

INSIDER

How To Get A Million Views:

Creators Reveal The Secrets of Short-form Video

Program recap

- Session #1: Visual Storytelling 101
- Session #2: Monetization 101
- Session #3: Distribution 101
- Session #4: Developing Shows
- Session #5: The First 3 Seconds
- Session #6: Creator Roundtable

All sessions are available to watch on-demand for program participants at [this link](#).

Content strategy

Content strategy

While it's extremely valuable to have a smart distribution strategy, you cannot reach wide audiences unless you're making high-quality content.

The five principles of a good video

- a. **Compelling Opening Footage** ([example](#)) – A good short-form video starts with a piece of footage that stops you in your tracks and forces you to stop scrolling
- b. **Valuable takeaways** ([example](#)) – A good short-form video is detail-rich and delivers something that makes the viewer feel like it was time well spent
- c. **Dedication to quality** ([example](#)) – A good short-form video feature elevations that make the video better than the viewer expected it would be
- d. **Authenticity** ([example](#)) – A good short-form video features natural personalities and is never faked
- e. **Stakes** ([example](#)) – A good short-form video makes it clear why the story matters



This [video](#) opens with a compelling piece of opening footage



This [video](#) offers a valuable takeaway on why movie props break so easily

Visual Storytelling 101

Visual Storytelling 101

- a. Visual storytelling is an essential part of success in short form vertical video
- b. The footage should be the meat of the story and communicate what you're trying to say. It should be dynamic, compelling, and evocative
- c. The footage shouldn't just serve as b-roll. If you're delivering the story through text or audio and the visuals don't matter, you're missing an opportunity to take full advantage of the medium
- d. Here's a brief checklist that you can use to tell if your video succeeds at visual storytelling:
 - I. Does this video mostly make sense with the sound off?
 - II. Could this video exist without the footage?
 - III. Is there more than one "OMG" shot in this video?



Video Analysis

Title: [Trying Lafayette Bakery & Cafe's Viral Croissants](#)

Views: 1M

What make it successful:

This video is a great example of visual storytelling in action. The footage is active, compelling, and colorful, and the story itself is told through the shots you see.

The First 3 Seconds

The First 3 Seconds

- a. The first 3-5 seconds of your video is critically important for building an audience
- b. In an ideal world, the first shot stops people in their tracks as they're scrolling through their feeds
- c. A good hook shot is:
 - I. Clear
 - II. Dynamic
 - III. Compelling



[Clear](#)



[Dynamic](#)



[Compelling](#)

Developing formats

Developing formats

- a. Many creators have had success launching repeatable shows on short-form video platforms
- b. For creators, developing formats will help:
 - I. **Predictability around performance:** If you launch a successful format, the likelihood of future videos in the same format performing similarly are better than if you launch something completely new
 - II. **Driving loyalty:** Developing a format that viewers instantly recognize will bolster your brand and create a loyal follower base
 - III. **Production:** You're naturally going to be better at something with practice. If you're producing videos within a format, you have a lot of chances to hone your skills, improve as a creator, and ultimately produce a better final product



In 2022, Insider launched a [food review series](#) rating the best iconic dishes in NYC



Caleb Simpson's [apartment tour series](#) is one of the most successful formats in social video

Distribution, tactics, and best practices for Reels

Guiding Principles

- a. **Post often, in a consistent cadence** – Posting regularly will...
 - I. Allow you to convert fly-by viewers who saw one video into fans that watch all your videos
 - II. Create a follower base that will become your core audience
 - III. Boost distribution by providing the algorithm with signals that you are publishing high-quality content that people love
 - IV. Give you a big enough sample size to understand what performs best for you and what you're good at
- b. **Focus on original content** – Avoid the following...
 - I. DO NOT upload content with a watermark from another platform
 - II. DO NOT rip someone else's content and repost it on your account
 - III. DO NOT post clips from longer videos that lack context or make no sense as standalone pieces of content
- c. **Use storytelling tools that are native to the platform** – Such as...
 - I. Adding text, filters, and camera effects
 - II. Always posting vertical videos where the visuals are in frame, clear, and do not have black bars around them
 - III. Uploading the highest-quality version of the video
- d. **Write captions like a human** – A good caption is clear, conversational, and adds context to the visuals on screen.
- e. **Do less of what doesn't work, and more of what works** – Constantly analyze what is resonating with viewers and what isn't. Looking at insights in Meta Business Suite can be intimidating at first, but once you are over the learning curve it becomes second nature. Take an afternoon to play around with it, and you'll be in a much stronger position to understand what's working and why.

Familiarize yourself with key metrics

- a. **Plays (sometimes called "views")** – The number of times someone starts watching your video
- b. **Minutes viewed (sometimes called "watch time")** – The total amount of time all viewers spent watching your video combined
- c. **Average time watch** – The average amount of a time a viewer spent on your video
- d. **Completion rate** – The percentage of people who made it to the end of your video

Know where to find performance metrics on FB Reels

- a. Go to [Business Suite](#) and click **Content**
- b. Click **Posts & reels**
- c. Find the Reel you want and click **View Insights**
- d. Browse through your KPIs to analyze what's working

Use Native Tools

Native tools on Reels include...

- [Crossposting from IG to FB](#): A simple way to grow your following on both platforms
- [Collabs](#): If your Reel features or was produced in conjunction with another creator, you can add that creator as a collaborator. This will add their username to the Reel and share it with their followers. This is a smart way to expand your network.
- [Production tools](#)
 - **Remix**: Create a Reel using another account's video or photos, then add your own twist or commentary
 - **Safe Zone**: When adding text or stickers, be mindful of the yellow bars that signal where the "safe zone" ends. This will ensure you don't place something you want the viewer to see where other elements will be.
 - **Green screen**: Green screen lets you choose a background for your reel from a library of pre-uploaded Scenes, or photos from your camera roll.
 - **Transitions**: Use in-app effects to elevate your videos and create creative transitions.
 - **Add Yours**: Participate in wider trends and challenges that are taking over.
 - **Templates**: Don't reinvent the wheel, use templates as a storytelling skeleton that can be applied to multiple videos



Green screen lets you mix first-person footage with b-roll

Monetization

Basics of Reels monetization

a. There are a few ways Reels are monetized today

- I. Overlay Ads (Ads on Reels): Ads placed directly on top of your Reel
- II. Post-Loop Ads (Ads on Reels): Ads appear after your Reel has looped twice
- III. [Branded content](#): Using the branded content handshake tool, turn your Reel into a Branded Content Ad
- IV. [Facebook Stars](#): Creators with an active following can benefit from their followers' loyalty. Stars has been expanded from live and on-demand video to Reels, so now your following can send you Stars on any of your videos. Meta pays 1 cent USD for every Star you receive.

b. Coming soon: Facebook revenue will be paid out based on performance (plays), rather than revenue from ads served

Requirements

- Invite-only
- [Comply](#) with with Facebook's [Partner Monetization Policies](#) and [Content Monetization Policies](#)
- Be over 18 years old
- Be a creator using Pages or Professional Mode
- Publicly share Reels
- Reside in one of the following [50+ locations](#)
- For Stars, you must also have 1,000 followers for 60 consecutive days

Be on the lookout for

- Facebook Reels Play [Challenges](#): Currently, you can only sign up on a mobile phone. An evolution of the original Reels Play bonus programs, Challenges reward creators with up to \$4,000 per 30-day period after they achieve certain publishing and performance benchmarks. Your progress resets after each 30-day period.
- Ads on Reels are coming to Instagram. Follow [Meta's Newsroom blog](#) for the latest updates and timeline.

The short-form video monetization ecosystem is in its infancy. Change is inevitable. Successful creators will adapt to these changes.

Miscellaneous FAQ

Q: How often should I post?

A: Post regularly. For some creators, that might mean posting twice a day. For other creators who produce higher-lift formats, that might mean posting once a week. But there are lots of advantages to posting consistently, on a regular cadence.

Q: Ugh, just give me a number.

A: I'd say in most cases, posting any less than 1x/week will make it tough to seriously build an audience. Generally, more is more.

Q: Should I post the same content on multiple platforms?

A: In many cases, it makes sense to post the same content on multiple platforms in order to reach new audiences. However, do not include watermarks from other platforms, and realize that using native tools (filters, camera effects, etc.) will often make your content feel more native to the platform on which you're posting it.

Q: I posted a video I thought would be a hit and it flopped. What gives?

A: This happens. Given the algorithmic nature of distribution, it's tough to predict how many views any one video will get. HOWEVER, if your content is consistent in quality and your output is regular, you should generally see consistent performance over a large sample. This is why it's important to look at a large number of videos when analyzing what works and doesn't, as opposed to drawing conclusions from the performance of a single video.

Q: How long should my videos be?

A: Do you want the nuanced answer? Or the practical but over-simplified answer?

Q: Practical!

A: Fine. If forced to say a number, I'd say videos should be somewhere in the 15-60 second range. But the nuanced answer—

Q: Ugh!

A: If you let me finish, the real answer is: A video should be as long as it needs to be. It's possible to deliver [something magical](#) in 6 seconds. There are also stories where you need much more time.

Q: Which metrics are most important?

A: The handful of metrics outlined earlier in this guide are a good place to start. Generally, the number of people you reach (plays) and the amount of time those people spend with your video are strong signals for whether a piece of content is resonating. But it also depends on your goals. If you're looking to build up a follower base, looking more closely at which videos are generating the most engagement per play and generating increases in followers might be the way to go.

Q: How do I build a loyal following?

A: Posting consistently and creating content that's repeatable and identifiable are two ways to build a loyal following. The best-case scenario is that someone comes across your video and loves it so much that they start following you for more of the same.

Q: The year is 2024. I've followed every best practice in this guide to the best of my ability but I'm not seeing the kind of audiences I hoped I would. What's the deal?

A: If you look around the short-form content ecosystem at the moment, you'll see a wide range of creators who are succeeding with a wide range of strategies and types of content. Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. What's working for someone else might not be what works for you. The way Insider approaches things is one way to successfully approach short-form video, but it doesn't mean it's *the* way.

There are two lessons in this:

#1 Watch and learn – There's a ton of value in carving out a few minutes a day to go through your feed and see what's working for others. Ask yourself why a particular creator is resonating and how you can take that as inspiration in your own work.

#2 Experiment and try new things – Experiment with different styles and approaches. Experiment with formats. Experiment with visuals. Make a video that's too weird. Make a video that's too boring. Because even if 9 out of 10 things you try fail, you've found 1 thing that works, and now you're in business.