


# Hearty, Wholesome, and Homemade:

## Building an Instagram Community That Thrives



# Not sure if this e-book is for you?

## Here is an easy way to tell before diving in:

 **Beginner Basics:** For arts professionals and students who are new to the field or looking for foundational training. Gain the building blocks to essential marketing skills that will benefit arts organizations of all sizes. These e-books are typically “how-to” guides for those unfamiliar with the topic at hand. See also [Take the Fear out of ROI](#).

**Intermediate Instruction:** For arts marketers who understand the basic subject or challenge at hand, but have yet to jump in. These e-books deliver material that cover the mistakes or challenges and how to solve problems on a more complex level, using real time examples from a variety of genres. For an e-book at this level, see [Turn Branding Oops Into Whoop Whoops](#).

**Advanced Approaches:** For arts leaders who have expertise in the field and are seeking to increase their knowledge on the topic. These e-books will lift your level of understanding to a marketing master and includes thought-provoking work sheets to further train your proficiency on the topic. For a peek at this level, see [8 Ways to Make Your Arts Organization More Human](#).



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[www.artsmarketing.org](http://www.artsmarketing.org)

**Introduction:**

# **Soak It Up! Dipping into Instagram Communities**



*“The power of an online community with a shared interest is immeasurable. Our ability to all come together, each giving a little, adds up to a whole greater than the sum of its parts.”*

*–Scott Stratten*



Consumer behavior studies show that people gravitate to those who like things that they like, and those who get excited about the same things that excite them. This, in turn, creates a community. Social media and technology, more specifically mobile technology, have amplified what it means to be a community, allowing people who may be distant geographically to connect with those of similar mindsets, goals, and shared interests. Today's digital communities have fast become places to belong and forums through which to be heard.

According to a new [Nielsen Study](#), mobile platforms took off in a big way this year. Users spent 63% more of their time utilizing mobile social media in July 2012 than they did in the previous year. By 2014, [studies predict](#) that mobile usage will overtake desktop usage.

As audiences increasingly gravitate toward mobile technology, it is essential for arts marketers to stay ahead of the curve and master mobile communication skills. Connecting with today's audience means conquering mobile and social outlets simultaneously. In this e-book, you'll learn how to foster a vibrant digital community that will change what engagement means for your organization.

Among the various socially-driven digital communities buzzing on the web ([Tumblr](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Facebook](#), to name a few), [Instagram](#) holds particular potential for artists and arts organizations. Instagram is an online photo-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take and share pictures via other social platforms. Since its inception, Instagram has gained more than 100 million active users and is arguably one of the best examples of serious social growth.





So, how can artists and arts organizations make Instagram part of their repertoire? Instagram is much more than an app or digital platform—it's a virtual gallery space, an online town meeting, and a pictorial narrative compacted into a single, hand-held device. As marketers in the creative sphere, images are especially resonant with us and our audiences. Instagram enables us to tell our story to a global audience in split seconds.

It's important to note that when it comes to business, Instagram isn't just for the big name brands. In fact, it is an especially appealing tool for small businesses with limited marketing resources because a.) all you need to do is register to begin posting content, and b.) it's free!

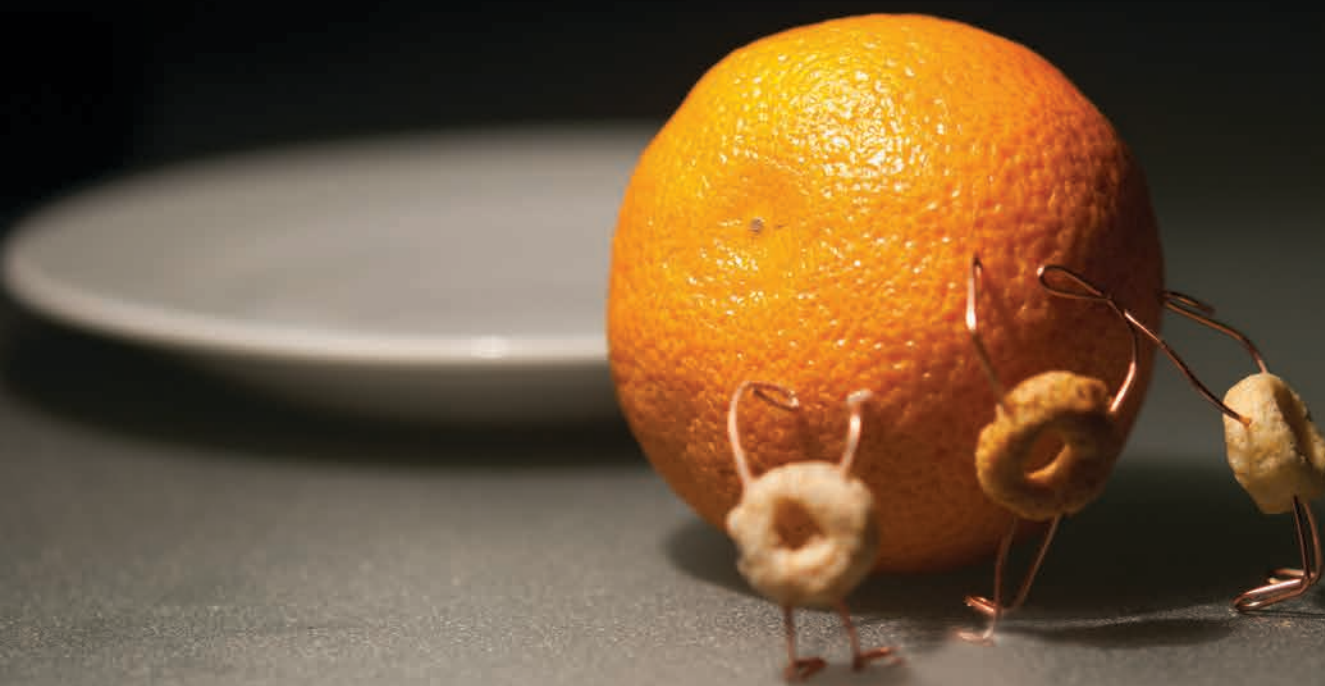
#Mindblown? Hungry for more information about how Instagram can work for you? We're here to give you a taste of effective Instagram engagement practices that will get you noticed and cultivate a successful online community. Read on for a healthy helping of insider wisdom about building your own thriving Instagram community.

*\*Throughout this book, look out for the 🍩 symbol for tools to enhance your Instagram community and the 🍞 symbol for the key takeaways from each chapter.*



## Chapter 1:

# Flaunt the Fruits of Your Labor






If you have a story to tell, visuals are a compelling way to convey it and connect with your audience. Instagram is the best network for illustrating your narrative through images. Clearly defining who you are and what you believe in will help inspire others to be passionate about those values and join your community. Use powerful images to express your organization's voice and what you represent. Where to begin? Take a moment to reflect on your organization's mission and communicate what sets you apart. What do you do? What do you care about? Document what's happening around you. Capture what makes you tick. Use photos to channel your point of view so your network becomes a digital extension of your organization's work.



# The Bread and Butter


- Your Instagram feed is an ever-growing mosaic of the many facets to your mission. Post images of your programs and community outreach efforts to enhance your credibility, create a more complete picture of who you are, and show fans what you do.
- Remember that this is a community. Remaining engaged and responsive is crucial. Take time to respond to comments on photos in order to build engagement.
- Accessibility is everything. Make your Instagram account public to ensure maximum visibility and participation.

 ***Use [Websta.gram's](#) easy-to-use instructions to add a “Follow Me” button to display an Instagram badge on your blog or website.***

### Follow Me Button

You can easily put Instagram's "Follow Me Button" on your Blog or Website.

Sample



Copy and Paste to your Website.

\* This code is in HTML, so it cannot be used on the Facebook wall or as Instagram comments.

```
<iframe  
src="http://widget.stagram.com/follow/ __USER__ NAME __HERE__  
" style="height:27px;" frameborder="0"></iframe>
```

# Case Study

The non-profit organization [charity:water](http://charitywater.org) uses Instagram to capture the essence of their mission and build awareness for their cause. While the staff works diligently to bring clean drinking water to people in developing nations, the app allows them to bring far away fans up close and personal with their work. By posting images of their water projects and the people who benefit from them, charity:water gives their 108,000+ followers a stake in their mission and invites them to join the community.

**“I was always an early adopter: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, they just became part of our communication language. They seemed like great ways to bring people together, and most importantly, tell stories.”**

**-Scott Harrison, Founder, charity:water**



## Chapter 2:

# Take It with a Side of Hashtags



**H**ashtags are a unifying force: they help members of your clan band together around a topic. Similar to their use on [Twitter](#) and [Google+](#), hashtags help aggregate photos of a particular subject based on the words being used. Creating distinct hashtags allows your visual content to be grouped and searched by keyword and increases exposure to existing and target audiences. If the tag is effective, it will generate more points of contact and content drivers for followers and potential fans. Suggesting that your fans use a hashtag (or just leading by example and adding tags to your own images) is sort of the digital equivalent to putting out a welcome mat, an invitation to participate in the community saying, “We’re glad you’re here, please come in!”



# The Bread and Butter

- Track the effectiveness of hashtags to see how many people are posting images related to your organization and at what rate. Doing this shows you which hashtags are the most popular as well as the type of content your community is posting and what is resonating with them.
- Send your Instagram content to other social networks. Open the app, go to the *Profile* tab, and click the gear in the upper right-hand corner. Scroll down to *Sharing Settings* and add relevant accounts.
- Hashtags are also useful for organizing entries and charting the success for contests. (See page 17 for more about how to use contests to generate excitement among your digital community.)

 **Check out the web tool [Nitrogram](#) to chart your hashtag effectiveness. Learn more on page 24.**

# Case Study

Kudos to [Chobani](#), the number one Greek yogurt maker in America, for creating unique, memorable hashtags that engage their audience. Hashtags like #tastereal, #itsCHObirthday, and #chobanipowered (a summer 2012 Olympics tag that's still going strong) expose the brand to new audiences and allow people to interact with their product.

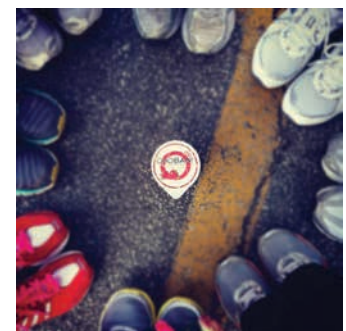
**“It’s about delivering the best experience possible every time, we want to be warm and quirky, engaging and inviting.”**

**-Nicki Briggs, Chobani’s Social Media Strategy Manager**



**chobani** -  
Often imitated, never duplicated. We keep it real. #tastereal  
<http://chobani.com/community/blog>

Follow



## Chapter 3:

# Peel Back the Layers





Instagram allows you to take an active approach to curating pictorial content. Part of building a successful community includes posting relevant, diverse, and well-executed visuals. Sharing insider content, for example, allows your followers to feel more in the know and at home with your organization. Show behind-the-scenes images to foster strong bonds with your community and help people near and far feel included. Your Instagram feed should be a place where everyone can be themselves and where no one is afraid to share. Aim for transparency and authenticity with images to build the strongest, most honest and inclusive community you can.

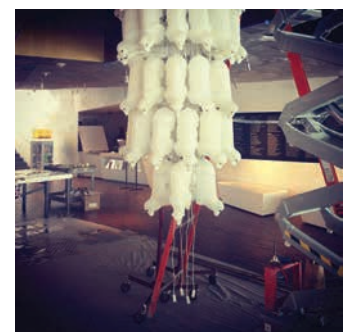
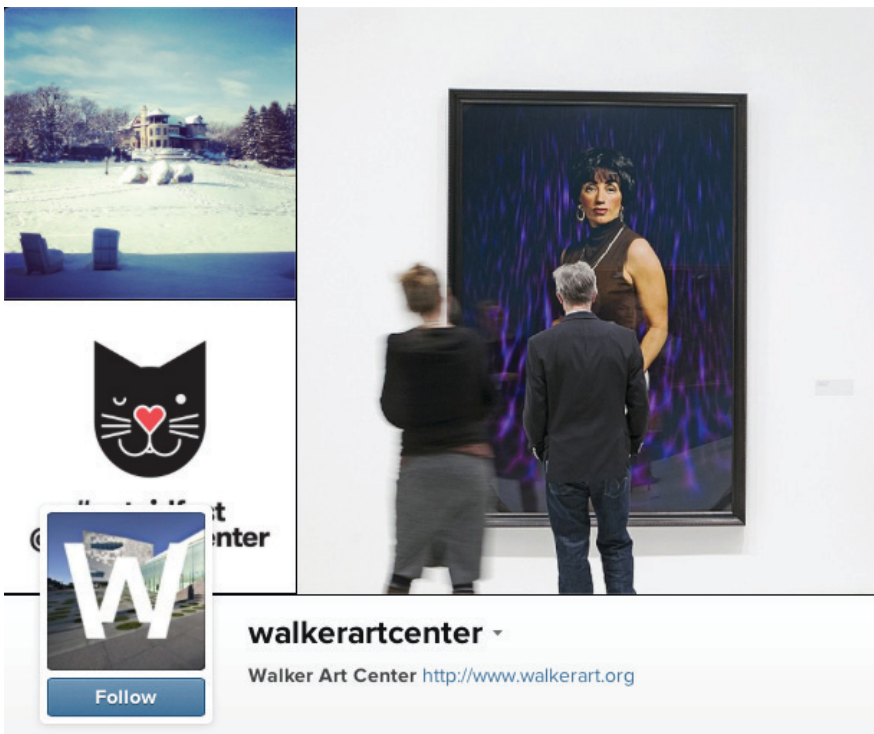


# The Bread and Butter

- Want to help your fans feel more personally connected to the life of the organization? Post photos of events, staff, and office life as an easy way to promote the fun things your organization is doing. It's a great way to show your patrons and staff a little love.
- Document the artistic process of an exhibition installation or rehearsal as well as the finished product. This humanizes your organization and builds anticipation for what's to come.
- Involve your audience! Encourage them to post photos inspired by a piece performed at a concert or pose a question about a behind-the-scenes photo of your upcoming exhibition.

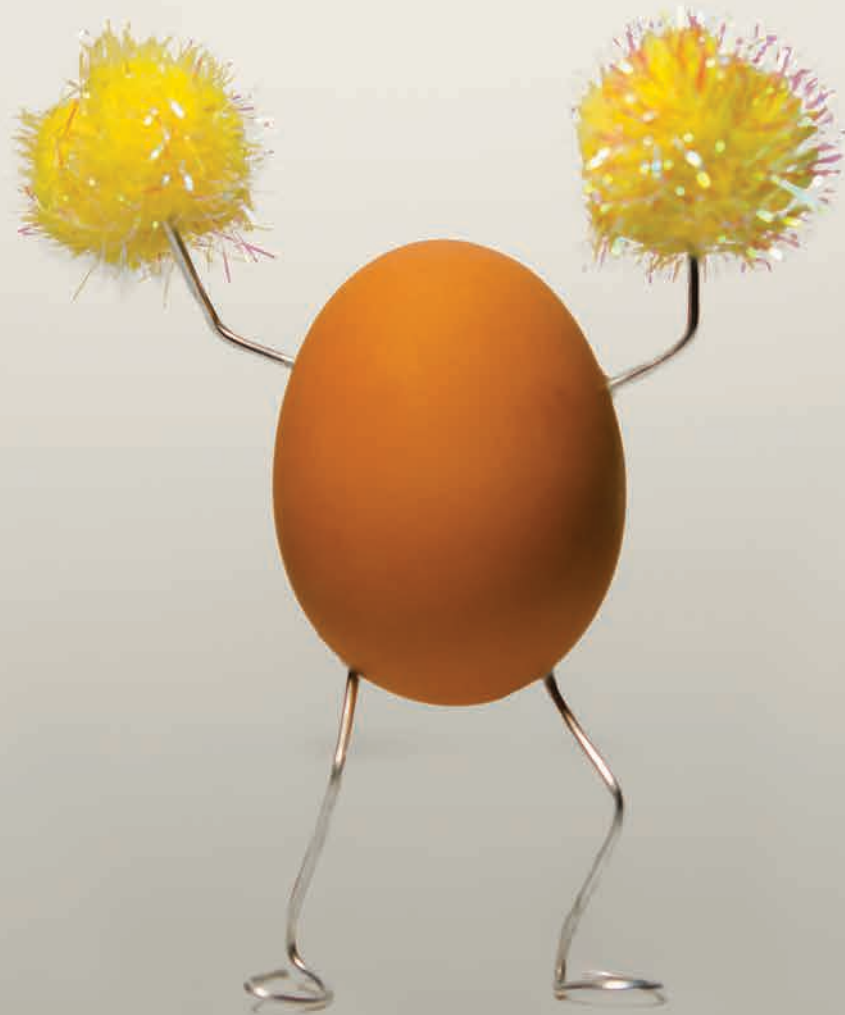
# Case Study

The [Walker Art Center](http://www.walkerart.org) in Minneapolis, MN does a great job of letting their followers in on the creative processes behind their work. With genuine and candid photos that have just the right amount of structure, the Center makes their work inclusive by documenting creative brainstorming sessions and the process behind upcoming installations. By uploading shots of inter-office culture, parties, and events, the Walker humanizes their work—and shows how lively and impactful that work is. With 9,100 followers and counting, The Walker Art Center is a whiz at making their feed the place to see.



## **Chapter 4:**

# **Egg Them on with Contests & Events**




**C**ontests allow audiences to have a personal and interactive experience with a brand. By creating one, you can generate excitement and influence engagement among your digital community. Contests attract new community members, hopefully turning them into loyal patrons, while current fans will engage more deeply with your organization. A number of brands have already had great success using this strategy to drive rapid fan growth.

 ***Learn how to use [Statigram](#) to manage your contests: including landing page creation, promotion and more on page 23 of this book.***



# The Bread and Butter

- Use calls for entries as a creative way to interact with your users, build engagement, and drive traffic. Need a jumpstart? Try a photo contest where users post images of themselves interacting with your organization or product— or even announce a small contest each week for optimal engagement.
- Need another idea? Thank your audience or celebrate milestones through Instagram. Check out how [Nike](#) celebrated their community, securing more than 600,000 “hearts” and more than 4,900 comments.
- Create a landing page for your contest to list the official rules and hashtags and to announce your winner. No longer limited to mobile, Instagram web profiles help you gain more exposure in the digital world.

 ***Need inspiration for how to make a great web profile? Check out the Instagram communities on pages 27-28 of this e-book for ideas!***

# Case Study

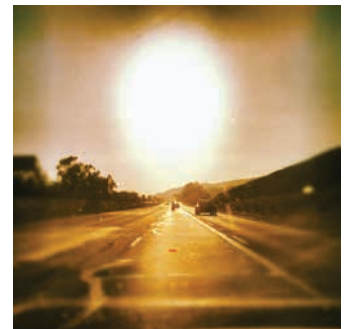
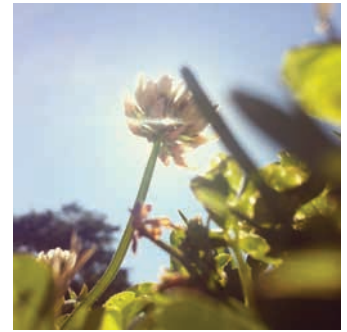
[RedBull](#) really made its mark on the contest scene with its [#summerishere campaign](#). During each week of summer 2012, RedBull announced a summer theme and asked their followers to snap, upload, and tag photos with the tag #summerishere. They offered prizes large and small for the most inventive interpretations of the week's theme– from a four-pack of Redbull to summer getaways. The campaign was such a landslide success that people continue to use #summerishere even though the contest has ended. So far 20,880 photos are rockin' the tag. Redbull's contest is a great example of how to increase engagement with your Instagram community.



redbull ▾

Red Bull @RedBull #GivesYouWings: F1, racing, skating, surfing, snowb moto, soccer, football, music, art, culture, gaming. <http://www.redbull.com>

Follow



## Chapter 5:

# A Marketer's Guide to Tracking Instagram Success





*“The ascendance of images has increased the need for marketers to be able to measure their impact, leading to the rise of companies like... Nitrogram...which specialize in Instagram analytics.”*

*–Tim Peterson, AdWeek*

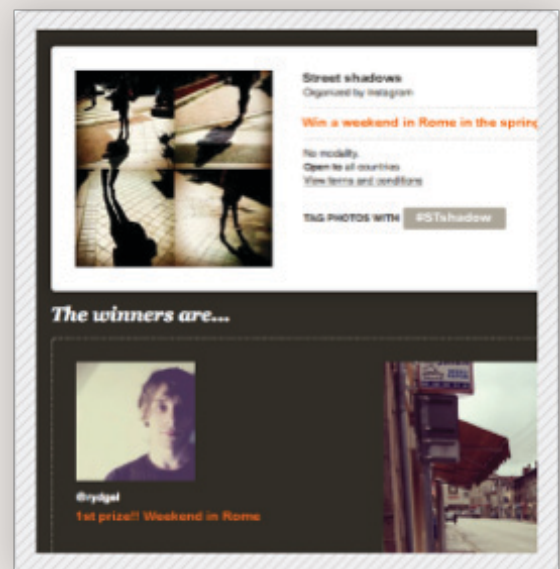
Ready to step it up and measure the progress of your Instagram success? Here are three handy web-based tools that are fundamental to a thriving visual community.

## Statigram

[Statigram](#) is a helpful online tool that analyzes your Instagram performance against your community members' actions. It then extracts this data into metrics, charts and graphs. Use Statigram for **growth monitoring, community insights, account history, and optimization tips.**

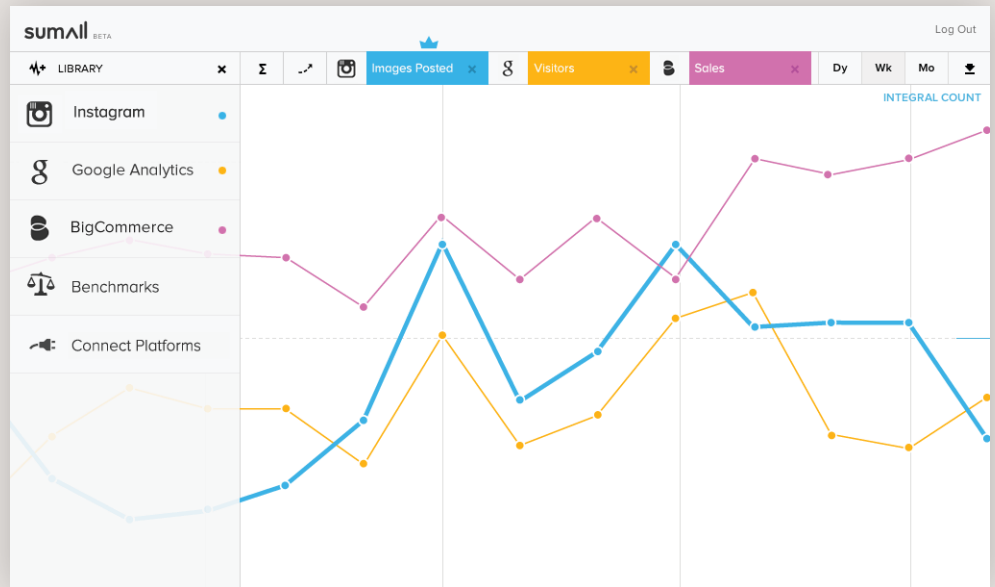


You can also use Statigram's [toolkit](#) to promote and hold your Instagram **contest**. Creating a public landing page allows you to market and promote, as well as monitor submissions in order to protect your brand image. Lastly, use their platform to announce the winner(s) of your contest.



# Sum All

[SumAll](#) is handy for measuring growth on Instagram in relation to your other social media accounts. Use this free tool to connect your [Google Analytics](#) and e-commerce platform with your Instagram

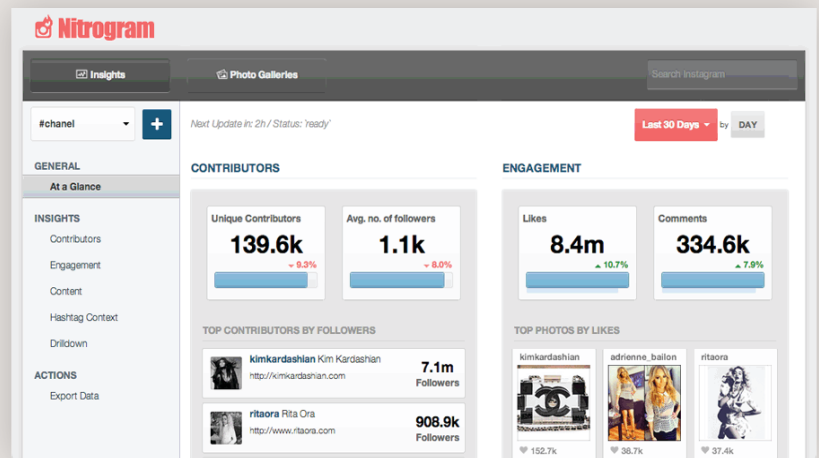


account. You can even link your Twitter and Facebook accounts to see how sharing photos has built engagement on those networks.

# Nitrogram

With [Nitrogram](#), you can measure your Instagram accounts through the use of [hashtags](#) surrounding your posts.

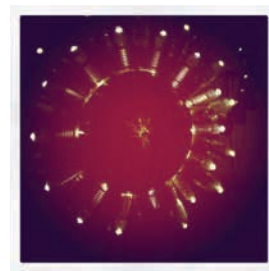
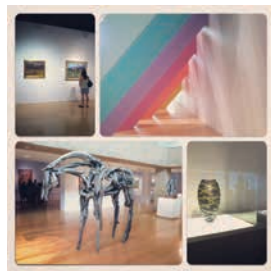
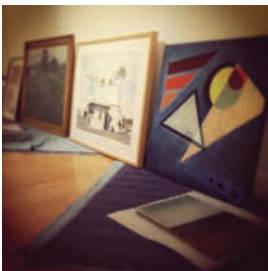
Nitrogram helps you monitor the photo activity associated with your community on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis. Use the [timeline](#) feature and hover over a place on the chart to track the growth of your Instagram community over time.



Other handy features allow you to see where your audience is posting from [geographically](#). You can also see the breakdown of “hearts” and comments corresponding with the photos you post to determine which were the most effective.

## Chapter 6:

# Noteworthy Instagram Communities to Check Out



“Over 40% of the world’s top brands – as defined by the Interbrand 100 – are using Instagram, including companies such as Starbucks, MTV, Nike, GE and Audi. These brands have hundreds of thousands of followers that like and share each and every photo posted via Instagram, augmenting their marketing strategy and helping to expand brand awareness.”

–Kelly Clay, Forbes

## From museums to global brands, Instagram communities are quickly growing. Make sure to check out these accounts for inspiration.



**@lagunaartmuseum**– Laguna Art Museum invites their audience into their narrative. With a growing base of 1,262 followers, they're on the road to digital community success.



**@brooklynmuseum**– From community gatherings, to concerts, to parties, the Brooklyn Museum keeps it intimate and dynamic. With 41,625 followers, the Brooklyn Museum's Instagram feed is indicative that their social media strategy has placed them above the rest.



**@Bexfinch**– Photographer Bex Finch has made waves on Instagram with close to 200,000 followers. Her photos of human subjects offer inventive takes on perspective.



**@Burberry**– This chic company, with 755,442 followers, has no qualms about letting their fans go backstage via photos to see them prepare for the runway.



**@massmoca**– It's clear that with 2,671 followers, Mass MoCA isn't just the largest center for contemporary visual and performing arts in the U.S. That's right– it's amazing at engaging its online community as well. We give Mass MoCA the prize for best noteworthy Instagram communities to check out.



**@NewMuseum**– Informative as well as enticing, these pictures don't try to substitute for the in-person experience; they make you want to be part of things online AND at the museum.



**@Jimmy\_Chin**– Now with 58,293 followers, this National Geographic photographer offers great ideas for how to look at our world in new ways.



**@smithsonian**– With 10,398 followers, the Smithsonian Instagram account documents what is going on at each of the institution’s 19 museums and the National Zoo, giving followers lots of visuals to explore.



**@sfmoma**– With 33,934 followers, SF MoMA is always on top of their social media game. Instagramming everything from events, to musical performances, and of course, peeks at exhibitions, this art museum knows how to be intimate and take fans behind-the-scenes.



**@Sharpie**– Sharpie, with 76,330 followers, shares fresh, fun drawings made with their writing implements to make their Instagram feed POP! Since there are always more things to draw, there’s always more content to share!



**@Starbucks**– Starbucks has built an enormous digital community on Instagram with 1,191,732 followers. Their content is well-planned, uses appropriate lighting, and makes good use of Instagram’s filters and blur effects to create a “cozy” mood that reinforces their brand personality.



**@tacomaartmuseum**– The Tacoma Art Museum used Instagram to engage the local and online community. By asking for submissions for the best images of the Northwest Working Waterfront using hashtag #253waterfront, the photo that attracted the most “hearts” received a one-year family membership. Although this organization only has 15 followers, their community building efforts deserve a gold star.

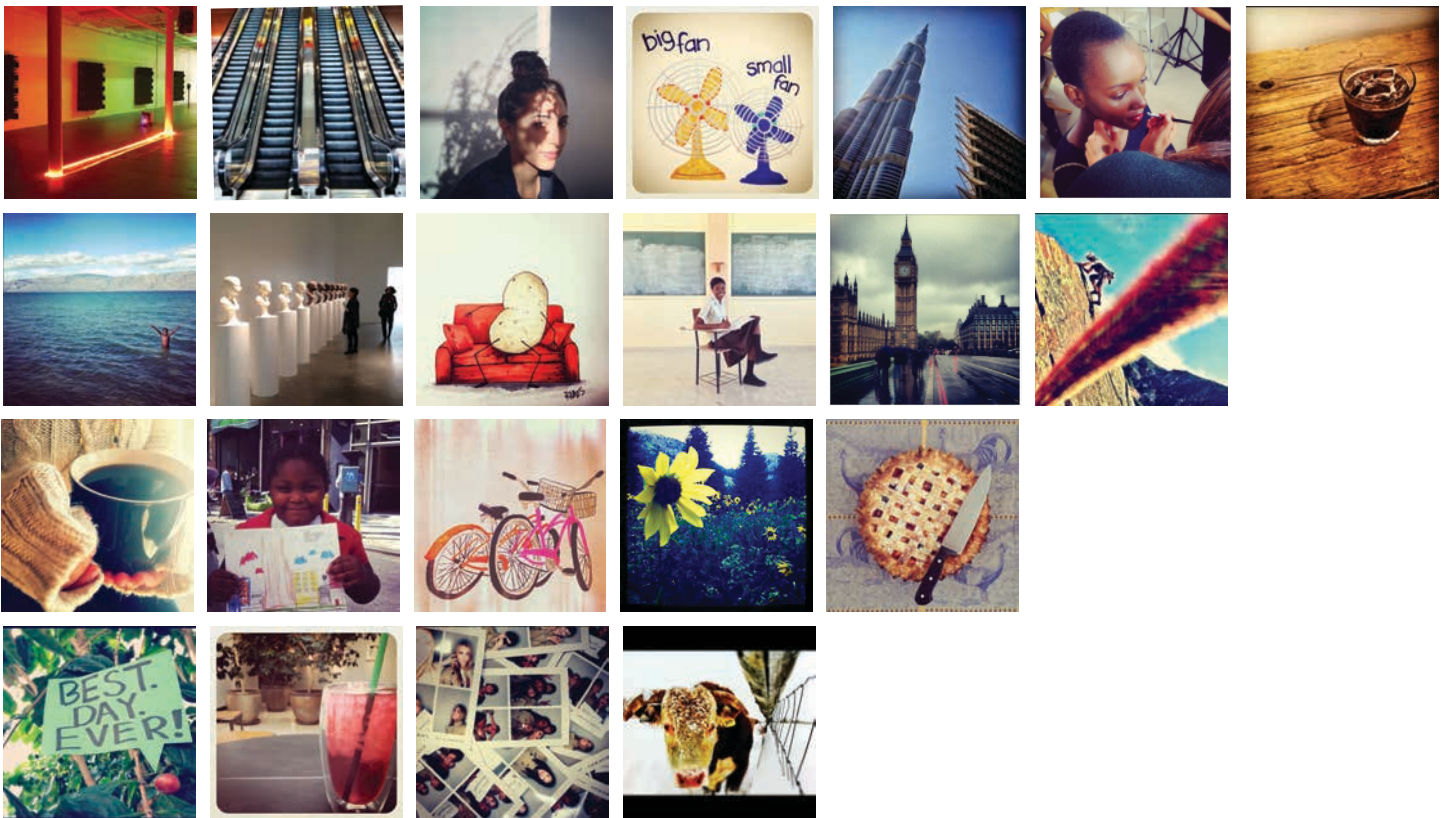
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