W3 AWARDS

2024 SOCIAL MEDIA TREND REPORT

WELCOME

Over the past two decades at the w3 Awards, it's become impossible to ignore the exponential growth of social media. Originally a means for keeping up with friends or lost connections, social has become a platform for entertainment, news, information, shopping, gossip, and making connections. Having a strong social media presence is a must, but with algorithms and updates always changing, a brand's strategy should be flexible and cutting-edge.

To that end, we've turned to our community of creative and strategy leaders behind some of the biggest brands in social at the Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts (AIVA). In the report, you'll find insights from our AIVA jurors on current social media content and marketing trends– including what will make entries shine bright this season. We're also excited to showcase some of our previous w3 Awards social media winners.

We hope you find this report useful and feel inspired by some of the winners who have set the standard for digital creativity on social media.

Enjoy!



SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

INSTAGRAM REIGNS

Everyone has a favorite, so we asked the AIVA jurors to rank the top 6 social platforms, in order of preference. On the most popular platform, Instagram, organic posts were used more frequently than Reels or Stories.

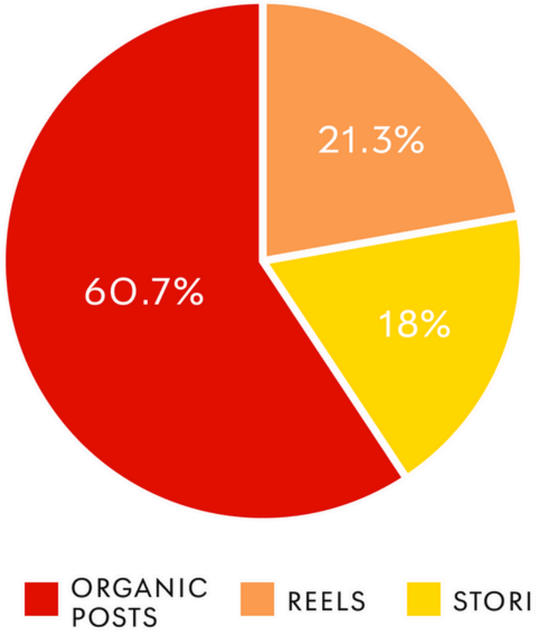
SOCIAL PLATFORMS RANKED BY PREFERENCE

1. INSTAGRAM
2. LINKEDIN
3. FACEBOOK
4. TIKTOK
5. X
6. SNAPCHAT

57.4%

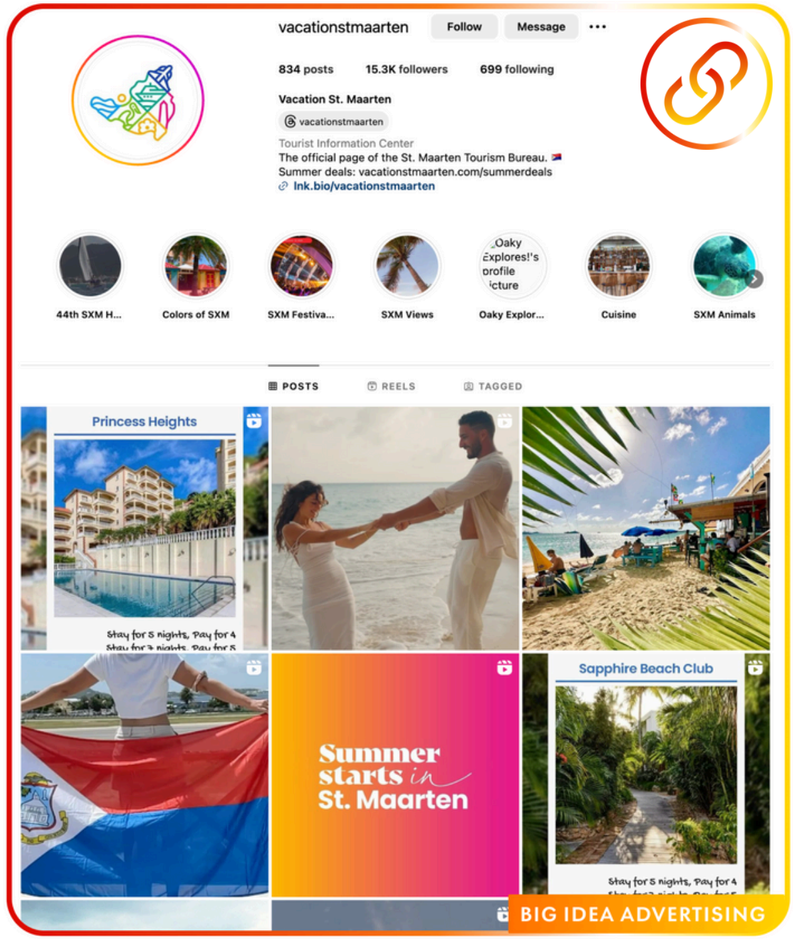
OF AIVA JURORS
PREFER INSTAGRAM

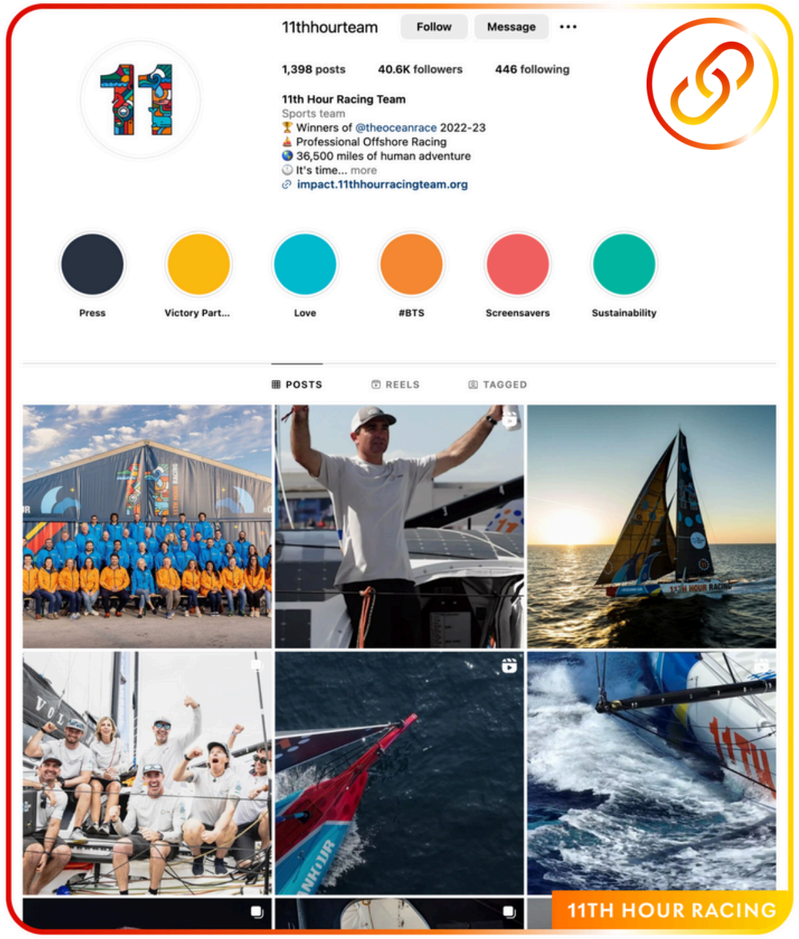
HOW AIVA JURORS ARE USING INSTAGRAM



W3 WINNERS ON INSTAGRAM

With such varied platforms, social content cannot be one-size-fits-all. AIVA juror Deborah Beckman points out the elements needed for impactful content on Instagram.





@Deborah Beckman



Director of Marketing, N. America & ANZ, 2K Games

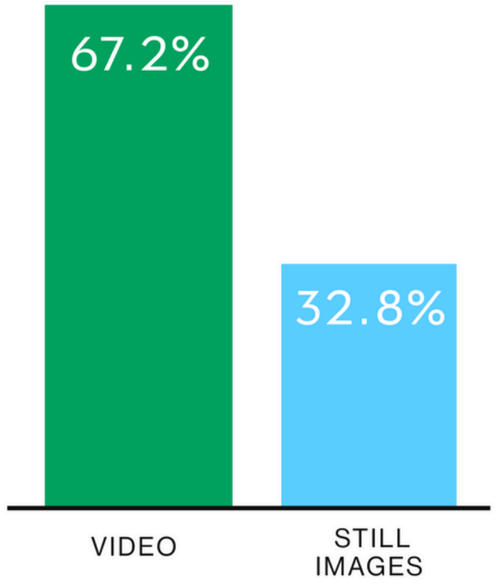
"From my perspective, the qualities I look for in award-winning Instagram content lies in a powerful blend of brand storytelling, impactful visuals, and audience engagement. The key to success lies in crafting creative content that resonates with the target audience, sparks engagement that ultimately builds brand awareness, loyalty, and drives conversions."

SOCIAL CONTENT

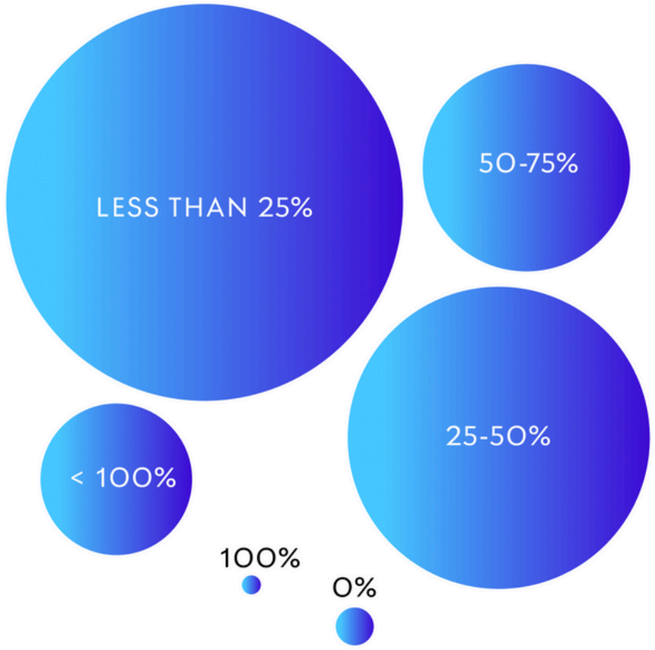
VIDEO VIEW

More than 65% of jurors responded that video content outperforms still images and photos– however, almost as many jurors also say video is 25% or less of their total social content.

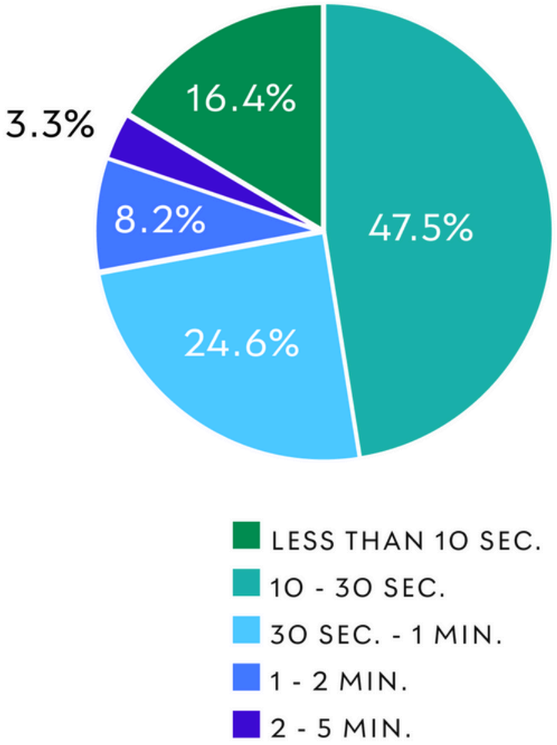
WHICH TYPE OF POST GETS MORE ENGAGEMENT?



WHAT PERCENT OF YOUR TOTAL CONTENT IS VIDEO?



OPTIMAL VIDEO LENGTH



SOCIAL VIDEO WINNERS

These w3 winners all had different approaches to social video. AIVA Juror Chaoqun Wang breaks down the qualities they, and most award-winners, share.

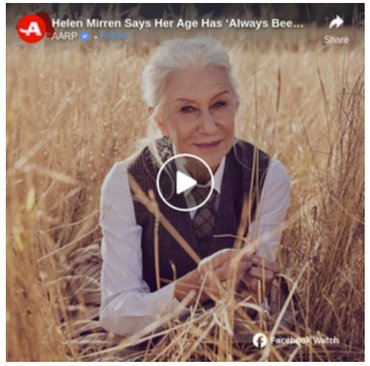
WHITE64



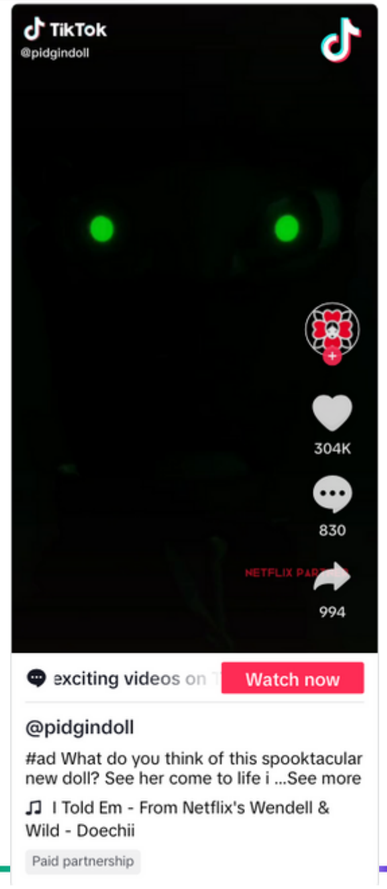
BANK OF AMERICA



AARP



POPSHORTS



@Chaoqun Wang



Design Director, Tom Ford Beauty

"Short videos are one of the top-performing trends. Sizzle reels, shorts, and video highlights are short, flashy clips pieced together to tell a story or market a product/ brand. While long videos still have their place for sharing behind-the-scenes content or core messages, these quick videos capture interest much faster. They act like trailers, drawing viewers in and directing them to more detailed content and other channels of interest."

AUTHENTICITY IS KEY

Using a genuine voice creates a more meaningful connection with a brand's audience, according to AIVA Juror Alfred Wee. See how these two different winners connect with their community.

@Alfred Wee



Executive Creative Director,
McCann Worldgroup

"Several criteria exist for creating impactful social video content. However, it becomes more meaningful when the brand's genuine voice connects with the audience."





RAPHAEL GOMES





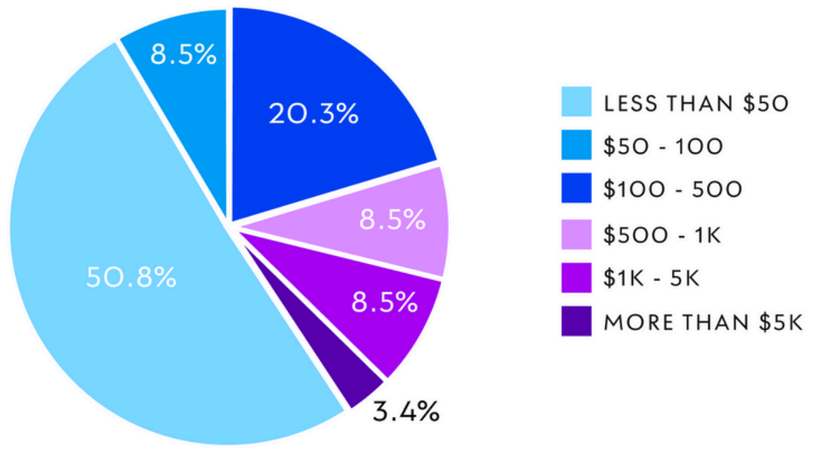
CENTRAL OHIO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

SOCIAL STRATEGY

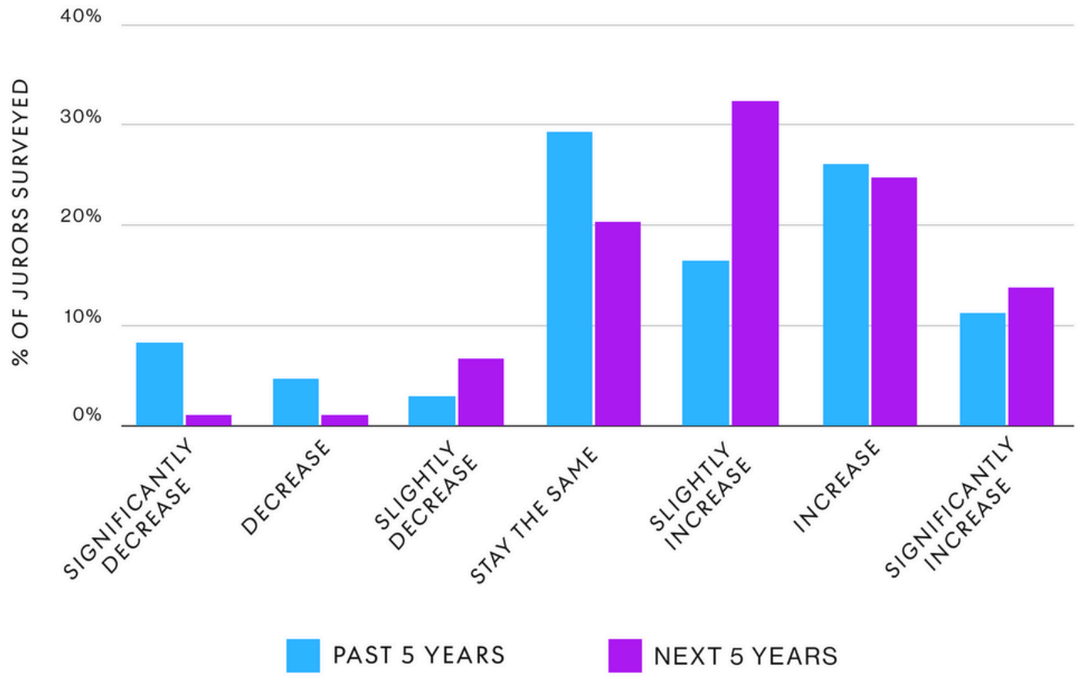
INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Different brands have different needs and resources to accomplish their goals. We asked the jurors about how their investment in social strategy has changed– and will change– and how social insights influence their business.

AVG. SPEND FOR ONE SOCIAL VIDEO



SOCIAL MEDIA INVESTMENT CHANGE OVER TIME



59.3% OF AIVA JURORS SAY THAT SOCIAL MEDIA INFORMS THEIR BUSINESS DECISIONS

CONTENT STRATEGY

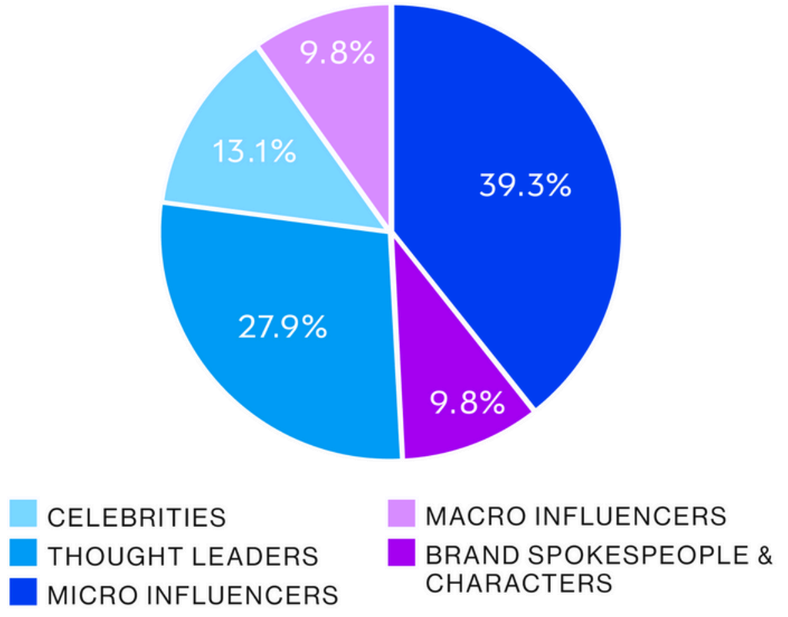
Social strategy requires just as much creative risk as, well, the creative. Top-performing brands are adjusting their strategy by collaborating with influencers and adding humor (or memes, if you're Gen Z).

BRANDS THAT EFFECTIVELY USE HUMOR

LIQUID DEATH BOOKING.COM NETFLIX
HUBSPOT DORITOS APPLE ARBY'S ZOMATO
WENDY'S ELMO OREO AT&T
SHITI COOLERS STATE FARM MINT MOBILE FRITO LAY
THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ALL ACCIDENT INJURY LAWYERS GEICO PHIL'S PIT VIPER

64.4% OF AIVA JURORS FEEL THAT INFLUENCER MARKETING IS IMPORTANT FOR BRANDS

MOST EFFECTIVE TYPE OF INFLUENCER



STRATEGIES THAT STICK

These w3 winners took home top prizes for their social media campaigns. AIVA Juror Marcos Valeta weighed in with the qualities he thinks all winning social strategies should have.

PAPA JOHNS
"GO WILD THIS CHINESE NEW YEAR"
BY QUMIN LTD

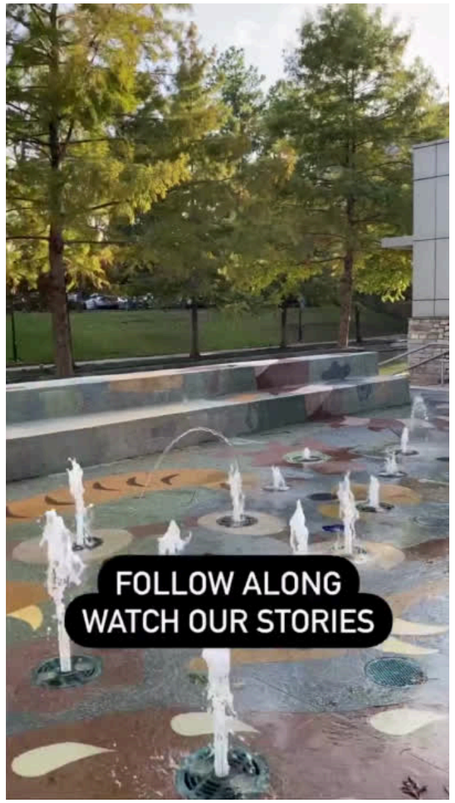


TOUR DE'23
BY 23ANDME &
BSB GROUP INTL



THE GREEN AMERICAN ROAD TRIP SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
BY HUNT, GATHER

ART GLADNESS
BY VISIT THE WOODLANDS



@Marcos Valeta



General Project, Manager & Founder, Waymaker Projects

"I look at a few key aspects when reviewing social media campaigns. Does the campaign stick to the language the social media community understands? Are the words short and suitable for quick comprehension by the target audience? Do the design elements strike a balance between colors, style, and message? Most importantly, would the target feel compelled to swipe back their thumb to see it again?"

CURRENT SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

HOT TOPICS

Social media has evolved into something more than we could have imagined. Between the rise of E-commerce, search engine replacement and government regulation, the current landscape of social is chaotically exciting.

SOCIAL SEARCH

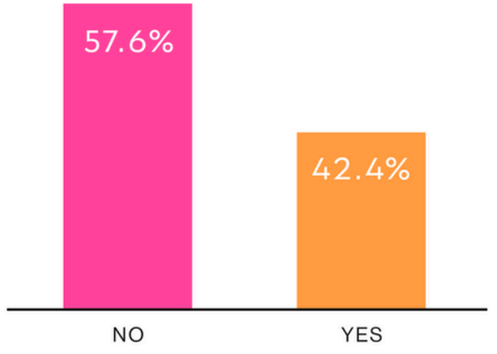
59.3% OF AIVA JURORS USE SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SEARCH ENGINE OR RESOURCE TOOL

WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SEARCH?

CURRENT TRENDS
AUDIENCE RESEARCH
CLIENT INSIGHTS
GENERATION MARKETING
NEWS
COMPETITION RESEARCH
QUICK FACTS
FOOD
BRAND SENTIMENT
TIPS & TRICKS
HOBBIES
PRODUCT REVIEWS
INSPIRATION
TALENT RECRUITMENT
JOB SEARCH
CAT VIDEOS
NETWORKING
TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

TIKTOK TRIALS

WILL THE TIKTOK BAN BE CARRIED OUT?



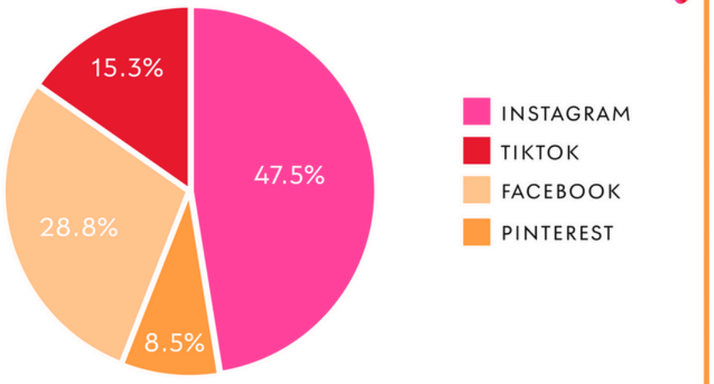
67.8%

OF AIVA JURORS ARE NO LONGER INVESTED IN A TIKTOK SOCIAL STRATEGY

SOCIAL MARKETPLACE

62.5% OF AIVA JURORS VOTED TO ADD E-COMMERCE CATEGORIES AT THE W3 AWARDS

WHICH PLATFORM IS BEST FOR E-COMMERCE?



ON THE TOPIC OF AI...

With suites of tools hitting the market to help businesses harness social's influential power, AI has emerged as a necessary tool to help scale campaigns, trim timelines and increase content output– but what area of social media management do the jurors want to see optimized next?

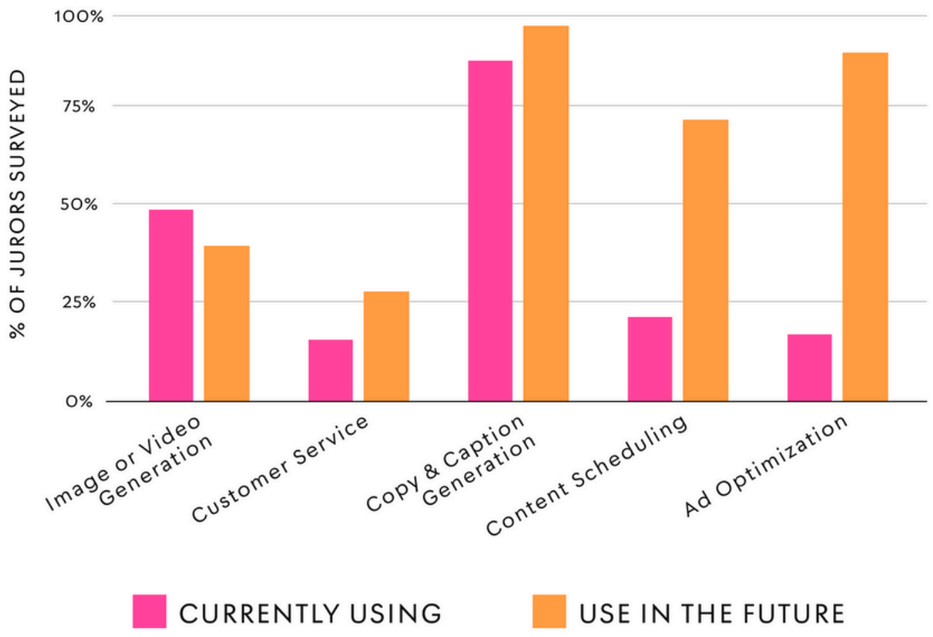
59.3% OF AIVA JURORS ARE USING AI TOOLS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

WHICH AI TOOLS ARE AIVA JURORS USING?

CANVA
GOOGLE AD TOOLS
POE
STABLE DIFFUSION
FIREFLY
GEMINI
MIDJOURNEY
MICROSOFT COPILOT
MURF
FACEBOOK AD TOOLS
TOPAZ
CLAUDE
BARD
ADOBE EXPRESS
DALL-E
JASPER
CHATGPT
GIGAPIXEL
PHOTOSHOP
METRICOOL

WHY USE AI TOOLS IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

We asked our AIVA Jurors to share all the reasons they currently use AI tools and how they would use them in the future.



TRENDSETTERS

With so many platforms, many brands choose to invest in the most tried and true. But there's no denying: the brands that explore newer outlets, like TikTok and Twitch, are reaping the rewards -- are you next?

PLAY BY THE RULES
BY POPSHORTS INC.

FLVR FOOD ENTERTAINMENT
BY FRITO-LAY NORTH AMERICA INC.
(D3 IN-HOUSE AGENCY)



@Michael Maloney



Founder/Creative Director, Brand Force 5

"The digital landscape is an ever evolving beast and I'm thrilled to have a front row seat as part of the jury for the w3 Awards. At Brand Force 5 we're always researching and exploring the latest technologies and trends so I'm especially excited to see entries in the new Social category. I hope to see agencies taking full advantage of what's available and exploring uncharted areas of creativity!"

TYSM

We hope you found something enlightening or exciting in our report that you can share in your kick-off meeting or campaign planning to help guide your own social strategy or content. We also hope you found inspiration in some of the digital creativity from previous winners at the w3 Awards. We can't wait to see what you create.

As one of the pre-eminent awards celebrating digital content, experiences and creativity, we are always re-evaluating, expanding and tailoring our social media categories to reflect the breadth of amazing work being done on and behind these platforms. If you are creating outstanding social media work, we encourage you to enter it in the 19th Annual w3 Awards. After all, you already know what our jurors are looking for– a win of your own is that much closer.

ARE YOU CRAFTING TRENDSETTING SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT AND CAMPAIGNS?

Submit your work to the 19th Annual w3 Awards

Subscribe to our newsletter for season news, events and stories about our AIVA jurors.

CREDITS

W3 AWARD WINNERS FEATURED

11th Hour Racing

Big Idea Advertising

WHITE64

AARP

Bank of America

PopShorts inc.

Raphael Gomes

Central Ohio Transit Authority

Rivers Agency

Qumin LTD

Hunt, Gather

23andMe & BSB Group International

Visit the Woodlands

Frito-Lay North America

AIVA JURORS FEATURED

Deborah Beckman
Director of Marketing, N. America & ANZ,
2K Games

Chaoqun Wang
Design Director,
Tom Ford Beauty

Alfred Wee
Executive Creative Director,
McCann Worldgroup

Marcos Valeta
General Project, Manager & Founder,
Waymaker Projects

Michael Maloney
Founder/Creative Director,
Brand Force 5

AIVA TEAM

Lauren Angeloni, Managing Director

Josh Campbell, Content Producer

Kari Gillenwater, Juror Manager

Leslie McMann, Copywriter

Mackenzie Lawrence. Social Media Manager