



# How to use social media to increase the visibility of your business

April 2023



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# 1. Introduction

Social media has become an essential showcase for any business.

According to Digital Report 2021's report on social networks and digital trends [REF-01], every 15 seconds a new user registers on a social network, and the number of users is equivalent to more than 53% of the world's population. The average use of social networks by these users is up to 3 hours a day. [REF-02]

In Spain, 85% of internet users between the ages of 16 and 65 use social networks, according to a study published by IAB Spain [REF-03]. Furthermore, 48% of these users follow a brand on social networks..

For SMEs and self-employed , the use of social networks represents a great opportunity to make their business visible, create greater proximity with current and potential customers and increase sales.

It is essential to make good use of the networks, with consistency and with a vision of what you want to convey to attract the target audience. Reels, stories, hashtags, influencers... social networks have created their **own formats and rules of communication**, which you need to know how to use in the best way. To do this, it is essential to have a strategy for use in social networks, managing to create successful profiles that attract new customers and build loyalty among current ones. [REF-04]

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## 2. What is a social network and which ones does businesses use?

A social network is a **digital platform** where any person or company can create a profile for free, easily and quickly to communicate with other users, share images, videos, information, events, messages and other digital content. Half of the companies in Spain use social networks, in line with the EU average, according to Eurostat data [REF-5]. Moreover, in the case of **Spanish SMEs**, 95% do so, according to the DNA of the Entrepreneur study by the company Hiscox [REF-6].

The main uses of social networks by companies are [REF-05]:

### 1. Dissemination channels

The products, services and content in general of companies can achieve greater visibility with the use of social networks. Furthermore, depending on the **target audience**, we can use **one or other social networks** as a communication channel.

### 2. Direct customer care and interaction

Networks allow a much more **direct, closer and personalised interaction** with customers **than traditional advertising**, as the company's communication through social networks can be daily, varied and bidirectional, through communication by messages or comments on networks. This achieves a stronger adhesion to the company's brand.

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### 3. Social selling

The presence on social networks can increase sales. This is thanks to several factors; the social network becomes a showcase for the company, with links to purchases, constant communication and interaction produce a greater closeness that improves trust and commitment to the brand, but you can also use advertising within the **networks and marketing strategies** such as online contests for testing products or services. The use of digital advertising and especially in networks has revolutionised the world of advertising as we know it, and for SMEs it is especially important because it is much more affordable than traditional advertising.

#### List of the main social networks


According to the IAB Spain study [REF-14] Facebook has been the most spontaneously known network in Spain for several years. It is followed by **Instagram, Twitter and Tik Tok**, the latter being a network that is growing very fast. Below, we are going to look at these networks and others to be taken into account by companies, especially SMEs, which have to focus their efforts on the most popular ones. [REF-06], [REF-07], [REF-08], [REF-09], [REF-10], [REF-11], [REF-12], [REF-13].

#### Facebook

It continues to be a very popular network, with **2.9 billion followers in the world** and 20.2 million in Spain, although its use is decreasing compared to previous years. 70% of users worldwide are between 18 and 44 years old, but it is very versatile in terms of the age group that uses it [REF-15]. It is a platform where **posts contain longer texts than short messages on Instagram**, and where images, videos and event announcements are also shared. It is used by a wide range of businesses, especially retailers and restaurants.









It has its own very popular ad system, which allows you to choose the desired budget to invest and the audience to which to show the ad according to the targeting (location, age, gender, type of interests) [REF-16]. In addition, it can be changed flexibly, and the prices make it **accessible to all types of companies**. It also allows selling directly from the application. An example of a successful case in this network is that of the restaurant Don Giovanni, which has achieved an increase in reviews and bookings through the constant publication of videos of dishes and posts [REF-17]

## Instagram



It is a very popular and continuously growing network, with 1,500 million users in the world and 23 in Spain. It is especially popular among young people, as 60% of users are between 18 and 34 years old [REF-18]. It is characterised by being very visual and sharing images or videos (reels), both temporary (stories) and permanent publications. It has the advantage that messages can be sent directly to profiles, which allows for close communication between small businesses and users. In terms of advertising, it is very interactive, allowing product catalogues to be displayed and access to the purchase of a specific product through links. Companies that sell **visually attractive products** are the ones that benefit most from this network, such as fashion, art, gastronomy or travel. An example of a successful case is the "Putos Modernos" brand, which sells diverse products, such as diaries, and marketing services for other companies (such as Pepsi, Cabify...), whose identity is to make irony out of everything, achieving a unique style [REF-19].

## Twitter

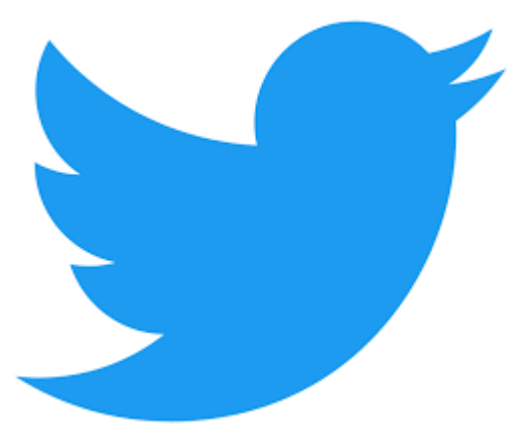


It became popular for writing very short messages of 140 characters, which have now been expanded to 280, and it is now also common to share short videos on it. It has 486 million users in total and almost 9 million in Spain. The average age is varied, ranging from 25 to 50. It is a social network focused on **current affairs and news**, but companies of all kinds have official profiles, it is used for viral marketing and to answer queries or comments about the brand

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Despite having suffered ups and downs in popularity, it is still a relevant social network. An example of success is Hawkers, an eyewear brand that, in addition to using other networks, has managed to become a "Trending Topic" [REF-20] thanks to lighthearted contests via Twitter.

## YouTube

A social network that despite the years is still popular and growing, with 2,500 million users in the world and 41 in Spain. It is used by a wide age range, from teenagers to older people (52% of users are between 18 and 44 years old) [REF-21]. It is characterised by the publication of videos of all kinds, from musicals to tutorials, interviews... Small businesses use it to publicise their products or services in videos in an original way (with "tutorials"), and it is popular for real estate agencies, travel agencies and other service companies. An example of a success story is **Boris Soler - Peluquería 2.0**, who created a channel to give hairdressing tips at home and managed to attract attention to his business. However, for SMEs, the most recommended use is to invest in advertising and to collaborate with or sponsor already **recognised users/influencers**, as generating quality content of their own requires a lot of resources [REF-22].

## TikTok

This social network is constantly growing, with 1 billion users in the world and 15 million in Spain [REF-23]. It is very popular among teenagers, so if the company has this target audience it is useful for an SME to have a profile and invest in advertising. It is a **platform where very short videos are published**, also using special effects or filters, and where "challenges" to share in the videos, for example short choreographies, are popular. The tone of the publications is very informal. An example of a success story on TikTok is that of San Saru, a jewellery brand, for adapting the language to the target audience [REF-24].

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## LinkedIn

It is a social network focused on the professional world, so its tone allows it to be more serious than other social networks. It has 850 million users worldwide and 14 million in Spain. 58% of its members are between 25 and 34 years old. [REF-25]. It can be used to publicise the company's successes and is of greater interest to SMEs in the professional services sector, such as law firms or marketing agencies. An example of a success story is PJA, an advertising agency that spent a lot of time looking for companies to provide its services to by sending portfolios [REF-26].

While this is the selection of networks to focus on, depending on the type of business, the creation of profiles in more sectoral networks can be explored. An example would be the use of the Twitch video network for the gaming community.



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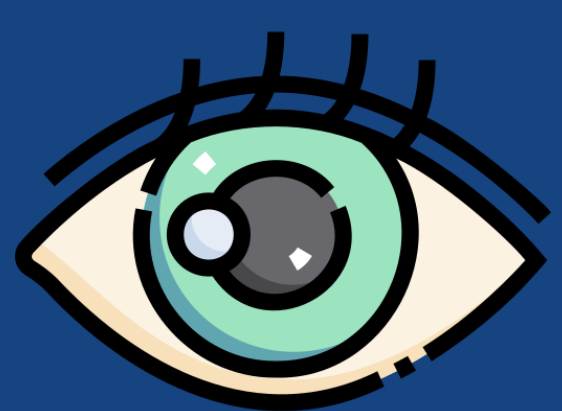


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## 3. Advantages of using social media for SMEs

The main advantages are [REF-27]:



1. **Increase visibility:** social networks allow companies to reach a wider audience than traditional channels, and at a lower cost.



2. **Build brand image:** through a digital brand strategy using social media, brand perception and reputation can be improved, and brand loyalty can be increased.



3. **Build community:** connecting with target audiences in a more direct and interactive way, for example through private messages, responses to comments or live interviews, helps to build stronger and longer-lasting relationships.



4. **Redirect traffic to the website:** quality social media profiles with engaging content draw attention to the brand and redirect to the website link.



5. **Increase sales:** the presence on social networks is part of the marketing and sales strategy, as it attracts potential customers, builds loyalty among existing ones, and is a continuous showcase for the brand, where its services or products are promoted. In addition, some social profiles can be used to sell directly.





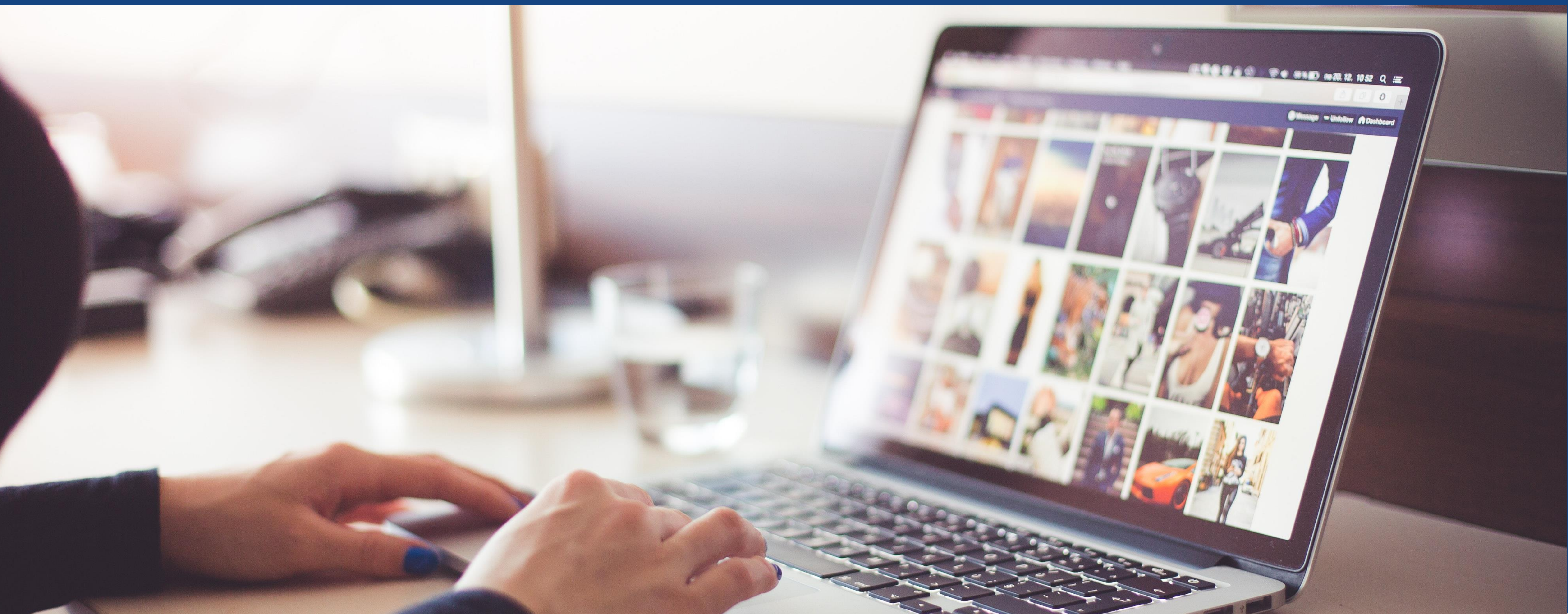
6. **Reducing costs:** this form of advertising and promotion is much cheaper than advertising in traditional media, making it attractive also for smaller companies or those with smaller budgets.



7. **Improve search engine positioning:** having a successful profile on social networks improves the company's position in search engines (such as Google), when these are used to search by type of business, according to the CognitiveSEO study. In addition, to improve searches you also have to use hashtags (hashtags are "tags", the # symbol is used in front of the keyword, so that when you search for those words, related publications appear) [REF-29].



8. **Analyse data and research the market:** social networks and their management tools are used to collect data on the behaviour of potential customers, on the effectiveness of promotion follow-up, on the type of content that is most liked, which allows for constant evolution to improve its use.



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## 4. Methodology for creating profiles and valuable content on social networks

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The basic requirements for creating a profile:

Creating a profile on a social network is very simple and is done in a few steps. The most common requirements are as follows:

1. Valid email address
2. Personal information: they usually ask for name, date of birth, gender and location, but not all of them require this information.
3. Username and password: The choice of username is very important for the company, as it reflects the brand and needs to be identifiable. It is best to use the name of the brand/company.
4. Profile picture: this is an element that has to be aligned with the digital brand image that you want to transmit. .
5. Contact information: it is common to ask for an email address and number.
6. Acceptance of terms and conditions

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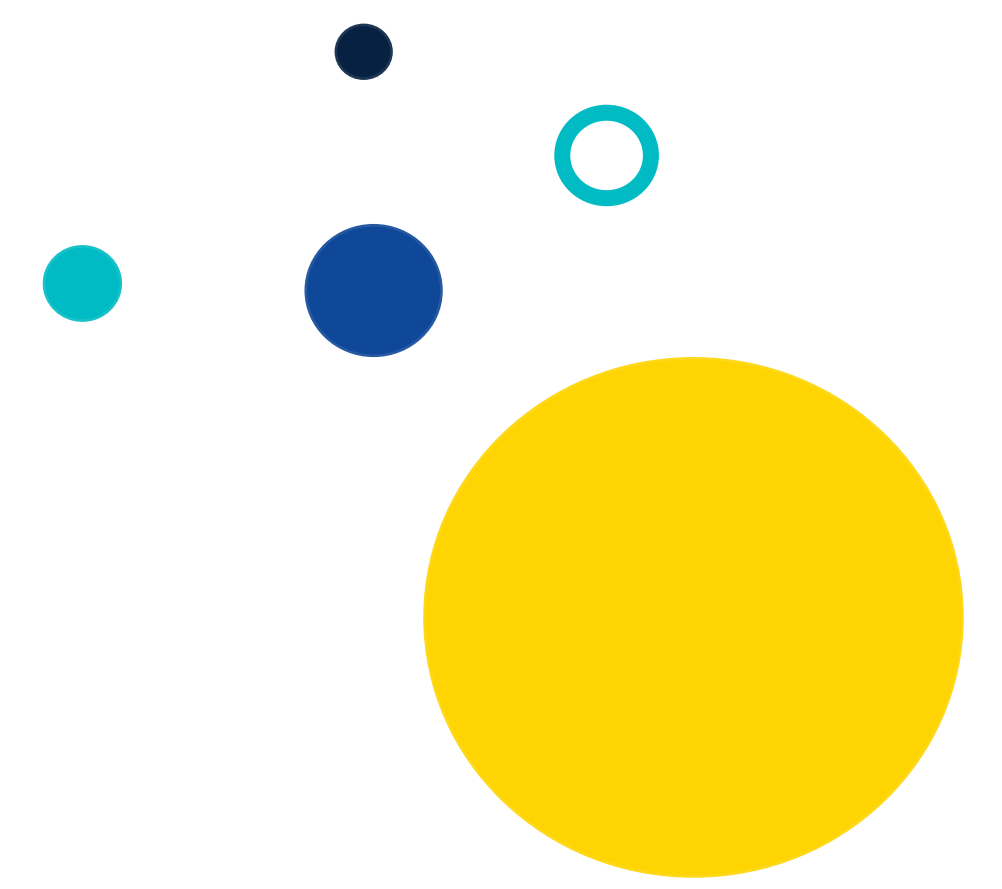
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## Social media strategy and content plan [REF-30], [REF-31].

It is not enough to create a profile; you have to have a social media strategy and a content plan to get the most out of your social media presence and maintain a good online reputation.

The **social media strategy** serves to define the objectives to be achieved by the company, to select the platforms on which to be present and to create the content plan, i.e. the guide to the type of content to be published. .

The **steps** to follow for the creation of the strategy are as follows:

### 1. Preliminary analysis

It is about studying the initial situation of the business. Ask yourself "Who am I and what do I do" [REF-32]. A **SWOT analysis** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and Opportunities) is recommended to evaluate the business and the brand.

It is also important to analyse the **competition** to know their positioning in the sector, how they communicate and what resources and social networks they use, as well as to review what strategies are being used by other brands in the same market.

For an SME or a self-employed who is just starting out, it is also helpful to learn from the best, and to do so, you can **consult various social networks** of companies that are successful or that you consider a model to follow, which inspire you to get **ideas for styles of publications** that you like, although the company's content must always be original.

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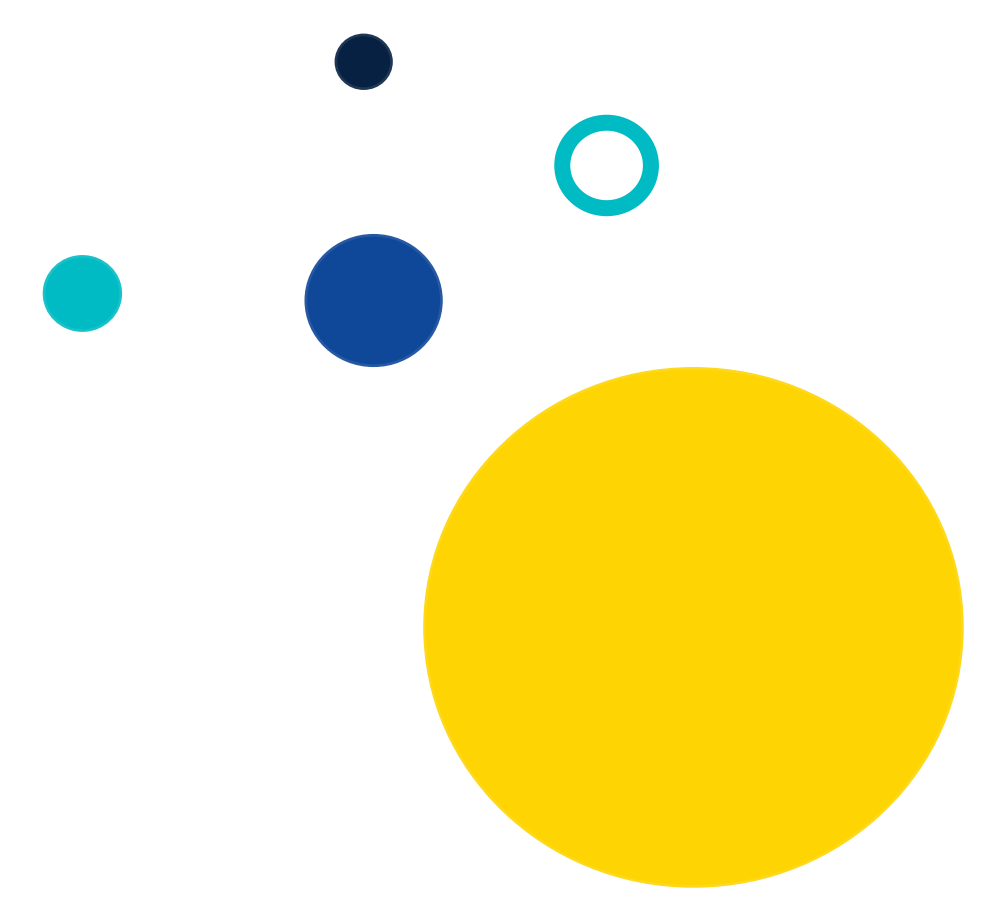
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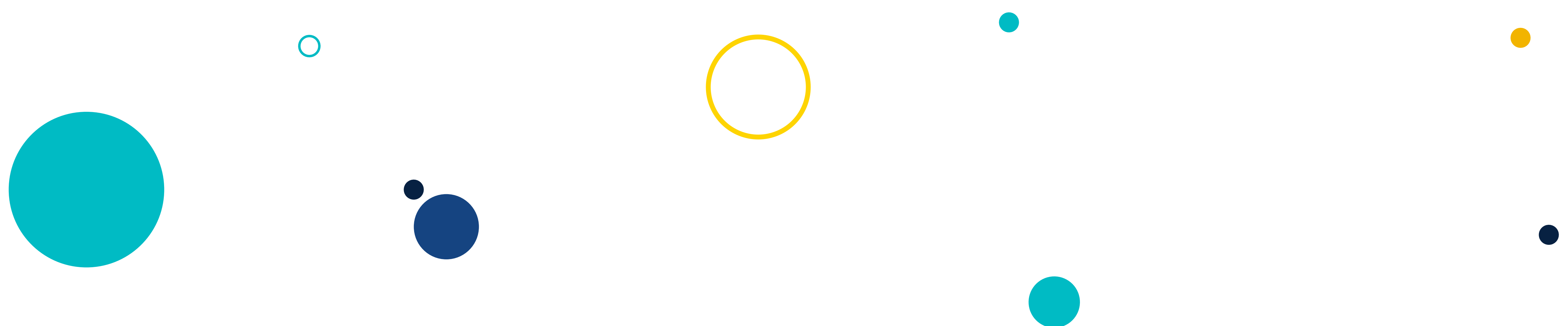
## 2. Setting objectives

The objectives to be set must be specific, measurable and realistic, and be classified between short and medium-long term. Some examples of objectives are the **number of followers** (although the important thing is to attract the target audience and have quality followers - not quantity), number of posts (for example, 2 per day for Instagram and 3 per week for Facebook) or **number of conversions** (people who carry out the desired action after viewing the social network - buying a producer).

## 3. Define the target audience

It is essential to know the real and potential customer, the social networks they use, their behaviour and their needs. Know whether they are younger or older, more modern or classic, more sophisticated... etc. To create attractive content, you have to know who you are addressing and what the interests of the target audience are, in order to connect the services or products with the profile in question.

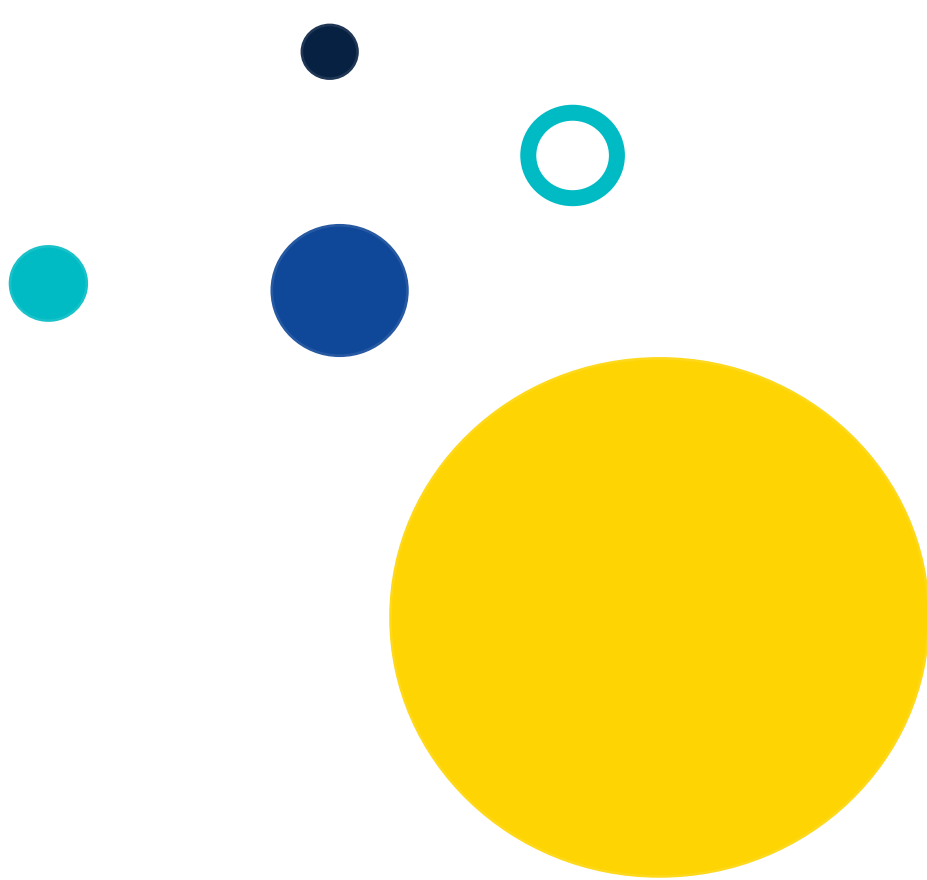
For this task, it is helpful to create a "**buyer person**" profile, which is the fictitious representation of the target audience, i.e., the customer profile that is interested in the business' product. This involves defining aspects such as their profession, education, where they live, their concerns and challenges, their interests, the solutions they are looking for, their **personality type** and **digital behaviour**. This profile serves as inspiration for actions in Social Networks. [REF-33].



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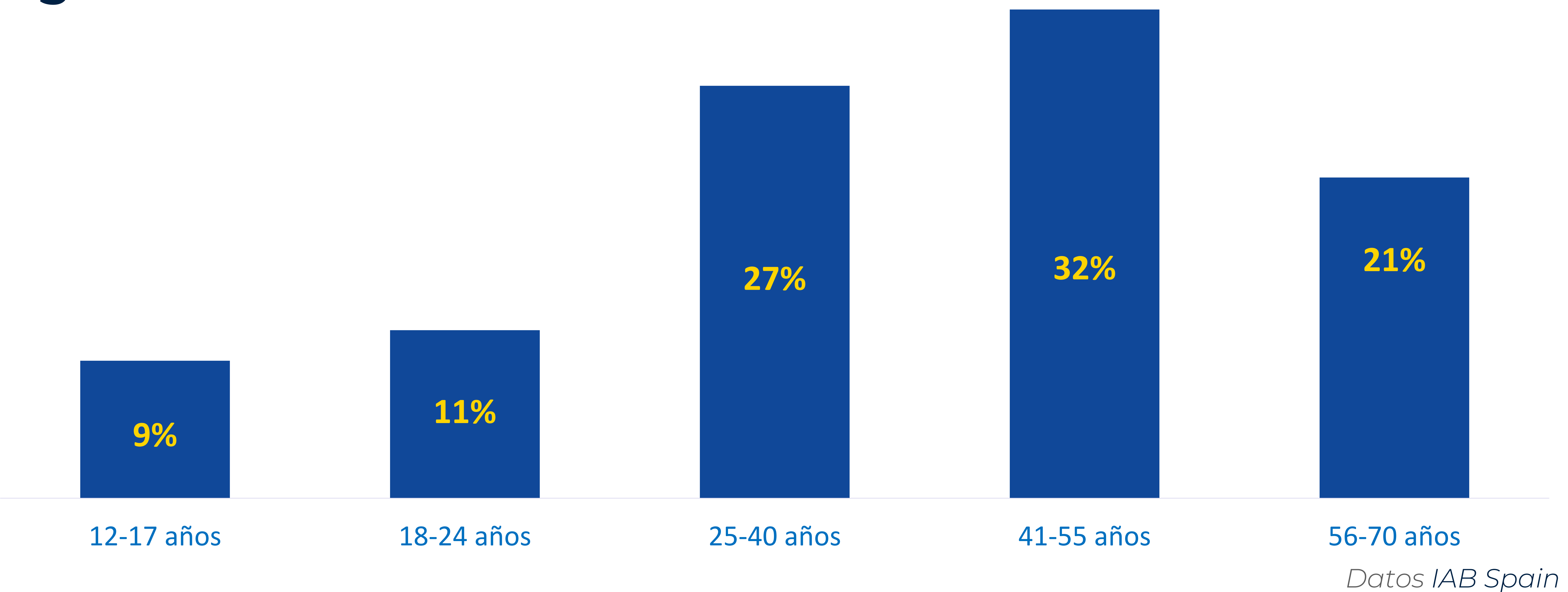
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In addition, to give an overview of the age group using social networks, the IAB Spain social network study [REF-34] indicates that the average age of a social network user is 41 years old, which shows that its use is widespread. 9% of users are between 12 and 17 years old, 11% between 18 and 24 years old, 27% between 25 and 40 years old, 32% between 41-55 years old and 21% between 56 and 70 years old. However, as discussed above, the most popular networks vary by age group.

Age of social network users

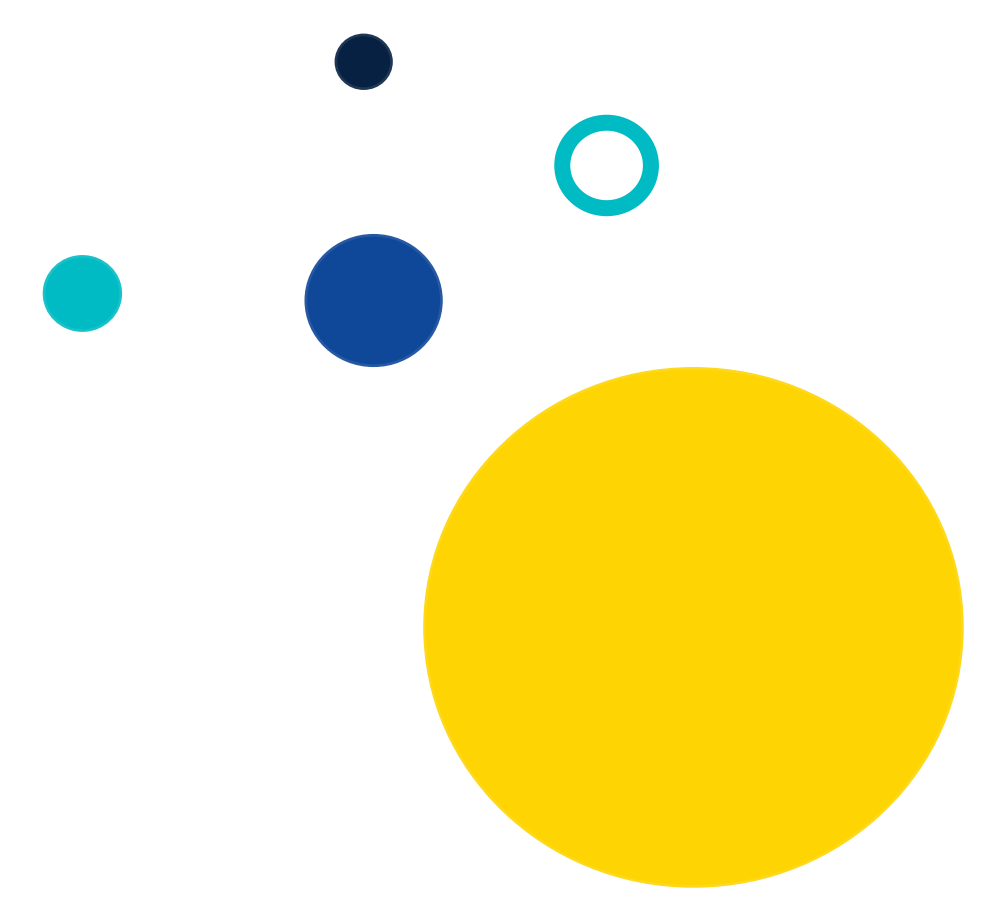


	Million users in Spain	Most common ages
Facebook	20,2	18 a 44 years old
Instagram	23	18 a 34 years old
Twitter	9	25 a 50 years old
YouTube	41	18 a 44 years old
TikTok	15	12 a 23 years old
LinkedIn	14	25 a 34 years old

Fuente principal: Informe Digital 2022 We Are Social y Hootsuite

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## 4. Create the strategy

Based on the objectives, the strategy will be created with a focus on the target audience and social media.

The elements of the strategy are:

- **Choice of social networks** where to create a profile
- The **tone of communications** (more formal or informal, serious or creative, being the more "casual" tones more common in social networks).
- The **type of format** (social media posts, videos, reels, infographics, blogs, tutorials...)
- The **company's official hashtags**
- **Planning and scheduling of actions.**
- **Those responsible** in the company for implementing the strategy
- **Key indicators** to measure the actions (for example, the degree of conversion of visits into sales).

## 5. Choose the social networks

Depending on the type of business, the most appropriate social network for the **target audience can be determined**. It is important to select the social network or networks in which you are going to have an **impact**, but it is not necessary to be present in all of them, and above all you should avoid **having empty profiles** [REF-35].

## 6. Make a schedule or editorial calendar

It is very important to be consistent in the publications on social networks, and not just create a profile. To create the **content plan**, it is recommended to create a calendar with the publication of content on each social network. You have to decide on the **frequency, type of content and date of publication**. For this function, the social media management tools in this document are of great help.

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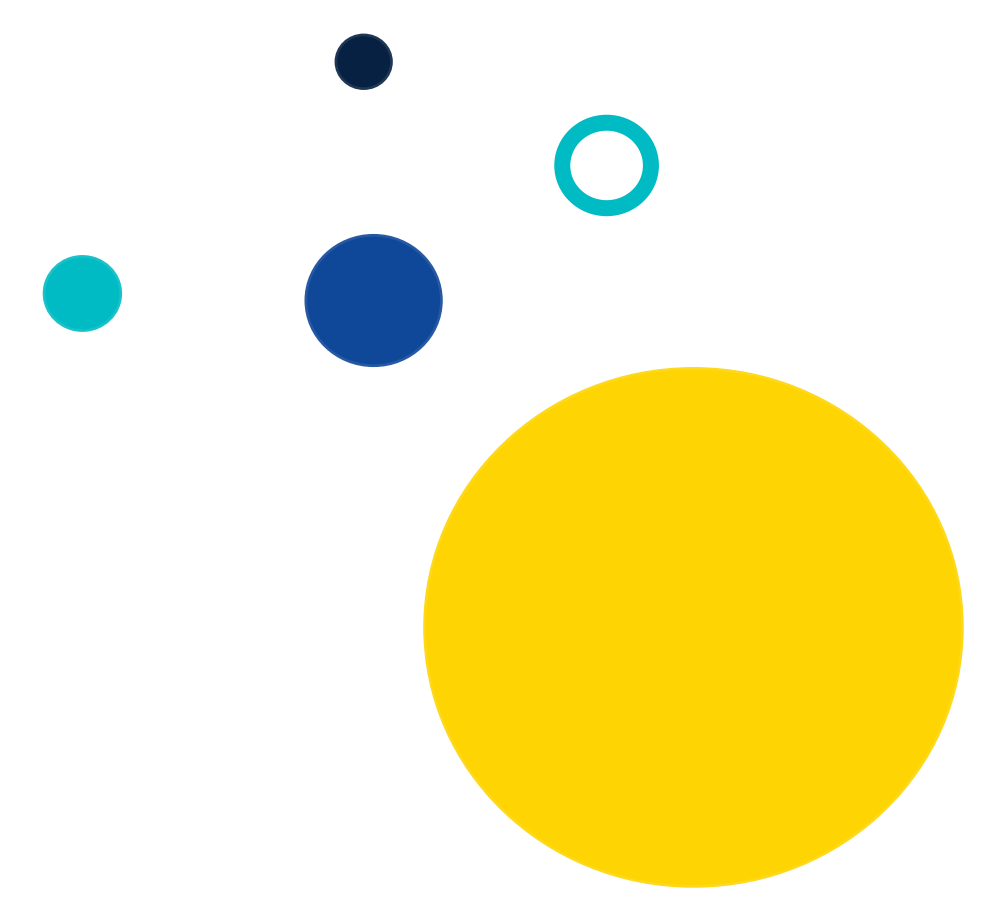


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## 7. Interact with the public

A key to success on social media is not only to be consistent with posts but also with **interactions**, **replying to messages** and **comments** to achieve that closeness and trust with followers and customers.

## 8. Measure results

Good planning must include **measuring** and **monitoring content**. It is about knowing what works or what needs to be changed. The guides to network **management tools** include applications that also allow you to track your publications with metrics.

### Guide to create quality content

To achieve an **impactful social network** and make a **good planning**, it is necessary to know the content formats and tips to provide quality.

### *Types of formats*

The type of format must be adapted to each social network [REF-36]. The most common formats are:

1. **Text posts:** these can be shorter and more direct or longer and more detailed, although the first format is better suited to the networks.
2. **Images:** these can be photographs, illustrations, graphics or infographics. In addition to the company's own images, the list of design tools in this monograph is of great help in creating quality formats.

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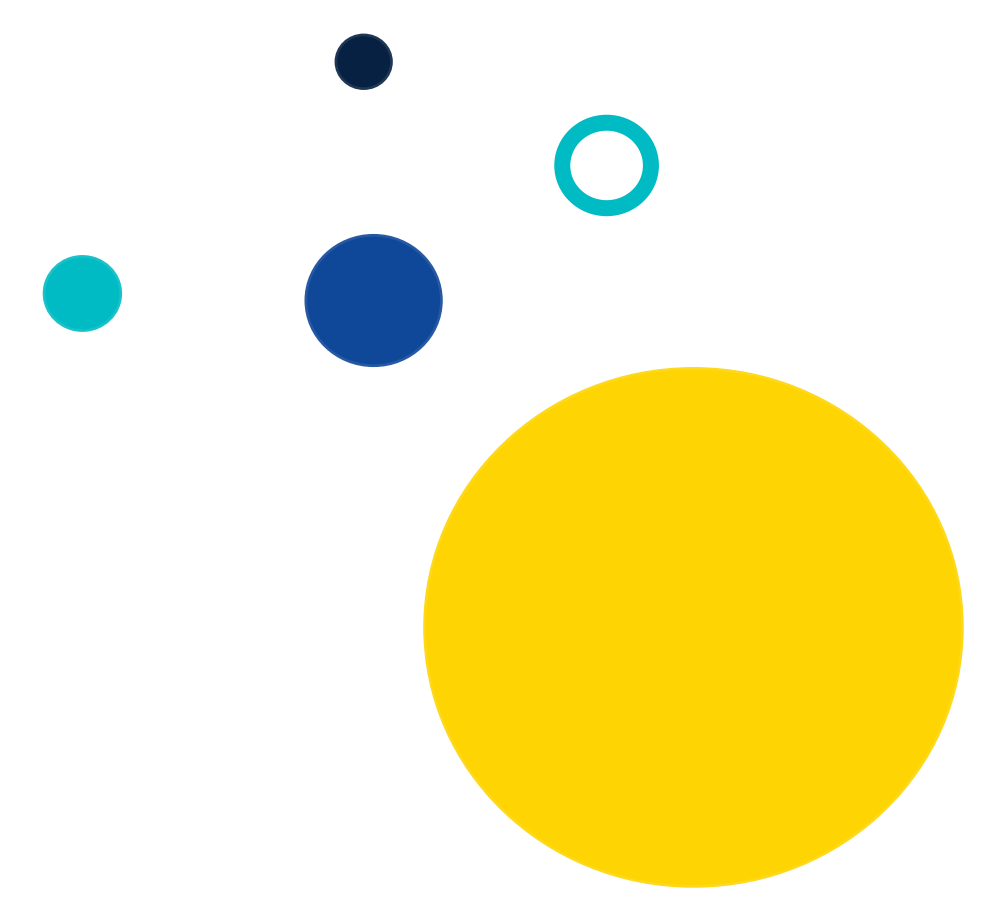


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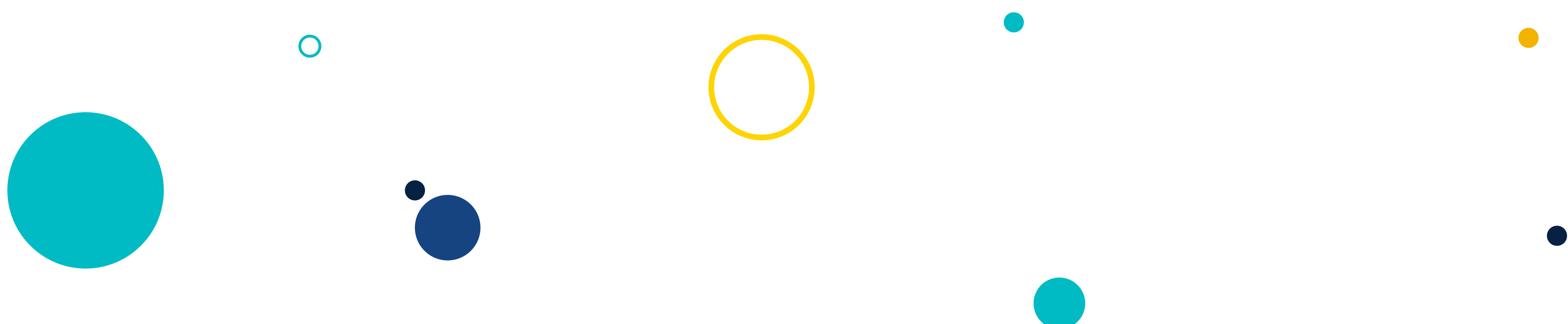


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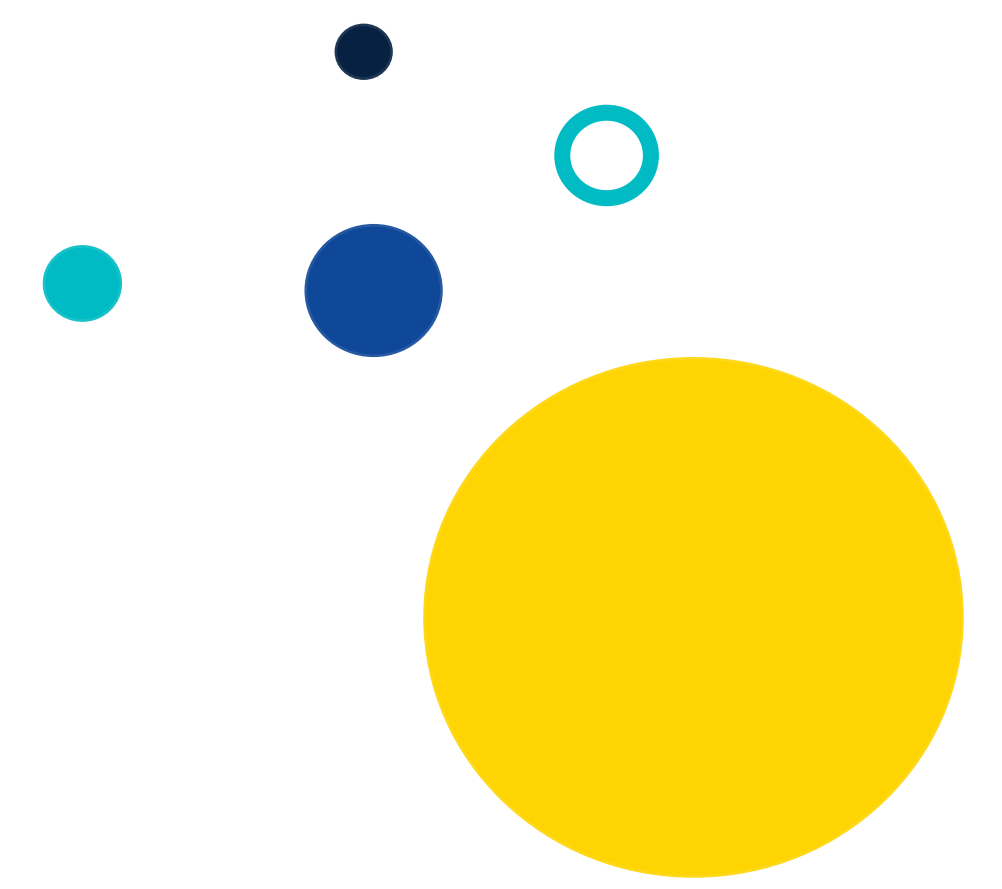
- **Photographs:** be careful with the intellectual property of the photos, choose images that make sense with the brand and that have a good quality. In any case, they are essential in networks and can be combined with texts
  - **Infographics:** they can help to convey ideas in a very visual format, and are also useful in formal environments, being especially good for use on LinkedIn or Facebook [REF-37].
  - **"Memes":** memes, which are images with text that create jokes, have become popular on social media, and for certain younger audiences can be a creative and fresh way to create "engagement", although they need to be used with care. They are popular on Instagram and twitter [REF-38].
3. **Videos:** short videos are common, from event clips, tutorials, interviews or product demonstrations. They became very fashionable with TikTok and from there other social networks also promoted this format, such as Instagram with "reels". It is the preferred format in social networks [REF-39].
  4. **Contests:** this involves generating challenges or contests to encourage the participation of followers and draw attention to the brand.
  5. **Surveys and questionnaires:** this is a way of generating more interactivity and finding out information of interest to potential customers. On Instagram, for example, they are easy to create through "stories" (temporary publications).



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## Types of content

These formats can be transferred in various ways on social networks, which are important to know:

1. **Static publications or posts:** these are publications that remain on the profile indefinitely, unless you wish to delete them. It should be borne in mind that when the profile is viewed on the network, the publications will be seen and they must have a certain coherence or give a global image, i.e. care must be taken with the appearance transmitted by the set of publications and not just each one individually.
2. **Stories:** these are temporary publications that disappear after 24 hours and usually include images and short videos.
3. **Direct or live broadcasts:** these are live broadcasts of events, such as concerts or company events, as well as interviews, allowing, for example, followers to ask questions via chat and the person on the live stream to answer.
4. **Advertising:** these are paid posts to showcase products and services, with direct access to social media profiles or the company's website.

It is important that it is **geolocalised**, as it is not the same if the **target audience** of the **business is local, national or international**. For example, a greengrocer or restaurant must invest in local geolocation, while an online T-shirt company can offer its services nationwide.

Within advertising on social networks, collaborations with "**influencers**" of interest to the market niche are very important, i.e., people with fame and many followers in a network, which allows the message to reach more people, and in particular the target audience. [REF-40] .

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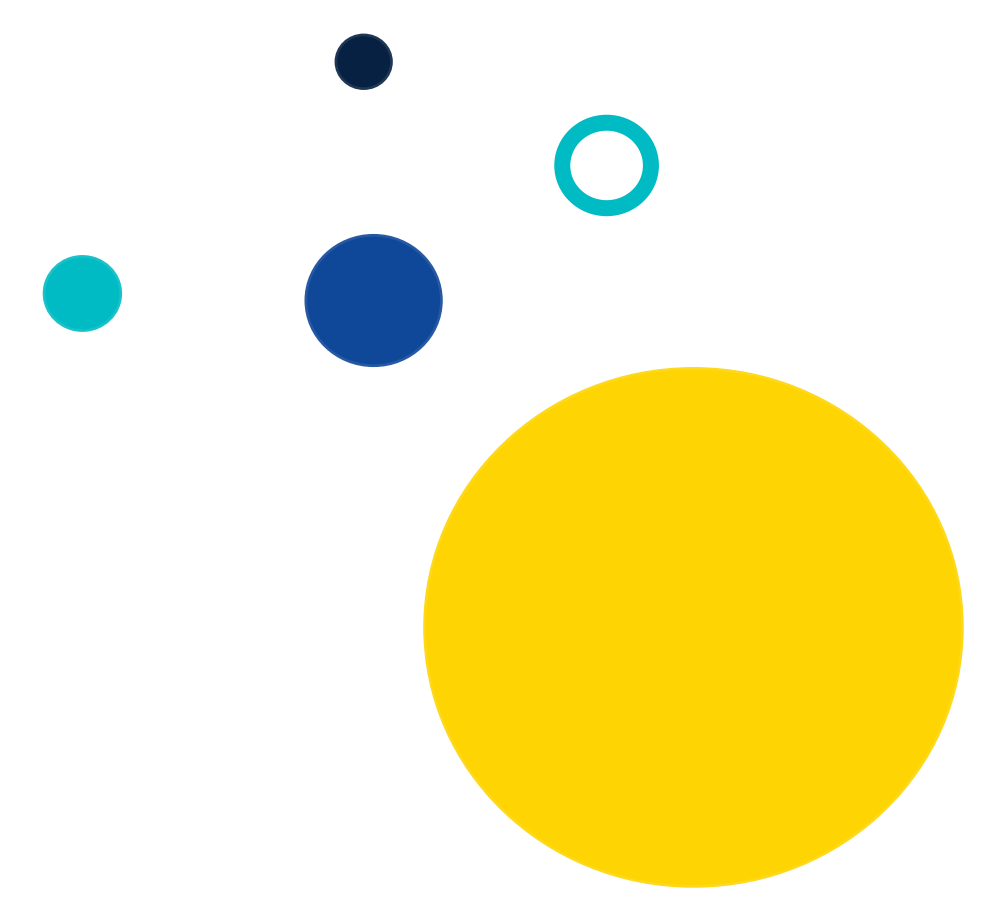


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## Type of message

It is important to show the experience of the SME or business, what makes it different. Some types of messages that can be used in social networks are [REF-41]:

- **Interviewing company staff or collaborators**, which helps to personify the company in social networks.
- **Testimonials**: include clients so that they can talk about their experience and share what they liked most.
- **Current affairs**: consider the issues that concern the target audience..

## Final tips

- **Language styles**: you must adapt to the target audience and the social network, although the general trend is to create a more informal and approachable language. In addition, messages need to be short, concise, fun and fresh. It is essential that they are clear and easily understood, that they do not create a language barrier with the target audience
- **Inclusividad**: Inclusiveness: inclusiveness is recommended in publications, images, videos... that is, considering the existing diversity in society [REF-42].
- **Accessibility**: for messages to be accessible to people with different abilities, it is recommended to include subtitles in videos and if there is text in a still image, the text should also appear in the description.
- **Use of (#) hashtags**: This involves creating words or very short phrases that have a meaning for the brand and the company or that attract the target audience, and are related to the message, image or publication created. To do this, the symbol (#) is added before the word or short phrase. You can have a series of hashtags that are used on a regular basis. Users searching for the word used will find the content with the hashtag.

In short, you have to combine different formats and types of message, analysing what works best for the brand and the target audience, seeking creativity and originality to position yourself and attract customers.

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## 5. Social media management tools

In addition to the social networks themselves, **digital tools** are available for the management of these social networks by companies. They allow **the integration of all the company's social media profiles in one place**, making it easy to schedule posts, respond to messages or comments in real time, receive customer alerts, and track and analyse data from posts, among other useful functions [REF-43].

Its main benefits are:

- They allow content to be scheduled for automatic publication, which is a great advantage because it does not require being attentive every day and because there are times of greater content viewing according to each social network.
- They speed up interactions with followers
- All social network profiles can be accessed through a single site.
- They serve as **monitoring tools**, generating reports and analysing metrics. The latter are essential to know what content works best, when you are able to increase sales, etc.

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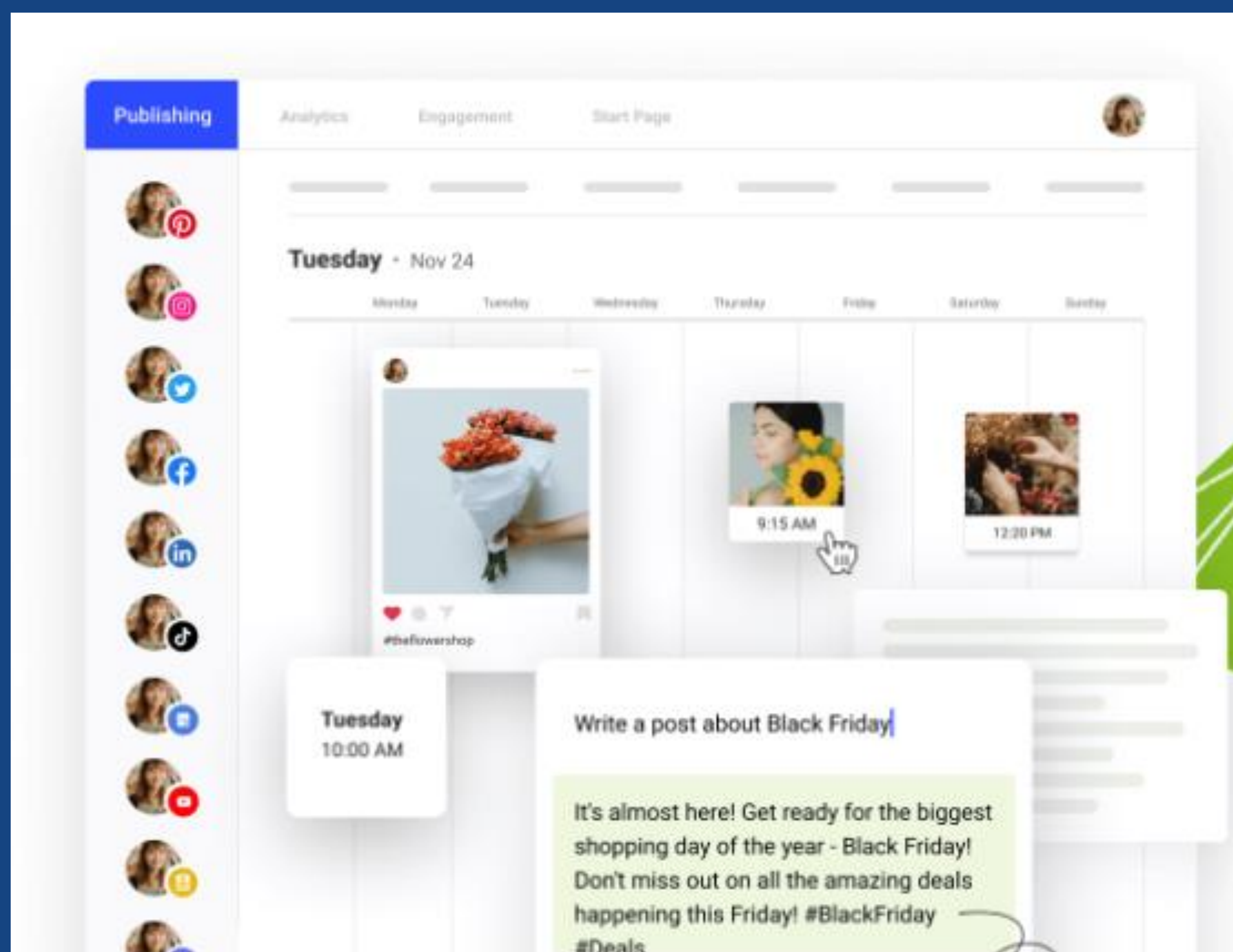
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Below, we take a look at the best management tools:



It is designed for small businesses and comes in a free version. It allows to create publishing calendars and schedule content on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google and Instagram. It also allows to track user behaviour and generate reports.



It is an easy-to-use Spanish management tool with analysis, management and planning functionalities. It allows the unification of advertising on networks and monitoring hashtags. It has a free account.

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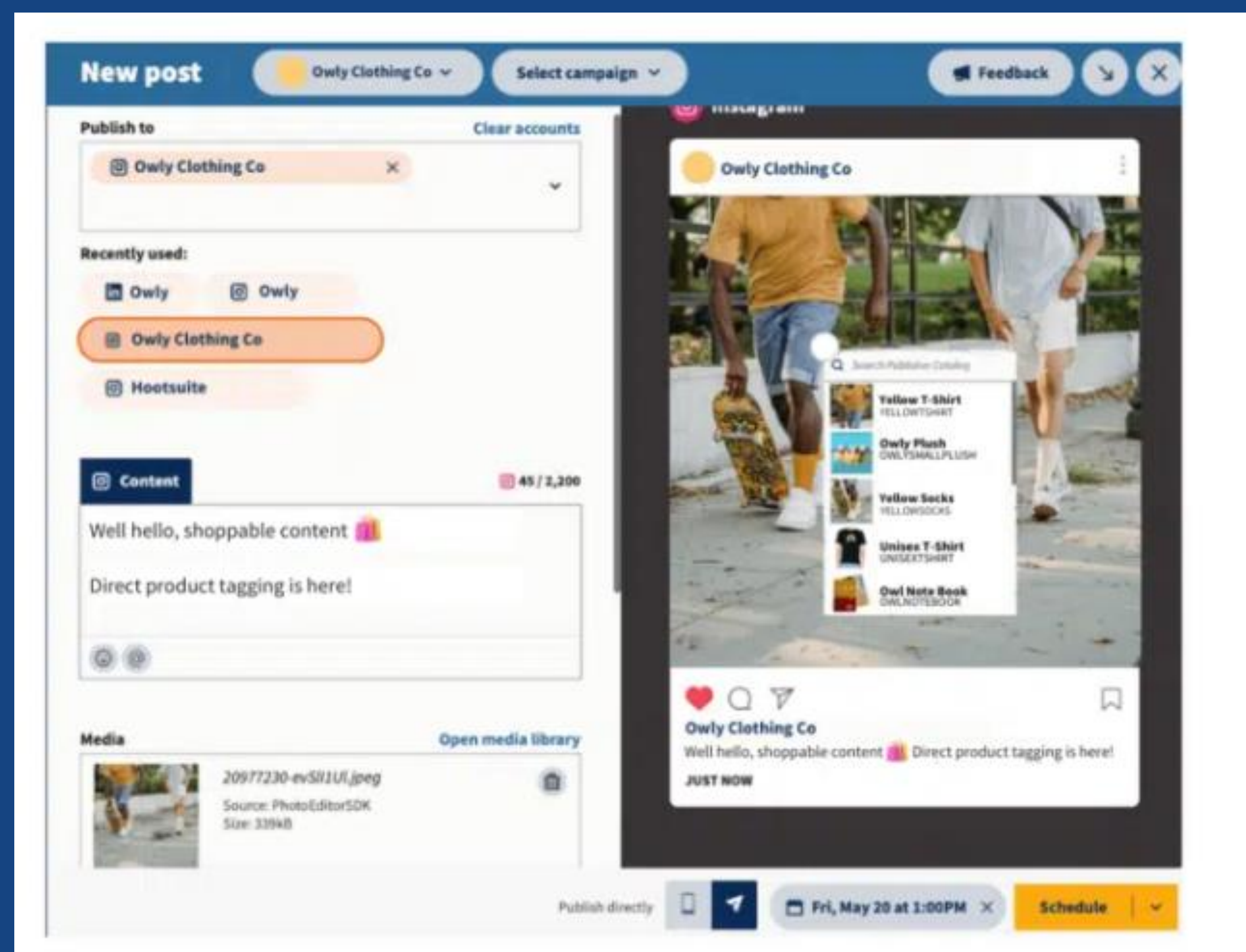


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It is one of the most popular tools on the market. Easy to use, it allows you to schedule publications, set up alerts and respond to comments or messages in real time. It has a one-month trial option and plans from €99 per month. They also have a very active blog with specific recommendations for the use of social media and management tools.



Specifically for Twitter, it allows you to schedule tweets for automatic publication and set up alerts.



It is the free Facebook tool that can also be used to manage Instagram posts, scheduling them and managing advertising on both platforms.



It is easy to use, and with very complete functionalities, highlighting its use for monitoring and supervising profiles, thanks to its detailed statistics. It allows you to set alerts, analyse trends, manage campaigns... It is a paid tool with a free trial option. [REF-44] .



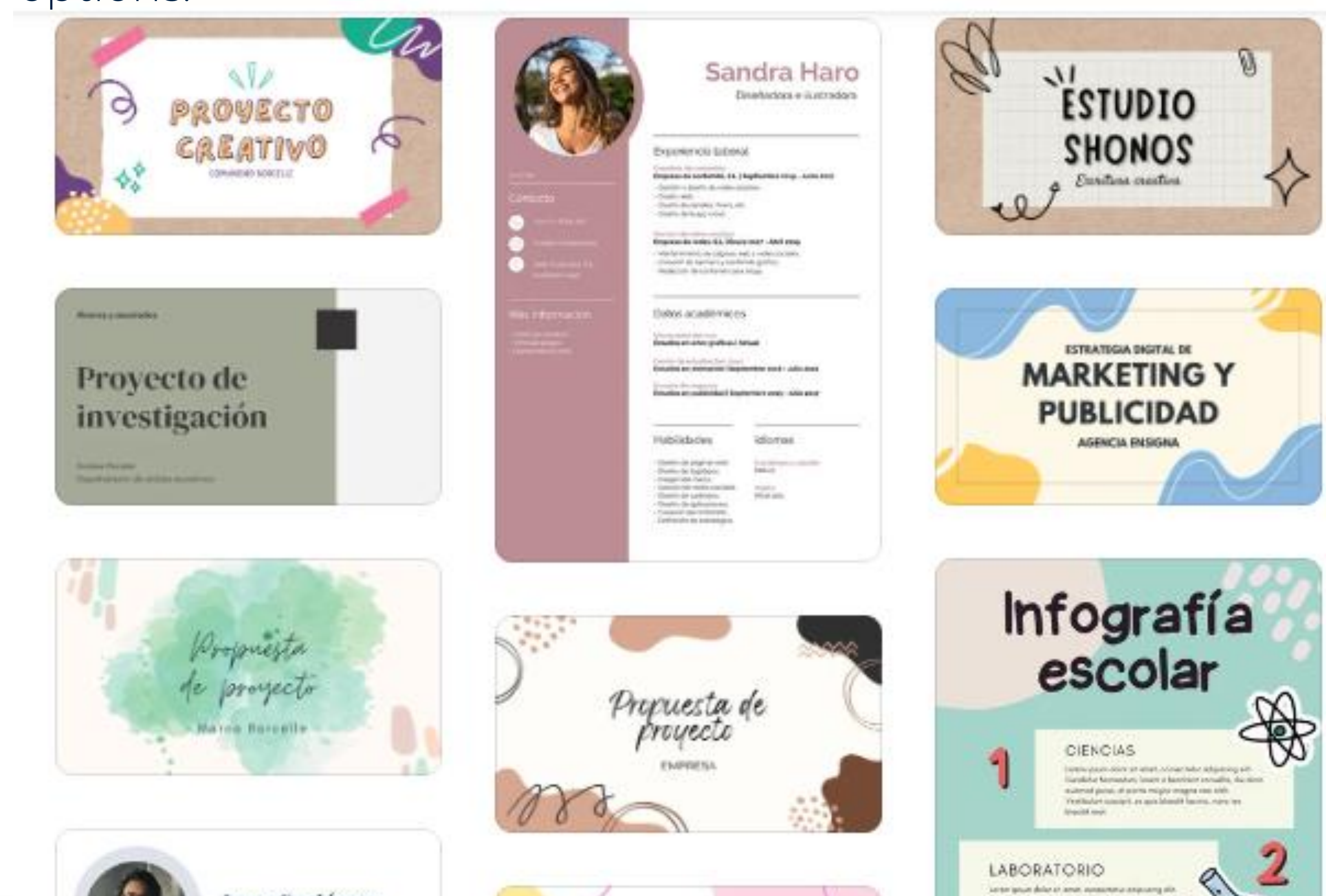
## 6. Layout creation tools

There are many tools to support the creation of quality and professional-looking content. On the one hand, there are **design tools with templates to use**, on the other, **high-definition image banks** and, finally, **free Artificial Intelligence tools** to create designs.

Creating layouts with templates [REF-45] :

**Canva**

One of the **most popular** for creating designs for social **networks**. It has thousands of templates such as infographics and presentations, as well as photo and video editing. It also has a feature to **create images with Artificial Intelligence**. It has a free option and other premium paid options.



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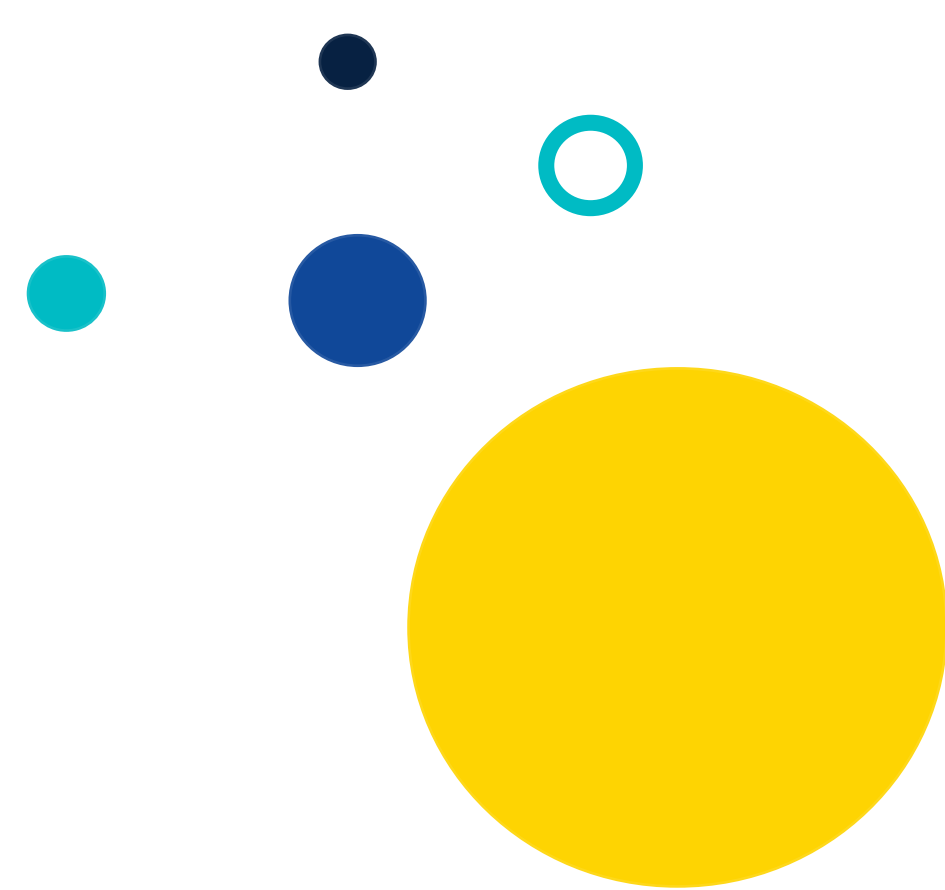
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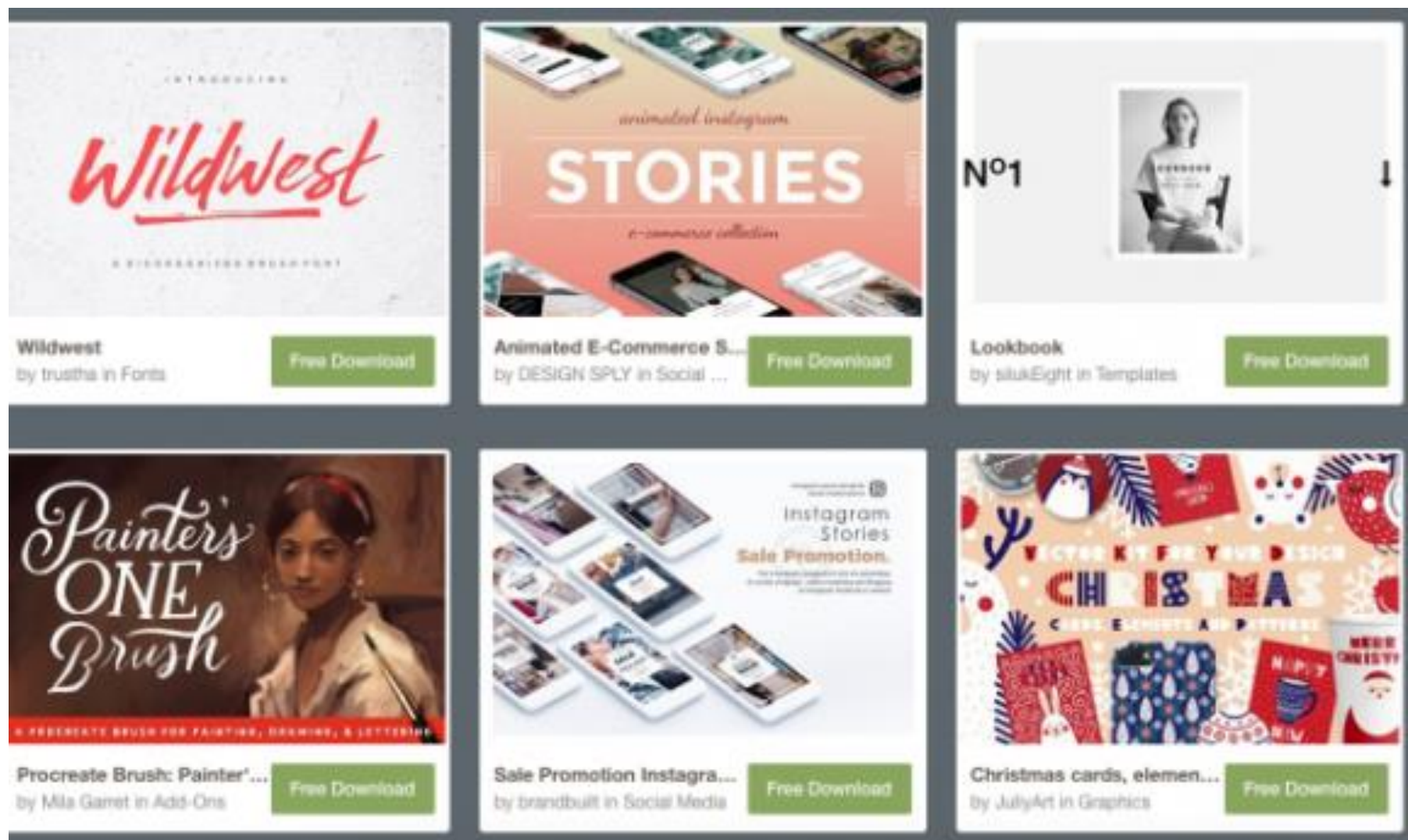


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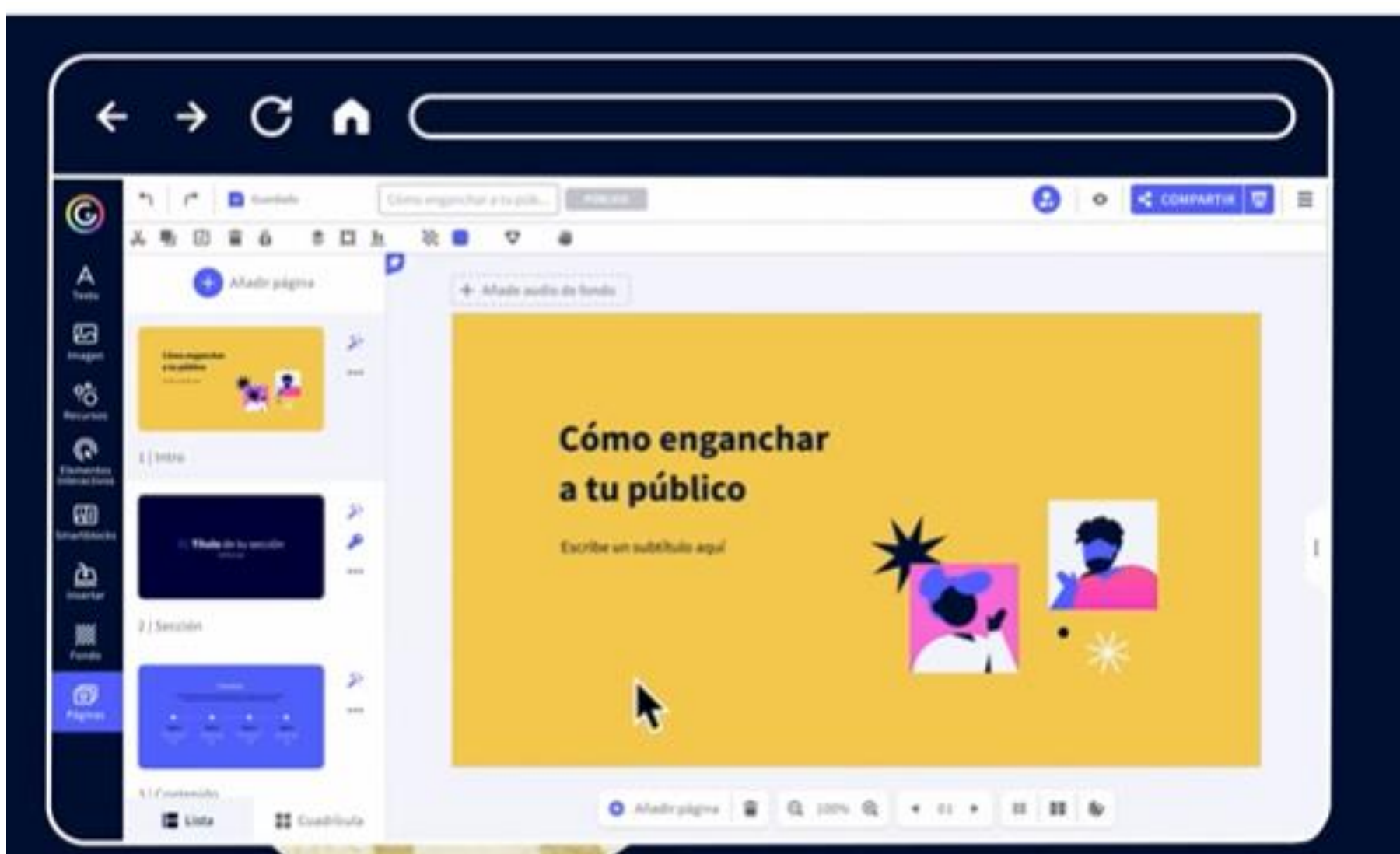




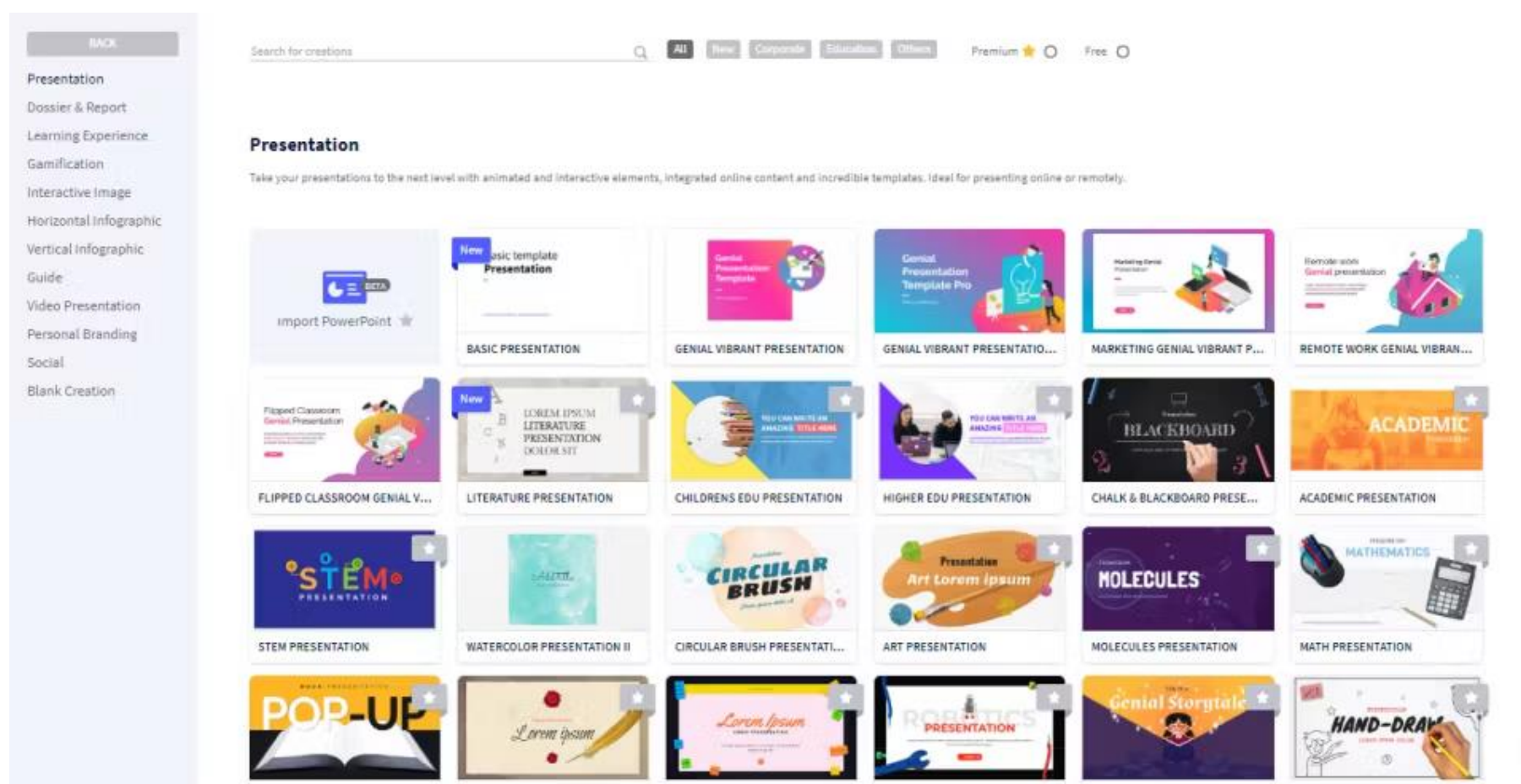
It is used to edit photographs and create original graphics and collages, with design models. It has both free and paid functionalities.



It allows a wide catalogue of design templates, which can be modified according to the company's taste and quality photographs that can be used according to the theme of interest. It is payable.



It is used to create presentations, infographics and graphic contents in an intuitive and free way.



Free royalty-free image banks

These are image search engines, where you just type in the words of what you want to find and choose high quality images that can be used guaranteeing that no copyright is violated.

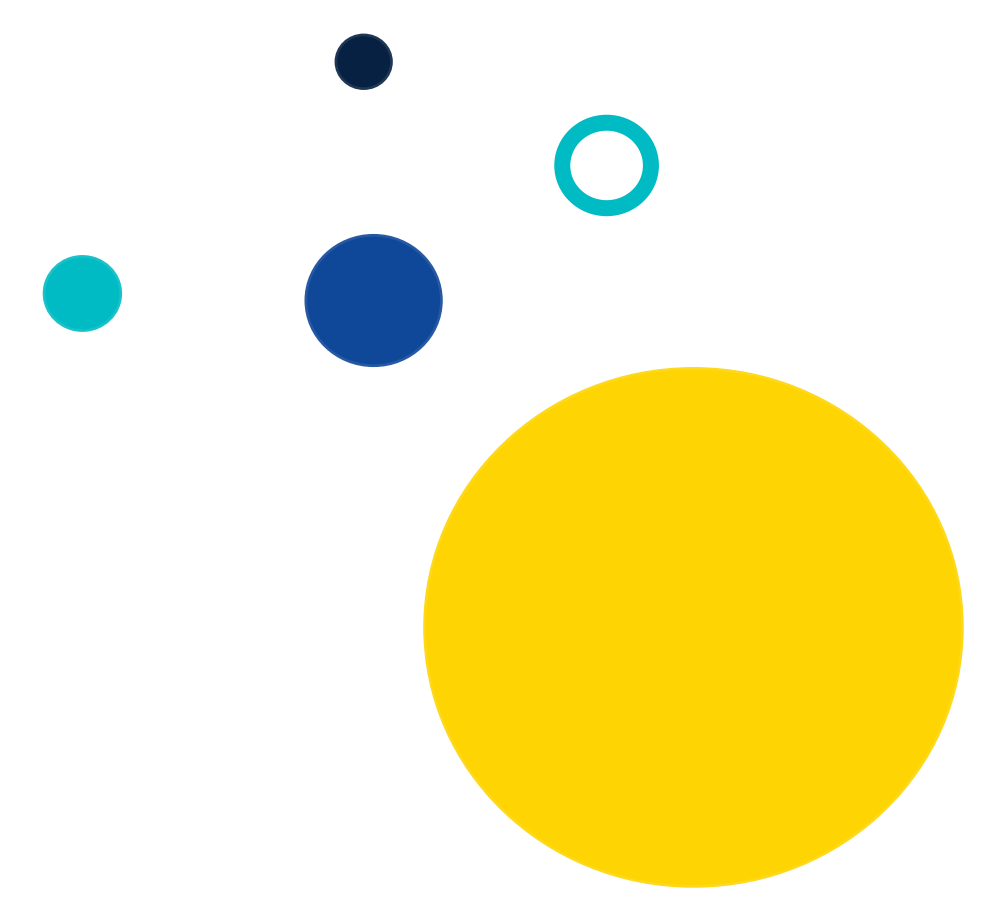
The main ones are: Pexels, Pixabay, Getty images.



Pexels

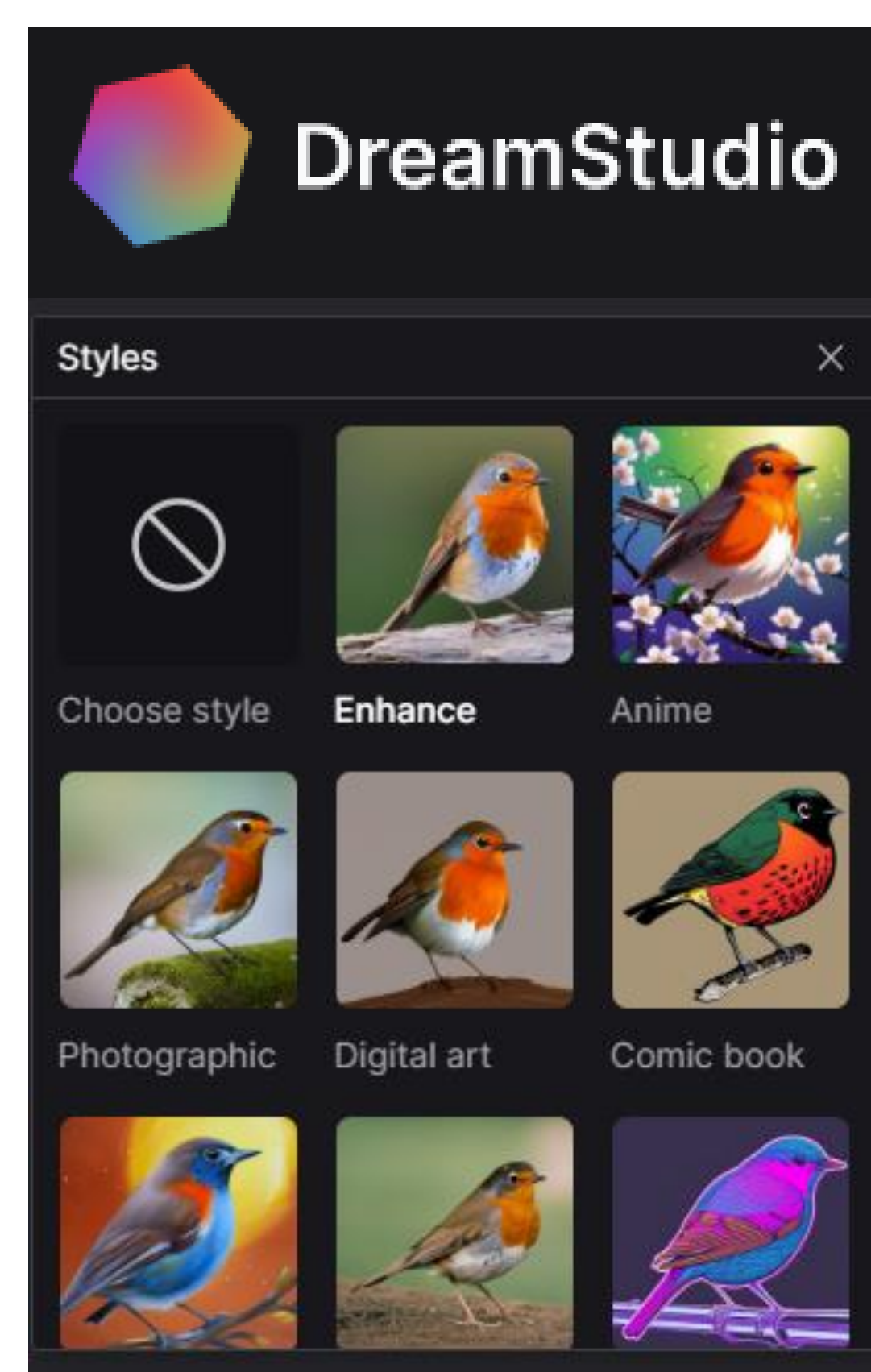
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Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for illustrations and images [REF-46].

These are free tools for the creation of images or illustrations, in which you only need to type what you want to generate. Some of these are:



Generates images from a word search engine, open source and free. Seeks to facilitate the use of AI in an ethical and useful way.



**Photosonic**

No registration required and it is free, works by typing in keywords and displays many variants of illustrations and designs.

Canva

As noted, this design tool also allows for the creation of AI images.

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## 7. Conclusions

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The need for SMEs and freelancers to **use social networks to increase the visibility of their business is undeniable**. This is as true for companies that have the possibility of selling online as it is for more traditional businesses that make themselves known through these networks.

There are hundreds of social networks, but it is advisable for SMEs to focus their efforts on the most popular ones, and make an analysis of which ones their target audience can be found on.

The **advantages of their use are multiple**, from **increasing visibility, brand loyalty or sales growth**. The investment in advertising within the networks is much lower than in traditional media, but beyond this, it is required that the profile on the social network is a careful showcase of the brand and that there is interaction with users.

**In order to have successful profiles, a strategy and a content plan are needed**. In other words, think about the type of messages and content you want to transmit, plan the frequency and evaluate how well it works..

SMEs and self-employed **can benefit from a wide range of free tools**, both for the management of social networks, scheduling publications and evaluating them, and for the **creation of designs**, which manage to create a creative, professional and attractive brand image in all their social networks.

In short, **the use of social networks is within the reach of all businesses**, and it is important not only to launch the creation of profiles, but to do so strategically and by creating quality content.



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