

Social Media Platforms



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Social Media Platforms

How has social media changed communications?

Since the early 2000s, social media has altered the way we communicate with each other, connect with loved ones and share our interests. As of 2022, an estimated 4.7 billion people are active on combined social platforms.¹

The growth of social media has also changed the way businesses reach their customers. Businesses can build their brand by establishing a presence on different social media platforms. The personal element of social media also enables businesses to develop connections with their customers and build brand loyalty.

Businesses can also reach new audiences on social media by advertising. By creating targeted, dynamic ads, businesses can reach people most likely interested in their offerings. Businesses can also use social media to showcase their products and services and prompt people to purchase. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram have developed features that allow businesses to sell their products directly on their platforms.

In this reading, we'll take a closer look at the major social media platforms people around the world use today.

¹Global. Data Report, 2022.



Facebook

Facebook is the world's largest social media platform. It has an estimated 2.9 billion people² logging on daily as of 2022. Its largest demographic comprises male (18.4%) and female (12.6%) users between the ages of 25 and 34.³ In addition, 75% of online users with an income higher than \$75k use Facebook, making it a good platform to use for digital marketing.²

² Aslam, Salman. Omnicore, 2022.

³ Clement, J.. Statista, 2022.

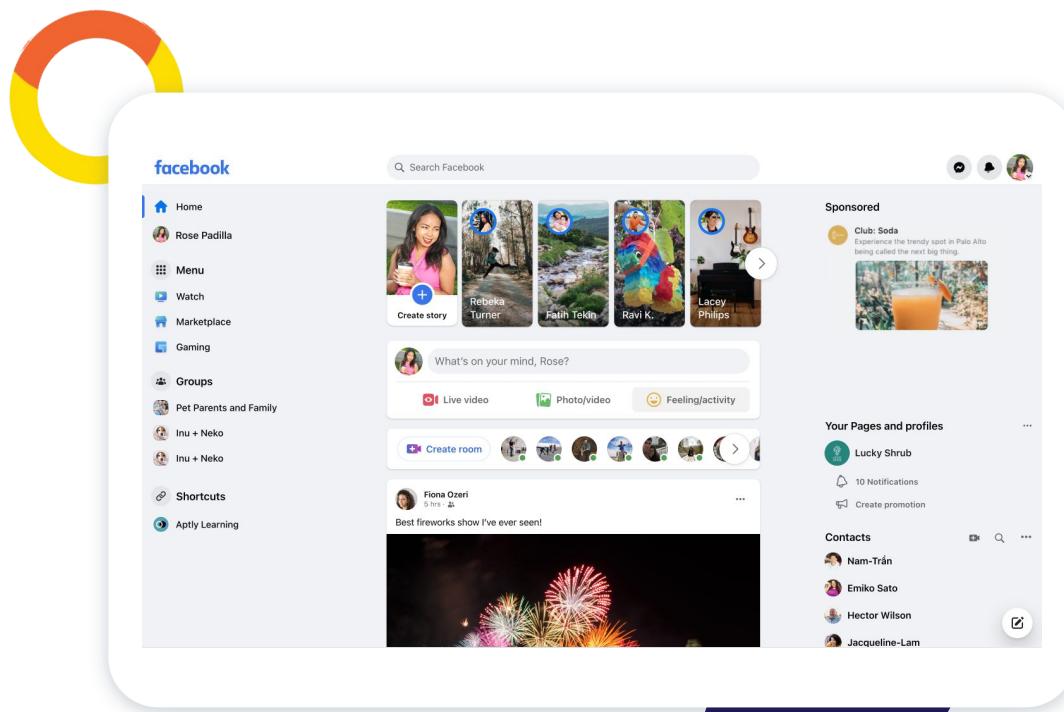


How people use Facebook

Facebook's mission is to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. People can use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family and discover what's going on in the world.

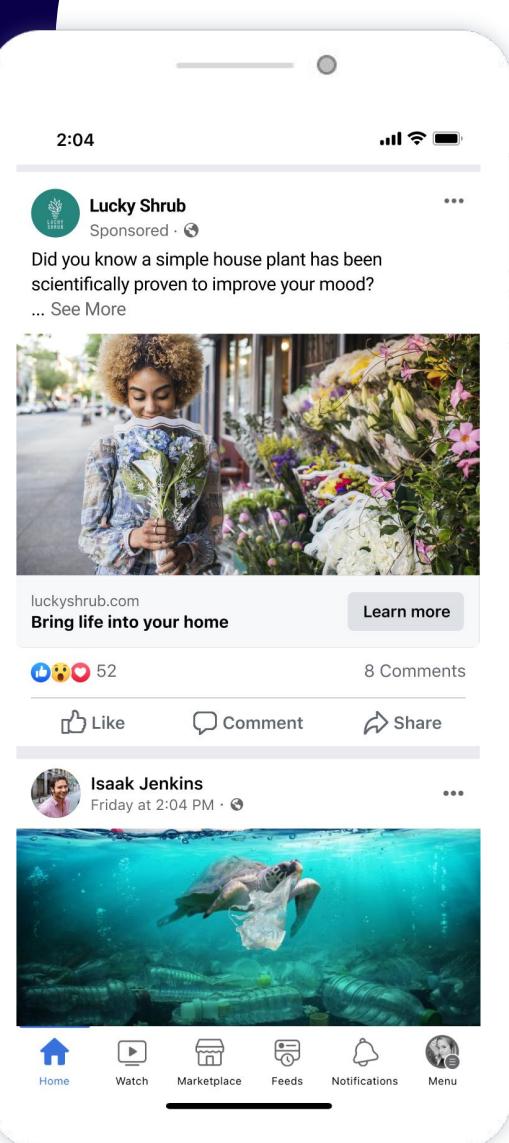
On Facebook, people can create profiles to share photos, interests, news, and personal updates. They can also add family members, friends and other people they want to keep in touch with as Friends. When a user logs into Facebook, they will land on their personal News Feed, which will include status updates, photos, videos and more from people they follow.

On Facebook, people can also share and express what matters to them. When people join Groups, they can find others who share their interests. People can also buy or sell new and used items easily on Marketplace.



How businesses can use Facebook

- **Establish their online presence.** Businesses can create Facebook pages and add their contact information, such as a website or business hours. This allows customers to easily contact them.
- **Stay connected with customers.** To help customers stay up to date with their offerings, businesses can share photos and product updates with posts.
- **Showcase products and services.** Businesses can highlight their offerings and prompt people to purchase with Facebook Shops. With this free tool, businesses can add a store catalog, customize the look and feel of a shop, and sell products.
- **Create dynamic ads.** Businesses can also create ads and manage consolidated campaigns with Ads Manager.



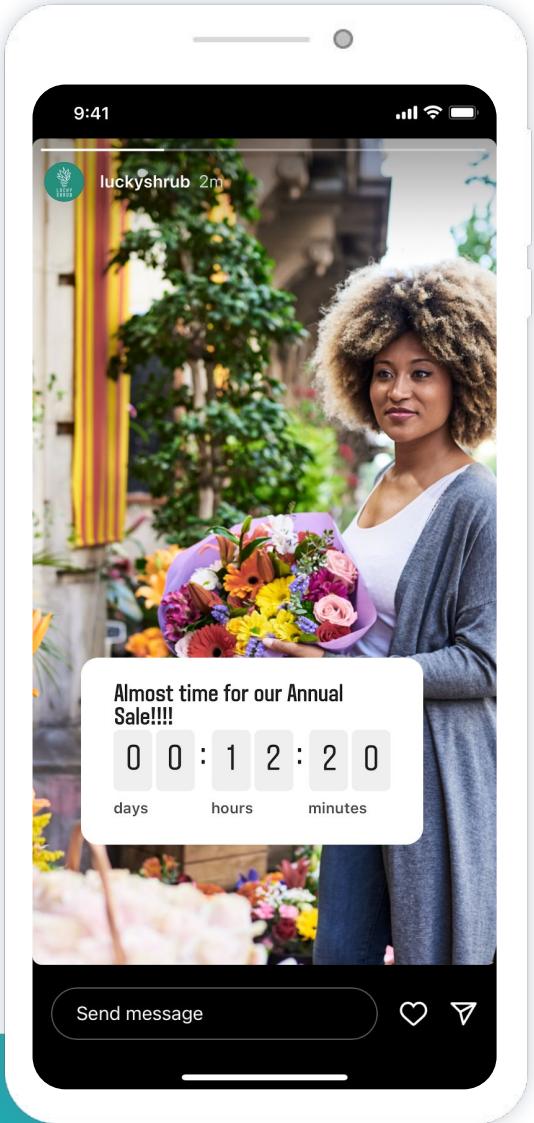
Instagram

Instagram was originally launched in October 2010 as a photo and video sharing app. Today, Instagram has evolved into a visually-driven platform where you can directly engage people and find a community based on your interests.

In 2018, Instagram topped over a billion users. According to Statista, more than half of Instagram's daily users are 34 years old or younger, and the largest user age bracket is 25-34 years old.⁴

⁴ Clement, J. Statista, 2022.





How people use Instagram

On Instagram, people can follow friends, celebrities, industry leaders, and businesses to stay up to date on their lives and events. People can also use Instagram to edit and post photos to their profiles or Stories.

Stories appear as a roll of profiles at the top of the news feed with photos and videos that last 24 hours, unless they are added to a Stories highlight on someone's profile. People can also share Reels, 90-second multi-clip videos with audio and visual effects, on their profile.

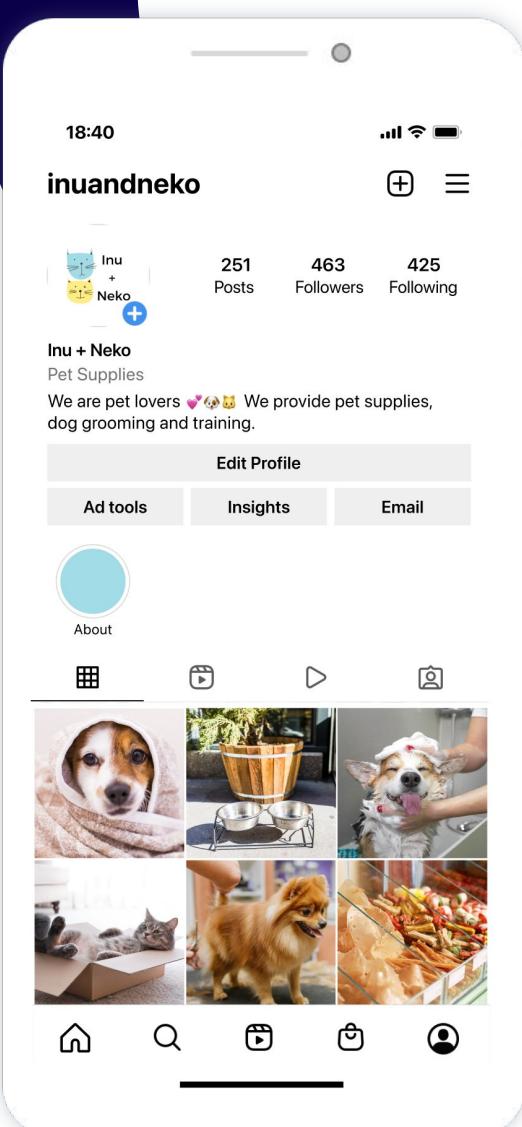
People can also connect with loved ones and others who share their interests on Instagram with Direct, which allows them to send private messages.

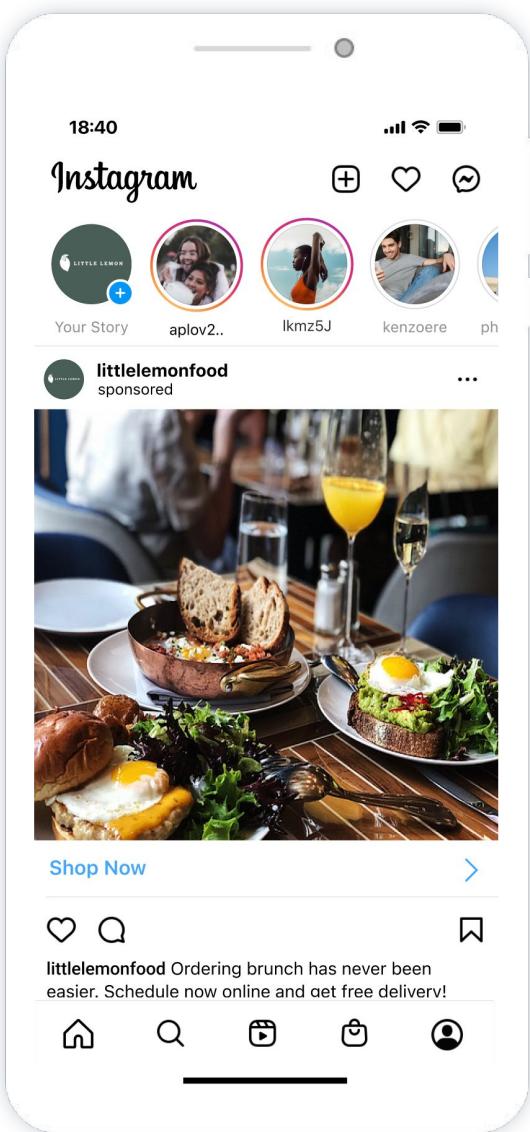
How businesses can use Instagram

Showcase your brand. Since Instagram is a visual app, it's a great way to showcase your offerings and demonstrate how they can fit into someone's life. Use Instagram's in-app creative tools to create playful photos and videos. Display your brand's personality by sharing photos and videos with a cohesive look and feel.

Engage with your community. Stay top-of-mind by regularly sharing photos and videos about your business. Businesses can also use Stories to post content that invites their community to engage with them using interactive stickers.

Get discovered. Use features such as location tags and hashtags so people who aren't already following you can find out about your business.





Set up a shop on Instagram.

Businesses can create a digital storefront on Instagram where people can browse and learn more about their products, such as the name of the product and the price of the item, without leaving the app.

Partner with creators. Businesses can also work with independent creators such as artists, bloggers, and celebrities on Instagram to promote their products.

Achieve business goals with ads.

Businesses can also reach new people by turning posts into ads on Instagram. People can engage with ads as they would an organic post and click a call-to-action button to take actions such as learn more or shop.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a free messaging app that allows users to send messages and place voice and video calls with just a wifi connection. There are approximately 2 billion WhatsApp users in the world, and one in five U.S. adults use WhatsApp.⁵ WhatsApp is available in more than 180 countries and in 60 different languages. Its biggest market is India, with 390 million users.

⁵ Lin, Ying. Oberlo, 2020.

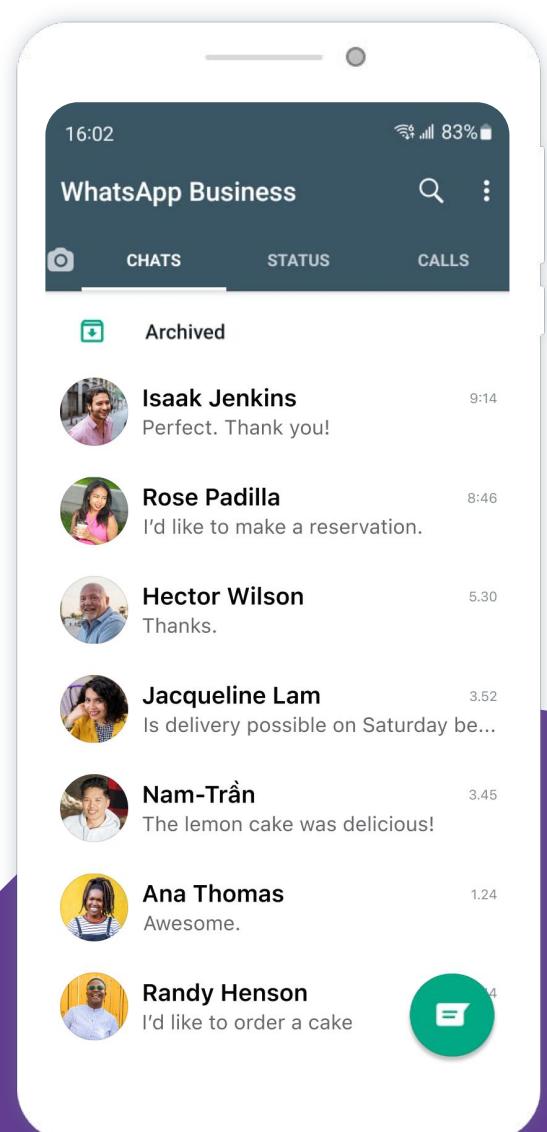


How people use WhatsApp

With WhatsApp, users only need a wifi connection to stay in contact with family across borders and oceans. You can send text messages and create group chats. You can even place domestic and international calls.

In order to maintain privacy, each and every message delivered on WhatsApp is automatically encrypted, so not even WhatsApp or Facebook can see its contents.

In addition to messages and calls, WhatsApp also allows users to send photos, videos, gifs, voice notes, and documents. Users can also post a status with their availability, and a story that lasts for 24 hours.



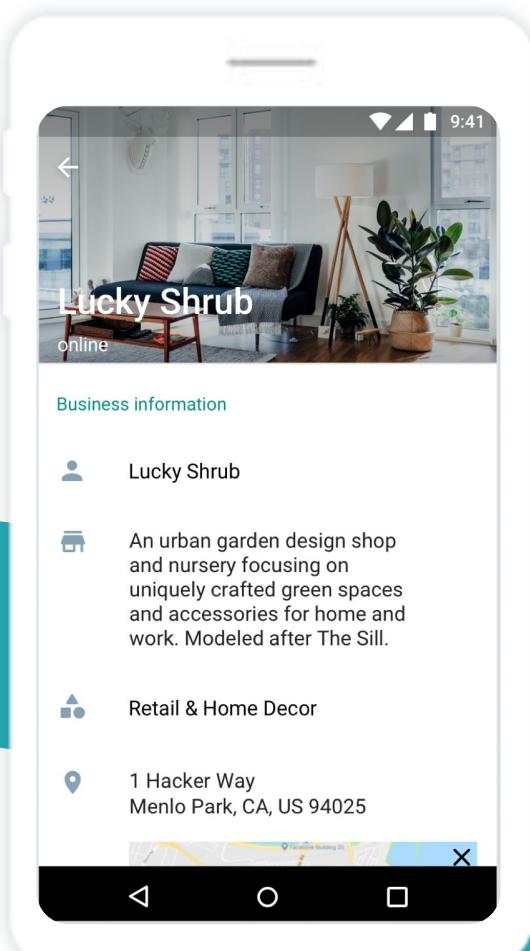
WhatsApp for Business

Direct messaging has become vital not only for personal connections, but also for commerce. Customers chat with businesses for information on hours and pricing, as well as for personal guidance on products.

According to a Facebook study conducted by Boston Consulting Group, 2 in 3 people surveyed globally that they had messaged a business during the 2019 holiday season.⁶

Businesses can use WhatsApp Business, an app that gives businesses tools to automate, sort, and quickly respond to messages from customers.

Download WhatsApp Business from [Google Play Store](#) or [Apple App Store](#).



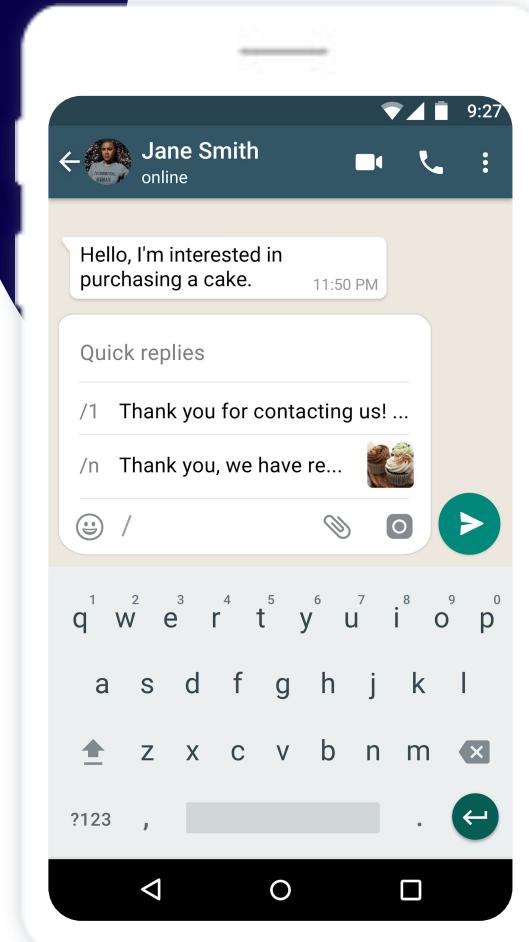
Create a business profile. With a Business Profile, businesses can add helpful information such as a business description, website, address, and contact information. This may help answer some customers' questions, but if they need to inquire further, they can message a business directly.

⁶Facebook IQ, 2019.

Messaging features for businesses

WhatsApp also has features to help businesses manage their chats, even when they're offline.

- **Set a greeting.** A greeting can automatically welcome anyone who opens a chat with your business.
- **Set expectations with away messages.** If people message your business outside of your working hours, set an automated away message with a rough time frame of when you'll be back.
- **Save time with Quick Replies.** Use quick replies to answer frequently asked questions like hours, address, contact information, and product availability with one touch.

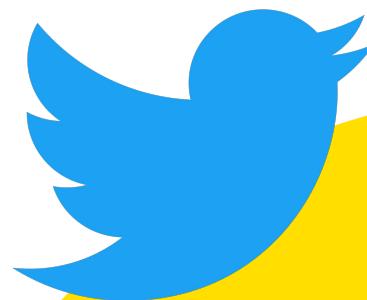


Twitter

Inspired by text-messaging, Twitter is a microblogging platform that allows people to share real-time status updates. An update, or a tweet, is limited to 280 characters. Because of its direct, conversational nature, Twitter users engage with it for everything from following breaking news, discussing niche interests, sharing personal updates, or simply chatting casually.

As per 2020 data, there are approximately 38 million daily active Twitter users in the U.S.⁷ 80% of those users are affluent millennials, and Twitter users in the U.S. tend to be more educated when compared to the general population. As for the gender divide, Twitter has more male users at 70.4%, and women making up 29.6% of users.

⁷ Aslam, Salman. Omnicore Agency, 2022.



How people use Twitter

People can curate their Twitter timelines by following people and other figures they are interested in. People can follow news sites, celebrities, authors, organizations working for social justice — anyone you like.

It's important to pay attention to one's timeline. Since active users tweet multiple times a day, and because the timeline is constantly being updated, tweets from even a few hours ago may already be long forgotten and out of the timeline.



Engage with others. Twitter's immediacy applies to interaction as well. As with other social media platforms, you can like people's tweets, and share — or "retweet" — them.

You can also comment on or reply to specific tweets. With famous figures and global brands having a presence on the platform, Twitter provides an opportunity for celebrities and companies to directly interact with their followers. Twitter also has a direct message function for private conversations.

Use hashtags. Another main feature of Twitter is hashtags. Hashtags are used to collect all related tweets under a single theme, and Twitter allows you to view all tweets under one hashtag in one place. For example, if you want to follow what's going on in Boston, you would follow #Boston. Hashtags are a way for users to have a concentrated conversation around one specific topic, and many companies and events create hashtags specifically so their followers can interact.



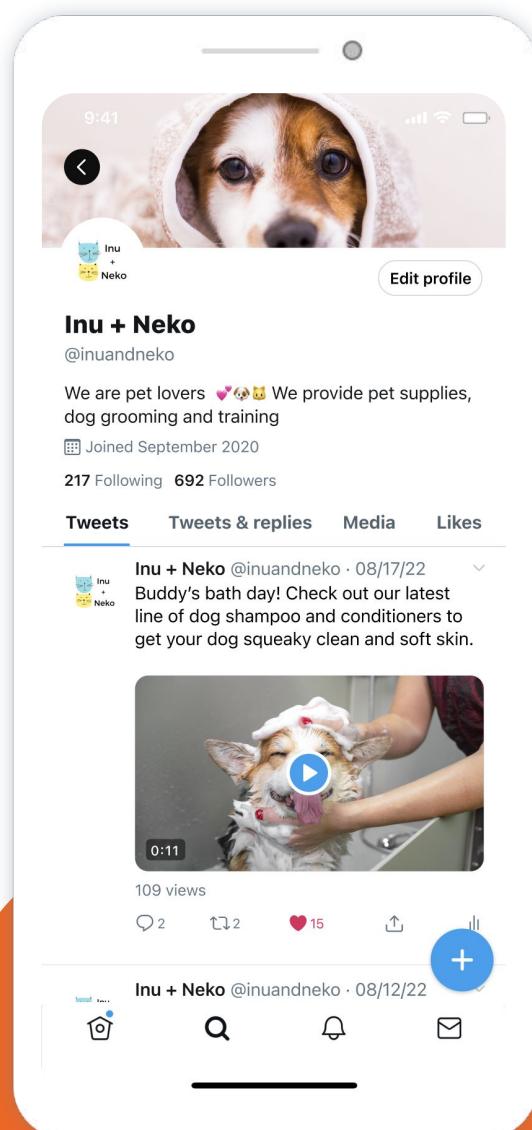


How businesses can use Twitter

Twitter is an ideal platform for your business to connect with your audience and join the conversations they're having.

Provide customer care. Through Twitter, businesses can offer real-time customer service, share product news and updates, and engage with customers in a personal way. This may include direct interaction and conversation, by asking questions, or responding to followers' comments in light, informal ways.

Engage followers. Twitter also gives companies a chance to discover what topics are relevant to the moment. This way, companies know how to engage followers with relevant content, and update their followers with any breaking news or changes. Additionally, by showing off your business's personality on Twitter, you can help spark interest in your brand among new audiences.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking site with more than 310 million monthly active users, as of 2022.⁸ The platform has become an increasingly important tool for anyone who is looking to find a new job, hire a new employee, broaden professional relationships, or learn and become certified in a new skill. Users can display their resumes and set up notifications to get alerted when new jobs are posted by companies they're interested in. 95% of polled recruiters use LinkedIn regularly to post jobs, and recruiters can also search for people with relevant job titles and experiences.

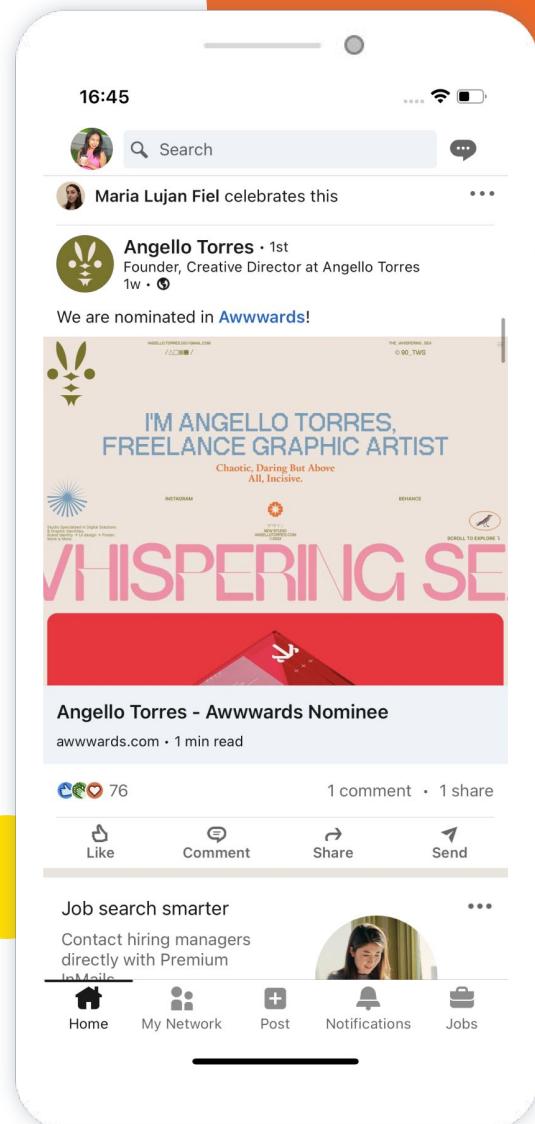
⁸ Aslam, Salman. Omnicore Agency, 2022.



How people use LinkedIn

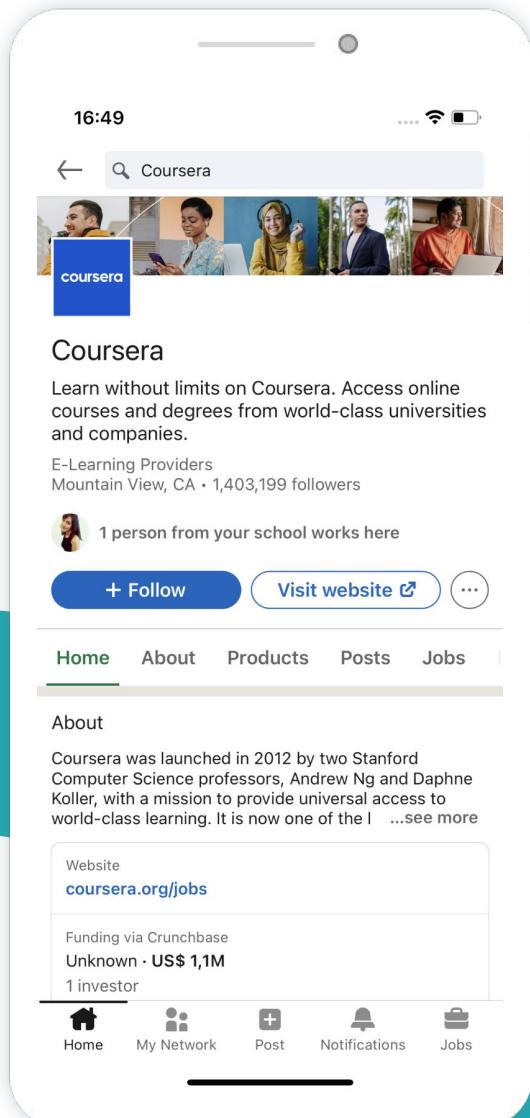
On LinkedIn, people can also connect with friends, acquaintances, and professional networks. You can search your dream company or role to connect with new people and learn more about what they do.

If you have a second-degree connection with someone you would like to meet, you can ask your mutual connection to introduce you. You can also join groups specific to your interests and industry. This will help you get acquainted with people who share your passions and stay on top of the latest trends in your field. Joining the right networks with industry leaders and similar companies can help businesses stay on top of industry practices and standards.



How businesses can use LinkedIn

Attract and reach new people. LinkedIn is considered one of the best social networks for businesses to attract new customers and followers. Given LinkedIn's massive user base across 200 countries and territories, and because users are already looking to engage with brands, industries, and ideas, LinkedIn can also serve as a great advertising platform. Businesses can post and advertise job listings to broad, yet strategic audiences. To reach the right audience you should target by job function and level, industry, and company size.



Post engaging and useful content.

Businesses can also establish their reputation by posting relevant content. Posts appear in the news feeds of people in your network. By sharing updates on their business stories or insights on industry practices regularly, businesses can establish themselves as reputable pioneers in their industries. They can also establish relationships with complimentary businesses by liking and commenting on other business' posts.

WeChat

Because China has a much more heavily-restricted internet than the U.S. and European countries, Chinese entrepreneurs have developed their own social media networks. The most popular one, WeChat, is considered to be "China's answer to Facebook."⁹

As of 2019, WeChat is the fourth most-used social app in the world. The network reached 1.26 billion users in 2021, and drives up to 30 percent of Chinese web traffic.¹⁰ Most WeChat users are in the 26–35 age group, a higher average than that of users on other social media apps.

⁹ Statt, Nick and Liao, Shannon. Facebook wants to be WeChat, 2019.

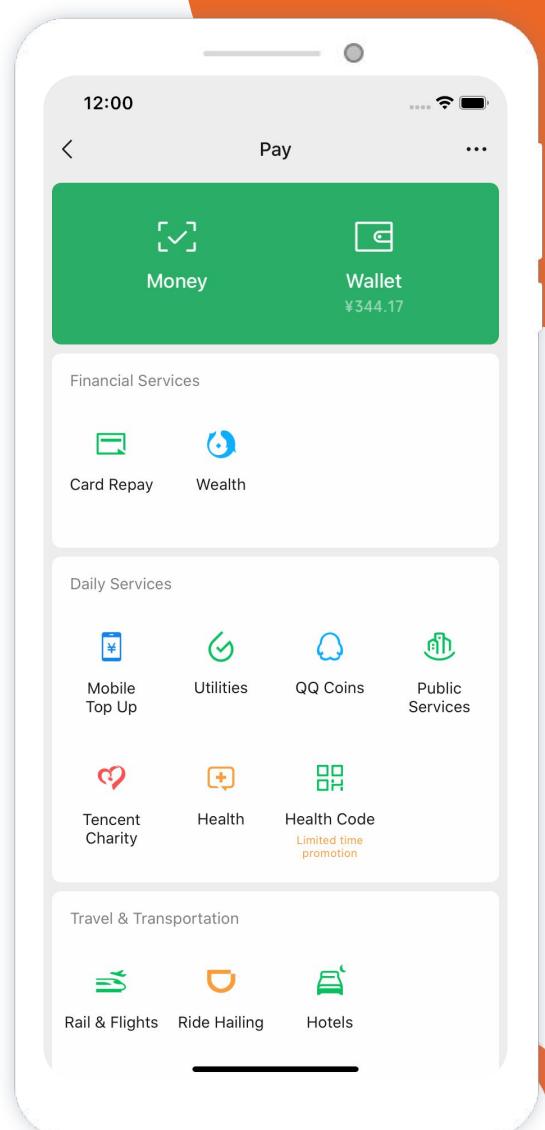
¹⁰ Iqbar, Mansool. Business of Apps, 2020.

How people use WeChat

WeChat offers many of the same services as other social media apps, such as messaging, networking, and news-sharing. You can post to your **Moments** feed with a picture, video, or text. You can like, comment on, and share posts, and adjust privacy settings to curate who can see your posts.

Pay with WeChat Pay. One of the most popular services on WeChat is **WeChat Pay**, an e-wallet which allows users to transfer money to other users and pay for services and products. Customers can pay businesses through WeChat Pay by entering in their payment information or directly scanning a business's unique QR code.

Play around with Mini-Programs. WeChat also serves as a gateway to other services like gaming, ride-sharing, shopping, banking, and more through **mini programs**, or native apps built within WeChat.



How businesses can use WeChat

Reach customers with mini-programs.

Businesses can make their services and products available on WeChat without investing in creating fully-formed apps by using **mini-programs**. Because **mini-programs** are quick to load, they are great for areas with lower data-plans. People can access mini-programs for offline transactions (such as paying for gas at a gas station) by scanning a QR code at a physical location. As **mini-programs** are integrated into WeChat, people can easily share items and shops with their friends, or discover shops through links in the articles influencers share.

In this image, you'll see a mini-program on WeChat for a coffee shop chain in China. Through the mini-program people can order drinks, access promotions, learn about new products, and share the chain's mini-program with friends.



Connect with customers through an official account. In addition to this, businesses can create **official accounts**, similar to how they can create business pages on Facebook. These accounts allow businesses to push out content to their users, have website-like functionality in their account page, and offer customer service interaction. The image to the right shows Facebook's official account. Through this account people can learn about how they can use Facebook to increase their sales.

Build a Brand Zone. Brands can also create a **brand zone**, which is a hub where a brand can provide a central overview of all of its WeChat activity. For instance, it can list its different **mini-programs** in its **brand zone**. This is a way for brands to get exposure to people that don't follow their official account. **Brand zones** come up on top of the search results in searches for the brand.

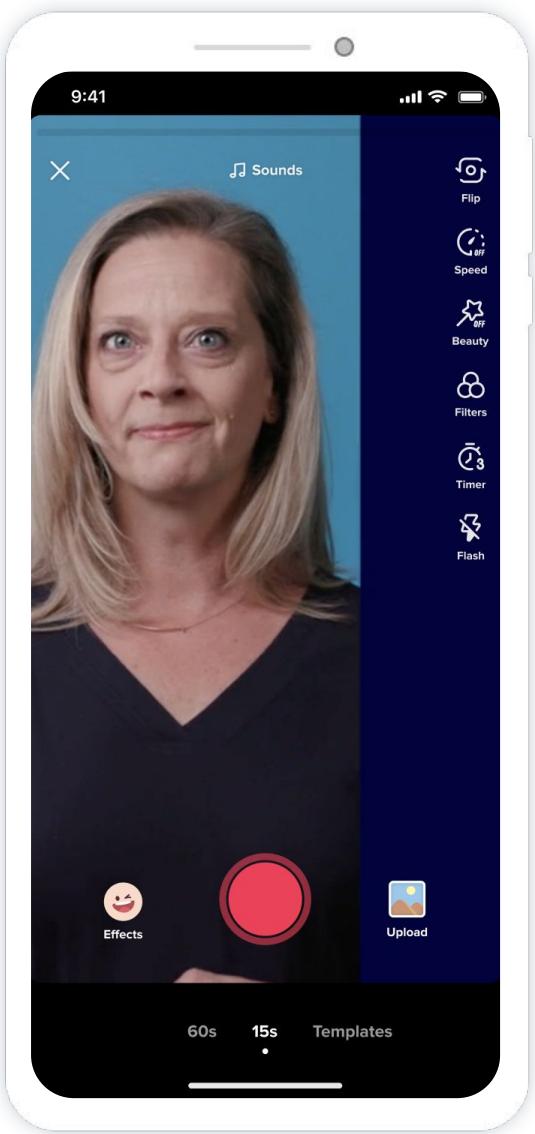
Advertise on the Moments feed. Finally, businesses can advertise on users' **Moments feed**. Businesses can target users by location, interest, and various demographics.



TikTok

As of 2020, TikTok, a musical lip-sync app—is the fastest-growing social media platform with an estimated 1.2 billion monthly users.¹¹ Its users are extremely young: 69% of users are between 13–24, and millennial usage is increasing as well. Its audience is split most heavily between China, the U.S., Indonesia, and Brazil with more than 50 percent of the app's users being in China.

¹¹ Iqbar, Mansool. Business of Apps, 2022.



How people use TikTok

Post short, informal videos. TikTok features content in short videos —15 to 60 second clips. Most of the first TikTok videos featured singing, dancing, lip syncing, and comedy, but now video content includes parody, memes, cooking and other tutorials, skits and short films, challenges, and more.

Be creative. Some creators have become celebrities in their own right, and many songs that made top charts in the U.S. were discovered and popularized through TikTok. TikTok also encourages interaction not only through typical means such as likes, comments, and shares, but also by allowing users to integrate other people's content into their own with duet and splice videos.

How businesses can use TikTok

Create informal and fun content. For businesses to successfully use TikTok, they need to make sure they understand TikTok's culture. Users look for fun, informal, and personal videos, so think about creating videos that showcase the people behind the business. Businesses can share tutorials on using products, or even participate in popular hashtag challenges. For example, NYX partnered with TikTok to develop the #ButterGlossPop Branded Hashtag Challenge Plus. This encouraged the TikTok community to apply the Butter Gloss in their own posts with catchy music and creative editing techniques.

Partner with creators. They can also partner with popular creators to feature their products, even if the content isn't directly related. Using popular hashtags can help businesses get discovered by new users, and businesses can also raise brand awareness by creating their own hashtags.

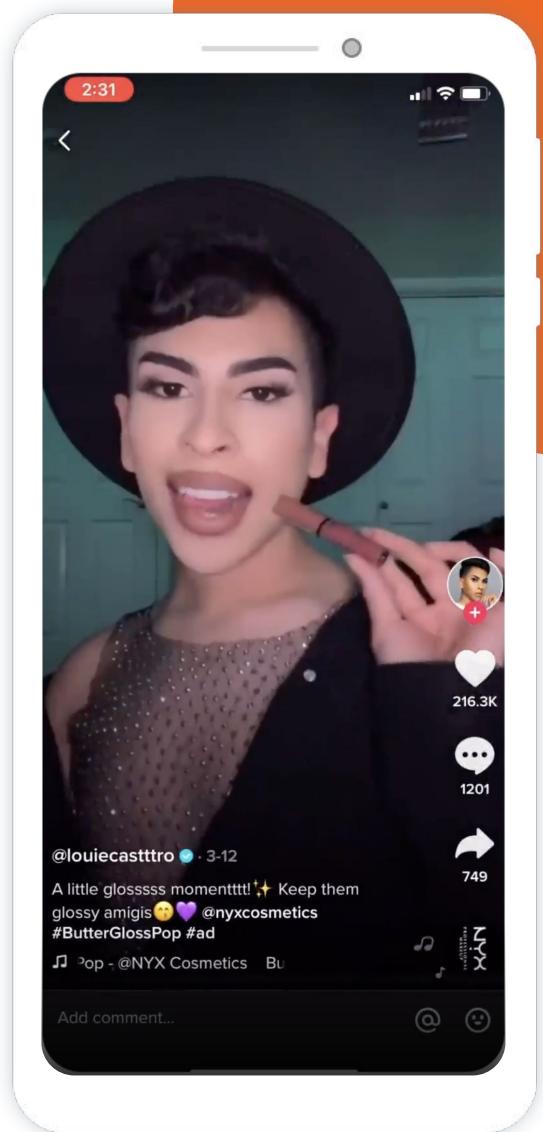


Image source: <https://www.tiktok.com/business/en/inspiration/100>

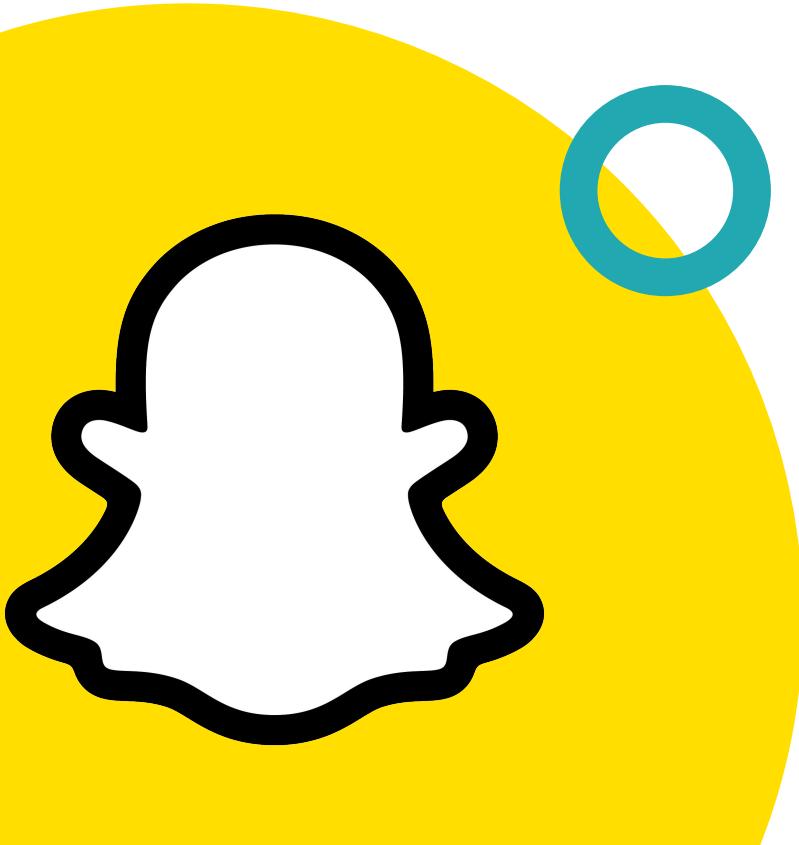
Snapchat

Snapchat is a photo-sharing app with over 530 million monthly active users.¹² 54.4% of Snapchat's users are female, and Snapchat is popular amongst younger demographics, including 69% of teens.¹³ India is Snapchat's biggest market, followed by the U.S. and France.

While Snapchat began as an app for sharing photos with friends, it has since introduced filters, games, and a Discover page. Users can follow celebrities or brands, news sites, or channels curated to include videos related to certain themes, like DIY projects, magic, or comedy.

¹² Doyle, Brandon. Wallaroo Media, 2022.

¹³ Aslam, Salman. Omnicore, 2020.



How people use Snapchat

Fleeting photos and images. Unlike other photo-sharing apps, the photos and videos you share on Snapchat are fleeting. Once a photo or a video is viewed by the recipient, it disappears. In some of their early blog posts, the founders expressed that they didn't want their users worrying about untagging themselves in photos from years ago before a job interview, or fixing up photos to make them look perfect.¹⁴ They wanted to create a more authentic, real connection for their users. They also saw the uniqueness in what they called the ephemeral nature of human interaction—the interaction happens in the moment, and doesn't leave a trace.

¹⁴ Spiegel, Evan. Snap, Inc., 2012.

Augmented reality filters. Snapchat has also added augmented reality into many of its lenses and filters, enhancing photos and videos with computer generated elements. Snapchat reports that over 250 million daily active users engage with augmented reality every day on average.¹⁵

¹⁵ Snap Inc. Investor Relations, 2022.

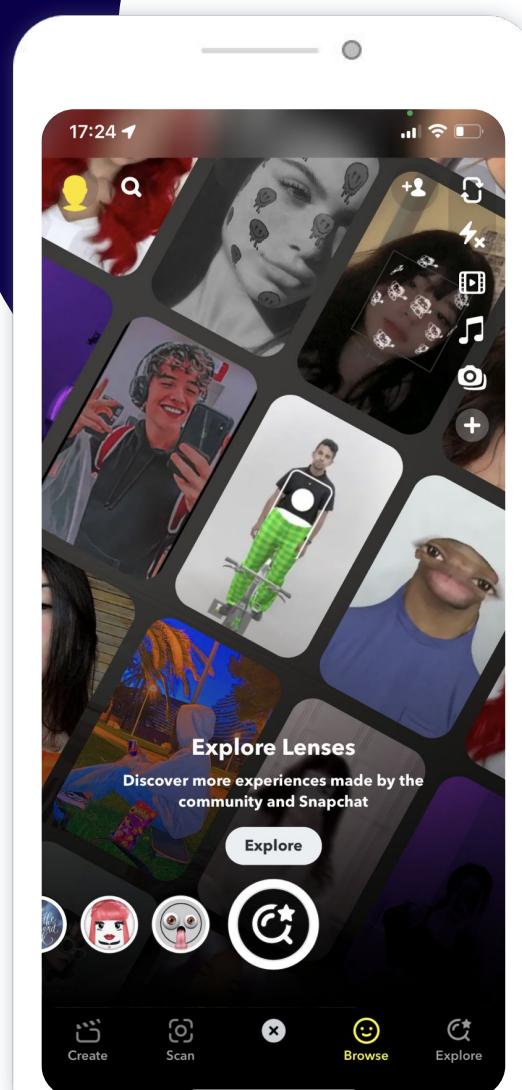


Image source: [Snapchat](#)

How businesses can use Snapchat

Businesses should look at Snapchat as a way to connect with their audience, gain new audiences, and provide unique content they might not be able to on other platforms.

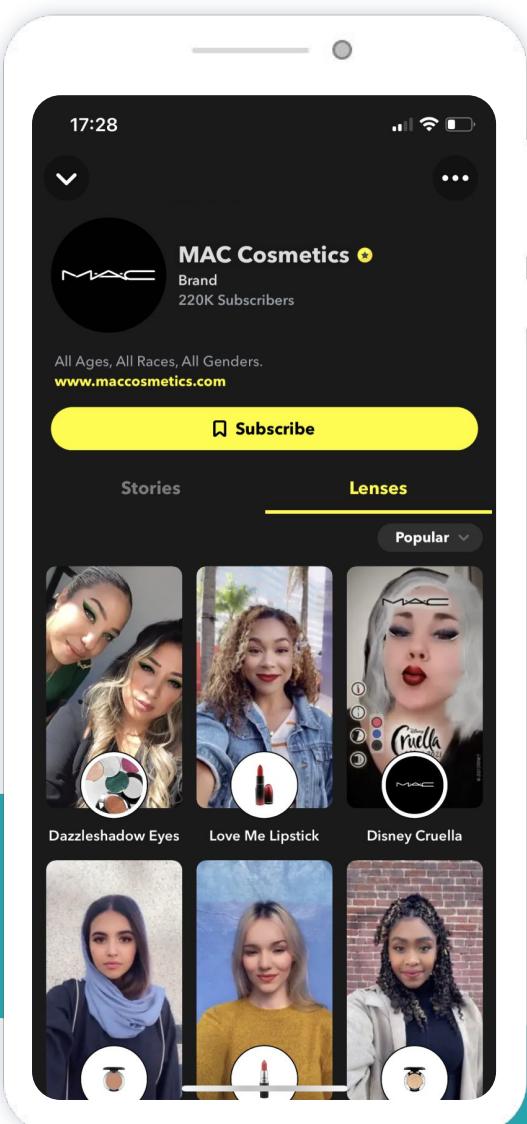


Image source: Snapchat

Create content for Stories. With **Stories**, businesses can create fun content by posting tutorials, videos, and more. **Stories** are a collection of Snaps that are visible to followers for 24 hours. Because businesses can use **Stories** to string together a series of snaps, they're not limited to one-and-done videos. It's a good way for people to connect in a zany and playful fashion.

Connect using augmented reality and Snapcodes. While businesses can use standard advertising to reach new audiences, Snapchat provides other options to interact with users; for example, businesses can consider creating lenses and filters. Filters overlay an effect on images, and lenses are augmented reality animations that can recognize faces and alter or add effects to them. Customers can also find Snapcodes at retailers or at events to "unlock" certain filters or lenses.

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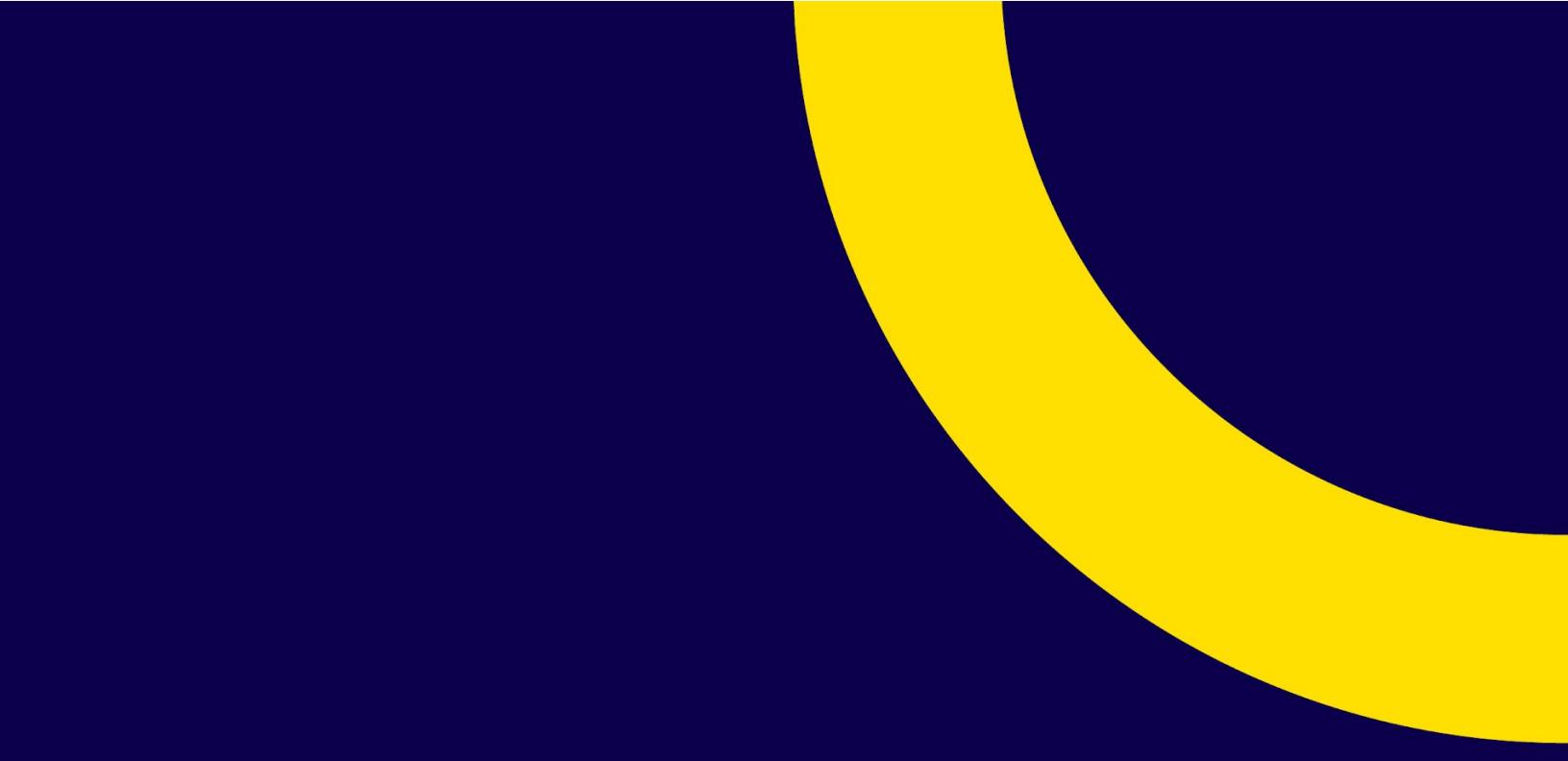
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