

SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS REPORT

The Next Phase of Creator, Organic and Paid

Perfecting the Content Lifecycle

DASH HUDSON



Contents

Introduction	2
Snapshot of Key Social Platform Updates	3
Platform Benchmarks	5
TREND 1	
Creator, Organic and Paid Each Excel in a Specific Area of a Social Strategy	7
TREND 2	
A Synergistic Approach to Creator, Organic and Paid Gives Brands an Advantage	9
TREND 3	
Boosting Organic Content Supercharges Brand Awareness	10
TREND 4	
Boosting Reels Delivers Impressions, While Static Content Engages	11
TREND 5	
Entertaining Content Experiences Significantly Higher Gains When Boosted	12
TREND 6	
Authentic Connections and Entertaining Content Drive Direct Sales With TikTok Shop	17
Conclusion	19

Snapshot of Key Social Platform Updates


As new technologies and user behaviors emerge, the major platforms constantly evolve their offerings alongside them to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.


These fresh features and tools present opportunities for brands to reach and engage their audiences in exciting ways and differentiate themselves.

Looking ahead, Dash Hudson identified three notable shifts taking place: the integration of Generative AI enhancements to the core platform experience, the reemergence of social commerce, particularly on TikTok, as a legitimate sales channel and the continued growth of direct messaging as a driver of engagement.


The Evolution of AI to Enhance Social Media Platforms


Love it or hate it, AI's here to stay, and 64% of marketers use it. Most of them say they've seen value from it and will keep investing in it. Social media platforms are also enhancing their offerings.

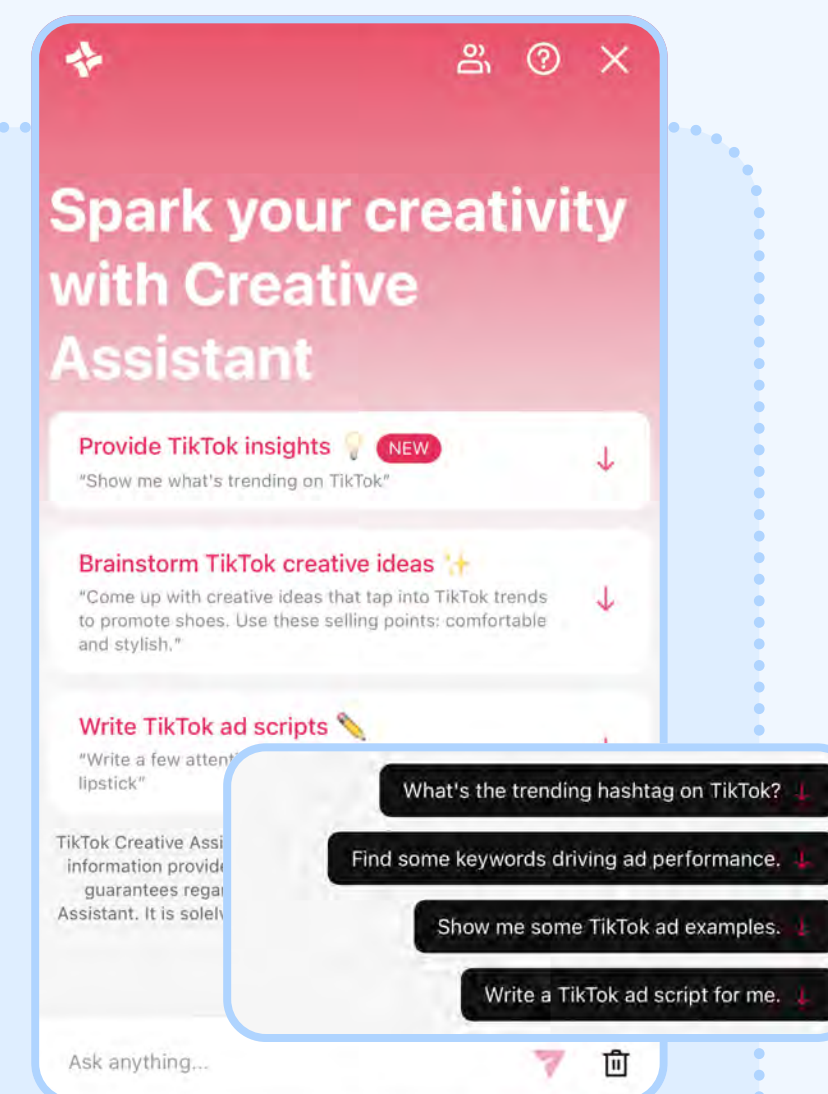
 TikTok launched an AI-powered [“Creative Assistant”](#) to guide marketers through aspects of the campaign creation process from platform insights to creative ideas and [custom ad scripts](#). TikTok owner Bytedance has also launched custom [AI Chatbot Creation tools](#).

 Meta has previewed two generative AI tools that facilitate video creation and in-stream photo creation/editing from text prompts. It has also expanded access to its [chat personas](#), which include AI versions of Kendall Jenner, Tom Brady and more, and is experimenting with [custom AI chatbot creation tools](#).

Additionally, lead-gen advertisers will be able to apply [AI across targeting, creative, placements and budget](#) on the Meta Advantage suite of ad automation products.

 Instagram is testing [several Gen AI features](#) including custom sticker creation and visual editing tools for uploaded content.

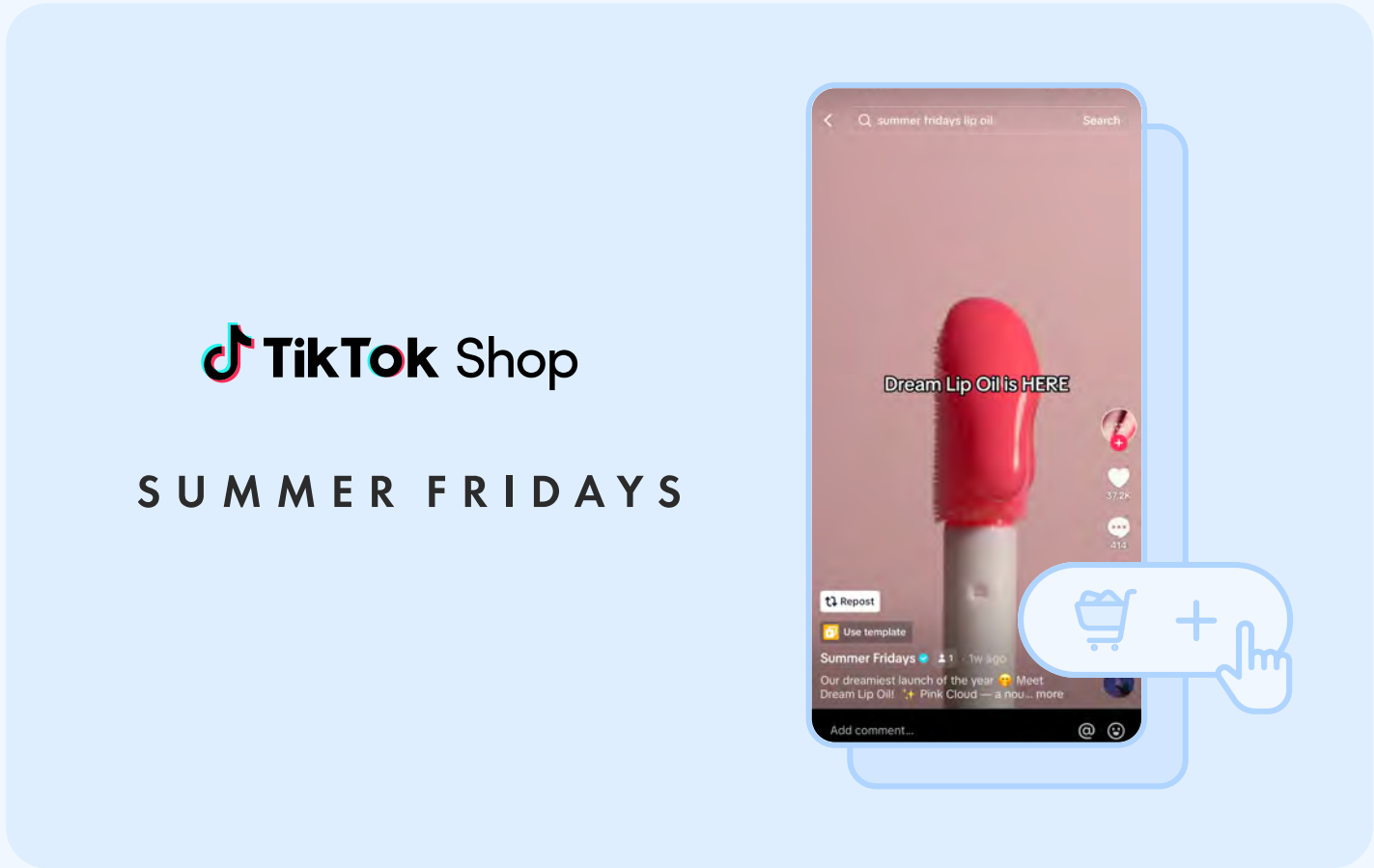
 YouTube launched [Dream Track](#), an experimental generative AI tool that enables users to create music in the style of various famous artists.



The Growth of Social Commerce

Since TikTok Shop launched, social commerce has been gaining traction and making it easier for users to shop directly in-app.

TikTok launched TikTok Shop in the US in September 2023, combining shoppable short-form videos and live streams. Brands like Summer Fridays and Sol de Janeiro are already using it and seeing success. It also added a new logistics offer [Fulfilled by TikTok](#) to TikTok Shop in the UK.



TikTok is also testing a [centralized wallet](#) in certain regions to manage in-app transactions.

Meta announced a [partnership with Amazon](#) that will allow users to purchase Amazon products without leaving Facebook and Instagram.

Private Messaging Plays an Expanded Role in Engagement

Users are increasingly sharing social content and interacting with each other via direct messaging rather than posting publicly. Users are increasingly looking to form connections in smaller circles. Platforms are catering to those changes.

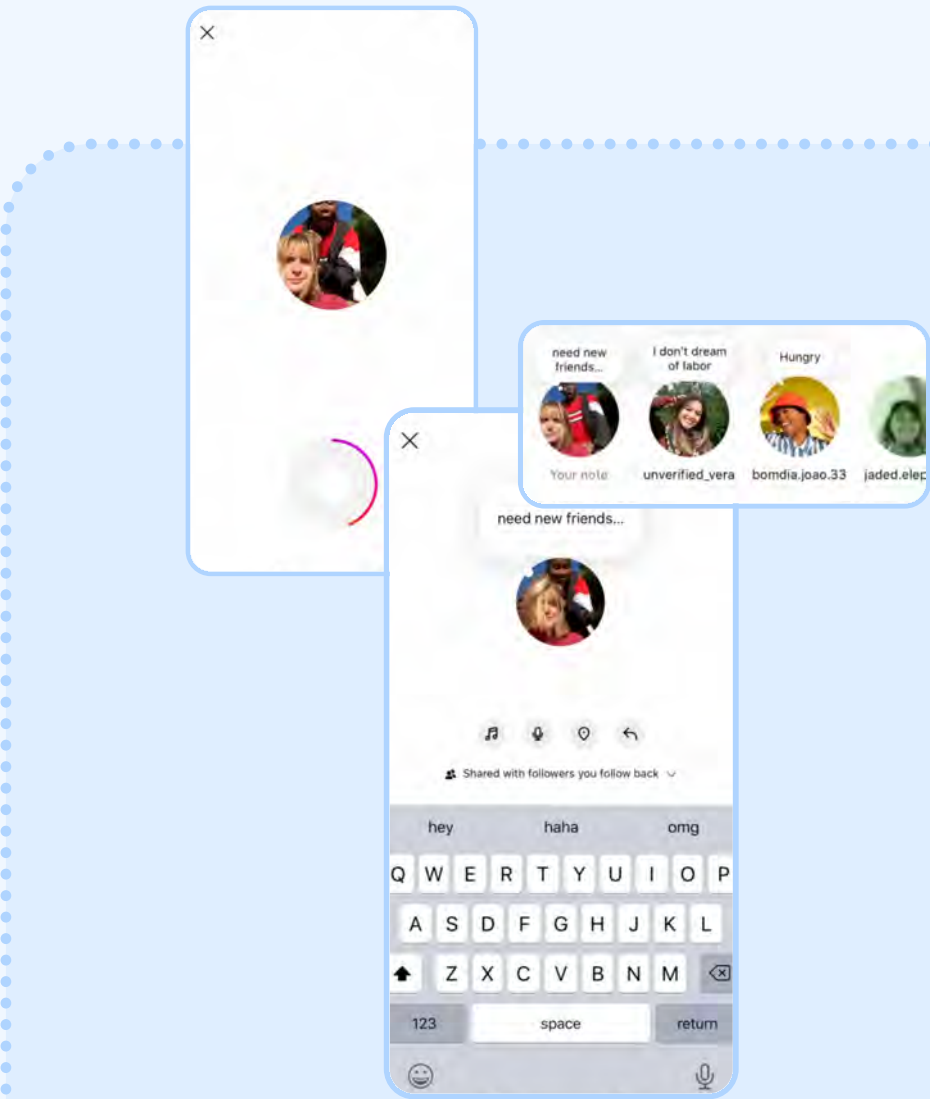
TikTok is reportedly exploring [new social features](#) that include messaging and sharing options. In early 2023, TikTok also expanded its DMs to allow users to send and receive in-app messages from any user, rather than just friends.

Meta adds Messenger back into Facebook. Almost a decade after they parted ways, users no longer need to download a separate app to send Facebook messages.

Instagram launched Notes, Broadcast Channels, and “Close Friends” features. Head of Instagram Adam Mosseri has said that most of the app’s growth is now coming from Stories and DMs.

Instagram continues to test new ways to use its Notes feature, allowing users to [add Notes to any post](#), create Notes with [looping 2-second videos](#) and reply to Notes with a variety of new options.

Instagram is also experimenting with a [new feature called Flipside](#) that allows users to establish a private side to their profile where they can post content for a subset of their friends.









Platform Benchmarks

While the value and effectiveness of the top social platforms varies depending on a brand’s overall strategy, key objectives and target audience, it’s important to have some general benchmarks in place to understand how you stack up against the competition. If you’re underperforming in specific areas or channels, it’s critical to reevaluate your approach to get your results on par with the rest of the market.

Dash Hudson analyzed brand activity on the major platforms between January and June 2023 to identify average growth rates across key metrics and posting frequency. Given the importance of short-form video, we also benchmarked the average performance of content on YouTube Shorts, TikTok and Instagram Reels.

Overall Platform Comparison

						
Avg. Followers/ Subscribers	289K	2.6M	765K	1.2M	231K	621K
Avg. Monthly Growth Rate	12.5%*	0.6%	1.8%	0.5%	1.3%	-
Avg. Weekly Posts	5	5	7	32	17	45*
Avg. Engagement Rate	4.8%	0.3%	-	3.8%	0.5%	8.7%
Avg. Reach	117K*	194K*	-	54K	-	-
Avg. Impressions	-	-	-	-	26K	24K

*Customer data only

Impressions: The total number of times a piece of content was displayed to the target audience

Reach: The total number of users exposed to a piece of content

Engagement Rate:

Pinterest: (Likes + Comments) / Followers




Instagram: (Likes+ Comments) / Followers

TikTok: (Likes+Comments+Shares) / Video Views

X: (Total Engagements) / Impressions

Facebook: Engagement Rate: (Total Engagements) / Impressions

Short-Form Video

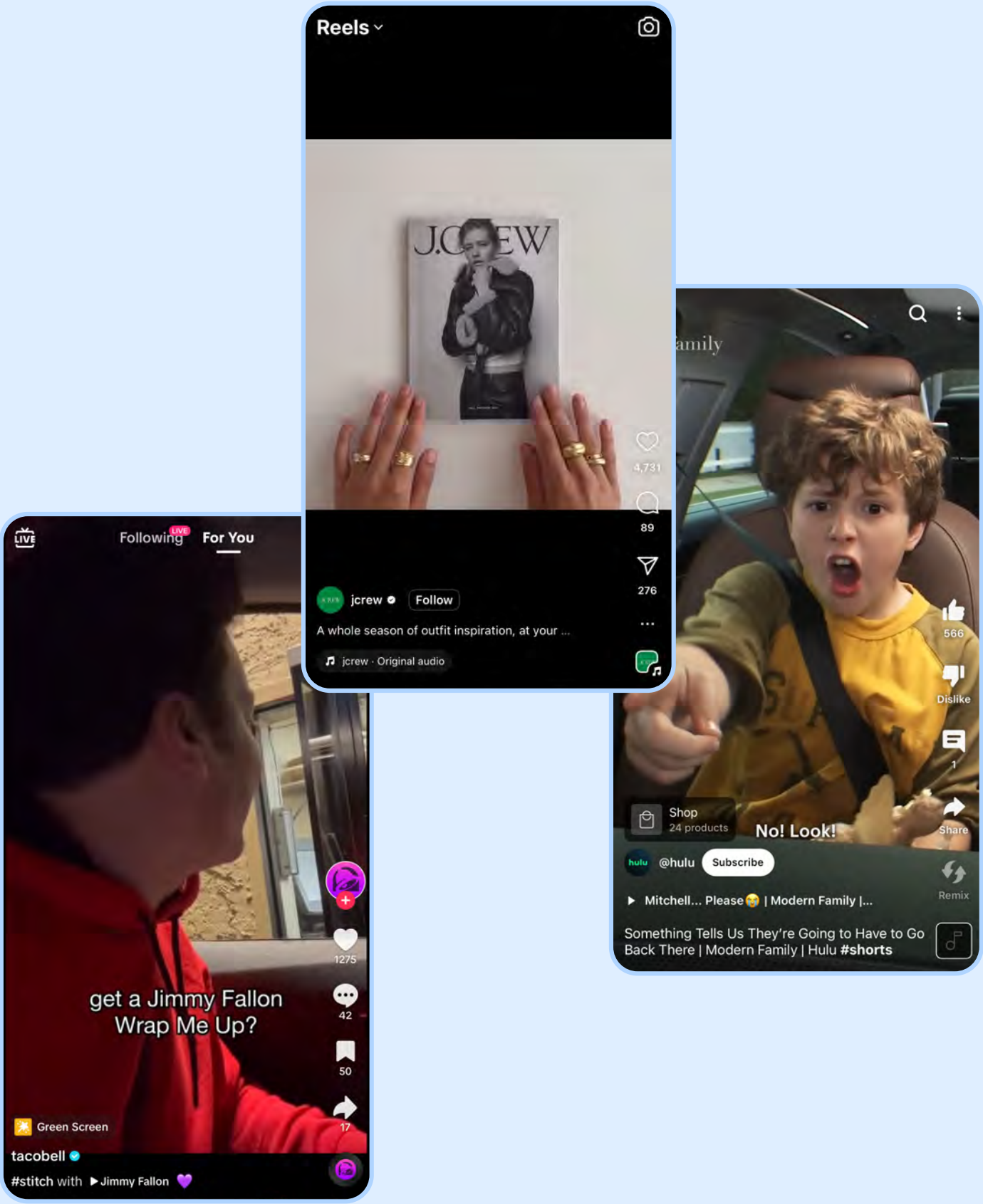
			
Avg. Weekly Posts	5 vs 4 in 1H 2023	4 vs 3 in 1H 2023	4 vs 1 in 1H 2023
Avg. Cross-Channel Engagement Rate	5.5% +17%**	2.8% -15%**	3.9% +5%**
Avg. Reach	117K* +31%**	147K* +50%**	- -
Avg. Video Views	148K +33%**	153K* +51%**	32K +77%**
Avg. Shares	165 -	339* -	42 -

*Customer data only | **Percentage Change vs. 1H 2023

Cross-Channel Engagement Rate: The Cross Channel Engagement Rate is a metric created to compare each platform's short-form video offering equally.

TikTok and Instagram: (Likes + Comments + Shares) / Reach

YouTube: (Likes + Comments + Shares) / Video Views*



TREND 1

Creator, Organic and Paid Each Excel in a Specific Area of a Social Strategy

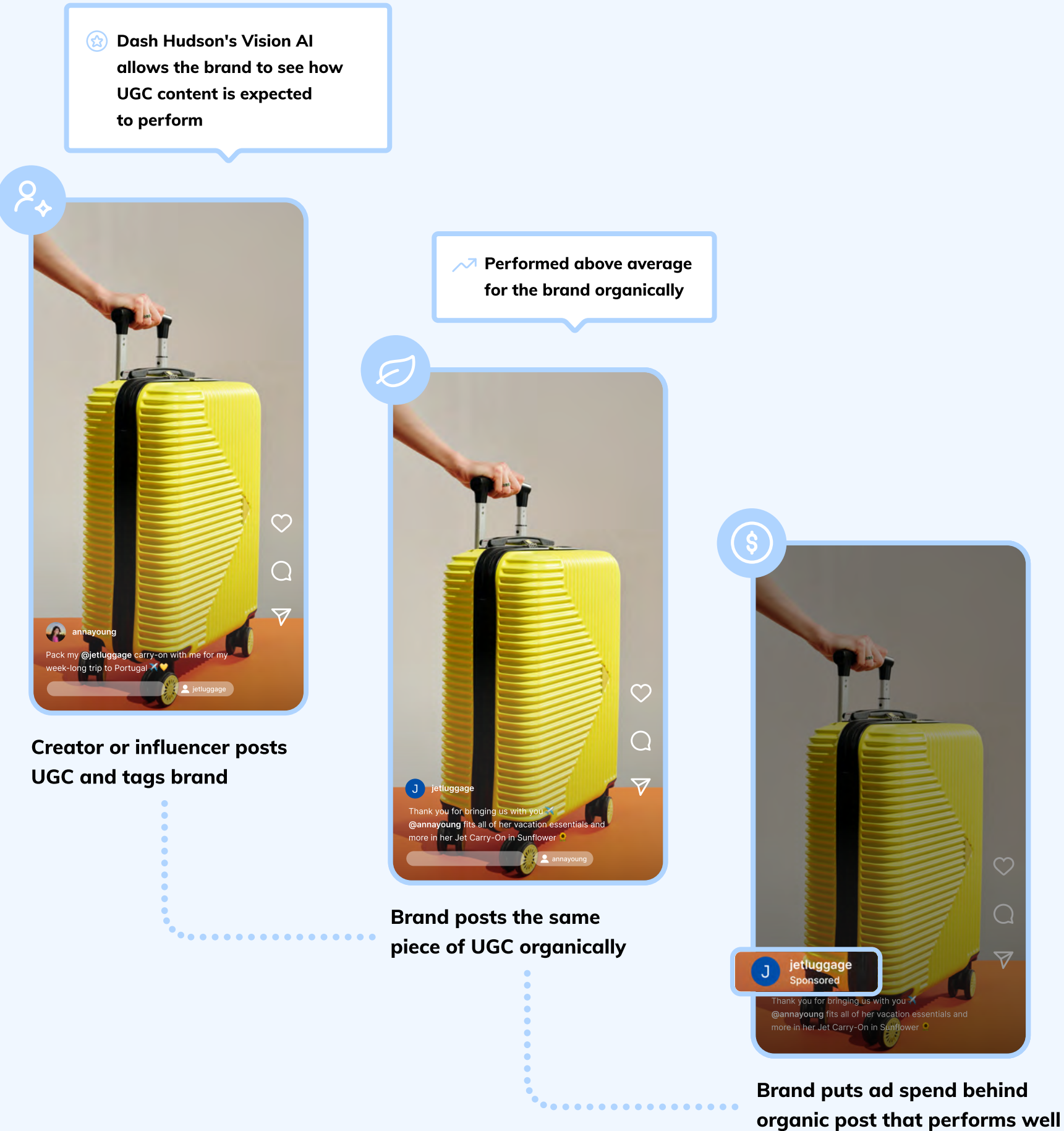
Within the content lifecycle, creator, organic and paid media have distinct roles to play depending on the objectives of an individual post or campaign.

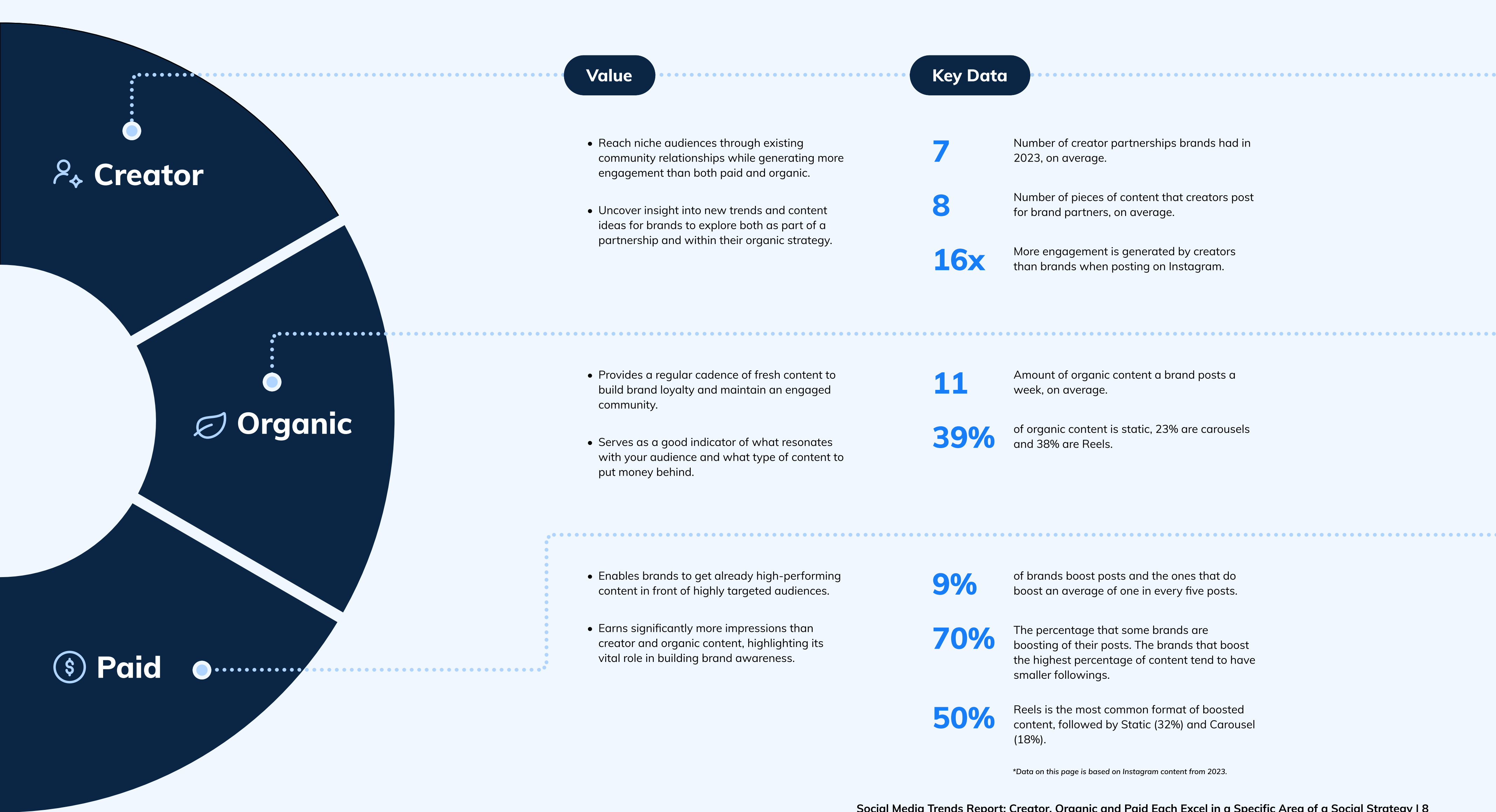
At the same time, each of these pillars is even more impactful when working in concert with the others as part of a holistic social media strategy. And this cross-pollination can drive meaningful results. IAB tracked over 1,000 consumer purchase journeys, finding that advertising alongside creator content can accelerate the purchase funnel, showing a

greater impact on building brand loyalty and a 1.3x greater impact on inspiring brand advocacy.

Dash Hudson looked at the Instagram activity of more than 900 brands during 2023 to understand how companies are building out their strategies. Additional analysis explores the inherent benefits of each pillar and how they can be leveraged most effectively.

In the report, we detail how Dash Hudson's Vision AI tool aids brands in optimizing every aspect of the content lifecycle. This includes predicting the performance of user-generated content for the brand and identifying owned content expected to outperform the brand's average.



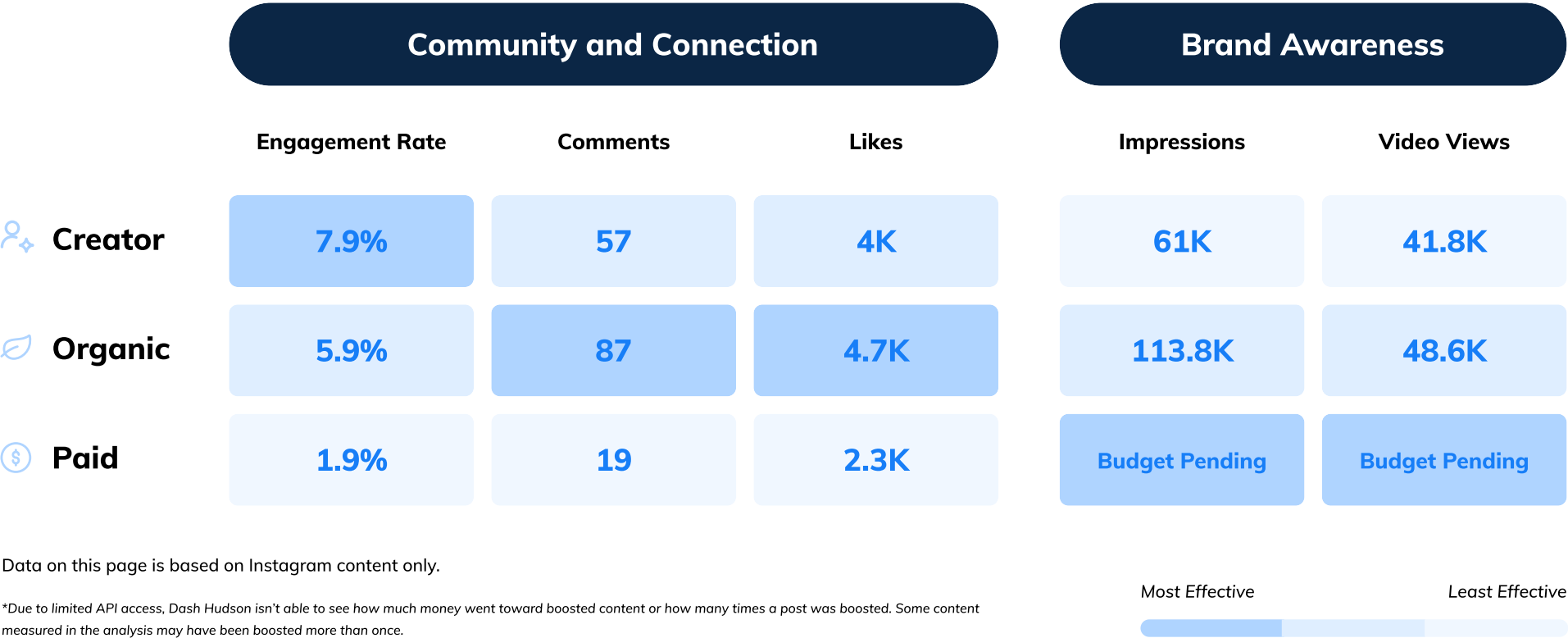


*Data on this page is based on Instagram content from 2023.

A Synergistic Approach to Creator, Organic and Paid Gives Brands an Advantage

A comprehensive social media strategy needs to simultaneously achieve several different objectives — grow brand awareness among a target general audience, build an engaged community of loyal fans and pique the passions of hyper-niche subcultures. Succeeding in each of these areas requires very different types of content and ways to get them in front of the right audience.

Dash Hudson analyzed the performance of creator, organic and paid content across various metrics to understand where each type excelled relative to the other two, along with their most impactful use cases within the content lifecycle.



Creator

Connecting with niche audiences and amplifying engagement.

- +34% higher engagement rate compared to organic content.
- +316% higher engagement rate compared to paid content.

Organic

Building brand loyalty and maintaining an engaged community.

- +358% more comments and +104% more likes compared to paid content.
- +53% more comments and +18% more likes compared to creator content.

Paid

Growing brand awareness.

- 3x more impressions and 6x more video views compared to organic content, regardless of budget.
- 7x more impressions and video views compared to creator content, regardless of budget.

Boosting Organic Content Supercharges Brand Awareness

Paying to boost a piece of content effectively breaks it out of a platform’s algorithm and places it in the feeds of targeted user demographics who might not otherwise have any previous knowledge of a particular brand. As a result, this approach excels at expanding brand awareness among a select audience of potential buyers, a huge first step in acquiring new customers and achieving greater sales over the long term. While boosting succeeds in increasing visibility, it’s important to note that these efforts don’t translate into higher levels of engagement as likes and comments don’t experience the same lift.

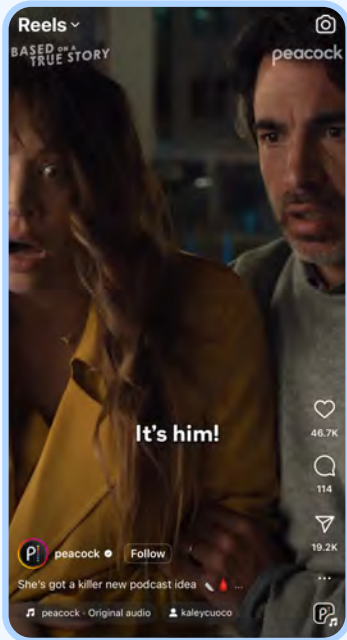
Dash Hudson compared the performance of organic content on Instagram before and after it was boosted to understand where brands saw the greatest gains across key metrics.

Data on this page is based on Instagram content only.

Key Findings:

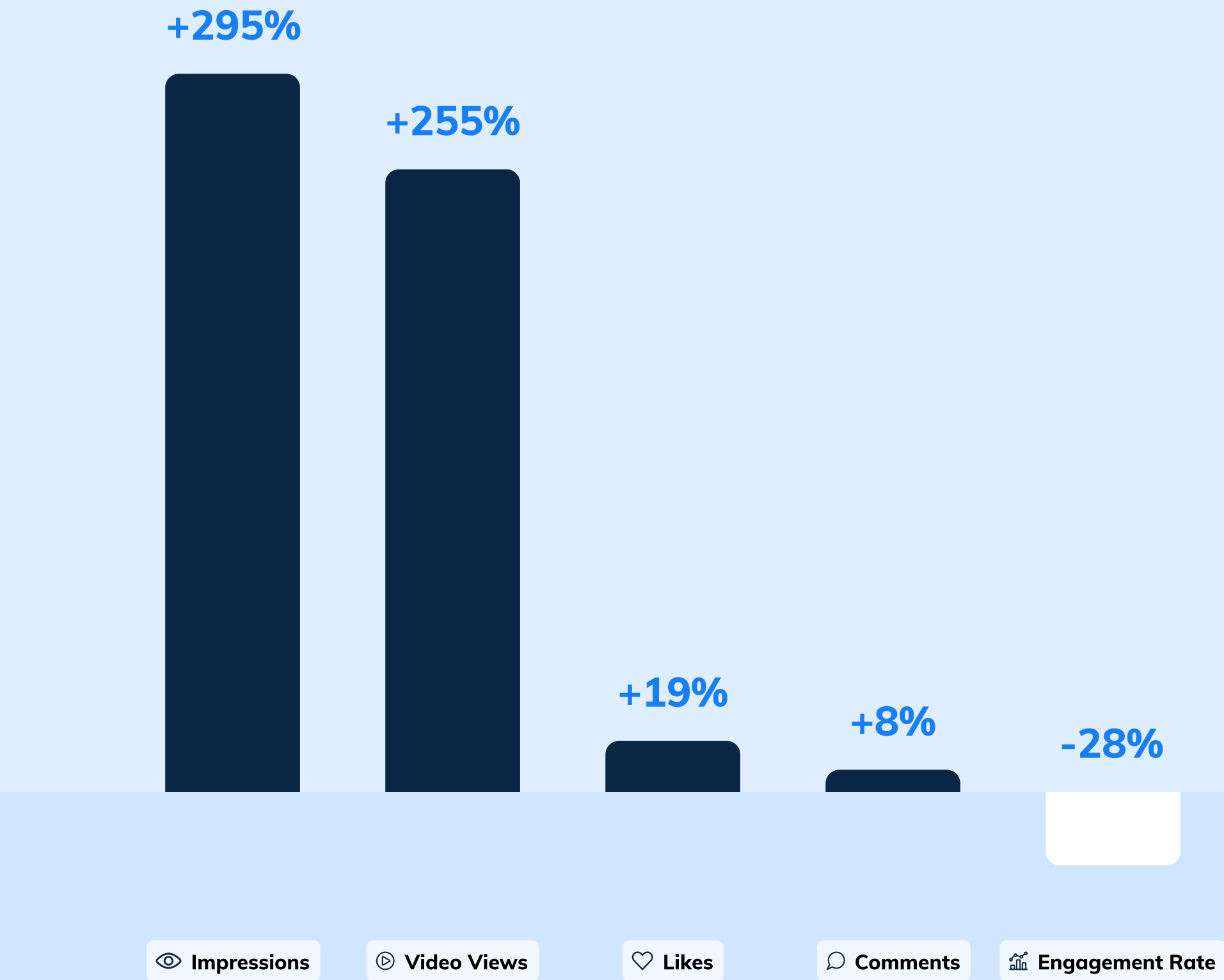
On average, boosting organic content increased impressions (+295%), video views (+255%), likes (+19%) and comments (+8%).

After boosting organic content, engagement rate decreased by an average of 28% from 3.5% to 1.9%, which is an expected result.



This organic Reel from Peacock has +4,069% more video views, +4,236% more impressions, +993% more likes and +113% more comments than the brand's average.

Lift in Boosted Organic Content



TREND 4

Boosting Reels Delivers Impressions, While Boosting Static Content Engages

Despite the shift toward short-form video, static content still has a big role to play in how brands engage their audiences.

For the vast majority of brands, text and image-based posts remain faster and cheaper to produce and, therefore represent a larger share of their regular content mix. There are noteworthy differences to highlight when boosting Static and Reels content.

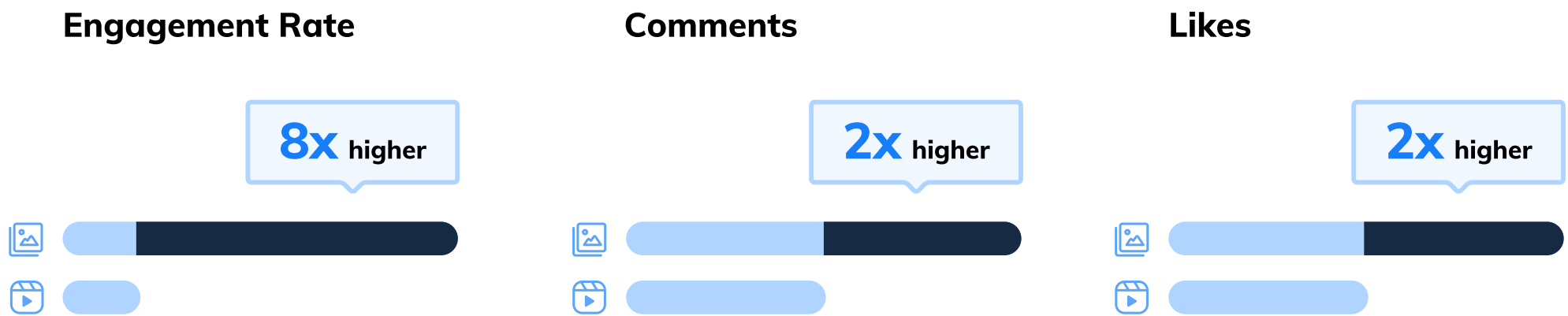
Dash Hudson analyzed the performance of boosted Static and Reels content on Instagram to understand how the different formats influenced the results. Boosting static posts generated significantly higher engagement rates than Reels, pointing to their effectiveness in building community relationships. Reels outperformed Static in audience impressions, proving to be better at growing brand awareness.

Data on this page is based on Instagram content only.

STATIC

Deepening Community Connection

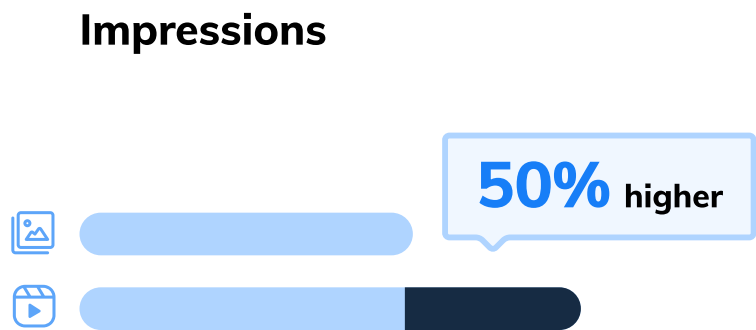
On average, static content earned more than an 8x higher engagement rate than Reels and more than 2x comments and likes.



REELS

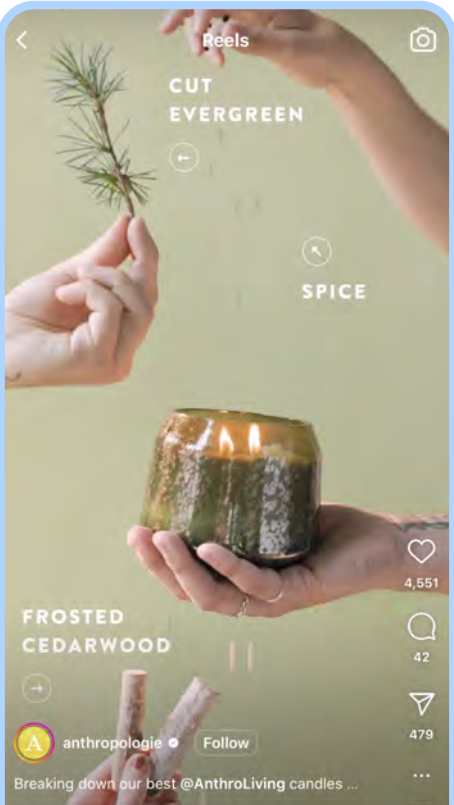
Growing Brand Awareness

On average, Reels generated more than 50% higher impressions compared to Static content.



Static Content Reels Content

This organic Reel from Anthropologie received +988% more video views and +1,208% more impressions when boosted.



Entertaining Content Experiences Significantly Higher Gains When Boosted

Content quality continues to be the driving force behind any successful social media strategy.

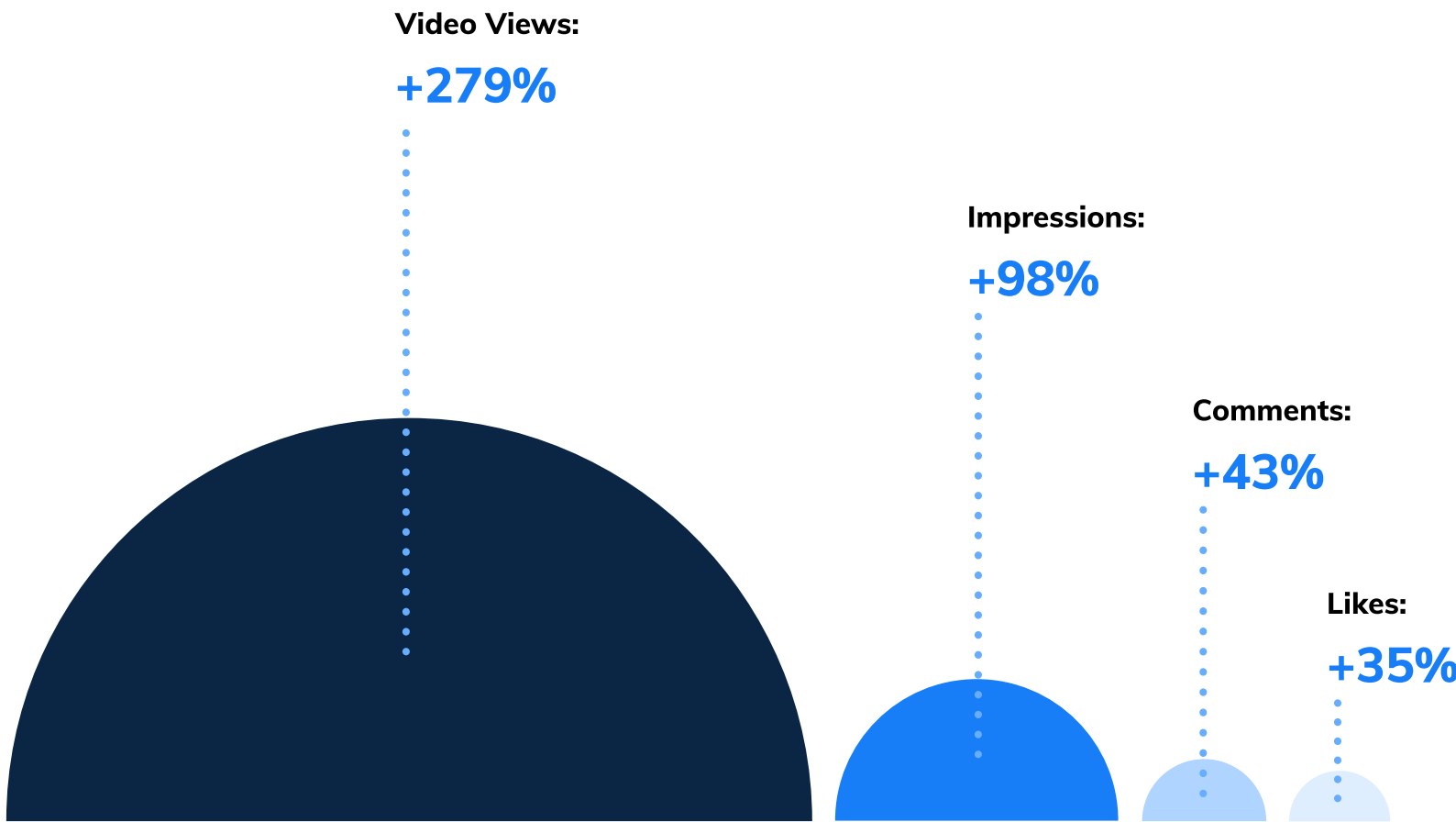
The posts that consistently outperform on most key metrics tend to be highly entertaining. Depending on the brand and its target demographic, entertaining is defined by some combination of creativity, timeliness, utility, aesthetics, authenticity and emotion. When a brand finds the perfect formula for a piece of content or a broader campaign, it not only gets elevated within the algorithm but audience engagement also skyrockets.

Savvy brands can take advantage of this initial success by paying to amplify their best content to ensure it reaches a wider audience.

Dash Hudson looked at its proprietary metric of Entertainment Score (Engagements/Reach, 0-low, 10-high) for Instagram Reels to determine if there was a correlation between a higher Entertainment Score and the overall performance of boosted content. In general, Reels that received an Entertainment Score of 5 or above experienced an increase in impressions, video views, comments and likes when boosted, giving brands a clear indicator of what content they should consider paying to promote.

Data on this page is based on Instagram content only.

The Impact of Boosting Content With an Entertainment Score Greater Than 5



Key Findings:

Only 16% of boosted content had an Entertainment Score of 5 and above, highlighting an opportunity for brands to be more strategic about the content they pay to promote and underscoring the importance of optimizing content to be more entertaining.



UNITED

United's Winning Formula for Maximizing Creator, Organic and Paid to Grow Engagement by 85%

A successful social media strategy starts with a sophisticated understanding of how creator, organic and paid media work together to achieve different brand goals and serve various audience needs. Each of these pillars has a unique role within the content lifecycle, from establishing a consistent presence for built-in followers to reaching niche audiences. Holistically, the interplay between the three ensures that a brand's best content has the greatest impact while optimizing ROI.

To see these insights in action, Dash Hudson highlights how United Airlines deftly combines performance analytics, creator partnerships, cultural resonance and UGC with strategic paid media to supercharge effectiveness. This 360-degree

approach grew the brand's community engagement on Instagram by an astounding 85% while many other brands struggle to gain traction.

Key Findings:

+200.5% increase in video views

+85.2% increase in engagements

+33.8% increase in net new followers

475.5 million organic reach from UGC

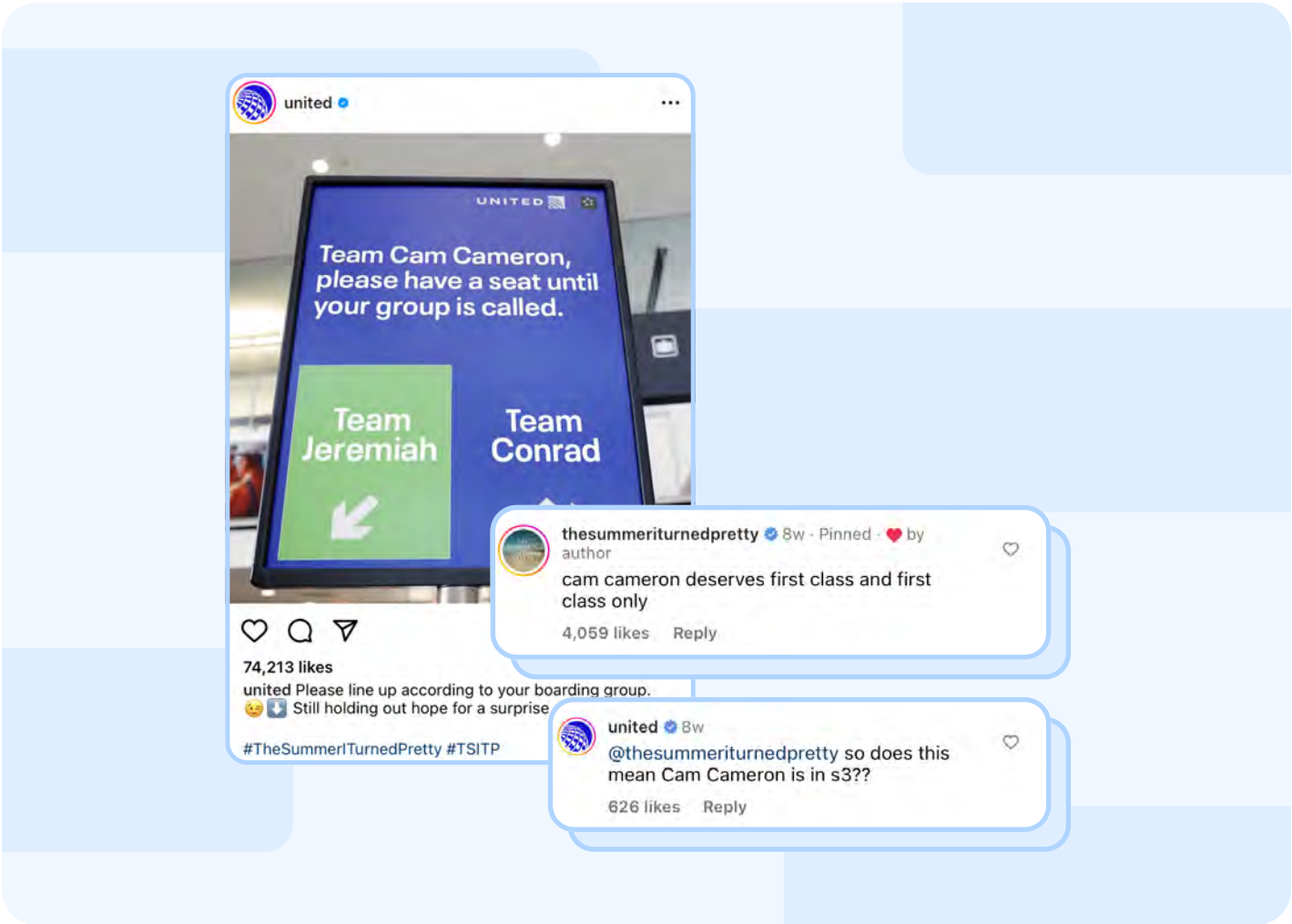
[Read the Case Study →](#)



Using Organic To Make Its Community Feel “Seen”

United is a real-time participant on social media, adapting its voice and content to be culturally relevant and relatable. Structured for proactive agility, this cross-functional Advertising and Social Media Team is always ready to pivot or jump on a new opportunity.

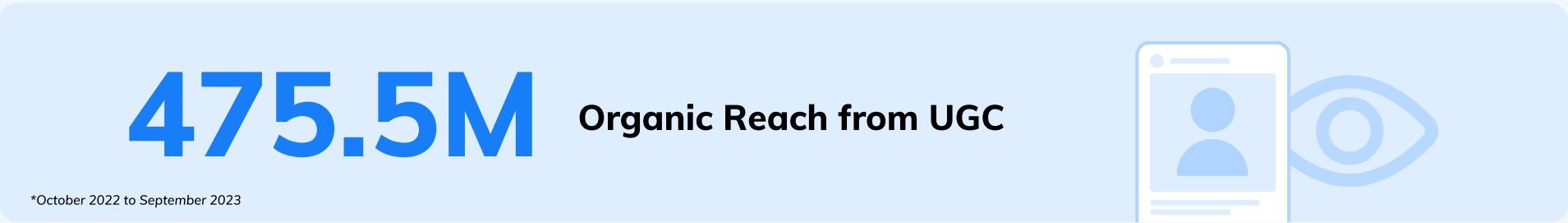
Community management is the cornerstone of United's organic social strategy, and it is the secret to how the brand has achieved such a loyal following. United is committed to making its followers feel "seen," responding to comments and queries with a blend of humor and positivity. The airline also regularly engages with other accounts and even shows up in the comment sections of viral content, showcasing the brand’s desire to craft a relatable personality and willingness to participate in the broader cultural conversation.



Taking a Multi-Faceted Approach to UGC

United’s deeper understanding of the social media landscape shows in its multi-faceted approach to earned media. The airline makes the most out of every piece of UGC at its disposal, from customers and influencers to its own employees, ultimately painting a portrait of how much people love being a part of the United community.

United uses Dash Hudson to source the most powerful Reels UGC that aligns with its messaging priorities. Customer experiences driving significant brand awareness with United experiencing 475.5 million in organic reach in the past year from UGC alone. The brand also maintains a roster of always-on influencers who continually create evergreen content about their flying experiences. The structure of these long-term partnerships allows United to repurpose this earned content across all organic and paid channels. Finally, United has tapped into an army of influencers from inside its own ranks. The brand has creative resources and activations for volunteers who share United-related content, and it offers internal social media education opportunities to make it enriching for any employee who wants to participate.



Leveraging Organic Insights To Maximize Paid Media

United leverages paid to support both its organic and earned content. Because of the range and specificity of its community, the airline amplifies tailored pieces of content to ensure they reach the audiences who will most engage with them. The brand also monitors performance insights, focusing on engagement rate, to determine what content to promote from influencers, customers and employee advocates. This hybrid strategy ultimately drives much higher engagement rates, accomplishing United’s goal for more meaningful brand awareness.

Maximizing Content Performance With AI

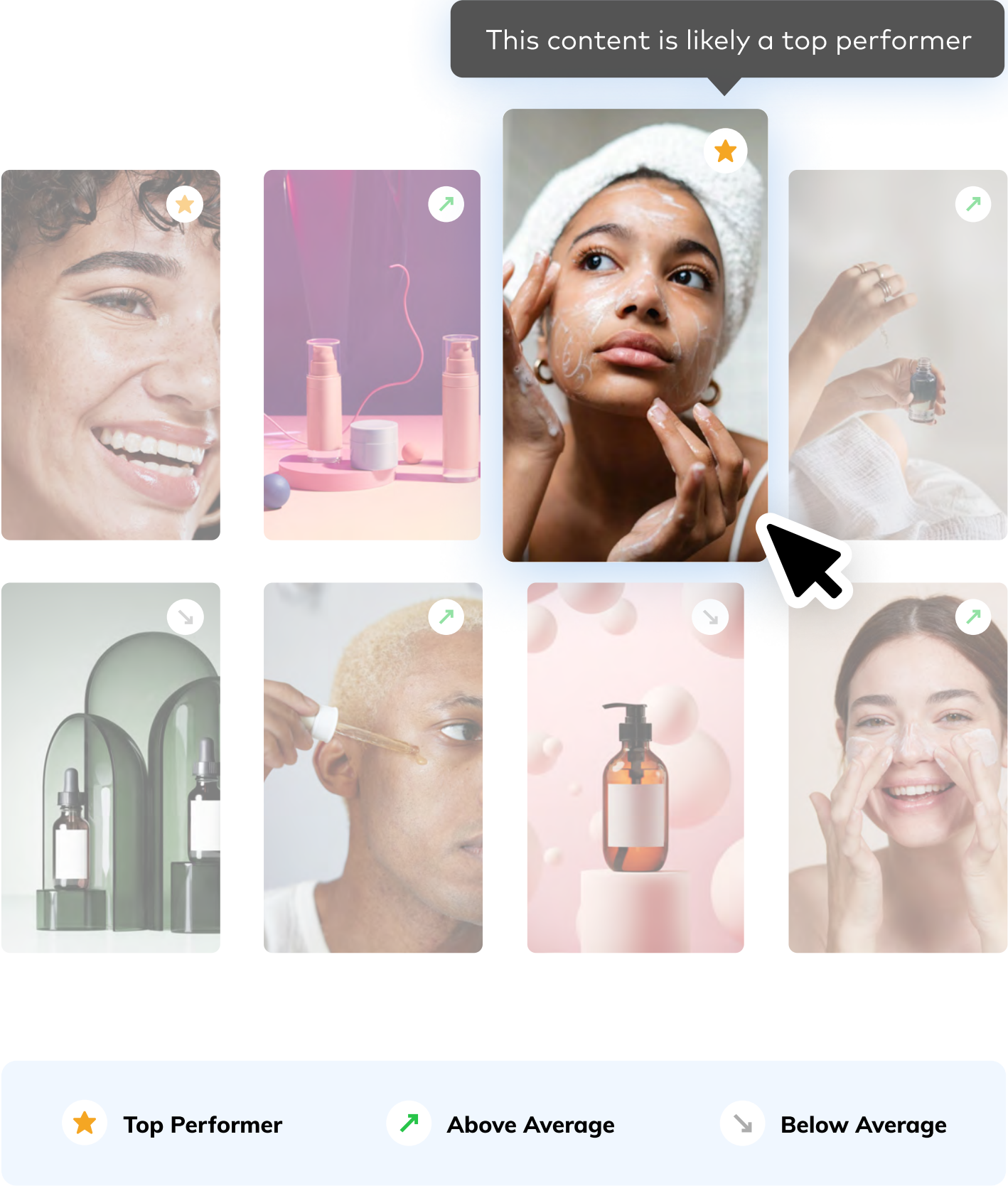
A renowned multinational corporation needed a social media solution that could scale across its global enterprise while enhancing creative effectiveness and operational efficiency. With a diverse portfolio of brands, each appealing to a unique audience and aesthetic, the corporation was in search of a solution to not only streamline content selection and workflow but also provide insights tailored to each brand's audience to drive engagement and maintain a competitive edge in the dynamic beauty industry.

Dash Hudson is a social media management platform that delivers sophisticated insights and workflow tools, keeping social media managers in the know and saving them time. As an industry-leading provider of AI-driven optimization since 2016, Dash Hudson understands how to leverage AI and modern social data to optimize content, enabling brands to outsmart social and drive ROI.

Vision AI Helps Brands Predict and Maximize Performance

Top Predicted Performers are posts that Vision AI determines will get the highest performance. Vision AI identifies thousands of visual elements in photos and videos, such as tone, contrast, composition, subject, and color trends to develop an understanding of what will perform well on social media before it is even posted. This real-time analysis allows brands to keep their finger on the pulse of content that truly engages their audience.

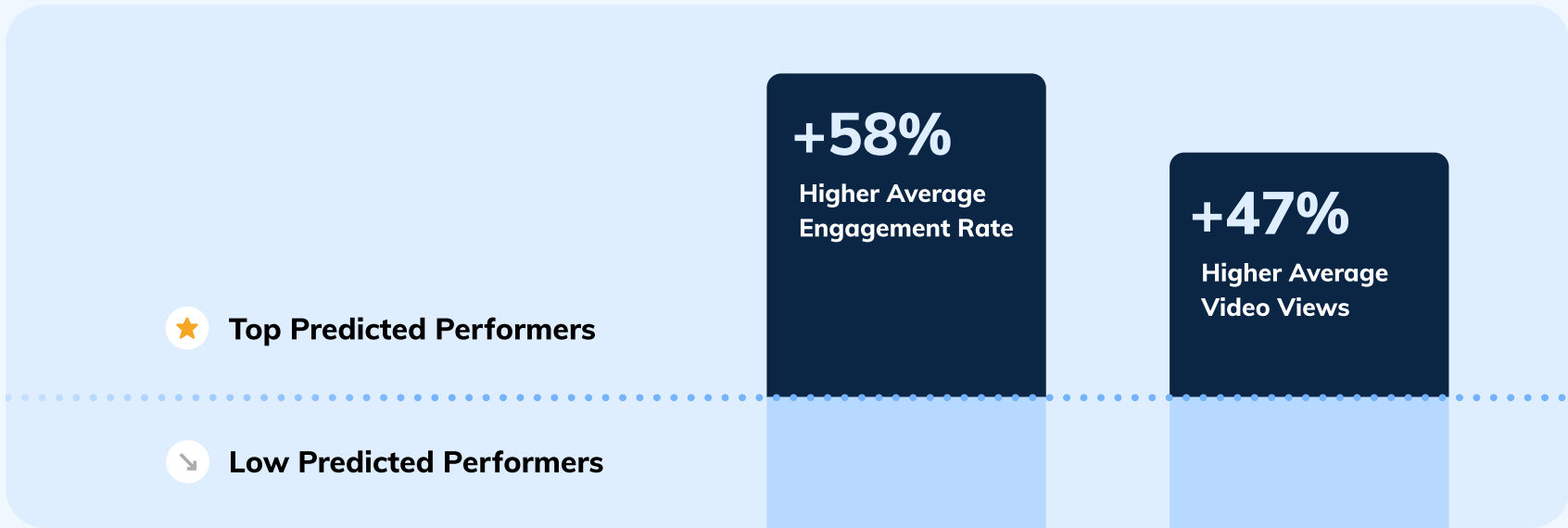
Audience preferences do not stay the same for long. This AI technology is ever-learning, adapting to each brand's unique audience in real-time. This ensures that the corporation's brands are always ahead of the curve, ready to engage their audience with the most effective and relevant content.



Vision AI Delivers Results

To understand the long-tail benefits of using Vision AI, Dash Hudson analyzed the average Engagement Rate and Video Views for Top Predicted Performers and Low Predicted Performers for the corporation's brands that have been leveraging Dash Hudson the longest. This analysis incorporated all of the brands' owned in-feed Instagram video content for 2023.

When it comes to performance, Vision AI has proven its worth among various brands across the corporation's portfolio. Top Predicted Performers consistently outperform Low Predicted Performers in both engagement and video views.



The Benefits of AI-Driven Content Selection

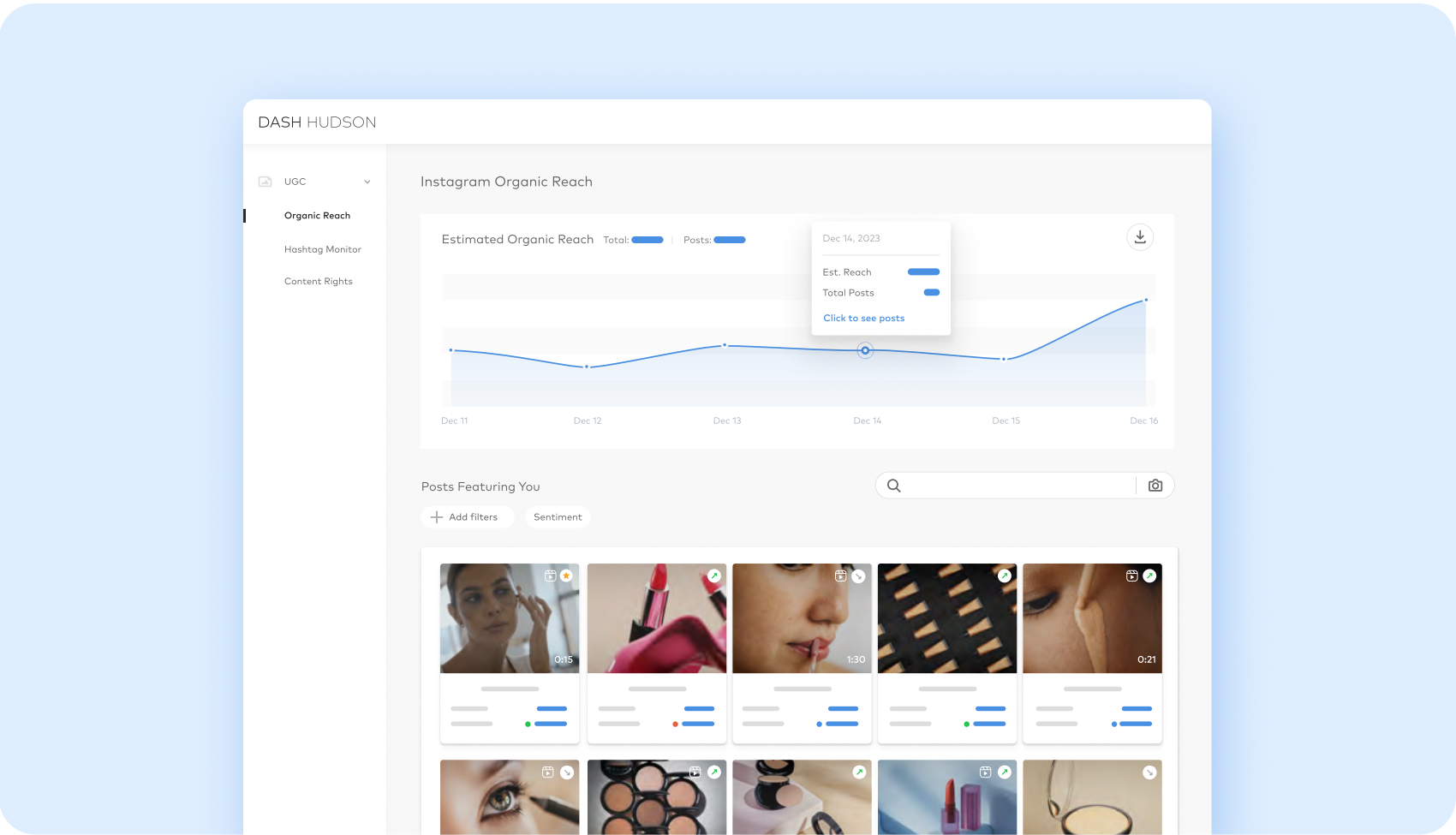
Predicting content performance before they hit post is a superpower that teams are using across the board to implement efficiencies in their business. Vision AI saves time in the content selection process, enabling brands to upload their assets, and allow Vision to predict which will be the top performers. This can inform campaign launch content strategy, or serve as an unbiased decision-maker, adding an objective, on-brand voice to what can sometimes be subjective discussions.

Using Vision AI To Identify Trends and Creator Partnerships

In the fast-paced world of social media, timing is everything. When viral moments happen organically, it's critical to react with speed to maximize the impact, and that requires high-quality assets.

Vision AI also works for UGC, allowing brands to quickly find content that will perform well, and then secure the rights in-platform in a few clicks. Dash Hudson simplifies the process of identifying and maximizing the impact of these organic moments.

A brand team can also use the Vision AI UGC tool to identify new creator partnerships, leveraging the predicted performance on the brand's own channels to maximize creative effectiveness and drive impact. This dual capability has made Vision AI an integral part of the corporation's social media planning and publication strategy.



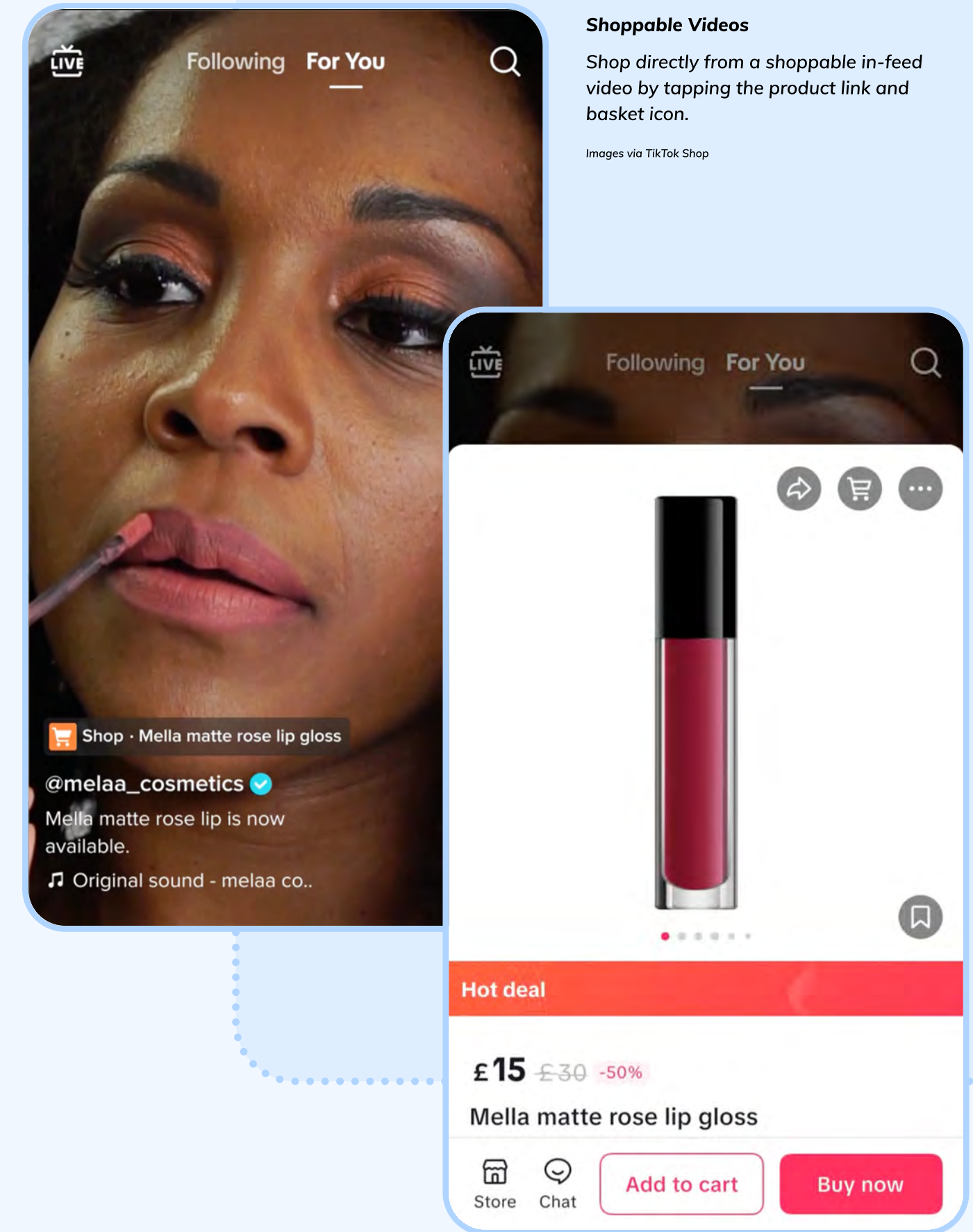
TREND 6

Authentic Connections and Entertaining Content Drive Direct Sales With TikTok Shop

Since its initial launch in select markets in 2021 and subsequent release in the US in September 2023, TikTok Shop has reignited excitement around the massive potential of social commerce sales for the platform's 1.6 billion users. The native platform experience seamlessly combines shoppable videos and livestreams in users' For You feeds along with Product Showcases, a Shop Tab, Shop Ads and other features to enable brands and creators to sell directly through the TikTok app.

In 2023, TikTok ranked as the **12th** largest e-commerce retailer in the US market and the **5th** largest e-commerce player in the UK market, providing a wealth of data on audience buying behaviors and sales metrics.

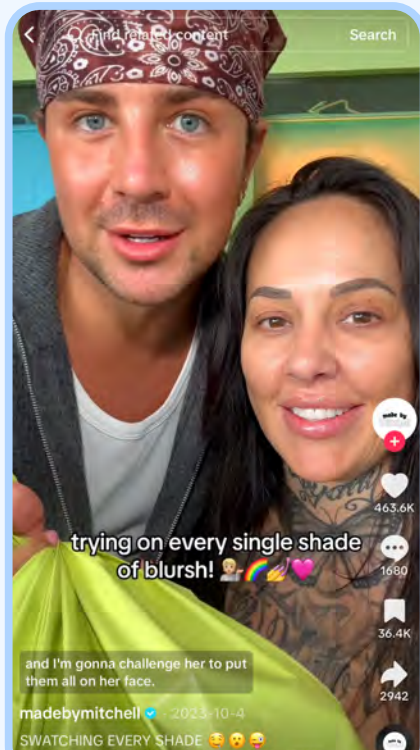
Insights are based on an analysis of Beauty brands from Dash Hudson's 2023 Cross-Channel Benchmark Report and NielsenIQ's Foxintelligence E-receipt Consumer Panel from Jan 1 to November 30, 2023.



TikTok Shop: Winner Takes All — and Anyone Can Win

To identify content trends that could translate into successful executions in the US and beyond, Dash Hudson partnered with NielsenIQ to analyze beauty brand performance on TikTok Shop in the UK. The two biggest indicators of converting content into sales were relatability and video views.

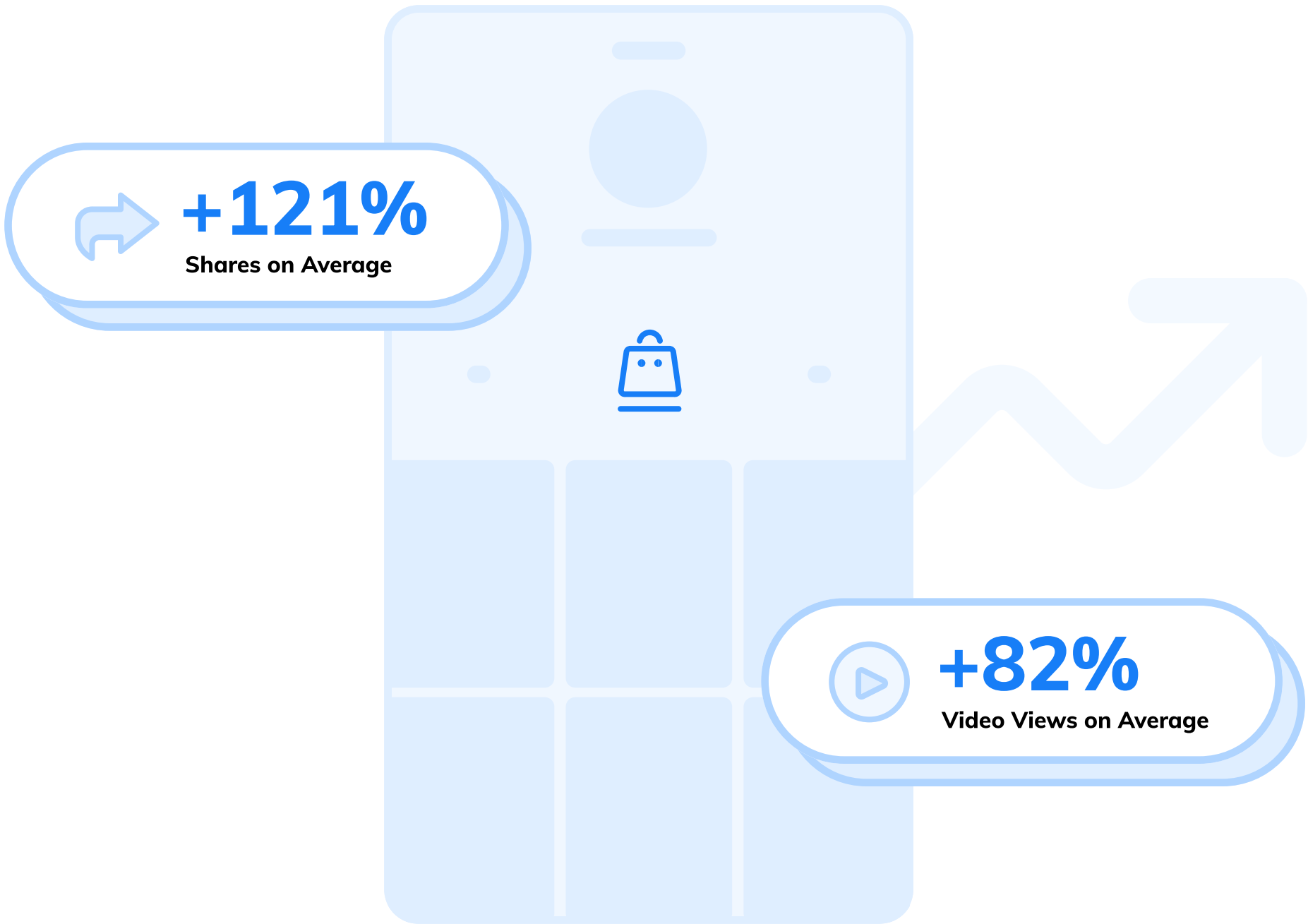
The top five UK beauty brands collectively account for **one-third** of TikTok Shop sales out of 500 brands within the beauty industry. On average, these leading brands have over **82%** higher video views and **121%** more shares than the industry average.



While these brands may not be considered mainstream beauty brands in the UK market, many of them are experiencing significant success with a large portion coming from TikTok Shop. This hints at a level playing field on TikTok Shop and an early mover advantage for any brand choosing to experiment with its new commerce tools. As always, brands must create content that is first and foremost authentic and entertaining.

Insights are based on an analysis of Beauty brands from Dash Hudson's 2023 Cross-Channel Benchmark Report and NielsenIQ's Foxintelligence E-receipt Consumer Panel from Jan 1 to November 30, 2023.

Top Performing UK Beauty Brands on TikTok Shop:



PERFECTING THE CONTENT LIFECYCLE

Conclusion

The complex nature of today's social media landscape, such as content-driven feeds controlled by everchanging algorithms, increasingly niche audiences and an overall leveling of the brand-creator-user divide, means that brands must be much savvier with how they create and amplify their content. Each stage of the content lifecycle has a specific role in a sophisticated social media strategy, with successful brands figuring out how they work together to achieve even greater results.

Particularly when it comes to boosting content, Dash Hudson found that there are outsized advantages to be gained, yet most brands only pay to magnify a small percentage of their content. Through analysis of our platform and partner data, we've created a set of guidelines to deepen your understanding of organic, creator and paid and ensure they work in harmony to grow performance on social and ROI.

Creator, organic and paid each excel in a specific area of a social strategy.

To maximize their ROI, brands must understand what content levers to pull based on their primary objective with organic outperforming in likes and comments, creator dominating in engagement and paid winning in video views.

Boosting organic content supercharges brand awareness among a broader audience of potential customers.

Because paying to amplify content breaks it out of a platform's algorithm and places it in the feeds of sought-after demographics, it can result in large gains in impressions and video views and modest upticks in likes and comments.

Boosting reels delivers impressions, while static content engages.

Static content is more effective at deepening audience connection, earning higher engagement, comments and likes, while Reels outperform in increasing awareness through higher impressions.

Entertaining content experiences significantly higher gains when boosted.

Dash Hudson's Entertainment Score continues to be a powerful indicator of overall success with posts that receive a score of 5 or above achieving a higher number of impressions, video views, comments and likes when boosted.

A synergistic approach to creator, organic and paid gives brands a clear advantage.

Beyond understanding how each of the three pillars can be individually deployed to maximize impact and effectiveness, brands that have unlocked strategies for using them together have the best chance of achieving better ROI and performance.

Authentic connections and entertaining content drive direct sales with TikTok Shop.

Top five UK beauty brands on TikTok Shop generate one-third of sales among 500 brands, showcasing an early advantage for brands on the platform. Despite limited recognition in the UK market, their success primarily comes from TikTok Shop, emphasizing the importance of authentic and entertaining content.

DASH HUDSON

Outsmart Social

Dash Hudson is a social media management platform that equips brands with intelligence and speed to stay ahead of the curve. Through its sophisticated cross-channel insights and workflow tools, Dash Hudson enables brands to create content that entertains, engages and drives consistent business results. To discover how Dash Hudson is empowering brands to outsmart social, visit dashhudson.com.



Andie Social Media Manager

Hey team! Sharing our weekly social performance dashboard for review.

