

Case Study - Shorts

Summary

1. [Intro](#)
 2. [Campaigns setup](#)
 - 2.1. [Some bumps in the road](#)
 - 2.2. [The ad creative](#)
 3. [The results](#)
 - 3.1. [Location & Spend](#)
 - 3.2. [Gender](#)
 - 3.3. [Age group](#)
 4. [Key takeaways](#)
 5. [Best practices](#)
 - 5.1. [YouTube Shorts Ads](#)
 - 5.2. [TikTok Ads](#)
 - 5.3. [Instagram Reels Ads](#)
 - 5.4. [Pinterest Idea Ads](#)
 6. [Conclusion](#)
-

1. Intro

There have been so many updates in the digital advertising space in the last few years. And 2022 is no different. We all know it, feel it, and live it. The good thing is we love updates, especially when they can help us improve the way we communicate with our audience and create better experiences for them.

Since short-form videos have gained so much popularity in the last few years, we decided to conduct an experiment to see **what is the best advertising platform for short-form vertical video ads**.

And we're sharing all of our findings with you.

To run the experiment, we tested the same ad creative on all the platforms that allow running vertical video ads: TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and Pinterest Idea.

We wanted to see **which of these four platforms would help us bring more traffic to our website when using a short-form video ad format**. We also paid attention to the traffic quality, which should be your focus as well if your objective is bringing traffic.

If you haven't been experimenting with short-form video ads just yet, this case study may come in handy. We'll share a lot of learnings, so you can decide if running short-form video ads on any of these platforms can be a good fit for your brand.

Before starting the experiment, we agreed on two main hypotheses:

1. YouTube Shorts ads bring the most traffic to our website.
2. Pinterest Idea ads bring the most qualitative traffic to our website.

Everyone on the team was looking forward to seeing the results even before the campaigns started.

These were some of the most common questions that popped into our minds:

- Would the addition of Pinterest and YouTube Shorts beat TikTok's and Instagram Reels's rivalry when it comes to short-form vertical videos?
- Will the first two platforms fight for supremacy with the other two?
- And perhaps the most important question: What is the best platform for promoting short-form videos?

Let's find out. But not before telling you a little bit about our campaign setup so that you can understand the whole picture of the experiment.

2. Campaigns Setup

We allocated \$3,000 for the experiment, which ran for 15 days, from August 16 to August 30, 2022. The budget was equally split between the four platforms, each having a total of \$750, which was set at \$50/day.

All four campaigns targeted:

- The same **ad**: vertical video (20 seconds long, 1080x1920 px);
- The same **two locations**: US and Canada;
- The same **age group**: 25-54 years;
- The same **language**: English;
- The same **device**: mobile (Android)*;
- The same **audience**: graphic designers**;
- The same **landing page*****.

We wanted to see which of these four platforms has better potential to bring more qualitative traffic to our website when using the short-form video ad format.

**we will detail below why we targeted only Android*

***interest-based targeting (to be detailed below)*

****LP: <https://www.creatopy.com/campaign/scroll-stopping-ads/>*

2.1. Some bumps in the road

A. The objective

We initially planned to do the experiment around the brand awareness objective, which is probably the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about testing a short-form video ad campaign.

But the problem was that TikTok doesn't have (at least, for now) the brand awareness goal, only the reach one. Below you can see what objectives you can choose from on each platform.

Brand awareness would have been great as it could have helped us show ads to an audience that's more likely to remember us and pay attention to the ads. The reach objective was not the right fit in this case because it meant the ads would have been seen by as many people as possible, regardless of the quality. We've already mentioned that we value quality over quantity, which is why we went for the goal that's available on all four platforms: traffic.

Also, interestingly enough, Pinterest doesn't have the reach goal, and Instagram and Google Ads have it mixed with another.

TikTok

Advertising objective

Choose the best advertising objective based on your campaign goals. [Learn more](#)

Awareness



Reach

Show your ad to the maximum number of people.

Consideration



Traffic

Send more people to a destination on your website or app.



App installs

Get more people to install your app.



Video views

Get more people to view your video content.



Lead generation

Collect leads for your business or brand.



Community interaction

Get more page follows or profile visits.

Conversion



Conversions

Drive valuable actions on your website or app.

Instagram

Choose a campaign objective



Awareness



Traffic



Engagement



Leads



App promotion



Sales

YouTube

Choose your objective

Select an objective to tailor your experience to the goals and settings that will work best for your campaign

 Sales Drive sales online, in app, by phone, or in store	 Leads Get leads and other conversions by encouraging customers to take action	 Website traffic Get the right people to visit your website	 Product and brand consideration Encourage people to explore your products or services
 Brand awareness and reach Reach a broad audience and build awareness	 App promotion Get more installs, engagement and pre-registration for your app	 Local store visits and promotions Drive visits to local stores, including restaurants and dealerships.	 Create a campaign without a goal's guidance Choose a campaign type first, without a recommendation based on your objective.

Pinterest

Build awareness

Brand awareness

Help people discover your brand, products and other services

Video views

Promote videos to help people discover your brand or drive actions

Drive consideration

Consideration (formerly traffic)

Get more people to click your ad on Pinterest

Get conversions

Conversions

Drive people to take actions on your website

Catalog sales

Promote your product inventory with shopping ads

B. The targeting limitations

The second bump in the road was caused again by TikTok, as the targeting capabilities are not that diverse compared to its opponents in this experiment.

What we mean by this is that we wanted to target users from 11 countries. Based on the location where you initially created your account, TikTok only lets you [target people from specific countries](#). In our case, the address for the company is in the United States, so we can target nine countries with our ads. The audience we targeted was a match only for two countries of the nine, so we decided to target only these two on all four platforms—the US and Canada.

C. The audience limitations

We also found some limitations regarding the audiences we want to target. There are not so many options on TikTok. That's why we only chose two-three interests for each platform that better describe our target audience—graphic designers.

We didn't want to use jobs for the Instagram Reels ad, custom audiences for the YouTube Shorts ad, or keywords for the Pinterest Idea ad because that would have meant an unequal setup on each platform. Chances are that more specific targeting options on these three platforms would have biased the overall results. We only wanted to test one variable with this experiment: the platform. Testing only one variable at a time lets you analyze the results of your experiment to see how much a single change affects the outcome. If you're testing two variables at a time, you won't be able to tell which variable was responsible for the result.

Also, even if using a trending sound is recommended for short-form videos, we didn't follow this rule this time. The decision was based on the idea of not favoring one platform over the other since there's a chance the trending sound on one platform is not the same as the trending sound on another platform. As a consequence, the results may vary depending on this, and we wanted to have a setup that's equal and as unbiased as possible on all four platforms. It's considered that using a trending sound makes the algorithm pay more attention to the video and will recommend it to people, as it knows people will like it. Thus, the chances of reaching a wider audience are higher.

D. The mobile targeting

We decided to advertise only to mobile users on all platforms. Even if Pinterest Idea ads can reach mobile and desktop users as well, this would secure our chances to have unbiased results. Considering that TikTok or Instagram Reels ads only reach mobile users by default, we decided to exclude other devices on all platforms. Also, our Google Account Manager told us before starting the experiment that YouTube Shorts ads are only available on Android at the moment, so we only targeted Android on all four platforms.

Now, let's talk about the creative process for the ad we used in our case study.

2.2. The Ad Creative

Before anything, let us introduce you a little bit to Creatopy, our product, which was promoted in the ad.

Creatopy is a platform that helps businesses automate and scale the ad design process. On the one hand, designers can easily craft ad creatives and make over 50 size variations of a single asset at once. On the other hand, marketers have the freedom to test concepts to understand what type of ads bring the best results.

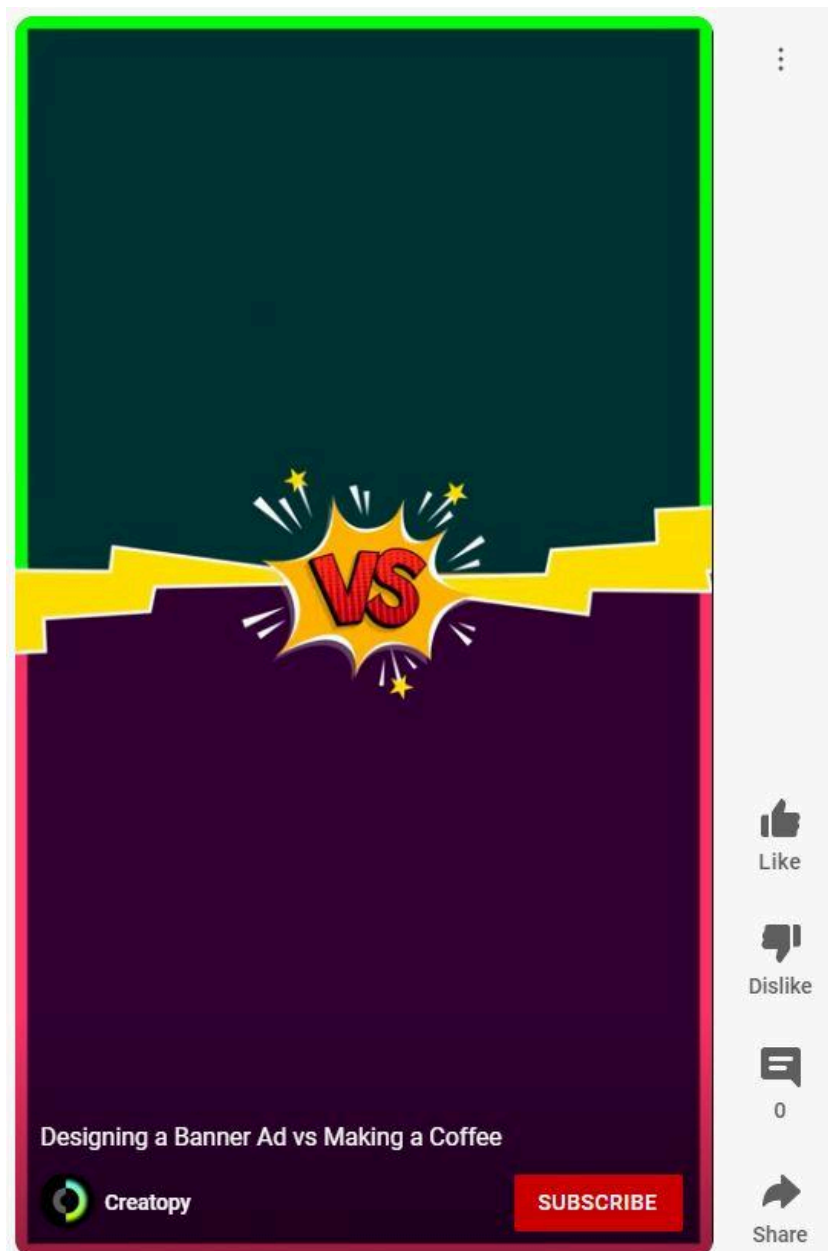
Our campaign targeted designers and emphasized how easy it is to make an ad using Creatopy. To do that, we decided to compare the time it takes to perform two different activities: making a coffee and designing an ad in Creatopy.

We split the screen in half. On the top, we had the designer, and on the bottom half, we illustrated the coffee-making process. As you would've guessed, designing the ad took less than making a coffee because, truly, creating ads using our platform is that simple. We also added some extra fun layers to our ad: a sports commentary voiceover, a stadium chant sound effect, and a timer bar to make the whole scenario more captivating.

This is a preview of the ad on each platform:

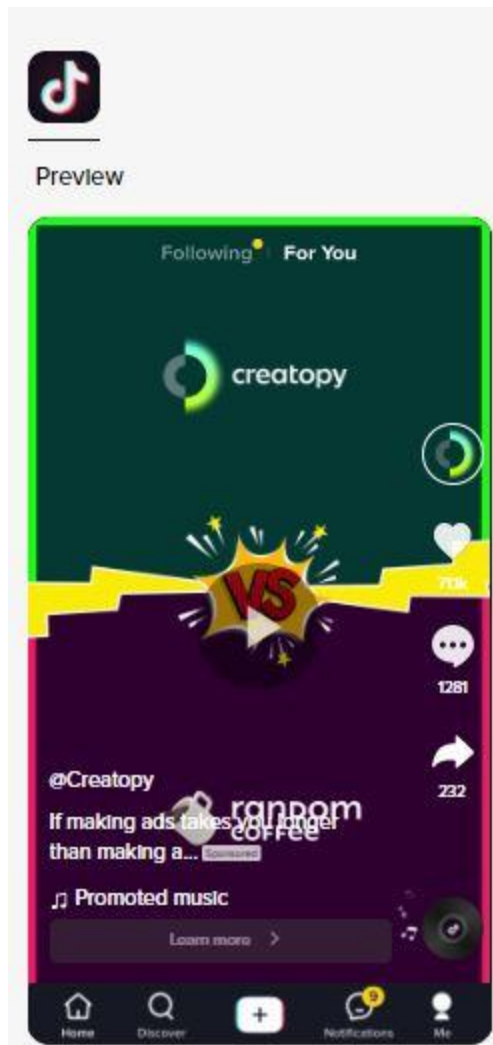
We only have a preview URL for YouTube because on TikTok, Pinterest, and Instagram, the ad wasn't published as an organic video.

YouTube Shorts ad



YouTube URL: <https://youtube.com/shorts/zdYKvS0mYK8?feature=share>

TikTok Ad



Instagram Reels ad



Pinterest Idea Ad



VS



With this creative, we wanted to have a video that somehow suited all the four advertising platforms we used for the case study. The ad had to be generic to emphasize our product's main capabilities and to look good in a vertical environment.

But did we achieve to create a short video that looks native on TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and Pinterest at the same time? Partially. First of all, that's close to impossible. Each platform has its own particularities, and the content style looks different. For example, TikTok is full of low-quality engaging videos. Instagram Reels is filled with fast and aesthetic edits along with recycled TikTok content. Pinterest Idea is more about tutorials and DIY, while YouTube Shorts keeps the YouTube video styles but converted in a vertical format. Did this aspect influence the results of our experiment? For sure. But the different results between platforms really say a lot, and we definitely made a clear point with this one.

3. The Results

So now, let's get to the results.

Variables	YouTube Shorts Ad	TikTok Ad	Instagram Reels Ad	Pinterest Idea Ad
Users who arrived on the landing page*	366	165	44	5
Sessions	442	166	51	5
Engaged sessions**	99	26	21	1

Engagement rate***	22.39%	15.66%	41.17%	20%
Impressions	56,810	155,398	46,831	91,397
CTR	0.64%	0.10%	0.09%	0.005%
CPC	\$1.49	\$1.59	\$12.01	\$2.01
CPM	\$13.50	\$4.74	\$16.67	\$7.15
Video views	172,318	143,215	46,620	23,308
Total video played at 100%	12,786	1,179	920	4,699
Video completion rate****	7.42%	0.82%	1.97%	20.16%
Ad spend	\$766.78	\$736.84	\$780.57	\$653.52

* According to Google Analytics data

** The number of sessions longer than 10 seconds

*** (the number of engaged sessions divided by the total number of sessions) x 100

**** (the number of total plays at 100% divided by video views) x 100

Other interesting findings

Now that we are clear about the winners and what that means, we should look over the other metrics from the table above. They are definitely very interesting to analyze, even if they do not count towards the traffic objective of the campaigns. Therefore, they do not add bonus points to the winners or can influence the top by any means.

1. The video completion rate

The Pinterest Idea ad has a video completion rate of 20.16%, more than double compared to the YouTube Shorts ad, which is in second place, with a completion rate of 7.42%. Both are pretty far away from the third and fourth places. The Instagram Reels ad has a completion rate of 1.97%, and the TikTok ad only 0.82%.

This shows that users on platforms like Pinterest or YouTube Shorts are more likely to consume longer videos. Also, it may be a sign that users come to these platforms to educate themselves and are already in the mindset of consuming longer content. In contrast, users may seek pure entertainment on platforms like TikTok or Instagram Reels. They come here for fun, and they will skip anything that disrupts their scrolling and doesn't entertain them from the start.

However, we're not saying that educational content cannot find its place on these platforms (because there's obviously lots of it). Still, it's important to catch users' attention in an entertaining way, specific to the platforms, to make them stop scrolling and watch your video until the end. So the key is to educate in a fun way.

2. The CPM

The lowest CPM was on TikTok at \$4.74. The highest was on Instagram Reels at \$16.67, followed by YouTube Shorts at \$13.50, and the third place was Pinterest Idea at \$7.15.

A high CPM indicates that your campaign may have room for improvement. And in this specific case, we know that there could have been some improvements at the audience level for the three platforms with higher CPMs.

For example, on Instagram, we could have targeted users by job titles, as we usually do when targeting graphic designers. On YouTube, we could have targeted some custom audiences. Or on Pinterest, we could have targeted after keywords as well, not just by interests. All of these things would have helped us be more specific in our targeting, thus decreasing the CPMs on our ads.

However, we took the risk knowing that the CPMs could be higher than usual. That's because we wanted similar (if not identical) setups on all four platforms, and we knew that we could not be that specific about our target audience on TikTok like on the other three platforms.

3. The impressions

The TikTok ad had the highest number of impressions and the only one that managed to surpass 100k, reaching 155,398. The Pinterest Idea ad was in second place with 91,397. The YouTube Shorts ad is in third place, with 56,810 impressions, while the Instagram Reels ad has the lowest reach at 46,831.

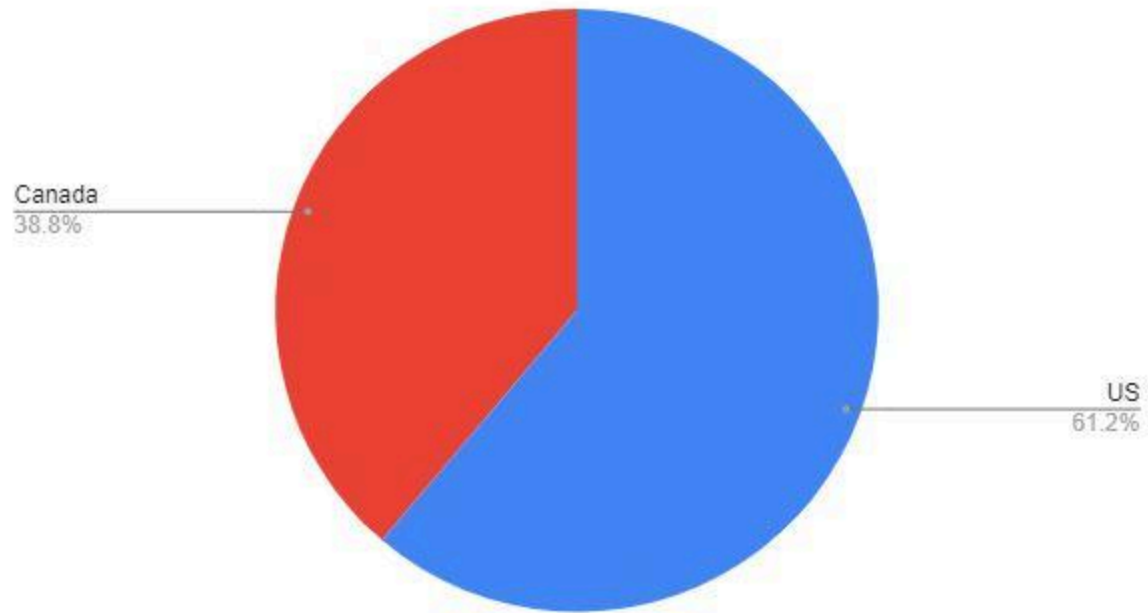
There is a logical explanation for this, as well. As you can see above, the CPM is the cheapest on TikTok, followed by Pinterest. These two platforms also have the highest impressions out of the four.

The same happened for the other two platforms. The Instagram Reels ad has the most expensive CPM; thus, it has the lowest number of impressions. The YouTube Shorts ad has the second most costly CPM, so it has a little more impressions than the Instagram Reels ad but less than the TikTok and Pinterest Idea ads.

3.1. Location & spend

Out of the two countries targeted, the most traffic on all platforms came from the United States (61.2%), and for Canada, it was 38.8%.

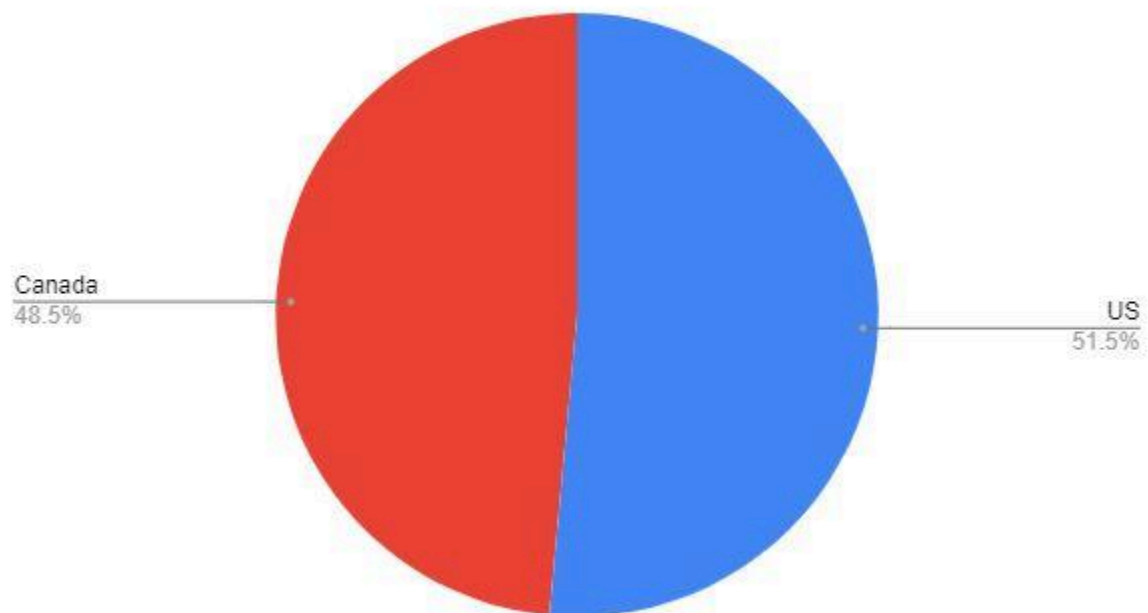
All platforms



Analysis by platform

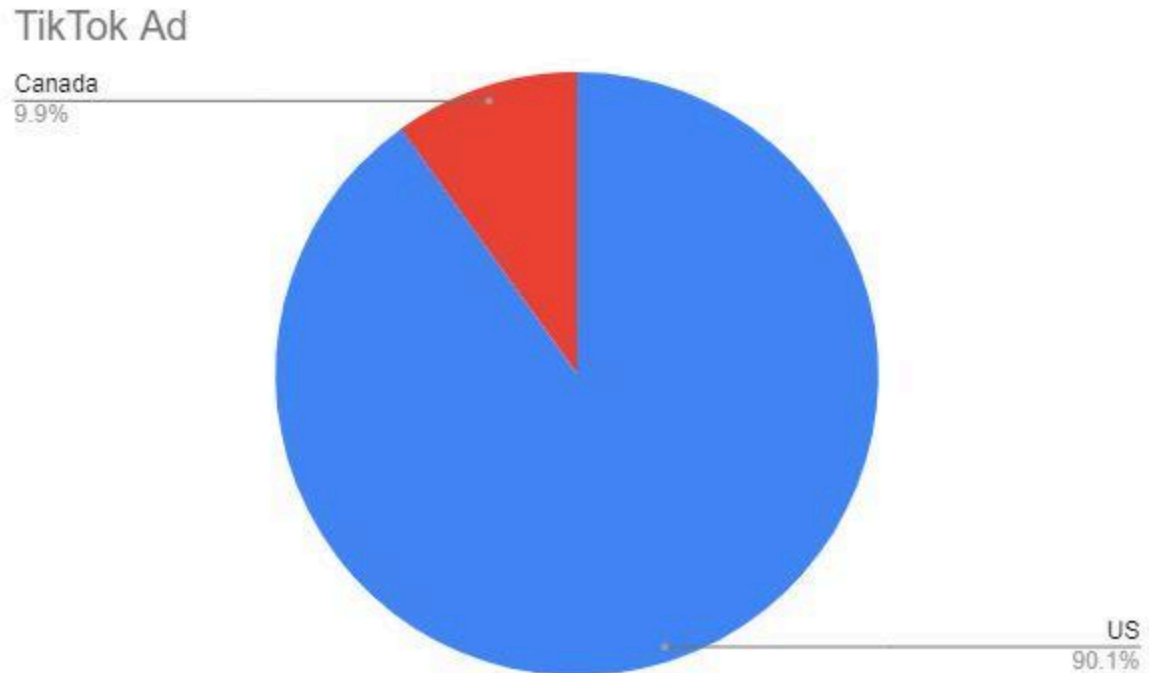
For the YouTube Shorts ad, the most traffic came from the United States (51.5%), and the least traffic came from Canada (48.5%). We can see that the percentages are very similar.

YouTube Shorts Ad



The almost equal split between the two countries is interesting, considering that there are approximately [210 million YouTube users in the US](#). At the same time, in Canada, the YouTube user base is 33.30 million, according to [datareportal](#). This shows that regardless of a platform's user base, your ads will be shown equally in any country you choose.

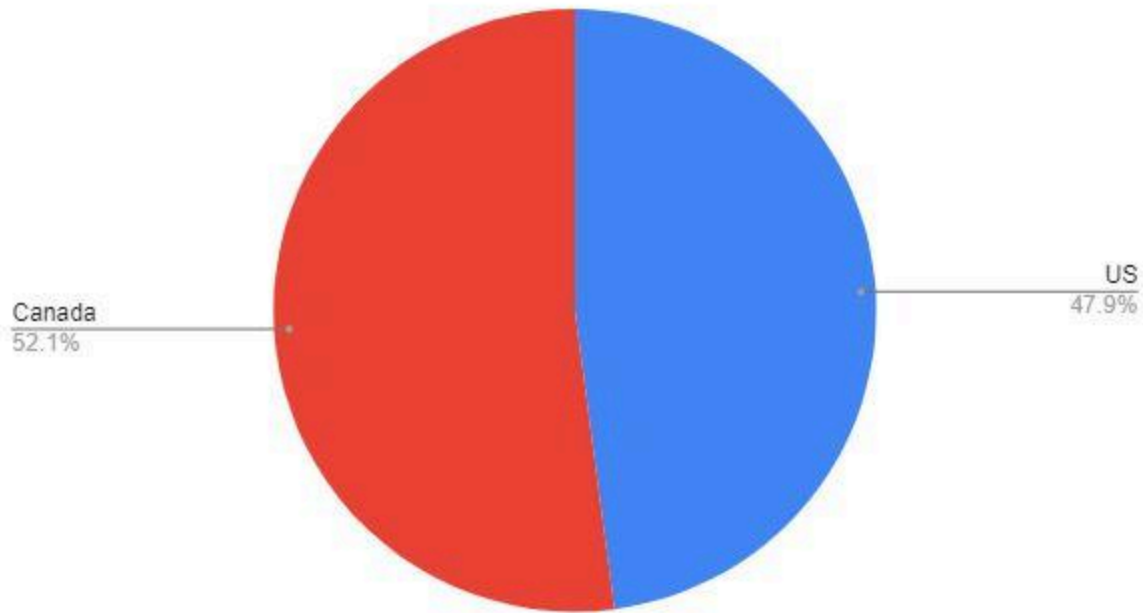
For the TikTok ad, things are less balanced, as most traffic came from the United States (90.1%), and only a small percentage of traffic came from Canada (9.9%).



According to [insiderintelligence](#), there are 8.3 million TikTok users in Canada. At the same time, the United States is known to be the country with the largest TikTok users in the world, according to [Statista](#). We talk about 136.42 million users. The considerable difference in the number of users can explain these percentages.

For the Instagram Reels ad, things change a bit. Here we can see that the most traffic came from Canada (52.1%), and the least traffic came from the United States (47.9%).

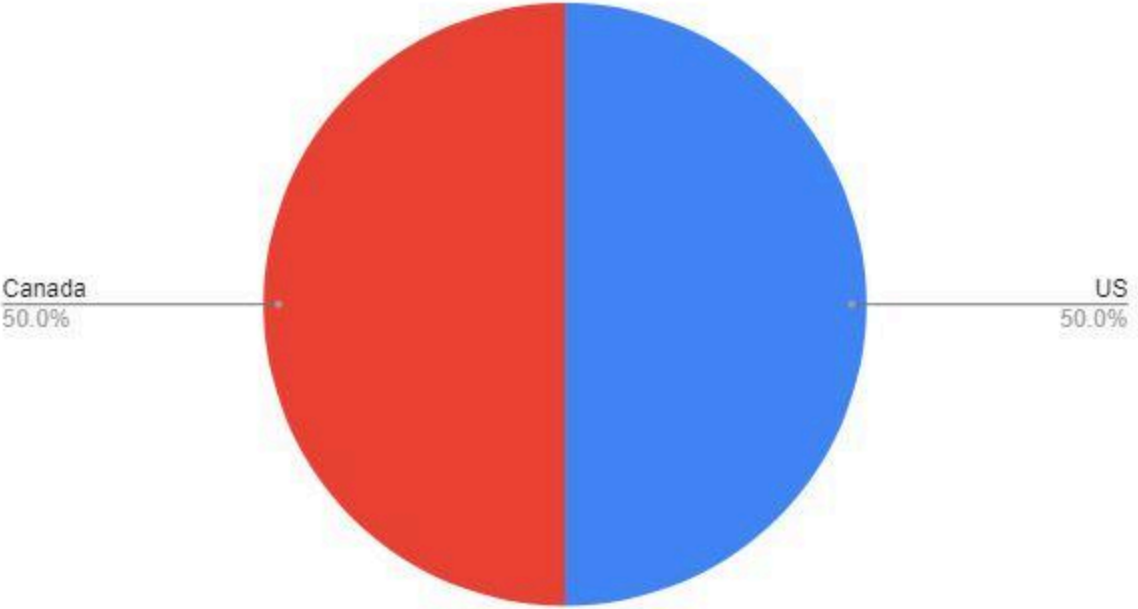
Instagram Reels Ad



This can be surprising since Canada has fewer Instagram users than the US. According to [datareportal](#), there are 153.6 million Instagram users in the US and only [17.40 million in Canada](#). However, as we've already pointed out, some platforms will show your ads in equal proportions even if you target countries with a lower user base. Platforms go beyond the user base and will optimize your campaign according to your objective.

Things look the most balanced for the Pinterest Idea ad, as half of the traffic came from the United States and a half from Canada.

Pinterest Idea Ad



Again, as you probably guessed, the US has the highest user base on Pinterest compared to Canada. More specifically, we talk about [88.6 million users](#), while there are [9.27 million Pinterest users in Canada](#).

Here, similar to the YouTube Shorts ad or the Instagram Reels ad, things look very balanced regarding the traffic split between the two countries.

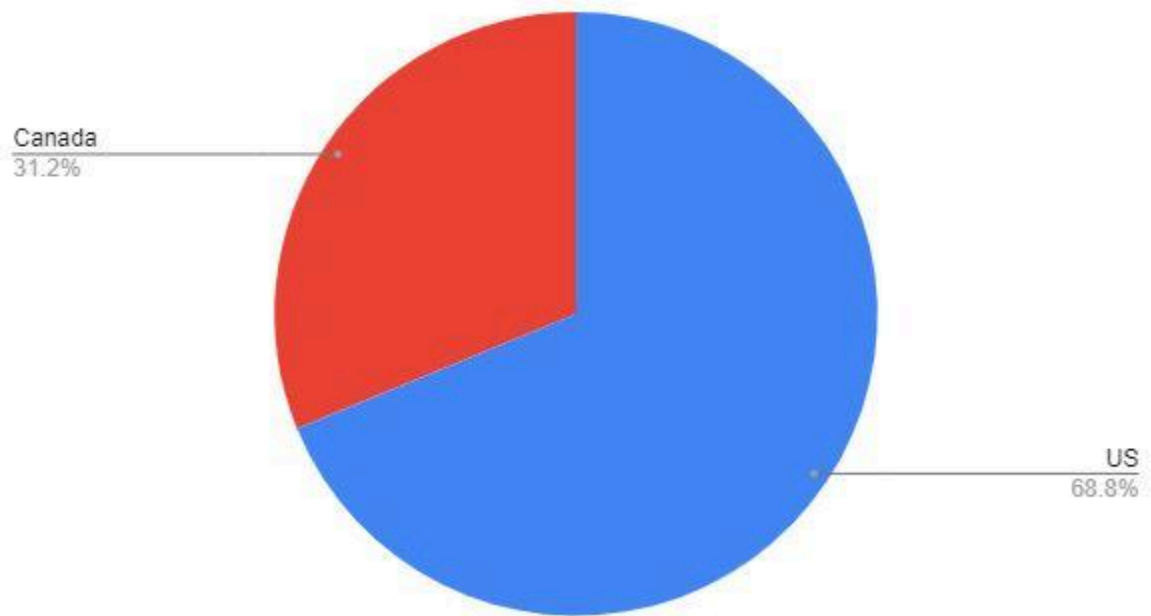
Traffic percentages overall breakdown from the two countries by platform				
Countries	YouTube Shorts Ad	TikTok Ad	Instagram Reels Ad	Pinterest Idea Ad
Canada	48.5%	9.9%	52.1%	50%
United States	51.5%	90.1%	47.9%	50%

As we can see, despite the US having the biggest user base on all the platforms, the traffic was well-balanced between the countries in most cases (three out of four). This means that you can target users in any country, no matter the user base on any of these three platforms because your ads will be optimized. That way, they will reach users in any country you choose without favoring one or another.

Analysis by spending:

If we look at spending by country, 68.8% of the budget was spent by the US, while 31.2% of the costs were directed to Canada.

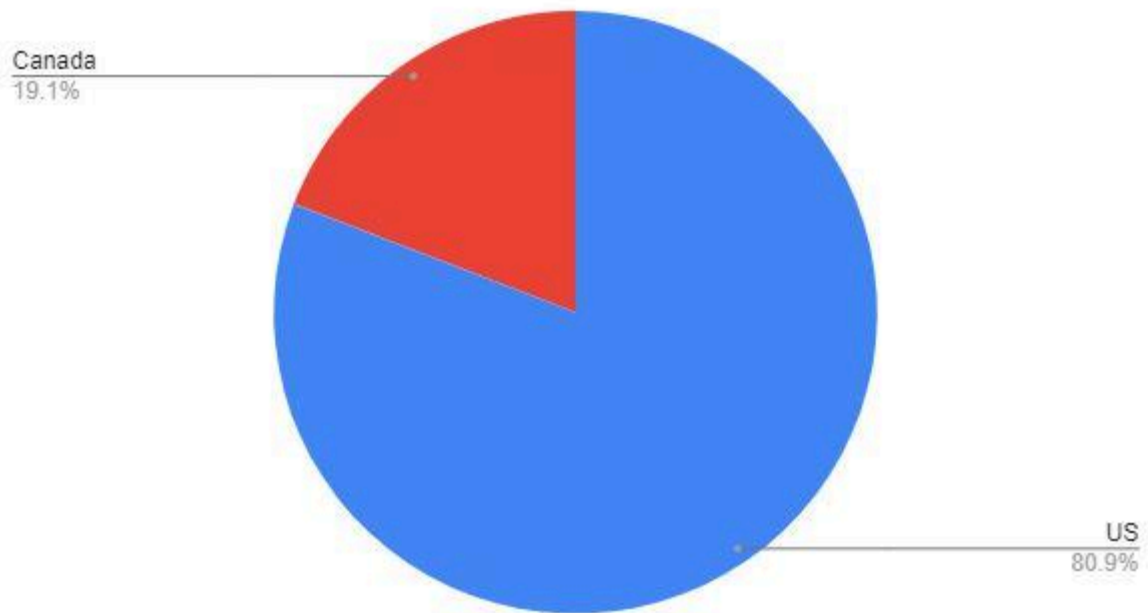
All platforms



Analysis by platform

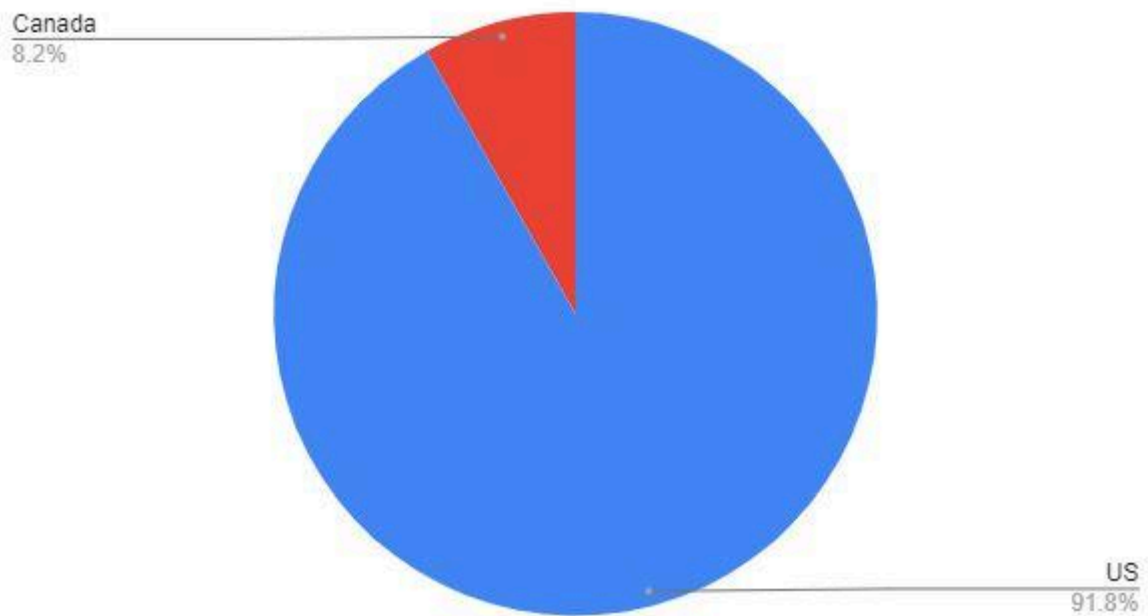
On YouTube Shorts, the US was the highest spender (80.9%), while the least spending was Canada (19.1%).

YouTube Shorts Ad



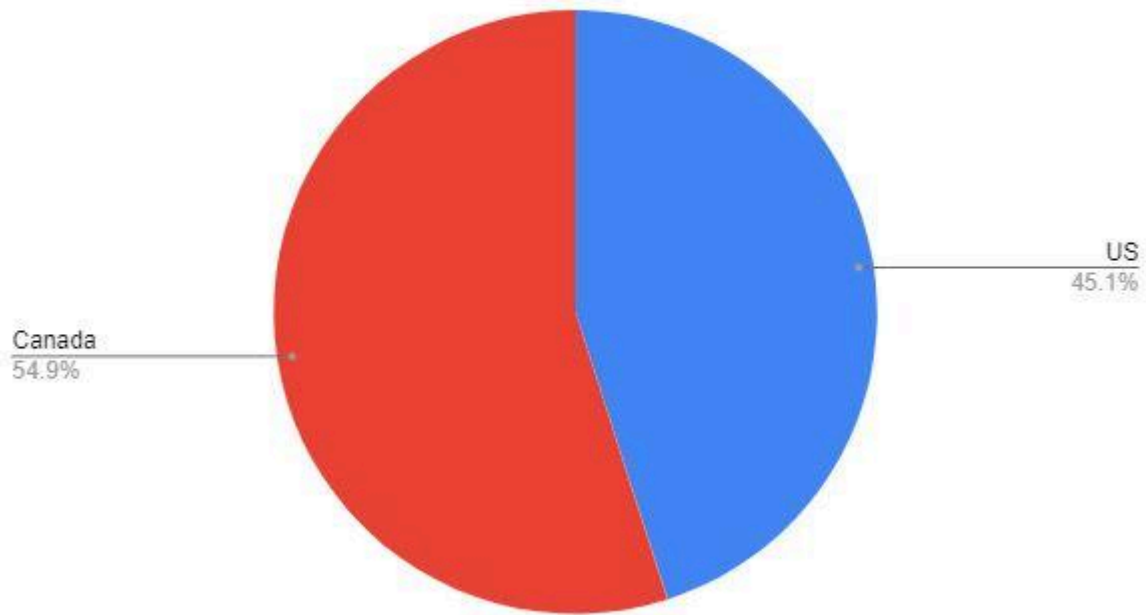
For the TikTok ad, the highest spend is directed to the US again, this time in a higher percentage than for the YouTube Shorts ad (91.8%), while Canada had 8.2%.

TikTok Ad



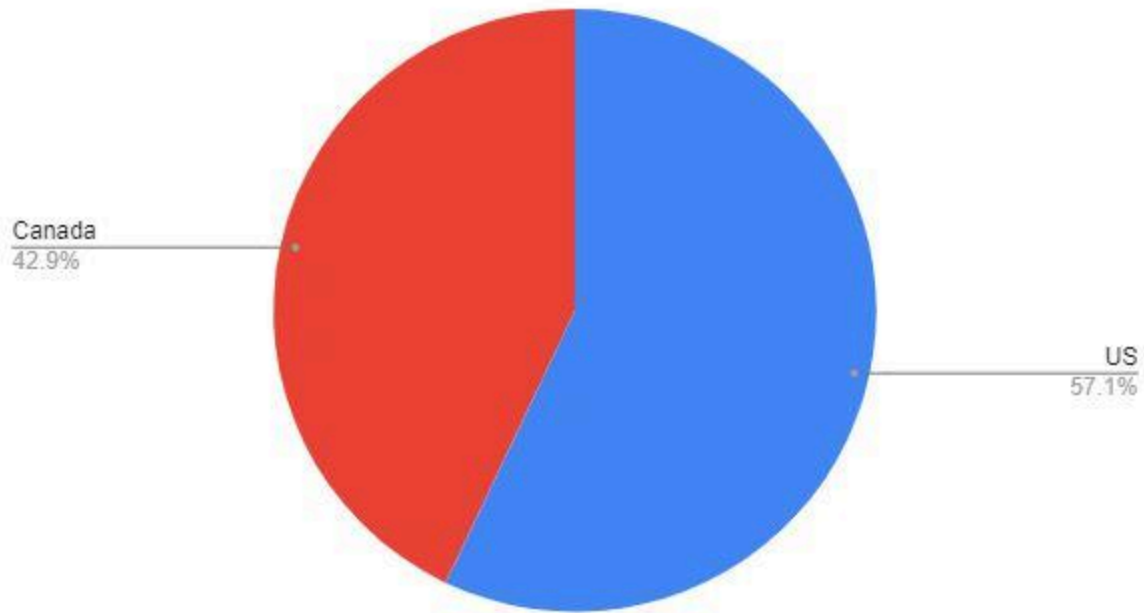
The top looks different for Instagram Reels, as we have Canada in the first place, with 54.9% spend, and the US has 45.1%.

Instagram Reels Ad



Lastly, for the Pinterest Idea ad, the highest spender is again the US, but this time, the percentages are more close to each other than TikTok or YouTube Shorts. Here we have 57.1% of the spending directed towards the US and 42.9% to Canada.

Pinterest Idea Ad



Cost overall breakdown from the two countries by platform				
Countries	YouTube Shorts Ad	TikTok Ad	Instagram Reels Ad	Pinterest Idea Ad
Canada	19.1%	8.2%	54.9%	42.9%
United States	80.9%	91.8%	45.1%	57.1%

On TikTok, Instagram Reels, and Pinterest, we see a high correlation between the country with the most traffic and the highest spending, as the percentages are very similar.

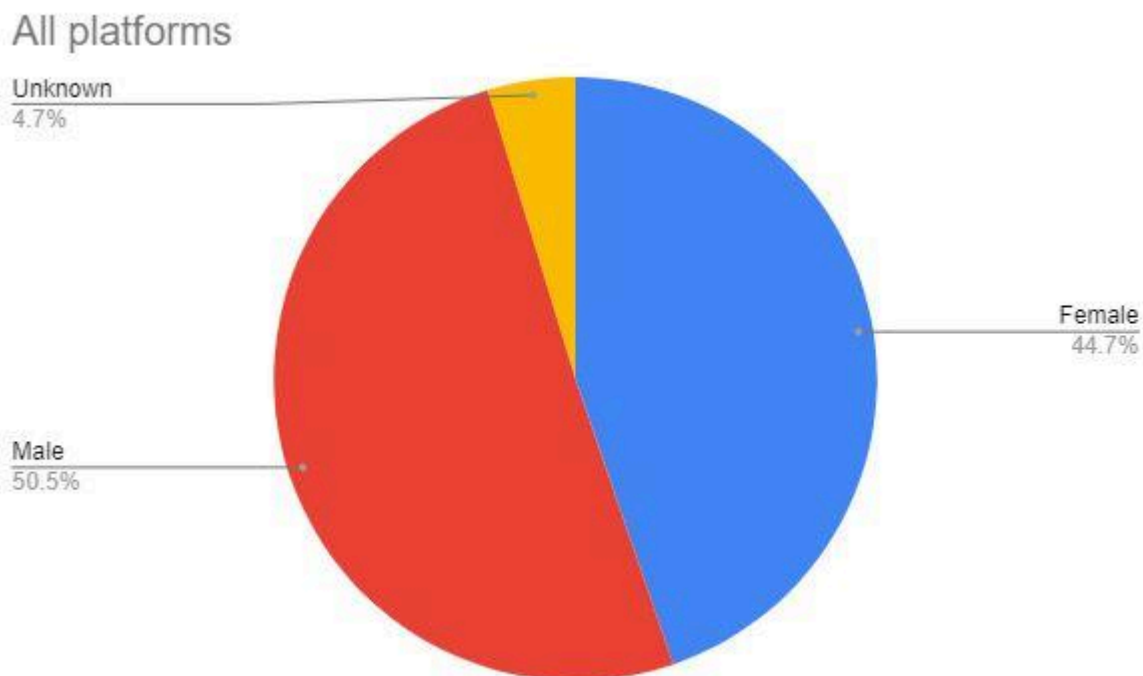
The biggest difference can be seen for the YouTube Shorts ad, where even if the traffic was almost equally split between the two countries, the spending was much higher in the US than in Canada. This shows that traffic in Canada was much cheaper than the traffic brought by the US on this platform.

One final thing we should mention regarding the budget is that the daily spending fluctuated. There were both cases of over or under spending.

The YouTube Shorts and Instagram Reels ads overspent by \$16.78, respectively, by \$30.57. In contrast, both the TikTok and Pinterest Idea ads underspent by \$13.16, respectively, by \$96.48. After we set the budgets on the first day of the campaigns, we didn't make any other adjustments to them.

3.2. Gender

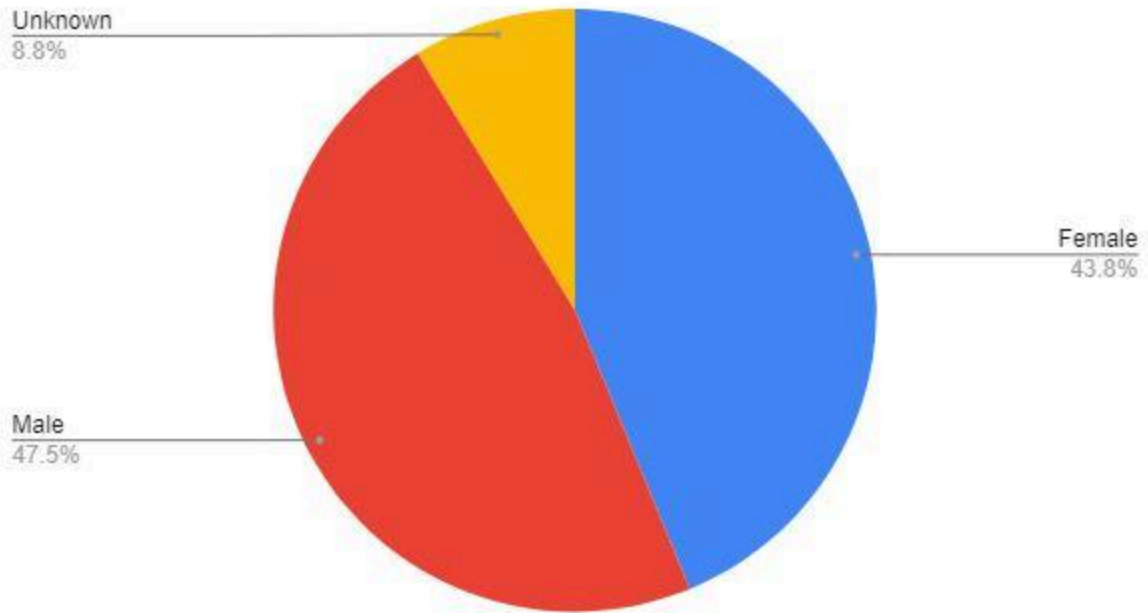
Our ads reached more males (50.5%) than females (44.7%), while the remaining 4.7% is unspecified/unknown.



Analysis by platform

For the YouTube Shorts ad, the predominant gender reached was male (47.5%), followed by female (43.8%), while 8.8% is attributed to unknown.

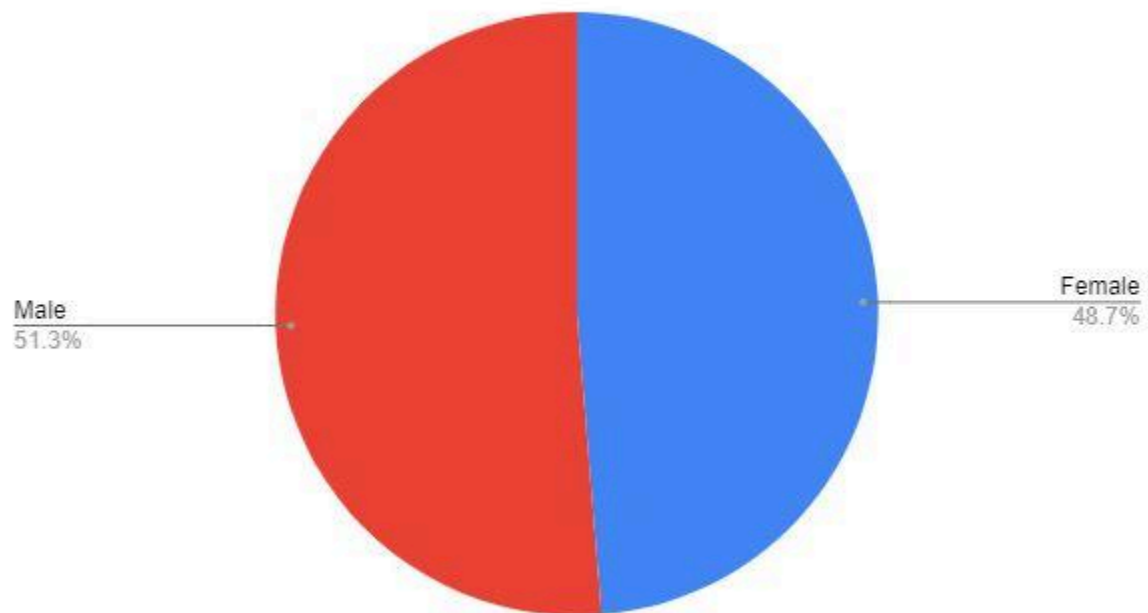
YouTube Shorts Ad



This data could be based on the fact that there are more YouTube male users (53.9%) than female users (46.1%), according to [globalmediainsight](https://www.globalmediainsight.com).

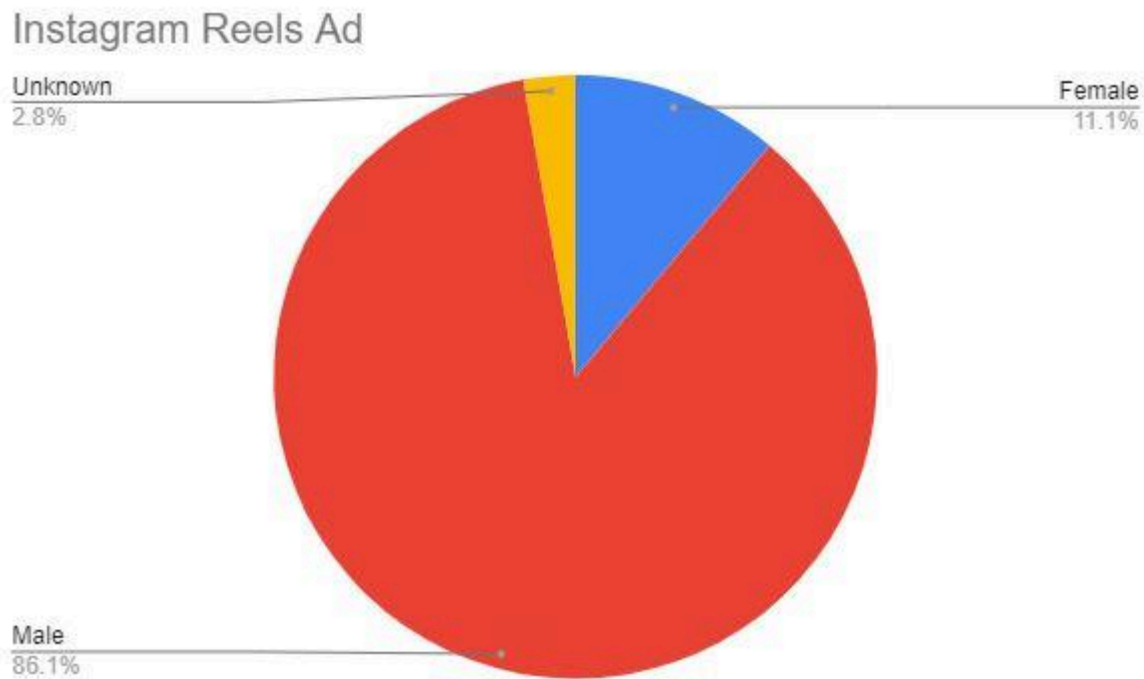
For the TikTok ad, male is again the predominant gender (51.3%), followed by female (48.7%).

TikTok Ad



According to [Statista](#), on TikTok, 57% of users are females, while the male audience represents 43%. So the results are equally distributed here.

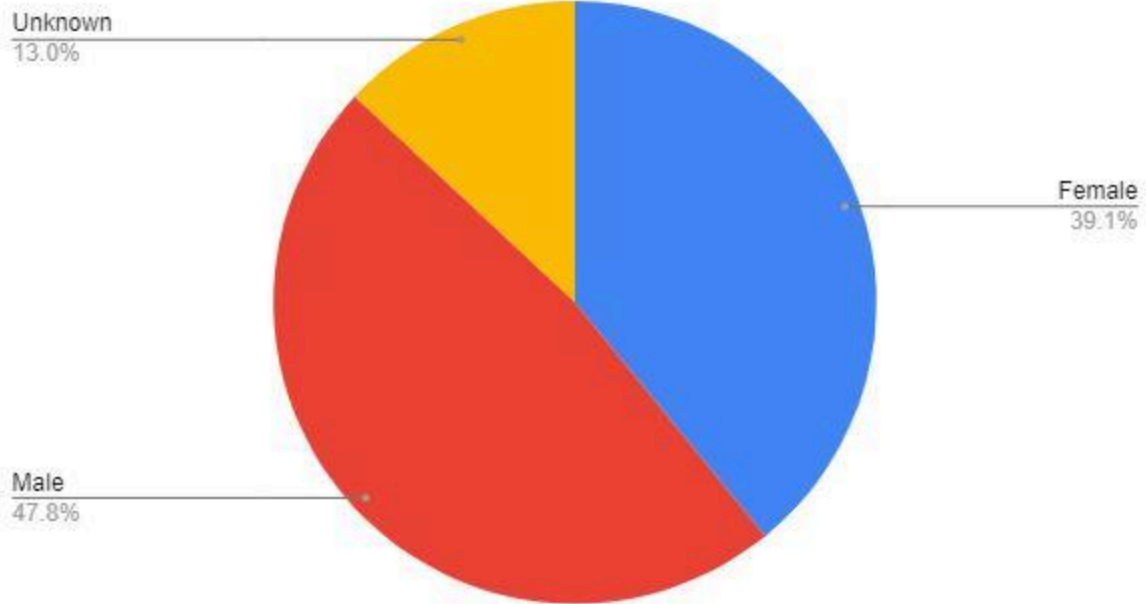
For the Instagram Reels ad, we can see the most significant difference when it comes to gender. We have males at 86.1% versus females with only 11.1%. And 2.8% is attributed to unknown.



According to [Statista](#), the distribution by gender is very even on Instagram, with 50.7% males and 49.3% females. But, as you can see, the percentages are very disproportionate in our case study.

For the Pinterest Idea ad, male is again predominant with 47.8% versus female with 39.1%, while 13% of the traffic is attributed to unknown.

Pinterest Idea Ad



According to [Statista](#), there are more women on Pinterest (76.7%) than men (15.3%), while 8% are attributed to unknown gender. So once again, it is hard to find the correlation between this and our results.

Traffic percentages overall breakdown by gender on each platform				
Gender	YouTube Shorts Ad	TikTok Ad	Instagram Reels Ad	Pinterest Idea Ad
Female	43.8%	48.7%	11.1%	39.1%
Male	47.5%	51.3%	86.1%	47.8%
Unspecified	8.8%	-	2.8%	13.0%

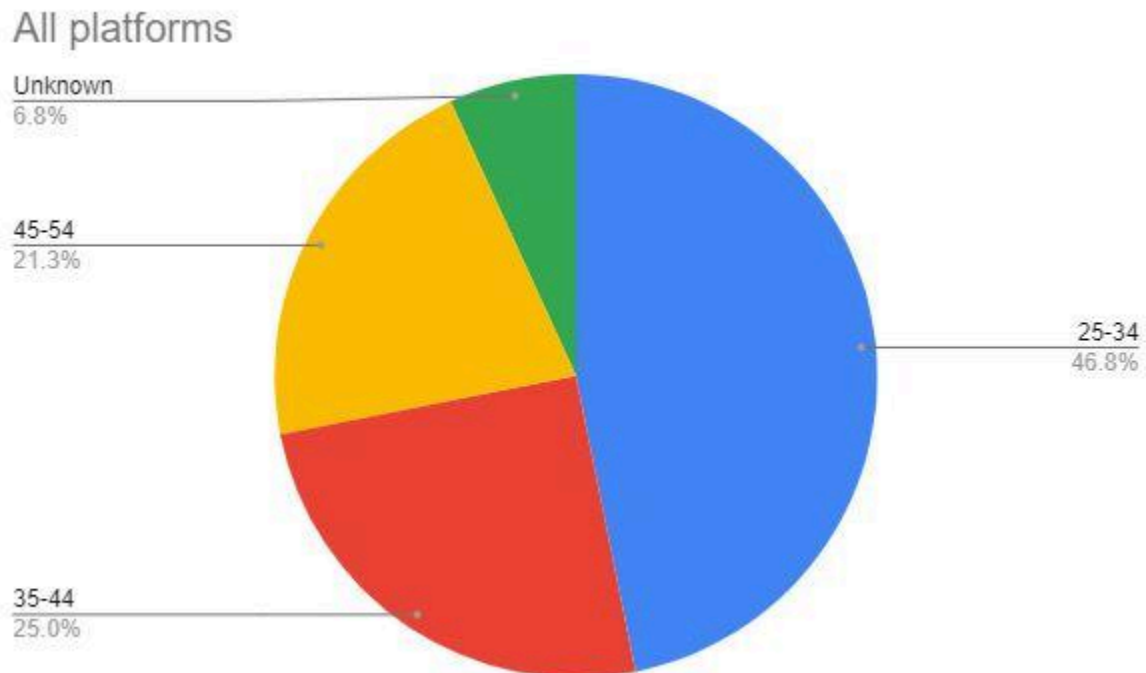
In all four cases, male is the predominant gender. The situation is more balanced between the YouTube Shorts and TikTok ads. We can see a striking imbalance for the Pinterest Idea ad, while for the Instagram Reels ad, the male audience represents the majority.

Based on Statista's reports on gender distribution by platforms, we can see that male is the predominant gender on only two platforms (YouTube and Instagram). So there isn't a clear correlation between the most predominant gender on the platforms and the most predominant gender who saw our ad and visited our website. This may simply be due to the fact that our ad was more appealing to the male audience.

Also, we can see that TikTok is the only platform out of the four where none of the traffic is attributed to an unknown gender, giving us full transparency on the split between genders.

3.3. Age group

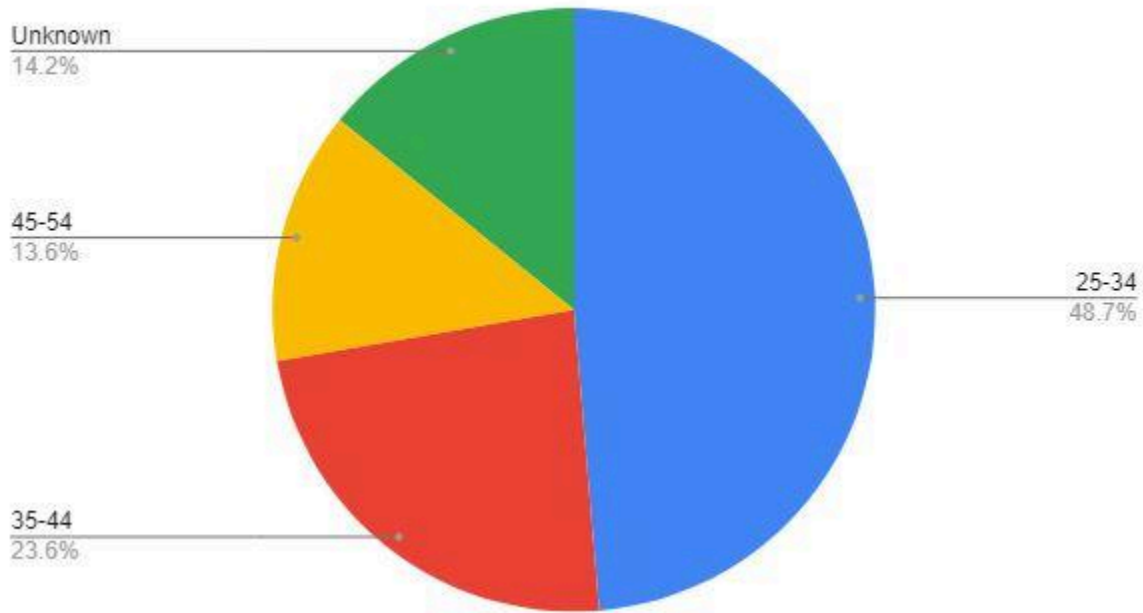
When it comes to the age buckets, the predominant age group we reached with our ads was 25-34 (46.8%), followed by 35-44 with 25%, and very close to it is the 45-54 age bucket with 21.3%. 6.8% is attributed to an unknown age bucket.



Analysis by platform

For the YouTube Shorts ad, 48.7% of the traffic is attributed to the 25-34 age bucket, 23.6% to the 35-44 age group, 13.6% to the 45-54 age category, while 14.2% of the reach is attributed to an unknown age group.

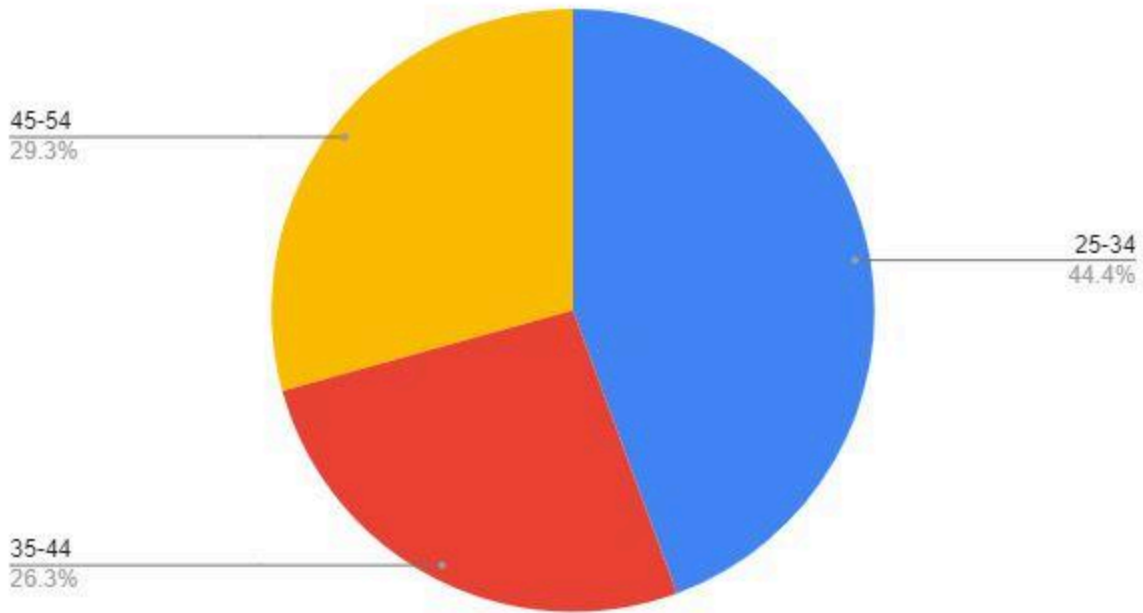
YouTube Shorts Ad



According to [Statista](#), 26-35 is the predominant age group among those we targeted, followed by 36-45 and 46-55. So we can see a correlation between this data and our own results.

For the TikTok ad, 25-34 is again the winning age group, with 44.4%, followed by 45-54, with 29.3%, and very close to it is 35-44 with 26.3%.

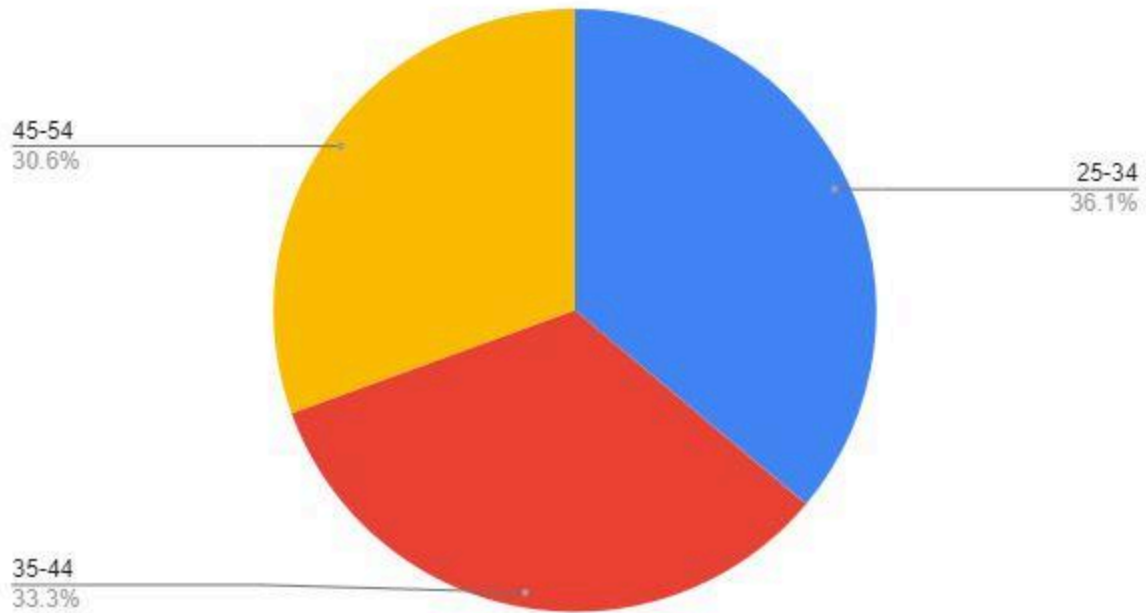
TikTok Ad



According to an [Ecwid](#) report, TikTok is most used by people aged 25-34 (31.6%), followed by 35-44, with 12.8%, and lastly by 45-54, with 6.3%. This time, we cannot fully connect this data with our own results because, in our case, the 45-54 age bucket surpassed the 35-44 age bucket. This shows the ad was more appealing to the 45-54 age group on TikTok than to the 35-44 age bucket, despite the lower number of users compared to the latter.

Things are the most balanced for the Instagram Reels ad compared to the other three platforms from our case study. Even if the winning age group is again 25-34 (36.1%), the differences between the age groups are not that big this time since the winner is closely followed by the 35-44 age bucket with 33.3%. The 45-54 age group holds the last place again, with 30.06%.

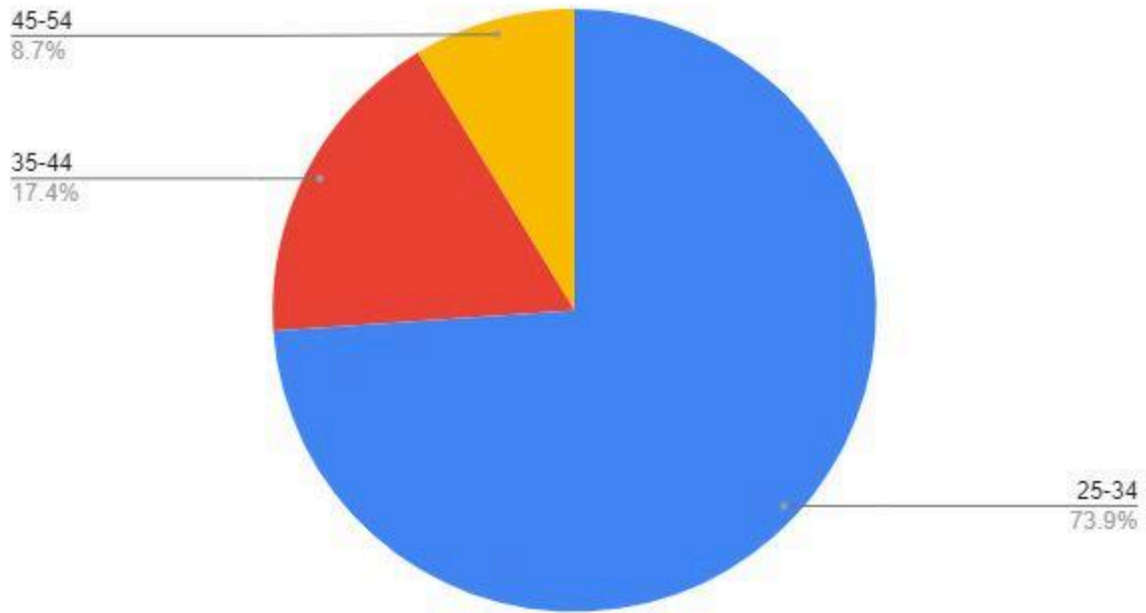
Instagram Reels Ad



According to a [Statista](#) report, our data can be correlated with the age distribution of Instagram users. 31.7% of users are people aged between 25-34, followed by 35-44, with 15.8%, and lastly 45-54, with 7.8%.

Things are the least balanced if we're looking at the Pinterest Idea ad data. The 25-34 age group wins, but in this case, with the highest percentage out of all four platforms—73.9%. The second place is attributed to the 35-44 age group, with 17.4%, while 8.7% go towards the 45-54 age bucket.

Pinterest Idea Ad



According to [Ecwid](#), Pinterest is most used by people between the ages of 18-24 (29.1%). The age distribution on the platform corresponds with our results, where the 25-34 age group was the most popular one.

Traffic percentages overall breakdown by age buckets on each platform				
Age Bucket	YouTube Shorts Ad	TikTok Ad	Instagram Reels Ad	Pinterest Idea Ad
25-34	48.7%	44.4%	36.1%	73.9%
35-44	23.6%	26.3%	33.3%	17.4%
45-54	13.6%	29.3%	30.6%	8.7%

Unknown	14.2%	-	-	-
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In all four instances, the 25-34 age group was the predominant one. When it comes to the 35-44 age bucket, it's the second highest reached age group, except for TikTok, where it was in the third place, and 45-54 was in the second place. In most cases, the 45-54 age group was the audience with the lowest reach.

Regarding gender, we cannot see any clear correlations in all four instances. More specifically, we're referring to TikTok and Pinterest, between the predominant ages by usage, per platform, and our data. This shows our ad appealed more to the 25-34 segment despite the overall usage distribution.

Also, the only case when a percentage of the traffic was not attributed to any of the targeted age buckets is for the YouTube Shorts ad. For the other three platforms, the traffic was attributed to one of the known buckets, giving us more transparency about where our traffic comes from.

4. Key Takeaways

Because we experimented with several platforms for this case study, it was interesting to see the different results we achieved when using the same budget. Here are the main things that you should keep in mind.

4.1. Targeting capabilities have an impact on your ad campaign's performance

TikTok has many limitations when it comes to targeting audiences, targeting countries, when choosing an objective, and even when choosing the budget you can spend per day, as you cannot spend under \$50/day/campaign.

Despite this, it brought more users to our website than Instagram and Pinterest.

But a good advertiser knows that not anything can be taken for granted. A good advertiser will have questions.

These were some of the questions that popped into our mind:

- Would the results have been different if we fully used the targeting capabilities the other three platforms offer? What's more is that even with restricted targeting given by the context, YouTube Shorts is the winner for the most traffic brought to our website, while the other three platforms managed to bring more qualitative traffic than TikTok.
- Would we have had better results if we could do better targeting and didn't encounter any limitations? Probably. All these factors should be taken into account when choosing an advertising platform. You have to see the bigger picture.

4.2. Pinterest can be an excellent platform for brand awareness

The Pinterest Idea ad didn't work as expected regarding the amount of traffic. Not for us, at least. We encourage you to test for yourself and come up with your own findings because chances are you'll have different results. Pinterest is one of the platforms we advertise on, and we are happy with the quality of the traffic brought from here. That's why we even put all the trust in it and bet that it will bring the most qualitative traffic. Pinterest Idea ads may be a better option for awareness or video views goals since they did a pretty good job on that side. But that wasn't our goal this time.

[According to Pinterest](#), "on average, campaigns that feature Idea ads see 56% higher brand awareness". Moreover, "on average, users who saw Idea ads were 59% more likely to recall that brand."

Last but not least, our findings favor these stats because the Pinterest Idea ad had a video completion rate of 20.16%, making it the highest completion rate out of all the four

platforms, more than double compared to the YouTube Shorts ad, which is in second place.

4.3. Instagram Reels can help you get in front of potential customers

The Instagram Reels ad brought the most qualitative traffic to our website. On the other hand, it didn't bring too many users compared to the YouTube Shorts or TikTok ad. One explanation can be the fact that the traffic was much more expensive on this platform. But those who arrived on the landing page were definitely curious about what we do. The Instagram Reels ad did a good job showing the ad to those most interested in our offer. If you are looking for a platform to help you bring high-quality visitors to your site, Instagram Reels may be a good option for you to test.

4.4. YouTube Shorts ads can bring you lots of traffic

There was a lot of buzz right when YouTube Shorts was released. Is it needed? Will it move the needle? Apparently, they would. Or, at least, they did for us. YouTube Shorts didn't disappoint. The ad managed to bring the most traffic to our website, being the detached winner of our case study. Also, we cannot complain about the quality of the traffic either, despite not being the highest out of the four platforms.

4.5. The ad and the landing page must go hand in hand

There must be a strong correlation between your landing page and your ad because it positively impacts the engagement rate. In our case, the ad talked about how efficient it is to create banner ads in Creatopy and compared this process with the time it takes to make a coffee. The landing page revolves around the same topic, efficiency. We can find many efficiency-related terms here, such as:

- Create scroll-stopping ads **effortlessly**
- Enjoy limitless creativity while **saving time**
- Animate your designs **with ease**
- Resize your ads **instantly**

The same is true for the design itself, not just for the ad copy. The banner that appears in the video can also be found on the landing page for almost every module.

If the user sees something in the ad, they unconsciously expect to find the same element on the landing page. Otherwise, the user flow is disrupted, and they will feel confused. They might end up exiting the page, and there's the possibility that they won't be able to associate your brand with something specific.

When working on your ad campaign, it's important not to overlook the creation of the landing page as well. In the end, your goal is to have an ad and a landing page that

complement one another visually and messaging-wise. That way, you'll have much better chances of converting visitors. And even if they don't convert right now, at least they will retain and understand your message with ease.

4.6. Get to know the platform before running ads on it

To create ads that look native, you need to take a step back and see what type of content performs best on each platform. For example, TikTok is all about spontaneous, non-exclusive content. The videos posted here should look like they were created without too much effort but still be engaging and interesting. The edits are pretty basic, like simple cuts and text overlays, but the videos usually have multiple fast, incredibly dynamic scenes.

On the other hand, the Pinterest Idea is all about providing inspiration. The multi-card format is designed to showcase ideas in action. Pinners can make tutorials or product showcases using a step-by-step format, where each step is presented on a different slide.

Instagram Reels are short-form videos that can look very aesthetic. You'll often find that users upload videos from TikTok here as well, so not all the Reels are original. The videos will usually have fast edits, are shot in just one frame, and are highly entertaining yet short.

Lastly, YouTube Shorts is a new vertical video format that aims to support the long-form video content available on YouTube and provide users with another way of promoting their channels.

4.7. Testing never fails

Do your own testing. There's nothing more reliable than having your own results and experimenting on your own terms. This is what we want to encourage you to do after reading this. Not necessarily on these platforms, but experiment nonetheless. It is vital for your accounts.

5. Best practices

Before concluding this case study, I want to give you some tips and tricks about these four platforms that may come in handy if you are new to advertising on any of them.

5.1. YouTube Shorts Ads

Let's start with YouTube Shorts, the winner of our case study.

YouTube Shorts ads are the newest addition to the Google ads table. Google announced the rollout during the Google Marketing Live show on May 24, 2022. We immediately got in touch with our Google Account Manager, and they confirmed the news for us. They also gave us some best practices to follow, which we will also share with you.

YouTube Shorts is a new mobile-optimized experience, and videos can be both square and vertical. The supported length is between 10 and 60 seconds.

Videos should capture attention early, focus on one message, and use trends, if possible.

Regarding capturing attention early on, Google recommends bold visuals, unique editing, and popular audio. They even suggest making different enhancements like creative lighting, costumes, or locations.

Another recommendation from Google is to loop the video, so the user doesn't feel or notice where it ends or starts. This may lead to them watching the video multiple times and increase engagement.

Moreover, you should also consider leaning into memes, since on YouTube Shorts authentic and unfiltered videos are celebrated.

Basically, the idea is to be as innovative as possible and think out of the box when creating your video ad to make sure you catch your audience's attention while presenting your brand in a funny and authentic way.

5.2. TikTok Ads

With TikTok ads, you must think vertically and use sound because TikTok is a sound environment, as they call it themselves.

The recommended video length is between 21 and 34 seconds, even if the supported length for TikTok ads is between 5 and 60 seconds. TikTok suggests making the video short, not too brief.

Authenticity is very important here as well. TikTok recommends creating videos that are positive, honest, and motivating.

A best practice is to convey your message through storytelling, either by introducing your business through a testimonial or by showcasing a product. TikTok says that using storytelling in your ads can help drive performance and get the most out of the platform.

For every storytelling type, they recommend 3-5 seconds to be allocated for the beginning and another 3-5 seconds for the end. The middle part should have somewhere around 10-15 seconds.

In the first part, it's good to have a person talking directly to the camera, and a product shot, or close-up, in case you only focus on showcasing your product from start to end.

Also, for the last part of the video, it's recommended to feature a person talking directly to the camera and a text overlay with CTA, website, and/or promo code. For showcasing the product storytelling type, a person interacting with the product is also recommended.

Regarding the middle part, there are some specificities for each storytelling type.

For the company introduction, it's recommended to show the product in use.

The same is available for the testimonial type of video. However, this time it's also a good idea to include a before & after shot of the product in use.

When showcasing the product, the middle part should contain a zoom-out to emphasize the product's design or branding. Showing how the product works can be a great idea as well.

5.3. Instagram Reels Ads

Out of the four platforms used in this case study, Instagram Reels is the only one where you can use video ads that have up to 30 seconds. You have to keep this in mind, so you don't waste time creating something that you won't be able to promote via paid.

Also, even if the maximum length allowed is 30 seconds, Instagram recommends using videos that have 15 seconds or less to maximize results.

Similar to the other platforms, we see a big focus on authenticity and conveying your message in a fun and entertaining way. Moreover, according to [Instagram](#), adding an element of surprise always helps.

People are already being entertained on the platform, so you must go the extra mile to differentiate yourself. It is important to keep your focus on the educational part, as well, to also bring value to your audience besides entertaining them.

5.4. Pinterest Idea Ads

Back in June 2022, Pinterest announced the possibility of creating Idea ads. Idea ads have a multi-card format, and they can combine video, static images, and text. A best practice is to start with a video as your cover page. The supported video length is between 2 and 60 seconds per page.

Pinterest recommends running Idea ads as part of the build awareness or drive consideration stages of the funnel. Also, they say that “multi-objective advertisers observe a 52% increase in unique reach when pairing Awareness & Consideration together (vs. Consideration only)“.*

Similar to TikTok, they recommend storytelling when using Idea ads. There are four types you can use:

- **Process.** Refers to how-tos, ads that take the users through a step-by-step process.
- **Personal.** Helps give your brand a more human touch by featuring a brand ambassador, an influencer, customers, or even employees.
- **Knowledge.** Helps provide product information or use cases.
- **Community.** Makes use of Q&As, behind-the-scenes, brand announcements, and so on.

*Source: Pinterest internal analysis of advertiser campaigns spending >\$500/ day during campaign duration, globally over a 90-day period, October - December 2021.

6. Conclusion

All in all, YouTube Shorts ads are a good option to reach a broad audience. Despite Google Ads being the center of different controversies for its alleged monopoly in the digital area, what's sure is that it does the job when it comes to delivery.

You shouldn't neglect TikTok, Instagram Reels, and Pinterest Idea ads either. They all may serve a purpose in your digital strategy. Instagram Reels ads can help in bringing qualitative traffic. TikTok ads can help increase your reach. And Pinterest Idea ads may be a good idea for brand awareness.

Regarding the ability of TikTok to bring you a high reach, we have two more case studies on TikTok ads, where the campaigns were set up with a reach objective. You can find them [here](#) if you want to learn more about this topic.

What's sure is that TikTok must level up its game when it comes to targeting capabilities since platforms such as Instagram, Google, and Pinterest, are more powerful in this regard. These types of limitations can lead to the dissatisfaction of advertisers that need more options when running ad campaigns.

On a final note, the following data may also help you. As of January 2022, [Statista](#) ranked social media platforms by the number of monthly active users worldwide. YouTube is first with 2,562 million users, followed by Instagram with 1,478 million users, TikTok with 1,000 million users, and last is Pinterest with 444 million users.

Moreover, this number will increase in the years to come. According to a [forecast by Statista](#), in 2021, there were 4.26 billion social media users worldwide, which will increase to almost six billion in 2027.

We hope you enjoyed our findings, that you managed to connect all the dots with other things you know about these platforms or things you experimented with before, and that you are able to draw some conclusions that can help you thrive.

And no matter the platform you choose, I hope you all get the results you wish for. There are no right or wrong platforms, only the ones that best suit your needs.

Happy testing!

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Infographic text:

Heading 1: The Best Platform for Short Form Video Ads

Heading 2: YouTube Shorts Takes Over the Advertising Game

Description: With short-form videos gaining so much popularity, we decided to test which is the best advertising platform for short-form vertical video ads.

Heading: Campaign setup

Description:

We allocated \$3,000 for the experiment, equally split between TikTok, YouTube Shorts, Instagram Reels, and Pinterest Idea. The campaign ran for 15 days, from August 16 to August 30, 2022.

Heading: Campaign results

Description:

1. YouTube shorts brought the most traffic (366 users), however, in terms of the quality of the traffic, Instagram Reels comes first thanks to its high engagement rate of 41.17%.
2. The Pinterest Idea ad has a video completion rate of 20.16%, more than double compared to the YouTube Shorts ad.

3. The highest CPM was on Instagram Reels at \$16.67, followed by YouTube Shorts at \$13.50. The lowest CPM was on TikTok at \$4.74. Pinterest Idea's CPM was \$7.15.
4. The TikTok ad had the highest number of impressions, reaching 155,398 in total. The Pinterest Idea ad came in second with 91,397. This could be due to their low CPMs.
5. the CPC on Instagram Reels is way above the average at \$12.01. This can explain the low traffic on Instagram compared to YouTube Shorts and TikTok.

Heading: Key takeaways

Description:

1. YouTube Shorts ads can bring you lots of traffic, so if that is your campaign's objective, you might want to consider running your ads on it.
2. Pinterest can be an excellent platform for brand awareness, as shown by the video completion rate.
3. Instagram Reels can help you get in front of potential customers. Its engagement rate shows that those who arrived on our LP were interested in our product.
4. TikTok has many limitations when it comes to targeting, which will have a noticeable effect on its overall performance.