



DASH HUDSON

Video and Beauty Brands: The Playbook for Cross-Channel Marketing

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Capture Attention with Content in Motion

Investment in video content is forecasted to increase from \$45 billion in 2019 to \$61 billion by 2021. And it's predicted that the average person will be watching 100 minutes of video a day. As visual marketing mediums like Instagram evolve and new channels like TikTok emerge, video content has quickly become an essential content pillar for brands across industries.

Video is on the rise—and for good reason. 83% of marketers believe that video is becoming increasingly important to capture attention across marketing channels and 57% say improving their video strategy and engagement are primary tactics for growth in audience and brand equity. Marketers report that video generates greater ROI on social media, and consumer sentiment toward video is stronger than ever. Video offers a not-to-be-missed opportunity for brands to invest in deeper storytelling and product education, to develop an impactful multichannel marketing strategy.

Often considered trendsetters in the marketing world, leaders in the beauty industry are incorporating video into their visual strategies to stand out amongst the noise in the crowded beauty space. Today's consumers want to build real relationships with the brands they invest in. Video offers the opportunity for marketers in the beauty space to differentiate from competitors and deliver meaningful messaging to consumers.

Instagram: Lo-fi vs. Hi-fi Video

Instagram predicts that 75% of all of the data we consume will be in motion this year. Many brands have experimented with video content as they've built out their Instagram strategy. Whether you paid a pretty penny for a real deal video shoot or took the risk of producing video in-house with limited resources, many marketers in the beauty space struggle to find a happy medium between keeping their budget in check and producing new and innovative video content to keep up with demand.

The term "lo-fi video" is frequently referenced in the visual marketing sphere, but is rarely properly differentiated from hi-fi video. Lo-fi video in this case refers to content that is captured on a phone. It's lower quality, often behind the scenes or on-the-go, and requires minimal production. Meanwhile, hi-fi video is the high quality, professional-feeling video content that usually has an entire production crew behind it. This style of video is more often used for campaign videos that will be leveraged across marketing channels, or for new product launches.

Lo-Fi vs. Hi-Fi Video



Lo-Fi

- Lower quality
- Video is captured on a phone
- Behind the scenes
- Minimal production



Hi-Fi

- High quality
- Multiple shots/angles
- Campaign videos
- New product launches

The style and level of investment in video content varies widely across brands. A classic cosmetics brand like COVERGIRL invests in a range of content styles from lo-fi BTS-style video, to highly produced campaign style shoots, while a millennial brand like Milk Makeup leans into a home video style vibe in its video content—regardless of the budget and the size of the team behind the production. This means that finding the right video strategy for your brand can depend on a number of factors including, but not limited to, your unique audience, your products, and the brand story you want to tell through video.

It's no secret that lo-fi video production requires a fraction of the cost of high-quality video content. But, will your video performance suffer as a result? We analyzed the effectiveness of lo-fi and hi-fi video content across the leading beauty brands to help inform your video strategy and catch you up on the latest industry trends.

Beauty brands know that their audiences want to see products being used by real customers at home in front of bathroom mirrors, not just on the flawless faces of Gigi Hadid and Kendall Jenner.

Authenticity is top of mind for today's consumers, and brands like Glossier are pushing the envelope in the beauty space with a focus on real beauty. This emphasis on transparency is evident in many forward-thinking brands' approaches to content as well.

Brands across the beauty industry are leveraging a mix of both hi-fi and lo-fi video content and, more than any other industry, beauty brands see a significant spike in effectiveness when it comes to lo-fi video. We took a deep dive into the top 30 beauty brands that feature both lo-fi and hi-fi video content on their feed and uncovered that on average, lo-fi videos see a **164.5% effectiveness rate** while **hi-fi videos sit at 32.6%**. The staggering performance of lo-fi video for beauty brands is proof that your prowess on social is not dependent on the size of your wallet.



Beauty Industry Lo-Fi vs. Hi-Fi Video Effectiveness Rate

Lo-Fi	Hi-Fi
164.5%	32.6%

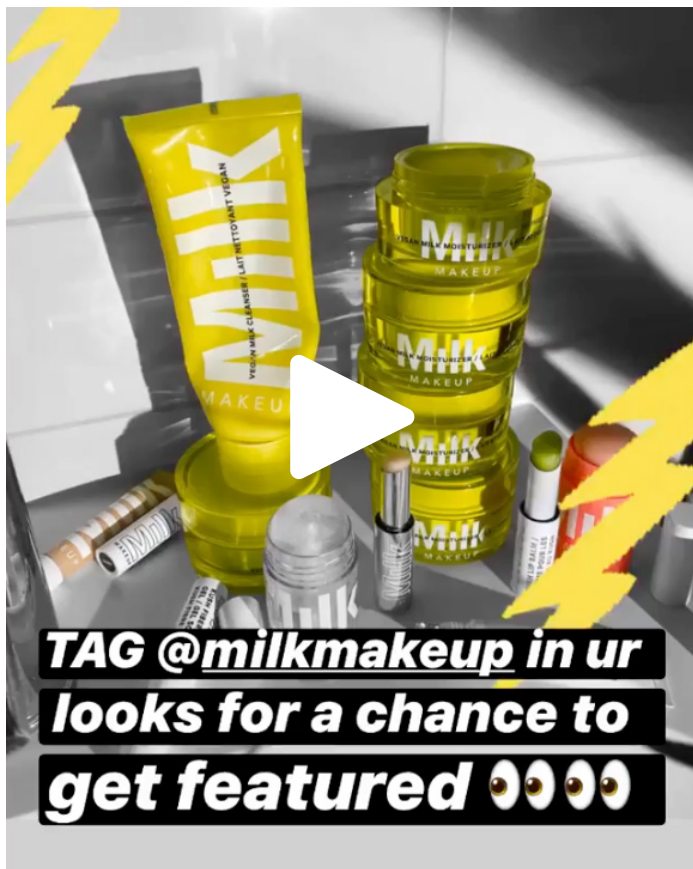
There's no denying that lo-fi video is making an impact on social performance across the beauty industry. It's not to say that professionally produced video no longer holds any value to brands. Hi-fi video will remain a key content pillar for many—especially for luxury beauty brands that are producing big-budget video content to be used across multiple marketing channels. The brands that are able to find a balance between both styles of video to effectively accomplish their goals on social are the ones that are meeting and exceeding their KPIs.

Instagram Stories

You can always count on Instagram to keep us on our toes with new features, innovative functionalities, and new ways for brands to engage followers. And Instagram Stories is certainly one that stuck. With over 500 million users watching stories daily, the opportunities for brands to convert followers into customers are endless. The addicting feature catches your attention the moment you tap on the home page. Stories are a key medium for brands to craft narratives through dynamic video content.

Beauty brands have been investing in stories in a big way since the feature first launched in 2016. Stories offer an opportunity for brands to go beyond what they feature on their feed and provide a glimpse into how their products are developed, take the viewer on office tours, share tutorials, and behind-the-scenes content at photoshoots and events. Many beauty brands' approaches to Instagram Stories have evolved since its inception—it's become less about the quality of the content and more about how brands are creating a compelling story—whether it be educational, clickbait, or an extension of a campaign.

The swipeable format inspires action from users through the swipe-up functionality that can take your audience directly to your website creating a conversion gold mine. The challenge? Measuring success.



With little in-app insight offered into long-term performance trends, brands can often only understand performance by measuring their own over time. It's critical to understand if your KPIs are going to move the needle in the competitive beauty space.

Instagram Stories Metrics

Check out the Instagram Stories terms and metrics that you should know and what they mean to your brand's performance.



Story Card: an individual video or image posted in a story.



Stories: represents the total number of story cards that have been posted by an individual brand or user in a day.



Reach: the number of unique times a story card or story sequence is viewed.



Impressions: the total number of times a story card or sequence is viewed.



Exit Rate: the percentage of people who exited a story card.



Tap Forward: the total number of times a user taps forward on a story card to view the next story card.



Tap Back: the total number of times a user taps back on a story card to view the story card again or the story card before it.



Effectiveness: takes into account your audience size, video views, post saves, likes, and comments—based on your reach.



Daily Story Card Engagement: based on average daily stories impressions, average daily stories reach, and average daily exit rate.



Stories Benchmarks for the Beauty Industry

We analyzed 25 leading beauty brands' stories data to uncover the KPI benchmarks that matter most on Instagram Stories.

Average Daily Story Card Metrics

We looked at average daily story card engagement, which represents all story cards posted on a per-day basis.

Average Monthly Story Card Metrics

Next, we looked at average monthly story card engagement, which analyzes story cards posted on a per-month basis. This way brands can take a step back to understand how they're performing on Instagram Stories month-over-month. We included tap forward and tap back per story to dive deeper into how your photos and videos are capturing followers' attention compared to the industry average.

Instagram Story Card Posting Cadence Benchmarks

It goes without saying that finding the perfect balance between the quantity and quality of the content you're posting is how the leading brands are outperforming the competition. One of the biggest challenges in crafting a winning strategy for Instagram Stories is determining how often, and how many story cards you should be posting.

Now that you're armed with the industry benchmarks, you have the framework you need to keep a finger on the pulse of your brand's performance across the KPIs that matter most. With Dash Hudson's content segmentation tool Story Boards, you can dive deep in your performance and understand which campaigns, series, and videos are keeping your audience engaged and coming back for more. You can view your stories by individual posts or by day, fine-tune time periods to reflect your content calendar, and filter stories by performance to gain insights in seconds. It's the sidekick marketers need to outperform across those trusty industry KPIs.

Beauty Industry Average Daily Stories Engagements

Avg. Daily Stories Impressions	70,290
Avg. Daily Stories Reach	64,549
Avg. Daily Exit Rate	4.86%

*Average daily stories engagements represent all story cards posted on a per-day basis.

Beauty Industry Average Monthly Story Card Engagements

Avg. Monthly Reach Per Story Card	47,855
Avg. Monthly Impressions Per Story Card	52,114
Avg. Monthly Exit Rate Per Story Card	3.64%
Avg. Monthly Tap Forwards Per Story Card	7,164
Avg. Monthly Tap Back Per Story Card	259

*Average monthly story card engagements represent all story cards posted on a per-day basis.

Beauty Industry Instagram Story Card Posting Cadence

Avg. # of Story Cards Posted Per Month	122
Avg. # of Days in a Month Stories are Posted	15
Avg. # of Story Cards Posted Per Week	27
Avg. # of Story Cards Posted Per Day	8

*Instagram story card posting cadence represents all story cards posted on a per-day basis.



The Top Instagram Stories Trends

In the 4 years since Instagram Stories launched, Instagram usage has doubled. It's simply a fact at this point that the amount of content being shared each day is increasing, making it harder and harder to stand out on the channel and garner engagement. As the Instagram feed becomes increasingly saturated, stories have become an equally important medium for brands to grow, drive sales, and build meaningful connections with their audiences.

Video quickly became a key medium in beauty brands' stories strategies. The purpose behind Instagram Stories is for brands to tell a deeper story and engage their followers in new ways—and video content presents the perfect opportunity to do just that. The feature provides the opportunity for beauty brands to test different approaches to content curation to see what's resonating and what's not with consumers.

We dug into the data and found three high-level trends that are driving stories performance across the beauty industry.

1. Tantalizing Texture

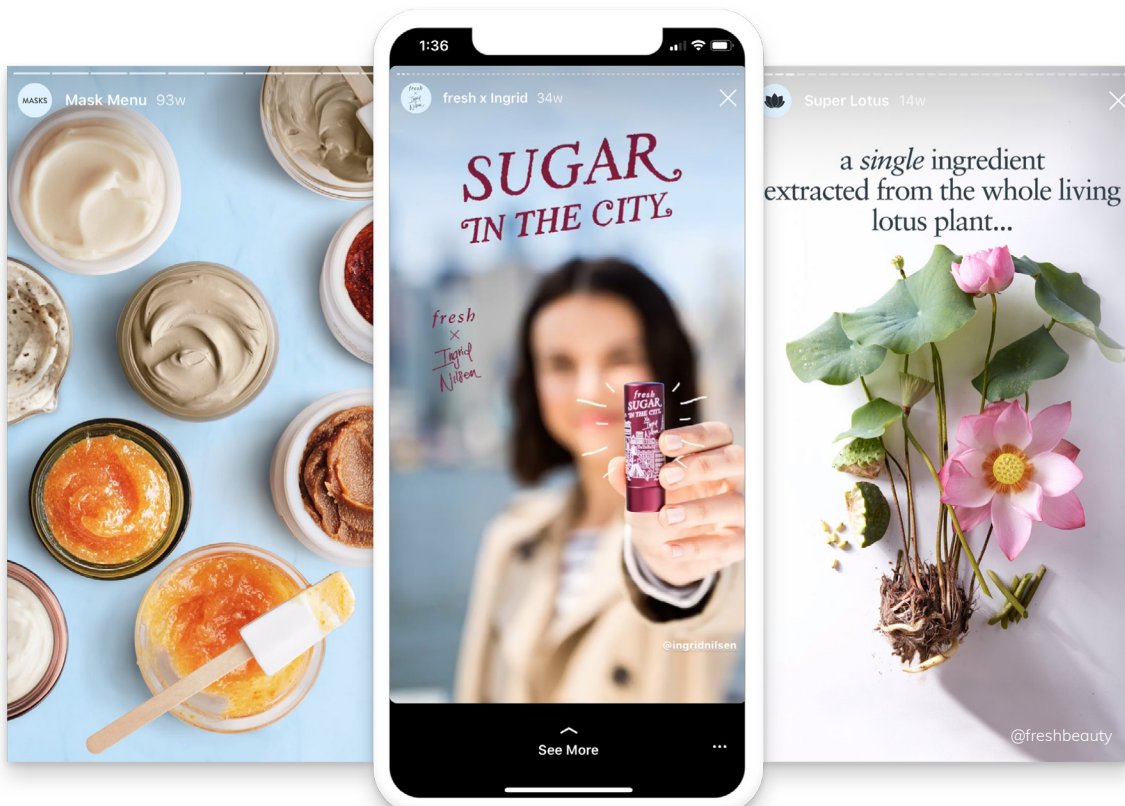
Brands are making these super-zoomed-in videos of product texture one of their content pillars across channels, as they're seeing how effective they are at capturing the attention of their community. Product close-ups have been around in the makeup space for quite some time—think crushed eyeshadows and smeared lipstick—but now it's gaining momentum in video format, and has become especially popular with brands in the skincare category. It allows brands to communicate the look and feel of a product in action, and is the ultimate #OddlySatisfying content for beauty gurus.

2. The Original Influencers

The beauty industry was one of the first to invest in influencers way back when the concept was just emerging in the collective social media consciousness. Influencer partnerships have stood the test of time and remain a key pillar in almost every beauty brand's social strategy. What's showing up more than ever on beauty brands' feeds? BTS of influencers' makeup routines. Beauty brands aren't just leveraging influencers to model their products in glam selfies—they showcase how their products can be used with different skin types and styles IRL, and fit into different makeup lineups, all while tapping into the power of referral. There's a reason why this trend has stuck—influencer video content provides a fresh angle for brands to tap into.

3. #CleanBeauty

One of the latest (and long overdue) trends in the beauty industry is the introduction of non-toxic, cruelty-free products. The conversation around clean beauty has even been a launching pad for new brands that are committed to an environmentally-friendly future in beauty. Beauty brands are bringing this to life with educational video content that highlights the natural ingredients at the core of their products. Brands are filling their stories with everything from luscious plants and bright berries to charcoal and gooey honey, to inform their communities of products, and offer a glimpse into how they're developed. Not only does this content pillar offer the chance for brands to promote their mission and attract new customers, it's also driving performance.





Pinterest

Pinterest may have been late to the party, but the addition of native video for business profiles has propelled the channel to the forefront of marketers' minds. Proudly described as a visual search engine, Pinterest is where consumers go to make a purchase decision.

Get up to speed on how to post videos on Pinterest to optimize for reach and conversions.

Capture Attention

The first question you need to ask is whether or not your product or service would look good in action. For most brands, the answer is a resounding yes. Motion makes it easy for consumers to imagine a product in real life—and the more they can picture it, the more inclined Pinners are to make a purchase. A quick video is an effective way to tease your new product launch or seasonal campaign—and incentivize that coveted click. The effectiveness of video is even higher on a channel like Pinterest because the majority of content in the main feed is static.

The Basics

Before you post a new video, make sure you have a Pinterest Business Account set up. While anyone can Pin from other sources, only verified businesses can add native video content into the feed. All you have to do is find the big plus sign on the homepage to create a Pin. Next, upload your video and use the slider to find a cover photo. Pop in a snappy title and description, then select “choose a board” to organize it into whatever category you’d like. Finally, enter a link for Pinners to go to when they click on your vid. Hit publish and voilà—it’s live.

Tech Specs and Best Practices

Once your creative vision is realized, focus on the technical specs of the upload. Lo-fi video is great but only works as a style when it's done intentionally. The wrong file type, size, or codec can take a post from lo-fi to low impact. It's like trying on clothes that look great in the changeroom but not at home. The clothes themselves could be fantastic, but the change in lighting makes you see them differently. Think of your video formatting for Pinterest in the same way—if you want content to appear in the feed as envisioned, you need to show it in its best proverbial light. That means your specs should be a combination of the following:



Video Formatting for Pinterest

File Type: [.mp4](#) | [.mov](#) | [.m4v](#)

Encoding: [H.264](#) | [H.265](#)

Max File Size: [2GB](#)

Video Length: [4 Seconds–15 Minutes](#)

Recommended Aspect Ratio:

[1:1 \(Square\)](#) | [2:3 \(Vertical\)](#) | [9:16 \(Vertical\)](#)

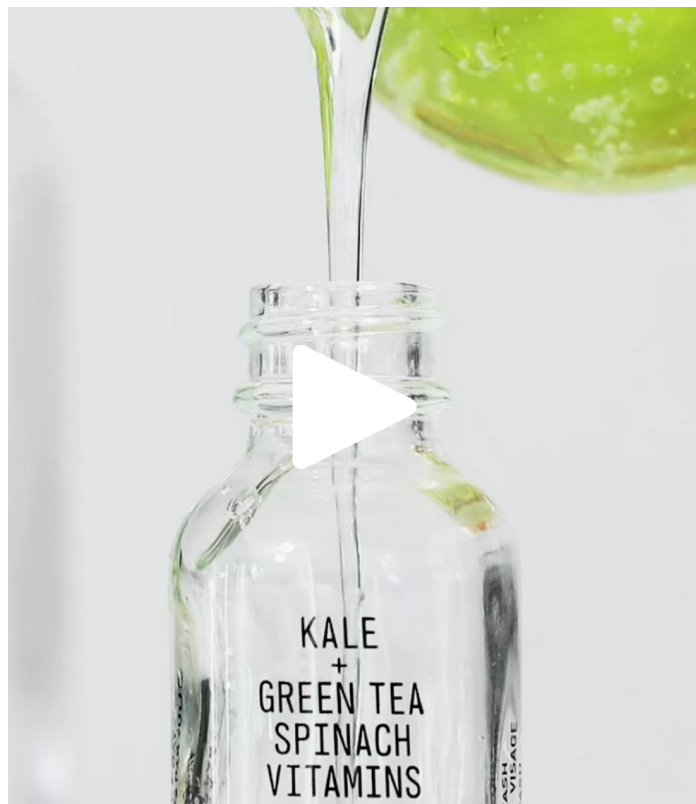
Copy also has an impact on video performance. Because Pinterest operates primarily as a search engine, adding a couple of keywords into your title and description helps Pinners find it organically. There is a copy character count (100 for the title and 500 for the description), but most people will only see the first 50-60 characters in their feed. Use this space wisely.

A technical detail to keep in mind when posting video is the sound. People Pin whenever inspiration hits, which could be in a circumstance where sound isn't an option. In this context, visually driven content is your best bet. If sound is an important element, adding captions for any dialogue is a great way to grab Pinners' attention and help them understand your message in a way that's significantly more accessible.

Promoting Video Content

When your Pinterest video finds its audience, boosting it to an even larger one is an opportunity to optimize for ROI. Similar to the process for other social channels, promoting a video on Pinterest is as easy as clicking a button. What separates it from the others is that promoted content can actually be sized up, so it not only reaches more feeds, it also stands out in a big way. If you do plan to promote, consider this when you're formatting—paid content can have the aspect ratio of 16:9, so having a backup file of that size comes in handy.

Pinterest provides a lot of flexibility for brands to customize how a video is promoted, which means your content can be used for anything from awareness to conversion campaigns. You get to choose if it shows up in search results, in-feed, or in the "more like this" section of a related Pin. To narrow your target even further, select a specific audience, keyword, or interest to associate with. These options give marketers the easiest route to the people they genuinely want to reach to maximize conversions.





YouTube

Brands are finding new ways to incorporate video content into everything from email marketing to Pinterest, but YouTube is surprisingly still uncharted territory for some brands. YouTube is the world's [third-most used](#) website, behind Google and Facebook, and it's the second largest search engine after Google. Considering YouTube is solely video, its share of online usage is huge. 73% of U.S. adults use YouTube on their mobile devices, compared with 69% for Facebook, 37% for Instagram and 28% for Pinterest, and the percentages continue to fall from there for other platforms such as LinkedIn, Snapchat, Twitter, and Reddit.

YouTube dominates in terms of content consumption, with 2 billion active users and 1 billion hours of content viewed per day. That said, there are still many brands out there for which YouTube is a horizon yet to be explored—a distant land where the locals speak in different metrics, the sun rises and sets according to a different algorithm, and the engagement window lasts forever. The gulfs between brands' subscription figures only solidify this notion. Across established brands, some have millions of subscribers, while others have just a handful.

With brands investing in video content across marketing channels, YouTube is where your long-form content should live before you slice and dice it for other mediums. This means that you can maximize your content, while creating a consistent visual story.

Engagement Metrics

Impressions: *The number of times the video thumbnail was viewed.*

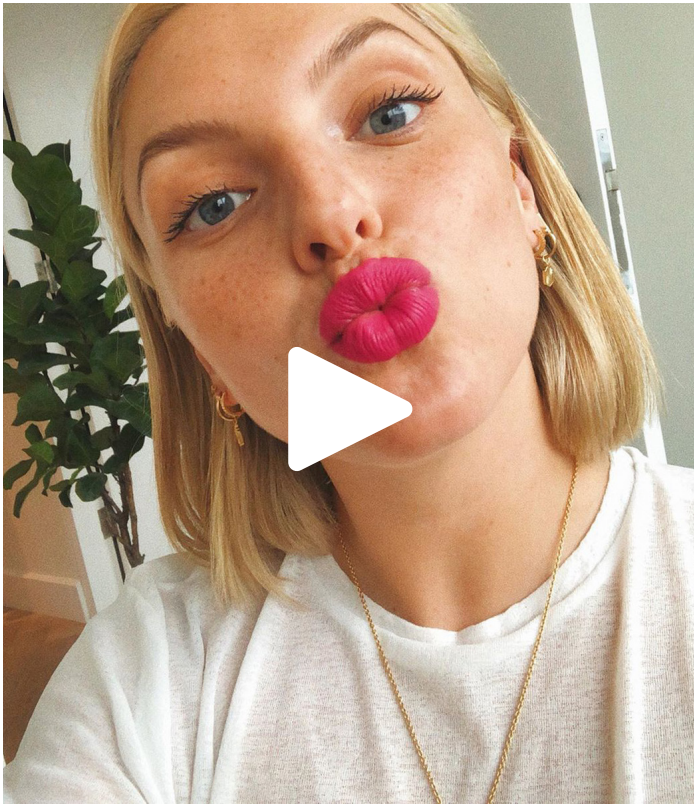
Impressions matter because they are a crystal-clear indication of whether or not your video is showing up in searches or as related content. This happens when your video and the keywords associated are relevant to the topic you're featuring. Impressions can include the same person seeing the thumbnail more than once.

Impressions Click-Through-Rate (CTR): *The percentage of people who saw the thumbnail and clicked through to watch the video.*

CTR matters because it tells you how many people are compelled to click through and watch the video based on your thumbnail and title.

Views: *The total number of times your video has been played.*

Views matter because it's essential to keep tabs on how many users your video actually reaches, and how different videos perform on your channel. Your most-viewed videos tell you what your audience is engaged with and interested in watching.



Watch Time: The total amount of time viewers spent watching your videos.

Watch time matters because it is the top-ranking metric and factor on YouTube. Arguably the metric to rule all other metrics. It governs how much visibility you'll get relative to searches where your content appears.

Average View Duration and Percent Viewed: The total amount of watch time divided by total views, or the average amount of time people spent watching your videos.

Average view duration matters because it tells you how engaged your audience is with the videos you're publishing on your channel.

Re-watches: The number of times viewers rewind and re-watch certain segments of a video.

Re-watches matter because they tell you which parts of your video were the most intriguing—so much so, that they went back to watch it again. Having this insight can be really helpful in planning future videos and decreasing drop off.

Likes and Dislikes: The number of viewers who like or dislike your video.

Likes and dislikes matter because it's a stark look at how your content performs. Few other channels have a feature which will allow you to dislike something, so brace yourself. Looking at these metrics in a ratio format can give you a little more insight into how your content is performing.

Shares and Comments: The number of times your video has been shared using the share button, and the number of comments on the video.

A more valuable form of engagement, shares and comments matter because they give you insight into which videos are being shared and talked about and which videos aren't. If sparking conversation is your aim, this metric will provide a useful benchmark to measure performance.

Card Click-Through-Rate: Cards are the calls-to-action that appear at any point during a video. They usually prompt a user to sign up, access a product, or subscribe. The Card CTR is the percentage of viewers that click through via the card.

Card CTR matters because it indicates whether the cards you're using are useful or irrelevant to your viewers.

Playlist Starts: How many viewers start your playlist.

This matters because it tells you how many of your viewers want to watch more. It's an indication of how engaging your content is, and the appetite your audience has for it.

Playlist Exits: How many viewers leave your playlist.

This is useful because it tells you where viewers are exiting your playlist. This will help you find the less-engaging videos and determine how to best order them.

Subscriber Growth Rate: The rate at which you're gaining new subscribers.

Subscriber growth rate matters because audience growth is key to increasing views, watch time, and your YouTube ranking.



Subscription Status: How many of your viewers are subscribers.

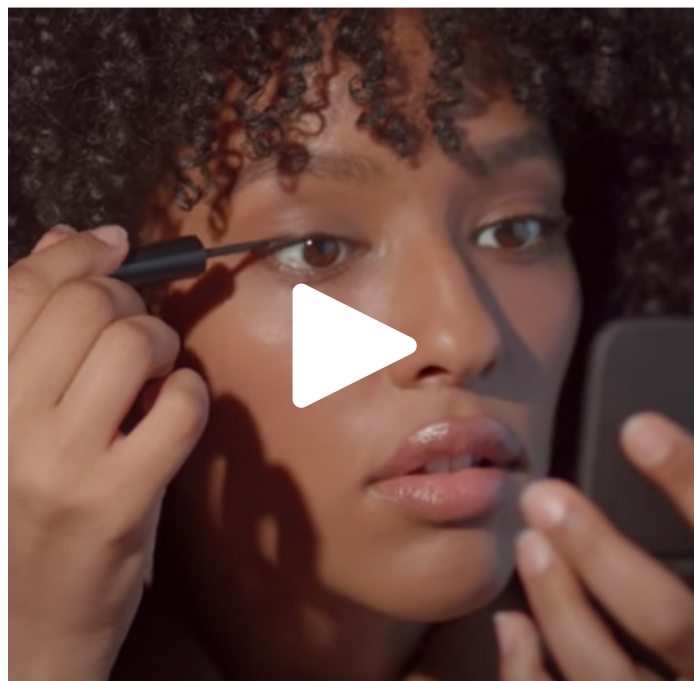
This gives insight into what type of community you've cultivated on YouTube. If you have viewers but no subscribers, you're effectively publishing to nobody, as users will have to search for your video, find it through the 'Up Next' panel, or via the recommended page. Turning viewers into subscribers means you're growing your viewer base and your new content will be served to those subscribers via notifications, home page promotion, email, and so on.

Subscriber Source: This metric shows you exactly where on YouTube your viewers are clicking "Subscribe".

This matters because it reveals where your strategy is and isn't working. It will help you determine where you need to evaluate your CTAs and where to invest.

Traffic Source: Tells you how viewers are finding your videos. It shows you where your traffic is coming from, whether it be from YouTube search, channel, suggested videos or from elsewhere on the Internet.

Traffic sources give you insight into where your audience is coming from. It tells you which tactics for directing your audience to YouTube are working and where they are not. It also indicates how well your content is performing within YouTube in terms of search, and if your thumbnails and titles are bringing new viewers in from recommendation pages.



Geography: Where your viewers are located in our wonderful world. Geography matters to brands for a number of reasons. If you're laser-focused on selling products in the U.S. and a significant chunk of your viewers are in Australia, that presents a problem. Knowing the locations of your viewers can tell you if you're getting in front of the right people or not, and allows you to focus on key markets for your business.

Demographics: Insight into who your viewers are, including age and gender.

Similar to geography, demographics matter because they let you know if you're reaching your target audience or not, and can help you understand what users you're missing out on.

Device: What type of device people are using to watch your videos—tablet, mobile, desktop or TV?

When it comes to YouTube, devices matter. Each device is used in a different way. From screen size to setting (in or out of the home), devices have a range of requirements, and it's important to understand which devices the majority of your audience is using to view your videos. TV, for example, lends itself to longer videos, while mobile might require subtitles.

Optimize Your Content in Motion

With so many metrics, it can be daunting to dig into performance—especially on a channel like YouTube that requires a unique lens compared to other platforms. One piece of advice from us? Nail down your objectives. Plan like you've never planned before and make sure you know what success means for your YouTube strategy. That will help you determine which metrics matter to your brand.





How Brands Use YouTube in a Multichannel Strategy

Content in motion is on the rise across visual channels this year. And an effective video strategy starts with [YouTube](#). The video channel presents the opportunity for brands to deepen their connection with consumers through storytelling and education. With brands investing in video content across marketing channels, YouTube should be your starting place before optimizing your video for each specific channel. This means that you can maximize your content, while creating a consistent visual story across channels.

We looked at some of the leading beauty brands' YouTube channels to see how they're incorporating the video medium into their multichannel strategy.

Long-Form Brand Messaging

YouTube offers brands the chance to tell their story without cutting out the details. It's every brand marketer's dream to have a platform where you can share an unfiltered, uncropped, untrimmed narrative of your brand's message, mission, and core values.

Lights, Camera, Product Education!

Beauty brands are often ahead of the curve when it comes to adopting different formats and branching out to multiple channels—and YouTube is the perfect place to educate customers on products and how to use them. But it's not just beauty brands leveraging YouTube, brands across industries are creating compelling videos to tap into audiences' eagerness to learn and get lost in a never-ending stream of video content.

Behind-the-Scenes

BTS content performs well across the board. Brand fans love getting a behind-the-scenes look into the world of their favorite companies, especially when it involves some familiar faces from Hollywood. This is a minimal-effort tactic that can make a big impact on your reach.



The Birth of Influencers

YouTubers were arguably the first influencers. Bloggers who were early to the YouTube game amassed millions of followers and some have created successful brands of their own. Brands in the beauty industry are using their star power and cult following to create viral videos of their own.

Series

With or without influencers, series offer the comfortable cadence and regularity of TV, but on-demand, and not too long. Series topics vary from fireside chats, interior design, clothing hauls, time-travelling through trends—the possibilities are endless.

The Value of Video Across Marketing Channels

The marketing landscape is never stagnant. This means that brands need to constantly evolve their marketing strategies to generate growth and awareness, especially in the highly competitive beauty industry. It's increasingly important for marketers to integrate video into their multichannel strategies to diversify their content mix and stay up to date with the latest trends in the beauty industry. Innovative beauty brands are harnessing the power of video to optimize every visual touchpoint they have with consumers. Understanding how to repurpose video content across marketing channels is key to building brand equity and cultivating a cult community in the beauty industry.