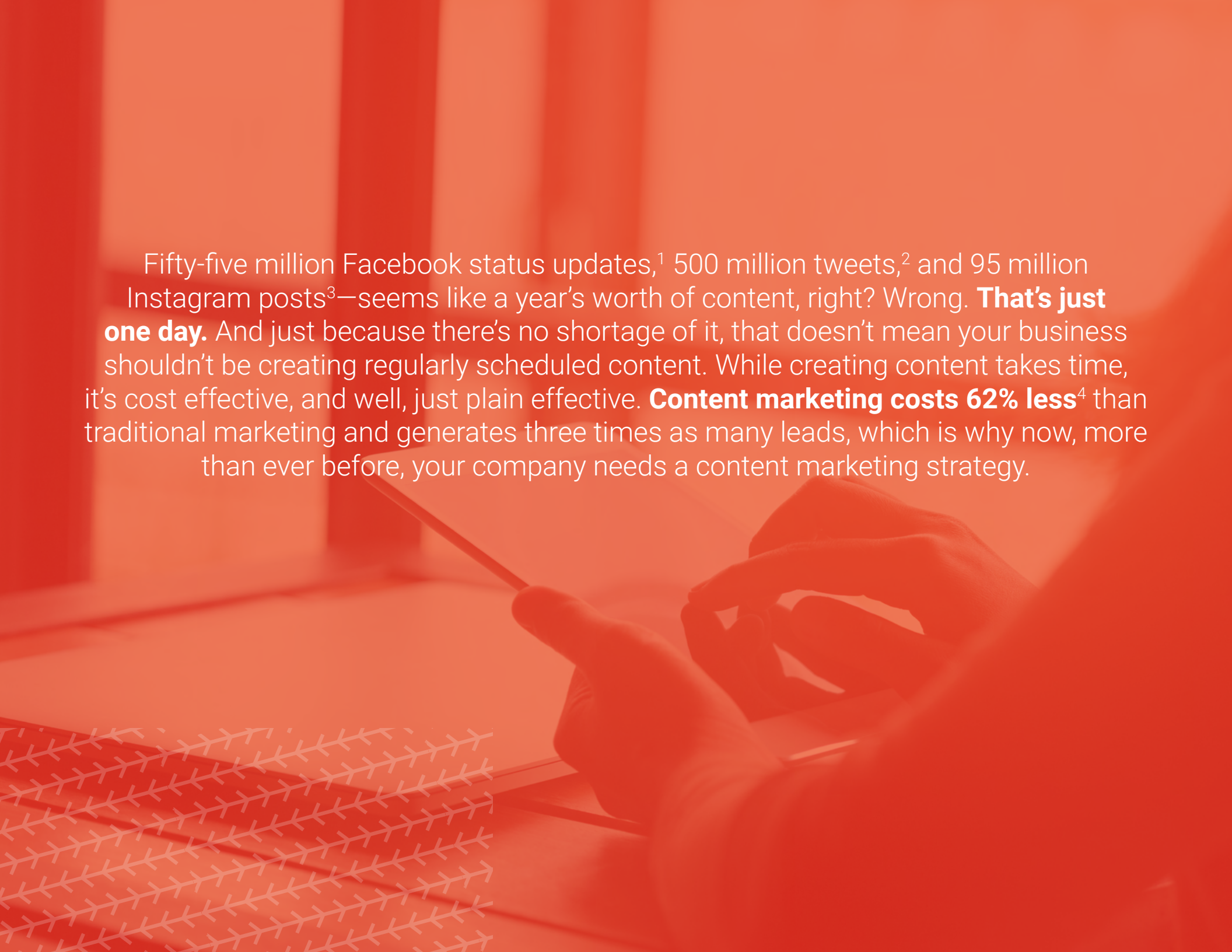




THE HODGES PARTNERSHIP

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS CONTENT MARKETING

Trends Report



Fifty-five million Facebook status updates,¹ 500 million tweets,² and 95 million Instagram posts³—seems like a year's worth of content, right? Wrong. **That's just one day.** And just because there's no shortage of it, that doesn't mean your business shouldn't be creating regularly scheduled content. While creating content takes time, it's cost effective, and well, just plain effective. **Content marketing costs 62% less⁴** than traditional marketing and generates three times as many leads, which is why now, more than ever before, your company needs a content marketing strategy.

JUST HOW MUCH CONTENT IS BEING PRODUCED?

Volume of social media content being published daily:



55 million
status updates¹



500 million
tweets²



95 million
posts³



720,000 hours
of content⁵

According to Domo's Data Never Sleeps 5.0 report, these are numbers generated *every minute of the day*:⁶



Snapchat users share
527,760 photos



More than 120 professionals
join LinkedIn



Users watch 4,146,600
YouTube videos



456,000 tweets are sent
on Twitter



Instagram users post
46,740 photos

And according to your marketing industry colleagues, here are the content marketing tactics that are part of their arsenal:⁷

Social media: **83%**

Blogs: **80%**

Email newsletters: **77%**

In-person events: **68%**

E-books/white papers: **65%**

Video: **60%**

Infographics: **58%**

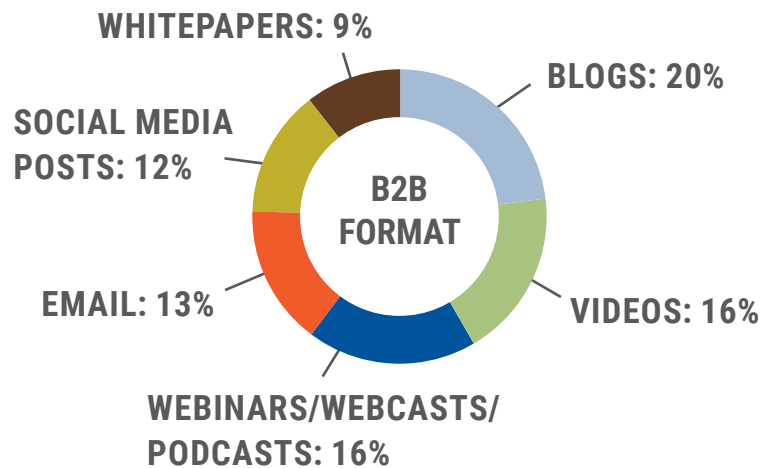
Webinars/webcasts: **58%**

CREATING CONTENT FOR A B2B AUDIENCE

B2B customers are typically well-informed consumers seeking out educational and data-driven information, like white papers. But this doesn't mean engaging and interesting content needs to be sacrificed – there's still a way to be fun, engaging and informative all at once. Having readily available content for potential B2B customers is critical too, as 80% of B2B decisions are made before contacting the seller.⁸

HERE ARE THE TYPES OF CONTENT THAT RESONATE MOST FOR B2B AUDIENCES.

Most effective content formats:⁹



B2B customers find the following sources of online content most valuable in shaping purchasing decisions (percentage of respondents):⁹

Professional associations and online communities: 47%

Industry organizations and groups: 46%

Online trade publications: 41%

Seminars/workshops: 41%

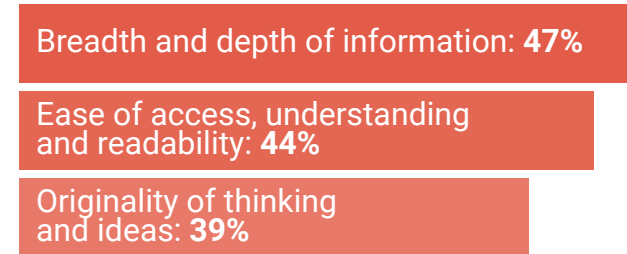
Trade shows: 35%



B2B buyers value the following specific types of content most when making purchase decisions (percentage of respondents):⁹

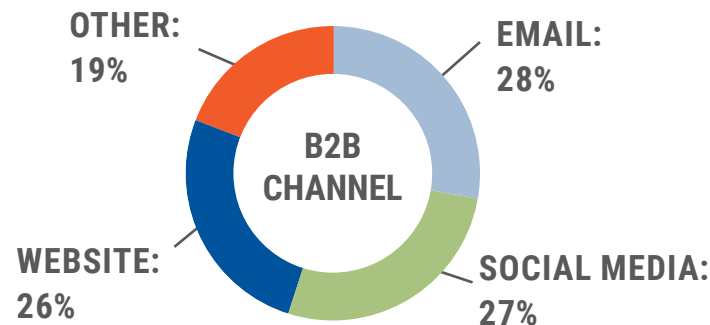


B2B buyers identified the characteristics they most value in online content as follows:⁹



ALSO KEEP IN MIND, THAT SOME CHANNELS ARE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN OTHERS WHEN IT COMES TIME TO DISTRIBUTE THE CONTENT YOU'VE CREATED.

From a B2B perspective, the most effective channels for distributing content are:⁹



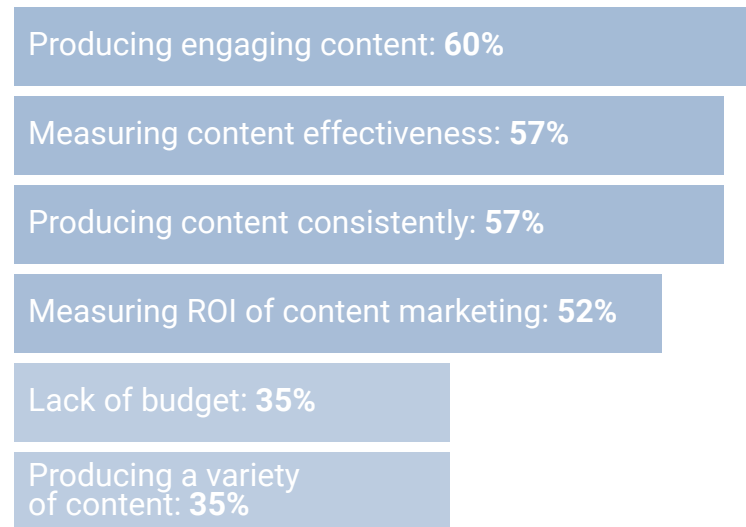
Other: Web-based events: 6%; Media sites/third-party sites: 5%; Community platforms: 3%; Mobile: 3%; Display: 2%



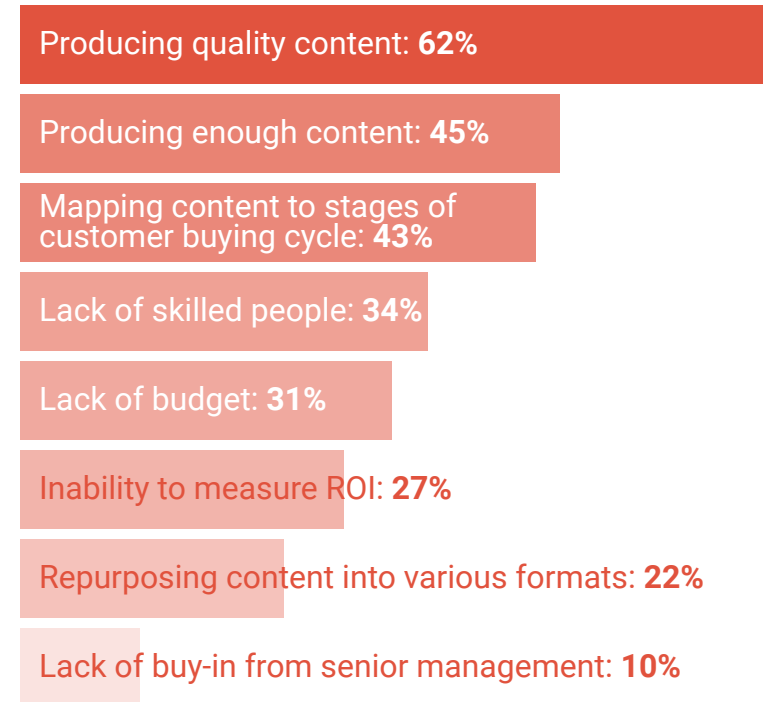
CHALLENGES

It's no secret that **creating consistent and engaging content can be challenging** and is an area that many struggle with. Often, organizations underestimate how challenging it can be to create, execute and measure a lasting and effective content marketing strategy. There are myriad reasons why content marketing is difficult for companies—budget, resources and expectations to name a few—but unless there is a real and sustained commitment to the effort, your content marketing strategy will likely fall short.

You're not alone. Here are the top challenges cited by B2B content marketers to creating successful content marketing programs:⁹



Top content marketing challenges:⁹



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTENT

We know the struggle is real when it comes to creating and sustaining a content marketing program, but that's no reason to give up, or worse, not start at all. The process is full of starts and stops, iterations and refining, but prospects are turning more and more to content marketing to aid in their purchasing decisions. While your content may not be perfect, being available and easily found when prospects are searching for you is what matters most.



75% OF B2B BUYERS

and 84% of VP level executives use social media to make purchase decisions.¹⁰



51% OF B2B BUYERS

rely more on content to research and make B2B purchasing decisions than they did a year ago.¹¹



81% OF B2B COMPANIES

use a blog as a content marketing tactic and marketers who prioritize blogging efforts are 13x more likely to see positive ROI.¹²



66% OF MARKETERS SURVEYED

used blogs in their social media content and 47% of buyers viewed 3-5 pieces of content before engaging with a sales rep.¹²

WHAT'S NEXT?

We know content marketing is here to stay, so the question is, what's next? If there's anything we've learned, it's to expect the unexpected. While we can't predict with certainty what the next big trend will be, here are a few to keep your eye on.

MICRO INFLUENCERS

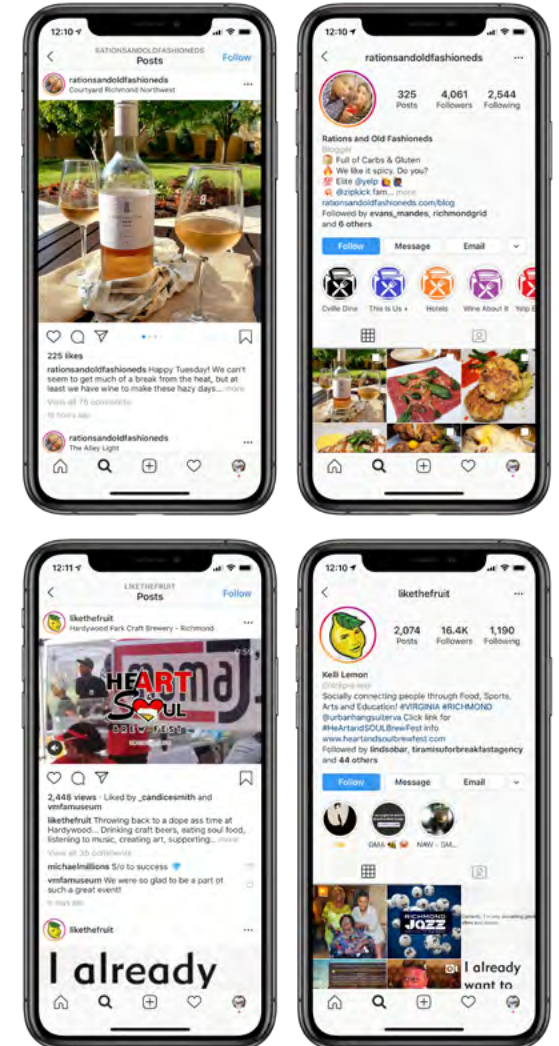
Micro influencers, whose social media following is between 10,000 to 100,000 followers, and nano-influencers, someone with fewer than 10,000 followers, are on the rise and have proven to be an effective form of marketing.¹³

82% 82% of consumers are "highly likely" to follow a recommendation made by a micro-influencer, compared to 73% who are highly likely to act on a recommendation from an average person¹⁴

60% Micro-influencer campaigns drive engagement rates that are 60% higher than average campaigns¹⁵

6.7x Micro-influencer campaigns are 6.7 times more efficient per engagement than influencers with larger followings¹⁵

85% Nano-influencers with 1000 followers generated 85% higher engagement than those having 100,000 followers¹³

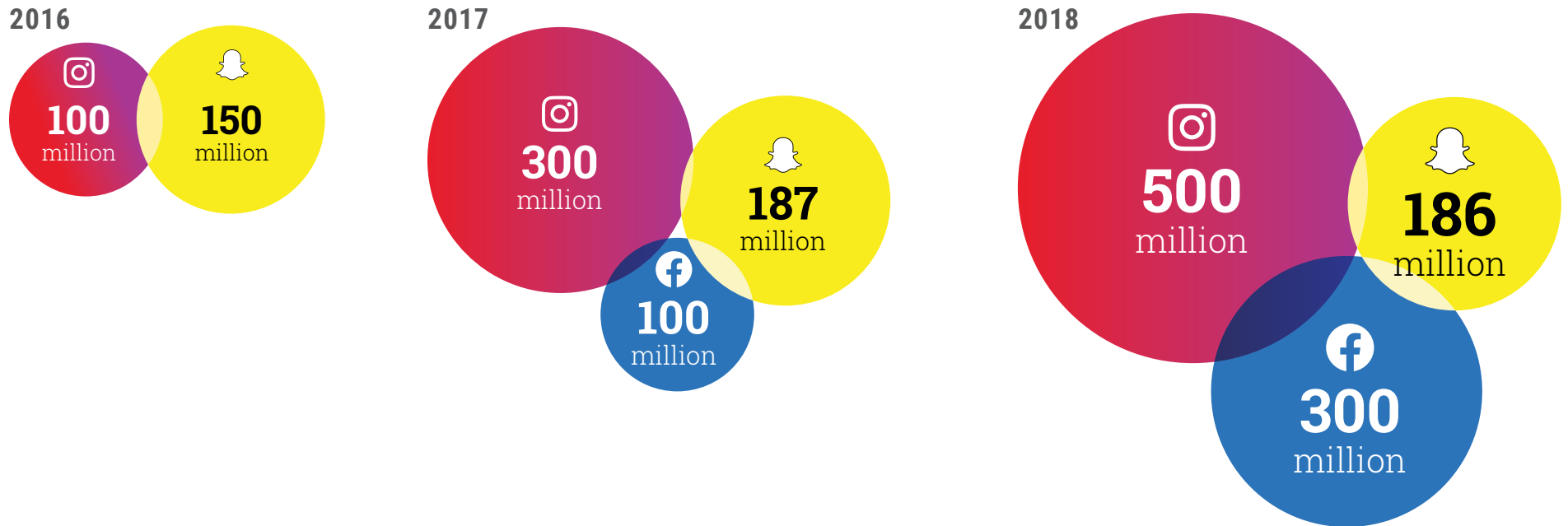




THE RISE OF STORIES

Nowadays people want quick, entertaining and engaging updates from their friends, families and even brands—all possible through social media “stories.” Ads between stories first became available to marketers on Snapchat when daily videos watched reached 20 billion and on Facebook and Instagram when they reached [150 million daily users](#).¹⁶ Today the number of daily story users on Instagram has tripled, and other platforms are growing exponentially, indicating that the use of stories will only continue to trend upward.

DAILY ACTIVE STORY USERS BY PLATFORM¹⁷



CONTENT PERSONALIZATION

People want content (even ads) that is relevant to them and are willing to share information about themselves in order to get it—**more than half of consumers (57%) are okay with providing personal information** (on a website) as long as it's for their benefit and being used in responsible ways.¹⁸ Personalized content also helps brands build relationships with targeted audiences and has shown a higher ROI than content that lacks personalization.



6.5% of millennials considered themselves brand loyal, and those who prefer personalized communications have a 28% higher brand loyalty than those who do not.¹⁹



88% of U.S. marketers reported seeing measurable improvements due to personalization — with more than half reporting a lift greater than 10%.²⁰



78% of U.S. Internet users said personally relevant content from brands increases their purchase intent.²¹



Increasing personalization in more channels can increase overall consumer spending up to 500%.²²



Personalization reduces acquisition costs as much as 50%, lifts revenues by 5-15%, and increases the efficiency of marketing spend by 10-30%.²³

IT DOESN'T END HERE

It's clear that many of the ultimate purchasing decisions made by B2B buyers result from a culmination of the research and information they've gathered beforehand. If you're not in the content game, you're already missing out. Taking it one step further by considering how and where your audience consumes information, as well as in the format they prefer can go a long way toward making sure you're reaching your target audiences in the right places and in the way they prefer.

These preferences and trends will change, of course, which is why it's important to stay up to date on these ever-changing platforms (e.g., there always are new ones emerging) and mediums (video is hot now, but will it be in the next 5 years?).

We know we'll be keeping tabs, and we'll continue to keep you updated, too.

**WANT TO GO DEEPER INTO USING CONTENT INTO USING CONTENT
TO ACHIEVE PR GOALS?**

Download our e-book *How Content Programs Have
Become PR's Number One Strategy*



ABOUT HODGES

The Hodges Partnership is an award-winning public relations and marketing agency with extensive experience in media relations, community relations, social media and more.

We're different than other agencies. We're easy to work with, experienced, creative and passionate about communications.

Our team embodies the following qualities.



COLLABORATIVE: Partnership is in our name for a reason. We're true team players because we know that we're stronger together.

DRIVEN: We're fueled by your success, and we work hard to make our clients the hero. We take our responsibility seriously, and we'll get you where you need to be.

BRIGHT: Representing our big ideas and our sunny outlooks, we are forward-thinking strategists seeking creative and insightful solutions solving real-world client challenges.

GENUINE: We're known for being easy to work with and as passionate advocates for our clients and our industry. We believe this is why our client relationships stand the test of time.



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