DOORDASH
FOR MERCHANTS

Restaurant Social Media Marketing

The Ultimate Guide

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The growing social media landscape

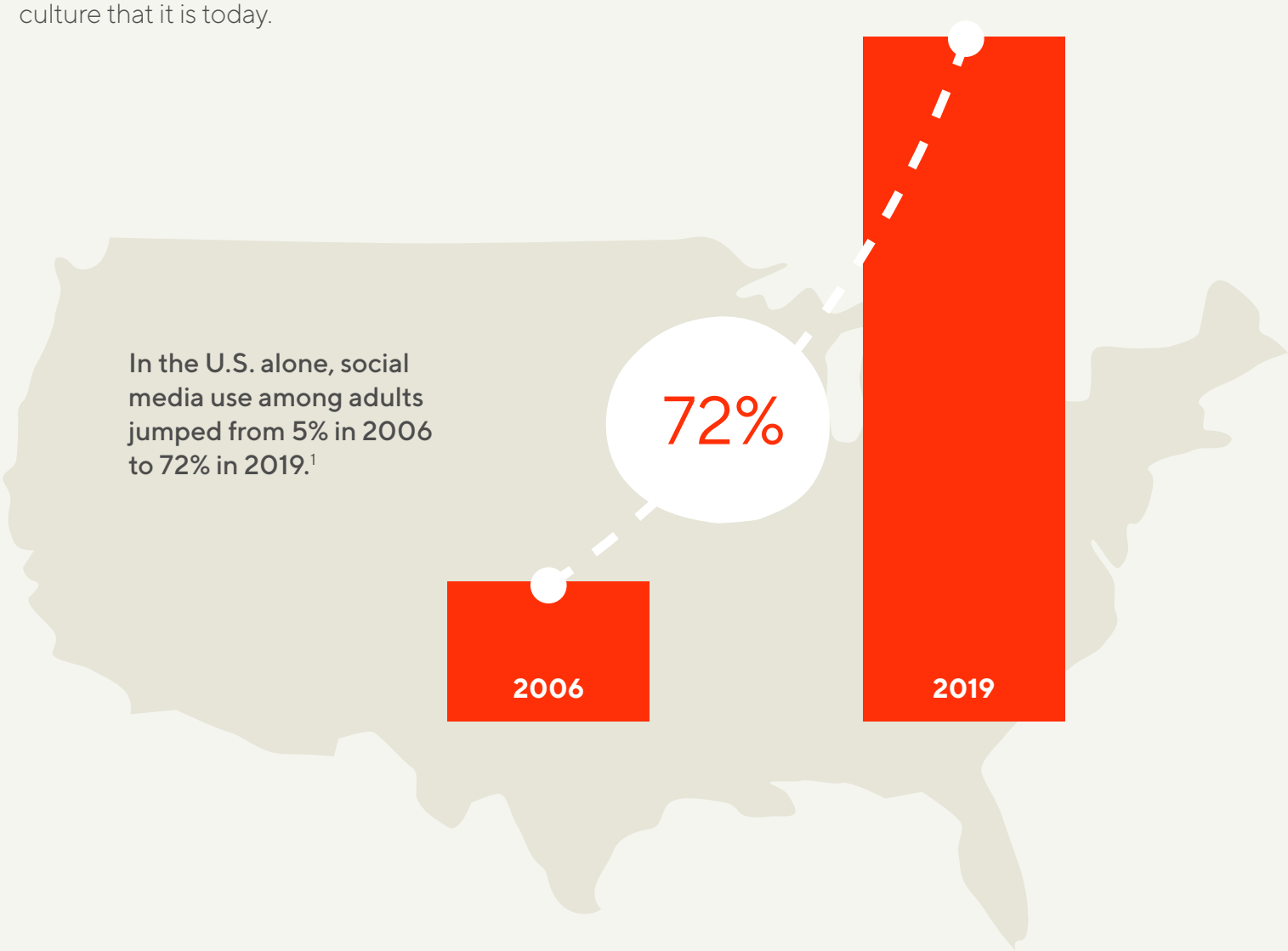
Social media has become table stakes for every industry — especially restaurants. Your customers use it, love it, and share their favorite food photos on it.

This guide will help you make the most of vital social marketing channels, attracting new diners to your restaurant and keeping them coming back for more.

In the last two decades, social media rose from digital novelty into the driving force of commerce and culture that it is today.

3.8 billion+

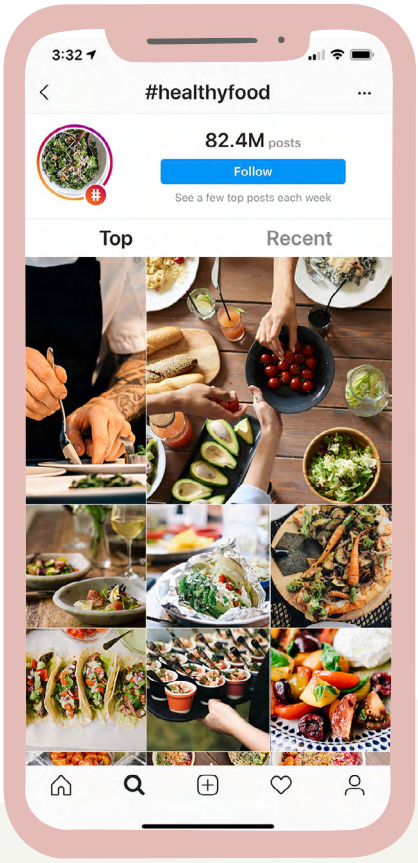
Today, there are more than 3.8 billion social media users worldwide, and growing.[2]



In the U.S. alone, social media use among adults jumped from 5% in 2006 to 72% in 2019.[1]

Creating trends with hashtags

Used to categorize content and make it more discoverable, clickable hashtags like #healthyfood are a topical combination of words, phrases, and/or emojis preceded by the "#" symbol. "Trending" hashtags are hot topics that are currently rising in popularity. People can even follow hashtags like they would a user.



> **At the time of publishing, there are more than 406 million Instagram posts with the #food hashtag[3] — one of the top 50 most-used hashtags on the social media platform.[4]**

From homemade creations to restaurant dishes, the #food hashtag spans users of all ages around the world.

If this sounds impressive, keep in mind that it doesn't even include the subsets of food hashtags.

#healthyfood
83M posts

#foodporn
238M posts

#italianfood
13M posts

#foodstagram
75M posts

#japanesefood
14M posts

#foodphotography
62M posts

And the list goes on...

Social media and food: an inviting way to connect

On social media, restaurants and their customers share drool-worthy photos. But social media is more than eye candy, it's a powerful marketing and brand awareness tool that restaurateurs can harness for real business growth. With so many eyes looking at social media all day — and many free and low-cost ways for you to make a splash — it's no wonder this powerful marketing vehicle is one of the greatest ways to build and grow your business.

50%

Nearly 50% of diners have tried a restaurant after seeing a social media post.[5]

Customers use social media to see what cuisine you offer and other customers' favorite dishes, and even check hours of operation and if you offer outdoor seating.

Read on for tactical insights into Instagram, Facebook, and other top social media platforms to leverage for your business.

Instagram

Instagram is one of the world's leading social media channels, with 1+ billion monthly active users globally.[6] With visual content galore, Instagram is the go-to arena to post vibrant and share-worthy photo and video content about food.

So what makes Instagram so important? Not only can customers find your profile directly or through a web search, but they can explore hashtags, tags, and geotags — finding your restaurant based on location, tagged posts, and more. The best part is that many of Instagram's most useful tools are free.

Here's an overview of Instagram for basic, intermediate, and advanced use.

Mastering the basics: Instagram for beginners

On Instagram, your future customers are always scrolling and scouting for inspiration — and new accounts to follow. Following restaurants and brands on the platform gives customers access to updates and a direct line to customer service, making it an invaluable tool for connection.

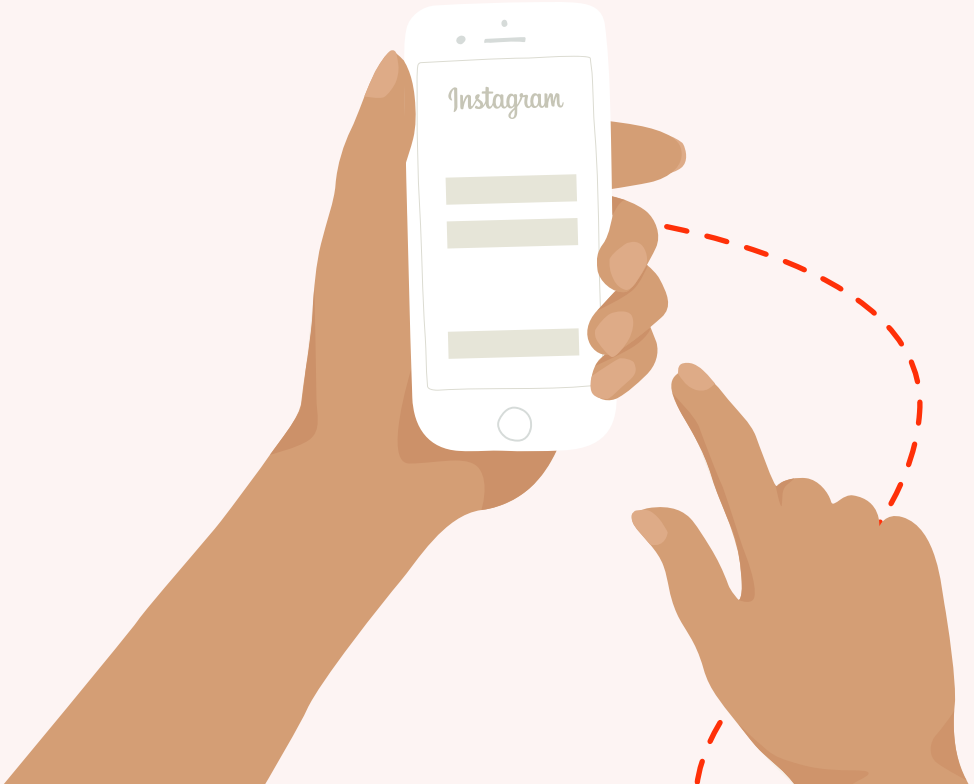
90%

In addition to following friends and family, 90% of all Instagram users follow business accounts to connect with their favorite businesses.[7]

CREATING YOUR ACCOUNT

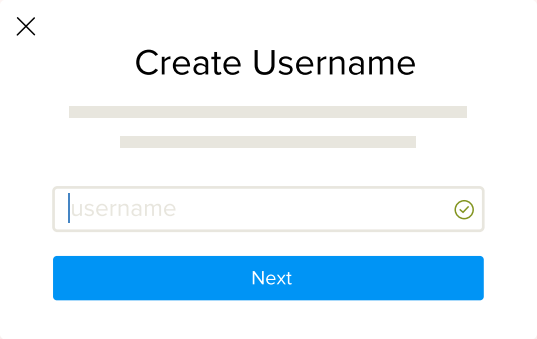
1 Start fresh

If you're completely new to Instagram, you'll need to create an account from scratch. The easiest way to create your profile and post content is via a mobile device. As a first step, download the Instagram app from the Apple or Google Play store.



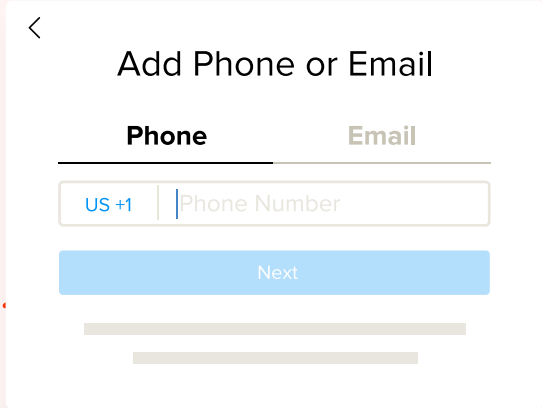
2 Create your account

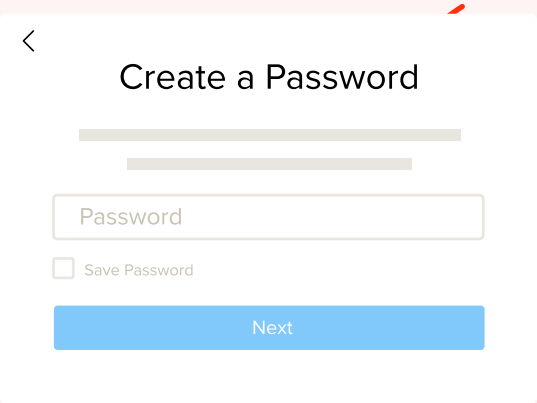
Once the app is downloaded, open it and follow the prompts to create a profile.



Make sure your account name is as close to your business's name as possible to increase your searchability — otherwise, customers may not know if a profile is actually yours.

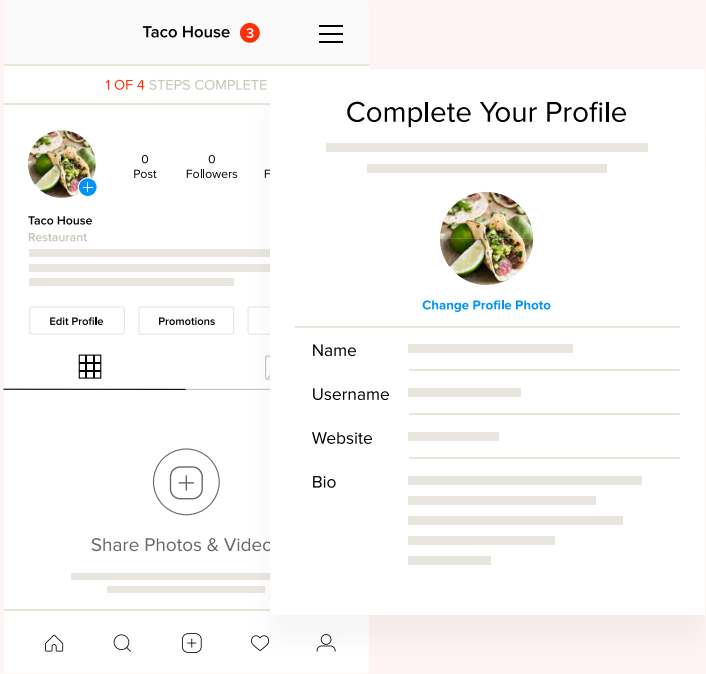
Secure your account with a current phone number or email address — and an airtight password that you'll remember. Share the login details with anyone on your team who will be responsible for posting. Instagram makes it easy to manage multiple accounts, so you can toggle between a personal and business account in the same app.





Add a profile photo that represents your business. Your logo makes the most sense, but you can also consider a photo of your signage, dining room, or signature dish.

Once these steps are complete, your profile is live!



3 Add the details

Fill out key profile information — restaurant name, website, and a brief bio telling customers about your business.

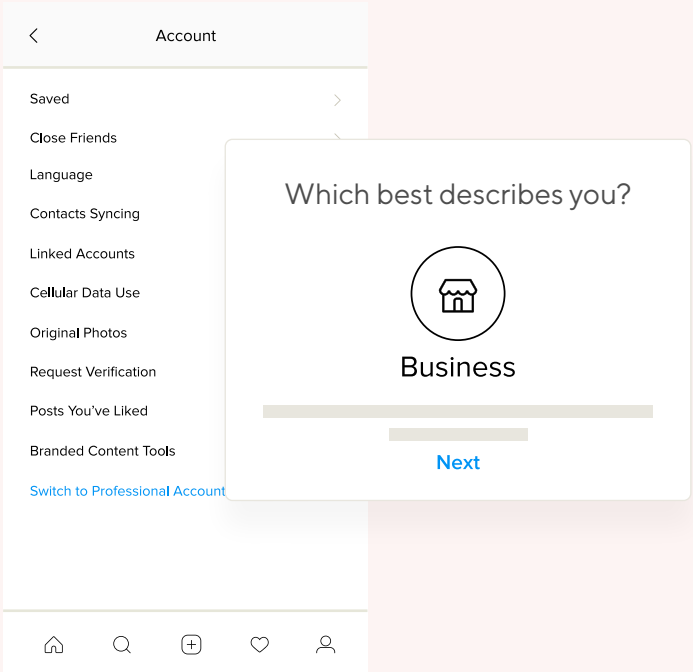
Make the description informative and personal.

4 Convert your profile to a business account

From the edit profile feature, you can select "Switch to Professional Account" to tap into Instagram for Business.

A business profile gives you access to advertising products and free analytics, detailing how many people are engaging with your posts via comments, saves, and shares.

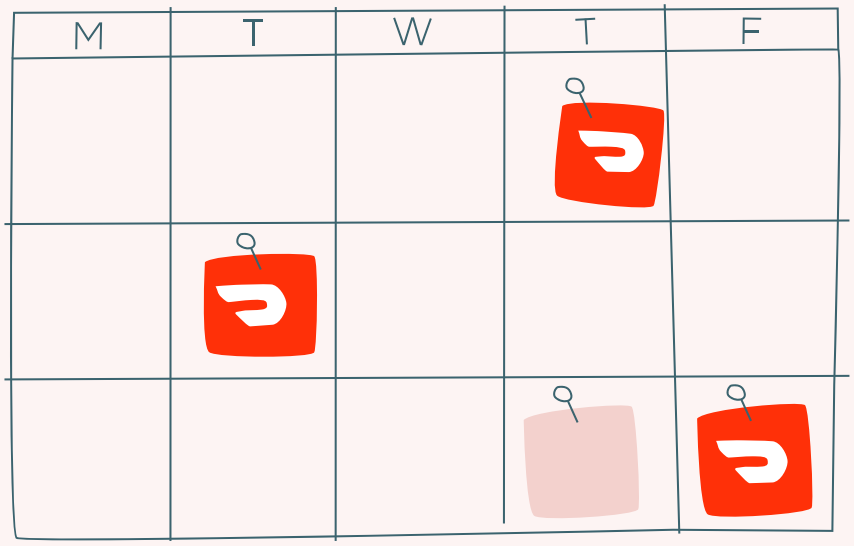
As you continue to post, you'll be able to track growth over time.



5 The extras

As a business account, you can add important information to your profile like business hours or a link to online ordering through DoorDash. This keeps customers informed at a glance — and puts your food and drinks at their fingertips.

Be sure to keep this information up-to-date as your operations change.



Building a brand

Planning content doesn't have to be daunting. When approaching your posts, think about your sales cycle and seasonality. What's on your menu right now? What are customers ordering from you most often? Which dishes are brand-new — or need a little extra love? The goal is to use the content you post to start a dialogue among your customers, building awareness and driving sales.

Some content ideas include:

Mouthwatering food

Got a photo of a signature dish that makes people hungry? Entice and excite customers by sharing high-quality photos of your food.

Delivery deals

If you're on DoorDash, post about it! You might reach customers who are thinking about where to get their next meal, helping to boost your delivery and pickup sales.

News and updates

If you're changing your hours, onboarding a new chef, or hosting an event, broadcast the news on social media. Instagram is a powerful way to keep customers informed.

When you sign up for DoorDash, you'll receive a complimentary food photoshoot so you can have professional, appetite-inducing photos for use on DoorDash and social media.

Engaging customers

Social media isn't a one-way street. You'll want to encourage customers to react and take action based on your posts. A great way to engage customers when you're just starting out is to run promotions.

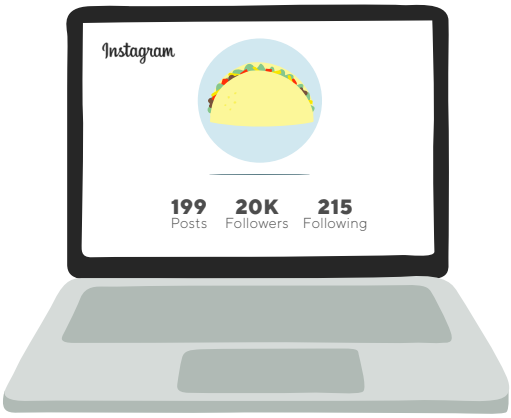
For example, you may run a promotion that gives customers $5 off of their order if they tag your Instagram handle in a post.

By rewarding your followers, they'll stick around — and stay engaged.

Acquiring followers

As your following grows, customers will naturally seek you out and find your page. But when you're just starting a profile, growing your Instagram following can take a bit more legwork.

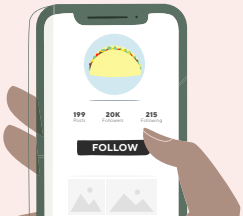
Below are some basic follower acquisition strategies.



+ Tell your existing customers (dine-in and delivery) to follow your new account.

+ Add your Instagram handle to the bottom of your receipts, create window/wall decals or table tents encouraging customers to follow you, or include your Instagram account on your menu.

+ Manually follow people who follow your neighboring restaurants — and engage with local businesses in your area to create a community online.



+ Encourage your employees to follow your account, share posts, tag their friends in photos, and help grow your audience.

Focus on these basic strategies and once you observe steady growth, move onto the tactics in the following section.

RESTAURANT SPOTLIGHT

Grimaldi's Pizzeria

@grimaldispizzeria

Grimaldi's Pizzeria is a renowned brick-oven pizzeria headquartered in Scottsdale, Ariz. with a flagship location in Brooklyn, N.Y. as well as locations throughout the country.

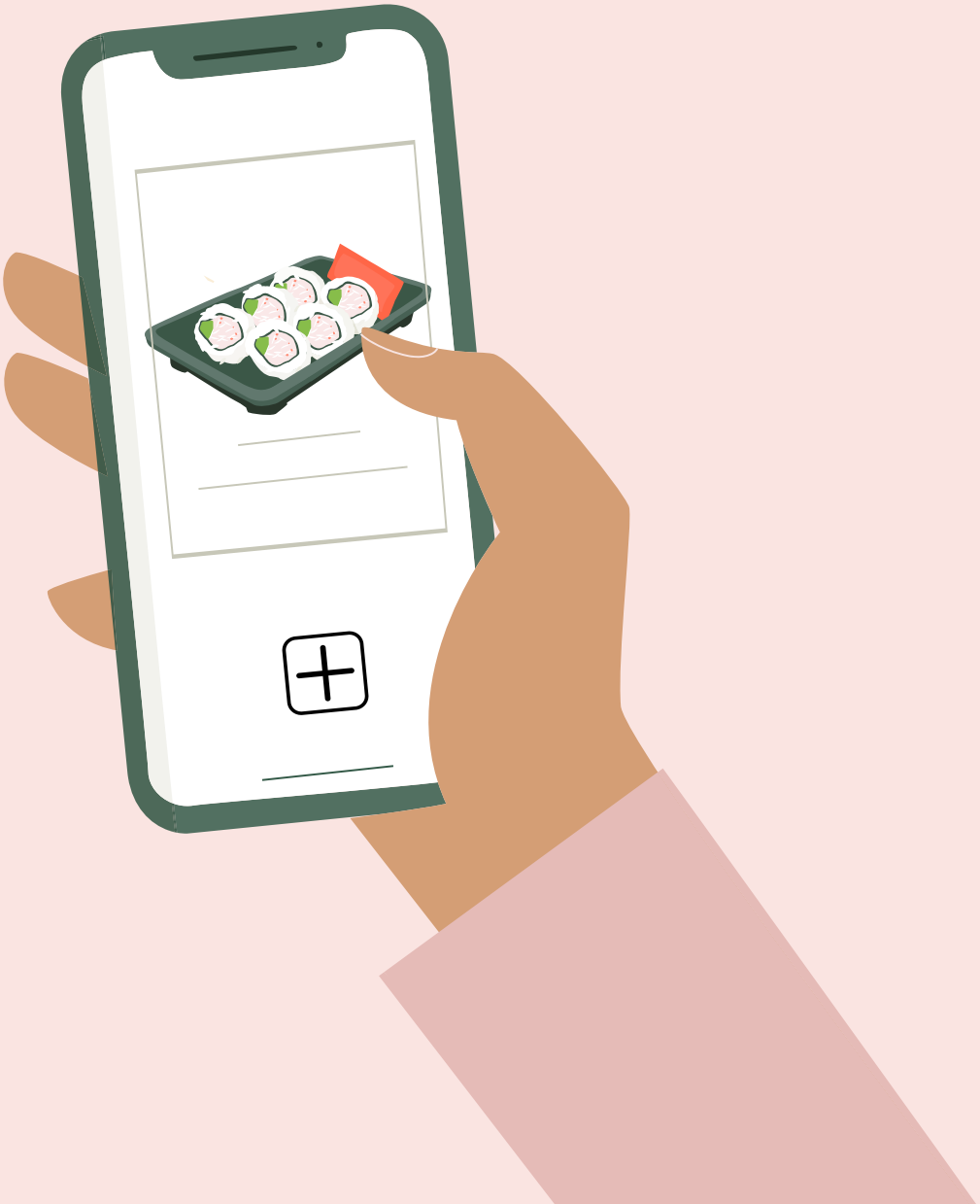
With 43 Facebook pages plus Instagram and Twitter, the marketing team knew they needed a dedicated resource to make the most of their social strategy.

The restaurant group hired an agency to maintain their strong Facebook presence (which has 92,000 fans) and focus on Instagram growth, incentivizing new followers with hashtag contests, promotions, and a free DoorDash delivery promotion.

Becoming strategic: intermediate Instagram

Ready to take your Instagram to the next level?

Channel your efforts into a focused social strategy to quickly boost followers and engagement.



Branching into new content types

As you master your social media feed and develop a regular posting cadence, you can start getting creative with the types of content you publish — and take advantage of Instagram's features.

Share Stories

Instagram Stories are vertical, often video posts that disappear after 24 hours. With Stories, you can post new menu items and updates. You can also create content to keep customers interested, like polls about their favorite dishes, giveaways, and national food holidays.

Create highlights

Highlights let you collect your stories and bookmark them at the top of your profile for customers to view at any time (instead of within 24 hours). Here, you can add FAQs, a visual overview of your menu, interior photos, and anything else you think would engage your audience.

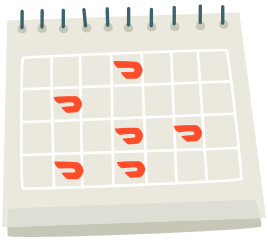
Add links

Your website may not be the only link you want to share.

Tools like Linktree enable you to share multiple links — such as a link to purchase gift cards, a link to your delivery platform, or a link to your reservations.

Use hashtags

Hashtags like #foodie or #restaurant are searchable and clickable tags that can help restaurants broaden brand awareness. Make an impact with local or foodie-specific hashtags to help users discover your restaurant. You can also use low-cost tools like Webstagram or Hashtagify to identify new top-searched hashtags to use.



Save time by scheduling posts

Planning social media posts in advance is a great way to save time while maintaining a regular cadence of content across your channels. Experiment with scheduling tools like Hootsuite or Buffer for Twitter and Facebook, and Planoly and Later for Instagram — which all have free plans.

Engaging customers on a deeper level

As your following grows, it's important to invest more time in engaging consumers — and it pays off.

Carve out time each day to respond to followers who comment on your posts or direct message you. A speedy reply shows customers that you're engaged and care about what they have to say.

Customers who are active on social media may already be posting photos of your restaurant or food. Repost this user-generated content (UGC) to extend the mileage of your Instagram posts and stories (and surprise and delight the original poster).

Acquiring more customers

At the intermediate level, you can begin thinking about paid advertising. Paid social media efforts put more eyeballs on your business — beyond your immediate following. Set up a paid campaign through your Instagram Business account to target consumers in your area who don't already follow you.

RESTAURANT SPOTLIGHT

Square Pie Guys

@squarepieguys

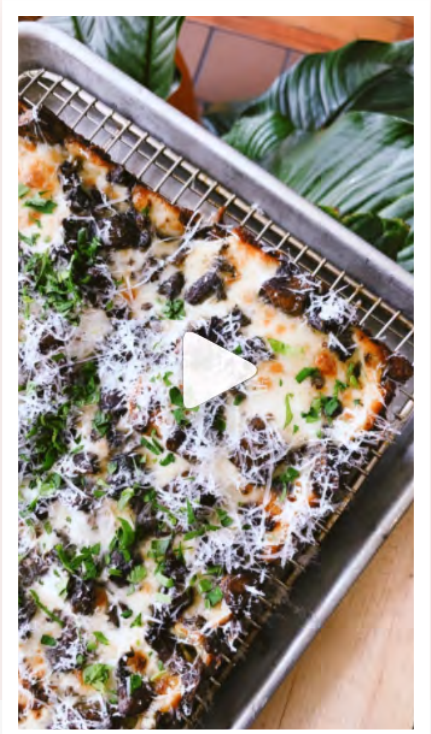
Square Pie Guys is a Detroit-style pizza shop in San Francisco, Calif.

In less than a year, the restaurant has grown its Instagram following to more than 15,000 followers. Their secret? Photo-worthy pizza pies and a great deal of user-generated content (UGC) and customer engagement.

The restaurant's overnight social success is proof that while food may speak for itself, genuine customer interaction speaks volumes more.

Read more →

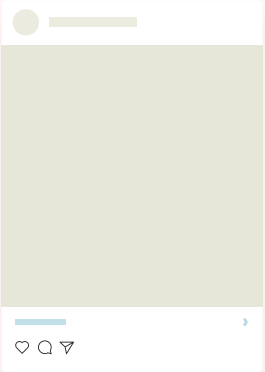
Why Square Pie Guys Launched with a Delivery-First Strategy



HOW TO CREATE INSTAGRAM AD CAMPAIGNS

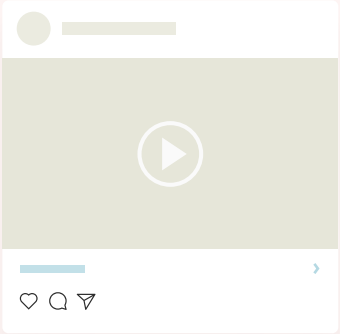
Instagram offers several different types of advertisements — and different ways to reach new audiences in their feeds. The simplest way to advertise is to promote a post you've already shared, but you can explore these additional paid options as your strategy evolves.

Image Ads



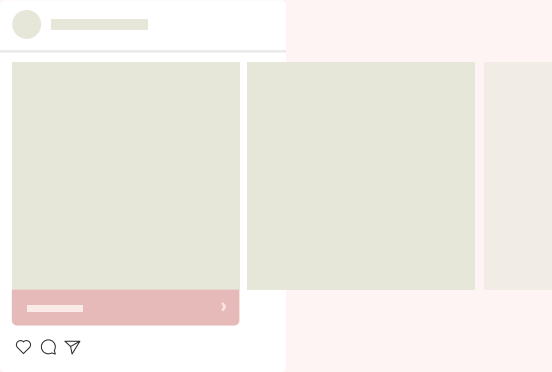
Share your restaurant's mission, food photos, or promotions with these static images that show up as regular posts in consumers' feeds.

Video Ads



Capture attention with videos up to 60 seconds long (15 seconds or less is ideal for optimal effectiveness). Show off a best dish being made or your restaurant patio ambience.

Carousel Ads

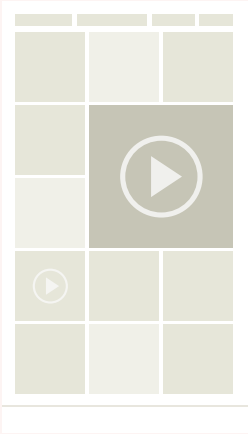


Each set of swipe-able, scrolling carousel ads can be two to 10 "cards." Treat your audience to a highly visual feast of photos and videos.

Stories Ads

With its full screen, vertical format, Instagram Story ads are photos and videos that feel authentic and lively.

Explore Ads



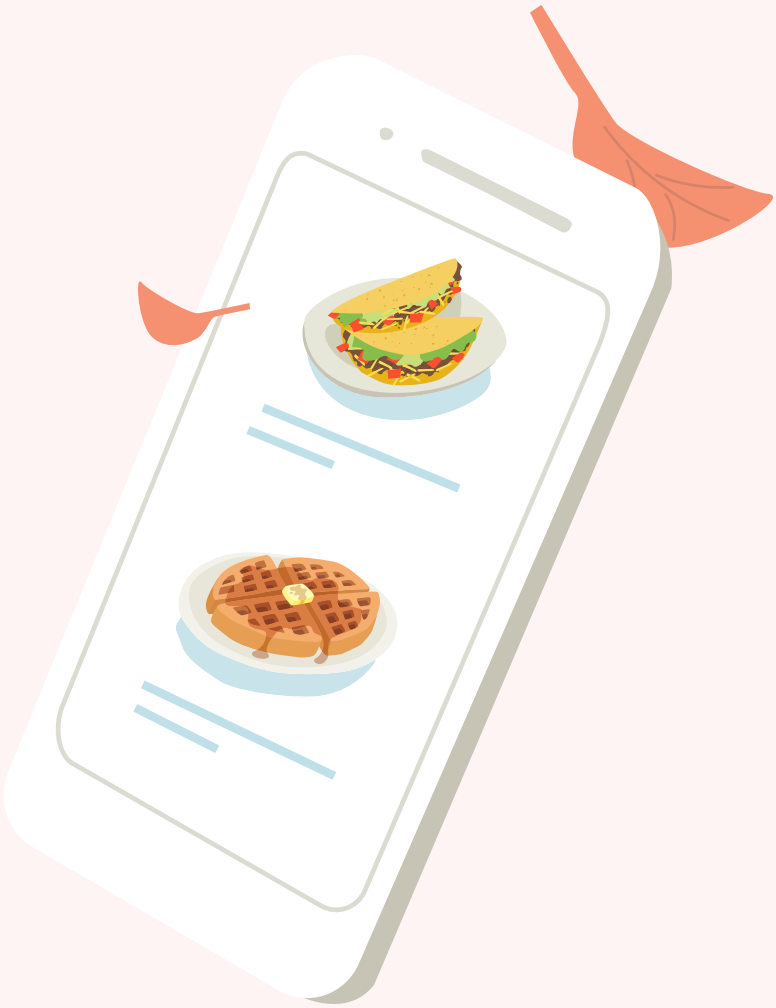
When users search, they could see your restaurant right on their "Explore" feed, next to fresh content recommendations inspired by their interests.

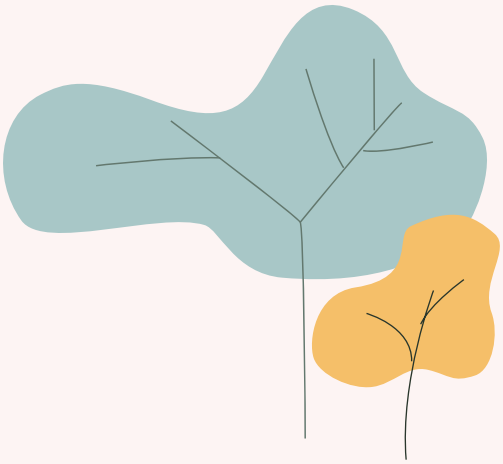
Instagram offers multiple ways to refine and target your audience, from location-based ads to reaching specific demographics, to targeting audiences based on interests and social media behaviors. Explore Instagram for Business to learn more.

Growing your Instagram presence: advanced social tactics

Once you've built a successful page, it's time to make your account best-in-class.

This means increasing the quality, frequency, and consistency of your posts, keeping engagement high, and using advanced acquisition techniques to grow your followers.



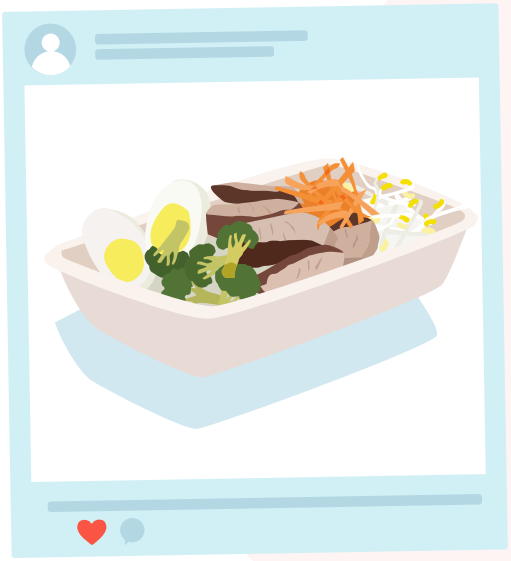


Creating top-notch content

Now that your restaurant has made a name for itself by posting high-quality photos, you're ready to make your content even more visually appealing by adding graphic design.

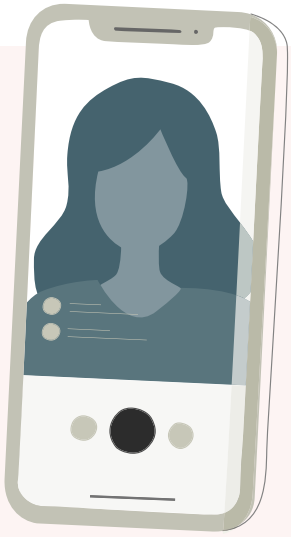
Platforms like Canva offer free, simple-to-use templates and tools for adding different styles to your visual content.

Instagram users can host Instagram Live — a video livestream where your customers can tune in and engage with you. You can use Instagram Live to host a Q&A with your founder or head chefs, stream a live cooking demo, or give a tour of your outdoor patio. Instagram Live streams are an engaging way to invite customers into your restaurant and enable real-time engagement.



Engaging customers like a pro

Once you've built up a following of hungry customers who regularly like your photos, respond to content, and share your profile with others, you can add food ordering links to your Instagram Stories and your profile — and convert sales with the tap of a button.



Try Instagram Reels

Instagram recently launched Reels, a feature similar to TikTok, which allows users to create and share short video content in a new, dedicated feed. Reels comes with a variety of video effects, including slow motion, audio tracks, AR filters, and more. Experiment with this new tool with behind-the-scenes kitchen videos paired with popular music. Keep it light-hearted and fun!

Advancing acquisition

To become a true Instagram marketer, use more sophisticated paid advertising strategies, such as retargeting customers who have visited your website. You can do this by creating a list of people you wish to remarket to — and using Dynamic Ads to get in front of them.

Lastly, Instagram offers Order Now and Gift Cards stickers that can be added to your stories to increase interaction. By including a call to action, you're making it even easier for new customers to try out your food and grow your sales.

RESTAURANT SPOTLIGHT

Beach Hut Deli

@beachhutdeli

In 1981, 19-year-old Troy Feist founded the original Beach Hut Deli which grew to over 45 locations across California, Nevada, and Oregon today.

Beach Hut Deli uses social media to showcase their sandwiches, promotions like family night, happy hour events, specials, and their beach-themed decor (which includes surfboard tables).

In addition to Beach Hut Deli's corporate page, each location has their own Facebook and Instagram account. The corporate team created brand guidelines to ensure consistency across all of these channels. Right now, the team's biggest priority is letting customers know that they are open for business during the pandemic. Beach Hut Deli shares regular updates letting customers know they can enjoy their delicious deli fare on their patios, through online ordering via DoorDash or their app, and by curbside pickup.

Facebook

With over 2.5 billion monthly active users,[9] Facebook is by far the largest global social media platform. The breadth of content shared on Facebook makes it an extremely versatile business tool — and its advertising capabilities can help you reach and capture a large portion of potential customers.

Here's how to get the most out of Facebook at every level.

Getting started: Facebook for Business

Having a presence on Facebook virtually guarantees more exposure for your business than on any other platform. Make the most of your new account using the tips below.

GETTING YOUR BUSINESS ON FACEBOOK

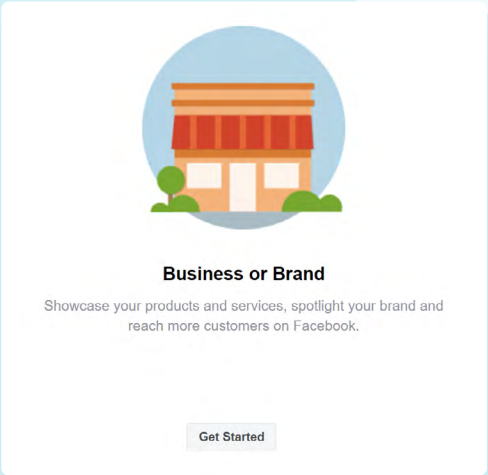
Once you've created your personal Facebook account, you can create a Facebook page for your business, using Facebook for Business. It's important to set up a business account on Facebook so you can access all of the unique tools and analytics available to business owners.

Here's how to get started.

1 Create a business page

Go to www.facebook.com/pages/creation, choose "Business or Brand," and follow the prompts on the screen.

You'll be asked to enter or create a personal account — but don't worry, this information can be kept private.



2 Populate your details

Make sure your business page has the most crucial details.

Add your location(s) so customers know where to visit you.

Provide your business hours for each day of the week.

Turn on "Reviews" to collect customer feedback.

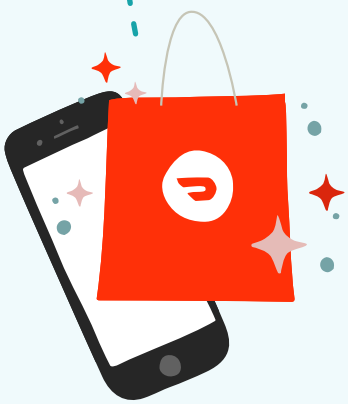
Choose a call to action. Add an email newsletter signup button, or link to your online food ordering platform or your website.

3 Fill your Facebook business page with content

Post regularly to drive growth, and diversify your content — from text to photos to video — to keep customers interested.

Some content ideas include:

- Special offers exclusively for Facebook page fans
- Photos of your restaurant team following healthy and safety rules
- Delivery and pickup options, such as platforms like DoorDash



Beginning to engage

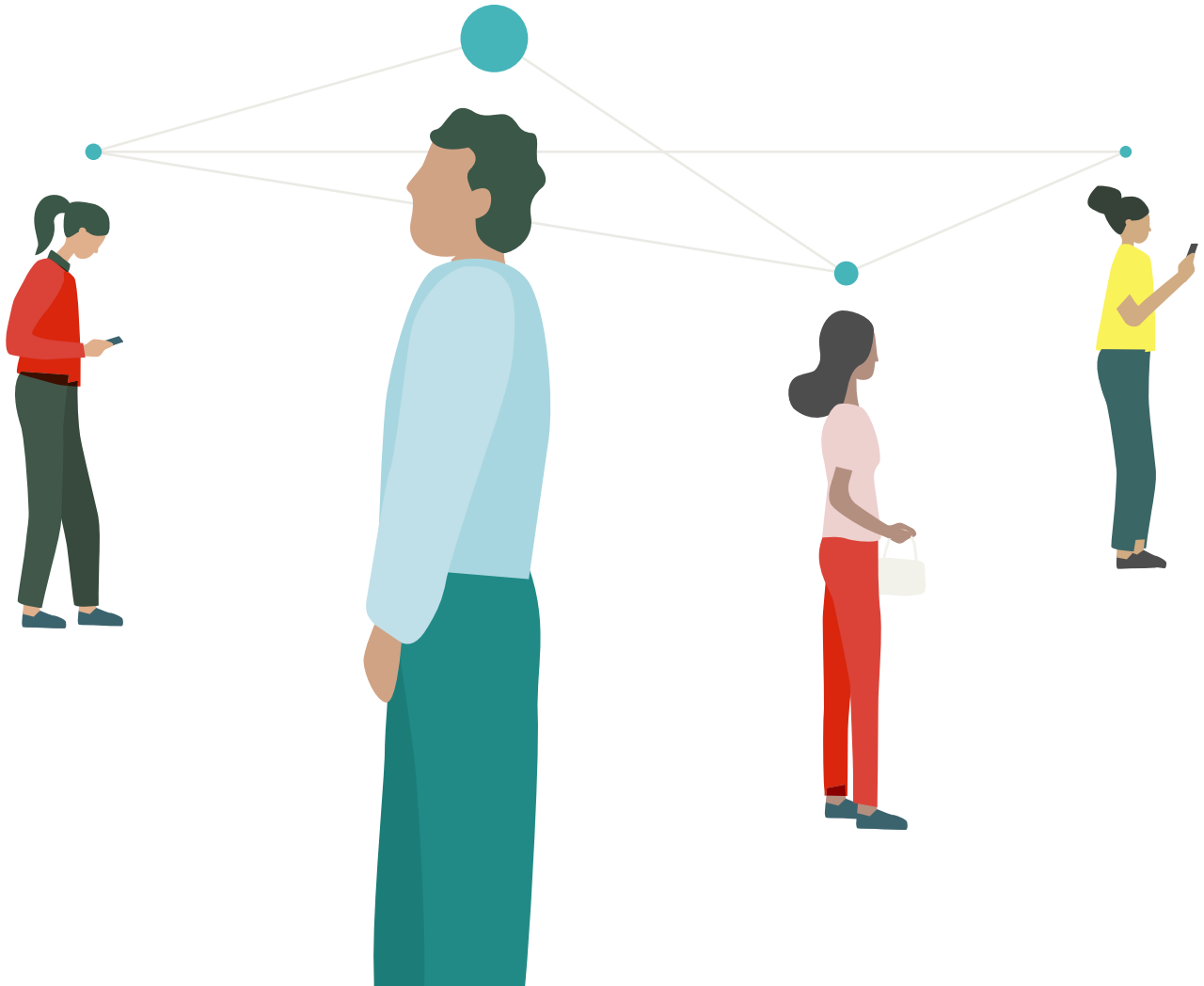
To get customers thinking about your food, post photos of your dishes and ask customers to respond to thought starters like "What's your favorite topping?" or "How spicy do you like your noodles?"

Open-ended questions encourage customers to not only "like" your photo post, but to comment as well.

Acquiring a customer base

Facebook's algorithms favor paid ad campaigns and "boosted" posts. But if you're not ready for advertising, Facebook enables you to invite people to "like" your page so you can rely on friends, family, and employees to extend invites and grow your network.

When you have a small following, it's time to use Facebook to attract and retain new customers.



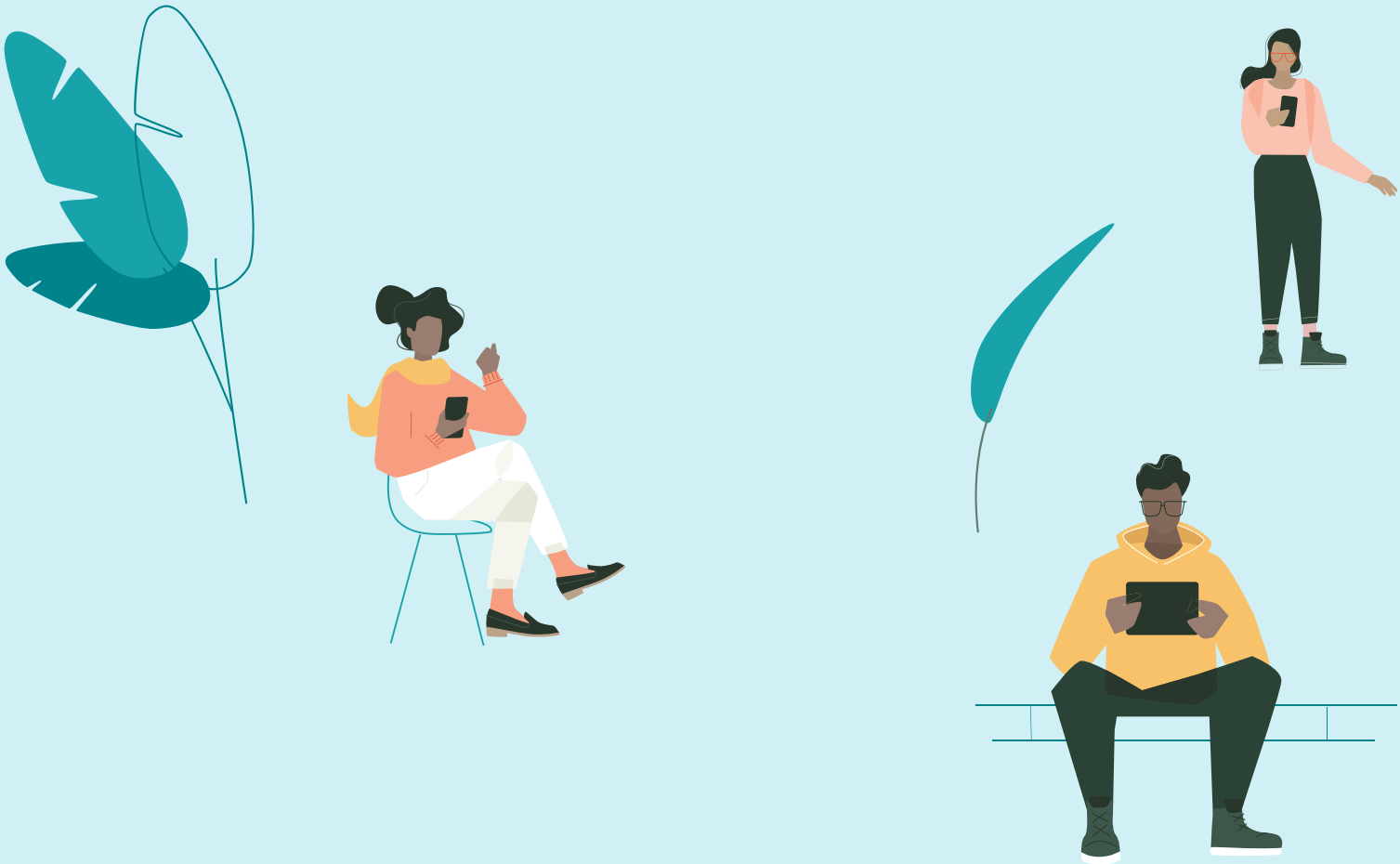
RESTAURANT SPOTLIGHT

Bad Daddy's Burger Bar

@baddaddysburger

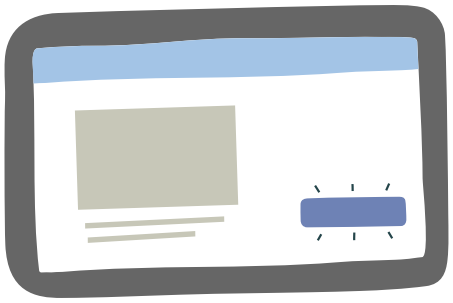
Founded in North Carolina in 2007, Bad Daddy's is known for its handcrafted burgers, giant chopped salads, a killer selection of local craft beers and their signature "Bad Ass Margaritas."

With over 100,000 followers on Facebook and thousands more across Instagram and Twitter, the Bad Daddy's team uses social media to drive traffic to their restaurants and highlight off-premise offerings. Their crave-worthy food photos combined with a fun, witty brand voice help to engage followers in both organic and paid efforts.



Becoming a better user: intermediate Facebook

Once you've mastered the basics, you can move on to intermediate tactics for Facebook users. Learn how to incorporate higher-level content and build deeper connections with your audience.



Bolstering your content

Advance those customer connections by sharing authentic stories about your restaurant's beginnings. Highlight key milestones and memories and share what inspires your brand story.

Anecdotes like these on Facebook perform well and help customers remember you.

Engaging and exciting

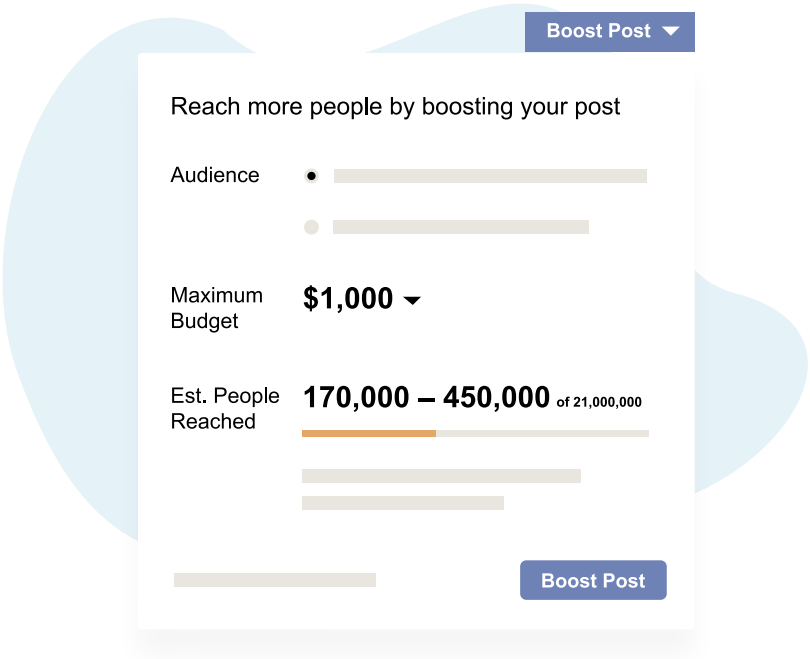
Facebook enables you to engage directly with customers, which allows you to understand exactly what they want from you.

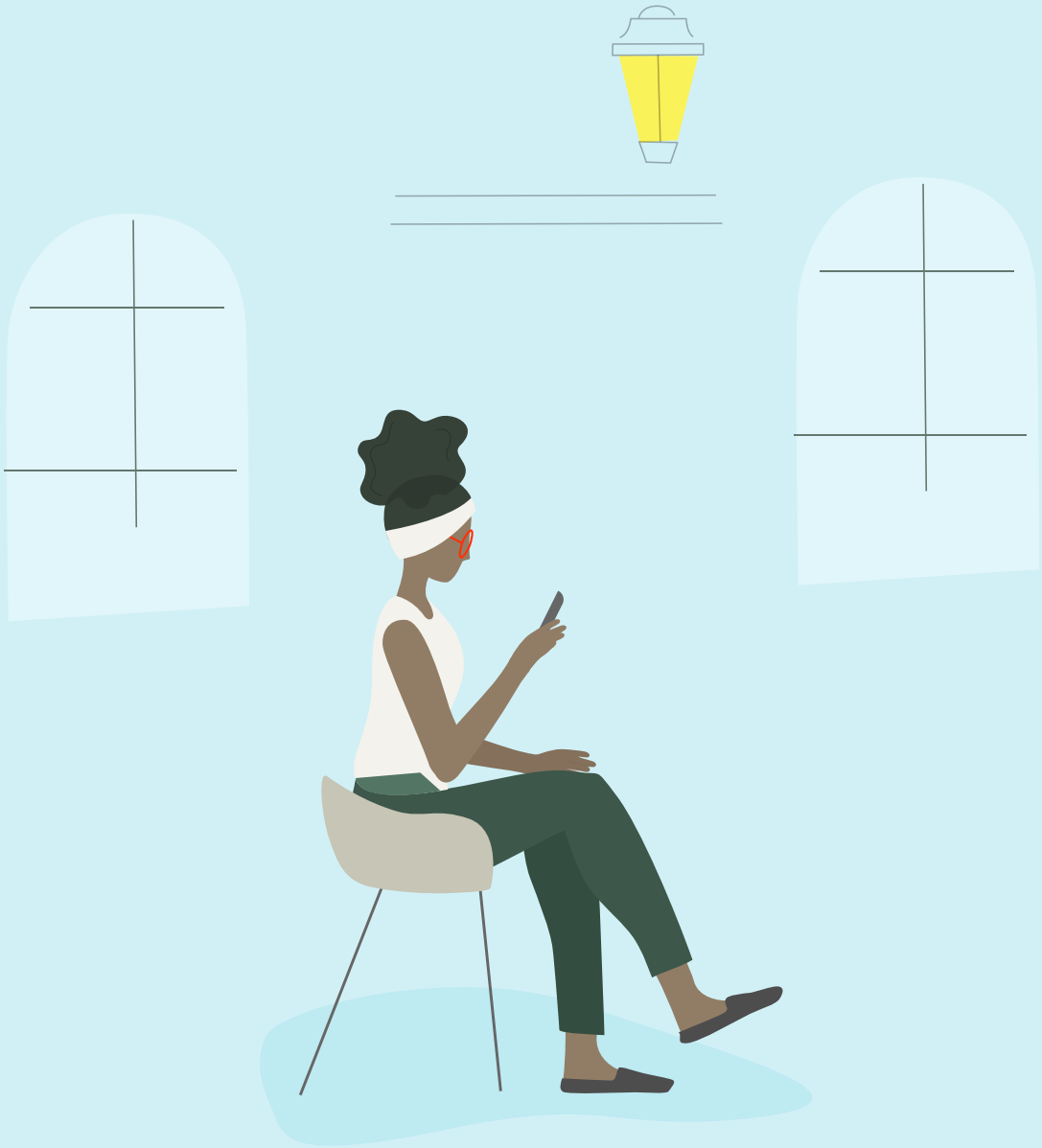
Host polls on new menu items or their ideal cocktail flavor profile. Letting your customers give feedback on new developments at your restaurant will make them more excited to order from you in the future.

Advertising to acquire

As an intermediate Facebook user, you're now ready to dip your toes into paid advertising. Facebook gives you the option to "boost" posts, making them appear in users' feeds and in searches — even for people who don't already "follow" or "like" your page.

Pay attention to who you're targeting and make sure this aligns with your ideal customer to generate maximum return on investment (ROI).



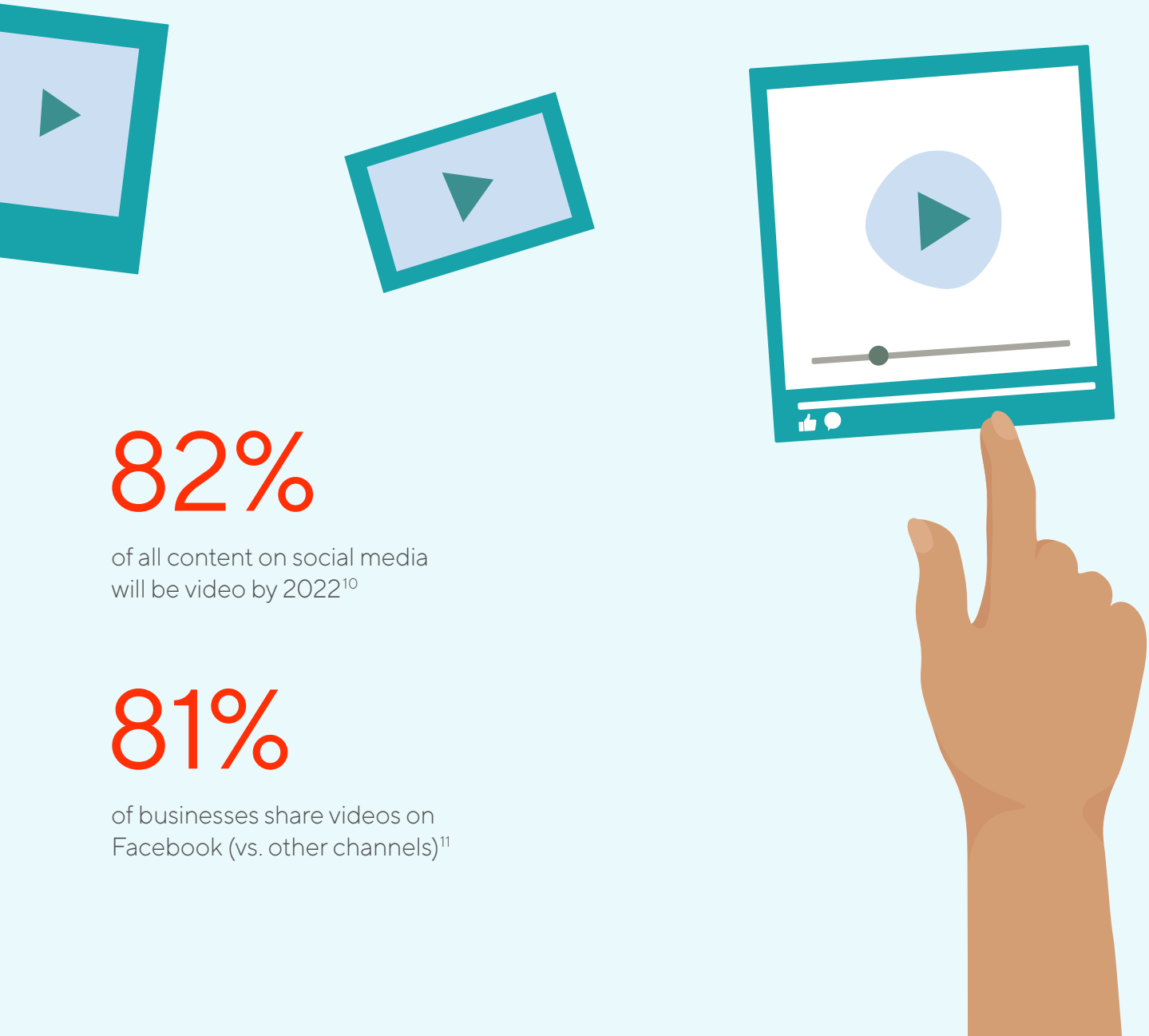


Becoming a Facebook pro: advance your content

A sophisticated Facebook strategy can help you reach your most ideal customers more effectively — and place your content front and center on their timeline feeds.

Sharing in motion

Video is poised to surpass other types of media formats. Facebook is a great place to enhance your online presence using video, whether through short, in-feed clips or longer Facebook Live events. You can also set a video as your profile or cover photo to get more eyes on promotions, tours, and new menu items.



82%

of all content on social media will be video by 2022[10]

81%

of businesses share videos on Facebook (vs. other channels)[11]

Engaging hungry customers

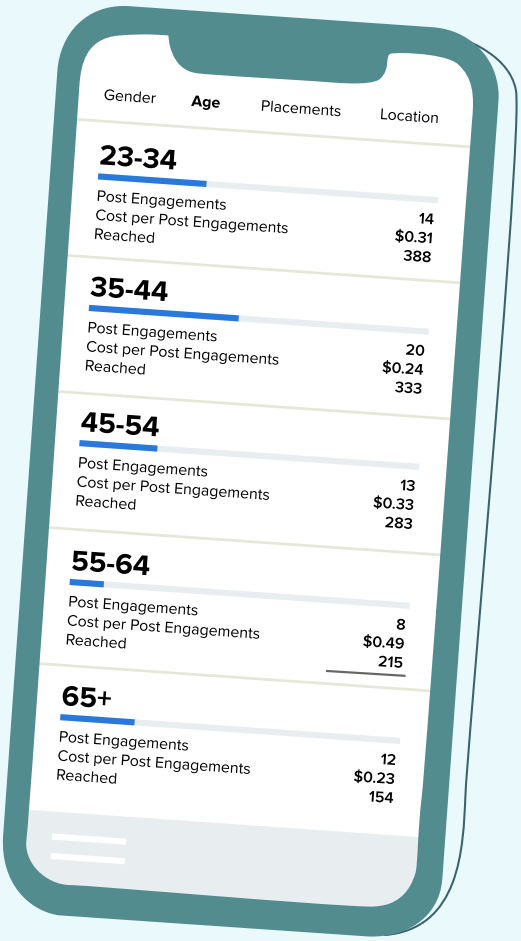
After customers have gotten to know your brand, they'll be ready to make a purchase. Share ordering options on your profile to clinch the sale. If you're on a technology platform like DoorDash, be sure to tell customers to order from you there to access convenient deals.

Customers may also message you on Facebook to ask basic questions like where to find your menu or what your hours are. Setting up a Facebook Messenger chatbot can help you answer customers faster by providing instant feedback on common questions.

Advancing your acquisition strategy

Sophisticated customer acquisition is all about meeting the customer where they are. Look into geo-targeting to show ads to people in a defined radius near your restaurant. Facebook now enables you to promote your business locally, showing people your ad based on their location — then navigating them to your storefront. When you run Facebook ads, you'll get free reporting to see how your promotions are performing.

Use paid ads on Facebook to retarget people who have viewed your website. You can even promote online ordering or pickup based on time of day, delivery radius (which you can increase with DoorDash's Expanded Radius), or customer demographic.



RESTAURANT SPOTLIGHT

Geno's Steaks

@genossteaks

Founded in 1966, Geno's Steaks is renowned for its award-winning Philly cheesesteaks and has amassed over 50,000 followers on Facebook, plus thousands more on Instagram and Twitter.

As a legendary South Philly restaurant, Geno's is able to rely heavily on user-generated content (UGC) of their mouthwatering cheesesteaks and iconic building exterior. The family-owned business also drives engagement by celebrating their owner and using a family-oriented brand voice that stays true to their traditional values even as the business grows.

Additional social media channels

The social media landscape isn't limited to Instagram and Facebook — there's a whole realm of emerging and evolving channels that are redefining digital content. Remember that these tools all work together — and you can make your social efforts go the extra mile by repurposing content on different platforms to reach different audiences.

Snapchat

Snapchat is a mobile app where users send "snaps" — or quick photos or videos — that disappear after 24 hours. There are a ton of free features, such as offering limited-time promotion codes or loyalty perks with close-ups of your food.

Restaurants can also create custom geofilters on Snapchat, letting nearby users tag their photos with a logo, a slogan, and more.

To help market its restaurant partners, DoorDash used Snapchat's augmented reality (AR) technology to let app users and restaurant fans to virtually "visualize" themselves eating inside Buffalo Wild Wings, Baskin-Robbins, The Cheesecake Factory, Chili's, and Outback Steakhouse.[12]

Snapchat can be a valuable tool for your paid marketing strategy as well. With the ability to target users with location-based ads, you can reach passersby right when they're hunting for their next meal.

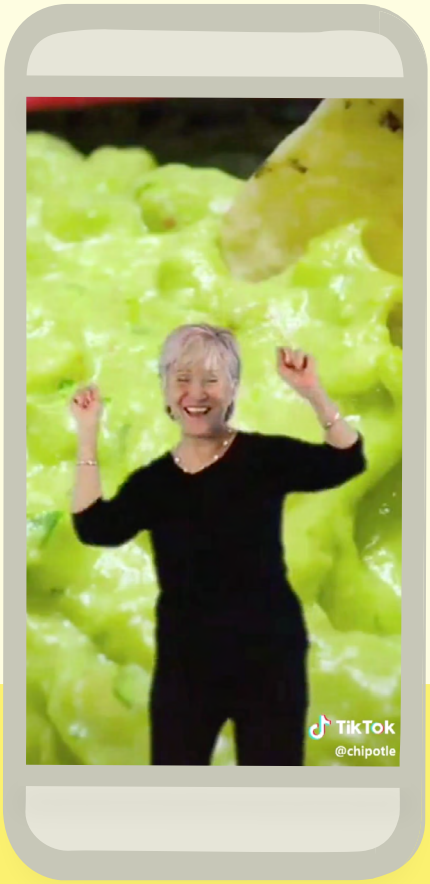
Twitter

With 321 million monthly active users globally, Twitter is a prominent platform (on mobile and desktop) where users share short "tweets" — limited to 280 characters — on everything from breaking news to viral memes. Customers can publically "@mention" you with a question or privately "direct message" (DM) you with a request. A prompt response will go a long way. Companies that use Twitter to interact with customers may see a 19% increase in customer satisfaction.[13]

American diner-style restaurant chain Denny's has a profile dedicated to funny content — which has amassed just shy of 500,000 followers. This unique tactic has helped the brand become relatable to a wide variety of customers.

TikTok

With an astounding 46 million downloads in 2019 in the U.S. alone,[14] the TikTok mobile app is a powerful platform that allows users to create obsession-worthy 15-second videos, soundtracked by music clips — dominating the attention of younger consumers. Restaurants such as Chipotle have partnered with TikTok and its content creators to invent viral branded dances to promote brand awareness in creative, attention-getting ways.

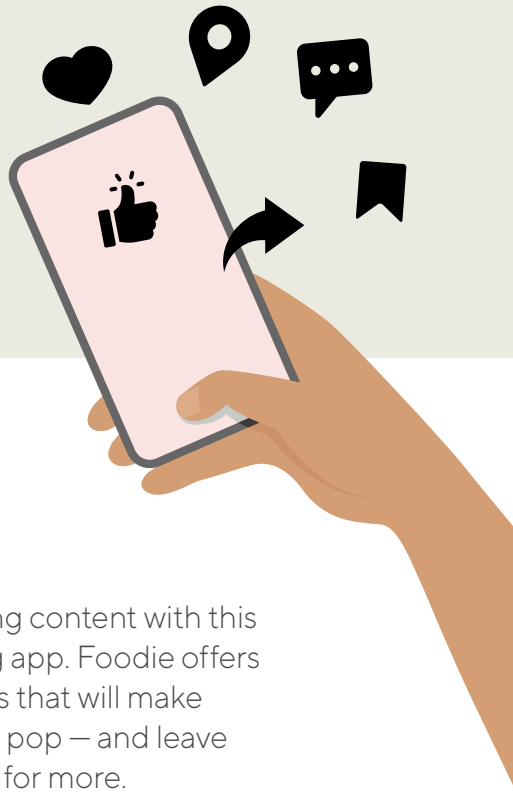


Brands and restaurants can tap highly influential TikTok content creators for branded content partnerships or run sponsored ads to reach new audiences. Visit TikTok for Business to learn more.

Social media tools

There are a variety of tools available that integrate with social media channels to help you create better content.

Here are a few popular tools that can enhance your social media profiles and grow your following.



Canva

The popular graphic design resource offers a wide array of free, food-inspired social media templates. There are millions of images, photos, graphics, and illustrations to spice up your content — and deliver eye-catching posts.

InShot

This no-fuss video editing app allows you to easily trim clips, blur backgrounds, overlay text or emojis, and add music, filters, and transition effects.

Linktree

Direct audiences to all of your key websites (e.g., your restaurant website, online ordering platform, reservations, and reviews) — with one convenient link.

Later

This free Instagram scheduler allows you to upload Instagram posts from your desktop, saving you time and helping to create a regular cadence of content. Planoly is a similar Instagram scheduling tool you can explore.

Foodie

Serve up appetizing content with this free photo-editing app. Foodie offers 30+ different filters that will make food photography pop — and leave audiences hungry for more.

Boomerang

Have fun with mini GIF-style videos of quick scenes of customers digging into entrees, takeout orders being packed up, and more. Simply tap one button, and Boomerang will automatically do the rest.

Hootsuite

Instead of manually uploading content to social media every day, use this free platform to schedule your Twitter and Facebook posts in advance. Buffer is a similar social media scheduling tool you can explore.

Jumpstarting your social strategy

Today, a strong presence on social media isn't a nice-to-have — it's a must.

Many ingredients go into a winning social media strategy. Growing your audience will require both creativity and commitment. But getting started is simpler than you think.

By following the steps outlined in this guide, you can attract new customers, retain loyal regulars, and serve up quality content that keeps audiences highly engaged.

99%

When choosing a restaurant, Gen Z and millennials are 99% more likely to rely on social media and online reviews than Gen X and boomers.[15]

Additional resources

10 Marketing Tips for the Modern Restaurateur

5 Ways to Ramp Up Your Restaurant Marketing

5 Ways to Boost Your Restaurant's Online Visibility

How to Nail Your Restaurant's Local Marketing Strategy

How to Boost Your Restaurant's Social Media Following

Are you ready to join the 310,000+ restaurants already on DoorDash?

Get Started

Want to speak to a sales rep?

Contact Us

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DOORDASH
FOR MERCHANTS

About DoorDash

DoorDash is a leading food-technology company that helps restaurants reach their potential by bringing their food to hungry customers everywhere. By empowering local businesses, we generate new ways for people to earn, work, experience, and live. Get started at get.doordash.com.