

# 2017 SOCIAL MEDIA BENCHMARK REPORT

Industry benchmarks across the most  
important social media metrics

# INTRODUCTION

There isn't a week that goes by when we don't have a brand ask how they compare against their industry.

This report gives you the **answer**.

You'll now have the data you need to truly benchmark your social performance in relation to your industry.

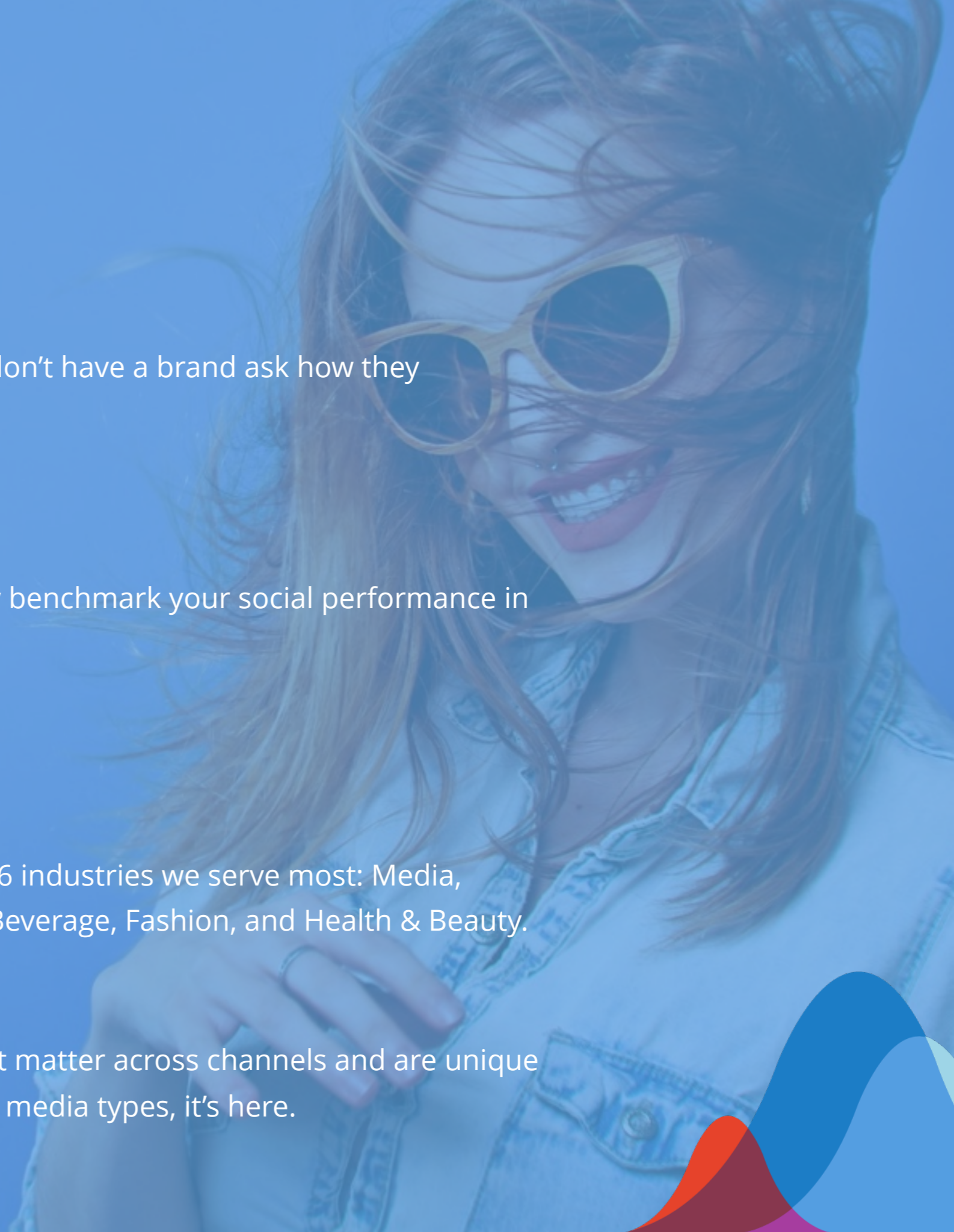
You'll find the following inside this report:

## **The Benchmarks:**

The most important metrics across the 6 industries we serve most: Media, Higher Education, Non-profits, Food & Beverage, Fashion, and Health & Beauty.

## **Industry Specific sections:**

Each section dives into the specifics that matter across channels and are unique to your industry. From hashtags to post media types, it's here.



# METHODOLOGY

We used Rival IQ to analyze social media posts across the top three social channels for brands, Facebook, Instagram & Twitter. We gathered data using Rival IQ's channel-specific rankings, focusing on engagement, social post type and hashtags.

Engagement is defined as measurable interaction on social media posts, including likes, comments, favorites, retweets, shares and reactions. Engagement rate is calculated based on all these interactions divided by total follower count.

For this study we provide a representative sample of companies in each industry. Companies included had active presences on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Companies were selected from our database of over 100K companies, and filtered based on industry. Each company included had to meet the following criteria:

- \* Facebook Fans between 25K and 1M as of December 2016
- \* Active on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as of January 2016

From those lists 120 companies were selected at random for each industry. We then used median performance from the set of companies for each industry to compile the data for this report.



A top-down photograph of a person's hand resting on the trackpad of a silver laptop. The laptop is open and sits on a white, shaggy rug. To the right of the laptop, a white smartphone is lying face down. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The text 'THE BENCHMARKS' is centered in white, uppercase letters.

# THE BENCHMARKS

# COMPETITIVE VS INDUSTRY BENCHMARKING

## What Is It and Why Do It?

Key performance indicators like engagement rate, the number of clicks on a social post, or hashtag engagement rates tells a lot about what is happening as a result of activities. But it says nothing regarding whether the efforts are successful, failing, or where to focus on closing those gaps. Why? Because benchmarks are relative.

Incorporating benchmarks into your social reporting is crucial to outperforming your competitors on social media. You need to look at your competitors and other organizations targeting the same audience to establish context so that you get a baseline understanding of what they're doing and how they're performing on social media.

Sometimes, these benchmarking reports don't put activities in the best light. Many companies treat competitive reporting as aspirational - comparing against the best in the industry.

In addition to comparing against the biggest players in your industry, understanding how you stack up against the industry as a whole is helpful. Industry benchmarking provides a clear picture across the competitive landscape.

In this report we focus on the industry benchmarks that give you a true representation. Companies included range in audience size - including some of the best, but also those just gaining traction.

Use this industry report to compare your own brand's performance. Even if you're not beating the best on social, how do you compare to your industry as a whole?

There's several surprises in the numbers, and many assumptions proven to be incorrect.

[SEE WHERE YOU RANK WITH A FREE TRIAL OF RIVAL IQ](#) ▶



# THE METRICS THAT MATTER

## What you need to know

Let's skip the vanity metrics and get straight to the point.

Chasing followers and page likes won't even get you to the first date. If you want to turn your social media followers into customers, you need to engage them.

But how do you know if you're doing a good job? How do you know how you compare? It's easy to compare against the best, we all know those brands. That comparison often proves worthless. Comparing yourself to only the best and biggest brands is a disservice to the work your team has invested in social media. Let's look at your industry as a whole. We compare the following industries:

- Media
- Colleges & Universities
- Non-profits
- Food & Beverage
- Fashion brands
- Health & Beauty

You'll see how each stacks against each other when it comes to these metrics:

- Engagement Rate
- Posts per day
- Posts per day, combined with engagement

Broken out by channels, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, you can get a true comparison.

In each industry section we dive in deeper to those stats along with industry specific metrics like hashtag usage and post type.

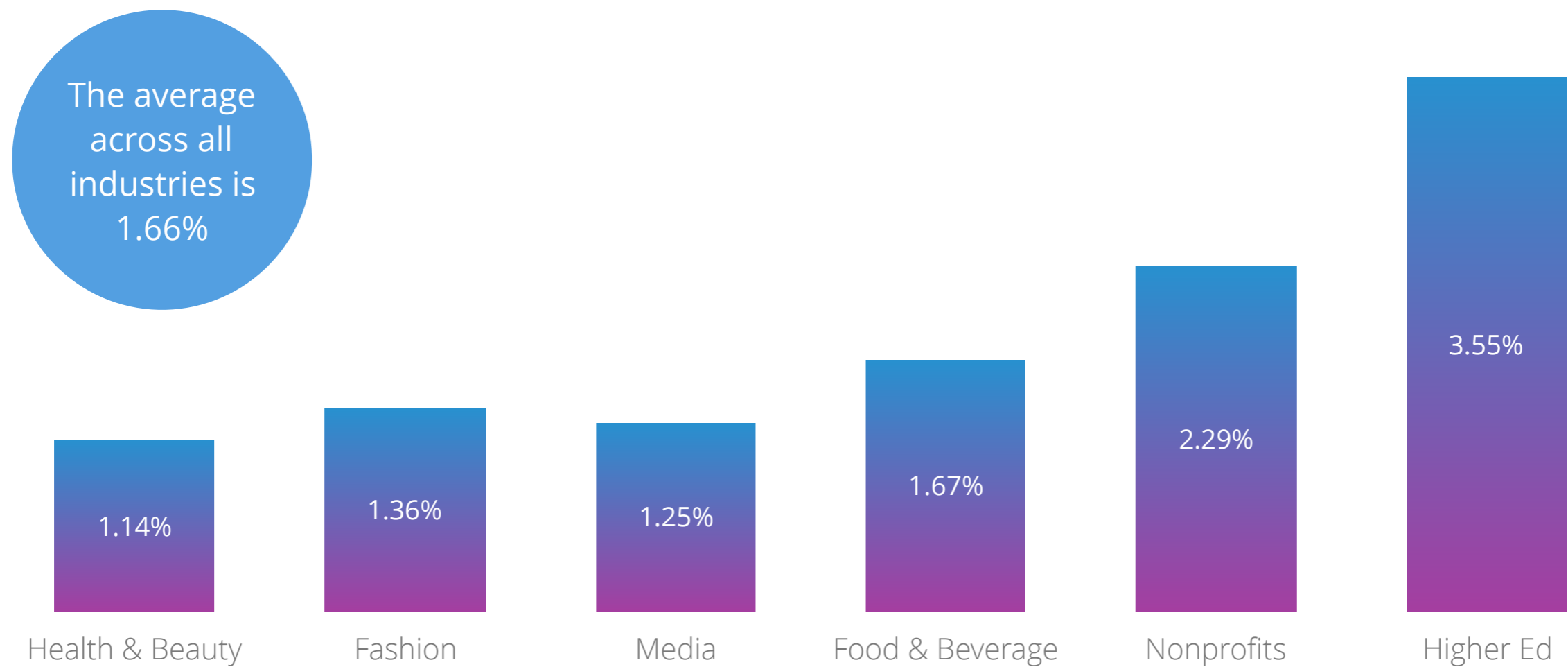
SEE WHERE YOU RANK WITH A FREE TRIAL OF RIVAL IQ ►



# INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT



Calculated by average engagement rate per post on Instagram.

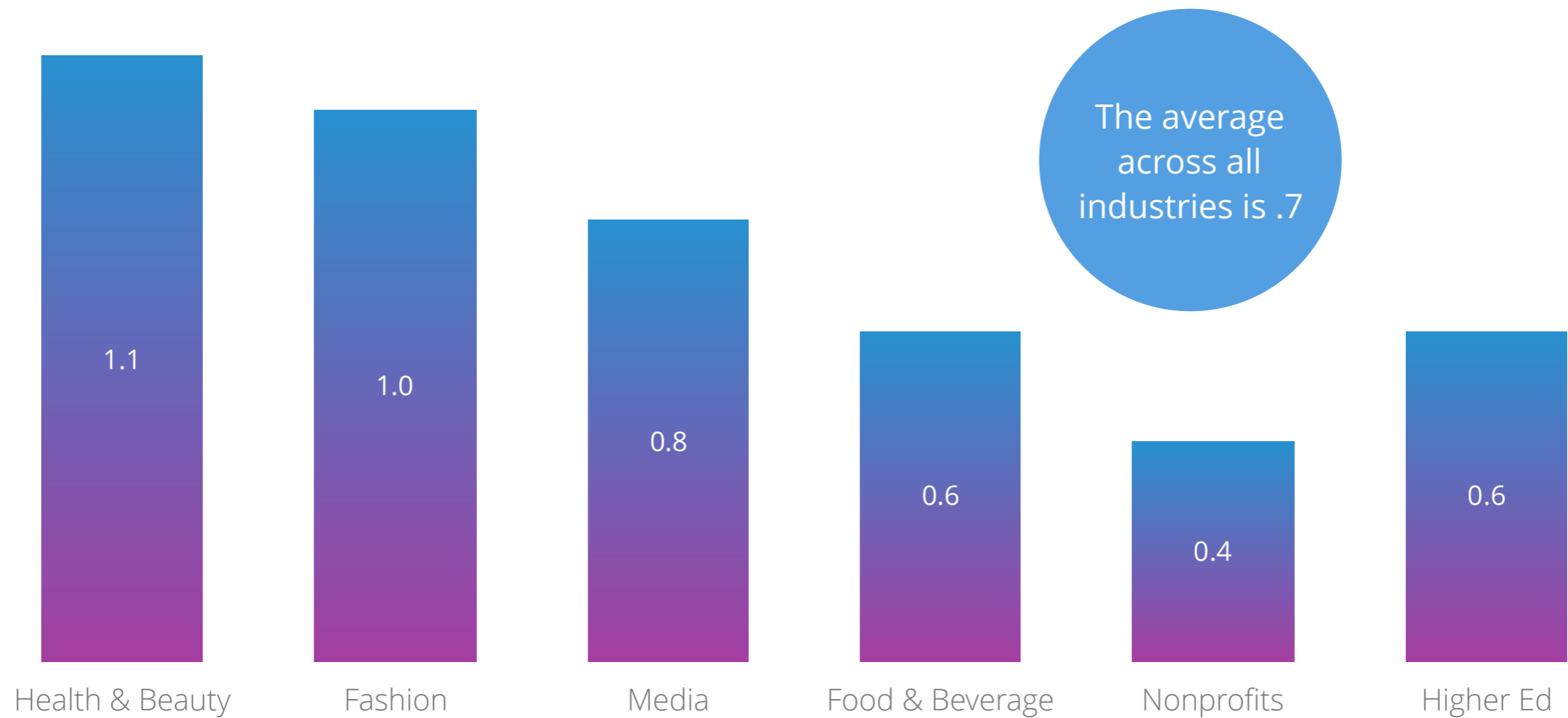


Despite popular belief, health & beauty brands aren't the best at Instagram. Rather non-profits and higher ed outperform other industries in this study.

# INSTAGRAM POSTS PER DAY



Calculated by average posts per day on Instagram.



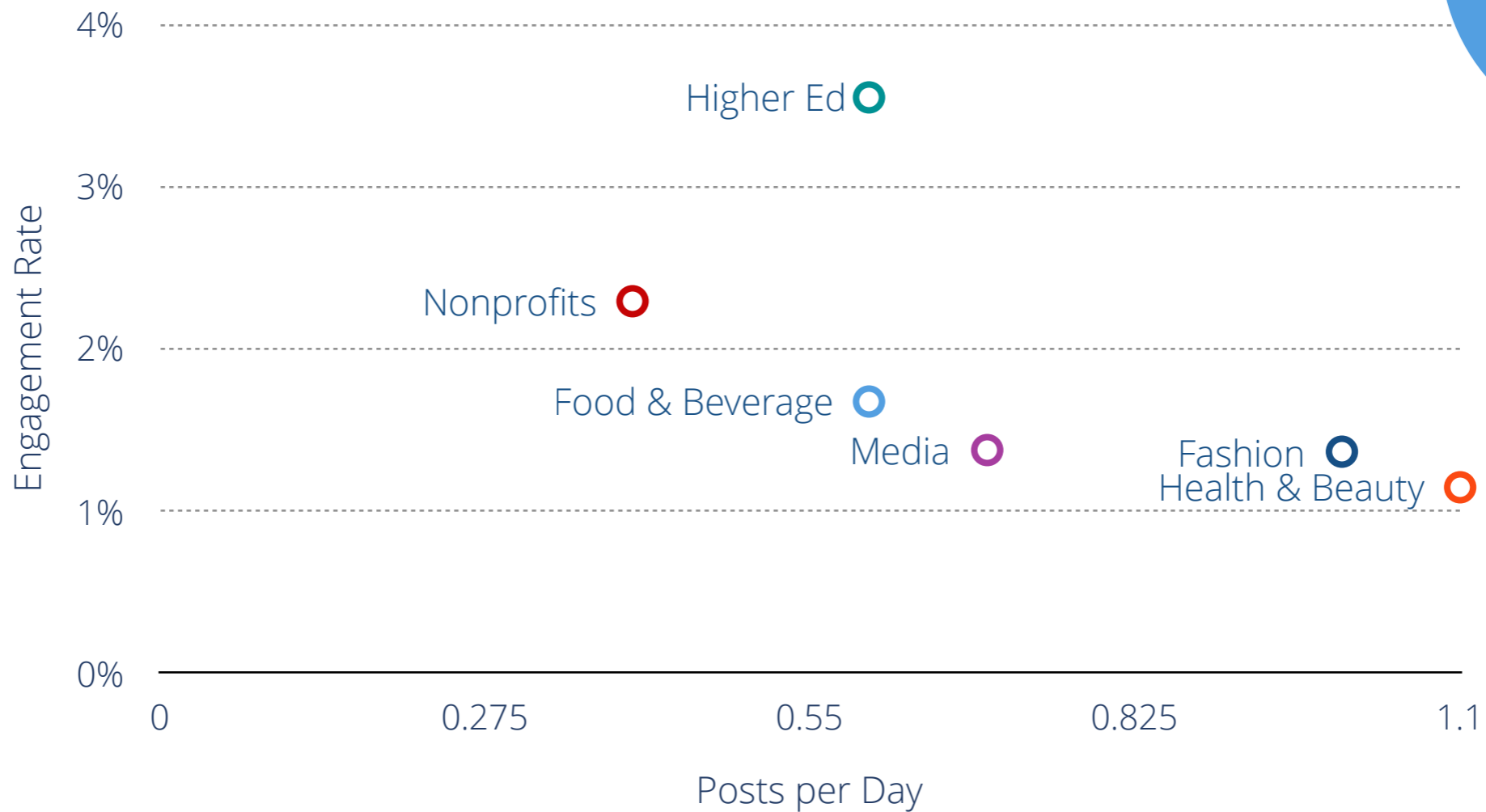
Industries in this study post as frequently as once a day to every 3 days. Focus on quality photos rather than frequency to dial into your audience.



# INSTAGRAM POSTS VS ENGAGEMENT



Instagram posts per day vs engagement rate



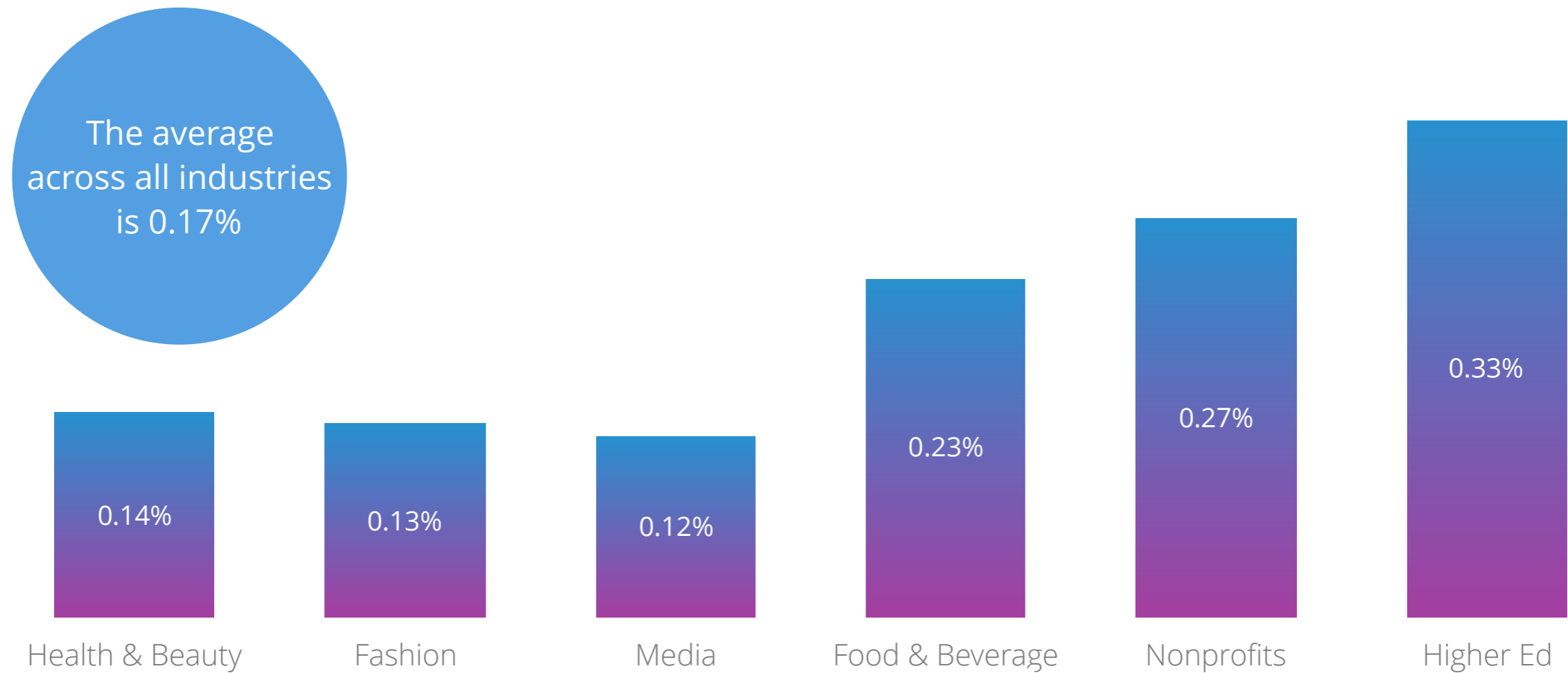
There's a significant difference in the number of postings per day across industries

Engagement doesn't correlate with posts per day. Non-profits & higher ed's higher engagement rates may reflect their audience profiles.

# FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT



Calculated by average engagement rate per post on Facebook.

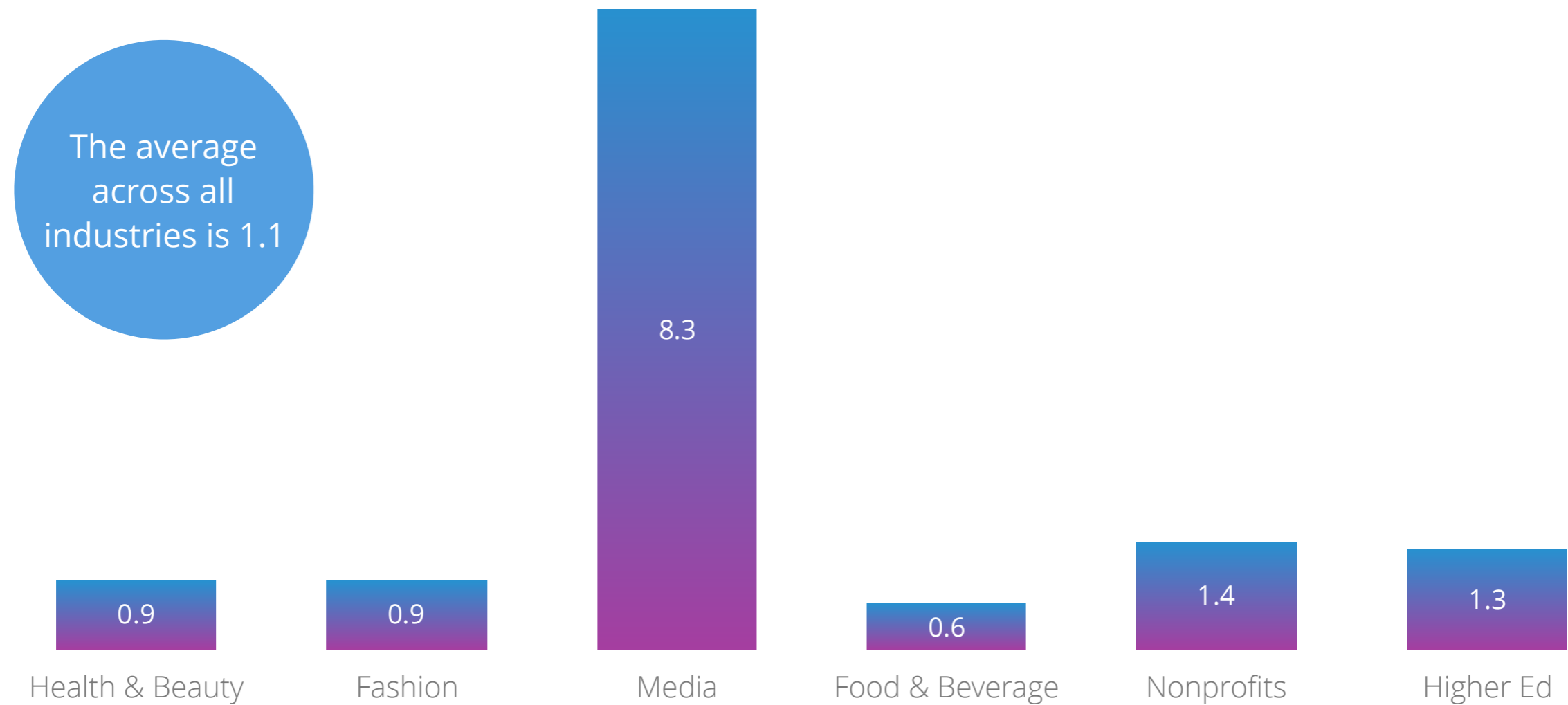


While a fraction of the percentage in comparison to Instagram engagement, Facebook remains the top social channel for brands with a wider audience reach.

# FACEBOOK POSTS PER DAY



Calculated by average posts per day on Facebook.

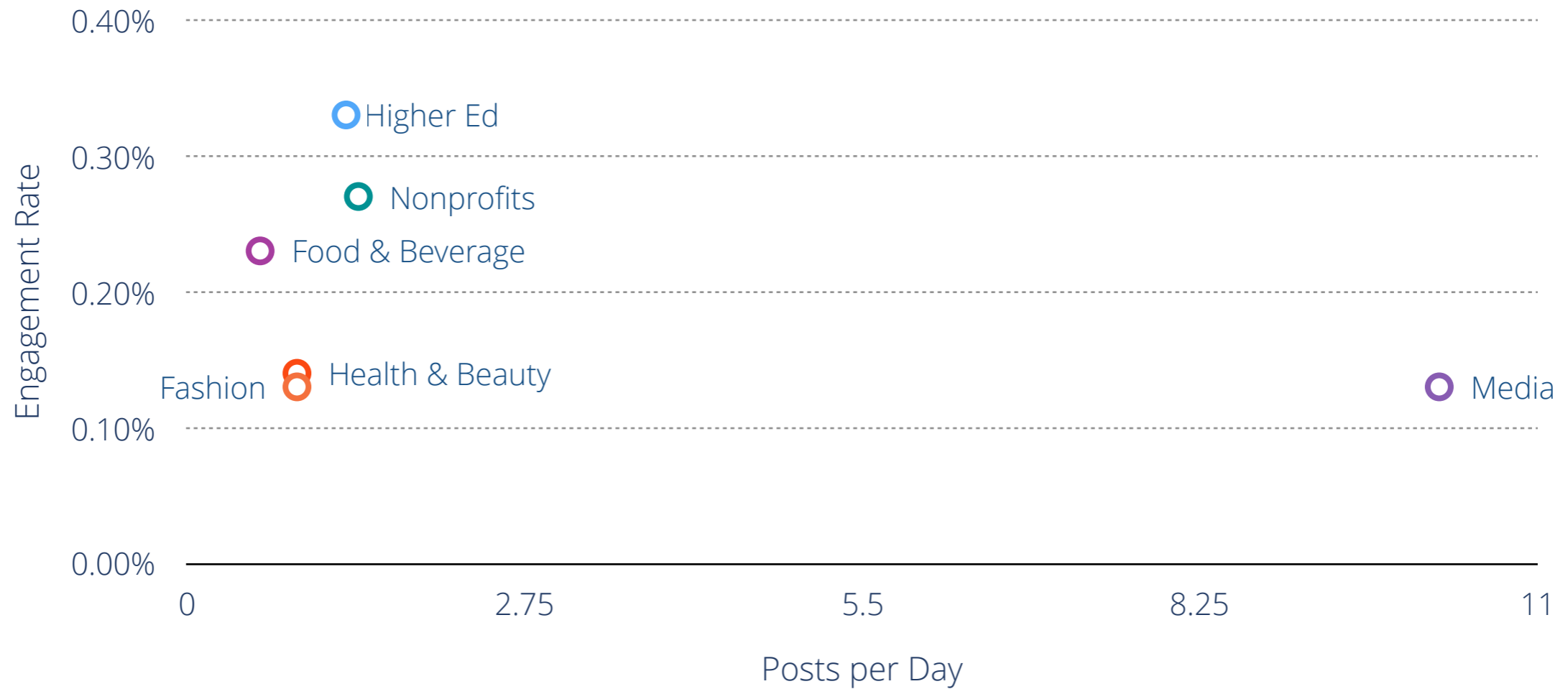


Media skews this graph, without that industry the average of about one Facebook post a day may reflect the reliance on Facebook algorithms.

# FACEBOOK POSTS VS ENGAGEMENT



Facebook posts per day vs engagement rate



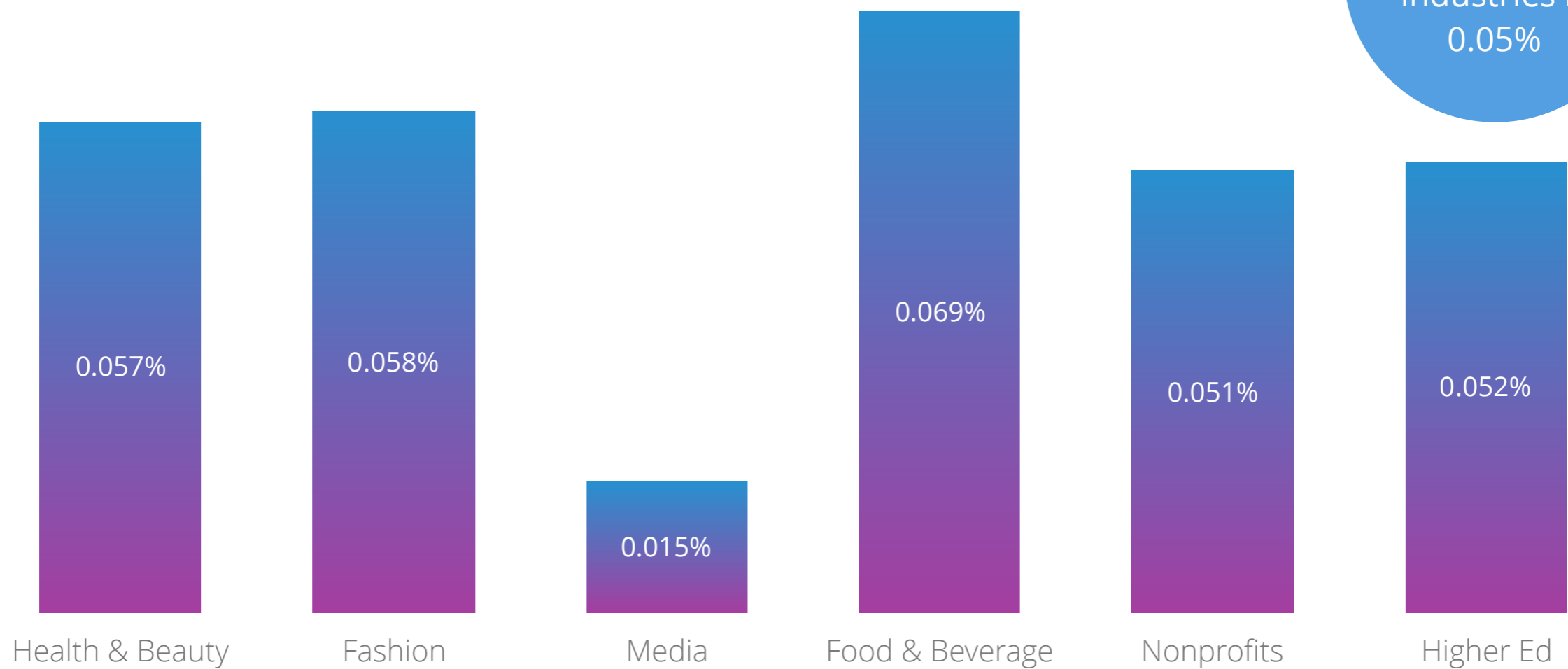
Despite similar investments across most of the industries studied, the engagement varies widely. Higher ed & non-profits may excel here based on the audience's relationship with the content.

# TWITTER ENGAGEMENT



Calculated by average engagement rate per post on Twitter.

The average across all industries is 0.05%



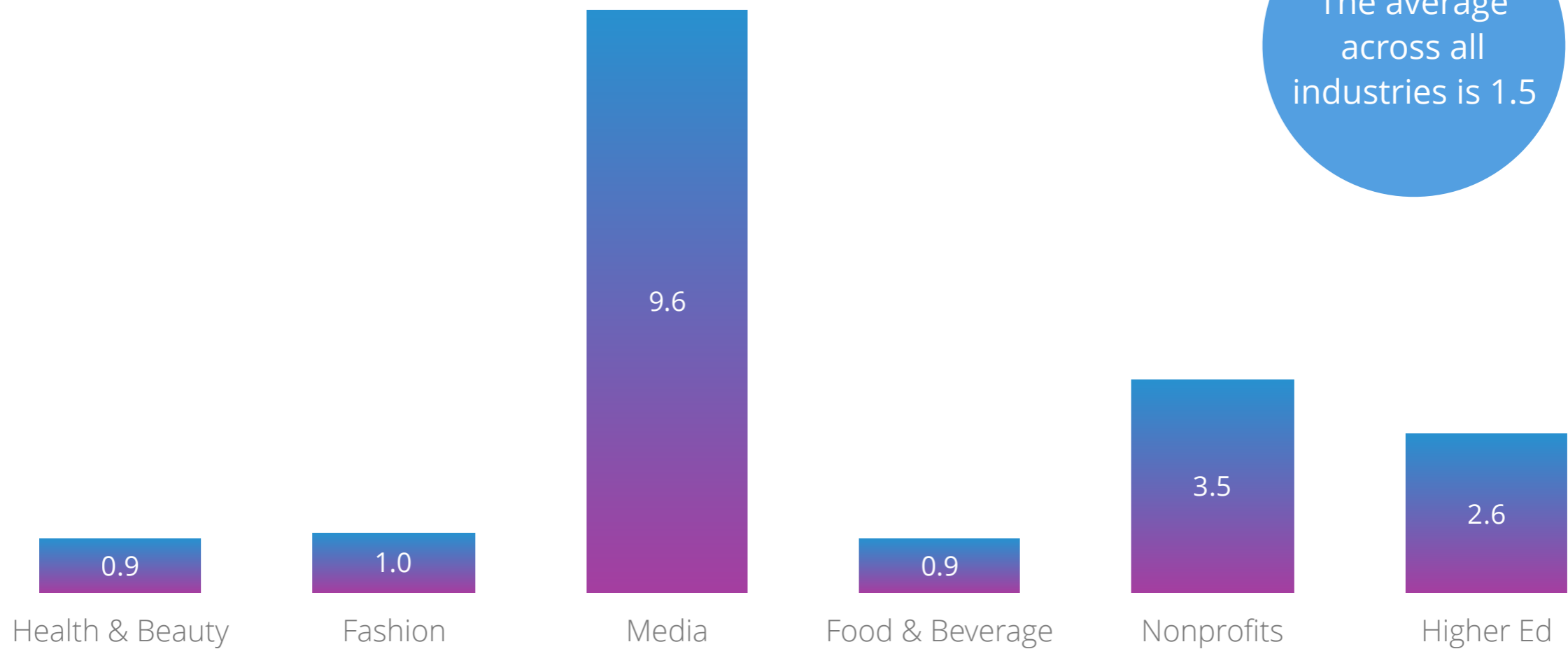
While we don't agree with the claim 'Twitter is dead', the engagement is minuscule. Most brands don't appear to try, treating it as a broadcast channel.

# TWITTER POSTS PER DAY



Calculated by average posts per day on Twitter.

The average across all industries is 1.5

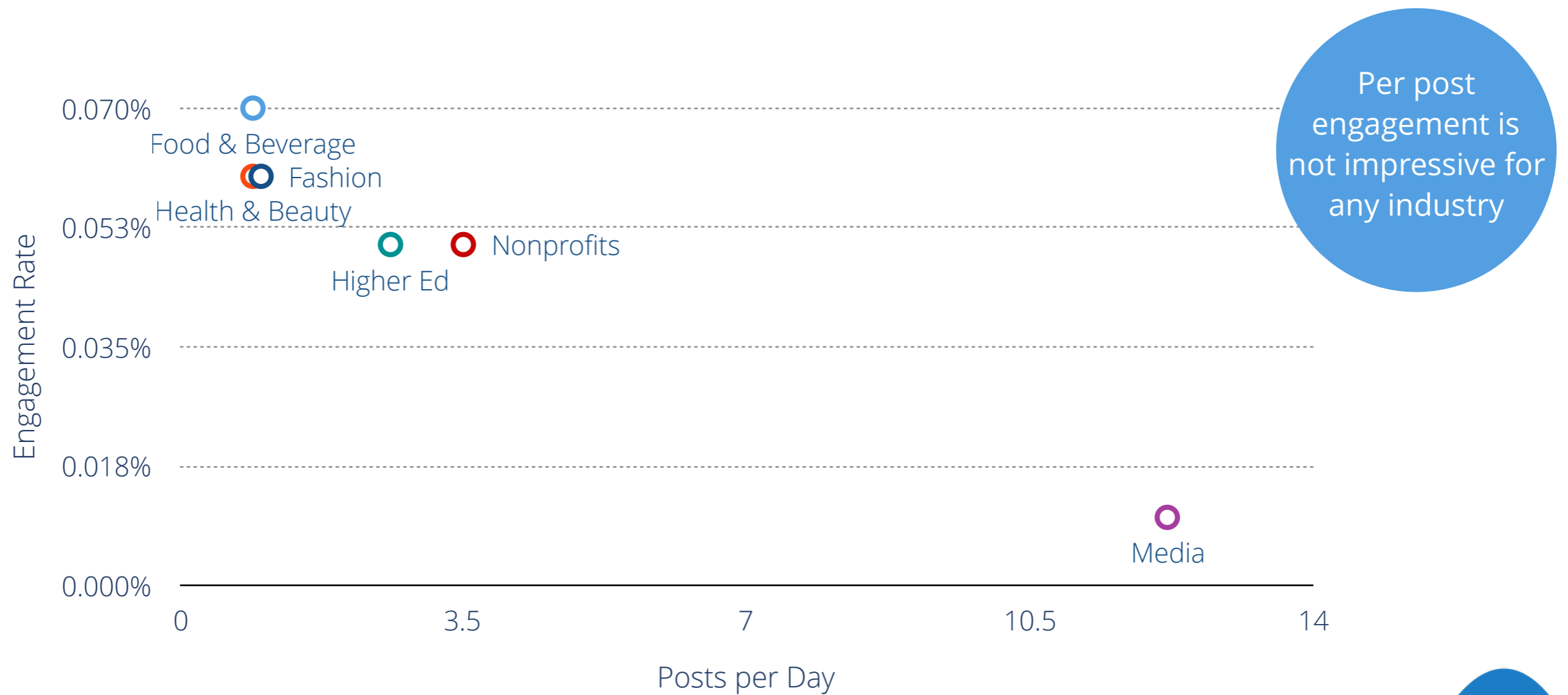


Brands posting infrequently on Twitter may benefit from the algorithm pushing popular content to the top of user's feeds.

# TWITTER POSTS VS ENGAGEMENT



Twitter posts per day vs engagement rate



Food & beverage brands sneak ahead of other industries, focusing efforts on quality and engaging content over frequency.



INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT:  
MEDIA



# MEDIA

## Media Companies Missing the Mark

It's no surprise that media companies have the highest posts per day on Facebook and Twitter. This may explain why media companies have the lowest engagement on those channels as well.

Based on this study, there are two opportunities that could improve that engagement rate:

- Use more video in posts on both Facebook and Twitter
- Invest in Instagram



FACEBOOK  
POSTS PER DAY

**8.3**

FACEBOOK  
ENG RATE / POST

**0.12%**



INSTAGRAM  
POSTS PER DAY

**0.8**

INSTAGRAM  
ENG RATE / POST

**1.25%**

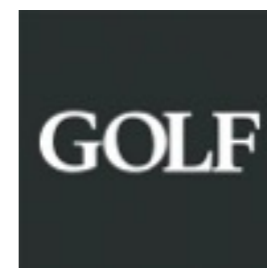


TWEETS  
PER DAY

**9.6**

TWITTER  
ENG RATE / TWEET

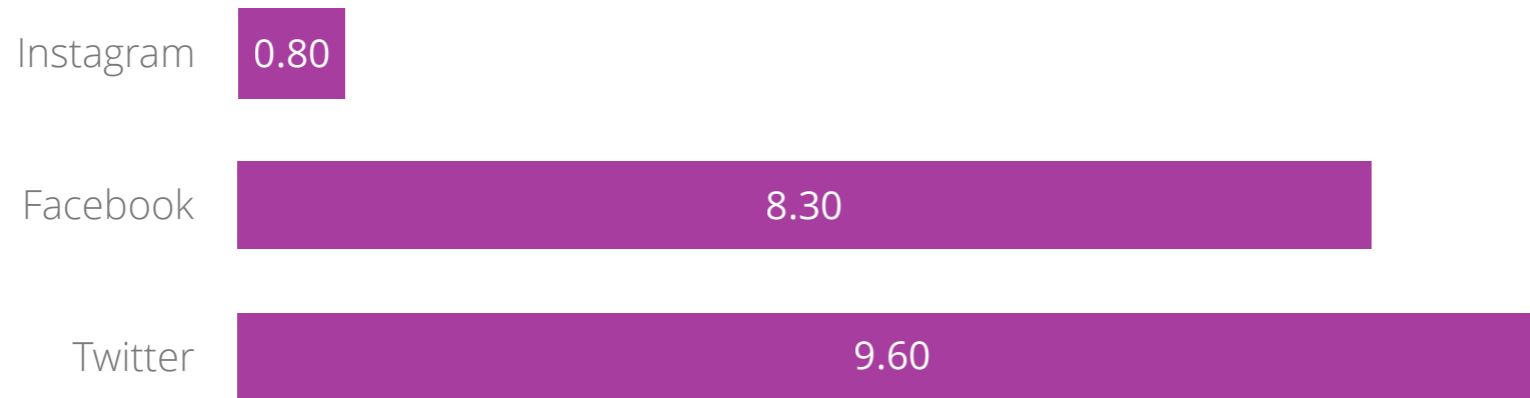
**0.015%**



A few examples from Media Companies

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# MEDIA: AVG. ENGAGEMENT RATE & POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE POSTS PER DAY



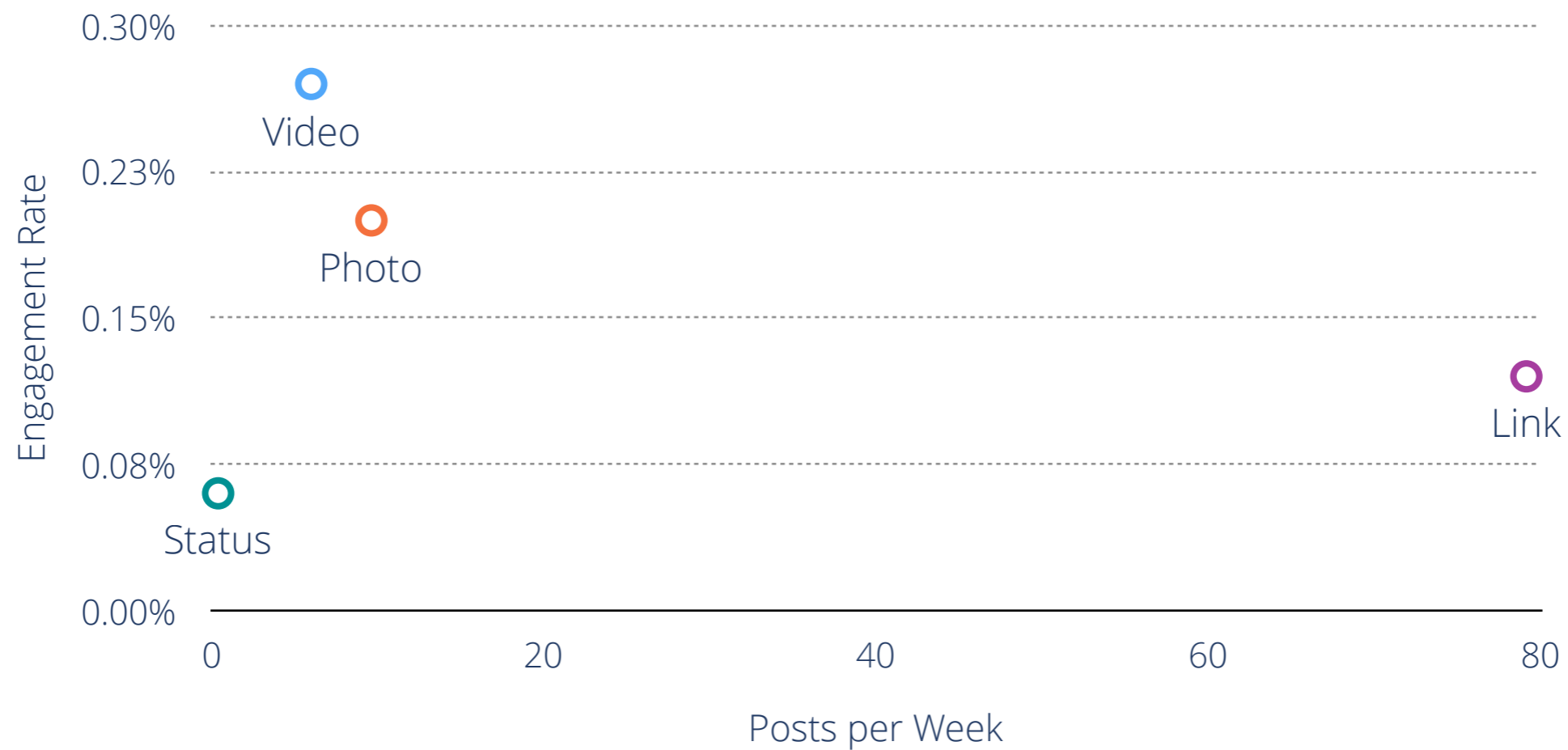
AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE

Media performs best on Facebook considering how frequently they post per day relative to other industries.

# MEDIA: FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type

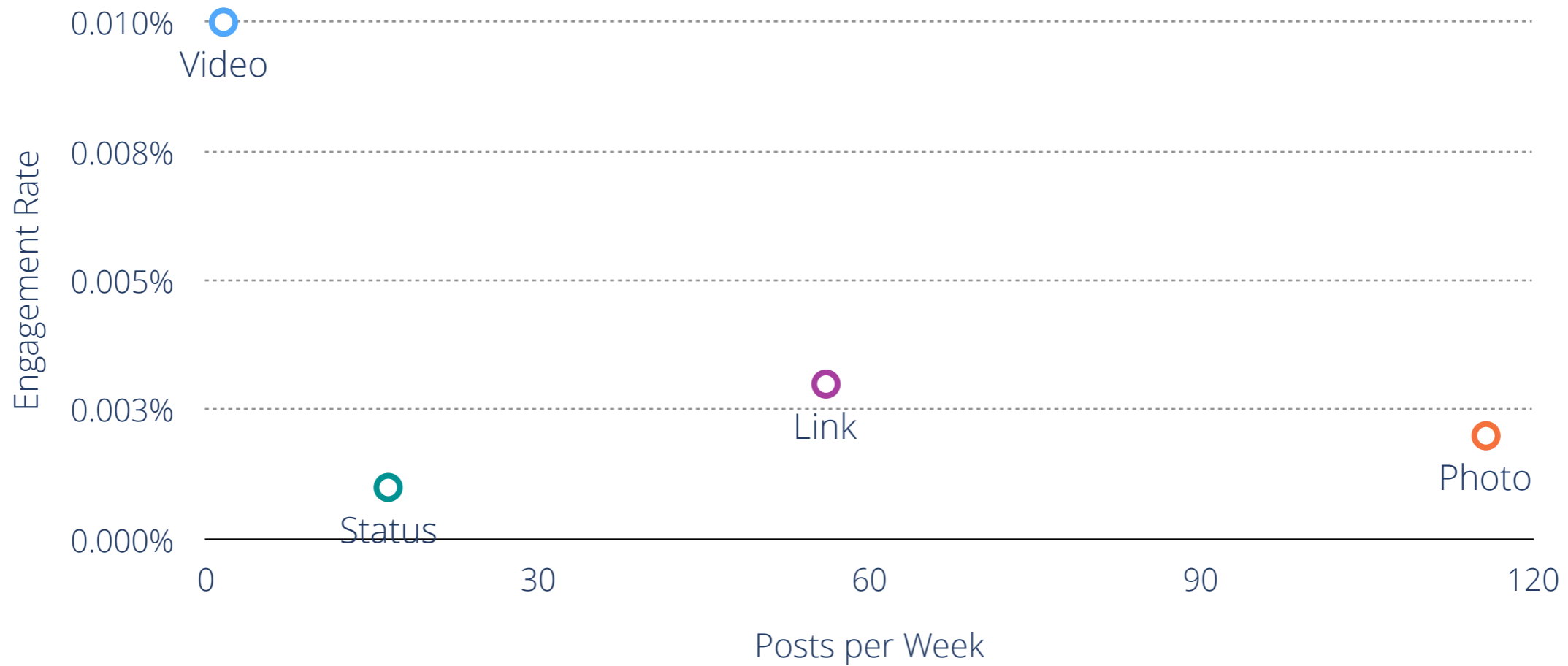


Media prioritize links that drive traffic, but to engage audiences they'll need to build native video and photo into the strategy.

# MEDIA: TWITTER ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type

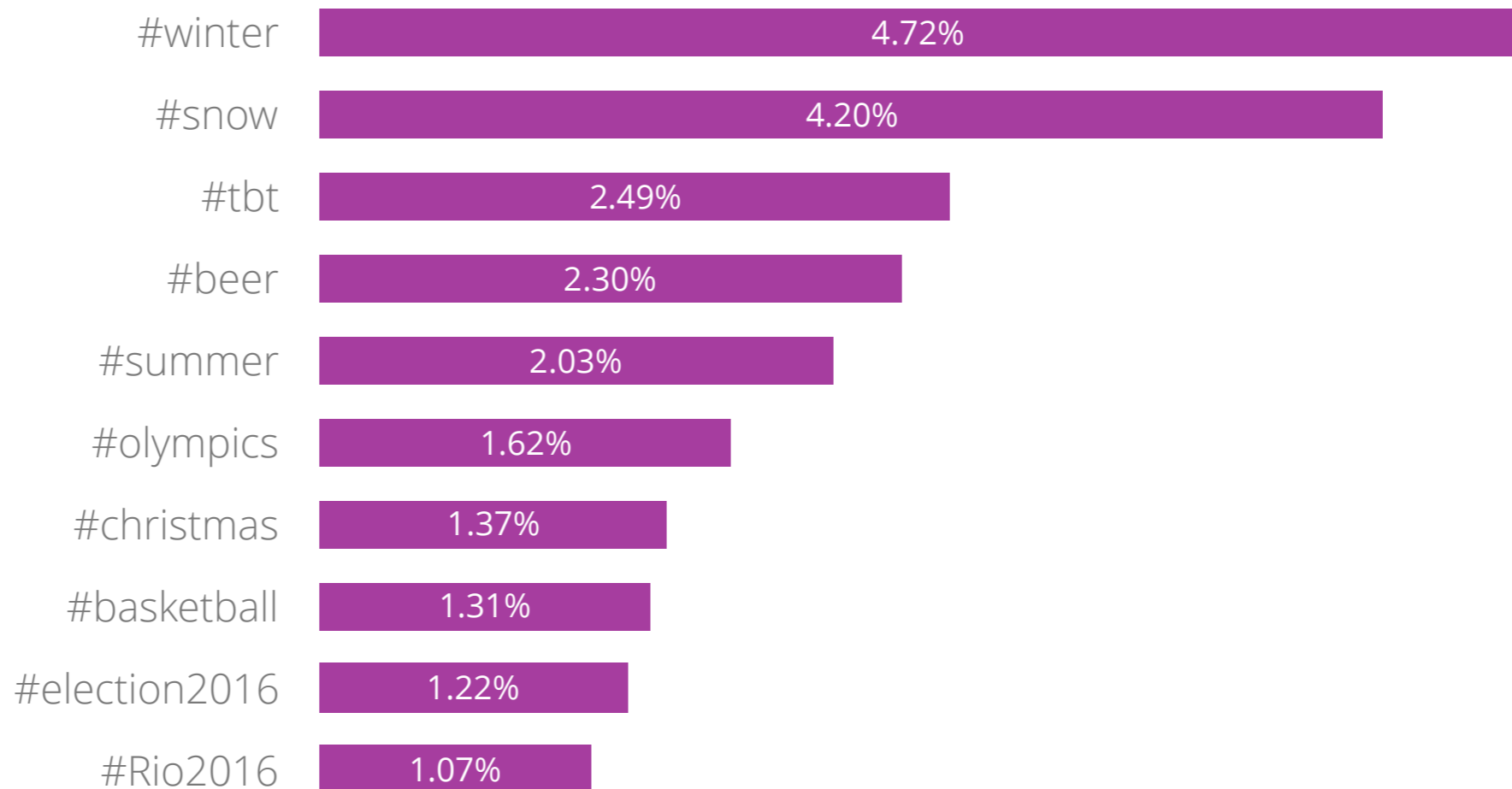


With such small engagement rates on Twitter, Media companies should repurpose more of the videos used on Facebook to include in Tweets.

# MEDIA: INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS



Top Hashtags by engagement rate  
(Used by more than 10 companies in study)



79.9% of  
Media's posts on  
Instagram include  
hashtags

Weather wins on Instagram for media companies. Capitalizing on those natural phenomena may open up possible Instagram audiences.



A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up, looking towards the left. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The text is positioned on the left side of the image.

# INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT: NONPROFITS

# NON-PROFITS

## Non-profits are owning native video

For nonprofits video isn't the only thing that does well - photos do too. With Instagram's high engagement rate, and the low frequency of posts, it appears non-profits are missing an opportunity to engage an audience that enjoys that content.

Based on this study, there are two opportunities that could improve that engagement rate:

- Repurpose Facebook videos for Twitter
- Utilize high performing hashtags



FACEBOOK  
POSTS PER DAY

**1.4**

FACEBOOK  
ENG RATE / POST

**0.27%**



INSTAGRAM  
POSTS PER DAY

**0.4**

INSTAGRAM  
ENG RATE / POST

**2.29%**



TWEETS  
PER DAY

**3.5**

TWITTER  
ENG RATE / TWEET

**0.051%**



**KEEP AMERICA  
BEAUTIFUL**



**HoustonBallet**



**DRESS FOR  
SUCCESS**

A few examples from Nonprofits

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# NONPROFITS: ENGAGEMENT RATE & POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE

With audiences similar to higher-ed, non-profits could see an increase in Instagram engagement by increasing posts per a day by 0.2.

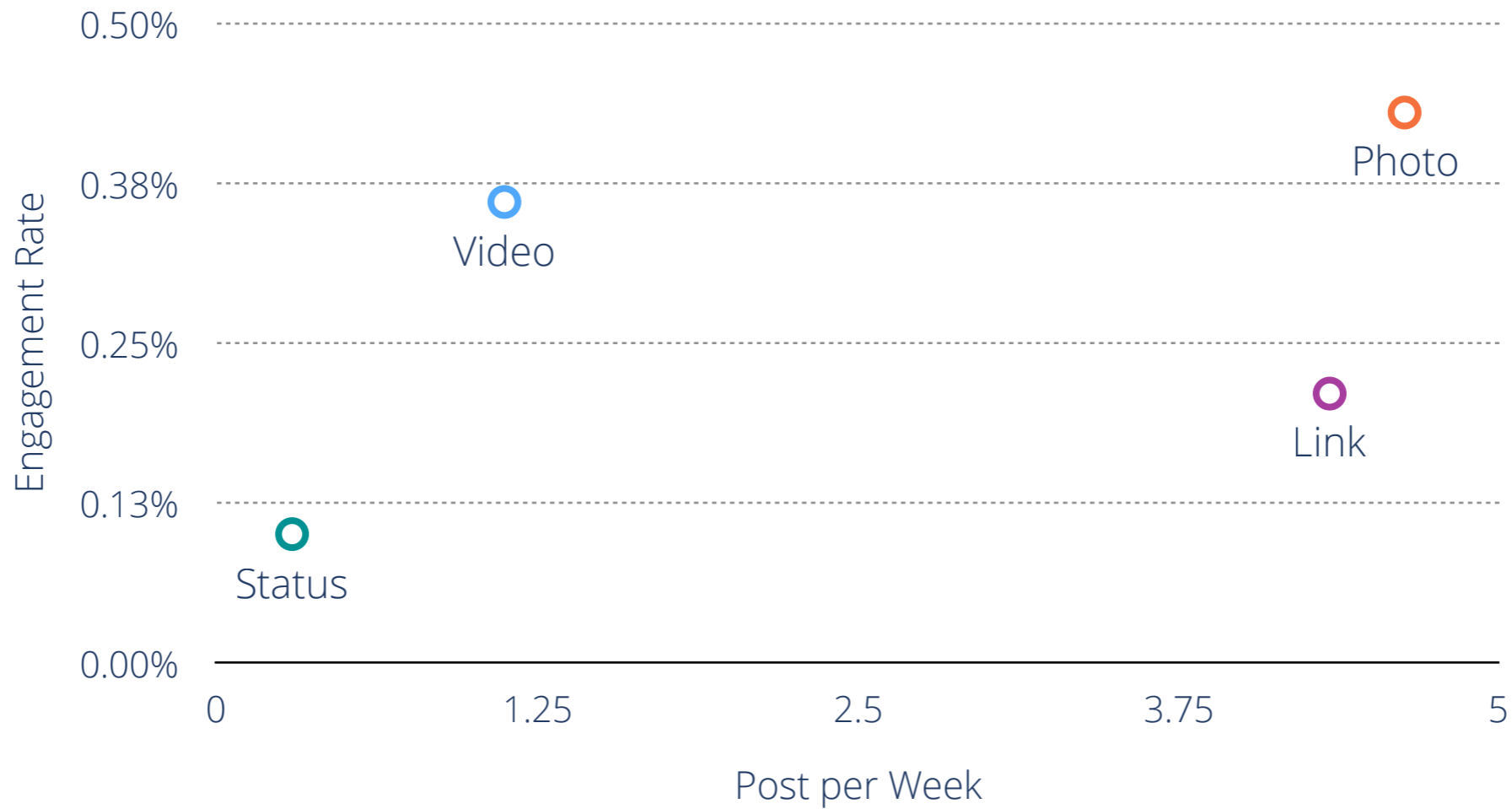




# NONPROFITS: FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type

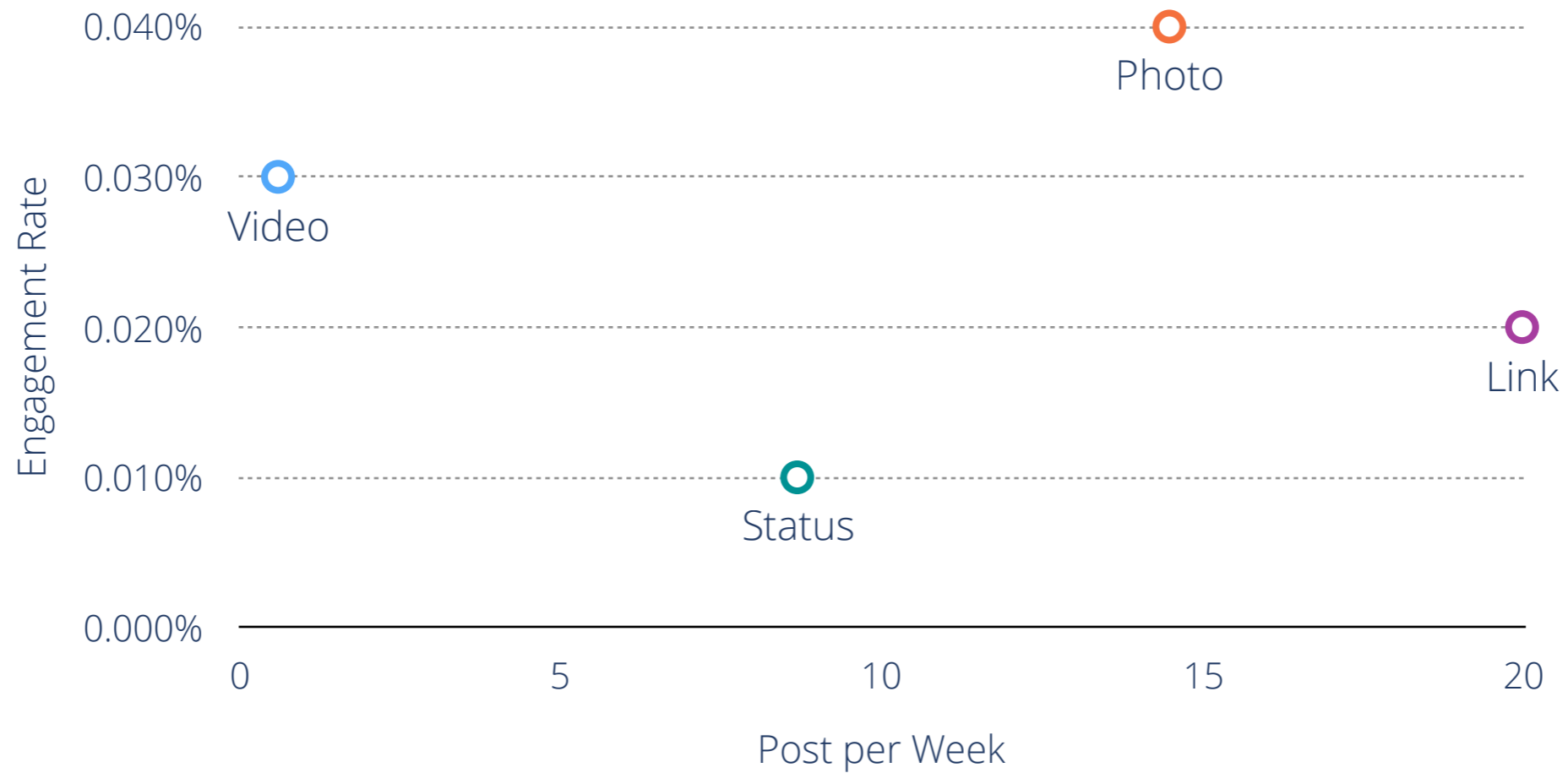


Video is an opportunity for nonprofits to increase audience engagement.

# NONPROFITS: TWITTER ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type



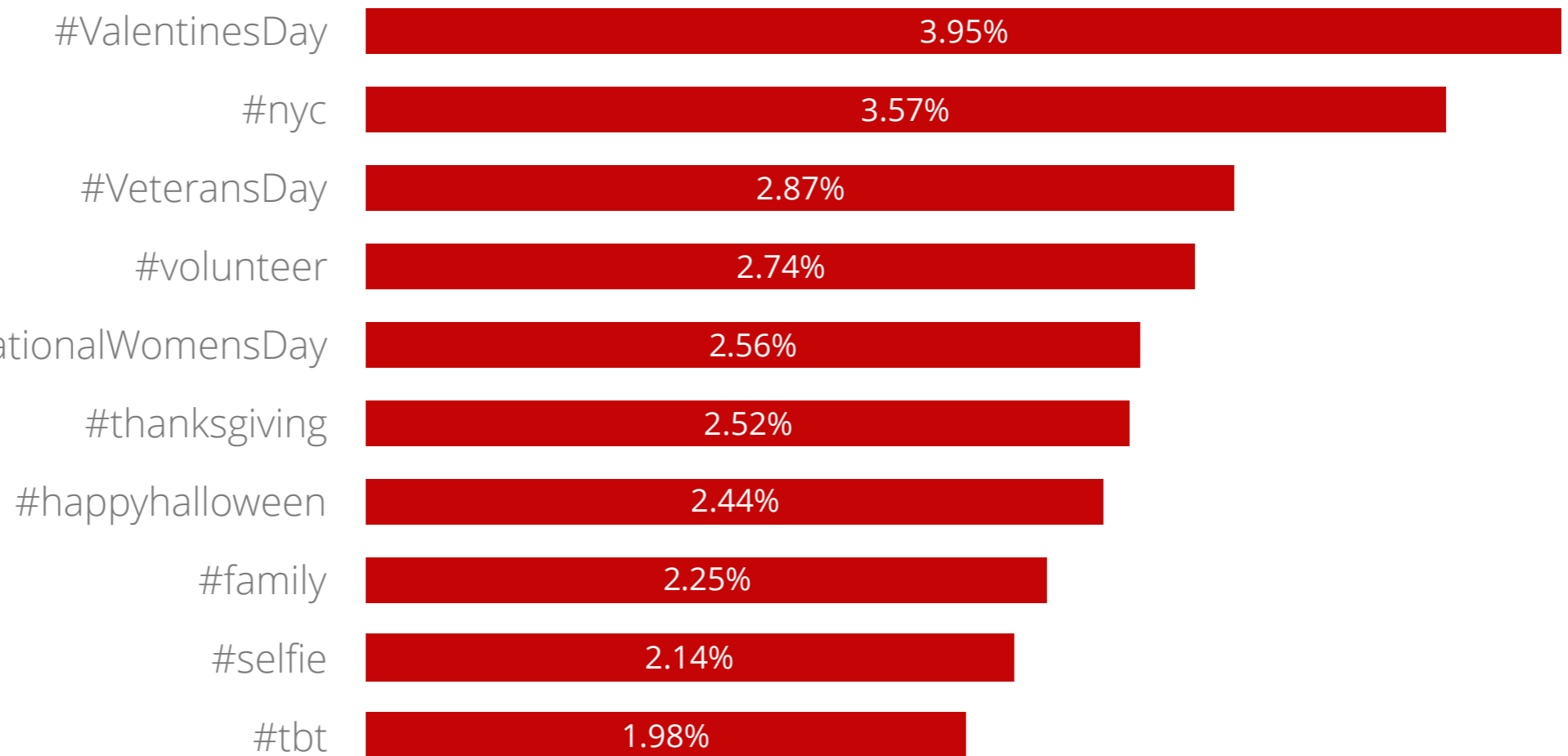
Nonprofits post more videos on Facebook and could repurpose on Twitter to increase engagement

# NONPROFITS: INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS



Top Hashtags by engagement rate  
(Used by more than 10 companies in study)

86.5% of Nonprofits' posts on Instagram include hashtags



Holidays and positive topics top the list of hashtags, making sense for non-profits to engage audiences on altruistic subjects.

A photograph of a young woman with long, wavy hair, wearing a teal graduation cap and gown. She is smiling broadly and looking upwards and to the right. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color. The text 'INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT: HIGHER ED' is written in white, uppercase letters on the left side of the image.

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT:  
HIGHER ED

# HIGHER ED

## Higher Ed Blow Others Out of the Social Waters

It's no surprise that colleges and universities have the highest engagement rate on Facebook and Instagram.

What is surprising is that on Facebook, posts that are simply status updates do almost as well as video and photo. This is unique to colleges and universities.

Based on this study, one opportunity that could improve that engagement rate is:

- Use more status updates on Facebook



FACEBOOK  
POSTS PER DAY

**1.3**

FACEBOOK  
ENG RATE / POST

**0.33%**



INSTAGRAM  
POSTS PER DAY

**0.6**

INSTAGRAM  
ENG RATE / POST

**3.35%**



TWEETS  
PER DAY

**2.6**

TWITTER  
ENG RATE / TWEET

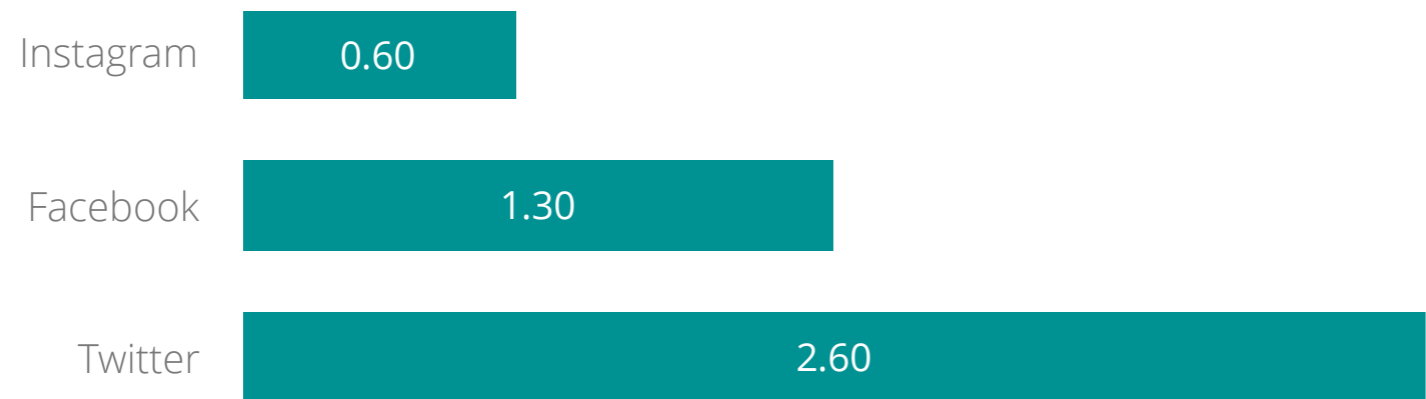
**0.052%**



A few examples from Higher Education

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# HIGHER ED: ENGAGEMENT RATE & POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE POSTS PER DAY



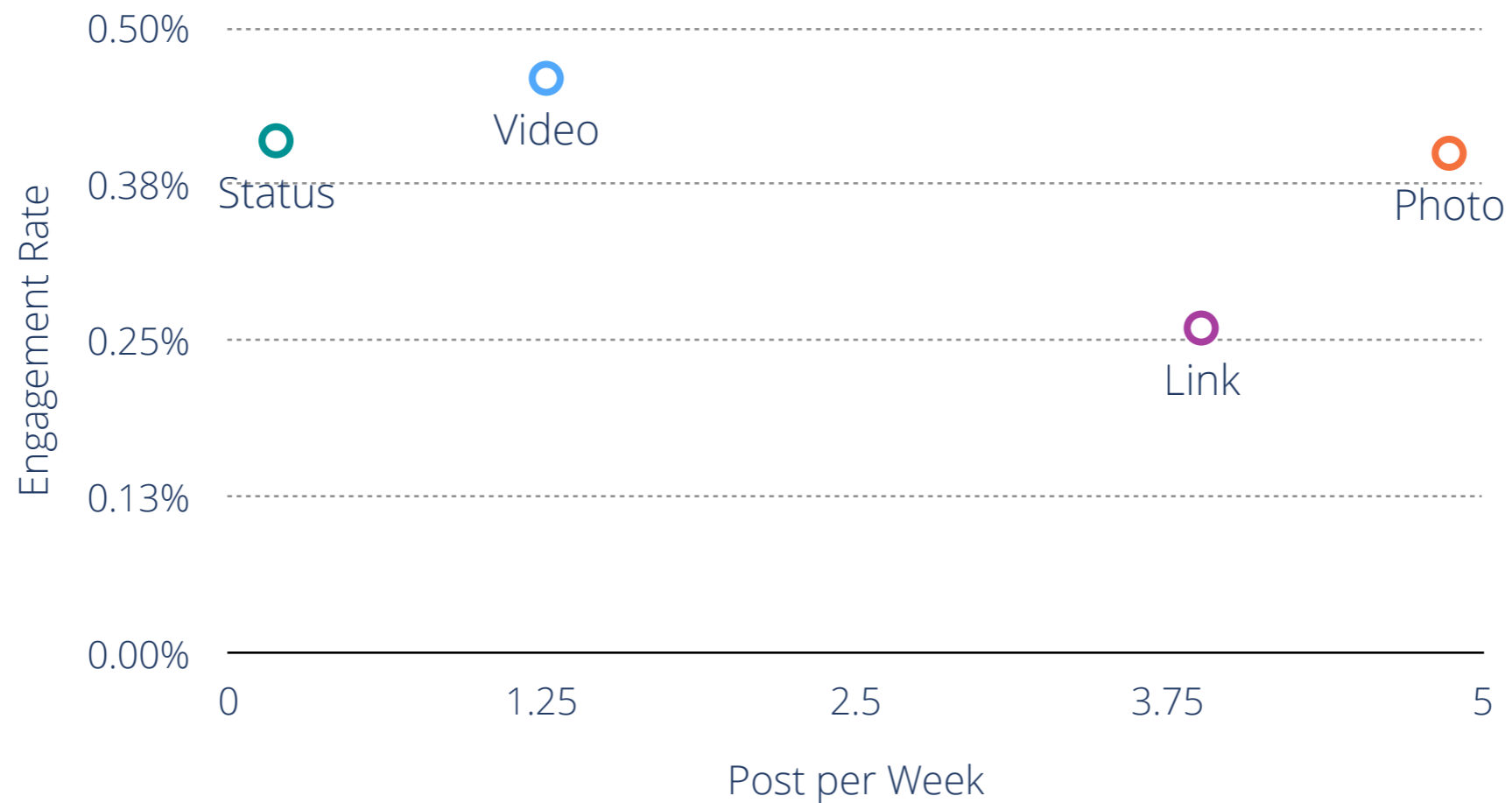
AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE

Colleges & Universities are second only to Media for the worst performance on Twitter.

# HIGHER ED: FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type

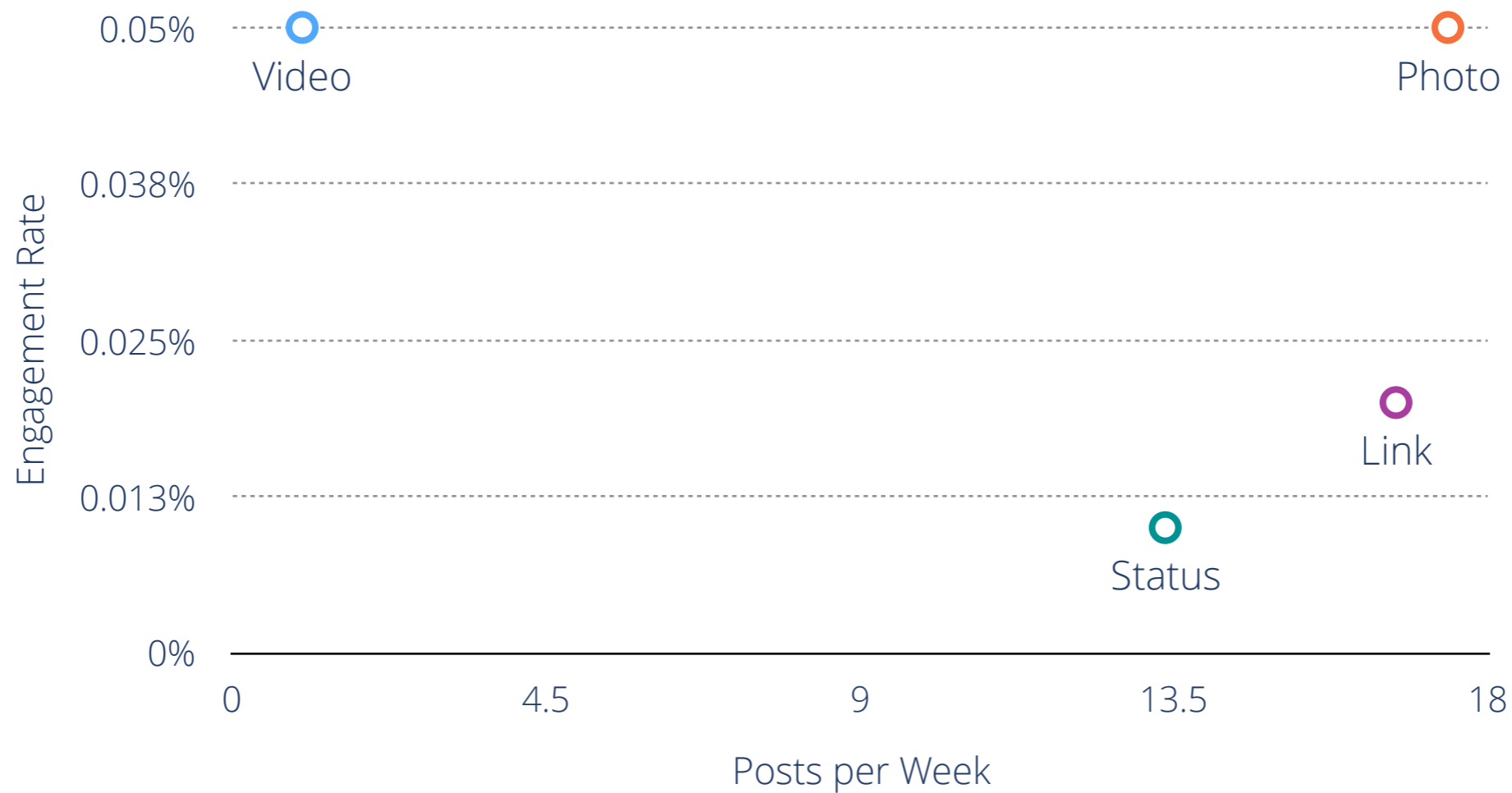


Status updates gain engagement without investing in photos or video.

# HIGHER ED: TWITTER ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type



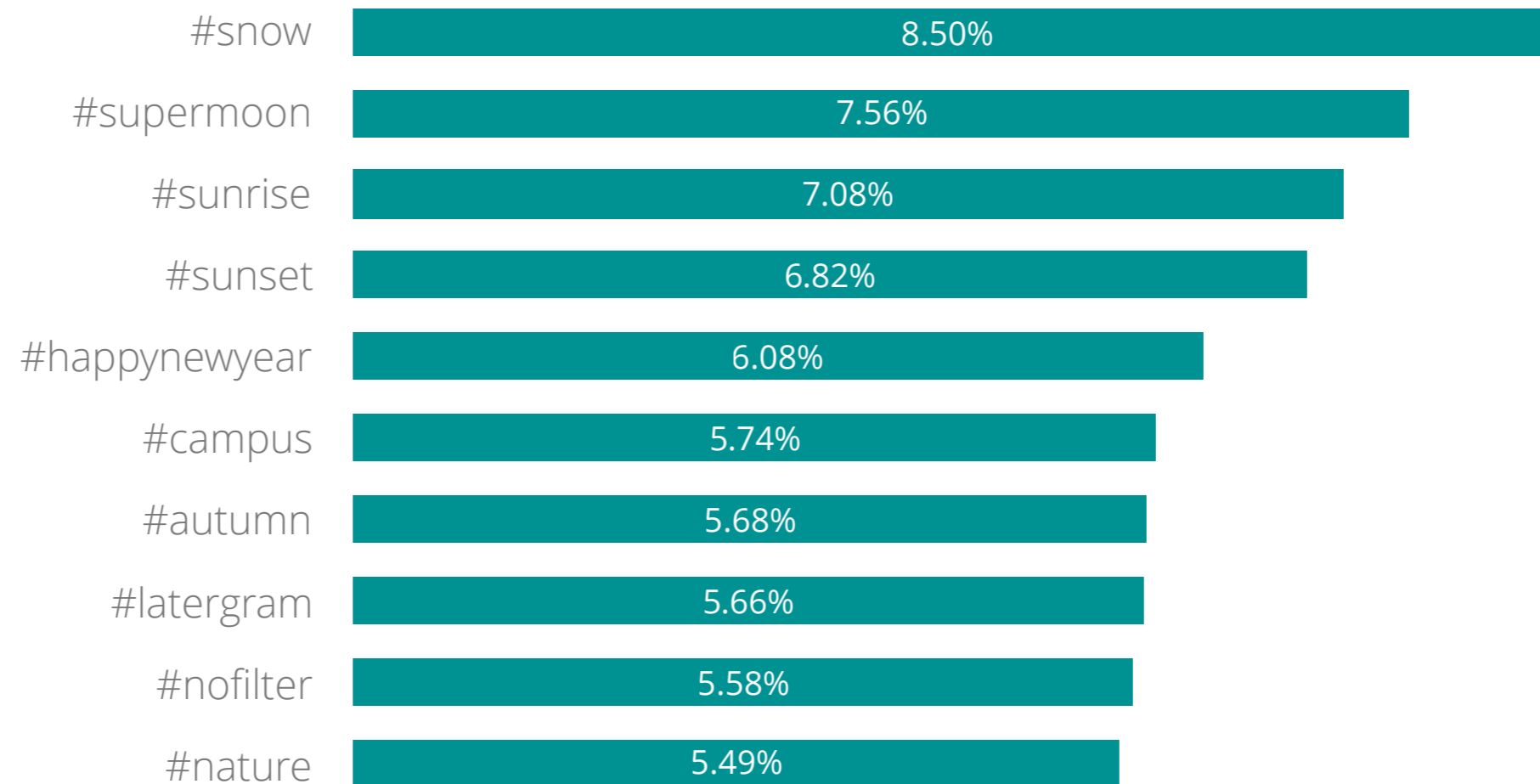
Video and photos are the best opportunities for Twitter engagement.



# HIGHER ED: INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS



Top Hashtags by engagement rate  
(Used by more than 10 colleges & universities in study)  
87.1% of posts on Instagram include hashtags



Seasonal and nature photos from around campus are easy wins, driving high engagement.



INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT:  
FASHION BRANDS

# FASHION BRANDS

## Fashion Brands Don't Dominate

Fashion Brands, along with Health & Beauty brands have a reputation of having high engagement rates, especially on Instagram. While there are many successful brands on social, it's important to note that they don't represent the industry as a whole.

Based on this study, there are two opportunities that could improve that engagement rate:

- Use more video in posts
- Use more relevant hashtags



FACEBOOK  
POSTS PER DAY

1

FACEBOOK  
ENG RATE / POST

0.13%



INSTAGRAM  
POSTS PER DAY

0.09

INSTAGRAM  
ENG RATE / POST

1.36%

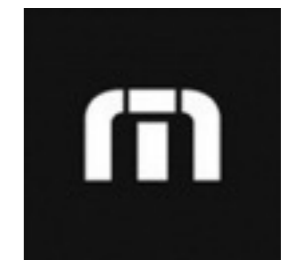


TWEETS  
PER DAY

1

TWITTER  
ENG RATE / TWEET

0.058%



A few examples from fashion brands

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# FASHION BRANDS: ENGAGEMENT RATE & POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE

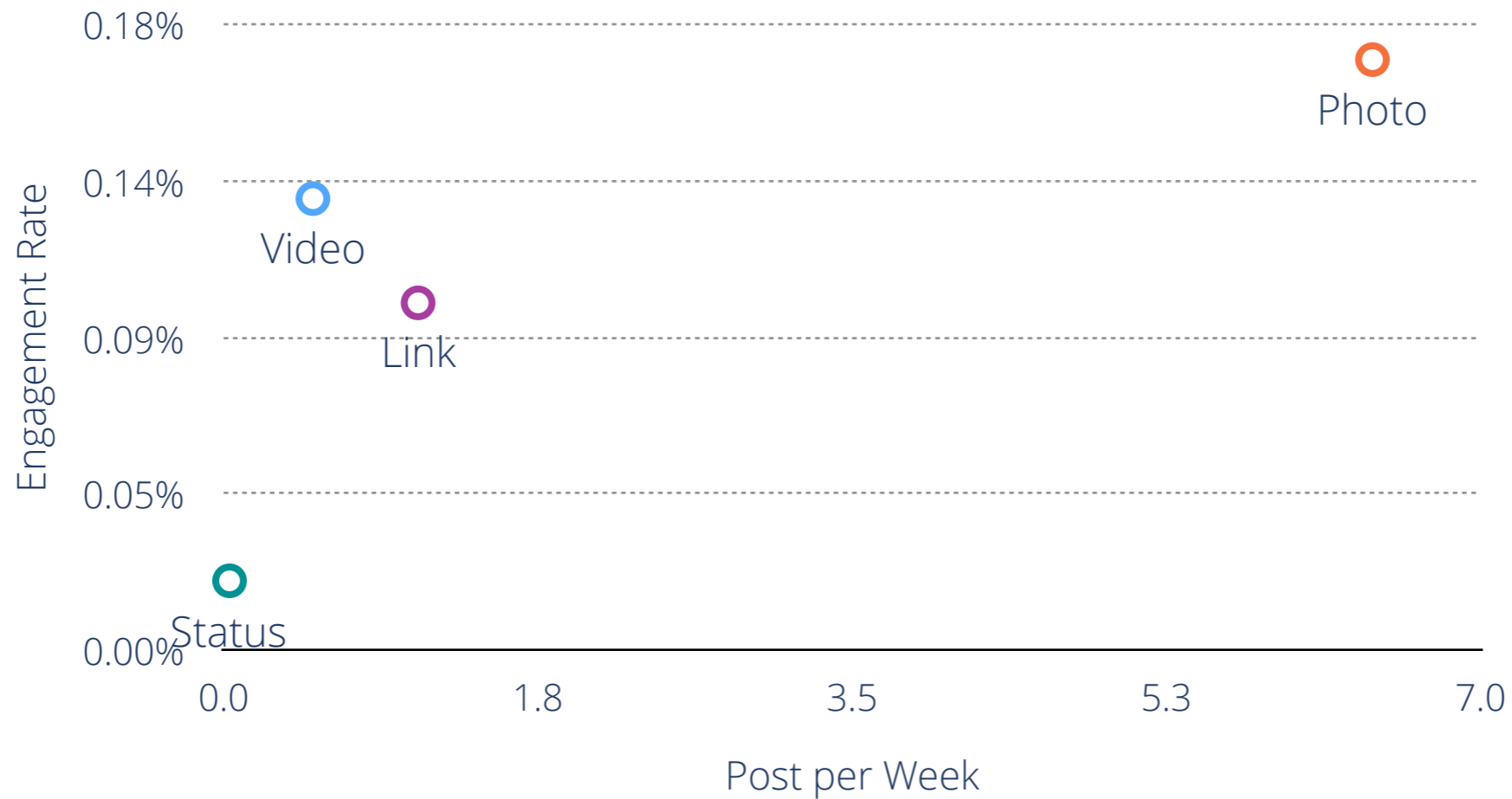
Fashion brands are clearly social - posting almost equally across channels.



# FASHION BRANDS: FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type

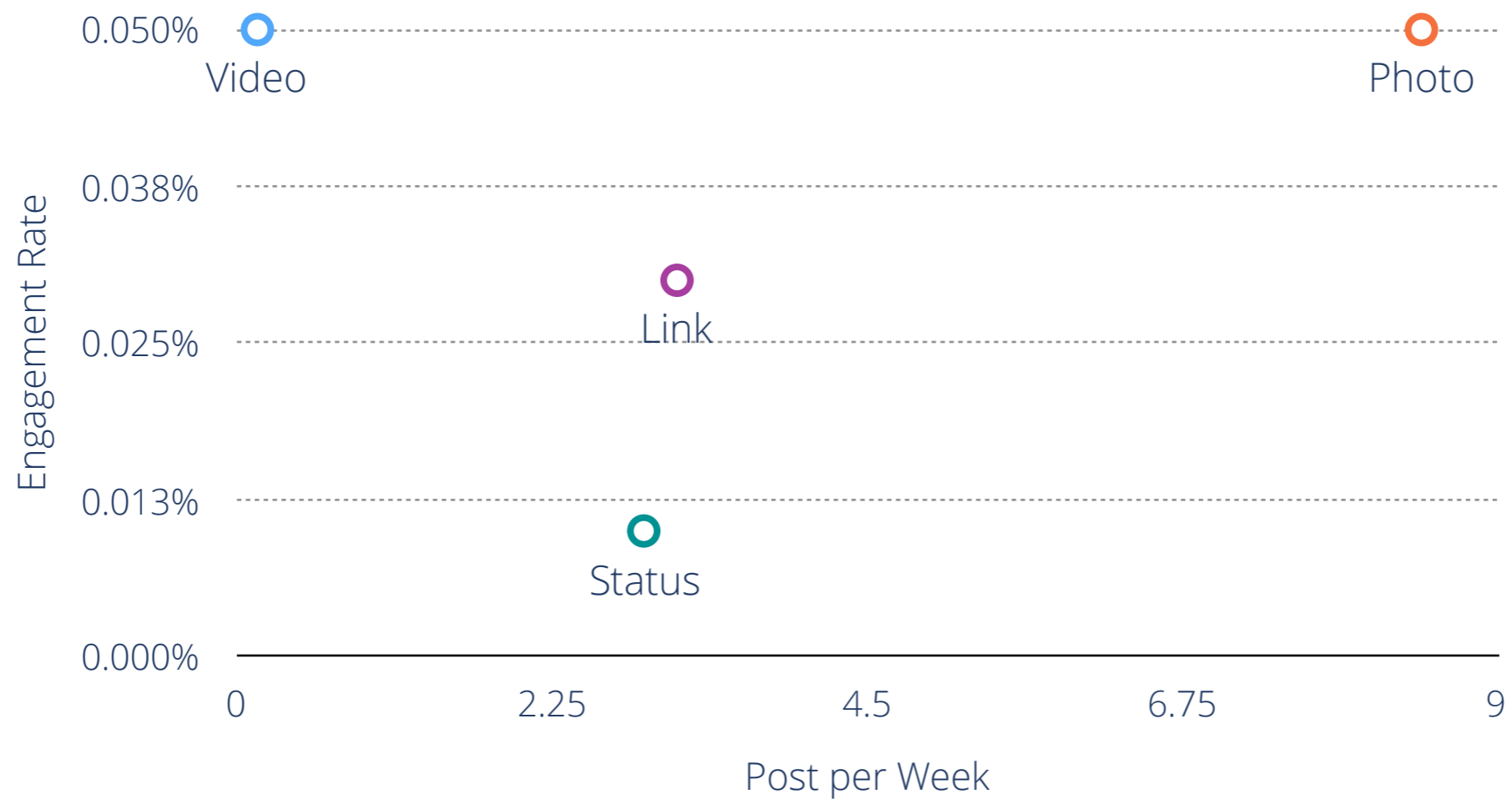


It's rare to see the most common post type receive the most engagement

# FASHION BRANDS: TWITTER ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type



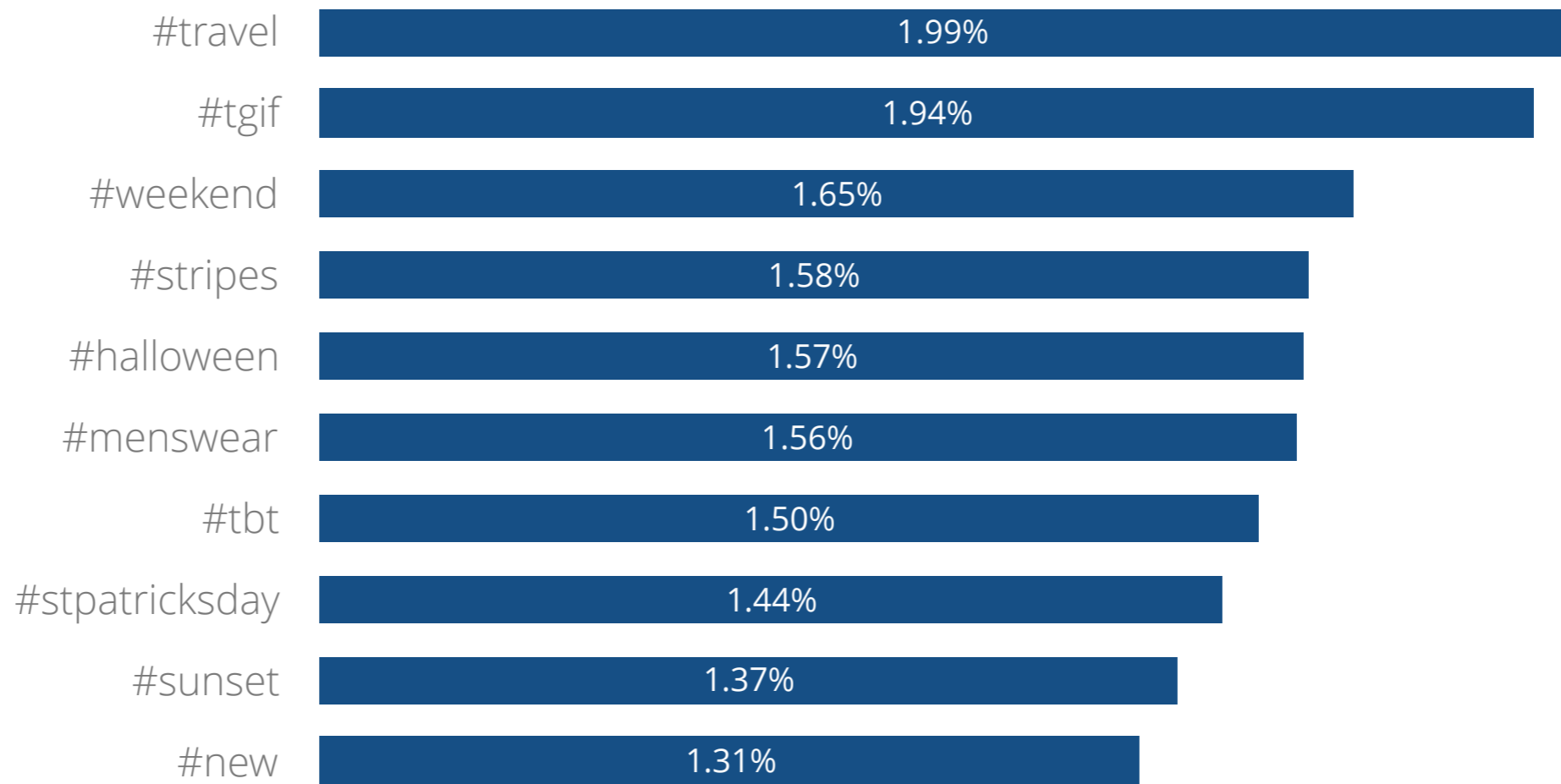
Few posts include video, yet it does as well as photos. Try adding video to tweets.

# FASHION BRANDS: INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS



Top Hashtags by engagement rate  
(Used by more than 10 companies in study)

80.2% of Fashion Brand's posts on Instagram include hashtags



The top hashtags for fashion brands are only slightly higher than the average engagement - unique to this industry. Test out fashion related hashtags to gain higher engagement.





INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT:  
HEALTH & BEAUTY



# HEALTH & BEAUTY

## Health & Beauty Surprises with Low Performance

Health & Beauty brands, along with fashion brands, have a reputation of having high engagement rates, especially on Instagram. While there are many successful brands on social, don't let those fool you into believing they represent the industry as a whole.

What surprised us in this study is that health and beauty's photos significantly trumped video both on Twitter and Facebook. This is unique from the other industries studied.



FACEBOOK  
POSTS PER DAY

**0.9**

FACEBOOK  
ENG RATE / POST

**0.14%**



INSTAGRAM  
POSTS PER DAY

**1.1**

INSTAGRAM  
ENG RATE / POST

**1.14%**



TWEETS  
PER DAY

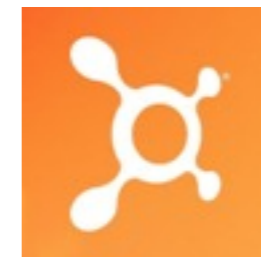
**0.9**

TWITTER  
ENG RATE / TWEET

**0.057%**



shakeology

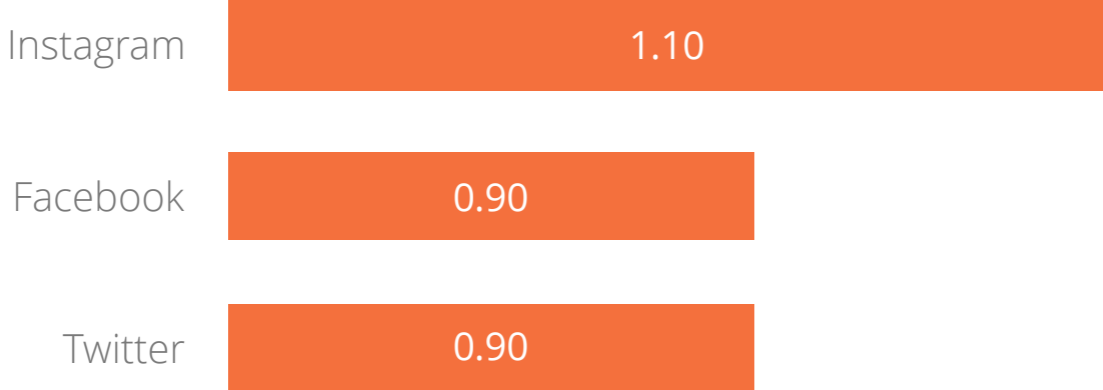


corepower  
YOGA

A few examples from health and beauty

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# HEALTH & BEAUTY: ENGAGEMENT RATE & POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE

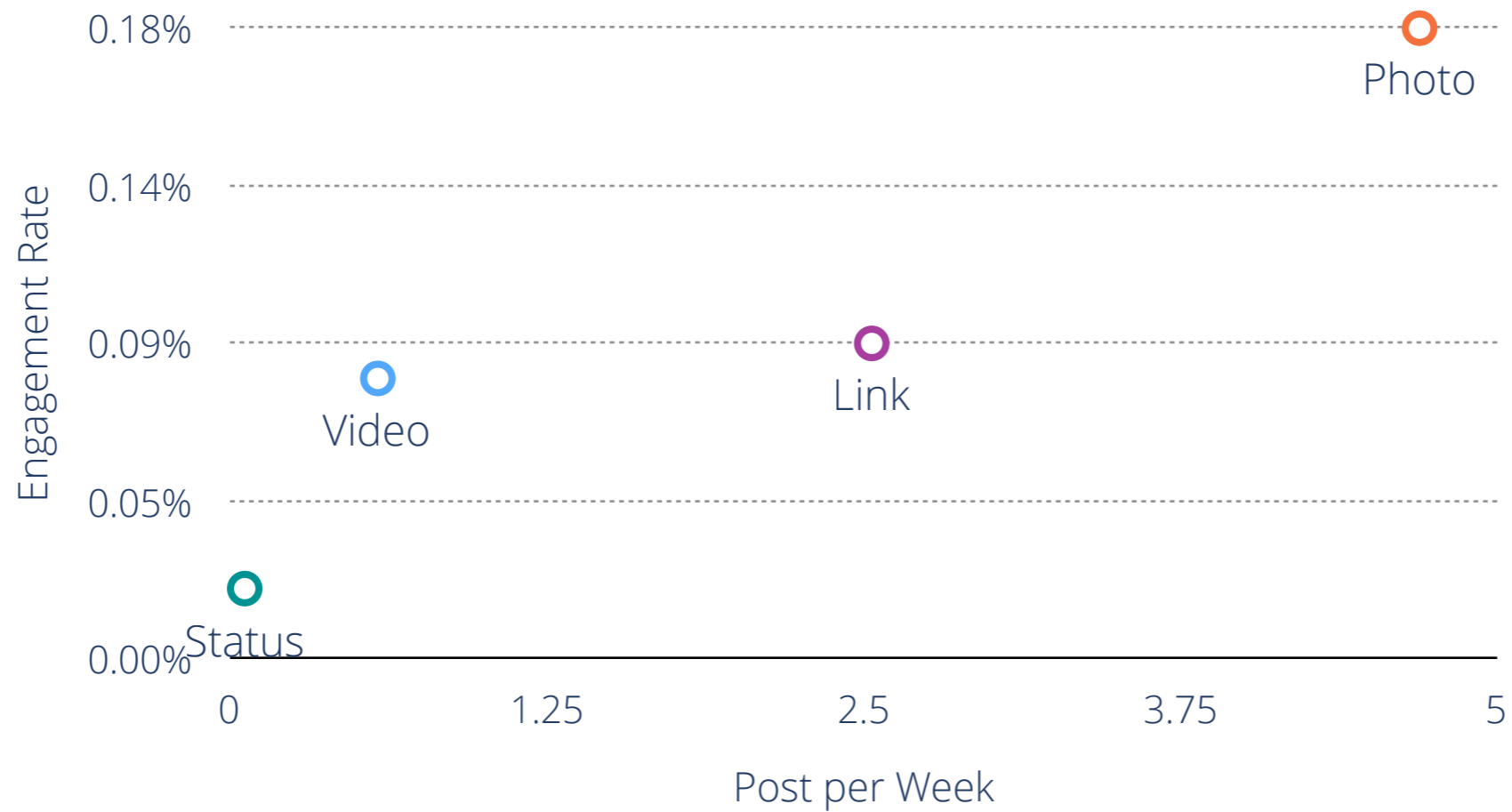
Health & Beauty stand just behind Fashion in social posting frequency.



# HEALTH & BEAUTY: FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type

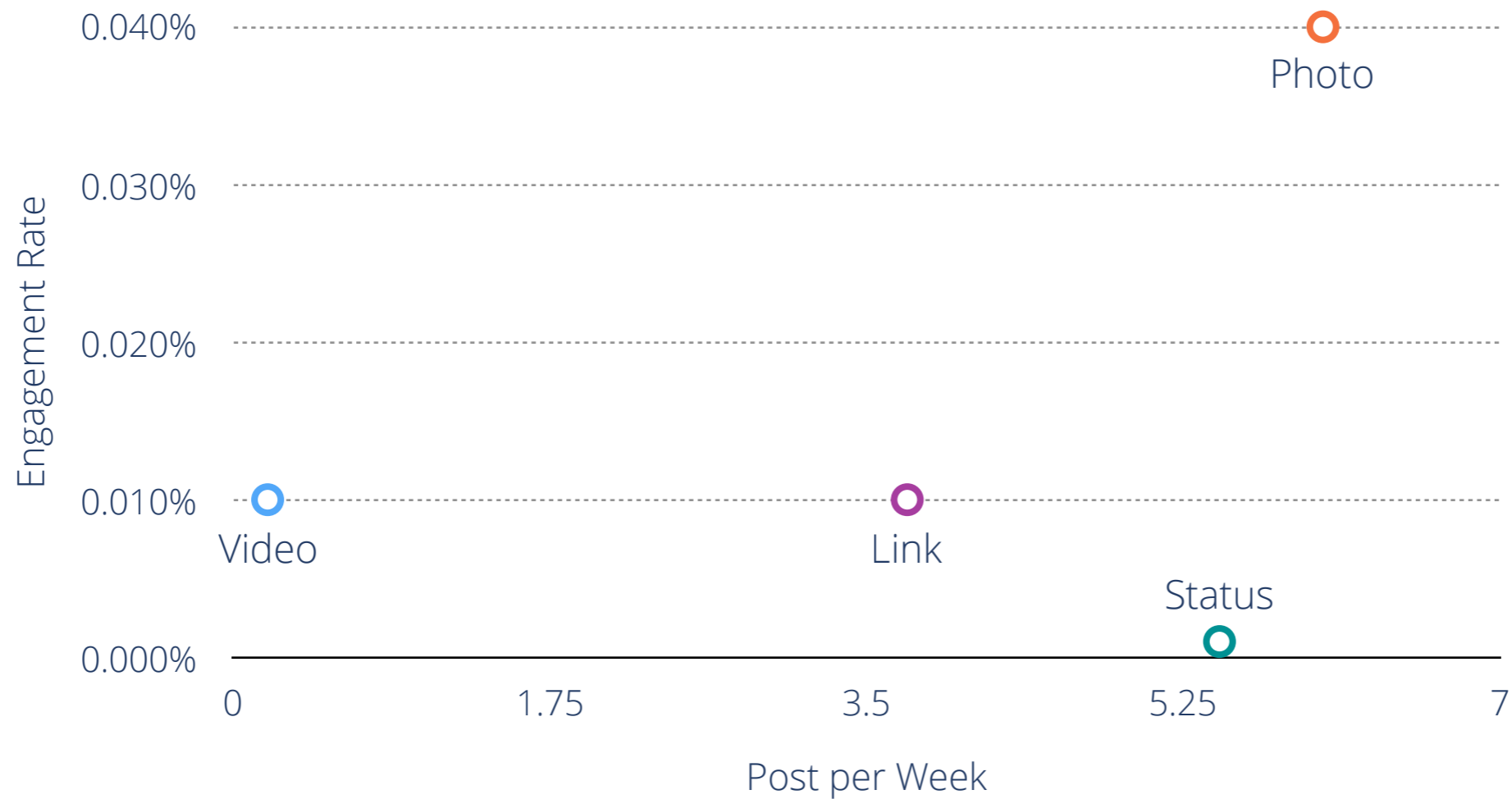


It's rare to see the most common post type receive the most engagement.

# HEALTH & BEAUTY: TWITTER ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type



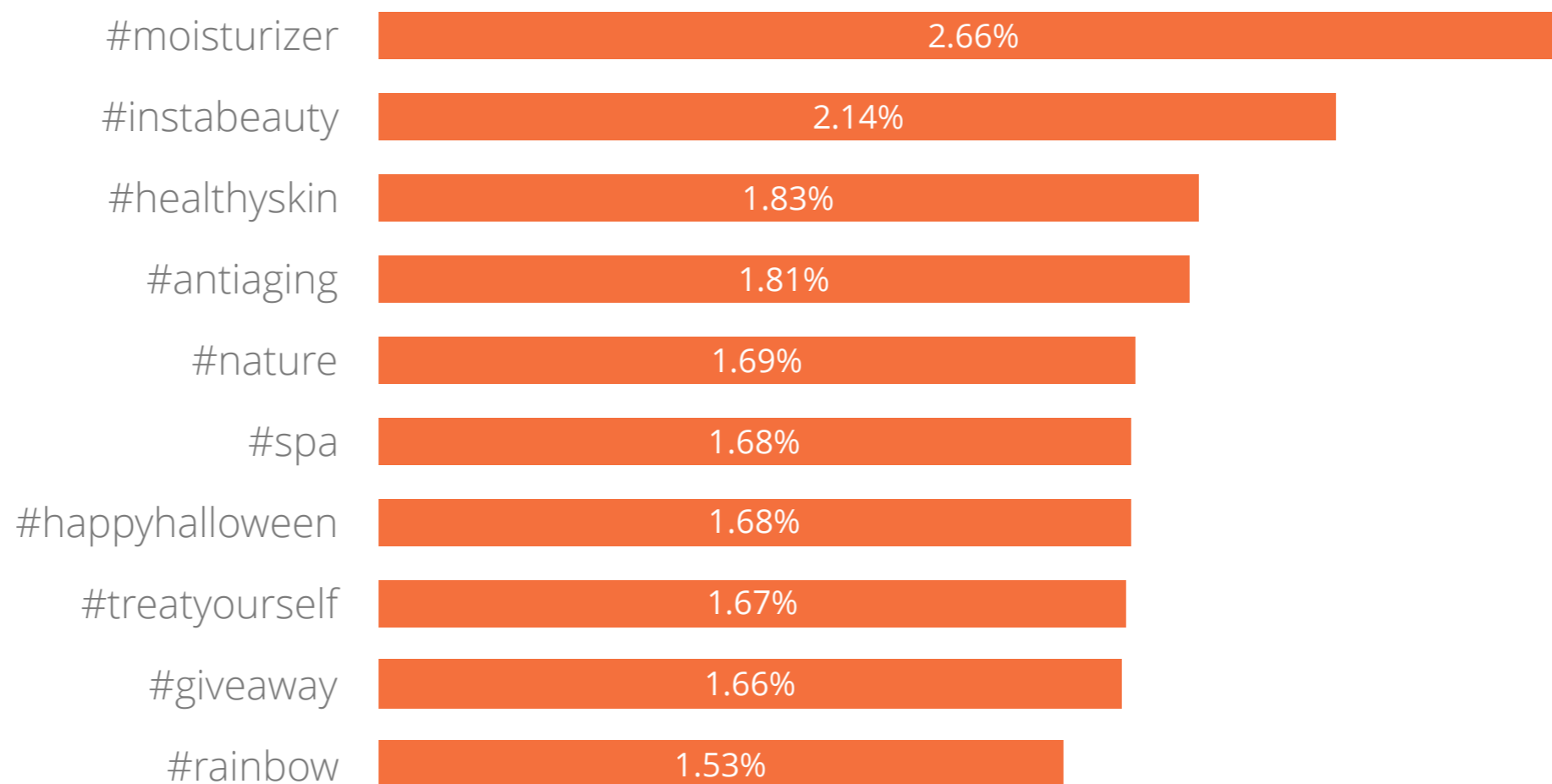
Healthy & Beauty is the only industry in this study where video is not equal or better on Twitter.

# HEALTH & BEAUTY: INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS



Top Hashtags by engagement rate  
(Used by more than 10 companies in study)

77.4% of  
Health &  
Beauty's posts on  
Instagram include  
hashtags



Health & beauty brands were one of only two industries in the study that had high engagement with industry-related hashtags.



INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT:  
FOOD & BEVERAGE

# FOOD & BEVERAGE

## Food & Beverage Brands Rock on Twitter

Food & Beverage brands significantly outperforms other industries on Twitter. The most common post type for Food & Beverage brands is photo, and it's also the most engaging on Facebook, which means it's important to invest in the imagery that resonates and engages the audience.

For these brands, timeliness is what helps a post stand out.



FACEBOOK  
POSTS PER DAY

**0.6**

FACEBOOK  
ENG RATE / POST

**0.23%**



INSTAGRAM  
POSTS PER DAY

**0.6**

INSTAGRAM  
ENG RATE / POST

**1.67%**

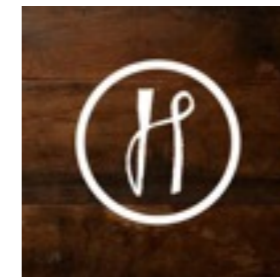


TWEETS  
PER DAY

**0.9**

TWITTER  
ENG RATE / TWEET

**0.069%**



**Honest**  
tea



**Kashi**

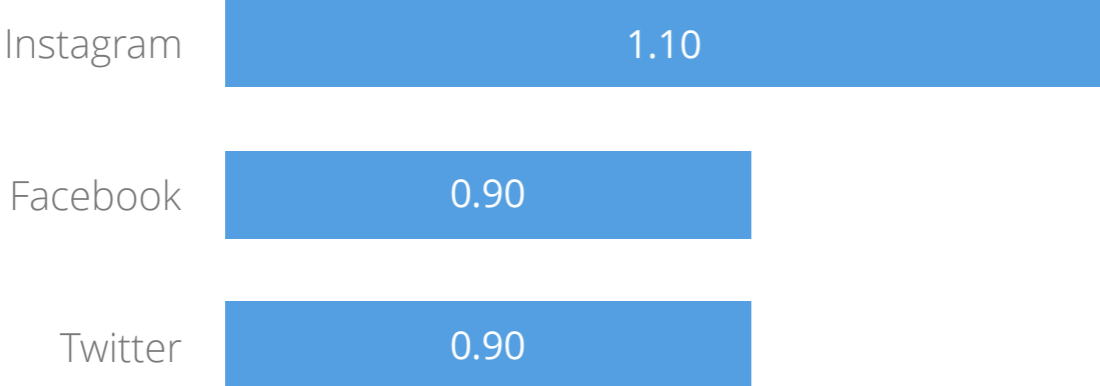


**Shiner**  
BEERS

A few examples from food & beverage

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# FOOD & BEVERAGE: ENGAGEMENT RATE & POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE POSTS PER DAY



AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE

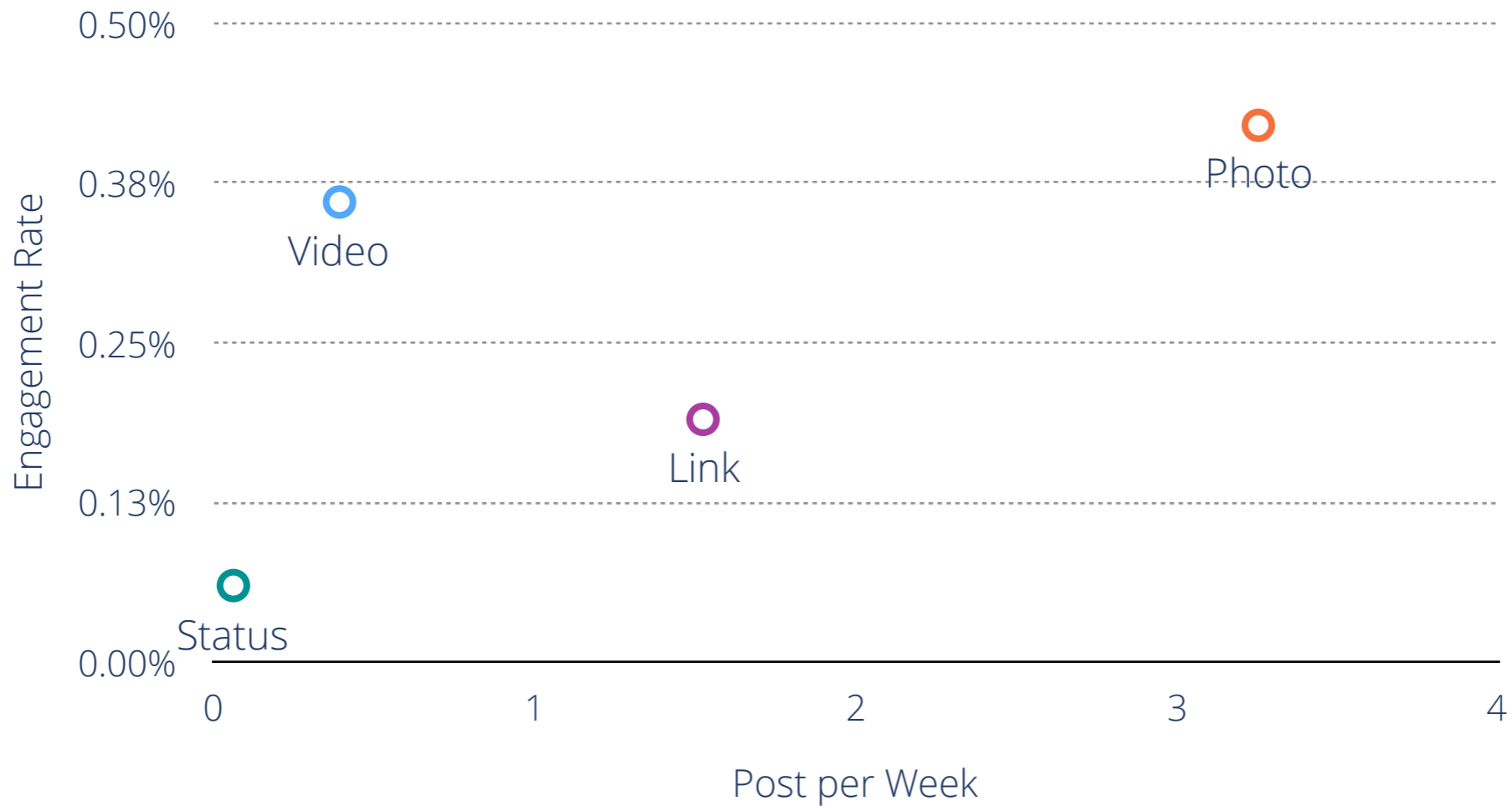
Surprisingly Food & Beverage Brands post the least on Facebook out of all the industries studied.



# FOOD & BEVERAGE: FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type

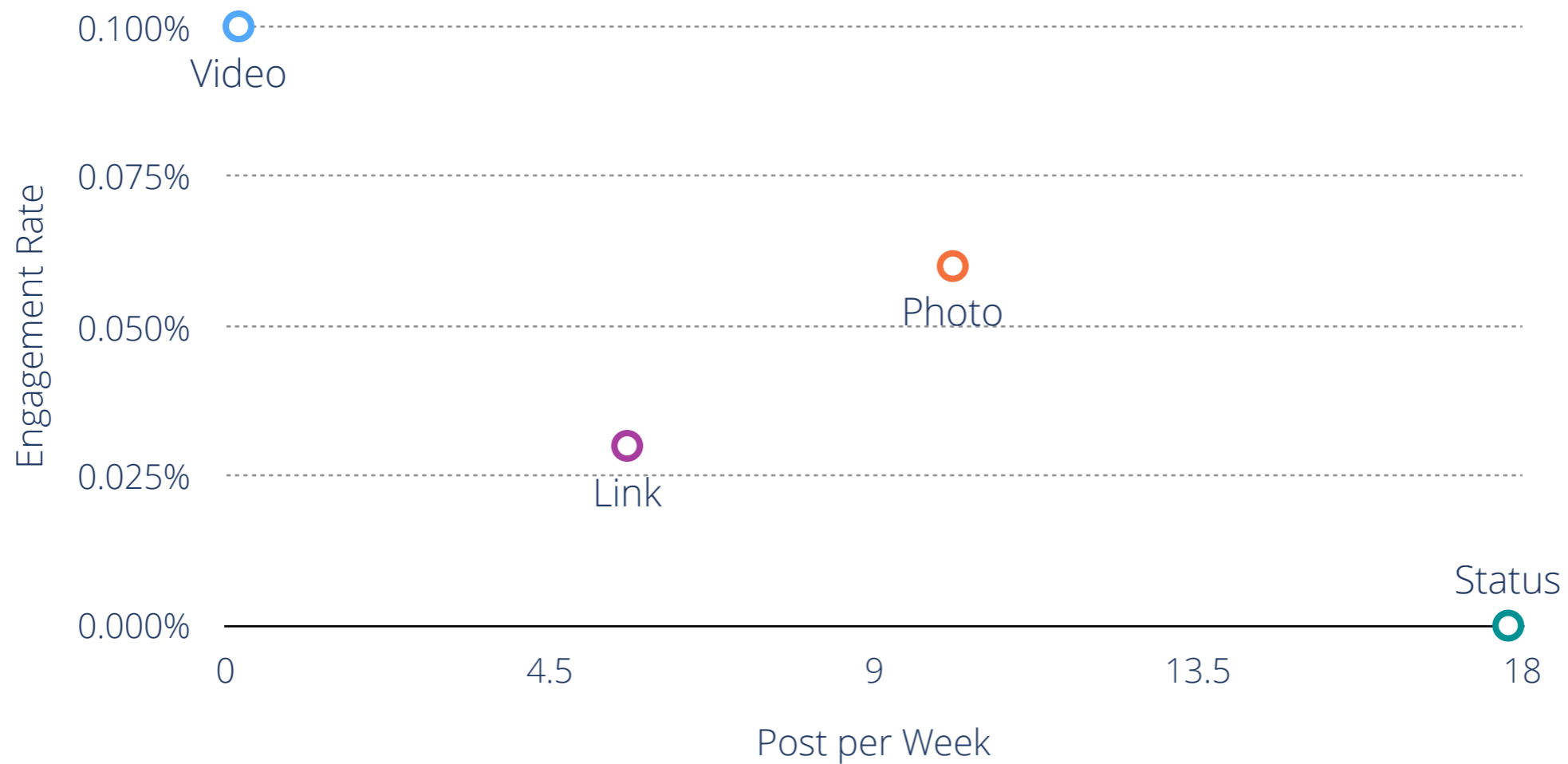


Video is underutilized on Facebook for Food & Beverage brands - brands using video on Facebook have an upper hand in engagement.

# FOOD & BEVERAGE: TWITTER ENGAGEMENT



Posts per week, engagement rate, by post type

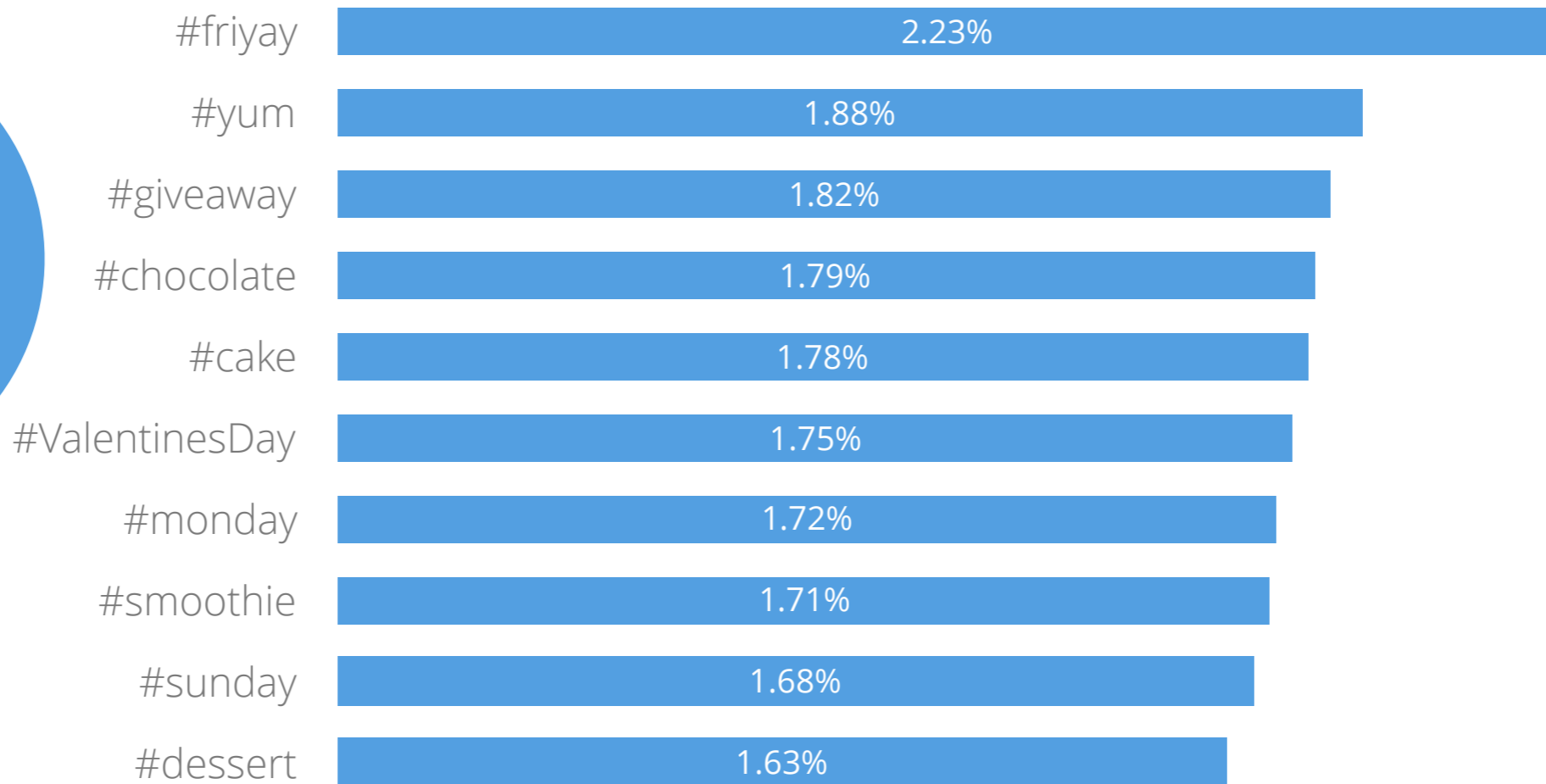


Video outshines all the rest for engagement on Twitter; by adding video into the strategy Food & Beverage Brands can increase their engagement.

# FOOD & BEVERAGE: INSTAGRAM HASHTAGS



Top Hashtags by engagement rate  
(Used by more than 10 companies in study)



80.2% of Food & Beverage posts on Instagram include hashtags

It's no surprise here that the top hashtags are around food, but include days of the week in the strategy too. Giveaways also help with post engagement.

# ABOUT RIVAL IQ

Rival IQ is an easy-to-use tool that helps you:

## **Understand Your Social Landscape**

Track results across all social profiles, including engagement, in influencers, social bios, and sentiment—for you and your competitors.

## **Gain Competitive Insight**

Conduct competitive analysis in minutes. Monitor your industry, create benchmarks, and evaluate competitor activity in time to respond before the market shifts direction.

## **Simplify Access to Data**

Find comprehensive analytics for all major social channels and the web, both for your company and your competitors - all from one source.

Get your free trial 