in place.
- Furthermore, consumers recognize that businesses are selective when incorporating influencers as consultants. They appreciate that not all influencers are suitable for every project, with about 58% agreeing that an influencer's specific expertise is crucial.
- Regarding the expansion of influencers' roles as consultants, opinions vary; over 40% of respondents feel that the appropriateness of such engagements depends on the industry and specific business context. About 72% of consumers believe that if a business has not yet engaged influencers as consultants, it is likely because they think influencers are either uninterested or lack the necessary expertise.
- Finally, over 45% of participants indicated that they would be more inclined to purchase from a business that employs influencers they admire as consultants. This shows a significant level of consumer support for businesses that effectively leverage the credibility and appeal of influencers.

Research **Details**

Less than 6% of consumers believe businesses have yet to engage influencers as consultants, with the majority thinking it's a regular practice

80% of US consumers believe businesses are currently engaging influencers as consultants.

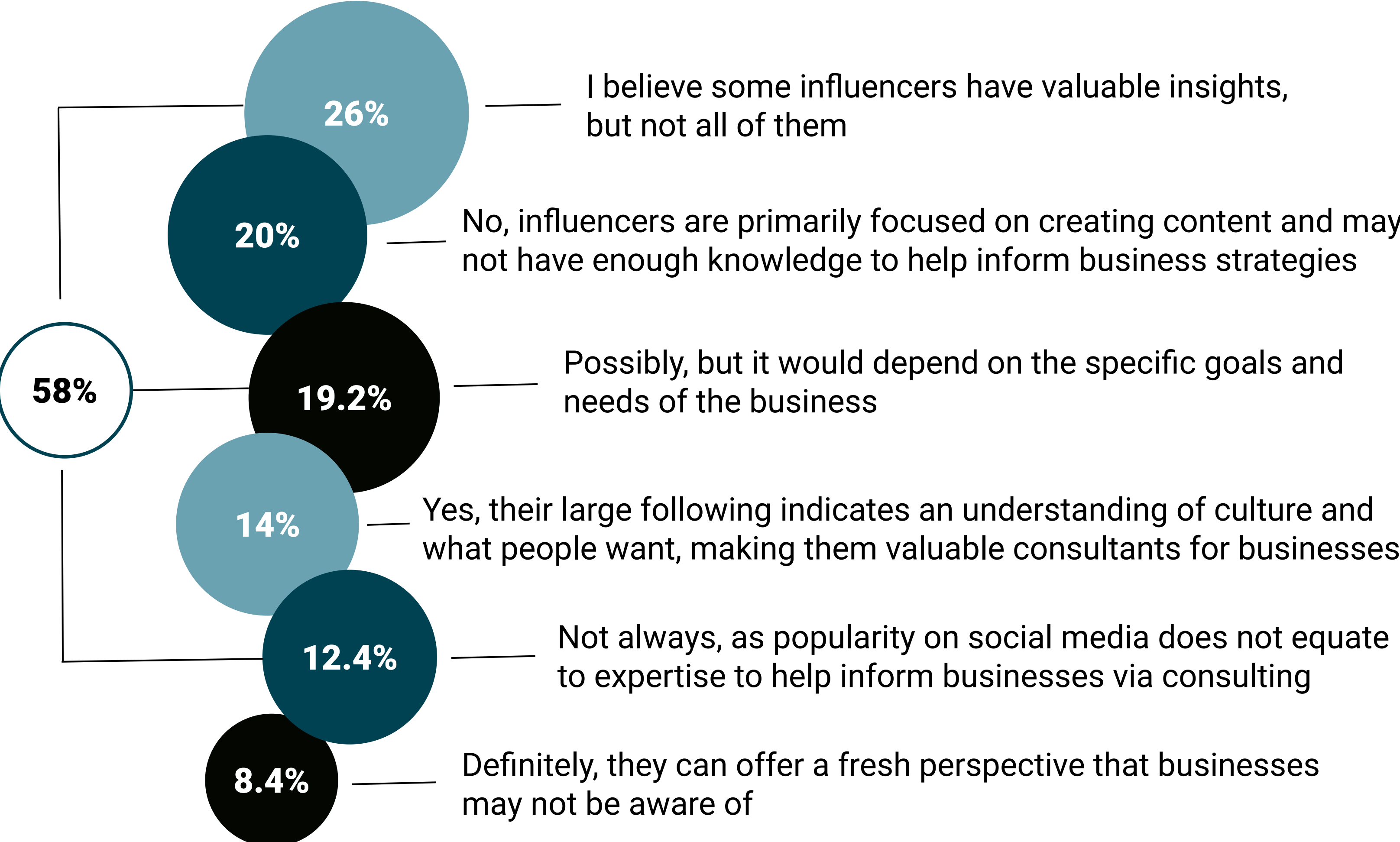


- **80%** believe businesses engage influencers as consultants for strategies such as product development, TV commercial production, or as a source of customer research - to name a few.
- **45.6%** believe businesses engage influencers as strategic consultants *often*, with over 20% believing they do so *very often*.
- **Only 5.6%** believe influencers are never engaged to serve in a consulting capacity.
- We see a relatively even spread across age groups for the different answers, showing older and younger consumers tend to agree.

Question 1: In your opinion, how often do well-known social media influencers work with businesses for things other than posting to social media? For example, how often do they work with companies for things like product development, TV commercial development, or as a source of customer research (to name a few)?

Sample: n=250 US Population

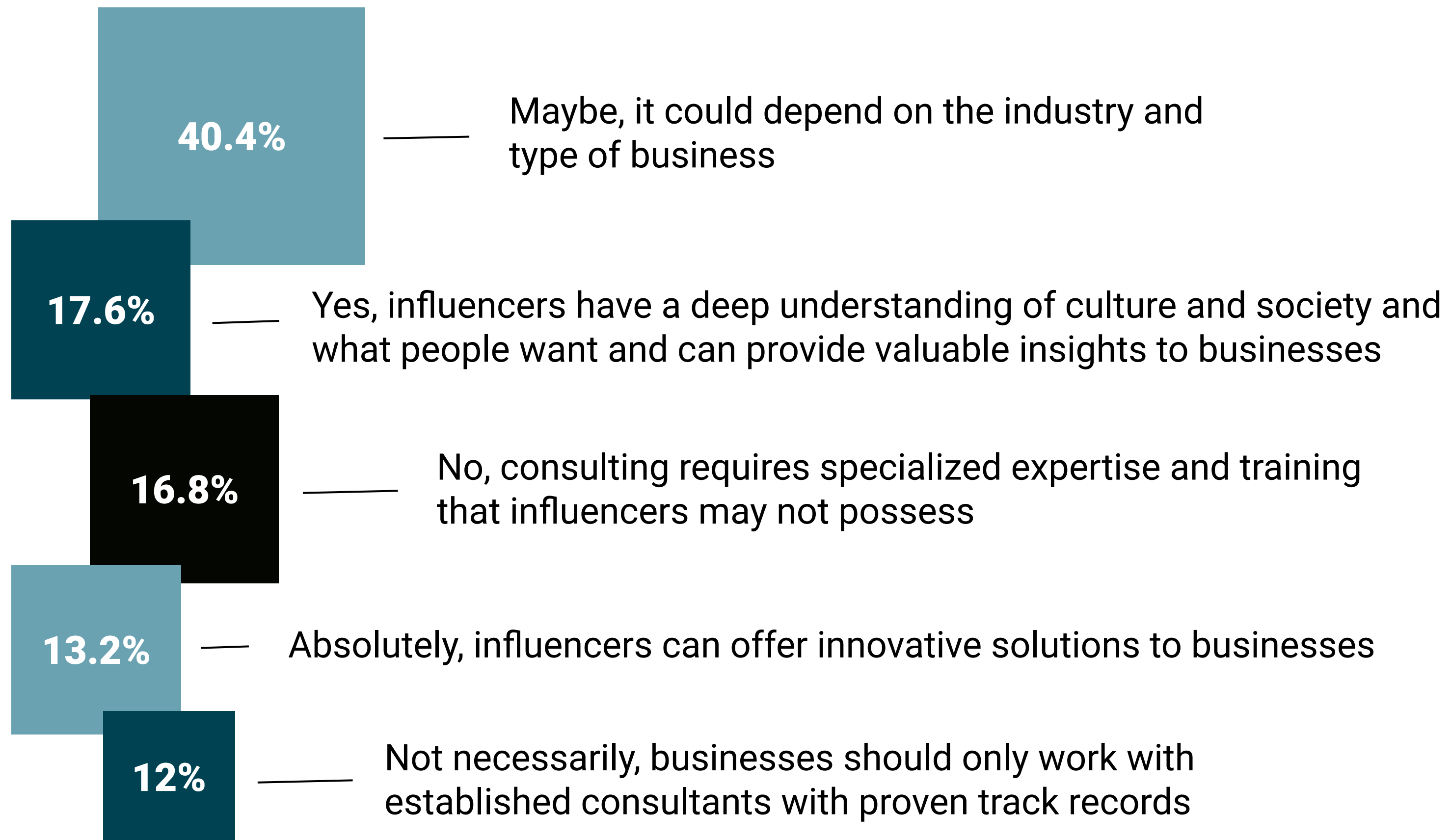
Consumers acknowledge that expertise plays an important role as businesses should not work with ***just any*** influencer, with roughly **58% agreeing that not all influencers are qualified** for every consulting project



- Consumers seem to recognize the importance of matching an influencer’s niche expertise with a business’s specific needs for consulting to be effective.
- **22.4%** believe that businesses will find value by working with influencers without hesitation.
- The majority, **58%**, cite caveats related to a creator’s expertise and the business’ needs and goals
- Interestingly, **only 20%** believe influencers don’t have a any role to play beyond content creation. They believe influencers should stick to content creation, indicating a potential for influencers to expand their roles in business strategy.

Question 2: Do you believe that well-known social media influencers have valuable insights that could benefit businesses?
Sample: n=250 US Population

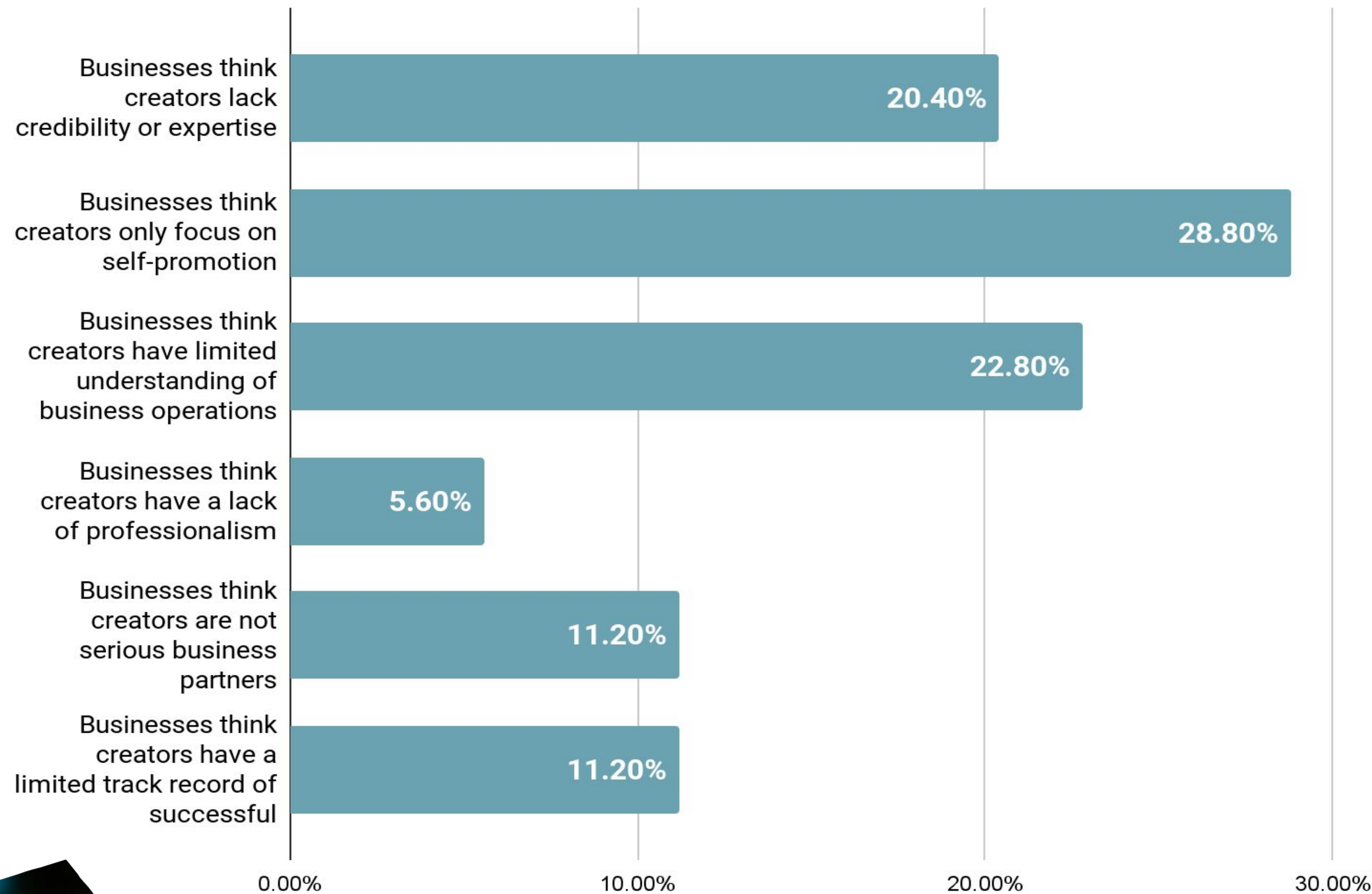
Consumers are equally measured about how more open-minded businesses should be to engaging influencers for consulting, with **over 40% saying it depends on the industry and the type of business**



- The divide in consumer opinion suggests that businesses might benefit from a hybrid approach, leveraging both influencer creativity *and* consultant expertise.
- **28.8%** don't think influencers have a role to play due to not having the right skill sets.
- Nearly 1 in 5 consumers (**17.6%**) acknowledge influencers' understanding of societal trends, suggesting their insights might be underutilized in business strategy.
- **13.2%** of consumers are optimistic about influencers bringing fresh perspectives, indicating a potential untapped resource for innovation in business.

Question 3: Do you think businesses should be more open to working with well-known social media influencers in a consulting capacity?
Sample: n=250 US Population

72% of consumers believe that businesses that do not engage influencers as consultants may avoid doing so because they perceive influencers as either uninterested or lacking the necessary expertise



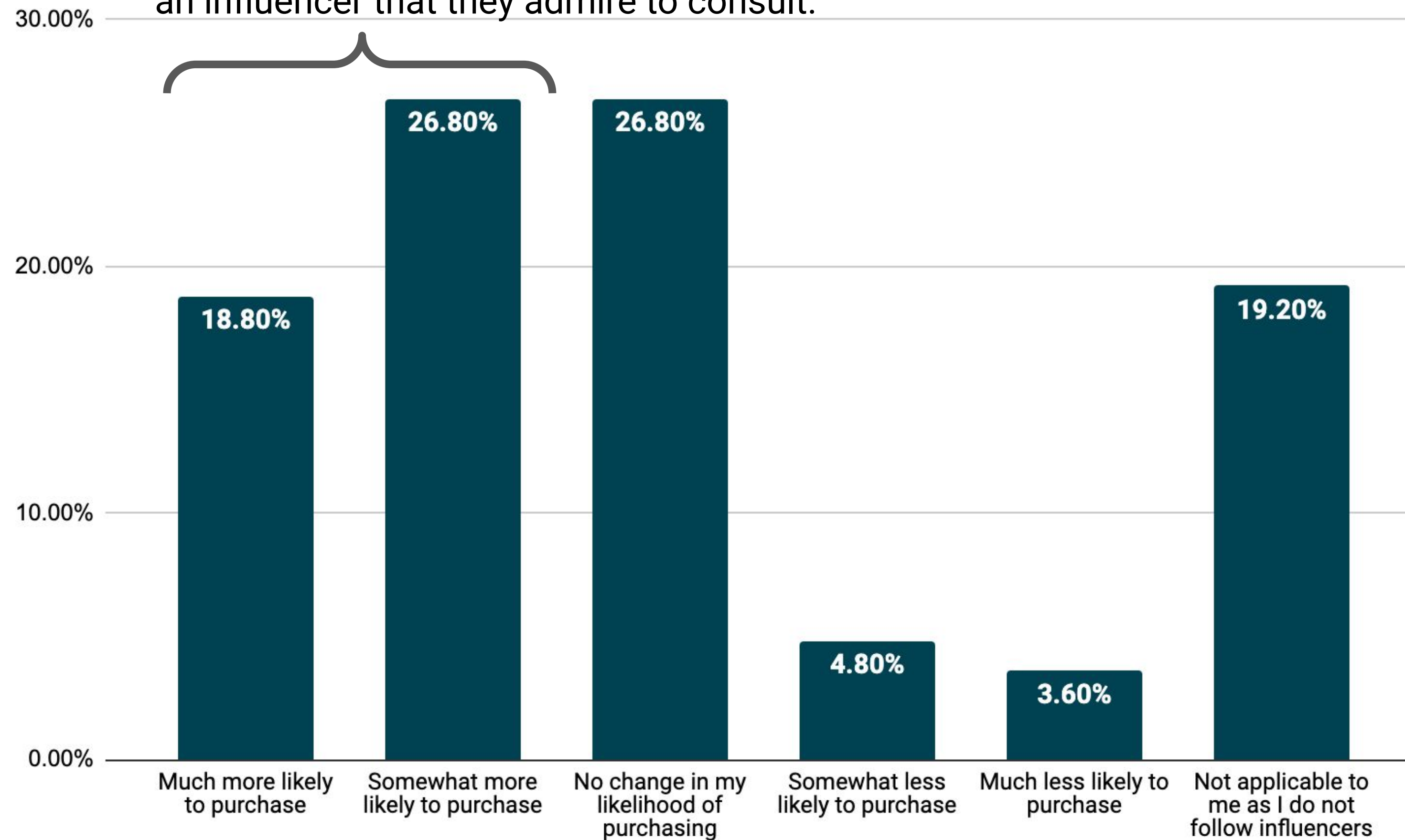
- **28.8%** believe that the businesses that have yet to engage influencers as consultants may be due to the perception that influencers are only focused on self-promotion. This assumption that influencers are primarily self-promotional is a prevalent consumer perspective, suggesting a potential reputation challenge for influencers in professional settings.
- **11.2%** of consumers speculate that a limited track record in consulting may make businesses cautious about engaging with influencers.
- These insights reflect an opportunity for influencers to demonstrate their business acumen and for companies to re-evaluate the potential of influencer collaborations.

Question 4: What do you think is the main reason why well-known social media influencers are not engaged to consult businesses more often? For example, with product development, TV commercial development, or as a source of customer research?

Sample: n=250 US Population

Yet over 45% say they would be more likely to buy from a business that's engaging influencers they admire as consultants

45.6% of US consumers are more likely to purchase from a company that taps an influencer that they admire to consult.



- **Over two-thirds** of consumers indicate a greater likelihood to purchase from businesses advised by influencers they admire, with **26.8%** being somewhat more likely and **18.8%** much more likely to buy.
- This finding suggests that influencer engagement can directly influence consumer purchasing decisions, possibly due to the trust and relatability factors associated with influencer involvement and, as a result, much more authentic endorsements.
- **Only 3.6%** of consumers are much less likely to purchase from a company consulting with an influencer, potentially pointing to a **minimal negative impact** of collaborations on consumer behavior.

Question 5: If a well-known creator that you follow and admire was consulting for a business in any capacity, would that influence your likelihood of purchasing from that business?

Sample: n=250 US Population

The Conclusion

The **Conclusion**

- There emerges a consistent theme of openness among all demographics to the idea of leveraging influencers in capacities that harness their unique insights, connections, and credibility.
- In essence, the survey data advocates for a reimagined approach to influencer-business collaborations, suggesting a shift towards more strategic, insight-driven partnerships.
- Success in this dynamic ecosystem requires businesses to not only recognize the distinct value influencers can bring to various aspects of business strategy but also to effectively communicate and demonstrate this value to a broad and diverse set of target audiences.
- Embracing this paradigm can enable businesses to navigate the complexities of the digital marketplace with greater agility, innovation, and connectivity, ultimately enhancing their competitive edge and resonating more profoundly with consumers across the board.

The Influence Spectrum

When Influencers & Creators Become Consultants, It Transforms Trust & Authenticity

- The data reveals a significant opportunity for businesses to innovate and differentiate themselves by engaging creators & influencers in strategic roles, thereby enhancing product development, refining marketing strategies, and building authentic, trust-based relationships with consumers.

**“I just got this sample
and I love it...”**

**“I’ve loved this
product for years...”**

**“I helped to design this
amazing product...”**

Transactional Influence

Transformational Influence

- Creator & influencer passion is lacking and knowledge is limited, comes across as talking points
- Fans & followers hear shallow advocacy

- Creator & influencer passion and knowledge has been cultivated so the messaging is convincing
- Fans & followers hear more authentic advocacy with in-depth knowledge and real storytelling

- Creator & influencer passion is deep and knowledge is expert-level
- Fans & followers hear transformational authenticity with expert passion and incredible, nuanced knowledge

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A Call-to-Action: Be an Advocate

1. **Assess Urgency** - Develop a sense of urgency around the need to engage creators & influencers as consultants to help modernize the relevancy, trust, and authenticity of marketing, products, services, insights, and more.
2. **Build a Guiding Creator Marketing Team Coalition** - Assemble an internal group with enough power to lead the change. Be sure to pick a single advocate to champion the change management.
3. **Form a Strategic Vision and Initiatives** - Create clear goals, intended outcomes, and a vision to help direct the change management. Work with a consultancy like **A Big Agency** to manage the process.
4. **Enlist a Cross-Functional Team** - Engage the necessary personnel across the company, particularly within business units that will prioritize integrating creators & influencers as consultants. As well, select a group of qualified creators & influencers to be the first to engage as consultants.
5. **Generate Short-Term Wins** - Plan for achievements that can be easily completed and recognized early.
6. **Sustain Acceleration** - Press harder after the first successes; continuous improvement. Take creators and influencers to additional parts of the business when the time is right.
7. **Institute Change** - Anchor the changes into the culture to solidify the new status quo.
 - a. Ensure you tag creators & influencers who have been engaged to consult within a system of record creator marketing SaaS platform for future record.
 - b. Update existing creator & influencer contracts to account for consulting hours so that negotiations aren't a disjointed strategy.

The Methodology

The **Methodology**

Data Collection

- Survey Instrument: The data was collected through a structured survey targeting the US population, comprising of no screening questions and 5 survey questions.
- Sample Size: n=250
- Date: The data was collected on April 4th, 2024
- Demographics: The survey targeting a representative sample of the US population, captured demographic information, including age groups, enabling a nuanced analysis of responses across different segments

Data Analysis

- Cross-Tabulation: Analysis involved cross-tabulating survey responses with demographic data to identify trends and differences in perceptions across age groups. This method allowed for a deeper understanding of how various demographic segments view the role of creators in business.
- Statistical Testing: Chi-square tests were performed to determine if differences in responses among age groups were statistically significant, providing a basis to assert whether observed trends were due to chance.