



Introduction

Social media has dramatically changed the world in the past decade. It affects the way we interact with one another, and it's changed the way companies in every industry conduct business and connect with their customers. This is especially true for restaurants, which is why having a social media presence is no longer an option: It's a necessity.

In this Restaurant Social Media Guide, you'll get an overview of the social media platforms your business should be active on. You'll also get a deep dive into the most important social media platforms, learning who's active on each platform, the ideal posting frequency, tips and best practices, and much more.

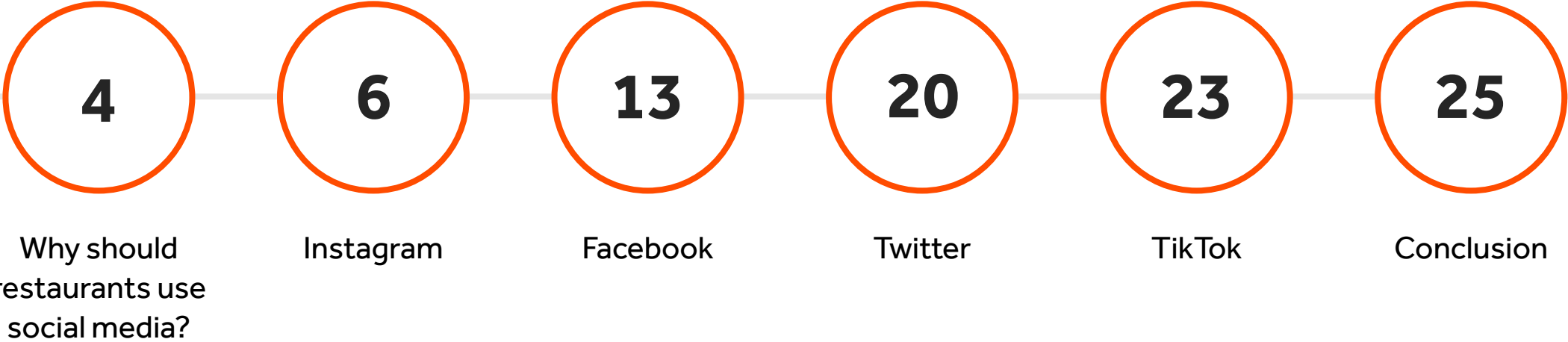
By the end of this guide, you'll have a better understanding of:

- The importance of managing your restaurant's brand online via social media
- Which social media platforms you should be active on, and how to manage your presence on each of them
- What your guests expect, want, and need from you and your restaurant's online presence

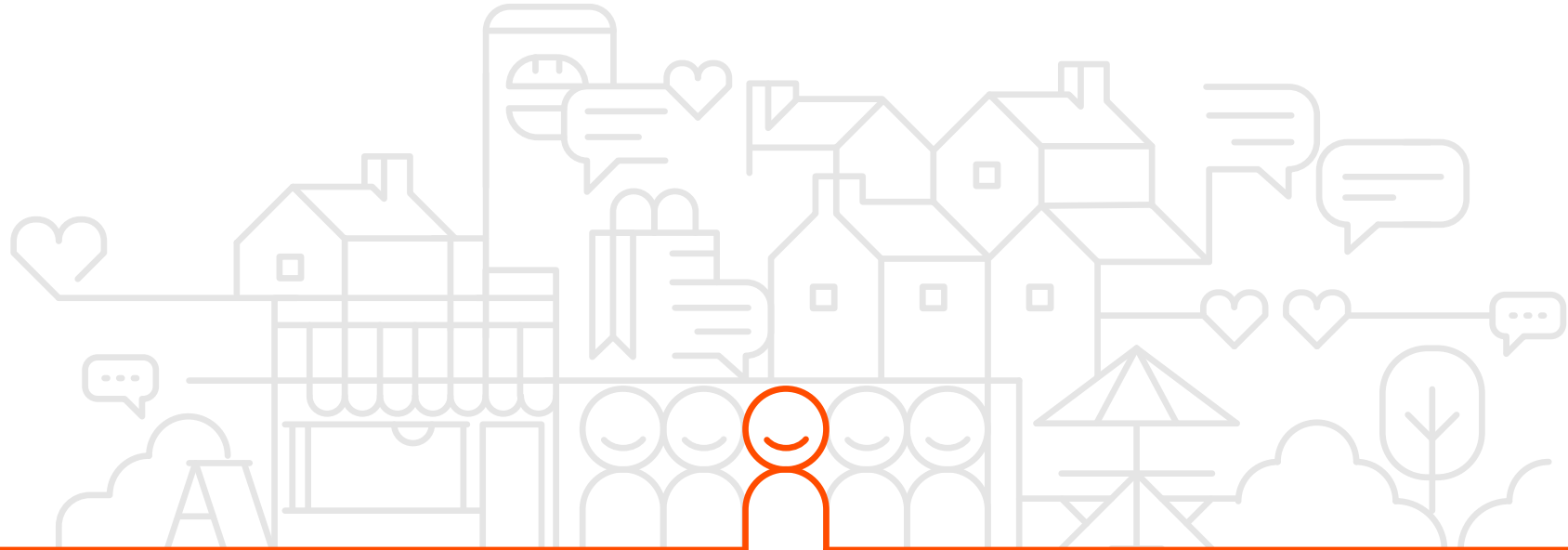
As you read, you'll discover that the world of social media and online branding is fast paced, and sometimes hectic. But it's also a fun, valuable, and important part of your business's marketing strategy.

Ready? Let's jump in.

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1

Why should restaurants use social media?

Your restaurant's social media strategy — whether it's as simple as always posting photos of your specials and promotions across every channel, or you're leveling up and promoting your posts on your best-performing platforms — is a crucial part of your overall restaurant marketing strategy.

A solid social media strategy provides information and opens communication with customers, gives your restaurant the opportunity to be found online, and adds a layer of professionalism and legitimacy to your restaurant.

And nowadays, your restaurant should also be using social media as a channel to keep the lines of communication open between you and your guests, in addition to using it as a marketing channel.



How do restaurants use social media?

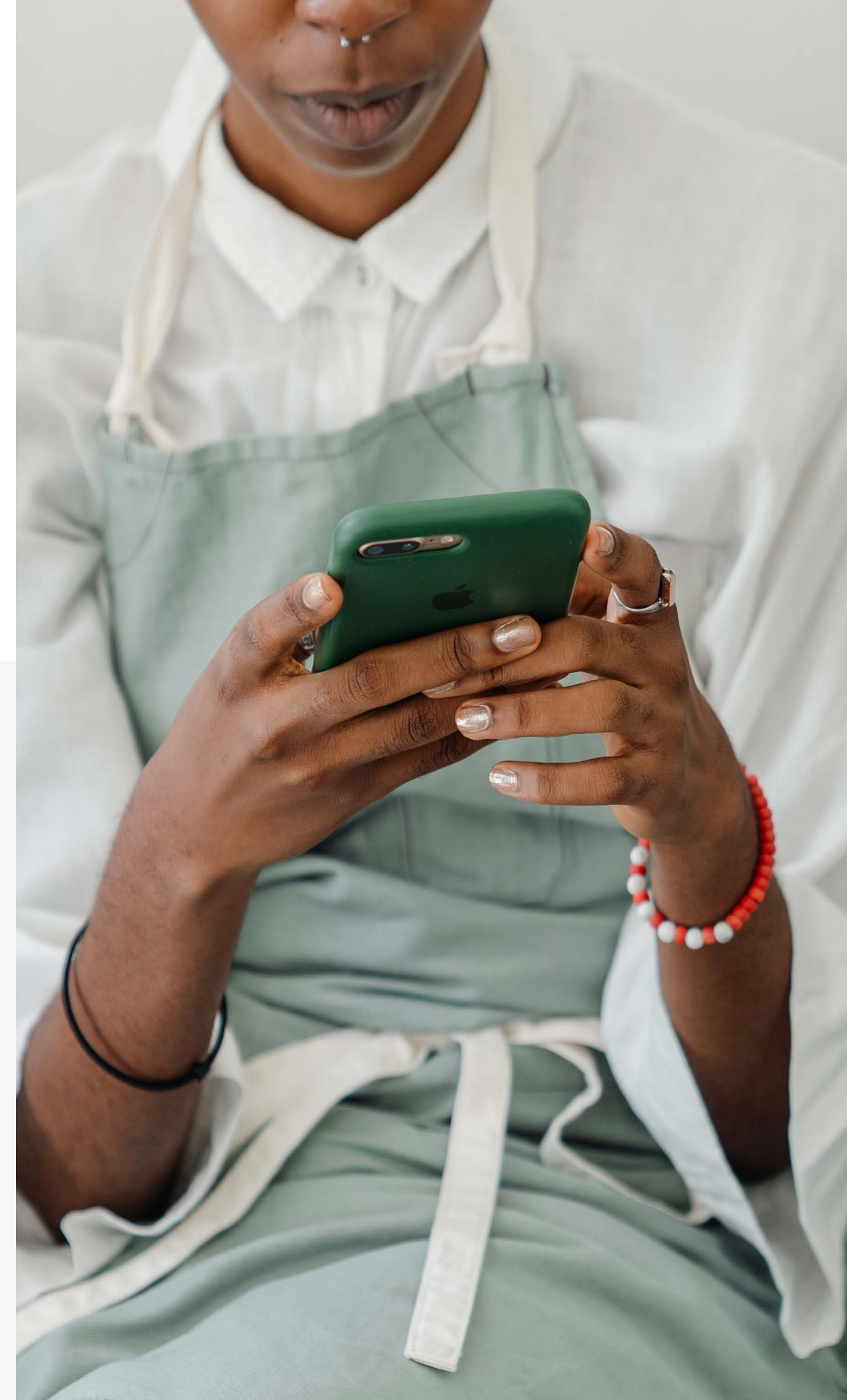
Restaurants use social media to connect with patrons in fun, useful, and creative ways. Here are some of the ways restaurants are using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and more.



Use social media to:

- Post high-quality food photos
- Post seasonal, daily, or weekly menus
- Showcase customer content
- Communicate with customers
- Share recipes
- Show behind the scenes shots and videos
- Highlight employees like chefs, servers, bartenders, and others
- Share your brand story, voice, mission and vision

Keep reading for a deep dive into four of the most popular social media sites and how to use each to your advantage. You'll also see some awesome restaurant examples to get you feeling inspired.





2

Instagram



The goal:

Showcase your restaurant's brand, hospitality, and overall culture through visual storytelling – giving guests a sneak preview of what it is like to dine at your restaurant.



Who you'll reach:

Up to **1 billion monthly active users**.



Ideal posting frequency:

You don't need to post more than once a day on your main feed. Less is okay, too: If it's reasonable for you, aim for 3-5 times per week. Post Instagram stories as often as you'd like – since these are easy and quick, feel free to post multiple times per day.

Instagram is officially the second most popular social media site behind Facebook – it's also owned by Facebook.

Instagram's likely where most of your target audience spends a lot of their time when they're on their phones because it's inherently scrollable. **If your restaurant isn't already on Instagram – or isn't very active there – you're missing out on huge branding, customer acquisition, and engagement opportunities.**

1B

ACTIVE USERS



Instagram’s emphasis is on visuals (images and video), which makes it a natural fit for restaurant and business owners like you – looking to tell your story, promote your restaurant brand, and showcase your mission and values. And, posting enticing and stylish visuals on Instagram gives guests a sneak peek of your amazing food and appealing aesthetic.

Instagram is equally important for attracting the customers you want. **30% of millennial diners** actively avoid restaurants with a weak Instagram presence, according to **Social Media Today**. And as restaurant customers become more digitally oriented, it’s critical to define an online presence and identity that stands out.



30% of millennials actively avoid restaurants with a weak Instagram presence, according to **Social Media Today**.

Creating the right content for Instagram

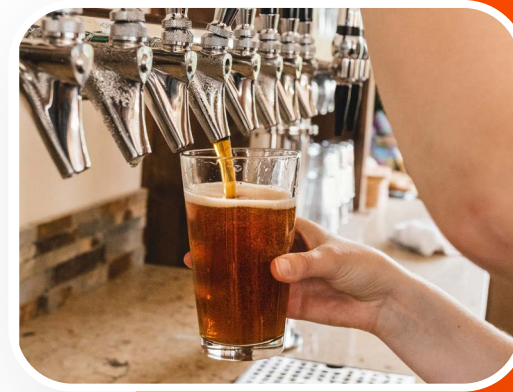
Use your Instagram profile as an opportunity to highlight a new menu item, your weekly special, a limited-time promotion, your customers, your team, and the behind-the-scenes work that goes into bringing your restaurant to life.

Mix your content up for your audience to keep them engaged and showcase what makes your business unique. Post images to your Instagram feed, of course, but also remember that you can post stories, lives, **and even Instagram reels**. Each of these features can feature different types of content. Always use new photos and visuals, and make sure to feature new and different menu items often to keep things fresh.

But you can also post more than what's on your menu. Whether you're a bar showcasing the fun times your nightly patrons have or a family restaurant showing kids devouring an ice cream sundae for dessert, find ways to feature your customers and team in interesting, relatable ways.

And don't forget to interact with your guests. The question and poll functions on Instagram stories are particularly engaging and fun for potential customers to use. Asking questions can inspire followers to engage with your posts and to interact with you, rather than simply continuing to the next story, or scrolling down the feed.

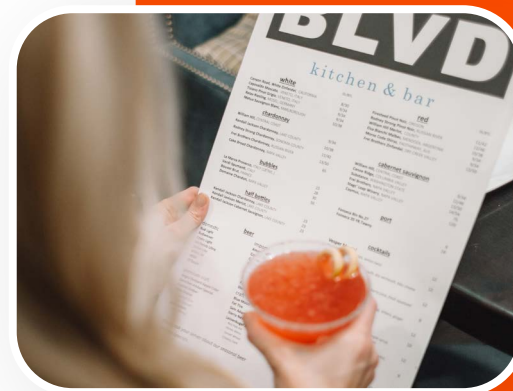
Try one or more of these ideas:



If you're offering a happy hour deal for the week: Post a photo of one of your bartenders pouring the perfect pint, and mention the available deal in the caption. Even better, repost the feed picture on your story with a swipe up to your online ordering site and your appetizer menu.



Take a photo of your employee of the month to celebrate your staff and put a personal spin on your content.



Designate a day to post a photo of your weekly menu special. In the caption, write that anyone who comes in and shows they follow you on Instagram will get a discount on that special. In addition, you could make an Instagram Reel with all new menu items, along with a trending sound in the background.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when composing a photo:

Pay attention to lighting:

Good lighting is everything. Use natural lighting whenever possible, or invest in an easy-to-use ring light for consistent lighting.

Set up the background:

Pay attention to the background of the photo – if you have cool wallpaper, pretty plates and glassware, or an interesting sign, make sure to feature them in the background of photos.

Edit thoughtfully:

Adobe Lightroom, Snapseed, or Photoshop Fix are all great options for adjusting lighting or adding contrast, but don't go overboard. A high-quality photo shouldn't need too much editing, so keep it natural and true to your brand.



Getting the composition and caption right

Good lighting, photo composition, and editing is important, but don't overdo it.

Overly edited or extremely filtered photos aren't ideal: You want your feed to look natural and authentic. Be original and focus on your point of view.

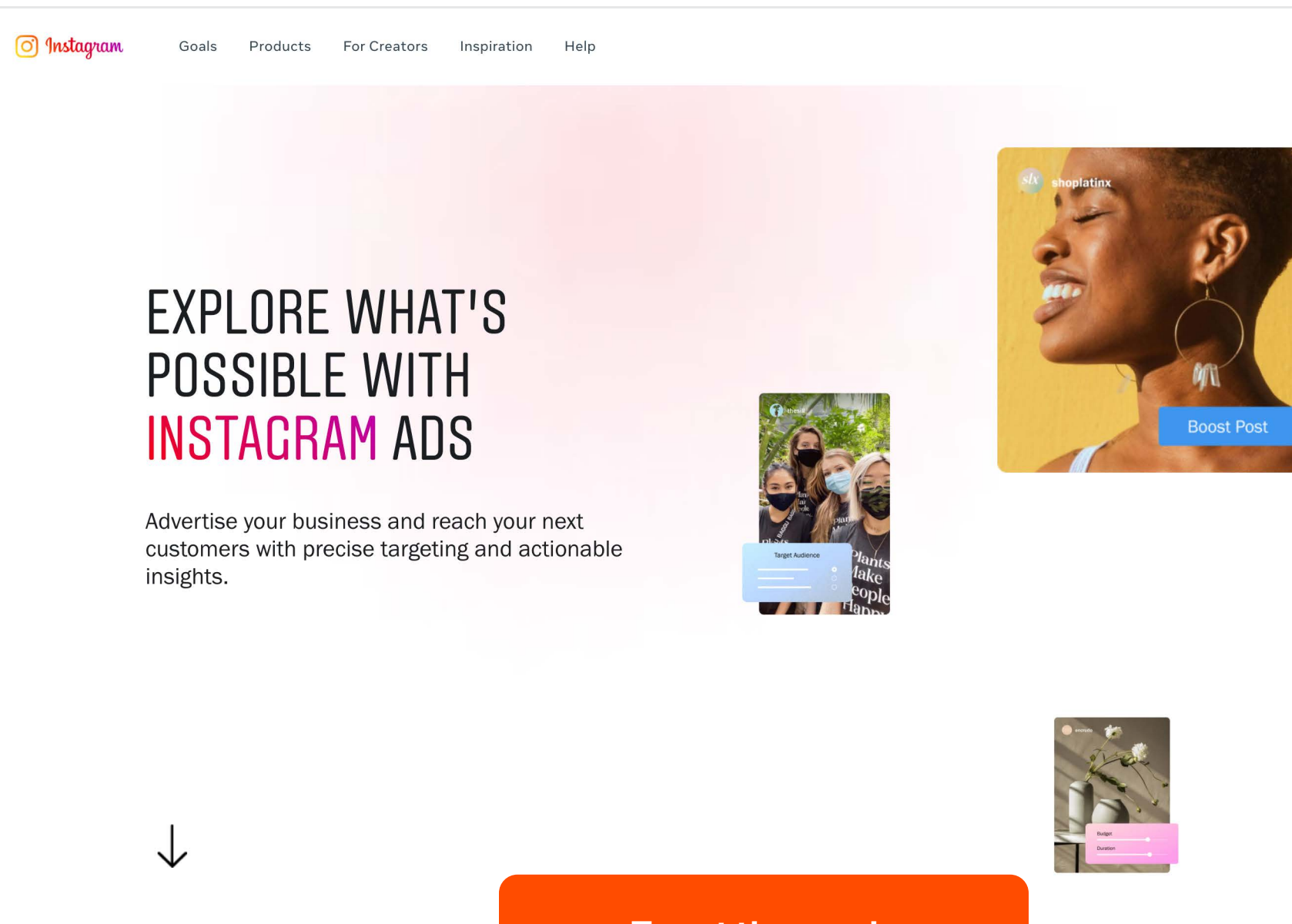
In your caption, explain what's going on in the photo, and write it in your own words. Grammar and spelling matter, but your unique voice matters even more.

And don't forget to include your location. Always add your location to your post, because people search by location. Make the location the name of your restaurant versus your city or town, and encourage your customers to do the same when they post pictures of their meals.

When you get comments, comment back! And if you're tagged or mentioned, comment on or repost the photo as a way of saying thanks to your customers.



Pro caption tip: Add something going on outside the frame that wouldn't otherwise be obvious to your followers. For example, if you share a special, give a bit of background on it. Or share a quote from a customer on why it's their favorite. Adding a non-obvious element can bring your post to life.



Using Instagram advertising

Through boosting, location-based targeting, and a **multi-platform ads manager**, you can easily promote your restaurant through Instagram ads, reaching audiences beyond your following list.

When creating your ad on Instagram, target the people in your local market that would most likely be interested in your restaurant using factors like demographics and interest categories. Use exciting imagery, a short caption, and maybe a special deal or promotion. And, since Instagram is owned by Facebook, the cross-platform functionality makes advertising easy and seamless. The ad you create on Facebook can be shown to people on Instagram, and vice-versa.

Keep reading to get a deeper dive into the how-to of Instagram and Facebook ads.

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TOAST CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT



Jackrabbit Filly
South Carolina

Jackrabbit Filly, based in Charleston, SC is known for its inventive Chinese-American cuisine – and they take their Instagram presence to the next level.

“We always post twice a day,” say owners Corrie and Shuai Wang. “Figuring people check their media right when they wake up, get out of work, and right before they go to bed, we try to align with that timing. Photos have to be eye-catching, and we always try to have something exciting and fresh to share with our peeps.”

Jackrabbit Filly’s page is full of **colorful food, beautiful drinks,** and **team bonding.** The page expertly entices guests with mouthwatering imagery, while also successfully integrating their culture, team, and values. Their captions often mention the **team** member behind the dish, the local business the ingredients were sourced from, or the family tradition that inspired the latest special.



TOAST CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

Jackrabbit Filly

“A really good picture is worth a thousand words,” said Corrie. “The picture you post HAS to capture people’s eyes. Find the spot in your restaurant that has the best lighting (ours is the floor by the front windows), know your angles, and repeat daily.”

For Corrie and Shuai, the growth has been incredible. “Shuai is very engaged with our followers and replies and chats constantly,” said Corrie. “In two years we went from 0 when we started the business to 15.1K followers. All just naturally.”



A really good picture is worth a thousand words... The picture you post HAS to capture people’s eyes.



3

Facebook



The goal:

Build a community for your customers by encouraging page visits and comments.



Who you'll reach:

Up to **2.89 billion monthly active users**.



Ideal posting frequency:

1-3 times a day.

As the most popular social media site of all time, Facebook can be an incredibly impactful tool to drive traffic to your restaurant. Not only are your guests (and potential future guests) using Facebook, but Facebook is also collecting a lot of useful data about them based on their activity.

Here's how to best reach your audience and take advantage of this powerful platform.

2.9B
ACTIVE USERS



Updating the “Information” and “About” sections

Just like your website, your Facebook business page should function as a one-stop source for your customers and followers. Social media is about more than just telling your followers what’s happening at your restaurant. It’s also about listening to them. Platforms like Facebook are a great way to create a two-way dialogue with your customers.

Because of Facebook’s established presence as a source of information, and the amount of information you can add to your page, existing and prospective customers may come to your Facebook business page looking for details. Sometimes they might even look here before they search for your restaurant’s website.



Make sure your Facebook page at least includes the following information:

- A link to your website
- A link to your online ordering page
- Address, phone number, and hours of operation
- Your menu
- Frequently Asked Questions (with answers to those questions)



Posting on Facebook

Facebook is a good promotional tool, but it's also an engagement and customer service engine. So be aware that you can't set it and forget it: You'll need to check in on your business's Facebook page often to respond to comments or questions.

Facebook is more casual than Instagram, so consider posting more often and more casually with your guests. And because Facebook's algorithm is notoriously challenging, be aware that not all of your posts will be seen by all of your followers. This means you should consider republishing useful posts – like specials or coupon codes – to reach more people.

Like Instagram, Facebook is also a strong branding tool. It gives you an opportunity to showcase your restaurant's hospitality, mission, values, and team. Show the parts of your restaurant that set you apart from your competition. Consider posting a behind-the-scenes or how-to video, or shedding some more light on the story of your business.

Share the process behind one of your signature menu items, or have someone who works in your back of house walk through your specials or show your followers around the kitchen.

These kinds of posts, photos, and videos better show off your restaurant's personality and get your audience invested in learning about (and ultimately visiting) your restaurant.

Things to remember about Facebook:



Facebook isn't as visual as Instagram, but it's still important to use visuals like photos and videos.



If you have an important announcement, feel free to share it more than once to get more eyes on it.



Verifying your Facebook business page is easy and effective. This helps solidify your Facebook page as a legitimate news source and stops any imposters from sharing information on your behalf. [Learn how to do this here.](#)



Focus on storytelling and creativity, and interact with your guests. Answer comments and questions, and use Facebook as a communication tool to stay in touch with your customers.



Pro tip: End your posts with a question or a fill-in-the-blank challenge. (i.e. My favorite topping to get on a pizza from Ellie's Pizzeria is _____!) Doing things like this will encourage interaction from your followers.

Using Facebook advertising

Facebook ads for restaurants are a great way to attract new customers and turn them into regulars.

For businesses and specifically those advertising on the platform, Facebook is an information gold mine. Facebook's huge data network allows business owners to get very specific with advertising outreach. In other words, Facebook gives you the ability to advertise only to the people who would be most likely interested in your establishment.

Facebook marketing for restaurants is a great tool to reach target customers because each ad is highly customizable. When creating an ad, you're given a wide range of options when it comes to deciding who you want to see the ad, based on location, demographic, and profile information.

You then set a budget and determine the duration of time the ad will be live. You can also choose what type of engagement you're looking to spur with this ad campaign — clicks, views, impressions, likes, shares — direct Facebook's algorithm toward those goals.



The ad you create on Facebook can be shown to people on Instagram — even without an Instagram account.

Like with Instagram, your ads can also be shown in the Facebook Audience Network. The audience network is a collection of mobile apps where you can show ads using the same targeting and measurement tools used on Facebook. Essentially, running ads in the Audience Network extends your reach beyond Facebook and into mobile apps that meet your targeting criteria.





TOAST CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT



Tono Pizzeria + Cheesesteaks
Minnesota

Minnesota's Tono Pizzeria + Cheesesteaks focuses on family recipes and amazing guest experiences. And social media helps them do this.

“We like to diversify our presence on a variety of platforms. Each platform offers us the agility to share a slightly different aspect of our brand personality,” says Chief Financial Officer Shaz Khan.

For Tono, Facebook is the place where they can share updates, announce new menu items, and connect with their audience. “On our website and Facebook, we maintain an informative presence. Each platform carries a different emphasis on different types of content,” said Shaz.





TOAST CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

Tono Pizzeria + Cheesesteaks

Tono's Facebook page is full of announcements, news stories, **reviews (with responses back)**, and even **an ask box at the top of the page** with direct links to the most frequently asked questions.

Focusing on quality brand storytelling has worked out, growing their page to almost 3,000 likes and over 100 reviews. But regardless of metrics, Tono is staying focused on the end goal.

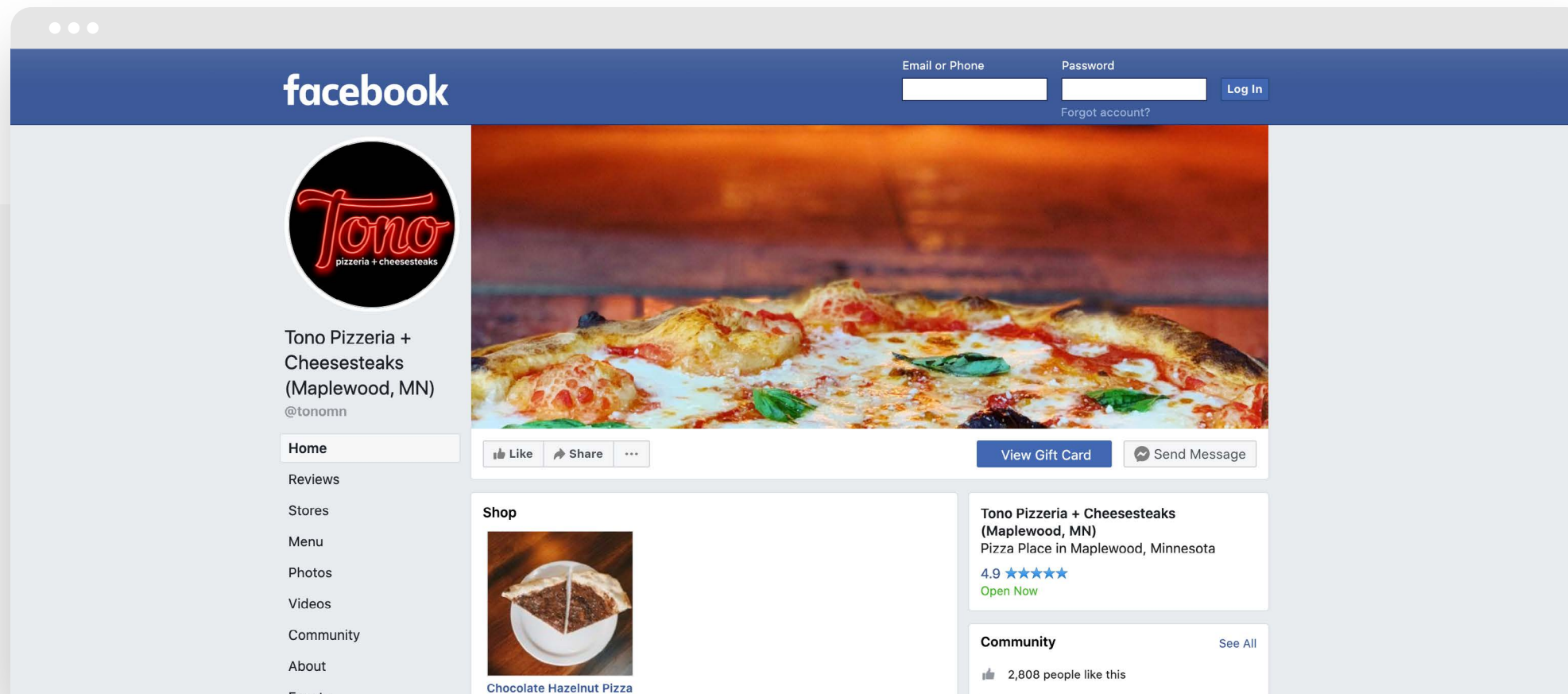
“It's important not to fall into the trap of measuring growth by followers, likes, and quantitative metrics,”

said Shaz. “Instead, consistency and quality of content is how we define success. So long as we continue producing quality content, and are responsive to engagement, we are really happy!”

Shaz's advice? “Be original and focus on quality. Be consistent in your branding and the voice of your brand. Make sure it resonates with what people experience in-store. Tell your story. Everyone has a story; it's what connects people, so tell it enthusiastically.”



Be original and focus on quality. Be consistent in your branding and the voice of your brand. Make sure it resonates with what people experience in-store.



4

Twitter



The goal:

Quickly share news and updates, interact with your customers, and comment on industry happenings.



Who you'll reach:

Up to **330 million monthly active users**.



Ideal posting frequency:

Up to 5 times per day (not including responses to individual Tweets).

Twitter is an ocean of information blurbs. Without the proper management and promotion, your account will just be another fish in the sea. But there's plenty you can do to stand out. Twitter for restaurants is still an unmatched opportunity for guest engagement and exposure to new customers.

330M
ACTIVE USERS



Getting Found

Twitter users can search for your restaurant. Make your account as clear and official as possible to verify it's you – whether or not **your account has a blue verified badge**.

Use your restaurant's logo as your profile picture. Share a photo of your restaurant interior or exterior as your header image. Also, be sure to add your own website and location, because there may be another restaurant with the same or a similar name out there. If you have multiple locations, specify that in your bio. ("Serving mouthwatering burgers and brews across the Midwest.")



Condado in the news 🌮😎 Check it out! 📌

Wisely @WeAreWisely · Nov 1

We're proud to support pioneering brands in the emerging NextGen Casual space, including @SmokeyBonesBar, @BrokenEggCafe, @condadotacos, and @EUGrill, which are continually raising the bar of the guest experience. bit.ly/3qblGx5 @FSRmag #restaurantnews #ChooseWisely

3:08 PM · Nov 1, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

Posting on Twitter

Like Facebook, Twitter is a great way to announce specials, share news and updates on your restaurant, and interact with new and existing customers. Typically, whatever you would post on Facebook, you can cross-post on Twitter as well. Post about restaurant happenings, staffing updates, menu changes, or any news that would be especially interesting to your guests.

And, don't forget to like and retweet as well – retweet events happening in your neighborhood, news stories that are relevant to your voice and brand, and share candidly and honestly about what is happening in your community.

Interacting with users

The beauty of Twitter lies in transparency.

If somebody who has visited your restaurant has a great (or not so great) experience, they may Tweet about it. These Tweets could come either from a direct mention (@YourRestaurant) or an indirect mention, where they'll tweet about "Your Restaurant" without calling out your username. It's up to you to monitor these direct mentions by checking your notifications center and by searching your restaurant name (or any variation) in the search bar once in a while.

Make an attempt to interact with every mention you receive. If you receive a neutral comment, liking the tweet will usually suffice. Mentions that are particularly positive (or negative) will usually require a response. For positive comments, match the user's tone and come up with a fun response. You can even sign it with your initials to show the "human" behind your brand.

 **Condado Tacos**
@condadotacos

Made in-house every day 👍😊

 **Stephen** @slegath_ · Oct 26

If you don't think @condadotacos has the best chips you have horrible taste in tortillas

For negative responses, take a more serious tone – they're usually not joking around. Always offer some sort of solution, which may require starting a private direct message or scheduling an in-person meet-up. It's times like these that will help determine how your restaurant is perceived online. If you respond with a standard "cookie-cutter" message to all comments, don't offer any sympathy, or don't respond at all, your customers will take note, and it could have a negative impact on your image. Instead, tackle each comment or mention as an individual issue. Personalizing each message and genuinely appearing interested to alleviate any issue builds goodwill for your restaurant and its perception online.



Things to remember about Twitter:

- Respond to every customer mention, tag, comment, complaint, and criticism
- Keep the content current
- Share links to your website/online ordering site



TOAST CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT



Condado Tacos
Ohio

Condado Tacos started in Columbus, Ohio, and has since expanded its brand all throughout the United States. Condado has done an amazing job building their platforms on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok – and have recently expanded their reach to Twitter as well.

“We use [social media] to engage with and form relationships with our fans and build our audience,” explained Gretchen Shisler, Condado’s Social Media Specialist. “It’s a quick and effective way for us to keep our followers in the know about featured items, new restaurant openings, special events, and more. Our main goal is to deliver content that’s engaging, entertaining, and relevant to our brand – so we’re always keeping a pulse on what’s trending to understand the type of content people want to see, as well as the potential success of our own offerings based on engagements and response.”



TOAST CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

Condado Tacos

Condado does an amazing job of **sharing updates, interacting with guests,** and **addressing any concerns that come up.**

“One of our favorite parts is getting to interact with our fans,” said Gretchen. “Not only do we aim to answer all questions and concerns quickly, but we genuinely enjoy messaging with guests about their experiences at Condado, and how amazing the food and drinks they’re sharing with us look!”

And this effort has paid off. Their reach on social media has grown exponentially, and they’re always willing to try out new ideas and initiatives to direct new results. Gretchen explained, “Something that’s

helpful for us is to define our goals by each specific initiative. For example — a scavenger hunt post we’d track views, participation, likes and comments, versus a post highlighting holiday gift cards would be meant to drive purchases.”

At the end of the day, the team at Condado’s goal is to showcase their brand, build relationships, and understand their guests. “To put it simply — give the people what they want!” said Gretchen. “Understand who your consumer is and how they want to interact with you on social. From there, be true to your brand personality, and it will pay off.”



One of our favorite parts is getting to interact with our fans... Not only do we aim to answer all questions and concerns quickly, but we genuinely enjoy messaging with guests about their experiences at Condado.



5

TikTok



The goal:

Tell your brand story and connect with new audiences.



Who you'll reach:

Up to **1 billion monthly active users**.



Ideal posting frequency:

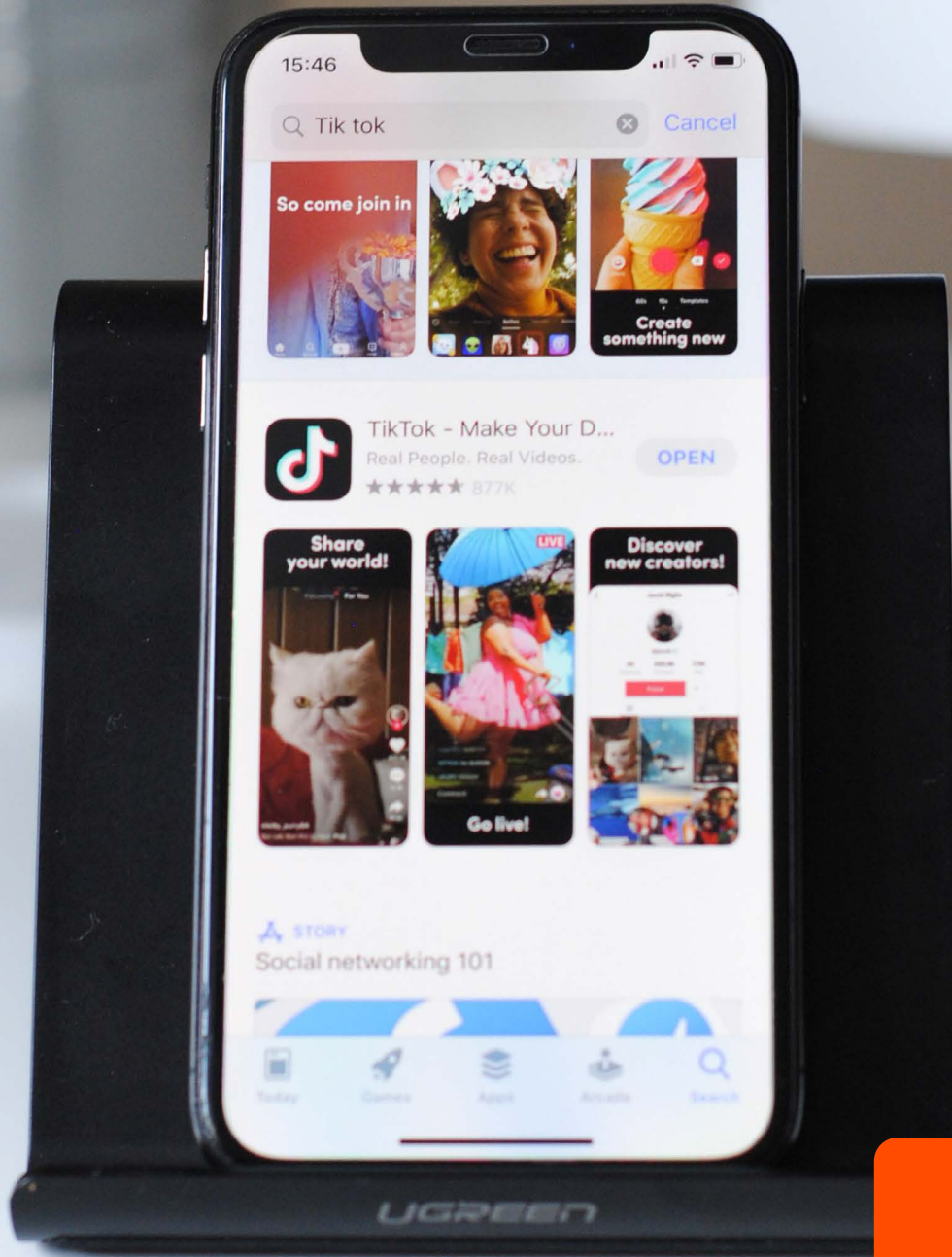
As often as you'd like – ideally 1 or 2 times a week minimum.

36% of people visited restaurants after viewing TikTok videos featuring the businesses, according to a recent survey from **Restaurant Dive**. And what's more, about **55% of survey respondents** said they wanted to visit restaurants because of food videos, with **51% percent of users** said they visited restaurants because of new menu items featured in videos.

Here's how to best take advantage of those numbers (and turn those views into visitors).

1B

ACTIVE USERS

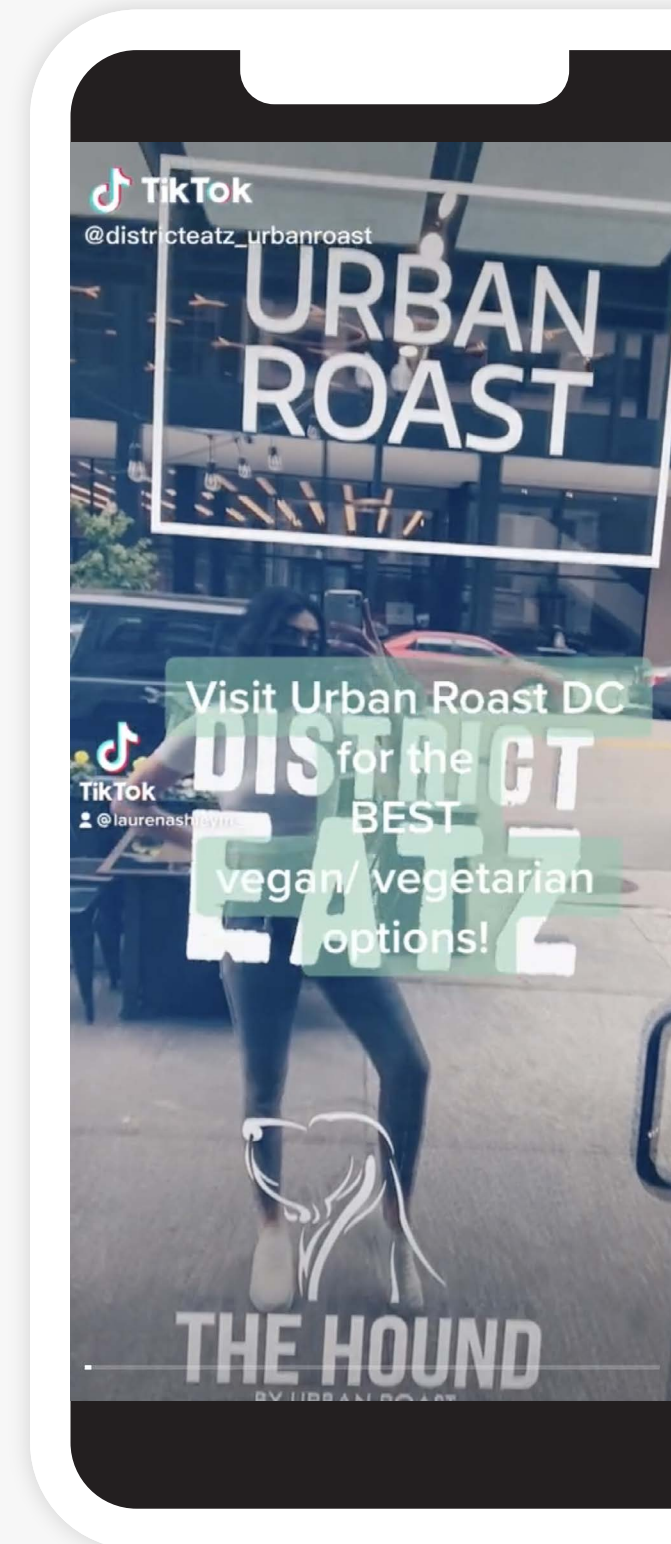
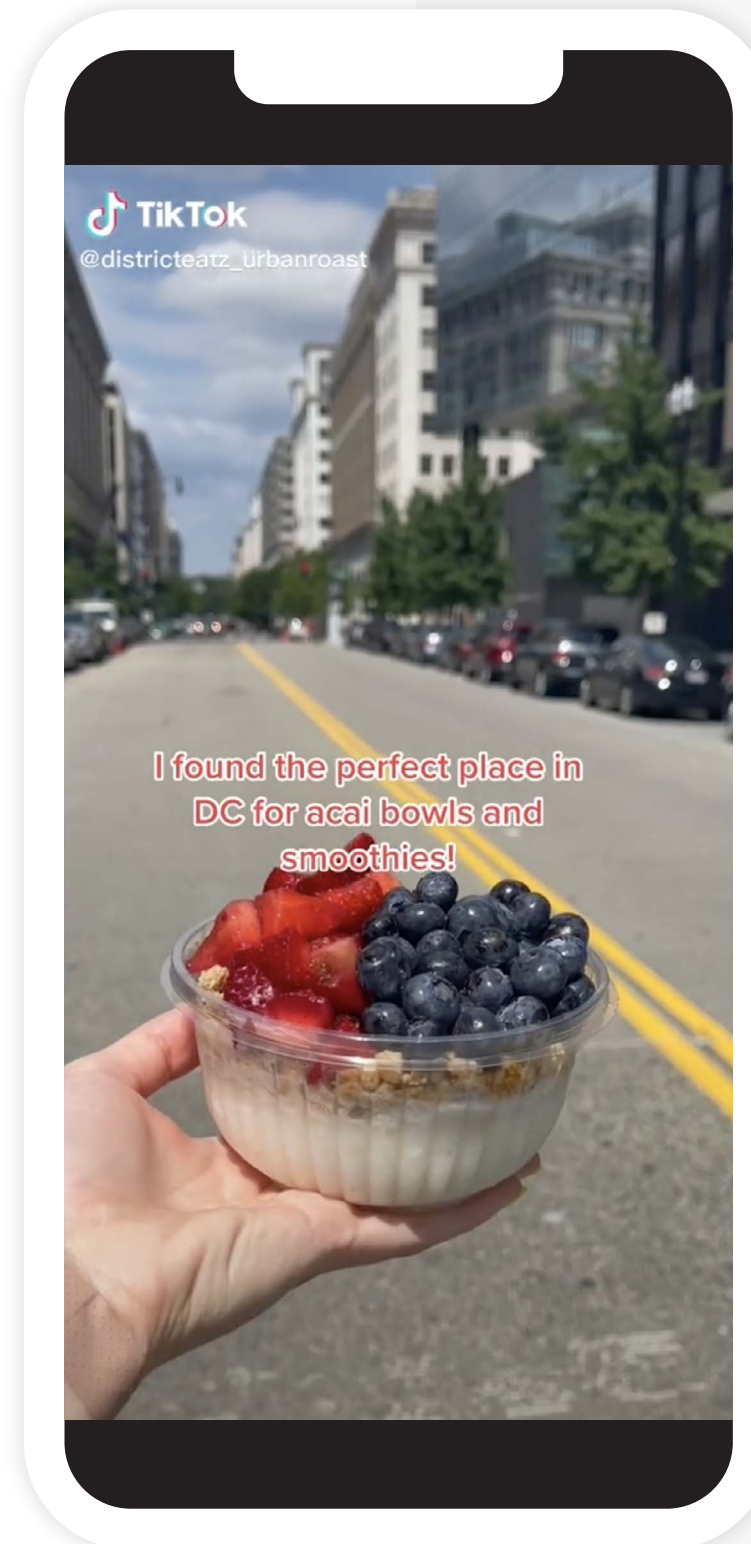


Getting found on TikTok

TikTok's appeal is in the For You Page or FYP. The FYP is the feed each user opens up to that is made up of popular videos across the app, both from those you follow and those you might not. The FYP is different for each person, created from an algorithm of each individual's previous video engagement, interests, and interactions. This algorithm also makes the app incredibly unique, in that it's not necessary to have thousands of followers to get views, and viral videos can seemingly come out of nowhere.

Like many social apps, TikTok is dominated by internet trends. Using popular sounds and tying viral trends back to your restaurant is an excellent way to get noticed by the algorithm and end up on the FYP. If you're not sure where to start, follow a few of your favorite brands and see what they're posting and what sounds they're using – you'll get to know what's popular in no time.

36% of people visited restaurants after viewing TikTok videos featuring the businesses, according to Restaurant Dive.



Encouraging and using user-generated content

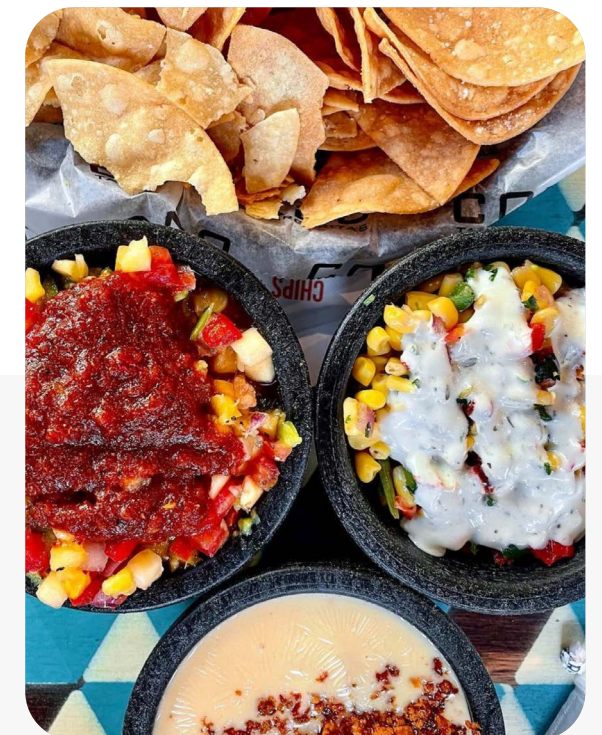
The food community on TikTok is massive – and clearly an influential platform for many viewers. This built-in community provides an especially strong opportunity to encourage, and use, user-generated content.

Condado Tacos (featured above) explained it this way:

People love our food (lucky us!), and they love seeing it. Our guests already take amazing pictures and videos of our food and post about Condado to their friends, so sharing UGC is a big player in our strategy. When people see our posts, we want them to crave the food enough to share with friends, talk about how delicious it looks, and then make plans to come dine with us or get takeout.

This can be done through legitimate partnerships – like working with influencers and other (non-competing) brands, or by sharing the content of your day-to-day customers who stop by and share photos and videos of your food. These types of relationships combine audiences – reaching more potential customers than you might on your own accounts.

At a minimum, stitch TikTok reviews, or repost them on your Instagram story. If you're looking to do a bit more, try reaching out to smaller influencers in your area, offering a free meal in exchange for an Instagram post or TikTok review. This is a relatively inexpensive way to expand your marketing reach, connect with new audiences, and grow local partnerships.





TOAST CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT



District Eatz
Washington, DC

TikTok has changed the game of how many brands use social media – including District Eatz in Washington, D.C. This trendy restaurant focuses on posting content following relevant trends and showing users their brand personality.

Their TikTok videos fully encompass the fun and trendy vibe of their restaurant – dressing up staff in popular Halloween costumes (**Squid Game-themed cocktails, anyone?**), showcasing their new **martini flights**, and taking full advantage of **popular trends and TikTok sounds**.

“It is always important to stay up to date on trends and look for ways to get the business noticed online,” said social media manager Lexi Littlefield. “Over the last 3 months or so, we have placed more of a focus on short-form Tiktok videos and Instagram reels – as we know the algorithm for these channels supports new users, and the barrier to entry is not too challenging.”



District Eatz

District Eatz focuses on creating relevant, timely content that will get noticed by the TikTok algorithm. “I would say a large majority of our initial growth came from those who discovered us on Tiktok during Christmas time in 2020,” said Lexi. “Our team went all-out with the seasonal decor, which highlighted the restaurant ambiance, and featured our seasonal drinks and dishes. When we made our first ‘winter-wonderland’ themed TikTok video, it quickly went viral. The feedback was quite amazing as we received non-stop phone calls for reservations the following day.”

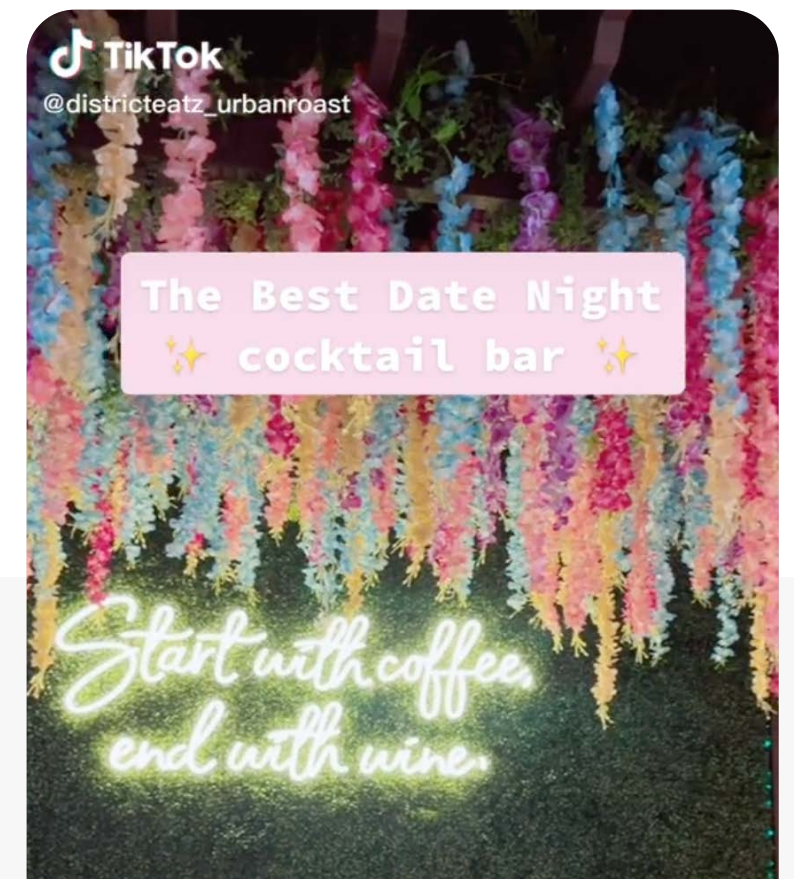
Lexi explained that that initial success inspired even more content. “After we saw the impact Tiktok had on the business, our team decided to continue on with themed decor for every season – matched with a 30-second TikTok video to show it all off,” she said. “We have seen the most engagement with short form videos that pair with trending songs and demographic-focused hashtags.”

District Eatz also has a strong TikTok presence outside of their own page – when you search their name, dozens of reviews and influencer videos come up – [like this one from a food and lifestyle blogger](#). “Whether it’s the content we create on behalf of the brand, the partnerships we develop with other local businesses, or the promotions and events we take part in... we aim to keep all messages and relations on-brand,” Lexi explained.

By focusing on what each platform is best for – Instagram for static imagery and spur of the moment sharing, Facebook for updates and quick commentary, and TikTok for fun and trendy content, District Eatz is meeting their guests on each platform, showcasing their personality and brand, and attracting guests.



Whether it’s the content we create on behalf of the brand, the partnerships we develop with other local businesses, or the promotions and events we take part in... we aim to keep all messages and relations on-brand.





6

Conclusion

Social media has clearly affected how restaurants interact with customers, suppliers, and vice versa. There's no longer a barrier between management and diners – and building that communication tool can not only drive new business but also add to your bottom line.

As a restaurateur, it's your job to understand that your brand stretches far beyond the walls of your establishment: **it's often in the hands of your customers.** So take control of your online presence.

Each of the channels we covered have specific goals, audiences, and implications for your business, and each is an essential tool in communicating with your customers and building and maintaining your restaurant's brand.

Go forth and be social.
And remember to always have fun.



Built to make your restaurant better

Toast gives your restaurant the technology you need to attract and retain your guests, and succeed in today's fast-paced environment.

[Schedule your free demo](#)