

Module 2

Creating a Social Media Strategy

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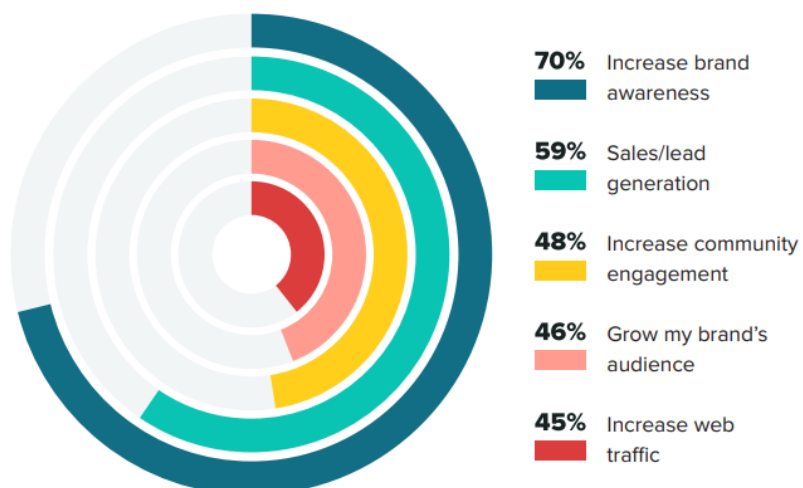
Creating a Social Media Strategy

Here are the points to be taken in this module:

- Setting Your Social Media Goals
- Choosing the Right Social Media Channels for Your Business
- Creating a Content Strategy
- Developing a Posting Schedule
- Crafting Engaging Captions and Hashtags

2.1 Setting Your Social Media Goals

Social marketers' top goals for social



Trying to navigate social without an end-game is both daunting and frustrating. Instead, marketers should be empowered to get down to business. That means knowing exactly what you should be doing day-by-day to meet the needs of the companies, clients, and customers you're working with.

2.1.1. Why do social media goals matter so much?

Marketers can't afford to ignore the process of setting goals on social media. Below are just a few of the reasons why specific goal-setting is an absolute must-do for marketers.

Goals hold you accountable

Whether you're working on behalf of a company or client, there's a growing expectation for marketers to discuss social media ROI with their bosses. Social media has the unfortunate reputation of being a time-sink among some critics. By defining goals, you're able to point to the specific steps and actions you're taking to meet your business' needs and justify your role.

Goals guide your budget

Maybe you're laser-focused on content creation. Perhaps you want to go all-in on Facebook ads. Either way, outlining your goals and an action plan is key to both figuring out what you need to spend to see results.

Goals encourage marketers to pay attention to data

Social media objectives are contingent on KPIs and metrics. Putting together a high-performing campaign means understanding what's moving the needle in terms of engagement, clicks, and revenue.

2.1.2. How to start setting social media goals

Now that you have a good idea of why you shouldn't just "wing it", we'll dive into the specifics of how to set social media goals.

The following framework is fair game for any business regardless of which social network you're focusing on.

Begin with a broad objective

Pop quiz: why is your business active on social media in the first place?

Beginning with a big-picture objective makes the goal-setting process less intimidating.

Here are some examples for reference:

- Small business: engage local followers and grow a greater community presence
- Startup: build awareness for a new product and generate leads for it
- Enterprise company: provide a timely customer service channel to boost customer loyalty

With a broad objective in mind, you can then start thinking about specific, granular goals that'll directly inspire your day-to-day social activities.

And hey, that leads us directly to our next point.

Setting SMART goals

Here's where we get into the nitty-gritty.

Once you've gotten your big-picture goals figured out, it's time to outline your SMART social media objectives.

The SMART goal-setting framework is insanely popular and we can't recommend it enough for social marketers.

In case you aren't familiar SMART is an acronym for:

- **Specific:** Your goals should be clear, simple, and defined.
- **Measurable:** This is where analytics come in. You want a goal that has one or more metrics.
- **Achievable:** Is it achievable or is it not possible within your resources?
- **Realistic:** With your current resources of time and money, is it possible to achieve your goals?
- **Time-sensitive:** Every goal needs a time frame, whether it's one year or several months.

Identifying your goal metrics

Next, it's time to identify the metrics you'd like to assign to your goals.

As noted, there are KPIs and metrics tied to every goal.

Let's use "increase brand awareness on Facebook" as an example goal. For marketers focused on this goal, you'd want to pay close attention to the following:

- Fan count
- Page and Post Impressions
- Post Reach
- Link clicks (if you are linking to your company blog)
- Website analytics for Facebook referrals

In a SMART breakdown, “increase brand awareness in the next 3 months” for a cafe might look something like this:

- **Specific:** Increase brand awareness on your Facebook account within a five-mile radius of the cafe.
- **Measurable:** Increase fan count by 15%. Increase link clicks on posts about the new cafe by 15%. Have an average Post Reach of 1000 people per post.
- **Achievable:** Yes
- **Realistic:** Boost new cafe posts with advertising by \$15 per post, targeting an audience within a five-mile radius. Consider also posting neighborhood specials to get the word out about the cafe.
- **Time-sensitive:** 3-month time limit on achieving the goal.

Tracking your results over time

Whether or not you’re reaching your goals depends on your ability to monitor your data over time.

Are numbers ticking upward in terms of clicks and conversions? Is your audience growing?

Whether the answer is “yes” or “no,” you’ll know for sure if your action plan is working.

Data is especially important for setting realistic social media goals. After all, goals require context.

For example, let’s say your Instagram is averaging 100 followers per week. Scaling up to 125 or even 150 per week within the span of three months isn’t unreasonable. However, expecting that average to boom to 500 or 1,000 isn’t rooted in reality.

2.1.3. Sample social media goals by platform

Remember: goals, priorities, and expectations vary from platform to platform.

To wrap things up, here are some goals for social media broken down by individual networks and their specific strengths.

Facebook

If your business wants to run advertising that targets hyper-specific users, look no further. With social media's largest user base and most robust ad-targeting platform, Facebook is the gold standard for paid ads for local businesses and e-commerce giants alike.



Twitter

If your business wants to build relationships with its target audience, Twitter is a solid starting point. The platform is ideal for use as a customer service or business development tool as you can go back and forth directly with customers and other companies.

LinkedIn

If you're a B2B brand, LinkedIn is the place to be. The go-to network for professionals, LinkedIn is all about flexing your company's influence and networking for new opportunities.



Drift
18,736 followers
4d

[Follow](#) ...

The thing about content is that you don't need to be 🤖% unique to be effective. Humans want that balance of surprising and familiar. So how do you bring that into your content marketing? 😊

Here are 4 tried and true formats that [Campfire Labs](#) uses 📄
<https://drift.ly/2nA0WRe>

- Jackie



Longform Content Marketing Formats Proven to Drive Results | Drift
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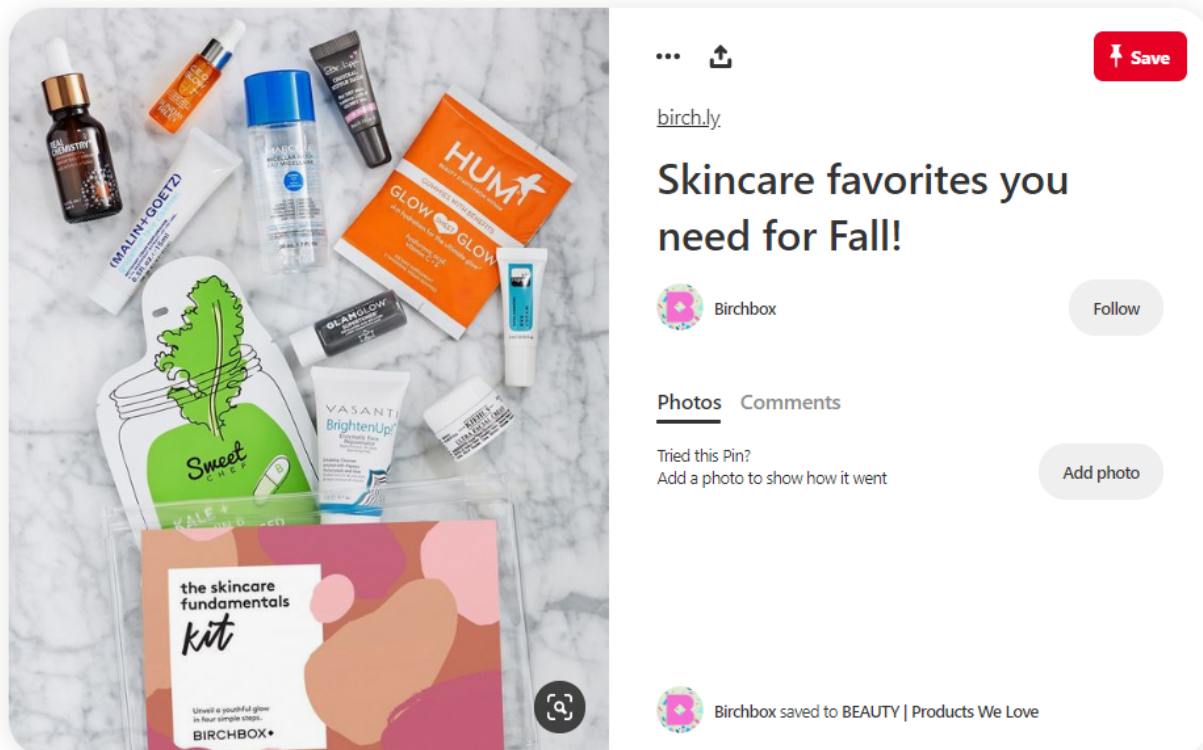
👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Instagram

If your business is selling a “visual” product (think: retail, hospitality, travel), Instagram is your bread and butter. Countless brands have managed to engage their communities through eye-popping photos, Stories, and compelling visual ads.

Pinterest

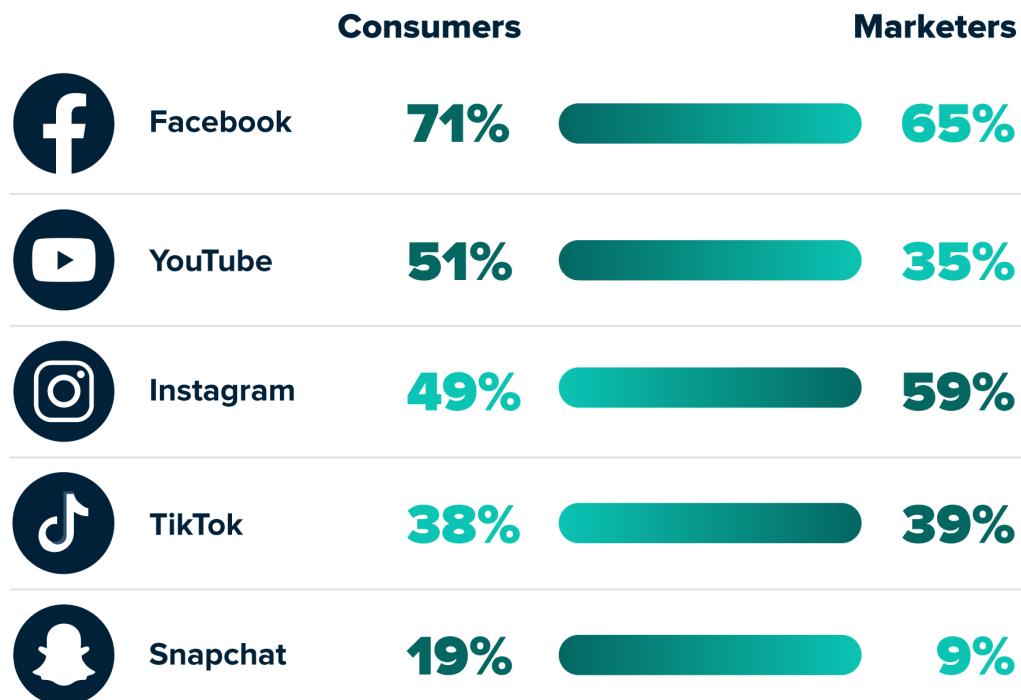
Pinterest is not unlike Instagram with its emphasis on visuals and product-based content, although its audience skews slightly older. Given that the majority of Pinterest users rely on the platform to research products, marketers should think twice before treating it as a “secondary” social network.



2.2. Choosing the Right Social Media Channels for Your Business

With more social media platforms than ever before to choose from, brands are faced with a tough question: which ones are right for me? Rather than employ the “spray and pray” method, identifying which social media platforms your customers use is an effective way to connect with your target audience where they’re at. According to the latest Sprout Social Index™, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are the top social media platforms consumers will use in the next 12 months.

The top platforms consumers and brands anticipate using most in the next 12 months



In the eyes of the consumer, all social platforms are not created equal. Their social platform preferences vary based on factors like age and interest—and even then there's no guarantee the platform of their choice is where they like to engage with brands.

2.2.1. Facebook

Key Stats:

- Monthly global active users: Nearly three billion
- US users: Over 179 million
- Average time spent per day (US): 30 minutes
- Largest age group: 25-34 year olds
- Who should use it: Brick and mortar small businesses (think: local events and reviews) and nonprofits (think: fundraisers) are two industries that stand out on Facebook. It's also useful for creating different interest groups, customer service, and social advertising.

Why you should be on Facebook

Reigning as the most popular social platform by monthly active users worldwide, Facebook is one network businesses can't afford to ignore in their digital strategy. According to the Computed Social Index, 71% of consumers and 65% of marketers plan on using this platform the most in the next year.

For brands looking to increase their reach and grow their business, there's a good chance their next customer is on Facebook. Paid social ads reach those customers—in fact, more than a quarter of all digital ad spending goes toward Facebook.

Facebook messaging and reviews are also crucial customer service and social media tools. Considering 60% of consumers say they use Facebook the most for customer service, it's a key platform to meet your customers where they're at. Adding a

2.2.2. WhatsApp

Key Stats:

- Monthly global unique active users: Over two billion
- US users: Over 68.1 million
- Average time spent per day: 28 minutes
- Largest age group: 26-35 year olds
- Who should use it: Direct-to-consumer brands like retailers or even financial services can benefit from offering customer service to an international audience.

Why you should be on WhatsApp

WhatsApp is the most popular global messaging app. For brands, WhatsApp presents an opportunity to personally connect with customers all over the world, providing timely support and real-time business updates.

And making personalized interactions easier matters—70% of people say they expect conversational experiences with brands on social, and 60% of brands say DM-ing plays a role in their customer care strategy.

If you're wondering how to use Whatsapp for business, there are many options; from standard customer care to creative marketing.

2.2.3. TikTok

Key Stats:

- Monthly global active users: One billion
- US users: Over 179 million
- Average time spent per day: 89 minutes
- Largest age group: 10-29 years old
- Who should use it: TikTok's What's Next report highlighted these key industries: Apparel & accessories, beauty & personal care, travel, food & beverage, and financial services.

Why you should be on TikTok

Known for less-polished, meme-y short videos, TikTok dominates as one of the platforms US consumers spend the most time on, and it's no longer the new kid on the block. With 38% of consumers expecting it to be one of the platforms they use the most this year, it's time to give TikTok marketing a try.

Showing up with authentic content on TikTok can build trust with consumers on the platform—73% of users feel a deeper connection to brands they interact with on TikTok vs other platforms. Considering nearly half of users say TikTok helped them make purchase decisions, that trust can go a long way.

TikTok trends can inspire other social content—on the app or on other platforms—and help marketers understand what topics are relevant to younger consumers. And while TikTok remains a core platform to reach Gen Z, the app has aged up, making it possible to reach a more cross-generational audience, too.

2.2.4. Instagram

Key Stats:

Monthly global active users: Over two billion

US users: Over 159 million

Average time spent per day (in the US): 30 minutes

Largest age group: 25-34 year olds

Who should use it: Travel, beauty, fashion, and health/fitness tend to do well on Instagram. If your brand is all-in on influencer marketing, posting user-generated content, and using short-form videos, Instagram is crucial.

Why you should be on Instagram

Instagram is one of the most widely used platforms among US adults, and 49% of consumers expect it to be the platform they use most this year. As the preference for short-form video increases, brands need to invest in platforms like Instagram where this content is king.

Instagram is also a key place to tap for influencer or creator collaborations—which is especially impactful for Gen Z and Millennial audiences.

The ease of Instagram shopping has also made the platform a shopping hub.

With 70% of shoppers looking to the platform for their next purchase, leveraging this feature can help you connect with customers while making sales. Consumers are also sliding into DMs with questions and feedback, making Instagram a valuable component of your customer service.

2.2.5. Twitter

Key Stats:

- Monetizable daily active users: 237 million
- US users: 76.9 million
- Average time spent per day: 34.8 minutes
- Largest age group: 18-29 year olds
- Who should use it: The jewelry industry gets the most engagement on Twitter, as does fast-moving consumer goods, food, beverages and home. But higher education is an industry that can uniquely benefit from Twitter by creating different channels for the variety of sports teams, areas of study and communities they cater to.

Why you should be on Twitter

Twitter is one of the top social media platforms for brands to keep up with the latest trends and conversations that their target audience cares about. One of Twitter's newer features, Twitter Spaces, makes it possible to have live conversations with your audience that you can promote beforehand, and Tweet out later.

Twitter also enables brands to receive direct audience feedback and questions. And being responsive can build your brand's image—Twitter customer care interactions lead to a 58% better attitude toward brands. This makes the platform a powerful place to collect consumer insights on how to improve products, services or social content.

2.2.6. LinkedIn

Key Stats:

- Members worldwide: 830 million
- US users: 190 million
- Average time spent per day: 34.8 minutes
- Largest age group: 25-34
- Who should use it: Almost every business can benefit, but some of the top industries they highlight in a recent report are tech & information, finance, healthcare, media & entertainment, marketing & advertising, travel and hospitality, retail, consumer goods, and real estate.

Why you should be on LinkedIn

While LinkedIn is often associated with B2B marketing, there are plenty of reasons why brands should consider developing their LinkedIn strategy. As the world's largest professional network, it's one of the best social media platforms for business and for lead generation; brands are able to hyper-target their professional audience using rich demographic data and interest-based filtering.

It's also home to job seekers and investors, making LinkedIn a valuable resource for recruiting and establishing your employer branding strategy to differentiate from your competitors.

2.3. Creating a Content Strategy

Your goal is to deliver high-quality, relevant content that will engage your audience, establish brand trust, and drive business—but how can you tailor your social content to break through all of the noise, provide value to your audience and ultimately impact your bottom line? A social media plan is a comprehensive blueprint for your social marketing strategy that will help you do just that.

It includes:

- Setting realistic social marketing goals to align with your overall business goals
- Determining how you will measure the success of your social marketing efforts
- Integrating emerging trends and best practices into your strategy and content development

This 30-day social media plan template is designed to help you re-invent your social media management strategy so that what you share aligns with the interests of your community and contributes to overall business value.

You will learn how to:

- Create an effective social strategy that aligns with audience interest
- Diversify your content and build a robust content calendar
- Determine business value driven by social

Use the social media plan template below to track your progress as you work through the plan. By completing just one task each day for the next 30 days, you can fully transform your social marketing strategy.

M	T	W	T	F
1 Establish your goals for social	2 Define your success metrics	3 List out your challenges	4 Brainstorm solutions	5 Analyze the competition
6 Determine your strengths and weakness	7 Audit your content	8 Create a list of relevant keywords	9 Determine your brand voice	10 Optimize your social profiles
11 Develop your buyer persona	12 Listen to your audience	13 Research industry topics and trends	14 Connect with other departments	15 Choose your content types
16 Develop a posting schedule	17 Brainstorm content ideas	18 Gather resources	19 Create your content	20 Optimize your content
21 Create a call to action	22 Connect to more resources	23 Amplify your efforts	24 Put paid behind your best content	25 Engage with your audience
26 Track your content	27 Compare your results to goals	28 Report out	29 Revisit and adjust your strategy	30 Celebrate your transformation

Week 1: Establish your goals and define your metrics

Day 1: Establish goals for social

Establishing clear social media goals is the first step toward transforming your strategy. Determine exactly what you want social to achieve. Here are several examples of goals you might consider:

- Drive website traffic
- Raise brand awareness

- Boost brand engagement
- Generate new leads
- Nurture leads
- Build a community around your business
- Establish authority and industry expertise
- Improve customer support
- Shift brand sentiment

The objective here is to give purpose to your social efforts. Once you've established your social goals, the content you produce and share should continually support those goals.

There are several methods to help you write out specific social media goals, including the Objectives and Key Results (OKR) method.

The OKR method asks you to set a broad objective statement and list out key results that describe what successfully achieving that objective looks like. Here's an example of a broad objective statement supported by clear, result metrics that define meeting the objective.

Objective (Goal)	Key Results (What success looks like)
Boost brand engagement	Increase engagement (likes, shares, mentions, comments) by 20% by the end of Q4

According to this example, if your objective is to boost brand engagement, you must increase the number of likes, shares, mentions and comments by 20% by the end of the fourth quarter.

Day 2: Define your success metrics

How are you going to define the success of your social efforts? Decide which metrics will provide the right data to determine whether or not social is supporting your business goals.

As you identify your success metrics (e.g. organic mentions, share of voice, or conversions), set clear standards for your social campaigns so that you know when you achieve success. If you are tracking audience engagement, what exactly do you consider successful engagement rates for your social content?

Depending on the type of content you produce, where you share and the goals you set for your social marketing efforts, the metrics you track will change.

If you're at a loss for the goals your team should set, use a Social Media Metrics Map to assess options for owned, earned, and paid social.

Day 3: List out your challenges

The task is simple: Make a list of the challenges you face when it comes to social media marketing. Think of any barriers that are keeping your social content from making its biggest impact.

As you list out your challenges, write out simple explanations of how these barriers are impacting your marketing efforts or overall business success. Here are a couple of examples to help you get started.

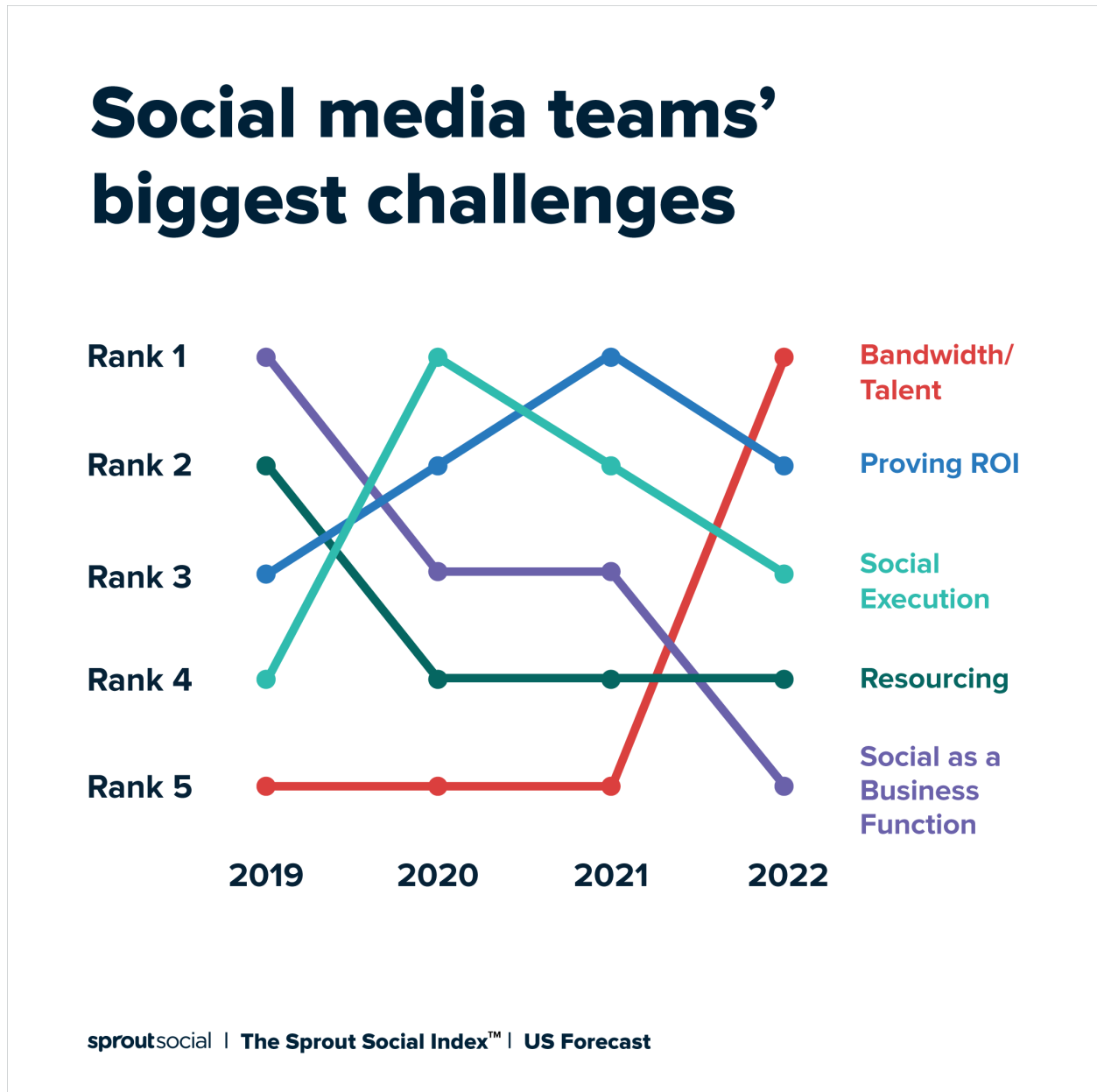
Challenge 1:

Although we consistently post on social, we are not achieving ideal engagement levels.

Challenge 2:

We have seen a dramatic drop in our social content's organic reach.

Not sure what your specific challenges may be? Use this



Day 4: Brainstorm solutions

Round up your marketing team and brainstorm possible solutions to the challenges you previously listed.

Be sure to provide evidence to justify effective solutions so that you're prepared when the time comes to gather resources and advocate for your budget.

Solution to Challenge 1:

We can use creators to engage with our social content and drive conversations.

Justification: In 2022, most marketers (74%) planned to spend at least a quarter of their social media budget on partnering with a content creator. With loyal followings, creators can boost engagement and keep relevant conversations going on social.

Solution to Challenge 2:

We can invest in paid social media advertising to run highly targeted campaigns and reach the right people.

Justification: Almost half of consumers report they “find the perfect products” by seeing targeted ads. By 2025, social shopping is set to become a \$1.2 trillion channel.

Day 5: Analyze the competition

If you're running out of ideas, try running a competitive analysis. Be careful not to mimic your competitors' content, but use your analysis to determine your brand's unique positioning instead.

Your brand and its competitors have similar ideal customer personas, so focus on the type of content that is resonating, both within your own social efforts and those of the competition.

Here are a few questions to consider as you analyze your competitor's social marketing efforts:

- Which marketing channels are my competitors using and are they successful in those channels?
- What are my competitors talking about and are those topics generating high audience engagement?
- Are there areas within our social strategy where we are outperforming our competitors?

Social analytics solutions are an effective way to compare your efforts against your competitors.

You can pinpoint days when competitors experienced peak engagement and dive deeper into what content was shared on those days to understand what resonates most with target audiences.

Week 2: Optimize your profiles and brand voice on social media

Day 6: Determine your strengths and weaknesses

Take a deep dive into your social strategy and determine where you are successful and where there is room for growth.

Conduct a survey among your marketing, sales, customer service, and product teams to gauge where they see areas of success or room for improvement.

For each criterion regarding your social marketing strategy, determine whether it's one of your strengths or weaknesses. This will help identify what you should focus on over the next five weeks.

Content Marketing Criteria	Strength	Weakness
We connect our content marketing strategies and tactics to our business goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We put enough resources—time, budget, people—into our social marketing program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our social content aligns with the interests and needs of our target audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have the marketing technology and analytics capability to measure the ROI of our social marketing efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have and use social media accounts to promote our content and drive prospects and clients to our website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We create content for specific channels and adapt them as necessary to perform well on other channels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Day 7: Audit your content

Run a social media audit to identify your best-performing content and most popular channels. Take time to understand what's working and why. Your metrics can help you identify which posts effectively cater to the interests of your audience.

If your posts aren't engaging and resonate with your followers, your social media content strategy needs to shift. Use your audit to review the content you've shared and identify which posts had the biggest impact.

Day 8: Create a list of relevant keywords

Use social media listening tools to identify the keywords most often associated with your brand. These keywords can help your team throughout the content brainstorming and creation process.

Social listening can help you uncover unique opportunities to tie trending conversations to your business and products.

For example, our team of analysts found that a new TikTok sound titled “Corn but it becomes a song and unites world” spawned over [607,000 videos](#). Nando's UK went all-in on this trend by showcasing their grilled corn to the sound, garnering 11.6 million views and over a 330,000 likes.

Day 9: Determine your brand voice and social persona

When it comes to building a social audience, consistency is key. Creating a brand voice and identifying a persona will enable you to remain consistent across all of your social channels.

After you narrow in on your persona, choose three words that describe your brand then explain what they mean for your brand and create dos and don'ts to guide content creation.

Voice Characteristics	Description	Do	Don't
Passionate	We're passionate about changing the way the world works.	Use strong verbs. Be champions for (industry). Be cheerleaders.	Be lukewarm, wishy-washy. Use passive voice.
Quirky	We're not afraid to challenge the status quo and be ourselves.	Use unexpected examples. Take the contrarian view point. Express yourself.	Use too much slang or too many obscure references. Use jargon, overplayed examples. Lose sight of the audience and the core message.
Irreverent (secondary characteristic of quirky)	We take our products seriously; we don't take ourselves seriously.	Be playful. Use colorful illustrations or examples.	Be too casual. Use too many obscure pop-culture examples.
Authentic	We're going to give you the tools and insight you need to make your job easier. That may not always be through our product.	Be honest and direct. Own any issues or mistakes, and show you will address them. Stick to your word.	Use too much marketing jargon or superlatives. Overpromise. Oversell the product's capabilities.

Source: Content Marketing Institute

Day 10: Optimize your social profiles

While much of your time is spent planning and creating content, the information included on your profiles is vital to the success of your social marketing efforts.

After you've determined your brand's persona, build out your profiles to align with your voice.

At a quick glance, your profile should speak to your brand with relevant visuals and engaging copy. Here are a few tactics to optimize your social profiles.

1. Use a consistent profile picture

If you own multiple social channels for your business, it's important that your profile picture is consistent across every channel. Most businesses will use their company logo or variations of their logo that have been designed specifically for their social accounts. Staying consistent across your profiles will increase opportunities for brand recognition.

2. Complete every section of your profile

If there is a field for information, take advantage of the opportunity to tell your brand's story. In creative and succinct ways, you should be able to describe what your business does, the offerings you can provide, and how you add value to the lives of your customers.

3. Add keywords to boost SEO

On Day 8, you compiled a list of keywords relevant to your industry, brand and its offerings. Use these strategic keywords in every section of your profile to boost SEO. They should appear in your bio copy, in photo names, interests and experiences.

Week 3: Find and listen to your community to better understand your industry

Day 11: Develop your buyer persona

Transforming your social marketing strategy may require you to either revisit your current buyer personas or create new ones from scratch.

Buyer personas help you better understand current and future customers, so you know exactly who you are marketing to and can create relevant content and offerings. Start by writing down everything you know about your target customer and perform

research to fill in any gaps. For a robust buyer persona, try to capture the following information.

- Demographics
- Backstory
- Lifestyle
- Career
- Purchase behaviors
- Finances
- Goals, challenges, pain points

Day 12: Listen to your audience

Listening to your community can help you gain insight into the minds of your followers, so you can be more strategic in your social marketing efforts.

Here's what you should listen for on social media:

- What your audience is talking about and what they share most often
- What your audience is saying about your brand, industry, products, services and competitors
- What your audience is sharing on forum-style platforms like Reddit or Quora
- How your audience engages with creators, trending topics and industry events

Day 13: Research industry trends and topics

To create relevant content and establish your brand as an authority on social, you must stay up to date with what's happening in your industry.

Join conversations surrounding high-interest topics. Perform ongoing research to make sure the content you produce and share aligns with the current interests of your community. Here are a few resources that will help guide your research.

Newsletters

As social marketers, research is one of our most valuable skills. Instead of browsing aimlessly through content, rummaging through thousands of social profiles, or running endless Google searches, an easy way to streamline research is to sign up for a solid mix of newsletters.

Newsletters provide insights into the state of the industry, changes in technology, updates to social networks, and emerging trends and best practices.

Here are a few newsletters that social media marketers should add to their resource list:

- [Link in Bio](#) features expert interviews from industry-leading social media managers. The newsletter shares actionable advice and relatable experiences to inspire their community.
- [Social Media Today](#) focuses on sharing original analyses of what's happening in social media. Their content is platform-focused, providing social marketers with insights on how to adopt new features and where other brands are finding success.
- [SocialMedia.org](#) is a membership organization for leaders in the social media marketing space. Their weekly newsletter, [The Shortlist](#), highlights member stories as they share what they're working on and what they're keeping an eye on in the space.

Webinars

Webinars can have a significant impact on social marketing strategies by generating new leads and prospects, nurturing existing relationships, and demonstrating expertise in our industries. During webinars, many businesses will live-Tweet along with their users to answer questions and keep the online conversation going.

Webinars can also provide a way for us to learn, which can spark content ideas during our brainstorming sessions. Social Media Today provides a wide variety of webinars specific to social marketers. You can register for upcoming webinars or watch from their [library of on-demand sessions](#).



WEBINAR - ON DEMAND

2022 Gift Card Trends and Insights

Custom content for GiftNow



WEBINAR - ON DEMAND

Are You Set for Holiday Shopping?

Custom content for InMobi



WEBINAR - ON DEMAND

How to overcome data silos and unlock data-driven marketing

Custom content for Snowflake

Forums

Forums give marketers an effective way to identify the topics that spur the most conversation online. Quora is a great resource to discover topics of interest, ask questions and engage in conversations relevant to your brand. As a brainstorming tool, forums can help social marketers build social content plans that address questions people are already asking.

Blogs

[Adweek](#) (and publications like [Digiday](#) and [Marketing Land](#)) present the anatomy of the latest, most creative campaigns out there, and also fill you in on the most recent

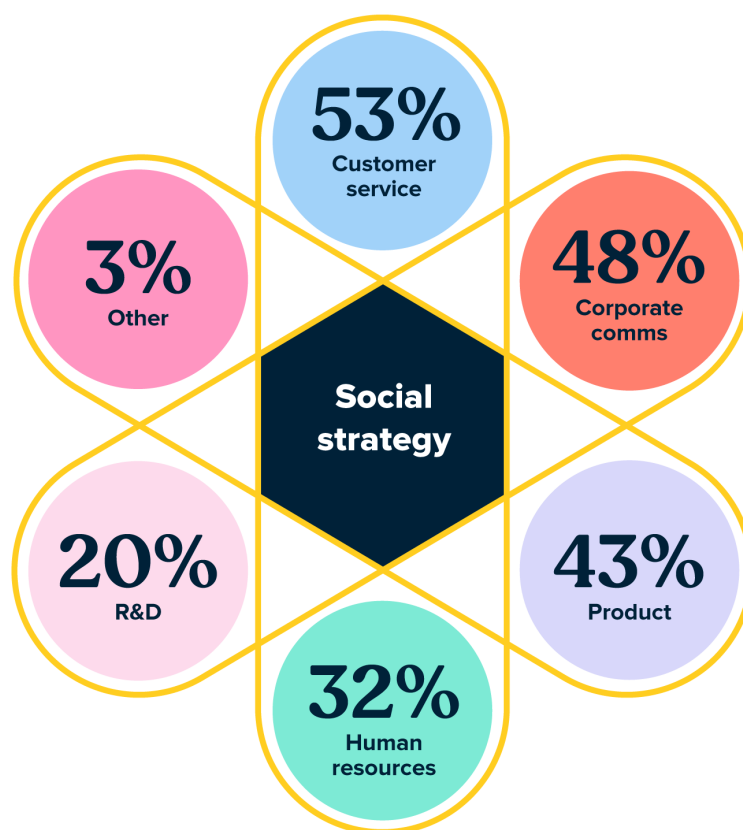
news. [The Mission](#) (and Medium generally) is great to turn to for thought leadership and gauging the pulse of our industry and the visionaries in it.

Day 14: Connect with other departments

As you continue researching industry trends and topics as inspiration for your content, connect with other departments within your organization.

Social is no longer limited to marketing, with functions across the business weighing in on strategy. But as a more diverse set of stakeholders gets involved, core social teams will need to adapt. Figuring out who owns what, and which proficiencies are needed across teams, has to be addressed as social strategies become more sophisticated.

Teams that contribute to their organization's social strategy



For example, try speaking with members of your sales team: they are often the first points of contact for consumers, and they can provide insight into customers' needs, challenges and successes. This insight can help generate content that addresses these needs or highlights successes.

Your human resources team can also provide insight into ongoing employer brand initiatives. Collaborate with HR to investigate how employees and potential hires are engaging with your brand on social. Their understanding of your workforce can help you identify what content is most effective for this important group of stakeholders.

A social media collaboration tool can help you streamline your efforts and manage cross-functional initiatives.

Day 15: Choose your content types

Start thinking about the types of content that will benefit your brand the most, while keeping your audience engaged.

Refer back to the buyer personas you created to determine if an image linking to a blog post would perform better than a Twitter chat or an Instagram Live event. Consider the resources available to you to determine if you can create a high-quality how-to video, or if you need to scale down your efforts and create an infographic using the same content.

For the best results, diversify your content to keep your audience interested. If you post the same type of content day after day or week after week, your audience will inevitably disengage.

Here's a list of possible content types you can start incorporating into your social marketing strategies:

- Memes
- GIFs
- Infographics
- How-tos
- Polls
- Contests
- User-generated content
- Photo and video

- Live streaming
- Audio

Before you start searching for content to share on social, figure out what your audience actually likes. One way to do that is to look at past social media posts to see which were most successful.

Make sure you sort your posts by the metric that is most important to you, whether that's clicks, responses, or total reach. Once you have an idea of what kind of content works best, you can move on to the next step.

Week 4: Fill out your social content calendar to increase reach and engagement

Day 16: Develop a posting schedule

Your publishing cadence depends on a handful of factors including your company, your audience, the campaign in question, and the social networks being used. We cover this more in our guide on how often to post on social media, but here are some recommended cadences for each network:

- TikTok: 1-4 times per day
- Instagram: 1-2 times per day
- Facebook: 4-5 times per day
- LinkedIn: No more than 1 time per day
- Twitter: 3-4 times per day
- Pinterest: No more than 1 time per day

There's a good chance your post frequency will depend on the size, experience and authority of your social media team, so don't feel like you have to send out less than stellar content to meet these guidelines.

Your brand's analytics can help you determine your best posting frequency.

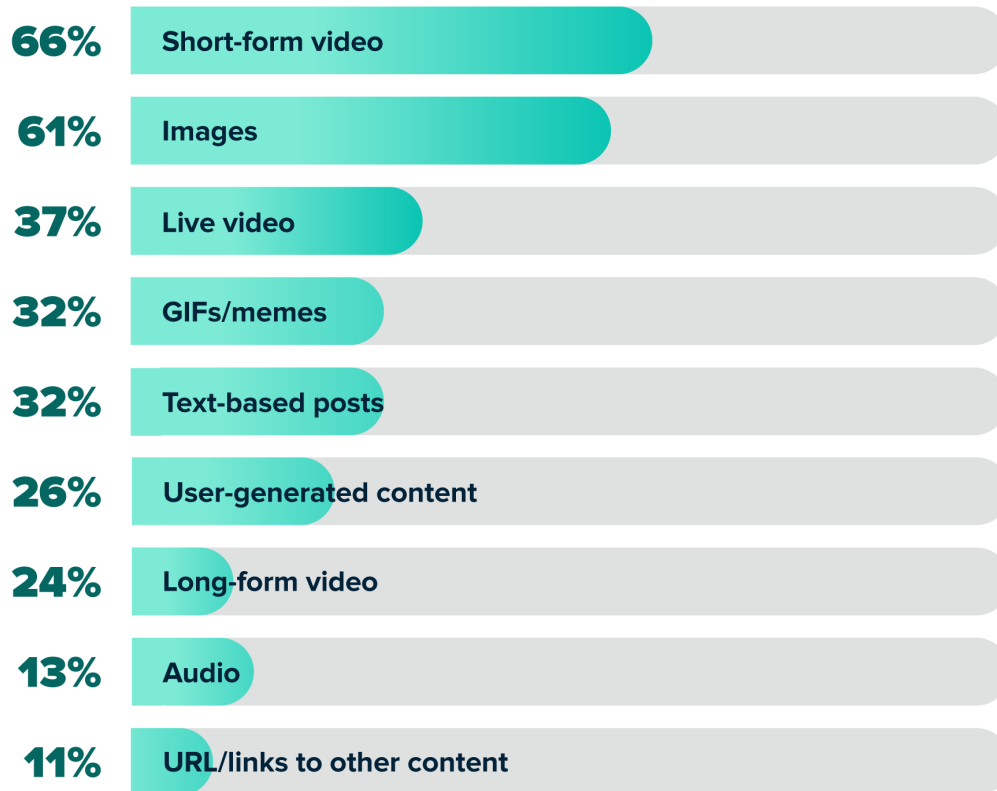
Day 17: Brainstorm content ideas

Now's the time to gather your inspiration and plan out content you know will resonate with your audience. The key to effective brainstorming is to put yourself in the mindset that inspiration can come from anywhere.

Think of what your business does well and how you can turn that into an engaging content piece. Look through some of your older content and see if you can repurpose or reformat it for a different channel.

Based on the conversations you've discovered are popular among your audience, how can you contribute to those conversations with fresh content? Here are some of 2022's most popular content types.

The most engaging types of in-feed social content



Video

About 66% of consumers cite short-form video as the overall most engaging social content, while 37% prefer live video and 24% prefer long-form video. Even if you don't have the budget to hire a videographer, don't rule this medium out. Tools like [Canva](#) and [Biteable](#) have democratized the creation process. Anyone on your team can make professional, on-brand videos, even while working remote.

Images and text-based posts

In the era of video, images and text-based posts still pack a punch with today's social users. In fact, 61% of consumers find images to be the most engaging social content. From Instagram carousels to Twitter threads, these posts are key pieces of leading content strategies.

User-generated content

Marketers have been able to amplify user-generated content to increase brand awareness, promote products and services and use the digital word-of-mouth concept to build brand trust and increase sales. In fact, 39% of consumers like to see brands share customer testimonials or real customer demos.

Day 18: Gather resources

Once you've determined the types of content best suited for your business and have decided on a publishing cadence, start gathering your resources.

Think back to the types of content you decided to incorporate into your social strategy and what resources you need to bring them to life. Here are several questions for you to consider as you start collecting your resources.

- Have you decided on the type of creative assets you'll use and how you'll store them?
- Who within the company needs to be involved in order to create this specific content piece?
- Do you need any sort of creative support for visual elements?
- Do you already own content (guides, e-books, blog posts) that can easily be repurposed for social?

Day 19: Draft your social media plan calendar and create your content

It's time to get to work. Start the content creation process and set reasonable timelines for project completion.

Be sure to build social content that speaks to your customer personas, stays true to your brand voice, and can easily fit within the posting schedule you've established.

Day 20: Optimize your content

During the creation process, it's essential for you to optimize your content so that your efforts don't go unnoticed in consumers' crowded social feeds. Every net new content piece you create should be able to be repurposed for another use down the line.

Consider your video strategy. A video can be broken down into short clips, quote graphics, still images, and more. Think through your options while creating content so you can fill out your social calendar with less effort going forward.

Here are a few additional tactics to optimize your social content to maximize reach and increase engagement:

- Include hashtags
- Shorten links
- Include images
- Adapt content for various social channels

Week 5: Supplement and boost your social media content calendar for the best results

Day 21: Create a call to action

Not all of the content you share on social needs to encourage customers to take action. You may even find that some of your most popular posts are those that simply showcase your brand personality or provide a good laugh for your audience.

Take The Sill, for example. Their TikTok videos provide their community with tips for caring for plants with a twist of humor that feels authentic to their brand. They go beyond standard product content, showcasing their brand in fun and creative ways that align with platform trends.

If the primary goal of your social marketing is to generate new leads and guide people into your sales funnel, you need to give your audience a clear next step. Include direct CTAs (call to action) on the posts you are using to drive action.

For copy inspiration, check out this list of effective social CTA phrases.

Day 22: Connect to more resources

By connecting your audience to more resources (especially owned resources) you are establishing your brand as an authority on your space while inviting them to engage further. The more they learn about you and stay engaged with your brand, the more likely they are to convert.

Day 23: Amplify your efforts

Once you've started promoting your content on social, think of ways you can amplify your messages to reach a larger audience.

Here is a short list of methods to consider in order to extend the reach of your content:

- Leverage your employees to amplify your content
- Give incentives for customers to share on their social channels
- Use creators to extend the reach of your content

Day 24: Invest in your best content

As you promote and amplify your content, you may quickly notice that some types of content perform better than others in terms of engagement and conversion.

Extend the reach of these high-performing pieces through paid ads. You can target a highly specific audience, attract qualified traffic and leads and grow your customer base.

The algorithms for social networks like Facebook and Instagram are now starting to favor paid content over organic content, making it increasingly important to invest in paid to give your content a fighting chance for discovery.

Which social media network you choose will depend on three important factors:

- Where your target customers are most concentrated
- Where your target customers are most accessible
- Where your target customers most actively engage with ads

Day 25: Engage with your audience

About 80% of consumers expect brands and companies that have a social media presence to interact with their customers in meaningful ways.

It's important to engage with and respond to your audience. Engaging with your audience in a two-way dialogue builds brand trust and adds authenticity. As you monitor your audience's reaction to your content, you can also gain valuable insight into its effectiveness.

Read through comments on your social posts and respond to questions and insightful comments. The comments section is a great tool for social marketers looking for feedback and can even inspire ideas for future content.

Week 6: Report on your social media results and celebrate your success

Day 26: Track your content

Content tracking is an effective way to gauge engagement and track the movement of your content across social channels.

You can track all of your content with the Sprout Social Post Performance Report.

Use the Post Performance reports to analyze published content down to the individual post and understand its performance with your audience.

Day 27: Compare results to goals

Think back to the objectives you set at the beginning of these 30 days.

For example, if your objective was to boost brand engagement, you needed to increase the number of likes, shares, mentions, and comments by 20% by the end of the fourth quarter.

Using a social media analytics tool, you can compare month-over-month engagement for all of your social profiles to determine if you are on track to meet your social marketing goals.

Day 28: Report out

Share the results of your social marketing efforts with your marketing team and leadership.

This is your opportunity to showcase the goals you've established and your progress toward them. You should use hard evidence, like the data you've gathered through listening and analytics, to report on the success of your social marketing efforts.

Depending on your goals, you may want to build a custom report that zeroes in on what matters to your team.

Day 29: Revisit and readjust your strategy

The most savvy marketers know that marketing strategies are in constant flux. Revisit your strategy, revise your marketing goals and adapt your strategies based on the data you've collected.

Day 30: Celebrate your transformation

Congratulations, you've successfully made it through the 30-day social marketing transformation program.

Celebrate your new strategy and the effort you've made to enhance your social marketing.

Developing a Posting Schedule

The internet never sleeps so the best time to post on social media seems like it's at every hour of the day. We're going to demystify this myth so your social team can plan, prioritize and create a successful social media marketing strategy.

Utilizing Sprout Social's research and data, here are the best times to post.

Best Times to Post on Social Media Overall

Mondays

10 a.m. to noon

Tuesdays

9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wednesdays

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Thursdays

9 a.m. to noon and 2 p.m.

Fridays

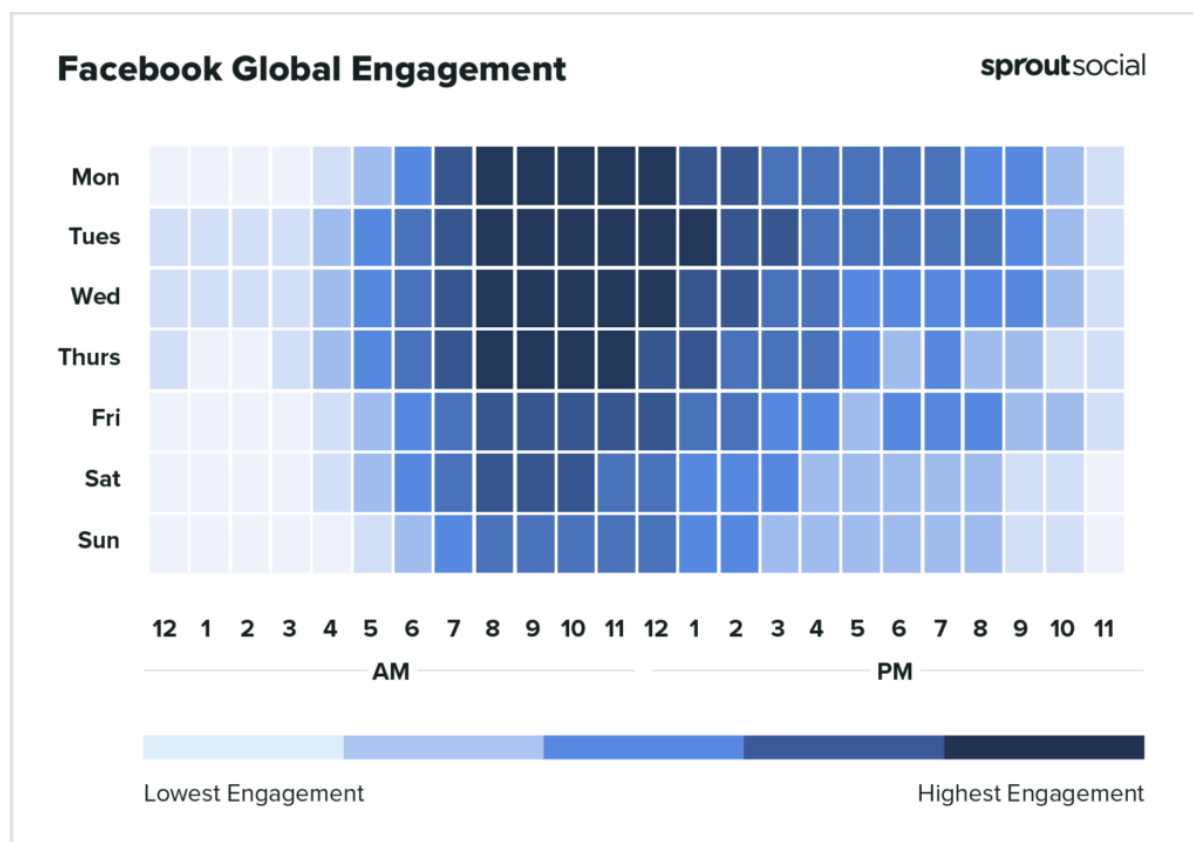
9 to 11 a.m.

Data from Sprout Social include users from various plan types, industries and locations. All time frames are recorded globally, meaning you should be able to publish with the times provided in any timezone and see positive engagement results.

- **Best times to post on social media:**
 - Mondays from 10 a.m. to noon
 - Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - Thursdays 9 a.m. to noon
 - Fridays from 9 to 11 a.m.
- **Best days to post on social media:** Tuesdays and Wednesdays
- **Worst days to post on social media:** Sundays

Each social platform has its benefits depending on your goals, content type, and audience. If you're noticing your engagement isn't where you want it to be, consider revisiting your social media KPIs. Of course, knowing which days you get the most engagement helps you reach those goals as well.

Best Times to Post on Facebook



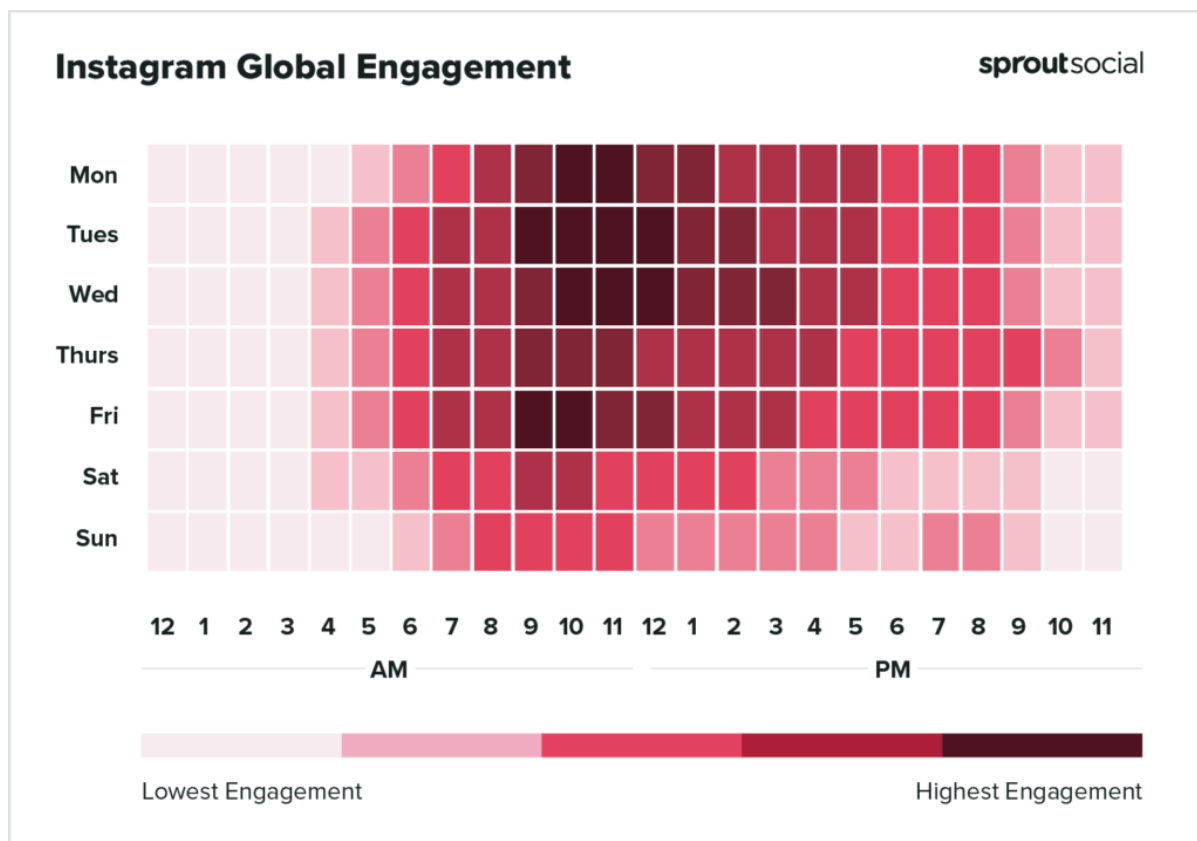
- **Best times to post on Facebook:**
 - Mondays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - Tuesdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - Thursdays from 8 a.m. to noon
- **Best days to post on Facebook:** Mondays through Thursdays
- **Worst days to post on Facebook:** Sundays

Optimal send times for Facebook are Mondays through Thursdays starting at 8 a.m. until early afternoon, generally 1 p.m. The only “off” hours for posting on Facebook are very early hours on Fridays through Mondays, generally midnight until 4 a.m.

With a solid Facebook marketing strategy, businesses can target the right audiences at the right time with their content. Keep in mind, engagement also has to do with how often you post on social media and what you post.

Not all social content translates well across every social media platform. Posting the right content on the right platform makes a difference.

Best Times to Post on Instagram



- **Best times to post on Instagram:**
 - Mondays from 10 a.m. to noon
 - Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

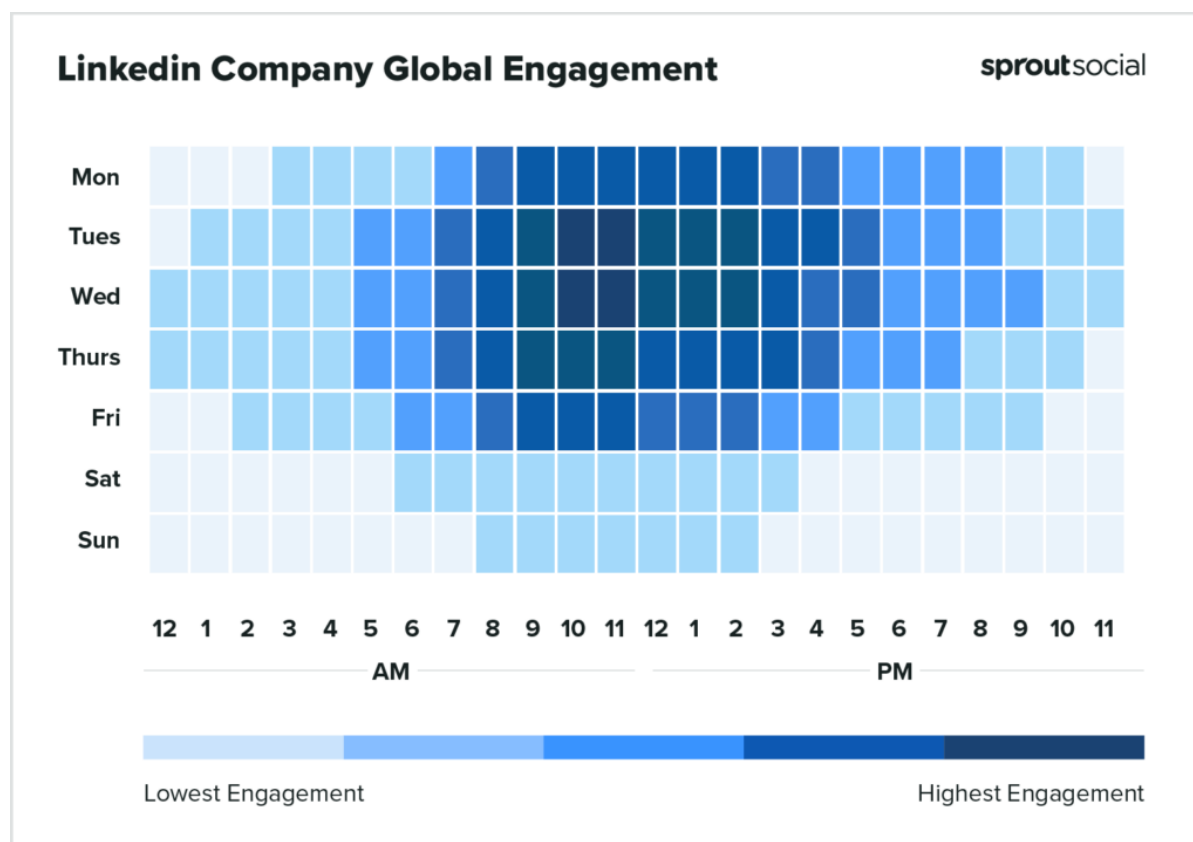
- Fridays from 9 to 11 a.m.
- **Best days to post on Instagram:** Tuesdays and Wednesdays
- **Worst days to post on Instagram:** Sundays

The best times to post on Instagram are Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., generally. Similar to Facebook, the “off” hours are the early morning hours every day of the week, from midnight until 4 a.m.

Instagram has grown a long way since its photo-only days. The app, which has nearly 2 billion monthly active users, is now a platform to share images, videos, Reels, and live streams, just to name a few creative content types. It is also an avenue to collaborate and partner with other brands and provides a stream of revenue through its e-commerce capabilities.

The Instagram algorithm is unpredictable. To be successful on the platform is a balance of consistently posting high-quality content that will engage and entertain your audiences. That’s a lot to ask for with each piece of content published. But using that as a guiding post can help with your Instagram marketing efforts.

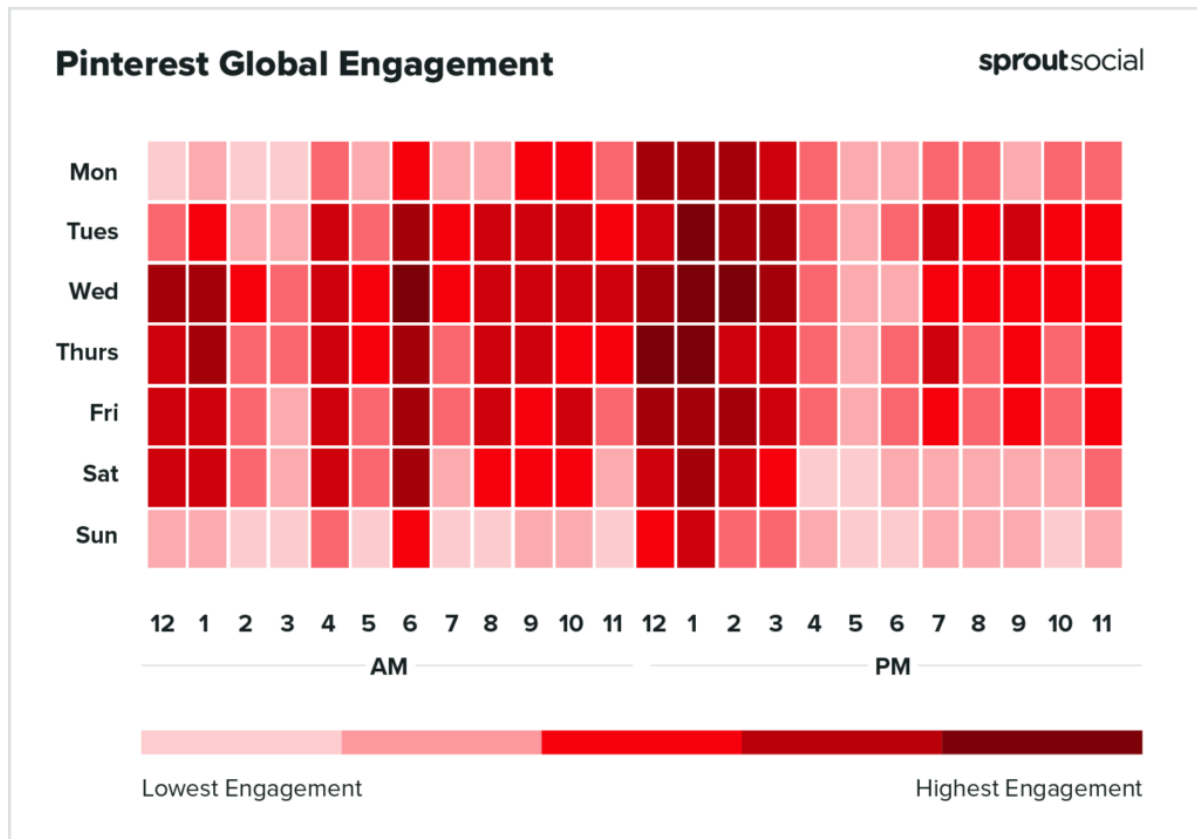
Best Times to Post on LinkedIn



- Best times to post on LinkedIn Company Pages:
 - Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon
- Best days to post on LinkedIn Company Pages: Tuesdays through Thursdays
- Worst days to post on LinkedIn Company Pages: Weekends

Unsurprising for this professional-focused social platform, LinkedIn engagement times are consistent with general business hours. High engagement hours are more concentrated midday and don't extend too far out past the workday hours. You're less likely to get eyes on your LinkedIn content on the weekend when engagement drops significantly.

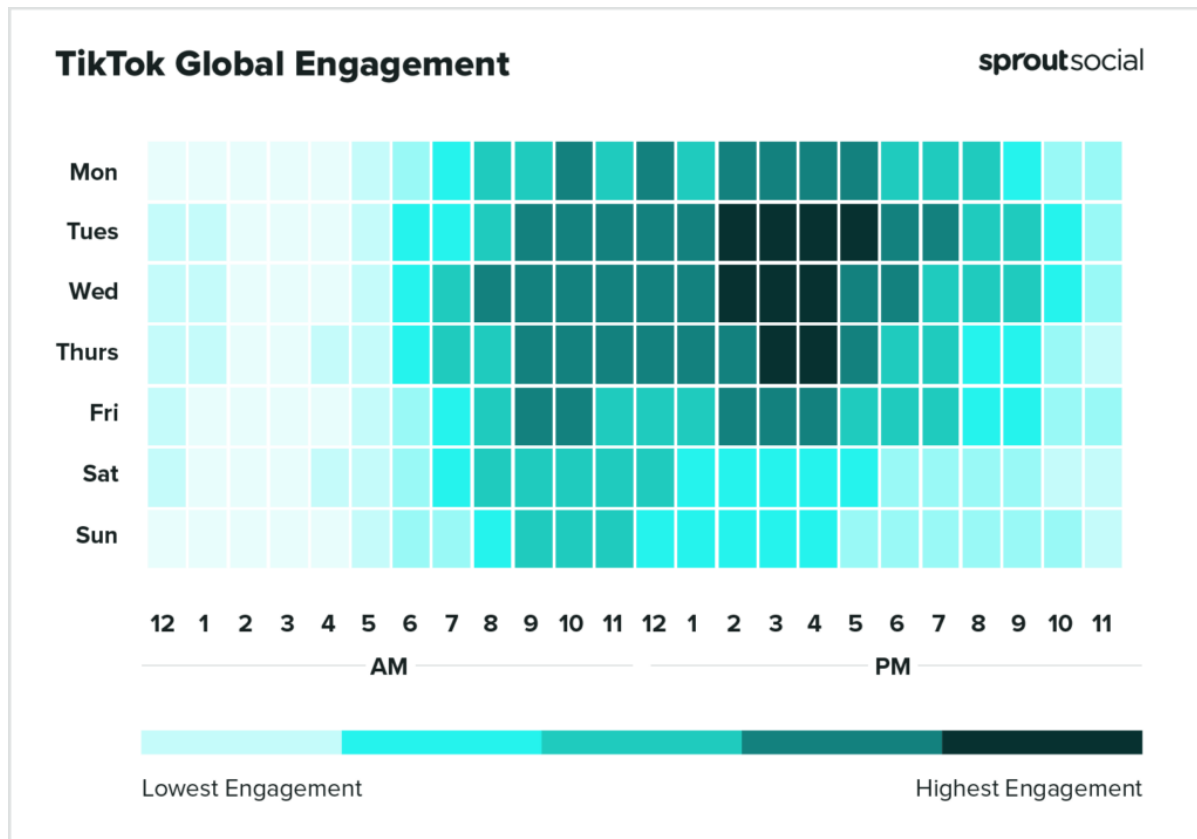
Best Times to Post on Pinterest



- Best times to post on Pinterest:
 - Tuesdays at 1 p.m.
 - Wednesdays from 1 to 3 p.m.
 - Thursdays from noon to 2 p.m.
- Best days to post on Pinterest: Wednesdays through Fridays
- Worst days to post on Pinterest: Sundays and Mondays

Pinterest is the visual search engine where users go to research and discover products, trends, designs and more. While not all brands may be on the platform, those who use it know Pinterest's benefits.

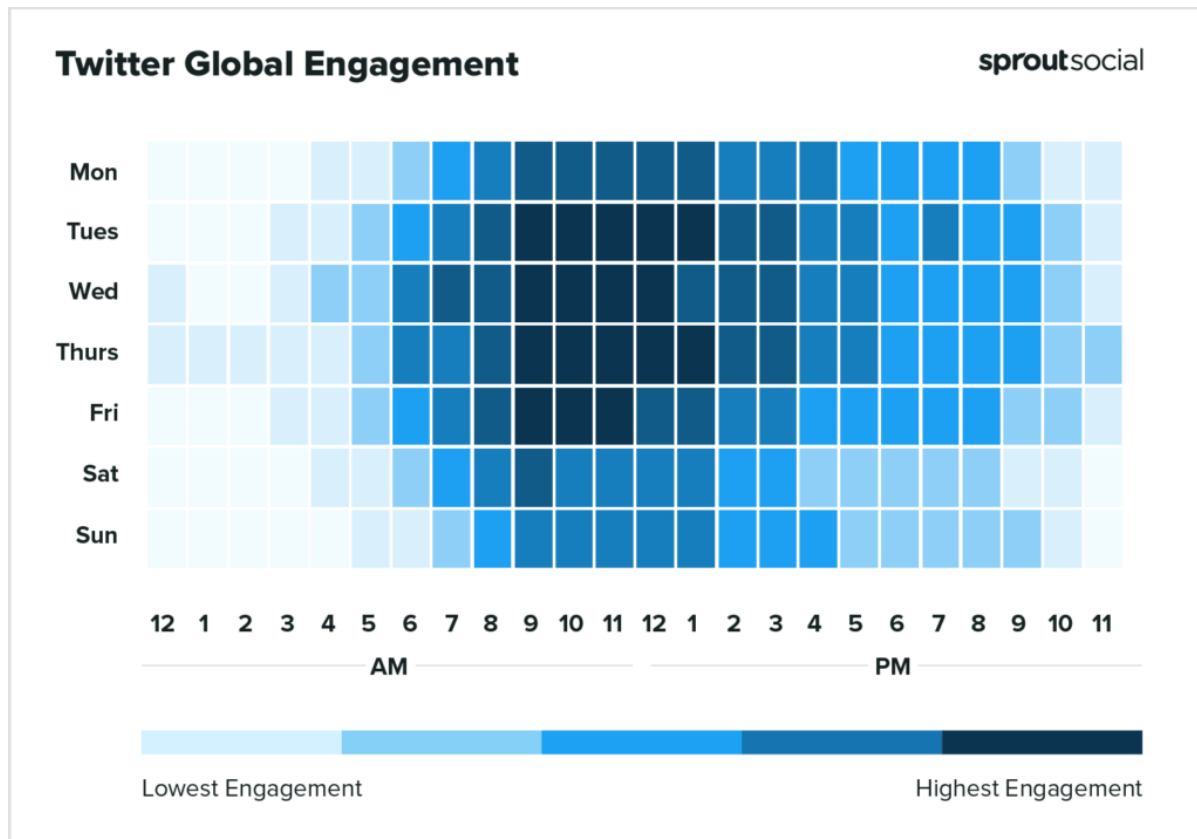
Best Times to Post on TikTok



- Best times to post on TikTok:
 - Tuesdays from 2 to 6 p.m.
 - Wednesdays from 2 to 5 p.m.
 - Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m.
- Best days to post on TikTok: Tuesdays and Wednesdays
- Worst days to post on TikTok: Sundays

The best times to post on TikTok are Tuesdays from 2 to 6 p.m., Wednesdays from 2 to 5 p.m. and Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m. Afternoons are when the highest engagements are on the platform; users are looking to fill their afternoon entertainment boost. However, generally, mid-morning through the afternoon (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) on Tuesdays through Thursdays see higher engagement on the app.

Best Times to Post on Twitter



- Best times to post on Twitter:
 - Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Fridays 9 a.m. to noon
- Best days to post on Twitter: Tuesdays through Thursdays
- Worst days to post on Twitter: Sundays

Twitter peak times for engagement grew significantly compared to last year, with hours consistently at late morning to midday during weekdays. The best times to post

on Twitter are Tuesdays through Fridays beginning at 9 a.m. and taper off around noon.

2.4. Crafting Engaging Captions and Hashtags

As a brand, it's important for you to adapt to this shift and engage your audience in a more authentic and personal way.

In this section, you'll learn how social media entertainment grew and ways you can approach it for your brand to increase your loyal customer base while staying relevant.

We also share excerpts from Sprout's Webinar Masterclass series, where Rachel Karten, social media consultant and creator of the Link in Bio newsletter, shared her thoughts on creating clever content that resonates with your audiences.

2.4.1. What spawned the era of social entertainment?

Social media used to be a way to communicate directly with your community and the algorithm barely had any influence over your feeds.

So if you followed a brand on social media, you would see their posts on your feed regardless of any optimization. Today, every post is influenced by factors like format, creativity, hashtags, how people engage with it and the ever-changing algorithm. Plus, everyone is competing for attention.

As a result, social media has become just as important for building brand awareness as fostering community, and it requires authentic storytelling and curating a unique voice

to stand out. It's also become a source of entertainment, which audiences are craving more than ever.

Let's break down how this evolution in social media entertainment came about.

The pandemic made lo-fi content a necessity

With most people locked in their homes during the pandemic, the average time US users spent on social media in 2020 climbed to 65 minutes daily—a significant jump from the previous year. This rapid increase forced marketers to ditch traditional practices and get creative with their ideas.

Enter lo-fi (low fidelity) and personality-driven content. With audiences craving authenticity and more human interaction, polished content was no longer enough. Brands like Oreo were some of the first to adopt lo-fi content and enviable creativity.

Real people and real faces are what audiences wanted while being quarantined. And brands responded with their employees and even CEOs posting stories and shooting Reels right from their phones.

Audience preferences for storytelling in marketing

More time at home and on their phones also meant audiences were wanting for more entertainment. A strong storyline, well-developed characters, conflicts and resolution are foundational elements of a compelling story. And social media content is no different.

Audiences seek entertainment and you can have their undivided attention on social media, provided you beat your competitors who are vying for the same attention. You can do this with content that is eye-catching, unique and relatable.

The pandemic and earlier global changes like the rise of smartphones and even the Hollywood writer's strike way back in 2007 that spurred today's reality shows, changed the way audiences consume content. They're still looking for the same elements any good story has but without the feeling that it's contrived and fake. It's a sign of the times.

Plus, with the Internet becoming more accessible, you can't get away with unsubstantiated claims. As Rachel pointed out in the Masterclass, people's tolerance for BS is at an all-time low.

The most successful brands leaned into this evolution in content consumption, adapting their strategies to tell stories that resonate with their audience. For example, this YouTube video from Google uses storytelling to subtly highlight its features while also comparing them with a competitor in the friendliest manner.

The “TikTok effect”

Entertainment's place in social media was solidified when TikTok arrived on the scene. TikTok initially entered the market as a social media entertainment platform and has quickly secured its position in every brand's social media marketing strategy.

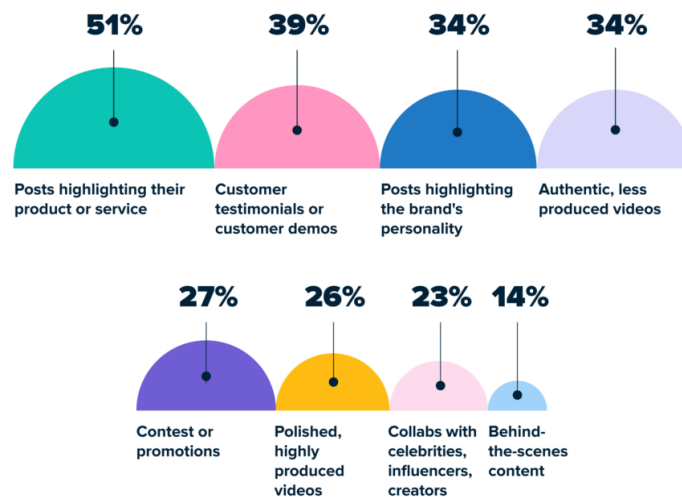
TikTok was truly a people's app, empowering regular people to create and post authentic, short-form video content on any subject. The app's ranking algorithms further leveled the playing field, enabling videos to appear on feeds based purely on the level of engagement it got such as views, likes and shares, giving rise to TikTok trends or “challenges”.

TikTok campaigns like the #ChipotleLidFlip challenge and the #GuacDance challenge resulted in over 250K video submissions and 430M plays in just six days.

After the #GuacDance challenge, Chipotle reported over \$800K sales of their guacamole on National Guacamole Day.

With its short-video format and clever positioning, TikTok took the world by storm, replacing YouTube as the most-watched app in 2021, and Netflix as the most downloaded app in 2022.

Types of content consumers like to see from brands they follow on social



3 ways to create more entertaining social content

Social media teams are effectively in-house content creators, which means you need to know the latest trends and align them with your brand values. All while ensuring you entertain your audience.

But as Rachel noted, “It’s really important you understand that social is now entertainment first.”

There’s no one-size-fits-all approach to social media entertainment. This freedom gives you the chance to experiment with different content types and formats. But there are some hallmarks that can help brands adapt their voice to be entertaining. Here are three ways you can lean into entertainment with your social content:

1. Lead with personality

Every brand has a distinct personality that sets it apart from competitors. Figure out your strengths and weaknesses, and carve out a niche for yourself. To do this, you need to:

Go beyond having a strong voice and tone

Tone and voice are crucial to every brand personality, but in a constantly changing social landscape where brands are competing for consumers’ attention, it’s necessary to go beyond the traditional route.

Take, for example, budget airline, Ryanair. With its self-deprecating humor and witty responses, the brand has become synonymous with disruptive social media marketing. Their content isn’t just another marketing asset, it engages their customers and builds a sense of community where audiences share a laugh and their adventures on the airline on social.

Put a face to your brand, and rely on creators as needed

Instead of collaborating with creators occasionally, think of them as an extension of your social team.

As Rachel shared, “I think one way to think about creators and influencers is sponsored posts, but another way is how can we bring them onto our channels and use their comedic timing and their personality on our channels.”

If your influencer budget is limited, motivate your co-workers to share some behind-the-scenes content or encourage your customers to create content with your products. It’s also a great solution if you or your social media team isn’t comfortable being on camera.

Old Navy encourages its customers to use their hashtag #OldNavyStyle on social media to share videos or photos with their products. This strategy has led to an increase of more than 500,000 posts on Instagram and TikTok videos getting over 15.5k likes.

2. Be real

No, we’re not talking about the social platform called “Be real”—we mean be authentic.

With social media becoming so ubiquitous and audiences becoming increasingly savvy to marketing and sales tactics, brands can no longer rely on superficial content. Consumers are looking for honesty and authenticity with content that provides value and is relatable.

To strike the right authenticity chord, you need to:

Embrace lo-fi, and stop showing up perfect

Not only is it cost-effective but also shows the human side of your brand while delivering higher ROI with smaller budgets. [Shoot unpolished videos](#) or capture product images from your phone and hit publish.

Fenty Beauty, with over 2.4M followers on TikTok, embraces the platform's lo-fi content style, letting their community and products speak to the value of the brand.

Humanize your brand

Make your content feel like a person, not a brand. For example, BTS video from your office, factory, kitchen, etc.

“Think of creative ways to make your content feel more like a person, like a peer's content, and not like there's some brand kind of talking down to your audience.”

At Sprout, we often recruit employees from various teams to star in our social videos to show the people behind the brand.

3. Optimize for shareability

Social media algorithms are focusing more on discoverability, helping supply endless entertainment with creators and brands you may not follow yet. Relevancy and relatability drive people to share content.

To create such content:

Tap into specific communities

Speak directly to your audience by posting content that connects your brand to their values.

Take this Tweet from Uber Eats, as an example. They celebrated Father's Day by sharing some jokes on their feed and subtly encouraging users to order something special for their dad. They highlighted the importance of spending quality time with loved ones while appreciating the role fathers play in our lives.



Tap into “universal truths” for your audience

People relate to universal truths the most, making them feel seen and it builds a sense of belonging. It can be content that breaks stereotypes, talks about shared experiences, or just is fun.

Tap into community building with social media entertainment

Social media is an opportunity to build meaningful relationships with your customers. Harness the power of social media entertainment to connect with your audience on a deeper level and build a sense of community that fosters brand loyalty.