



**sproutsocial**

+

**RIVER ISLAND**



## **Sprout Social outfits River Island for success on social media**

**10,000**

Chatbot responses  
sent in 3 months

**15 million**

content engagements  
in 6 months

**6.1 million**

post link clicks in 6  
months

When shoppers are looking for chic, stylish and affordable fashion on the High Street in Britain, millions of them head to [River Island](#).

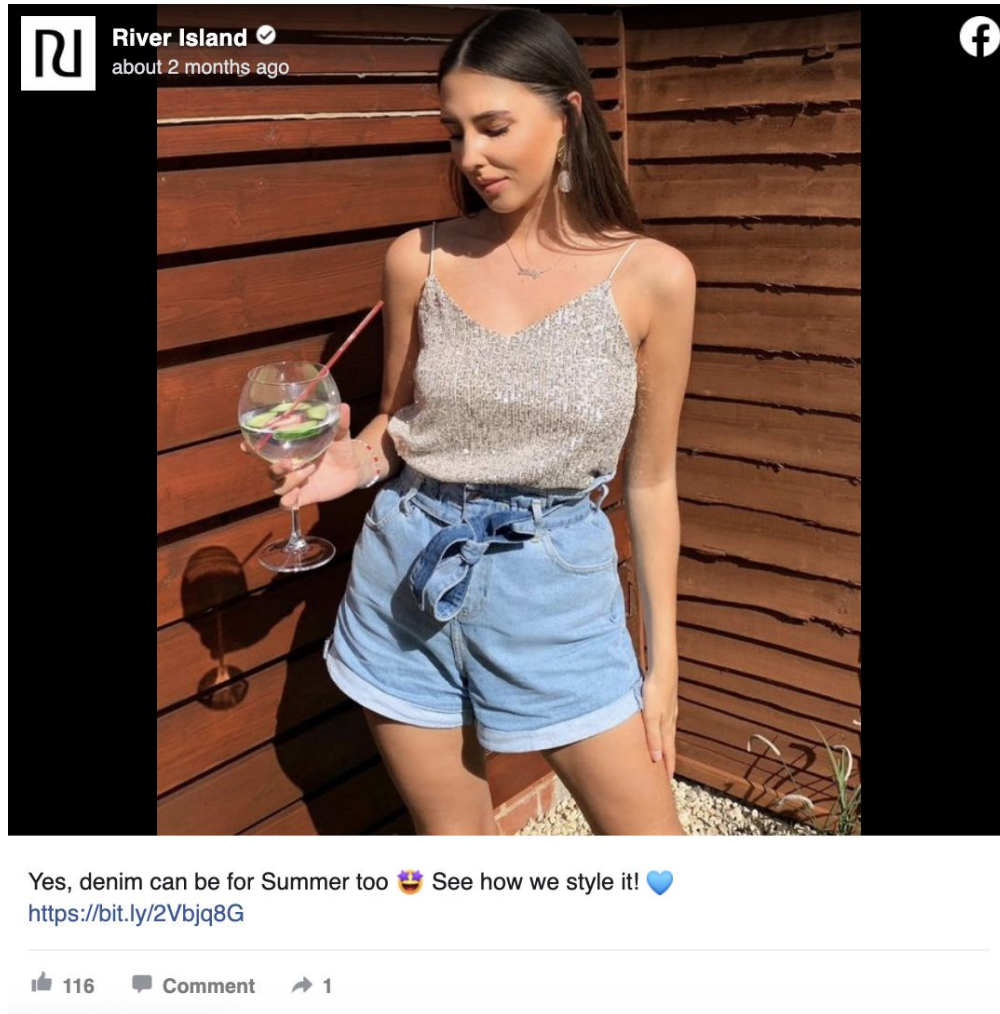
Headquartered in London, River Island has more than 350 stores across the UK, Ireland, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. The retailer's robust online presence includes six dedicated websites and millions of followers across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, TikTok and YouTube.

The River Island social team uses Sprout Social to publish a consistent stream of high-quality content, deliver top-tier customer service and gather insights from social listening to tailor content that's a perfect fit for their followers.

## **Welcome to the Island**

"We're pretty social," reads River Island's [Facebook](#) bio. Their more than 2.3 million followers on the platform might agree. In the first half of 2020, the River Island social team published an average of nearly 400 posts per month across Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Leading that team are River Island's Social Media Marketing Manager Chloe Bebbington and Senior Social Media & Marketing Executive Kimberley Thomson.

Bebbington works within Sprout every day, focusing on the retailer's organic strategy and approving the many messages they schedule. The rest of the social team writes, curates and selects imagery for posts. Once scheduled in Sprout, the posts are routed to Bebbington and River Island's copywriting team for approval.



With Sprout’s [approval workflows](#), Bebbington can ensure every post is accurately representing and amplifying the River Island brand. “Nothing gets published unless it’s been signed off and we’ve been able to make the necessary changes when needed,” said Bebbington.

The ease of [scheduling within Sprout](#) was a welcome change for the team. “Now we do our planning directly in Sprout, which helps cut down the amount of work we were doing,” said Bebbington. “Before, we were essentially just copying and pasting everything [from a shared Google Doc], which sounds easy but becomes quite time-consuming.”

Time is of the essence, especially on Twitter. In the first half of 2020, River Island shared an average of 176 messages per month on Twitter to keep up with the fast-paced nature of the platform and the trends that evolve there.

While River Island’s Instagram strategy focuses on products and shoppable posts, their Twitter strategy is all about community building and information sharing. Interactive content like polls, memes and community questions are posted daily, drive high engagement and spark conversations the River Island team can join. Twitter is also their go-to platform for sharing blog content, which drives traffic to their website.



“The conversations that take place on Twitter are different than anywhere else, as our community uses the channel for quickly digestible, reactive, topical content,” says Thomson. “Twitter gives us an opportunity to join the conversations we need to be a part of and understand trends that we can bring into the content on our other platforms.”

Be sure that when paragraphs go to the next page they aren't being cut off in an awkward way or don't have any extra return spaces.

**“Knowing that our customer service team would similar queries come through, which would need the same responses, we wanted the Chatbot functionality to manage that for them. The function is so easy to implement. At first, the customer service team couldn't believe that it was so simple to just turn on, but it became quite clear how useful the bots would be for them.”**



---

**Chloe Bebbington**  
Social Media Marketing Manager

## A bit about Bots

River Island's social strategy is not only about the content they're publishing but how they're supporting their customers. To help their customer service team respond to FAQs, River Island activated [Sprout Chatbots](#) on Facebook and Twitter.

“Knowing that our customer service team would similar queries come through, which would need the same responses, we wanted the Chatbot functionality to manage that for them,” said Bebbington. “The function is so easy to implement. At first, the customer service team couldn't believe that it was so simple to just turn on, but it became quite clear how useful the bots would be for them.”

Since the bots went live in mid-April with conversation flows developed by the River Island team, they've generated nearly 10,000 auto-responses on the brand's behalf.

## Talking shop using Sprout Social Listening

Thomson regularly works within the [Sprout Social Listening](#) tool, gathering insights from two live topics—one for competitive analysis and the other for purchase intent. Within those topics, she uses filters to hone in on insights to inform content, campaigns and strategy.

Retail is a highly competitive industry. If Thomson wants to look at conversations around something specific like denim campaigns, she can use the competitive analysis topic to measure River Island's [share of voice](#) (SOV) compared to its competitors.

The purchase intent topic picks up conversations about River Island, some of their popular hashtags and keywords like, “love,” “need,” “want” and “buy” to learn more about the specific products that are popular among consumers.

**“With the Tag Report, we can test and report on UGC versus campaign imagery and determine which are more engaging. This helps us confidently allocate budgets to different creative assets.”**



**Kimberley Thomson**

Senior Social Media & Marketing Executive

## **Social data impacts the whole Island**

The Tag Report is one of the most effective and useful Sprout reports for the River Island team.

They have over 160 active tags, which can be applied while scheduling or retroactively and help the team get a bit more granular with their data. Once messages are tagged, the social team uses the Tag Report to analyze the performance of specific campaigns, owned content vs. influencer content or “reactive” posts where they specifically ask their followers to engage.



Tell us how you spent your Sunday in emojis 🙌 GO!

11:45 AM · Jun 28, 2020



👍 27    💬 69 people are Tweeting about this

“With the Tag Report, we can test and report on UGC versus campaign imagery and determine which are more engaging,” said Thomson. “This helps us confidently allocate budgets to different creative assets.”

When COVID-19 forced River Island’s warehouses and stores to close, the business really started to understand the importance of social data.

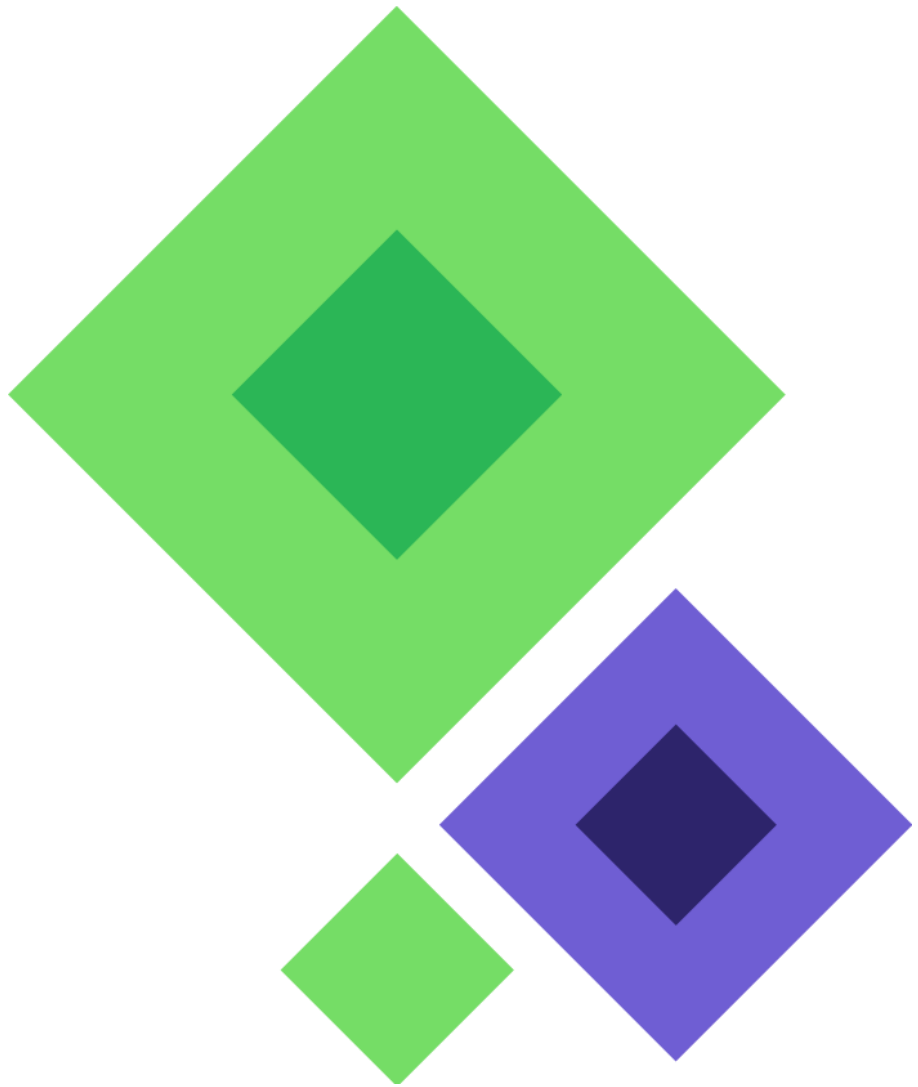
“The business and our director of eCommerce have really recognized that it’s not just about revenue coming from social. It’s also about our reach, engagements, traffic and the quality of the traffic that’s coming through to our website,” said Bebbington.

The insight and information the River Island team discerned from social and Premium Analytics data within the first few months of COVID-19 has made a huge impact on the business.



“The use of influencer or UGC imagery across our email marketing and site has increased. The images and the data that informed that decision come directly from social,” said Bebbington. “Because we’ve been able to show how content performs, dig up key insights and prove real social value, now, for the first time, we’re starting to work as a full 360 platform.”

In a fiercely competitive industry, both in stores and on social, River Island manages to shine with sharp strategies, definitive data and a little help from Sprout. From publishing tools and social listening to Premium Analytics and a Bot Builder, Sprout works as a 360 platform for River Island, just as their social team does for the business at large.



**Sprout Social** offers deep social media listening and analytics, social management, customer care, and advocacy solutions to more than 23,000 brands and agencies worldwide. Sprout's suite of solutions supports every aspect of a cohesive social program and enables organizations of all sizes to extend their reach, amplify their brand and create the kind of real connection with their consumers that drives their businesses forward. Headquartered in Chicago, Sprout operates across major social media networks, including Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and LinkedIn.