

CREATING VIRAL CONTENT

Tips from Social Media Experts



“We don't have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it.”

– Erik Qualman
Forbes Top 50 Social Media Influencer



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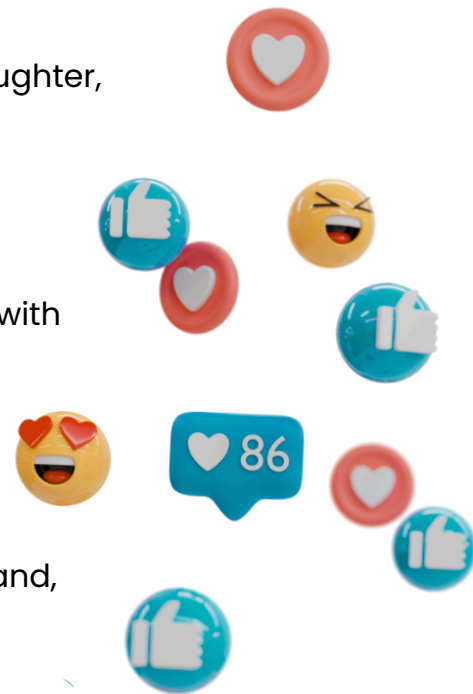
Understanding Viral Content

Creating viral content is the dream of many social media users, marketers, influencers and businesses. They are all wondering the same thing;

what exactly makes content go viral?

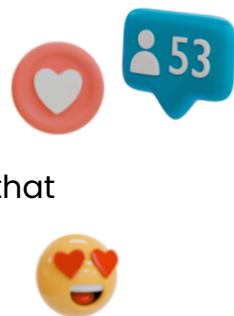
While there isn't one simple answer, there are 5 key characteristics of viral content:

1. **Emotional Appeal:** Evokes strong emotions like laughter, awe, or surprise.
2. **Relatability:** Resonates with a broad audience by tapping into common experiences.
3. **Novelty:** Unique and original, capturing attention with fresh ideas.
4. **Visual Appeal:** High-quality visuals that are eye-catching and engaging.
5. **Brevity and Clarity:** Concise and easy to understand, making quick consumption possible.



Past real-world examples of viral content:

- **Ice Bucket Challenge:** A fun, easy-to-participate-in challenge that supported ALS research, leading to widespread participation.
- **Dress Debate:** A photo sparking debate over its color, captivating a global audience with its ambiguity and polarizing views.
- **Baby Shark Dance:** A catchy tune and simple dance moves that became a hit among children and parents.



Know Your Audience

Knowing who you are speaking to allows you to tailor your content to their preferences, interests, and behaviors. Luckily, there are tools and techniques you can use to make sure you are optimizing the connection with your audience on all platforms.

- **Social Media Analytics:** Use built-in tools on social platforms to gather data on demographics, interests, and behaviors. Track metrics like engagement rates, reach, and growth to identify top-performing content.
Note: Platforms like Instagram now allow you to see how many new followers you gain on each individual post!
- **Competitor Analysis:** Study your competitors' audience and the type of content they engage with. Identify gaps and opportunities to differentiate your content and appeal to your shared audience.

“Social media is about the people! Not about your business. Provide for the people and the people will provide for you.”

– Matt Goulart,
Founder of Ignite Digital Inc.

Connect & Create

Once you understand your audience, you are better positioned to create viral content. Why? When people resonate with the content they consume, they share it!

- **Leverage User-Generated Content:** Encourage your audience to create content related to your brand or topic. Share user-generated content to build community and increase authenticity.
- **Identify Pain Points and Interests:** Address your audience's challenges and interests in your content. Provide tips, “hacks” and information that add value. Content that is helpful is always shareable!

Trends & Hashtags

Staying current with trends and using hashtags can significantly boost the visibility and shareability of your content. It's vital to know how to identify and leverage trends, implement hashtags, and the tools available for tracking both – like a hashtag generator (you can check out the free generator offered at socialpost.ai to start!)

- **Research & Monitor:** There are several tools (free and paid) readily available online to track both trends and hashtags. You can also simply monitor each platform yourself to identify which hashtags are being used.
- **Adapt:** Align trending topics with your brand's voice and message. Create unique content that ties the trend to your brand, making it relevant to your audience.
- **Create Branded Hashtags:** Develop unique, branded hashtags that represent your business or campaign. Encourage your audience to use these hashtags to increase visibility and create a sense of community. (Even better if your hashtag is similar to one that is currently trending!)
- **Mix General and Niche Hashtags:** Combine widely-used hashtags with niche ones to reach a broader yet targeted audience. Avoid using too many hashtags; stick to a few relevant ones to avoid looking spammy.

“Jump on trends, join the conversation on hot topics, or use situational marketing to encourage engagement. Hashtags can help you with this, as it will be easier for people to find your content and appreciate your creativity with a comment, like, or repost.”

– Gary Vaynerchuk

Timing & Consistency

Posting at the right times and maintaining a consistent schedule are critical components of a successful social media strategy. Using some of the previously mentioned tools can help you determine the best times to post, and strategies for maintaining consistency – two key factors impacting how popular a post will be.

- **Maximize Reach and Engagement:** Posting when your audience is most active increases the chances of your content being seen and engaged with. Optimal timing can lead to higher likes, shares, comments, and overall engagement.
- **Beat the Algorithm:** Social media algorithms favor content that receives immediate engagement. Posting at peak times helps your content get more visibility and higher placement in feeds.
- **Optimal Timing:** Use social media analytics tools to identify when your followers are most active. Look for patterns in engagement rates on different days and times.

If you're new to a platform, or don't yet have the data to help you determine optimal timing, know that each social media platform has its own approximate peak times. For example:

Facebook: Early afternoon (weekdays)

Instagram: Mid-morning to early afternoon (weekdays)

Twitter: Late morning to early afternoon (weekdays)

LinkedIn: Early morning and lunchtime (weekdays)

TikTok: Evening and late night

Figuring out WHO your audience is and what they like is only half the battle; the second half is creating a connection with them, and you do that with engagement!

Engage your Audience

Engaging with your audience is a crucial strategy for creating viral content because it builds trust, fosters community, and increases the likelihood of your content being shared.

When you actively interact with your audience—by responding to comments, hosting live sessions, or featuring user-generated content—you make your followers feel valued and part of a community. This emotional connection not only encourages them to interact more with your content but also makes them more likely to share it with their own networks, amplifying its reach.

Beyond these reasons, engaging with your audience actually increases your algorithmic presence. Every comment on your post (even your replies to other comments) boosts your organic reach for that post.

The most important thing to remember, and you've likely heard it dozens if not hundreds of times, is to **be authentic**. Stay true to your values, stay consistent in your messaging, and people will naturally want to connect with you.

"Engaging with others' content by liking and commenting is crucial for building a social media following because it fosters a sense of community and reciprocity. When you actively participate in conversations and show genuine interest in others' posts, you not only increase your visibility but also build relationships and trust. This engagement encourages others to return the favor, amplifying your reach and attracting a loyal and engaged audience."

– Greg Henson
Founder of SocialPost

The most important thing to remember (you've likely heard it dozens if not hundreds of times) is to **be authentic**. Stay true to your values, stay consistent in your messaging, and people will naturally want to connect with you.

Authenticity is the foundation of trust. When you present yourself honestly, your audience can see and *feel* that you are genuine, which fosters trust.

Brian Solis of Social Champ summed it up perfectly when he said, ***"Engage, enlighten, encourage, and especially...just be yourself! Social media is a community effort; everyone is an asset"***.

Trust is crucial in building long-term relationships and loyalty with your audience.



So, how do you do this?

- **Ask Questions:** Pose open-ended questions in your posts to spark conversation. Encourage your audience to share their thoughts, experiences, and opinions. (And always reply!!)
- **Share User-Generated Content:** Encourage your audience to create content related to your brand or topic. Share user-generated content to show appreciation and foster a sense of community.
- **Go LIVE!** Use live streaming to connect with your audience in real-time. Host Q&A sessions, behind-the-scenes tours, or live demonstrations.

"Social media allows us to engage, interact, and build relationships with our audience in ways that were never possible."

– Neil Patel
Founder of Ubersuggest & NP Digital

Value in Listening

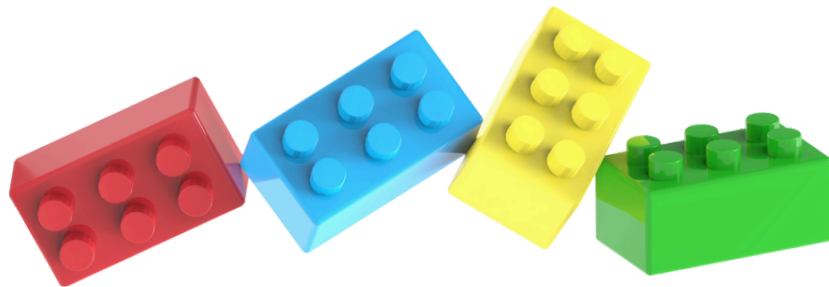
Responding to comments and messages is vital for building a strong and engaged community on social media. It shows your audience that you value their input and fosters a sense of connection and loyalty.

Engaging with followers' comments and messages can also enhance your brand's reputation, as it demonstrates responsiveness and attentiveness. This interaction not only helps to resolve queries and issues promptly but also encourages more people to participate in discussions, boosting overall engagement.

The best part? Feedback gained from these interactions provides valuable insights into your audience's preferences, helping you to refine your content strategy and better meet their needs.

Some of the largest and most successful influencers and brands build this into their marketing strategy.

For example:



LEGO Friends: *LEGO Ideas* allows fans to submit and vote on new set ideas.

Before its launch, LEGO conducted extensive research and received feedback indicating that there was a demand for sets designed with girls' interests in mind. The insights gathered from this research led to the development of LEGO Friends, which quickly became one of LEGO's best-selling lines.

Success is a Marathon

"When I hear people debate the ROI of social media, it makes me remember why so many businesses fail. *Most businesses are not playing the marathon. They're playing the sprint.*"

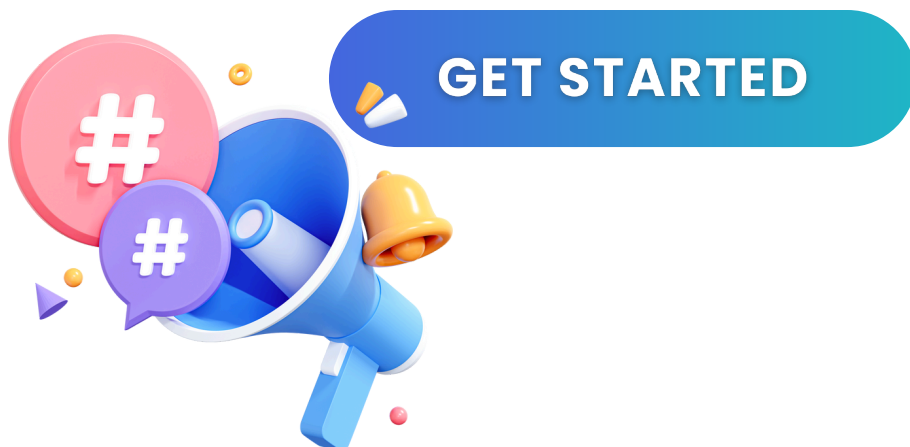
– Gary Vaynerchuk

Media mogul Gary V perfectly underscores the importance of long-term strategy and value in social media efforts. Unless you have an unlimited marketing budget to spend on advertising, true success and longevity on social media never happens overnight!

Even if you do create a post that goes viral, there will always be an expiration date on how long the traction lasts. The best social strategy is to always focus both on short term virality as well as long term consistency.

Remember: *it's about the journey, not the destination!* Enjoy the process, because social media should never feel like a burden.

If you ever need some extra help with your social content creation or strategy, you know where to find us! (And in case you didn't know, we offer a free starter plan! You can click the button below to get started today).



Bonus Tip From the Pros

Follow the 5-pillar framework to create your content plan for the month.

- 1) **Brand:** Content that shows your authentic brand and relates to your cause, stakeholders, or success.
- 2) **Authority:** Content that positions you as an expert in your field and showcases your knowledge and expertise.
- 3) **News and Community:** Sharing articles or information about what's new in the community, and content to keep your followers informed.
- 4) **Promotion:** Content that promotes your services, events, or initiatives.
- 5) **Inspiration:** Content that inspires your followers with inspirational quotes, thank-you messages, or thought-provoking questions.

