

Trust, Influence and Authenticity

What Today's Equestrians Expect from the Brands Around Them

Equestrian sport has always been shaped by tradition. From the rituals of competition to the daily rhythms of stable life, horsemanship is built on experience, knowledge, and community passed down through generations. Yet the way riders discover information, evaluate brands, and learn about new ideas is evolving rapidly.

Data gathered over the year 2025 suggests that equestrians today are more digitally connected, more discerning, and more interested in credible information than ever before. Rather than relying solely on reputation or advertising, riders increasingly look for authenticity, expertise, and evidence when deciding which products, technologies, and organizations they trust around their horses.

The findings reflect a broader shift within the horse world. Knowledge is more accessible, conversations are more public, and trust is becoming one of the most important currencies in the industry.

THE RISE OF THE DIGITALLY CONNECTED RIDER

One of the report's clearest findings is how dramatically the discovery journey has changed. Perhaps not a surprise, but social media platforms have become one of the most important sources of information within the equestrian community, not just for entertainment but also for learning and research.

More than half of respondents, 53%, say they would turn to social media first when searching for equestrian information. At the same time, 88% prefer watching a video when learning something new rather than reading written material.

For many riders, short demonstrations, training clips, and product explanations offer a practical way to understand how something works before trying it themselves. In fact, many respondents indicated that the most effective educational videos are very short, often under one minute. Whether it is a quick demonstration

of saddle fit, a brief explanation of horse nutrition, or a snapshot of a professional rider's training routine, visual content allows knowledge to be shared quickly and widely. This shift does not mean that traditional sources of information have disappeared. Instead, riders now move fluidly between formats. They watch videos, read articles, and discuss ideas with friends and trainers. The difference is that information is now discovered and shared across a much wider digital landscape.

At the same time, the rise of ultra short learning formats raises questions that extend beyond the equestrian industry. Across many sports there is increasing discussion about whether younger participants are becoming accustomed to fast answers and instant results, rather than longer learning processes. While short videos can make knowledge more accessible, they also highlight the importance of ensuring that horsemanship education continues to emphasize patience, understanding, and the time required to develop true riding skill.



AUTHENTICITY MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

Alongside this digital focus comes a strong preference for authenticity. Riders are not simply interested in polished marketing imagery. They want to see how products and ideas fit into everyday horse care. The report found that 96% of equestrians check a brand's social media presence before purchasing from them, while 69% say they would like to see more behind the scenes content from equestrian organizations and professionals.

This type of content might include training sessions, stable routines, or honest discussions about challenges as well as successes. These glimpses into real equestrian life help audiences understand how equipment, feed, or management practices are actually used around horses. There were also clear indicators that providing context around the management and routines of professional sport horses would help foster a better understanding of what top level participation looks like. In turn, this type of transparency could help convert casual viewers into more engaged followers of the sport.

Interestingly, the study also suggests that equestrians remain cautious about content that feels overly manufactured or disconnected from genuine experience. Riders value transparency and practical insight, particularly in a sport where decisions directly affect the welfare and performance of the horse.

In this environment, authenticity is not simply a trend but a reflection of credibility.

RIDERS AS TRUSTED VOICES

This emphasis on credibility helps explain why riders and trainers play such an important role in shaping trust within the equestrian community.

According to the report, 89% of respondents say they trust brands more when they work with riders rather than influencers, and 68% say they are more likely to try a product recommended by a professional they respect.

Unlike traditional celebrity or influencer endorsements, equestrian partnerships often carry a sense of practical validation. Riders and trainers work with horses every day, testing equipment and management practices in real world conditions. When



they explain why they use a particular saddle, supplement, or training tool, their experience helps translate technical features into meaningful benefits.

However, credibility depends heavily on authenticity. Riders who carefully select partnerships and clearly explain their reasoning tend to inspire greater trust than those who promote numerous products without context. In a community where expertise is highly valued, the most influential voices are often those who share genuine insight rather than simply visibility.

THE ENDURING IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL IDENTITY

While authenticity and expertise drive trust, aesthetics remain a powerful part of equestrian culture. The report shows that 90% of equestrians say a brand's visual

design influences their purchasing decisions. This is hardly surprising in a sport where presentation has always mattered. The elegance of competition attire, the organization of a well kept barn, and the craftsmanship of quality tack all contribute to the visual identity of the horse world.

In recent years, equestrian imagery has also gained visibility beyond the sport itself. Fashion editorials, advertising campaigns, and lifestyle brands increasingly draw on equestrian aesthetics such as polished leather, tailored silhouettes, and countryside imagery to evoke a sense of heritage and timeless style.

Within the equestrian community, however, visual identity carries an additional meaning. A brand's presentation often signals professionalism, attention to

detail, and respect for tradition, all qualities riders value when choosing products for their horses.

THE GROWING DEMAND FOR EVIDENCE AND EXPERTISE

Perhaps the most significant insight from the report is the strong appetite for scientific credibility within the equestrian industry.

An overwhelming 96% of respondents say they would pay more for products that are proven through scientific research, while 78% express interest in learning more about equine studies.

Advances in equine science, from nutrition and biomechanics to performance monitoring technologies, are providing riders with new ways to understand their



horses' well being. These developments are helping to bridge the gap between traditional horsemanship with modern research.

At the same time, riders remain cautious about innovations that lack clear validation. Veterinary endorsement, transparent data, and accessible explanations are important factors influencing whether new technologies or products gain acceptance.

The message from the research is clear: knowledge matters, and riders want to understand not only what works, but why and how it will benefit their horse.

A COMMUNITY SHAPED BY TRUST

Taken together, these findings suggest that the equestrian world is evolving in ways that balance tradition with new forms of knowledge sharing. Riders continue to value heritage, aesthetics, and community, yet they also expect greater transparency, authenticity, and scientific rigor from the organizations and brands they engage with.

Information now travels quickly across the global equestrian network, and trust is built through a combination of expertise, lived experience, and credible evidence. For those working within the industry,

from equipment manufacturers to equine health companies and equestrian organizations, this changing landscape presents both an opportunity and a responsibility. Brands that share knowledge openly, support research, and communicate honestly about their products are likely to resonate most strongly with today's riders.

In a sport defined by partnership between horse and human, it is perhaps fitting that the same principle now shapes the wider industry. **HS**

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