

TL;DR

Viewers decide in the first 1-3 s whether to keep watching. This guide reverse-engineers the best performing *hook types* on TikTok, Instagram Reels, Lemon8, YouTube Shorts, LinkedIn and Facebook so you can open strong, batch quickly and reclaim editing hours.

1 Why hooks rule short-form video

- TikTok and other short-form platforms reward content that hooks viewers within 1–3 seconds.
- YouTube Creator Insider repeatedly advises to avoid long intros; cold opens often improve completion.
- LinkedIn and Meta best-practice guidance similarly emphasize a clear hook in the opening seconds.

Implication: Nail the hook and you can spend less time on mid-video polish without tanking retention.

2 Universal hook formulas (apply anywhere)

| Formula | Template | Use when... |
|------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Problem-Promise | “Struggling with <i>X</i> ? Watch me fix it in 30 s.” | Pain-point tutorials |
| Intrigue | “This feels illegal to know.” | Hacks, myths, revelations |
| Numbered payoff | “3 ways to double leads today.” | Listicles, swipe files |
| Contrarian | “Stop using <i>X</i> - do this instead.” | Busting common advice |
| POV jump-cut | <i>Opens mid-sentence:</i> “-and that's why we fired our best customer.” | Storytime, vlogs |

Batch tip: Script five hooks for one idea, film all in one take, then A/B test which keeps watchers past 50 % view-time.

3 Channel-specific cheat sheet

3.1 TikTok

- **3-Second Rule:** Place the *core payoff* before the progress bar reaches the first tick.
- **On-screen text first, voice second** - most users watch muted for 1-2 s.
- **Jump straight into action** (e.g. pour paint before you explain the colour hack).

Rapid template:

| Time Range | Action | Content |
|------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| 0:00-0:02 | Text card | "I bet you edit videos the hard way." |
| 0:02-0:05 | Cut | Show 2-step shortcut |

3.2 Instagram Reels

- **Preview the result** in frame 1 (after/before), then rewind to “How”.
- **Beat-sync opening** - align first cut to the song's down-beat; Reels watch-time rises when the audio feels native.
- **Gradient text overlay** contrasts against busy backgrounds and survives Reels compression.

3.3 Lemon8

- **Pinterest-style cover slide:** big headline + micro-thumbnail collage; strong covers drive more saves.
- **Value-first caption** - summarise the tutorial in ≤ 100 chars before any hashtags.
- **Carousel tease:** promise a template in slide 3; viewers swipe to unlock, boosting completion.

3.4 YouTube Shorts (and long-form cold opens)

- **Face or bold B-roll in 0.5 s;** static branded intros kill retention.
- **Context in a single line:** “Three SaaS metrics no one tracks.”
- **For > 8 min videos:** steal your own highlight clip as a 5-s pre-roll, then smash-cut into the standard intro.

3.5 LinkedIn Native Video

- **Hook = business outcome.** “Cut onboarding churn this quarter.”
- **Subtitles recommended** - many viewers scroll on mute during office hours.
- **Aspect ratio 4:5** fills more vertical space on mobile feed.

3.6 Facebook Reels & Ads

- **Pattern-interrupt frame:** odd crop, flipped colour, or upside-down headline; works because it contrasts with friends' photos.
 - **“Feels personal” opener** - direct second-person call-out (“Hey coffee lover-turned-manager!”).
 - **Add a progress bar overlay** to hint at short length and reduce skip-rate.
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4 Scaling hooks without doubling edit time

1. **Script stack:** write 5 hooks → 1 body → 1 CTA. Swap hooks per platform.
 2. **Shoot wide + tight** simultaneously (dual-camera or 4K crop). Saves reshoots.
 3. **Automate captions** (CapCut auto-transcribe) and brand text styles in templates.
 4. **Clip-grading macro:** LUT batch-applied via free DaVinci Resolve preset. 60 s saves per reel.
 5. **Hook leaderboard** spreadsheet: log hook variant, platform, 3-s hold % and watch-through %. Kill low performers after 3 days.
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5 Common hook mistakes

| Mistake | Consequence | Fix |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Burying payoff after long logo | Viewers swipe | Cold open with benefit |
| Too many on-screen words | Cognitive overload | ≤ 10 words in first frame |
| Re-using TikTok memes on LinkedIn | Brand mismatch | Re-script in industry tone |
| No captions on mobile-first feeds | Mute drop-off spike | Auto-subtitle every cut |

6 Further reading

- [Hook Intent Matrix - qualify leads \(not just views\)](#)
- [Short-Form Funnel Blueprint - hook → checkout](#)

- [Platform-native Test Plan - TikTok vs Reels vs Shorts](#)
 - [TikTok Support - Creating & Posting Videos](#)
 - [Instagram Creators - Reels Tips & Updates](#)
 - [Instagram Help Center](#)
 - [YouTube Help - Create Shorts](#)
 - [Meta Business Help Center](#)
 - [LinkedIn Help Center](#)
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Sources

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 - Instagram Creators - Blog (Accessed: 2025-09-02): <https://creators.instagram.com/blog>
 - YouTube Help - Create Shorts (Accessed: 2025-09-02): <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/11451188>
 - Meta Business Help (Accessed: 2025-09-02): <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/>
 - LinkedIn Help (Accessed: 2025-09-02): <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/>
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- [Segment Anything Model \(GitHub\)](#)
- [Segment Anything Model \(arXiv\)](#)
- [LLaMA 2 \(GitHub\)](#)
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Last updated 24 Jul 2025 - we will refresh these patterns every quarter as platform algorithms evolve.