



# Transformation of the Customer Acquisition Economy and the Redistribution of Marketing Rents Between Platforms and Creators: From Auction-Based Advertising to Performance Commissions

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## Abstract

*This paper examines a structural transformation in the global electronic commerce ecosystem. The transformation consists in a shift in advertising monetization from auction based payment for exposure, including CPC and CPM, to mechanisms in which remuneration is linked to a verifiable outcome, including CPS and CPA, within social platforms. The analysis conceptualizes marketing rent as surplus income generated through institutional and technological control over consumer attention as a scarce resource. It also treats marketing rent as a redistribution mechanism through which income moves from advertising networks and media intermediaries to content producers.*

*A longitudinal comparative analysis of consumer patterns from 2010 to 2025 identifies a change in the dominant mode of consumption. Search organized around intention and query has been partially displaced by product discovery shaped by social interaction and recommendation loops. This shift changes the point at which purchasing interest emerges. As a result, recommendation systems and socially mediated trust signals acquire a central economic function within platform commerce.*

*The empirical section uses the case of a store operating on TikTok Shop. This case illustrates how content formats, affiliate arrangements, and institutionalized trust markers, including a review volume above 1000 and the presence of Lab Tested status, affect conversion and reduce transactional uncertainty. The causal link is straightforward: visible signals of verification reduce perceived risk at the moment of purchase. In consequence, trust becomes an asset that can be expressed in economic terms.*

*The findings show that an increase in customer acquisition costs in auction channels by 40 to 60 percent changes the relative efficiency of monetization models. Because commission based schemes tie payment to realized results, they reduce the share of commercial risk borne by brands before conversion occurs. This model also allows content creators to appropriate part of marketing rent through the accumulation and capitalization of trust capital. At the theoretical level, the paper proposes the concept of algorithmic attention rent. This concept explains how platform ranking systems and reach allocation algorithms convert attention into transactional probability and define the conditions under which rent is extracted within the ecosystem. From this perspective, the development of electronic commerce points toward a decentralized system of outcome based transactions in which value is allocated not by the fact of an impression, but by verifiable effect and trust mediated purchasing.*

**Keywords:** Social Commerce, Marketing Rent, Creator Economy, Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC), Affiliate Marketing, Algorithmic Rent, CPS Models, Consumer Trust.

## INTRODUCTION

The contemporary global e-commerce economy is entering a phase of structural rupture comparable in scale to the institutionalization of search mechanisms in the early 2000s [4]. For ten years, the core instrument of customer

acquisition remained the auction-based sale of advertising inventory, which formed the dominant architecture of attention allocation in digital environments [1]. Within this configuration, platform aggregators-including Google and Meta-functioned as centralized intermediaries capable of dominant marketing rent by controlling channels of access to

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the user and the rules of content selection. By the mid-2020s, however, the stability of this regime had been undermined by a set of systemic factors: reduced targeting precision due to the retreat from third-party cookies, saturation of advertising channels, and accelerating growth of customer acquisition cost (CAC) that increasingly resembles exponential dynamics [3].

Marketing rent, in its classical interpretation, refers to economic gain derived from control over access to the consumer and from the monetization of attention scarcity. During the period of search based electronic commerce from 2010 to 2015, this rent was concentrated primarily among the owners of search algorithms and ranking infrastructures. The transition to the social commerce regime in 2020 to 2025 altered this pattern of appropriation. Platforms of a new type, with TikTok Shop as a notable example, institutionalized schemes in which payment depends not on the delivery of impressions, as in CPM, and not on the probabilistic signal of a click, as in CPC, but on a confirmed transaction outcome, as in CPS. This shift changed the direction of value flows, since content creators no longer function only as intermediaries of advertising messages. Instead, they perform a sales function and accumulate a trust based mandate that reduces transactional uncertainty [5].

The relevance of the study is supported by the continued expansion of the social commerce market. Available forecasts point to sustained growth, although published estimates differ with respect to market size, base year valuation, and expected growth rates [7, 11]. For this reason, the article relies not on a single long range projection, but on the convergence of recent analytical assessments indicating that social commerce is becoming a significant channel within digital retail [7, 11].

Particular analytical value is found in the Beauty and Personal Care category. In this segment, purchase decisions depend not only on visual demonstration, but also on signals of actual and prolonged product use, which strengthen the credibility of user generated content and reviews [3]. This feature makes the category suitable for examining how trust is produced and converted into purchase decisions within platform based commerce.

The empirical section examines the case of a store operating on TikTok Shop. The case illustrates the interaction between performance based commission arrangements, for example CPA or CPS affiliate programs, and platform mediated trust signals, including technical verification markers such as Lab Tested [9]. These mechanisms perform different functions. Commission schemes connect remuneration to a realized commercial outcome, whereas trust signals reduce skepticism and perceived product risk at the point of purchase.

**The article's goal** consists in an analytical deconstruction of the mechanisms through which marketing rent is redistributed

and in substantiating performance commissions as a more sustainable monetization model under conditions of the attention rent. The concept is used to describe how platform ranking mechanisms convert attention into transactional probability and, in doing so, establish new rules for the extraction and redistribution of marketing rent in favor of performance oriented intermediaries, including creators, in the transition from CPC and CPM models to CPS and CPA models.

**The academic novelty** rests on the fact that the paper introduces and operationalizes the concept of "algorithmic attention rent," describing how platform ranking mechanisms convert attention into transactional probability and thereby establish new rules for extracting and redistributing marketing rent in favor of performance intermediaries (creators) in the shift from CPC/CPM to CPS/CPA.

**The study hypothesis** that reduces to the proposition that CAC growth and the erosion of auction-targeting precision render CPC/CPM structurally less sustainable, whereas commission-based CPS/CPA schemes increase the sustainability of brand unit economics by shifting risk onto a demonstrable outcome and simultaneously allow creators to appropriate a larger share of marketing rent through the accumulation of "trust capital" (UGC/reviews/quality verification), which raises conversion and reduces transactional uncertainty.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study uses an interdisciplinary research design that combines the economics of digital platforms, microeconomic analysis of advertising markets, and marketing analytics. At the center of the analysis is an economic model of marketing rent understood as income derived from control over visibility, access to consumers, and conversion within platform infrastructures. Within this model, algorithmic attention rent refers to the share of value generated when ranking, recommendation, and reach allocation systems shape the probability of transaction by controlling the distribution of attention [2, 5, 12].

The longitudinal comparison is organized into three analytical periods: from 2010 to 2015, from 2015 to 2020, and from 2020 to 2025. This division is not based on chronology alone. Each interval corresponds to a distinct configuration of customer acquisition in digital commerce and to a different relationship between search, platform mediation, content distribution, and transaction infrastructure.

The period from 2010 to 2015 is treated as the phase of search led electronic commerce. In this configuration, customer acquisition depended primarily on search intent, keyword based advertising, and ranking visibility within search engines and marketplaces. The dominant mechanisms of monetization were exposure and click based models,

while trust was formed mainly through brand recognition, marketplace reputation, and standardized review systems [5, 17].

The period from 2015 to 2020 is treated as a transition phase. During these years, mobile use intensified, social platforms expanded their role in product discovery, and short form content became more important in the formation of purchase interest. Search remained central, but recommendation systems and social proof began to influence the early stages of the purchase journey more directly. This period is therefore analyzed as a stage in which the search regime was still dominant, although the conditions for a different acquisition logic had already emerged [3, 17].

The period from 2020 to 2025 is analyzed as the phase of integrated social commerce. In this configuration, content discovery, trust formation, affiliate intermediation, and transaction execution increasingly occur within the same platform environment. The importance of exposure and click based monetization declines relative to models in which payment is linked to a realized outcome, including CPA and CPS arrangements. The periodization therefore reflects successive changes in the dominant acquisition logic rather than a formal division into equal time blocks [3, 8, 12].

The information base consists of three groups of sources. The first group includes peer reviewed publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science on creator intermediation, platform governance, digital advertising, and rent extraction, together with selected industry reports used only for market structure, benchmark indicators, and institutional context [5, 12]. The second group includes market reports by Grand View Research, Fortune Business Insights, and Mordor Intelligence. These materials are used comparatively rather than as a single source of truth, in order to identify overlapping estimates of market size, growth dynamics, and regional variation across North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific [3]. The third group consists of store level and platform level empirical indicators from TikTok Shop, including GMV, AOV, conversion rate, affiliate performance metrics, review based trust signals, and post purchase indicators such as return rate [8, 10].

The empirical case is a United States based TikTok Shop store in the Beauty and Personal Care category [8, 13]. The selection of this category is based on its structural weight within United States social commerce and on the importance of demonstrable use, visible product effects, and review based credibility for purchase decisions. In the context of TikTok Shop in the United States, Beauty and Personal Care accounted for more than 22 percent of total GMV in 2024, which makes it a suitable setting for examining the relationship between trust signals, creator mediated selling, and conversion [8]. Because the core empirical material is drawn from the United States market, the findings are interpreted within that geographic scope.

The empirical corpus includes three components. The first component consists of performance data for content formats used by the store, including short form video, livestreams, and user generated content, with attention to their contribution to traffic, engagement, and conversion within the sales funnel [8]. The second component consists of a corpus of 1000 user reviews, which is analyzed through qualitative content analysis in order to identify recurring trust cues, purchase triggers, and references to product effectiveness, authenticity, safety, and prior use experience. The third component consists of the store's technical credibility signals, including the presence of Lab Tested status and certificates of analysis. These indicators are examined in relation to conversion dynamics and return rate as a proxy for post purchase satisfaction [10].

To compare consumer patterns across periods, the study applies a standardized historical comparison of secondary data rather than a simple chronological description. Archival reports by Nielsen and Forrester are used for the earlier periods, while more recent panel studies by Shopify and Adobe are used for the later periods [17]. Since the original reports rely on different measurement instruments, the analysis does not compare raw indicators mechanically. Instead, it translates the evidence into a common set of analytical dimensions: customer acquisition cost, dominant consumption environment, trust in different advertising formats, and the prevailing mode of product discovery, whether search led or recommendation led. This procedure makes it possible to compare structural changes across periods under changing technological conditions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results consolidate around three interrelated blocks: the longitudinal dynamics of behavioral patterns, empirical indicators of effectiveness, and a conceptualization of the mechanism through which rent income is redistributed. The qualitative comparison shows that, over the 2010–2025 interval, e-commerce evolved from a predominantly transactional regime toward an emotionally and socially mediated form of consumption. At the starting point of the period (2010), online purchasing was structured as a rationalized choice mediated by search engines and oriented toward price comparison and functional feature matching. At the end point (2025), the act of acquisition became embedded in media consumption circuits: decisions are formed inside an entertainment stream in which product demonstration, narrative, and social proof function not as external triggers, but as elements of a single consumption script. In this way, a transition is registered from the logic of “search” to the logic of “discovery,” in which attention is converted into demand through engagement, while cognitive evaluation is increasingly complemented by affective and socio-normative grounds of choice (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Comparative analysis of consumer patterns in e-commerce (compiled by the author based on [3, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27]).

Characteristic	2010 (Search e-comm)	2015 (Mobile e-comm)	2020 (Pandemic peak)	2025 (Social commerce)
Dominant channel	Google Search, Price Comparison	Facebook, Instagram Ads	Amazon, Direct Marketplaces	TikTok Shop, Instagram Reels, Live Shopping
Device	Desktop (80%+)	Mobile/Desktop Mix	Mobile Primary (70%+)	Mobile First (91%+)
Trust mechanism	SSL badges, Text reviews	Star ratings	Video reviews, Opinion leaders	Lab Tested, Video evidence, UGC
Motivation type	Intent-based search for a specific product	Brand discovery via targeting	Necessity of home delivery	Discovery-led impulsive finding
Average CAC (US)	~\$10-\$20 (Retail)	~\$30-\$45	~\$50-\$65	~\$70-\$130 (in auction models)
Influencer impact	Low (blogs)	Medium (photo posts)	High (stories)	Absolute (commission-based selling)

The materials summarized in Table 1 capture a critically important shift: over the fifteen-year interval, customer acquisition cost (CAC) [18, 28] in conventional performance channels increased on average by a factor of 6–8, which transformed the auction model of traffic buying (clicks in the Google/Meta ecosystems) from a scaling instrument into a source of structural unprofitability for product categories characterized by low lifetime value (LTV) [19, 22]. Under conditions in which the cost of contact grows faster than marginal profitability and expected purchase repeatability, the auction mechanism begins to reproduce adverse selection: the winning strategy becomes not the improvement of offer efficiency, but the buyout of the most expensive segments of attention, which further accelerates price escalation. The consequence is a decline in the economic feasibility of the CPC/CPM model for a substantial share of products and a strengthening demand for schemes in which payment is tied to a verifiable outcome. Performance commissions developed in response to the declining efficiency of click based monetization models. Since clicks function only as probabilistic signals of conversion and do not ensure a

completed purchase, brands bear a considerable share of the costs associated with inefficient reach and non converting traffic. Consequently, payment tied to an accomplished sale redistributes part of this risk from the brand to intermediaries and influence agents [3].

Content affects customer acquisition through two related mechanisms. It generates attention and reduces perceived quality uncertainty by presenting observable consumer experience. Because this form of presentation supports product evaluation before purchase, content consumption becomes part of the decision process rather than a separate media act. Consequently, sales effectiveness is determined not only by the scale of reach, but also by the credibility of the trust signals accompanying the offer. Stronger social proof and clearer markers of reliability and competence are associated with higher conversion potential at similar levels of exposure. In this study, sales effectiveness is measured through customer acquisition indicators, including engagement, click through behavior, and conversion. The comparative results for different content formats are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Effectiveness metrics of content formats in customer acquisition (compiled by the author based on [8, 14, 15]).

Content format	Share in GMV (%)	Conversion rate (CR, %)	AOV (Average order value, \$)	Impact on retention
Short-form video	58%	2.5%–5.0%	\$55–\$65	High (via subscription/following)
Livestream shopping	10%	9.0%–30.0%	\$70–\$85 (bundles)	Medium (impulsivity-driven)
In-app showcase	32%	1.8%–2.3%	\$45–\$55	High (repeat purchases)
Affiliate content (UGC)	N/A	+29% to baseline CR	Varies	Critical for trust

The case study shows that visual confirmation in user reviews plays a significant role in purchase decisions. The analysis of a corpus of 1000 reviews indicates that 49 percent of consumers treat photos and video materials in feedback as a decisive element of evaluation [21, 25]. This pattern suggests that trust is shaped not only by the presence of reviews as such, but also by the visibility of actual consumer experience. As a result, the material demonstrability of product use

becomes an important condition of trust based choice.

The case also indicates that conversion growth is associated not simply with a greater volume of user generated content. The strongest increase, reaching 43 percent, was observed after the introduction of Lab Tested status and the placement of certificates of analysis on the product page and in video materials [10]. The causal mechanism appears to be connected with the reduction of perceived product risk. When verification

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is presented in a clear and document based form, skepticism declines and the probability of purchase increases [9].

The distribution of effects across trust signals is not uniform. Simpler forms of endorsement, including influencer mention, are associated with a weaker effect on conversion than video demonstration and documented verification. As trust signals become stronger, conversion rises more rapidly; however, after the addition of formal verification markers, the rate of increase becomes less pronounced. This pattern points to a saturation effect, in which each additional trust signal

continues to support conversion but no longer produces the same incremental gain as in earlier stages of trust formation.

This interpretation is consistent with survey evidence showing that 74 percent of consumers are more likely to purchase when product claims are supported by testing data [23]. In this context, certification functions not as an emotional stimulus, but as a mechanism that reduces the perceived probability of choice error. Therefore, the results suggest that documented verification occupies a distinct position among trust signals because it changes the structure of decision making at the point of purchase.

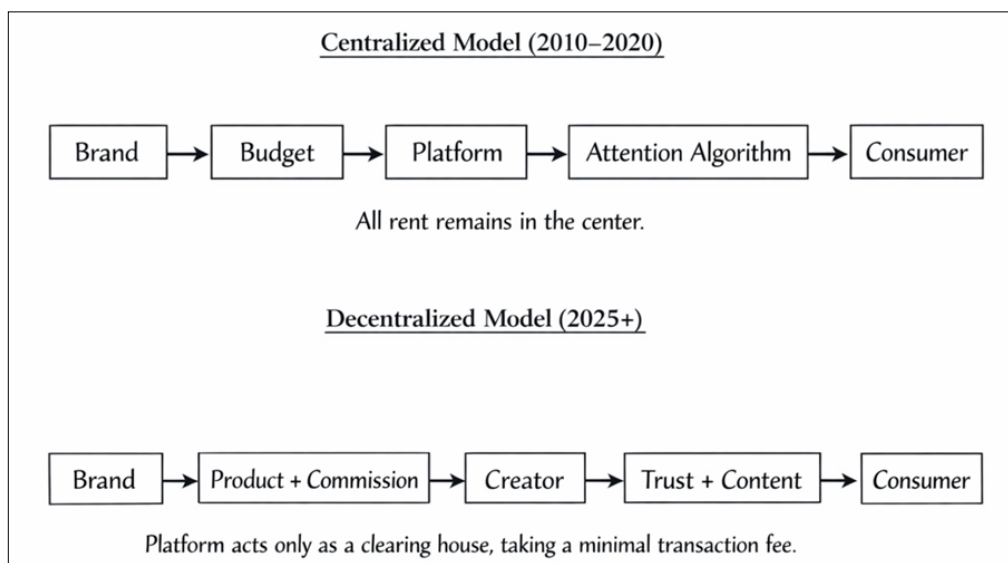
**Table 3.** Comparative acquisition economics: Auction (CPC) vs Commission (CPS) (compiled by the author based on [14, 31, 32]).

Parameter	Auction model (CPC/CPM)	Commission model (CPS/Affiliate)
Main rent beneficiary	Platform (Meta, Google)	Content creator (Creator)
Profit distribution	Platform captures 70–90% of acquisition margin	Creator captures 15–30%, Platform 5–10%
Advertiser risk	High (pay for impressions without guarantee)	Low (pay for outcome)
Quality incentives	Low (CTR is what matters)	High (creator reputation is what matters)
Average ROI	\$2.87 per \$1 (Google)	\$6.50 per \$1 (Influencer marketing)

The redistribution of rent income in the configuration under consideration can be described as a sequence of shifts in the trust center and, following it, shifts in the point at which value is appropriated. At the initial link of the chain, trust is anchored not to the platform infrastructure as such, but to a personalized carrier of reputation—the content creator—whose identity, narrative repeatability, and observable “accountability” to an audience form stable trust capital. Within this logic, the platform acts not as the primary source of legitimation, but as an environment for attention distribution within which trust is “embedded” into content and transferred to the product through demonstration, experience, and social proof.

The platform’s recognition of the dependence of attention retention on content quality and regularity leads to the

institutionalization of a compelled compromise: to prevent audience leakage and maintain consumption density, direct monetization mechanisms are introduced that redistribute part of marketing rent in favor of creators. In this way, a new regime of rent relations is formed in which surplus extraction ceases to be the monopoly of the advertising-auction owner and becomes the outcome of a coalition between platform and creator, jointly converting attention into transaction. Instrumentally, this is expressed in the development of partnership circuits such as TikTok Shop Affiliate and Amazon Influencer, which institutionalize the creator the status of a performance intermediary: remuneration is tied to a completed sale, and a share of rent is paid as a commission equivalent of the trust function that ensures conversion (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Flow structure of marketing rent in digital ecosystems (compiled by the author based on [14, 30, 31, 32]).

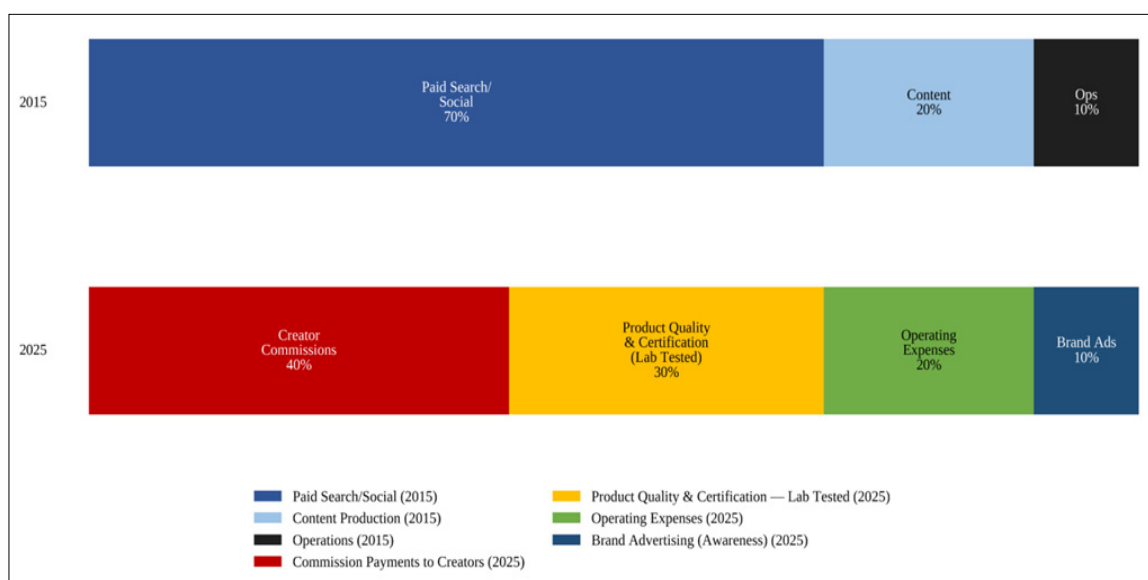
The observed shift toward performance commissions is accompanied by a redistribution of rent income across platform participants. Because this change affects the allocation of risk, remuneration, and control over conversion, it can be interpreted as part of a broader transformation of economic relations within the digital environment rather than as a temporary market trend. The process dynamics can be productively described through the concept of “platform feudalism,” within which infrastructure and the rules governing access to traffic flows operate as an analogue of “land” owned by platforms, while content creators occupy the position of “vassals” who control a scarce resource—stable audience attention and its trust capital [6]. In such a scheme, economic power is determined not only by ownership of the technical system, but also by the capacity to retain and reproduce an audience as a source of future transactions.

Within this configuration, the key mechanism of value appropriation becomes algorithmic attention rent, arising from platforms’ data-driven ability to direct and redistribute the attention of large-scale user populations [2]. Under auction advertising logic, attention scarcity takes on an institutionally constructed character: competition for access to the user is converted into bid inflation, and the price of a click tends toward the limits of the advertiser’s economic tolerance. The 2024–2025 increase in Facebook and Instagram advertising costs by 60% served as an empirical indicator of this tendency and became a driver

of forced channel diversification, because the entry barrier to traditional auction contours turned excessive for a substantial share of brands [1].

Within this framework, the creator economy can be understood as an institutional alternative to auction based competition in customer acquisition. This alternative relies on a different mechanism of competitive coordination and a different approach to reducing acquisition costs. In this model, competitive advantage does not depend primarily on the ability to secure visibility through higher bids in search or social ranking systems. It depends on the capacity of creators to assemble narrow, thematically focused, and relatively high converting communities around specific forms of content, a process described as tunable clustering [33]. Because such communities are built around perceived relevance, credibility, and functional usefulness, product offers can be presented in a form that reduces choice uncertainty and increases the probability of conversion. As a result, competition shifts from the purchase of attention to the organization of trust mediated demand.

Figure 2 presents the structure of marketing expenditures for a D2C brand and illustrates this shift in cost allocation. The figure highlights the relative weight of auction based acquisition costs, creator related expenditures, and conversion oriented spending, thereby making it possible to compare the economic logic of the two models.



**Figure 2.** Structure of marketing expenditures of a D2C brand (compiled by the author based on [14, 5]).

In contemporary social commerce, trust increasingly functions as a general transactional resource. At the same time, its large scale circulation creates the risk of declining credibility. Evidence showing that 92 percent of consumers trust influencers more than traditional advertising indicates the growing weight of creator mediated recommendation in purchase decisions [15]. However, the expansion of promotional communication presented as personal experience, together with fabricated reviews and opaque

native promotion, makes it more difficult to distinguish between authentic use and commercial imitation. As a result, the transactional value of trust becomes less stable, and demand rises for signals that can be verified more directly.

The empirical case examined in this study shows how this shift affects consumer decision making. After the introduction of Lab Tested status as an additional product level verification marker, trust formation no longer depended only on

creator recommendation or review volume. A personalized recommendation continued to reduce the cognitive costs of choice and to provide initial legitimacy, but laboratory verification added a different type of assurance by reducing perceived product risk. This combination points to a hybrid decision model in which affective trust and document based verification perform complementary functions. Under these conditions, the stability of trust is shaped less by charisma or reach alone and more by the presence of reproducible evidence of product quality that can withstand the informational saturation of influencer marketing.

This logic is especially evident in the Beauty & Personal

**Table 4.** The impact of different trust signals on purchase probability (compiled by the author based on [10, 14, 21, 29]).

Trust signal	Increase in purchase probability (%)
Recommendation from a trusted influencer	63%
Presence of 50+ authentic product reviews	43%–61%
Documented product verification, including Lab Tested status or certification data	74%
Money-back guarantee	58%
Video demonstration of product use	66%

The observed scientific turn in marketing practices, referred to as Muketing, reflects the institutional maturation of social commerce, in which aestheticized presentation loses its sufficiency as a persuasive mechanism. Under these conditions, consumer decisions increasingly depend on an evidentiary foundation, especially in categories marked by elevated risk sensitivity and information asymmetry, including cosmetics, dietary supplements, and electronics [16, 34].

In such segments, value is created not so much by visual persuasiveness as by the demonstration of verifiable attributes and reproducible efficacy confirmations that can compensate for trust erosion under conditions of saturated promotional communication.

The transition to performance commissions (CPS) simultaneously implies a radical restructuring of the risk profile: under auction logic, the brand effectively concentrates the full risk of inefficiency on itself, because spending on clicks or impressions remains irreversible even in the absence of commercial effect. Under the commission regime, risks become distributed: weak content quality nullifies the creator’s commission income, while ineffective ranking that reduces transactional yield limits the platform’s ability to extract its transaction fee. At the same time, a specific vulnerability forms that is appropriately described as the “algorithm curse”: both creators and brands become dependent on opaque metrics and rules of attention allocation through which the platform redistributes reach and, in practice, determines transactional probability [2]. This dependence logically entails a demand for a new type of regulation that would require disclosure of operational attention metrics and the principles of their application as a

Care category, where risk possesses not only a financial, but also a medical and socio-psychological nature. The higher the potential consequences of a mistaken choice for health, the more significant become supply-chain transparency, ingredient provenance traceability, and the availability of test results as institutional guarantees. Within this frame, “Lab Tested” and the accompanying documentation function not as a decorative marker, but as a competitive advantage, because they translate trust from the domain of subjective conviction into a regime of confirmable reliability and thereby stabilize conversion in an environment prone to erosion of trust foundations (see Table 4).

condition for sustaining fair competition in an environment where algorithmic infrastructure becomes the central mechanism of market access [2].

**CONCLUSION**

The transformation of customer acquisition from auction-based advertising regimes to performance commissions constitutes a tectonic shift within digital capitalism, affecting not only marketing instruments, but also the logic of value appropriation, the distribution of risks, and the institutional foundations of trust. The analysis conducted makes it possible to formulate a set of generalized conclusions.

First, auction advertising in CPC/CPM formats has approached the boundary of marginal effectiveness. The acceleration of CAC by 40–60% over the last two years undermines the possibility of sustainable scaling for a significant share of small- and mid-sized brands, because the growth of the price of access to attention outpaces the dynamics of margin and customer lifetime value. Against this background, social commerce grounded in CPS logic demonstrates an advantage in payback terms: ROI proves to be 2–3 times higher due to the elimination of a substantial share of “empty” spending associated with untargeted clicks and targeting errors.

Second, an accelerated redistribution of marketing rent is observed. Whereas previously the main beneficiary was concentrated on the side of infrastructure owners and the advertising auction (Google, Meta), in the current phase a meaningful share of rent income-up to 30% of the product price-shifts toward content creators. The determinant is trust scarcity: under conditions of eroding advertising legitimacy, it is creators rather than algorithmic intermediaries who become carriers of “attention capital,” converted into

transaction through reputation, demonstration, and social proof.

Third, trust mechanisms in e-commerce have undergone qualitative evolution: from predominantly technical guarantees (SSL level and baseline payment protection typical for 2010) to socio-scientific circuits (UGC and “Lab Tested” by 2025). The empirical results of the TikTok Shop case confirm that combining laboratory verification with confirmable user experience produces conversion growth within the 43–74% range, which becomes critically important in an environment of high competition and informational noise.

Fourth, the development trajectory of e-commerce shifts toward seamless integration of content, trust signals, and transactional action. Competitive leadership in the next decade will be determined by platforms’ capacity to ensure, simultaneously, a fair distribution of rent between creators and brands and a consumer safety regime through tools of verifiable quality- including certification practices and transparency of confirmations.

The practical significance of the study consists in substantiating the need to revise marketing budget structure in favor of partnership programs and investments in product-quality evidentiary support as a factor that increases conversion and reduces return risk. The scientific novelty is expressed in the theorization of algorithmic rent and in the analysis of its transformation under the transition to performance-based remuneration models in social media. A prospective direction for further research is associated with the role of artificial intelligence in automating content production and with assessing its impact on the sustainability of commission models under conditions of a possible “trust inflation.”

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