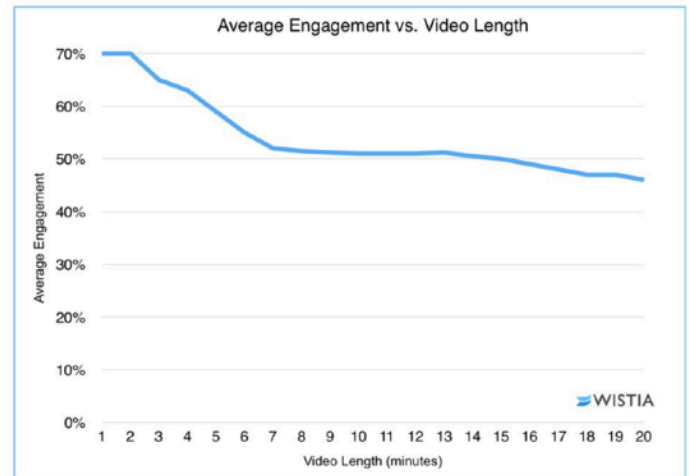


Social Media Best Practices

- **Use images or visual graphics in your posts.** These attract more attention than plain text or links on virtually all social media platforms.
- **Video is extremely popular on social media, particularly live video at the moment.** Use video as much as possible, of 2 minutes length or less. It is best to post video natively in FB (share directly) than to share via a link.
- **Never share a video until after you have watched all of it.**
- **Always use plain language.** The average person reads at a middle school level ([Clear Language Group](#)). Keep this in mind with social media posts, and all other public outreach materials.
- **Track what kinds of posts are most successful.** Most platforms have tracking metrics built in so that you can easily access statistics on how your posts are performing. Try out different styles of posts, and see what your followers respond to.
- **Series are effective.** Using a consistent template for an infographic on a regular basis can be an effective social media tool. Also, use commonly acknowledged hashtags such as #throwbackThursday or #FridayFAQ. These regular postings should be high-demand content presented in a reliable and consistent format and typically see more engagement than general postings.
- **Connect with your partners on social media!** Follow their pages/accounts, and they will likely return the favor. Share content from partners that is relevant to your followers, and always provide credit where it is due. Tagging partners that are relevant to your posts is another good way to expand your reach. If you are trying to reach a particular public figure, business or agency, social media is also another platform to contact them and draw attention to your efforts through tags, messages, reviews and shares.
- **Test the use of ads or boosting posts** (this is an advanced topic but since the cost is relatively low, you can take an empirical approach).



2 minutes is the sweet spot. After that, the drop-off in engagement is significant. Here are a few important points from this data.

TIPS FOR MESSAGING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Catch your audience's attention** by providing timely, new, or interesting content.
- **Focus on strong emotions, be positive most of the time.** What emotions should you focus on to prompt meaningful discussions among your fans? This research published in Harvard Business Review found that six emotions were extremely common in highly shared content on social media. These were:
 - ✓ Admiration
 - ✓ Amazement
 - ✓ Astonishment
 - ✓ Curiosity
 - ✓ Interest
 - ✓ Uncertainty
- **Link to additional resources, i.e. provide value.** Have a clear, concise message for each post, and if more information is relevant then link to it rather than spelling it all out in your posts. Have everything required for a call to action in the post itself, and supporting information as a supplemental link in the post or in a pinned comment.
- **Use quotes liberally.**
- **Ask questions**
- **Do NOT bait! (This will hurt your reach.)**
 - ✓ "Vote baiting" asks followers to "vote" on one of several options by reacting to or commenting on a post in a certain way.
 - ✓ "React baiting" prompts users to give specific reactions to a post.
 - ✓ "Share baiting" offers hidden value to users that share a post.
 - ✓ "Tag baiting" calls on users to tag friends with characteristics defined by a post.
 - ✓ "Comment baiting" pushes users to sound off in the comments with a particular word or phrase.
- **Instead of bait, be kind to your audience and provide a good but intriguing overview** of what you are posting about.

