



Cardinals Communications Audit

Introduction

This Communications audit is meant to research and analyze the communication channels of the Arizona Cardinals brand. Their social media presence will be compared to one of their competitors, the Los Angeles Rams. Their Instagram, TikTok, X, and Youtube accounts will all be analyzed to get a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses of their online presence. The research was targeted to get a better understanding of the following research questions:

1. How does weekly game performance affect interaction and engagement?
2. Does humorous or more serious content perform better?
3. How present is gameday experience content?

Methodology

The research spanned from September 1st - 30th, 2024. Social Blade, Muck Rack and Rival IQ were used to obtain the findings below. Social Blade and Rival IQ were used to research and evaluate social media presence and performance over the last 30 days. MuckRack was utilized to share how much media coverage both brands received in the last month. A total of 2,257 posts were evaluated across both Arizona Cardinals and Los Angeles Rams Instagram, X, Facebook, Youtube,

Social Media Analysis - Cardinals

Instagram (@azcardinals)

As of October 2nd, @azcardinals on Instagram has 1.1m followers, with 3,581 posts. During the month of September their following count jumped by a 168.2% rate. They post on average 6 times a day, not including stories. They also have a very organized highlight section for players as well as game highlights and digital wallpapers.

Key Finding 1: *The Cardinals hold a very minimalistic approach to their Instagram*

In almost every caption they choose short to the point captions, they also have very simple pictures for many posts. They keep graphics simple and don't use a lot of words or descriptions. You will notice in figure 1 they do not have any post covers with wording other than the Kyler stat. This is intentional to keep a clean grid look. However, it does seem to have a lack of effort or boring undertone as no post stands out or looks engaging.



Figure 1: A screenshot of the Cardinals Instagram grid featuring posts from this past month

Key Finding 2: *Winning weeks vs Losing weeks play a big role in tone and humor posts*



Figure 2: A post from the Cardinals captioned “Not done.”

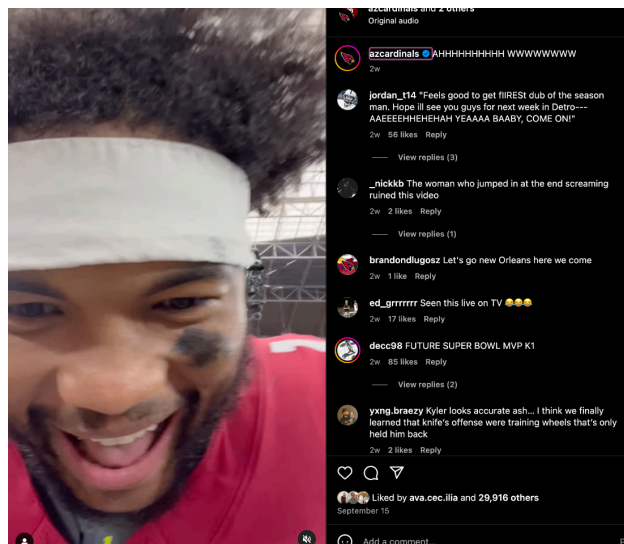


Figure 3: A reel cover from a postgame video captioned,
“AHHHHHHHHHH WWWWWWWW”



Figure 4: A meme captioned, “Marv, we love you”

The Cardinals tend to have a very serious tone on Instagram. There is little humor and definitely a trend between win weeks and loss weeks. When the Cardinals have won their Sunday game the overall posts are more playful and positive especially postgame. In figures 3 and 4 you will see they have a fun reel with Kyler as well as a Marin Harrison Jr. meme. The humorous content tends to perform better but that also can be in trend with fans' moods coming off of a win as well.

Tik Tok (@azcardinals)

The Cardinals TikTok presence is more lighthearted than Instagram with more player personalities shining through. They have 941.7k followers and posted 25 times within the month and had an average engagement of 1.17k.

Key Finding 1: *Player Personality performs better*

The TikToks that perform the best for the Cardinals are not the heavily edited or showy ones but rather the trivia. The videos asking players questions or holding more player interaction have higher views as well as higher engagement.

Key Finding 2: *Quality over quantity is key to TikTok posts.*

As mentioned earlier, Cardinals have an engagement rate of 1.17k however their competitors The Rams had an average engagement of 39.6k while still posting .5 times less than the Cardinals.

This has to do with the type of content posted, although the Cardinals have a lighter presence on TikTok they are not as good as posting trending, short form, internet humor content. The Rams however post trendier content which will be analyzed in their own section but it does perform better compared to Cardinals team specific content. Even by looking at figure 5 and 6 you can see how the Rams content looks more humorous whereas Cardinals looks a bit more tidy and formal. TikTok users tend to appreciate a more honest and comedic outlook, especially if it

follows other TikTok trends which the Cardinals struggle to do. Since TikTok is primarily younger users they don't have as much worry about trying out new lingo and trends but they don't seem to take advantage of that as much as other professional league teams are.

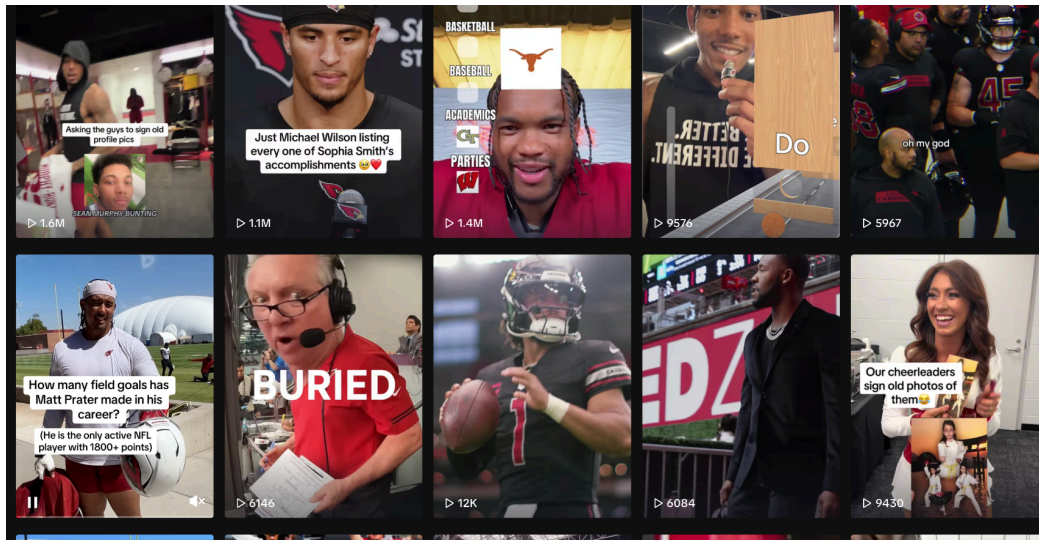


Figure 5: A screenshot of the Cardinal's TikTok grid with their most recent posts.

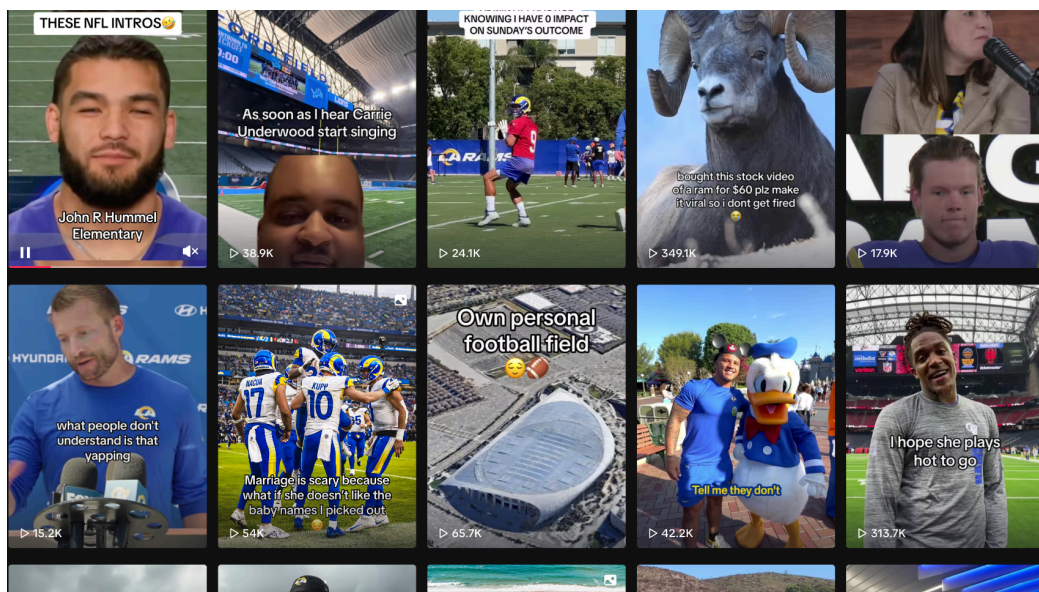


Figure 6: A screenshot of the Ram's TikTok grid with their most recent posts.

Traditional Media

In the month of September the Cardinals had a total of 57,985 articles written about them. Most of these articles were written by BVM Sports, Yahoo Sports, YardBaker, Headtopics, and USA Today, all digital publications. There is no analysis on the kind of articles but most sports articles tend to trend towards game and player performance.

Social Media Analysis - Competitor

Instagram (@rams)

The Los Angeles Rams have a strong Instagram presence with 1.7m followers and 4,828 posts on their page. They also have their highlight section dedicated to all their gameday content, a strong choice rather than spamming timelines which many users can find annoying. Their content is used to mostly highlight stats, players, and also has a touch of youth to it with edited win videos and the use of influencers. Their graphic choice is inconsistent with some choosing to be in a kid doodle type font, sometimes full capitol bold, and other times in cursive which can lead to a clash on their grid and inconsistent theme overall.

Key Finding 1:*The Rams do not focus as much on Internal Gameday Content as Cardinals do.*

The Rams post less on Instagram than the Cardinals do. However, this seems to be working for them since their engagement rate is 1.10% compared to Cardinals 0.64%. They choose to highlight some pregame, some postgame, and minimal game highlights keeping it to nine posts for a gameday. This may be the better approach because many fans are already watching these games and do not need the spam of replays, pregame information, and postgame interviews they

have already seen. Figure 7 shows the 9 posts they had on gameday and what they thought was important to share.



Figure 7: A screenshot of the Rams 9 game day posts.

Key Finding 2: *The Rams use influencers to their strengths.*

The Rams highlighted influencers Leah Kateb (@leahkateb) and Miguel Harichi (@miguel_harichi) from the show of the summer Love Island. They posted a grid post as well as a reel with both performing well and having lots of fan interactions. This was a great choice because although they may have little to do with football, they both posted on their own pages about going to the game and in turn grew the Rams audience. You can see in figure 8 their two main page posts dedicated to the couple.



TikTok (@rams)

The Rams currently have 1.7m followers on TikTok with 29.4m likes. They posted 17 times within the last 30 days and have a high engagement of 39.6k. They typically post trending humorous content that sometimes isn't even related to Rams but is more of content for fans to relate to.

Key Finding 1: *The Rams do a great job of participating in TikTok trends.*

The Rams have a very fun presence on TikTok with a lot of trends as their posts. They aren't afraid to use templates that fans can relate to. They hopped on trends like Brat Summer and Moo Deng which have nothing to do with football, but they were able to put a football spin on it, broadening their audience to those who may not know football but know online humor. You can see in figures 5 and 6 how their TikTok grid reflects that.

Key Finding 2: *The Rams content breaks the fourth wall of social media by addressing the audience jokingly.*

Rams have a unique presence in that all of their content is not just football focused and they even refer to themselves as the “social media managers” on their page. This can make viewers feel closer to the brand and as if they are laughing with. In figures 7 and 8 they refer to themselves as “I” and “Me” which makes their content more relatable for fans.

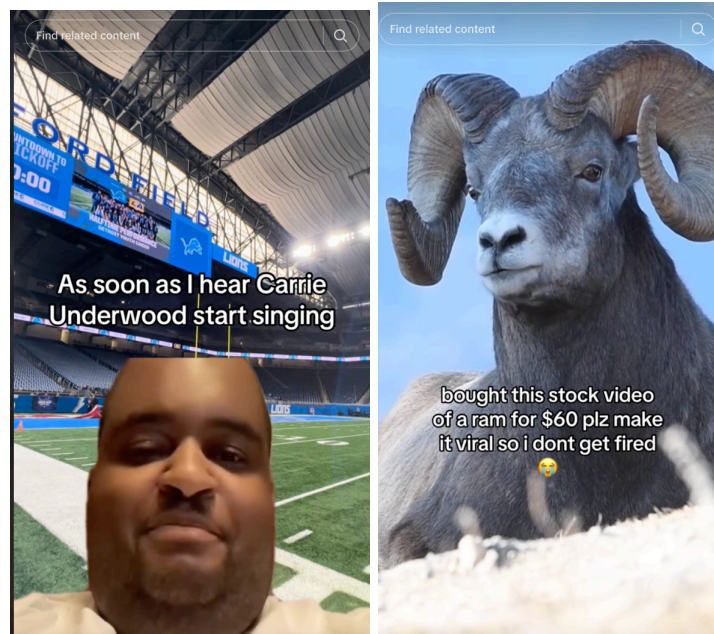


Figure 7: A TikTok Screenshot from Rams Figure 8: A TikTok Screenshot from Rams

Traditional Media

In the month of September the Rams had a total of 68,825 articles written about them. Most of these articles were written by BVM Sports, Yahoo Sports, YardBaker, Headtopics, and Sports Illustrated, all digital publications. There is no analysis on the kind of articles but most sports articles tend to trend towards game and player performance.

Competitor Analysis

These metrics were measured between the dates of September 1st-30th

Facebook	Client: Arizona Cardinals	Competitor: Los Angeles Rams
Total # of followers	1.38m	1m
Total # of Page likes	1.3m	908k
Average # of posts per day	10.2	9.43
# of posts during 30 day research period	306	283
Average # of engagement (likes and comments) per post	331	1.12k
Average # of shares per post	22.5	93.4
Average engagement rate	0.024%	0.12%
Tone of posts	Community, Info heavy	Spotlights, Minimalistic

Instagram	Client: Arizona Cardinals	Competitor: Los Angeles Rams
Total # of followers	1,184,296	1,791,004
Average # of posts per day	6.14	4.36
# of posts during 30 day research period	212	137
Average # of engagement (likes and comments) per post	7.57k	19.7k
Average # of comments per post	101	263
Average # of likes per post	4,672.04	11,097

TikTok	Client: Arizona Cardinals	Competitor: Los Angeles Rams
Total # of followers	942k	1.71m
Average # of posts per week	3.5	3
# of posts during 30 day research period	25	17
Average # of engagement (likes and comments) per post	1.17k	39.6k
# of Followers in past 30 days	+10,800	N/A
Tone of posts	Casual, Trivia	Trendy, Comical, BTS

Twitter/X	Client: Arizona Cardinals	Competitor: Los Angeles Rams
Total # of followers	1,175, 467	1,263,267
Average # of posts per day	24.3	14.7
# of posts during 30 day research period	731	441
Average # of engagement (likes and comments) per post	645	1.1k
Average # of retweets per post	39	103

Average engagement rate	0.055%	0.088%
Percentage change of followers in past 30 days	+2,664	+3434
Tone of posts	Informative, Community heavy	Informative, Sassy/Playful

Youtube	Client: Arizona Cardinals	Competitor: Los Angeles Rams
Total # of subscribers	85.4k	148k
Average # of video views	3,468	8,101
Average # of posts per week	15.3	15.2
# of posts during 30-day research period	71	76
Average # of engagement per post	N/A	N/A
Average # of comments per post	N/A	N/A
Average # of likes per post	N/A	N/A
Average engagement rate	N/A	N/A
Percentage change of followers in past 30 days	2.9k	4k
Tone of posts	Press heavy, Serious	Team insight, Mic'd up, recaps

Key Metric Comparison Findings

- Rams hold more followers/subscribers than Cardinals on every platform
- Quality over quantity is important, the Rams post less but get higher engagement as well as higher followings.

- Cardinals overall have a more serious tone across all platforms compared to Rams.

Conclusion

The Cardinals have some great work on their communications channels, however they do have a lot of room for growth. They struggle to stay on trend and have an authentic voice. They post a lot more than the Rams across all platforms but have less of a following and less engagement. It would be beneficial to look inward and evaluate the kind of content that is put out and how frequently. They do a great job of staying consistent with graphics and themes. They're weakest area is TikTok as they do not post as much and have little engagement, but focusing more on loosening up and following trends would probably make a positive impact. Returning to the three research questions brought up earlier, here is how they performed.

1. How does weekly game performance affect interaction and engagement?

Weekly performance has a huge impact on social media tones. Interaction and engagement doesn't drop much but the tone of the comments completely does with fans offering up opinions and thoughts on player and game performance. In losing weeks they take on a more serious dry tone whereas wins are followed with memes and more positive content.

2. Does humorous or more serious content perform better?

Humorous content performs a lot better, especially on TikTok. However, the Cardinals do not take advantage of this the way the Rams do. They are better about showing player personality through trivia, but they struggle to create content that users would recognize as humor. They typically only post humor when the team is performing well.

3. How present is gameday experience content?

The Cardinals are not doing themselves a favor at all when it comes to gameday experience. This is arguably one of their largest issues as a franchise but they had little to no content on game day experiences for fans, nothing that created a want to be at the venue. In the Client Backgrounder, it was highlighted that game day experiences are their biggest struggle as a franchise, however their socials do nothing to support solving that problem with no main grid posts highlighting fan experiences other than generic pictures of a crowd.