What marketers can learn from Snapchat's growth

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12 valuable marketing lessons from Snapchat's success

Snapchat is turning into a very appealing platform for brands, while the engagement of its users keep increasing. How did it become the new trending social platform?

Snapchat has surprisingly evolved into a very interesting **social** network, both for the users, but also for the brands that start exploring its numerous opportunities for increased engagement, curated content and new creative directions.

It has shaped a new form of mobile-focused marketing that combines engagement, (playful) creativity, uniqueness and fun filters and **Snapchat** has achieved to measure a significant growth, counting more than 100 million daily active users and we are expecting this number to rise very soon.

Which **marketing** lessons can we extract from its successful case then?

Start with a narrow audience

A small and engaged group of people can be very useful at the initial stage of your platform, in order to examine what needs to be adjusted, depending on the users' habits.

There is no need to chase the larger audience yet, or at least, until you're confident that you can really make a difference.

Pick the right early adopters

Snapchat's decision to focus on a young target audience seemed to be among the reasons it skyrocketed its fame, as it managed to win over the most demanding users.

A **brand's** early adopters are the influencers that will affect its future, which means that if you pick the right ones, then you already have an advantage from your competitors.

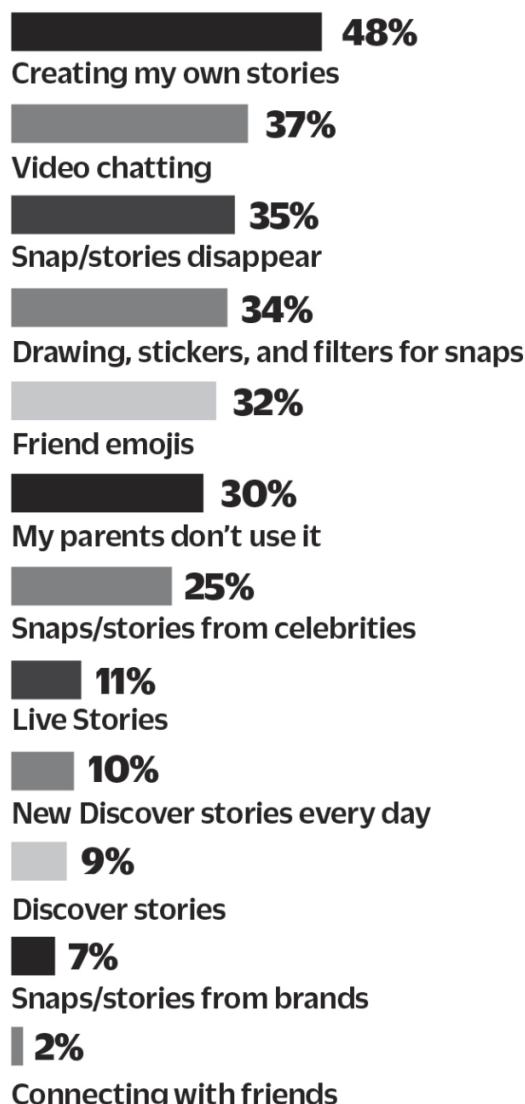## Spot a trend (the ephemerality of social media)

Social media has been popular for the direct communication and the instant reactions from users. The increase of content in our feeds highlighted the ephemerality of our posts, which were still available if you searched for them though.

Snapchat decided to take the ephemerality of posts to the next level by setting an expiry date to them, reminding us that if we want to enjoy what our friends post, we need to visit the platform daily.

It's interesting to observe the stats below, as Snapchat users seem to really like their

temporary posts, with 35% of them considering it the reason they use the platform.

What Do You Like Most About Snapchat?

- 48% Creating my own stories
- 37% Video chatting
- 35% Snap/stories disappear
- 34% Drawing, stickers, and filters for snaps
- 32% Friend emojis
- 30% My parents don't use it
- 25% Snaps/stories from celebrities
- 11% Live Stories
- 10% New Discover stories every day
- 9% Discover stories
- 7% Snaps/stories from brands
- 2% Connecting with friends

Source: [Variety](http://www.brandknewmag.com)

## Boost engagement with psychology

Snapchat users spend an average of 25-30 minutes on the platform every day and this impressive level of engagement was created by blending the idea of ephemerality and the right psychological triggers, in order to keep the users coming.

The fact that the posts disappear after 24 hours makes users visit the platform several times during the day, in order to beat the dreadful **social** F.O.M.O (Fear Of Missing Out).

This creates a sense of urgency that is very effective as a way to boost the engagement and I

believe that **Snapchat's** level of engagement will increase even more in the next months.

Every new platform should seek for the right way to encourage engagement, as this is the only way to turn the product into a habit that will hook users to keep using it and eventually expand its audience.
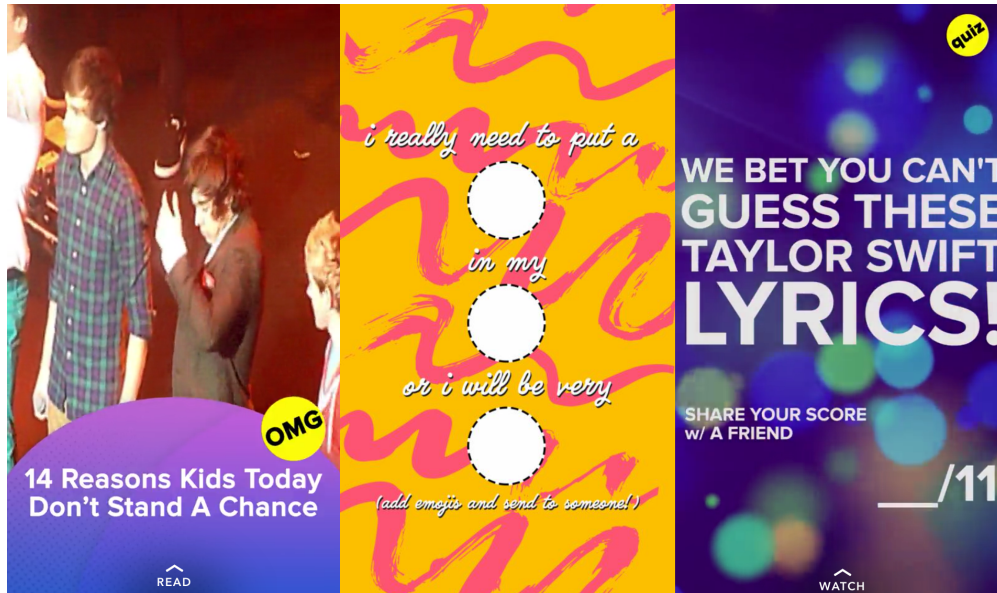
Seize the mobile power

As the mobile domination continues, so do the chances of success when a product is launched in a mobile-focused approach.

Snapchat relied on the way we use our mobile devices to make instant communication easier, while it encouraged us to curate real-time content as part of the global stories, changing the idea of real time coverage.

Thus it managed to:

- use the mobile power
- turn users into publishers
- create a new type of live coverage

and what we can learn is that there is always the need to come up with new ideas to create an appealing product, by analysing the current trends, but even predicting the next ones.

Think locally

Global success may come through focusing on the local element and this also occurs to **Snapchat** and its decision to highlight all the local stories that matter to users.

Now that users turn into publishers, they also want to contribute with their content into the right context and **Snapchat's** micro-stories helped to measure a significant increase of content during the past year.

Hence, what we can learn from this approach is the importance of maintaining the local focus when trying to engage with users, as this will keep them interested in the platform, until they decide to add their own public content.

Disrupt communication

Snapchat was initially used as a private (and ephemeral) method of communication, which was mostly relevant to teenagers who couldn't stop using the fun platform.

By the time it managed to win the most demanding demographic in terms of communication, **Snapchat** knew that it's ready to think of bigger plans and come up with new ideas on how to attract a wider audience.

It's no secret that **Snapchat** aims to replace **Facebook's** Messenger as our main platform of communication and the introduction of Chat 2.0 proved that it seems to be on the right direction.
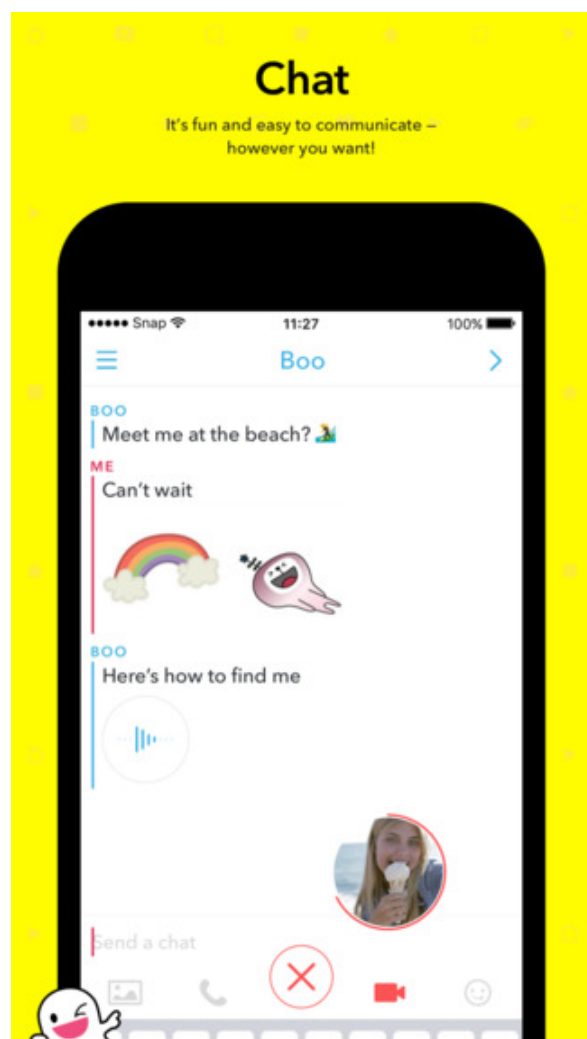
The introduction of audio and video calls proved that **Snapchat** is going beyond its favourite (young) audience and tries to stand out as a reliable platform for our daily instant communication.

It may be too early yet to tell whether it can grow that big to compete with **Facebook's** Messenger (and this also depends on the audience's loyalty towards the biggest social network), but at least **Snapchat** seems to be trying hard to expand its features (or else, to imitate what works better on other platforms).

Provide new creative directions

Snapchat succeeded in providing a new creative direction, a more colourful and playful one that allowed both users and brands to experiment with a more engaging visual content.

In fact, it was more challenging to persuade **brands** to adjust to the new type of content, as it looked from the beginning more appealing for instant communication and fun posts, rather than what we know as branded content.

When your platform is able to influence brands on their creative direction, then you know that you're one step closer to monetising your idea.
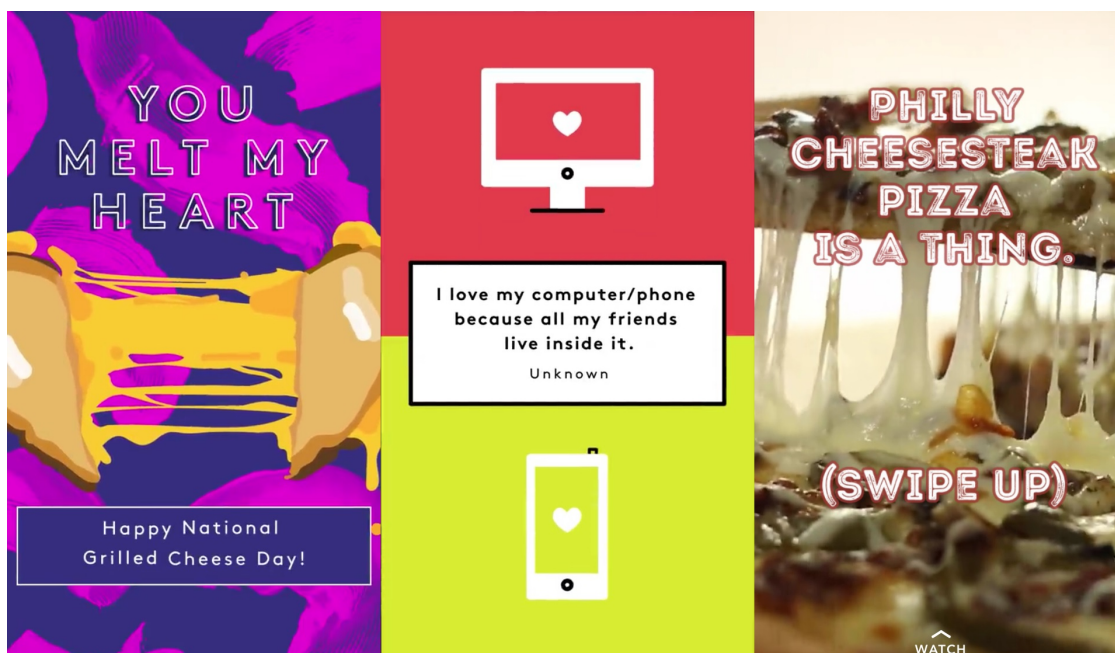
Think of expansion

Snapchat has [reportedly](#) acquired Bitstrips for $100 million, a popular app that includes personal emojis, the so-called bitmojis, which seem to fit perfectly to **Snapchat's** idea of fun snaps.

This is a proof that a trending platform needs to consider new paths to maintain its relevance and provide more features to its demanding audience. It's easy to lose your popularity just as fast as you earned it, so it's important to never rest on your laurels.

Create effective advertising (the trend of vertical videos)

Snapchat knew that its growth plans can't be viable without an effective form of **advertising** and the idea of vertical videos turned out into its secret weapons for further growth, as it created a new trend in content.

Full-screen vertical videos seem to work very well lately on **Snapchat**, with [Facebook imitating the idea](#) with the introduction of Canvas, as users seem to be [up to 9 times more willing to watch a full ad](#), comparing to other types of videos.

As the time spent watching an ad is a significant measurement, **Snapchat** knows that the concept of vertical videos has been very successful and that's what makes many brands find the idea of advertising on its platform appealing.

And since the measurement of a campaign matters to all brands, **Snapchat** [promises](#) to expand its measuring capabilities soon with the collaborationwith "industry-leading measurement partners to help advertisers understand who their ads are reaching and what impact they are having".

Showcase brand opportunities

Brands were cautious at first to join **Snapchat** and once they did, many of them were unsure whether it could be part of their marketing strategy.

Except for the big brands that joined its Discover section from the early stages, others wanted a solid proof that this network can be taken seriously in terms of effectiveness for their business.

2016 was certainly the year that brands realised that they cannot overlook **Snapchat's** success, as its users keep increasing, the engagement is not expected to be reduced, while its video views rose 400% since last year.

Video keeps growing as an appealing part of a brand's marketing strategy, which means that **Snapchat's** popularity (and its new form of creativity) makes more brands flocking to try out the new vertical content.

Snapchat's success may attributed to the fact that it has become appealing both to users, but also to **brands** and this favors the chances of growing even more, provided that it manages to maintain the balance between the two different audiences.

Stay fun (but effective)

Yes, **Snapchat** still manages to maintain a balanced focus between users and **brands** (even favouring user), but its growth may require a reconsideration of its priorities and this will be a challenge, which might affect its future.

Its fun and creative approach towards content and instant communication has contributed to its impressive engagement rates and this can serve as a useful lesson for any brand trying to grow in the **digital** landscape.

Users should always be a **brand's** main focus and this approach may help you build a solid platform, which will effectually attract **brands** and facilitate the process of monetisation.

Of course, there's no secret formula that will help any platform turn into the "next **Snapchat**",

but still, we can all learn some valuable marketing lessons by understanding what led to the success of **Snapchat** and [how a business may use it](#).

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