

Social Media Best Practices For 2023:

How DMOs Can Leverage Short-Form Video Across Different Platforms



photo: @MukukoStudio

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2023 Best Practices by Platform

DMOs have learned so much about their audiences in recent years. But we understand the frustration teams feel when they think they have it all figured out, only for an algorithm to change or a new app to launch. Keep in mind that best practices continue to change as newer platforms like TikTok nudge competitors for market share, travelers have more content, platforms continue vying for their attention, and user behavior changes.

In a guide purpose built for destination marketers, we've put together the latest available guidelines for TikTok, Instagram, Instagram Reels, Facebook, YouTube, and YouTube Shorts.

We'll back it up with data that demonstrates the effectiveness of these platforms and different content formats. We've made these recommendations as specific to the travel industry as possible but, as always, don't ignore your own if they've been working well for you!

Content Calender



photo: @katekerdi

Some takeaways that apply to each platform include:

- Posting when your audience is online
- Considering local holidays and events that may impact engagement
- And remembering the kind of content that generally works best for each platform

Our biggest advice regardless of which platforms you're working with? Understand your audience and where they are.

Stick to the platforms that have worked, where you know you're having great engagement and conversations. You may feel pressured to launch a new channel that has a lot of buzz or that's suddenly gained massive adoption (and we always encourage trying new things!), but at the same time if your audience isn't there yet, it won't matter.

Let's dive in!



TikTok

TikTok 2023 Trends

Think of 2023 as the year [TikTok takes a big leap towards “growing up”](#), according to numerous publications, analysts, brands, and TikTok itself.

That doesn't mean everyone's parents and grandparents will suddenly inundate the platform, which is part of the reason why so many Gen Z and teen users have fled places like Facebook and Instagram. Rather, TikTok has indicated it believes it has a secret sauce that competitors can't simply copy to achieve the same results. To that end, TikTok is portraying itself as the app that inspires users to act based on the content they've seen, such as booking a flight or trying a new suitcase packing technique.

Where do DMOs land in the Tiktok space? While some organizations grapple with state bans, others are dialing up their efforts.

That being said, there's still lots of room to grow on this channel. In a recent review of more than 850 CrowdRiff customer social media accounts, we found that only 42% have a TikTok account. Of the active TikTok accounts, about 35% are posting at least once a week, and the superstars of the platform (just 6%) are posting daily.





photo: @ollivves

[TikTok's "What's Next 2023 Trends Report"](#) revealed three key trends the platform will be focused on this year:

Actionable Entertainment:

According to the report, "on other platforms, content is 'personalized' based on broad identity categories or simple browsing histories. But on TikTok, content is curated based on what viewers find entertaining, so it captures their attention and trust." TikTok has a good idea of what content users are looking for and serves them that. The creators featured in that content drive action by earning that attention and trust.

Making Space for Joy:

Living through the pandemic naturally created more awareness of health and wellness and inspired millions to take better care of their bodies. TikTok users "are seeking out meaningful and personalized strategies to public health challenges, burnout struggles, and personal hardships," the report said. People want to be the happiest and healthiest version of themselves and are looking to creators for tips and tricks for how to get there. This also ties into the upswing we're seeing in sustainable travel, with the focus on traveling mindfully and leaving a positive impact on the environment and communities in these destinations.

Community-Built Ideals:

Everyone wants to feel like they belong and to be understood. When people feel included and supported, they're more easily able to make changes and achieve goals they set for themselves. "TikTok communities are a cut above the rest because they're specific—and that's what helps them thrive at scale," the report said. "The platform isn't just a place to find fellow moms and gamers. It's a place to connect with other #TiredMoms who face the same day-to-day stressors that you do and get inspired by #CozyGamers who prioritize laid-back, stress-free gaming."

The report also found that among people who took an off-platform action as a result of watching a TikTok, 92% said they felt a positive emotion that ultimately resulted in an off-platform action such as making a purchase. Also notable is the finding that 72% of TikTok users who took an off-platform action said they received reviews from platform creators they trust. This is all because brands and creators tap into niches like #TiredMoms to have honest conversations people care about and can identify with. Decide who your niche audience is (LGBTQ, sustainable-minded travelers, etc.)

Through its three trend focus areas, TikTok is essentially doubling down on what it's been offering users all along. Again, it's the platform of authenticity and the place where brands can continuously and organically reach audiences thanks to TikTok's algorithm.

"[TikTok] focuses on showing you the best content from all users, as opposed to pushing you to build your own social graph," [Industry Dive](#) said.

"That enables TikTok to maximize user engagement, because your feed mix isn't limited to updates from certain profiles that you choose, while it also provides more exposure potential for creators, who are then able to have their posts seen by a lot more people, outside of their own audience."



photo: @clay.banks

TikTok Outperforms Instagram Reels in Engagement

On average, TikTok videos have engagement rates that are six times higher than Reels, according to a study of more than 564,000 TikTok videos and more than 1.3 million Instagram Reels.

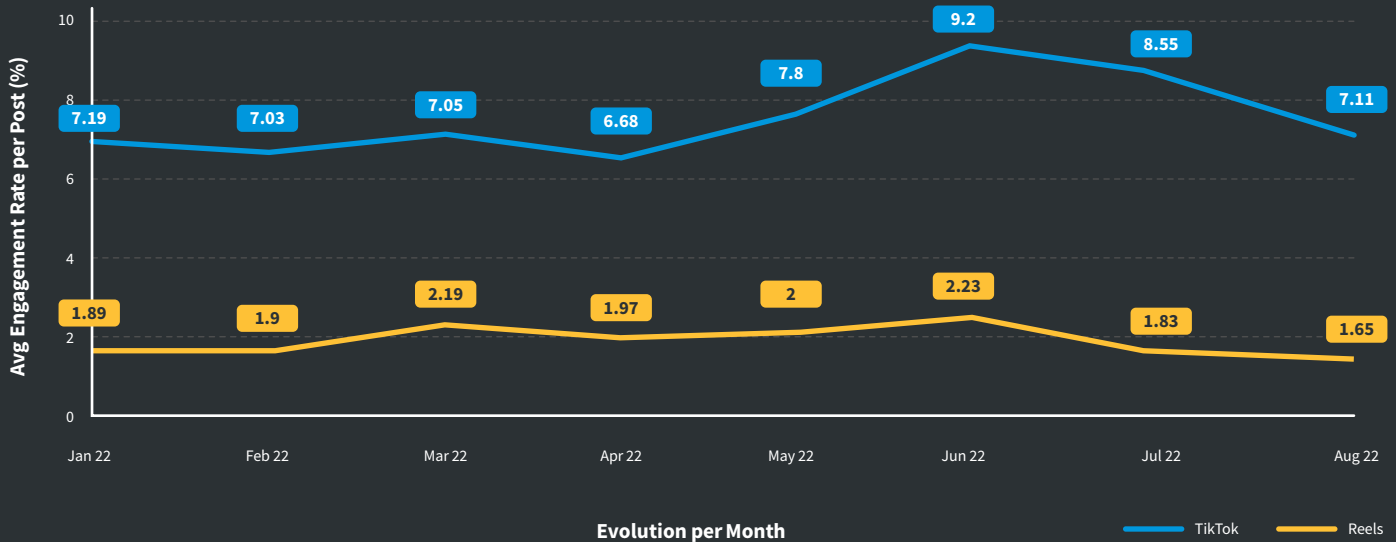
Interestingly, data show accounts with smaller followings had higher watch rates than those with larger followings (watch rate refers to percentage of completed video views). This speaks volumes about the shift we are seeing away from large influencers and focusing more on niche travel creators. The study doesn't specify why that is and the results are not industry specific, but this is promising news for smaller DMOs trying to understand the impression that Reels could make on their audiences.



photo: @_michaelsala_

photo: @trail

TikTok and Instagram Reels: Engagement Evolution (by followers)



Source: Socialinsider 2022 study

TikTok and Instagram Reels: Posting Frequency Comparison



Source: Socialinsider 2022 study

2023 Best Practices

Best time to post (Eastern Standard Time):

6am - 10am and 7pm - 11pm, with Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday the days with highest engagement.

How often to post:

Aim for at least once per day, remembering that quality is better than quantity on TikTok. The algorithm prioritizes content that's watched from start to finish, meaning that quality content has a higher likelihood of being consumed completely. Videos can be short, but they must have great hooks and target niche audiences. Only 42% of CrowdRiff customers have a TikTok account and just 6% of those customers post daily. 35% of these customers do, however, post at least once per week.

Content that works best:

People scroll through TikTok to be entertained. Find what makes your brand entertaining and stick to that. Maybe your destination is known for a unique dance style or food that would surprise your audience, make them laugh or motivate them to run to the grocery store to buy ingredients and start cooking. Keep videos short (a few seconds is fine!), use hashtags, collaborate with local TikTok creators, jump on challenges, add music, and engage with your followers. [Also consider adding text-to-speech and captions to your videos](#) not only to help followers with vision impairments enjoy your content – this feature also provides an edge to traditional video. And make sure you secure the proper licensing rights to music for your videos ([check out this handy guide for how TikTok makes it easy to do this](#)).

Destination Example

Visit Berlin joined TikTok in 2022 and its videos already average thousands of views. Their videos focus on tips and tricks for exploring popular attractions and events around the city and they do a fantastic job with hooks at the start of the video – definitely check them out to learn how they grab travelers' attention!

[Watch here](#)





photo: @peter_mc_greats

Instagram and Instagram Reels

Instagram 2023 Trends

Reels – [Instagram’s fastest-growing format](#) – defined feeds and content in 2022 and that’s not changing this year. Instagram head Adam Mosseri took a page from TikTok’s plans as [he recently outlined the platform’s top three priorities for 2023](#):

Inspire people to be creative:

Expect Instagram to add more visual customization and tools, like augmented and virtual reality.

Help people discover things they love:

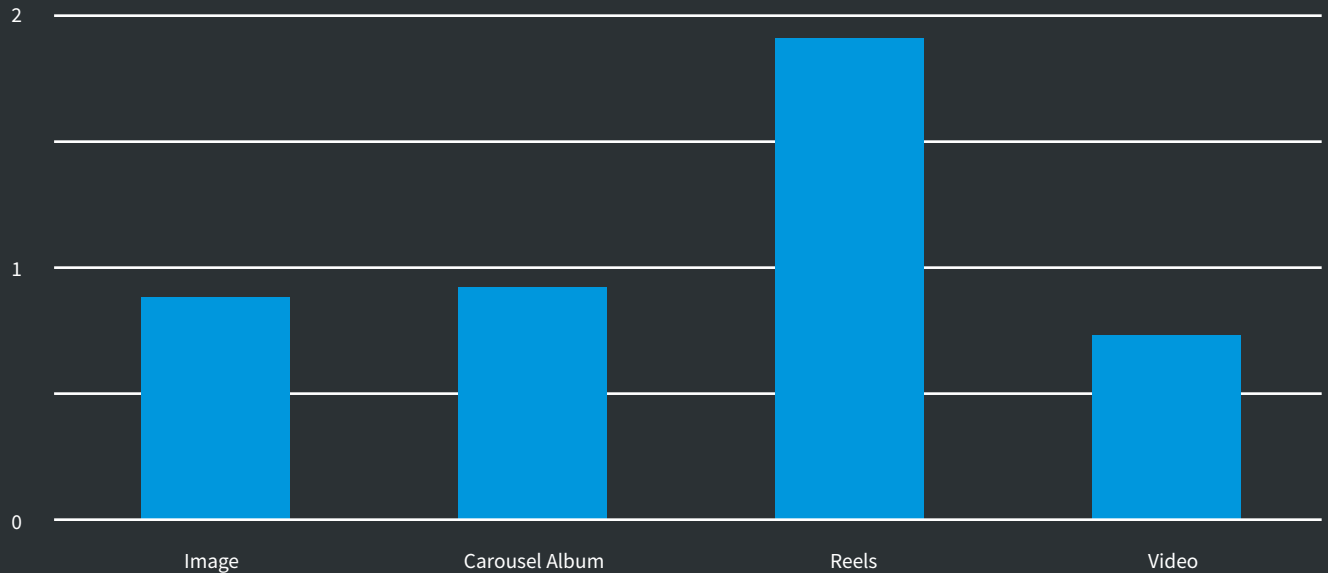
Besides showing audiences what they know and love, Instagram will prioritize helping them discover new creators and brands (a la TikTok-like experience). Zuckerberg also noted in July 2022 that [just over 15% of content in Instagram feeds was being delivered by its AI recommendation engine](#) and that he expected this to “more than double” by the end of 2023. This basically means audiences can expect to see a lot

more content from people and brands they don’t follow, which is a great opportunity for DMOs to organically reach new followers.

Spark connections between people:

[Mosseri recently said the way audiences are interacting with Instagram content is changing](#), with more users sharing content like photos and Reels to their Stories and sending DMs to friends than they share to their main feed. Instagram is hoping it can stand out by focusing on conversations around content instead of just on content itself. [It’s also added a new feature called Notes](#) in the inbox section which lets users share a conversation prompt in a Story-like bubble. It definitely takes more time and attention, but consider how you could engage one-on-one or with small groups of your audience to have fun and important conversations about your destination.

Organic Performance of Post Types on Instagram



*Depicts average percent engagement per post type
Source: Socialinsider travel industry study

Reels are on the Rise

[Reels account for roughly 20% of the time that people spend on Instagram](#), so it's clear this is the kind of content audiences are increasingly expecting. [Instagram added a "Boost Reels" option in 2022 for brands](#) that lets them turn their Reels into ads to reach new audiences and drive more engagement. Boosted Reels will appear in feeds, Stories, the Reels tab, and the explore page to help new customers find your brand.

To be eligible for boosting, "Reels must be less than 60 seconds and have a 9:16 aspect ratio, which means they're filmed vertically and have a full-screen format," [Instagram said](#). "At this time, Reels that use third-party intellectual property — such as copyrighted music, GIFs, interactive stickers, or camera filters — are ineligible for boosting, as well as Reels shared to Facebook."

Instagram also announced that Reels creators can earn money for their high-performing content, known as the Reels Play Bonus program, [if their Reels are deemed eligible](#).

2023 Best Practices

Best time to post (Eastern Standard Time):

The best time to post Reels is in the morning, Monday through Thursday, with Wednesday at midday getting the top spot for highest engagement. Many brands post on the hour mark, so consider posting a few minutes before or after the :00 to better stand out from your competition.

How often to post:

Most brands post an average of a little more than once per day. Keep in mind that the algorithm prioritizes recency, meaning newer posts will show up higher in feeds than older ones. This also means it's even more important on Instagram to post when your audience is online so that they won't miss your amazing content! 91% of CrowdRiff customers are active on Instagram and almost 50% of these customers post daily.

Content that works best:

Pro tip #1 is don't just recycle watermarked TikToks as this will only show your audience that they're not getting anything new or original to Instagram by following you there. Again, it's ok to repurpose content from other platforms, but make sure it's optimized for Instagram and consider adding elements like polls or quizzes that are specific to the platform. Work with a diverse set of local creators who understand your destination and represent what's best and unique about it, and dedicate part of your budget to making this happen. Use hashtags that are specific to your niche(s) and destination, and encourage your audience to use these hashtags so you can share their UGC.

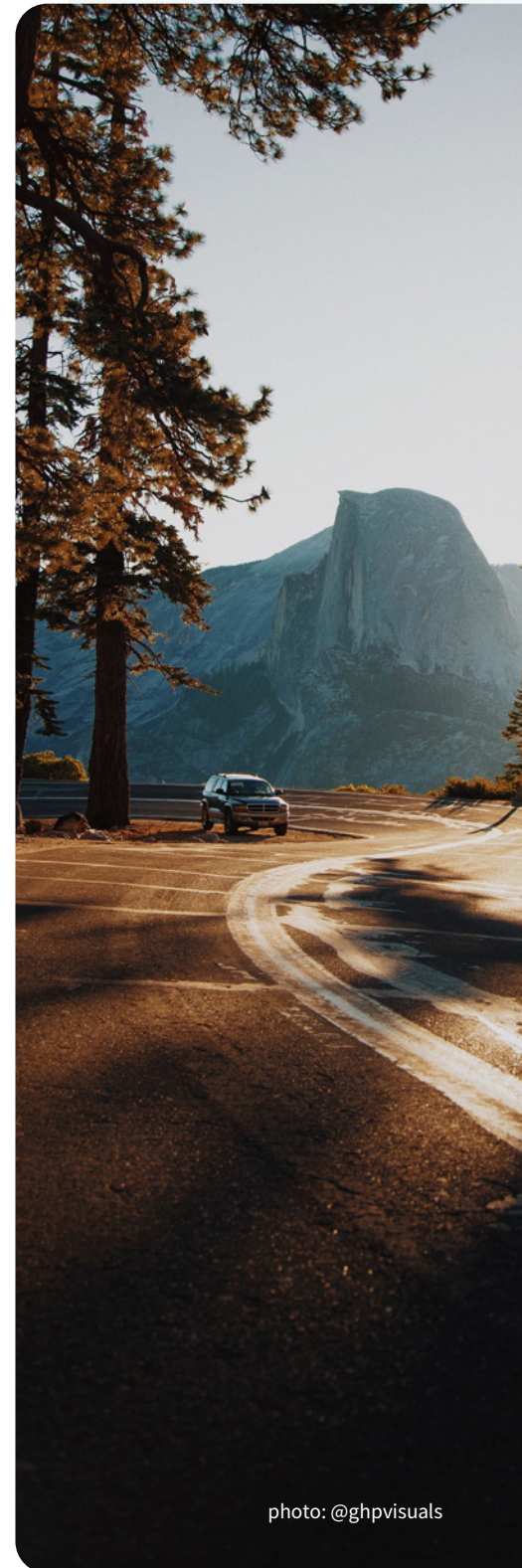


photo: @ghpvisuals

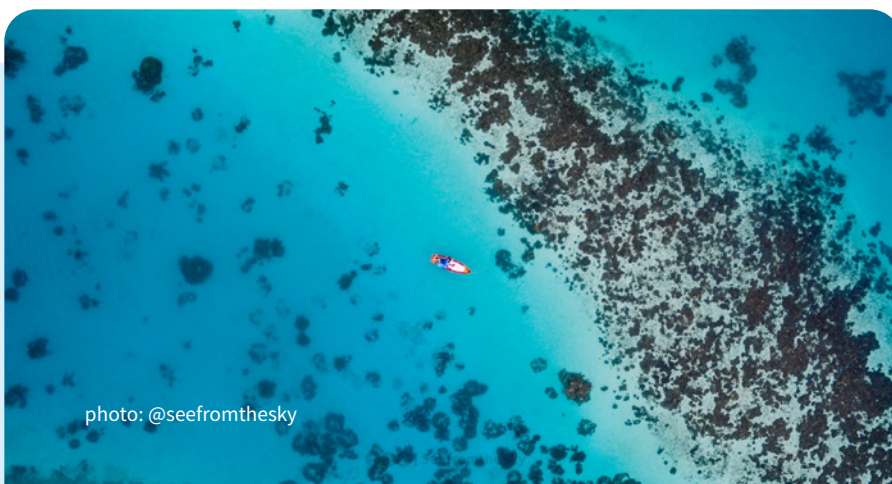
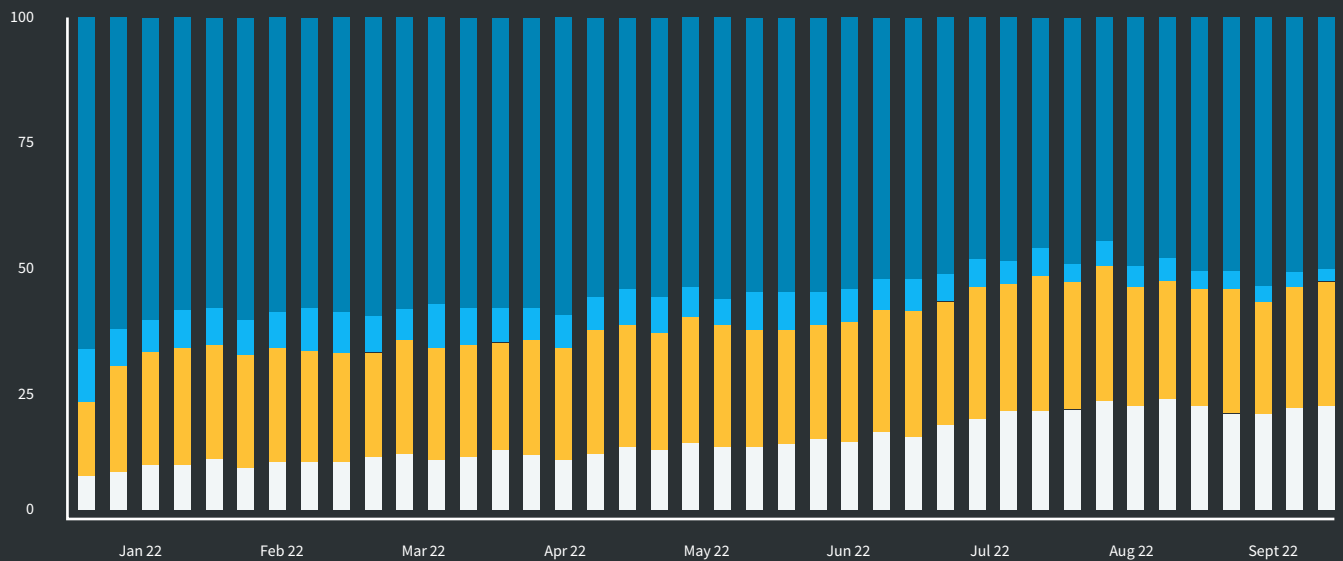


photo: @seefromthesky



In the last 9 months, brands in the Travel Category shared:

54.92% Photos

24.23% Carousels

14.61% Reels

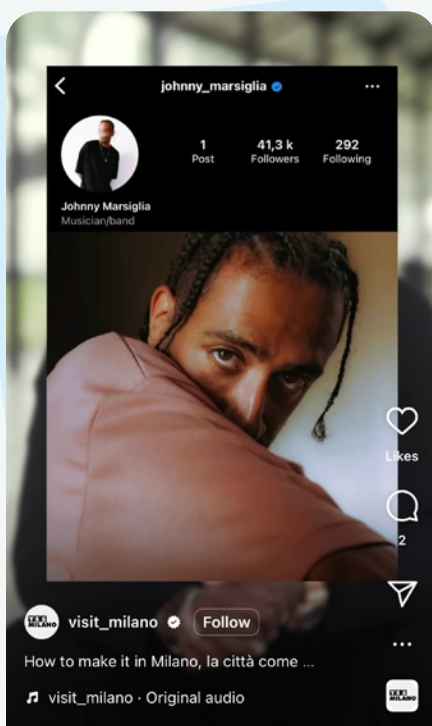
6.21% Videos

● Reel ● Carousel ● Video ● Image

Date Range: 01 Jan 2022 - 30 Sept 2022

Sample: SocialInsider - Worldwide Data for the Travel Industry

Although Instagram will continue to prioritize Reels content, that doesn't mean you should abandon images. Images were Instagram's original calling card and what continues to drive audiences to the platform. Photos are often easier to quickly consume and convey information, so continue to keep them in your content mix. As this chart below shows, single, static images still accounted for more than half of content shared to Instagram by travel brands in 2022 with Reels steadily increasing in adoption throughout the year.



Destination Example

[YesMiliano worked with CrowdRiff](#) to redefine their Instagram content post-pandemic as they knew they had to expand beyond the destination's image as a business and shopping reputation to become more inclusive. They share a lot of UGC to encourage audience engagement and use Reels to spotlight creators that exemplify its diverse and inclusive culture.

[Watch here](#)

Facebook

Facebook 2023 Trends

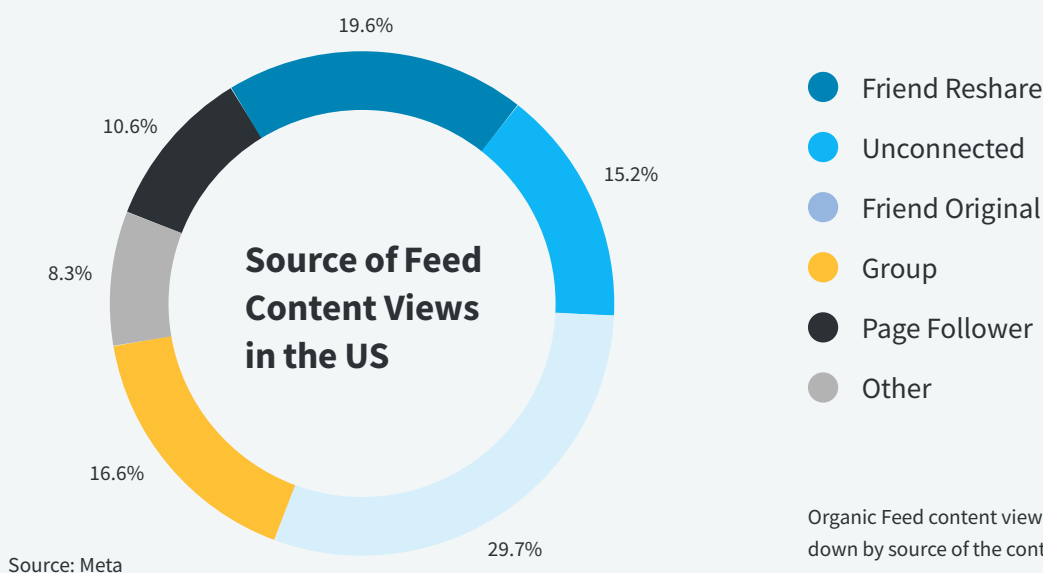
Like on Instagram, Facebook users will continue to see more content from people and brands they don't follow in 2023.

[Zuckerberg told The Verge in October 2022](#) that, “What’s basically going to happen is that, over the next year or two, we’ll start showing more recommended content in the Feed,” he said. “And we’ll know that we’re doing a good job because the content in the beginning is going to displace some other content, and either displacing that content is going to lead to negative feedback from people, and lead to people connecting with each other less in all the metrics that we focus on, or it will actually lead to people connecting more and being more satisfied with the product.”

The chart below shows how more than 15% of views in Facebook’s feed already come from the AI-recommended content, with friends’ original content still claiming the largest percentage (nearly 30%).

Eventually, about 40 percent of content on a user’s main feed will come from people and pages they don’t follow, Zuckerberg said, but added that being able to keep up with content and conversations from family and friends will continue to be a hallmark of Facebook. “And I think that that’ll be an important differentiator for our services: being able to do that in addition to the recommended content,” he said. “But I do think the amount of recommended content will ramp up.”

Read: Facebook and Meta are still very much trying to figure out user behavior shifts like everyone else, so expect priorities and algorithms to keep pivoting during the next year.



Organic Feed content views in the US during Q3 2022, broken down by source of the content.



photo: @robertbye

Home versus Feeds

[Facebook rolled out the Feeds tab in July 2022](#) to further advance its foray into AI-recommended content. Facebook said that Feeds are “a new way to find the most recent posts from your friends, Favorites, Pages, and groups,” the company said. “You can curate a Favorites list of the friends and Pages you care about most and filter their content in this new tab.”

Home, or the increasingly AI-recommended feed, is “the new name of the tab you first see when you open Facebook to discover new content,” the company said. “From Home, you can easily access Reels and Stories and get personalized recommendations.”

Currently, Home is the default feed that shows up when users open the Facebook app and it’s unclear how many users are aware of the new feeds. For DMOs, this means that communities like groups you may have created on Facebook become more important to ensure your audience is seeing your content. Educate your audience about these changes and ask them to add your page to their Favorites feed.



photo: @timbog80

2023 Best Practices

Best time to post (Eastern Standard Time):

Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8am - 12pm. Posts that are shared during mid-week mornings typically receive higher engagement.

How often to post:

While Facebook [recommends posting at least once per week](#), other experts [recommend posting between three and seven times per week](#). This keeps you relevant to your audience without bombarding them with too much content.

Content that works best:

The content that Facebook has been known for all along – text, photos, and links (blog posts or news stories about your destination, etc.) – still work well and are what users want. Based on data from the third quarter 2022, posts with a link on Pages had a higher percentage of content views than posts with a link from friends (see chart below). About 7.5% of content views for Pages came from posts without links. Don't disregard links, but keep in mind that photos and simple text status updates can also be effective (see chart below).

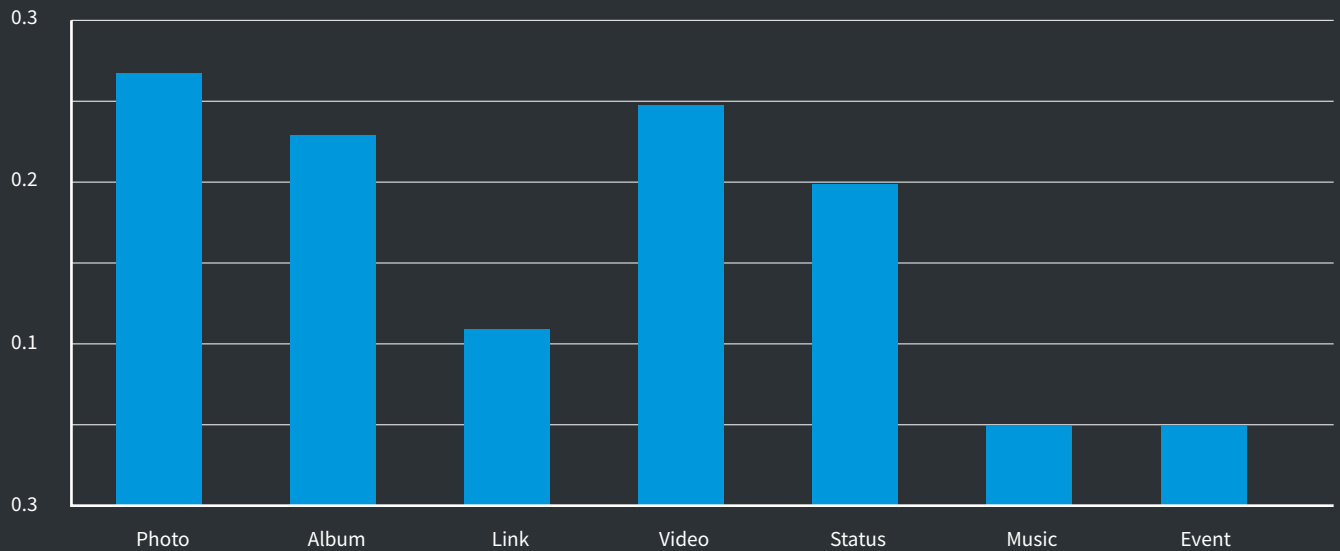
photo: @jareddrice



	Posts From Friends and People Followed	Posts from Groups Joined	Posts from Pages Followed	Unconnected Posts	Other	Grand Total
Post with a Link	1.6%	0.4%	3.1%	2.4%	0.2%	7.7%
Post with no Link	47.7%	16.2%	7.5%	12.8%	8.1%	92.3%
Grand Total	49.3%	16.6%	10.6%	15.2%	8.3%	100%

Organic Feed content views in the US during Q3 2022, broken down by whether the individual post contained a link to an external site or app.

Organic Performance of Post Types on Facebook



*Depicts average engagement rate per post type
Source: Socialinsider 2022 study

Destination Example

[Visit Staunton](#) is a small DMO in Virginia that has the right mix of UGC, blog links, and news stories that feature its lively cultural and arts scenes. Its audience is also really engaged with its posts with lots of comments and shares (like we said, having a strong community couldn't be more critical to success on Facebook), and the Visit Staunton team also replies to comments helping travelers with questions they have.





YouTube and YouTube Shorts

YouTube 2023 Trends

YouTube's big objective, if you didn't already know, is that creators come first.

This is very different to other platforms since, from its beginning more than 15 years ago, YouTube has made incentivizing creators to join the platform and help them make money a key priority, and the company is doubling down on that in 2023.

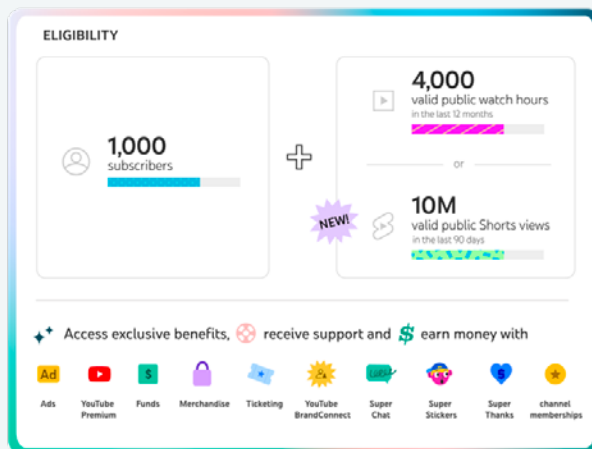
As we pointed out in the introduction, YouTube is the world's second largest social media platform after Facebook, with 2.5 billion monthly active users. YouTube Shorts, videos 60 seconds or shorter that launched in 2020, get 30 billion views per day, and [1.5 billion monthly active users](#). To put that into perspective, that's more than TikTok's 1 billion monthly active users. Because YouTube has been around so much longer than other short-form video platforms, audiences are intimately familiar with YouTube creators and DMOs sharing content on YouTube and Shorts can use that to their advantage by working with those creators.

Shorts Creators Can Now Join YouTube's Partner Program

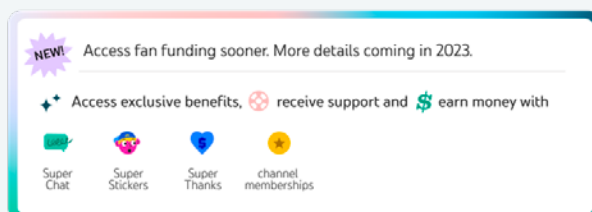
YouTube's popular partner program is expanding to include Shorts creators, [which the company announced in 2022](#). The company said this furthers its goal of rewarding creativity, and during the past three years, creators, artists and media companies have earned more than \$50 billion from YouTube.

To be eligible, Shorts creators need at least 1,000 subscribers and either 4,000 valid public watch hours in the last 12 months or 10 million valid public Shorts views in the last 90 days. If nothing else, this is a sign of just how invested YouTube is in Shorts and is also encouraging for small DMOs without the resources to create a slate of splashy videos. Now, you could create one long video and cut it into bite size pieces to get a lot of mileage from your hard work.

YouTube Partner Program



YPP Fan Funding



Source: YouTube



2023 Best Practices

Best time to post (Eastern Standard Time):

Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 12pm - 9pm.

How often to post:

Four to six times per week. Remember, these videos don't have to be long or necessarily high production value thanks to Shorts. Just over a third of CrowdRiff customers are active on YouTube Shorts, showing an interest in short form video and investment into this newer medium.

Content that works best:

For DMOs, educational videos ("how-tos," explainers, etc.) and vlogs are examples of videos that work great on YouTube and Shorts as [learning is a top reason why people turn to YouTube](#). Take your audience behind the scenes of their favorite attractions or show them "a day in the life" of a local small business owner that has a unique perspective on the destination.

Destination Example

[Visit California has shared more than 30 Shorts videos](#)

that focus a lot on local food, and also serve to tease the longer versions of the video. Its YouTube feed also features Visit California podcast episodes – an outside-the-box example to keep in mind if you already have an engaged YouTube audience and are looking for places for your podcast to stand out but are weary of competition on traditional podcast platforms.

[Watch here](#)



What Different Teams Should Prioritize

DMOs come in different shapes and sizes and there is definitely no one-size-fits-all platform.

Teams should accept that they'll likely never master all social platforms or be everywhere that their audiences are – after all, some estimates put the [total number of social platforms in existence at more than 200!](#)

Chances are your team is probably already active on either Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. If you're only active on one or two of those, make sure you're seeing a lot of success there before hopping on new platforms, especially if you're a small team. It's better to have a successful strategy, great content, and high engagement on one platform than to spread

yourself thin on numerous ones. Consider the resources you have available.

Knowing who your audience is and which platforms they hang out on will always be the most important factor in deciding which platforms to invest in.

[Also remember what your social media marketing goals are:](#) if it's mostly about sharing content and engaging with followers, maybe Instagram is the right place to spend your time, but if you're more interested in customer support or want to offer that service (essentially acting as a virtual visitor center to answer travelers' queries) Facebook would be a great place to be. If you want to build trust and share reliable, real-time information that doesn't need to stick around your feed forever, Instagram's Stories are a helpful tool.





With that in mind, we have some broad guidelines on platforms to focus on:

Smaller teams with basic experience:

Instagram, Instagram Reels, and Facebook. These are the more legacy social platforms that have years' worth of best practices to learn from, which makes it easier for small teams to quickly pick up.

Mid-sized teams with mixed skills:

Instagram, Instagram Reels, Facebook, and either TikTok or YouTube Shorts. These teams have more resources available to create more content dedicated to different platforms. Recall that TikTok's algorithm prioritizes videos watched from start to finish – mid-sized teams are likely better able to create quality content that will be consumed and rank higher.

Big teams and budgets with advanced skills:

Instagram, Instagram Reels, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts. The beauty of bigger teams and budgets is that there's wiggle room to test and learn on different platforms, create engaging content and be able to keep up with the volume of content required to be successful.

Internal resources only versus external as well:

If you're only using internal resources to keep your audience engaged on social media, we recommend sticking with one or two social platforms so you can keep a proper handle on the amount of content needed. For DMOs that feel like they aren't reaching their audiences effectively or able to create the content that tells the stories they want to share, we recommend looking into an affordable resource that can help you get there.



How to Define Your Brand on Social in 2023

We know you probably already have your organization's branding figured out, but how does that translate to different platforms?

Some DMOs try to be everything to everyone and, while there's nothing wrong with that, building trust comes from having a defined audience that knows you're talking specifically to them.

photo: @marthaberg



photo: @priscilladupreez



photo: @jsnbrsc





photo: @marcu.david

[Storylab.ai](#) has this [nifty list of five content themes](#) to use to help structure your branding on social, bearing in mind that that some of these themes won't fit with certain platforms while all may fit with others:

Problem and brand awareness: talk about what makes your brand unique and why you're worth visiting. Your DMO may be the only reliable source of information about your destination and your problem could be how to best demonstrate that to travelers.

Trends: Talk about trends in your market (or larger/global trends). With inflation and price sensitivity, share free or low-cost experiences with your audience if you know they're a group that cares about price. Watch for fun social trends that you can jump on like the ["Little Miss" meme trend in 2022](#).

Personality and trust: Show yourself and your personality if your team is up for it! Celebrate the people on your team (and your partners!) for their

expertise and personality. Discover Long Island is strong in this area, sharing Instagram Reels of their staff visiting different attractions and the [DMO's staff also hosts a podcast](#).

Brand and product positioning: Only about one-fifth of your content should talk explicitly about your brand and its mission. For DMOs, one example could be sharing how tax revenue you've generated has directly benefited a key infrastructure project for the local community.

Responsibility and ethics: if your brand is purpose-driven, show it off! For example, if your destination is particularly committed to sustainability don't be afraid to share that and show how travelers can do their part.

Still looking for more? [CrowdRiff Connect](#) helps your business partners and creators get a great first impression of your brand by configuring your branding like logo and color scheme. Connect also makes sourcing content from and sharing assets with these partners easier while making your community more united in the process.



How Localhood Creator Services Helps DMOs Succeed Across Social Channels

Whether you've been successful on multiple platforms or wish you had time to be more engaged, [Localhood Creator Services has you covered.](#)

And whether you've already had a great experience working with content creators or are searching for an easier way to manage that workflow, Creator Services also helps with that.

While many DMOs have developed long-term relationships with influencers, sometimes it's difficult to find the right match or get quality content that aligns with your brand. Even after getting the content, supplying feedback for future projects or paying creators adds more tasks for DMOs with teams that are already stretched thin.

photo: @kalimullin



Localhood's Creator Services manages the workflow with creators from end-to-end. We handle all of the logistics, including creator acquisition and screening, compensation – including negotiations, contracts, insurance, and liability, and day-to-day creator support, so your team can focus on creating the best strategy for the assets that we deliver. Localhood sources content creators and works closely with them to create the Localhood Story content your team wants.

Your team gets:

Fresh content:

Delivered in Localhood Story format that automatically has the benefit of distribution on Google

Access to raw assets:

You can also use Localhood Stories to power your social media strategy across Instagram, TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and other platforms

Diverse content:

Can work with lots of people from various backgrounds

Video content that's ready to go:

Receive turnkey content that follows a narrative and tells a story from start to finish which DMOs often struggle to create themselves

Visit California started using Creator Services in January 2022 and to date has already worked with over 20 active creators. These creators have produced more than 600 Localhood Stories with a combined length of over 10+ hours of video content. This content has achieved:

+129,000

Localhood Story views

+2.5 million

Google Search impressions

+730,000

TikTok views from repurposed content

(In fact, at one point, Localhood Creator Content was used in 50% of this DMOs TikTok strategy)



If Creator Services sounds like a lifesaver and a resource that will help your team work more efficiently, [reach out to us for more information.](#)



photo: @DawsonLovell