

Unleashing the power of video:

Key trends driving social media engagement in 2023

Reels, live video, and GIFs — a closer look at the impact of video

What you will find in this report

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FOREWORD

Today, social media has become an integral part of our lives, serving as a global platform that connects individuals, fosters communities, and drives business growth. With each passing day, this digital realm undergoes rapid transformations, presenting both challenges and opportunities for marketers.

In recent years, we have witnessed a seismic shift in the way people consume content on social media platforms. Audiences now crave immersive and visually compelling experiences that transcend traditional text-based communication.

Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have emerged as pioneers in adapting to these changing content demands. They have transformed the social media landscape by offering short-form, snackable video content that captivates users and keeps them hooked. The success of these platforms lies in their ability to seamlessly blend entertainment, creativity, and information into bite-sized videos that effortlessly resonate with audiences.

While the rise of video in social media is evident, it is important to recognize that this landscape is continually evolving. New platforms, trends, and technologies will emerge, challenging us to stay agile and innovative. As marketers, we must remain vigilant, continuously exploring and experimenting with the latest features and functionalities offered by social media platforms.



Zarnaz Arlia

Chief Marketing Officer, Emplifi

Introduction

With the accelerating pace of change – both in technology and consumer behavior – around social media, it's as essential as it is challenging for today's marketer to keep up. Just understanding the most up-to-date best practices can seem like a full-time job on its own, and it's understandable for marketers to wonder where to turn for answers.

At Emplifi, we believe the answer to this challenge lies in data. In this report, you'll get our latest insights on the state of social media marketing, gleaned from our exclusive first-party data from millions of posts published across hundreds of thousands of brand profiles worldwide. This report will not only give you a snapshot of social media behavior today, but will provide you with the trendlines you'll need to project where to spend your dollars tomorrow.

What did our Q2 2023 data show us? For one, the impact of video – in its many forms – is undeniable across all the major social media channels. We also dive deeper into a couple of key trends to better understand how brands are adapting to changing consumer behavior and preferences, and how that's impacted their spending and tactics.

We hope these insights will help you make better decisions and execute a more confident marketing strategy.



The biggest drivers of organic social media engagement

All brands want high engagement rates on their social media channels — when someone likes, comments on, or shares their posts, they're socially supporting that content, as their followers can see this interaction. And, in short, it validates your efforts to create an engaged community using the power of organic, authentic content.

But it's important to remember that not all social media platforms are created equal, and brands can't take a "one-size-fits-all" approach across their social channels.

When it comes to engagement, despite seeing a 11% year-over-year decline in Q2 2023, Emplifi data shows that Instagram still significantly outperforms both Facebook and Twitter in terms of the amount of interactions brands are seeing on their posts.

So, what's driving these figures? As we examine in this section, each social media platform tells its own story as to the types of content brands' followers are more likely to interact with. Though one theme does emerge: **visuals outperform text**.

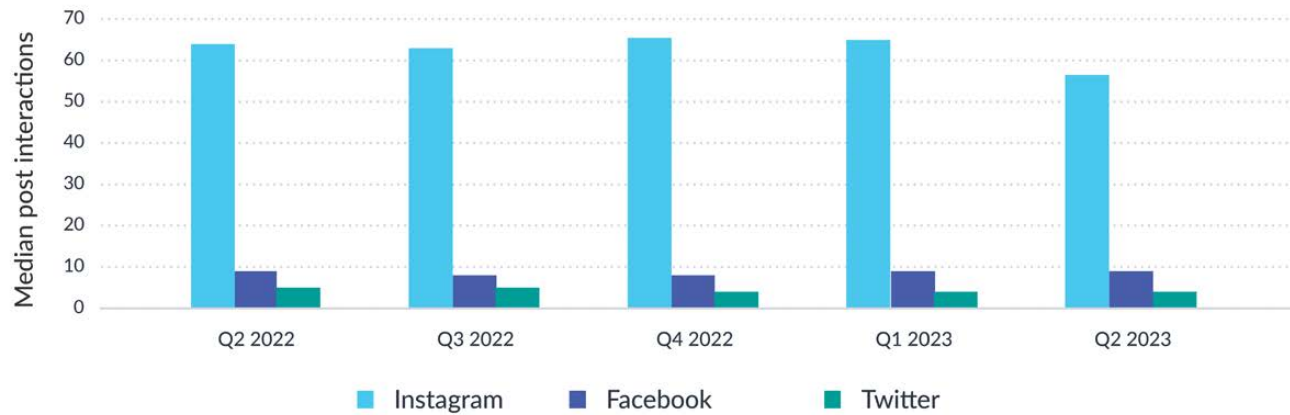


Instagram
significantly outperforms
Facebook
& Twitter

in the amount of interactions brands are seeing on their posts

Source: Emplifi data

Evolution of interactions Brands (worldwide)

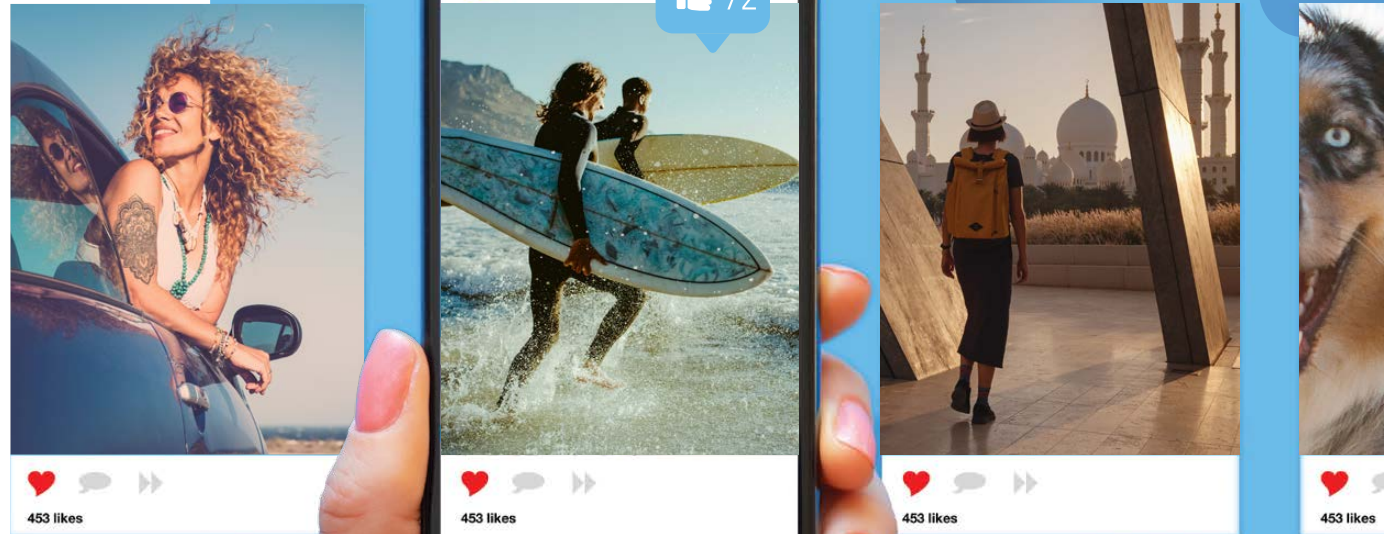


Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 224,426 Facebook, 80,732 Instagram, 26,073 Twitter profiles of brands

Instagram: Reels and Carousels

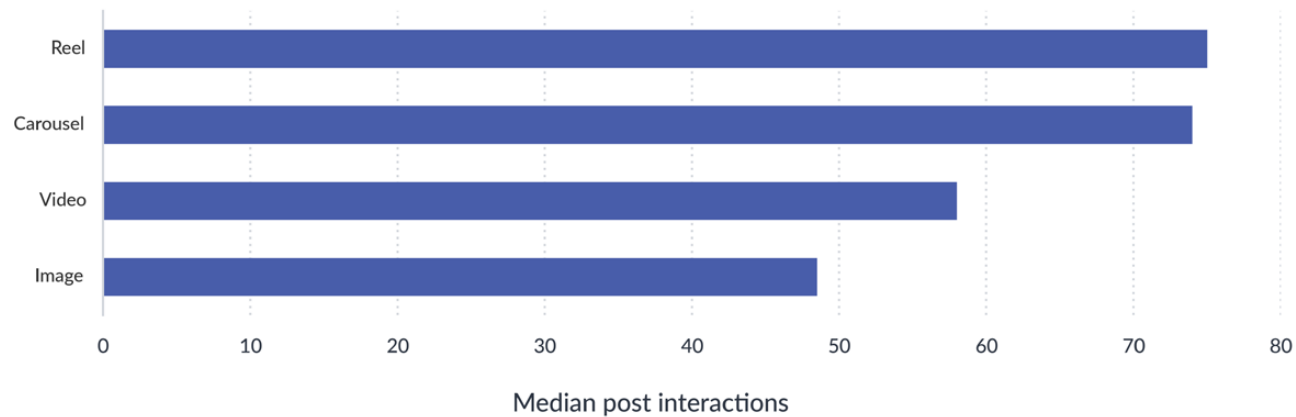
While Instagram had its start with single-image posts, the platform has since evolved to include an array of different content formats. And today, Emplifi data shows that users are more likely to gravitate toward Reels and Carousels (multi-image posts) as the most engaging content formats, with both formats seeing **75 and 74 median post interactions** in Q2 2023, respectively.

In comparison, **Reels see 55% more interactions than single-image posts**, and **29% more than standard Video posts**.



Performance of post types on Instagram (worldwide)

Median post interactions of brands



Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 4,624,677 posts published by 73,656 profiles on Instagram

Facebook: Live video

Live video dominates above all other formats, seeing nearly **4x more post interactions than static video.**

Interestingly, while Reels outperforms all other formats on Instagram, it comes in third on Facebook. As Reels was only widely introduced on Facebook [in early 2022](#) (nearly two years [after Instagram Reels](#)), this figure could be partly attributed to users being in the process of adopting this post format. However, as more brands begin to cross-post Instagram Reels across to Facebook, it will be interesting to see its overall impact on these figures.

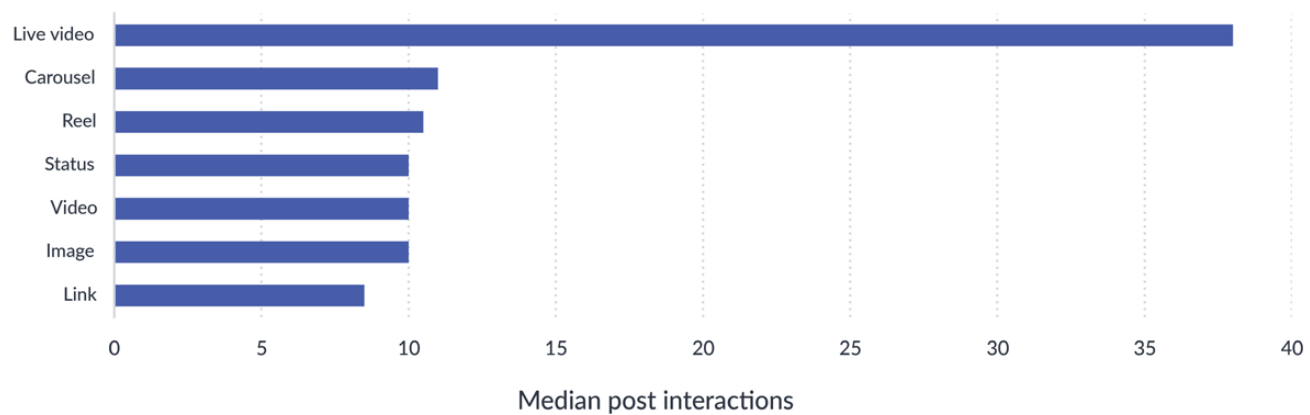


4x MORE 
post interactions than
static video



Performance of post types on Facebook (worldwide)

Median post interactions of brands



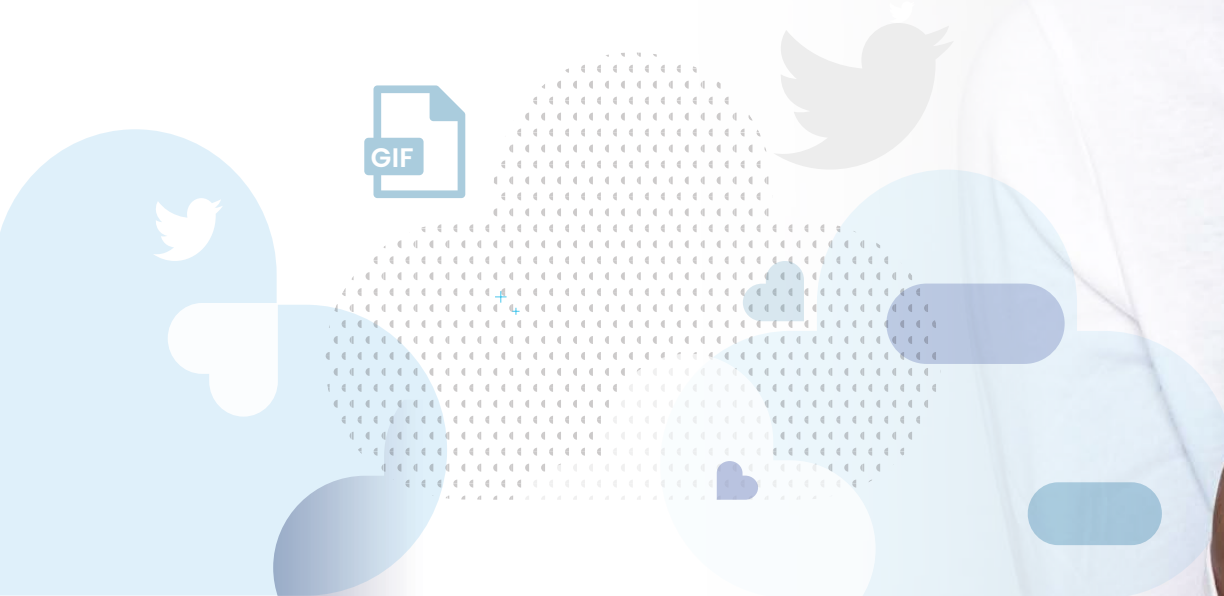
Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 10,777,730 posts published by 190,075 profiles on Facebook

TOP SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT DRIVERS

Twitter: GIFs

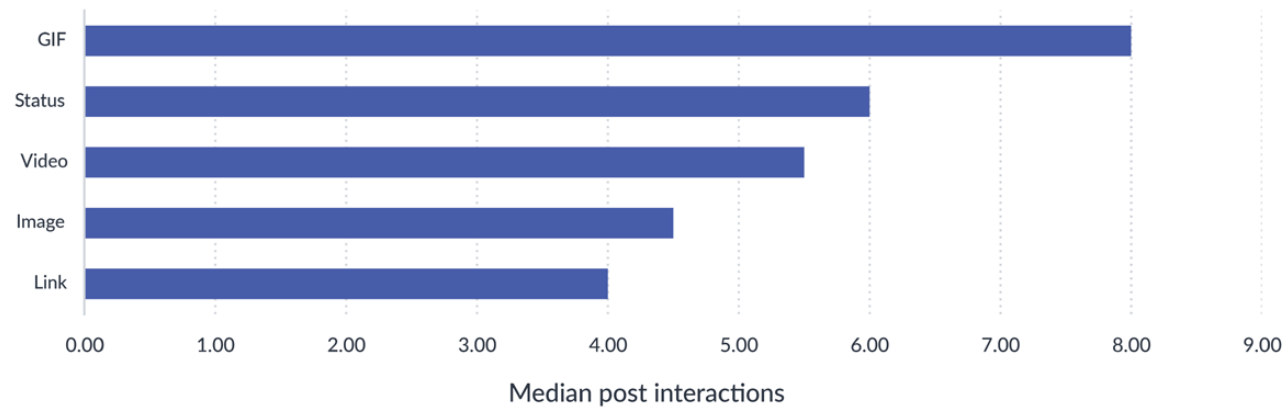
Using GIFs on Twitter has recently become a hot debate, with [some arguing](#) they're dated and used by older generations. However, Emplifi data shows that, of all content formats on Twitter, GIFs garner more engagement — seeing **2x more interactions than links** and **33% more than status updates**, the second highest-performing content format.

Bottom line? Brands may not want to give up on GIFs just yet.



Performance of post types on Twitter (worldwide)

Median post interactions of brands



Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 2,187,195 posts published by 21,254 profiles on Twitter



Twitter trends: Understanding the current landscape

Twitter verification



Historically, verification has been a means of safeguarding legitimacy and preventing identity fraud across social media platforms. Twitter introduced the concept in 2009, paving the way for others like Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, and YouTube to follow suit.

Today, any user paying for Twitter Blue, Twitter's \$8/month subscription model, automatically receives a verification badge — also referred to as a “blue tick” or “checkmark.”



Twitter: How quickly are brands getting verified?

When Elon Musk announced non-verified accounts would be deprioritized in “For You” feeds by April 15, 2023, we expected an impact on the rate of brands who would pay for verification.

According to Emplifi data, an analysis of 40,000 brand accounts found that 4% were verified a week before the change, with that number doubling to 9% by the end of June 2023.

While these are still early days, it will be interesting to monitor how this figure evolves over the coming months as brands determine how they navigate this new approach to verification.

Proportion of brands that are verified on Twitter

-  11 April, 2023: **4%**
-  30 June, 2023: **9%**



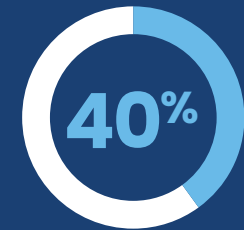
SPOTLIGHT

Brands leverage threads on Twitter

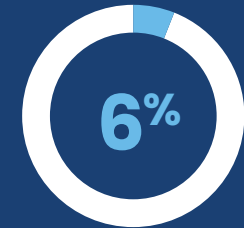
According to Emplifi data, 40% of brands published at least one Tweet thread in Q2 2023. However, on average, only 6% of their tweets overall were threads. Though almost half of brands use Tweet threads, they use them sparingly. Since Twitter Blue subscribers have access to a hugely expanded Tweet character count (up to 25,000 vs. 280 for non-subscribers), brands might want to consider how that advantage weighs up versus threads, and if longer-form tweets could help them to better convey their most important messages.

Popularity of Twitter threads among brands (worldwide)

% of brands that posted at least one Twitter thread:



% of Tweets written as threads:



Source: Emplifi data

Date range: 01 April 2023 - 30 June 2023

Sample: 21,254 Twitter profiles, 2,187,195 Parent statuses

Closer look: The state of Instagram and Facebook Reels

The popularity of [short-form video has exploded](#), with brands and users alike adopting this newly popular content format like never before. In addition to TikTok (examined later in this report), Reels on both Instagram and Facebook are driving a lot engagement on these platforms, becoming popular sources of entertainment, education, and brand discovery, creating an enormous opportunity for brands across the board.

In this section, we dive deeper into how brands are using Reels — for both organic and paid social — and the levels of engagement they're seeing.



THE STATE OF INSTAGRAM & FACEBOOK REELS

Brands are steadily using Reels more and more

While it has remained steady since the second half of 2022 across the industries examined, Instagram Reels use has increased 86% among brands since Q2 2022, with **90% publishing at least one Reel in Q2 2023**.

Reflective of it being introduced nearly 18 months after Instagram, **Facebook Reels use among brands only reached 7% in Q2 2023**, though use is trending upward. Media and Sports brands led the way, with 14% and 13% of brands, respectively, publishing a Facebook Reel in Q2 2023.

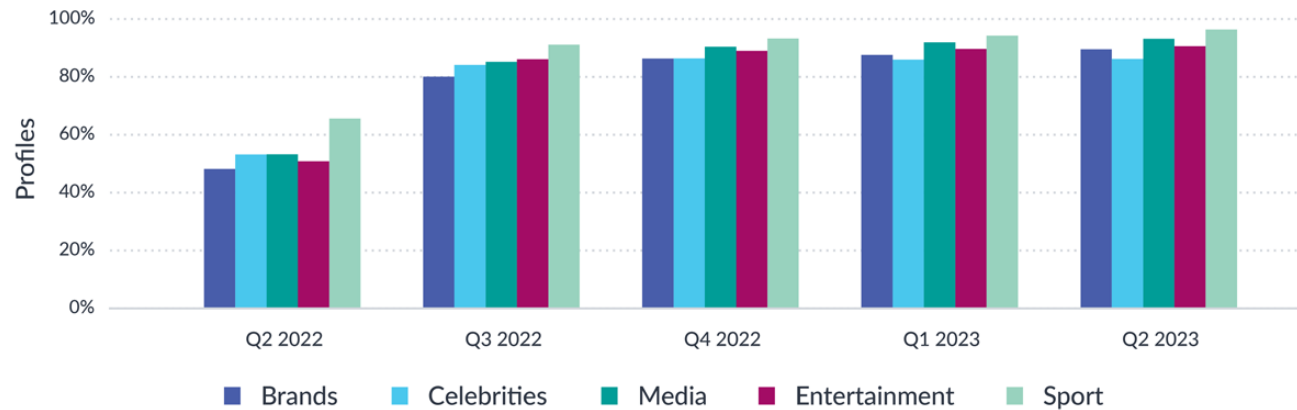


of brands published
at least one Reel
on Instagram
in Q2 2023



Evolution of average Instagram Reels usage

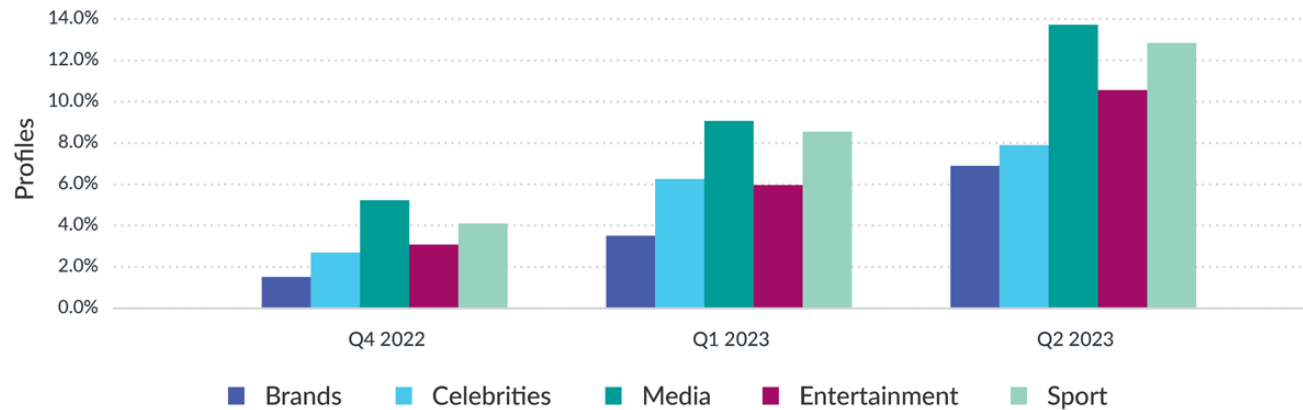
Profiles have adopted Reels format to their publishing strategies



Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 50,543,640 posts published by 132,891 Instagram profiles

Evolution of average Facebook Reels usage

Profiles have adopted Reels format to their publishing strategies



Source: Emplifi data
 Date range: 01 October 2022 - 30 June 2023
 Sample: 151,633,907 posts published by 298,055 Facebook Pages. Pages with no Reels were counted in.

Notable differences in how people engage with Reels on Instagram and Facebook

Although more brands are including Instagram Reels in their social media strategy, the amount of engagement they're receiving has been trending downward in recent quarters, dropping 30% year over year (from 169 median post interactions to 118).

This could be due to higher competition for Reels, in addition to the [recent deprioritization of Reels](#) in the Instagram interface to make room for other content formats. All things considered, these findings only highlight the need for brands to diversify the content they publish on Instagram; they likely shouldn't shy away from Reels at this time, as it still remains one of the top engagement drivers for brands on the platform.

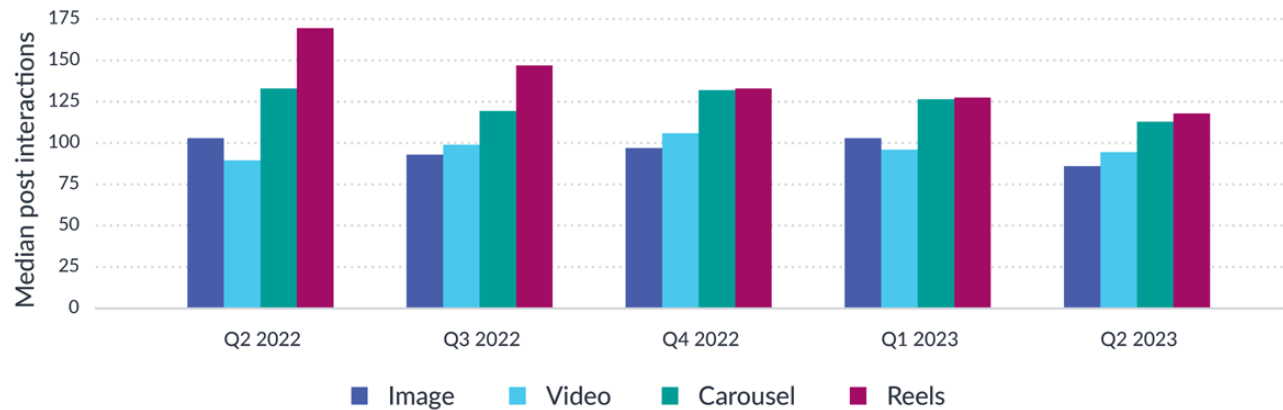
Though more brands are starting to leverage Facebook Reels, the level of engagement for these posts has remained stable across quarters. Photo posts currently drive more engagement than other post types on Facebook.

As Facebook Reels continues to gain traction among brands, it could be beneficial — and make for a lighter lift — for brands to consider repurposing Reels from their Instagram profile, and focus more on investing their efforts in other Facebook content like images and video posts.



Evolution of median posts interactions

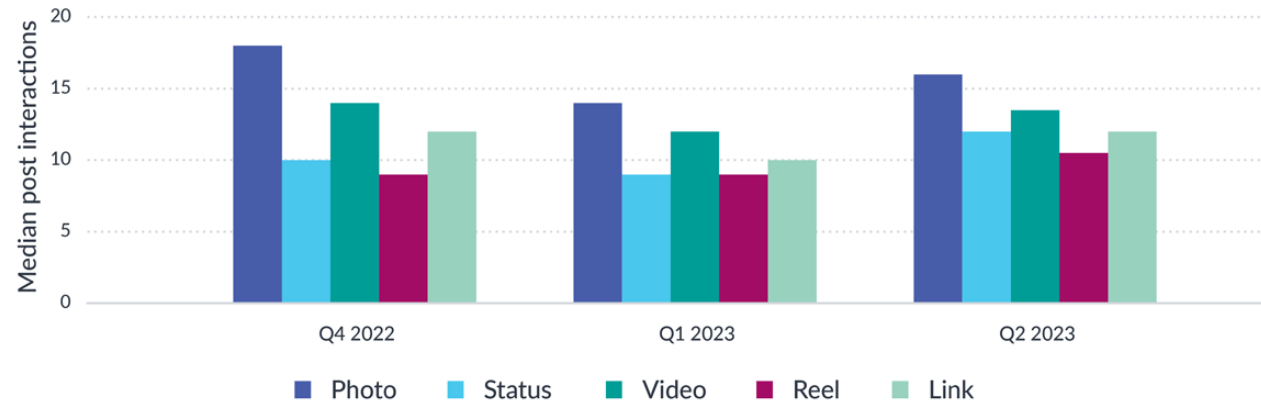
Brands should focus on Carousels and Reels but stay authentic



Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 3,375 posts published by 3,375 Instagram profiles of brands. Only profiles that published all post types included.

Evolution of median posts interactions

Photo is still the most successful post type



Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 October 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 123,522 posts published by 17,116 Facebook pages of brands. Profiles with 0 Reels were excluded.

Top brands driving engagement with Reels (Q2 2023)

Global brands are already making the most of Reels, adding the new content format to their social media strategy. Those jumping on the Reels train on Instagram are seeing notable results, with various industries represented from Retail, Automotive, and Entertainment.

Social media teams looking for inspiration can follow the following brands that are truly embracing video content.

Brand profiles ranked by median Reel interactions (on Facebook & Instagram)

Rank		Profile	Interactions on Reels	Median Reel interactions
1		How Ridiculous /Howridiculous	424,962	11,274
2		Umniah /Umniah	59,731	8,257
3		WWE Network /WWENetwork	127,189	5,608
4		Zain Iraq /ZainIraq	23,412	4,448
5		Macy's /Macys	113,203	3,427
6		Beko /BekoAlgeria	20,270	2,940
7		GRANPLUS /GRANPLUSBR	73,862	2,909
8		ViX /vix	181,157	2,887
9		ONDO.brand /ondo.mn	55,225	2,677
10		I love Dachshunds /ILoveDachshundsDogs	18,145	2,245

Source: Emplifi data
Date range: April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023
Sample: 4,199 brands profiles that published Reels

Rank		Profile	Interactions on Reels	Median Reel interactions
1		SpaceX /spacex	2,667,546	222,580
2		adidas Football /adidasfootball	7,335,627	176,429
3		Rockstar Games /rockstargames	1,699,970	121,684
4		Netflix Brasil /netflixbrasil	18,471,426	118,302
5		BUGATTI /bugatti	2,185,517	109,989
6		JACQUEMUS /jacquemus	4,546,193	100,248
7		Porsche /porsche	2,697,651	85,046
8		Ferrari /ferrari	2,932,184	84,642
9		Red Bull /redbull	13,185,691	83,581
10		PlayStation /playstation	7,034,604	80,915

Source: Emplifi data
Date range: April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023
Sample: 50,914 brands profiles that published Reels

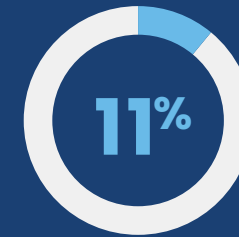
More brands are using Reels for ads — though other content formats still drive most impressions

The number of brands leveraging Reels for ad placements — especially for Facebook — is on the rise. And while brands are still significantly more likely to publish Reels on Instagram than they are on Facebook (as seen on previous pages), the gap in usage between the two is much more narrow when it comes to the proportion of those who leverage Reels for ads.

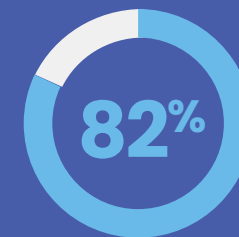
According to Emplifi data, while 11% of all Instagram ads were Reels, 87% of brands leveraged this format at least once as an ad placement Q2 2023. This is compared to 69% last year — a 26% increase year-over-year.

On the other hand, while only 31% of brands leveraged Facebook Reels for ads in Q2 2022 (keeping in mind that Facebook Reels was only widely introduced in early 2022), 82% used Reels in their Facebook ad account in Q2 2023 — a 165% boost in usage.

While usage of Reels in ad accounts is stabilizing across both platforms in recent quarters, both platforms are still seeing steady increases in recent quarters, highlighting how adoption of Reels in ad placements continues to gain traction.

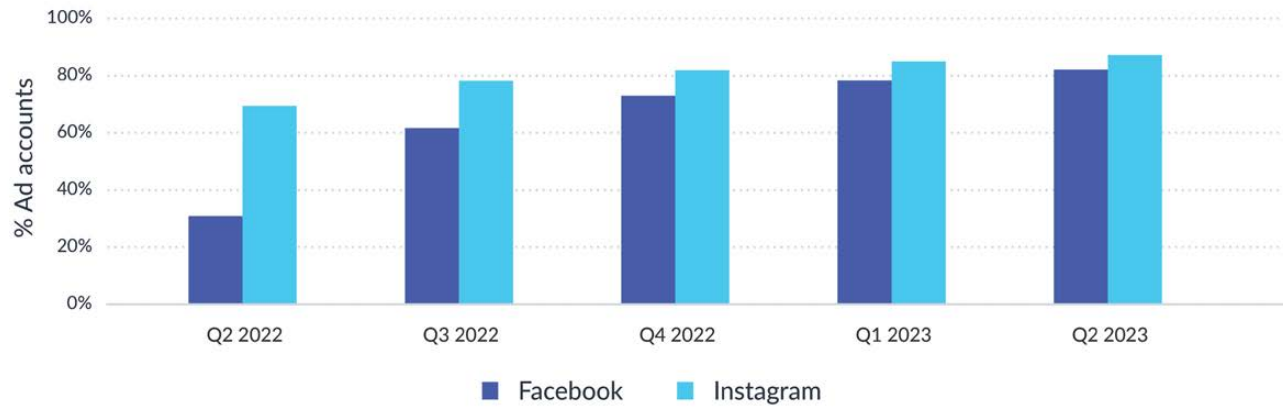


of all Instagram ads were Reels



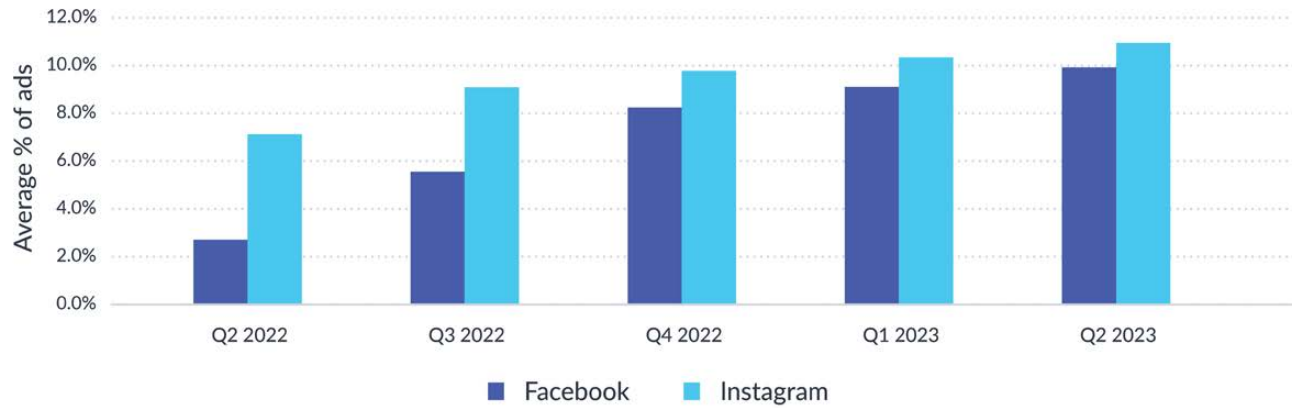
of brands used Reels in their Facebook ad accounts
= 165% boost in usage year-over-year

Share of ad accounts that published Reel ads



Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 8,846 ad accounts and 1,400,685 ads

Share of Meta ads placed in Reels



Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 8,846 ad accounts and 1,400,685 ads

THE STATE OF INSTAGRAM & FACEBOOK REELS

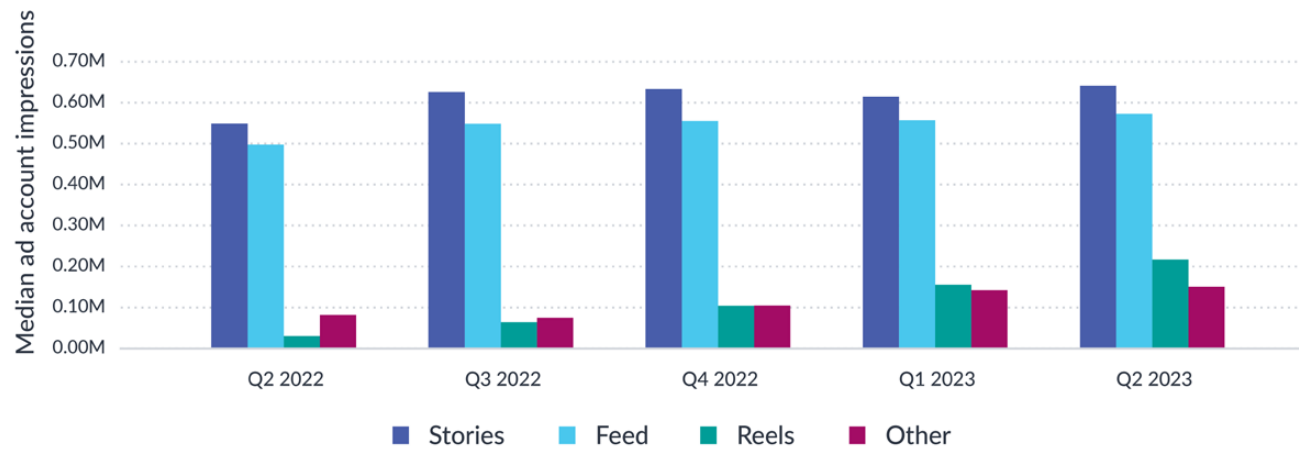
Mirroring brands' increased use of Reels in their Instagram ads, the number of ad impressions driven by these Reels has been steadily growing every quarter, making up **14% of all Instagram ad impressions in Q2 2023 (vs. 3% in Q2 2022)**. Reels trails both Stories and Feed ads in this department, though the gap in impressions between these three ad post types has steadily become narrower over the past year.

Unsurprisingly, with brands' adoption of Facebook Reels still in its infancy, impressions driven by ads using Reels remain very low (3% of all Facebook ad impressions in Q2 2023), while **the majority of impressions are driven by Feed ads (72%)**.

Overall, as short-form video continues to gain popularity (and preference) among audiences, and as brands continue to adapt their social media strategies to cater to these preferences (particularly via their ads), it will be interesting to examine how these splits evolve over the coming quarters.

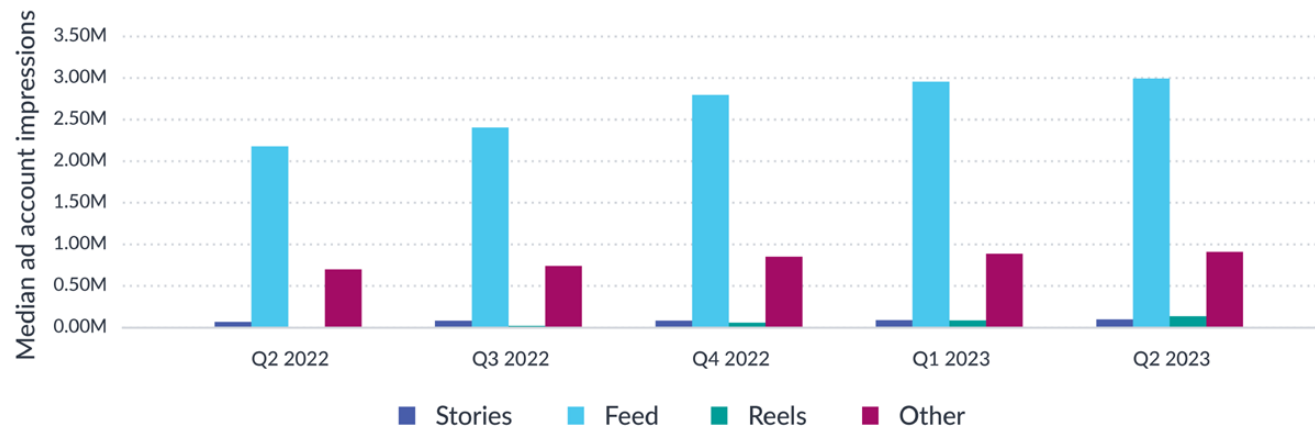


Evolution of ad account impressions on Instagram



Source: Emplifi data
 Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
 Sample: 10,393 ad accounts and 8,832,082 ads on Instagram

Evolution of ad account impressions on Facebook



Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: 10,384 ad accounts and 8,715,798 ads on Facebook



TikTok vs. Instagram: The clash of short-form video titans

With users' increased preference for short-form video, the skyrocketing popularity of TikTok has been unsurprising. Along with Instagram Reels, consumers have multiple options at their fingertips to consume short-form videos, while brands have different ways to connect and engage their audiences.

Where do these two platforms stand today? We examined over 700 sister Instagram and TikTok accounts to learn more.

TIKTOK VS. INSTAGRAM REELS

TikTok fan growth continues to soar

Compared to Instagram and its more established audience base – brands are still seeing major growth in their follower base on TikTok, as they did in the early days on platforms like Instagram and Facebook.

Emplifi data shows that the average brand saw a five-fold increase in their number of followers on TikTok in Q2 2023 compared to Q1, while they saw a more modest 6% increase in Instagram followers.

As TikTok continues to grow, brands that aren't already on the platform should review their social media strategy to determine how they can best leverage this platform to connect with their short-form video-craving followers.



TikTok vs. Instagram: Average page follower growth in Q2 2023



TikTok:

500% INCREASE

From Q1 2023



Instagram:

6% INCREASE

From Q1 2023

Source: Emplifi data

Date range: 01 April 2023 - 25 June 2023

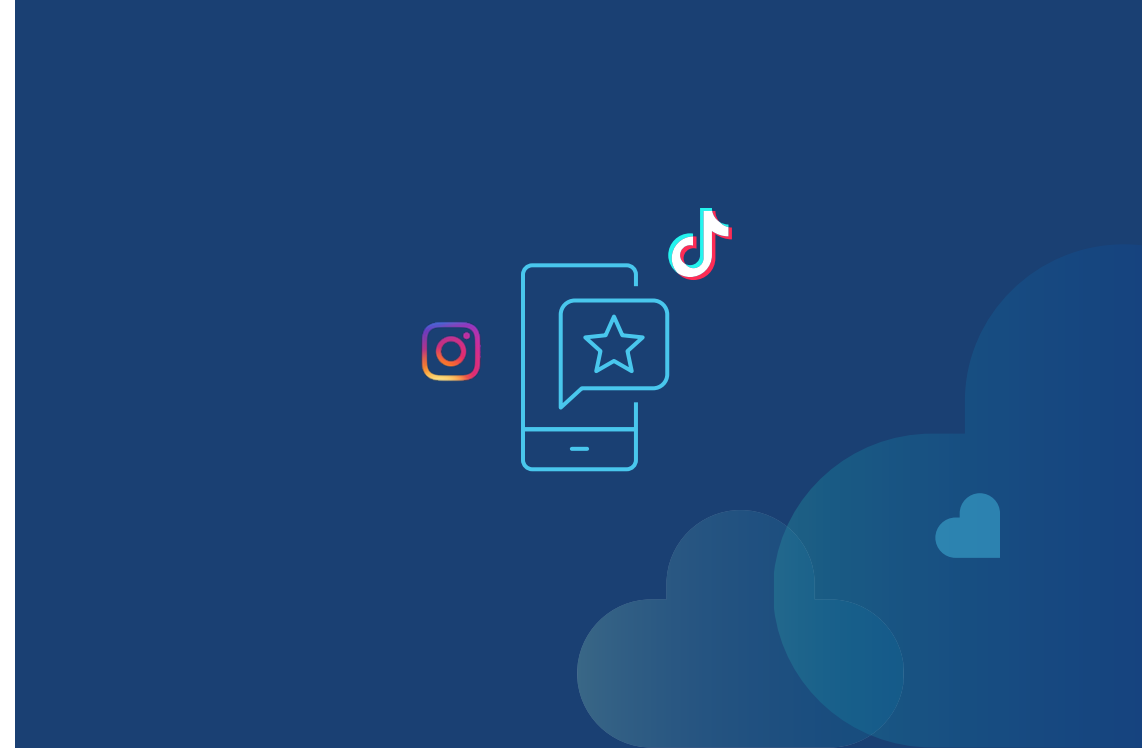
Sample: 774 brands that have active profiles both on Instagram and TikTok

Instagram posts get more reach, but TikTok posts get higher engagement rates

While TikTok and Instagram both provide a channel for brands to share short-form videos, each platform comes with its own unique experience, interface, demographics, and algorithm — all impacting how (and when) users see and engage with these videos, and notably, how brands should approach creating videos for these platforms.

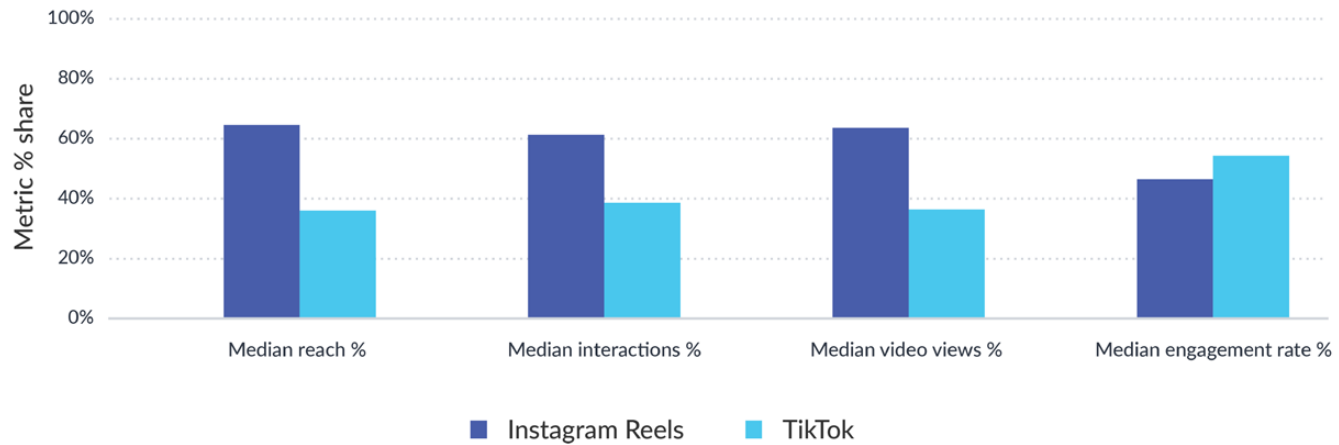
What does the data show in terms of how well brands are reaching their audiences with their video content, and how much their audiences are responding to it?

When looking at over 1,000 sister Instagram and TikTok accounts and evaluating how much each network contributed to their overall figures in Q2 2023, Emplifi data shows that brands' Instagram accounts outperformed their TikTok accounts when it comes to **median reach** (65% vs. 35%), **median interactions** (61% to 39%), and **median video views** (64% to 36%). However, brands saw higher **median engagement rate** via TikTok than they did on Instagram (54% vs. 46%).



TikTok vs. Instagram: Metrics rundown

Sister TikTok & Instagram pages



Source: Emplifi data
Date range: 01 April 2022 - 30 June 2023
Sample: Sample of 1,057 brands that have active profiles both on Instagram and TikTok

Key takeaways



Social media posts that primarily feature videos — including Reels, live video, and GIFs — are driving the most organic engagement, reflecting the **rise in demand for short-form video**, and the need for brands to devote resources to short video production if they haven't already.



More brands are including Reels on Instagram and Facebook for their organic and paid campaigns. While engagement has remained stable or decreased slightly, brands shouldn't shy away from Reels, as it **remains a top engagement driver**.



While repurposing video content across different social media platforms has its benefits, brands should avoid taking a “one-size-fits-all” approach to their social media video content strategy. The lone exception might be cross-posting Facebook Reels and Instagram Reels to **increase views and engagement**.



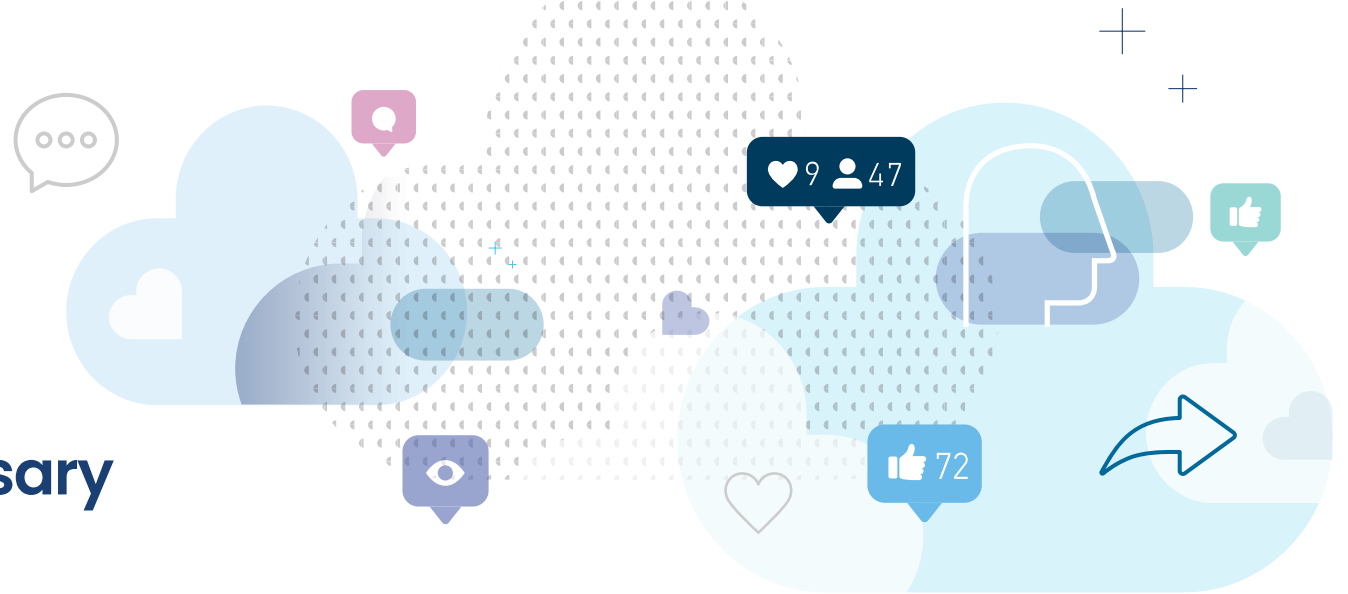
Brands should consider the benefits of subscribing to Twitter Blue, as they can not only gain credibility with their audiences via check marks but also tap into new features such as expanded character count, opportunity to edit Tweets and more.



TikTok is in its prime, experiencing massive follower growth. **Having a TikTok strategy in place is no longer a nice to have — it's a must.**



Implementing a video strategy into your current social media strategy will take time. Luckily, there's a multitude of different brands, such as the ones mentioned in this report, who are paving the way. Look for inspiration from top brands who are **getting the most out of their short-form video content**.



Methodology and glossary

Our analysis primarily focuses on Q2 2023 data and year-on-year comparisons, downloaded at the beginning of January 2023.

The quarterly data presented in this report reflects the state of Emplifi's database starting with the beginning of the previous quarter through the end of the previous quarter for the post. The data is pulled only once and is not updated between releases.

Median post interactions

The median value of the sum of Likes, Comments, and Shares on a given post.

Median Reels interaction

The median value of the sum of Likes, Comments, Shares and Views on a given Reel.

Impressions

The number of times an viewer sees an ad or post for the first time.

Additional terms relating to our TikTok vs. Instagram analysis:

- **Sister TikTok and Instagram profiles:**
Profiles owned by the same Emplifi client on both Instagram and Tiktok that have the same handle. Example:
www.instagram.com/examplecompany
www.tiktok.com/@examplecompany
- **TikTok interactions:**
Defined as the sum of Likes, Comments, and Shares.
- **Reach engagement rate:**
Defined as the sum of Engagements for a post, divided by total Reach for that post. For more information on the definition of these metrics, check out this resource.

See how you compare

Want to see these stats for your
specific industry and region?

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About Emplifi

Emplifi is a leading unified customer engagement platform that empowers businesses to reach and grow communities through digital- and social-first strategies. More than 20,000 brands like McDonald's, Ford Motor Company, and Delta Air Lines rely on Emplifi to enable connected, empathetic experiences for the modern consumer across marketing, commerce, and care. Headquartered in New York, Emplifi partners with major social media networks and digital platforms, including Google, Meta, LinkedIn, Twitter, TikTok, and Snapchat.

For more information, visit emplifi.io

