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[Tech Talk](#), [Business Advice](#)

Using Instagram to Encourage Bakery Visits

Once bakers have created an Instagram account and developed a following by posting mouthwatering photos of flaky pastries, intricately decorated cakes or colorful cupcakes, they're ready to take the channel to the next level: using it to drive bakery visits.

Doing so effectively requires syncing your bakery's Instagram presence with its in-store atmosphere and events. Here are some guidelines:

Make Your Bakery Instagram-Friendly

Product photos rule, but finished treats aren't the only subjects you should shoot, especially as people place more and more value on memorable food experiences. Capturing social media-ready shots of your store decor, signage, merchandising displays and bakery exterior can get people excited about seeing it all in person.

"We have a floral installation outside our Kensington store to drive more business," explains Daisy Heath, social media manager at London-based [Primrose Bakery](#). "Not only is it more visible, but people take lots of photos outside—especially [influencers](#), whose followings can translate into customers for us."

Creating Instagram-friendly murals to drive foot traffic is a rising trend for food hot spots. For example, one of Chicago's Parlor Pizza locations has a [mural of pizza wings](#) that customers frequently use to frame themselves in photos.

Rachael Samuels, manager, social media, at social management and analytics platform [Sprout Social](#), says artwork can be an effective way to illustrate your bakery's story. And if it includes your Instagram handle or a branded hashtag (think a couple words that include your bakery's name or signature creation), it can promote your social presence and help build your brand every time a fan posts a picture of it.

Entice followers with behind-the-scenes footage of how products come to life.

If going all out with a mural or custom artwork isn't feasible, consider smaller, photo-friendly bakery tweaks, like staff T-shirts with funny sayings, light installations or even holiday decorations.

Another way to entice followers is with behind-the-scenes footage of how products come to life. For example, use Instagram Stories to show the step by step of a cake getting decorated, and then encourage followers to come in for a taste.

Invite User-Generated Instagram Content for your Bakery

Another way to get consumers engaged on Instagram—and walking into your bakery—is by encouraging them to post photos of your products on their feeds or in their Stories. Ensure these followers' posts include your bakery as the location, tag your business's handle and use your branded custom hashtag. Regularly repost these photos, tagging their creators.

For example, [Magnolia Bakery](#) has locations in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. A New York-based customer recently shared a picture of a slice of cake from the bakery on their personal Instagram Story, tagging Magnolia and including the text, "Mondays call for CAAAKE!!!!" The bakery shared the picture to its own Story, adding the text, "Agreed!"

When working on user-generated content (UGC) efforts, "think less about product and more about the feeling you want to evoke," Samuels says. "Leverage this content by tapping into the emotional side and keeping it interactive."

For example, consider focusing a UGC campaign around "[treat yourself](#)" moments—opportunities for consumers to enjoy some "me" time with a special sweet in your bakery.

You can also turn UGC initiatives into promotions that get people in the store and buying products: Ask customers to snap photos of their favorite baked goods and tag your bakery, and award discounts or free goodies to randomly chosen participants.

You can also monitor these posts to get a sense of which products people are most excited about it, and use that information to inspire future promotions.



Seamlessly Link Bakery Events and Instagram

"Social isn't just about being on social," Samuels says. Tying in-store events into your Instagram strategy is key to spreading awareness of them—and boosting in-store traffic. Think cake decorating demos, open mic nights, live music performances and other similar events, all of which should be promoted ahead of time using Instagram.

"We do master classes each weekend," Heath says. "If we see [registration for] a certain weekend is selling slowly, we'll do an Instagram giveaway of one of the spots."

Use Instagram Stories to capture real-time footage of the events and offer followers an authentic look at what being there is like. In addition, take plenty of photos to share after the event to engage attendees and build excitement for the next one. ^[1]_{SEP}

You can also leverage Instagram to turn an ordinary day into a special one at your bakery.

"We release a code word on Instagram that people can say in-store to get a free product," Heath says. These types of promotions can help ensure followers are regularly tracking the bakery's account and keeping the brand top of mind.

By tying your Instagram strategy to both everyday life and special events in your bakery, you can successfully leverage the platform to drive in-store traffic.

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