

**sprout**social

# The 2024 Social Media Content Strategy Report

**A Playbook for Every Network**





## Introduction

# The more things change, the more consumers engage

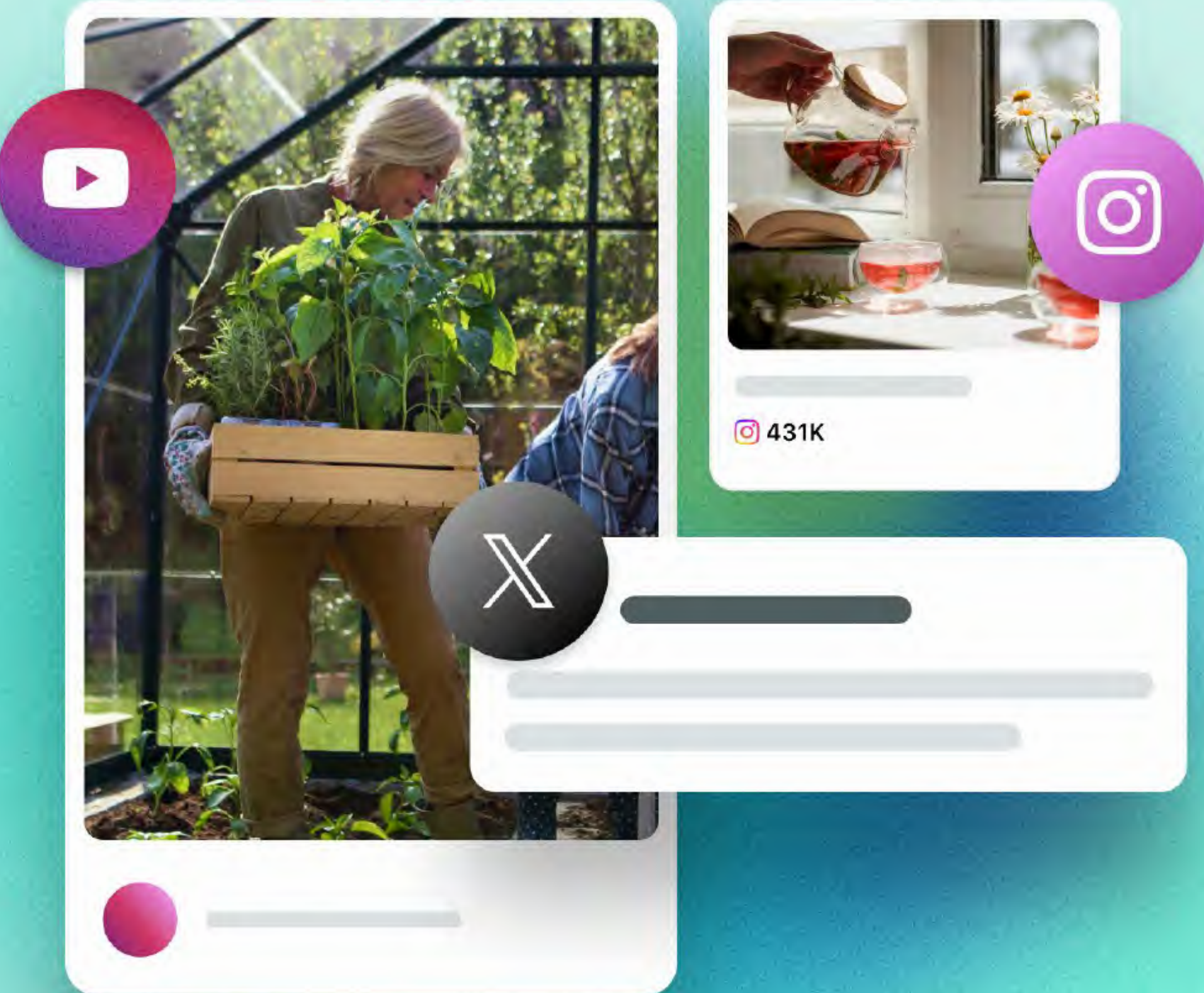
Consumers have an insatiable appetite for content—even as the social media ecosystem becomes more complex. At the end of 2023, 38% of all social media users anticipated they would use more platforms in 2024.\*\* All signs point to that prediction being spot-on.

**Compared to six months ago, most social users are just as engaged or interact with brand content more often on social.** Despite AI-generated content inundating feeds, emerging networks adding even more channels and hyper-personalized algorithms creating niche bubbles, consumers have never been more plugged into brand content.

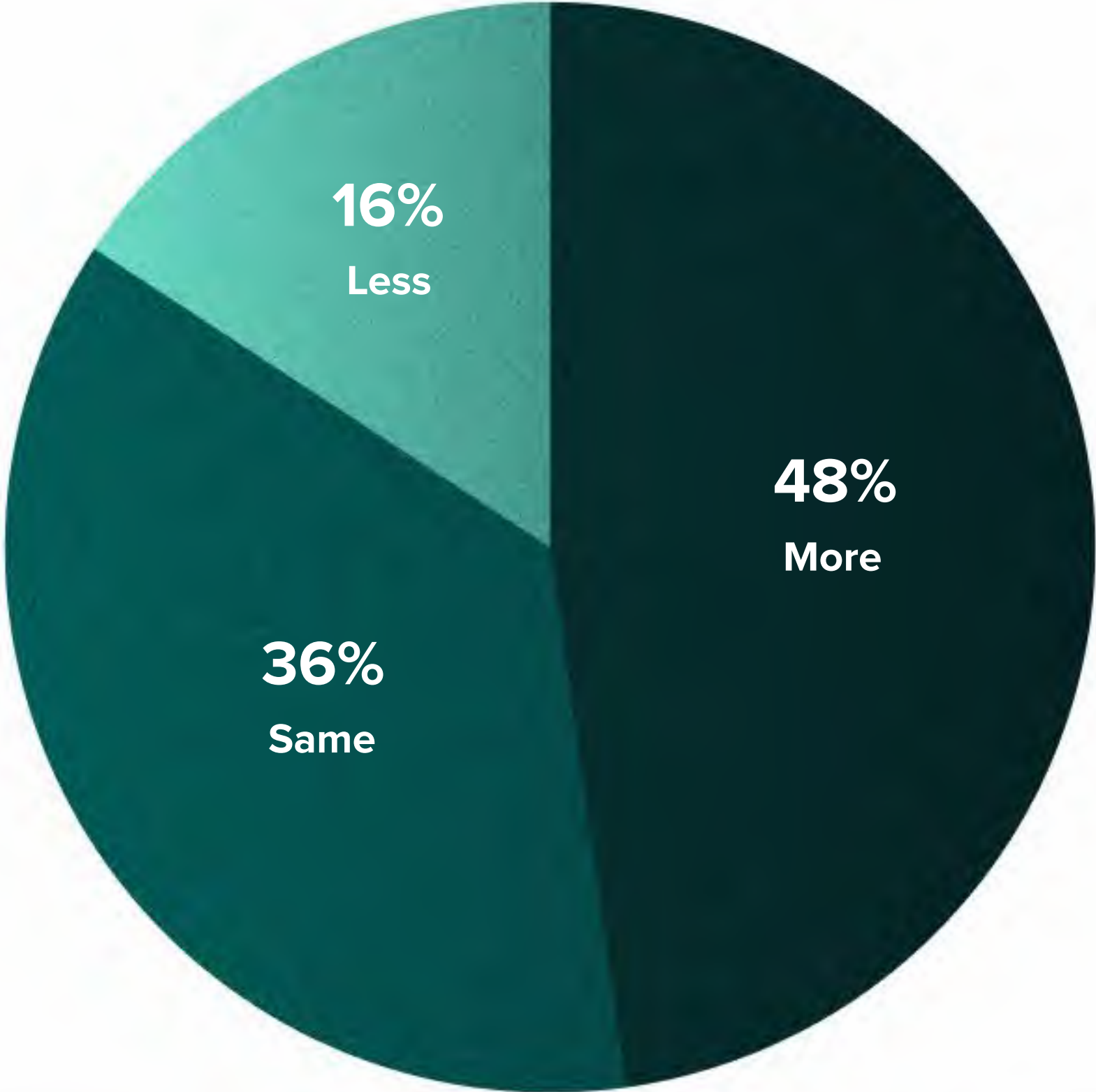












When we asked consumers which platforms brands should stay away from, their **#1 answer was somewhat surprising: none**. Every network offers opportunities for finding and growing your community, because social users use every platform to meet different needs for connection and consumption.



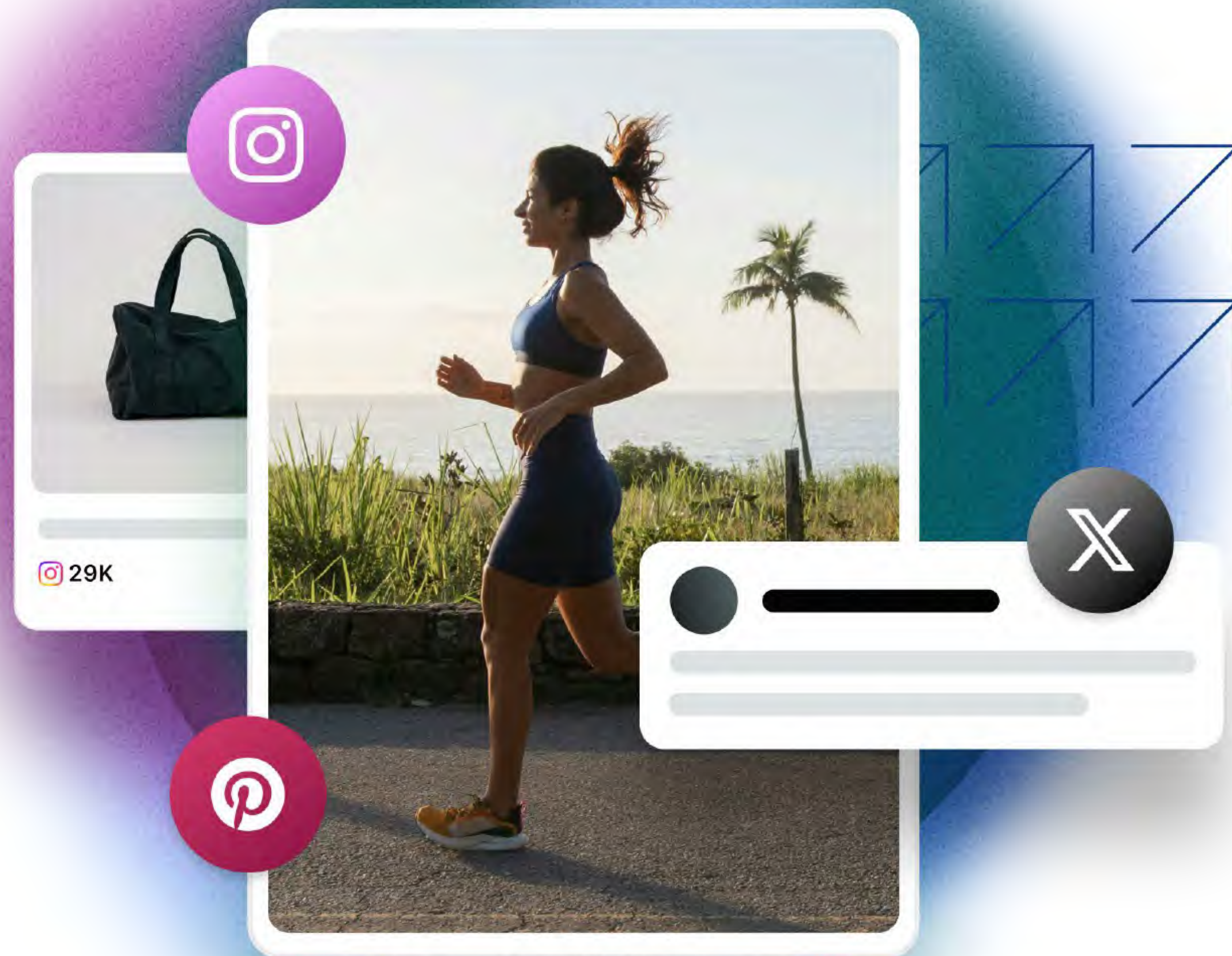
## How much social media users have interacted with brands over the past six months



# Which platforms do social media users have profiles on?

Consumer demographic								
All social media users	84%	83%	78%	68%	48%	43%	39%	15%
Gen Z	91%	67%	83%	86%	51%	52%	26%	17%
Millennials	86%	87%	80%	73%	47%	42%	45%	17%
Gen X	78%	92%	74%	54%	48%	36%	46%	13%
Baby Boomers	64%	91%	64%	38%	42%	38%	38%	10%





For marketers, this is a call to action that's getting harder to answer. Brands need to meet their customers where they are (and want to interact)—social media. But that's increasingly easier said than done.

**Social users are everywhere:** the majority are on Instagram, Gen Z aren't the only ones on TikTok anymore and Facebook remains a stronghold for Millennials, Gen X and Boomers.

Though consumers aren't letting social media saturation slow down their engagement, we know social marketers are feeling the effects. Social teams face increased burnout trying to keep up with their audience's heightened demands.

For this report, we surveyed over 4,500 consumers in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and Ireland to find out **what users actually want from brands** on social, and how their responses differ from network to network. These findings reveal what kind of content social teams with limited budgets and bandwidth should be prioritizing, and how to deliver the greatest return on investment from your social media efforts.



# Are you entertained yet?

## Entertainment + Education = Revenue

Across almost all mainstream networks, the number one way social users want brands to show up on social channels is with entertaining content. They're looking for an escape from boredom. Brands that are able to fill their need will be rewarded with increased awareness and affinity.

What makes content entertaining? **66% of social users** find “edutainment” (content that educates and entertains) to be the most engaging of all brand content. Even more so than memes, serialized content or skits.^

By strategically adding their products and services into the equation, marketers can turn this quest for entertainment into revenue. Consumers are **most likely** to buy something on social when brands post content that shows their product or service in action.

Actions brands take on social that compel consumers to buy

- 1 Post original content showing their product or service in action
- 2 Post content from real customers showing their product or service in action
- 3 Target me with an ad or promo code
- 4 Partner with another brand or an influencer I love
- 5 Interact with a post or comment I made



## Captive on the content carousel

Brands published 10 posts per day across networks in 2023, according to Sprout's 2024 Content Benchmarks Report. That number **doubled and even quadrupled** for certain industries.

Not only are teams under pressure to create more content, consumer preferences are also necessitating higher quality content. **91% of social users** say the production value and budget that goes into brands' social content impacts whether they engage with it, and younger consumers are more likely to say it impacts their engagement. Further, the number one reason we unfollow brands is unoriginal or repetitive content, intensifying the creative strain further.^

Winning consumers' attention has become increasingly difficult. Social media marketers are feeling overstretched by constant production and uncertainty regarding the ever-changing social landscape. The antidote isn't publishing more—but rather, focusing on building the right content for the right channels.

**By focusing on *entertaining* audiences and understanding what they want from brands on each platform, you and your team can fine-tune your content strategy and make the most of your resources.**





## Instagram



Primary audience:  
**Gen Z, Millennials**



Reasons for brand interaction:  
**Product discovery,  
Customer care**



Content that performs best:  
**Short-form video (<15 seconds),  
Static images**



Best days to post:  
**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday^^**

### Instagram

# Instagram dominates consumer attention

Though it's most popular with Gen Z and Millennials, **84% of social users have an Instagram profile** (the most of all of the networks)—a testament to the platform's wide appeal.

Users' primary reasons for scrolling Instagram are to connect with friends and family and alleviate boredom. But half of all users also interact with brands there at least once per day. In fact, 69% of social users say they see the most engaging brand content on Instagram, and another **44% wish brands used Instagram even more often**, the highest of any network.

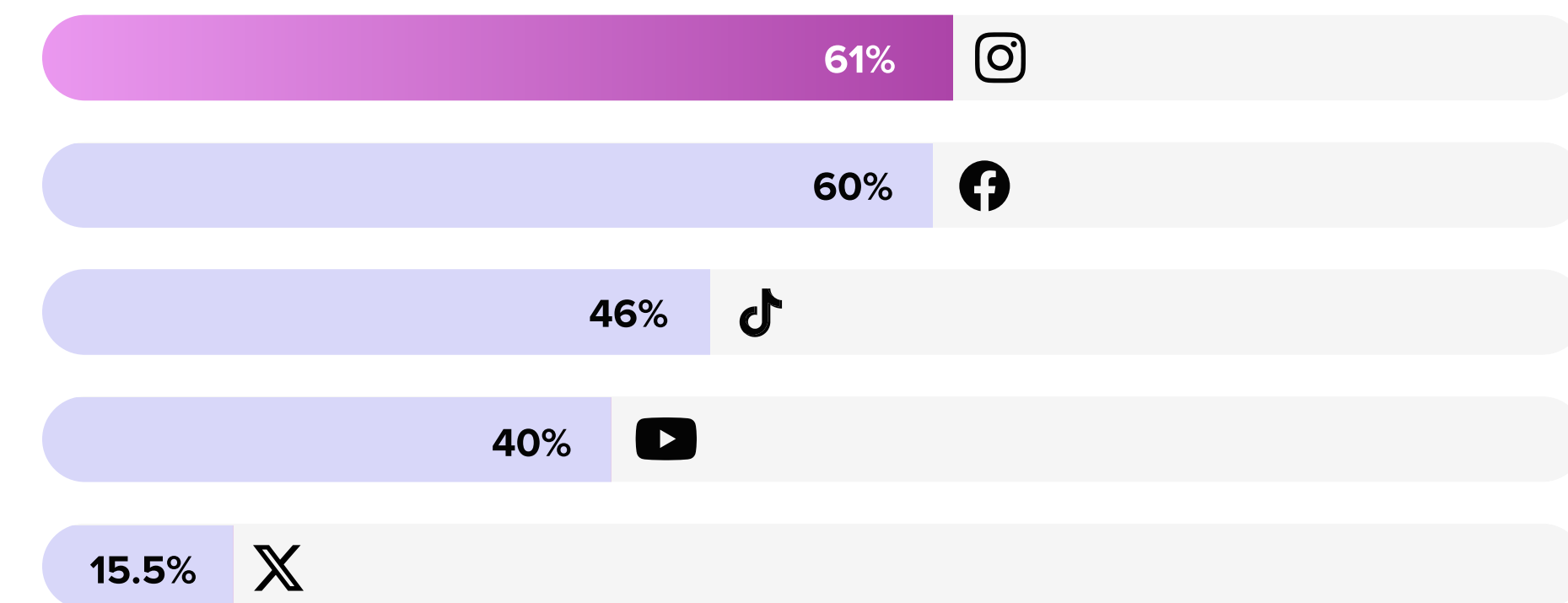


Interacting with brands has become a core function of the Instagram experience. It is the top social media channel for product discoverability, with **61% of social users turning to the network to find their next purchase**.<sup>\*</sup> Another 72% of Gen Z are most likely to use Instagram for customer care over any other channel.<sup>\*</sup> Which further proves Instagram isn't just a part of a comprehensive social strategy—it's an essential part of the customer journey.

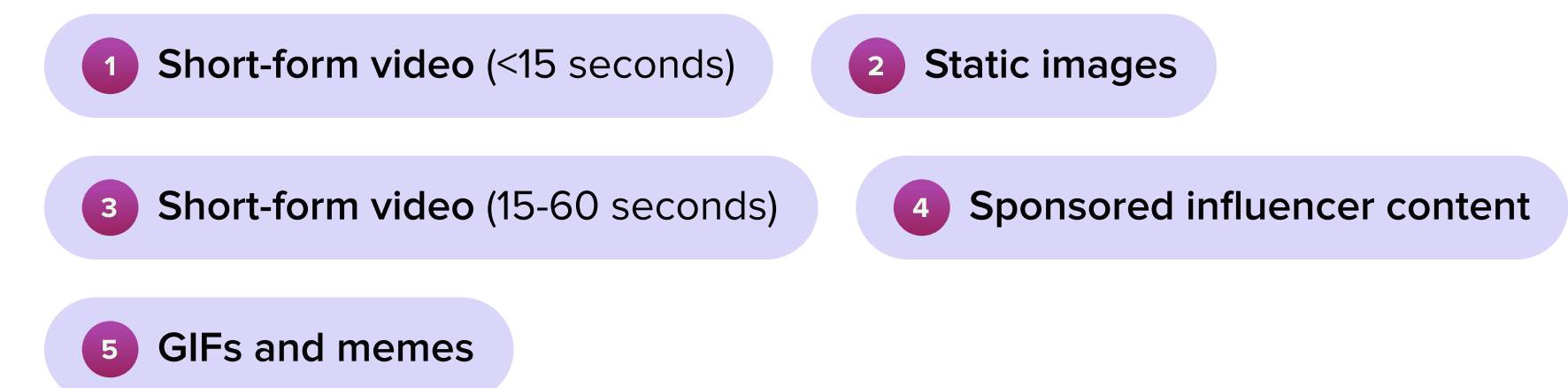
Though the platform was once synonymous with photo sharing, Instagram has become a destination for consuming video content, too. Most social users say Instagram Reels and Stories are both the video formats they engaged with most in the past six months and plan to engage with most in the next six months.<sup>^</sup>

**But that doesn't mean brands should completely throw out their static image content.** Social users also said they are most likely to engage with short-form video and static images when interacting with brand content on Instagram.

## Top social media channels for product discovery



## The types of brand content social users are most likely to interact with on Instagram



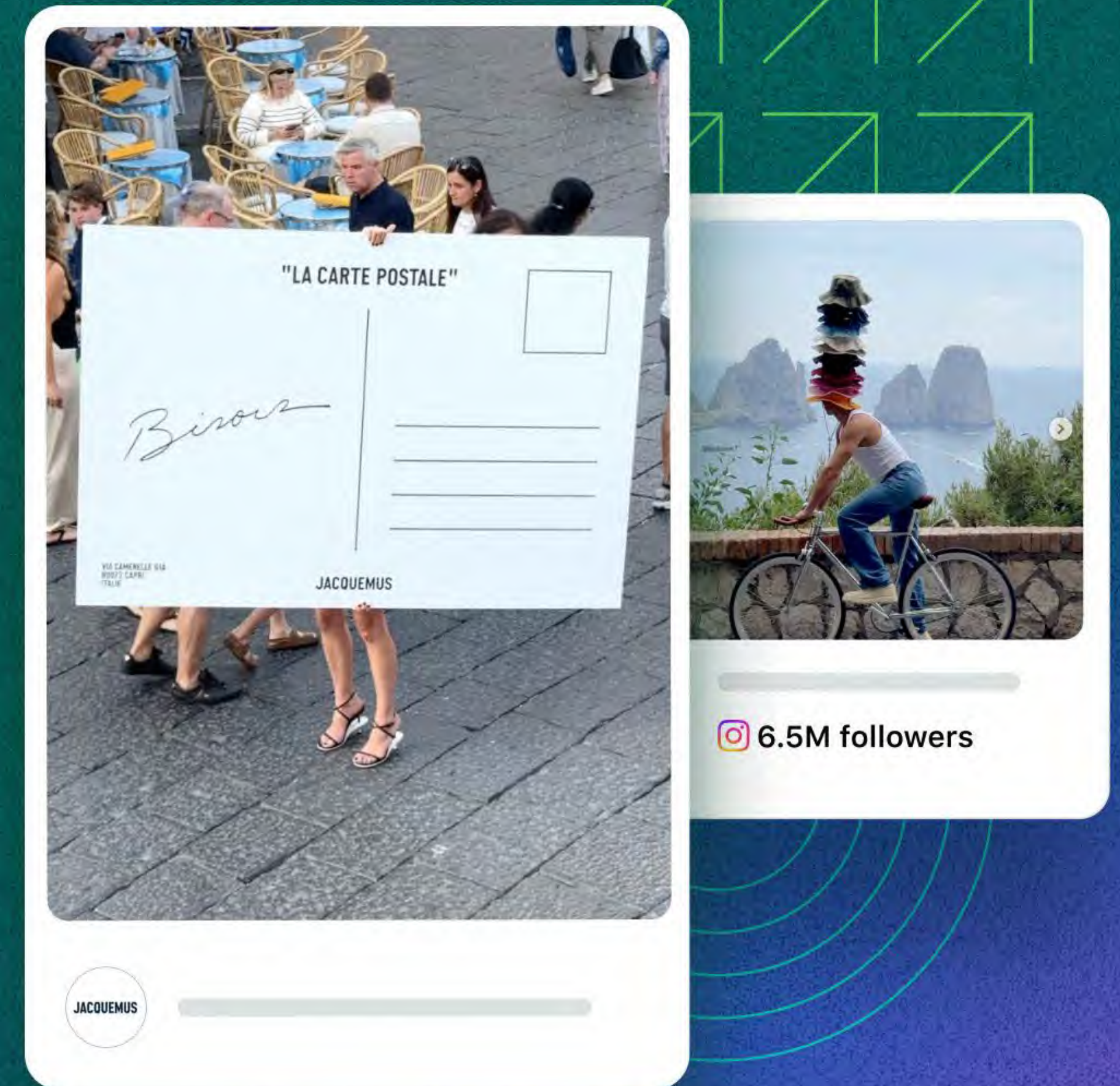


## Brand spotlight

# Jacquemus

Luxury retailer Jacquemus takes full advantage of the many different content formats that resonate on Instagram, and uses them to create eye-catching, sensationalist visuals. The French label is renowned for grandiose marketing strategies—particularly on the platform.

**Jacquemus currently boasts 6.5 million followers on Instagram**, all hooked on the brand’s top-tier creativity. As one user commenter put it, Jacquemus has “the hardest working social team. 🔥”





## Facebook



Primary audience:

**Gen X, Baby Boomers, Millennials**



Reasons for brand interaction:

**Customer care**



Content that performs best:

**Text posts**



Best days to post:

**Monday through Thursday^^**

### Facebook

# Facebook is still a mainstay—especially for brands













Two decades after Facebook first emerged and transformed the way social networks fit into culture, it's still one of the most popular platforms in the world. About **83% of all social users** have a Facebook profile, and it's used most by Gen X, followed by Boomers and Millennials. The overwhelming majority of consumers log into Facebook to connect with friends and family, but it's also the most popular network for getting news and current event updates.\*



**Almost half (44%) of Facebook users interact with brand content on the network at least once a day.** Of all brand content, consumers are most likely to engage with text posts—even above short-form video and static images. Given how many social teams wish they had more time to create content, this stat is a helpful reminder that sometimes less is more on the platform.

Consumers are also most likely to turn to Facebook for customer care compared to any other channel—especially **Millennials, Gen X and Baby Boomers**.\* This is a staggering illustration of Facebook’s continued influence, and why brands should continue to invest in the platform.

### Top social media channels for customer care

Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
 72%	 71%	 72%	 79%
 62%	 62%	 49%	 34%
 47%	 29.5%	 41%	 31%

### The types of brand content social users are most likely to interact with on Facebook

- 1

Text posts
- 2

Static images
- 3

Short-form video (<15 seconds)
- 4

Short-form video (15-30 seconds)
- 5

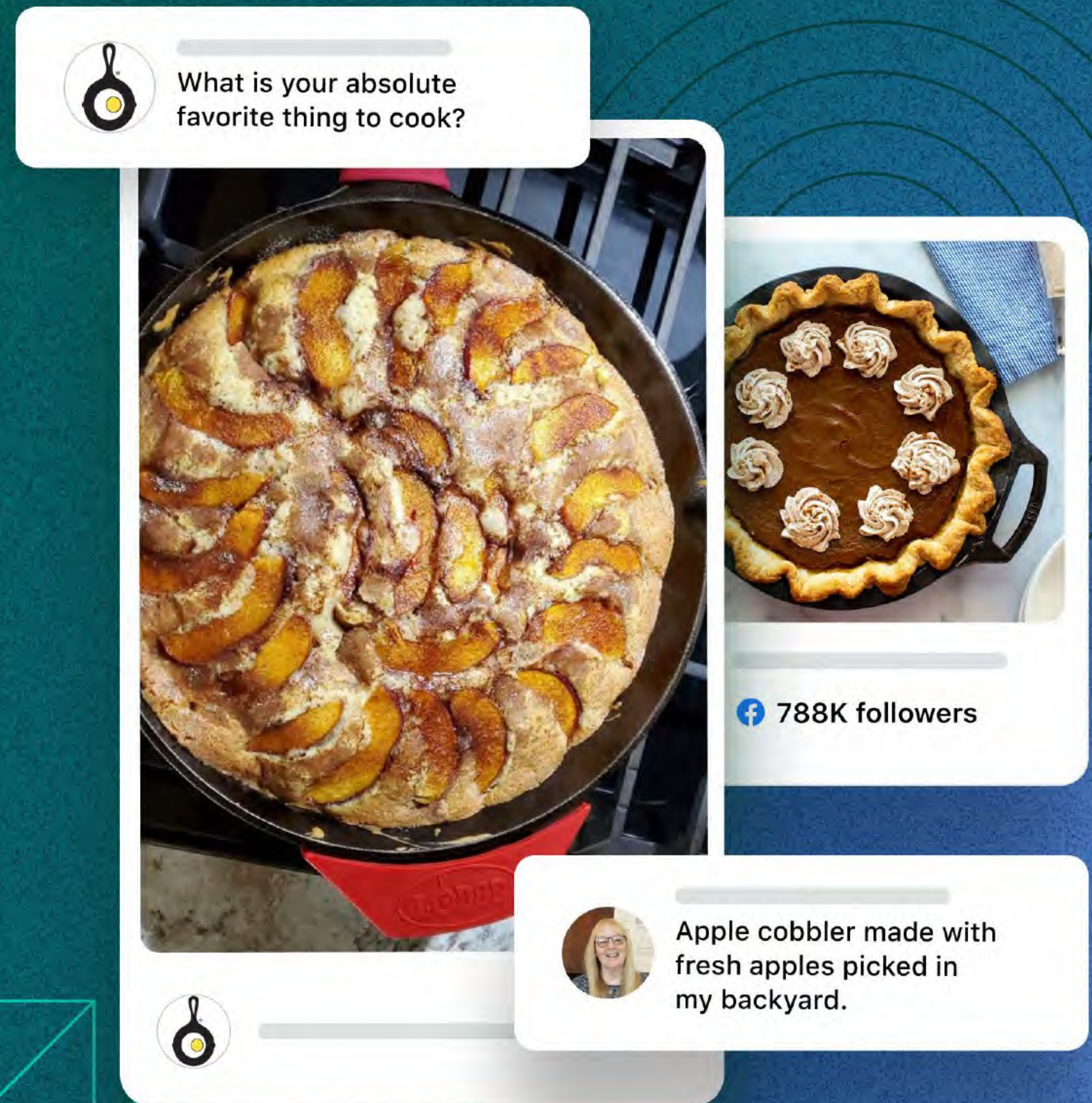
GIFs and memes



## Brand spotlight

# Lodge Cast Iron

Lodge Cast Iron has been making heirloom quality cookware since 1896. The family-owned brand is beloved, and their community engagement on Facebook proves it. Followers flock to the comment sections of their conversational, text posts to share their favorite recipes and love for the brand. Their posts—despite their seemingly simple formula—are engagement goldmines.





## YouTube



Primary audience:  
**Gen Z, Millennials**



Reasons for brand interaction:  
**Entertainment, Education**



Content that performs best:  
**Long-form video (>60 seconds)**

## YouTube

# YouTube keeps consumers engaged for the long haul

**More than three-quarters (78%) of all social users** have a YouTube profile. That number soars even higher for Gen Z and Millennials. Since its debut in 2005, the platform has continued to be the premier channel for long-form video content.

As consumer attention spans shorten, YouTube's relatively long videos continue to appeal—even when it comes to brand posts. **Over half (51%) of YouTube users** are most likely to engage with brands' long-form videos. This paradox doesn't mean short-form video is irrelevant on the platform: consumers say 31-60 second videos are their second choice when consuming brands' YouTube content.



Just because consumers are willing to watch longer brand videos compared to other platforms, doesn't mean their standards are lower on YouTube. They still want to be entertained—a throughline across every network—and they want to learn about your products in a captivating way.

Since only **one-third (32%) of YouTube users engage with brands on the platform everyday**, and another 47% engage at least once a week, you should be even more intentional about creating content that's intriguing, informative and memorable. The long-form nature of YouTube content also gives you the chance to create smaller cut-downs for other video-centric platforms like Instagram and TikTok, maximizing reach and returns.

## What social media users want brands to prioritize on YouTube

1 **Entertaining content**

2 **Educational product information**

3 **Sponsored influencer content**

4 **Contests and giveaways**

## The types of brand content consumers are most likely to interact with on YouTube

1 **Long-form video (>60 seconds)**

2 **Short-form video (31-60 seconds)**

3 **Short-form video (15-30 seconds)**

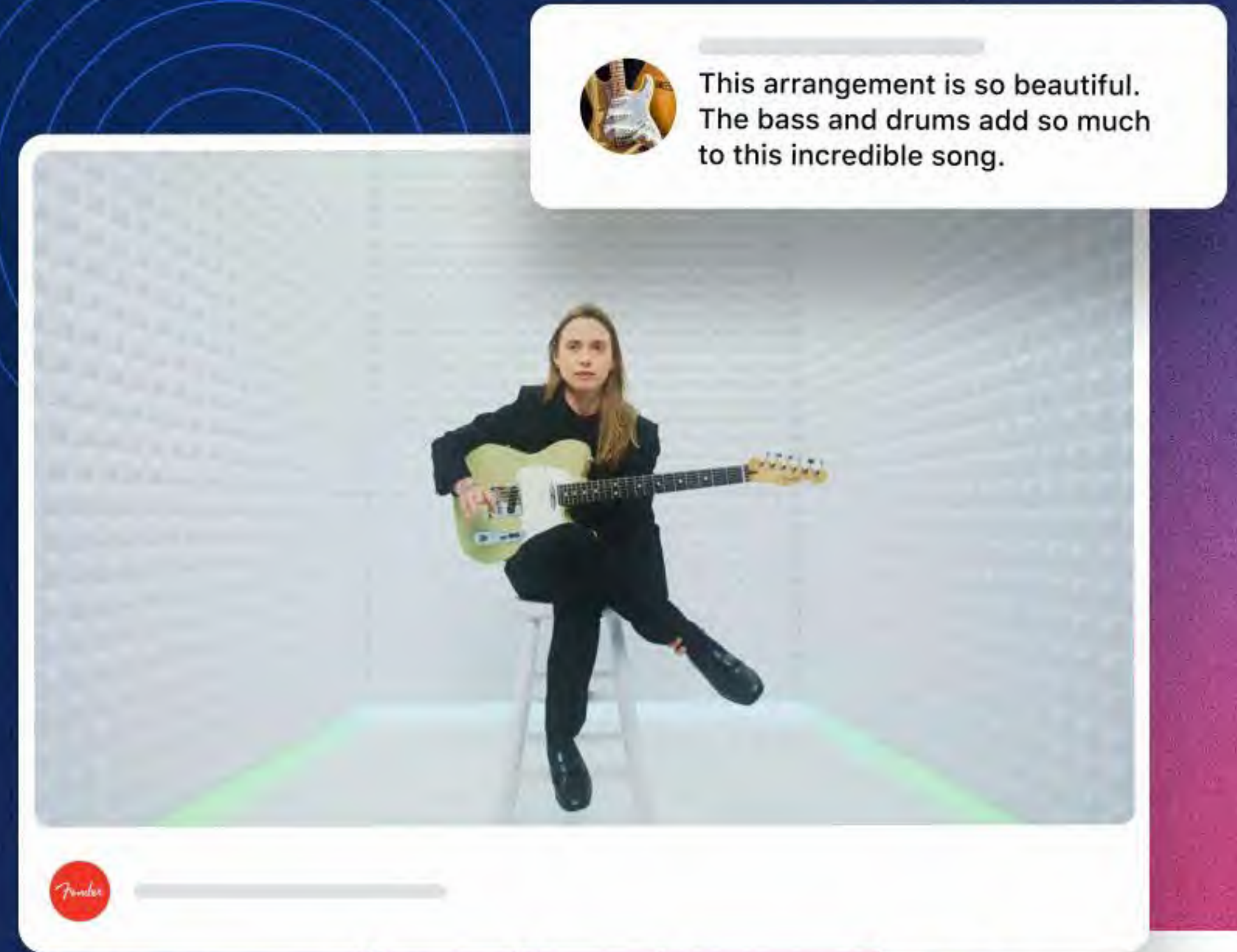
4 **Short-form video (<15 seconds)**



## Brand spotlight

# Fender

Fender's musical legacy precedes it. Maker of musical instruments and amplifiers, Fender is world-famous for its guitars. On YouTube, the brand highlights musicians who perform their songs and explain how Fender instruments help them create their unique sound. Fender has a content library of more than 3,000 videos on YouTube, filled with resources for their customers.



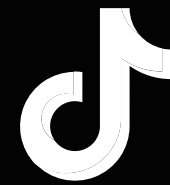
This arrangement is so beautiful. The bass and drums add so much to this incredible song.



Thank you Fender!!!



## TikTok



Primary audience:  
**Gen Z, Millennials**



Reasons for brand interaction:  
**Product discovery**



Content that performs best:  
**Short-form video (15-60 seconds)**



Best days to post:  
**Wednesday, Thursday^^**

## TikTok

# TikTok's impact on younger generations can't be overstated

It's almost cliché at this point: younger consumers drove (and continue to drive) TikTok's proliferation. Though **68% of social users have a TikTok profile**, that number skyrockets to 86% of Gen Z and 73% of Millennials.

For Gen Z especially, TikTok is more than a social network. It's a search engine, a news source, a birthplace of culture and an online shopping mall. **TikTok is the top channel for news and product discovery among Gen Z.\***

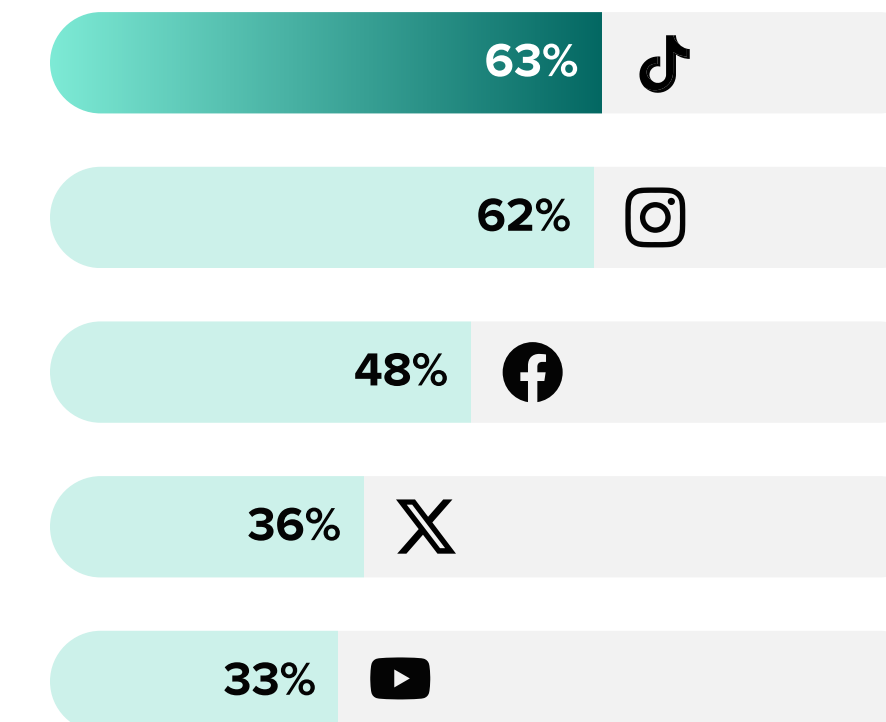


Which explains why **54% of users engage with brand content** on TikTok at least once—if not multiple times—per day: they proactively seek out new products and product updates on the platform. Another 30% engage with brand content at least once per week.

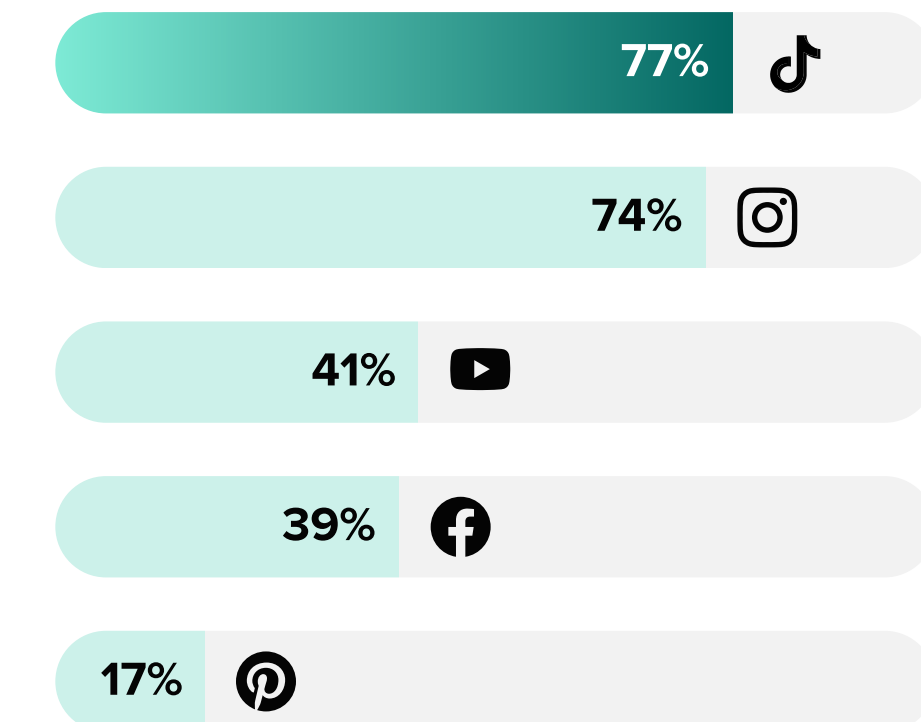
When users interact with brands on TikTok, they're most likely to engage with short-form videos, ranging from 15-60 seconds long. And they're most interested in entertaining content, influencer partnerships, and contests and giveaways.

## Gen Z's top social channels for...

### News



### Products



## The types of brand content consumers are most likely to interact with on TikTok

- 1 Short-form video (15-30 seconds)
- 2 Short-form video (<15 seconds)
- 3 Short-form video (31-60 seconds)
- 4 Sponsored influencer content
- 5 Long-form content (>60 seconds)

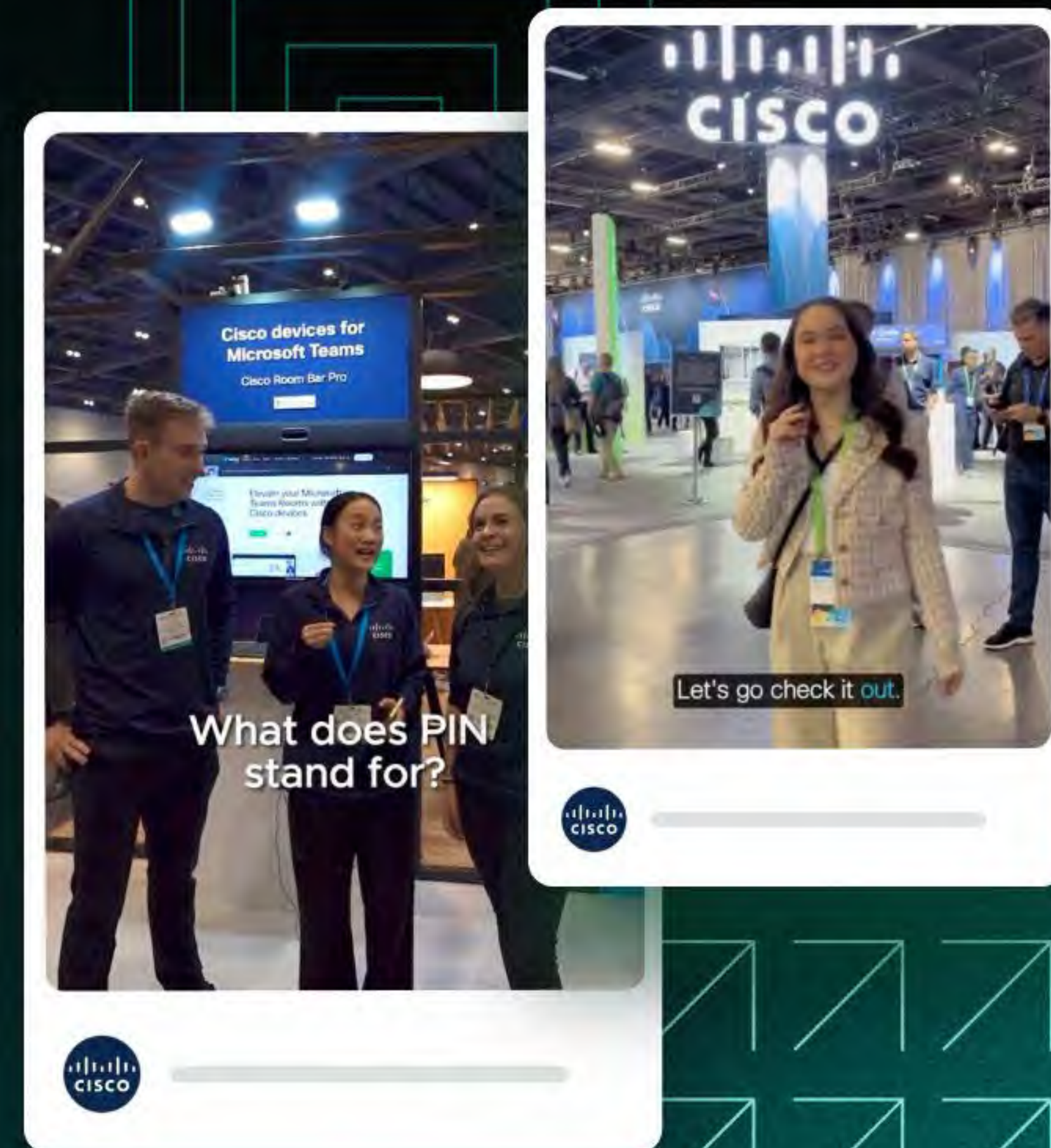


## Brand spotlight

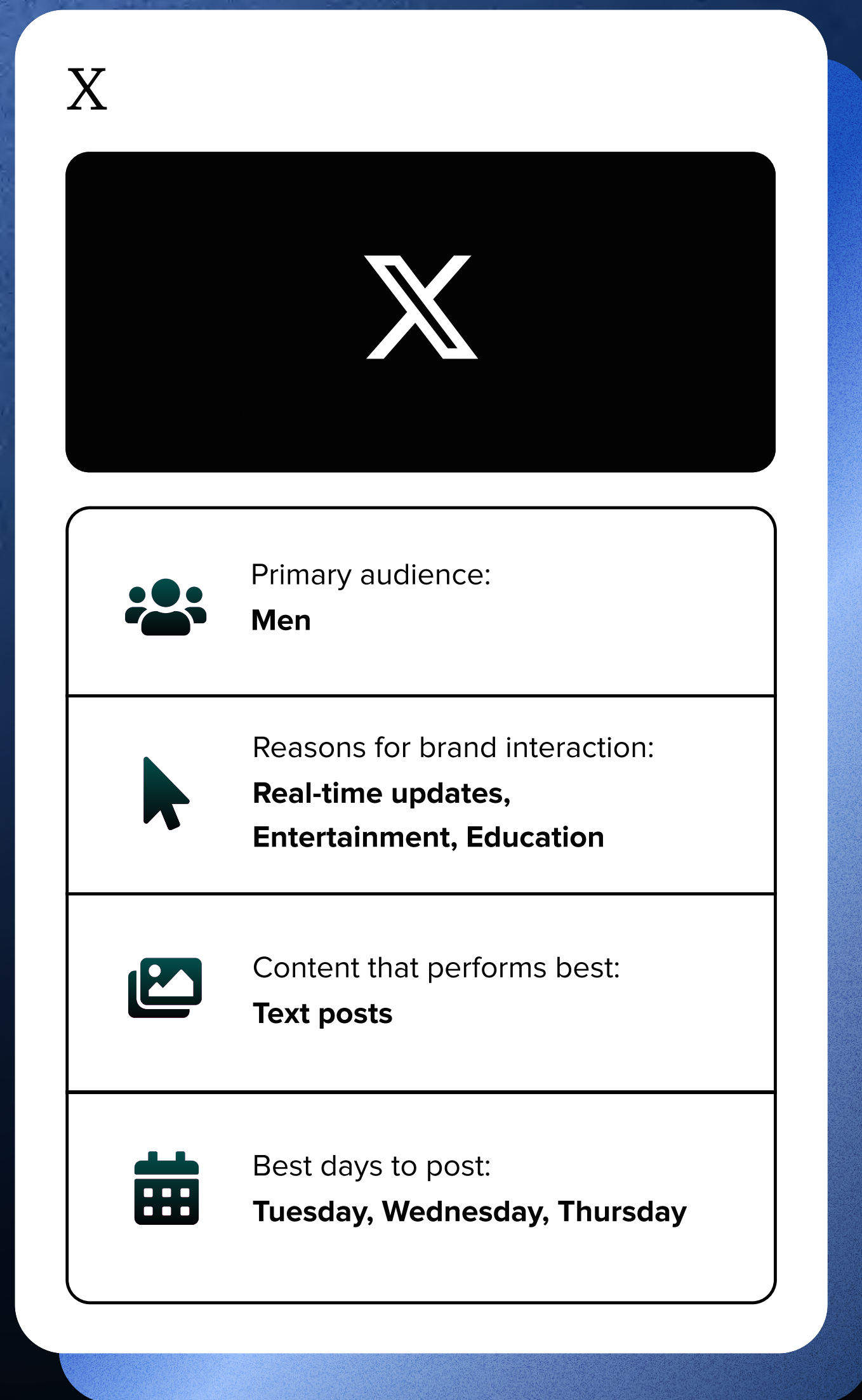
# Cisco

Cisco is a software, network and cybersecurity solutions provider (which may not seem like the type of brand that can succeed on TikTok). The company proves even highly technical brands can find their niche on the platform when they share product education content that's fun, relatable and approachable.

Cisco has amassed nearly **150,000 followers** and **more than 835,000 likes on TikTok**, evidence of the platform's potential for all brands—regardless of industry.







## X's core user base is still passionate about the network

When X (formerly Twitter) transitioned from being public to privately-owned, many brands were skeptical of its longevity. But X's core user base remains present on the network. **Almost half (48%) of all social users** across age demographics have an X profile, with men significantly more likely to have a profile than women.



**Users turn to X for timely updates and news** because of its reputation as a news-breaker platform, and that's especially true for Baby Boomers. Consumers also use X for entertainment, connection with friends and family, and keeping up with influencers and celebrities. When interacting with brands, X's purpose changes slightly. While still wanting to be entertained, consumers are also most likely to engage with educational product content and contests and giveaways.

On average, **35% of X users interact with brand content daily—if not multiple times a day**—and 23% interact multiple times per week. When users interact with brand content, they're by far most likely to engage with text posts, followed by static images and short-form videos.

## The types of brand content social media users are most likely to interact with on X

- 1 Text posts
- 2 Static images
- 3 Short-form video (<15 seconds)
- 4 Short-form video (15-30 seconds)
- 5 GIFs and memes



## Brand spotlight

# Aldi UK

The UK branch of the multinational supermarket chain Aldi is quintessentially British—especially on X. The brand shares cheeky posts about hashtag holidays and current events in the UK. They also respond to user-generated posts about their products in a way that’s light and on-brand.

Aldi Stores UK  
@AldiUK



Aldi Stores UK  
@AldiUK

Happy #WorldSnakeDay to everyone who’s ever handed us a lawsuit x

6:53 AM · Jul 16, 2024 · 81K Views

60 Reposts 8 Quotes 1,114 Likes 8 Bookmarks





## Pinterest



Primary audience:  
**Gen Z, Millennials, Women**



Reasons for brand interaction:  
**Positive inspiration, Education**



Best days to post:  
**Monday through Friday^^**

### Pinterest

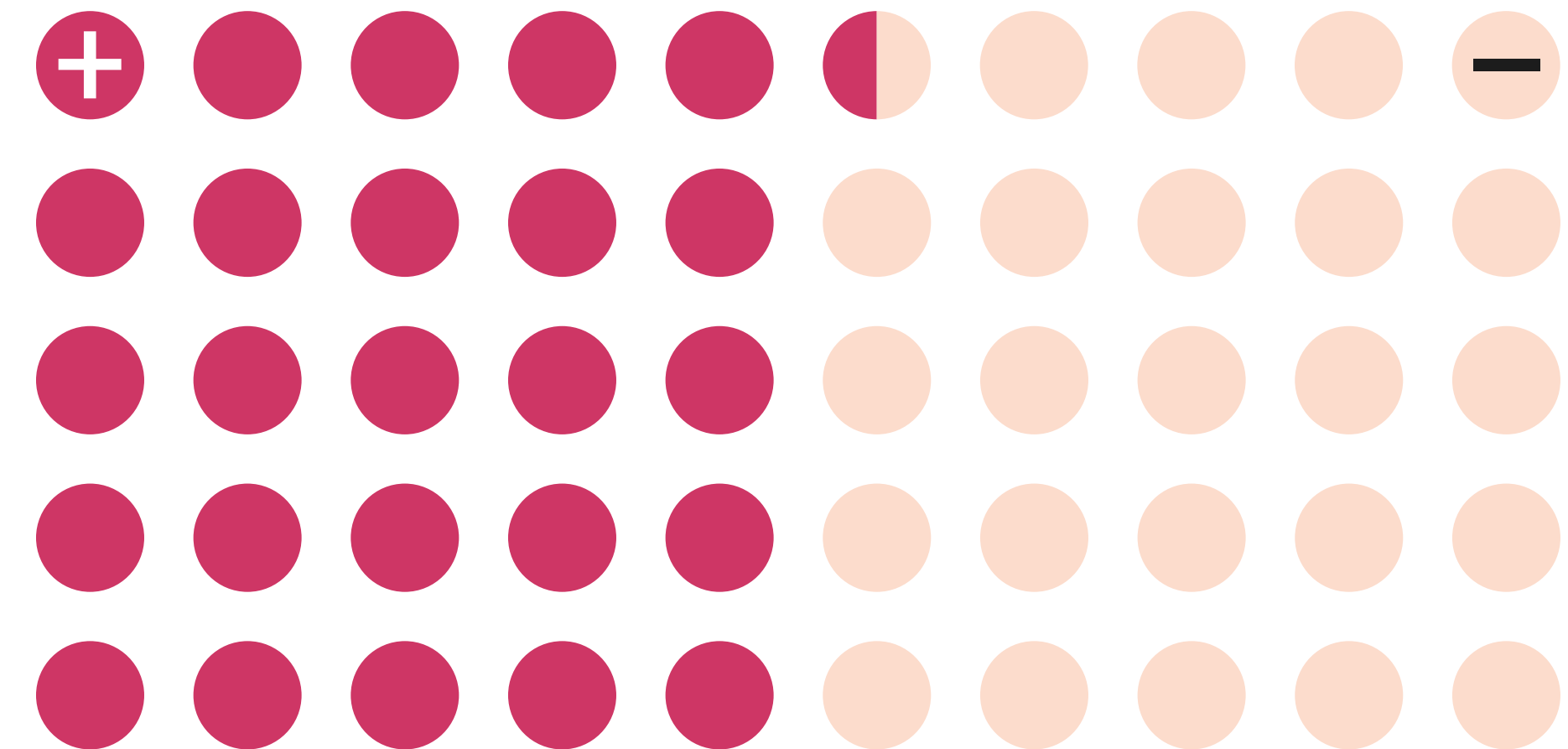
## Pinterest's positivity offers a halo effect for brands

**Almost half (43%) of all social users have a Pinterest account**, and it's most popular among Gen Z, Millennials and women. Pinterest's appeal comes from the positive vibe of the platform. More than half (51%) of all social users feel that—compared to content on other platforms—Pinterest is more positive. That number rises to 60% among Gen Z.



Pinterest's optimistic and refreshing nature explains why a quarter of all social users wish more brands used it. **Again, this trend is most notable among Gen Z, with 31% agreeing they wish more brands used the network.** When social users were asked which platforms brands should stay away from, Pinterest was the second least likely answer behind Instagram, underscoring just how potent the opportunity for brands is.

More than half (51%) of all consumers feel that Pinterest is more positive than other platforms

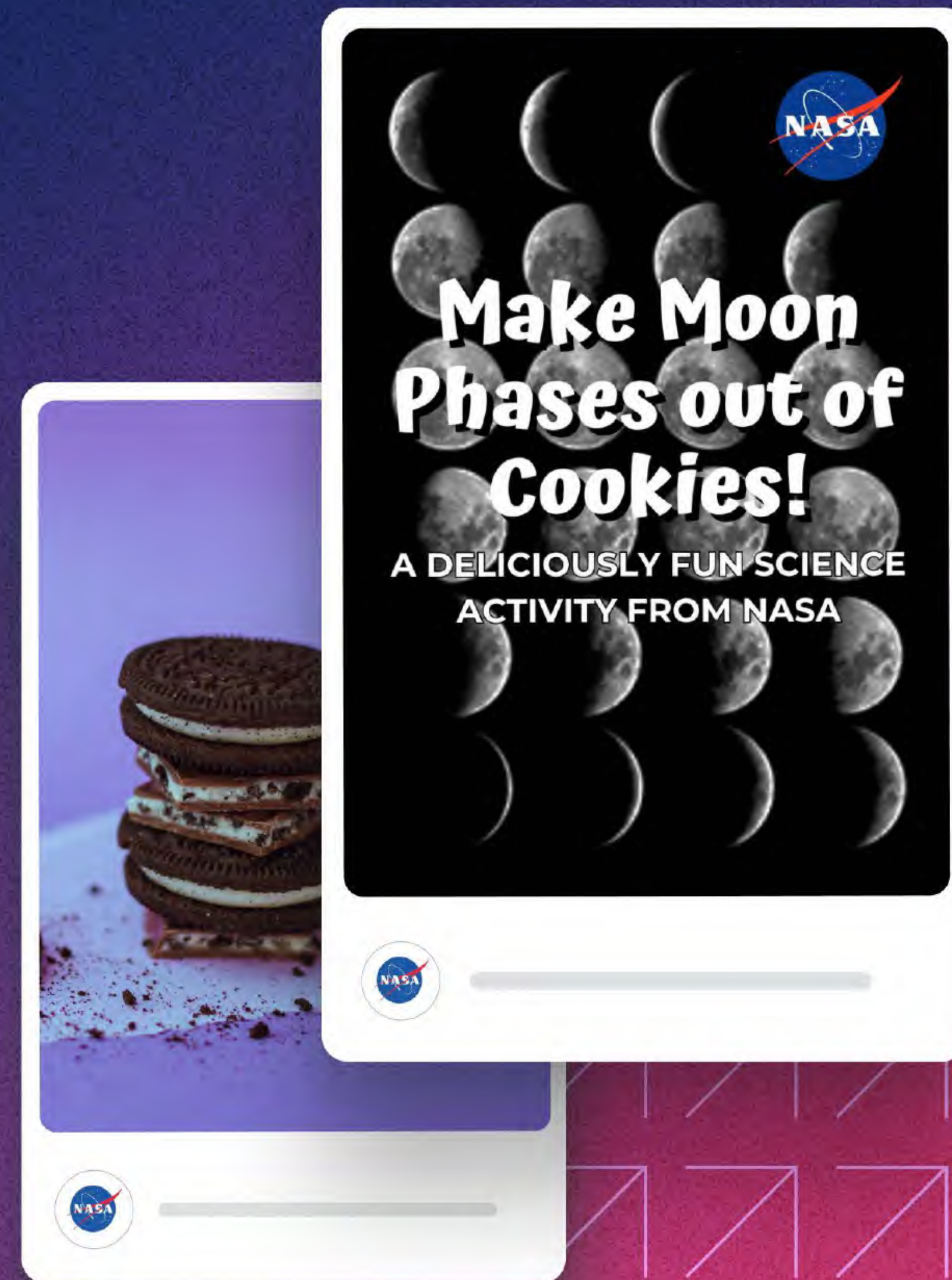




## Brand spotlight

# NASA

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) educates the American public about space science—including how to bake cookies that look like moon phases and create rockets made out of paper. Or, at least, that’s what they do on Pinterest. By adapting their mission to the DIY and craft inspiration-style content on the platform, they’ve developed a following of almost 560,000 and see 4.4 million monthly views.





## LinkedIn



Primary audience:  
**Gen X, Millennials**



Reasons for brand interaction:  
**Education, Community management, Customer support**



Content that performs best:  
**Text posts, Static images**



Best days to post:  
**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday^^**

## LinkedIn

# LinkedIn is a space for more than thought leadership

LinkedIn (or, as creator Jayde Powell coined, “The Briefcase App”) is known for being a business-centric social media network. But, in the last few years, it’s evolved into a haven where people share personal updates and reflections, and build genuine community. Its user base is still primarily made up of people in the corporate workforce: **39% of all social users have a LinkedIn profile.**

It’s most popular with Gen X and Millennials, the generations young enough not to be retired yet and old enough to have established careers. Users are most likely to turn to LinkedIn to search for jobs, but they’re also looking for networking and professional development opportunities.



## How social users want brands to show up on LinkedIn

**1 Share educational product information**

**2 Manage smaller communities**

**3 Provide customer support**

**4 Interact with other brand accounts**

**5 Post entertaining content**

## The types of brand content social users are most likely to interact with on LinkedIn

**1 Text posts**

**2 Static images**

**3 Short-form video (<15 seconds)**

**4 Short-form video (15-30 seconds)**

**5 User-generated content**

When brands show up on LinkedIn, users want them to share educational product information, manage communities and provide customer support. The platform shouldn't be a mouthpiece for your brand or a chance to show off your fluency in corporate jargon. Instead, it's an opportunity to educate people about your products and industry, and foster community and trust

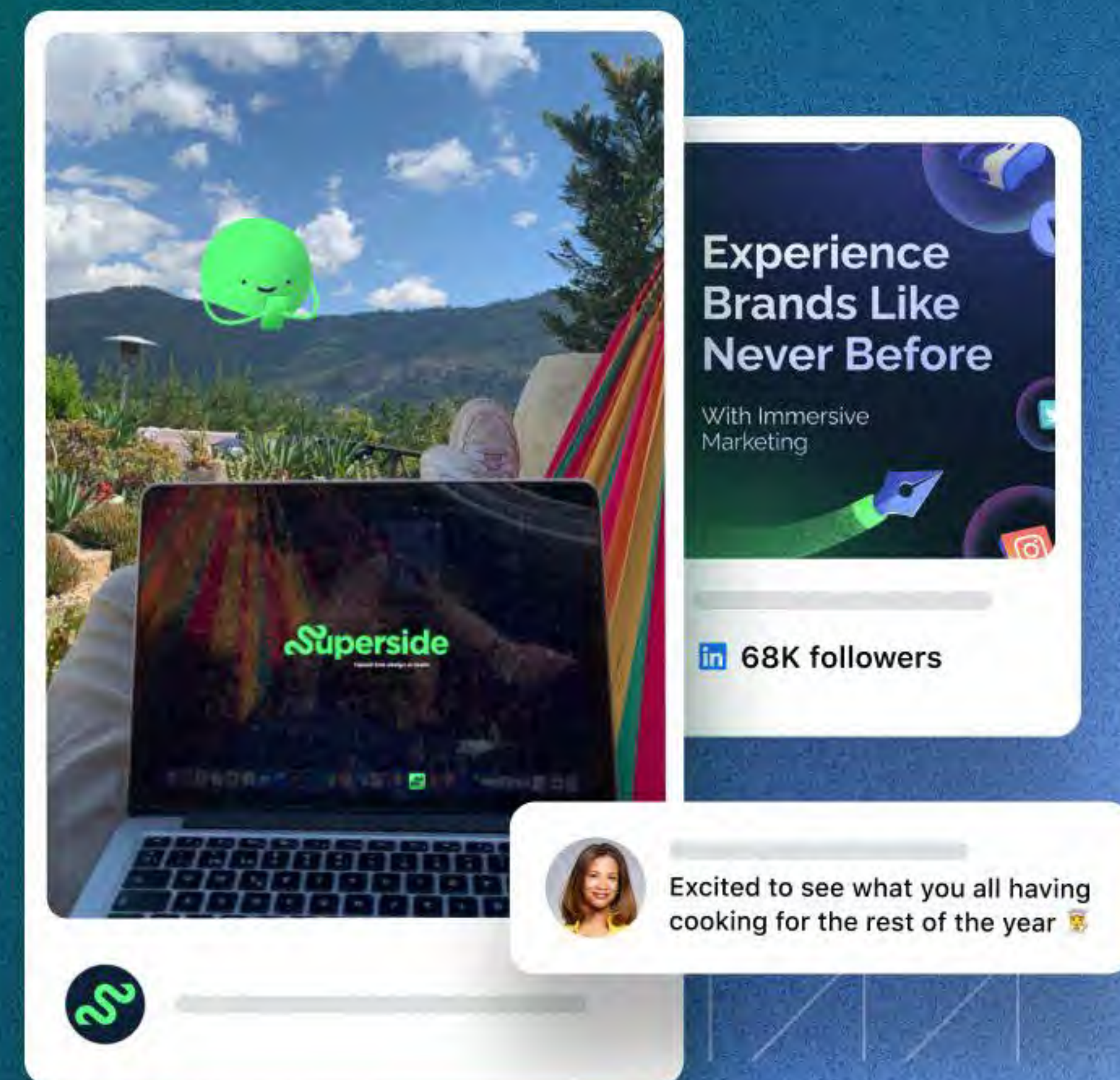
About a quarter of users typically engage with brand content on a daily basis (or more). The remaining half are casual users, who log in a few times a week to once every other week. When interacting with brands, they are most likely to interact with text posts and static images, suggesting video may not be a draw on LinkedIn compared to other platforms.



Brand spotlight

# Superside

Superside is a creative subscription service that scales companies' internal design capabilities. On LinkedIn, the brand shares their latest product innovations, relatable memes, tips from their designers and industry news related to AI developments. The content keeps their 68,000 followers informed and engaged.





## Threads



Primary audience:  
**Gen Z, Millennials**



Reasons for brand interaction:  
**Entertainment, Education**



Content that performs best:  
**Text posts, Static images**

### Threads

## Threads is still finding its footing, but has long-term potential

Meta's Threads platform, designed for sharing text updates and creating public conversations, has seen massive growth since it debuted at the end of 2023. Yet, only **15% of our survey respondents currently have a Threads profile**. This percentage increases slightly for Gen Z and Millennials.

Like almost all other platforms, most users turn to Threads to escape boredom, but some use it to keep up with news and real-time updates. **About 34% of Threads users report logging in at least once a day.**



When it comes to brand content on the network, most social users want to be entertained, educated about products and see their favorite brands interacting with each other.

**Almost half of users (47%) are likely to interact with text posts** from brand accounts, followed by static images, short-form video and long-form video. Interest in long-form video is particularly noteworthy, and could be an emerging opportunity for brands.

## How social media users want brands to show up on Threads

- 1 Post entertaining content
- 2 Share educational product information
- 3 Interact with other brand accounts
- 4 Host contests and giveaways
- 5 Provide customer service and support

## The types of brand content social users are most likely to interact with on Threads

- 1 Text posts
- 2 Static images
- 3 Short-form video (<15 seconds)
- 4 Long-form video (>60 seconds)
- 5 Short-form video (15-30 seconds)



## Brand spotlight

# American Red Cross

The American Red Cross—a nonprofit that helps those affected by disasters—was an early Threads adopter. On the platform, the organization urges people to donate blood and prepare for disasters while providing community education in the wittiest ways possible.

The Red Cross also responds to donor and volunteer questions, and jumps on threads with other brands, delighting their 49,000 followers.



americanredcross 08/19/2024

I went to donate platelets just to binge Netflix for free. Does that make me [brat](#)?

66 4 2





# Quality over quantity matters most

Social media users' demand for entertainment above all else continues to shape and evolve what brand content looks like. But that doesn't mean you should create content for the sake of entertainment alone. Your strategy should still educate your audience, forge connections and serve your business goals.

As people up their usage across platforms, brands should keep the key pillars of entertainment, education and connection top of mind—while understanding the unique nuances of every network. This will enable teams to give audiences what they *really* want and maximize their limited resources.

Reaching consumers in today's over-saturated landscape starts with staying adaptable, listening to customer needs and prioritizing content that resonates.

**Remember: Go where your customers are.  
You don't have to do everything, everywhere.**





# About the data

Unless otherwise indicated via the symbols below, the research cited in this report was conducted online by Cint on behalf of Sprout Social. Consumer participants included 4,400 respondents across the US, Canada, UK, Ireland and Australia who have at least one social media account and follow at least five brands on social media. The survey was conducted between June 28 - July 10, 2024.

**\*\*Q4 2023 Sprout Pulse Survey.** The data referenced was collected via online survey from 1,623 consumers who have at least one social media profile and follow at least five brands on social media, between September 12-14, 2023. 50% of respondents were based in the US and 50% in the UK.

**\*Q1 2024 Sprout Pulse Survey.** This consumer survey was conducted online by Cint, a global market research firm, on behalf of Sprout Social. Participants included 2,000 consumers across the US and UK who follow at least five brands on social media. The consumer survey was conducted from March 15 - March 22, 2024.

**^Q2 2024 Sprout Pulse Survey.** This consumer survey was conducted online by Cint, a global market research firm, on behalf of Sprout Social. Participants included 2,059 consumers across the US and UK who have at least one social media account and follow at least five brands on social media. The consumer survey was conducted from May 17 - 27, 2024.

**^^2024 Best Times to Post on Social Media Report.** Sprout Social's Data Science team gathers this information by analyzing nearly 2 billion engagements across 400,000 social profiles across Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest and TikTok.

# About Sprout Social

Sprout Social is a global leader in social media management and analytics software. Sprout's intuitive platform puts powerful social data into the hands of more than 30,000 brands so they can deliver smarter, faster business impact.

With a full suite of social media management solutions, Sprout offers comprehensive publishing and engagement functionality, customer care, influencer marketing, advocacy and AI-powered business intelligence. Sprout's award-winning software operates across all major social media networks and digital platforms.

**[Learn more at sproutsocial.com](https://sproutsocial.com)**

**[Schedule a demo](#)**