Promoting Albanian Gastronomy Through Storytelling and Social Media:

By: Andrew Dupuis, James Englander, & William Morton

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The RRNO Foundation

Promoting Albanian Gastronomy Through Storytelling and Social Media

An Interactive Qualifying Project
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for the degree of Bachelor of Science By:

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Abstract:

The RRNO Foundation uses food tourism to preserve culinary traditions and foster the development of sustainable food systems in rural Albania. This project helped RRNO develop a social media strategy to strengthen its online presence and promote its mission. We interviewed social media experts, analyzed RRNO's past social media content, and created, tested, and evaluated content on RRNO's platforms. Through these methods, we developed a social media strategy for RRNO focusing on defining an audience, boosting user engagement, increasing reach, maintaining consistency, and evaluating content. This strategy will help the RRNO foundation develop and maintain its social media presence and preserve, develop, and promote Albanian cuisine worldwide.

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We would like to give a special thanks to all of the following people who have helped make our project successful during this unique IQP experience:

- Worcester Polytechnic Institute
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  - Paige Neumann - WPI Librarian
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  - Nikolin Kola - Co-founder of RRNO
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  - Gabi Rovi
  - Stacy Happy
  - Irina Groushevaia
- Global Lab Web Designers
  - Mariko Endo
  - Vandana Anand

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Nikolin Kola   Paige Neumann

Stacey Happy   Irina Groushevaia   Gabriela Rovi

Executive Summary:

The lack of economic opportunity in rural Albania and the lure of emigration has led to an erosion in rural livelihoods and a rapid decline in the country's rural population from approximately 2.1 million in 1990 to 1.1 million in 2019 (World Bank Group, 2019; Jurgens, 2014). As a result, many organizations, such as the RRNO Foundation, have begun to promote the culinary traditions of rural Albania in an effort to preserve Albania's culinary heritage, halt the exodus from rural areas, and catalyze rural development.

In recent years, local food has become a focal point in the tourism industry (Hall, C. M. et. al., 2004). In fact, Harrington (2005) suggested that countries struggling to attract tourists to rural areas should use local food to promote the culture, nature, and lifestyles of rural communities and provide economic opportunities to rural areas. As part of its overarching goal, RRNO intends to encourage food tourists to visit rural Albania and experience the country's diverse culinary heritage. Currently, RRNO is utilizing the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram to promote food tourism in rural Albania. However, the foundation would like to improve its use of social media to spread awareness and create interest in Albanian cuisine.

Voskopoja, Albania
(Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

Our goal for this project was to design an effective social media marketing strategy for the RRNO foundation to help grow its online community and advance its mission of preserving, promoting, and developing Albania's culinary traditions. We conducted interviews with social media experts and assessed food-centric social media Facebook and Instagram accounts to identify effective practices of successful, active social media accounts. We then assessed RRNO's past social media posts to determine a baseline of what RRNO's previous

Example of a Food Centric Social Media Profile we Observed

audience found engaging. With this baseline and an understanding of successful social media strategies, we created and posted social media content, utilizing the different storytelling strategies we learned, on RRNO's platforms. We then evaluated the performance of our content using social media analytics and Buffer - a third-party software. We developed a manual for the RRNO foundation consisting of the best practices, components, and strategies for developing a social media presence. This manual will help RRNO create an attractive and consistent experience across its multiple platforms and build awareness on social media.

Findings

Through synthesis of academic literature, our interviews with social media experts, observation of food-centric social media profiles, and A/B testing on RRNO's Instagram and Facebook accounts, we were able to identify the best practices,

components, and strategies for social media development. Based on our findings, these best practices, components, and strategies were categorized into the following topics:

- Defining and Understanding One's Audience
- Boosting User Engagement
- Increasing Reach to Non-Followers
- Maintaining Consistency
- Evaluating Social Media

Defining and Understanding One's Audience

Defining and Understanding one's audience means knowing key characteristics about them that would affect their preferences and interests and how they respond to different social media content. Defining and understanding one's audience often affects the different strategies used to increase reach and boost user engagement. For example, RRNO's Facebook audience engages more with posts written in Albanian than

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English because most of them are from primarily Albanian speaking locations (Tirana, Albania and Pristina, Kosovo) as is seen in Figure 1.

Boosting User Engagement

It is important to learn how to properly communicate with the audience to increase engagement and build a strong, loyal social media following. The ability to engage in dialogue between a profile and its followers is the core component that distinguishes social media from traditional media. There are many strategies account managers use to increase audience engagement in the initial post:

- "Call to Action"
- "Question of the Day / Answer of the Day"
- "Incentives and Tangible Rewards"
- "Posting on or About Holidays"

After building an initial dialogue, to continue to build their presence, a
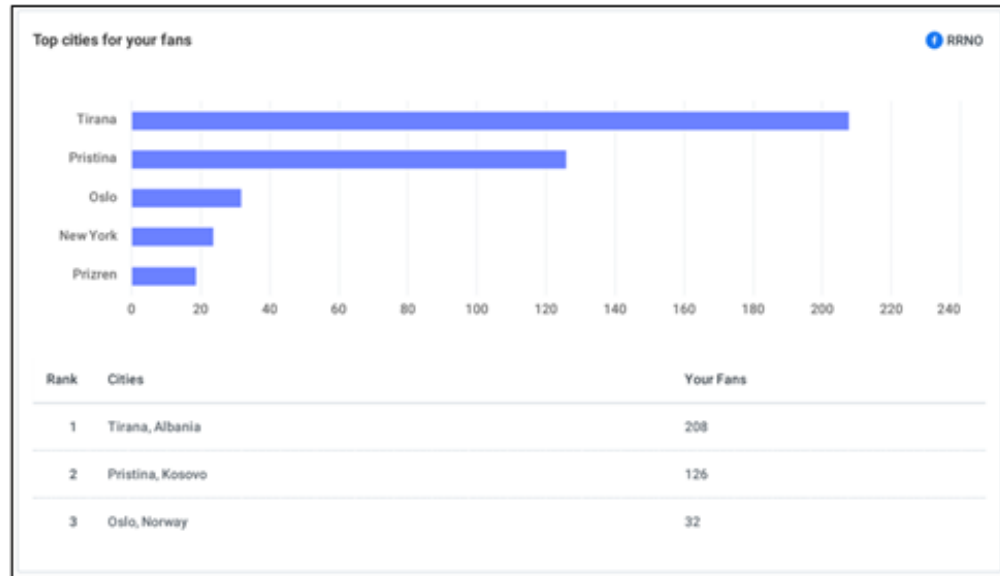

Figure 1: Buffer Audience Demographics of RRNO's Facebook

person or organization must maintain the conversation beyond their posts. Through discussion and observation, we discovered the following strategies are used beyond a post to motivate viewers to engage with an account and its content:

- "Responding to Comments and Direct Messages"
- "Following back New Audience Members"
- "Posting at Peak Follower Activity Times"
- "Staying Consistently Active"

Increasing Reach to Non-Followers

Reach is a metric on social media that indicates the number of accounts that have viewed a social media post. Increasing reach on social media is essential to attract new followers to one's audience. Through our methods, we identified two strategies that increase reach: collaboration and hashtags.

Collaborating with the right influencers - those that target a similar audience or possess a similar mission - directly connects an organization to an audience other than its own, which enables a person or organization to create awareness and increase their online following.

Hashtags, similar to collaborations, help to increase reach by linking one's posts to topics which users not a part of their audience can search and follow. In other words, hashtags enable users interested in a topic to search and find related content from people and organizations they do not follow. For example, users can find various food-related content posted by accounts they do not follow by searching for posts that contain "#food".

Maintaining Consistency

Maintaining consistency is key to maintaining one's audience and building online recognition. To maintain consistency, one must have a consistent posting schedule, and consistent caption and content aesthetics. The main caption aesthetics account managers keep consistent include length, format, style, language, and tone. In their content, account managers maintain consistent themes and editing styles. They also maintain a consistent posting schedule, so their audience knows when to expect their content. These strategies are used to develop a trusting relationship between a person or organization and its audience and help one build and maintain a loyal following.

Evaluating Social Media

Social media metrics provide a direct representation of how an audience engages with social media content and profiles. They also provide information to better understand one's audience such as demographic data: age and gender; and geographic data: location in terms of city and country. We used Facebook and Instagram Insights - a free, business analytics tool on social media - to measure audience engagement and reach on posts and profiles. Additionally, we incorporated Buffer, a third-party social media analytics (and publishing) tool, to provide information such as hashtag, posting frequency, and long-term account trend analyses.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on our findings we recommend that the RRNO Foundation continue to develop its social media strategy by completing the following:

1. Perform a two-month long content engagement test to understand its audience's preferences and interests based on their responses to different types of social media content.
2. Set up Buffer to facilitate social media management and capture more analytics.
3. Collaborate and build relationships with organizations that possess similar missions or target a similar audience on social media.
4. Expand its social media presence to new platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and Twitter.

The RRNO foundation is a non-profit organization with the mission of preserving, promoting, and developing the culinary traditions of Albanian cuisine worldwide. Since its establishment in 2018, the foundation has found it challenging to spread awareness and create interest in Albanian cuisine and rural Albania among food tourists through social media. This is due to the fact that RRNO has not had time to understand the components and best practices of a successful social media strategy as well as how to develop and maintain its social media presence. To grow its online community, it is important for the RRNO foundation to know which social media strategies are most effective in building an online presence. As a result, we have developed a manual composed of best practices, components, and strategies to aid the foundation in developing its social media presence and create organization recognition and awareness.

Youtube Logo

Twitter Logo

TikTok Logo

Authorship:

Section	Author(s)	Editor(s)
Abstract	James Englander	All
Executive Summary	Andrew Dupuis and James Englander	All
Introduction	Andrew Dupuis and James Englander	All
Background	Andrew Dupuis, James Englander, and Will Morton	All
Methods	Andrew Dupuis, James Englander, and Will Morton	All
Findings	Andrew Dupuis, James Englander, and Will Morton	All
Conclusion	Andrew Dupuis and Will Morton	All
Recommendations	Andrew Dupuis and Will Morton	All
Manual	Will Morton	All

Meet the Team:

Andrew Dupuis	James Englander	Will Morton

My name is Andrew Dupuis, and I am from Raymond, New Hampshire. Currently, I am an undergraduate student at WPI majoring in Chemical Engineering. Although I am extremely disappointed in the fact that I was not able to experience Albania and all it has to offer, I am grateful for all the invaluable skills this project and my advisors have taught me. I hope that one day I will get the chance to be "Taken by Albania."

I am James Englander and I am from Falls Church, Virginia. Currently, I am studying Robotics Engineering at WPI. After this project, I definitely respect social media managers more because social media and its strategy is more complex than at first glance. Also, I am grateful to have helped the RRNO Foundation improve its social media and connect them with members of the Albanian Diaspora.

I am Will Morton, and I am from Yarmouth, Maine. Currently, I am studying Mechanical Engineering at WPI. Through IQP, I hoped to gain cultural diversity, which was hard to gain from this unique, remote experience. But still, I learned much about Albanian culture and cuisine working with the RRNO Foundation. In addition, IQP taught me valuable team work skills that I will greatly value in my future endeavors

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Albanian Alps - Thethi, Albania
(Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

Introduction:

In recent years, local food has gained global recognition as a subject of interest in the tourism industry (Hall, C. M. et. al., 2004). According to a study conducted on 150 local and foreign tourists interested in gastronomy and local food that visited the three major cities in Bulgaria, the most important factor to consider when picking a destination is the local production of traditional foods (Stankov et. al., 2019). Food tourism is often used synonymously with gastronomy and culinary tourism (Hall, 2020). Gastronomic and culinary tourism focus more on high-end restaurants and food markets as attractions while food tourism focuses on understanding the processes to get food from "field to fork" as well as how tourists can explore the culture of a destination through local food and drink (Hall, C. M. et. al., 2004, p. 284). In recent years, the concept of traveling to a destination specifically to experience its culture and heritage through its food and drink has become a popular interest among food tourists (The Rise of Food Tourism, n.d). Destination marketing organizations (DMO's) have begun to leverage the increased interest among tourists in experiencing local food and drink to encourage travelers to visit a destination (The Rise of Food Tourism, n.d.). Harrington (2005) suggested that countries struggling to attract tourists to rural areas should mimic DMO's in using local food as a vehicle to promote the culture, nature, and lifestyles of rural communities to revitalize and provide economic opportunities to rural areas.

Photo of dried Apple Slices Taken at the nearly Abandoned Village of Stebleve, Albania (Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

The lack of economic opportunity in rural Albania and the lure of emigration has led to an erosion in rural livelihoods and a rapid decline in the country's rural population from approximately 2.1 million in 1990 to 1.1 million in 2019 (World Bank Group, 2019; Jurgens, 2014). Government agencies and nonprofit organizations have sought to use food tourism to bring much needed revenue to rural households and to foster the growth of more resilient food systems. For example, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, in partnership with the Albanian Ministry of European Integration, currently seeks to use the cultural heritage of rural Albania to foster economic growth and development for remote areas (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2019). In addition, the Albanian Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade, and Entrepreneurship is leading two strategies currently in place that aim, in part, to help develop tourism in rural areas: The Strategy of Tourism Development in Albania 2014-2020 and The National Strategy for

Development and Integration 2015-2020 (Nagy et al., n.d.). To capitalize on this emerging interest in food tourism and on government policies to encourage rural development, our sponsor, the RRNO foundation, has launched an initiative to promote rural food tourism in Albania.

The RRNO foundation aims to create economic opportunities in rural areas, invigorate a desire for traditional Albanian foods, and establish local and resilient food supply chains in Albania. As part of its overarching goal, RRNO intends

to encourage food tourists to visit villages in Albania and experience the country's diverse, rural cooking. Currently, RRNO is utilizing the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram to promote food tourism in rural Albania. However, the foundation would like to improve its use of social media to spread awareness and create interest in Albanian cuisine.

Our goal for this project was to design an effective social media marketing strategy for the RRNO foundation as a means to grow its
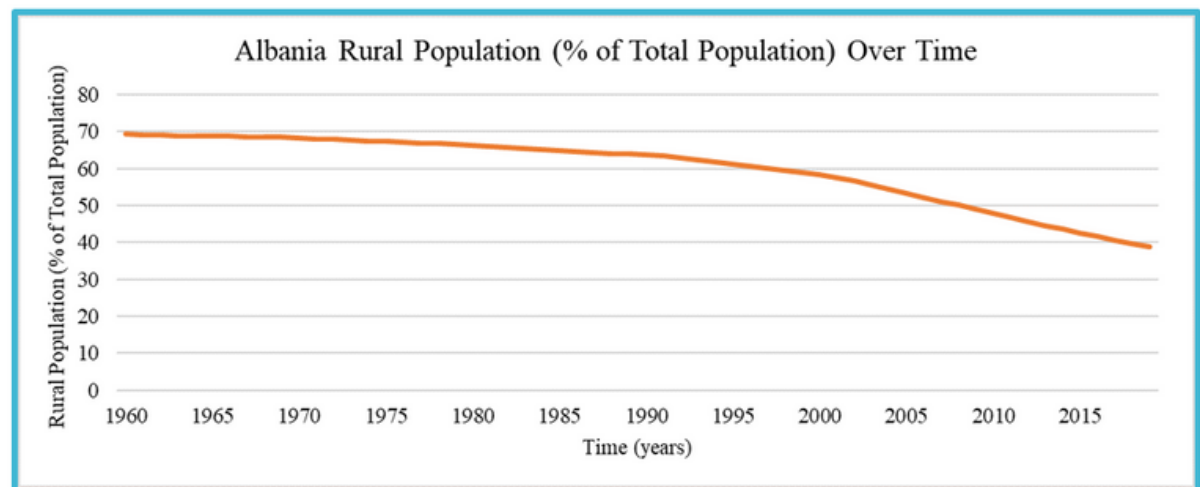
Albania Rural Population (% of Total Population) from 1960 to 2019
(Data Provided By The World Bank)
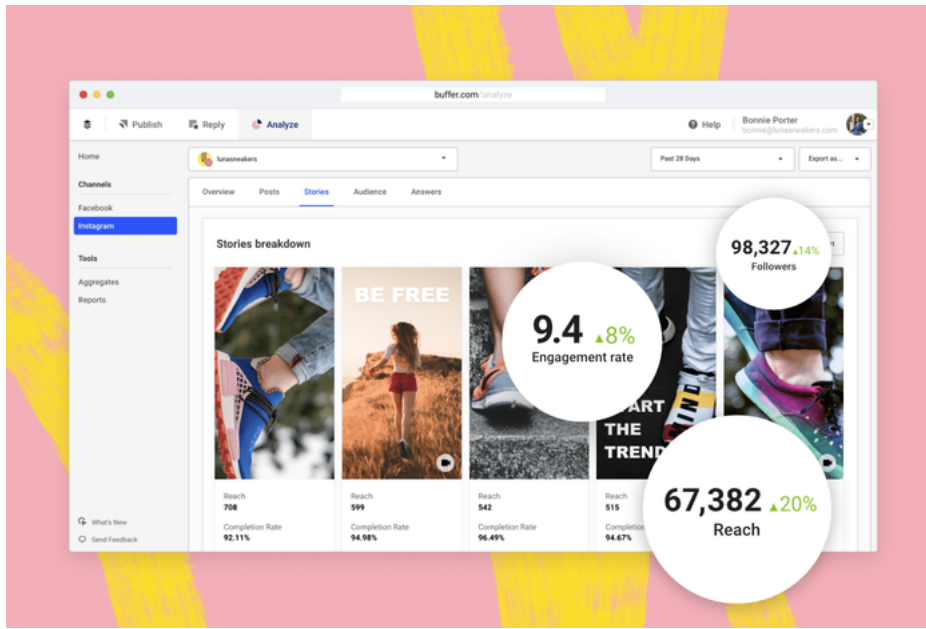
Buffer Analytics Page used for Testing Content on RRNO's Social Media (Credit Buffer)

The Team Interviewing Gabriala Rovi, a Social Media Expert

online community and advance its mission of preserving, promoting, and developing Albania's culinary traditions. We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with social media experts and assessed food-centric social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram to identify the effective practices of successful, active social media accounts. In addition, we assessed RRNO's use of social media to determine a baseline of what RRNO's historical audience found engaging. With this baseline and an understanding of successful social media strategies, we created and posted social media content utilizing different storytelling strategies on RRNO's platforms. We then evaluated the performance of our content using social media analytics and Buffer - a third-party software. We then developed a manual for the RRNO foundation consisting of the best practices, components, and strategies for developing a social media presence. This manual will help RRNO create an attractive and consistent experience across its multiple platforms and build awareness on social media.

Restaurant Owner and Chef Shpresa hand rolling dough for Petanik
(Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

Food Tourism

Growing International Interest in Food Tourism: A Niche Market

Food tourism has emerged as a rapidly growing area of research (Hall C. M. et. al., 2004; Long, 2004; Rand & Heath, 2008). In recent years, the social and cultural significance of food has gained international recognition as studies have shown food to be one of the most essential elements in attracting tourists to a destination (Hall, C. M. et. al., 2004). Over the last decade, the concept of traveling to a destination specifically to experience its food and drink has become a popular activity among adventurous, wealthy millennials who are eager to learn about different cultures through authentic, culinary experiences (The Rise of Food Tourism, n.d; Boutsioukou, 2018; Tan, n.d.). This consumer trend coincides with a general shift in the desires of travelers seen in academic literature (Benson et. al., n.d.). Travelers are seeking a more immersive travel experience - one that allows them to engage deeply with the culture of the destination they visit through unique and memorable experiences with the people, food, and environment of the destination (Benson et. al., n.d). Traditional food, which represents a direct connection to the nature, culture, and lifestyles of rural communities, plays a significant role in

In this Section:

offering this immersive experience to these avid tourists (Sim, 2009; Raji et. al., 2018). Many scholars have recommended that low and middle income countries use this form of niche tourism based on rural food, culinary traditions, and cultural heritage to attract tourists and promote destination awareness as it offers great potential to reinforce rural economies (Hall, C. M. et. al., 2004; Raji et. al., 2018; Ab Karim et. al., 2010).

Food Tourism: Exploring Local Culture Through Food

The term "food tourism" has many definitions, but it is best explained in Long's (2004) definition, which encapsulates the many facets of food as it relates to tourism:

"...food tourism is about food as a subject and a medium, destination and vehicle, for tourism. It is about individuals exploring foods new to them as well as using food to explore new cultures and ways of being. It is about groups using food to 'sell' their histories and to construct marketable and publicly attractive identities, and it is about individuals satisfying curiosity. Finally, it is about the experiencing of food in a mode that is out of the ordinary, that steps outside the normal routine to notice difference and the power of food to represent and negotiate that difference"
(Long, 2004, p. 1).

According to Long (2004), local food and drink have the ability to initiate travel to a destination through the way they are able to express and encapsulate a cultural experience in that they are linked to the history, heritage, and culture of a destination. Experiencing and participating in the consumption of these cultural specialties provides travelers with the immersive cultural experience they seek (Hall, C. M. et. al., 2004; Grigorova et. al., 2016). Similarly,

Hegarty and O'Mahoney (2001) find that food adds value to tourism by representing the cultural heritage and history of a destination. Hegarty and O'Mahoney (2001) also imply that through the consumption of local food, travelers gain insight into a region's culture and lifestyle through learning about the traditions involved in making the food. The relationships, depicted by both Long (2004) and Hegerty & O'Mahoney (2001), between the eating habits and

culinary practices of people in rural communities are known as "foodways" (Benson et. al., n.d). When these foodways are the foundation for food tourism development, local foods and beverages, and other food-related activities become demonstrations of local traditions and techniques (Benson et. al., n.d). On this basis, the food tourism sector can be used as a tool for rural development and cultural sustainability.

Shaping Culinary Identity Through Local Food

Food tourists have become interested in understanding the culinary arts of food (Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

UNWTO Members Visiting Albania to Discuss Rural Development and Sustainable Tourism (Credit UNWTO)

In recent decades, travelers have become increasingly interested in consuming specialty foods and beverages from particular cultures and sampling culturally specific delicacies (Sharples & Getz, 2000). As a result, many countries struggling to attract tourists have begun to focus on using rural food, culinary traditions, and cultural heritage to assist in the development of rural areas (Harrington, 2005). The process of rural destination development involves working to identify what makes a destination's food and drink unique and how it motivates travelers to visit (Bessière, 1998 & Benson et. al., n.d). Understanding that local food helps to project the local history and culinary heritage of a destination; a strong, positive image of a destination's food is pivotal in the creation of its culinary identity (Ab Karim et. al., 2010). Many countries around the world have already recognized this and, as a result, are developing strategies to leverage the culinary identity of their destination to gain a competitive marketing advantage in the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2019; Stankov et. al., 2019). Italy and France are examples of countries that have used food to construct world-renowned culinary identities to attract tourists (Ab Karim et. al., 2010). The success of Italy and France has inspired low and middle income countries such as

Albania to explore food tourism to showcase the cooking traditions of rural communities and, in turn, foster rural development.

Role of Food Tourism in the Development of Rural Areas

Food tourism has the potential to play a significant role in the development of rural areas through its ability to improve economic opportunities in these areas. The rural cuisine that drives food tourism is a "communicator of cultural meaning:" a tangible representation of a destination's cultural heritage and culinary traditions (Solcum & Everett, 2010, p. 747; Bessière, 1998). As mentioned, the search for local, fresh, high-quality cuisine that represents the culture and lifestyle of a destination has become a popular pursuit by food tourists (Food or Gastronomic Tourism, n.d; Solcum & Everett, 2010). Increased tourism tied to place-specific rural food and the influx of food tourists can be used to strengthen and support struggling local producers and

artisans, and ultimately preserve a destination's rich and diverse cultural heritage (Rand & Heath, 2008). For countries such as Albania, food tourism can be used to foster the development and growth of sustainable food systems in rural areas (Roberts & Hall, 2001). These local initiatives have encouraged destination management organizations (DMOs) in Albania and other non-profit organizations, such as the RRNO Foundation, to promote rural Albania's culinary traditions and preserve its food culture, prevailing flavors, techniques, and traditions that make up the rural community's identity - its history, heritage, and values (Rand & Heath, 2008; Moric, 2013).

The RRNO Foundation

The RRNO foundation is a non-profit organization, based in Albania, formed in 2018 by a group of Albanian chefs. Its name stems from a famous book written by Zef Pllumbi: "Rrno vetëm për me

tregue". The Albanian word "RRNO," meaning "to live on," was chosen to represent the foundation as it coincides with its mission of preserving, promoting, and developing the culinary traditions of Albanian cuisine worldwide (RRNO – to Live On, n.d.).
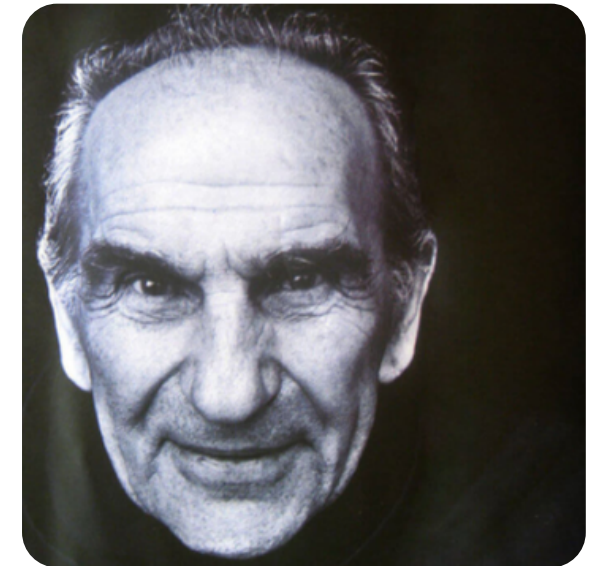
Zef Pllumbi
(From the RRNO Foundation's Website - www.rrno.al)

RRNO's Goals

The mission of the RRNO foundation can be seen as a response to the erosion of rural culinary

People Pulling Down Enver Hoxha's Statue in 1991 Signifying the Fall of Communism in Albania (Credit Balkan Insight)

traditions in Albania, which began in the early 1950s when the communist regime imposed a series of agrarian reforms that put in place agricultural collectives (Carter, 1973). By the early 1960s, all of Albania's private rural farmland had been collectivized. These agrarian reforms, which were enforced until the fall of communism in 1991, undermined long standing food practices and culinary traditions in the country (Carter, 1973).

The collapse of the communist regime brought additional challenges to rural communities and food producers such as an influx of cheaper food imports and large scale emigration from rural areas to cities and abroad (Hall, 1996; Fonte-francesco et. al., 2019). Between 1990 and 2015, at least a third of Albania's population emigrated, and almost half of the rural population moved to major cities between 1990 and 2019 (Barjaba, 2017; World Bank Group,

2019).

RRNO was established to preserve, develop, and promote Albanian cuisine. In terms of preservation, the foundation aims to attract chefs to Albania to codify and standardize authentic, local Albanian recipes. As for development, one of RRNO's goals is to help locals compete with the influx of cheap food imports by setting up a resilient and self-sustaining local food supply chain that connects farmers and food producers to restaurants. In terms of promotion, the foundation intends to attract food tourists and members of the Albanian diaspora from across the world to Albania to experience its culture through its cuisine (RRNO – to Live On, n.d.).

The foundation hopes to influence young members of the Albanian diaspora to return and reconnect with their roots as well as attract food tourists to visit Albania. To better understand the possibilities for food tourism, RRNO embarked on the Albanian Gastronomic Expedition.

RRNO visited 365 villages across Albania, Macedonia, Kosova, and Montenegro for 70 days, covering some 16,500 kilometers, and amassing over 10,000 photos and 60 hours of video depicting the culinary traditions and cultural heritage of the Western Balkans (RRNO – to Live On, n.d.). RRNO has used some of its collected footage on social media to encourage members of the Albanian diaspora and other food tourists worldwide to visit Albania (N. Kola, personal communication, September 21, 2020).

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented RRNO from completing the second phase of its expedition and posting on its social media platforms. RRNO would like to improve its use of social media and learn how to better promote the traditions and heritage found in the culinary arts of rural Albania (N. Kola, personal communication, September 21, 2020). As part of improving its social media presence, the RRNO foundation has partnered with students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute to develop an effective social media strategy detailing how to promote its mission worldwide.

Social Media Overview

Social media encompasses many platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. It allows users to create and share media content, such as photos, videos, text, information, and ideas, with other users. Since its creation, social media has drawn some 3.8 billion users across many platforms (Kemp, 2020). Researchers
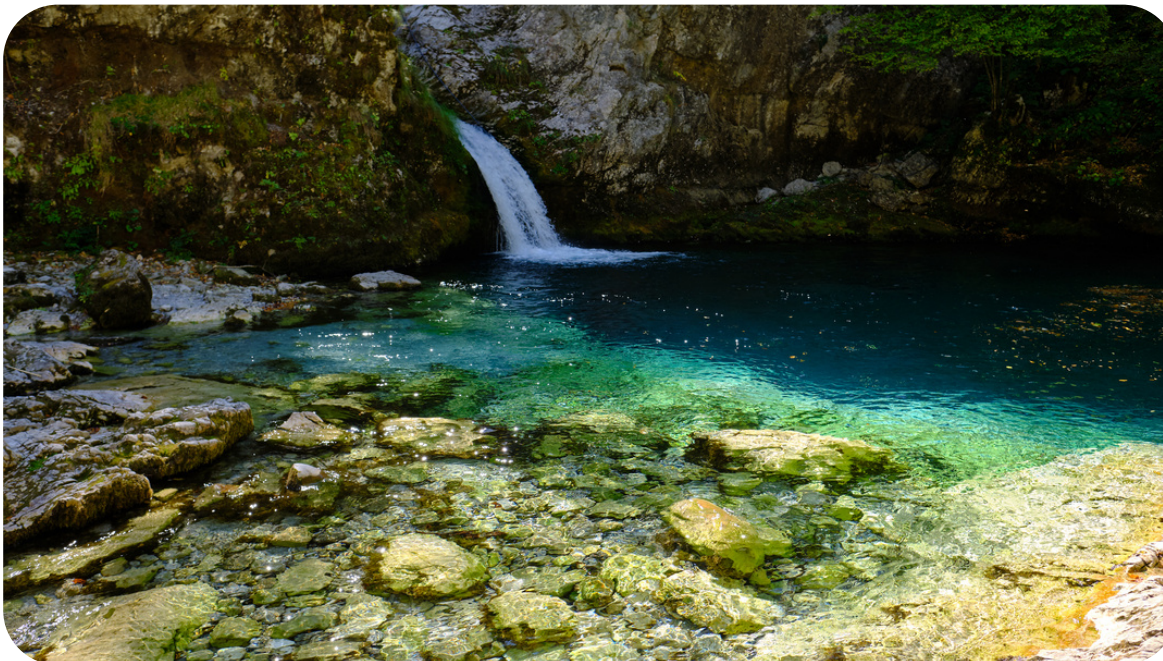
The Blue Eye of Theth one of the First Stops on the Albanian Gastronomy Expedition
(Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

Sharing Online (Credit University of Arkansas)

claim that the success of Facebook is due to the fact that using the platform elicits a positive, excited state in the user (Mauri, 2011; Lin, 2015). Instagram, however, is successful as a result of its mobile and user-friendly interface (Musonera, 2018). In broad terms, social media is a beneficial tool because it provides a medium for organizations to converse with their consumers and consumers to converse with each other (Yasa, 2020). The RRNO foundation is currently active on Facebook and Instagram, which are two different platforms that possess their own distinct functions and uses for sharing content.

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site that allows users to create free-to-use profiles where they can connect with friends, family, and others. On this network, users can create and share posts containing photos, videos, links, and text with other users. In addition, users can also create and share stories, which are temporary

posts, and events (About Facebook, n.d.). In the professional industry, businesses and nonprofits can create professional pages that offer features that allow them to better understand their audience to improve how they communicate and connect with their audience. Some of the unique features accessible to business accounts include understanding the number of accounts reached, understanding the number of times a page was visited, and understanding the demographics of an account's followers (Facebook For Business: Marketing on Facebook, n.d.). Furthermore, a professional page also includes the ability to connect with various management apps to help account holders create and advertise content to post, analyze the success of their Facebook page and posts, and manage all the functions of the page (Facebook For Business: Marketing on Facebook, n.d.).

Instagram

Designed specifically for the smartphone, Instagram is a social media application that allows users

Facebook and Instagram Logos
(Credit Fagadau, Hawk, and Swanson)

to post visual media with captions. The original design of the app only enabled single photo sharing with a caption and allowed only followers - other users who choose to see when the user they follow posts content - to like and comment on a post. The application has since diversified to include other features: a sharing feature, a direct message feature, the ability to post multiple photos and videos, a temporary post feature known as "stories", and more (About Instagram's Official Site, n.d.). With the increasing diversification on the

platform, Instagram added professional accounts, giving organizations the ability to create and promote their brand on the platform. Professional accounts contain all the functions of an individual account and additional functions that allow account managers to analyze the performance of their content, page, and followers (Instagram Business Tools | Instagram Help Center, n.d.).

The Role of Social Media in Food Tourism

With the advent of professional accounts on social media, many organizations, especially in the food tourism sector, have realized that social media has become an important tool in influencing tourists' decisions to visit a destination because the vast majority of tourists refer to social media when making travel decisions (Raji et. al., 2018; Bu et. al., 2020; Kempiak et al., n.d.). Organizations with a strong presence on social media have a competitive advantage in tourism destination

marketing as it allows them to increase destination awareness and encourage travel to specific destinations (Raji et. al., 2018). Social media also has the ability to connect other food tourism marketers with large like-minded online food affinity groups (Richards, 2015). In fact, 94% of nonprofits all over the world agree that social media is effective at creating online awareness (Nonprofit Tech for Good, 2019). However, as of 2019, only 41% of those nonprofits have developed a social media strategy to build an online community (Nonprofit Tech for Good, 2019). As a result, the average online following size of nonprofits around the world has not exceeded 35,000 people (Nonprofit Tech for Good, 2019).

The Basics of a Social Media Strategy

A social media strategy is a set of guidelines that facilitate the decision-making process for the different aspects of managing social media to

ultimately create an online following. Considering the novelty and complexity of social media, no single research project has developed a completely comprehensive general social media strategy. With that being said, the following topics have been frequently discussed in the academic literature as the core parts of a social media strategy:

- Defining and understanding the target audience
- Engaging with the audience
- Maintaining Consistency
- Handling Controversy
- Increasing Reach
- Evaluating social media success

The following sections will detail the ways in which each component affects decisions for managing social media.

(Created by Orange Crush From 99Designs)

Defining and Understanding the Target Audience

Defining and understanding a target audience is crucial to developing a social media strategy because it affects every decision in managing social media. As noted by Wang (2020), the target audience will determine the effectiveness of different digital content marketing approaches. Consequently, research on content marketing strategies with different audiences is often contradictory when comparing different target audiences. However, there are a select few general strategies that apply to all social media use. For example, defining a target audience will help spread a message as people are more likely to view information targeted at them (Guo, C., & Saxton, G. D., 2018; Kilgour et. al., 2015). In addition, Namisango et. al. (2019) found that the ability to connect with specific audiences on social media enables nonprofits, like the RRNO foundation, to build online communities.

However, it's important not only to define but also to understand the many aspects of the audience, such as demographics, that affect how people respond to social media messages.

Target Audience (Credit Infographic World)

Understanding the audience enables an organization to improve its communications on social media and to better understand the qualities and characteristics of the audience, such as age, as they affect the content's relatability. Multiple studies have shown that millennials, people aged 22 to 38 years old prefer different social media content and trust social media more than generation xers, people aged 40 to 55 years old (Kim et. al., 2018; Dabija et. al., 2018). Younger target audiences, between 15 and 25 years old, prefer to use Instagram over Facebook (Holmberg et. al., 2016, Marengo et. al., 2020). Age, however, is not the only quality of a target audience that affects their reception of social media messages. Location and culture also affect the preferences of a target audience such as preferred food and tourist activities (Fried et. al., 2014, Vu et. al., 2018). Understanding the target audience will heavily affect decisions ranging from choosing social media platforms to deciding the best approaches for engaging the audience.

Ways to Engage the Audience

After one has gained an understanding of the target audience, the next step is to effectively communicate with them. The ability to engage in a dialogue between a social media account and its followers is the most complex part of any social media strategy and is also the core component that distinguishes social media from traditional media (Kilgour et. al., 2015). There are two main parts to any social media dialogue: interacting with the entire audience in posts and interacting directly with community members. As with all social media platforms, the discussion always starts with the posted content whether it be a Youtube video, Facebook or Instagram post, or Tweet.

Content Strategies for Posting

The first part of any social media discussion is the initial post on the main feed. Researchers have studied various strategies for different aspects of the uploaded content. For

People Commenting and Reacting on Social Media (Credit Hootsuite)

example, the video format, generally considered the most effective information sharing format (Kilgour et. al., 2015), is associated with higher engagement on Facebook than on Instagram (Klassen et. al., 2018). However, there are a few strategies that apply to all platforms. Klassen et. al. (2018) found that content which relates to one's audience's interests and qualities and has a positive tone and message is associated with higher user

engagement. In the same study, Klassen et. al. (2018) found that many people follow and engage with brands on social media for giveaways and rewards such as discounts.

Being transparent about the organization's goals on social media is another strategy that boosts engagement on all social media platforms due to the fact that people develop an emotional bond with and

Growing Followers (Credit Foremost Media)

trust organizations that tell their personal stories and motivations through social media (Hassan et. al., 2015; Kim and Kim, 2020). The last strategy that applies to all platforms is making content that encourages user interaction such as likes, comments, or shares (Kilgour et. al., 2015). After creating the content, the next major aspect of posting is scheduling when content will be published on social media. Scheduling an upload during peak user activity greatly increases the chances of users viewing the post,

the organization's credibility, and the user engagement on social media (Yu & Sun, 2019; De Maio, 2018; Humphrey et. al., 2016; Kim & Kim, 2020).

Strategies for Interacting with Individual Audience Members

For organizations to build their online following and presence on social media, they need to also build relationships with individual community members. Researchers have found many methods organizations can use to communicate with individual audience members. Hassan et. al. (2015) found one method that many organizations will use to interact with their audience beyond the initial post is to follow individual audience members and interact with their social media content. Research shows that this has the ability to create awareness for organizations and help them form trusting bonds with audience members, which could ultimately boost user interaction. In addition, the account managers of an organization's social media will

often reply to existing comments on their posts and respond to direct messages from followers and non-followers to encourage more people to comment on their future posts (Hassan et al., 2015). These strategies show that the organization values its audience and their opinions and interests, which has the ability to motivate the audience to interact with the organization's account. Both of these strategies, however, require the organization to be consistently present on social media.

Maintaining Consistency

Having a consistent presence on social media has two main facets: messaging and activity. The first facet is having consistent messaging across social media content and platforms, which includes content styling, formatting, wording, and voice. Multiple researchers suggested that maintaining consistent messaging is important because it creates and enhances trust in an organization (Cawsey & Rowley, 2016; Briones, 2011). Furthermore, Ashley & Tuten (2015) found that if

Example of a Marketing Campaign Creating a Controversy (Credit Toyota)

an organization's messaging does not stay consistent with its target audience's interests and qualities, the brand's reputation could be harmed. The second facet of having a consistent presence is staying active on social media. Khamis et. al. (2017) found that consistent social media activity helps maintain an organization's following. Moreover, Shafer et. al (2018) found that online audiences care more about the frequency of social media activity

than the quantity of uploads. Lastly, research has shown that organizations with a consistent, active social media presences will have more success and handle online controversy better than those that are sporadically active or inactive (Klassen et. al., 2018).

Dealing with Controversy

Handling controversies, or managing crises, is a major

component of a social media strategy due to its capability to ruin organizations' reputations. Furthermore, organizations stand to benefit from properly handling crises (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014; Humphrey et. al., 2016). On top of that, Hassan et. al. (2015) found that some organizations even create controversies around their products "so that people will talk about it" (pg. 268). Many researchers have studied previous crisis responses and the public's reception to understand the best approaches to crisis management. In one study, Jin et. al. (2011) concluded that the reception of a crisis response will depend on the origin: internal or external; and type of response: defensive or accommodative. An internal crisis is a crisis that started by internal organizational issues such as workplace discrimination or fraud. An external crisis is a crisis that started because of an issue outside the organization such as the Albanian Earthquake in 2019. The main crises to focus on are internal since people consider these easier to solve and place the organization under more

scrutiny as a result (Jin et. al., 2011). To respond to internal crises, the organization should take a proactive, accommodative approach where the organization admits fault, apologizes in an appropriate manner according to their audience, and highlights the process for future improvement (Jin et. al., 2011; Zhu et. al., 2017). For example, tweets from an actor on the TV show called *The Flash*, expressing racist and misogynistic ideas emerged in May of 2020, and the executive producer of the show took the accommodative approach by firing the actor and releasing the following tweet (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Example of a Tweet using the Accommodative Approach

As for external crises, Jin et. al. (2011) found that defensive approaches have more positive public reception unless the organization is closely related to the crisis. A defensive approach, such as denial, justification, or scapegoating, aims to reduce the perceived responsibility of an organization for the cause of the crisis. For example, in 2012, KFC suffered greatly from denying and minimizing an external crisis in which one of their poultry providers was caught violating Chinese health codes. As a result of being directly related to the crisis's origin, KFC's defensive approach only exacerbated and prolonged the controversy (Zhu et. al., 2017). For any crisis, however, Veil et. al. (2015) found that any attempt to hide the controversy such as removing comments or posts online will only create more negative publicity. On the other hand, influencers can help manage crises by spreading positive messages about the organization (Zhu et. al., 2017; Gruber et. al., 2015).

Strategies to Increase Reach

Collaborations

Multiple researchers have noted that influencers, also known as social media celebrities or content creators, can help with every part of a social media strategy (Klassen et. al., 2018; Genç et. al., 2019; Zhu et. al., 2017). Kilgour et. al. (2015) explained that content creators are powerful on social media because they can endorse and diffuse a message wider than most and give the message credibility and widespread awareness. However, they may also spread negative messages just as quickly. Chatzigeorgiou (2017) outlined two key factors in determining the best collaboration. First, the influencer should share similar interests and values with the organization because they are more likely to promote those organizations. Moreover, influencers who share interests and values with the organization or brand will have followers that likely share the same interests. Secondly, the optimal influencer to collaborate

with has a sizable following because they can create the most awareness for the organization. These findings also apply to collaborations with other organizations that have large online followings and similar interests. Other than collaborations, the main strategy for increasing awareness of social media posts is using hashtags.

Hashtags

Hashtags are a key technique used to increase awareness of social media posts because they enable posts to reach people outside one's following (Laucuka, 2018; Highfield et. al., 2014). Researchers have defined a hashtag as a word or phrase prefixed by the hash (#) symbol (Laucuka, 2018; Highfield et. al., 2014; Tariq et. al., 2020). According to Fedushko (2019), posts with at least one hashtag have on average 12.6% higher engagement rates than posts without hashtags.

In addition, on certain platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, people can follow hashtags and get notified of posts that are uploaded with a certain hashtag. However, it is important to use hashtags carefully to avoid people perceiving them as spam (Tariq et. al., 2020). Highfield (2014) also highlighted the fact that evaluating hashtags is a key component of understanding audience behaviors. This is because users can use hashtags as keywords to search for posts (Tariq et. al., 2020).

Content Performance Evaluation

Evaluating social media performance is a crucial component of a social media strategy because it allows managers to understand their target audience, how content can be improved, and ways to enhance engagement. As such, it is important to understand the basis for the myriad of metrics that many platforms provide and the definitions of each. Table 1 shows the base metrics on Facebook and Instagram and their definitions.

Name:	Definition:
Likes	The number of times people have clicked the like button on a social media post.
Shares	The total number of times people have sent a social media post to others.
Comments	The total number of times people have written short messages on a social media post.
Reach	The total number of accounts that have seen a social media post.
Impressions	The total views on a social media post including repeated views from the same account.

Table 1: Base Metrics for Facebook and Instagram

Facebook and Instagram have built-in tools, both of which are called Insights, that display the metrics above and more depending on the platform (About Instagram Insights; Audience Insights: Interactive Facebook Insights tool). For instance, Facebook Insights collects different types of post clicks - link, image, and other clicks - for each clickable element in a post; Instagram Insights does not. Both of these tools provide an assortment of useful data that many business accounts have used to measure user engagement (Bu et al., 2020; Wang, 2020; Klassen et al., 2018). However, higher-level features, such as hashtag analysis and account growth over years are not incorporated in these analytics. For this reason, it is necessary to invest in third-party software (TPS). Moreover, some TPS have features to facilitate other aspects of managing social media.

Features of Third-Party Software

The six major third party social media managing software packages - Later, Hootsuite, Sprout Social, NapoleonCat, Buffer, and SocialPilot - have features that include timing analytics (Figure 3), frequency analysis (Figure 4), audience demographic data (Figure 5), post growth analysis over time (Figure 6), hashtag performance analytics (Figure 7), post engagement measurements (Figure 8), and more (See Appendix B). (Buffer | Social Media Analytics & Reporting for Growing Brands, n.d.; H. Inc, n.d.; Instagram Analytics, n.d.; S. Inc, n.d.; Social Media Analytics Tool, n.d.; Sprout Social, n.d.). Some of these analytics are similar to those in Insights, but these online tools display the information with detailed graphics to help the account managers better understand the significance of the data. In addition, these software suites have an advantage over Insights because of their ability to track analytics and data, particularly the growth of an account, over a longer period of time (Buffer | Social Media Analytics & Reporting for Growing Brands, n.d.; H. Inc, n.d.; Instagram Analytics, n.d.; Inc, n.d.; Social Media Analytics Tool, n.d.; Sprout Social, n.d.).
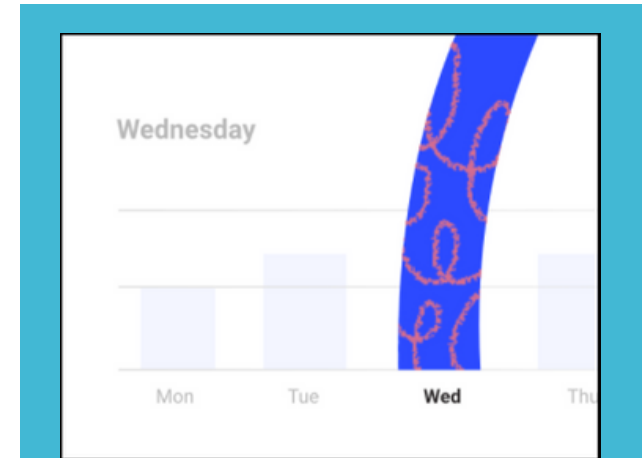
Figure 3: Example of Timing Analytics (from Buffer | Social Media Analytics & Reporting for Growing Brands, n.d.)
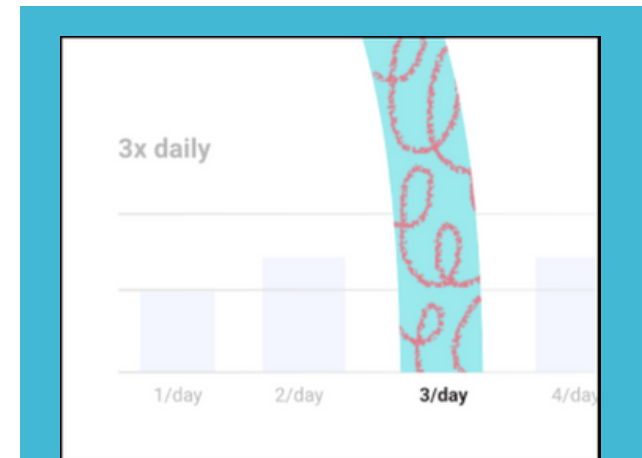
Figure 4: Example of Frequency Analysis (from Buffer | Social Media Analytics & Reporting for Growing Brands, n.d.)
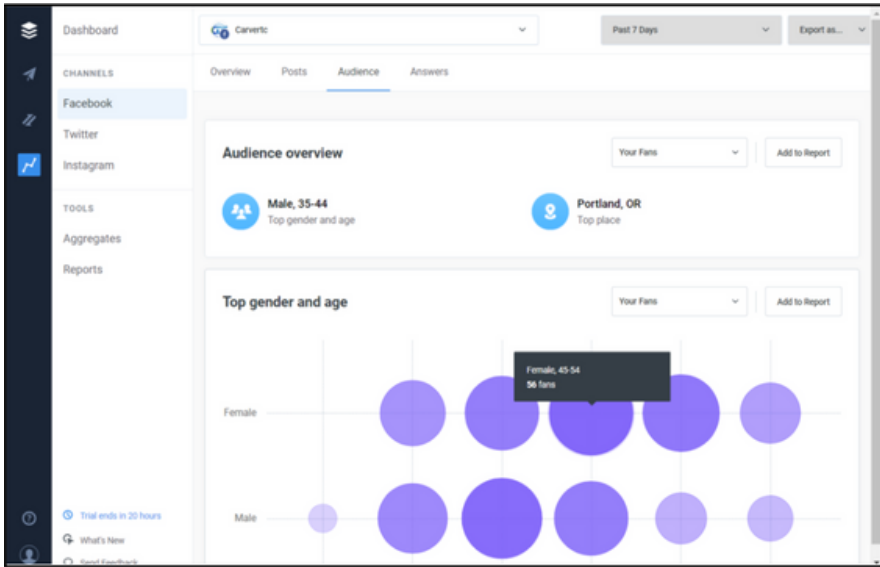
Figure 5: Example of Demographic Data Provided by Buffer (from Carver, 2019)

Figure 6: Growth Over Time Analysis Example - Depicts new followers gained over time (from Lee, 2015)

Figure 7: Example of Hashtag Performance Analysis on Buffer (from Hall, S. H., 2020)
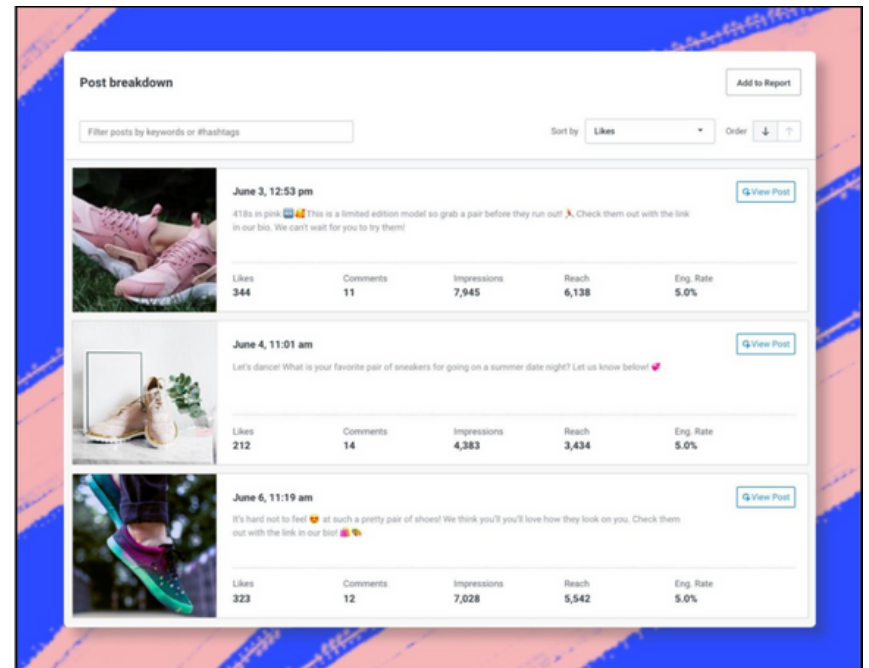
Figure 8: Post Engagement Measurements Provided by Buffer (from Lua, 2019)

Pumpkins in a Village in Thethi, Albania
(Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

Methods:

We designed an effective social media marketing strategy, applicable to multiple platforms, to help the RRNO foundation create awareness and advance its mission. Our team completed the following four objectives to achieve the project goal:

01 Analyzed key informant interviews with social media experts to identify the components of an effective social media marketing strategy and best practices for creating and uploading content.

02 Assessed RRNO's past posts on social media, via social media analytic software on Facebook and Instagram, to establish a baseline of what RRNO's previous audience found interesting.

03 Generated various storyline threads informed by research, interviews, previous content analytics, and active food-centric social media accounts, and tested them on RRNO's Facebook and Instagram platforms.

04 Evaluated the performance of our storyline threads, through research-proven social media analytics and expert-recommended third-party software, to determine which storytelling strategies resonated with RRNO's audience on social media.

In this chapter, we describe how we carried out these objectives. Figure 9 below shows the project objectives and their respective methods.

In this Section:

1. **Interviewing Social Media Experts on Social Media Strategies**

2. **Using Social Media Analytics to Assess the Performance of RRNO's Previous Content**

3. **Developing Social Media Storytelling Content**

4. **Evaluating the Performance of the Posts on RRNO's Main Accounts**
   - Analyzing Individual Posts
   - Analyzing Account Growth Over Time

Analyze key informant interviews with social media experts to identify the components of an effective social media marketing strategy and best practices for creating and uploading content.

Assess RRNO's past posts on social media, via social media analytic software on Facebook and Instagram, to establish a baseline of what RRNO's historical audience found interesting.

Generate various storyline threads informed by research, interviews, historical content analytics and active food-centric social media accounts, and test them on RRNO's Facebook and Instagram platforms.

Evaluate the performance of our storyline threads, through research-proven social media analytics and expert recommended third-party software, to determine which storytelling strategies resonated with RRNO's audience on social media.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Social Media Analytics

Research/Analyzing Food Centric Social Media Accounts

Social Media Analytics & Third-Party Software

Publish Content on RRNO's Social Media Platforms

Figure 9: Project Objectives and Their Corresponding Methods

Interviewing Social Media Experts on Social Media Strategies

We conducted semi-structured, key informant interviews with social media experts who have managed personal and organizational social media accounts to become familiar with practical techniques to create an effective social media strategy. A semi-structured interview is a technique utilizing a partially developed interview plan that leaves open the possibility of straying from the planned questions and probing for further detail (Keller & Conradin, 2019). We explored each expert's process for creating and posting content as well as managing social media. A more detailed plan for social media expert interviews is located in Appendix A.2. Table 2 to the right, contains the social media experts we interviewed.

Descriptions:	
Gabi Rovi	A graduate student of WPI who works as the project manager at our university's global lab that manages her own "bookstagram" and Youtube channel where she posts content centered around books.
Stacey Happy	A digital media associate in the marketing communications department at WPI that manages the university's social media accounts on many different platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Linkedin).
Irina Groushevaia	A social media manager and free-lance editor that manages MOFAD's (Museum of Food and Drink) social media platforms.

Table 2: Interviewees and Their Social Media Experience

These interviews were used to understand which practices social media experts have or have not found success for managing a social media account. We structured interview questions around the following categories to determine the core components of a successful social media development strategy and best practices for creating, managing, and maintaining a social media presence on multiple platforms:

Understanding the target audience:

- Preferred social media platforms
  - Instagram
  - Facebook
- Details of the audience that would affect the content
  - Cultural knowledge
    - i.e. Holidays
  - Demographics
  - Preferences/Interests

Process for uploading content:
- Scheduling
- Photo/Video Editing
- Use of various media features
  - Captions
  - Hashtags
  - Geotags
  - Instagram and Facebook stories

Ways to engage the audience:
- How to create audience feedback
- How to encourage the audience to share information
- How to attract new audience members
- How to handle controversial topics

Measuring Social Media Performance:
- The strengths and limits of built-in analytics tools
  - Facebook Insights
  - Instagram Insights
- Potential third-party management software

During these interviews, we took copious notes on the aforementioned categories which we then used to form the basis of a social media strategy for RRNO.

Using Social Media Analytics to Assess the Performance of RRNO's Previous Content

We evaluated the content on RRNO's Facebook and Instagram expedition accounts, using Insights, to gain an understanding of what RRNO's previous audience found intriguing based on the engagement levels with its past posts.

The analytics we collected were not intended to inform our planned social media strategy since the previous audience's reactions were outdated and might not represent their current preferences. The RRNO foundation has not been active on its social media accounts since finishing the first phase of its expedition in March of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented the RRNO foundation from completing the second phase of its expedition, limiting its ability to capture and create new content for its social media platforms. Nevertheless, the data collected from this analysis formed a baseline for understanding which aspects of RRNO's content its previous audience found engaging.

We used Facebook and Instagram Insights to acquire and examine information about audience interactions with and reactions to RRNO's content. Informed by our background research, the team chose to analyze the metrics defined in Table 3 from RRNO's past posts on its social media platforms.

We analyzed the social media metrics of thirty of RRNO's most recent posts to gain insight into what posts were most engaging. After collecting the social media metrics from those posts, we assigned a primary theme to each post as well as a secondary and tertiary theme if multiple themes were present in the post.

Name:	Icon:	Definition:
Likes		The number of "likes" on a post
Reach - Percentage of Reach from non-followers	N/A	The number of accounts that view a post - Percent of accounts who did not follow posting account
Impressions	N/A	The number of times a post is viewed by users, including multiple views by users
Shares		The number of times users distribute a post to other users
Comments		The number of responses, made by followers, to a post
Post Clicks	Click	The total number of times a post is clicked. This includes but is not limited to photo views, video play, and expanding to read a post, but does not include comments, likes or shares.

Table 3: Content Metrics with Icons and Descriptions

We assigned themes to posts based on what is portrayed in the visual media and the captions. The theme ranking - primary, secondary, or tertiary - was based on its predominance in the post; in other words, the most predominant theme was the primary theme.

We then compared engagements - likes, comments, shares, and post clicks (Facebook only) - to reach of the posts. This ratio shows roughly the percent of people who saw and engaged with the post; in other words, the ratio shows how engaging the post was to RRNO's audience. For example, when comparing posts with similar reach, a more engaging post will have a higher ratio of engagements to reach than a less engaging post. After ranking the posts based on which had the highest ratios of engagements to reach, we identified the ten top-ranked posts and determined the common themes of these top-ranked posts.

Developing Social Media Storytelling Content

Our team, in collaboration with RRNO and the Market Identification Group (MIG) - a fellow WPI student team working with the RRNO foundation - developed twelve gastronomy driven social media posts, six per platform, to promote the MIG's survey on RRNO's social media platforms. We framed our content around the transmedia storytelling model with the two transmedia platforms being RRNO's Instagram and Facebook. The transmedia storytelling model, used by modern franchises like Star Wars and Pokemon, utilizes different platforms to deliver related stories as part of an overall storyworld (Jenkins, 2007). We also observed this model in practice in the various food-centric social media profiles (FCSMPs) we followed on Instagram and Facebook.

We used the knowledge from our analysis of social media practices on food-related networks to help create and design storyline threads structured around promoting the survey using visual media from RRNO. Some of the many networks we observed are provided in Table 4. In addition to observing FCSMPs, we took into account information from our interviews with social media experts when designing the storylines.

We then uploaded the storylines we created to RRNO's Facebook and Instagram accounts to test the storytelling strategies we learned. Our literature review suggested that these platforms operate differently due to the demographics of each platform's audience as well as the different formats and functions that define each platform. Considering this and the fact that RRNO's Facebook account was its primary

Food Promotion Organizations:	Famous Chefs:	Food Bloggers:	Major Food Hashtags:
@worldfoodtravelasn	@chef_pillai	@migrationology	#foodporn
@Offical_Foodie	@gordongram	@girleatworld	#foodphotography
@Foodcationing	@christophe_bacquie	@hotforfood	#yummyfood
@buzzfeedtasty	@bobbyflay	@foodys	#food

Table 4: Some of the Food Centric Social Media Profiles we Observed

platform, we designed and formatted the storyline threads specifically for Facebook, and then, we modified the formatting of these storylines to fit the different demographics, layout, and functions of Instagram.

Before the sample content was tested on RRNO's social media platforms, it was presented to our sponsor for approval. We then published the content, using third-party software, every other day for two weeks from November 11th, 2020 to November 28th, 2020, on RRNO's Facebook and Instagram accounts.

Evaluating the Performance of the Posts on RRNO's Main Accounts

Two days after each post was published, we reviewed the social media analytics since new posts disappear from followers' feeds after two days (Introducing "You're All Caught Up" in Feed, 2018). We then evaluated the performance of the posts to determine which social media strategies were most effective at engaging RRNO's current audience and reaching new potential followers.

We used the same built-in social media analytics noted in objective 2 to evaluate RRNO's audience's reactions to and interactions with our uploaded storylines threads. We also used Buffer, which we chose based on research out of the six major third-party social media managing software suites: Later, Hootsuite, Sprout Social, NapoleonCat, Buffer, and SocialPilot (see Appendix B for a more detailed comparison and why we chose Buffer), to evaluate the posted content. Table 5 provides an abbreviated version of the table in Appendix B comparing TPS. The outline for how we evaluated the content and account is shown in Figure 10.

The data collected from these analytics was used in addition to information gained from previous research and interviews to create a guide for content creation for RRNO as part of its overall social media strategy.

Analyzing Individual Posts

For our individual posts, we used Buffer and Insights to analyze the reach, number of impressions, and number of post interactions - likes, shares, and comments. This helped us understand the full extent of exposure and engagement for each post and find the content strategies that elicited the most reactions.

Analyzing Account Growth Over Time

After the two weeks of posting and analyzing our content, we compiled the individual post statistics and used Buffer to determine growth of the accounts followers over our posting period. Additionally, we observed the days in which followers increased the most and identified which content caused the increase.

	Later	Buffer	NapoleonCat	SocialPilot	Hootsuite	Sprout Social
Minimum Cost	Free	$28 per month (free trial available)	$21 per month (free trial available)	$25 per month (free trial available)	$29 per month (free trial available)	$99 per month (free trial available)
Platforms Available to the Scheduling Tool	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Linkedin	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Pinterest, TikTok	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Pinterest, Youtube	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Linkedin
Demographic Data	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Timing Analytics		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Hashtag Analysis		Yes		Yes		
Platforms Available for Analytics	Instagram	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Youtube	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Pinterest	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Pinterest, Youtube	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Linkedin
Capterra Rating (#/5 Stars)	4.4	4.5	N/A	4.4	4.3	4.4

Table 5: Abbreviated Version of the TPS Comparison Table in Appendix B

Analyzing Individual Posts
- Third-Party Software and Insights
  - Social media Metrics
    - Identifying engagement of posts to learn what tactics affect the engagement

Analyze Growth Over Time
- Third-Party Software
  - Growth over time based on followers and social media metrics
    - Identifying what caused changes in followers on the profile
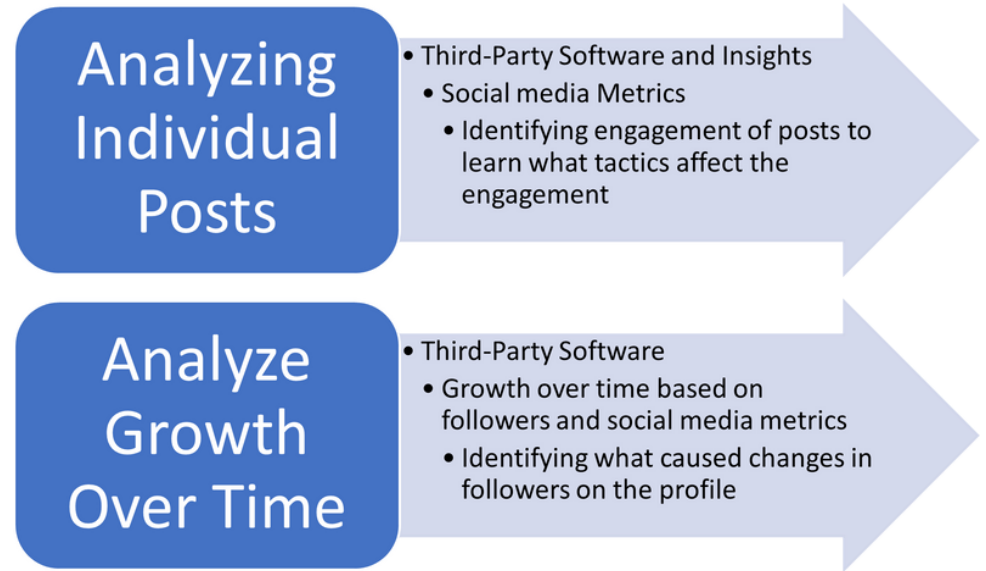
Figure 10: Outline on How Content was Evaluated

Findings:

RRNO's Previous Audience Finds Food Themed Content Appealing

In our assessment of RRNO's Albanian Gastronomic Expedition (@albanian.expedition) accounts on Instagram and Facebook, its posts portrayed the following themes: food preparation, food presentation, locals, nature, and villages. In the collage below there is an example post for each of the mentioned themes. There is a "Nature" themed post (top left - Figure 11), a "Village" themed post (top right - Figure 12), a "Locals" themed post (bottom left - Figure 13), a "Food Preparation" themed post (bottom middle - Figure 14), and a "Food Presentation" themed post (bottom right - Figure 15).

Albanian Gastronomy
Expedition

The majority of RRNO's top ten most engaging posts on each platform portrayed themes surrounding food - food preparation and food presentation. Of RRNO's ten most engaging Facebook posts, nine posts portrayed themes surrounding food. In addition, the primary themes in six of those nine posts, were either food preparation or food presentation as is seen in the pie chart in Figure 16. As for Instagram, food preparation and food presentation were the primary themes for seven of its top ten most engaging posts (see Figure 17). These results suggested that when the RRNO foundation was posting on social media between July of 2019 and March of 2020, the most engaging content themes were food presentation and preparation. Food presentation themed posts consisted of photos and videos of dishes in their final, ready-to-eat state. These dishes were displayed in the hands of the chefs who made them, on a table for a meal, in front of a plain background to accentuate the dish, or encased for preservation.

Food preparation themed posts contained photos and videos of the chef creating the dish or the raw ingredients used to create the dish. These findings provided us with a baseline of what content themes RRNO's previous audience engaged with and found the most appealing, giving us an idea of what RRNO should possibly post in the future to captivate its audience.
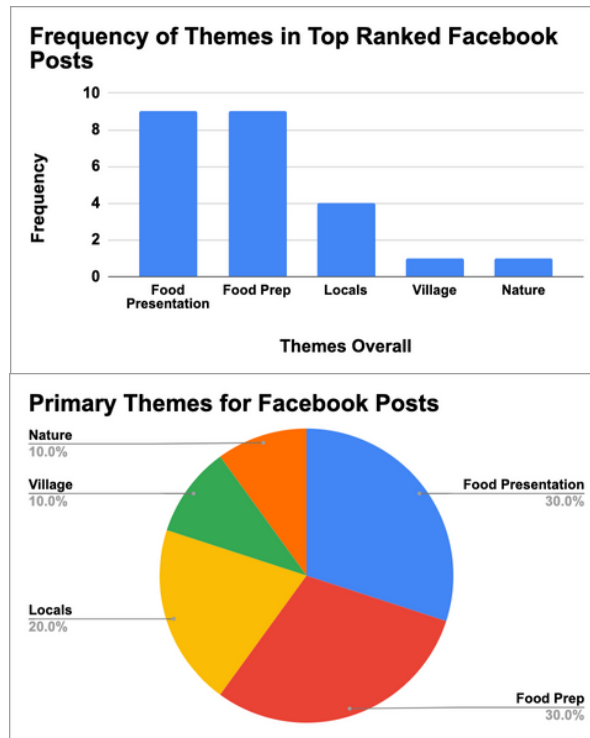

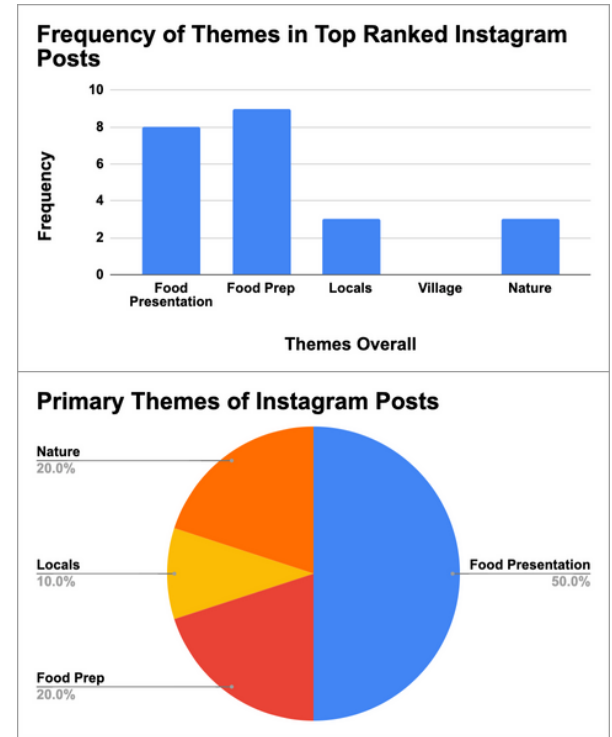*Figure 17: Most Engaging Content Themes on RNNO's Previous Instagram Posts*

Figure 16: Most Engaging Content Themes on RNNO's Previous Facebook Posts

Defining and Understanding the Audience is the Most Important Component of a Social Media Strategy

The most important component to consider when developing a social media strategy is defining and understanding one's target audience, which aligns with the academic literature on the subject as noted in the background chapter (Wang, 2020; Guo, C., & Saxton, G. D., 2018; Kilgour et. al., 2015).

With the help of Buffer, we determined the gender, age, and location demographics of RRNO's audiences on both Facebook and Instagram. Across both audiences, we noticed that most members were from Tirana, Albania followed by Pristina, Kosovo.

To note, both of those cities are composed of primarily Albanian language speakers. Over 35% of RRNO's 990 Facebook followers were from cities in Albania and Kosovo while only 5% were from New York City and Oslo (see Figure 18). Instagram's audience, consisting of 630 followers, was more diverse in terms of location with members from Albania and Kosovo only making up 20% (see Figure 19). In addition, the percent of RRNO's Instagram audience from New York City, London, and Copenhagen combined for roughly 12% of its total Instagram audience.

In terms of age and gender, consistent with background research (Holmberg et. al., 2016; Marengo et. al., 2020), RRNO's Facebook audience was significantly older than its Instagram audience. In fact, on Facebook, RRNO's audience had a higher percentage of audience members 35 or older than Instagram as is seen in Figure 20. On the other side, Instagram had a higher percentage of audience members 35 and younger than Facebook (see Figure 21). As for the gender, men made up the majority of each audience on both platforms.

In our content trials, we used A/B testing - an expert-recommended method of trial and error testing - to determine RRNO's audience's preferences and interests. RRNO's Facebook audience engages more with posts written in Albanian than English because most of them are from primarily Albanian speaking places (see Figure 18). This was reflected in the way our Albanian Independence Day post (on Facebook), written in Albanian, received 39 engagements while our other posts written in English never received more than 10 engagements. It is important to note that this post was published on an Albanian national holiday. As a result, we cannot entirely attribute the engagement we received on this post to the use of the Albanian language.
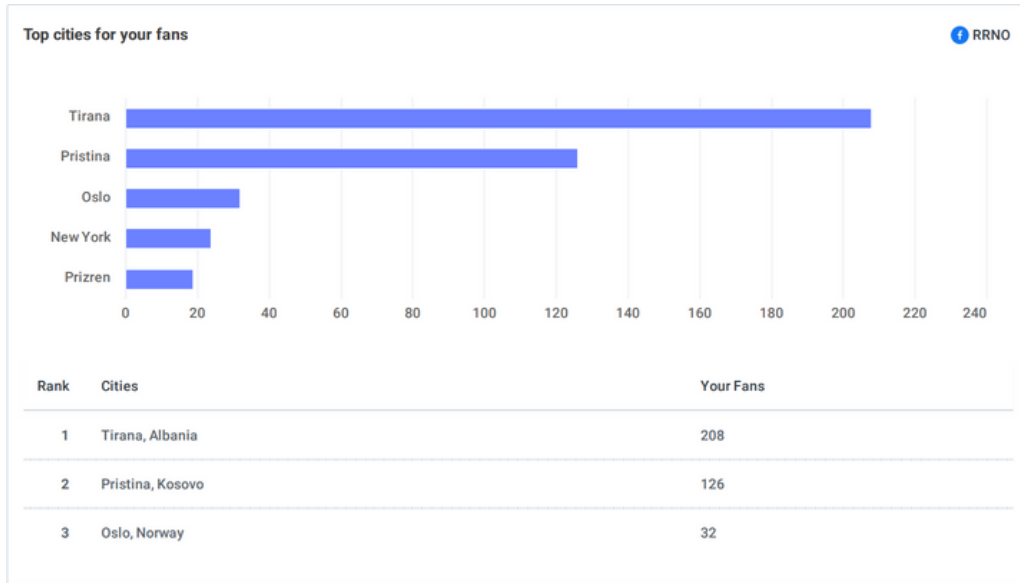
Figure 18: Top Locations of RRNO's Facebook Audience as of December 1st, 2020

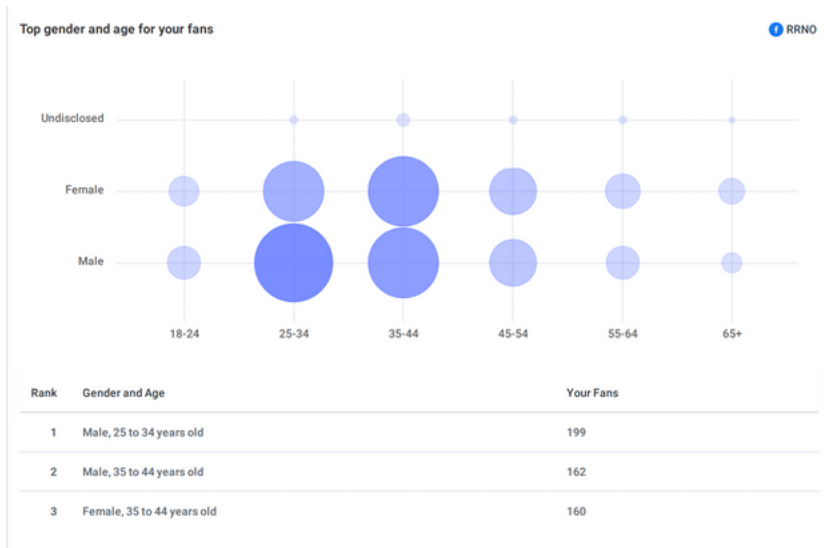Figure 21: RRNO's Instagram Audience Gender and Age Breakdown as of December 1st, 2020

Figure 20: RRNO's Facebook Audience Gender and Age Breakdown as of December 1st, 2020
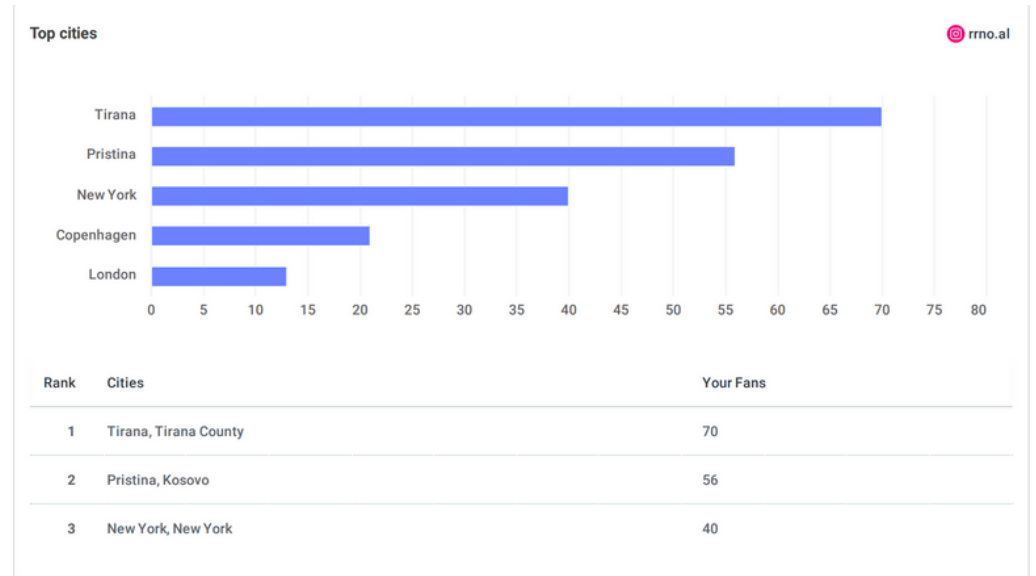
Figure 19: Top Locations of RRNO's Instagram Audience as of December 1st, 2020

On Instagram, there was no significant difference in engagements between posts written in Albanian and English. Still, a few factors limited our ability to gain more information on RRNO's audience's preferences from our content trials. The first factor was that we only were able to test within a short time frame of two weeks. This was not enough time to understand which storyline threads RRNO's audience preferred. In addition, most of our posts were focused on promoting RRNO's survey, which prevented us from testing other specific storyline threads separately. Some of the storylines we did not get the chance to test included cooking tutorials, sharing personal food opinions or experiences, explaining the history of Albanian dishes, and telling stories of food related traditions.

Social media experts have claimed that to boost user engagement, social media content should encourage users to interact with the post (Kilgour et al., 2015). Experts use an assortment of strategies to encourage users to like, comment, click, save, or share their content. One such strategy to get followers to engage with content is the "call to action" (CTA) strategy. This strategy involves provoking an audience to perform a desired action by clearly describing the next action one wants them to take. Table 6 displays the most prevalent call to action phrases with their corresponding definitions that food centric social media platforms used in their captions as a means to promote users to engage with their post. (Example CTAs - Figures 22-25 - are provided below Tables 6).

Certain "Call to Action" Can Boost User Engagement

Call to Action Phrases:	Meaning:
"Tag a Friend"	In the comments of a post, mention another account handle
"Comment Below"	Write a comment in the comments section of the post
"Like/Share this post"	Either click the like button on a post or click the share button and send the post to another user
"Follow us"	Go to the profile of the account that posted and click the follow button
"Create a post with the hashtag"	Upload content on a personal account with the specified hashtag in the caption
"Create a post and tag us"	Upload content on a personal account and mention the original account in the caption or tag them in the photo
"DM us"	Use a direct messaging service to send content to the profile of the account that posted

Table 6: Common CTA Phrases Used in Food-centric Social Media Captions

Figure 23: Post by @EatWith Using "Tell us Below" CTA

Figure 25: Post by @juicyfoodpictures Using "Don't Forget to Double Tap" CTA
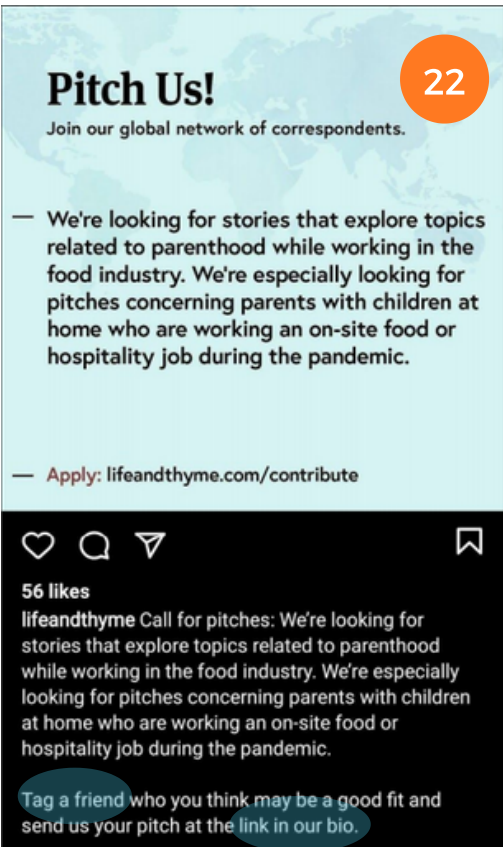
Figure 22: Post by @LifeandThyme Using "Tag a friend" CTA
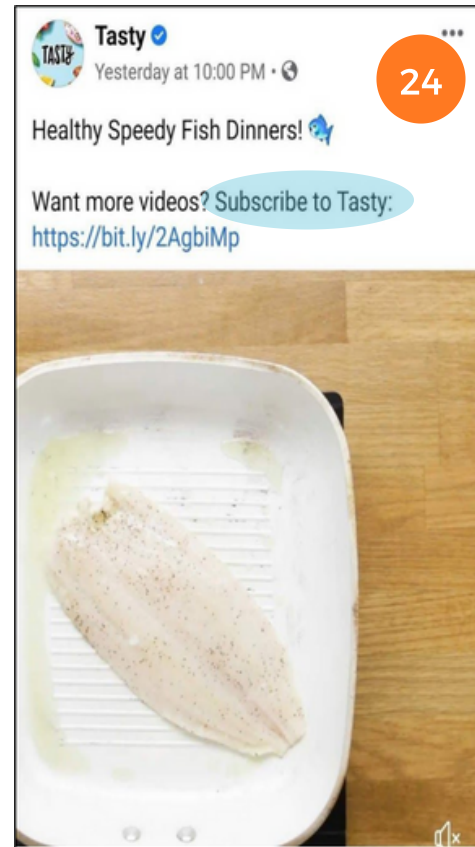
Figure 24: Post by @Tasty Using "Subscribe" CTA

In an attempt to generate engagement and motivate viewers to interact with RRNO's content and its accounts, we incorporated the call to action strategy in the captions of our test content. We used the following CTA phrases, based on those commonly used by FCSMP's, in our captions (see Table 7 for definitions).

Call to Actions Phrases:	Meaning:
"Share this post"	See definition in FCSMP CTA Table 6
"Follow us" / "Join us in our Journey"	See definition in FCSMP CTA Table 6
"Comment Below"	See definition in FCSMP CTA Table 6
"Click the Link"	For Facebook: Click the hyperlink in the post caption
"Link In Bio"	For Instagram: Go to the account managers profile and click the link in their bio.
"Don't Forget to Double Tap" "Tap the Like Button"	Either click the like button, or perform a shortcut for liking a post on Instagram Mobile
"Tell us in the Survey"	Click the survey link and fill out our survey

Table 7: CTA Phrases Used in Our Posts

🇦🇱 Follow us ➡️ @rrno.al 🇦🇱

👇 Comment Below 👇

TAP the 👍 button and **SHARE** this with your family, friends, and other members of the Albanian Diaspora

❗*Click the Link in our Bio* ✍️❗   **Like** this post and **Share** it with others.

👍 Don't forget to **LIKE** and **SHARE** 👍

For our posts on Facebook, the CTAs we used, "Click the Link", "Tap the Like Button", "Share this Post", "Comment Below", and others were not effective in encouraging those who follow RRNO's Facebook account to perform any of these actions. This was seen in the way we were unable to receive more than 10 engagements on most of our Facebook posts. We believe that the lack of engagement we received on most of our Facebook posts came as a result of the 8 months span where the RRNO foundation did not post. Research has proven that in order to maintain a strong presence and a loyal following, one must be consistently engaging with their audience online (Khamis et. al., 2017). Therefore, we believe that the RRNO foundation's time off from posting decreased their followers' interest in interacting with its content, which indirectly affected the call to action strategies we incorporated on both Instagram and Facebook. We believe this is the reason most of our calls to action were not successful in our content trials.

This was depicted in the way we asked RRNO's audience to answer the questions we posed in our captions with the CTA, "Comment Below," but received no comments.

However, on Instagram, the "Click the Link in Bio!" action was effective in terms of prompting followers and non-followers of RRNO's pages to take action. This was evident in our survey appreciation post (see Figure 26) on Instagram which received a total of 8 link clicks because of this CTA as of November 27th, 2020.
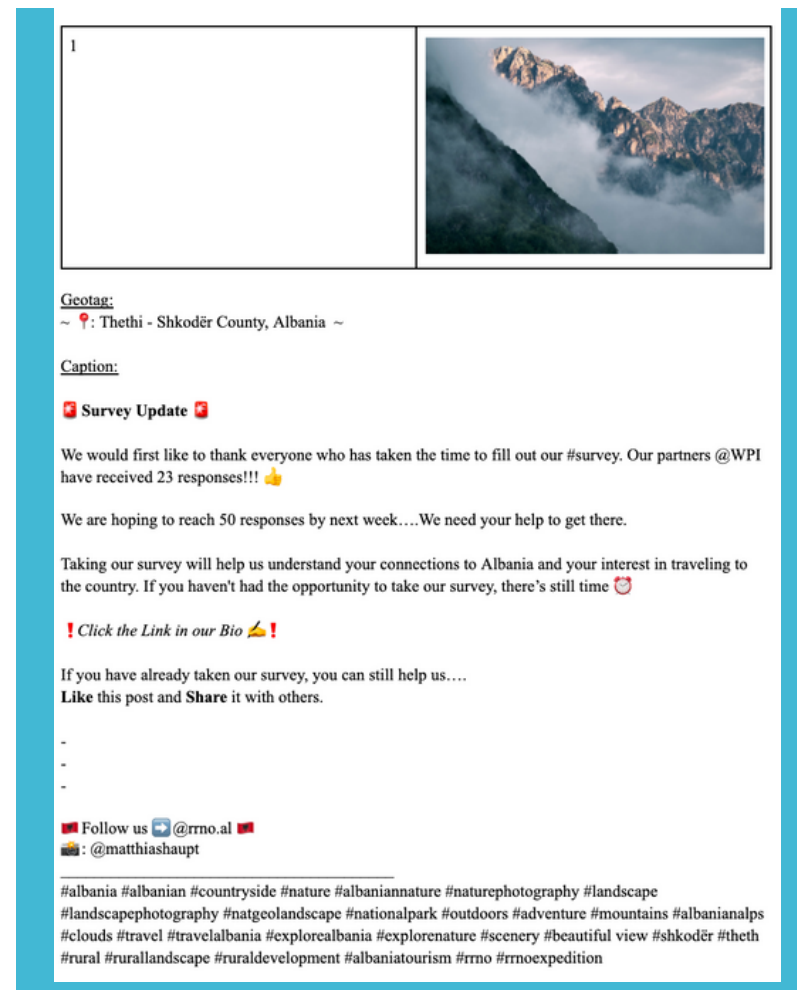
Figure 26: Our Survey Appreciation Post, Published on November 24th, 2020

This was further manifested in all our other Instagram posts that promoted RRNO's survey and included the "Click the Link in Bio!" CTA, which each received at least 1 survey link click (see Figure 27). The success of this CTA could also be seen in the number of profile visits we received on our first two posts about the survey on Instagram. We concluded that the 38 and 31 profile visits we received on our first two posts came as a result of our "Click the Link in Bio!" CTA, which directed RRNO's audience to its profile where the link was located (see Figure 29). It is important to note as a whole, we did receive likes, shares, and follows, as is shown in the Buffer Findings Report (Appendix C); however, we are unable to determine if these actions came as a direct result of our CTAs.
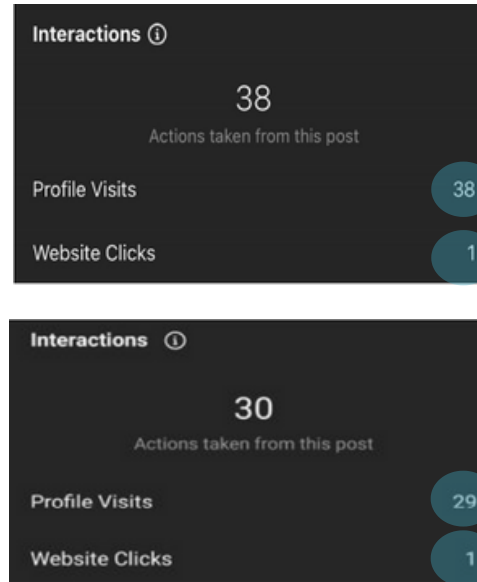
Figure 27: Instagram Insights of "Click the Link in Bio!" CTA Posts Showing Survey Link Clicks and Profile Visits

Question and Answer of the Day (Q/AOTD) Can Boost User Engagement Under Certain Conditions

Social media researchers suggest that sharing personal and being transparent with one's audience can boost engagement because it creates an emotional bond and builds trust between the audience and the organization by inspiring conversation (Hassan et al., 2015; Kim and Kim, 2020). This aligns with the views of the social media experts we interviewed, who use a caption strategy called "Question of the Day (QOTD) / Answer of the Day (AOTD)" to motivate followers to share their personal experiences. In this strategy, the account runner poses a daily question at the beginning of a post caption and provides their answer directly below it. Through observation of FCSMPs and interviews with social media experts, the QOTD can relate to the visual content in the post; however, it does not have to relate to said content. This is seen in Figures 28 and 29 which show how questions that related to the post and those that did not were both able to motivate followers to engage with their post by sharing their opinions.
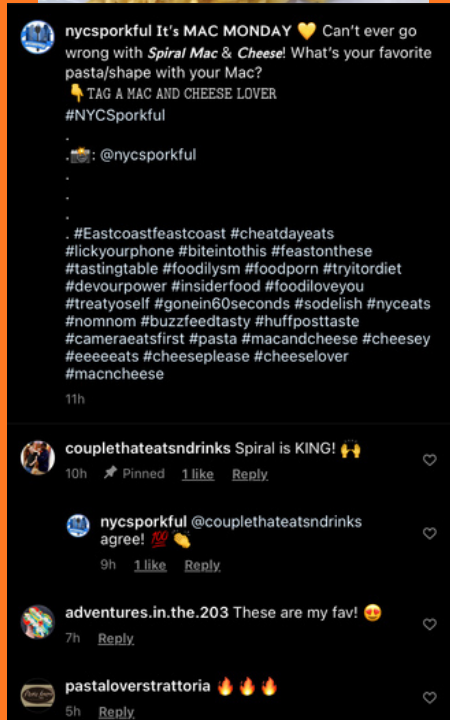
Figure 28: Example of @nycsporkful Using a Question Related to the Content to Spark Conversation
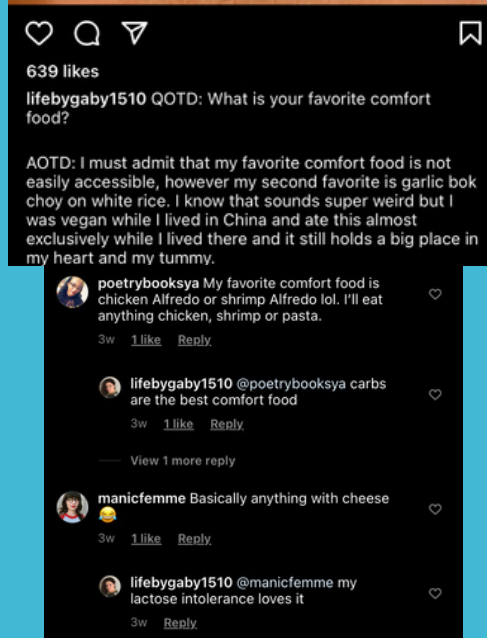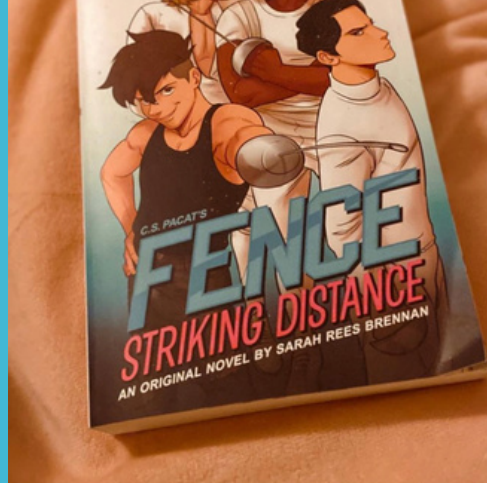
Figure 29: Example of @lifebygaby1510 Using a Question Not-Related to the Content to Spark Conversation

In our content trials, however, this strategy did not create any engagement on our posts. This was reflected in the way we were unable to incentivize people to respond to our questions. We believe this is due to the fact that our use of this QOTD/AOTD strategy was overshadowed by the primary focus of each post: promoting the Market Identification Group's survey.

The QOTD and AOTD should be contained in one post. In other words, if one posts a question and answer of the day, they should not continue the conversation about the question in their next post. Instead, in their next post, one should pose a new question and provide their new answer.

Lastly, for this strategy to be effective, the person or organization that posed the question and provided their answer must periodically check the comments section throughout the day to respond to their audience's answers.

Users Engage with Organizations Who Respond to Comments and DMs and Follow Them Back

Responding to comments and direct messages (DMs) made by one's audience is considered a "cardinal rule in social media marketing" (*Social Media Marketing 101,* 2018). This strategy involves replying to all social media comments and DMs made by one's followers in the form of questions, answers, opinions, and even criticism. Responding to all comments and DMs shows one's audience that the person or organization values what they have to say (see Figures 30 and 31). This makes followers feel appreciated, which incentivizes them to engage more with one's account and its content.
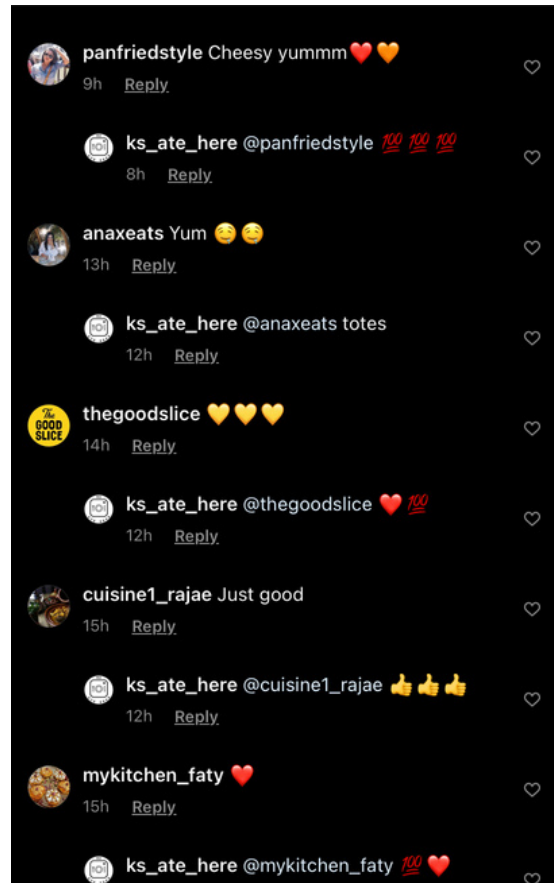
Figure 30: Example of @ks_ate_here Replying to its Audience's Comments on Instagram

Figure 31: Example of @Migrationology Replying to its Audience's Comments on Facebook

Furthermore, a person or organization should always respond to comments or DMs in a professional, personable, positive, and timely manner as well as in a tone of voice and style that coincides with its social media identity (*Social Media Marketing 101*, 2018).

Lastly, it is important for an account to respond in a consistent way, suggesting the importance of creating an outline for how to respond to comments, especially those that are negatively direct at a person or organization (*Social Media Marketing 101,* 2018).

Following, or requesting to follow - if it's a private account - users that have recently followed one's account is an effective means of engaging with an audience beyond a post. This strategy involves a person or organization following back users that have recently followed their account to interact with their content in the hopes that this engagement will be reciprocated. This strategy also helps to develop trusting bonds with audience members, making them more likely to engage with one's future content

We were not able to test what we learned about responding to comments and DMs on RRNO's social media accounts because we did not receive any comments or DMs on any of the content we uploaded on both Facebook and Instagram. Additionally, we did not test the following back strategy because we did not want to wrongfully associate the RRNO Foundation with followers who could potentially damage its reputation.

Incentives and Tangible Rewards Increase Engagement and Reach

Incentives and tangible rewards were another strategy backed by social media theorists to help businesses and organizations boost user engagement on social media (Klassen et. al., 2018). A practitioner we interviewed emphasized that their organization incentivized its audience to interact with posts by providing rewards and perks for participation in a specific task. This strategy is also commonly utilized when an organization requires financial assistance and donations from their social media following. FCSMPs use this reciprocity strategy to express gratitude to their following to encourage future participation (see Figures 32-34).

Figure 32: Example of a Giveaway by @Olivola

Figure 33: Example of a Giveaway by @cafedonutsdk

Figure 34: Example of a Giveaway by @emi.eats

giveaway, a sample product from the sponsor was the reward. Among giveaways hosted by FCSMPs, random chance or reaching a milestone were the two most common giveaway strategies. The random chance giveaway typically had followers comment on the post to enter and would choose a random user who commented on that post. Random chance giveaways have been adapted for multiple social media goals such as attracting new followers or encouraging engagement on posts. To specifically increase reach, oftentimes giveaways will request people to enter by making a comment containing tags of other accounts.

The milestone contest most often involves reaching a certain number of followers on an account. Another, rarer, giveaway mechanism we found was a post contest. To enter a post contest giveaway, followers often must create a post and use a specific giveaway hashtag created for the contest.

We have also observed some FSCMPs use giveaways to promote a brand that partnered with the FCSMP. In the case of a sponsored

The reason this is a rare contest is because the host has to manually sift through and pick one or more winners from the possibly hundreds of posts created using the hashtag. It is important to note that the hashtag must be entirely new otherwise posts unrelated to the contest could be selected as winners.

Users Engage with Posts on or About Holidays

Posting on and about nationally recognized holidays and special occasions can significantly boost post engagement. In our observations, many FCSMPs post on or about holidays to encourage those who celebrate the holiday to interact and engage with their content (see Figures 35 and 36).
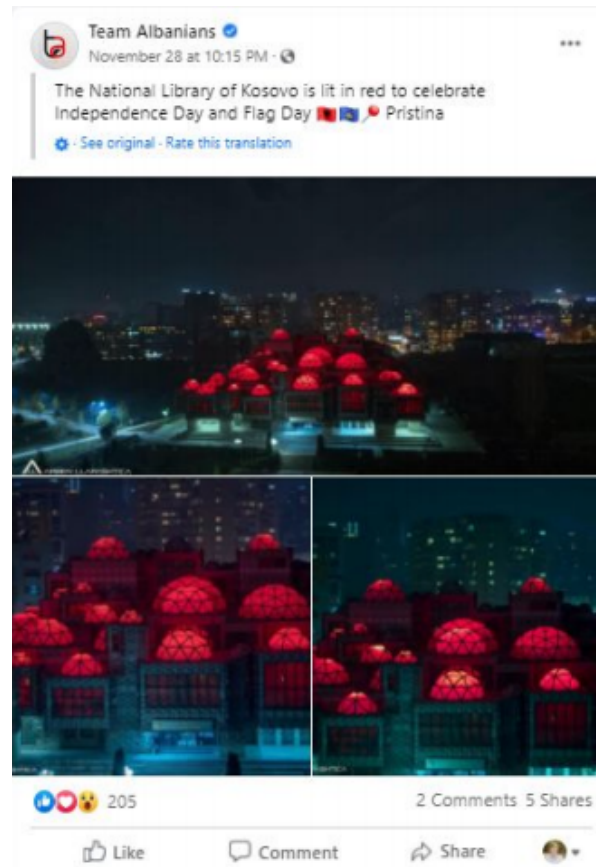
Figure 35: Example of a Holiday Post by Team Albanians

Figure 36: Example of a Holiday Post by a Food Centric Social Media Profile @rocikmeals

We confirmed this strategy in our content trials with a post celebrating Albanian Independence Day. The celebration post, reaching 243 accounts and having 38 engagements as of December 1st, 2020, significantly outperformed all other Facebook posts uploaded after our first post on November 11th, 2020. We do, however, have to acknowledge that some of the engagement on the Facebook post could have come from the fact that the post was in written Albanian rather than English, which was explained earlier in the findings section. Although we explained that posting on and about national holidays can be beneficial, it is possible that not all holidays will be beneficial to post about. Considering the opportunity for controversy surrounding holiday, it is vital to assess one's audience's thoughts about a holiday prior to uploading a post. If the holiday is positively recognized, then it would be beneficial to post about it.

Posting at Peak Activity Times Boosts Engagement

Social media experts we interviewed argued that organizations should post when their audience is most active on the respective platform, which is consistent with much of the recent academic research (Yu & Sun, 2019; De Maio, 2018).

In our content trials, this strategy was difficult to test due to the fact that RRNO's audience was spread across many different time zones. As a result, our trials cannot conclude that this strategy is effective at boosting user engagement.
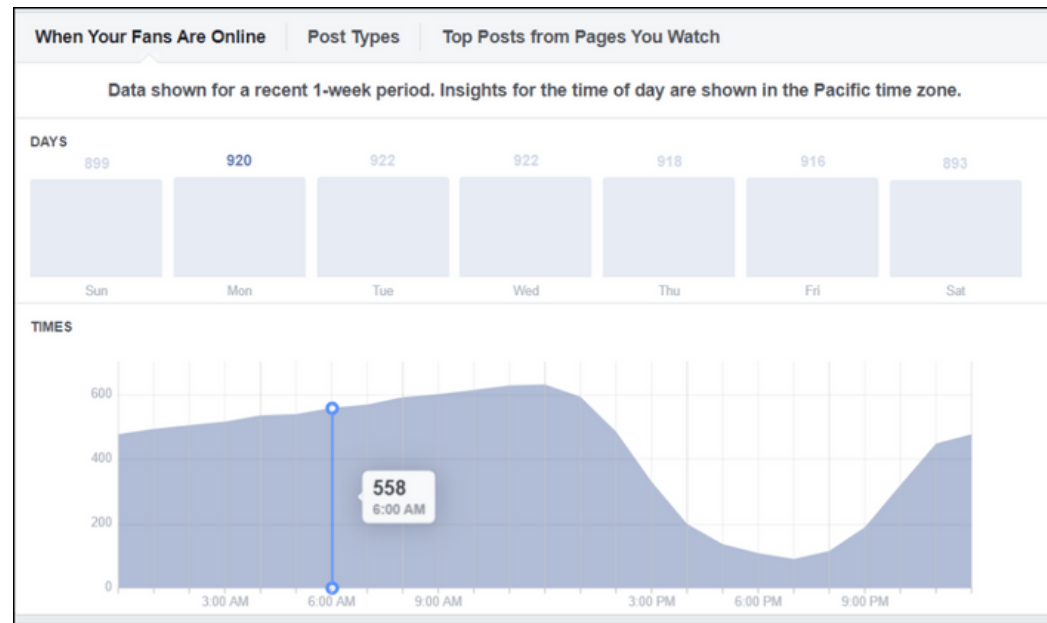
Figure 37: This Graph Displays the Times when One's Followers are Most Active

To address this issue, many larger organizations, such as Eatwith and McDonalds, created multiple social media accounts on the same platform that target different locations and time zones (see Figure 38). This enables organizations spread across time zones to release the same content at different peak activity times.
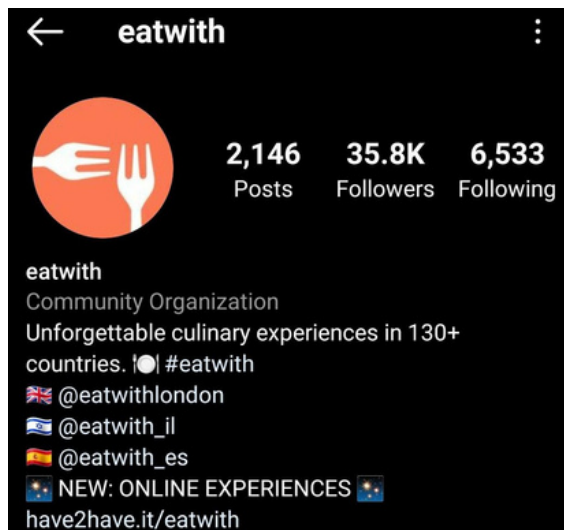
Figure 38: @eatwith and Affiliated Accounts @eatwithlon and @eatwith_es

Staying Active Keeps One's Audience Engaged

Another strategy to boost user engagement is to stay consistently active on social media (Shafer et. al., 2018). Consistent activity means logging on at least once a day to social media and interacting with one's audience through some or all of the following means: replying to comments and DMs, following others, interacting with others' posts, updating one's profile, and posting. Through discussion with experts, we found that especially in the early stages of growing a social media presence, it is very important to converse and engage with one's audience on social media.

During our content trials, which started on November 11th, 2020, we identified significant increases in RRNO's following on both Instagram and Facebook. RRNO's Facebook gained roughly 35 new followers, and its Instagram gained 5 (Figures 39 and 40). Since we were consistently active during the content trials, we can conclude that the consistency of our uploads during our two week publishing period directly contributed to the increase in followings on RRNO's accounts. However, collaborations were the main cause for the significant increase of over 20 Facebook followers between November 16th and 17th.
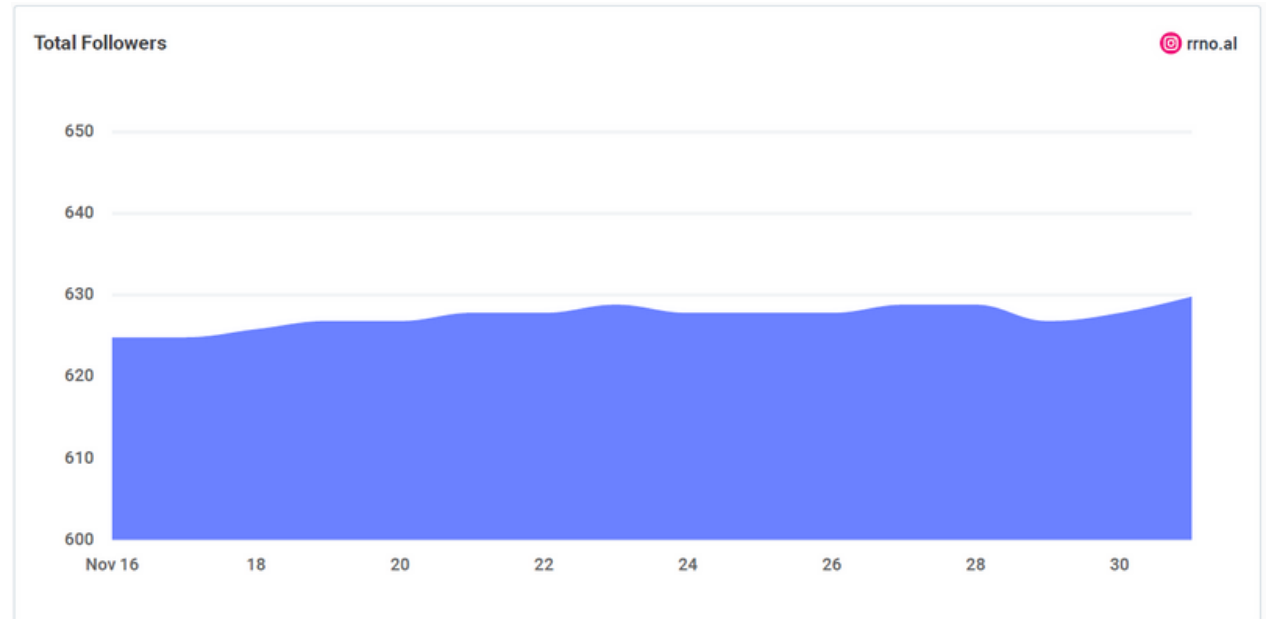
Figure 39: Facebook Following Over the Course of Our 2 Week Testing Period
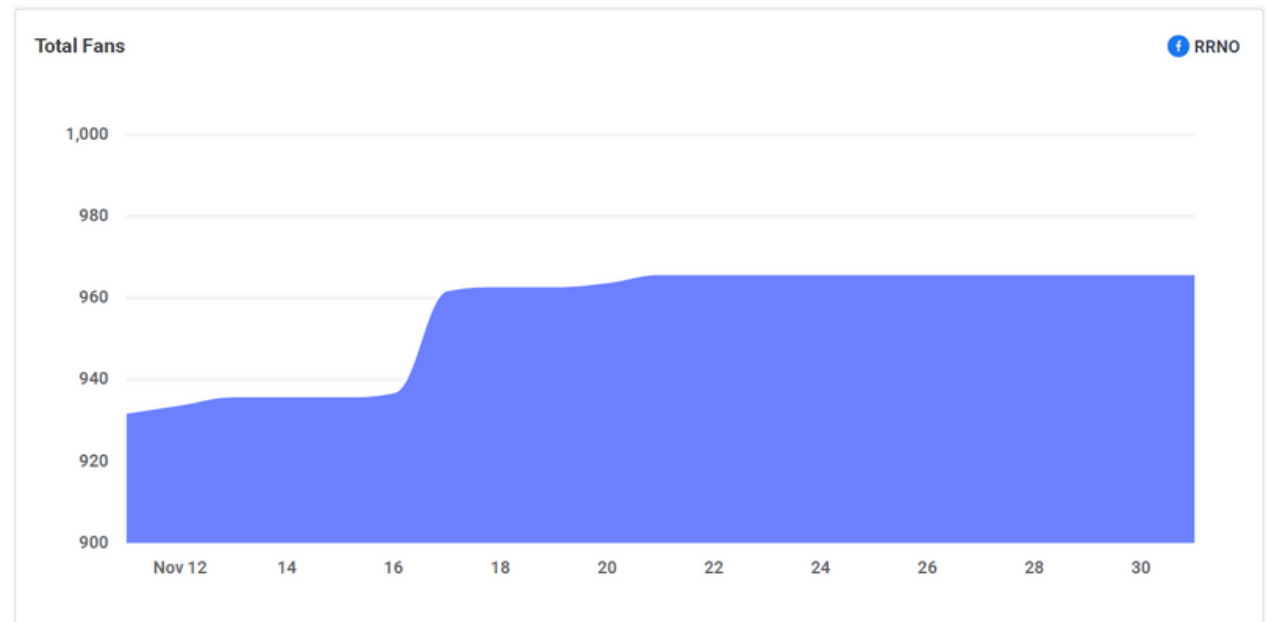
Figure 40: Instagram Following Over the Course of Our 2 Week Testing Period

Collaborating with Influencers Increases Reach

Collaborating with influencers and other organizations that target a similar audience or possess a similar mission can expand an organization's audience (Kilgour et al., 2015; Chatzigeorgiou, 2017). In our interviews, experts use two collaboration techniques to increase reach: requesting influencers to share an organization's posts with their audience and mentioning or tagging influencers in an organization's own posts. In our analysis of FSCMPs, we found that these profiles rely heavily on the mention or tagging strategy when they collaborate with a person or organization (see Figures 41 & 42).

Figure 41: Mention/Tagging Strategy Used on a Facebook Post
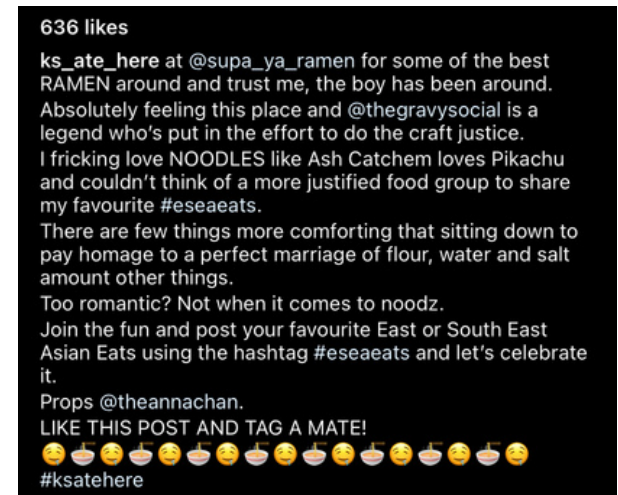
Figure 42: Mention/Tagging Strategy Used on a Instagram Post

In our content trials, we tested these techniques on RRNO's social media platforms. On Facebook, we tested the method of having influencers we knew with large online followings share our posts on their page. This technique was widely successful with our Facebook post, gaining the largest number of

accounts reached and the largest number of engagements out of all our posts at 3,714 accounts reached and 229 engagements (see Figure 43).

tagged a world-renowned, Albanian restaurant and its chef with large online followings to reach potentially new followers (see Figure 44).

Hashtags help increase reach by allowing people to see posts without going to the specific profile page that uploaded the post, making the posts easier to discover for non-followers (Barnhart, 2020). On Instagram, users can follow hashtags to get notified when a post is made with a certain hashtag. In our expert interviews we learned that there is "no one formula" for how to successfully use hashtags. They use a couple of different strategies for deciding which hashtags to include in their posts. First, they research other competitive social media organizations with similar missions or similar target audience to see what hashtags they use. This provides experts with a basis for developing their own hashtags.

Figure 43: Our First Facebook Post where we Tested the Collaboration Strategy. We asked Influencers to Share this Post (Data collected on December 10th, 2020)

Figure 44: Instagram Insights for a Post we @mullixhiu and @bledar_kola (Data collected on November 22nd, 2020)

Using Global and Niche Hashtags Increases Reach

On two of our Instagram posts, we used the mention or tagging technique to test the strategy's effectiveness. We mentioned and

Experts use the maximum number of hashtags, which is 30 on Instagram and Facebook. They recommend including both niche hashtags and globally known

hashtags in one's post. Niche hashtags are only known by the organization's following or people part of its niche. Since very few people use these hashtags, people following the hashtags are more likely to see the organization's posts. Also, less than one million posts use niche hashtags. Globally known hashtags, on the other hand, are followed by various people and organizations, and at least one million posts incorporate them.

While less people might see one's posts in a global hashtag due to the large volume of posts, there are more potential people to reach using globally known hashtags. Therefore, it is ideal to include both globally known and niche hashtags in posts.

We incorporated hashtags in our posts to increase reach to more social media accounts. Hashtags worked very well for Instagram; however, we could not conclude the same for Facebook.

Two of our posts on Instagram reached at least 840 social media accounts as of December 2nd, 2020. The majority of impressions, or total post views, on both posts came from hashtags. Figure 44 shows that of the 843 accounts we were able to reach, 521 of the post views came as a result of the hashtags we used. Similarly, the "Petka" post taken on November 23rd - one day after the post was published - had 773 impressions of which 461 could be attributed to the hashtags we used (see Figures 45 and 46).
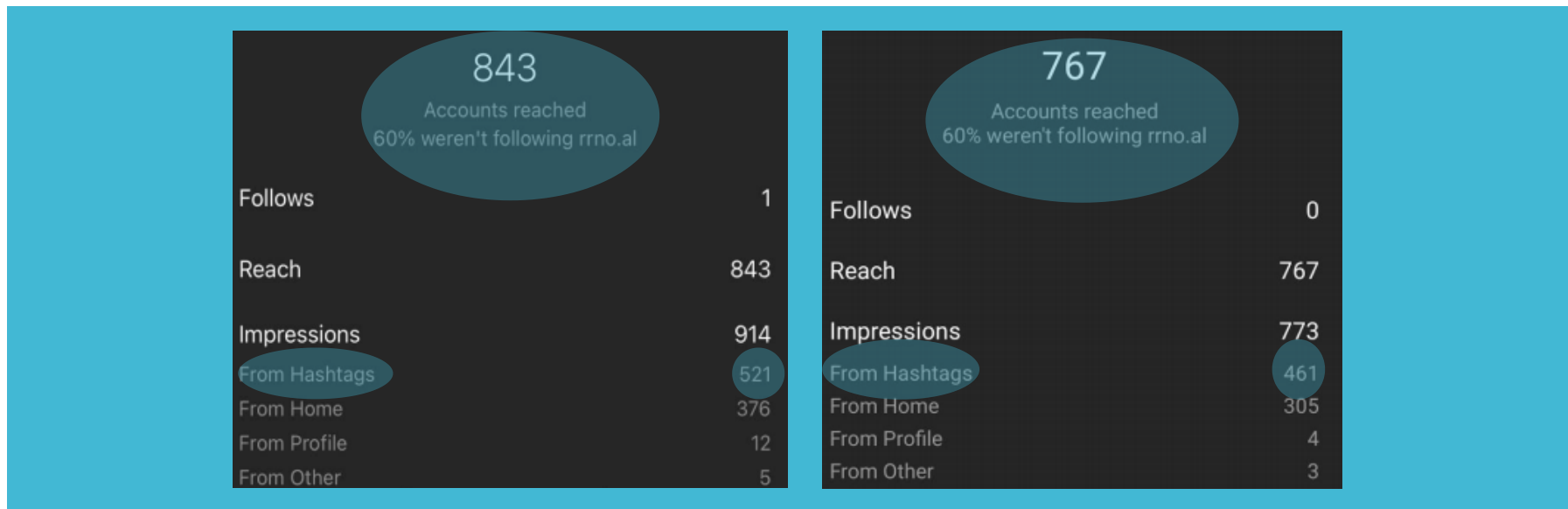
Figure 45: This displays the reach of our
"Petka" Post
(Data collected on November 22nd, 2020)

Figure 46: This displays the reach of our
"Lakror" Post
(Data collected on November 22nd, 2020)

For Facebook, there is no breakdown on how people viewed a post such as on hashtags, RRNO's page, or a shared post. Therefore, we cannot conclude whether hashtags affected the number of accounts reached on our Facebook posts.

Consistency is Key to Maintaining One's Following

Social media practitioners as well as researchers claim that having a consistent posting schedule and consistent content and caption aesthetics are necessary for building an online following. To maintain consistency, experts use a posting schedule as a means to develop a trusting relationship with their audience, making them more likely to engage with future content. This strategy aligns with much of the academic literature on building brand trust and credibility over time (Humphrey et. al., 2016).

Another strategy for maintaining consistency involves keeping content and caption aesthetics consistent with the audience's preferences and interests, which are determined earlier in one's social media development. This includes maintaining similar caption-specific characteristics such as length, format, text font, style, language, and tone of voice - the way a message is conveyed - as well as similar post characteristics such as content themes and photo or video editing styles.

In our observations of FCSMPs, many profiles maintained consistent content and caption aesthetics. This is seen in the way @girleatworld always posts pictures of themselves holding an item of food in their hand with a long, detailed caption and how @emi.eats uses the same caption aesthetics when posting about different locations they visited. @Migrationology always structures the captions of their Facebook video posts with a short description of

what's being cooked in the video followed by a description of where people can find the food. (See examples 47 an 48 below)

In our content trials, our consistent activity on RRNO's social media platforms effectively increased the organization's following. On Facebook, we gained a total of 35 fans, and on Instagram, we gained 5 followers. Before our content trials, there was no growth in either of RRNO's social media following due to the lack of activity since August 2nd, 2019 on its Instagram and lack of original content on its Facebook since August 23rd, 2020. During our content trials, we were unable to confirm if having consistent content and caption aesthetics helped maintain and build RRNO's audience due to the fact that we did not have enough time to see engagement patterns emerge.

Content Consistency

Figure 47: @girleatworld Maintaining a Consistent Image Style.

Caption Consistency

Figure 48: @emi.eats Maintaining a Consistent style, format, and tone in her Captions

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Albanian Alps - Thethi, Albania
(Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

Conclusion:

To help the RRNO Foundation create a social media management and marketing guideline, we applied the key components of a social media strategy: defining and understanding one's target audience, boosting user engagement, increasing reach, maintaining consistency, and evaluating posted content.

Defining one's target audience gives social media managers a clear understanding of how to best format their content to reach their target audience. Additionally, understanding one's target audience informs social media managers of what content elicits the most positive reactions and engagement from the target audience, which can be found through A/B testing on social media. For RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition profiles on Facebook and Instagram, past posts revolving around the themes of food presentation and food preparation were the most engaging in terms of its previous audience. In regards to RRNO's current audience, Facebook posts written in Albanian created significant engagement.

Increasing reach allows social media managers to connect with potential new followers and grow their accounts. To build a strong social media presence, one must increase awareness of its organization and mission in order to grow its following. Through our methods, we identified two strategies that increase awareness: collaborations and hashtags.

This is an image of fried "Kërmill" - a famous dish of Snails known to the Village of Dardha, Albania (Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

Collaborating with the right online figures or influencers - people or organizations that target a similar audience or possess a similar mission as one's account - can help create awareness of one's organization and its mission by connecting it to another large, similar audience. Using collaborations, we were able to reach over 3,700 people on a single Facebook; all of our other posts did not reach more than 400. Hashtags are commonly used to increase awareness because they allow people who don't follow one's account to potentially see and interact with their posts. However, hashtags had varying success depending on the platform; they significantly boosted reach on our Instagram posts but not on Facebook. As a result, it is important to incorporate the maximum number of hashtags, both globally known and niche, on every post.

Boosting user engagement is an important component to consider in a social media development strategy because one must continually keep their audience engaged to create and maintain a strong social media presence. We found two ways to engage with one's audience on social media: the initial post and the follow-up conversation beyond the post. In the initial post, one can boost user engagement by using call to actions in captions, inputting question and answer of the day into captions, offering incentives for completing tasks on social media, and posting on and about holidays. Of the strategies listed, only the "Click the Link" and "Link in Bio" call to actions and posting on and about holidays significantly boosted engagement. One can also boost user engagement beyond the post by responding to comments and direct messages efficiently, following back and interacting with users that have recently followed one's account, scheduling posts to upload at peak follower activity times, and staying active and present on social media.

Having a consistent posting schedule and consistent content and caption aesthetics are necessary for creating and maintaining a loyal online following. Account managers maintain consistency in the length, format, style, language, and tone of their captions as well as in the themes and editing styles of the content they post. They also maintain a consistent posting schedule, so their audience knows when to expect their content. These strategies are used to develop a trusting relationship between an organization and its audience and help one build and maintain a loyal following. Consistent activity during our content trials also led to an increase in followers on both RRNO's Facebook and Instagram.

Social media account holders evaluate posts on social media to understand the performance of their content and strategies. Account managers will be able to identify the engagement of each post through

analyzing the engagement rate on Buffer and the number of reactions to a post in Insights. Additionally, they can identify awareness of posts through analyzing the reach on Buffer as well as a more detailed breakdown of impressions from hashtags and reach from followers and non-followers through Insights. Also, account managers can use Buffer's growth over time analysis to identify what strategies are beneficial to their account's overall development.

Based on our findings, we developed a manual that includes the best practices, components, and strategies for social media development. This manual explains what actions should be completed when "getting started" on social media and what should be done in each stage of the posting process: pre-production, production, and post-production. It also recommends an assortment of strategies account managers should use to understand

their audience, increase reach, boost user engagement, and maintain consistency. The manual also includes a section on special circumstances, which details how to handle unique situations that occur on social media. Overall, this manual covers all key components of social media management and development in a succinct guide that includes general recommendations as well as those specific to the RRNO Foundation.

Buffer logo
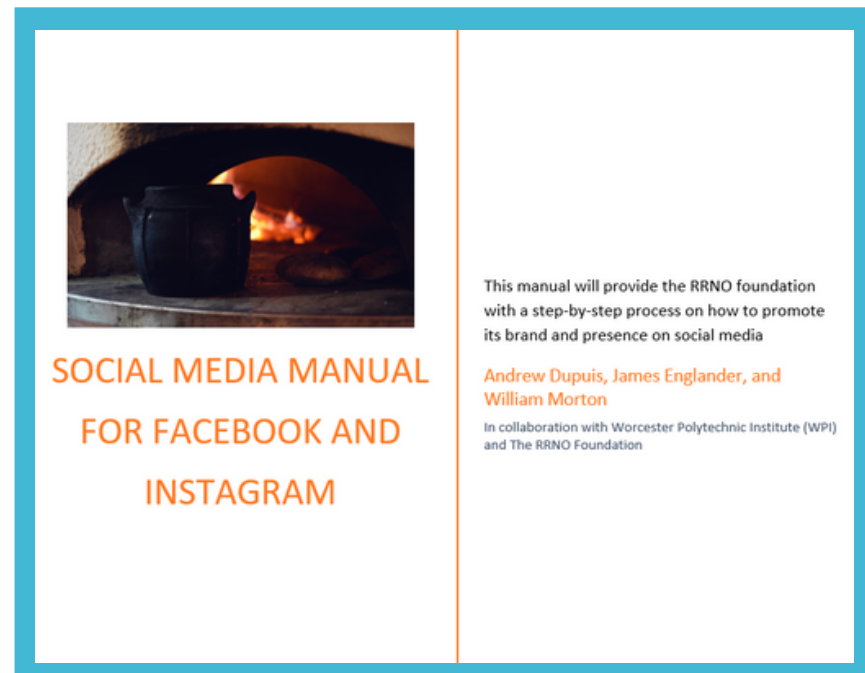
SOCIAL MEDIA MANUAL FOR FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

This manual will provide the RRNO foundation with a step-by-step process on how to promote its brand and presence on social media

Andrew Dupuis, James Englander, and William Morton

In collaboration with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) and The RRNO Foundation

Title Page of Manual

Recommendations:

Since its establishment in 2018, the RRNO foundation has sought to spread awareness and create interest in Albanian cuisine and rural Albania among food tourists through social media. The RRNO foundation would like to strengthen its use of social media. We developed a manual for the RRNO foundation that highlights the best practices, components, and strategies for social media development. The manual includes the following: instructions for using third-party software; strategies for increasing reach; strategies to boost user engagement; best practices for understanding one's audience; and components of social media content and captions. Laid out in five detailed chapters: getting started, pre-production, production, post-production, and special post circumstances; the manual provides a step-by-step process, describing specific recommendations for RRNO to use to successfully promote their brand on social media. Beyond the manual, RRNO will need recommendations for future social media when the foundation plans to expand beyond Facebook and Instagram.

Getting Started

We recommend that the RRNO foundation perform a two to three month long content test and use the metrics provided by Facebook and Instagram Insights and Buffer to help it understand its audience's preferences and interests,

In this Section:

and the following questions related to Facebook and Instagram:

- What is the best day to post?
- What is the best time of day to post?
- How often a week should it post?
- What hashtags provide the most reach on its posts?
- What types of content are the most engaging?
  - Video?
  - Image?
  - Multiple media (both videos and Images)? (called Carousel on Instagram)
  - Text only?
- What content themes are the most appealing?
- Food preparation?
- Food presentation?
- Local villages?
- RRNO Member Personal Stories?
- Landscapes and nature?

Before completing the content trial, we recommend that RRNO set up a third-party social media management software (TPSMMS). We specifically recommend using Buffer because it is easy to use, cost-effective, highly rated, and has hashtag analysis.

Once the TPSMMS is set up, we recommend that the RRNO foundation schedule at least one week's worth of content to be uploaded once a day at a consistent time throughout the week. Based on our findings, for each post, we recommend that RRNO has a theme for its content, has consistent content and caption format, and incorporate strategies to increase engagement and reach such as calls to action and hashtags.

To help RRNO decide which themes and formats to use, we recommend that it observe food-centric social media profiles and organizations that have a similar mission or target a similar audience on Facebook and Instagram to get a sense of what practices, components, and strategies are commonly used and effective. If a holiday occurs within the content trial posting period, we recommend posting a holiday-themed post with hashtags pertaining to the holiday, if and only if the holiday is positively recognized among its audience.

We also recommend that the RRNO foundation stay active and continually engage with its audience during this testing period. We recommend RRNO do so by incorporating engagement boosting strategies in the initial post such as QOTD/AOTD as well as beyond the post through means of responding to all comments or DMs from users and following back and interacting with users that have recently followed the foundation's account.

Finally, we recommend that RRNO analyze the analytics two days after the day a post was published due to

the fact that new posts disappear from followers' feeds after two days, which means that it is unlikely to receive any further engagement beyond that date.

In terms of reviewing the analytics, we recommend that the RRNO foundation focus on engagement rate, also called engagement-to-reach ratio, and total reach as these metrics will inform RRNO of how engaging its content is based on its audience. This will allow the foundation to better understand the preferences and interests of its audience, which will enable them to tailor content to their audience's liking. In addition, we also recommend using the hashtag performance feature on Buffer to understand which hashtags are generating the most impression and therefore, reaching the most potential followers. We suggest performing this experiment for at least 2 months. This timeframe, supported by research, is considered to be enough time to collect the data required to answer the aforementioned questions.

Content Process After Getting Started

Preproduction

Research Other Organizations

Before creating posts, we recommend that the RRNO foundation research and evaluate other people or organizations that possess similar missions and or target similar audiences. Such include other general food tourism operations that seek to use food to attract food tourists to specific destinations or more specifically encourage a certain group to return to said destination to reconnect with their roots or people and organizations whose target audience are members of the Albanian diaspora. In addition, we recommend that RRNO observe other food centric social media profiles who may not focus on reconnecting its audience to its roots but rather focus on authentic cuisine.

Table 8 contains the organizations, influencers, and food centric social media managers we recommend RRNO to research and evaluate on the next page.

This will help RRNO identify other testable strategies as well as gain a better understanding of what its target audience prefers in terms of content. RRNO can then adapt this in its social media strategy.

We would also like to note that these people and organizations we recommended RRNO to research and evaluate (see Table 8) are the same organizations we recommend it potentially network or collaborate with.

Food Bloggers:	Members of RRNO:	Celebrities/Influencers:	Organizations:
- Mark Weins (aka Migrationology) - @topfoodmoment - Buzzfeed Tasty - @NYCSporkful - @Foodys - @albanianfoodtours - @ks_ate_here - @whenfetametolive	- Fejsal Dimiraj - Jessica Natali - Ronald Bukri - Albert Hazma - Ardit Curri - Bledar Kola	- Bebe Rexha - Ava Max - Jim Belushi - Robert Belushi - Rita Ora - Gordan Ramsey - Rachel Ray	- Go As Local - Outdoor Albania - Food Bank Albania - Museum of Food and Drink - Mullixhiu - Noma - Team Albanians (Dani Hoxha) - MAASBESA - Albanian American National Organization - Albanian Chef Academy - James Beard Foundation - Albanian Food Network

Table 8: Recommendations For Research and Collaborations

Establish a Posting Schedule

Prior to crafting and uploading posts, we recommend RRNO create a weekly schedule for posting. This details how frequent RRNO posts, what days of the week it posts, and what time of the day it posts at. This information can be concluded from the recommendations on Buffer. Establishing a schedule on a weekly basis allows for RRNO to maintain consistency with its social media and instills an expectation from its audience.

Production

Food Related Visuals are Recommended

Our findings from our historical content analysis suggest that food themed posts are the most engaging in terms of RRNO's previous audience on its Albanian Gastronomy Expedition Instagram and Facebook accounts. We recommend posting photos and videos of the preparation and presentation of Albanian cuisine.

This consists of visuals showing the process of creation to consumption of an Albanian dish. These could show the raw ingredients of a dish, the chef making the dish, the final display of the cooked dish, the chef serving the dish, and the dish being eaten by people. With visuals showing the final display of a cooked dish, we recommend presenting the final dish on a table or in front of a plain background to accentuate the texture and details of the dish.

Additionally, we recommend including the historical context and cultural significance of the food in the post considering RRNO was founded to spread awareness of the culinary traditions of Albanian cuisine. That being said, we also recommend periodically incorporating other themes such as nature to prevent the content from seeming repetitive.

Caption Recommendations

Based on our findings, we recommend that RRNO incorporate the following elements in Table 9 into their social media post captions.

Figure 49 provides a visual representation of each element listed in Table 9.

Element:	How/Where to Use:	Strategy:
Hook/Questions	Use an interesting fact/question that relates or doesn't relate to Albania or theme of the content, at the beginning of a caption. *Keep this short so the whole hook/question can be seen without needing to hit "See more"	Boost User Engagement
Call to Actions	Use this strategy throughout a caption to compel users to perform an action you desire.	Boost User Engagement
Hashtags	Use this strategy at the end of your caption in a consolidated block of text.	Increase Reach
Geo-tags	Use this strategy in the separate Geo-tag section of the caption to display where the photo/video was taken.	Increase Reach
Mention/Tag People	Use this strategy throughout a caption whenever you are referencing another account user. Commonly used when collaborating with an influencer on a post. *If you are referencing the photographer, do so at the end of your caption directly above the hashtags*	Increase Reach

Table 9: Recommended Elements of a Caption and their Strategies

Figure 49: Example Caption With Sections Color Coordinated with Elements in Table 9

Requesting Collaboration

We recommend that the RRNO foundation request a collaboration via a simple email or descriptive direct message. In this email/direct message, we recommend RRNO include the following:

- Who it is?
  - Explain the foundation and its mission
- What its intentions are with this particular post?
  - To give it some attention
- Why it chose to ask this particular influencer to collaborate?
  - Typical Reason: This user has shown interest in the topic
- Asking if they would be willing to share this post with their followers

As for a long term relationship/collaboration, if there's a particular influencer or organization RRNO would like to connect with,

experts recommend sending an "influencer package" containing RRNO merchandise or other incentives as well as a letter that is similar to the following:

"Hi _____, we are the RRNO foundation, (describe mission). We see that much of your work relates to the many projects we are working on. Would you be interested in collaborating with us in the future?"

To help increase awareness of the RRNO foundation, its mission, and the Albanian Gastronomy Expedition outside of social media, we recommend that RRNO connect with free-lance journalists or bloggers in the food scene, advertise its mission on food publication sites, and reach out to documentarians.

Postproduction

Evaluating Content

After two days of publication, we recommend RRNO evaluate the posts using Insights and Buffer. In Buffer, we recommend assessing the engagement rate metric as it indicates how engaging the post was. In Buffer and Insights, we recommend assessing the reach number as it shows how many accounts the post was seen by. In Instagram Insights, we recommend RRNO observe the impressions from hashtags and reach from non-followers as in conjunction with each other, they can identify the success of the hashtags in reaching new accounts. In Facebook Insights, especially if there is a link in a post, we recommend RRNO look at the breakdown of different post clicks on a post.

Respond to Comments and DMs

We also recommend that RRNO's social media manager respond to comments and direct messages in a quick and efficient manner. For comments, RRNO should respond when the comment is left on the post. For direct messages, RRNO should respond when they get notified of one. This indicates to the audience that RRNO values their opinions and thoughts and increases the likelihood that they will engage with RRNOs content in the future.

Choose New Hashtags

To continue to reach new accounts, we recommend that RRNO look for new hashtags to incorporate into its posts. To find new hashtags, we recommend researching other accounts similar to RRNO and observing what hashtags they use. In conjunction, we recommend that RRNO identify the hashtags with low reach on its posts, using hashtag analysis, so they can be replaced by new found hashtags on future posts.

Follow New Accounts

To boost engagement and followers, we recommend RRNO follow the accounts that are consistently interacting - liking and commenting - with its content. We also recommend that they follow other organizations who are a part of the food tourism industry, possess a similar mission as RRNO, or target a similar audience as RRNO. Doing this increases the likelihood that these accounts will either collaborate with or follow RRNO and possibly increase awareness of RRNO's social media.

Special Post Circumstances: Controversy and Giveaways

Handling Controversy

How the RRNO foundation responds to controversy is dependent on the type of controversy and its audience's opinion of it. There are two types of controversy: internal and external. An internal crisis, for example, would be caused by a member or members of RRNO such as posting something offensive on RRNO's social media. In this case, we recommend that the organization take the accommodative approach and make a post apologizing to its audience and outlining a plan for improvement. Additionally, we recommend that the foundation take some time off from posting after the crisis on all its social media platforms until the negative publicity subsides.

An external crisis is a crisis caused by a person outside of the RRNO foundation. We recommend three ways to respond to this form of crisis. 1). If the external crisis is directly related to the RRNO foundation, for example, an organization the RRNO foundation collaborates with skimmed money raised in a fundraiser, the RRNO foundation should apologize as if it were an internal crisis mentioned

above. 2). If the external crisis is indirectly related to the RRNO foundation, for example, an organization in the same industry as the RRNO foundation is involved in a controversial incident, the RRNO foundation's response will depend on its audience. If their audience requests a response, we recommend that the RRNO foundation responds in a way that defends its integrity and shows that the foundation is not affiliated with the other organization. 3). If the external crisis is indirectly or not related to the RRNO foundation and its audience is not requesting its take on the controversial issue, we recommend that the foundation does not respond.

We also recommend that the RRNO foundation keep up with the local Albanian news about other food tourism organizations that may be linked to the RRNO foundation. This is due to the fact that, especially in the United States, controversial issues or events show up first on the news. Therefore, if RRNO could know at the same time as everyone

else if they are connected to the event, they can respond quicker. This is important because if an organization is connected to a controversial issue or event, its audience will want a response as soon as possible. Furthermore, the longer the organization waits to respond, the larger the backlash they will receive.

How RRNO Should Host Giveaways

We recommend that RRNO use giveaways to give back to its social media community as a means to incentivize its audience to complete a task. We recommend two approaches for determining a winner from a giveaway: random choice or reward everyone who participated. For random choice, we recommend hosting the giveaway on a single Facebook or Instagram post where people enter by commenting on the post then use the website commentpicker.com to choose a random winner from the comments of the post. To encourage more

engagement, we recommend allowing people to enter the giveaway multiple times. For prizes, we recommend a gift card, recipe book, or discounts on future RRNO programs. The last part of random choice giveaways is announcing the winners. We recommend that RRNO announce winners publicly on a previously established giveaway deadline to accomplish two tasks: ending the giveaway and ensuring the contest was not fake or biased. If RRNO does not publicly announce the winners, its audience will perceive the giveaway as an empty contest and potentially feel manipulated for engagement, leading to controversy. The other approach for determining a winner from a giveaway, is rewarding everyone. This is done to encourage the entire community to work together to surpass a milestone for RRNO. For prizes, we recommend offering a live, virtual cooking class to motivate audience members to help the foundation achieve a specific goal, such as reaching over 1,000 followers on Facebook or 700 on Instagram.

Future Social Media Use

We have a few recommendations for RRNO once it starts building a social media presence beyond Facebook and Instagram. First, we recommend that RRNO look into a mention-tracking software, such as Nuvi, as a means to monitor how people are talking about the foundation. Second, we recommend branching out to new platforms to increase awareness of RRNO and its mission of preserving, promoting and developing Albanians cuisine worldwide.

Before expanding onto additional platforms, we recommend that the RRNO foundation choose one of its existing platforms, Instagram or Facebook, to be its primary social media platform based on which audience better resembles its ideal target audience. The other platforms the foundation becomes active on

should then be used to direct followers from those platforms to its primary account. Seeing as though RRNO is targeting a younger demographic, we recommend that the foundation make Instagram its primary account because Instagram has a younger audience than Facebook.

However, we recommend that if a single person is managing the foundation's accounts, RRNO should not be on more than three platforms. Being active on four or more social media platforms has the potential to decrease RRNO's ability to create organization recognition because it won't be able to consistently engage with its audience on each platform. In other words, RRNO should focus its energy on staying constantly active on two to three social media platforms rather than having sporadic activity across four or more social media platforms. When expanding beyond three platforms, we recommend hiring additional employees to help manage certain

RRNO accounts in order to maintain a consistent online presence and continually interact with its audience.

For other platforms, we highly recommend TikTok seeing as though RRNO is targeting a younger audience, and TikTok is the newest social media platform popular among social media users ages 16-25. However, due to the lack of revenue options on the platform, many TikTok stars have also branched out to other platforms such as Youtube and Twitter. We recommend Youtube because the platform has many features that enable RRNO to earn money including memberships and advertisements (Cooper, 2020) Twitter is another viable option; it serves as a great platform for providing short, text based announcements or updates to one's audience. If RRNO uses Twitter, we recommend that the foundation avoids videos or photos as those are less engaging on the platform than text and links.

City of Pogradec, Albania
(Photo from RRNO's Albanian Gastronomy Expedition)

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Appendix A.1 - Interview Consent Script With Key Informants

Hello _____.

(If the entire team is present): We are Andrew Dupuis, William Morton, and James Englander.

(If the entire team is not present): I am _____ (and this is _____). Unfortunately, (_____) could not make it today due to a prior commitment.

It's a pleasure to meet you. We are students at Worcester Polytechnic Institute designing a social media marketing strategy for the RRNO Foundation for our IQP project. The RRNO Foundation is a non-profit organization created by a group of Albanian chefs aimed at preserving, promoting, and developing the culinary traditions of their homeland through documentation of old forms of culinary heritage.

Thank you very much for meeting with us today. We estimate this will take roughly 30 minutes to an hour. Would it be alright if we record this interview? Feel free to let us know if for any reason you do not feel comfortable with us recording this interview, that is perfecting fine. Also, if you do not want to answer a particular question, let us know and we will move on to the next topic. Also, if there are any questions that are confusing, please let us know and we will try to clarify.
(open conversation)

Additionally, we would like to clarify any personal concerns you may have. Any information you share with us is completely confidential and will only be used for research purposes with your permission. We would like to inform you that, as part of this project, our university requires us to write and publish our findings in a research paper. If you would like, we could send you a copy of the finalized report. With that being said, would you be willing to let us use your name in our project documents? Also, can we quote you in our project report and related documents?
(open conversation)

Our group asked you to participate in this interview today because we would like to learn about the components of an effective social media marketing strategy and best practices for creating and uploading content. Before we start, do you have any questions for us?
(open conversation)

Appendix A.2 - Interview Questions for Key Informants

- *What are the important components to address when developing a strategy?*
  - *What actions boost success on social media?*
    - *What strategies do you implement to boost user engagement?*
    - *What strategies do you use to reach new potential followers?*
  - *What actions hinder success on social media?*
- *What is your process for uploading content?*
  - *Preproduction?*
    - *What do you look for in the subject of a photo or video?*
    - *What technology have you used for previous photos?*
  - *Production?*
    - *What practices do you use when formatting your captions?*
    - *What do you include in your captions?*
    - *What factors determine the length, and content of a caption?*
    - *Is it important to maintain consistency in your captions?*
  - *Postproduction?*
    - *What is your upload schedule?*
      - *How often would you suggest one post when starting up a social media?*
    - *What events or factors prompt you to post content?*
- *What technology or services have you used or are using to enhance your content?*
- *Have you used Facebook or Instagram Insights to aid in posting?*
  - *What are the most important metrics to assess in Insights?*
  - *What are some ideas or metrics you can't find in Insights?*
    - *What third party software features are the most useful?*
- *What difficulties have you had developing social media?*

Appendix A.3 - Optional Interview Questions for Key Informants

- *What are some differences between creating posts for Facebook and Instagram?*
  - *Do you post the same content?*
  - *Does the caption have similar formats?*
  - *Is cross-posting beneficial or detrimental to post and social media performance overall?*
- *Do you have any other important information or insight on running a food-centric social media account?*
- *What types of photos have you found are most appealing to your audience?*
  - *Ex. Pictures depicting nature*
  - *Ex. Pictures containing people*
  - *Ex. Pictures containing food*
    - *What tactics/strategies or style advice do you use when posting food content?*
    - *What are some techniques to promote food in general?*

Appendix A.4 - Closing Interview Script for Key Informants

Thank you for dedicating time out of your busy schedule to meet with us today. We greatly appreciate your wonderful insight. Was there anything that you think we missed or a topic that you wanted to cover more?
 (open conversation)

Would you like us to send a copy of our transcript?
(open conversation)

Please contact us if you find relevant information later on at our group email (gr-rrno-social-media-a20@wpi.edu). Thank you again for your time. We hope you have a nice day.

Appendix B.1 - Choosing a Third-Party Software

Using third-party software to manage social media accounts is very beneficial to account runners. From background research and expert recommendations, we decided to assess six software packages: Later, Hootsuite, NapoleonCat, Buffer, Sprout Social, or SocialPilot. All these applications help social media account holders organize and run their social media accounts. After careful analysis, we concluded that RRNO should use Buffer due to its cost, features, and reviews.

All these software suites range in price. On top of that, each individual software contains multiple plans for different costs. The minimum cost for each plan ranges from free to 99 dollars per month, and each plan offers a free trial. Buffer costs 28 dollars a month which is market standard pricing. Additionally, each of the six software packages provide discounts for non-profit organizations, and the majority of the organizations, including Buffer, have a discount at 50 percent of the standard price. The minimum cost and non-profit discount for each plan is shown in table below (Buffer | Social Media Analytics & Reporting for Growing Brands, n.d.; H. Inc, n.d.; Instagram Analytics, n.d.; Inc, n.d.; Social Media Analytics Tool, n.d.; Sprout Social, n.d.). For a great price, Buffer has excellent features.

These software suites provide tools to help account runners succeed when using their social media. One thing all these software packages provide is a scheduling tool that allows account holders to create posts that will be scheduled to be published at a time of their choosing. Buffer, along with the other five third-party software suites, provides a post scheduling tool for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, and Pinterest, which is beneficial if the RRNO foundation wants to expand to more platforms beyond Facebook and Instagram. The table below shows the platforms supported on other social media third-party software packages (Buffer | Social Media Analytics & Reporting for Growing Brands, n.d.; H. Inc, n.d.; Instagram Analytics, n.d.; Inc, n.d.; Social Media Analytics Tool, n.d.; Sprout Social, n.d.).

Furthermore, these software suites provide analytic features that further the understanding of social media analytics beyond Facebook and Instagram Insights. The foundation needs the chosen third-party software to contain analytical features for Facebook and Instagram. At the minimum cost, Buffer has analytic tools available for at least Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. In terms of common analytic features, the RRNO foundation requires the chosen third-party software to include growth analysis, demographic data, timing analytics, and post engagement measurement. Buffer includes a growth analysis feature detailing the growth of an account over time. This can be used

Appendix B.1 - Choosing a Third-Party Software

to identify what an account runner is doing correctly and incorrectly to attract new followers and more attention. Also, Buffer provides demographic data that shows the age and gender of followers and provides location data like top cites, countries, time zones, and languages spoken of the followers. Another tool Buffer contains is timing analytics which provides the account runners with the best times to post based on the activity and engagement of their followers. In addition, Buffer has post-engagement measurements that detail the level of engagement and attraction to each post. This allows account holders to identify what content is the most attractive and engaging with followers. The common features available for each software suite is detailed in table below (Buffer | Social Media Analytics & Reporting for Growing Brands, n.d.; H. Inc, n.d.; Instagram Analytics, n.d.; Inc, n.d.; Social Media Analytics Tool, n.d.; Sprout Social, n.d.). Beyond common .

features, third-party software can provide more unique features as well

Moreover, some of these third-party social media software packages provide more unique analytical features than others. The RRNO foundation is looking for software that provides hashtag analysis. Buffer offers the unique features of hashtag analysis and frequency analysis. Post frequency analysis details how often account runners should post to generate the most engagement. Hashtag analysis identifies what hashtags would cause the high levels of engagement with and attraction to a post and provides them to the account runners. This allows account runners to increase the performance of and interest in their content. The unique features of each software suite are shown in table below (Buffer | Social Media Analytics & Reporting for Growing Brands, n.d.; H. Inc, n.d.; Instagram Analytics, n.d.; Inc, n.d.; Social Media Analytics Tool, n.d.; Sprout

Social, n.d.).

Finally, all software suites that were assessed were rated and reviewed on Capterra – a software review website similar to Yelp. Buffer has the highest rating, at 4.5 stars, among all the software packages. The ratings of each software suites are detailed in the table below (Buffer | Social Media Analytics & Reporting for Growing Brands, n.d.; H. Inc, n.d.; Instagram Analytics, n.d.; Inc, n.d.; Social Media Analytics Tool, n.d.; Sprout Social, n.d.).

In conclusion, we choose and recommend to use Buffer as a third party social media manager because it is offered at an affordable, discounted price, contains the common and unique features important to RRNO, and has the highest rating on Capterra.

Appendix B.2 - Third-Party Software Comparison Table Part 1

	Later	Buffer	NapoleonCat	SocialPilot	Hootsuite	Sprout Social
Minimum Cost	Free	$28 per month (free trial available)	$21 per month (free trial available)	$25 per month (free trial available)	$29 per month (free trial available)	$99 per month (free trial available)
Non-Profit Discount	50%	50%	50%	Yes Unknown	50%	50%
Scheduling Tool	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Platforms Available to the Scheduling Tool	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Linkedin	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Pinterest, TikTok	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Pinterest, Youtube	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Linkedin
Growth Analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Demographic Data	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Timing Analytics		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Appendix B.2 - Third-Party Software Comparison Table Part 2

Post Engagement Measurements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Hashtag Analysis		Yes		Yes		
Platforms Available for Analytics	Instagram	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Youtube	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Pinterest	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Pinterest, Youtube	Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Linkedin
Capterra Rating (#/5 Stars)	4.4	4.5	N/A	4.4	4.3	4.4

Appendix B.2 - Third-Party Software Comparison Table Part 3

Customer Response Analysis					Yes	Yes
Competition Analysis			Yes			Yes
Post Frequency Analysis		Yes				
Influencer Discovery				Yes		
Online Review Management						Yes
Trend Identification				Yes		

Appendix C.1- Buffer Facebook Report

Final Report Facebook

November 11, 2020 to December 1, 2020

Performance   *RRNO*

Engaged Users	Post Impressions	Reactions	Post Reach
268 ↗244%	**5,997** ↗703%	**121** ↗405%	**4,732** ↗788%

Page & Post Engagements	Link Clicks	New Fans	Posts
344 ↗270%	**26** ↗2,500%	**35** ↗1,650%	**5**

Average performance   *RRNO*

Daily average engagements	Daily average impressions	Daily average clicks
16 ↗300%	**286** ↗695%	**1** ↗100%

Total Fans   *RRNO*
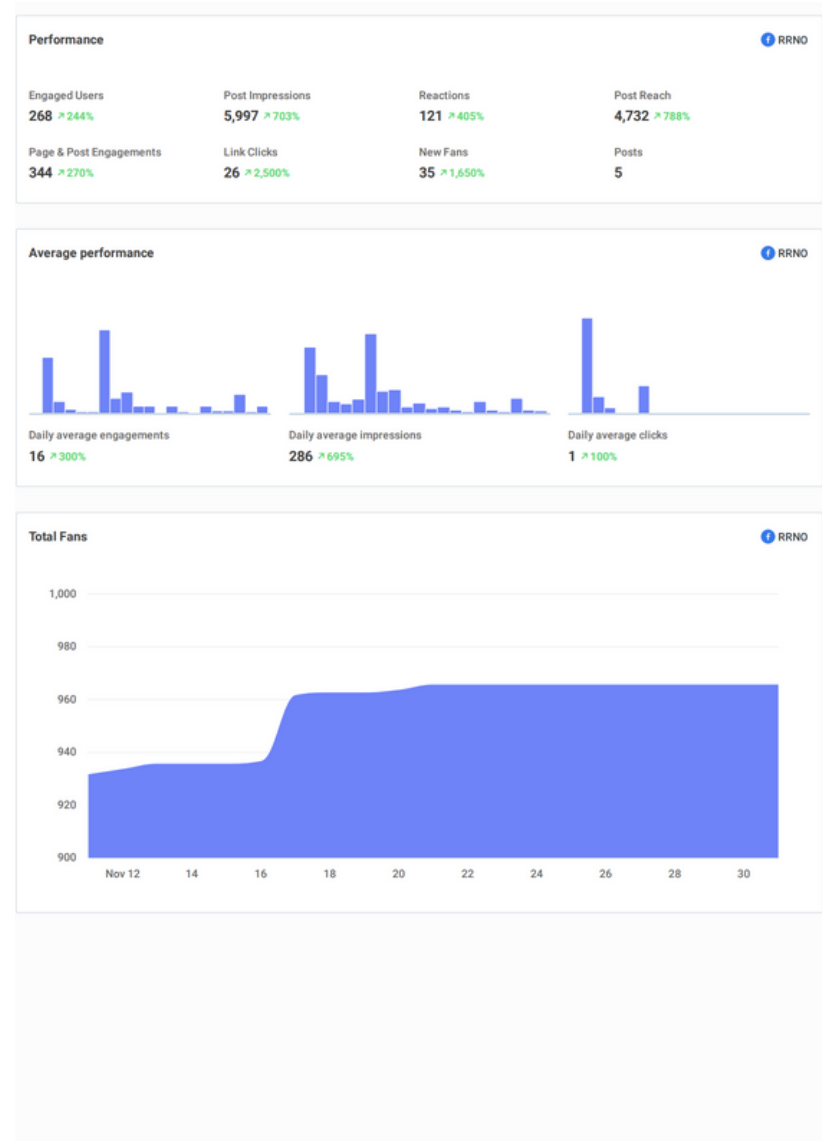
Help

Appendix C.1- Buffer Facebook Report

Post summary ⓘ RRNO

Posts	Reach	Reactions
5	4,162	28
Comments	Shares	Engagement Rate
1	11	4.35%

Hashtag performance ⓘ RRNO

Rank	Hashtag	Posts	Average Reach ↓	Average Eng. Rate
1	#naturephotography	2	1,995	7.36%
2	#naturelovers	2	1,995	7.36%
3	#landscape	2	1,995	7.36%
4	#landscapephotography	2	1,995	7.36%
5	#natgeolandscape	2	1,995	7.36%

Post insights ⓘ RRNO

Showing 5 posts in total   Sorted by Date

November 11, 2020 07:21pm
Would you be interested in visiting the village your family came from 🏔 🏔 Your interests are essential to our project 🏔 We, the RRNO Foundation, are working on a project to empower rural communities through culinary tourism. As part of our project, we have partnered

Post Clicks	Reactions	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
140	9	4,313	3,714	3.90%	—

November 18, 2020 08:00pm
🌽🌽 🌽 🌽 🌽. 🌽🌽 🌽. 🌽🌽🌽/🌽🌽🌽 🌽 🌽. 🌽🌽🌽 🌽🌽 🌽🌽🌽 🌽 🌽🌽 🌽🌽 🌽🌽🌽🌽 🌽 Tell us more about your travel interests in the survey link below 🌽 🌽🌽🌽 🌽🌽 🌽🌽 🌽 http://wpi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9QwHshL5dEk6PC8 **If you have

Post Clicks	Reactions	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
1	3	77	65	9.09%	—

November 20, 2020 05:13pm
Can you guess the name of this savory Albanian dish 🍝 🍝 - This is petka, a home-cooked pasta dish often topped with porcini mushrooms and duck. This is one of the signature dishes served Mullixhiu by a famous chef and co-founder of the RRNO Foundation Chef Bled

Post Clicks	Reactions	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
3	3	69	61	13.04%	—

November 22, 2020 07:21pm
Brief History of Lakror 🥧 At the end of the 15th century, the territory of present day Albania fell under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The country of Albania was under their rule for almost 500 years, which heavily influenced the culinary traditions of Albanian cuisine

Post Clicks	Reactions	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
4	2	52	46	15.38%	—

November 28, 2020 05:38pm
Rrofsh sa malet e qofsh sa motet Shqipëri. GËZUAR FESTAT E NËNTORIT! 🇦🇱 🇦🇱 . . . 🇦🇱 Follow us 🏔 @rrno.al and Join us in our journey 🏔 Albanian Gastronomy Expedition Photo Credits 🏔 : @matthiashaupt _____ #albania #albaniancountry
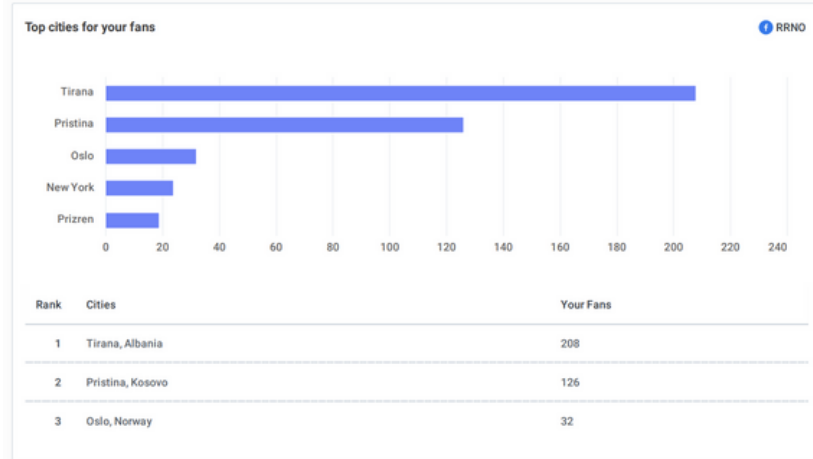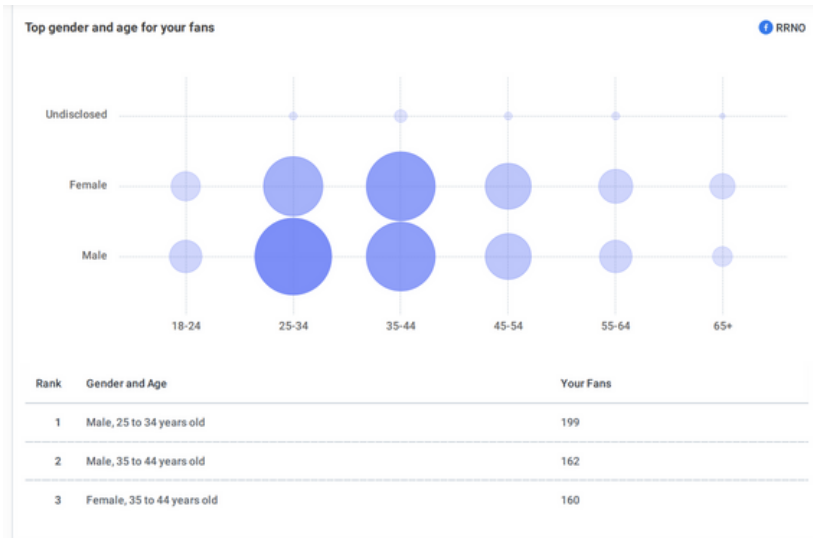
Post Clicks	Reactions	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
22	11	317	276	14.51%	—

Audience overview for your fans ⓘ RRNO

Top gender and age	Top place
Male, 25-34	Tirana, Albania

Appendix C.1- Buffer Facebook Report

Top gender and age for your fans

Rank	Gender and Age	Your Fans
1	Male, 25 to 34 years old	199
2	Male, 35 to 44 years old	162
3	Female, 35 to 44 years old	160

Top cities for your fans

Rank	Cities	Your Fans
1	Tirana, Albania	208
2	Pristina, Kosovo	126
3	Oslo, Norway	32

Audience overview for people reached

Top gender and age
Male, 35-44

Top place
Athens, Greece

Top gender and age for people reached

Rank	Gender and Age	People Reached
1	Male, 35 to 44 years old	742
2	Male, 25 to 34 years old	725
3	Female, 35 to 44 years old	503

Appendix C.1- Buffer Facebook Report

Appendix C.1- Buffer Facebook Report
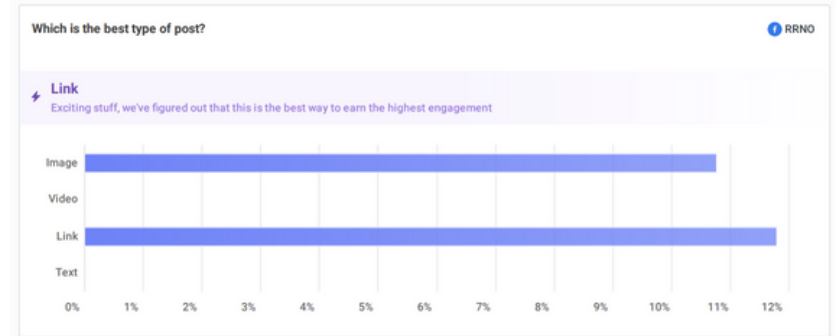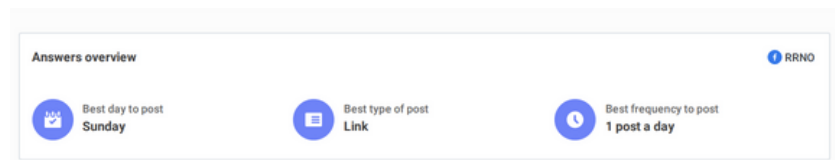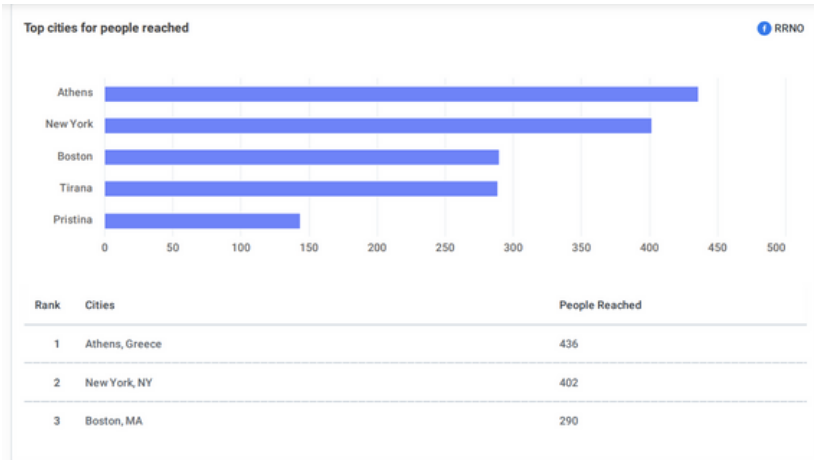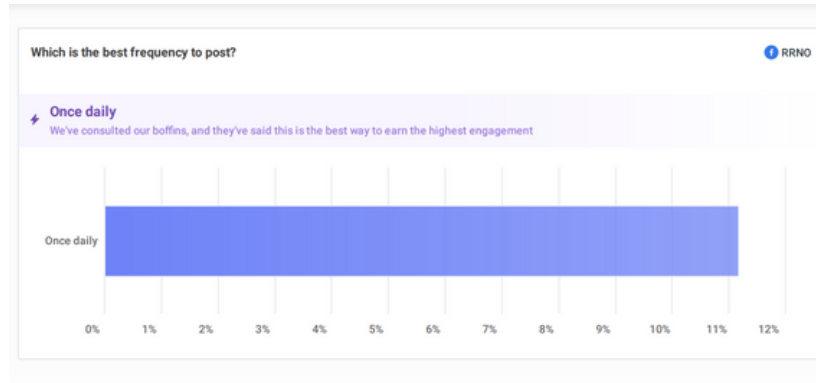
Appendix C.2- Buffer Instagram Report

Final Report Instagram
November 16, 2020 to December 1, 2020

Help

Performance   rrno.al

Posts   Impressions   Reach
6   3,881 ↗ 27,622%   3,388 ↗ 67,660%

Likes   Comments   New Followers
248   1   5 ↗ 67%

Average performance   rrno.al

Daily average impressions   Average likes per post   Average comments per post
243 ↗ 24,200%   41 ↗ 4,100%   0

Total Followers   rrno.al

Appendix C.2- Buffer Instagram Report

Post summary — rrno.al

Posts	Impressions	Reach
6	3,746	3,350

Likes	Comments	Engagement Rate
248	1	6.70%

Hashtag performance — rrno.al

Rank	Hashtag	Posts	Average Reach ↓	Average Eng. Rate
1	#foodart	1	847	4.63%
2	#delicious	1	847	4.63%
3	#albanianagastronomy	1	847	4.63%
4	#culinary	1	847	4.63%
5	#traditions	1	847	4.63%

Post insights — rrno.al

Showing 6 posts in total — Sorted by Date

November 16, 2020 10:16pm
Would you be interested in visiting the village your family came from 🇦🇱 🇦🇱 TELL US IN OUR SURVEY 🇦🇱 Link in Bio! 🇦🇱 ... We, the RRNO Foundation, are working on a project to empower rural communities through culinary tourism

Likes	Comments	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
67	0	536	454	12.69%	—

November 18, 2020 07:54pm
... Tell us more about your travel interests in our survey 🇦🇱 Link in Bio! If you have already filled out the survey let us know by ... Also let us know your thoughts

Likes	Comments	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
48	0	533	422	9.19%	—

November 20, 2020 05:01pm
Can you guess the name of this savory Albanian dish 🇦🇱 🇦🇱 - This is petka, a home-cooked pasta dish often topped with porcini mushrooms and duck. This is one of the signature dishes served @mullixhiu by a famous chef and co-founder of the RRNO Foundation

Likes	Comments	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
43	0	929	847	4.63%	—

November 22, 2020 04:48pm
Our personal favorite is a lakror filled with wild cabbages. What are your favorite lakror fillings 🇦🇱 🇦🇱 Comment Below 🇦🇱 _____ ... We would greatly appreciate your response.

Likes	Comments	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
29	1	845	840	3.55%	—

November 25, 2020 04:00pm
🇦🇱 ... We would first like to thank everyone who has taken the time to fill out our #survey. Our partners @wpi have received 23 responses!!! 🇦🇱 We are hoping to reach 50 responses by next week... We need your help to get there.

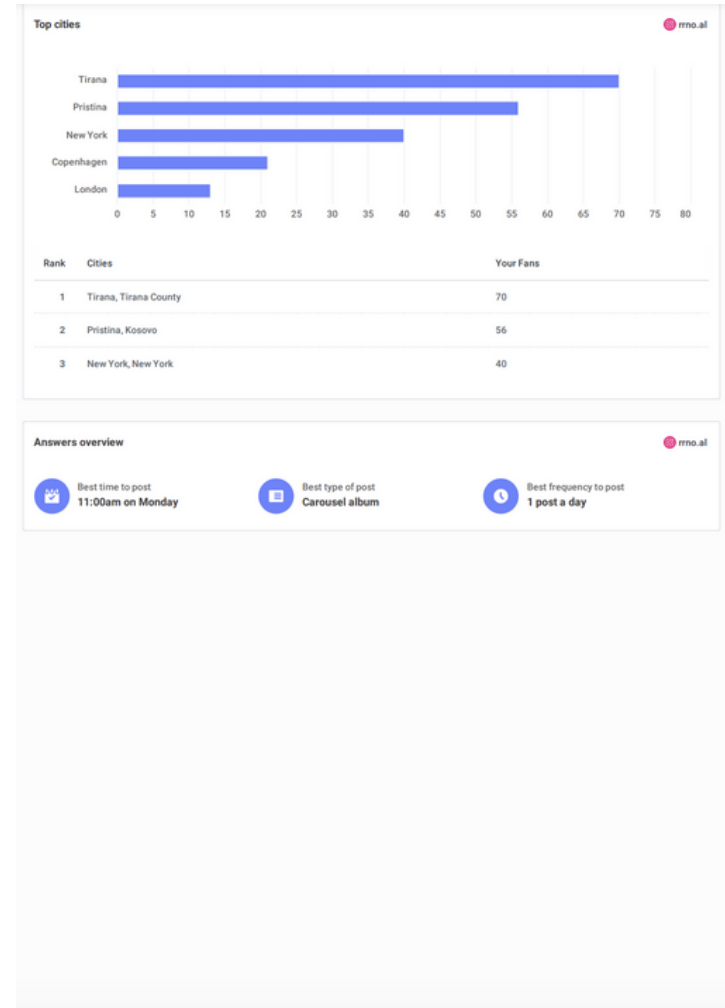| Likes	Comments	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
25	0	478	459	5.23%	—

November 28, 2020 06:29pm
Rrofsh sa malet e qofsh sa motet Shqipëri. GËZUAR FESTAT E NËNTORIT! 🇦🇱 🇦🇱 . . . 🇦🇱 Follow us 🇦🇱 @rrno.al and Join us in our journey 🇦🇱 Albanian Gastronomy Expedition Photo Credits 🇦🇱 : @matthiashaupt _____ #albania #albaniangastronomy

Likes	Comments	Impressions	Reach	Eng. Rate	Spend
36	0	425	328	8.47%	—

Appendix C.2- Buffer Instagram Report

Appendix C.2- Buffer Instagram Report