

How To Use Social Insights To

Build Your Content Strategy



DETAILED IN FIVE STEPS WITH CASE STUDIES



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Introduction

If you're on your game, you have your content strategy in place. Perhaps it looks similar to the previous year's plan, but with a few tweaks. Chances are the research involved reflecting on what worked throughout the year based upon the desired business goal, what didn't, and then iterating upon it.

But what if there was a better way?

What if your strategy could be more than just a version of the last one, but a plan with data that isn't just filled with insights pulled from posts during specific moments in time, but culled from a holistic view of your audience; a rich data set that's like a veritable crystal ball illuminating the most relevant topics, time of day and even type of content that actually

engages your audience. What if you could reach an audience you didn't expect would be interested in your content, and by proxy, your brand?

Using our analytics engine, Kairos and audience analytics platform, audience.ai, we were able to answer these questions as we built out our content strategy.

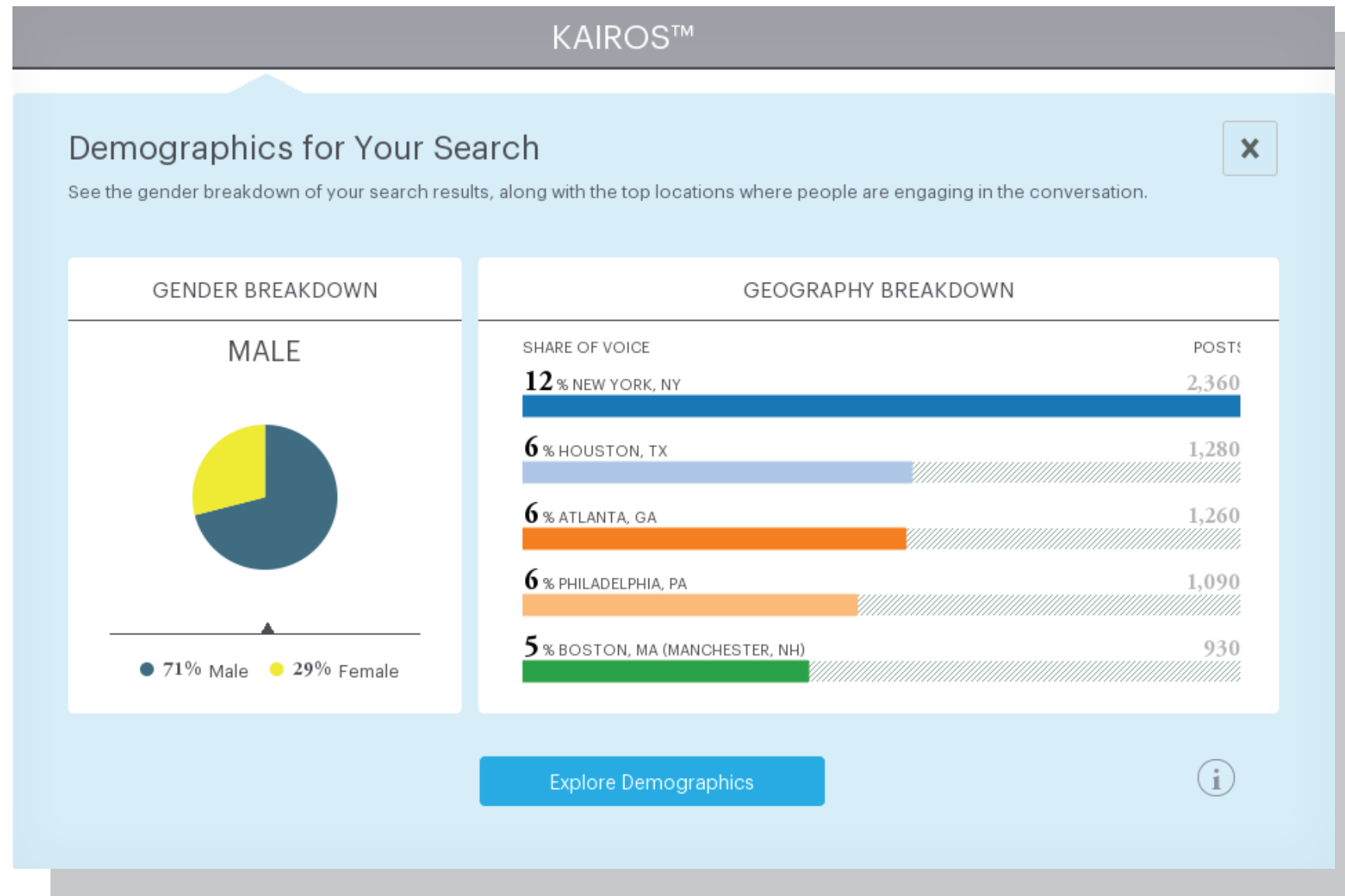
We knew we wanted to reach marketers, product developers and strategists as they are the audiences who would best benefit from our tools. But we were able to figure out the best time and day to post as well as the type of content that would resonate with them, and some other audiences we didn't expect.

IN THIS GUIDE YOU'LL LEARN:

- The steps to creating a winning content marketing strategy
- The best practices to employ for each step of your content marketing strategy
- Explore our findings about our target audience, should this be applicable to you, too
- Content marketing ideas to get you started

LESSON ONE

Understand Your Audience



A successful content marketing strategy begins with truly understanding the interests and needs of your target audience. But the challenge is getting an understanding of your audience beyond the readily available basic insights, like what consumers are engaging with or saying about a given topic on social media at a certain time, and their demographics.

Instead, you need tools that provide a holistic understanding of who you're reaching, what that audience cares about, the topics they discuss, their feelings about certain topics or brands, who they engage with, and the channels they frequent. These types of insights will help you identify the right people to talk to and create the right content that will resonate with them, which will help drive increased sales and brand lift.

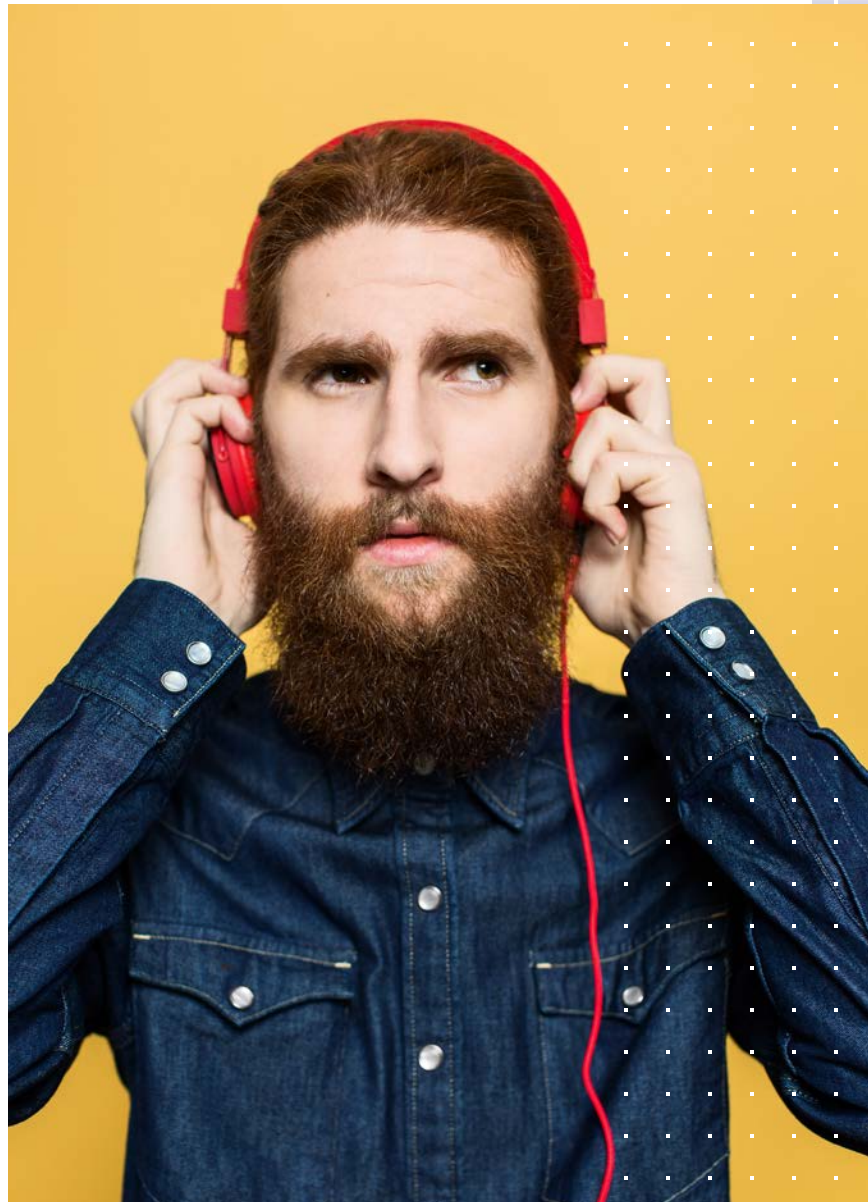
In fact, when compared to cookies or demographic targeting, combining artificial intelligence with public social data offers a deeper data set and a more holistic view of

your audience, which means better targeting. For a deeper look into this, check out our **Marketer's Guide to Audience Building**.

Armed with these details, you can craft content that will connect with your audience on an emotional level which will lead to increased engagement and help you set the right marketing investment.

As we analyzed our targeted audience, we found that it's mostly composed of men (**71 percent**) and they mostly lived in New York. They're driven by an interest in the next big thing in tech, like the "internet of things" and arts and entertainment. They're also constantly striving for success both in their personal and professional life. We know this because of the habits outside of the marketing space like signing up for a marathon and learning and improving cooking techniques.

This is the data we'll be working with as examples throughout the guide.



Best Practices

Depending upon the audience you're trying to reach and the platform you're using, these will vary. For example, you wouldn't employ the same tactics for a millennial audience as you would for an audience of retired golfing enthusiasts.

However, there are a few questions that transcend specifics and should be kept in mind when working to develop and target your audience:

- What challenges does your company's product or service solve for the prospect or client? You must have a command of how your business benefits the end user. Then, your content should be related to that purpose.
- Who are your current clients and who is engaging with you right now? You must know who you're working with and who you're reaching. That's a real easy way to continue expanding your audience library. Consider asking your company's executives or sales teams for this information.
- Armed with the information about how you're reaching and you're currently serving, it'll be helpful to segment them based on groups like, industry, job title, interests, life stages, budget or overarching pain points.
- Have a command of your competition. Understand where you fit in the space and who your competitors are reaching on their social channels and through their content. This will require a bit of harmless spying using keywords or exploring their "About Us" page and feature descriptions.
- Once you know who you're up against, create differentiation factors for each segmentation. So if you segment based on industry, determine how you stand out against the competition as it relates to that industry.
- Compile all your research into personas, or audience profiles, complete with a "name," photo, demographic data, interests, pain points, goals, interests and competitor analysis.

Finally, be able to compose a content mission like: "[INSERT YOUR BRAND/COMPANY] creates content to help and inform [INSERT TARGETING INFO] so they can [INSERT ACTION] better" to help you stay focused.



CASE STUDY ONE

Under Armour's I Will What I Want campaign

CHALLENGE

Under Armour needed insights for how to connect with and reach a new opportunity audience for them - "Athletic Females"—without polarizing their core audience of "Female Athletes." Ultimately, they wanted to increase brand connection and empowerment and style among the two audiences.

NI INSIGHTS

Using Networked Insights' platform Kairos, Under Armour was able to easily understand and visualize the two audiences current perceptions of UA vs. other competitive brands. So, they were able to quickly gain visibility into their preferences in the athletic wear category, their health and fitness habits, and common interests and affinities between the two audiences.

TAKING ACTION

Using these insights from Networked Insights technology, they were able to focus on content and media placement that engaged their audiences while increasing their brand's association with feelings of empowerment and style.

UA had a 116% increase in discussions among "Athletic Females"—the audience they were trying to expand their reach with through this campaign.

LESSON TWO

Choosing the Right Content

The basic premise of content marketing is to apply the, “if you write it, they will come” approach. But there are no Fields of Dreams in content marketing.

However, you can increase your chances for success, meaning the content will be found, it will be read, it will be shared, and it will drive leads, **if it perfectly hovers the line between content you want them to read and content they want to read.**

With social insights, you’ll be able to better understand your audience’s needs and desires along with their personal and professional interests. You’ll also be able to discover what drives your audience on an emotional level—what’s making them sad, happy, anxious, inspired etc.

By studying your audience holistically, you can also learn what motivates them—their values, beliefs, attitudes, opinions and passions. You can then use this to discover

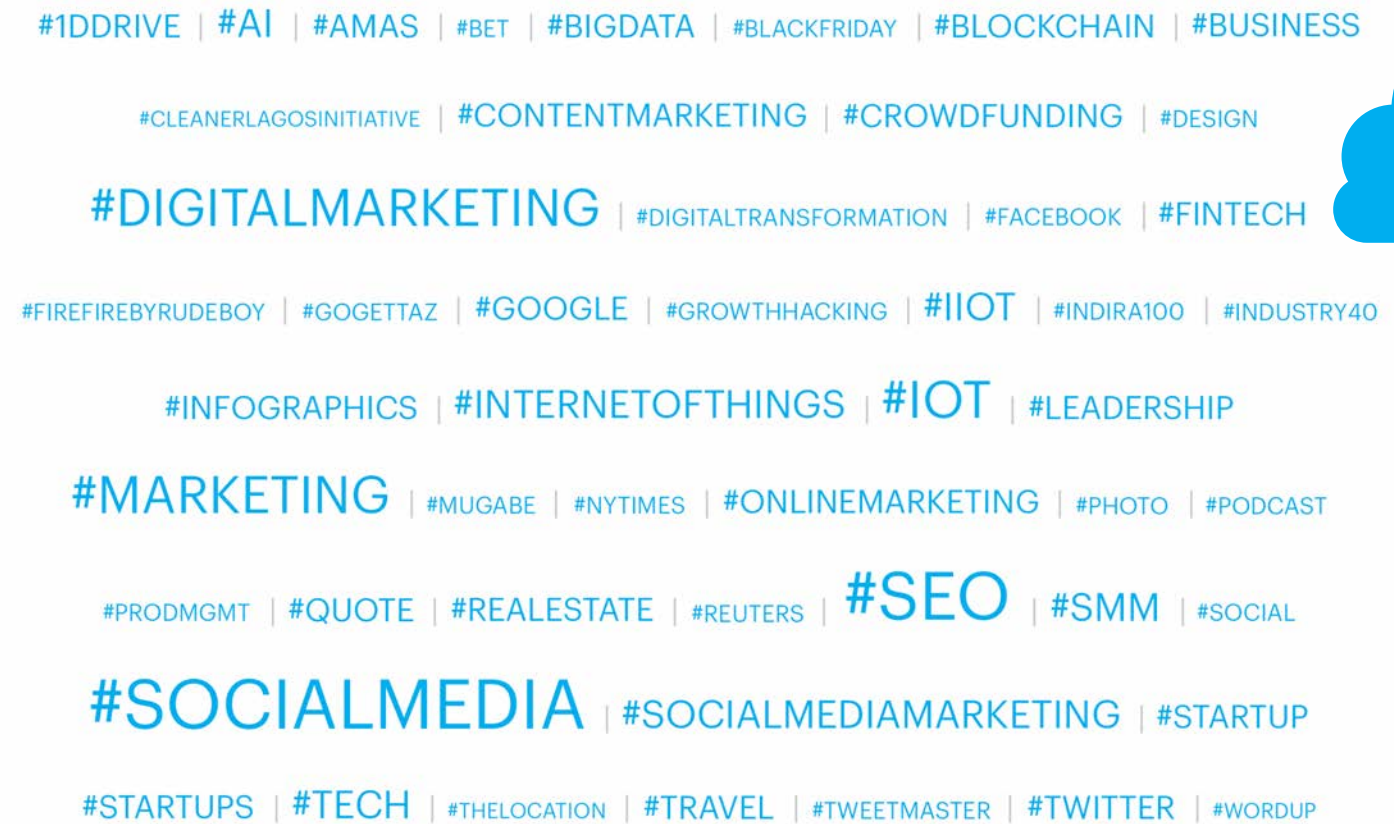
keywords to include in your content, so you’re remaining mindful of SEO best practices.

Also, you can apply these insights to develop core content that will work to drive more relevant and richer content that will inspire your clients or prospects to engage.

Once you’ve established your primary content assets and voice, you can begin to intersperse more in-depth exclusive content that is unique to your brand, and watch your audience engagement grow.

When we looked at our audience, meaning **we used Kairos to analyze millions of posts**, we discovered the common topics driving the conversation, shown in the word cloud.

We also discovered that **video and infographics tend to be the most downloaded and desired type of content** with our audience.



A word cloud visualization showing various hashtags and terms. The most prominent terms are #DIGITALMARKETING, #MARKETING, #SOCIALMEDIA, and #SEO. Other visible terms include #1DDRIVE, #AI, #AMAS, #BET, #BIGDATA, #BLACKFRIDAY, #BLOCKCHAIN, #BUSINESS, #CLEANERLAGOSINITIATIVE, #CONTENTMARKETING, #CROWDFUNDING, #DESIGN, #DIGITALTRANSFORMATION, #FACEBOOK, #FINTECH, #FIREBYRUDEBOY, #GOGETTAZ, #GOOGLE, #GROWTHHACKING, #IIOT, #INDIRA100, #INDUSTRY40, #INFOGRAPHICS, #INTERNETOFTHINGS, #IOT, #LEADERSHIP, #MUGABE, #NYTIMES, #ONLINEMARKETING, #PHOTO, #PODCAST, #PRODMGMT, #QUOTE, #REALESTATE, #REUTERS, #SMM, #SOCIAL, #STARTUPS, #TECH, #THELOCATION, #TRAVEL, #TWEETMASTER, #TWITTER, and #WORDUP.

KAIROS™
WORD CLOUD

THE TOP FIVE DISCUSSED BRANDS AND TRENDS FOR OUR AUDIENCE ARE:

1. Google
2. Facebook
3. Internet of Things
4. Social Media Listening
5. Search Engine Optimization + Search Engine Marketing

THE TOP FIVE INFLUENCERS FOR OUR AUDIENCE ARE:

1. Danny Sullivan
2. Gary Vaynerchuk
3. Draymond John
4. Guy Kawasaki
5. Jeff Bezos



Best Practices

When you get to the content development stage, ensure your content mission is built, your personas a reset, and the execution team is determined.

From there, keep these questions in mind:

1. Do I have a core set of content built out in a feasible plan, and am I interspersing the core content with exclusive content unique to my brand?
2. Did I identify which content creation techniques will help get my point across with those in our audience who prefer skimming to reading?
3. Did I build in time and hire adequately for content formats that require more resources, technical expertise, or maintenance than others?
4. Do I know what platform I want to share this on?
5. Did I size the imagery correctly for each platform it will be shared on?
6. Does it include keywords and take SEO best practices into consideration?
7. Am I offering a variety of content that is interesting to my targeted personas?
8. Are the content assets I'm creating related to my audience's life, personal interests and needs more than plugging my brand?
9. Does my piece of content include enough background on the company—remember these are opportunities to develop brand recognition and establish trust, which in turn leads to loyalty.
10. Did I ensure my client or prospect gave me the rights to repurpose and distribute any of the content they're mentioned in across multiple formats and platforms?



CASE STUDY TWO

Intuit + Appealing to the Self-Employed

CHALLENGE

Intuit was launching an invoicing campaign for QuickBooks that aimed to target self-employed consumers with invoicing-oriented content.

The client wanted to understand the major themes driving the self-employed audience's invoicing conversation to help them craft their own invoicing content.

NI INSIGHTS

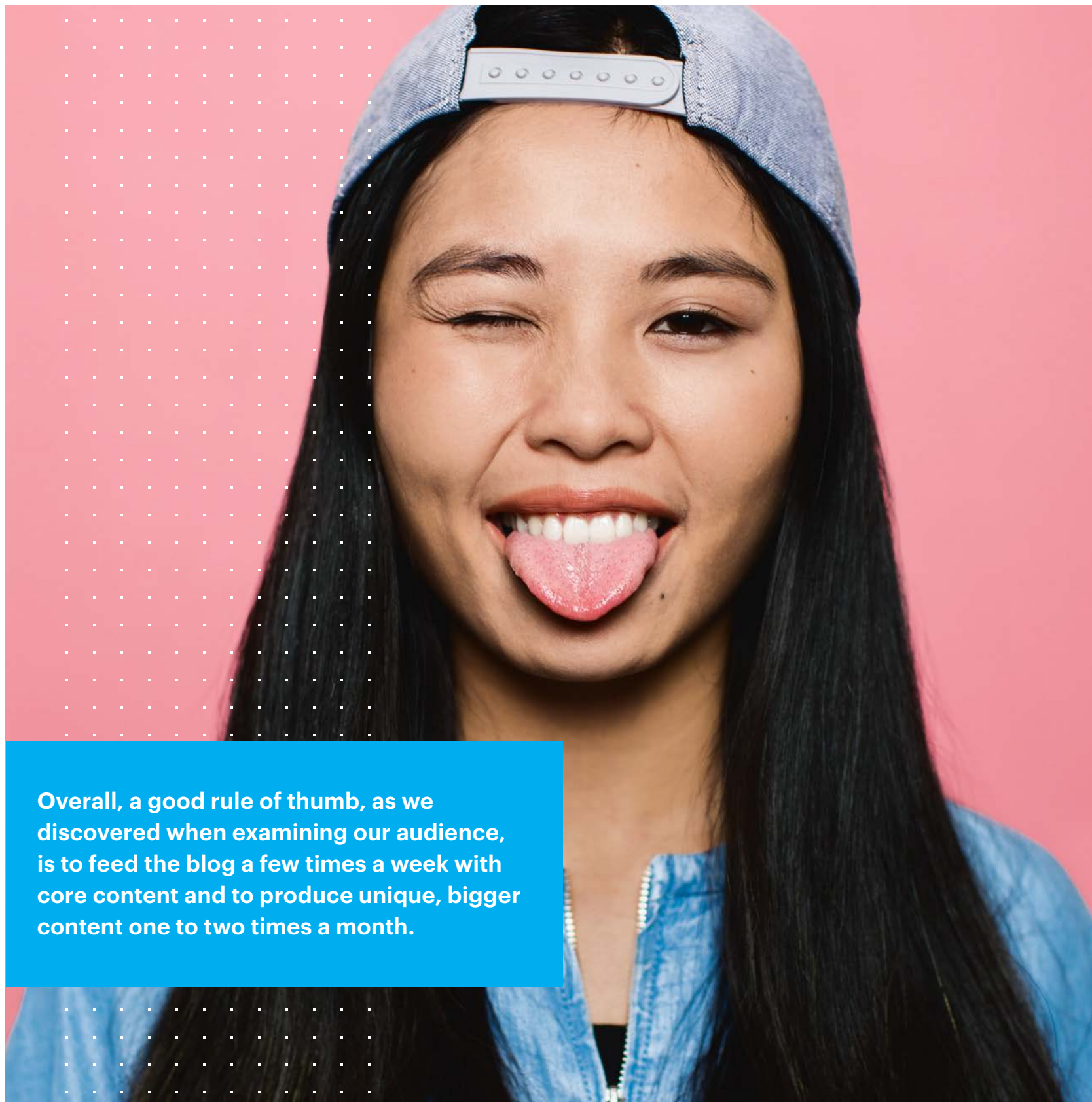
Using Kairos' in-depth analytics capabilities, Intuit was able to see how the self-employed audience actually talked about invoicing by **identifying major themes within the invoicing conversation.**

Also, they were able to easily visualize how their competitors were speaking about invoicing to better understand who and what else was being highly associated with the topic.

TAKING ACTION

Intuit was able to leverage the insights from the self-employed audience analysis within Kairos to better shape their invoicing content to include topics that would better resonate.

Kairos also helped them pinpoint the most significant themes of conversation (e.g. collecting late/unpaid invoices and sending/filing invoices) to use as targeting keywords on social channels.



Overall, a good rule of thumb, as we discovered when examining our audience, is to feed the blog a few times a week with core content and to produce unique, bigger content one to two times a month.

LESSON THREE

Determine the Right Content Cadence

Whew! We've covered a lot, which means you have a lot to work with, but does that mean you should be running out to study your audience, create personas and begin churning out content like a dairy farmer makes butter? Probably not.

But what you should be doing is determining what your audience wants, and then scale your content creation to meet that. This means, determine the type of content (video, blogs, articles, advertorials, infographics etc.) that best fits your audience's needs, and the scale to that.

Best Practices

So some points to consider as you determine to what scale you should be producing:

1. What are my competitors doing? What does their team look like? What is their following?
2. Do you have a dedicated following that relies on you for fresh content regularly? If not, you'll be able to pace yourself and be more patient.
3. How often is news updated in your industry? In the tech world things are changing at a dizzying rate, so developing templates to tell that story would help scale the workload better.
4. Determine your resources and budget. If you need regular updating and you're small shop, tap into the power of the freelance community and **let.it.go**.

So the short answer: Let your audience tell you how often to post and what they want to see.

Remember, your blog, website and social profiles are the backbone of your content marketing program.

So, feed it, but don't bloat it. After all, it doesn't function on its own, like a billboard for example, rather it requires strategic promotion, which in itself takes a lot of time and planning.



CASE STUDY THREE

Kix + “Maker Moms”

CHALLENGE

Help better understand and relate to their target audience of parents, concentrating on these key content themes - healthy foundations, kid-driven innovation and empowering creativity.

NI INSIGHTS

Using Networked Insights technology, Kix was able to uncover an audience of new moms who believe that that creativity and play are key in raising successful children called “Maker Moms.” The brand learned that this segment was inspired by the new Maker Movement, and interested in DIY projects.

Armed with this insight, the brand placed itself at the center of the “Maker Moms” narrative by creating content that incorporated its cereal into DIY projects that moms did at home with their children.

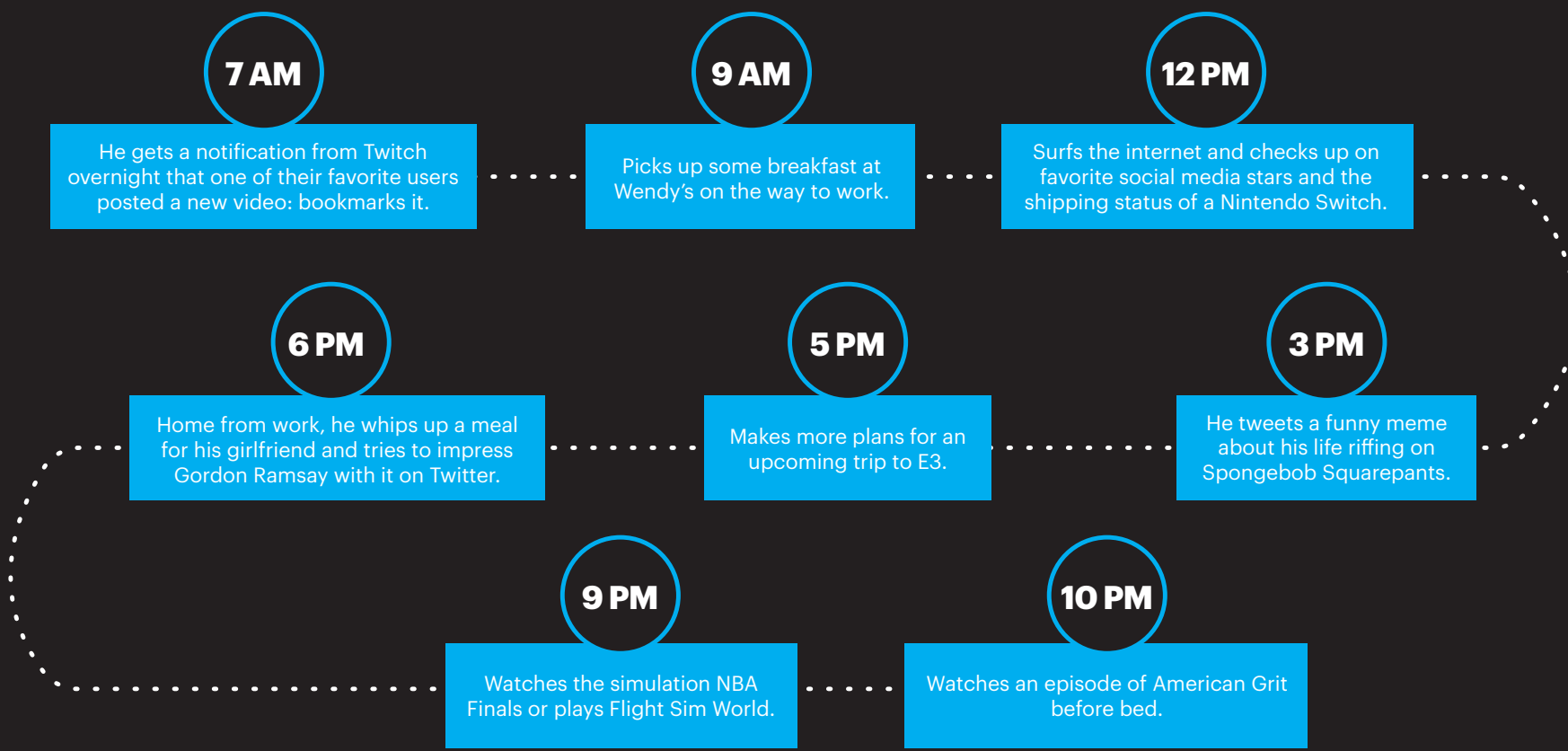
TAKING ACTION

As a result, the cereal brand extended its presence beyond breakfast as “Maker Moms” also served the cereal as a snack and used it as an ingredient in arts and crafts activities throughout the week.

In addition, the cereal brand was able to identify that the 2:00am - 4:00am slot was prime for targeting its message because that’s when the “Maker Moms” with very young children were awake for feedings and highly engaged on mobile devices.

The results invigorated the brand and grew its relevance in the home. In just one month, **the brand’s social fan base spiked by 877%**, far exceeding the average 10% growth seen by other classic cereal brands during the same period.

A Day in The Life: Recently Graduated + Starting a Career



DAILY ANALYSIS OF POSTS PER DAY



LESSON FOUR

Launch at the Right Time + Day

Developing content takes time and a team. Even more so if the asset involves interviewing, research and designing.

And all that effort is only worth it if your audience actually sees it.

Thankfully there are ways to up your chances by understanding habits and playing to them.

As we discovered in our report, [Life Stage Marketing: Audience Targeting from Graduates to Retirees](#), with the right tools you can create a profile of your audience that includes their daily engagement habits, down to the minute they engage.

For example, we know that recent graduates and will be surfing the internet at noon on a weekday and will be interacting with their favorite social media personalities. This is a good opportunity to use an influencer they like to share content you want them to see.

So to identify the best day and time to post for our audience: marketers, product developers and strategists, we tapped into our insights engine, Kairos.

When we built out a day-in-the-life analysis looking at engagement habits for our target audience during a one-month period and we found that Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, were the most popular days for posts, across all platforms.

We also found that Monday and Friday have slightly lower post volume, than the popular days, and Saturday and Sunday have significantly lower post volume.

As a result, we determined that our content would be best received if we posted during the middle of the work week.

We want to dive deeper and find out if the time of day also mattered.

Turns out, it does.

Peak Times to Post Content

MORNING: 7 A.M. TO 11 A.M. PDT



AFTERNOON: 12 P.M. TO 3 P.M. PDT



Fun fact, we found that there are higher levels of retweets on Sunday compared to Thursday.

LESSON 4 - CONTINUED

On average, we recommend posting content between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. PDT (which corresponds to 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. CST). We also found that content distributed between 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. PDT (which corresponds to 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. CST) is likely to gain more traction

We also examined the engagement habits during high volume days as compared to low volume days to determine when people engage should you be on a daily posting cadence (we explore posting cadences in lesson 4).

Consider Thursdays, a high volume day. We found that there are higher levels of post engagement in the evening through late night compared to the early morning-afternoon, this may be because during work hours people are not typically engaging heavily on social platforms. But now consider a low volume day, like Sunday. We found that there are still high levels of engagement particularly in the afternoon to evening.

Best Practices

As you can expect the time and day would vary depending on the audience, however, here's a good gut check for you.

1. Is the content being posted in the middle of the week?
2. Will it be cross-posted? Did you ensure each of the platforms are in the same time zone? Keep in mind that 50% of the U.S. population is in the Eastern Time Zone, and the Eastern and Central combined represent almost 80% of the U.S. population.
3. Are you leveraging the built-in insights tab on your platforms? Each offer a breakdown of when your audience is engaging.

CASE STUDY FOUR

Guardian Life Insurance Company of America + Social Video Engagement

CHALLENGE

Guardian began this campaign in an attempt to grow their social community and increase their audience engagement.

“We wanted to get closer to the needs, wants and desires of the working American, and really bring to bear what’s in the hearts and minds of our consumers and align that with our content,” said Guardian Life Insurance of America® Head of Corporate Digital & Social Mari Pagliughi.

They had been successfully creating valuable content, but they wanted to garner more engagement on their video content. Knowing they wanted to go outside the traditional insurance content strategy, they used Networked Insights technology to help optimize their content campaigns, to better understand what their audiences were talking about beyond just products and brands.

NI INSIGHTS

Using Networked Insights powerful audience analytics engine Kairos, they found out that parents love DIY crafts involving their kids, and that Halloween not only elicits the year-long-dormant-creative spark in youthful party-goers, but in moms of young children, too.

After understanding the audience (parents), and the type of content (DIY crafts), the final key element they needed to know was when exactly they should post the video to provide the best opportunity for engagement.

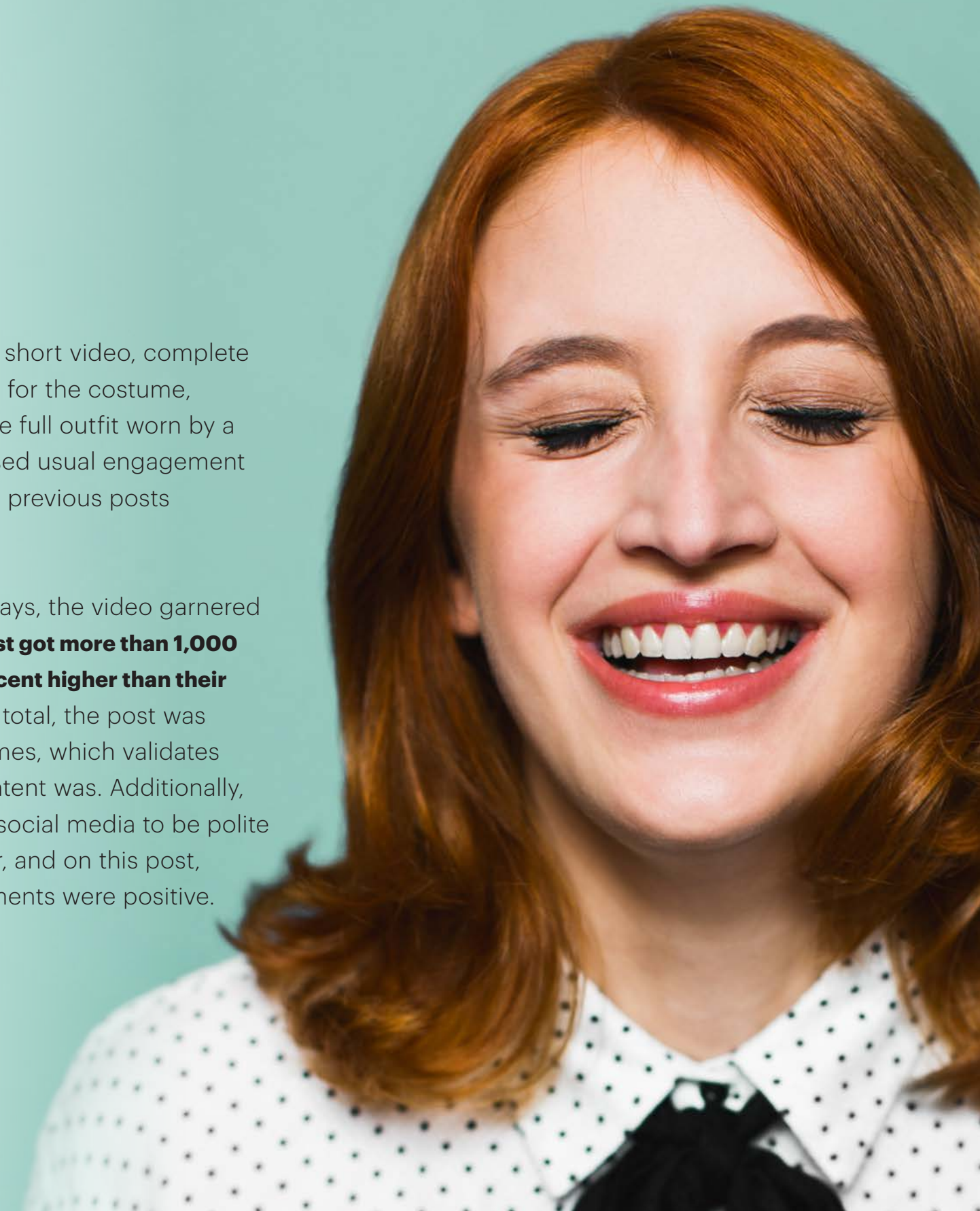
Analyzing conversation trends, they identified that a lot of the do-it-yourself type content was happening around Halloween.

Digging deeper, they were able to pinpoint the exact day that conversations peaked for DIY crafts with parents and children, which was Oct. 3. With just a few weeks shy of the holiday, parents have enough time to create unique and adorable costumes.

TAKING ACTION

When they posted the short video, complete with the items needed for the costume, how to make it, and the full outfit worn by a baby, the post surpassed usual engagement numbers compared to previous posts Guardian had shared.

Within the first three days, the video garnered 40,000 views. **This post got more than 1,000 engagements, 655 percent higher than their previous video post.** In total, the post was shared hundreds of times, which validates how engaging the content was. Additionally, it’s rare for people on social media to be polite and kind to each other, and on this post, almost all of the comments were positive.





LESSON FIVE

Track the Progress

There is absolutely no shortage of ways for you to track and measure the success of your content and campaigns. The challenge is deciding which metric you want to use.

The best way for you to use social and online data to understand how effectively your brand is connecting with your target audience, and how your audience is behaving along the purchase funnel is to track every step and adjust accordingly. You

may find you need to adjust and better optimize content you already have, or to better track where your leads are falling off and make it a goal to remedy that.

Whatever the results are, know that your content marketing strategy is a function of your time and effort, which means it can be adjusted as needed and there is no one-size-fits-all.

Best Practices

1. Determine the metrics you want to use (author, number of tweets, number of LinkedIn shares, number of Facebook “likes”, conversions to email subscribers, page views, etc.)
2. Measure your content, authors and results against those metrics
3. Optimize continuously to ensure you’re getting the most out of your content
4. Try repurposing well-performing content to maximize your reach, while not overwhelming yourself with content production
5. **Always, always, always make sure you know what content is resonating with your audience.** After all, that’s the bottom line goal.



CASE STUDY FIVE

Group M, The World's Largest Media Buyer

CHALLENGE

GroupM currently buys one in every three ads purchased globally, and media buyers and brand strategists across their agencies use Networked Insights and Kairos to better target ads and create pitches that are more relevant.

NI INSIGHTS

Group M uses Kairos systematically across multiple campaigns, driving measurably more effective campaigns that resonate with consumers because they are more strategically targeted. This systematic approach to better campaign communications helps GroupM and its clients more effectively use their content creation and media budgets on the largest scale possible.

TAKING ACTION

"Real-time social data represents an enormous opportunity for brands, but technology must artfully enable insights based on what audiences are saying—and not saying. Networked Insights provides real rigor and discipline, and we have fully integrated it into our technology stack. We believe the combination provides us with real competitive advantage."

- Irwin Gotlieb, Chairman of GroupM



Summary

Creating a content strategy from scratch can be overwhelming but armed with the right insights, you'll be able to create the right that will drive the right results for your sales and marketing teams.

About Networked Insights

Networked Insights' social analytics platform helps brands discover and deeply understand their ideal audiences, providing valuable content intelligence so they can make smarter marketing decisions.

Learn more at networkedinsights.com.

Interested in a demo?

[Contact us!](#)

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