



# THE **ULTIMATE** DIRECT **MARKETING** **HANDBOOK** **FOR FARMERS**

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**YOUR **NEED-TO-KNOW** GUIDE FOR SOCIAL  
MEDIA, EMAIL CAMPAIGNS, AND BRANDING  
FOR YOUR FARM.**

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# FOREWORD

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At Local Line, our mission is to help farmers access local markets online and find new customers. We hope that our complimentary handbooks and articles help with that! After the success of our first guide, *The Food Suppliers Guide to Selling Food Online*, many of you have asked for a farmer-specific handbook regarding marketing with specific tips for digital marketing. The goal of this eBook is to share proven marketing practices and help you to become an effective marketer.

The interest in local food system is growing rapidly. Consumers are finding new ways to connect with farmers, which means great marketing is more important than ever.

Online marketing can be intimidating, but the more you practice - the less this is true. It's crazy how much information and how many marketing opportunities there are. How can you manage it all?

As our content writer, I've learned a lot from our Local Line team and am thrilled to pass this on to you through this book.

To be honest, marketing can be a challenge. There's no magic formula that works for everyone since every farm business offers different products, has different values and markets or regions can have distinct attributes.

Let's not forget - farming is often hard work but farmers persevere, so we know you're not the crowd that's going to be scared off easily. You just have to start.

What is exciting is that by being active online, you can attract an audience, differentiate your products and share your unique farm qualities. With the many marketing tools that are available today, there are plenty of options to test and discover what best works for you and your customers. It may take some trial and error before you find methods that are most effective for you - but before you know it, you'll be a natural.

My hope is that this handbook will guide you through the basics, and share some tips along the way, so that you can create a marketing strategy that works for you.

On behalf of the Local Line Team, I wish you success! Happy marketing!

Cheers,  
Nina

# THE RULES FOR MARKETING SUCCESS

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Here are the four rules to marketing success:

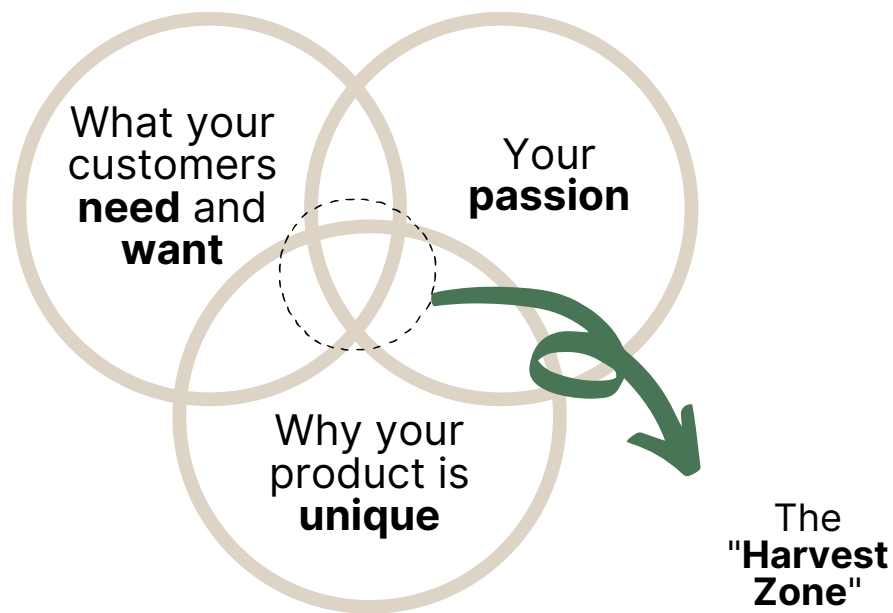
## **1. Make time for marketing**

To be successful in marketing - you have to dedicate time to work on it. In your workweek, try to block some allocated time and allocated people for focus on marketing tasks. Farming is often a family business, so why not do it together? Another idea is to create a circle of fellow farmers in your region to share practices and ideas. If you don't take the time and schedule marketing - odds are it won't happen, and you won't see results.

## **2. Talk to your customers**

Marketing is not just posting on social media. Talking to customers about their interests, your product and getting their feedback is part of marketing. Having meaningful, in-depth conversations with those you're selling to (or have sold to), is a handy tool. They're more likely to buy from you, and also, you can gather some helpful insights about their needs, experiences, and wants, and use this information in your marketing plans.





### 3. Work within the "Harvest Zone"

The "Harvest Zone" is the optimal mind space for your marketing messages. This is the focal point of:

- Knowing what your customers want;
- Your food passion, what motivates you and what is important about your way of farming/production;
- Why your product is unique. What is something you do that makes you proud of your product?

This way of thinking about your story or messaging helps to create a marketing plan that is more likely to work. It is a blend of authenticity, individuality, and relatability. Every piece of content, every benefit you showcase, and any advertising material you produce should all be based on this focal point. This "Harvest Zone" model can help you position your business to be a leader in your industry.

Before starting or continuing to create content - find your voice in the market by finding the balancing point between these factors.

### 4. Your customers are people

When working on marketing initiatives, it can be easy to forget that you're talking to someone. With social media and websites, it can feel like you're shooting messages out into space, but you're not! There are people on the other end (or, there will be soon!). Make sure your content is interesting and personable so that people will want to read and watch it. As important as optimizing your views and clicks can be, you want to build a relationship with your customers, to grow your business.

# THE POWER OF DIGITAL MARKETING

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Marketing allows your customers to understand your business, your products, and what makes you unique. It's safe to say that it will be tough to turn a profit if you don't do any marketing. Good marketing has always helped businesses reach target markets, increase their customer base, and ultimately, boost profits! Now digital marketing has changed the game. It has drastically increased the reach a small business can have and to grow an audience - so it can have a massive impact on growing your business.

## WHAT IS DIGITAL MARKETING?

Digital marketing is any promotion or marketing initiative that uses an online platform or a type of technology.

There are *five main aspects* of digital marketing:

**Devices** - Any device a consumer uses to interact with your marketing content including smartphones, tablets, computers, TVs, etc.

**Platforms** - Social media platforms, emails, websites, and any other application.

**Media** - Paid, owned, and earned communications channels for reaching and engaging with audiences.

**Data or Analytics** - Insight collected to inform businesses to interact more effectively with their target audiences.

**Technology** - Interactive experiences businesses use to market their product, such as in-store kiosks or email campaigns

## WHY DO I NEED IT?

It is clear that everyone is online - businesses, consumers, politicians, you name it! Our online world has created an excellent opportunity for businesses to reach even greater audiences and has surpassed traditional marketing techniques. The old tricks just don't work anymore.

Digital marketing and using social media platforms as marketing tools, helps you to differentiate and compete with much larger businesses. We think local food producers deserve a fair chance to reach broader markets so their businesses can thrive. Word of mouth has always been important but is now online and can now help you even more.





## HERE ARE A FEW OTHER REASONS WHY YOU NEED DIGITAL MARKETING:

- You are now open for business 24/7. Your online presence can reach your audience at all times of the day, literally anywhere in the world.
- Social media channels help you find new customers. Geotags, and hashtags (we'll get into this a bit later), give you access to your ideal market.
- You can measure and understand if marketing is working. Things like page clicks, engagement on social media posts, and followers; allow you to measure where your marketing content is going and whether people are buying into it.
- It's not expensive to get started, and it can be a lot cheaper than traditional channels, such as print ads. Social media and email accounts are free to set up, and they give you free access to excellent analytics tracking tools and an entire community of users!

## HOW DO I SUCCEED?

### Create “likable” and “shareable” content

Successful digital marketing all starts with good content. Content is anything from photos and videos to blog posts or recipes. It's anything that you create to help promote or “market” your business. Low-quality content can be harmful, while great content can make the difference between surviving or thriving.

To build great content, you should include a mix of what you want to say and what is likely to be of interest to your audience. This middle ground can be hard to find.

Here are some tips:

- *Look at what your competition is doing* – Get insight into what's working for them and how it might work for you.
- *Tell your story* – Food is extremely personal. People want to know more about who is producing the food they eat. Share your background, how you grow food, and where you do it! This can be done through photos and videos too. Images “read” much faster!
- *Create helpful content* – This tip is most relevant for blogs, yet it is vital if you want to create written content. Your blog content should be engaging and useful for your target audience so that they want to read it. Put yourself in their shoes: if you were a consumer buying your product, what would you need to know? For example, if you're a vegetable producer, share tips on how to store and keep produce fresh, or how to make stock from peels and scraps.
- *Look at your analytics* – This may seem obvious, a great way to know what your customers are interested in, is to keep track of what they like. Use your social media and website analytics tools to see what content is getting the most traction. Keep doing what works well!

### Don't forget about mobile!

If you have a website that hosts your content and store, it's essential to optimize for both mobile and desktop use. There is nothing more frustrating than clicking on a social media link to be sent to a website that isn't formatted for mobile.

A true mobile-friendly website is not only aesthetically pleasing, but it also functions correctly and seamlessly. Your customers should be able to access your website from any browser and device and should be able to get what they're looking for intuitively and quickly.

### Social proof!

Simply put, there's a lot out there. Consumers have more choices today than they've ever had when it comes to buying food. It can be overwhelming to know what to choose. As a marketer, it is your job to convince them you're the best choice. Use the power of social proof to show consumers why your product is exceptional. Try these methods to improve your results:



- Ask current customers to provide testimonials and share them on your channels
- Share customer photos on social media by asking them to use a specific hashtag (#) to be featured
- Collaborate with “influencers” that have a big following and get them to talk about you!
- Post content that people will want to share and watch the follows roll in

These are great forms of marketing because they show that others endorse your product. The use of social proof validates your content because it demonstrates that you're not the only one that thinks your product is great!

### **Use email!**

Unlike social media or ads, emailing creates a direct channel from you to consumers and can be an extremely effective marketing tool. According to a survey by McKinney iConsumer, email is still the most effective marketing channel – nearly 40 times that of Facebook and Twitter combined.

To make the most use of email – you need to start building an email list right now. As you continue to grow your business, your list will continue to grow. It is important to note that smart digital marketing is not only about getting new customers; it is also about creating lasting relationships with your current customers. Getting a repurchase from an existing customer costs a lot less than getting a new customer. Emailing allows you to keep communication open and generate personal relationships.

### **Focus on organic engagement**

If you have some experience in social media marketing, you know that it's all about engagement. The higher the engagement, the more likely you will be able to make a sale!

There are two primary forms of engagement: organic and inorganic (or paid). Paid ads on Instagram or Facebook can help you reach a broader audience; however, they could come across as pushy, so you need to think through your content. Paid ad costs can add up quickly, so it might not be right for everyone.

Organic engagement comes from good content and is the most sustainable online strategy. It creates a long-term following, trust with your followers, and is an excellent form of social proof! Click ads can work; however, focusing on creating great content and an online community is much more effective and durable in the future. If you're just getting started with digital marketing, I recommend you spend your funds on the content, rather than on paying for click ads.

It may seem overwhelming to get started, especially if you are new to the social media world. We hope that by taking the steps outlined in this guide, you will be able to include marketing in your day-to-day routine. There are many tips and tricks to be learned so that you can effectively (and quickly) start digital marketing successfully.

# BRANDING

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## WHAT IS A BRAND?

A brand is the soul of a business. It is the collection of strategies, fonts, images, tone of voice and verbal cues that represent a business's personality. A brand represents the values and promise of a business and creates recognition with customers and the general market. A brand is made up of:

- **Business Name** - This is your starting point. The name of your business will set the tone for all other aspects of your brand. Be sure your name comes from your heart and evokes your purpose.
- **Logo** - A logo is the largest (and probably most important) aspect of your brand. It is the first thing customers will see when they interact with your business. It allows for recognition. A logo can be a symbol, or just text in a great font, or any combination. It wise to give a lot of attention to your name and logo to ensure it will still fit as you grow your business.
- **Colours** - This may seem like a trivial task - however, your brand's colour palette is very important. Different tones represent different moods and values. For example, red represents boldness and assertiveness, while yellow represents happiness and playfulness. Your colour palette should be applied to your logo as well as other content you create (e.g. website, online store, promotional material, social media posts, signage).
- **Fonts** - Similar to a colour palette, a brand requires a few selected fonts. You might want to have one font for headings and another for your content. Your fonts don't have to be the same as your logo, but they should complement your logo font.
- **Brand Language** - For many different marketing platforms such as social media or your website, it is important to have a consistent description of your business: a sentence or two that you can use as a "bio" on different platforms to introduce your business.
- **Brand Voice** - Your tone and language should feel like your own personality, for example optimistic, friendly, casual and helpful, reassuring... take time to describe your business as a personality and that will help you create content with a consistent tone of voice.



## WHY DO I NEED BRANDING?

Your business will generate a reputation whether you take the time to define your brand or not. Branding is the approach to maintain control of your reputation. It provides customers with context and helps them create a bond with your business. Good branding works. Here's why:

### **Trust**

A brand is a promise. People trust businesses that are likeable and consistently deliver on a promise that they find appealing.

### **Appeal**

Food is very visual - people want to eat food that looks good. Therefore, the better the product looks (in packaging and on its own), the more likely it is to be purchased. A consistent photo style helps to connect your products and your brand personality

### **Recognition**

This is a huge benefit. When you have a consistent and clear brand, people will start to become familiar with it. An effective logo and colour scheme will help create familiarity and act as a short form for your business which in turn, will help you maintain and grow your customer base.

A good logo and colour scheme will help create familiarity and in turn, help you keep and grow a customer base.



## HOW DO I BUILD MY BRANDING?

### **Determine whom you want to sell to**

The first step to building a successful and profitable brand, you must determine your target audience. Different audiences are attracted to different types of companies and products. The more you know about your target audience's needs and attitudes the more likely you will in be creating an appealing brand.

### **Determine your business value proposition**

Not only must your brand speak to your target audience - but it must also declare what you do and why you do it. Why do you get up every day? In order to create a strong brand that consumers trust, you must determine what value and service you provide. It is also important to define how your business is unique. Your uniqueness could be almost anything that matters to your target audience: your mix of products, your location, your personality, etc.

### **Create a brand logo**

Once you have a clear idea of your target audience and your purpose or value proposition, you have the basis to create a logo. Creating a logo may be the most important part of building your brand because it should not change very often. It requires some design thinking. Consider imagery that best represents what you want to say.

If creating your own logo, use a design tool to explore different ideas. Canva is a great place to get started! It's a free online design program that is easy to use! Alternatively, you may want to consider using a graphic designer or asking designer friends to see if they can help you.

### **Find your brand voice**

A brand is not just about the visual logo or colours you choose - it is also about the text and language you use along with those elements. Every business has a specific tone and personality that comes through in its content. For example, do you speak in the first or third person?

### **Keep it going**

After you've put all this work into creating your brand, it is essential to use it consistently at every opportunity. This includes your website, online store, social media accounts, and any other material associated with your business. The only way to build your brand and increase brand recognition is to consistently apply your brand!



# HOW TO TELL YOUR BRAND STORY

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## WHY IS STORYTELLING EFFECTIVE?

Storytelling makes you relatable. People communicate through stories. From our early days, people used stories to package information and share knowledge, teach skills, and build relationships. This is the same today.

Stories evoke emotion and create deeper connections between the listener and the teller. By using storytelling as a marketing tool, your customers get better insight into who you are and why you do what you do. Being more personable to your customers results in customer confidence and generating a bond with your business.

Not convinced? Here's some science: In an article written by the Harvard Review, the author discusses the release of Oxytocin, a neurochemical, during storytelling. Oxytocin is a signal to the brain that is released when we are trusted or shown kindness, and "it motivates cooperation with others". This is why you feel down after a sad movie or inspired after a motivational speech. This is why storytelling works in business too!

Becoming a good storyteller is a skill that if practiced can improve over time. When telling your brand story, don't let it be an afterthought. Remember, you will never have full control of your story. It is half what you actually say, and half of how your listeners perceive your story, so think through your story and try it on some friends.

### **STEP 1:** Figure out who you are talking to

Before writing anything, map out where you want the story to go. Don't focus on what you want to say, but rather what your audience needs to know.

The best way to do this is to create customer personas. These are the customer types you are trying to reach with your marketing, and the "person" you are talking to when you are telling your story. Make your customer personas as realistic as you can and maybe even give them names! This way, you are telling your story to a "real person."

### **STEP 2:** Pick the right subject

After you have created your persona(s), you need to determine what you are trying to communicate.

Find commonalities and trends within your audience - their concerns, hopes, desires, and challenges. You want your story to address their problems and how you can help them.

Here is an **example** to make this more clear.

*Andrew is an organic vegetable farmer who started farming 15 years ago after leaving his fast-paced job in the oil industry. He wanted to make a difference and reduce his carbon footprint.*

*He wanted to make food that gave back to the earth and give him and his community alternative options to traditional grocery store vegetables.*

His audience personas:

**Sustainable Student Steve persona:** (because one of his significant sales outlets is on-campus weekly farmers' markets). Steve wants to reduce his carbon footprint, give back to his local economy, and be healthy. Steve is concerned about his meat intake, and the lack of food transparency in large retailers.

**Concerned Parent Cathy persona:** Cathy wants to give her kids nutritious food and lead a healthy lifestyle herself. Cathy is concerned her kids will not grow up to be healthy.

These two personas are very different; however, Andrew's story must apply to both of them. The appropriate subject for Andrew's story would be the transition to organic farming and increasing accessibility to good produce.

### **STEP 3: Choose the Platform**

The next step is to decide the best way to communicate your story. This may differ based on your product, your customer personas, and your preferred marketing platforms. You can communicate your content in many different ways:

- Articles
- Case studies and/or reviews
- E-books
- Videos
- Infographics
- Graphics and photographs

The next step in the process is determining the best way to communicate your story. We think the best methods are through a short summary or an About Us page; through photographs on your social media platform and website; and through a video. Again, this may differ based on your product, your customer personas, and your preferred marketing platforms. This is an essential step, as many factors are dependent on how you are telling your stories, such as text length, language and tone, and writing structure.



#### **STEP 4: Write a draft (or many)**

Once you have determined who audience, what you're writing about, and how you're presenting it, it's time to write! When writing a story, consider applying a typical story structure:

When writing a story, consider applying a typical story structure:

1. *Exposition* - This is the introduction. Provides the background for the story to follow and sets the scene.
2. *Rising Action* - The rising action is the point of the story where the conflict begins to brew.

#### **STEP 5: Get edits**

When you repeatedly read the same piece of text, you often begin to skim the content. Share it with someone! It is always great to get constructive feedback from a fresh set of eyes.

#### **STEP 6: Share it everywhere!**

The final step to creating a brand story is to share it. Your brand story is the backbone of your marketing, therefore be sure to share it effectively. Be sure to keep the tone, mission statement, and themes in all of your marketing activities. This will resonate with your customer base.

Remember, your story isn't static, just as your business isn't static. Your customer personas may change, your product may change, and you may change! Just because you wrote your brand story once, does not mean your storytelling is over.

# INTRODUCTION TO ANALYTICS

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## WHAT ARE ANALYTICS?

Tracking analytics uses mathematical algorithms, statistics, and machine learning to find patterns. In simple terms, it is the congregation of different data points to show trends. Analytics can tell you how often something is being viewed, by how many people, and where they are coming from. It can also make assumptions to inform what type of content is most impactful.

## WHY DO YOU NEED TO TRACK ANALYTICS?

Success must be measured. When using social media as a marketing tool, it is essential that all actions and engagement with your content is being tracked and analyzed. It may seem as if your content is working well - however, you can't be sure unless you are actively checking the data.

Tracking analytics allows you to make informed and precise decisions regarding the type of content to post, how frequently, and where to post. In addition, it can be very helpful to track your activity over time to pinpoint what worked and what didn't. It is much more effective to have numbers to back your success than to estimate whether your actions are helping or hurting your business.

## WHERE DO YOU GET STARTED?

Most social media platforms have built-in analytics or insights tools to help you determine your success. These analytics are very detailed and are platform-specific. Further in this guide, we will outline how these different tools function and what you should track with them - we're just getting started!



# SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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Social media is a huge aspect of digital marketing. In this section, we will take you through the most successful platforms and how to use them from start to finish.







Instagram is a great tool to help you market your business! It's all about visual content and is excellent for showcasing your production process, your family & employees, and your products. Ultimately, it's meant to portray authenticity and helps your customers to get to know you. If you are a small-scale food producer, Instagram is a great way to create an online presence and drive demand for your products.

Instagram is a social media platform that is made for sharing photographs and videos from your phone. Each user has a profile where they can upload photos and a news feed that shows content uploaded by those whom you follow. When you upload a photo, it will be displayed on your profile and on the news feed of the people that follow you. It has an emphasis on fast and easy visual sharing.

## WHY INSTAGRAM?

### **It is a hub for literally everything!**

Over 25 million businesses use the application, and 200 million Instagram users are confronted with at least one business profile each day. There's a ton of opportunity to engage potential customers and showcase your brand. Instagram is a powerful marketing tool!

## WHY IS IT HELPFUL FOR FOOD PRODUCERS?

Food is a very visual industry! How many times have you seen pictures of a beautiful dish and thought, "I would eat that!" The goal of using Instagram as a marketing tool is to convince consumers to buy your products. This platform lets you upload photos and videos on your feed or on Stories\* in a way that connects you with customers and keeps them up to date. It's personal, simple-to-use, and extremely powerful! And it's free, so there's really no reason not to give it a try!

\*Note, Stories is a 24-hour quick, engaging photo/video format for smartphones.

# SETTING UP YOUR BUSINESS ACCOUNT

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## STEP 1: SETTING UP YOUR ACCOUNT

The first step is to download the app. Instagram, unlike other social media platforms, is meant to be used on your phone, therefore, to use the program, you must have access to a smartphone or tablet. When you first open the Instagram app, you will be prompted to sign up. Be sure to sign up using a business email address.

The next step is to enter your info:

**Full Name:** Enter the name of your business. This will allow your business to be recognizable among visitors.

**Username:** This is the name of what people search to find your business. It starts with the @ symbol. For example, Local Line's username is @locallineinc.

**Please note:** If the name of your business is already taken, you may have to get creative.

## STEP 2: BUILDING YOUR ACCOUNT

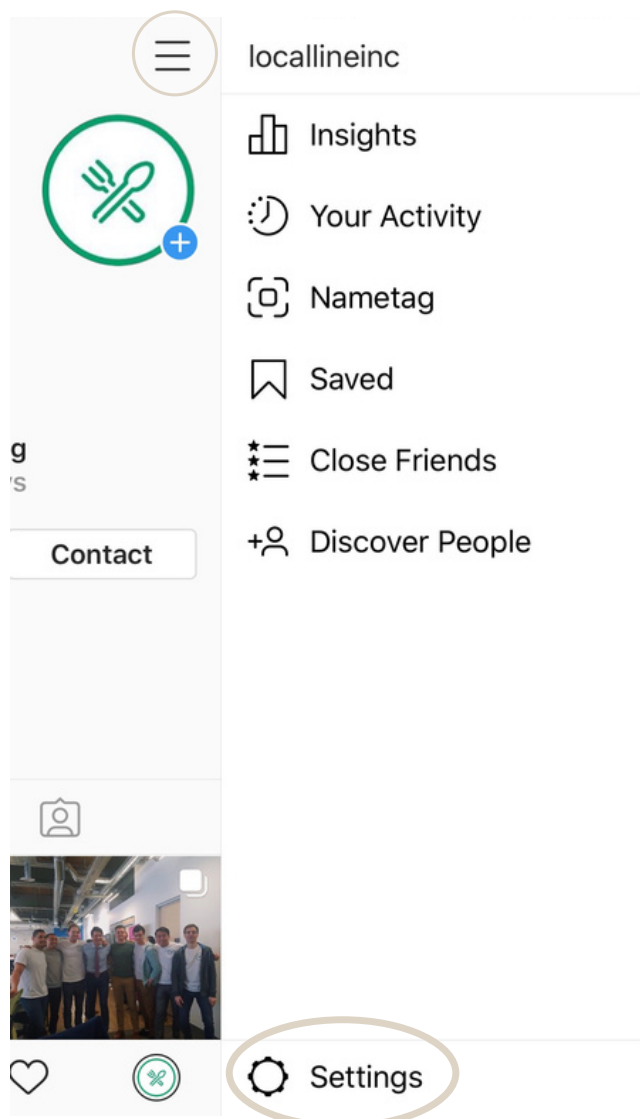
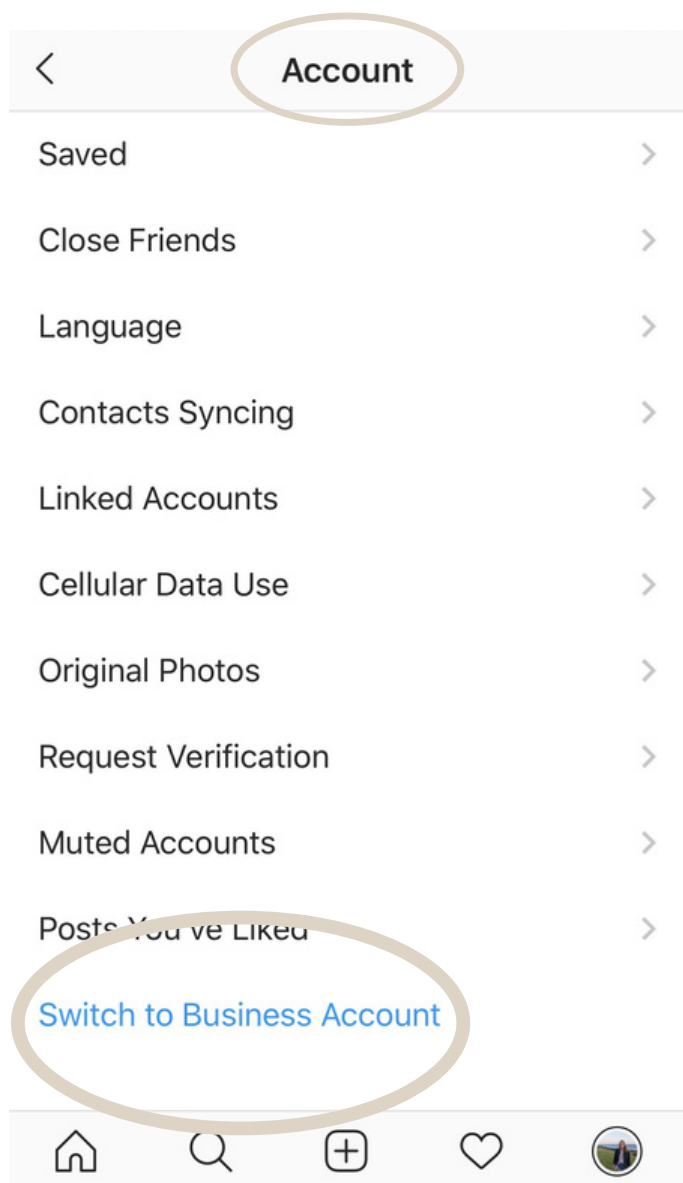
Now that you have an account, optimize it to increase your followers. Start with choosing your profile picture. We recommend using your logo as it keeps consistency with the branding of your business. Remember, Instagram automatically crops your profile image into a circle, so be sure to leave room for this.

Your Instagram bio is a short (150-character maximum) summary of what you do. In your bio, you can also urge followers to take action by adding a URL such as your online store or business website. If using a URL, be sure to shorten your link using bitly to keep your profile from looking cluttered. You can also use a service called Linktree - which allows you to create one link that has multiple destinations, for example, you can direct followers to your website, online store, and blog.

You can always update your profile by clicking on the **Edit Profile** button.

## STEP 3: SWITCHING TO A BUSINESS PROFILE

At this point, you have an account and profile ready to go! The next step is to make your public profile a business profile. To do this, go to the **Settings** tab. It can be accessed by clicking the three stacked lines located in the upper-right corner of the homepage. Click the **Settings** button located at the bottom of the page.



In **Settings**, scroll down to **Account**. Click **Switch to Business Profile**. Instagram will lead you through how to switch.

This will let your profile appear as a business to your followers. It will also give you access to analytics regarding posting times, followers, engagement, and more. In a business profile, you can add your location, category, phone number, email, and any directions. These features can help you increase your sales.



# NAVIGATING INSTAGRAM

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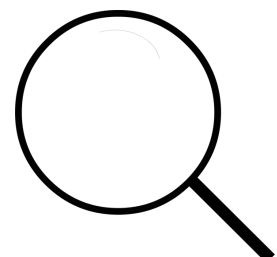
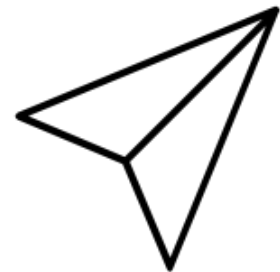
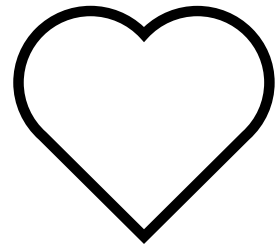
## THE NEWSFEED

When you first open your application, it will show your newsfeed. This is the central hub where you find the content of the accounts you follow. This is the main way to engage with others on the app. At the top of your newsfeed, you'll see multiple profile pictures of accounts you follow with a pink circle around them. These are **Stories**.

When you scroll down your newsfeed, you can engage with content. To Like something, double-tap the middle of the photo/video or press the **heart** located under the photo/video to the left. You can also comment on content by pressing the **speech bubble** beside the heart. Additionally, you can share a piece of content by pressing the **paper airplane** symbol. This allows you to send to other users on Instagram or share as your story.

Above the stories section of your newsfeed, in the top left corner, the **camera** symbol allows you to create your own story. The **TV** symbol will send you to Instagram TV. Finally, the **paper airplane** symbol (identical to the symbol for sharing a piece of content), sends you to your **direct messages**.

In the bottom bar of the newsfeed, you'll see 5 different symbols from left to the right. This bottom bar will remain the same for every page you click through. The **house** symbol will send you to the newsfeed. The **magnifying glass** symbol will send you to the Explore page.



The **square** will allow you to upload new content to Instagram. The **heart** symbol shows you all the engagement you've received on your content. The last symbol on the right side should be your **logo**. This will lead you to your profile. This is how you will appear to your followers.

## UPLOADING NEW CONTENT TO INSTAGRAM

To upload content to Instagram:

1. Press the **square button** located in the center at the bottom of the newsfeed. This will send you to your photo library. Make sure you allow Instagram access to your **Camera, Photo Library, and Microphone**; otherwise, you will be unable to upload content. This can be done in the settings of your mobile device.
2. Take your content or select which photo/video you would like to upload. You are able to select multiple, by pressing the **stacked square** symbol on the right or create a collage by choosing the **collage** symbol beside the stacked square symbol.
3. Instagram is formatted for square photos/videos and will automatically format your content this way.
4. You can edit your content by selecting filters, or adjusting brightness, contrast, saturation, and more. This is an optional step. When you are happy, select **Next**.
5. The final step is to create the caption and update details for your post. You can always review your photo/video, by selecting the picture in the top left corner and it will give you a preview of your post. Additionally, you can **tag other accounts**, add a **location**, and **share** your post to other linked social media accounts. When you are happy with your post, press **share** and the post will become visible on your profile and to others.

**Note:** You can save drafts of posts by selecting the arrow in the top left corner. This will be saved in your account, and you can post them at a later date. Additionally, you can always edit posts after they have been uploaded, by pressing the three dots located in the top right of your post.

## USING INSTAGRAM STORIES



Unlike creating a post on Instagram, **Stories** are a temporary image or video that you can share with your audience. They are formatted for mobile-viewing and are visible for **24 hours**. Stories show authenticity, as they are quick and easy to digest, versus a curated Instagram profile feed. They can be used to talk directly to your audience and allows them to “talk right back” by using direct messaging on the app. You can’t market on Instagram without using Stories. Here's how to use them:

### STEP 1

Open the Instagram application to your **newsfeed**. This should be where you can view all the posts of the accounts you follow. At the top of the page, under the Instagram logo, there are profile pictures of the accounts you follow with pink circles around them. These are the stories of the accounts you follow. You can click through these to see what others are doing!

### STEP 2

To create your own story, click the **camera** icon in the top right corner above the picture of your logo. It will prompt you to your camera. You can also get here by clicking your **logo** in the top right corner. **Note**, if you have not granted Instagram access to your camera or microphone, do this. It must be granted to create a story.

### STEP 3

To update settings, click the settings icon in the top right corner. Here you can change who can see your story, saving preferences, and more. Set these settings to meet your needs. To go back to the newsfeed, click the arrow in the top-left corner.



- **Square:** This will prompt you to your camera roll. You can use any of the photos on your device for your stories.
- **Lighting bolt:** This will update the lighting options for your camera - such as flash and low-light settings.
- **Circle:** This is the trigger to take a photo or a video.
- **Circle of Arrows:** Flip the camera.
- **Happy face:** This is where you can find face filters for silly photos or videos.

Additionally, there are also a series of words that you can scroll through. These mean:

- **Type:** Allows you to type on a coloured screen if you do not want to have a photograph/video.
- **Live:** This is a setting that will let you live-stream with your customers.
- **Normal:** Regular camera/video.
- **Boomerang:** This will allow you to take a “moving” picture.
- **Superzoom:** Different filters for video-taking such as *Surprise* or *Paparazzi*.
- **Focus:** Take a portrait by blurring out backgrounds around a subject.
- **Reverse:** Play videos in reverse.
- **Hands-free:** This allows you to take videos without having to hold the centre button.

These many options will allow you to create content specific to you. Play around with the options and determine what you like best!

#### STEP 4

After you are happy with a photo or video to share, you can edit your post! Instagram provides many tools, such as adding text, drawings, hashtags, account mentions, etc. These are called Stickers. They help add actions to your posts and increase engagement.

Here are some stickers you should use:

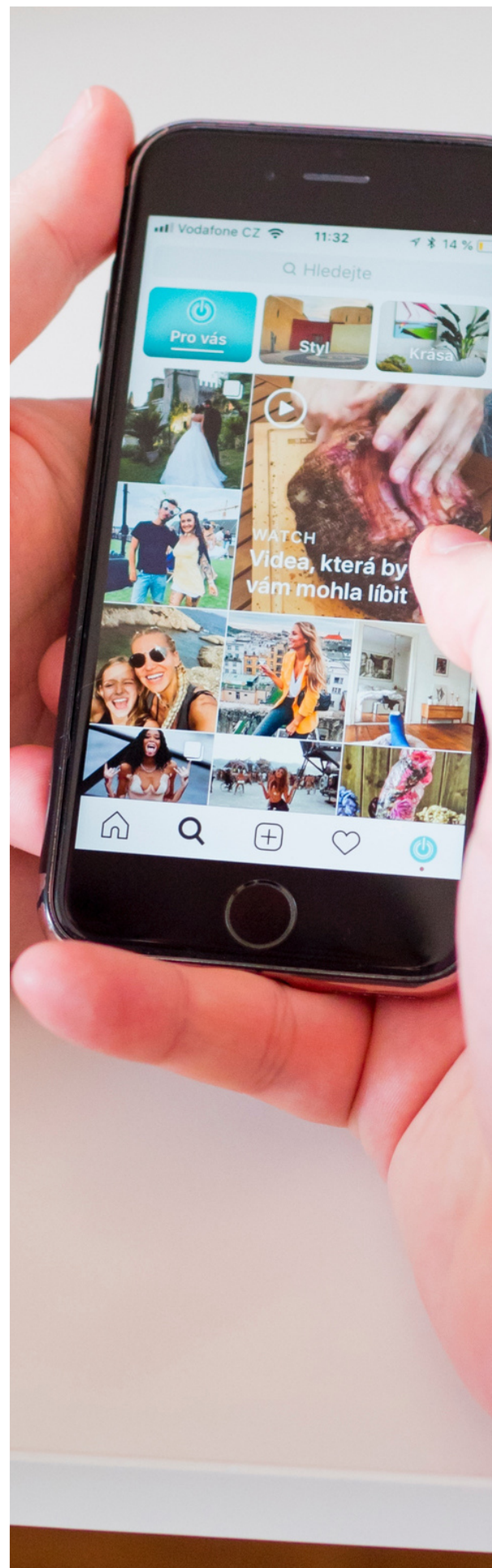
- **Poll sticker:** Ask your customers what they want by asking questions with customized answers. Instagram will show the results and let you make educated decisions. For example, what day is best for delivery? Monday or Tuesday?
- **Questions Sticker:** This sticker allows your followers to ask questions relevant to a topic. For example, ask which day is best for delivery, and let your followers send you their responses. It is an informal way to speak directly to your audience.

- **Hashtag sticker:** Hashtags can be a very powerful tool for reaching potential customers. A hashtag sticker will link your story to the hashtag and automatically get added to the Explore page. Remember, that hashtags can also quickly come across as spammy, therefore make sure to be critical when using a hashtag.
- **Location sticker:** Add the Geotag (location)! Same with adding a hashtag, this sticker links your story to all posts in the same location, which helps increase your exposure.

In addition to these stickers, there are many more! There is a lot to discover on stories, therefore play around with the features when you're first starting out.

### STEP 5

Tap the **Your Story** button to post your story publicly, **Sent** to send it privately to selected accounts, or **Save** to download it to your phone to post at a later date.



## USING STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Keep your stories on your profile forever! Instagram stories only last for 24 hours; however, the app lets you make a Highlight, which is a curated collection of chosen stories to stay on your profile. These highlights can be used for:

- **Frequently asked questions** - use the Questions sticker to ask your customers for questions. Save these stories as a highlight to easily answer any questions new visitors may have about your business.
- **Farm tour** - film a farm tour on your stories and save to your highlights. This will help show new followers where their food is produced and who's doing it!
- **Products** - showcase popular or new products on your story and save them as a highlight to keep them visible on your profile.

To create a highlight, go to your profile. Underneath the bio section, you should find a circle with a plus sign. Click this, and it will guide you to an archive of your past stories. Pick which stories you would like to use and add a title. The highlight will show up on your profile.

## SENDING A DIRECT MESSAGE

Similar to many other social media platforms, Instagram has a messaging feature called Direct Message. It can be accessed by clicking the paper airplane symbol in the top right corner of your **newsfeed**. To send a direct message:

- Press the plus sign located in the top right corner.
- Search the account(s) you want to send a message to. Select the correct account(s) and type in your message. You can also add voice recordings, images, GIFs, and more.
- Press the return key to send the message.

**Note:** Any messages sent you will send you a notification, and can be seen by clicking the **paper airplane** symbol in the top right corner of your newsfeed.



# CREATING CONTENT FOR INSTAGRAM



Social media is all about content. Consumers like quality photos that represent your brand, story, and product! Good content increases sales, while poor quality content can be very detrimental to your brand. Tips to improve your photos:

## PICK A THEME

Your Instagram profile is a grid of all your content. When first visiting your page, users will see a collection of your last 6-9 pictures. It is crucial when you are taking and posting photos to your profile, you are considering what the collection of photos will look like together. It's great to have a mix of farm and staff photos, with some product photos. You want to share your story and day-to-day activities, however, be sure to show what you are selling.

A theme will reduce the likelihood of having a cluttered or unsynchronized feed and help you determine what photos you need to take. This also helps for your branding.

## STAY AWAY FROM THE ZOOM!

If you're using a smartphone for your photography, refrain from using the zoom function. The lenses in our phones are not the same as a removable, adjustable lens on a professional camera. Using zoom can actually reduce the quality and give you a blurry/grainy photo.

## LIGHTING!

To take a great photograph – you need to have good lighting. Be sure always to use natural light. Flash photography and artificial lighting can be tough to work. Also, if you're taking photos outside, make use of “golden hour”.

Also, if you're taking photos outside, make use of “golden hour”.

## CONSIDER YOUR DEVICE (IT MAY BE TIME TO UPGRADE!)

Your Instagram page starts with your camera. At the end of the day, you can't change the quality of a photo after it's been taken. You can clearly tell the difference between a high-quality photograph taken by a DSLR camera versus a photo taken by an older digital camera or mobile device. Make sure you are using the best device available to you. Don't have access to a camera? Newer models of smartphones are changing the game for photography and can produce high-quality sharable photos.

**Note** – if a photo looks blurry or grainy – it's not the best quality. The higher the quality, the more professional the photos appear.

## SLAP A FILTER ON IT

Filters can work wonders for an image (if done correctly). Consider playing around with different filters to enhance the natural beauty of your photos.

Note – often pre-made “free” filters provided by Instagram or free apps can appear over-saturated and reduce the quality of a photo. I would recommend using VSCO or any other applications that allow you to adjust parameters such as saturation, brightness, highlights, and shadows manually. This allows you to “create your own filter”. This step may take some extra time versus a pre-made filter; however, it can make a world of difference.

## TAKING PHOTOS OF PRODUCTS? CONSIDER THIS...

Instagram is a marketing tool – therefore, you must showcase what you actually sell. Product photographs are an essential tool for your business. Food must look appetizing; otherwise, customers won't buy it.

Here are some quick tips:

- *Use produce that is bright in colour and has the least amount of blemishes.* We all know there's nothing wrong with a piece of fruit that has a few bumps and bruises – though for marketing purposes, pick your best-looking products.
- *Take photos with natural scenery.* Small-scale farming practices are all about the real, natural, and ethical production of food. Taking a picture of your final product with a beautiful landscape in the background helps connect the product itself with its production. If that's not possible, consider using natural fabrics, textures, and tones as the background of your photos – this will help make the link to handmade and organic production.
- *Avoid shadows.* When you take a photo of something straight from above, shadows occur and can dominate a photo. Adjust the angle of shooting, to reduce the intrusion of shadows in your pictures.



# BUILDING YOUR FOLLOWING

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Just like any marketing tool, you need to build an audience to get customers. When first starting out with Instagram, it can be overwhelming to reach your audience, so we have compiled some tips to help you get started:

## #TEAMFOLLOWBACK

Just starting your profile? Network by following other local suppliers, restaurants, retailers, and customers. This will give them a nudge that you are on Instagram or help you get traction with potential buyers. Additionally, when you're looking to increase your following, it is vital to follow customers back. Just like being personal through direct messaging or commenting, following your customers shows you care (as funny as that sounds). As your following grows, this may be less important, however, when first starting out it can really help!

## PROMOTE ON ALL YOUR PLATFORMS

If you are using multiple social media platforms - cross-promote! Post on your Facebook page to follow your Instagram account. This can help drive customers to follow you on all platforms. Additionally, if you have a mailing list, add links to your social media channels in your emails. Sometimes to increase your following all you need to do is inform your customers.

## INTERACT WITH YOUR FOLLOWERS BEYOND POSTING

A great way to hook followers is being personal! Interacting with customers via Direct Message or starting conversations through commenting can have a lasting impact. Food is very personal, and customers want to get to know who's producing theirs. Just like selling in person, when selling online, you want to maintain customer service! Don't underestimate the power of personal communication!



# MEASURING YOUR SUCCESS

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When you switch to an Instagram Business account, you have access to Insights. Insights give you data about who's looking at your content. It will help you determine what's working and what isn't!

To access your insights, click the stacked lines in the top-right corner on your profile. Click Insights. Within Insights, you'll see three main sections: **Activity**, **Content**, and **Audience**.

Within **Activity**, you see:

- **Interactions.** It will give you insights, such as the number of profile visits and website clicks.
- **Discovery.** Tells you more about who you're reaching.
- **Reach and impressions.** Reach is the number of unique visitors to your content, and impressions are the number of times your content has been viewed.

Within **Content**, you see:

- How **many** and **which posts** you've posted that week.
- **Post** and **story engagement.** For example, which posts are most popular and how many people are engaging with it.

Within **Audience**, you see:

- **Locations.** Where your followers are located. This can be split up into City or Country.
- **Age Range.** It is interesting to see what age range you are attracting with your content.
- **Gender.**
- **Followers.** Shows you when your followers are most active on social media. This can help you determine when you should post to increase engagement.

Now, that you understand what analytics are and what they are telling you, it's time to use them to help you! Here are our three best tips to help you get started:

## SET A KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

A key performance indicator or KPI is a measurable parameter that can be used to evaluate success. As success looks different for each business, you must determine which parameter works for you. If your business thrives on community and communication with your audience, track engagement. If you are looking to build your customer base and following, track reach.

## CALCULATE ENGAGEMENT FOR EACH OF YOUR POSTS

**Engagement Rate** represents the percentage of your followers that are engaging with a specific post or story. It is not a value that Instagram calculates for you; however, it can easily be calculated in two ways:

**Method 1** calculates the Engagement Rate against all of your followers. This value determines how many of all your followers are actually engaging with your posts. Low values can be due to many factors such as posting times, hashtags, videos versus photos, and more!

### METHOD 1

**Engagement Rate (%)**

$$= (\text{Number of Likes and Comments} / \text{Number of Followers}) \times 100\%$$

### METHOD 2

**Engagement Rate (%)**

$$= (\text{Number of Likes and Comments} / \text{Reach}) \times 100\%$$

**Method 2** calculates the engagement rate against all the followers you actually reached. It determines out of all the people that saw your content, how many actually engaged with your post. This value can be useful when analyzing the content itself. For example, if 350 followers are seeing the content, why do only 10% like it?

Both methods provide powerful insights into your posts and engagement with customers. By playing around with types of content, hashtags, posting times, and more - you can use the engagement rates to determine which gets you the best results. Similar to your KPI, make sure you are tracking this value over time to get accurate results.

## POSTING TIMES

In the **Audience** section of Instagram Insights, you will find information about your followers such as top locations, age range, gender, and followers. This information can give you insight about your followers and when they're engaging with your content. Most importantly, use the Followers section to track at what time of day and which day of the week, your followers are most active. Schedule your posts to match peak use times. This will increase the possible engagement your customers will have with your content.

These are just some ways you can use Instagram Insights to grow your following and increase customer engagement.

# facebook

## WHY FACEBOOK?

Facebook can be mighty for small business owners. It is a fact that today, almost every business has a Facebook business page. It serves as social proof that you're current and actively running your business. The business page allows you to share content with your customer base, while also providing valuable information like contact information, business hours, and employees. Your business page also gives your customers the ability to leave reviews and ratings - which is the strongest form of social proof.

## SETTING UP YOUR BUSINESS ACCOUNT

The first step to marketing on Facebook is creating a business page. It will allow you to reach a larger audience and give you access to marketing tools such as analytics and ads. Having a Facebook page is also necessary to switch your Instagram account to a business account.

### ***Here's how to get started:***

To create your new business page, visit this link to create a page. You'll need to add:

- **Your business name and bio:** Add the name of your business. Your bio tells your followers what you do and any other quick info!
- **A profile photo and cover photo:** For your profile photo, use your logo or a photo that best represents your business. The cover photo is a longer picture that will be at the top of your profile. Use a picture of your farm or your team!
- **A call to action button:** This is a button that will be found at the top of your page. It is an action that will direct your customers to a specific place. Put a link to your online store or email address!

Now that you have created your page, you can:

- **Personalize your profile:** After setting up your profile, you can continue to personalize your profile by adding your story, shop section, services, etc.
- **Publish new content:** Now that your page is set up, you can start adding content! By adding content, your page appears active and will help you hook followers!
- **Message your customers:** Now your customers have the ability to message your business and ask questions one-on-one!
- **Promote your page:** If you have a large customer following on your personal Facebook account, you can invite friends to like your new page.

# BEST PRACTICES

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## BRANDING

Having a uniform and attractive branding allows your business to become recognizable among customers. You should strive to have consistent branding across all platforms. Similar to other social media platforms, on Facebook, you can upload a bio, profile and cover photo. It is a smart tip to use your logo as your profile photo.

## BE PERSONAL AND ACTIVE

Food is personal! People want to know who is growing/producing their food - so do not hesitate to share this! Share information about who you are and what you do. Additionally, it's important to be active on your platform. When people send you direct messages or engage with your content. The quicker you respond, the better! It shows that you care and sets a tone for future customer service.

## POST STICKY AND RELEVANT CONTENT

Individuals follow interesting accounts. Use this platform to share compelling high-quality photos of your farm, products, and your team. You can also link your Instagram and Facebook pages, enabling any Instagram photos to be shared to your Facebook page.

Alternatively, to Instagram, Facebook is a great place to upload any blog posts you've written, relevant website links, or other non-photo-related content. You want your feed to be a balance of beautiful, 'sticky' content and relevant links and posts - such as how to order, delivery schedules, new products, etc. The balance will make the experience enjoyable for customers and will attract new ones.

## CREATE A CONTENT POSTING SCHEDULE

With any marketing strategy - it can be beneficial to plan your posts ahead of time. This will save you time in the long run and help you create a curated feed.

Spend some time at the beginning of the week and determine what information you would like to be shared that week. Any great photos or articles you haven't shared yet? Create a list of posts and decide which day and time you would like to post them. You can use tools such as Hootsuite or Sprout that allow you to schedule posts ahead of time and will send them out automatically!

Do not stress if you deter away from the schedule and have other content you want to share. Scheduling is a great way to keep you on track and make sure you are staying active on the platform.



## **RE-EVALUATE!**

This is an essential step for any marketing strategy! After you have been using the platform for a while, take some time to assess your results.

- What posts got the most engagement?
- Have you received any feedback from your customers?
- Has your following decreased or increased over time? Has it stayed the same?

These are critical questions to answer. By assessing your past, you will be able to re-work and adjust your strategies to better succeed in the future. The best way of tracking these results is to use Facebook Insights!

# MEASURING YOUR SUCCESS

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Unlike Instagram, Facebook has changed its algorithm to prioritize content from family and friends over businesses. This is where Insights comes in! To measure your success, you must look at the data. Facebook, like many other platforms, now offers an analytics tool with their business page, to show you trends.

To access Facebook Insights, go to your business page on Facebook. At the top of the page, you will see multiple options such as **Page**, **Inbox**, etc. Click on the **Insights** tab. When you are on the Insights page, on the left-hand side, you will see many different tabs. These mean:

- **Overview:** This is a summary of the data from the last while. You can update the timeline to whatever best suits you. On this page, you will see information about page views, clicks, reach, top posts in that timeline, and Pages to Watch\* (competing pages that may give you ideas on how to run your own).
- **Promotions:** This gives you a summary of all paid advertisements you have on Facebook.
- **Followers:** This gives you information about who is following your page. It tracks the number of followers, actions your followers are taking, and where your followers are coming from.
- **Likes:** This gives you an overview of your likes. Note: this is likes on your page, not to your content.
- **Reach:** This tracks the reach of your posts. It also tracks engagement, such as likes and comments over time.
- **Page Views:** This page tracks who's viewing your page, how frequently, and any parameters about the viewers, such as age, gender, etc.
- **Page Previews:** This is an interesting one. It tracks the frequency of users that hovered over the page name to view a preview of the page.
- **Actions on Page:** This page tracks the number of actions people are taking on your page, such as website clicks and breaks it down by action type.
- **Posts:** This page is very important! It tells you information about when your followers are active on Facebook and which types of content are the most popular amongst them.
- **Events:** This page tracks any data around any events you may host.
- **Videos:** This page gives you insight into any videos you upload.
- **Stories:** This page gives you insight into any stories you upload.
- **People:** This page tells you everything you need to know about your fans and followers!
- **Local:** This is a Facebook setting that will allow you to see who's near you and give you insight into their activity and behaviour.

- **Messages:** This will give you insight into your direct messaging, like how often you're receiving messages, etc.

As you may be able to tell, Facebook gives a lot of data, and it can quickly become overwhelming. When you're looking at analytics - make sure only to spend time focusing on those that make the most sense for your goals. We recommend focusing on these three measurements:

## REACH

This page gives you an overview of how many individuals are viewing your content and how they engage with it. On this page, the information is divided into four sections:

- **Post Reach** - This represents the number of individual people who had one of your posts appear on their screen. This is divided into organic and inorganic (paid).
- **Reactions, Comments, Shares** - This represents the amount of positive engagement you've had. The data is divided by engagement type: likes, comments, and shares.
- **Total Reach** - This represents the number of individual people who had any of your content appear on their screen. This is divided into organic and inorganic (paid).

Each section has individual graphs that allow you to change periods, and hone in on what type of content is most successful. These four different sections give you insight into how well your content is doing and how far your content is reaching. Adjust your content scheduling and type over time and track the changes!

## POSTS

This page is divided into three different sections:

- **When Your Fans Are Online** - When your followers or people who like your page are on **Facebook**.
- **Post Types** - The success of different post types based on average reach and engagement.
- **Top Posts from Pages You Watch** - A curation of posts and their engagement from other pages that you view. It can be used to compare your stats to those of similar pages and help you find new ways to use your business page.

Additionally, this section also gives you running lists of all the posts you've uploaded and their data. Here, you can compare and contrast which posts were most successful and which were not.

Use the Posts insights to determine what time of day is best to upload based on follower activity, and what type of content best resonates with your audience.

## PAGEVIEWS

This page can give you insight on who's visiting your page and how frequently. The page is divided into three main sections:

- **Total Views** - This represents the total number of views your Facebook page is receiving. You can also dive in further by dividing this data by section.
- **Total People Who Viewed** - This represents the number of individuals that viewed your Facebook page. You can also divide this value by **Section, Age and Gender, Country, City, and Device**.
- **Top Sources** - This chart gives insight into from which website or application your views are coming.

Insights can help you learn more about how frequently your page is being visited, and where the views are coming from. A great tip is to compare the increase or decrease in views based on your content schedule! Perhaps you start uploading more visual content versus posts, track whether your views are increasing!

Your Facebook page can be an excellent place for your customers to learn more about your business and interact with you via message. It is important to remember that your Instagram profile and your Facebook page serve different purposes. Don't be scared off if the engagement or reach is very different between the two. Be sure to determine what you are using the platform for and track your analytics based on this.



# EMAIL CAMPAIGNING

Every marketing tool has its purpose, and each is essential for connecting with customers. Social media is great for sharing photos and content; however, it can create a lot of noise, and things can easily get lost. A direct channel for customers can be very helpful to share your products, story, and life directly with them. This is where email campaigning comes in. It allows you to create demand by telling your authentic story. Instead of just sending another email, use this tool to best showcase your lifestyle and products to potential customers that might need that pull to commit to becoming a customer.

Email campaigning is also useful to help to:



## BUILD YOUR BRAND

Consumers will have a higher likelihood of purchasing from you if they know you. Brand recognition is a key tool for driving new leads. Email campaigns can be a great way to grow that recognition and increase reach over time.

## INCREASE YOUR VISIBILITY

Did you recently write a great piece of content or release a new product to your store? Email campaigning can help drive traffic to your website or store for new items.

## FOSTER BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

You must continue to build relationships with your customers, no matter how big or small your business is. Email campaigning is a personal, direct line to your customers and can be very effective at creating relationships.

# GETTING STARTED WITH MAILCHIMP



## WHAT IS MAILCHIMP?

MailChimp is an online email marketing tool that give small businesses with limited resources, access to technology to help them grow. The tool lets you use templates, fill in your business-specific content, choose recipients, and send! Further, the tool provides services like email automation, marketing campaigns, and analytics\*.

**\*Note:** Analytics is the discovery, accumulation, and communication of data collected on your marketing, such as the number of clicks, views, and replies.

## SETTING UP YOUR MAILCHIMP ACCOUNT

Unlike many social media platforms, MailChimp is best accessed on your desktop and can be reached on any browser at any time. It does not require you to download any software.

For a food business, we would recommend trying the free option - yes, free! This allows you to test the service and see the results before committing to a monthly fee. Additionally, the free version gives you 2000 subscribers (contacts) and 12000 emails/month. That's plenty - especially if you are first starting with email campaigning. Also, the free version still gives you access to their excellent features mentioned above like automation and templates.



## BEST PRACTICES

These are some of the best features of MailChimp and how to use them:

### **TEMPLATES, TEMPLATES, AND MORE TEMPLATES!**

MailChimp has pre-made professional templates that allow you to fill in the blanks with your information. These templates include different kinds of text boxes, dividers, buttons, social media links, and more. You probably had never thought of adding those to your emails in the past! It takes the work and time out of designing templates! You can also save templates you've used in the past and use them in different email campaigns. These templates make your emails look professional while saving you time from having to format them time and time again.

#### **To increase your sales, use templates to create emails that include:**

- A header that represents your business and products. We recommend using a nice photograph and placing your logo on top.
- Photographs. Include great pictures of your farm, production process, and of you! Show people where their food is produced. Also, include photos of new or featured products.
- A link to where they can order and an explanation of how to order.
- Any social media links. This is where they can follow you for more information.
- Any other content. Blog posts that you've written or videos that show what you do.

### **THE POWER OF AUTOMATION**

Automation helps you to send the right emails to the right people at the right time. Instead of sending individual emails, you can save time and money by letting the system do it for you. Whether you are sending information about upcoming events, new products, or ordering deadlines, this system enables you to customize lists, content, and dates flawlessly.

### **OPEN AND CLICK RATES**

Unlike your regular inbox, MailChimp tracks who opened and clicked on the links provided in your emails. This can be a super powerful tool because it lets you know who's interacting with what content. It lets you give customers who aren't opening your emails or clicking on the link to your online store a little nudge. Notice someone is ignoring your emails? Maybe shoot them a call to remind them orders are due soon.

Further, it also lets you gauge which email campaigns work best. Maybe you try one email campaign with one title versus another. The higher open rate suggests that the title works well. Additionally, you try a campaign with more photographs of your farm versus photos of the products.



The click rate will suggest which photos engage your audience more. Tracking these two rates gives you a clear picture of how to structure your emails. These numbers can be found under **View Report** in the campaigns section in the program.

**To increase your sales, we suggest:**

When you create your first email campaign, put half of your contacts in one list and the other half in a different list. Switch up the email title between campaigns and add different photographs. By doing this, you can compare which content or wording works better! This may take a few tries, but it's a great way to get feedback on your strategies.

# MARKETING TOOLS

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## WHY TOOLS CAN SAVE YOU TIME (AND MONEY)

By this point, you may be overwhelmed by all of the different platforms and what comes along with managing them! We get it – it might seem like there's a lot to do; however, we recommend using a few tools to help you get better organized. Tools allow you to plan and view everything you need to in one place! Here are some of our recommended - and free - tools to help you get started:

### HOOTSUITE

This is your social media hub - we cannot recommend this platform enough. **Hootsuite** allows you to connect all of your social media platforms (including Facebook and Instagram) and have running feeds of your posts, likes and comments, and analytics.

The best part of the tool - is that they offer a free version! There are some limitations; however, the main features are still available. You can always start with the free version - and upgrade later if you choose. Here are some of Hootsuite's best features that can help you get organized:

#### Running Social Media Feeds

Hootsuite is set up so that you can see your different social media platforms in one place! You can connect Hootsuite with all of your platforms and create feeds that best represent your needs. The tool lets you add social media accounts and streams. The streams include:

- Home page
- Mentions
- Your content
- Likes/Comments/Retweets (this is dependent on the social media channel)
- Hashtags
- Scheduled
- New followers

This feature allows you to manage your social media accounts and view engagement, without having to visit each platform individually, saving you so much time!

This feature allows you to manage your social media accounts and view engagement, without having to visit each platform individually, saving you so much time!

**Note:** The tool does allow you to engage with your audience; however, it's abilities are limited. We recommend still checking your social media accounts (especially Instagram) to make sure you are engaging with your audience.

### **Ow.ly**

Hootsuite also has a URL condenser tool that allows you to put in links and it will instantly condense it into a shorter one. This is important for social media as it reduces the number of characters used and reduces visual clutter from a post. To use, copy, and paste your link into the **Add a Link** section of the post composer and click **Shrink**.

### **Post Scheduling**

This is the best feature of the tool and the main reason we recommend it! Similar to other social media management tools, Hootsuite allows you to schedule your content ahead of time.

You can write your posts, add images and links, and schedule the time and date for it to be posted. After scheduling, you can always edit the content and schedule time! This saves so much time from having to upload posts manually and keeps consistency in your uploading schedule.

**Note:** With the free version, you are only able to schedule up to 30 posts at a time

### **Social Media Resources**

Further to the great features the tool provides, Hootsuite also offers an abundance of free courses and content all about social media marketing. They are an expert in the business and can provide you with great tips and ideas to help you create the best possible marketing strategy!

### **CANVA**

Not all of us are graphic designers by trade - so it can be a challenge to create strong graphics for your online presence. A great (and free) tool to consider is Canva. Canva is an online graphic designing tool that allows you to create everything from logos, social media posts, presentations, flyers, etc.

The tool provides you with hundreds of templates, images, and text fonts to help you create the compelling visuals. Most importantly - it so easy to use!



# CONCLUSION

There is so much opportunity being offered by digital marketing. In our opinion, it's all about experimenting to find what works. Be intentional, be yourself, and try different things. This handbook serves as a guideline to introduce the various options that are available, and how to get the most out of the tools.

If we could leave you with one message - it's simple - your business needs to be online and it is not difficult. There is an abundance of new customers and orders waiting for you! One step at a time, and before you know it, these digital marketing practices will become second nature. You just need to get started!

**Good luck!**  
 **Local Line**