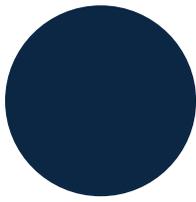


# SOCIAL NETWORKS FORECAST 2019

Hootsuite's annual predictions  
for social networks





# SOCIAL NETWORKS FORECAST 2019

In last year's *Social Media Trends* report, we predicted that 2018 would see social networks focusing on emerging trends including mobile video, livestreaming, AI-powered improvements to social ad platforms, and visual search and product discovery.

This year sees the major social networks building on these big bets with new formats, technologies, and ways of engaging. They're incorporating augmented and virtual reality experiences into mobile video, using artificial intelligence to deliver more personalized content and advertising, and integrating shopping experiences seamlessly into visual search and product discovery.

They're also responding to increasing public demand for improved security and transparency, updating their safety policies and exploring ways to help users rediscover the authentic, personal connections that brought them to social media in the first place.

Read on for our forecast of what's next for each of the major social networks, along with examples of best-in-class brands that are getting results with the latest social media strategies and technologies.

The *Social Networks Forecast 2019* is based on a survey of more than 3,000 Hootsuite business users, from large enterprises to small agencies, conducted in Q3 2018 for our annual *Social Media Trends* report. We've supplemented these results with insights from primary interviews with dozens of industry specialists, as well as published reports and data from Edelman, Gartner, GlobalWebIndex, Forrester, Econsultancy, Kleiner Perkins, We Are Social, and others.



# FACEBOOK

Increased transparency  
Authentic connections

After facing a number of data breaches that compromised more than 137 million of their 2.23 billion users, Facebook will spearhead the charge to restore trust in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

With a number of major elections happening in the next 18 months, Facebook is enhancing security features and transparency for users around the globe, with dedicated artificial intelligence tools, fact checking partners, and more than 20,000 new safety and content reviewers.<sup>2</sup>

Along with a dedication to fighting fake news on the network, Facebook's move towards increased transparency includes new tools that will let anyone see the ads that any page is running, plus archives of political ads that are labeled to show who paid for them.<sup>3</sup>

Facebook Stories announced a 150 million user count in 2018—along with plans to launch Stories Ads. While Facebook is currently testing these ads in the U.S., Mexico, and Brazil, expect the rollout of the 5 to 15 second video ads for all users this year.<sup>4</sup>

On the innovation front, Facebook's newest virtual reality headset—[Oculus Quest](#)—is set to ship in spring 2019. The Oculus Quest combines a wireless design, virtual hand controllers, and full positional tracking.<sup>5</sup>

Customers will see an increased focus on Facebook Groups this year, with new features in beta such as the ability for branded Facebook Pages to join Groups,<sup>6</sup> as well as a new feature called [Watch Party](#) that will allow members of Facebook Groups to view, comment, and react to videos together.<sup>7</sup>

---

## **BEST-IN-CLASS** BRANDS TO LEARN FROM

Jewelry company [BaubleBar](#) used dynamic ads to target broad audiences across Facebook. The campaign led to an increase of 47 percent return on ad spend and doubled their average purchases per day.<sup>8</sup>



# YOUTUBE

Personalized broadcasts

More interaction and flexibility for users

YouTube grew from 1.6 billion to 1.9 billion active users in 2018, a number that shows no signs of slowing.<sup>9</sup>

Less than a year after launching, their new [YouTube TV](#) streaming service already had more than 300,000 subscribers<sup>10</sup>—and by summer 2018, that number had swelled to 800,000.<sup>11</sup> In 2019, we'll see further expansion with new channel selections, publishers, and markets.

The future of YouTube means more control, flexibility, and interactivity for users—and for advertisers. By combining the advertising reach of TV and online video, brands will gain better reach, targeting, and measurement capabilities.

New tools such as [Google's Reach Planner in AdWords](#) (in beta at time of publication) will put a sharper focus on the planning and customizing of video campaigns for brands.<sup>12</sup> The future of video entertainment sees unique data, core audiences, and video formats coming together for the most personalized user experience seen to date.

---

## **BEST-IN-CLASS** BRANDS TO LEARN FROM

Adventure company [Majestic Heli Ski](#) used strategic video ad targeting with YouTube Ads to zero in on a specific customer base. By focusing on users who were searching online for ski resorts and certain types of skis, the company has boosted their customer base by 400 percent over the last five years, increased sales by 25 percent, and earn 50 percent of their new customers through YouTube.<sup>13</sup>



# SNAPCHAT

## Technological innovations The visual shopping experience

While Instagram Stories have surpassed Snapchat this past year with more than 400 million daily active users, the network is still a go-to for a broad youth audience.<sup>14</sup> Seventy-nine percent of teens have an account—and due to addictive features like Snapstreaks (which track how many days in a row two users Snap each other), 44 percent say they would pick Snapchat over other networks if they had to choose just one.<sup>15</sup>

While Snapstreaks might not be of much interest to older users, Snapchat's dedication to technological innovations is something marketers should continue to watch. With the launch of their newest Spectacles product in 2018, Snapchat continues the move towards a future where hardware and software converge.

In addition to the new Spectacles, Snapchat is working on updates within both the platform and the hardware, including a new feature that automatically curates your Spectacles Snaps into a single Highlight Story.<sup>16</sup>

Along with their continued investment in augmented reality, Snapchat will introduce new shopping capabilities in 2019. Recent announcements include a new visual search tool in partnership with Amazon, which will allow users to point their camera at just about anything, find it on Amazon, and buy it—all within Snapchat.<sup>17</sup>

---

## **BEST-IN-CLASS** BRANDS TO LEARN FROM

Modern home furnishings company **Structube** used Snapchat to reach a new millennial audience. With a variety of targeting strategies to maximize reach and effectiveness, Structube used the Snap Pixel (a piece of code that lets advertisers measure and track the impact of campaigns) and Snap Ads with Webview (Snap Ads that allow viewers to swipe up to a web page) to achieve a 930 percent return on ad spend and a 66 percent lower CPM.<sup>18</sup>



# LINKEDIN

## A cohesive ecosystem Deeper analytics

Now under the ownership of Microsoft and reaching 575+ million professionals from 200 countries, LinkedIn has been working hard to introduce new capabilities and features for their users—and escaping the security controversies plaguing other social platforms.<sup>19</sup>

After introducing a new user interface, new ad formats, and a native video feature in 2018, LinkedIn continues to be a customer-centric network.<sup>20</sup> Since the acquisition, LinkedIn and Microsoft have worked to integrate programs and features that streamline the customer experience. This includes the much-celebrated integration of Microsoft Dynamics 365 (Microsoft's CRM tool) into LinkedIn Recruiter.<sup>21</sup>

The launch of [Talent Insights](#), a new self-serve analytics tool, will tap into LinkedIn's extensive data to deliver information on demand to the millions of HR and recruitment professionals using the network. These insights will help LinkedIn's professional users understand market trends and skill availability, and will improve their ability to refine and target their searches.

As the talent market gets tighter, expect to see more data-driven innovations from LinkedIn in the coming year.

---

## BEST-IN-CLASS BRANDS TO LEARN FROM

[Adobe](#) raised brand awareness and caught the attention of hard-to-reach marketers by sharing strategic thought leadership and digital content, including links to other relevant thought leadership articles, infographics, tips and tricks, and entertaining videos.

After this campaign, more than 50 percent of viewers agreed that Adobe is shaping the future of digital marketing—and 79 percent agreed that Adobe can help optimize media spend.<sup>22</sup>



# TWITTER

Cooperative safety policies

Live broadcasting options

In 2019, Twitter will double down on security and crack down on bots and “dehumanizing speech.” After a tumultuous year fighting racism, threats of violence, spam, and abuse, Twitter is drafting [new safety policies](#) with critical public input and increased transparency as the social network looks to find its direction forward.<sup>23</sup>

Another core focus will be Twitter’s ongoing investment in their [developer ecosystem](#), which helps talented developers create new and innovative ways to use Twitter. Expect to see more personalized experiences thanks to investments like this.<sup>24</sup>

Twitter also continues to invest in live broadcasting. They recently launched audio-only live streams for mobile,<sup>25</sup> and also announced that live video streams will be bumped to the top of followers’ timelines.<sup>26</sup> These changes create a greater incentive for brands and publishers to explore live broadcasting—and for followers to tune in.

---

## **BEST-IN-CLASS** BRANDS TO LEARN FROM

Global research company [Sirius Decisions](#) used Twitter Ads to connect with their audience and boost ticket sales for their conference. The ad campaign produced a 16x return on investment.<sup>27</sup>



# INSTAGRAM

Advertising options for broadcasters  
New ways to discover—and shop

Instagram hit one billion monthly active users in 2018. Its monumental growth can be attributed to Stories, new video features, and advanced advertiser options.<sup>28</sup>

With the introduction of [IGTV](#), Instagram proved their continued dedication to video last year. While there are currently no ads in IGTV, expect monetization options to roll out for creators in 2019.<sup>29</sup>

We'll also see new ways to shop on Instagram next year. Product tagging will expand, and the newly introduced Shopping channel in the Explore section means even more opportunities for brands to get their target audience's attention.<sup>30</sup>

With these developments, Instagram offers significant opportunities for businesses and their customers. With the highest user engagement rates among major social networks and a battery of innovative ad tools, Instagram is poised for sustained growth in the year ahead.

---

## **BEST-IN-CLASS** BRANDS TO LEARN FROM

Fashion and accessories brand [Everlane](#) uses Instagram Stories to share authentic and transparent content with their audience of more than 566,000 followers.<sup>31</sup>

Fashion and lifestyle company [Lacoste](#) tested Carousel Ads in Instagram Stories against other ad formats—and saw a 61 percent higher click-through rate.<sup>32</sup>



# PINTEREST

More mobile ads

Powerful shopping tools

After hitting \$500 million in ad sales in 2017,<sup>33</sup> Pinterest is set to double this number as they approach an impressive \$1 billion in ad sales for 2018.<sup>34</sup> While other networks hog the spotlight, Pinterest continues to quietly grow into a top platform for businesses.

As the site becomes a go-to for big fashion, beauty, home, and lifestyle brands, Pinterest's mobile ads are proving particularly popular for businesses trying to get in front of the company's 250 million monthly active users<sup>35</sup>—80 percent of whom use the network's mobile app.<sup>36</sup>

With 90 percent of Pinterest's users using the site to make purchase decisions, expect to see a further dedication to shopping and a focus on consumer behavior.<sup>37</sup>

In 2019, Pinterest will continue to position itself as a powerful discovery tool with updates to features such as "[Shop the Look](#)" and the [Pinterest Lens](#).<sup>38</sup> The platform's unique ability to incorporate visual, social, and search into a single user experience means more users will turn to Pinterest when looking for new ideas, products, and inspiration.

---

## **BEST-IN-CLASS** BRANDS TO LEARN FROM

International home furnishings retailer [IKEA](#) used keyword targeting and Promoted Pins to reach students shopping for dorm-room décor and organizers, increasing their click-through rate by 72 percent and decreasing their cost per click by 37 percent year over year.

Other brands worth checking out on Pinterest include Etsy, Refinery29, and HGTV.<sup>39</sup>

Get better business results with [Hootsuite](#).

# Endnotes

- 1 Vox. [The Facebook and Cambridge Analytica Scandal, explained with a simple diagram](#). 2018.
- 2 Facebook. [Mark Zuckerberg post](#). 2018.
- 3 TechCrunch. [Facebook and Instagram launch US political ad labeling archive](#). 2018.
- 4 TechCrunch. [Facebook Stories reveals 150M daily viewers and here come ads](#). 2018.
- 5 Facebook. [Introducing Oculus Quest](#). 2018.
- 6 Digiday. [With Facebook emphasizing community, marketers are trying to figure out Facebook Groups](#). 2018.
- 7 Facebook. [Watch Party Launches Around the World](#). 2018.
- 8 Facebook. [Success Story: BaubleBar](#).
- 9 YouTube. [Mid-year Update on Our Five Creator Priorities for 2018](#). 2018.
- 10 CNBC. [In their battle against big cable, YouTube TV and Hulu with Live TV have signed up hundreds of thousands of subscribers](#). 2018.
- 11 TechCrunch. [Hulu with Live TV tops a million subscribers](#). 2018.
- 12 Google Ads. [Unlock the Potential of YouTube with Reach Planner](#). 2018.
- 13 YouTube. [Majestic Heli Ski](#). 2017.
- 14 Business Insider. [Instagram's Stories feature is now twice as big as Snapchat, with 400 million daily users](#). 2018.
- 15 Recode. [Snapchat is still the network of choice for U.S. teens—and Instagram is Facebook's best shot at catching up](#). 2017.
- 16 AdWeek. [Snap Introduced Two New Styles for Its Second-Generation Spectacles Camera Sunglasses](#). 2018.
- 17 AdWeek. [Snapchat is Partnering With Amazon to Test a Visual Search Tool](#). 2018.
- 18 Snapchat. [Structube saw 9.3x ROAS with Snapchat](#).
- 19 LinkedIn. [The 2018 LinkedIn Top Startups are Changing The Way We Work](#). 2018.
- 20 Inc. [LinkedIn just launched Native Video Ads. Here's What it Means for Marketers](#). 2018.
- 21 Microsoft. [Dynamics for Talent + LinkedIn Recruiter = Hire Performance](#). 2018.
- 22 LinkedIn. [Adobe raises brand awareness and captures the attention of hard-to-reach marketers with LinkedIn Sponsored Content](#).
- 23 Twitter. [Creating new policies together](#). 2018.
- 24 Twitter. [Tap into what's happening](#). 2018.
- 25 TechCrunch. [Twitter launches audio-only broadcasting feature on its IOS app and Periscope](#). 2018.
- 26 Engadget. [Twitter puts live streams at the top of your feed](#). 2018.
- 27 Twitter. [Sirius Decisions: A B2B company increased ticket sales with Website cards](#).
- 28 TechCrunch. [Instagram hits 1 billion monthly users, up from 800M in September](#). 2018.
- 29 Instagram. [Welcome to IGTV](#). 2018.
- 30 The Verge. [Instagram adds a shopping tab to the Explore page](#). 2018.
- 31 Hootsuite. [What You Can Learn From 7 of the Best Brands on Instagram Stories](#). 2018.
- 32 Instagram. [Lacoste tested the carousel format for ads in Instagram Stories](#). 2018.
- 33 Recode. [Pinterest expects to make more than \\$500 million in revenue this year](#). 2017.
- 34 CNBC. [Pinterest nears \\$1 billion in ad sales and valuation rises as it looks to go public in mid-2019](#). 2018.
- 35 VentureBeat. [Pinterest passes 250 million monthly active users](#). 2018.
- 36 Pinterest. [Promoted App Pins](#). 2018.
- 37 Pinterest. [Here's How People Shop on Pinterest](#). 2018.
- 38 Pinterest. [Introducing the next wave of visual search and shopping](#). 2017.
- 39 Pinterest. [Ikea: Small-space living ideas deliver big returns](#). 2017.
- 40 Vox. [The Facebook and Cambridge Analytica Scandal, explained with a simple diagram](#). 2018.
- 41 Facebook. [Mark Zuckerberg post](#). 2018.
- 42 TechCrunch. [Facebook and Instagram launch US political ad labeling archive](#). 2018.
- 43 TechCrunch. [Facebook Stories reveals 150M daily viewers and here come ads](#). 2018.
- 44 Facebook. [Introducing Oculus Quest](#). 2018.
- 45 Digiday. [With Facebook emphasizing community, marketers are trying to figure out Facebook Groups](#). 2018.
- 46 Facebook. [Watch Party Launches Around the World](#). 2018.
- 47 Facebook. [Success Story: BaubleBar](#).