CreatorIQ





Winning Strategies in Streaming:

How Industry Leaders are Harnessing Creator Marketing



Introduction

The streaming industry, now a staple in households around the world, has grown significantly over the last few years. One key factor in this growth—and in streaming brands' efforts to stay ahead in an increasingly competitive space—has been creator marketing.

Examining the top streaming brands over the last five years (2019-2023) as ranked by engagements, impressions, and Earned Media Value (EMV)—CreatorIQ's proprietary metric for measuring the viral impact of social media content—we see a general upward trend, especially following the industry's pandemic-era spike in 2020. However, growth for some brands began leveling off as early as 2021, due to challenges including streaming fatigue, market saturation, and post-pandemic shifts.

CreatorIQ's analysis of top streaming brands during this period highlights the most impactful creator marketing strategies for both immediate success and future growth.

Creator Marketing Growth for the Top 15 Streaming Brands (2019 to 2023)

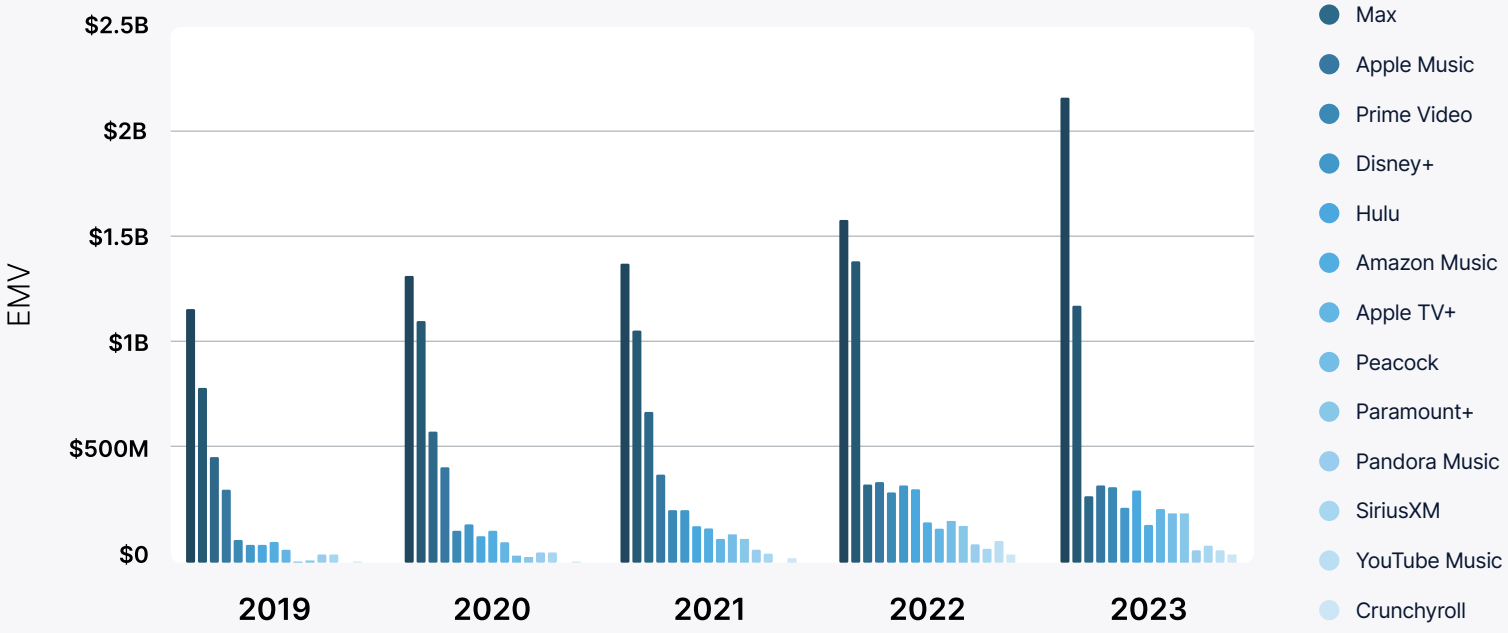
61% ↑
in average engagements

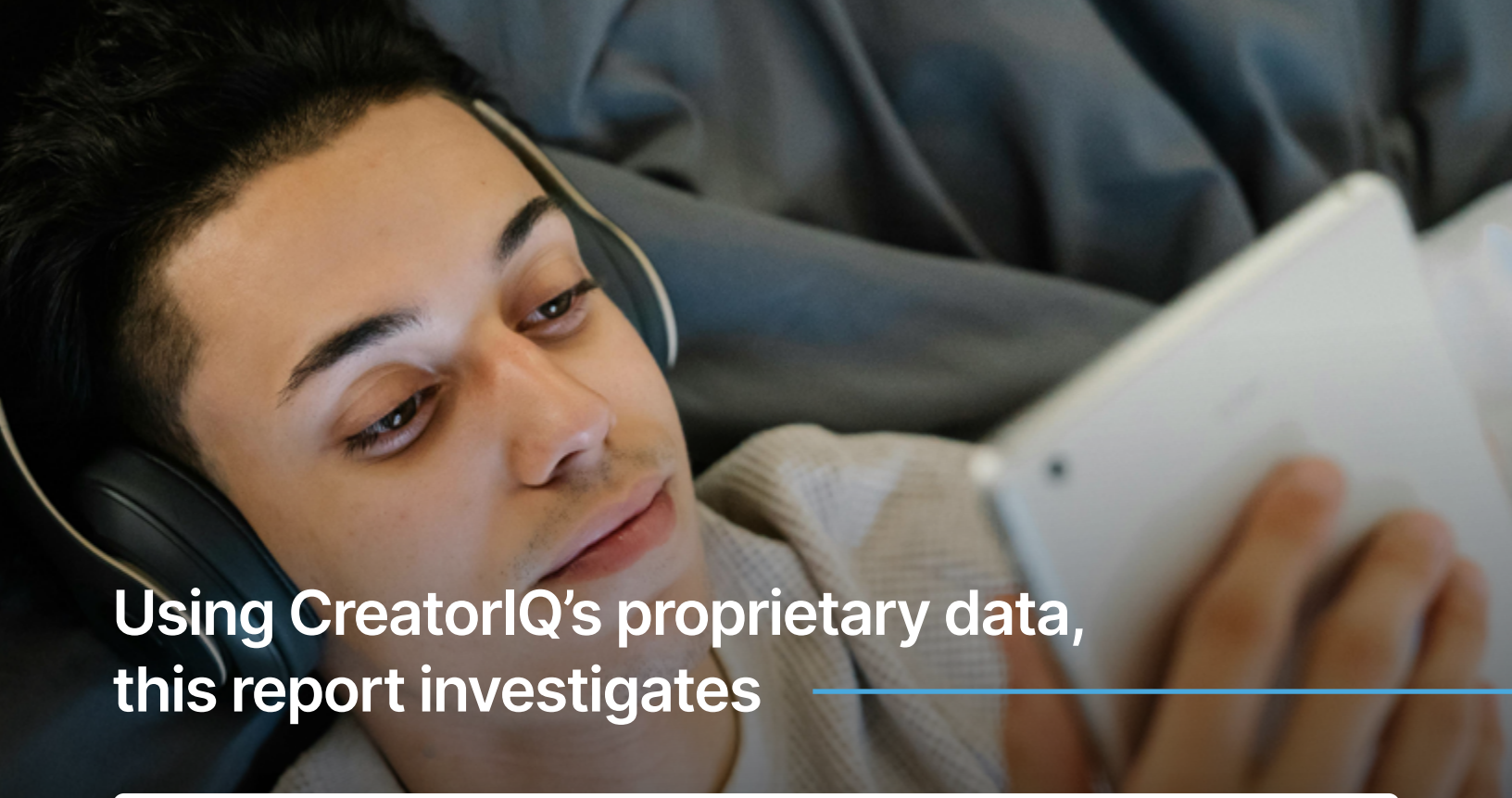
61% ↑
in average community size

66% ↑
in average total EMV

EMV Index of the Top 15 Streaming Brands

2019–2023 U.S. Data





Using CreatorIQ's proprietary data, this report investigates

Strategies Behind the Top Streaming Brands' Success

- Partnership strategies
- Analysis of the most impactful creator marketing campaigns
- Retention and potency of powerhouse creators

Performance of Top Streaming Brands

- Detailed growth timelines for Spotify, Netflix, and Prime Video
- Key campaigns and content driving digital engagement
- Influences of original content on brand success

Current Trends and Consumer Behaviors in Streaming

- Streaming fatigue and its impact on subscription churn rates
- Strategic shifts towards original content
- Effects of password-sharing policies on key metrics

The Winners So Far in 2024

- Predicted growth trajectories for top streaming platforms
- Most impactful campaigns and strategic partnerships
- Analysis of 2024 market trajectory

Strategies Behind the Top Streaming Brands' Success

Let's take a look at the growth trajectory of the three biggest streaming brands: Spotify, Netflix, and Prime Video. Here are the key takeaways from the creator marketing tactics they deployed, and what propelled them to success from 2019 to 2023.

Invest in Powerhouse Creator Relationships

Spotify

Retained powerhouse creators played a crucial role in Spotify's dominance, contributing $4.8B EMV over the five-year period and securing its position as the top streaming brand by EMV.

Netflix

Powerhouse creators increased their contribution from $528.0M in 2019 to $695.1M in 2023, underscoring the importance of nurturing long-term relationships with this creator community segment.

Prime Video

In 2023, Prime Video's powerhouse tier creators generated a record $263.2M EMV, 75% of the brand's yearly total ($351.6M EMV) highlighting the brand's success in prioritizing high-impact creator partnerships.

Harness the Power of Micro-Influencers

Spotify

While primarily focused on powerhouse creators, Spotify also benefited from the contributions of gaming micro-influencers, who played a significant role in sustaining the brand's digital presence, with the brand growing its micro-influencer community from 7.3k in 2019 to 15.6k in 2023.

Netflix

The rise of micro-influencers during the pandemic was pivotal, with their efforts leading to a 67% YoY increase in impressions in 2020, demonstrating their value in enhancing Netflix's engagement during market shifts.

Prime Video

Prime Video effectively leveraged micro-influencers in campaigns like Savage X Fenty to capture niche audiences. Over five years, micro-influencers made up an average of 50% of Prime Video's creator community, closely aligning with the top 15 streaming brands' average of 48%.





Prioritize Creator Retention

Spotify

Spotify's long-term engagement with its creator community resulted in an impressive 79% average retention rate from 2019 to 2023, significantly higher than the top 15 streaming brands' average of 64%. This strong retention contributed to Spotify capturing an industry-leading 40B impressions in 2023, underscoring the crucial role of creator retention in driving sustained growth.

Netflix

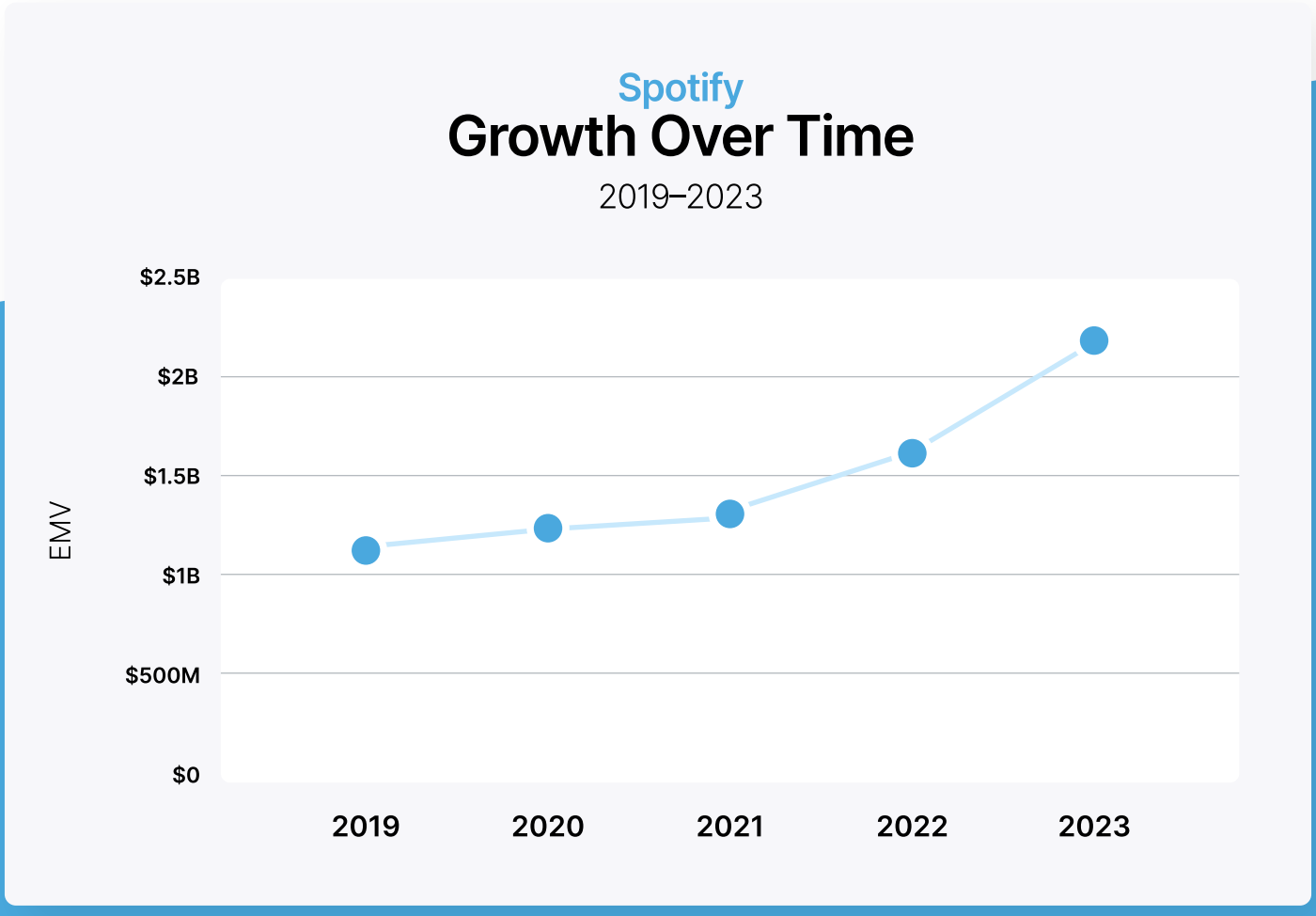
Netflix's adaptability in retaining key creators through changing market conditions allowed the brand to maintain high levels of engagement, even as other platforms struggled with the brand's total engagements growing from 724.9M in 2019 to 1.2B in 2023. During these five years, Netflix averaged a retention rate of 68%.

Prime Video

While a major focus of Prime Video's strategy was community expansion, with the streaming platform doubling its creator community in 2019 and 2020, maintaining long-term relationships directly contributed to a 67% increase in impressions and a 174% boost in engagements. By 2023, Prime Video overtook Netflix's retention rate (66%) averaging 68%.

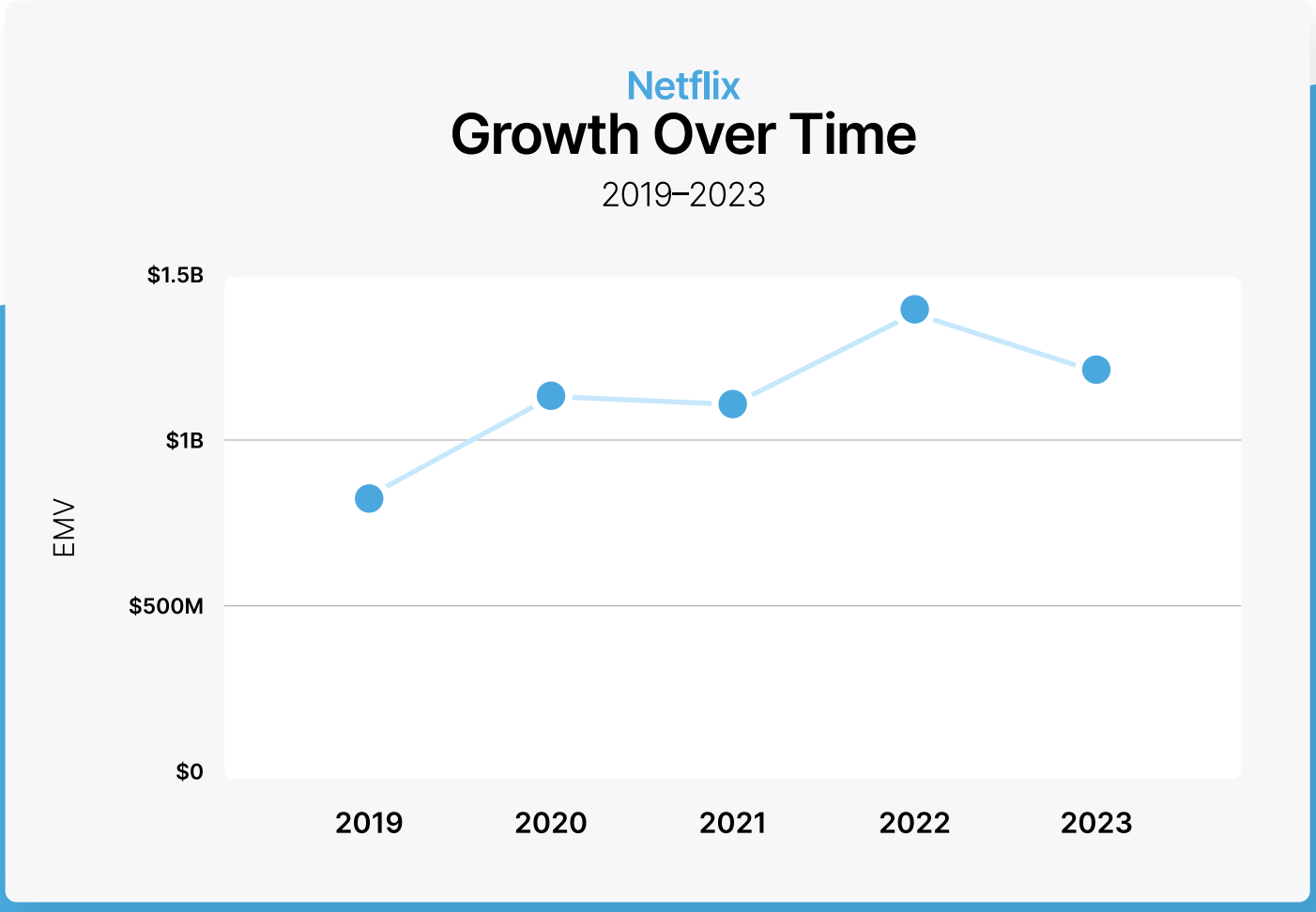
Spotify Growth Timeline

From 2019 to 2023, Spotify saw a remarkable EMV increase from $1.2B to $2.2B, taking the crown as the No. 1 streaming brand by EMV, nearly doubling the $1.2B EMV total of No. 2 Netflix. This growth was fueled by the retention of its powerhouse tier creators, strategic celebrity partnerships, and a significant boost in content volume. Key partnerships with figures like Joe Rogan and the Call Her Daddy podcast, alongside the consistent influence of gaming creators such as Evan Fong and Lankybox, played pivotal roles in driving Spotify's success.



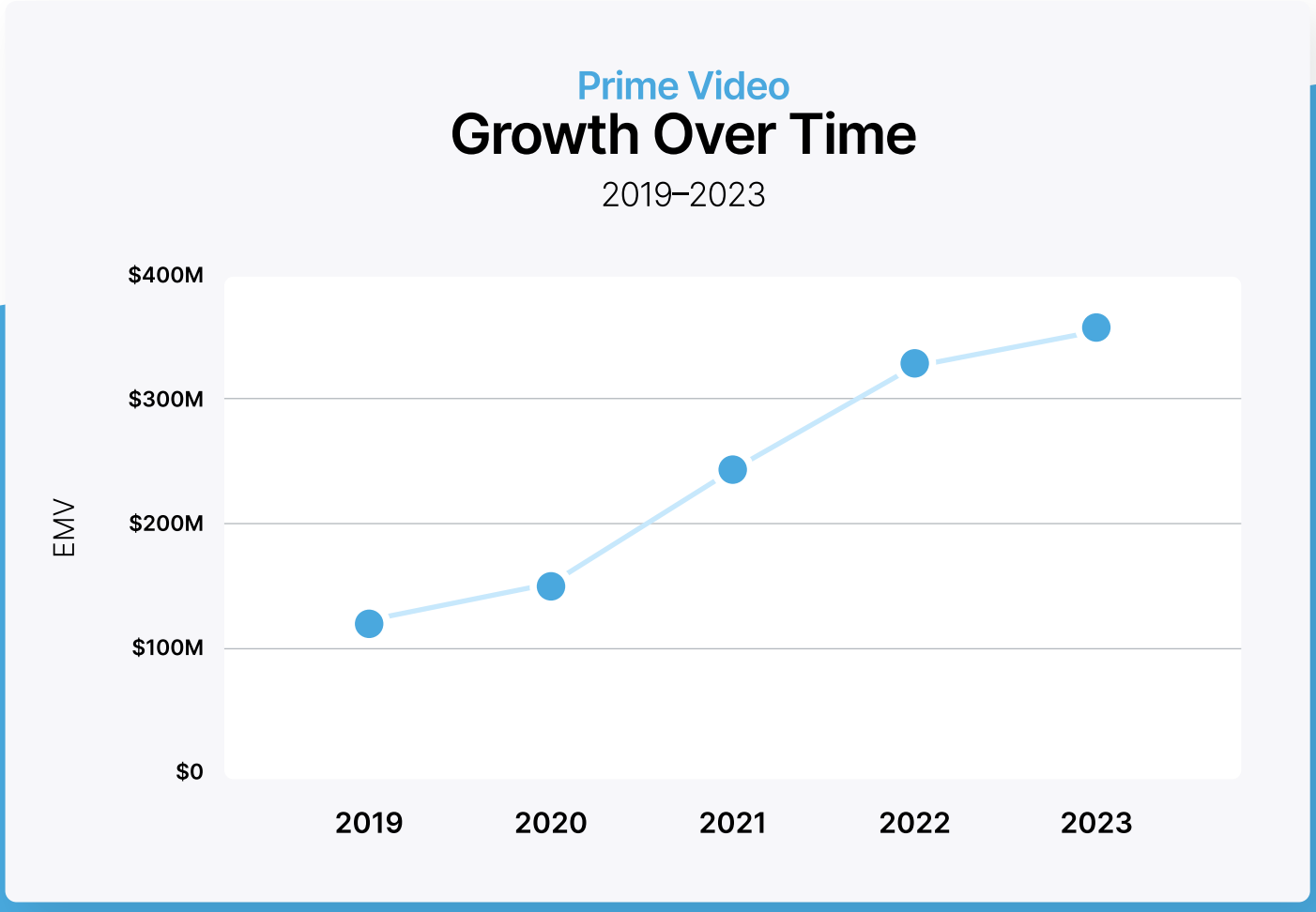
Netflix Growth Timeline

Already established as a key player in the streaming industry, Netflix grew from $823.6M to $1.4B EMV between 2019 and 2023, then experienced a 15% dip in 2023 due to market changes and emerging competition. Netflix's success was bolstered by its robust creator community, effective promotion of original series, movies, and reality TV, as well as adaptability to evolving market dynamics including the global pandemic. Major hits like Stranger Things, The Witcher, and Squid Game, along with strategic media partnerships, were key to Netflix's influencer marketing triumphs. As a result, Netflix prospered long-term, growing its total engagements by 65% and total impressions by 95% from 2019 to 2023.



Prime Video Growth Timeline

Prime Video's EMV surged from $110.1M in 2019 to $351.5M in 2023, driven by the brand's strategic focus on expanding its creator community, impactful creator marketing campaigns, and robust partnerships. Prime Video grew its creator community by 115% over five years, directly contributing to a 174% increase in engagements and a 67% increase in impressions. Notable campaigns like the Savage X Fenty Show and #PrimeVideoCreator and partnerships with the NFL and family-friendly channel Super Simple Songs, which collectively drove 5.3B impressions and 140.9M engagements over five years, were instrumental in Prime Video's growth.



Current Trends and Consumer Behaviors in Streaming

As a burgeoning space, the streaming industry is in a constant state of flux, driven by rapid technological advancements, evolving consumer preferences, and competitive market dynamics. Understanding current trends and consumer behaviors is crucial for streaming platforms aiming to stay ahead of the curve.

Let's delve into the latest developments shaping the industry, examining the primary forces driving consumer engagement, and the strategies that top brands are deploying to maintain their competitive edge.



Streaming Fatigue

Even if you haven't heard of it, you're probably experiencing it. Streaming fatigue, also known as subscription or content fatigue, has been a hot-button topic since 2022, when the breadth of streaming services (particularly video streaming), and the various subscriptions required to consume all of the original content spread across these different platforms, started to seem like an exorbitant household cost.

According to Antenna, the average monthly streaming subscription churn for some of the largest video streaming platforms (Apple TV+, Disney+, Netflix, and more) has increased from 4.6% in 2022 to 6.3% in 2023. When comparing the subscriber churn rate with the total number of creators who mentioned streaming brands from 2022 to 2023, we see a similar dip in community size: the total number of streaming content creators decreased by 4.6% from 157.0k to 149.8k.

However, in H1 2024, the overall creator community for the streaming industry bounced back. The average number of creators for each brand increased by 28% YoY compared to H1 2023, a sign that the best for the streaming industry may be yet to come.

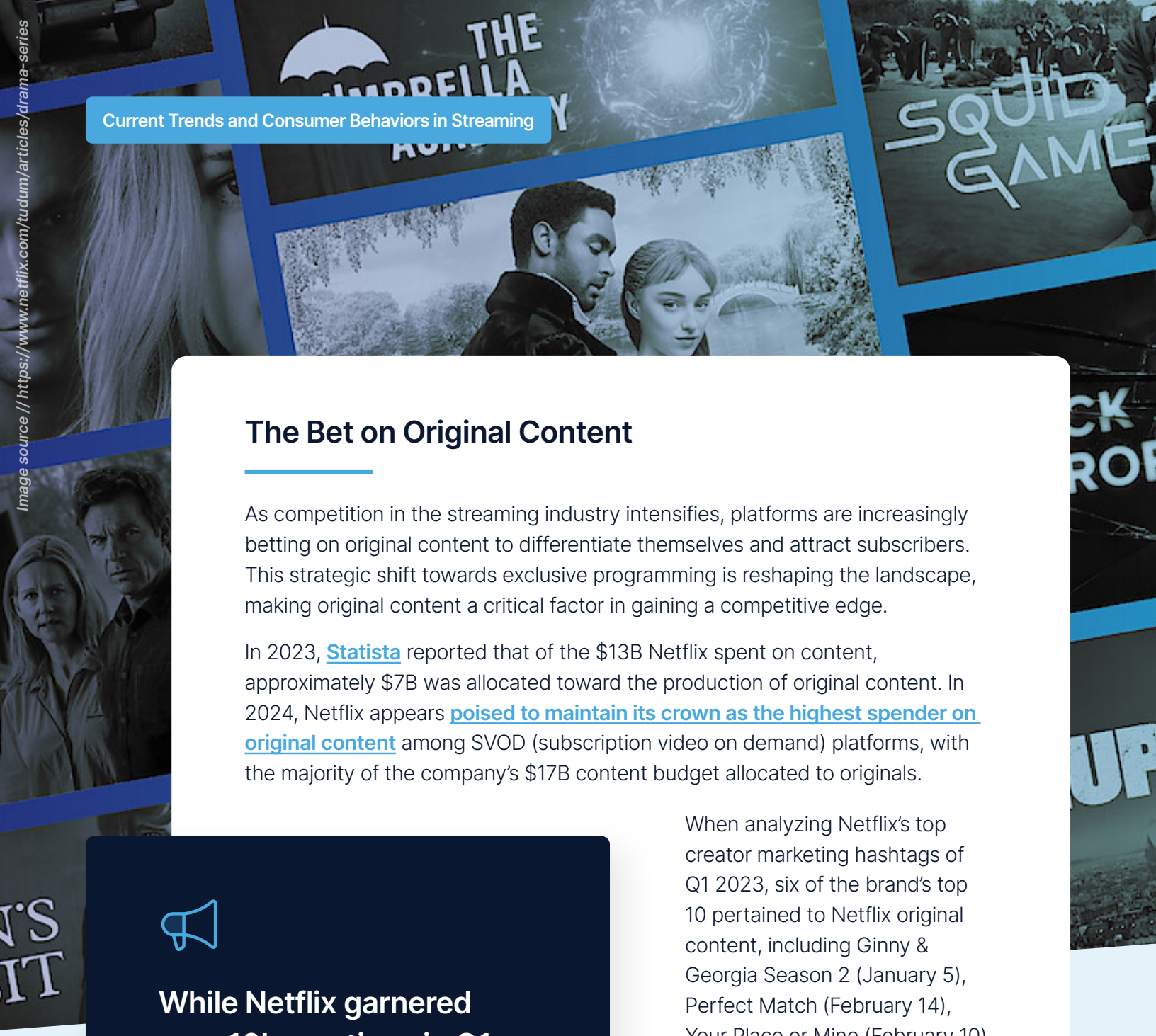


Image source // https://www.netflix.com/tudum/articles/drama-series

The Bet on Original Content

As competition in the streaming industry intensifies, platforms are increasingly betting on original content to differentiate themselves and attract subscribers. This strategic shift towards exclusive programming is reshaping the landscape, making original content a critical factor in gaining a competitive edge.

In 2023, Statista reported that of the $13B Netflix spent on content, approximately $7B was allocated toward the production of original content. In 2024, Netflix appears poised to maintain its crown as the highest spender on original content among SVOD (subscription video on demand) platforms, with the majority of the company's $17B content budget allocated to originals.

When analyzing Netflix's top creator marketing hashtags of Q1 2023, six of the brand's top 10 pertained to Netflix original content, including Ginny & Georgia Season 2 (January 5), Perfect Match (February 14), Your Place or Mine (February 10), Outer Banks Season 3 (February 23), and Love Is Blind Season 4 (March 24).

While Netflix garnered over 10k mentions in Q1 2023, hashtags associated with Netflix original content collectively generated $39.4M EMV—11% of the brand's $314.7M quarterly total.

The Impact of the Password-Sharing Crackdown

In May 2023, Netflix became the first video streaming platform to announce and implement a password-sharing policy, aiming to limit account use by location and device, and clarifying that an account is intended for use by one household. This policy marked a significant shift in the streaming industry, signaling a crackdown on a practice that had become common among users.

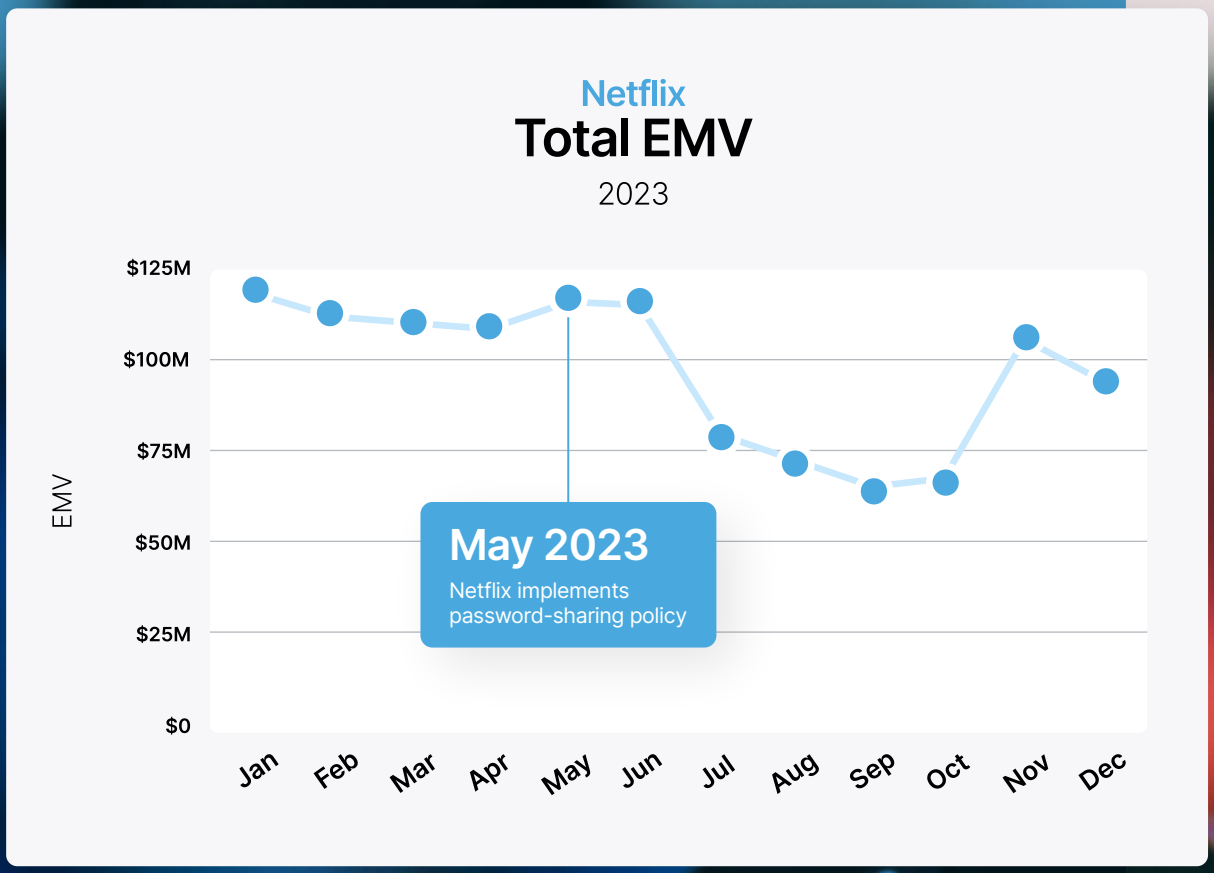
Following the implementation of this policy, Netflix experienced a notable decline in its total EMV, which decreased by 15% YoY in 2023. The most significant drop occurred between May and July 2023, with a sharp 36% decline, and parallel 48% and 46% declines in impressions and engagement. This downturn coincided with a decrease in social conversation surrounding the controversial policy, and a 27% contraction in Netflix's community when those unwilling to adopt the policy stopped watching Netflix content. The decline persisted through October before gradually returning to a total EMV figure more consistent with Netflix's performance in H1 2023.

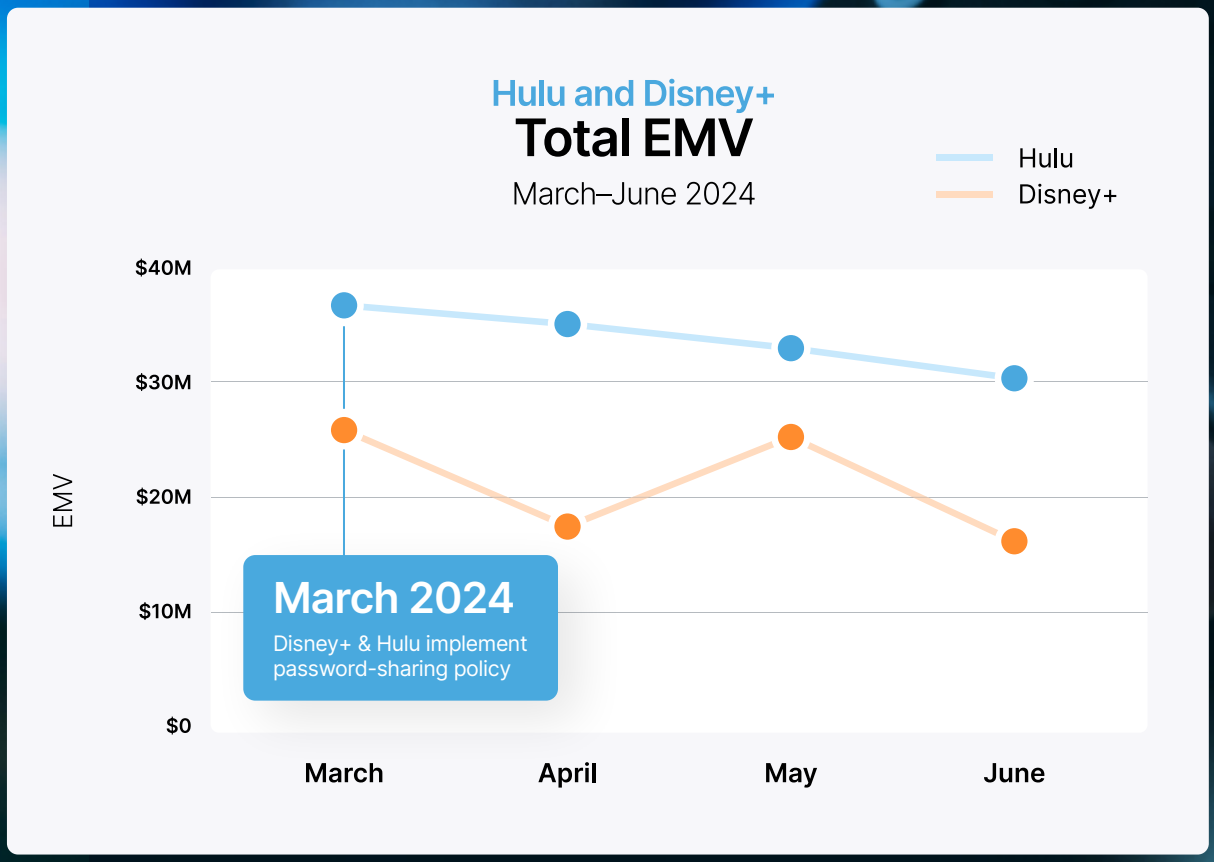
Despite this recovery, Netflix's total monthly EMV has yet to exceed its January 2023 high-point of $122.2M EMV. However, following the uptick trend in the last two months of 2023, Netflix's EMV appeared to stabilize in H1 2024, averaging $110.7M EMV per month—13% more than its $98.4M monthly average in 2023.

In March 2024, Disney+ and Disney-owned streaming platform Hulu followed Netflix's footsteps by implementing their own password-sharing policies. Both platforms experienced a similar EMV decline to Netflix, with their EMV decreasing by 37% and 20%, respectively, from March to June 2024. The decline was spurred by a 38% and 10% contraction in the streaming services' respective creator communities, which in turn dropped total engagement by 60% and 9% in three months.



This trend underscores the widespread impact of password-sharing crackdowns across the streaming industry. As Disney+ and Hulu move into H2 2024, we expect to see a stabilization similar to the arc of Netflix.


Netflix
Total EMV
2023
$125M
$100M
$75M
$50M
$25M
$0
EMV
May 2023
Netflix implements password-sharing policy
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec


Hulu and Disney+
Total EMV
March–June 2024
Hulu
Disney+
$40M
$30M
$20M
$10M
$0
EMV
March 2024
Disney+ & Hulu implement password-sharing policy
March
April
May
June

Winners in 2024 So Far

In the first half of 2024, some streaming platforms have distinguished themselves thanks to impressive growth and innovative strategies. Here are a few highlights from these standout performers, and an examination of the key factors behind their success.

iHeartRadio

H1 2024 proved a banner time for music and audio streaming, with all major platforms—including Spotify, Apple Music, SiriusXM, YouTube Music, Amazon Music, and Pandora Music—experiencing significant growth. However, iHeartRadio stood out by capturing $90.3M EMV and 48.2M engagements, representing a remarkable 101% year-over-year EMV increase and more total engagments than Pandora Music and Youtube Music combined (40.5M). With this impressive performance, iHeartRadio is on track to surpass its 2023 yearly high of $98.8M EMV.

A significant factor in iHeartRadio's H1 success stemmed from the increased potency of its creators. Hit radio shows hosted on the iHeartRadio app, such as The Breakfast Club AM and The Herd with Colin Cowherd, grew significantly in popularity. As a result, the social channels (@breakfastclubam and @theherd on Instagram) for both shows ranked as the No. 1 and No. 2 EMV-drivers for iHeartRadio, contributing a collective $19.6M EMV, a substantial increase from $3.7M in H2 2023.



@breakfastclubam

#1 EMV-Driver

Image source // iheart.com



@theherd

#2 EMV-Driver

Image source // iheart.com



Image source // @ iheartradio on Instagram

Another critical factor in iHeartRadio's success was the impact of its long-running iHeartRadio Music Awards, which celebrate the most-played artists and songs on the platform. The awards show, which occurred in April, helped the hashtag #iHeartAwards2024 accumulate 465 mentions from 138 creators, **driving $3.0M EMV and helping the brand to 371.7M impressions.**



Image source // @NBCSports on YouTube


Image source // @NBCSports on YouTube

Peacock

In an overall tough half for video streaming brands, with leaders like Netflix and Disney+ experiencing slight EMV declines, Peacock stood out by growing 7% YoY in H1 2024, amassing $128.6M EMV. Peacock is well-positioned for significant expansion in H2 2024, thanks to NBCUniversal's exclusive U.S. broadcast rights to the Olympics. In H1 2024, Olympics-related social media campaigns significantly boosted Peacock's visibility, with hashtags such as #MTUSA, #TrackFieldTrials24, #ParisOlympics, #TeamUSA, and #Olympics ranking among the platform's top 10 most impactful hashtags and collectively generating $27.9M EMV, accounting for 22% of Peacock's H1 total.

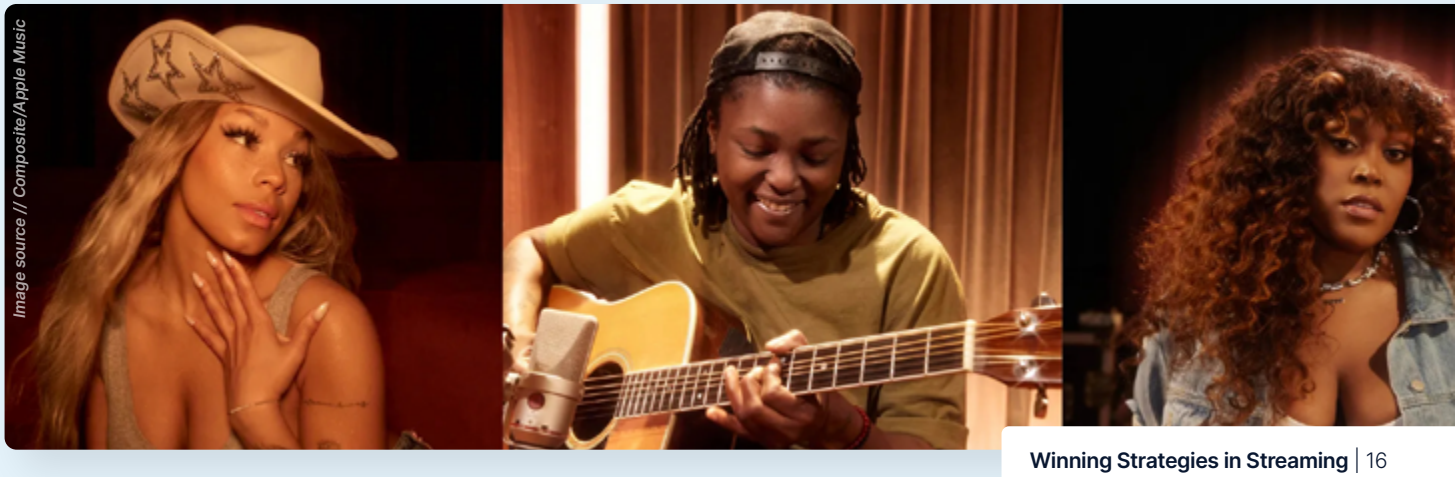
By July, Peacock climbed to the No. 3 spot on the streaming industry Top 10 leaderboard, amassing $53.1M EMV—a 55% increase from the previous month. This surge was accompanied by a remarkable 84% growth in engagements, reaching 52.8M, and a 54% increase in impressions, totaling 989.4M. The excitement surrounding the Olympics was a major factor, with event-related hashtags contributing $23.1M EMV, or 44% of Peacock's monthly total. With this strong performance, Peacock is poised for continued growth in the latter half of the year.


Image source // Peacock



Apple Music

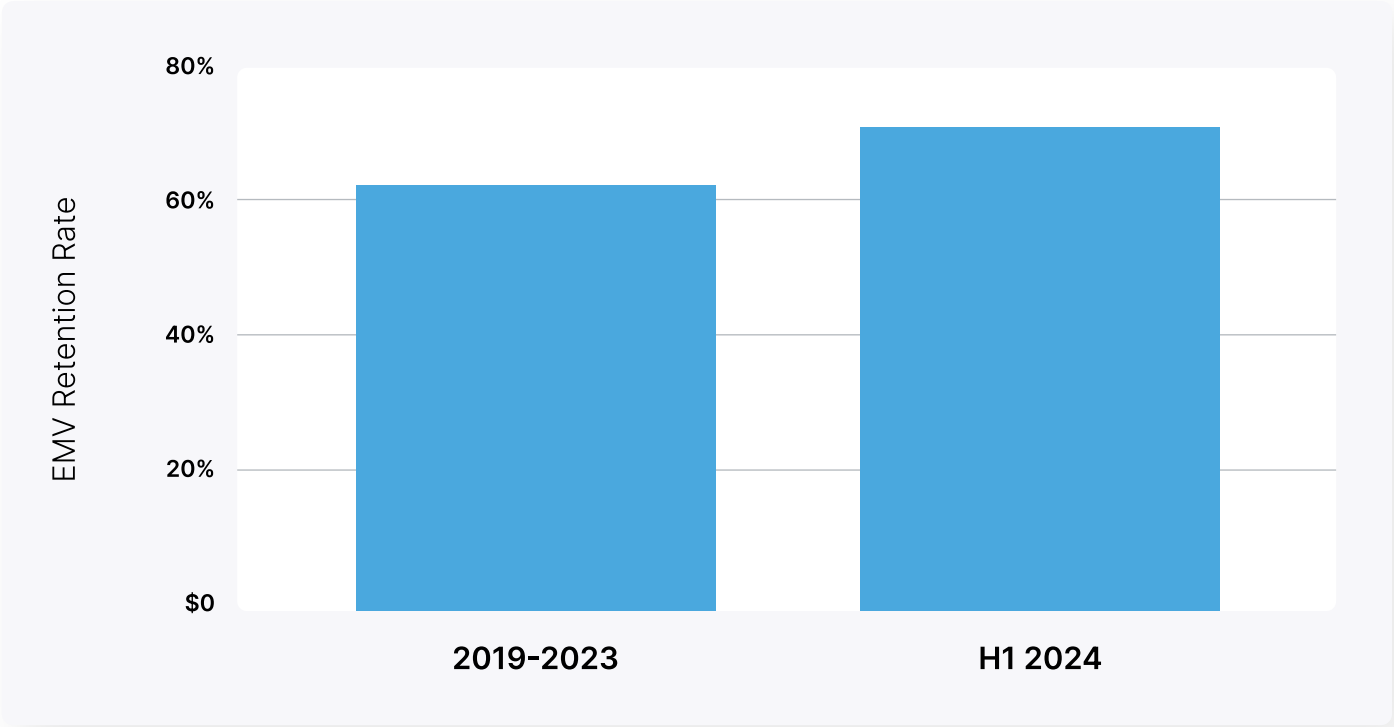
In H1 2024, Apple Music dominated the music streaming landscape, amassing 4.9M impressions and 191.2M engagements, the third and fourth highest totals among the top 15 streaming brands and the second among music streaming brands. While it remains distant from Spotify's leading position ($1.2B EMV in H1), Apple Music's H1 total was a remarkable 132% greater than its next closest competitor, Amazon Music, which collected $98.1M EMV. If Apple Music maintains its strong performance in H2, it can surpass its all-time high of $427.7M EMV achieved in 2020. A key component of Apple Music's success in H1 was its strategic partnerships with major music industry names, including Beyoncé and Peso Pluma. These collaborations resulted in impactful hashtags #PesoPluma and #Beyoncé, which collectively generated $8.3M EMV and coincided with the launch of new albums from both artists. Alongside Beyoncé's country album Cowboy Carter, which launched in March, Apple Music collaborated with the artist to release an exclusive cover playlist, Apple Music Nashville Sessions: Beyoncé Covered, for #BlackMusicMonth in June.



What's Next for the Streaming Industry?

The streaming industry has undergone a profound transformation over the past five years, driven by the emergence of new platforms, shifting consumer preferences, and the strategic implementation of creator marketing. The industry's growth trajectory, marked by a significant increase in digital engagement, underscores the pivotal role of creators in shaping brand success and consumer sentiment.

2024 appears poised to be the industry's best year yet, with average EMV growth for streaming brands up 56% YoY in H1. A key driver of this success is these brands' EMV retention rate. After averaging 62% between 2019 and 2023, this metric has increased to an impressive 72% in H1 2024. EMV retention serves as an important marker of community health, measuring the value of engagement driven by loyal content creators from one time period to the next.



Content creators are fueling significantly more engagement in H1 2024 compared to H1 2023. Average engagements are up by 245% YoY to 123.7M, facilitated by an expanded content volume of 601.3k brand mentions across all major streaming brands. If this trajectory continues, the industry is poised to break the total content volume it achieved last year (984.8k mentions).

Despite challenges such as streaming fatigue, market saturation, and changing post-pandemic lifestyles, top streaming brands have demonstrated resilience and adaptability. The strategic use of high-impact creator partnerships, and a heightened focus on original content, have been key drivers of growth and competitiveness. Looking ahead, brands that continue to nurture strong creator relationships, and adapt to evolving consumer behaviors, will be well-positioned to lead the industry into its next phase of growth.

What creator marketing strategies can your brand deploy to pull ahead?



Invest in Powerhouse Creator Relationships

While other industries benefit from a more balanced creator community, streaming brands should prioritize the retention of Powerhouse tier creators to drive sustained growth.



Harness the Power of Micro-Influencers

Especially effective during times of market shifts, micro-influencers bring authenticity, and can drive meaningful engagement. While brands should still focus primarily on powerhouse creators, leveraging micro-influencers' talents can be critical in niche markets or for specific campaigns.



Prioritize Creator Retention

Maintaining long-term relationships with top-performing creators is essential for sustained growth. In H1 2024, successful brands have demonstrated the power of consistently engaging with retained creators. This approach helps secure ongoing loyalty and influence within their communities, ensuring your brand's continued impact and visibility.

Want more detailed metrics on your brand's creator marketing performance?

Check out the interactive CreatorIQ Top 10 Leaderboard to see who's leading the pack in your industry, and how your brand stacks up against the best.

Explore the CreatorIQ Top 10 Leaderboard

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