

grapevine



The World of YouTube

Part I: The “Coming of Age” of a YouTube Star

Millions of creators produce 300 hours of video on YouTube every single minute.¹ While most started uploading videos as a hobby, a select few have skyrocketed to YouTube superstardom.

What seemingly began as bored teens talking into a camera is now a platform for fame, riches, and influence. Nearly every creator on YouTube began as an unknown. However, for thousands of these millennials something special happened. Their activities, opinions, and humor began to attract large audiences of loyal and engaged fans.

Many of these creators worked tirelessly at building their audience and became stars. In fact, a study by Variety suggests YouTube celebrities are now more recognizable and influential than the old guard of Hollywood generated movies and TV A-listers².

In this study, Grapevine leveraged its network of YouTube creators to paint a picture of how new media stars are created. This is the first of three installments providing insight into the World of YouTube. 1,861 creators participated. Using their responses we provide tips for YouTube creators to develop compelling content and draw increasingly larger audiences.

1 <https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>

2 <http://variety.com/2014/digital/news/survey-youtube-stars-more-popular-than-mainstream-celebs-among-u-s-teens-1201275245/>

THE MAKING OF A STAR: THE SECRETS OF CHANNEL GROWTH

There is no magic formula for YouTube success but there are clear patterns we identified from our findings demonstrating what it takes to grow a channel.



Patience and persistence on the path to stardom:

Almost unequivocally, it takes time to grow a channel. YouTube stars are rarely born over night. On average, it takes over two years to become a Trendsetter and most Celebrities have been creating for more than 5 years.



6 Hours+ to make it:

The most successful YouTube creators invest more production time into each video. The fastest growing Trendsetters and Celebrities spend over 8 hours creating and finalizing a single vlog.



Publish at least twice a week:

A majority of popular YouTubers upload two or more videos to their channel each week. Daily uploads are rare and the extra work will only yield a few extra subscribers.



Mature on YouTube:

While the YouTube audience is young (between 13-17), many YouTube creators with sizable subscriber bases started their channels as teenagers, uploaded hundreds of videos devoting years of their life and now fall within the 24-29 age range.



Just grow:

Remember, growing a channel is a marathon, not a sprint. The creators you are most familiar with are extremely hardworking; not everyone becomes an instant success.

Build your audience at your own pace and follow the tips above to produce better content. Do all of these things and you just might become the next YouTube celebrity.



THE STAGES OF YOUTUBE STARDOM

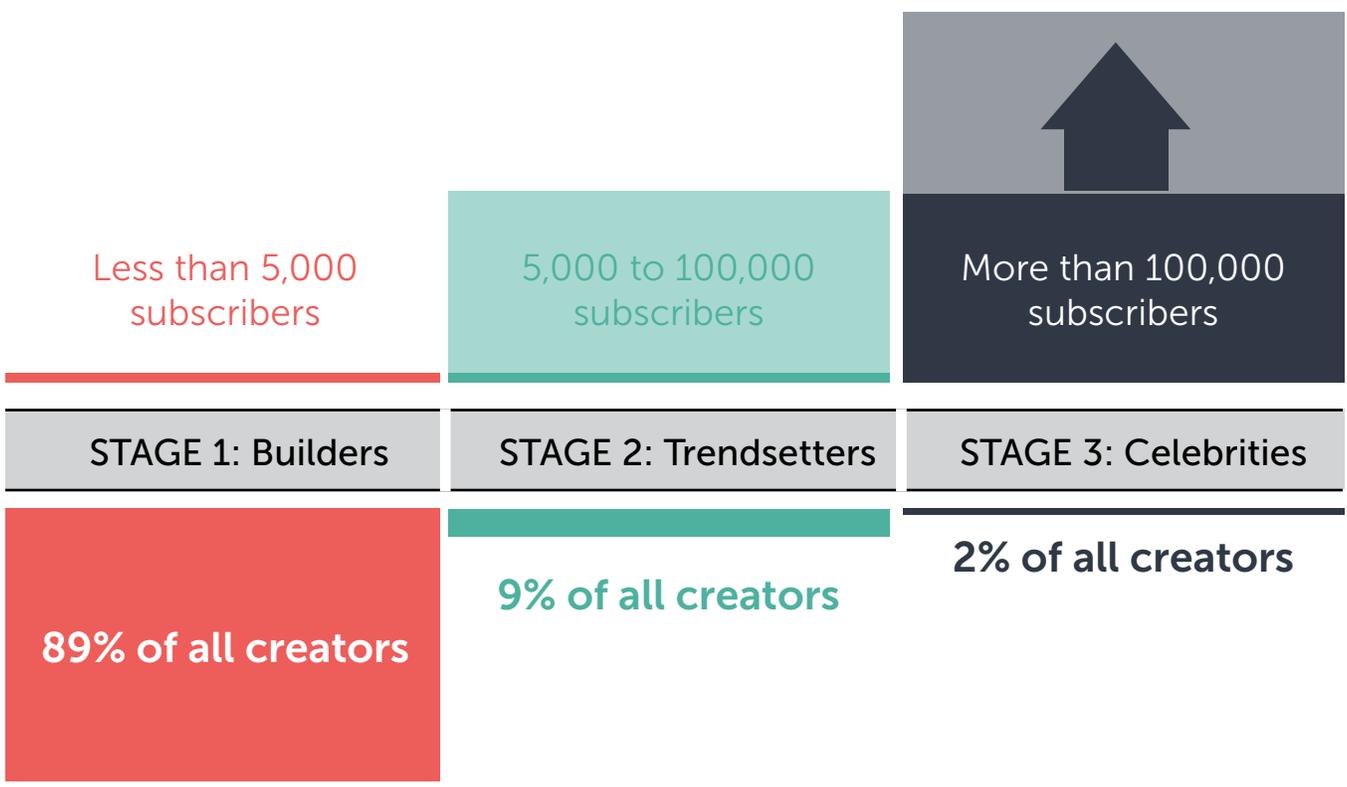
YOUTUBERS BY THE NUMBERS

The world of YouTube is a collage of ages, perspectives and experience. Active creators can yield subscribers ranging from a few dozen to 36 million.

In this study we take a look at how youtubers grew up and what it takes to become a social media superstar.

To better understand how creators grow their channels and influence over time, survey participants were segmented into three core stages:

The Three Stages of YouTuber Growth



PATIENCE & PERSISTENCE

ON THE PATH TO STARDOM

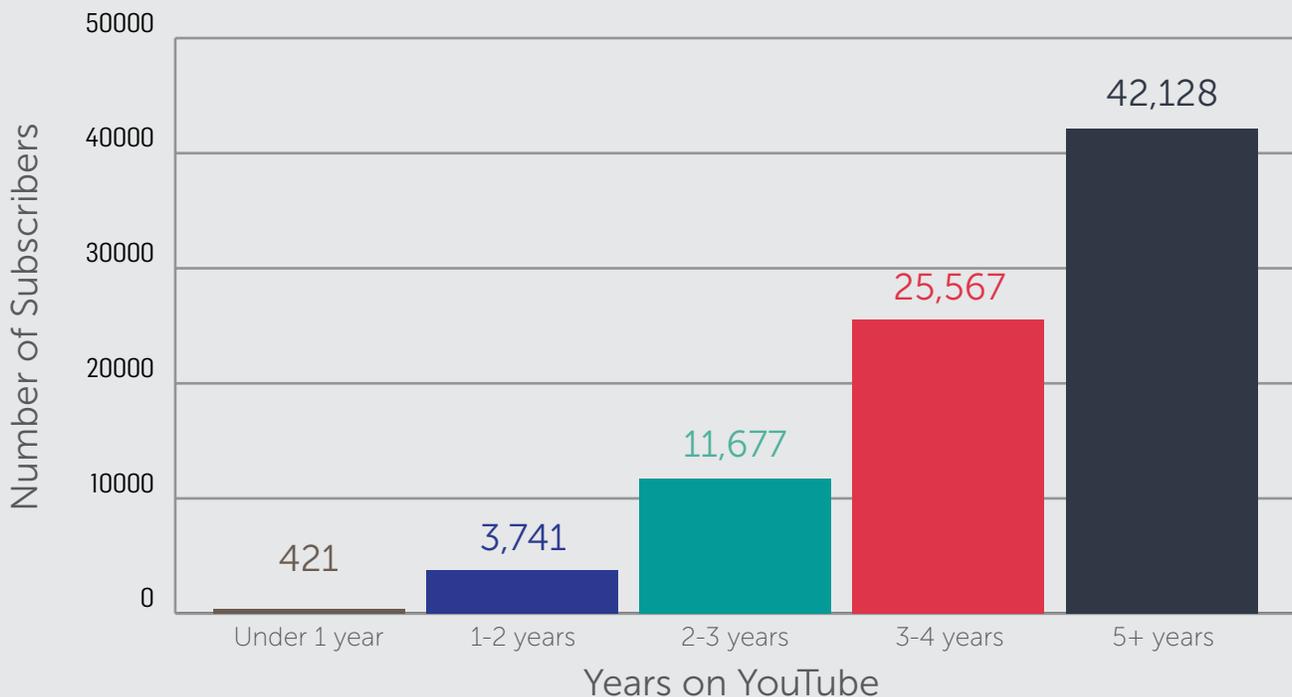
216% On average, a channel will grow its subscriber base 216% per year for the first five years of committed production.

300% Year 2 is the inflection point. During which, the average YouTube channel audience triples and continues to trend upward in later years.

YouTube stars are not born overnight.

It is not surprising that, on average, individuals who have been creating on YouTube for a longer period of time attract the most subscribers. A YouTuber's audience has the potential to grow exponentially over time as he or she becomes a better video producer, learns his or her viewer's needs and promotes her work..

How Quickly YouTube Channels Grow



Quick Fact: Creators that stick with it for more than 5 years have a 1 in 3 chance of emerging as a Trendsetter or Celebrity.



HARD WORK & QUALITY TIME

SIX HOURS LATER

Celebrities put in long hours.
Hard work does pay off. Among the YouTubers surveyed, there was a strong correlation between the amount of time they spent creating each video and larger channel subscriber counts.

Over the years, YouTubers have seen production quality increase dramatically among the videos their peers create. These days, creators are working harder than ever to produce content their viewers will love.

70% & 6+

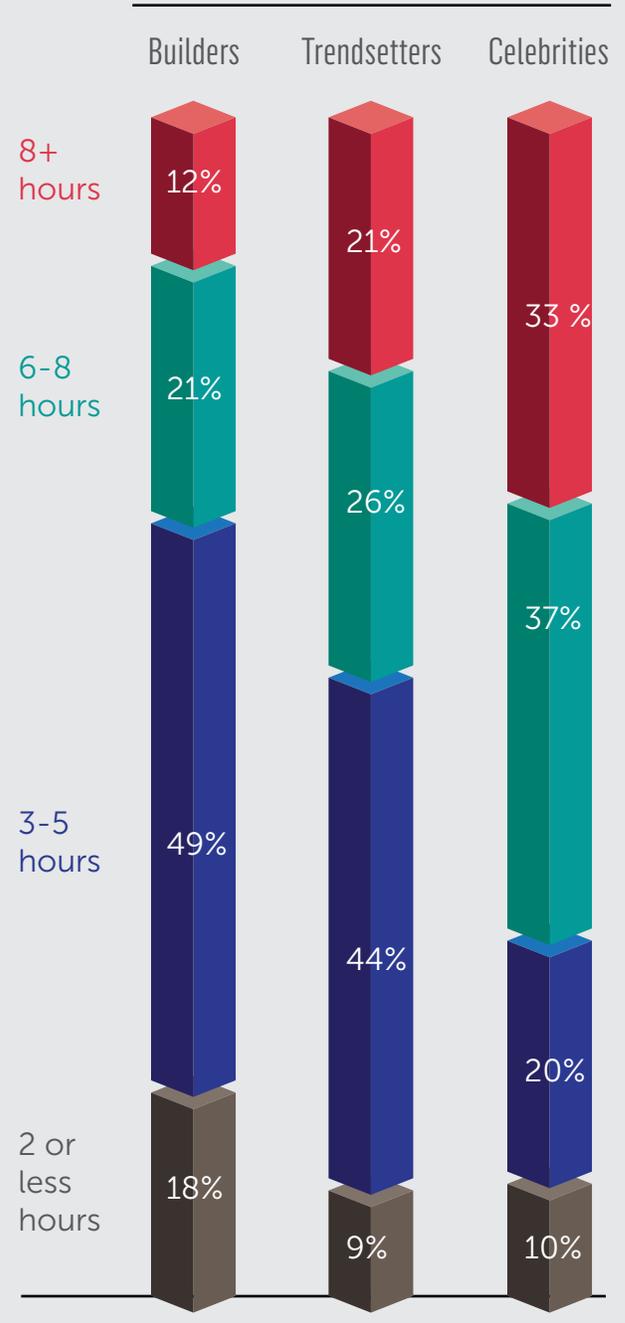
70% of Celebrities spend 6+ hours creating a single video. Most Builders spend less than half that time developing, producing and publishing their videos.



Name: Annie Marie
YouTube Channel: ittybittyannie
Joined YouTube: June 2006

“It used to be you would get your camera in your bedroom. Now, people are going on location and putting in effects to make better videos.”

How Much Time Goes Into a Single YouTube Video?



UPLOAD OFTEN

MORE VIDEOS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

1 out of 2

Over 50% of Trendsetters and Celebrities upload 2 or more videos per week.

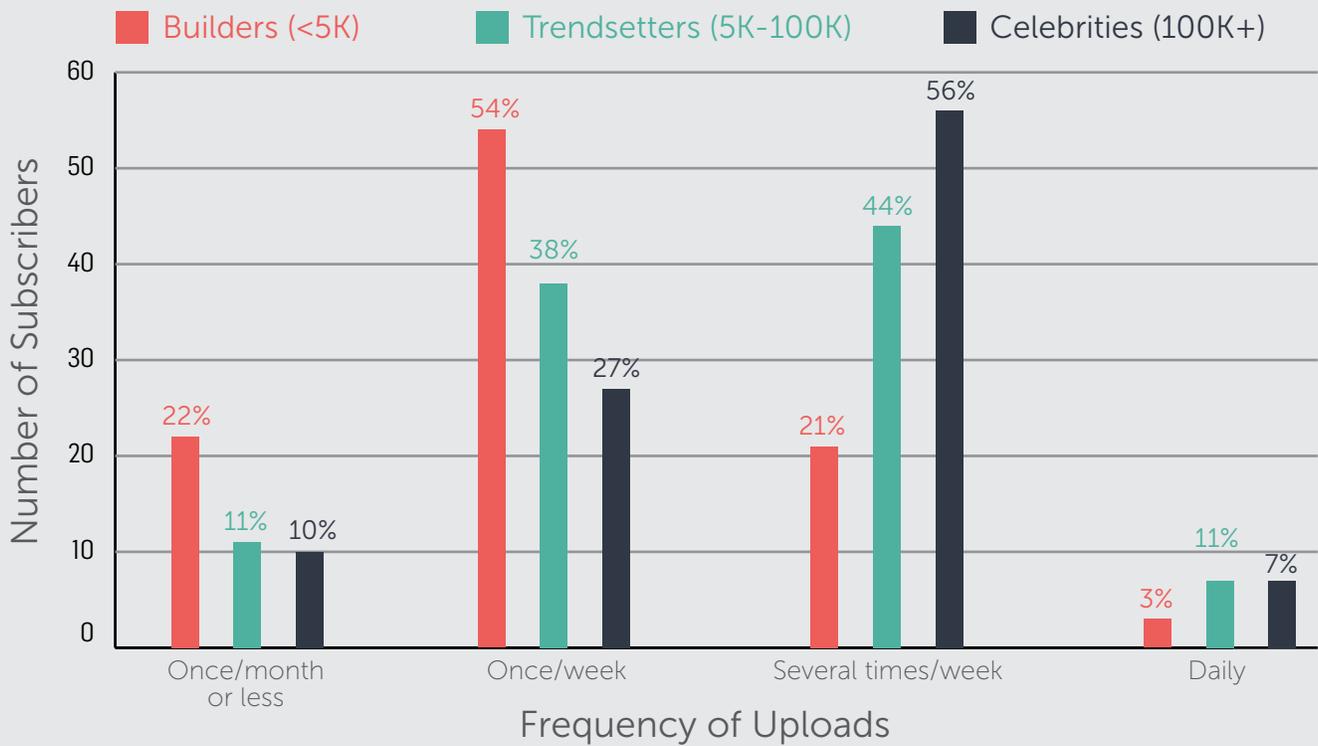
1 out of 14

A daily upload schedule is uncommon, even among creators who have turned YouTube into a career.

Celebrities upload videos several times a week.

Bigger channels grow faster because they provide more content to their viewers and continuously hone their craft. YouTubers who publish one or fewer videos per month do not develop as much experience or momentum as their more active counterparts.

How Video Upload Frequency Impacts Channel Growth



Quick Fact:

The number of creators who publish videos every day is rare. A daily upload schedule is uncommon, even among creators who have turned YouTube into a career. YouTube stars spend more of their time interacting with viewers, and developing and editing each video before it goes live.



MATURE WITH YOUR CHANNEL

THE "COMING OF AGE" ON YOUTUBE

BUILDERS

35%

Largest segment:
35% of Builders
are 14-17 years old

TRENDSETTERS

36%

Largest segment:
36% of Trendsetters
are 18-23 years old

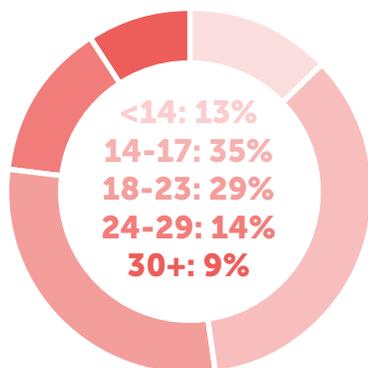
CELEBRITIES

43%

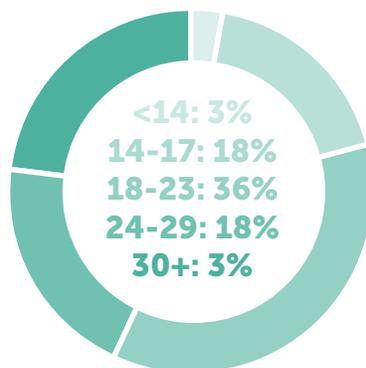
Largest segment:
43% of Celebrities
are 24-29 years old

How old are popular YouTube creators?

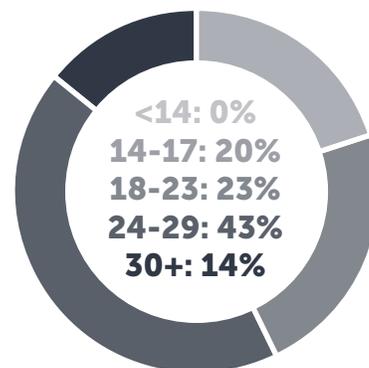
Ages of Builder Creators



Ages of Trendsetter Creators



Ages of Celebrity Creators



Celebrities tend to be older and wiser.

While the Internet seems to belong to the younger generation, our survey shows that most Celebrities (>100k subscribers) lean towards the older end of the age spectrum.

Many popular YouTubers are viewed as role models to their younger audiences. A 2014 survey conducted by NuVoodoo found that 82% of its YouTube viewer respondents were between 14 and 17 years old. (3) And yet, according to the 2015 World of YouTube study, only 20% of Celebrities fall within the 14 and 17 age range. In fact, 57% of these successful creators are older than 24.

The trend clearly shows an "aging" of the YouTuber as subscriber base grows. Each segment is represented by a specific age bracket that gets progressively older with more subscribers:

- 35% of Builders are 14-17 years old
- 36% of Trendsetters are 18-23 years old
- 43% of Celebrities are 24-29 years old

Quick Fact: Fame does not happen overnight, so while YouTubers may start off young, it takes a couple of years before they rise to popularity.



GROW AT YOUR OWN PACE

IT'S A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

500K vs 12K

The most popular YouTuber with 2-3 years of experience has 500,000 subscribers and the average has an audience of 12,000.

1.13M vs 42K

The biggest channel we surveyed with 5+ years of experience on YouTube had 1.13 million subscribers compared to 42,000, the average.

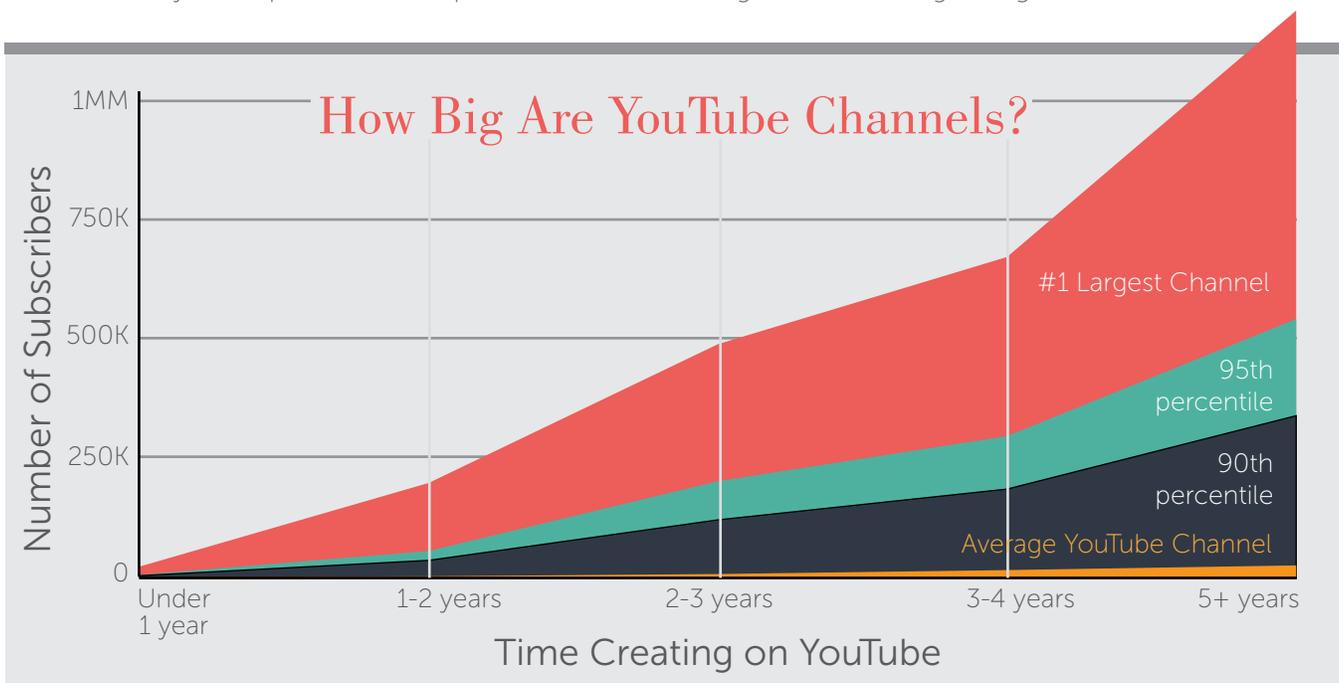
Few YouTubers become superstars.

Although most creators can expect to grow their subscriber counts 216% each year for the first five years, the biggest channels experience astronomical growth. Avoid benchmarking yourself against these breakout successes. Follow the YouTuber best practices outlined in our Cheat Sheet on page 10 to maximize your channel growth.

In each category, the largest channels yield between 2500-7000% more subscribers than the average.

- Most channels under one year old have less than 500 subscribers, while the largest channel has 30,000.
- The most popular YouTuber with 2-3 years of experience has 500,000 subscribers and the average has an audience of 12,000.
- The biggest channel we surveyed with 5+ years of experience on YouTube had 1.13 million subscribers compared to 42,000, the average.

On YouTube, a small number of creators rapidly ascend to Celebrity status. Of course, some of the most popular channels today have spent the better parts of a decade honing their craft and growing their channels.



CHEATSHEET: GROWING UP ON YOUTUBE



Be patient and differentiate yourself

- On average, channels experience 216% subscriber count growth per year for the first 5 years.
 - Creators that stick with it for more than 5 years have a 1 in 3 chance of emerging as a Trendsetter or Celebrity.
-



Put in the hours

- 70% of Celebrities spend 6+ hours creating a single video, compared to 46% of Trendsetters and only 32% of Builders.
 - The best YouTubers treat video conception, development, and production as important stages. A single six-minute video can easily turn into a whole day effort if you care about its quality.
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Upload often, but not too often

- There is a direct correlation between how often creators upload videos and the size of their subscriber base.
 - Over 50% of Trendsetters and Celebrities upload 2 or more videos per week.
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Stick with it: mature on YouTube

- There is an "aging" of the YouTuber as subscriber base grows.
 - More than half (57%) of Celebrities are at least 24 years old and none are younger than 14.
 - 48% of Builders are 17 years old or younger.
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Run the marathon, not the race

- Very few channels are overnight successes. In fact, the most popular YouTuber at each stage of maturity is an anomaly.
 - The largest channels yield between 2500-7000% more subscribers than the average.
 - Patience, persistence, hard work, quality time, dedication, and maturity play critical roles in the development of YouTube superstars.
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ABOUT GRAPEVINE

Grapevine is a platform that helps 100+ beauty, fashion and lifestyle brands partner with its network of more than 17,000 YouTube creators for unique sponsorship opportunities.

To make extra money through YouTube sponsorships, visit:
http://bit.ly/YouTube_Money

To launch your first influencer marketing campaign, sign up at:
http://bit.ly/YouTube_Brands

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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