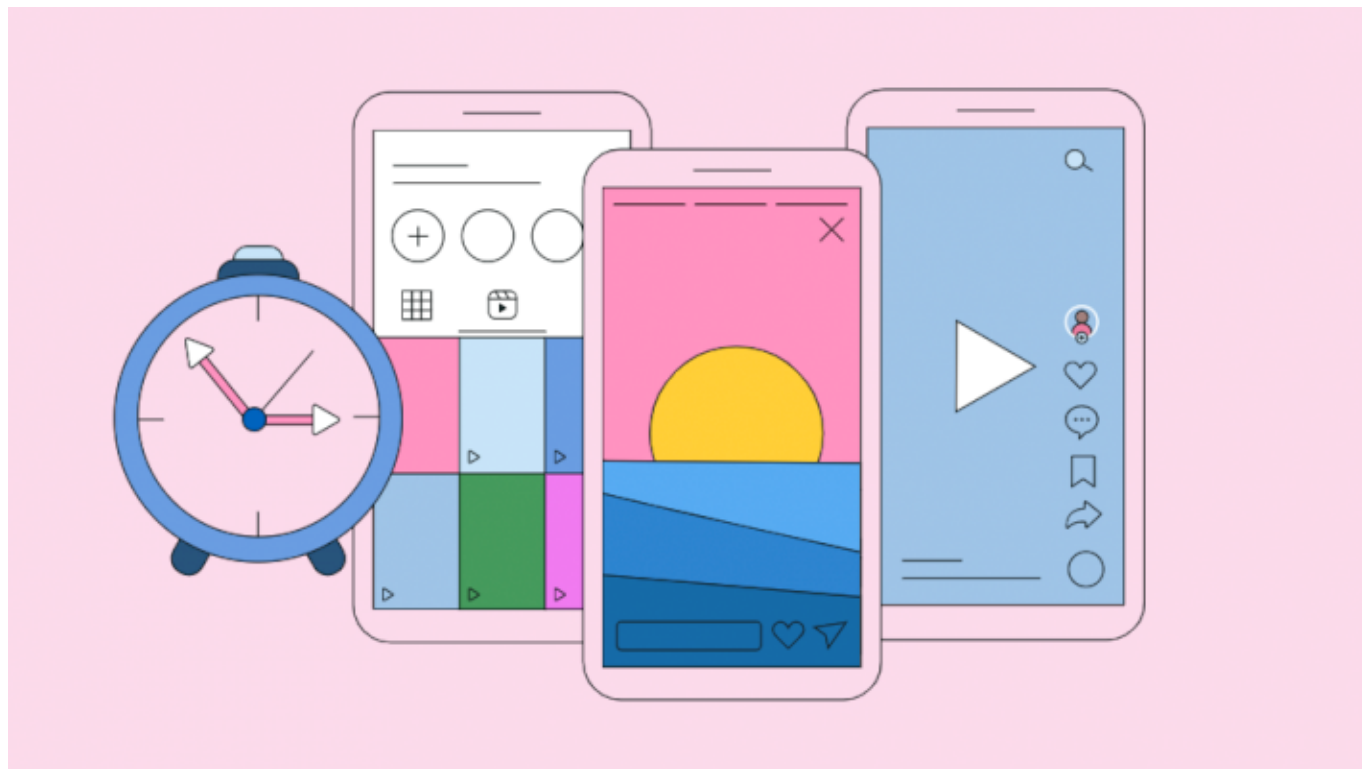


8 ways to leverage short-form video (and how to get buy-in)

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At the risk of stating the obvious: Short-form video is a big deal. Who hasn't been scrolling through TikTok or Instagram Reels only to realize they've lost an hour?

The fast growth of TikTok has influenced nearly every other social media platform to become short-form video platforms themselves. And this shift is putting pressure on social media practitioners to put on their movie director hats. According to the Sprout Social Content Benchmarks report, 52% of marketers cite changing content formats as a challenge when planning and scheduling posts.

The good news? The short-form video format is here to stay, and worth investing in for the long term.

In this article, we'll give you several tips for a successful short-form video strategy, featuring expertise from beauty giant Glossier. But first, let's get into a few highlights about short-form video, and ways you can get buy-in.

Why short-form video is worth using (and how to secure buy-in)

Whether you love short-form video but need buy-in, or you still need some convincing, we've got you covered.

While there's no official length cut off for short-form videos, they're typically considered to be videos between three seconds and one minute in length. This bite-sized content can supercharge your social strategy and brand awareness. And it's well within your reach to start using it in your video marketing strategy.

Here are a few stand-out use cases for short-form video to convince you, or your leadership team, that this format is worth the investment.

Short-form video statistics speak for themselves

The data behind short-form video doesn't lie—it's a winner.

Here are a few stats that prove the value of short-form video:

Consumers find short form video to be 2.5x more engaging than long-form video (The Sprout Social Index™).

TikTok, a short-form video platform, is the most engaging social platform by engagement rate (Socialinsider).

55% of TikTok users bought something after seeing the brand on the app.

Reels account for almost 20% of the time people spend on Instagram.

In fact, on Instagram Reels have the highest reach of all media types on the platform.

In 2022, Instagram Reels had an average engagement rate that was at least double that of other post types (Socialinsider).

As of June 2022, YouTube Shorts topped 5 billion monthly active users.

It's the most popular content format

Put simply: People like short-form video. According to The Sprout Social Index 66% of consumers say short-form video is the most engaging type of social content in 2022.

Think about it: It's easy to binge, easy to share with friends and it's entertaining.

Capture your audience's attention with the content format they already love.

It's easy to make and repurpose

Coming up with a short-form video strategy requires work, but producing video content is not as hard as it used to be.

And that's made a difference. According to Wyzowl, 41% of marketers who used video as a marketing tool for the first time in 2022 did so because creating video in-house has gotten easier.

Thanks to social platforms like Instagram and YouTube offering their own short-form video feeds, this content has become easier to repurpose across platforms—which saves you time and energy.

Short-form video helps you reach more people organically

Today, the digital space is pay-to-play, while the economy is forcing teams to tighten budgets.

Not exactly a dream combination.

This is where short-form video is a secret superpower for increasing reach without increasing spend. It makes sense: this format's popularity already makes it more clickable and shareable. And those stacked engagements mean that social algorithms will notice, and push, your content.

How to prove ROI of short-form video

Proving the ROI of short-form video will help you get buy-in from your leadership team and gain their trust. And that, in turn, can help avoid lengthy approval times and missing trends.

According to Wyzowl, 63% of video marketers use video views as one of their metrics to measure ROI. But your video metrics will depend on your overarching social goals and platforms you use.

Here are a few to get you started:

Video views

Average watch time, or view duration

Full video views vs partial (may also be called "watched full video")

Likes/dislikes

Card clicks (YouTube-specific)

Link clicks (for Instagram Stories)

Engagements

To speed up approval processes, Sprout's Senior Social Media Manager Olivia Jepson, advises: "Build trust. Ask what teams and leaders need to provide you so you can be more self-sufficient. Use data to back up why internal reviews need to be faster and why it's better to be nimble vs. being bogged down by approval processes and too many inputs."

Using a tool streamlines this process so you can prove ROI across platforms, with one hub. For example, Sprout's Analytics and Reporting suite compiles high-impact video stats for all of your channels.

The best short-form video platforms to use

In an attempt to keep up with TikTok's meteoric rise and success, many platforms have created their own vertical, short-form video tools and feeds.

Keeping up with these changes can be a chore, so here's a shortlist of the most popular short-form video platforms to prioritize and the ideal video length for each:

TikTok: You can't talk about short-form video without talking about TikTok. Having surpassed one billion monthly active users, the platform continues to deserve attention. On TikTok, videos can be as short as a few seconds, and as long as 10 minutes.

Instagram Reels: While Instagram isn't prioritizing Reels as much as in 2022, they're still a powerful reach tool. Reels can be from 15 seconds to 90 seconds long (read more about how Instagram Reels compare to TikTok).

Instagram Stories: This ephemeral content disappears in 24 hours, so it's short-lived (unless you save them in Instagram highlights.) But with 50% of 'gram users visiting a website after seeing a product or service in Stories, they're worth using for promos, or to direct people to newly posted Reels. Individual Stories can be up to a minute long, but you can string multiple Stories together.

Facebook Stories: Facebook Stories are very similar to Instagram Stories. And with over half a million daily users, they could be a valuable resource for brand awareness.

YouTube Shorts: Since launching in 2021, YouTube Shorts officially surpassed 50 billion daily views. Shorts can be up to 60 seconds long.

8 ways to get more from your short-form video strategy

Whether you're tackling short-form video for the first time or upping your output, it pays to have a strategy. To help, we brought in some guidance from the team at Glossier.

Here are 8 ways to get more from your short-form video strategy, plus tips on how Sprout can help.

1. Start by doing your research

Look at how your competitors are using short-form video. How often do they use video (if at all)? What's their tone? How do they tackle trends, and what gaps have they left? Use this information to stand out in your industry.

A tool like Sprout turns weeks of manual analysis into a few minutes' work. Sprout's Competitive Analysis Reports narrow down how often competitors post videos, their top-performing posts and engagements across Instagram, Twitter and Facebook—no scrolling or spreadsheets required.

But it's not just about the competition: Look at the data behind videos you've posted, too. Knowing which videos have performed well for you in the past can help guide your future strategy.

2. Don't be afraid to experiment

To find the themes, trends and tone that work for you, you have to experiment a lot—for instance, by trying different Instagram Reel ideas and TikTok trends.

Even social media giants had a learning curve when they shifted to short-form video. Jamie Dinar, Senior Manager of Social Media and Digital for Glossier, remembered that "It was a lot of testing and learning, and a lot of time scrolling through my own For You Feed."

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Jamie Dinar

Senior Manager of Social Media and Digital at Glossier

Nearly half a million followers and over eight million video likes later, Jamie found Glossier's TikTok identity. But it took experimentation. This is one of their first videos on the platform vs. a

more recent one.

To replicate Glossier's success, get creative and test various video content ideas. Think: behind the scenes content, FAQ answers, how-tos, product hacks, user-generated content, trend-based videos and educational videos.

Once you've published a variety of short-form videos, look at your data. Which drove the highest engagement? The most views?

Level up by using a tool like Sprout's post and channel performance reports to compare your videos' performance side-by-side, across channels—and to see if short-form video is having a positive impact on your channel growth.

3. Schedule your videos

Making short-form videos may be easier nowadays, but social teams are still stretched thin—in fact, bandwidth is one of their top challenges (The Sprout Social Index).

Many social platforms have rolled out their own scheduling tools. But that still requires you to go from platform to platform to schedule posts.

That's all wasted time you can get back by using the right tool. With Sprout, you can schedule a video to publish on different platforms, like TikTok and Instagram Reels, at the same time.

4. Reuse videos across platforms

With nearly every social platform rolling out their own short-form video tools and capabilities, repurposing has gotten easier—so you get multiple posts for the time and effort of one.

You can even start doing this now: Repurpose longer videos you currently have to get the ball rolling, without starting from scratch. For example, here is a YouTube clip our team turned into an Instagram Reel.

And pro tip: pre-made video templates are a handy way to streamline your process. Simply plug your videos into a template, and the rest is done for you.

On TikTok, find template options by tapping the plus sign at the bottom of the screen. When the editor opens, tap “templates” at the bottom of the screen.

And on Instagram Reels, you can turn any Reel with three clips or more into a template—including your own, once you start publishing videos. Simply find a Reel you like, tap the three dots at the bottom right of the screen and tap “Use as template.”

Or, tap the plus sign to create a post, tap Reel and tap Templates at the bottom of the screen to choose one you like.

5. Find the right content mix

Experimenting with different types of content to find what works is step one.

Step two is taking the content buckets you identified and deciding how often to post each type.

Jamie from Glossier shared a tip she heard directly from the TikTok platform reps—the 80/20 rule. For Glossier’s TikTok channel, that means making 20% of their videos trend-based, and 80% original programming.

Leaning on trend-based content was great for building a following, but as their channel grew Jamie needed a way to stand apart.

“We recognized that we needed to build an identity on the platform and give people a reason to come to our channel over all the others posting the same trends. That’s when we started building a strategy based on product hacks, Glossier associates and behind-the-scenes content.”

Using trends is still an important piece of Glossier’s TikTok strategy. But emphasizing original and community-first content has given their short-form video content an identity—on TikTok and beyond.

6. Lean into your community

Good social content is created with your brand’s community in mind.

Look to your community for user-generated content to re-post on your own channels, and to inspire more videos. After all, 39% of consumers like to see real customer testimonials or demos (The Sprout Social Index). Tap your community for this content, and create a relationship with them as you do.

What makes this series so special is that it was spurred organically from our community—it was something they were already posting about.

Jamie Dinar

Senior Manager of Social Media and Digital at Glossier

She continued, “We tried to reframe the conversation around beauty, offering our platform to the people using our products to tell their stories, rather than having it come from the brand. Ultimately, we didn’t want to tell them how to use their products—it was their story to tell.”

7. Leverage content that humanizes your brand

From embracing lo-fi authenticity to featuring real employees, short-form video is a powerful tool for humanizing your brand.

One way Glossier does this in their TikTok and Reels content is by featuring employees and their HQ. As Jamie told us, “We have a meet the team series where we ask our store associates, who we call editors, to say their name and share their favorite Glossier product,

which has been really useful in reinforcing product discovery.”

Another way they do this is by leaning into humor. “Sometimes we’ll do silly dances if it makes sense. We’ll quiz people in line during our store openings.”

Glossier has even humanized promotional content: “If we’re running a larger campaign, we might show bloopers from set, or behind-the-scenes footage like products being made in the factory.”

8. Engage, engage, engage

It’s called “social” media for a reason—double down on engagement in the comments section of your short-form videos.

Glossier is known for going above and beyond to create relationships with their audience. As Jamie put it, “We really stood out by using social as a tool for two-way communication and to cultivate a community by responding to comments and DMs, and engaging with our audience in a really authentic, human way.”

One way the brand stands out is by using a surprise and delight strategy with everyday users who post about Glossier—not solely mega-influencers. “We send them products, we post friends-only content, we communicate with them directly in DMs,” Jamie told us. “In return, we see them post even more without us asking for it. It’s a great opportunity to build brand loyalty.”

And brand loyalty matters. According to Sprout’s #BrandsGetReal Report, 68% of consumers say who feel more connected to a brand are more likely to buy from them vs. a competitor.

Use short-form video to build a long-term strategy

Platforms may come and go (RIP, Vine), and formats may shift, but short-form video is currently here to stay.

Investing in this format is worth it for the long run. So scroll through your feed (it’s research—not procrastination). Get inspired. Build your case. And score buy-in. Your leadership team and brand will thank you—even if they don’t know it yet.

With a more robust video strategy comes the need for a more robust social media management system. Consider this your cue to try Sprout for free for 30-days and see what we can do for your short-form video strategy, team bandwidth and beyond.

This is how Glossier’s “Dew it Yourself” series came to be. “What makes this series so special is that it was spurred organically from our community—it was something they were already posting about,” Jamie tells us. “So it was a good opportunity to build on it and make it our own.”

Tags: Instagram, Social Media Content, TikTok, Video