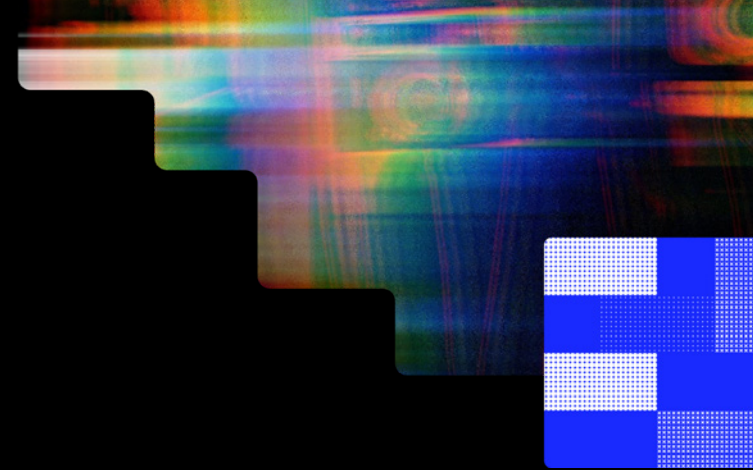




TRENDS 2025

Creator Trends
Mid-2025 Report

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HOW CREATOR TRENDS ARE INFLUENCING TRAVEL MARKETING IN 2025



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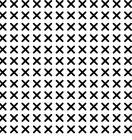
00 WHAT WE LEARNED (SO FAR) IN 2025

Back in fall 2024, we surveyed 200+ destination marketers to uncover the visual marketing trends they were betting on for 2025. Now that we're halfway through the year, we're seeing those predictions come to life—some faster than expected.

From shifting influencer strategies to the rise of local creators, the travel marketing landscape is evolving in real time. And while the platforms and formats keep changing, one thing's crystal clear: **video is king!** 🏰

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Travel brands are clearly along for the video ride—they're ramping up video production to excite travelers about under-the-radar local attractions, unique hotels and resorts, seasonal events, and more.

By combining short-form video with a mix of user-generated content (UGC) and professional footage, brands are fueling their Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube channels with engaging content. Plus, they're strategically syncing up their paid and organic content strategies to make their dollars work harder.

And the biggest news of all: **We learned that travel brands are steering away from influencers and towards authentic local storytellers like Creators by CrowdRiff.**

So, what does all this mean for your marketing strategy? 🧐

Here's a quick look at how 2025 is shaping up and what we're looking forward to in the travel marketing space as the year continues.

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01 RISE OF THE CREATOR LANDSCAPE

Many of the creator trends that excited us in 2024 are expanding and branching out in 2025—particularly the evolution of the creator. For some larger context, [a 2023 Goldman Sachs study](#) estimated that the creator economy would grow from \$250 billion to as much as **\$480 billion** by 2027.





\$480 billion

is the estimated value the creator economy is expected to grow to by 2027.

In fact, we've grown our creator pool from 105 creators in 2023 to a staggering 1,100+ creators in 2025 that covers nearly all of North America! No matter the size of your brand, creators are key to producing visual content that resonates with your audiences.

Travel marketers are drawn to Creators by CrowdRiff because they give an inside scoop into what makes a destination so enticing. This might mean capturing the best local shops for [Small Business Saturday](#) or elevating the art, culture, and natural beauty that make travelers want to visit places like [San Marcos, Texas](#).

CHAPTER TAKEAWAY

As the creator economy grows, these kinds of on-call, ear-to-the-ground creators will keep helping travel marketers meet increasing content demands and **get travelers excited about their destinations.**



02 CREATORS ARE DETHRONING INFLUENCERS

Our 2025 Trends Report showed that travel brands have shifted from traditional influencer marketing to creator marketing—only 44% of those surveyed believed influencers would be important to strategies in 2025.

The main reason? **A bigger focus on trust and authenticity.**



\$1.7 million

is the average annual spend by enterprise brands on influencer campaigns.

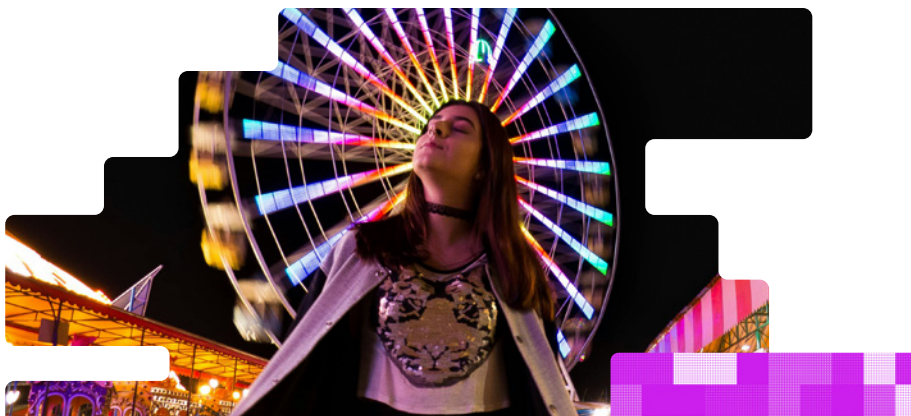
While many creators have smaller followings than influencers—often under 10K—they’re making a larger impact because marketers and customers can rely on their genuine approach and niche focus.

[Sprout Social Influencer Marketing](#) confirmed this in their TikTok data, discovering that smaller influencers have significantly higher engagement rates than larger influencers.

“We’re going to see a rise in niche creators, including local creators, and the resurgence of mid-tier creators in 2025,” [analyst Jasmine Enberg](#) said to eMarketer in February 2025.

This also aligns with [Snapchat’s Emerging Trends in Travel Report](#) from April 2025, which shared key stats highlighting how creators boost brand trust and credibility: 62% feel that creator reviews are more trustworthy than traditional reviews, and Snapchatters are 2.5x more likely to book through links shared by creators because they trust their recommendations.

On top of all this, the rising cost of influencers plays a huge factor: enterprise brands spend an [average of \\$1.7M](#) on influencer campaigns annually, and [Influencer Marketing Hub](#) reports that mega-influencers with more than 1M followers can charge over \$10,000 for just a single Instagram post! It’s easy to see why marketers are turning to creators for authentic, budget-friendly content that works.





10x

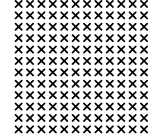
more shares are generated by creator content compared to regular brand content.

The truth is, relying solely on mega-influencers doesn't offer the best ROI for brands. Influencers can charge steep fees whenever content is used, and they often focus on popularity rather than telling the right story. They're often flown in for shoots, piling on expenses without the local awareness of what makes a destination so special.

Meanwhile, creators are experts in generating engaging, knowledgeable content rather than prioritizing celebrity status or name brands. Travel brands love creators' access to smaller, more focused communities and their ability to capture

specific, localized, in-the-know stories. It's content gold without the exorbitant sponsor fee of paying a movie star with 1M followers!

The proof is in the posts: [Marina Del Rey](#) has seen massive results from content made by CrowdRiff Creators, with one [Instagram post](#) reaching over 154,000 views and over 6,400 likes in only two months. Another [CrowdRiff Creator-produced Reel of a local Italian tasting menu](#) hit over 76,000 views and 2,400 likes in two months. In contrast, their average engagement on non-Creator material typically lands between 100 to 200 likes.



[Visit Tennessee's](#) Senior Digital Media Manager, Amanda Burton, knows the power of local creators:

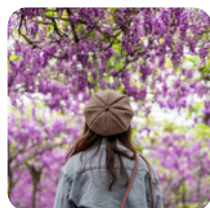
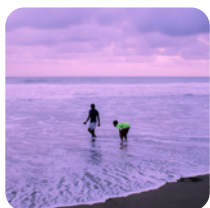
"We get the best content when we ask a creator to take us to their favorite coffee shop. We want to see them share their own experiences and favorite spots. We've done that for waterfall hikes and state parks to see the best views. I love to let creators take ownership because I know they'll do a great job. I think we're harnessing that authenticity more with each shoot."

Creators are often creating content that's more engaging than content produced by brands. [Creator IQ](#) reported in October 2024 that 98% of industry leaders believe that creator content drives more ROI than traditional ads—a 20% increase since 2023—and a [2025 Dash Social study](#) showed that creator content got 10x as many shares on TikTok than brand content.

As this era of authenticity continues to evolve in 2025, creators are not only gaining "influence share," but also becoming entrepreneurs in their own right, and the content they provide is highly valuable.

CHAPTER TAKEAWAY

**Follower count isn't everything—
authenticity is. Don't sleep on the
impact of niche creators!**



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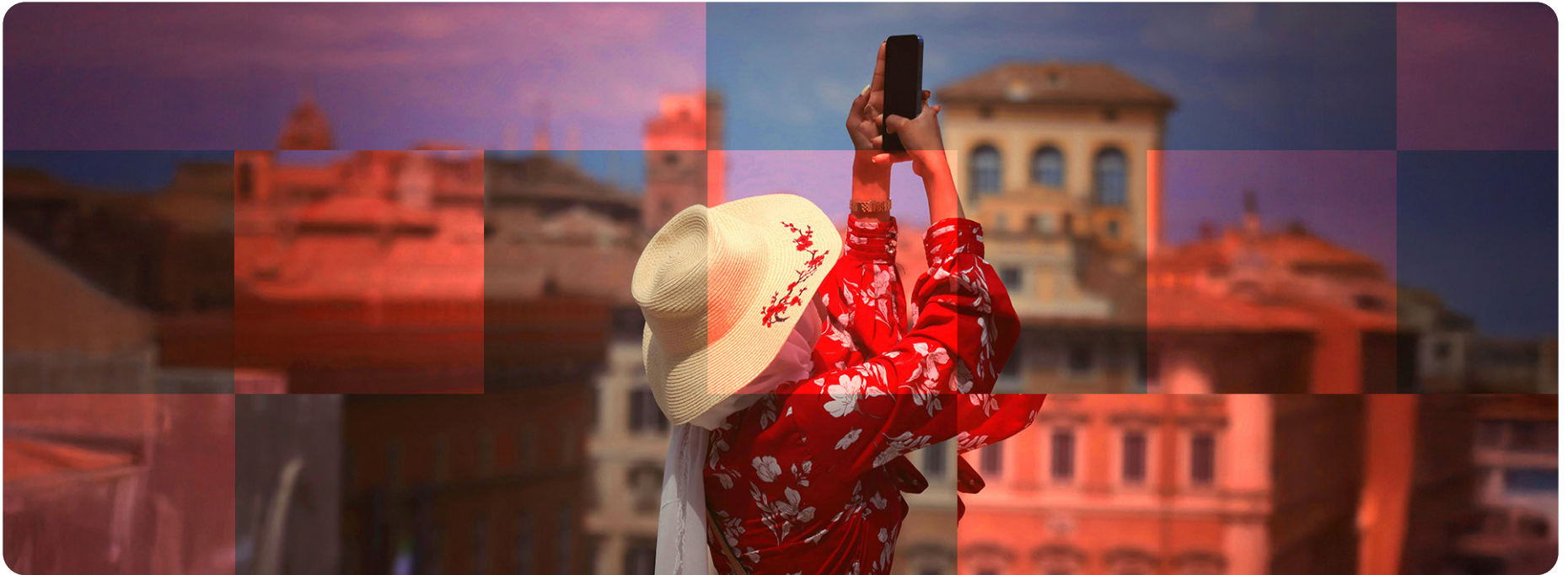
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03 CREATORS HAVE MORE SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Right now, creators are seeing the most activity on TikTok and Instagram, but each platform has its own unique engagement.



[Dash Social's 2025 Social Media Trends Report](#) showed that for many creators, TikTok outperformed Instagram in growing followers, with creators generating 61% more followers on TikTok. Yet Instagram is the place to engage, with creators gaining 17% more likes on Instagram than on TikTok.

For example, [Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory](#), which supports over 11 communities, has seen a 10x increase in saves on Instagram Reels after working with Creators by CrowdRiff on content like "What to do" guides and "A day in..." destination spotlights.

366%

growth in Instagram followers was achieved by Meet Chicago Northwest in just one year.

Many DMOs are already seeing this kind of growth firsthand. [Meet Chicago Northwest](#) grew their Instagram following from 3,000 to over 14,000 in just 12 months (a 366% increase!) by posting mostly content from Creators by CrowdRiff. Meanwhile, [Discover Torrance](#) added over 1,200 followers in just three months by showcasing their destination through local creators.



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CHAPTER TAKEAWAY

Take note of your audience's demographics and behaviors across your different social media platforms and adjust your strategies for each platform accordingly. Creator collaborations will be most successful when you focus equally on growth and engagement.



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04 CREATORS > VIDEOGRAPHERS

Our 2025 Trends Report noted that customers using Creators by CrowdRiff generally use a mix of Creators, influencers, and videographers but opt to hire Creators when they want that less-polished, more authentic lens—which they typically lean on for their social media channels.





For travel and hospitality marketers, we see this continuing to shift in favor of creators, especially when local perspectives are the top priority.

Professional photographers and videographers will remain valuable for more complex shoots, advanced creative direction, or greater technical expertise—but it's also worth noting that many creators are expanding their toolkits to include high-end drones, GoPros, and other elaborate gear and technology.

CHAPTER TAKEAWAY

While professionally shot visuals still have an important place in marketing strategies, the lines are blurring between how we define “professional” vs. “highly skilled creator.” The bar for high-quality content is rising, and creators are rising along with it!



05 UGC VS. CREATOR CONTENT: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Content sourcing is in constant flux. It can sometimes be confusing to distinguish between user-generated content (UGC) and content made by creators, but each brings its own unique value to travel marketers.

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UGC is authentic content that everyday people, customers, or fans create about a brand. Brands and customers love it because it feels honest and real. Content creators also create UGC, but take it up a notch by leveraging their strong technical editing and storytelling skills that are unique to them. A brand usually hires them to step in and fill in the gaps of good organic UGC by creating custom short-form videos from a more detailed creative brief.

For Creators by CrowdRiff, this distinction is key. While UGC is a powerful source of inspiration, working with content creators ensures that brands receive high-quality, short-form video tailored to their goals and needs—all without relying on expensive videographers or influencers.

CHAPTER TAKEAWAY

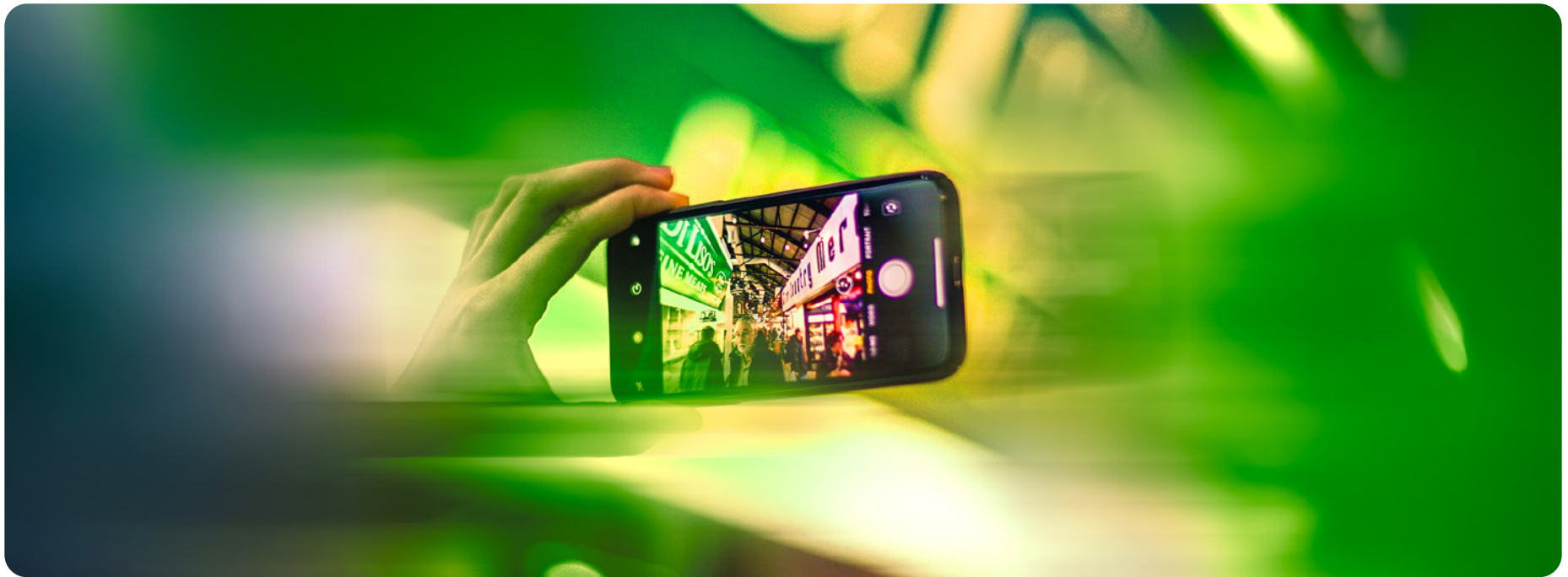
By leveraging a blend of UGC and creator-driven content, brands can maximize reach, trust, and impact across their digital campaigns.



06 KEEPING UP WITH DEMAND

In our 2024 Trends Report, we observed a ramp up in destination marketers' demand for video. In 2025, we're learning that video isn't just nice to have but essential for getting eyes on your brand. Many brands are even skipping horizontal videos altogether and capturing vertical video only!

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9,000+

Shoots completed

100,000+

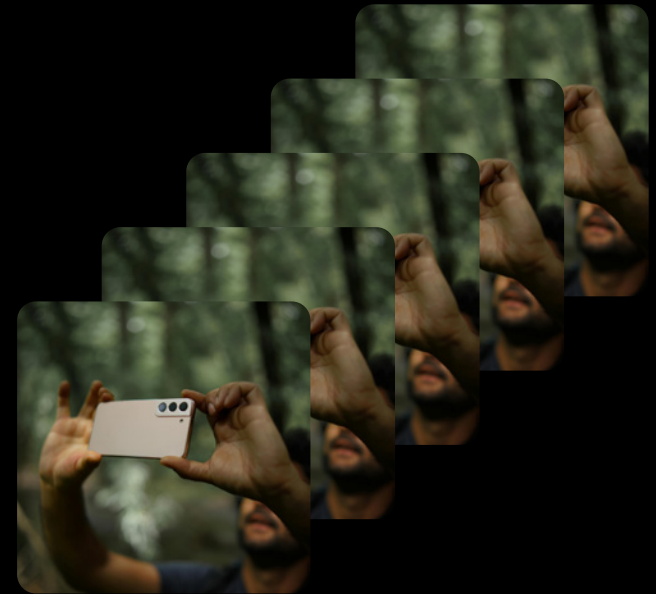
Videos created

750

Available Creators

4.5

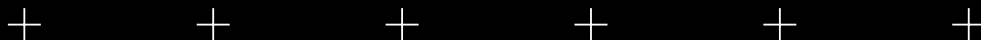
Average star rating



Creators by CrowdRiff helps travel marketers meet this demand head-on. Since launch, our community of over 750 talented creators has produced more than 9,000 shoots for a total of over 100,000 videos with an average rating of 4.5/5 stars.

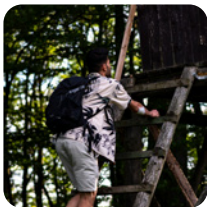
Plus, **92%** of CrowdRiff customers have said they'd recommend our network of Creators as the solution to keeping up with growing content needs. It's a great way to acquire authentic, custom short-form video content without getting caught up in the logistics of contracting, licensing, and payments.

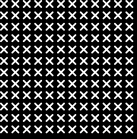
And the cherry on top? Increased social media metrics from quality assets and storytelling.



CHAPTER TAKEAWAY

**Travel brands rely on Creators
by CrowdRiff to help them meet
today's demand for video content.**





FINAL TAKEAWAYS

- 01 Video is still king on social media—especially short-form content
- 02 The creator economy is bigger than ever before
- 03 A blend of UGC and creator-made content is key to an effective video strategy
- 04 Travel brands are increasingly relying on local creators over typical influencers for their authenticity and cost-saving benefits
- 05 The lines are blurring between “professionals” and “creators”
- 06 You can tap into Creators by CrowdRiff to keep up with all of the above 🤖

VIDEO CONTENT FOR SOCIAL FIRST ERA 🚀

Get high-quality, social-ready content from local creators at scale—in less than 3 weeks and always within budget.

Want to see what's possible for you?
Get in touch with our team today.



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Creators

by  CrowdRiff

