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Influencer Marketing on Instagram in Switzerland:

Influencer's Landscape
and Fraud Problem



Introduction

As more and more companies are trying to grow their presence on Instagram through influencers it's becoming competitive. In order to stand out, marketers need to know what works and what doesn't. To do this, they need data to help them make better decisions about their influencers choice and the whole influencer marketing strategy.

With this report, we set out to provide our readers with the most current Instagram influencers insights and benchmarks. We have also covered the most challenging topic - Influencer fraud, to help marketers make smarter decisions when choosing influencers for their campaigns.



This report was made in partnership with



HypeAuditor is an AI-powered Instagram analytics tool that helps to get insights about the creator's audience, increase advertisers' ROI and safeguard authenticity in influencer marketing. It sets a standard for Instagram analytics by providing the most accurate data.

HypeAuditor applies machine learning to determine behavioral patterns and identify fake followers and engagement on influencer accounts. It presents users with a breakdown of demographic data for an influencer's audience, and brings benchmarks for each metric for influencers with a similar number of followers.

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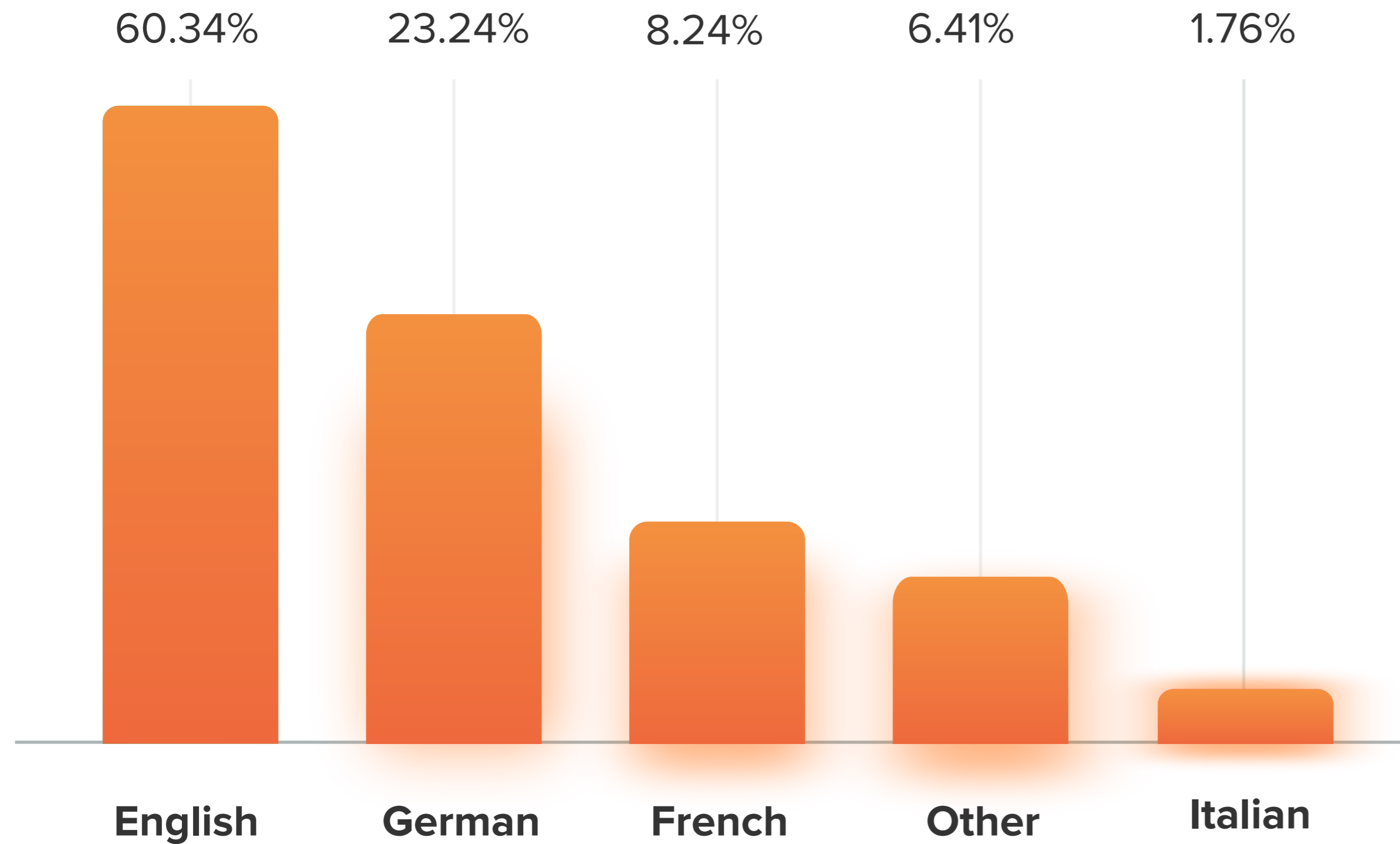
Farner Consulting is Switzerland's leading agency for communications consultancy. Founded in 1951, the agency now employs more than 160 people at its offices in Zurich, Bern, St. Gallen, Lausanne/Geneva and Lugano.

It offers a comprehensive array of services, covering all aspects of communication – from public relations, public affairs, content creation, research & analytics, digital marketing and change communications through to advertising and events – and bringing together multidisciplinary communications consultants with industry-specific expertise and know-how. Farner is one of the Global Top 100 Agencies (The Holmes Report). Farner is the first Swiss PR agency ever to receive Europe's most important award for excellent communication three times: The Holmes Report "D-A-CH Agency of the Year" in 2012, 2015 and 2018. Internationally, Farner is the exclusive affiliate of FleishmanHillard in Switzerland and also works with other international networks.

Chapter I:

Instagram Influencer Landscape in Switzerland

Distribution of influencers by languages



The population of Switzerland is about 8.5 million who speak on one of the four national languages: German, French, Italian or Romansh.

Influencer from the German part of Switzerland address only to the german speaking audience, so there are not much influencers with a decent following.

Instagram influencer landscape

Mega-influencers & Celebrities

(over 1M followers)

- they often have a very mixed audience with various topics of interest. Their relationships with them are more distant compared to other groups of influencers. They have the biggest reach, but the lowest trust

Macro-influencers (100K - 1M followers)

- they are famous in a local community, you can think of them as a “mini-celebrity.” Their content is usually high-quality and is comprised of a certain passion or topic

Micro-influencers (5K-20K followers) and Mid-tier influencers (20K - 100K followers)

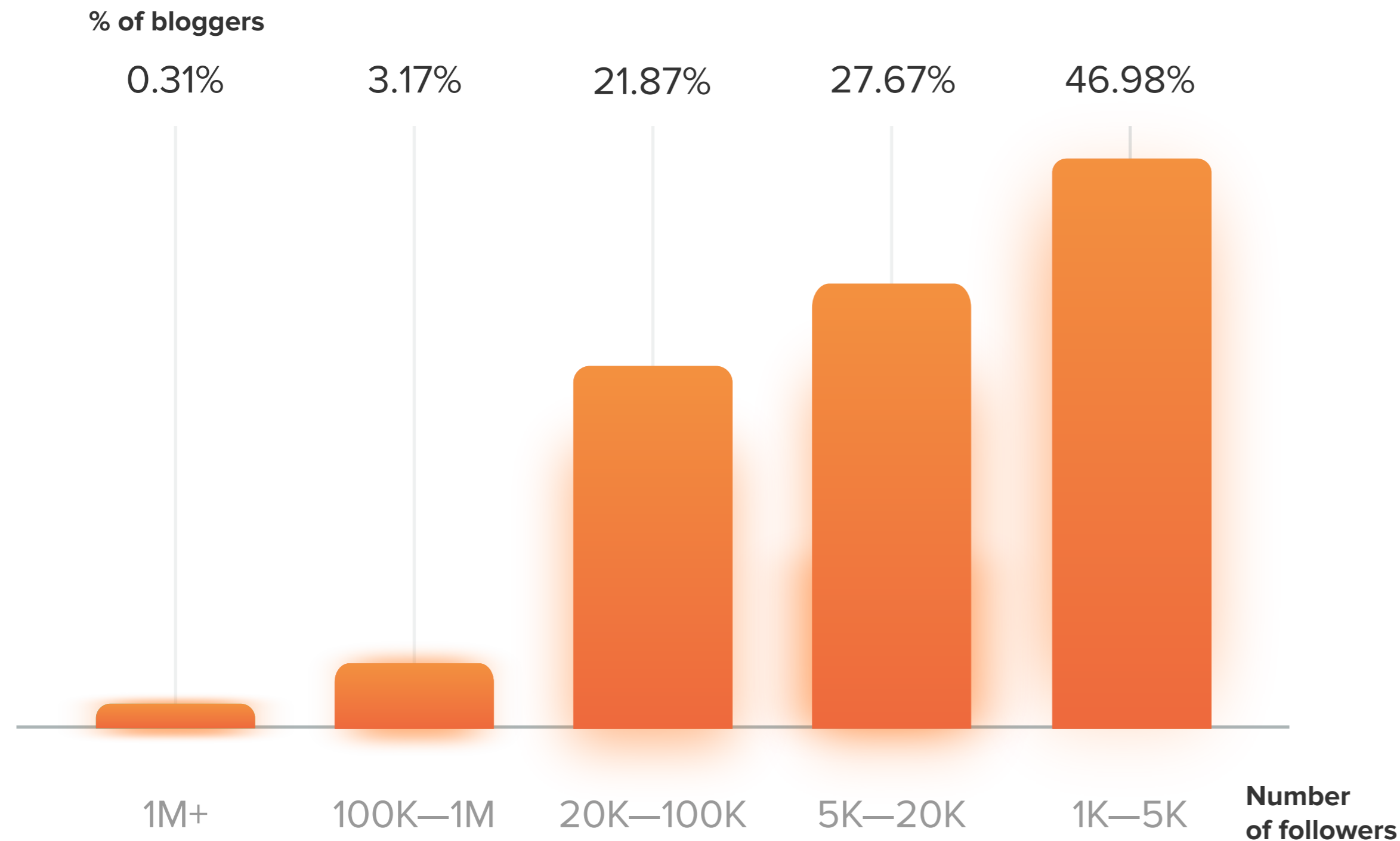
- they have more niche audience that is highly engaged with the deeper connection. Micro-influencers present in almost any sector: health and fitness, food, entrepreneurship, fashion, and beauty to name just a few prominent categories

Brand Advocates or nano-influencers (1K-5K followers)

- They are regular consumers who are passionate and willing to share, but have little influence



Instagram influencer landscape in Switzerland



The number of Macro and Mega-influencers is limited. If you want to scale your influencer marketing and get a bigger reach, you should turn to Micro and Mid-tier influencers.

Brands tend to underestimate the power of an influencer with a small audience. For you, this strategy could be a real edge over your competition.

Key takeaway for marketers

Influencers in Switzerland are divided not only by followers number or category, but there are also different language groups. If you want to cover all these groups of influencers you should localize content and a landing page, if you use swipe up campaigns in Instagram Stories.

The biggest and one of the underestimated group of creators are Nano and Micro influencers. Working with them could be a real edge over your competition.



Chapter II:

Instagram Influencer Performance and Benchmarks

Instagram Engagement Rate

For many marketers, engagement is the most important metric and a popular KPI of brand awareness. But what does it mean, exactly?

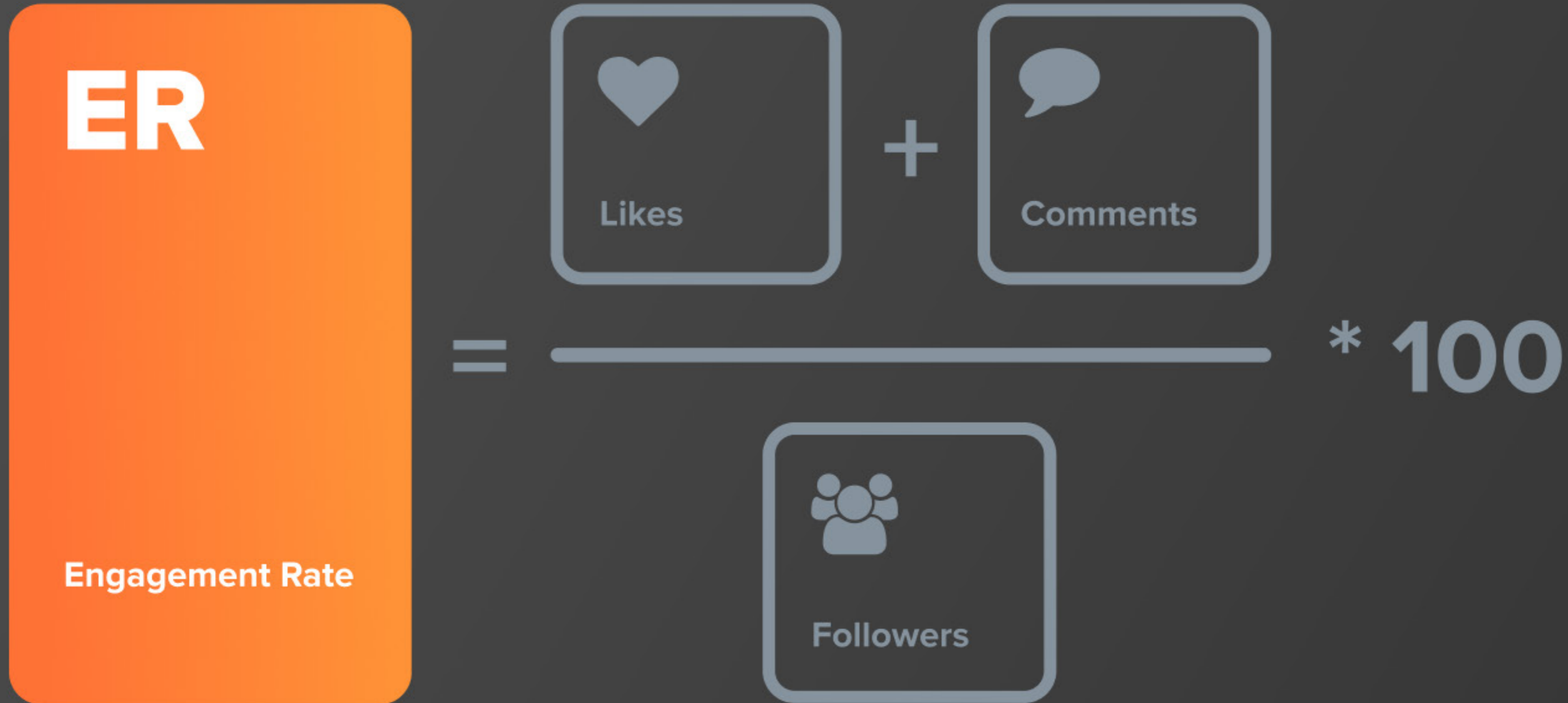
What is Engagement Rate?

Engagement Rate or ER is a commonly used benchmark of success on Instagram, as it can determine if an influencer is connecting with their audience.

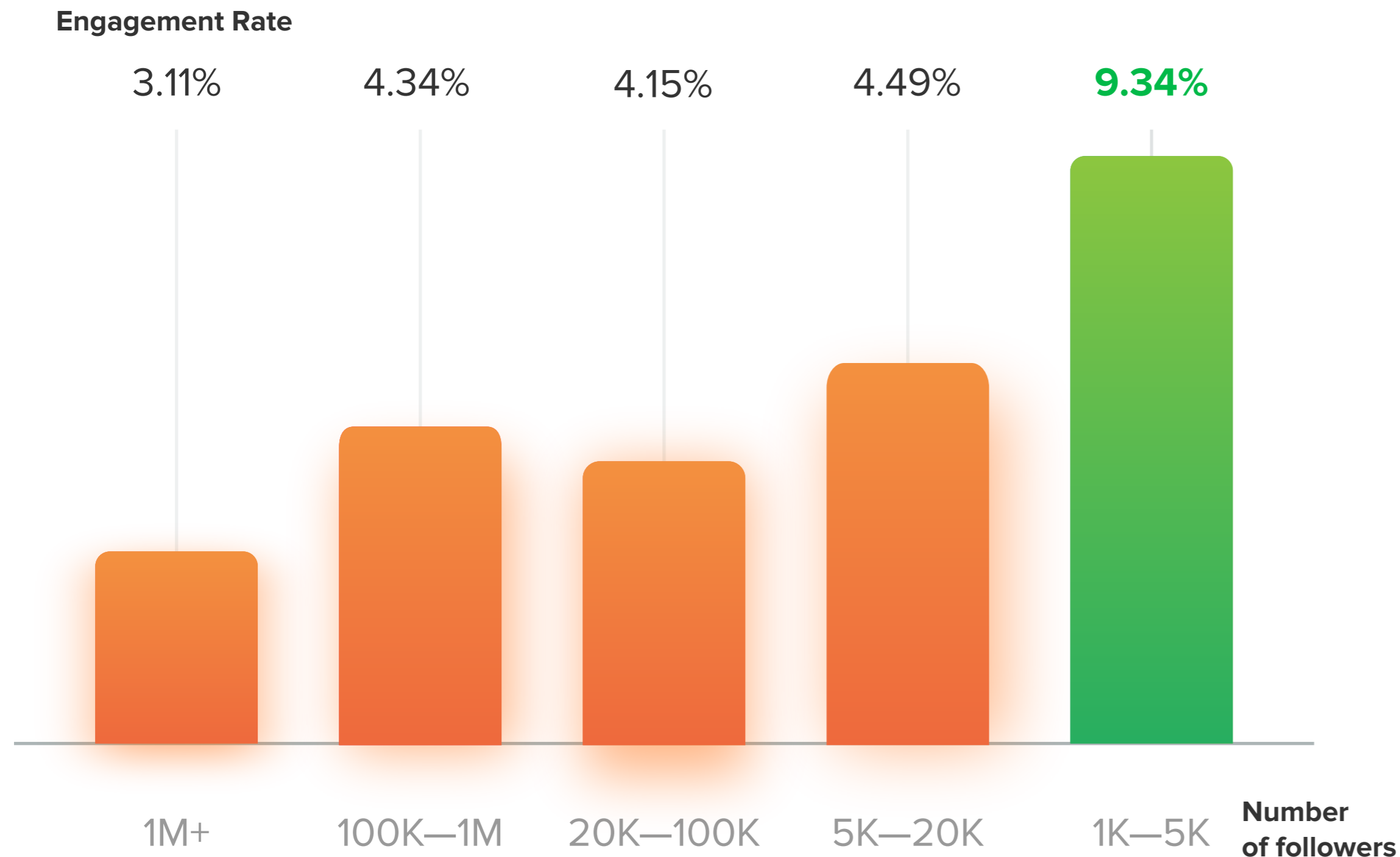
Highly engaged content with many likes and comments often stand a better chance of organically appearing on an Instagram feed.



How to calculate Engagement Rate?



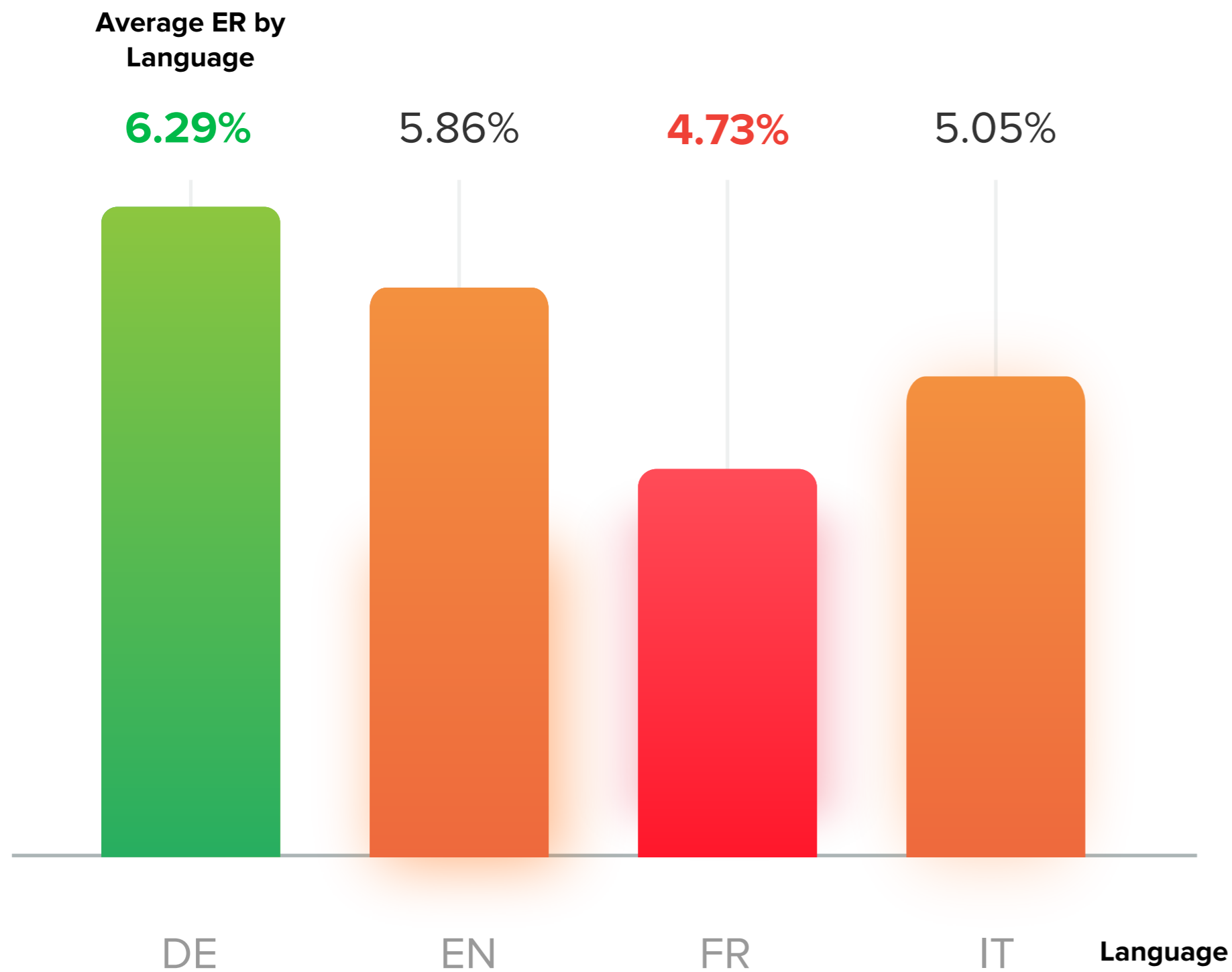
Average Engagement Rate on influencer's Instagram accounts



At HypeAuditor we believe that there is no single and universal Engagement Rate that could be used as a benchmark for all influencers.




Nano- and micro- influencers have stronger connections with their audience thus, their ER is higher. On the chart below, you can see that nano-influencers have the highest ER (9.34%) and then ER is inverse to followers number.

Average Engagement Rate on Instagram by posts language



From our analysis, we observed that the highest Average Engagement Rate have influencers who post content in German language, the lowest average Engagement have influencers who post content in French.

Average interactions per post on influencers accounts by followers number

 avg comments	752	102	28	14	10
 avg likes	86413	9397	1598	509	208
 number of followers	1M+	100K—1M	20K—100K	5K—20K	1K—5K

There is no sense to calculate the average number of likes and comments on Influencers accounts, because the posts of highly influential users skews the average.

Compare the number of likes and comments between influencers with the similar followers number. Pay attention to Likes to Comments Ratio, this metric indicates how strongly influencer's followers are involved in a dialogue.

Key takeaway for marketers

Engagement rate is a good metric to analyze how active and engaged are influencer's audience, and how they react on your sponsored post. It's a powerful tool for marketers if they use it properly.

You can use ER to compare different posts with each other to find some working patterns or to compare bloggers. The main rule here is to **compare Engagement between influencers with the similar followers number.**

Nano- and micro- influencers have established a good dialogue with their audience and one-on-one communication, which is much more intimate and engaging thus, their Engagement Rate is higher.

There is also a significant difference in the Engagement rate of influencers who post content in different languages. Just keep it in mind when set KPIs.



Chapter III:

Instagram Influencer Fraud in Switzerland

Fraud-Free influencers

What influencers are considered as Fraud-free?

At HypeAuditor we believe that an influencer with a big percentage of real people among followers, authentic engagement and without anomalies on followers and followings graphs is Fraud-Free.

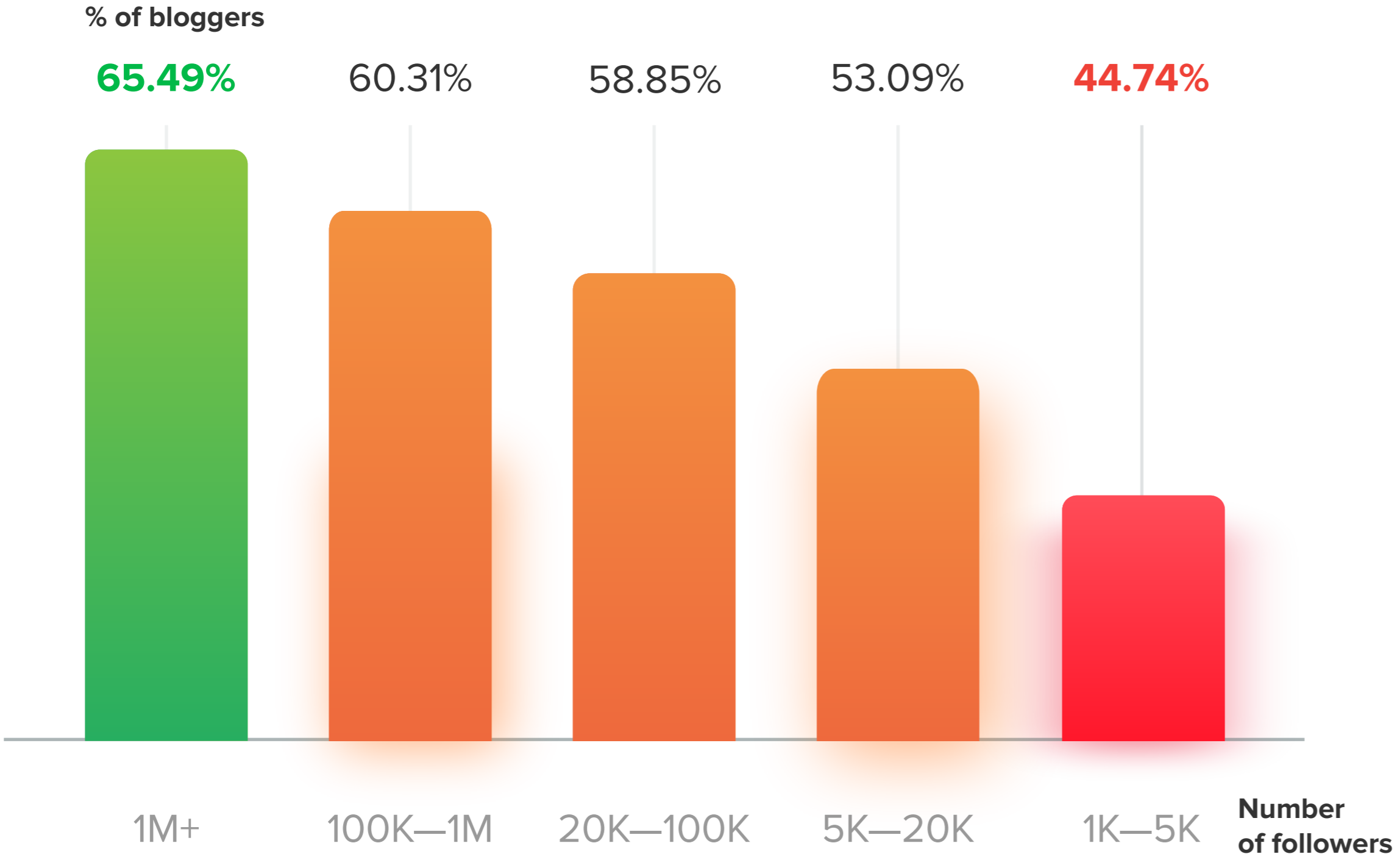
How to detect influencer fraud?

You can check any account for these 3 signs of cheating on your own:

- 1) Run through the list of the followers and mark the ones you think might be “the bad, inflated ones”.
 - 2) After that, check the likes on the past 12 posts of a person.
 - 3) Then you should check all the comments and pages of the accounts who wrote them.
- You can go through these steps every time you want to analyze someone’s page.



Percentage of Fraud-Free influencers by followers number



According to our findings, the most authentic are Mega and Macro-influencers, over 60.31% of them are fraud-free.

Nano-influencers tend to try many questionable tactics to grow their followers number, but with time most of them find a strategy that works.

The verdict? It's likely to implement the influencer vetting into your marketing strategy.

What tactics do influencers use to artificially increase their followers number and engagement?

Among the most popular tricks are:

1

Follow/Unfollow

2

Bying followers

3

Buying Comments and likes

4

Comments Pods



Follow/Unfollow

What is Follow/Unfollow on Instagram?

The Follow/Unfollow trick, or mass following, is commonly used by influencers to find new followers. It has very simple mechanics:

- 🔥 An influencer's account follows you, or likes, or posts a comment on Instagram.
- 🔥 You get a notification and follow them back
- 🔥 They unfollow you after a couple of days.

Influencers use special tools and apps for automatic Follow/Unfollow that starts following other users based on the filter criteria.

Why it's Bad?

There is a fierce debate in the community of influencer marketing specialists about the usage of follow/unfollow trick. At HypeAuditor we believe this is SPAM. But more importantly, this method is directly prohibited by Instagram.

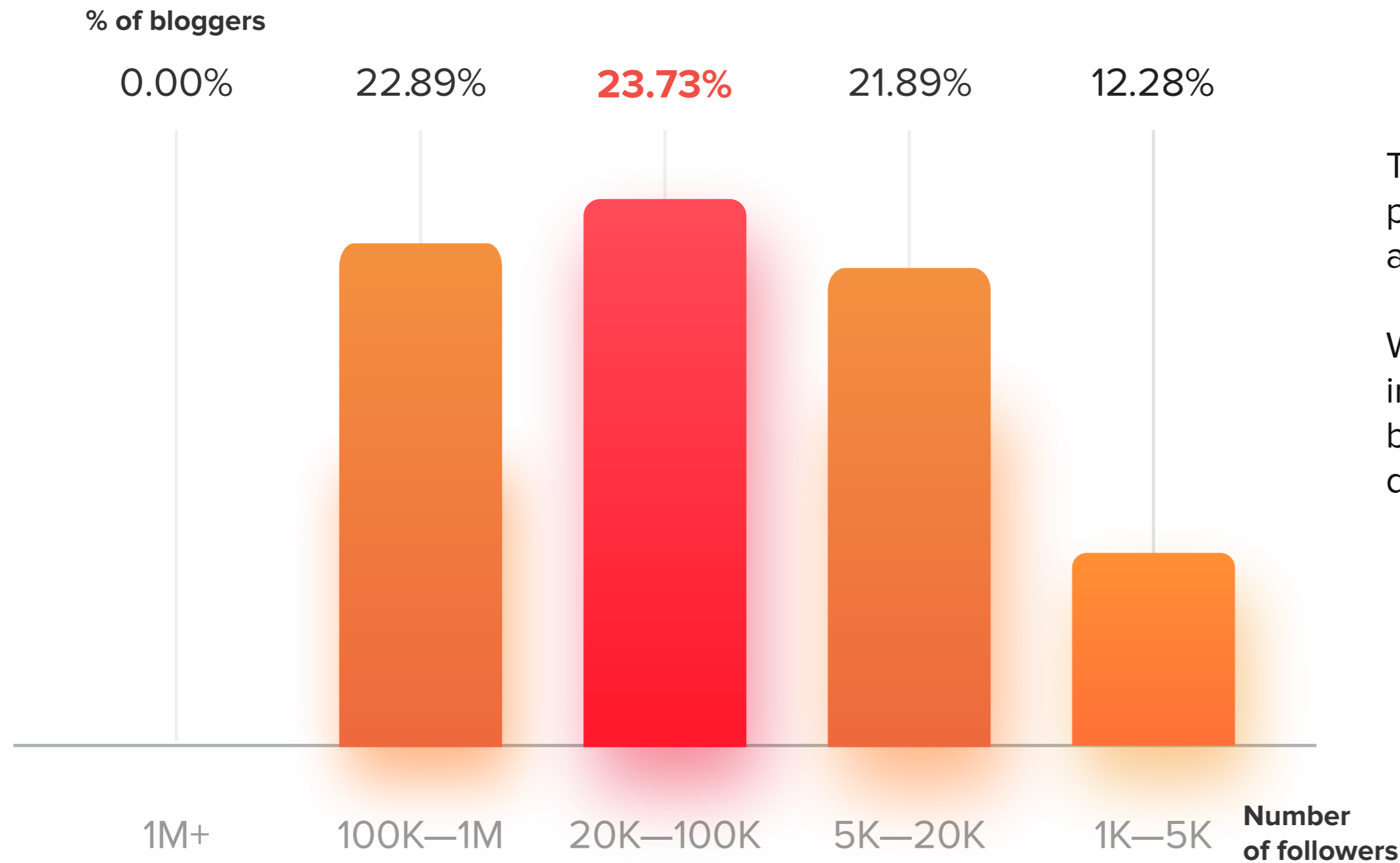
How does this threaten advertisers? According to the Instagram announcement, they will artificially reduce the reach of influencers who use third-party applications. Besides, numerous articles in the media denouncing such influencers can also have a negative impact on the reputation of your brand.

How to Detect Influencers who use Follow/Unfollow?

Just check out the Following graph on HypeAuditor, if you see these kinds of spikes it means that this influencer is using mass following to gain new followers.



Percentage of influencers who use Follow/Unfollow by Followers Number



The study shows that follow/unfollow is mostly popular among influencers who have between 5K and 1M followers, over 20% of them use this tactics.

When considering which influencer to choose, bare in mind that influencers who use this trick have the bigger percentage of non-reachable audience, who don't see their posts, thus they have a lower reach.

Inauthentic Comments

What comments are inauthentic?

Comments to tag-to-win giveaways and contests, spammy comments, and comments that come from Instagram Pods are considered inauthentic.

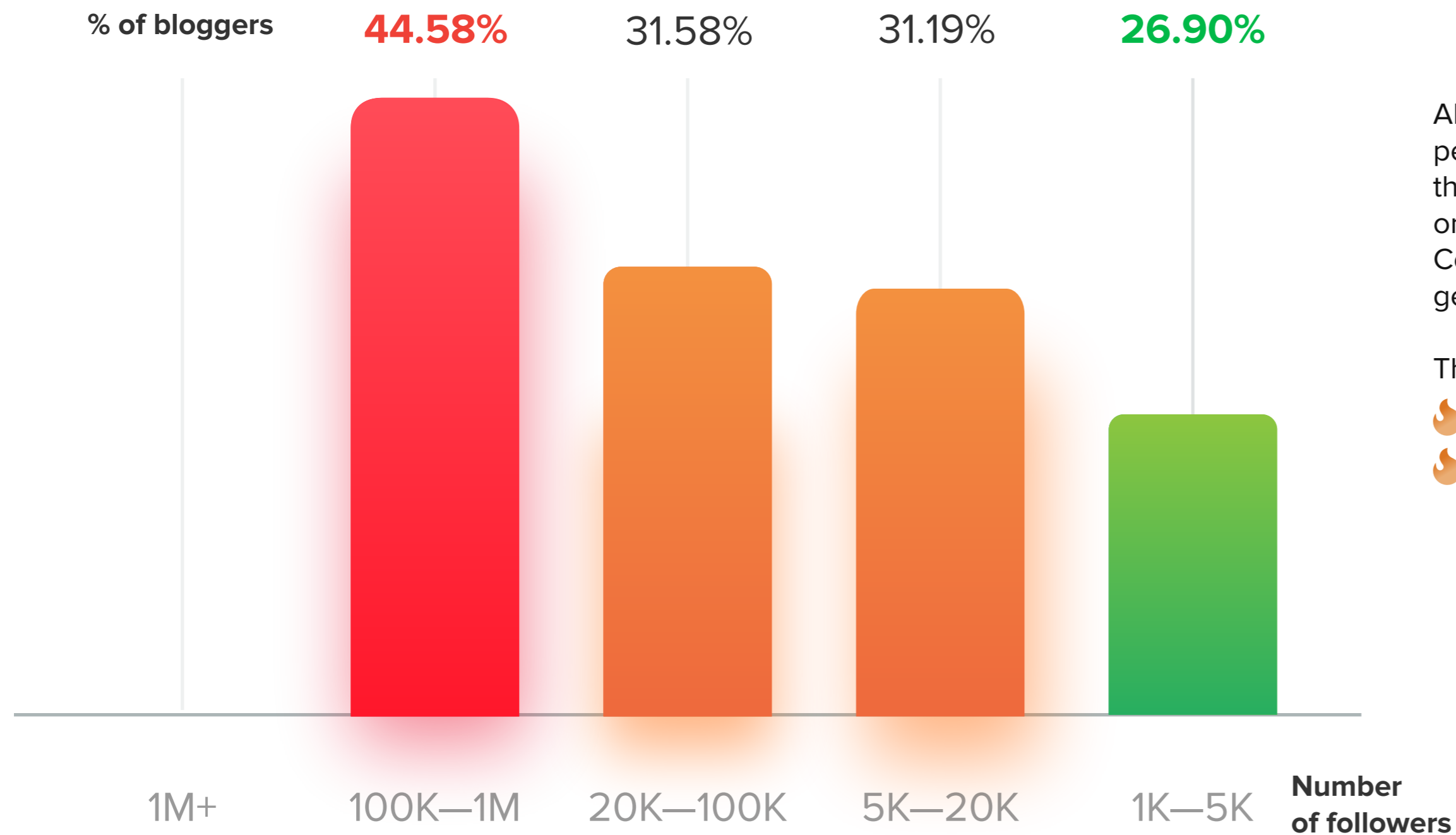
How to detect them?

When we check Comments Authenticity, we take into account multiple factors, among them: commenter's content and the quality of an account that left that comment. We mark as suspicious comments that:

- 🔥 Consist of emojis only or words like: wow, cool, fantastic etc.
- 🔥 Are monosyllabically simple and irrelevant.
- 🔥 Consist of the mention of another account only.



Percentage of influencers who have Inauthentic Comments by Followers Number



Almost one-third of influencers have inauthentic comments. The biggest percentage of them are on celebrities accounts. At HypeAuditor we believe this is not due to their inauthentic actions but due to the overall level of SPAM on Instagram. Most of the spam came from users who use Instagram Comment Tools and Bots. They target their comments based on: hashtags, geo location, followings of other accounts, specific accounts targeting.

There are two main inauthentic methods to boost the comments number:

- 🔥 Buying comments
- 🔥 Comments Pods (we will look at them in more detail below).

Comment Pods

What is a Comment Pod?

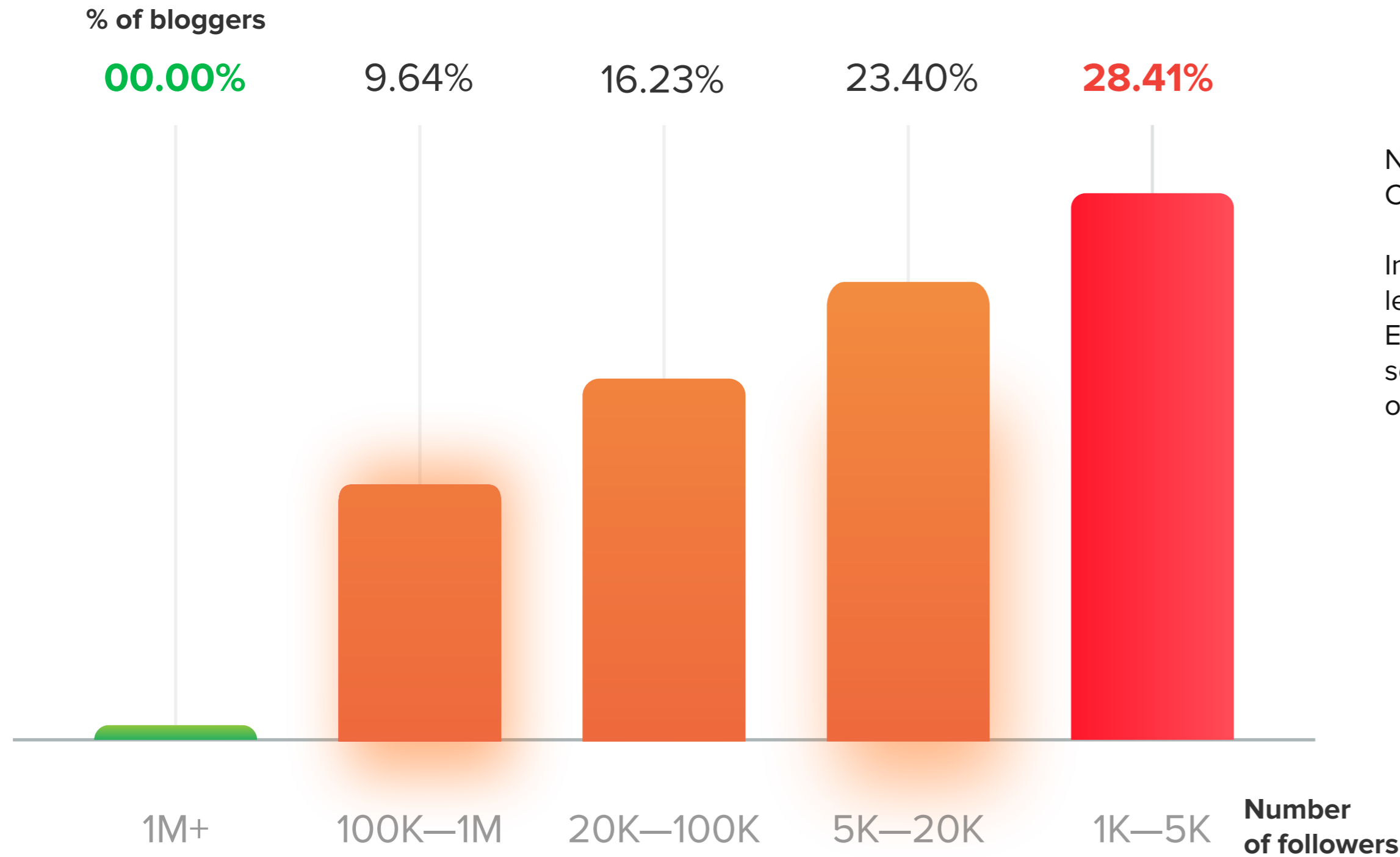
Comment pods (Engagement Pods or Boost Groups) are groups of bloggers collaborating to run up their activity. They often gather on Facebook, Telegram or other chats. A blogger from such pod would make a post and throw a link to the chat with some comment: “likes, comments (3 words and more), saved.” And then he/she would go up the chat to see the last 10 tasks from other bloggers and carry them out. This method is definitely hard to see with eyes only as there are real people with real accounts and high-quality content, and they would write extended comments.

How to detect them?

It's hard and time-consuming to detect engagement pods manually. To do this, you should check every comment and a follower who left them. If you see that all posts are commented by the same group of users, it might be a pod. To detect pods at a HypeAuditor our machine-learning algorithm takes into account multiple factors, among them: behavioral patterns, commenter's content and the quality of an account that left that comment.



Percentage of influencers who use Comment Pods by Followers Number



Nano- and micro-influencers in Switzerland commonly use Comment Pods, 24% and 20% respectively.

Influencers who have over 20K followers use this method less because it doesn't have a significant impact on their ER. But if the audience is not active, it can be used to get some meaningful comments and make a good impression on advertisers.

Abnormal Growth

Most of the influencers increase their number of followers gradually. Every month more and more Instagram users are starting to follow them. Some promotion methods, advertising, mentions in media or a shoutout from another influencer could accelerate this growth, but nevertheless, the general pattern remains the same. However, some bloggers do not want to wait and use inauthentic methods to increase their followers number immediately.

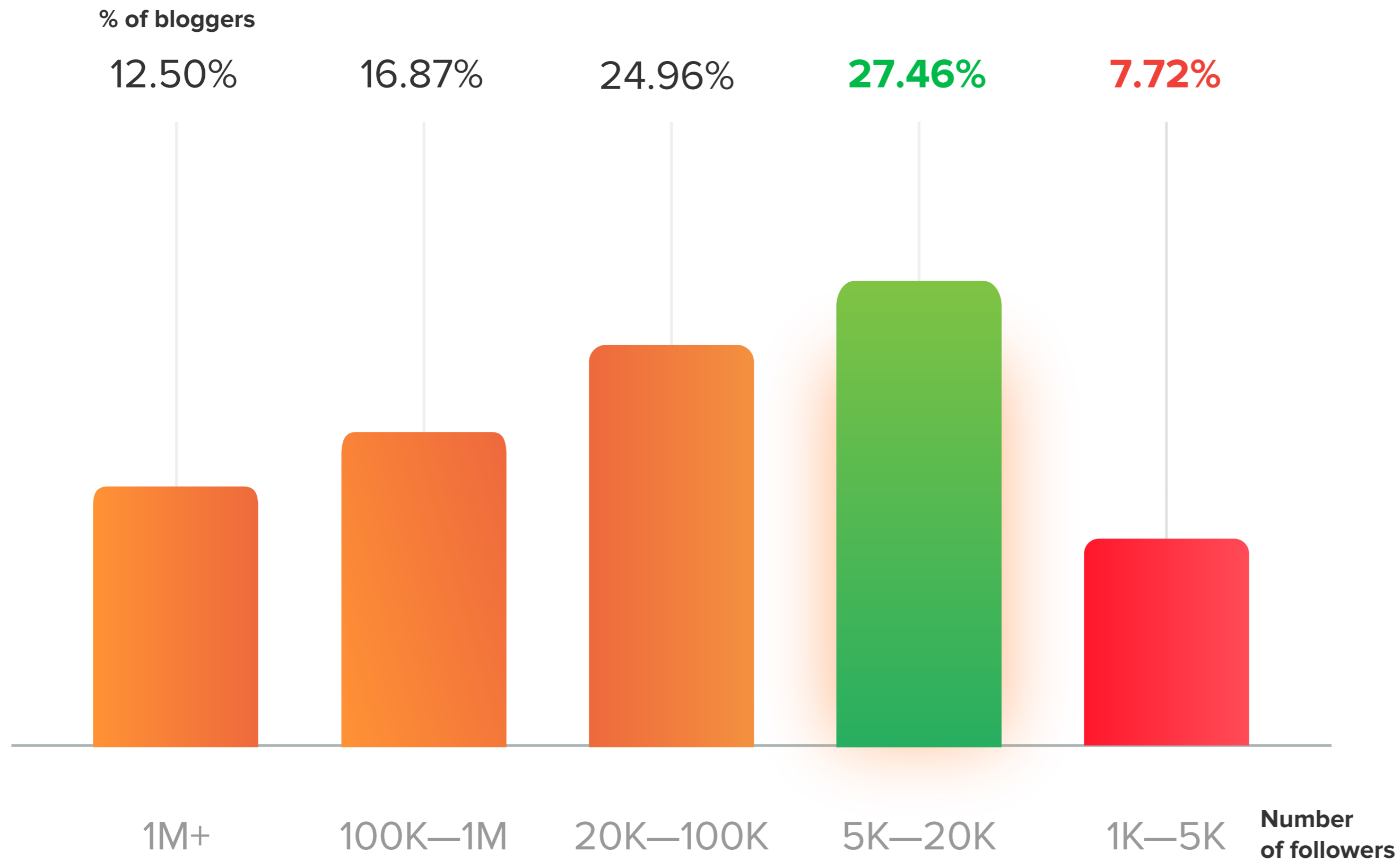
How to Detect Inauthentic Growth?

To detect growth anomalies you should check the Followers graph that shows the dynamics of followers growth. Analysis of this graph gives a lot of information about the account's growth patterns and trends and also helps to detect if an influencer has bought followers.

Accounts that increase followers number artificially will show sudden rises and hockey-stick growth on a Followers graph.



The Percentage of Growth Anomalies on influencers accounts by Followers Number



The easiest and fastest way to grow followers number is to buy them. Over 27% of influencers with 5K-20K followers, and over quarter influencers who have between 20K and 100K followers are buying followers.

These numbers are impressive, but you can avoid the loss by implementing due diligence influencer vetting process in your marketing strategy.

Key takeaway for marketers

Influencer marketing is far from transparent. But it's possible to avoid losses associated with influencer fraud by implementing the comprehensive vetting process in your marketing strategy.

It's not enough to choose an influencer based only on the relevance and quality of their content, followers number, and engagement. Metrics could be artificially inflated, thus data-driven decision making is clearly the strongest weapon. Quantitative and qualitative analysis will provide you with the most cost-effective influencer posts and ROI.



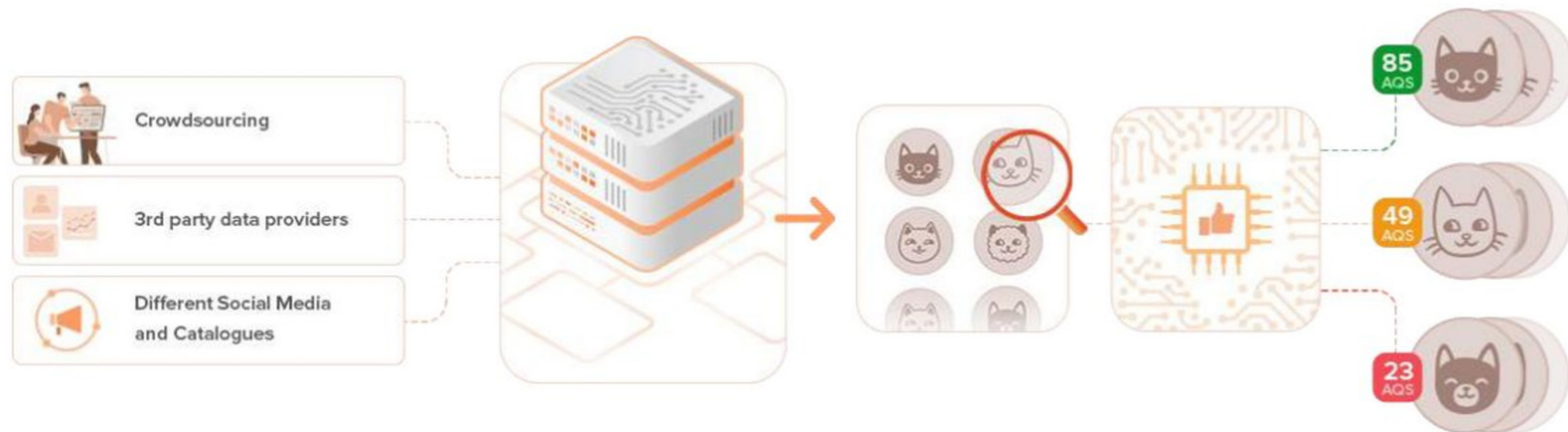
Methodology



The report uses data from a wide variety of sources, including market research agencies, internet, and social media companies, news media, and our own internal analysis.

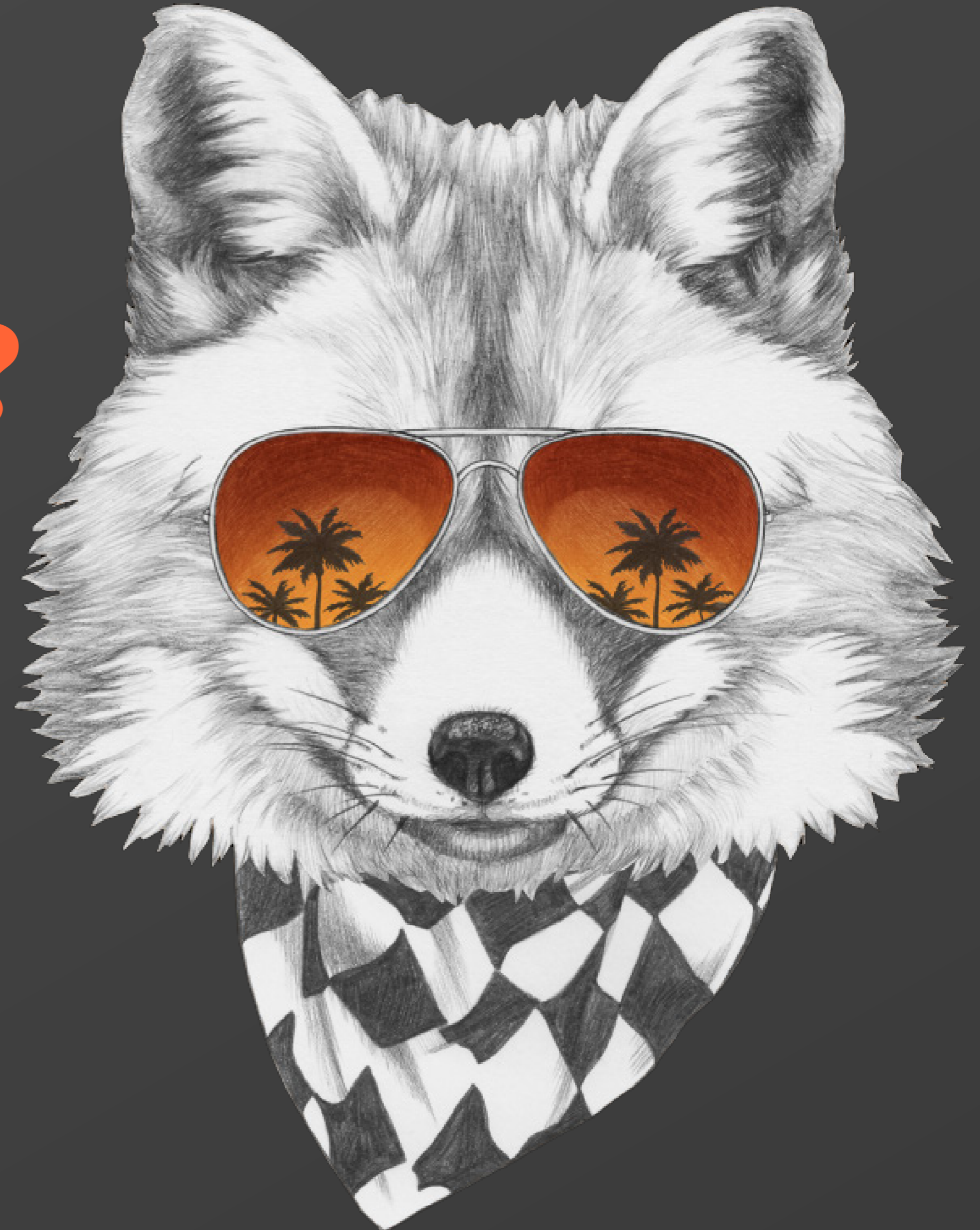
We have collected and aggregated open data from a variety of sources: social platforms, catalogs, websites, crowdsourcing, and many more. After that, we processed the data by anonymizing, sorting and structuring, cleaning and removing any irregularities, and enriching the data.

Then we transformed the data into intelligent estimations by using best-in-class estimation and machine learning algorithms developed by our team of leading data scientists and influencer marketing experts.



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info@hypeauditor.com

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