



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office

Local Enterprise Week 2026

Making it Happen





FOLLOW



20 WAYS TO GROW YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

What We Will Cover

Step 1: Get the fundamentals right

1. Be clear about “why” people should follow your account
2. How to create a posting plan
3. How to make your accounts immediately appear “interesting” when people land on them

Step 2: How to employ tactics specific to each social network

4. On some networks you can invite your personal connections to follow your business account.
5. How to run a competition to grow followers
6. Social Media SEO – how to ensure your accounts get found by people searching
7. Social Media SEO – How to ensure your posts get found by people searching
8. How to get noticed by your target audience who follow similar accounts to you
9. Consider collaborating with other accounts
10. Utilise formats that get your content shown to non followers
11. Consider running an ad to promote your account to non followers

Step 3: Convert followers on one social network to follow you on another

12. Try adding a cross promote message to the bottom of a post
13. Try sending out a specific post
14. Consider turning that post into an ad

Step 4: Convert your website visitors into followers

15. Add links to your main social networks to your web pages
16. How to pull your social media content into your website to generate followers
17. How to prompt website visitors to follow you

Step 5: Convert people you contact through business

18. Utilise your email to prompt people to follow you
19. Utilise your email lists
20. Utilise marketing and promotional material

1. Be clear about “why” people should follow your account

Why?

In order to attract followers we need to post interesting content

Write some bullet points to complete this sentence

“Follow us and you will receive”

Are the reasons varied and compelling?
Or are you just selling your products?

Figure out where you are on this **spectrum**

Very Suited to Instagram

The Middle

Not so Suited to Instagram



Visual Products

- Jewellers
- Boutiques
 - Florists
 - Furniture
- Tattoo Parlours
- Photographers
 - Crafts

- Gym
- Yoga
- Hotel
- B&B

Not visual but not so serious

- Life coach
- Mindfulness
- Recruitment
- Marketing

Not visual & Serious Information

- Solicitors
- Accountants
- Drain Company

If you are visual on the left:

You can send out lots of posts about your products & services and it won't get boring. People won't feel like they are constantly being sold at

If you are in the middle you need to

- think about interesting , helpful tips and advice interspersed with sales posts
- Think about a visual strategy. What eye catching images and videos can you post?

What works on social media

What Doesn't Work



Positioning your brand as overly salesy or boring through ...

- Selling selling selling through your page updates
- Repetitive and uninteresting updates

What Does Work



Increasing awareness, engagement and trust in your brand through

- Understanding where on the spectrum you are – visually interesting products or not and then tailoring your content.
- Sharing your knowledge and expertise in order to help customers – e.g. through videos, blog posts or ebooks
- Sharing links to 3rd party information that they would find useful
- Sharing photos or videos about your company that are interesting and engaging.
- Giving away free products as prizes through a promotion or contest

2. How to develop a Posting Plan – Do some research



Spend time doing this research

On each of the social networks that you use, do a search for companies in your sector and find 7-10

Look beyond Ireland – search for businesses in London, Manchester

Ask yourself

- Which accounts do I find dull and why? Avoid posting the type of content they are posting.
- Which accounts do you immediately find interesting and why?
- What content is interesting?
- What topics are they posting about?
- What type of images and videos are they creating?
- What levels of engagement are they receiving in terms of likes, comments and followers?
- Could we create those within our business?

This will feed into your posting strategy

Example Posting Plan

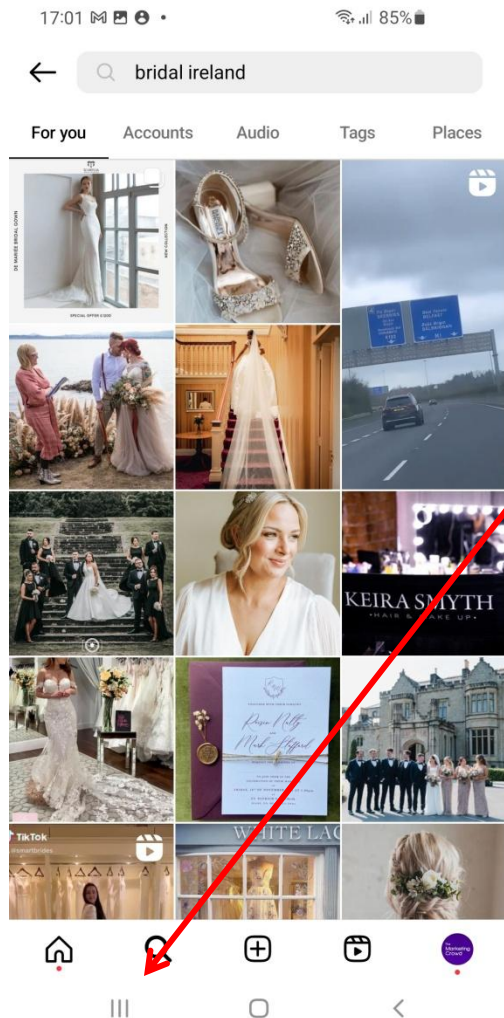


For A Hotel

Social media posts will include ...

- Things to do when you are on holiday in this area
- Upcoming events in the area
- Behind the scenes images and videos of staff
- Recipes from the Head Chef
- Wellness tips from the Spa
- Win a free meal / Win a free stay
- Special offers

How to find similar businesses on Instagram



Tap on the search icon in the menu

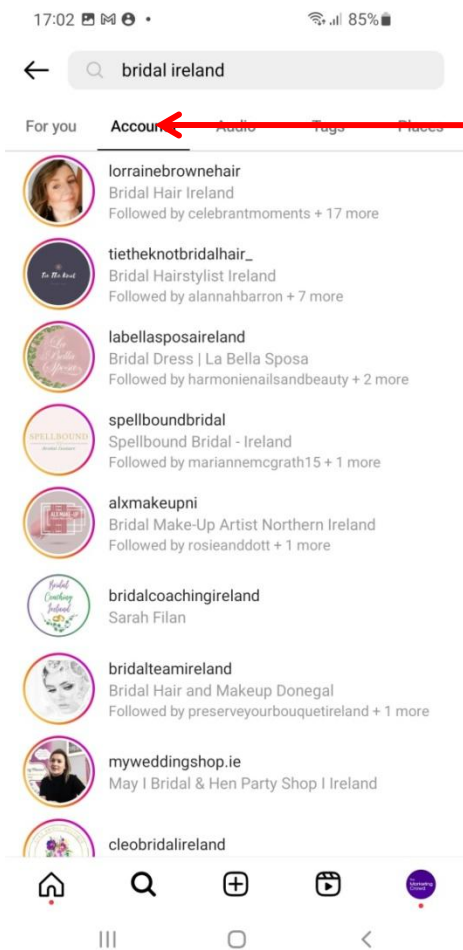
When you type in search words you will be taken to the search results.

The first category is “For you”

I searched for Bridal Ireland so these are posts and reels that have those 2 words somewhere in the caption – either in the sentences or in Hashtags.

Hashtags increase your ability to appear in these results

How to find similar businesses on Instagram



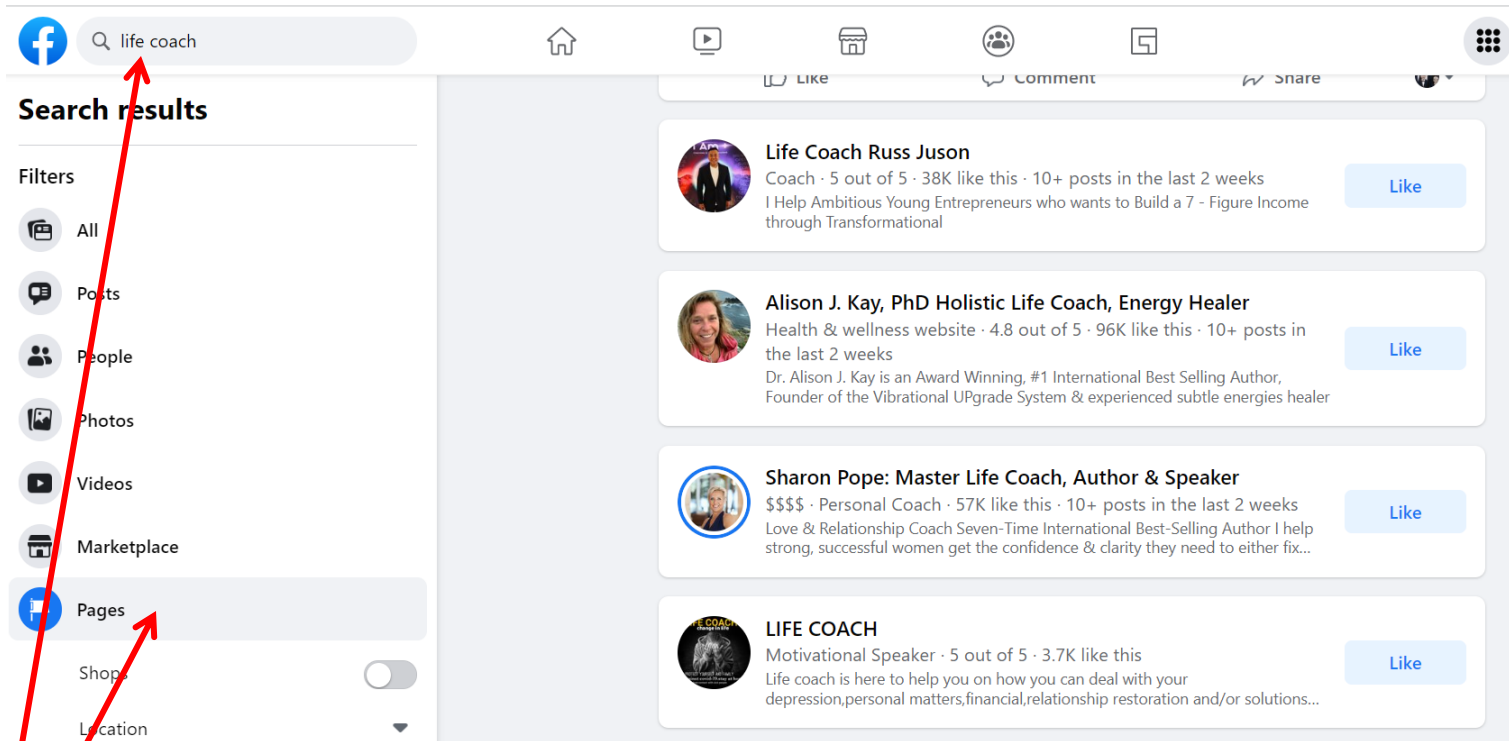
Next category is Accounts

They are now showing me accounts that have the words Bridal and Ireland in the name or username of the Account

Search for businesses like your and then view their profiles. Ask Yourself

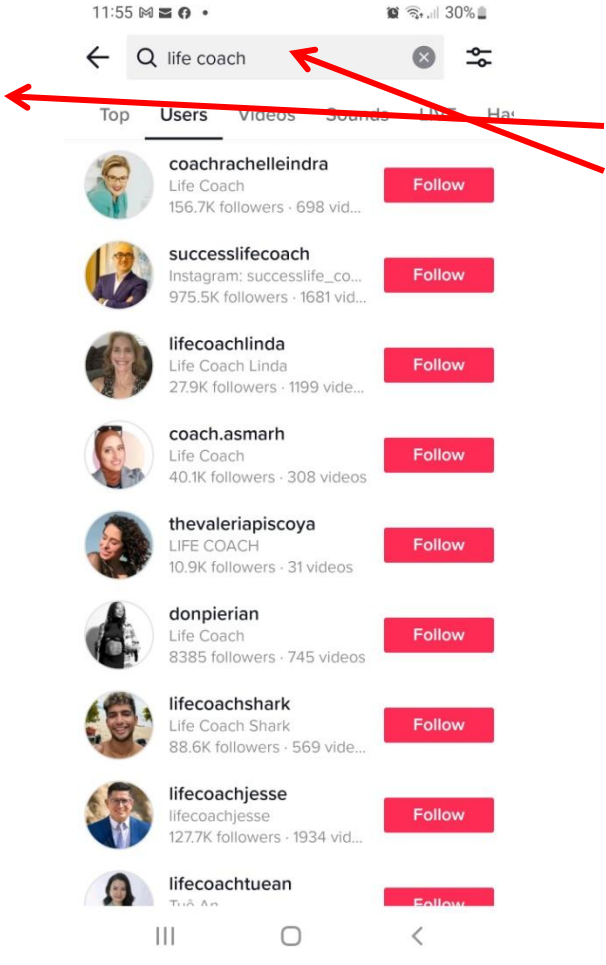
1. What are they posting?
2. Is the content interesting?
3. Does the grid look visually interesting?
4. Would you want to follow this account and if not why not?

How to find similar businesses on Facebook



1. On desktop, click into the search box top left
2. Type in your search term e.g.. Life coach.
3. Then click "pages" on the left hand menu
4. Browse through the results and view their pages
5. Then change the search to life coach Ireland or Life coach London

How to find similar businesses on Tik Tok



1. When you are on the home feed, Tap on the search icon top right.
2. Then Type in your search term e.g.. Life coach.
3. Browse through the results and view their profiles
4. Then change the search to life coach Ireland or Life coach London

2. How to develop a Posting Plan – Ask Chat GPT


ChatGPT 4o ▾




What can I help with?


Message ChatGPT




 Create image

 Summarize text

 Code

 Get advice

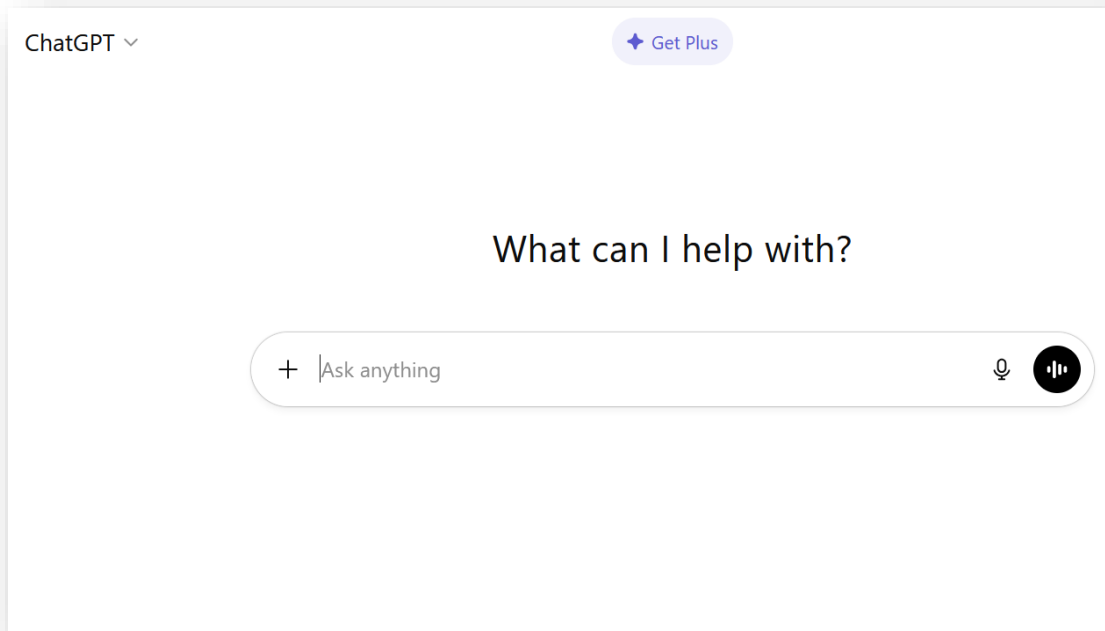
 Brainstorm

More

Go to chatgpt.com

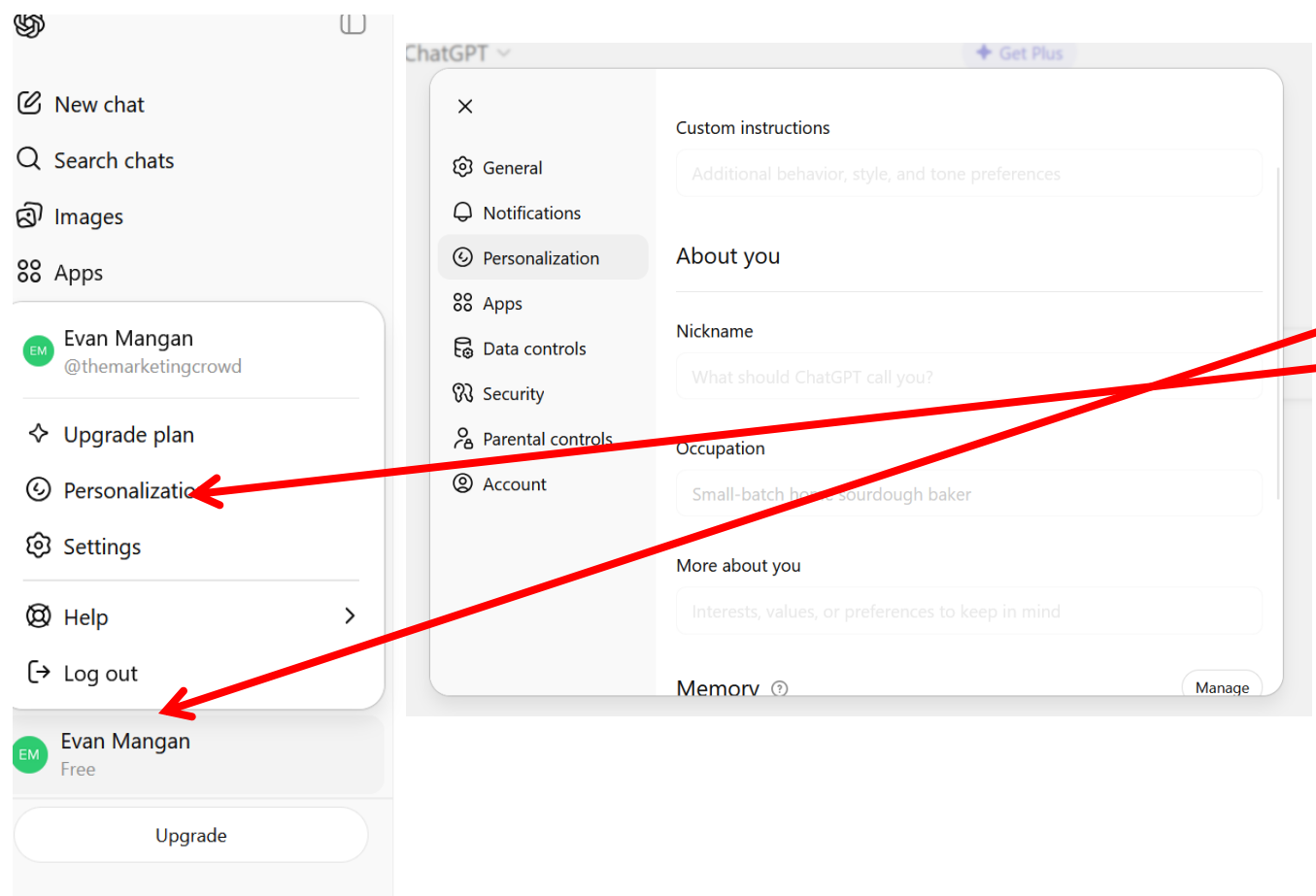
Create a free account if you don't have one

Chat GPT – Fast Answers



By default, in Chat GPT you are getting a quick answer

Chat GPT– Tailored Answers (personalisation)



You can provide lots of context and custom instructions in the personalisation section

Click on your name Then personalisation

Then fill in the custom instructions and about you boxes.

Give Chat GPT lots of context about your business and answer will become far more tailored to you.

2. How to develop a Posting Plan – Ask Chat GPT

ChatGPT Auto ▾

Act like an Instagram marketing expert and brainstorm 20 topics for Reels and Posts for my business that will increase engagement and grow our followers

Based on what I know about your boutique business (occasion wear, strong focus on mother-of-the-bride and women 30+, with stores and e-commerce), the content that tends to grow followers fastest falls into three categories:

- Helpful advice
- Behind-the-scenes / personality
- Transformation / styling

Below are 20 Reel and post ideas designed specifically to attract the type of followers who could become customers, not just random views.

20 Instagram Reel & Post Ideas for Ladies Boutique

1. "5 Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a Mother of the Bride Dress"

+ Ask anything

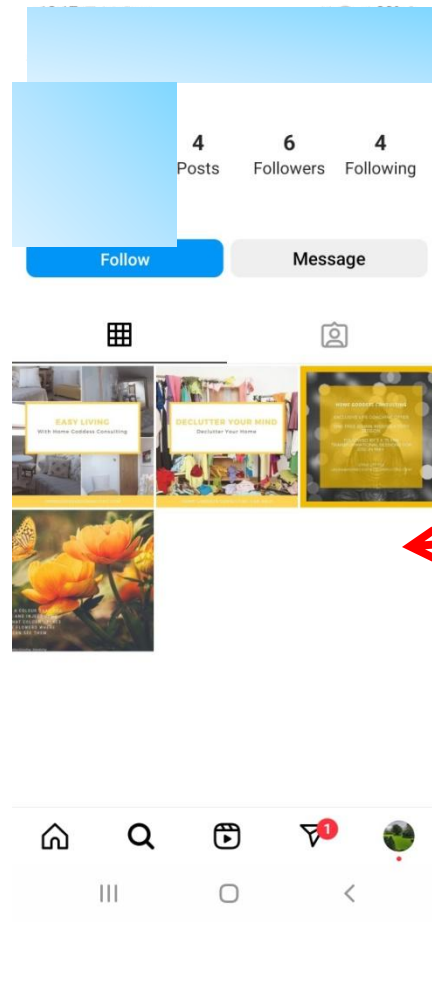


ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info. See Cookie Preferences.

Then ask Chat GPT ...

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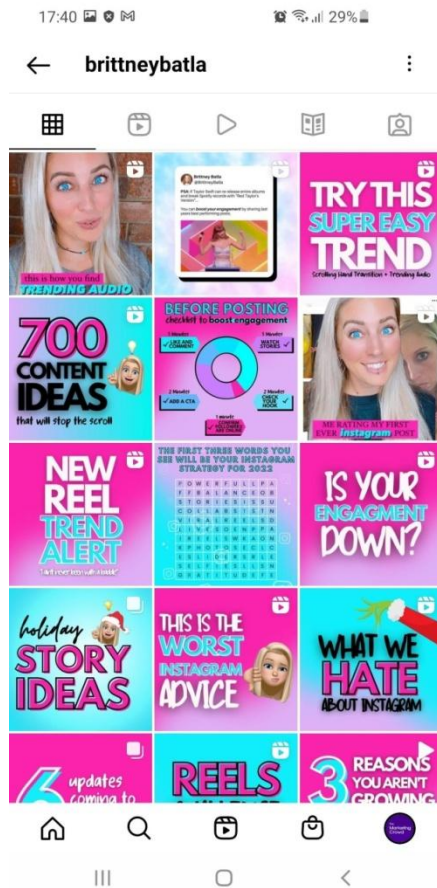
If you are starting out on a social network and you are trying to grow your followers, ensure you post 10 – 12 posts as soon as possible – not over a few weeks or months

Why?

If there are few posts, people are less inclined to follow because they will think

1. Your account isn't very active so isn't worth following
2. They don't have enough to go on – they don't know if you will be posting interesting content .

On Instagram - Ensure the grid creates an initial good impression – it needs to look visually appealing



Why?

People can immediately see your most recent 12 posts all at once and will form an immediate impression of whether your account looks interesting.

If you have visually beautiful products, this is easy. Post photos / videos of your beautiful products

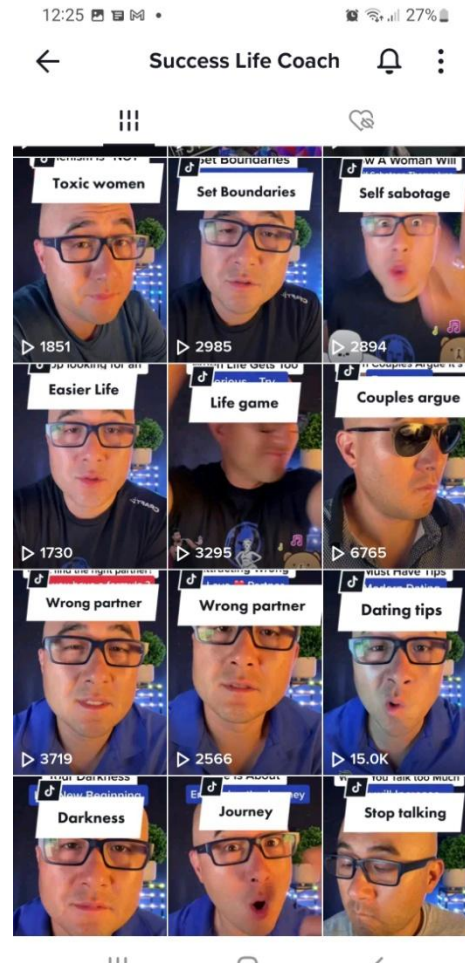
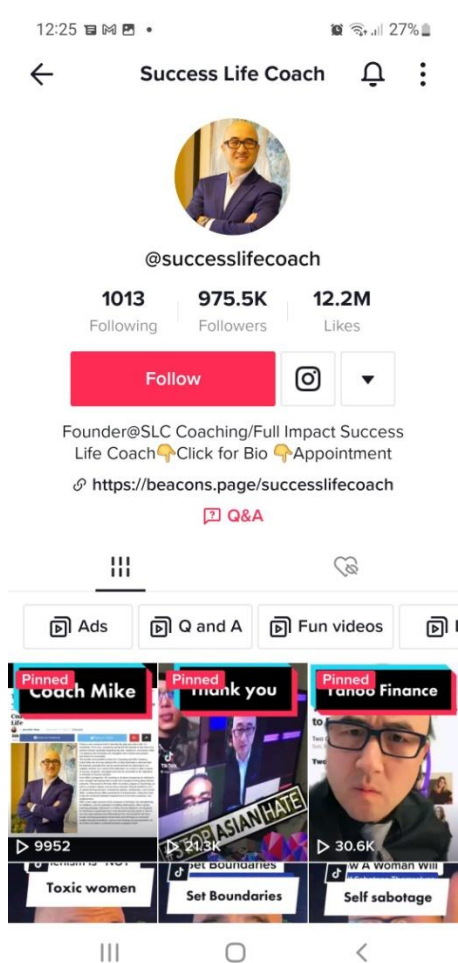
If you are in the middle of the spectrum – no physical or beautiful products you need to find a way to make it visually interesting

- Use eye catching stock images
- Use your brand colours as the main theme in your posts – design these in Canva
- Make yourself prominent in the image / videos

Top tips for all types of businesses

1. Design eye catching covers for your videos and reels using Canva
2. Pin 3 very interesting posts to the top of your grid

On TikTok - Ensure the grid creates an initial good impression – it needs to look visually appealing



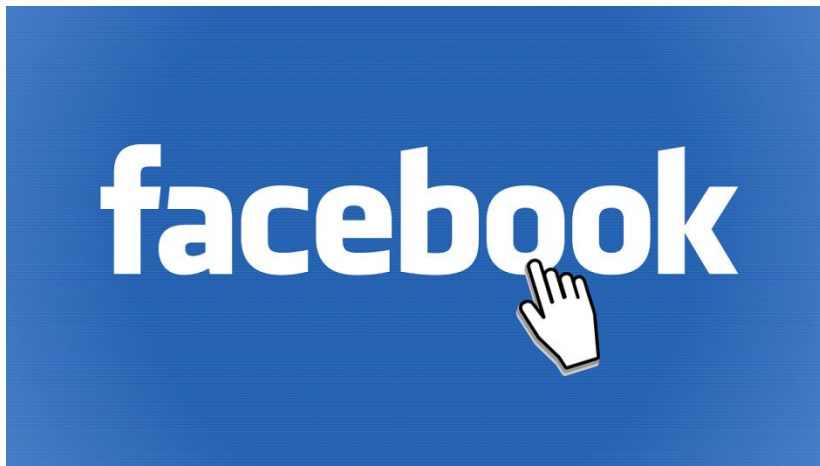
Why?

People can immediately see your most recent 6-12 posts all at once and will form an immediate impression of whether your account looks interesting.

Top tips for all types of businesses

1. Search for other businesses like yours and check their profiles. What type of covers have they chosen and which do you like the “look and feel” of
2. Add text to the cover of all your TikToks so people can immediately see what your videos are about and it will tempt them to watch
3. Pin 3 very interesting TikToks to the top of your grid

On Facebook



People don't immediately see your recent 8-12 posts all at once, they mainly see them one by one as they scroll down.

Tip for all businesses

- Always look at your most recent 4-5 posts and ask yourself would a visitor to the profile find this mix of posts interesting? Or would they think ...
 - Always selling
 - Dull images
 - Not enough variety
 - Too much sharing of other people's stuff
-
- Aim for a mix of images, videos, multiple images
 - Aim for a variety of topics
 - Aim for a balance of selling Vs informative / interesting

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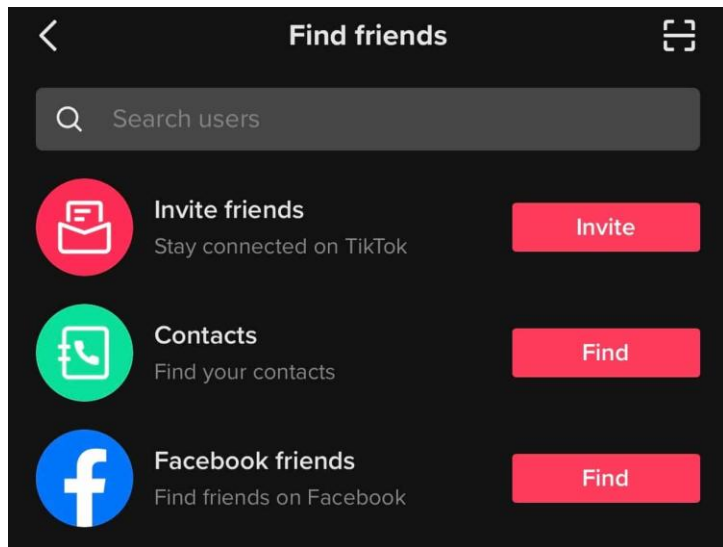
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4. On some networks you can invite your personal connections to follow your business account.

Even though your friends might not be potential customers for your business, there are a number of advantages to inviting your friends to follow you on social media



1. **It helps grow your numbers when starting out on a new social network e.g.. TikTok or Instagram**
2. **All of the algorithms place a lot of weight on engagement and the more engagement your content gets, the more likely they are to show it to more people.**

Your friends are likely to engage with your posts (like and comment and perhaps share) just to support you but this can then result in your reaching more of your followers.

4. On some networks you can invite your personal connections to follow your business account.

Important Tip

When inviting anyone to Follow your business account on Social Media, always ...

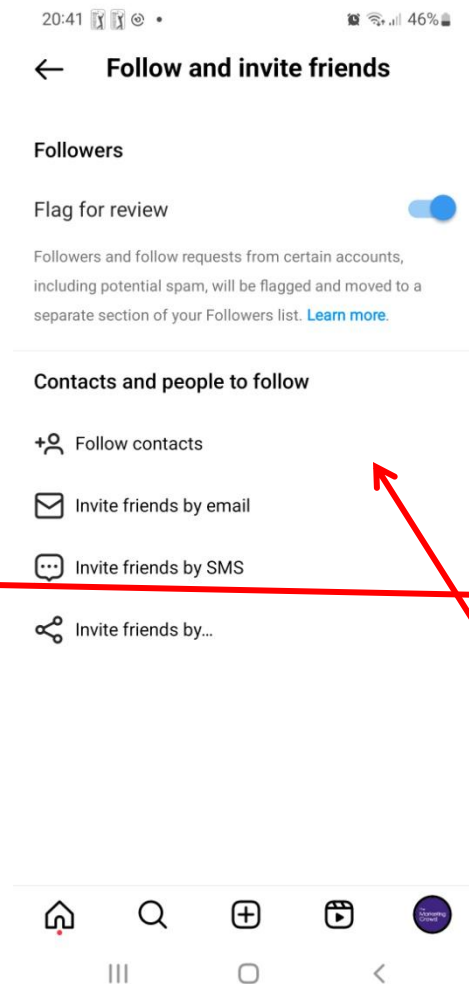
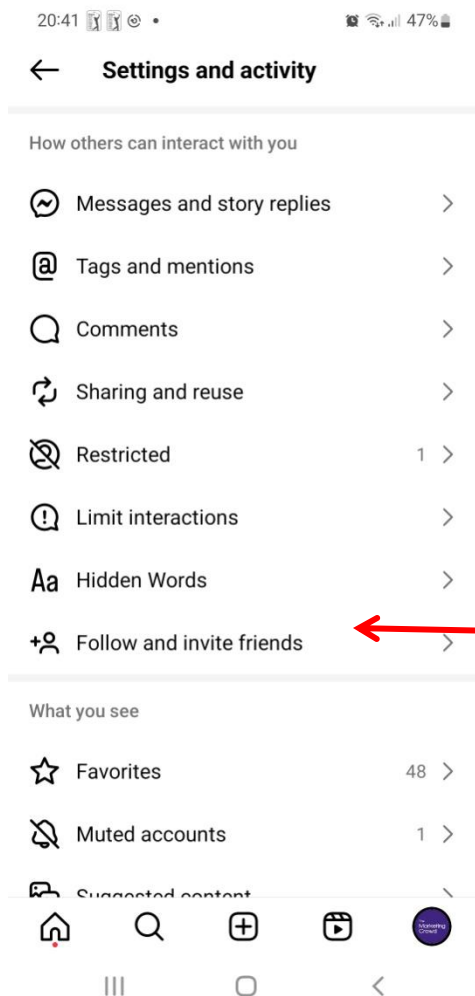
Explain how they will benefit from your account.

Hi John

Just to let you know that we now have an account for our business on Instagram. I hope you could follow our account and if you do you will be the first to hear about X, we will be sharing tips about Y and will be running many competitions giving away Z.



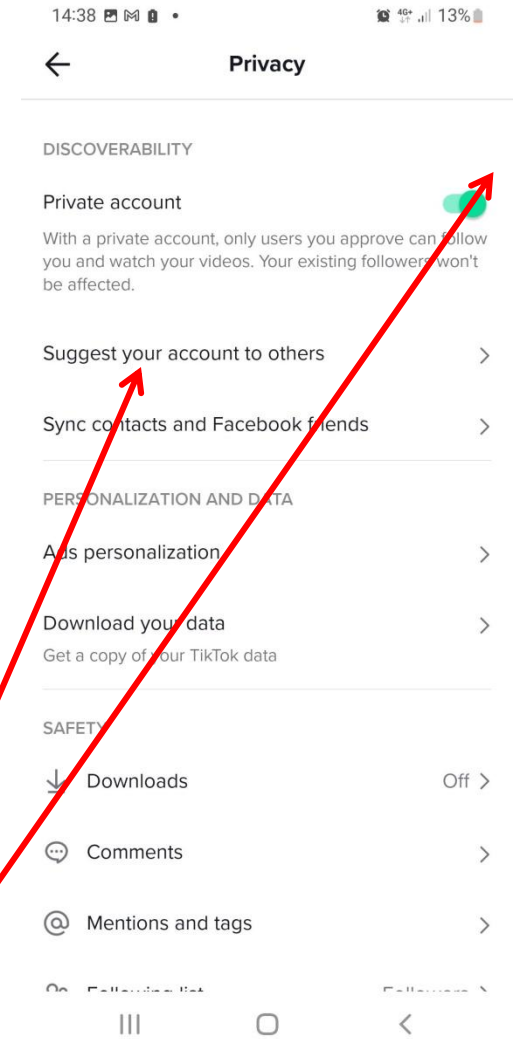
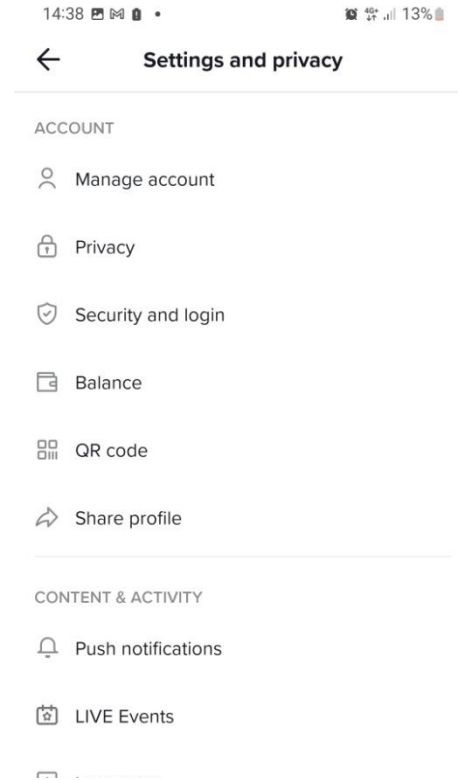
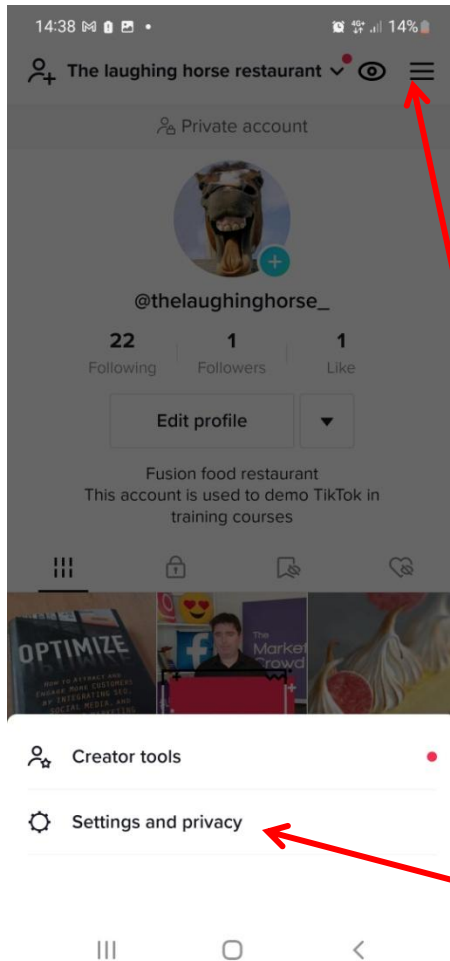
On Instagram: Option : Invite people to follow you



- **Go to your profile**
- **Tap on menu top right**
- **Tap on Follow and invite friends**

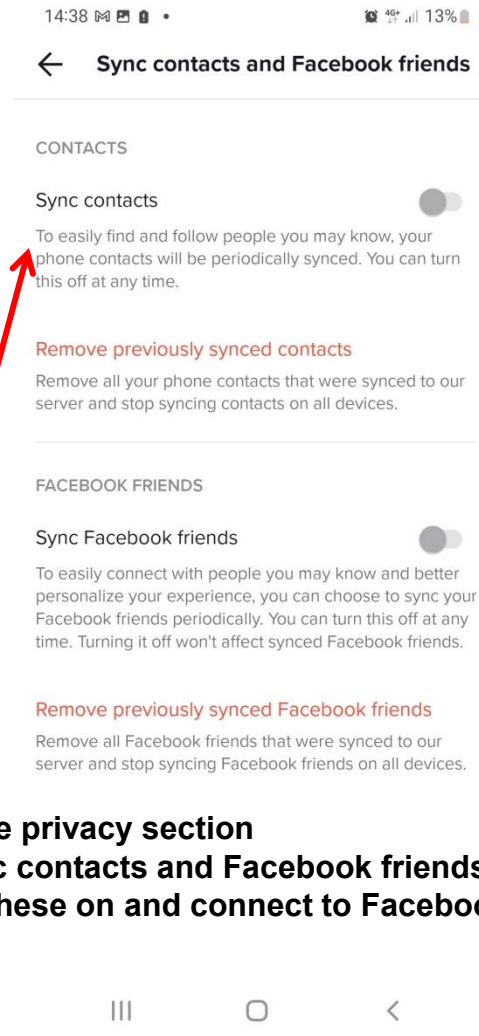
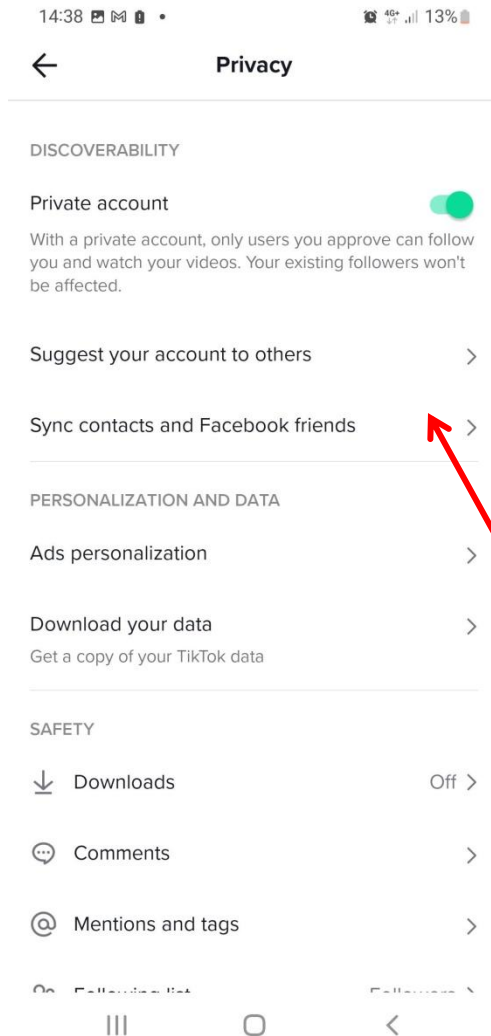
You can now generate an email, text message or WhatsApp message inviting people to follow you

On TikTok: 1. Get your account suggested to friends and you will be suggested as an account they could follow



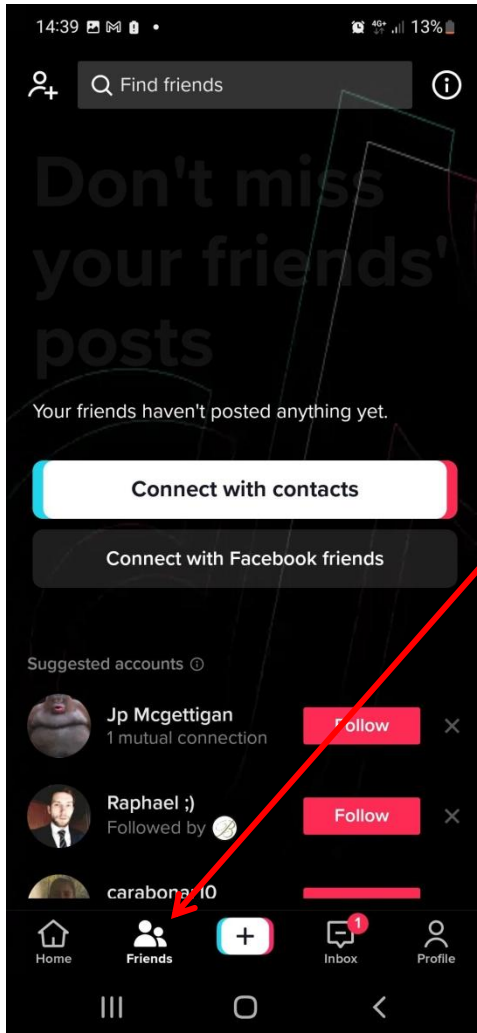
- Go to your profile
- Tap on menu top right
- Tap on settings and privacy
- Tap on Privacy
- Tap on Suggest your account to others

On TikTok: 2. To get find the people you know on TikTok – so you could follow and they might follow back – sync your contacts and Facebook friends



- Go to the privacy section
- Tap sync contacts and Facebook friends
- Switch these on and connect to Facebook if prompted

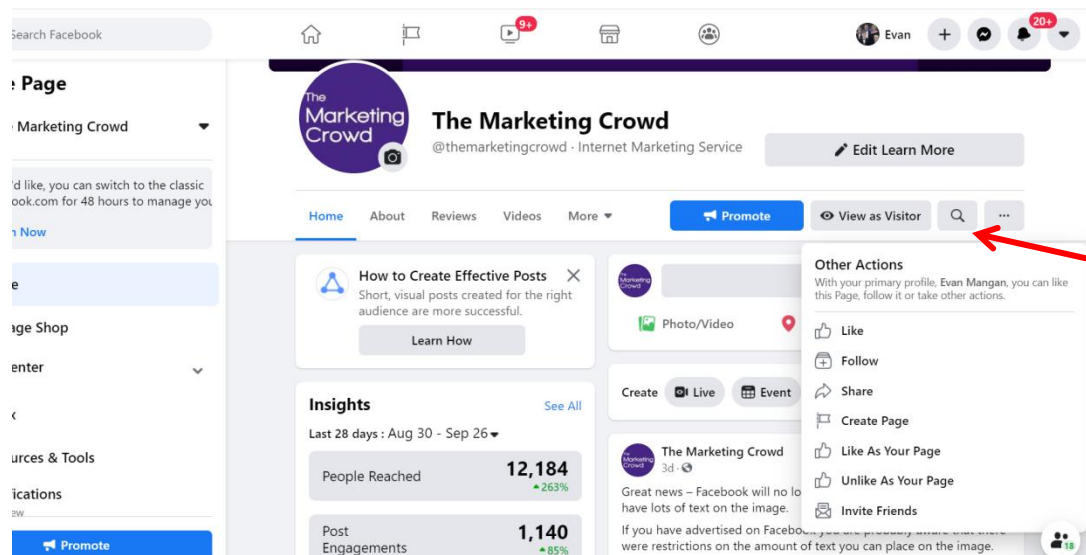
On TikTok: 3. Regularly check the "friends" feed and engage with your friends videos. They will likely engage with yours.



- Tap friends in the menu
- If you haven't already, tap connect with contacts and Facebook friends
- Your feed will now contain videos from friends and contacts.

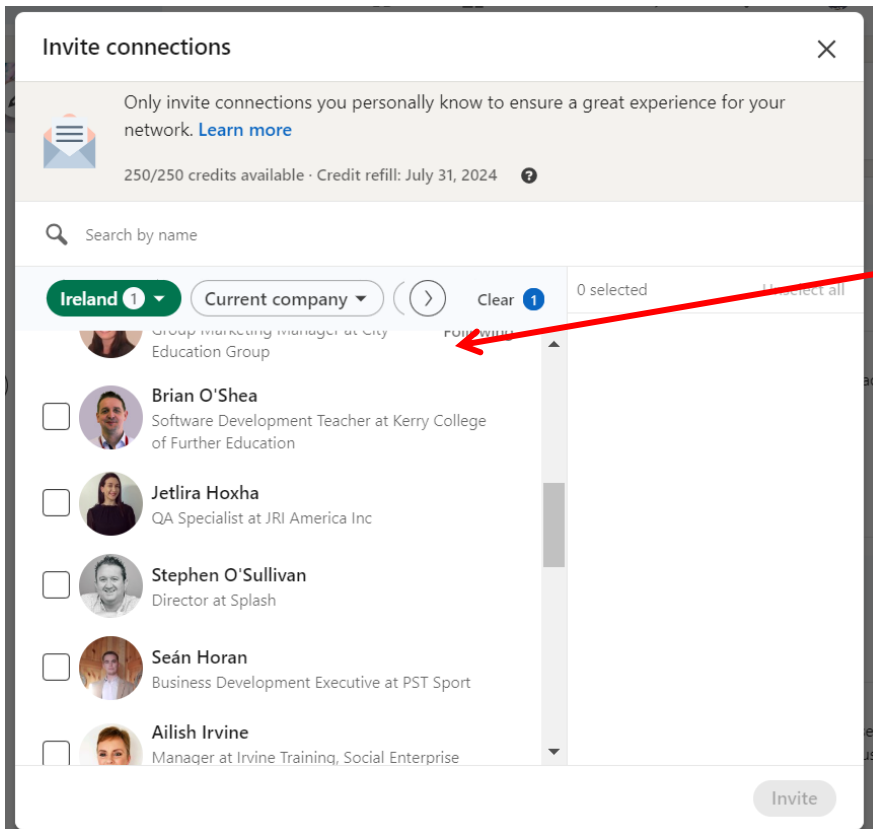
- Engage with these videos regularly and these account will likely follow and engage with you.

On Facebook – Invite your Facebook friends to like your page



- On desktop, click on the 3 dots
- Click on invite friends
- Then tick next to the friends that you want to invite – they will get a notification.
- Also tick – send invite in messenger as they will notice this more.

On LinkedIn – Invite your 1st level connections to follow your page



The best way to grow your followers is to invite your 1st level connections to follow your Page

On the left menu of your page click on Invite to follow

You can then browse through your connections and tick the ones you wish to invite.

You can invite 250 per month

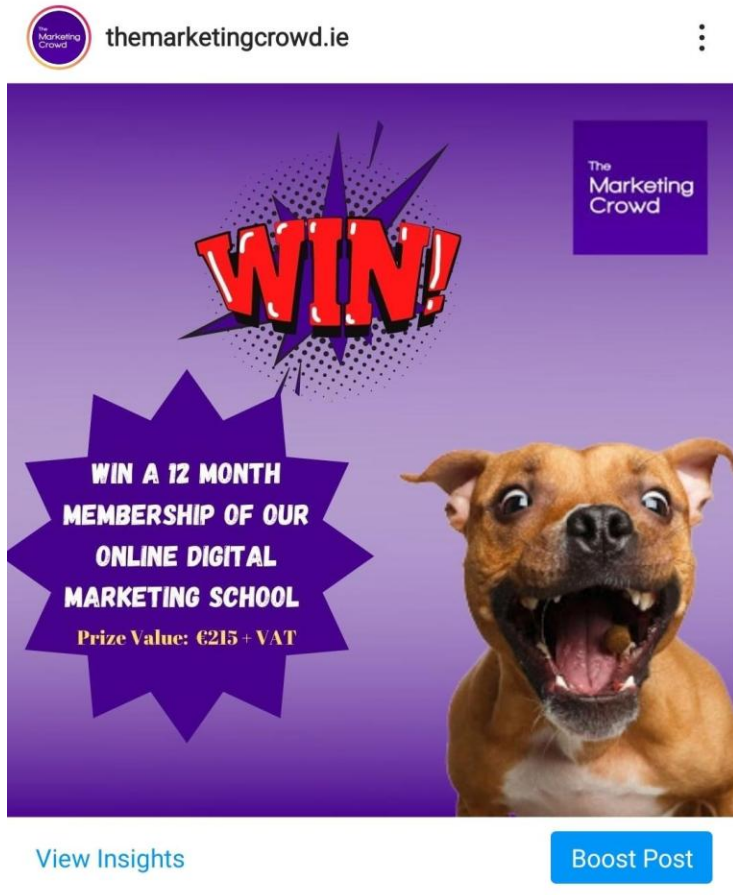
5. How to run a competition to grow followers



Competitions

- Get engagement which will increase the reach of the post.
- More of your followers will see it and are likely to engage which means the algorithms are more likely to show your future posts to those followers.
- It can also be a great way to grow your followers

Run an Instagram competition



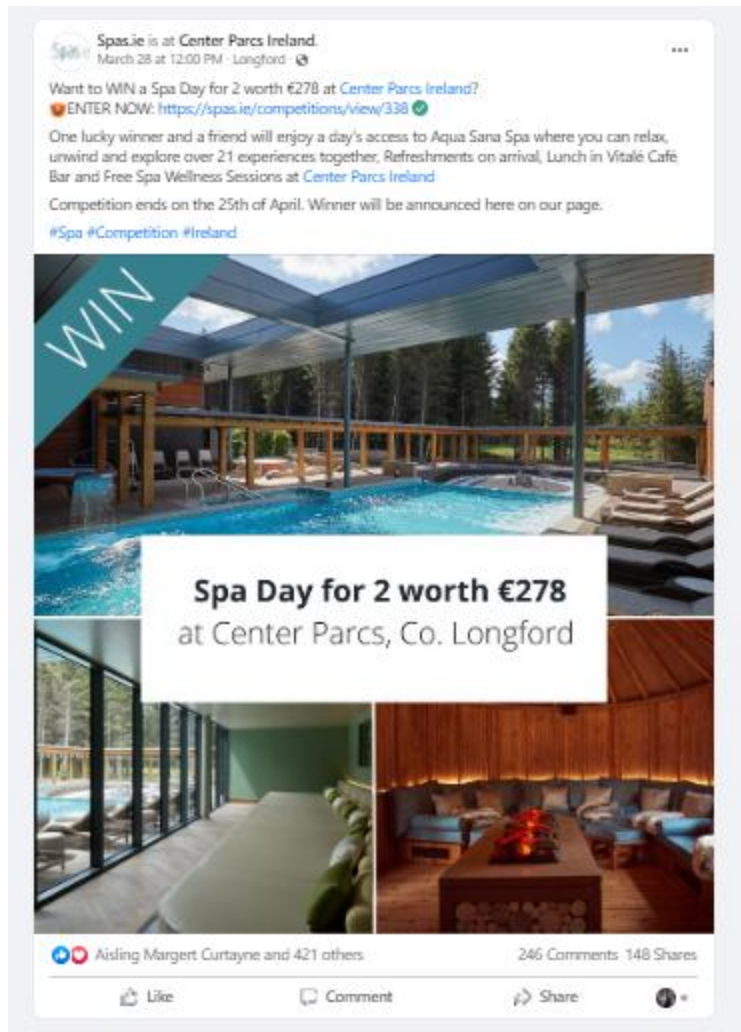
Run a contest giving one of your products away.

You can ask people to enter by ...

1. Following your account
2. Liking the post
3. Tagging a friend (s) who would also be interested in the product

Ensure you use hashtags like #instacontest #instagiveaway #contest to increase the reach

Run a Facebook competition



Run a contest giving one of your products away.

You can ask people to enter by:

1. Liking the post
2. Commenting

You cannot require people to:

- a) Like the page
- b) Share the post
- c) Tag their friends

However, you could say "Feel free to share"

Important!

When people like your post but have not liked the page you should then invite them to like the page

6. Social Media SEO – how to ensure your accounts get found by people searching



People are on Instagram, and TikTok following their interests.

Therefore they are searching for accounts to do with their interests.

On Instagram : Consider adding key words / search terms to your profile name. (max 60characters)

On TikTok – Consider adding keywords to your name and the bio

On Facebook – Keyword in the page name get you found and also the page description / location

7. Social Media SEO – How to ensure your posts get found by people searching

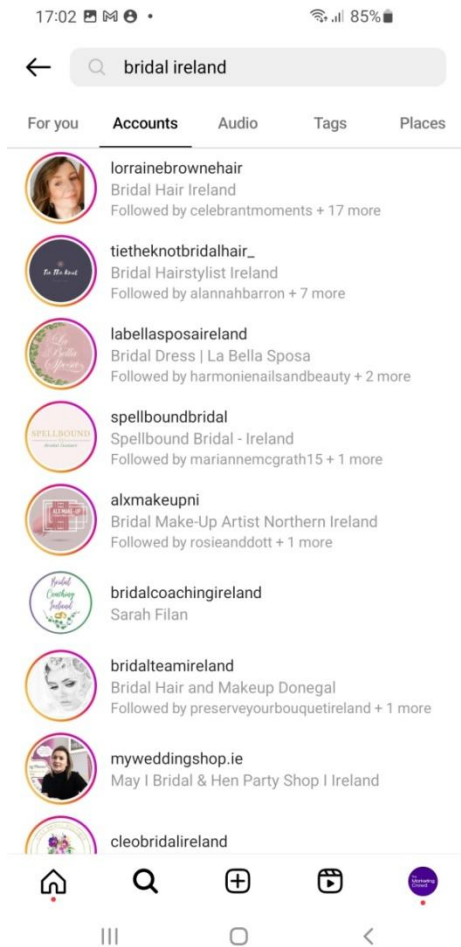


Use keywords in the content of your posts

On all the Social networks, people can search for posts that contain a word or phrase. So ensure that you are including some key phrases in the captions.

However, on some social networks Hashtags are important to get your content found.

7. Social Media SEO – How to ensure your posts get found by people searching



About Hashtags

1. The main way people can find posts or Reels on Instagram to do with a topic is to search using search words e.g.. Bridal Ireland, Digital marketing

For you search results show you content that have the search words in the caption or spoken the in the text of the video. The easiest way to get the search words in the caption is by using hashtags. You can add up to 5

It will help you attract more followers. People will find and discover your content and when they click through to your profile they will hopefully follow you.

8. How to get noticed by your target audience who follow similar accounts to you



Engage within your niche or locality – Like and comment on posts in your niche or locality

When you comment on a post as your business profile it has two benefits

1. Other viewers of the post might click through to your profile to check you out
2. The person whose post you commented on will certainly check out your profile

Therefore, it's a good idea to comment on posts using your business account ...

- That would be seen by a lot of people that you would like to have as followers – this could be within your sector or locality)
- That were sent out by people that you think could become your customers. You could find these people through hashtags or because they follow a competitor

9. Consider collaborating with other accounts on Instagram & Facebook



You can tag a collaborator on your posts or Reels and when you do ...

1. They can accept the collaboration
2. Your post or Reel will reach the collaborators followers as well as yours
3. Both of your profile names will appear at the top of the Post / Reel
4. The engagement stats from both sets of followers are aggregated in the post / Reel
5. It could help grow your followers as people can click through to both accounts

Collaborator Posts / Reels on Instagram



Step 1. Open Instagram and click on the +

To get started, open your Instagram app. Tap on the + symbol at the top right corner of your screen.

Step 2. Select your image or video

Next, tap on either Post, Story, Reel, or Live. Select the image or Instagram video you would like to share, then tap Next when you're ready.

Editing options will appear.

If you wish to edit your image or video go ahead, if not tap Next.

Collaborator Posts / Reels on Instagram



Step 3. Tag people

Tap on the Tag People option, then tap Invite Collaborator.

Step 4. How to invite a collaborator on Instagram

Search for people to co-author using the tagging screen. When you invite a collaborator, once they have accepted, they can share your post on their profile grid and with their followers in Feed. If they do, they'll be shown as another author on the post.

Your collaborators will appear below the Add Tag and Edit Collaborator tabs. The Collab tag will automatically appear in the middle of your Instagram post. Tap Done to save changes.

Step 5. The collaborator will then get a notification and if they accept the collaboration it will get distributed to their followers

Ways to use Collaborator posts / Reels



Are there Instagram accounts;

1. that are business partners? Do you deliver a product or service in conjunction with another account?

Could you send out a post/ Reel about that product or service or some helpful content that is relevant?

2. that are not competitors but you are both targeting similar audiences? You could both benefit.

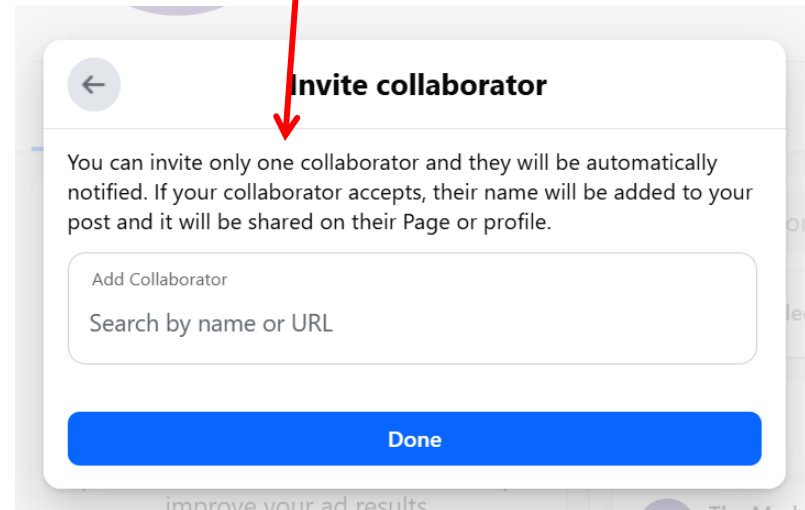
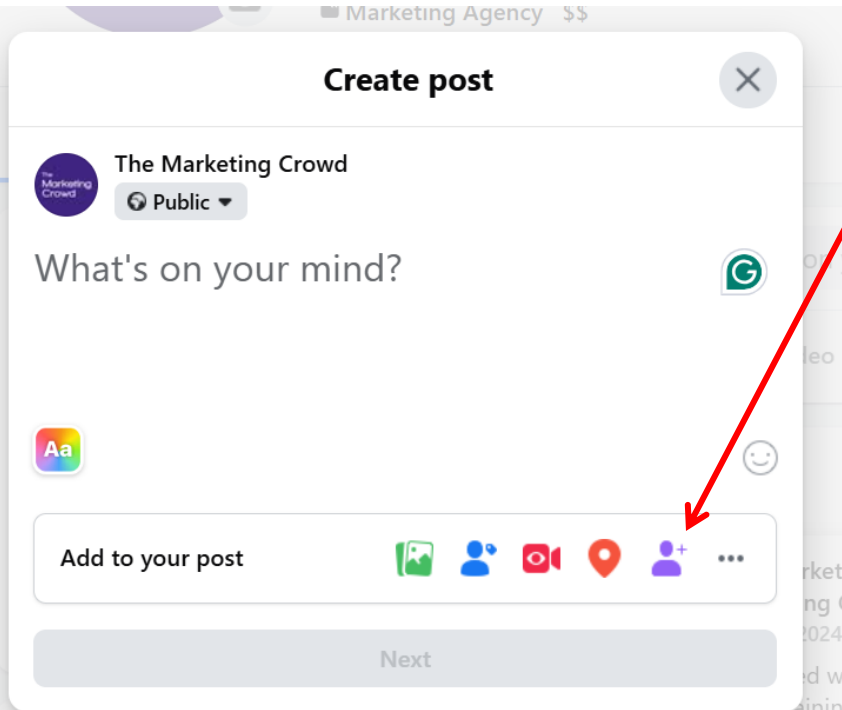
Make a list of accounts in your industry or town/ county that you could approach. However, ensure you explain:-

- a) How the post would be relevant for both accounts – not just yours.
- b) How both accounts will benefit.

You can also create collaborator posts & Reels on Facebook

When you are creating a post on Facebook, click on the icon for collaborator

Then search for an invite the collaborator



10. Utilise formats that get your content shown to non followers



On TikTok, your video will be shown to hundreds / thousands of non followers

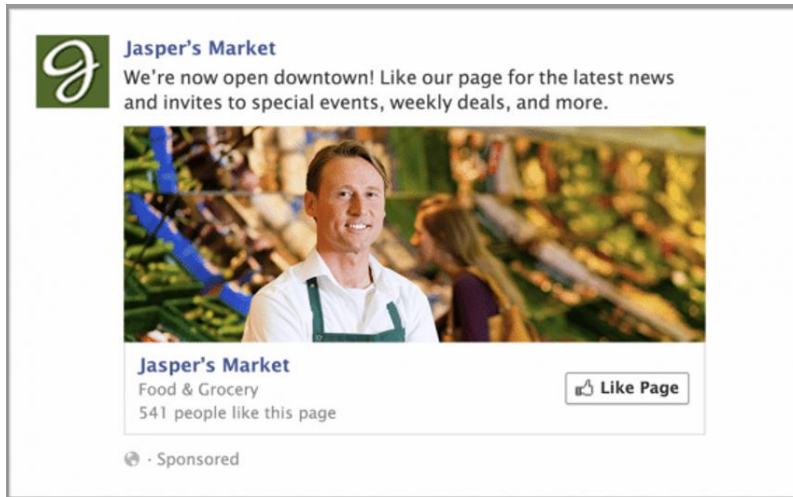
On Facebook your Reels could be shown to non followers if the algorithm thinks it is interesting and your posts could be “suggested” to non followers

But on Instagram, you can reach non followers by posting Reels because they go into a Reels feed mainly seen by non followers

On Instagram – post more Reels

Note – you can also send out a “trial” reel on Instagram which will be shown to non followers who have an interest in that topic. They might then choose to follow you. .

11. Consider the Pros and Cons of running an ad to promote your account to non followers



All the main social networks allow you to run an ad campaign to grow your followers/

This could be worth considering if

- a) It is your main social network and
- b) You are struggling to grow followers bit you need more quickly for credibility

However, also consider this ...

1. It can be very expensive to convert strangers / cold audience into followers

LinkedIn

Ads Guide | Follower Ads

Promote your LinkedIn Page to seamlessly acquire followers



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12. Try adding a cross promote message to the bottom of a post

When it arrives it looks like it will be very useful for small businesses in Ireland who want to start selling more online as we will get a centralised shop that we can then promote across Facebook & Instagram through posts, stories and Ads.

If you would like to read more about this you can check out the article on Techcrunch

<https://techcrunch.com/2020/05/19/facebook-shops/> ✓

Evan

PS - Are you following us on Instagram? If you'd like to get more tips on the best apps and tools for digital marketing click on the link below and then tap on follow <https://www.instagram.com/themarketingcrowd.ie/> ✓

Occasionally adding a prompt at the end of your Facebook posts is a good way to nudge your Facebook followers to also follow you on Instagram



13. Try sending out a specific post



Send out a Facebook post prompting your followers asking them to follow you on Instagram

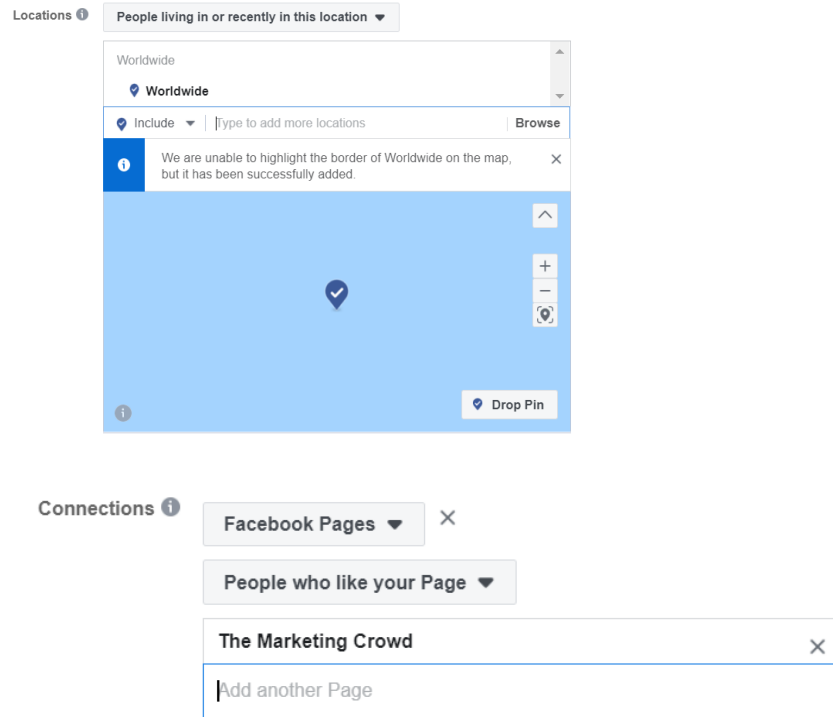
Or send out an Instagram post asking your followers to follow you on TikTok

Ensure you tell them why they should follow you on The other social network as well as this one

E.g. The way the algorithm works you don't get to see all of our posts but if you also follow us on x you have a greater chance of seeing us.

Also, we tend to post different content on x

14. Consider turning that post into an ad



If you want to advertise to your Facebook followers who ALSO use Instagram (in order to prompt them to follow you on Instagram)

1. Go to the Ads tool (within Ads manager) on Facebook
2. Select engagement as an objective
3. Instead of targeting Ireland select “worldwide”
4. The under Custom audiences select your Facebook page followers 9Note – you will need to firstly create this custom audience in the audiences section of Ads manager)
5. Then under placement select Manual placement untick all the placements except Instagram
6. When choosing what to send out as an ad select a previous post (the post that you sent out on Facebook)
7. Add a call to action button and link it to your Instagram profile

You are now targeting your FB followers with an Ad on Instagram who ALSO use Instagram

What We Will Cover

Step 1: Get the fundamentals right

1. Be clear about “why” people should follow your account
2. How to create a posting plan
3. How to make your accounts immediately appear “interesting” when people land on them

Step 2: How to employ tactics specific to each social network

4. On some networks you can invite your personal connections to follow your business account.
5. How to run a competition to grow followers
6. Social Media SEO – how to ensure your accounts get found by people searching
7. Social Media SEO – How to ensure your posts get found by people searching
8. How to get noticed by your target audience who follow similar accounts to you
9. Consider collaborating with other accounts
10. Utilise formats that get your content shown to non followers
11. Consider running an ad to promote your account to non followers

Step 3: Convert followers on one social network to follow you on another

12. Try adding a cross promote message to the bottom of a post
13. Try sending out a specific post
14. Consider turning that post into an ad

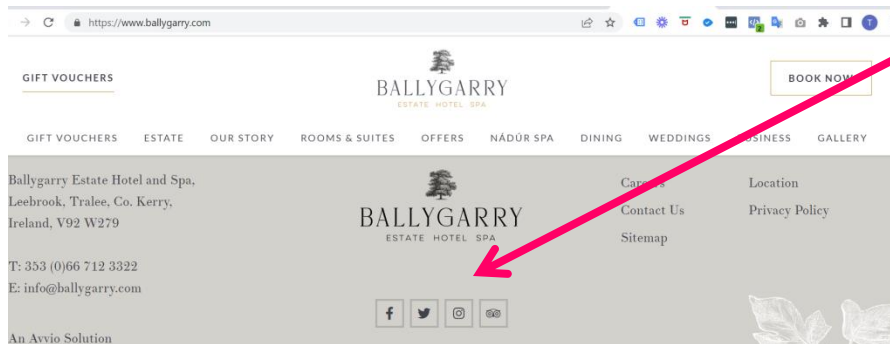
Step 4: Convert your website visitors into followers

15. Add links to your main social networks to your webpages
16. How to pull your social media content into your website to generate followers
17. How to prompt website visitors to follow you

Step 5: Convert people you contact through business

18. Utilise your email to prompt people to follow you
19. Utilise your email lists
20. Utilise marketing and promotional material

15. Add links to your main social media accounts to your site



There are Pros and Cons to having these links prominently on your site so weigh them up

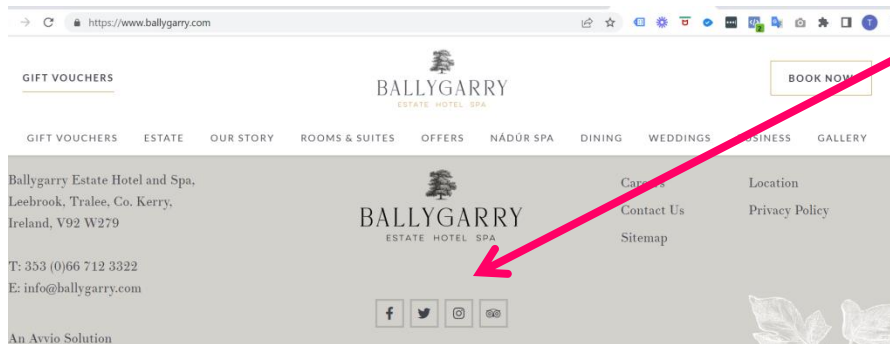
Pros:

1. **Site visitors can click through and follow you**
2. **Site visitors can check your accounts to see that you are a reputable business that posts regularly and that you get a lot of engagement. This fosters trust**

Cons:

1. **The visitor might get distracted on the social network and might never go back to your site – especially on a mobile phone**

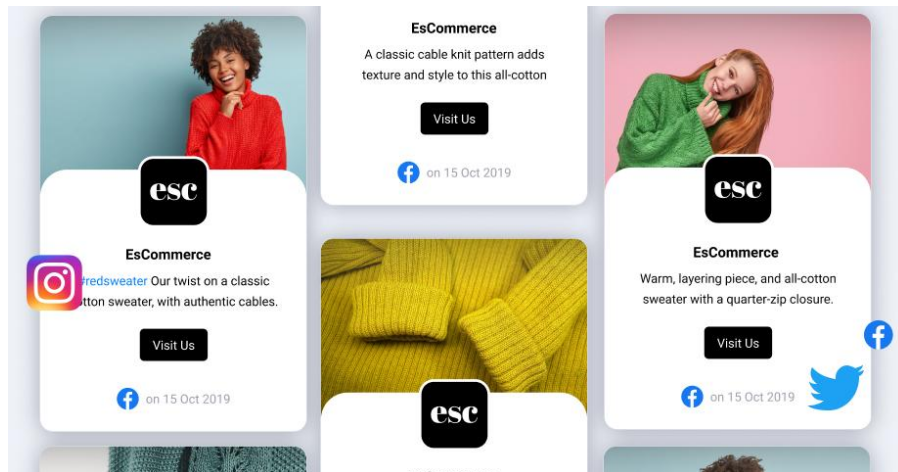
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Important tips

1. Try to also pull your Social media posts / Reels into your website – this might be enough for people to follow you
2. If you ever change your username on Instagram, Twitter, TikTok realise that it also changes the url of your social media accounts. So you need to update the links on your website. Having broken links to your social media posts looks very bad

16. How to pull your social media content into your website to generate followers



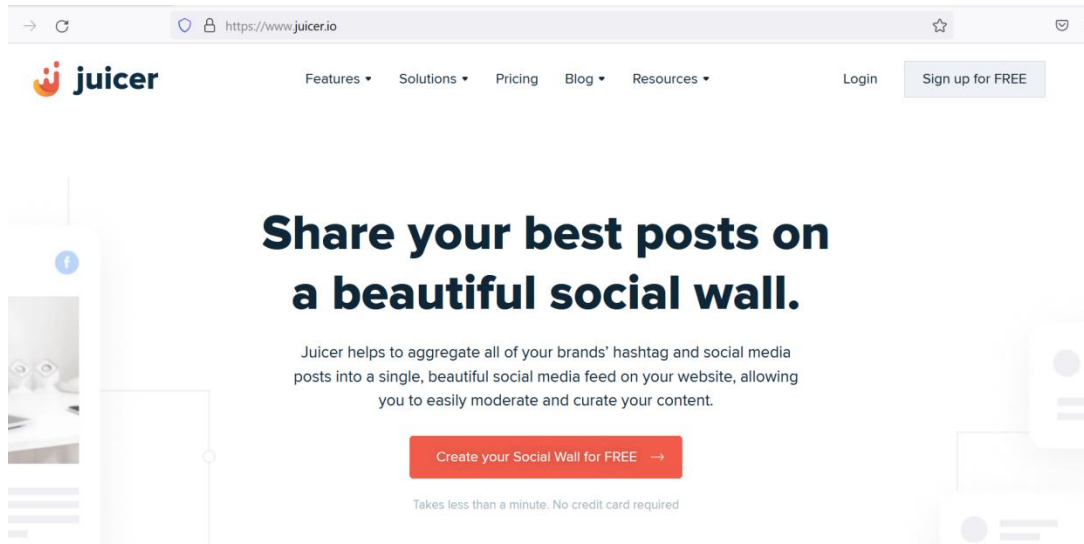
Thousands of people will visit your website over a 12 month period.

Wouldn't it be great to convert them into social media followers.

One way is to have links out to your social media accounts – but you are in danger of them not coming back to your website.

Another way is to pull a feed from your social media account into your website so people can see the interesting content you are sharing and then they can choose to follow you.

You can use Juicer.io to pull in your Instagram, TikTok, Twitter or Facebook posts for free (But only 2 sources on the free plan e.g.. Instagram and TikTok)



Go to Juicer.io

Create a free account

Connect to one of your social media accounts

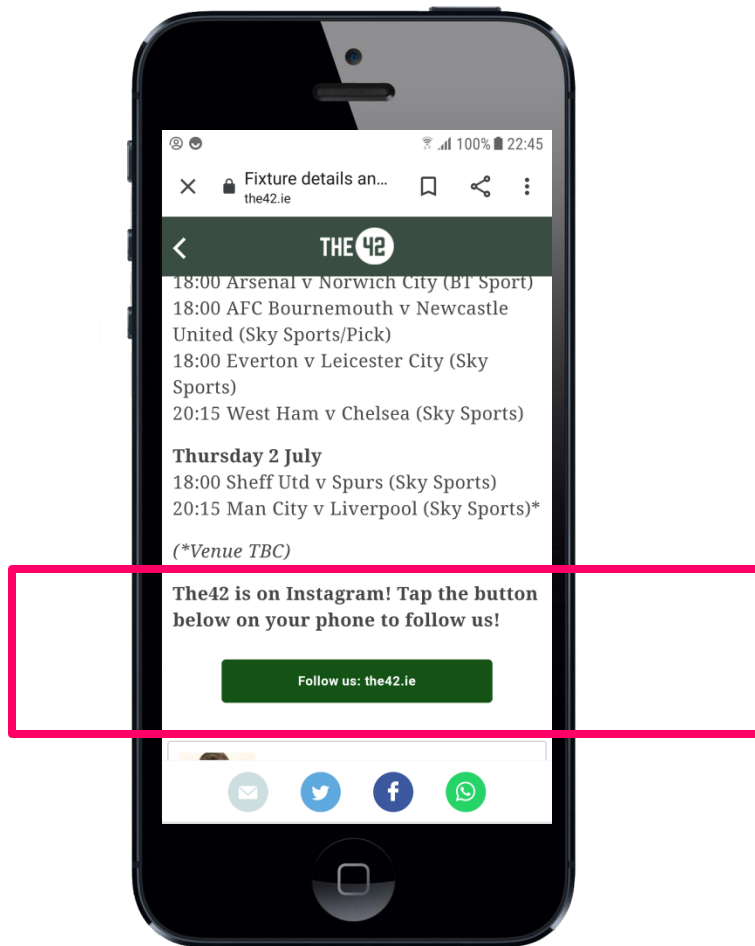
Tailor the design and layout

Get the embed code and place it on your site

You can then connect a second social media account

Then the one feed will display posts from both social media account

17. How to prompt website visitors to follow you



Consider having text at the bottom of your web pages that says

“We are on Instagram. Tap the link below to follow us” and then a button that links to your profile

See an example on this page

<https://themarketingcrowd.ie/how-to-replace-a-video-background/>

You can apply this principle to any of your social networks – not just Instagram e.g.. TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter.

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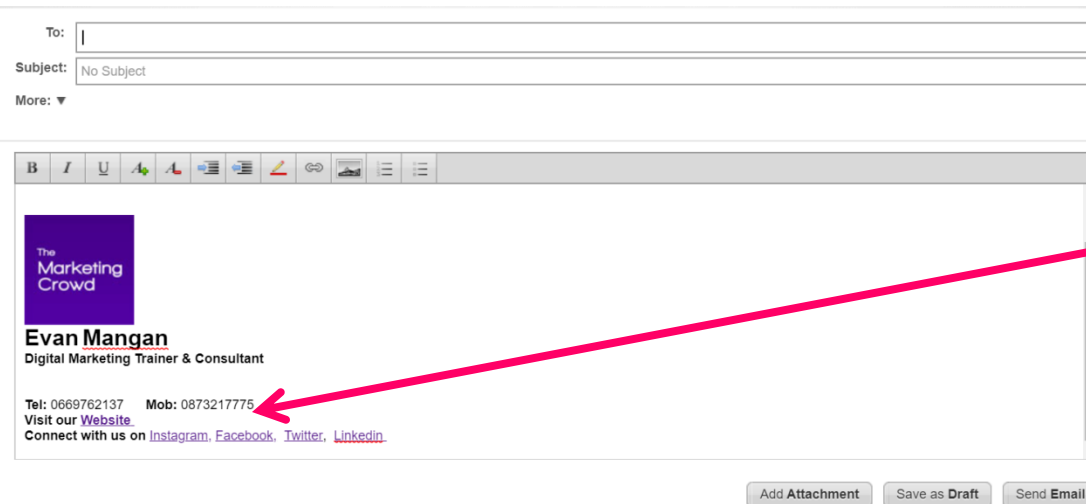
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18. Utilise your email to prompt people to follow you



Prompt people who receive your business emails to check out your Instagram account.

Add a link to your email signature.

This can be done in the settings of MS Outlook / Gmail / Yahoo or any email provided by Blacknight etc.

Simply go to the settings section of your email account.

19. Utilise your email lists



Send an email to your email list explaining why they should follow you on Instagram

Do you have an email list or a list of customer email addresses?

Email them to let them know

- You are on Instagram
- How they will benefit from following you
 - Inspiring images / content
 - Contests
 - Vouchers / Discounts

20. Utilise marketing and promotional material



Review your marketing material and the next time you are designing and printing, ensure you include links to all your main social networks

- Business Card
- Letterhead
- Brochure / Flyer

