

The Effectiveness and Impact of Short Videos as Advertising

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Abstract: With rapid technological advancements and the rise of Generation Z, short-form video advertising has gradually replaced traditional television ads as a significant and influential social medium in people's daily lives. With the rise of platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, short-form videos have gained widespread popularity, allowing brands to reach a diverse and engaged audience. This paper examines the effectiveness of short-form videos as a new form of advertising. Using a combination of literature review and comparative analysis, this study explores key factors contributing to the success of short-form video ads, including user engagement, influencer collaborations, and platform strategies. The findings highlight the distinct advantages and characteristics of short-form videos over traditional advertising, offering a fresh perspective on their commercial value. This paper further discusses the potential for short-form videos to shape the future of digital marketing, providing insights for brands and researchers as they adapt to this dynamic landscape.

Keywords: Digital marketing strategy, Short Videos, Advertising, Engagement, Social Media.

1. Introduction

Short-form video is a type of video content, which allows the creators to communicate their ideas and audiences to learn the content efficiently and effectively [1]. The length of short-form videos is debatable. Google defines the content should be less than 10 minutes, while hutspot identifies that it would be more effective if a short-form video is contained with 31-60 seconds. In the last decade, as short-form videos have emerged as an interactive and effective way to engage with the audience, the length of the short-form becomes more varied, and so is the content. Short-form videos are used for a variety of purposes, from tutorials, life-recording, and even promoting brand products. Short-form videos quickly gain popularity among a wide range of population, from teenagers to senior citizens. Take TikTok, for example. It had 1.4 billion monthly active users in 2022, generating an estimated \$9.4 billion in revenue, Researchers anticipate that 53% of social media marketers will escalate their investments in TikTok in 2023, surpassing all other formats [2]. As a result, both ordinary citizens and celebrities use short-form videos to deliver messages, tell stories, or simply entertain people. s

In the beginning, creators simply use short-form content to share their personal experience in using a product, without commercial intention. However, as the number of users and the number of views increases among different short-short video platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTubes, created a new business model for firms, known as social commerce (s-commerce) [3]. Brands learn the potential of short-form videos as a marketing vehicle. Brands invite both ordinary citizens, who are normally with a large number of followers, and celebrities to share their experience in using the

products. Brands do this for a number of reasons. First, they want to raise potential consumers' awareness of their products. Second, they expect the short-form videos will encourage sales. In this sense, short-form videos can be used as an innovative form of advertising. This paper analyzes the factors that make short-form videos an effective new advertising tool, emphasizing the distinctions between traditional advertisements and short-form videos. It explores the potential future development of short-form video advertising. Through comparative analysis and literature review, this paper examines the differences between short-form and conventional advertising, identifying key factors that contribute to the success of short-form video ads. The findings provide a useful reference for the advertising industry's transition to the short-form video era and offer insights for future developments.

2. The effectiveness of short videos as advertising

2.1. The creators of short-form videos

Even though some short-form videos feature celebrities, most videos are created by ordinary citizens. According to research, Short-form videos, particularly those featuring non-celebrity creators, leverage narrative techniques that focus on problem-solving, personal experience, and product benefits in real-life scenarios, making the content both memorable and persuasive. A typical short-form video goes like this: a lady or a man comes across a situation, either with themselves, their family, their pets, or their friends; they tried different ways to solve the problems, but they couldn't. Not until they adopt the focal products could their situations be solved. Then they begin to describe how the products solve their problems, showcase the characteristics and functions of the products in detail, and relate their consumer experience with the products. Normally, even with celebrities, these videos are set in a daily background, not in a commercial background. The creators relate their experience in colloquial language. Brown & Fraser discovered that simplifying language and avoiding technical terms in short-form video ads can make the message more accessible and help viewers better understand and remember the content being advertised. Even when they look into the function of the products, they use easily accessible language rather than scientific terminologies.

The effectiveness of featuring ordinary citizens in short-form videos lies in the stronger connection they foster with audiences compared to celebrities. Human beings are naturally inclined to connect with similarities rather than differences, making it easier for viewers to relate to the everyday situations portrayed by ordinary people. This relatability also helps the brand develop credibility. Unlike traditional advertisements, where overly perfect characters and settings can create a sense of distance and feel overly "sales-driven", short-form videos with realistic scenarios allow viewers to envision themselves in the content. The familiar, everyday settings—such as an apartment salon or a workstation—further strengthen this connection, enhancing the brand's credibility. Moreover, the use of colloquial language helps audiences understand and retain the message more effectively, boosting engagement and the memorability of the content. This combination of relatability, realistic settings, and accessible language significantly contributes to the effectiveness of short-form videos as a persuasive advertising tool.

2.2. Platforms and target-consumers

Brands have their short-form videos on various platforms. Since platforms charge at different rates, given brands have a marketing budget, they have their short-form videos on different platforms. In selecting platforms and the marketing strategies on the platforms, brands have several factors under consideration. First, it is the number of users on the platform. The larger the number of users, the more appealing the platform is to brands. Second, besides the number of users, brands would give thought to the profiles of the users. If target consumers of the focal products match the profile users'

profile of the platform, then the brands will be encouraged to have videos on the platform. What's more, the number of influencers on the platform, for example, people who have great influence on people in a certain industry or product, also have an effect on the willingness of brands to have videos on the platform.

In general, brands undertake two marketing strategies when they have a video on the platform. First, it is macro-targeting, which means brands will have the videos promoted to all the users indiscriminately regardless of their gender, age, and other basic information. This approach allows brands to reach the maximum number of users, raising brand awareness widely. Traditional advertising, such as TV or print ads, typically also employs macro-targeting; however, it lacks the flexibility of digital platforms, where users can directly search for and interact with the brand. Second, there is micro-targeting, which means brands will selectively promote their products to their target consumers, who will be selected based on users' profile information, such as gender, age, preferences, and so forth. Brands can vary their ranges of targets by negotiating with platforms to adjust the algorithm used to select the users. Compared to digital advertisement, traditional advertisement lack of accuracy and flexibility which usually relies on rough audience analysis, and advertising strategies cannot be adjusted based on real-time user data, Digital advertising allows the ad to be customized and personalized to a specific demographic, narrowing the target range and increasing the chances of conversion [4].

By macro-targeting, brands use short-form videos to raise consumers' awareness of their products, which is one of the core functions of traditional advertising. What is more, a number of views of the video could be accurately tracked. By micro-targeting, brands have their products promoted to the people who fall within the demographic group of the brands' target consumers and thus increase consumers' likelihood of buying the products. Viewers' information could be accurately tracked and analyzed to enable the brands to adjust their marketing strategies. In this sense, short-form videos are not only an effective form of advertising, but they are more effective than traditional advertising in promoting the products.

2.3. The content

One of the main differences between short-form videos and traditional advertising is the length, which is typically limited to under one minute. This brevity inherently restricts the form and content of traditional advertisements, often leading to a concise, straightforward message. In contrast, the flexibility of short-form video content in both length and format allows creators to adapt their messages to fit platform requirements and audience preferences, which enhances engagement compared to traditional, longer-form ads. This flexibility not only enables creators to share diverse and dynamic content but also to relate personal experiences with the products, allowing for a more authentic advertising approach.

The content of short-form videos makes it an effective form of advertising. First, the creators use a first-person perspective to share their experience, addressing the audience directly. For creators who already have a significant number of loyal followers, Using a first-person perspective in video ads creates a sense of intimacy and authenticity, allowing audiences to feel more personally addressed and, thus, more likely to engage with the content. What is more, marketing intention is covered by experience sharing. Such a weak attack increases the credibility of the advertising. Second, creators affirm their trust in the products by sharing users' experiences. Such self-affirmation further strengthens the credibility. What is more important, by sharing personal experience, creators attempt to change the collective perception of audiences, which is the core value of advertising.

3. The influence of short-form videos

3.1. Influence on individuals

It's cost-effective to create short-form videos. Expensive equipment, such as high-definition cameras, and lighting fixtures, is not entailed to create short-form videos. Anyone with a smartphone is able to create short-form videos. Short-form video ads have the natural advantage of increasing user engagement and aggregating user traffic, anyone could become an influencer [5]. Such a democratic nature is absent from traditional advertising. Platforms pay commissions to creators based on the number of views of videos. In addition, short-form videos not only decrease the cost of filming ads, but also lower the barrier to entry into commercial areas. Individuals can establish a personal brand by publishing high-quality content that enhances their personal influence and attracts followers and financially supportive audiences, thereby creating personal branding opportunities. This provides contemporary young people with more entrepreneurial opportunities and future planning options. Short-form videos not only serve as a tool for entertainment but also function as a commercial platform for operation. Additionally, short-form video creators can leverage audience demographics, preferences, and engagement metrics, such as likes and shares, from video analytics as a valuable feedback mechanism. This motivates them to continue producing high-quality content, enabling them to monetize their follower base. In this era, short-form videos offer individuals increased opportunities for creation and growth.

3.2. Influence on corporations

Digital advertising is affordable, measurable, and effective[2-4]. First of all, short-form videos diversify the way that corporations market their products. In the past, corporations rely on traditional ways of marketing, such as TV commercials, bulletin boards, leaflets, and marketing activities in malls. Short-form videos enable brands to promote their products to a wider range of audiences and have their product promoted to audiences they intend. Moreover, the cost of short-form video advertising is lower than that of traditional advertising, making it more cost-effective for information dissemination and brand building compared with traditional advertising, short-form videos are more cost-effective. Furthermore, short-form video platforms enable audiences to actively engage through likes, comments, shares, and even response videos. In contrast to the one-directional communication of traditional advertising, short-form videos foster a deeper level of interaction between brands and consumers. This interactive approach not only enhances brand visibility but also strengthens user engagement and loyalty, allowing brands to build more meaningful connections with their target audience. Additionally, brands benefit from receiving timely feedback from customers, enabling them to identify potential issues and make necessary adjustments promptly.

Moreover, brands can leverage the algorithmic recommendation systems provided by short-form video platforms. These algorithms generate precise recommendations based on users' interests and preferences, increasing the likelihood of reaching potential consumers. Compared to the broad-reach strategy of traditional advertising, this targeted approach significantly enhances ad reach and conversion rates, thereby further expanding the brand's influence.

4. Conclusion

This paper primarily explores the effectiveness and unique advantages of short-form videos as an advertising medium, particularly in comparison to traditional advertising approaches. Based on the analysis of characteristics of short-form video, this paper can safely draw the conclusion that short-form videos are an effective form of advertising. Their cost-effectiveness, flexibility, and diversity make them popular with brands. However, problems ensue along with opportunities. Until recently,

there has been no regulation over the content and form of short-form videos, which, as a result, may be improperly used by brands and individuals for different purposes. This paper lacks access to specific sales figures that are born out of short-form videos, as they are difficult to obtain. Further research could focus on the direct impact of short-form videos on consumer behavior and sales performance, as well as adding case studies as supporting evidence to strengthen the theme and argument in enhancing targeting accuracy and engagement on these platforms.

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