YouTube Makes Pitch for Brand Dollars With New Creator Offerings at NewFronts

YouTube on Thursday unveiled a smattering of new features designed to help brands make more of their partnerships with creators, including a hub for performance insights and tools for discovering creators who could be a good fit for specific campaigns.

The updates were made as part of the company's NewFronts presentation in Manhattan, where YouTube made its pitch to brands looking to allocate media budgets.

Among the core updates is the launch of YouTube's creator partnerships hub, through which brands can more easily discover sponsored videos, search for creators, and uncover insights about the performance of both paid and organic linked videos.

Embedded within Google Ads, the hub is designed to streamline how brands collaborate with creators. The tool can surface videos where creators have tagged or mentioned a specific brand, enabling marketers to request permission to link those videos to their campaigns. Once linked, marketers can integrate the content into their Demand Gen and Video Reach campaigns and gain access to reporting on both paid and organic engagement.



Additionally, YouTube is rolling out Brand Connect API, a new tool within the Brand Connect suite—a platform designed to help connect brands with creators. The Brand Connect API integrates YouTube creator analytics into custom tech stacks.

“We know that many brands and agencies have other agencies that they partner with. They invest in or build tools of their own that they use for their marketing campaigns,” Melissa Hsieh Nikolic, director of product management for YouTube Ads, told ADWEEK. “And so our strategy is to make sure that our creators and the appropriate metrics are making it into those tools … so it’s just much easier for them to do their daily work.”

The company is also bringing creator insights into Insights Finder, a platform designed to provide various marketing data and a view into audience intent.

Using the platform, advertisers can now search for YouTube creators and learn more about the demographics of their unique fan bases—details that could potentially help hone their targeting strategies.

Within the platform, marketers can search using a variety of criteria or topics, with Hsieh Nikolic adding, “Imagine that

you’re a sneaker brand. In Insights Finder, you can actually do things like [filter for] ‘sneaker enthusiasts,’ ‘sneakerheads.’”

With these inputs, Insights Finder will then produce a list of suggested YouTube creators for those topics—alongside data about the creator like engagement rates, like and subscriber counts, and their most viewed videos from the past month. Marketers can use the information to help determine whether a specific creator might be a good partner for a given campaign.

Additionally, YouTube on Thursday announced that partnership ads—which allow brands to turn YouTube creator videos into paid ads, with built-in targeting capabilities—are being added as an offering within Google Display & Video 360.

The slate of new product features underscores the company’s focus on driving more content monetization by facilitating brand-creator partnerships.

“We want to help brands find and partner with the right creators for their campaigns and measure the outcomes for what they are building together,” Hsieh Nikolic said.

The NewFronts presented an ideal moment to make the new product announcements, Hsieh Nikolic said, because it’s an opportunity to pitch social media buyers.

With more than 2.53 billion monthly active users, YouTube is becoming an increasingly valuable part of many brands’ marketing mixes. And the company’s advertising business is booming; in the first quarter, Google recorded $8.93 billion in ad sales from YouTube.

Aided by the explosion of its short-form video product, Shorts, the platform is also cementing itself as a stronghold for creators as TikTok’s fate in the U.S. remains in question.



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