

# **Social Media for Firearms Trainers & Shooters**

TacCon 2024

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# This Course

## What to expect

- Basic terms and overview of popular networks to establish foundational knowledge
- Ideal ways to set up your accounts on different networks
- Types of content and ways to maximize them
- The business of influencing, monetization, disclosures
- Social media discrimination against firearm and 2A content
- Strategy concepts for posting to social media

# My Story

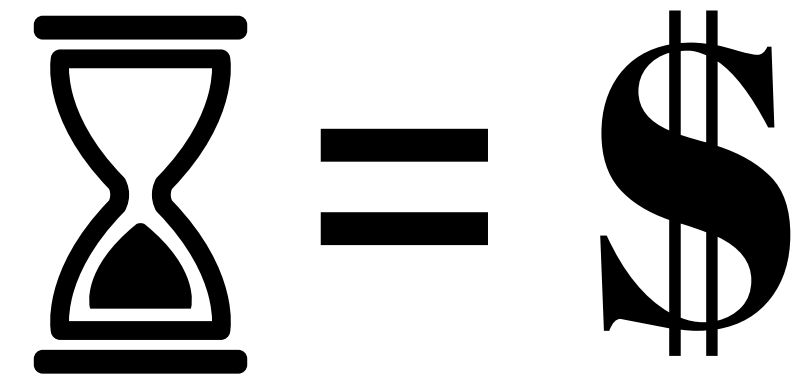
Social media is a valuable tool

- Early adopter - or as haters said, “self-promoter”
- I understand can be blocked, banned, or throttled at any time
- Social media users are people (mostly)
- Allows me to connect with most loyal supporters/followers
- I use social media as a professional tool and for personal entertainment
- Can be addictive/unhealthy

# My Story

Social media is a valuable tool

- ROI - return on investment (time vs. \$)
- Organic reach (not paid or boosted)
- Running ads: effort to create approved ads is not worth my time or resources
- My strategy may not be ideal for you

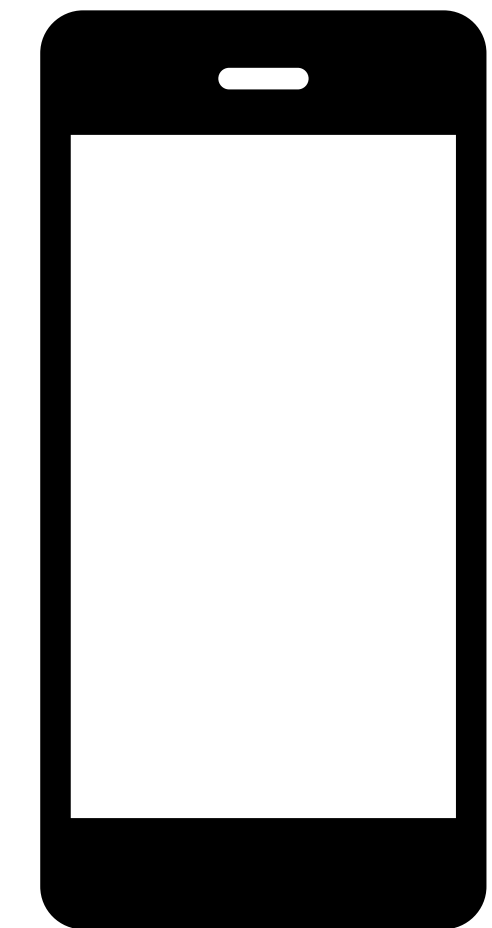
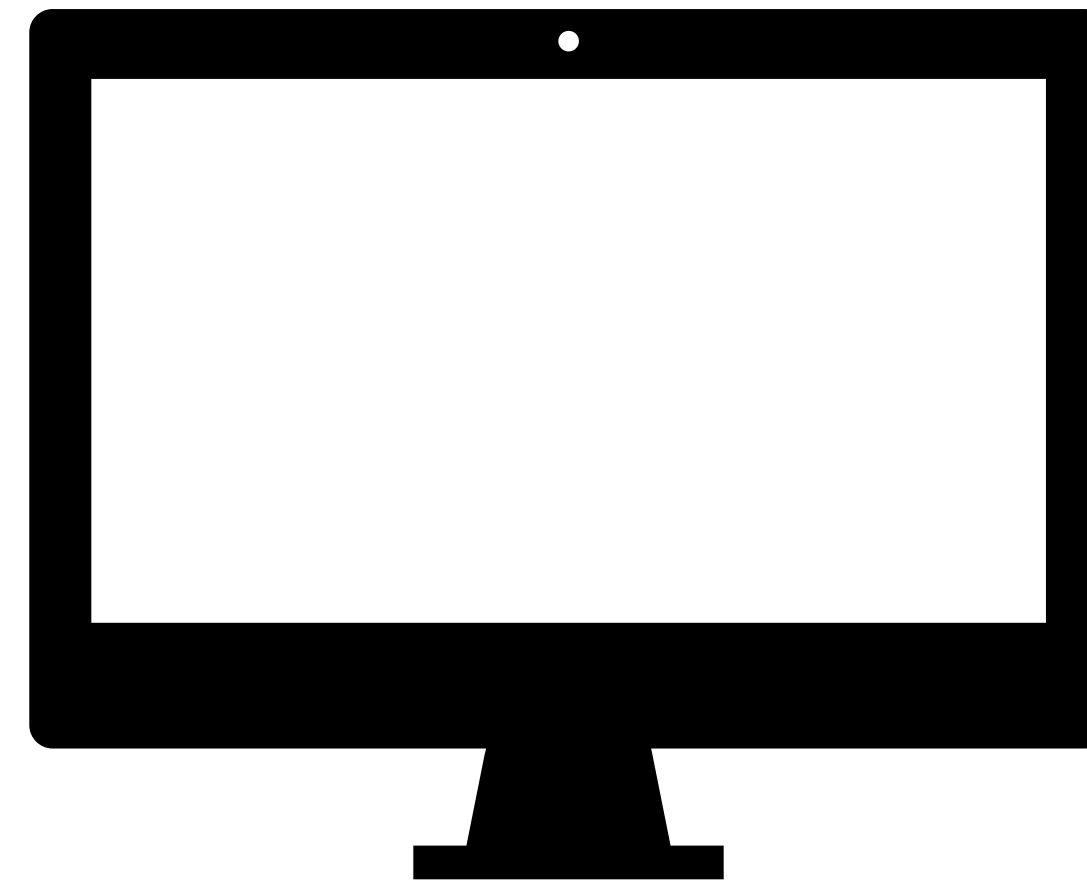


**Social Media is NOT  
Free Advertising**

# Social Media Networks

# Social Media Networks

- Facebook
- Instagram
- X(Twitter)
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Other networks - TikTok, Pinterest/Mewe/  
Truth Social/2A Platforms, etc.



# Social Media Challenges

- Real vs. unrealistic expectations
- Demands on time
- Competition for attention
- Ever changing landscape
  - Features
  - Monitoring (human vs. AI)
  - Attitudes toward 2A/gun content



**More than 4.95 billion people worldwide use 6.7 social media platforms each month.**

**October 2023**

# Your Competition for Attention

- Shooters
- Trainers
- Gun/gear manufacturers
- Neighbor's kids' soccer game
- Grandma's flower garden
- Political commentary
- Memes
- Spam accounts

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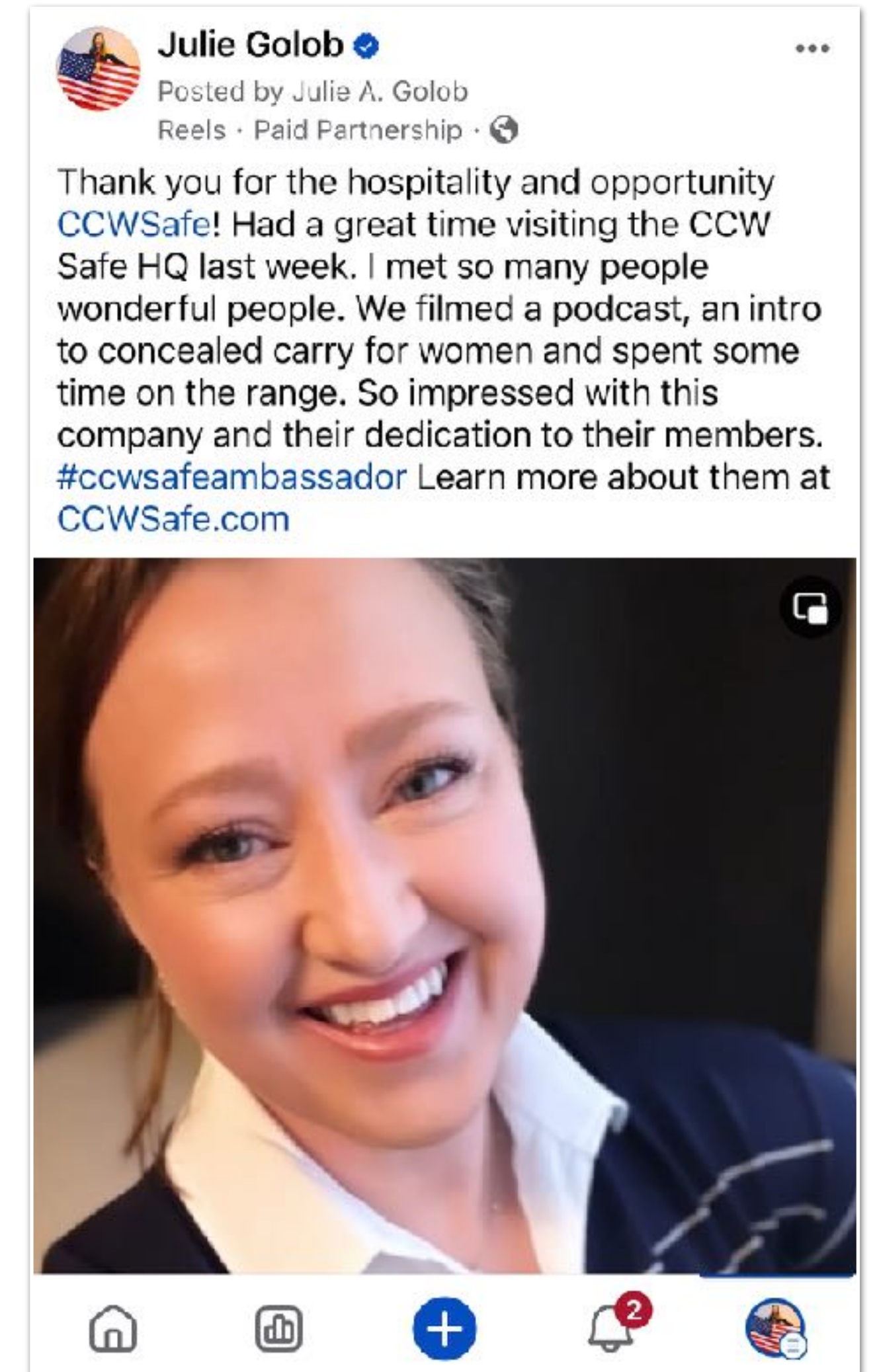
# Social Media Vocabulary

- Hyperlink - making text clickable
- Tagging or mentioning - hyperlinking a user/page (@juliegolob)
- Collaborator - content simultaneously posted to another account after their approval
- Partnership labels - identify paid content
- Reel/Short/Story - short-form video content
- Verified - authenticated account
- Cross-posting - sharing content across more than one account/network

# Links

## How links are used in social media and in networks

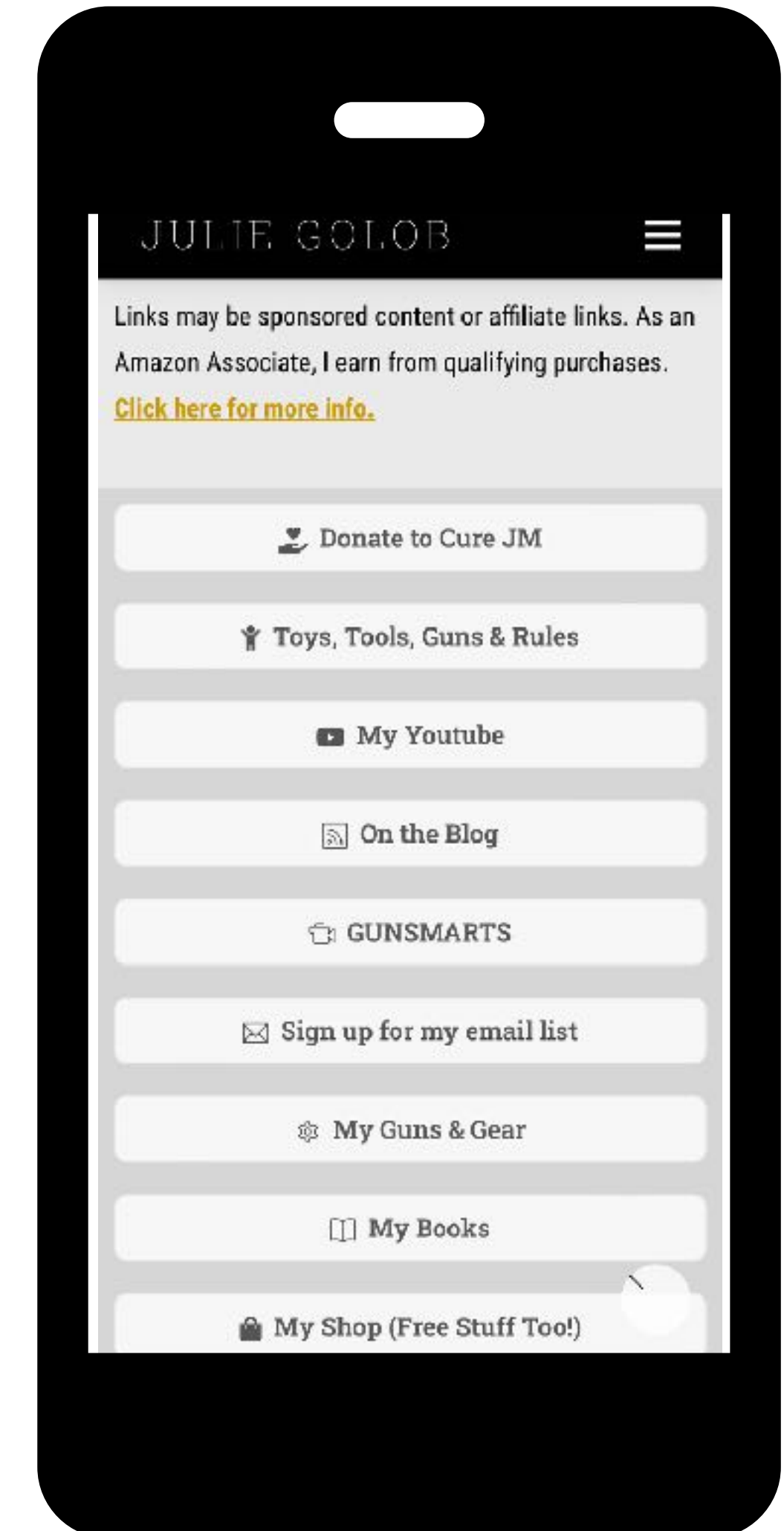
- **Hyperlinked text** - tagged accounts or websites
- **hashtags** - # sign with text offers search capability for a topic
- **#linkinbio** (Instagram) - 3rd party apps or webpages that offer a link to content outside the platform
  - Paid/free
  - Allow you to link a post to a website



# Links

How links are used in social media and in networks

- #linkinbio (Instagram)
  - If you have a website, you can create your own microsite with links



# Account Setup

**Consider setting up social media accounts used for shooting/training as business/professional accounts.**



# Social Media Style

Who/what are you on social media?

- Personality driven
- Corporate/selling
- Educational/informative
- Advocacy
- What is your troll policy/Impressum
- Parental Guidance Rating

# Account Set Up

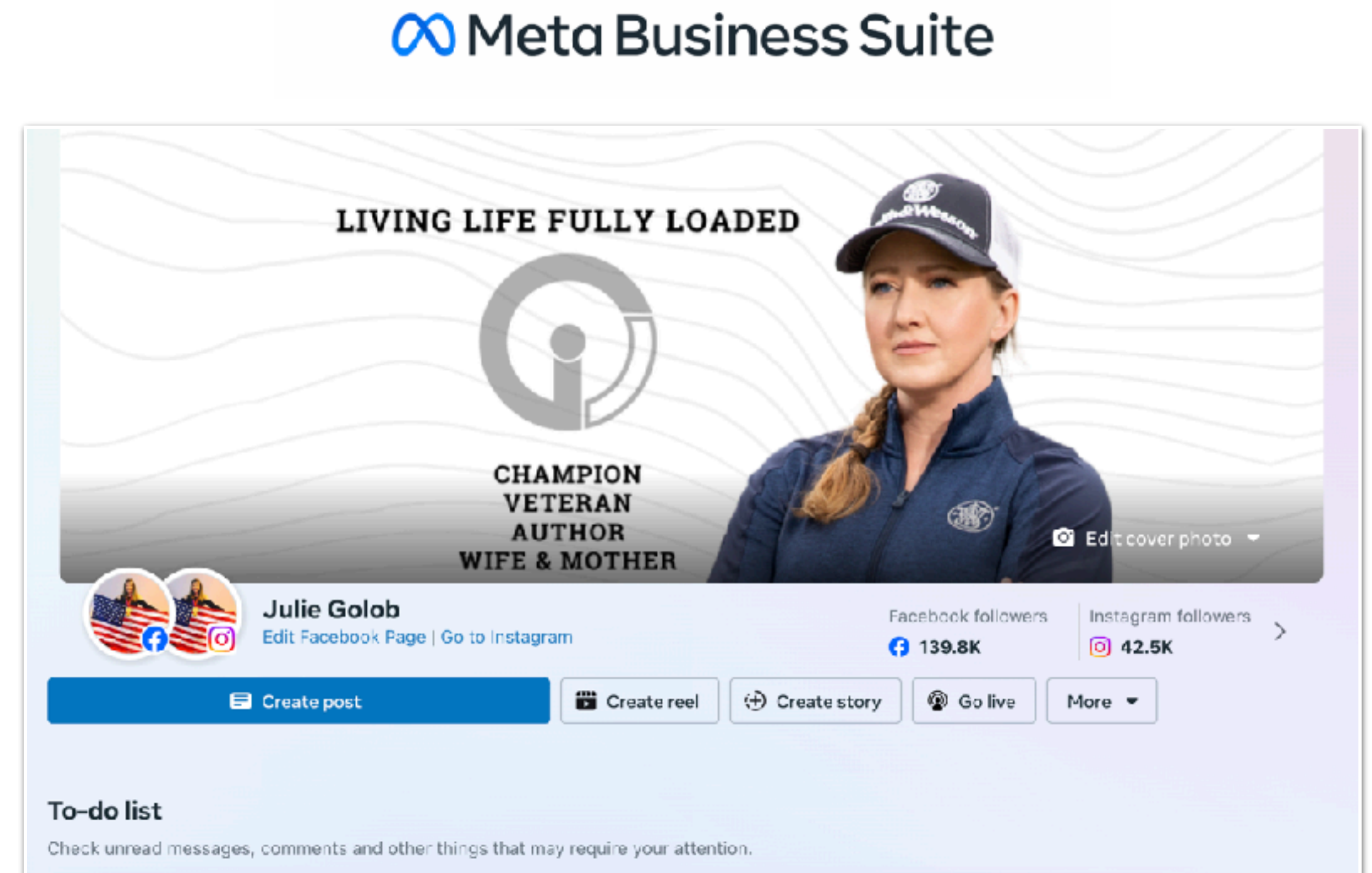
## Choosing a name

- Handle consistency
  - juliegolob
  - juliegolob1
  - julieg1
- Pros/cons of using terms like - shooter, shooting or other “gun” terms
- Choose a handle/name that is easy to remember/say/share

# Account Set Up

## Choosing the right account - Facebook

- Personal account vs. Business Page
  - Tabs - about, services, reviews & videos
  - Page analytics
  - Meta Business Suite (computer desktop or phone app)



# Account Set Up

## Choosing the right account - Instagram

- Personal - gives access to music but cannot
  - Schedule posts
  - Get third-party access to analytics
  - Use contact buttons
  - Use swipe-up function in Stories
- Creator - creating content (access to music)
- Business - making or selling something (no access to music)

# Account Set Up

## Choosing the right account - YouTube

- Options
  - Create different channels for personal and business
  - Change privacy viewing options
- Monetized account info
  - 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours in the past year
  - 1,000 subscribers with 10 million valid public Shorts views within the past 90 days

# Account Set Up

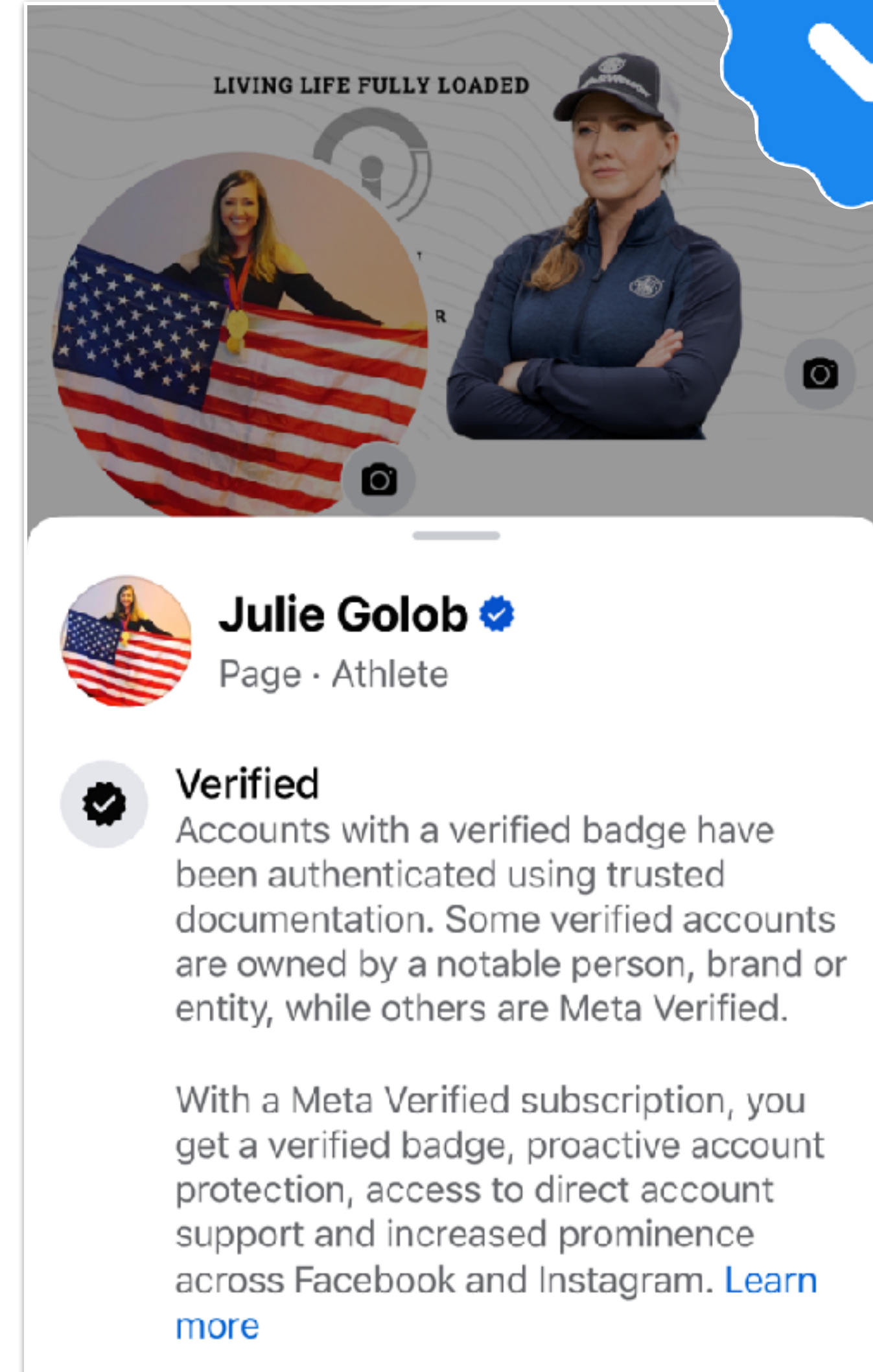
## Choosing the right account - Other

- LinkedIn - basic vs. premium (paid), profile vs. creator mode
- Twitter - multiple accounts can be linked with phone or email
- For other networks, research
  - Paid vs. free accounts for business
  - Analytics features

# Account Set Up

To verify or not to verify?

- Factors
  - Cost
  - Customer service features
  - Pro/anti-gun platform
  - Likelihood of impersonation



# Bio

## Maximizing your bio

- Concise with most important information first
- Call to action
- Hashtags/Keywords/Emojis
- Brand requirements
- Consistent across different networks

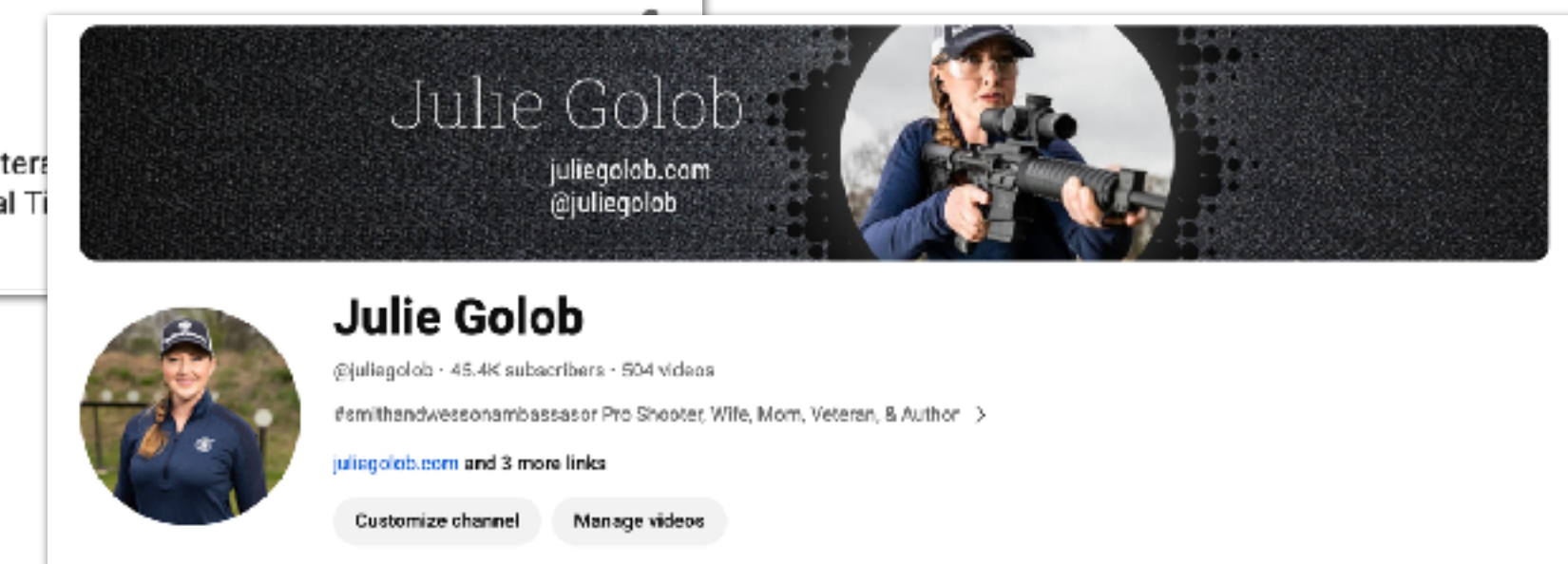
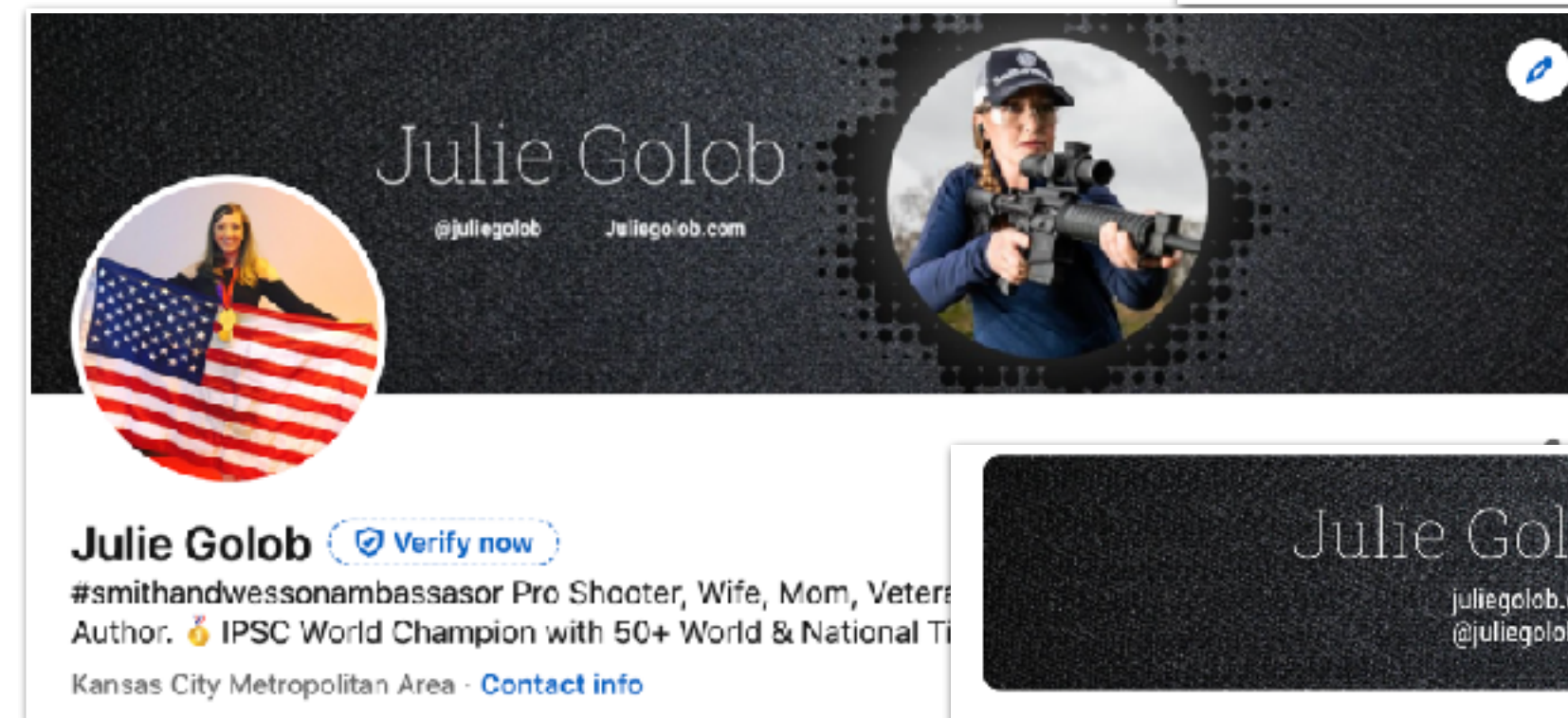




# Consistent Branding

## Personality vs. business considerations

- Logo - profile photo, watermarking
- Channel/cover art
- Profile photo (same or similar/related)
- Font usage
- Colors
- Hashtags

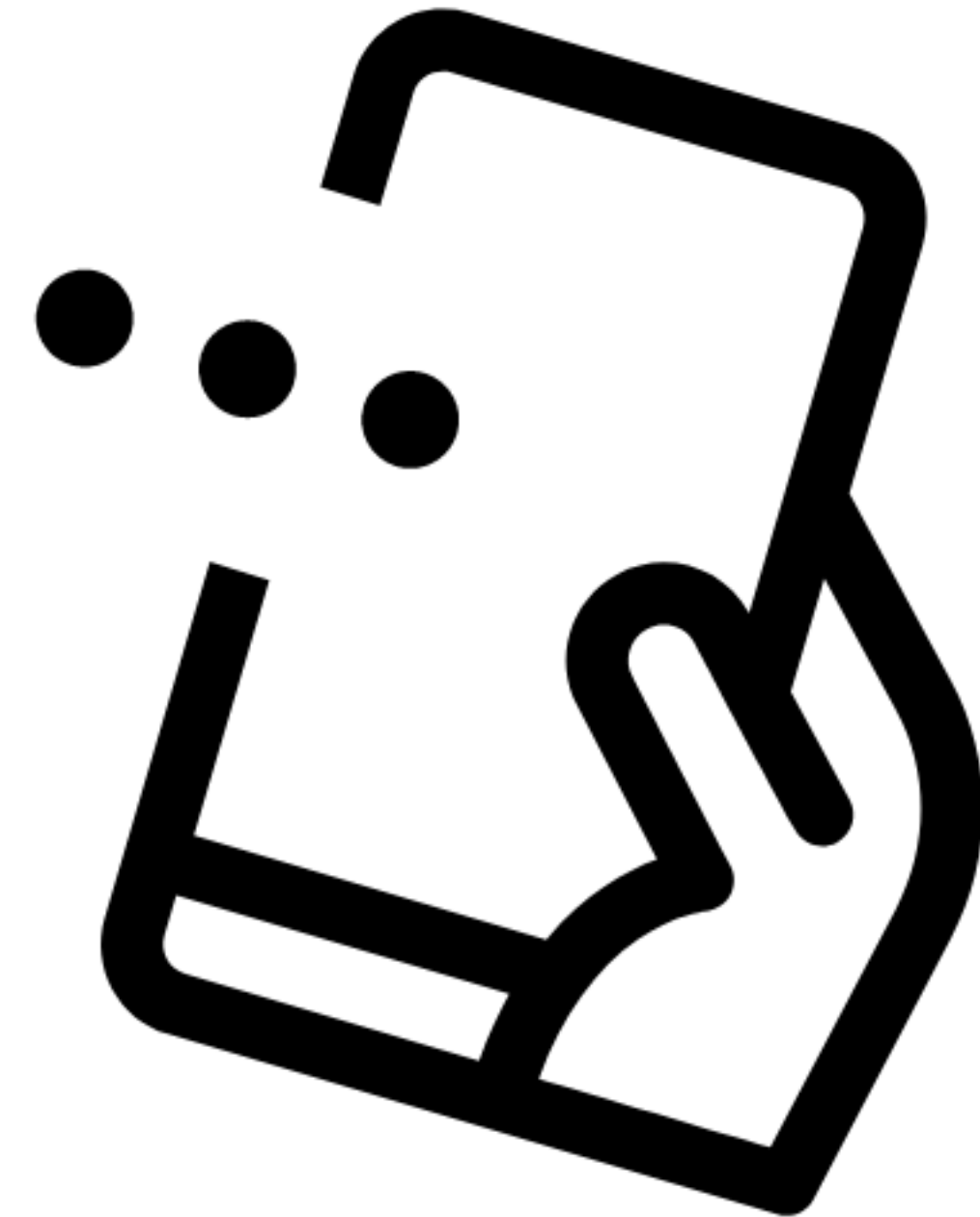


# Types of Content

# Types of Content

## Text updates

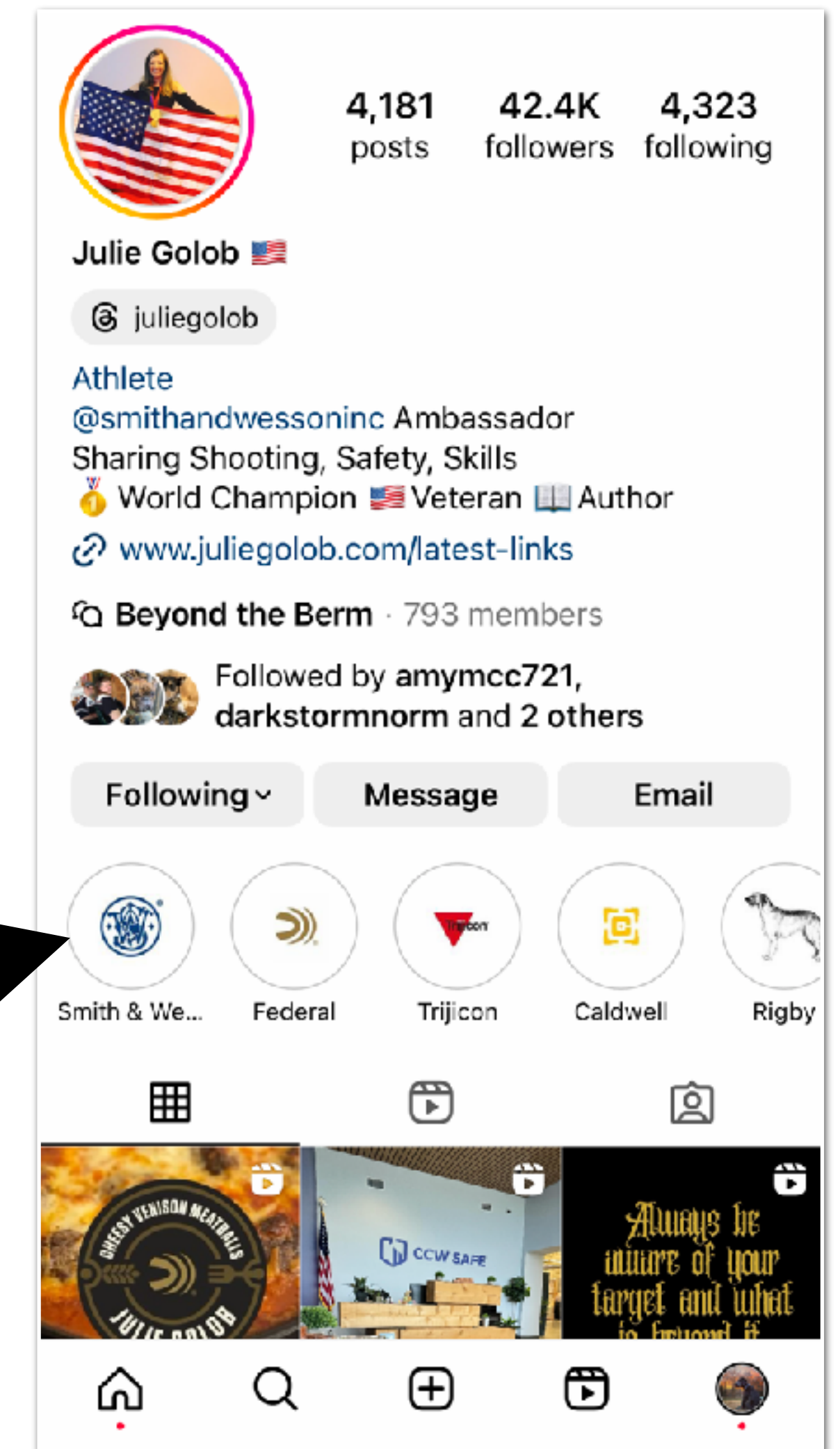
- Short and sweet or long-form notes/thoughts
- With or without links
  - Networks want you to stay in network
- Check-in/location
- Feeling/activity/marked safe



# Types of Content

## Stories

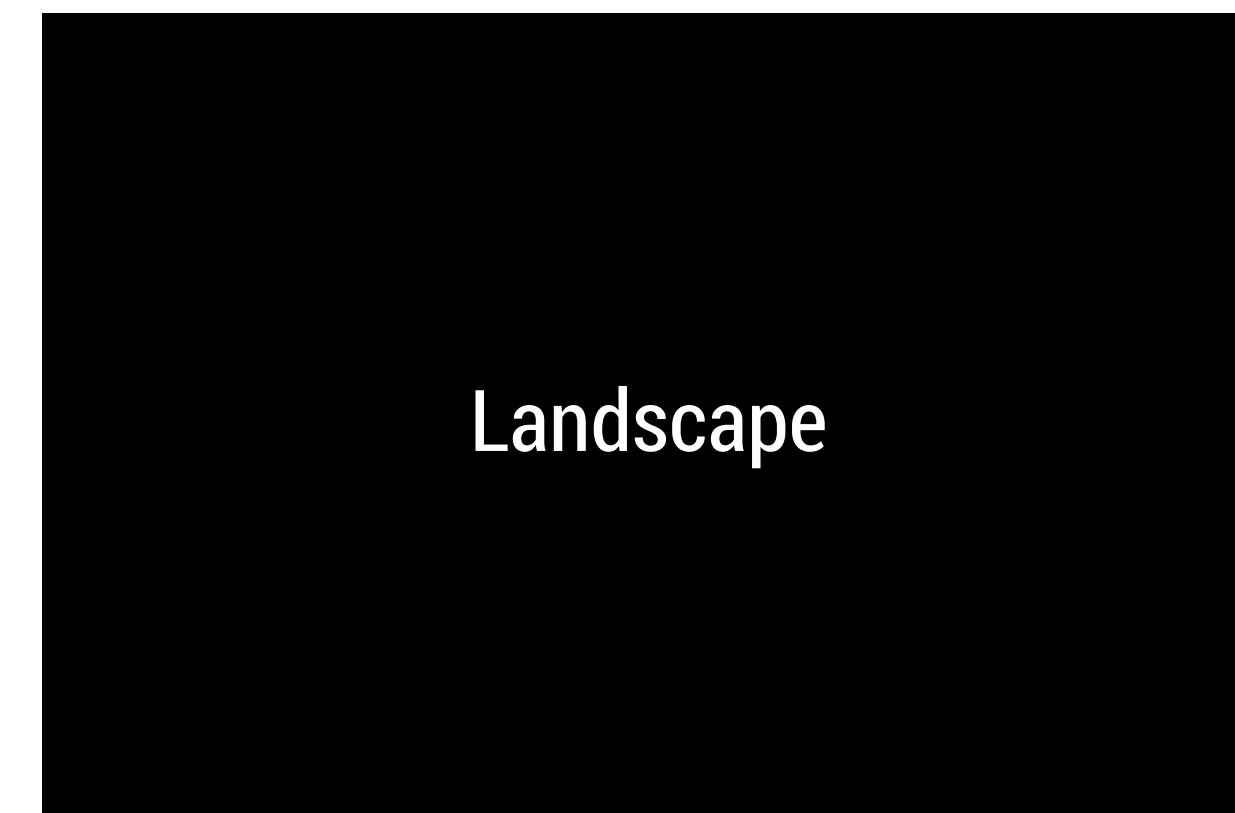
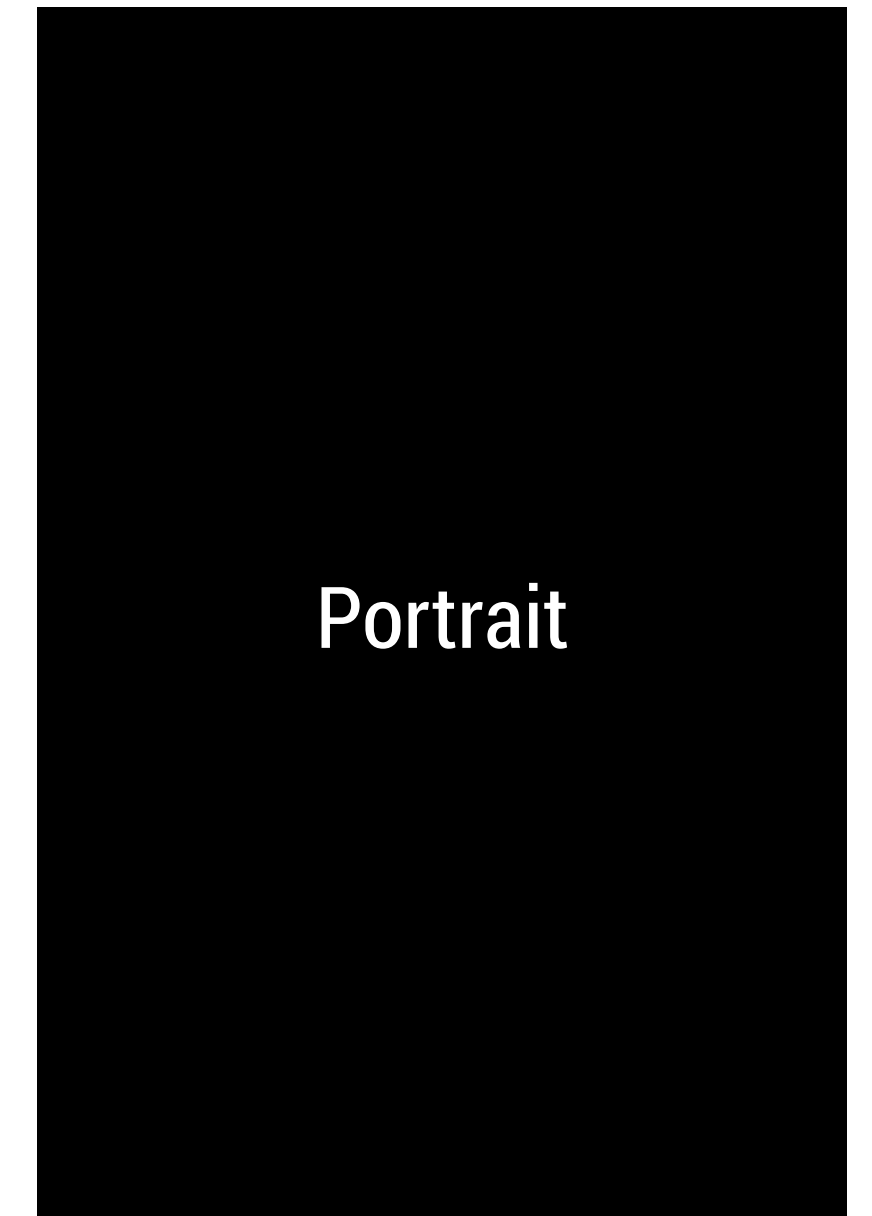
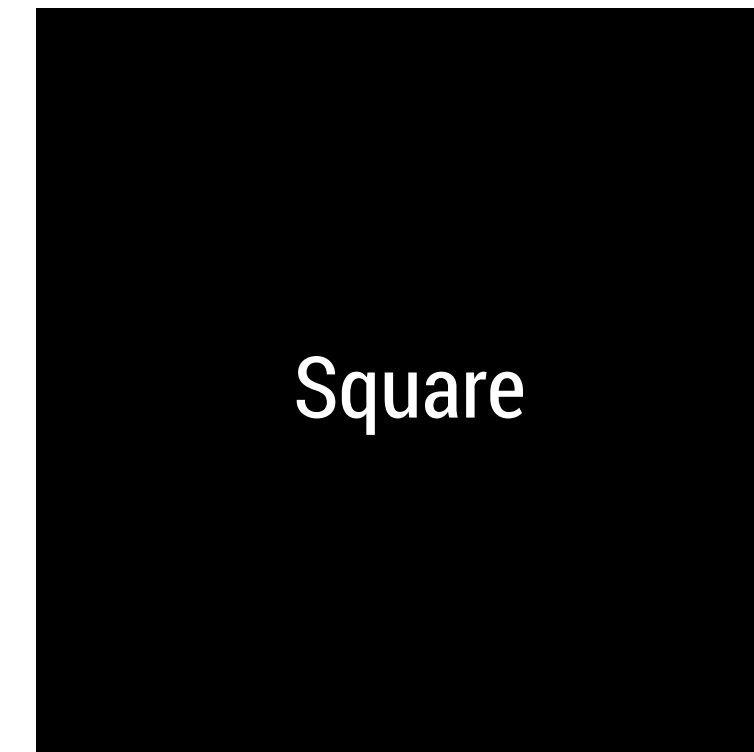
- Short-form content ultimately shared as a video
- Embellishments - music, stickers, links
- Limited viewing time (disappears after 24 hours)
- Reactions/comments in direct messaging
- Saved Instagram Stories can be organized in “Highlights”
- Ideal for less-polished or time-sensitive content



# Types of Content

## Images

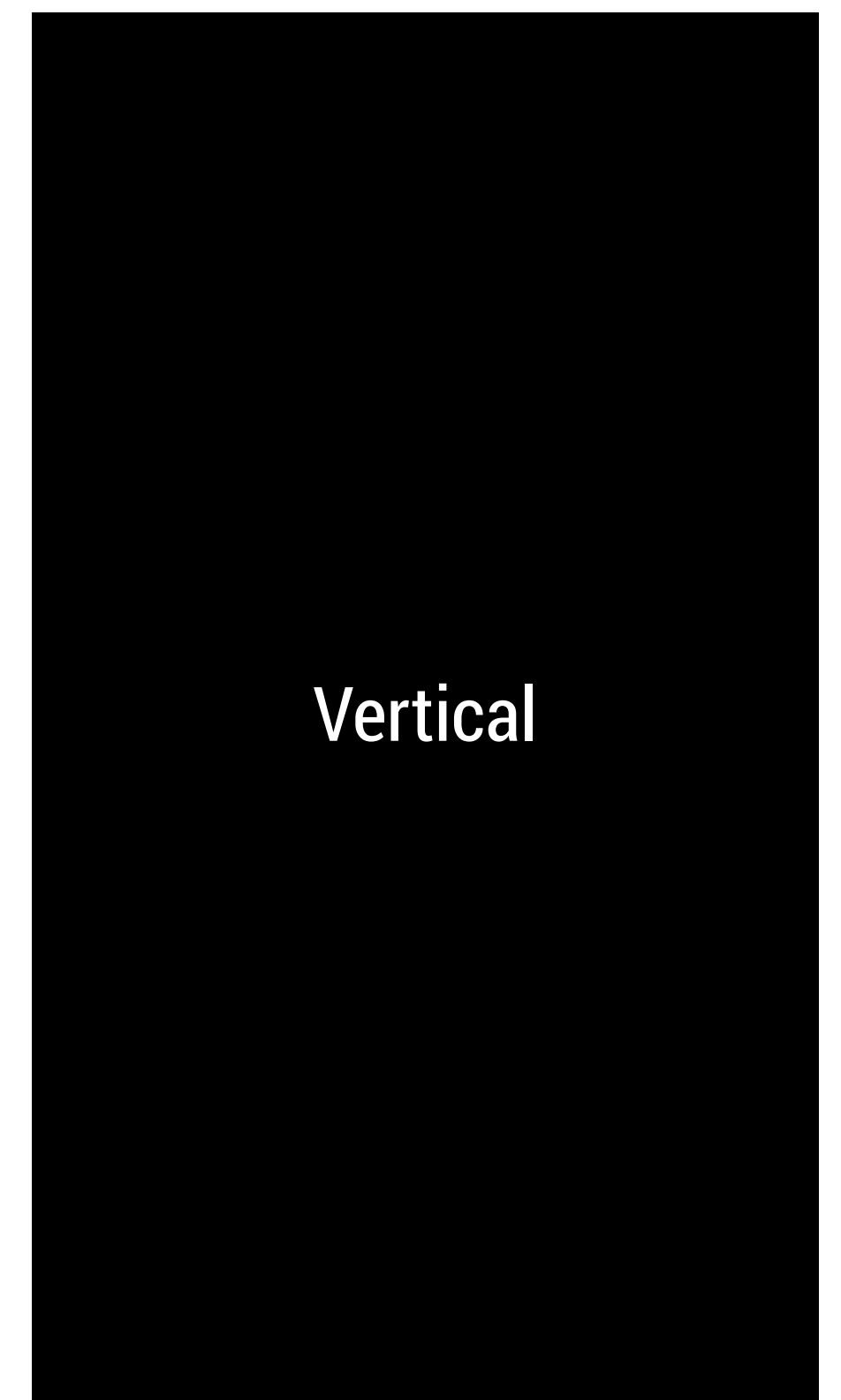
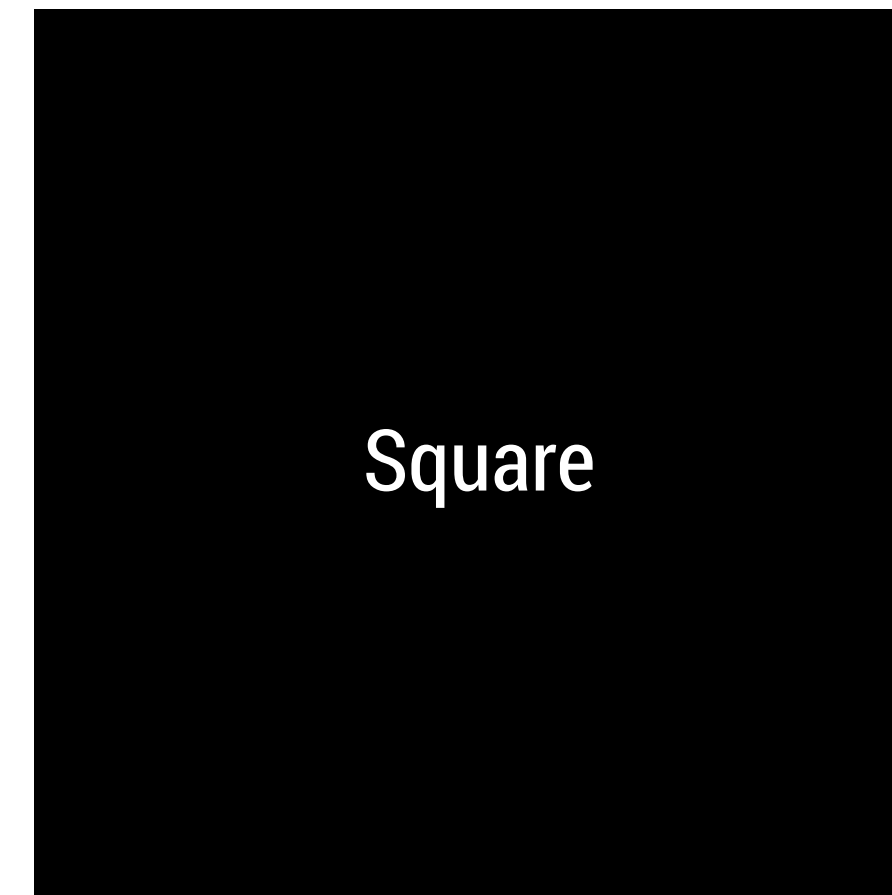
- Gif(s)/memes
- Single photo/image
- Carousel - multiple images in one post
- Albums - image organization tool



# Types of Content

## Short-form video

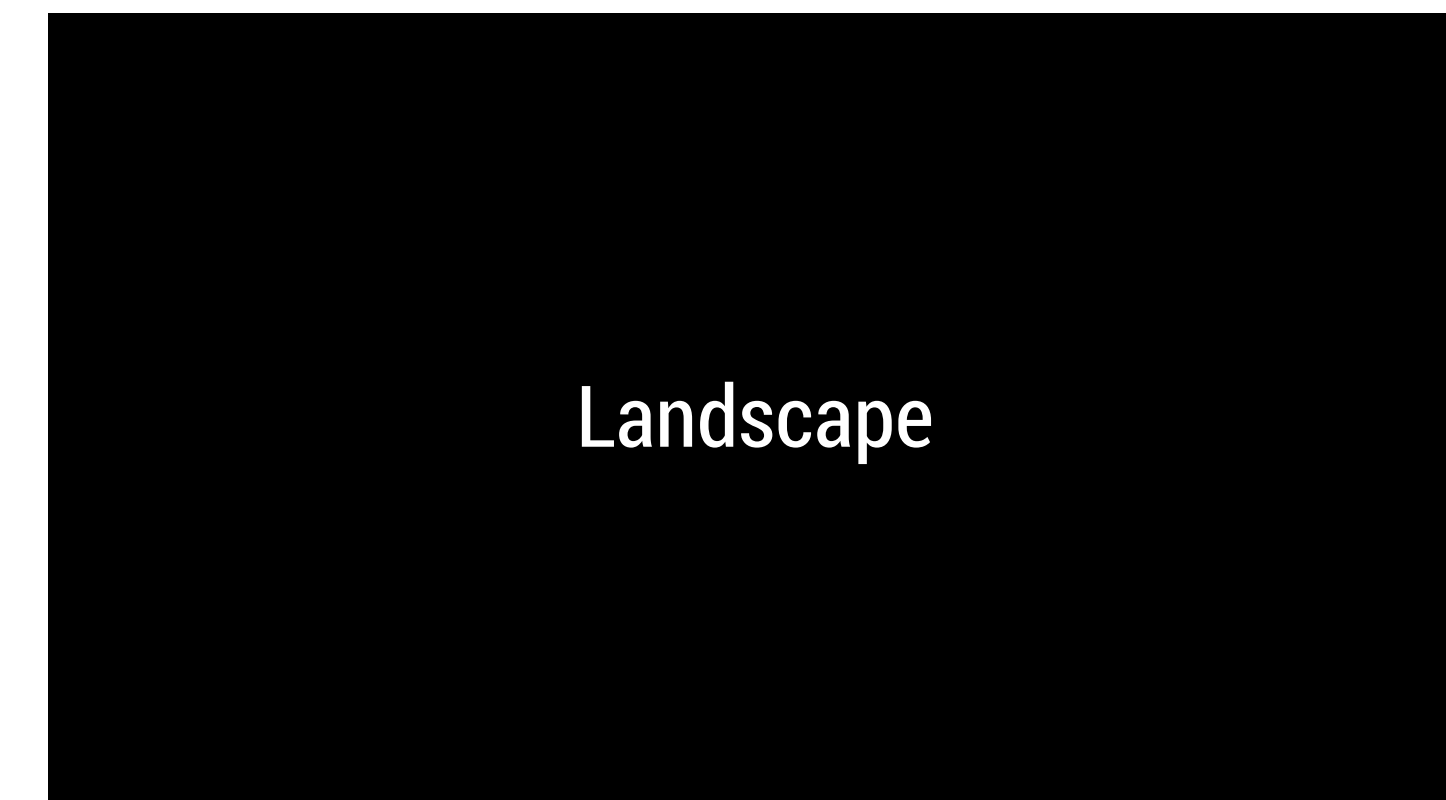
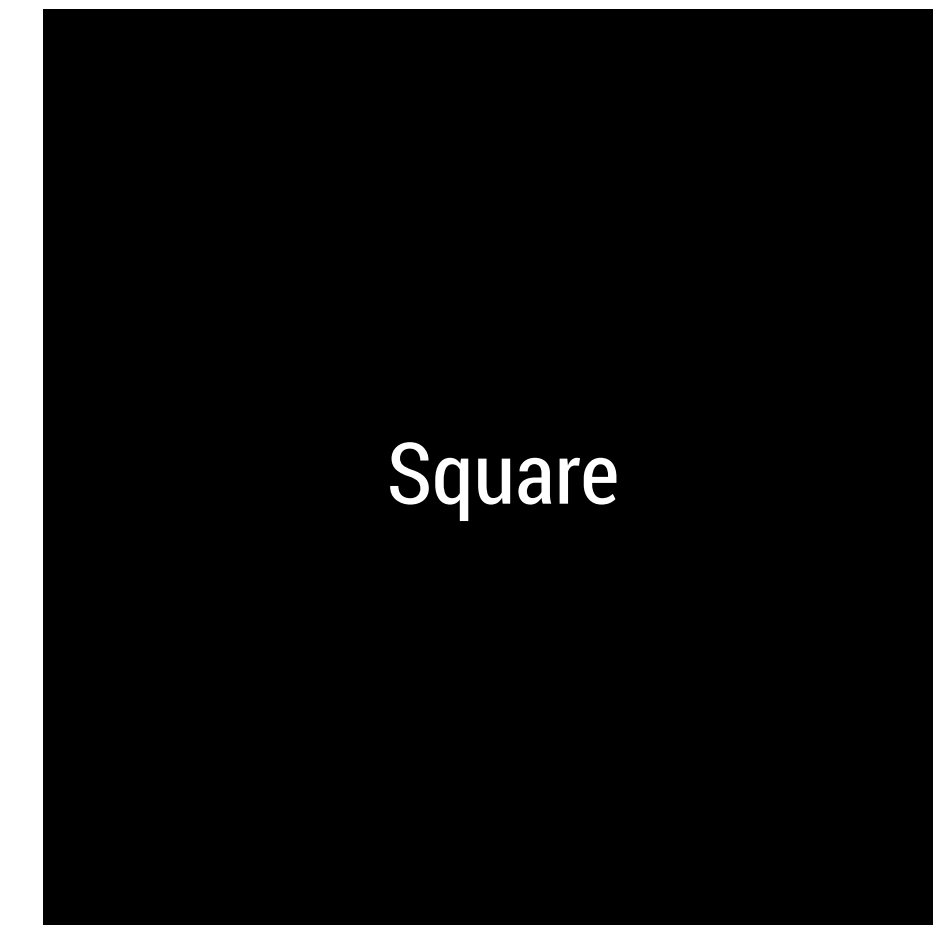
- Filmed in vertical or square
- Duration
  - Youtube Shorts (60 seconds)
  - Instagram/Facebook Reel (90 seconds)
- Use
  - Quick tips/info
  - Trending themes/audio



# Types of Content

## Long-form video

- Filmed in landscape or square
- Duration - longer than 90 seconds
- Use
  - Educational
  - Informative
  - Vlog



# The Networks



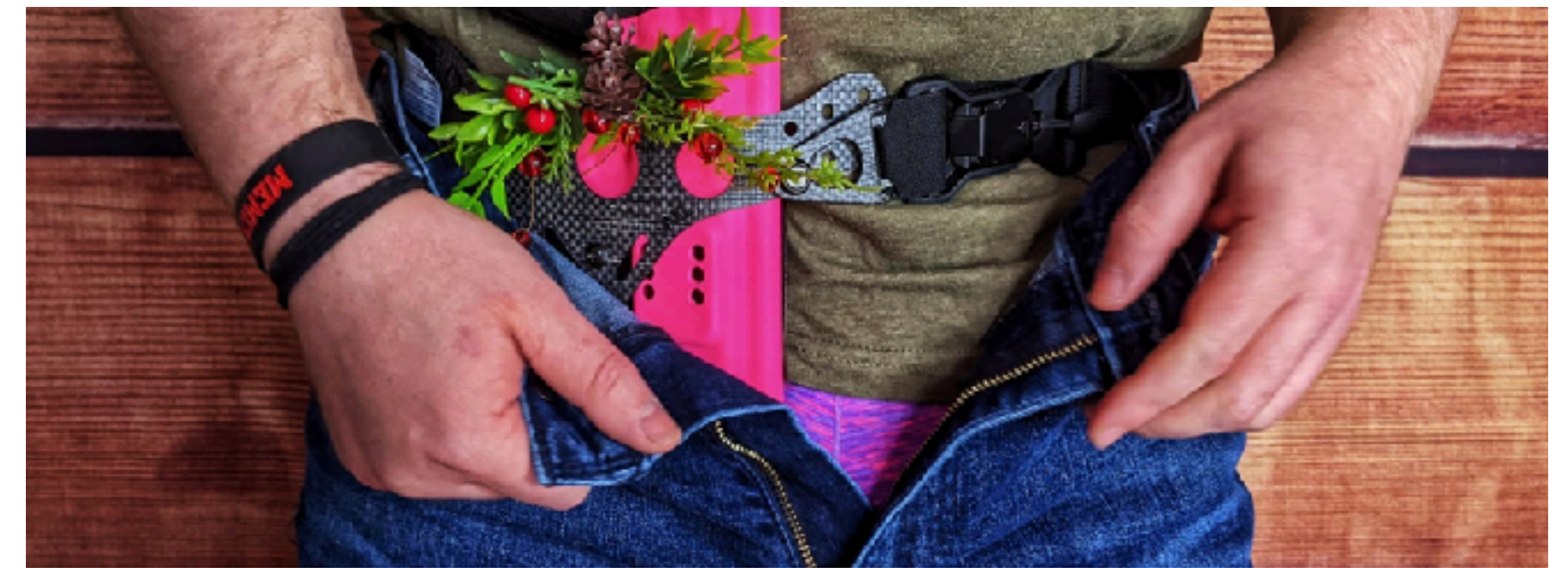
**Facebook**

# Facebook

## Facts and features

- Most used social media - 2.9 BILLION
  - Reach potential (pros/cons)
  - Age demographic - 25 to 34
  - Constant updates/advancements/bug fixes
  - AI & post violations
  - Facebook Groups

## Using Social Media to Educate



### PHLster Concealment Workshop

Private group · 33.0K members



+ Invite

Share

Joined



# Facebook

## Facts and features

- Text updates with or without feeling/activity, check-in/locations
- Links (inside or outside Facebook)
- Image/gif posts with descriptions, tagging
- Image Carousel
- Albums
- Stories - photo/video

# Facebook

## Facts and features

- Video
  - Long-form content
  - Live video with easy-to-see/react comments
  - Reels (90 seconds)

**PRO TIP:** If making a Reel in Instagram, if it has music, you aren't allowed to download with audio. Save before uploading, upload to Facebook and then add music in Facebook.

# Facebook

## Strategies

- Link Facebook business with Instagram account
  - Access to Meta Business Suite
  - Direct cross-posting option or when posting to Instagram with a linked account (photo posts, image carousels)
    - Update tags and links
- Share & comment on other content

# Facebook

## Strategies

- Experiment with posting options (text, images, videos)
- Post videos directly to Facebook (cross-posting for Reels does not add them to your page)
- Live video for announcements/updates
- Subscriptions for exclusive paid content

**Instagram**

# Instagram

## Facts and features

- 2 billion active monthly users
  - Reach potential (pros/cons)
  - Age demographic - 18-24 (30.8%) and 25-34 (30.3%)
  - Constant updates/advancements
  - AI & post violations
  - Strict policies and enforcement of content (not gun friendly)



# Instagram

## Facts and features

- Text updates as images (screenshots, quotes, saved from stories) and expand in the captions
- Links - #linkinbio, links in stories, links in post/reel are not supported
- Images posts with descriptions, tagging
- Image carousel - can be useful in getting followers to see your content more than once
- Stories - photo/video options with links

# Instagram

## Facts and features

- Video
  - Long-form - not ideal and length dependent on whether you post from desktop or app (phone)
  - Reels (90 seconds)
- Broadcast channels - free subscription, impromptu informal updates
- Live video
- Subscriptions for exclusive paid content

# Instagram

## Strategies

- Link Facebook business with Instagram account to cross post Reels, Images & Stories to Facebook
- Utilize music (if account type allows)
- Reels are primary content, but explore other post types as well
- Live video - best when scheduled via post/Story
- Broadcast channel for personal updates/polls/Q&A
- Subscriptions for exclusive paid content

# Stories (Facebook & Instagram)

# Facebook & Instagram Stories

## Strategy

- Create Stories in IG to directly post to Facebook
- Disappear after 24 hours
  - PRO TIP - every other day posting means continuous content (M,W,F)
- Don't just use the Stories to repost feed content
- Use Stories for questions, polls & event coverage or other day-in-the-life content you don't want in your feed
- Use stories to share content from other accounts/partners

**X(Twitter)**

# Twitter

## Facts and features

- 335.7 million users
  - Age demographic - 25-34
  - Political/news oriented content
  - Anti-gun prior to Musk ownership

# Twitter

## Facts and features

- Ideal for short/concise updates
- Fast-paced and timely content
- Hashtags and trending content
- Links - websites, newsletter signups, products
- Quotes, questions, polls



# Twitter

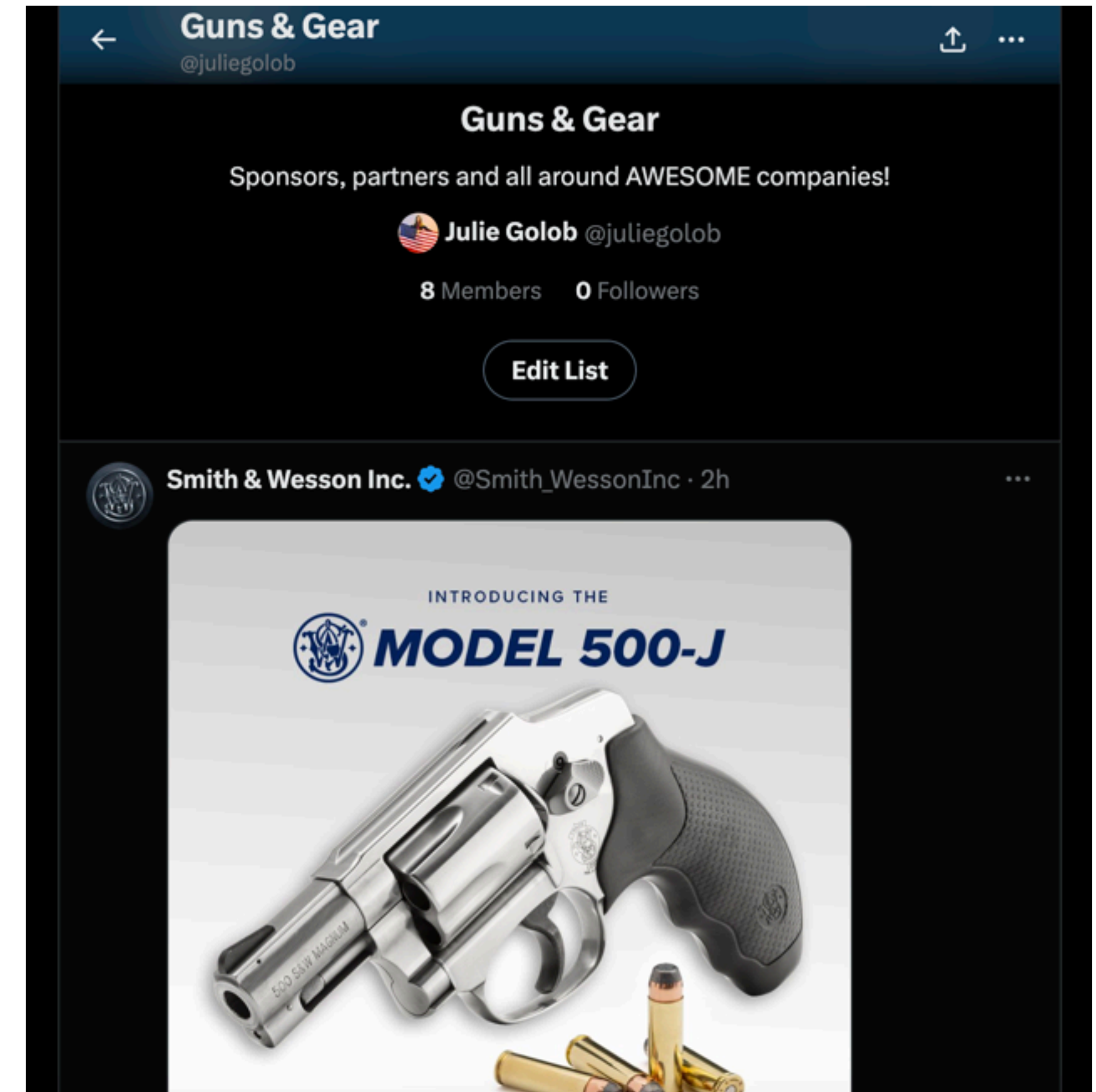
## Facts and features

- Images - tend to perform better than video
- Video - fastest-growing content type on the platform
- Audio & Spaces - audio chat, live audio conversation

# Twitter

## Strategies

- Pay attention to notifications (verified and mentions)
- Follow and engage with other users in your space
- Watch what's trending to see if it warrants participation
- Create lists to see content specific to you/your business for potential retweet/comment



**LinkedIn**

# LinkedIn

## Facts and features

- 1 billion members
  - Age demographic - 25-34
  - Network for “professionals” - career/company based
  - There doesn't seem to be an issue with firearm-related content
  - Dating app?



“Number one, I can filter for an education – MBA baby. Number two, I can filter by industry, I’m looking at doctor, lawyer, finance bro. Number three I can filter by country, very important,” says Candice Gallagher in a viral TikTok with over one million views.

# LinkedIn

## Facts and features

- Text updates, videos, photos, links
- Events
- Articles
- React, comment & share to continue conversations
- Messaging
- Premium option

# LinkedIn

## Strategies

- Think of it as an earlier version of Facebook
- Follow and engage with other users in your space through comments, reactions & reshares
- Connect with industry professionals (no more cold calls at SHOT)

# LinkedIn

## Strategies

- Profile vs. Creator Mode
  - Even more options in “Creator Tools”
    - Audio events
    - Newsletters
    - Live videos

**YouTube**



# YouTube

## Facts and features

- 2.7 billion users
  - Age demographic - 25-34 and 35-44
  - Search engine (Google)
  - Anti-gun history, but better now
  - Entertainment, education, information
  - YouTube Shorts (60 seconds)

# YouTube

## Facts and features

- Ideal for teaching/training
- Description allows for written content (search)
- Live video
- Podcasts

# YouTube

## Facts and features

- Community tab - micro social media network inside Youtube
- Hashtags - organize and find content
- YouTube studio with creator tools

# YouTube

## Facts and features

- Video
  - Long-form (ideal) - intro, end screen to push next view, chapter organization
  - Short-form (Shorts) - like Reels.
    - Music rules/uses
    - Shorter than Reels (15 & 60 seconds)

# YouTube

## Strategies

- Video hub for your website or as link shares (keep in mind that platforms prefer you to stay in-network)
- Use the Community tab to post (text, image, link, quiz, videos) and connect with subscribers
- Use playlists to organize and share content
- Store option to sell branded gear
- Subscriptions for exclusive content

# Other Networks

# Other Networks

## How I Use/Don't Use

- TikTok - (1 billion), not gun/2A friendly, security reasons
- Snapchat - (800 million) skews younger, disappearing content
- Pinterest - (500 million), not gun/2A friendly, photography/graphics skills
- MeWe - (20 million), not as user friendly
- Truth Social - (600,000), small & political
- 2A/Gun Networks - echo chamber, decrease in reach

# Other Networks

## Pros & Cons

### Pros

- Less competition for attention
- May be gun/2A friendly
- More meaningful communications/  
connections

### Cons

- Poor user experience
- Friends & family not on them
- Time consuming creating optimized for  
the network



**Shooter/Trainer/Creator**

# The Business of Influencing

## Paid Subscriptions

- Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Patreon
- Ask yourself why someone should subscribe
- Set a reasonable fee for the subscription
- Be clear about the benefits
- Deliver

# The Business of Influencing

## Macro & micro-influencers in advertising

- Mega or celebrity influencers: 1 million+ followers
- Macro-influencers - 100K - 1 million followers
- Micro-influencers: 10K–100K followers
- Nano-influencers: 1K–10K followers

Mega/Macro - huge reach potential

Micro/Nano - better engagement & niche

# Monetization

Each platform has different terms

- Ads on content
- Bonuses (Facebook, Instagram)
- Facebook “Stars”/Instagram “Gifts”
- Subscriptions (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)
- Sponsorships/brand deals

# FTC Guidelines

## Disclosure is your responsibility

- Financial, employment, personal, or family relationship with a brand
- Paid for content or gifted products
- Tags, likes and shares are considered endorsements
- Verbal and visual disclosure (watermarking, #ad, captioning)
- The network's disclosure is NOT enough
- “Organizations and influencers that misrepresent, fail to disclose, or include inadequate disclosures regarding their sponsorship or connection to social media content risk attention from the FTC and civil penalties of up to \$50,120 per violation.”



# Discrimination

**Are you violating community standards  
or network rules?**



# Discrimination

## Issues and tactics to overcome

- Used to be just #'s or words (gun-related words, 2A, etc.)
- AI now scans imagery
- Shadow banning - no one seems to be seeing your content or engaging with it
- Account cannot be seen by non-followers
- Posts removed without the option to appeal
- Account closed/frozen



# Discrimination


What can you do?

- Follow the appeal option if available
- Report an issue with the platform (Instagram)
- Periodically back up/download or ensure you save content
- Create a new/backup account

# Discrimination

What can you do?

- Shadow bans/account throttled back
  - Collaborate with other accounts
  - Engage in comments (your posts & others)
  - Share and tag related content (posts, stories, links)



**Your account can't be shown to non-followers**

Your account activity may not follow our [Recommendations Guidelines](#).

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**What this means**

Your account and content won't appear in places like **Explore, Search, Suggested Users, Reels, and Feed Recommendations**.

[Learn about how recommendations work on Instagram.](#)

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**What you can do**

-  Edit or remove content ● 5 >
-  Appeal decision >

[Explore how to increase reach to current followers](#)

**Social media networks  
do not owe you anything.**

# Discrimination

## Building on Borrowed Land

- Ways to document/salvage/share
  - Organize and back up valuable content (computer or web-based storage)
  - Take screenshots of posts/comments
  - Post to website/blog
  - Create and maintain an email newsletter

**You may have to start over.**



**Analytics**

# Analytics Matter

## Pay Attention to Social Media Stats

- Why
  - Track how content performs
  - Track growth
  - Help you determine if time is worth the effort
  - Useful for potential partnerships

# Analytics

## What to Watch

- Number of followers/subscribers
- Demographics - male/female, age, location
- Reach
- Engagement
- Impressions, views/reactions/comments



# Choose Your Own Adventure

## My Experience

- Facebook - most active and loyal following
- Instagram - personal favorite for other interests, but anti-gun
- X(Twitter) - I use this for sharing sponsor content and links
- LinkedIn - serious potential
- YouTube - greatest ROI (return on investment) if you want to create lasting, searchable content

# Strategies

# Strategies

- Establish consistency that makes you easy to identify through handles, bios, profile images, and banners
- Evaluate networks
  - Reach potential, time and effort
  - Ability to customize content to the platform (text, graphics, video)
  - Do you like the network/users/style?
- Adopt and use new features in chosen networks
- Link to other social media accounts in profiles/website when possible

# Optimizing Content by Platform

## Maximizing Time in Content Creation

- Images - Square, 1200x1200
- Long-form content - landscape with duration depending on goal/topic
- Short-form video - vertical
  - Under 15 seconds for trendy/viral-style content
  - Under 60 seconds for informative/educational content

# Social Media Tactics

Don't Forget about the "Social" in Social Media

- Care about your followers
  - Engage with Top Fans
  - Be active in the comments
    - Of your posts
    - Content creator posts in your niche
- Collaborate with other accounts/businesses
- Use tagging features to credit and increase reach
- Use call to action (CTA's) in content (like, share, subscribe)

# Making the Most of One Idea

## Maximize Content Creation

- Long-form content posted to YouTube/Facebook
  - Text content
    - Keyword-rich video description
    - Use description or transcript as a blog post/LinkedIn article
    - Tweets - pull quotes to share on Twitter linking back to website or video
    - Newsletter content/teaser

# Making the Most of One Idea

## Maximize Content Creation

- 3-5 Shorts/Reels
  - Standalone short-form content
  - Long-form video teasers
- Photography
  - Screenshots/thumbnail images
  - Posed images - featuring skill(s), event, products

# Beyond Social Media

Reduce risks of building on borrowed land

- Own your space by building a website
  - Share content from networks on your site
  - Take advantage of search engine optimization
  - Organize site/content based on professional goals
- Email Newsletter - Mailchimp, Constant Contact, Aweber



# Tools & Resources

# Tools & Resources

- Meta Business Suite - managing Facebook & Instagram
- Social Media Examiner - learning about features and current strategies
- Canva - photo and video editing web-based software
- TubeBuddy - YouTube analytics and tools
- Metricool - in-depth social media stats
- FTC Guidelines - rules about disclosures
- Calendar - content planning/reminders (Gmail, Notion)
- AI programs - captioning assistance, transcripts