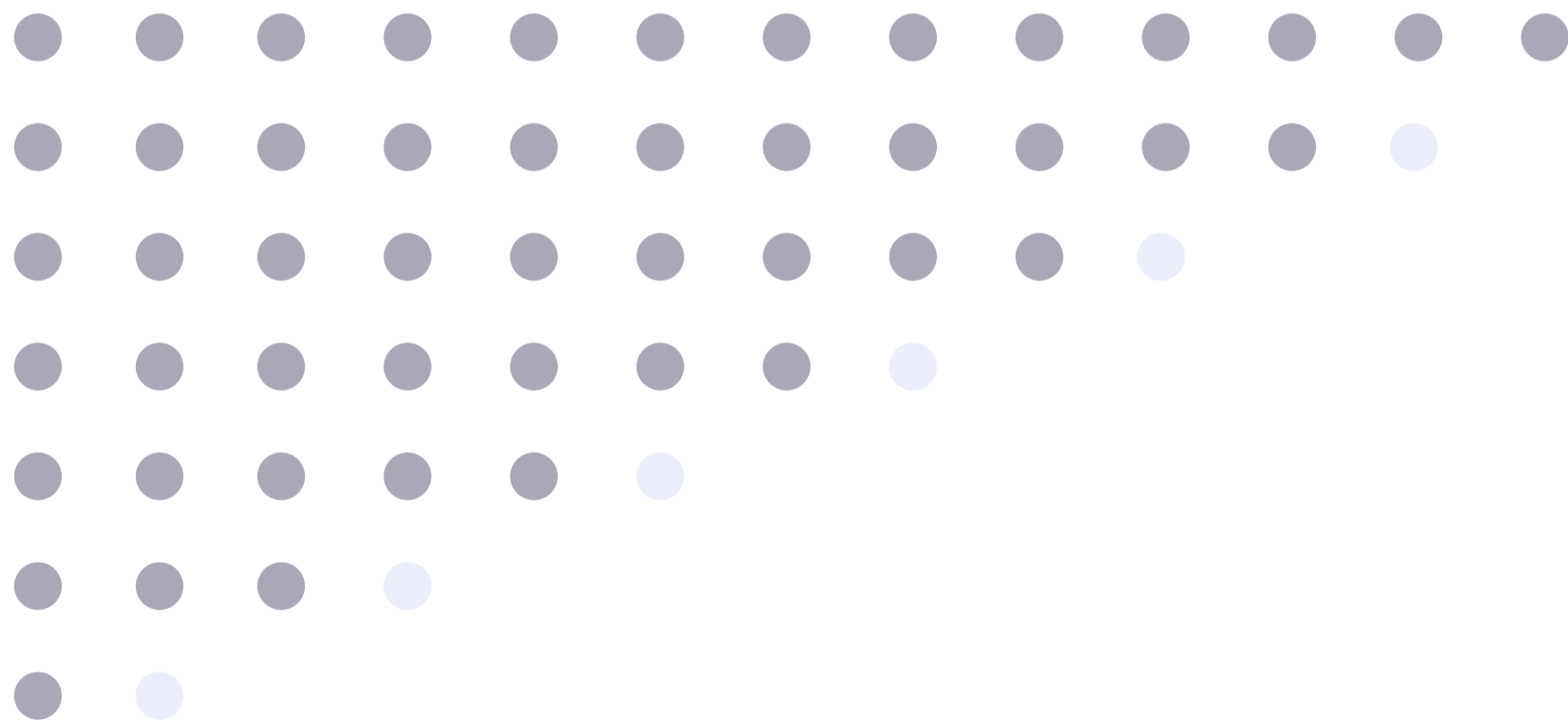




SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT STUDY

**101,421,493 POSTS SHOW HOW TO WRITE THE
BEST CONTENT ON FACEBOOK VS. INSTAGRAM
VS. TWITTER IN 2020**



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Introduction



When it comes to social media marketing, everyone has a favorite platform. Every social marketer is fighting to get the best results on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. And they're typically succeeding on one platform more than the others.

So what if in 2020 you could raise your engagement on all three, with simple tweaks in your strategy?

Most experts already have an idea about which platform brings more engagement, where to post more and where to use more photos or videos. But they're not always right.

Or they may be missing one key insight to boost their engagement even further.

That's why [Socialinsider](#) shook hands with the content experts at [Planable](#) and set up to debunk the myths by creating an outline of the most engaging post and post caption on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

We took a close look at over 101 million posts from 178,463 profiles across all platforms to figure out what the most engaging posts have in common.

We analyzed the actual engagement power of each platform, the impact of different caption lengths, the use of emojis, the effects of asking questions, the impact of different post messages and even how special activations such as Christmas posts impact your analytics KPIs.

Keep reading to learn how to write the perfect captions for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Summary



In this study, you'll discover:

- 1. On which platform are brands more active.** We find out where brands choose to be more vocal and post more, as well as the posting habits from 2017 until the present day.
- 2. Which platform brings the highest engagement rate per post.** We look at an overall average engagement rate per Facebook post versus Instagram post versus Twitter post to see which platform has a more responsive audience.
- 3. What type of post works best on each platform and how long should captions be.** We find the perfect combination between the length of the caption and the type of post: images, carousels/albums, links, statuses, and videos.
- 4. What does the perfect post look like on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.** We identify the combos that bring the highest engagement rates on each of these 3 platforms.
- 5. Do emojis influence engagement on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.** We look at how posts that contain emojis perform and what the optimal number of emojis seems to be.
- 6. Does asking questions in the caption encourage engagement.** We understand if asking questions actually makes your audience answer through comments and likes.
- 7. What types of messages raise more interactions.** We take a good look at post messages from categories such as promotions, giveaways, tutorials, DIYs, events, contests.
- 8. How do holiday posts perform.** We understand if Christmas posts bring engagement on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

Key Findings



1. Twitter is by far the platform where brands interact the most, but the overall engagement might be deceiving. Brands post, on average, 60 posts per month on Facebook, 25 posts/month on Instagram, and 195 posts/month on Twitter.

2. Instagram is by far the most engaging platform, with an average engagement rate/post of 2.26%, as opposed to 0.21% on Facebook and only 0.06% on Twitter. Although brands post less on Instagram, this is where the audience is more willing to interact with them.

3. 20.7% of all posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter include emojis in the caption and they have higher engagement rates per post. Across the board, posts with emojis in the caption lead to an increase in engagement compared to posts without emojis.

4. 9.8% of all posts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram include questions in the caption and it leads to a decrease in engagement. Brands seem to already be aware of the fact that asking questions on social media rarely leads to getting the answers they hoped for.

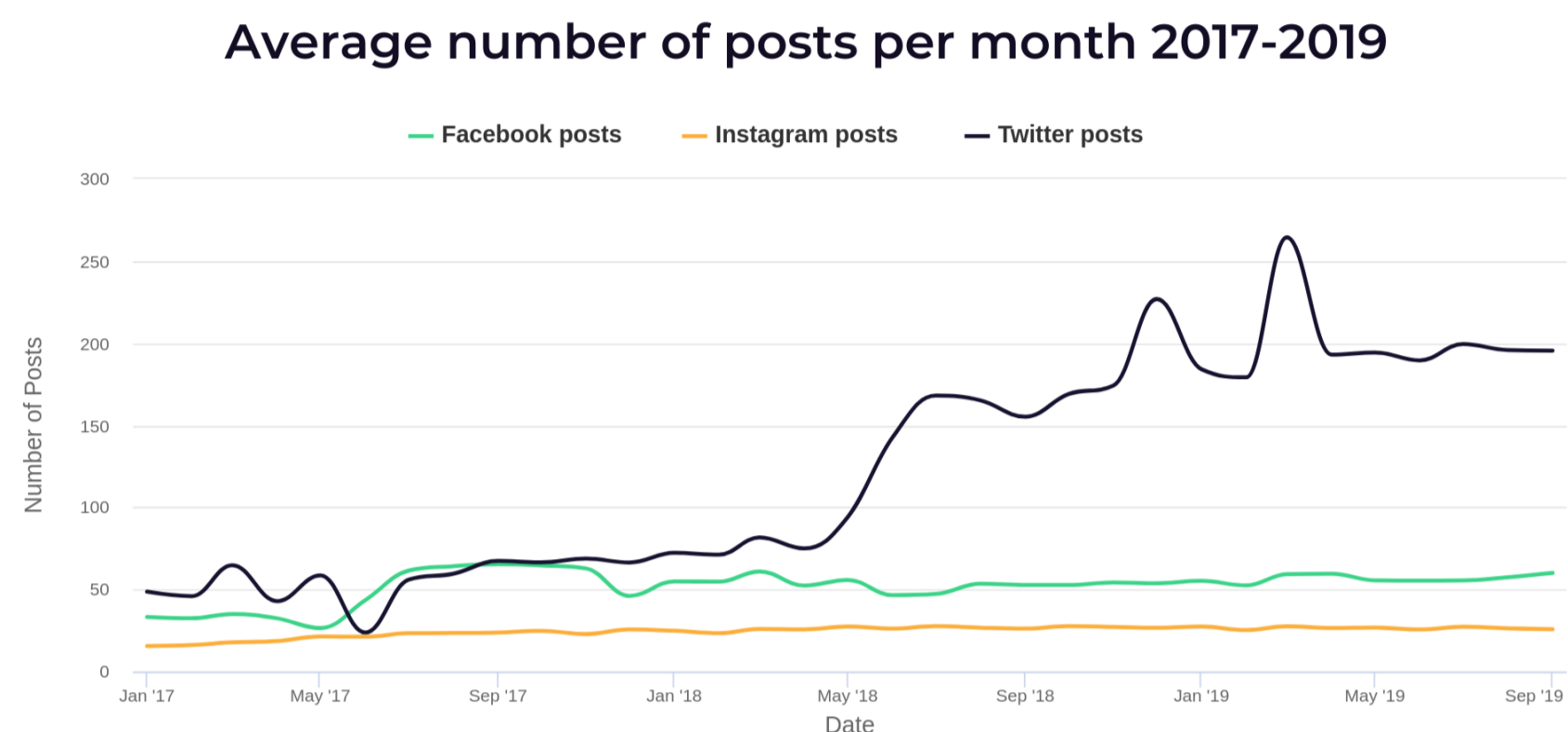
5. Perfect posts: over 20 emojis, short captions with albums/carousels or videos. Using over 20 emojis, writing short captions of under 10 words and posting albums/ carousels on Facebook and Instagram, but videos on Twitter results in higher engagement rates per post.

6. Messages in captions: Posts about contests and giveaway are still top performers. Posts about contests and giveaways perform exceptionally well across the board, bringing higher engagement on all 3 platforms, while tutorial posts perform badly across the board.

7. Christmas posts only perform well on Facebook - 0.35%. Posts that include Christmas words or Christmas hashtags only have a higher engagement rate than regular posts on Facebook, while on Instagram and Twitter they bring down the engagement.

1. Brands post on Twitter twice more than on Instagram and Facebook combined

There is an average of 195 brand posts per month on Twitter. On Instagram, brands post only 25 posts per month, while on Facebook the average is 60 posts per month.



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

planable socialinsider

With few exceptions, the trend of posting more on Twitter, less on Facebook and even less on Instagram has been constant from 2017 until the present.

However, there has been one notable change: sometime in May 2018, the average number of tweets per month almost tripled to what it is today.

This makes it obvious that Twitter is the preferred platform. But it's actually a tricky situation. With so many posts, there's a higher risk of having your messages ignored and lost in the feed.

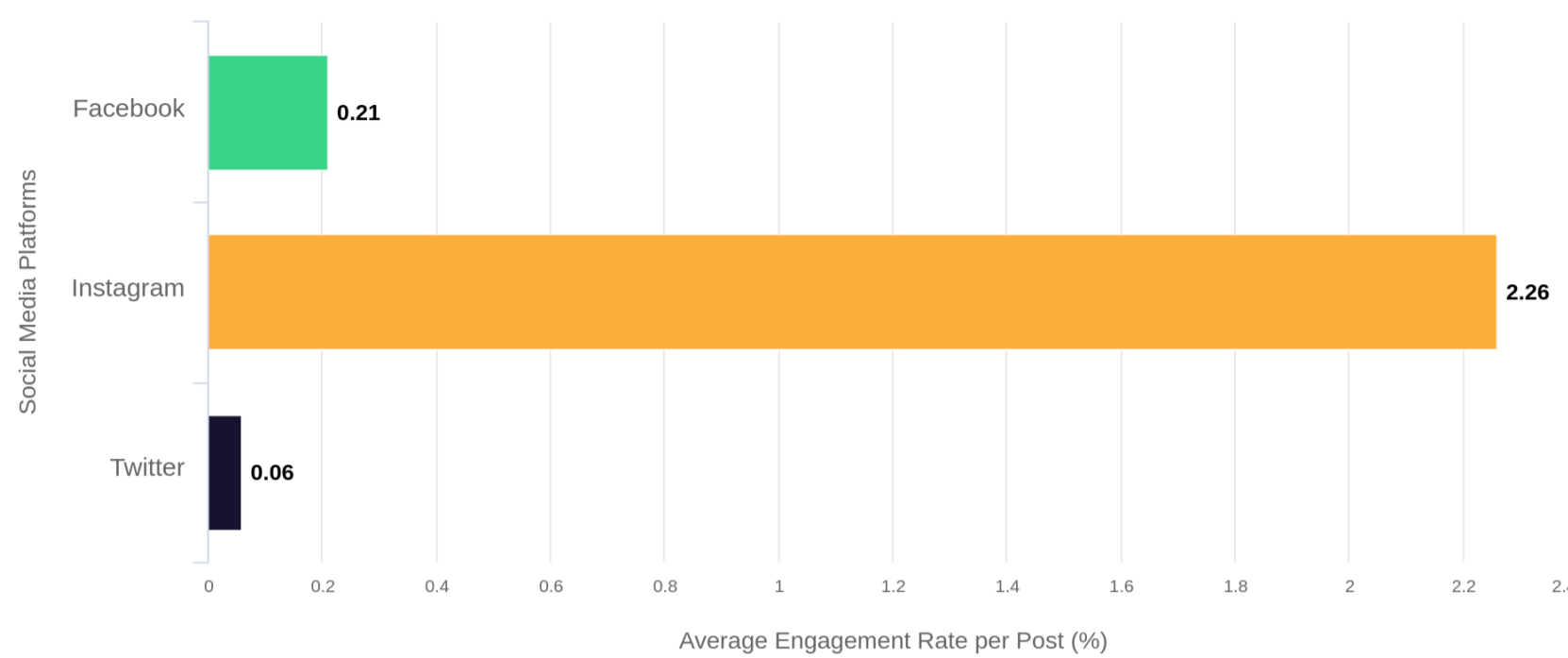
To fully understand how well brands reach their audience, we need to take a look at the average engagement per post on each social media platform.

2. Instagram is by far the most engaging platform, with an average engagement rate/post of 2.26%, as opposed to 0.21% on Facebook and only 0.06% on Twitter.

Although the overall engagement shown in your analytics might look good at first sight, it's important to look at the rates of individual posts to figure out if posting more is really the answer.

Instagram's average engagement rate per post is around 2.26%, while Twitter and Facebook are well under 0.50%

Average engagement rate per post on each platform



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

planable socialinsider

There are two possible reasons for this: people on Instagram are more likely to like and comment, or all the **Twitter "noise"** is overwhelming and disrupts the message.



Jenn Herman Social Media Strategist | **Jenn's Trends**

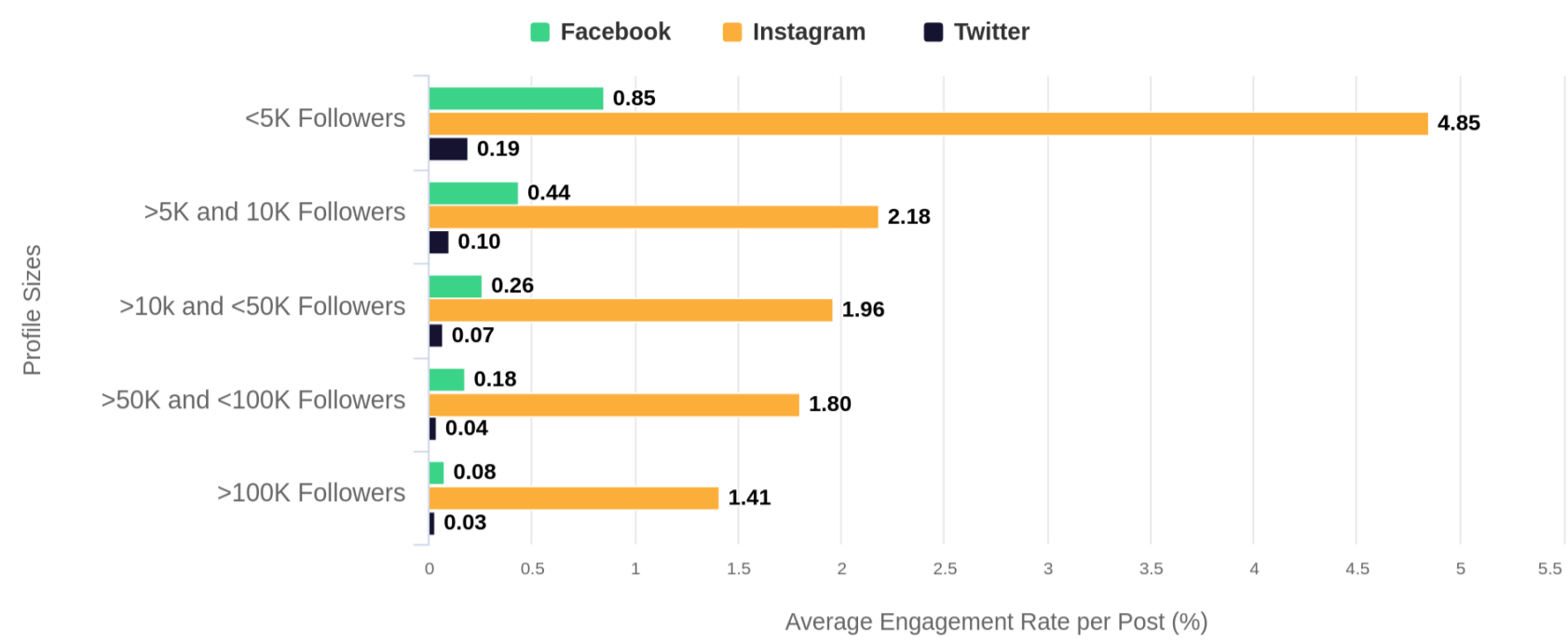
I love seeing that engagement rate for Instagram at 2.26%. I've always said Instagram is highly engaged - especially compared to Facebook and Twitter - which your data correlates with other stats I've seen in the past. All the more reason to focus on Instagram for community building and relationships!

Smaller profiles have better engagement rates on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Another interesting fact is that smaller profiles have more loyal audiences and obtain higher engagement rates per post than big profiles.

In fact, the bigger the profile, the smaller the engagement rates.

Average engagement rate per post by profile size



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

planable socialinsider

There may be power in numbers, but not if those numbers are dormant. When it comes to having a reliable audience, smaller profiles might actually have a leg up.

- Profiles with fewer than 5,000 followers receive on average 4.85% engagement rate on Instagram, 0.85% on Facebook and 0.19% on Twitter
- Profiles with between 5K and 10K followers receive on average 2.18% engagement rate on Instagram, 0.44% on Facebook and 0.10% on Twitter
- Profiles with between 10K and 50K followers receive on average 1.96% engagement rate on Instagram, 0.26% on Facebook and 0.07% on Twitter
- Profiles with between 50K and 100K followers receive on average 1.80% engagement rate on Instagram, 0.18% on Facebook and 0.04% on Twitter
- Profiles with over 100K followers receive on average 1.41% engagement rate on Instagram, 0.08% on Facebook and 0.03% on Twitter.



Andy Crestodina co-founder & strategist | Orbit Media

It's not getting easier. We asked 1000+ bloggers about their biggest challenges both engagement and winning traffic from social media were numbers one and two.

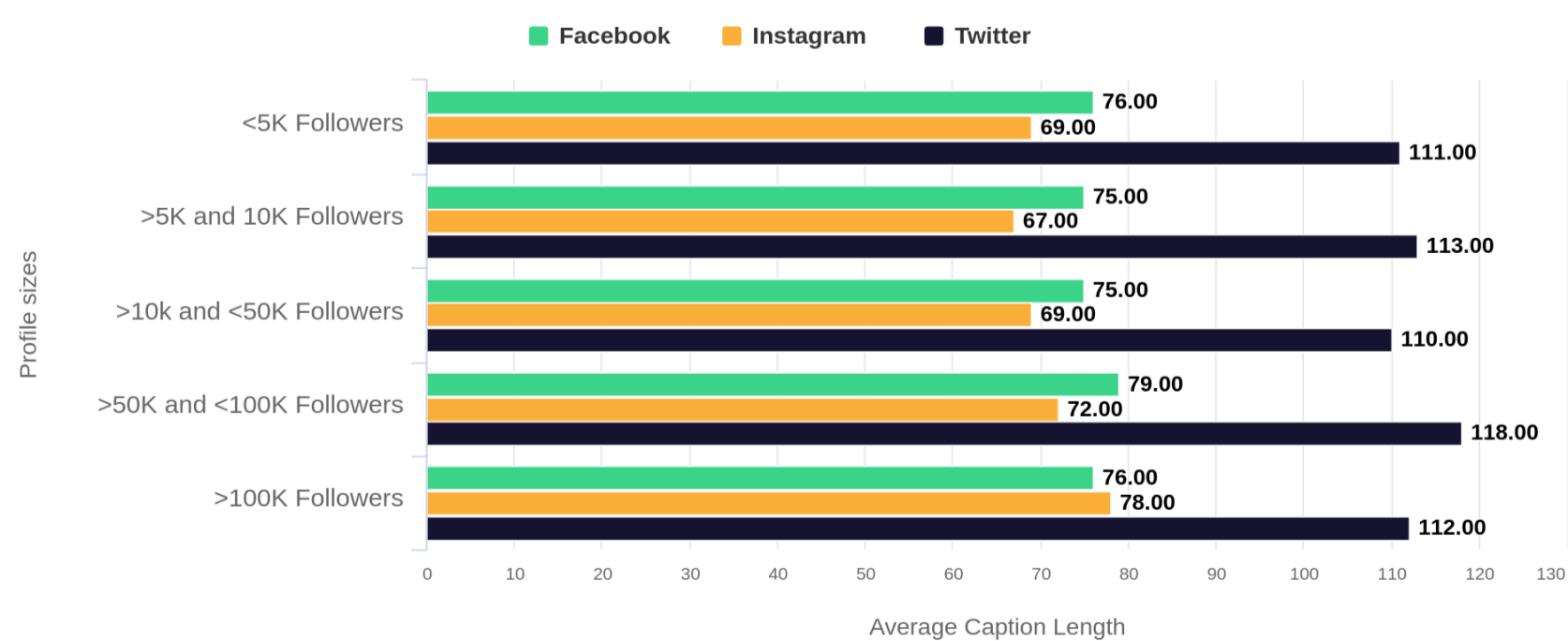
This new analysis confirms the massive differences between channels that marketers have noticed for years. Twitter has more noise and less engagement. Instagram has less noise and more engagement. But if your goal is traffic, Twitter may still be a better choice. The inability to add links to posts makes Instagram a tough choice if you want to bring people back to your property.

Enjoy the engagement on Instagram, but keep in mind that almost none of that engagement is clicks and visits. Great for brand awareness! Terrible for conversion...

3. Brands post the longest captions on Twitter: 110 - 120 characters.

Despite being the only platform with a character limit, Twitter is the platform where brands post the longest messages: between 110-120 characters, which means somewhere between 10 and 30 words.

Average caption length (characters) by profile size



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

On the other hand, posts on both Facebook and Instagram are shorter, around 70 characters, or less than 10 words.

So have brands identified the best practices?

4. Perfect posts consist of over 20 emojis, short captions, and albums/ carousels on Facebook and Instagram, but videos on Twitter.

When trying to understand what exactly makes a post score high on engagement, we looked at all of the different elements that go into it: from the length of the caption to the addition of an image, video or link, to the use of emojis to complement messages.

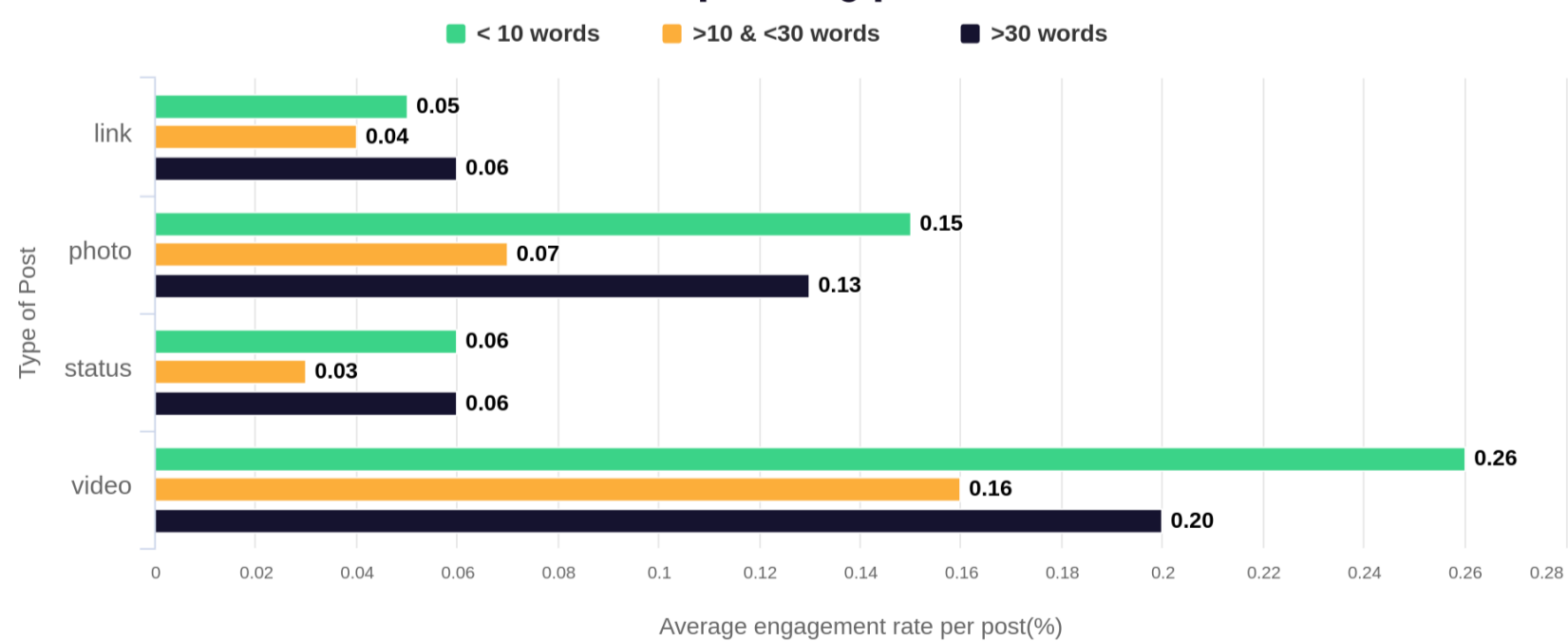
Here's what we now know:

Short messages paired with carousels on Instagram and Facebook and videos on Twitter perform better.

On Twitter, post videos with short captions of under 10 words for the highest engagement rate/post - 0.26%.

Images also perform well, despite the fact that Twitter isn't the most visual of the three social media platforms.

Twitter avg. engagement rate per post by caption length and post type



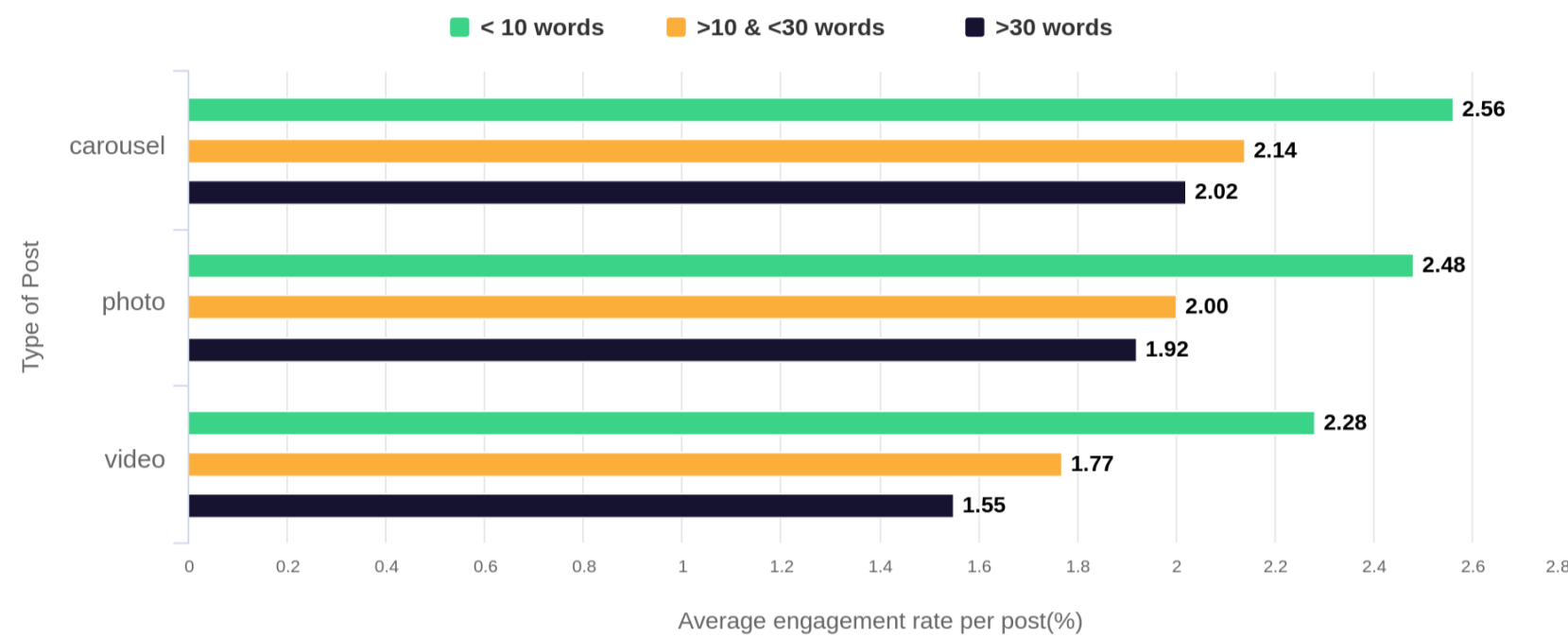
Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

planable socialinsider

On Instagram, the data supports the findings of our previous study: Posting carousels with short captions of under 10 words brings the highest average engagement rate per post - 2.56%.

By far, these short captions on images outperform videos on Instagram. But videos do have their purpose on this platform: **video posts receive the most comments**, as seen in a previous study.

Instagram avg. engagement rate per post by caption length and post type



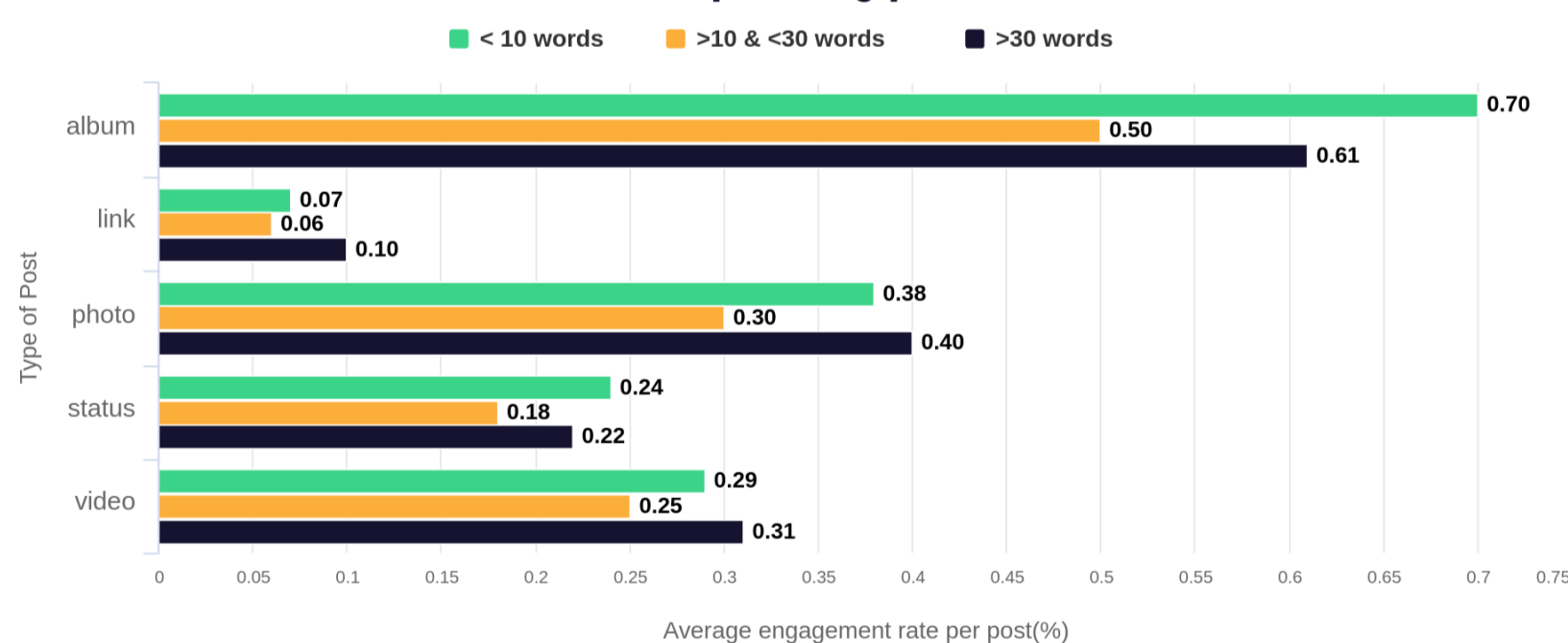
Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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On Facebook, the same rules seem to apply as with Instagram. Albums with short captions (written for the entire album, not on individual images) bring the highest average engagement rate - 0.70%.

The album posts on which the data is based refers to a post with multiple images uploaded, similar to the **carousel posts on Instagram**.

Facebook avg. engagement rate per post by caption length and post type



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

planable socialinsider

But these numbers don't mean that brands can rule out video posts.

When looking at the pool of data from 2017 to 2019, video posts seem to be in third place engagement-wise. But one important factor to consider is that lately, video format has been on the rise, as shown in the **Facebook video study**.

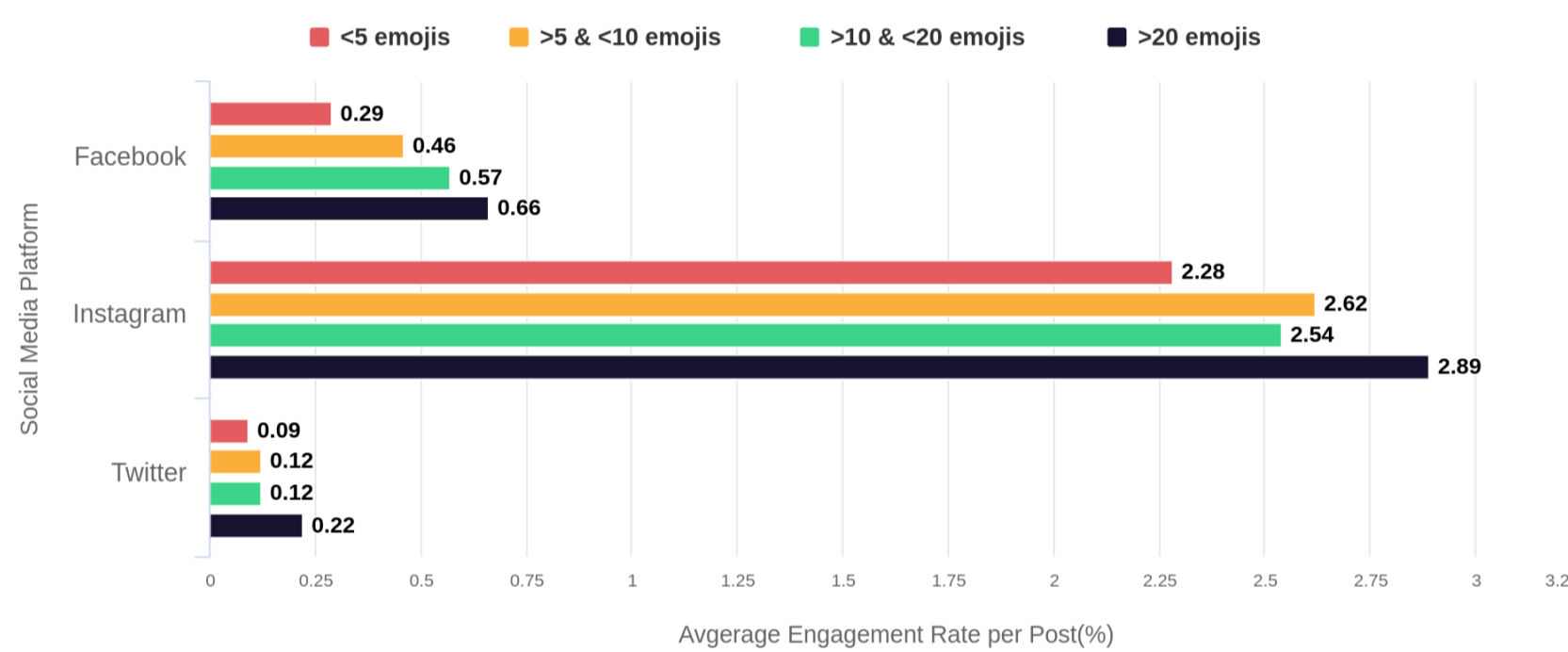
However, there is one notable outcome: **When posting links, single images, statuses, or videos, people need more information, which translates into longer captions of over 30 words.**

Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter messages containing over 20 Emojis have high engagement

While 20 emojis seems like a lot, the truth is that today emojis have become part of the day-to-day vocabulary.

Adding lots of emojis to those short and sweet captions plays as an extension of the message, rounding it up into a clearer, more evocative idea.

Average engagement rate per post by number of emojis

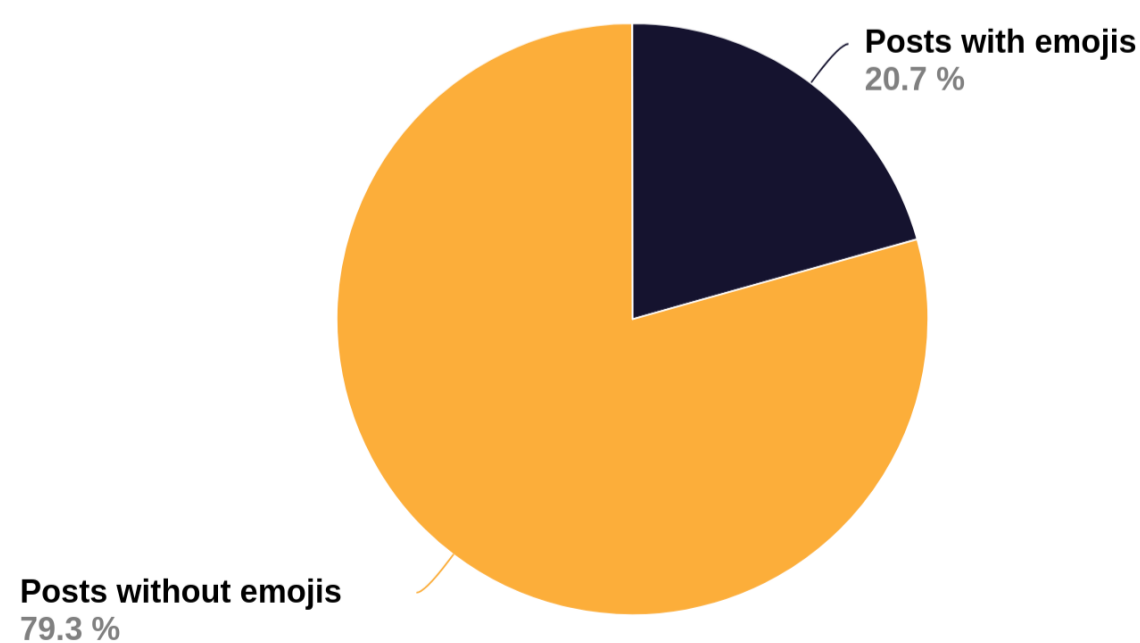


Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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And brands are starting to notice the power of emojis, as over 20% of all posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter contain at least one emoji.

Posts with emojis in the caption on all platforms combined



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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Lilach Bullock Digital Marketing Influencer I

lilachbullock.com

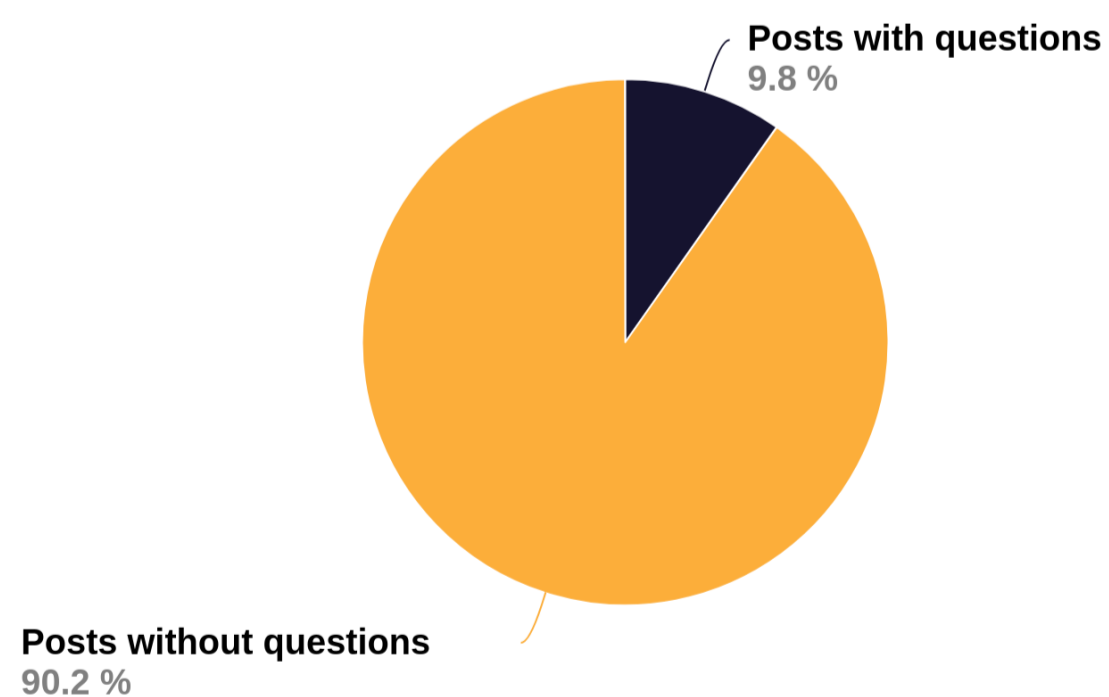
I'm not very surprised to see that Instagram leads the way in terms of engagement; in fact, I would say that Instagram is currently the best social media platform for businesses.

It's also very interesting to see what the 'perfect post' looks like – and it makes perfect sense. Brands and marketers clearly need to be on Instagram, but whichever platform they use, they should create lots of visual content, leverage emoji and keep things short and sweet!

5. 9.8% of all posts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram include questions in the caption and it leads to a decrease in engagement.

Brands might expect their audience to answer the questions they're asking in the caption, but in reality, data shows that questions do the exact opposite, regardless of the platform.

Posts with questions in the caption on all platforms combined

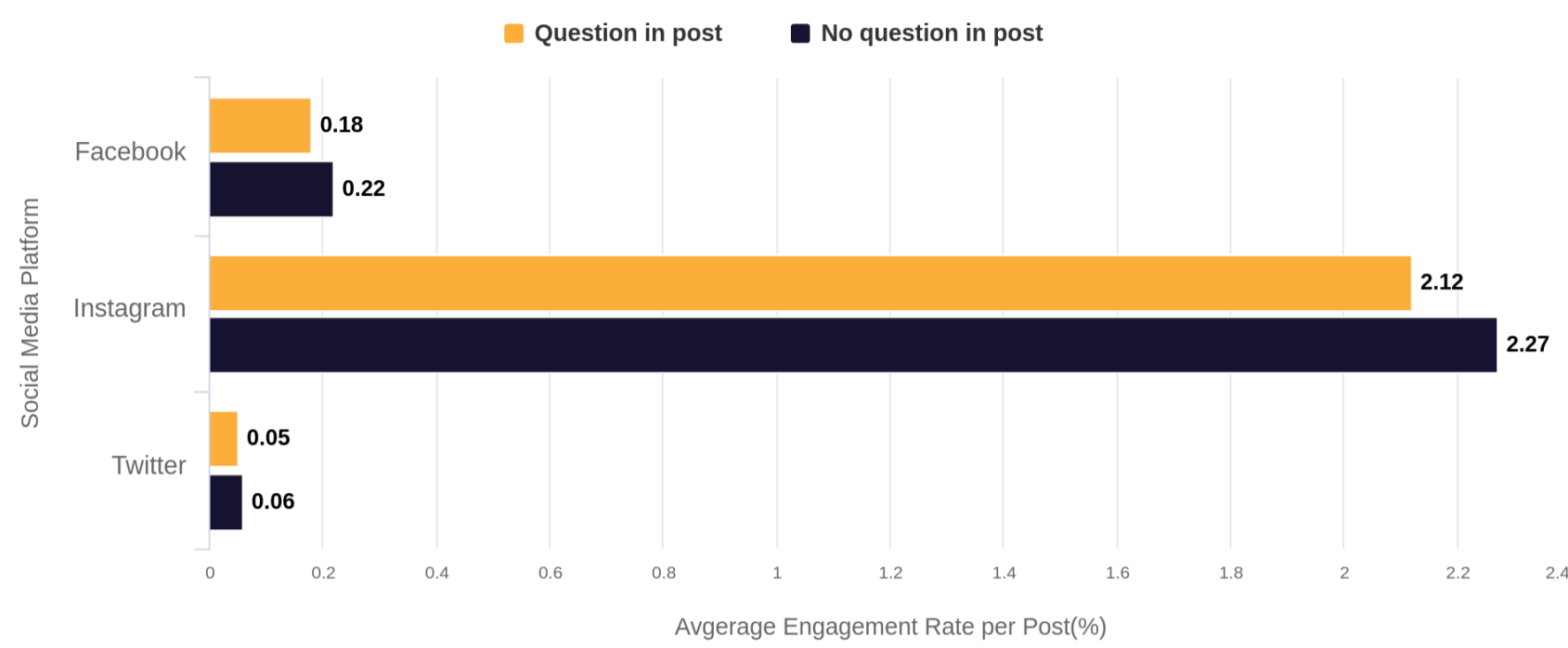


Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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The engagement for posts that contain questions drops to 0.18% on Facebook, 2.12% on Instagram and 0.05% on Twitter.

Average engagement rate per post with questions



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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6. Contests and giveaway posts perform exceptionally well across the board

There are certain types of post messages that are very common and can easily be posted either individually, either part of campaigns or brand activations. And the audience typically has a strong response to these posts: they either love or hate them.

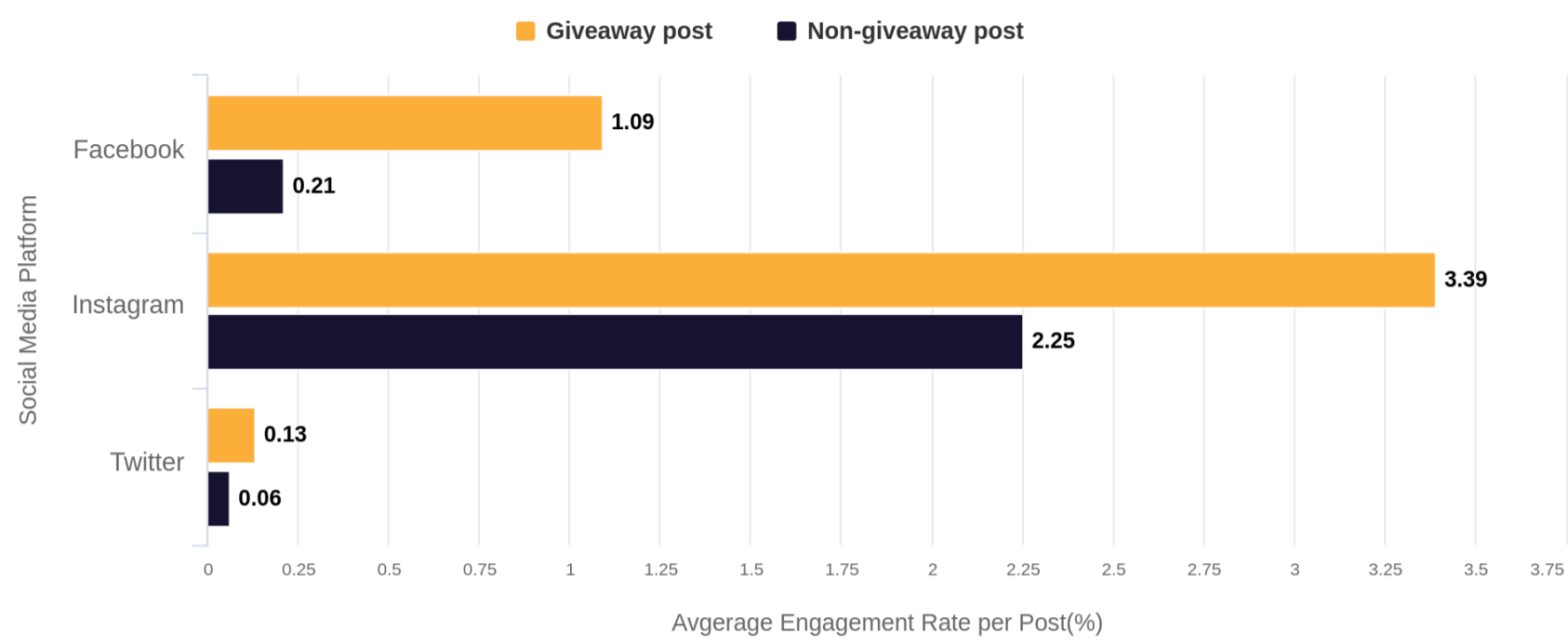
We look at the posts that are about giveaways, DIYs, promos, contests and tutorials.

- **Giveaway:** The best performing posts will be giveaways, which are always highly engaging regardless of the platform.

By the nature of a giveaway post, which typically calls on the audience to react and offers incentives to do so, it's no surprise that the engagement is much higher.

Therefore, the engagement rate per post reaches on average 1.09% on Facebook, 3.39% on Instagram, and 1.13% on Twitter.

Average engagement rate per giveaway post



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

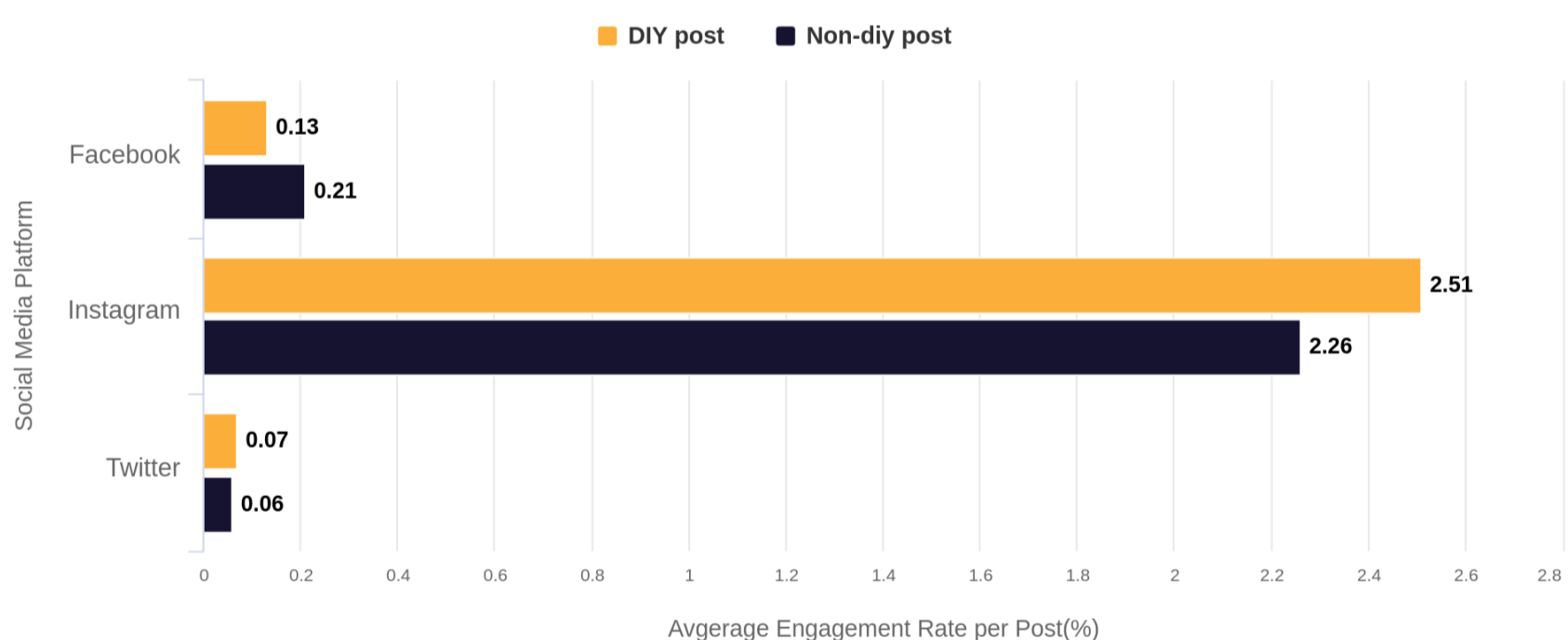
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These numbers are much higher than regular posts can reach.

- **DIY:** The popular “do-it-yourself” posts haven’t lost their magic, rising the engagement rate per post on Instagram to 2.51% and on Twitter to 0.07%.

However, Facebook is not a friendly platform for these types of messages, as they result in a drop in the average engagement rate to 0.13%.

Average engagement rate per DIY post



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

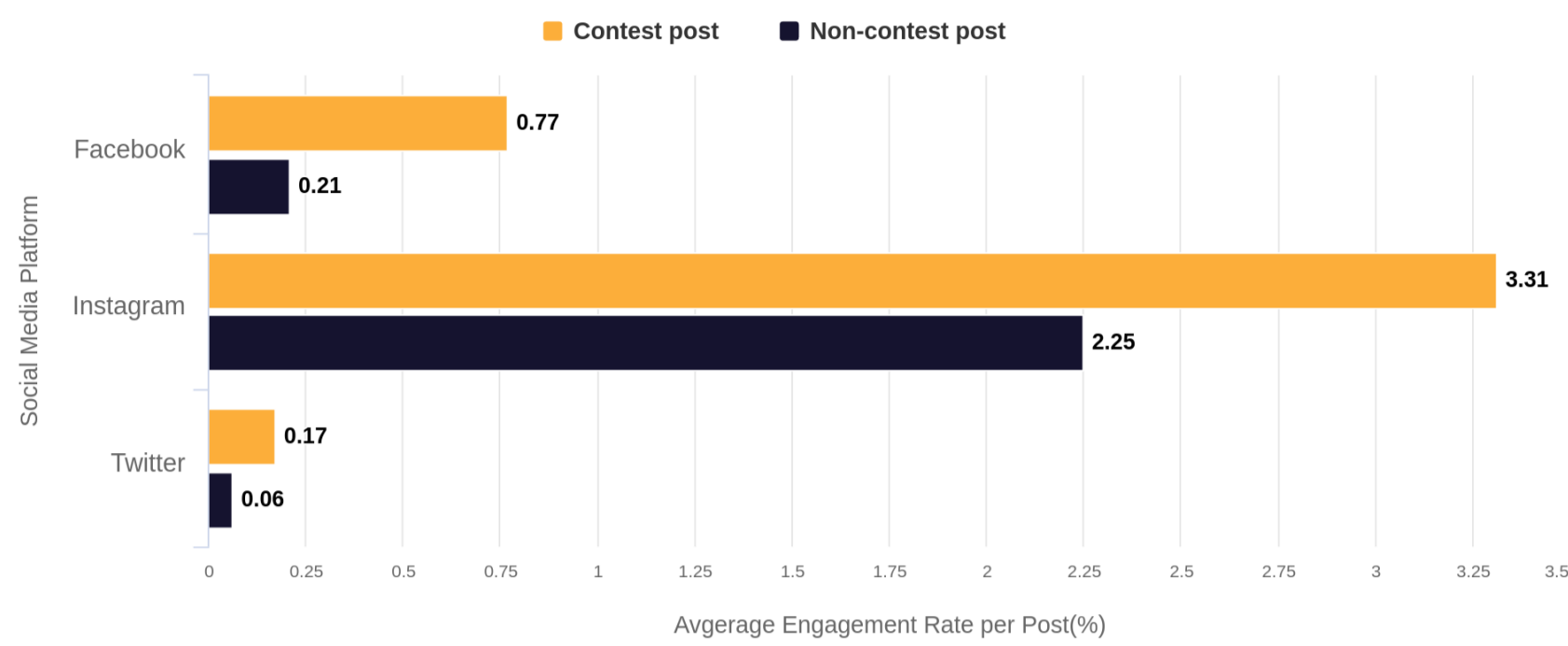
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This means that DIY can be a great strategy on Instagram especially, and might even work on Twitter as well in certain cases.

- **Contest:** Mentioning a contest in the post brings up the engagement almost as much as a giveaway - on all 3 platforms.

As seen in the charts, the average engagement rates go up to 0.77% on Facebook, 3.31% on Instagram and 0.17% on Twitter.

Average engagement rate per contest post



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

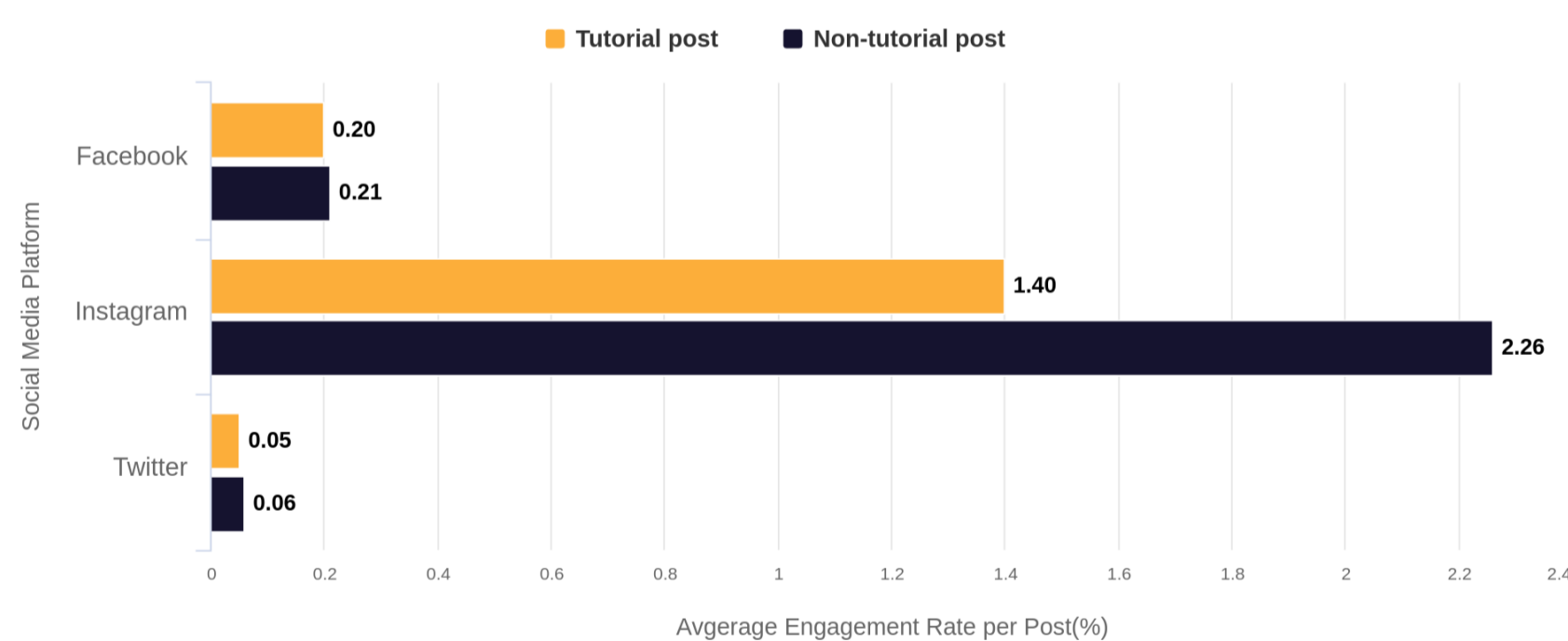
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The key takeaway here is that the audience will always engage with brand posts if they're offered an incentive to do so.

The prize doesn't always have to be anything big. A little sign of appreciation can go a long way.

- **Tutorials:** While sharing knowledge might seem like a good idea, when doing so in the form of tutorials, they're mostly ignored.

Average engagement rate per tutorial post



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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This can be explained by the fact that brands need to be more down to earth and humanized as much as possible, which makes people feel comfortable to engage in a conversation.

Tutorials have the tendency to offer information from the position of "higher authority", and that ends up creating distance rather than closeness.

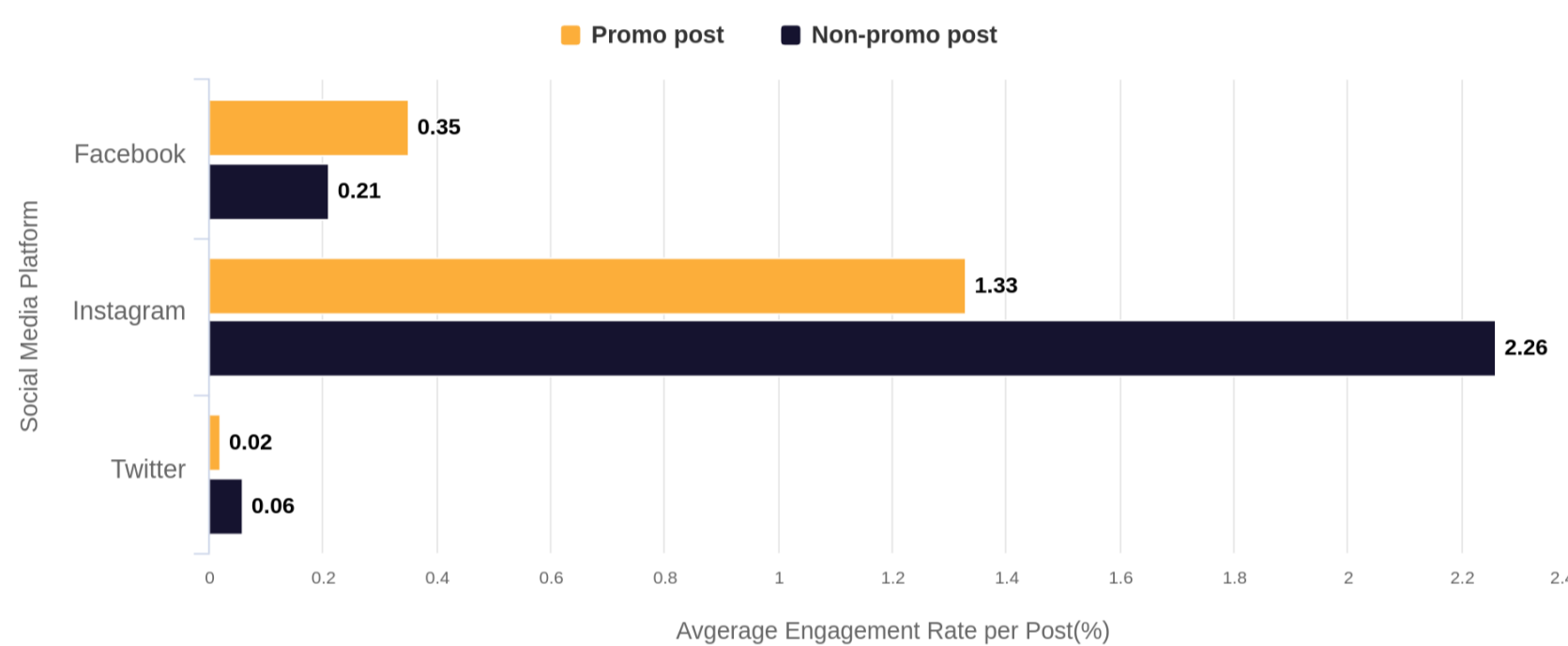
- **Promo:** Use most of the promo or promotional announcements on Facebook, and less on Instagram and Twitter.

Promos are also quite common among brand posts, but they're not performing too well on Instagram and Twitter.

Since on Instagram the engagement rate per post drops almost 1% when mentioning promos, and on Twitter goes down to 0.02%, promoting brand products needs to be carefully thought through.

Try mixing promo posts with the highly engaging giveaways to still keep those numbers up.

Average engagement rate per promo post



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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On Facebook, on the other hand, promos are very well received and people actually interact more with these types of posts, taking the engagement per post to an average of 0.35%, as opposed to the 0.21% norm.

The conclusion? When brands write about contests or giveaways, the engagement spikes on all 3 platforms while posting tutorials results in lower engagement on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This means you need to be careful how you leverage these types of posts in order to get the message across, but not hurt your engagement too badly.

7. Christmas posts work best on Facebook, raising the average engagement rates to 0.35%-0.39%

The holiday season is typically a big deal when it comes to social media strategies and most brands create special content for the occasion.

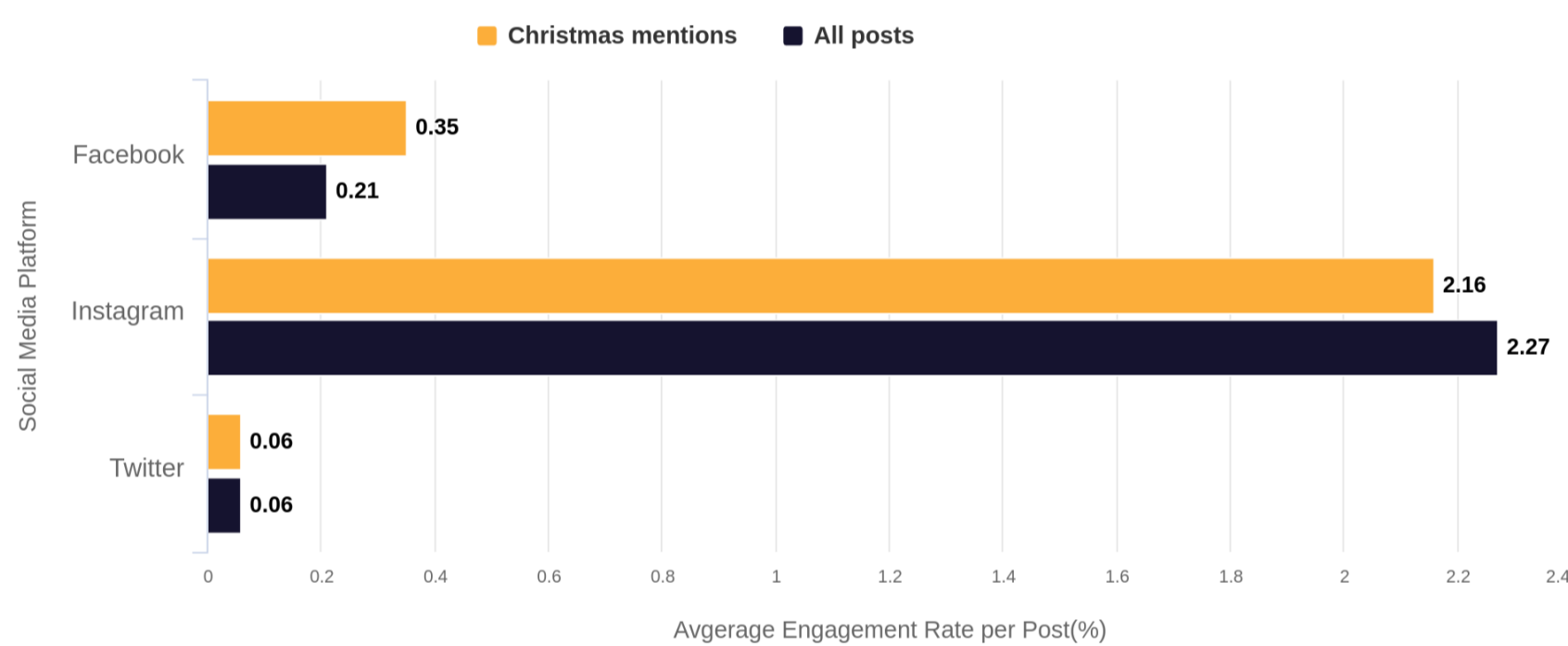
But to truly understand how these holiday content plans level up to day-to-day social media content, we dug through the posts to identify the ones with mentions of Christmas-related words, Christmas hashtags and Christmas emojis.

Posts with Christmas mentions and Hashtags

When publishing posts that include Christmas mentions in their text or Christmas hashtags, Facebook is the best choice, while on Twitter they don't have an effect.

On Facebook, the average engagement rates go up to 0.35% for Christmas mentions and 0.39% for Christmas hashtags.

Average engagement rate per post with Christmas mentions

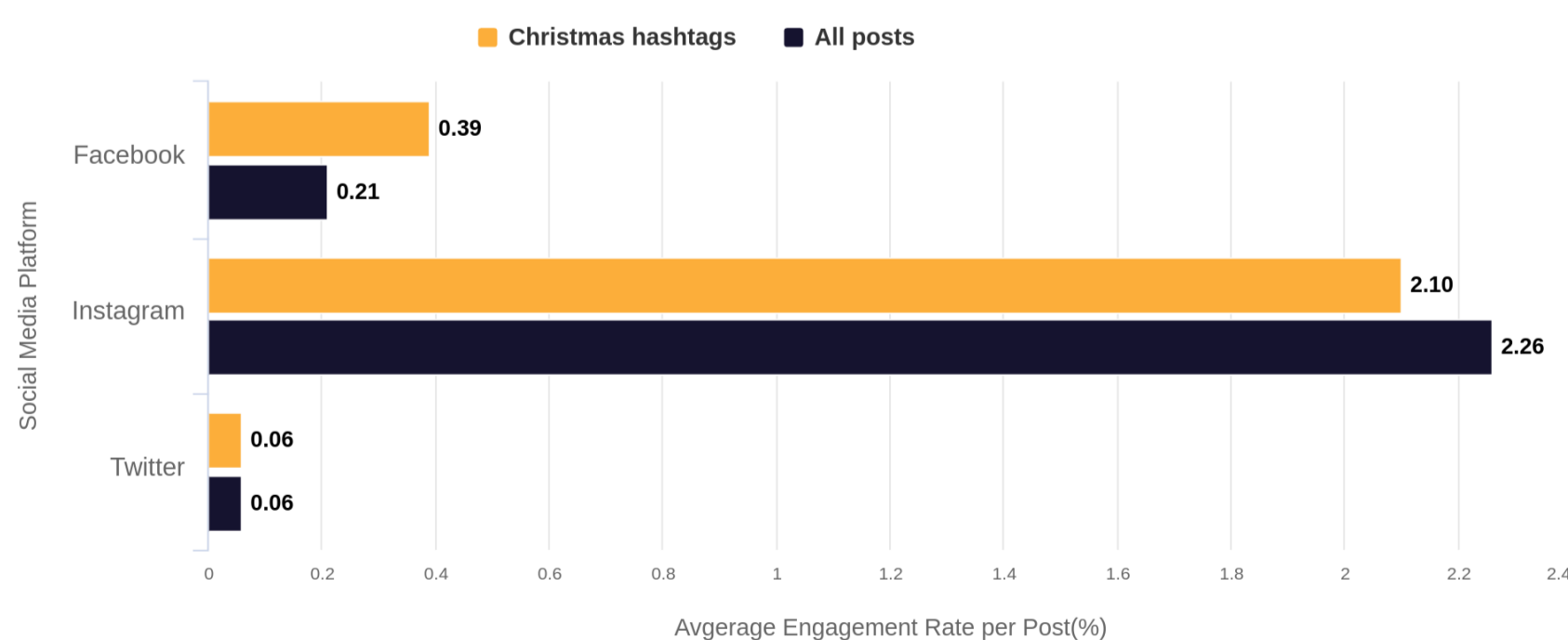


Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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The engagement rates per Christmas post drops to 2.16% for the mentions and 2.10% for the hashtags on Instagram, but remains the same as regular posts on Twitter.

Average engagement rate per post with Christmas hashtags



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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To understand how holiday posts impact social media results, we made a list with the most common Christmas words and hashtags, to get a sample of posts that can be labelled as Christmas:

- "Christmas"
- "Xmas"
- "Santa"
- "Reindeer"/reindeers
- "Rudolf",
- "North Pole"
- "Naughty or nice"
- "Santa's list"
- "Elves"
- "decorations",
- "Christmas star"
- "Greetings"
- "Season greetings"
- "Christmas wish"
- "Jolly"
- "Mistletoe"
- "Saint Nick"/ "St. Nick"/
"Saint Nicholas"/ "St.
Nicholas"
- "Bethlehem"
- "Christmas gifts"/
"Holiday gifts"
- "Gift bags"
- #christmas
- #xmas
- #christmastree
- #xmastree
- #merrychristmas
- #winter
- #santa
- #rudolf
- #reindeer
- #christmastime
- #xmastime
- #christmasdecor
- #xmasdecor
- #santaclaus
- #christmasdecorations
- #xmasdecorations
- #holidays
- #holiday
- #december
- #christmasiscoming
- #holidaygift
- #christmaslights
- #xmaslights
- #navidad
- #christmasgift
- #xmasgift
- #christmascountdown
- #xmascountdown
- #weihnachten
- #christmasmood
- #christmaseve
- #festive
- #silentnight
- #christmasmagic
- #xmasmagic
- #noel
- #happyholidays
- #christmasmusic
- #christmasdecor
- #xmasmusic
- #xmasdecor
- #christmasgiftideas
- #xmasgiftideas
- #adventcalendar
- #christmasparty
- #mxmasparty
- #christmasiscoming
- #wintertime
- #christmascarols
- #christmascoffee
- #candycane
- #christmasdinner
- #snowman
- #christmasvibes
- #xmasvibe
- #elf
- #christmascheer
- #xmascheer
- #christmasmovie
- #xmasmovie
- #christmasdrink
- #xmasdrink
- #christmassshopping
- #xmashopping

This led to a sample of 3,972,028 posts on Facebook, 829,244 posts on Instagram and 1,011,214 tweets.

We then compared the engagement rates of the posts with any of the words or hashtags from our list with the overall average engagement rates per post of each individual platform.

The Christmas Tree emoji, among the top emojis on Facebook and Twitter

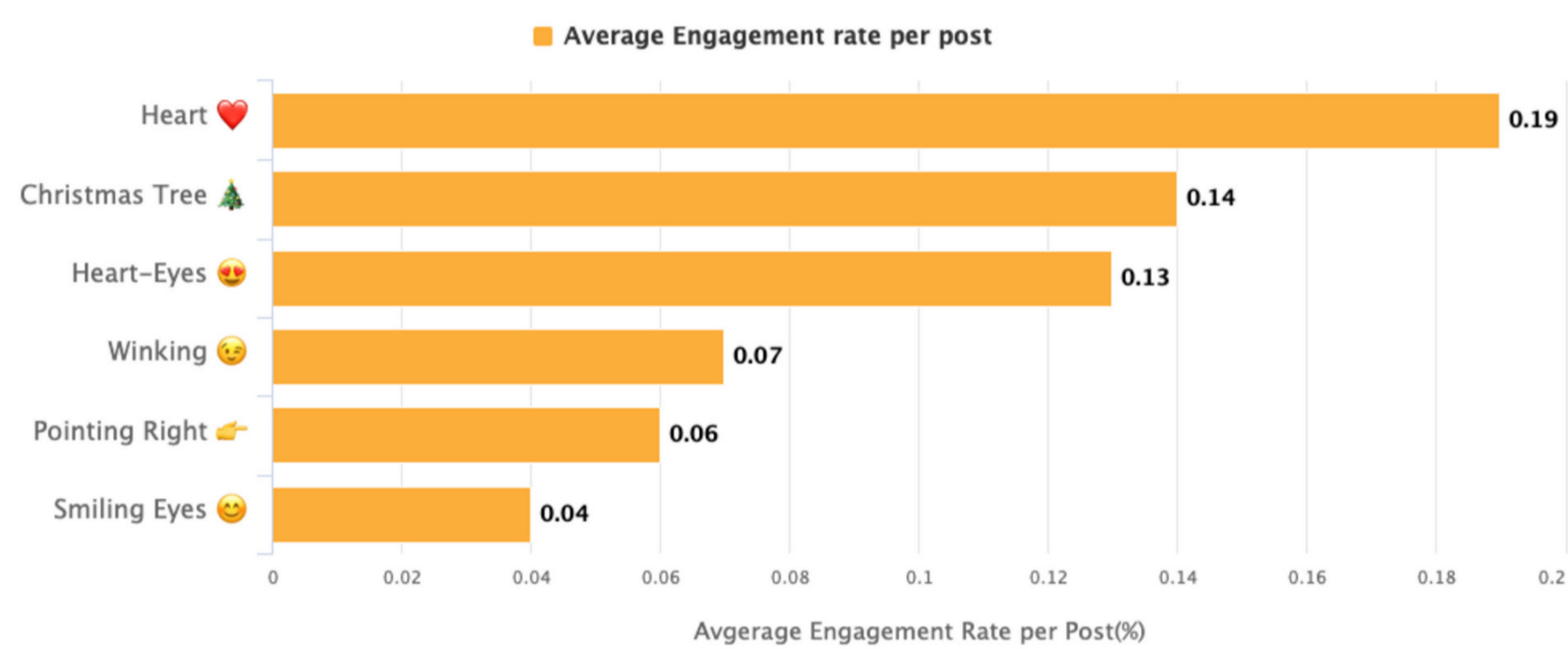
It's already established that people love emojis, but what about special Christmas emojis?

As it turns out, the most engaging emojis in the above-mentioned Christmas posts are typically regular emojis, but the Christmas Tree also brings high engagement rates on Facebook (0.53%) and Twitter (0.14%).

On Facebook, the Christmas spirit is a bit higher. The top emoji by engagement is the party popper 🎉, followed by heart ❤️, Christmas Tree 🎄, heart-eyes emojis 😍, sparkles ✨ and pointing right 👉.

Put together, they can tell a nice story of a fun Christmas party with a sparkling Christmas tree that everyone loves.

Top Facebook Christmas emojis

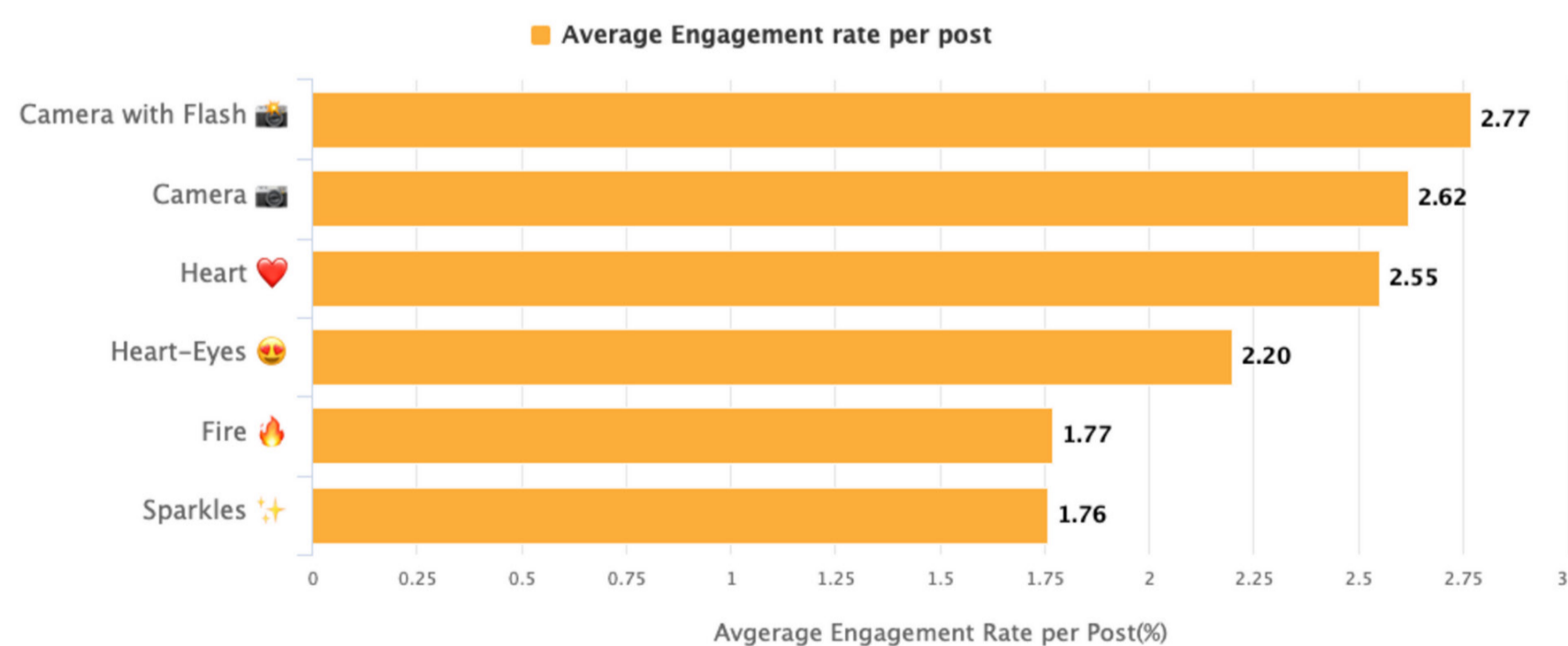


Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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On Instagram, regular emojis are more engaging than Christmas related one. The top emojis are camera 📷 and camera 📷 with flash, heart ❤️ and heart eyes 😍 fire 🔥 and sparkles ✨.

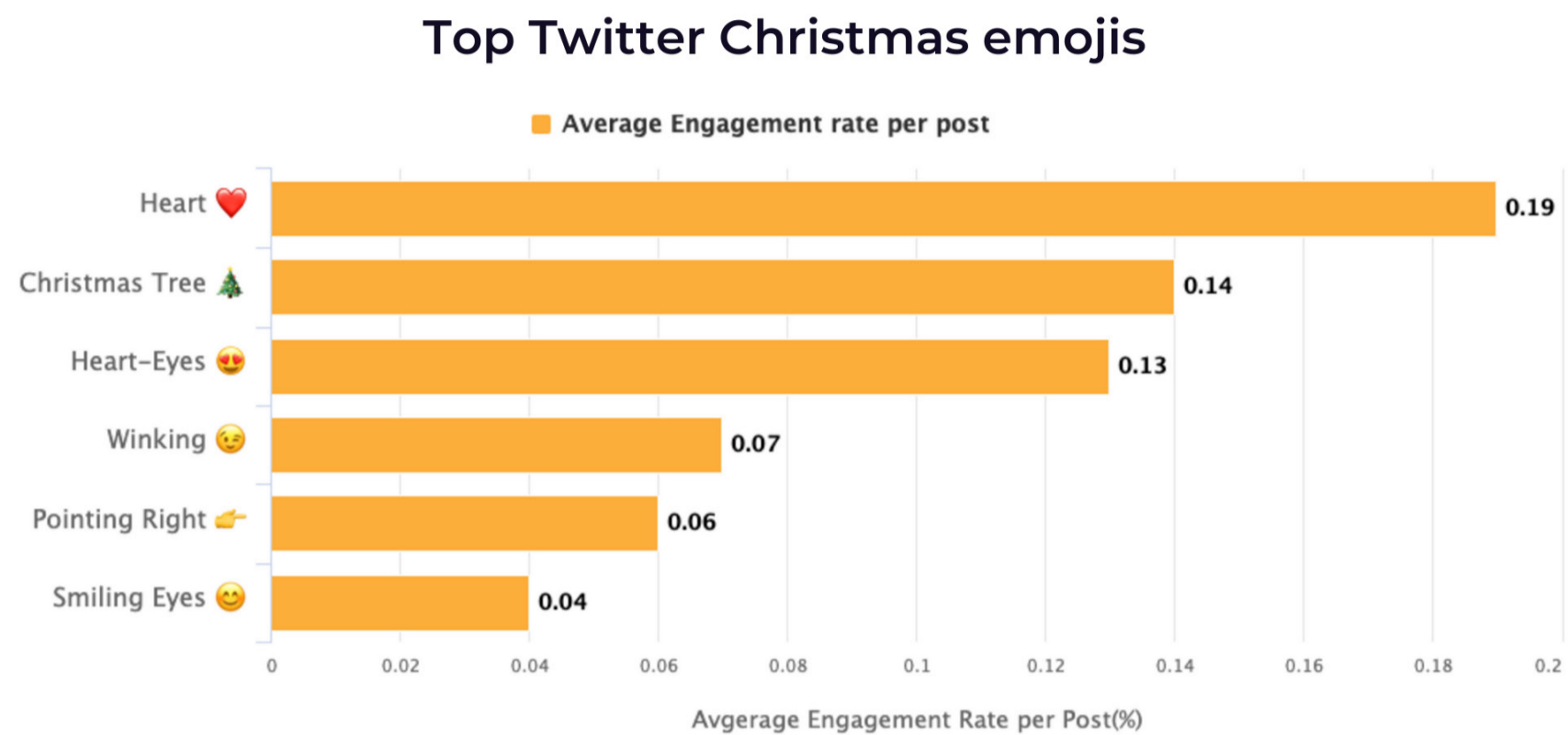
Top Instagram Christmas emojis



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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On Twitter, the heart emoji ❤️ is the most engaging one, followed by the Christmas tree 🎄, heart-eyes 😍, winking 😜, pointing right 🙌 and smiling eyes 😊.



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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Going through all this data enforces the idea that brands should treat each social media platform as a separate channel, instead of posting the same information everywhere.

These differences show exactly what and how to post on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter in order to get the best results and avoid unnecessary efforts.



Miruna Dragomir

Head of Marketing | Planable

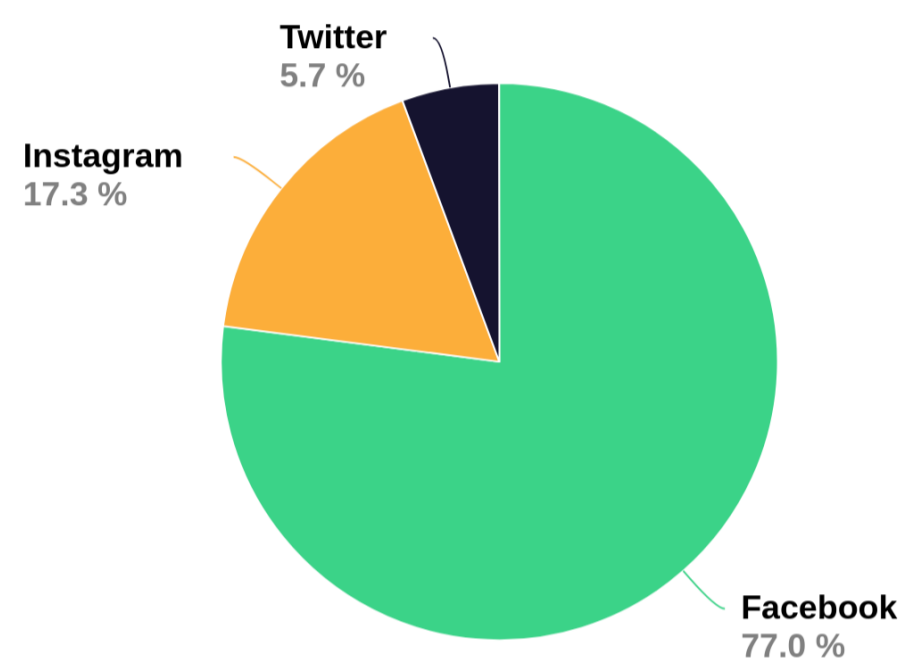
Contextual content and social media posts tied to events always have the power to strike engagement and interactions. We constantly see brands leveraging national days, holidays, or events to spike their awareness and sales. As for emojis, I'm all for it. We launch an [events emoji calendar](#) every year to help social media managers get inspired and attract the right attention.

Methodology



To gather the data for the posts with the highest engagement rate per post we looked at 101,421,493 posts from 178,463 profiles of different sizes, across all platforms.

Brand profiles: Volume of analyzed profiles on each platform



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

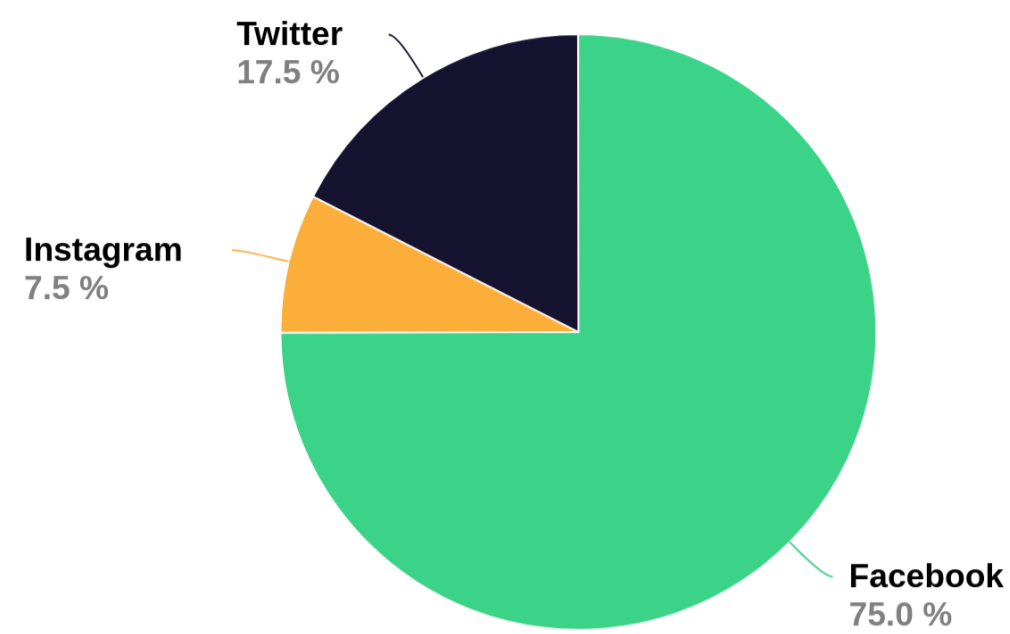
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Within this report, we included representative business Instagram, Facebook and Twitter handles with an active presence on the platforms between 1st of January 2017 and 1st of October 2019.

The data was gathered as follows:

- Facebook: 137,486 profiles with 76,045,525 posts
- Instagram: 30,873 profiles with 7,653,440 posts
- Twitter: 10,104 profiles with 17,722,528 posts

Brand posts: Volume of analyzed posts on each platform



Source: Socialinsider data
Data range: January 2017 - October 2019

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We used Socialinsider to find out metrics such as post counts and average engagement rates while respecting the Instagram, Facebook and Twitter API guidelines. Socialinsider defines total engagement as the sum of likes and comments, while the engagement rate is the average engagement per 100 followers.

We wanted to know which elements influence engagement in a positive or negative way, from post types to specific content elements such as emojis, caption length, questions or types of messages, as well as Christmas posts.

We define as giveaway posts, DIY posts, promo posts, contest posts, and tutorial posts those published messages that include mentions of these keywords in the captions

Similarly, we define Christmas posts as posts that include Christmas related keywords or hashtags in the caption.

Please note that this study was based on 2017-2019 data extracted by Socialinsider from brand posts that exist within the tool's database. Take this study as a guideline and a starting point for discovering the most engaging posts for your brand. Despite looking into a big pool of posts, certain insights might not be applicable for some profiles.



We're a collaboration platform for brand content. With Planable social media teams work better together and save time on coordinating content. The product makes it easy to visualize, approve and publish social content from one shared space. They're trusted by brands such as Jaguar Land Rover, WFP, and Stanford to simplify their content workflows.

Apply these insights to your posts and schedule your December calendar!



Socialinsider is a social media analytics tool that aims to deliver quality insights to businesses. With this tool you can track and analyze Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Youtube pages, run hashtags reports and create competitive benchmarks. It makes it easier to optimize all social media campaigns.

Check your social media content engagement with a free trial!

