

What motivates people to watch YouTube

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I spend a lot of time watching YouTube. In fact, I've made it my job. Each week, I publish a newsletter called [YouTube Re:View](#) that highlights that latest video trends. Given the number of videos uploaded to YouTube every second, you could spend every waking moment trying (and failing!) to keep up with the latest videos. That's why YouTube Re:View aims to help marketers stay in the know with what everyone's watching by surfacing the most popular videos quickly gaining momentum.

With millions upon millions of views, these popular videos reflect what the world is choosing to watch. But we wanted to understand, on a deeper level, what motivates people's viewing preferences. So we recently reached out to a few leaders in the advertising industry to gain a better understanding of why they watch what they watch on YouTube. Here's what we learned.

Sometimes it's fun to relive the past

I like to think of YouTube as a visual archive of our human history. This also rings true for Susan Schiekofe, GroupM's Chief Digital Investment Officer. Schiekofe turns to YouTube to relive her past, just like [75% of Gen](#)

think with 

[Xers](#) choose to watch YouTube videos that relate to past events or people. "[Steven Tyler's tribute to Paul McCartney](#) is magical—it's my all-time favorite from The Kennedy Center Honors' archive."



75% of Gen Xers choose to watch YouTube videos that **relate to past events or people.**

Source: Google/Ipsos Connect, U.S., YouTube Human Stories: Gen X, n=1,004 respondents age 35–54 who go online at least monthly, Sept. 2016.

Sometimes a how-to video is better than an instruction manual

Horizon Media's Vice President of Digital Investment, Alex Stone, is a recent first-time homeowner who relishes the opportunity to dig into his mounting list of home improvement tasks. Stone is just one of the [70% of millennials](#) who watch YouTube to learn how to do something new.



70% of millennials watch YouTube to **learn how to do something new.**

For example, Stone turns to YouTube to guide him through small, but important projects like [installing a mailbox](#) or [trimming a tree](#). These videos, typically recorded by regular people in similar situations, aren't meant to be entertaining, but instructional and useful.

If you're a sports lover, there's so much more to watch than just the game

When I think of sports videos, I imagine game highlights. However, sports fan Colleen Leddy, Head of Communications Strategy at Droga5 introduced me to a much wider range of sports content. Leddy grew up rooting for UConn basketball. At her wedding she even danced with her dad to "One Shining Moment," the NCAA basketball anthem.



79% of YouTube sports viewers say YouTube has **sports and fitness video content that they can't find anywhere else.**

Source: Google/Ipsos Connect, Sports Viewers Study, U.S. among adults aged 18-54 who watch sports/fitness content on YouTube at least monthly, n=1,501, Feb. 2016.

She gravitates to sports videos that inspire her: [a basketball player who overcomes adversity](#), a [hall-of-famer's moving speech](#) about her mentors, or a [classic speech that transcends sport](#) to provide valuable life lessons. These stories humanize the players and make sports about much more than, well, sports. It's no surprise that [79% of YouTube sports viewers](#) say YouTube has sports and fitness video content that they can't find anywhere else.

In speaking with these advertising leaders, I learned that they aren't simply going to YouTube to watch the latest hits. They're looking for videos that have a deeper personal meaning and enrich their lives.

To continue learning about what influential marketers watch on YouTube, and keep track of the most popular videos and trends, subscribe to [YouTube Re:View](#).

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