The ultimate guideline to growing your followers on Instagram

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Why some business profiles grow exponentially, and the other ones struggle to reach a thousand subscribers? Learn how to grow your Instagram followers and maintain high engagement rates organically.

Sociality.io Blogs is a collection of carefully crafted content with experts' opinions, industry insights, and guides to master social media marketing game. To learn more about Instagram marketing, visit sociality.io/blog

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Drop us a line at support@sociality.io

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introduction

Fact: 80% of 1 billion users are subscribed to at least one business profile.

A lot of businesses find Instagram statistics overwhelmingly impressive and put their efforts into building their social media presence. We have all been there, and we all have seen businesses get too excited about hitting their first 10K followers. But why some business profiles grow exponentially and the other ones struggle to reach a thousand subscribers. In this article, you will learn how to organically grow your Instagram followers in your own phase.

WHY DO PEOPLE FOLLOW BRANDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

The answer to this question is key to your profile's success. A successful social presence starts with understanding the target audience, as this will offer insights on what content to create.

73.4% of users follow a brand due to interest in its product or service, while 58.8% are more interested in its promotions. Also, people follow business profiles that are entertaining and open for communication. Or they simply engage with brands because their friends follow their content.

Although many people follow brands because they already liked them before they discovered them online. **However, you can still take the opportunity to create entertaining content and show your brand's personality to make your audience get to know you better.**

ORGANIC VS NON-ORGANIC GROWTH

The temptation to use services and buy engagement is high. But trust us, you won't benefit from reaching fake growth at any point in the future.

You might be wondering how fake a few thousand followers can harm you, rather than just be displayed at the top of your profile and enable you to embed links to your stories.

The Instagram algorithm is complicated, but it won't recognize fake followers as fake. If out of 2000 followers only 30 liked your post or have even seen it, the algorithm will consider your content not interesting. So, it will not display your content even to the most loyal followers who truly enjoy your posts. They simply won't see it.

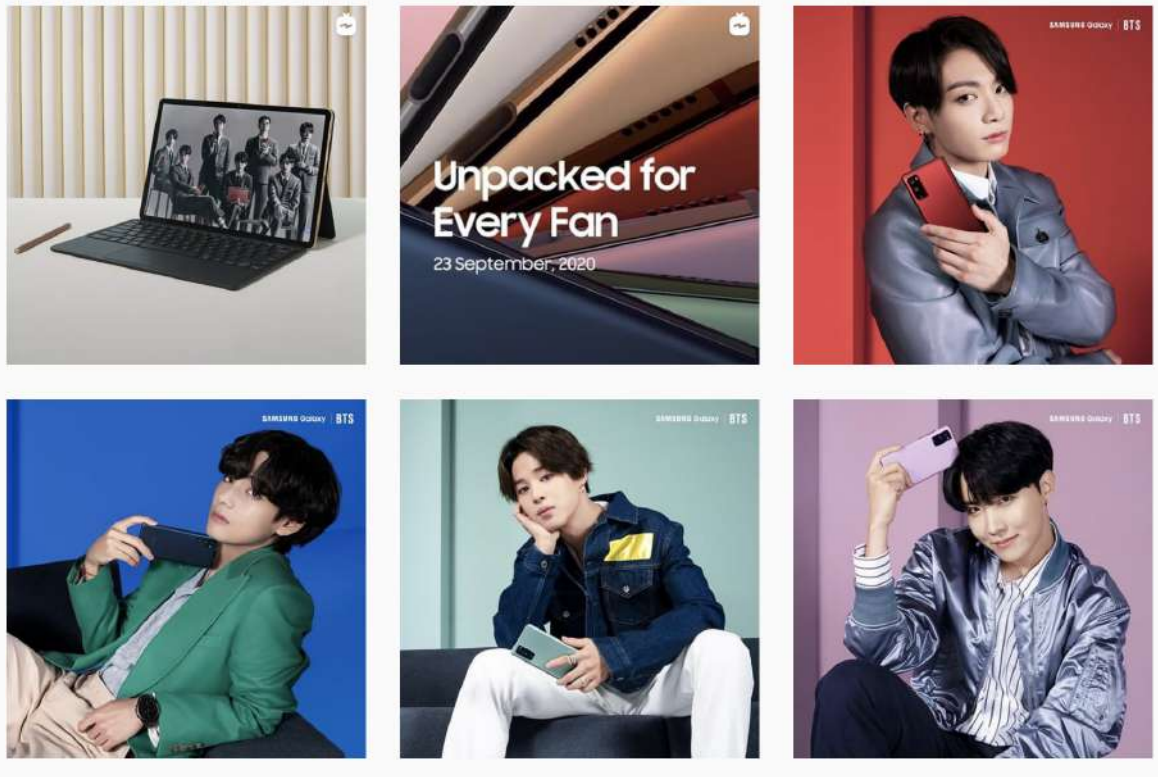
Fake growth will harm your engagement rates, reach, discovery, etc in many ways and will definitely downgrade your social media marketing efforts. **We highly recommend you to stick to our guidelines and use strictly organic growth techniques.**

step by step
organic growth guideline

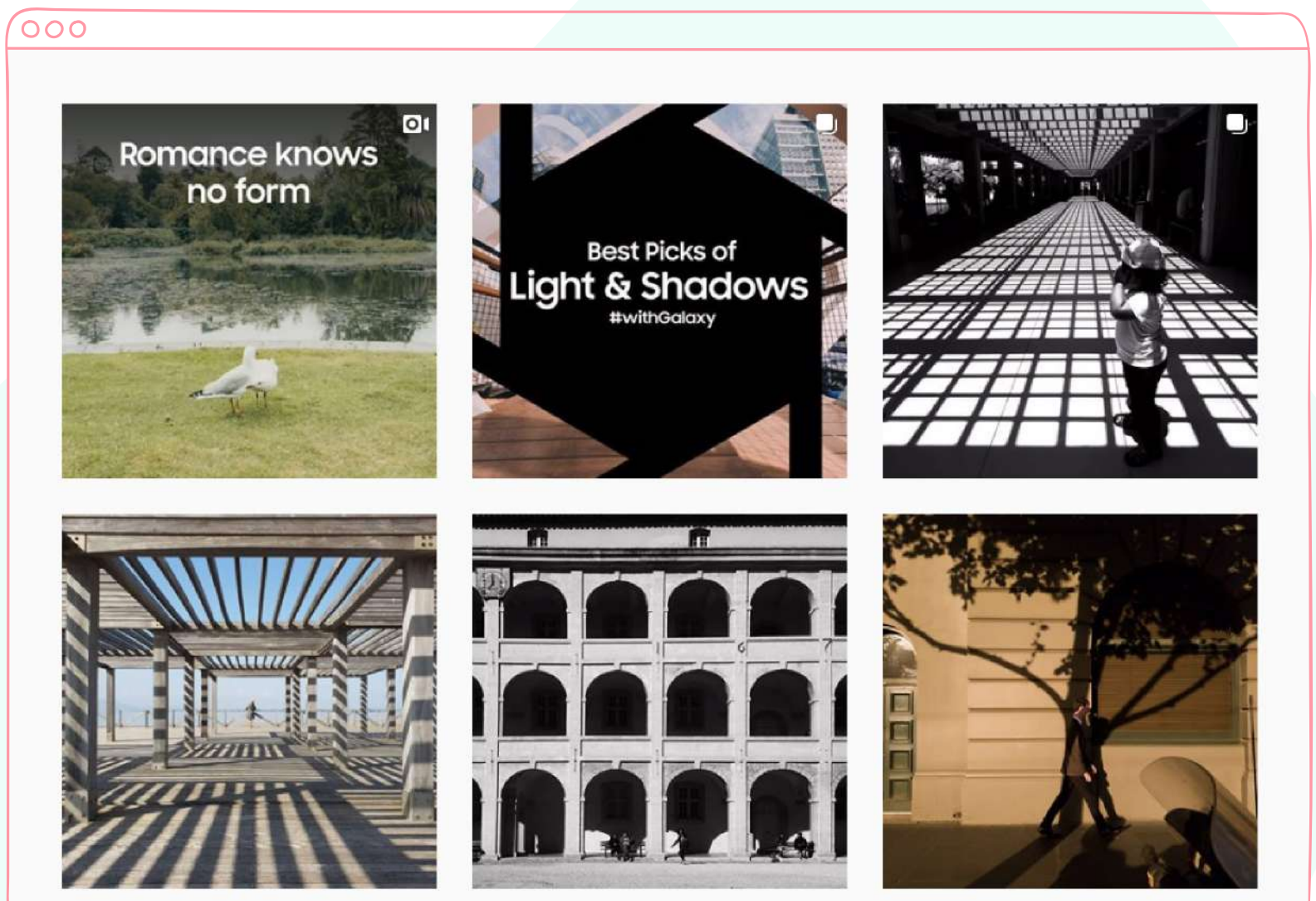
STEP 1 _ PLAN, CREATE AND OPTIMIZE INSTAGRAM CONTENT STRATEGY

Your content strategy will evolve with time and reflect the ongoing behavioral and social changes. **However, having a clear short-term strategy is crucial to making sure you hit marketing goals.** Understand how your profile is going to represent your business and what idea it is going to be focused around. This is the right way to attract the target audience.

Samsung mobile is promoting its brand new S20FE.



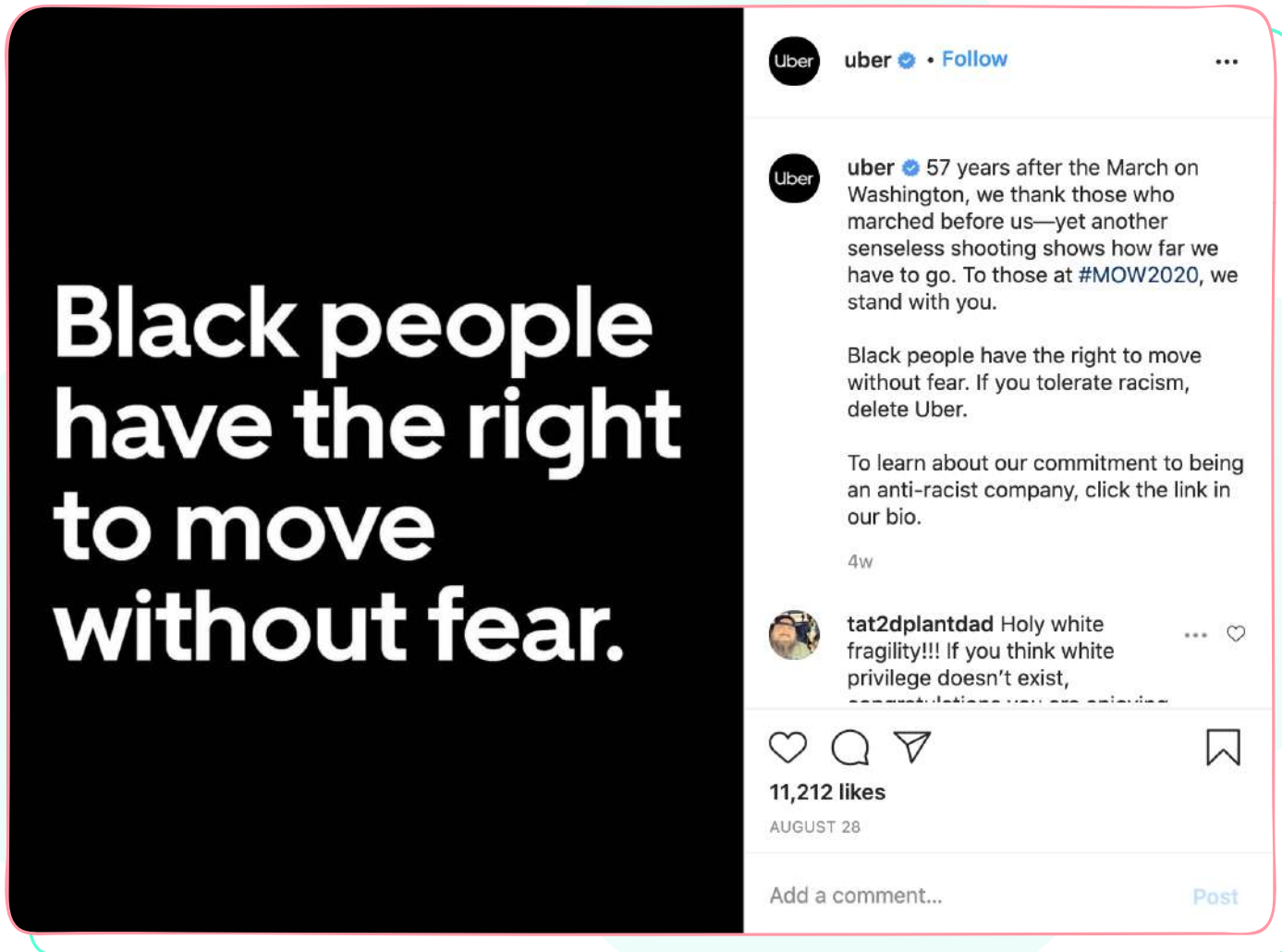
However, in the past, they used to promote a product indirectly by showcasing smartphones' camera capabilities. *(Note that the below pictures are not available anymore. Samsung had deleted them when they shifted to a new content strategy that was adjusted to reflect market changes.)*



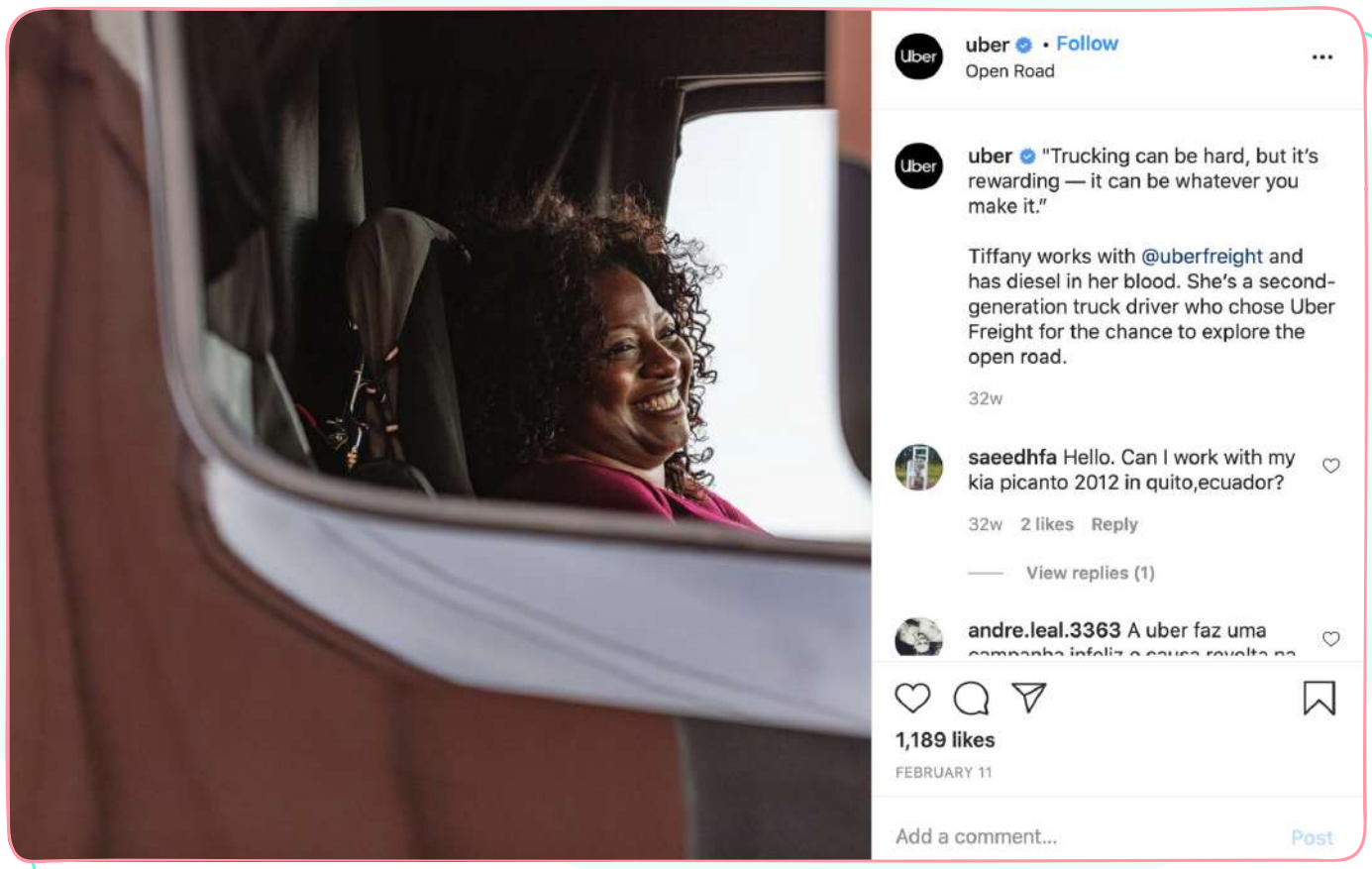
STEP 2 _ FIND YOUR UNIQUE VOICE AND APPROACH

Instagram is a visual social media. It has its own personality and your business profile should get the most of it. There are no rules into what your feed should look like. So, many brands with well-known names don’t use their platform to push their products. Instead, they use the feed to express their core values.

For example, take a look at Uber Instagram. You won’t find product placement or long reads about Uber benefits. Instead, Uber is using their platform to have fun, show its care for the community, and telling Uber drivers’ stories.

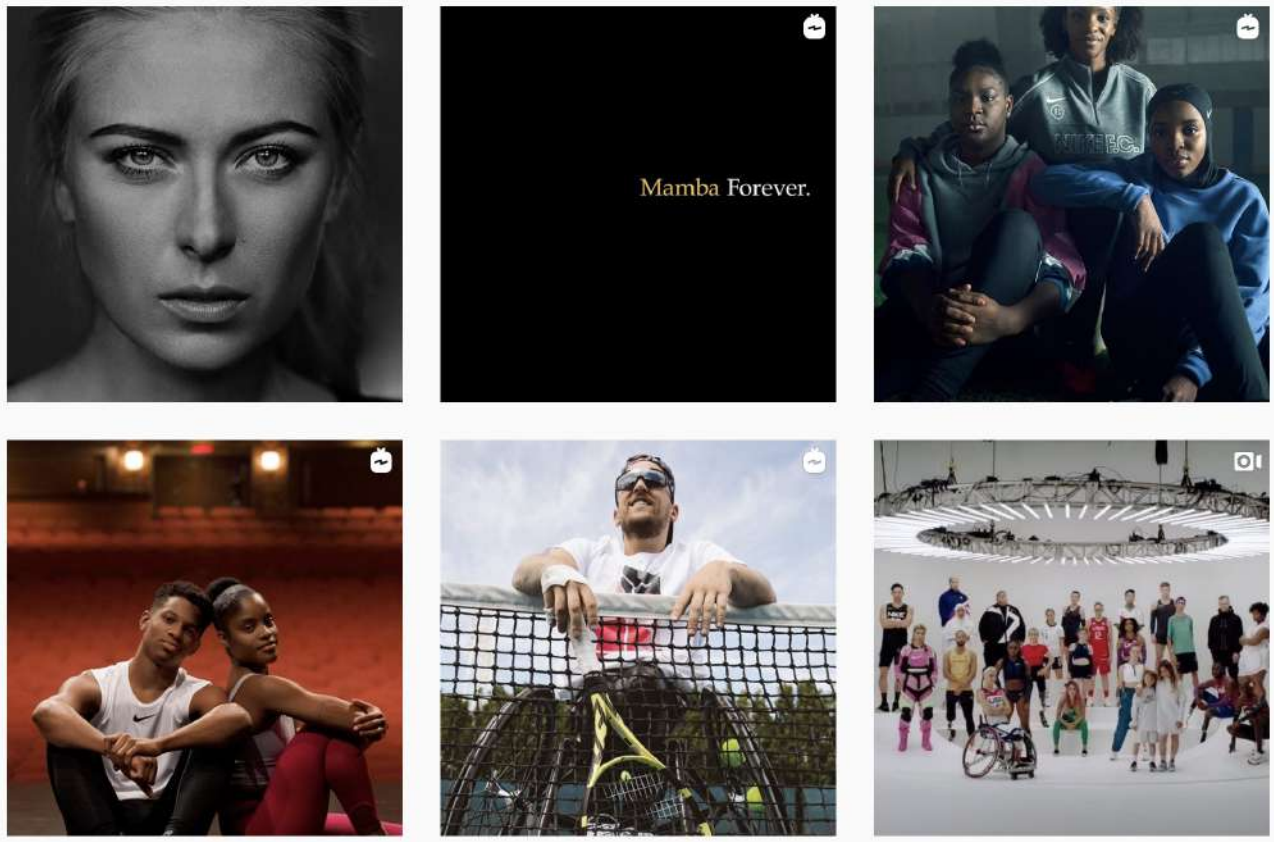


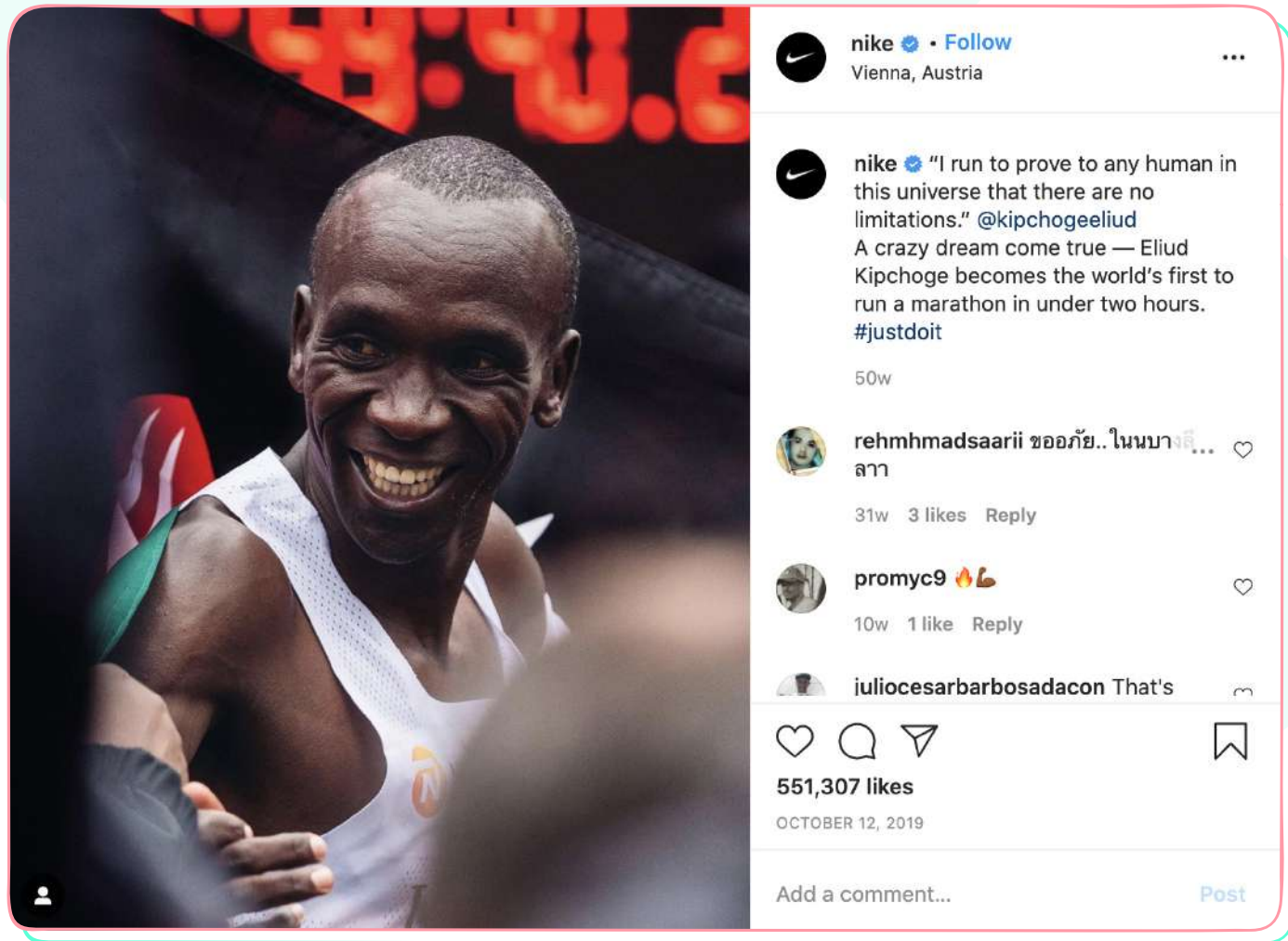

Dan Saffer
@odannyboy
UBER DRIVER: Have a nice flight!
don't say it
don't say it
don't say it
don't say it
don't say it
ME: You too!
uber • Follow
uber Hands up if you've done this too
36w
homes_for_sale_today UBER - you debited my credit card account with R1100 for rides/eats I did not do or order. I want a refund now. This is your disgusting response.My account has an unrecognized charge
.
Thank you for writing in, Grant.
Due to the presence of sensitive or personally-identifying information, I have marked the image for deletion. This was done to protect
4,698 likes
JANUARY 16
Add a comment...
Post


uber • Follow
Open Road
uber "Trucking can be hard, but it's rewarding — it can be whatever you make it."
Tiffany works with @uberfreight and has diesel in her blood. She's a second-generation truck driver who chose Uber Freight for the chance to explore the open road.
32w
saeedhfa Hello. Can I work with my kia picanto 2012 in quito,ecuador?
32w 2 likes Reply
View replies (1)
andre.leal.3363 A uber faz uma
1,189 likes
FEBRUARY 11
Add a comment...
Post

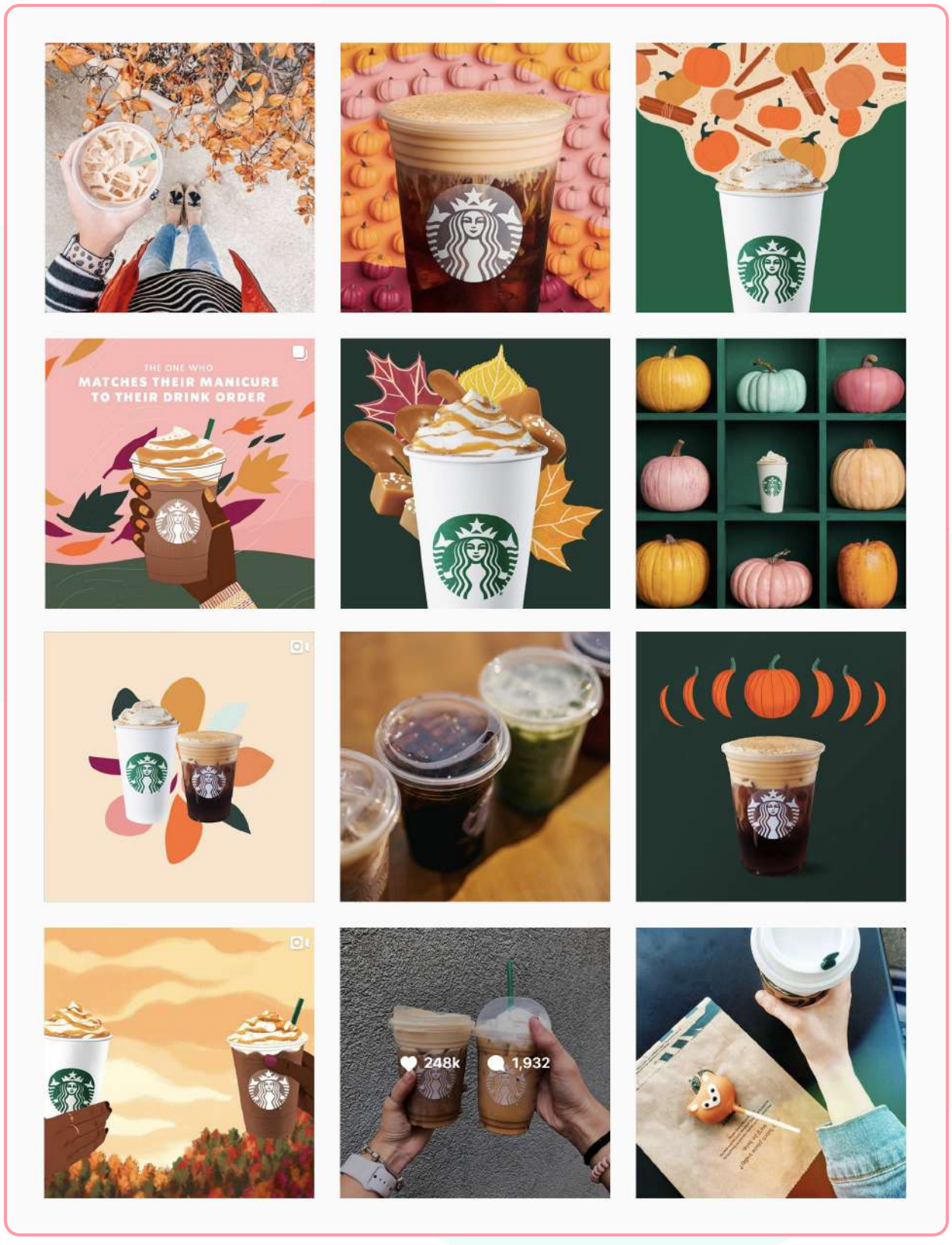


For example, Nike is also using its main profile to share their values through images. There you will find content that inspires people to do sports. Pay attention to bio: *"If you have a body, you are an athlete. #justdoit".*


Mamba Forever.


nike • Follow
Vienna, Austria
nike "I run to prove to any human in this universe that there are no limitations." @kipchogeeliud
A crazy dream come true — Eliud Kipchoge becomes the world's first to run a marathon in under two hours.
#justdoit
50w
rehmhmadsaarii ขออภัย.. ในนบา... ลาา
31w 3 likes Reply
promyc9
10w 1 like Reply
juliocesarbarbosadacon That's
551,307 likes
OCTOBER 12, 2019
Add a comment...
Post

Starbucks is promoting its famous pumpkin spice latte. Thus, they are transforming their feed with bright colors to bring the autumn to audiences' feeds. It is eye-catching, conveys Starbucks branding, and makes you want to buy the drink!



Some well-known business profiles don’t use Instagram to show their product line. Instead, they share their core values and the ways you can use the product and what their brand stands for.

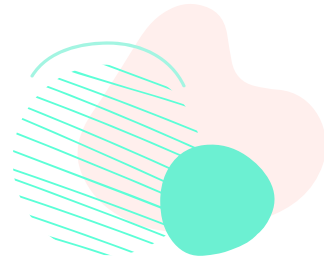
We love this approach. Other brands come up with creative ways to showcase their products.

Each profile is unique in its own way. Make yours too!
Make your profile likeable by your audience, don’t be pushy with your product line—welcome people for direct conversation without a tie.

STEP 3 _ CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY!

Posting content at random times without a consistent schedule — **is engagement rates killer.** Although, the Instagram algorithm is complex and continuously improves users’ feed based on their engagement history.

The worst thing you can do when trying to get followers on Instagram is to post content at random, haphazard times. If you’re lucky enough to get users following you in the beginning, you don’t want to make them forget they followed you in the first place.



Keep to a regular posting schedule. Instagram algorithm greatly favours accounts that post content consistently. You can choose your own posting frequency and post formats whether it’s post in feed, stories, IGTV or reels. Regular posting gives your posts more visibility by increasing the overall engagement they receive.

Sociality.io is a social media management tool enables you to schedule the unlimited amount of posts consistently and publish it automatically at a time when your audience is most likely to see it. After you schedule your posts for an upcoming month, you can focus on growing your account via other techniques.



all this with
sociality.io

PUBLISH
- Calendar
- Social Feed
- Compose

On which social profiles
do you want to create post?

MyBrand
@mybrand
MyBrand
MyBrand.com

Create Post

Type
Photo

Message
Schedule all your content in advance to all social media networks! 😊

212

Photo
Upload Photo

You can drag and drop the photo into this area.

Preview

MyBrand @mybrand · 22 March
Schedule all your content in advance to all social media networks! 😊

preview

0 0 0

STEP 4 _ UNDERSTAND INSTAGRAM'S ENGAGEMENT-SEEKING ALGORITHM

Instagram functions evolve almost every day. So does Instagram's algorithm. It works in a user-friendly way, so **Instagram is more likely to show you as a user the posts from the accounts you have the most interactions with.** To be more precise, the Instagram algorithm decides what posts users see each time they open the app.

Instagram doesn't reveal how the algorithm works. However, there are some factors that can affect the Instagram algorithm, such as:

- **Engagement**
  The rate of how well users interact with your content in terms of likes, comments, savings and shares.

- **Timeliness**
  You already know that consistency is the key. In addition, session time plays a role.

- **Interests**
  If a user liked certain types of posts in the past, the algorithm is more likely to show the user that type of posts in the future.

- **Relationships**
  The algorithm shows posts from accounts that a user already interacts with more regularly.

- **Profile searches**
  What kind of accounts a user searches more often.

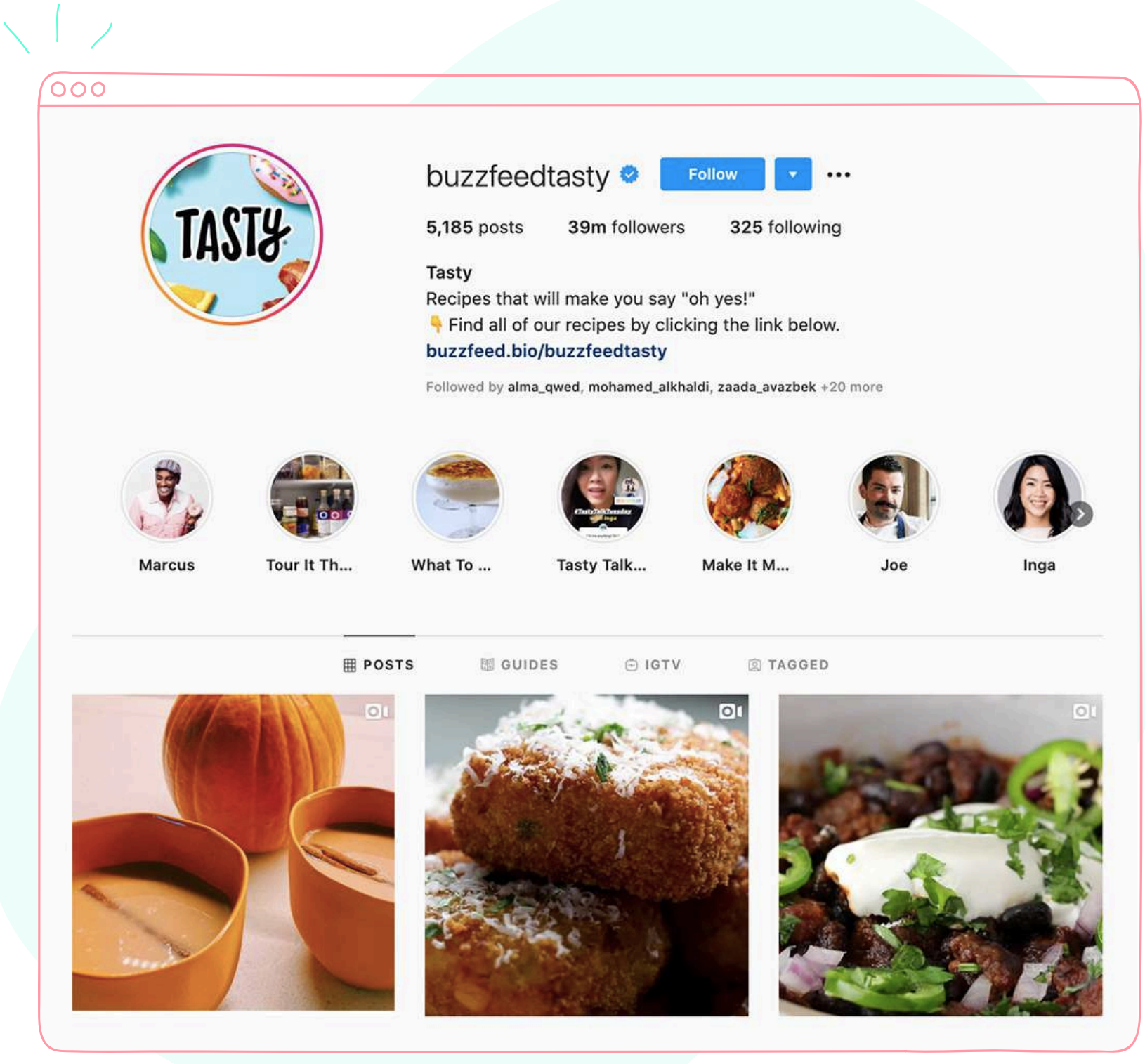
HOW TO HACK INSTAGRAM ALGORITHM?

Add CTA (calls to action) to your captions to encourage your followers to interact with the content you post. Most common examples of CTA are “Double tap if you agree”, “Click link in bio”, “Tag your friend”, etc.

Make sure your CTA is relevant to your photo/video.

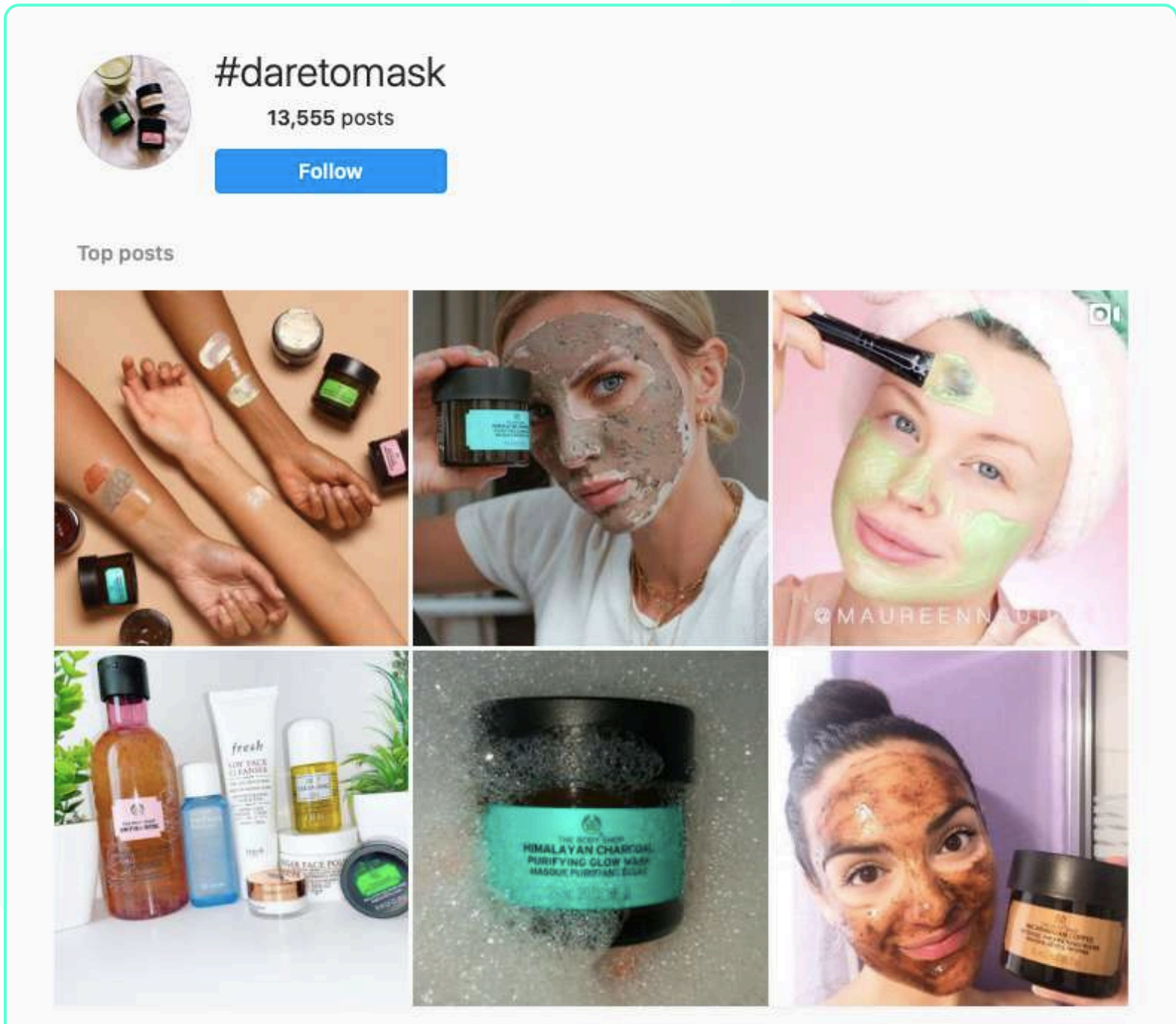


You can also add a strong CTA in your bio section to engage everyone visiting your profile to drive a traffic to your website.



Create your custom hashtags. To build a community around your brand and to connect your followers make them feel like they are a part of this community, use hashtags. Try not to use overly popular hashtags, instead try to create your own.

Just check out how many users dare to mask with this The Body Shop's hashtag.



Communicate with followers. Discuss with them, ask questions - people enjoy personal attention. Create a welcoming atmosphere on your page and build a community.

Keep in mind that every action taken on a post: liking, leaving a comment, tagging someone, resharing - all these actions are indicated as a separate interaction with the post by the Instagram algorithm. More actions - more engagement.

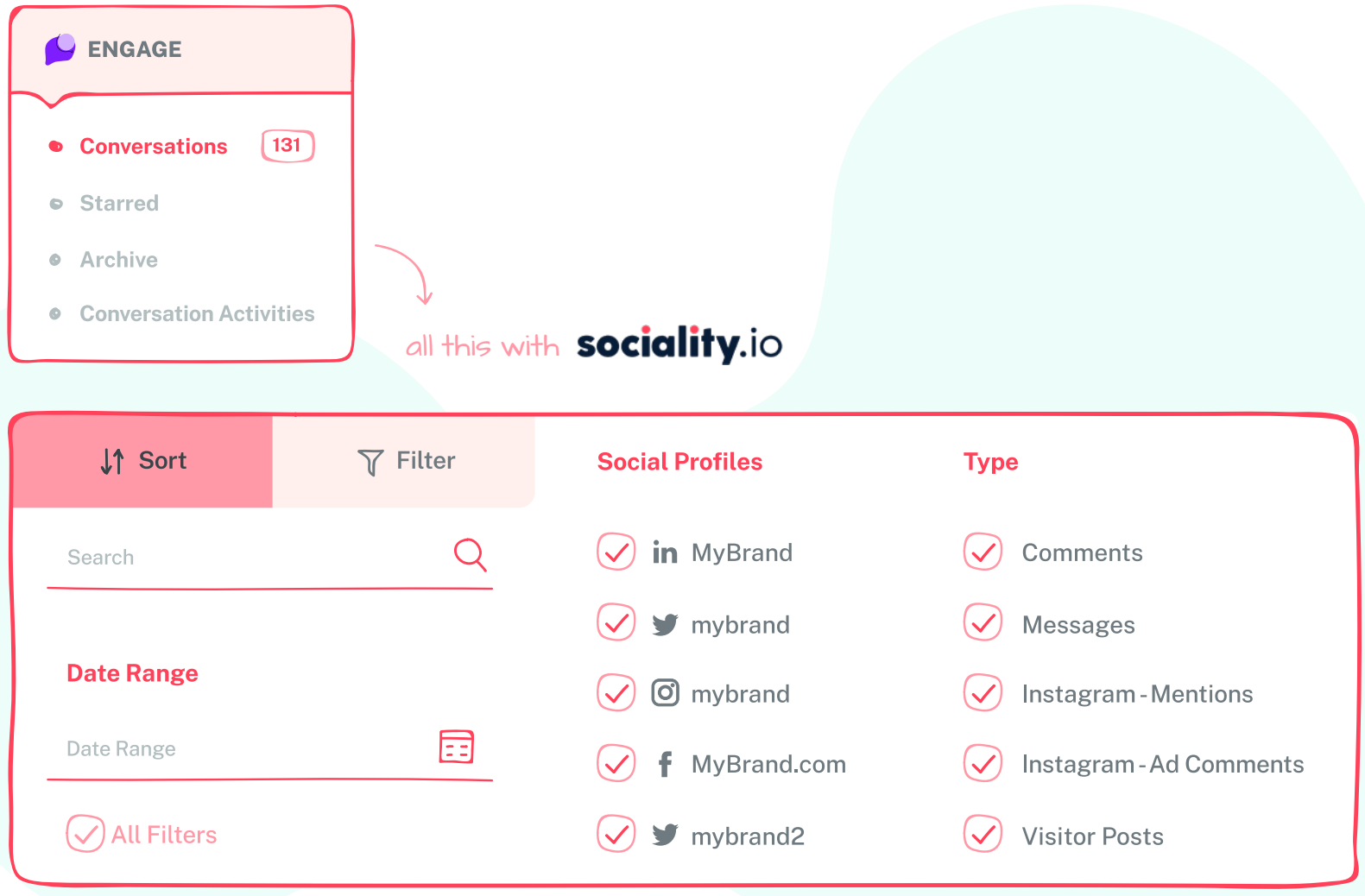
In addition to the friendly atmosphere on the page, you need to create a strong customer support channel. **Do your best to respond to every comment and direct message.** Make your followers feel welcomed.

Don’t just quickly respond using template answers to clients’ problems, but really show your readiness to help and provide a solution for their problems. For some people, leaving feedback in the comments section is easier and faster than reaching you via email. Provide a platform for them to talk to you in a way that is more convenient for them.



The Body Shop does its work with communication extremely well, none of 2.3M followers are left with no attention.

If you want to monitor all comments and engagement you receive from your followers, you need a powerful tool to help you out. You don't want vital feedback or customer complaint to be buried under many others. Try out Sociality.io Engage tool. It tracks all engagement as well as enables you to assign tasks and add notes for productive collaboration with all your social media marketers team.



STEP 5 _ EXPLORE YOUR COMPETITORS

Finding your social media competitors helps you to analyze their social media strategy efforts and learn from their mistakes and successes. Having an explicit list of competitors helps you to evaluate your own social media results against the competitors and identify the gaps in your social media marketing tactics.

It is important to evaluate what offers your consumers see. You need to know your competitors and update your current differentiation strategies.

DIFFERENTIATE DIRECT VS INDIRECT COMPETITORS

Competitors in business can be direct and indirect. **Direct competitors** offer a product or service very similar to yours. For example, if you produce tea, then all other tea producers will be your direct competitors. **Indirect competitors** are producing a product that can replace yours - in the tea example, these would be coffee or cocoa producers.

But we should understand that business competitors differ from the ones in social media. Every brand/business in social media competes for users' attention. Therefore, your social media competitors are not only your direct and indirect competitors, but also news pages, popular meme accounts, influencers and celebrities, public pages, etc.

IDENTIFY YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA COMPETITORS

› Check online communities on social media or community forums

All human beings need advice at some point. Some seek advice and suggestions from friends, some on **online communities on social media or community forums.**

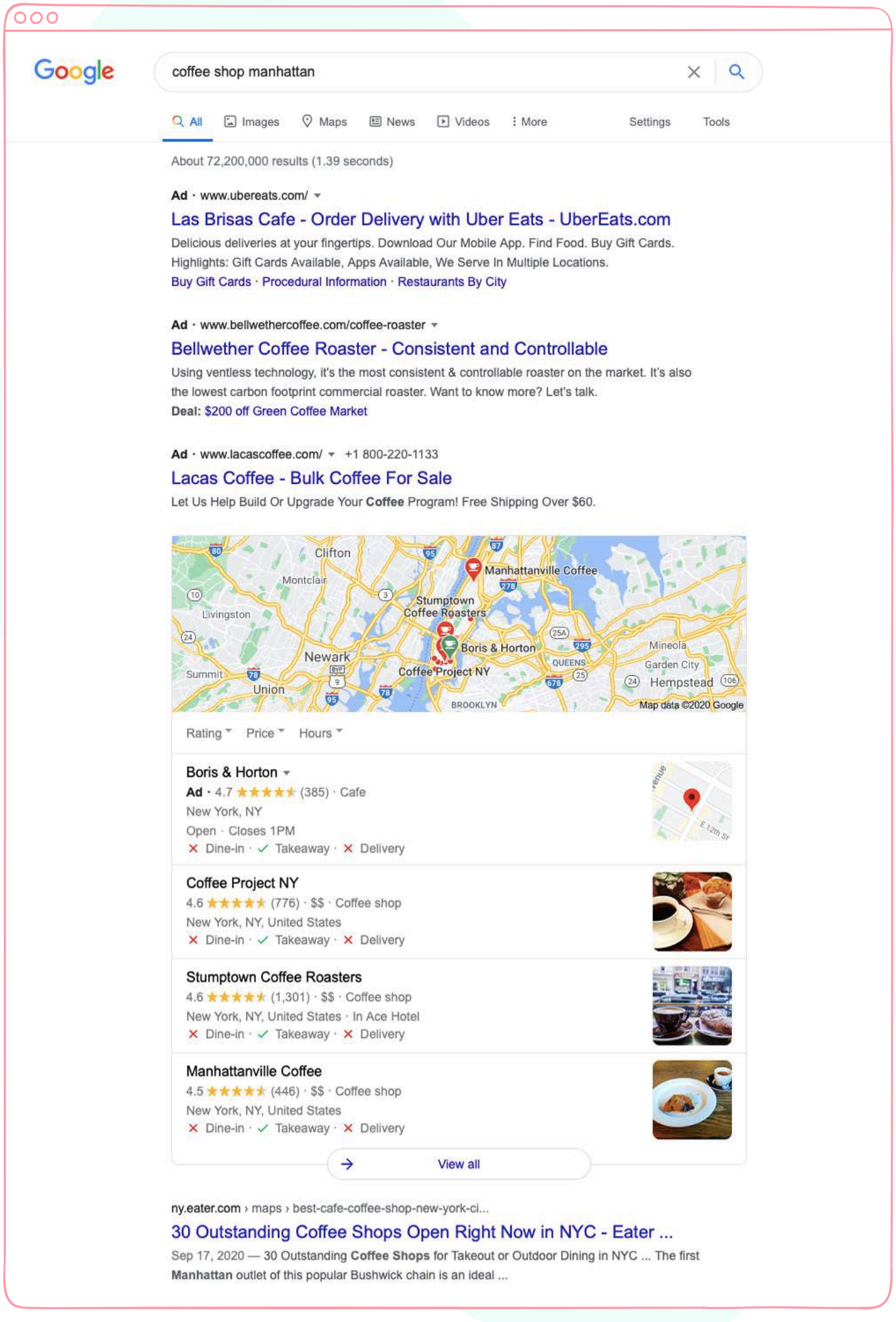
Nowadays, social media users' decisions are highly influenced by the recommendations on social media. By looking over the conversations, your potential customers have on online communities or community forums, you can determine your social media competitors.

› Conduct a keyword research

Keyword research is one of the best ways to find out which brands are competing for the same space in search engines and search bars. Lots of potential customers look for desired products using search engines.

To find out your competitors by keywords, you need to use the main keyword phrases describing your brand/business and enter them into search engines like Google and search bars in social media platforms. Keep in mind that the default results will be personalized based on the user's location and preferences.

Now let's search for some coffee in Manhattan to see what Google search engine can offer us.


Google
coffee shop manhattan
All
Images
Maps
News
Videos
More
Settings
Tools
About 72,200,000 results (1.39 seconds)
Ad · www.ubereats.com/
Las Brisas Cafe - Order Delivery with Uber Eats - UberEats.com
Delicious deliveries at your fingertips. Download Our Mobile App. Find Food. Buy Gift Cards.
Highlights: Gift Cards Available, Apps Available, We Serve In Multiple Locations.
Buy Gift Cards · Procedural Information · Restaurants By City
Ad · www.bellwethercoffee.com/coffee-roaster
Bellwether Coffee Roaster - Consistent and Controllable
Using ventless technology, it's the most consistent & controllable roaster on the market. It's also the lowest carbon footprint commercial roaster. Want to know more? Let's talk.
Deal: $200 off Green Coffee Market
Ad · www.lacascoffee.com/ +1 800-220-1133
Lacas Coffee - Bulk Coffee For Sale
Let Us Help Build Or Upgrade Your Coffee Program! Free Shipping Over $60.
Clifton
Montclair
Livingston
Newark
Summit
Union
Manhattanville Coffee
Stumptown Coffee Roasters
Boris & Horton
Coffee Project NY
BROOKLYN
QUEENS
Mineola
Garden City
Hempstead
Map data ©2020 Google
Rating
Price
Hours
Boris & Horton
Ad · 4.7 (385) · Cafe
New York, NY
Open · Closes 1PM
Dine-in · Takeaway · Delivery
Coffee Project NY
4.6 (776) · $$ · Coffee shop
New York, NY, United States
Dine-in · Takeaway · Delivery
Stumptown Coffee Roasters
4.6 (1,301) · $$ · Coffee shop
New York, NY, United States · In Ace Hotel
Dine-in · Takeaway · Delivery
Manhattanville Coffee
4.5 (446) · $$ · Coffee shop
New York, NY, United States
Dine-in · Takeaway · Delivery
View all
ny.eater.com › maps › best-cafe-coffee-shop-new-york-ci...
30 Outstanding Coffee Shops Open Right Now in NYC - Eater ...
Sep 17, 2020 — 30 Outstanding Coffee Shops for Takeout or Outdoor Dining in NYC ... The first Manhattan outlet of this popular Bushwick chain is an ideal ...

If you are struggling to find more keywords take a look at some of the related search words. Social media users might have searched for the topic before.

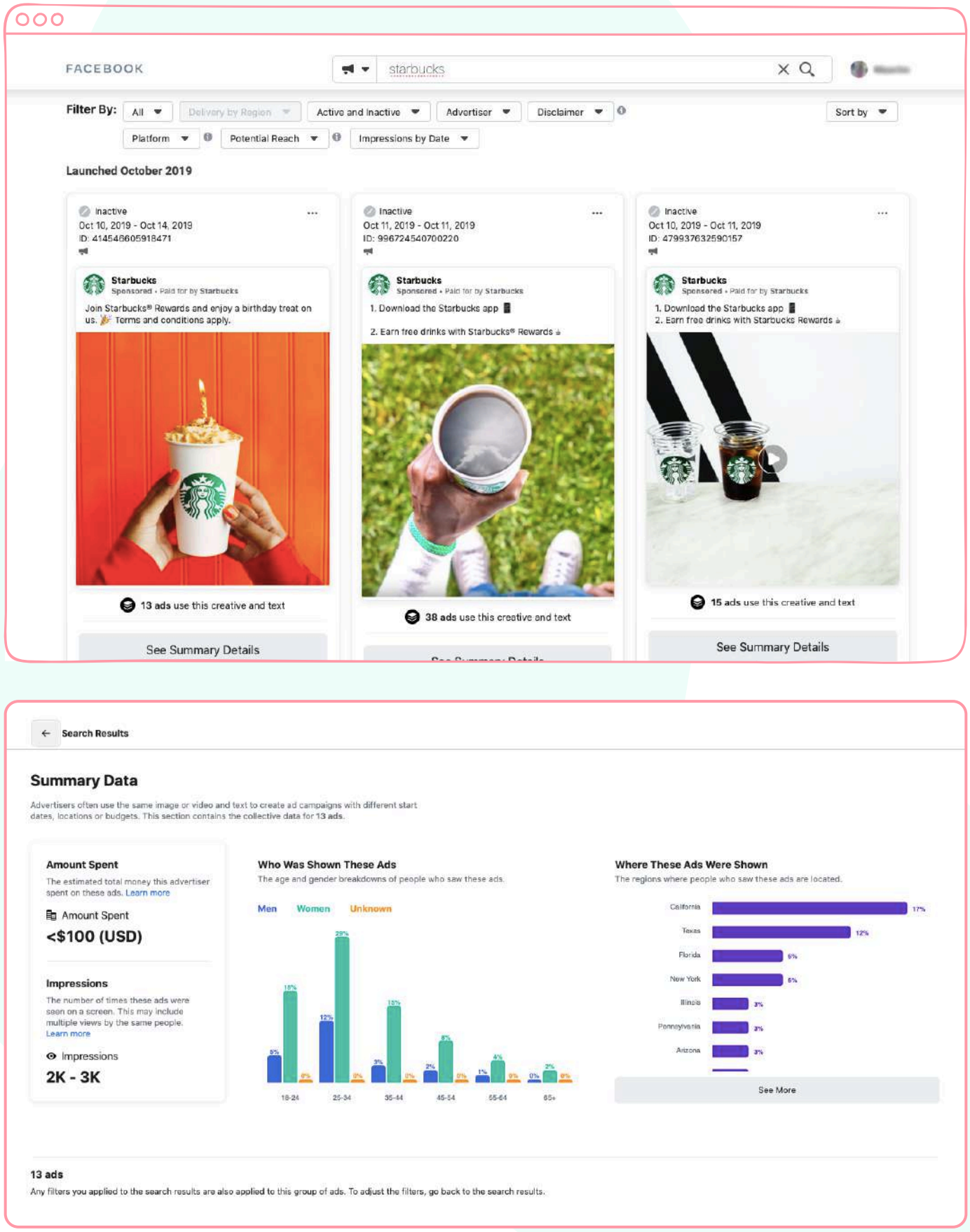


ANALYZE COMPETITORS' SOCIAL MEDIA

If you have a competitor with active social media accounts, you can visit some of these platforms to assess the performance of competitors.

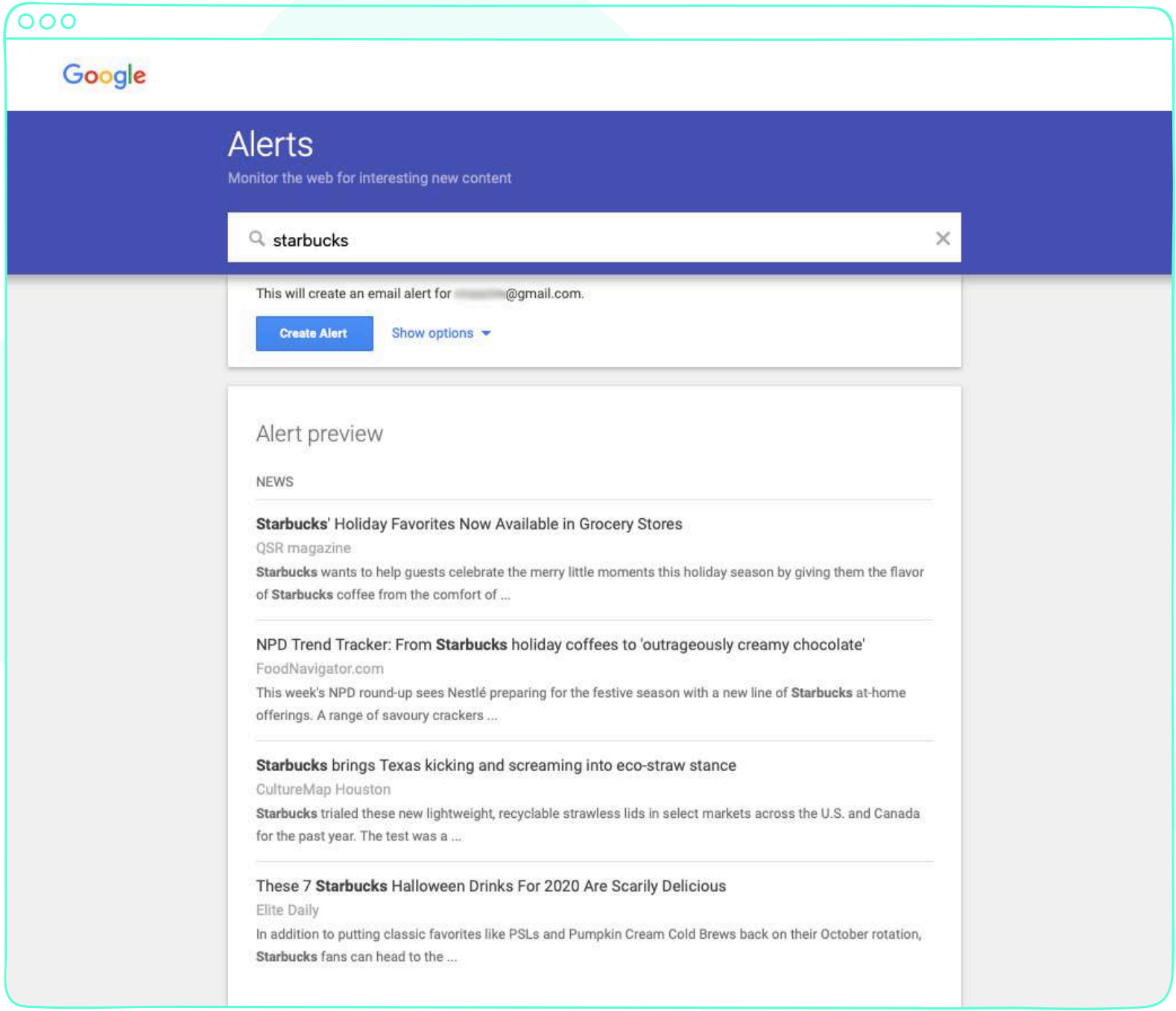
› Facebook Ad Library

Facebook has its own library that contains all active ads running across Facebook and Instagram. You can search by account names, keywords and locations. In addition, you can see more details such as impressions the ad received, demographic details, the amount spent on the ad, etc. This feature is available to everyone and free to use.


FACEBOOK
starbucks
Filter By:
All
Delivery by Region
Active and Inactive
Advertiser
Disclaimer
Sort by
Platform
Potential Reach
Impressions by Date
Launched October 2019
Inactive
Oct 10, 2019 - Oct 14, 2019
ID: 414546605918471
Starbucks
Sponsored · Paid for by Starbucks
Join Starbucks® Rewards and enjoy a birthday treat on us. 🎉 Terms and conditions apply.
13 ads use this creative and text
See Summary Details
Inactive
Oct 11, 2019 - Oct 11, 2019
ID: 996724540700220
Starbucks
Sponsored · Paid for by Starbucks
1. Download the Starbucks app
2. Earn free drinks with Starbucks® Rewards
38 ads use this creative and text
Inactive
Oct 10, 2019 - Oct 11, 2019
ID: 479937632590157
Starbucks
Sponsored · Paid for by Starbucks
1. Download the Starbucks app
2. Earn free drinks with Starbucks Rewards
15 ads use this creative and text
See Summary Details
Search Results
Summary Data
Advertisers often use the same image or video and text to create ad campaigns with different start dates, locations or budgets. This section contains the collective data for 13 ads.
Amount Spent
The estimated total money this advertiser spent on these ads. Learn more
Amount Spent
<$100 (USD)
Impressions
The number of times these ads were seen on a screen. This may include multiple views by the same people. Learn more
Impressions
2K - 3K
Who Was Shown These Ads
The age and gender breakdowns of people who saw these ads.
Men
Women
Unknown
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+
Where These Ads Were Shown
The regions where people who saw these ads are located.
California
17%
Texas
12%
Florida
6%
New York
6%
Illinois
3%
Pennsylvania
3%
Arizona
3%
See More
13 ads
Any filters you applied to the search results are also applied to this group of ads. To adjust the filters, go back to the search results.

› Google Alerts

Google offers free and useful online tool to monitor your and your competitors' online presence. You can track online mentions of your brand and also your specific product.



› SimilarWeb

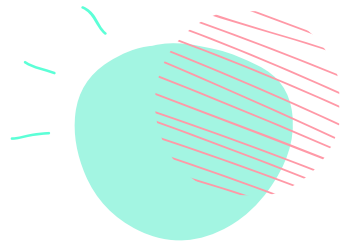
This platform helps to see which publishers, ad networks, creatives and landing pages your competitors are using to target their audience, to reveal organic & paid keywords along with traffic share rank and landing pages for any site and understand your competitors' performance with traffic and engagement metrics, etc.

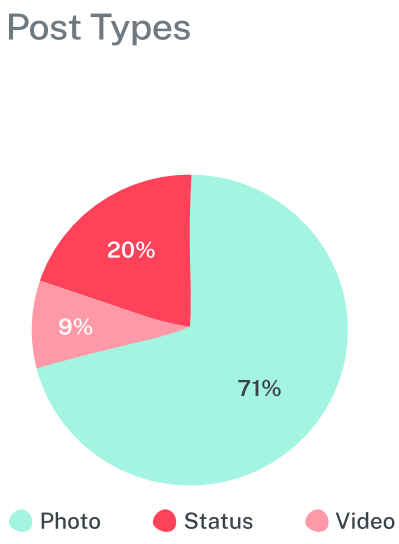
› Sociality.io

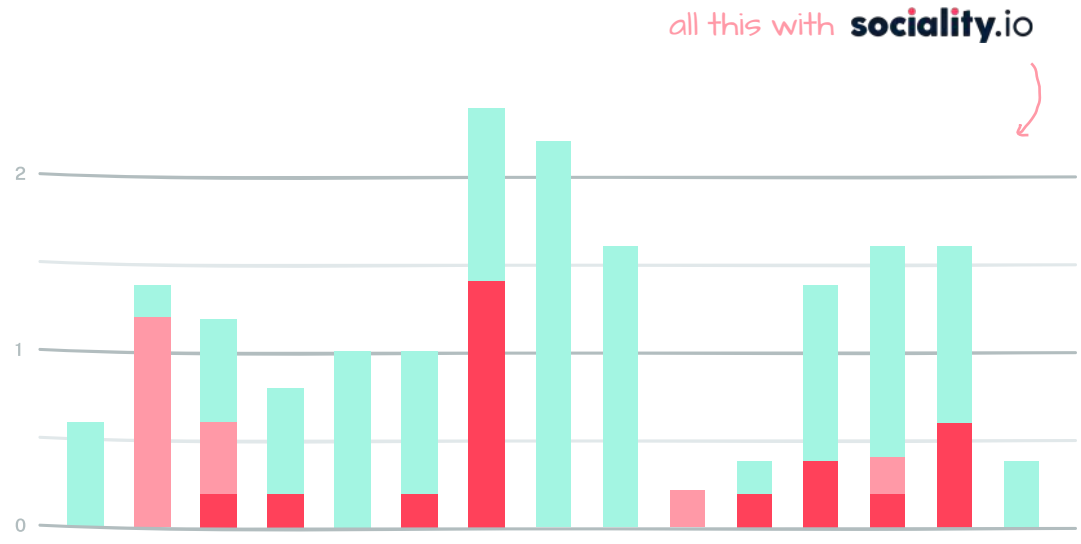
With the Social Media Competitor Analysis tool from Sociality.io, all competitors are in one report. You can prepare your Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube competitor analysis reports in a few minutes. You can measure your own performance with your opponent's detailed fan and interaction charts, analyze competing page content with comparative reports and review your own content strategy.

Sociality.io offers many different features for all your needs:

- PPT and Excel reports
- Retrospective data
- Content analysis
- Sharing by email
- Sharing times
- Comparative charts
- Graphic descriptions
- Interaction rate
- Unlimited number of reports







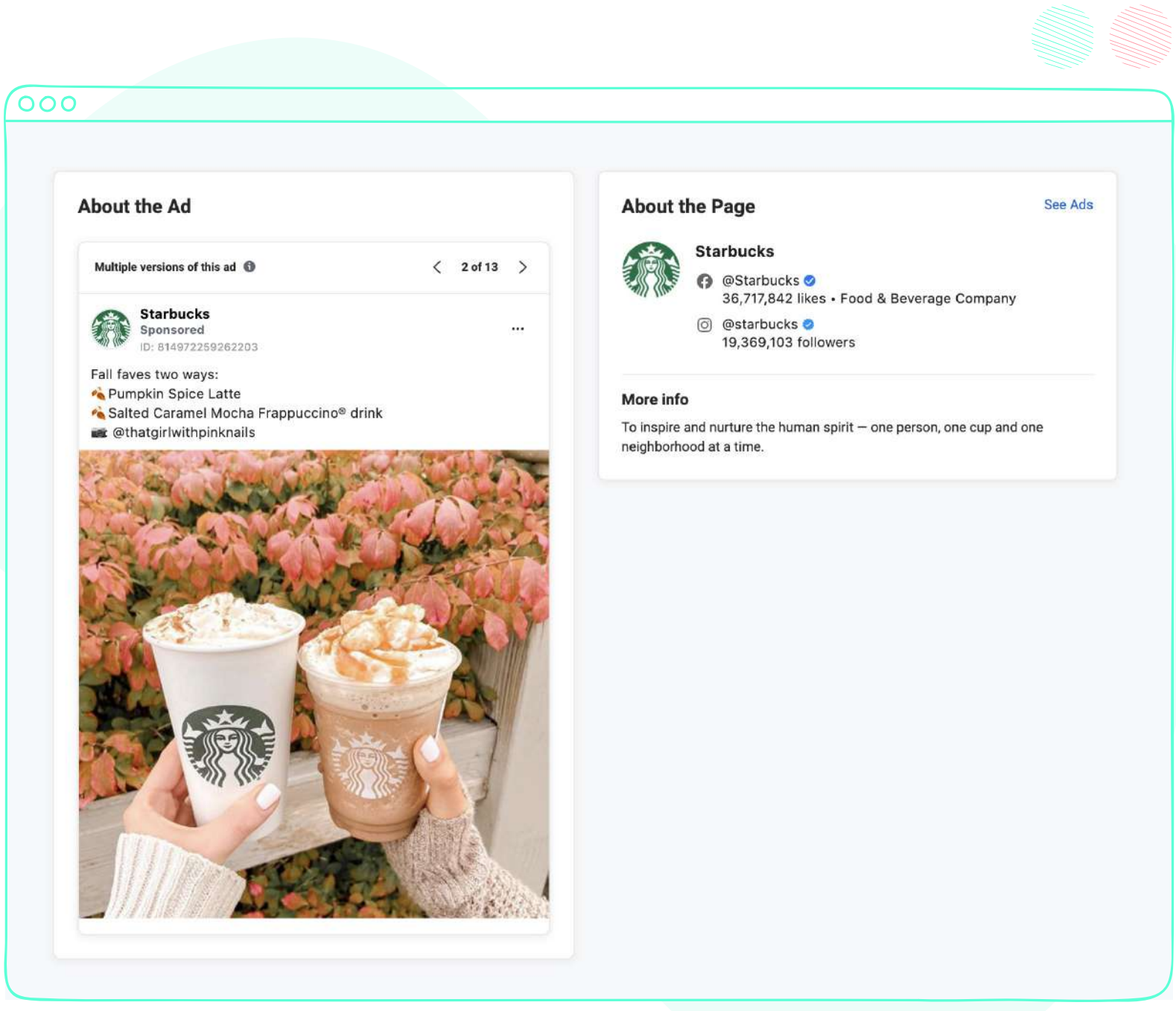
STEP 6 _ ADVERTISING AND GIVEAWAYS, INFLUENCERS

Once you set up your Instagram profile and create your unique concept, you will grow slowly. This type of growth is healthy and serves a nice base for future marketing efforts. Your key metrics will be positive and overall, and the profile page will leave customers a good impression of a credible and reliable brand.

We strongly discourage you from buying followers, but it doesn't mean that there aren't paid ways to grow your account.

Advertising, giveaways and sponsoring Instagram influencers are 3 main methods that will bring wide audience attention to your profile.

Instagram advertising In case you have a budget for social media needs, promote your account by Instagram Ads. The algorithm enables you to segment your audience to a variety of indicators. It allows you to reach the people who are more likely to be interested in your product and online content.



Giveaways is the most straightforward strategy that can truly attract many people to your account. But to reach the right audience give away something that can interest only your target segment. Brainstorm with your team what an ideal customer would want to receive and use this as a gift. It can be a 3-month free subscription or an additional feature to their plan, anything that would attract the right people.

It’s important to note all the pros and cons before launching a giveaway. Attracting short-term or fake followers are one of the biggest cons you should avoid. To do so, first of all, choose your goal (to gain more followers, to grow email subscriptions, etc.) and be clear and precise with your participation instructions.



Sponsoring Instagram influencers Today, there are indeed real opinion makers, who can boost your sales. Their positive opinion shared with a million followers can be more effective than a GQ September issue cover. But not every big account owner is the right person to work with. Understand their audience and pick influencers with closest to your target segment as possible.

If you don't know where to start searching for the right influencer, you can use Google for some general research or get more detailed information on platforms like HYPR and Markerly.

Consider working with micro-influencers. They may not have a huge audience as macro-influencers and celebrities do, but the engagement and reach rates can be much better as shown by a study by Markerly.



to wrap it all up

Growing your Instagram profile is a challenge that eventually pays off with direct benefits such as increased brand recognition, a stronger bond with customers and most importantly, increases in sales. 80% of 1 billion users follow at least one business profile for many reasons. Your goal is to increase as many incentives as possible to be trusted by your followers. Social media can become your real superpower!

We understand that sometimes you as a business owner or marketer would like to take an easy step and buy followers without understanding what consequences you will face in the future. We strongly discourage you from building fake credibility. Our best advice is to grow healthy and slowly by creating a dedicated community of people who care about your business.

Monitor your statistics with the help of the Sociality.io report feature, work on high-quality content for your followers by using all the features of Instagram effectively and do your best using our guidelines to get as far as you can.



sociality.io

All in one social media management platform

Learn more at
sociality.io/blog