



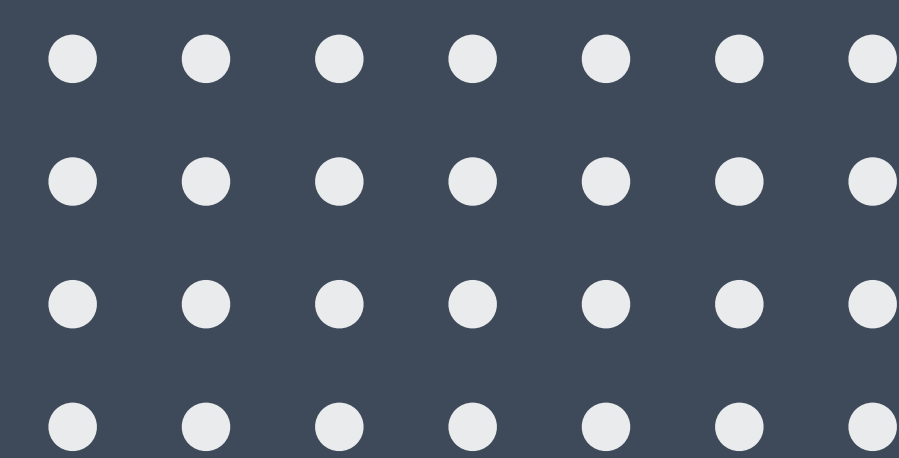
Slam's Ultimate Guide to Nonprofit Marketing

Instagram for Nonprofits

Fall 2022

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Instagram 101

Behind every great Instagram account is a top-notch strategy (or an overworked Gen Z intern).

Which means you probably can't photodump your way to the top. However, you can pull together your staff to create something that is true to your brand and resonant with audiences, both old and new. The first step is pinning down why you are taking your mission to socials.

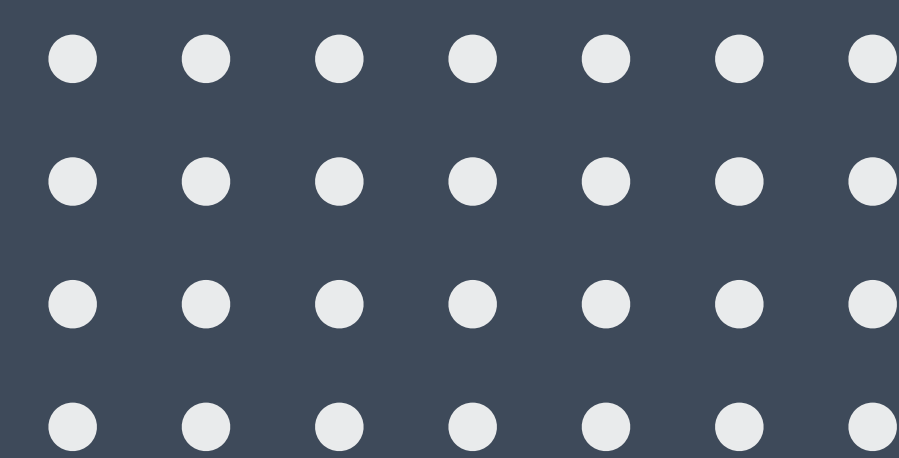
Why Instagram for nonprofits?

We can give you a list (and we will) but your account will be that much better if the impetus is your own. Here are a few reasons we think more nonprofits should up their IG game:

- Creating brand awareness
- Connecting with community
- Attracting donors and volunteers
- Directing traffic to your other channels
- Promoting your events

Sure, you can do all the tasks above through your website, but unless you're an [SEO](#) all-star, few people who aren't already aware of your operation will stumble onto your page.

Instagram (and TikTok) are the best options for generating quick and widespread engagement. The platform is being used to show peer-to-peer learning, breaking news, announcements, and more. If you don't have an account, you can start setting it up. If you already have one, skip this section.



Instagram 101 (cont.)

Instagram Reels v. TikTok

But why Reels and not just TikTok? Isn't TikTok the place to be in? That's what we thought too.

Instagram is doing a big push to prioritize vertical videos. These videos pretty much have the same format and size as TikTok. We've tried a couple of experiments ourselves and have seen how much Instagram is pushing Reels to new audiences.

Though we still recommend using TikTok, don't leave Reels behind. Our tip is to record these videos off-platform and edit them in the app. This way you can cross-post without the logos from the platforms.

Creating an Instagram account

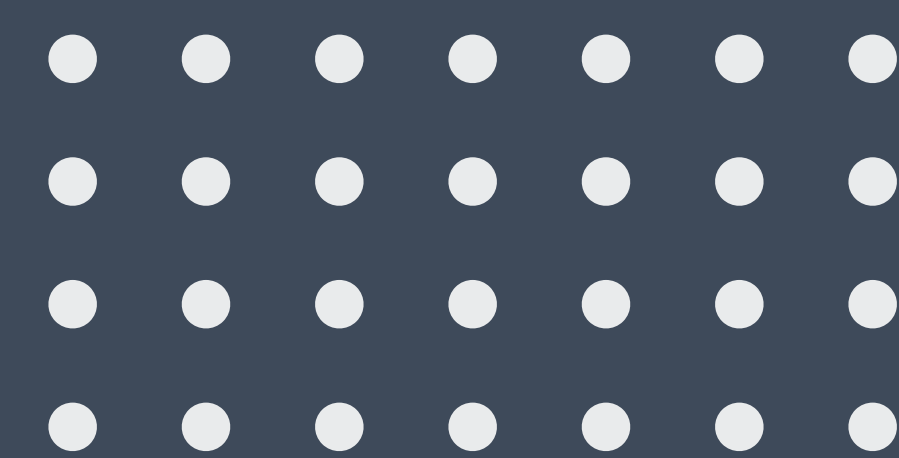
When you name your account, make sure that it will be easy for users to find you. Maybe the name of your organization is already a username that belongs to someone else, but you can make it your own by adding periods or an extra word.

For example, @slammedialab can become @slam.media.lab or @slamdigitalmarketing.

For this initial step, practicality reigns supreme. Don't worry, the creativity kicks in soon after!

Once you've decided on a username, our recommendation is to opt for an Instagram business account rather than a personal one. Why? Better metrics and features. You may not be trying to turn a big profit, but you are still looking to make a big impact, so leveraging business tools is a must-use strategy.

Unlike personal accounts, Instagram business account benefits for nonprofits include the ability to share contact information with followers in your bio, add links to your stories, and more.



Instagram 101 (cont.)

Creating an Instagram Account (cont.)

You'll want to connect this account to Facebook.

If you already have a Facebook Business account, that's even better. You can use this Facebook profile to generate a business Instagram account. Otherwise, you'll have to attempt to connect the two accounts retroactively, which can be tricky.

Here's how you link your Instagram account and Facebook profile:

1. Tap the person icon on your profile pic in the bottom right of your account
2. Tap the 3 lines in the top right, then tap the settings button
3. Tap Accounts Center at the bottom, then tap the Set up accounts center
4. Tap Yes, finish setup
5. Sync your profile photo, then tap continue
6. Once completed, you'll be able to cross-share

We recommend creating an email and phone number specifically for your nonprofit Instagram account. You can give all your team members access here and have one or two people own managing the inbox.

ACTION ITEM — Set up an account!

Go to [Instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com) (or download the app) and set up the account.



Setting your north star

What do you want your account to be known for? The goal of this section is to fill out this sentence: "This Instagram account is all about _____."

We like to look at the strategy build process in four steps:

1. Defining audience
2. Defining brand
3. Landscape analysis
4. Write down your north star

After that's it! Off to the races to create Insta content.

Step One: Define who you're reaching

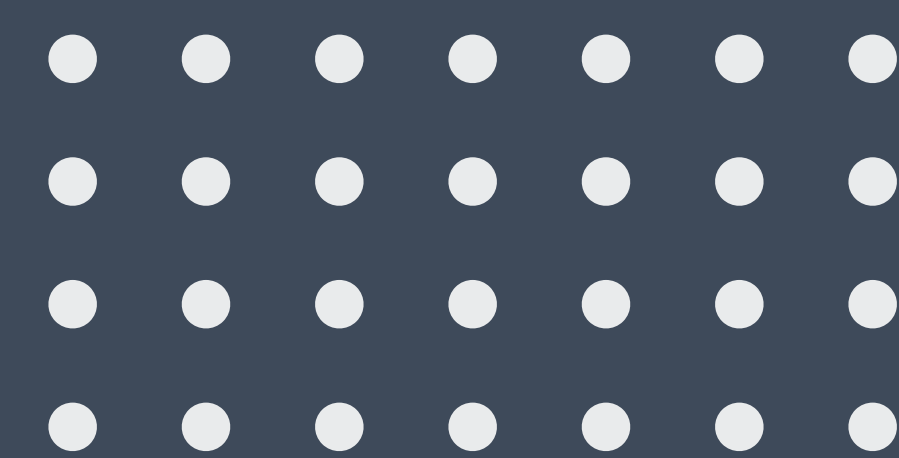
A good post can get the attention of everyone—young pop culture nerds to "what's his face?" octogenarians. But the secret here is counterintuitive; good content that reaches a wide audience often gains traction because of its hyperspecificity.

Which means nailing down who you want to reach is a critical step.

Our audience identification process includes exploring the following audience demographics:

- Age
- Gender
- Location
- Interests

We also like to think about who these individuals already follow (both brands and creators).



Setting your north star (cont.)

Step One: Define who you're reaching (cont.)

If you've been operating an account for a while, you can take this rough sketch of who you believe your audience to be and compare it to your Instagram Account Insights.

Note: You need to have a business or creator account on Instagram to view insights. Learn how to set up a [business](#) or [creator](#) account.

To view insights:

1. Go to your profile
2. Tap the insights button
3. Tap the metrics under Overview

Are you currently reaching your target audience? Is it time to think about shifting it? What are you doing right and what do you need to go back to the drawing board on?

ACTION ITEM — Write down who you want to reach (audience)

Use our deck template to put your strategy together or a regular doc works too!



Setting your north star (cont.)

Step Two: Define who you are

Once you've landed on your archetypal user, it's time to create the archetype for your brand's social presence. Are you the jester entertaining viewers? The professor educating them? Something else entirely?

Your content will be much easier to create if you define the limits it must exist within.

To create these you can start by:

- Jotting down four emotions you are looking to elicit
- Identifying 3-8 effective ways to communicate that speak to your audience
- Collecting data from a basic user research survey

Think about it as a brand discovery. Some examples we've done in the past:

1. Funny, but not out of reach
2. Open, clear, and direct... but not wordy
3. Empowering...but not preach-y

ACTION ITEM — Write down your brand messaging and voice

Use our deck template to put your strategy together or a regular doc works too!



Setting your north star (cont.)

Step Three: Landscape analysis

Now that you know the voice, messaging, and your audience, let's look at what your competitors are doing. What are some accounts you love? What do you like about them? Who are destroying the game on Instagram?

Look at it in two ways:

- Creator/Influencer accounts in your industry
- Nonprofit accounts
- For-profit accounts

What you should collect:

- What topics are they sharing?
- What type of format are they using? (i.e. Listicles, Dances, Trend-based)
- What demographics do they target (more or less)?
- How's their content performing? (Look at the likes, comments, and total followers)
 - Break this down by good/bad

ACTION ITEM — Check out your competitors and make a list of what you like and don't like about them

Use our deck template to put your strategy together or a regular doc works too!

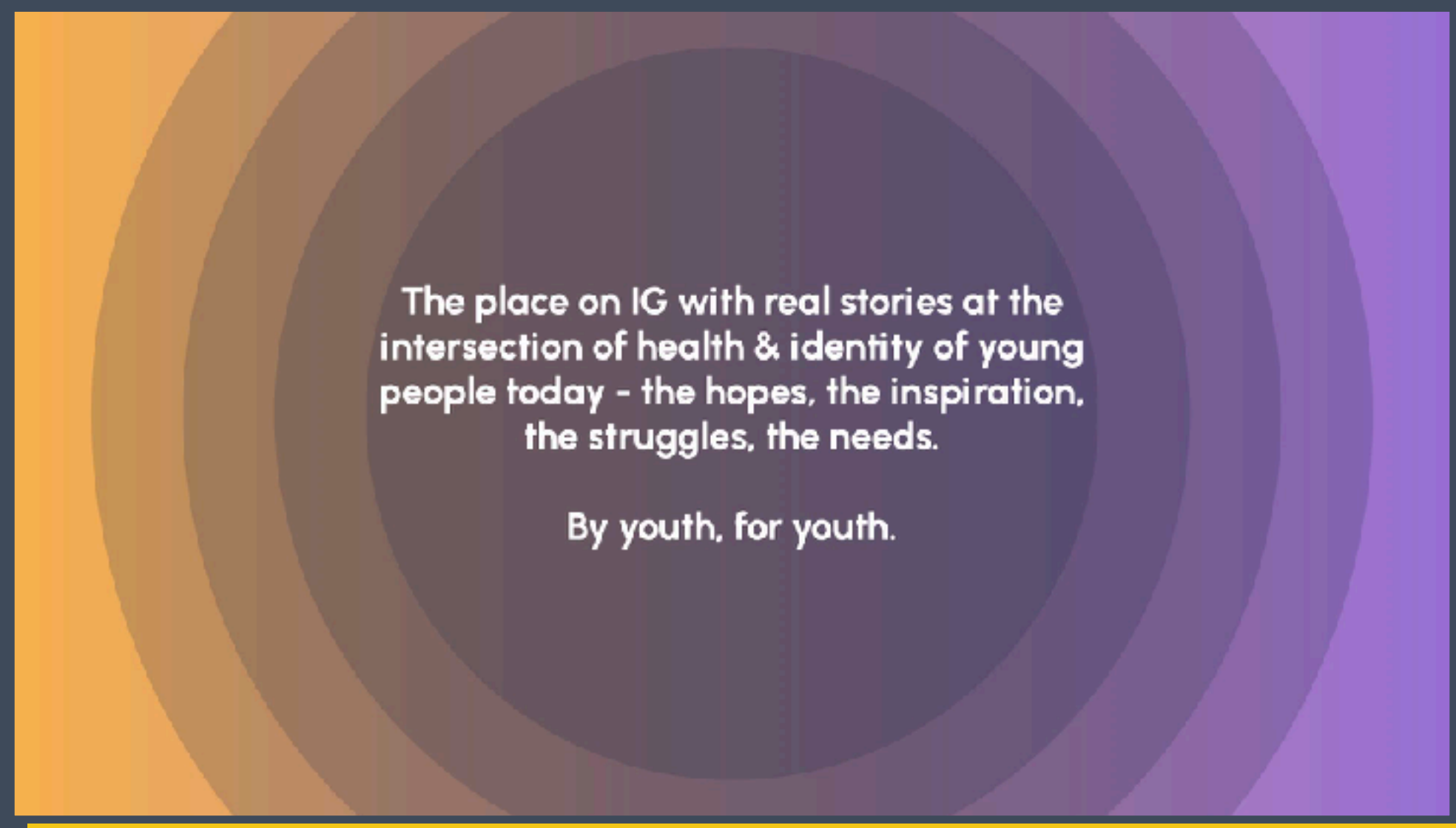
Setting your north star (cont.)

Step Four: Write your north star

Now you have all the pieces you need to start churning out content and creating a stellar Instagram feed. Before you get to work, we recommend synthesizing all your back end work into one sentence. Something you can look back at anytime to realign your strategy. Something you can show to new team members to communicate your social goals and strategies in seconds. We like to call it the north star.

It should be something a bit bigger than just "...all about your nonprofit". Think bigger. Think about what your community cares about? What's the overlap between the work you do and what people love on social media?

Here's an example of a north star we created for our work with a well-known health nonprofit:



ACTION ITEM — Write down your north star

Use our deck template to put your strategy together or a regular doc works too!



How to do a content audit

Define your content

Now that you've defined your target audience and the personality you'll be bringing to socials, the fun begins!

For us, this looks like a three-step process:

1. Audit past content
2. Identify content pillars
3. Identify content buckets

If you already have an Instagram account, this may seem like deadweight at first glance, but it's actually extremely helpful for strategically improving your account metrics. You already have data to explore. That's a win.

To perform a content audit, start by identifying your account's 4-10 highest performing pieces and 4-10 lowest performing pieces.

Once you've identified these, we recommend organizing them based on:

- Medium (reel, repost, photo, video, etc.)
- Content type (meme, education, announcement, etc.)
- Design (brand treatment, no treatment, etc.)
- Caption (short, long, emoji, etc.)

If you're feeling ambitious you can create a table, chart, or graph to map the results, but just getting the trends down on paper is also great.



How to do a content audit (*cont.*)

Define your content (*cont.*)

Now step back and look at the numbers. What's working and what is consistently flopping?

Once you've gathered this information, you can begin integrating your goals with what actually works.

ACTION ITEM — Start your content audit

Use our deck template to put your strategy together or a regular doc works too!



How to do a content audit (cont.)

Content Audit Example

For example, maybe your nonprofit is committed to educating people about wildlife conservation. You've been pushing out a ton of long-form educational content punctuated by a meme here and there. Wouldn't you know it, those handful of memes are exponentially surpassing the educational content in performance metrics. Sigh.

Rather than throwing in the towel completely and devolving into a frog meme account (which, valid) you can find creative ways to marry performance and objectives.

In this particular scenario, we would spend time posting the following types of content to see what works:

- Memes centered around facts about endangered animals
- Two-slide posts including 1) cute photos of endangered animals and 2) quick graphics with information about the featured animal

We would also encourage this account to begin publishing reels with educational content. To engage a meme-focused audience, we recommend:

- Keeping videos short (under 20 seconds)
- Editing with quick, frequent cuts
- Injecting humor whenever possible
- Adding absurd elements
- Featuring one or two personalities consistently

Reels are surpassing all IG content types at the moment, so don't miss the chance for high engagement.



How to Revamp Your Content Pillars

After taking an honest look at your Instagram performance, the next step is to revisit your content pillars (ideas and topic areas that your brand deeply cares about).

Even if you established these in the past, they may be outdated for your operation or no longer resonant with your audience.

When creating new pillars, our preferred plan of attack is to ideate, ideate, ideate, and then winnow your list down to the three or four pillars that feel most true to your organization.

We worked with a health nonprofit with extensive content on social. When they first partnered with us, their content pillars looked something like this:

- Mental health
- Family relationships & conflict
- LGBTQ+ sexual health
- Body image
- Friendships
- Sexual health
- Communication
- Racism & discrimination
- Romantic relationships
- Addiction
- Immigrant, mixed family, and undocumented experience
- Learning differences

How to Revamp Your Content Pillars (cont.)

There was great content here, but the sheer volume of it was diluting each message. We pushed the team to identify just four pillars to hone in on and develop.

The long list eventually became:

- Mental health
- Family relationships & conflict
- LGBTQ+ sexual health
- Body image
- Friendships
- Sexual health
- Communication
- Racism & discrimination
- Romantic relationships
- Addiction
- Immigrant, mixed family, and undocumented experience
- Learning differences



- Mental health
- Sexual health
- Identity
- Relationships



How to Revamp Your Content Pillars (*cont.*)

We love the above pillars because they streamline quite a few of the original topics in a way that is easy to communicate to audiences.

As you develop your brand's content pillars, your audience should be at the forefront of your imagination. For maximum impact, whatever you land on should be:

- Clear
- Concise
- Easy to communicate

ACTION ITEM — Lay out 3-5 content pillars that align with your brand

Use our deck template to put your strategy together or a regular doc works too!



How to Create Content Buckets

Once you know what your audience wants and what your organization wants, it's time to identify the content formats that will make up your Instagram feed.

Typically, we recommend three static formats, Instagram reels (consider looking into our TikTok strategy as well!) and stories.

Three different static formats for a nonprofit focused on ending homelessness could look like:

- Memes addressing misconceptions about homelessness
- Graphics sharing useful information about combating homelessness
- Behind the scenes photos of daily direct action (with photo release consent from anyone pictured)

Or, three different static formats for a nonprofit humane society could look like:

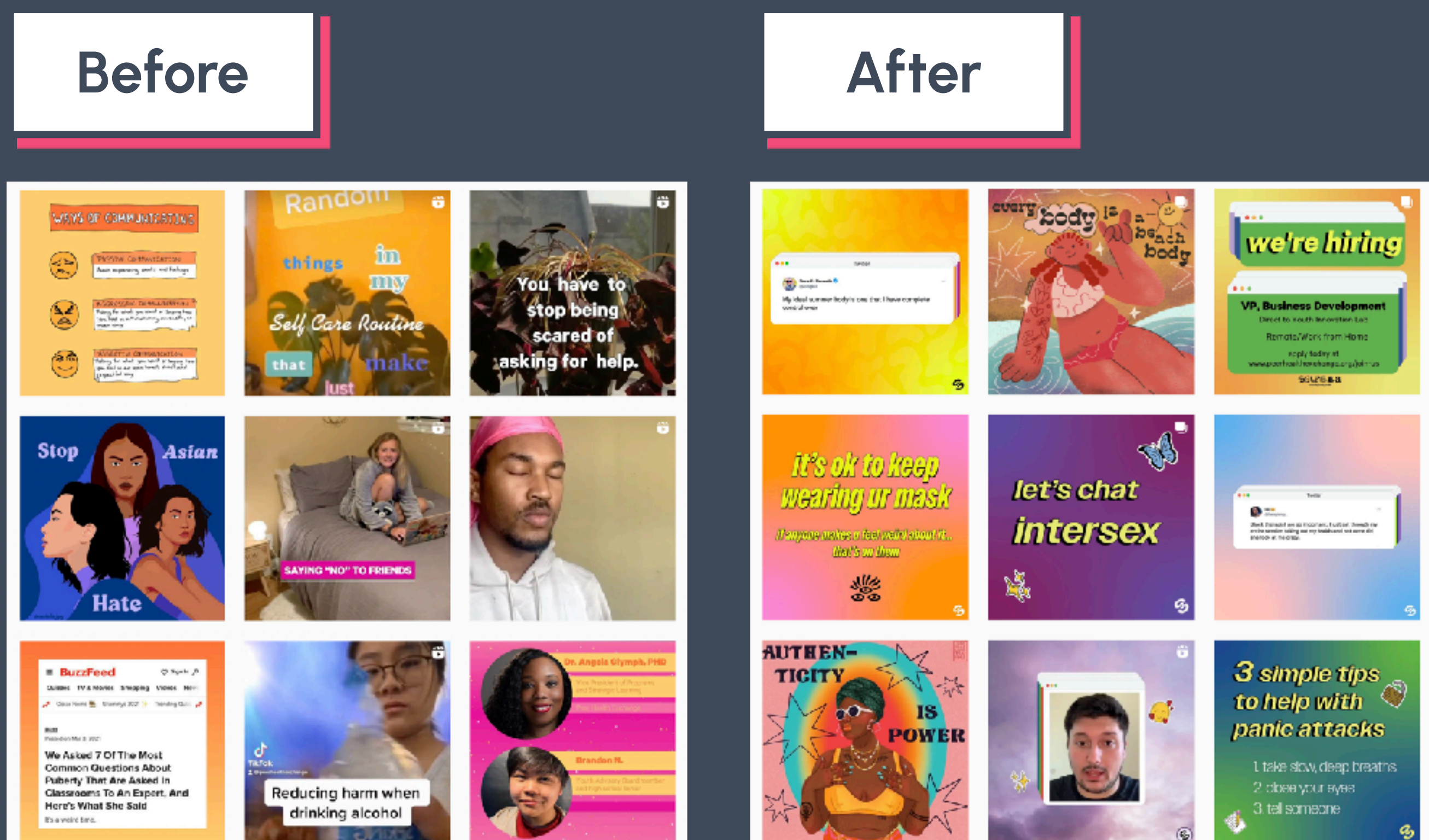
- Photos and graphics highlighting animals waiting for adoption
- Relatable memes for animal-lovers
- Graphics and slides educating on proper cat and dog care

How to Create Content Buckets (cont.)

Not only do you want each piece of content to hit your objectives, match the feel of your brand, and look quality, but every piece of content should also complement its neighboring content. The two screenshots below are from the same account, before and after tightening the look and feel into something more cohesive.

To create a cohesive page, we like to create a few treatments that interact well together and then stick to the best ones.

While working with designers here, the words you listed under tone and feel at the top of this project will be your guiding point.



ACTION ITEM — Create 2-4 layouts you can use for your brand for

Some popular examples include: Quotes, Images, Tips/Advice, Screenshots

We advise using [Canva](#) if you don't have a designer on staff or Figma if you do have one.

How to Create Content Buckets (cont.)

Where Content Buckets and Content Pillars Intersect

Okay, so you've got your content pillars mapped and your content buckets secured. Now, it's time to bring them together.

To get the ideas flowing, our favorite exercise is coming up with 3-4 ideas for each bucket and pillar intersection. For example, as Peer Health Exchange brought their pillars and buckets together, a list exploring mental health content ideas could have looked something like this:

3 static content ideas:

- Meme about feeling both very seen and very exposed post OCD diagnosis
- Photo graphic series featuring young people sharing info about their mental illnesses
- Graphic with practical, underhyped self care ideas

3 Reels Ideas;

- Mythbusting 3 misconceptions about bipolar disorder
- Top dos and don'ts for supporting a friend in a depressive episode
- Tips for finding a therapist who gets it.

3 IG Story Ideas;

- Story sharing information about identifying and managing different mental illnesses
- Story listicle with tons of self and collective care ideas
- "Storytime" stories series featuring young people talking about life pre and post diagnosis (spotlighting that treatment/management is effective and possible)

ACTION ITEM — Match one content pillar with one content bucket and design it!



Running the Content Production Process

Now it's time to create. The size of your organization will dictate how complex the content creation and approval process is. A social media manager working within a 300+ person org likely has a few departments to get approval from before posting. Someone on a 10-person team might need only the green light from their direct manager.

In any case, it's important to define the process before getting started, so you never have to go back and delete a post or start from scratch. Answer these two questions and you're golden:

- Who is doing what?
- How are we organizing the process?



Running the Content Production Process (*cont.*)

Define your roles

A personal Instagram might be a one-person-show, but anything larger than that sure isn't.

There are many jobs to be done on Instagram content production:

- Ideation/Content Planner
- Graphic designer
- Photographer/Photo Sourcer
- Copywriter
- Programmer
- Community manager

There might be overlap in who does what, but it's important to create a solid sketch of who is owning what. That way, your team won't do something twice or forget to do something altogether.

If you have one person on your team who will be fully owning the Instagram page, that's great! For quality assurance, we recommend assigning one or two others the job of looking at each post before it goes live. More eyes = fewer typos.



Running the Content Production Process (*cont.*)

Tips for designing the graphics

Most of the jobs tied to dimensions of your Instagram content process will leverage tools you're already familiar with, but the design step may be new to your team. If your team can't splurge on a graphic designer and is feeling overwhelmed about the prospect of creating polished-looking designs, fear not; there are tools for everyone.

Below we'll be sharing some design tools, ranking them by level of difficulty, and giving a quick pros and cons list for each.

Canva

You've probably heard of this one, or even used it to create flyers for your org. Canva is a beginner design tool that can be invaluable for small teams without design expertise.

The Pros:

- Very easy to get started
- Lots of design inspo from the community
- Quick production time
- Canva Pro offers a [not-for-profit discount](#)

The Cons:

- Not super customizable
- You won't be able to brand nearly as easily
- Not easy to share files between other design software

Running the Content Production Process (*cont.*)

Tips for designing the graphics (*cont.*)



You can think of Figma as the Google Docs of the design world. It can be used for projects as large as website build to as small as creating a bake sale poster.

From our perspective, Figma is a tool that can fit most teams. It has high-capability with a low barrier to entry.

The Pros:

- Offers both a Mac and PC app
- Is browser friendly
- Offers easy continuity between AI ↔ Figma via copy SVG
- Allows you to export or import as SVG files
- Provides predetermined social sizes
- Bases designs on pixels (versus exclusively vector art)
- Allows you to collaborate with others in real time
- Provides shared workspaces in lieu of files
- Costs nothing to start

The Cons:

- Not created specifically for social
- Can include a bit of a learning curve

Running the Content Production Process (cont.)

Tips for designing the graphics (cont.)



Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop + Illustrator)

Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop are advanced tools generally only used by high-expertise, high-budget teams. For large, corporate-funded design projects, these are the standard. We don't recommend these tools for small or low-budget teams.

The Pros:

- Professional-grade design capabilities
- Trusted name in the design world

The Cons:

- Expensive
- Difficult to learn
- Not great file organization for regular projects

Invest in systems and processes. Set up a calendar that works

The backbone of a killer socials presence (from YouTube to Instagram) is consistency. Big gaps in your posting cadence will lose you followers again and again.

That's why effective systems and processes are arguably the most important piece here.

Our favorite tools for nonprofit Instagram accounts are:

- Content calendars
- Automation tools



Running the Content Production Process (*cont.*)

Invest in systems and processes. Set up a calendar that works (*cont.*)

We recommend Airtable for content calendars. On an Airtable project base, you can create a calendar and running ideas list where each item is sorted by status, pillar, bucket, and more. Airtable allows you to create multiple views of your calendar and ideas list so that you can filter items based on any criteria.

For example, a nonprofit that wants to start pushing out more content around food justice can create a view of their ideas list that filters out anything not tagged with that term. That takes out an entire step of searching for the ideas you're looking for, and makes content production that much easier.

For a full tutorial on how we set up our content calendars, [check out this tutorial](#).

[You can download our Airtable template here.](#)

For Automation, we recommend Zapier and Instagram's auto posting feature.

Auto posting is as easy as selecting the Facebook and Twitter options on the final page Instagram gives before a post goes live. For a quick tutorial, [check out this Loom](#).

That's great, but you can do so much more than that with Zapier, a tool that allows users to integrate two or more apps at a time. For example, with Zapier you can manage a hiring process through an Airtable base that automatically sends rejection and acceptance emails.



Running the Content Production Process (*cont.*)

Invest in systems and processes. Set up a calendar that works (*cont.*)

While Zapier isn't as easy on the backend, it's well worth learning to use; once it's set up, it can save you hours and hours of labor by automating tedious, manual tasks.

Our favorite way to use Zapier for content creation is to integrate a Slack or Teams channel with Airtable. On this channel, every team member can drop content ideas that will automatically transfer over to your Airtable calendar. From there, team members running point on graphics, copy, and posting can take ideas to the finish line.

If you'd like to use Zapier, they have a 15% discount for nonprofits. [Check them out here.](#)

ACTION ITEM — Set up your Airtable calendar and automations



Managing Your Community

Your team is set, your calendar is full, and your posts are steadily going live, but there's still more to do. As posts gain momentum, comment sections and DMs pick up and require attention. As your following grows, hosting an Instagram live becomes a possibility.

Throughout all of this, your numbers are changing.

It's time to get serious about managing your Instagram community and reporting your data.

We won't spend too much time on community management because how you do that is guided by your organization's communication style. However, we will give our top recommendations here:

- Respond to comments when possible
- Encourage commenting through CTAs in captions
- Answer direct messages
- Create content that followers request
- Follow similar accounts and interface with them
- Host Instagram Live events with brand-aligned creators or accounts



How to run reporting

At the one month mark of officially launching your new Instagram strategy, we recommend compiling your first report. Our basic report format includes:

- Summary
- High Level overview (MoM)
- 3 highest performing pieces
- 3 lowest performing pieces
- Next Steps

The month over month high level overview includes:

- Followers
- Impressions
- Engagements
- Engagement Rate

In just over a month of creating content, you may not be seeing drastic changes. That's normal. The goal of the report isn't to identify whether Instagram is worthwhile (it is, it just takes time), but rather to further refine your strategy.

Pay special attention to what posts are performing well and what posts are gaining little traction. Is this due to the type of content? The subject matter? The time of day the post went live?

Be thorough in your analysis and use the data to continue driving engagement upwards.

Happy posting.

How to run reporting (cont.)

Tools for Reporting

It's super important to learn about overall trends across your followers and your content's performance with your audience. On the Instagram app, you'll be able to see:

- Accounts reached
- Accounts engaged
- Content interactions
- Plays
- Total followers (growth, by location, age range times they're most active)
- Content performance and interactions

If you have some budget, we recommend using a software to help you pull this data to show your team. Instagram doesn't allow you to download your data natively, which is why we recommend using Iconosquare or Sproutsocial to get what you need. Both softwares have a nonprofit discount.

To get the Slam social discount, use these links and referral codes:



(Use promo code: icopromo5)

Tutorial + Templates

- [Iconosquare Tutorial](#)
- [Sproutsocial Tutorial](#)
- [Reporting Deck Template](#)



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