

# Comcast sees an opportunity in SMB streaming advertising

Article

**The news:** Comcast ad tech subsidiary **Freewheel** is launching a self-serve ad platform called **Universal Ads** that will help small and midsize businesses purchase streaming ad inventory.

- The ad platform already has several streaming and CTV partners onboard for its alpha launch this month, including **NBCUniversal** (also a Comcast subsidiary), **Roku**, **Paramount**, **Warner**

**Bros. Discovery, DirecTV, and more.**

- Notably, streaming leaders **Disney, Netflix, and Amazon Prime Video** are not part of Universal Ads' launch.

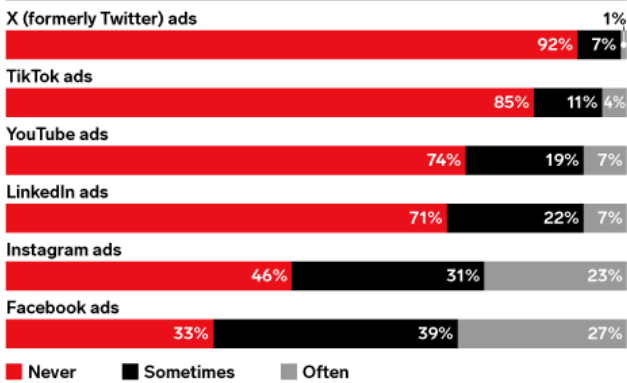
**Zooming out:** Universal Ads meets a desire both from small businesses to reach streaming audiences as well as an ad industrywide push to open doors for small- to midsize business ad spending.

- Ad product launches throughout 2024 signaled that advertising platforms of all sizes were looking to attract small business spending as competition for big-budget brands heats up. **Meta, Google,** and smaller competitors like **Taboola** launched a series of [AI-powered features](#) intended to bring SMBs into the fold.
- It's those large digital platforms that Comcast is hoping to compete with. In a press release, Comcast said it found that 50% of advertisers who spend on social media and not TV feel they've plateaued, while 89% expressed interest in TV and streaming advertising.
- **Comcast sees a benefit in being the middleman between streaming platforms and SMBs.** If the company can successfully connect streamers and small businesses, it stands to benefit significantly from the large number of smaller brands that want to access streaming's highly engaged audiences and unique advertising opportunities.

**Our take:** Universal Ads is poised to become a significant player in the streaming advertising business by providing platforms without their own ad tech stack an easy lever to pull to reach advertisers. But it may not be the only platform in town for long: Netflix, Disney, and Amazon are likely to explore their own similar products, and its current partners could similarly splinter off over time.

## Social Media Platforms SMB Marketers Worldwide Use to Run Ads, by Frequency, Jan 2024

% of respondents



Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Source: Social Media Examiner, "2024 Social Media Marketing Industry Report," May 20, 2024

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