Simply Measured's Ultimate 2017

INSTAGRAM EBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Instagram is top-of-mind for any social marketer in 2017, and with a community of 600 million users (100 million of which were added in the last half of 2016), it's no surprise that brands have been flocking to the rapidly growing network in droves.

The photo-sharing network has evolved into a photo-, video-, and GIF- sharing network. It's even become a competitor with Snapchat for live video with its introduction of Instagram Stories and Instagram Live, and a competitor with Pinterest with its recently released "Save" feature. MarketingLand tells us that "15 to 25 percent of the people who see a link in an Instagram Story are swiping on it, according to a handful of brands and publishers that have been experimenting with the feature."

The mobile app even has a full network of "feature" apps like Hyperlapse, Layout, and Boomerang, boasts an intuitive Direct Messaging service, and has developed a robust ad platform. Instagram Ads include photo, video, and carousel formats now, and marketers can gain insight into the business results they're achieving with these investments, from website conversions to mobile app downloads.

Whether your brand is just starting to invest time and energy in Instagram, or is an established powerhouse on the network, you'll want to understand the basic definitions and metrics at the beginning, optimize your strategy in your intermediate stage, and focus on driving business value if you are in the advanced stage. Through research and measurement, you can develop a solid foundation of what works, what doesn't, and what to focus on for your specific brand. This guide to Instagram analysis and optimization outlines the metrics required to measure and fully understand Instagram, and walks through some tips for using these metrics to plan and optimize your Instagram campaigns.optimize your Instagram campaigns.
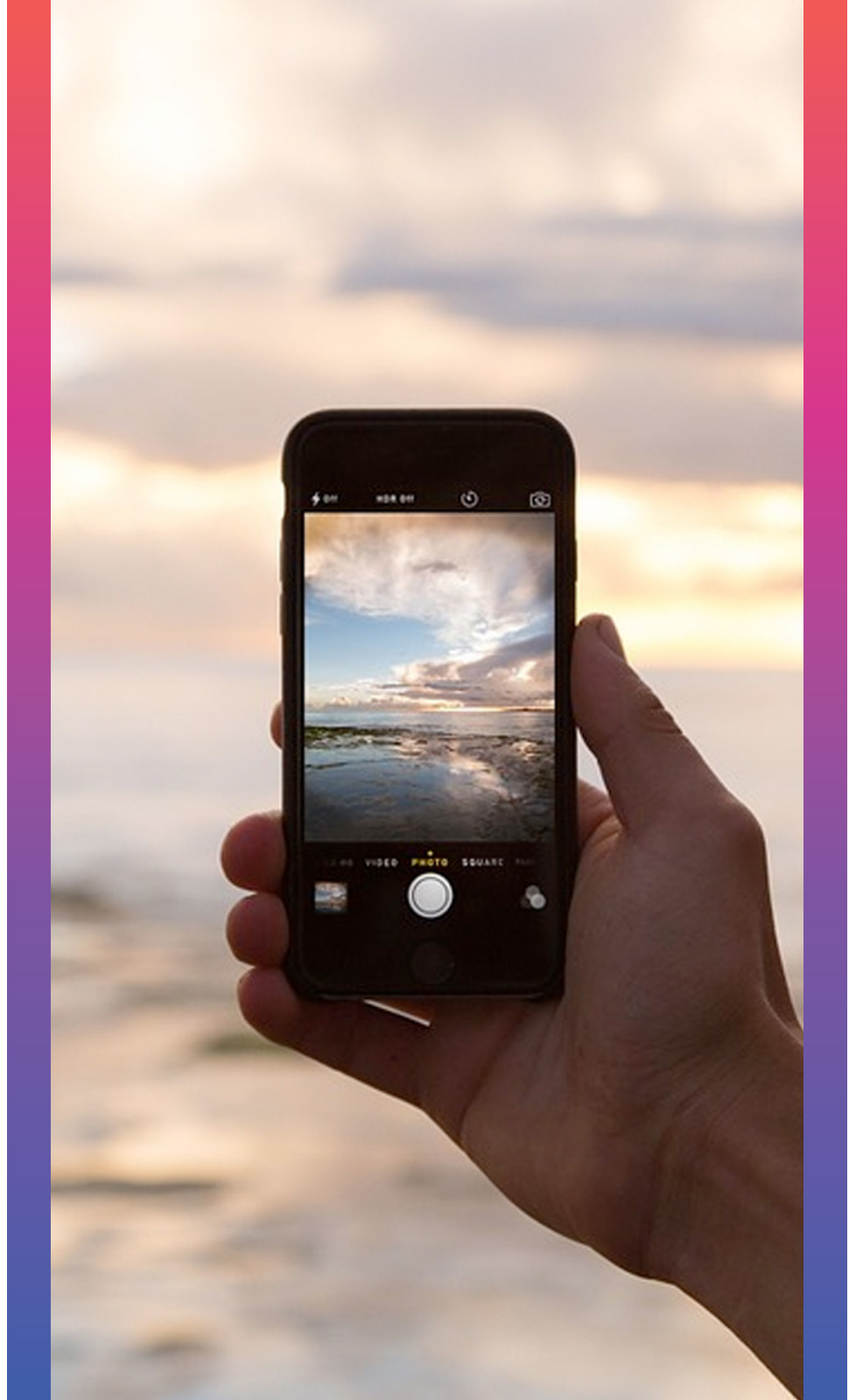
Leveraging Instagram's Most Recent Updates

Here's what happened to Instagram in 2016.

- **February 2016:** Instagram debuts view counts for videos

- **March 2016:** Instagrammers gain the flexibility to tell their stories in up to 60 seconds of video.

- **April 2016:** Instagram rolls out on Windows 10 Mobile

- **May 2016:** Instagram gets a fresh new look.

- **July 2016:** Instagram makes it easier to find videos in the Explore feature by adding video channels.

- **August 2016:** Perhaps the biggest Instagram development for Instagram in 2016. Instagram Stories debut.

Snapchat pioneered this "in-the-moment" idea with branded content, and quickly became a force to be reckoned with. Then Instagram launched Instagram Stories. With over twice the number of MAUs as Snapchat, Instagram Stories has become a new playground for brands on social media. Here's why.

1. Natural and Experimental: Instagram has always been the place to highlight the best-quality images from brands, supported by a range of clever filters and editing tools. But Instagram Stories, as Kevin Systrom explained, allows "filling in the space in between – and becoming more about visual expression in general – capturing all the world's moments, not just the best ones".

Instagram Stories do not need to be shot professionally. They vanish in 24 hours. They humanize brands and forge a deeper connection between social audiences and brands. Instagram Stories can also be a great way for brands to experiment with different kinds of content and see what works before investing marketing dollars in that idea.

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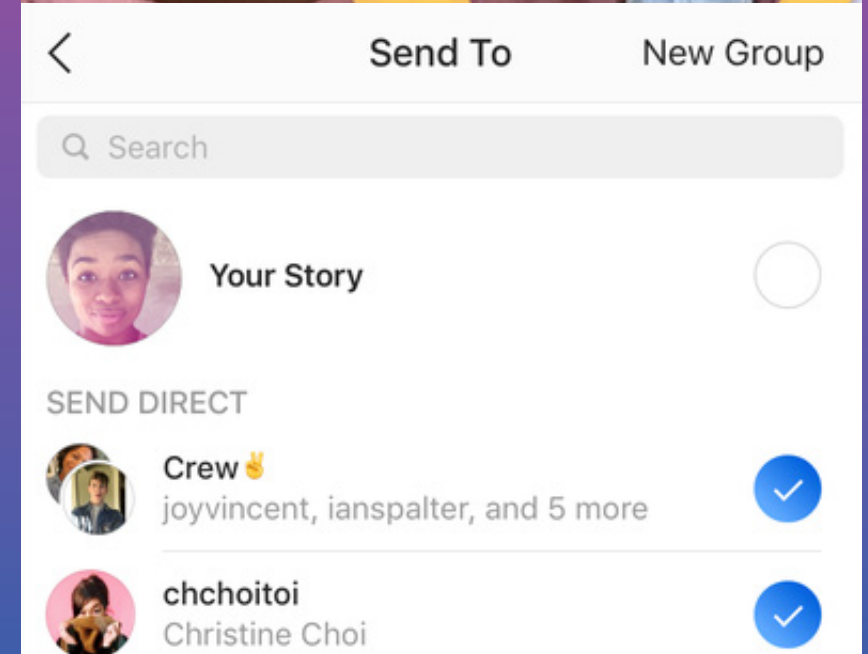
2. On Top of the Feed: When Instagram changed their algorithm a few months ago to show posts in-feed depending on how likely were you to be interested, brands had no choice but to work even harder to create compelling and engaging content. Instagram Stories help brands be even more visible to their followers. If someone already follows your brand, they will see it on top of their feed highlighted by a colored circle, which indicates that a new story is available. This is a huge opportunity to get content right in front of an audience that already cares about you, helping to keep your brand top-of-mind and driving awareness.

Instagram and other social networks have a unique ability to impact prospective customers and customers in various stages of the buyer's journey, from awareness to advocacy. Here are the stages of the buyer's journey:

While Instagram Stories do not currently offer in-depth metrics, the feature is already being used by top brands across many verticals. Here's how brands are using Instagram Stories to   meet business goals for their brands and products.

Starbucks

What: Fall has become synonymous with pumpkin patches and Starbucks' Pumpkin Spice offerings. The retailer has, in a very light-hearted way, captured both popular subjects in this Instagram story.

Impact on Buyer's Journey: Starbucks' seasonal coffees are so popular that they command their own social media pages. As the retailer launched the fall-themed coffees, this story was perfectly crafted to capture the fall mood and at the same time announce the new products, driving awareness.
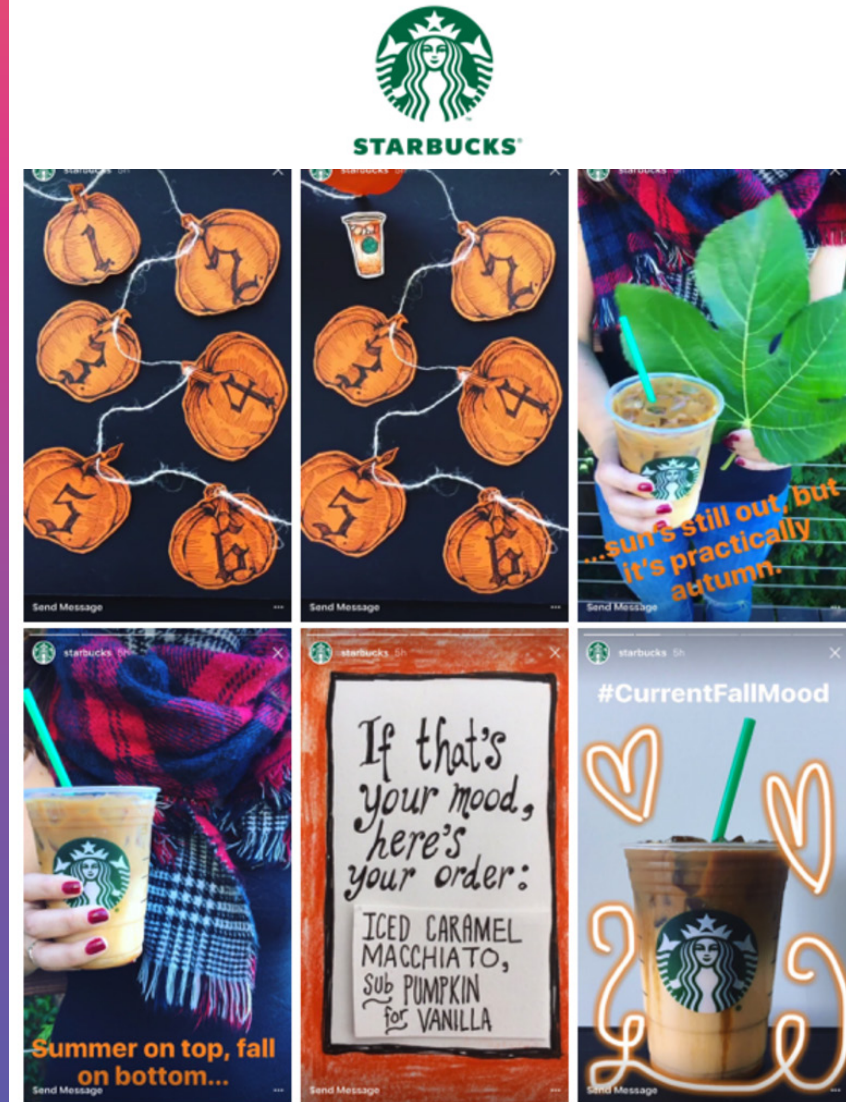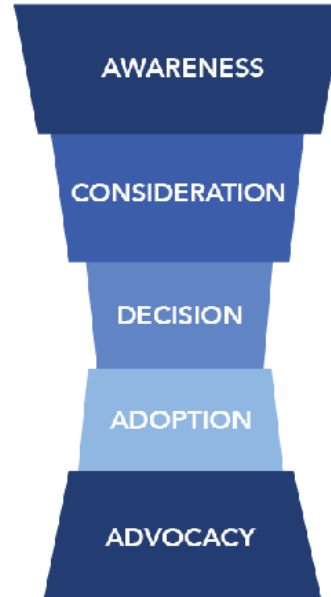
Time Magazine

*What: Time* is using Instagram Stories to highlight global issues like the refugee crisis in Greece. Powerful photos like these have a potential to be a great instrument for social change, documenting people's circumstances, sharing their stories, and changing their lives–or at least sparking a dialogue.

Impact on Buyer's Journey: Instagram Stories are shared with people who are already aware of your brand and are following you on Instagram. This is an opportunity to connect with your core audience on values they followed you for in the first place. *Time*, which has been an impeccable source of world news for over nine decades, used Instagram Stories to release a very strong and succinct story about the crisis in Greece, directing the audience to more content on their website. While the story surely helps drive top-of-mind awareness, it mainly impacts the consideration stage of the buyer's journey on the social media metrics map.

Social Metrics Map

BUYER'S JOURNEY	OBJECTIVE	SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY	SOCIAL ACTIVITY	SOCIAL KPI'S	BUSINESS IMPACT
AWARENESS	Create awareness	Expose target audience to brand content	Posts, promotions (boosts)	Impressions, reach	SOV, ToMA
CONSIDERATION	Generate demand	Generate engagement of target audience with brand content	Posts, responses	# of engagements, types of engagements	Visitors/traffic (online or offline)
DECISION	Drive conversion	Drive target audience to brand offers	Posts, promotions	Link clicks	Conversions (purchases, lead submissions, app downloads)
ADOPTION	Delight customers	Drive engagement with brand product/services	Responses (i.e. social customer care)	(positive) earned mentions, customer care metrics (responses, times, & qty)	Sentiment and satisfaction
ADVOCACY	Inspire evangelism	Activate customer influencers	Posts, outreach to influencers, reshares	Earned impressions, earned reach, social UGC	Referrals, influencer activity positive word of mouth, NPS
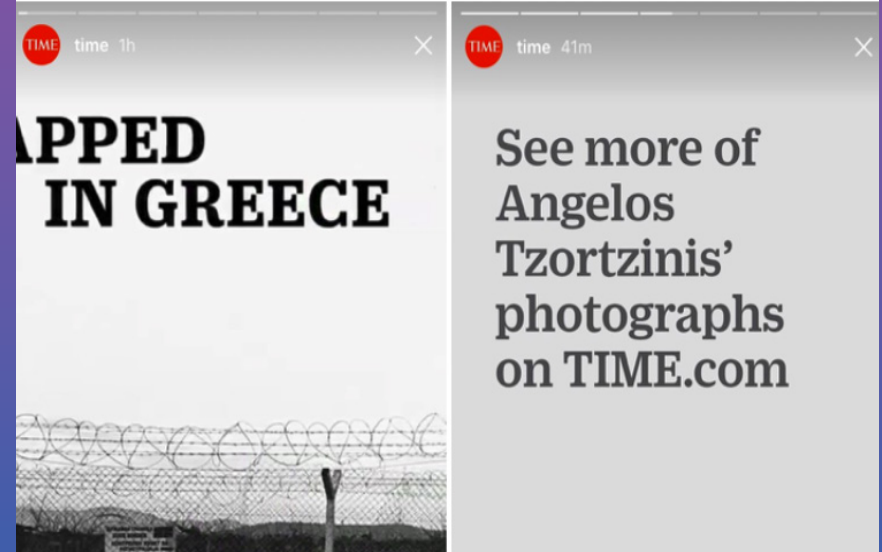
NASA

What: NASA shared an Instagram story inviting social media users from around the world to register for a satellite launch event at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The selected applicants would get exclusive behind-the-scenes access for the launch, plus the opportunity to snap, post, tweet, and share everything about the launch of NOAA's GOES-R.

Impact on Buyer's Journey: It is not every day that we get an opportunity to go behind-the-scenes at a rocket launch. This post from NASA is immensely exciting for many of NASA's followers who are passionate about space exploration. Although the CTA (driving traffic to site) for this story mainly impacts the consideration stage of the buyer's journey, the overall experience goes beyond just the registration on the website. Being part of an event like a rocket launch inspires the audience to engage with NASA further and makes them associate with the brand positively, helping drive adoption and building advocacy.

AirBnB

What: AirBnB showcased an AirBnB room with an influencer, @SongofStyle, who visited Paris for Fashion Week. In this story, she gives a quick glimpse of her room and the neighborhood where she stayed.

Impact on Buyer's Journey: This influencer takes AirBnB's audience around the house and out the window, and even on a trip to the neighborhood shop. This rich and immersive experience is a great example of a brand activating influencers to become advocates and inspire evangelism among current customers. Worth noting: there is no CTA here, which keeps the content non-salesy and experiential.
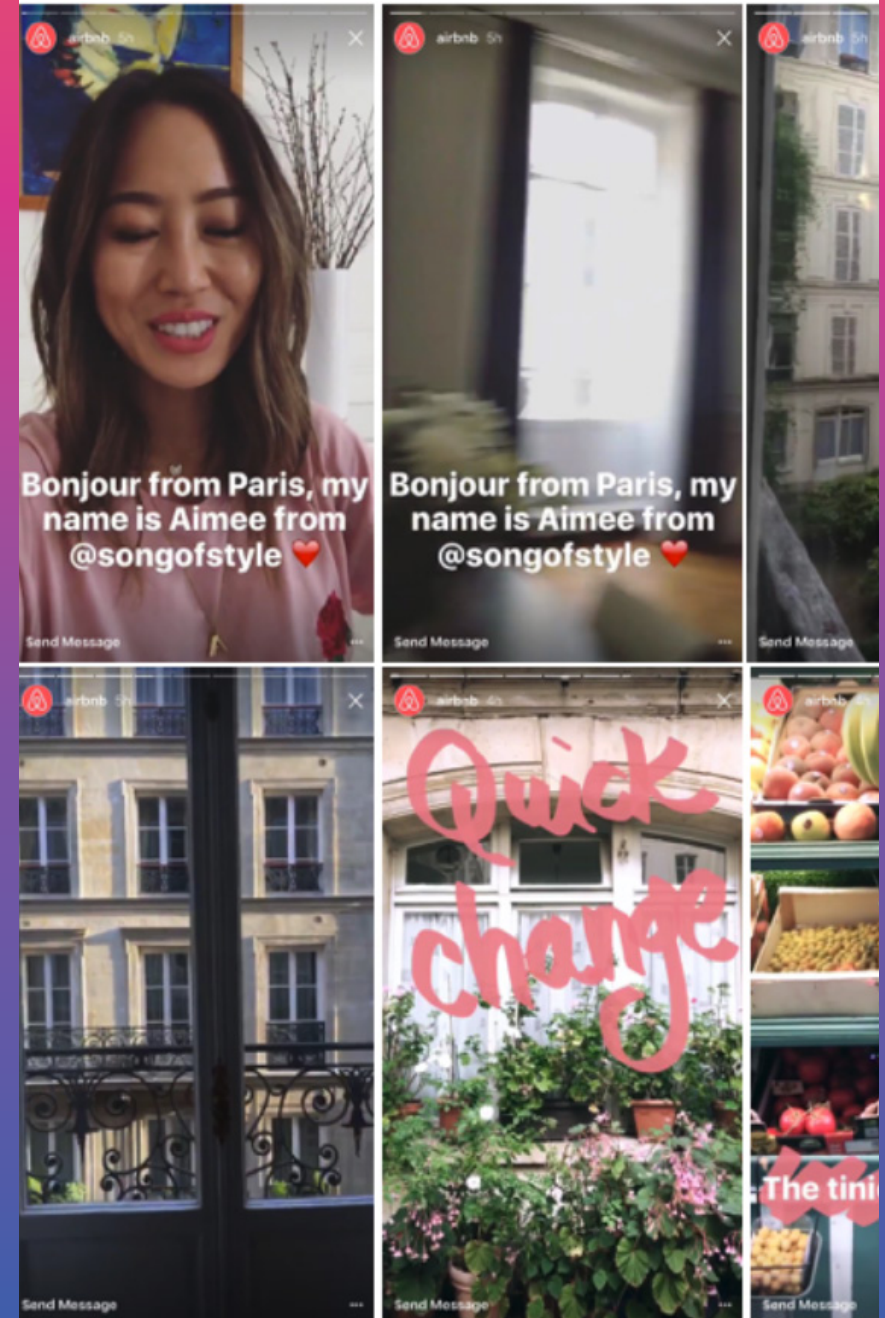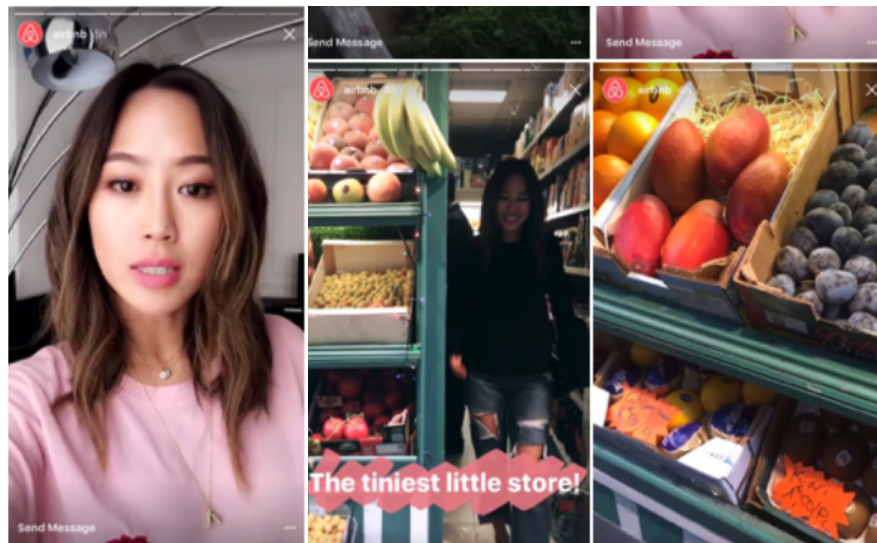
The New York Times Fashion

What: NYT Fashion covered the Ralph Lauren Fashion Show at New York Fashion Week, where the designer made dresses available for purchase immediately after the show. NYT Fashion also shared celebrity interviews and moments from the after-party.

Impact on Buyer's Journey: The fashion vertical is one of the most active on Instagram, and understandably so, since images and videos are such an integral part of that industry. This story gives the audience a glimpse into what happens at high-profile events that most don't get a chance to see firsthand. Such content helps delight the audience and create a positive association with the brand, helping drive adoption.

Amazon

What: Amazon showcases a Chalkboard Mug in this story, showcasing how creative one can get with it. The playfulness of this story keeps it memorable.

Impact on Buyer's Journey: The ephemeral nature of this Instagram Story is a good fit for the transient nature of the design on the chalkboard mug. For a retailer that sells millions of products, it is not possible to create a story for each one of them. However, a simple and fun story like this one helps build top-of-mind awareness about the retailer and also helps drive people to Amazon's website, where they can then discover many other items.

Whole Foods Market

What: Whole Foods used Instagram Stories to announce their sales/digital coupons, which were valid only for a few days.

Impact on Buyer's Journey: Instagram has been one of the most engaging channels for Whole Foods. The brand experiments with different features to keep interactions with their audience engaging. This story showcases sales and coupons, and also features a CTA asking people to download the app for weekly deals. This is a brilliant strategy to glide the audience through the decision stage in the buyer's journey to drive conversions, since everyone who shops at Whole Foods would love to be able to use this information. Since the information in the story is only available for 24 hours, downloading the app is a logical next step.

While Instagram Stories do not yet have metrics, the feature can undeniably be leveraged to move your audience through the buyer's journey.

August 2016: Instagram Zoom rolls out, addressing a common pain point and allowing users to zoom on photos and videos in feed, on profiles, and on Explore.

There's so much you can do with this much-requested feature, I'm surprised that more brands aren't leveraging it. Here are a few ways your brand can take advantage of this "pinch and zoom" phenomenon.
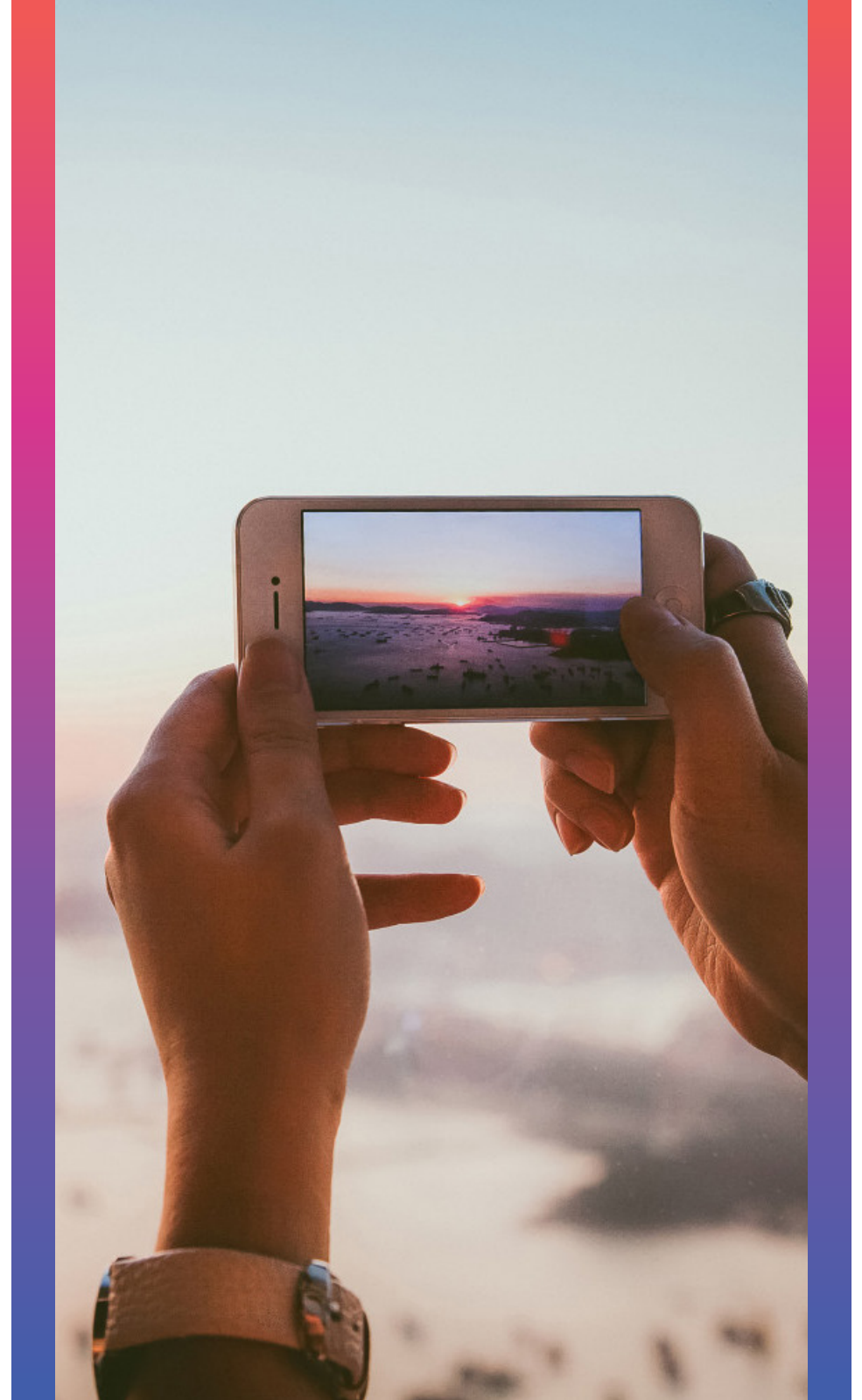
Show Off the Details

Timberland asked its followers to "pinch and zoom," and carefully inspect the unique heel of a shoe from their autumn collection.
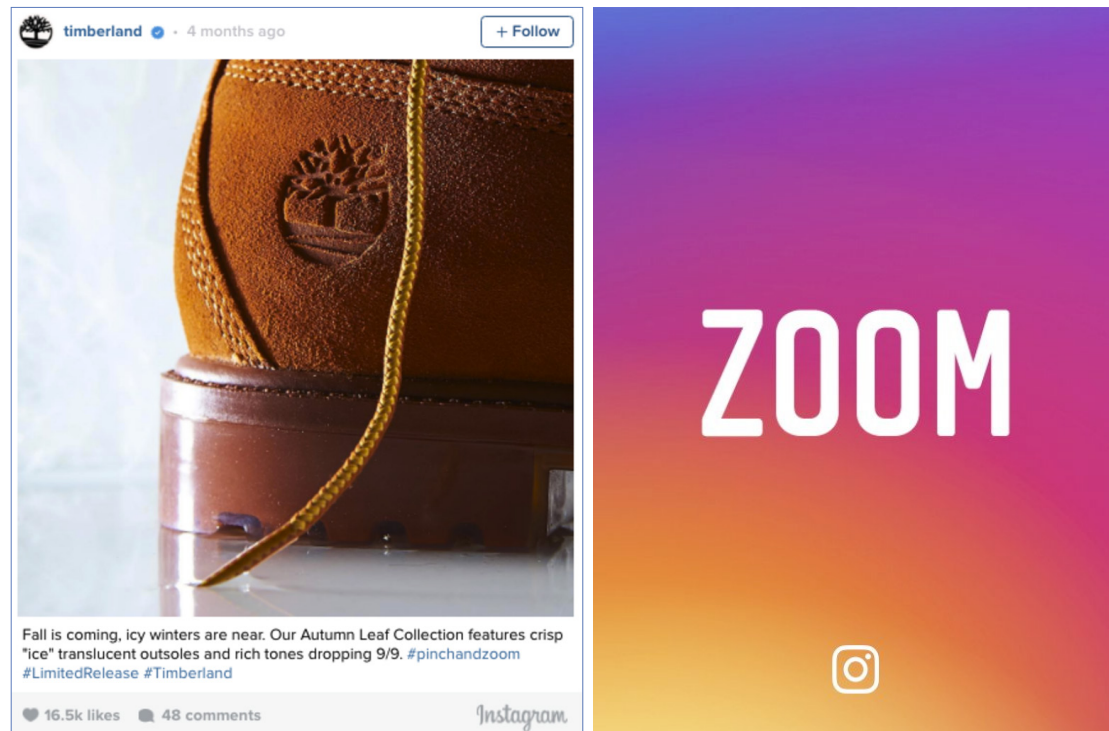
Use Instagram Zoom to generate interest for the unique craftsmanship and small details of your new product or collection.

Map It Out

Northwestern University knows that its social demographic is active on Instagram, so the famed Chicago school published an Instagram post of a campus map, taking advantage of the new #pinchandzoom functionality.

northwesternu · 4 months ago   + Follow

Thanks to Instagram's new #pinchandzoom functionality, this #Northwesterncampus map just may come in handy for some of our #NU2020 students.

1,030 likes   5 comments   Instagram

Try this on your own brand's Instagram account, especially if you are throwing an event or running a campaign around a specific location or travel experience.

Instagram Zoom enables wide exploration of static images, so you should also consider publishing infographics or portions of infographics on Instagram now, and encourage people to explore different areas of the image with this feature.
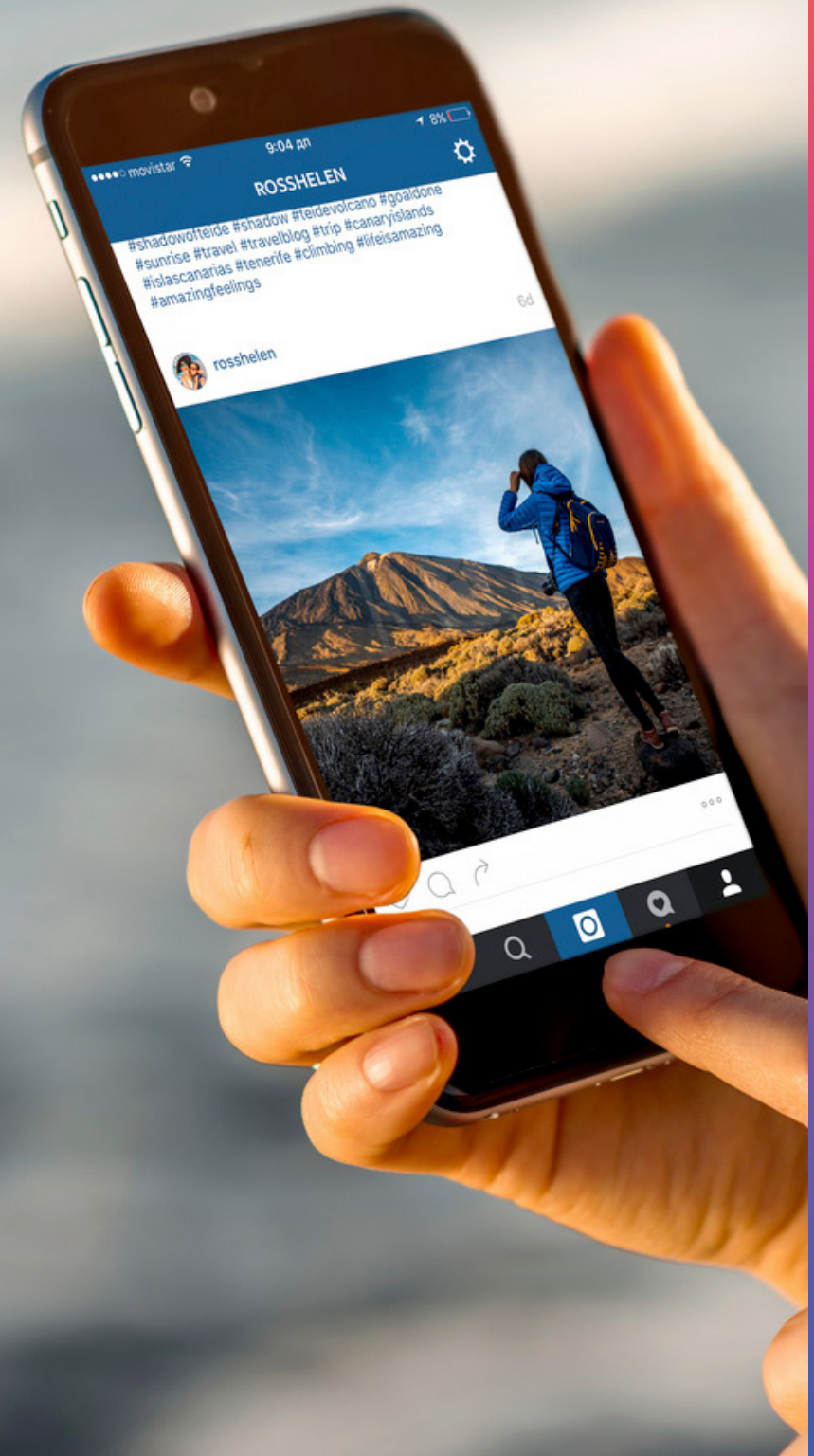
Food Pics on Fleek

If you are a culinary-focused brand, Instagram Zoom should mean a lot to you. Refinery29 said it best on their Instagram account when the feature released in early September:
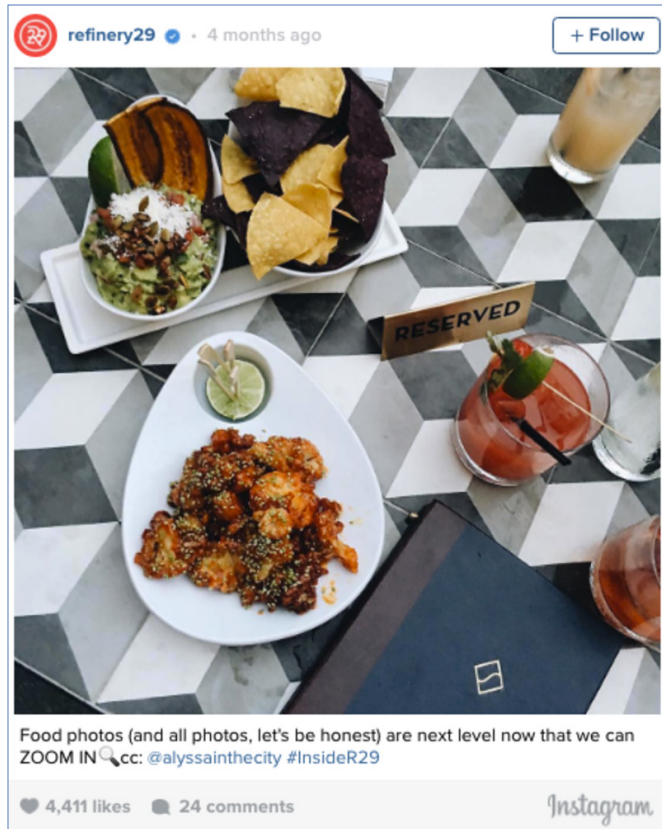
Give your followers a closer look at your food and bevs by asking them to zoom in. This could also be a fun CTA for a contest campaign: can you find _____ on the table?
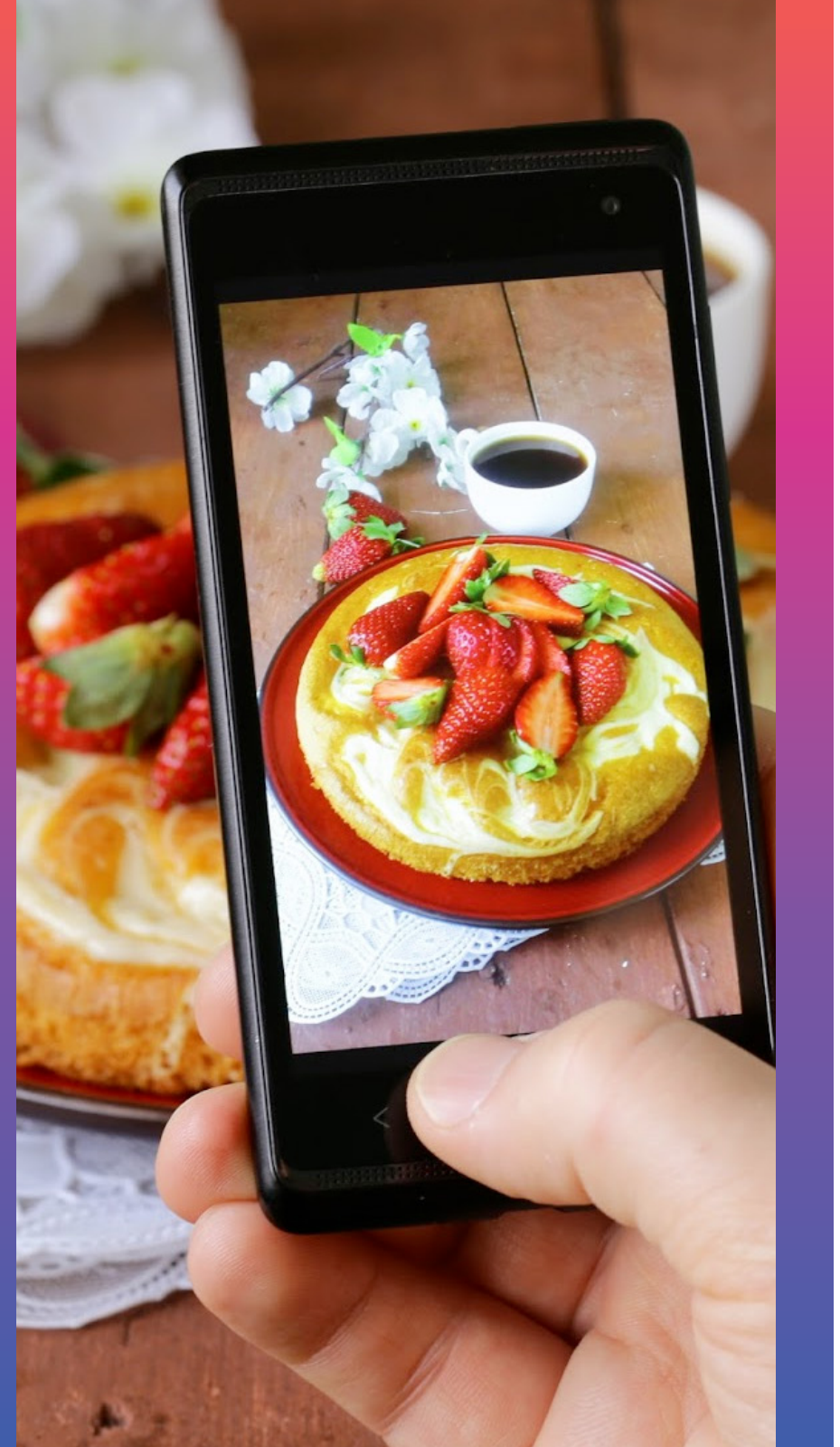
Make a Puzzle

Give your loyal followers an exclusive peek at what's to come for your brand by hiding clues in an Instagram picture.

Try it with your own brand: tease an update with a "Where's Waldo" scene.
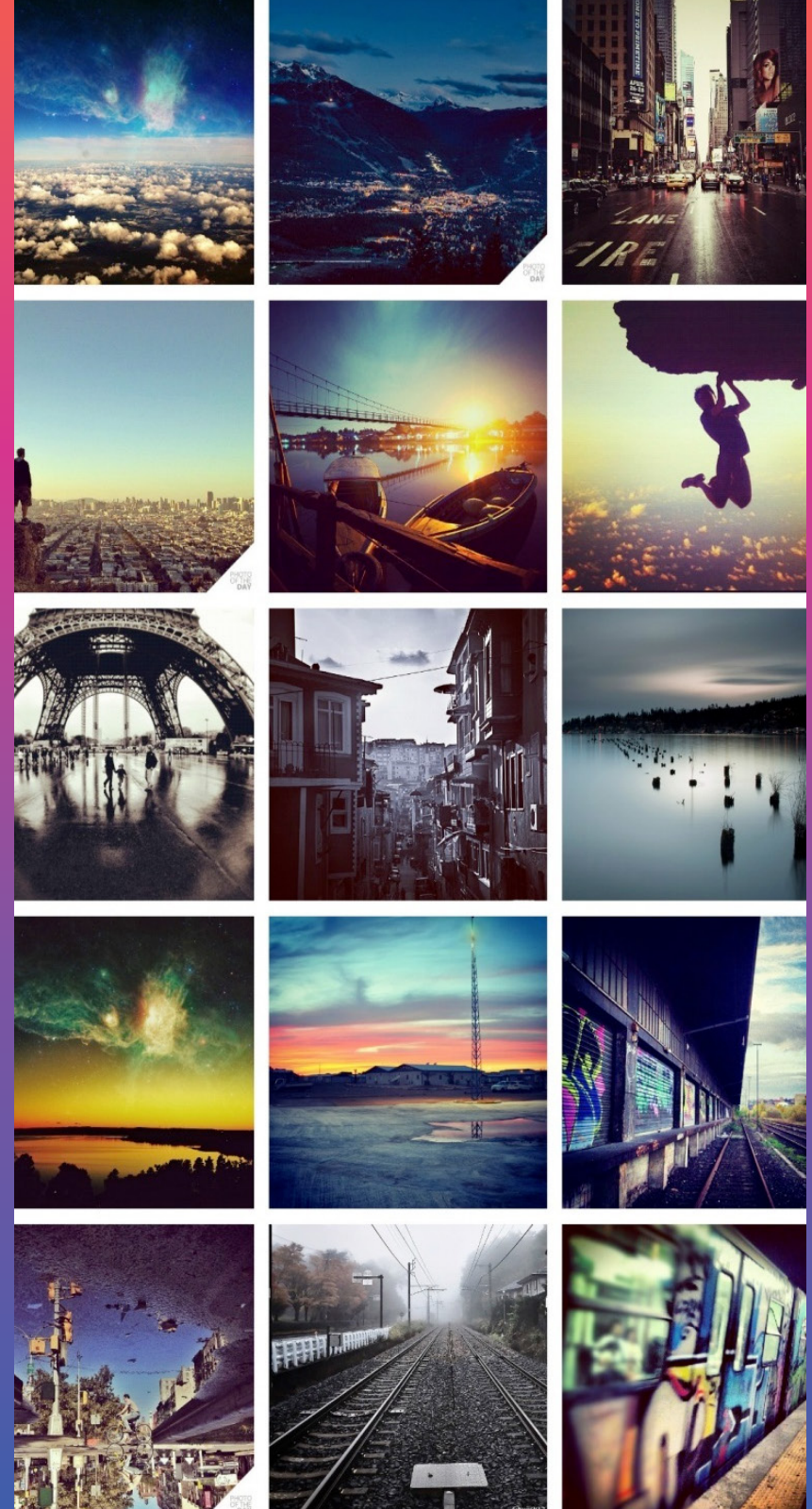
Read the Fine Print

Take advantage of Instagram Zoom by incorporating more text-heavy images in your Instagram strategy. This will get followers to spend more time on your posts and give them a deeper connection with your brand.
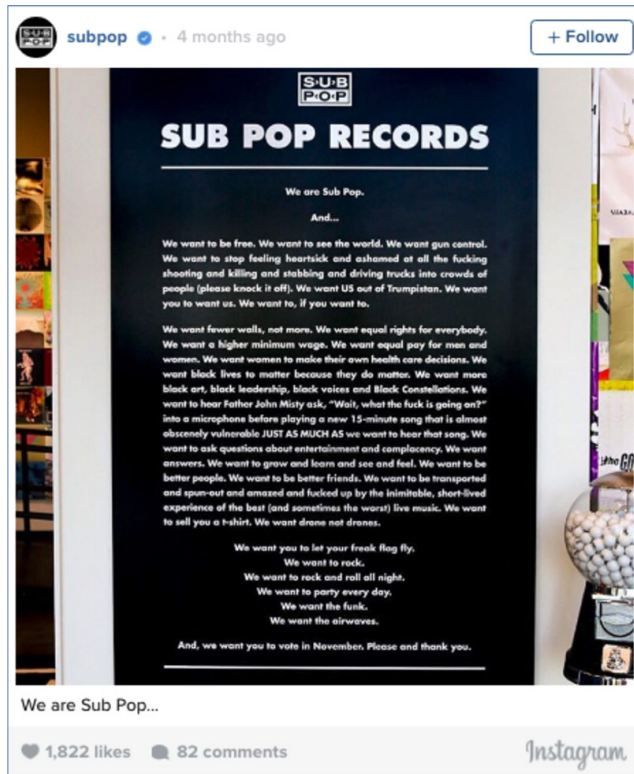
Just make sure you don't abuse this strategy, and that you only use it when you have something meaningful to say. Oversaturation of this technique will make followers scroll past instead of staying awhile.

October 2016: Instagram Stories get added to the Explore feature, enabling greater discovery of Instagram Stories and encouraging more users (especially brands and influencers) to use Instagram Stories for discoverability.

November 2016: You can now add Boomerangs to stories, as well as mention other users (who will be notified).

Instagram Live Is the New Instagram Stories

And not just because it is Instagram's latest product feature. When Instagram Stories rolled out, they took visual precedence over "normal Instagram," organized in a neat little row on the top of your screen–the first thing you see when you open the app. Now, Instagram Live stories will be featured first in this Instagram Stories line-up.

What You Should Do: Want prime real estate on Instagram without investing more in ads? Go Live! Take a look at your upcoming editorial and/or event calendar to see where you can fit in regular Instagram Live updates that will engage your audience. Set a view and viewer number goal, so you can see whether your strategy is working or where you need to pivot.

Nota Bene: This strategy will only work if you do it on a regular basis. Unlike Facebook Live, Instagram Live stories disappear once the broadcast is over.

Make Instagram Live Its Own Channel

Instagram Live takes a lot of features from Periscope and Facebook Live and weaves them into its own ecosystem. Despite living in the same place, Instagram Live isn't at all like "normal" Instagram, so don't treat it as such.

What You Should Do: Set the goals I mentioned in the previous section–or maybe even more detailed engagement goals around comments and Likes (see the section below). Don't use Instagram Live only as a "behind-the-scenes" look at "normal Instagram" photos and videos. That can work sometimes, but you'll get the most return from Instagram Live if you view it as its own universe, with its specific variation of your brand feel and original programming.
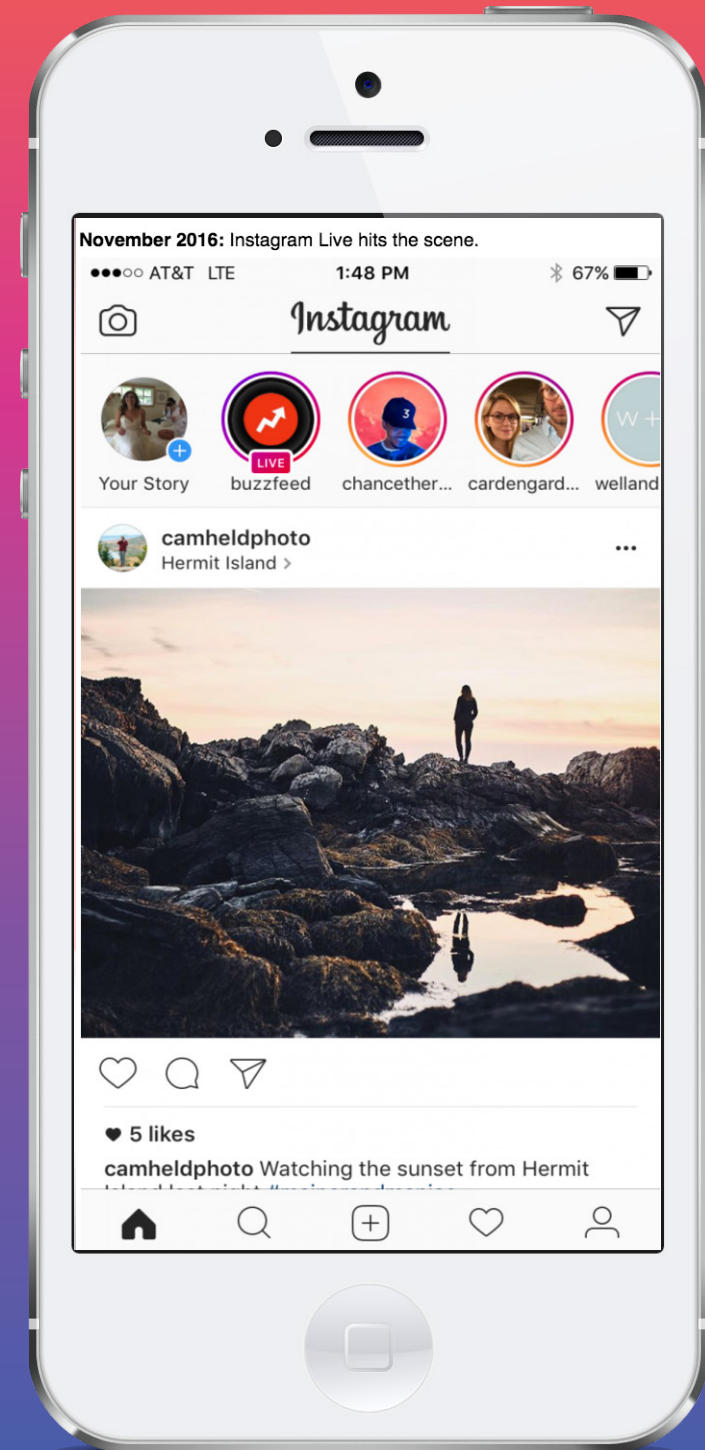
Making the case for the resources you'll need for this effort will require firm goals and a clear explanation of how hitting these goals can affect your organization as a whole, whether from demand gen, brand awareness, or revenue perspectives.

Choose Whether You Want Visible Comments

Instagram Live gives your audience the ability to comment and Like freely as the broadcast goes along, but you also have the power to turn comments off altogether.

What You Should Do: Fear not the trolls. Open your brand up to feedback, and you may be pleasantly surprised at what comes in. Use this feedback to inform future content, on Instagram Live and beyond, and switch off those comments only if the water gets too hot.

Take Your Influencer Marketing Program Off Training Wheels

Instagram Live is a great place to do this. If your influencer marketing program is nascent, dormant, or even non-existent, Instagram Live is a godsend.

What You Should Do: Reach out to influencers who intersect with your brand philosophy, offering, and audience (or leverage the ones you already have!). Start a weekly series which focuses on either interviewing relevant influencers in your space or letting an influencer take over and invite your audience into their world.

This Is Brand Discovery at its Finest

Under the Explore tab, U.S. users will now find a "Top Live" section, displaying the "best" Instagram Live content currently being offered, according to Instagram's algorithm.

This is a wonderful example of quality winning out over quantity: while we recommend regular, consistently timed and themed posting on Instagram Live, quality level is the most important consideration to keep in mind. You're opening yourself up to wide swaths of new audience if you're featured in the Top Live category.

What You Should Do: Make getting featured in the Top Live category a quarterly goal for your Instagram Live program. Make sure you're promoting your Instagram Live programming on other social channels to draw more eyes and more engagement, which are likely to get you featured here. Post outside or before your target audience's business
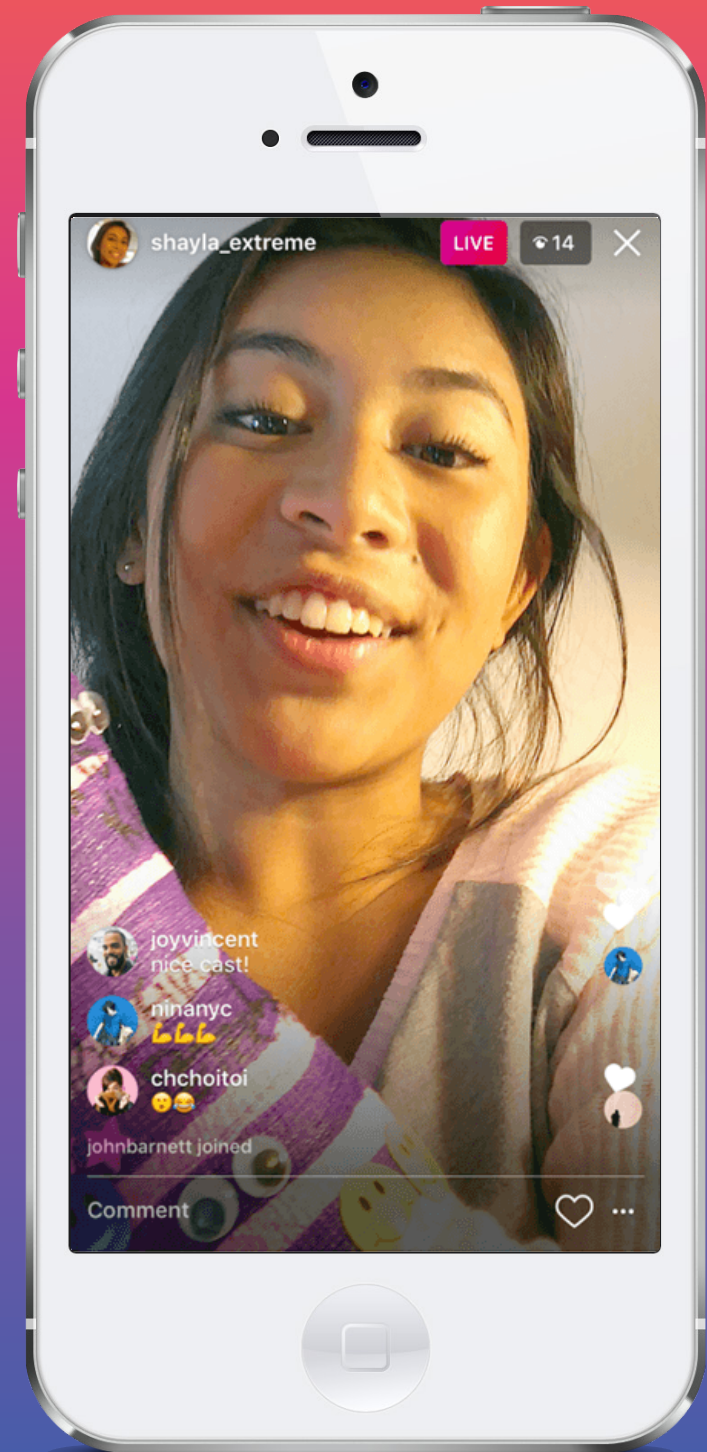
hours, when Instagram users are more likely to be able to turn their full attention to a piece of content (and have the sound on).

December 2016: Instagram introduces the Save feature on posts so you can check them out later--a direct competitive swipe at Pinterest.

December 2016: Instagram Stories just got a lot more playful and creative with the addition of stickers (including holiday-themed stickers to encourage adoption).

In the same update, Instagram rolled out a new "Hands-Free" option in the format picker so you can start recording a video with just one tap.

You can now add as much text to your photo or video as you want, and choose between left, center and right justified text, with a new slider that lets you adjust size easily with automatic text wrap. On iOS, you can now save your entire story from the past 24 hours to your camera roll as a single video (very similar to Snapchat's download feature).
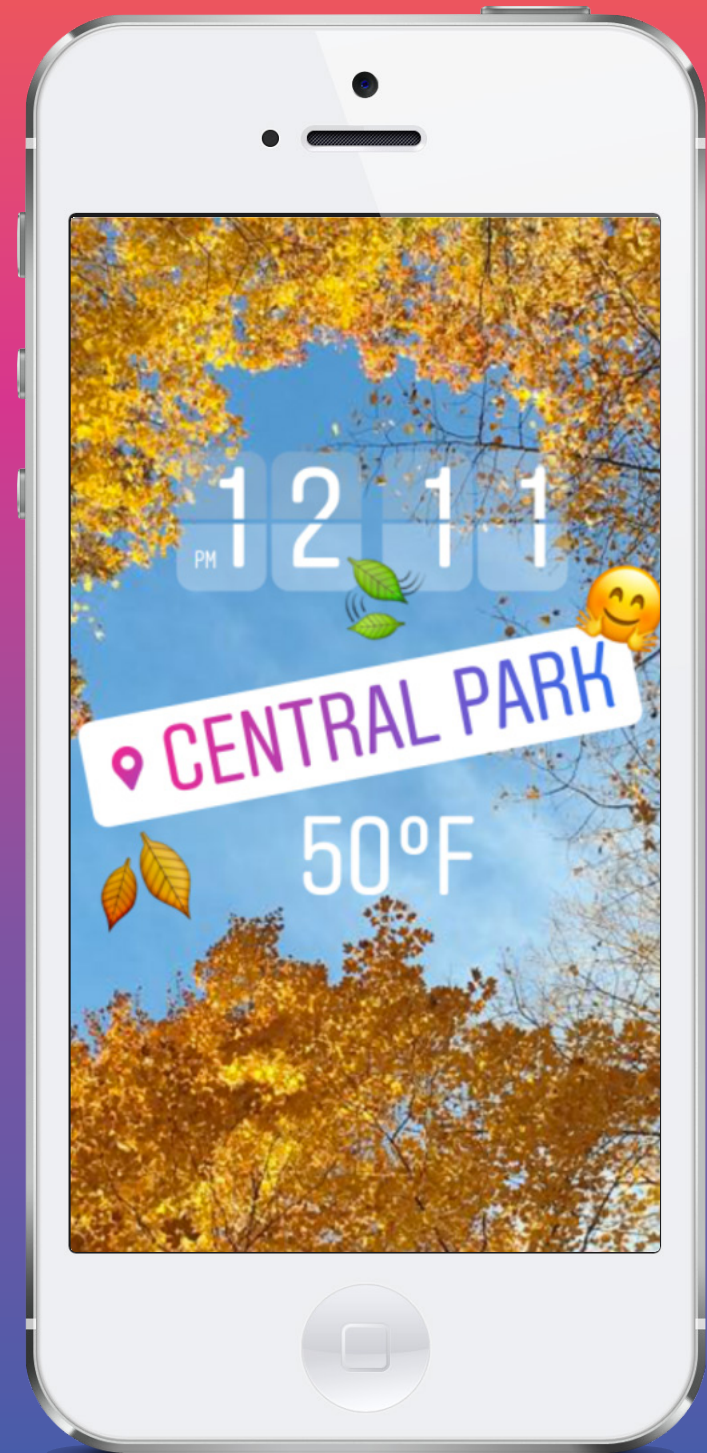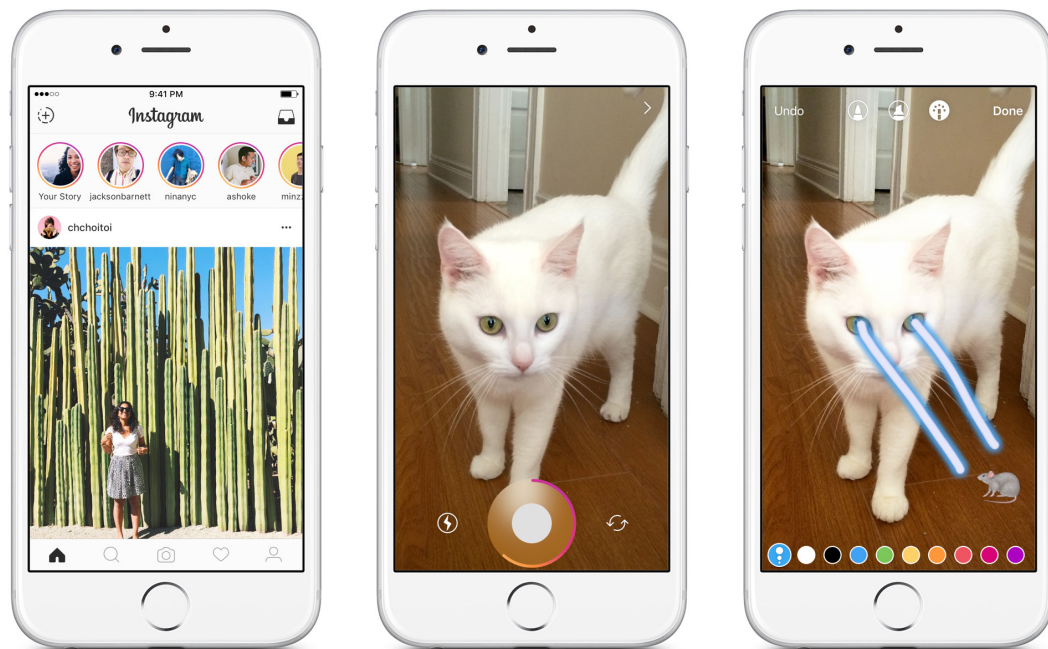
BASIC: INSTAGRAM DEFINITIONS AND METRICS

To understand any network, you need to know its parameters: what it does, which actions users can take, and which metrics count toward your success. You can't analyze what you don't know, so we'll start by defining the different ways of measuring Instagram. Armed with the proper metrics, you're able to research, measure, and optimize your Instagram programs.

Engagement Metrics

Likes

Likes on Instagram are much like Facebook Likes or Twitter Favorites. They are a signal that the image you've posted has resonated with your followers. A user taps a photo or video twice in the center to like it, and the heart icon beneath the post turns solid red. Next to this icon is a count of how many Likes an image has earned.

Comments

Besides liking posts, users can also share comments. The comments appear under the photo, with the option to collapse or expand when there are more than three. Users can tag other Instagram users and include hashtags and emojis in their comments.

Total Engagement

Total engagement is the sum of Likes and comments on your Instagram posts during an established time period.

Total engagement gives you insight into how active your audience is and how well your strategy is working.

Engagement per Post

The engagement per post metric provides deeper insights than just total likes or comments. It gives you an average of how much engagement you're getting per post and helps you discover which posts earn the most interaction. Keep in mind that some of your posts will resonate well and earn high engagement numbers, while others will fall flat.

HOW TO GET MORE *likes* AND *followers* ON *Instagram* (....AND FAST!)

In addition, it's important to look beyond average engagement per post number and take a magnifying glass to your content. This can be done by breaking engagement per post into engagement per video and engagement per photo to give you more tactical insight on which types of content your audience responds to most.

Engagement as % of Followers

Engagement as a % of followers is calculated for a specific time period, and is an invaluable tool for benchmarking.

Total Engagement in a Time Period ÷ Total Followers
=
Engagement as % of Followers

Engagement as a % of followers shows the portion of your current followers interacting with your posts during a specified time period. By comparing this metric period-over-period, marketers have a starting point to find valuable insight into their specific tactics.

	INSTAGRAM POSTS	ENGAGEMENTS	ENGAGEMENTS PER POST
All Posts	32	536,473	16,764.8
Photo Posts	31	525,393	16,948.2
Video Posts	1	11,080	11,080.0
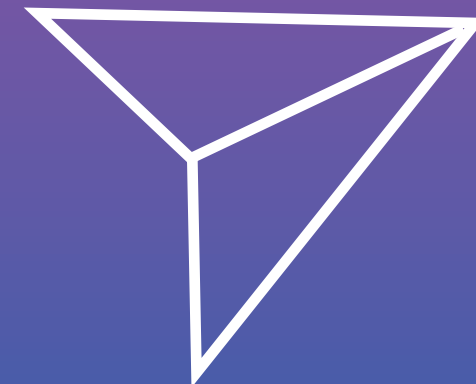
Hashtag Engagement Metrics

A secondary type of engagement on Instagram is interaction with your brand hashtag. An "engagement" with a hashtag happens anytime an Instagram user mentions a hashtag in a comment or caption on any photo or video across the network.

Instagram Hashtag Report: 10/1/15 to 10/14/15

HASHTAGS IN THIS REPORT: #lodenfrey   SEE ALL HASHTAGS

| 31 Unique People | 39 Hashtag Volume — Total number of photos & videos that included the hashtag(s) being tracked | 55k Potential Reach — The number of unique people that were potentially reached | 59k Potential Impressions — Potential number of times that the photos and videos posted could have been seen. | 5,723 Instagram Engagement |

| 1.3 Posts per Person | 1,411.2 Average Reach per Photo Posted | 1.1 Potential Impressions per Person Reached | 146.7 Average Instagram Engagements per Post |

Hashtag Volume

Hashtag volume is the total number of hashtag mentions during an established period of time. If you're more interested in how viral a campaign hashtag is rather than how your Instagram account is being interacted with, you'll want to pay attention to hashtag volume, the number of times a hashtag has been used in any given period.

Potential Hashtag Reach

Your potential reach shows you how many people have seen your hashtag on Instagram. For the most part, reach is considered a "potential" metric; just because a post appears on a feed doesn't mean the target user has seen it.

Reach
The number of unique people who have seen content associated with your page

Potential Hashtag Impressions

Your number of potential impressions is the amount of times that photos and videos using your hashtag are displayed in a user's stream. Just like reach, this is a "potential" metric.

Impressions
The number of times content associated with your page is displayed

Instagram Stories

The metrics available for Instagram Stories right now are limited. While this may change in the future, right now we have three big metrics you should be paying attention to if you're investing time and effort in Instagram Stories.

View Count: The number of people who have watched your Instagram Story. Swipe upwards while you watch your Story. You'll see how many people have watched your Story and their usernames listed below.

View Rate: Keeping an eye on your View Rate on a consistent basis allows you to improve. How many of your followers are actually watching your Instagram Stories? Which Instagram Stories have the best View Rates, and which have the worst? How can you optimize by time of day or content?

Let's say that your account has 100,000 followers. Your Story gets 1,000 views. Your View Rate would be:

(Number of views X 100)/Number of followers

This gives you 1%. This is your View Rate for that Story.

EVERYONE HAS A STORY

Drop-Off Rate: You can figure out the percentage of your followers who stopped watching after 1, 2 or X Stories, as well. Let's say your first Story had 3,000 views, the second had 2,000 views, and the last one had 1,000 views.

First, determine the View Rate for each of your Stories.

Story 1: 3%
Story 2: 2%
Story 3: 1%

Then, calculate the difference between each percentage by using the following equation:

((Story 2-Story 1)/Story 1) X 100

By monitoring your average drop-off rate on a regular basis, you'll be able to tell which content is turning your followers off and which content is keeping their attention.

PRO TIP:

Compile a list of your most frequent viewers, and put their names and key characteristics (i.e. geographical location, profile interests, gender, etc.) in a Google Doc or Excel spreadsheet. Try to understand what your most frequent watchers have in common, and scour their profiles to see the kind of content they post (and, thus, might be interested in seeing from your brand).

INTERMEDIATE: OPTIMIZING YOUR STRATEGY

Instagram

### ☑ Experiment with segmented analysis.

"We want to know what's working," said pretty much every social media marketer ever. It makes sense: when you analyze your social data, you're able to quickly understand which content is performing best.

On the whole, that's fantastic, but today we're here to take social analysis one step further. We're here to segment our data.

Segmented analysis allows you to bucket specific types of posts together and analyze them as a group.

A simple form of segmented analysis is analyzing performance by post type: video, photo, or link. Once you aggregate data for your segments, you can compare their performance and understand trends in your content. This approach is an effective way to learn which posts are driving engagement, impressions, or any other metric you're trying to move.

Here are a few different examples that can help you think about segmentation, so you can craft a social strategy that really speaks to your audience. In these examples, I focused on Instagram and created segments using Simply Measured's segmented analysis tool. I used our reports to investigate engagement per post and its components (comments/likes), as well as the number of people tagged in comments.
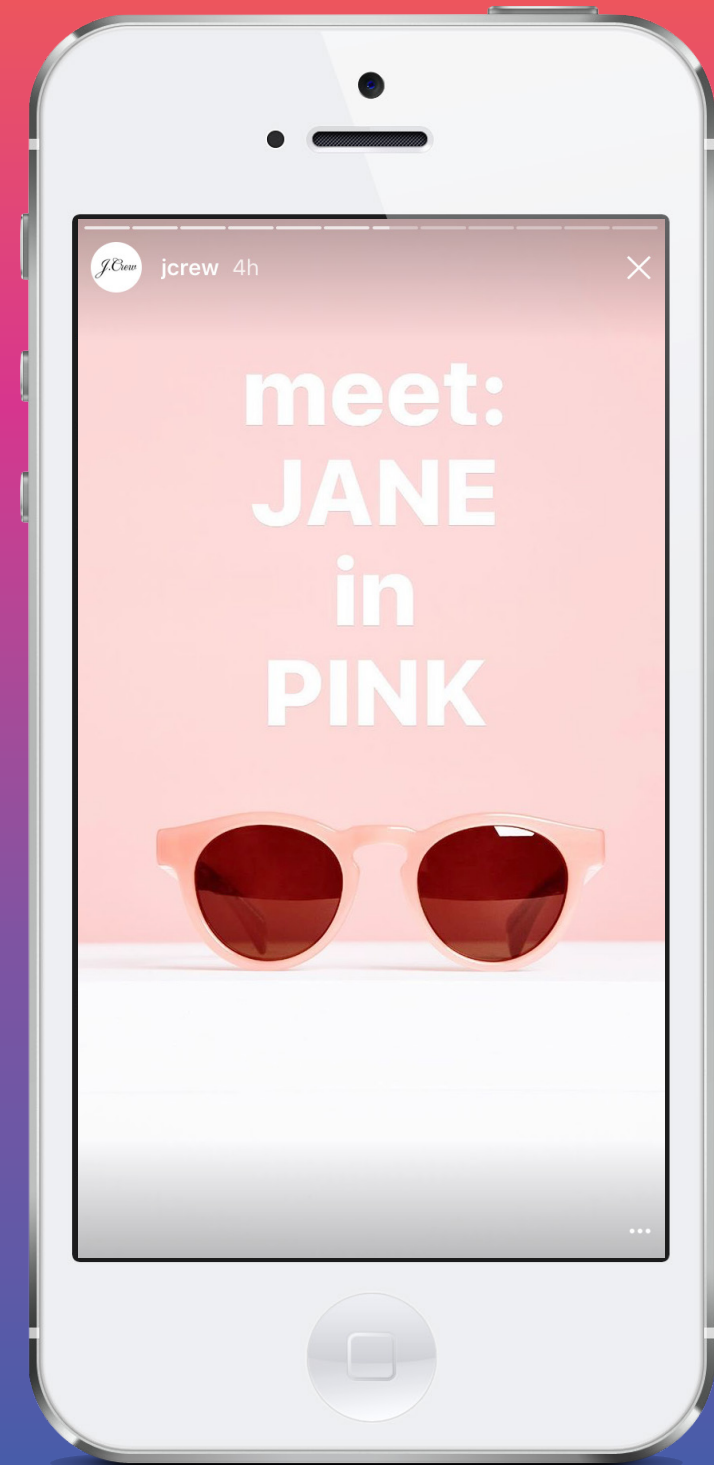
Product vs. Product

One way to conduct segmented analysis is to compare how different product lines drive engagement.
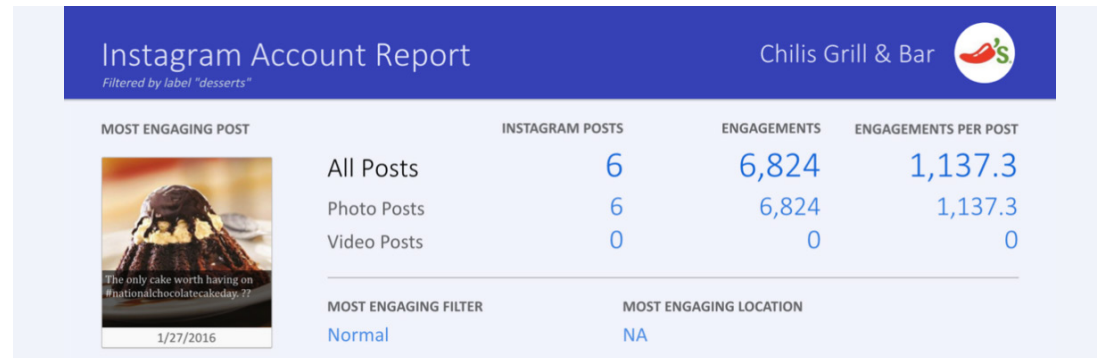

Segmentation

Take a look at the Chili's Grill and Bar Instagram account and you'll find a variety of posts featuring their food, alcoholic beverages, and, of course, desserts. We looked at all posts that were published by Chili's on Instagram in Q1, comparing all posts including an image of a drink with all posts including a dessert.
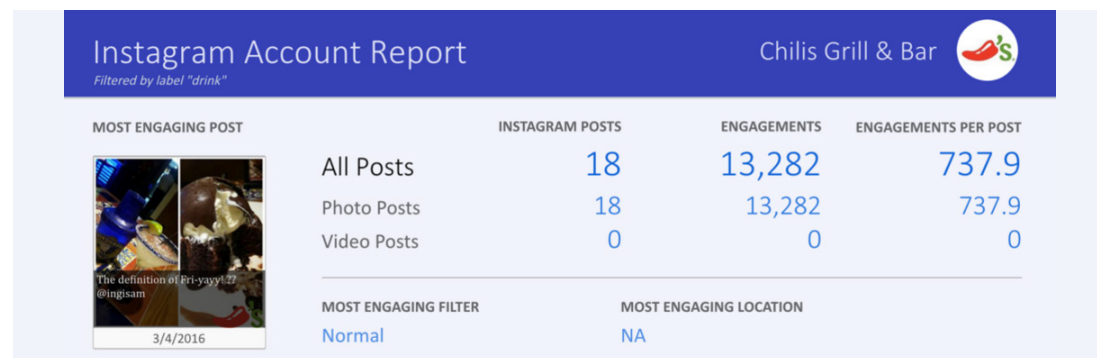
Results

Instagram posts featuring desserts were a hit with Chili's audience. All six of the posts featured the restaurant's Molten Chocolate Cake, and their average engagement was over 50% higher than the average engagement on posts featuring drinks.

Take a look at the lead chart on Simply Measured's Instagram Account Report and you'll notice that the top post featuring drinks also includes this cake.

Instagram Account Report
Filtered by label "desserts"

Chilis Grill & Bar

MOST ENGAGING POST

	INSTAGRAM POSTS	ENGAGEMENTS	ENGAGEMENTS PER POST
All Posts	6	6,824	1,137.3
Photo Posts	6	6,824	1,137.3
Video Posts	0	0	0

The only cake worth having on #nationalchocolatecakeday. ??
1/27/2016

MOST ENGAGING FILTER	MOST ENGAGING LOCATION
Normal	NA

There were over twice as many comments on the dessert posts, and these comments included many more tagged Instagram accounts.

It's interesting that the brand published three times more posts with drinks than desserts.

Instagram Account Report
Filtered by label "drink"

Chilis Grill & Bar

MOST ENGAGING POST

	INSTAGRAM POSTS	ENGAGEMENTS	ENGAGEMENTS PER POST
All Posts	18	13,282	737.9
Photo Posts	18	13,282	737.9
Video Posts	0	0	0

The definition of Fri-yayy! ??
@ingisam
3/4/2016

MOST ENGAGING FILTER	MOST ENGAGING LOCATION
Normal	NA

Blog Strategy

You can use segmented analysis on Instagram to evaluate a specific tactic.

Segmentation

KitchenAid often posts teasers and encourages followers to go to their blog. In Q1 of 2016, 44% of KitchenAid's posts used this approach.

I wanted to know if this was an effective strategy, so I created a segment targeting all of KitchenAid's posts that contained the word "blog." I compared these posts with all Instagram posts from the brand.

Since Instagram posts don't have links, it makes sense that posts that mentioned the KitchenAid blog didn't perform as well as KitchenAid's average posts in Q1.

Check out these gorgeous Herb Buttered Beet Noodles with Sautéed Mushrooms + Arugula from @kristimurphydiy on our blog (blog.kitchenaid.com). Then, head over to @infatuation to learn how you can win your own KitchenAid® St...

February 29, 2016

Instagram Engagements 1,585
2.1x compared to brand average

Get creative with color and try this beautiful Vanilla Ombre Cake from @grandbabycakes on our blog (blog.kitchenaid.com). Share your take on this recipe with us using #MadeWithKitchenAid for a chance to be featured.

March 27, 2016

Instagram Engagements 1,246
1.6x compared to brand average

These were the top two Instagram posts containing a blog mention in Q1 2016.

The weather is beautiful here at #SOBEWFF, and the stand mixers are colorful! Which color is your favorite? ☐?

February 28, 2016

Instagram Engagements 3,829
4.3x compared to brand average

We love this awesome extruded pasta shot from @peachesandsalt! What's your favorite type of pasta? #regram #MadeWithKitchenAid #??
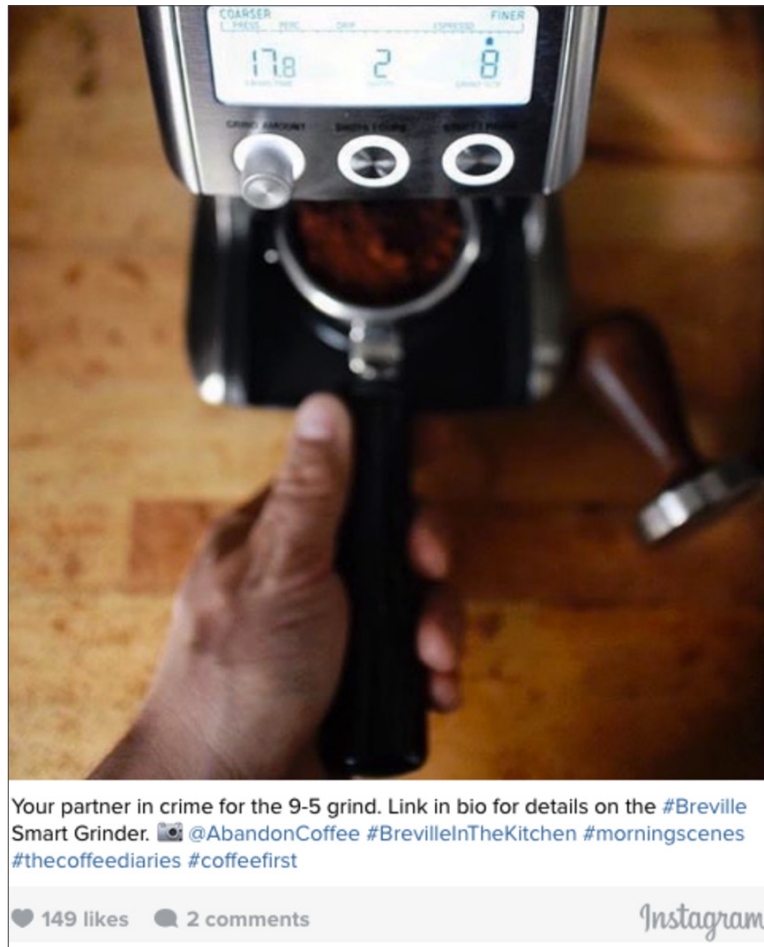
February 09, 2016

Instagram Engagements 2,387
2.7x compared to brand average

These were the top two Instagram posts containing a blog mention in Q1 2016.

There was less engagement on blog-related posts across the board. Additionally, the two top-performing posts featuring the blog had an incentive for the audience to win. To contrast, the top two posts overall were shots of KitchenAid stand mixers. The lesson here: KitchenAid can do more with less and shouldn't use Instagram as a driver towards its blog.

Ready to try Simply Measured?

Request a Demo Today

Link in Profile Approach

Do "link in profile" posts work for your brand on Instagram? Segmented analysis is one way to find out.

Your partner in crime for the 9-5 grind. Link in bio for details on the #Breville Smart Grinder. 📷 @AbandonCoffee #BrevilleInTheKitchen #morningscenes #thecoffeediaries #coffeefirst

♥ 149 likes   💬 2 comments   *Instagram*

Segmentation

Another tactic that marketers use to move their audience to their site is putting a specific clickable link in their profile and including a call to action in their post.

Breville used this tactic quite a bit in Q1 2016. Close to 30% of their posts mentioned a link in their profile. We compared the performance of these posts to averages for all posts published during the time period.

Results

Once again, this segment performed below average for engagement across both photos and videos.
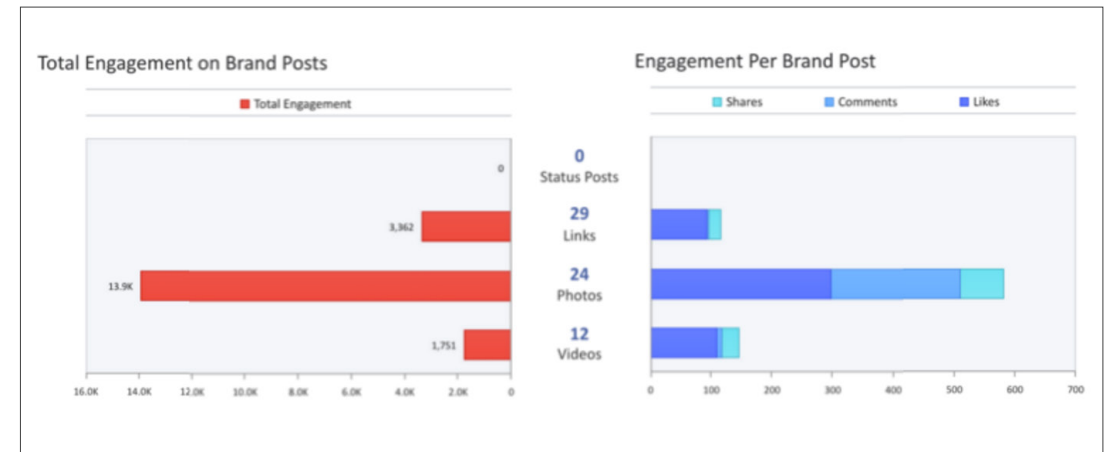
Engagement by post type on Facebook from the Facebook Fan Page Report.

It's interesting to note that Breville's posts with photos also outperformed posts with links on Facebook. This suggests that even when users can click on a link right from a post, they aren't engaging as much with posts that only contain links.

These quick case studies demonstrate how powerful segmented analysis can be for understanding what's working for your brand on Instagram and across social.

☑ Partner with and Regram Influencers:

Brands like Red Bull do a great job of partnering with influencers who matter to their target demographic, and regramming photos from the most influential extreme sports photographers, including Christian Pondella. This is a great way to source awesome content and amplify the brand's Instagram feed.

It's time to get down and dirty. Red Bull Rampage is here and you can watch all the action this Friday on Red Bull TV at 9:30am PDT. 🏆
@brandonsemenuk ⬛: @christianpondella #downhill #mtb #RedBullRampage

☑ Understand What Engages Your Target Audience the Most. In line

with the point above, you must understand what captures your target audience's attention (and keeps it there) to be successful on Instagram. Let's take The New York Times, for example.
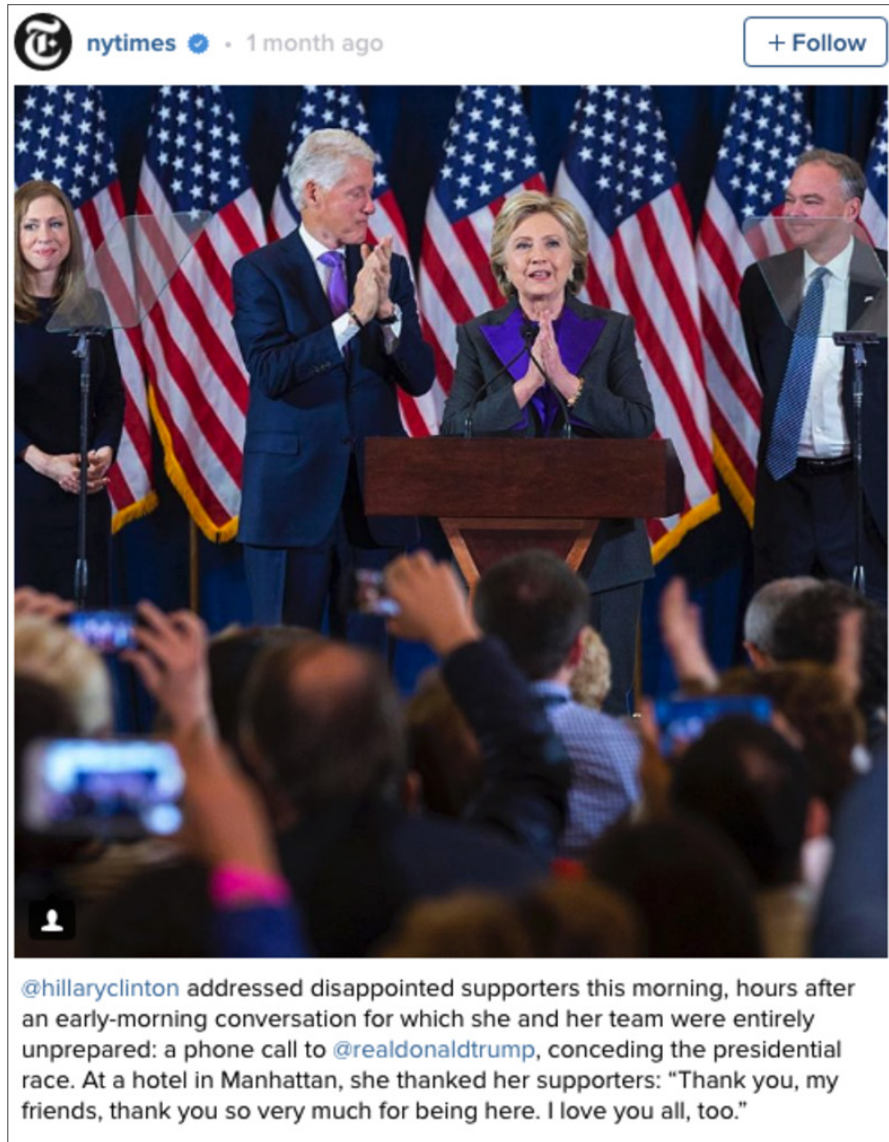
The Times already reaches millions of people through print and digital subscriptions. To reach and engage their audience on Instagram, the brand experiments with various formats: photos, videos, and Instagram Stories. Their engagement as a % of followers in the data period between 10/23/16-12/23/16 was over 175% (the top five fashion brands that we studied last week average 60.6% engagement as a % of followers), indicating that this community is highly engaged with the brand on Instagram, and brand content is resonating.

Looking at the broad content types posted by The Times, we see that posts related to Travel generate the most engagement and are among the top 5 content types posted by the brand. Posts related to the 2016 Election were the second most-engaging and most common post type sent out by The New York Times.

Which Content Type Resonates Most With The Times' Audience on Instagram

Content Types Posted	Number of Posts	Average Engagement/Post
Travel	19	14522
Election	52	12106
Technology	3	10893
National Issues	6	10817
Portrait	153	10299
World Affairs	43	10172
Event	25	9785
Food	16	9430
Climate change	8	9229
History	5	9224
Games	3	8962
Movie	2	8836
Life and Well being	1	7595

Data By: Simply Measured

The following post from this year's election was the most engaging post in the data period.

nytimes ✔ · 1 month ago   + Follow

@hillaryclinton addressed disappointed supporters this morning, hours after an early-morning conversation for which she and her team were entirely unprepared: a phone call to @realdonaldtrump, conceding the presidential race. At a hotel in Manhattan, she thanked her supporters: "Thank you, my friends, thank you so very much for being here. I love you all, too."

☑ **Employ a sophisticated hashtag strategy.**

Emirates Airline uses two hashtags – #HelloTomorrow and #EmiratesAirline. Only #EmiratesAirline was used for this report, since we tracked only branded hashtags for all the airlines.
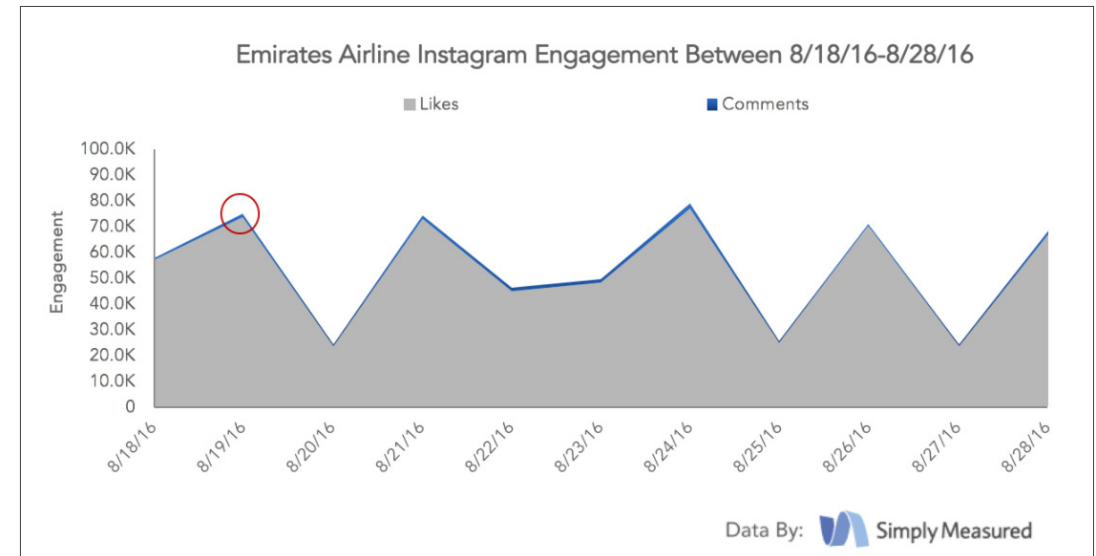
Emirates has consistently been ranked among the top airlines in the world. They were the second airline (after Singapore Airlines) to fly the world's largest passenger airliner, the Airbus A380, which is a much-discussed topic among frequent flyers and aviation geeks. Emirates understands that, and has made sure to tag this energetic chunk of the audience so that they find the content easily through other relevant hashtags that the airline used in the photo's comments.

The brand's engaging tone and beautiful images resonate with customers. Its strategy to use the hashtag in the photo, along with other popular hashtags, ensures that this content will reach the right audience, making it the most engaging post for the brand in the data period and driving the peak on Aug 19th.

While Emirates Airline has not used any influencers directly to generate engagement on Instagram, the airline has used its partnership with the LA Dodgers to very creatively drive conversations. They have painted one of their planes in the Dodgers colors, and shared a video taken by an avid aviation enthusiast, SpeedbirdHD.
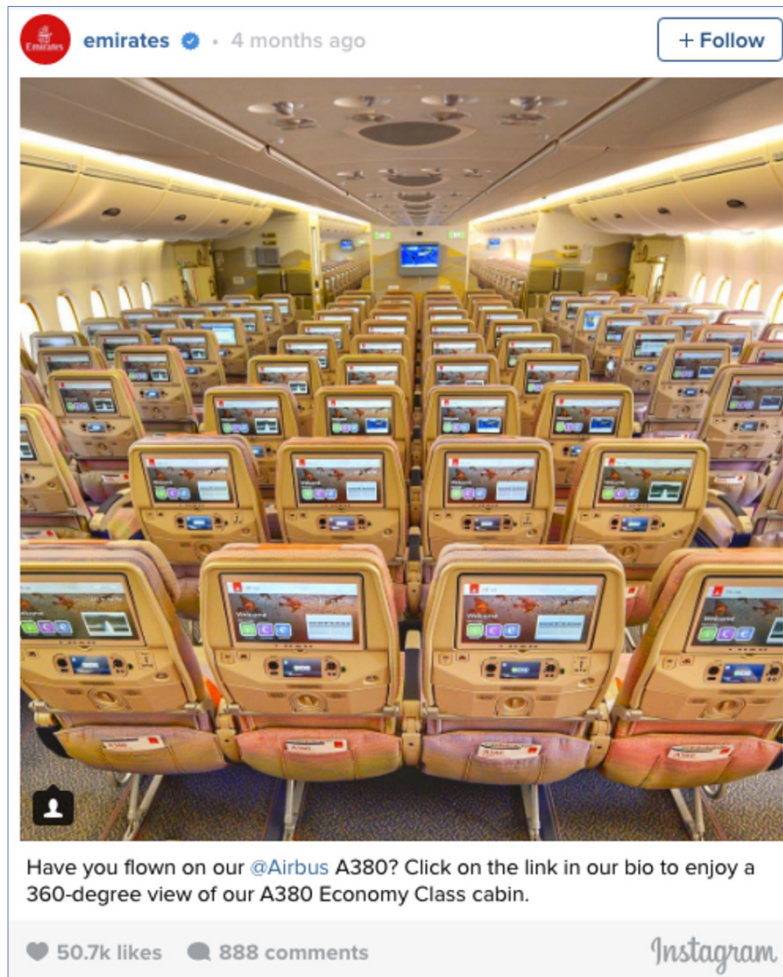
This brand nails a few important elements of Instagram marketing in one post, partnering with/mentoring influencers, posting a video, and sharing user-generated content.

Instagram Stories

☑ **Tell a cohesive story, and create suspense.** Your drop-off rate will be high if you are not telling a story which makes people want to keep watching in the midst of all their other distractions.

☑ **Stay competitive.** What's your competition doing? Don't copy, but get inspired.

☑ **Find out when your followers are online.** Instagram Stories are not reliant on an algorithm, unlike "regular" Instagram. This gives you a unique opportunity to get quality content in front of those who care enough about your band to follow you. But first you need to know when your followers are on Instagram, which requires running an analysis of your Instagram followers. Side note: we can help with this.

☑ **Use the text and drawing tools, and stickers.** You can now get more playful with your content without having to leave the Instagram platform, if you already have a presence there. If you aren't active on Instagram yet or have an account but don't post much, this feature opens an avenue for creating a unique, fresh experience on the network.

You will also be able to "dress up" basic content that would look pretty bland on its own, and generate more engagement. This is an excellent method of connecting with a younger audience on the Instagram platform that you haven't been able to touch yet.

☑ **Don't abuse 'em.** If an Instagram user follows your brand, your account will show up with a colorful ring around it whenever you release new Instagram story content. This means it is time to aggressively increase your follower count, so that you can be top-of-feed and top-of-mind on as many user feeds as possible.

This feature gives your brand an unprecedented ability to get organic content in front of users, as more and more social networks become pay-to-play enterprises.

This feature also means that your account gets unique placement among an Instagram user's closest friends and family members, so make sure you're not abusing the feature by flooding feeds with low-quality content, or you'll experience a significant amount of unfollows. Remember, with great power comes great responsibility.

☑ **Gain more insight about your audience.** Instagram stories have flexible privacy settings, meaning you can exclude specific people from seeing your Instagram stories, even if they follow you. Chances are, this privacy feature is not one most Instagram users will target at brands. This means that the more Instagram users your brand follows, the more you will be able to view Instagram stories and gain personal insight into how your target audience utilizes Instagram and interacts with fellow Instagram users.

☑ **Repurpose content.** Instagram stories are flexible, meaning you can choose to feature a part of your Instagram story on your main profile if it goes over well. This gives you the chance to test content before you make it a part of your Instagram magnum opus.

ADVANCED: DRIVING BUSINESS VALUE

☑ Find Your Next Instagram Campaign Theme

Decide on your next Instagram campaign topic and content by looking at the conversations and trending themes around your brand and/or industry.
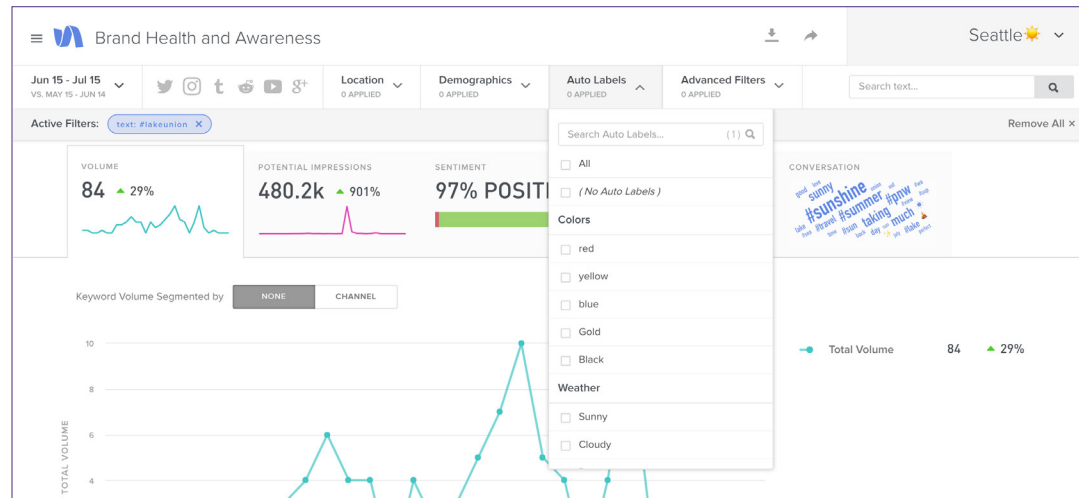

This is an example of the volume, Share of Voice, and sentiment information you can receive about any topic you choose within the Simply Measured Social Listening solution.

Our Social Listening solution provides greater context for planning your next campaign with:

- **Themes** that can expose purchase intent and preferences for product "flavors"
- **Keywords** that can tell you which terms people are associating with your brand
- **Sentiment Analysis** that can tell you whether the commentary around your brand is skewing positive or negative right now
- **Regional and Geographic Trends** so you can better reach your target audiences and new consumers and get involved in relevant conversations

All of these features can help you expose insights around your brand faster than ever before–then plan your next campaign accordingly.
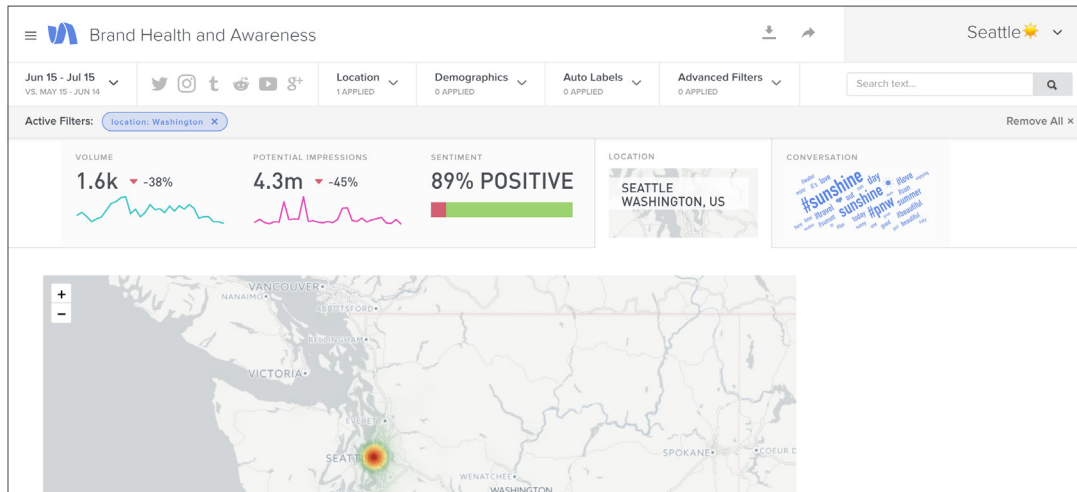
Measure the Performance of Your Brand's Content

You can use our Social Analysis & Monitoring solution to speedily measure the results of your owned content, including a holistic understanding of your social performance across all major social channels, and unified metrics for comparison across channels.
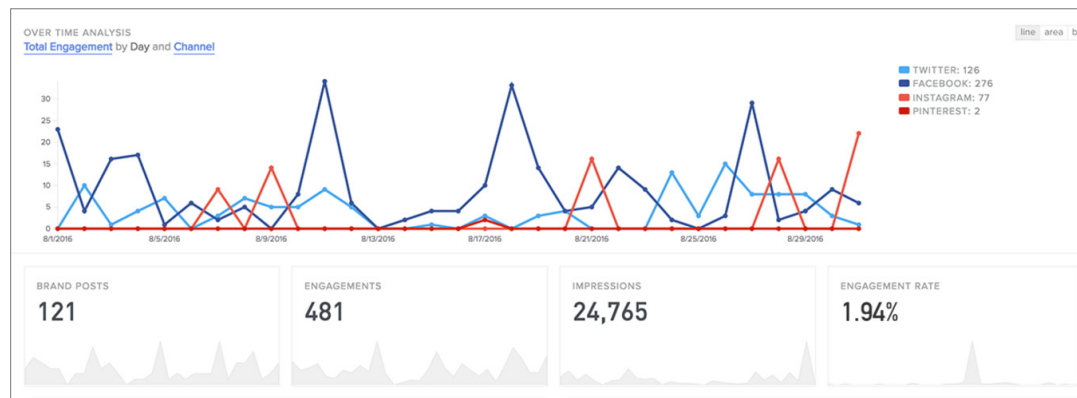
This will help you answer questions about your Instagram content in context, questions like: "Which content is being engaged with most, on Instagram and beyond?" and "Does the same content work for me on Instagram as on insert other social channel here?" and "How well are my influencer programs performing for me?"

Run Competitive Analysis

To refine and improve your social strategy, you should be continuously benchmarking against competitors and running competitive analysis. This allows you to quickly understand how your competitors are operating–where they're winning, where they're weak–while also identifying and remedying gaps in your own plan.
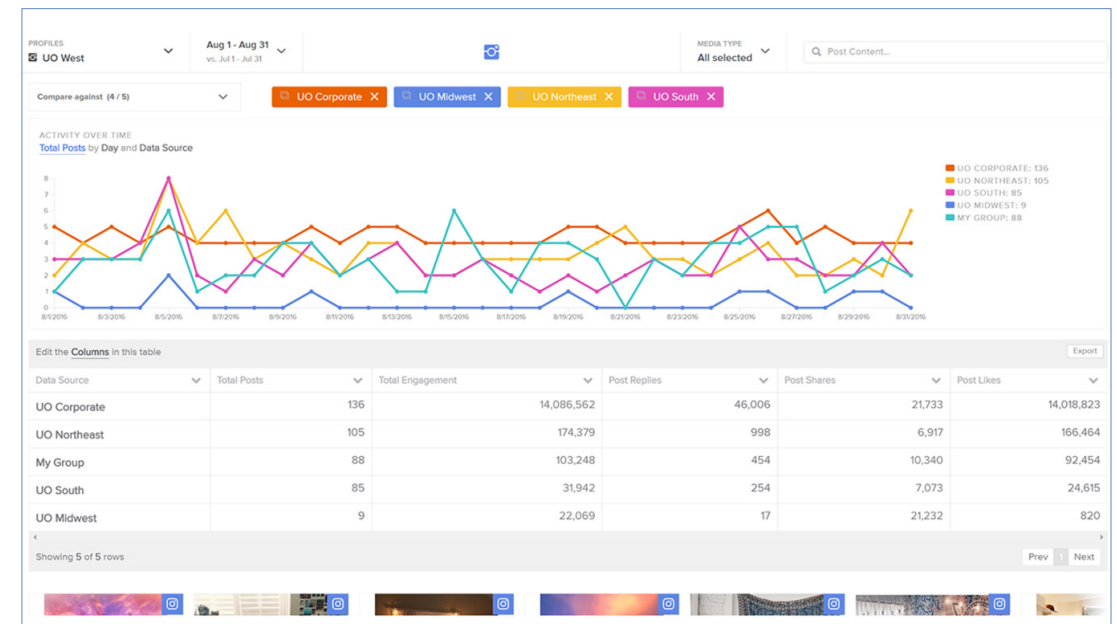
☑ Drive Engagement and Brand Awareness

Want to know which of your posts are increasing social engagement and brand awareness for your brand right now? Versus last week? Versus last month? Versus last year? Versus last campaign? Versus last event? Now you can set concrete goals and benchmarks, and easily measure your progress–then optimize your content accordingly.
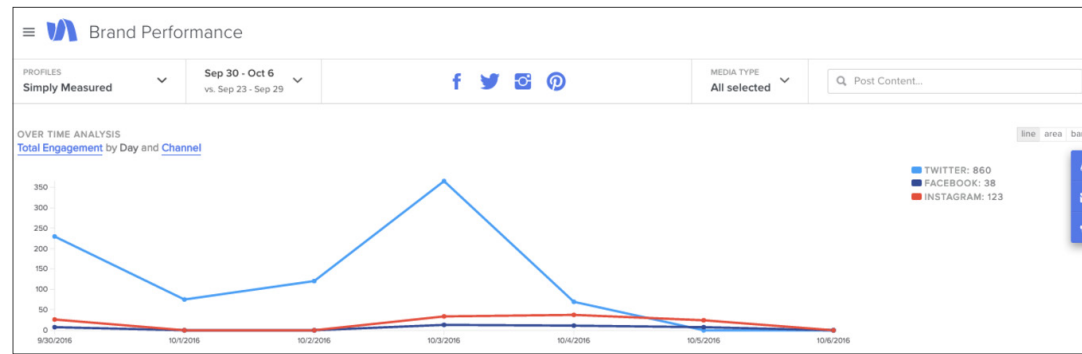
Our Social Analysis & Monitoring solution also enables you to easily drill down into peaks and valleys and immediately see which owned posts drove those moments of grandeur or frailty, so that you can begin to see trends and make the changes you need to when it comes to:

- Social channel focus
- Content type
- Copy
- Partnerships
- Overall messaging

This speed and flexibility will make you better and more agile at growing engagement and awareness for your brand.

☑ Identify and Measure the Success of Your Influencer Campaigns

Influencer marketing is a growing, effective strategy on social for both B2B and B2C brands. Whether you want to leverage influencers with 1,000 followers or 1 million followers, the best way to find the right influencer fit for your audience is to look for people who are already respected and engaged with in your space, reach out, and then measure the social yield they generate for you.
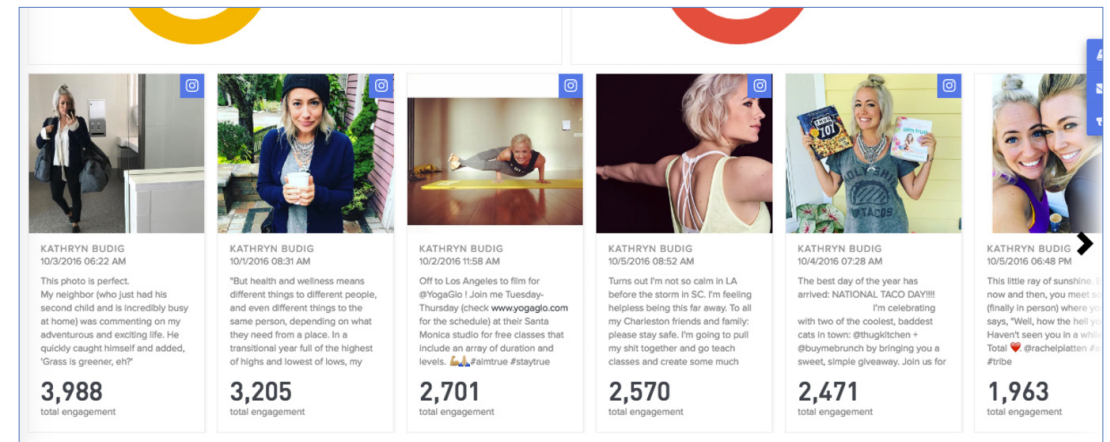
☑ Optimize Towards Business Outcomes

You need to be able to accurately attribute the impact of social on site activity and conversions, as well as put dollar signs next to social posts so you can report and optimize based on business outcome. This includes, for the first time ever with Simply Measured, Dark Social.

Simply Measured's solution can show you the complete attribution picture when it comes to social in your business. The easiest way to break it down is by Owned and Earned. Let's start with Owned.

By first examining the ROI of your owned Instagram content -- the posts your brand produces on social -- you'll be able to understand the business impact of levers you are totally in control of pulling in one direction or another.

You can assign ROI, business value, and revenue to:

Impressions:
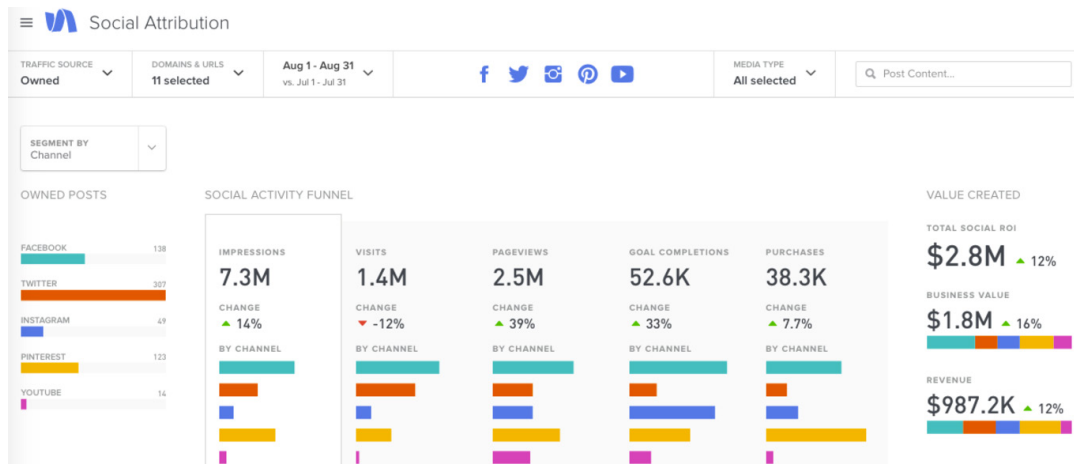
Conversions: Email signups, coupon downloads, complete purchases, and video views.

GOALS	DOMAIN(S)	GOAL COMPLETIONS	TOTAL BUSINESS VALUE	TOTAL REVENUE	GOAL COMPLETION RATE	GOAL COMPLETIONS
		All Channels				Facebook
Email Signup	seattlesurfwear.com	23K	$1.2M	$0	19%	5.3K
Coupon Download	seattlesurfwear.com	13K	$434K	$0	13%	1.3K
Complete Purchase	seattlesurfwear.com	10.5K	$0	$987.2K	5.1%	2.2K
Video View	seattlesurfwear.com	6K	$250.4K	$0	15%	1K

Individual posts:

Individual social channels:

In fact, you may find out that what you thought was your most lucrative channel drives engagement but not the conversions and goal completions that actually matter to your business–or vice versa. Only setting up a solid attribution program will tell you.

☑️ Identify Which Content Drives the Most Engagement and Conversion

It's not enough to show high-level business impact. You must empower yourself on a day-to-day basis by using powerful, flexible, and fast filters and search features to

understand social traffic and conversions to different domains associated with your brand, different time periods, different social channels (including Dark), different media types, different copy, and different hashtags.

You can even decipher how posts containing specific words or hashtags are performing. For instance, you can see here how posts containing the word "Maui" are driving value to an imagined business called Seattle Surfwear (as you might guess, we had a hard time getting real customers to let us use their sensitive financial information in a guide!).

This is a powerful example of what you can do with a solution built specifically for social attribution. You can't do this type of content analysis using a tool like Google Analytics.
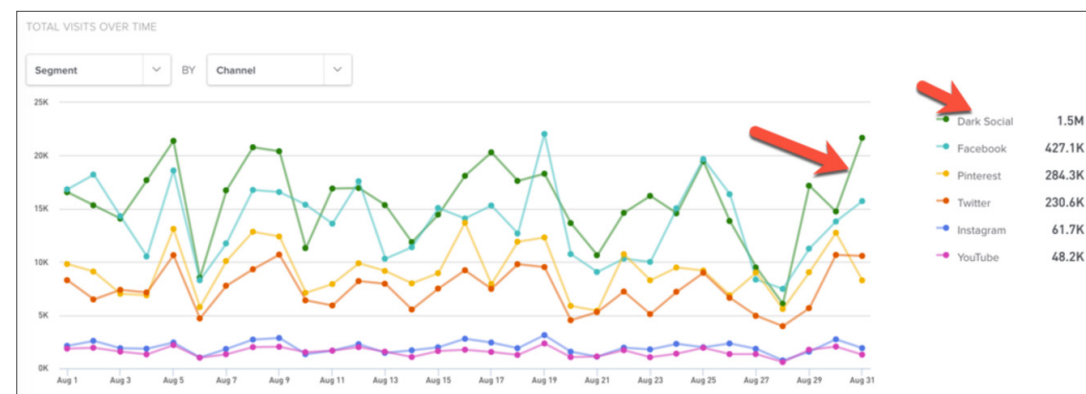
This part of Social Attribution makes it incredibly easy for you to see how both campaigns and individual pieces of content are performing against one another in real time, so you can identify successes and make tweaks when necessary.

But let's not forget about earned social. Social Attribution allows you to see how consumer-to-consumer sharing is driving business outcomes for your business. The Social Activity Funnel and line graph allow you to determine the impact of earned and Dark Social.

☑ Determine Which Digital Advertising Channels Yield the Highest Conversion Rates

One of the most powerful aspects of our social attribution solution is the ability to see what content from your website is being shared through social. Here you can see what web content is being shared and leading to site activity and goal completions.
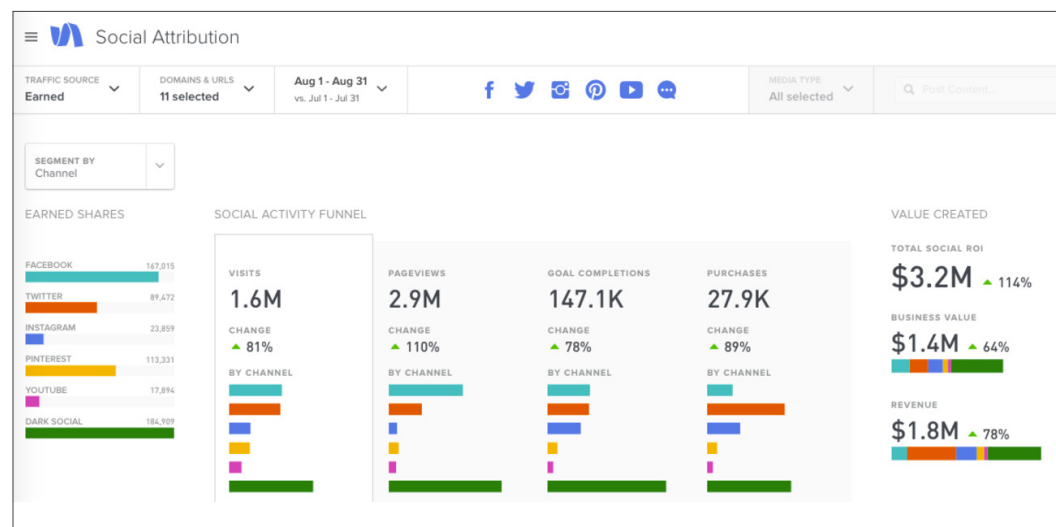

☑ Extract More Insight Into How People Find Your Brand's Website

We can see that Dark Social is playing a significant role in the outcomes from earned social sharing. Let's delve deeper into that.
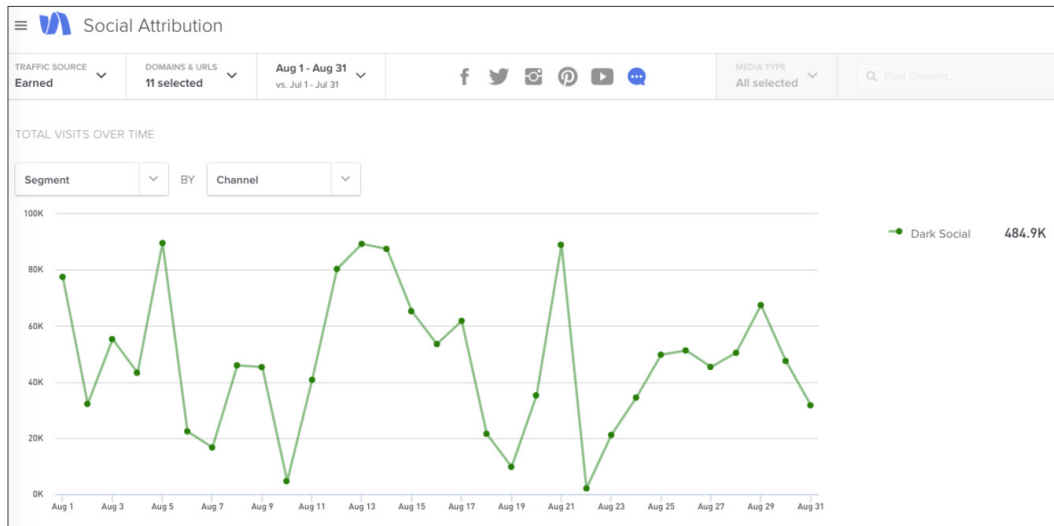

Since the Social Attribution solution is a fast-moving web dashboard, you can easily isolate Dark Social and see how it is driving visitors to your website.
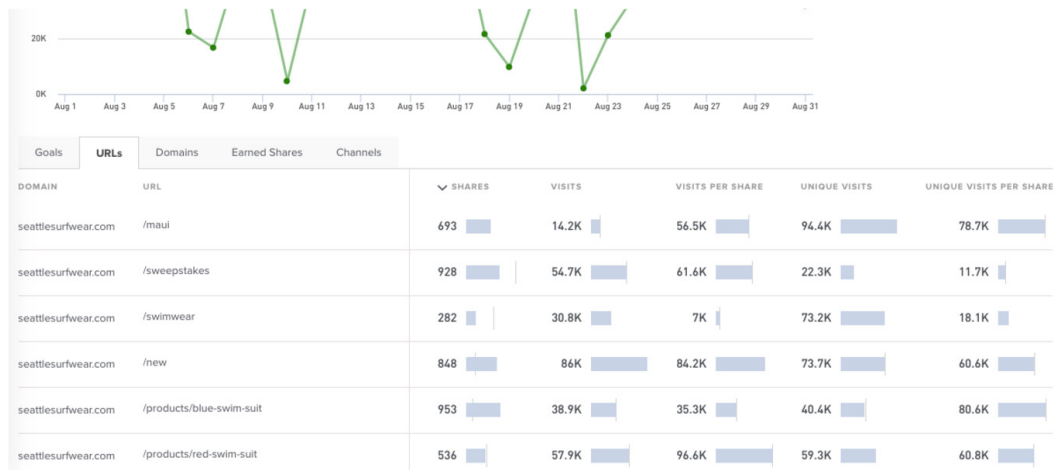
When you scroll down, you're able to see which exact domains are being shared via Dark Social for any given time period you choose.

Let's take a look at the level of pageviews that Seattle Surfwear is generating from Dark Social.

| DOMAIN	URL	SHARES	VISITS	VISITS PER SHARE	UNIQUE VISITS	UNIQUE VISITS PER SHARE
seattlesurfwear.com	/maui	693	14.2K	56.5K	94.4K	78.7K
seattlesurfwear.com	/sweepstakes	928	54.7K	61.6K	22.3K	11.7K
seattlesurfwear.com	/swimwear	282	30.8K	7K	73.2K	18.1K
seattlesurfwear.com	/new	848	86K	84.2K	73.7K	60.6K
seattlesurfwear.com	/products/blue-swim-suit	953	38.9K	35.3K	40.4K	80.6K
seattlesurfwear.com	/products/red-swim-suit	536	57.9K	96.6K	59.3K	60.8K

What we are seeing for Seattle Surfwear is that Dark Social is not a consistent driver of pageviews. This can be the case for Dark Social because private messages often contain specific pages consumers want their friends, family, and colleagues to view. In fact, in many cases the URL being shared through Dark Social contains the opportunity to convert right on that web page. So, let's see how content shared via Dark Social is generating business value, despite not being a driver of pageviews.
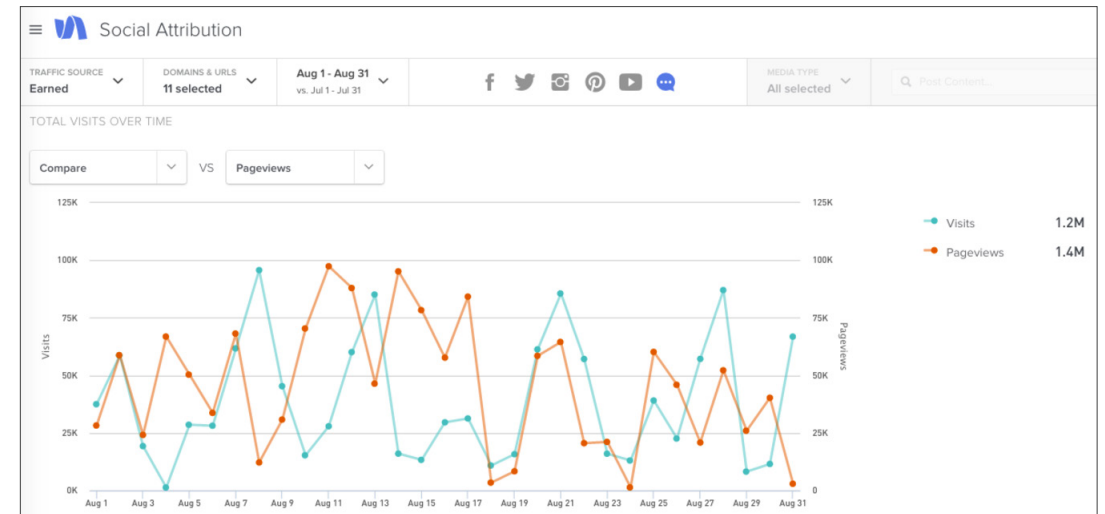
For Seattle Surfwear, more traffic from Dark Social leads to increased Business Value (the monetary value ascribed by your brand to non-purchase conversions). This means that the private URL-sharing among friends, family, and colleagues is consistently leading to Business Value for Seattle Surfwear.

When you tap into what is being shared through Dark Social, you have an entirely new layer of intelligence on which to optimize owned content.

The person sharing via Dark Social has already done the digging for the link, viewed the page, and decided to share it with those closest to him or her via private message. This means that Dark Social sharing hits further down in the funnel, in the consideration phase as opposed to the awareness phase.
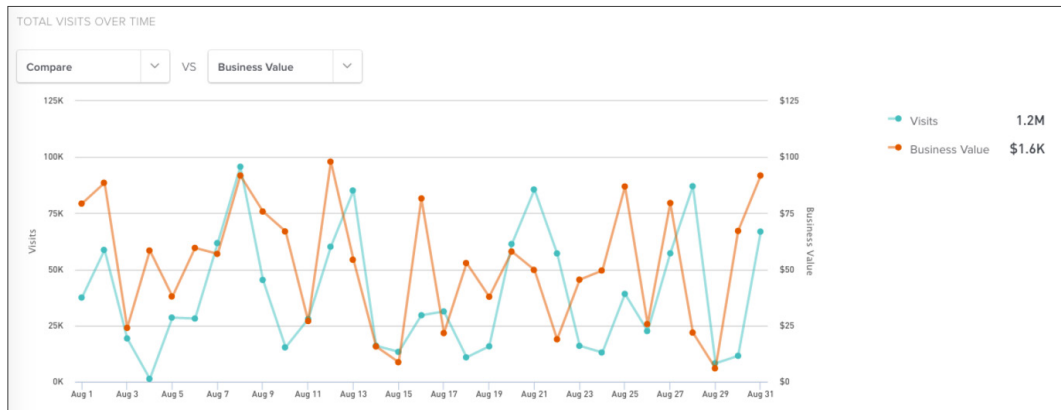

Now that you know that Dark Social sharing is leading to a lot of revenue, you want to identify which URLs are being shared through Dark Social, so that you can better educate your content strategy for social and the rest of your team. The products, messages, and promotions on these pages shared through Dark Social are exactly what will compel your audience to convert through your owned social posts and web content.

All the insight you'll glean from consistently running this type of analysis will give you new power in your organization and allow you to leverage consumer sharing to drive more highly qualified site traffic and conversions.
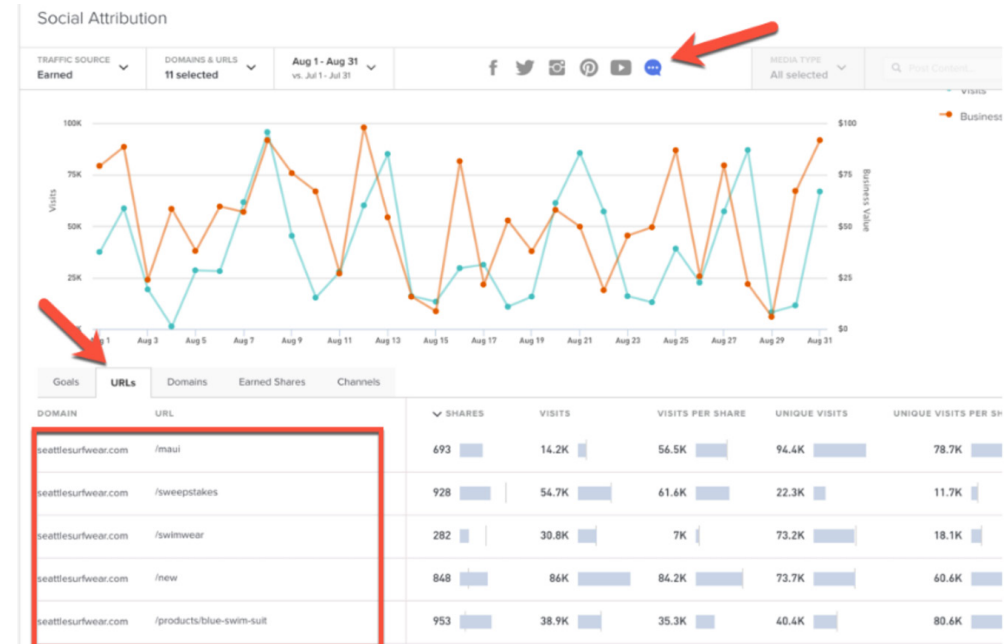

Determine Social ROI

Your job is to know the ROI of all the investments you are making, and then appropriately assign budgets to each digital channel for maximum ROI. Now you have access to the revenue that social is creating from owned social accounts that your brand runs and manages:
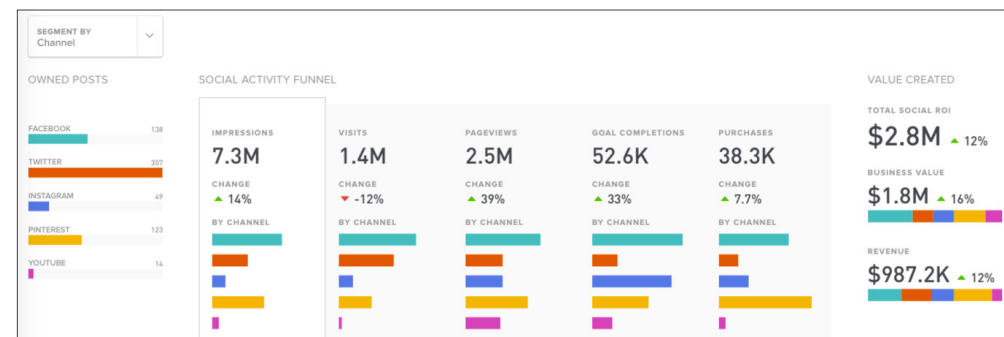
From earned social (how people talk about your brand and share your brand content):
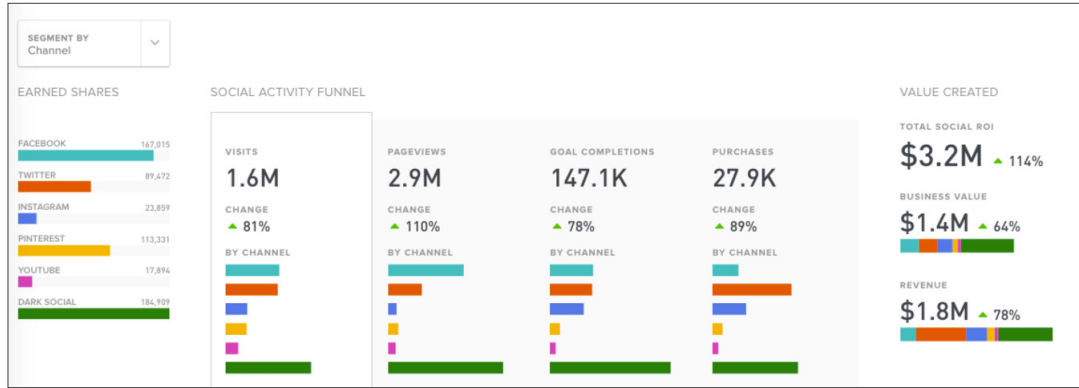

And, for the first time ever, from Dark Social (the sharing of your content that occurs via text, Slack, Facebook Messenger, and other messaging apps):
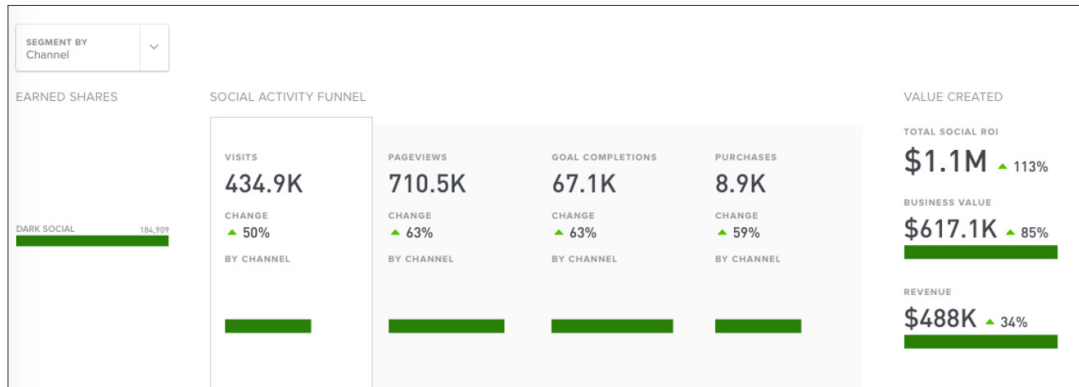
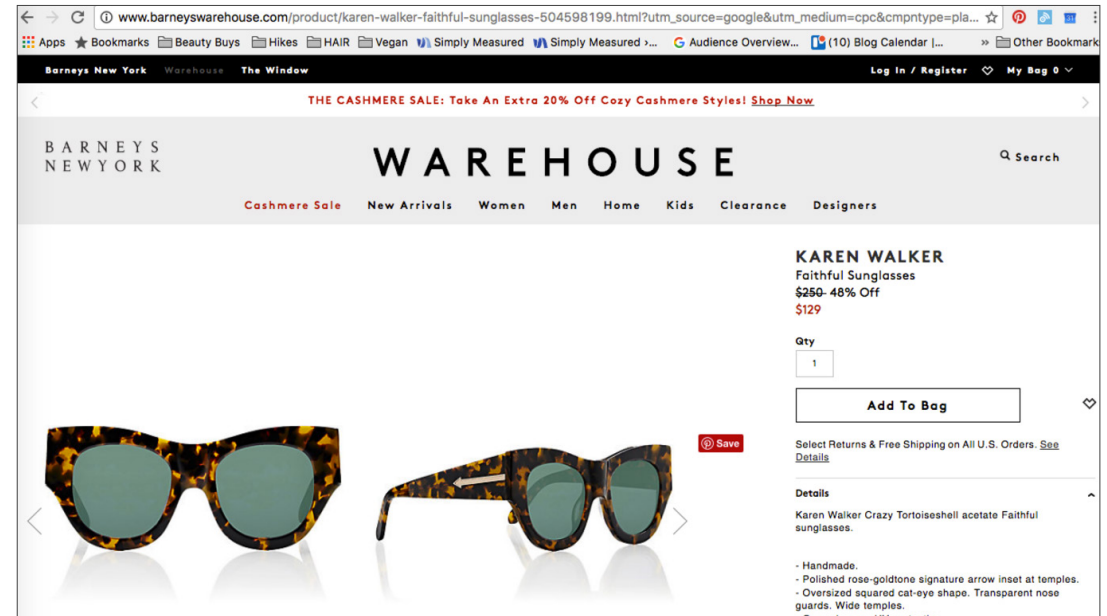
Accurately Represent Social Marketing and Your Customer Journey

Do you know how consumers interact with your digital content and, ultimately, making purchases in a holistic way? Have you been missing Dark Social?
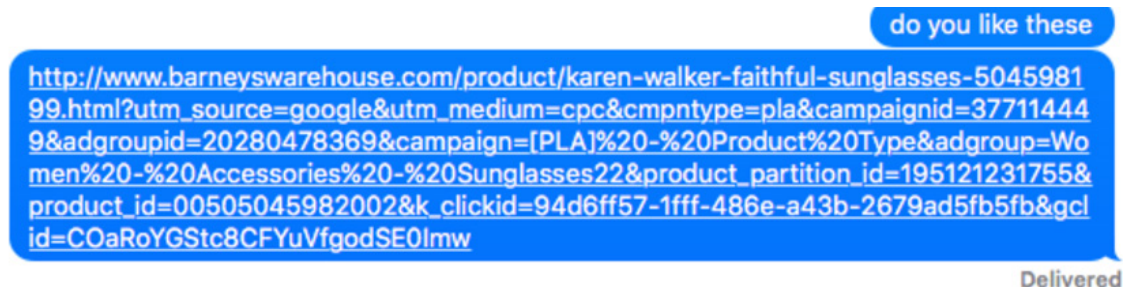
A customer searches for your product.
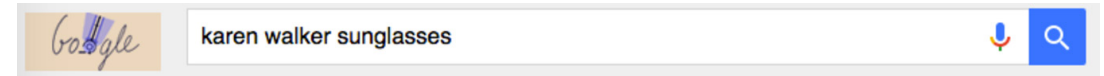
She clicks on a search result and heads to your product page or landing page.

She knows that her friend has been searching for a product like this, so she texts her friend the link (which Simply Measured has attached JavaScript to).

do you like these

http://www.barneyswarehouse.com/product/karen-walker-faithful-sunglasses-5045981
99.html?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&cmpntype=pla&campaignid=37711444
9&adgroupid=20280478369&campaign=[PLA]%20-%20Product%20Type&adgroup=Wo
men%20-%20Accessories%20-%20Sunglasses22&product_partition_id=195121231755&
product_id=00505045982002&k_clickid=94d6ff57-1fff-486e-a43b-2679ad5fb5fb&gcl
id=COaRoYGStc8CFYuVfgodSE0Imw

Delivered

Her friend clicks on that link, visits your site, and makes the purchase or completes the goal you have set.

Can you see this trajectory at present? If not, you're not missing the complete picture of your customer journey from Instagram to your website--and countless potential opportunities to grow new revenue and make your content more appealing and shareable.

CONCLUSION

Now you have a well-rounded understanding of basic Instagram metrics, along with some tried-and-true tactics to deploy in your upcoming campaigns. Whether you're looking to harness already existing buzz around your brand or you need to build awareness and drive conversions from the ground up, be sure to turn to this resource whenever you find yourself needing some more Inspiration.

About Simply Measured

Simply Measured is the most complete social analytics solution, empowering marketers with unmatched access to their social data to more clearly define their social strategy and to optimize their tactics for maximum impact.

Our goal is to put the tools to understand business data in the hands of business users. We think reporting should be simple, attractive, and accessible for everyone – not just data scientists. Our software streamlines the process from data to deliverables and eliminates the countless hours spent on everyday reporting tasks. We do this by putting cloud data sources at your fingertips, providing a marketplace of best practice reports, and allowing you to generate beautiful solutions on the web, in Excel, and in PowerPoint with a couple of clicks.

Want to try Simply Measured?

REQUEST A DEMO