

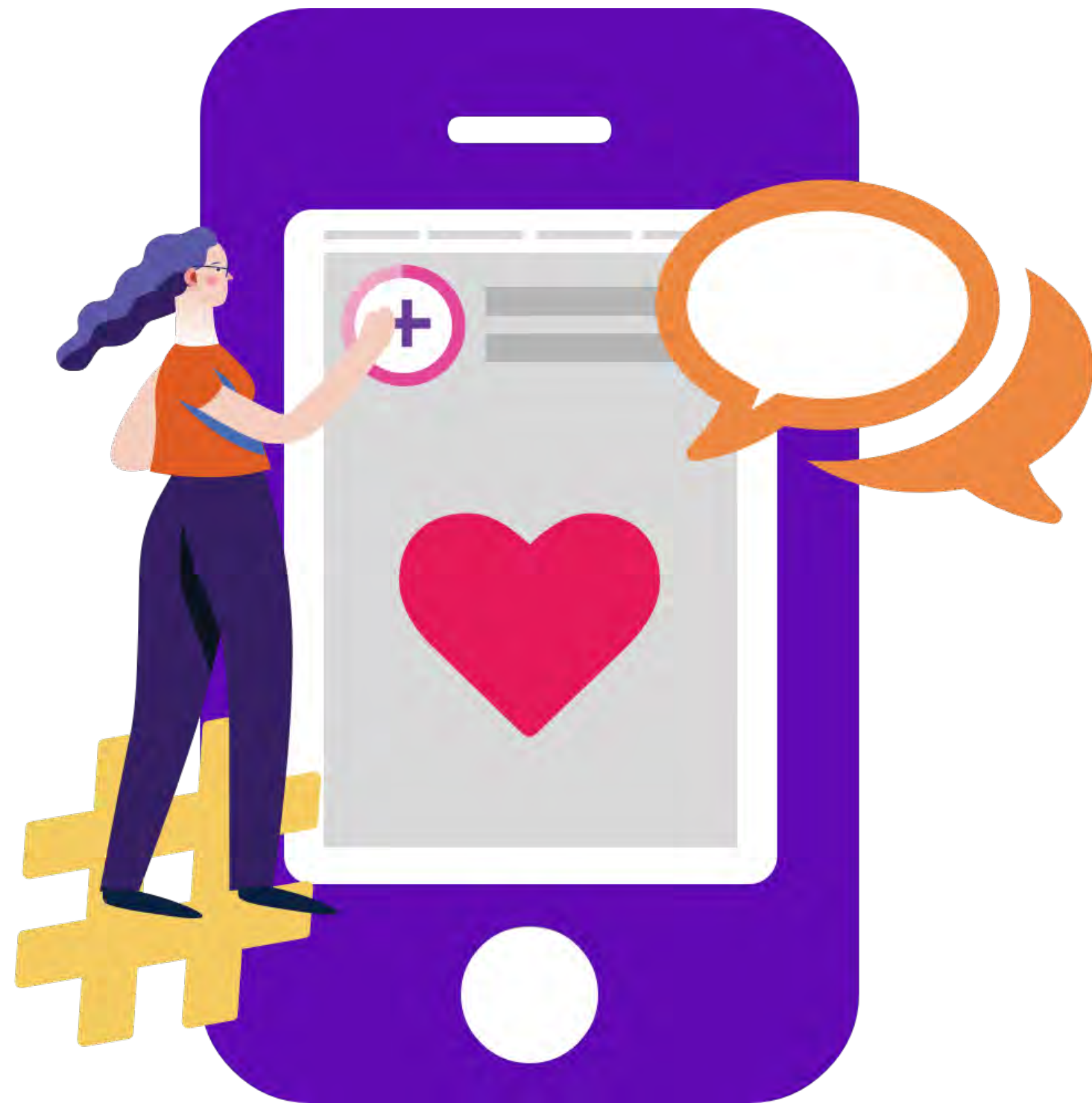
2021 Instagram Stories Benchmark Report

THE GUIDE TO INSTAGRAM STORIES METRICS AND BENCHMARKS FOR 2021

Rival
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Questions to Answer with The Instagram Stories Benchmark Report

Instagram Stories continue to grow in relevance to your social media marketing efforts, but it can be tough to know how your brand stacks up against competitors.



- What kind of Stories engagement are my competitors seeing?
- How do I find my Instagram Stories stats?
- How frequently should I be posting Stories?
- What kind of Stories engagement (taps, replies, and exits) should I expect?
- How might my Instagram Stories engagement change if I published more often or grew my followers?

DATA SET INCLUDES

— **770** —
HANDLES

IN 2020 BETWEEN THE MONTHS OF

JUL AUG SEPT OCT NOV

COMPRISING

— **45K** — **190K** —
STORIES **FRAMES**

The Metrics: Definitions

Engagement: Measurable interaction on Instagram Stories and posts, including likes, comments, replies, and shares.

Exit Rate: The percentage of your impressions that exit your Stories by swiping right, swiping down, or closing Stories.

Frame: A single photo or video posted to your Instagram Story.

Impressions: The total number of views of a frame in your Story.

Post Reach Rate: The reach of a post expressed as a percentage of your followers.

Reach: The total number of unique people that saw a frame in your Story.

Reach Rate: Your Story Viewers on any given day divided by your follower count, expressed as a percentage.

Reply Rate: The percentage of your Story Viewers that replied to your Story on any given day.

Retention Rate: The percentage of your Story Viewers on any given day that see all your frames.

Story: The set of frames posted to your Story within a single 24-hour day.

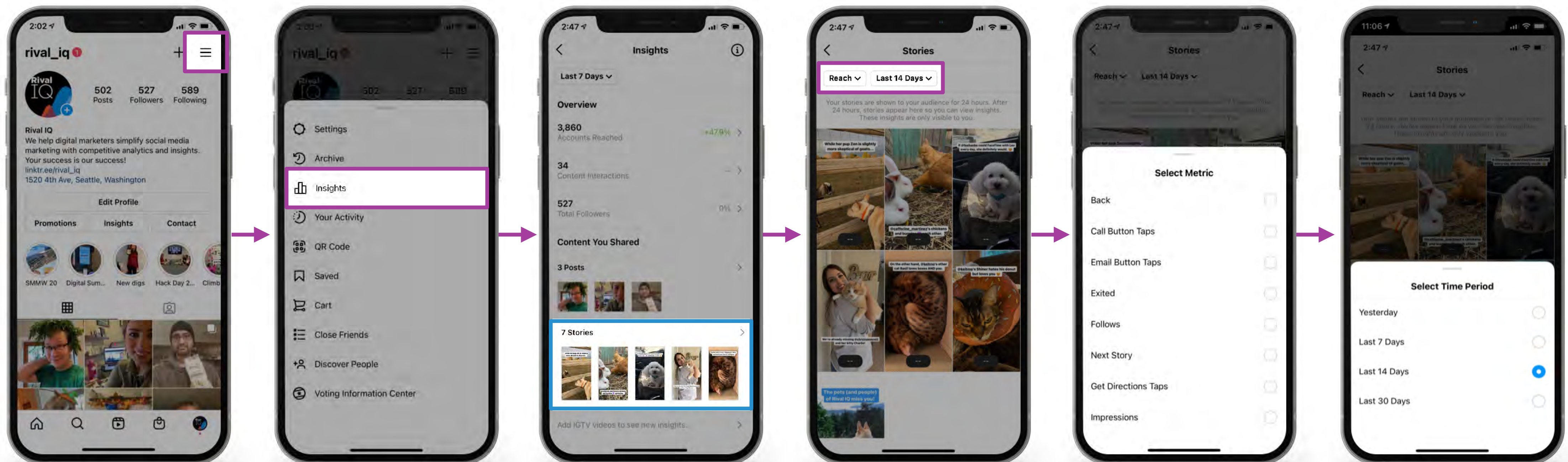
Story Viewers: The number of people who saw your Story on a given day.

Tap-Back Rate: The percentage of your impressions that have a tap backward to see the previous photo or video again.

Tap-Forward Rate: The percentage of your impressions that have a tap forward to see the next photo or video.

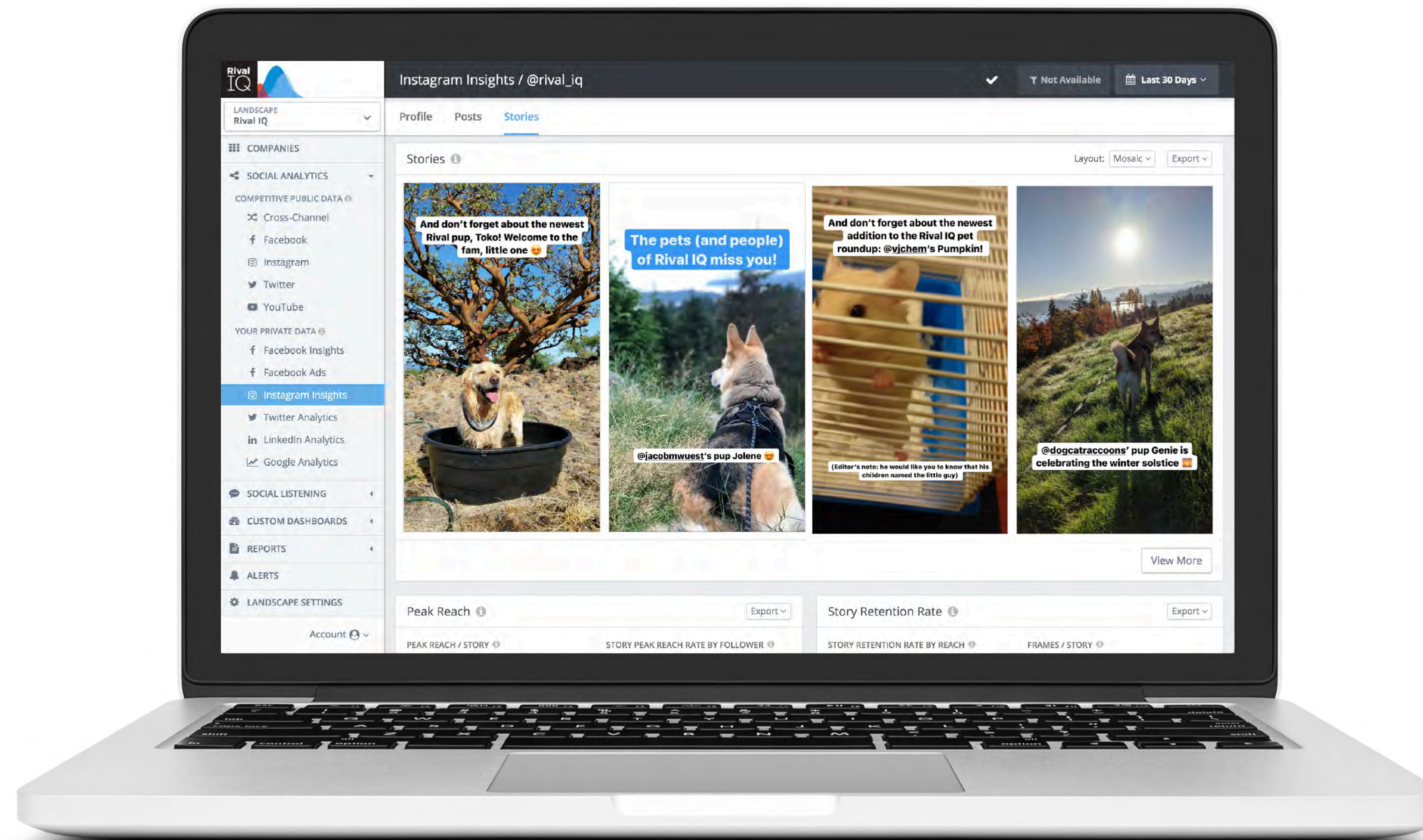
Where can I see my data in Instagram?

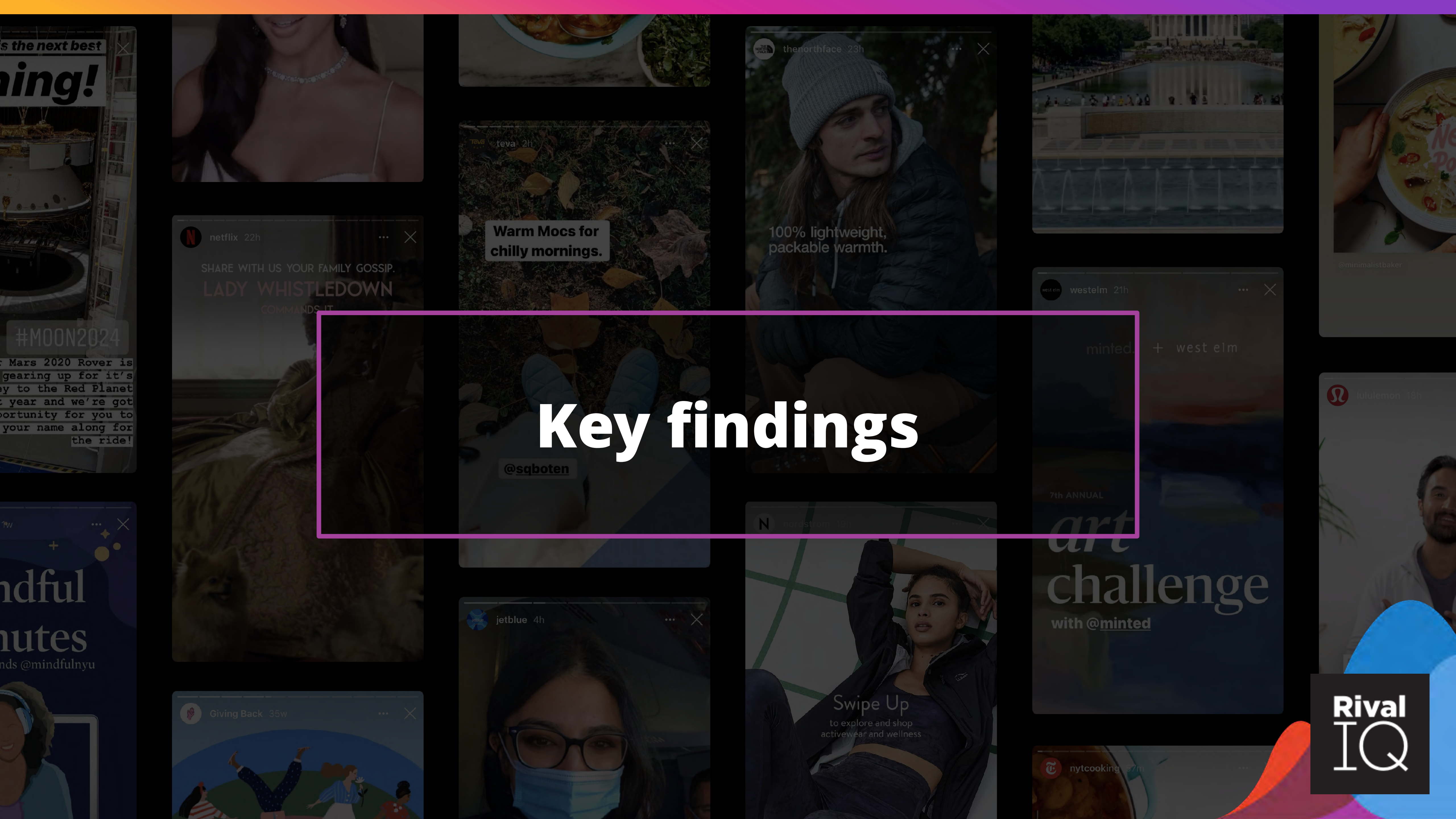
Looking in the Instagram app? Here's where to find your stats.



Using Rival IQ to supercharge your Stories

Track and measure your Instagram Stories performance right inside Rival IQ using our Instagram Insights Reports.





Key findings

Key Findings and Takeaways



Brands are posting more Stories than ever

Brands of all sizes increased their Story frequency this year, leading to more stellar content (and also more competition).



Retention Rates are flat

Retention rates on Stories increased just 1% this year. Brands saw gains in tap-back rates but losses in replies and reach, which kept retention rates from growing.



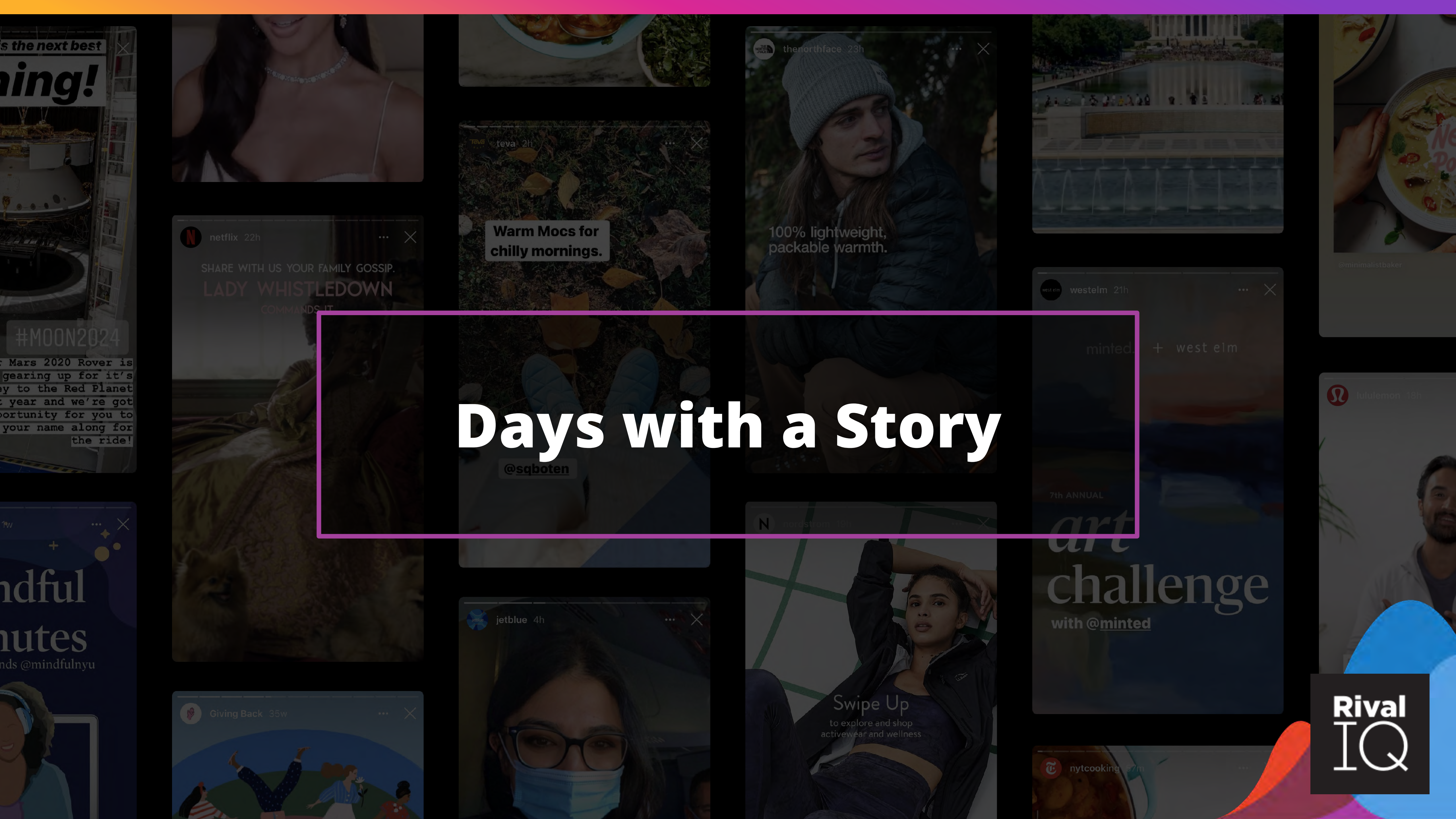
Reach Rate is down (again)

Your Stories are reaching a smaller percentage of your followers compared to last year. As more brands hop on the Instagram wagon, Stories are more saturated and less likely to be seen.



Posts reach more than Stories

Instagram posts continue to see a much higher reach rate. Hook viewers with posts and keep them engaged with Stories.



Days with a Story

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What is Days with a Story?

The number of days per month a handle published to their Story.

There are two main ways to measure Story activity levels:

- 1. How often do brands publish to Stories?
- 2. How many frames are typically published in a day?

Days with a Story answers the first of these questions.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓		✓	
✓		✓		✓		✓
	✓		✓			

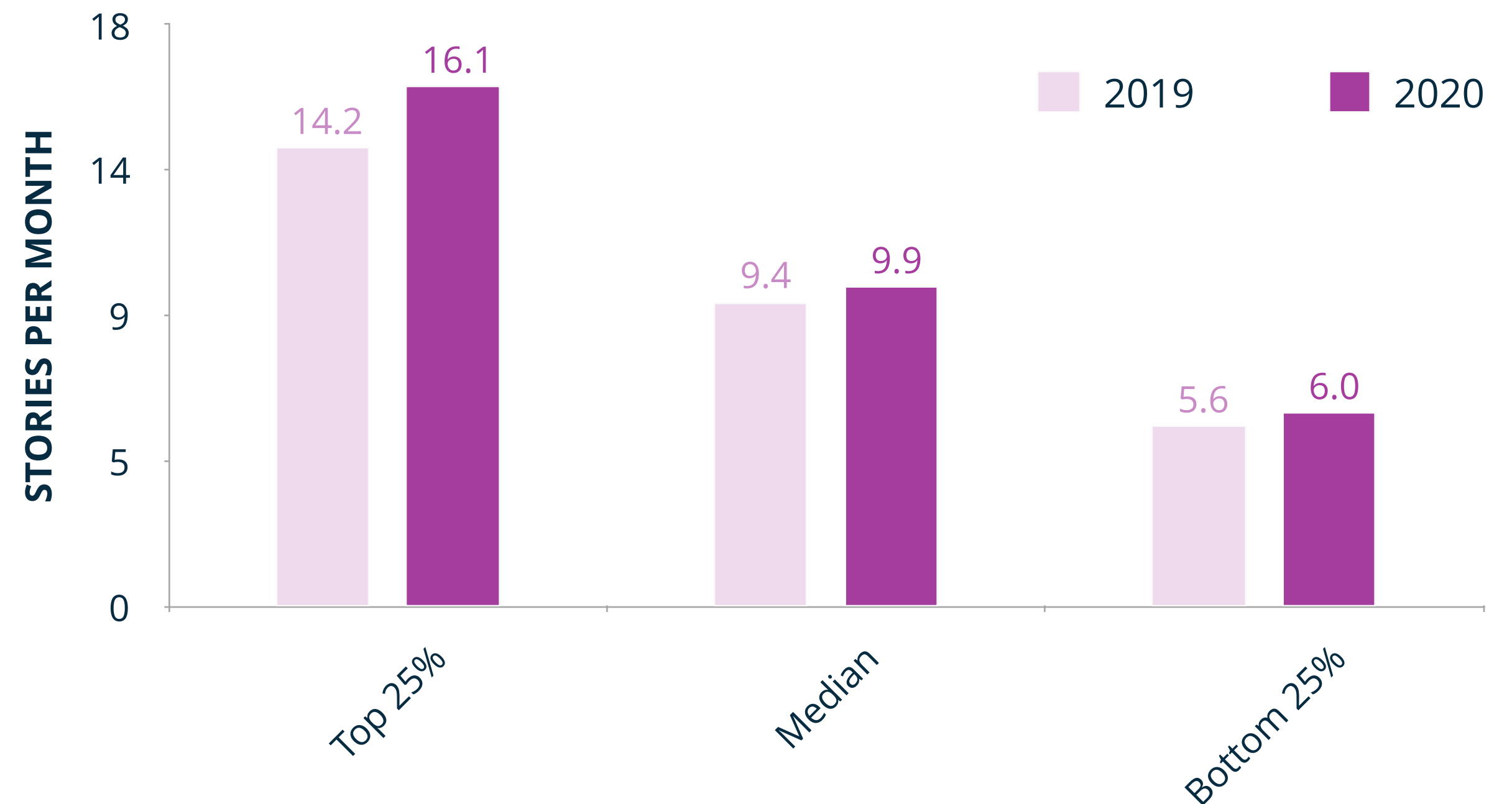
DAYS WITH A STORY

Days with a Story

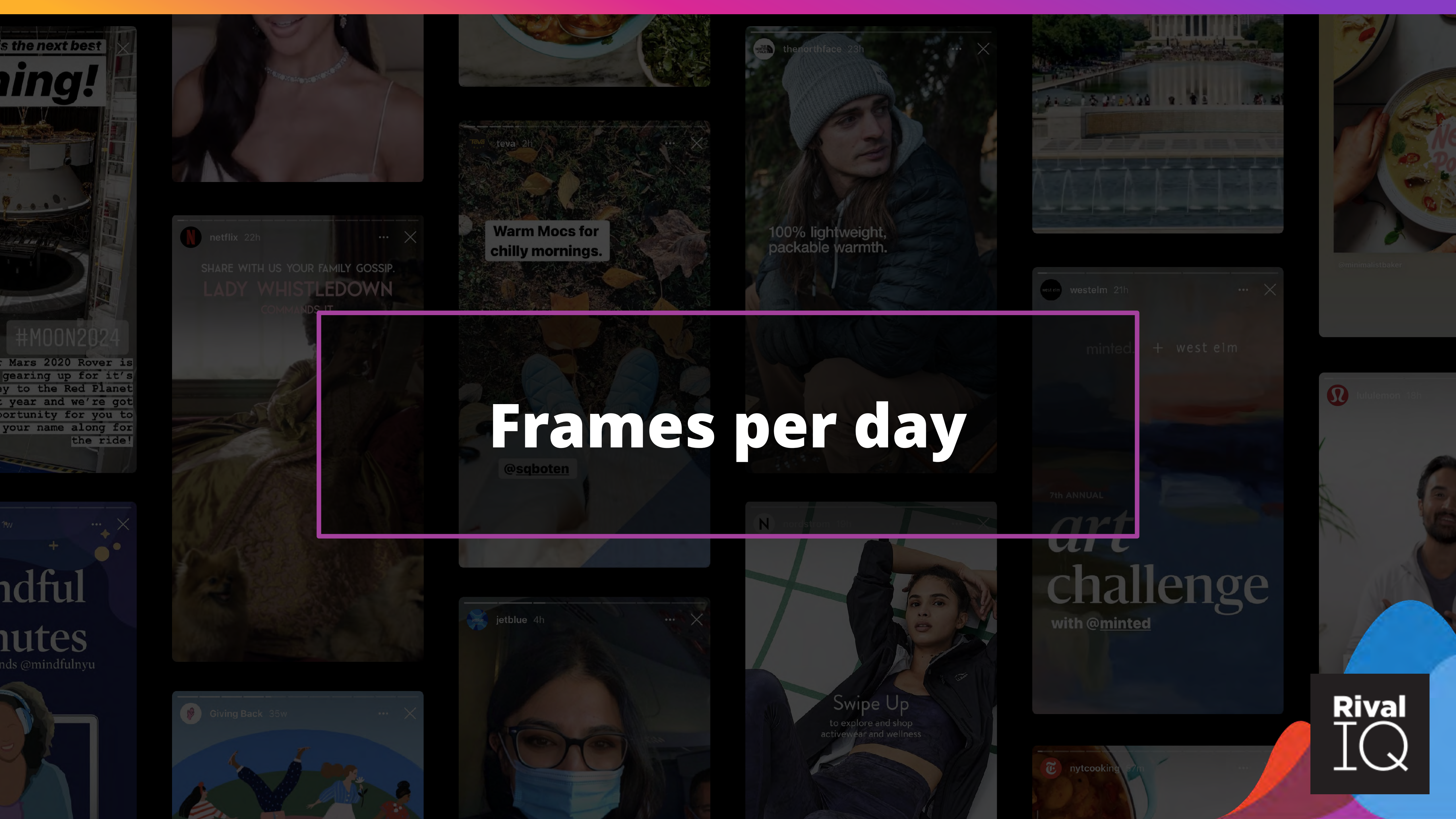
The number of days per month brands published Stories.

Story frequency is up across the board, with the average brand posting an Instagram Story 10 times per month.

- The top 25% most active brands publish Stories at least 16 times a month—roughly every other day.
- The least active 25% of brands publish just over 1 Story per week.



Story posting per month hasn't changed much over the last few years: everyone is posting a little more frequently than they used to. This consistency means the majority of brands still post Stories just over twice per week. Where does your brand fall?



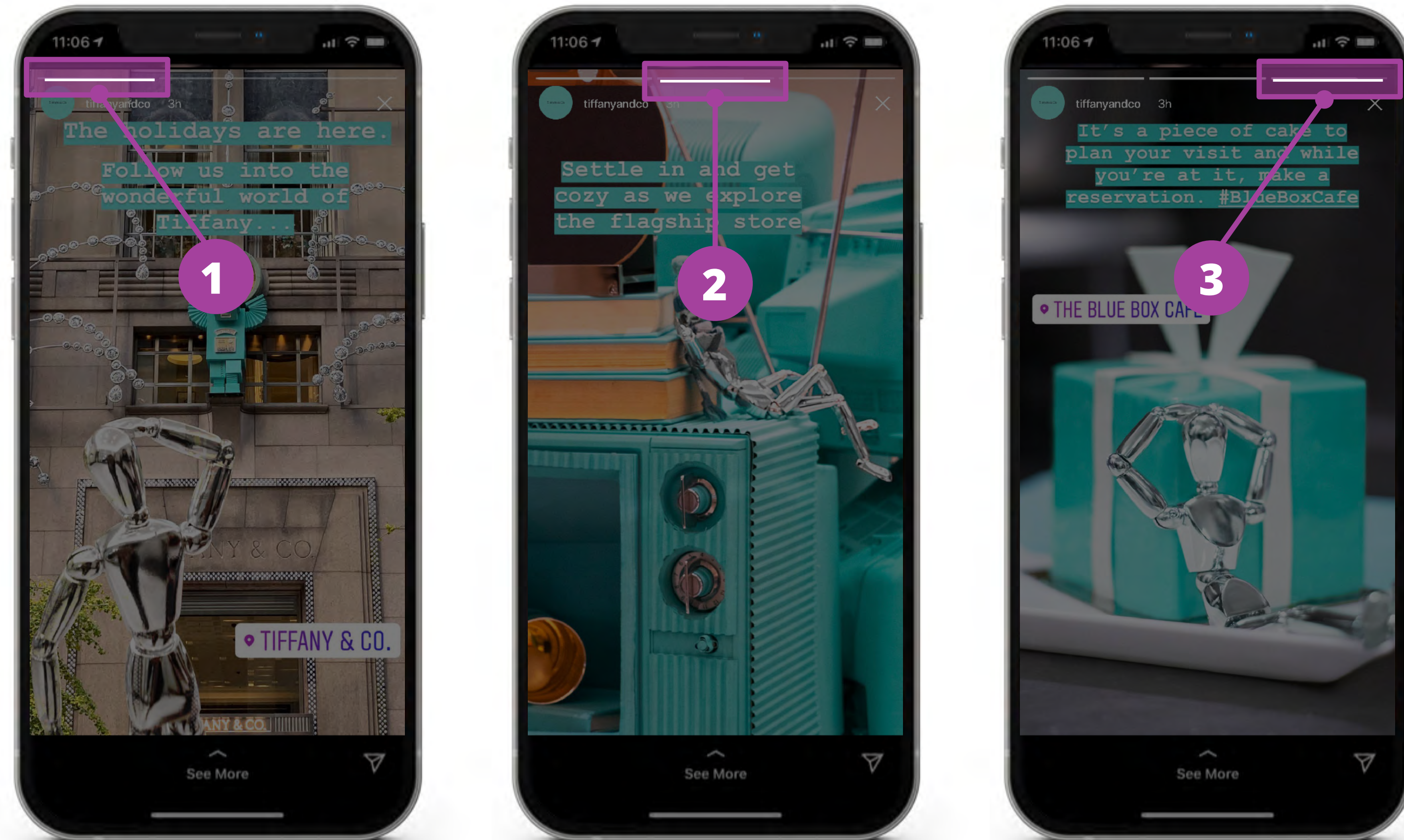
Frames per day



What is frames per day?

The number of individual photos or video frames posted to Stories within a 24-hour period.

In this example,
Tiffany & Co. posted
three frames per day.

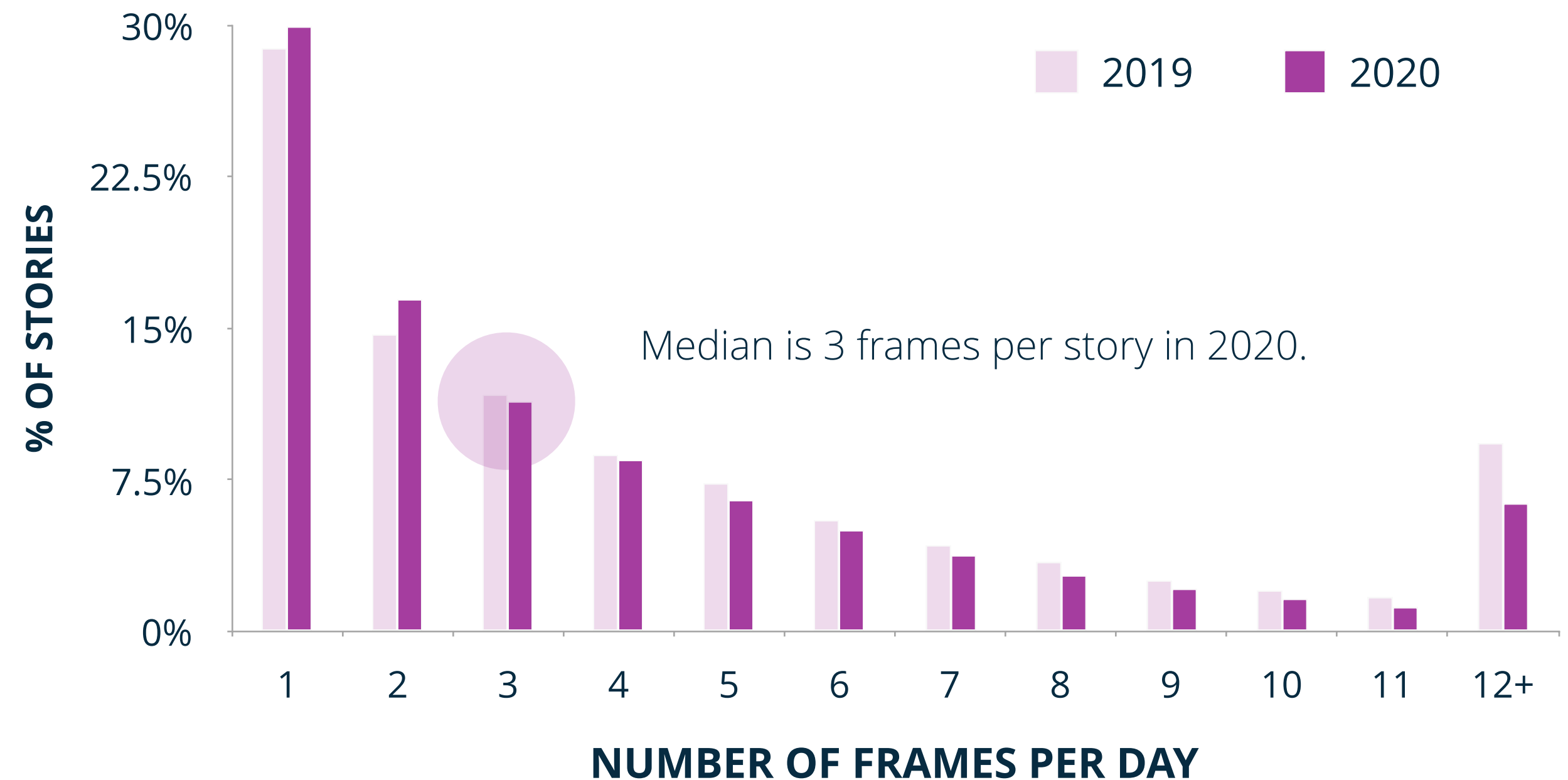


Frames per day

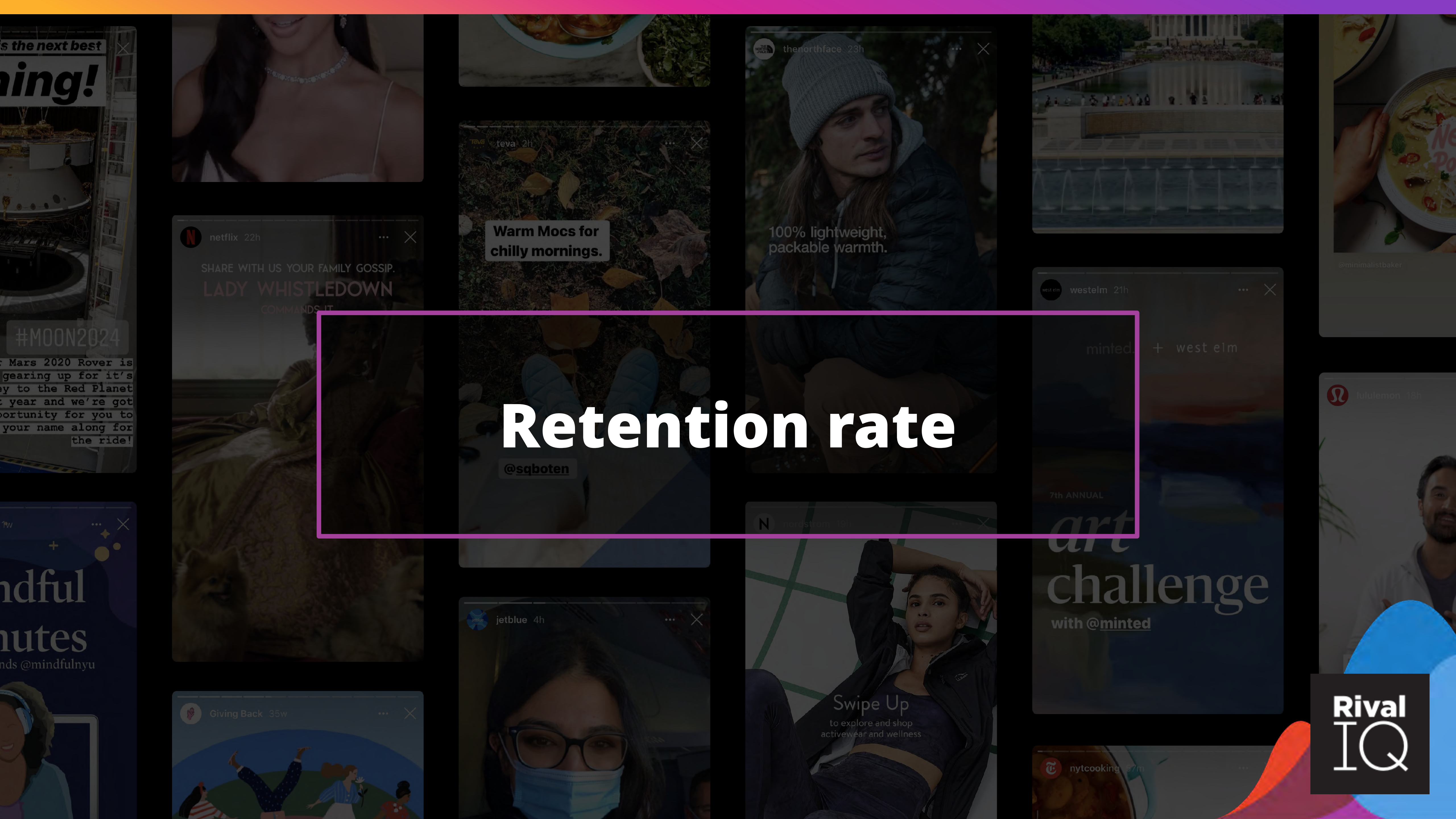
The number of individual photos or video frames posted to Stories within a 24-hour period.

Shorter Stories are more common than long ones.

- About 30% of Story activity comprises days with only one frame.
- 1-3 frames account for about 60% of brand activity.
- Almost 20% of Stories have 7 or more frames.



More brands are using Stories in their marketing, but they're not posting higher frame counts. Smaller Stories with minimal frames continue to increase in frequency. Finding your own brand's average number of frames per day can help fine-tune your frame frequency strategy.



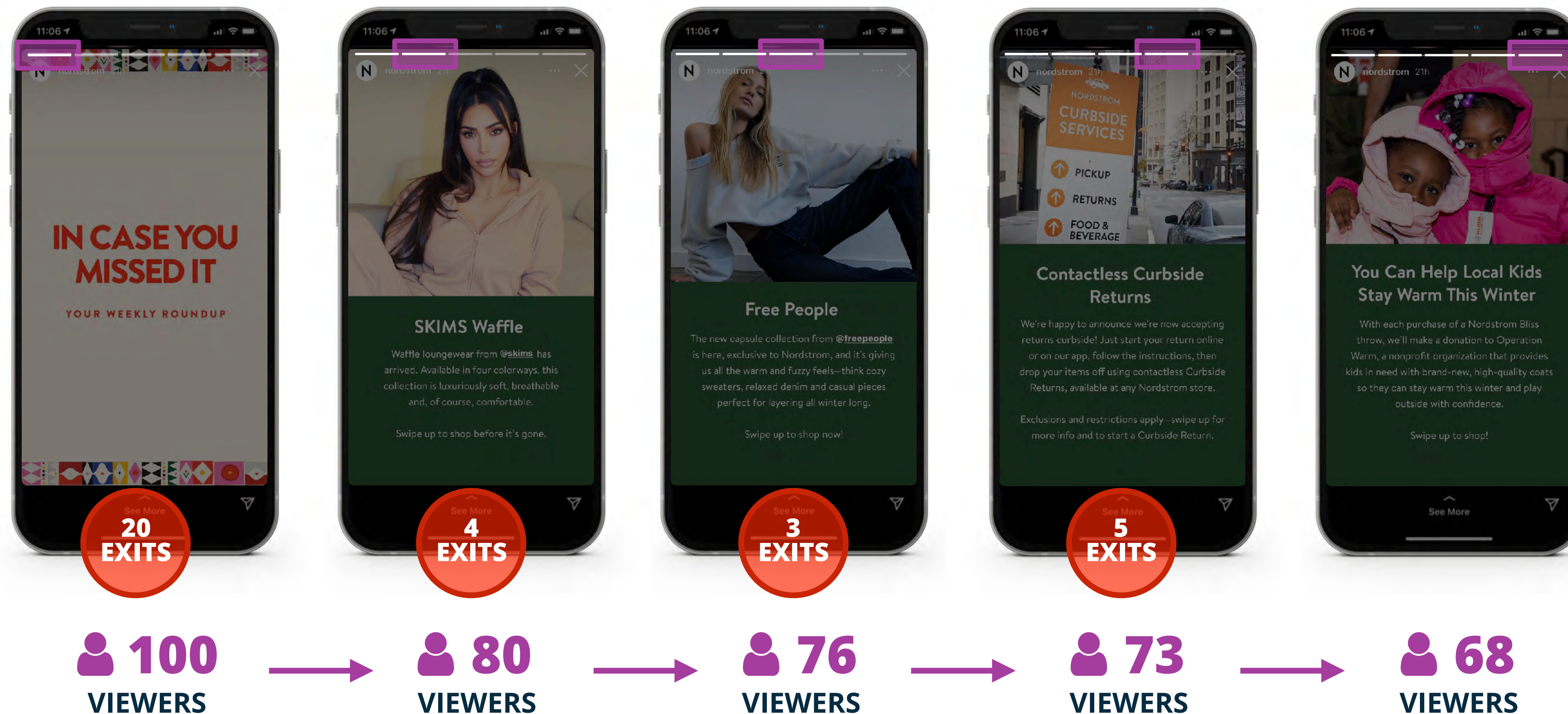
Retention rate



What is retention rate?

The percentage of Story Viewers on any given day that see all posted Story frames.

This is what **68% retention** looks like.

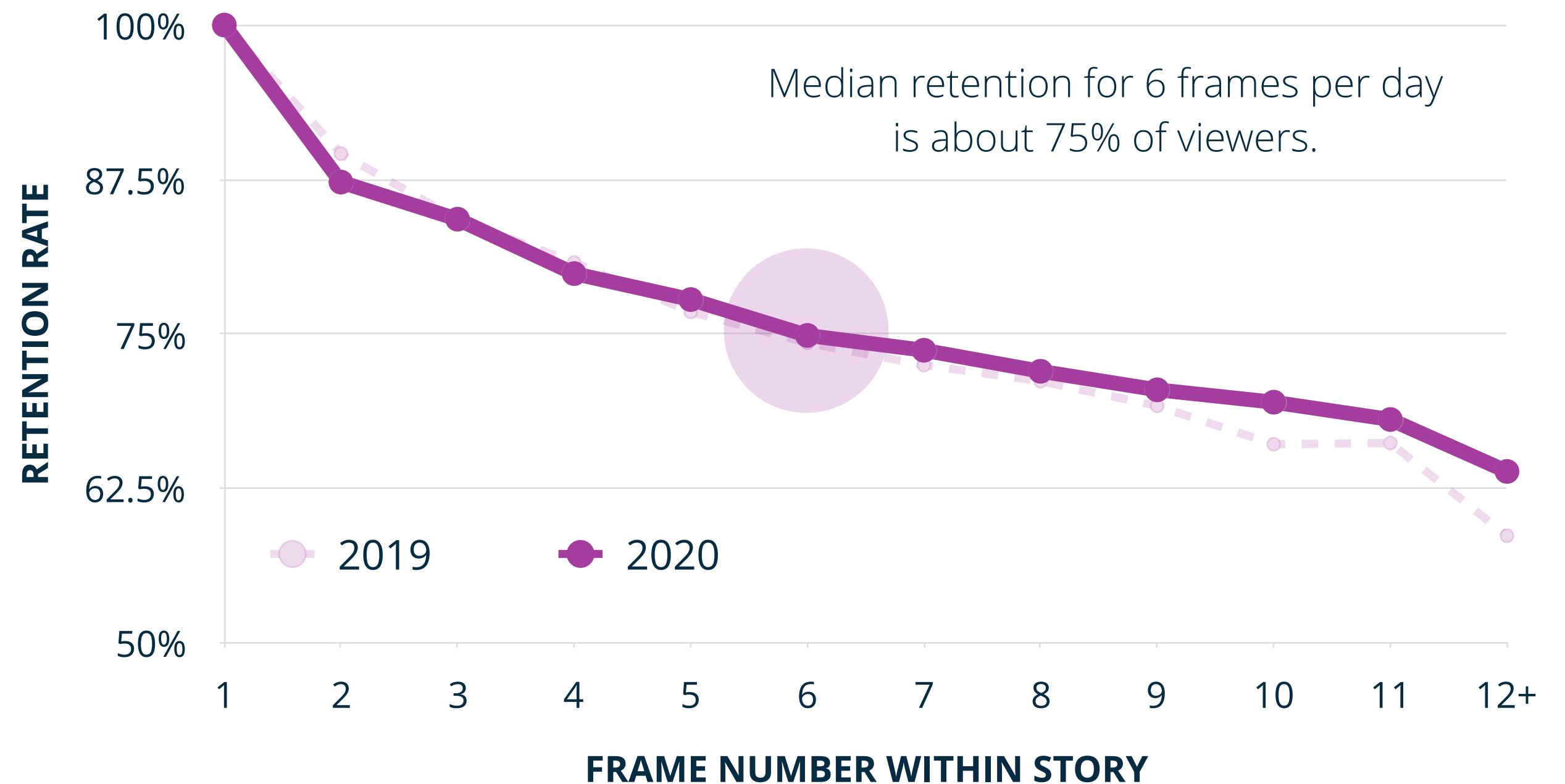


Retention rate

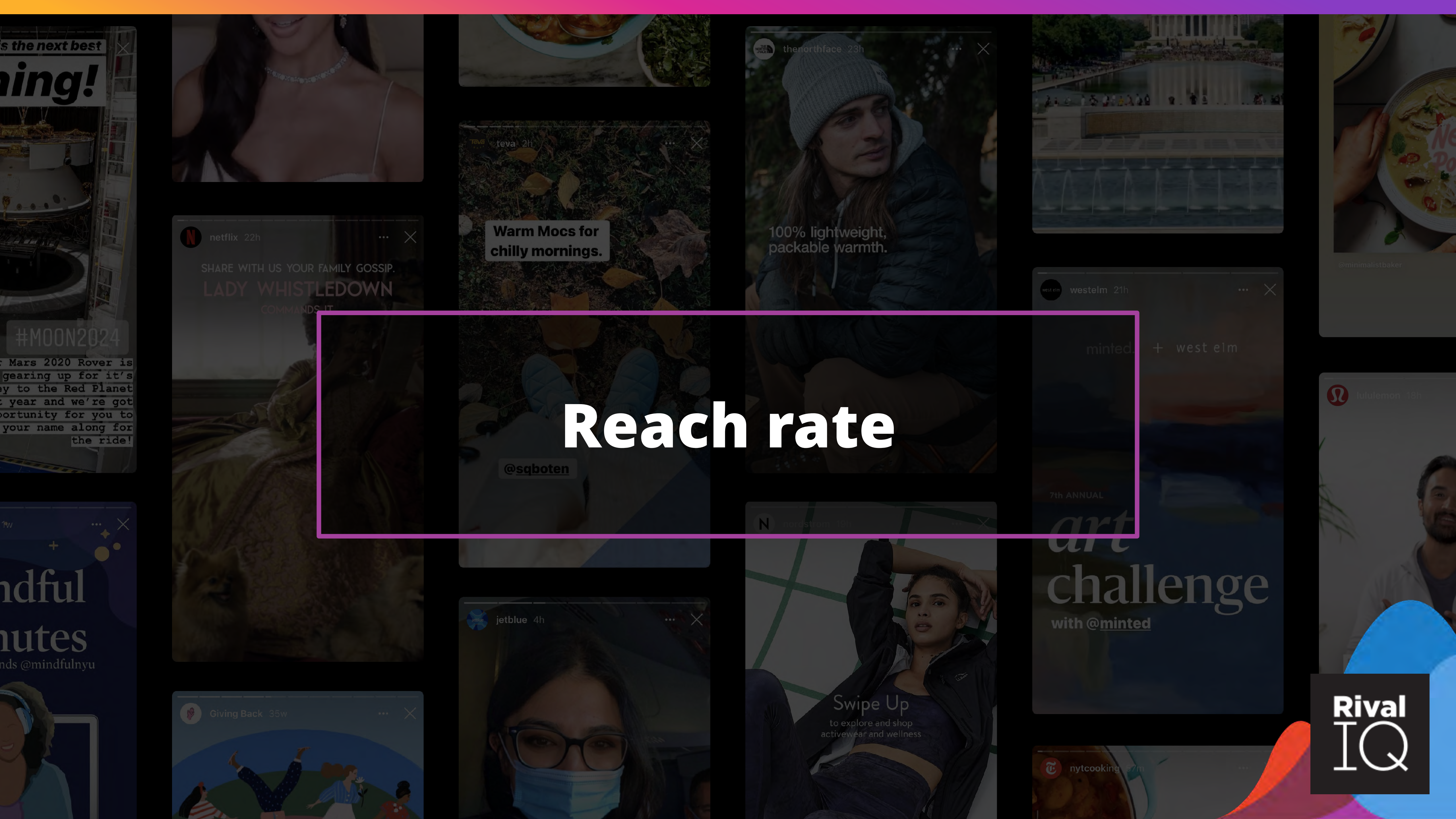
The percentage of Story viewers on any given day that see all Story frames.

The more frames you publish, the lower your retention rate.

- The average retention rate was pretty flat this year, with just a 1% increase over 2019.
- As always, the biggest dip is from 1 to 2 frames a day as users swipe past the Story.
- After that big initial drop-off, the retention decline slows down and stays above 75% through 6 Stories per day.



In our experience, retention is one of the best measures of Instagram Story success. Make sure the first frame hooks viewers, and then from there, the sky's the limit.

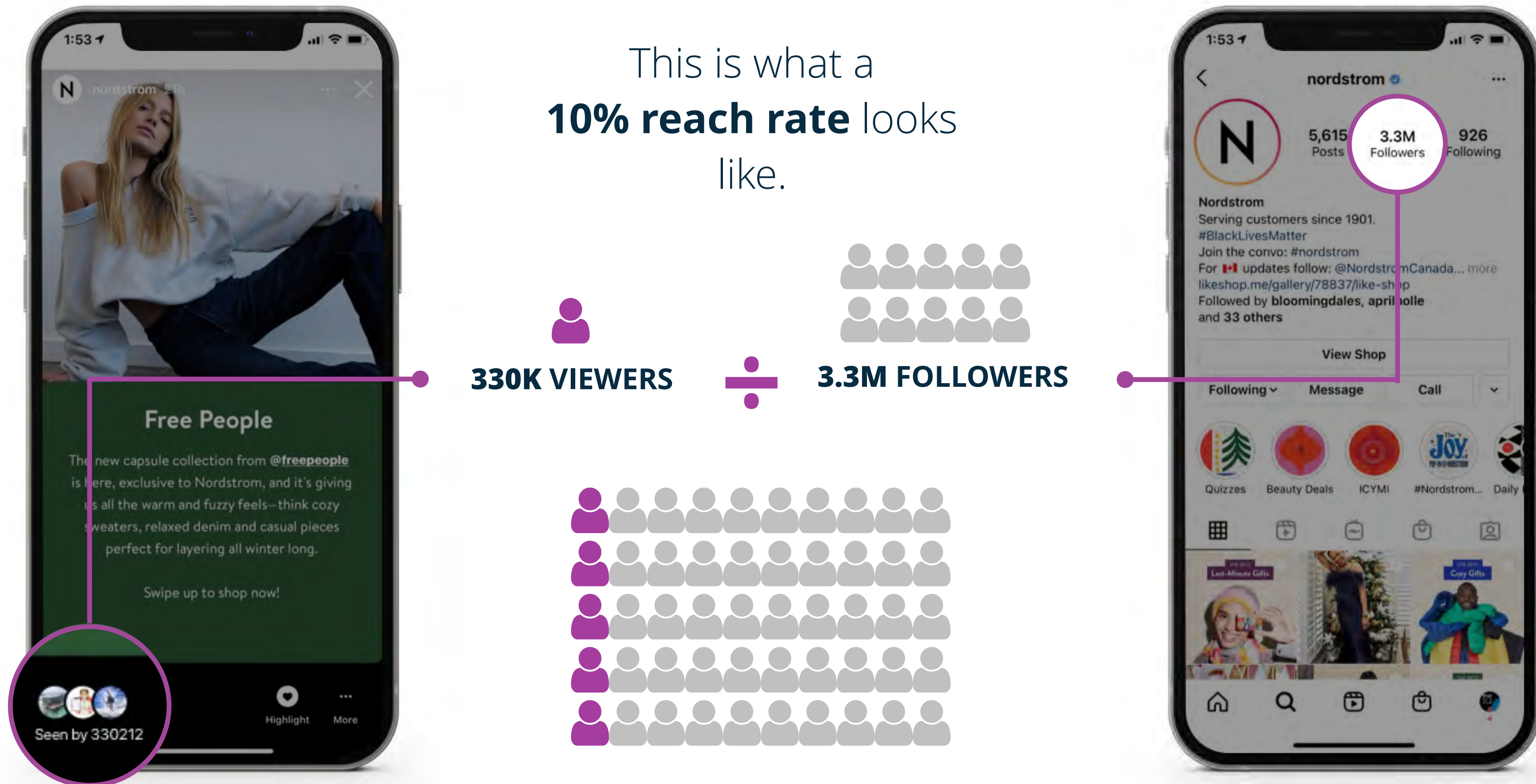


Reach rate

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What is Story reach rate?

Story Viewers on any given day divided by follower count, expressed as a percentage.

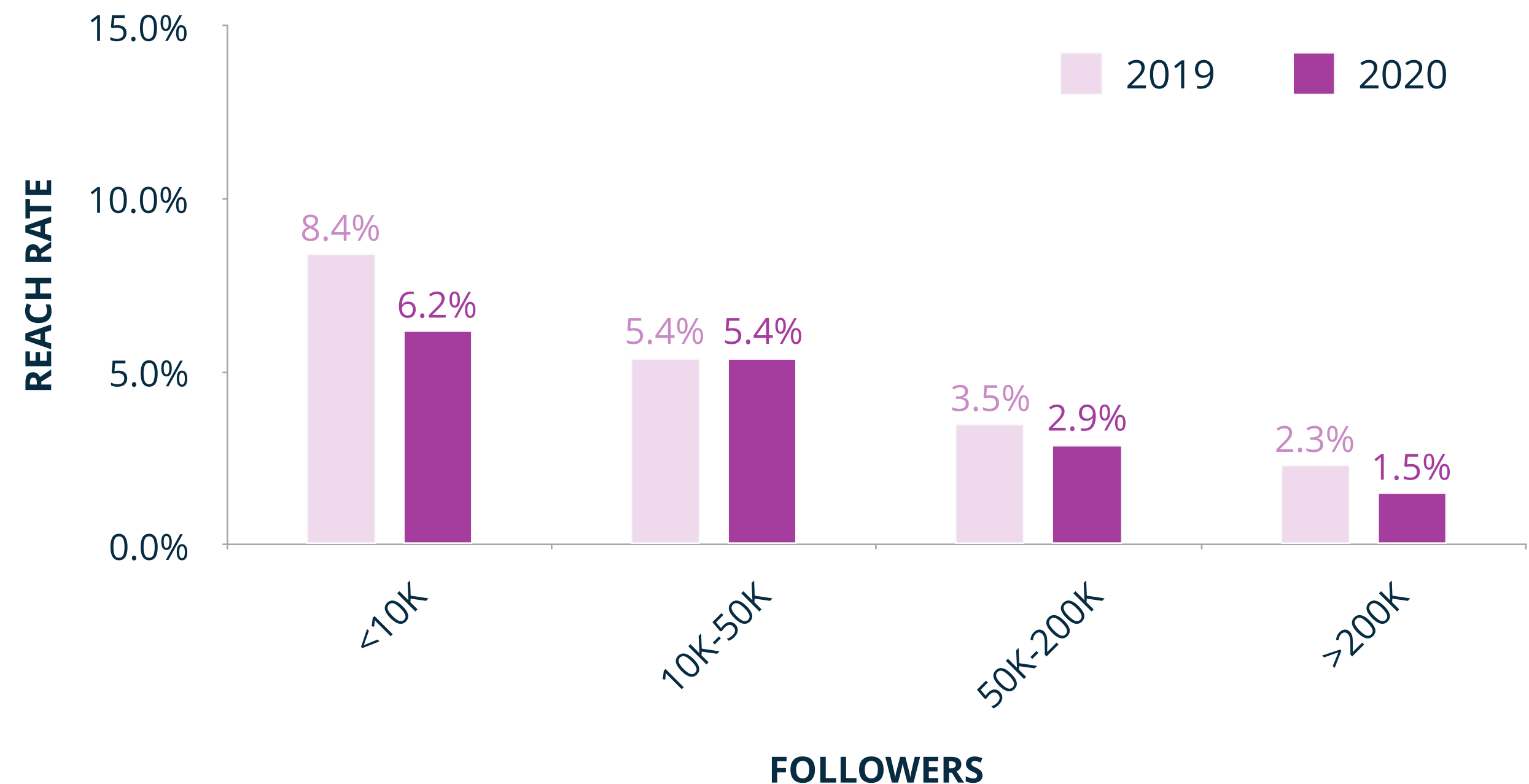


Story reach rate

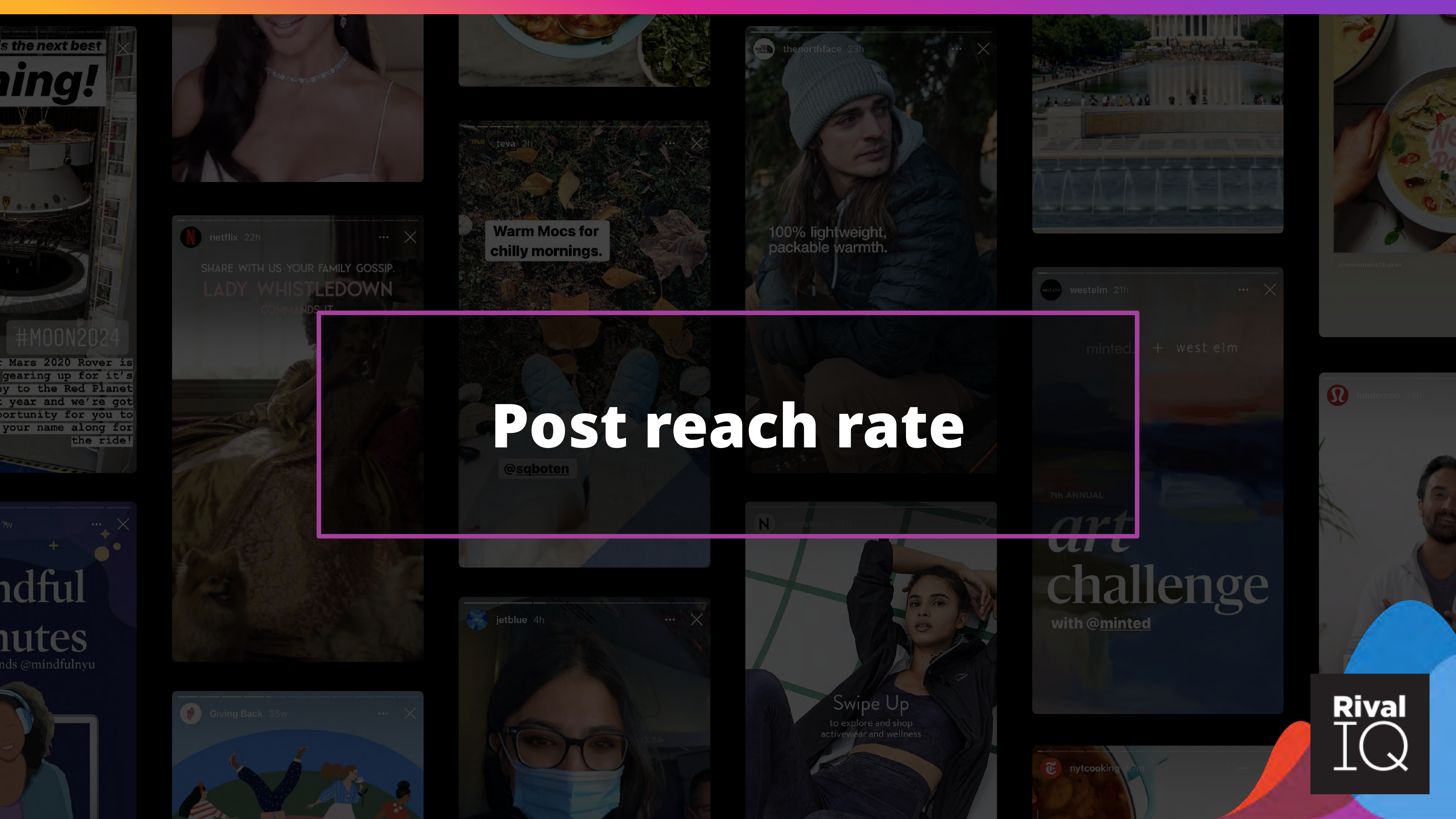
Story Viewers on any given day divided by follower count, expressed as a percentage.

Brands saw reach rates decline in 2020 no matter their follower count.

- Mid-size brands with between 10K-50K followers were able to hang onto a consistent reach rate from 2019.
- Brands with over 200k followers lost the most this year with a 34% drop in reach rate.



As we saw earlier in this report, brands are posting more and more Stories, so the competition for views has never been higher. Strong first frames are a marketer's best tool for encouraging retention and notice from the Instagram algorithm.

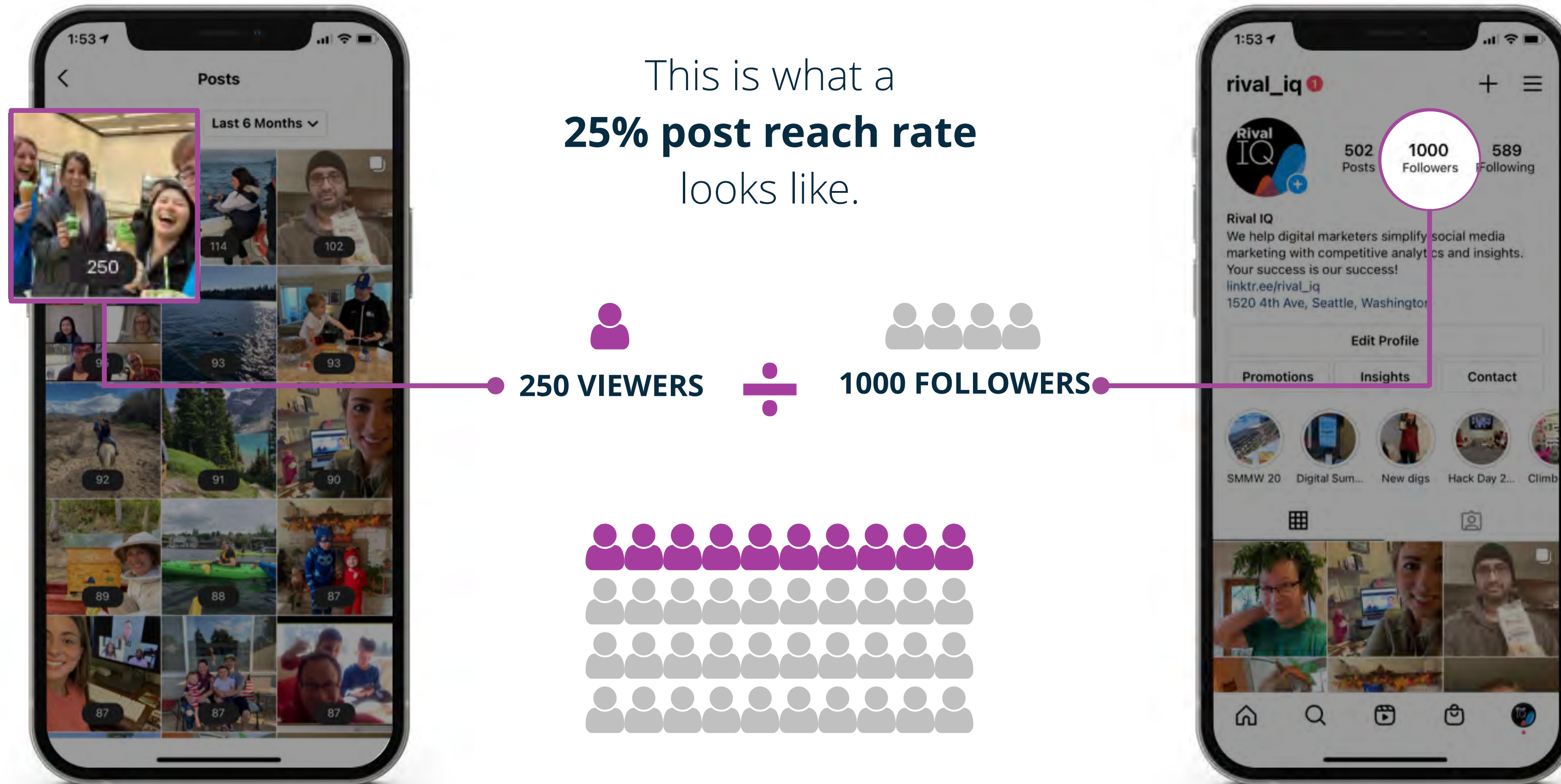


Post reach rate

What is post reach rate?

The reach of a post expressed as a percentage of followers.

This is what a
25% post reach rate
looks like.

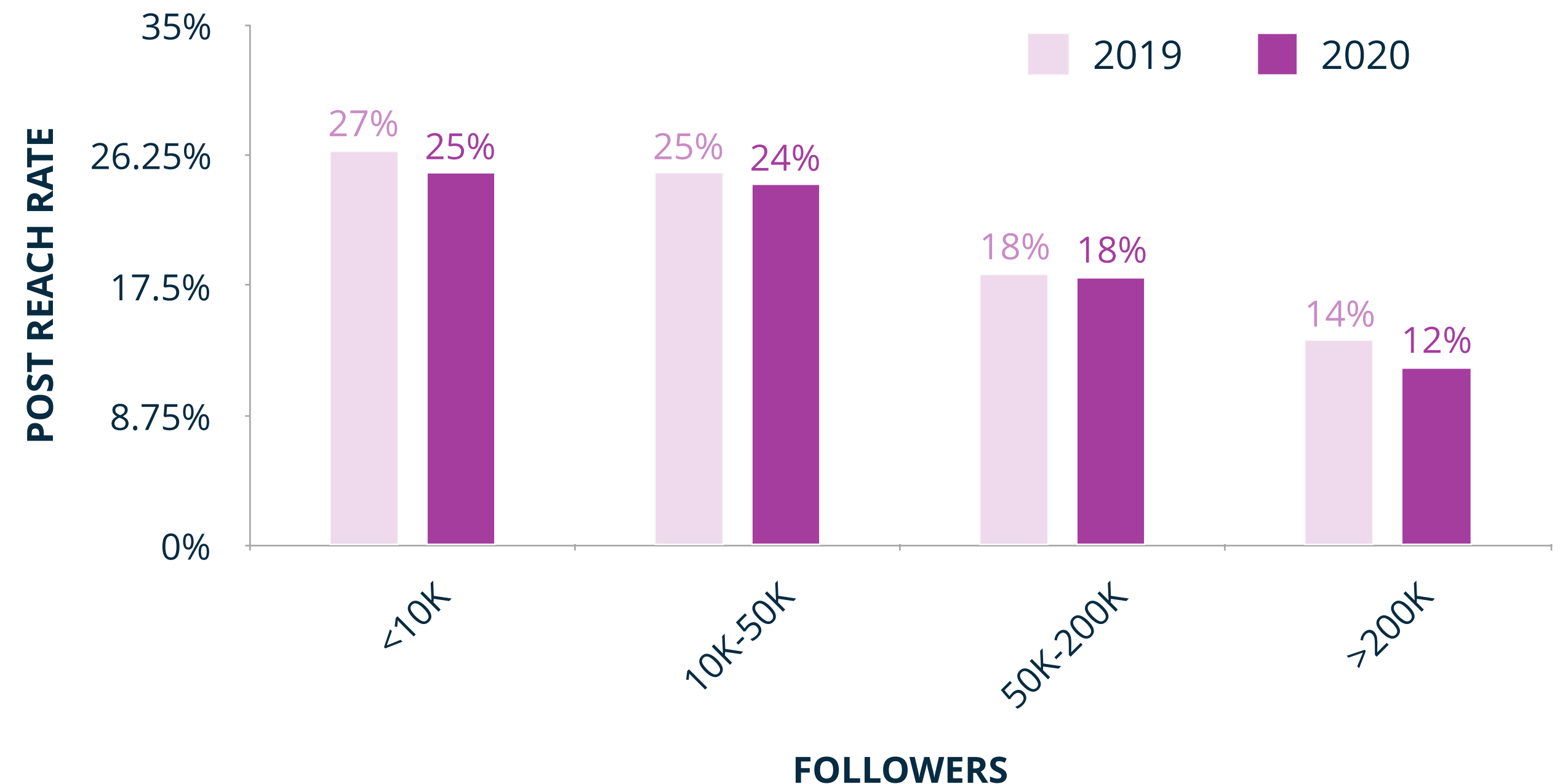


Post reach rate

The reach of a post expressed as a percentage of followers.

Brands saw their post reach rates decline or stay the same in 2020.

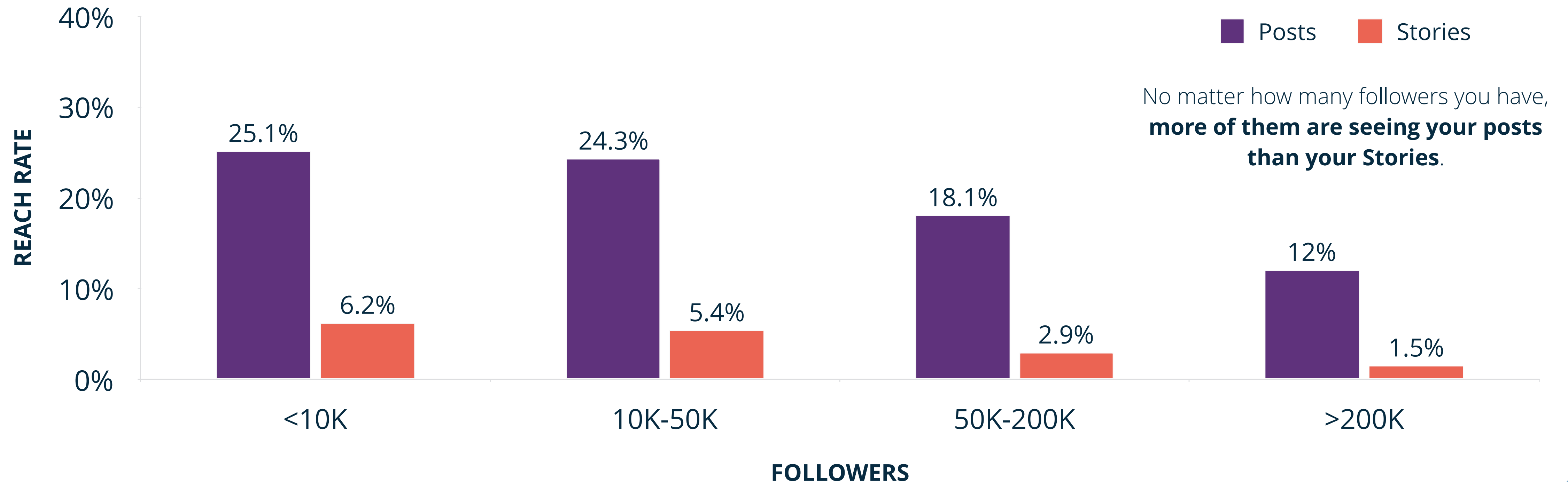
- Handles with between 50K-200K followers managed to hold onto their 18% post reach rate from last year.
- As usual, the larger your follower count, the smaller your reach rate.



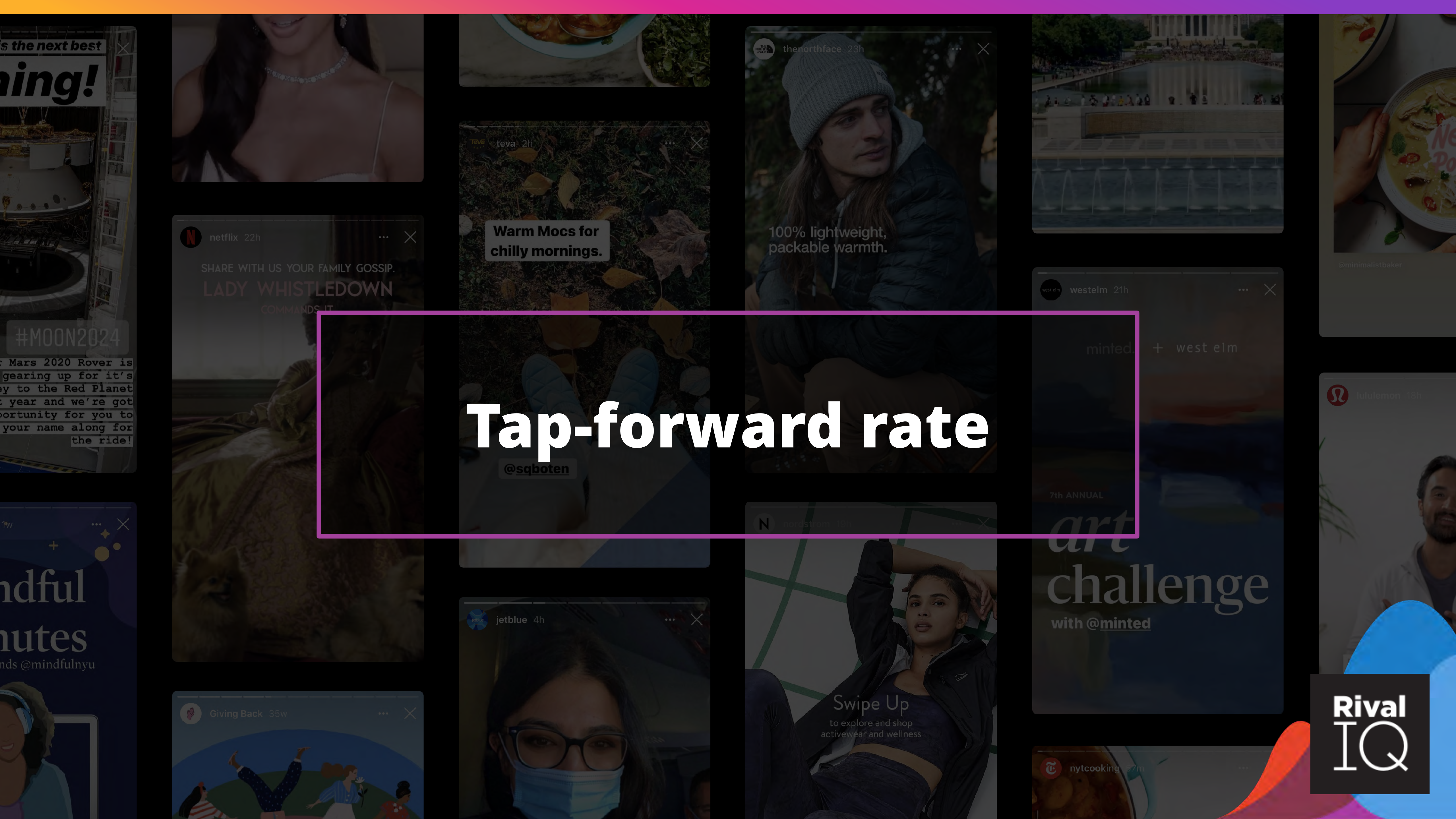
Post reach rate has declined every year we've studied it as Instagram adds more ways for users to consume content (like IGTV and Reels) and therefore further divides attention. The good news is that the declines weren't very dramatic.

Reach rate: Stories vs. posts

The reach of a post expressed as a percentage of followers.



Stories continue to have a lower reach rate than posts for brands, but does that mean your brand should stop creating Stories? The short answer is no: Story impressions can be a great tool for engaging with followers and developing relationships over time.

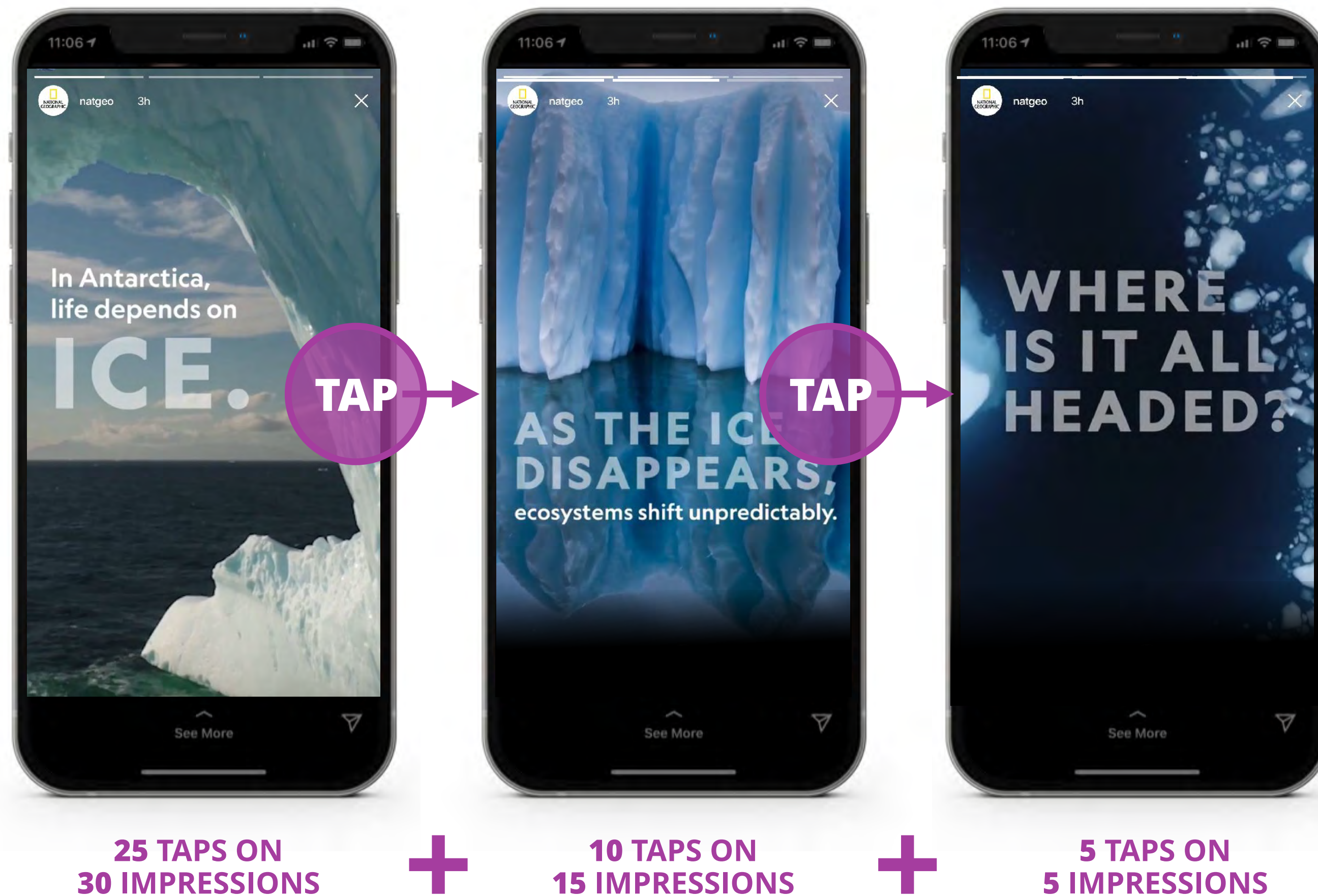


Tap-forward rate

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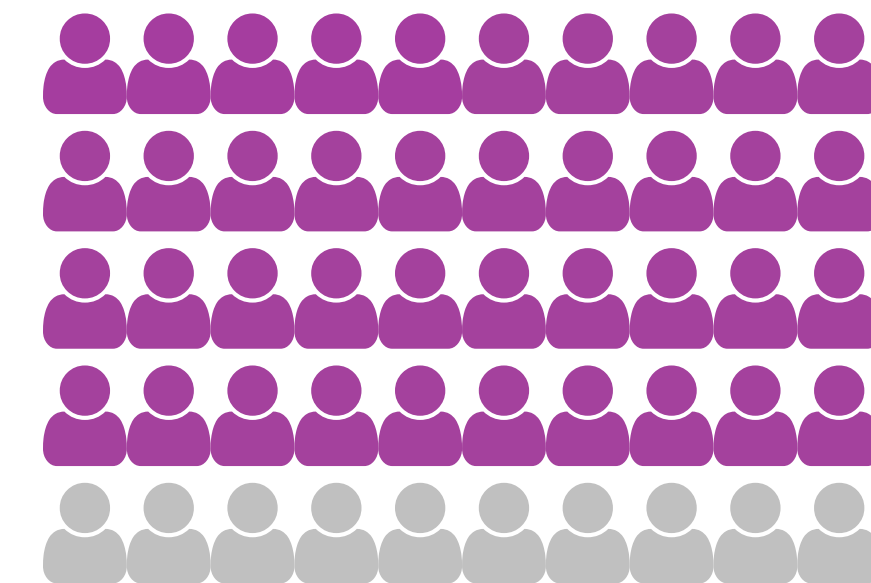
What is tap-forward rate?

The percentage of Story impressions that have a tap forward.



This is what a **80% tap-forward rate** looks like.

40 TAPS ÷ 50 IMPRESSIONS

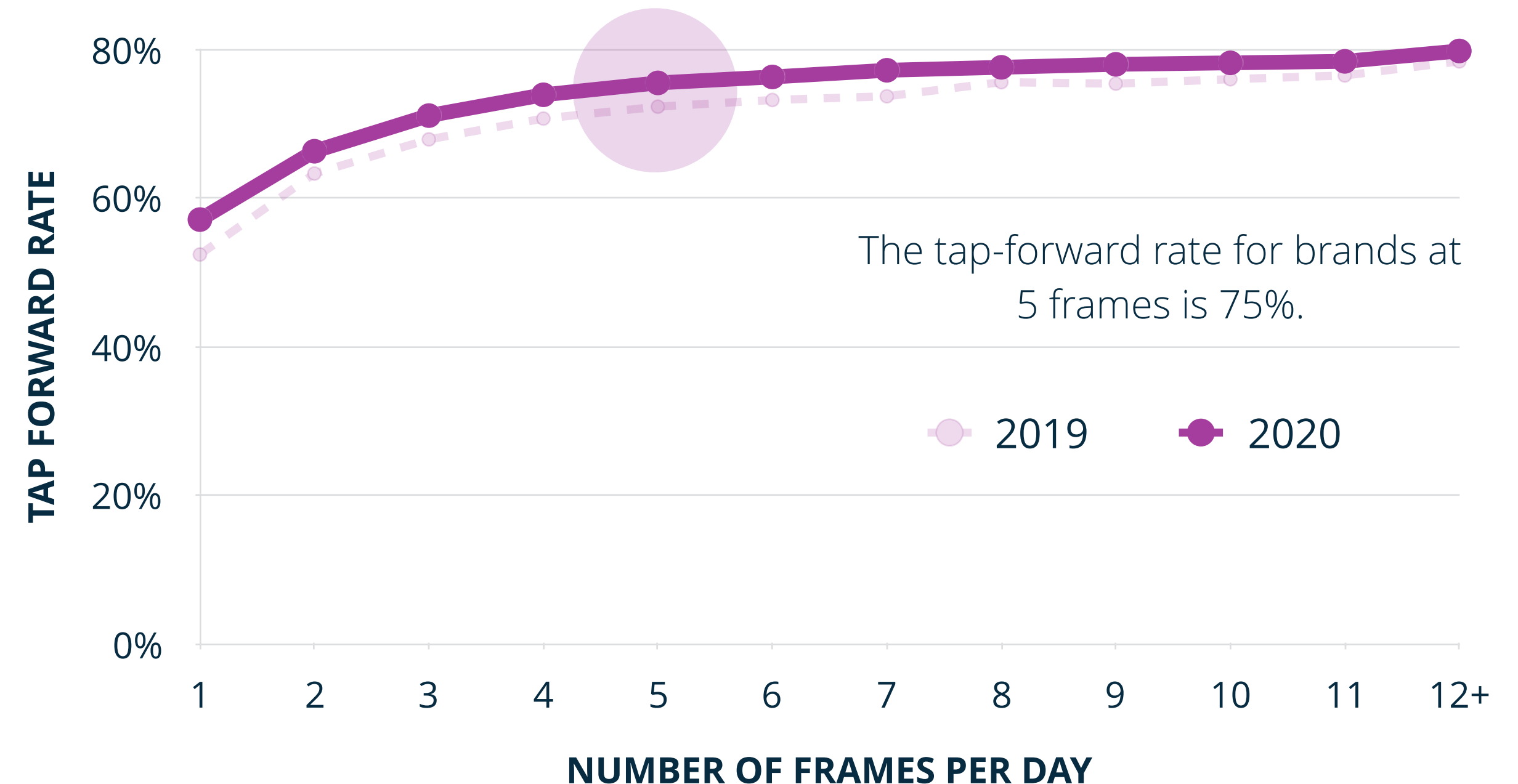


Tap-forward rate

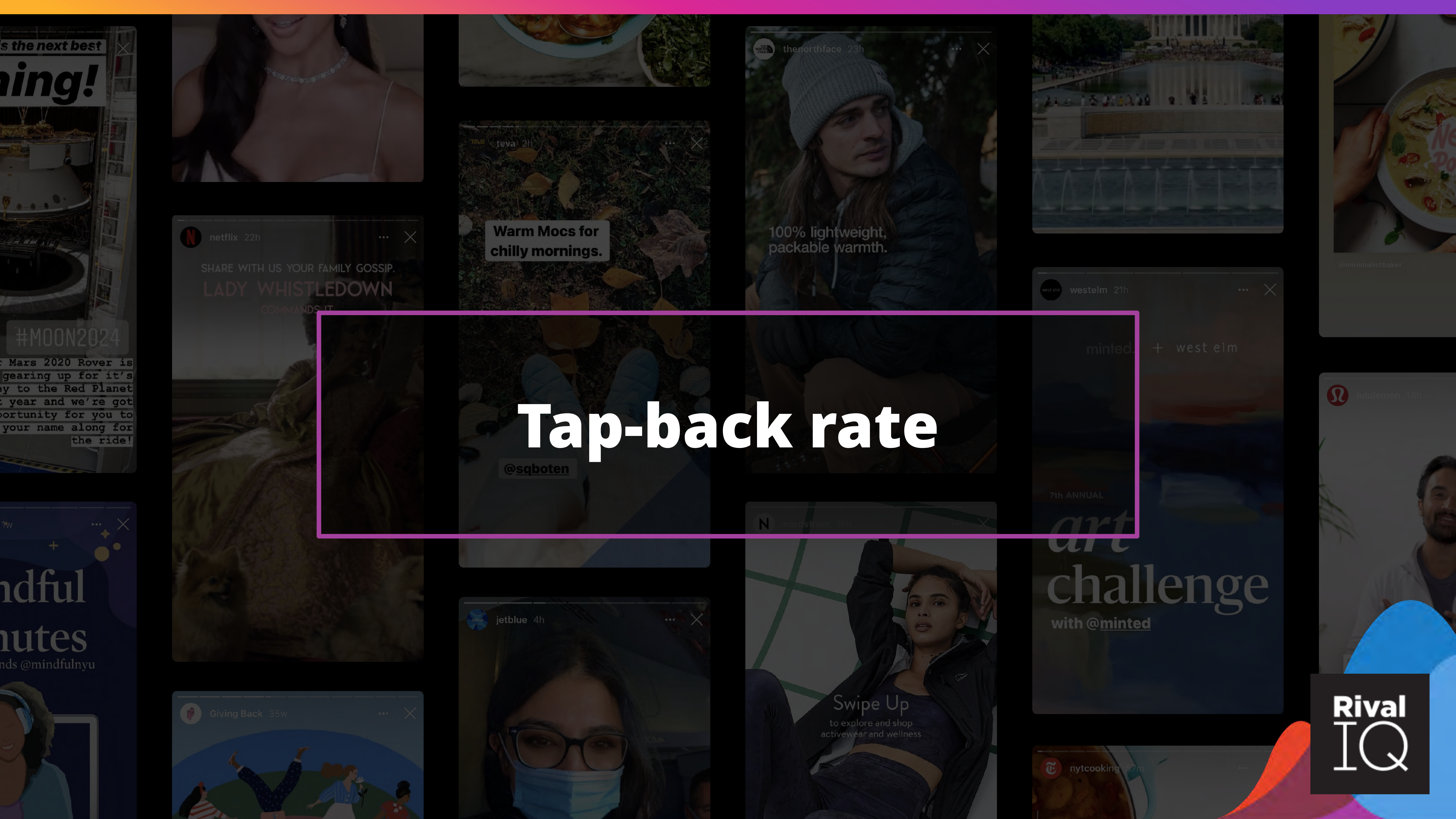
The percentage of Story impressions that have a tap forward.

The more frames in your Story, the more likely followers will tap forward.

- The median tap-forward rate at 5 frames per day is about 75%.
- Tap-forward rates have stayed pretty much the same compared to last year's data.
- If your Story contains more than 12 frames, almost 80% of your viewers are tapping forward to advance to the next frame.



Tapping forward isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it does indicate that the viewer has either seen enough of the content or wasn't interested in the first place. Keep your frames engaging and experiment with video to maintain your viewers throughout the entire Story.

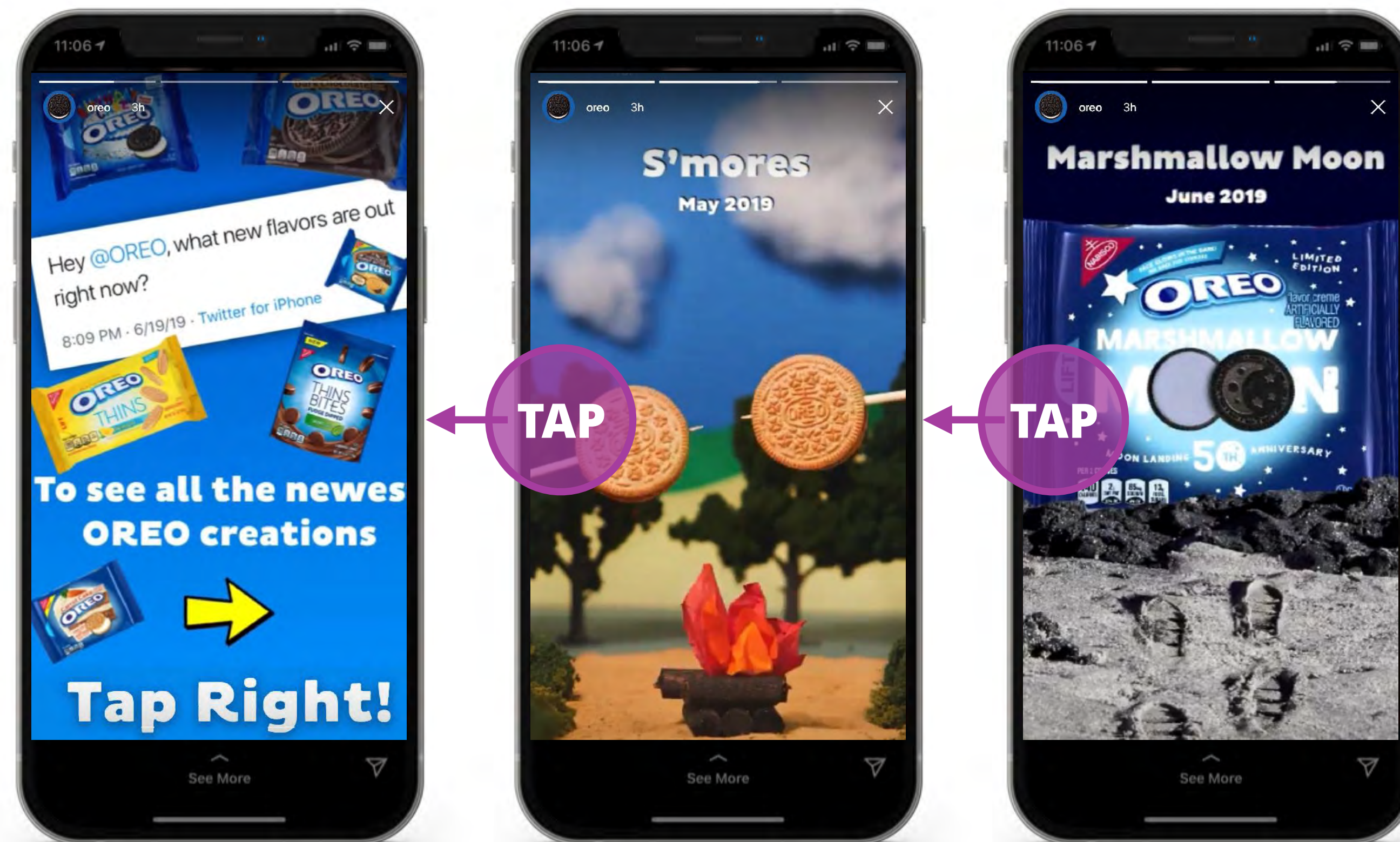


Tap-back rate

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What is tap-back rate?

The percentage of Story impressions with a tap backward.



0 TAPS ON
30 IMPRESSIONS



3 TAPS ON
15 IMPRESSIONS



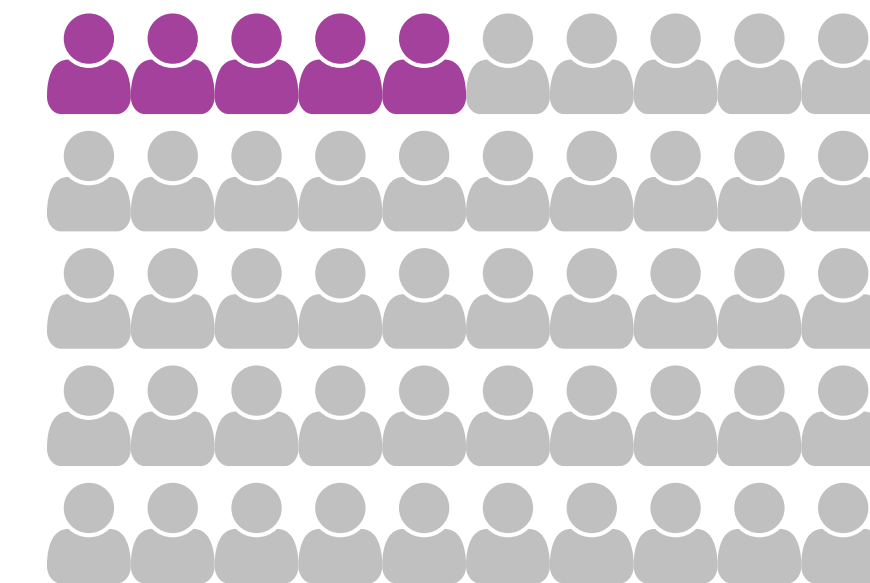
2 TAPS ON
5 IMPRESSIONS

This is what a
10% tap-back rate looks like.

5 TAPS



50 IMPRESSIONS

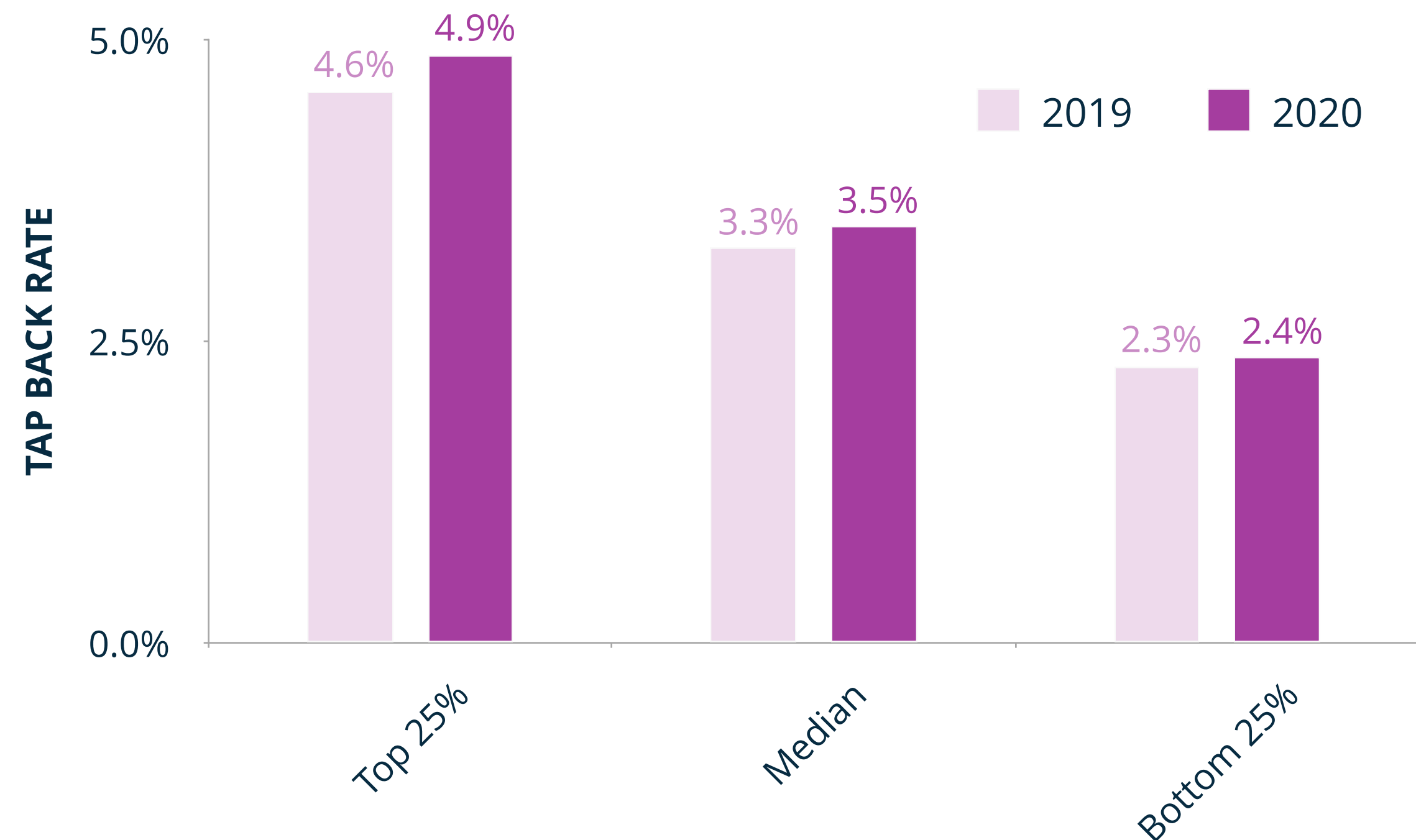


Tap-back rate

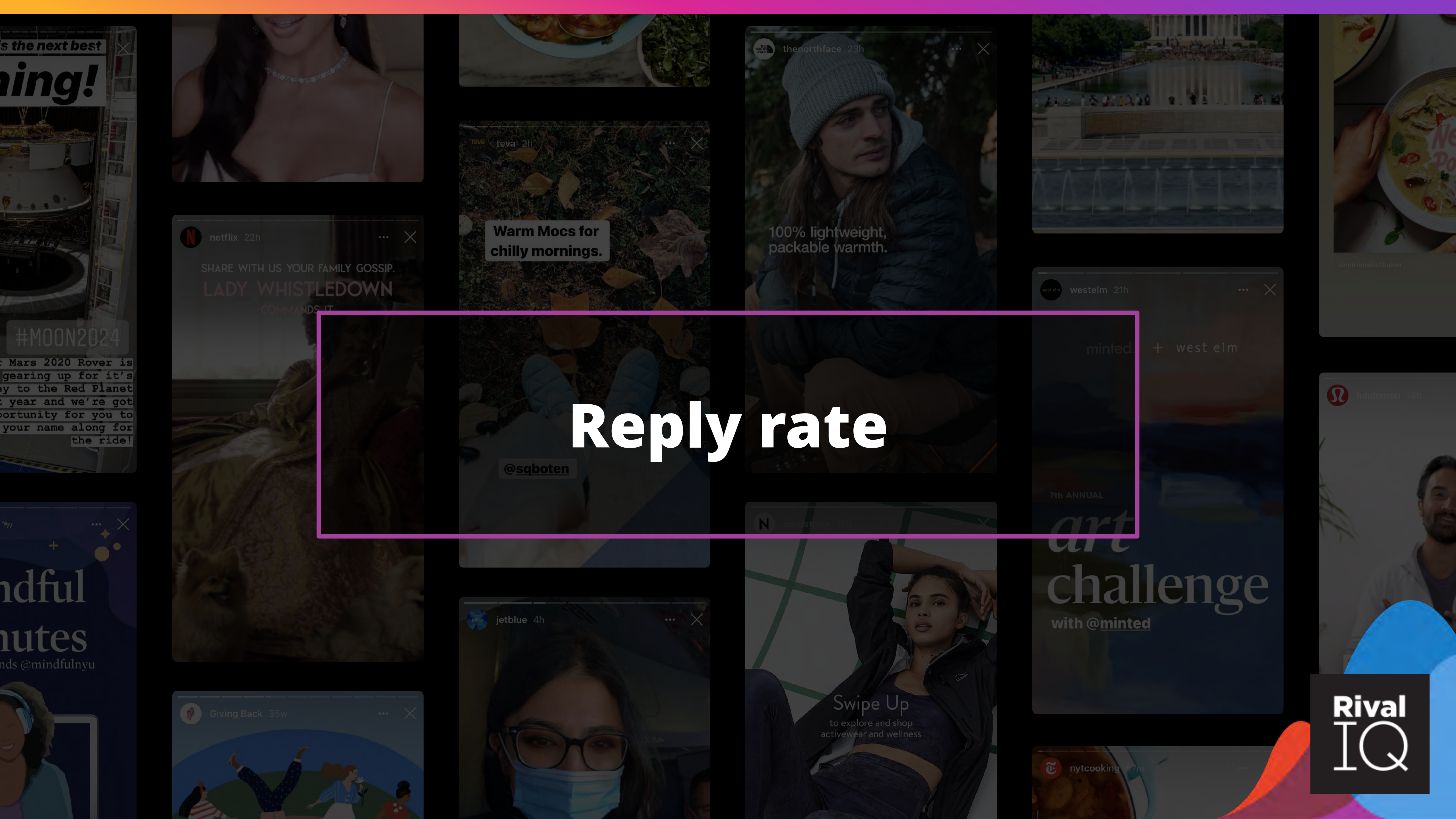
The percentage of Story impressions with a tap backward.

The tap-back rate is only slightly higher in 2020 across the board.

- The median tap-back rate is 3.5%, but the top 25% of brands see tap-back rates closer to 5%.
- Taps back are a great indication of content that your followers want to consume more of.



Tap-backs mean a viewer was eager to reengage with your content, which is always a good thing. Tap-backs have increased slightly as brands grow savvier about posting engaging frames that merit a second look.

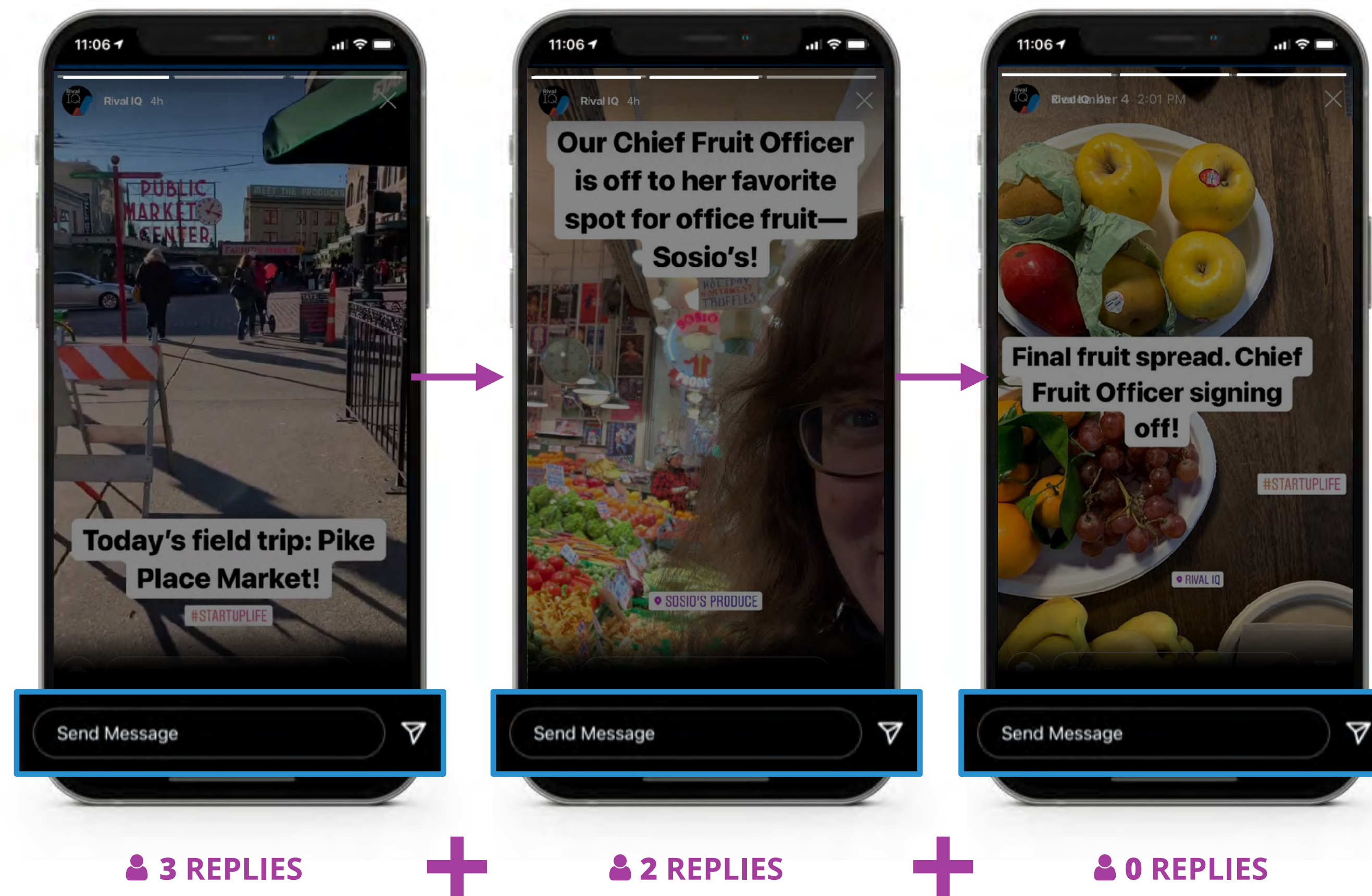


Reply rate

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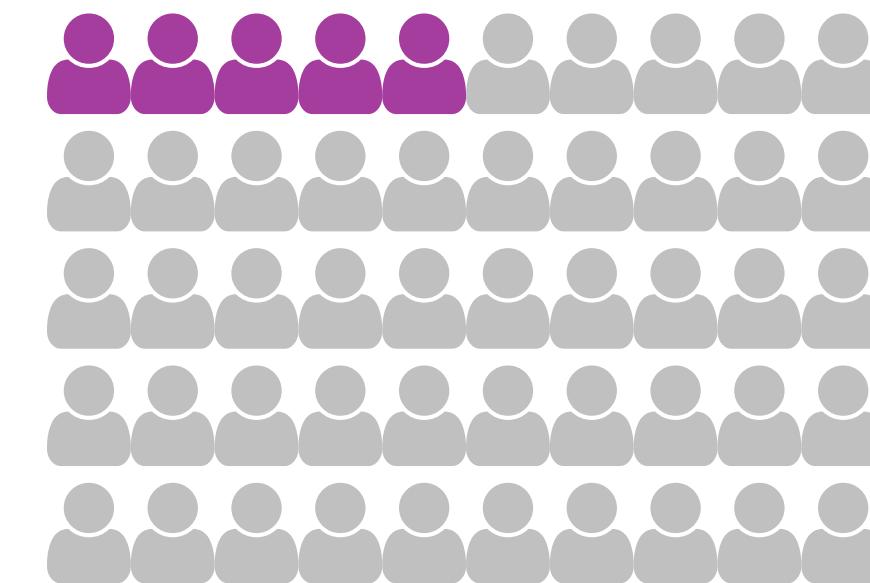
What is reply rate?

The percentage of Story Viewers that replied to the Story on any given day.



This is what a **10% reply rate** looks like.

5 REPLIES ÷ 50 VIEWERS

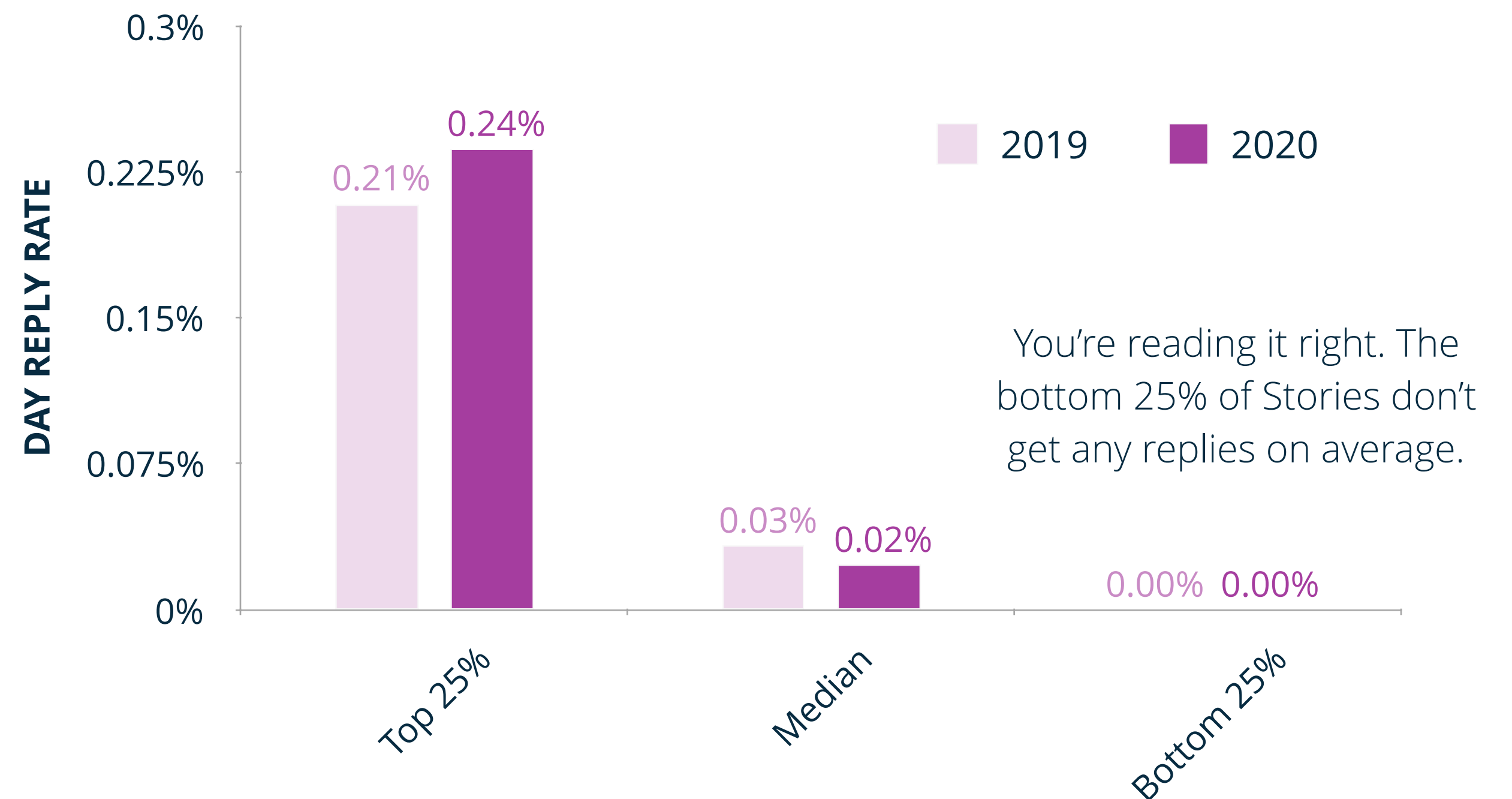


Reply rate

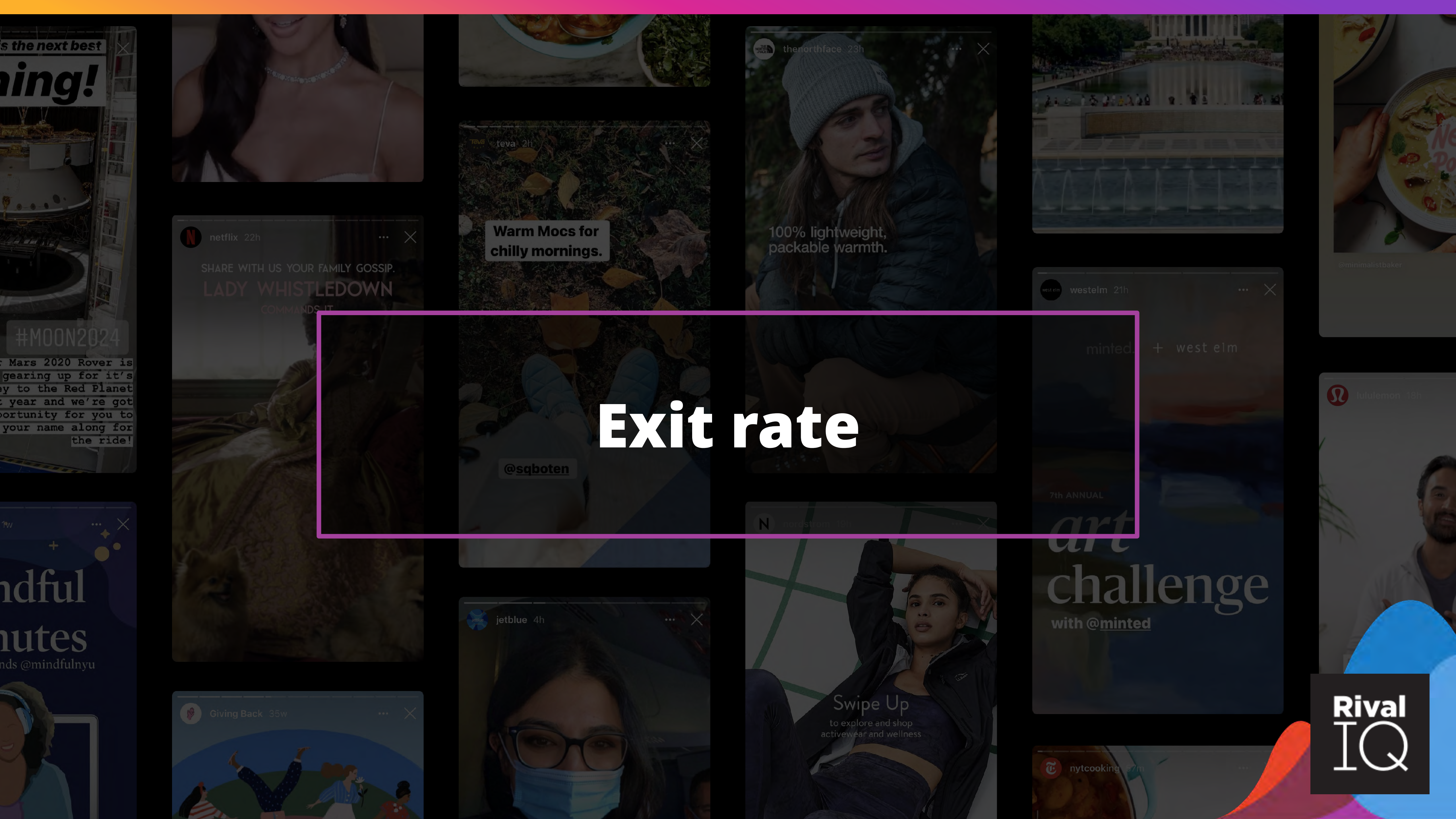
The percentage of Story Viewers that replied to the Story on any given day.

The average reply rate stayed about the same in 2020.

- The top 25% of brands in this study saw a 12% increase in Story replies, while median reply rates fell about 30%.
- These reply rates are tiny because users mostly don't reply—particularly in the bottom 25%, which has a 0% average reply rate.



The best way to score an elusive reply is to ask for one by asking a question. Unfortunately Instagram's API continues to limit data from in-frame engagement stickers like polls and quizzes.



Exit rate

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What is exit rate?

The percentage of impressions that exit your Story.

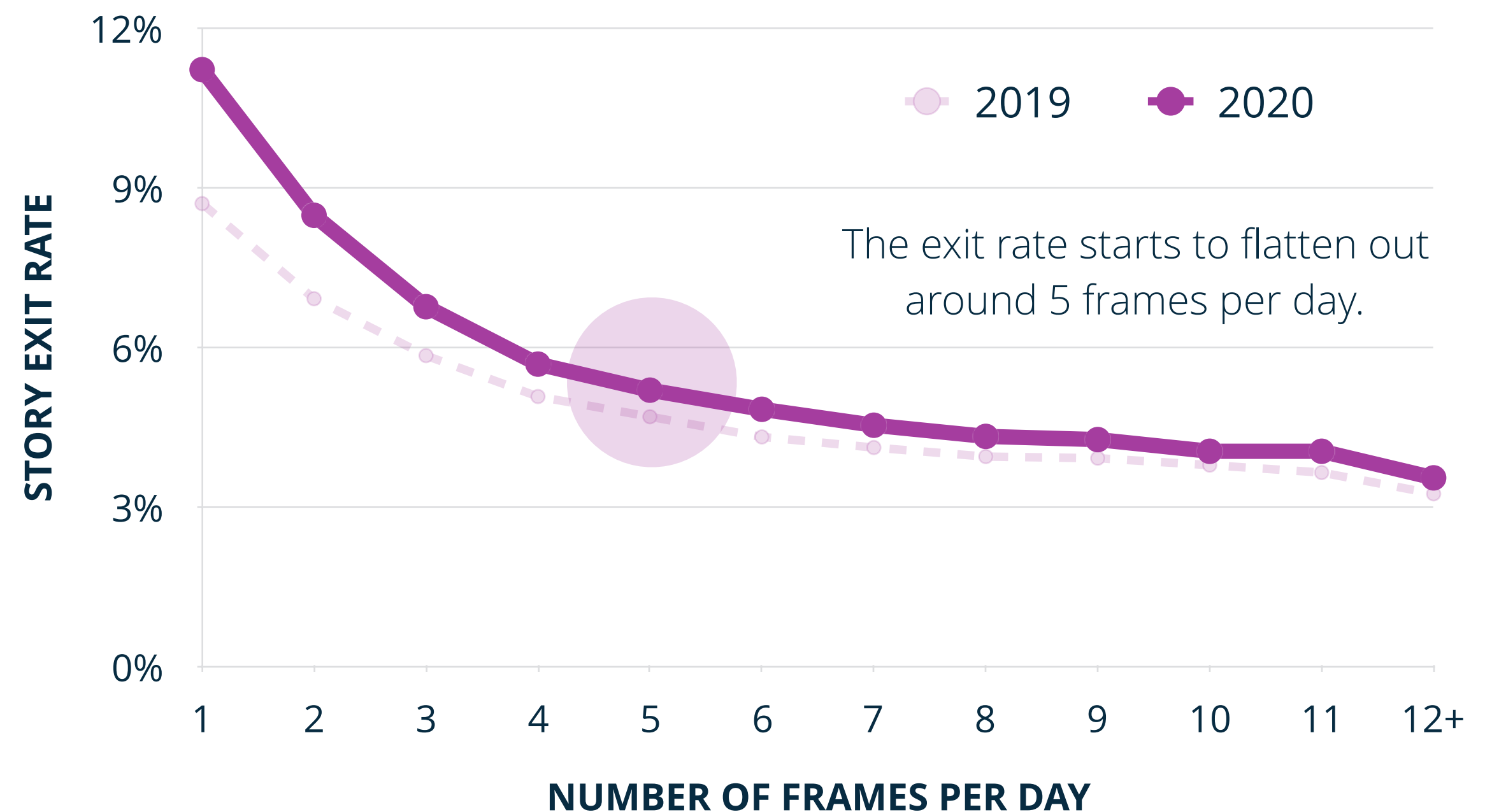


Exit rate

The percentage of impressions that exit your Story.

Exit rates saw a slight increase in 2020.

- Brands saw exit rates increase by about 12% this year, which means viewers are a little more likely to bail on a Story than they were last year.
- Exit rates start at about 11% for Stories with a single frame.
- The rate begins to really tail off at 5 frames per day and flattens out in the 3% range.



Exit rates increased a little across all frame per day counts this year, which indicates viewers were slightly less engaged with Story content this year. As we noted earlier, Instagram continues to divide the attention of their viewers with features like Reels and IGTV, so a drop here isn't too surprising.

About Rival IQ

Rival IQ is a social media analytics toolkit that helps you:

Supercharge your social landscape

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

Stay ahead of the competition

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

Do more with your data

Dive deeper into your social media analytics with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram Insights, boosted post detection, LinkedIn Insights, and so much more.

The Rival IQ logo is located in the bottom left corner. It consists of the words "Rival" and "IQ" stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif font, set against a solid black square background.

GET YOUR FREE TRIAL ►