gupshup

Instagram Messaging API For Your Business

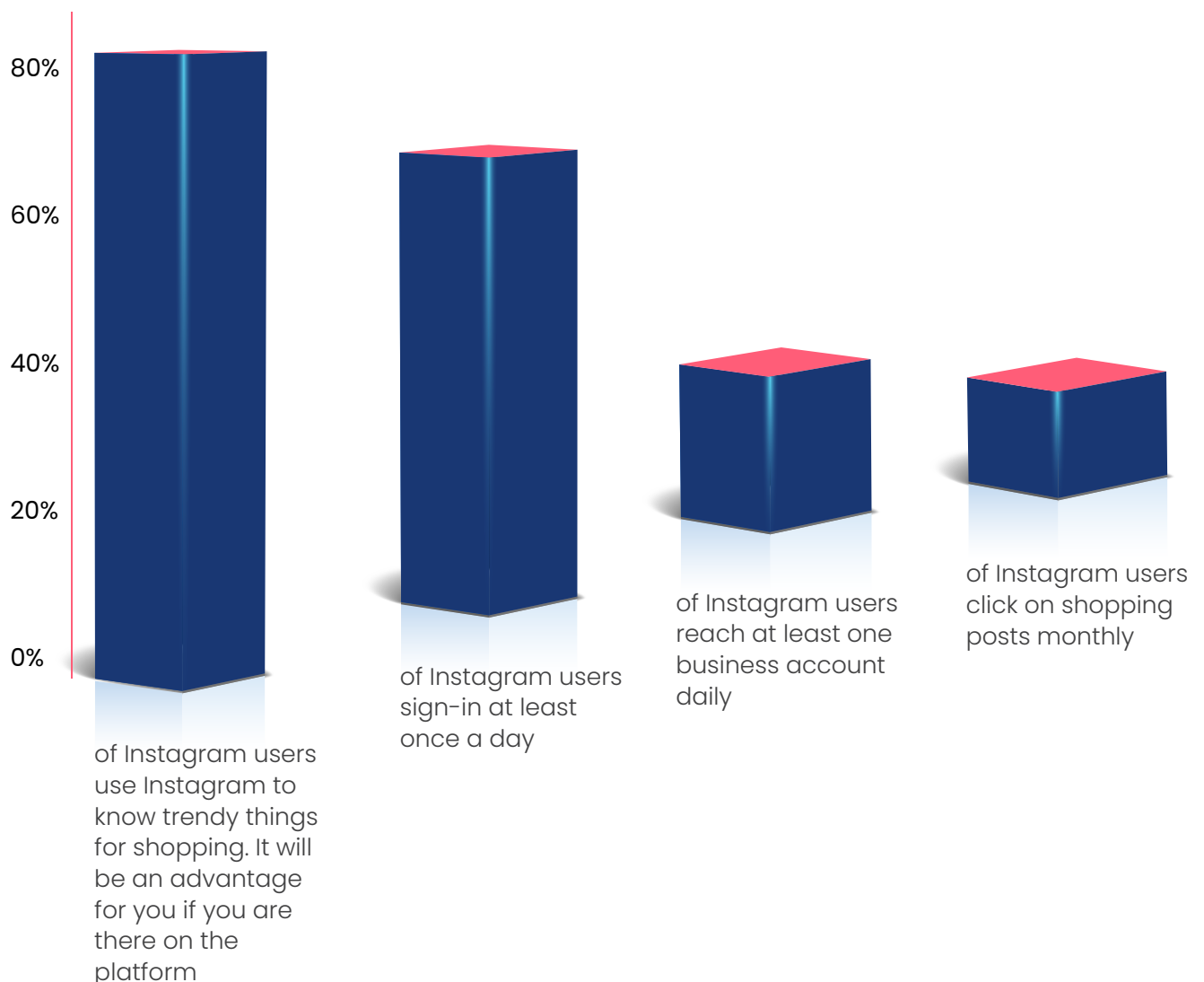# Table of Contents

Messaging apps like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Instagram, play a vital role in getting people connected with businesses and brands. Conversations with brands have increased as customers are getting engaged on a platform that they are already spending a lot of time on. According to Instagram research, 90% of people on Instagram follow a business and 50% are more interested in a brand when they see ads for it on Instagram.

Instagram has truly emerged as one of the most widely used social media platforms, with more than 1 billion active monthly users, who on average spend 29 minutes a day on the app! Not only are millennials part of these statistics, but brands post an average of 27.9 times per month, which is almost once a day!

It is, therefore, no surprise that Instagram has the 4th most users among all mobile apps on all platforms. Instagram business accounts see an average 1.46% growth in followers monthly.
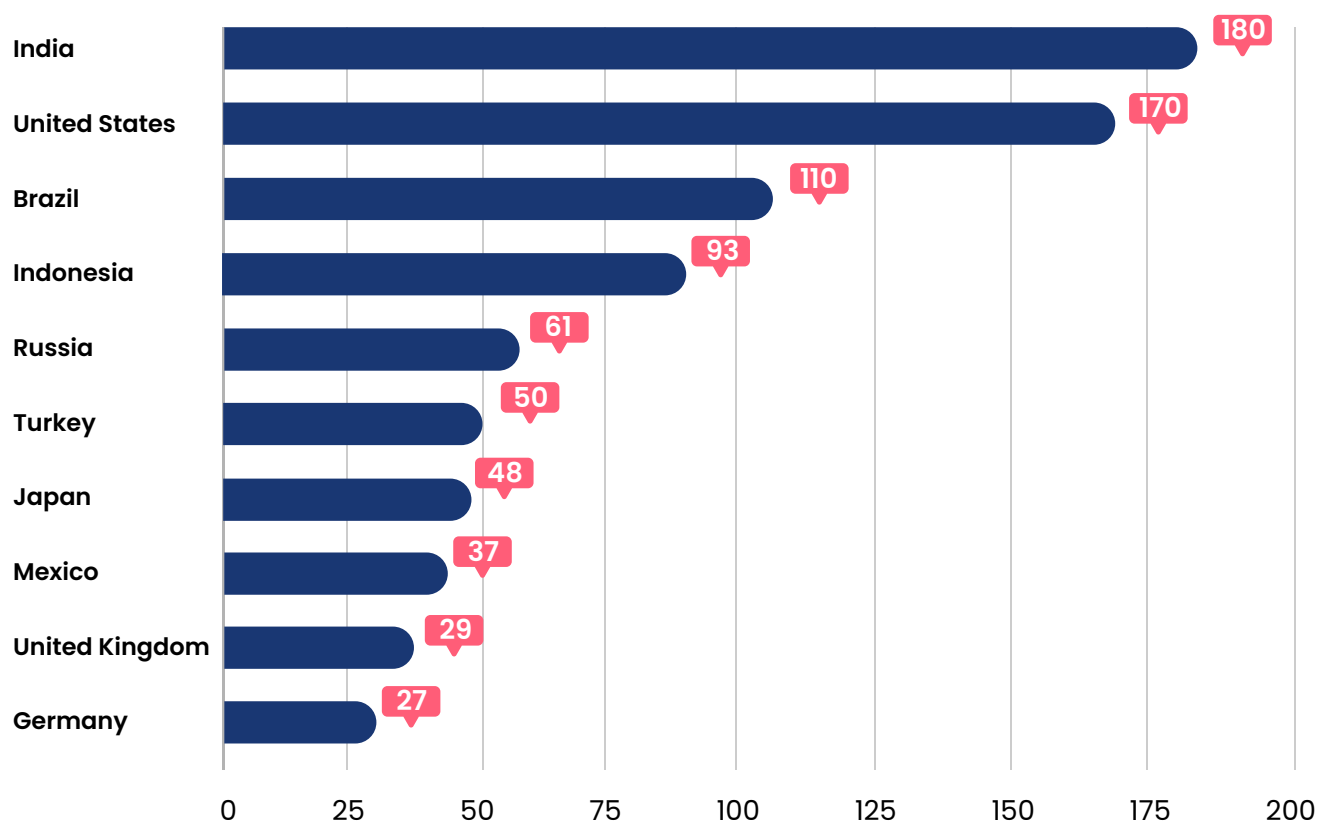
Percentage of
Instagram users

80%

60%

40%

20%

0%

of Instagram users
use Instagram to
know trendy things
for shopping. It will
be an advantage
for you if you are
there on the
platform

of Instagram users
sign-in at least
once a day

of Instagram users
reach at least one
business account
daily

of Instagram users
click on shopping
posts monthly

The Instagram Mania

◗ A staggering 500+ million daily active users (DAUs)

◗ Instagram has crossed 1.4 billion monthly active users (MAUs)

◗ Globally, 51.4% of females and 48.6% of males use the app

◗ Instagram MAU growth rate >= 100 million users per year

◗ In India, there were 144,080,000 Instagram users in January 2021, which accounted for 10.2% of its entire population!

Instagram users by country as per July 2021 (in millions)

Country	Users
India	180
United States	170
Brazil	110
Indonesia	93
Russia	61
Turkey	50
Japan	48
Mexico	37
United Kingdom	29
Germany	27

> *Instagram is a perfect avenue for us to connect with our customers especially since many people use Instagram to discover new beauty products. However, it was difficult to follow up with people or respond to potential sales leads because we did not have the right tools. By implementing Messenger API for Instagram, we have not only scaled our conversations through different entry points such as Instagram Feed, Instagram Stories, mentions, and direct messages but have also improved our response time to customer inquiries.”*
>
> **-Eda Lim, Head Of Digital, Luxury & Professional Division, Kiehl's Malaysia**

Bot Discovery on Instagram

The prior section exemplified the reach of Instagram on brands and consumers alike. Social media has taken over every sector, be it retail, FMCG or e-commerce. Brands need to take this opportunity to make the most out of this rising phenomenon by building chatbots and leveraging it to draw in automated conversations to drive engagement and sales. So how does a conversation with an Instagram bot start?

User-Initiated Conversations

In order for a business to engage with users on Instagram, it is imperative that users send the first message in a conversation to a business. Businesses cannot send messages to users 24 hours after the user's last message. This restriction has been imposed by Facebook to prevent irresponsible businesses from spamming Instagram users. Learn more about the 24-hour rule.

Scenario 1 : Message button on Instagram profile

A user comes across a product post and goes to the brand's Instagram profile page.
The user clicks the 'Message' button and enquires about the product.
The bot provides product information and asks whether the user wants to place an order.
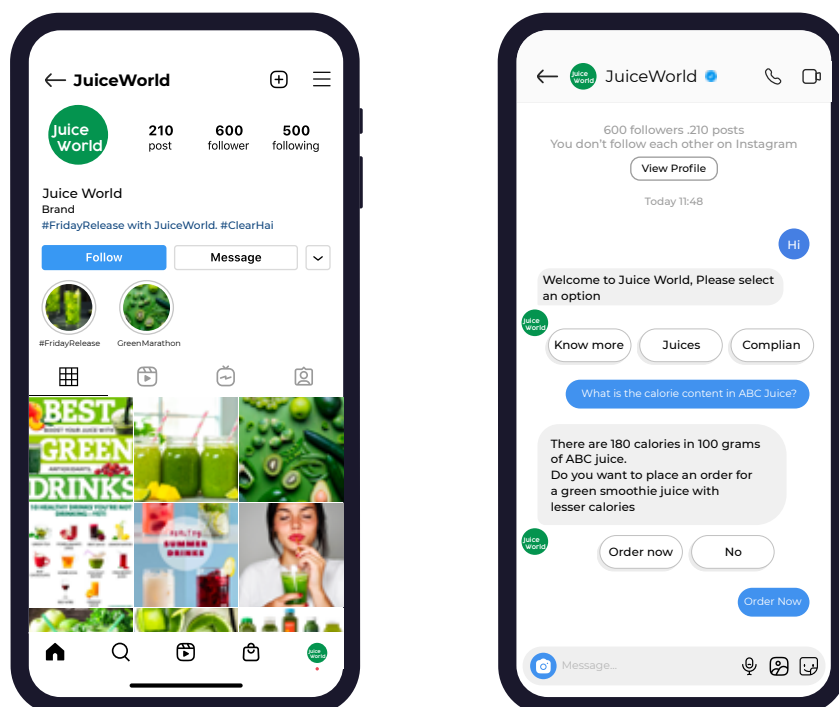
Scenario 2 : Link Click

A user comes across the link to the bot on SMS and clicks on it.
The user is redirected to Instagram DM and says Hi.
The bot responds with a welcome message and asks the product preference.
The user selects the desired options and places order.
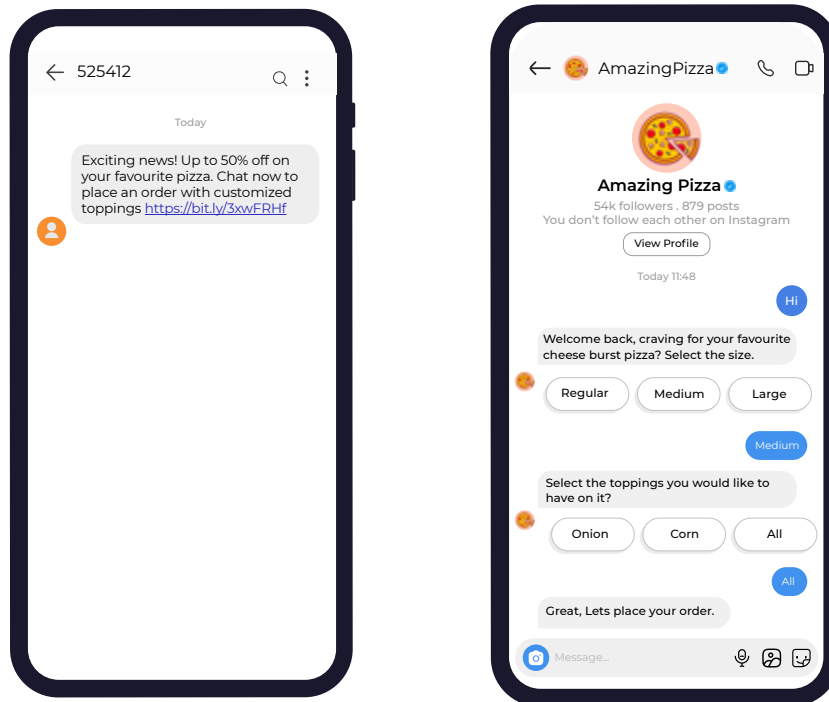
Scenario 3 : QR Scan

A user scans a QR code from the poster and is redirected to Instagram DM.
The user asks about the brand's product offerings.
The bot provides the product catalogue.
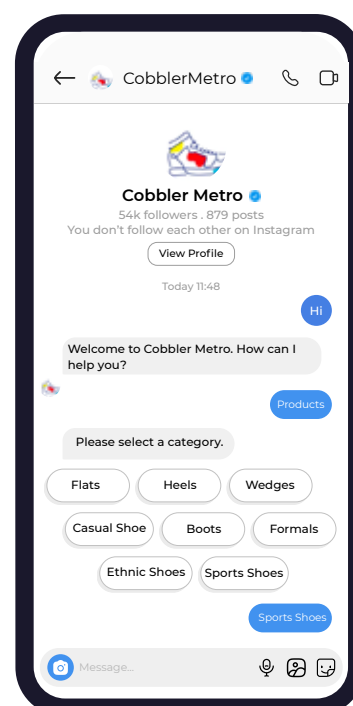
Scenario 4 : Website Click

A user clicks on a button/popup on a website which redirects the user to Instagram DM.
The user selects its preferences to see the menu of that restaurant.
The bot provides specials in text format and the whole menu as an image/pdf.
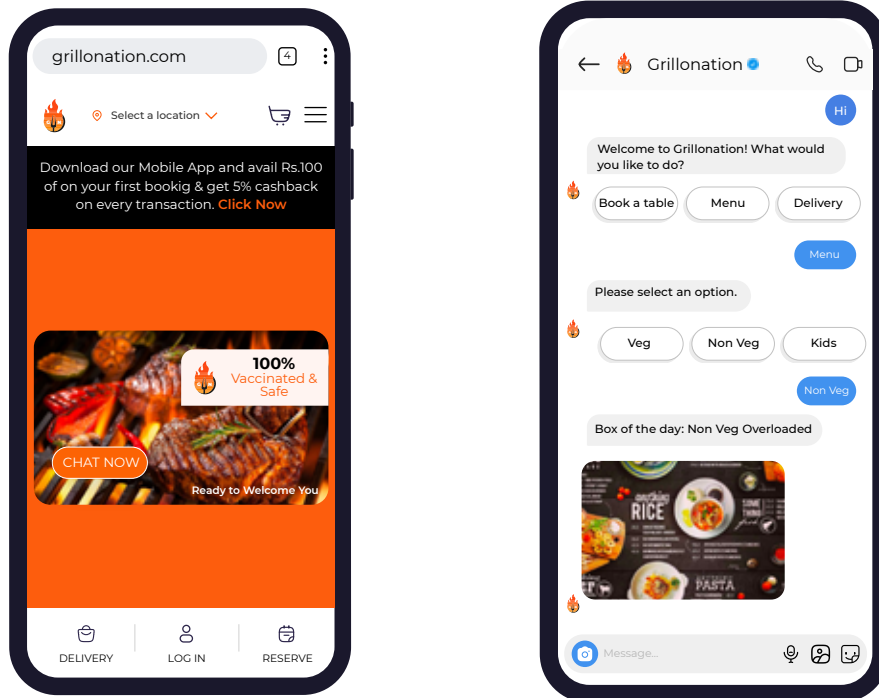
Scenario 5 : Redirected from other Bots

A user chats with the brand's website bot through a web widget.
The website bot provides an option to chat with the Instagram bot and the user selects it.
The user then continues the conversation in Instagram DM.
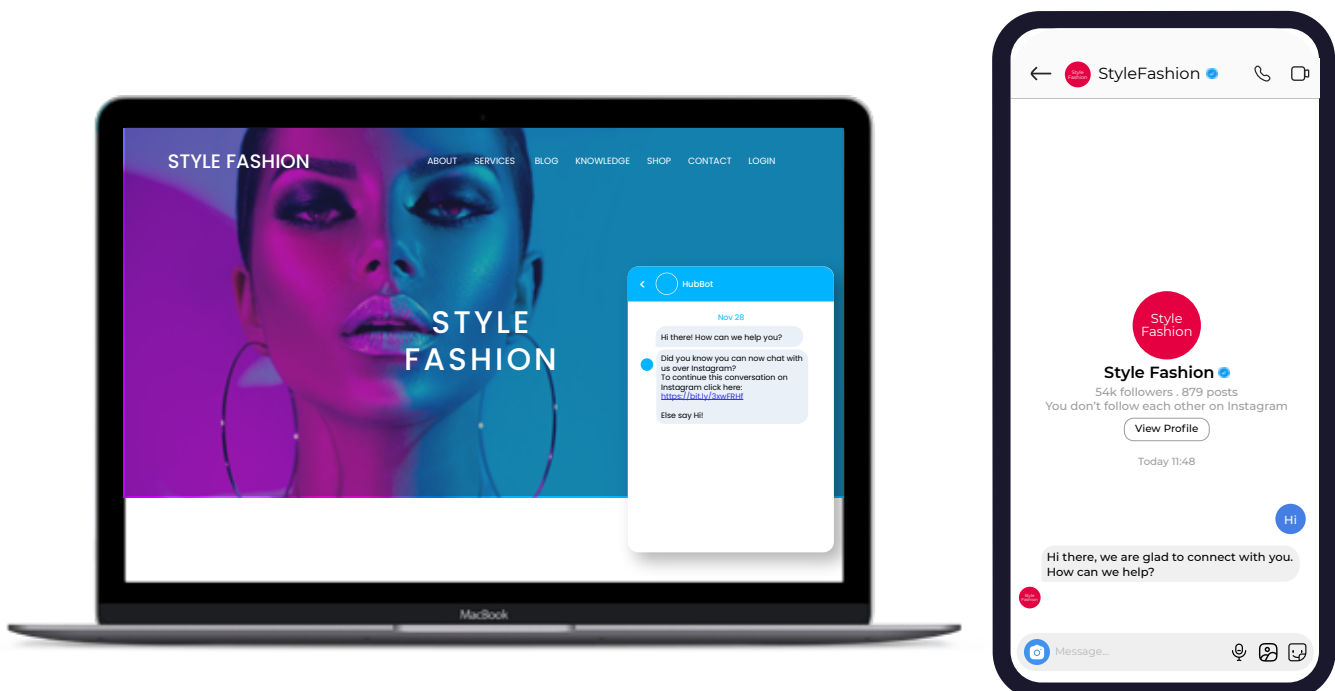
Scenario 6 : Search in Instagram DM

A user comes across a product post and goes to their own Instagram DM.
The user searches for the brand's Instagram username in the search bar above the conversations.
The user messages "Hi" and then enquires about the product after the bot's greeting message.
The bot provides product information and asks whether the user wants to place an order.
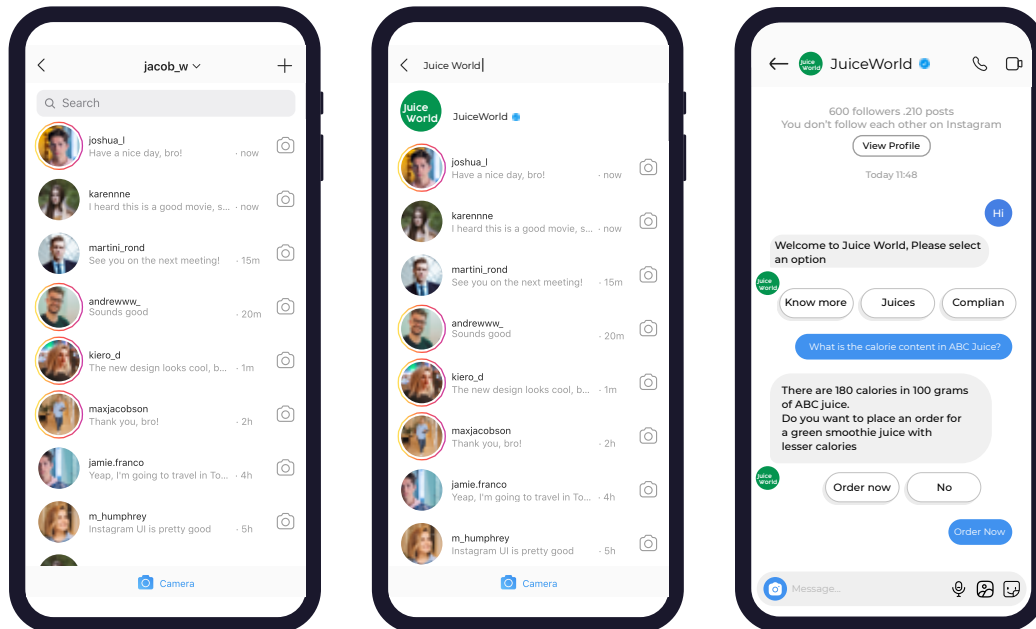
Bot Initiated Conversations

However, there are certain use cases where businesses/bots can send the first message. Businesses or bots are allowed to send only one message to the user if the user performs a certain action.

Scenario 1 : Sponsored Post

A user comes across an ad on Instagram and clicks on it.
The user is redirected to the brand's Instagram DM.
The bot greets the user and presents the ongoing offers.
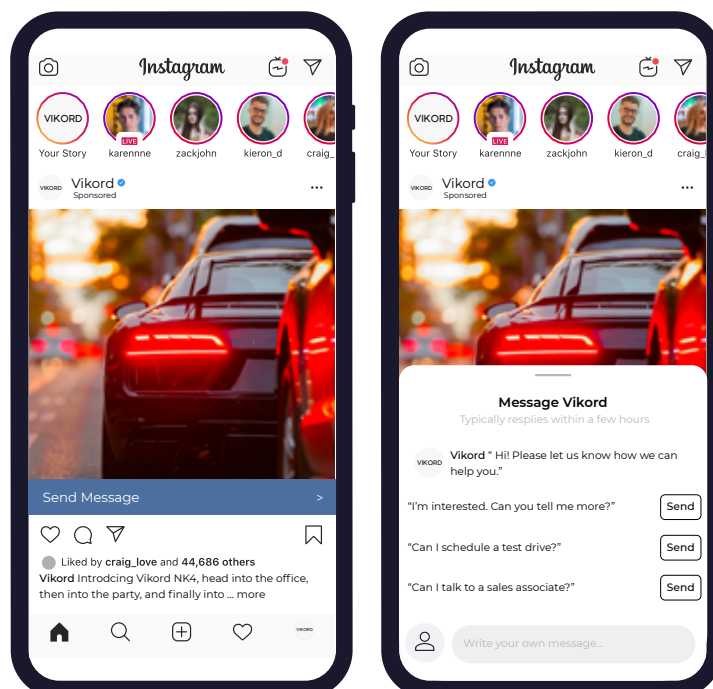
Scenario 2 : Sponsored Story

A user comes across a sponsored post on Instagram and clicks on the "Send Message" button.
The bot shows a pre-set question and some suggested replies in a pop up.
The user sends a message to the bot by typing in the pop up or selecting from among the suggested replies.
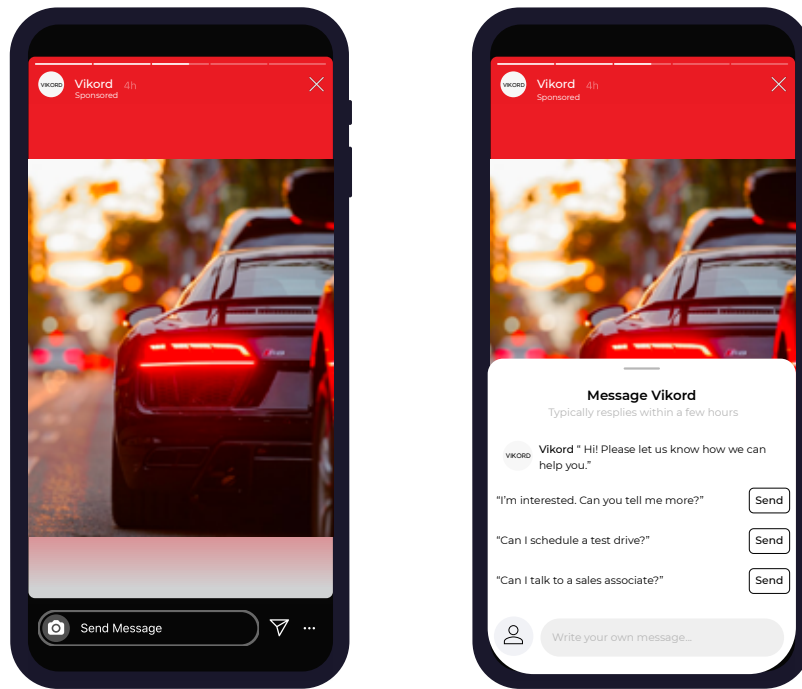

Scenario 3 : Post Comment

A user comments on a brand post praising the products.
The bot sends a message appreciating the feedback.
The user's comment on the post is referenced with the bot message.
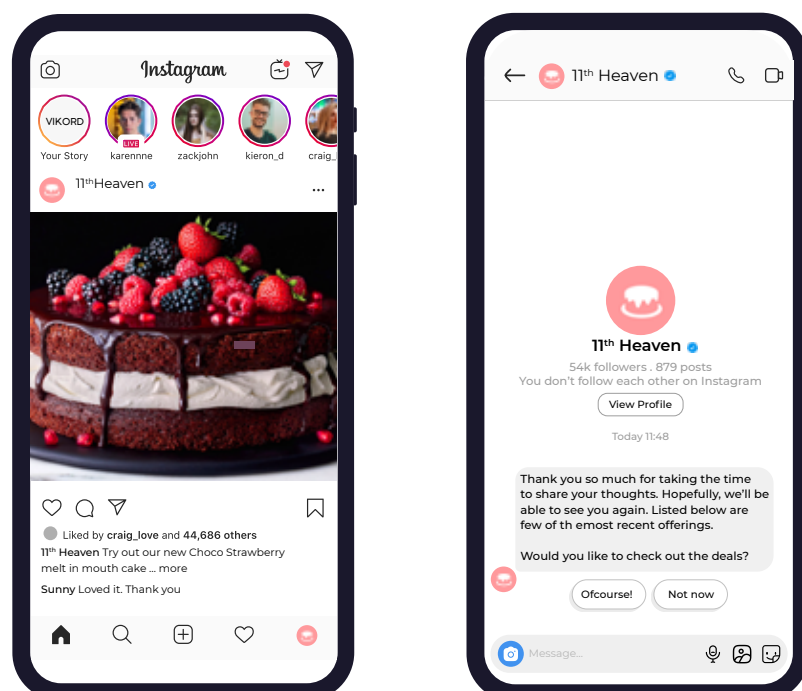
Scenario 4 : Story Reply

The user comes across a brand's story and reacts with a laughing emoji. The bot sends back a message appreciating the reaction.
The user is intimated that the business/bot has responded to the story reply.
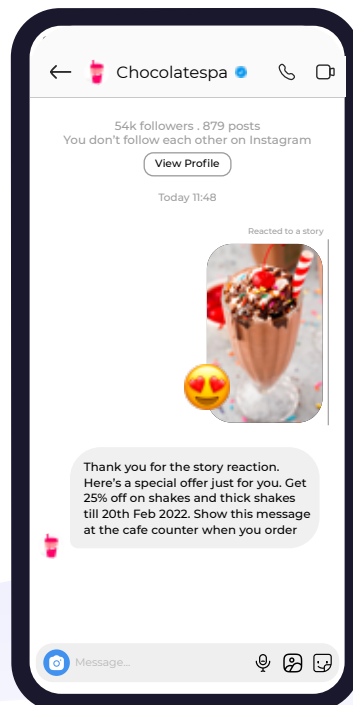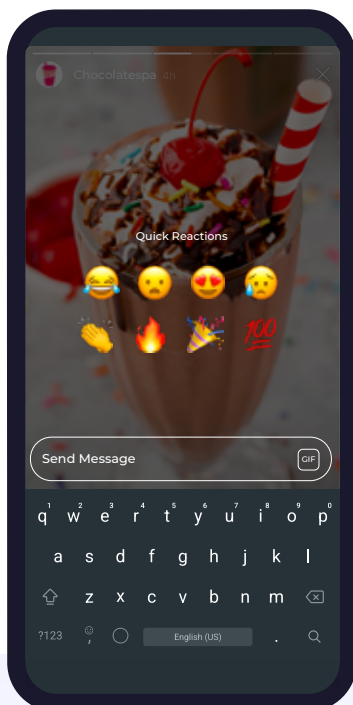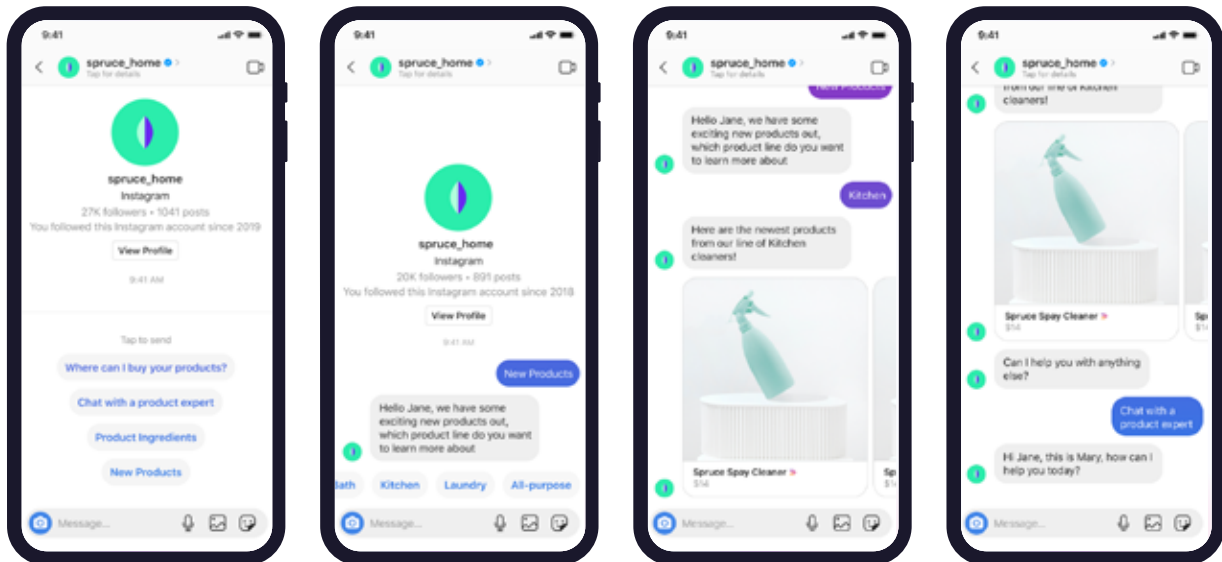

Scenario 5 : @mentions

A user mentions the brand in their story with a photo of the brand's product.
The bot sends back a message appreciating the mention.
The user is intimated that the business/bot has responded to the @mention.
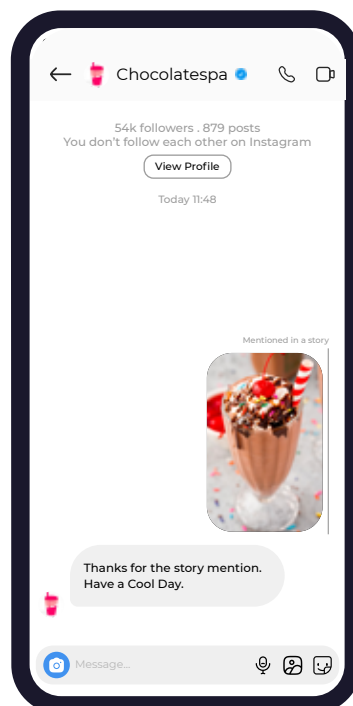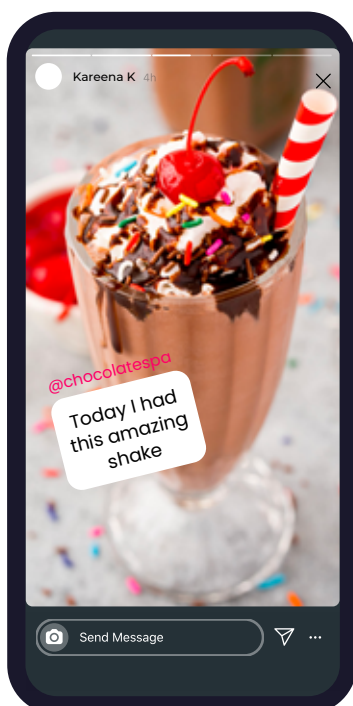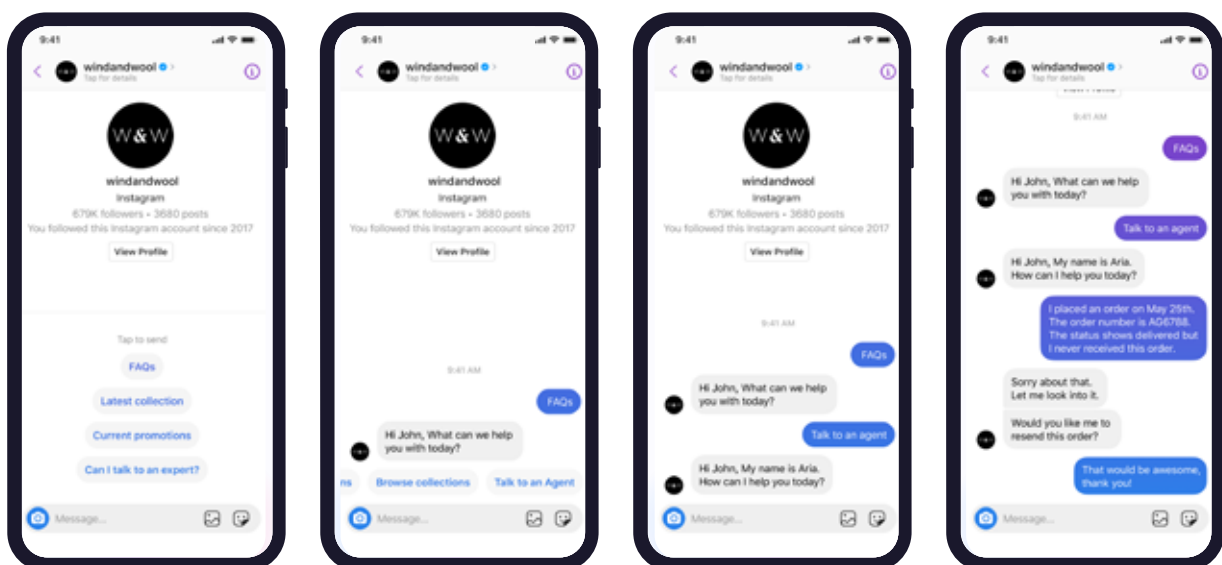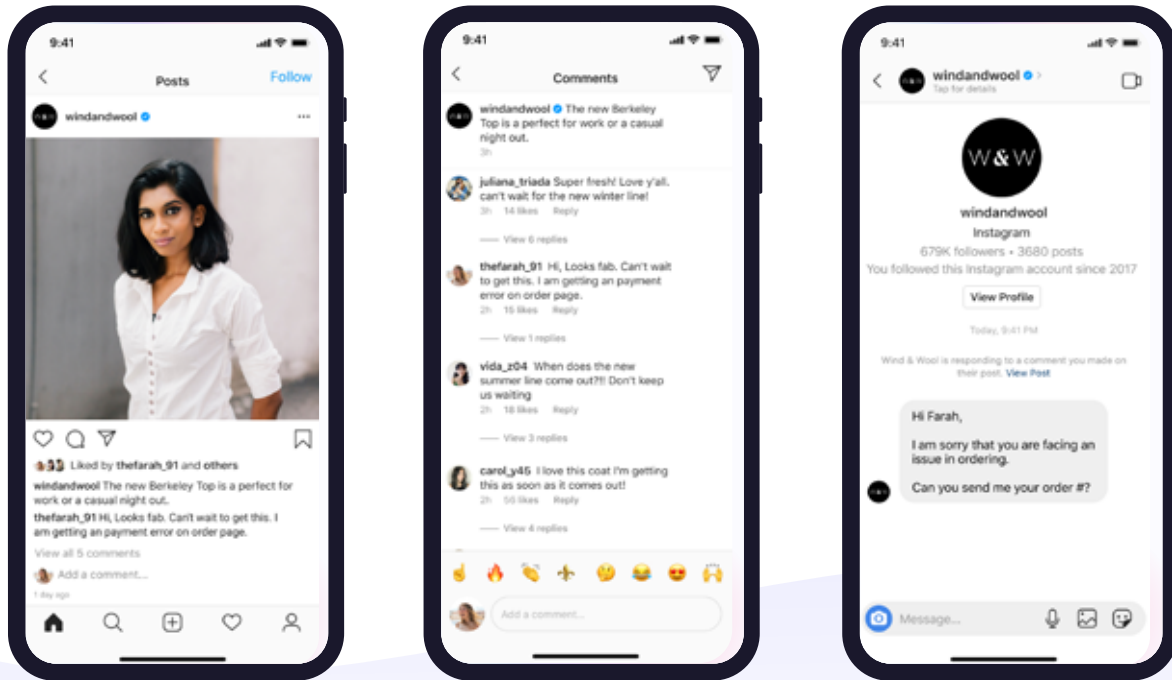
Journeys

Pre-purchase product discovery with automation and live chat

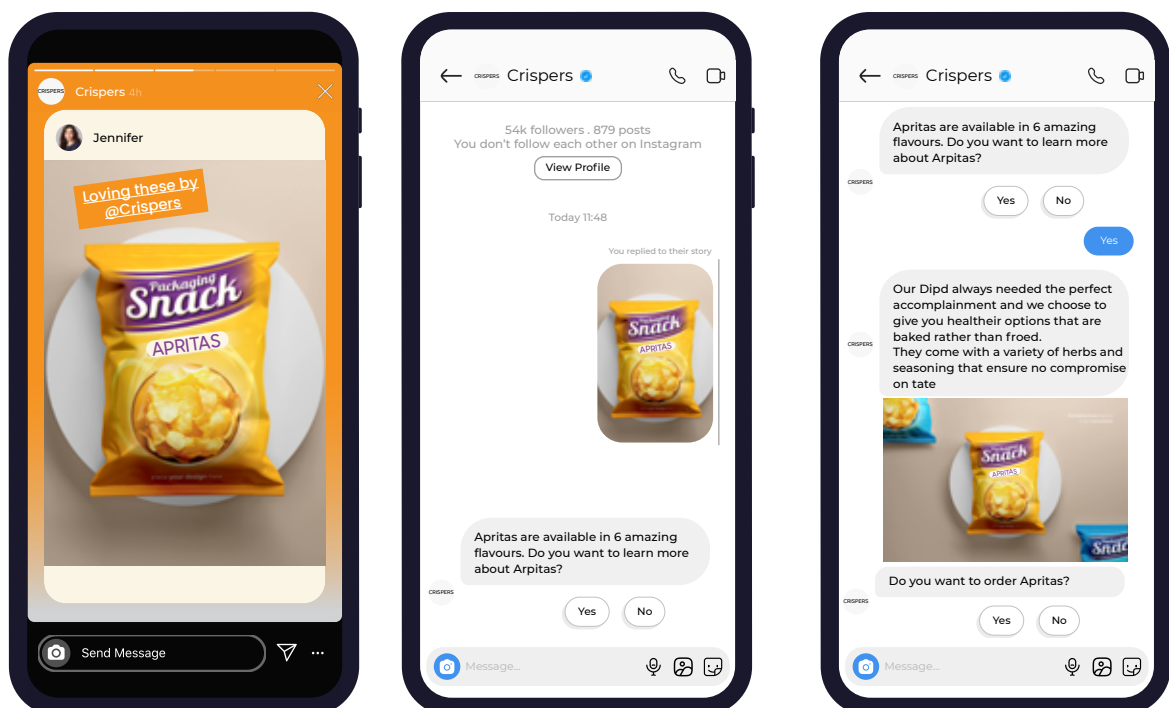## Post-purchase customer support with automation and live agent

# Post Purchase customer care with private reply

Product Enquiry

User sees a brand story and replies with a query
Bot sends an answer and asks if you want more information
User asks for product details
Bot give product details and asks if you want to order

Product Recommendations

- User sees a content marketing article about benefits of a product line
- User clicks on a link/button given there saying "Learn More"
- Redirected to DM, user sees ice breakers, ignores them and asks for recommendations
- Bot asks category and subcategory and shows product template carousels
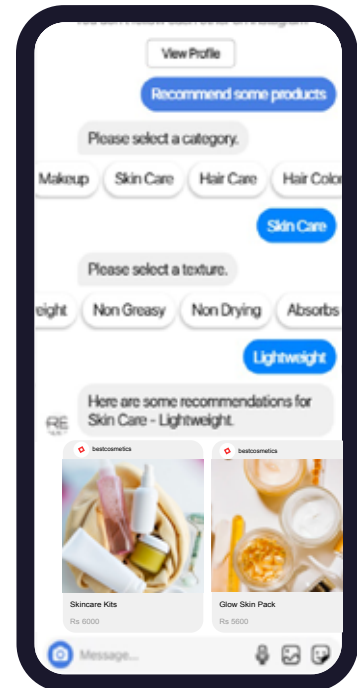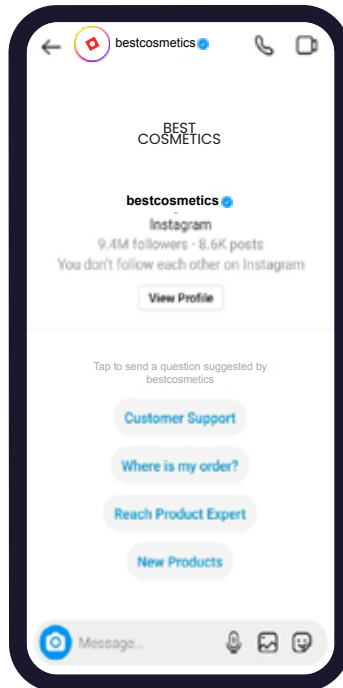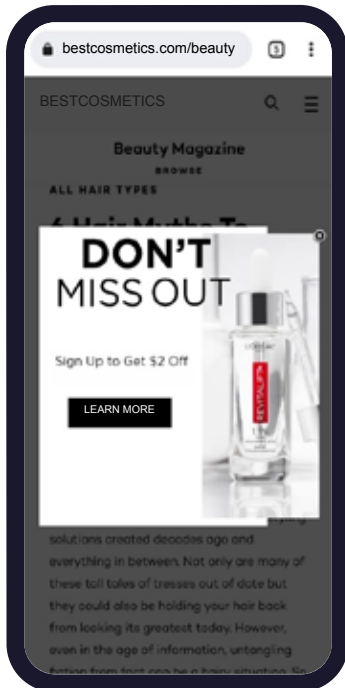
Shopping/Ordering

- User sees an Instagram ad and clicks on ad redirect button named "Shop Now"
- Redirected to DM and bot asks what you want to order
- After product category and subcategory selection, bot shows product template carousels
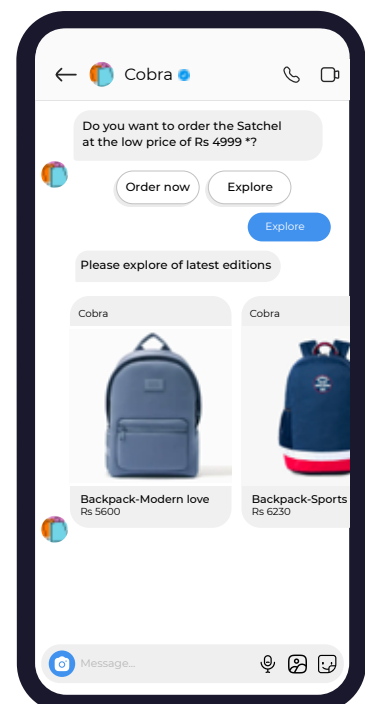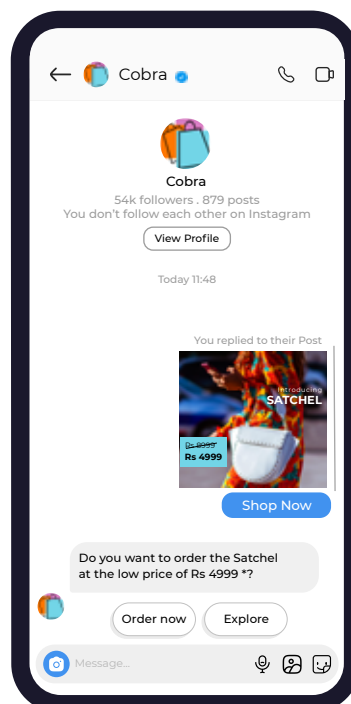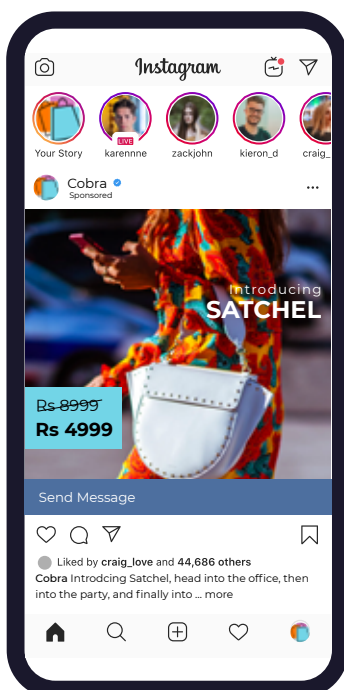
Customer Support

- User comments on a post with a complaint
- Bot sends Private Replies message and asks if you want to lodge a complaint
- User makes a complaint and bot raises a ticket
- User is not satisfied and asks to talk to agent
- Bot escalates to live agent and conversation continues
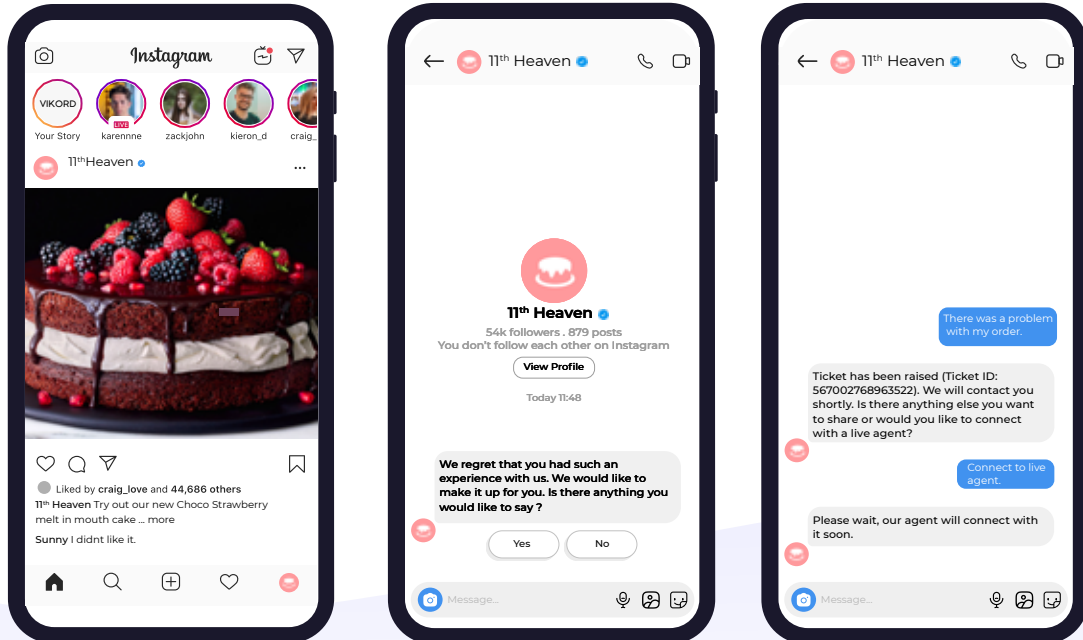
Order Tracking

- User says Hi and bot asks how can I help you with quick replies, one of which is "Track your order"
- User enters order details
- Bot shows order status
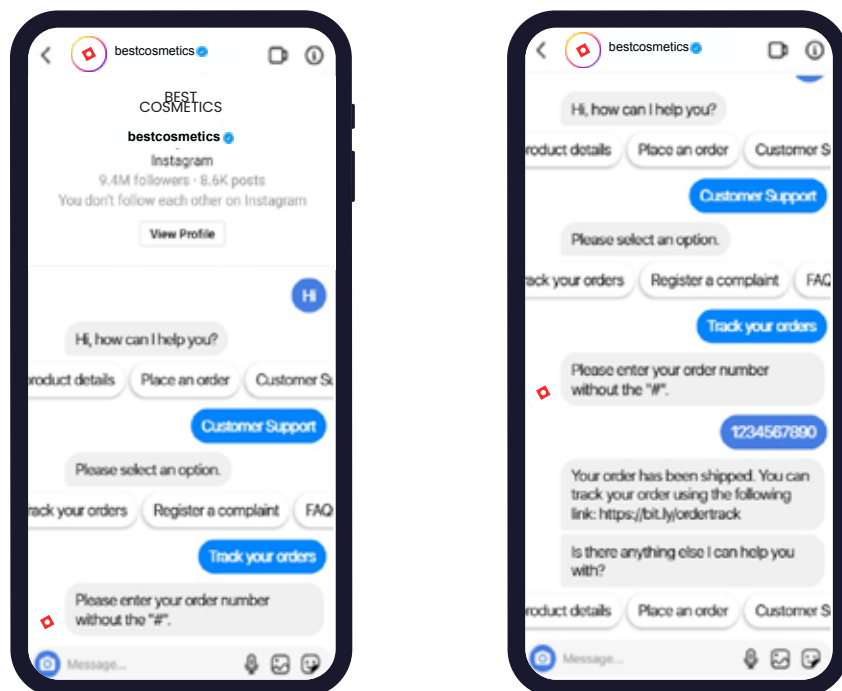
Lead Generation

- User sees a brand story about an invite-only product/service
- User clicks the button at bottom or swipes up titled "Register Now"
- Redirected to DM, user sees ice breakers and clicks "Online Raffle"
- User enters all details asked by the bot
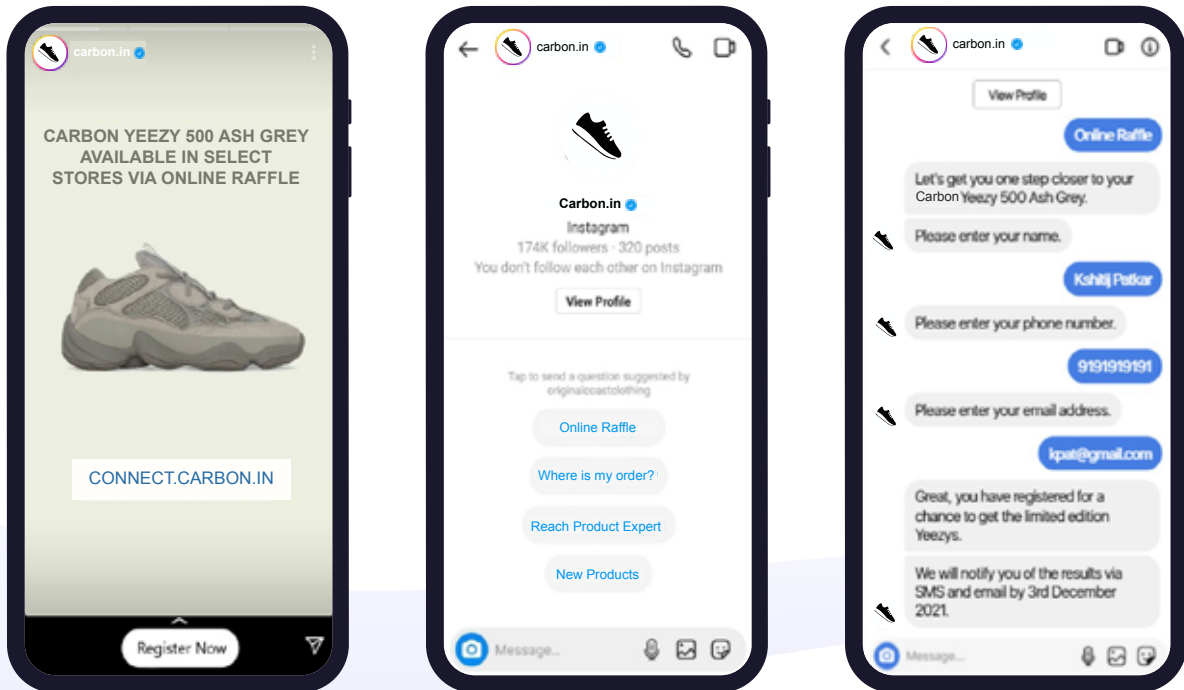
Feedback

- User mentions a brand in their story praising the products they bought
- Bot sends Private Replies message saying Thanks
- Bot asks if user will give feedback in the same message
- User says Yes and completes feedback form
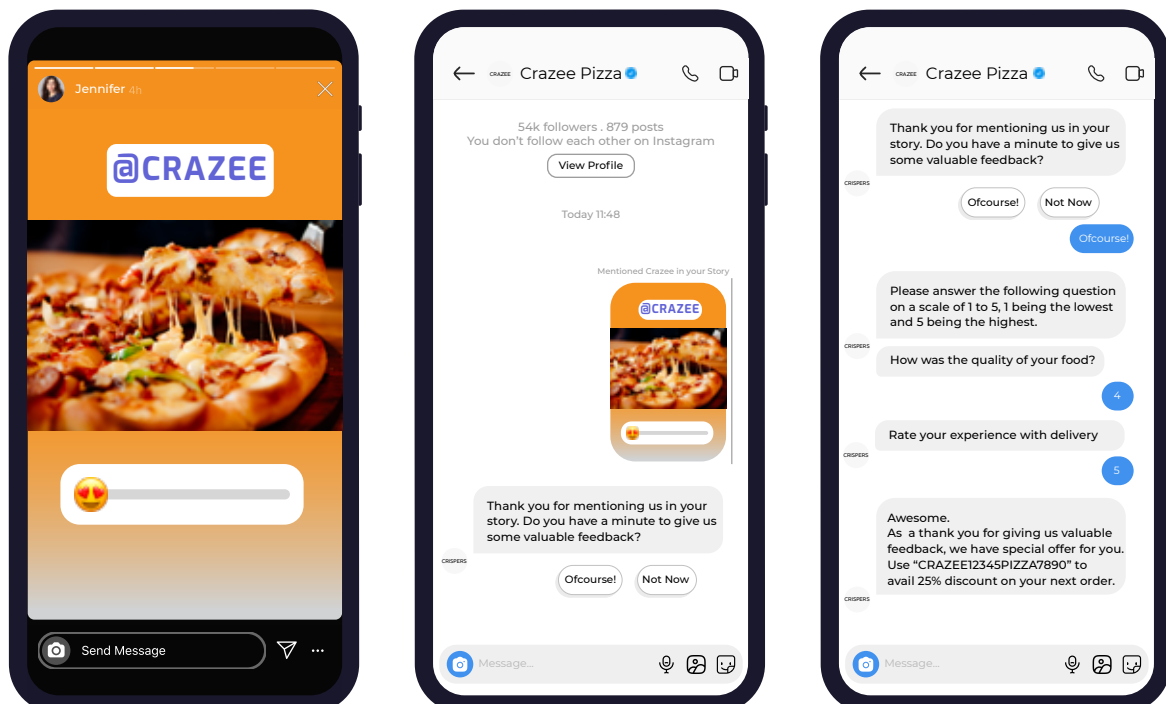
Gamification

- User sees a post about a contest which says DM to participate
- User goes to DM and sees ice breakers, one of which is "Participate in Contest"
- User plays the game and wins a coupon code for discount
- Bot gives the coupon code with link to website for shopping

Stock Availability

- User comments on a post saying "This is out of stock on your website"
- Bot sends a Private Replies message apologizing for the inconvenience.
- Bot asks if the user wants to be notified when the product is available.
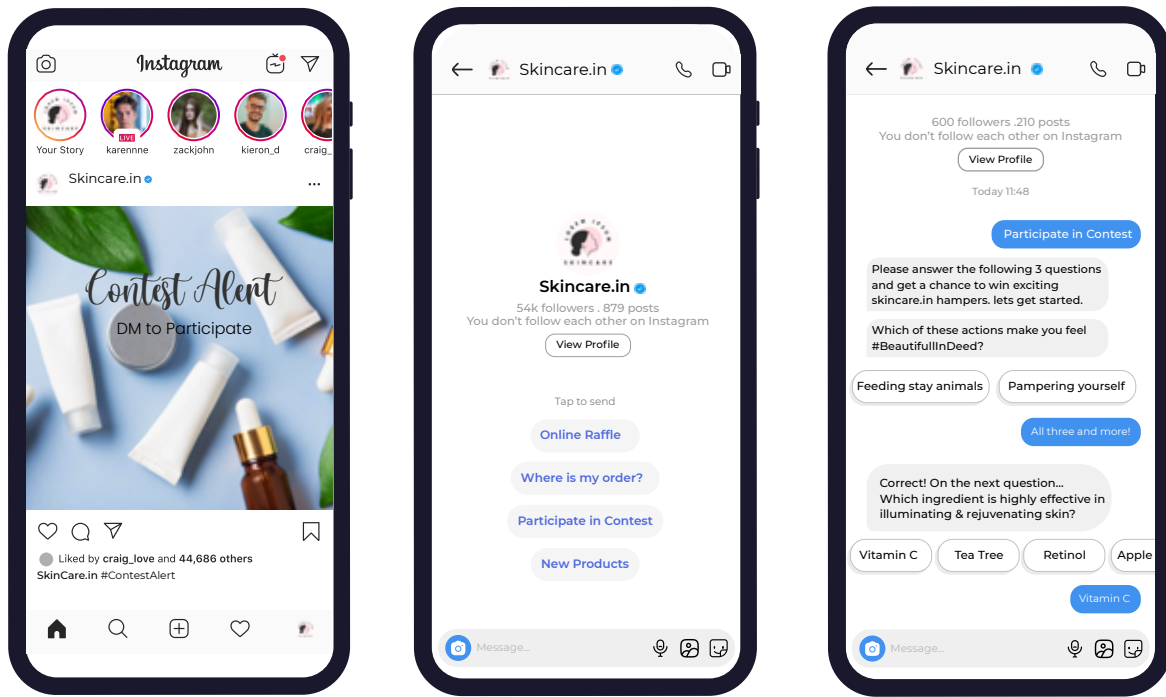- User agrees and bot takes email and phone number.

Rebuy

- User mentions a brand in their story praising the products they bought
- Bots sends a Private Replies message saying Thanks and gives special discount for rebuying
- User wants to rebuy and bot gives product template carousels
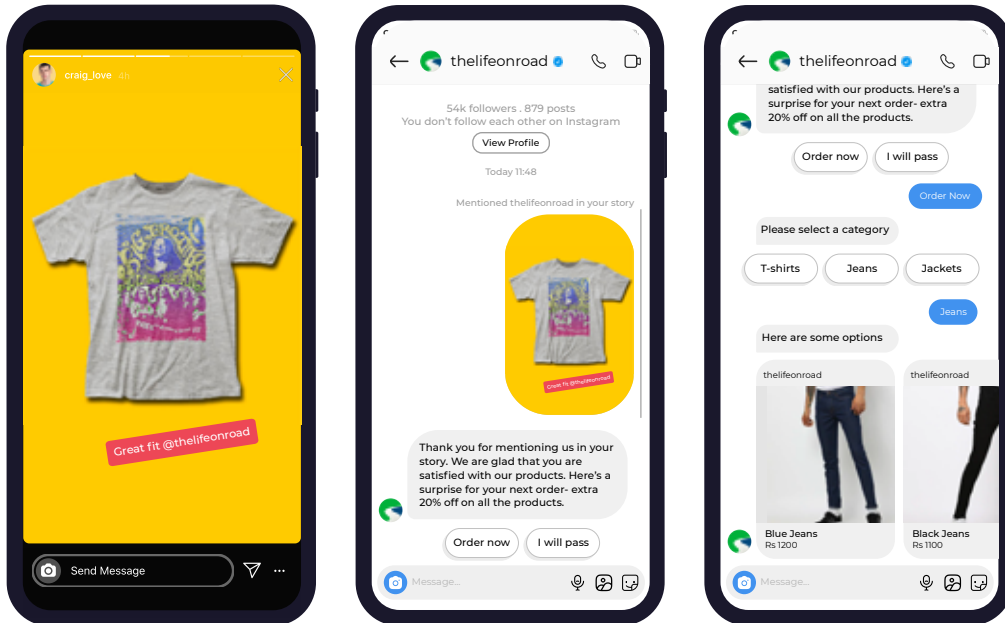
Media types allowed

- Text
- Image
- Sticker
- Product template carousels (up to 10)
- Generic template (title, subtitle, image, up to 3 buttons)
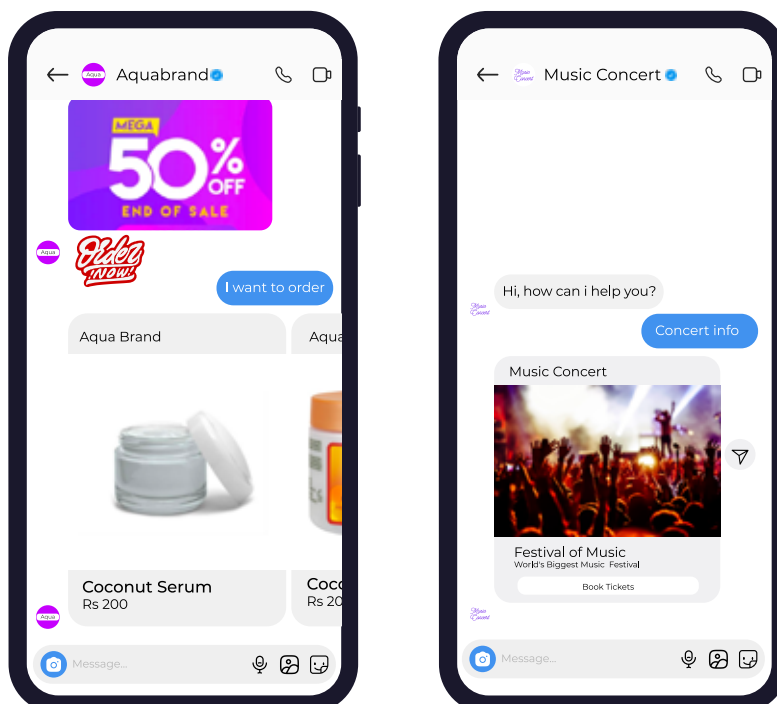
Use cases

Lead Generation bot

The bot helps collect customer information in a conversational format
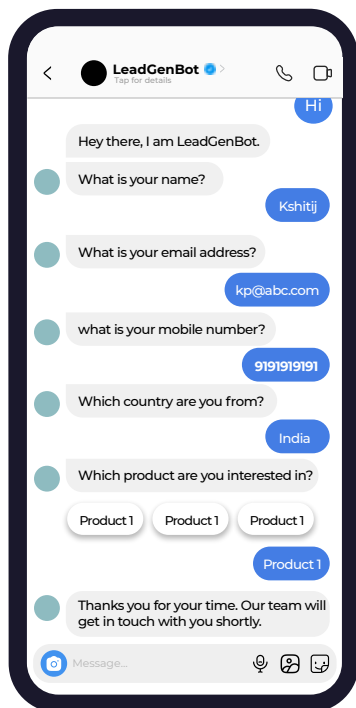
FAQ/Product enquiry bot

The bot helps answer users' questions related to products, services or the brands themselves.
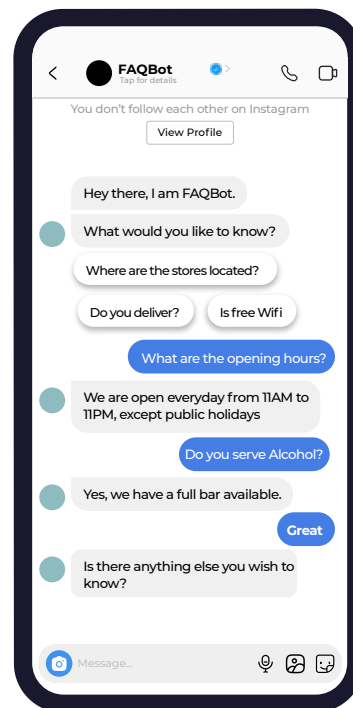
Customer Support/Grievance Resolution bot

The bot provides solutions to frequently occurring issues, raises tickets and connects users to human agents if needed.
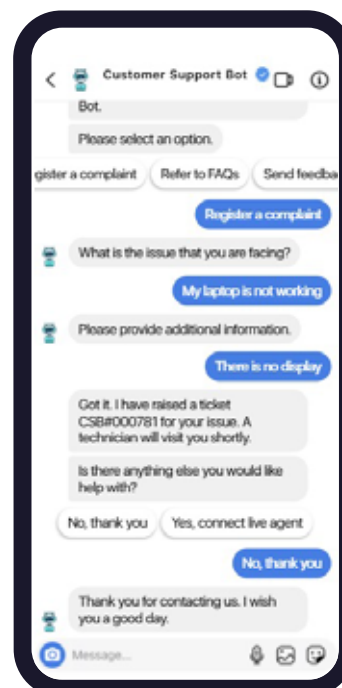
Order/Service Tracking bot

The bot provides information about the order/service status, staff assigned (if any), ETA, etc.
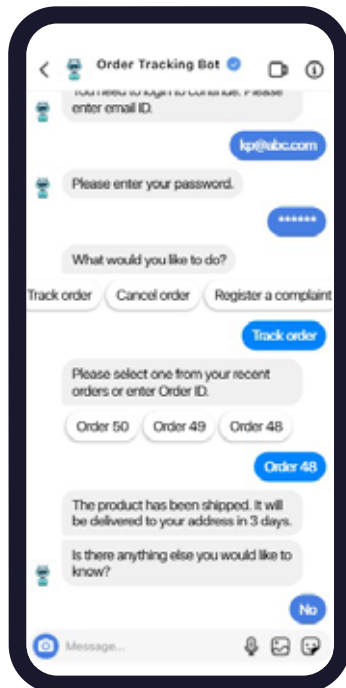
Sales/Shopping/Ordering bot

The bot displays menu cards/catalogues, places orders, provides payment options, etc.
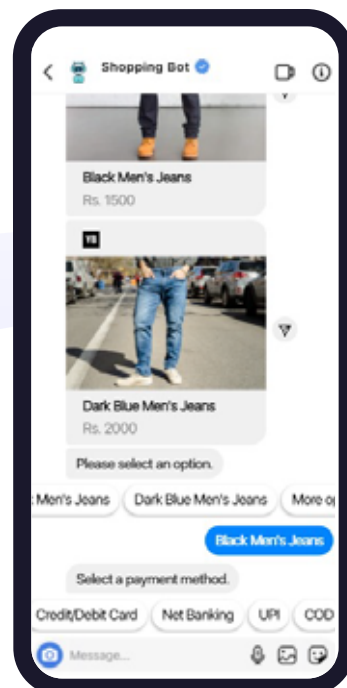
Marketing/Ad showing bot

The bot helps send content for marketing, coupons, offers, updates, etc. after users opt-in for the same.
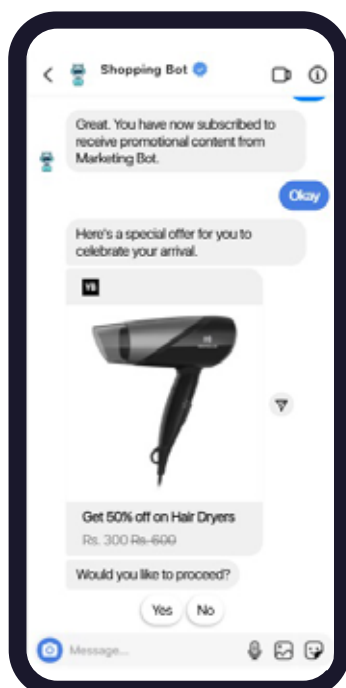
Games/Quiz/Contests bot

The bot helps run games/quizzes/contests in a conversational pre-defined format.
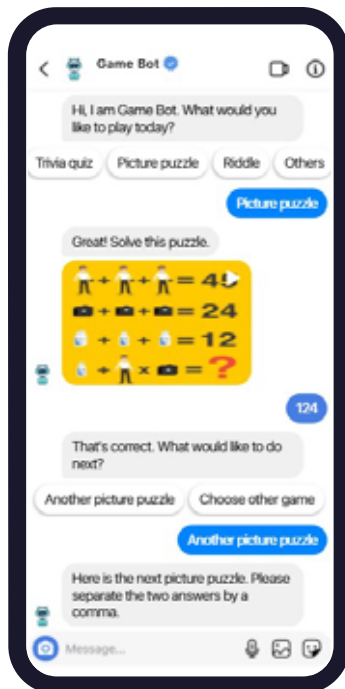
Recommendations/Suggestions bot

The bot provides recommendations from your product/service portfolio or in general.
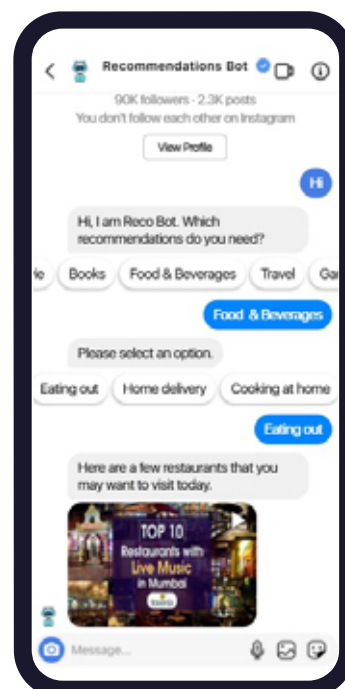
Tourism/Travel/Hotel booking bot

The bot provides travel/hotel options with details, and helps in booking, gives reminders, etc.
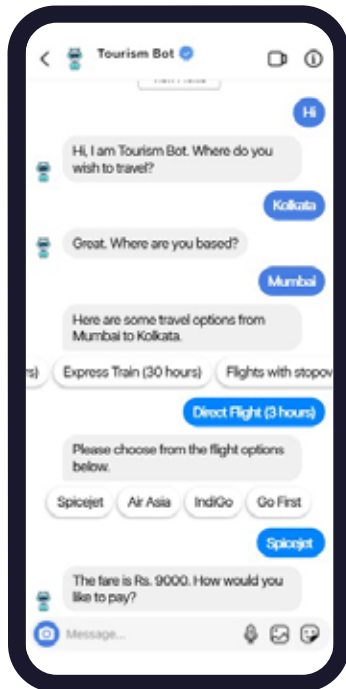
Survey/Feedback bot

The bot helps conduct surveys/collect feedback after a user visits the website.
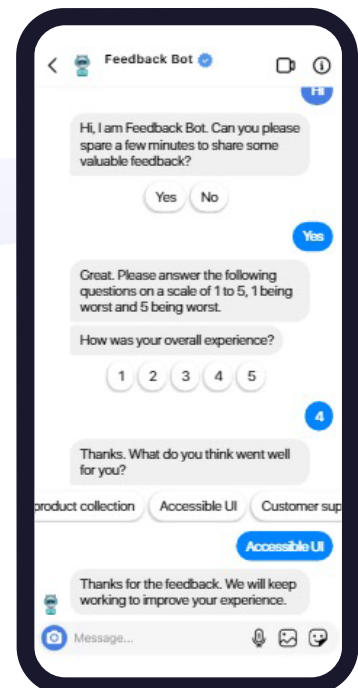
Finance/Banking/Insurance/Investment bot

The bot provides financial advice and runs simple tasks like bill payment, statement generation, insurance premium payment, buying/selling shares, etc.
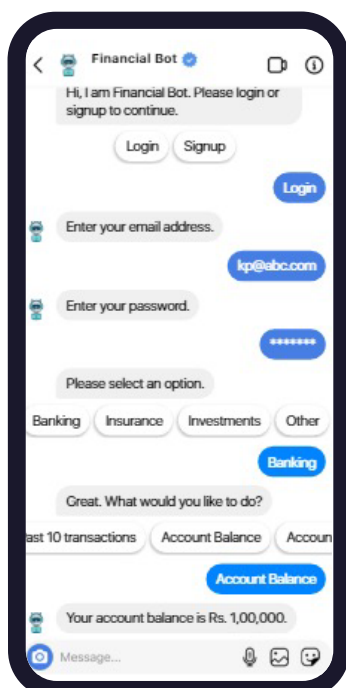
Education/Learning bots

The bot provides educational materials, conducts tests, answers doubts, and connects users to human teachers.
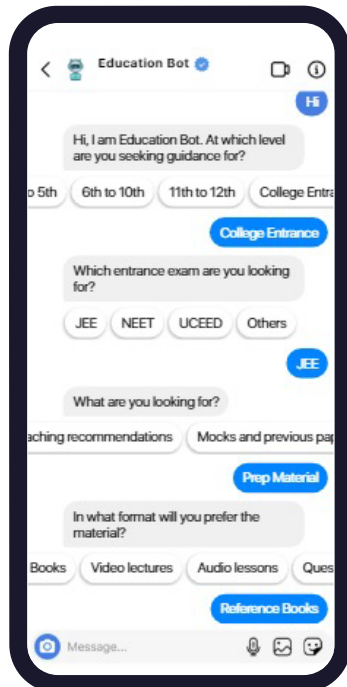
Medical/Healthcare bots

The bot provides general health tips, recommends hospitals/doctors, helps in appointment booking, etc.
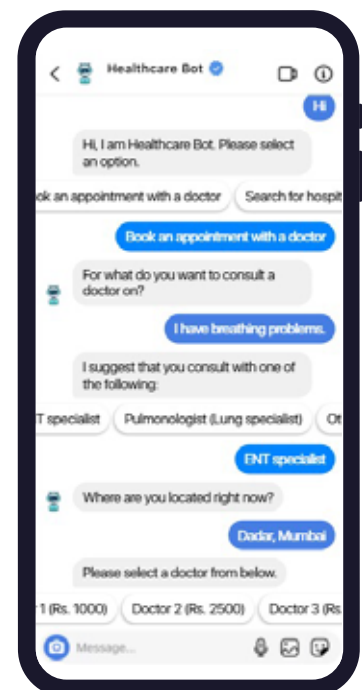
HR/Recruitment/Onboarding/Training bot

The bot collects employee information for recruitment/onboarding and provides training material/company policy details, conducts recruitment tests, gives holiday information, processes leave applications, etc.
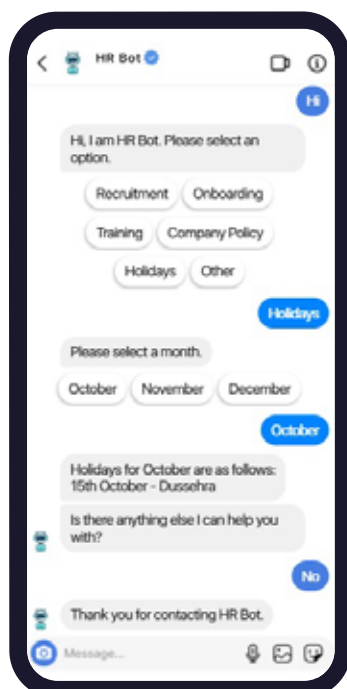
Features

The 24-hour rule

- When a user sends a message to a bot, a 24 hour conversation window is opened. The bot can send any number of messages to the user within this window.
- After 24 hours of user's last message, the bot cannot send a message to the user.
- If the user gives their expressed permission, that is, opts in, the bot can send messages to the user on another channel such as email or SMS outside the 24-hour window.
- For example, a user starts a conversation with a bot about a product and wishes to order it. The bot informs the user that the product is out of stock and asks if the user wishes to be reminded when the product is in stock again. The user sends their last message at 11 am on Monday.
    - If the user denies the reminder, the bot can send messages to the user only till 11 am on Tuesday.
    - If the user opts in for the reminder, the bot can send the reminder message to the user on another channel such as email or SMS even after 11 am on Tuesday.

Why is the 24-hour rule needed?

It is best to directly quote Facebook to answer this question:

> *Facebook uses Message Tags to protect Messenger by protecting Facebook users from getting spam messages coming from irresponsible businesses. Less spam keeps users on the Messenger platform engaged and conversion rates high, creating a healthier ecosystem for responsible businesses."*
>   **-Ze'ev Rosenstein, head of business messaging product, Messenger, and Instagram**

Human-Agent Escalation

- Users can also request to talk with a human agent while in conversation with a bot, or the bot can escalate a user query to a human agent in case the bot is unable to resolve the query.
- Human agents can send messages to users within 7 days of the last user message.

Private Replies

▶ The "Private Replies" feature allows Businesses to reply to comments made on their posts with a single message on Instagram.

▶ When using this feature, the user will get a message with a reference link to the comment that is getting the reply.

▶ Private replies are allowed within 7 days (except IG Live) of the creation date of the comment.

▶ Please note that Private Replies do not open the 24 hour window for standard messaging.
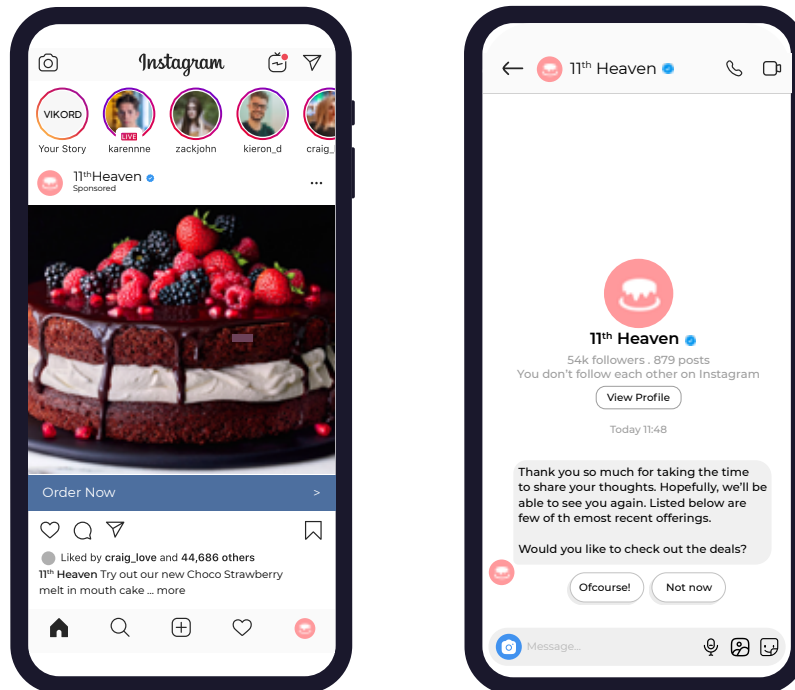
Private Reply for Instagram Live

▶ Private Reply for Instagram Live has a different reply window from regular post comments private reply.

▶ Private reply for IG Live can only be triggered while the live is happening and will no longer be valid as soon as the live ends.

Ice Breakers

▶ Ice Breakers provide a way for users to start a conversation with a business with a list of frequently asked questions.

▶ A maximum of 4 questions can be set as Ice Breakers.

▶ Ice Breakers supports localization to allow businesses to set custom questions depending on the user locale.

▶ This feature is currently available on the mobile app only.
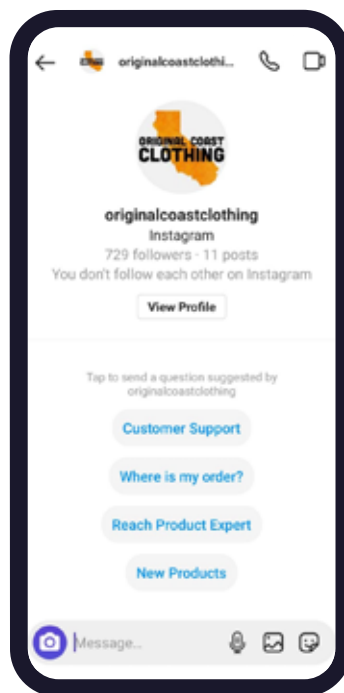
Publishing a bot on Instagram using the Gupshup platform

You can easily engage with and reap benefits of conversational commerce on Instagram with the Messenger API for Instagram. Leverage rich two-way conversations with your followers with Gupshup's rich array of Instagram messaging and conversational tools. Here are the steps to follow to get started with the Gupshup platform:

- You need to have an Instagram business (Professional) account
- You need to have a Facebook Page connected to your Instagram account

How to publish a bot on Instagram?

Steps to convert your Instagram account into a Business (Professional) account:

1. Go to your profile page and tap the hamburger icon in the upper right corner.
2. Tap 'Settings'.
   a. For some accounts, the 'Switch to Professional Account' option will be listed right below 'Settings'.
3. Tap 'Account'.
4. Tap 'Switch to Professional Account'.
5. Tap 'Continue'.
6. Select a 'Category' for your business and tap 'Done'.
7. Tap 'OK' to confirm.
8. Tap 'Business'.
9. Tap 'Next'.
10. Add 'Contact Details' and tap 'Next'. Or tap 'Don't use my contact info' to skip this step.
11. Tap X on the top right corner to return to your profile.

Steps to connect your Facebook Page to your Business (Professional) account on Instagram

1. Go to https://www.facebook.com/pages/ and log in to your Facebook account.
2. Click on the page you have created for linking to the Instagram account.
3. In the sidebar on the left, scroll down and select 'Settings'.
4. In the sidebar on the left, scroll down and select 'Instagram'.
5. Click on the 'Connect Account' button and log in to your Instagram business (Professional) account.

Note: If you wish to create a new Facebook Page, follow the instructions given here.

Steps to allow access to messages

1. Go to your Instagram Business (Professional) profile page.
2. Tap the hamburger icon in the upper right corner.
3. Select 'Settings' > 'Privacy' > 'Messages'.
4. Under 'Connected Tools', switch on the 'Allow Access to Messages' toggle.

Steps to link your bot with Facebook

1. Log in to the Gupshup website.
2. Go to the 'Dashboard' tab > 'My Bots' section.
3. Select the button under the 'Publish' column against the bot you wish to publish.
4. A list of channels will appear. Click the 'Publish' button against Instagram.
5. Click 'Link your Facebook'. A new window/tab will pop up.
6. Log in to your Facebook account.
   Note: Ensure that the Facebook account you log in to has the admin rights to the Facebook Page you wish to select.
7. Select the Instagram business account that you want the bot to be published on.
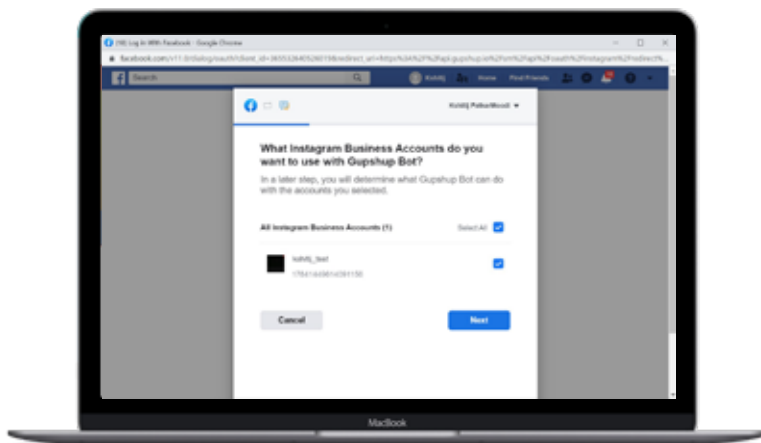
8. Select the Facebook Page connected to your Instagram business account.
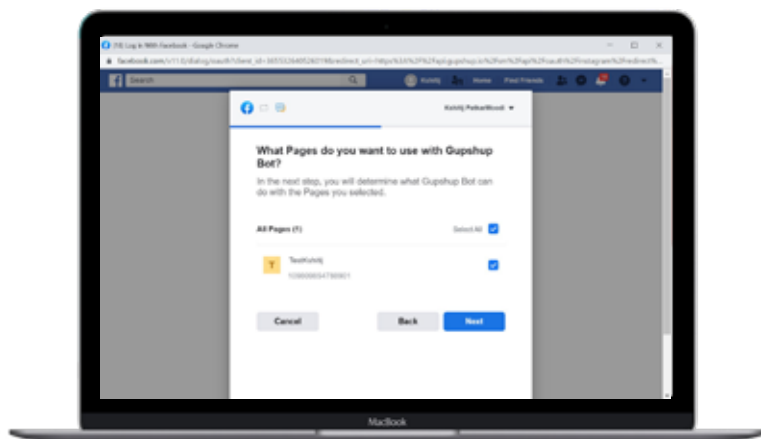
Note: You can add only one Facebook Page with the bot. If you select multiple pages, only the latest one will be considered for bot deployment.

9. Switch on the toggles for all permissions and click 'Done'.

To access the Gupshup documentation on publishing a bot on Instagram, click here.

Benefits of the Gupshup solution

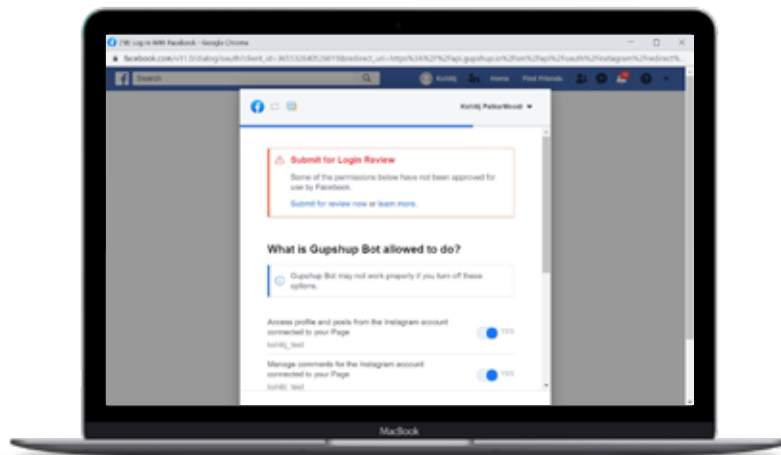Gupshup supports integration with CRMs, payment gateways, ticketing systems, POS systems like Shopify, Zendesk, Zoho, FreshDesk among others. The bot can be configured to run rewards and loyalty programmes by business logic or connecting with existing reward systems already built-in.

Since Instagram does not support sending bulk notifications, the bot can collect relevant information about the user like a phone number to reach out to users on channels like GIP, SMS, Email, over the course of conversations. You can also provide personalised offers/deals to the user based on business logic and requirements. Instagram has its own demographic audience base which can be catered through an Instagram DM Bot, making it better than FB Messenger and WhatsApp Business Messenger.

Gupshup stores all conversations with the users. Between conversations, users can ask the bot for previous orders and reorder. Within the messenger, one can view 10 products in a product catalogue/message. More products can be seen by sending more messages. You can use a generic template with buttons to redirect the user to another link.

A user can send a product image and based on a third party or the brand's in-built image-based searching, the bot can provide product recommendations to the user.

Some other benefits include:

◗ **Increase Interaction with users:**
Interactive communication with icebreakers and quick replies, increases conversation with users.

◗ **Faster Response Rate:**
Respond to basic customer queries faster using automation, thereby reducing wait time.

◗ **Level up Customer Experience with rich communication:**
Level up your customer engagement with rich media like images, Videos, Carousels, Stickers, Product templates and Generic templates.

◗ **Drive real business outcomes:**
Drive real business outcomes by addressing customer queries, showcasing products and facilitating quick purchase right when customers show interest and are in the mindset to explore.

◗ **Reduce drop-offs:**
Convert ad clicks and story mentions into actionable engagement in Instagram DMs, thus reducing drop-offs that creep in due to redirection.

◗ **Increase brand visibility :**
Increase brand visibility by engaging with comments, story mentions and story replies from followers and prospects.

◗ **Amplify customer satisfaction:**
Use advanced sentiment analysis on public comments to instantly detect negative and positive reactions and convert them to one-to-one conversations in Instagram DMs in real time.

◗ **Build meaningful relationships:**
Strengthen ties with followers with personalized messages.

◗ **Monetize marketing spends:**
Monetize marketing spends by integrating instagram messaging into marketing initiatives, like posts, stories and IGTV and contests.

◗ **Increase followers count:**
Increase follower count by providing exceptional customer experience with messaging.

◗ **Optimize customer support :**
Scale customer support 24/7, while reducing costs, by deploying advanced AI and NLP based response mechanisms and smart escalation to human agents when needed.

Conclusion

Instagram is a channel among the 30+ channels that customers can use through Gupshup's Messaging API which forms the core of the Gupshup Conversational Messaging Platform. Brands can now engage with and drive real business outcomes from their followers with Instagram Messaging API. Gupshup's API solution enables businesses to easily integrate 1-way and 2-way messaging with Instagram.

If you're looking to add Instagram to your brand's communications ecosystem; explore Gupshup's customizable Instagram API solutions here. For more information, talk to an authorised Gupshup representative. #LetsGupshup