

Model B & Opinium

What Consumers Want: Preferred Channel Trends



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Foreword



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Marketers enjoy an almost unrivalled feedback loop, thanks to near instantaneous results from their efforts, especially online. When specific channels deliver sales, leads and other highly sought-after outcomes, they receive commensurately more emphasis and budget - or the inverse, if their outcomes are not optimal.

For anyone tracking along with the most common narratives surrounding the marketing industry, which are driven at least in part by the efficacy of these channel outcomes, email marketing is intrusive and over-utilized, influencers are the most effective way to build a brand and TV is dead.

This is why the results of Opinium's consumer survey, detailing where brands are - and aren't - welcome, are so enthralling. In a proverbial ode to cognitive dissonance, email and TV are revealed to be the channels consumers most enjoy hearing from brands on, while influencer marketing is among the least liked.

Digging one layer deeper, as any marketer is wont to do, we begin to see results more aligned with our preconceived notions - but only after segmenting by generation. For consumers aged 44 and under, influencer, social media and online ads surge in popularity, whereas email and TV become much less liked by those 45+.

Reviewing the findings in full, then comparing and contrasting to our expectations and historical outcomes, is a fascinating exercise that will enrich any marketer's view of where to place their focus. Enjoy.

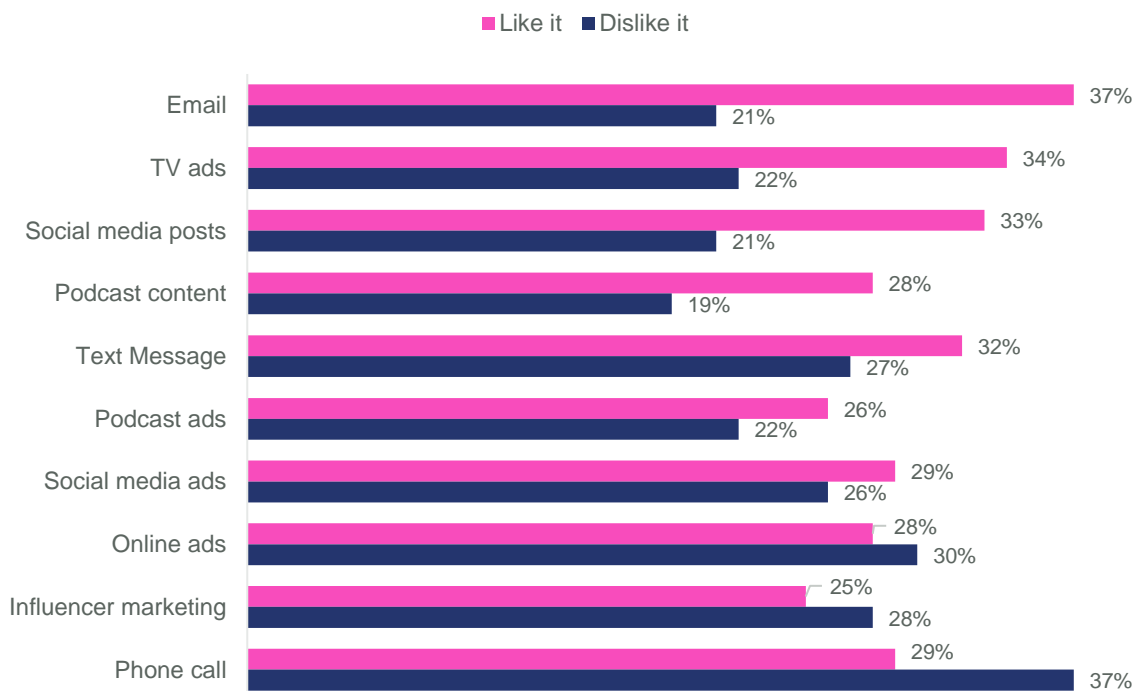
Where Americans like to hear from brands and companies

Email leads the pack: nearly two fifths of Americans like receiving emails from brands

Across all but three channels studied, more Americans say they enjoy hearing from brands than those who say they dislike hearing from them. Still, brands are much more welcome on certain platforms than others.

Email, TV ads, and social media posts (*not ads*) make up the top 3 channels Americans either 'like' or 'love' hearing from brands or companies on. Close to two fifths of Americans (37%) enjoying hearing from brands via email, while around one third enjoy hearing from brands on TV and through social media posts (34% and 33%, respectively).

Degree to which Americans like/dislike hearing from brands and companies on given channels, in order of net preference (% like - % dislike)



Phone calls, influencer marketing, and online ads are most unpopular channels

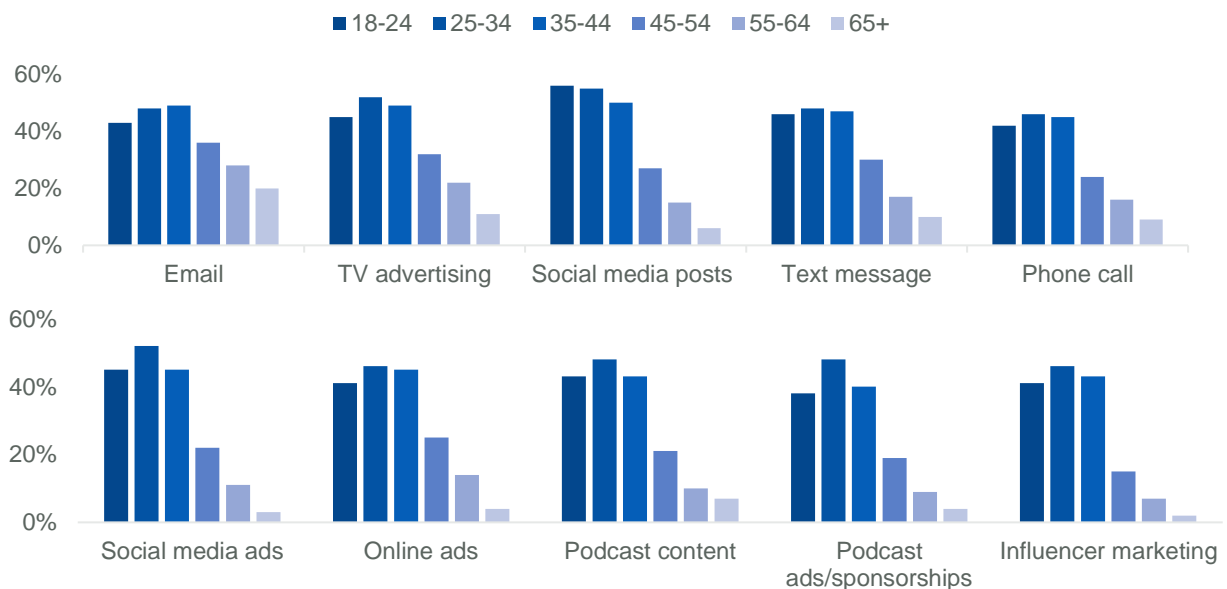
Meanwhile, there are more Americans who *dislike* hearing from brands through phone calls, influencer marketing, and online ads than those who say they like hearing from brands in these ways.

Close to two fifths (37%) of Americans dislike or hate hearing from brands through phone calls, making it the least favorite channel studied.

Digging deeper, brand communication preferences point to a stark generational divide

The degree to which Americans like hearing from certain platforms varies greatly by age group. Younger demographics are accustomed to and enjoy hearing from brands and companies via online platforms, while older demographics are more resistant.

To what degree do you like or love hearing from brands and companies on the following channels? (by age group)



Although email contains the most even spread across age groups of Americans who enjoy hearing from brands on the channel, there is still a significant difference between generations. Nearly half (48%) of 25–34-year-olds enjoy hearing from brands over email, compared to around three in ten (28%) 55–64-year-olds and only one fifth (20%) of those 65+.

Social media is the most popular channel for brand communications among younger generations. Over half of 18-24 and 25–34-year-olds (56% and 55%) enjoy hearing from brands through social media posts (*not ads*). Although posts are preferred over ads, social media ads still appeal to this younger demographic. Over half of 25–34-year-olds (53%) and over two fifths of 18-24-year-olds (45%) enjoy hearing from brands in this way.

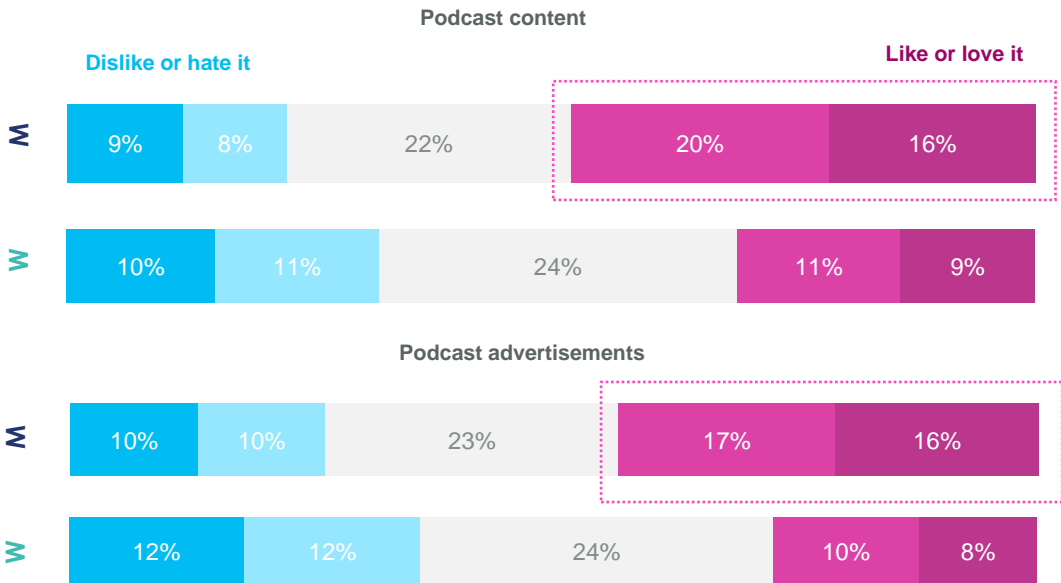
Respondent reactions to influencer marketing demonstrate how stark this generational divide is in the marketing industry. Close to half (46%) of 25–34-year-olds enjoy hearing from brands this way, and around two fifths of 18-24 and 35–44-year-olds do as well (41% and 43%). Meanwhile, two fifths (41%) of 55–64-year-olds are unfamiliar with the concept.

Podcast advertisements and content are more effective in reaching men

More men both say they listen to podcasts and enjoy hearing from brands on them than women. More than a third (36%) of women say podcasts are either not a channel they use or hear from brands on, compared to a quarter (25%) of men who say the same.

Moreover, men tend to enjoy hearing from brands more than women on podcasts – in both sponsored and organic content. Close to one fifth (16%) of men say they ‘love’ hearing from brands on podcasts through ads or organic content, while under one in ten (8% and 9%, respectively) women say the same.

Degree to which Americans like hearing from brands and companies on podcasts, by gender



Social media channels

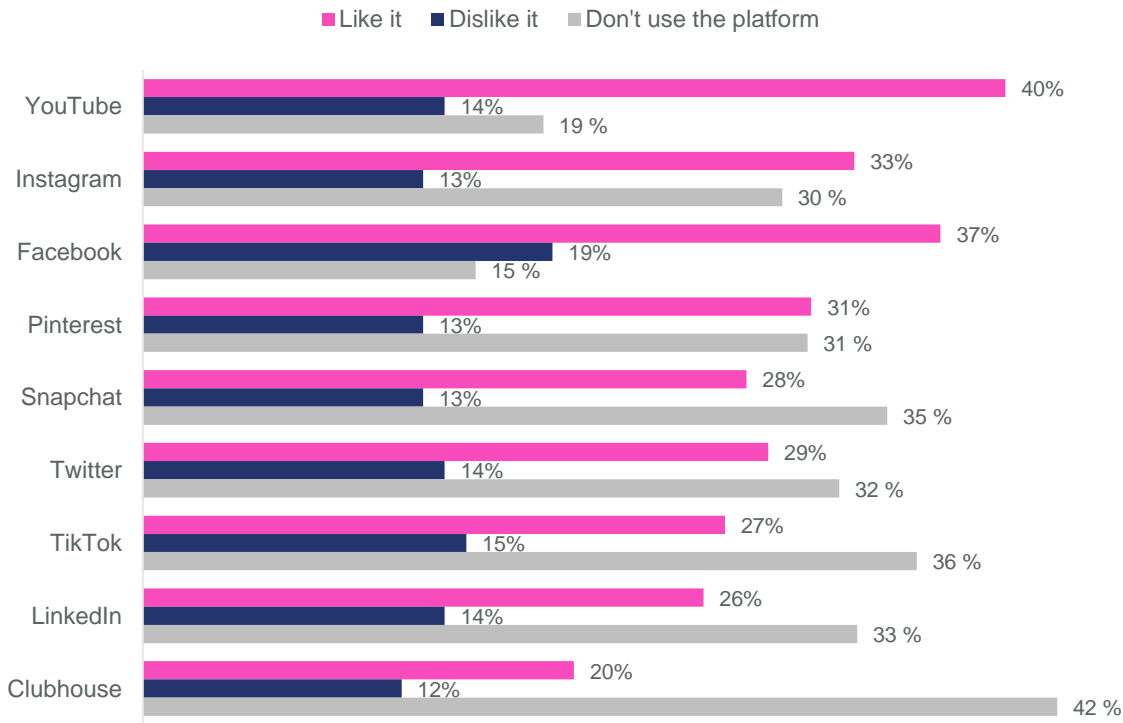
YouTube tops social media platforms Americans like to hear from brands on

The top social media platform Americans like to hear from brands on is YouTube, with two fifths (40%) stating they enjoy hearing from brands on the platform. This is especially true for 25–34-year-olds. Two thirds (66%) of Americans in that age group stated they either love or like hearing from brands on YouTube.

Facebook, though well-liked, is more polarizing. Nearly two fifths of Americans (37%) enjoy hearing from brands and companies on the social media platform. However, Facebook also draws more Americans who say they *dislike* hearing from brands on it compared to any other platform. Nearly one in five (19%) Americans either dislike or hate hearing from brands on the social media platform, highlighting the broader issues the platform has had with public perception in recent years.

Americans are less likely to want to hear from brands on professional platform, LinkedIn, and audio chat platform, Clubhouse. Among users of social media newcomer Clubhouse, men tend to dominate the scene. More women report not being on the platform than men – close to half (47%) of women and around two fifths (37%) of men. Furthermore, men are much more likely to enjoy hearing from brands on the platform, with 16% of men saying they ‘love’ hearing from brands on Clubhouse, compared to just 6% of women who would say the same.

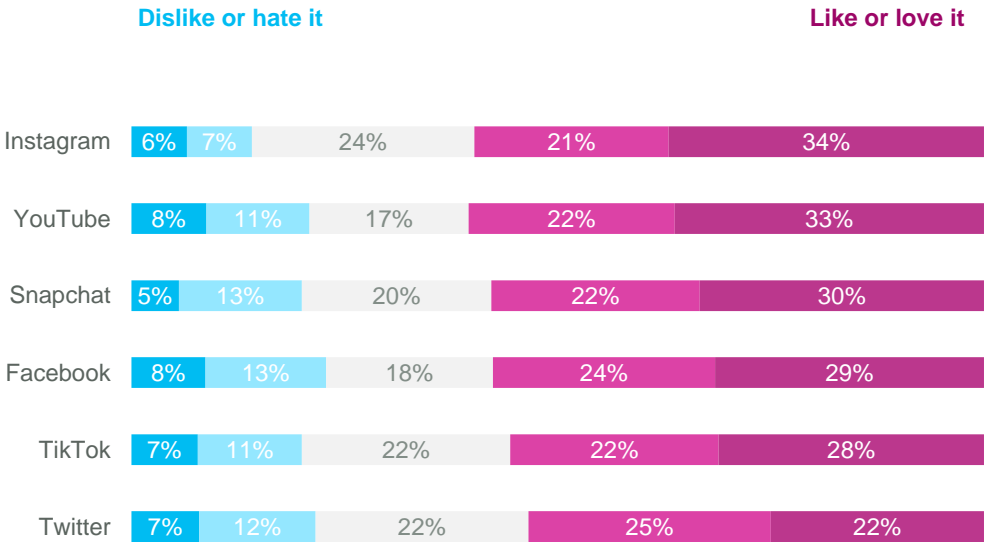
Degree to which Americans like hearing from brands and companies on social media channels, in order of net preference (% like - % dislike)



Gen Z love hearing from brands on social media, especially on Instagram

Around a third of Gen Z state they 'love' hearing from brands on Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat (34%, 33%, and 30%, respectively). Across all of the popular social media platforms, over or close-to half of 18–24-year-olds enjoy hearing from brands on them. However, Instagram stands out amongst the crowd. Only 13% of Americans in this age group dislike hearing from brands on the platform, underscoring its value as a key platform to communicate with this generation.

Degree to which Gen Zers like hearing from brands on top social media platforms



For Gen Z, TikTok has also emerged as a popular platform to hear from brands on, with over a quarter (28%) saying they 'love it.' Although TikTok is fairly new to the scene, only 5% of Americans in this age group are either not on the platform or don't hear from brands on it, a nod to the app's rise in popularity and importance for brands looking to reach this generation.

Importance of personalization

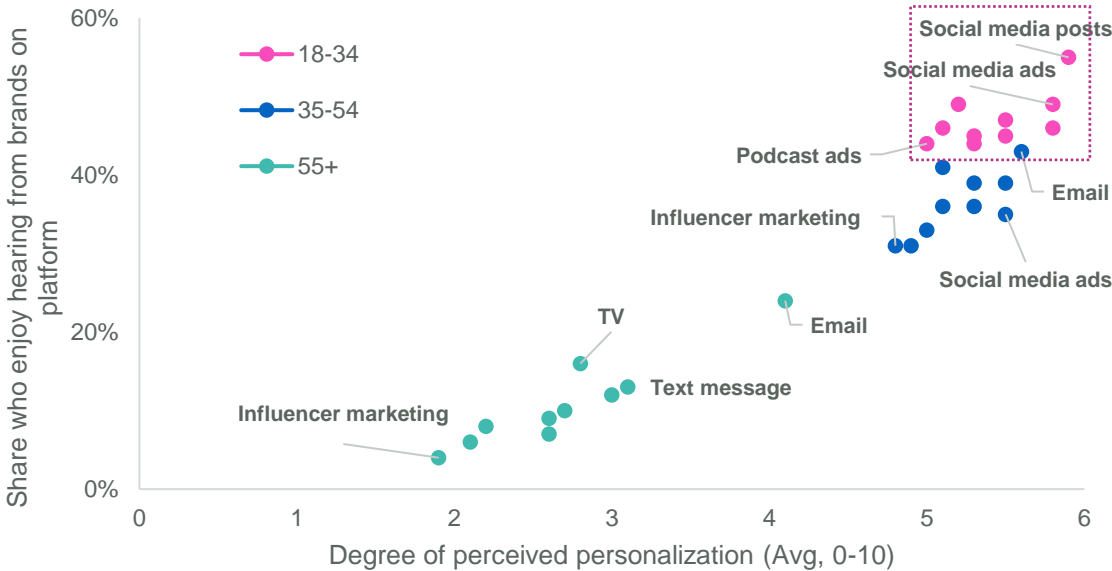
Email, the top channel Americans like to hear from brands on, also seen as most personalized

On a scale of '0' being 'Not personalized at all' to '10' being 'Very personalized to me,' three fifths (60%) of Americans rank the brand communications they receive via email as a 5 or above – ranking the highest in terms of personalization out of all the platforms studied. Americans rated the brand communications they receive via email as a 5.1 on average, followed by social media posts and ads which scored 4.8 out of ten. At the other end of the scale, podcast ads and influencer marketing are perceived as the least personalized by Americans, both scoring just 4.2 out of ten.

This represents a moderate trend for brand communications across all platforms: the more personalized the communications are perceived to be, the better liked they are by consumers.

18–34-year-olds rate the ads they are served as more personalized than any other group. This age group also enjoys hearing from brands the most. 18–34-year-olds find social media posts to be the most personalized form of brand communication, rating it on average as a 5.9 out of 10, closely followed by social media ads and email, both rated on average as 5.8.

Enjoyment of brand communications on given platform vs. degree of perceived personalization, by age group



Platform engagement

Brand engagement is strongest with social media and podcast content

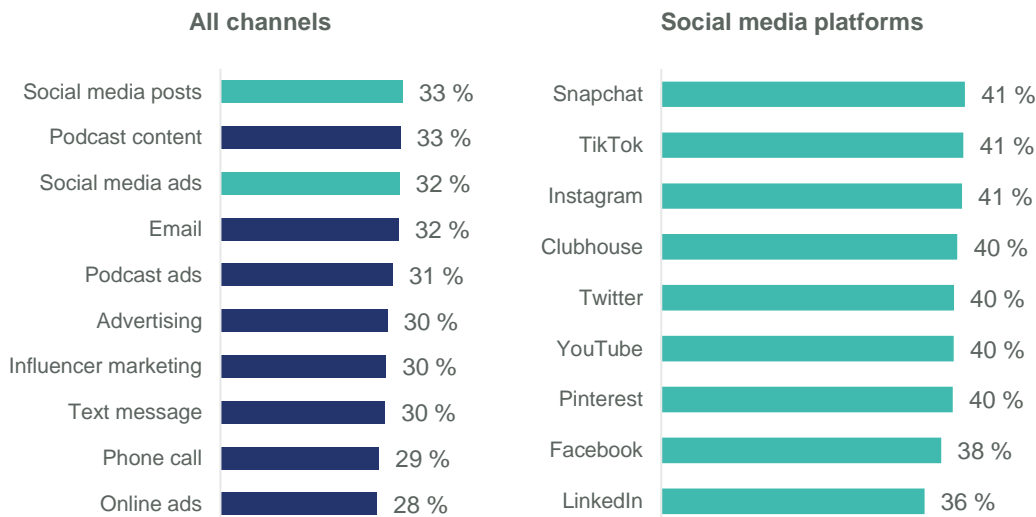
We asked Americans how often they engage with ads on each platform (e.g., click on the ad, go to the website after hearing about it, or purchase the product).

A third (33%) of social media users engage with organic content from brands regularly. This is tied with podcast content for the most-engaging channel with a third (33%) of podcast listeners engaging with content from brands regularly. Overall, social media platforms are the most engaging channel for brands to communicate and/or advertise on. Just under a third (32%) of social media users say they regularly engage with ads, joining social media posts and podcast content in the top three.

Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram draw highest engagement across social platforms

Respondents reported consistently high engagement with brand content across all social media platforms. Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram barely take the lead with slightly over two fifths of users (all 41%) regularly engaging with ads on each platform. There is a relative dip in ad engagement when it comes to Facebook and LinkedIn, where under two fifths of users on those platforms regularly engage with ads (38% and 36%, respectively)

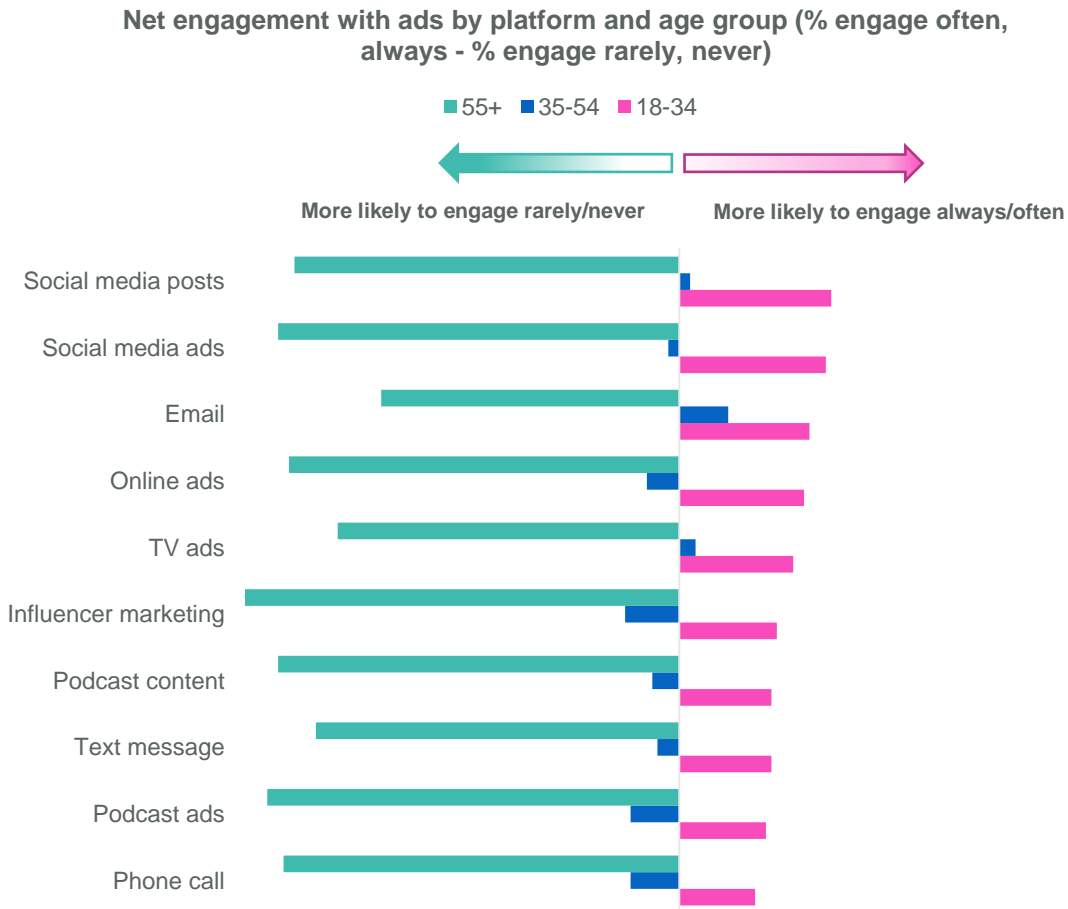
Percent of platform users who engage* with this form of brand comms regularly (often or always)



* (e.g., click on the ad, go to the website after hearing about it, or purchase the product)

Younger Americans report higher engagement with every type of ad

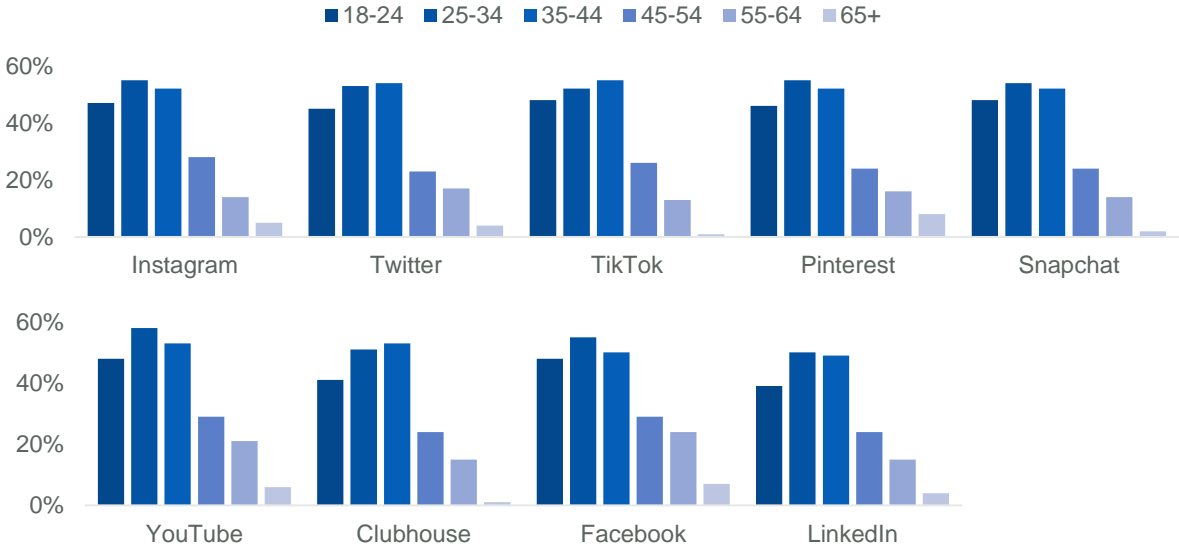
Across all communication channels, older Americans (aged 55+) are more likely to say they ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ engage with ads as opposed to engaging with them ‘often’ or ‘always.’ This demographic is most likely to engage with ads through email, with one in ten (12%) engaging with ads via this channel regularly. Still, this is outnumbered by the over two thirds (67%) of 55+ year olds and who engage with branded emails either ‘rarely’ or ‘never.’



Americans aged 35-54 engage most with ads they see via email, on TV and through social media posts, (39%, 38%, and 38% engage regularly with ads on these platforms, respectively). Across the board, Americans aged 18-34 are more likely to regularly engage with brand content, but social media comes out on top. Half of 18-34-year-olds say they engage regularly (i.e. often or always) with social media ads and organic posts (50% and 51%, respectively).

Looking at specific social media platforms, there are consistently strong levels of engagement with ads across all social channels among younger demographics. Americans between 25 and 44 engage with social media ads the most, as shown in the consistent peak for these age groups in the data. Engagement levels for these age groups are particularly high on YouTube, where nearly three fifths (58%) of 25–34-year-olds on the platform regularly engage with ads.

Percent of platform users who regularly engage with ads on given social media platform



Methodology

This research is based off a survey of 1932 US Adults weighted by age, gender, and region to be nationally representative of the country. The research was in field from 6/16/21 to 6/21/21.

Appendix

Figure 1
Brand content engagement vs. degree of perceived personalization

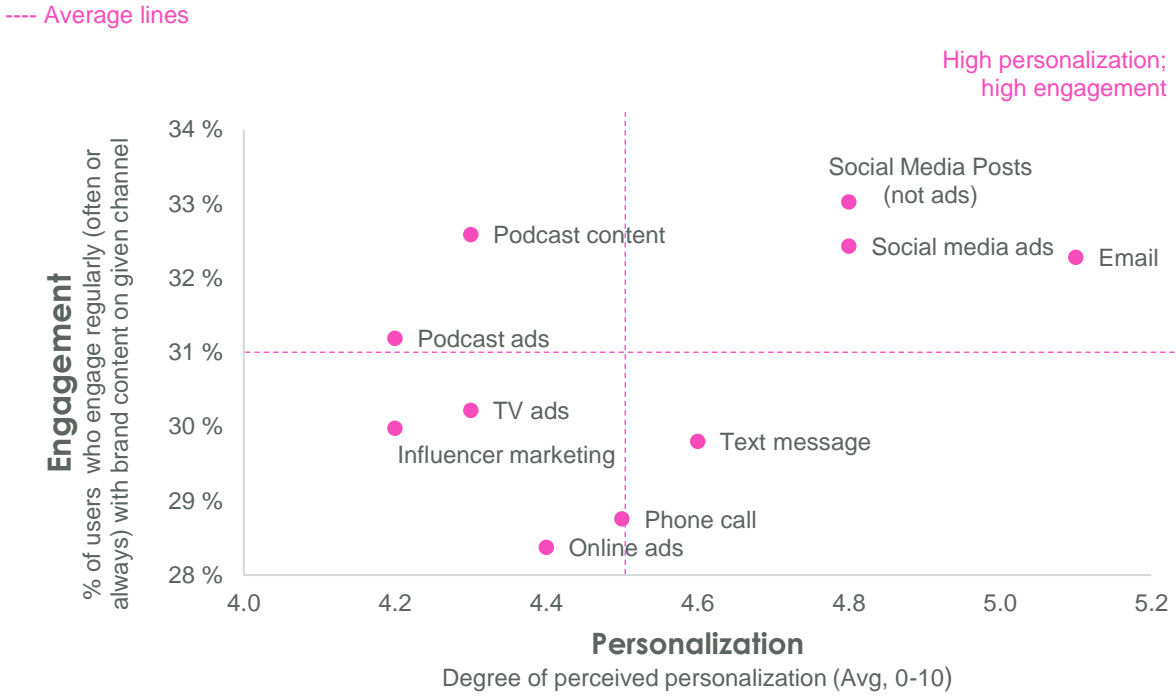
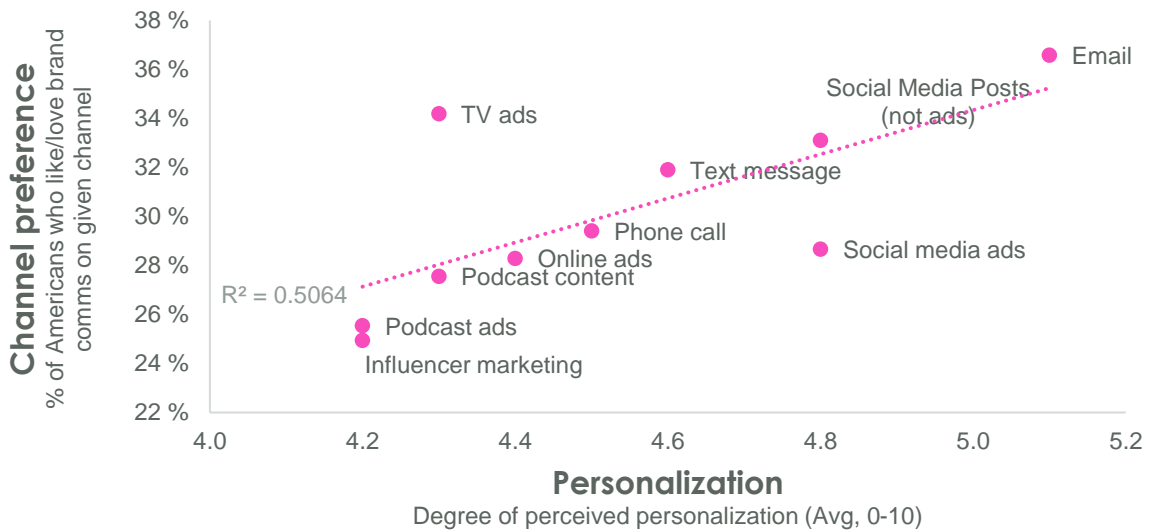


Figure 2
Degree to which Americans like hearing from brands on given channels vs. degree of perceived personalization



About Us

MODEL B is a pioneering technology company borne out of a full-service advertising agency, providing AI-enhanced Ad Technology and managed service support to brands looking to grow. We exist to empower brand-side marketers in whatever way creates a competitive advantage, whether that's expediting their ability to in-house, thanks to our SaaS products, or delivering strategic, creative and media support. Promoting transparency and simplicity is at the heart of our One Team + One Tool approach, which drives measurable and consistent impact.

www.modelb.com | hello@modelb.com | [@ModelBco](https://www.instagram.com/ModelBco)

OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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