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**DIG Social Media Manager Guidebook: Strategy Guide**

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DEVELOPMENT IN GARDENING

# Social Media Strategy Guide



Julia Jenak and Bryn Pellowe

# Purpose

The social media strategy guide is a framework for the DIG directors and the Social Media Manager to get the most out of DIG social media pages. The use of social media should be intentional, and this guide is an important step in creating a consistent, engaging social media presence. Social media pages, when managed well, can be powerful tools to communicate stories and garner support. In 2019, 72% of adults used at least one social media site (PEW). This means that social media is an incredibly powerful tool to reach a large network of donors and partners. It can be used to maintain and build relationships with DIG's current and potential donors, supporters, and partners.

The Social Media Strategy Guide requires participation from both DIG directors as well as the Social Media Manager. Once filled in, it can be used as a resource alongside the Social Media Style Guide by a DIG Social Media Manager.

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## Set Social Media Goals

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To genuinely fulfill the other components of the social media marketing strategy, DIG must first set goals for its social media presence. These social media goals should align with the mission statement and overall strategic goals of the enterprise. Although these goals (both the strategic goals and social media goals) may be common knowledge to the DIG Directors, it is imperative that the goals are documented so that an incoming Social Media Manager can accurately and effectively manage the social media platforms.

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## Set Social Media Goals

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### **DIG US Action Required:**

Begin by writing down up to five social media goals. These goals should align with the enterprise's strategic goals and should follow the SMART framework: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely.

<b>Strategic Goal</b> (e.g. Expand programs to new regions, broaden partnership potential)	<b>Social Media Goal</b> (e.g. Build community around the enterprise, recruit donors)	<b>Metrics</b> (e.g. Likes, comments, shares, reach, website clicks, donations, partner posts, etc.)

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## Set Target Audience

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Keeping the social media goals in mind, setting DIG's target audience will allow DIG to fulfill its goals and inform the other social media strategies. It is important to recognize the differences between DIG's current audience and target audience. In what ways does the current audience align with or fail to align with DIG's target audience? The answer to this question will influence the actions that DIG takes to better align its current audience with its target audience. More specifically, the target audience will influence the content that DIG provides and the other social media strategies it implements.

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## Set Target Audience

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### DIG US Action Required:

To determine DIG's target current audience, consider the following questions:

Question	Current Audience
Who are they? What is their job title, age, gender, salary, location?	Location: Atlanta, Denver, or Los Angeles Age: 25-44 Gender: primarily female
What are they interested in that you can provide?	Inspiring stories, captivating images, improved knowledge and understanding of poverty and sustainable global development
Where do they spend their time online? Are they on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn?	When compared with Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter, Facebook is the most widely used social media platform among American adults (69% of adults use Facebook, 37% use Instagram, 27% use LinkedIn and 22% use Twitter) and its user base is most representative of the American population (PEW)
When do they look for the content you provide? What time and day?	Times: most activity between 9:00am - 3:00pm Days: equal activity on all days of the week
Why do they consume the content?	For inspiration, for access to knowledge and information
How do they consume content?	Read posts, view images, watch videos

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## Analyze Competition (Inspiring Organizations)

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In the business world, this segment of the strategy allows companies to better understand their competitors, including their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and potential threats. However, never once in our time working with DIG did we hear the DIG Directors speak about other enterprises or organizations with similar missions as competitors. If anything, they were inspired by the competitors' work and allowed it to influence their own. So, in true DIG spirit, we will use the term Inspiring Organization as opposed to competitors.

DIG must observe the social media strategies of organizations or enterprises similar to its own due to the potential, and likelihood, of overlap between target audiences. If an enterprise or organization has a large number of followers or is receiving high levels of engagement on posts, they may be implementing target audience specific strategies that DIG can replicate to increase its followers or garner similar levels of engagement.

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## Analyze Competition (Inspiring Organizations)

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### **DIG US Action Required:**

Step 1: Select up to 5 Inspiring Organizations to focus on (e.g., Rise Against Hunger, FAO, CompostNow, Gardens for Health etc.)

Step 2: The Social Media Manager should observe the social media strategies used by the Inspiring Organizations.

In observing the strategies of the Inspiration Organizations, consider the following questions:

1. What social networks are they on?
2. How large is their following?
3. How often do they post?
4. What types of content do they post?
5. What is their engagement rate (likes, comments, shares)?
6. Are they partnering with other organizations or community members?
7. What hashtags do they use most often? How many hashtags do they use?

Step 3: How can the Inspiring Organization's social media strategies influence DIG's strategies?

1. What are the strengths and weakness of their social media strategies
2. How can this inform DIG's strategies?

Record answers to the questions in the table on the following page.

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## Analyze Competition (Inspiring Organizations)

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Inspiring Organizations	Strategies	Potential Influence on DIG Strategies

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## Determine Social Media Platforms

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There are four potential social media platforms that DIG can engage with: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter. Currently, DIG is engaging with all platforms except Twitter. The profiles and posts on Facebook and Instagram are practically identical; the profile on LinkedIn remains consistent with Facebook and Instagram but shares posts that are different from those on Facebook and Instagram.

When choosing social media networks, consider the following:

- Where does DIG's audience spend time?
- How much time and how many resources does DIG have?

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## Determine Social Media Platforms

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### **Where does DIG's audience spend time?**

As was considered when setting target audiences, it is important to know what platforms are most widely used by the American population. When compared with Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter, Facebook is the most widely used social media platform among American adults (69% of adults use Facebook, 37% use Instagram, 27% use LinkedIn and 22% use Twitter) and its user base is most representative of the American population (PEW).

DIG currently focuses its attention on crafting posts for its Instagram page because it receives more engagement for posts on Instagram compared to the same post on Facebook.

However, given that Facebook is the most widely used social media platform, DIG may want to also focus its attention on growing its Facebook audience and engagement. Since a large portion of DIG's social media fundraising is promoted on Facebook, it is important to grow DIG's audience on Facebook and develop Facebook-specific fundraising strategies.

How much time and how many resources does DIG have?

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## Determine Social Media Platforms

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### **How much time and how many resources does DIG have?**

In considering social media networks, DIG must consider the time and resources, meaning personnel, skills, and content, that it has. Given that posts on Facebook and Instagram are practically identical, the pages on both platforms can be managed by one Social Media Manager. We anticipate that the management of these two pages, in addition to the other expectations of the Social Media Manager, will require a commitment of roughly 8-10 hours each week.

The LinkedIn page is managed separately from Facebook and Instagram and requires additional knowledge and content. Due to the professional and academic nature of the content of DIG posts on LinkedIn, the page may need to be managed by a DIG US team members rather than a Social Media Manager.

#### **DIG US Action Required:**

Record answers in the table below.

<b>Where does DIG's audience spend time?</b>	
<b>How much time and how many resources (personnel, skills, content) does DIG have?</b>	

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## Create Engaging Content

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Engaging content will foster a closer connection between DIG's audience and its mission. To create engaging content, the images and captions must be compelling and tell a story. DIG has incredible stories to share about its beneficiaries, its unique model, its partners, its impact and about the power of sustainable agriculture. With all of the photos and stories shared from the Program Managers and other employees in the field, it is important that the Social Media Manager shares content and stories on the social media pages that illustrate the positive impact of DIG's programs on the individuals and communities it serves. Content that is posted to the social media pages must also be varied to avoid being repetitive. A helpful tool for varying content, geography of stories, and exploring different themes is the Communications Calendar. This requires input from both DIG Directors and the Social Media Manager. An explanation of how to use the Communications Calendar will be provided in more detail in the accompanying document titled **Social Media Manager Responsibilities**.

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## Create Engaging Content: Content Variation

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Content shared on DIG social media pages should be varied, including a good mix of stories from the field, partnerships, and direct asks for support. Consider using the 70/20/10 Rule as a posting strategy to ensure the bulk of the content shared relates directly to DIG's work and its beneficiaries, some relates back to partnerships, and direct asks are featured, but not overwhelming.

### **70% of content should add value to the community by sharing stories and information from DIG's programs and farmers in the field.**

These stories can be focused on beneficiaries, the local culture, or they can be educational.

### **20% of content should highlight partnerships.**

This can be a sponsor of a garden, such as MetroFresh in Senegal, or a Cocktails and Castoffs chef. It should provide context of that person or organization's relationship to DIG. Further instructions for how to effectively leverage partnerships is provided in the "Connecting with Partners" section of this document.

### **10% of content can promote DIG and include a direct ask for support.**

Fundraising may be a key goal of DIG's social media strategy, whether it is through direct asks or by marketing an upcoming fundraising event, such as Cocktails and Castoffs or Giving Tuesday. Posts that are part of a fundraising campaign have a smaller reach by about 19% percent and a 3% lower level of engagement. Followers may become fatigued if they see too many fundraising posts in a short period of time. This can even lead to followers unfollowing the account altogether. When a caption includes a direct ask for donations, the "donate" button on Instagram is an effective feature that should be used to offer an easy way for the audience to donate, rather than having to navigate to DIG's website.

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## Create Engaging Content: Photos

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Well-captured photos and compelling images often draw stronger emotional reactions from an audience. Sharing high-quality images in posts on social media pages will result in higher levels of engagement.

**Professional photos receive higher levels of engagement by about 1% and tend to have a higher reach**, according to our internal data analysis of DIG's Instagram account. Program managers should be encouraged to use the Program Manager Guidebook for tips on taking great photos, but in the case that a photo is under or over exposed, or lacking saturation, simple edits can be made in an editing application (VSCO Cam, Lightroom, a smartphone Photos application) or even directly on the Instagram application.

### **Our data analysis of DIG's Instagram also showed that DIG's audience engages more with posts that feature people.**

Individual and group photos garner almost the same level of engagement, but photos that feature only one individual have a higher average reach. Individual and group photos may garner similar levels of engagement because while individual photos allow DIG to share a caption that provides deeper details of someone's story, group photos are also powerful because they evoke a sense of community. Landscape photos should be used less frequently because the data analysis shows that they result in lower engagement. They can be mixed in for variety, or as a second or third photo complementing the primary photo.

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# Create Engaging Content: Videos, Text, Graphics

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## **Videos**

High-quality videos are also engaging to an audience because they can bring a story to life. Videos sent from the field should be included in social media posts when available and applicable to the theme.

## **Designing a Text or Graphics Post**

Text and graphics posts are posts that are designed using Canva or another graphic design platform, consisting primarily of text or another visualization of information. Text and graphics posts garner lower levels of engagement and a lower reach as well (see Appendix A for an example.) Due to the Instagram algorithm, posts with text are less likely to be shown on the Instagram Discover tab or first in someone's feed. Posts with text and graphics should be used sparingly, or as the second or third photo included in a post.

However, these can be just as visually appealing when they are used. Any text should be easily readable. Take advantage of DIG's nonprofit Canva pro membership to craft these. Branding should be prominent and consistent; instructions for doing this can be found in the Social Media Style Guide.

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# Create Engaging Content: Captions

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## **Writing the caption**

The goal of writing a caption is primarily to share a story. Use the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship storytelling resources provided as a guide to writing a successful, engaging story. Include details about the people in the photo, including their names, background, and real quotes if possible. DIG's voice should be consistent in writing captions. The language used and tone are both important in creating a consistent brand voice. Tools for developing a consistent voice can be found in the Social Media Style Guide.

## **Engaging the audience in the conversation** (see Appendix B for examples)

- ❑ If the caption can dive deeper into a US connection, this is helpful. A majority of the DIG audience resides in the US. Posts are more engaging when they make parallels between the field and the US. For instance, featuring topics like food waste or farmers markets offers something that the US audience can relate closely to.
- ❑ Ask questions to the audience to encourage them to think and comment on the post. (e.g. What are you harvesting from your garden this week?)
- ❑ Ask the audience to share their own posts of a specific theme, and tag DIG, using a DIG specific hashtag (e.g. Be sure to tag us in your post and use the hashtag #reaplifedig)
- ❑ Share educational material, such as a fun fact related to the photo, a gardening tip, or a food waste tip. This could also include mentioning a national or international holiday.

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# Create Engaging Content: Captions

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## Links

Do not include links in the caption of an Instagram post because the website cannot be accessed on the mobile application. Instead, DIG should set up an account with LinkTree. This will allow links that are associated with posts to remain permanently accessible to the audience. Here are resources from LinkTree to set up a **free account**.

## Hashtags

Although the data and trends are constantly changing, hashtags are not an effective way to increase engagement on Facebook. If DIG would like to include hashtags with posts, no more than 1 to 2 hashtags should be used. Despite this trend on Facebook, hashtags are an effective way to increase reach and engagement on Instagram and LinkedIn. On Instagram, best practice suggests that 5 to 10 hashtags will increase engagement on posts. On LinkedIn, it is better to use fewer hashtags, best practice suggests 1 to 2 hashtags. Different from Facebook and Instagram, hashtags on LinkedIn should remain professionally-focused given the professional nature of the platform. In the social media audit we completed, we found that hashtag use on Instagram increased post reach; however, too many hashtags may overwhelm the caption and reduce engagement among DIG's current audience. **Therefore, if DIG wants to post the same content on each platform for efficiency, 5-10 hashtags should be included in each post caption to increase both engagement and reach.**

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# Create Engaging Content: Captions

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## **Hashtags continued**

As an optimal marketing strategy, DIG should include both branded (#reaplifedig) and popular social community hashtags (#sustainablefarming) in social media post captions. On Instagram and LinkedIn, users can follow hashtags so that posts with that specific caption are featured on the user's feed. Therefore, although they may include thousands or even millions of other posts, popular social community hashtags may allow DIG to increase its reach and even gain new followers. When determining popular social community hashtags, consider the hashtags DIG would search to find posts from organizations or enterprises that are similar to its own. Hashtagify.me and RiteTag may be helpful resources when determining popular hashtags to include in post captions.

Although using branded hashtags may not increase the reach of a post as much as popular hashtags can, branded hashtags are important to establish brand consistency and may also increase post engagement among DIG's followers. A brand hashtag is a company name or company tagline that is unique to DIG (#reaplifedig). This is something followers or partners can use when they post content related to DIG or share DIG's content on their page. As well, when DIG launches a campaign, such as a fundraising campaign, there should be a brand hashtag specific to that campaign. Therefore, the brand hashtag must be unique so that the content that populates the hashtag page will primarily be content related to DIG.

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# Create Engaging Content: Captions

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## **Hashtags continued**

Depending on the post content, hashtags that are relevant to a local community social movement can also be used to build community level awareness and increase post reach, post engagement and number of followers. When partnering with another individual or organization on social media, specifically Instagram, the hashtags that are unique to the partner's brand should also be included in the post. (See Appendix C for examples of successful DIG specific hashtags.)

DIG must create a database of popular, brand, local, campaign and partnership specific hashtags. This way, there is some consistency in the hashtags DIG is including across different posts with similar content themes. #reaplifedig and #cocktailsandcastoffs are two branded hashtags that have been successful in implementation. However, DIG should create a few more branded hashtags that align with the themes of the content DIG posts. For branded hashtags, find hashtags that are featured in a limited number of posts from other individuals or organizations.

The content of the post should inform which hashtags to use. It is helpful to have categories for which hashtags to use for specific types of posts, whether it features a DIG farmer or a partnership. Particular hashtags can be added or removed depending on relevance.

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## Proposed DIG Hashtags

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	<b>Branded</b>	<b>Popular</b>
<b>Stories from the field</b>	#fieldsofgrowth (280 posts) #digfarmers (12 posts) #sowinghope (296 posts)	#sowingseeds (50.1k posts) #sustainablesolutions (34.8k posts) #sustainableagriculture (172k posts)
<b>Stories related to partners and/or donors</b>	#digpartners (1 post) #digdonors (0 posts)	#plantaseed (42.7k posts)
<b>Stories related to cocktails</b>	#rootedinfood (24 posts) #cocktailsandcastoffs (110 other posts, primarily featuring DIG) #dighacks (0 other posts)	#zerowaste (6.8m posts) #climatechange (4.7m posts)
<b>General (widely applicable)</b>	#reaplifedig (200, primarily featuring DIG) #rootedinjustice (31 posts) #rootedinearth (296 posts) #reaplife (144 posts)	#rootedincommunity (6.2K posts) #agentsofchange (48.3k posts) #grassroots (645k posts) #resilience (2.1m posts)

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# Connecting With Partners

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## **Why leverage partnerships?**

DIG has a wide network of supporters and partners with diverse skill sets and stories to share. Bringing them into DIG's social media conversation will make for more engaging content and will make partners feel closer to the work DIG is doing, especially when they can't actively be in the field together. It is also a great opportunity to thank them for contributing to DIG's mission. By creating a strong network on social media, the larger mission of reimagining food systems is strengthened. While partners do not need to be featured in every DIG post, having roughly one every two weeks adds some variety in what you're posting, which increases follower engagement. Featuring partnerships on social media can also increase DIG's audience by exposing DIG's partners' audiences to DIG's content. For detailed recommendations on connecting with partners by featuring them in a DIG social media post, see the **Social Media Manager Responsibilities Guide**.

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## Create a Timeline and Organize Posts

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Based on analysis of all of DIG's Instagram posts from January 2020 to December 2020, posts that are shared on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays reach the largest number of people. While the number of people a post reaches is important, how much engagement a post gets, measured by the ratio of the number of likes to the number of people reached, is also a helpful metric for determining which days are the best to post. Based on our analyses, posts that are shared on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays receive the highest levels of engagement. Since DIG strives to both engage its current audience and increase its reach, a combination of these optimal posting days is suggested. **Rather than having posts scheduled for every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, try introducing variety into the posting schedule by posting on different days of the week each week.** In terms of posting times, audience activity is highest between **9:00am and 3:00pm**. In terms of posting frequency, content should be posted **3-4 days each week**. To create a timeline for posting content, use the Communications Calendar, organization system, and folders outlined in the "Social Media Manager Responsibilities" document.

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# Appendix A

Text and graphic posts



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# Appendix B

## Engaging Captions

### Example 1: Connecting to US audience

**reaplifedig** Today, DIG celebrates the monumental milestone achieved by @kamalaharris in becoming the first female, first black, and first Asian-American Vice President. 80% of DIG farmers are women, and we believe that investing in female voices & women in leadership will make our communities stronger. Here's to women being recognized for their ability to lead! #reaplifeDIG #femaleleaders  
#womensupportingwomen #womenempowerment

### Example 2: Asking questions to engage audience

**reaplifedig** Ready to start something new this year? DIG farmers in Senegal have gotten creative about growing—and we thought we'd share! Not only can you do this in your backyard with veggies, herbs, or ornamentals, but you'd also keep some trash out of landfill. Comment below or directly message us for some DIG tips on how to get your urban, upcycled garden started! #reaplifedig #rootedincommunity  
#urbanagriculture #homegardens

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# Appendix B

## Engaging Captions Continued

Example 3: Sharing educational material

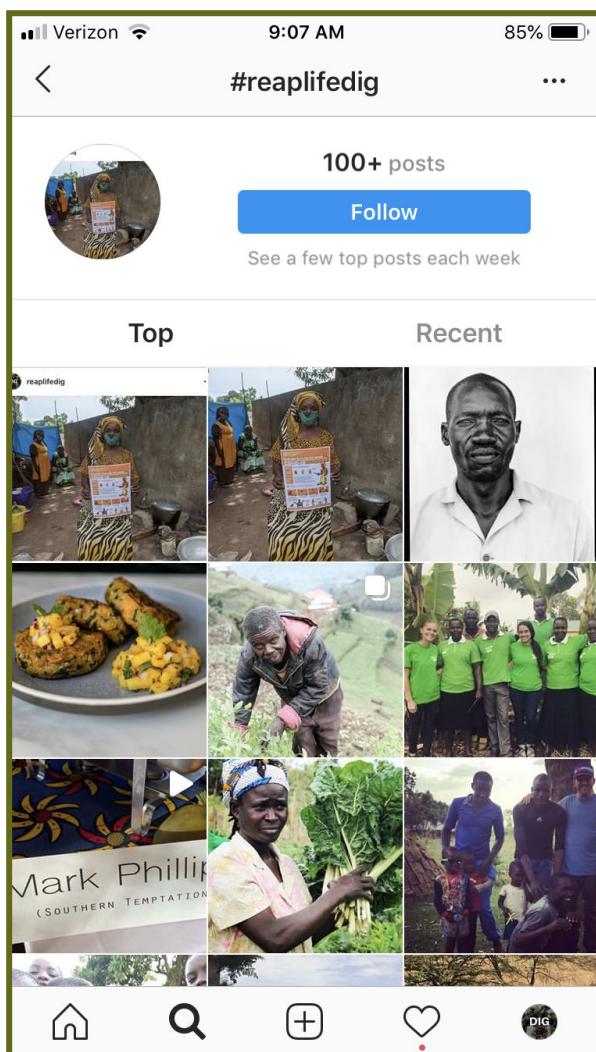
**reaplifedig** Join us in celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities alongside the United Nations. By innovating new tools, making our curriculum accessible translating to Braille, and by cultivating community support through our caregiver program, DIG has created a more inclusive space for people living with disabilities and their communities. As one of our founding farmers, Levi, stated 'Disability is not an Inability and with the right tools, we can be strong.' Our social media community helped us to deepen this program, and we couldn't be more grateful! #internationalDisabilityDay #IDPD2020 #reaplifeDIG #rootedincommunity

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# Appendix C

## Branded Hashtag Pages

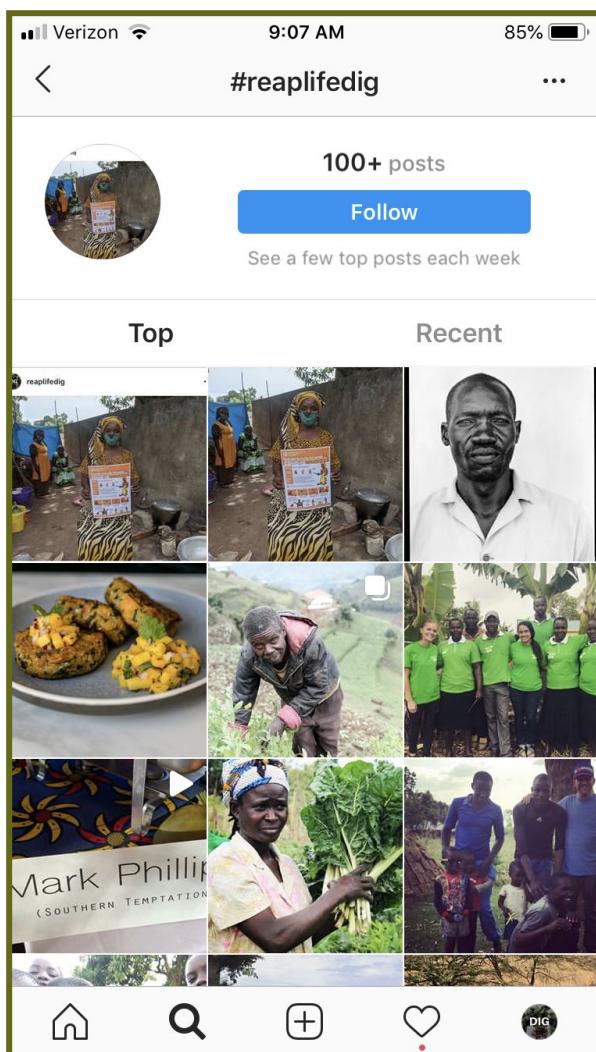


These two hashtag pages on Instagram primarily include posts related to DIG--this is what we want for our other branded hashtag pages.

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# Appendix C

## Branded Hashtag Pages



These two hashtag pages on Instagram primarily include posts related to DIG--this is what we want for our other branded hashtag pages.

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