

# Private vs. Public: What is Snapchat's Best Move?



By Peter LaMotte, Senior Strategist,  
[LEVICK &](#)

[Carly Berkenblit](#), Intern, [LEVICK](#)

In 2011, Snapchat started off as a prototype for a class at Stanford. Today, it is one of the world's most popular [social media](#) apps, with more than 100 million daily users and a value of nearly \$16 billion. Snapchat's release of "Snapchat Partners," an application programming interface that will connect brands to developers for in-app [marketing](#) purposes, has firmly positioned the company on track to keep growing. Most interestingly, Snapchat Partners will provide marketers with more options to buy and measure advertisements on the app, without needing to partner with [Snapchat](#), itself.

This new marketing initiative stands out from other social media platforms since the advertisements are integrated into the app's experience. A recent success of Snapchat Partners' advertising integration into the app would be the "X-Men: Apocalypse" filter. The advertisement was mixed in the assortment of Snapchat filters, altering the individuals face and eyes, while adding in text that promoted the movie title and release day. Each snap that a user sends to one another using that filter is free promotion for that movie and more times than not, unbeknownst to the user. Since each snap is as easily sent and it is to view, a brand can effortlessly and

effectively integrate with an individual's content.

Some brands have done such an excellent job of seamlessly integrating filters into Snapchat that users are willing to promote the brand without any consideration to the role they are playing in the brand's marketing strategy. A common example would be when an upcoming movie has a facial-recognition filter that alters the user's face to match a main character, along with the movie title and release day in the corner.

Snapchat, however, must be careful to not get carried away with brand partnerships. The brand must insert their advertisement into a conversation where they know they are welcome, in order for their message to not backfire. Brands have learned the hard way that people do not like being sold and targeted on their social platforms. Brands must be cautious to target the right audience, all while making sure the brand does not interfere with a regular user's experience. Those are two major cautionary flags any brand must address.

If the branded content doesn't appeal to the target audience it will not only turn users against the brand, it may drive users away from Snapchat altogether. There is always the risk of garbage in, garbage out. If Snapchat loses control over the content being pushed on their platform, they may undermine their current success.

While this style of marketing is unique to Snapchat, only time will tell if this will reflect a short-term trend, or have the capacity to consistently bring in revenue and help Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel's IPO dreams become a reality?

Snapchat's new marketing technique gives it a unique edge over other social media platforms. Various brands now have the opportunity to insert their own message into a conversation, targeting it to appeal to a broad audience, that they may not have been able to previously reach. Filters, in particular,

give brands the ability to create a new level of engagement. It is also very cheap for brands, or even individuals, to create a custom promotion on Snapchat. No other major social engagement platform has ever had that level of integration.

While it is too early to measure the impact that integrated advertisements will have on Snapchat, it is certain that the platform needs to make sure it is not interfering with the user's experience. While the revenue potential is great for Snapchat, if it strays away from a social media platform and into an advertising hub, other social media platforms will just take over where Snapchat left off, without making the same mistakes that they made.

*About the Authors: Peter LaMotte is a Senior Strategist for LEVICK, [Carly Berkenblit](#) is an Intern at LEVICK while attending the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.*