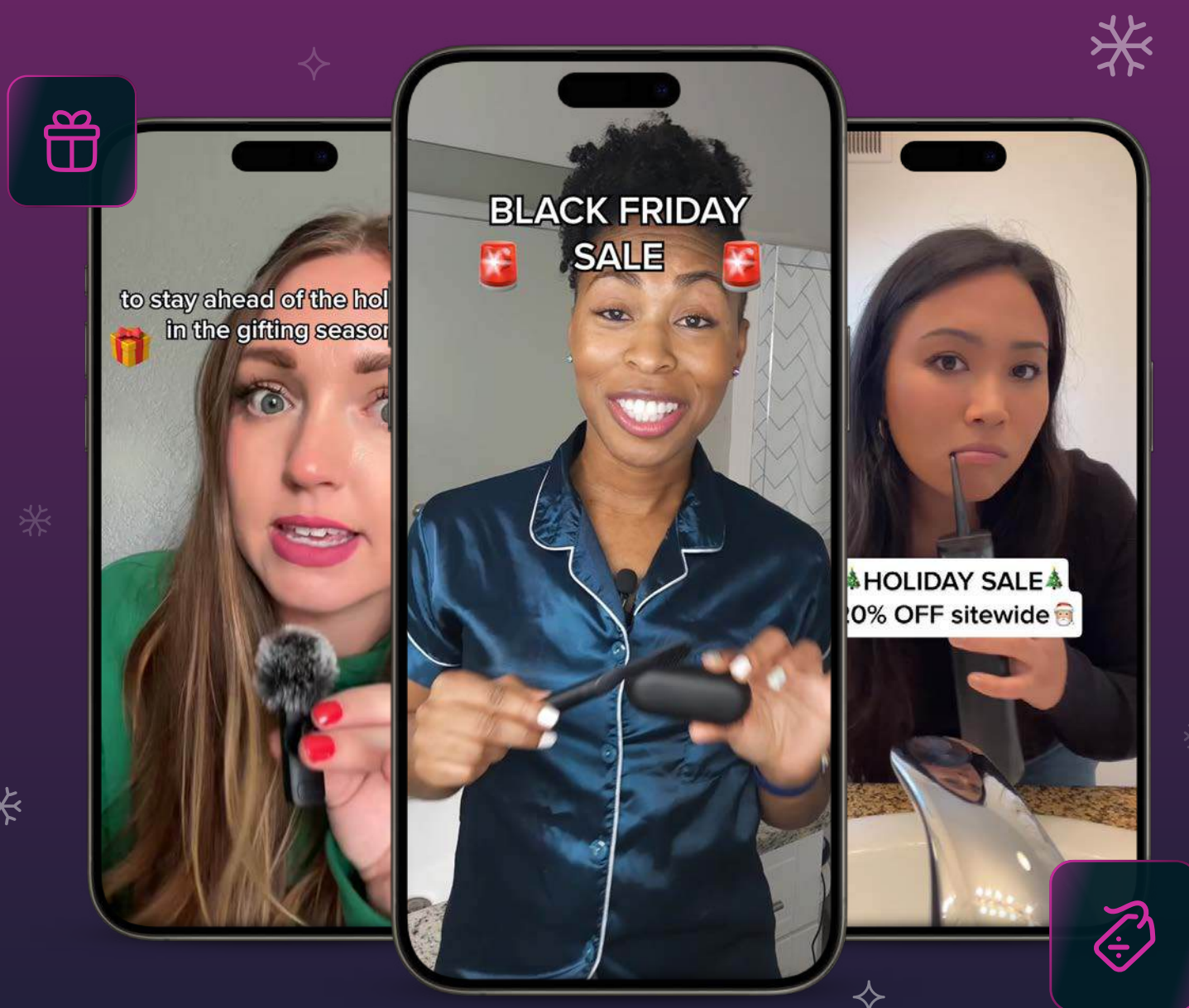


Q4 EBOOK

The BFCM + Q5 Creator Marketing Playbook 2026

(2026 EDITION)



What's new & what to implement now

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Q4 isn't won in November. It's won in the September you're in now.

Paid CPMs spike into November, the auction gets crowded, and creator rates climb 20–40%. You can't out-bid that. You can out-prepare it: creators booked in September, content tested in October, organic warming your audience before you pay for reach.

This playbook covers the season's dates and the shopper behind them, the four shifts that change how Q4 is won, a lane-by-lane timeline from August to January, and the five plays that carry it.

WHY INSENSE

Insense is the creator engine — a vetted global marketplace at the core — that scales creator content across organic and paid, and shows you who performs.

Vetted global marketplace

115,000+ vetted creators across 57+ countries, sourced by market, niche and language.

Plugs into your stack

Ads Manager, Slack, Claude, ChatGPT, your AI assistant. The creator layer, not another platform to rip and replace.

Creator-level performance

Others show which ads perform. We also tell you who — then you rehire the winners.

01

The eComm peak season

What Q4 and Q5 2026 look like, and who's buying.

What is **BFCM** and **Q5**?

Two windows, not one. The concentrated deal week everyone plans for, and the cheap month afterwards that most brands still ignore.

BFCM

Black Friday Fri, Nov 27 · Cyber Monday Mon, Nov 30

- The concentrated deal window of the year: deep discounts, flash offers.
- Multi-week in practice — rolling deals start in October.

Q5

Mid-December to end of January

- The overlooked window: last-minute shopping, gift cards, returns, New-Year clearance.
- Resolution-themed offers: fitness, wellness, organization.
- The cheapest CPMs of the season.



THE DATES THAT ANCHOR THE SEASON

Oct 31

Halloween

Nov 26

Thanksgiving

Nov 27

Black Friday

Nov 30

Cyber Monday

Dec 25

Christmas

Last BFCM was the biggest on record. 2026 is forecast bigger.

\$44.2B

US online sales in Cyber Week 2025, up 7.7% on the year before

\$336.6B

spent globally during Cyber Week 2025

\$14.25B

Cyber Monday 2025 — the biggest online shopping day ever

57.5%

of Cyber Monday revenue came from a phone

+56.5%

growth in revenue from social commerce, the fastest-growing channel

\$500M

spent on TikTok Shop in the four days of BFCM, with 50% more buyers

THE FLIP SIDE

CPMs peaked at \$23.49 around BFCM last year, and in H1 2026 only ~25% of advertisers grew revenue at all; most paid more for the same. You can't out-bid the auction, but you can out-prepare it.

Sources: Adobe Analytics 2025 holiday recap · Salesforce Cyber Week data · eMarketer (TikTok Shop; 2026 forecast) · Northbeam H1 2026 Meta report

The 2026 shopper: value-conscious, deal-skeptical, early

They're nervous, but they're still buying

Purchase sentiment just dropped to its lowest level for this time of year. People still plan to buy for the holidays; they're bracing to spend less and think twice. Prices never came down after the tariff waves, so real spending is barely growing (~1%). The money is still out there, it's just much pickier about where it goes.

Nearly half start before Halloween

By the time BFCM ads peak in late November, a lot of carts are already decided.

They've learned the discount game

They screenshot prices in October, compare across brands, and wait to see if "the deal" is actually a deal.

They click, but they don't buy

Meta click-through rates hit 12-month highs in H1 2026 while conversion rates fell — up to 50% in some accounts. Attention got cheaper; trust didn't.

Still a growth season: eMarketer forecasts ~6.6% ecommerce growth for holiday 2026. The spend is there for brands that earn it.

What this changes for Q4 2026



1. Compete on value, not just discount percentages

Bundles, kits, limited editions, gift-with-purchase — offers that feel like getting more, not just paying less.



2. Trust comes from real people

Skeptical shoppers ignore brand claims and punish visible AI. Reviews and creator demos convert the doubters.



3. Be in their search results

Gift searches happen inside TikTok, Instagram and YouTube now, and creator videos are what ranks there.



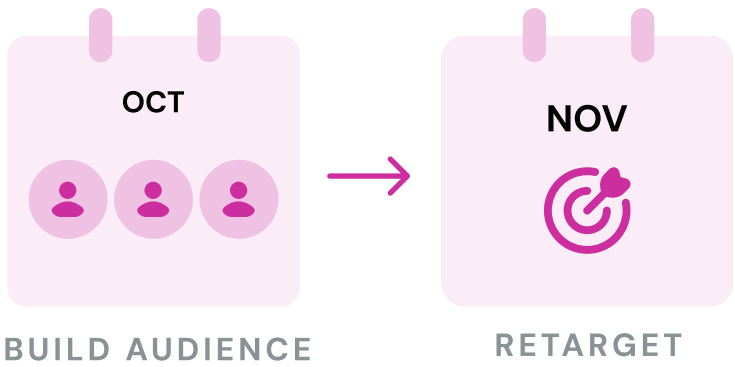
4. Be buyable where they scroll

More of the purchase happens in-app: TikTok Shop, shoppable video, live.



5. Tease offers in October

The early shopper is already buying, and every October viewer becomes cheap retargeting in November.



Sources: Common Thread Collective consumer sentiment data · Deloitte US consumer spending outlook · Modash BFCM marketer survey · eMarketer 2026 holiday forecast · Northbeam H1 2026 Meta report

02

What's different in 2026?

Four shifts that change how Q4 is won.

Four shifts that change how Q4 is won

Shift 1

The creator is the new targeting

- Andromeda rewards creative diversity
- Partnership Ads are Meta's fastest-growing surface
- Creator pay goes performance-based

Shift 2

You have to know who performs

- Follower tiers are dead; vetting moves to performance and fit
- The roster, not the one-off, wins November

Shift 3

Organic and paid merge into one engine

- Repurposed creator content outperforms everything
- TikTok Shop and live selling crossed the chasm
- One asset runs feed → Shorts → CTV

Shift 4

AI rewired the work — on both sides

- Infinite AI variations made volume free
- Shoppers punish visible AI
- The edge moves to real people and faster ops

Targeting → creative → the creator

Creative still matters enormously — the creator is the layer above it, not a replacement for it.

THREE ERAS OF ONE MARKET — WHERE THE ADVANTAGE SAT, AND WHY IT MOVED

UNTIL ~2021

TARGETING



Targeting was the lever

You found your buyer with audience settings: interests, lookalikes, demographics, exclusions. Media buyers won on audience architecture; the creative was almost packaging.

Why it ended: privacy changes took the signal away, and Meta's own automation started beating hand-built audiences.

2021–2024

CREATIVE



"Creative is the new targeting"

Meta's message flipped: go broad, we'll find the people, you give us the ad. The system reads your creative and decides who it's for. The ad itself became the targeting instruction.

Why it ended: AI made creative volume free. When anyone can ship fifty variants, creative alone stops being an edge.

NOW · 2026

CREATOR



The creator is the new targeting

Six edits of one video read as one signal to the algorithm; six creators read as six. And with Partnership Ads and Spark Ads the ad runs from the creator's own handle — Meta ranks on signals from both accounts. The person is part of delivery now, and trust is what shoppers reward.

What it means: your casting decision is your targeting decision. The roster is the strategy.

SO THE QUESTION A MARKETER ASKS HAS SHIFTED

~~Which audience do I build?~~



~~Which creative do I test?~~



Which creators do I book?

The creator is the new targeting

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Meta's Andromeda update changed what targeting means: the system now reads your creative to find your buyers. More distinct creators, faces and angles do what audience settings used to — Meta's own tests show +22% ROAS from creative diversification alone.

Ads from the creator's handle became Meta's fastest-growing format: a reported ~\$10B quarterly run rate, roughly double last year. The auction for creator content is getting crowded.

The friction is gone: since December, a creator shares an ad code and you're authorized to run their content. Meta's hub will even surface creator posts already mentioning your brand.

Creator pay is changing with it. Flat fees are giving way to base plus commission; affiliate links now run on TikTok, Instagram (up to 30 tagged affiliate products in one Reel) and YouTube at the same time. The frontier is pay-per-ad-performance: creators compensated on the results their ads drive.

DO THIS BEFORE OCTOBER

- Lock contracts and permissions by mid-September — holiday rates climb 20–40% and the good creators book out first.
- Brief for real variety: 6+ meaningfully different creatives per ad set, several faces, not six edits of one video.
- Whitelisting rights go in the first contract (≈30% of base rate at signing; much more when renegotiated mid-season).

WHAT YOU GET WITH INSENSE

- One-click Meta Partnership Ads and TikTok Spark Ads permissions.
- Content rights in perpetuity, all digital channels, including CTV.
- Hybrid pay built in: base plus commission in one deal flow.
- Fresh faces on tap: 115,000+ vetted creators across 57+ countries.

Sources: Meta Andromeda performance data · Meta Partnership Ads announcements (Dec 2025) · The Creator Economy, Q1 2026 · Instagram affiliate rollout (Mar 2026)

Know who performs — creators, not just creatives

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Vetting flipped from "how many followers?" to "has this person actually sold anything?" Nano, micro and macro tiers tell you audience size, not whether the audience listens.

81% of BFCM collabs are repeat creators. Brands aren't hunting new faces in November, they're rebooking the creators who already performed for them.

Holiday booking is a market: creator rates climb 20–40% into November and the best calendars fill first. A graded roster books at September prices; cold outreach pays November prices.

The data to grade them finally exists. Ad platforms and creator tools now report performance per creator, so "who do I rebook?" has a number behind it instead of a feeling.

DO THIS BEFORE OCTOBER

- Grade every creator after each flight — conversions, engagement quality, reliability — so by October you know exactly who to rebook.
- Book November from your proven bench; new-creator discovery belongs in August–September, not crunch time.
- Agree rebooking terms before October, and whitelisting extensions into January with your top performers.

WHAT YOU GET WITH INSENSE

- Vetted network: only 2 in 10 creators are approved to the marketplace, on 5 approval criteria.
- Creator Performance View: connect Ads Manager, see which creator performs, rehire winners.
- Ads Insights inside the platform: ROAS, CPA, hook and hold rates per ad, sorted against your account averages.

Sources: Dara Denney on creator classification · Modash BFCM marketer survey · holiday creator-rate benchmarks (2026)

One creator, both engines — the organic–paid silo is breaking

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Repurposed creator posts beat everything else: 63% of marketers say repurposed creator content outperforms every other BFCM content type. Organic is quietly doing paid's testing for free.

TikTok Shop stopped being an experiment: QVC, a 40-year live-selling veteran, is now the #2 brand shop with \$18M in a single month. July's Deals For You Days was the whole industry's Q4 dress rehearsal.

The effect doesn't stay on TikTok: the platform's own data shows a Shop sale lifts performance across your other channels while bringing in new-to-brand customers.

The same creator video travels further than ever: feed, Reels, YouTube Shorts, and increasingly the TV screen, as Shorts land on YouTube TV and Roku turns social video into CTV ads.

DO THIS BEFORE OCTOBER

- Brief both uses into every collab from day one: the organic post, the ad rights, and the raw footage for recuts.
- Plan creator lives for BFCM weekend; live sessions convert at 9–30% versus 2–3% for standard ecommerce.
- Fund organic winners within days. When a post takes off, put paid budget behind it — that's the whole point of the bridge.

WHAT YOU GET WITH INSENSE

- Both kinds of creators in one marketplace: influencers with an audience, and UGC creators with content-craft skills.
- Every collab is dual-use: a post on the creator's handle, plus edited and raw files for your ad account.
- TikTok Shop covered: seeding for reviews, affiliates for shoppable video on commission.

Sources: Modash BFCM marketer survey · TikTok Shop seller data · TikTok for Business · YouTube and Roku announcements (2026) · eMarketer livestream commerce data

AI rewired the work — on both sides

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Social platforms handed everyone infinite creative: Meta's AI suite generates imagery, translations and voiceovers inside Ads Manager; TikTok's Symphony spins video variations on demand. Volume alone stopped being an advantage this year.

Shoppers are pushing back: only 7% trust visibly-AI ads more, 31% trust them less, and 91% want AI content labeled. Meta now labels AI-generated ads; YouTube demonetized template content.

The edge moves to what AI can't fake: a real person your buyer believes, and the teams that move faster because AI handles the work around them.

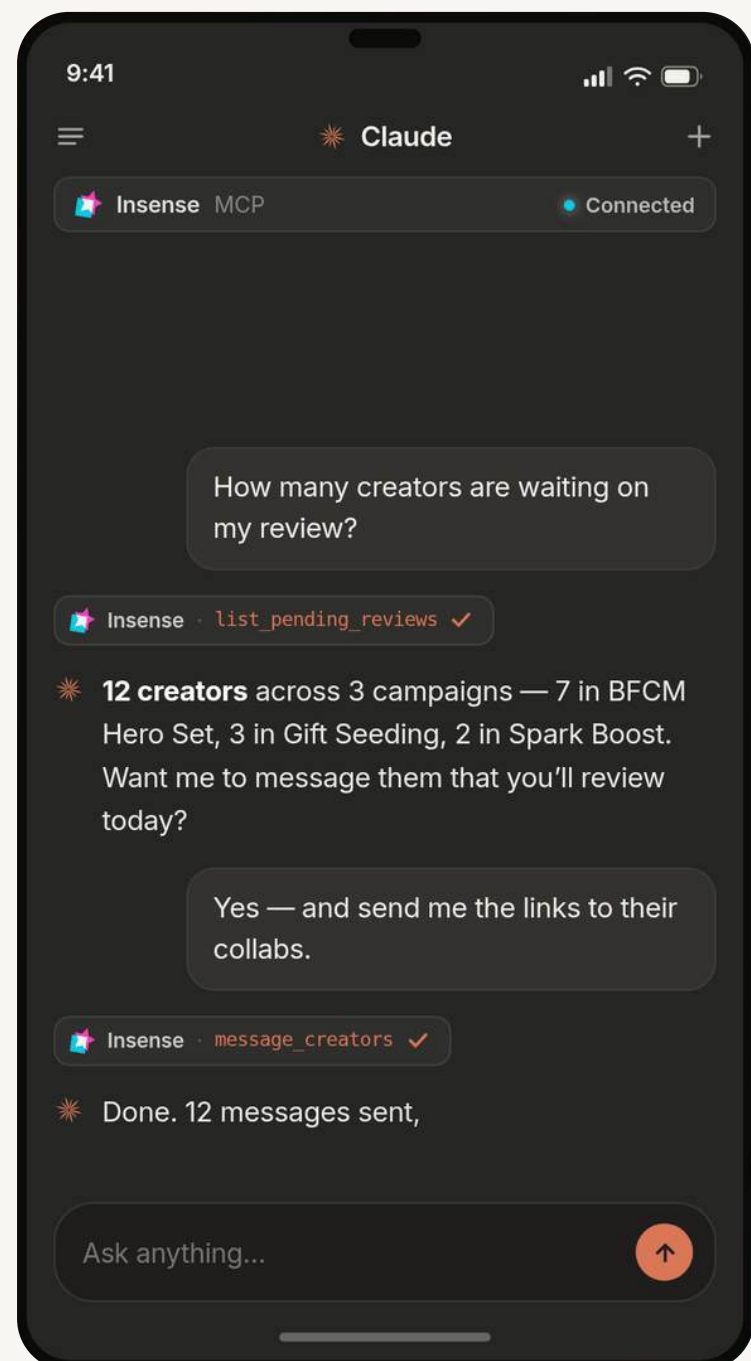
Winning teams wire creator ops into their stack: notifications where the team works, an AI assistant that can read campaigns and message creators, automated follow-ups.

DO THIS BEFORE OCTOBER

- Wire the stack: creator-ops alerts in your team's channel, your AI assistant connected to your campaign data.
- Split the work: AI for variations, translations, recuts and reporting; real faces wherever trust does the selling.
- Label AI-assisted content in the EU (AI Act) and anywhere trust matters.

WHAT YOU GET WITH INSENSE

- Real vetted humans on camera: 115,000+ of them.
- Plugs into your stack: Slack notifications, Claude, ChatGPT, MCP for your AI assistant, automated creator nudges.
- Avatars can carry volume tests; conversion in November belongs to humans.



Sources: Meta AI Creative Suite and ad-labeling announcements (Jun 2026) · TikTok Symphony · Klaviyo/Datalily consumer study via eMarketer · YouTube monetization policy (Jul 2026)

What the operators are saying right now

"Q4 isn't won in November... whatever gaps you have in September are the gaps you'll have in December. Except then they cost 10x more."

Nick Shackelford · Aug 2026

"Your BFCM targets are bigger than last year. I'm less confident you can say the same about your creative resources."

Ari Murray · Aug 2026

"If your partnerships team still thinks in nano, micro, and macro influencers... they're running a 2020 playbook. It has nothing to do with followers."

Dara Denney · Aug 2026

"Creators aren't just part of the strategy. They ARE the strategy."

Karin Tracy, Meta — NA Retail lead · 2026

"The question isn't 'what campaigns are you running in November?' It's 'what are you learning in July?'"

Kait Stephens, Brij · Jul 2026

"The best TikTok Shop strategies don't just drive sales, they create a halo effect that lifts performance across channels."

Richard H. Pyo, via TikTok for Business · Aug 2026

03

The timeline & strategies

August to January, step by step.

August → January: the timeline

"September gaps cost 10x in December." The market plans in July and hires creators by the end of September.

	AUG - SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC - JAN
 Organic + influencers	Seed products · hire creators · build the roster	"Offer coming" wave · last seeding	Peak posting + creator lives	Holiday posts → New-Year kick-off
 Influencer ads (Partnership / Spark)	Line up creators · lock ad permissions	Pilot whitelisting on early winners	Scale winning handles and creative	Extend licences · Q5-fit creators
 Paid social	Modular UGC sourcing · light testing	Finalize BFCM set · build 3–4 weeks early	Launch and rotate against fatigue	Push to ~Dec 18 cutoff → scale Q5 winners

Sources: "September gaps cost 10x in December" — Nick Shackelford · market timing — Modash BFCM marketer survey

The five plays at a glance

Three lanes, five plays. The rest of this section takes each one in turn.

1 Seeding & reviews

ORGANIC + INFLUENCERS

Seed products at scale to generate organic posts, reviews and social proof. Start in August so creators have time to receive, try and publish before demand peaks.

2 Search-led content and lives

ORGANIC + INFLUENCERS

Build gift-search language into creator hooks, overlays and captions. Add creator lives and community content in November to capture high-intent discovery.

3 Influencer ads as a creative testing engine

INFLUENCER ADS

Meta Partnership Ads and TikTok Spark Ads put paid budget behind an influencer's face and handle. With the right permissions you can run new creative from their handles and test creators, hooks, angles and offers. Secure permissions in September, pilot in October, scale winners in November.

4 Modular UGC testing

PAID SOCIAL

Building blocks from every shoot; test angles and faces in September and October until the winners surface.

5 Test cheap, launch prepared

PAID SOCIAL

Test at normal CPMs, with the BFCM set built and approved three to four weeks early.

Four organic plays that feed the whole engine

1 Product seeding

Send product to a creator batch that fits your budget. Simple asks: unboxing, first impressions, one or two Reels. Expect 15–50% to post — it's trust and content generation, not guaranteed output.

2 Live shopping + community

Creator-led lives that sell, not just demo — live sessions convert at 9–30% versus 2–3% for standard ecommerce (in Europe, shoppable video carries the volume). Broadcast channels handle the drop alerts.

3 Influencer posts

Paid placements and affiliates on a simple cadence: tease → launch → reminder → last chance. Tracked links or codes on everything.

4 Measure & rebook

After each post, grade creators on clicks, saves, sales and comment quality — engagement and conversions, not followers. Re-invite the winners for November through January.

Seeding: the lever that doesn't inflate at BFCM

Paid CPMs spike 20–60% in November. Product cost doesn't. Seeding is the acquisition input whose price stays flat all quarter.

Works well for

- High-frequency products people love talking about: cosmetics, fragrance, accessories, snacks.
- Recognizable brands with a wide relevant creator pool.
- Honest reviews and first impressions as the goal — trust and content, not guaranteed output.

Works less well for

- High-value or intimate products, and heavily contested categories.
- Long or rare usage cycles (supplements, medical) — reviews take too long to form.
- Narrow niche creator pools, or briefs that expect ready-to-run ads from a seeding send.

THE Q4 MOVE

Seed in August and September — benchmark economics: ~35% accept, ~30% of those post, so roughly \$105 per post, and existing customers convert best. Grade the posts, then flag the winners for Partnership Ads or Spark rights before BFCM week.

60 creators seeded. 44 posted.

Fling — plant-based gummies, teas and supplements

73%

of seeded
creators posted

44

videos delivered
in two months

6x

more creators
than before

The ceiling

Fling was stuck at ten or fewer creator partnerships. Sourcing, briefing and paying them was manual, and paid UGC production was too expensive to scale.

The play

A two-month seeding campaign: 60 brand-aligned creators shortlisted, product sent seamlessly, creators free to post to their own feeds.

"Insense has been a game changer for streamlining our influencer marketing — saving us countless hours."

Ellas Ross

Brand Strategy & Marketing Manager, Fling



Creators are your search results now

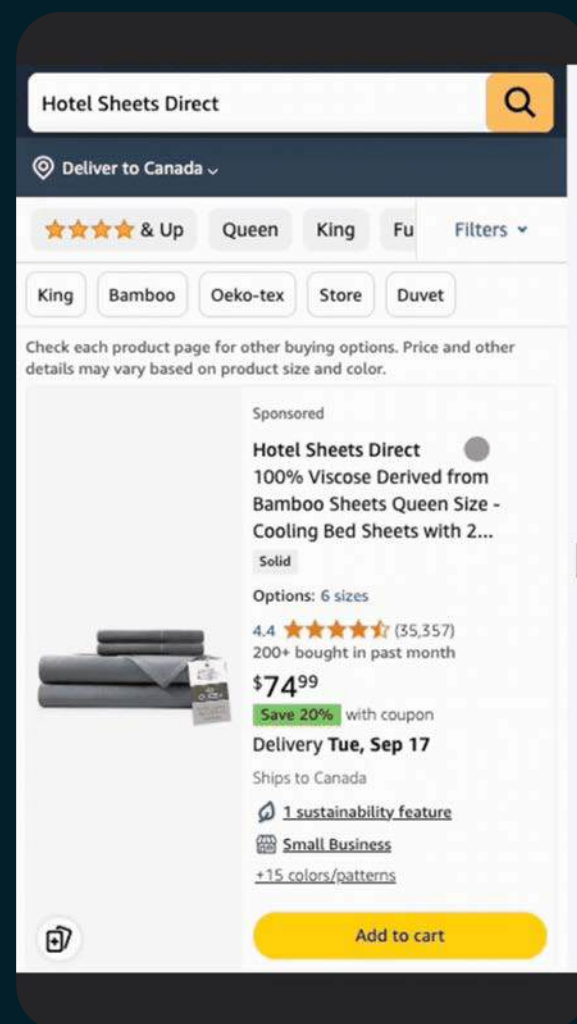
Over half of Gen Z start product searches on TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. In Q4 the surge comes from gift-buyers: people shopping for someone else, in a category they don't know, typing "gift for [person]".

Why the gift-searcher is gold

- Money in hand and a deadline: they buy within days.
- Zero brand loyalty in your category: the video that ranks becomes the recommendation.
- Almost no competition: everyone fights over "best [product]"; few target "gift for gym girl".
- Rankings last for weeks, while feed posts die in 48 hours.

How to rank: four keyword layers

- **Spoken:** creator says the phrase verbatim in the first three seconds (platforms auto-transcribe).
- **On-screen:** one text overlay carries the phrase (read via OCR).
- **Caption:** phrase in a natural sentence, plus 5–10 hashtags on Instagram.
- **Title:** keyword-first titles on YouTube and Shorts.



THE PLAY

Write the search phrase into the creator script — one phrase per video — publish on creator handles by mid-October so rankings mature by BFCM, then re-phrase for December ("last minute gifts") and Q5 ("new year routine"). It's measurable now: Google just connected Instagram, TikTok and YouTube to Search Console, so you can see which keywords drive traffic to your posts and feed the winners into the next brief.

The middle lane: paid budget behind creator handles

The bridge between your organic and paid lanes: ads that run from the creator's own account — Meta Partnership Ads and TikTok Spark Ads.

Why creator-handle ads win

- They carry borrowed trust: the ad arrives from a face your buyer already follows, with the comments, likes and history attached.
- Meta's own numbers: ~19% lower CPA and ~13% higher CTR versus business-as-usual ads.
- They feed the auction advantage: every creator handle is one more distinct voice for the algorithm to optimize across.

AUG-SEP · LOCK PERMISSIONS

Agree whitelisting in the original deal (~30% of base rate; far pricier mid-season).

OCT · PILOT

Small budgets behind three to five posts with strong hooks and comment quality.

NOV · SCALE THE WINNING HANDLES

Rotate faces, and manage comments for social proof.

DEC-JAN · EXTEND LICENCES

Q5 runs on the winners you already proved.

Picking the posts worth amplifying: hook strength and comment quality first, format fit second, raw likes last. Organic reach is not the same as ad-readiness.

Sources: Meta Partnership Ads performance data · whitelisting rate benchmarks (2026)

Meta Partnership Ads costs down 42% versus other platforms

Particle for Men — personal care engineered for men

11

creator handles live
in one month

2 wks

brief to ad-ready
content

21

creators sourced to
build the roster

The ceiling

Particle needed an affordable platform with whitelisting built in, not bolted on, plus fast UGC turnaround for Meta and one place to find creators and chat to them.

The play

Creators authorised to run ads from their own handles, with rights agreed in the original deal — so the same pipeline produced more whitelisted ads for less.

"Insense has really helped us streamline the whole influencer-paid ads pipeline. We use it every single day, and we've seen an increase in whitelisted ads as a result."

Alan Azulay

Creative Marketing Coordinator, Particle for Men



Five paid social plays for the Andromeda era

Balance note: diversity is not slop. The bar is many distinct, good ads — "one great ad is worth a thousand bad ads" (Savannah Sanchez).

1 Start here: creative research and persona mapping

Before a single hook gets written: pull what already converts — competitor ad libraries, your own top performers, review and comment mining — then map the three to five personas actually buying, each with their trigger and their objection. Every hook answers one persona's objection; every creator you book matches one persona. Skip this and you're testing guesses at November CPMs.

2 Modular UGC sourcing

Brief creators for building blocks — multiple hooks, demo, B-roll, CTAs, stills — and let editors assemble many versions from one shoot.

Only ~4–8% of creatives become winners; top accounts ship 12–19 new creatives a week (Motion 2026).

3 Disciplined creative testing

Break winners into components (hook, copy, overlay, thumb). Test a few distinct variants at a time; iterate one change per version.

2026 bars: 25–35% hook rate is good on Meta, 30%+ on TikTok; don't judge under 2K impressions.

4 Keep evergreen running

Don't pause your best always-on ads. Duplicate, add a simple offer overlay, and run them alongside the BFCM set.

Winners keep learning; pausing resets the auction's memory of them.

5 Test cheap, launch prepared

October is the last cheap lab: trial Meta's newer buying tools, flex ads, rolling budgets and incremental attribution on small budgets, so the learnings survive BFCM pricing.

Hold 10–15% of the Q4 budget in reserve for Q5's low CPMs.

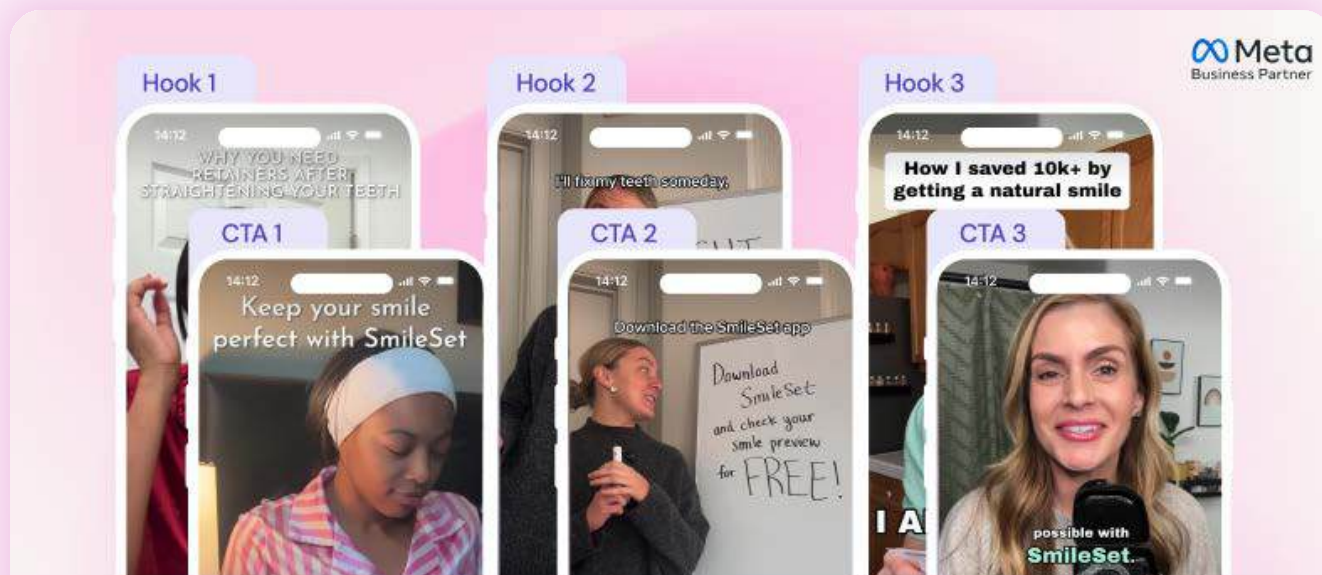
Modular UGC: the math that makes Q4 affordable

THE WINNING MATH

1 winner $\approx$ 10–13 creatives tested (industry benchmark, 2026)

3–4 November winners $\approx$ 30–50 variants tested through September and October

Modular is the only affordable way there: many versions from one shoot, not 50 shoots.



30 Creators. 3 hooks, 3 CTAs, 3 B-rolls each.
270 creatives every month.

Most performance team ship 20–30 creatives. The winning ones ship more.

The building-blocks brief

- **3+ hooks per creator:** different angles, not different takes.
- **Demo and lifestyle B-roll:** product in use, footage to cut against.
- **2–3 CTAs and still frames:** endings and thumbnails to rotate.
- **Raw files included:** same-day hook swaps become possible.

When an ad fatigues in BFCM week

Climb this ladder, in order:

- 1 Hook swap
- 2 Element swap
- 3 Modular recut
- 4 Full reshoot (last resort)

Before October: plug creator ops into your team's stack

BFCM is won in response times. A day-late content review is a missed testing slot; an unanswered creator is a lost deliverable. The fix isn't more discipline, it's moving creator ops to where your team already works.

Why teams silo out in Q4

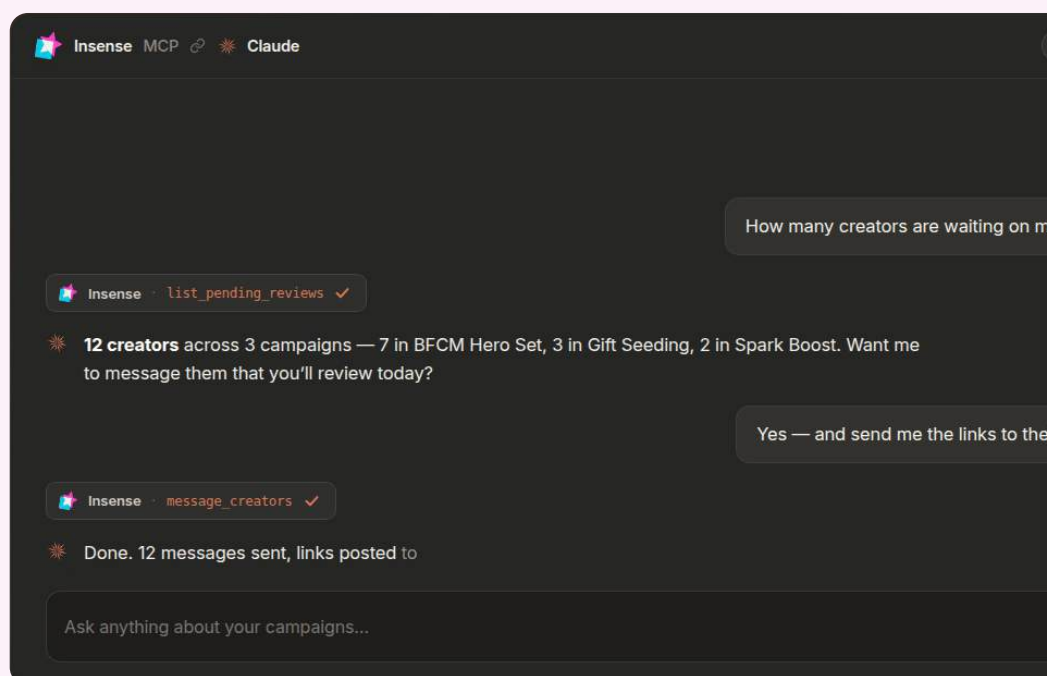
- Your team already runs its own ecosystem: Slack, an AI assistant, Ads Manager, a planning doc. Every tool outside it becomes "the tab nobody checks."
- In November that tab costs real money: creators wait, content sits unreviewed, a cancellation goes unnoticed for two days.
- The fastest teams treat creator ops as part of the stack, not a separate platform to remember.

The September setup

- Creator-ops alerts in the team channel: content submitted, published, creator waiting, collab canceled.
- Your AI assistant on your campaign data: "who's waiting on my review?" answered without logging in anywhere.
- Automated nudges to unresponsive creators, so follow-ups don't depend on memory.
- Shipment tracking visible to whoever owns logistics, not buried in a separate tool.

WITH INSENSE

All four ship today: Slack integration, MCP for your AI assistant, automated Instagram DM nudges, and shipment tracking in the chat. Section 4 shows how they work.



Q5: the quarter after the quarter

Most brands go dark on December 26. The auction gets cheap exactly when your proven creative is freshest.

Why Q5 works

- CPMs drop hard: Meta runs ~28% cheaper in the last week of December; TikTok engagement sits ~25% above the Q4 average.
- Shoppers keep spending: gift-card holders spend ~20% above card value; exchanges, self-gifting, resolutions.
- Another 5–8% of annual online sales on top of Q4 (industry estimates).
- Your Q4 learnings are at their freshest — you know exactly which creators and hooks won.

The September setup

- Extend Partnership Ads and Spark licences into January — negotiate it in the original deal.
- Source fresh cuts before New Year so you launch in the first week of January.
- Turn on Q5 versions of proven ads: resolution and fresh-start angles.
- Rebook your top Q4 creators for the year while the results are fresh.



Almost nobody plans for this: across the entire competitor content landscape, only one player even mentions Q5. Brands that brief January content in December buy reach at the year's lowest prices with zero new production pressure.

Selling in Europe? Q4 changes more for you this year

Meta Ads got a surcharge

Location fees live since Jul 1, 2026: UK +2%, FR/IT/ES +3%, AT/TR +5% — billed off-dashboard, on top of budgets (VAT compounds). Adjust ROAS targets by the fee and report from invoices, not Ads Manager.

TikTok Shop is the land-grab

13 European markets live (AT/BE/NL/PL added Jun 2026). The big four did ~€500M in Q2, and ~70% of GMV is affiliate-creator-driven. Under-competed versus the US: seed affiliates in DE/FR/ES/IT now.

EU targeting is weakening

Post-DMA "less personalized ads": a growing share of EU users get contextual-only delivery, so lookalikes and remarketing degrade. Creative diversity and creator content matter even more than in the US.

CREATOR UPSIDE IN EUROPE

European creator rates run ~10–30% below US equivalents (UK is roughly level; Southern and Eastern Europe well below), so global sourcing keeps Q4 content costs flat while US rates spike. Mind the rules: France requires written contracts plus on-screen disclosure, and the EU AI Act pushes labeling of AI-generated creator content — one more reason real humans win.

04

How to run the playbook on Insense

The creator engine beneath it all.

The same map, run on Insense

Each step written as the work you do on Insense. Your team runs the campaigns; the marketplace feeds every lane.

	AUG - SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC - JAN
 Organic + influencers	Seed products · hire creators · build the roster	Last seeding wave · "offer coming" posts	Creator posts + lives · comments	Holiday posts · rebook top creators for the year
 Influencer ads (Partnership / Spark)	Lock Partnership / Spark permissions with each collab	Pilot whitelisting on early winners	Scale winning creator handles	Extend licences into Q5 · Q5-fit creators
 Paid social	First modular briefs · light testing	Finalize the BFCM creative set	Launch scheduled campaigns · rotate versus fatigue	Source fresh Q5 cuts · scale winners

Built to plug in, not replace: Insense is the creator layer — sourcing, briefing, rights, permissions, payments, creator performance — plugged into the stack you already run.

The same plays, run on Insense

Organic + influencers

1 Seeding & reviews

Product-only campaigns, shipment tracked in the chat. Built for organic buzz and for Amazon and TikTok Shop reviews, with the product reimbursed.

2 Affiliate, TikTok Shop and hybrid

Pay for outcomes: fixed plus commission in one deal, TikTok Shop collabs and lives, affiliate posts for proven creators.

Organic + influencers

3 Run paid ads from creator handles

Meta Partnership Ads: start with a Partnership Ads-ready creator pool, send permission requests from the collab chat, and track every license window in the Partnership Ads Hub. Account-level permissions turn each approved handle into a reusable testing channel — run multiple creative variants without requiring an organic post. TikTok Spark Ads: agree usage and duration upfront, collect authorization codes in the collab chat, launch the authorized posts in TikTok Ads Manager.

Paid socials

4 Modular UGC testing

Get hooks, demos, B-roll and raw files from every collab. Test more creators, angles and combinations without starting a new shoot.

5 Test cheap, launch prepared

First applicants within 48 hours. Ad-ready content in about 14 days.

Repurpose everything: one collab feeds every lane — an organic post, a seeded review, a Spark boost, a Partnership Ad. Same shoot, same roster. Rights, permissions and payments agreed once.

Seeding & reviews on Insense

Design for two outcomes: organic content and buzz on creator handles, and reviews where buyers actually check. Run Amazon and TikTok Shop review campaigns as product-only collabs, with the product reimbursed through the platform.

1 Build an appealing offer

PR box, nice packaging, a personal touch. Creators choose brands that respect their time.

2 Launch with wide filters

Broad creator and audience filters to maximize matches across the marketplace.

3 Invite top vetted matches

Hand-pick from matched, vetted creators (2-in-10 approval baseline).

4 Extend with email outreach

Use the outreach tool to reach the wider creator database beyond the marketplace.

NEW

Product shipment lives in the chat: create orders one by one or in bulk, watch live statuses through "Delivered", and export all creator addresses in one click.

Guides: [help.insense.pro/article/4235](https://insense.pro/article/4235) (seeding best practices) · [help.insense.pro/article/5315](https://insense.pro/article/5315) (outreach setup)

Pay for outcomes: affiliate, TikTok Shop, hybrid

Flat creator rates inflate 20–40% into November. Outcome-based deals keep your cost per post flat exactly when demand peaks.

Hybrid deals

One collab, two components: a fixed fee plus a sales commission. Creators share the performance risk, you lower the upfront cost of scale. Agree the split per deal and pay through the same balance.

TikTok Shop collabs

Creators post shoppable videos and go live with your products; GMV flows through Shop and feeds GMV Max. Reviews land on your product page, where Shop buyers actually decide.

Affiliate posts

Commission-only deals for the creators who already proved they convert. Extend November and December reach with no new fixed content budget.



WHY THIS COMPOUNDS IN Q4

Commission creators keep posting through Black Friday and December without a new budget line, and every affiliate post is one more entry in the platforms' search results for your product — exactly when gift-buyers are searching.

Meta Partnership Ads: two workflows

With Insense's vetted creators

- 1 Launch a Meta Partnership Ads campaign.
- 2 Filter for Partnership Ads-ready creators.
- 3 Connect your Meta Ads Manager account.
- 4 Agree the license duration with the creator.
- 5 Hire the creator and send a Partnership Ads request from the collab chat.
- 6 Launch in Meta Ads Manager and track permission windows in the Partnership Ads Hub.

With creators outside Insense

- 1 Agree deliverables, usage rights and licensing terms.
- 2 Open the Partnership Ads Hub and connect Meta Ads Manager.
- 3 Click Request Partnership Ads.
- 4 Find creators by handle or upload a list.
- 5 Send the connection request.
- 6 Once accepted, launch through Meta Ads Manager or the Partnership Ads Hub.

META UPDATES SINCE DEC 2025

Meta's Partnership Ads Hub surfaces creator content that tags or mentions your brand. Creators can share permissions through ad codes, and Facebook Professional Mode profiles are now eligible, expanding the creator pool.

UGC that's built to be tested, not admired

What every collab delivers

- Building blocks, not one finished ad: multiple hooks, product demo, B-roll and several CTAs from a single shoot.
- Edited video and raw files, both standard — your editors can swap a hook the same day an ad fatigues.
- Rights and whitelisting agreed in the same flow, not chased after the shoot.
- First applicants in 48 hours; ad-ready content in about 14 days.

Why this wins Q4 specifically

- Only ~4–8% of creatives become winners: three or four November winners means testing 30–50 variants in September and October.
- Modular is the only affordable way there: many versions from one shoot, not fifty shoots.
- Meta's algorithm rewards exactly this: distinct creators, faces and angles are the new targeting.
- When BFCM-week fatigue hits, you recut instead of reshooting.



One collab, three jobs: an organic post on the creator's handle, a stack of paid variants for your ad account, and the whitelisting rights to run it from their name. This is the content engine everything else in this playbook runs on.

Find the right creator by describing who you need

AI search across data only Insense has

Describe the creator you need in plain English. Nine years of first-party creator data — signup details, screening surveys, past collaborations and portfolio content — turns that sentence into ranked matches, and shows the facts behind each one: what they've actually shot, who they've worked with, how they performed.

Profiles built around real creator work

See actual portfolio content alongside each creator's data and metrics. Search "male nurse" and immediately review their hospital-scrubs video, then shortlist and share the strongest matches with your team.

Every platform and market, one search

Search TikTok, Instagram and YouTube creators in one place, with authorized channel insights. Find vetted creators across 57 countries and hard-to-source niches, including 50+ and healthcare.

115,000+

vetted creators

57+

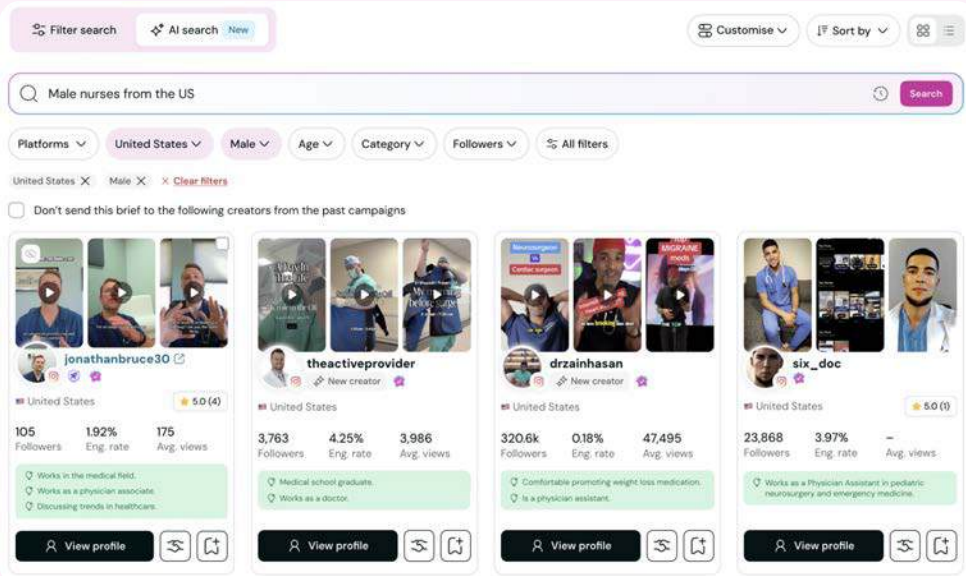
countries

2 in 10

approved

48 hrs

to first applicants



Built for September: describe your November bench today, shortlist it this week, first applicants before the weekend. And when US creator rates spike 20–40% into November, a 57-country vetted supply keeps producing at flat rates.

Repurpose everything: one roster, three platforms

The mega-strategy: person plus creative in one unit.

Meta Partnership Ads

Ads from creator handles with the paid-partnership label. The Partnership Ads Hub and ad-code permissions make setup one-click.

TikTok Spark Ads + GMV Max

Boost creator posts natively. GMV Max, now mandatory for Shop sellers, optimizes paid, organic, affiliate and LIVE as one pool. Measure blended GMV, and re-validate winners in October — the US algorithm is retraining.

YouTube Creator Partnerships

BrandConnect's successor: creator deals and partnership-style ads on Shorts, with the API open to platforms. Shorts now on YouTube TV is a free path to the living room.

WHY IT MATTERS

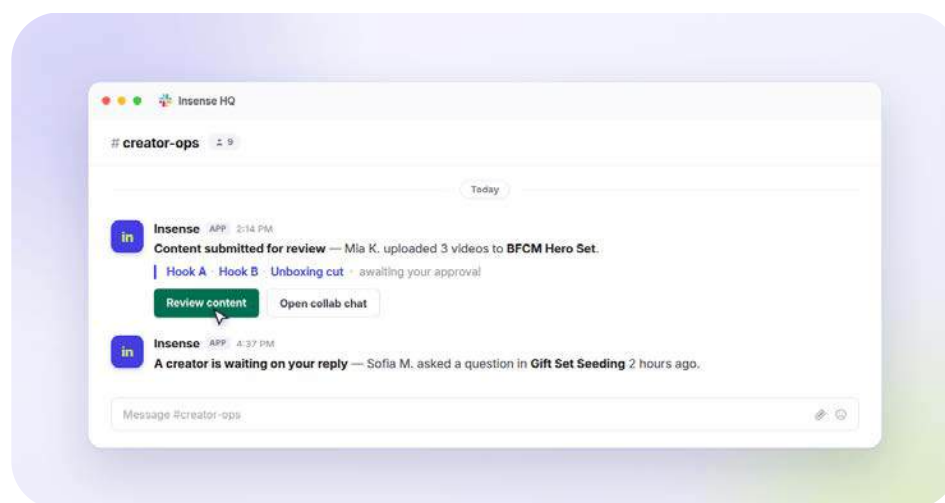
One collab is never one asset: the same shoot becomes an organic post, a seeded review, a Spark boost, a Partnership Ad. Permissions, rights and payments are agreed once, and the same vetted roster distributes across every surface — with new ones multiplying (AppLovin, programmatic, CTV).

Insense works where you work: Slack and your AI assistant

Q4 is won in the response times — how fast you review content, answer a creator, replace a cancellation. So we stopped making you check the platform.

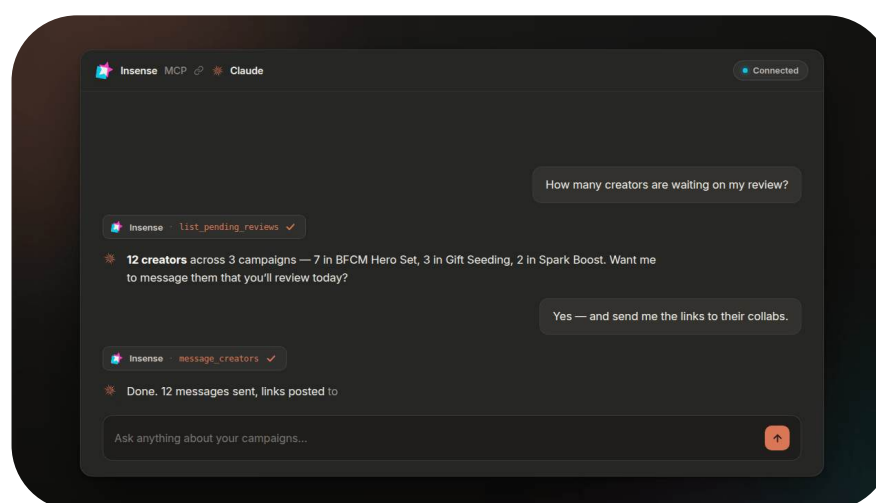
In your Slack

- Connect your workspace once: every key event pings your channel — content submitted for review, published, brief approved and live.
- A creator waiting or cancelling? You know instantly, and can answer or replace before the deal goes cold.
- Automated Instagram DM nudges to unresponsive creators, built on Meta's Creator Marketplace API.



In your AI assistant (MCP)

- Connect Insense to Claude or ChatGPT, or the agent your team already uses.
- Ask, then act: "How many creators are waiting on my review?" → "Message them all that I'll review today."
- It reads and acts across campaigns, collabs, creator profiles and chats.



WHY IT MATTERS

Insense plugs into the stack you already run and strips out the ops that eat weeks: rights and payments settle in-platform with no legal back-and-forth, and creators apply to you instead of your team chasing them.

Know who performs: the creator loop

"You don't just find great creators, you know who performs."

1 • Source

vett ed creators,
matched to your
brief

2 • Create

one collab feeds
organic and paid

3 • Analyze

performance by
creator, via Ads
Manager

4 • Rehire

the winners join
your roster

5 • Feed

new briefs,
products, fresh
faces, repeat

Every creator, one table

Their ads, ad spend, content cost, ROAS, ROI, CPA, hook and hold rate — performance by person, not just by ad.

The winners surface instantly

Filter by brand or campaign, click into any creator's paid-ads profile, export CSV.

Spot winners, re-brief in clicks

Ads auto-sort into buckets against your own account averages, and the re-brief drawer opens the creator's chat.

Rebooking decisions are made by person — and by October, your November bench is a sorted table, not a hunch.

INSENSE

God View

Search creators, campaigns, deals...

📖

\$2,892

🗨️

🌱

Home

Campaigns

Chats

Creator Marketplace

Creator Lists

Partnership Ads Hub

Creative Library

Performance

Organization

Performance

Beta

Last updated 6 hours ago

Eden & Om LLC

Creators

Ads

Search creators

Brands

Campaign

Export (CSV)

Creators with tracked performance

Only insense creators with tracked paid ad results appear here. [How tracking works](#)

Creator	Ads	Ad spend	Content cost	Total investment	ROAS	ROI	CPA	Hook rate	Hold rate
 thatmomchelsey 1 matched deal	10	\$462	\$225	\$687	0.4x	-70%	\$154.09	36%	19%
 miranotmyira 2 matched deals	9	\$3,107	\$450	\$3,557	1.7x	51%	\$57.53	40%	21%
 tamaraleeisme...	8	\$141	\$225	\$366	5.5x	111%	\$35.19	31%	17%

Next up: your creator roster, run like a team

81% of BFCM collaborations are with repeat creators, and creators' number-one barrier is the lack of consistent brand deals (CreatorIQ, 5,095 creators surveyed). You can already rebook proven performers on Insense today. What ships this fall turns your bench into a system.

Your bench, in one place

Every creator you've worked with, with your own tags and labels, notes, and a content library per creator.

Bring your own creators

Creators you found outside Insense live in the same roster: manage, brief and pay everyone through one flow.

Know who to book next

Performance-based suggestions from your own results: who delivered, who's due a rebooking, who fits the next brief.

Brief the bench at once

One-to-many messaging when a campaign drops: tell your whole roster about the BFCM brief in one send.

Rolling out through the fall — ask your account manager about early access.

Ready to win Q4?

Let's build your creator engine before the auction heats up.
See how you can win Q4 with organic and paid social.

Book a demo

insense.pro/book-a-demo

The all-in-one solution for scaling UGC production and influencer marketing, offering both a creator marketing platform and diverse, flexible managed services.

Insense has 115,000+ vetted UGC creators and micro-influencers from 57+ countries across the USA, Canada, EMEA, APAC and Latin America, an interactive brief, integrated chat, automated payments, lifetime copyrights, and more.