



The Sudden Rise of the Deinfluencer: Can Online Superstars Stop Us Shopping?

A) Warm up

1. How often do you shop online?
2. Would you ever consider buying a product based on a review from social media?
3. To what extent do you believe that you are influenced by advertising or other people when you buy a new product?
4. In your opinion, what do you consider to be an “influencer”?

B) Adapted Text - The Sudden Rise of the Deinfluencer

The Sudden Rise of the Deinfluencer: Can Online Superstars Stop Us Shopping?

By Ellie Violet Bramley

Adapted from an article published in 2023 by The Guardian

A **backlash** against overconsumption is spreading fast on social media. Is this the beginning of the end for our excessive consumer culture?

On YouTube, I am watching people that I have never met. They are crying at the smell of a perfume I have never smelled. But I want it, and I am not alone. When influencers began posting videos of themselves reacting with tears and elaborate descriptions of a perfume called “Missing Person” by Phlur, comparing it to the smell of someone you love and miss, it sold out in five hours and accumulated a 200,000-strong waiting list.

Social media is now what markets and shopping centres once were – the place people **flock** to spend their cash. And when something goes viral online, it sells in real life. Influencers reportedly sold \$3.6bn of goods in 2022, with the \$700 Dyson Airwrap hair styler among the top sellers. In a recent study, 54% of people said they made a purchase either in the moment or after seeing a product or service on Instagram. According to another report, 55% of TikTok users have made a purchase after seeing a brand or product on the platform. On Twitter, that figure is 40%.

If influencing is trying to convince people on social media to buy certain products, then deinfluencing is basically the opposite. It originally **stems from** beauty TikTok in early 2023, it has been huge on the platform ever since, spreading to game and book influencers. The hashtag #deinfluencer has more than 185m views. One creator’s instructions not to buy various viral products of the moment – “Do not get the UGG Minis.

Do not get the Dyson Airwrap. Do not get the AirPods Max” – has been liked more than 57,000 times. This **backlash** may be a reaction against influencer culture and the huge profits that some people have made from it.

But as with most things on the internet, deinfluencing has different meanings for different people. In some posts, influencers aim to suppress **hype**. “It’s an opportunity to use my voice and share my honest and personal thoughts on experiences with products I’ve purchased that have become viral through social media,” Rachelle di Stasio, a former dancer with more than 160,000 followers on TikTok, tells me by email. Her first video tagged “deinfluencing” has been watched more than 780,000 times. “Put this back on the shelf,” she tells viewers, referring to a \$60 lip balm from Tom Ford.

Others recommend low-cost alternatives to luxury “**high-end**” products they consider not to be worth the money. While @alyssastephanie admits to having bought 20 bottles of one expensive TikTok-popular sunscreen, she recommends a **mid-range** \$8 alternative from the US grocery store Trader Joe’s instead. “Honestly, it’s better,” she tells her 127,000 followers. Another popular type of content sees former employees of big-name beauty shops reveal which products were most frequently returned.

Karen Wu, AKA @cakedbybabyk, says: “It’s definitely ironic because you’re still influencing people by telling people what to do.” In a recent video, she **urged** people not to buy a lipstick, comparing the feeling of it to having chicken fat on your lips. Paige Pritchard, who goes by the name of The Spending Coach on TikTok, has been posting content under the deinfluencer hashtag to claim that overconsumption habits normalised by TikTok – from wearing a new outfit every day to having 50 different foundations – are not normal: “To me, deinfluencing is living your life, **drawing inspiration from** what you see,” she says, but not necessarily feeling that “you need to go out and create an exact copy of someone else’s life”.

Overconsumption will not be stopped easily, since the internet and shopping **go hand in hand**. “Social media has been linked with selling products since the beginning. People forget that this is not a new thing,” says Isobel Selby, a senior account manager at the influencer marketing agency Fanbytes. Enberg suspects that deinfluencing is just a reaction to the current economic **turmoil**: “The **hype** will **wind down** as the economy improves. Deinfluencing isn’t the cure for overconsumption, nor is it the end of influencer marketing. TikTok creators will remain a major driver of commerce sales from social media, which (while slowing) will grow 29.8% in the US this year.”

Ironically, having negative reviews thrown into the mix through deinfluencing might actually boost the impact of some influencers. “Creators are smart. Having a mix of positive and critical reviews helps them gain more trust,” says Enberg.

Barber believes deinfluencing “has to be coupled with an anti-consumption message” and people slowing down their purchasing. One TikToker, Nava Rose, who has nearly 6 million followers and calls herself “the girl with too many clothes”. Even before the current deinfluencing moment, she posted videos apologising for her role in overconsumption, and she now aims **to put consumers off** buying things that they don’t need. “The fact that some people actually consider shopping fast fashion to be a hobby is honestly quite terrible. Find a new hobby please. Birdwatching is such a nice wholesome hobby.”

The original article can be found in the link below:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2023/feb/22/the-sudden-dawn-of-the-deinfluencer-can-online-superstars-stop-us-shopping>

C) Key Words from Context

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

high-end	to draw inspiration from	in turmoil	mid-range
Backlash	to urge someone to do	to stem from	to wind down
to flock to	to go hand in hand	to put someone off	hype

- To persuade someone strongly to do something: _____
"I would _____ you to reconsider your decision."
- To cause someone to lose interest or enthusiasm in something: _____
"I would really love to visit the country, but the difficult political situation _____ at the moment."
- A product or service of high price and high quality: _____
"We offer really _____ products, so we need to convey a _____ image."
- To be in a position of extreme difficulty, confusion and lack of order: _____
"The company is _____ after the recent scandal caused most of the board to step down."
- To move together somewhere in a crowd: _____
*"Everyone in my town _____ to the coast during the summer holidays."
 "Investors _____ to safe investments such as gold during a financial crisis."*
- To be caused by something: _____
"Many of the country's economic problems _____ the government."
- Intense publicity and promotion causing excitement: _____

"There is a lot of _____ surrounding the launch of the latest smartphone."

8. Medium quality and medium price: _____

"I prefer to buy clothes from _____ stores."

9. A strong negative reaction to a political or social development: _____

"There was a strong _____ after the government changed its economic policy."

10. To slow down gradually and come to a close: _____

"At our company, our day usually _____ after about 4pm. We receive much fewer calls and emails."

11. To be inspired by: _____

"I _____ others who have been successful in my field."

12. To be very closely connected or associated: _____

"Hard work and success _____."

D) Comprehension

Can you answer the questions below about the text?

1. How did an influencer generate hype surrounding the perfume "Missing Person" by Phlur?

2. How does the writer explain the link between social media and shopping in today's world?

3. What is a "deinfluencer", and what are 2 potential reasons behind their recent inception? (For this you will need to look across the whole article)

4. According to the article, what do deinfluencers mainly aim to achieve?

5. According to the article, how likely is it that the deinfluencer trend will continue and why?

6. What is one potential way that deinfluencing could backfire?

E) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

high-end	to draw inspiration from	in turmoil.	mid-range
Backlash	to urge someone to do	to stem from	to wind down
to flock to	to go hand in hand	to put people off	hype.

The Travel Industry

The covid 19 pandemic plunged the travel industry into _____. International travel almost stopped completely during the height of the lockdowns, and even as lockdowns started to ease, governments continued to _____ the public not to travel unless it was absolutely necessary.

As soon as the pandemic ended, there was an immediate huge demand for travel again. In a kind of _____ against the lockdown policies that had been enforced for 2 years, travellers _____ to holiday destinations worldwide.



However, it seems like the travel boom was very short-lived. Travel appears to be _____ again as the economic fallout from the pandemic is really starting to kick in. It seems as if the crisis is even hitting higher earners. Even those who were able to afford luxury, _____ hotels are now downgrading to more _____ options due to the economic crisis. The idea that the situation could get worse continues to _____ spending lots on a holiday. *"We are struggling to attract visitors at the moment. Now that covid has passed, it seems like people's economic, political and*

humanitarian concerns mainly _____ the conflict in Ukraine.” said John Selles, owner of a 5-star hotel on the island of Sicily.

Then, of course, there is the climate crisis. For many, warm sunny weather and beach holidays _____, although fears of forest fires in warmer climates, as well as an uncomfortable feeling surrounding air travel could deter people from travelling in the future.

It seems once again that hotels and holiday destinations will have to work hard in order to generate _____ this summer and attract holidaymakers. If you are considering a nice holiday this year but you are not sure where to go, maybe you can _____ inspiration from an online influencer!