

The Top 10

Food & Beverage Brands Dominating Influencer Marketing

And Their Recipes
for Success





Creator Content is the **Main Ingredient** in Successful F&B Marketing



Our apologies up front: that's not the last cooking metaphor in this report. But the comparison is apt. Like any good recipe, a successful marketing strategy carefully measures individual components—organic content, digital marketing, earned media—and skillfully combines them into something more than the sum of those parts.

Traditionally, influencer marketing has been treated as a garnish to sprinkle on top of the marketing mix. But for a growing number of top food and beverage brands, creator content has become the star ingredient.

These brands realize that limiting creators to awareness building on organic social leaves a lot on the table. Instead, creators can drive measurable, bottom-of-the-funnel results when mixed into everything from earned and performance marketing to e-commerce and affiliate programs.

[According to Mediakix](#), influencer marketing delivers 11 times more ROI than some types of digital marketing, like banner ads. That's the difference between spending \$10 on a drive-through burger meal and dropping \$120 on a three-course lunch at Manhattan's famed three-star Michelin restaurant, Le Bernardin.

Hungry yet? This report reveals which F&B brands are leading the way with innovative creator marketing. More importantly, we explore actionable best practices you can use to craft your own recipe for success.

Let's dig in.

Menu

Top 10

This report examines the top F&B brands as measured by EMV, CreatorIQ's proprietary metric for quantifying the value of social media content. All data comes from the first half of 2023 (January to June).

Top 10 Categories	Page
Top 10 F&B Brands	4
Top 10 Restaurants	7
Top 10 Grocery Retail	9
Top 10 Grocery Items	11
Top 10 Alcoholic Beverages	13
Top 10 Non-Alcoholic Beverages	14



Recipe for ROI

We don't stop at rankings. After each top 10 list, we examine how a particular brand used one of the five key steps in our Recipe for ROI.

Recipe	Page
Step 1: Prioritize Authenticity Over the Hard Sell	6
Step 2: Let Creators Lead	8
Step 3: Don't Always Think Big	10
Step 4: Leverage Trends and Challenges	12
Step 5: Engage the Right Communities	15

Top 10

All Food & Beverage

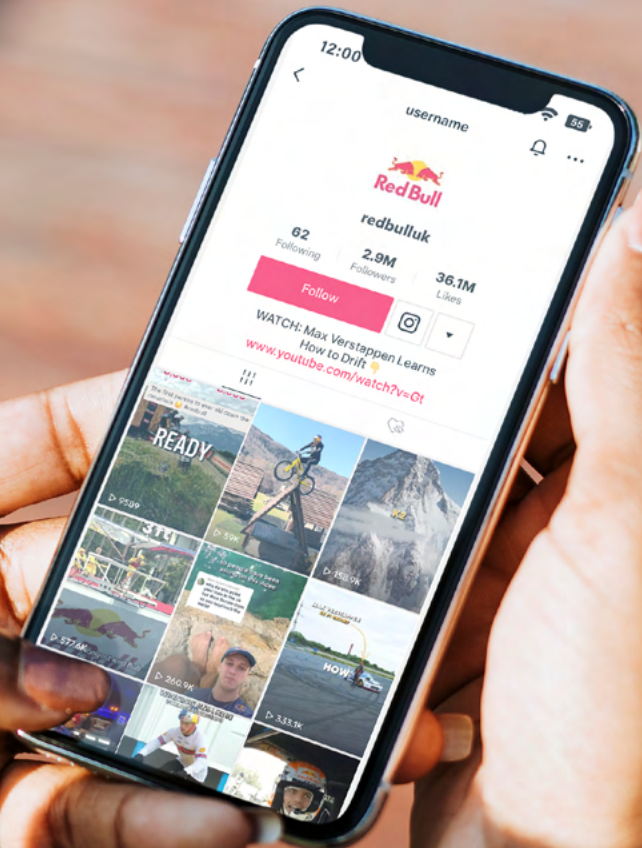
Rank	Brand	EMV	Creators	Posts per Creator	EMV per Creator
①	McDonald's	\$206,413,090	9,277	3.1	\$22,250
②	Starbucks	\$185,943,820	17,082	2.8	\$10,885
③	Red Bull	\$142,658,156	3,867	6.2	\$36,891
④	Celsius	\$104,628,318	3,901	5.1	\$26,821
⑤	Oreo	\$103,418,758	4,720	4.2	\$21,911
⑥	Trader Joe's	\$97,626,306	12,820	3.0	\$7,615
⑦	Coca-Cola	\$97,543,331	7,561	2.6	\$12,901
⑧	GFUEL	\$83,401,405	303	21.0	\$275,252
⑨	Bud Light	\$78,625,707	2,063	5.4	\$38,112
⑩	Bang Energy	\$73,973,590	361	13.7	\$204,913

H1 2023



How We Calculate Earned Media Value (EMV)

To calculate EMV for a brand or campaign, we assign a unique value to a piece of content based on the engagement that this content received from followers and consumers. This value is then attributed to the specific brands mentioned within that content. EMV can be used to evaluate the earned performance of individual marketing campaigns, and benchmark brands within their competitive landscape.



Recipe for ROI



Step 1:

Prioritize Authenticity Over the Hard Sell

A key benefit of working with creators is the authenticity they lend your brand. Don't undermine that connection with consumers by pushing transparently self-serving content.

Just take a look at the Instagram feeds of Red Bull's roster of extreme athletes. You won't find scripted reads or blatant product placements. In fact, aside from hashtags and the occasional Red Bull t-shirt, you won't see the brand's imagery much at all.

Red Bull knows that this understated presence is enough to generate awareness and loyalty without turning off younger consumers wary of traditional advertising.

It's been a hit. The energy drink powerhouse generated nearly \$112.0M EMV in the first half of 2023 on Instagram alone, far and away the highest total among F&B brands. What's more, 80% of Red Bull's H1 EMV stemmed from creators who had also posted about the brand in the previous half—a sure sign creators appreciate Red Bull's hands-off style.



Red Bull | H1 2023

Total EMV: **\$142,658,857**

Creators: **3,867**

Posts per Creator: **6.2**

EMV per Creator: **\$36,891**



Top 10

Restaurants

(QSR and Traditional)

Rank	Brand	EMV	Creators	Posts per Creator	EMV per Creator
1	McDonald's	\$206,413,090	9,277	3.1	\$22,250
2	Starbucks	\$185,943,820	17,082	2.8	\$10,885
3	Chipotle	\$52,125,874	4,772	2.2	\$10,923
4	Taco Bell	\$48,306,849	3,432	2.5	\$14,075
5	The Cheese-cake Factory	\$48,271,413	4,779	2.0	\$10,101
6	Dunkin'	\$47,015,967	4,960	3.1	\$9,479
7	Chick-fil-A	\$43,875,240	4,241	2.3	\$10,345
8	KFC	\$33,003,659	1,675	2.8	\$19,704
9	Raising Cane's	\$29,054,669	1,793	2.6	\$16,205
10	Wendy's	\$28,932,717	2,074	2.6	\$13,950

Recipe for ROI



Step 2:

Let Creators Lead

Rather than striking out on your own, it's best to partner with creators who have already earned the trust of your target audiences.

When TikTok food critic Keith Lee shared a Chipotle quesadilla menu hack with his 10M followers, the brand moved quickly to add the creation as an official menu item and launch a paid campaign centered on Lee.

In the four months between Lee's first organic posts and the launch of the "Keithadilla," Chipotle earned more than 33.3M Engagements and 433.6M Impressions on TikTok.

Chipotle's decision to collaborate with Lee not only boosted the reach and visibility of the menu hack, but also demonstrated the brand's willingness to embrace and celebrate the creativity of its fans.



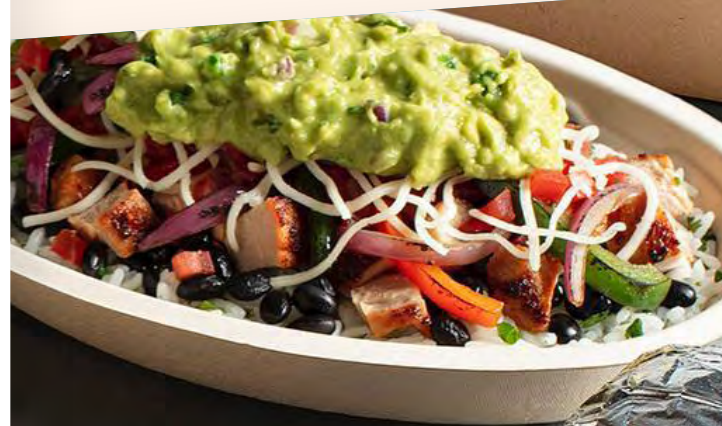
Chipotle | H1 2023

Total EMV: **\$52,125,874**

Creators: **4,772**

Posts per Creator: **2.2**

EMV per Creator: **\$10,923**



Top 10

Grocery Retail

Rank	Brand	EMV	Creators	Posts per Creator	EMV per Creator
①	Trader Joe's	\$97,626,306	12,820	3.0	\$7,615
②	Whole Foods Market	\$62,966,352	7,538	2.9	\$8,353
③	Erewhon Market	\$32,815,447	3,767	3.0	\$8,711
④	Kroger	\$25,339,773	2,178	3.9	\$11,634
⑤	Publix	\$17,796,235	2,318	5.2	\$7,677
⑥	7-Eleven	\$15,188,610	1,263	2.4	\$12,026
⑦	Sprouts	\$14,025,708	2,031	3.0	\$6,906
⑧	Wegmans	\$8,990,579	694	2.5	\$12,955
⑨	H Mart	\$6,580,078	744	2.0	\$8,844
⑩	Safeway	\$6,249,060	609	3.0	\$10,261

H1 2023

Recipe for ROI



Step 3:

Don't Always Think Big

Sometimes it seems like superstar creators with millions of followers get all the glory. But a large number of smaller accounts can have just as much—and often more—of an impact for marketers.

Whole Foods is great at harnessing the aggregate power of these smaller accounts. Half of the brand's \$63.0M EMV in H1 can be attributed to creators with fewer than 300,000 followers on their primary social channel.

There's the gluten-free foodie who excitedly shares new products; the TikToker who tags the brand when whipping up tasty new recipe videos; the professional food writer who uses Whole Foods produce to make surprising treats. What these creators lack in raw follower count, they make up for in the authentic connections they form with their audience, and the high levels of trust they engender.



Whole Foods | H1 2023

Total EMV: **\$62,966,352**

Creators: **7,538**

Posts per Creator: **2.9**

EMV per Creator: **\$8,353**



Top 10

Grocery Items

Rank	Brand	EMV	Creators	Posts per Creator	EMV per Creator
①	Oreo	\$103,418,758	4,720	4.2	\$21,911
②	Doritos	\$62,343,837	4,780	2.3	\$13,043
③	Nutella	\$49,845,099	3,126	2.8	\$15,945
④	Jell-O	\$49,185,476	2,526	3.5	\$19,472
⑤	Reese's	\$34,841,744	2,301	3.0	\$15,142
⑥	M&M's	\$28,765,063	2,350	2.7	\$12,240
⑦	Snickers	\$25,140,653	1,597	2.5	\$15,742
⑧	Cheetos	\$24,212,137	1,942	1.9	\$12,468
⑨	Peeps	\$23,383,171	2,349	2.6	\$9,955
⑩	Takis	\$21,220,761	614	2.5	\$34,562

H1 2023

Recipe for ROI



Step 4:

Leverage Trends and Challenges

Trends and challenges are a great way to stretch your marketing spend. What starts with a handful of carefully selected creator partners can quickly spread to a much wider audience of organic participants.

Cheetos turned to this strategy when it unveiled its Flamin' Hot Carolina Reaper.

The brand sent bags of the product to select TikTok creators and asked them to film their reactions while crunching into the spicy new snack, made from the hottest pepper in the world. Engaging, customizable, and full of goofy fun, the #CheetosReaperReactions challenge quickly spread beyond creator partners to become an organic hit.

Over the course of a year, the campaign saw 2.2k creators publish 4.6k posts. All that added up to an impressive \$26.6M EMV.



Cheetos | H1 2023

Total EMV: **\$24,212,137**

Creators: **1,942**

Posts per Creator: **1.9**

EMV per Creator: **\$12,468**



Top 10

Alcoholic Beverages

Rank	Brand	EMV	Creators	Posts per Creator	EMV per Creator
①	Bud Light	\$78,625,707	2,063	5.4	\$38,112
②	Luc Belaire	\$36,052,786	348	6.1	\$103,600
③	Branson Cognac	\$34,747,141	95	17.7	\$365,759
④	Michelob Ultra	\$15,704,298	595	5.6	\$26,394
⑤	Aperol	\$15,120,817	2,518	1.9	\$6,005
⑥	Budweiser	\$14,107,614	789	3.0	\$17,880
⑦	818 Tequila	\$14,032,841	1,248	2.8	\$11,244
⑧	Hennessy	\$13,920,439	1,291	3.3	\$10,783
⑨	Corona	\$13,255,819	725	3.9	\$18,284
⑩	Guinness	\$10,667,398	1,417	2.7	\$7,528

H1 2023

Top 10

Non-Alcoholic Beverages

Rank	Brand	EMV	Creators	Posts per Creator	EMV per Creator
①	Red Bull	\$142,658,156	3,867	6.2	\$36,891
②	Celsius	\$104,628,318	3,901	5.1	\$26,821
③	Coca-Cola	\$97,543,331	7,561	2.6	\$12,901
④	GFUEL	\$83,401,405	303	21.0	\$275,252
⑤	Bang Energy	\$73,973,590	361	13.7	\$204,913
⑥	Monster Energy	\$64,033,354	1,259	7.1	\$50,860
⑦	PRIME	\$58,564,453	2,277	3.4	\$25,720
⑧	Liquid I.V.	\$41,528,911	4,680	4.9	\$8,874
⑨	Alani Nu	\$35,482,064	4,487	4.1	\$7,908
⑩	OLIPOP	\$34,789,801	3,565	2.3	\$9,759

H1 2023

Recipe for ROI



Step 5:

Engage the Right Communities

When social media users congregate into communities, they're effectively forming organic, self-selected marketing segments. It's a marketer's dream. But being accepted into these communities isn't easy for brands.

Creators are your way in.

Energy drink brand Celsius, which markets itself to young, health-conscious consumers, has used creator partnerships to cozy up to the strength and fitness communities on Instagram and TikTok.

From fitness trainer Alex Eubank to MMA superstar Dustin Poirier to creator-turned-boxer Jake Paul, Celsius' partners represent an organized effort to reach a specific community of consumers. And the results speak for themselves: Eubank alone generated more than \$26.0M EMV for Celsius in the first half of 2023. Identify the communities most likely to have an affinity for your brand and products, then build your content and creator strategies from there.



Celsius | H1 2023

Total EMV: **\$104,628,318**

Creators: **3,901**

Posts per Creator: **5.1**

EMV per Creator: **\$26,821**





Equipment You'll Need

Any good cookbook includes a list of the core kitchen utensils and appliances needed to make the recipes.

You'll also need some equipment to scale your creator-led marketing. Discovering, managing, measuring, and paying creator partners across multiple campaigns is impossible without the right tools.

CreatorIQ, the industry's most trusted software to unify and power advanced influencer marketing, has everything you need to serve up scalable ROI. Our Intelligence Cloud facilitates data science-enabled creator discovery, streamlines workflows, ensures brand safety, and drives meaningful measurement.

That's why CreatorIQ helps power creator marketing for many of the world's leading F&B brands, including AB InBev, Celsius, Red Bull, Raising Cane's, Whole Foods, and more.

Ready to take your **creator-led marketing** to the next level?

[Learn More at creatoriq.com](https://creatoriq.com)