





INTRODUCTION

The year 2021 brought about many changes in the social media and digital sphere, including but not limited to, the death of the Swipe Up functionality in Instagram Stories and the phasing out of Moments on Twitter. The birth followed quick death of the LinkedIn Stories feature. The year also saw growth in TikTok usage by brands, social influencers and creators as the platform continuously proves to be worthwhile (now boasting over 1 billion users globally) with seemingly unparalleled levels of organic reach and engagement – unlike the dwindling organic reach levels of Facebook which makes brands 'pay to play'.

TikTok, a platform where any piece of content could 'go viral' and isn't subject to the publisher's follower counts, saw many new brands invest in paid for TikTok ads in 2021.

Off the back of TikTok's increased usage, Instagram is endeavouring to compete with their Reels – offering similar creative functionalities to TikTokand the stats show us that they have been rewarding Instagram users for doing so, serving up increased

reach and engagement to those who utilise this content type.

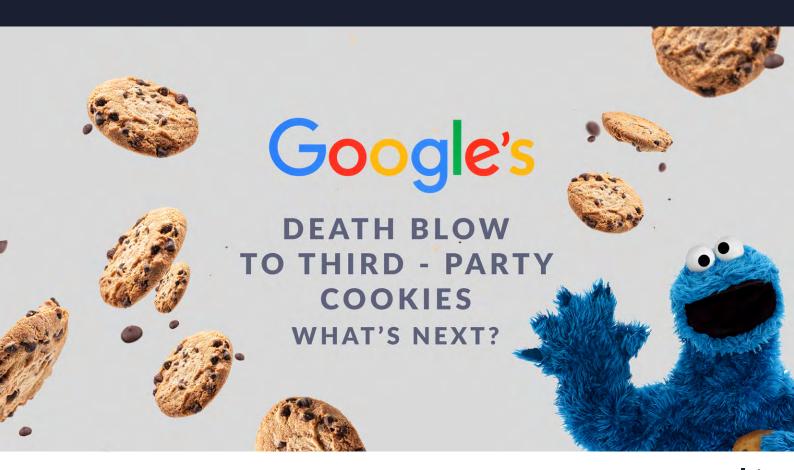
2021 saw podcasts gaining in popularity, especially with the female demographic between 16-24 years of age. The GlobalWebIndex (GWI) stats also show us that people are active across multiple social channels; so a 'portfolio' approach is wise.

As far as influencer marketing goes, brands that partnered wisely with creators are connecting with new audiences, earning their trust and gaining cultural capital.

Now, one can't look ahead at 2022 without addressing the elephant in the room: the phasing out of third-party cookies!

What do Sesame Street monsters and marketers have in common? They all love cookies.

But the cookies are going away. Well, some of them at least.



"For years, brands have been using third-party cookies to track website visitors, improve the user experience, and collect data that helps us target ads to the right audiences. We also use them to learn about what our visitors are checking out online when they aren't on our websites. But the way we use cookies and Google ad-tracking tools could change dramatically with Google's efforts to phase out the third-party cookie on Chrome browsers by 2022."

- HubSpot

Not sure what third party cookies are? This image explains the difference between first-party and third-party cookies:

WEB COOKIES: DIFFERENT FLAVOURS

	FIRST-PARTY	THIRD-PARTY
WHO HOSTS	The domian you're visiting	Ad servers, social media sites, commenting aggregators, live-chat-pop-ups, etc.
WHERE TRACKED	The domian you're visiting and in rare instances, other sites	Users accross many domains
MAIN PURPOSE	Smoother site access	Enabling adware
WHAT THEY DO	Remember logins, preferences shopping cart items, etc.	Retarget prospective customers as they move from site to site
	WHERE TRACKED MAIN PURPOSE	WHO HOSTS The domian you're visiting The domian you're visiting and in rare instances, other sites MAIN PURPOSE Smoother site access Remember logins, preferences

The change is due to users demanding greater privacy including transparency, choice and control over how their data is used, and it was clear the web ecosystem needed to evolve to meet these increasing demands.

So, what does all this mean for marketers?

• It is predicted there will be a need to increase digital ad spending by 5-25%+ to reach the same goals as 2021. The recent stats are proof of this trend. Already, between Q3 2020 and Q3 2021, industry leaders saw the CPM rate increase by a whopping 33% and search CPC increase by 30% higher year on year.

• The good news is that Google is only planning to phase out third-party cookies and not first-party cookies as the giant sees first party relationships with web users as "vital". Thankfully, with a first party cookie you can learn about what a user did when they visited your website, see how often they visit it and gain other basic analytics that can aid the marketing team in developing effective marketing strategies. Essentially, any first party data you gain on your web users will remain intact.





LOOKING AHEAD



Due to the heavier reliance on this first-party cookie data, we predict that marketers will be forced to 'up the ante' of how they track user behaviour on their-websites. And will likely utilise first-party cookie and tracking solutions like HubSpot to better monitor which users from the CRM visit their site, which categories are of most interest to the individual user and set up trigger-based workflows to intercept users at the right time on the preferred channel.





- Consumer profiling ahead of the 'Death of the Third-Party Cookie' will be of top priority for most marketing teams. The reason being is that third-party cookie data gives valuable insight into the user's interests across various websites. With this detailed data, you can build robust consumer profiles and off the back of this data create look alike audiences; thus enabling marketing teams to target ads to people with similar web profiles.
- Google Ads may be affected: (You'll still be able to leverage and target Google Ads, which will be powered by Google Chrome's first-party cookies and the Privacy Sandbox tools, but... ad software that relies on third-party cookies will undoubtedly be affected.





WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOOGLE'S PRIVACY SANDBOX?



In the cookie-less future, Google wants ad targeting, measurement and fraud prevention to happen according to the standards set by its Privacy Sandbox, whereby cookies are replaced by a series of application programming interfaces. Advertisers will use each API to receive aggregated data about issues like conversions. The most significant item in the Privacy Sandbox is Google's proposal to move all user data into

the browser where it will be stored and processed. This means that data stays on the user's device and is privacy compliant.

Due to hyper-targeted content being affected, agencies and marketers will need to become more innovative and come up with ads that are relevant to mass audiences.

"Consumers are holding brands to a higher standard when it comes to creativity in social advertising—but rewarding those that get it right."

- Hootsuite

- If [this is all speculation right now] the Google Privacy Sandbox Conversion management API gets limited to just very simple click-based attributions, it would mean a bigger focus on direct-response ad campaigns, i.e. provide an irresistible offer and get people to immediately sign up, share with contacts or register.
- It might be time to revitalise older strategies, like contextual advertising. While third-party data allowed you to place ads directly in front of people
- who matched certain user profiles, contextual advertising allows you to circulate PPC ads on websites that rank for similar keywords as your ad. This way, if you're selling sports apparel, your PPC ad could show up on sports-oriented websites.
- Another ad type you could try is Dynamic Keyword Insertion. Essentially, the ad dynamically changes based on the search terms used so that it feels like the most relevant response to the search query.

HOW DYNAMIC KEYWORD INSERTION WORKS

Lets say you're advertising a chocolate shop. You could use a keyword in your ad headline:

Headline: Buy {Keyword:Chocolate}

Google Ads will try to replace this code with one of your keywords in your ad group ("dark chocolate," "Sugar free chocolate," "gourmet chocolate truffles"), but when it can't,

it'll use the word "Chocolate."

Note that the persons search team isn't always the same as the keyword.

PERSON SEARCHES FOR:

YOUR AD COULD LOOK LIKE:

DARK CHOCOLATE	Buy Dark Chocolate www.example.com Artisan candy from San Francisco Free shipping orders \$50 more	
SUGAR FREE CHOCOLATE	Buy Sugar Free Chocolate www.example.com Artisan candy from San Francisco Free shipping orders \$50 more	
GOURMET CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES	Buy Chocolate www.example.com Artisan candy from San Francisco Free shipping orders \$50 more	



In the last example, "Chocolate" goes in the headline because the keyword "gourmet" chocolate truffles is too long to fit.

What does this third-party cookie update mean? In many instances, more legwork! Remarketing was usually done using Cookies, but a workaround is to re-market using lists and then selecting specific ads to show them.

The good news is that all of this doesn't happen overnight. The rollout plan is as follows.

After this public development process, and subject to our engagement with the CMA our plan for Chrome is to phase out support for third party cookies in two stages:

STAGE 1 (STARTING LATE - 2022):

Once testing is complete and Api's are launched in Chrome, we will announce the start of stage 1. During stage 1, publishers and advertising industry will have time to migrate their services we expect this stage to last for nine months, and we will monitor adoption and feedback carefully before moving to stage 2.

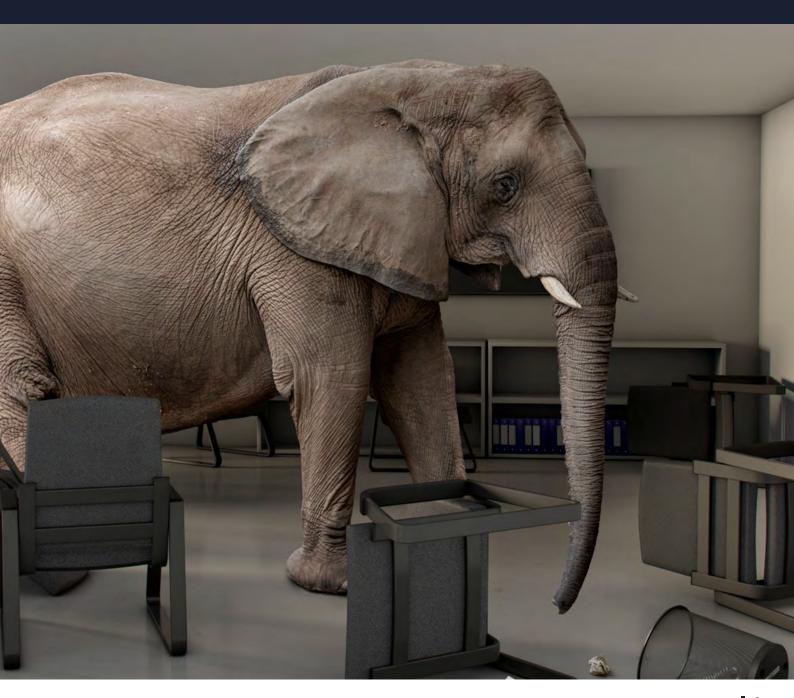
STAGE 2 (STARTING MID-2023):

Chrome will phase out support for third-party cookies over a three month period finishing in late 2023

Source: https://blog.google

SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS!

OKAY NOW THAT THE ELEPHANT IS ADDRESSED, LET'S FINISH OFF WITH SOMETHING FUN: **SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS!**



DID YOU KNOW, global social media users have surpassed 4.5 billion?! Hootsuite and WeAreSocial estimate that 1 million new users join social media platforms every single day. In South Africa alone, users are spending an average of over 3 hours on social media every single day.

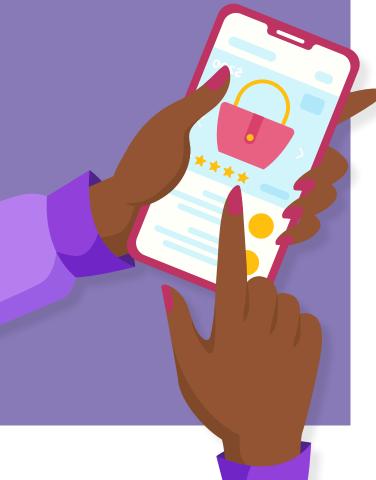
In 2022 the key to unlocking online communities is in the hands of influencers a.k.a. digital creators. The tide is shifting from macro influencers towards smaller and more authentic micro influencers and leveraging the power of groups/communities.

Why bother with social communities in 2022?

Over a billion Facebook users regularly engage within groups. – Hootsuite

That's over a third of everyone on Facebook. Brands that partner wisely with creators and communities are connecting to new audiences, earning their trust, and gaining cultural capital.





TREND ALERT: SOCIAL COMMERCE

It's 2022 and the era of social commerce is in full swing! Social media has become an integral part of the post-pandemic shopping experience.

Many competitive SMEs have struck a balance between social storefronts and bricks and mortar, while large brands test the outer limits of online shopping experiences.





You've probably noticed it; Facebook has been pushing WhatsApp for Business integration.

Simply put, WhatsApp for Business allows companies to securely message their customers directly within the WhatsApp messaging platform and people can now reach this platform directly from the brand's Facebook page. One advantage over SMS is that WhatsApp is tied directly to a single phone number and provides a branded business profile. The business profile can have automated comms and can be linked to the shop, helping people quickly see what's on offer.



TREND ALERT:

Business messaging for 'conversational commerce' purposes: enabling sales and support teams to answer product or customer service questions with rich, contextual messages that will, ultimately, facilitate a new transaction or keep a current customer happy.

METAVERSE. ENOUGH SAID RIGHT?

For those living under a rock who haven't yet heard about Facebook's transition to "Meta", let me enlighten you: Facebook renamed to Meta to rebrand [let's be honest, they were going through some bad press] and reflect its ambitions in the Metaverse – a future vision that the internet is a 'persistent shared digital space'.

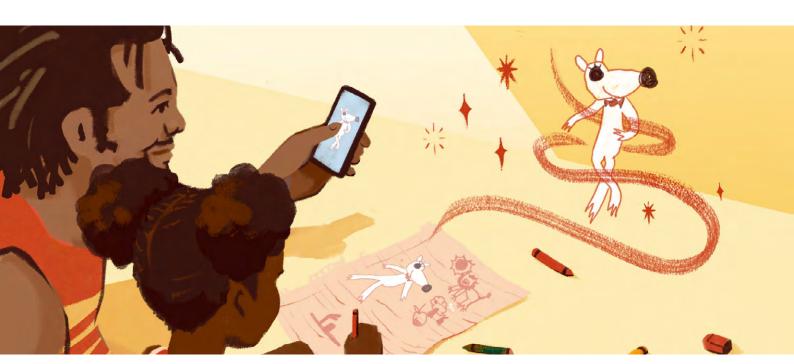
So, what does this mean for Meta? Stats show us that their userbase across their owned assets [Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp] remains very strong at 3.5 billion combined users. As far as a Metaverse development roadmap goes, Zuckerberg said Meta's corporate structure will stay the same, but the company will now report to two operating segments: Family of Apps (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.) and Facebook Reality Labs (VR/AR/Metaverse operations).

Source: thehustle.co



A COUPLE OF RECENT META ADVANCEMENTS:

In December they announced building a first-of-its-kind method for using AI to automatically animate children's drawings of people.



They are partnering with Ellen DeGeneres to bring her hit mobile game Heads Up! - a hilarious twist on charades where players guess the word on the card that's on another player's forehead - to messenger though their AR video calling experience Group Effects.





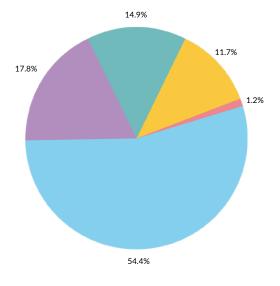


"Meta has provided an end-of-year update on its Bulletin newsletter platform, which it first launched in April 2021 as part of a push to facilitate more connections between creators and subscribers by using the company's massive reach to scale newsletter growth."

- SocialMediaToday

Despite these advancements, it is important to note the dwindling organic reach of content by Facebook pages. Facebook's Transparency department released a report showing what a typical news feed looks like in the US in the third quarter of 2021. Posts from Pages Followed is less than 15% of content:

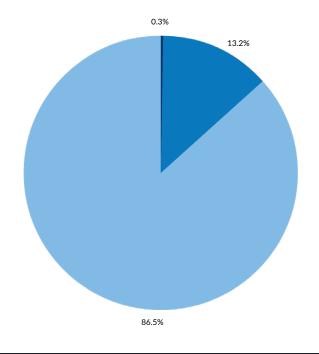
Note: The report doesn't include ads or the things people viewed outside of News Feed, like on Watch, Marketplace or other places within the app.



Source of News Feed content views in the United States

- Posts from Friends and people followed
- Posts from Groups joined
- Posts from Pages followed
- Unconnected posts
- Other

By far, the most common experience in News Feed for people in the US is to see posts without links and from their friends or from Groups they've joined. Also, it is interesting to note that most of the views in the Q3 report did not include a link to a source outside of Facebook.



News Feed content views from viewers in the United States

- Content views on posts with no links
- Content views on posts with links (Excluding most-viewed news domins)
- Content views on posts with links (Only from the most-viewed news domains)

FACEBOOK TAKEAWAYS:



 A/B test organic newsfeed content with external links to content without external links to see which is most effective and let the takeaways inform your approach.



• Another insight from the Q3 report is that of the top 20 most successful pages, the majority are about food, lifestyle or entertainment. So, if you are looking for a content theme, these are sure-fire wins.



• Due to the dwindling organic reach of page content, it is imperative to include the Stories format in your content strategies. Story content lives at the top of feed and isn't subject to the same algorithmic demoting as feed content.



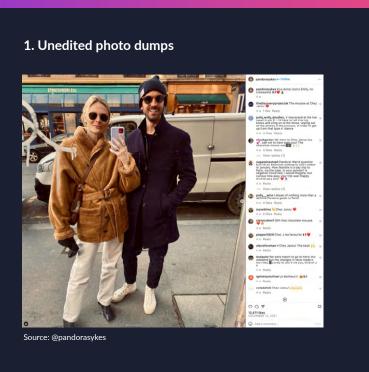
Organic post engagement isn't great. The average total post engagement vs page
fans in the South African region is 0.06% [according to datareportal]. So, manage
your expectations and your clients' engagement expectations accordingly and find
creative ways to drive engagement like asking your audience for feedback or running
competitions.



WHERE IS THE INSTAGRAM AESTHETIC HEADED IN 2022?

There's no doubt about it, over-saturated filters and picture-perfect setups are out. Instead, we're seeing a new wave of true-to-life unedited shots gracing the 'gram.

Here are a few of the top aesthetic trends on Instagram in 2022:



2. Instagram's in-app fonts on the feed.



3. 70's iconography



While you are checking out this example, go on and take in the Reels tips;)

4. Stories: Cute and relatable is in!







We're seeing stories that are timely [relevant to the season] like the above, effectively delivering USP info in a non-pushy way.

5. Seasonal Colour Palettes

This next aesthetic trend is subtle and seamless. So much so it could have gone unnoticed. Popular with creators, the art is in migrating your colour palette as the seasons change - gradually shifting from summer tones to dark autumnal tones for instance.

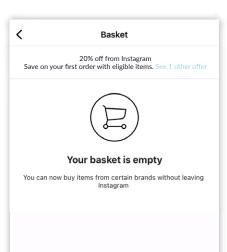


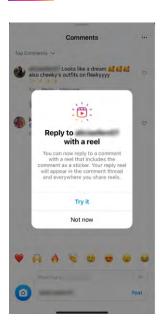


Instagram is testing a new option that would help users curate their feed by enabling them to re-arrange their profile photo grid, placing their previously posted images into any order of their choice regardless of when each was posted.

SOME OTHER NEW DEVELOPMENTS ARE:

We can see Instagram is pushing Instagram shops hard. From offering users money off to punting free shipping.





You can now reply to comments on a Reel, with another Reel.

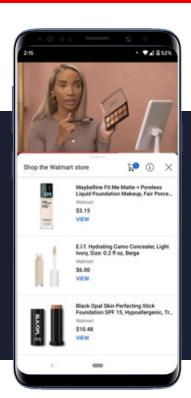
For instance, you can now reply to a comment with a Reel that includes the comment as a sticker that appears throughout the response Reel. The reply Reel will also appear in the comment thread and everywhere else you share Reels.





YOUTUBE

Coming in strong as the second most-used platform globally, only proceeded by Google, it is not surprising that YouTube is innovating by building an organic live shopping experience on the platform.



Wendy Yang, Product Designer, YouTube Shopping:

"Live shopping is an area we're really excited about and is a huge opportunity. The exciting thing about live shopping, and shopping generally, is that we're already seeing it happen on YouTube — with creators revealing a product line, dropping new merch, or discussing their latest shopping haul. People want to shop on YouTube and, according to a study we ran in partnership with Publicis and TalkShoppe, 89% of viewers agree that YouTube creators give recommendations they can trust. We can make it easier to shop by integrating it directly into YouTube, removing steps in this process, and making the entire shopping experience fun and interactive for our users."

If a consumer wants to buy, they can make purchases using onsite check-out or at retailer site. That means the video streaming experience is uninterrupted so users never miss a moment.

HOW DOES SETUP WORK? After connecting to their store, creators tag their favourite products and set up a live shopping stream. They can even add a trailer to their upcoming live event watch page to encourage users to set reminders. You can find out more in this helpful YouTube Live Streaming Shopping Experience article.

Some of the features the platform is most excited about are: the ability for creators to offer their audience live product drops, exclusive discounts and even fan polls during the livestreams to get feedback from their audience.

As far as YouTube content inspiration goes, check out the YouTube blog periodically as they showcase what the top creators are doing: https://blog.youtube/

And take a look at a great article on how to get more views on YouTube in 2022 here.

NEED HELP WITH YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT STRATEGY AND ROLLOUT?

Contact our social studio today for a no-strings-attached consultation.



Many people think Twitter is a dying channel but these **2022 South Africa** region mobile app stats from Hootsuite and WeAreSocial show that Twitter ranks 9th when it comes to monthly active users.





Hootsuite stats also show that the channel ranks 6th – proceeded only by the social channels: WhatsApp [No 1], YouTube [No 2], Facebook [No 3], Instagram [No 4], Facebook Messenger [No 5].

Yes, there was a minor dip of **2.1%** in quarter-on-quarter usage, but since a multi-channel social approach is wise, including it in the mix [if there is capacity to effectively manage it] is a good idea, especially if you are trying to reach an audience with more of a male skew.



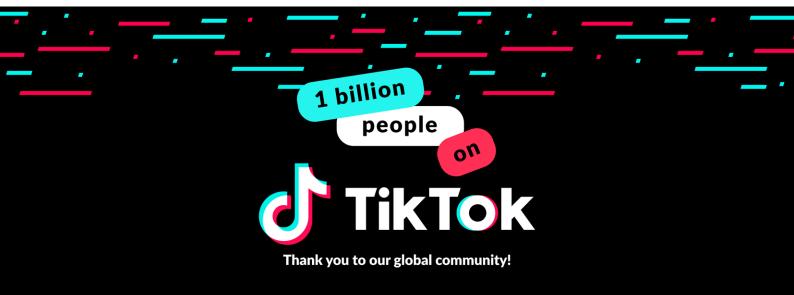
On that note, if you're trying to reach a younger female audience **SnapChat** saw an increase of **28%** and the percentage of the ad audience that is female is **78.5%**.

Twitter recognises that people use social to foster community around interests relevant to them, so they've started testing a feature that has the potential to fundamentally change its platform. What have they decided to call it? Wait for it... Communities! The platform says it will give people "a dedicated place to connect, share, and get closer to the discussions they care about most."

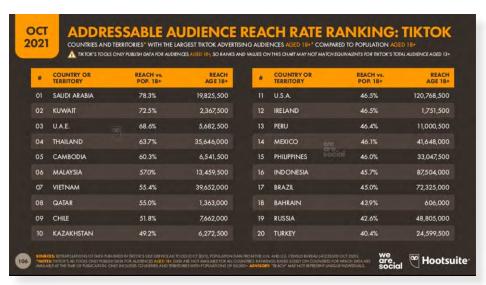




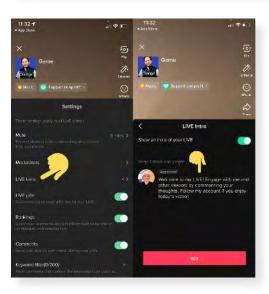




As of late last year, Tiktok was the most downloaded mobile app around the world says DataReportal. But uptake in South Africa is a slow trickle compared to these countries – self serve ad tools show it is particularly popular across the Middle East and Southeast Asia.



As far as advancements go, TikTok has added live-stream intros to better facilitate engagement. The option enables you to add a short text description to welcome new viewers as they come across your broadcast.



This offers a simple way to welcome viewers, and explain what your broadcast is all about, and what you would like them to do as participants in your stream.



Live-streaming is gradually becoming a bigger element of TikTok as it looks to broaden its horizons beyond short video clips.

Source: SocialMediaToday



Another impending advancement is that TikTok is planning to open its own 'TikTok Kitchen' chain of delivery-only restaurants.

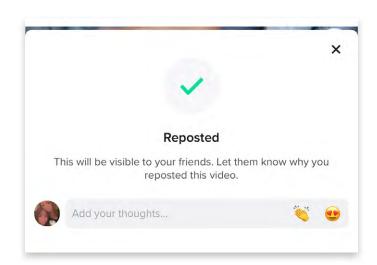
Image source: The Verge

So why is TikTok getting into the restaurant game? It is believed that the TikTok Kitchen project will be more of a branding vehicle for the platform to generate hype and tap into rising trends in food delivery. The project also aligns with their broader eCommerce plans:

Get more users to order and pay for things in the app. Once transactional behaviours are established, there is more comfort in the same and that could be another way for TikTok to generate increased interest in instream shopping for other products and services.



TikTok has also been testing a new re-post option to boost the distribution of their clips. When a person or a brand re-posts a clip, their connections will be able to see that they've re-shared it in the video details, along with any comments they've added to the clip.



Essentially, it's another way to boost clips that you like, and share them with all your connections at once, as opposed to sending each clip individually.

Interested in advertising on this popular platform? Follow this link for a guide: www.tiktokforbusinesseurope.com



LINKEDIN





Coming in at a strong 7th place in the rankings of most used social platforms in South Africa is LinkedIn. Boasting over 8M users and growing at a steady, but modest rate with a fairly even gender split.

The platform recognised it needed to innovate to meet new Covid related digital demands:

"With the pandemic still disrupting live events and forcing businesses and industry groups to seek alternative means of networking and community connection, LinkedIn has seen a big rise in live events hosted on its platform, with the creation Live Events in the app increasing by 150%, year-over-year."

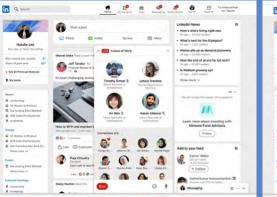
- SocialMediaToday

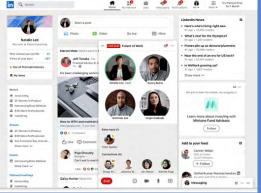
The platform is launching an initial test of its own, a Clubhouse-like audio events platform that enables users to tune into live discussions in the app. Participants can raise their virtual hand to join as a speaker, or post 'likes' in response to the chat.

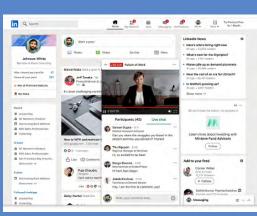
As you can see below, the format looks very much like Twitter Spaces and Clubhouse, with separate panels for those on stage and speaking and those tuning in underneath. The point of all this is to provide more capacity for professional connection within industry-aligned discussions.

LinkedIn also notes that it has solid capacity to highlight the most relevant audio sessions to each member, surfacing events based on the individual's interests, passions, and career goals.

The platform is using the format as a template of sorts for its other live meeting features, including video events:







The goal of which is to expand the platform's capacity to host virtual discussions, bringing thought leaders together in new formats.

This was intended to be a short piece, but hopefully you've found this guide helpful.

TO SUM THINGS UP:

- 11's time to channel the infinite potential of social commerce.
- 12 It's important to be prepared for the 'Death of Third-Party Cookies' so start leveraging the data you still have access to and create detailed customer profiles.
- Start producing marketing strategies less reliant on third-party cookie data like first-party cookie related workflows to intercept people at the right time, on the right channel. Create and foster an effective CRM this will prove invaluable as you move away from relying on less effective display ads or other advertising crutches.
- Buff up employee advocacy programs and master social listening to gather consumer insights. You know those social reports that your agency sends? Read them! If your agency is worth their rate card, there will be some helpful insights and actionable takeaways there.
- If Instagram is part of your marketing mix and you've haven't yet explored the Reels format, start experimenting with Reels.
- Thriving communities on social media present a big opportunity, especially for smaller brands, as you no longer have to create a niche community from the ground up. You can find an existing community to fit into.
- Seek out online communities that are active and engaged around interests relevant to your product category. If you make spices, talk to home cooks. If you service cars, find auto clubs. You can utilise influencers to tap into these circles and by adding value there, you'll build cultural relevance, reach new audiences, and learn more about your target market.
- If you're not on TikTok get on TikTok. The Drum goes so far as to say TikTok is set to become the top social media platform in 2022. But remember, having fun and being playful is part of the raison d'être of this channel, so the winning formula for your content should include both.

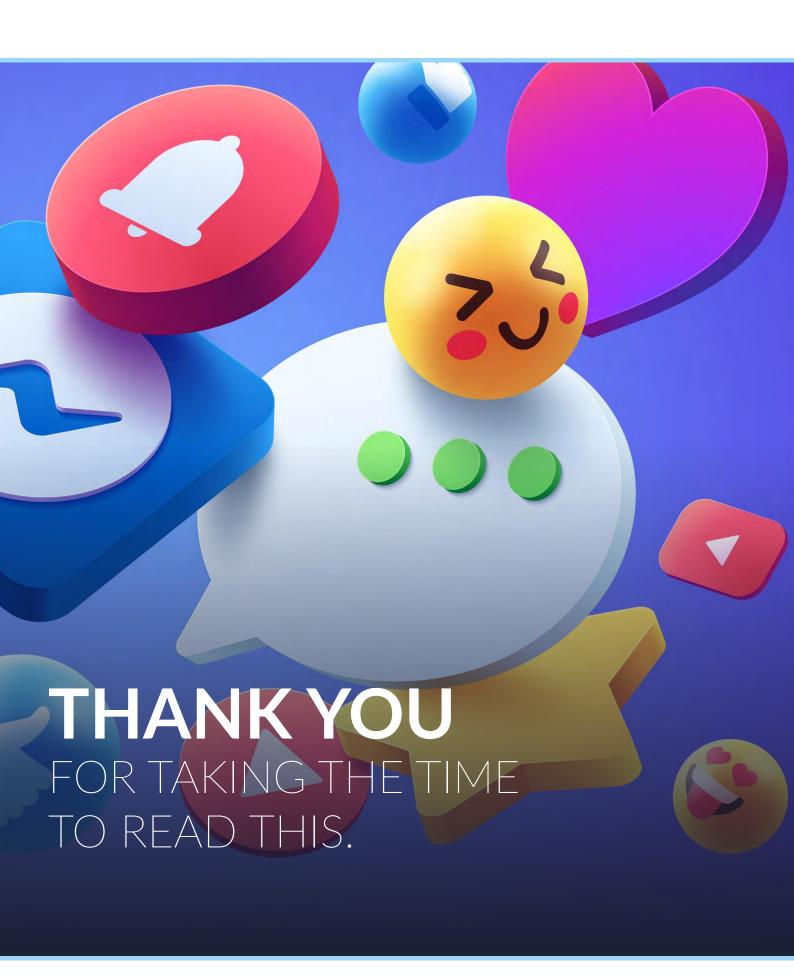
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JULIA RHODES



Our Head of Social Media & Digital, Julia Rhodes, is a digital marketing expert who has been producing effective online campaigns for over 10 years. Some of her previous clients include The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Al Jazeera English, Standard Bank, Lipton and Adidas. Her specialty is producing effective social media videos and one of her claims to fame is that she successfully made a video go viral for one of her UK clients.





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