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Social Media the PR way:

Enhancing Your Strategy with Social Listening

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Introduction

Social media has changed PR and communications forever. There is now a never-ending stream of online interaction where consumers gather more information and share more opinions than ever before. As PR folk, brand guardians and comms teams, it's our job to identify the benefits of social media at every stage of the media lifecycle: Plan new content; Communicate and distribute that content; Monitor engagement with our content and brand; and Evaluate the impact of our communications on the brand.
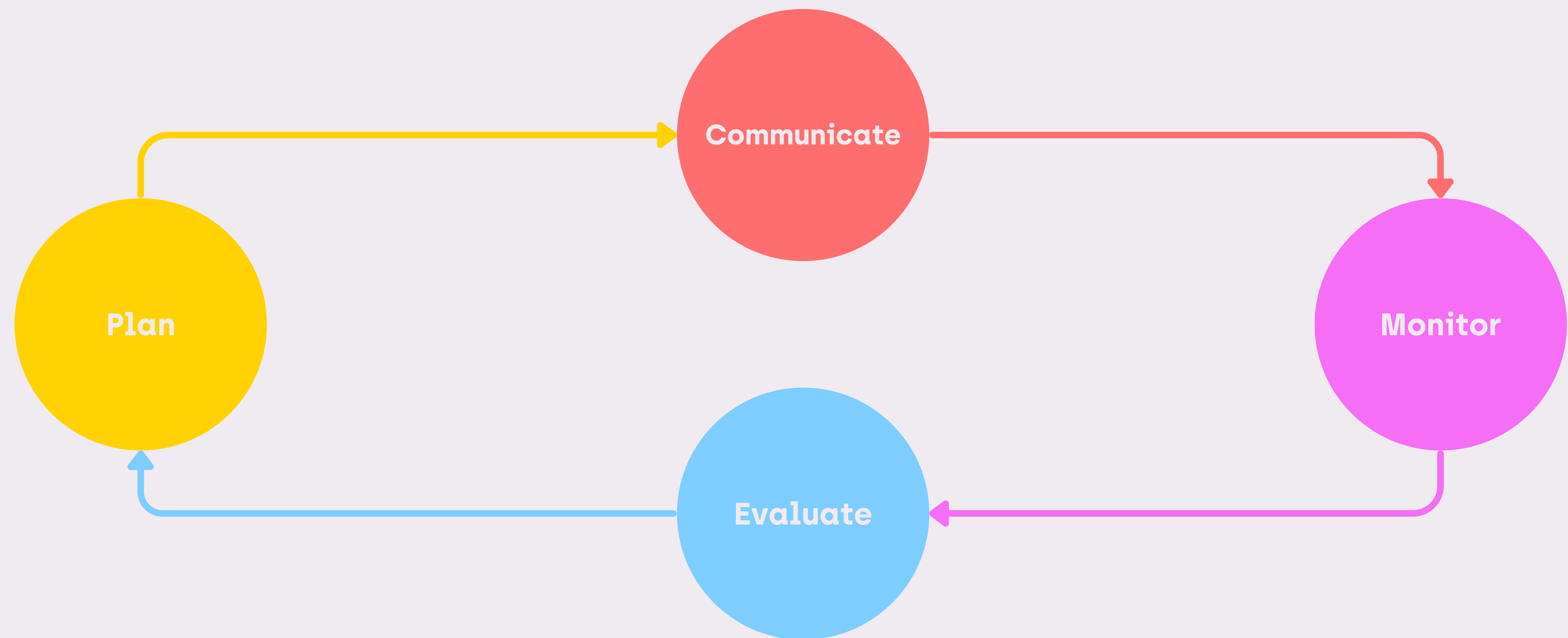
Social media monitoring and listening tools, once seen solely as the domain of marketing, are now a staple in the PR tech stack.

Onclusive and Digimind – now part of the same company – have joined forces to shine a light on the impact of using social media in your PR strategyand give you AI enhanced tools to execute that strategy.

What can social media do for you in PR?

- Show how global events are impacting your audience (and changing the opinions of that audience),
- Gives you valuable channels to share content through,
- Identify journalists and media contacts to approach with press releases,
- Predict an oncoming PR crisis by listening to how people are talking about your brand,
- Provide insights about a brand's different audiences and drivers of sentiment.

Ultimately, social media helps you improve the impact of your PR and communications activity.

Social media – the challenges & opportunities for PR and Comms

Social media challenges for PR & comms professionals

The beast that is the 24/7 news cycle has been fed by the arrival of social media and grown into a challenging web of engagement for PR teams to wrestle with. In just a few short hours, a story can gain immense traction and have a lingering impact on your brand reputation.

The assumption is that PR professionals are more comfortable with traditional print, broadcast, and online media – and this implies that we're leaving our brand's reputation on social media up to chance.

Social media management is no longer a low-level responsibility role, but rather an important strategic lever for brand articulation. How we track the impact and prove the worth of social media PR to our key stakeholders can also be a massive challenge when you don't have the tools in place to assist you. Yet, there's barely any education on the benefits of social media for PR and comms professionals. And even less education on the specifics of social media listening and its uses for brand insights and reputation management.

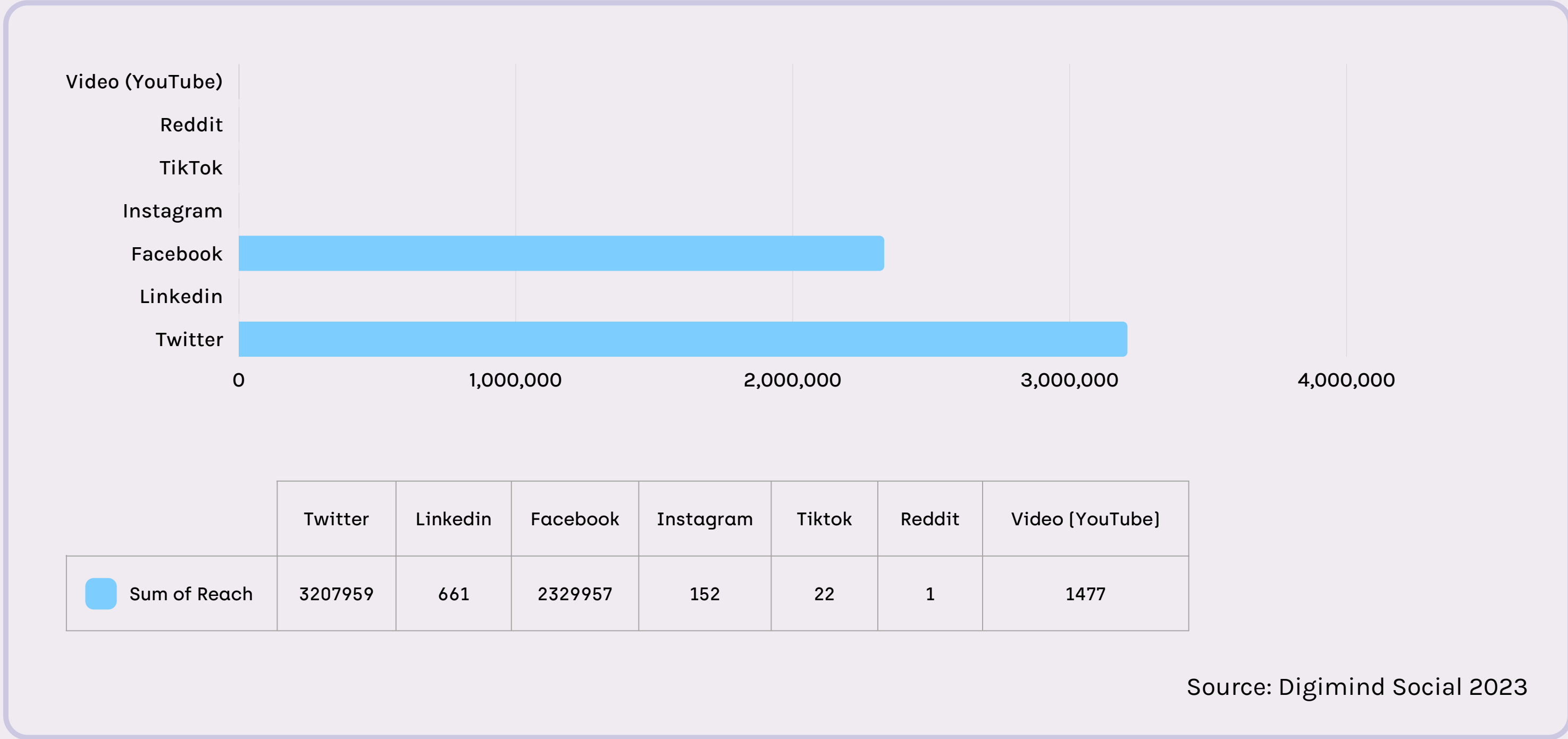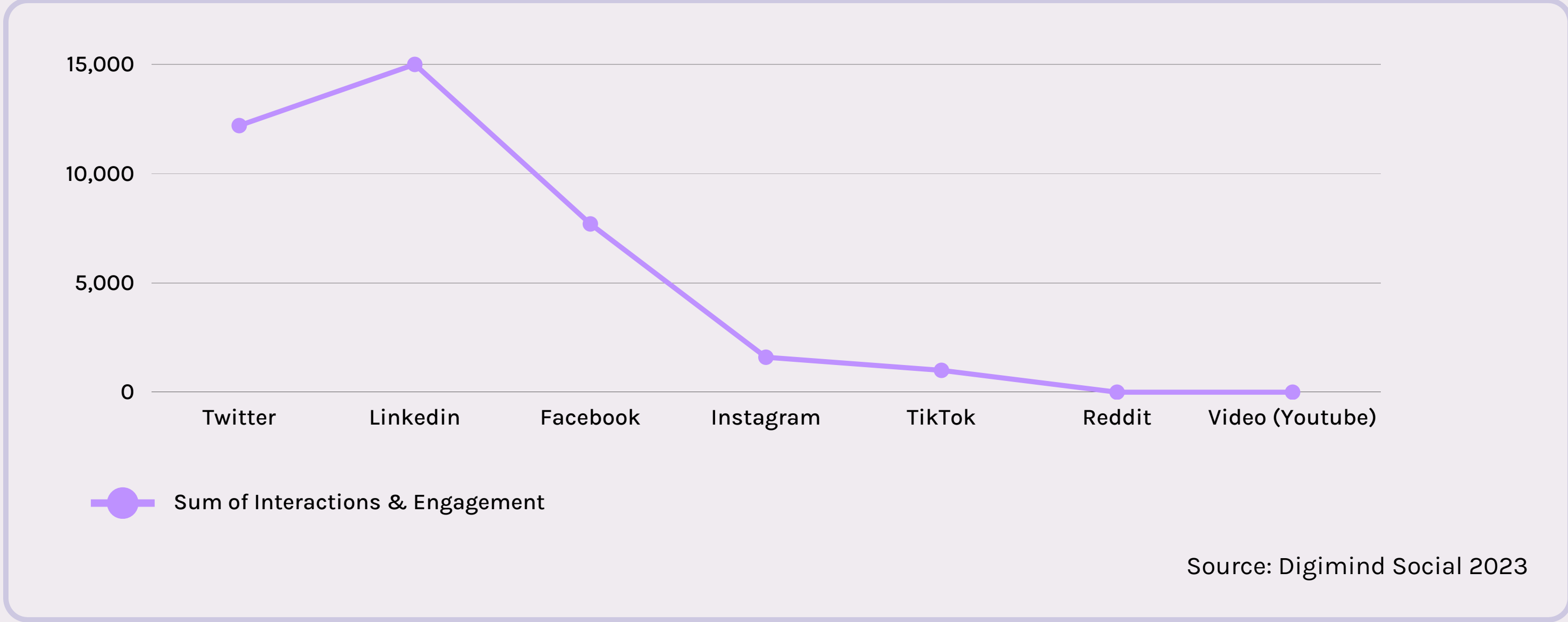# Social media opportunities for PR professionals

However, it's becoming more understood that social media has a significant impact on earned media performance and reputation, so it should be an essential part of every PR and comms team toolkit. It provides endless opportunities for PR teams who are struggling to build their media relations arm, catch the attention of journalists, and safeguard their brand.

The most successful PR teams are achieving this by both 'listening' on social media (to hashtags, keywords, comments) and social 'monitoring' (the performance of accounts and competitors). They're also tracking the evolution of the number of subscribers, interactions, and video views to learn the messages that work best with the public. As well as this, social listening also allows you to keep up to date with the attitudes of journalists and what content they are engaging with, helping you to create highly targeted media lists.

We monitored and listened to social media conversations surrounding 'World Day for Cultural Diversity' between 14 May – 28 May 2023 to demonstrate how social listening can deliver rich data insights.
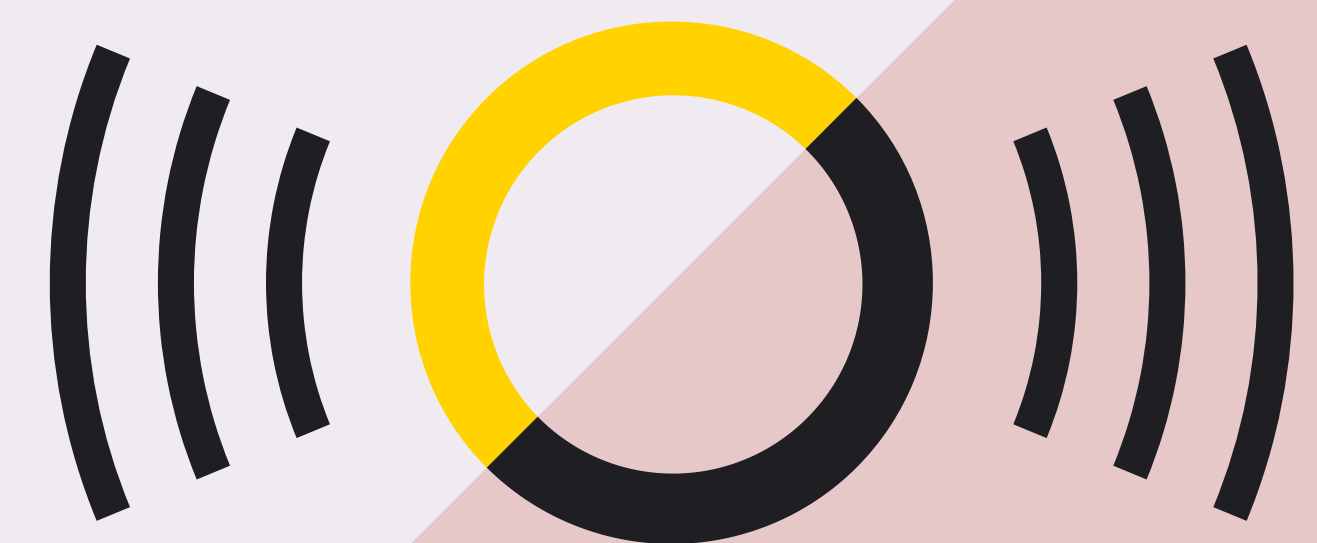
The social media platforms that offer the highest ROI for PR teams
(Engagement Impressions & Reach of posts on 'World Day for Cultural Diversity')

Y-axis: 15,000 / 10,000 / 5,000 / 0

X-axis: Twitter, Linkedin, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Reddit, Video (Youtube)

Legend: ● Sum of Interactions & Engagement

Source: Digimind Social 2023

Bar chart categories: Video (YouTube), Reddit, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter

X-axis: 0, 1,000,000, 2,000,000, 3,000,000, 4,000,000

	Twitter	Linkedin	Facebook	Instagram	Tiktok	Reddit	Video [YouTube]
■ Sum of Reach	3207959	661	2329957	152	22	1	1477

Source: Digimind Social 2023

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The most popular platforms for distributing comms and corporate messaging
(Volume of posts on 'World Day for Cultural Diversity' on each platform)

Source: Digimind Social 2023
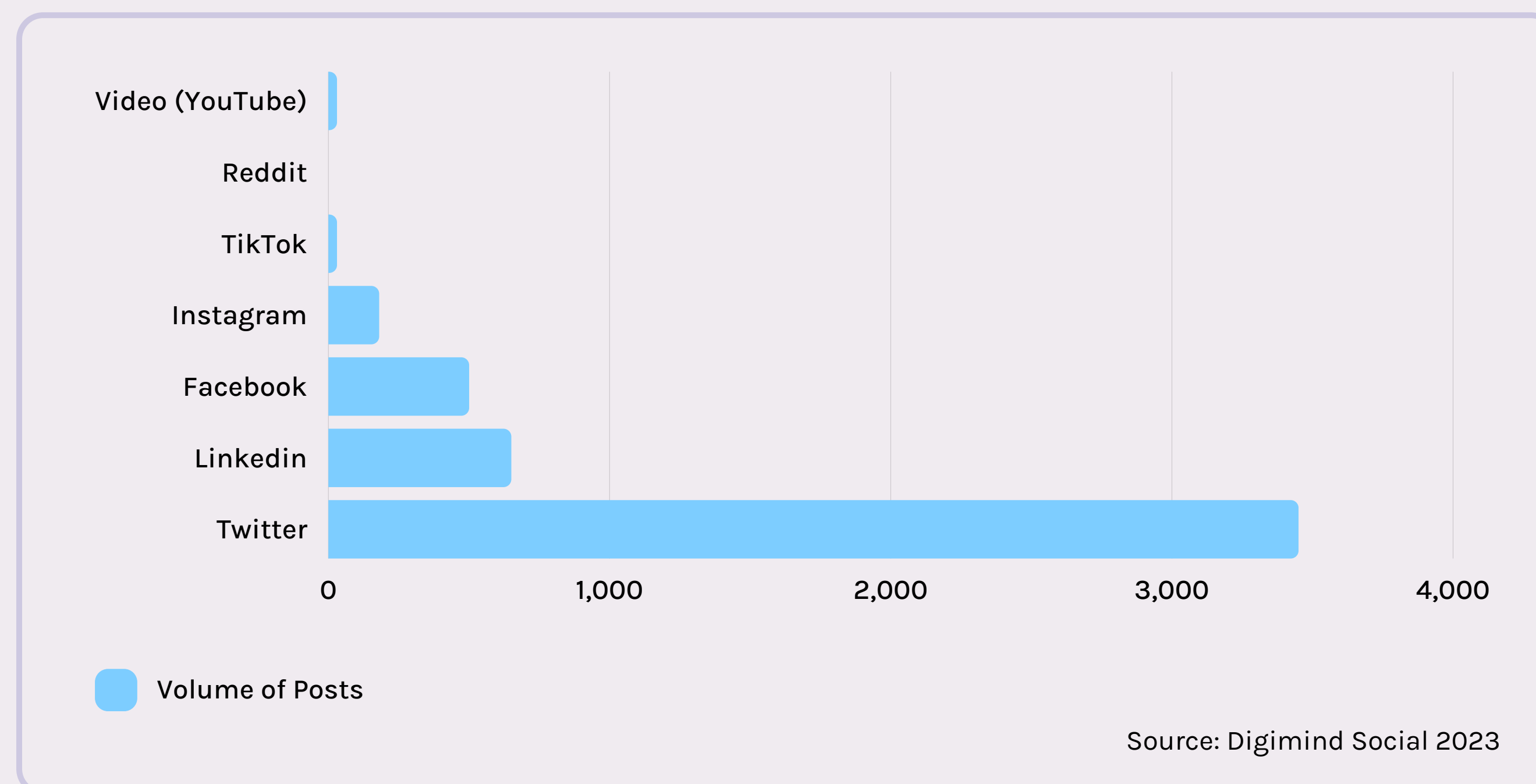
We tracked the volume of posts on the topic of World Cultural Diversity from business accounts in the week proceeding and the week following World Day for Cultural Diversity on the 21 May. Posts on Twitter are seen to have high engagement, reach. It also had the highest volume of posts surrounding the World Day for Cultural Diversity – indicating that it is the platform of choice for communicating corporate messaging of this nature. Facebook and LinkedIn also perform well across both data sets. These platforms may be your go to if you increased return on investment and wider reach with corporate messaging.

By partnering with a Media Monitoring Organisation who can pull data from both established social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn), and relatively new and disruptive platforms (e.g., TikTok), you can engage with and understand bigger and more diverse audiences than ever before.

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Digimind is the only social media monitoring provider that can coherently pull social listening data from TikTok and LinkedIn.

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Social monitoring vs social listening

Definition: Social Monitoring vs Social Listening

Social media monitoring captures data on the performance of social media activity from both your company and your competitors. It's a reactive measurement for campaign analysis and overall performance reporting.

Social media listening is more proactive, capturing quantitative and qualitative data to anticipate trends, sentiment, and consumption styles. It can support content creation, positioning, and customer relations.

These two social media measurement practices are easily mistaken since they are interdependent. However, social listening is especially useful for PR and communication teams who need to develop newsworthy content, produce 'hooky' press releases, and manage their brand reputation.

The advantages of social listening

Social listening allows you to proactively respond to potential crisis situations with automated alerts, weak signal detection, and targeted monitoring. With these features you can better anticipate the warning signs of 'bad buzz' by viewing changes in language & sentiment and explanations of peak breaks.

Social listening tech can also:

- Identify messages and stories that generate organic engagement across social media within your target audience,
- Provide insights on your competitors' top strategies,
- Identify new relationships with influencers and media personal,
- Enhance your releases and comms campaigns.

Our customers use cases for social media listening by percentage

Pie chart values: 24.18%, 11.45%, 10.71%, 10.5%, 9.12%, 6.68%, 4.88%, 4.67%, 4.67%, 13.15%

Legend:
- Brand Monitoring
- Competitive Analysis
- Crisis Management
- Trend Watch
- Company Monitoring
- Consumer Insights
- Campaign Success (includes PR and comm pros)
- Content Performance
- Influencer Monitoring
- Other

Source: Digimind Social Tool, 2023

# The best social media platforms for PR professionals

With the role of PR professionals ever evolving, we looked at the successes of social media PR and the power of new social media platforms.

Over the next five years, social media ad spend is expected to rise by 71% (HubSpot). This year, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are growing steadily as businesses continue to invest in short-form video content.

Consumer trends are showing that many users are turning to newer content-led platforms for building community and getting up-to-date information. That is to say, depending on your PR strategy and the type of comms you produce, some platforms will work better than others.

Twitter

| Launch date	Monthly active user worldwide	Tweets per day
2006	+330M	867M
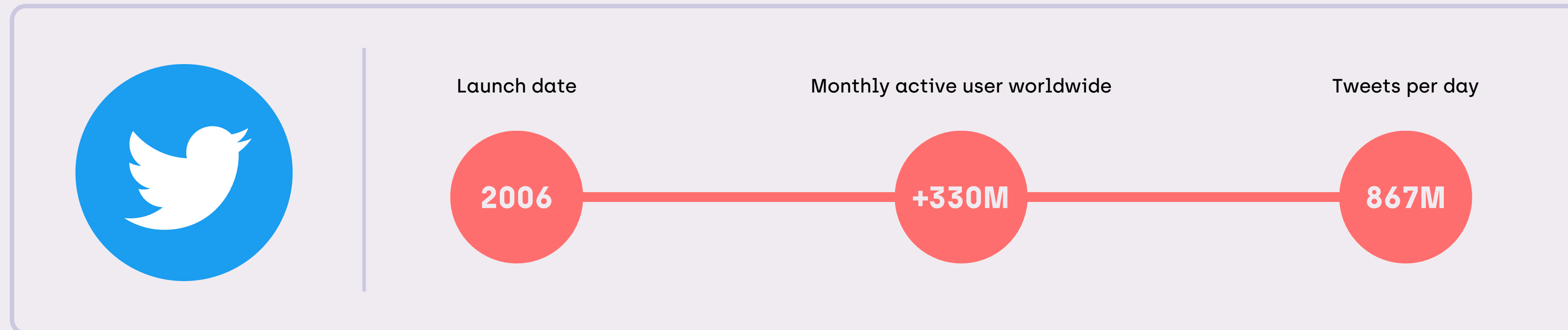
Most of the tweets on Twitter are posted by a minority of the platform's users. However, the engagement with these tweets by way of likes, comments, and retweets are staggering – making it a great platform for monitoring conversations in real time and uncovering a global sentiment on specific topics.

In terms of social listening, Twitter is best for brand reputation insights, detecting a crisis, and offering customer service. In order to remain part of the fast-paced Twitter conversations, people are compelled to tweet bold and fast. Therefore, a complaint, question or piece of praise can quickly gain weight and exposure. Being able to proactively monitor these 'weak signals' will identify whether your brand's reputation is trending upwards or downwards, so you can directly interject with your comms to avoid a crisis.

This is also one of the reasons why many brands are offering customer service on Twitter. The effectiveness of direct interaction can have either positive or negative effects on your brand reputation.

65% of people have more brand loyalty if a brand reaches out to them on social (Digimind).

Instagram

| Launch date	Monthly active user worldwide	No. of buisnesses on Instagram
2010	2B+	200M+
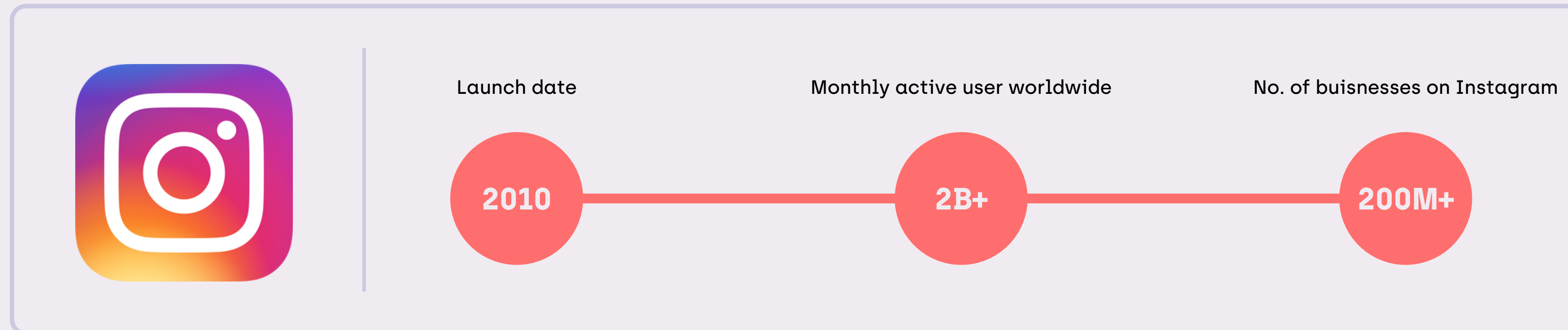
The unique way you can handpick content you like on Instagram (whether it be reels, influencers, or friends) is what's made the platform so successful – the algorithm works hard to introduce you to new content that you are likely to enjoy.

As a result, Instagram performs as an impeccable PR tool as it's easier to engage an audience that's already invested in the topic you're talking about. Social listening on Instagram allows you to identify potential relationships with new influencers and target specific audiences based on their interests and engagement. According to Hypefury, the industries that currently engage with their consumers the most on Instagram are the Fashion, Tech, Travel & Tourism and Health, Beauty & Wellness industries. This may be due to the volume of influencers who engage with these industries, offering increased PR potential.

1 in 4 social media users follow virtual influencers on social media. (HubSpot)

YouTube

| Launch date	Monthly active user worldwide	Content uploaded per minute
2005	2.5B+	500hrs
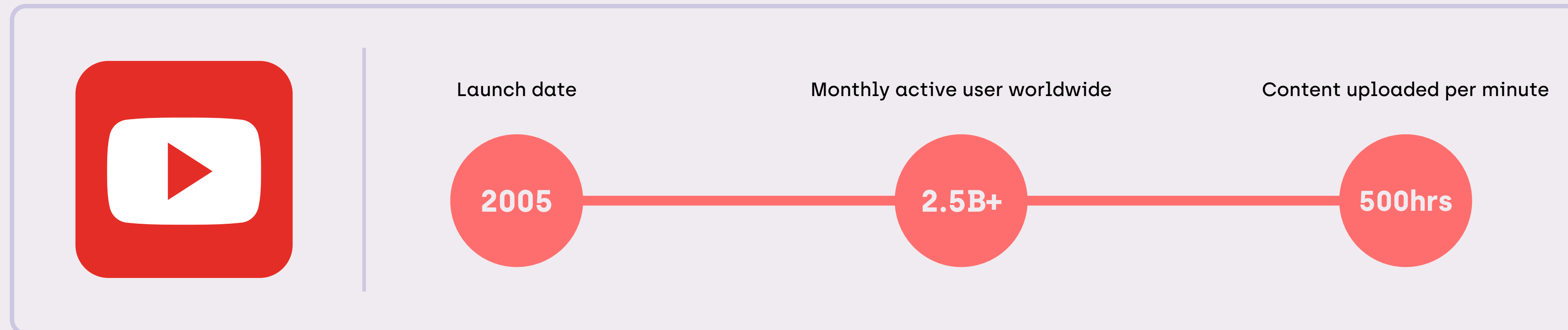
More than 73% of adult consumers spend their screen time browsing YouTube (HubSpot).

YouTube is a great way to distribute your content. If your brand has a YouTube channel, you can house video PR campaigns on the platform, knowing it will be sharable across multiple mediums. Classic YouTube also gives you a lot of control over comments, allowing you to filter out negative or unhelpful posts. You can even disable comments completely to let the content speak for itself.

Short-form video is great for driving business results and will continue to grow in popularity throughout 2023. The arrival of YouTube shorts is an opportunity to fit your comms into a medium with high return on investment. And it doesn't need to cost the earth. As PR teams, we often have smaller social media budgets than our marketing counterparts. However, the latest trend of lowbudget, casual videos could work to your brand's advantage. You don't need expensive full-studio production to make waves – just a point of view and a sense of humor.

Facebook

The second most popular platform is Facebook, where 68% of consumers spend time (HubSpot).

Launch date	Monthly active user worldwide	Most downloaded app
2004	2.9B+	2010s
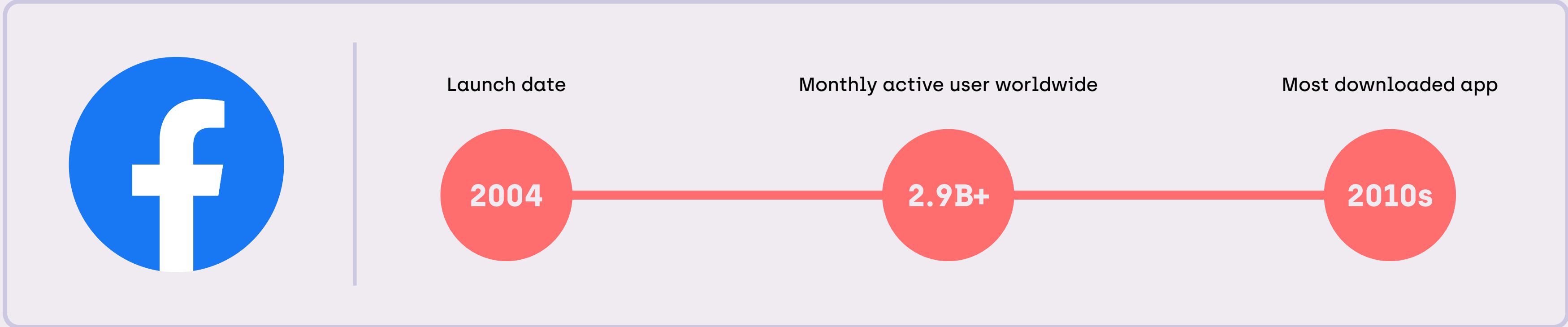
Facebook is deemed by many as the platform with the largest 'fake news' and 'hate speech' problem. As a result, many businesses can shy away from using it to promote their brands. However, Facebook has a captivated loyal audience that isn't going away. For PR and comms teams, the platform offers unique insights into audience demographics. With Facebook you can use location, age, and interest-based targeting when distributing your releases. It also means any social listening is going to give you great insights on sentiment drivers, the types of people your content resonates with, and whether you're impacted by fake news.

Linkedin

| Launch date	Active members	Contries and territories serviced
2003	900M+	200+
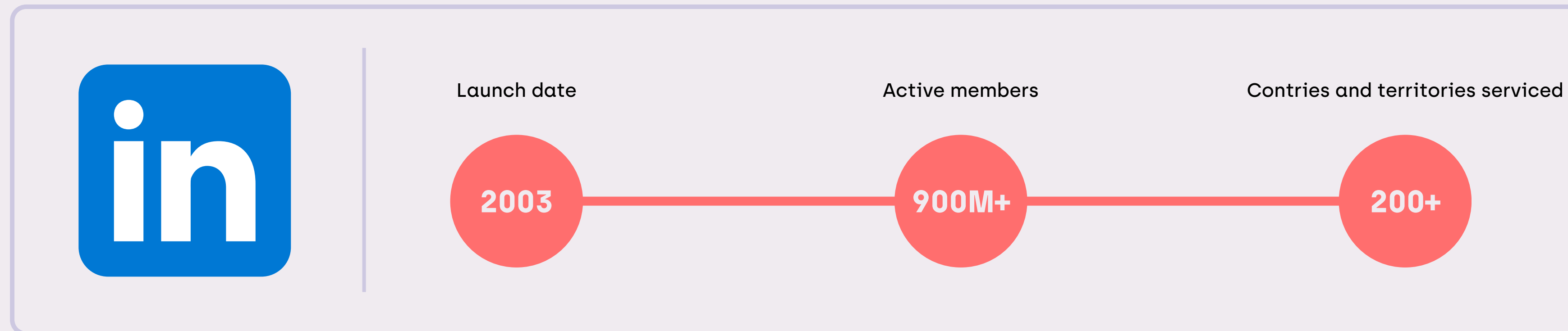
Since 2015, most of LinkedIn's revenue came from selling access to member information to recruiters and sales teams. That being said, it's still a platform that generates content through post sharing, uploads, and its article feature.

Communicators can use LinkedIn to optimise campaign impact by:

1. Keeping your company profile up to date. This profile should include all the latest branding and links to your press releases and thought leadership.
2. Being Active. Share your articles and most recent PR campaign material. Whether that be video or written format, ensure you create content that is optimised for sharing on LinkedIn.
3. Boost your own personal brand. LinkedIn provides users with the ability to pose business questions and get them answered by experts. This is your opportunity to shine and could even make it easier for you when reaching out to journalists.
4. Connect with Journalists and media folk. Sounds obvious but can be easy to overlook.

Social listening is a powerful tool to help you understand your competitors' corporate and PR strategies. Your competitors (if they're smart) will be doing all the above and you can analyse how they're performing and where they are focusing their efforts.

TikTok

Launch date	Active monthly users worldwide	Global app download
2016	1B	3B+
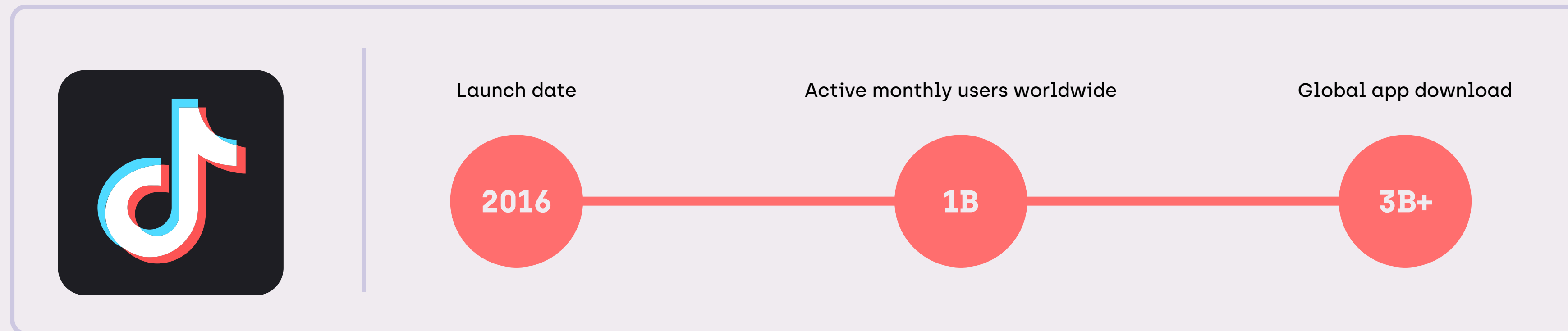
In the past year, TikTok surpassed Google as the primary source of information for Gen Z. Now, 87% of social media professionals think consumers will search for brands on social media more often than through search engines in 2023. The data shows that we're already on track — almost a quarter (24%) of consumers aged 18-54 already go to social media first to search for brands. This increases to 36% among Gen Z (HubSpot).

Due to this, TikTok is a great candidate for social listening. You'll spot emerging market trends by analysing common searches, post descriptions, viral content, and top mentions. However, the volume and nature of the content produced makes it hard to collect data. With a lot of the content being visual, it can be tough to capture video mentions for brand reputation purposes. You'll need a service that can overcome this to gain full PR advantages from TikTok.

Digimind is one of the only providers that can pull extensive social listening data from TikTok.

I WANT A DEMO

Social listening for brand reputation insights and crisis detection

While 65% of companies identified social media as an exacerbating factor of brand crises, 55% of also believe social media generally makes it easier to rebuild a brand after a crisis.

Social media listening can be used to detect a brand crisis by tracking conversations and customer feedback across social media platforms. This can help identify potential issues, monitor customer sentiment, and respond quickly to any negative comments or reviews. Additionally, it can be used to gain insights into what's trending in the current political climate, allowing brands to pivot away from messaging that will harm their reputation.

Brand reputation is a complex operation that encompasses six key components:

1. The quality of your products and services
2. Governance (transparency and ethics)
3. Civic engagement (causes, environment, etc.)
4. Leadership and innovation
5. Your work environment
6. Financial performance

These components are drivers that make or break your brand's reputation. So, they must be monitored and analyzed closely. And you can't always rely on your audience to @mention you (which sends you a notification) when they are commenting on these vital components for your brand reputation – you need to actively listen for them.

> More than 80% of users do not tag a brand's handle or hashtag when posting on social, so it's vital you have a social listening tool that can monitor all your mentions – whether you're tagged or not.

Digimind can monitor your mentions even when you're not tagged.

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Social listening for benchmarking and competitor insights

Social media listening can give you a rich understanding of the conversations and trends surrounding your competitors. By monitoring what your competitors are saying and doing, you can find valuable clues into their strategies, customer feedback, and potential weaknesses or opportunities. This can help inform your own competitive strategies and keep you ahead of the competition.

Case study

A sports federation used Digimind social listening to benchmark the online reputation of its teams. The goal was to boost fan engagement in order to drive ticket sale traffic on the federation's official ticketing office and merchandising store.

The federation monitored the online reputation of different national teams, and the commitment generated in each match around certain key KPIs (mentions, tone, and reach). It performed a simple classification and analysis of the data on players of the French teams. Digimind's Top Reputation module allowed social media data to be compared to queries made on Google.

With more than 30 matches analysed, the sports federation was able to use this data to fine tune communications and increase interactions by 20%.

# Social listening for content creation

You can use the information you gather from social listening to identify trends, topics of interest, and potential stories to influence your content. When you understand the sentiment of conversations, you can craft content that fully resonates with your audience. And, when you have insights on media trends, you can tailor your comms to meet the demand.

Sentiment of consumers on social media platforms on posts relating to 'World Day for Cultural Diversity' (Sentiment Analysis)

Source: Digimind Social 2023
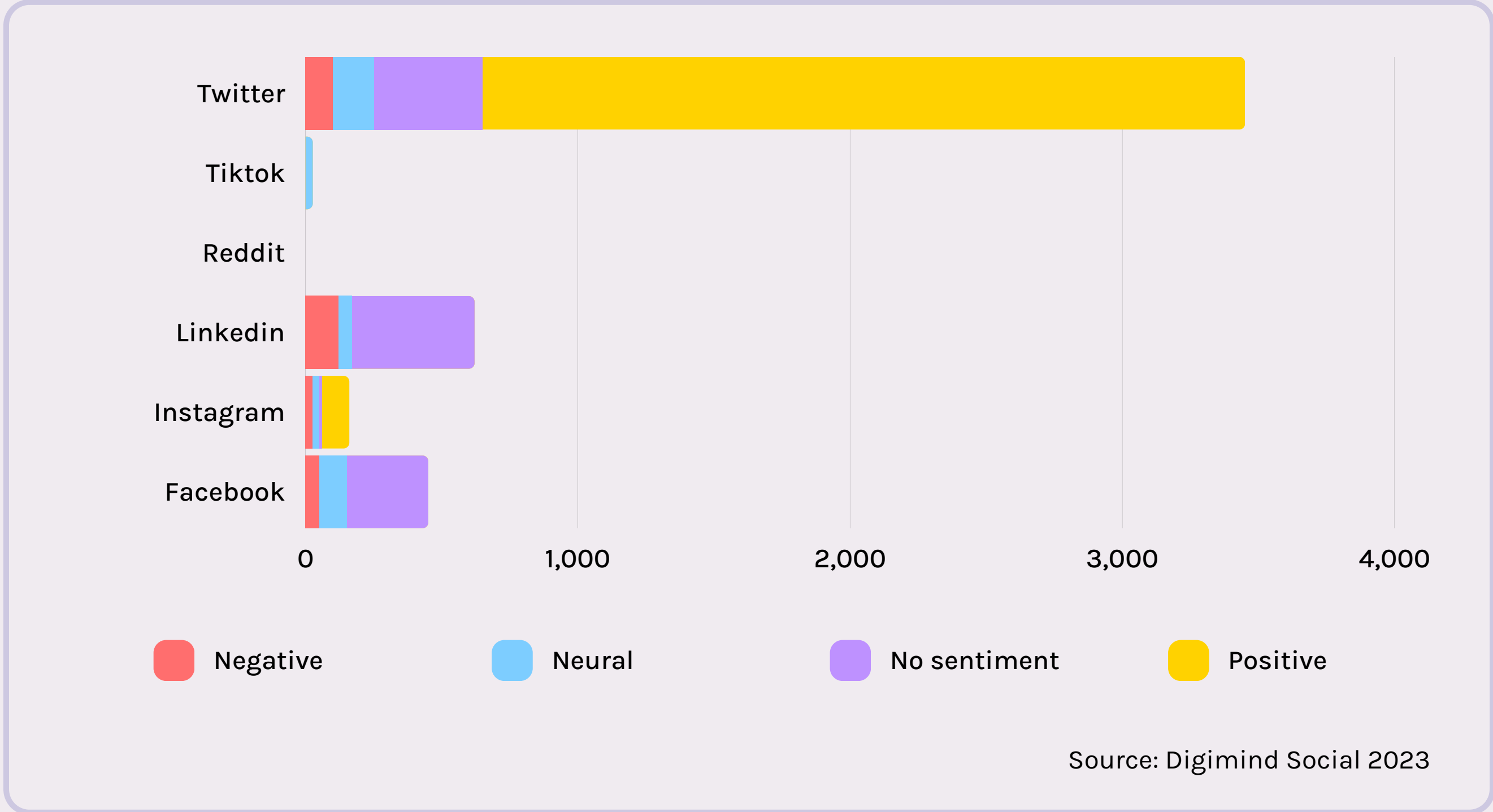
As we can see - sentiment around World Cultural Diversity was largely positive, which is good news for the brands talking about the work they're doing. However, where negative sentiment comments do arise, this is a perfect opportunity for PR and Comms teams to respond or course correct where needed. As the sentiment is mostly positive across the board, it is a good indicator that this would be a good topic to focus content around.

Social listening tools give you the power to adapt your comms to audience feelings and reactions with sentiments and topics analysis. You can also benchmark brand sentiment by topic to understand how consumers perceive your brand in relation to key social issues e.g., sustainability, diversity, and data security. This will reveal unmet customer needs – and you can go further by analysing competitor activity and consumer discussions to see how you compare. When it comes to creating content, this is all low-hanging fruit – the data will highlight your gaps and you can fill it with your comms.
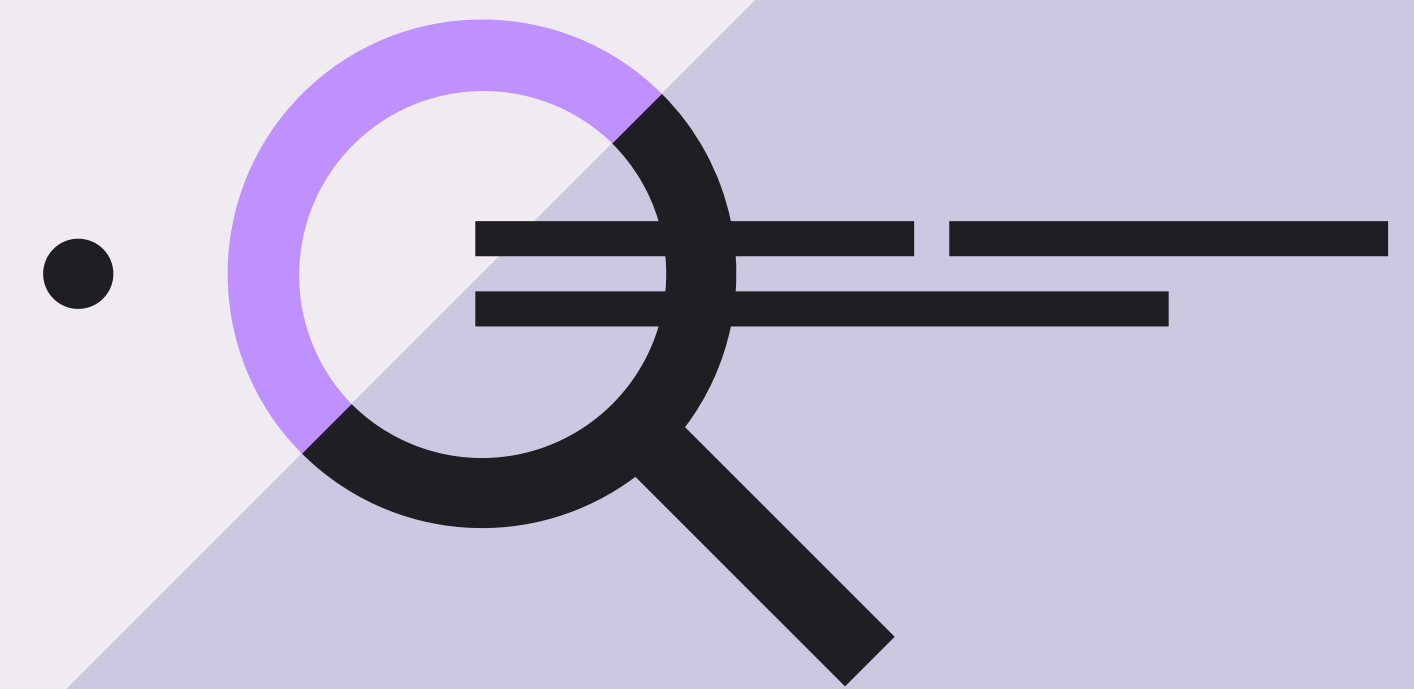
Case study

US-based Digital Marketing, Advertising and PR Agency, Hart Inc., were tasked with creating content for a manufacturing client to feed its newsletters, website, and online content. They needed something fast that could communicate the consumer's voice. So, they turned to Digimind social listening to capture real-time authentic consumer insights that were fed to the content teams of all the relevant departments.

What did Hart do?

Keyword Analysis:

The agency started listening to the keywords related to the brand, the market, and its competitors to understand key topics, trends, and best-performing content.

Sentiment Analysis:

They gathered primary and third-party sentiment, meaning they were looking at competitors' sentiment as well to understand what content drove positive and negative sentiment for their competitors.
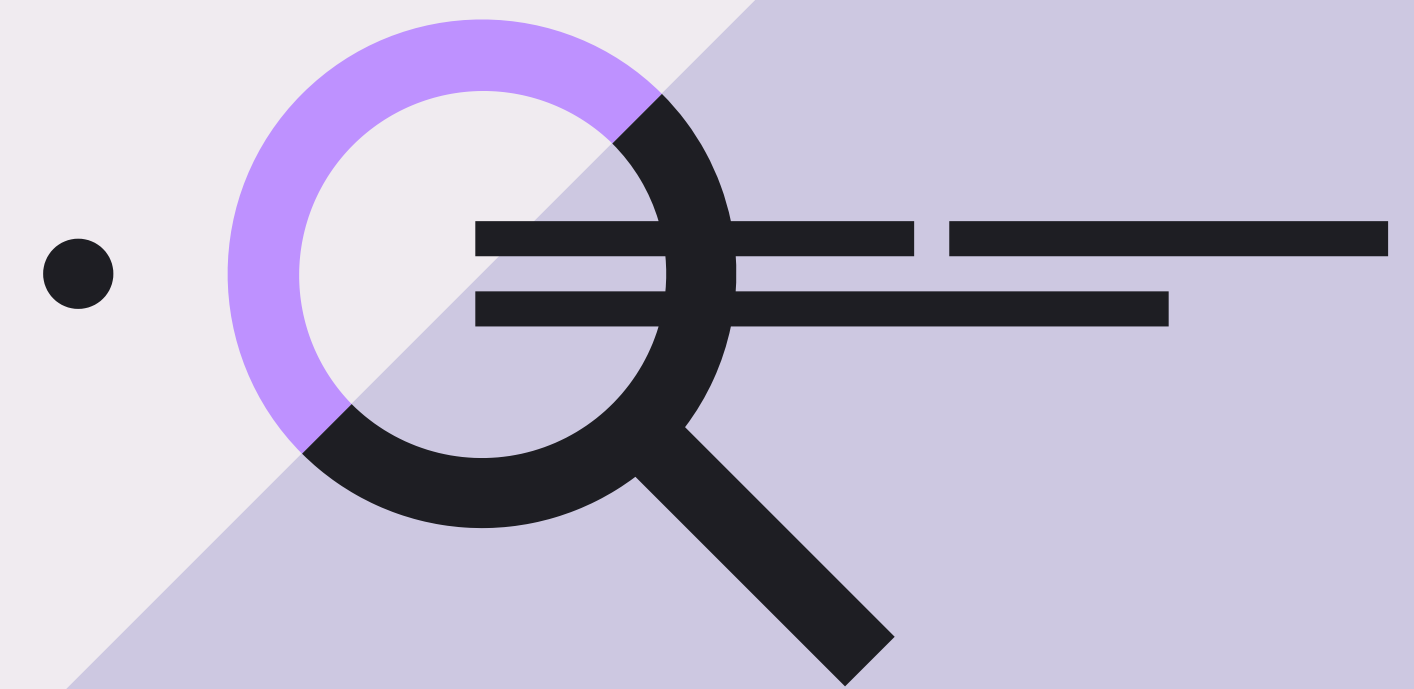
Historical Analysis:

They looked back a few years to track trends that took place and identify any topics and times during the year that spiked. They also checked if these trends were cyclical and relevant to the industry, meaning they could be incorporated into the forthcoming content calendar.

Media Listening & Monitoring:

They wanted to understand the level of dialogue that was taking place across the different publications they sought to be in. They also had specific media lists that were added as custom sources for this monitoring.

Get an overview of popular topics in your industry to identify upcoming and current trends. Plus, see what's popular amongst consumers and key influencers. All this will optimise your copywriting content with trend analysis.
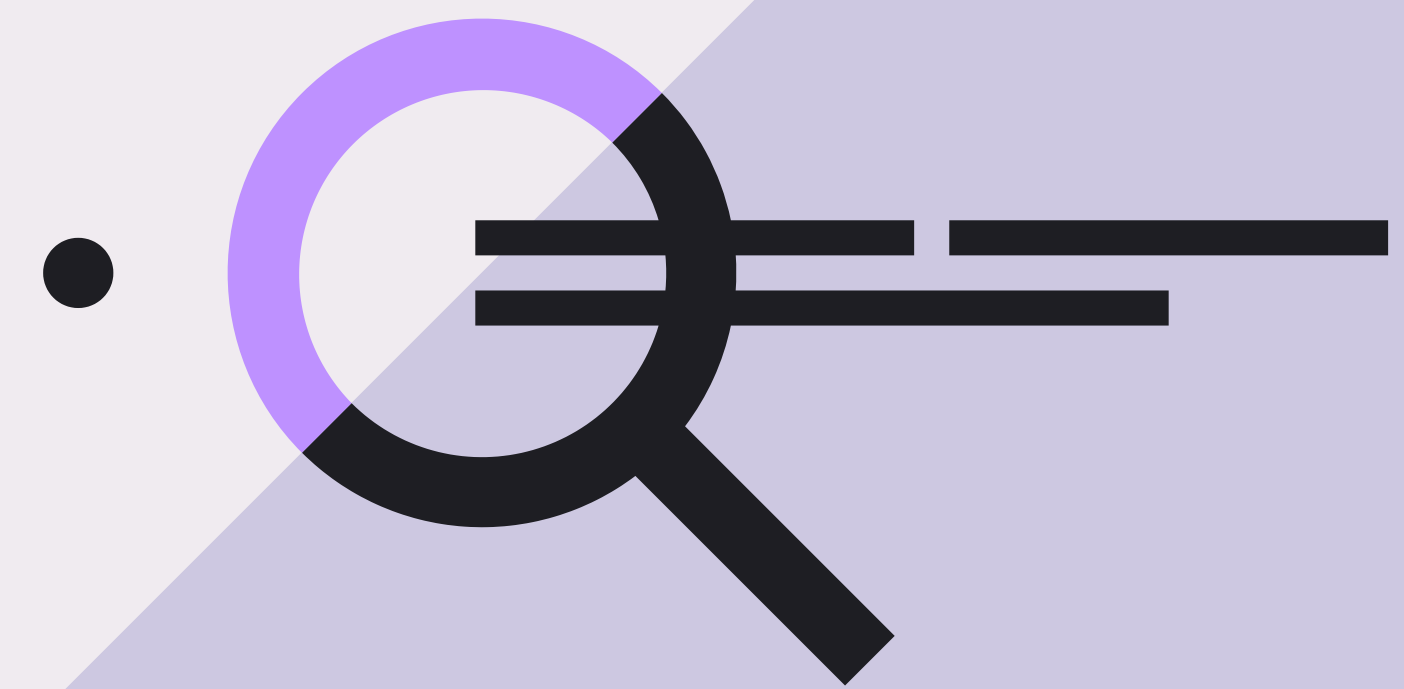
Want access to data like that?

YES PLEASE!

Social listening for influencer identification

Influencer PR is a form of public relations that uses social media influencers to spread the word about brand campaigns, products, or services. It's a cost-effective way to reach new audiences and generate brand awareness.

The idea behind influencer PR is that if you can get someone who's popular and respected in your industry to talk about your story, then people will be more likely to listen. It's similar to celebrity endorsements, except that instead of hiring famous actors or models, you're working with bloggers and social media personalities who have real influence over their audience.

Social listening can help you find these niche influencers based on specific searches and account analysis. But it also helps you better understand the ecosystem of your opinion leaders, optimising your more traditional PR processes. You're also able to build target sources lists by identifying which journalists and thought leaders write about your industry. You can also identify your detractors and their lines of communication and criticism.
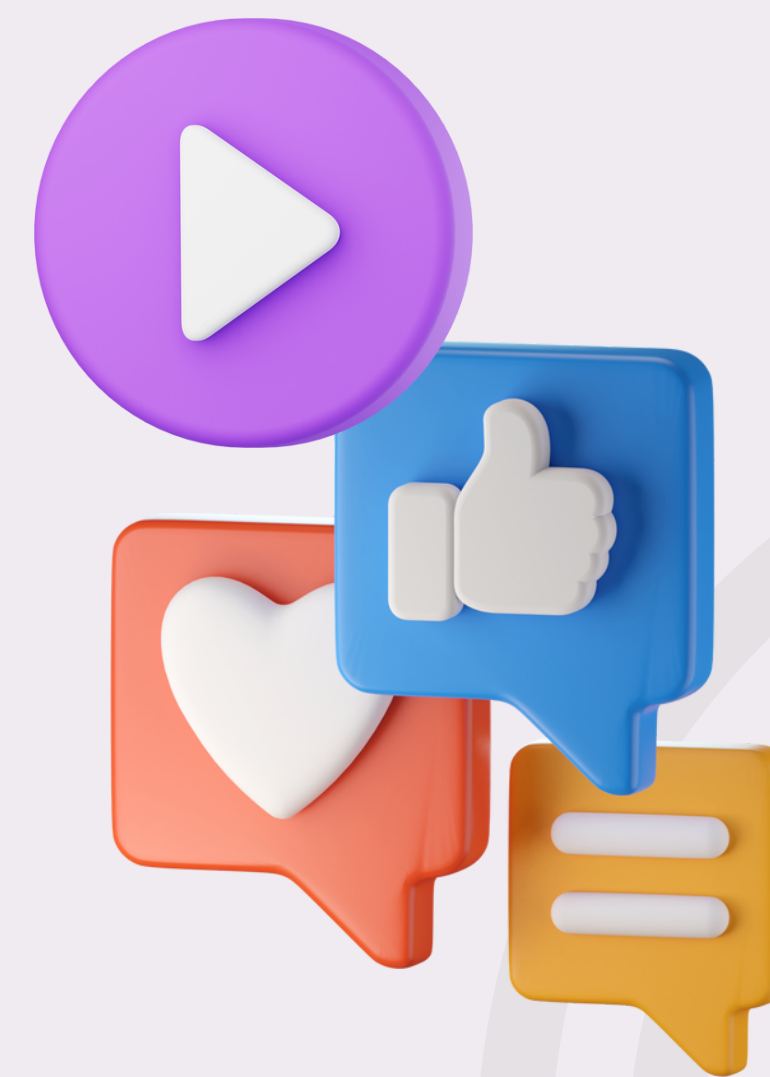
There are a couple of ways you can integrate influencer PR into your strategy.

Influencer campaigns:

Influencer campaigns can be brief or ongoing, but they typically involve content creation and distribution on behalf of your brand. For example, an influencer might create a blog post about your product or service, create a YouTube video review, or share photos on Instagram. It's an effective strategy because it allows you to tap into the networks of established social media users. These people have already built-up large followings who are likely to be interested in their recommendations, so they can help you build credibility as well as reach potential customers who would otherwise be tough to reach through traditional methods like paid advertising and press releases.
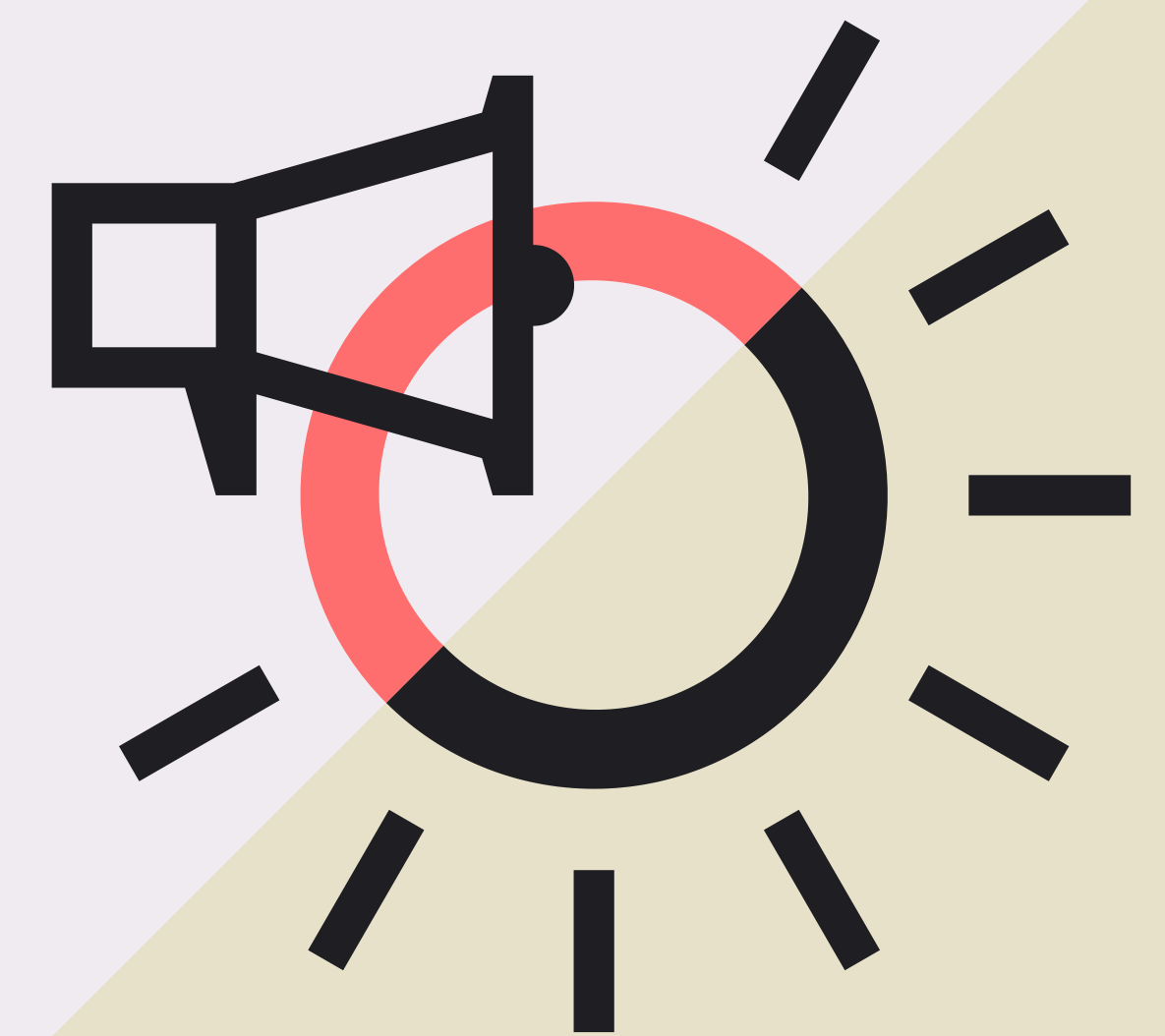
Brand ambassadors:

Influencers can also act as brand ambassadors by representing your company at events or trade shows and spreading awareness through their online channels. In addition, influencers can be a great way for small businesses with limited budgets to get coverage in local newspapers, magazines, and blogs.
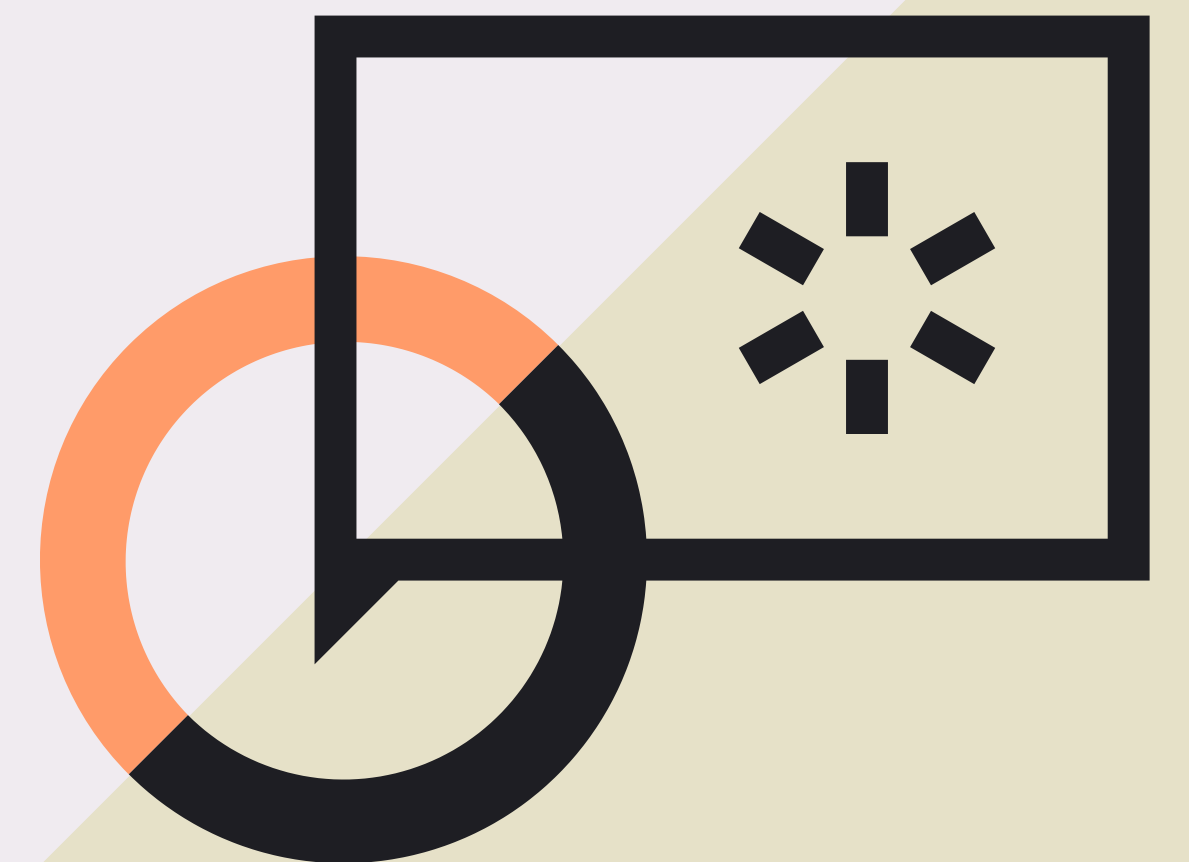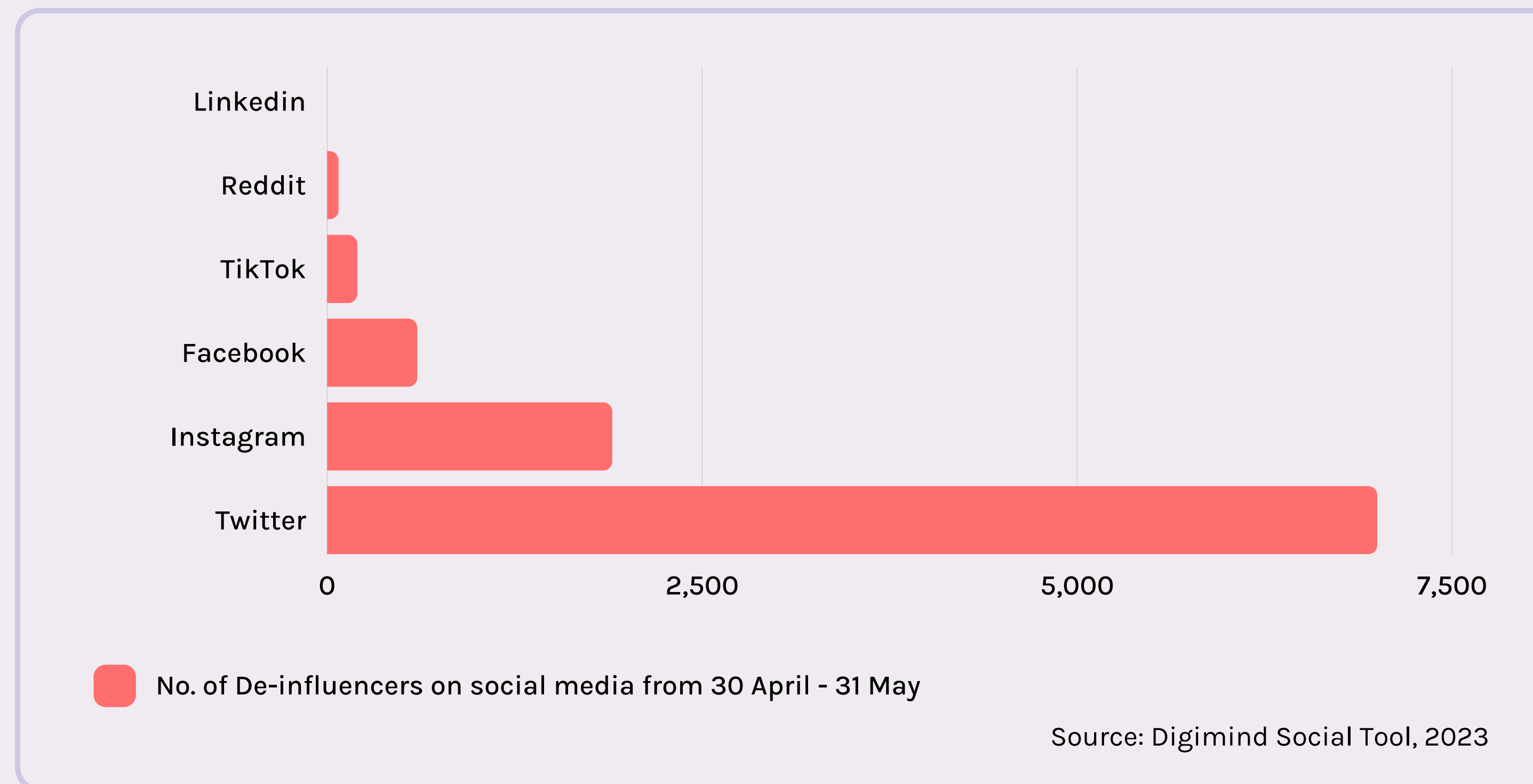
De-influencing

De-influencers are people who discourage others from over-consuming. They often talk about how much they distrust sponsored posts or critique the amount of money influencers make from promoting big brands.

The rise of de-influencers has been attributed to the growing awareness of the true depth of influencer marketing and the associated costs. Everything on social media needs to be marked as an 'AD' if branded. People are now less likely to immediately trust what a big influencer says and more likely to question why they should buy something just because someone with 1M+ followers says so.

Twitter has noticeably more de-influencers using its platform in May than any other

Chart: Horizontal bar chart showing number of de-influencers by platform.

- Linkedin: ~0
- Reddit: small
- TikTok: small
- Facebook: ~700
- Instagram: ~2,000
- Twitter: ~7,000

X-axis: 0, 2,500, 5,000, 7,500

Legend: No. of De-influencers on social media from 30 April - 31 May

Source: Digimind Social Tool, 2023

Social listening can help you identify de-influencers who are targeting content creators associated with your brand. If you find you're often mentioned in de-influencer content, then it is time to adjust the authenticity of your messaging. You can do this by finding an influencer who is better aligned to your brand or targeting a smaller audience.

With Digimind you can use social listening to identify the right influencers for you based on topic, reach, follower count, content type and more.

SEE IT IN ACTION

Top tools for social media mastery

Using customisable AI, our social listening platform analyses data for over 850M online sources, across 190 countries and turns it into powerful brand insights that drive PR and comms strategy. With this best-in class social listening tool, PR and communications professionals have access to comprehensive data analysis across more than 25 major social platforms, including LinkedIn and TikTok!

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Here are some of the key social listening features that can empower you to fully master social media.

1.Alerts and reporting for crisis management

Identify 'bad buzz' and catch a crisis before it's even happened with live alerts that you can set up on your own dashboard. You can not only analyse conversation topics and sentiments but also set up real-time alerts by activity thresholds or key emotions expressed.

You can also decide the cadence of reputation reports you receive so you can see how sentiment around your brand is trending and share this with key stakeholders.

PAYMENT

CUSTOMER CARE

DISPOSABILITY

DELIVERY

PRICE

■ Negative   ■ Neutral   ■ Positive
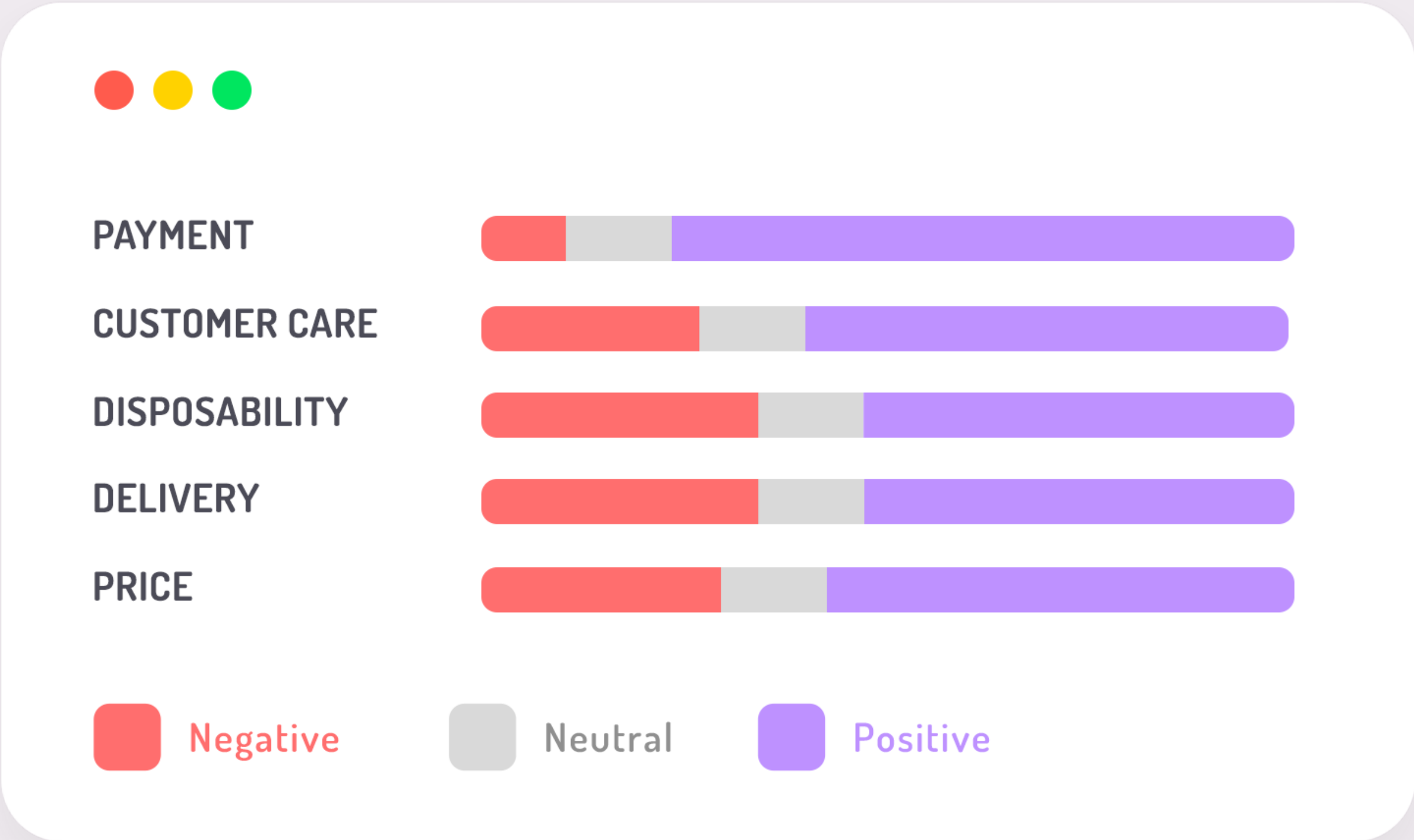
FIND OUT MORE

2.Monitor brand reputation with TikTok social listening.

Digimind monitors TikTok better than our competitors. We can both listen (to hashtags, keywords, accounts) and monitor the performance of an account and competitors to know the evolution of the number of subscribers, interactions, and video views. We create bespoke reports so you can identify the messages and videos that work best with the public.
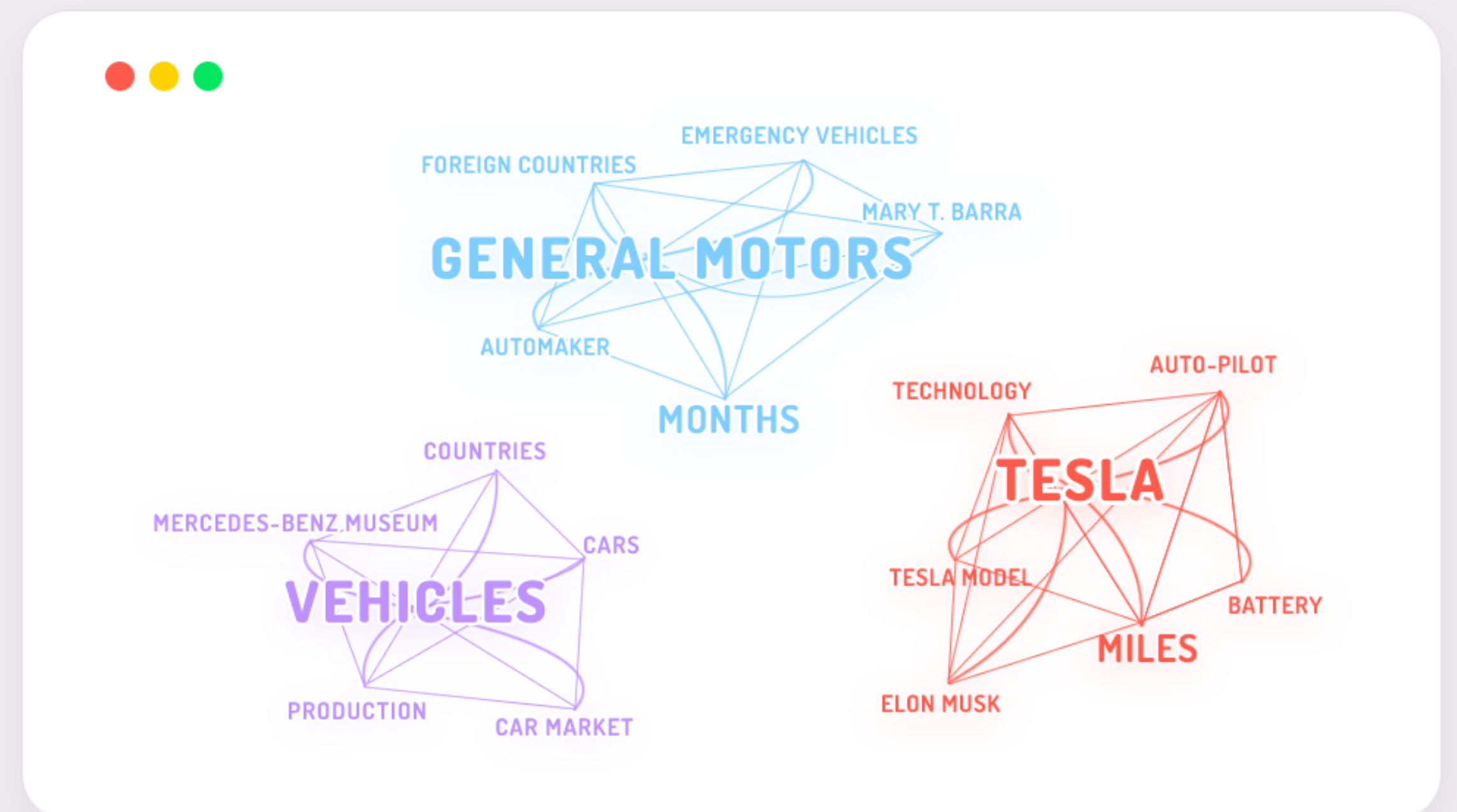
FIND OUT MORE

• • •

3.Analyze competitive intelligence with LinkedIn monitoring

Digimind LinkedIn Monitoring offers three methods of capturing information:

- Keywords Monitoring - In all languages, monitor public posts about a topic, including keywords, hashtags, and hypertext links.
- Company Monitoring - Keep track of your competitors' or partners' profile posts.
- Analytics - Manage your global community engagement for campaigns on your profile.

Monitor and analyse LinkedIn publications on Digimind Social to keep a pulse on industry and competitor activities, grab new advancements, structural changes, and potential opportunities.

FIND OUT MORE

With the total number of social media users around 4 billion, almost half of the world's population, discussions among consumers are increasing on social networks, forums, and review sites. Furthermore, there are increasing demands for personalized, well-rounded experiences increasing because of the pandemic, as well as customers seeking brands whose socio-political values align with their own. The stakes have never been higher for brands who must constantly optimize communications.

Find out more about Onclusive & Digimind's social media monitoring and listening tools

CONTACT US

Methodology

All data was collected using the Digimind Social tool between 30 April 2023 – 31 May 2023.

Scores

The Scores identified in each graph indicate how influential this source is. It is calculated by multiplying ranking and mentions.

Top 50 Media

We used the "2019 Newspaper Web Rankings" to define the top 50 newspapers in Europe and collected every tweet they posted in the month of May.

De-Influencers

A search was created looking for all mentions (and variations) of 'De-Influencers' in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish across publicly available social media channels including Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, Reddit, and Instagram.

World Cultural Diversity Day

A search was created looking for all mentions of 'The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development' in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish across publicly available social media channels including Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, Reddit, and Instagram.

About Onclusive

Onclusive is a global partner for PR and Communications success. We combine industry-leading data science with an international consultancy and best-in-class PR workflow tools. Our technology, insights and expertise make sense of the fractured, fast-moving media world, helping you manage, monitor and measure your communications activity. Elevate your performance and prove and improve your value with Onclusive on your side.

www.onclusive.com/en-gb