

Growth Hacks to Build Your Social Media Footprint

with Carly Stocks



How I inadvertently became a social media specialist



Top lessons

- Be Genuine
- Stay Consistent
- Show up to serve
- Strive to create a community
- Assess and adapt
- Have a strategy

Consistency is Key



CONSISTENCY

- Posting more can equal faster growth
- But don't overdo it
- Avoid burnout
- Pick a schedule you can keep

How often to post

You don't need to post daily to grow

Post as often as you can sustain

Post at least twice a week to grow



Staying Consistent

- Keep track of content on a calendar
- Schedule Content in-app or with a scheduler
 - Facebook Business Suite
 - Youtube Creator Studio
 - Metricool
 - Apphi
 - Later





Time-Saving Tips

- Batch Content
- Write captions on your computer
 - Use a notes app to access on phone
- Build a hashtag list
- Create hashtag groups

When to post

- Post during your audience's peak time
- Metricool and in-app Analytics
- Post around the same time
- Post when you can engage



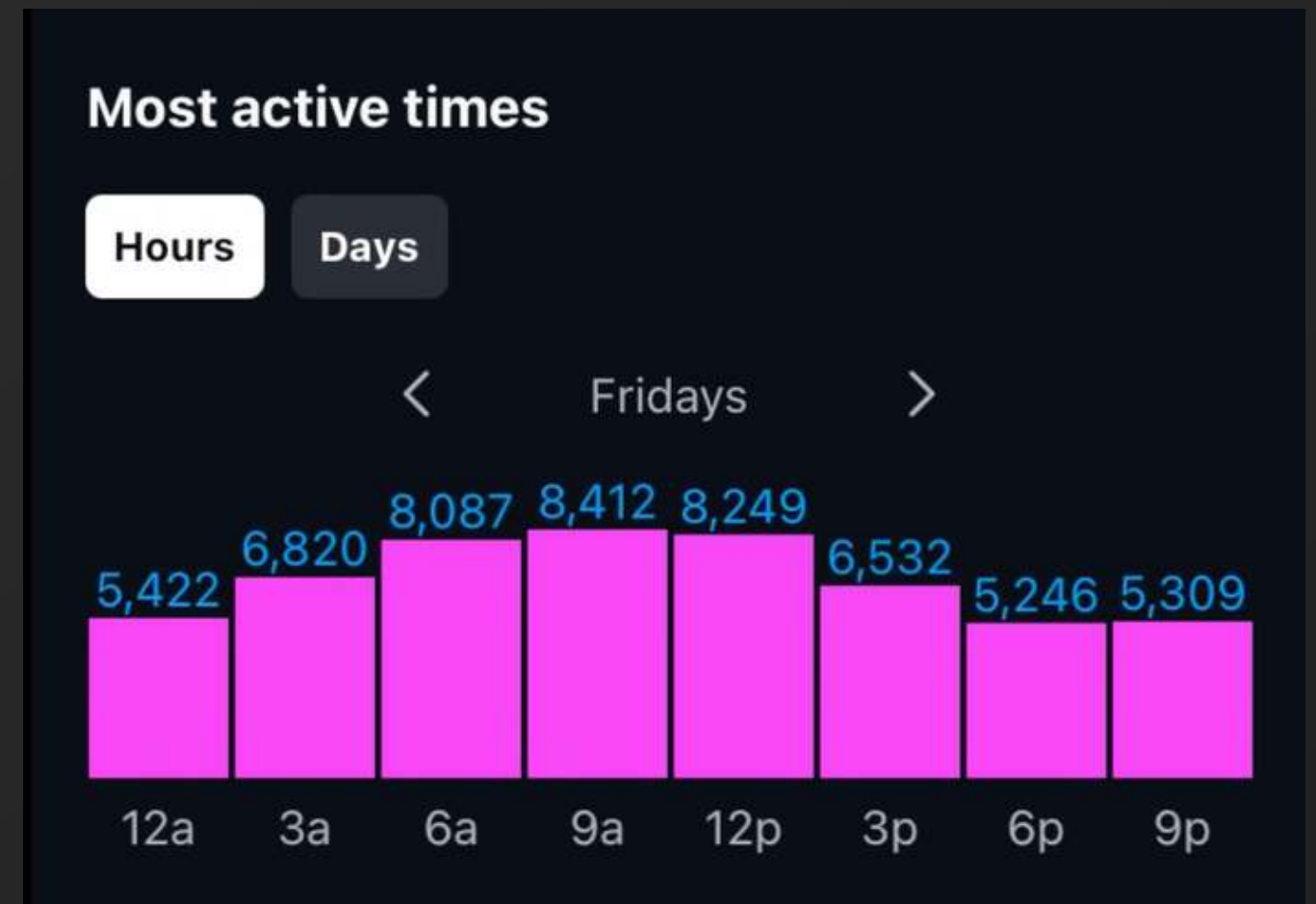
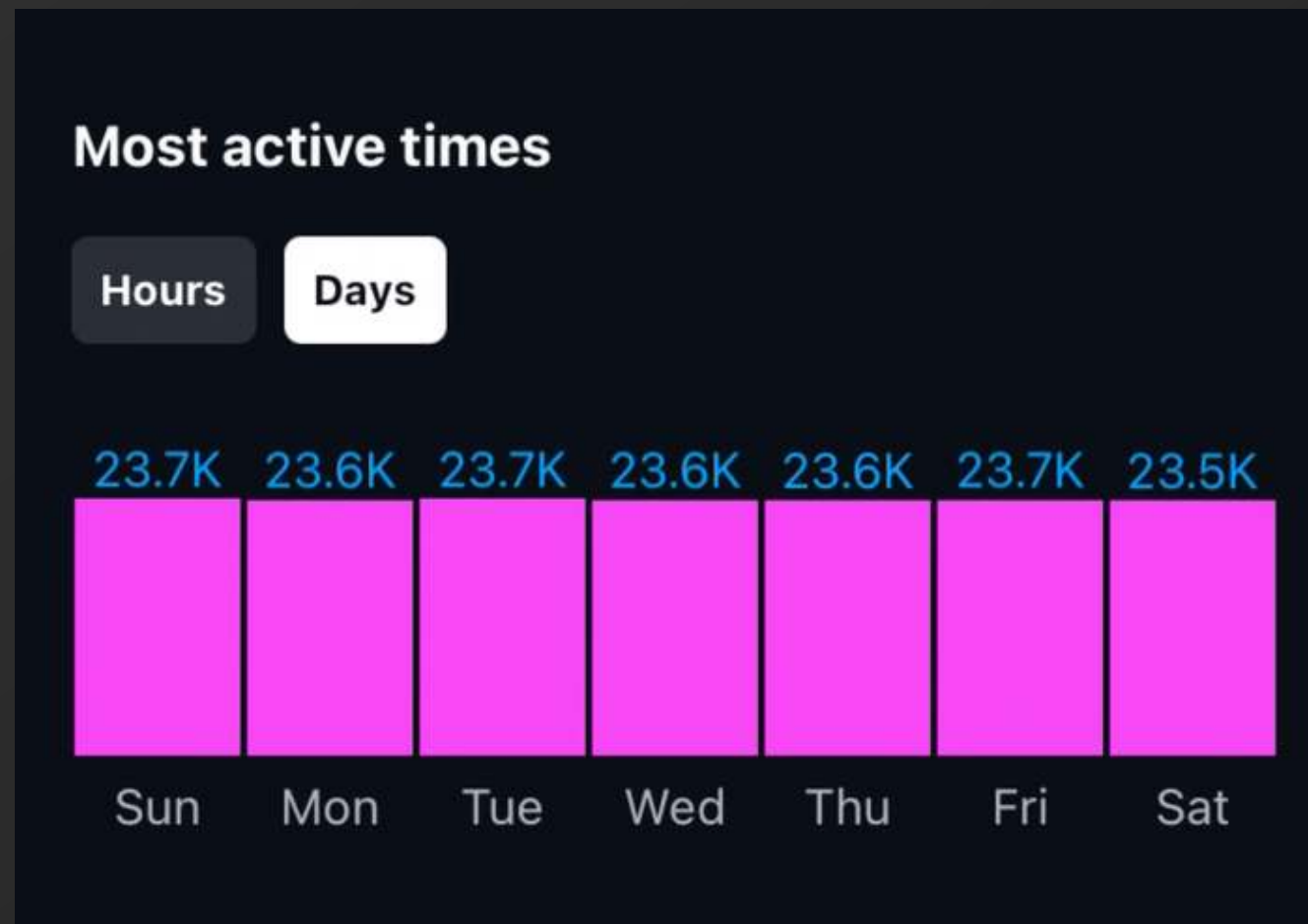
Metricool

The screenshot displays the Metricool social media planning interface. At the top, a dark navigation bar contains the Metricool logo, navigation icons for Analytics, Inbox, Planning, SmartLinks, and Ads, an "Upgrade to Premium" button, and a user profile for "darkskyutah". Below the navigation bar, the interface is divided into sections for "Calendar", "List", and "Autolists". The "Calendar" view is active, showing a weekly grid from Sunday 1 to Saturday 7. The grid is currently empty, with a pinkish-red background. The left side of the grid lists time slots from 3:00am to 2:00pm. Above the grid, there is a search bar, a "Today" button, a date range selector for "Sep 1, 2024 - Sep 7, 2024", a filter icon, a "Best times" dropdown, a "Create post" button, and a clock icon showing "02:22 PM - America/Denver". A chat icon is visible in the bottom right corner.

When are followers most active on Instagram?

Go to Profile → Professional Dashboard → Total Followers →

Scroll to the bottom



Facebook Business Suite → Planner

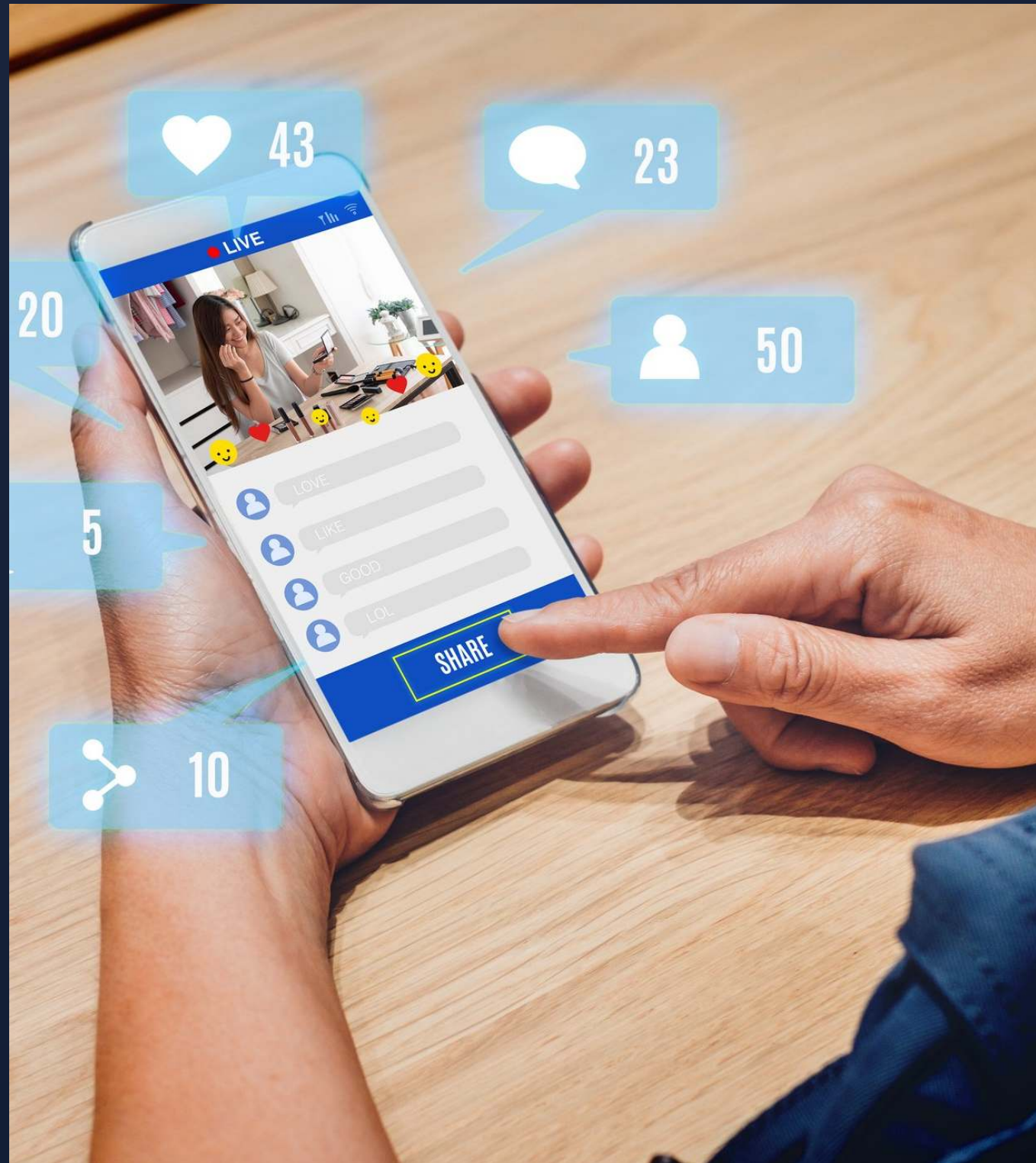
The screenshot displays the Facebook Business Suite Planner interface. At the top, the title "Planner" is followed by the subtitle "Plan your marketing calendar by creating, scheduling, and managing your content." Below this, there are navigation options for "Week", "Month", and "Today", with "September 2024" centered above a calendar grid. The calendar grid shows days from Sunday 15 to Saturday 21. On the left side, there is a vertical sidebar with icons for home, notifications, a calendar, and other tools. The main content area is divided into columns for each day. On Sunday 15, there are three posts: two Instagram posts at 9:15 AM (one with 166 likes and 17 comments) and one Facebook post at 9:15 AM (with 13 likes, 1 comment, and 1 share), followed by an "Active" status at 10:57 AM. A notification on Monday 16 states "100 people reacted to your posts" and offers a "Send invites" button. On Friday 20, a notification at 10:00 AM indicates that Instagram followers are most active at this time, with a "Schedule" button.

WHAT CAN
WE DO
FOR YOU



Show up to Serve

- Respond to messages
- Answer questions
- Ask questions
- Be helpful
- Provide Value



How can you engage with your followers?

- Be grateful
- Thank them for the comments
- Respond to them in their language
- Show appreciation
- Engage in conversation about the post



How can you engage with others in your niche?

Join Facebook groups or forums

- Actively participate
- Answer questions
- Be helpful
- Post your work if appropriate

Follow accounts in your niche

- Make comments
- Like posts
- Ask questions

Use Broadcast Channel

- Create channels with specific purposes
- Teach people more in depth
- Share alerts
 - Vincent announces Aurora activity

The screenshot shows a social media profile for Vincent Ledvina (@vincentledvina). The profile includes a bio identifying him as a scientist and PhD student, a link to a free aurora e-book, and a broadcast channel named "Alaska Aurora Alerts" with 11.2K members. The broadcast channel is currently active, with a notification that says "Auroras starting no...". Below the profile are buttons for "Following", "Message", and "Shop", and a row of featured content including "Book a tour!", "In Media", "Aurora FAQ...", "Alaska Life", and "Q&A".

vincentledvina

Auroras starting no...

689 posts 351K followers 1,122 following

Vincent Ledvina he/him

vincentledvina • 8 new

Scientist
"The Aurora Guy"
☀️ Space Physics PhD Student @uaf.gi
FREE aurora chasing e-book ↴
bit.ly/free-aurora-e-book

Alaska Aurora Alerts · 11.2K members

Followed by chasing_horizonz_, mikeshawphotography and 116 others

Following Message Shop

Book a tour! In Media Aurora FAQ... Alaska Life Q&A

Strive to create a community

- Like or comment on loyal followers' posts
- Follow others in your niche
- Be a good follower
- Make thoughtful comments
- Use their name
- Share others' work

Be patient

Steady growth > Viral growth

Take time to build

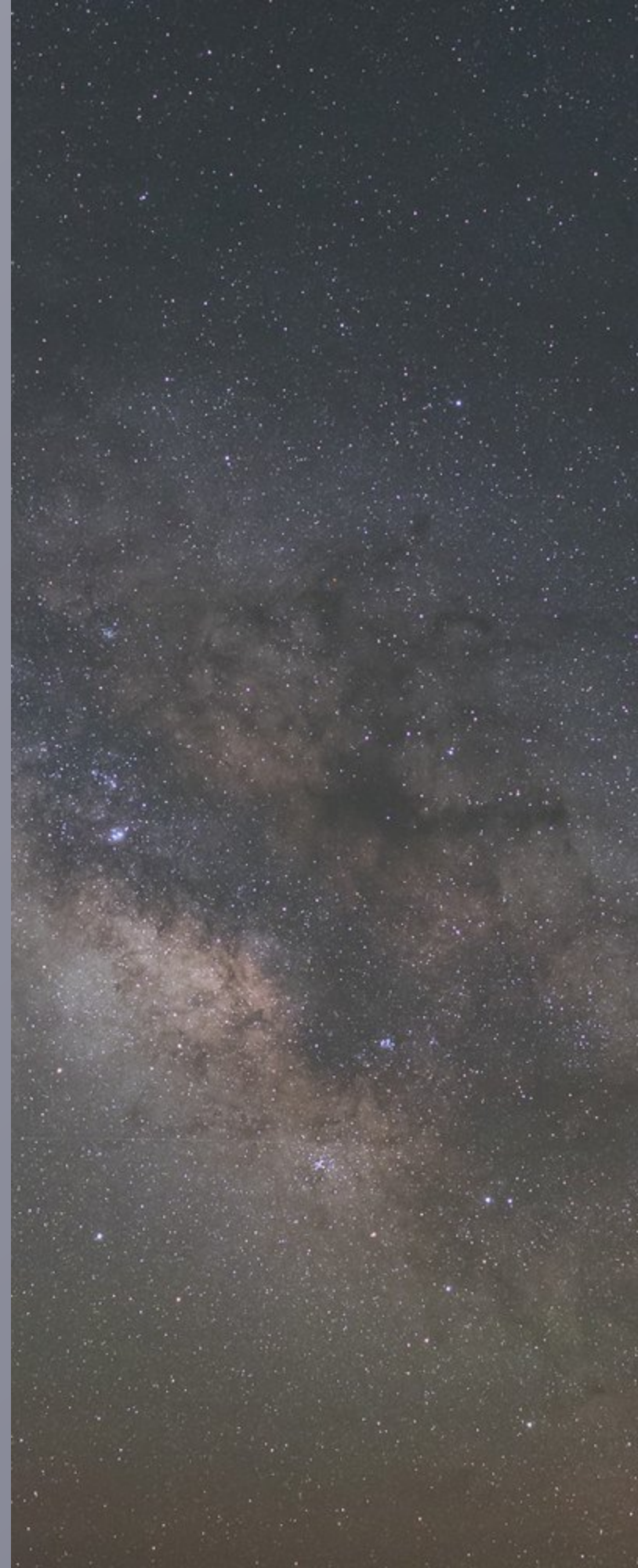
There are seasons of growth

Enjoy the journey



Assess and adapt

- Instagram will always change
- Some things are out of our control
- Our content has to change too
- Things that worked in the past don't now
- Trends come and go
- We have to be willing to adjust to grow



Adjust your Bio

- Does your Bio need a facelift?
- How is your profile picture?
- Is it clear what you do?
- Is it clear who you serve?
- Would you follow you?
- Do you need a new call to action?

**MAKE A
GOOD
FIRST
IMPRESSION**

The background of the right side of the slide is a vibrant blue with a textured, slightly grainy appearance. In the bottom-left corner, there is a rolled-up mat or rug, also in a similar blue color, with a darker blue inner core. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

Analyze your data

- Data from App
- Facebook Business Suite
- Metricool



Assess others

Who is successful in your niche?

- Check Explore Page
- Look up hashtags
- Look up other creators
- What are they doing right?
- What are they not doing?
- Is there a gap you can fill?
- Follow and interact with those you like
- Ask questions





Who is currently growing in your niche?

- Not all popular accounts are growing
- All accounts lose followers
- Some accounts are losing and gaining at a similar rate
-
- Most accounts are getting some non-follower reach
- Not all accounts are turning non-followers into followers
 - Use Social Blade or HypeAuditor for data

Note: Growth is not the only metric for a successful account
Reach and Engagement are key for most sponsors

Who is currently growing in our niche?

< rami_astro   ...






719 posts 1M followers 722 following

Rami Ammoun

 rami_astro


Photographer

< aaronjenkin   ...



869 posts 652K followers 664 following

Aaron Jenkin | Cornwall & NZ he/him

 aaronjenkin

Photographer

< astronycc   ...



243 posts 339K followers 894 following

Samil Cabrera

 astronycc

Photographer

< benjaminbarakat   ...



441 posts 59.6K followers 1,709 following

Benjamin Barakat

 benjaminbarakat

Photographer

< miguel_claro   ...





681 posts 49.9K followers 724 following

Miguel Claro Astrophotography

 miguel_claro


Photographer

< missjessbess  ...





642 posts 44.7K followers 2,066 following

Jess Santos

 missjessbess


Photographer

< jriceastro  ...



182 posts 20.6K followers 811 following

Jason Rice

 jriceastro

Photographer

< kristinrosephotography   ...



530 posts 11.2K followers 995 following

Kristine Rose Photography she/her

 kristinrosephotography

Education

What are they doing right?

- Beautiful production value
- Often use written hooks to stop the scroll
- Descriptive on screen text

- Story Telling in Reels or Captions
 - Showing the process
 - Showing gear taking images
 - Walking up to gear

What are they doing right?

- Using video and still images
- Using Carousels (Multiple images)
- Reels over 8 seconds
- Making you wait until the end for image or payoff
- Use niche specific hashtags for post



719 posts

1M followers

722 following

Rami Ammoun

rami_astro

Photographer



Touring the cosmos from my telescope

Prints and wallpapers

beacons.ai/ramiastro

Rami Astro Content Updates · 3.8K memb...

Followed by chasing_horizonz_, azastroguy and 479 others

Following

Message

Shop

- Specialty- Moon and Deep-Sky
- Uses a variety of gear
- He doesn't travel much
- Uses Instagram lives
- Visual storytelling
- Adds movement and animation
- Concise informative captions
- Varying number of hashtags
- Engagement rate 1.64%
- Post Frequency- 2.92 per week



- Specialty- Time-lapse videos (Milky Way and Moon)
 - Posts mostly Reels
 - Incorporates story telling and movement
 - Uses multiple time-lapse videos together
 - Mainly Showcases one geographic area
 - Cornwall, England
 - Concise informative captions
 - Stopped using hashtags in May
 - Used 3-5 prior to May
-
- Engagement rate 2.68%
 - Post Frequency- 1.88 per week




873 posts

652K followers


668 following

Aaron Jenkin | Cornwall & NZ he/him

 aaronjenkin

Photographer

- I like to timelapse ✨
- Landscape & Astrophotography Prints 📷
- 2025 Cornwall Calendar now available! ⬇️

 hype.co/@aaronj



Followed by **chasing_horizonz_**, **adventurewithpaige** and 209 others

Following ▾

Message

Shop






245
posts

340K
followers


896
following

Samil Cabrera

 [astronycc](#)

Photographer

+

Exploring the outdoors 

All content is captured and processed by me.

Prints ↓

 displate.com/astronycc/space



Followed by [azastroguy](#), [jsn_pdog](#)
and 378 others

Following ▾

Message

Email



- Specialty - Astrophotography
 - A true mix of Deep Sky, Milky Way, Moon, and Solar
 - Provides variety of subjects and locations
 - Tells story of capturing the image
 - Includes written hooks when appropriate
 - Doesn't always use on screen titles
 - Adds movement to images
 - Rotation, panning, zooming in
 - Concise informative captions
 - Uses 6-10 hashtags
-
- Engagement rate 3.23%
 - Post Frequency- 1.88 per week

- Specialty- Milky Way photography and Nightscape
 - Showcases beautiful tour locations
 - Finds the world's most unique trees
 - Separated his photos from Reels in the feed
 - Incorporates tour footage
 - Collaborations
 - Showcases people on tours
 - Uses captions to explain video
 - Occasionally uses titles or hooks
 - Uses 10-14 hashtags
-
- Engagement rate 2%
 - Post Frequency- 2.76 per week




441 posts

59.6K followers

1,709 following


Benjamin Barakat

 benjaminbarakat

Photographer

Milky Way Photographer of the Year 21, 22, 23 & 24
Living in Switzerland 🇨🇭

Photography workshops & expeditions 📍

 www.benjaminbarakat.com and 2 more

 **Cosmos Cafe** 🪐 · 913 members



Followed by mikeshawphotography, chasing_horizonz_ and 427 others

Following ▾

Message

Contact





681 posts

49.9K followers

724 following

Miguel Claro Astrophotography

miguel_claro

Photographer

Night Photographer, Author 2x Science Communicator | @darkskyalqueva | @twanight @esoastronomy ambassador | Private Workshops | BUY MY PRINTS

miguel-claro-prints.mysho... and 4 more

Followed by mikeshawphotography, azastroguy and 184 others

Following Message Email +



- Specialty- Solar and Deep Sky Photography
- Collaborations with @darkskyalqueva
 - Most images captured in this location
- Many descriptive titles in the videos
- Longer Captions
- Often educating on scientific principles
- Uses stories to connect with audience
 - talks about gear, share BTS, promote prints and workshops
- Uses 15-20 hashtags
- Engagement rate 3.82%
- Post Frequency- 1.08 per week

- Specialty- Landscape and Nightscape
 - Showcases the overlanding experience
 - Collaborations on Reels
 - Descriptive Captions
 - Mix of images and Reels in the feed
 - Uses EXIF Data panel as a second slide
 - Variety of Reels
 - Different Landscapes
 - Editing Tutorial
 - Drone footage of tours
 - Uses stories to share BTS and tell stories
-
- Engagement rate 3.14%
 - Post Frequency- 0.44 per week



642 posts

44.7K followers

2,066 following

Jess Santos

missjessbess

Photographer

Wanderer / Adventurer / Stargazer 🌵

Join the Community @theimageguild 👁️

@SonyAlpha Ambassador / #AlphaCollective

#CommunityOverCompetition

linktr.ee/missjessbess

The Image Guild · 93 members



Followed by **lorithomasphotog**, **chasing_horizonz_** and 134 others

Following ▾

Message

Email





182 posts

20.6K followers

811 following

Jason Rice

@jriceastro

Photographer

Astrophotography | Birmingham, AL

Website | Inquiries | Prints

bio.site/jriceastro

Astro Amigos · 433 members

Followed by astronomycc, bettymaya.foott and 74 others

- Following
- Message
- Shop
- + Person icon



- Specialty- Nightscape and Deep-sky
- Mix of Reels and images
- Carousels of multiple images
- BTS footage
 - people, location, and camera (drone)
- Concise Captions
- Uses a slider to provide some movement
- Uses on screen titles and storytelling
 - Includes calls to action
 - Adds voice over and asks questions
- Follows some viral trends

- Engagement rate 5.06%
- Post Frequency- 3.24 per week

- Specialty- Milky Way Images
 - Mostly images
 - Reels- BTS, tutorial, speaking to camera
 - Descriptive Captions
 - Story telling about images in captions
 - She uses Instagram to promote her business, events, and podcast
 - A business account that feels more like a passion project
 - She uses stories to share her life and BTS
 - Also uses stories to share and sell offers
-
- Engagement rate 1.83 %
 - Post Frequency- 1.28 per week




530
posts

11.2K
followers

995
following

Kristine Rose Photography she/her



 kristinerosephotography

Education

Full-time fine art nightscape photographer and educator in NS Canada.
Halifax, Nova Scotia

 kristinerosephotography.com

 **Night Sky News**   · 471 members

  Followed by **lorithomasphotog,**
chasing_horizonz_ and 116 others

Following ▾

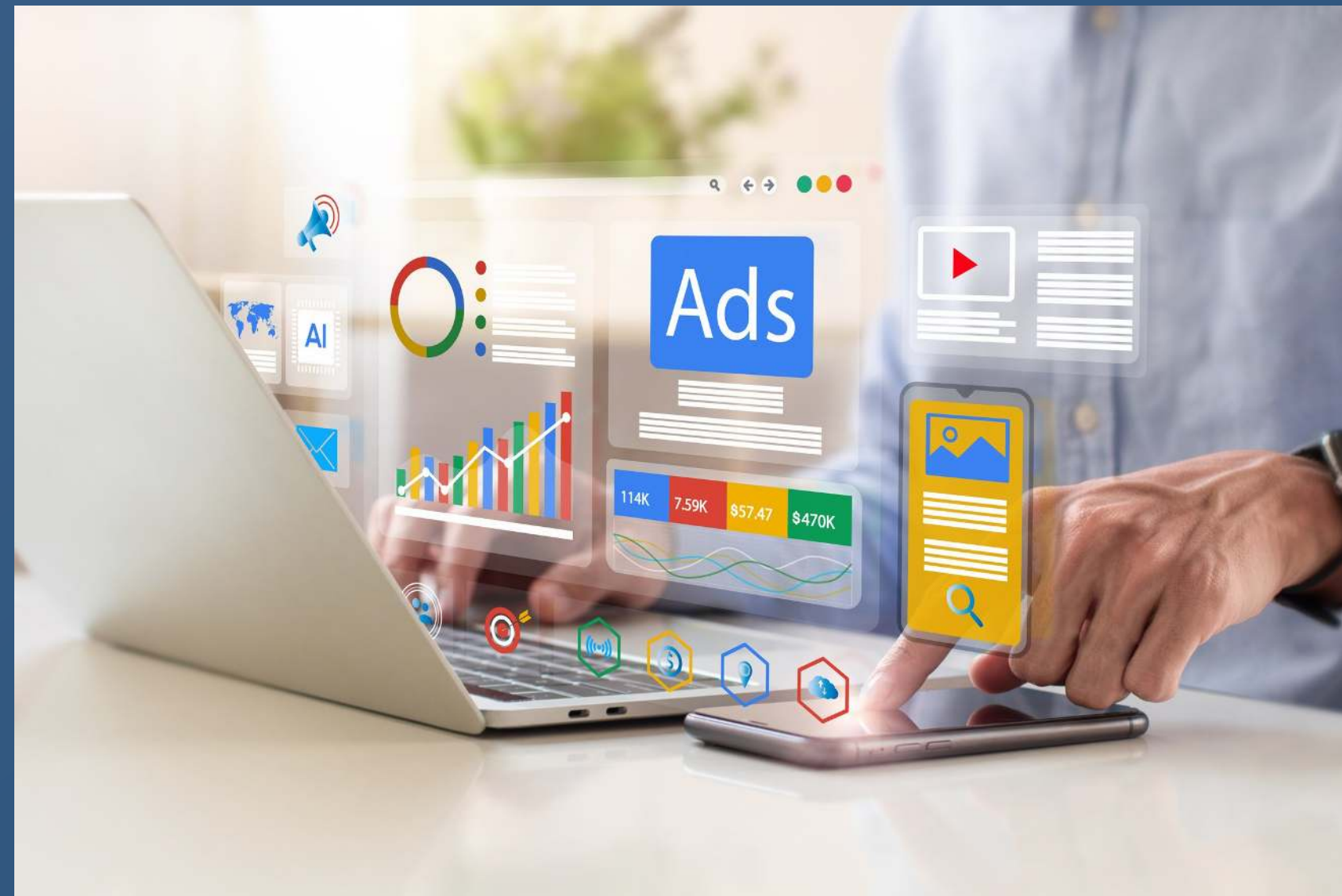
Message

Email



Have a Strategy

What is a social media strategy and why do I need one?



Social Media strategy is your plan



Your strategy should answer these questions

- What are your specific goals?
- What is your niche or target audience?
- How will you serve them?
- What content will you create?
- How can you engage with your followers?
- How will you use data to track progress?
- How will you adjust?



**What
would you
like to
accomplish
with social
media?**



A night landscape photograph featuring a rocky foreground, a line of dark evergreen trees, and a starry sky with the Milky Way galaxy. The text "What are your specific goals?" is overlaid in large white font.

**What are your
specific goals?**

**The two main
types of
photography
accounts on
social media
are**

**Business or
Passion Project**



Business or Brand

Social Media's role

- Use as top of funnel
- Teach or share value
- Build an email list
- Build credibility
- Reach potential customers
- Build a community



How to make money on social media

- Sell prints
- Instagram Subscriptions
- Monetize Youtube channel
- Sell courses or digital products
- Membership sites
- Sell workshops
- Brand sponsorships
- Affiliate Marketing



Passion Project

Social Media's role

- Share images
- Get to know other night photographers
- Increase beauty in the online world
- Build credibility
- Build a community of friends
- Promote a Cause
- Encourage yourself to process images



The most successful business accounts feel like a passion project

- Focus on serving before selling
- Show up for them
- Build a connection
- People like to buy from people



What is your Niche?

More than just a topic or genre

- A problem you are trying to solve
- A person you are speaking to



Finding your Niche

Photography is too large, you must specify

- What is your favorite type of photography?
- What do you do best?
- What type of photography are you known for?
- Can you niche down even more?



Who is your target audience?

- Who will you serve with your content?
- What do they value?
- What are their interests?
- What are their concerns?
- What solutions do they need?



How to find information about your target audience

- Facebook groups
- Subreddits
- Quora
- Google Trends
- Pinterest
- Hashtags
- Youtube Videos
- Comments sections
- Audience research platforms
 - SparkToro



On what platform are they active?



Should you be on all platforms?

- Focus on one platform
- Create an account for each platform to secure your username
- You can post the same material across all platforms





**How will you
serve your
audience?**



Ways to serve

- Tutorials
- Inspirational Messages
- Showcase your unique experience
- Funny content
- Create a product that solves a problem
- Create interest
- Answer questions



What content will you create?

Create Quality Content

- Post Your Best Work
 - Don't wait to be perfect
- Tell Stories
- Share your journey

Educational content

- Upcoming news
- Share tips
- Tutorials
- How-to guides



@darkskyutah

Research your niche for content ideas

What is working for other
creators?

How can you put your spin on
it?



Research other Niches

What is working in other niches?
Can you make that work for you?



Vary your Content

NEWS

STORY

PHOTOS

SOCIAL
MEDIA

BLOG

C O N T E N T

Setting Shutter Speed for Nightscape Photography



“

How to avoid
star trails.

@darkskyutah

Share or save this post for future reference.

Carousels

multiple slides or
images together

- Increase reach
- More followers will see it.
- Instagram shows the second slide to a follower who didn't interact

Carousel Tips

- Use to teach concepts
- Show collections
- Use Canva to add text
- Include different crops of an image
- Include an EXIF slide with settings



Reels or short-form video

- Generally shorter than one minute
- Best way to reach new followers
- Introduce your content



Reels Tips

- Visit beautiful places
- Create high-quality video
- Use Trending Audio
- Include text on the screen
- Include hooks
- Use movement
- 2-second rule



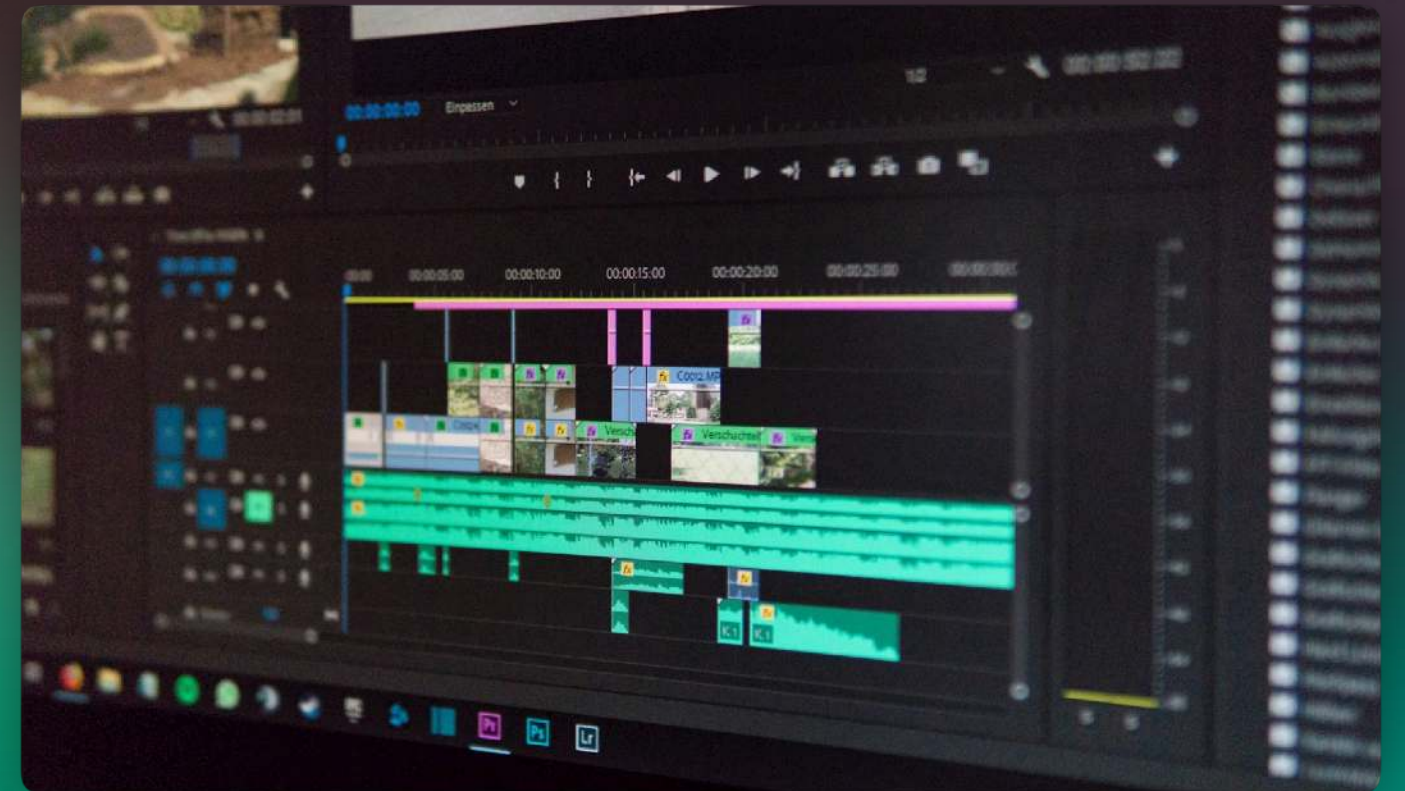
Reels

Tell a story

- Record B-role footage on your adventures
 - Walking to your camera or sites.
 - Messing with the camera or telescope
 - Time-lapse video of a telescope or camera taking pictures

Learn video editing skills

- Watch video editing tutorials on Instagram
- Try professional editing software
 - Davinci Resolve, Adobe Premier Pro, Final Cut Pro, etc
- Try video editing phone apps
 - Adobe Premier Rush, Inshot, Capcut, iMovie, etc





Stories

More casual and immediate

Build connection

More interactive

Only last 24 hours

Show your personality

Share things outside your niche

Share offers and products

Stories Tips

- Show behind-the-scenes content
- Ask Questions
- Use Polls and Quizzes
- Showcase others' work
- Make Announcements
- Share News Events
- Tips and Tutorials
- Shoutouts to other creators
- Giveaways and Contests



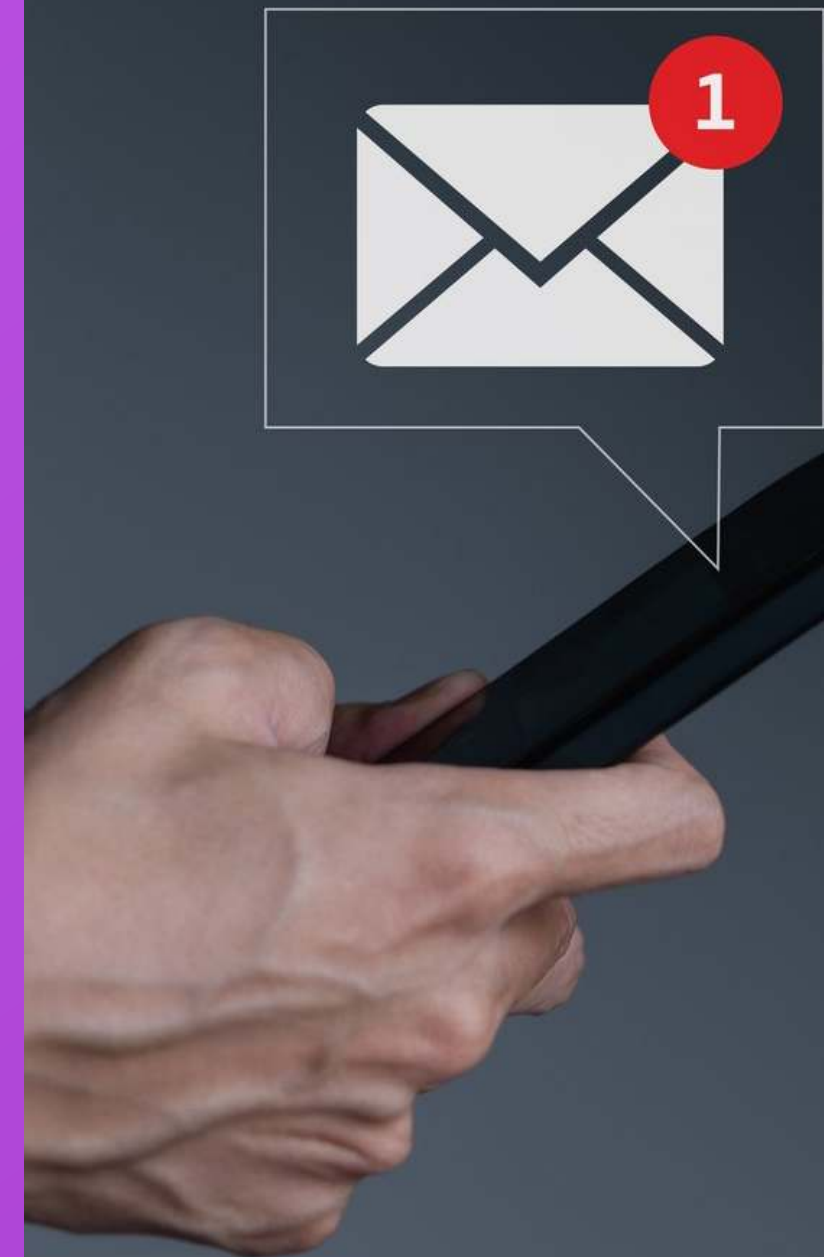
Direct Messages (DM)

- Great to answer questions
- Great for networking and collaborations
- The most effective way to sell on Instagram
- One-on-one interaction
 - Establish boundaries
 - Tell people what you will and will not talk about
 - Use the Frequently Asked Questions feature



How to use DM's to sell

- Have conversations
- Build trust
- Answer questions
- Follow up
- Use Direct message automation in posts
 - Many Chat



Lives

- Do Q&A's
- Behind the Scenes
- Tutorials
- Collaborations or Interviews
- Show your gear set-up
- Reviews
- Show the moon through a telescope
- Live Giveaways
- Industry News



Collaborations

The background of the slide is a photograph of a desert landscape at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the foreground, two tripods are set up on a rocky surface. The tripod on the right is taller and has a camera mounted on it. The tripod on the left is shorter and also has a camera mounted on it. The overall scene is silhouetted against the bright sunset.

Collaboration increases reach

- Borrow another audience
- Increase Visibility and Growth
- The Algorithm boost
- Increase engagement
- Credibility
- Increase Expertise

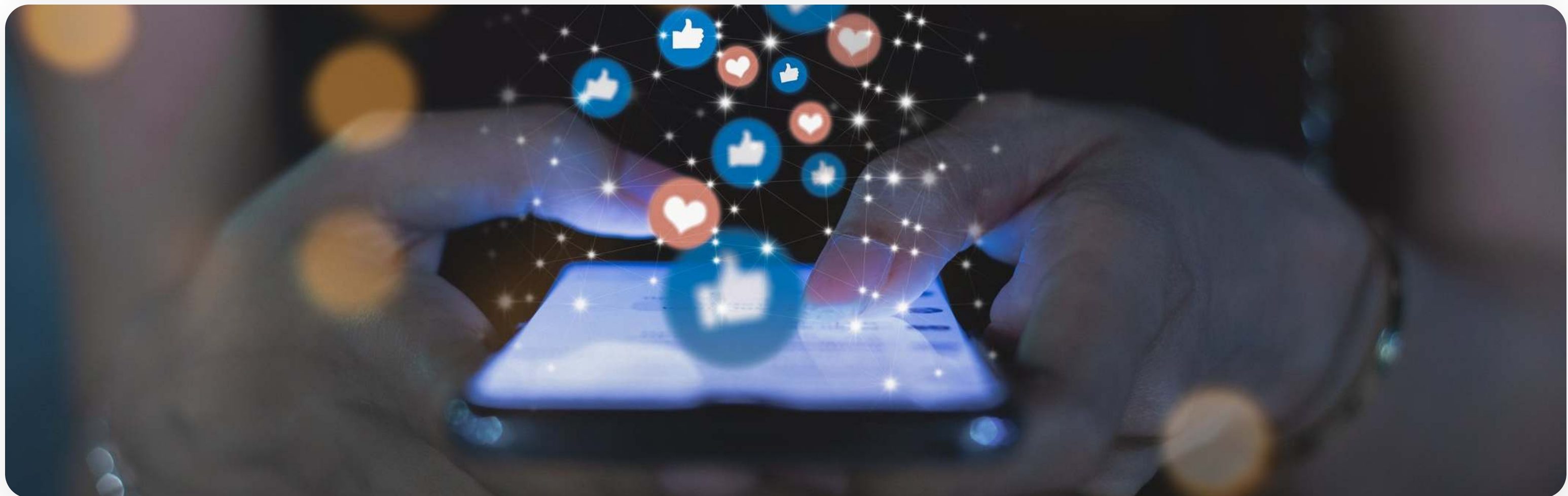
A photograph of two hikers standing on a rocky mountain peak at sunrise. The hiker on the left is wearing a hat and has long hair, and the hiker on the right is wearing a dark jacket. They are both looking out over a vast, misty landscape of rolling hills and valleys. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The hikers' shadows are cast on the rock in front of them. Two red backpacks are on the ground near the hiker on the right.

Collaboration Ideas

- Hold a photo challenge
- Guest post
- Visit the same location and share your images
- Create Series together
- Live discussions
- Editing Challenges
- Joint workshops
- Feature posts or spotlights
 - Encourage people to use your hashtag
- Collaborate with music creators
- Showcase student work

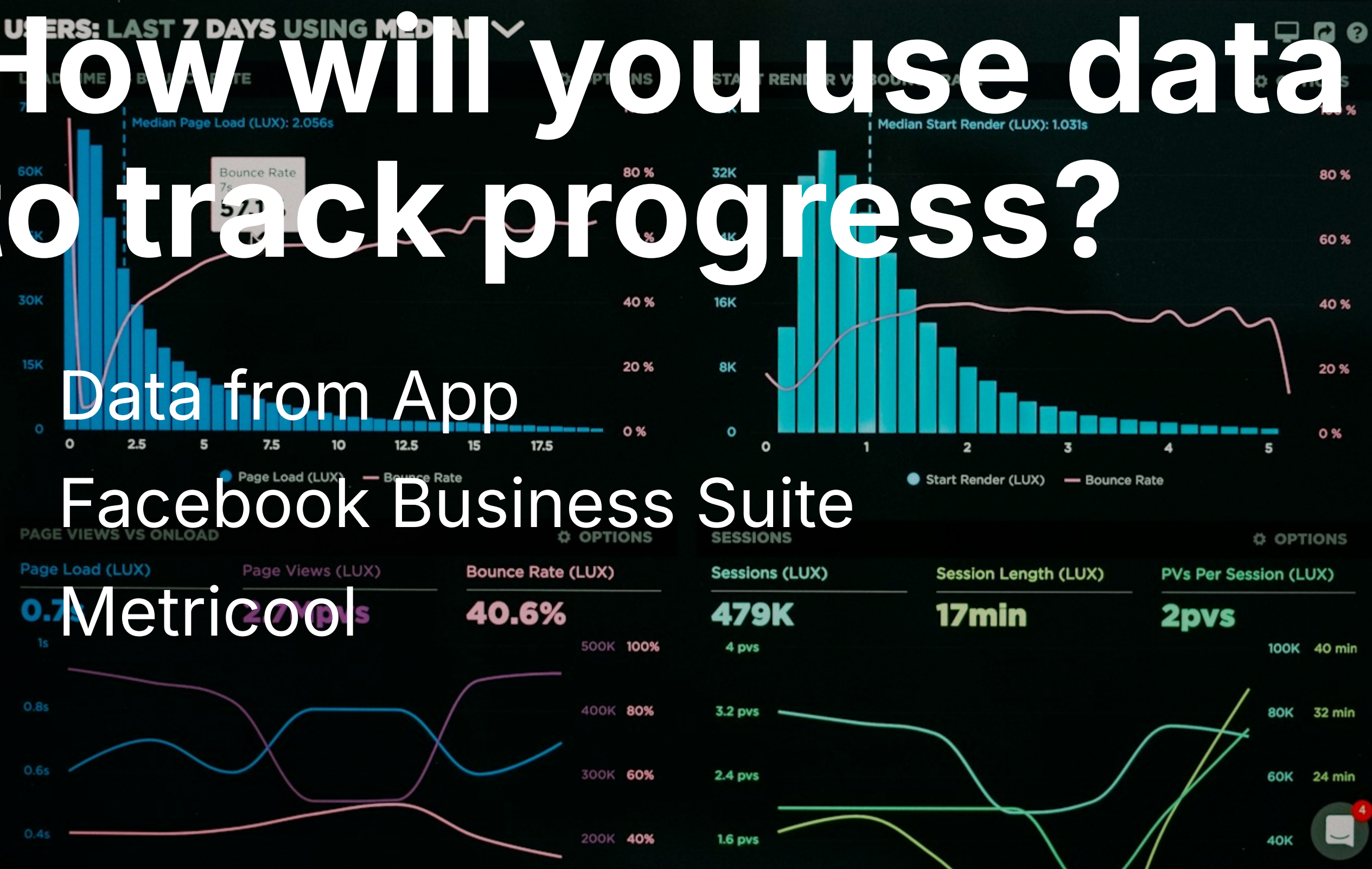
How can you engage with your followers?

- Use the platform to serve
- Answer questions
- Respond to messages
- Ask questions



How will you use data to track progress?

- Data from App
- Facebook Business Suite
- Metricool



How will you adjust?

- Be searchable
- Write Alt Text
- Include niche keywords in captions and bio
 - Don't Keyword stuff
- Switch up hashtags
- Update location tags





Hashtags

Hashtags can still help you

- Use hashtags specific to your post
- Don't only use the most popular ones
- Don't put hashtags in the comments
- Instagram only uses keywords in captions for SEO

Hashtags

Use hashtags with varying number of posts

- Most should be in 100K-750K range
- Don't use many hashtags under 50K-100K
 - Unless it is very niche-specific or your own
- Don't reuse the same set of hashtags all the time

Don't stress a lot about them



How Many Hashtags?

There is debate about the number of hashtags

- Keep hashtags between 5 -8 or 8 -28
- Consensus is less than 30
- Use more popular ones on Reels for reach
- Test out on your account and see which help



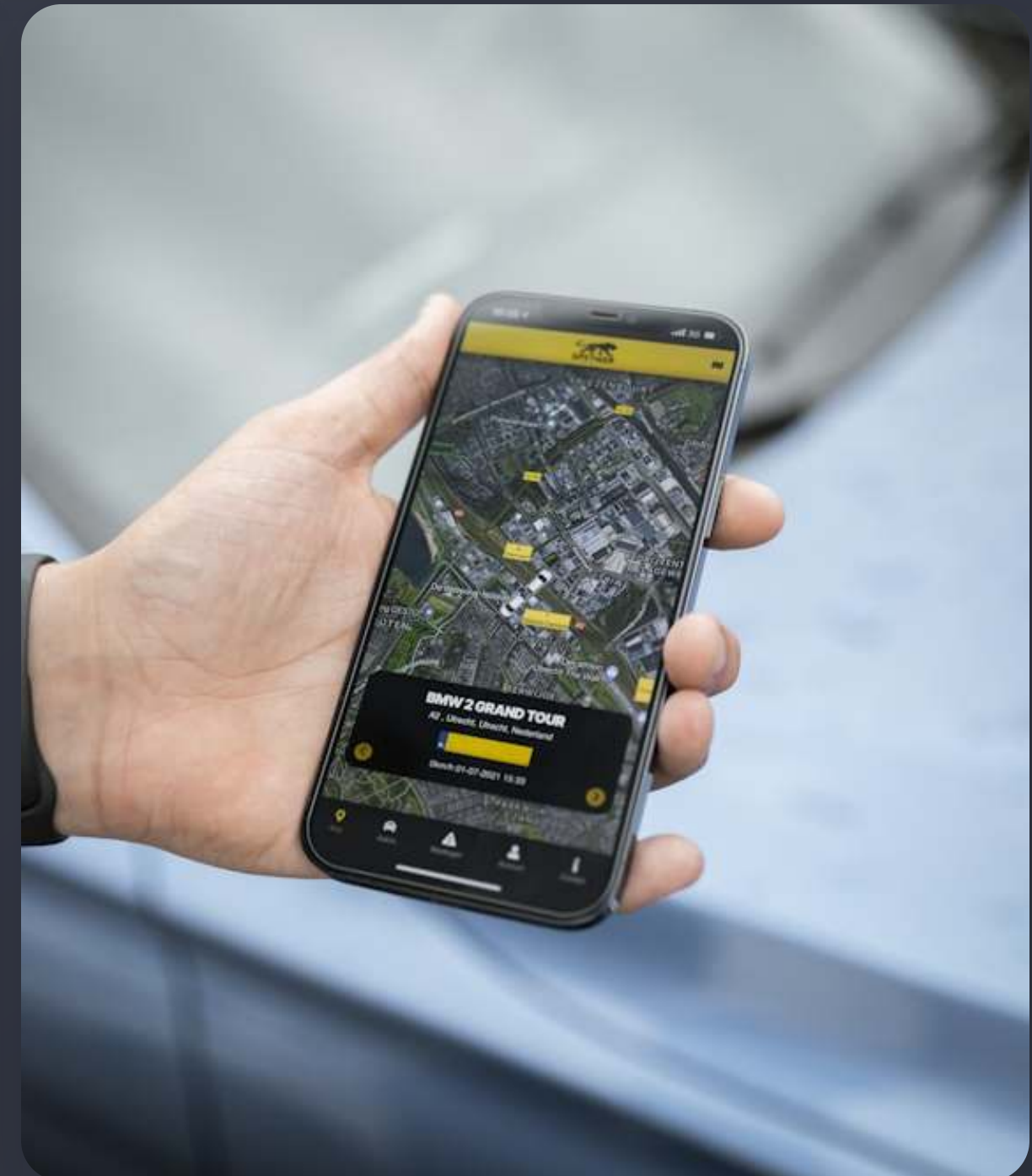


Use Location Tag

- Location tags can increase reach
- Use an existing location tag
- Don't use exact GPS coordinates
- Be mindful of privacy

How to pick the location tag

- Pick a relevant location
- Pick a popular location
- Consider Niche Appeal
- Choose an Event or Occasion if applicable



Final thoughts

- Don't hold anything sacred
- Be social
- Move on if it isn't working
- Have fun
- Experiment
- Have growth mindset

