

2026-10-14



Global Study: Social Is Reshaping the Path to Purchase as Consumers Embrace Short-Form Video and Human Influencers

DV research finds short-form video drives the strongest consumer response, while AI-generated influencers face more skepticism than human creators using AI
NEW YORK, Oct. 14, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [DoubleVerify](#) ("DV") (NYSE: DV), the leading software platform to verify media quality, optimize ad performance and prove campaign outcomes, today announced the release of its *2026 Global Insights Report, Scroll, Stop and Shop: Walled Garden Trends*. The report examines how social and walled garden platforms are evolving into full-funnel channels, offering advertisers new insights into how consumers engage, research and purchase and how marketers can respond. The report draws on global surveys of 22,000 consumers and 2,020 marketers along with additional DV data.

"Social has fundamentally changed how brands and consumers connect," said **Mark Zagorski, CEO of DoubleVerify**. "As these platforms become more central to the entire customer journey, advertisers have an opportunity to create stronger connections but doing so requires greater clarity into where and how their investments are working."

Consumer behavior shows social media playing a growing role in how people discover, research and purchase products. Key consumer findings include:

Social media is becoming a direct path to purchase. Roughly 1 in 4 consumers globally (26%) use social media to research products, and 1 in 4 (25%) have purchased through social media in the past year. Nearly 4 in 10 (38%) say seeing an ad on social media can encourage them to purchase from a brand. LATAM consumers are the most likely to use social media for product research (36%), followed by APAC (30%), EMEA (21%), and North America (20%).

Short-form video drives consumer action. Nearly 4 in 10 consumers globally (38%) say short-form video ads, including Reels, TikToks and Shorts, can prompt them to click or purchase, making it the top ad format measured. That compares with 31% for ads before or during long-form video and 25% for social feed ads. Short-form video is especially effective in LATAM (49%) and APAC (47%), compared with EMEA (29%) and North America (27%).

Influencers are mainstream purchase drivers. Nearly half of consumers globally say micro-influencers (47%), macro-influencers (48%) and mega-influencers (49%) influence their purchase decisions. Mega-influencers (1M+ followers) have the most influence of the three tiers measured. Their impact is strongest in LATAM and APAC (58% each), compared with EMEA (40%), and North America (39%).

Consumers are skeptical of AI-generated influencers. In one of the largest global studies to date examining consumer sentiment toward AI influencers, DV found that nearly 4 in 10 consumers (37%) respond negatively to brands using AI-generated influencers, compared with fewer than 1 in 3 (29%)

who respond positively. Consumers are 10 percentage points more likely to respond positively when human influencers create content with help from AI (39%) than when the influencer itself is AI-generated (29%).

As social becomes a bigger driver of consumer behavior, marketers face growing pressure to justify their investments.

Reaching the right audience remains their biggest challenge: 4 in 10 social advertisers (40%) cite reaching their target audience as a top challenge, although that figure fell 12% year over year, the largest decline measured. Calculating ROAS/ROI ranks second (36%), followed by keeping up with content trends (35%), brand suitability and content alignment (34%), and managing campaigns across multiple channels (33%).

“As social moves further down the funnel, advertisers are asking more of their investments,” added **Zagorski**. “Reach still matters, but marketers also need to know whether those investments are driving results and appearing in environments that are right for their brands. Consistent measurement and transparency across social platforms are critical to making that possible.”

DV offers [DV Authentic AdVantage™](#), a holistic solution designed to help advertisers measure media quality, protect brand equity and optimize business outcomes across social media. The solution is built on the strength of the DV Media AdVantage Platform (DV MAP™), DoubleVerify's full-spectrum media effectiveness platform, which combines media verification, AI-powered optimization and campaign outcomes measurement to help advertisers maximize performance and return on ad spend.

To download the full *2026 Global Insights Report, Scroll, Stop and Shop: Walled Garden Trends*, visit <https://doubleverify.com/lp/report/social/verify/2026-dv-global-insights-walled-garden-reports>.

About DoubleVerify

DoubleVerify (“DV”) (NYSE: DV) is the industry's leading media effectiveness platform that leverages AI to drive superior outcomes for global brands. By powering media efficiency and performance, DV strengthens the online advertising ecosystem, preserving the fair value exchange between buyers and sellers of digital media. Learn more at www.doubleverify.com.

Chris Harihar
646-535-9475
chris@crenshawcomm.com

Source: DoubleVerify Inc.