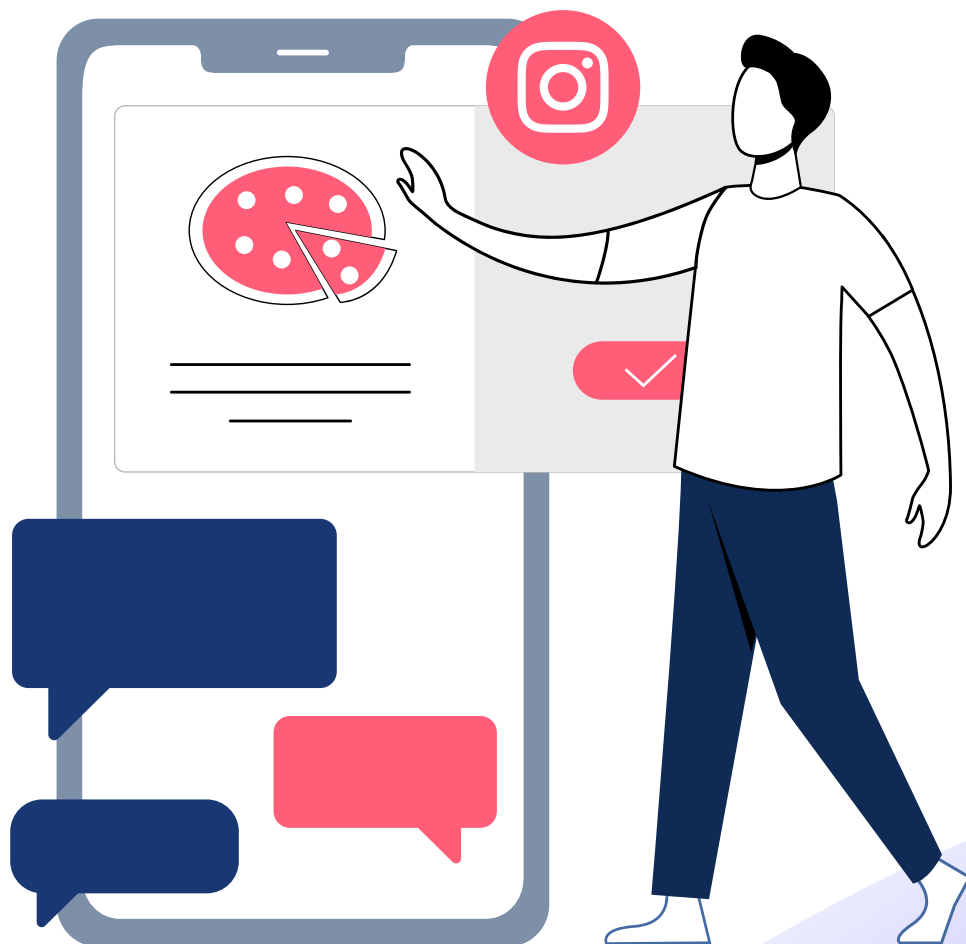# gupshup

Scaling Product Discovery on Instagram

Learning for Readers

› Instagram is no more a mere photo-sharing app. Its core feature of adding more followers to profiles displaying the best pictures, turns Instagram profiles into potential storefronts.

› Instagram Shopping is much in vogue as it offers numerous features for all the stakeholders to fruitfully engage with each other such as two-way sharing of text messages, images, stickers, rich product templates, and more.

› Instagram as a tool, holds immense potential to help businesses generate more leads and move them down the sales funnel.

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1. Opportunity with Instagram

Being the fourth most used social platform in the world, Instagram stands seventh in the list of ten most visited websites globally. The app has over 1 billion active monthly users spending an average of 29 minutes a day on it! Furthermore, brands are known to post an average of 27.9 times per month, which is almost once a day! Hence, it comes as no surprise that Instagram has the fourth most users among all mobile apps. Instagram business accounts see an average 1.46 percent growth in followers monthly. 90 percent of people on Instagram follow a business and 50 percent are more interested in brand ads on Instagram. Therefore, it provides ample scope for brands to market their products and services on the channel.

Instagram is:

> The Fourth Most Used Social Platform

> Seventh Among the Top-10 Most Visited Websites Has 1 Billion Active Monthly Users

> 90% of Instagrammers Follow a Business

However, the common challenge businesses face is in terms of increasing the discoverability of their products to potential customers and users on Instagram. Let's now look at the ways in which brands can boost the discoverability of their products organically through conversations. While Instagram as a channel does hold the potential to replicate offline store experiences for customers, businesses need more to craft engaging experiences to move the leads down the sales funnel. That is where the Instagram Messenger API assumes relevance.

2. What is Instagram Messenger API?

Simply put, the Instagram Messenger API is an intermediary between businesses and Facebook servers. It allows brands to integrate their own set of functionalities and features to create a customized workflow for a seamless shopping experience right from product discovery to sales and support. Instagram DM, Comments, @mentions, and others, allow the two parties to converse with one another. The conversations can be at scale through chatbots and converted into a sale by integrating payment gateways to enable a smooth purchase lifecycle and thereby, provide a state-of-the-art customer engagement.

The Instagram Messaging API is:

> An Intermediary Between the Brand and Facebook Servers

> Best Suited for Large Organizations

The Instagram API is more suitable for larger businesses. Smaller businesses can use the Facebook Business Inbox—a mobile tool to manage business communication from the Facebook Messenger that aggregates conversations across Instagram and Facebook.

The biggest value addition that Instagram offers businesses are the features incorporated to improve product discoverability. These features drive conversations between brands and customers.

3. Conversation Starters on Instagram to Boost Product Discoverability

Shopping on Instagram is primarily influenced by the content that brands create to engage customers, which in turn, drives user action. A Facebook study reveals that Instagram goes beyond improving brand awareness to boost sales. 54 percent of the people surveyed say that they are influenced by Instagram to make a purchase. With conversations being customers' preferred mode of communication, brands can devise conversational journeys to influence their decisions further and recommend products, solutions and offers accordingly. Six unique ways to strike engaging conversations over Instagram are through:

- Reels
- Sponsored Posts
- Sponsored Stories
- Post Comments
- Story Replies
- Story Mentions
- Ice Breakers

3.1. Instagram Reels

Reels are short video clippings with a duration of 60 seconds or less. Users often seek fresh and crisp content through innovative means. When TikTok's popularity soared in 2020, Instagram lost no time in rolling out a similar feature in the US as well as 50 other countries of the world.

Reels can be created with users' preferred audio files or from Instagram's music library, filters and effects, speed manipulation, and several other features. Creators with a public account could share their reels to users' Explore tabs. Users would receive recommendations for reels based on the ones they watched previously.

3.1.1 Instagram Collab Feature

The Instagram Collab feature allows brands to collaborate amongst themselves or with individuals/influencers to co-post reels for greater discoverability. Influencers are typically Instagram users with a large fan following; collaboration with Instagram influencers is known to be one of the most successful ways to improve brand awareness and better product discoverability for small and mid-sized businesses.
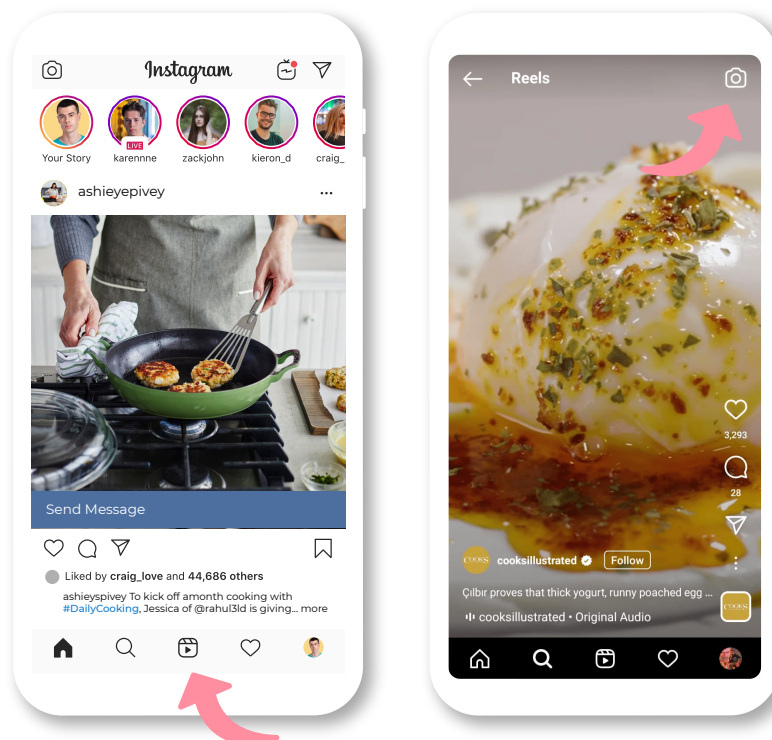
3.1.2 How to Create Reels on Instagram?

There are three ways to create Instagram reels:
- Reels Tab
- Instagram Home Screen
- Instagram Stories Camera

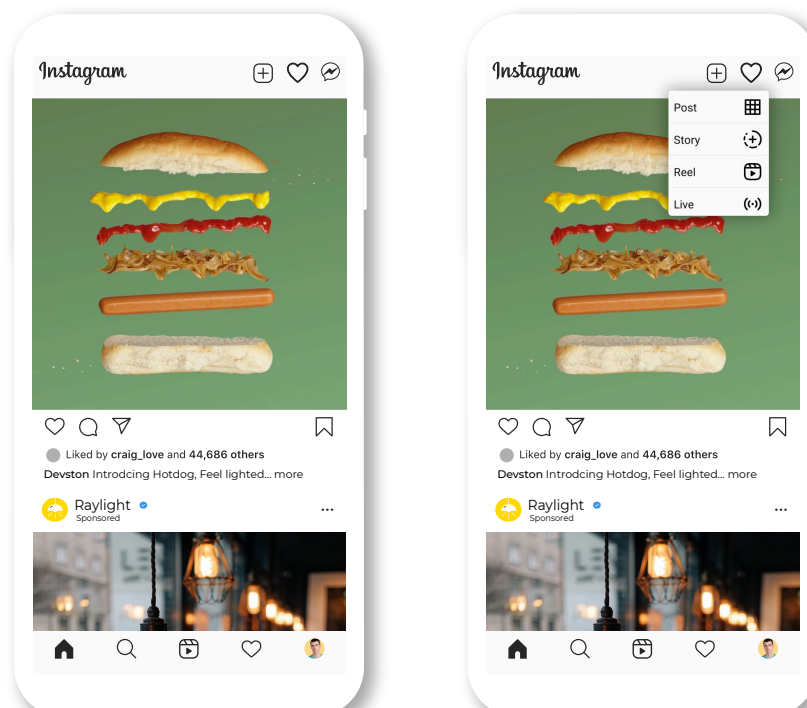### 3.1.2.1 Creating Reels Using the Instagram Reels Tab

Tap on the reels tab and click on the camera icon at the top-right corner

Using the Reels Tab

3.1.2.2 Creating Reels from the Instagram Home Screen

Tap on the "+" at the top-right corner and scroll to the Reels tab at the bottom of the screen

Using the Instagram Home Screen

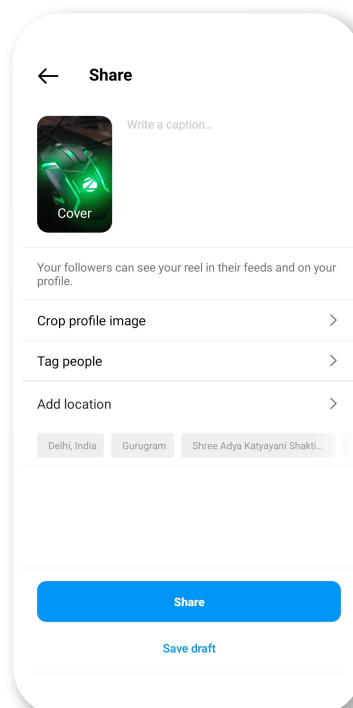### 3.1.2.3 Creating a Reel Using the Instagram Stories Camera

Open the Instagram Stories camera; find the reels icon positioned in either the Normal mode or Create mode or in the bottom menu next to "Story"
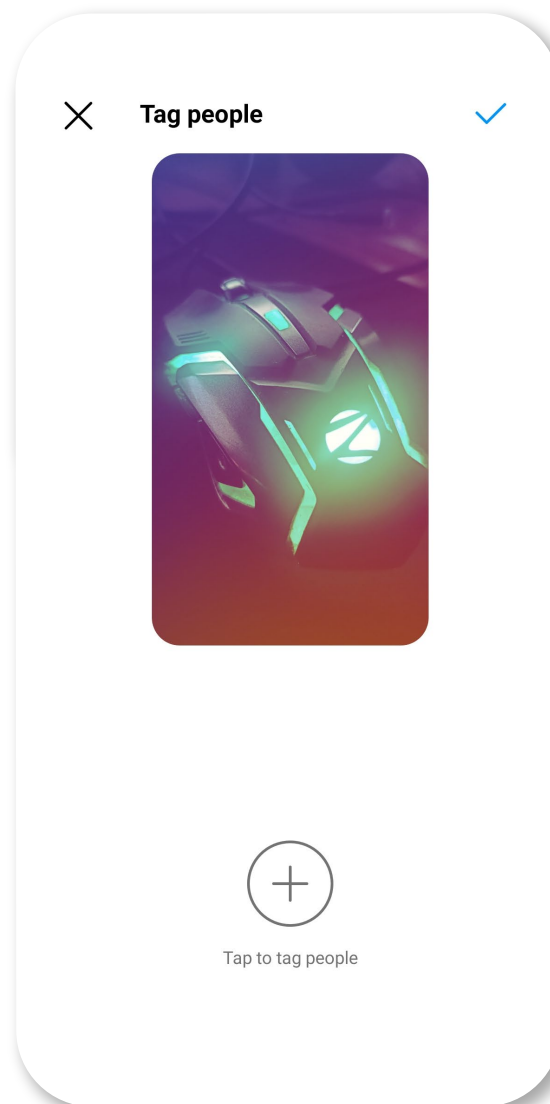

Using the Instagram Stories Camera

3.1.3 How to Create an Instagram Reel with a Collab Tag?

Record a video and add effects of your choice. Preview the result and click on Share.

Sharing the Reels

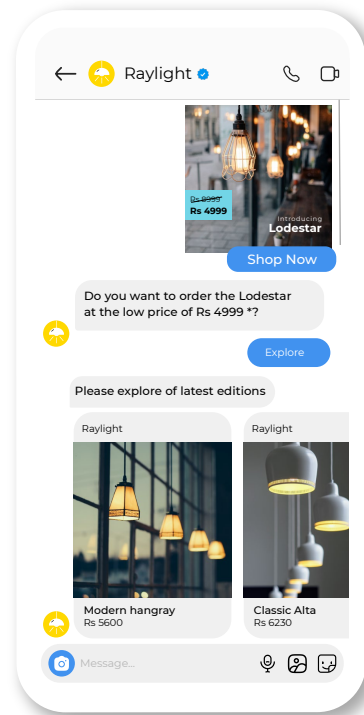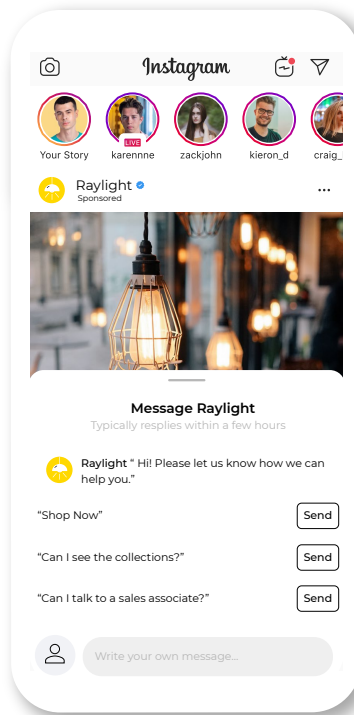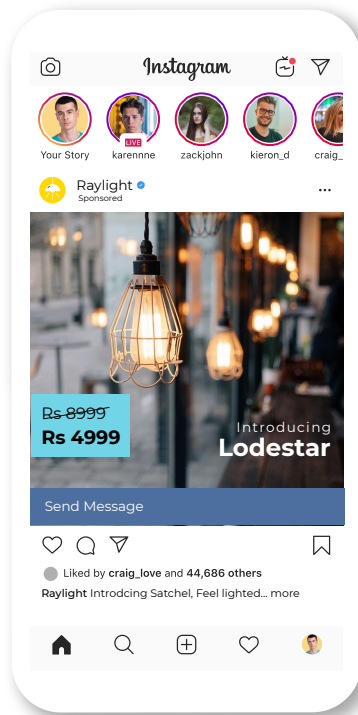The next screen contains two options: **Tag People** and **Invite a Collaborator** to be credited on the post.

Tagging and Collaborator Options

3.2. Sponsored Posts

An Instagram sponsored post is the content which is published and promoted as an ad by a brand on Instagram to increase the reach. These posts are flagged as "Sponsored".

Now with the scope for integrating chatbots, customers can connect with brands from the sponsored posts and interact with them through the bot to either place an order, make an inquiry, or explore products. *Brands can even recommend products based on the user's interest depicted by the customer during interaction. Suggested replies such as 'Buy Now', 'Explore More', or 'See More Details' can be placed for the customers to choose from and act accordingly.*

Sponsored Post

For example, in the image above, the user after seeing a Sponsored Post, clicks on **Send Message** to interact with the Instagram Direct Messenger. The DM presents some suggested replies to start the conversation.

The user clicks on **Shop Now** from the suggested reply options presented by the bot and finally interacts with the bot to discover a wide range of lamps offered by the brand, with the carousel shared by the chatbot.

3.3. Instagram Sponsored Stories

A Story is an Instagram feature that allows users to share photos and videos on their Instagram accounts; it is visible for a period of 24 hours.

Instagram Story

The Instagram Story feature can also be leveraged to run Story ads targeted at specific audiences based on parameters such as video views, traffic conversions, brand aware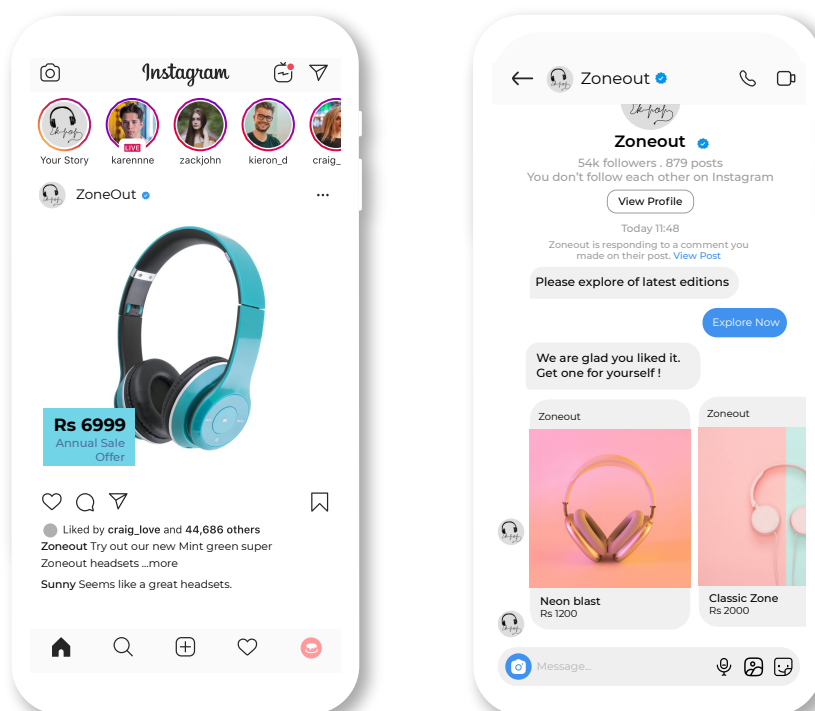ness, and more. Unlike the Instagram Story, Instagram Story Ads do not disappear in 24 hours. By integrating messaging here too, brands can create journeys catered towards increasing the discoverability of their products.

For example, as showcased in the image above, *a user comes across a sponsored story of a brand on Instagram and clicks on the Send Message button. The bot shows some pre-set 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 and then interacts with the bot which eventually shows a range of products in the form of a carousel. Appropriate workflows for exploring products or making a payment can be created.*

To drive action-based engagements, brands can plug in suggested replies like **Buy Now** or **Explore Similar Products** into the pop up, thereby boosting the discoverability and sales of products and solutions to the customer.

3.4. Post Comments

As in the case of Facebook or Twitter, users can comment on Instagram posts as well. *Comments are one of the easiest ways for users to express their opinions about a brand, its products and services. If monitored closely, comments can often give insights on what customers expect from a brand. Now with the comment-to-chat facility on Instagram, businesses can leverage automation to increase discoverability of their products and services as per their customers' preferences.*
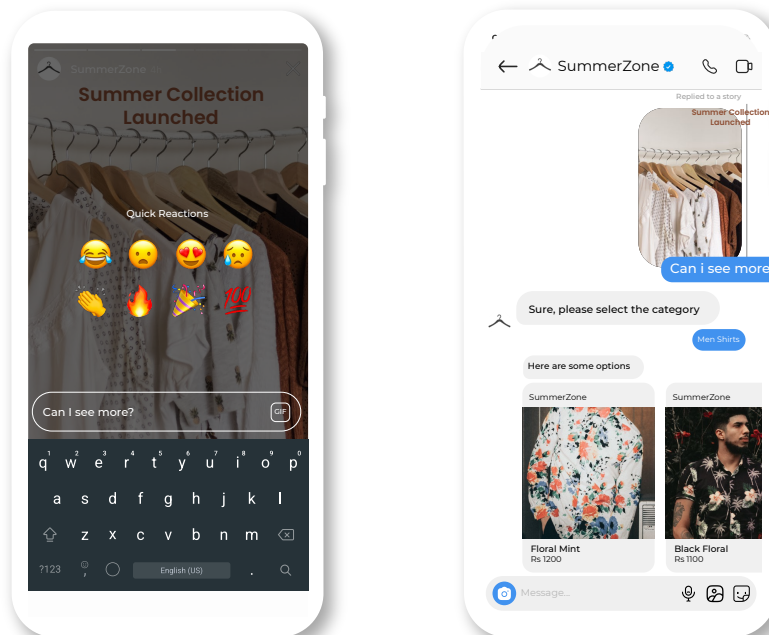

Posting a Comment on Instagram

In the above example, we see a user commenting his admiration on a post from a brand showcasing a pair of cool headsets. The Instagram DM of the brand which is configured to identify the keywords and sentiments within comments, engages with the comment of the user and showcases the products that the user would like to explore and buy.

3.5. Story Replies

Stories are a great way to share updates with followers and thus drive regular engagement with them on Instagram. *Now with automated conversations, customer reactions and replies to stories can be used to increase product discoverability too.*
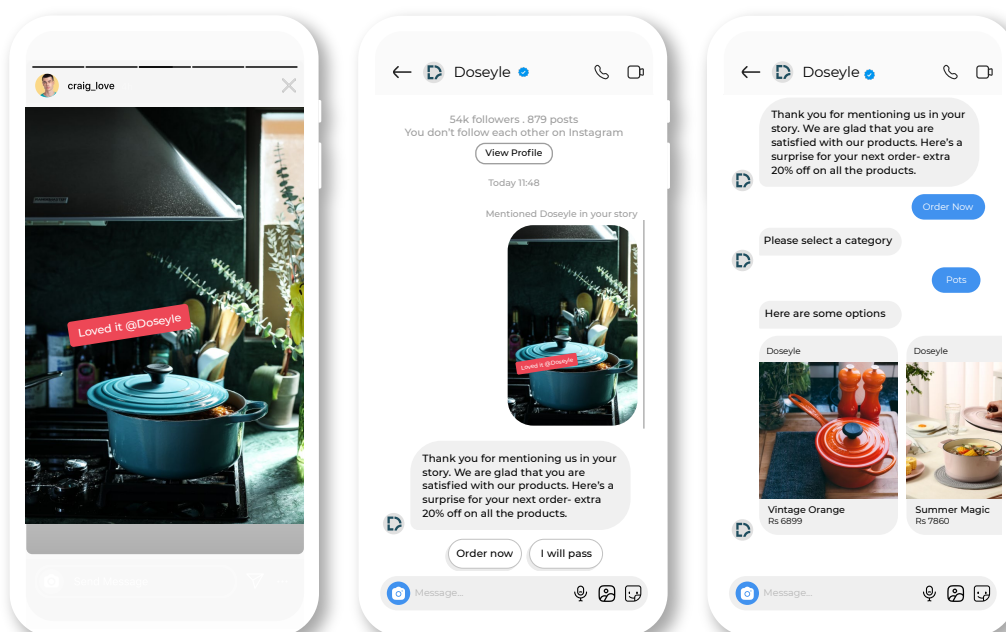

Reacting to a Story

In the above example, a user comes across the summer collection launch story of a brand and shows interest in exploring more by replying "**Can I see more?**" The bot engages further to showcase a carousel of shirts as picked by the user.

3.6. @mentions

Instagram is a social media channel where customers love putting out stories too. In such a situation *if a customer tags a brand it becomes an obligation for the brand to respond back. With Instagram Direct Messenger Automation this is now very easy, and can even help brands increase their product discoverability.* In the below example, a user puts out a story mentioning a brand and expressing how much they loved the Pot which they have bought recently from the brand.
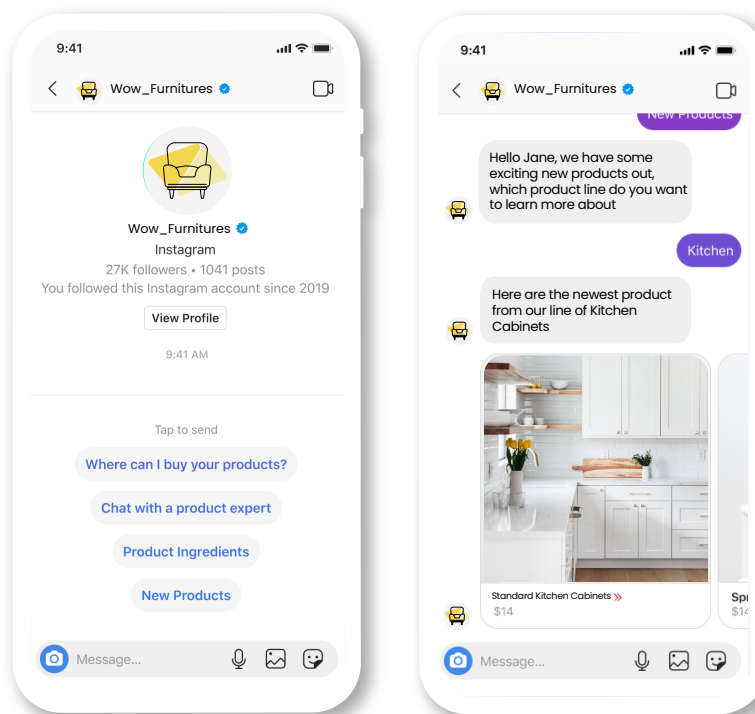

Instagram Mentions

With the help of automation, the Instagram bot of the brand immediately responded back sharing its appreciation. To take the conversation further, the bot even shares a discount offer on the next purchase from the customer. The customer engages further and explores more offerings through a carousel.

3.7. Ice Breakers

Ice Breakers are basically conversation starters. They are a set of options that are showcased upfront to help customers start conversations with a bot.

Ice Breakers

Brands can use these features to provide options about new products that are in demand, for their customers to explore. In the above example, we see **New Products** as an option in the ice breaker. The customer chooses it to start a conversation with the bot and the bot showcases the range of new products available.

4. Tailored Product Discovery Customer Journeys from Gupshup: Why it Works?

Gupshup, being a leader in conversational messaging, helps brands with customized conversational journeys. While Gupshup's preset journeys enable brands to launch their conversational experiences in a quick and easy fashion, the tailored journeys help brands deliver a unique experience for their customers to cherish. From product discovery, to commerce to support, the journeys are tailored to drive results as per business and customer needs across industries.
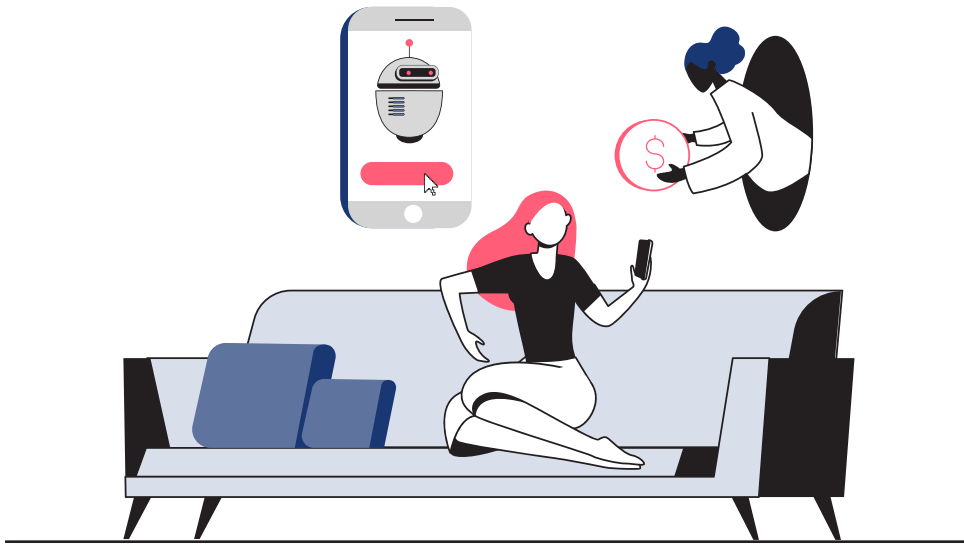
5. Some Benefits of Harnessing the Conversational Capabilities on Instagram

- **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, 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-on-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 ads, posts, stories and IG Live and contests and drive ROI based engagements.

- **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.

6. Benefits of the Gupshup Solution

Gupshup supports integration with CRMs, payment gateways, ticketing systems, POS systems like Shopify, Zendesk, Zoho, FreshDesk among others. With Gupshup, brands can configure bots to run rewards and loyalty programs by business logic or connect with the inbuilt reward systems.
Since Instagram does not support sending bulk notifications, brands can also configure bots to collect the relevant user information such as the phone number to reach out to users on channels like Gupshup Messaging, SMS, Email, and so on. Brands can even provide personalized offers/deals to users based on business logic and requirements.

Gupshup stores all conversations with the users which enables brands to deliver appropriate responses in case users can ask their bot for enquiries related to previous orders/conversations. Within the messenger, brand can showcase products in a visually appealing and interactive format. Brands can even use buttons on interactive messaging to re-direct a user to an external link through the bot.

7. Publishing A Bot on Instagram Using the Gupshup Platform

You can easily engage with and drive real business outcomes from your followers and customers on Instagram. Leverage rich two-way conversations with Gupshup's rich array of Instagram messaging and conversational tools. To use Instagram API with Gupshup Platform, brands need:

- Instagram Business (Professional) account
- Facebook Page connected to your Instagram account

8. 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.

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.
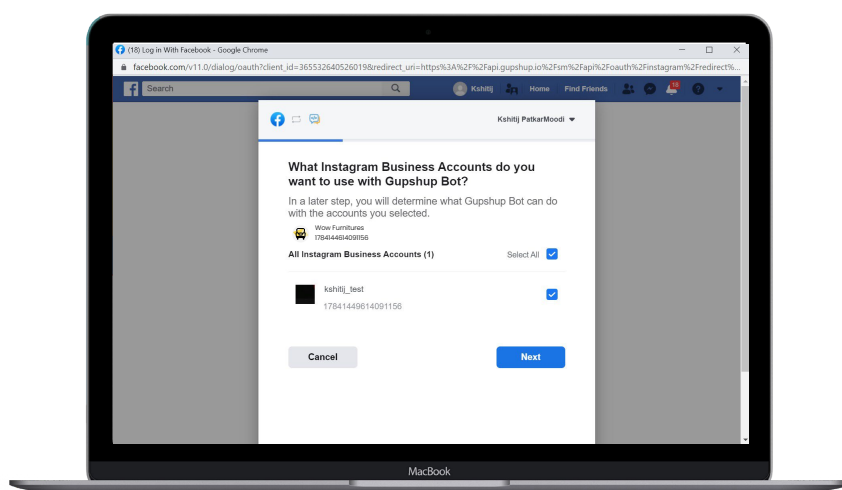
Steps to allow access to messages

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 will pop up.
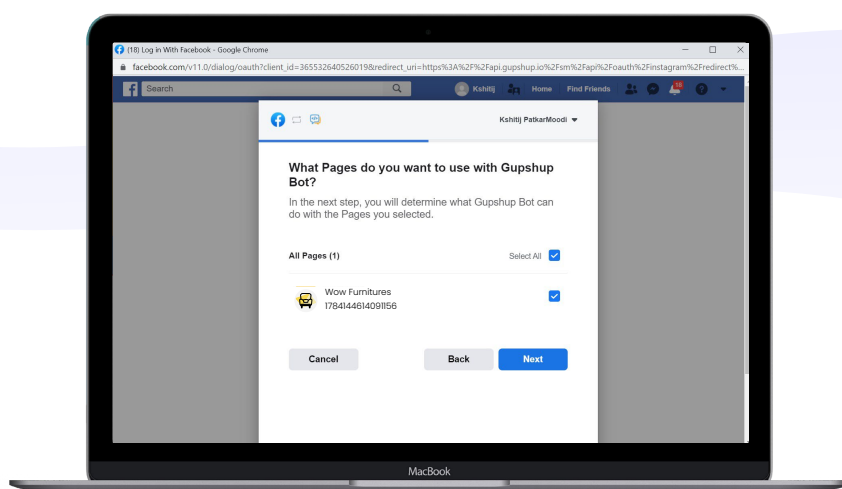6. Log in to your Facebook account.

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.
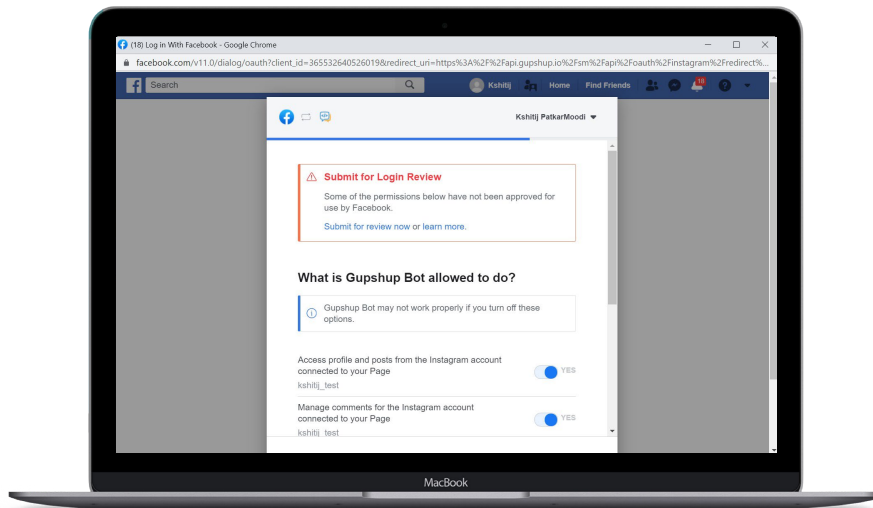

Linking Instagram Business Accounts to Facebook

8. Select the Facebook Page connected to your Instagram business account.

Linking Facebook Pages with the Gupshup Bot

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.

Granting Permissions for the Gupshup Bot

9. Conclusion

Traditionally, increasing product discovery came with heavy investments on Ads. Conversations over Instagram are providing a lucrative means to showcase products to potential customers in a contextual and organic manner. Harnessing it now can really help you win more customers and stay ahead of the competition. Instagram is among the 30+ channels that brands can use through Gupshup's Messaging API which forms the core of the Gupshup Conversational Messaging Platform. Brands can now engage and drive real business outcomes from their followers and customers on Instagram with tailored conversational journeys, including product discovery journeys. For a seamless transition in to the world of conversational commerce, connect with Gupshup today.

Write us at converse@gupshup.io

#LetsGupshup to get started.

Talk to Us   Get Started

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