instacart

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Environments V: Research Design Studio

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Background

Instacart was founded in 2012 by Apoorva Mehta, Max Mullen, and Brandon Leonardo. The company was launched in the San Francisco Bay Area with the mission to deliver groceries from local stores directly to consumers' doorsteps. By leveraging a network of personal shoppers, Instacart offered a novel solution to the age-old challenge of grocery shopping, providing convenience and efficiency to its users.

Timeline

2012 Instacart is founded and launches in the San Francisco Bay Area, delivering food from local grocers.

2013 Introduction of the Express membership program (now Instacart+), offering unlimited free delivery for a monthly fee.

2014 Expands to 10 major metropolitan cities, including New York City, Los Angeles, and Portland.

2017 Goes nationwide, partners with key U.S. grocery retailers, expands to Canada, and launches Instacart Ads.

2018 Acquires Unata, a Toronto-based tech platform, and launches its first enterprise offering for retailers.

2020 Expands into new verticals like beauty, electronics, and pets, growing the Instacart Shopper community to over 500,000.

2021 Expands EBT SNAP payment integration, acquires FoodStorm and Caper AI, and welcomes new CEO Fidji Simo.

2022 Launches Instacart Platform, offering end-to-end solutions to help retailers grow their businesses.

Brand Evolution

Instacart initially targeted busy professionals, offering convenience in grocery shopping, but gradually expanded its focus to include a broader audience, such as families and elderly individuals. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the brand shifted its emphasis to safety, reliability, and community support, transforming its image from a mere convenience service to a trusted and essential resource for many households.

Existing Services

- Grocery Delivery
- Instacart Pickup
- Express Delivery
- Scheduled Delivery
- Multi-Store Ordering

- Alcohol Delivery
- Prescription Delivery
- Pet Supplies Delivery
- Household Essentials Delivery
- Beauty Supply Delivery
- Late Night Delivery
- Convenience Store Delivery
- Ready Meal Delivery
- Asian Grocery Delivery
- Cake Delivery
- Latin Grocery Delivery

- Advertising Services
- Instacart Business
- Gift Delivery
- Same-Day Flower Delivery

Market

Instacart operates primarily in the U.S. and Canada, partnering with local grocery stores to offer tailored services across urban, suburban, and rural areas. Its strong regional presence adapts to local demands, such as alcohol delivery where permitted. While focused on North America, Instacart's success suggests potential for global expansion, especially as the global market for online grocery delivery grows, driven by increasing demand for convenience and e-commerce, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Revenue
$ 2.5 Billion
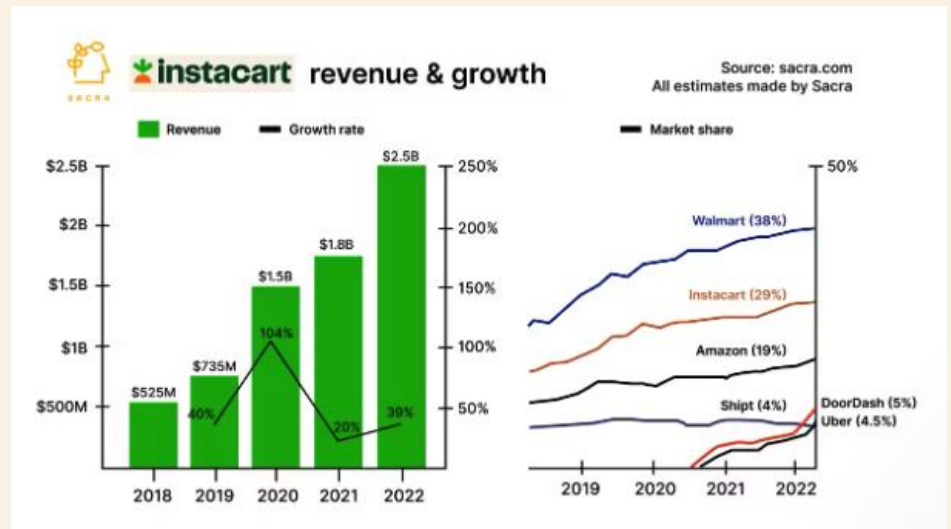
Instacart is a **market leader** in the online grocery delivery world, especially in the US. Instacart's strong partnerships with major grocery stores and its ability to offer same-day delivery with a personal touch have helped it stay ahead of the competition.

While big names like Amazon Fresh and Walmart are strong competitors, Instacart's unique approach—letting customers shop from a wide range of retailers—keeps it in a leading position.

Competitors

Instacart has a variety of competitors in different segments of the market.

Grocery delivery services

- Shipt
- Amazon Fresh
- Walmart Grocery Delivery
- Fresh Direct
- Peapod
- Google shopping
- Thrive market

Meal Kit Delivery services

- HelloFresh
- Blue Apron
- Home Chef

Convenience and General Merchandise delivery

- Go Puff
- Boxed
- Doordash
- Postmates
- Uber Eats

Farm - to - table and Specialty delivery

- Misfits
- Imperfect foods
- Farmbox Direct

Unique Attributes and Benefits

Wide Retailer Network: Partners with major chains and local stores, allowing users to shop from multiple retailers in one order.

Same-Day Delivery: Offers speedy same-day delivery, often within a few hours.

Personalized Shopping: Assigns personal shoppers who provide customized service and real-time adjustments.

Detailed Inventory Access: Provides detailed access to store inventories, including brands, sizes, and promotions.

Membership Benefits: Instacart+ offers free delivery, reduced fees, and exclusive discounts.

User-Friendly App: Features smart shopping lists, recipe suggestions, and easy reorder options.
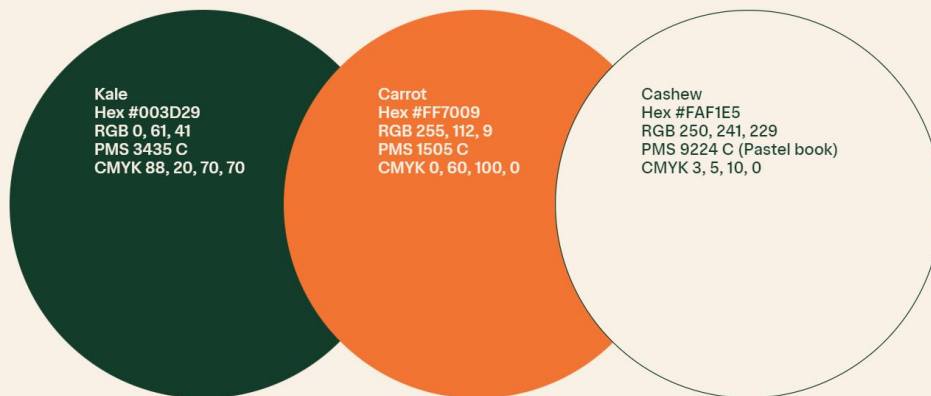
Flexibility and Convenience: Allows scheduling of deliveries at the user's convenience, whether immediately or later.
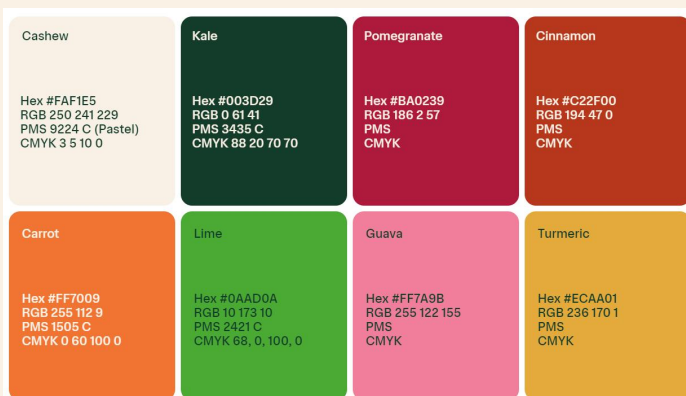
Creative (Visual Guidelines)

Color

Palette is modern, fresh, and grounded in food.

Primary Colors: Kale and Cashew are "black and white." They are used for our logo, background colors, and typography. Carrot is our palette cleanser. It cuts through our background colors, adding a pop of freshness to our palette.

Kale
Hex #003D29
RGB 0, 61, 41
PMS 3435 C
CMYK 88, 20, 70, 70

Carrot
Hex #FF7009
RGB 255, 112, 9
PMS 1505 C
CMYK 0, 60, 100, 0

Cashew
Hex #FAF1E5
RGB 250, 241, 229
PMS 9224 C (Pastel book)
CMYK 3, 5, 10, 0

Extended Palette: Inspired by food first but offers a range to extend beyond. Each secondary color supports our Core Identity Palette, while Instacart Plus colors are reserved for Plus communications.

Typographic color: To ensure that our brand impression is iconic, typography is always set in Kale, Cashew, or White (when an extra pop is needed). Please do not mix tones.

Cashew
Hex #FAF1E5
RGB 250 241 229
PMS 9224 C (Pastel)
CMYK 3 5 10 0

Kale
Hex #003D29
RGB 0 61 41
PMS 3435 C
CMYK 88 20 70 70

Pomegranate
Hex #BA0239
RGB 186 2 57
PMS
CMYK

Cinnamon
Hex #C22F00
RGB 194 47 0
PMS
CMYK

Carrot
Hex #FF7009
RGB 255 112 9
PMS 1505 C
CMYK 0 60 100 0

Lime
Hex #0AAD0A
RGB 10 173 10
PMS 2421 C
CMYK 68, 0, 100, 0

Guava
Hex #FF7A9B
RGB 255 122 155
PMS
CMYK

Turmeric
Hex #ECAA01
RGB 236 170 1
PMS
CMYK

AaBbCc AaBbCc AaBbCc AaBbCc

AaBbCc AaBbCc AaBbCc AaBbCc

Typography

Typefamily flexes for product efficiency and delicious enjoyment.

Instacart Sans: Instacart Sans is about function. It is a variable typeface with optical sizes for our product interface.

Instacart Contrast: It carries the flavor of the type palette. It is a variable typeface with modulated contrast for big expressive moments and optical sizes for smaller headlines.

Efficiently
Efficiently
Efficiently
Efficiently

Deliciously
Deliciously
Deliciously
Deliciously

Type Anatomy

acefgisty

Instacart Sans

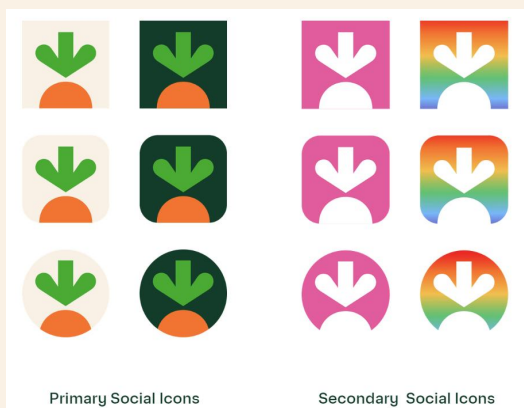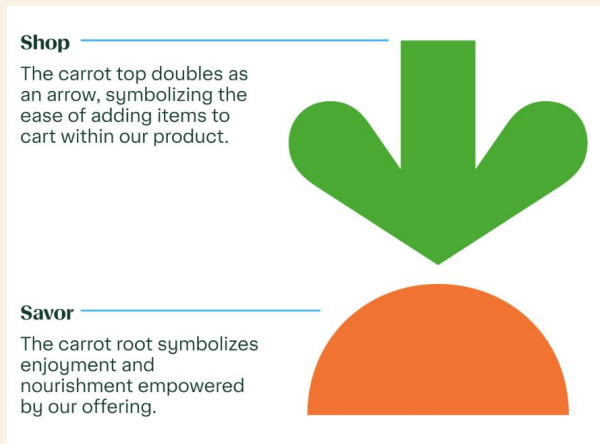High stroke contrast   Vertical stress

acfgiosty

Flat terminals

Instacart Contrast

Logo

Logo is the root of the brand system. It symbolizes the efficiency and enjoyment their offering empowers.

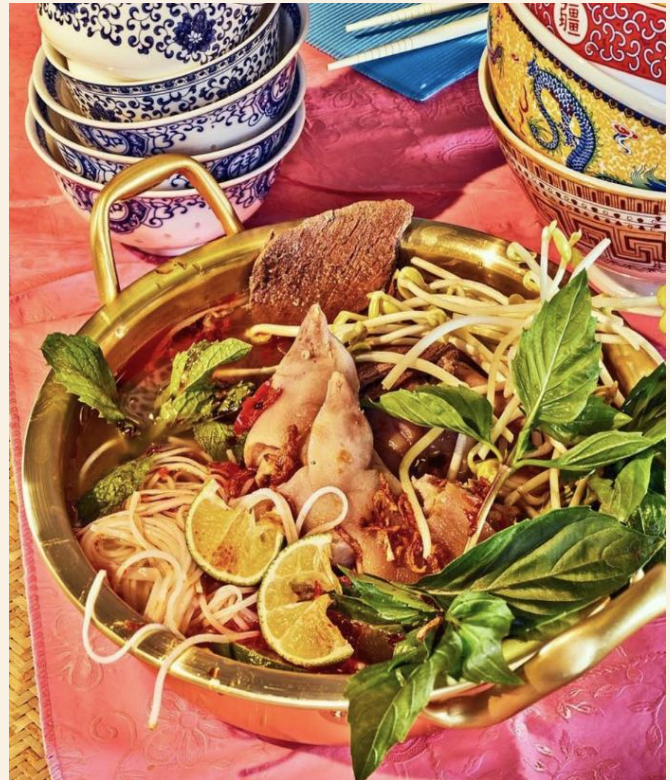The symbol is a carrot growing from the earth or peeking up from a customer's cart.

Shop
The carrot top doubles as an arrow, symbolizing the ease of adding items to cart within our product.

Savor
The carrot root symbolizes enjoyment and nourishment empowered by our offering.

Ink traps based on arrow counters · Round notch · Round geometry · Custom ligature · Straight terminals reference ground line · Ink traps based on arrow counters

Their social icons can be temporarily updated for seasonal campaigns like Women's History Month or Pride Month.

Primary Social Icons   Secondary Social Icons

Photography

It is the most juice dripping, oil glistening, cheese melting, craveable ingredient in our system. The ethos is rooted in real moments, real stories, and real foods.

Principles: **Craveable & Delicious, Authentic & Warm, Sensorial & Bespoke, Familiar, Diverse**

Illustration

Illustrations play a supporting role to photography in conveying more abstract ideas or educational information. They should feel effortless and simple with a delightful, witty point of view.

Principles: **Effortless, Witty, Lively, Delightful**

Motion

Motion enhances our communication, adding cohesion without overshadowing our brand elements. Before using motion, assess whether it strengthens the message. Motion should be purposeful, supportive, smooth, and elevated—never bouncy or cartoonish. It serves as a subtle, elegant touch that complements our visuals.
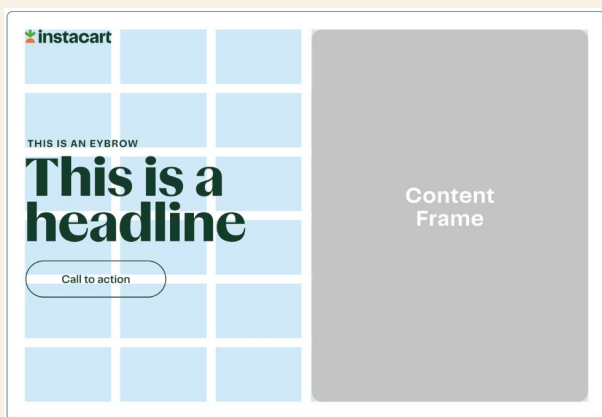
Layout

The sharp and round corners of our symbol inform our UI elements and content frames within layouts.
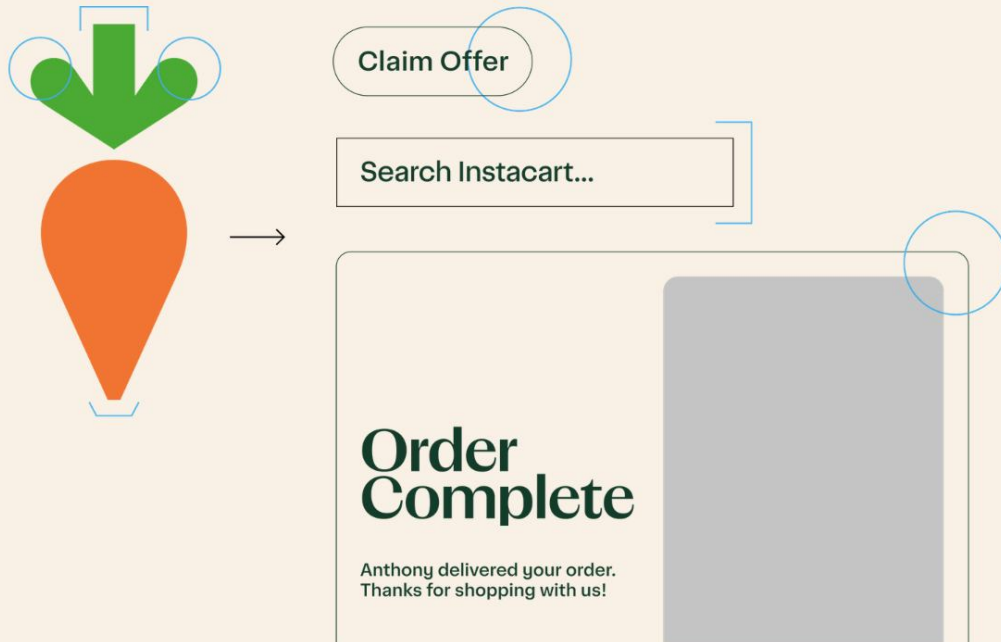

Using a grid helps structure information and ensure layouts are constructed in a clean and organized fashion. Also allowing generous, clear space between groups so our users can easily and quickly decipher our communications.

What are key design elements and messages of existing advertising, websites, environments, etc.?

- Emphasizing affordability and savings through visible promotions and deals.
- Seamless integration of loyalty programs for easy access to rewards.
- Personalized shopping experiences based on customer data.
- Promoting convenience and fast delivery services.
- Showcasing partnerships with major retailers to reinforce product variety and quality.
- Using gamification and promotions to drive customer engagement and retention.
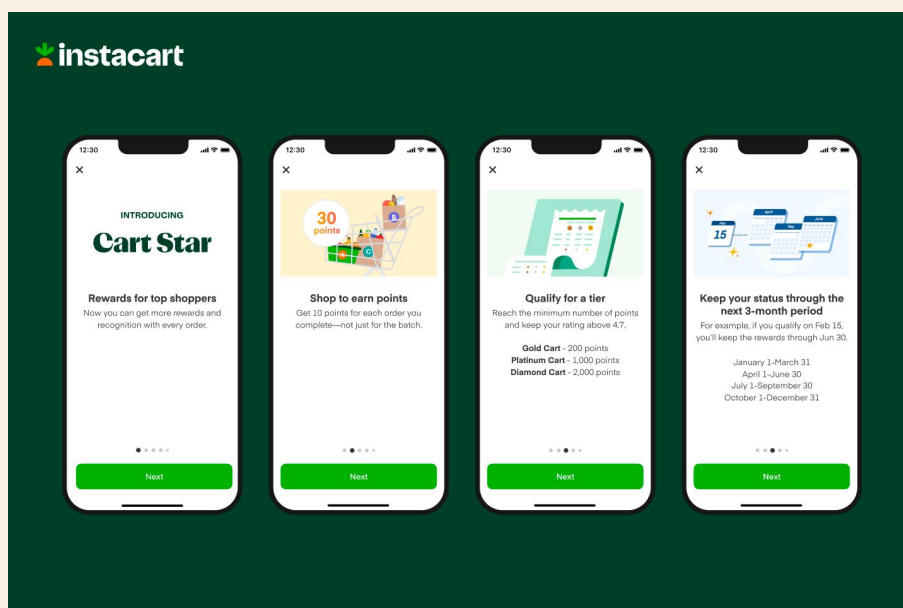
Understanding the (Existing and New) Audience

Who are they?

Instacart's existing audience primarily consists of individuals aged 25 to 45, generally middle to upper-middle class, living in urban and suburban areas, and often college-educated. They value convenience, health, and are tech-savvy, with lifestyles that include busy professionals, young families, and frequent online shoppers. This audience prioritizes time efficiency, expects fresh, high-quality products, and is willing to pay for the convenience of grocery delivery.

Gender Demographics

Male 44.5%

Female 55.5%
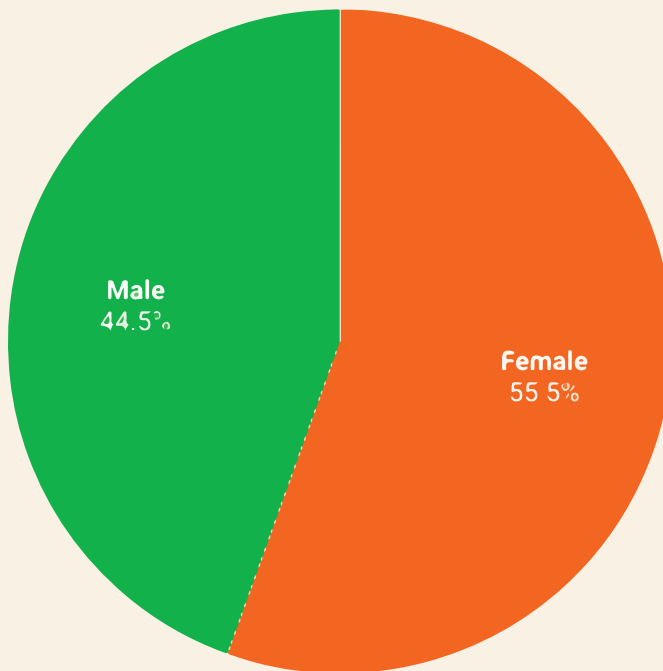
Values: Convenience, health, and comfort with technology.

Lifestyle: Busy professionals, young families, and urban dwellers.

Behavior: Frequent online shoppers, loyal to services that offer convenience and personalization.

Target Audience

Instacart targets both its existing demographic and new segments, such as older adults and health-conscious individuals. The company seeks to attract more tech-savvy users who value convenience and personalization. By addressing the needs of these groups, Instacart aims to expand its reach and continue its growth.

Brands Instacart's Audience Likely Likes:

amazon fresh
Similar focus on convenience and time-efficiency, with a broad selection of products and quick delivery options, appealing to tech-savvy, busy individuals.

Hello FRESH
Caters to health-conscious consumers who value fresh, high-quality ingredients and meal planning convenience, aligning with the Instacart audience's priorities.

WHOLE FOODS MARKET
Whole Foods Market (via Amazon Prime): Known for high-quality, organic products, Whole Foods resonates with the same audience that values freshness, quality, and ethical sourcing.

Brands Instacart's Audience Might Not Like:

Walmart
While it offers convenience, Walmart's brand may be perceived as less premium or focused on quality compared to Instacart's usual choices, potentially less appealing to those who prioritize freshness and brand prestige.

ALDI
Aldi Delivery (via Instacart): Aldi's value-oriented positioning might not resonate with Instacart users who prefer premium or organic products, even though they may appreciate the convenience.

Jet
Although it offers online grocery options, Jet.com's focus on bulk buying and lower-cost goods might not align with the convenience and quality-focused audience that prefers personalized and fresh grocery shopping experiences

Brand Interactions

Mobile App
The primary tool for convenient, on-the-go grocery shopping.

Website
Used for larger orders and browsing on desktops/laptops.

Email
Provides order updates, promotions, and personalized recommendations.

Retail Partnerships
In-store signage and promotions reinforce brand usage.

Customer Support
In-app and online support for resolving issues and assistance.
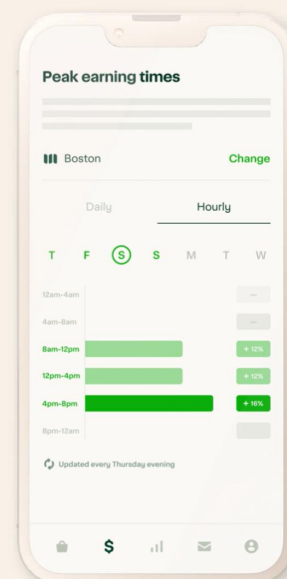
Social Media
Engages on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter for updates, tips, and offers.

1 Plan
2 Go online
3 Choose
4 Shop
5 Pay
6 Deliver

Plan when to shop

The Shopper app helps you plan when to shop to make the most of your time. You can toggle your location to see the Daily and Hourly peak times around you. Check back every Thursday for an updated chart.*

* Not available in California

Peak earning times

Boston   Change

Daily   Hourly

T   F   S   S   M   T   W

12am-4am
4am-8am
8am-12pm   + 12%
12pm-4pm   + 12%
4pm-8pm   + 18%
8pm-12pm

Updated every Thursday evening

Current Brand Attitudes and Behaviors

Positive

"I love using Instacart because it saves me so much time. With my busy schedule, having groceries delivered to my door is incredibly convenient."

"Instacart is a lifesaver, especially during the pandemic. It's reliable, and I can always count on getting fresh produce without having to leave my house."

"The personal shopper feature is great! They always find good substitutes if something is out of stock and keep me informed throughout the process."

Negative

"Instacart is convenient, but the fees can add up quickly, making it expensive compared to shopping in-store."

"While I appreciate the service, I've had issues with missing items or incorrect orders, which can be frustrating."

"I use Instacart when I'm in a pinch, but I find that some items are priced higher than they would be if I shopped in-store."

Attitudes to be Challenged

"I only use Instacart occasionally because the service fees and delivery charges make it too expensive for regular use."

"I'm hesitant to rely on Instacart because of inconsistent service quality, like missing items or delayed deliveries."

"While Instacart is convenient, I worry about the freshness of the produce compared to picking it out myself in-store."

Brand Essence and Personality

Instacart is centered on convenience, making grocery shopping easier and faster through same-day delivery, user-friendly technology, and access to multiple retailers. Reliability is key, as customers trust Instacart to deliver accurate, on-time, and fresh groceries. Personalized service from Instacart's shoppers, who select the best products and communicate directly with customers, adds a caring, valued touch to the experience.

"Delivering the Future of Grocery"

"Transition Meet Technology"

"Serving Generously"

Instacart's tone of voice is forward-thinking, service-oriented, and generous, aligning with its key messages. The brand's tone is visionary and innovative, emphasizing its role in revolutionizing grocery shopping through technology. It reflects a modern approach by seamlessly integrating everyday tasks with tech solutions, positioning Instacart as a bridge between traditional shopping and the future. Additionally, Instacart's warm and customer-centric tone highlights its dedication to going above and beyond in serving its customers with care and attention to detail.

Instacart's visual identity is marked by bright green, symbolizing freshness and growth, and orange accents that add energy and warmth, making the brand feel approachable. Clean sans-serif fonts reinforce efficiency and reliability, while rounded edges and icons contribute to a friendly, easy-to-navigate interface. The brand's imagery highlights high-quality, fresh produce and features lifestyle scenes that emphasize convenience and ease for customers.

Our Objective

To research about Instacart's current brand and provide three key insights in the development of a potential physical retail space.

- To strengthen Brand Loyalty and Trust, emphasize reliability, speed, and quality with real-time tracking, testimonials, and accurate deliveries, fostering repeat use and emotional connections.
- For Data-Driven Personalization, showcase tailored shopping experiences, custom recommendations, and targeted promotions to boost satisfaction and engagement.
- To drive Increased Engagement, create an immersive, interactive environment with personalized kiosks, promotions, and gamified elements that encourage exploration and repeat visits.
- Highlight Instacart's reliance on large grocery retailers and its broad selection, delivering the key message of convenience and variety through displays of multi-store shopping and fast delivery.
- Focus on differentiators like personalized service, product variety, and seamless experiences to communicate Instacart's core values and deepen customer loyalty.

Customer Retention Rate (CRR): Measures brand loyalty by tracking how often customers return to Instacart, with a high retention rate indicating strong loyalty.

Average Order Value (AOV): Assesses the impact of data-driven personalization, with increases in AOV suggesting successful personalized recommendations.

User Engagement Metrics: Tracks session duration, interaction rates, and visit frequency to gauge how engaging the platform is, with higher engagement linked to greater customer satisfaction and loyalty.

New Context

Desired Brand Attitudes

"This experience makes me feel like Instacart truly understands my needs and values my time. It's more than just delivery; it's about convenience and quality."

"I didn't realize Instacart was so innovative and tech-savvy. This space really shows how they're shaping the future of grocery shopping."

"This environment makes me want to explore more. I didn't know Instacart had so many cool promotions and interactive features to keep me engaged."

"I didn't realize Instacart was so innovative and tech-savvy. This space really shows how they're shaping the future of grocery shopping."

Personalized Experiences: Tailored lists and personalized offers make customers feel understood, fostering engagement and encouraging repeat use.

Reliability: Customer stories, real-time tracking, and live demos showcase Instacart's accurate, timely deliveries, reinforcing trust in the service.

Retail Variety: Partnerships with major chains and local stores offer customers flexibility and variety, enabling them to shop multiple stores in one order.

Convenience: Fast deliveries, scheduled orders, and multi-store shopping streamline the grocery experience, saving time for busy customers.

Category Expansion: New offerings in beauty, electronics, and more enhance Instacart's appeal as a one-stop shopping solution.

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