

# INSTA-SALES: BOOST SKINCARE PRODUCT SALES WITH SOCIAL SHOPPING



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BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

**T**hanks to the rise of shoppable posts, Instagram is becoming a virtual shopping mecca. If your aesthetic practice sells any retail skincare products, this is one e-commerce trend that's too hot to ignore. Here's what you need to know to get started.

## SHOPPABLE POSTS: A GOOD FIT FOR YOUR PRODUCTS?

Social shopping isn't just for big retailers. It is easy to set up and maintain your product catalog, even for one product. Beyond boosting product sales, shoppable posts can generate buzz that attracts new followers; loyal customers are easily converted to patients.

Despite the many benefits, there are a couple of things you need to consider before you dive into social sales.

- Do you already sell online? If so, then adding social media to your outlets will be relatively easy. However, if you are new to ecommerce, consider the costs and logistics of shipping before you pass go.
- Do your products meet the requirements? Both Facebook and Instagram forbid selling healthcare items. They allow beauty items ("skincare" is listed as a sub-category of beauty). This is a fine line, so choose your products and descriptions carefully. If you make medical claims, particularly for ingestible supplements, the product may be rejected. You can review the full list of prohibited items at [facebook.com/policies/commerce/restricted\\_content](https://www.facebook.com/policies/commerce/restricted_content). Also, you can log into Instagram and browse the "beauty" category of their shopping tab to get a general idea of the types of items typically sold.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

If you implement shoppable posts into your marketing plan to sell products on both Facebook and Instagram. In fact, a Facebook Catalog is a prerequisite to qualifying for Instagram shopping.

Here is what you need to get started:

- **Personal Facebook account.** Even if you don't use Facebook in your personal life, you need a personal account to manage your business page.

- **Facebook Business Page.** Once the page is created, you can customize and manage it yourself or grant access to an employee or marketing company to manage it for you.
- **Connected Instagram business account.** Your practice needs an Instagram account before you can begin selling. Make sure it is linked to your Facebook business page.
- **Facebook catalog.** Depending on how you manage your business page and your e-commerce, there are several ways to create a catalog. You can connect to Facebook and create a catalog with shopping cart software such as Shopify or BigCommerce or you can create it directly on Facebook using the Catalog Manager or Business Manager.

## GET STARTED

The simplest part of the process is activating Instagram shopping. Once you've met the requirements listed above, log into the Instagram profile, go to "business" then "shopping." On-screen instructions will walk you through the process. Expect to wait a few days while your account is reviewed.

Instagram will notify you when your request is approved. Now comes the fun part! Your imagination is the limit when it comes to creative Instagram posts, and you can tag a product just like you would tag a person.

Instagram usage statistics are staggering: One billion people log in every month, and 200 million visit one or more business profiles daily. Furthermore, 81 percent of all social media users research products on Instagram, and 11 percent shop directly on the platform. You can easily tap into this growing market of enthusiastic consumers. ■

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