



The untapped potential

**of short-form video
and creator content
on YouTube**

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Long-form content on YouTube continues to evolve as creators expand what's possible with video. Coupled with the increasing prevalence of YouTube Shorts, viewers also have a carved-out space to engage with short-form video giving them the best of all worlds.

96%

of surveyed Gen Zers in India said they watch both short-form and long-form videos on YouTube, based on a survey by Material¹.

"Consumers love short-form video," said Jasmine Enberg, Vice President, Principal Analyst at EMARKETER. "For young people in particular, it's now a major entertainment channel, and that offers opportunities for brands, from storytelling to sales."

On YouTube, brands should be looking to invest in short-form video. "With short-form video now an established part of social media marketing, YouTube Shorts offers brands a familiar and tested format for reaching audiences," said Enberg. YouTube is part of the short-form evolution for both creators and viewers.

In fact, over

65%

of YouTube Daily Active Viewers in India are also Shorts Daily Active Viewers²



1. Google / Material, Power of YouTube Shorts, November 2023 (Base: India short-form video watchers, including YouTube Shorts and at least one other SFV platform, n=1,790), Field Dates: 11/7/23 - 11/22/23

2. YouTube Internal Data, IN, Aug 2024

Viewers are using Shorts to discover new things that spark their interests and then using long-form content to satisfy their curiosity and make confident decisions.

This report evaluates the state of short-form video, looking specifically at YouTube Shorts' untapped potential for brands. It highlights the value of short-form content and includes next steps for investing in Shorts.

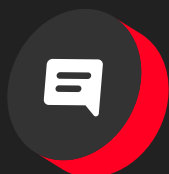
Executive summary:



YouTube Shorts marries the explosion of short-form video with YouTube audience and creator trust. Shorts can drive consumer discovery and conversion on YouTube.



YouTube Shorts presents an untapped opportunity for brands, already heavily invested in creator content, to reach a wider and more leaned-in audience.



Creators have engaged communities on YouTube, and brands can use partnerships on Shorts to take advantage of that deep connection.



Brands that are already investing in Shorts are seeing success, and there's an opportunity for others to connect with their existing audience and find new customers.

YouTube Shorts is set up for an explosion of short-form video

Shorts allow viewers to discover what's new, go deep on what they love, and easily join in. Beyond that, viewers get access to a wider variety of content from their favorite creators and artists once they find something they like on Shorts.

- **Shorts has a huge audience.** In 2023, YouTube Shorts crossed 2 billion monthly logged-in users globally³.
- **Not only are a lot of people watching Shorts, but they're also engaged with what they're watching, including the ads.** After seeing a YouTube Shorts Ad, 65% of surveyed Indian respondents looked for more info or reviews on YouTube, according to a Material survey⁴



This remarkable statistic underscores the direct impact and action-oriented nature of Shorts advertising, demonstrating its power not just to capture attention but also to drive tangible results by motivating viewers to actively seek out more information and potentially convert.

Brands and agencies alike are excited about Shorts and their potential as a new channel for video ads and creator content.

YouTube's audience is unmatched, meaning that Shorts tap into YouTube's diverse demographics. "The YouTube Shorts First Position campaign has helped us effectively target Maharashtra for our Marathi song, 'Bayo' on Coke Studio Bharat. The results across brand lift, search, and connected TV are encouraging, and the campaign has given us key insights into future launch strategies from a discoverability and awareness standpoint." - Shantanu Gangane, Sr. Director, Integrated Marketing Experience, The Coca-Cola Company



3. YouTube Internal Data Global, May 2023

4. Google / Material, Power of YouTube Shorts, November 2023 (Base: India short-form video watchers, including YouTube Shorts and at least one other SFV platform, n=1,790), Field Dates: 11/7/23 - 11/22/23

Brand partnership

on YouTube Shorts are a major opportunity.

Partnerships with creators are a key way that brands engage with audiences.

Partnership ads on YouTube Shorts unlock exciting creative possibilities for brands and creators alike. These creators and artists have business strategies, writers' rooms, and production teams. They're creating programs that people love to watch, and along the way, they're redefining entertainment, news, and education. This level of creator professionalism enhances the impact of partnership ads on the platform. The concise and visually driven nature of Shorts encourages innovative and impactful storytelling, allowing for authentic integration that resonates with viewers. This format offers a powerful avenue to build brand affinity through genuine collaborations, drive product discovery in a natural context, and achieve measurable results within a highly shareable and interactive environment.

"Partnership Ads have helped drive improved consideration and ROI for Myntra in a distinct and differentiated manner, complementing our existing Google Ads mix, boosting brand credibility and likeability, thanks to the powerful combination of creator advocacy and immersive, engaging, and interactive advertising formats." - Deepash Jain | Senior Director - Performance Marketing, MarTech, Consumer Growth, Social Commerce & Analytics.



"The creator economy has become too big for brands to ignore," said Enberg. "Creators have a unique ability to build a community through their content and turn their fans into customers. As more creators launch their own brands, marketers have recognized that if they don't partner with creators today, those creators could work with—or become—competitors tomorrow."

On YouTube, there's a sense of trust and community that brands can benefit from.

93%

of viewers in India agree that YouTube creators' content is trustworthy, more than on other platforms (86%), based on a survey conducted by Kantar⁵

"We are the pioneers of oral beauty in India and are building this category with our innovative brand, Colgate Visible White. Beauty & grooming categories are exploding in India. We are driving relevance for teeth whitening amongst young Indians by showing them the transformative role a whiter, more beautiful smile can play. As we do this, there are a lot of queries that consumers have, and that is where 'education' and 'advocacy' play a critical role! We used YouTube influencers strategically to educate consumers and answer the questions for which they search for information online. The learnings from the influencer 'Shorts' campaign have been incredibly encouraging, and we plan to leverage these for future influencer activations." - Swati Rao, Director, Marketing - Oral Beauty and Personal Care, Colgate Palmolive



5. Google/Kantar, WhyVideo, n=1061 YouTube viewers, n=2312 weekly video viewers 18-64 (IN), fielded from (3/26/24-4/24/24). Competitive set includes 10 market competitors: Linear TV, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, Sony LIV, Jio, MX Player, Facebook, Instagram, Moj & MX Takatak, Roposo.

Despite that investment in creator content, including long-form content on YouTube, many brands haven't yet joined their audiences on Shorts. That means the brands that do invest in Shorts now have an early-mover advantage where they can meet a large, engaged audience.



According to a survey conducted
by GWI, in India,

44%

of YouTube Shorts users don't use
Instagram Reels.⁶

"Despite its wide reach, YouTube has remained a white space for many marketers, especially when working with creators. Shorts presents a massive opportunity for brands, particularly those that are looking for more cost-effective, creator-made ads," said Enberg.

"We are thrilled with the performance of the first position on YT for the 'Le Chal' campaign. It was a very critical one for us as we were launching a new ad film during Diwali, and the performance on both brand and media metrics has been phenomenal." - Rajat Jain, Director Foods, Nestle India

Strategically partnering with Shorts-focused creators provides a competitive edge, allowing you to access a segment of the market that might otherwise remain untapped, ultimately diversifying your reach and strengthening your overall YouTube presence.

Brands can capitalize on the YouTube Shorts opportunity by collaborating with creators. This could involve extending partnerships with current creators who have a YouTube presence to include Shorts in your agreements. Alternatively, brands can discover new YouTube creators who offer access to a unique and incremental audience on Shorts, potentially unreachable through other platforms.



6. GWI, All Internet Users Aged 18+,
Feb 2025

A compelling case study is AJIO's strategy for its Big Bold Sale. To drive awareness and purchases, AJIO partnered with 10 creators for 15-30s YouTube Shorts videos showcasing their apparel. These were amplified using a Shorts-focused Partnership Ads campaign within their Demand Gen strategy, precisely targeting menswear and womenswear segments with tailored creatives and integrated product feeds. This approach delivered 2X higher conversion rates than regular campaigns, an average video watch time of 22 seconds, and a significant ROAS of 20.9 compared to 13 from standard brand creatives.

This case highlights how strategic creator partnerships on YouTube Shorts can drive significant engagement and return on investment. Arpan Biswas, Chief Marketing Officer, AJIO, said, "We partnered with YouTube Shorts creators to promote our tentpole Big Bold Sale and saw our view duration and conversion rates explode, driving meaningful business impact. This clearly demonstrates the power of creator-led content in driving both performance and engagement with our target audience."

YouTube has a self-service tool called BrandConnect to identify the right creators to work with. Beyond that, consider working with agencies to discover new creators that can reach a desired audience. Agencies can help brands find overlaps in audiences they may not have anticipated. For example, an organic coffee company may partner with a climbing creator to reach outdoorsy viewers interested in eco-conscious products.



@TheKurtaGuy



@thebrowndaughter

87%

**of viewers in India agree that
YouTube helps them decide what to
purchase, based on a survey
conducted by Kantar⁷**

7. Google/Kantar, WhyVideo, n=1061 YouTube viewers, n=2312 weekly video viewers 18-64 (IN), fielded from (3/26/24-4/24/24). Competitive set includes 10 market competitors: Linear TV, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, Sony LIV, Jio, MX Player, Facebook, Instagram, Moj & MX Takatak, Roposo.

Early movers

are using YouTube's massive shorts audience to work with creators and drive results

Users are comfortable with ads and sponsored content on Shorts. "Viewers are already accustomed to product integrations on long-form YouTube videos and on other short-form video platforms. It's natural for them to expect product integrations and advertising to be a part of their viewing experience on Shorts as well," Enberg said.

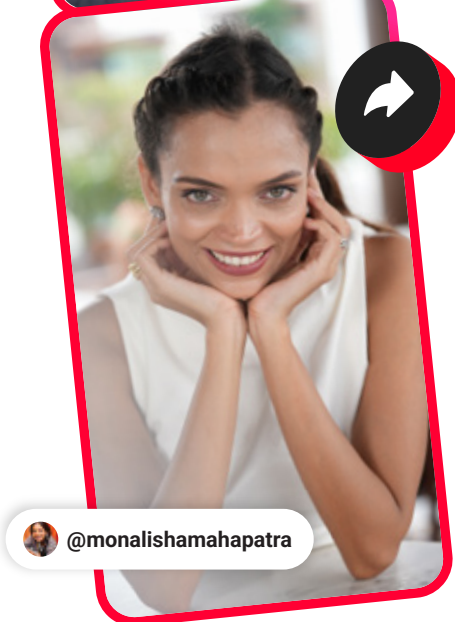
This established acceptance of branded content creates a fertile ground for collaborations. By strategically aligning with relevant Shorts creators, brands can seamlessly integrate their messaging into engaging short-form videos, capitalizing on this openness and reaching their desired demographic in a format they actively consume.

Brands should seek Shorts partnerships that can reach their target audience. For M•A•C Cosmetics, it wanted to boost brand awareness, drive stronger consideration, and connect with its core audience of beauty enthusiasts for its popular range of lipsticks and foundations. The brand saw an opportunity to expand its digital strategy by leveraging YouTube Shorts, using its existing influencer content to deliver customized, engaging messaging that would resonate with its audience. It saw a 2.5x higher View-Through Rate and a 66% lower Cost Per View compared to M•A•C Cosmetics' usual branded video reach, with a 13% Lower Cost Per Thousand Impressions (CPM).



Find creators who can present content in an engaging way.

Star Health did this by partnering with regional influencers to create localized content, helping build trust and drive higher engagement across different markets on YouTube. **This campaign generated a 48% Increase in policies sold, a 45% decrease in Customer Acquisition Cost, a 20% lower Customer Acquisition Cost compared to social, and a 10% lower Cost Per Lead.**



Conclusion

Brands are already invested in content creators, and content creators are leaning into short videos. For consumers, short-form video is a major piece of their media diet and a major influence on their shopping behaviors.

Brands should be taking advantage of YouTube Shorts to go deep with the creators they trust most, reach leaned-in audiences, and drive results for their business.

There's only one  YouTube



@ManishKharage

About this report

This white paper was produced for YouTube by EMARKETER Studio, an in-house creative studio within the research company EMARKETER.

It has been localized to India by Yamini Nayar, Product Marketing Manager, YouTube Ads Marketing, Google India.