

## INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN E-COMMERCE PRACTICE

### ІНТЕГРАЦІЯ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕРЕЖ В ПРАКТИКУ ЕЛЕКТРОННОЇ КОМЕРЦІЇ

*Modern e-commerce is undergoing a rapid evolution that spans almost all consumer sectors and is characterized by the dominance of mobile commerce, deep personalization of offers, and the active development of social and voice commerce. The integration of shopping functionality directly into social networks, complemented by the widespread use of artificial intelligence to significantly improve the customer experience, indicates a transition to more interactive and convenient forms of online trading, where interaction with the user becomes a central element of success. Influencer marketing plays a special role in this process. Due to their significant presence and high level of trust among followers, influencers have a significant impact on consumer preferences and decisions. Research shows that influencer marketing is a highly effective tool that not only reaches a large audience, but also actively shapes their attitude towards a product or service, stimulating specific purchases or other targeted actions. This trend highlights the critical importance of integrating social media and influencer strategies into modern e-commerce practices to achieve competitive advantage.*

**Ключові слова:** e-commerce, social media, influencer marketing, content marketing.

*Тсучасна електронна комерція демонструє стрімку еволюцію, що охоплює майже всі споживчі сфери та характеризується домінуванням мобільної комерції, поглибленою персоналізацією пропозицій, а також активним розвитком соціальної та голосової комерції. Ключовим вектором її розвитку є глибока інтеграція функціоналу покупок безпосередньо в соціальні мережі, що доповнюється повсюдним застосуванням штучного інтелекту для значного покращення клієнтського досвіду. Ці тенденції свідчать про перехід до більш інтерактивних та зручних форм онлайн-торгівлі, де взаємодія з користувачем стає центральним елементом успіху. Завдяки своїй безпрецедентній проникності, високій інтерактивності та здатності охоплювати різноманітні демографічні групи, соціальні медіа перетворилися на незамінний інструмент для бізнесу будь-якого масштабу. Вони надають унікальні можливості для встановлення прямого та ефективного діалогу з цільовою аудиторією, оперативного поширення інформації про продукти та послуги, цілеспрямованого формування іміджу бренду, а також реалізації комплексних маркетингових кампаній. Це досягається за допомогою різноманітного контенту, інтерактивних елементів та можливості спілкування в реальному часі, що дозволяє стимулювати залучення користувачів та конвертувати їхню увагу у конкретні дії. Особливу роль у цьому процесі відіграє інфлюенс-маркетинг. Завдяки своїй значній присутності та високому рівню довіри серед підписників, інфлюенсери мають суттєвий вплив на споживчі переваги та рішення, створюють контент, що глибоко резонує з інтересами та ціннісними орієнтирами їхньої аудиторії, формуючи потужний канал для брендів. Дослідження доводить, що інфлюенс-маркетинг є високоефективним інструментом, який дозволяє не лише масштабно охопити цільову аудиторію, але й активно формувати її ставлення до продукту чи послуги, стимулюючи до конкретних покупок або інших цільових дій. Це підкреслює критичну важливість інтеграції соціальних мереж та стратегій роботи з інфлюенсерами в практику сучасної електронної комерції для досягнення конкурентних переваг.*

**Key words:** e-commerce, social media, influencer marketing, content marketing.

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**Formulation of the problem.** The relevance of studying the role of social networks in modern e-commerce is due to the rapid and comprehensive penetration of social media into the lives of billions of users around the world. Social platforms have ceased to be exclusively a tool for communication and information exchange, transforming into powerful marketing channels and trading platforms. Changing consumer behavior, who increasingly spend a significant part of their time in the online environment, actively interact with brands through social networks and make purchasing decisions under the influence of content, recommendations and opinions of opinion leaders, makes understanding the mechanisms of this interaction critically important for the success of

any business in the field of e-commerce. Ignoring the potential of social networks or their ineffective use can lead to the loss of a significant market share, reduced competitiveness and missed opportunities for growth.

Modern practice of conducting e-business demonstrates that social networks are not just one of the communication channels, but often the leading tool for attracting, converting and retaining customers. They provide unique opportunities for building long-term relationships with the audience, increasing brand loyalty, promptly receiving feedback and quickly responding to market needs. The development of social commerce tools, such as platform stores, direct sales through chats and integration with payment systems, turns social

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networks into full-fledged trading ecosystems. Therefore, research into the development directions of relevant social network tools in the context of e-commerce is extremely important for the scientific community and business practitioners, as it allows developing sound approaches to using this powerful tool to achieve commercial success in the digital age.

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

The modern development of e-commerce is impossible without deep integration with the capabilities of social networks. Recent scientific publications and studies clearly indicate that social media has transformed from a simple communication channel into a key tool for strengthening digital branding and effective interaction with consumers. In particular, Gutierrez-Velasco, J. et al. emphasize the strategic role of digital marketing communications in increasing the digital presence of brands [3], while Ugolkova, O. notes the fundamental importance of digital marketing and social networks in the modern business environment [11]. These works lay the theoretical foundations for understanding the indispensability of social platforms in modern e-commerce business models. One of the most significant aspects of integration is the use of influencer marketing. The study by Horobchenko, O. highlights influencer marketing as a powerful tool for developing e-business, emphasizing its potential in attracting an audience and stimulating sales [5]. Developing this topic, Burdiak, O., Pomazan, L. & Havryliuk, I. analyze in detail the role of social media influencers in ensuring the effectiveness of advertising, which directly affects the commercial results of online businesses, which indicates a shift in focus from traditional advertising to more personalized and trustworthy communication channels offered by influencers [1].

In addition to influencers, content marketing on social media plays an important role as a means of building a brand and attracting customers in the e-commerce ecosystem. Ponomarenko, I. & Yahelska, K. emphasize the importance of content marketing in digital branding, emphasizing that high-quality and relevant content is the basis for building strong relationships with consumers online [6]. Statistical data presented by Haan, K. further confirms the growing importance of content marketing for modern businesses [4]. In addition, Yankovets, T. considers digital marketing of brands in social media as a comprehensive approach to increasing their awareness and interaction with the target audience, which is critical for success in e-commerce [12]. The conclusions on the digital transformation of enterprises, obtained by Sakun, O., Stankevich, I. & Sakun, N. from their study, indirectly confirm that the successful integration of social networks into e-commerce requires the use of modern analytical tools for processing data on consumer behavior [7]. In the context of global challenges, Tanasiichuk, A. et

al. draw attention to international business strategies to ensure the stability of enterprises, which also emphasizes the need to adapt and use all available digital tools, including social networks, to maintain competitiveness in turbulent conditions [10]. However, the topic of the significance of social networks in e-commerce is a constant and dynamic area for scientific research due to its constant relevance.

**Formulating the purpose of the article.** The purpose of the scientific article is to investigate the theoretical and practical aspects of using social networks as a leading tool of modern e-commerce, identify key mechanisms of their influence on online sales, and substantiate relevant tools for effectively attracting and retaining customers through social media.

**Presentation of the main research material.** The current state of e-commerce in the world is marked by unprecedented growth and its deep penetration into the daily lives of consumers. The COVID-19 pandemic, known as the "corona crisis", acted as a powerful catalyst for these processes, significantly accelerating the transition from traditional retail models to online shopping. This event has radically changed consumer habits and stimulated businesses to actively adapt and expand their presence in the digital space, turning e-commerce into one of the main drivers of the global economy.

Analysis of the distribution of online shopping around the world clearly demonstrates the dominant role of specialized online stores, which account for the largest share of transactions – 29%. This emphasizes their convenience, wide assortment and competitive prices. Interestingly, physical stores also hold a significant share of online purchases (28%), which indicates the hybrid approach of many consumers and the integration of online channels into the strategies of traditional retailers. This highlights the importance of omnichannel strategies, where physical and digital touchpoints complement each other. In addition, retailer websites account for a significant share (10%), indicating their role as a direct channel of communication with consumers. Direct sales from brands, which account for 9%, reflect the growing trend of manufacturers to establish direct relationships with the end buyer, bypassing intermediaries. Although purchases through social applications (7%), games (5%) and other channels (4%) currently have a smaller market share, their importance is constantly growing, reflecting the diversification of points of sale and the emergence of new, interactive e-commerce formats. This indicates a dynamic development of the industry and the constant search for new ways to interact with customers in the digital space (Fig. 1).

Modern foreign economic activity clearly demonstrates that players in the electronic market, regardless of their size or specialization, primarily compete for the attention of the online audience. This

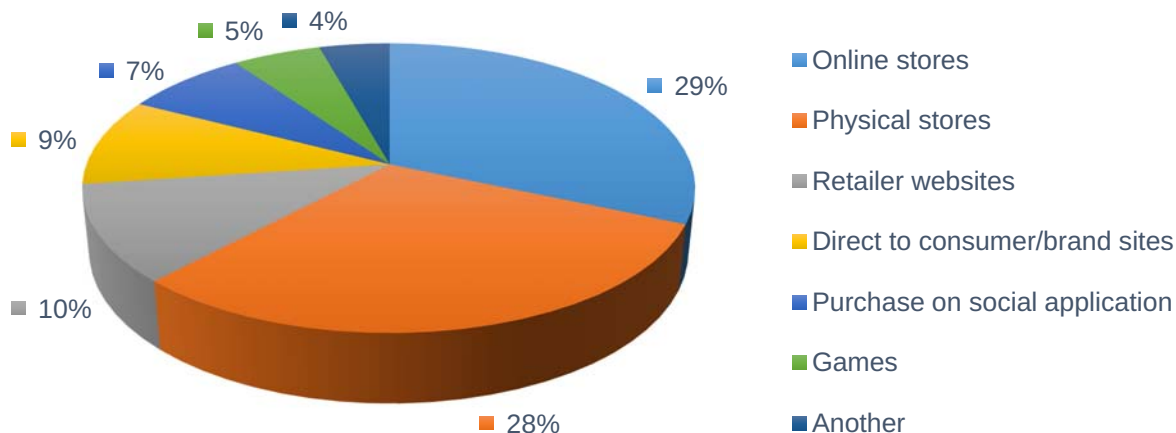


Figure 1. Distribution of online purchases worldwide by channel, 2024

Source: compiled by the author based on Statista data [8]

competition is critically important, since it is precisely the attraction and retention of users that is the driving force that ensures the constant growth of business activity and market share. That is why social networks have acquired the status of not just an additional, but a vital communication channel for any electronic commercial enterprise. They are not only a powerful tool for the effective delivery of advertising messages to the target audience, allowing companies to reach their potential customers with high accuracy. Their functionality goes far beyond traditional advertising: social networks serve as interactive platforms for the free exchange of opinions, reviews, recommendations and experience of using goods or services. This spontaneous, but extremely influential exchange of information is of enormous importance for the formation of consumer decisions, since trust in

recommendations from real users often exceeds trust in official advertising materials.

The evolution of social media in e-commerce demonstrates its ever-growing and now pivotal role across the entire online sales cycle. This cycle extends from the consumer's first contact with a brand to the actual purchase and, no less importantly, the subsequent interaction with the customer after the sale. Social media has evolved from simple communication platforms into powerful integrated ecosystems that shape consumer behavior and determine the success of e-commerce. Their importance in this context is so fundamental that they have become an indispensable tool for any business that seeks to operate effectively in the digital space (Tab. 1).

In the early stages of e-commerce and social media, the latter were used primarily as traditional marketing

Table 1

The evolution of social media use in e-commerce

Stage	Main characteristics	Tools	Example
1. Beginning (2000s)	Use of social networks (Facebook, Twitter) mainly for marketing and advertising	Banner advertising, creation of brand pages, contests and raffles	The company creates a Facebook page to promote its products
2. Integration (early 2010s)	The emergence of social commerce functions, the ability to make purchases directly on social networks	"Buy", "Like" buttons, integration of payment systems, targeted advertising	Facebook adds the "Shop" function, allowing brands to sell products directly on the platform
3. Personalization (mid-2010s)	Using user data to personalize offers and advertising	Recommendation systems, retargeting, personalized mailings	Instagram uses algorithms to show users advertisements for products that match their interests
4. Influence marketing (late 2010s)	Active development of influence on marketing, cooperation with opinion leaders	Sponsored posts, reviews, live broadcasts	Brands collaborate with bloggers on Instagram to promote their products
5. Modernity (2020s)	Development of social commerce, direct sales through social networks, use of video content, integration with other channels	Live broadcasts with the possibility of shopping, chatbots, integration with CRM systems	TikTok is becoming a popular platform for direct sales, where users can buy products while watching videos

Source: compiled by the author

channels. Social platforms were a place to reach a wide audience and increase brand awareness, but without direct functionality for transactions. Brands used them to announce new products, run contests, and drive traffic to their external websites. A significant transformation occurred later with the emergence and widespread adoption of social commerce features. This stage was marked by the ability for users to make purchases directly on social media platforms, without having to visit third-party online stores. The development of analytical tools and sophisticated artificial intelligence algorithms led to unprecedented personalization of offers. Platforms learned to collect and analyze huge amounts of data about user behavior, their interests, and previous purchases, which allowed brands to showcase the most relevant products and services. In addition, influencer marketing, i.e. collaboration with opinion leaders and bloggers, has become an extremely important tool for attracting and building audience trust. Influencers, thanks to their authenticity and direct contact with their audience, act as effective brand ambassadors, able to influence purchasing decisions and expand reach, proving the multifaceted and complex role of social networks in modern e-business.

Social media is today one of the most powerful and effective tools for reaching an extremely wide range of users around the world – most of the population, regardless of age, are active users of at least one social media platform. This ubiquity of use makes social media an indispensable channel for communication, marketing, information exchange and public opinion formation, and their ability to provide direct and instant interaction with the audience makes

them unrivaled compared to many traditional media. The growth in popularity and use of social media of various types is clearly visible. The most impressive growth is demonstrated by the overall use of any social media platform, which is steadily increasing year by year, emphasizing their integration into everyday life. In parallel, there is growth, albeit at a less intense pace, in the field of professional and business networks. This indicates a growing awareness of their value as tools for networking, job search, exchange of expertise and business development. Particularly notable is the significant growth of platforms focused on the exchange of multimedia content, which was especially pronounced in 2023, reflecting the shift in consumer preferences towards visual and video formats (Fig. 2).

However, despite the overall growth, there are certain nuances in the dynamics of the use of different types of networks. Thus, the use of corporate blogs and microblogs, although showing growth until 2019, after this period shows a certain decline. However, it is important to note that they still maintain a significant level of popularity and remain important channels for targeted communication and distribution of content that requires a more detailed format. The general trend is unambiguous: social networks continue to grow and increase their importance in a wide variety of aspects of both personal life and business activity, becoming an integral part of the modern information infrastructure.

In recent years, the integration of social networks into e-commerce practices has significantly deepened. The social network Instagram is showing rapid growth in popularity and is rapidly attracting

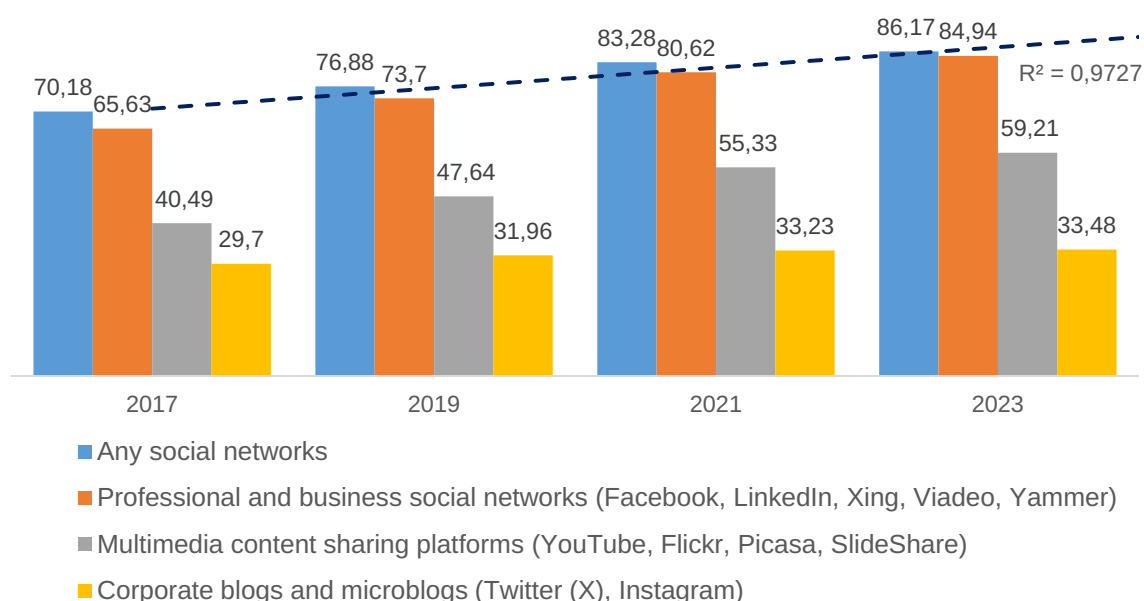


Figure 2. Use of social networks by large enterprises, %

Source: compiled by the author based on Eurostat data [2]

a significant number of users around the world. In parallel, the Facebook platform maintains its position as the world leader among social media (Fig. 3). Among young social media users, Facebook is gradually losing its former popularity in favor of platforms that emphasize bright visual content and active interaction, among which Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok stand out. Social media platforms are actively integrating commercial tools to facilitate the online shopping process for users. In particular, the introduction of functions such as Facebook Shops and Instagram Shopping significantly expands the possibilities for purchasing goods directly within these social networks, which creates direct sales channels, allowing brands to showcase their products and carry out transactions without taking users outside the usual social environment.

Digital tools have opened up unprecedented opportunities for brands to establish a direct, two-way dialogue with their target audience, which was previously difficult or impossible. This direct contact not only allows you to significantly expand the reach of potential consumers, but also helps create deeper and longer-lasting associations with the brand's values, offerings, and overall philosophy. Thanks to digitalization, companies can build more personalized and interactive relationships with their audience, which is important for building strong recognition and loyalty in a highly competitive market.

One of the most powerful tools in this context has become content marketing. It gives brands the opportunity to constantly provide valuable and relevant information that is interesting and useful to consumers, going beyond direct advertising. Thus, the brand does not just sell, but positions itself as an authoritative expert in its field, which significantly increases its trust and memorability among the

target audience. Success in gaining users' attention in the online space directly depends on the quality, relevance and personalization of content, which should meet the individual interests and needs of consumers in specific circumstances. Companies are actively using various content formats, including high-quality photos, captivating videos, informative text materials and audio formats, in order to interact with the audience as effectively as possible. It is important that to meet the needs of today's demanding audience, content must not only be of high quality, but can also be created from various sources: internal resources of the company, user-generated content, partners or purchased from specialized publishing companies.

The significant demand for content materials in the context of digital marketing is a key driver of the constant growth and evolution of the relevant market, which is reflected in the huge investments that companies are willing to spend in this area. This is evidenced by the steady growth of content marketing market revenues: from \$36.9 billion in 2018 to \$63.0 billion in 2022, with a forecast of reaching \$107.5 billion in 2026 (Fig. 4).

This trend clearly emphasizes the growing importance of content marketing as an extremely effective tool for attracting an audience, building its loyalty and, ultimately, achieving strategic business goals in the modern digital environment. In addition to content marketing, social networks have proven to be a powerful channel for visual brand identification, contributing to the formation of active communities around it and the rapid spread of viral content, which significantly increases its recognition. At the same time, influencer marketing uses the trust of opinion leaders to effectively and quickly penetrate the brand message to target segments, increasing its recognition among specific groups of consumers.

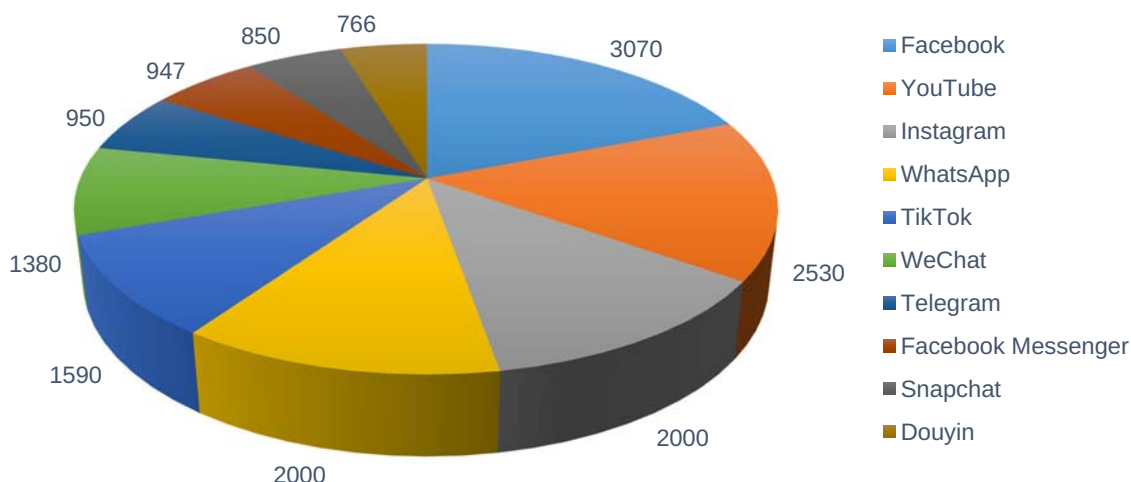
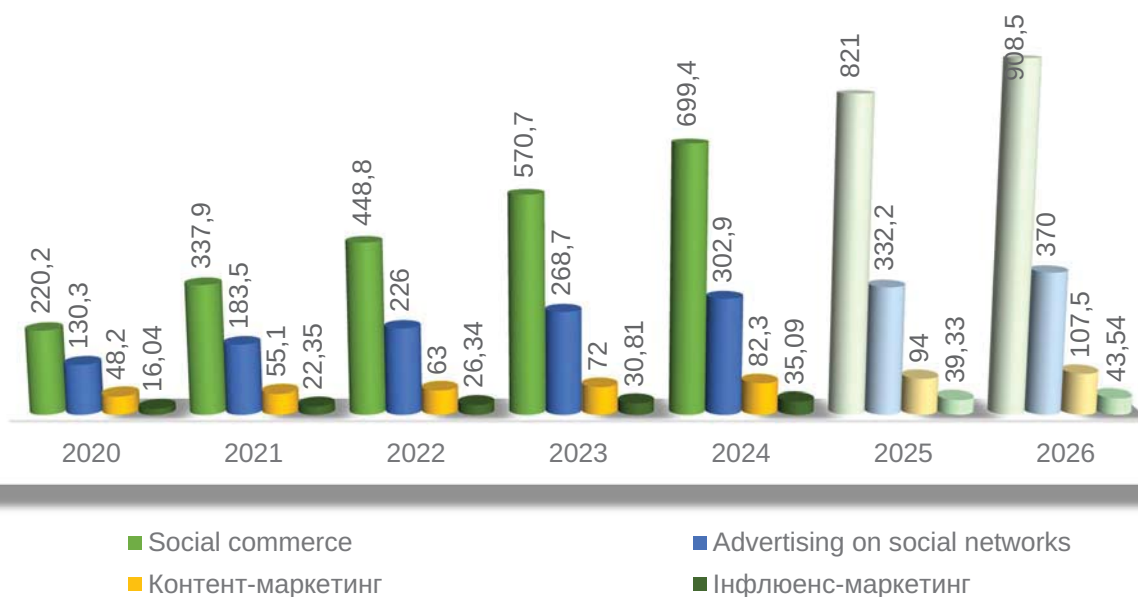


Figure 3. The most popular social networks in the world as of February 2025 by the number of active users per month, million people

Source: compiled by the author based on Statista data [9]



**Figure 4. Global revenues from the use of the main tools of social networks in e-commerce from 2020 to 2026 (forecast), billion dollars USA**

Source: compiled by the author based on data [4; 8; 9]

In the modern business environment, content marketing occupies a unique place, functioning not only as an integral part of the company's overall marketing strategy, but also as an independent, full-fledged tactic. This approach is based on the use of innovative and creative marketing communications to form the desired perception of the brand in the minds of consumers. The goal is to create a positive image of the company, which, in turn, contributes to the successful promotion of its products and services and increases their attractiveness in the market. Digital platforms, in particular social networks and various online services, play a significant role in the effective distribution of content. Among the most popular and effective tools for such promotion are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), Foursquare, LinkedIn, YouTube and TikTok. Each of these platforms has its own unique characteristics, audience and content formats, which significantly affect the achievement of marketing goals.

That is why the content distribution strategy must be carefully adapted to the individual characteristics of each selected platform. It is not enough to simply "post" the same content on all channels; it is necessary to consider the specifics of user interaction, optimal formats (video, text, images), publication timing and ranking algorithms. Such an individualized approach allows you to maximize the reach of the target audience, increase user engagement and, as a result, significantly improve the overall effectiveness of marketing efforts. Almost every large company actively maintains its own blogs, where it regularly publishes relevant and useful materials. This practice

allows brands not only to confirm their expertise and professionalism in the relevant industry, but also to effectively strengthen consumer trust. Thanks to this approach, brand recognition is significantly increased, which, in turn, leads to effective promotion of products and services on the market. High-quality and interesting content creates a strong connection with the audience, transforming them from passive consumers of information into loyal customers.

In parallel, in recent years, the influence of niche and local opinion leaders who have amassed a significant audience on social networks and have a powerful potential to influence consumer decisions has grown significantly. Cooperation with such influencers has become one of the most effective marketing tools. It allows brands not only to reach a loyal and targeted audience of influencers, but also to significantly increase recognition and trust in their brand through their recommendations. Influencers are able to stimulate sales through authentic reviews, demonstrate products in real-life scenarios, and create compelling advertising messages that are perceived by followers as trusted advice, rather than direct advertising. Due to the unique ability of influencers to establish a deep emotional connection with their audience, influencer marketing has become a highly effective tool for shaping consumer preferences and attracting new customers. The emotional component brought by thought leaders significantly increases the level of audience engagement, which directly correlates with the growth of e-commerce. Thus, investments in quality content and cooperation with influencers become an integral part of a modern marketing strategy, providing

brands with competitive advantages and contributing to sustainable development in a dynamic digital space.

The overall trend in the use of social platforms for influencer marketing is a steady increase in its popularity and the expansion of its presence across different social platforms. As can be seen in Fig. 5, all six platforms – Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter and Snapchat – are showing an annual increase in the percentage of marketers using them, which indicates the growing effectiveness and integration of influencer strategies into marketing campaigns. Instagram remains the undisputed leader in this area, showing the highest usage rate and steady growth from 62.0% in 2020 to a projected 84.1% in 2025. Facebook holds the second place, also showing significant growth, highlighting their key role in influencer marketing strategies. YouTube and TikTok occupy the third and fourth places respectively, with figures that are steadily increasing. In particular, TikTok, while a relatively younger platform, is showing significant progress, increasing its share from 36.0% to 46.8%, indicating its rapid integration into the influencer ecosystem and its growing appeal to marketers seeking to reach younger audiences and utilize short-form video content. Twitter and Snapchat, while having smaller market shares, are also showing positive growth dynamics, confirming the general trend of expanding influencer marketing across all key platforms.

The main goal of any business, regardless of its size, industry or form of ownership, always focuses on a critical task – attracting customers. This is not just one of the goals, but the fundamental, unchanging

core around which all the activities of the company revolve throughout its entire life cycle. A stable and constant flow of customers is an absolute prerequisite for survival, sustainable development and prosperity in a competitive market. Without this vital element, the company's ability to generate income, invest in its development, expand its presence and effectively resist competitive pressure becomes extremely limited or even impossible.

Thus, without exception, all the resources, efforts and strategic initiatives of the company, including its marketing activities, are ultimately aimed at a single global goal: creating and constantly maintaining a strong, loyal customer base. This cannot be considered an additional option or simply a desired result; it is a fundamental necessity that forms the basis of any successful and viable enterprise. Every aspect of a business, from the very first stages of product or service development to the subtle nuances of after-sales service, must be purposefully oriented towards satisfying the needs of consumers. A company's strategic line that focuses on customers involves a continuous process: first attracting the attention of potential consumers, then converting them into direct buyers, and, ideally, transforming these buyers into long-term, loyal brand supporters. This requires a deep understanding of the target audience, constantly improving the offer, building effective communication channels, and creating an exceptional customer experience at every stage of interaction. It is this holistic approach that allows a business not only to survive, but also to dynamically develop, adapting to changing market conditions and strengthening its position.

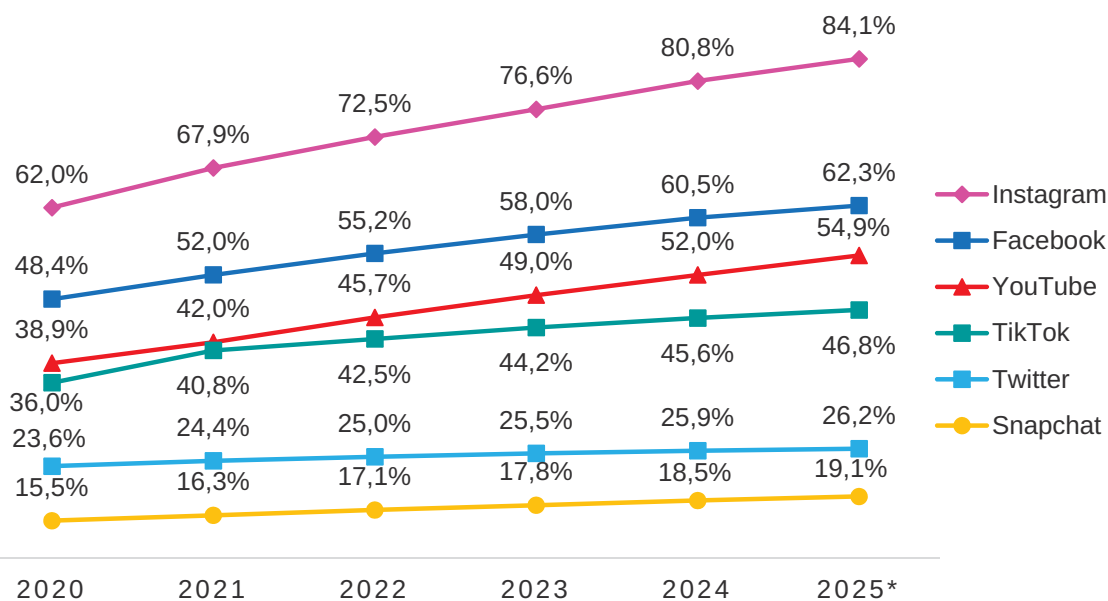


Figure 5. Use of social platforms for influencer marketing in 2020–2024 and forecast for 2025\*, %

Source: compiled by the author based on data [8]

**Conclusion.** In today's digital era, the success of e-commerce businesses is directly dependent on two key factors: the number of users they engage with and the speed at which those users engage with the platform or brand. This direct relationship underscores a fundamental shift in the paradigm of doing business, where the digital audience is becoming the most valuable asset. Successfully leveraging the power of social media allows companies to achieve much more than just attracting attention to their offerings. It allows them to build strong and loyal communities around their brands, creating spaces for interaction, dialogue, and emotional connection. This process transforms passive observers who stumble upon content into active brand advocates who are ready not only to repurchase but also to recommend it to others. Such loyalty and community building are critical to ensuring sustainable business growth, especially in a highly competitive and ever-changing online environment where attracting new customers is becoming increasingly expensive and difficult.

Today, social networks are full-fledged marketplaces with direct sales, video content and integration with other channels, continuing to evolve towards a more interactive and personalized shopping experience. Influencer marketing provides a unique opportunity to establish direct communication with your target audience, using the trust that this audience feels in certain opinion leaders. The further development of e-commerce will be determined by a number of factors, including technological innovations, changes in consumer behavior and regulatory initiatives. Omnichannel is expected to grow in importance, which involves the seamless integration of online and offline sales channels to provide a holistic customer experience. Further personalization based on deep data analysis and machine learning will play a major role, and the importance of environmental sustainability and ethical practices in supply chains and marketing will grow. Overall, e-commerce will continue to transform, becoming even more convenient, personalized, and integrated into the lives of consumers around the world.

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