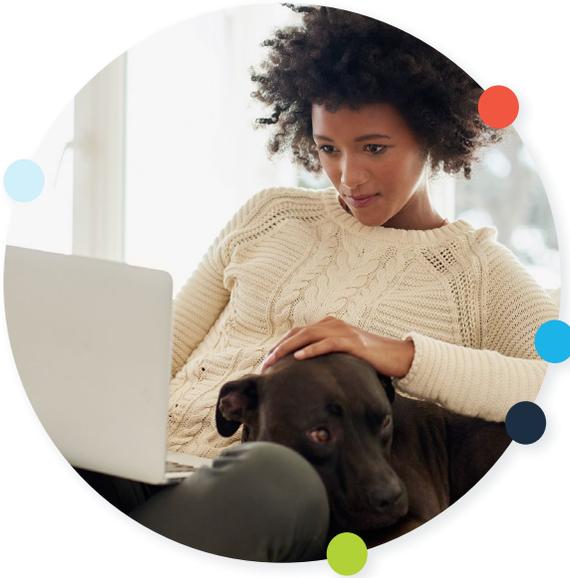


# THE ANATOMY OF A SOCIAL AD



Every digital marketer managing paid social is responsible for making sure every campaign hits its mark. But that’s easier said than done: although digital ad spending hit **\$209 billion in 2017**, relatively few brands will yield positive results from their social ad campaigns.

Why do some brands consistently attract new customers, while others struggle to stay relevant? Part of the answer can be found in how each brand approaches paid social. At Pattern89, we believe social advertising requires a balanced, full-funnel approach: successful brands create social

campaigns that engage potential customers consistently, from awareness to conversion.

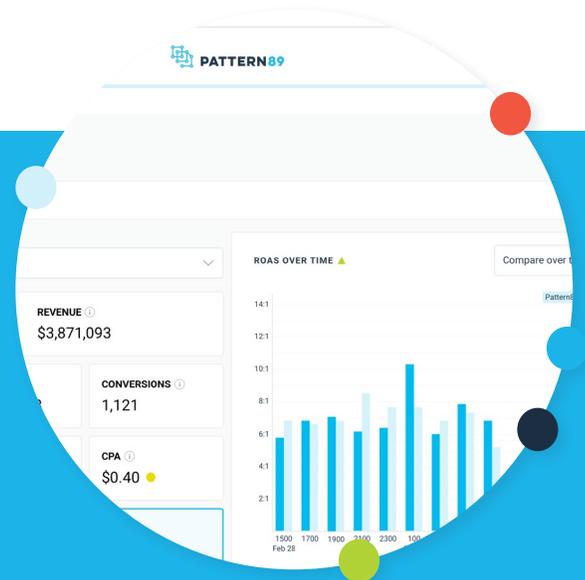
But a social ad is much more than just the sum of its parts. Every part of an ad — from headline to call-to-action — can impact performance. With the help of the Pattern89 Data Co-op, we’ve surfaced valuable data that reveals some best practices for successful and effective Facebook and Instagram ads.

## About the Pattern89 Data Co-op

The Pattern89 Data Co-op was built to help brands access benchmark data on ad performance, as well as create a database of social ads to help marketers identify trends in paid social. Populated by data from a wide range of name brands and industries, the Data Co-op contains billions of data points from hundreds of brands, and hundreds of millions of dollars in ad spend.

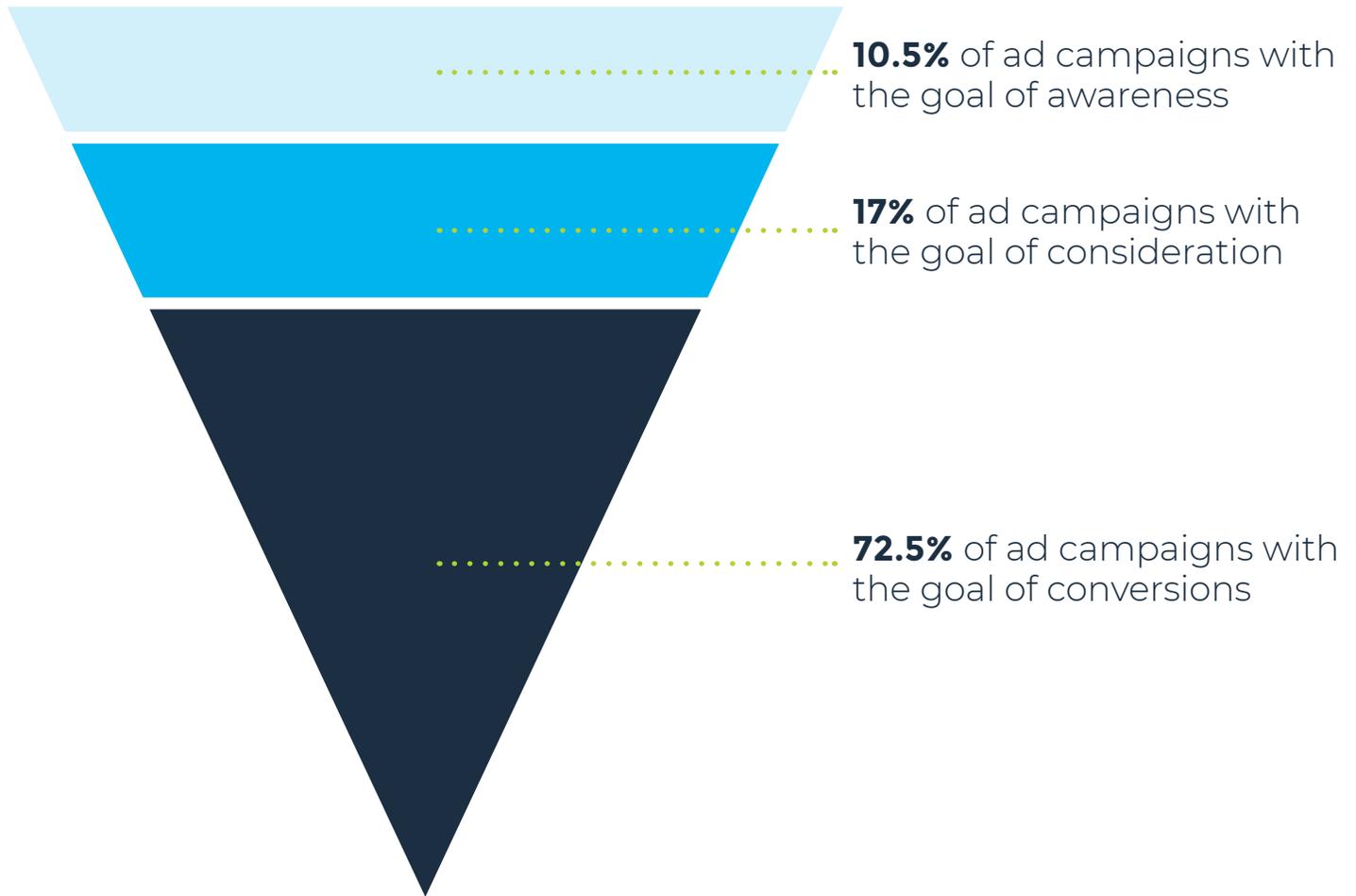
This report will show you how to identify, experiment with and improve each part of a social ad to increase return on ad spend (ROAS), and how to increase ad relevance with creative.

The data used in this report is from the Pattern89 Data Co-op, which is based on data collected from Facebook and Instagram in 2017 across approximately 160 brands.



# INTRO TO SOCIAL AD ANATOMY

Millions of businesses rely on social advertising to reach their target audiences, share educational information about their products and offer customer service. Social advertising is a fast-growing industry, but ad spend isn't doled out equally across objectives. The Pattern89 Co-op data shows us where brands spent the most:



Conversion is the goal for 72.5% of ads in the Pattern89 Data Co-op. But only 17% of ads focus on consideration, and just 10% are built to drive awareness. Brands that skip top-of-funnel advertising can lose out on opportunities to educate new prospects, drive website traffic, offer relevant content or engage existing customers.

The data above tells us that advertisers focus most on the bottom of the funnel, while all but neglecting top-of-funnel messaging. Focusing on bottom-of-funnel conversions can also lead to audience exhaustion: targeting the same people with the same messages will eventually turn them off.

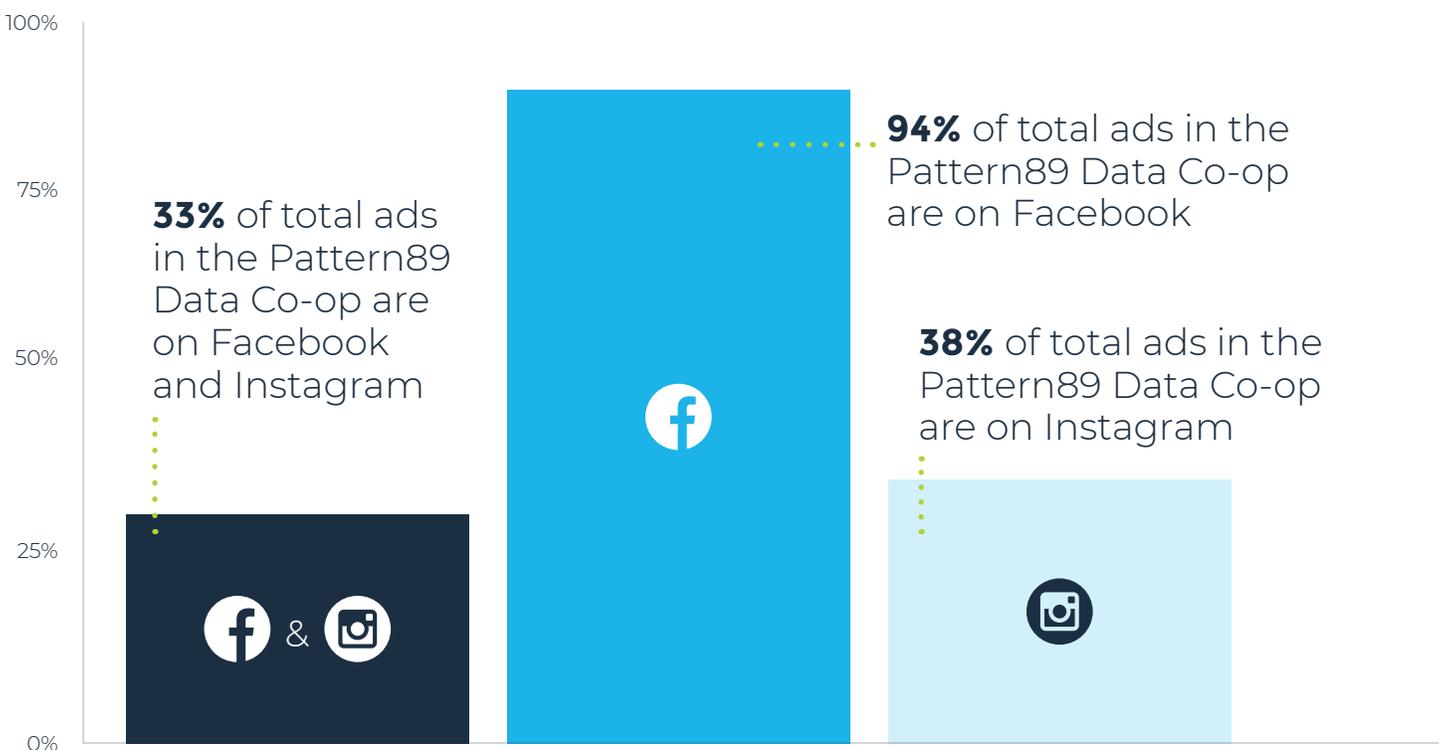


## Homework

Instead of focusing on conversion-only campaigns, plant top-of-funnel audience seeds which, with the right tending, can grow into new retargeting audiences. The fuller the top of the funnel, the more chances an ad has to convert near the end of a customer journey. Campaigns that spread ad spend across objectives can also save money. A Pattern89 customer whose campaigns were focused only on conversion netted an increased profit of \$10,000 one month after implementing a full-funnel approach. The company also saw a 24% ad spend decrease.

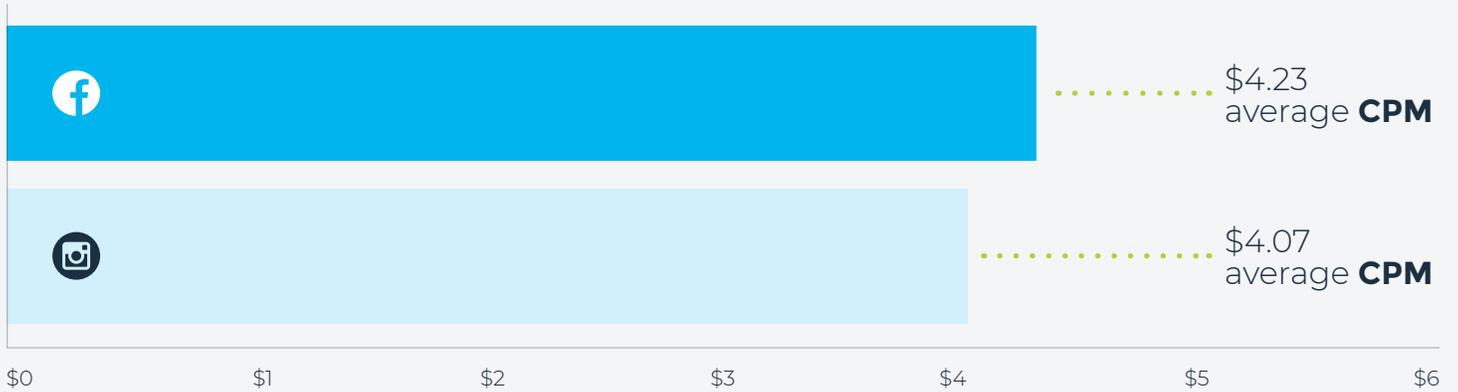
The Pattern89 Data Co-op shows that for most brands, Facebook is far and away the most popular ad channel. With more than **6 million businesses** advertising on Facebook and approximately 4 million on Instagram, the potential to reach hundreds of millions of customers is just a few clicks away.

But not every brand approaches advertising with a clear vision of their customer funnel — and that can affect the cost of ads. The Pattern89 Data Co-op reveals a disparity in how brands advertise:



These stats are relevant to cost because, while Facebook and Instagram’s audiences are different, testing ad performance across social channels could help brands determine how to better allocate budget to maximize ROAS. Now, let’s use Pattern89 Co-op data to see how Facebook and Instagram’s average ad costs compare to each other:

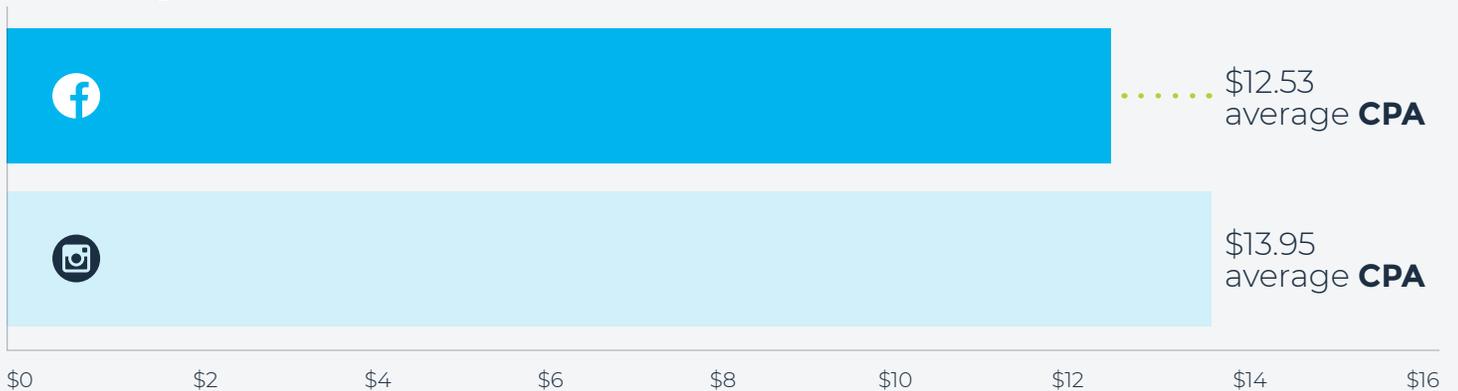
## Average CPM



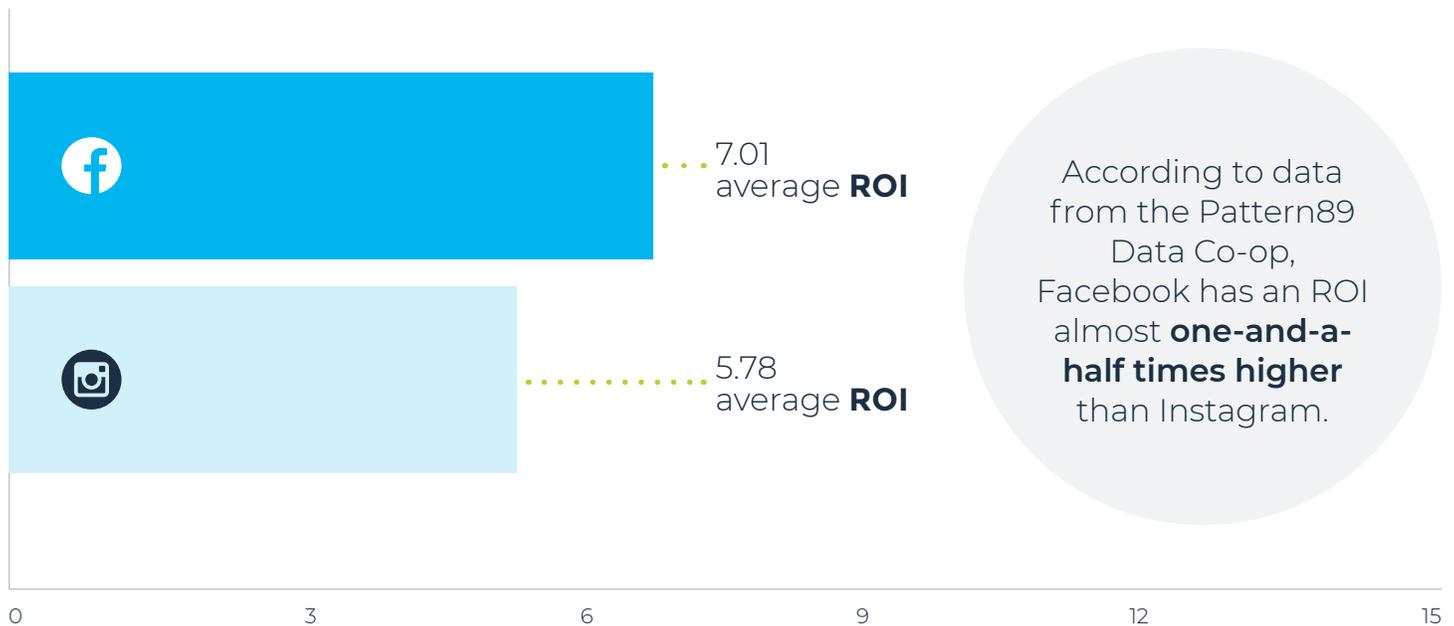
## Average CPC



## Average CPA



# Average ROI



## Homework

So, how can brands use this information to maximize their ad spend?

**Experiment with distinct strategies for each social channel.** Facebook might be popular today, but that doesn't mean brands can't build audiences on other social channels. Different audiences react to different types of creative on each channel.

**Balance your funnel.** This means creating ads that speak specifically to each stage of the buyer's journey. Focusing on the entire funnel can also save brands money: the fewer unsuccessful conversion ads a brand runs, the more they can spend on ads that engage users at other stages.

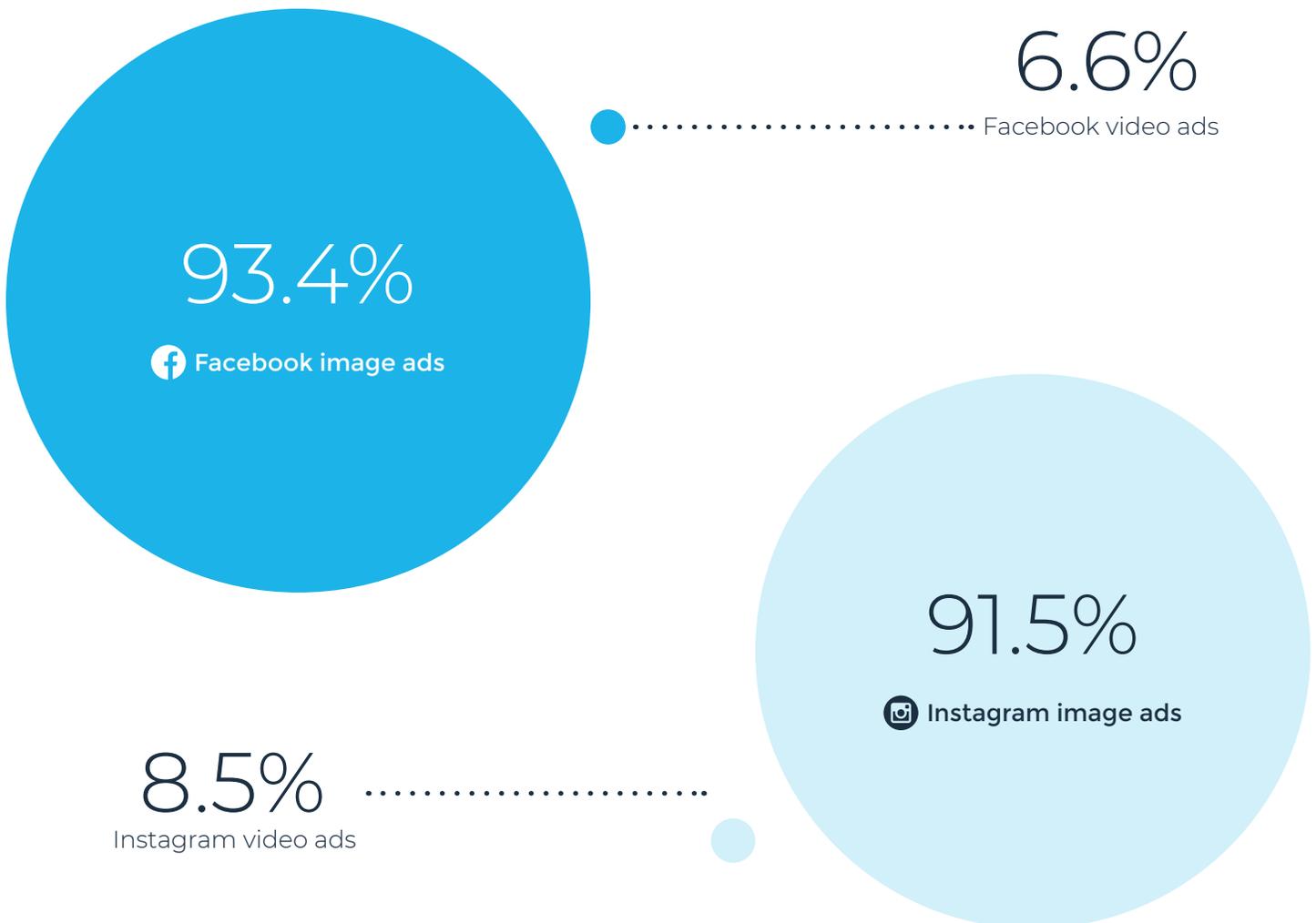
**Build more (and better) audiences.** A balanced funnel should lead to better, more segmented audiences. Experiment with exploratory audiences, lookalikes and retargeting, and match creative and messaging to fit each target.

# AD ELEMENTS DISSECTION

## Images vs. Video

Savvy digital marketers have learned the best messages often aren't delivered with words. Creative is one of the most critical parts of a social ad's success. And video can have a larger impact on an ad's performance than a simple image: a **2017 Buzzsumo study** revealed that videos are the most engaging format on Facebook, with posts featuring videos performing consistently better than images. And in late 2017, **eMarketer reported a surge** in Instagram video engagement: numbers for videos from top media publisher accounts worldwide increased by 53% year over year in May, 7% higher than the growth rate for photos over the same timeframe.

That makes the Pattern89 Co-op data on video and image ad usage surprising. Marketers are still building ad campaigns with images over 90% of the time.



Video is an established mainstay among social media users but brands are woefully behind in actually delivering the video content their audiences want. There's a list of perceived barriers to creating engaging video content — equipment, cost, time, quality — but even smartphone-shot video, edited with readily available software, can help deliver brand messaging in an authentic and captivating way. An investment in video doesn't have to break a marketing team's budget — in fact, there's **a growing number of mobile apps** designed specifically to help marketers create images and videos for social media ads.



## Homework: Invest in video

It's that simple: audiences are demanding video ads. With so few brands offering useful video content, it should be every digital marketer's priority to experiment with video ads across social channels.

## Homework: Prioritize engagement

Use social ads to get your target audiences involved in the conversation, especially for top-of-funnel ads. Customer shout-outs, polls or sharing user-generated content (UGC) can entice audience members into talking about your brand and using your social media handles to do it. Every mention is an ad you don't have to build.

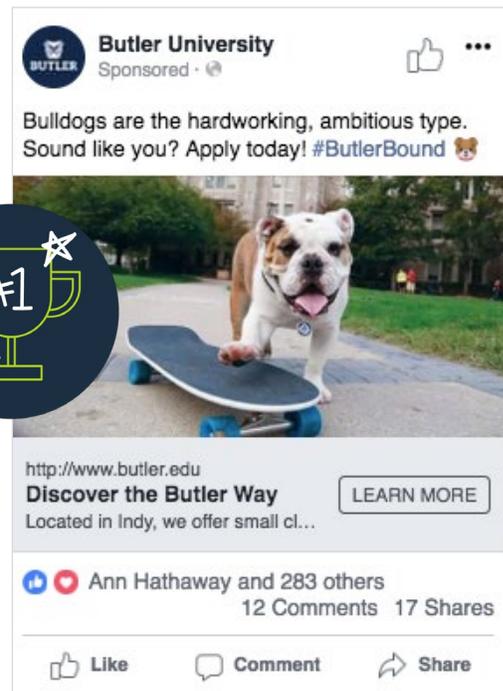
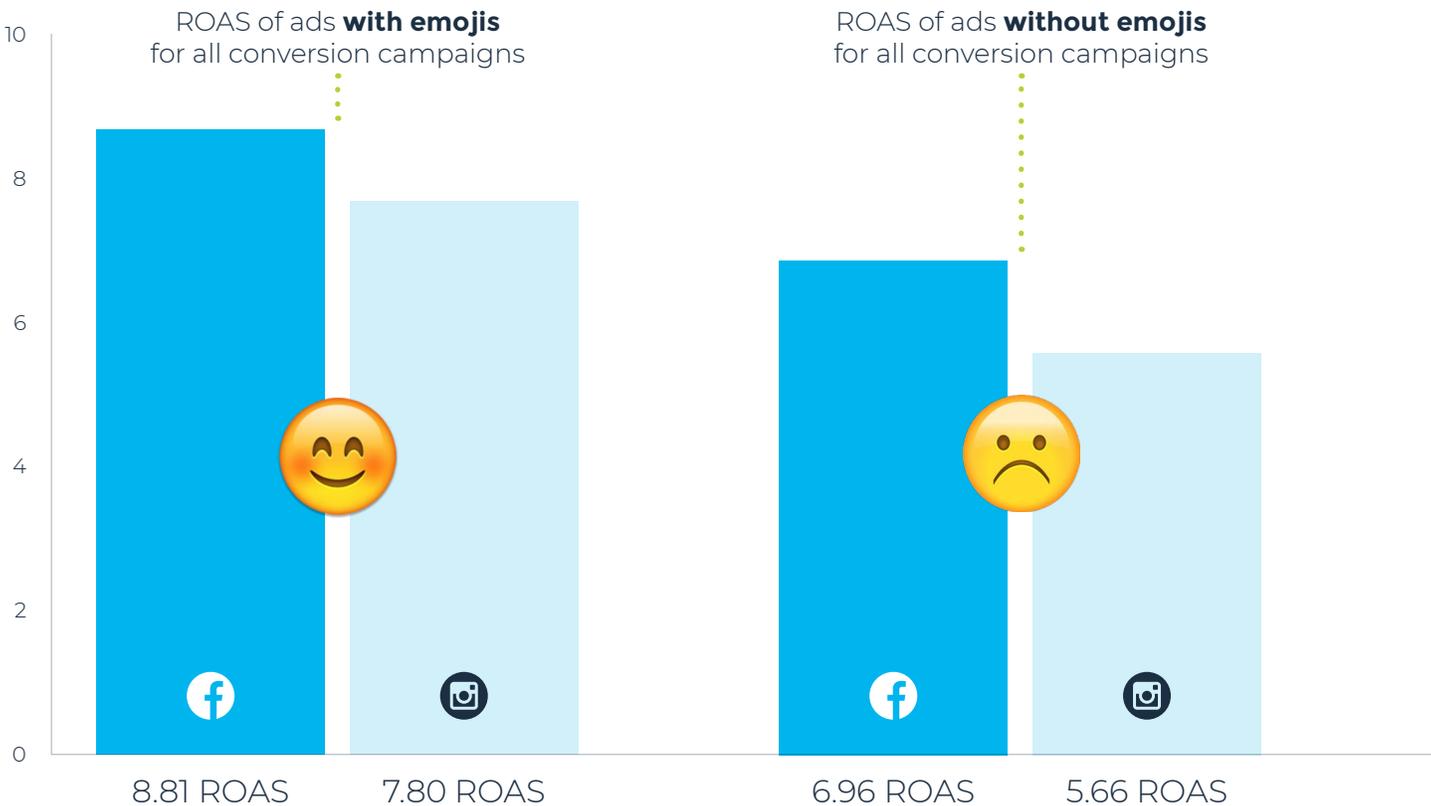
# Emojis

While images and videos are incredibly effective creative elements on paid social, there's another type that can pack a lot of meaning: emojis.

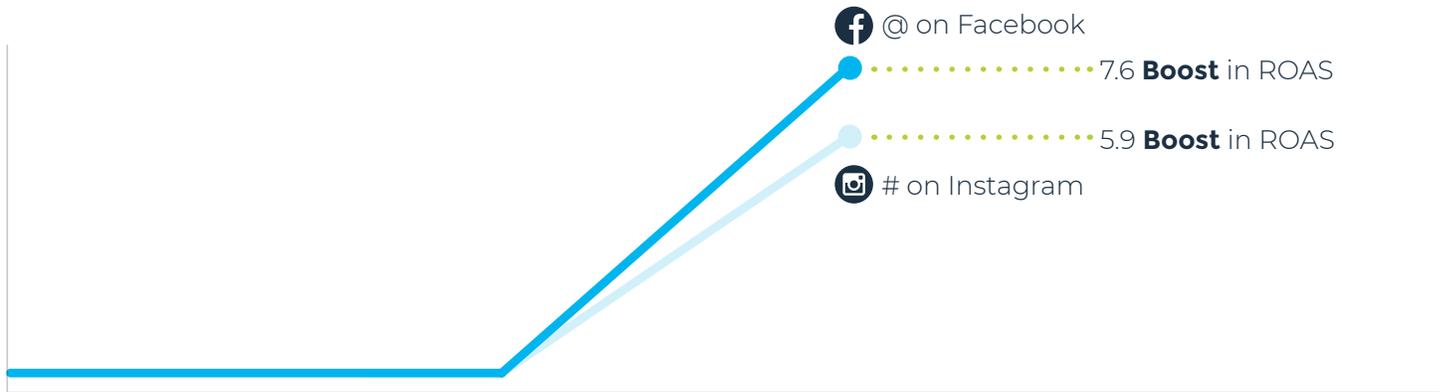
The emotion-carrying symbols are especially popular with millennial audiences, who sometimes prefer to communicate using emoji in place of written words. Emojis can also boost ad effectiveness: a 2016 study by Twitter revealed that using branded emoji in social ads increased engagement by 10 percent. Instagram, a social channel built around visuals, reported that nearly 50 percent of its comments included an emoji.

Emojis are kind of a big deal for paid social.

The Pattern89 Data Co-op corroborates those earlier studies. Our data shows that, across goal objectives, Facebook ads including emojis are noticeably more successful than ads without:



Tagging topics with a hashtag on Instagram, or other social handles with an ampersat on Facebook, can also boost ROAS:



The most-used emojis might surprise you. According to the Pattern89 Data Co-op, here are the top three:

01.



02.



03.



## Homework: Give emojis a chance

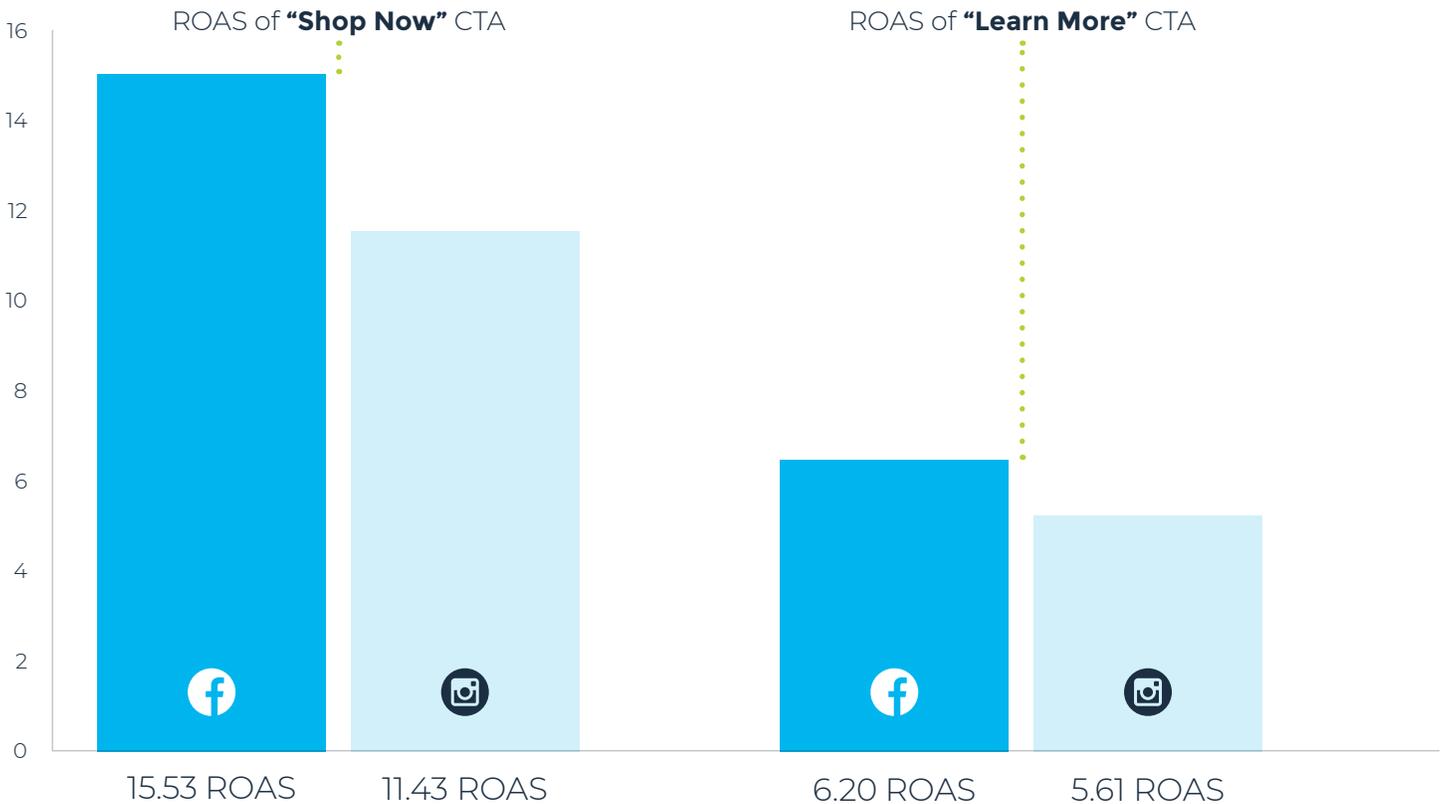
Are you new to emoji-land? Are you concerned that your target audiences won't respond favorably to them? Put those fears to rest and experiment with emoji. With just 6 percent of Facebook and Instagram advertisers using emoji, it's safe to call emoji use in ads new. But with a ROAS boost like the ones above, it's an experiment brands can't afford not to try.

A successful investment in creative requires both diversity and curiosity. A diverse set of images, videos and special characters gives brands the opportunity to try an almost endless combination of visual cues. And brands that integrate visual experimentation into their social ad strategies will always learn something new to help craft more effective campaigns in the future.

## CTAs

One of the most important parts of a social ad is its call-to-action. An effective CTA pushes its reader to act: whether that's driving traffic to a site or buying a product, the best CTA is the one that works. But how do you know which CTA to use?

The Pattern89 Data Co-op reveals that on both Facebook and Instagram, one CTA is the clear winner:



Effective top-of-funnel messaging is usually educational, while bottom-of-funnel messaging should be about driving action. This data also hints at the funnel imbalance we noted earlier. The outsized portion of conversion ads might be the reason "shop now" is so popular. No matter the root cause, brands must choose the right CTAs for each ad. Identifying recurring themes in how audiences react to CTAs, as well as other parts of an ad, can help point toward ways to improve future ads and campaigns.

# Ad Sentiment

An audience's reaction toward an ad can be shaped by any of its attributes, but sentiment can have a surprising effect as well. Here's what we learned about sentiment from Pattern89 Co-op data:

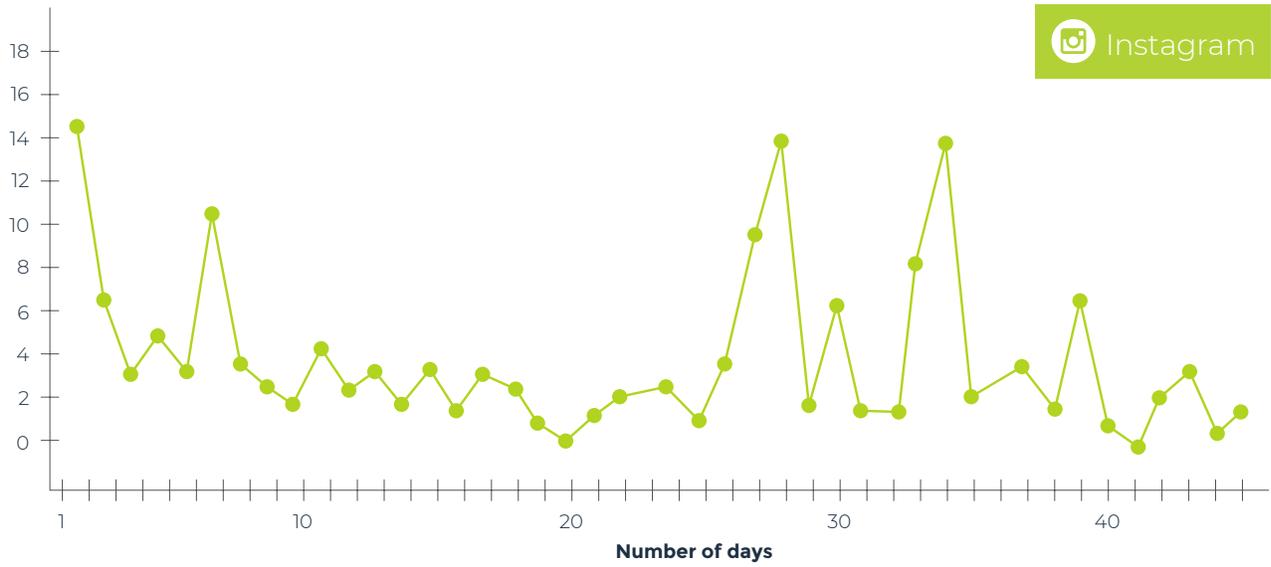


An awareness ad with neutral sentiment--an ad that doesn't purport to be better or worse than a competitor, for instance--gets a ROAS more than twice that of a negative ad. And during the conversion phase, neutral ads outperform negative ads by as much as 65%. With results like these, it's easy to see why the body copy of an ad can carry so much weight: the attitude of an ad can change the customer's attitude as well.

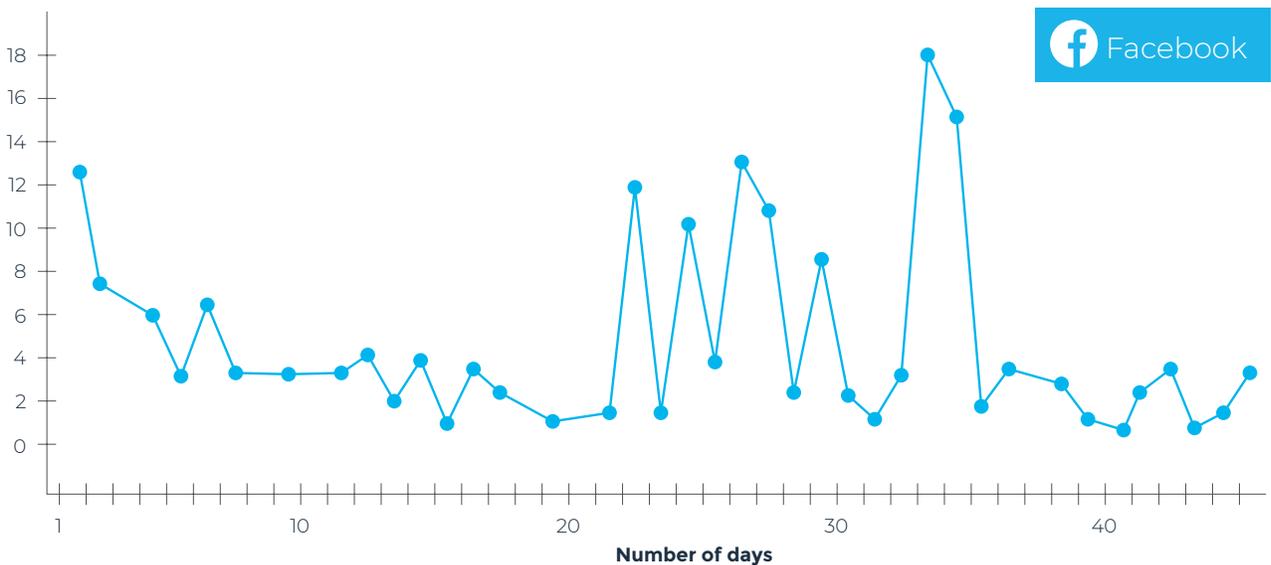
# Ad Flight Times

Experimenting with sentiment, depending on the stage of the funnel, can accelerate the customer journey. But a successful ad doesn't just deliver the right message with the right images; it's also delivered at the right time. Another factor in an ad's success is flight time: the number of days an ad runs. With help from Pattern89 Co-op data, we've learned that both Facebook and Instagram have surprisingly long ideal run times:

## ROAS on Instagram



## ROAS on Facebook



This data suggests experimenting with ad run times of 20-30 days can yield positive benefits. Of course, smaller brands might want to try shorter run times to save money; but there's a correlation between increased ROAS and longer ad flight times. Note: while the baseline for both Facebook and Instagram appears to be approximately 20-25 days, individual ad campaign flight times vary.

# KEYS TO PAID SOCIAL HEALTH

These data points offer a small window into the vast pool of insights from the Pattern89 Data Co-op. Here's how we suggest brands approach achieving social ad health in the long term:



## Homework:

**Identify your most successful social ad patterns.** Compare your ad performance to industry benchmarks and discover how to iterate faster. Get started with the Pattern89 Data Co-op that delivers billions of data points from a wide range of brands.

**Invest in testing ads at scale.** Scaling ad creation doesn't increase performance in itself; it's the resulting data that leads to more effective ads. Pattern89 Campaigns can help you build dozens, or even hundreds, of ad variations at scale to find the most successful trends.

**Commit to optimization.** Collecting and learning from data isn't a single task-- it's an ongoing process. Pattern89's Discovery process guides you through this process while increasing ROAS.

**Analyze ad results and learn from them.** The end of every campaign can provide a roadmap toward future success. Pattern89 Data Science tools make at-a-glance ad analysis easy and support from the Pattern89 CX team offers expert advice to stay up-to-date with the ever-changing paid social landscape.

Ready to see how Pattern89 can widen your paid social universe? Get your **free Pattern89 Social Scorecard** now.

[GET IT NOW](#)