

Social Media Buyer's Guide



-To- H1 2018

Welcome To The

SOCIAL MEDIA BUYER'S GUIDE



Vice President, Marketing

RICK MARTIRA

Associate Director, Marketing

RASHIDA BOYD

Marketing Team

DANIELLE WESTERHOFF
SOPHIA HUNEYCUTT

Design Team

TYLER COURTENAY
QUAN NGUYEN

About Us

Unified helps marketers make informed and impactful decisions with the industry's only business intelligence platform purposely designed for social advertising. With experience collecting and enriching over 1 billion dollars of social investment data, Unified is passionate about providing Fortune 2000 brands and agencies greater transparency into their many teams, tools and strategies. The Unified Platform and service teams are specifically built to ensure data quality, optimize investments and answer critical business questions. Unified has offices in New York City, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.



The Future Of Social Media Advertising: Trends To Watch In 2018

By Rick Martira

Whew! Marketers were busy in 2017, with brands launching an average of 1,906.0 campaigns—an 184.0% increase from the previous year. We've seen it all, from new Instagram Stories Ads to Pinterest Video Ads with Autoplay, so let's take a few minutes to recap this amazing year, and explore some predictions for our next trip around the sun.

We discovered that:

Organic Is Dying, Leaving Behind Brands That Are Less Prepared For Paid.

You've probably noticed that your organic posts aren't getting as much reach, visibility, or engagement as before. This change was always inevitable, as social networks matured and shifted from user adoption to profitability. Historically, brands leveraged organic as the primary way to reach consumers, but as social channels change their algorithms, these brands are scrambling to navigate the fragmented, complex, and fast-moving world of paid social.

A Variety Of New Ad Types Entered The Playing Field.

Keeping up with the constant innovation seen throughout the industry, each social channel released new ad types or features—more than 10 this year alone! Most recently, Instagram Stories ads and **Pinterest Autoplay Video Ads** rolled out, to great success all around.

There Are More And More Cooks In The Kitchen.

As social campaigns become increasingly complex, more teams are needed to execute them. In fact, research showed that there are 6.1 unique companies connected to a single campaign line item on average. That is a whopping 221.0% increase over the previous 24 months.

More Data, More Data Ownership Problems.

With 54.0 ad accounts per brand on average, and that aforementioned 1,906.0 campaigns released per brand on average annually, the amount of data produced has exploded. Marketers have slowly begun to demand data ownership and control as numbers continue to skyrocket, however, many are just waking up to this issue—if they know about it at all.

As you can see, social advertising has been on the move this year, and we expect nothing less from 2018. Here are some of our predictions:

More Transparency.

The ability to know what teams, tools, and tactics are performing the best, and how much money is going into social campaigns, will be even more prominent as brands realize that a large chunk of the \$50B in social investments could translate to wasted money for their business.

Offline and Online Convergence.

Expect offline sales, online sales, and advertising to become even more entwined, in terms of both measurement as well as targeting and integrated consumer experiences.

Social Advertising Data Ownership.

We have found that most marketers probably don't even know whether they own their data. Not only is this expected to change as marketers realize that data ownership is a huge issue, but there will also be a concerted effort to find solutions to this problem.

Increased Accountability.

With more transparency into where budgets are going, marketers will have more power to hold sub-brands, teams, and partners accountable that run these massive social media campaigns.

At the end of the day, social is still the most innovative form of media of our time. There are constantly new social ad offerings, tactics, and measurement capabilities up for grabs.

We hope that the articles in this guide, which include tips from the holiday season, a guide to Instagram Stories ads, and questions to ask before thinking about a Snapchat campaign, help you through the fast-paced year to come.

Thanks for reading!

Sincerely,



Rick Martira

VP, Marketing

Source

1. "Four Key Insights That Perfectly Convey the Current State of the Industry, According to Unified"

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*learned from
the holidays
to implement*

IN **2018**

By Sophia Huneycutt

Let's face it—if there were a marketing Super Bowl for retail sales, it would be the holiday season. After all, the winter holiday season makes approximately ten times the revenue as back-to-school season, the second biggest of the year. As one can expect, brands and agencies alike put extra effort into their marketing strategies to make sure they hit the magic number.

However, once the mistletoe and menorahs are put away, brands should realize that some of those same tactics can serve them throughout the entire year, not just from October through December. Get a running start into 2018 with the following lessons learned from holiday season tactics.

1

Marketing On The Move

*During
The
Holidays*

Focus Heavily On Mobile To Support “Research Online, Buy Offline” (ROBO) Behaviors.

Smart marketers know that consumers are researching products in stores while they are shopping. In fact, 51.0% of North American mobile owners look for a better price on items when in a store, while 47.0% look for more information¹. As a result, marketers are focused on relaying special deals and product information via apps and social, hoping to attract people who are actively looking for gifts and deals.

*After
The
Holidays*

Run Facebook Local Awareness Ads To Capitalize On ROBO Behaviors.

The truth is marketers need to focus on mobile, and not just during the holiday season. With 70.0% of Americans glued to smartphones, **social marketers need to keep mobile top of mind, always**. Make sure ads are mobile-compatible (or mobile-centric), and try using ad units like **Facebook Local Awareness Ads** to entice customers while they're within a visitable range of your brick-and-mortar locations.

2

'Tis (Always) The Season

During
The
Holidays

Warm Hearts With Charitable Giving And/Or Partnerships.

Most brands focus their charitable giving during the holiday season by forming partnerships or offering to match donations. Given that 56.0% of internet users plan to start or finish their yearly giving during November and December, this makes perfect sense.

After
The
Holidays

Keep Up The Good Vibes.

Charitable giving, also known as cause marketing, has implications beyond the holidays for consumers. Charitable partnerships year-round can increase your brand equity by winning hearts and loyalty from consumers. For example, **this brand ran a charitable campaign during the Olympics, and managed to drastically lower costs while increasing engagement.**

3

The Gift Card Effect

During
The
Holidays

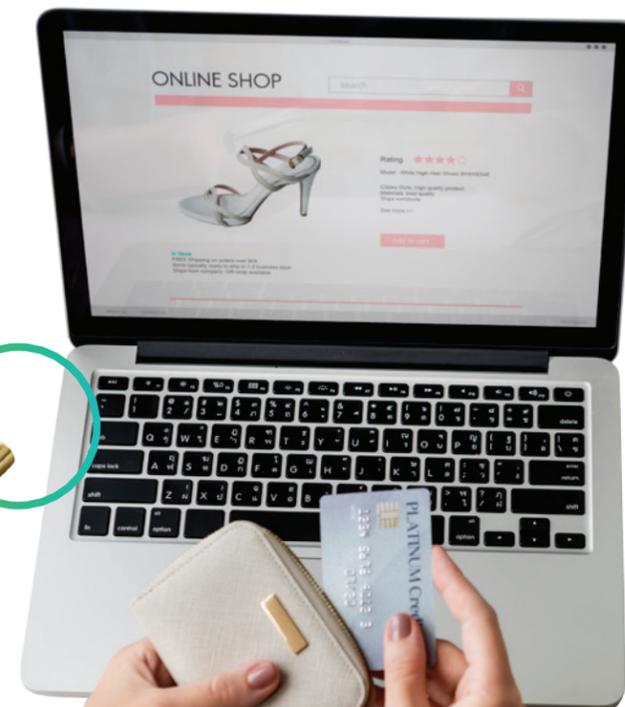
Use Gift Cards As Another Way To Snatch Up New Customers.

With 57.0% of US consumers noting that they prefer gift cards to physical presents, it's no wonder they are so popular³. The recipients are so enthusiastic about gift cards that 51.0% of them indicate that receiving a gift card prompted them to visit a store more often than they would have otherwise⁴. As a result, many brands will release holiday-branded gift cards or will sell a variety of gift cards in retail locations.

After
The
Holidays

Craft Your Offer To Upsell.

Once gift recipients have a gift card in hand, regardless of whether it's specific to your brand or from a financial institution like AMEX, it's easy to keep them coming for more. In fact, 45.0% of them will spend more than the value of their gift card, making them ideal candidates for upsell opportunities⁴. To entice consumers after the holiday season, include incentives for adding money to their cards, pair popular \$25 items with compatible products to boost sales, and utilize one-click call-to-action options (e.g. Twitter offer cards or Facebook offer buttons).



4

Shopping With The Stars

During
The
Holidays

Attract New Customers With Celebrity Partnerships.

With more money in the budget for holiday advertising, marketers often seek out celebrities for holiday campaigns. Partnerships with influencers can significantly increase appeal, raise reach, and help attract new customers, especially those who are fans of—or even those who are acquainted with—the celebrity.

After
The
Holidays

Let Celebrities And Influencers Increase Brand Equity Year-round.

In reality, celebrity partnerships can draw attention to any event or product release during the year, for example, **the Superbowl**. Use social media intelligence to uncover habits, likes, and dislikes of first and third party audiences. With this data, you can use found affinities to partner with the right celebrities and other brands, inform music and creative, and push your campaigns to better performances.



5

Count Your Chickens Before (And After) They've Hatched

During
The
Holidays

You Focus On Conversion-based Metrics.

No matter the conversion type you need—store lookups, downloads, orders—the holidays provide a unique opportunity to test out metrics and gather intelligence on the impact of various tactics on your ROI. With huge numbers of customers shopping during this time, gathering data on them seems like an obvious step that may not feel as possible earlier in the year.

After
The
Holidays

Don't Just Use Conversion-based Metrics—Try Custom Metrics Too.

Ideally, marketers should be testing both social KPIs and custom metrics throughout the year. The intelligence gained from extensive testing can inform and refine holiday season tactics. But in order to test effectively, you must really understand the difference between standard KPIs and custom metrics, **as well as the pros and cons of each**.

As you can see, holiday strategies don't have to be treated like your holiday decorations—taken out and dusted off once a year. Whether it's capitalizing on CRM audiences, hobnobbing with A-listers, or catching consumers on mobile ads, these tactics can be tweaked for year-round use.

Learn more about implementing these strategies [here](#).

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The **ABCs** of **Instagram Stories** for **Advertisers**

by Sophia Huneycutt

If you've been following social advertising for the past four years or so, then you already know that successful **social media marketers have a mobile mindset**. Influenced by the quickly growing number of mobile device owners who spend a remarkable **92.0%** of their time in apps, advertisers are running social media campaigns that cater more and more to these types of devices.

And, when you consider that **39.0% of mobile app users stream video daily**, it's not surprising that mobile is expected to account for 64.0% of all video viewing activity in the US by the end of next year. Unsurprisingly, social channels have already begun capitalizing on these trends, releasing everything from autoplay mobile video ads to video ads for mobile, video-based apps.

Facebook, keeping in character with its status as the industry bellwether, has been at the head of the pack. Case in point: Instagram. It's hard to believe that just a couple of years ago the only things popping up in your Instagram feed were square photos of your best friend's gourmet dinner. Since **Facebook's acquisition of the app in 2015**, Instagram has become a trailblazer in social innovation and video, especially with its newest triumph, Instagram Stories—a casual, video-based feature within the app.

And, luckily, advertisers have the opportunity to use it.

A Casual Way To Make Lasting Impressions

The first thing you should know is that Instagram Stories Ads are full screen, appearing between the Stories posted by everyday people (more on this later). And, if the promise of a completely immersive consumer experience doesn't get you excited, they also have advanced targeting, reach, and measurement capabilities.

While they are technically ads, Instagram Stories look a lot different from any of their ads of the past. Shorter, less edited, and down-to-earth, these videos and photos read like real-time messages between BFFs—as opposed to more traditional advertisements from brands to consumers.

Finally—The Ability To Capture 100% Of Your Customers' Elusive Attention

The fact that these brand stories autoplay in full-screen mode is especially exciting to advertisers, considering that visibility is listed as a concern for 91.0% of digital marketers³. Because Stories are so short and visually appealing, they capture the attention of mobile-bearing consumers on the go. With **70.0% of Americans now glued to their smartphones**, catching that crowd's attention is a boon for advertisers.

Originally, Stories only offered the reach objective, but now advertisers can focus on traffic, which is an effective objective for this ad type; because they are so engaging, Instagram Stories encourage people to tap off their screens and straight into your website.



When You Should (And Shouldn't) Use Instagram Stories

So when are Instagram Stories ads especially effective? As many marketers know, there are some ad units that work better based on their campaign's audience, business goal, and creative combination.

But before you even *think* about running an Instagram Stories campaign, you should start with a strong Instagram presence. If you have an Instagram page, preferably with a high amount of engagements, Stories will be much easier to adopt. Most importantly, you'll have a base of fans ready to devour your content.

Once you've got your page set up, consider these three situations that work especially well for Instagram Stories:

1 If you want to reach the 51.0% of millennials who use the channel⁵.

While Instagram is a great way to reach nearly all generations, it's extremely popular among millennials. These young consumers also happen to be highly visual, and passionate about brands they believe in. If this sounds like a group you'd like to reach, Stories is for you.



2 If your brand wants to shift or maintain brand perception.

As we mentioned in our introduction, Stories provides a direct, intimate connection to consumers who love visual storytelling. With Stories, you can show your ideal consumer exactly what your brand stands for, and invite them behind the scenes.



3 If you want to use...well, pretty much any objective.

Now, advertisers can select the reach, video views, conversions, app installs, or traffic objectives. These are the most popular for advertisers—but if your heart is set on lead generation, you'll have to stick with ads on Instagram's main feed.



This is not to say that any situation outside of these can't get you to your business goal, but for campaigns outside of these parameters, marketers should **consult an expert or ads partner to ensure a successful campaign.**

Instagram Stories' (Creative) Golden Rules

To propel your campaign toward your business goals, you should abide by five proven best practices.

✓ Don't just repurpose content from your website—be bold.

Captivating creative and sound are vital for this audience, which is filled with visually-minded people who are used to swiping through beautiful images all day. Focus on creating engaging, snack-sized experiences that'll connect you to your chosen crowd.

✓ Think about video length.

For example, a TV trailer should take the full 15 seconds; after all, you need to convey the basic message of your movie. In contrast, when it comes to content that's heavily product-focused, the shorter the better. If you're in retail or a similar industry, you can use images of your product—but only if the visuals are captivating enough.

✓ Stories autoplay, so grab the user's attention right away.

Don't show your logo first; show a striking, attractive image. Additionally, try not to convey long-lived content that is already on your main site, but switch it up so your fans don't get bored. For example, if you're a yogurt brand, show a video of your employees taking a lunch break with your yogurts as a snack—give consumers more variety beyond simple close-ups of the yogurt itself.

✓ Feature simple messaging.

You need to have content that's easy to understand in 15 seconds. Even though Stories is technically a quicker, more casual format than Instagram's main feed, you still need a compelling story to pair with your visuals. You can also show captions; spice those up to grab even more attention.

✓ Think about measurement.

Make sure you've **chosen the correct standard KPIs and custom metrics** that'll measure the results of your creative strategy!

10 Basics In 10 Seconds

We've gone over *why* and *how* advertisers should embrace Instagram Stories campaigns. Now you need to familiarize yourself with the details. Below, we've included 10 things you should know before you set up your first campaign.

Location in App	The top horizontal bar of Instagram's mobile app
Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Center, left, right, aligned• Text color can change• Unlimited text
User Tagging	Available with notification via direct message
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photo or video• Use quick, transient moments• Try short, silly content
Uploadable?	Yes
Paid Promotion	Yes
Measurability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unique viewers/post• Views (1second conversions)• Completion rate• App installs
Lenses?	No
Video Length	16 seconds
Posts Per Story	Unlimited

Conclusion

Instagram Stories ads are the latest must-have tools in your social advertising toolbox you didn't know you needed, and business intelligence companies have seen a huge overall adoption rate.

However, even with all of the opportunities Instagram Stories brings, marketers need to work with their internal teams, agencies, or ad partners to weigh key factors and develop content, targeting, and CTAs that will get them to their business goals.

Now that you've got your guide to the basics, it's time to jump on the Stories bandwagon.

Need help getting started?
[Let us know.](#)

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10

Questions To Ask Before You Even **Think** About Running A Campaign On Snapchat

by Sophia Huneycutt

If you haven't run a campaign on the platform yet, Snapchat can seem intimidating. And given that it's **the newest of the major channels**, that's understandable. But once you've done some research, you'll find that Snapchat is an easy channel to work with—and the benefits of doing so are bountiful.

Still, there are some questions you'll need to ask before you begin your first Snapchat campaign. Lucky for you, we already asked—and answered—them.





How is Snapchat different from other channels?

If you aren't personally active on Snapchat, its appeal may be hard to grasp without seeing and using the app (we highly recommend asking your high-school-aged niece or college-bound nephew to show you what it's all about).

Snapchat is a casual—and, dare we say, a downright fun—social channel. Its focus on short, light-hearted content has inspired consumers and advertisers alike to create organic-looking content that attracts a ton of engagement. The ephemeral videos and photos create an urgency that encourages consumers to check the platform 18+ times a day on average.

Since the channel is solely mobile, its full-screen ads ensure 100% of users' attention—a valuable asset for advertisers aiming to capture the eyes (and wallets) of Snapchat's strong base of millennials.

And after considering Snapchat's massive growth and impressive video view stats, some might even say **you'd be crazy not to consider Snapchat.**



What audiences are available?

While Snapchat's base—173M total daily users—has a reputation for skewing young, the platform is including more and more consumer segments every day¹. In fact, it now has 28 million consumers aged 25 and up.

However, if you do want to reach a younger audience and their \$65 billion in buying power, Snapchat is a no-brainer. It holds the attention of 83.4% of US consumers aged 12 to 17 alongside 78.6% of 18 to 24 year-olds.

Within Snapchat's large base, you can target any number of audiences based on demographics, interests, and lookalikes. In fact, **with the help of some business intelligence software**, you can even target 1st-party CRM audiences to reach the exact audiences you know will be receptive.

1st-party CRM data provides a powerful opportunity to hyper-personalize messaging based on where a particular audience is in the customer journey. For example, you can target those who completed an order to encourage follow-up purchases. Or even target people who signed up for your newsletter or RSVP'd for an event—i.e. those elusive almost-customers who you'd like to commit—with special offers to encourage adoption.

3

What types of ads are available?

Snapchat ads have a solid reputation, despite the fact that the platform is in its infancy compared to more established competitors. This is evidenced by an impressive 39.0% of consumers who rarely or moderately skip ads on the platform. Of the same group, 50.0% say they engage with Sponsored Lenses on Snapchat, while 30.0% say they watch Snapchat video ads.

The secret to Snapchat's effectiveness is the variety of ad units it offers, each one unique.

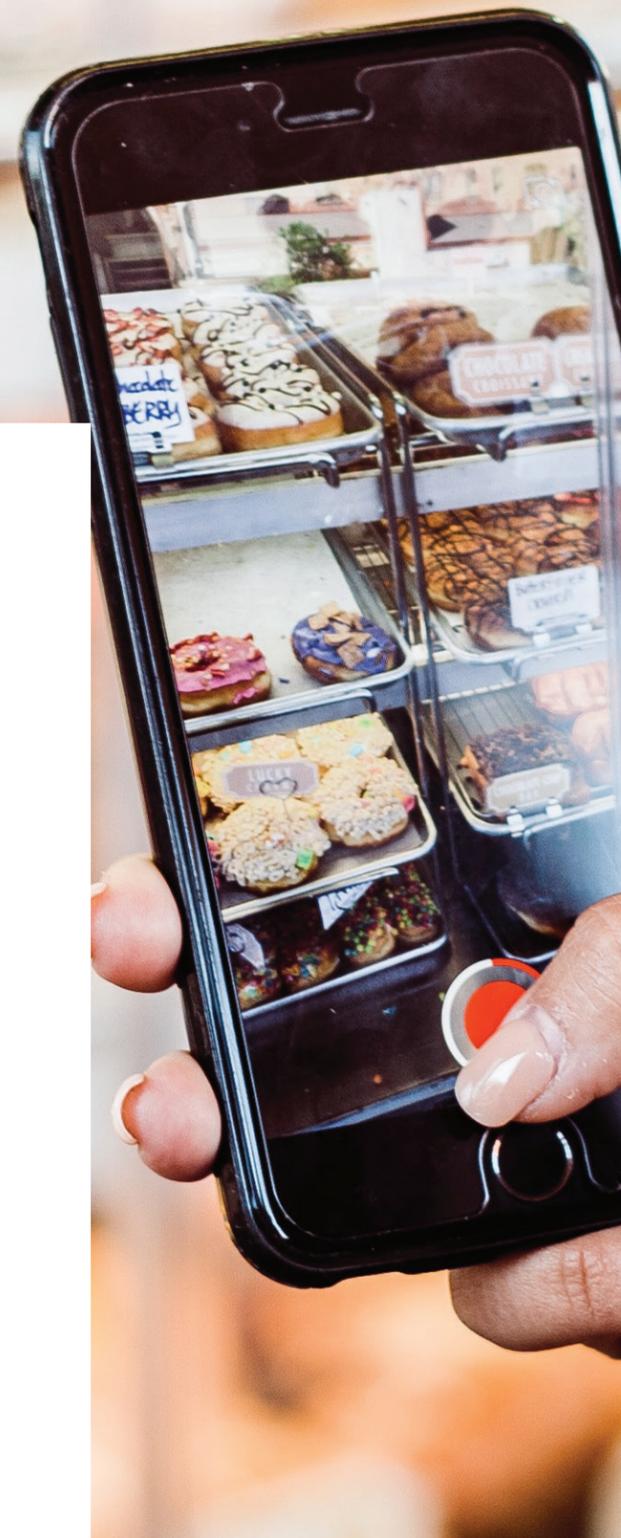
Snap Ads

Snap ads, which look most like traditional ads of all the options, are vertical video or photo ads. They can push traffic to a pre-loaded website, encourage app installs, or drive video views.

Filters

Filters allow brands to create overlay images that take over users' backgrounds. Since they can be activated depending on a Snapper's location, these particular ads are perfect for driving traffic to events or in-store sales.

While these are among the most effective ad units available, **Snapchat has even more options** for marketers to consider.



4

Should I work with one of Snapchat's advertising partners?

If you don't have the expertise or the resources—social takes consistent and constant care—then an advertising partner can work wonders with little effort on your end. They are **certified companies with premier access to Snapchat's API**, ready to guide you from strategy to wrap-up deck.

Working with an advertising partner can have many benefits, from easy campaign deployment, to tools with unique optimization algorithms, to power features that may not be available in the native tool.

Those advertising partners that feature **social business intelligence software** can vastly improve your campaign **performance** and **transparency**—all while **securing elusive data ownership**. We've seen remarkable results from partnerships—as much as an 84.0% higher swipe-up rate and a 56.2% lower CPM than benchmarks, in some cases.



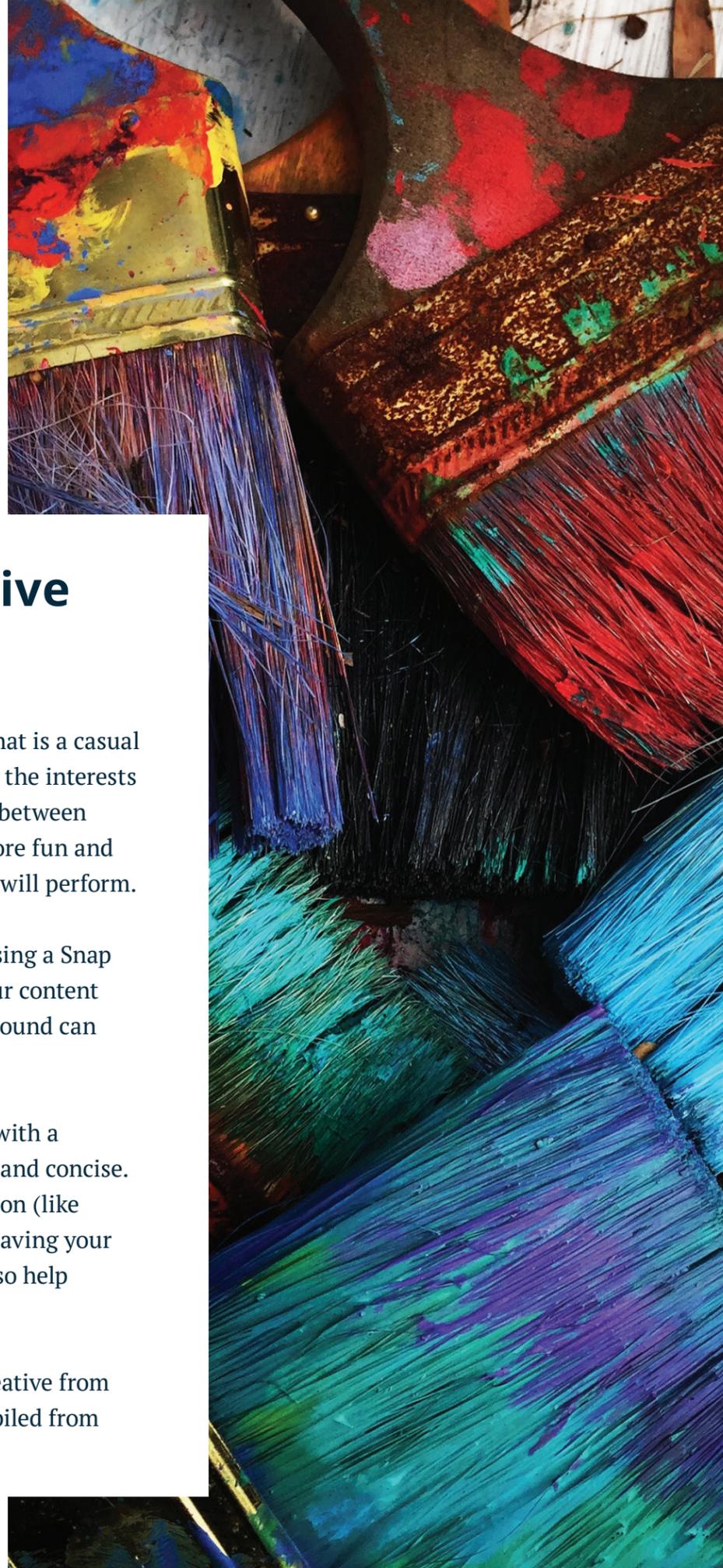
What type of creative should I be using?

Marketers should keep in mind that Snapchat is a casual video app, and make sure creative matches the interests and tone of the community. Ads appear in between light-hearted snaps from friends, so the more fun and organic your content appears, the better it will perform.

Think short, surprising content if you're using a Snap Ad. Going for a Sponsored Filter? Make your content eye-catching and spontaneous. Sight and sound can captivate users in all these cases.

You've got less than 10 seconds to engage with a Snapchatter, so make this messaging clear and concise. If you need a consumer to complete an action (like swipe up), make this call-to-action clear. Having your logo appear in the first two seconds will also help engagement rates and performance.

Most importantly, do not repurpose old creative from Facebook or Instagram ads; Snap Ads compiled from repurposed material do *not* perform well.



Where should my campaign be seen?



You can place your ads in Our Stories (snaps collected from different people in a certain location), Discover (a hub that includes professional articles and shows), and User Stories (where consumers receive friends' snaps). While you can choose one or more of these areas, our recommended best practice is that you place your ads everywhere.

It's important to note that although you won't have 100% control of ad placement (your ads may end up between a cute picture of someone's puppy and a viral video of a break dancer), however this is surprisingly inconsequential as long as you've targeted appropriately. Bonus points **if you've consulted with an ad expert**—because you won't need to worry about the minutia.

Unlike in display advertising, your social audience is already engaged. So no matter where your ad ends up in consumers' feeds, you know they'll be interested.

Which objectives will work for my campaign?



Snapchat can optimize to three objectives: raising awareness, increasing consideration (i.e. engagement), and driving action.

If you need to get as many eyes on your ads as possible, like to get the word out about a new car, for example, go for raising awareness. If you'd like to generate excitement and video views around specific content, say for an upcoming TV premiere, go for increasing consideration. If you'd like consumers to complete a specific conversion or click off-site to your website, go for driving action.

Each of these objectives will determine how your campaign is measured, which we'll dive into later.



How can I be sure my entire team, including external partners, is on the same page?

Brands are working with more teams and partners than ever, with **6.1 individual companies** tied to a single campaign on average last year.

In some ways, this is a good thing; it shows that brands are embracing social as an ad channel more enthusiastically than ever. However, this influx of ad campaigns has created **significant transparency problems**, where teams work in silos and a large amount of important data is not communicated.

You need to be able to share best practices and optimize your campaigns—not to mention campaign results. So how can you make sure that everyone is reading off the same playbook and has access to the same performance information?

Easy—find a platform that can **aggregate, normalize, and contextualize your data in real-time.**



How will I be sure that my campaign is pacing well?

Social media is like a plant. To thrive, it needs someone to water, fertilize, and occasionally repot it. Similarly, there are many things you must watch and potentially adjust during your campaign flight to ensure your budget dollars are spent efficiently on the most lucrative ads. For example, if you notice that a certain piece of creative or a targeting bucket isn't doing well, you should find a seamless way to swap out that content for higher performing creative.

Additionally, you should think about how you want to optimize your campaign in terms of both bids and budget dollars. Snapchat's native tool mainly focuses on the former, which is effective in small doses. However to really move the needle on performance, consider having **a platform that will automatically reallocate budget dollars as well.**



How will I measure my success?

You've asked all the right questions and prepared an almost perfect campaign. But how will you know whether your campaign succeeds or not?

Snapchat has standard metrics like total opens, open rate, and completion rate, which are effective in measuring your baseline performance. However, brands should consider **custom metrics** as well, or at least familiarize themselves with the benefits of each.

Channel uniqueness, audiences, ad types, creative, measurement—there are a lot of important pieces to ponder even before even a single word of copy is created. By answering these 10 questions, marketers can significantly increase their odds of success.

Excited and ready to run your first campaign, but need some help? **Let us know.**

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CONTACT US



www.unified.com



sales@unified.com



855-236-5482



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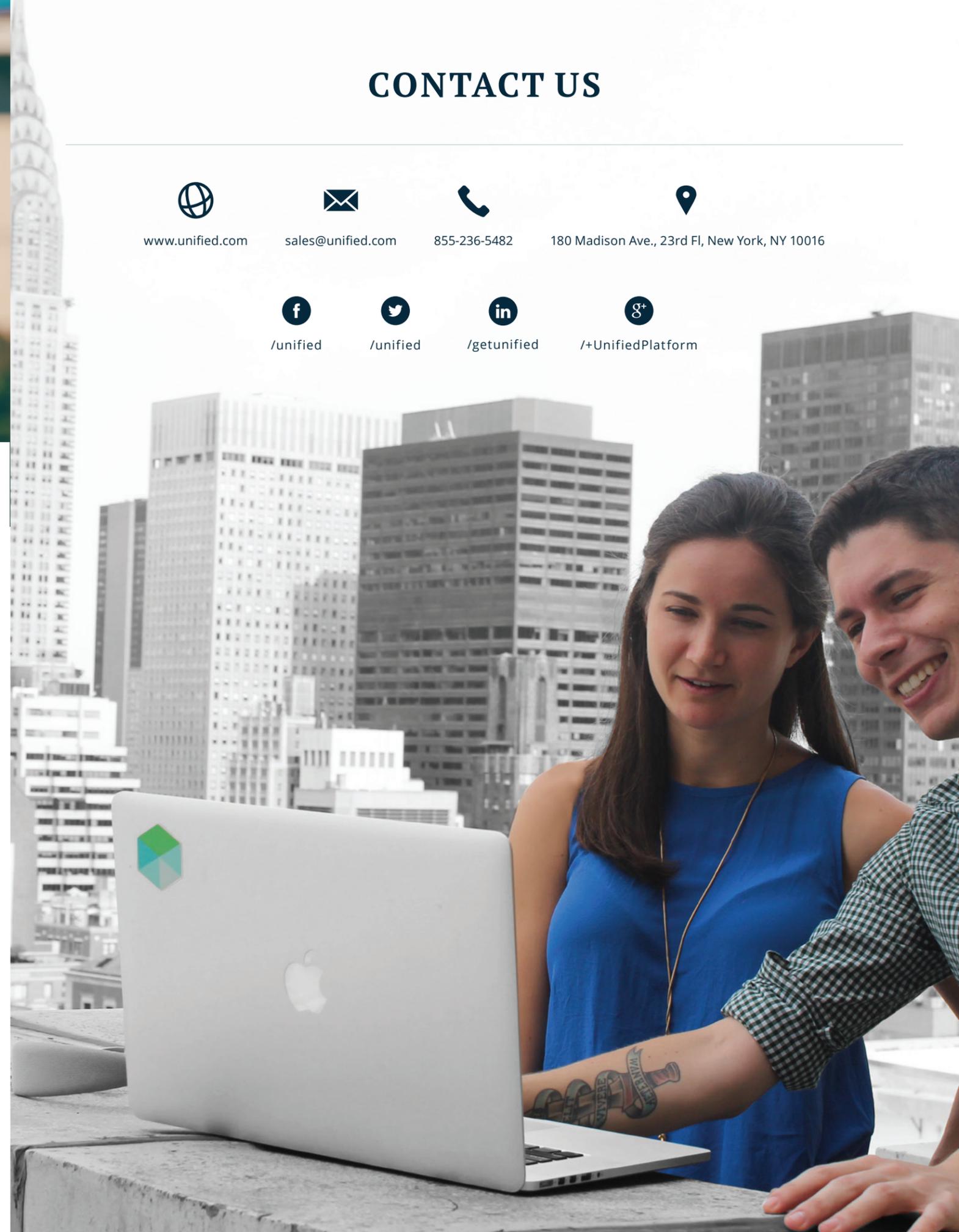
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