

GARY VAYNERCHUK

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

DAY TRADING ATTENTION

HOW TO ACTUALLY BUILD BRAND AND
SALES IN THE NEW SOCIAL MEDIA WORLD

“One thing I’ve learned being around Gary for the last decade is that when he sees new consumer trends or new best practices in marketing, people should listen and act on them.”

—MICHAEL RUBIN, CEO OF FANATICS

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the 1 percent that make consumer-centric decisions vs the 99 percent that make decisions based on boardroom politics.

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Contents

Cover

Title Page

Dedication

Author's Note

Introduction

Part 1: The Tiktokification of Social Media

Part 2: The Modern Advertising Framework

Part 3: The Core Variables

Part 4: Platform Overview

Part 5: Breaking Down Content Examples

Part 6: Real-Life Scenarios

Conclusion: Closing Notes

Acknowledgments

Bibliography

Notes

About the Author

Also by Gary Vaynerchuk

Copyright

About the Publisher

OceanofPDF.com

Author's Note

The feedback I'll provide on various pieces of content in this book are the opinions of myself and my team, based on our experience. I cannot claim any knowledge of any business's agenda or original intent. I'm just using it as an opportunity to paint a clearer picture for all of you.

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Introduction

Nathan Apodaca unintentionally made one of the greatest modern advertisements.

Nathan, known as “Doggface” on the internet, was a regular guy working at a potato factory in Idaho when he decided to take his longboard to work one day. As he was cruising down the side of the road on his way to the factory, he pulled out his phone and filmed himself on the front-facing camera. He recorded a short video of himself enjoying the vibes—just lip-syncing the lyrics to a Fleetwood Mac song that he had playing in the background and taking a sip out of his jug of Ocean Spray cran-raspberry juice.

Nathan didn’t think much of it. Eventually, right before he got into work, he casually posted the clip on TikTok.

Later that day, he was stunned to see that video had over 2 million views.

It continued to go viral and amassed millions more views (around 90 million views at the time of writing). Soon after, Nathan’s whole life changed. He started getting approached by brands for sponsorship deals. He got interviewed by major media outlets. He later released a song with Snoop Dogg and had an acting debut in a television show. At the time of writing, he has 7.5 million followers on TikTok, 2.5 million followers on Instagram, and 276,000 subscribers on YouTube.

The video also dramatically impacted Ocean Spray’s business. The content made the brand relevant not only to the younger audience that you might think is the platform’s core demographic, but also to the thirty-, forty-, and fifty-year-olds who consume TikTok at scale today. Their juice was flying off the shelves at retail locations across the US.

That's not all. The song "Dreams" by Fleetwood Mac (which was playing in the background of the video) hit the top of the iTunes charts, even though the song itself was originally released in 1977.

The craziest part?

Nathan almost didn't even post the video. He said in an interview with *Big Boy's Neighborhood*, "I was like, 'Man, maybe I shouldn't post it' . . . I looked at it again, and I was like, 'Okay, remember what GaryVee says all the time: Post out content, let it get out there. It doesn't matter if I don't think it's good. Somebody out there wants to see me.'"¹

This Ocean Spray story is just one of many examples that capture what modern advertising looks like. There are countless brands, small businesses, service providers, influencers, and content creators that have seen life-changing sales numbers from content that didn't look like traditional "commercials" or banner ads. For instance, a hip-hop themed lip balm brand named TrapStix had 75 orders between 2018 and 2020. After a series of overperforming TikTok videos, they went on to sell 50,000 units in two years.² Similarly, a daughter helped turn her dad's novel into a bestseller more than a decade after its release, thanks to a popular video she made.³ Stories like these are happening around the world every day.

It's not just TikTok either. Small businesses are using YouTube Shorts to rank their videos in search queries to drive leads. Plenty of creators across YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (Twitter) are using these platforms to build massive communities of their own, and even create their own products that rival those of larger brands. As I'm writing this, my team and I are using Facebook Reels to drive sign-ups for WineText.com, a deal-of-the-day wine SMS service associated with my dad's business. (By the way, if you just signed up at WineText.com, please email my dad at sasha@winelibrary.com. He would love to hear from you, and I know that this would make his day, his week, his month, and his year, which would be the biggest return on investment of this book.)

If you picked up this book, you probably already know you should be on social media. Compared to October 2009, when my first book, *Crush It!*, came out, there are far fewer people who doubt that social media "works." However, only a small percentage of that group truly understands how to use modern advertising platforms to build brand and grow sales in today's rapidly changing environment.

This book will give you the blueprint.

Day Trading Attention (and Why It Matters)

In 2013, I wrote *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World*. It was a guide on how to communicate on the social platforms of the day. Given how much the advertising landscape has changed in the ten years that have since passed, I figured it was time for an updated version.

I thought about calling this book *Jab, Jab, Jab, Left Hook*, a fitting name for a sequel. I eventually decided on *Day Trading Attention* because it best describes not only what I do for a living, but also the number one skill set that you need to master in today's advertising landscape: understanding attention—what it is, where it is, where it's underpriced, and how to leverage it for brand building and sales.

This isn't a book about *just* social media—it's a book about mastering the art and science of storytelling in modern underpriced attention channels. Of course, social media happens to be a huge part of that, but as you'll see over the course of this book, it can also involve strategies like event marketing, developing collectible products, running ads on streaming services, brand collaborations, influencer partnerships, and potentially even traditional advertising campaigns like TV commercials or billboards in some cases.

Just as a day trader constantly studies financial markets to keep a pulse on what's happening, you must constantly study what people are paying attention to, the cost associated with capturing that attention, and how it shifts by the day. This is how you'll find the best marketing and sales strategies for your business or brand. Think of it this way: If you know *what* people are paying attention to and *where* they're paying attention, then you actually have a shot at selling them something.

This is what marketers have been doing for generations: identifying where human attention lies and reverse-engineering it. For instance, the radio gets invented, people start listening to it, and marketers realize, *Hey, I can pay money to the radio station so they'll let me pop in while people are listening, and I can sell them my stuff. This radio station talks about baseball, and people listening are probably baseball fans, so why don't I tie some baseball references into my script, so they'll be more interested in listening to me?*

Same thing with television. The TV is invented, shows are created, and people start watching, and marketers realize, *Hey, I can show up while people are watching and show them why my company has the best laundry detergent ever.*

You can even take this concept back to the Stone Age. I bet if somebody wanted to sell you a new club, they would draw on the cave walls because that's where all the cavemen were most likely to look.

Attention is the game. More specifically, *underpriced* attention is the opportunity.

To understand what that means, think of attention as an asset. It's like buying real estate. Fifty years ago, if you believed that Malibu was going to grow in popularity and home prices would go up, you would've first studied all the tactical nuances of buying beachfront property in that area, and then you would've bought as much as you possibly could before prices started rising even further. Similarly, when an advertising platform has a lot of eyes and ears on it, and the cost of storytelling on that platform is relatively low, that's when you need to go all in. Just like certain cities have underpriced real estate, certain advertising platforms have underpriced attention.

That being said, underpriced attention isn't just about what advertising medium is the cheapest; it's about whether you can get a low cost relative to the amount of actual attention you'd get.

Let me explain.

In the 1950s, one of the mediums with underpriced consumer attention happened to be television. According to some estimates, 90 percent of American households had a television set by 1960, and unlike today, people actually watched TV commercials back then. Some brands realized this early on, and aggressively launched TV strategies with mascots, taglines, and catchy jingles. In the 1950s, brands were also able to have creative control over producing shows on TV, which led to programs like *Hallmark Hall of Fame* and *The Colgate Comedy Hour*. Roy Disney (Walt Disney's older brother) even made a catchy jingle out of the slogan "I Like Ike," which was then run as TV commercials, eventually contributing to Dwight D. Eisenhower winning the 1952 presidential election. The proof was clearly there—television held a vast majority of underpriced consumer attention.

As the years passed and technology began to evolve, however, the attention shifted.

The number of consumers watching traditional cable television today is dramatically declining. The 2022 coverage of the Winter Olympics drew the lowest ratings in the event's history on NBC.⁴ According to some studies, top cable providers had a net loss of 3.5 million video subscribers in 2022.⁵ With other mediums like social media and streaming platforms creating more competition for consumer attention, advertising on television just isn't what it used to be in the 1950s, '60s, '70s, or '80s. But still, the cost of TV commercials is upward of \$100,000 in many cases; the price hasn't adjusted much for the decline in attention over the years.⁶

What does this mean? While television commercials can still "work," they are generally overpriced. Sure, if you're spending over \$100,000 on a commercial, you're going to sell some stuff. But what if you allocated that same \$100,000 on a well-executed, modern advertising strategy grounded in social media? Would you sell even more? More interestingly, could you extract insights from your social media campaigns to help you make even better commercials (should you still decide to run them)?

By no means am I telling brands to never run another television ad again. In fact, even though traditional television commercials are overpriced as a whole, there is one major exception: Super Bowl commercials. I believe the Super Bowl commercial is the single greatest deal in advertising in the US, even at \$7 million for a thirty-second spot as I'm writing this in 2023.⁷ One hundred fifteen million people watched the most recent Super Bowl in the United States, and it's a part of the culture for Americans to sit down and watch those ads too. That level of consumption is impossible to replicate with even the best social media strategies. Believe it or not, I think Super Bowl commercials are a bargain; they can really work for brands, assuming the ad is good (we'll get into that later). Similarly, regular TV commercials can occasionally work, if the ad was bought in a very strategic way and the creative was remarkable and well priced.

The issue is, most of today's television commercials and other traditional marketing executions are not Super Bowl ads, nor are they purchased at an appropriate price—so, why do so many marketers, brands, and corporations still treat them like religion? It's because people tend to dismiss what's underpriced today, and instead focus on what used to work in the past, or what might work in the future. In the process, they continue to underestimate what's working right now.

It's why some small business owners and professionals still say, "TikTok can't generate leads like SEO," or "LinkedIn doesn't convert as well as Google AdWords." In the 1950s, those same people would've said, "Television commercials don't work as well as radio ads"—and they would've been wrong. In the early 2000s, those people would've said that Google Ads were a waste of time. In the mid-1990s, when I was running my dad's liquor store, those people told me that having a website was stupid and that I should just open up another store for Wine Library. In the late '90s, they told me email wouldn't replace catalogs.

I get it. People always have reactions like these when new technology comes along and changes the way we do things. Still, I wish more businesses and brands understood that they're only hurting themselves. By continuing to underestimate modern advertising platforms, they're leaving ridiculous amounts of opportunity on the table, and they don't have to.

Let me ask you, marketers and executives: Why are you always a "no" person in the face of new opportunities? Why can't you be a "maybe" person, do your homework, and then decide if it's a "yes" or "no"?

Many fast-growing brands today have been built on the back of smart modern advertising executions—companies like True Classic and Fashion Nova to name a couple, not to mention companies built around personal brands such as Chamberlain Coffee (founded by popular YouTuber and content creator Emma Chamberlain). I built Wine Library primarily by using underpriced mediums in the 1990s and early 2000s: Google AdWords, email marketing, and organic YouTube videos.

Day trading underpriced attention is what has historically worked best in advertising.

What does this mean for you? For large companies and brands, it's time to think beyond the "potential reach" that TV commercials, print ads, billboards, or digital programmatic banner ads offer. For small business owners and professionals, it's time to expand beyond the old, traditional sales strategies of Google AdWords, SEO, SEM, cold calling, referrals, or going to the chamber of commerce. For creators and influencers, it's time to get more strategic about the content you're putting out instead of posting just to post and expand the platforms you're posting on.

I'm not saying you should entirely stop cold-calling or whatever is working for you right now. I don't like to think of any marketing or sales method as "dead." I just think there's a much smarter way to build a

modern, cohesive advertising strategy, one that has social media at the core and uses insights from social campaigns to inform all the other pieces. In fact, I can't wait to make fun of people who are overinvesting in social media in a decade or two.

Today, mass consumer attention sits across a handful of social media platforms, which happen to have literally zero cost for organic reach (the number of people who will see your content if you just post it, without running it as an ad). That's why social media can be one of the best places to capture underpriced attention. For example, Facebook has an estimated 3 billion monthly active users at the time of writing.⁸ Instagram and YouTube each have roughly over 2 billion, and LinkedIn has 930 million members.⁹
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Influencers promoting your product or service can also be an underpriced strategy, assuming you choose up-and-coming influencers who are relatively low cost. Same applies to event marketing, ads on streaming services, brand collaborations, developing collectible items related to your business, and all the other opportunities I'll talk about in this book.

But here's the catch: Even if you're on social media—even if you are running ads on Hulu instead of a cable TV network—it doesn't mean it'll work for you. You actually have to be good at the execution.

As soon as I sensed that people were paying attention to TikTok, I knew I needed to figure out all the tactics and details of how to storytell within that platform. I needed to figure out how to make videos people want to watch, how to use different creative units (that is, carousels versus stand-alone images versus videos), what the first few seconds of my videos should look like, what trending audio I should use in the background, how to decide when to duet or stitch a video, and more.

Social media is just an empty vessel; you only get out of it what you put into it. Without putting in the work to understand these platforms and the psychology of the people using them, you're just creating a bunch of content that no one will ever see. If you make videos for TikTok that no one wants to watch or spend \$10,000 running Facebook ads with content that doesn't captivate people, then social media will be a "waste of time and money." If you overpay for influencer endorsements that don't lead to sales, then influencer marketing will be a "waste of time and money." It's like how playing basketball could earn you a lot of money in theory, but you have to be a good basketball player to actually achieve that. Just because

you're marketing on social media doesn't mean you're good at it. If you're not good at it, it may not work for you.

It's important to recognize what advertising mediums are traditionally overpriced versus underpriced, but it's also important to know how to make them work for you, given the resources you have available.

That's what you'll learn in this book. With the in-depth strategies, frameworks, and tactics in the coming pages, you'll be better equipped than most to advertise (and grow) your business or brand in the world that we currently live in.

The New Social Media World

Back when I wrote *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook*, I defined the concept as “give, give, give, ask.” In other words, make content that gives value to your audience so that you have permission to “ask” for their business down the road. The “jabs” (free value) would set up the “right hook” (the ask) in the algorithm—with how various social platforms worked back then, getting high engagement on one of your posts meant that future posts would be more likely to be shown to those individuals who engaged. So, it made sense to create a “jab” that engaged a wider audience so that more people would see and engage with your right hook. Providing free value was also just a good way to build trust and affinity with your audience so they'd be more receptive to things you ask for down the road.

Over the last decade, algorithms across platforms have evolved dramatically. Today, there are far more variables to consider when producing content.

For example, what should “free value” look like now? What should the layout, design, and formatting look like? How do you decide what pieces of content to make, and how can you create a process to make that production sustainable? How should your content change depending on the platform you're posting on? Could a piece of content that builds brand also drive sales at the same time? How can content like Doggface's Ocean Spray video drive so many sales, when it doesn't even look like a “right hook”?

As we think about these answers, let's take a step back for a second and start from the most basic advertising question of all: What's the reason that human beings buy certain products and services instead of others? Whether

it's through social media or anywhere else—what *actually* gets someone to buy that latest business software tool, or their newest T-shirt, or the watch they're wearing?

Sometimes it's because the product was at a convenient location, they were able to get it at a cheap price, or maybe a friend recommended it to them. But you'd be surprised how often people subconsciously buy things because the brand or business *means* something to them. In other words, they decide that a certain product or service is more *relevant* to their needs or to who they are. That is the power of “brand” at work.

For example, maybe an accountant got you to trust his or her expertise by posting thoughtful information about taxes online. Maybe a sneaker brand collaborated with your favorite athlete, and that made you buy. Maybe a skin-care brand made a funny reference to a Netflix series you like, and the next time you were in the mall or drugstore, you picked up their product because you subconsciously felt “closer” to that brand than their competitors. Maybe a couple of law firm partners created an entertaining podcast about golf, an area you’re passionate about, and the next time you had a business contract to get done, you thought of them first. Maybe a B2B company created smart content on how their software would save you money, and that made you buy. Many of our purchasing decisions are influenced by how we consciously—or subconsciously—feel about a brand. I’ll buy virtually anything if the ad has a positive New York Jets reference tied into it ;).

What this means is that content alone is not enough; content that scales brand relevance is the goal. Relevance is defined as “a close connection with the subject you are discussing or the situation you are in.”¹² We need to tell stories that help people feel closely connected to our businesses and brands.

It’s not just about letting consumers know your business or your brand exists. It’s not about posting random content just for the sake of posting it. If you’re a florist, for example, you can’t just post a picture of a flower with “happy Tuesday” in the caption and call it a day. Relevance is about creating and distributing content that people find meaningful (whether that’s potential customers, clients, or other individuals who matter to you). When your business is more relevant, more people consider buying, which then leads to higher sales numbers.

Why did Doggface's Ocean Spray video drive sales? It made the brand more relevant to a variety of different demographics. Whether intentional or not, there was something about the video that struck a chord with people—maybe it was the camera angle, maybe it was the length of the video that made it easily consumable, maybe it was the vibe of the song that was added to the video, maybe it was the style of movement in the first few seconds, maybe it was the lighthearted nature of someone just enjoying life, or maybe it was a combination of all of these elements and more. The strategy behind how you make your content (such as, what your first three seconds look like) and your understanding of platform nuances (such as, what trending audio to use on TikTok versus Instagram) are two of many tools you can use to make content that's more relevant.

One of the biggest changes in the new social media world is that the more relevant your content is to an audience, the more your content will be distributed by the platform itself. As I'll talk about more in [part 1](#) of this book, all platforms are heading in the direction of showing content to users based on what they're interested in, rather than who they follow. The more relevant your content is to an audience, the more they will be interested in consuming it, and the more reach you'll get.

This means that the quality of the content that you put out is more important than ever. I don't mean production quality, or whether you subjectively like the piece of content or not—I mean, are you putting out stuff that a group of people is interested in consuming?

For content to be relevant and drive business results, it needs to be more strategic and thoughtful than ever before. You need to consider variables like:

- What time are you posting?
- What title do you have as a text overlay on your video?
- Who are you making your piece of content for? Why should they be interested in consuming it?
- If you post a video on TikTok, how are you tweaking it before you post on, say, YouTube Shorts?
- Is your post caption (aka copy) optimized?
- What creative units are you using? (Creative units are different content creation features on platforms, like stories, carousels, Reels on Instagram, or status updates on Facebook.)

- What creative styles are you using? (Meaning, ways of displaying content within creative units, such as a skit on Instagram Reel.)
- How are you deciding what piece of content to run as a paid ad?
- Are your profiles on each platform optimized correctly so people know what you do, and how to contact you?
- How can you use insights from social media content to inform larger advertising strategies, such as trade shows, TV commercials, or higher-production videos?

And much, much, much, much more.

These are the kinds of concepts we'll explore in depth in this book.

The Supply and Demand of Content (and Why You Need to Act Now)

The opportunity is enormous for everyone reading this—as more platforms are distributing content based on what people are interested in rather than who they follow, it's more practical than ever for creators, businesses, and brands alike to achieve more relevance and grow. Even if they don't have an audience. But the reality is, the opportunities on platforms today won't last forever.

Why? It's a concept I call the Supply and Demand of Content.

When there's a lot of attention on a platform (especially when it's early in its maturity), you have a greater chance to get awareness and engagement on your content because there aren't as many content producers and advertisers on the platform yet. As a platform gets more and more mature, it gets harder to have your content stand out.

Between mid-2021 and 2022, my YouTube channel saw some of the greatest spikes in views that I've ever received, largely thanks to the disproportionately high organic reach of YouTube Shorts when they were first released to the public in July 2021. At that point, there were fewer content creators on YouTube Shorts compared to the number of people who wanted to watch that type of content. Today, YouTube Shorts is still a huge opportunity for many brands and business owners. YouTube is the second-biggest search engine in the world, so posting Shorts and long-form videos with search-engine-optimized titles can help increase the discoverability of

your content. However, as more time passes, the more strategy and thoughtfulness it will take to stand out.

The Supply and Demand of Content applies to features and content formats within platforms too.

For example, in 2015 and 2016, I was getting dozens of emails a day from people saying they made the biggest business development deals of their lives through Instagram direct message (DM). At that point, some celebrities and executives were more directly reachable through their DMs than other forms of contact, so reaching out to them with an offer to bring value was more likely to get you a response. It's the same reason email marketing worked extraordinarily well in 1999—it was a time when people read all their emails.

Today, Instagram DMs still work for business development, but it's harder than it was in 2015 and 2016. You might have to be more strategic about who you're reaching out to, who you add into the message group, the number of people you reach out to, how established your own profile is, the opening line of your message, and other variables. Same thing with email marketing—it still works today, but you can't get 91 percent open rates on a 100,000-person email list like I did with WineLibrary.com in the late 1990s.

In 2019 and 2020, I was putting out a lot of content about why everyone should be making TikTok content. I was telling everyone that it's more than just kids lip-syncing and dancing—the platform offered enormous opportunities for brand awareness. The in-app content creation features were a relatively new thing back then, and I believed the app was like “training wheels” for future influencers and content creators. The content creation features made it easier for people to create, and I knew back then it would pave the way for other apps to integrate similar features. At that time, the opportunity for organic reach on TikTok was obviously high, and it still is in 2023, but today it takes even better content to stand out (and it's not quite that obvious).

This has been a recurring theme over the last decade of social—first there's underpriced attention, and then, slowly but surely, people figure out the mismatch between supply and demand. First, it's usually entrepreneurs and creators who can move fast and experiment on new platforms without bureaucracy limiting their innovation. Sometime later, small businesses and startups begin to take advantage of the opportunity. Finally, big brands and advertising budgets eventually start flowing in. Then the supply and

demand curve begins to even out—advertising ends up getting more expensive, and organic reach begins to stagnate or decline.

There's an especially big opportunity today for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and private-equity-owned brands. With so many Fortune 500 brands in the world continuing to allocate large budgets to outdated forms of advertising, there are still large gaps in supply of content across platforms. The faster you can understand and implement the strategies in this book, the more of an advantage you'll have in the current landscape of advertising. Although some advertising platforms are more mature than others, don't be confused: There's still a lot of organic reach and attention up for grabs. In my twenties, when I was buying wine terms on Google AdWords for ten cents a click, I initially thought that the opportunity was "over" once it was raised to a dollar. I thought competitors had "figured it out"—in hindsight, I made a huge mistake. Even a dollar was cheap.

Same thing with advertising platforms today. TikTok organic reach might not be as good as it was in 2020 (in fact, it's not even close), but there's still an enormous "land grab" of attention available. But just like you can't read about doing push-ups and get in great shape, you can't just read about marketing and magically grow your business.

If you want to take advantage of it, you must become a practitioner of day trading attention.

The insights and observations I'll share in this book are based on everything that my companies at VaynerX and I have learned over the years. At VaynerMedia, we've learned what successful marketing and advertising looks like for large Fortune 500 brands. Through the Sasha Group, we've helped small businesses grow and drive leads and revenue. Through VaynerCommerce, we've gained insights on scaling e-commerce and direct-to-consumer (DTC) companies. I continue to hold myself accountable to be a practitioner of everything I'm writing about—over the last decade, I've continued to grow the community around the GaryVee personal brand, as well as drive sales for Wine Library using modern marketing strategies. Many of these observations come from my personal interactions with thousands of startups, entrepreneurs, creators, and celebrities through my DMs on social. I've also gathered insights from other companies I've cofounded, such as Resy and Empathy Wines (Resy sold to American Express in 2019, and Empathy Wines sold to Constellation Brands in 2020). I've learned a lot from the companies I've

invested in over the course of my career too, including Liquid Death, Slack, Coinbase, Venmo, Uber, Snap Inc., and more.

Day trading attention is what I do every day, and it's the reason I've had overall success in marketing over the course of my career of twenty-plus years. When I was a kid selling lemonade on Tingley Lane, day trading attention was about figuring out what trees to put signs on based on where drivers were most likely to look. When I was a teenager doing baseball card shows on the weekends, it was about setting up my display just right to catch the most eyes as people walked by. As a young adult working in my dad's liquor store, it was about studying customer movements throughout the store and learning the best wines to display near the cash register for deals. In my twenties and early thirties as we scaled the business, it was learning how to capture as many emails as possible, and knowing how to advertise on Google as more people began to search there.

Everything you'll see me talk about in this book comes from experience because I only talk about things I've lived. As new advertising mediums come out, the attention shifts, and the game continues, and this is a game I've been playing for many, many years.

The strategies in this book apply to companies of all sizes; you'll see different examples involving Fortune 1000 brands, influencers, local businesses, B2B companies, nonprofits, executives, direct-to-consumer companies, and more. As you get into the following pages, you'll also learn modern advertising tactics in deep detail. Platforms change rapidly, and it's possible that some of these tactics that work today as I'm writing this will not be as relevant by the time this book comes out. However, many other tactics here will be tried and true for the next several years and beyond, and the people who put them into practice will win.

I believe this book will create an enormous number of success stories, like *Crush It!* and *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook*—I've written many books, and I know which ones I get the most emails about (gary@vaynerx.com). I look forward to hearing from you on how you put the strategies in this book into practice.

Part 1

The Tiktokification of Social Media

At thirty-two years old, I started getting involved in the world of social media and Web 2.0, as we called it then. I published Episode 1 of *Wine Library TV* in 2006 (a YouTube show where I tasted and reviewed wines—best gig I ever had), and shortly after, I started going to events like SXSW and getting acquainted with this emerging industry. Up until that point, I was a wine retailer, working every day to build my dad's business in an attempt to pay my family back for everything they did for me. At that time, I saw social media and tech as a totally new world of opportunity.

As I started going to more events and making connections, I became friends with several people on the 10–20 person Facebook team. I built relationships with other leaders in the Silicon Valley tech scene as well. I also started reading up on the budding world of Web 2.0 through resources like TechCrunch. I had a strong sense early on that social media would completely change the way human beings communicate, and I just wanted to be in the mix.

One day, I was presented with an opportunity to invest in a company called Twitter through a friendship I'd built over some time. (By the way, as I moved forward in finalizing that deal, I had to find a law firm in New Jersey to help with the process. I found one and came across a junior guy at the firm who was ascending to partner. He went by the name of Marc Yudkin, and he is now my COO at VaynerMedia, general counsel, and brother.)

Several months later, Randi Zuckerberg called me with an opportunity to buy some of her parents' Facebook stock. I said yes and wrote the biggest

check I had ever written in my life, a six-figure check that pretty much wiped out all my savings at that time.

Finally, in that same year, David Karp and I became friends. I believed in his vision for his startup, Tumblr, and later ended up investing in it.

Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr were the first three companies I ever invested in. Of course, this changed the trajectory of my life, but there's a funny reason why I tell this story:

When I invested in Tumblr, I called my brother and said, “AJ, Tumblr is going to be bigger than Facebook and Twitter. It’s going to be the biggest one of them all.”

AJ asked, “Why?”

I said, “On Facebook and Twitter, you follow people. On Tumblr, you follow things you’re interested in.”

Now, Tumblr didn’t become the biggest of those three platforms, because there were so many other variables at play (although they still had a \$1.1 billion exit to Yahoo in 2013). Still, that early realization about “interest”-based platforms versus “social”-based platforms is something that has continued to play out over time in a major way.

This speaks to why I was such a big advocate of Musical.ly early on. Released in 2014, Musical.ly was the first social platform that I saw since Tumblr that was distributing content to users based on their interests—something I will refer to as “the interest graph” for the rest of this book. I even had two Musical.ly stars come to my office for *AskGaryVee* Episode 198 in 2016 because I knew this platform was onto something. A year later in 2017, ByteDance acquired Musical.ly and merged it into TikTok in 2018. Since then, TikTok has been the largest champion of the interest graph model, and its execution of the “For You” page is something that I believe will define the foreseeable future of both social media and other advertising platforms—it already has.

Here’s why it’s so special:

At the time of writing, the default tab users land on when opening the app is the For You page. The content that TikTok surfaces there is based on the unique preferences of each user. TikTok considers videos you like or share, how long you watch videos, comments you post, and even the types of content you create. They also consider your device type, the location you’re in, language preferences, and more—all these factors are processed by TikTok’s recommendation engine and weighted based on how much you

care about each specific factor. The algorithm learns each user's consumption patterns and adjusts their feed's content based on how those consumption patterns change over time.

In other words, their content feed is led by the interest graph (what you're interested in), rather than the social graph (who you follow).

Prior to TikTok's For You page, most platforms were led by the social graph. Some platforms still considered users' interests—Facebook, for example, used to have an algorithm called EdgeRank to determine what content would show up in user feeds. Every like, share comment, and new post from a user was counted as an “edge,” and based on all those edges, Facebook would predict what types of content would be most interesting to that user. If you always “liked” a particular friend’s photos but you skipped over their text-only status updates, the algorithm would show you more of that friend’s photos and less of their status updates. Other platforms would consider user interests as well, but still, the content served would usually be within the container of who users decided to follow.

As social media matured, we soon found out that there were limitations to the “social graph”—driven content approach over time. When the content you see is based on which accounts you follow, it becomes harder to keep you on a platform as your relationships and preferences evolve over the course of your life. You might have subscribed to a YouTube channel in your early twenties about starting a company, but what happens at twenty-seven when those ambitions change? You might have followed some Facebook pages around your favorite artist in high school, but what happens when your music tastes shift? Within the social graph environment, you would have to actively follow new people or pages to get a steady stream of the content you want. It's higher friction and doesn't necessarily guarantee that you'd be seeing the content you want to see. An interest-graph-led algorithm, on the other hand, would automatically recognize your changing interests and show that content to you automatically, making it more likely that you'll stay on the platform longer.

At this point, nearly every platform is copying TikTok's interest-graph-led algorithm. Meta is making a huge interest graph push through Instagram Reels and Facebook Reels, as well as Instagram's Explore page. YouTube has expanded their video recommendation engine as well as their Shorts feed. X (Twitter) is making a push around their For You video feed, as well as their main For You feed that combines various post types. Snapchat is

working on their Spotlight feature and LinkedIn is optimizing their own feed as well. It's a phenomenon I'm calling the "TikTokification of social media," and it has major implications for everyone reading this book.

For the first time ever, the incentives of businesses and the advertising channels are truly aligned. Think about it, Instagram doesn't want you to leave the app and go to YouTube Shorts. YouTube doesn't want to lose you to TikTok, and TikTok doesn't want to lose you to Netflix or Spotify. The war for attention is on, which means platforms are incentivized to distribute content that's relevant and valuable to the end consumer. This means that if you make content and advertising that people actually want to watch, you'll be rewarded with more views and engagement. The opportunity for organic reach is virtually unlimited. The more relevant your content is, the more reach you'll get. This is a huge change, especially for the Madison Avenue advertising world. When a brand buys a billboard or a TV commercial spot, the advertising company doesn't just magically reward them with more impressions if their advertisement was good. Modern social platforms do. For example, if BMW makes a crappy ad to run on television, NBC won't care; they'll happily still take their money. The modern social platforms don't want users to make bad content, which makes them more aligned with the advertiser.

Prior to the TikTokification of social media, marketing on social platforms had a similar dynamic to email marketing. With email, you would spend time building a list, and then market to that list. Similarly, with social platforms, you would spend time building up your follower base and then you'd market to that follower base through your content. Much like email, only a small percentage of your social media audience would see each one of your posts. Now businesses, creators, and brands don't need to have a follower base before they can start getting views and engagement. You could create an account on any social platform in this book today, post some content over the course of this week, and you actually have a shot at getting thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even millions of views. It just depends on whether your content is good enough or not. Learn to make compelling, relevant content at scale and the platform will distribute your content to people who are interested in consuming it.

Even with my millions of followers on TikTok, if I post a piece of content no one wants to watch, it might only get a few thousand views. Meanwhile, if a car dealership with fifteen followers posts a video relevant

to people who want to buy cars, it might get millions of views and have people coming to the dealership from different parts of the state. Similarly, if a regular guy working at a potato factory posts a lighthearted video drinking Ocean Spray juice on his longboard, it just might change his entire life—that is the power of the TikTokification of social media.

You potentially could get 100 views, then 10,000 on your next piece of content, then back to 300 on the next ten, then up to 500,000 on the following one, etc. That's what happens when the creative is the variable of success, not the number of followers you have (by the way, the words *creative* and *content* mean the same thing; I'll use them interchangeably in this book). Of course, these numbers may vary based on the platform. Certain platforms may still place higher value on how many followers you have than others—not every platform's interest graph algorithm is as advanced as TikTok's at the time of this writing, but I believe variability in views on each piece of content you post will only get wider and wider over time. Every platform is moving in this direction.

This puts small businesses and creators on a much more even playing field with larger companies, which means major brands now have to worry about small companies taking their market share. Beverage brands across the board have to compete with Logan Paul and KSI's Prime Hydration. Folgers has to compete with Chamberlain Coffee. In this new social media world, a creator who truly understands how to capture attention could start a skin-care line tomorrow that competes with the biggest names in the industry.

Today, people who know how to make great content will have a leg up on big brands, many of which are still trying to pass off overproduced television ads as social media content. In fact, I predict that over the next ten to fifteen years, human-based consumer brands will become the biggest issue for the largest consumer brands in the world (that was the journey I went on with Empathy Wines back in 2019 and the journey that Mr. Beast is currently on with Feastables at a bigger scale).

Everyone is competing for the same, limited space in the user's feed, and the best way to win that space is by making more relevant content. More relevance equals more reach.

Advertising in the World of the Interest Graph

So, if relevance is what we all need to be aiming at, how do we know what kinds of content would be the most relevant to the end user? How do we know what kinds of content people actually want to consume, and what will get the most meaningful distribution?

Fortunately, you don't have to guess. With interest-graph-driven algorithms, you can find out the truth for yourself for zero additional cost (beyond what it takes to make the creative itself). Make a piece of content based on who you want to reach and what you think they might be interested in seeing, post it on one or more platforms of your choice, and look at your post analytics and comments to see what happens. Did it do better than your account's average performance? Did it do worse? Who did the platform end up serving it to, based on your analytics (in other words, who was *actually* interested in consuming it versus who you *thought* would be interested in consuming it)? Any interesting observations in the comments? You can use all these observations to make your next piece of content even better.

This is a game changer, especially for large brands. Currently, they might spend months defining guidelines for the content and ads they want to put out, between defining their target audience, doing research, conducting focus groups, selling ideas through various internal decision makers, and more. The process is slow, outdated, and built for those developing TV commercials in the pre-social media era. Brands would decide to spend \$8 million on a commercial (between agency fees, production costs, and media costs), and use a combination of their research and subjective opinions to make a generic thirty-second video that would appeal to the various demographics that watch it.

Today, with interest graph algorithms, instead of putting months and months of research, effort, and resources into a TV commercial that people will most likely not watch, brands can put out content (aka ads) every day based on a hypothesis of what will work and get actual results to validate or invalidate their hypothesis. They can rely on reactions from the market, instead of ten people in a focus group.

For example, let's say you're leading marketing efforts for a large athletic clothing brand, and you want to make a TV commercial to get more moms across the US to buy your clothing. You can make 20, 30, 40+ different pieces of content/ads for narrow demographics of moms, post them across social media platforms, and see what happens. Observe what

pieces of content perform better than the average on your account, see who ends up consuming the piece of content through post analytics, note what words and messaging catch attention, and use those learnings to help craft your higher-production, higher-budget commercials.

It's similar to how stand-up comedians try out different material. They go in front of smaller crowds at a bunch of different comedy clubs, see what lines work and with whom they work, and use those learnings to make their next show even better. By the time they do a big Netflix comedy special, there's very little guessing involved; they already know what to do. Similarly, learnings from social media marketing can help brands mitigate risk on higher-production campaigns.

I call this "marketing for the sake of better marketing." You do actual marketing with the goal of building brand and sales through social media, and you also use those learnings from content to do even better marketing in the future. The confusion is that companies approach these social media posts (again, which are advertisements) with a mindset of "test and learn," "throw it against the wall and see what sticks," or "spray and pray." Just to remind you: This is marketing for the sake of better marketing.

This applies to creators and small businesses too. Say you have a business with \$250 a month to spend on paid advertising. Instead of debating what content to run as an ad this month, you can post a bunch of organic content, see which ones resonate, and turn those pieces of content into ads to drive sales (aka "brandformance"). If the content already did well when you posted it organically, you have more proof that it'll work when you run it as an ad, mitigating your risk.

As you'll see in this book, the amount of data available across social platforms is immense. For example, at the time of writing, you can see how many people viewed your video versus swiped away on YouTube Shorts. You can see average watch time on your TikTok videos. You can see how many followers versus nonfollowers viewed your Instagram and Facebook Reels. You can even see the job titles of individuals who consumed your content on LinkedIn. You can track metrics like views, saves, shares, likes, and comments on certain platforms to see how people engaged with your content.

There are many ways to use this data. For example, large brands can make skits on TikTok featuring different potential mascots with a variety of character traits. They can observe reactions in the comments before

building the mascot into a much bigger part of the brand. Think GEICO using content to test Martin the Gecko against the GEICO Caveman to see which character resonated with people the best. E-commerce companies can make TikToks with sample items they're thinking of selling and decide whether to carry inventory after seeing whether people are interested in the product. If a local restaurant is debating what new menu item to add, they could make a video asking that question, run it as a Facebook ad to their local area, and use community feedback as a data point in making the decision.

In the new social media world, everything is about the content itself, not the people who chose to follow you. Creative is the variable of success.

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Part 2

The Modern Advertising Framework

There are two ways to invest: You can either make long-term bets, go to sleep, and wait for the returns to show up over time, or you can day trade. Both are different ways to do it. Marketing *used* to be like the former—brands would spend months planning out a campaign, execute on traditional channels like television, and bet on the fact that it'll work out. Today marketing is like day trading—if you are not staying ahead of the curve every day, somebody is outflanking you. That means your strategies need to be far more sophisticated than ever.

In [part 3](#), I'll go into extreme detail on the six core variables to win in this new environment. Your level of success will largely depend on how deeply you understand these variables, and how you incorporate them into your advertising strategy. It's why [part 3](#) is the deepest section in this book; I'm giving you all the details.

Before we get there, though, here's an overview of the core variables that make up the modern advertising framework—later you'll see how they all work together:

Cohort development: Defining who you want to reach

When you're making content, the first step is to develop cohorts. This term refers to the buckets of often narrow but sometimes broad consumer segmentations that you'd want to try to reach.

Platforms and Culture (PAC): The new requirement for your advertising knowledge

PAC is a two-pronged framework that should inform the content you create. First, you have to know the platforms, or more specifically, the creative units and features on the platforms you're posting on. By creative units, I mean the *types* of creative you can post on each platform; on Instagram, some of the creative units are stories, Reels, and carousels. You have to know the nuances of these creative units. For example, how long can an Instagram Reel be? Do you know which creative units are getting the most organic reach on each platform? Do you know how carousels on LinkedIn, Instagram, and TikTok appear differently in-feed? The reason this is important is that it helps you ideate your content; if you know that a LinkedIn carousel has to be uploaded as a PDF document, whereas an Instagram carousel is uploaded as a series of images or videos directly in the app, then that will impact your ideation around each piece of creative.

The other aspect of PAC is culture. Are there any current events related to your business category that your cohorts would know about? What influencers and celebrities might your cohorts be following? Do you know how to speak to your cohorts, based on their interests and slang?

Strategic organic content (SOC): What good modern advertising looks like

SOC is the content that you post across platforms to build relevance, brand, and sales. I added the S in SOC because content must be strategic. SOC is about the small details, such as what the first three seconds look like, what your copy (aka the post caption) says, the title text you add on the video, how long your video is, and more. PAC knowledge can help you make more strategic organic content.

Amplification: Spending against what works, aka not wasting a penny

Amplification refers to any tactic that lets you reach even more people through your content. That means running paid ads on social platforms, running ads on streaming services, influencer marketing, TV commercials, outdoor media, and more. The content you decide to amplify would be informed by SOC insights: What pieces are overperforming? Which ones are getting more comments? For example, you could decide to take a piece of overperforming strategic organic content, add some sales-focused elements, and run it as a brandformance ad with some slight tweaks, since you know the content has already been validated by the interest graph algorithm.

Videos people want to watch: Modern commercials

These are more broadly relatable, higher-production videos that you can make (depending on your resources). Unlike traditional commercials, modern-day commercials are pieces of content that don't feel like an "ad." People actually want to watch them, and the production is always informed by insights and observations from the content (aka SOC) you're putting out across platforms. Please note: This is a video that looks like a skit from a sitcom, a music video, a movie trailer, a *Saturday Night Live* skit. The videos that people actually want to watch in the world.

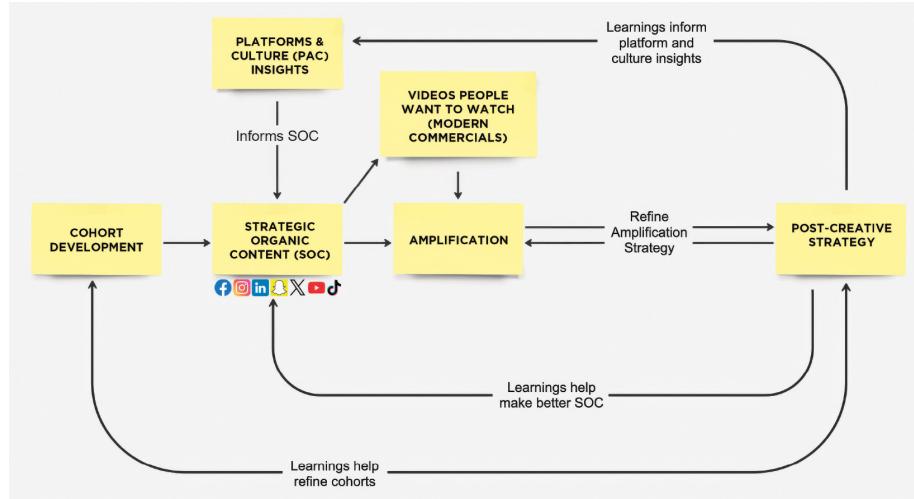
Post-creative strategy (PCS): Listening to actual consumers and gathering insights

Post-creative strategy is all about listening. Once strategic organic content gets posted, read the comments on your content and comments on other accounts that are relevant to who you're trying to reach. This way, you'll get a better sense for what's resonating, what isn't, and who your content is reaching. PCS insights help make your next piece of SOC even better, and help you uncover new cohorts or eliminate existing cohorts as needed.

In a nutshell, that's the framework. Define who you want to reach, use platform knowledge and cultural insights to make strategic content, and

leverage insights from data and comments to decide what ads to run, and what to build on further with higher-production pieces of content.

The following graphic illustrates the overall process:



To give you a little preview of what this process looks like in action, here's a simple example:

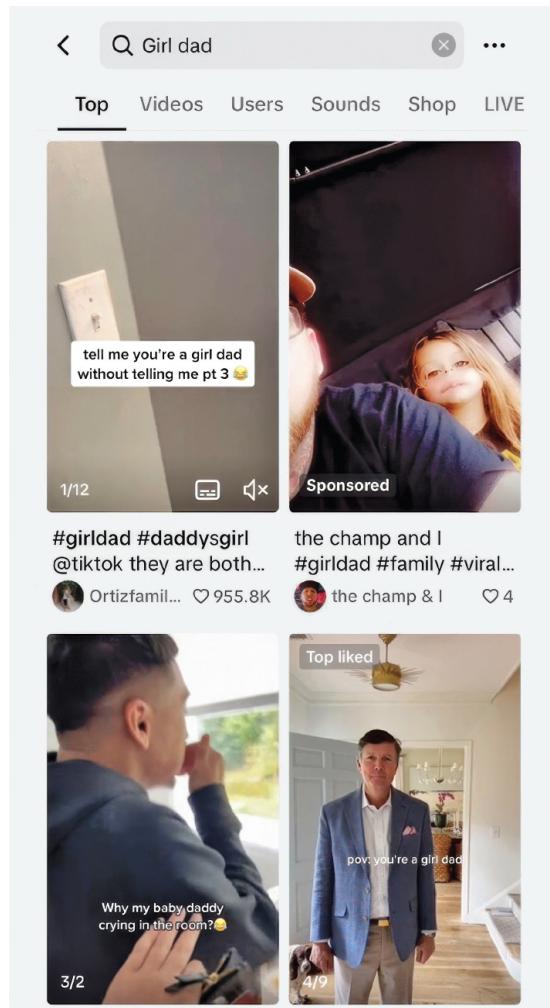
Let's say you have a small business that sells kids' clothing. How would you use the modern advertising framework to build brand and drive sales?

Before you jump into running ads, throwing money into a high-production commercial, or even making content, you need to get a sense for 1) who you want to reach, and 2) what those people care about so you can make the kind of advertising they actually *want* to consume. By now, you know that if people are interested in consuming your advertising, you'll stay relevant and top of mind. Relevance is what leads to consideration, and eventually sales.

The first step is identifying a variety of different consumer segments (or cohorts), so that you can make advertising that's relevant to them (rather than something generic that's meant to appeal to everyone). Based on your business objectives, maybe you decide to focus on millennial moms who recently had their first kid and dads who have young daughters (aka girl dads), among thirty to forty other cohorts.

Next, go into each platform and do some research on what these cohorts naturally watch and engage with. With platforms' search capabilities

constantly improving, you can type in something like “girl dad” in the search bar and find videos relevant to that group.



"Girl dad" search on TikTok. August 12, 2023.



“Girl dad” search on Facebook Reels.
August 12, 2023.

Spend some time going through hashtags and search results. Notice what creative formats and styles are overperforming. Notice what's underperforming. Notice how the content differs across platforms. Are people using similar wording in the titles of their videos? Are they using the same audio? Are people using certain platform features such as duets, polls, or video replies to comments? What kinds of content are companies and brands posting? What kinds of content are actual human beings posting?

These platform and culture (PAC) insights will inform what your strategic organic content (SOC) might look like. Instead of blindly making content in a spray-and-pray manner, you can first narrow in on:

1. Your creative unit (such as a standard TikTok video, as opposed to a carousel or photo)

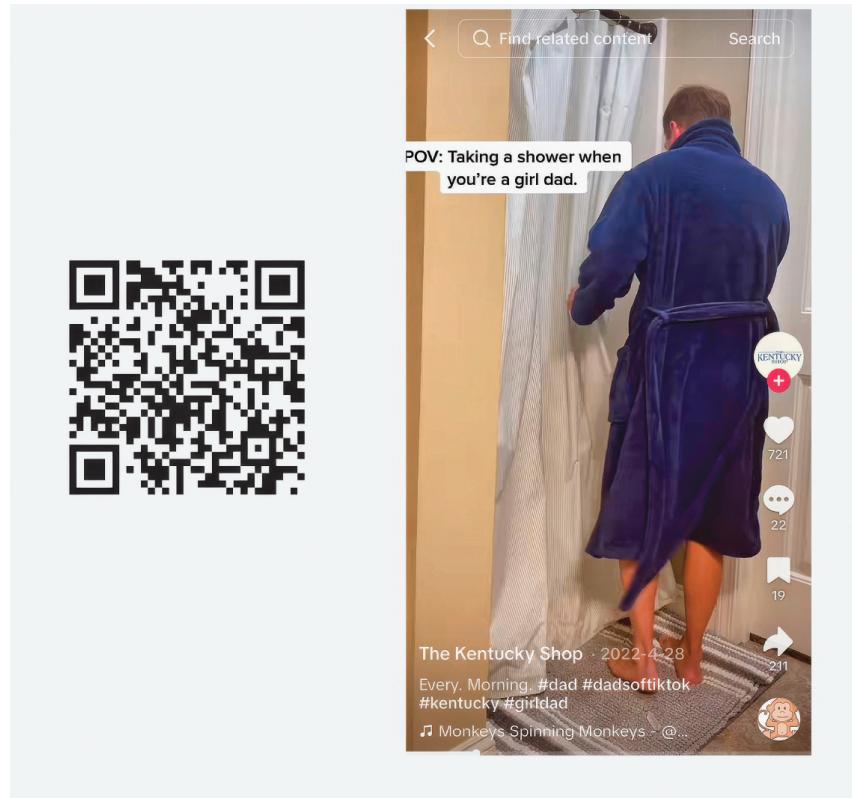
2. Your creative format (such as filming a TikTok video with “pov: you’re a girl dad” in the title), and
3. Platform features you want to use (such as TikTok’s content creation tools to type out the title in-app, as opposed to adding it through a different video editing software).

If you click on some of the videos titled “pov: you’re a girl dad” from the search results in the above images you might notice many of them have a similar style. At the time of writing, many of them feature dads with their wives and daughters, and the camera angle alternates between them as they lip-sync parts of a song. You could decide to make a similar video; or if you’re not a dad with daughters and there’s no one in your company who can help, you could start with a different creative format. For example, in the below image you’ll find a video from an apparel shop with the title “pov: taking a shower when you’re a girl dad,” which is a short video of a guy walking into a shower and stepping over a bunch of bath care products.

Maybe you could try a few variations based on common situations that girl dads experience; some variations could tie in your kids’ clothing product in a creative way, and others could be more broadly relatable for girl dads.

Once you know *what* you want to make, you can then execute with strategic organic content principles in mind. For example, if you know you’re making a TikTok video, with SOC knowledge you’d know you need to capture attention right away in the first three seconds. This might mean your title needs to be relatable and placed at the beginning, so people know right away what the video is about. You might also add certain camera angles, cuts, and movements in the early part of the video to keep people watching. If you’re making the same video for Snapchat, SOC would look different; maybe you change the title to make it more relatable for young people as opposed to dads and add it in-app in Snapchat’s native style. Please note: Snapchat has not aged up in its content platform in the way TikTok has. I know many of you reading this probably have Snapchat and TikTok in the same place demographic-wise, but they’re considerably different. The consumption on TikTok has aged up far more in the directions we’ve seen historically from Facebook and Instagram, while Snapchat, because it’s used more as a messaging platform for the youth, has

stayed quite young. Thus, the people we're targeting in the content part of Snapchat Spotlight and Discover skew younger.



If a piece of content you post resonates (which you can measure based on how many views it gets compared to the average on your account, the type of engagement it gets, how many sales you get as a result of posting it organically, or other indicators), the next step is to amplify it. If the girl dad video hit, that means you now have a piece of content that has proven to work. You could amplify it through an ad on TikTok, for example. You could repurpose the piece of content into a Facebook ad, potentially layer on some ad targeting (such as men in the US who are parents of preschoolers ages three to five), and see if it resonates there too. You could use tools like TikTok Creator Marketplace or YouTube BrandConnect to partner with influencers in the “parenting” category, who could take the learnings from your organic content success and build on it with similar content advertising your products.

Depending on your resources, you could also create more broadly relatable, “modern commercials” using the learnings from your strategic

organic content. Maybe you posted twenty-five different videos with relatable scenarios for girl dads similar to the examples above, such as “pov: you’re a girl dad getting ready in the morning,” “pov: you’re a girl dad coming back from work,” “pov: you’re a girl dad watching the game,” and more. If you noticed three or four of those get more traction than the rest, you could build those out into a funny skit made for increased distribution that’s geared toward a broader audience of parents, for example, with direct-response elements like a QR code at the end to drive traffic to your site. You could also make a different version of the same video sending people to the URL that’s in your account (such as, driving to a “link in bio” on Instagram) instead of a QR code, as an alternative, lower-friction approach to drive traffic to your URL.

Contextual versions of that video could go on YouTube as well as other platforms, depending on the length of the skit along with other SOC and PAC elements. You could amplify it further through YouTube pre-roll ads targeted at “in-market audiences” related to kids’ clothing (Google’s way of identifying people who are in-market to purchase). You could run it as a commercial on over-the-top (OTT) streaming services like Hulu, connected TV devices like Roku, or free ad-supported streaming television (FAST) channels like Pluto TV. Although detailed targeting capabilities on these platforms are still being developed, and your cost per thousand impressions (CPMs) might be higher than on social media, you can spend with a little more confidence knowing that your content has been validated already. One of the key characteristics of this form of advertising is to use social media for both quantitative and qualitative insights on actual consumer beliefs around your creative, therefore mitigating the risk when you take it to bigger and more expensive formats and distributions.

Throughout the entire process, you’ll be reading the comments on every one of your posts and paying close attention to consumer behavior across your cohort segmentations. This level of listening is what I call post-creative strategy. These are the insights that help make your next piece of content even better than your last. For example, reading the comments could help you pick up on inside jokes that only girl dads would get, which could then lead to a new piece of SOC. It could help you uncover new cohorts you may not have considered; maybe you notice *daughters* of girl dads leaving comments about how much they relate to those videos. Maybe you realize they’re the ones driving some of the above-average distribution

of your videos by sending it to their dads. You can add them to your cohort list, do research on the content they like to consume, post a few pieces of SOC for them made for shareability, and go through the rest of the process as needed. You might even notice some comments that spark ideas for new products, collaborations with other brands, partnerships with certain influencers, or lead to new terminology/slang that you use in your copywriting in future posts.

Makes sense?

The same framework works for large brands too. Let's take a different example—say you're leading marketing for a national brand in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) space, and you want to drive in-store sales. You want more customers to walk into places like Kroger and Walmart and buy your product off the shelf. How would you use this framework to do that?

You could start by looking at your business objectives to determine your cohort categories.

Based on the store locations your brand is in, you could narrow in on areas that have strong potential for sales growth (such as areas where your brand isn't as developed but your category is established with high demand, and areas where you have strong distribution). Depending on your business, there may be other factors you consider as well, but the main thing is to find the areas where you're most likely to get the highest sales increase for your marketing investment.

Then you can break down who you're trying to reach at a more granular level. If you're selling environmentally friendly cleaning products, maybe you make content for 25–29-year-old women in Los Angeles interested in sustainability; maybe you make content for 45–50-year-old moms in Chattanooga who wear sustainable clothing. You could do the same across all your key store locations. Cohorts could be informed by your existing sales data in each region, such as who's buying your products, how much potential you have in each market to get more of those customers, or if you need to win over a different demographic segment.

Once you have 20, 30, 40+ consumer segmentations, you can then go into each advertising platform and start getting a feel for the creative units and content formats that these groups want to consume. You can gather PAC insights to help inform what “consumer centric” content actually looks like. Just like how we searched “girl dad” on TikTok and Facebook Reels in

the prior example, you could search things like “sustainable fashion” or “Chattanooga parents” and see what pops up. You can see what cultural references different groups are using, what songs they’re listening to, and gather other information you can then use to make strategic organic content.

A lot of Fortune 500 brands struggle with this because of their own internal, subjective interpretations of what “quality” content looks like. Many of them overly stick to their “brand guidelines” and make content that subjectively fits the brand’s persona, instead of what people want to consume. Companies are convinced that it’s not “on brand” to post content with different fonts, colors, thumbnails, and product use cases, but the reality is, these restrictions just make their content less interesting. Brands should think about how they can convey different messages to different people instead of trying to force the same formats and messaging in all their ads. People will only consider buying something if it means something to them. The only way to make a brand meaningful is to make it relevant to as many different people as possible. I call this being “boardroom centric” versus being “consumer centric.” It’s the biggest issue facing the biggest brands in the world today. Until the past is debated more properly through a contemporary consumer behavior lens, the biggest brands in the world will continue to lose market share to many of the brands that are going to be started by the people who read this book.

Once you’re making SOC for your consumer segments, next is constantly paying attention to your analytics and your comments to see which ones are hitting. If you’re targeting 45–50-year-old moms in Los Angeles interested in sustainable clothing, you could make a video for them, add a Los Angeles location tag, make city-specific references in your video, and your content may actually get organically distributed to users in the city.

Next comes amplification. If the North Star for your CPG brand is to get more households to buy your product, one option (out of many) is to turn your overperforming organic content into ads on Facebook and Instagram with the goal of maximizing reach. You could target 45–50-year-old moms interested in sustainable clothing within a five-mile radius of the store that carries your product. If your goal is more reach, the platform will show your ads to as many people as possible within your designated target (at the time of writing). If your content already resonated with that group organically, there’s potentially less risk of missing the mark when you

amplify the content with a goal like reach. In your ad content, you could incentivize people to go to the store, and even take photos and share them on their own socials with a hashtag so you can use that for additional content.

Media dollars especially matter in situations like this when you're trying to get sales with customers in a specific local area because your organic content may not reach people within the city alone, so targeting your overperforming content within your select local regions becomes especially important.

This new way of running media is based on actual consumer intent—instead of relying on the subjective opinions of internal decision makers to make important media buying decisions, you can use consumer data from both organic and paid social media to drive some of your more expensive, higher-produced ad campaigns.

In this specific scenario, you could also potentially go on Instagram, type in each of your store locations in the search bar, scroll through top posts in the area, and find local influencers whom you can pay to do meet-and-greets at your stores (assuming the retailer would allow you to do that, which many don't).

Based on the content that's resonating in organic, paid social, and influencer campaigns, you can turn those into higher-production, modern commercials on OTT and CTV (connected TV) devices targeting your store location zip codes, outdoor media near your stores, or traditional television if you're buying remnant inventory and cost makes sense.

With Roku and Instacart's recent partnership before this writing, CPG brands can run ads on Roku and see whether people bought on Instacart after seeing the ad. With platforms like the Trade Desk, brands can buy premium inventory on major networks and streaming services, and even use first-party data (information collected from your customer base or subscribers) for more precise targeting. With these modern-day ad platforms, you can use consumer insights to make commercials with direct-response focus that people actually want to watch. You can build brand and sales at the same time.

When it comes to attribution, you can look at actual sales reports from your stores to see whether your strategy worked. You can look at incremental sales numbers of the stores in locations you made content for and compare them against other stores that you didn't drive foot traffic to. If

you keep other variables constant (that is, you don't drive sales through discounts and you don't change your product's placement in the stores), then you'll know whether building brand and relevance is leading to sales instead of relying on brand lift studies or other "proxy reports."

Let's take another example. This time, say you're running a local arts nonprofit, and every summer you put on a series of shows in your small town featuring artwork done by kids in the area. Your goal is to drive more donations, and you don't have money or resources. How would you get more donors?

When you don't have a lot of time or content creation resources, the biggest thing to do is set up a system where you record long-form content that can then be chopped up into clips that you can post across platforms. For a lot of people, starting a weekly podcast is the most practical way to do that. In this situation, the number one thing is to film the art shows from as many angles as possible because that will be the footage that you use for your advertising content. If the show is open for a few hours and people are just walking through, you'd want to walk out of there knowing that you have 40, 50, 70+ moments that you can use for content. Remember, you don't need a high-budget super camera from Hollywood—there are plenty of cameras that can get the job done, including the one on your phone.

During the show, it's important for the founder or someone else from the organization to go around and interview people, asking questions that have potential to overperform as social media content. This is where understanding cohort segments becomes valuable. If you know that your most common donors are 40–50-year-old parents living in your town, then maybe you can interview those kinds of people as they're walking through the show or ask questions that are interesting to that demographic. When you postproduce that content and post those clips across platforms, other 40–50-year-old parents in your area may feel more affinity toward your organization when they see people who look like them right away in the first three seconds of the video (potentially people they even know).

There are two main reasons for interviewing people at the show: 1) It saves you time, so you can rely on the show footage for content rather than coming up with new ideas on your own, and 2) if you scroll through your feeds across social, chances are you'll see some clips where two people are doing Q&A with one another out in public. These "street interviews" can be

appealing because they come off as authentic and real, and this creative format may get more distribution as a result.

As you're asking questions, think of what you can ask that the broader public may be interested in. Instead of just asking "Did you have a good time here?" or "What was your favorite part of the show?" (which can still be useful to gather testimonials and reviews), also ask questions about what their favorite memory was from their own art class growing up. Ask about a funny story that happened, or their "art nightmare" from school. Ask fun questions like "What color paint are you and why?" Ask questions that could lead to greater distribution, ones that get more organic reach than your standard pieces of content.

This kind of relatable content could do well across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, X (Twitter), YouTube Shorts, LinkedIn, and YouTube long form. When you post-edit the footage for each platform, that's where SOC and PAC knowledge come into play. Maybe you connect with a bunch of parents from your town on LinkedIn and post videos from your personal profile; if you believe that they're likely donors, then connecting with them on LinkedIn would make it more likely that they'll see your posts.

As you're editing with SOC in mind, you could try a few different variations of your videos: Some clips could start off with a fun question in the first three seconds, like "What was the craziest story from art class growing up?" If the person being interviewed gave a wild response, you could do another version of the video where you start with their answer instead of your question, post both versions across platforms (tweaking the copy for each platform so it's contextual), and gather insights on what worked and what didn't. If one version did overperform your averages on Facebook Reels but underperformed on YouTube, then you could dig into the analytics and comments and start thinking about why.

For nonprofits specifically, it's worth considering how direct you want to be with asking for donations in your organic content. Maybe 50 percent of your content could be about building general awareness around what your organization does (which would lead to people clicking into your profile and visiting your donation page on their own), and 50 percent of your content could literally ask for donations directly in the copy or in the last few frames of your video. Every nonprofit should play with their own ratios here, but no one should be 100 percent in either direction.

In this scenario, if you've been getting 50 to 100 views on your Instagram account on average over the previous months of posting organically, but three of your new clips from the show got 400 to 500 views each, then you can consider amplifying those with paid advertising. You could spend \$100 on three clips and run them as Instagram video ads with a goal of driving donations (with your copy asking people to donate in a very direct way). You could target them against everyone in the ten-mile radius of your town and rely on the algorithm to find the people most likely to convert.

Does this all feel like a lot to consider so far?

Between developing cohorts, making strategic organic content, applying insights about platforms and culture, creating modern-day commercials, learning amplification strategies, and doing post-creative strategy, I have empathy for how it can seem like a lot. The problem is that this is the reality of what it takes to be successful in the modern advertising environment.

So, where should you start? If you're in a full-time job right now and you want to build a business around your passion for cooking, what's step one?

First, I think everybody gets too caught up in trying to boil the ocean. As you continue reading this book, understand that you shouldn't have all of this figured out at once. Long before you can dunk a basketball, you must learn how to walk and not shit your pants.

As you go through this book start to finish, think about what comes most naturally to you and which skills you're most interested in developing. If you're good at staying tapped into cultural trends, then start there. Even if your videos aren't strategically produced with platform nuances in mind, they'll still do decent if you're making smart cultural references. If you're a little more type A and you love learning about strategy (such as what the first three seconds of your video should look like, or optimizing your video based on watch-time analytics and retention graphs), then start there.

If you want to quit your full-time job to pursue your passion for cooking, the first thing I would do is just start making food content. Take as much as you can from this book and implement it. After posting consistently (multiple times a day for several weeks or months), then you can start challenging yourself to incorporate more elements and variables that you hadn't before.

Think of it like working out. When you first start working out, maybe you just want to get your stamina up on the treadmill. Then you start working on your muscles with the lowest weight that you can lift. As you keep going, you can start doing more challenging workouts with more weight. But in the early days, you just have to get yourself to the gym.

It's no different when it comes to being a prolific content creator and advertiser. Just start.

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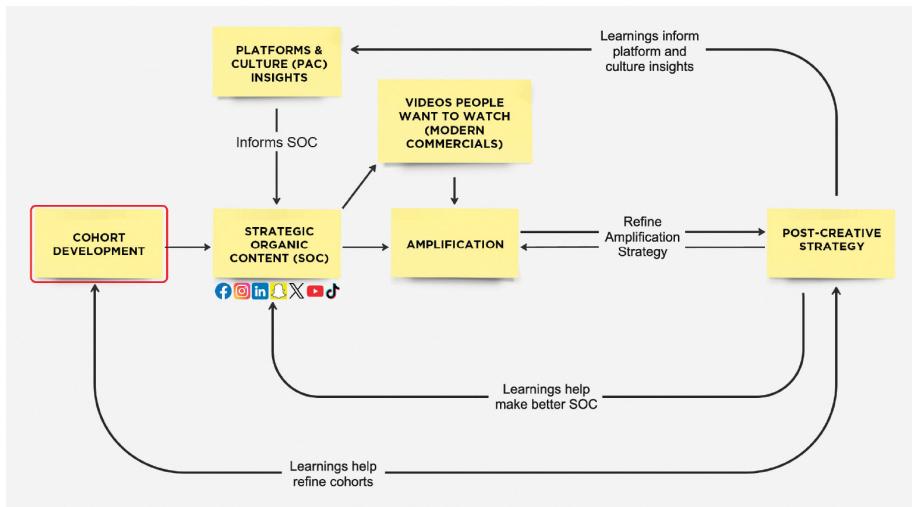
Part 3

The Core Variables

Cohort Development: Defining Who You Want to Reach

Before you make a piece of content or any ad, the most important question to ask yourself is “Why am I making this?” That’s why cohort development is the step that we start with.

Cohorts are labels that describe any current customers or clients, potential customers or clients, and give you a framework for what content to create. This way, instead of serving a single message to a mass audience, you can make content that’s relevant to each individual cohort. If you were serving ice cream to a large crowd, you wouldn’t just give everybody vanilla, because people like different flavors. Cohort development is about defining different audience segments, so you know what “flavors” to serve them.



When brands make commercials for traditional television, it's hard to make them with specific cohorts in mind because the network's audience is usually very broad. On social platforms, however, we can make content for a variety of different cohorts because contemporary interest-graph-driven algorithms will serve it to whoever wants to watch it. We can create brand relevance through that content, and potentially also use insights from it to inform traditional TV commercials, outdoor media campaigns, or other contemporary marketing efforts—instead of the other way around (that is, making generic TV commercials for a broad viewership, and using those same assets for social media).

A few things to consider when defining your cohorts are:

1. Define cohorts with “teeth.”

For example, instead of 18–35-year-old males, what if you made content for 18–22-year-old males living in New York who are into basketball? Instead of 20–35-year-old professionals, what if you made content for 25–30-year-old females in LA making over \$75,000 a year? Instead of 30–45-year-old moms, what if you made content for 40–45-year-old moms in Singapore who have an affinity to high fashion? I call these “cohorts with teeth”—in other words, specific segmentations that give you the opportunity to create more relevant content. A twenty-one-year-old guy in New York who's into basketball will respond to a very different piece of creative than a twenty-year-old guy in Tennessee who goes hiking every weekend. Grouping them

both into the bucket of 18–35-year-old males doesn’t give as big an opportunity to make them care about your brand or business.

This especially applies to large brands that are at national scale that need every human being to know about them. Take an iconic brand like Nike, for example. Advertisers may think everyone associates Nike with “Just Do It,” but that’s not true. Some people buy their sneakers because of the brand’s association with street culture. Some people buy it because they’re fans of Virgil Abloh. Others buy from the brand because they like to go to the outlet store thirty minutes away from their city in a rural suburb and get a good deal on sweatpants. Brands can have different meanings for different people; defining cohorts with teeth can help you achieve that.

2. Think of your cohorts like an “accordion.”

If you have a retail store that sells primarily to a female customer base, you might initially think that your cohort segments would all be women. But after putting out ten to twenty pieces of content, maybe you notice in the comments that husbands of female shoppers are secretly excited about being dragged along to your store. With that observation, you could make content for them with the hypothesis that maybe they’ll share it with their wives and they’ll both feel fonder toward your store as a result. You could then define a new cohort with “teeth” that represents husbands of your female shoppers.

Another example: Maybe you put out a few pieces of content aimed at 18–22-year-old males into basketball in New York, but you notice in the comments that you’re getting meaningful engagement from people referencing the Knicks. You might decide to tweak that cohort to 18–22-year-old male Knicks fans in New York. Or you might look at the analytics for the post and notice that it’s being served in a whole different city altogether, which means you can then hypothesize why the piece of content resonated more broadly. Based on actual results and engagement from your pieces of content, you can add, remove, or adjust your segmentations as needed.

Since your cohorts will always be shrinking, expanding, and changing based on your post-creative strategy insights from the comments (which I’ll explore in more detail later), I like to think of them as an accordion. In fact, it’s quite common for us at VaynerMedia to eliminate some cohorts we’re

working with altogether after one to four months or so and stand up two to four other new cohorts that came from insights from the comments section.

3. Consider the business objectives of your company.

Look at consumer segments that you've historically done well with, or areas where you intuitively know you need to grow. If "moms 27–35 in Salt Lake City" have bought from you repeatedly, then maybe you want to double down on that and go even narrower within that segment: such as moms 27–35 in Salt Lake City who are into yoga, or high-income moms who have a house in Park City, Utah.

If you believe your product should be doing better with certain consumer segmentations, you can lean into those too.

Let's say you're a content creator who does card tricks, and you have ambitions to sell out a show in Las Vegas one day. Say your current audience consists of young males. In this case, you'd need to create cohorts like 40–46-year-old moms in Chicago. Why? Because that will dictate the ideation of your content and will help you make different stuff that will resonate with different people. If you know you're making content for 40–46-year-old moms in Chicago with teenage sons, the content you're going to make will attempt to appeal to that mom as opposed to the algorithm, what you think is the viral trend of the moment, or what your friends and other young men are going to like. It completely changes the starting point for the ideation of your creative, therefore allowing your brand to broaden. Now you'd be trying to find a mom in a mall to do a magic trick for, and after the act, you could ask a quick question like "Just an extra minute for my TikTok, what's the toughest thing about raising a son?" That piece of content might help new audiences find you and become interested in you.

4. Define a high volume of cohorts.

Many brands only define a handful of broad cohorts, which often results in generic creative that isn't meaningful to the audience that's consuming. The more cohorts you define, the more opportunities you have to create relevance for your business or brand. Based on results from your content, you can always add or remove cohorts.

One important note, especially for high-end brands in the luxury category, is that making content for more people doesn't mean you have to

compromise on your production value. Just because your photo shoot or video shoot was done on a cattle ranch because you're trying to win with that demographic doesn't mean that you're compromising the quality of the content or the quality of your product. For luxury brands specifically, I would argue that they could benefit from a little bit more casual content scattered throughout to make them more approachable and humbler. That being said, I'm incredibly empathetic after being in boardrooms with many of the biggest luxury brands in the world that that's not going to happen anytime soon. That's unfortunate because what luxury brands have done over the last twenty years with streetwear brand collaborations has broadened their appeal dramatically; their narrow focus on the subjective opinions on the production value of their content on social media is limiting their opportunity to grow their business. Very few people will be turned off by their "human" content, and many more will finally consider buying from them because the content will feel more relevant and approachable to them.

When you make content for a variety of different cohorts, you're trading on the context, not the production value. This is something a lot of high-end brands struggle with; as a whole, they don't do as much content with a wide range of consumer segments because they think it compromises the brand. In reality, I think it has a lot more to do with the internal politics at the organizations, and the desire of creative directors to stay in control—not that it's an impossible task from the brand's standpoint.

It's true that sometimes you need to say "no" to making certain types of content to preserve a brand. I value "no" very much, but when you only say "yes" four out of four thousand times, your balance is off. Everything's best in balance. The social media creative conversation with luxury brands is very clear to me: They are truly treating it like fashion shows and *Vogue* print ads, and they're missing a lot of opportunities.

5. The creative you produce could hit multiple cohorts.

The methodology here isn't always linear. Sometimes you might think of a piece of content you want to try out that doesn't clearly fall into one cohort or might fall into multiple. You might have a piece of content that you just really want to make, or an idea that multiple different cohorts might be interested in. Cohort labels are just hypotheses that you can come back to

and refine later—don’t be crippled by content that could fall into multiple buckets.

6. Consider (but don’t overthink) media addressability.

Media addressability (the total number of people you can reach in your ad targeting through paid advertising) is another factor to consider when defining who you want to make creative for. As you make content that overperforms organically, you might want to amplify some down the road and run them as paid social media ads; in that case, how would you target them?

As platform algorithms continue to evolve, they continue to get better at automatically serving your ads to the best possible cohorts based on who they think will engage with it. You might think that you’re trying to reach 18–22-year-old males in Missouri who are interested in gaming, but platforms might pick up on the fact that you’re getting higher watch time and conversion from a different segment that you may not have expected and serve your ads to them instead. This can happen both in organic content as well as paid advertising. Remember—even though you’re creating all these narrow cohorts, when you’re posting organically, you wouldn’t be manually targeting them through the platform anyway. You’d be relying on the algorithm to help you find the right audience.

Also, to remind you, a big reason to define cohorts with teeth in the first place is to give you a strong framework for creative ideation to make unique content. It’s not that you’re *only* going to reach that audience and no one else. By defining narrow cohorts, your content is going to be more unique, sharper, more specific, and more relatable to different people. Too many people today make too much generic content. Too much of the same stuff. By going narrow, you win.

Let’s say you have a local accounting firm, and you noticed a lot of sign-ups on your website after you posted a video titled “5 things business owners don’t know about taxes” on your Facebook page. When you amplify the video as a paid ad, instead of targeting “business owners” in your town, you could target everyone in your town and surrounding towns, while trusting that the algorithm will optimize distribution and show your ad to the right people who will sign up on your website. The creative would remain the same—your content would still technically be geared toward

business owners even though your targeting is broader. That way, you give yourself room for serendipity—you might find that people who have full-time jobs with side hustles are also watching your ad and signing up. Facebook might identify any number of variations of cohorts that want to consume your ad—cohorts that you might not have expected.

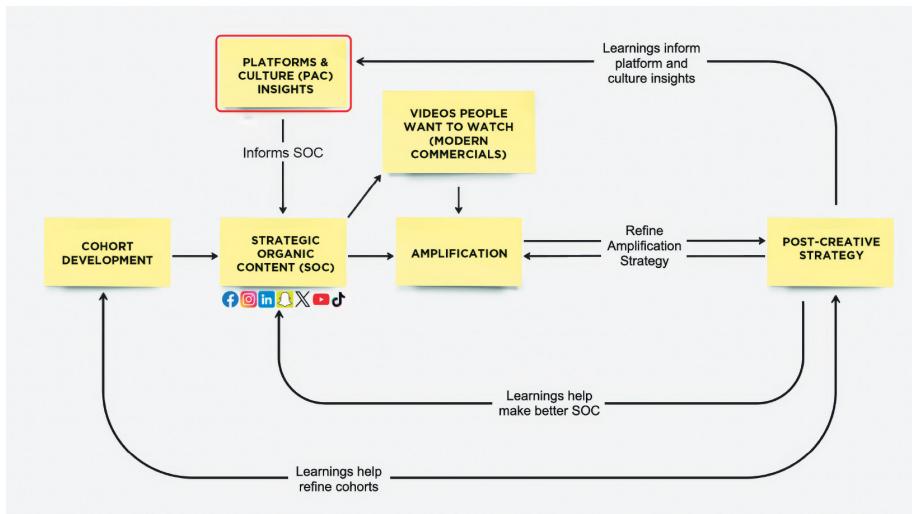
However, there's no universal right answer on whether your media targeting should be narrow or broad. Depending on the platform, you could try both; for example, if you have a B2B SaaS (software as a service) company, you might define one of your cohorts as chief information officers at the specific companies you're trying to reach. You can make content specifically for those organizations, and use LinkedIn to run ads to executives at those companies with very specific, narrow targeting. There might also be scenarios when you want to target people within your own audience, such as people from your customer database or everyone who watched a certain percentage of an Instagram video.

As we'll explore later in the "Amplification" section, different platforms have different levels of sophistication in their algorithm, which also plays a role here.

7. Consider subcultures, stages of life people are at, affinities and passions, psychographics, cultural trends, and more.

There are many ways to define cohorts—age, geographic location, and interests are just a few of the many factors to consider. What about millennial parents working from home and feeling burnt-out? What about graduating college students feeling anxious about entering the “real world”? What about 40–50-year-olds who reached a breaking point with their health and are committed to working out more? What about the emerging trends around young people not drinking alcohol and preferring mocktails instead? This is where knowledge of cultural trends is required.

Platforms and Culture (PAC): The New Requirement for Your Advertising Knowledge



PAC refers to the knowledge that helps you make better, more strategic organic content. Let's break down both sides of it, starting with culture:

The “culture” side of “platforms and culture” can help you define your cohorts, make relevant creative for them, and help inform your platform strategy. When I say culture, I don’t just mean what’s popular and trending now in the urban hip-hop world or what the “kids are into.” I mean, do you know how to speak to the narrow cohorts you’re trying to reach? Do you know how to speak to, say, 40–47-year-old men living in the Midwest who like hunting and fishing? Do you know what trends they’re paying attention to? Do you know their common behaviors as consumers? Do you know how to get them to care about what you’re selling?

If you were running a billboard ad campaign, this would mean paying attention to what’s happening in the town you’re in, and seeing how you can incorporate those nuances into the ad. In the world of 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s TV commercials, that meant paying attention to broad consumer interests (such as baseball) and incorporating those references in the commercial. On social, since we can make a high volume of content for low (or zero) cost for a variety of different cohorts, we need to have a nuanced understanding of what they’re all paying attention to in culture.

People often misunderstand this—staying in tune with culture doesn’t mean you need to dance on TikTok. If you’re a B2B IT hardware company, you don’t necessarily have to force a Drake reference into your content (or you could; I’m weirdly into that sort of thing as a tactic to experiment with). It’s more about understanding what’s culturally relevant to your target

audience. Maybe it's an old TV show they grew up watching in the 1980s or '90s. Maybe it's tennis or golf or a hobby they've picked up. Maybe it's a consumer behavior trend in your industry. Or maybe it is a trending meme or a pop culture reference that's circulating around the internet.

By the way, one observation I see among some well-intentioned marketers and businesspeople is that they think the people who can make content relevant to a specific cohort are the people who look like the consumer cohorts. I don't think that's necessarily true. I don't think a forty-year-old woman is the only type of person who knows how to sell to other forty-year-old women. Similarly, I don't think twenty-two-year-olds are necessarily "better" at social media strategy than fifty-year-olds just because they "grew up with it." I understand these points of view, but I hope you consider this alternative perspective—especially if you're looking to build your own marketing team.

To gain insight into culture, you must pay attention to what I call "signals." Signals are any data points or information that give an indication of what's relevant to different consumer groups. Signals could take many forms, including:

- A consumer behavior or statistic
- Something a celebrity did
- Something an influencer did within cohorts you're looking at
- News articles
- Emerging trends on advertising platforms or sites like Google Trends
- Tweets, articles, or other content that sparks debate
- Research statistics about relevant topics
- Historic events

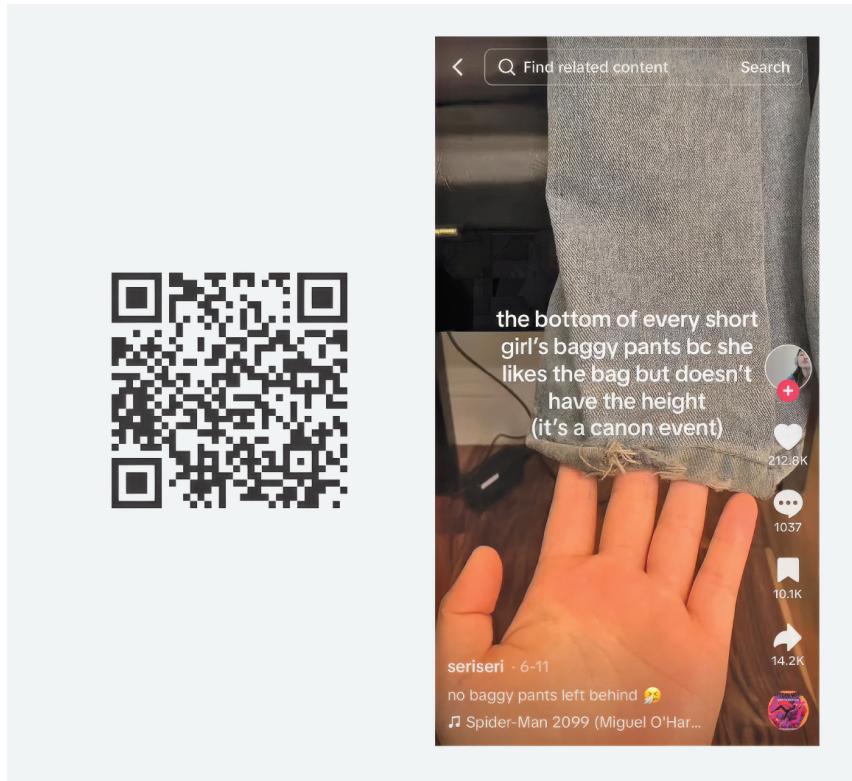
And much, much, much more.

For example, as I'm writing this there's a TikTok trend where people refer to "canon events," inspired by the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. Canon events refer to moments that everyone has to experience for themselves to build character or learn a life lesson. Here's an example from a creator:

In this case, if you came across this trend, you could use it as an opportunity to showcase how well you understand your cohorts. What are

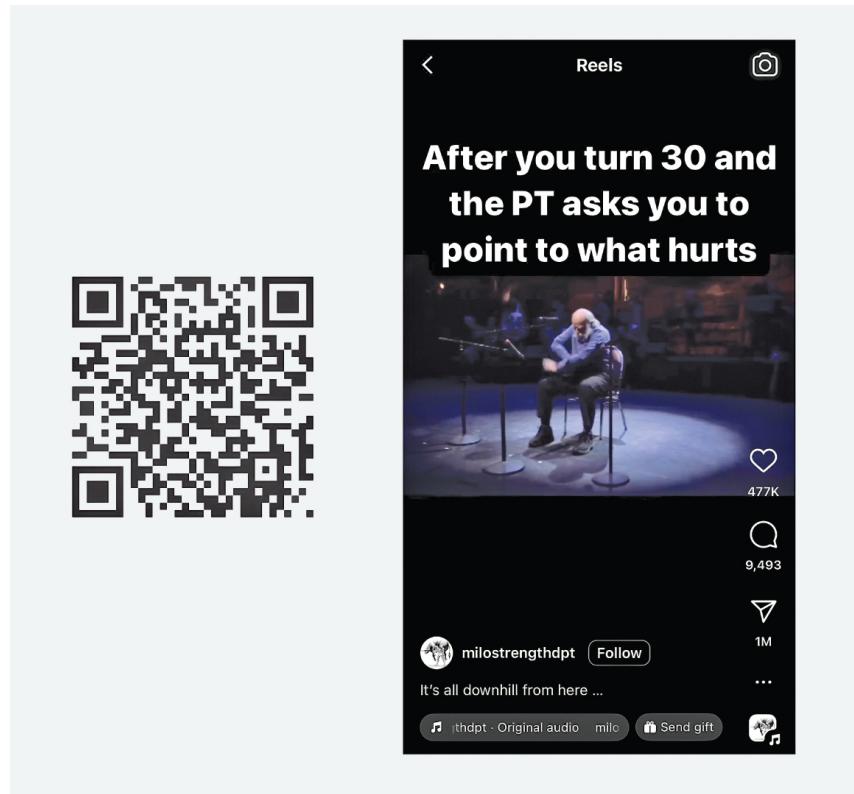
the key life events for the people you're trying to reach? What are the most common behaviors that people can relate to? Can you weave in your product or service in a way that's authentic?

Another cultural observation you might have noticed based on news articles is that there's a growing number of people doing flexible gig work. As work moves beyond nine-to-five for a lot of people, they may have more time during the day to browse social. You could use that data point to try out different platform strategies—maybe it's a sign that people have more time throughout the day, which means you could try posting at midday times like 10 a.m.–2 p.m. and compare that to other time slots.



As we'll cover more in the Post-Creative Strategy section, you might find trending memes, videos, or audio on various platforms that you can adapt into your content when you're scrolling through content yourself. Here's a physical therapist who layered on his own messaging over a popular video of hambone artist Steve Hickman. The video received 26.5 million views, at the time of writing.

Notice how the headline of the text here directly calls out a cohort, people over thirty who are starting to feel the effects of their lifestyle on their bodies: Adding titles that speak directly to your cohort group and calls them out literally is a good way to capture attention and make it relevant in the first few seconds.



By the way, when layering your content over memes, remember two things: 1) Give credit to the original poster in the copy (or the person featured in the video) to the best of your ability, and 2) layer on your own branding over the video so that when it's shared, viewers have a way to associate the message to your brand. This could be your logo, your own reaction (in the form of a TikTok duet or Instagram Remix), something else.

When you're looking into cultural trends, think of authentic ways that your brand can cross over and participate. Wendy's did a good job here with showcasing a photo of their Strawberry Frosty and calling it "Straw Barbie Frosty" in the copy of the tweet, given all the hype around Barbie in summer 2023 (see below).

If you're a B2B organization or an executive, you can pay attention to news trends in your industry or current events related to your area of expertise that you can talk about. You can use platforms to gather these events too—for example, you can tap into LinkedIn's suggested searches to see what people are searching on the platform, and their "news" section to see what people on the platform are talking about that could be relevant to your field.



A lot of executives, service providers, and others are sometimes scared to tap into cultural trends or make content in general because they don't want their clients to take them less seriously. Many are worried about coming off as too "gimmicky," "cringey," or like "just another content creator" if they start using trending creative formats.

I'm passionate about this, because I personally have gone in directions with my personal content that others have been skeptical about. People have looked at me over the years and wondered, "Why is he talking about that?" "Why is he putting out content about this?" People wonder if I'm hurting myself somehow by speaking about certain subject matters.

The reality is, unless you're talking about something highly polarizing, most people don't give a crap. You may think you look silly by using a meme, a trending TikTok audio, or the "green screen" feature on platforms

with you talking over an article screenshot in the background. But most viewers don't think of it that way.

The number of people who will consume your culturally relevant content and think, "I don't want to work with them," is a very small percentage. On the flip side, people who would've otherwise never considered working with your law firm, your dentistry, or your nursery now consider it because you were more human. For every 1 percent of people who don't want to work with you after watching your video, maybe 5 percent will work with you, and by putting more culturally relevant content out you're giving yourself 4 percent more opportunity. What most professionals have wrong is that they think 80 percent of people will never work with them again, for every 1 percent of opportunity they might get.

But here's an important note: If you're not funny by nature, don't force it. If you aren't chill and casual, don't force it. This is a game of authenticity. If you're actually uptight and super polished, then maybe you need to stay in that zone because this strategy will leave you vulnerable if you do it from a place of inauthenticity.

Also, if you're authentically yourself, there are plenty of viewers who enjoy authentic stiff people or authentically awkward people. In fact, authentic awkward interviewers are emerging in social media as I'm writing this book.

On a similar note, I often hear from music artists who are aware about the potential of TikTok and other platforms, but they don't want to compromise on their authenticity or creativity just to get more views. They're worried that playing into trends may compromise who they are, their artistic style, and what got them to their current level in the first place.

If that's you, let me say it again: You don't need to compromise, nor do you need to make for trends and algorithms if you feel like that's not "you." Want to know why I say that? Because that's what I do. If you go look at my content on TikTok, I'm not dancing or playing into trends 24/7. What I do is put out content at scale every single day across all platforms on topics I want to be talking about, and things I'm passionate about.

That said, I'm always keeping an eye on trends and finding authentic places where I feel comfortable integrating them into my day-to-day content. I continue to challenge myself to be better at that.

For the artists in the scenario above, even though you don't need to compromise, realize you can't exist in a 2024 world and beyond while

thinking that the “music is going to speak for itself.” Record companies and audiences alike are looking for artists on social networks. It is what it is. You can be mad about it—guess what, there were artists who were mad that *TRL* was the most important platform. There were artists who were mad that disc jockeys in certain radio stations were the most important. The reality is, there are always platforms of the time that bring the most exposure for commercial success. If you’re an artist or a creative person, that’s good news: Social networks are the most merit-based system ever. The DJ doesn’t have to like you, the executives at MTV don’t have to like you, Carson Daly doesn’t have to like you; the world just has to like you.

But sitting at home and hoping that you can just put out music on Spotify and SoundCloud and call it a day is just not the reality of the record business in the modern world.

Ask yourself if leaning into cultural trends is truly inauthentic for you, or if you’re just scared to go there from an insecurity standpoint. You need to challenge yourself to put the concepts from this book into practice while being authentic—that applies to everyone from content creators to small businesses to large brands.

There was a time when brands used to drive culture through their ads—in the days when people watched TV commercials at scale, Nike’s “Just Do It” and Wendy’s “Where’s the Beef?” ad from 1984 were memorable, culture-defining moments. Today, it rarely happens. Of course, some of the biggest brands in the world manage to drive culture through widely used products. LVMH and Apple have products that play a key role in many people’s lives and even their identities. Occasionally brands will drive culture through a properly executed activation at an event like the Formula 1 Miami Grand Prix. But brands rarely drive culture through their advertising because most ads feel like bland TV commercials, even when they’re posted on social media. So, consumers scroll past them.

Today, in the new social media world, brands can drive culture not only through relevant content, but also through collaborations and even developing unique collectible products.

How would a brand go about driving culture through collectible items? Here’s an example:

Start by looking at your cohorts. Who are you trying to reach? If you’re trying to reach 16–20-year-old young males to buy your product, have you thought about signing a deal with the most famous Twitch gamers to create

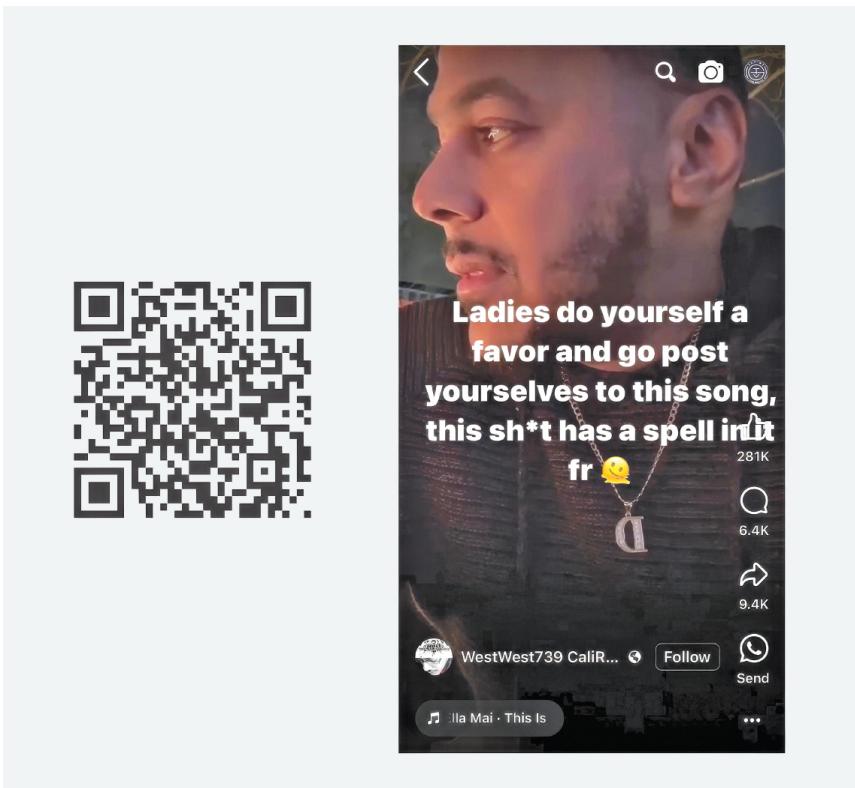
their rookie cards? If you made a set of cards similar to what Capri Sun did with Nickelodeon in 1991 and 1992 (clearly with the goal of building relevance for their Capri Sun juice), and put them into your product packaging, you'd increase the likelihood that fans of those Twitch gamers would buy your product. You'd also broaden the product's appeal to collectors who want to buy cards of famous cultural figures today—these are individuals who may buy your product just to get the cards, use your product as a result, and purchase more later because they became fans of the product itself. Start with cohorts. Understand the cultural trends that cohort is paying attention to. Make a related collectible. That could be a sneaker collaboration, a collectible toy, a one-off comic book, a collectible pin, a magnet, a key chain, or even a digital collectible like a non-fungible token (NFT).

Now that I've talked a bit about the culture side of PAC, let's get into the P: platforms.

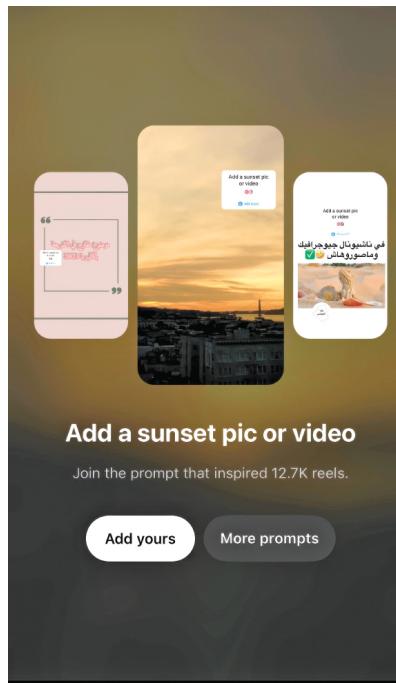
When you gain platform knowledge, you become aware of the variety of different features that exist across TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, and X (Twitter). You also get to know how to use the different features to create more awareness, engagement, and, ultimately, sales.

For example, Facebook allows users to upload photos as replies in the comments section. Using that observation, maybe you could add CTAs (calls-to-action) in your copy on Facebook Reels, asking people to leave their own photos in the comments and build a more intimate community. When people leave a comment or engage with your post, it's a sign to the platform that people like watching or interacting with your content; since the platform wants to keep people on for longer, it's more likely that your posts will be shown to them more often in the future (or to other groups of people who may also be interested in watching). It could also be an opportunity to get user-generated content that you repost in a different format, such as resharing those images on your Facebook and Instagram stories with your message layered on top of it.

Here's how a creator generated photo replies in Facebook Reels comments using a combination of in-app music and strong text call-to-action on the video:

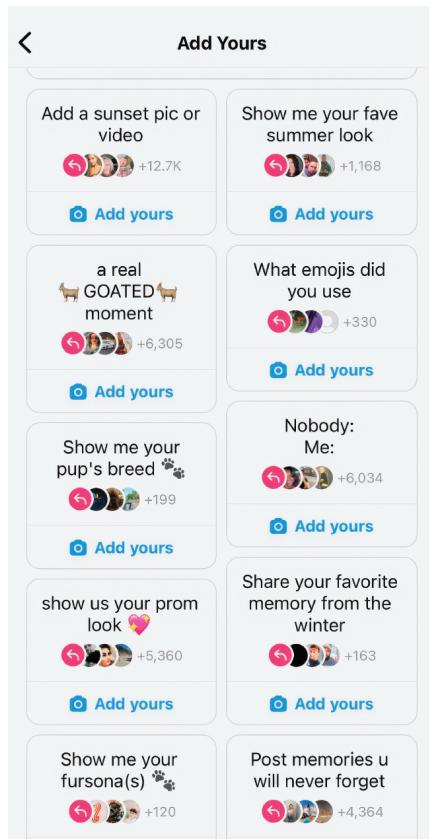


Another way to uncover popular creative formats is by paying attention to what the platform is prompting you to do. When scrolling on a platform, you might see a screen like this, prompting you to use a particular feature or try a new creative format:



Appeared in Instagram Reels tab in July 2023.

The above prompt appeared while scrolling on the Instagram Reels tab (Instagram's version of TikTok's For You page). It refers to the “Add Yours” sticker—a sticker through which users can add their own videos or pictures that relate to different generic prompts. When clicking on “more prompts” in the screen, this is what we see:



If you're scrolling and you see something like that, you could come up with a number of different hypotheses: Maybe Instagram wants more people to use the "Add Yours" sticker. Maybe Instagram will reward accounts who use that sticker with more reach and awareness. Maybe it's an indicator that they want people to use other in-app creative features.

Whether those hypotheses end up being right or wrong, it would be a smart idea to experiment with it yourself.

When you scroll through your TikTok feed, you might notice some videos that have the words "CapCut: Try this template" above the username (at the time of writing). As you begin to see more and more of these videos, you should think about why they're being surfaced more often. If you do more research, you'd find that TikTok and CapCut (a video editing app) are both owned by the same parent company, and they've been integrated with each other. CapCut can help users create content with more speed and less overwhelm. As TikTok wants more users to create content on the platform, it makes sense that they might surface more videos created using CapCut; if

you were to use CapCut templates in your TikTok videos, it might help your video's distribution. This is the thought process that's required.

Here are a few points to keep in mind to help you gain platform knowledge:

1. Take account of all the features a platform has.

At the most basic level, do you understand that you can duet and stitch videos on TikTok? Do you know that YouTube comments can link directly to a time stamp in the video? Do you know how long an Instagram Reel can be compared to a Spotlight Snap? Spend the time to play with each platform and see all that you can do.

2. Remember, the platform just wants you to stay on for longer.

Every platform just wants to keep users on for longer, which is the ultimate goal of all these features and updates. When you make content that people want to watch, consume, and engage with, you'll be rewarded with more reach. If you post a two-hour podcast interview on YouTube, it could still get a substantial amount of views and engagement for your business if that content is engaging enough. On the flip side, a short, five-second video with long, engaging text placed over it might also overindex in distribution if people are watching the video multiple times just to finish reading the text (signaling to the platform that the content might be good if people are watching repeatedly).

This is why there's no standard right answer to how long your content should be. It only matters whether people want to watch it. Sometimes people who are new to making content will think that they're "shadow-banned" by the platform if they aren't getting a lot of views—but more often than not, their content just isn't good enough, so the platform doesn't serve it to more people.

3. Pay attention to what is unique.

What kinds of features does a platform have that few to no other platforms have? For example, no other platform in this book besides Instagram lets users pin up to three comments in the comments section, at the time of writing. Also, at the time of writing, when users swipe past the last slide of

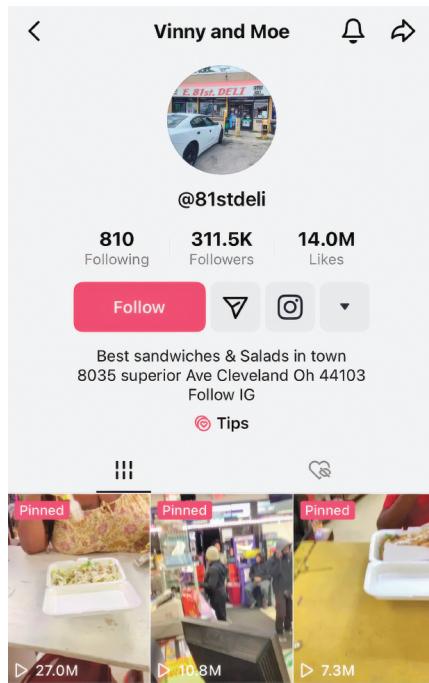
a TikTok carousel in the For You page, it leads to the poster's profile—which is different from how Instagram carousels work (they don't allow users to swipe past the last tile). Pay attention to features on a platform that you don't see anywhere else—this can help inform what your content ideation should look like. For example, maybe the call-to-action on the last tile of your Instagram carousel would be to leave a comment or share this with a friend, but on TikTok you could try a “swipe and follow me” CTA and see if that works.

4. Pay attention to what's similar across platforms.

At the time of writing, all the platforms in this book besides LinkedIn already have some version of their own video feed like TikTok's For You page. YouTube, TikTok, LinkedIn, X (Twitter), and Instagram all have a scrubbing feature so users can fast-forward into the video (Facebook currently only has it for long-form videos, not Reels). Platform similarities can also give an indication to what their goals are, where they might be headed, and what behaviors they may or may not be trying to incentivize. You might be able to even implement similar tactics across platforms if you know where the similarities are.

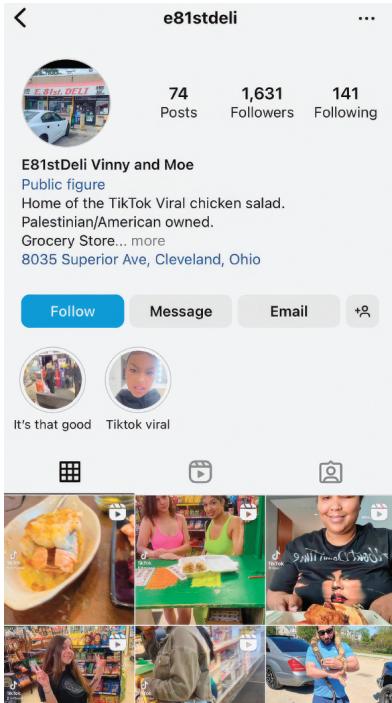
For example, 81st Street Deli does a great job of showcasing their viral TikTok videos as pinned posts on their profile, but there's a missed opportunity in doing the same on Instagram (see the following image).

On TikTok, their pinned videos feature trending food items from their menu—that way, when users land on their profile, they'll immediately see what they're known for.



@81stdeli profile on TikTok, July 2023.

However, Instagram also allows profiles to select pinned posts at the top. They could potentially pin some of those same videos (assuming they were posted contextually as Instagram Reels) or create a separate video “manifesto” of what their business is about and what content people can expect to find on the page. Another opportunity here is adding one or more links to their Instagram bio that point to areas they want to drive traffic to and utilizing Instagram’s unique “Highlights” feature. Using Highlights, they could feature popular menu items, comments, or videos from their community about those items, or the interior of their deli, to give people a more thorough overview of who they are.



@e81stdeli on Instagram, July 2023.

5. Notice how similar user behaviors show up differently on different platforms.

On LinkedIn, when a user likes or comments on a post, it will resurface the post on their connections' and followers' feeds. When a user likes or comments on an Instagram post, it doesn't directly show up in their followers' feeds again in the same way. These kinds of differences will impact how you make and distribute content. For example, maybe you could put an extra focus on creating business-or career-related discussions in your comments section on LinkedIn, given the greater distribution that comments will get you.

6. Stay up-to-date on new tests that platforms are running.

Platforms are always testing new features. Currently, YouTube is testing an AI-powered multilanguage voice-over dubbing tool. There are indications that other platforms are testing versions of AI chatbots and related features.

Paying attention to these tests might give you an indication of the direction they're heading in.

7. Consider the psychology of the user when they're on the platform.

LinkedIn started out as a job search tool many years ago and still carries that DNA—when people are browsing through LinkedIn, they're in a business and career state of mind. When those same people are browsing Facebook, they might be in the mindset of seeing what their high school and college friends are up to. When they're scrolling through TikTok, they might be in a lighthearted, casual mood. Each platform has its own context, which impacts how the piece of content is being consumed.

8. Be a practitioner, not a headline reader.

My plea is for you to *do* social media, not just read about it. Whether you're a twenty-two-year-old creator trying to build a brand around yourself, whether you're a fifty-two-year-old owner of a small business in your town, or an executive at a corporation—you have to be the practitioner. The only way to get good at this stuff is to make content, post it, and learn from it.

As you're playing around with various platforms and taking account of what features and creative units they have, you can reference this broad overview across platforms, at the time of writing:

Key Creative Units Across Platforms (at the time of writing)								
							 personal profile	 company pages
Stories	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Multi-image assets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Videos	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Live	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
In-app content creation features	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Text-only posts	Native text-based videos	In stories	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
GIFs		✓	via GIPHY	✓	via GIPHY	✓	✓	✓
Polls	✓	In stories and comments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Document uploads (PDFs)							✓	✓
Audio events					✓		✓	✓
Advertising capabilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Some details in the previous chart might still be the same at the time you're reading this, and some platforms may have added new features and things may have changed. My hope is that you use the prior chart as a guide on the kinds of things you should be noticing as you're playing with different platforms and use that knowledge to inform how you make your strategic organic content.

Now it's your turn. Take your own time to audit each platform at the time you're reading this and fill out the following chart with a pen or marker. Can you figure out what each platform's current features and capabilities are?

Worksheet: Fill this out on your own



in
personal
profile

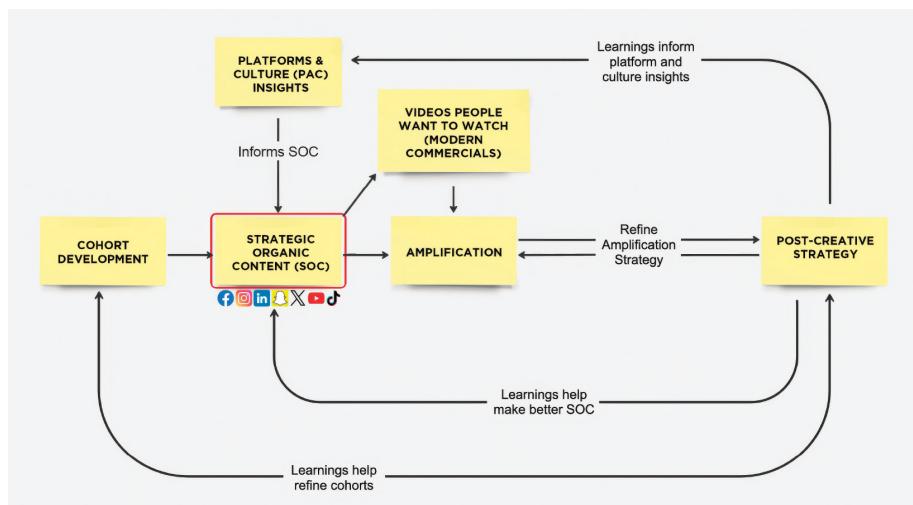
in
company
pages

Ability to share content via private messages							
Ability to share in-feed posts directly to stories							
Collaborative posts (between 2 or more accounts)							
Tagging location on a post							
Video Live							
Live video feed							
Ability to add guests on the live							
Pinned comments on live stream							
Live stream remains in-feed after it's over							
Ability to create live events natively in-app							
Carousels							
Adding audio to carousels							
Ability to share >10 images							
Ability to tag people on each tile							
Natively sharing each tile to stories							
Ability to add both images & videos to carousels							
Sending carousels in DMs							

Stand-alone Images							
Ability to add audio to images							
Ability to tag people on an image (not including tags in captions)							
Ability to add links onto in-feed images							
Videos							
Ability to post short-form videos that also surface in a separate, "For You-page style" feed (<60-sec)							
Ability to post long-form videos (>60-sec)							
Ability to add audio to videos natively in-app							
Ability to tag people on a video (not including tags in captions)							
Ability to add links directly onto videos							
Ability to record a video alongside another (i.e. duets on TikTok)							
Ability to record a video following a short snippet of another video (i.e. stitch on TikTok)							
Adding polls on videos							
Natively adding text and/or captions							
Natively adding stickers, emojis, and/or GIFs on videos							
Upload separate thumbnails to videos							

Stories							
Adding links							
Adding polls							
Adding product tags (for native shops)							
Adding lyrics to music on stories							
Natively adding stickers, emojis, and/or GIFs on stories							
Asking questions natively on stories							
Sharing tweets to stories							
Ability to record with native filters or lenses							

Strategic Organic Content (SOC): What Good Modern Advertising Looks Like



Over the next decade, the best communicators in the world will be the ones who are most talented at understanding how platforms work and understanding cultural nuances of hundreds of different consumer segmentations. PAC is the foundation of that, and SOC helps put PAC knowledge into practice.

Strategic organic content is meant to build brand, grow community, and create relevance. In the current social media landscape, it refers to the organic content that you post across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, X (Twitter), YouTube, and TikTok.

It's a framework for how to make creative that people *want* to consume—the concept applies across many forms of advertising. Advertisers on television, radio, and outdoor media also have to know what “strategic” content looks like in those mediums. Advertisers have to know what the first few seconds of their commercial should look like and sound like so that you turn around from doing the dishes and look at the television. They have to know what a call-to-action should sound like on a radio ad that people can remember as they're driving. The same concepts apply on social media; it just so happens that with the number of social platforms that exist today, there are far more variables to consider when making strategic organic content compared to a strategic billboard or a strategic television commercial.

The bottom line is, being a good advertiser on social media is harder than being a good advertiser in the traditional marketing world. This is the biggest thing that Fortune 500 companies have upside down.

Often when I look at internal teams at brands and small businesses across the board, I notice some are “going through the motions” with their social media content. Some direct-to-consumer* brands blindly want to be sales-oriented, and so that's the way they approach their creative. Other times, small business owners just delegate their social media strategy to their twenty-two-year-old niece or nephew and the owners themselves aren't evaluating it (or don't know how). Fortune 500 brands will often enforce their brand guidelines on every piece of content, which makes their content less interesting and less relevant in many cases. They tend to bring television, print, and outdoor advertising mindsets to social media platforms.

That's why I put the *S* in SOC. Your content must be strategic. If you want to build brand and grow sales, you can't just post content for the sake of posting it.

Using your cultural insights and platform knowledge, SOC is about knowing how to make content specific for LinkedIn versus Facebook versus TikTok versus every other platform. How should your videos look on each platform? What should your images and carousels look like? What

trending audio should you attach to your videos to increase watch time and shareability? What time should you post? How much copy should support it? What does the thumbnail look like? What do the first three seconds look and sound like? How do you incentivize people to hit the share button on a platform to create more awareness? SOC and PAC are about practicing creative and platform strategy at a “PhD” level.

When done properly, SOC helps you do a few things:

1. You build brand and relevance from day one.

When I talk about posting a high volume of content, one of the biggest misconceptions that people have is that I’m asking them to “spray and pray,” “test and learn,” or “throw stuff against the wall and see what sticks.” While I absolutely believe in learning from what you post, I don’t love phrases like “test and learn” because it undervalues the power of SOC. It leads some brands to treat social media as less valuable than other forms of marketing. I prefer to think about SOC as “marketing for the sake of better marketing.” You post relevant content for your specific cohorts that can build brand on their own, but with the learnings you get from producing at a high volume, you’re able to do even better marketing through your future content. That includes learnings from quantitative data and analytics, but also qualitative data from comments section insights.

I don’t want you to try to build your business based off the “lightning bolt model”—in other words, don’t spend all your time and resources on one piece of content trying to get it “right” and hoping to strike gold. Instead, try to put out four or five social media posts across each platform every day to give yourself more chances to have something hit.

The more content you’re able to put out, the better. If you’re trying to get better at tennis, practicing five days a week will improve your game more than if you practiced once a week. Each piece of content will help inform and refine your broader strategy.

This is why I always tell people to hold off on saying their strategy “isn’t working” until they’ve been putting out content for 50–100 days. You can’t just post four times on YouTube and give up because your Shorts got twenty views each.

When you’re more relevant, then you’ll be on top of mind for your customers or clients when they need what you’re selling—this helps your

sales-focused paid advertising campaigns convert more effectively at lower cost. With the way algorithms work now, relevance impacts reach; if your content is contextual and relevant to a specific cohort, then the platform will surface that content to more people within that cohort (as well as others outside the cohort who also may be interested).

The immediate goal with SOC isn't always sales, although some of your content may be more focused around your product or service than others. You'd be surprised how SOC can drive sales on its own (and definitely will help inform what your actual paid advertising campaigns should look like).

2. You can turn your best-performing content into performance ads to drive sales.

With the TikTokification of social media, every platform is moving in the direction of the interest graph—which means your content might get seventeen views if it doesn't resonate, but if it does, it might get one million regardless of the number of followers you have. If you have a piece of strategic organic content that overperforms compared to the average on your account, you have proof that people resonate with it. Then you can take the piece of content and tweak it a little. If you're a personal trainer and you have an Instagram reel that overperformed, you could tweak your copy to say something like “If you’re interested in personal training in [your city], please email me at [your email]”—and run it as an Instagram ad within a five-mile radius of your town. This way, you mitigate the risk on your paid advertising by using content that’s already been proven to work through natural social media algorithms.

3. You can make higher-production commercials with proven insights.

When brands and agencies do advertising research, it usually comes in the forms of focus groups or studying industry research reports. With the volume of content that can be put out across platforms, we can gather research data points at a higher rate than ever before. Instead of using a series of small focus groups to guess what kind of commercial we should spend hundreds of thousands of dollars making, we can collect data from SOC and see what kinds of messaging resonates.

For example, Starbucks put out this tweet highlighting a relatable scenario for part of their customer base:

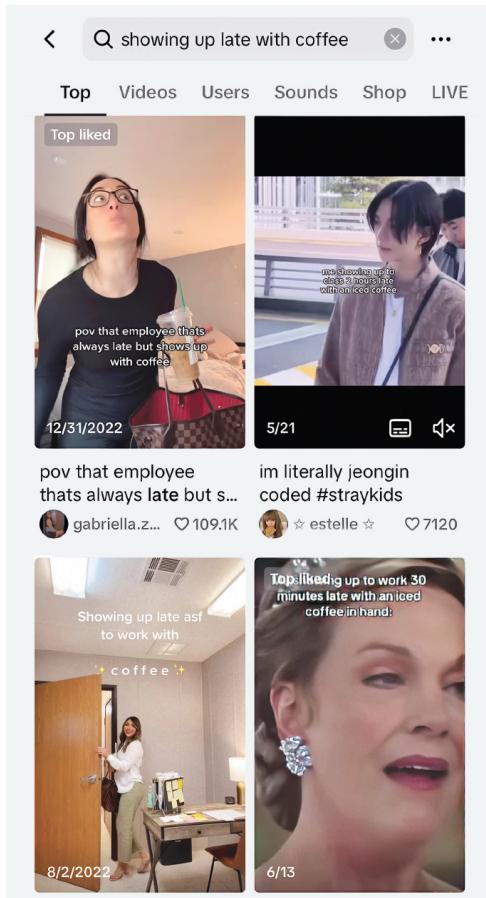


If this tweet did “well” compared to their average performance numbers or the quality of replies, Starbucks could decide to expand on it through short-form videos that they post across advertising platforms. For example, a quick search on TikTok along the same theme, “showing up late with coffee,” pulls up a few short-form videos with titles like “pov: that employee that’s always late but shows up with coffee,” “me showing up to class 2 hours late with an iced coffee,” “showing up late asf to work with a coffee,” and more (see the following image).

Maybe they could combine their tweet theme with some of these video formats, and create some short videos titled “little miss shows up late to work with iced coffee” or “little miss shows up late to the family reunion with iced coffee” based on common scenarios people might find themselves in. If these clips happen to be broadly relatable, they could put even more resources behind this concept and turn it into a long-form, higher-production skit—maybe getting some influencers involved. By the time they decide to produce that skit and amplify it across channels like YouTube, OTT, CTV, or standard television commercials, they would have gathered data that proved consumers care about the message. They would’ve minimized the risk before investing those tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

This is how a simple post on X (Twitter) can be the seed that leads to a high-budget advertising campaign.

The more SOC you put out, the better insights you’ll have—you’ll get a sense for what content resonates, how to effectively use platform features, and you’ll learn how to make your next piece of content better than the one before it. There’s no permanent right answer to what the “best practices” are on advertising platforms because things shift and change so much. That’s why you should be posting as much as humanly possible—so you can uncover new learnings as they happen.



Searched on TikTok, August 23, 2023.

Consider the following points as you're making SOC for your personal brand, your business, your clients, or the company you're working for.

Does your content feel like an ad?

When companies think of what their LinkedIn posts should look like, many of them immediately go into a PR-driven mindset and default into promoting what their company is doing, instead of actually providing value. This post from Gong approaches things differently (see the following image).

Here, the first two lines in the copy immediately address the intended audience—"MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS. As a leader, it's part of your job to establish emotional stability." The headline of the image is "Mental health is a challenge for sellers"—so immediately this appeals to both

leaders in organizations as well as some junior salespeople who might be brave enough to engage with the content, which means their managers might see it (given how LinkedIn's algorithm works).

The presentation of data in a graph-style format is also native to the psychology of the LinkedIn audience when they're on the platform—they're in a business, sales, and overall professional mindset. It's a visual piece of content that brings value by providing information without overly promoting the company—in fact, the company name is weaved into the graph in a subtle, smart way near the bottom.

The dimensions of the image also maximize the amount of space taken up in the feed, which can help boost engagement in some cases.



When clicking “see more” and expanding on the text, this is what we see:

A LinkedIn post from the company account "Gong". The post discusses the importance of emotional stability for leaders and sales professionals, citing survey results from 300+ sales professionals. It provides tips for helping teams, such as check-ins and automating administrative tasks. The post concludes with a call to action: "THAT'S how you'll retain your most valuable asset – your people."

Gong
226,016 followers
11mo •

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

As a leader, it's part of your job to establish emotional stability.

Your team has to feel their best on the inside to produce their best work.

That's why we surveyed 300+ sales professionals and found that:

Burnout, difficulty to stay motivated, and struggle to keep healthy work/life balance are 3 of the top 5 challenges sellers face.

Here's how you can help your team:

Check-in with empathy.

Dedicate time during 1:1s to truly hear how your sellers are doing.

Reduce the amount of mundane administrative tasks by automating them with technology.

Give your sellers time back to focus on what really matters.

THAT'S how you'll retain your most valuable asset – your people.

Here we see more details around the context of the graph, the stats, and tactical pieces of advice for leaders that are broken up in an easy-to-read format (again, providing value to their audience around a common topic many of them may be thinking about).

Some potential ways to improve might be the following: What about changing colors on the graph for easier readability? What about making the title larger on the graph? Could that catch more people as they're scrolling? What about adding a call-to-action at the end of the copy, or leaving the first comment from the company account (or an executive from the company) to create more engagement on the post? Would all of this result in greater reach?

The first two lines of the copy convey a strong point of view, but another way to approach it might be adding a “cliff-hanger” at the end of line 2 that incentivizes readers to click the “see more” button on LinkedIn to expand the copy and continue reading to see what the point of view is.

If you’re at a B2B company putting out content on LinkedIn, the best advice I have is to pretend that your company is the “B2B magazine” of your industry. Pretend your organization is the host of a show related to your subject matter on Sirius radio, and your goal is to get the best ratings. Instead of trying to promote your business in every post, make content that people in your cohort categories will be interested in consuming. The best part is, in the B2B world, you don’t need hundreds of thousands of views on

your content. If you're making content for decision makers in the IT sector, maybe a couple hundred views from people in those roles is enough to generate return on investment.

A strategy I always recommend to B2B organizations or service providers is to invite your target decision makers to be guests on your podcast. This has a few benefits: 1) You'll be able to build relationships with potential customers that may lead to sales in the long term; 2) after six months of doing this, the potential customers that you'd normally reach out to will now be reaching out to you to get on your podcast; and 3) the podcast is content that you can post across platforms—you can cut up clips from that podcast, post it organically, and take the ones that perform well and run those as ads on LinkedIn against others from your target customer base.

What does the hook of your video look like?

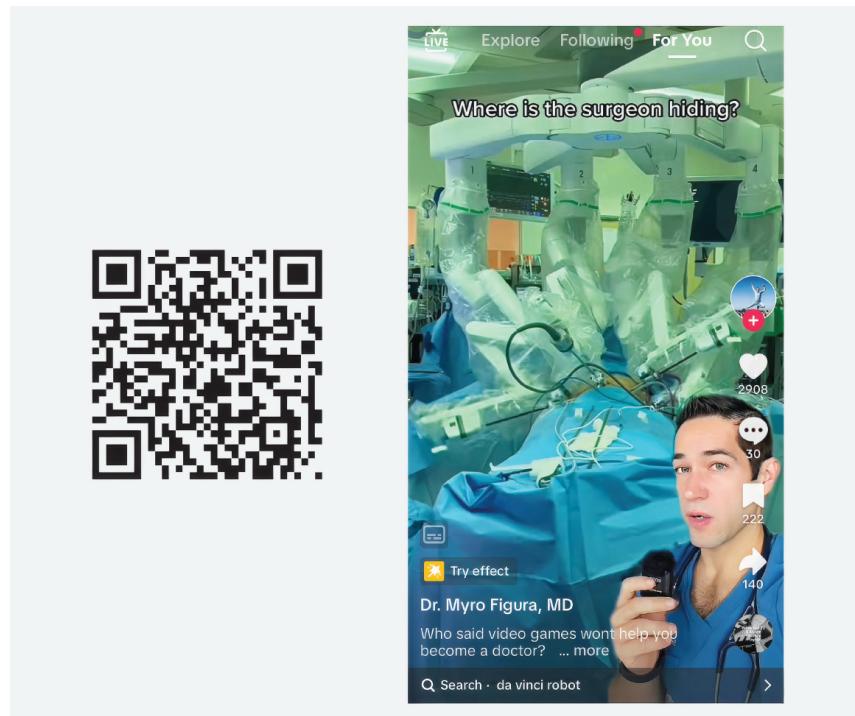
The hook is the first thing that a user sees when they're scrolling, and they come across your content.

If you're posting a video, then the hook is everything that appears in the first three seconds or so. That includes the title, the thumbnail, any captions you might use, the opening lines, the character or person in the video, and the overall design and format of the post.

If you're posting an image, consider what colors are most prominent, what words are largest, and other elements that will catch the viewer's eye.

Out of all the variables, the hook is one of the most important ones because it dictates the first impression of your content. This is where you either catch people's attention or let them scroll past. Most of us don't sit on the couch anymore with the remote in our hands, bound by the *TV Guide* schedule with only a few channels to choose from. We live in a world where there are obnoxious amounts of information getting thrown at us—which means if you're not catching people's eyes in the first second or two, they're going to scroll to the next piece of content in their feed. The hook is the part where the audience decides if the piece of content is relevant to them or not.

Check out this TikTok video, for example:



There are multiple variables here that help create an engaging hook:

1. The green screen video effect: Green screen effect allows creators to add their commentary or reaction on top of either a picture or a video in the background. In this case, the creator used TikTok's native "duet" feature (which allows you to post your video in combination with another video from another account, in various formats) and selected "green screen" as the format for the duet. This means the video is playing in the background, with the creator's face in the corner providing their commentary over it.

This format helps create an eye-catching hook that makes viewers curious about what the creator is going to say.

I also think the green screen format is a great one because it allows people to comment over headlines, articles, and screenshots of other posts that may be relevant to what your consumers care about. It can be an easy way to make content; if you're a real estate professional, chances are you have some opinions about current interest rates or home-buying trends in your area. You could find a relevant article that talks about those things with an intriguing headline, and layer on a

“green screen” with your opinion. If you want more distribution on special press releases and announcements your company makes, you can “green screen” it for extra distribution instead of just posting that content on your blog and letting it sit there.

2. Title and first three seconds of the video: The title “Where is the surgeon hiding?” along with the creator saying “Where is the surgeon?” out loud in the first few seconds of the video creates curiosity. Adding a title that asks a thought-provoking or interesting question like this might lead to more users staying on the video to find the answers.

In this example, the readability of the title might be something to improve. The white text against the green background might not have been as readable as, say, using TikTok’s in-app features to add a black background behind the white text so it’s a bit more readable. This is where things get subjective—just because you or I or someone in the organization likes a particular color doesn’t mean that color is the one that’ll catch the most attention. In this scenario, maybe the creator could try multiple different colors in the headlines, post all the versions, and see which one actually ends up working the best.

In the first few frames of the video, there’s also a slight pause before the creator starts talking. The first frame of the video appears as a static image, rather than immediately focusing on the main point of the video. The first few seconds of a video are too valuable to waste time with slow starts, or extra frames that aren’t 100 percent necessary. It’s best to get into the message as fast as possible; otherwise you’ll lose viewers.

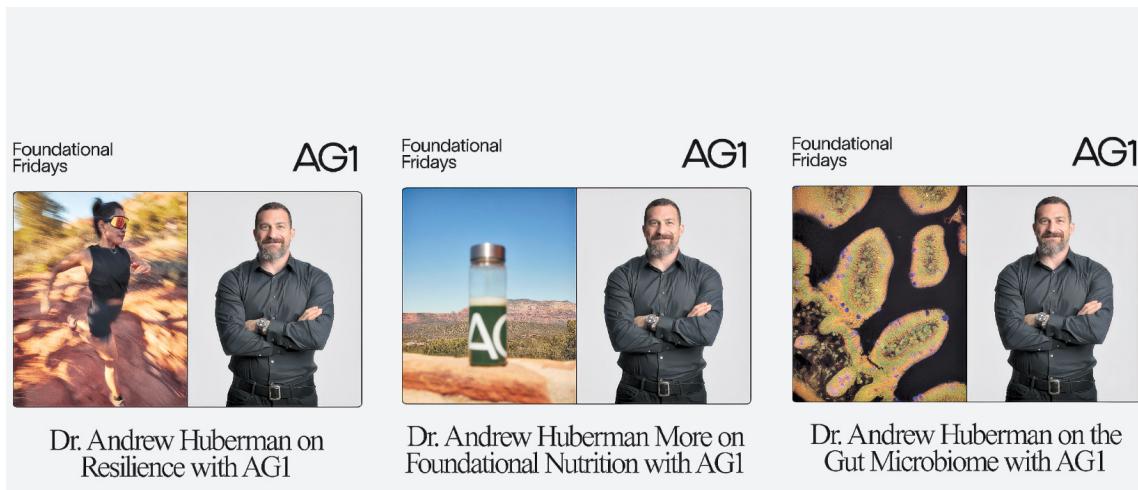
The first three seconds are critical to how relevant your video feels to your intended audience—this is the place to feature actors and actresses who look like the people you want to reach, add thought-provoking headlines, or add movement and camera angles that make people curious about what the video’s going to say.

3. The sound: Native TikTok audio involving the *Mission: Impossible* theme song was added here and is playing in the background as the creator is talking. The familiarity of the song is a good way to catch attention and help the distribution of the video; if TikTok sees that a lot of people are watching videos with that audio attached, then it’s

potentially more likely they'll give favorable distribution to other videos that have the same audio.

With certain platforms today, you also have the option to repost a piece of content with new edits, once you see how it does the first time around. You can change one variable—the title, the hook, or the overall video format, or anything else—then repost it and see how it does. This might work better on some platforms than others; sometimes, if your content is being shown predominantly to your followers, showing the same piece of content to them again within a short time frame (even with slight tweaks) might limit performance. Some platforms will show you what percentage of your viewers were followers versus nonfollowers, and you can use that data to inform your strategy here.

When it comes to video formats and styles, it's tempting for brands to keep the same style across their content to stay within their brand guidelines. For example, Athletic Greens had a smart strategy partnering with Dr. Andrew Huberman for a content series; however, these three thumbnails from their Instagram Reels all have a similar design:



Athletic Greens Instagram thumbnails on three videos.

If they repeatedly used this format as part of their hook because of actual data that showed this design increased performance, then that's an appropriate strategy. However, a lot of brands tend to sacrifice

performance, engagement, and relevance because they make what they want to make rather than what consumers want to see. Usually this means creating strict guidelines around things like logo placements, colors, how the product is used, and other things that the consumer doesn't care about.

Do people spend time watching and interacting with your content?

Today we have unparalleled access to data on how people are consuming our content. Back when I ran a full-page ad in the *New York Times* for Wine Library, I couldn't see exactly how many people saw it and actually consumed it. If a brand is running a TV commercial, they might have a guess for what the "potential reach" is, but they don't know how many people actually saw it and paid attention to it (unless they use creative attribution methods, like QR codes or special phone numbers as parts of their call-to-action).

Now every platform provides analytics on how people are consuming your content, and this quantitative data is an important part of your feedback loop to make even better content the next time around. If you post something on TikTok, you can get insights on average watch time, percentage of viewers who watched the full video, number of new followers you got from the piece of content, and more. This feedback lets you ask smart questions. Why is one piece of content getting more followers than another piece of content? Why are some of your videos getting more people to watch to the end? Is it the topic? Is it the creative format? Is it your copy that makes people watch? You might not be 100 percent sure on these answers, but that's okay—as long as you have a hypothesis, you can continue to try things.

At the time of writing, YouTube provides some of the most thorough analytics out of any platform in this book. You can see audience retention graphs for long-form videos on YouTube analytics, which can help you find out which moments in your long-form video that people are resonating with the most (based on which parts of the video got the most replays or shares).

Does your content evoke emotion and tell a story?

If you tell your story properly, your audience will be willing to sit down and pay attention to you for longer than they normally would. A common misconception is that your content has to be short to capture attention. The reality is, we live in a world where so many people binge-watch *Game of Thrones* or *Stranger Things* for hours and hours on the weekend. People will sit and have a Marvel movie marathon and spend the entire day watching films back-to-back. They'll also scroll past a thirty-second YouTube short if it's not engaging.

It's not about the length of your content; it's about how good your content is.

When you make content, make it for the person who is consuming it. Not for yourself. What you make needs to be either informative, thought-provoking, entertaining, or a mix of multiple different elements. Once you catch attention with a strong hook, are you keeping their attention throughout the length of your video? What's their incentive to watch till the thirty-second mark, the one-minute mark, or the three-minute mark?

Is your content native to the platform?

Once you have a sense for who you're making content for, you need to understand how to make content within the creative units. An important part of this is using each platform's features in a way that leverages their unique capabilities.

Think of it this way:

All of us act differently when we're in a boardroom versus when we're on a trip to Vegas with our closest friends. We act differently with our family than with our coworkers. Being "native to a platform" is no different than being aware of the context of the room that you're in.

You'd want to make your content "blend into" the platform as much as possible. If you were running ads on Hulu, you might think about how to make it similar to the show you're running ads on. If you're running radio ads, that would mean incorporating jingles and music similar to the radio station that you're running ads on.

Notice how Brit + Co* uses Instagram carousels to display a decision tree across multiple carousel tiles (see the following image). The first tile asks a question and serves as the "hook," enticing people to swipe based on their answer. The decision tree expands into many different options as users

keep sliding and ends on a wholesome message. Notice that in the first tile, there's a little hint through the design of the image that there's a continuation in tile 2 and beyond. It reminds users that the post is a carousel and that there's more to swipe through, as sometimes in-feed graphics can be mistaken for stand-alone images as users are scrolling fast in-feed.



Brit + Co Instagram carousel.

The carousel is also culturally relevant for the time it was posted (Mother's Day), and hits on a common emotion and pain point that certain people have around holidays when they have challenges with their family situation.

If this carousel performed worse than Brit + Co's usual numbers, they could tweak the format in the future by trying any number of things. For example, they could try designing an entire flowchart in one image instead of multiple (so that it can be quickly consumed at a glance instead of asking users to swipe through multiple tiles).

When you're making content native to a platform, there are a few elements to consider:

1. What sizes and dimensions are you working with?

For example, on Instagram, the snapshot of your video as it appears on your profile grid is only a portion of your full vertical video (at the time of writing). If you're reposting a TikTok video to Instagram, one of the tweaks you might make is adding a specially designed Instagram thumbnail as the first frame of your video where the key elements are all placed within the dimensions necessary to show up in your grid.

2. Are you using a platform's in-app features?

This is one of the easier ways to make your content native to a platform—if you’re posting a video clip, you can use in-app features across platforms to add a title to your video. That way, the video leverages designs and features that are unique to the platform. Snapchat, for example, lets users add text to a thin black bar within the app—a format that’s unique to the platform.

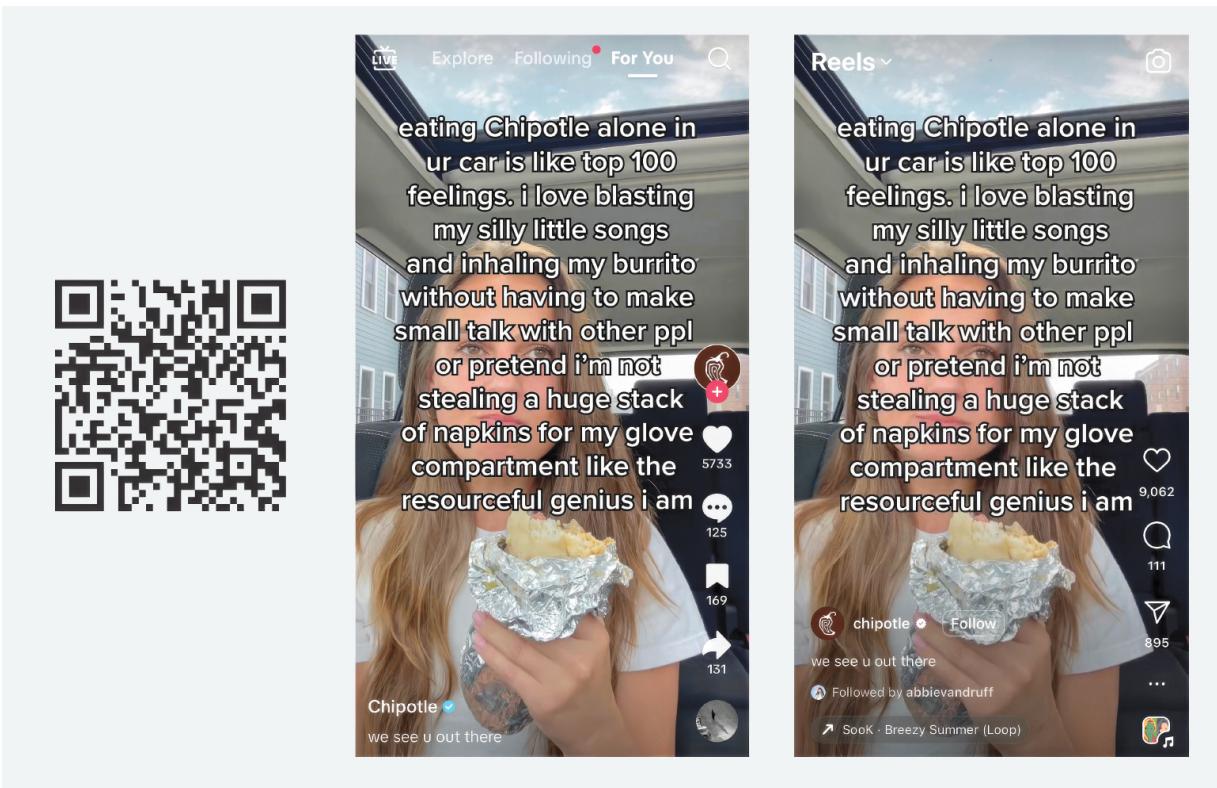
Instagram and TikTok both allow you to add polls on to your videos, for example, but the polls aren’t designed in the same way. Every platform has a number of these in-app features that make them different from the others.

3. Does your copy reference contextual elements from the platform?

People tend to overlook the importance of copy when making content, but this is where you have the opportunity to address your viewers directly. You could say things like “Hey Instagram” or “Hey Facebook” at the beginning of your copy to call out the users, or reference specific calls-to-action. On Instagram, you’d say “share this with your friends,” but on LinkedIn, you’d say “send this to a colleague” (since that’s what LinkedIn calls their share feature at the time of writing this). On Instagram, you’d say “save this post,” but on X (Twitter) you’d say “bookmark this.” If you’re using your own audio on a Facebook or Instagram reel that feels inspirational, funny, motivational, or any other kind of audio that people can add to their own Reels, you can say something like “make a reel using this audio” in the copy.

4. Are you using cultural trends within each platform?

Chipotle in this example repurposed a TikTok to an Instagram Reel (see the following image).



It was the same video with the same copy, but the trending sound they used in the background of this short looping video was different on each platform.

I often get asked whether it's okay to post the exact same piece of content across multiple platforms to increase output and save time. I don't love this approach because people use it as an excuse to "copy and paste" creative across platforms without any thought. There are too many contextual nuances from platform to platform, and blind copying and pasting means you're leaving opportunity for relevance and distribution on the table. There are always small tweaks you can make—even if it's just in the copy or the audio you use. My team does have a content repurposing strategy where we'll sometimes take the same piece of content and distribute it across multiple platforms. But I know that if I made a video specifically for Facebook it would perform better than something that was repurposed from somewhere else.

Are you putting out enough volume of content?

Two partners walked up to me at VeeCon 2023 and told me, “We want to change the world.”

I loved it—I said, “Good!” After exchanging some warm feelings and shaking hands, I asked them how many times they were posting content.

They told me they were really working hard, and they added another person to their team. I pushed back: “How much content are you putting out?”

They replied, “Not enough.”

For the third time, I asked again, “How much content are you putting out?”

Eventually, they told me the truth: They were publishing one post a week.

I have a lot of love for those two and I love every business owner, creator, or leader who has big ambitions. I hear from a lot of entrepreneurs and business owners who aspire to be billionaires, or artists who aspire to be the next Drake. When I ask about how much content they’re putting out to bring awareness around their mission, the answer is almost always too little.

With those two who walked up to me at VeeCon, I pulled out my phone and filmed a piece of content with them right then and there, prompting them to talk about some of the key points around what they know. You can watch the interaction at garyvee.com/quitoverthinking. I think it’ll help a lot of you.

People always get into the “quality” versus “quantity” debate when it comes to content. To me, the answer is always both. But putting out more quantity is what gives you an indication to what quality actually is. The more formats you put out, the more consumer segmentations you make content for, the more insights you get on what’s resonating. Does a short looping video perform better on X (Twitter) than a GIF of the same looping video? Does a status update on LinkedIn perform better than putting the same quote in a native “template” in-app, making it appear more like a graphic? What platform drives the most link clicks for you when you link to an external URL?

You won’t know answers to these questions unless you’re posting a variety of different types of content across platforms at a high volume. Even though I believe creative quality is the variable of success, it’s the quantity execution that’s the opportunity to figure out what quality is.

And no, you're not "oversaturating" the feed or annoying people by posting more. Most of your content isn't even being seen because of the number of apps out there, and the number of distractions available in everybody's day-to-day life.

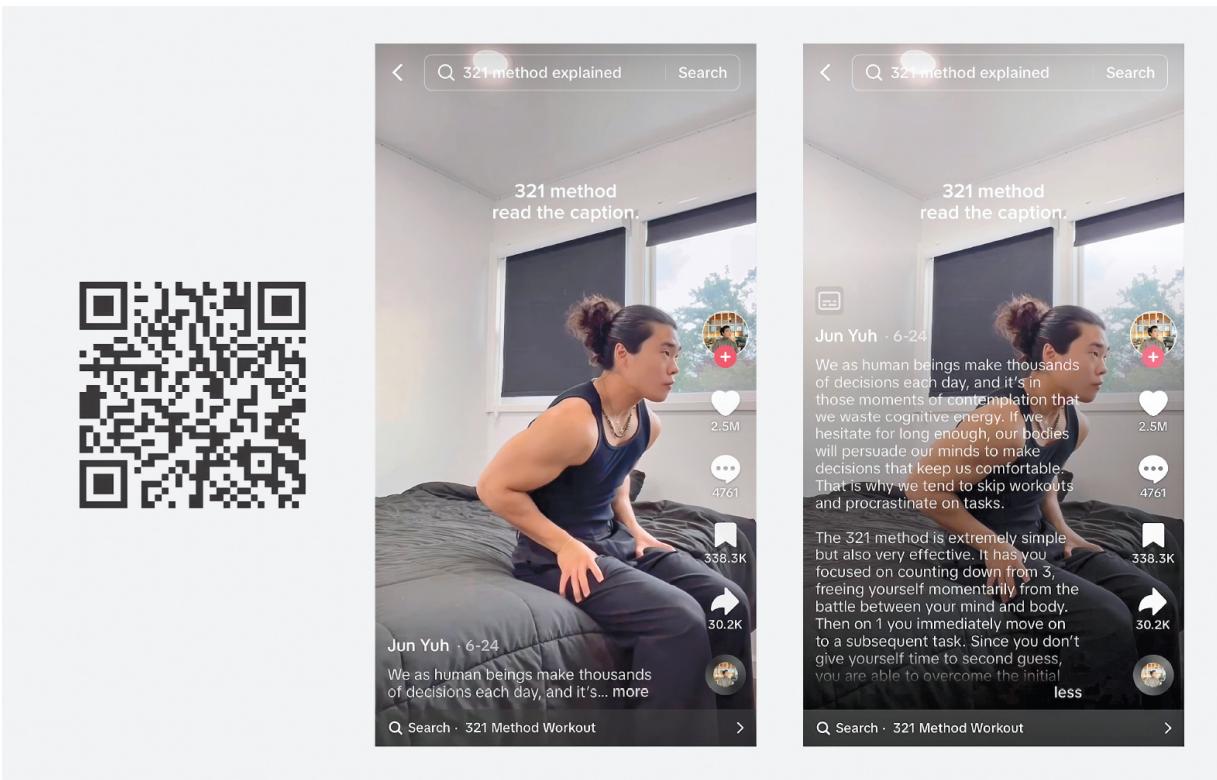
Some people make the mistake of thinking that their content will perform better if they post less. If that's you, I would challenge you to take a deeper look at the numbers. In many cases, people might get, say, 1,000 views on a post if you're posting once a day, and that might drop down to 500 per post when they're posting four times a day. But even though your reach per post is lower, you're still getting a total of 2,000 views per day versus 1,000 views per day with your higher quantity. The results might differ based on the platform, but make sure you measure it instead of guessing.

Bottom line? Post more.

Is your copy optimized for the platform?

As people increasingly use platforms like TikTok and Instagram as search engines, the copy (the caption) on your post plays a huge role. The creator of the following video received 12.9 million views (at the time of writing); it's an eleven-second video that starts with "pov: you're feeling lazy and don't feel like doing anything" (which is relatable for a large group of people) and ends with a CTA to "read the caption," where there's longer copy elaborating on a solution to the problem.

If done right, your copy can be the primary driver of your content's distribution. Your copy can be a place where you add additional context around your piece of content and build on it further. You could reference the cohorts you're trying to reach by starting with a line like "For all the dads out there" or add a curiosity-provoking line that keeps people watching until the end.



Platforms across the board continue to expand the character limits for copy at the time of writing, which is a sign that they appreciate the greater length and the value it adds to the content. If you're a strong writer, you could take advantage of text-only posts on Facebook and LinkedIn, long-form posts on X (Twitter), YouTube Community tab posts, and maxing out the character limits on Instagram and TikTok.

What does your profile hygiene look like?

Before you start posting content it's important to make sure that your profile is set up in the right way, so that when viewers click through to your profile after watching your video, they know exactly who you are and what you do.

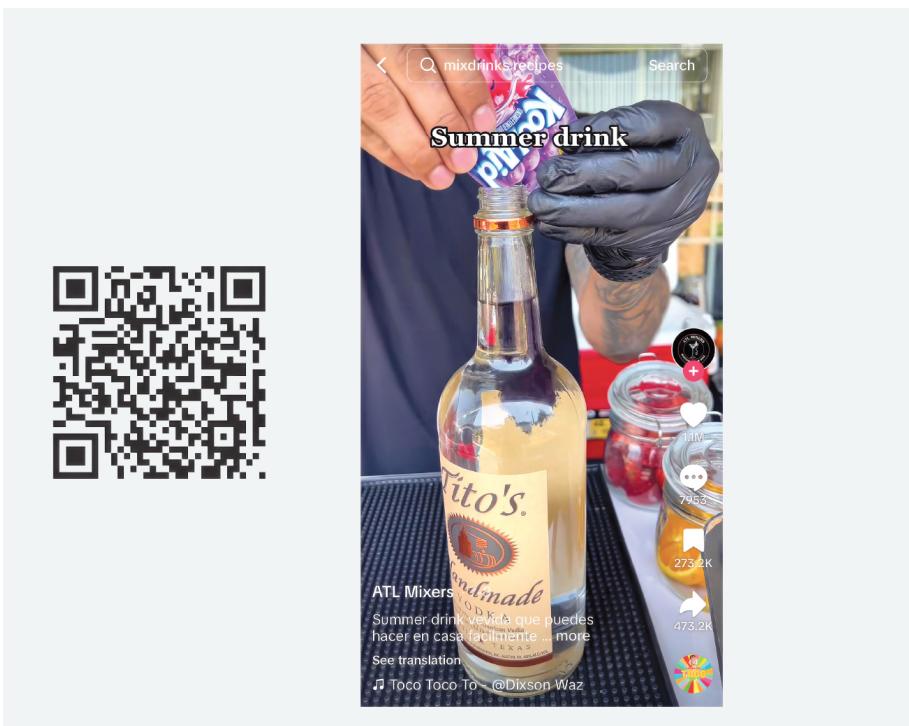
For example, ATL Mixers did a great job with this TikTok video in the following image; they used catchy audio in the background, and they showed the process of making a summer drink (a topic that would be top of mind for people in July, when this was posted). Videos that show the

process of making something—a drink, a recipe, or a special kind of food—are interesting for people to watch because they want to see the outcome.

In this case, ATL Mixers got 19.9 million views on this video at the time of writing. However, the link in bio doesn't go to their website; it goes to their Instagram page.

On their Instagram page, they have a short bio explaining what they do and Instagram highlights featuring a couple of client reviews, but they don't have a website link there in bio or a phone number.

If someone wanted to hire them for a private event, what would they do? Sign up on a website? Message them on Instagram? There's no obvious call-to-action on what to do, and there were undoubtedly some TikTok viewers who would've hired them if the steps were clearer. A better strategy would've been to link to a website in their TikTok bio with a form to fill out or a phone number to call. They could do the same on their Instagram page, in addition to using the Highlights feature to showcase other parts of their business, such as footage from events they've done in the past or short videos of top drink recipes.





ATL Mixers profile on TikTok, with link in bio leading to Instagram.



atlmixers_ on Instagram.

This is just a classic example of missed opportunities when you don't optimize every angle. The reason this book is going so deep is that there are so many little details that make up the full picture. I couldn't even explain

to you the potential revenue loss that ATL Mixers missed out on by not maximizing their profile during this viral moment.

You should make sure that people can easily see who you are, what you do, and have the chance to take an action (whether it's clicking a link to your website, calling your number, or any other important action you want people to take). It's our job as operators to eliminate friction for users who want to do things with us.

Are you showing different sides of yourself, your brand, or your business?

I often notice businesspeople post a lot of technical how-to videos related to their products or services, but don't share as much about themselves. You don't need to share more than what you're comfortable with—I rarely talk about my personal life in my content and everyone is in control of how open or private they want to be.

However, you might completely change the trajectory of your business with one post about your experience as a stay-at-home parent. That might be the post that gets a ton of views because millions of other parents relate to it. Through that increased distribution, you could build awareness for your business, assuming your profile hygiene is on point, and build trust as a result of sharing your personal side. Your video about your passion for sneaker collecting might lead to more business for your B2B hardware company because your customers' kids who are in college or high school shared your videos with them. If you built up a following through posting your modeling photos on Instagram, but you love food, consider posting about your favorite recipes one out of every five posts.

One thing I'd ask all of you reading is, do you act differently around your friends than you act professionally? Do you act differently around your family than you act professionally? Consider bringing those versions of you to your business and to your content in general. This is something people have been told for a long time not to do, but I'm telling you that you should. I believe history will prove me, this book, and this concept to be right.

People are always worried about losing respect with their audience or posting something that no one cares about. The reality is, putting out content is never a bad thing. The more topics you touch on, the more opportunities you have to relate to people.

Do you occasionally mix in content to get answers to questions you have?

The best way to figure out what content to make is to literally ask the audience. You could use the poll feature (which multiple platforms have) to ask questions and gather data or use other creative units. For example, say you have a YouTube channel about fitness, but you really want to post about fashion and you're not sure how people will react. You could start by doing a poll through the YouTube Community tab, where you ask people, "*I'm really passionate about fashion and I have a lot of interesting tips to share, would you all be interested in seeing 1 or 2 videos?*" You could take it a step further and ask, "*Have you ever thought about dressing better? What's stopping you?*"

You could even state a strong point of view that you have on video related to your business and see if people have different takes in the comments. For example, if you have a bike shop and you're wondering what bikes people are most interested in, you could make a video pointing to one and say, "*This bike is the best for mountain biking.*" You might get some comments from people who disagree or have other recommendations, which would give you a sense for what's running through people's minds.

Those insights would then inform the ideation of your future content.

Are you finding the right balance between asking for business while providing value?

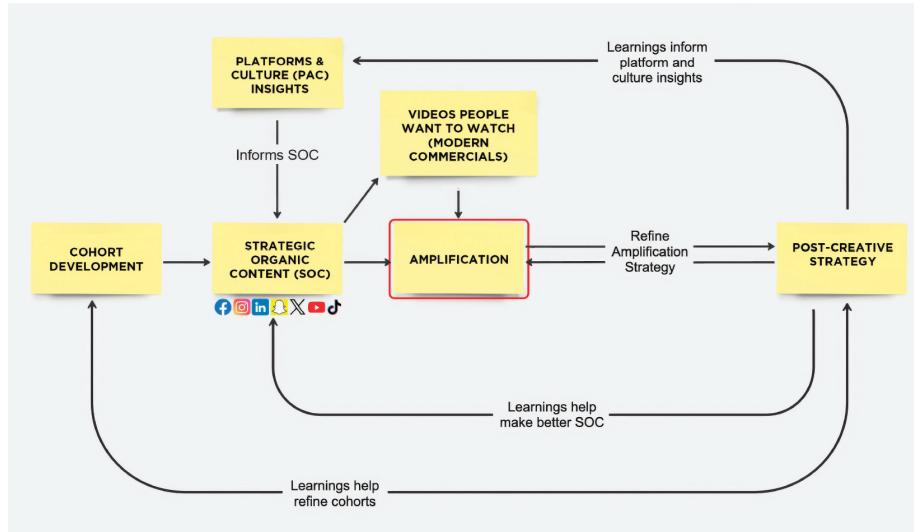
This is a concept I talked about in *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook*, and it's still an important topic to consider to this day.

Back then, I noticed that people usually fell into one of two categories: They would either not put out enough "jabs" (free value) to balance out their "right hooks" (asking for business), or they would *only* put out free value and be too scared to ask for business.

There's no set formula here and every business and brand needs to find its own balance, but make sure you're doing both. As you're putting out free, valuable organic content across platforms, make sure you're taking the overperformers and turning them into sales-focused ads. Every now and then when you have something specific to promote, you can even post a sales-focused piece of content organically across platforms, directly asking people to buy or sign up.

If you're *only* asking people to buy, however, they'll quickly tune you out, so make sure to balance out those asks with a high volume of valuable content.

Amplification: Spending Against What Works, aka Not Wasting a Penny



The first television commercial aired in 1941 before a game between the Brooklyn Dodgers and Philadelphia Phillies. The company that ran it, Bulova watches, paid somewhere around \$4 to \$9 to air the commercial; according to an inflation calculator from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, \$9 in 1941 is just over \$180 in 2023.¹³ Incredibly cheap.

It featured a picture of a United States map, with a clock in the middle displaying the company's name. A narrator in the background read out the words "America runs on Bulova time," and that was it. It was before people knew how to leverage the visual components of TV, and how to make commercials that were different from radio ads that ruled the day prior to television.

Yet, despite the lack of "SOC" and "PAC" understanding on what makes a great TV commercial, it was still a good deal for the time.

Similarly, over the last decade, brands and businesses were able to cover up mediocre content through the extreme underpriced nature of social media advertising.

Marketers would be able to set up a Facebook conversion campaign, write some copy, select a stock photo from their built-in library, and actually get results. The supply of quality ads was so low that businesses could get away with generic creative. It's like when you're the only restaurant in town—people are still going to eat your food even if it isn't excellent. When there are fifteen restaurants in town, you need to serve better food.

As more advertisers have come in, and as advertising platforms' algorithms have evolved, creative has become the most important variable to a successful media campaign. With Meta's Advantage+ shopping campaigns, you can feed up to 150 combinations of creative (at the time of writing) and the platform will automatically serve the creative to the best possible audiences to hit your ad objective. The targeting with Advantage+ shopping campaigns would be broad, limited only by age and the geographic area, and the algorithm would do the rest. The paid advertising ecosystem across platforms is moving in the same direction as their organic content algorithms: They're becoming more and more interest-graph led. The platforms (depending on their sophistication) will take your creative, and they'll distribute it to whoever is most likely to take the action you want them to take—whether it's visiting your website, buying your product, signing up with their email, or any other action-based ad objectives the platform offers.

At the time of writing, Facebook, Google Ads (which includes YouTube), Instagram, and TikTok are currently leading the way in terms of the sophistication of their advertising algorithm. For example, with Google's Performance Max campaign type, the algorithm is built to optimize performance in real time and find who's most likely to convert across all of Google's channels (like YouTube, Display, Search, Discover, Gmail, and Maps).

What does that mean for you? For instance, if you're looking to get donations for a nonprofit, you could run an ad campaign on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube, and layer on age, country, and interest-based targeting related to your category (on Facebook and Instagram, that might mean targeting people interested in health and wellness if you've got a nonprofit related to feeding people). You could rely on the platforms to find the best donors through their algorithms, without manually targeting 30–35-year-old high-income men and women in New York City who are

interested in health and wellness. You might just target everyone in the US who is interested in health and wellness and see who converts.

However, there's still a place for setting narrower targeting based on the cohorts you're trying to reach. Not all platforms' algorithms are equally advanced in terms of automatically distributing your creative to the perfect audience, and some mediums work differently than others. If you're running podcast ads on Spotify, you wouldn't want to broadly target every podcast that exists because they don't have an interest-graph-driven conversion algorithm that can automatically find listeners most likely to convert. In that case, you'd want to choose targeting categories based on your cohort strategy. Through platforms like Nextdoor (a hyperlocal social network) you might benefit from layering on zip code-specific targeting with creative that's contextual to local areas. X (Twitter) allows advertisers to target based on keywords people search in their search queries. Even on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, layering on manual, narrow targeting can be beneficial sometimes—especially when you know for a fact that your creative resonates with that group through your organic content insights.

Your ad objective also plays a role—if you're optimizing for reach (showing your ads to as many people as possible in a target audience) rather than a specific action such as a website visit or a conversion, you might want to go narrower with your targeting or use your first-party data so that the platforms aren't showing your ad to completely random people.

If you're new to the world of paid advertising, experiment with everything; try a campaign where you manually specify targeting details that are related to cohorts who resonated with your organic creative and try some with broader targeting. There are a lot of nuances here when it comes to what your ad targeting should be, what a good cost per thousand impressions (CPM) is, what your maximum ad frequency should be, and more—the best way to learn is by running campaigns yourself.

By putting out SOC informed by PAC insights, you can minimize the risk of wasting money on your ad campaigns and unnecessarily driving up your customer acquisition cost (CAC). This is especially important in the modern world, after Apple's iOS 14.5 update, which introduced App Tracking Transparency (ATT). After this change, apps had to ask users for permission to track their activities across other apps and websites.

Since users had to opt in (rather than opt out), many chose not to opt in —this created challenges for advertisers as it limited the amount of data that advertising platforms had access to. A lot of direct-to-consumer and e-commerce businesses were built off running Facebook ads to their websites, and then retargeting those visitors over and over again until they converted. In a post-iOS 14.5 world, it became much harder for platforms like Facebook to track who landed on your website; the available data became far more limited. Even on desktop devices, there are more and more limitations on the data shared between browsers and advertising platforms. This has a couple of implications:

1. It's one of the reasons why platforms like Instagram and TikTok are focused on building out their own "Shops" that allow users to browse products and buy within the app itself. If users buy within the app, they own that data and they can use it to serve more relevant ads to people rather than being at the mercy of other companies like Apple. TikTok, for example, currently has a Shop Retargeting feature that allows advertisers to show ads to people who have interacted with their TikTok Shop.
2. Building brand through organic content is more imperative than ever. Today, the best way to reach high-intent audiences is through well-made content. Even in your ad campaigns, your creative is the most important variable because the algorithm generally does the job of delivering the content to the people most likely to watch or convert.

For example, let's say you're a plumber with \$700 to spend on paid ads this month. You've been putting out content already across platforms for months, you're seeing some overperform organically, and you're trying to decide where to allocate your budget.

The first thing to do in this situation is find the normal range of views and engagements you get on your organic posts across platforms. If most of your posts get 5 to 25 views but seven of the videos got 500 to 700, then that's a clear "overindex" in performance, even if it's not "viral" by everyone else's standards.

Before running media, make sure to slightly tweak those seven videos visually to be more sales focused. If your video is funny, maybe you could

add a few frames to the end of the video that say, “If you want a plumber with 12 years of experience and also a sense of humor, click here to get a free consultation.” You could also add a version of that line to the copy of your video.

Then you can take those seven videos and spend \$100 against each of them within a five-mile radius of your town. Look at which two performed the best and got you the most consultations, and next month spend more money on that ad. You could also repurpose it for other platforms—if you ran the ad on Facebook initially, try adding a native title on the video using TikTok’s content creation tools and try captioning it in the app. Then post it on TikTok and amplify it there if it does well organically.

The biggest mistake a lot of small businesses and service providers make in this situation is spending too much of their budget too quickly. With the approach above, you’re giving yourself a chance to get more proof the ad works before investing more money in it.

If you have the resources, you can expand your winning ads into more broadly relatable videos that people want to watch (modern commercials) and run those as YouTube pre-roll ads.

YouTube is also exciting because it’s a gateway into CTV ads for many. In fact, I had a fun moment with my dad at Cannes Lions 2023, when he was talking about a commercial that came on when he was “watching television” and how he couldn’t hit the “skip ad” button fast enough. The fascinating insight here is, although he called it a television commercial, it was an ad on YouTube that he was watching on a connected TV device.

Three in four TV-owning households had smart TVs (which can access the internet and streaming services and integrate with connected TV devices like Roku or Amazon Fire TV Stick) as of Q1 2023.¹⁴

Through CTV devices, people can watch YouTube, OTT streaming services like Hulu and Netflix, and FAST channels such as Tubi or Pluto TV.

Streaming services like Hulu and devices like Roku have increasingly accessible advertising options for small businesses. Even if you’re a solopreneur, you can literally run ads on shows that play when people are watching something on Hulu. At the time of writing, if you get approved as a small-medium business on Hulu, you can run ads for as little as \$500 per month. Just pause and think about that for a minute—opportunities like this used to be hundreds of thousands, or millions of dollars at minimum in the

world of TV commercials. Now you can have a real “commercial” for your personal brand, your startup, your small local business during major shows on Hulu that people are actually watching.

These aren’t just for brand awareness campaigns. For example, Roku partnered up with Shopify to let users buy products through their TVs when an ad plays, using the Roku remote. Through Roku’s partnership with Instacart, CPG brands can see if people purchased their product on Instacart after seeing an ad on Roku.

As you get proficient at running ads on social media platforms, I believe those same skills will translate to advertising on OTT, FAST channels, and CTV. Media buying dynamics on streaming services are becoming increasingly similar to the marketplace bidding process on social networks.

Please note: This is important for those in the Fortune 500 landscape. The social media frameworks are eating up your beloved traditional media platforms. It’s time to have the humility to lean into the reality of the post-2023 world.

In a sense, your paid ads strategy should be an extension of your organic content strategy—if you’re not putting out strategic organic content regularly, then your ads won’t be nearly as effective because you won’t have any indications of what is resonating with people. You’ll be guessing a lot more.

Whether you’re amplifying creative on streaming services, social media, traditional TV commercials, or other channels, keep in mind that every ad channel can either be overpriced or underpriced. It depends on how you use it. Of course, some channels may be inherently underpriced or overpriced based on supply and demand. If you’re running ads on platforms that are relatively early in their maturity, before there are a ton of other advertisers competing with you for the limited ad space, you’re going to get more people consuming your ad for a cheaper cost. At the same time, if you’re running an ad on Instagram with zero SOC principles that’s not native at all to the platform, the results you get might lead you to believe that Instagram ads are overpriced.

Even channels that are traditionally overpriced could be underpriced for brands that know how to execute well.

For a lot of direct-to-consumer brands, television commercials can work when they’re direct response focused. The more your ad looks like an infomercial, the more it could drive sales in a television commercial

environment. The key is to make it direct response focused and geared toward getting more sign-ups and website visits, rather than brand awareness alone.

One way to approach this would be to create two versions of the same ad: one with a QR code on-screen at the end, and another with the website link. Compared to a website link, a QR code might be lower friction. Companies could run both ads through YouTube pre-roll to get a sense for which one results in the most website traffic, and amplify the winner through a broader OTT, CTV, and remnant television commercial campaign.

While infomercial-style commercials would work for direct-to-consumer companies, TV commercials can be insanely overpriced if they're used for just brand awareness with "vanilla" creative—such as a car driving down a hill with a generic statement on the screen.

When it comes to amplification, a common mistake brands and businesses make is overpaying for major celebrity endorsements. Many businesses have a dream A-list partner in mind. They think, "If I can just get that person to post about my product, I'll be set." The reality is, that post may not drive as much sales as people think. Instead of relying on one person or one endorsement, consider a broader influencer marketing strategy. You could send product samples to a list of micro-influencers—people whose opinions hold a large weight among their own little network, even if it's 1,000 followers. You could also send products to emerging creators in your field on TikTok—with the interest graph algorithm, their video about your product might drive more sales than an endorsement from the biggest celebrity in your space.

If you have a small restaurant or a store, you could also invite local influencers to your business for meet-and-greets, or host fun events such as a trivia night or game night. Influencers can often be the catalysts who can draw people in your community to your business location. From there you can film the event itself, and distribute clips from that footage across platforms to get even more distribution.

Remember, the influencers you bring out to your location don't necessarily have to have hundreds of thousands or millions of followers. In fact, several small micro-influencers in your area who you find through TikTok or Instagram search may be able promote the experience and create excitement with a substantial portion of your local area. The most important

part with these events is to make sure that you film them, so that you maximize the value of content as you post them across advertising platforms and create excitement for upcoming events.

As you grow into a better practitioner of media buying and amplification, you'll see there are hundreds of variables that factor into this across platforms. Here are a few frameworks and principles to keep in mind:

1. Make sure you have enough creative variations for your ads.

Imagine you're a lawn care service provider who primarily sells to individuals in your town and a few nearby towns as your main customer base. You've been running five total Facebook ads, one contextual to each of the towns in your area. You started out getting a lot of leads, but now, after a couple of months, your lead gen's been cut in half and your numbers continue to dwindle. What would you do?

You'd be stunned how many lawn care and landscaping businesses have asked me this exact question in my emails, DMs, or at the airport when I'm traveling. I'm excited to answer it here (by the way, the answer applies to any local business—whether you're a barber or dog sitter or anything else).

The answer to this question is, you need fifty-five more ads. You relied on the five ads too much.

As I've said many times throughout this book, creative is the variable of success. Even though I believe the Super Bowl commercial is the greatest ad buy in advertising at \$7 million in 2023, if that thirty-second video is boring and forgettable, you might have wasted all that money. Even though the media itself was a good deal.

Same thing in this example with the lawn care service provider. Facebook works. It works big-time for local businesses. The problem is, the same people have seen your five ads over and over. The people who were going to convert have already converted, and for the rest of them, it's just noise. Ad fatigue has set in (which is what happens when your audience sees your ad so much, they stop paying attention).

So what you need to do is make more content. More videos. More pictures. More text posts. Use different angles, different sayings, different titles, and different hooks. If you talked about lawn health last time, talk about flowers this time. If you talked about spruce trees last time, talk about

Japanese maples this time (because if I own a Japanese maple, that ad just might get me, whereas none of the others would). For the record, I don't know what a spruce tree or Japanese maple tree is, but I've hung around my dad, Sasha, enough to have heard those terms.

In many cases, it's small variables that differentiate a winning ad from the ads that don't work. It's the way you say something in the first three seconds of the video. It's the actor or actress who plays in the video. It's a singular word that you change in the title. It's the thumbnail you use in the first frame. If you're only using one style or one message, you're not going to resonate with as many people as you could have.

The bottom line is, you need more content. The work here is not spending money on ads every day. The work is coming up with new creative pieces of content every day that are then supported by the ads. That's how you may get to the outcome you're looking for.

Once again, this goes back to SOC—your content has to be strategic, and you need enough volume of organic content to give yourself the opportunity to have more creative that resonates with your audience.

2. Don't completely dismiss ad platforms because they “don't convert.”

Let's say you have a direct-to-consumer company that's been finding success with Facebook ads and YouTube ads, but TikTok ads haven't been getting you nearly as many conversions. You've historically focused more on your paid ads than your organic strategy, and you've been hearing from people in your field that Facebook and YouTube convert better than TikTok for direct response.

In this scenario, a lot of companies would dismiss TikTok, and just stick to Facebook and YouTube instead. But if you're a historian of digital ads, you'd know that people said “Google outperforms Facebook” in the same way during the early to mid 2010s. When there's an emerging platform like a TikTok and there's mass attention on it, the platform is always incentivized to improve direct-response conversion numbers because they want your money.

There are two things I'd do in this situation:

1. Use organic strategy to aggressively build brand, which will drive down your CAC on your performance ads. The more aware people are

of your product, the less your CAC will be. In other words, if a toothpaste brand has been putting out content across social and you've been seeing it for a while, and a few weeks later you search "new toothpaste brands" or "i need new toothpaste" in Google, you'll be more likely to click on their sponsored ad in the search results because you've heard of the brand. That's how brand building leads to sales. In the above situation, if you're aggressively executing on your TikTok organic strategy, you may increase conversions from your TikTok ads that way.

2. Putting all your eggs in one basket is never a good idea, especially when consumer attention sits across different advertising platforms. Right now, more direct-to-consumer brands are telling me that they got TikTok working compared to a year ago. That means a year from now, that number will probably double. Don't be like the companies that didn't do Facebook ads in 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 because Google and email marketing was converting better than Facebook. Don't be like the brands that told me the yellow pages was "tried and true" and didn't want to run Google Ads in the early 2000s as a result. Those same companies then had to catch up later.

Remember, these platform algorithms will grow and develop over time. Continue to spend 10, 15, or 20 percent of your time on platforms that "don't convert" and try to switch up your content organically to see if something gets you results.

I still occasionally run radio ads for Wine Library because I always want to be trying different mediums—to me, no advertising medium is ever "dead." If there's attention somewhere, it's possible to tell your story there in a way that makes people want to buy.

3. Experiment with different ad objectives, and rely on common sense.

Depending on your objective or your media strategy, you may not always get clear attribution that directly shows that your customers came from watching a video.

Of course, you can take steps to make sure this is set up in the best way possible—you can create unique Twilio or Google Voice numbers that you don't promote anywhere else, so you can tie the value of your marketing

efforts to the calls you get to those numbers. Digital ad platforms will also show you how many people converted after watching your ad, or signed up on your lead-gen form.

You can also use other tools like your website analytics (such as Google Analytics); if you had a video dramatically overperform your averages and you noticed an uptick in your organic search traffic on your website on the same day, it's reasonable to assume that the video had some sort of effect.

But there are also many cases where the ROI of building brand on social media isn't as clear. You might have an Instagram Reel that overperforms in views where you're teaching people something related to your area of expertise, where you're not directly pushing a sale. You might amplify the ad without tweaking it much because you're just using it to build brand awareness. In reality, that piece of content might be one that leads people to buy your product or service, but it's not obvious because you can't always directly attribute the sale to that specific piece of content. People might watch your ad and buy three weeks later by going directly to your site because they already know who you are. In this situation, business owners and brands often throw up their hands and say, "My creative didn't work!"

But this is where you need to lean into common sense. The ad is likely going to work because the video already overperformed compared to your average organically. The creative you're running has already been proven—people want to watch it, and therefore it's going to create relevance for your business or brand. As we know, that relevance is what leads to consideration and makes it more likely for them to convert on future ads you run that might have a more direct-response focus.

One thing I always recommend is looking at your overall sales numbers as an indication of whether you're headed in the right direction. You might be getting more sales, consultation calls, or in-store purchases as a result of people going to your website directly three weeks later because they know who you are through your "brand awareness" ads.

After you've really been putting the strategies in this book to practice for several months, look at total sales and see if you're headed in the right direction.

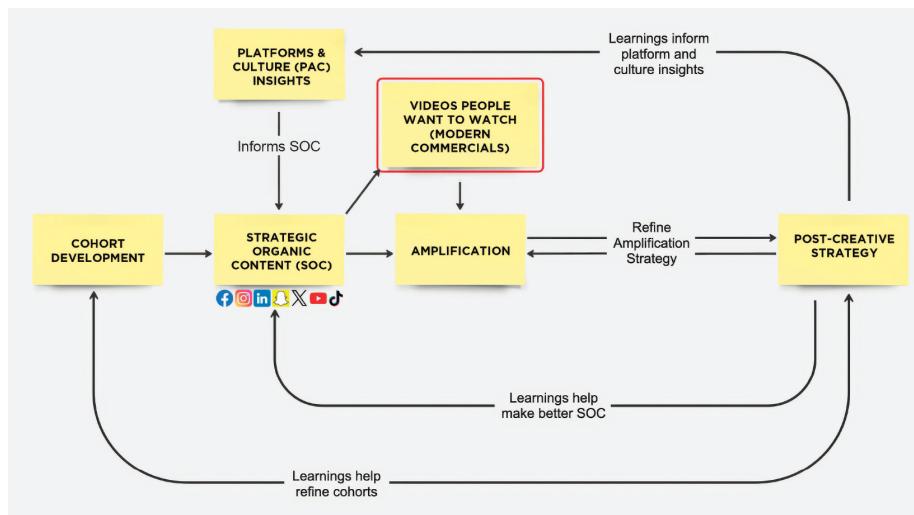
4. Optimize your content based on your ad learnings.

Let's say you made a piece of creative that overperformed slightly compared to your organic content average, amplified it through paid ads, and you're still not getting many conversions.

At this point, you can use both your organic and paid data to change some elements up in your content. Maybe from your ad analytics you can see that your three-second views compared to the total impressions your ad got aren't very high. In other words, out of all the people who are being served the ad, not a lot are stopping to watch. In that case, you can dig in even more: Who are the ads being served to? What age groups, demographics, gender? Based on that information, you can tweak the first three seconds of your video to show elements that are more relevant to that group (through your title, the people featured in the video, the words in your captions, or other variables) to catch their attention right away.

Your ad campaign learnings can also help you refine your SOC going forward.

Videos People Want to Watch: Modern Commercials



Depending on your resources, you can create longer-form, broadly relatable, potentially higher-production videos for broader impact. These are videos that might look more like TV commercials that people actually want to watch. The budget for these might be higher than a normal piece of

content, but they don't have to cost nearly as much as traditional television commercials do today. In fact, they shouldn't.

Dollar Shave Club's viral video is a classic example. In March 2012, they released a funny video featuring founder Mike Dubin. After releasing this video, they ended up generating 12,000 orders in forty-eight hours. The video cost \$4,500 and it was shot in a day.

Purple Mattress had a similar execution with their commercials, leading to \$65.5 million in sales in their first year. They have multiple popular commercials. Maybe the most notable one is their four-minute-long "Raw Egg Test," which has 194 million views as of this writing on their YouTube channel.

I believe that videos like these are our generation's version of Nike's "Just Do It," or Wendy's' "Where's the Beef?" They're the ones that capture mass attention, drive culture, and birth major brands.

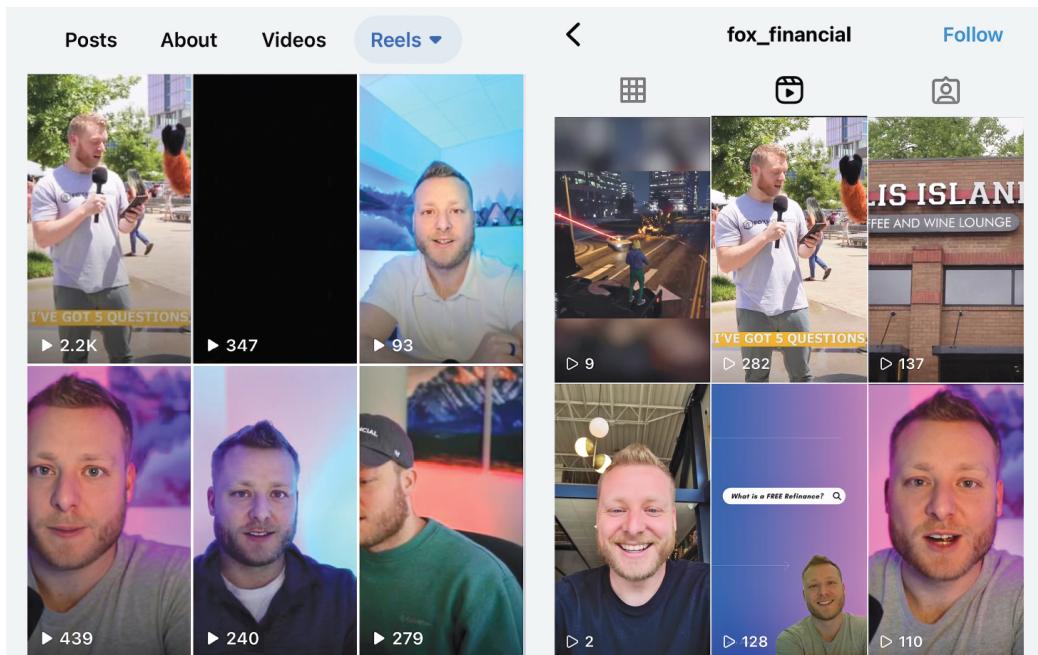
Especially if you have a direct-to-consumer business or work at a brand, you can create an iconic, higher-production video around your company and distribute it across advertising platforms with the goal of increased distribution. These are videos that evoke emotion like a Super Bowl commercial—they create laughter, sadness, happiness, joy, and they appeal to a broader base of people. Although you could add a call-to-action to these videos to drive an outcome (such as a QR code at the end, a prompt to click the link in your bio, or mention your website link), they shouldn't be blindly focused on promoting your business. These are videos that you'd make in such a way that millions and millions of people would want to watch them. It's like SOC, but more thoughtful, produced, and expanded videos built off your initial marketing insights. The more people who watch it, the more awareness and relevance you'll create around your brand or business, and the more you can drive down your customer acquisition cost as you run ads in the future.

How do you come up with a concept for a broadly relatable video? Let's play out a scenario. Take the following home loans and insurance company, @fox_financial on Instagram, as an example (see the following image).

At the time of this writing, they had 6 videos uploaded on Facebook Reels, and 18 posts uploaded on Instagram Reels. On Instagram, they were getting anywhere between 30 to a little more than 100 views on most videos, and on Facebook, most of their videos got 200–400 views.

There was one clear overperformer on both platforms—a video where they interviewed people on the street and asked them financially related questions. The opening line was “I’ve got 5 questions, get them all right, win the prize” with text that said “\$500” over it, implying that was the prize. On Facebook, it hit 2,200 views for them, and on Instagram it hit 282.

There are a couple of things we might learn from this:



(left) Via Fox Financial—Home Loans & Insurance page on Facebook, (right) @fox_financial on Instagram, both searched on August 23, 2023.

1. It’s a signal that people are resonating with the format of “public interviews.”

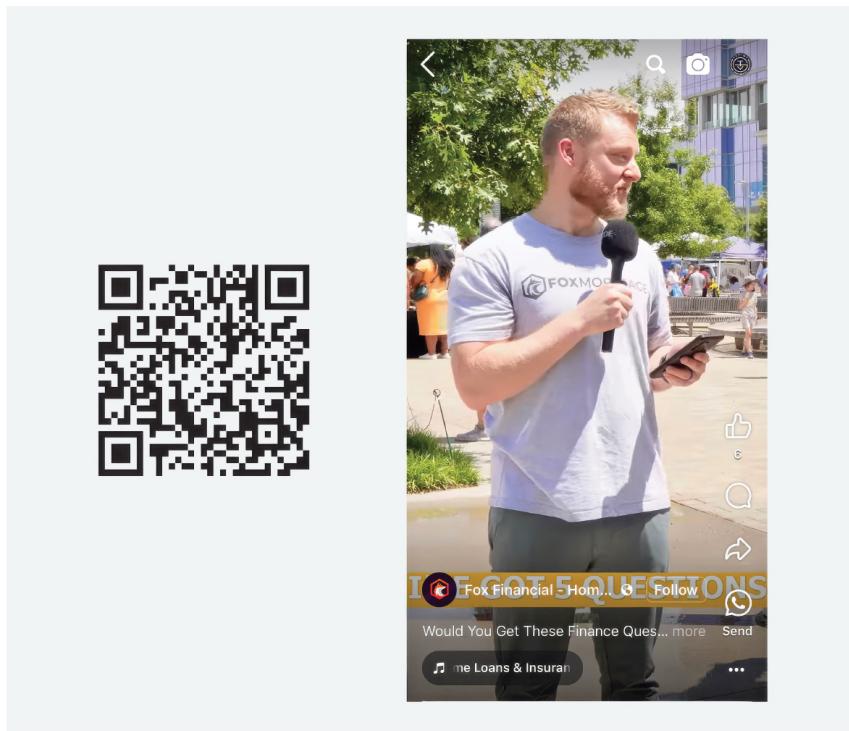
Asking questions related to finance was a clever way of tying their brand into a format that captures attention. If they were to build this concept out into a modern commercial, they could potentially do a two-to-three-minute “game show” style contest with three contestants to see who can answer the most questions right. They might insert a few questions related to home loans and insurance with answers that might be surprising to the broader public.

2. They also had a fox in a mascot suit in the background that represents the company. In the world of advertising, mascots have historically helped companies resonate with more people; in the 1950s, 1960s, and

1970s especially, major brands would incorporate mascots at scale (such as the Marlboro Man, Tony the Tiger, and the Keebler Elves). Even today, mascots like the GEICO gecko, Flo from Progressive, and Jake from State Farm help make the marketing from organizations more palpable.

In this example with Fox Financial, the company could try ten to twenty more pieces of content featuring the mascot more prominently—and maybe try some with the subtitles placed a little higher on the screen so that it's not hidden behind the Facebook Reels user interface.

Maybe the mascot helps answer people's questions about home loans and finance. Similar to how @goodboy.noah on TikTok incorporates a cheetah mascot into his cooking videos as a character who gives advice, the Fox mascot could be a character who helps people out with their home loan and insurance challenges. Maybe the fox interacts with employees in their office. They could continue to build out that mascot's personality over time, and it could become the star of their extended, more "produced," expanded campaigns. Look at what Duolingo is doing with their mascot, which is completely dominating and helping grow the actual business.*



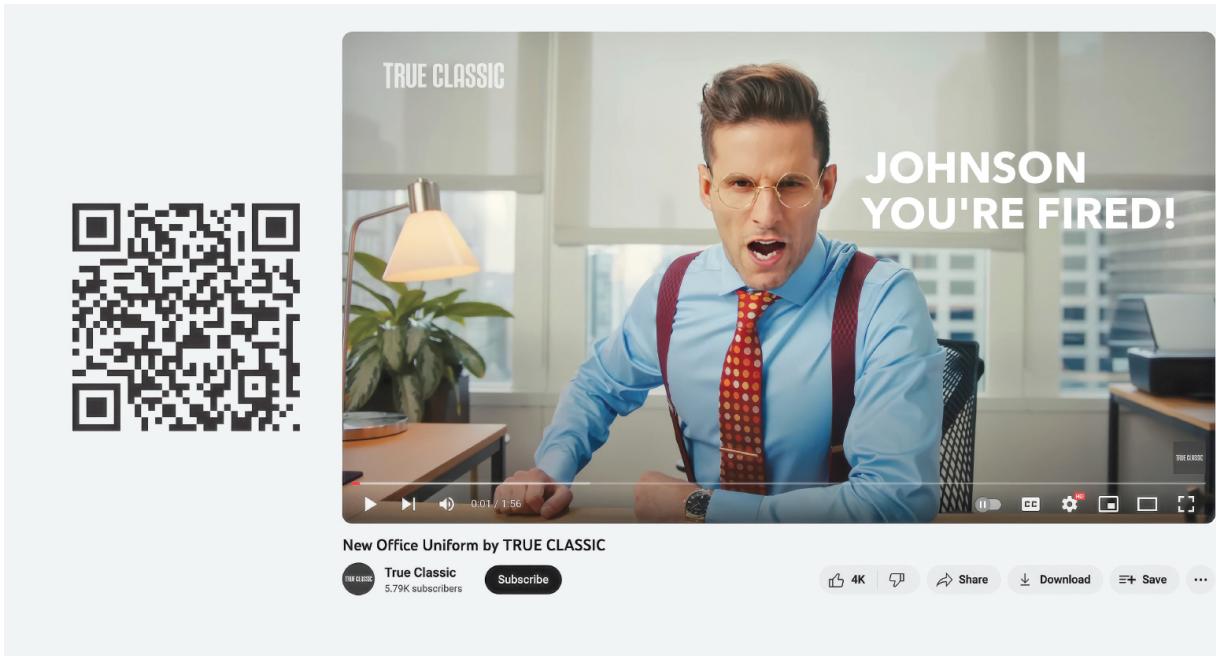
To remind you, your broadly relatable video doesn't necessarily have to be funny. Humor is an angle that can work depending on your strengths; Mike Dubin had a background in improv theater, so it made sense to lean into that for Dollar Shave Club's video. If you use a mascot, it doesn't have to be a funny one—it can be a thoughtful character, a smart character, or incorporate other characteristics that we really admire in human beings. You could also do a "day in the life" video, around yourself as the founder of your business. If you made a piece of strategic organic content that resonated around your origin story, you could expand on it in a three-minute sentimental sizzle reel talking about how your business got started. I would prefer you make multiple videos—one that's ridiculously funny, one that's inspiring, and others based on the emotion you're trying to appeal to. Instead of subjectively trying to decide which one is best, make them all and post them all organically across platforms to see which one takes off the most.

True Classic Tees ran a variety of high-production videos across platforms with a direct-response focus. Focused on comedy, these videos feature a variety of funny scenarios that their customer base (young men) would relate to. The following video in the next image shows an exchange between a manager and an employee, while other videos feature a group of friends going out to eat or a couple of guys at the gym. This one ends with a CTA to click the link for a 20-percent-off incentive—a brand video with direct-response elements to grow sales.

The themes and concepts of your broad video can be validated through your volume of social media content that you put out, so that by the time you spend the money to do a real production shoot, you know what concepts will resonate.

At this stage, you can also add in various influencers, actors, or actresses who could appeal to a broader base. Local businesses can incorporate what I call "alpha moms"—micro-influencers in local areas who have a small following, but large influence over their small community. You can search your town in Instagram, scroll over and click your town's hashtag, sort by "top posts," tap into various profiles, find people who live in your area who have a follower base, and start to build a relationship. Obviously, you'll have to find the right fit; not everyone would be interested or willing to participate, so you can ask if they'd be willing to

come by your store or meet up for dinner. See if they're the kind of person you'd want in your high-production video.



When it comes to Fortune 500 brands, they typically make a few big mistakes when doing high-production shoots like this:

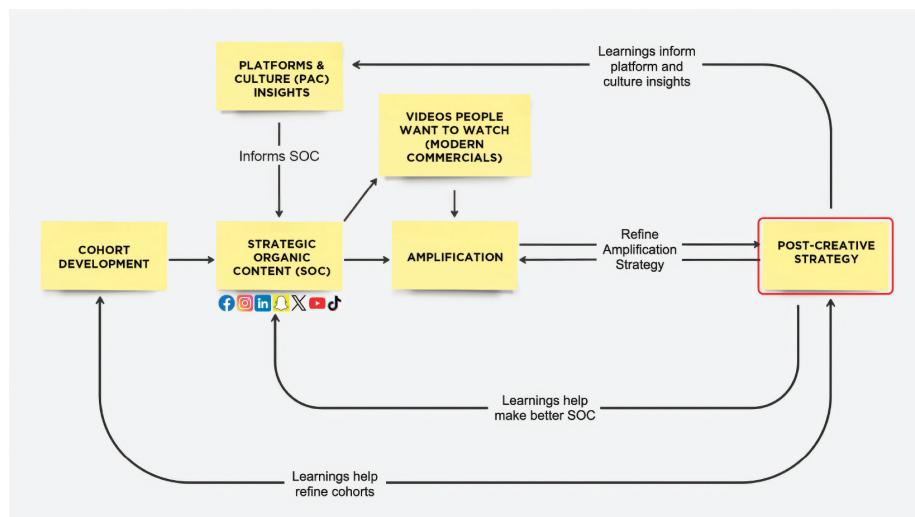
1. They don't distribute the ad in the right places. Running a high-production, emotional ad as a standard thirty-second to one-minute television commercial at the average cost won't give you as much ROI as, say, posting it on YouTube and running it as a pre-roll ad. If it's two or three-plus minutes long, you can make a vertical version of it to post with contextual copy on TikTok, Instagram, Facebook in-feed, LinkedIn, and try the horizontal version on YouTube.

Given the highly produced nature of these videos, you can also run them as ads between shows on OTT platforms (like Hulu), CTV devices like Roku or Amazon Fire TV Stick, and FAST channels like Tubi.

2. They don't maximize the value of their production shoots. If you have the luxury of doing a production shoot with influencers, actors, actresses, or even your own team, you must capture as much content as possible during the shoot. I call this the "sawdust." While you or your

team are doing the actual shoot (aka “cutting wood”), you should also be capturing other content to distribute across advertising platforms (aka “the sawdust”). Maybe while an influencer is getting ready for the shoot you ask them three questions related to your brand’s category. Maybe a team member films the production team filming it, which would give you a whole “behind the scenes” series you can publish.

Post-Creative Strategy (PCS): Listening to Actual Consumers and Gathering Insights



From my first baseball card show at the Jewish Community Center on Oak Tree Road in Edison, New Jersey, to my days working in retail at Wine Library to the present day as chairman of VaynerX, I've done a lot of people watching.

At baseball card shows in my youth, I would walk around the tables for an hour and try to listen to what the buyers and card dealers were talking about. I would try to get a feel for “the current,” as I used to call it back then; the overall sentiment of the room. I would watch what made people stop and look at the different tables—I would even pretend I was a regular attendee at the event and walk by my own table just to think about what I could put there that would catch my own personal attention. I listened closely, watched consumer behavior, and used those insights to set up my own table.

At Wine Library, I stood behind the cash register and watched people walk through the store. What direction did they normally walk in? Where did they normally pause and stop? What wines or signs caught their attention? If I placed half bottles of champagne near the register, would people pick them up? I would use these insights to redesign the store layout for higher profitability.

When people look at my career of being an early investor in Facebook, X (Twitter), and Tumblr, and being early on advertising platforms and consumer trends, they often ask me for my “predictions” on what’s next. The truth is, I don’t predict, I just pay very close attention to what’s happening right now, and I act quicker than most. For example, I used to read every post on the forums of the Mark Squires Wine Bulletin Board in 1997, which led to an observation: Wine drinkers were starting to like Australian wines because they’re juicy. For the next five years, this category was huge for Wine Library and the wine industry as a whole.

Listening is the foundation for post-creative strategy (PCS). This is the biggest variable that informs my creative process. Once I know what the consumer cares about, I can then ideate and strategize what my marketing and sales strategy should look like. My love for listening is why I fell in love with social media at first; I could post something and get real feedback. Real, unfiltered consumer insights.

Post-creative strategy is about reading the comments on every post you put out to get an insight or an observation on consumer behaviors and interest. Did your content strike a nerve? Are people genuinely leaving positive comments because they like the content, or are they trying to virtue signal to their friends? How do the tone and tenor of your TikTok comments differ from the YouTube comments you receive? Did your content make people uncomfortable? Did they find it funny?

Once you make a piece of content for a cohort and post it, post-creative strategy is about 1) understanding how well (or how poorly) it resonated, and 2) using those insights to inform how you make your next piece of content. You might have made a video for 22–25-year-old females who just got their first job, but based on the comments, you might see that something you said in the video also resonated with older men and women who felt inclined to leave comments with advice to younger people. You might then decide to add 45–50-year-old high-income executives as part of your new

set of cohorts and make a piece of content asking them to leave advice to their younger self.

As platforms continue to evolve into an interest-graph-led algorithm, you might notice that your content gets served to groups that you might not have expected. Small variables can shift your content's trajectory of distribution—it could be the way you say a particular word; it could be a facial expression that you make. It could be something entirely unintentional. Like an accordion, your cohort categories will always be shrinking and expanding based on these observations.

You can use these insights to refine what you make for SOC and even uncover new PAC signals. PCS is about saying “Hey, we need to make more videos where we showcase our flowers in the first three seconds of the video because people are noticing them,” or “It seems like twenty-two-year-olds value flexible work environments; we need to highlight that part of our company culture.”

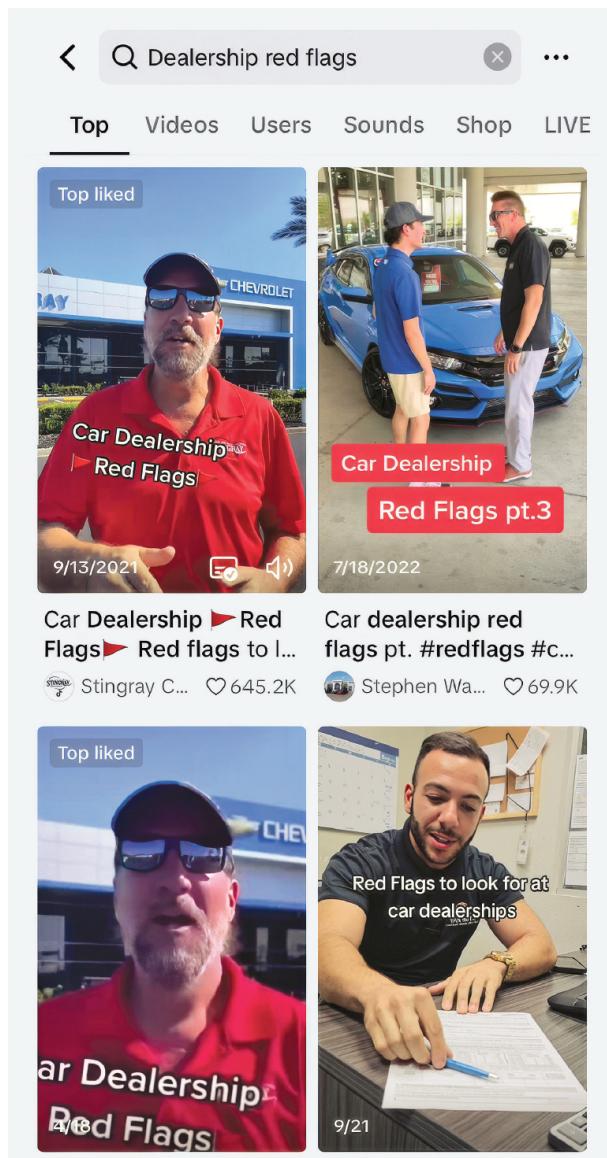
If you’re a business owner or aspiring creator, one of the best things you can do before you make your first Facebook Reel or TikTok is to spend some time scrolling through other people’s posts in your industry. Type in “car dealership,” “dentist,” or “fitness” on TikTok search. Notice the formats they’re using. Notice the themes they’re talking about. Notice what types of content are doing well, and which ones aren’t. Read their comments too. I often get DMs with questions like “I’m running out of content ideas, what should I do?” My response? Spend more time listening. You’ll be surprised by how much you can learn about consumers in your industry and what’s going through their head by browsing.

When typing in “car dealerships” on TikTok search, one of the suggested search terms was “dealership red flags.” See the following image for those search results.

If you have a car dealership, a content series titled “Car dealership red flags” could be an educational content pillar for you that might perform well on TikTok, based on this observation.

Let’s go a little deeper:

Clicking into the first video, on the top left, we see a short, seven-second video from a Florida-based car dealer. The video has 645K likes, 4.3K comments, and 22.6K saves from what we can see; clearly, it’s a piece of content that struck a nerve.



Dealership red flags, searched August 15, 2023.

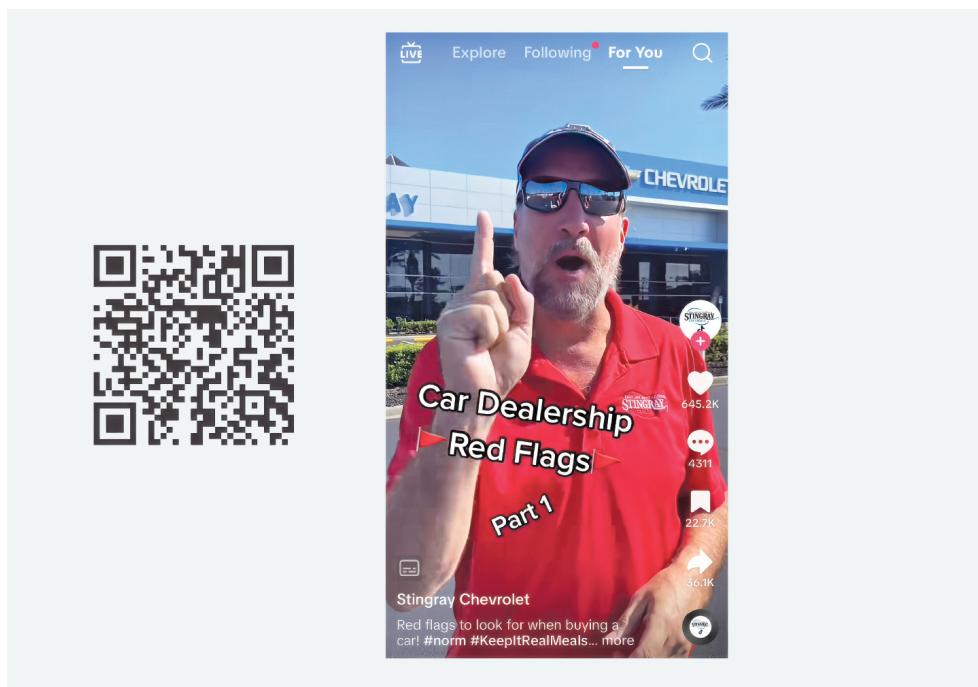
The video starts with a large title, “Car Dealership Red Flags, Part 1.” It starts off like an educational skit between a salesperson and a customer but quickly cuts short when the salesperson almost punches the customer (in a funny way) when she asks a question.

Now let's extract some post-creative strategy insights.

Reading through the comments (see the following image), it seems like the overall sentiment was generally positive, with various comments from users that signaled the video was funny.

But what led to the outsized success of this video? Here's one potential reason: Some portion of the public has negative feelings toward dealerships, and these kinds of funny videos can help humanize them. Some people view dealerships as a place for hard negotiations and stressful conversations, and this video presents that environment as a fun, casual place to be. You can see that one of the commenters even names the staff member in the skit, as did the original poster's account when they replied to the second comment.

The fact that “car dealership red flags” was already a popular search term means that a lot of people probably feel stressed-out or anxious walking into these dealerships in the first place.



98gabs98
i have a blue trax & didn't get punched by norm. i feel betrayed by my dealership 😞
2021-9-13 Reply 3837 View 12 replies

Teej
So you handin our free fades? Where's the red flag
2021-9-13 Reply 6307

Stingray Chevrolet · Creator
Norm hands out free fades all day long
2021-9-13 Reply 2811

Based on that PCS insight, if you're in this industry maybe you could experiment with funny back-and-forth involving certain customers or staff members who are willing to role-play funny scenarios. You could also work on building up the personal brands of the individuals who work at your dealership, so your audience feels affinity toward them as well as your company.

Post-creative strategy is about coming up with these kinds of human behavior observations based on the qualitative data.

From a SOC and PAC standpoint, we can analyze this piece of content further:

Since videos automatically repeat from the beginning once you finish watching them on TikTok, it could be that short skits like the one above have a better chance of getting high watch-time rates (and therefore greater distribution on the platform). The first three seconds of this video also had a large, noticeable title that gets people curious—people always want to know what to “look out for” in their day-to-day lives, and this video plays into that. The person in the video says the title out loud, which can help reinforce the title and add to the strength of the hook.

If you're struggling to think of what content to create, you'll find the answers through listening. Platforms like Reddit or Quora are also fruitful grounds to gather PCS insights—you can see what kinds of questions people are asking in different categories, within different topics and

subreddits. You could answer those questions in video form on social media.

As you begin to deeply understand your audience and the audience of companies that are slightly “adjacent” to your category, you can start getting into some exciting territory. For example, you can begin to strategically think about collaborations, and cross-promote your communities with other influencers, brands, and businesses. This is something that many personal brands, thought leaders, and creators tend to do well—by going on someone else’s podcast in a category close to yours, you can get exposure to their audience and create affinity with some of them.

At VaynerMedia, we have a job title called “post-creative strategist.” Their primary job is to read every comment that our clients’ posts get and make observations from those comments that inform our overall content strategy. I think of these strategists as “anthropologists” or “psychologists”—regardless of whether they have that formal background in education or not, they need to have the curiosity and empathy to interpret the human reactions from the comments. You can also think of them as contemporary journalists who are doing the research for an article.

This is different from how brands today approach strategy and creative. Normally, strategy happens in a silo—a strategist might go and do research for a month (for example) on her own looking at research reports, and then hand those findings off to a creative who will then make a high-budget commercial based on that research. When you’re day trading attention in the modern world, the PCS role is critical (whether you do it yourself or you hire someone) because it helps you produce both quantity and quality. You define your cohorts, produce a volume of SOC for them based on PAC insights, amplify the winners with media, and learn from the comments so you can do even better marketing going forward.

Once you get in the habit of reading the comments, the next step is to get in and engage. In 2017, I talked about a concept called the \$1.80 strategy. The premise behind this was to leave your “two cents” (your opinion or your overall thoughts—not spam or generic comments like “follow me”) on ninety posts a day to build awareness through comments. As I’m writing this in 2023, it’s still more relevant than ever. Replying to your comments has always been essential as it builds community and a

relationship with your audience. But today, I believe that comments *are* a form of content.

On LinkedIn, replying to the comments on your posts is especially valuable because when you leave a comment, it's more likely that your people will see that post for a second time in their feed as LinkedIn bumps it up again. Each time you leave a comment on your post (or reply to one), the entire post gets resurfaced in your followers' and connections' feeds.

A screenshot of a LinkedIn conversation. Ambreen Nadeem, a Bestselling Author and Top 10 Rising Stars of LinkedIn Keynote, posted 6 days ago: "So true Matt Higgins idea itself is nothing unless it is worked upon." Matt Higgins, CEO and Cofounder at RSE Ventures and WSJ Bestseller, responded 6 days ago: "Exactly. The value of an idea lies in the effort and action put into making it a tangible outcome." There are 6 likes and 2 replies to Ambreen's comment, and 2 likes to Matt's reply.

It also helps build depth and relationship with your audience, especially when you can use your reply to build on what they say. For example, notice how Matt Higgins didn't just reply "I agree" to this LinkedIn comment above—he expanded on top of it.

On platforms like TikTok, some of your comments might get more likes than some of your videos. Back to our earlier example with the car dealership, they received 2.8K likes on their comment reply alone, which is more than some of the other videos on their TikTok account.

Tone matters, too. Notice how Wendy's built a reputation on snarkiness, as we see here:



When you reply to someone's comment or leave a comment on another account's post, make sure that it's meaningful. Bring value. Be thoughtful, funny, smart, clever, informative; add to the conversation. Leaving generic responses like "cool video" or replying with some fire emojis is nice but won't do as much for you to help you stand out and build awareness.

Comments sections across platforms have their own capabilities and features that you can take advantage of in your content strategy. Fill in the following chart to audit each platform's comments section capabilities at the time you're reading this.

As we're getting through to the end of part 3, take a step back for a minute and think through which of the core variables come most naturally to you, and which ones seem challenging. Do you feel like you can intuitively understand the reactions of human beings in the comments, and use that to make your next piece of content? Are you naturally strategic in your thought process? Are you naturally curious about understanding what

content works on one platform but not another and why? Are you excited about understanding the psychology of your consumer segmentations?

If you have a B2B company with zero presence on social, maybe your first step right now is to figure out what podcast you're going to start based on the consumer segments you're trying to get as clients. Later you can revisit the SOC and PAC sections of this book as you turn that footage into clips to distribute across platforms.

Comments section worksheet: Fill this out on your own						
						
Pin comments						
Post image in comments						
GIF reply						
Post video in comments (and/or reply to comments with video)						
Add clickable link in comments						
Add comments to favorites						
Send comment through DM						

If you're at a place where you're posting once or twice a week, you could start by getting up to four times a day so you give yourself more opportunities to gather data on what's working and what's not. Then you can revisit the Amplification section to see how you can reach a bigger audience.

If you're a local business that's already been putting out content for a while, maybe you could try out the influencer marketing approach and find

the best micro-influencers in your area for in-store events or just broader promotion.

If you're at a Fortune 500 or Fortune 1000 brand that leads with TV commercials as the biggest part of the marketing campaign, maybe you could read through the SOC, PAC, and Amplification sections to see how you can use social to build brand and get marketing insights to help make even better commercials.

If you're already making content and posting regularly, you could pay more attention to the SOC and PAC sections to think through how your content is being optimized for the platform and think through amplification strategies to turn your high-performing organic content into direct-response assets to drive sales.

Don't try to boil the ocean right away. Just start from wherever you're at.

OceanofPDF.com

Part 4

Platform Overview

Think about the different friend circles and groups you're a part of:

You've got your work friends. Your core high school friends. Your family. Your local community tennis club.

As you hang out with each of these different groups of people, chances are you're a slightly different version of yourself. You're still you, but you're in a different mindset based on the context of the group you're in. The environment plays a role too. Think about the dynamic if you were to hang out with your work friends at a bar or five-star restaurant, compared to sitting with them in a boardroom while pitching to a client. It would be very different. Same human beings. Different mindset.

Since social platforms just scale human behavior that already exists, the same concept applies there too. Humans adapt their behavior to the context of the environment they're in, and each social platform is a different environment with different context, features, and capabilities. That means you need to change how you show up on each platform.

In this sense, different platforms give you the opportunity not only to capture more attention, but also to show slightly different sides of yourself, your business, or your brand. You'll also build a deeper relationship with people who see your content on multiple platforms. It's like this: If you only talk to a friend at work, you wouldn't have as deep of a relationship as you would if you also grabbed drinks with them a few times. If people see your long-form podcast interviews on YouTube and a few twenty-second thoughtful clips on YouTube Shorts and TikTok, they'll have a more

complete picture of who you are or what you do. Of course, this also leads to increased relevance, which leads to sales.

If you don't take the time to understand the context of each platform, your content will be less effective at best, and awkward and off-putting at worst.

That's what this section will help you with. As you begin putting the core variables from [part 3](#) into practice, you'll start getting a feel for platform differences. The following pages will give you an overview of what makes each platform unique, and how you can use that uniqueness to your advantage.

TikTok

Many 40–50-year-olds today dress the way they do because they were subconsciously or consciously influenced by hip-hop culture. When I was growing up in the 1980s, the average forty-nine-year-old adult didn't wear baseball caps with jeans and sneakers as their day-to-day outfit, especially not to work. Over the years as hip-hop culture penetrated all different demographics, it has affected everything we do in society—from the clothes we wear to the slang we use in conversations.

If you were around in the 1980s and dismissed the rise of hip-hop as a “fad” or just another “kids’ trend,” you would have missed out on a rare opportunity to understand a genre that would influence consumer behavior for the next several decades. Those learnings might have had a life-changing impact on your advertising strategy and your business as a whole.

Just as hip-hop influenced behavior in society at large, TikTok has influenced the way people communicate. TikTok has impacted everything from the size and dimensions of video content to the tone and slang people use when talking to each other. If you've mastered the skill of making content that overperforms on TikTok, you'll likely be able to make content that overperforms on other platforms too (even though each platform still has its own contextual nuances).

Unfortunately, many creators, businesses, and brands across the spectrum dismissed the rise of TikTok in the early days of the platform. Back when I was aggressively putting out content in 2019 and telling people to start posting on TikTok, I heard all kinds of comments:

“This is a fad.” “It’s for kids and my customer isn’t on it.” “Will TikTok even last?” “I don’t want to lip-sync or dance.”

At the time, I had a few responses to these concerns:

1. If you had invested time and resources into making TikTok content and it did disappear for whatever reason, the learnings would translate to other platforms. For example, I spent a lot of time on SocialCam, where users could capture and share videos online and on mobile. It was there that I learned how to create vertical video content; those learnings translated to other platforms like Instagram and Vine, and it was a big reason my content there performed exceptionally well on Instagram from 2017–19. The short-form nature of Vine was what helped me understand some of the dynamics I see working in TikTok content.
2. Even if a platform turns out to be a “fad” and goes away, you’d still retain the brand value that you captured by putting out content there. When you get brand value, people will still find you wherever consumer attention moves next. Diddy still trades on the brand value he got from showing up on MTV. King Bach was successful on Vine first, before building his brand further on other platforms after Vine disappeared. When brands run TV commercials on networks with popular shows, they don’t get caught up in questions like “What if the show gets canceled?” They milk the attention while it’s there. In fact, platforms like Facebook and X (Twitter) have been around longer than hit TV shows like *Seinfeld* and *M*A*S*H* were.
3. If a platform does stick around, usually it expands its user base to many different demographics. In that case, it would be smart to get on it early and get a sense for how to make content on the platform. The same people who said “TikTok is for kids lip-syncing” would have said “Facebook is just for college kids.” Later, they would have had to catch up.

Many of those who jumped on TikTok in 2019 and 2020 experienced incredible growth in both brand and sales. Charli D’Amelio began posting in May 2019 and has amassed 151.1 million followers at the time of writing. It was a combination of her dance talent and the fact that she

jumped on the platform early. I even got emails from niche businesses—like cement contractors—who scored big deals with the help of their TikTok content. Can you imagine that?

The platform more than doubled its user base from 2019 to 2021, aging up as it grew. Exact numbers vary, but according to TikTok’s CEO, the average TikTok user in the US is an adult well past college age.¹⁵ If you haven’t started posting on TikTok yet or you’re still doing only one to two posts a week, it’s time to ramp up—regardless of whether you’re an influencer, a lawyer, or a Fortune 1000 brand.

I’ve been fascinated by this platform since the early days of Musical.ly, when I invited two stars from the platform on the show in 2016 for *AskGaryVee* Episode 198. Musical.ly intrigued me for a number of reasons; at the time, they were reaching such a young demographic, even kids in first grade. With more kids using devices like iPhones and iPads, I felt that a platform that was able to capture the attention of the youth would also have the potential to age up to older demographics (similar to how Facebook started with college kids before building a much broader user base).

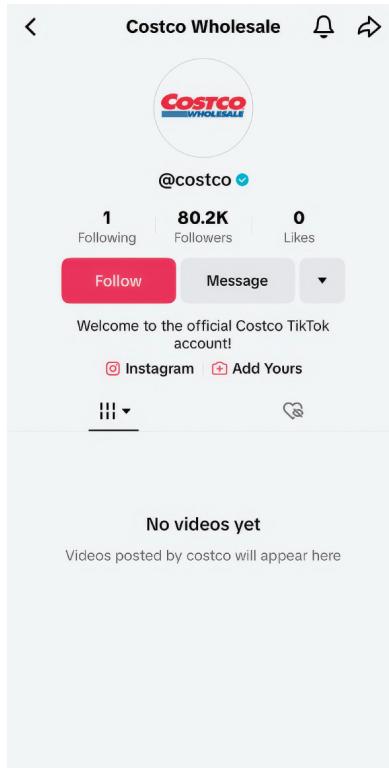
Musical.ly’s early success also had a lot to do with the fact that it provided utility. It wasn’t just a social network; it solved a problem. It gave people access to features like video speed control, filters, audio, and other tools that made it easier to make content. Even if you weren’t the best at lip syncing, you could still use those tools to express yourself and make content. At the time, I thought the platform had staying power similar to Snapchat, given that they had a similar user base.

That ended up playing out in 2017, when TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance, acquired Musical.ly, and later merged it with TikTok. Over time, TikTok became the leader of all modern social platforms; at the time of writing, they’re the highest-ranked app on Apple’s App Store out of all the main platforms in this book. It’s largely thanks to the technology behind their For You page, which is built to surface content based on themes you’re interested in rather than the people you follow—which is the basis for the modern advertising strategies I’m talking about in this book. To compete in the war for consumer attention, every platform is now trying to copy TikTok’s For You page in an attempt to keep users on their platforms for longer (by surfacing content they actually want to consume).

Through their groundbreaking algorithm, TikTok also gave rise to a relatively new phenomenon: interest-based communities. In the past,

communities would often gather around personalities and brands, and they still do. However, now because of how content is distributed on TikTok, there are large groups of people who are fans of genres like “#booktok,” “#corporatetok,” “#sportstok,” “#winetok,” and more. Two different people may have entirely different For You pages based on their interests—this creates inside jokes and community-specific slang that only exists with certain genres of content. There are both broad trends that spread across TikTok as a whole, as well as interest-specific trends that only people interested in a specific category would be familiar with. Putting out relevant content will help you land in the right For You pages.

For Fortune 500 brands, this presents a huge opportunity for community engagement; some brands may even have established TikTok hashtags around their name with content uploaded from the community that they could engage with. At the time of writing, the hashtag #costco has 12.1 billion views, and #costcotiktok has 2.3 billion views, for example, but their TikTok account has zero posts (see below).



That's a missed opportunity for community building, and it's happening at scale across many large brands.

When users are on TikTok, they're often in a lighthearted mindset, which puts them in the mood for casual, fun content. That doesn't mean you need to dance or be funny; lightheartedness can take many different forms. Maybe it means you type out the title of your video in the app itself, so the font style looks more casual and less "produced." If you're doing an interview series, maybe you could switch up the scene for one of your interviews and film it outside on the park bench instead of in your normal studio, to give it a more casual feel even if you're talking about more serious topics. You could try using more emojis in your copy. You could try using a more casual tone and relatable language through what you're saying. You could use trending templates from CapCut. There are a lot of different ways to do it—experiment for yourself and see what works.

Here are some other factors to consider when you're making TikTok content:

Pay extra attention to the first three seconds of your video.

This matters for every platform, but it matters even more for TikTok—the first three seconds are when a user decides whether your content is relevant to him or her, or not. At the time of writing, it's one of the biggest factors behind how widely your video gets distributed in the For You page, and who it gets distributed to.

This is where you need to call out your cohort segments directly, add titles that hook people to watch your video, state your strong points of view, or add creative camera angle movements that create curiosity. The first three seconds are where you need to show the audience that your video is something they want to watch. One strategy to consider is to make the opening of the video a little more broadly relatable, while the rest of your video remains narrow to what you want to talk about. You might reach some unexpected audiences that way and create relevance with a wider range of people without compromising the "depth" of your content.

The same applies to other content formats that show promise on TikTok at the time of writing—such as carousels, photos, live streaming, and stories. Create curiosity and show that your content is relevant to the people you're trying to reach and do it as fast as humanly possible.

Use TikTok search to find community-specific trends and creative formats.

As I've mentioned a few times in this book, TikTok search can be the ideal place to do consumer research to find popular creative styles for your content. If you have a company that sells office supplies, you can literally type in "office supplies" in TikTok search, and do research. Find out what types of content that group is interested in, what concerns they have, and what they care about.

Search capabilities exist on every platform, but at the time of writing, TikTok and YouTube have the most advanced search features out of all the platforms in this book. You can use search to find common trends and the kinds of language people use within your category. That research could impact how you make content on all platforms.

Interact with the community through comments and video replies.

Comments are a form of content, especially on TikTok.

If you search terms related to your category, watch a bunch of videos, like a few posts, and follow some accounts, you'll get more of those types of posts in your For You page. That'll give you a chance to leave thoughtful comments on posts as they're still getting distribution (which would then lead to more awareness for your comment, and by proxy your own account).

Through video replies, you can build a deeper relationship with the people who comment on your own posts as well, and show viewers that you're listening, which may incentivize even more comments.

Regardless of what your business is, you have to put in the time to get good at making TikTok content. It'll help you make better content for other platforms too.

Instagram

Like TikTok, Instagram is another platform that started out with baked-in utility. Just as Musical.ly and TikTok made people better video editors, Instagram turned people into photographers overnight.

In the early days of the app, photo sharing was a popular function among social platforms. Apps like Path and Tumblr, which were built on this functionality, were also hot back then, as well as Facebook, which had a large percentage of user interactions related to photo sharing at the time. It was one of the reasons why I went on the record in 2011 and said that Facebook was going to buy Instagram.

That following year in April, Facebook did end up buying Instagram for \$1 billion; I thought it was a steal, as I mentioned on Piers Morgan's show on CNN the next day after the acquisition, but most of the public thought otherwise. To me it was a no-brainer; Facebook took just a tiny fraction of their market cap at the time to take out a fast-growing competitor and brought them into the fold, and the results have played out. People eventually came around, especially after Facebook offered \$3 billion for Snapchat in 2013, and acquired WhatsApp for \$19 billion in 2014.

Over time, Instagram continued to add more features beyond just photo sharing. In 2013 they added video-sharing capabilities. In 2016 they added Stories as a feature after the success of Snapchat Stories (and Facebook's failed attempt to buy Snapchat). They also added live streaming, and later added IGTV as a video feature to build long-form video dynamics similar to YouTube (which was later rebranded to Instagram video). Today Instagram has a wide range of creative units—including Instagram Reels, long-form videos, carousels, images, stories, guides, and more.

Imagine you were a 20–40-year-old living in 1995; on an average day, you'd be reading newspapers, listening to the radio, watching TV, and reading magazines—I think of Instagram as all those mediums wrapped up into one. It's like a "one-stop shop" where people can find all different types of content—they can scroll through images (like a print magazine), they can watch long-form videos (like a full TV show), or they can get value through short-form content (similar to reading a magazine or newspaper article). Instagram is like a "catch-all" for a variety of consumption patterns and content formats—it's like the information and entertainment portal for the world (Facebook has similarities for a slightly older demographic).

Instagram has been making its own push to rival TikTok with interest graph technology—through the Explore page, the Reels tab, and suggested posts in the home feed, they're surfacing more content based on what you're interested in. Given Instagram's maturity as a platform and the

changes happening in the algorithm, a lot of creators and businesses have seen their organic reach on the platform steadily decline. It's a natural part of the process. It doesn't mean Instagram doesn't work; **it just means you need to get better at it.**

Here's what you need to consider to win in Instagram's current environment:

Mix up your creative styles.

Instagram has surpassed 2 billion monthly active users—at the time of writing, that's more than the publicly available figures for TikTok, Snapchat, X (Twitter), and LinkedIn. When you're navigating a mature, established platform like Instagram, there's naturally going to be a higher supply of content and ads in people's feeds. When there's a higher supply of content, you need to be much more strategic about everything you make so that it stands out (especially when demand for content remains the same or declines, with Instagram users shifting over to TikTok and other platforms).

When you're getting lower views on your content than you're used to, it's a sign that you need to switch things up. Change up your creative styles, formats, or even the topics you talk about. Instead of only doing Instagram Reels, try more images. If you've been doing images and videos, try more carousels. Try different platform strategies too; for example, when you're posting Reels, maybe try sharing them in the Reels tab only (without sharing them in-feed). Try posting at different times.

At the time of writing, one strategy my team and I have been experimenting with is sharing videos within the second tile of a carousel, with the first tile being a meme or another image. So far, we've been seeing that the carousel version generally reaches more accounts compared to just sharing the video by itself as a reel. We've also been trying graphics that start with "The person who sent you this wants you to know . . ." and finishing with a specific message because we've noticed that getting more "shares" on a post creates dramatic uptick in overall reach. If you would've told me that those posts would be the ones that would reach a million accounts consistently on my page, I wouldn't have believed you. That speaks for the importance of trying different things—you can't always predict the formats that are going to work.

Utilize the range of creative units available.

Instagram has a wide range of creative units, all of which can help you reach different audiences. Carousels, stories, and images can help you reach and engage your existing followers, primarily (at the time of writing). Instagram Reels can help you reach more nonfollowers (at the time of writing). Your broadcast channel can help you reach people directly in their messages. You could also do live streams with guests to reach their audience.

Utilizing all creative units is good advice for any platform you're on, but it will likely result in even more benefits on Instagram because different creative units will help you reach different segments of consumers. If you're only posting Reels and nothing else, you might be missing out on engaging more of your followers. If you're only posting images and carousels, you're probably missing out on potential nonfollower reach. If you're not using stories, you're missing out on sharing a higher volume of content that could give followers a better sense for who you are (such as reshares from X [Twitter] or other more casual content).

Pay extra attention to your Instagram profile hygiene.

Since Instagram is the “catch-all” for content consumption, you can think of your Instagram profile as a modern “home page” for your internet presence. Make sure your Instagram profile is set up properly; have your website linked, have a full bio that describes what you do, and utilize the Highlights feature to showcase different aspects of you or your business. Set up a broadcast channel that people can join where you send valuable, infrequent updates. If you have a phone number that you want people to text, you can set that up in your profile too.

The accounts that you're following can also give people an indication of what all you do. For example, if you have a restaurant in multiple different cities and you have accounts for each one, make sure each account is following the others to create more awareness.

The bottom line is, if you want to win on Instagram, you have to really step up your game. There's a difference between being good at basketball in sixth grade versus college versus the professional league. In a 2024 world, Instagram is now the professional league.

X (Twitter)

X (which I'll refer to as Twitter in this section) holds a special place in my heart because of the impact it had on my early career, and it could hold the same potential for you too. Twitter is how I built my brand from 2007 to 2011, when I was working in Wine Library and nobody knew who I was. I would reply to tweets for hours and hours every day on topics that I had opinions about.

At the time, Twitter was the only platform where you could jump into a stranger's post and leave a reply without coming off as creepy. Of course, now all platforms have that privilege, since that content now revolves around your interests more than your friends.

However, Twitter is still the water-cooler of our society. It's the place where people go to share opinions and hot takes about the world today, just like they would at a cocktail party. For brands, businesses, and creators, that means participating in relevant conversations, and using the platform to listen to what consumers care about.

Out of all the platforms in this book, Twitter is the one that has changed the least since I wrote *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook*. Meta is a very different company compared to the early days of Facebook. Amazon transformed into a totally different company since it was founded. The same with Netflix, which started as a DVD rental-by-mail service in 1997. Up until last year (2022), Twitter was still very similar to the platform I signed up for in 2007. Outside of a few changes, such as the addition of Spaces and X Premium (formerly Twitter Blue), the product is largely the same.

When Elon Musk acquired Twitter in 2022 and later renamed it X, everyone was asking me what I thought; I know there's a lot of conversation happening around topics like freedom of speech and who Elon is personally. As a businessman and marketer focused on day trading attention, I'll instead focus my insights where I think I can provide you value. What I'm excited about with the acquisition is how Twitter is going to innovate in the future, and what all they could do given that they essentially own the "town hall" of the internet.

For example, I've always believed that they could launch a streaming service, similar to Hulu or Netflix. When we watch trending shows on Netflix, many of us go to Twitter to share our thoughts; why not build an OTT service directly into the platform?

There has also been some speculation that Musk will bring back Vine; while I have no idea whether that's going to happen or not, I do think that would make a lot of sense. Vine was the platform that popularized short-form video consumption as we know it today, back when it launched in January 2013. In many ways, Vine was the true originator of every platform's strategy nowadays. Integrating Vine back into Twitter or relaunching Vine as a stand-alone app could be a viable play.

Here are some things you should keep in mind on this platform as you integrate it into your strategy:

Use Twitter to listen.

Twitter advanced search is still an incredibly effective tool. Brands can literally type in their brand name, find out what people are saying about them, and jump into conversations. You can search terms related to products or topics in your category to help inform your content strategy across platforms.

This is exactly how I gathered data on what wines people liked, and what consumers were saying about them. I would search topics on summize.com, which Twitter later acquired and used as the underlying technology for Twitter search. I would literally type in "chardonnay" and read through what people were saying. If somebody said something like "I'm going to wine country this weekend to drink some chardonnay," I would reply with a comment like "What kind of chardonnay do you like?" They would reply with a brand. I might hit them back and say, "That brand is overpriced." The convo would keep going back and forth from there. It was an opportunity for one-on-one relationship building. I would literally do this for hours and hours every day to build brand.

It also led to consumer insights. What were people thinking about merlot? I was just one search away from finding out. When I found out that people didn't like merlot at the time and liked pinot noir instead (influenced by the movie *Sideways*), I incorporated those insights into my content. It might have dictated a term I used in a YouTube video, or a theme I decided to cover.

I do the same thing to this day. Because there's so much conversation happening on Twitter around so many different topics, you can use the search function to get a pulse on what "the world" is thinking and feeling. It

could help you learn more about the cohorts you’re trying to reach or a cultural trend you might want to tie into your content.

Listening can also open unique opportunities for customer service, and surprise and delight.

Since people turn to Twitter to post about their strong opinions, that also means they’re more likely to share their experiences with different products and services. Negativity unfortunately happens to be louder than positivity, so people are more inclined to share negative experiences. At the same time, they’re also just one post away from sharing amazing experiences with the world too.

Check out this post, for example, from a Chewy customer:

Anna Brose, MSc
@alcesanna

I contacted [@Chewy](#) last week to see if I could return an unopened bag of my dog's food after he died. They 1) gave me a full refund, 2) told me to donate the food to the shelter, and 3) had flowers delivered today with the gift note signed by the person I talked to?? 😭😊

12:35 AM · Jun 15, 2022

40.6K Reposts 7,728 Quotes 695.4K Likes 5,758 Bookmarks

Searching your brand’s name and surprising people with giveaways, answering questions, or being extra kind when someone posts about a frustrating experience can lead to positive word of mouth on this platform.

Post at a high volume.

I always encourage people to post multiple times a day across platforms, but Twitter is one place where you have permission to post at an exceptionally high volume. Even 10–20+ times a day is considered “okay” if you have the capacity to do so.

With a higher volume of tweets, you can try different quotes and messaging styles to see what gets more likes, reposts, replies, and overall impressions. For those of you who are strong writers, posting threads or just writing long posts with X Premium could be a format that suits your strengths. You can always repurpose your Facebook status updates,

LinkedIn text posts, or YouTube Community tab text posts into posts on Twitter.

The bottom line here is, not a lot has changed, but don't underestimate this platform. There's a huge opportunity for listening to the market as well as getting new eyeballs on your content if you play it right.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn was launched in 2003 as a professional networking platform, used primarily for job searching and recruitment in the early days. What started as a tool for job seekers and recruiters has become one of the most important platforms for marketers.

Today, an enormous number of people go on LinkedIn to get information through articles, news, and other content. The platform continues to remind me of Facebook in 2012, a time when businesses and brands saw high organic reach through Facebook Fan Pages. Though the interest graph algorithm isn't as optimized on LinkedIn (at the time of writing) compared to TikTok, organic reach remains high.

LinkedIn is a gold mine for entrepreneurs, creators, executives, and especially B2B companies and professional service providers. When people are on the platform, they're in a business and career mindset; it's like the "library" or the "boardroom" of social networks. If you're selling to senior corporate executives or selling a super-niche product that you're struggling to storytell around in places like TikTok and X (Twitter), then LinkedIn may be the place for you.

But it's also a secret weapon for the average business that sells to normal, everyday consumers, such as those selling fitness equipment, wine, clothing, or anything else. Content creators often think of LinkedIn as a cringey, weird, old social network and stay away from it as a result. That's fine, if you want to leave opportunities on the table.

If you're a true practitioner of day trading attention, you know that you need to be wherever people's eyes and ears are, and attention is definitely on LinkedIn. Regardless of whether you're selling to consumers or businesses, you're selling to human beings, and those human beings are on this platform. Make content relevant to a LinkedIn psychology, post consistently, and watch what happens.

Just keep the following points in mind:

Know the difference between company pages and profiles.

LinkedIn users have personal profiles, while companies have their own pages on LinkedIn. Both can create content, but at the time of writing, content from personal profiles tends to get more organic distribution on the platform compared to content from company pages.

It would be smart to have a presence on both; if you're a financial advisor with your own firm, you should be putting out content on both your personal profile and the company page of your firm. In fact, building personal brands around human beings at your company is a strategy I'm passionate about—it would lead to a lot more lead generation for businesses than they realize.

Treat LinkedIn as a content platform, not just a sales engine.

LinkedIn is unique in that it lets users have both “connections” and “followers.” Connections are done one-to-one, with people you reach out to (or who reach out to you). Followers are people who can see your content without connecting with you.

A lot of LinkedIn interactions today go something like this:

You get a connection request from someone, you accept, and boom: They immediately message you with a sales pitch for a “consultation call.”

Instead of immediately selling to people through private messages and using LinkedIn as an extension of cold emailing or cold calling, consider using the platform as a place to distribute content, and use private messages to build relationships. Don’t go in for the sale right away.

Connect with people whom you want to reach, and then make relevant content that they’d want to consume. When you distribute content on LinkedIn, it’s more likely that your connections and followers will see your posts. Engage them through your content, create relevance, and then run over performing content as an ad through your company page (tweaked for lead-gen or sales purposes).

As a bonus, when LinkedIn users engage with your posts, your post will also show up in the feeds of *their* connections and followers. If you’re selling to people with the title VP of Engineering, you can literally connect with them one-on-one and make content that they’d want to engage with,

which would then distribute your post to their network (which likely also includes similar executives you'd want to reach).

When you're making content for LinkedIn, remember to sprinkle in stories about your personal life, your passions, hobbies, and other parts of you that you might not think are "professional." Help people get to know you as a human being as well as your expertise in what you have to offer, and they'll be more likely to do business with you.

Pay extra attention to your copy.

When users are in a business and career mindset, they're more in the mood to read information, just like they read emails or documents at work. This makes your copy on LinkedIn even more important. Regardless of whether you're sharing an image, a video, a PDF, or any other content format, try to add long, thorough copy that provides context.

LinkedIn also offers native articles and newsletters as creative units, which you should absolutely be leveraging.

Use the targeting capabilities of LinkedIn's ad product.

LinkedIn ads tend to be more expensive than ads on other platforms in this book. However, because of their narrow targeting capabilities and the psychology of users when they're on the platform, it has the potential to drive more leads and conversions than other platforms, especially if you're in a specialized industry.

You can target people by job title, seniority, and even the company they work for (among other options). Imagine how nuanced your content can be if you're able to know the names of the individuals whom you're targeting at specific organizations, through LinkedIn search. It's a marketer's gift.

The bottom line for LinkedIn? For influencers and creators, stop thinking you're too cool for it. For businesses and brands, treat it as a content platform, and build up the human beings in your company the best you can. Again, LinkedIn is a gold mine for those who know how to use it.

Facebook

Facebook might be one of the most underestimated and underutilized platforms in this book.

Facebook's the platform all of us are familiar with; it created a monumental culture shift in the early days of social media as the first social platform that most marketers considered to be "legitimate." With roughly 3 billion monthly active users at the time of writing (making it the largest platform in this book), I rarely hear comments from people saying their "customer isn't on Facebook" like I did a decade ago. I'm not kidding; it's the largest platform in this book.

However, most contemporary content creators—especially the ones winning on TikTok and Instagram—are dramatically underestimating the power of Facebook. In their eyes, it's their "mom's social media app." It's the same as businesspeople saying "TikTok is just for kids." It misses the point, and it leads to a lot of untapped opportunities.

Today, a lot of people thirty-plus years old still use the same slang as teenagers or people in their early twenties, as a result of social platforms today. It's what I call the Youthification of Society; if you look at the behavior of a forty-year-old man or woman today, it resembles that of a twenty-five-year-old just a couple of decades ago. Even if Facebook is "your mom and dad's social media app," they're not too far away from being valuable audience members for content creators and influencers that would normally focus on TikTok and Instagram.

Because of the wide range of people on Facebook, and how mature it is as a platform, it's fertile ground for a variety of different businesses, creators, and brands to take advantage of. B2B companies can market to an older audience of executives and stakeholders. If you're a local business, you need to pay extra attention to this platform—when people check Facebook, they're in a mindset of seeing what their high school and college friends are up to. This also puts users in a "hometown," "local" state of mind. They'll be more receptive to businesses that feel "close to home." Not to mention, Facebook will let you run ads to users within a certain mile radius of a location (such as your store). Following the model in this book, you can post organic Facebook Reels, let the algorithm do its thing, and tweak the overperformers to be more sales focused and run them as ads in your area.

I believe that overall, Facebook as a company has been making thoughtful moves when it comes to developing their platform and their

brand. In 2021, they introduced Meta, which brings together all their apps and products under one umbrella. I felt that the rebrand to Meta was a game of both offense and defense—it was a defensive move in that Facebook itself was skewing older in its user base and it had been around for a long time, and the name could be associated with an old, outdated product. Fresh branding also helped given all the pressure Facebook was receiving from a political front.

From an offensive standpoint, I believe that the company's greatest strength over the years has been going to where consumer attention actually is. They bought Instagram, they bought WhatsApp, they tried to buy Snapchat, and now they're building the foundation for the metaverse. Meta is playing the same game as I am, and the game I'm hoping you will play: day trading attention.

Keep these points in mind when making Facebook content:

Be sure to mix Facebook Reels into your strategy.

For several years, Facebook went through a period of declined organic reach—like every platform, as they got more mature and the supply of content grew, the attention on each individual piece of content decreased. In the early days of Facebook “Fan Pages” (now just called Facebook Pages), organic reach was high in the first several years, until around 2011–14.

Facebook had to make choices about what content they serve to users first, as most platforms have to do as they grow in maturity and size.

Facebook’s EdgeRank algorithm was the first major change in this direction. Until 2009, Facebook’s feed showed content chronologically; users would log in and see posts from their friends and pages in the order in which they were posted. The EdgeRank algorithm would analyze your interactions on various posts and use that data to decide what to show you first.

As the algorithm continued to evolve over the years and prioritize relevance, pages started seeing less organic reach, and over time, media publishers and brands stopped giving Facebook the attention it deserves as a platform.

However, as Facebook develops its own interest graph algorithm similar to TikTok and comes up with new creative units, organic reach on the platform is back. Businesses, brands, creators, and influencers have the

potential to reach millions of people that don't follow them. Search the platform for Reels related to your business, see what creative formats are working, and start becoming a practitioner.

Use Facebook's analytics to get more strategic.

Like Instagram, Facebook has a wide range of creative units available. From text posts to Reels to GIFs to notes to live streams, there are different ways to engage people on the platform that you need to be experimenting with.

It also offers some of the most comprehensive analytics tools to measure performance, second only to YouTube if we compare it to other platforms in this book at the time of writing. Here are some of the analytics you can see (at the time of writing) on Facebook Reels alone:

- Audience retention
- Performance by the hour, in terms of engagement and minutes viewed
- Followers reached versus nonfollowers reached
- How your reel performed compared to the averages on your account, broken down by average three-second views, average minutes viewed, and average reactions, comments, and shares

Facebook also lets you natively A/B test organic content, so you can try, say, two different versions of a text post with two different sentences in your first line and actually see which wording performs best.

The reason I emphasize creative experimentation so much is that many businesses are still running the same old marketing playbook from ten years ago on Facebook. Barbershops continue to post a random picture of their building with “good evening” in the copy or post a random meme with zero connection to the business. Many businesses haven’t had practice using the current features of the platform to create more relevant content. **At the end of the day, it is my belief that over 90 percent of the content on social media lacks any level of strategy, even when the goal is to drive business outcomes, which is the biggest reason why I thought it was time to write this book.**

Use Facebook groups to engage communities.

At the time of writing, posting in groups on Facebook is an overlooked opportunity that can help businesses build brand. If you engage in Facebook groups (or even create your own) with the intent of bringing value as opposed to spamming people to buy something, you'd be surprised at the kind of relationships you can build.

It's no different than going to a chamber of commerce to network with people. You don't want to be the guy at the event slinging business cards without listening to the people you're talking to; the same concept applies to Facebook groups.

The bottom line with Facebook is, organic reach is back, and it's time to start paying attention to this platform again.

YouTube

EP 1
Episode 1 – Verite
February 21, 2006

Wine Library's Director of Operations Gary Vaynerchuk launches WINE LIBRARY TV and his vision for it. He then turns his palate toward three commune-specific California Bordeaux-styled blends from the Verite Winery: Joie, Desir, and La Muse.

[2001 Verite La Muse Red Meritage](#)
[2001 Verite La Joie Red Meritage](#)
[2001 Verite Le Desir](#)

Episode 1 of *Wine Library TV* published February 21, 2006, tv.winelibrary.com.

I started *Wine Library TV* back in 2006, about two months after YouTube officially launched to the public.

I thought I was going to do something like QVC (a television network specialized in home shopping). I thought I was going to sell wine on camera for my store, similar to how businesses sell products on QVC.

As we were filming the first episode of that show, I had a lightbulb moment when the camera went on: Once I put this show on YouTube, it was going to be on the internet forever.

At that moment, I realized I didn't just want to sell wine; I wanted people to get value from watching my content—I wanted to build my reputation instead of focusing on the money. This dynamic has played out

across platforms today—people who are putting out value with good intent are winning the most. But it's especially true on YouTube, where long-form content can provide extra context on who you are, your intent, and what you have to share.

For me, YouTube was the first time I realized content could drive business. By becoming a “media company” instead of just a wine salesman, more people would become aware of Wine Library, and if they found my content or my personality meaningful, the next time they were searching for wine they might be more inclined to click on a Wine Library Google ad. It's the same principle I'm talking about in this book. By putting out relevant content, you can drive down the customer acquisition cost of your ads.

Today, YouTube remains a great platform for long-form shows. I think of it like a central entertainment hub. When on YouTube, people are in a mindset of wanting to consume television and film-like content with a scattering of TikTok-like posts through the Shorts feed. YouTube requires more production and more effort from users; when people are on YouTube, they expect higher production value.

Consider the following points as you make YouTube content:

Lean into the science behind the art.

Google's DNA had a profound impact on YouTube, since they bought the company for \$1.65 billion in 2006. YouTube has benefited from Google's strength in data analytics. At the time of writing, YouTube has the most advanced analytics capabilities of any platform in this book.

The data you can see on YouTube is comprehensive; from click-through rates on your thumbnails to audience retention graphs to seeing the percentage of people who swiped away on your Shorts without viewing them, there's a lot you can dive into. People who are winning the most on YouTube are the ones who are paying close attention to their analytics, and optimizing videos based on that. You need to be committed to understanding the small variables that make a big difference in the results your videos get.

Whether it's large text versus small text, adding someone's face on the thumbnail, the facial expression the person makes, or adding a transparent background versus solid background, it all matters. Testing variations of videos can help on any platform, but it's especially helpful on YouTube

because the platform lets you see the impact in views and click-through rates when you change your thumbnail or title. The most successful YouTubers (like Mr. Beast) are doing this at the highest levels.

There are two sides of making great content: science and art. While both matter, YouTube is the place where you'd want to lean a little more into the "science" side of things.

Use YouTube to “document” events.

The cinematic nature of YouTube makes it an ideal place for vlog (video blog) content. There's a reason why people like Casey Neistat have historically done well on this platform, and why I kept YouTube as the primary home for my vlog, *DailyVee*.

It's a place for “day in the life” style videos that document aspects of your life or business, or other higher-production “modern-day commercials.” It's especially true in a world with connected TV devices, where people can watch YouTube on television. In fact, some stats show that nearly half of YouTube viewership¹⁶ happens on TV screens—the psychology of what people expect when turning on TV is like the psychology when they're on YouTube.

Similar to TV, another way to document is through live streaming. You'd be stunned how many people would be interested in watching podcast interviews that are one to two hours or longer on YouTube. With YouTube mobile, users can keep the video playing in the background while they're doing other things on their phone, which also lets them listen passively while they're walking the dog or doing the dishes (similar to how they'd listen to actual podcasts on the podcast app).

Live streaming a long-form podcast on YouTube does two things: 1) You're live streaming a show, which is an easy way to make content, and 2) once the live stream ends, you're left with a long-form video on YouTube that you can then retitle with SEO in mind and add a smart thumbnail to it.

Optimize your videos for searchability.

Google's dominance in search carried through to YouTube over the years. Today, YouTube is the world's second-largest search engine—if you title

your videos properly with keywords in mind, your videos could show up not only in YouTube search results, but also Google search results.

This is especially valuable for those of you who provide specialized services, or B2B companies that sell specialized products.

For example, if you're a real estate agent selling homes in Newton, Massachusetts, you could make videos talking about the town and post them on YouTube with the town name in the title. When people are looking to move to the area, they'll type in things like "Schools in Newton, MA," or "Living in Newton, MA" on YouTube, and you can create awareness by popping up in those results.

If you're a B2B company, in addition to posting content on LinkedIn, you can post how-to video content on YouTube; these could be valuable for you even months or years down the line, as people in your target cohorts search those keywords.

The bottom line for YouTube: Once you've gotten off the ground and started posting a lot, use the analytics insights to your advantage, and test everything relentlessly. Be more thoughtful about your production.

Snapchat

User behavior on Snapchat is much closer to how we communicate face-to-face than any other social network.

When you pass by a friend in the hallway and say "What's up?" to him or her, that moment "disappears." For those of us who grew up in the era prior to text messaging, those minutes we spent talking to our friends on the phone every night also "disappeared." Broadcast TV also worked in a similar way, before tools like DVR came along; once the broadcast aired, that was it.

Similarly, Snapchat offered disappearing messages, which played into that dynamic. Its early appeal had to do with two fundamental human behavior truths: 1) Kids don't want to hang out in the same place as their parents, and 2) you'd prefer to lock your room instead of keeping it open.

Like every new technology, the public dismissed it at the beginning, labeling it as an app that had no other use case besides sending inappropriate messages. Over time, Snapchat came out with additional features that made it more than just a messaging platform. In 2013, they

released the groundbreaking Stories feature, where users could add their “snaps” and keep them up for twenty-four hours for their followers to see. The functionality of Stories is what separated Snapchat from other platforms in the early days; the feature itself was unique, and on top of that, it gave birth to new user behaviors such as swiping up and to the side, which were relatively new at the time. Snapchat had its big moment in 2015, when DJ Khaled got lost while riding a Jet Ski and shared his hilarious documentation of that experience on the platform. His videos went viral, received widespread press coverage, and introduced a broader audience to the platform and to him.

Just a couple of years or so after Snapchat launched, their early success led to Facebook offering to buy the app for \$3 billion, which they declined, choosing to execute on filling the social pipelines that other platforms had ignored.

Today Snapchat remains just a little different from the other platforms in this book. For one, it still hasn’t aged up as much as platforms like TikTok or Instagram. Second, it’s often used as a messaging platform more than a tool for content discovery. It continues to overindex with the young, and it’s a place where people nurture intimate relationships with their core friend group. Snapchat offers two primary methods of content discovery, at the time of writing: 1) a “Spotlight” tab, which is Snapchat’s version of the For You page, and 2) Snapchat Discover, which features content from certain publishers and influencers. Most young people typically turn to TikTok, YouTube, or Instagram to find new content before Snapchat, but this platform is still worth keeping in mind.

At the time of writing, Snapchat Spotlight offers wide variations in content performance; in other words, one of your videos could get 17 views, and another could get 100,000. All platforms have these variations to some degree with the TikTokification of social media, but Snapchat’s differences can be wider than most, depending on the kinds of content you’re putting out. It’s a sign that Snapchat is still relatively early in terms of its maturity as a content platform, which means it should be on your radar.

Of course, depending on the type of business you have, Snapchat may or may not be a priority platform for you—a company selling B2B insurance, for example, is more suited to LinkedIn and Facebook than a Snapchat environment, but I would recommend that everyone at least

maintain a presence on Snapchat. Take some of the videos you’re posting on TikTok and other platforms, make them contextual to Snapchat (say, by overlaying text on the video using in-app features), and keep posting. Be aware of the unique features that the platform offers, such as their augmented reality (AR) lens builder tools, and get practice using them. In fact, Snapchat is one of the most advanced AR platforms, and as AR still has potential to grow, this is a great place to start practicing your skills as we go into the next generation of innovation.

If you have a local business, Snapchat is a platform you should be looking into. Local-based content is very much a part of Snapchat’s DNA, which allows users to share their location with friends on a map within the app. Running ads within a small radius of your business location could potentially help you reach a new audience at a relatively low cost.

The bottom line: If TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, X (Twitter), and Facebook are all part of your “main dish,” keep Snapchat as a side dish, so that you’re not caught off guard if or when it ages up.

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Part 5

Breaking Down Content Examples

Everything we've covered so far in this book—from the core variables of modern advertising to consumer psychology on various platforms—is aimed at one thing: helping you make relevant content.

There's both science and art that goes into making quality content that people want to consume; they both matter. [Parts 3](#) and [4](#) of this book explored the “science” side, going super deep into the modern advertising framework and platform psychology. In part 5, we'll look at the “art” side of things. In the following pages, you'll see some examples of different content formats and styles that will inspire your own creative process as you start making. I want to give an enormous shout-out to Team GaryVee and many VaynerMedia executives who helped me with this section.

Let's get into it.

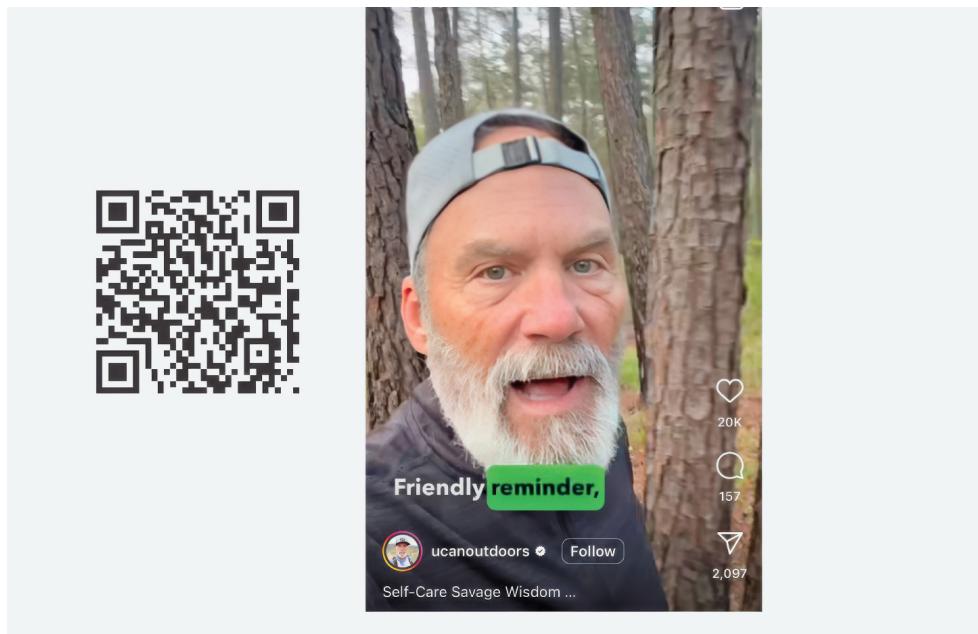
Straight-to-Camera Selfie Videos

I'm starting this section with a video from @ucanoutdoors on Instagram because it's a perfect example of what I mean when I say, “Quit overthinking, start doing.”

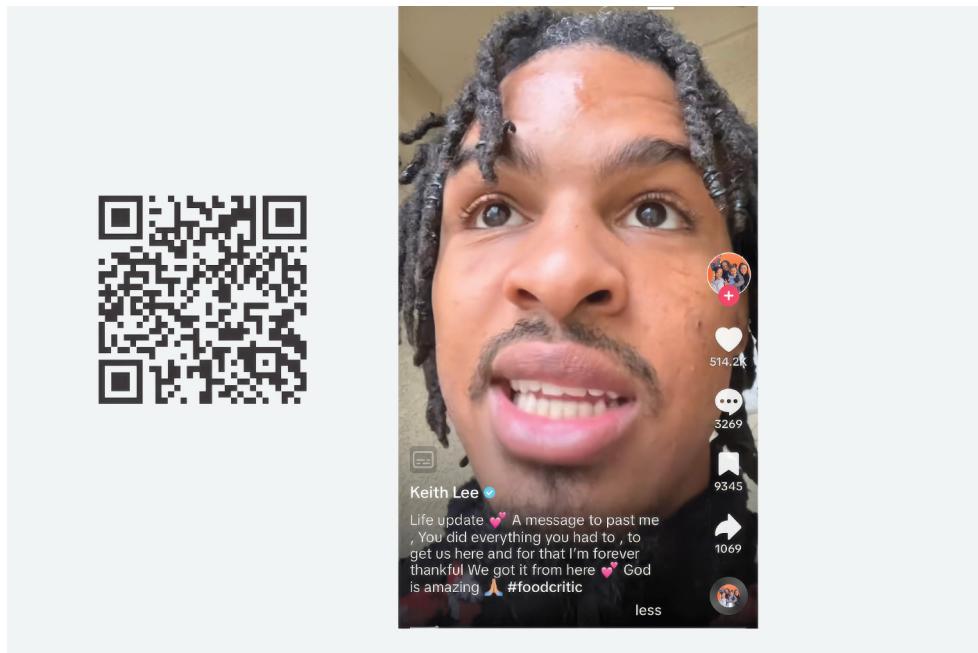
Content doesn't have to be fancy to work—it can be as simple as looking into the front-facing camera on your phone and talking about what you believe in.

In this case, the creator of the video pulled out his phone and shared his thoughts while taking a walk through the woods. He layered some audio

over it from Instagram and added captions for easier consumption. Of course, there are little things here that could be improved; maybe adding a title to the top of the video would improve performance, maybe cutting out the pause at the beginning of the video would improve performance, or maybe longer copy around what the quote means to him would improve performance.



But the main thing I want to call out here is that posting is better than not posting. A lot of creators and businesses can easily execute on this content format. Just pick a common piece of advice you give your customers, clients, or something you believe in, and literally make a piece of content with it right now. You could combine this with an activity you enjoy doing; if you like hiking or walking on the treadmill, pull out your phone when a thought hits you and record some content. It could also be super mundane; while you're reading this right now, you could be on a park bench, and you could grab your phone and make a piece of content. For others, you're reading this on a bus, and even though it's loud and noisy, you can still pull out your phone and make a video. Even if the background noise is a little loud, if your video is deep and real and authentic to you, it has tremendous potential to be a piece of content or ad that resonates with the audience.



Through straight-to-camera videos, you can connect with audiences in a deeper way, like the video above from food critic Keith Lee.

What he did in this video is what a lot more influencers and creators should do: break the fourth wall with their audience and share personal stories about their journey and genuine moments from their everyday lives.

This kind of authentic, “in the moment” content through straight-to-camera videos helps build a closer connection with the audience and leads to building an actual engaged community. If you scroll through some of the comments on the original post, you’ll see the kind of positive sentiment that it got:



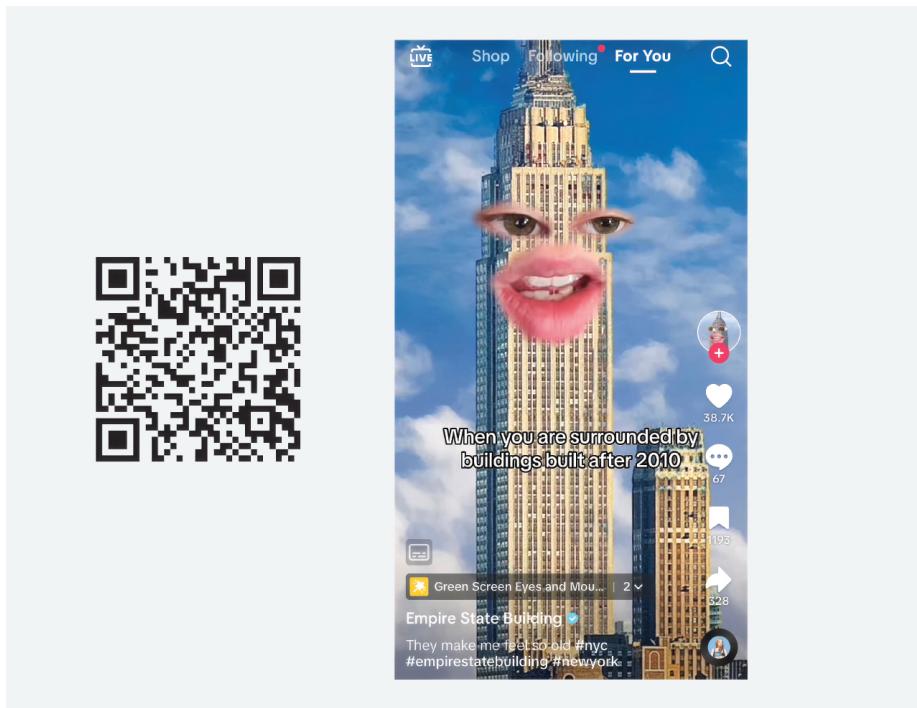
Even if people look to you for your professional advice or opinions, consider sharing content when you hit milestones in life or other personal stories that are meaningful to you. They're easy to make (just record selfie-style on your front-facing camera) and will give people more opportunities to relate to you.

Mascot-Driven Content

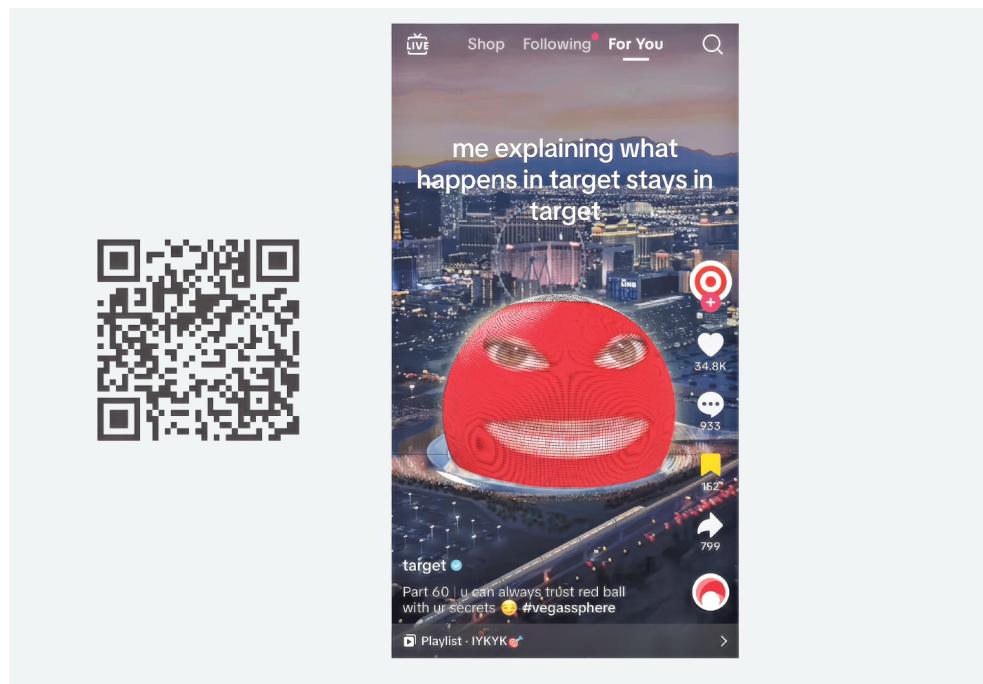
Using mascots is something I've mentioned in this book a few times because I really want you to consider experimenting with it. Whether you're a small business or a large brand, there are many creative ways to incorporate mascots into your content—whether it's a full-blown cartoon, or just starting small by using face filters on your product.

Here's an example from the Empire State Building's TikTok account.

By using TikTok's in-app effects, the team behind this account was able to layer on an "eyes and mouth" effect, and literally humanize a building by making it "talk." Through this filter, the Empire State Building can take part in conversations and have a personality of its own. If you sell a physical product of any sort, you can use in-app effects like these to give your product personality that makes it fun and relevant to the people you're trying to reach—maybe even have your products "interact" with competitors' products or do mini skits of your own.



A 2.0 version of this is what Target did in the following example—integrating a mascot with a cultural trend:



Target does three things right here:

1. Hopping on a timely trend is always a good idea. In the summer of 2023, there were some videos that spread across the internet showing the brand-new Sphere entertainment venue in Las Vegas, Nevada. Quickly there were a lot of memes of individuals and brands putting themselves on the Sphere and riding that trend.
2. They humanized the “red ball” (the ones typically outside of Target stores) and placed it in the Sphere.
3. They successfully built on an “inside joke” with their customers through the text overlaid on top of the video, “me explaining what happens in target stays in target.” The copy builds on it too.

That being said, the best part about participating in a social media trend is the opportunity to keep the conversation going past the life span of that one particular video. At the time of writing, there’s some missed opportunity to interact with the comments.

When you respond to comments on your content with video replies within a short time frame, it can help both pieces of content (both the original video and the reply) get even more distribution. For example, when people scroll through the comments of the original video, they’ll see your video reply (likely near the top of the comments section, as platforms tend to prioritize comments with replies from the original creator). As people see your video reply in their normal feed as they’re scrolling through, they’ll be able to click on the comment you replied to and see your original video.

By hitting their comments section hard with clever responses and video replies, Target could have built on the momentum of this trend even more.

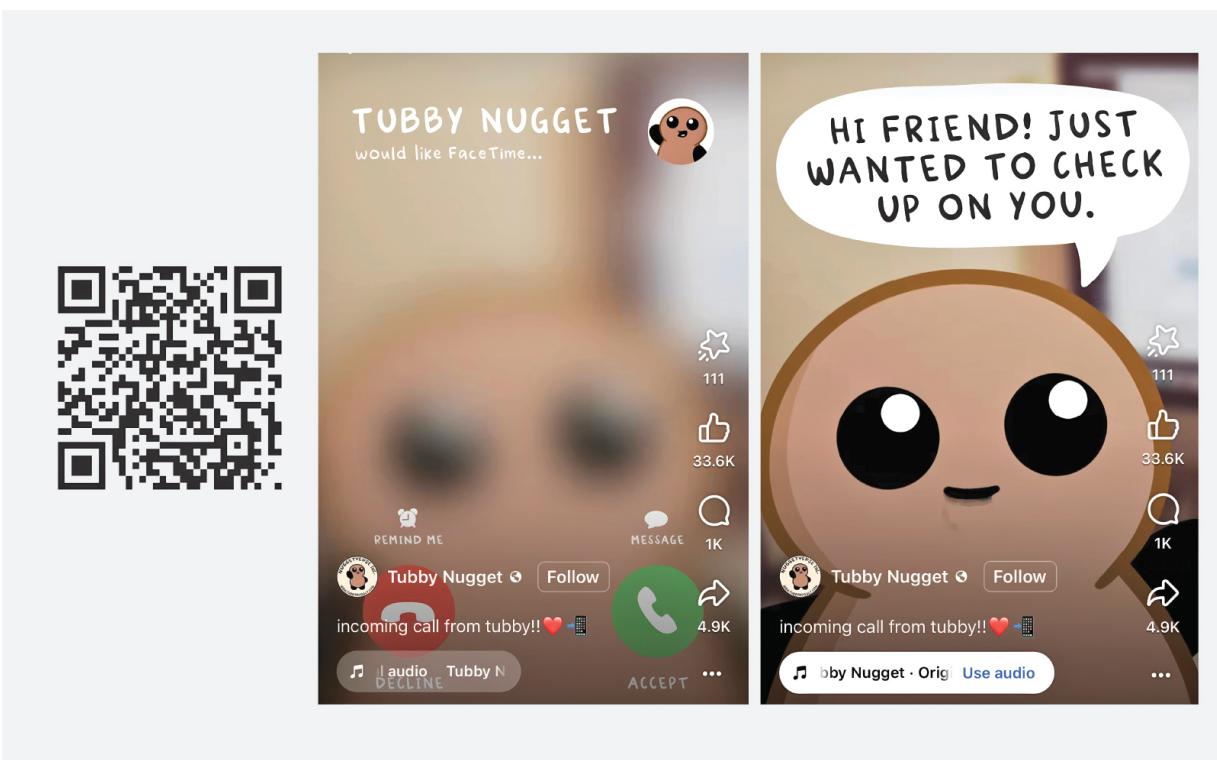
Cartoons and Comics

The ultimate version of creating a mascot is creating a full-blown cartoon character with its own social accounts and its own story line, like Tubby Nugget (see example in the following image).

Tubby Nugget is a cute and adorable character that’s easy to fall in love with—the creators publish comic strips with this character as well as actual video animations. It also leads to new business opportunities—at the time

of writing, Tubby Nugget's creators sell their own plush toys, personalized videos, pins, stickers, and more. If you build up a mascot around, say, a roofing business, that mascot could not only help your content get more distribution—it could also lead to a whole new “merchandise division” for your company a few years later with people who want to wear T-shirts with your mascot on them because they relate to its personal qualities.

Obviously, building out a whole cartoon series requires talent and resources; for a small business or brand, it might be more practical to start by layering an in-app face filter over a product like in the Empire State Building example and using that to start building out the character. Later, as the business grows and you have more validation that the mascot works to generate business, you can throw more resources at it.



In the Tubby Nugget video, there are a couple of things worth calling out.

First off, it starts with a simulated “FaceTime call.” The FaceTime user interface is something that a lot of people are familiar with—leveraging design elements that are familiar to your audience can help catch attention

at the beginning of a video. The audio once the “call” starts also sounds a little like the audio that comes from a phone call, which helps add to it.

It’s also built for shareability—in this “call,” Tubby Nugget checks on the viewer, asking them if they’re doing well and taking care of themselves. People may use Facebook’s share feature to send the video to people that they want to check in on, like the person who left the following comment on the video:



One of the questions to ask here would be, does starting with the FaceTime call design perform better, or is the character itself a better hook? If the video started with the character right away, would the video catch more attention because it went straight into the message without making people wait for even half a second?

The copy could also incentivize shareability even further. Maybe a second line could have been added, like “The person who sent you this wants to make sure you’re okay.”

Strategic Reposts

You can repost content from one platform to another, if you keep your content contextual and native to the platform.

For example, here’s a Facebook post from McDonald’s:



And below, check out their Instagram post with the same text.

On Instagram, they posted the same message—but since the platform tends to have a more visual feel to it, they embedded the text from the Facebook status update in an X (Twitter) style graphic that's sized appropriately for Instagram.

Also, did you catch the date on the two posts? Their Facebook post was published in September 2022, while their Instagram post went up in November 2020; this speaks to a concept that I call the “Rolling Stones Rule.”



Rock bands like the Rolling Stones could go around the world and play the same few songs repeatedly, and people would still come out and listen for decades. When you have a message that resonates—whether it's an ad, a

song, a piece of art, some content, or anything else—you can repost it again and again, and still get traction on it.

In this example, also notice the wording of the message, “One day, you ordered a Happy Meal for the last time and you didn’t even know it.” The way this is phrased plays into some other similar sayings that have gone around the internet for years.

When searching similar phrases on TikTok, we see more popular videos with text like “When you realize we all went outside to play for the last time not knowing it’d be the last time.”