LIFT

LIFT GRADUATE RESOURCE TOOLKIT

RECOMMENDED TOOLS, TEMPLATES, AND PLATFORMS FOR CONTINUED SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH

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This workbook belongs to:

_____

Created by Me&Co. in collaboration with Texas State University

WELCOME!

SCALEUP and the LIFT program are proudly supported by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

Congratulations on completing the LIFT Social Media Marketing Program! 🎉

This toolkit was designed to help you continue growing your brand online with confidence. Inside, you'll find curated tools, platforms, and resources that make it easier to plan, create, and manage your social media presence.

Think of this as your post-program cheat sheet — something you can return to when you're ready to refine your strategy, explore new tools, or simplify your workflow.

A NOTE FROM MELODY

Congratulations on completing the LIFT Social Media Marketing Program!

What I hope you took away was that, social media isn't just about posting — it's about storytelling, connection, and building something that reflects your mission and community. My second hope is that this toolkit becomes a resource you can return to whenever you need clarity, inspiration, or structure.
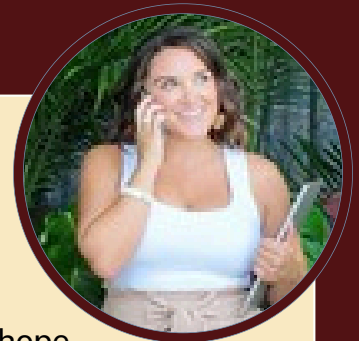
Keep showing up, experimenting, and letting your brand evolve. You've already built the foundation — now it's time to expand your reach with confidence and purpose.

With pride and gratitude,

Melody

Melody Estrada
Founder & Lead Strategist, Me&Co.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

1. Start with the **categories** that align with your biggest needs (design, scheduling, analytics, etc.).

2. Every tool in this guide has value — but to avoid feeling overwhelmed , start by testing 1–2 in each section that align with your current goals and see what moves the needle most before continuing to add on.

3. Bookmark or save your favorites and test them out for 30 days.

4. Use the Pro Tips at the end to stay consistent and make the most of your time online.

CATEGORIES OF TOOLS

WHY WE CHOSE THESE TOOLS

With so many marketing tools out there, this toolkit was designed to simplify your search — giving you a curated list of platforms that actually make your social media management easier, faster, and more effective. Through the LIFT program, you were introduced to numerous tools. This guide includes all of those tools (plus more!), so that you have a go-to guide for social media tools. Each tool was chosen with small business owners and creative entrepreneurs in mind, based on:

- **Ease of use** – Tools that are beginner-friendly and intuitive, so you can start creating right away — no steep learning curve required.

- **Accessibility** – Many include free plans or affordable upgrades, making them realistic for growing brands on a budget.

- **Impact** – Every tool has a proven track record of saving time, improving content quality, or driving engagement.

- **Compatibility** – Tools that integrate smoothly with each other for a streamlined workflow (for example, designing in Canva and scheduling through Buffer).

- **Sustainability** – We prioritized platforms that help you stay consistent.

✅ Use this guide as your toolkit "cheat sheet" — explore, experiment, and find the platforms that best align with your goals and growth stage.

DESIGN & CONTENT CREATION TOOLS

BRING YOUR BRAND TO LIFE WITH VISUALS THAT STOP THE SCROLL.

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DESIGN & CONTENT CREATION TOOLS

Bring your brand to life with visuals that stop the scroll.

◆ **About this section**: Bring your ideas to life with visuals, videos, and graphics that capture attention. These tools help you design scroll-stopping content, edit videos with ease, and maintain brand consistency — even if you're not a designer. Think of this section as your creative toolkit for storytelling.

Click on each tool logo to view the tool's website

Canva – Easy-to-use design tool with templates for posts, flyers, and presentations. Great for batching content and maintaining brand consistency.

CapCut – Mobile and desktop app for quick video edits, captions, and trending transitions.

Descript – Ideal for video editing, podcast clips, and repurposing long-form content into short highlights.
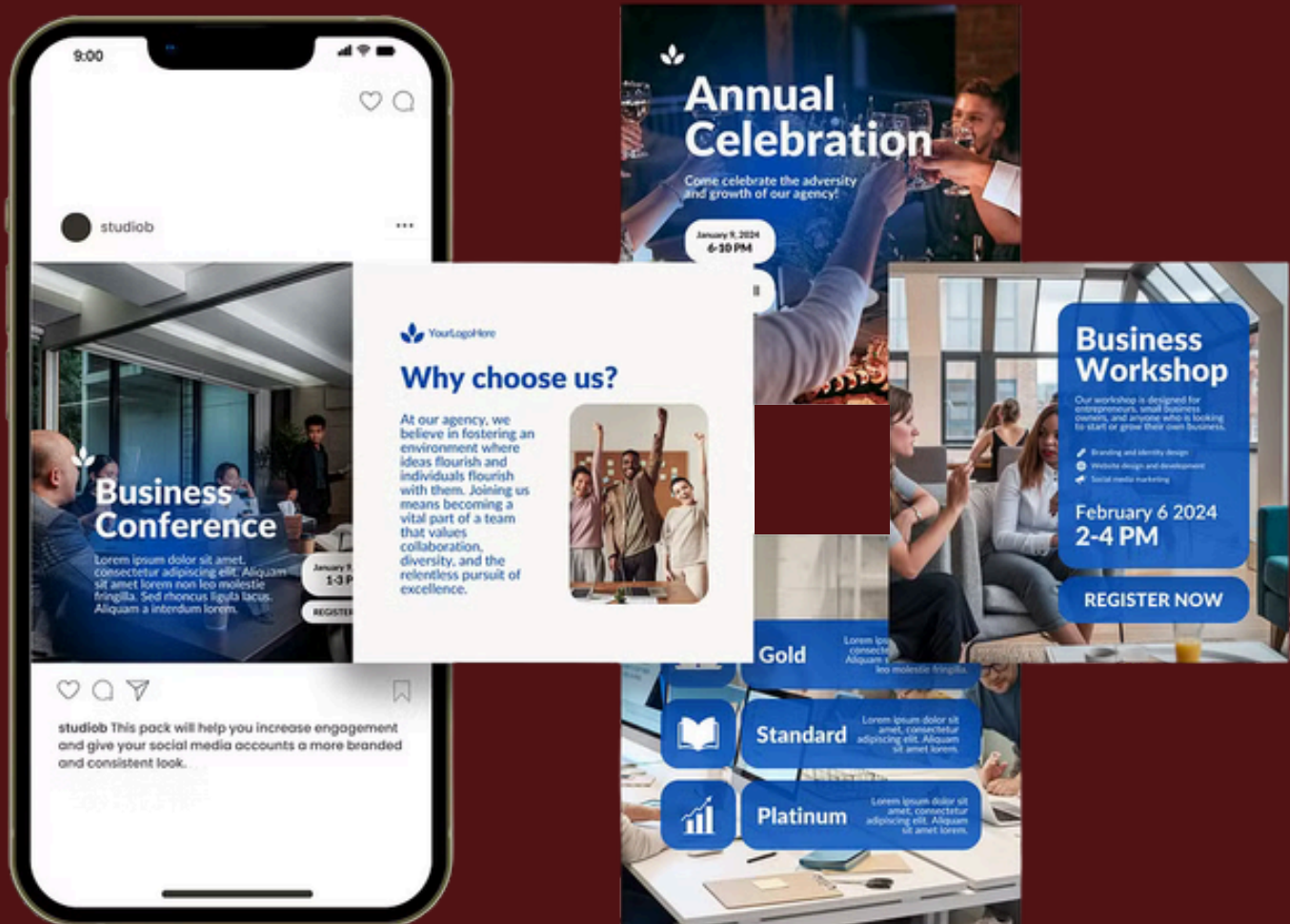
Adobe Express – Free online tool for creating branded graphics with templates that sync across devices.

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DESIGN & CONTENT CREATION TOOLS

🟢 *Pro Tip*: Create a few branded templates you can reuse each month — consistency builds recognition.

Examples of reusable business branded templates. ↘️

SCHEDULING & AUTOMATION TOOLS

PLAN AHEAD SO YOUR BRAND STAYS ACTIVE EVEN WHEN YOU'RE BUSY.

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SCHEDULING & AUTOMATION TOOLS

Plan ahead so your brand stays active even when you're busy.

◆ **About this section**: Consistency drives growth — and these tools help you stay on track. Use them to plan, schedule, and automate your posts across platforms, so your brand stays active even when you're offline. Perfect for founders balancing marketing with everything else on their plate.

Tools like Buffer, Later, and Metricool let you schedule ahead, preview your feed, and even compare analytics from different platforms in one place. Whether you prefer a visual planner (Later) or a data-heavy dashboard (Metricool), this section helps you find the right fit. Consider batching your content once a week, and then letting automation handle the posting — it's one of the easiest ways to reclaim your time.

Click on each tool logo to view the tool's website

Buffer – Simple scheduling dashboard for Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and more. Great analytics and team collaboration features.
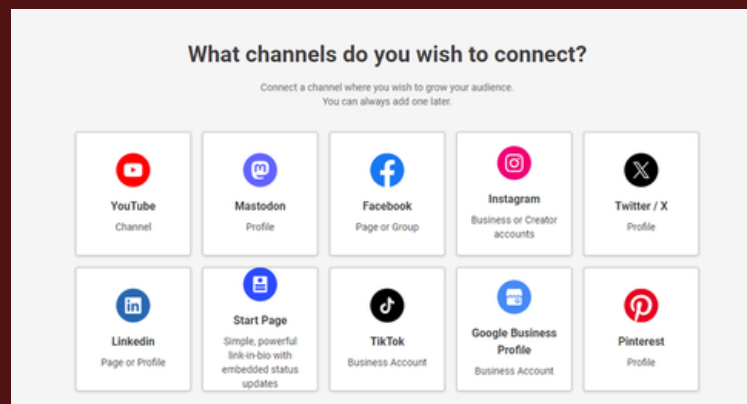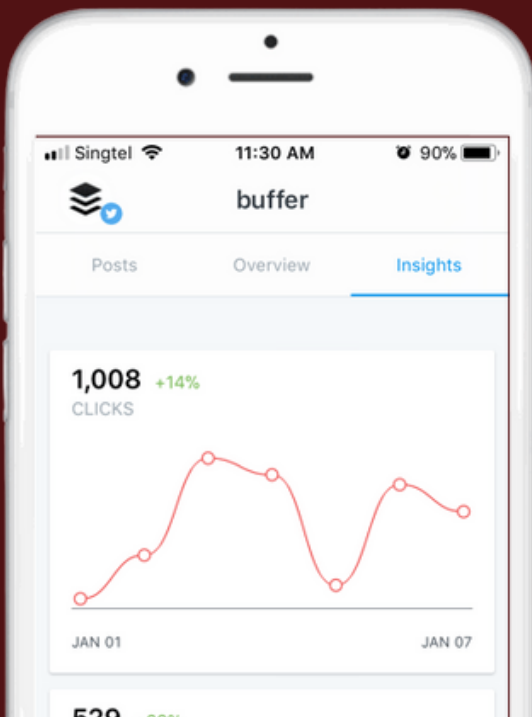
Metricool – Offers advanced analytics and competitor tracking — great for agencies and multi-platform users.

Later – Visual planner with drag-and-drop grid previews, perfect for Instagram-first strategies.

SCHEDULING & AUTOMATION TOOLS

🟢 ***Pro Tip***: Set aside one day each month to schedule your next 30 days of content. Consistency > Perfection.

ANALYTICS & OPTIMIZATION TOOLS

KNOW WHAT'S WORKING — AND DO MORE OF IT.

ANALYTICS & OPTIMIZATION TOOLS

Know what's working — and do more of it.

◆ **About this section**: You can't improve what you don't measure. These platforms help you understand your audience, track performance, and identify what's working — so you can make data-driven decisions and refine your strategy with confidence.

If you're using Meta Business Suite, you'll see your post reach and engagement all in one place. Want a wider view? Google Analytics connects social media activity to actual website visits, while a Notion Tracker Template lets you customize how you monitor progress. The key is consistency — checking your data every two weeks helps you spot patterns early and adjust your strategy before you burn out
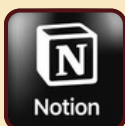
Click on each tool logo to view the tool's website

Meta Business Suite – Free tool for tracking engagement, reach, and ad performance across Facebook and Instagram.
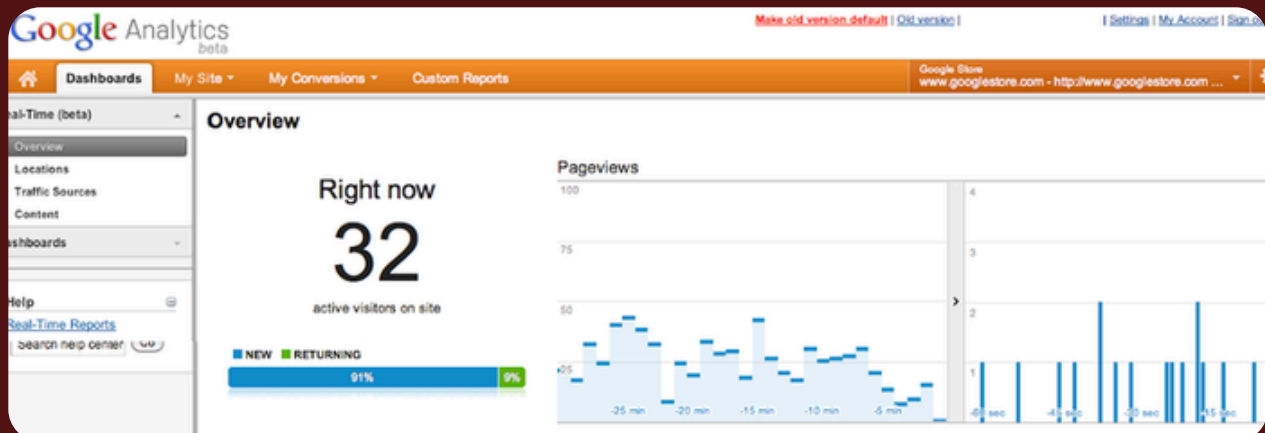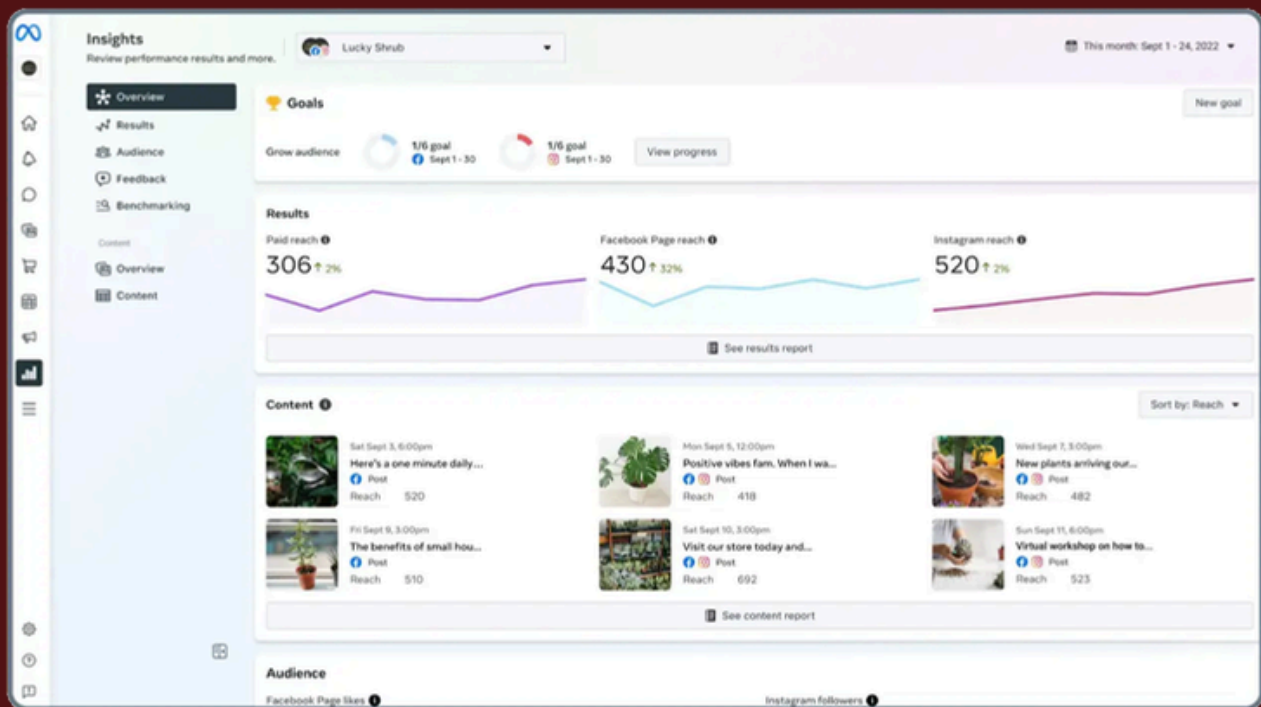
Google Analytics – Tracks website traffic from social media campaigns.

Notion Tracker Template – Customize your own metrics dashboard to track followers, engagement, and conversions.

ANALYTICS & OPTIMIZATION TOOLS

Pro Tip: Review analytics every 2–3 weeks. Look for patterns in what gets saved, shared, or commented on.

AI & COPYWRITING TOOLS

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER.

AI & COPYWRITING TOOLS

Work smarter, not harder.

◆ **About this section**: Save time and spark creativity with AI tools designed to support your content process. From writing captions and blogs to repurposing videos and ideating faster, these tools help you work smarter — without losing your personal voice.

Think of this section as your creative co-pilot. The goal here isn't to let AI take over — it's to remove friction in your workflow so you can spend more time being creative and less time stuck staring at a blank screen.

Click on each tool logo to view the tool's website

ChatGPT – Generate caption ideas, outlines, and creative hooks for your posts.

Jasper – Write long-form blogs and repurpose captions at scale.

OpusClip – Automatically turns long videos into short clips with captions and trending formats.

Klap - converts videos into shorter clips.

Runway - Tools to ideate, generate and edit.

Typeset - Create Digital content faster.

AI & COPYWRITING TOOLS

Other AI tools from the course:

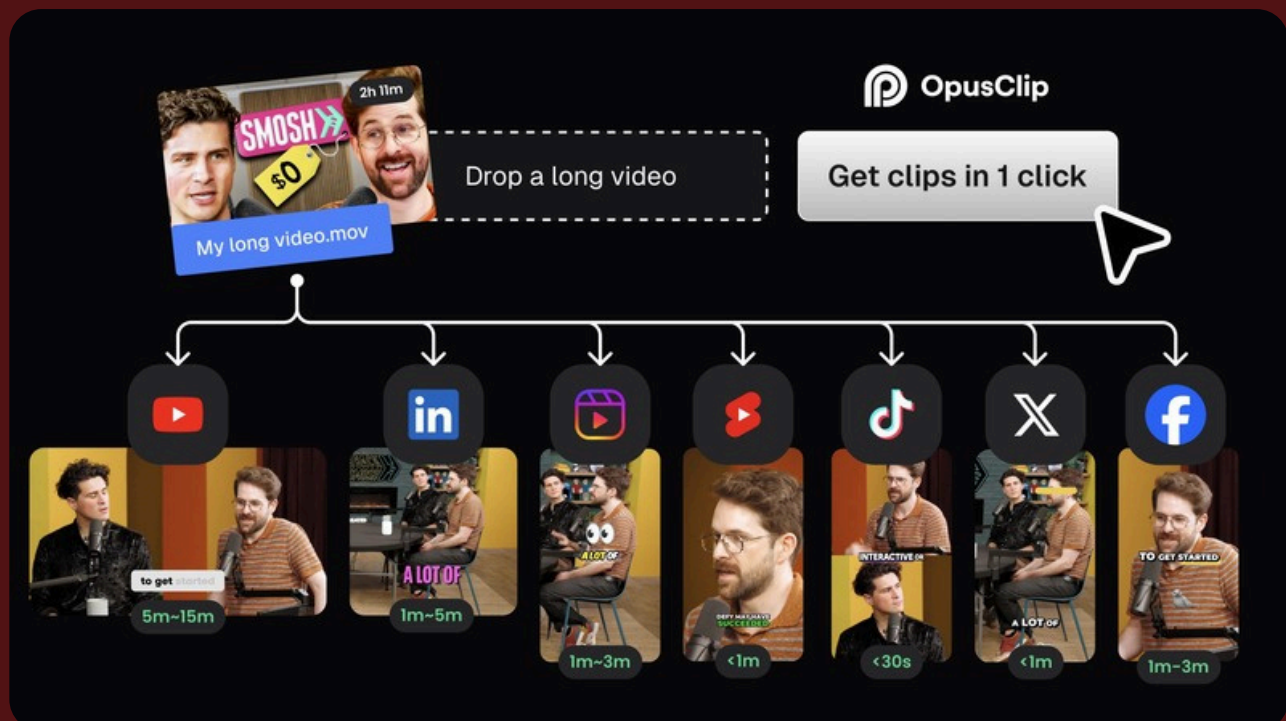| Stealth GPT	Flick	Wordtune	Semrush	Ahrefs

🟢 ***Pro Tip***: Always add your voice. AI should inspire, not replace, your personality online.

STOCK PHOTOS & VISUAL ASSETS

KEEP YOUR CONTENT LIBRARY FRESH AND BRAND-ALIGNED.

STOCK PHOTOS & VISUAL ASSETS

Keep your content library fresh and brand-aligned.

◆ **About this section**: Every post starts with great visuals. This section includes free and premium resources to help you find high-quality images, templates, and brand elements that keep your feed fresh and cohesive. A must for when you need content that feels elevated, not generic.

Use Pexels and Unsplash for free, diverse photography that looks professional without breaking your budget. When you're ready to invest in unique assets, Creative Market offers fonts, icons, and templates that make your brand stand out. Don't forget tools like Icons8, which provide illustrations that can bring your posts to life with minimal effort. The right visuals can communicate your message faster than any caption ever could.

Click on each tool logo to view the tool's website

Pexels / Unsplash – Free, high-quality images and short videos. Search by theme, color, or mood.

Creative Market – Paid platform for unique fonts, templates, and brand elements that set your visuals apart.

Icons8 – Free icons and vector illustrations for adding visual accents to posts or presentations.

STOCK PHOTOS & VISUAL ASSETS

● **Pro Tip:** Build a small "brand library" of 20–30 visuals from sites like Pexels and Unsplash that match your vibe. Rotate and reuse them across posts, stories, and ads — it's the secret to staying consistent without feeling repetitive.
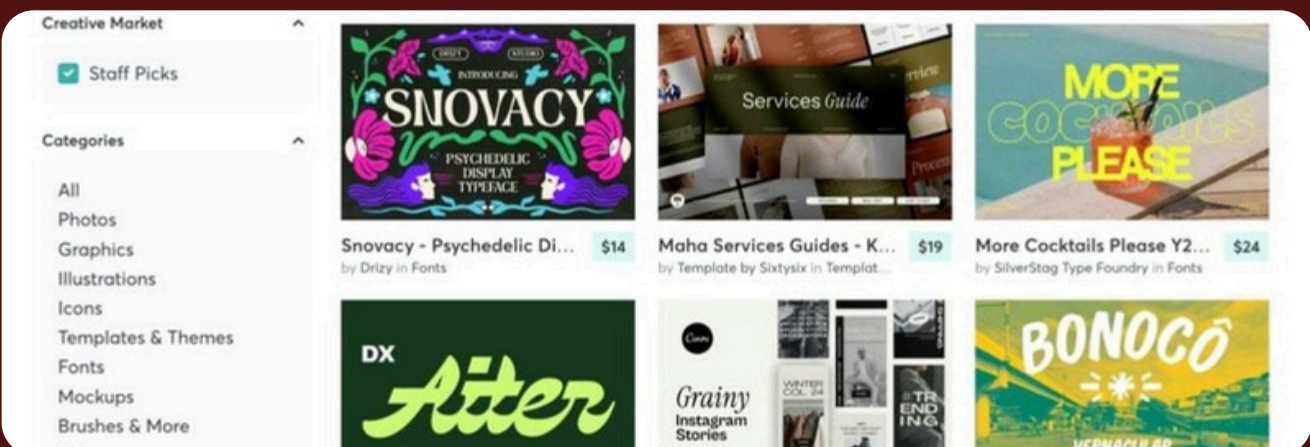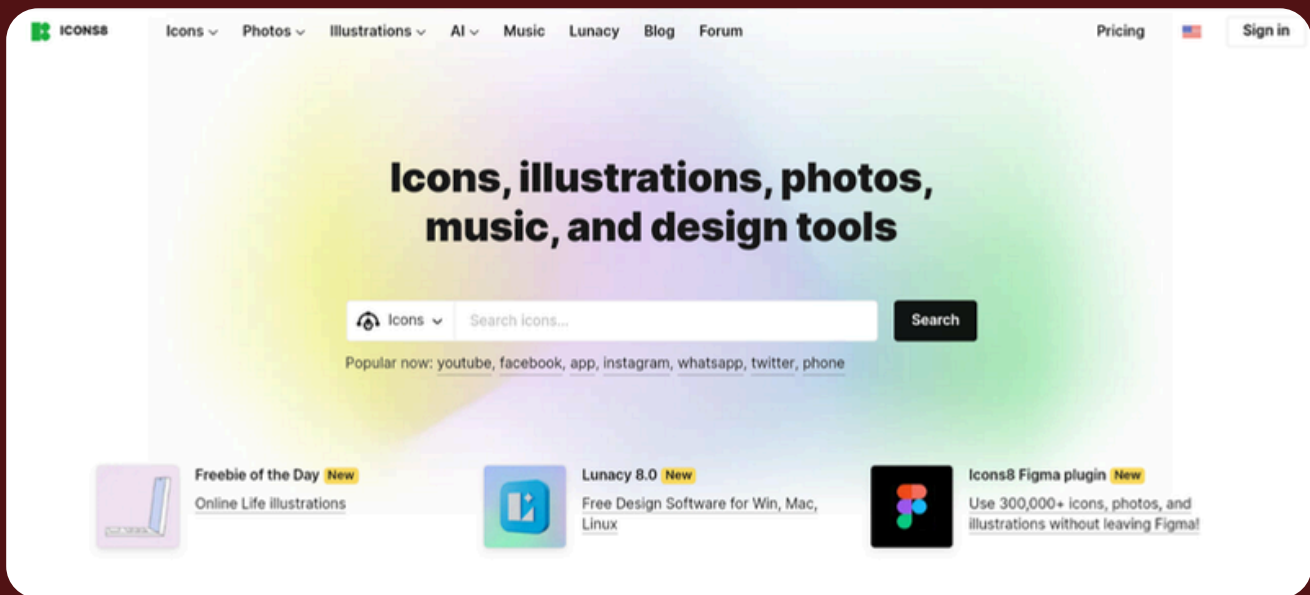
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ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY TOOLS

CREATE TWO-WAY CONVERSATIONS THAT GROW TRUST AND LOYALTY.

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ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY TOOLS

Create two-way conversations that grow trust and loyalty.

◆ **About this section**: Social media is a conversation, not a monologue. These tools help you build meaningful interactions — from automating responses to creating link hubs that guide your audience toward your offers, services, or community spaces.

With ManyChat, you can set up automated replies that make followers feel seen (and save you time). Tools like Linktree and Beacons turn your bio into a mini website, helping you centralize everything from sign-ups to product links. The goal is to remove friction — so when someone's ready to connect, book, or buy, you've made it effortless for them to take that next step.

Click on each tool logo to view the tool's website

ManyChat – Automate responses on Instagram and Facebook DMs to nurture followers.

Linktree – Centralize all your links in your Instagram bio.

Beacons – Create branded landing pages for links, opt-ins, and product offers.

ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY TOOLS

Pro Tip: Make it easy for followers to take the next step — link to your newsletter, services, or product directly in your bio.
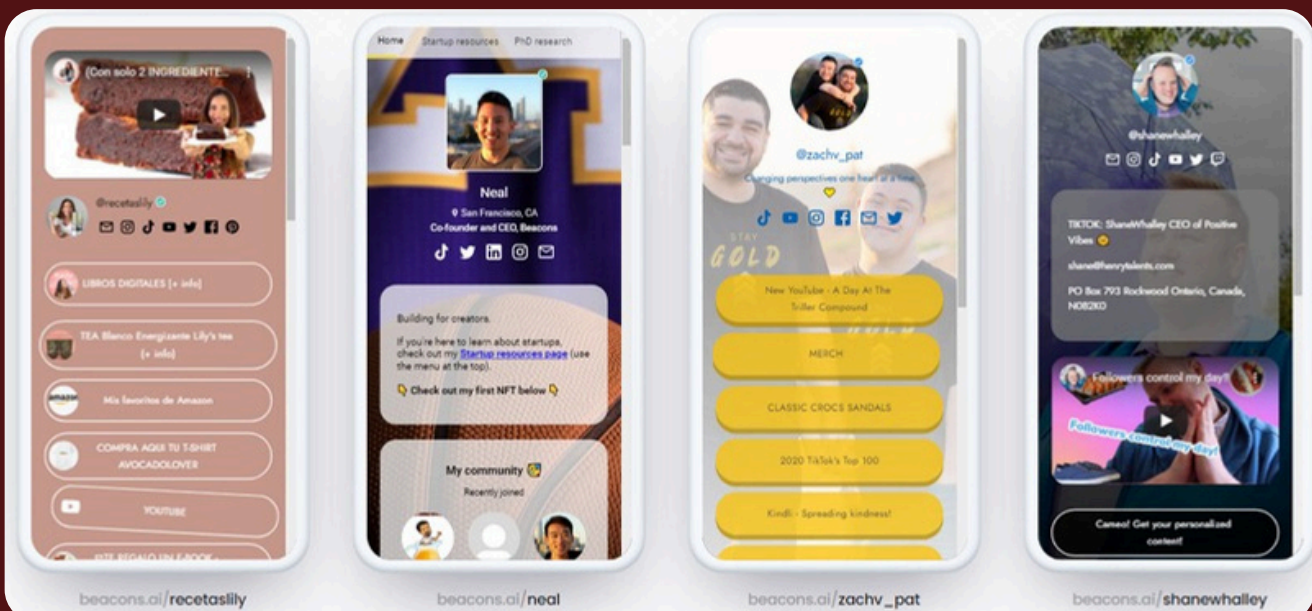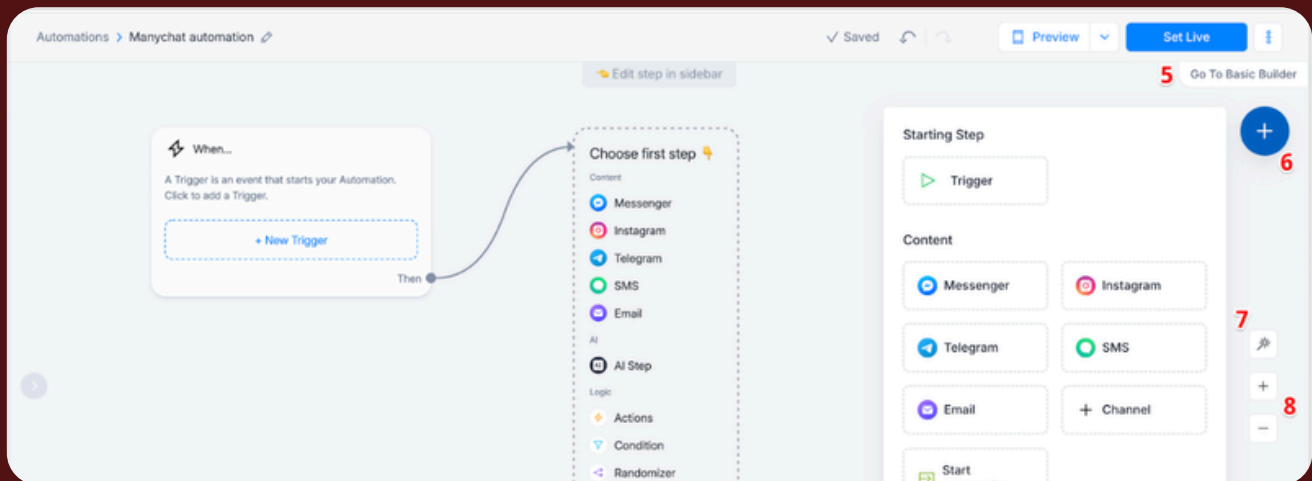
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beacons.ai/neal

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beacons.ai/shanewhalley

TOOLKIT INDEX

USE THIS ALPHABETICAL INDEX TO QUICKLY FIND AND REFERENCE THE TOOLS MENTIONED THROUGHOUT THE GUIDE.

TOOLKIT INDEX

Use this alphabetical index to quickly find and reference the tools mentioned throughout the guide. Each tool includes its category, a brief description, and the link to the tool website so you can easily identify what it's for and explore the right resources for your needs. Bookmark this section as your go-to "cheat sheet" whenever you're looking for new tools to support your social media growth.

- Ahrefs (AI & Copywriting Tools) – Advanced SEO and content analysis platform with an AI content detector for quality assurance.

- Adobe Express (Design & Content Creation Tools) – Free online design app with templates that sync across devices for consistent branding.

- Beacons (Engagement & Community Tools) – Build a branded bio link page with analytics, product links, and lead capture options.

- Buffer (Scheduling & Automation Tools) – Simple scheduling dashboard for Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and more. Great analytics and collaboration tools.

- Canva (Design & Content Creation Tools) – User-friendly design platform with templates for posts, flyers, and presentations. Perfect for batching branded content.

- CapCut (Design & Content Creation Tools) – Mobile and desktop video editor for quick cuts, captions, and trending transitions.

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TOOLKIT INDEX *continued*

- ChatGPT (AI & Copywriting Tools) – Generate ideas, captions, outlines, and content drafts to jump-start your creative process.

- Creative Market (Stock Photos & Visual Assets) – Premium marketplace for fonts, templates, and design assets to elevate your visuals.

- Descript (Design & Content Creation Tools) – Video and audio editing tool ideal for creating podcast clips and repurposing long-form content.

- Flick (AI & Copywriting Tools) – AI-powered social media manager for hashtags, content ideation, and caption writing.

- Google Analytics (Analytics & Optimization Tools) – Monitors website traffic, audience behavior, and social media referral data.

- Icons8 (Stock Photos & Visual Assets) – Library of free icons, illustrations, and vectors to enhance your visual storytelling.

- Jasper (AI & Copywriting Tools) – AI writing assistant for long-form blogs, captions, and repurposing content at scale.

- Klap (AI & Copywriting Tools) – Converts long-form videos into short, optimized clips for social platforms.

- Later (Scheduling & Automation Tools) – Visual content planner with grid previews and scheduling tools for Instagram-first strategies.

TOOLKIT INDEX *continued*

- <u>Linktree</u> (Engagement & Community Tools) – Create a customizable bio link to house all your important links in one place.

- <u>ManyChat</u> (Engagement & Community Tools) – Automates DMs and responses on Instagram and Facebook to nurture audience engagement.

- <u>Meta Business Suite</u> (Analytics & Optimization Tools) – Free tool to track engagement, reach, and ad performance across Meta platforms.

- <u>Metricool</u> (Scheduling & Automation Tools) – All-in-one tool for scheduling, analytics, and competitor tracking across multiple platforms.

- <u>Notion Tracker Template</u> (Analytics & Optimization Tools) – Build a custom dashboard to track followers, engagement, and conversions.

- <u>OpusClip</u> (AI & Copywriting Tools) – Automatically turns long videos into short, captioned clips in trending formats.

- <u>Pexels</u> (Stock Photos & Visual Assets) – Free, high-quality stock images and short videos searchable by mood or theme.

- <u>Runway</u> (AI & Copywriting Tools) – AI-powered creative suite for generating, editing, and enhancing videos and visuals.

- <u>Semrush</u> (AI & Copywriting Tools) – Comprehensive SEO and content marketing tool with keyword research and performance insights.

TOOLKIT INDEX *continued*

- <u>Stealth GPT</u> (AI & Copywriting Tools) – Privacy-focused AI content creation tool designed for secure, creative workflows.

- <u>Typeset</u> (AI & Copywriting Tools) – Speeds up digital content creation with built-in formatting and publishing features.

- <u>Unsplash</u> (Stock Photos & Visual Assets) – Free, community-driven photo library for high-quality, professional visuals.

- <u>Wordtune</u> (AI & Copywriting Tools) – AI writing enhancer that helps you refine tone, clarity, and flow in your content.

end of index

◆ PRO TIPS FOR STAYING CONSISTENT

- Set monthly goals (e.g., "Post 12 times" or "Test 3 Reels ideas").
- Batch-create content on Mondays and schedule for the week.
- Reuse your top-performing posts every 90 days.
- Track engagement weekly and tweak captions or visuals based on results.
- Celebrate small wins — engagement is progress!

◆ NEXT STEPS FOR GROWTH

Your growth doesn't end here. Stay connected with Texas State University Small Business Development Center (SBDC), a collaborative effort between the SBA, Texas State University, State of Texas, and local governments to support small businesses.

And if you're ready for a creative refresh, explore Me&Co.'s **Social Media Starter Kit** — a plug-and-play bundle of templates and content planners designed to help you stay consistent online.

SCALEUP Small Business Resources

Texas State University SBDC

SCALEUP Small Business Resources

Texas State University: Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Me&Co. Marketing Resources

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