

# It's Time for FemTech



# *to Step Up*

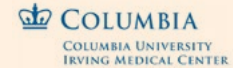
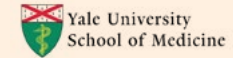
**In women's health, building trust  
and rapport has never been more important.  
Are you brand ready?**



## Medical device companies operate in a highly regulated world but, when it comes to others peddling misinformation, it's the Wild West on social media.

This has been discussed in the news a lot, lately, and there is a growing body of work highlighting the problem of social misinformation in women's healthcare. A short time ago, we came across some reports that stopped us in our tracks, in a good way.

- Recent, separate studies on social media and health information conducted by the Yale School of Medicine,<sup>1</sup> Columbia University Medical Center,<sup>2</sup> and Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF)<sup>3</sup> all found that inaccurate medical information is rampant and highly consumed
- In fact, the Yale study uncovered that **health-related misinformation on TikTok was shared at a higher rate than reliable information**
- The KFF poll found that **social media use is correlated with being exposed to and an inclination to believe health misinformation** and false claims
- To combat this, the researchers recommend that health professionals work to provide better produced, accurate information designed for social media consumption
- The Yale team adds a recommendation to **consider partnering with marketing and communication specialists, to be more effective**



Here is another set of measurable reasons, reported with a sense of urgency from the field, to support an approach we've long championed and **a direct call from the field to do so.**

As marketers, we're well aware of the power of social media messaging. And as marketers who work closely with medical device companies, our philosophy has always been that the things that make effective messaging in the general space should apply to the medical space.

But this latest round of information and recommendations stands out particularly, because we know **it is a specific call to action and opportunity for FemTech companies.**

We want to amplify the call and offer some usable information for successfully positioning your FemTech brand to seize this moment. Because this moment is too important to let pass.

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# This is *FemTech's time* in marketing

FemTech brands have a real opportunity to improve patient education and outcomes with the right information, and establish brand and industry leadership, as part of the work in promoting products that address underserved needs in women's health care.

More than that, since the horse that is social media is already long out of the barn, so to speak, and running wildly — sometimes dangerously — on its own, FemTech providers and marketers have a joint responsibility not only to tame it but to embrace it and help it do what it's been born to do, for the public good as well as the good of the brands being marketed.



To accomplish this, information must be delivered meaningfully, memorably and proactively in ways that work best for social media. FemTech companies can't afford to be hesitant in embracing that wild horse, in captivating audiences and sharing information in dynamic ways because:

1. it is clearly how to drive engagement, the first step to being heard on social media
2. the information is too important
3. the potential reward for brands is too great

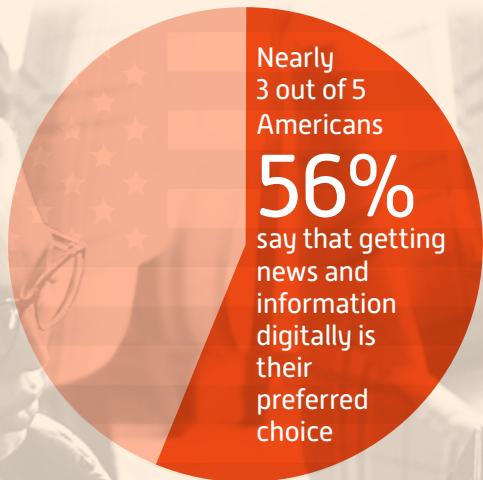
**It's exciting. And it's scary.  
But mainly, it's exciting.  
As an industry, FemTech is  
ideally suited to show the way.**



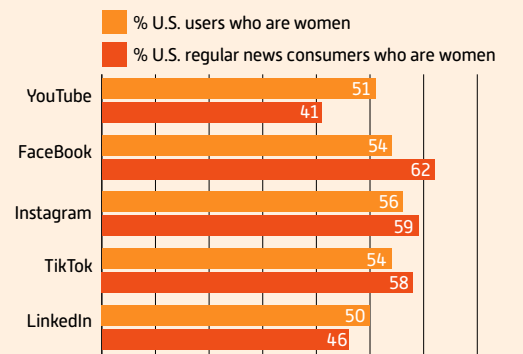
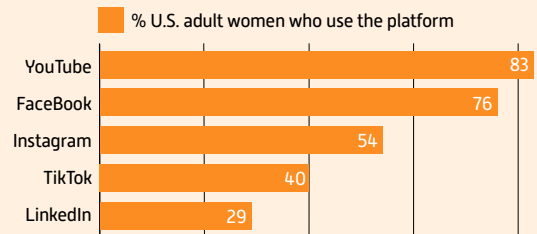
# Be Where Your Audience Is Looking For You

Not surprisingly in 2024, people turn to digital platforms to get information, more so than by any other means. Nearly 3 out of 5 Americans [56%] say that getting news and information digitally is their preferred choice<sup>4</sup> and social media is where nearly 2 out of 5 [19%] go for their information, often.<sup>5</sup>

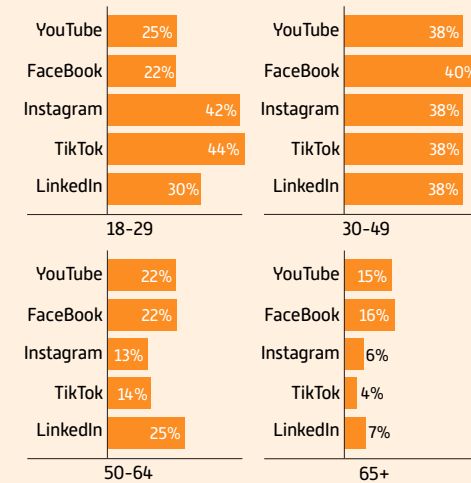
Going online is also now our go-to method of obtaining medical and healthcare information in the U.S.; women are more likely than men to explore and learn about their health and healthcare,<sup>6</sup> which is among the top 3 information interests for women online.<sup>7</sup>



## Top 5 Social Media Platforms for Delivering News & Information to Women in 2024



## Regular Usage for News, by Age Group (U.S.)



Info Sources: Pew Research Center [Social Media and News Fact Sheet, Nov 14, 2023](#) and [Social Media Fact Sheet, Jan 31, 2024](#); DataReportal [Digital 2024: The United States of America, Feb. 22, 2024](#)



**Learning about their health and healthcare is among the top 3 information interests for women online.**



A 2022 survey commissioned by CharityRx found that most U.S. adults go online before consulting a doctor. 65% first go to Google and many are also turning to social media, the first choice for a strong percentage of people under 60, namely YouTube (33% overall) and TikTok (20% overall).<sup>8</sup>

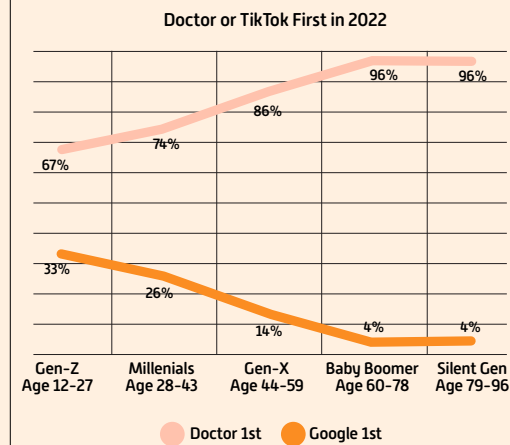
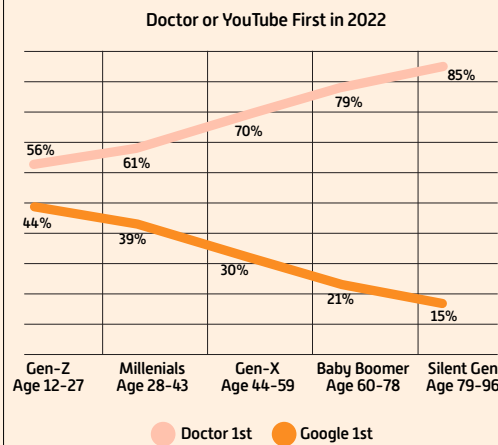
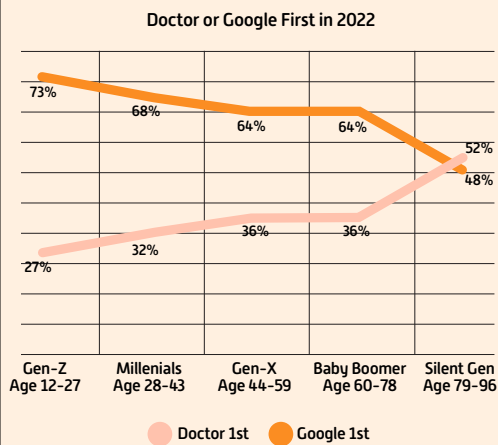
The survey also revealed that TikTok's relevancy for the youngest adult generation is undeniable.

**As of 2022, 1 out of 3 Gen-Zers were going to TikTok before consulting with their doctor.**<sup>9</sup>

Since then, TikTok's reach in the U.S. has grown over 30%.<sup>10</sup>



## Where Do We Go First for Health/Medical Information?



Info Source: CharityRx: [The Shifting Role of Influence and Authority in the Rx Drug & Health Supplement Market](#), Sep. 21, 2022

## What about the impact of online health information that a woman comes across by chance?

*...high demand from consumers for information, treatment options and advice on their health has coincided with a rapid increase in treatment-related advertisements and self-proclaimed experts sharing their advice across social media platforms. As a result, today's consumers are inundated with health information, even when they're not actively seeking it out.*<sup>11</sup> [CharityRx]

Considering that scrolling and diving into rabbit holes are favorite social media pastimes, it makes sense to look beyond self-reported goals and behavior when determining the most effective social platforms for information sharing and social marketing dollars.

facebook

3,000,000,000  
ACTIVE USERS

**Facebook** is still by far the leading social platform for all adult age groups, with over 3 billion active users, worldwide<sup>12</sup> and more than half of all social media visits in the U.S.<sup>13</sup> It clocks in at 2nd to its closest rival — **YouTube**, with 2.5 billion active users — for overall usage among U.S. women, although not so for Gen-Z women, who show a preference for video-first platforms.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, **Instagram's 2 billion active users** represent a 25.3% audience growth for 2024, compared to Facebook's 3.1% and YouTube's -0.9%.<sup>15</sup> and the competition between TikTok and Instagram is heating up.<sup>16</sup>

Social media has become truly a mobile affair. Only 1.32% of social media users do so from their laptops. 78% use a smart phone, exclusively.\*



**Americans average 127 minutes per day on social media.\***

(just over 2 hours and slightly below the global average of 145 minutes). Between ages 12 and 70, Americans will have spent over 5 years of their lives on social media.



**TikTok and Instagram are not Facebook or YouTube and Gen-Z is not Gen-X.** But the importance of video-first engagement continues to grow and the common underlying thread in all social media is the social: people talking to people, sharing experiences and knowledge, interacting authentically.

**Personal. Relevant. Trustworthy.**

And there's the rub because the very reason social media is so powerful at connecting people and ideas — and why FemTech needs to be there — is also the reason why misinformation is a problem.



**Short videos of less than 1 minute capture the attention of 66% of social media consumers and are 2.5 times more engaging than longer videos.\***

\*Info Source: Forbes: *Top Social Media Statistics And Trends Of 2024* | Belle Wong, J.D. | May 18, 2023

# Harness The Power Of The *Influencer*— Or Be One

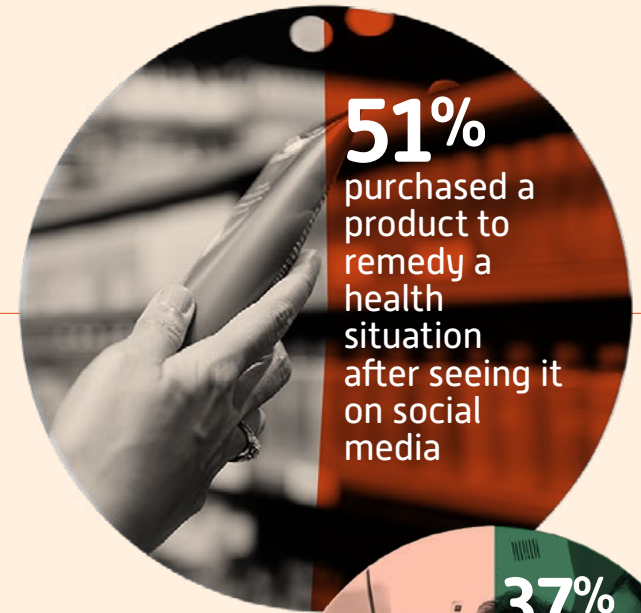
Social media influencers gain followers through their **authenticity and credibility**, as well as their content and personalities. They've cracked the code on making strong connections and shareable content. If the content is information, any influencer will be a good or bad agent of truth and accuracy.

When it comes to health and medical topics, Americans know misinformation from influencers is a significant issue: **89% believe influencers likely contribute to health misinformation** and 76% fact-check influencers' information and endorsements.<sup>17</sup>

This doesn't diminish influencers' sway, however.

While only **17%** of Americans say they trust influencers more than doctors for health advice, that isn't stopping them from acting on the advice provided.<sup>18</sup> [CharityRx]

CharityRx goes on to say that over half of people they surveyed (51%) purchased a product to remedy a health situation after seeing it on social media and 37% turn to influencers for health advice because they are easier to access than medical professionals.







# Now, there's a challenge for FemTech.

How can FemTech harness the power of the personality-driven, personal-story-sharing, short-video-centric world that is social media for the common good and the good of their brand?

At the most basic level, when you know who your audience is, you know where to reach them and what kind of formats work best on those platforms. But to have a meaningful presence in the social space, you need be there authentically, become part of the community, and help to strengthen the platform's engagement and value. That's what influencers do.

It also happens to be a great way to establish your brand voice.

To do this, it's important to think beyond being exclusively brand-centric (this is who we are, what we do, why you should care, the problem we're solving).

## Best Content Formats for Engagement on Top Social Platforms



Platform	Best Performing Content
Facebook	<b>Short-form video</b> User-generated content, polls, relevant memes, link-based posts
Instagram	<b>Short-form video</b> How-to, behind-the-scenes, trending content
TikTok	<b>Longer video</b> Storytelling with a captivating hook
LinkedIn	<b>Short &amp; Long video</b> Thought leadership content
YouTube	<b>Long-form videos*</b> In-depth tutorials, product walkthroughs, webinars, Q&A

Info Source: Buffer: [Posting Like a Pro](#) | Rochi Zelani | July 28, 2024

\*Additionally, short form videos have a growing presence as "You Tube Shorts"



## What works better for social media?

- **User-centric brand *response* approaches**
- **Addressing users' concerns, information needs, or interests**
- **Focus on building an empathetic, honest connection rather than followers**
- **Focus on helping rather than selling**



# It's also important to raise awareness of the health need your brand addresses — again, through a user-centric approach to the issue, first, and your brand, second.

Product and brand-centric marketing belong on nearly all of the most used platforms, of course. The point here is to place those in conjunction with valuable social content shared in a relevant, compelling and user-centric way.



**Think of the people who should be your social faces on video-first platforms to help share your information in a manner that fits the platform, content style, and your brand.**



## **It could be one or more established influencers.**

Partnering with trusted health influencers whose field of expertise, audience, and content approach aligns with your brand can be a powerful thing. The best health influencers want to use their authority to help combat misinformation and support solutions they believe in.<sup>19</sup> Endorsements by well known personalities are shown to increase brand credibility by 56%<sup>20</sup> and engagement rates for posts created with or by influencers are 4.7 times greater.<sup>21</sup> You will need to fit into their world — and vice versa — and work to build a mutually helpful and authentic relationship.



## **It could be one or more users of your products.**

Health professionals or patients with direct experience with your brand carry a lot of natural influence, precisely because they have relevant stories to tell from a user's point of view. These people can make excellent ambassadors and User Generated Content contributors — especially meaningful for platforms where sparking dialogue is a goal.<sup>22</sup> The right ones could serve as meaningful role-models, interviewees, or content contributors, reflecting the experiences and concerns of your audience while sharing relevant and accurate healthcare information and building trust.



## **It could be one or more people on your own team.**

This doesn't necessarily mean a senior member; it could be an intern.

Your founder or CEO might be a great pick but there also are likely to be people at all levels of your organization whose social following, personalities, story-telling abilities, experiences, belief in what you do, etc., make them excellent faces for your brand and sharers of the information you want to contribute. It might be an individual, team, or whole department.

Of course, it takes creative expertise, planning, a deep understanding of your brand, and knowledge of the issues tangential to your brand, to get this aspect of social media right. But done right, you'll establish your social value while building your position as a reliable and engaging source of accurate information that becomes valued content on the platform(s) you choose. If you do so in a manner that is compelling, responsive and builds trust, with a personality that connects, you'll wield the power of the influencer.

**With this power comes great responsibility.**

# Lean In To Your Marketplace Advantage For The Best Outcomes

Social media influence has such an impact on what is learned, shared, and acted upon, that FemTech brands looking both to create engagement and stem misinformation do need to ensure the accuracy and clarity of the information they share.

**However being accurate and clear does not mean “playing it safe.”**

On the contrary, to have impact — to be noticed at all, really — your information **must** compel attention.



This takes some courage for risk-conscious corporate cultures often found in medical and health spaces. **But it's absolutely possible to create explosively compelling, relevant marketing and social content without jeopardizing safe and correct messaging.**

**Achieving this correctly for your brand depends on many factors but there is general guidance to keep in mind, as you work this through with your internal and external teams:**

- “Be authentic” by developing a consistent brand voice across platforms
- Lean into your mission and differentiators
- Help your audience see themselves reflected in your content
- Think first about creating a shared connection
- Embrace humor, as well as empathy and other emotions
- Don't be afraid to be provocative
- Know your audience and listen, so you can address their interests, needs and concerns
- Present creatively for the platform [this doesn't have to be expensive]
- **Use your marketplace advantage**

# What marketplace advantage?



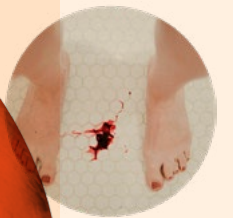
There are a number of them, actually. FemTech has some built in advantages when it comes to social media; we've already touched on some of them:

**There's an urgent need** for a better approach to learning about women's health issues and treatments on social media.

**There are large audiences** already there, who know misinformation is a problem and are actively seeking reliable sources.

By its very nature of **focusing on issues in women's health**, FemTech has a natural fit as part of the solution.

Because it occupies "a female space," FemTech also has permission — if not a downright expectation — to tailor brand messaging and activity with traditionally feminine attributes, **which also happens to be an extremely effective approach for social media, in general.**



Info Source: National Center for Health Statistics, October 2023



# Feminine attributes?

If you look back to our bulleted suggestions on approaching your social positioning and messaging, you will see some examples of communication methods that have traditionally been labeled *feminine*: responding, listening, shared connections, empathy...

Bifurcating anything into strictly "male" and "female" is inaccurate, of course, and problematic, but there's room to consider a continuum of "masculine" and "feminine" and there are findings from social science that give us some helpful tools.



Social science has done a good job examining the role that language and style play in creating the environments, relationships, and understanding you want to establish with women online.

Noted gender-based communication differences start early<sup>23</sup> and we can look to girls for clues about the most basic elements of feminine communication: dialogue that focuses on creating affinity, connection, relationships and consensus;<sup>24</sup> a tendency to gravitate towards small, close-knit groups and talk more concretely and idiosyncratically than men.<sup>25</sup>

**Women and girls are also more likely than men and boys to ask questions and seek to establish rapport.<sup>26</sup> Women place more value on connection than hierarchy in their interactions.<sup>27</sup> "Me, too!" vs "I win!"**

Understanding this, it makes sense that women are the larger active audience on social media.<sup>28</sup> Social media seems inherently built for the way women tick.



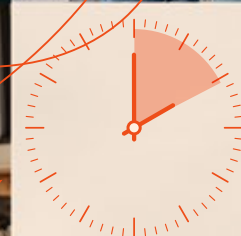
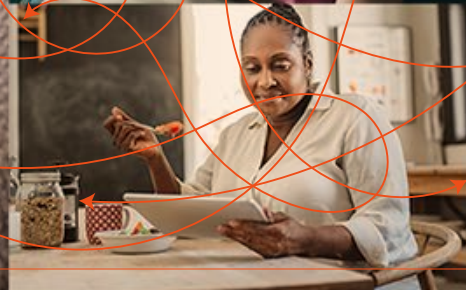


# Knowing how and why women engage, trust and share knowledge —

and what defines a comfortable space to do so — is a valuable tool for any FemTech brand strategizing formats and delivery of their online content.

It's important to master because, whether your brand spends more time pitching to hospitals, care providers, or consumers, social media is driving the conversation.

And — since over half are likely to purchase a product to remedy a health concern after seeing it on social media and **nearly 3 in 4 are likely to talk with their doctor about treatment**<sup>29</sup> — this means the women you connect with on social media are your ultimate audience and communication partners.



# Wrapping

## Up

The call to address women's health misinformation on social media highlights a powerful opportunity that exists — right now — for FemTech, as a category, to step into a leadership position among medical devices in the social space and for FemTech brands to use social media's strengths as a connector to demonstrate their relevancy and build trust.

**Thoughtful, responsive, compelling content that isn't afraid to stand out is essential to building a successful brand presence.**

Understanding and capitalizing on the things that make FemTech naturally suited to succeeding on social media is key to mastering its social messaging and improving the information landscape for women.

Using female-centric communication styles and feminine brand attributes to share accurate knowledge, expertise and experiences, foster dialogue, and create safe learning and sharing spaces are tools FemTech companies should use as part of their approach.

**It's time to go after that horse.  
Saddled up?**







## End Notes:

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We are a group of executive-level marketers who have built a reputation by working with medical device and life science companies that recognize opportunities for value-creation through strategy, branding, marketing and advertising.

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