

How to Plan an Instagram Stories Campaign

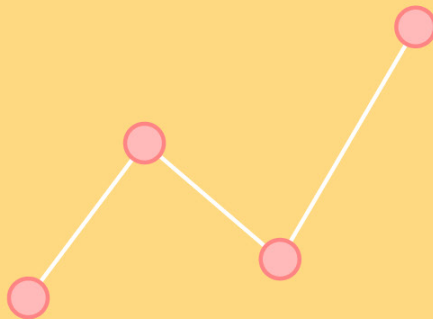
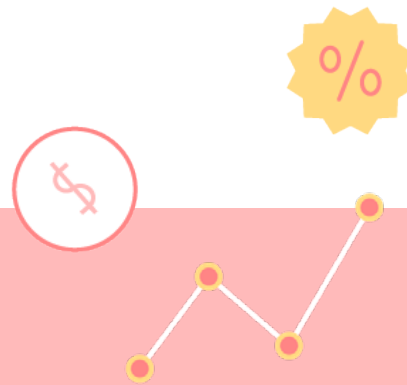


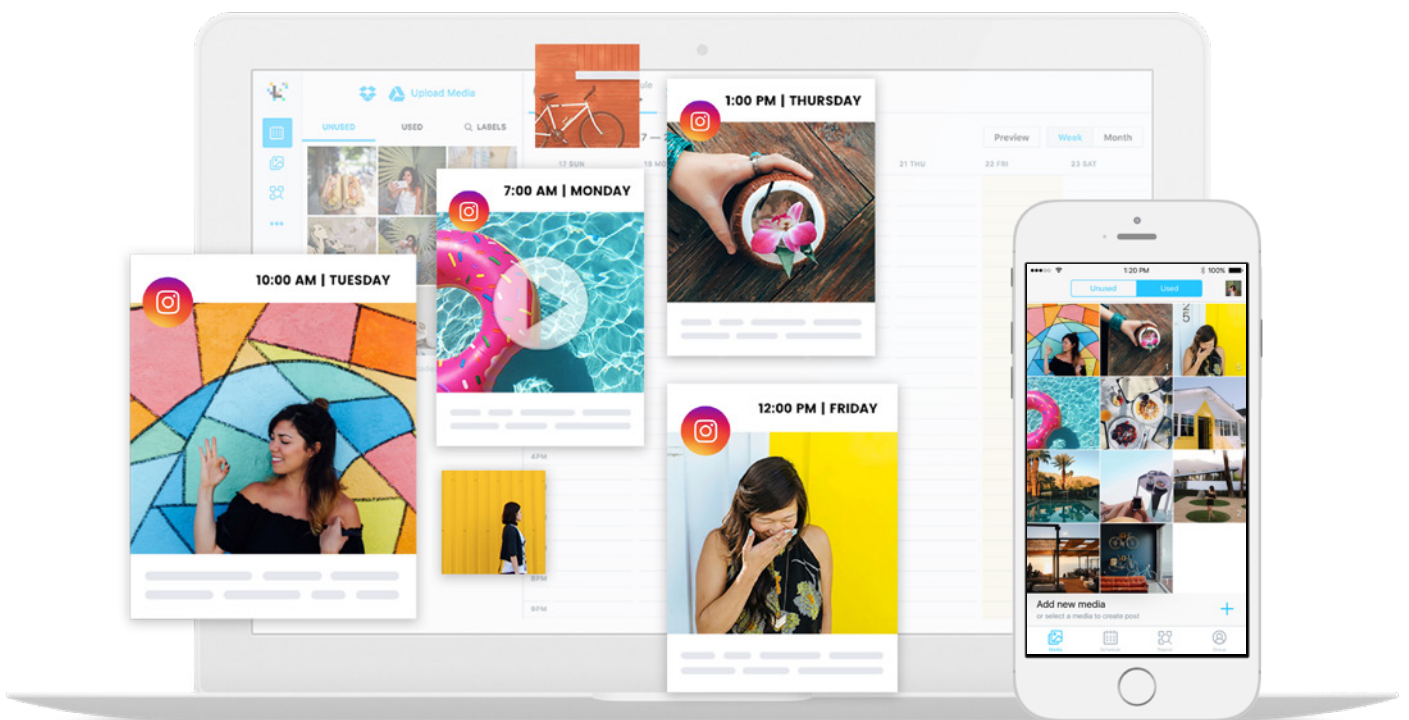
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Introduction



Introduction

There was a time when brands weren't sure how [Instagram Stories](#) fit into their visual marketing. Was it for daily highlights? Behind-the-scenes content? Takeovers?

Those days are *definitely* over.

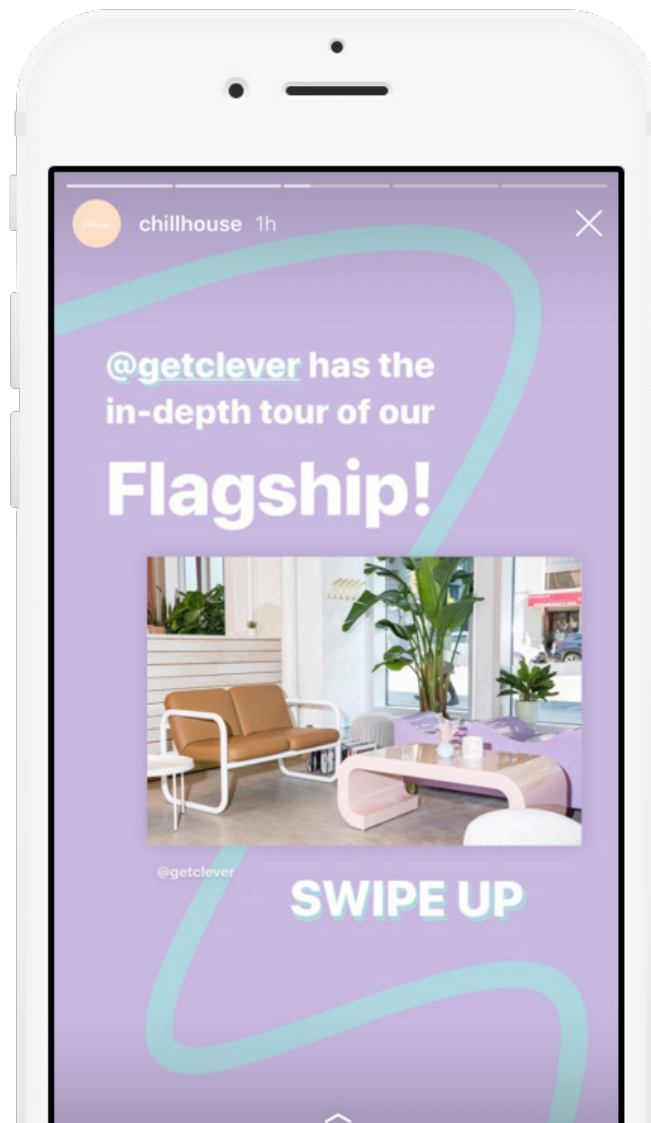
From Ralph Lauren to Whole Foods, more businesses than ever are turning to Instagram Stories to run and promote their marketing campaigns – and they've been pretty darn successful!



No seriously! Over the past few years, Instagram Stories has quickly proven to be one of the best channels for businesses to reach and acquire new customers. And a lot of it has to do with its immense popularity.

According to data from Instagram, there are over 500 million daily active Instagram Stories users worldwide. And one-third of the most-viewed Instagram Stories are from businesses!

So whether you work in ecommerce, education, or media and publishing, running a creative Instagram Stories campaign can be one of the best ways to achieve your broader marketing goals.



That's where this guide comes in. In the following chapters, we cover everything you need to know about running your first Instagram Stories campaign, from setting your goals to storyboarding your concept, and tracking your success.

Ready? Let's get started!

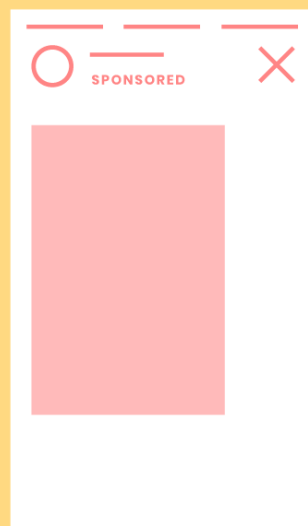


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CHAPTER ONE

What is an Instagram Stories Campaign?



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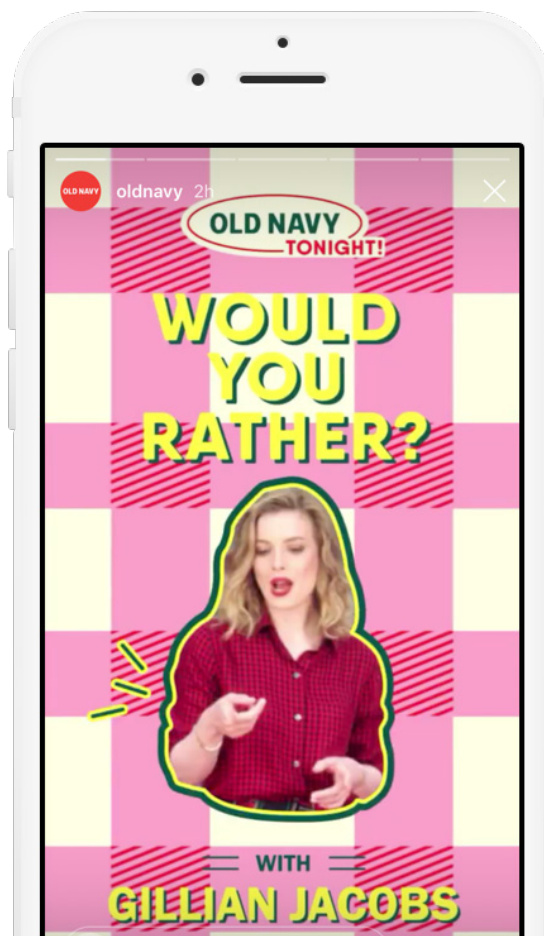


CHAPTER ONE

What is an Instagram Stories Campaign?

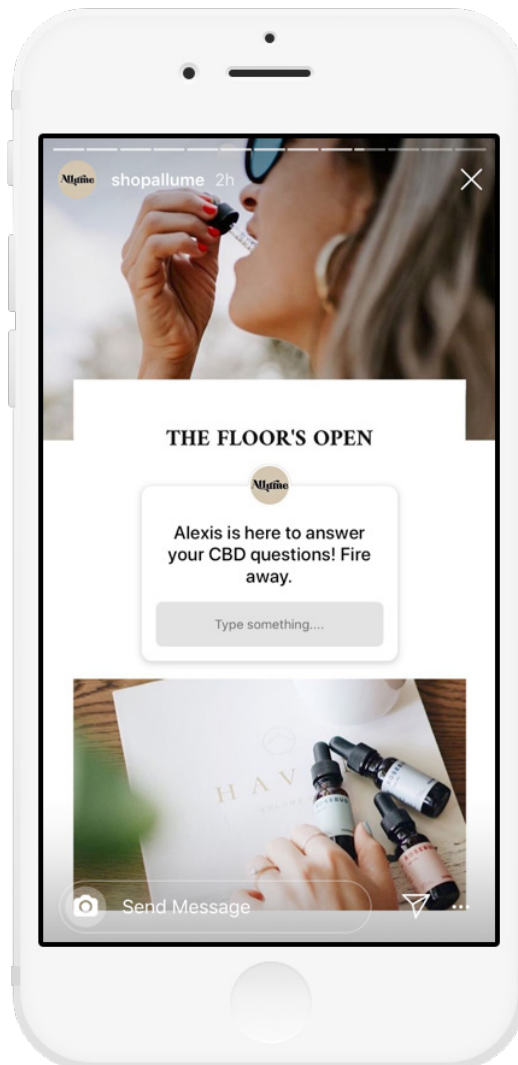
An Instagram Stories campaign is any marketing campaign that takes place on... you guessed it, Instagram Stories!

Basically, it involves businesses sharing content on their Instagram Stories with the intention of achieving a marketing objective. That objective can be broad, like increasing brand awareness, or it can be specific, [like driving sales of a new product](#).



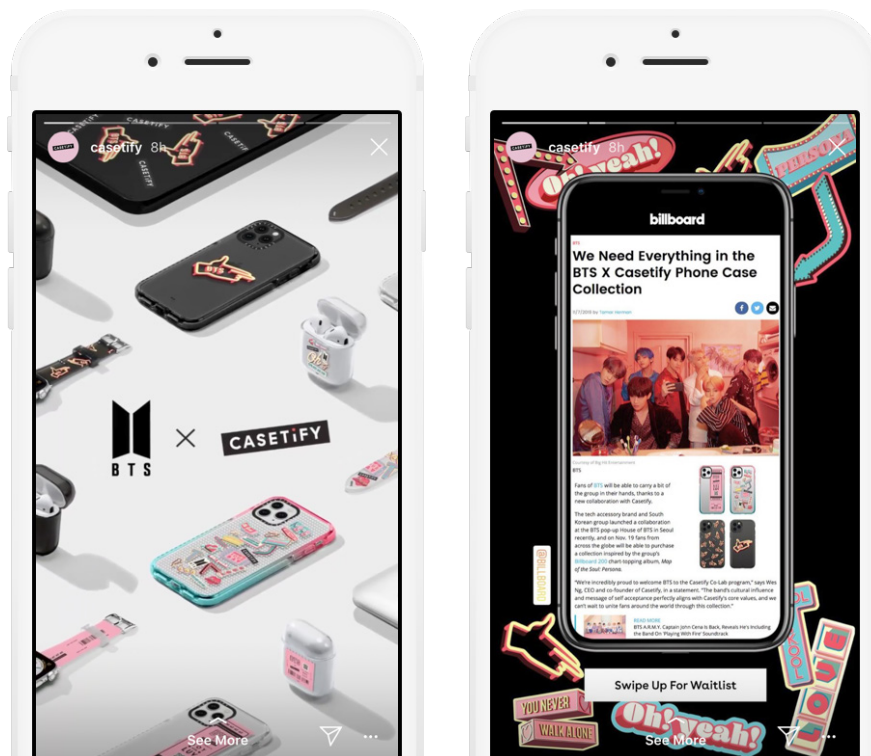
In any case, the goal is to generate a ton of interest in a concentrated amount of time – and oftentimes, the best way to do this is by sharing interesting, creative, and mind-blowingly awesome content!

This is important to remember. At the center of any successful stories campaign is **high-quality, interactive content that inspires users to like, share, and comment.**



Let's take a look at some examples:

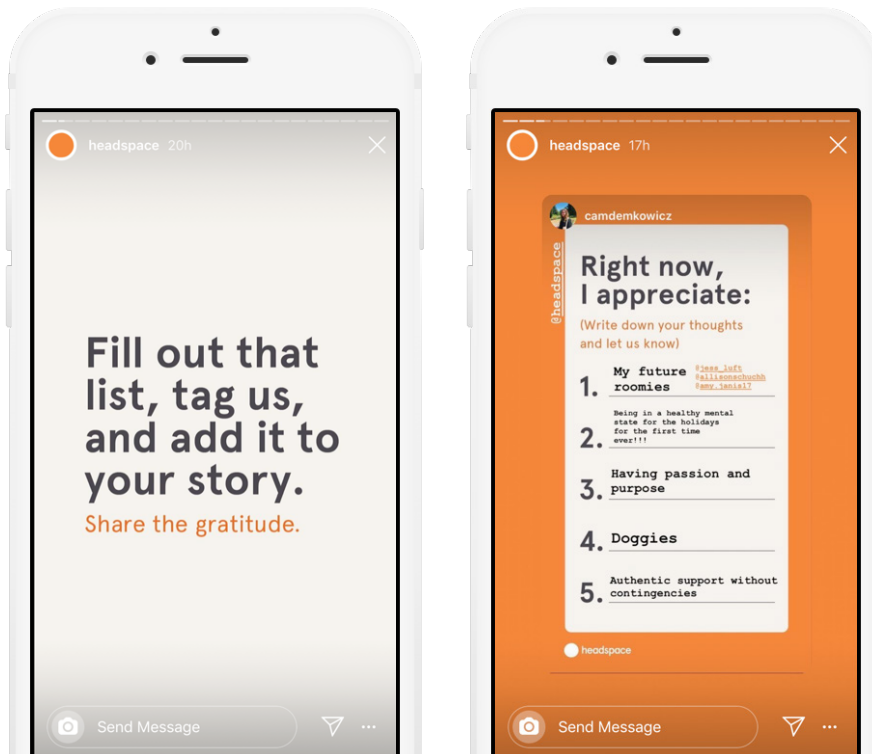
Lifestyle brand, [Casetify](#), recently ran an Instagram Stories campaign to promote a new product collaboration with BTS, the ultra-popular K-Pop group.



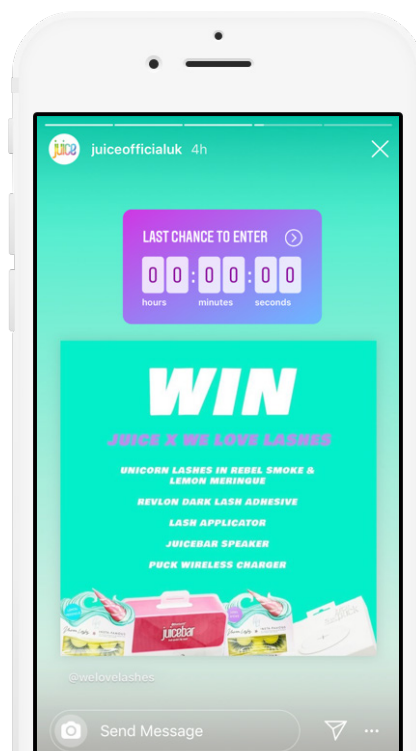
Notice how Casetify uses the call-to-action “Swipe Up For Waitlist”? This is a great strategy to entice viewers to take action on your story.

What we love about Casetify’s campaign is how they shared screenshots of press shoutouts as a way to build social proof and drive a ton of interest in the collaboration.

Another great example comes from the meditation app, [Headspace](#). They recently ran a user-generated content (UGC) campaign on Instagram Stories where they asked their followers to fill out a list, tag Headspace, and share it to their own stories:

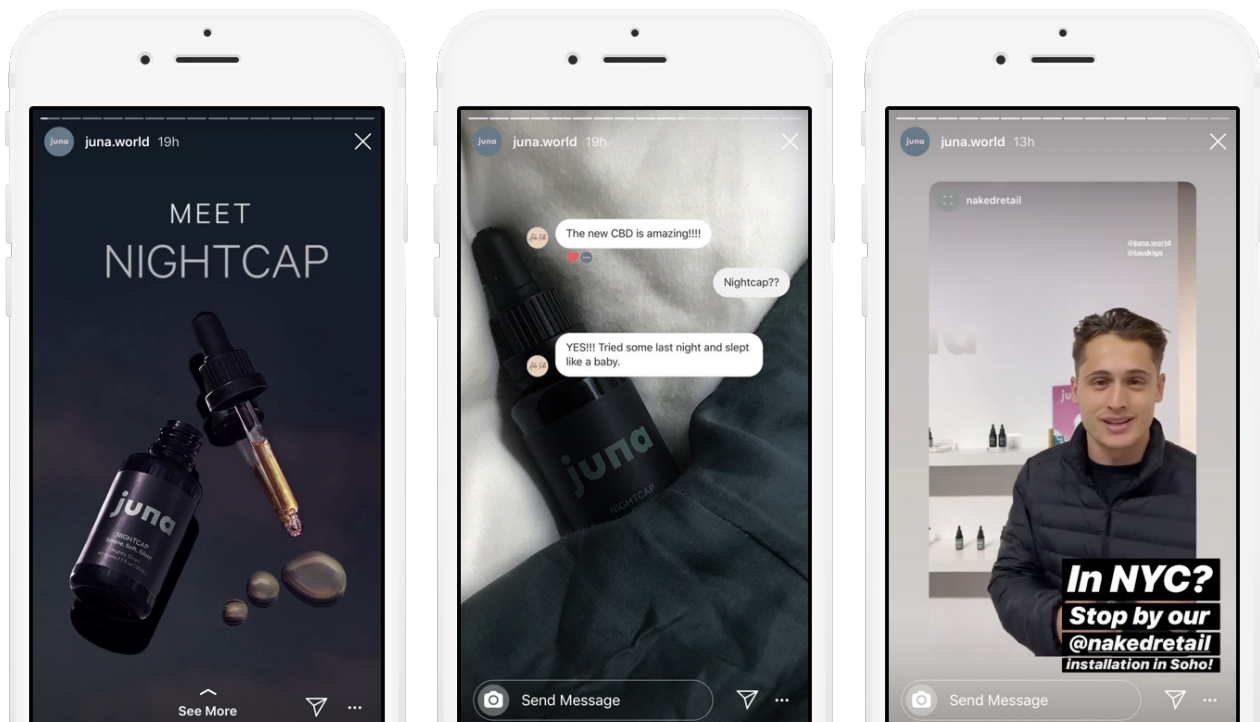


Instagram contests and giveaway are also really popular when it comes to Instagram Stories campaigns – they’re so great for promoting your business and gaining exposure. Check out how [Juice Official UK](#) partnered with [We Love Lashes](#) to promote a giveaway:



Keep in mind that your Instagram Stories campaign doesn't just have to take on Instagram Stories!

Take [Juna](#) for example. In order to promote a new product line, the CBD company shared a series of creative and stories – including stories to announce the product, user-reviews, a takeover, a promo code, and a CTA to make a purchase:



But they didn't stop there. Juna also shared about the new product line in a feed post on Instagram and on other social channels as well.

All of this is to say that while you can absolutely run a marketing campaign entirely on Instagram Stories, you can also treat stories as a single (but important!) touchpoint in your campaign.

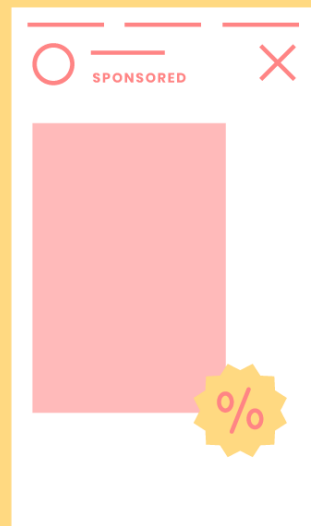


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CHAPTER TWO

Pick Your Campaign Goals



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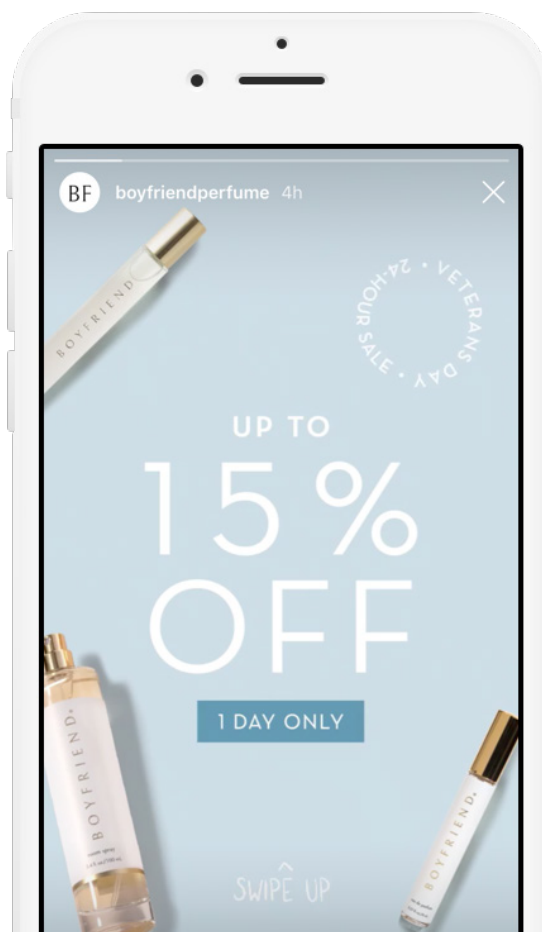
CHAPTER TWO

Pick Your Campaign Goals

It's pretty common to start the planning process of an Instagram campaign by defining your target audience, but we recommend starting with your campaign goals.

That's because the goals of your Instagram campaign often dictate who you target.

For example, if your goal is to raise awareness about an important cause, the audience you target will probably be fairly wide. On the other hand, if your campaign goal is to drive product sales, chances are you'll be focusing on users who are most likely to make a purchase.



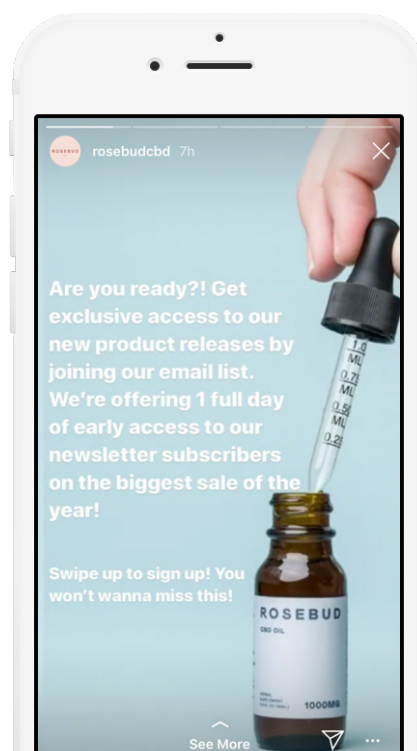
So, what's your goal?

One of the great things about Instagram Stories campaigns is that they can be used for all kinds of goals, from increasing brand awareness and promoting new products to driving ecommerce sales (or something else entirely!).

Just keep in mind that the goals you set will heavily influence the type of campaign you run, as well as the metrics you use to track your success.

Once you've determined your campaign goals, it's a good idea to put some thought into your key performance indicators (KPIs).

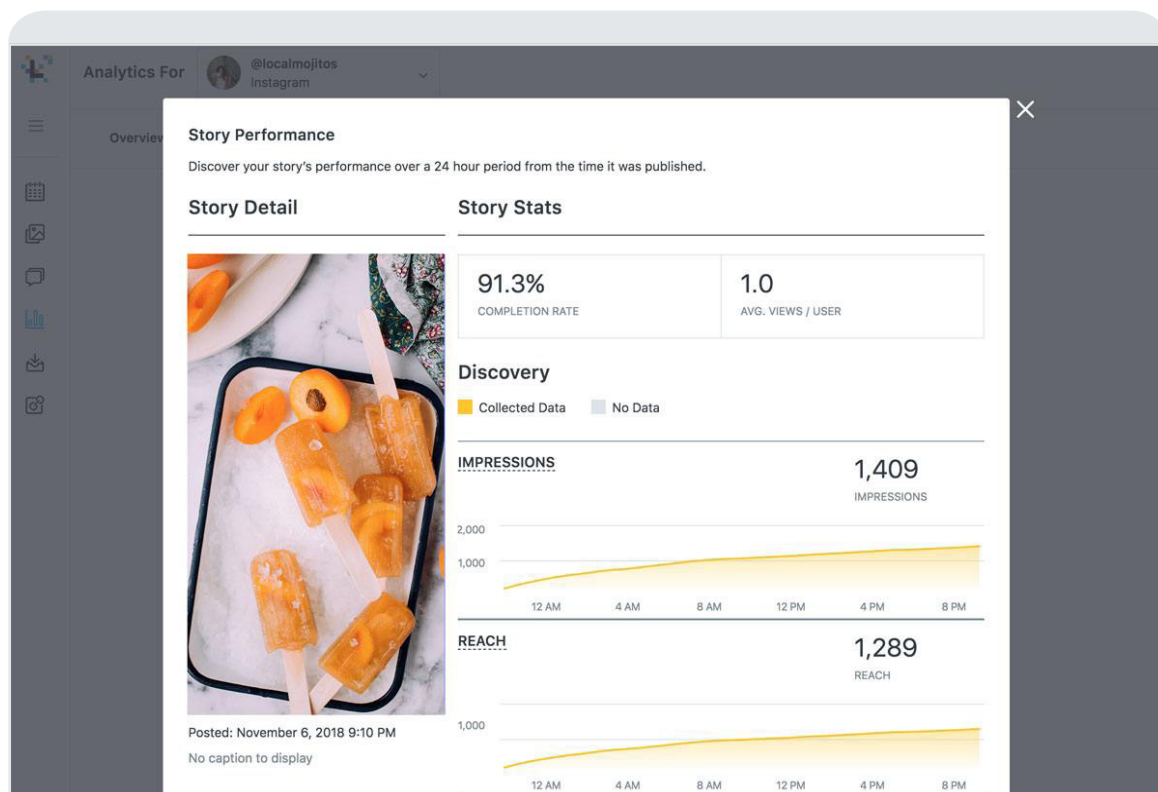
Your Instagram Stories campaign should eventually tie back to numbers, so make sure they're measurable! For example, if you're planning to promote a new product, then set a goal for how many units you want to sell during the campaign. If it's a lead generation campaign, set a goal for how many emails you collect.



And don't forget about your [Instagram engagement metrics](#)!

While your campaign might have nothing to do with engagement and everything to do with making sales, setting goals for the number of likes, comments, views, and shares you receive is still important!

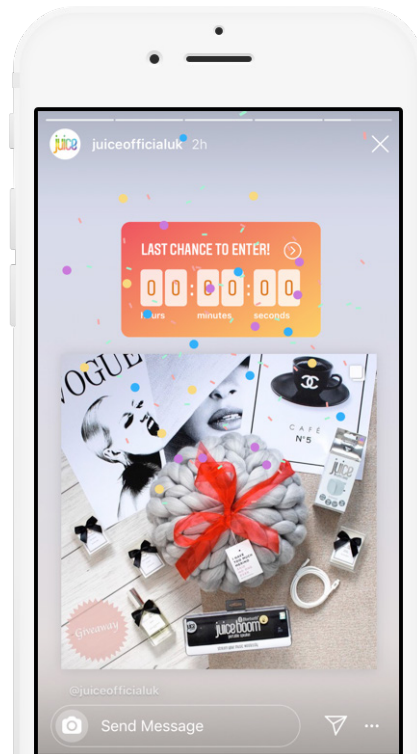
We also recommend looking beyond [social-only metrics](#) and diving into things like email leads and site visitors. The more you can tie your stories campaign back to measurable results, the better.



Something else to consider is what Instagram Stories features are most likely to help you achieve your goal(s).

Whether you're trying to grow your engagement, build more brand awareness, drive traffic to your website, or even make ecommerce sales, there's definitely an [Instagram Stories sticker](#) that can help you along the way – and it really pays to incorporate them into your strategy.

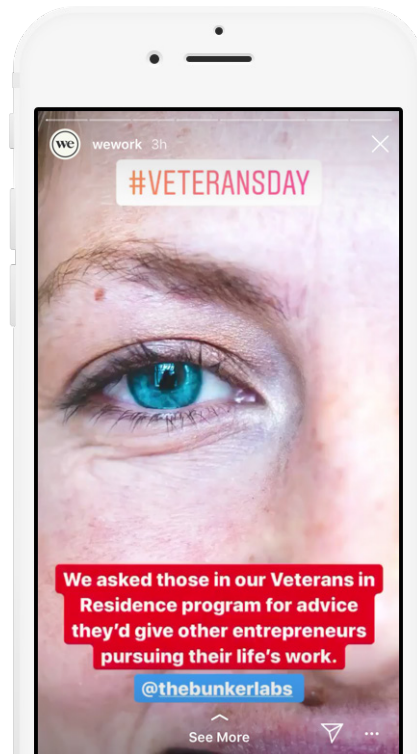
For example, if your Instagram Stories campaign is centered around a product launch, you could use Instagram's countdown sticker to build interest:



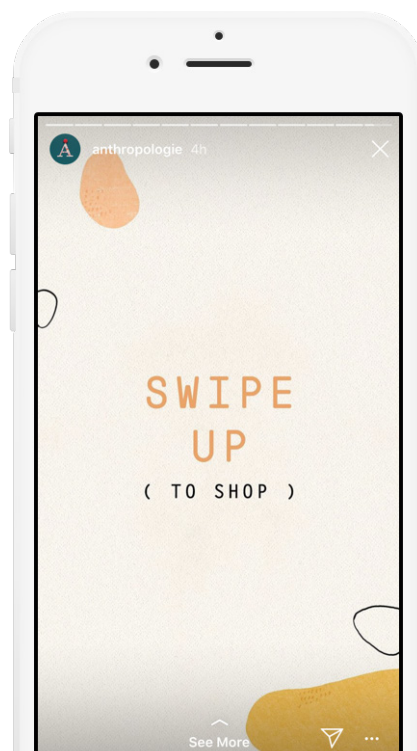
Or the hashtag sticker if your campaign is centered around collecting user-generated content (UGC):



If you're partnering with influencers in your campaign, they could use the mention sticker to promote your account (and campaign) in their own stories:



And if you have access to Instagram's swipe-up feature on stories, you can use the feature to drive traffic directly from your stories campaign to a URL where viewers can learn more:



With your campaign goals set, it's time to define your target audience.

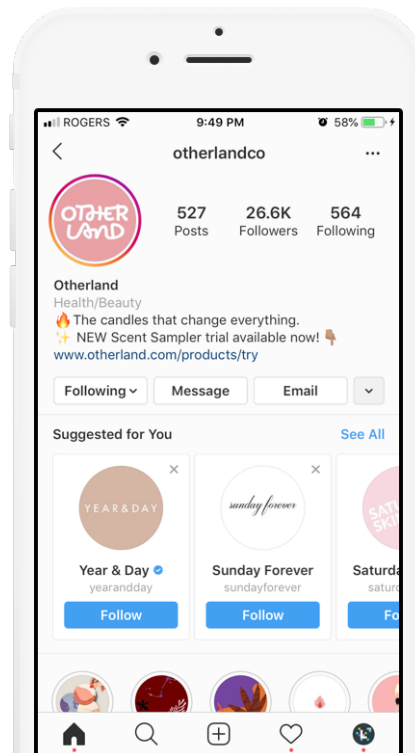
Keep in mind that depending on the goals of your campaign, your target audience could be very broad (and include users who don't currently follow you) or it could be a narrow subset of your followers.

In any case, knowing who you're trying to reach with your Instagram stories campaign is just as important as how you reach them.

If you're looking to drum up a lot of engagement (which you should be!), it makes sense to create a strategy around content that your audience actually wants to engage with. And the more you know about your audience, the more you can tailor your campaign to your audience's needs!

Start by answering some key questions about your target audience:

- What kinds of content do they engage with?
- Do they prefer photo-based stories or videos?
- What stickers do they engage with the most?
- What hashtags do they use and follow?
- What communities are they a part of?



Another quick way to find out more about your Instagram audience is to use Instagram’s “suggested” feature. When you find a customer that embodies your target market, click on their suggested tab to find other users like them.

Knowing these things can help you build a customer profile (or “persona”) that underpins your Instagram stories campaign – which is especially useful if the goal of your campaign is to reach new users who don’t follow you yet!

While we don’t recommend researching your audience into oblivion, having a good understanding of their interests, content habits, and the types of incentives that will motivate them to participate is vital to running an effective campaign.



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CHAPTER THREE

Set a Timeline for Your Campaign



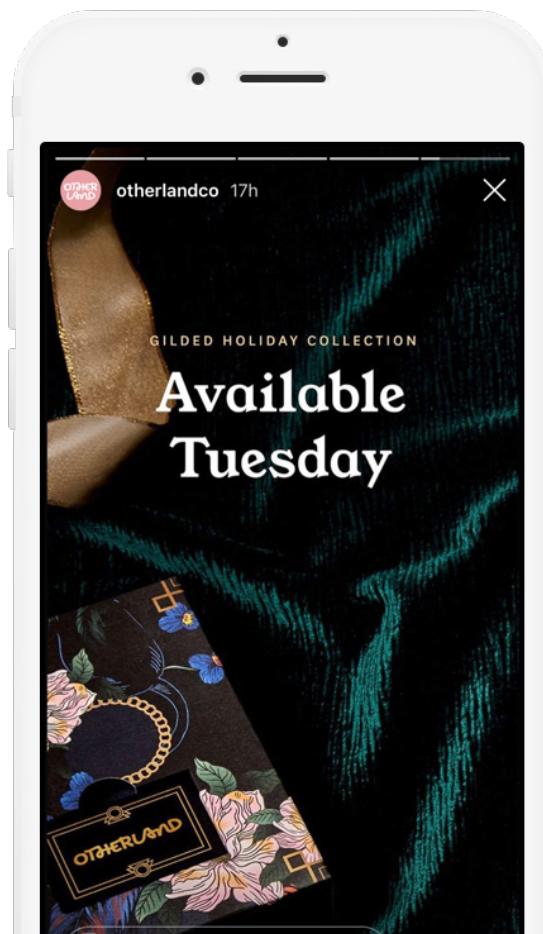
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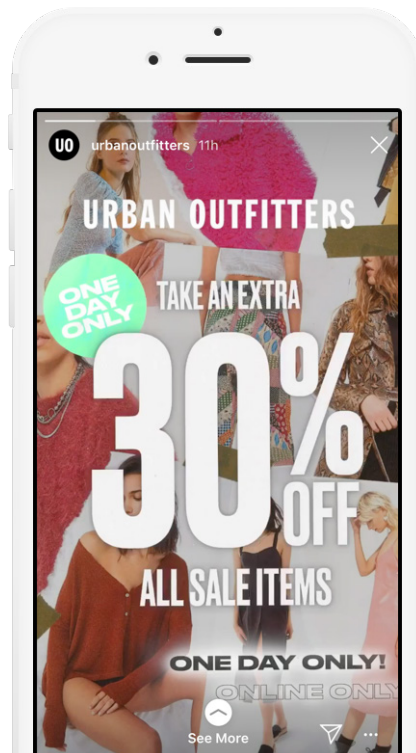
Set a Timeline for Your Campaign

Is your Instagram stories campaign tied to a real-life event, like a conference, in-store sale, or holiday? Does it coincide with a [product launch](#)?



Generally speaking, unless your campaign is tied to a larger event (like Pride Month, for example) or a long-term awareness campaign, it's best to set a fairly concise timeline – usually a week at most.

It really depends on the focus and goal of your campaign. Some types of campaigns need strict deadlines (like contests & giveaways) while others don't. But the risk with letting a campaign run for too long is that it will lose steam.

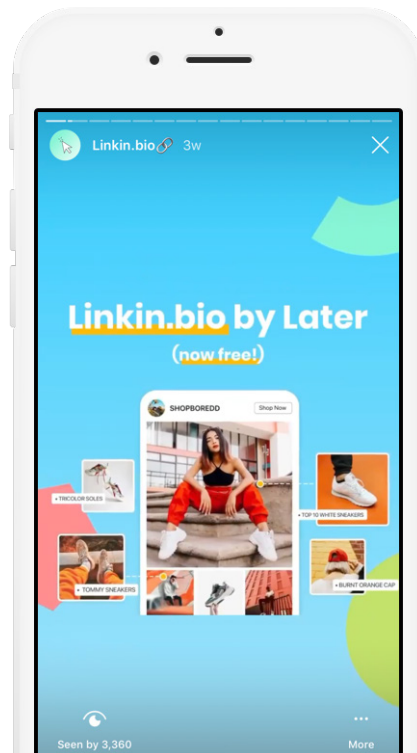


If your campaign is tied to a specific date, let that act as your starting point and then build your timeline backward from there.

This will give you a clear idea of how much lead time you're working with and the potential scope of the project. If you're dealing with a tight deadline, you may have to scale back on some of your more ambitious ideas for your campaign.

But if you have plenty of time to play with (you super-organized marketer you!), you can really level-up your campaign to help you meet your goals.

To give some perspective, we started planning an Instagram Stories campaign to promote our [new Linkin.bio release](#) about 1 month before the launch. This involved building a strategy and brief, storyboarding the concept, designing the creative (including pre- and post-launch creative), and scheduling all of it in advance.



You may want to think about a launch timeline that runs something along the lines of:

- **Day 0-7:** Pre-campaign hype
- **Day 8:** Launch day
- **Day 9-13:** Post-campaign follow-up
- **Day 14-30:** Plan additional activations to keep up the momentum

By breaking it down per day, or pre- and post-launch, you'll be way more organized in your approach. It can also help you think of creative ways to promote your campaign and drive as much engagement as possible.

For example, we spent a solid week promoting our Instagram Stories scheduling feature on social media, and then we launched our [free Instagram Stories for Business course](#) one week later.



The course acted as a free lead magnet for us to attract new customers, while also allowing us to indirectly promote our scheduling feature with a free course that was full of fun and helpful content to share.

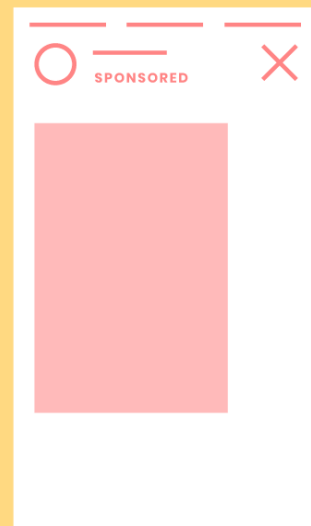


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CHAPTER FOUR

Decide on Your Strategy & Creative Direction



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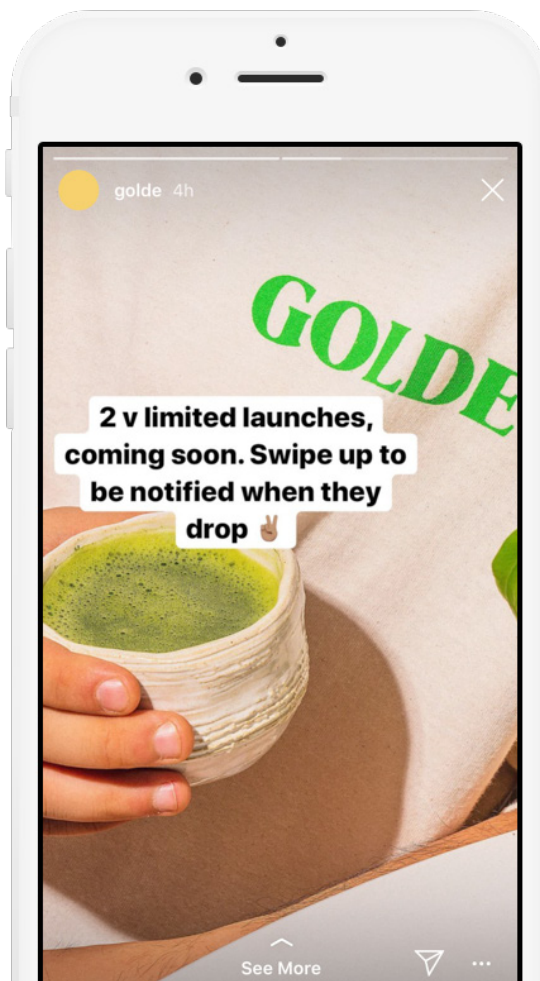
CHAPTER FOUR

Decide on Your Strategy & Creative Direction

Now that you have all the details like goals and timeline locked down, it's time for the fun part: what will your campaign look like?

It may sound like a fancy marketing term, but having an overarching creative direction is what separates your stories campaign from your other day-to-day social posts.

Your campaign's creative direction is what's going to make it stand out and be seen on your social platforms, and it's so important to get it right! Especially on Instagram, since it is such a visual platform.

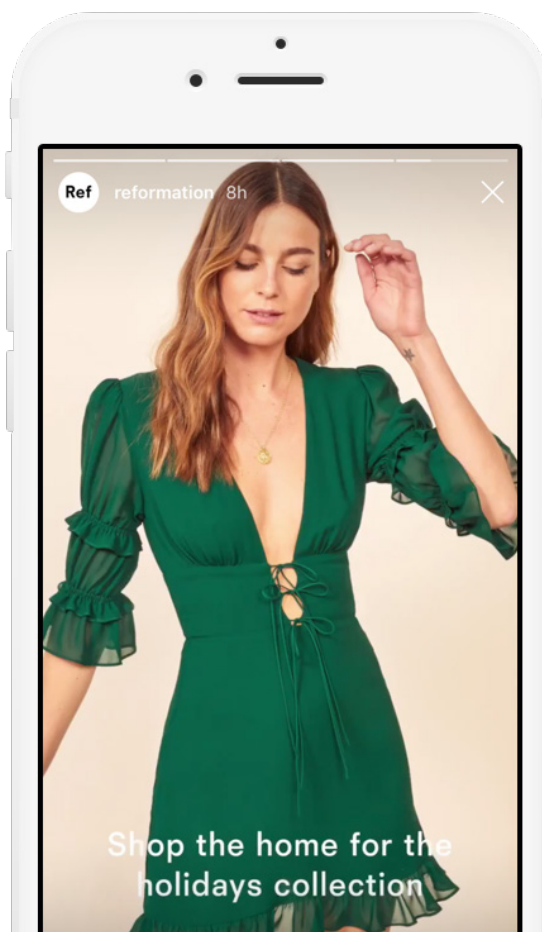


Not sure where to start? There are four elements to your strategy and creative direction you need to think about.

First, you need to pin down the concept behind your campaign. This can be as simple or as in-depth as you'd like, however, it should be a guiding point for creating your stories.

A great way to start building your story concept is by starting with a single angle and building from there. Your angle could include a company update, holiday, product launch, new blog post, or anything else you'd like to share with your followers.

Keep in mind that your concept should always tie back to your campaign goals. For example, if your campaign is about promoting a new product launch, this needs to be reflected in your concept – you'll need product photos, possibly some UGC, teaser photos, and more.



Basically, the goal here is to build a strategy for achieving your campaign goals. Here are a few questions to help you get started:

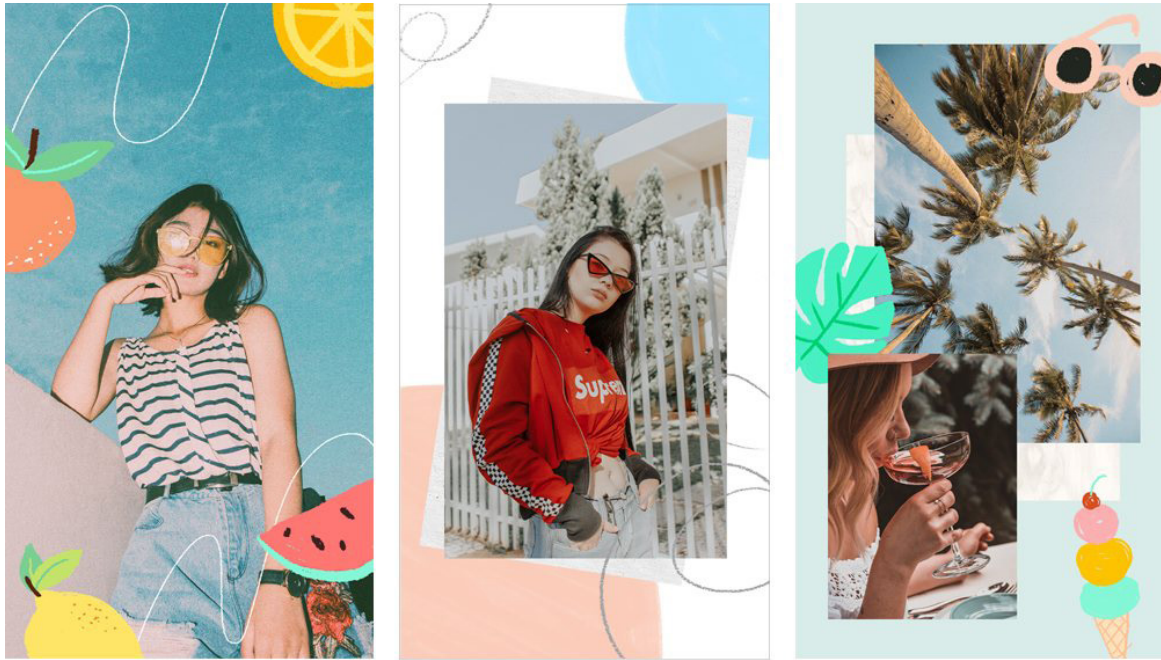
- What is the idea or concept behind your stories campaign?
- What is the focus of the campaign? What products or services (if any) will you be focused on marketing?
- What is the campaign's promotional strategy?
- How will the campaign help you reach your business goals?

Once you've come up with the broad strokes vision of your campaign, you need to define the overall visual style. This should include a color palette, some inspirational imagery, a design style guide, or design templates that will work across your social channels.

If you already have a stories branding kit with your color palette, fonts, and filters all defined, kudos to you!

If not, it's a good idea to build one out so that your stories campaign stays on-brand and matches your overall aesthetic.

TIP: [Instagram Stories templates](#) are a great shortcut for creating consistent branding! By using templates, you'll know that your text will be balanced, the elements will be aligned, and the overall appearance will help you stand out from the standard Instagram-style stories post.



Mood boards are also a great idea at this stage of planning! You can easily create a mood board by pinning inspiration images on Pinterest or check out this [blog post from Canva](#) on how to build a mood board for your future campaign.

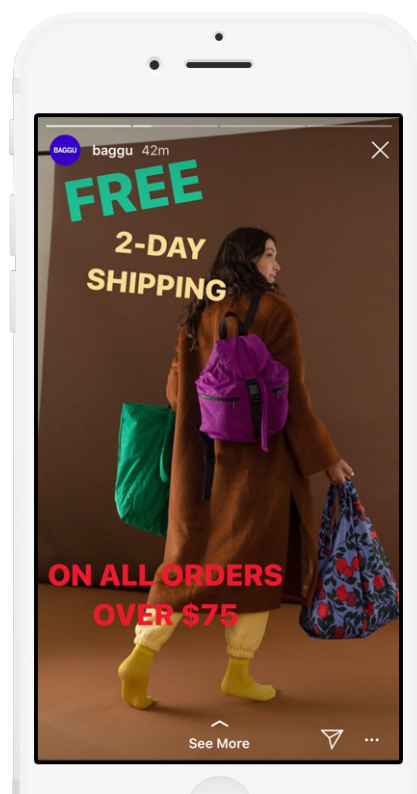
Thirdly, your creative direction should outline your campaign message and editorial style.

This will help you fine-tune your content and make sure how your introducing, explaining or selling your product throughout the campaign remains consistent. It's a good idea to nail down a couple of terms or core messages you want to weave through each of your campaign assets.

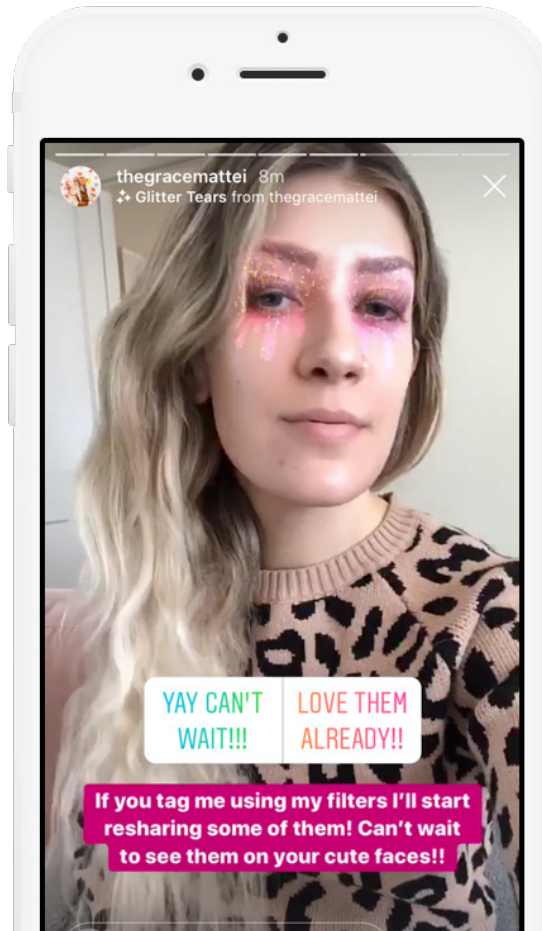


Finally, as we mentioned before, it's a good idea at this stage to establish what Instagram Stories features you'll be using to promote your campaign as this will impact your stories' design and messaging.

For example, are you planning to use stickers, the swipe-up feature, or any other creative tools?



And don't forget about AR effects! Now that Instagram's Spark AR platform is open, any business can create and promote AR effects on Instagram.



And while the feature is only slowly being adopted by businesses, there are a lot of great ways to incorporate AR effects into your campaign.

Cosmetic brands can use AR to let their followers virtually “try on” their products, fashion brands can use AR to create virtual fitting rooms, allowing people to try on shirts, sunglasses, or entire outfits – there are really countless applications!

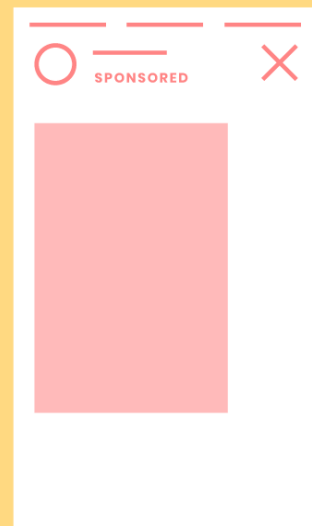


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CHAPTER FIVE

Create a Storyboard for Your Campaign



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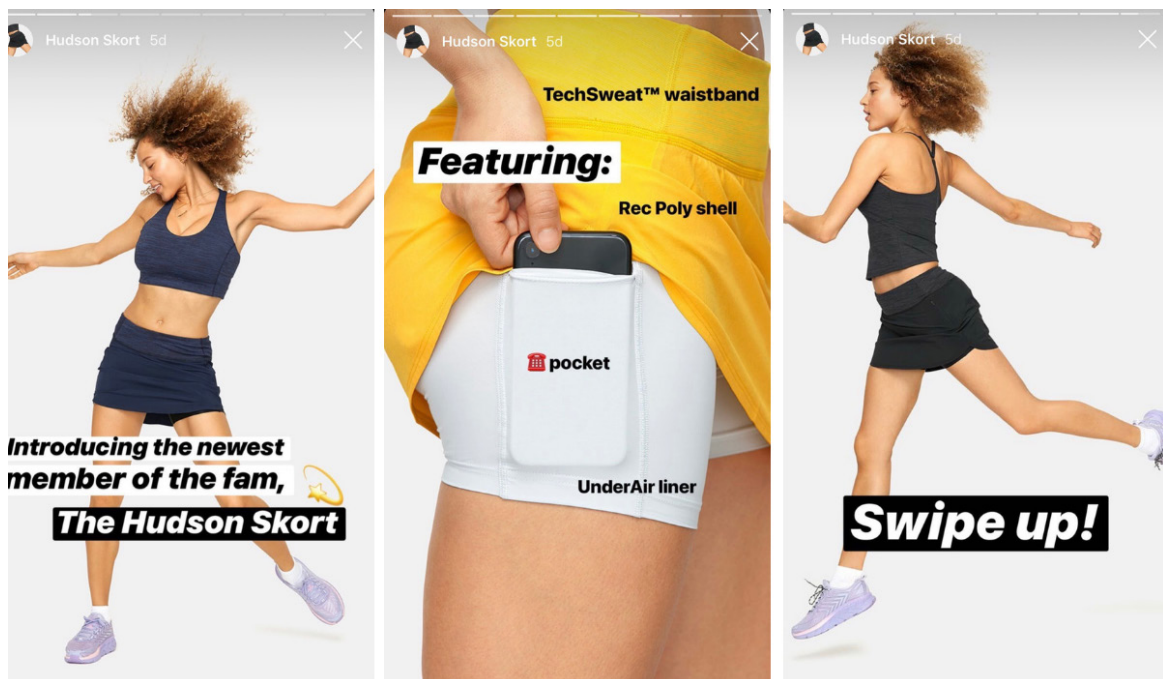


CHAPTER FIVE

Create a Storyboard for Your Campaign

Before you whip out your camera and start snapping a bunch of photos and videos, it's a good idea to create a quick storyboard of your campaign to map out the details and make sure it all flows together.

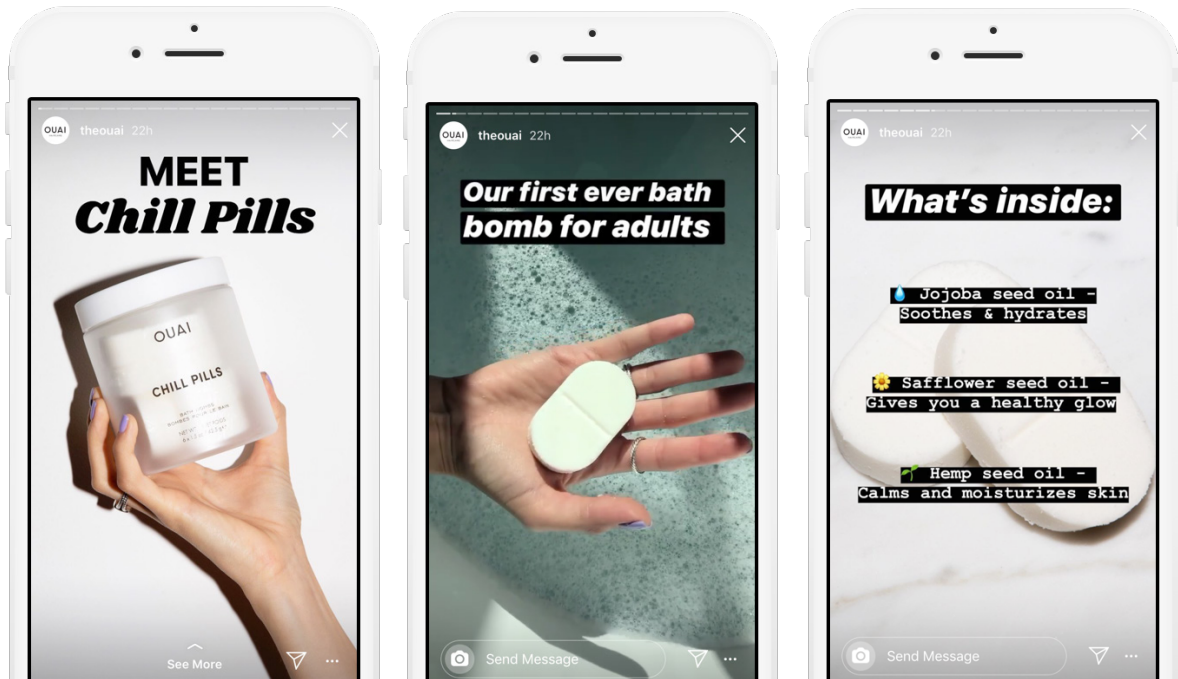
Never heard of a storyboard? Basically, it's a visual representation of how your campaign will unfold, from beginning to end. Think of it as a comic strip version of your campaign with notes about what's happening in each story, like if you're including a CTA.



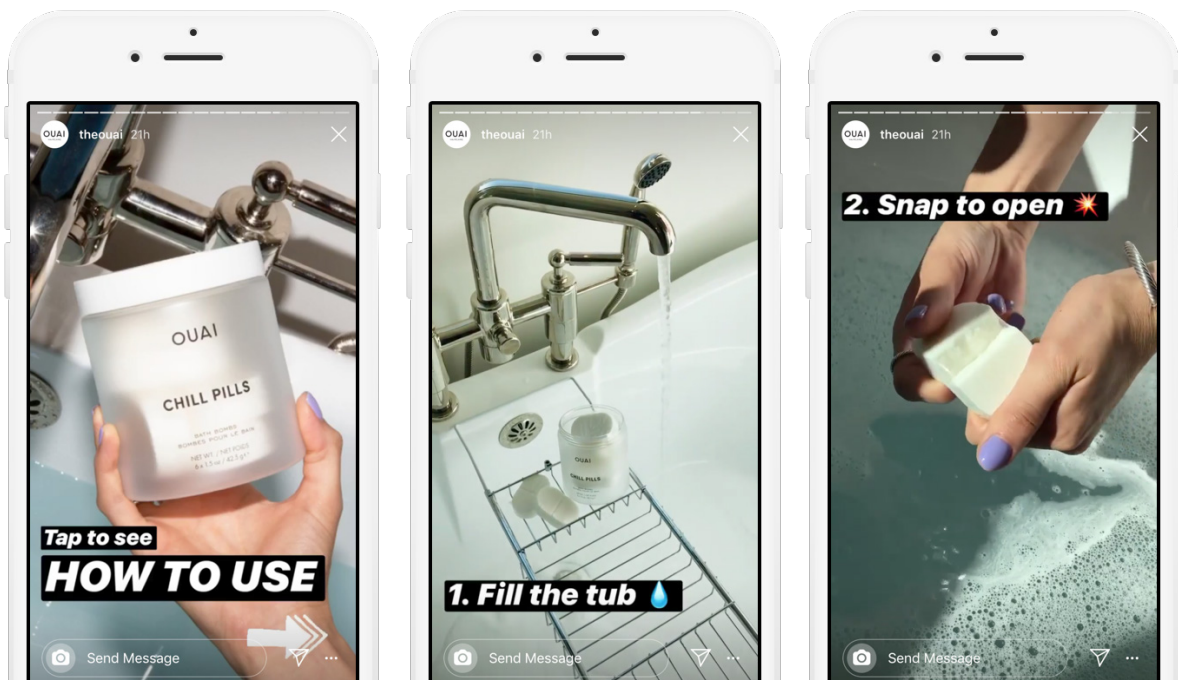
This is essentially your campaign roadmap or an overview of each of the “moments” in your campaign.

Let's look at an example from [OUAI Haircare](#). The modern haircare brand recently shared a series of Instagram Stories as part of a campaign to promote their “Chill Pills” bath bombs.

They start with several stories introducing the product and outlining how it benefits buyers:



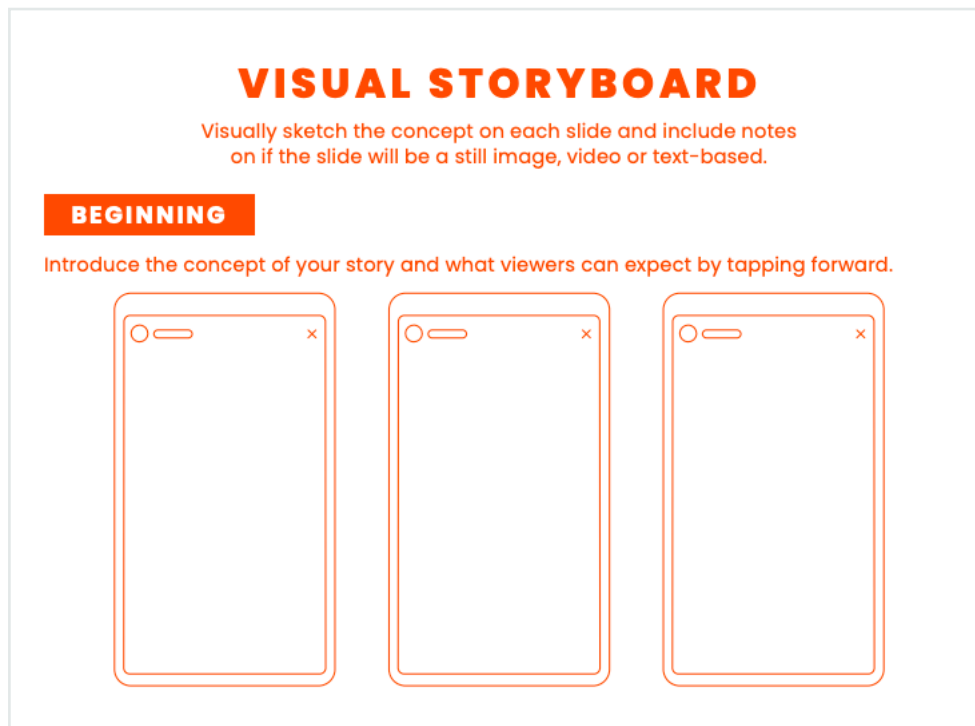
Then they share a quick & snappy tutorial on how to use the product:



And finally, they share a call-to-action prompting viewers to swipe up to shop the product:



Notice how the campaign narrative quickly (and seamlessly) moves from introduction to education to promotion? This is exactly what you should try to do when sketching out the details of your campaign.



You'll also want to spend some time figuring out how you'll best convey your message, and what types of media you'll need to support it.

For example, are you posting original photography, illustrations, GIFs, videos, or a mix of them all? Are you using close-up shots, flat lays, landscapes? How do you want your campaign to come to life?

TIP: A lot of this will tie back to the creative concept and visual style that you defined in the previous step.

Lastly, you'll want to make note of your call-to-action, swipe-up links, or anything else you'll want to include to conclude your story.

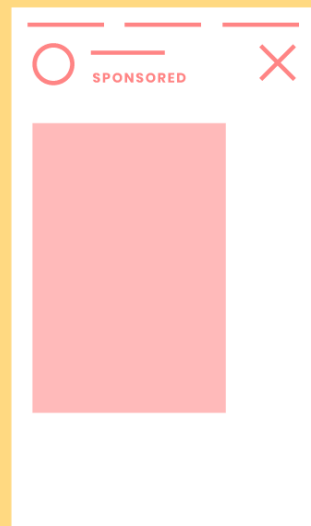


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CHAPTER SIX

Create Your Campaign Assets



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CHAPTER SIX

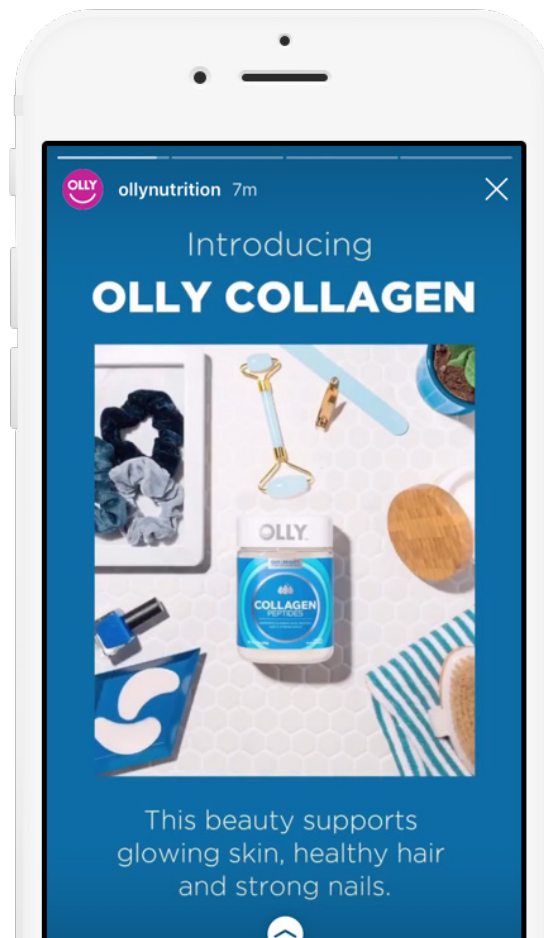
Create Your Campaign Assets

Once you have your strategy, creative concept, and storyboard nailed down, you now get to create the actual assets for your stories campaign!

Your campaign assets would be things like photos, videos, graphics, GIFs, or anything else you're planning for your social media campaign.

When it comes to actually creating content for your campaign, this is going to vary heavily depending on the size of your company, and whether you're selling a physical or digital product.

For a physical product, you'll likely be creating photos and videos with the actual product. You'll want to have a mix of both product photos and lifestyle photos, and your creative shoot could range from a small photo session with your iPhone to a multi-day, big-budget shoot with multiple photographers and videographers.



For a digital product, most of the content creation will probably come in the form of graphic images or videos, or if you're selling a service then you may do a photoshoot of yourself instead.

You might get to have creative control over social specific assets, or you might just have to work with whatever your marketing team gives you.

As we said, this part of the planning process varies greatly, but the most important thing is that you are sticking to your creative direction and creating high-quality content for your social channels.

Here are a few things to think about when the time comes to creating your campaign assets:

#1: Do You Have a Design Brief for Designers?

If you're lucky enough to work with a design or creative team, you'll want to create a clear design brief for your social assets. Make sure you have your storyboard, style guide, and design assets like logo and slogan nailed down and shared with your designers and contractors at this point. This is where all the planning for your creative direction comes into play, so don't let it go to waste.

#2: Do You Have a Branded Hashtag for Your Campaign?

If you plan to gather user-generated content or if your campaign will be running for a long time over Instagram, you may want to create a branded hashtag specifically for this product launch.

Don't forget to include this hashtag in your asset copy and even integrated into the design of your stories!



#3: Can You Repurpose Content from Other Channels?

When you're creating digital assets, you don't want to let any piece of content go to waste. Think about how to squeeze the most out of each asset!

For example, if you're using feed posts to promote your campaign as well, you could consider sharing your Instagram post to your stories as well to drive even more engagement.



Here are a few assets to keep in mind:

- Instagram Stories content
(original photos and videos, illustrations, and more)
- Supplemental UGC assets
- Instagram Stories Highlights cover icon or image
- Promotional content, such as influencer content, takeovers, and more
- Branded hashtag

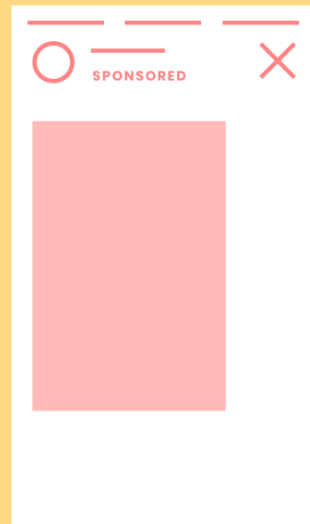


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CHAPTER SEVEN

Schedule Your Instagram Stories Campaign



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CHAPTER SEVEN

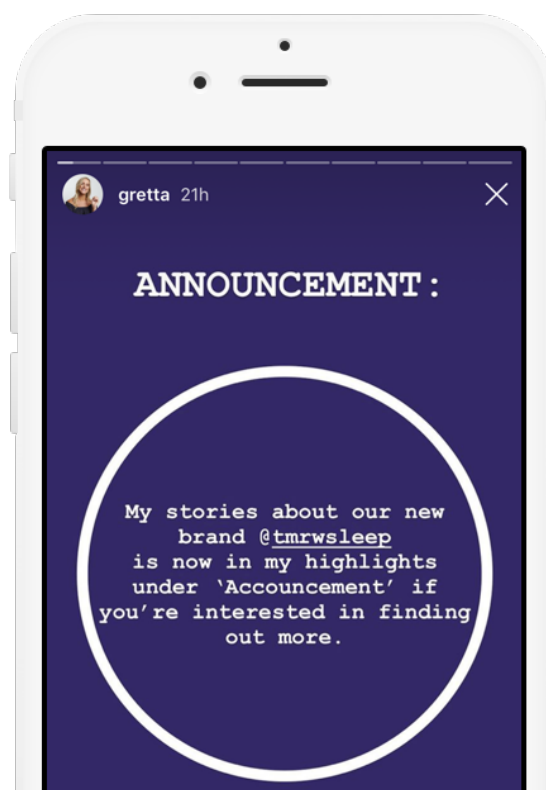
Schedule Your Instagram Stories Campaign

Once you have all your content and assets, it's time to put everything together and plan out your social media content calendar!

Now's the time to plan when each piece of the puzzle goes live across your social channels for maximum impact for your campaign. This often takes up more time than you think, so make sure to factor that into your timeline and schedule!

While you may have an official “launch” day, you might want to have a different timeline for social media or different launch “phases.”

Take [Gretta](#) for example. The serial-entrepreneur shared several “teasers” in the days and weeks before she announced a new product launch. And following the launch, Gretta shared a final story letting her followers know that they can find her announcement content in her highlights:



When you're planning your social media calendar, it's also worth thinking about the lifespan of each piece of content – especially since Instagram Stories only last for 24 hours. Basically, you need to think of ways to keep your campaign top of mind!

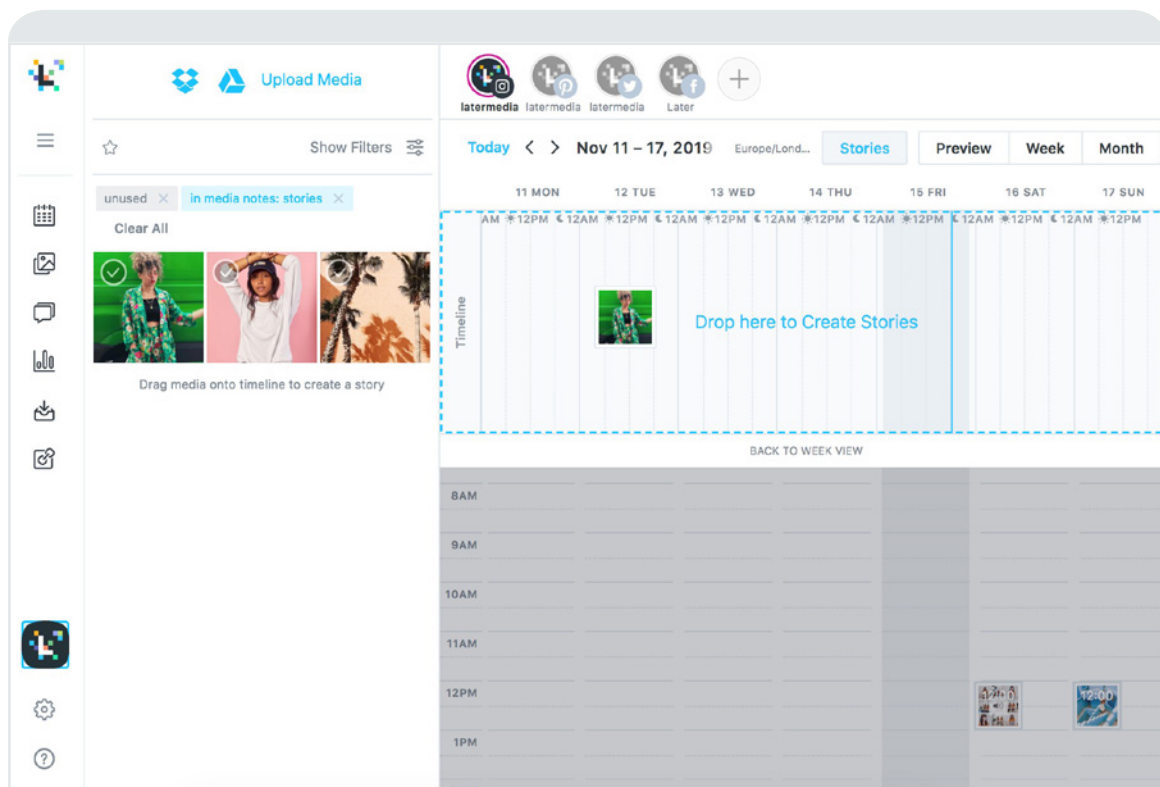
Will you be posting new content every day? Every few days? What's the optimal frequency to drive as much engagement as possible?

This is where [Later's](#) intuitive and easy-to-use content calendar comes in handy: it lets you view all of your social media content together by day, week, or month.

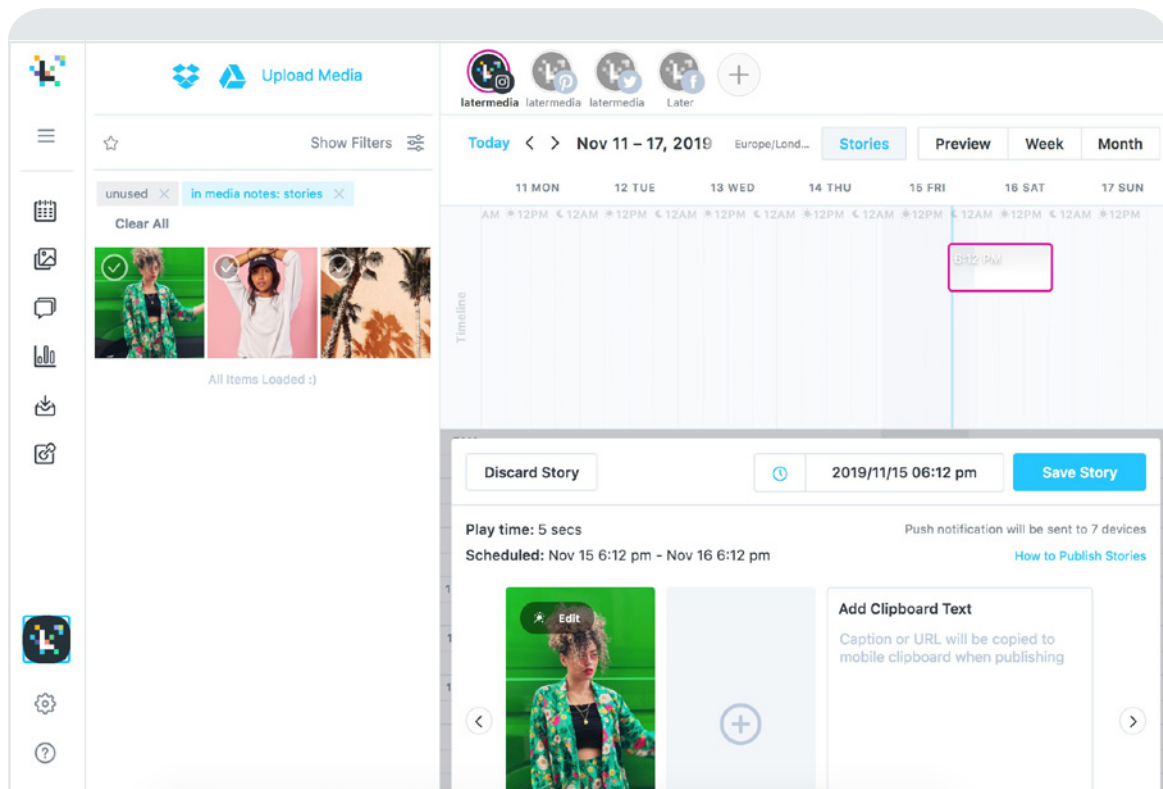
You can also visually plan and [schedule Instagram Stories](#) right from your desktop. Here's how to do it:

Step #1: Bulk upload your photos and videos for Instagram Stories.

Step #2: Drag and drop your stories onto the storyboard tool, and then re-arrange them to fit the look you want.

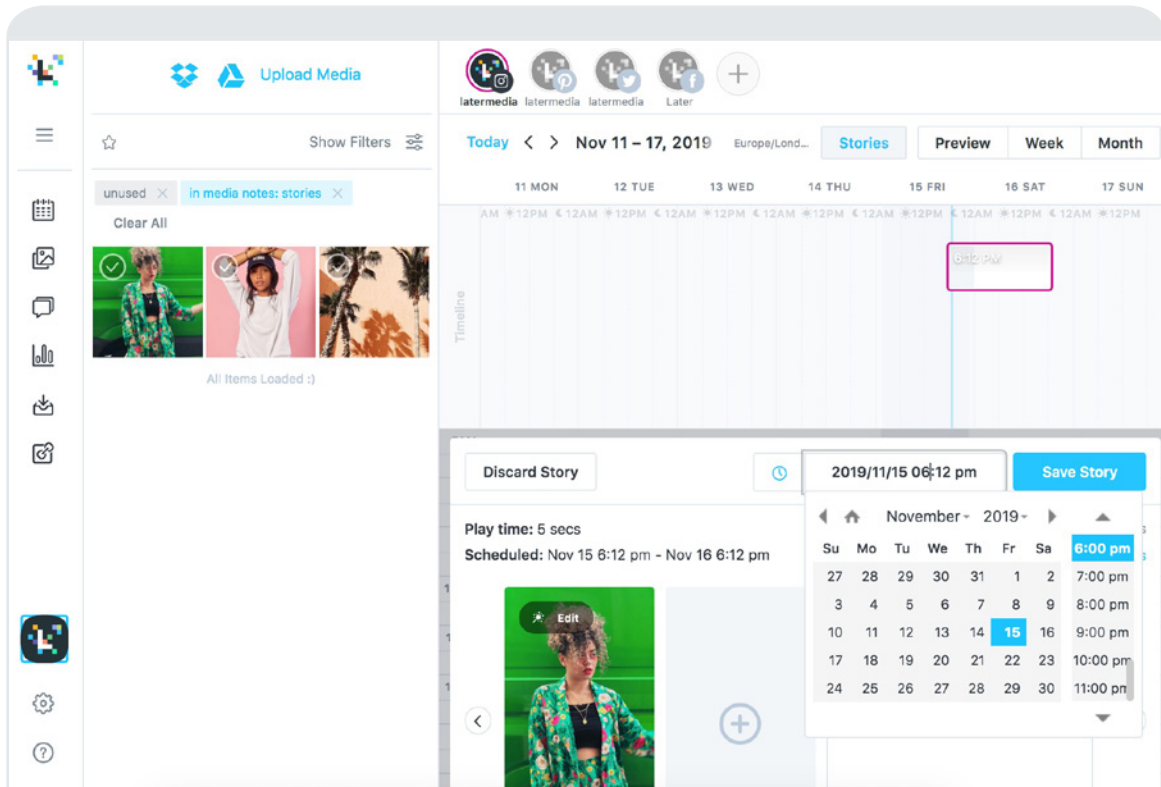


Step #3: Add links or captions to your scheduled stories, which will be copied to your phone when it's time to post.

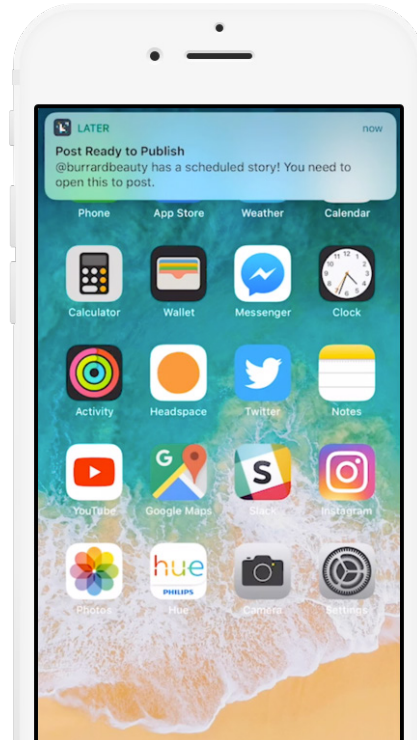


TIP: You can also [create trackable links](#) for your Instagram Stories to monitor traffic and sales from Instagram!

Step #4: To schedule Instagram Stories, simply select the time and date from the drop-down menu beside the Save Story button.



Step #5: Get a notification on your phone when it's time to post! Your stories will be downloaded to your phone and caption or links copied to your clipboard, making it easy to post Instagram Stories in seconds.



And that's it! [Scheduling your Instagram Stories](#) can help you save a ton of time and stay organized while planning your campaign!

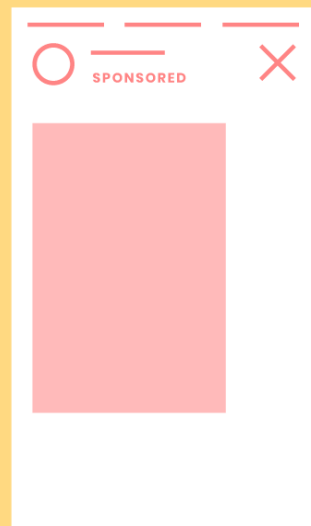


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CHAPTER EIGHT

How to Promote Your Instagram Stories Campaign



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CHAPTER EIGHT

How to Promote Your Instagram Stories Campaign

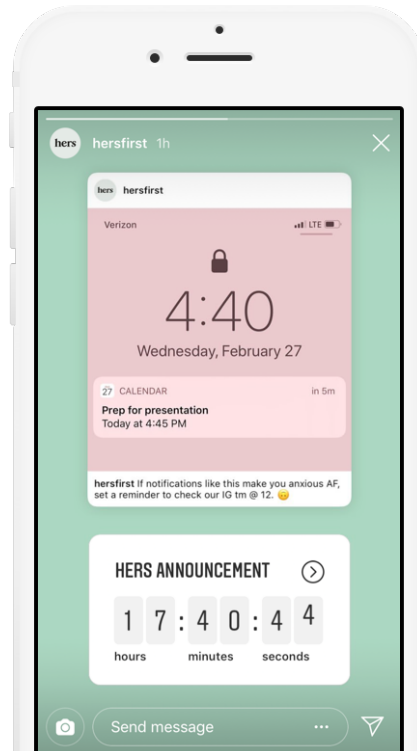
Once you've created and published the content for your Instagram Stories campaign, you want to get the most eyes on it as possible. And that's where promotion comes in.

Beyond actually posting content to your feed, you need to build a strategy to promote it with hashtags, influencers, [stories stickers](#), and more.

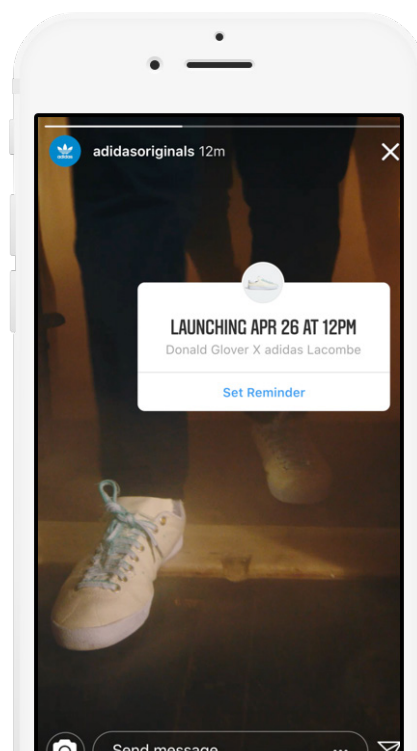
#1: Build Hype for Your Campaign with Instagram Stories Countdown Sticker

If you're promoting an upcoming occasion (like an in-store sale, product launch, or event), you can add a sticker that counts down to a date and time that you set.

Your followers can then subscribe to your countdown event, which will send them a reminder when the time is up and your countdown is complete. So it's a great way to build buzz around your campaign!



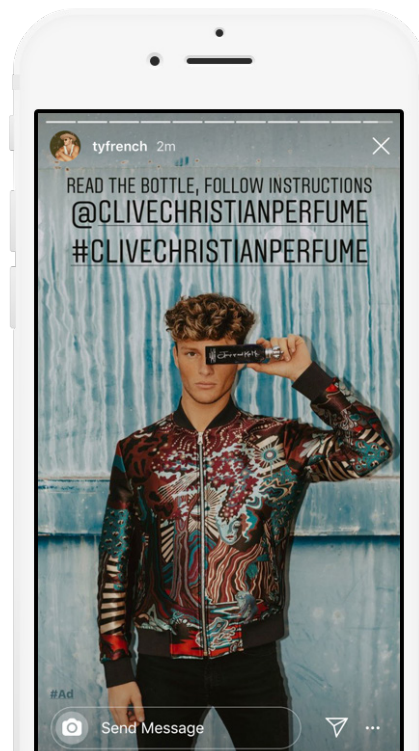
If your campaign is centered around a product launch, you can also use Instagram's new [product launch sticker](#), which works very similarly to the countdown sticker but also includes a product launch tag in-feed that lets people set reminders for the launch date, preview product details, and buy as soon as a product is available without leaving Instagram.



#2: Partner with Relevant Influencers to Drum Up Excitement

Another great way to promote your Instagram stories campaign is to work with influencers.

Typically the process of identifying the right influencers for your campaign is the same as we described above. The goal is to find relevant influencers, bloggers, or photographers who have a large social following and a strong engagement rate on their posts.

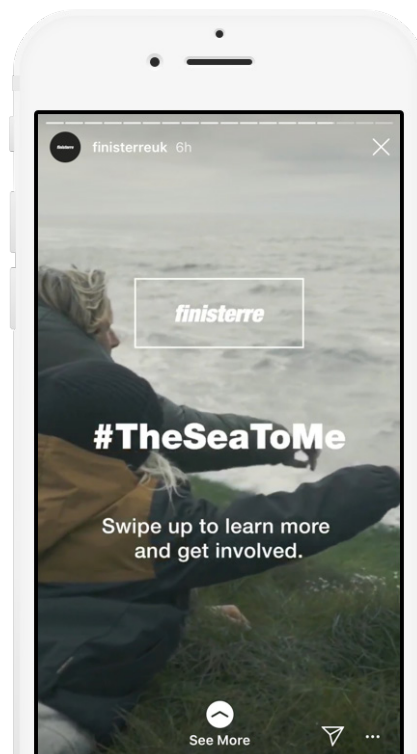


You can even work with a handful of influencers and have them post about your campaign on their channels. This gives you exposure to their audience, and it's an easy way to get more people involved in your campaign.

#3: Create a Campaign Hashtag

We discussed this a little bit earlier, but even if you aren't running a giveaway or UGC-style campaign, it's almost always a good idea to create a branded hashtag to promote your Instagram stories campaign.

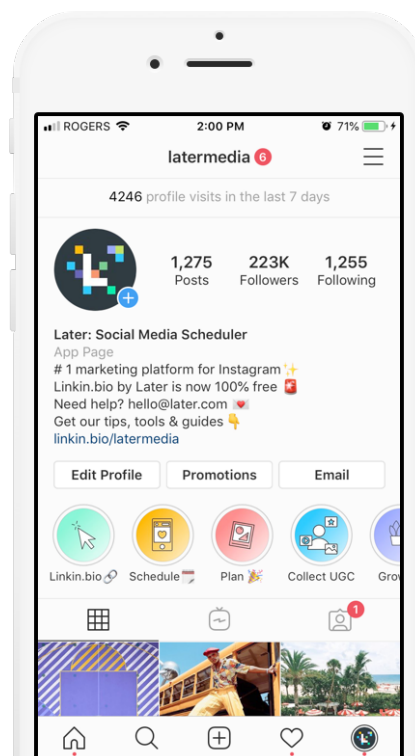
The key here is to think about your brand identity and what message you want to convey, and then coming up with a creative hashtag that sums all of it up. The more creative, the better!



#4: Save Your Instagram Stories to Highlights

Your beautifully crafted launch day Instagram Stories posts don't have to disappear after 24 hours! Save your stories to an Instagram Highlight to make it easy for people to shop or learn more about your new product throughout the duration of your campaign.

Don't forget to have a clear cover image or icon to help it stand out from the others! Check out how we do it on Later's Instagram account [@latermedia!](https://www.instagram.com/latermedia/)



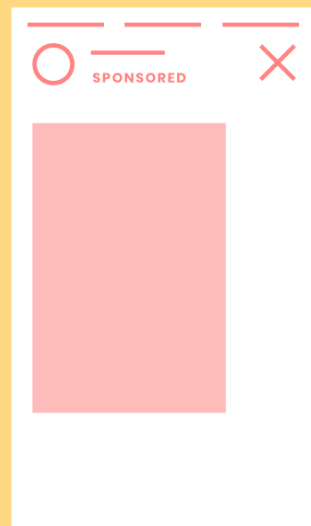


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CHAPTER NINE

Go Live for Launch Day!



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CHAPTER NINE

Go Live for Launch Day!

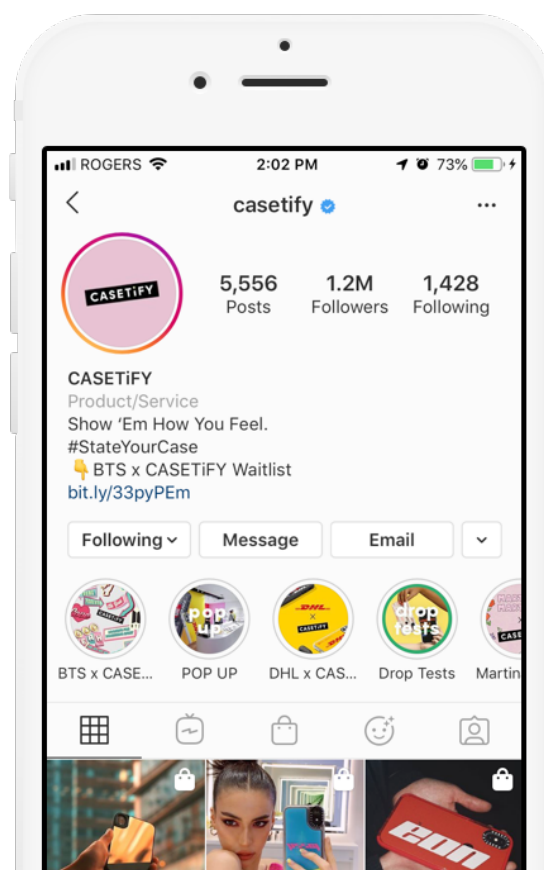
Start chilling the champagne, because launch day is almost here!

With your scheduled content ready to go, all you have to do is set your alarm and get ready to monitor the excitement, answer questions, and engage with your community.

Here are a couple of other things you might need to do on the big day to make sure your launch day goes smoothly:

#1: Update Your Instagram Bio

You may want or need to change the link in your bio to a specific campaign landing page or use a trackable link. You can also update your Instagram bio to include a call-to-action to purchase your new product at the link in your bio, or add the campaign messaging to your bio.

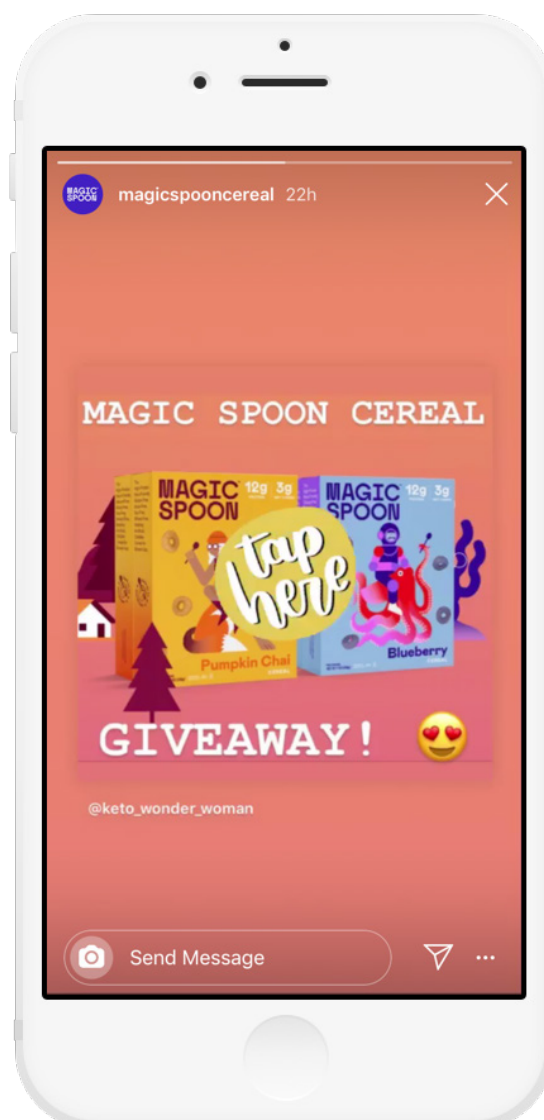


#2: Be Speedy With Your DM Responses

Now is not the time to leave your followers on read. Make sure you spend enough time responding, engaging and answering your followers' questions across all your platforms. You may need to enlist help from your wider team to achieve this, but it's really important for valuing your community and also making sales!

#3: Reshare Content From Your Followers

There's going to be a lot of chatter about your campaign and one of the best ways to show your appreciation for your followers' positivity and excitement around your product is to reshare their posts! The more user-generated hype you can share the better.



#4: Host a Live Q&A

Making yourself available on launch day to answer your followers' questions really shows that you're invested in the campaign. If you can set time aside on launch day to host a live Q&A on Instagram or Facebook it's a great way to keep the excitement levels up and the conversation flowing about your campaign.

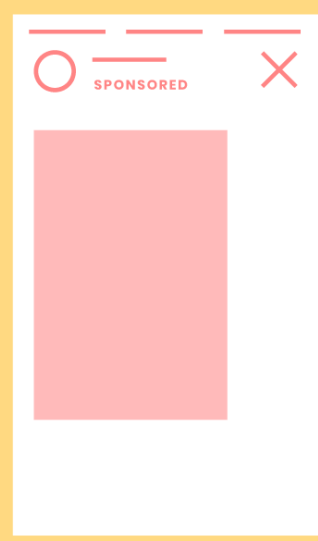


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CHAPTER TEN

Track and Measure Your Social Media Success



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CHAPTER TEN

Track and Measure Your Social Media Success

Remember all the way back in step #1 when you created your campaign goals and KPIs?

Now's the time to check in on those goals and measure them!

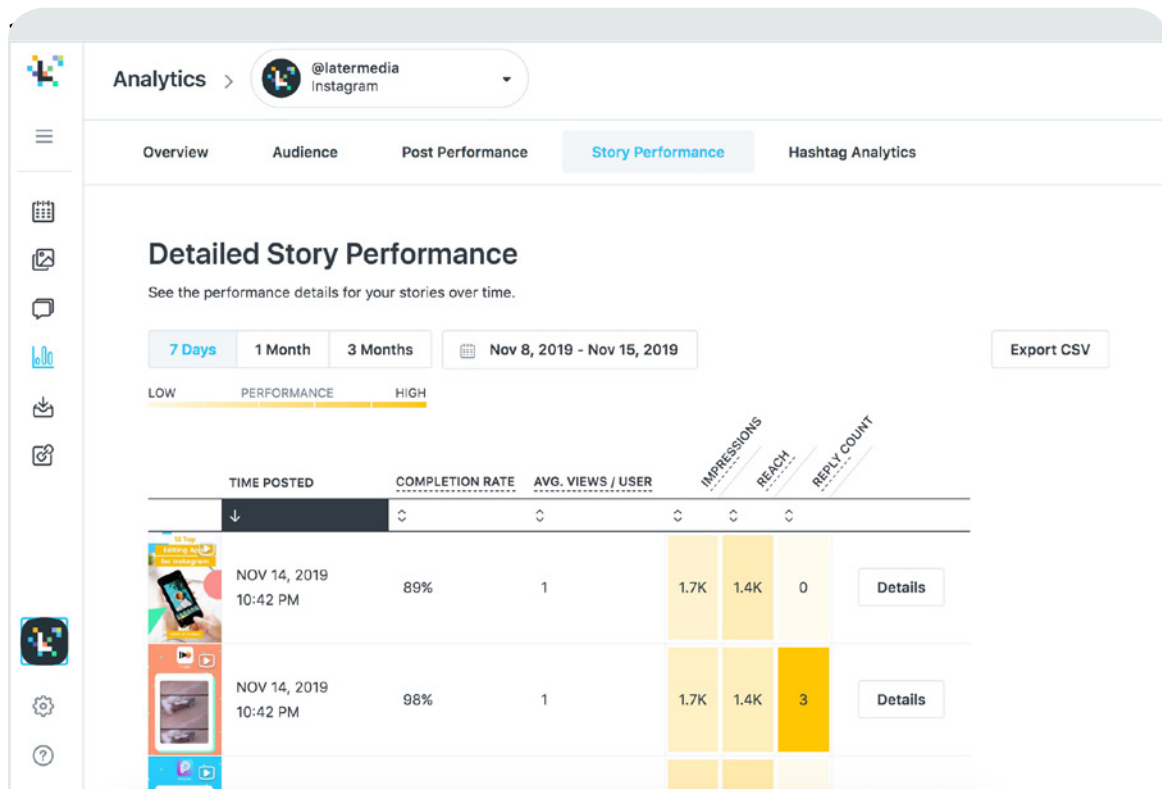
Success looks different to every brand and business, but you should spend time reviewing how successful your campaign was and how it tallied up against your goals.

You can track your brand awareness KPIs, like engagement rate and impressions, along with leads, signups, and ecommerce purchases. But you'll also want to take a holistic look at how your campaign performed and where you could improve for next time.

For example, you can glean insights about your followers' preferences and what content resonated best with them, what medium they liked most, and what channel performed best.

All of this knowledge can then be put into your next stories campaign!

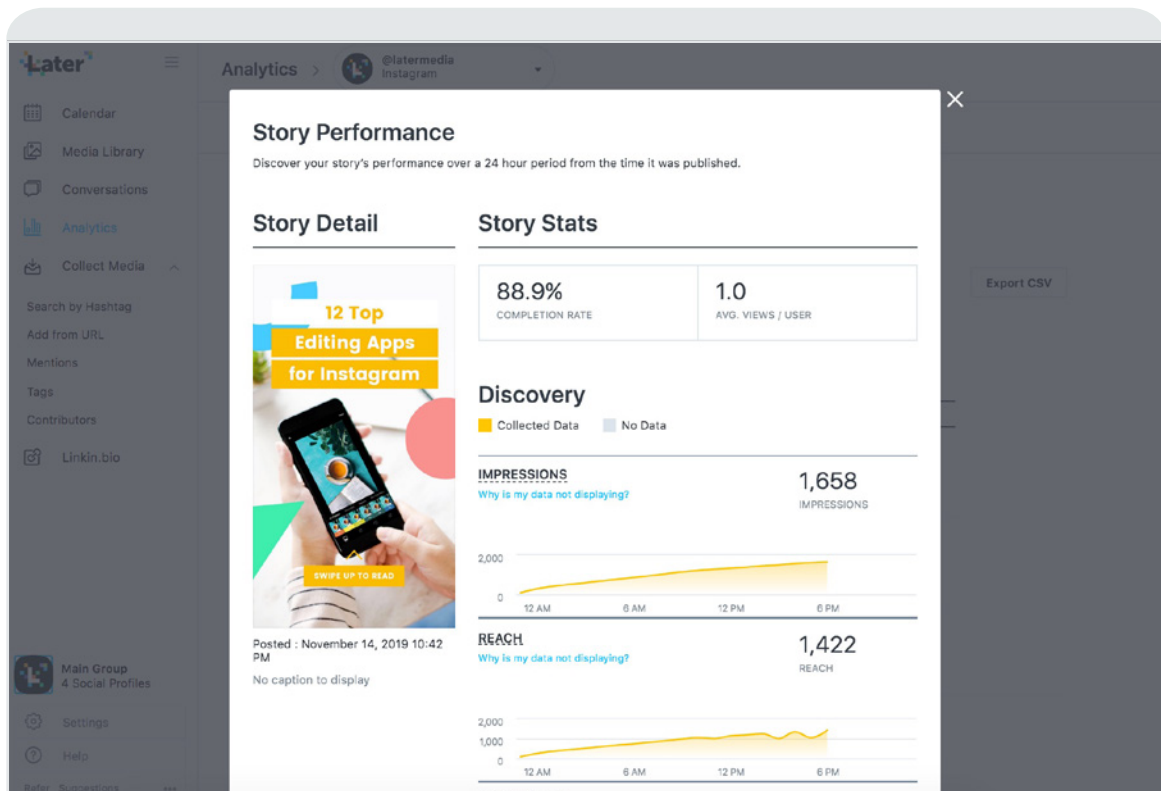
Looking for a way to keep track of your campaign success? Then you may want to check out [Later's Instagram Stories Analytics](#) tool! Unlike the analytics in the Instagram app, which only saves your stories metrics for 2 weeks, you'll be able to analyze up to 3 months' worth of Instagram Stories with Later!



With Later’s Instagram Stories analytics, you can track and rank stories by impressions, reach, completion rate, average views per user, and the number of replies each story received.

TIP: As an Instagram Partner, Later uses the Instagram API for all Instagram analytics, which does not include data for swipe ups, profile clicks, or sticker taps in stories.

And like your Instagram post analytics, you can also hone-in on your individual stories to learn more about how each of them performed over time. You can learn more about [every Instagram Stories metric you need to know here](#).



Shopify stores using Linkin.bio can also track sales from Instagram and see exactly how much revenue each post generated through the link in their bio.

You can track revenue from your Linkin.bio management page, or view your revenue per post alongside your Instagram analytics in Later.



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Conclusion



Conclusion

Whether you work in ecommerce, education, or media and publishing, it pays to build a presence on Instagram. But if you really want to get ahead, running frequent Instagram Stories campaigns can be one of the best ways to quickly grow your following and acquire new customers.

At the end of the day, it all comes down to being organized. Building a solid game plan before your campaign goes live, nurturing it while it's in progress, and tracking your results afterward are all key to running a successful campaign.



Put Your Social Media Plan into Action

Join Later to start planning and scheduling your social media posts today.

[Sign Up Now!](#)

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