



# Conviva's 2021 Instagram Video Benchmarks

Social Insights Report



## The rise of long-form content on Instagram

While Instagram started as a photo app, it's video that has become its future. In October of 2021 Instagram made the decision to combine IGTV with the rest of the Instagram feed. This change meant any video updated and posted to the Instagram feed could now be up to one hour in length. This leaves only Reels as a separate tab within the Instagram app.

So now, three years after IGTV launched, long-form video clearly has a permanent home on Instagram. While it's clear Instagram is serious about long-form content, it's not as clear as to whether brands are on the same page. This report examines brands' usage of video within Instagram, leading up to the inclusion of IGTV within the main profile feed. It identifies which brands and accounts are using it best, offers tips and insights for creators, and provides insight into what the future might look like.

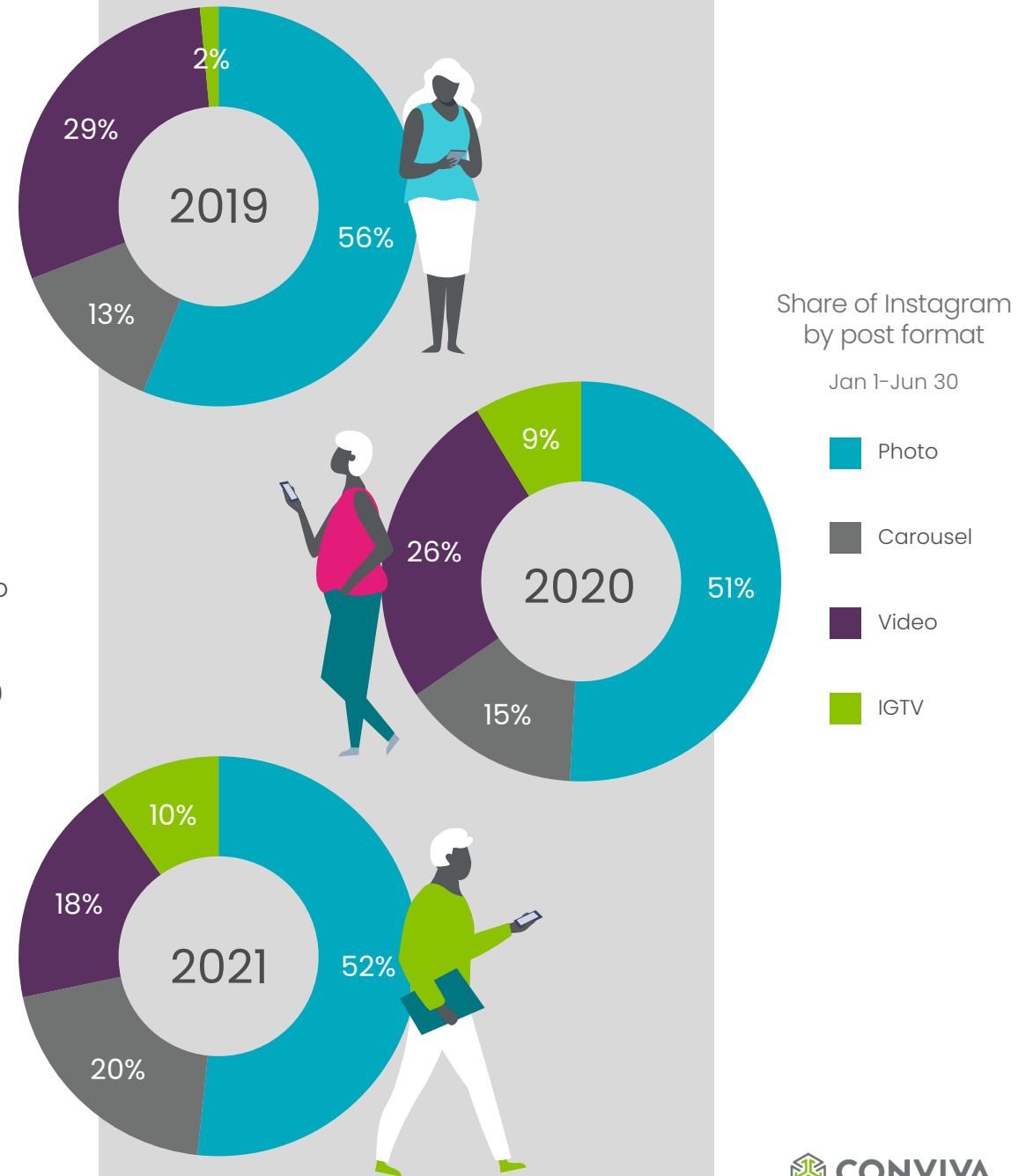
For this report, Conviva analyzed Instagram accounts in the first half of 2021, January 1 to June 30, as compared to the same time period in 2020 and 2019. This analysis includes more than 25,000 accounts, 54,000 IGTV videos, 400 million engagements, and 4 billion video views. Categorized accounts identified include 1300 accounts in the categories of brand: consumer-related product, service brands, events, and locations; media: newspapers, news organizations, news websites, and publishers; entertainment: TV/movie networks, TV shows, audio, and social-first content networks; and sports: sports or esports teams, leagues, and sporting events.

Highlights include:

- Single photo and video posts drop as carousel and IGTV posts double in share.
- Video is an engagement hack for carousel posts with 17% greater reach, 16% more impressions, and 12% more engagements than image-only carousels.
- The majority of engagement with video on Instagram comes on day 1, but IGTV posts have the longest shelf life with 29% of IGTV engagement coming after the first two days.
- iCarly, BuzzFeed Deutschland, Grand Canyon Men's Basketball, In The Heights, and Barb And Star top the list for highest engagement rate in the first half of 2021.
- IGTV posts with the shortest descriptions have the highest engagement, but are the most infrequently used.

## Newer formats supplant single photo or video

Looking at the mix of content posted by 25,000 Instagram accounts over three years reveals interesting trends about how brands are using Instagram. Standalone photos posted to the feed declined from 56% share in 2019 to just over half of all posts in 2020 and 2021, while the drop for standalone videos is even more dramatic from nearly 30% in 2019 to 18% share in 2021. No doubt the addition of new video options like inclusion in a carousel, IGTV video, or Reels (not included in this analysis) as posting formats contributed to the decline. Carousel posts have skyrocketed in the past year, from below 15% in 2019 and 2020 to 20% of all posts in 2021. IGTV has also grown rapidly in the few years since it was released, up from 2% share in 2019 to capture 10% share of posts in 2021. Together, carousel and IGTV posts accounted for 30% of all posts in just the first half of 2021, double the share commanded just two years prior.



## Entertainment leans into IGTV as sports lead in carousel posts

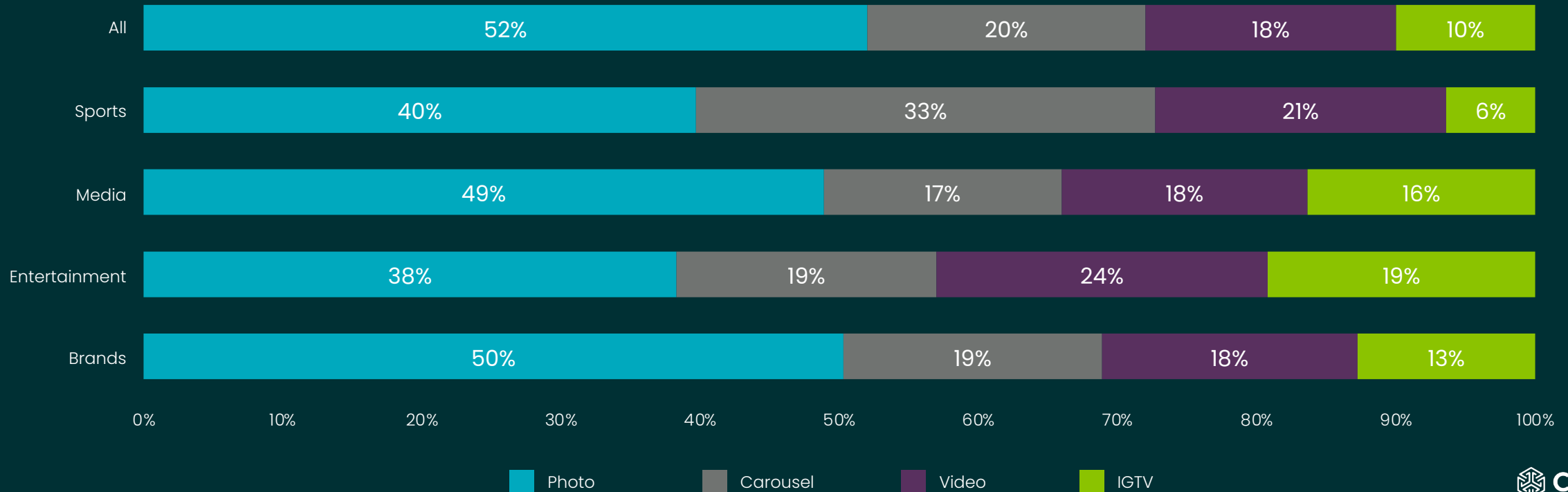
Entertainment led other verticals in use of both standalone video and IGTV at 24% and 19% share of Instagram posts, respectively. Entertainment includes accounts for shows, movies, channels, networks, television studios, and streaming companies so the affinity with video is clear.

Carousel posts accounted for a third of the content posted by sports accounts, but their use of IGTV lagged behind all other verticals. Sports teams and leagues are famous for being analytics-focused to drive engagement, so it is no surprise that carousel posts also commanded the highest engagement for the sports vertical.

Brands and media were still most likely to rely on a single photo for their Instagram post, around half of the time. Taking into consideration these four categories as well as other account types not shown, like influencers and celebrities, all accounts use of single photo was even higher at 52%.

### Share of Instagram by post format by vertical

Jan 1-Jun 30, 2021



## Average Instagram engagement rate by post format by vertical

Jan 1-Jun 30, 2021

	PHOTO	CAROUSEL	VIDEO	IGTV
Sports	3.2%	5.4%	2.5%	1.7%
Media	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.1%
Entertainment	2.9%	3.0%	2.1%	2.1%
Brands	1.0%	1.2%	0.7%	0.6%

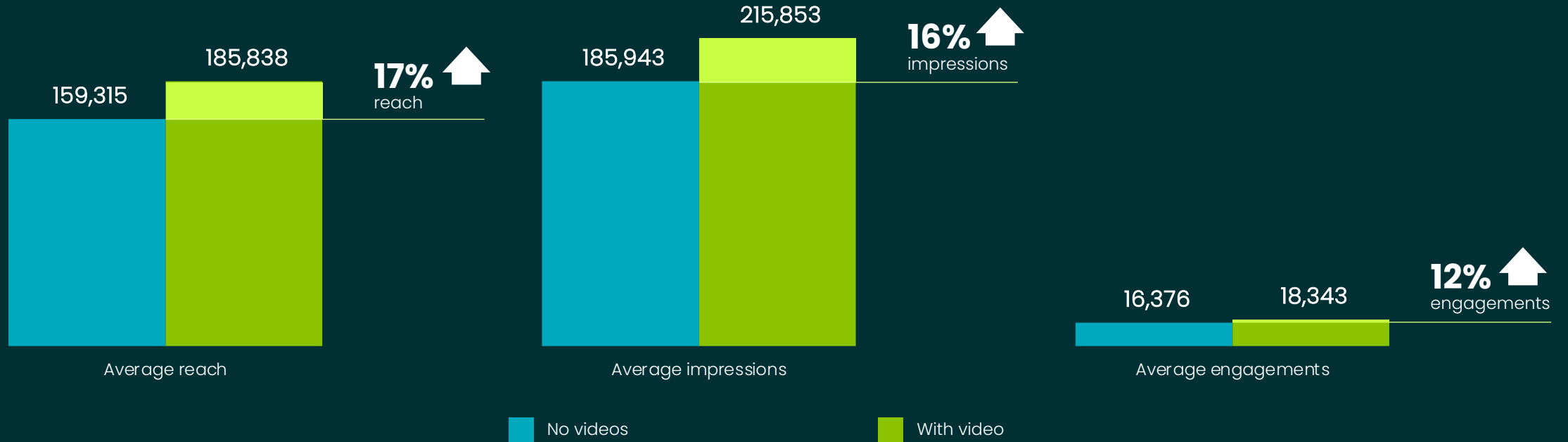
### Carousel posts top-performer for all verticals

Overall, sports accounts commanded the highest average engagement rate for all posts types except IGTV. For IGTV, entertainment accounts led in engagement rate. Conversely, brands had the lowest average engagement rate across all content types. Interestingly, media accounts saw very consistent engagement rates across different post formats.

Without exception, carousel posts had the highest engagement rate of any post format, ranging from 1.2% for brands to 5.4% for sports accounts. Single video and IGTV lagged in engagement rate, while single photo performed second best for most verticals.

# The effect of video on performance of Instagram carousel posts

Jan 1-Jun 30, 2021

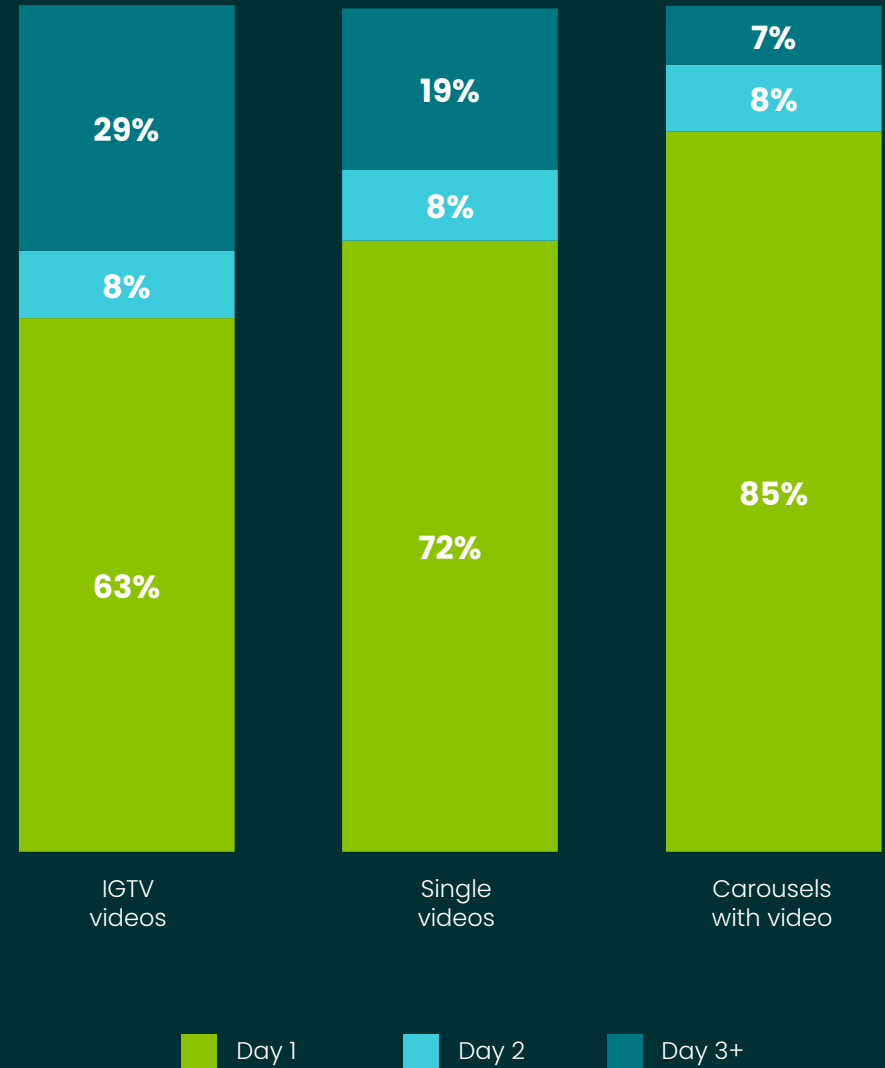


## Video drives carousel performance

Not every video longer than a minute needs to be a long-form video feed post. Many brands are breaking up long videos into multiple videos and creating a carousel. Looking at the analytics for more than 100,000 carousel posts shows how this can be an effective engagement hack. Carousels that included a video performed significantly better on average than carousels that were made up of just images. This included an average 17% greater reach, 16% more impressions, and 12% more engagements.

## The slower start but longer tail

Long-form videos can drive value long after their post date. Looking at IGTV videos compared to carousels that include videos or traditional videos posted to the feed on Instagram, IGTV videos only got about 63% of their total views on the first day of posting, compared to 85% for carousels and 72% for Instagram videos. Interestingly, all videos get around 8% of their total views on the second day, leaving carousels to get 7% of their views on the third day and beyond, videos to get 19%, and IGTV to achieve a significantly higher 29%. Now that IGTV has been rolled into the main Instagram feed, it will be interesting to see whether long-form 60+ second videos will be served up in the same way as previous IGTV videos or if they will follow a viewing pattern similar to single videos.



% of video views captured over time

Jan 1-Jun 30, 2021

# IGTV top performers by average engagement rate

## 1 iCarly

ENGAGEMENT RATE  
**98%**

POSTS  
**5**

AUDIENCE  
**162,901**

2

## BuzzFeed Deutschland

ENGAGEMENT RATE  
**58%**

POSTS  
**10**

AUDIENCE  
**26,884**

3

## Grand Canyon Men's Basketball

ENGAGEMENT RATE  
**50%**

POSTS  
**11**

AUDIENCE  
**15,742**

4

## In The Heights

ENGAGEMENT RATE  
**21%**

POSTS  
**10**

AUDIENCE  
**137,820**

5

## Barb And Star

ENGAGEMENT RATE  
**21%**

POSTS  
**17**

AUDIENCE  
**16,909**

		Engagement rate	Posts	Audience
6	Falcon and the Winter Soldier	19%	6	607,533
7	High School Musical: The Musical: The Series	17%	13	589,451
8	Kids' Choice Awards	16%	9	156,424
9	Loki	15%	5	1,112,922
10	Soul of a Nation	14%	21	11,299
11	Cruel Summer	14%	12	85,731
12	Floribama	13%	56	64,711
13	Refugee Olympic Team	13%	6	6,570
14	Fresh Out	12%	38	8,952
15	A New Untold Story	12%	5	16,968
16	Black Widow	11%	8	630,533
17	Burden Of Truth	10%	5	9,767
18	Wynonna Earp	10%	6	184,330
19	Loyola Chicago Men's Basketball	10%	26	18,766
20	NBA en Movistar+	9%	15	9,593

Jan 1-Jun 30, 2021, minimum of 5 IGTV posts and 5000 audience

Don't see your account listed, but deserve to be included in our rankings? [Fill out this form.](#)





# IGTV top performers by total engagements

**1 The Dodo**  
 ENGAGEMENTS **111,768,290**    POSTS **453**    AUDIENCE **10,256,872**

**2 Manoto TV**  
 ENGAGEMENTS **90,785,664**    POSTS **1,466**    AUDIENCE **6,070,322**

**3 UFC**  
 ENGAGEMENTS **86,048,522**    POSTS **445**    AUDIENCE **28,096,245**

**4 5 Minute Crafts**  
 ENGAGEMENTS **67,439,186**    POSTS **384**    AUDIENCE **45,169,641**

**5 LADbible**  
 ENGAGEMENTS **51,218,751**    POSTS **399**    AUDIENCE **10,994,474**

		Engagements	Posts	Audience
<b>6</b>	9GAG	<b>46,332,215</b>	191	56,926,789
<b>7</b>	ICC - International Cricket Council	<b>37,466,416</b>	286	18,160,468
<b>8</b>	Royal Challengers Bangalore	<b>29,394,388</b>	245	6,832,871
<b>9</b>	WorldStar Hip Hop	<b>28,517,297</b>	184	31,050,954
<b>10</b>	Barstool Sports	<b>27,037,633</b>	379	10,529,831
<b>11</b>	UEFA Champions League	<b>25,379,642</b>	76	76,167,293
<b>12</b>	BBC News	<b>24,251,066</b>	707	18,346,235
<b>13</b>	Aaj Tak	<b>23,904,833</b>	3,079	5,602,426
<b>14</b>	Mumbai Indians	<b>22,336,053</b>	213	7,471,867
<b>15</b>	Big Brother Brasil	<b>21,876,961</b>	95	14,070,817
<b>16</b>	Netflix	<b>20,862,651</b>	110	27,394,535
<b>17</b>	The Daily Show	<b>19,692,604</b>	527	8,756,378
<b>18</b>	Overtime	<b>18,924,918</b>	309	5,201,321
<b>19</b>	BRUT Officiel	<b>18,087,177</b>	656	2,031,437
<b>20</b>	NowThis News	<b>17,773,403</b>	906	3,115,442

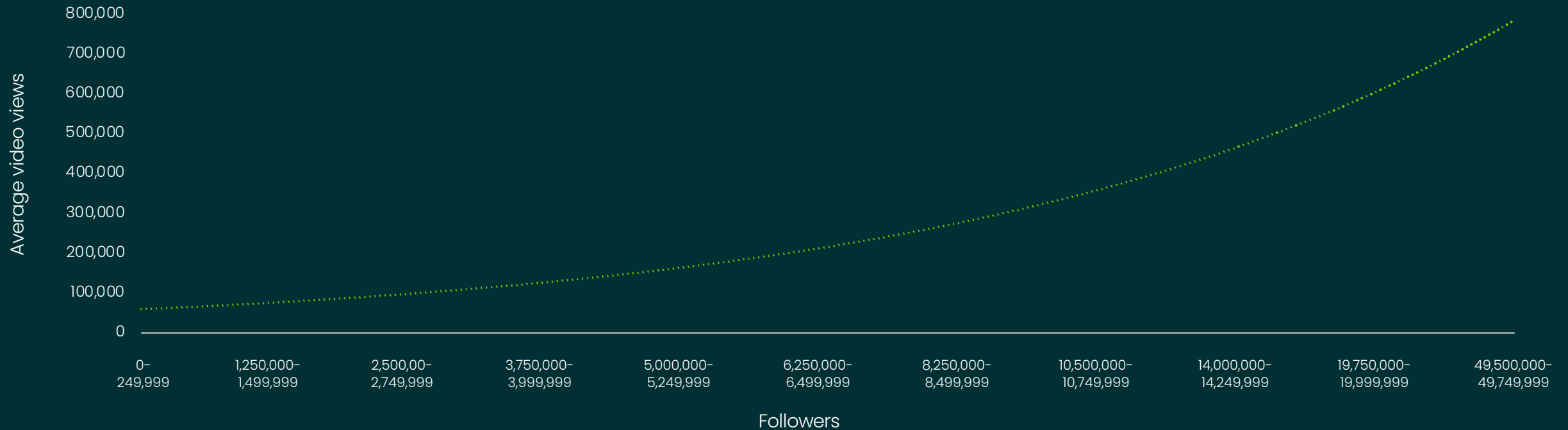
Jan 1-Jun 30, 2021, verified brands, media, sports, and entertainment accounts

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## Video views trend by account size for IGTV

Jan 1-Jun 30, 2021

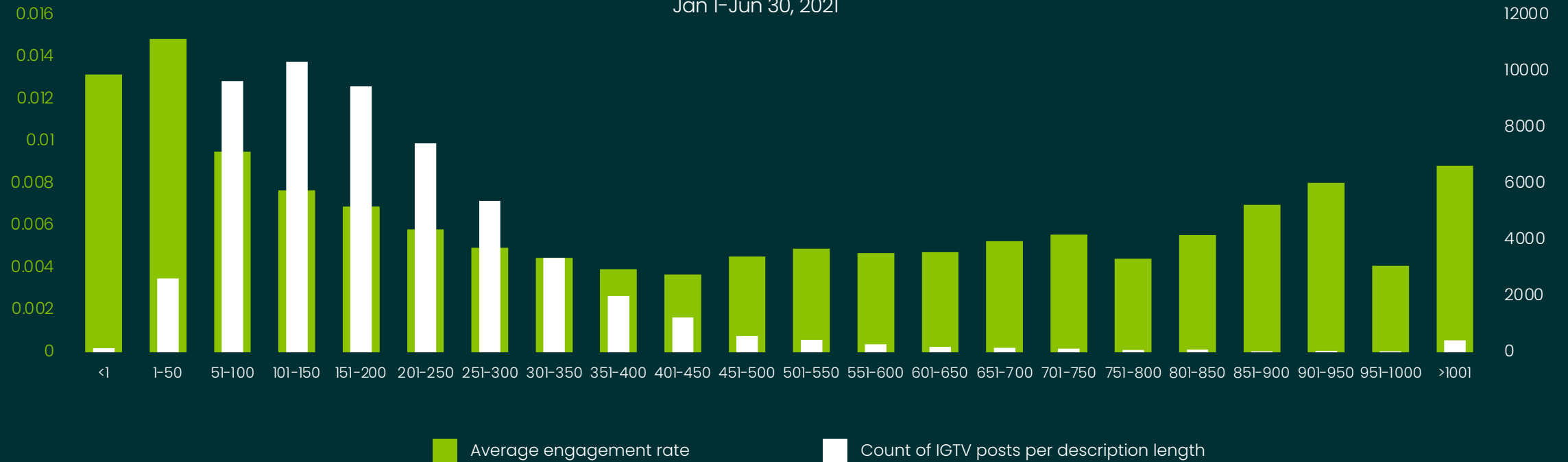


### Big followings drove big views on IGTV

As Instagram does away with the IGTV tab and folds long-form video into the feed more seamlessly, there is at least one metric brands should keep their eyes on. Unlike some other avenues, the trend for video views on IGTV was largely tied to how many followers an account had. For smaller accounts with fewer than 1 million followers on Instagram, it was a challenge to average more than 50,000 views per IGTV video. For accounts larger than 1 million but less than 10 million followers, 500k average video views per IGTV post was nearly unheard of. While there are definite exceptions to this rule, accounts with the most followers on Instagram commanded the highest views on IGTV which made a big investment into IGTV a good choice only for well-established brands. It will be interesting to see how this change within the Instagram app affects views for long-form videos and if they will be treated the same way as videos that are shorter than one minute in length.

## Engagement rate by description length for IGTV

Jan 1-Jun 30, 2021



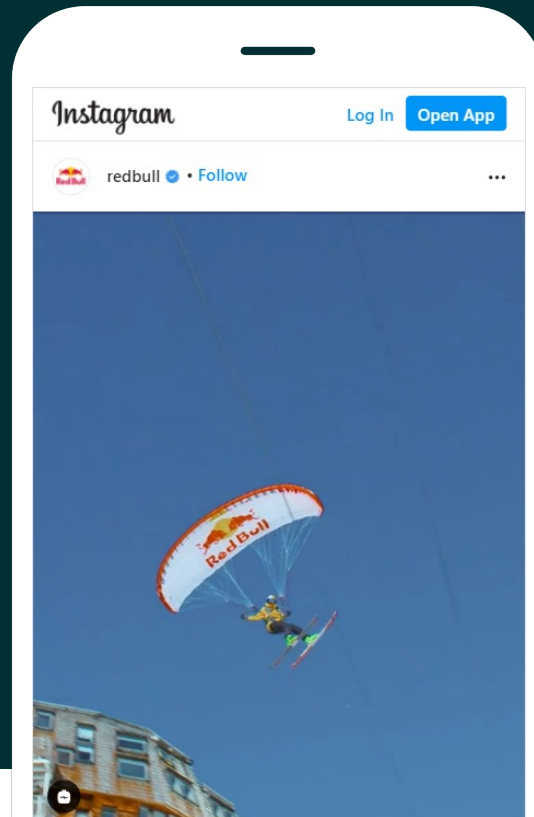
**Most commonly used descriptions, least effective**

Looking at the engagement rate of 54,000 IGTV videos in comparison with how many characters were included in their description shows that the highest engagement rate for posts occurred when descriptions were short and sweet, between one and 50 characters. No description, or 0 characters, did exceptionally well also. Interestingly, incredibly long descriptions, 1200 characters or longer, performed better than medium-length descriptions, such as 100-800 characters. Longer descriptions are commonly used on videos where a background story is warranted, for recipes, and news videos that have a full news article posted in the description.

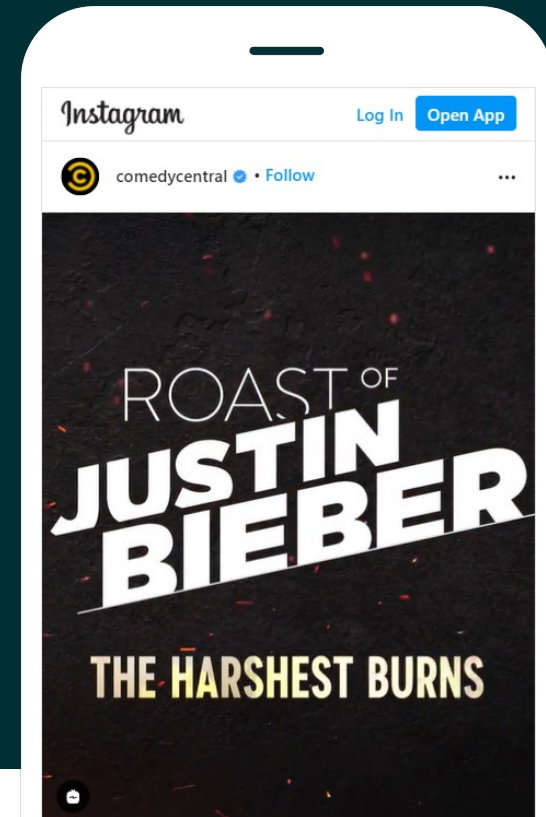
## Successful long-form content on Instagram



The Daily Show takes Trevor Noah's in-show monologues and crops them vertically for Instagram. By highlighting a component of the show consistently, viewers know what to expect and can be enticed to watch the full show for more.

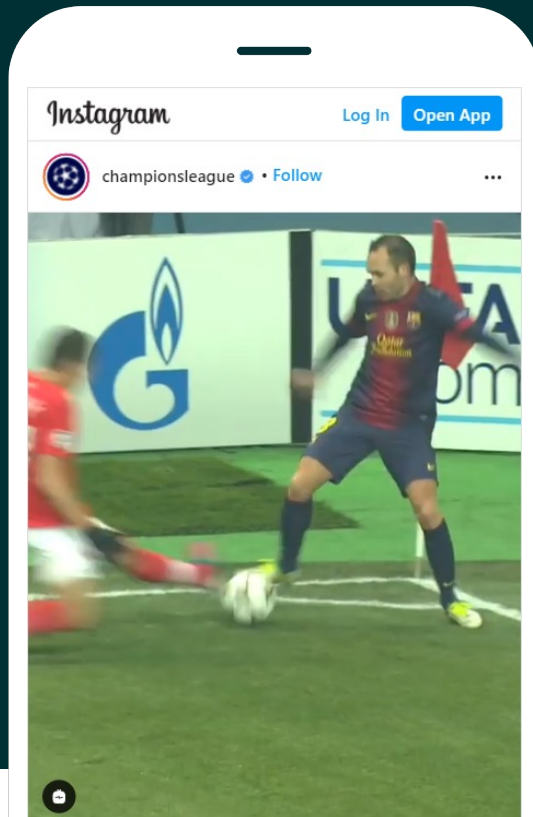


Red Bull has found success on Instagram with longer extreme sports highlights. When they were posting on IGTV to promote videos, they carefully selected a 15-second highlight to be placed on their main feed that got viewers excited to watch more.

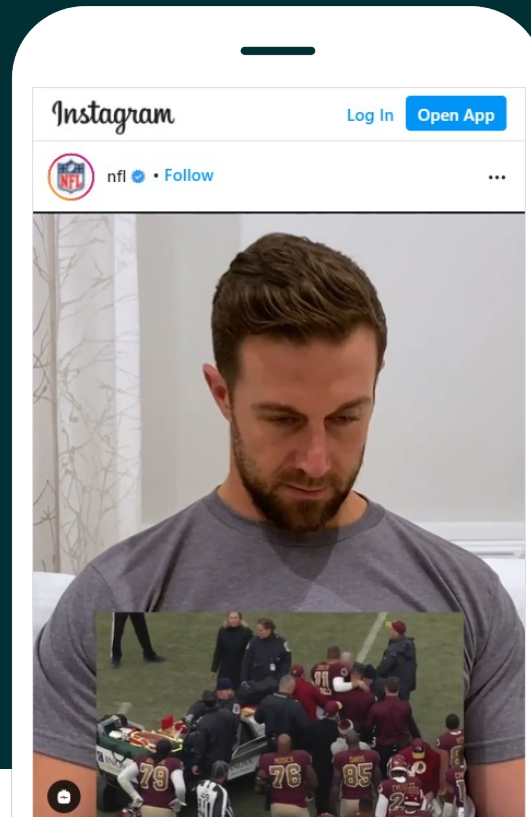


Comedy Central compilations and clips from popular shows are a proven formula for the brand. Previously, the IGTV area on Comedy Central's Instagram neatly organized content with each show broken out into series for easy discovery and tracking.

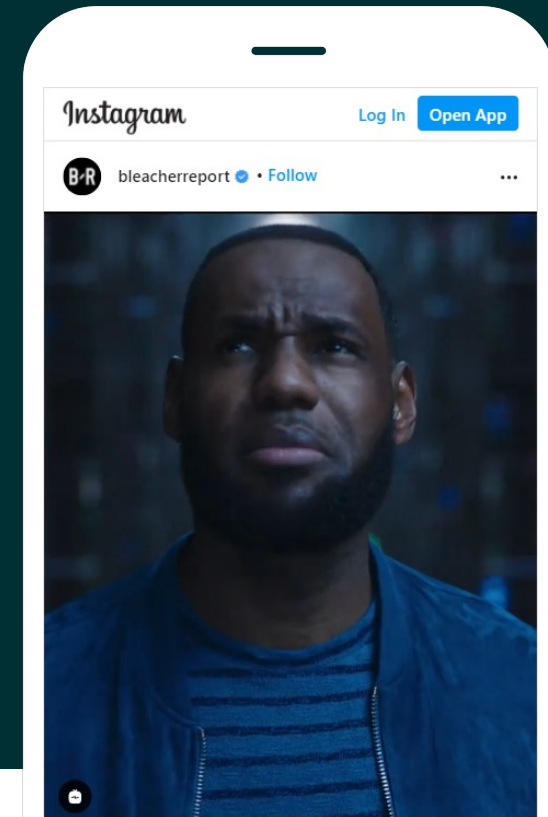
## Successful long-form content on Instagram



UEFA Champions League had one of the most impressive IGTV presences with an established following. Most of their content was focused on specific player or team compilations, which almost always exceeded 1 million views per video.



The NFL created an array of long-form Instagram content focused on behind-the-scenes footage, player interviews, and athlete stories that humanize the sport in a way game highlights cannot.



Movie and show trailers found their home on Instagram within IGTV. With the new update, don't expect trailers on Instagram to go away anytime soon, and longer-form video in the main feed will likely be a welcome addition.

## Long-form video best practices

### **Make sure the content is the right fit for the format.**

In some cases, a shorter story or single scene from a show might be better as a multi-part video carousel, Reel, or Instagram story. For longform videos on Instagram, you want to find content that will keep the viewer engaged, like single story or intriguing video compilation.

### **Pay attention to the analytics.**

Look at other platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and now TikTok (as they test out five-minute videos) and use analytics from Conviva Social Insights to see which videos have the longest watch time. You can also look at old Instagram Stories that had high completion rates to determine which content is worth repurposing.

### **Start strong.**

For long-form videos on Instagram it's sometimes best to let people know what they are getting into. A short intro clip or video highlight included in the preview you post to your feed can make all the difference between a successful video and a flop. Experiment with different types of previews to see what works well with your audience.

### **Always add auto-caption.**

Believe it or not, the majority of people scroll through social media with the volume off. Auto-captions provide the opportunity for engagement when listening with the volume on might not be a possibility.







## Final thoughts

While the IGTV name may not live on, long-form video on Instagram is here to stay. The addition of long-form video within Instagram allows viewers to fully immerse themselves in a brand on Instagram in a way they couldn't before. While social managers might lament the need to create custom content for each platform as well as in multiple different formats, it's clear that different post types provide the flexibility to engage with audiences in new ways. As social platforms, Instagram included, continue to experiment and roll out new formats, it will be interesting to continue to track what brands gravitate towards.

## Methodology

For this report, Conviva analyzed Instagram accounts in the first half of 2021, January 1 to June 30, as compared to the same time period in 2020 and 2019. This analysis includes more than 25,000 accounts, 54,000 IGTV videos, 400 million engagements, and 4 billion video views. Categorized accounts identified include 1300 accounts in the categories of brand: consumer-related product, service brands, events, and locations; media: newspapers, news organizations, news websites, and publishers; entertainment: TV/movie networks, TV shows, audio, and social-first content networks; and sports: sports or esports teams, leagues, and sporting events.

## Any Questions?

Visit [www.conviva.com](http://www.conviva.com) or contact Conviva at [pr@conviva.com](mailto:pr@conviva.com).

## About Conviva

Conviva is the census, continuous measurement and engagement platform for streaming media. Powered by our patented Stream Sensor™ and Stream ID™, our real-time platform enables marketers, advertisers, tech ops, engineering and customer care teams to acquire, engage, monetize and retain their audiences. Conviva is dedicated to supporting brands like CCTV, DAZN, Disney+, Hulu, Paramount+, Peacock, Sky, Sling TV, TED and WarnerMedia as they unlock the incredible opportunity in streaming media. Today our platform processes nearly 3 trillion streaming data events daily, supporting more than 500 million unique viewers watching 200 billion streams per year across 4 billion applications streaming on devices. Conviva ensures digital businesses of all sizes can stream better—every stream, every screen, every second. To learn more, visit [www.conviva.com](http://www.conviva.com).

