

Marketing for Small Business Part 2: Instagram

Instagram is a great way to promote your brand, connect the physical world with the online world and launch a new product or service, just to name a few. What you use—and how you use it—will depend on your goals and your organization. For example, you may want to feature new items if you are a retail business, or feature new portfolio photos or items if you are a photographer or have an Etsy shop.







Create a Business Account

*Note: An established Facebook Page is needed to create a business Instagram account.

1. Log into your Instagram account.
2. Tap your profile and tap the gear in the top right corner.
3. Tap 'Switch to Business Profile'.
4. Log into Facebook account and allow permission for Instagram to access your Facebook pages.
5. Choose a Facebook Page – only 1 is allowed.
6. Once completed you can edit the information in your business profile at any time.
 - a. Profile > Gear > Edit Profile > Business Contact Information
7. You can also view insights about your followers.
 - a. Profile > Bar Graph Icon (top right corner)

Instagram Stories:

Your story is a way of sharing photos and videos with your followers that disappear after 24 hours. To share a photo or video (3 to 60 seconds) to your story:

1. Tap  in the top left of your screen or swipe left from anywhere in Feed.
2. Tap  at the bottom of the screen to take a photo, or tap and hold to record a video. You can also tap **Boomerang** at the bottom of the screen, then tap the circle to take a burst of photos that loops forward and backward.
3. You can tap  or  to add text or draw on your story. Tap **Undo** to remove an effect or **Done** to save it.
4. You can tap **Cancel** to discard your photo or video, or  to save it to your phone. When you're done, tap  to share to your story.

What Kinds of Visuals Can I Use?

Visuals are the main currency of Instagram. Small businesses should share compelling content that their followers won't be able to find anywhere. Instagram advises in its own best practices guide:

<http://blog.business.instagram.com/post/29441248656/instagram-best-practices-to-see-more-tips-and>

Think about the kind of visuals you like—subject, quality, etc.—and try to replicate that with the photos you share on your account. Worried you won't have something visually compelling to share? Think about the following business opportunities to snap photos with your phone and upload directly to Instagram:

Your office. Take photos of the team's offices. Everyone has individual taste when it comes to their workspace. This is interesting to those who might buy from you. Also take photos in and around your work environment—brick-and-mortar office, manufacturing floor, virtual office, the retail floor or wherever it is you hang out during the day. Think about the behind-the-scenes photos that most people wouldn't otherwise get to see.

Community events. Your employees have lives outside of work. Encourage them to take appropriate photos or video for you to use on the business's Instagram page. Likewise, if you and your team participate in community service, get visuals from those outings.

Celebrations. Many organizations celebrate new babies, birthdays, work anniversaries and more. A few years ago, one of our young professionals didn't believe human beings can't eat more than six saltines in one minute. She took the challenge and we got it on video. Though it was completely silly, our followers loved it ... and it drove a level of engagement that eventually brought us some business.

Quotes, Promotions/Sales, etc.

Example Accounts:

- Califia Farms
- Paris Opera Ballet
- Tentsile
- Staples
- Disney
- Seagate Studios
- Twitch and Whiskers
- Anthropologie
- Sweet Pure Honey

Instagram Basics & Terminology

Tagging – Instagram allows you to add tags before you post an image or video. To do so, tap the Tag People option before sharing your photo, and then tap in the photo where you'd like to add a tag. The app will then prompt you to type in the person's name to search for him or her. Once you've tagged other users in your photo and shared the image, other users can tap on the photo to see the people who are tagged.

Mentioning – Mentions on Instagram work very similarly to on Twitter, in that you use the @ symbol to tag other users in your comments or photo or video captions. Typing in the @ symbol, followed by the first letter of a person's username, will bring up a list of people you can select from; or, you can simply finish typing out the person's username on your own. It's also important to note that if you want to reply to another user's comment (even on your own photos), you need to tag the person in it with an @mention, or that user won't get a notification.

Liking – Liking is a simple way to connect with other users. To like a photo, either double-tap the image or tap the heart button under the post. To view photos you've liked, go to your profile, press the gear button on the top-right corner and select Posts You've Liked.

Commenting – Another simple way to connect with other users is to comment on photos. Next to the Like button is a Comment button — just tap it, and the app will take you to the Comments page for that photo, with a text box where you can enter in what you want to say and hit Send when it's complete

Direct Messaging – Users can communicate privately via a feature called Instagram Direct. To access it, go to the app's home page and tap the button on the top right corner. Here, you can send instant messages, photos and videos to other users. To send a new direct message (DM), tap the "+" button on the top right corner. This will pull up two options at the bottom of your screen: Send Photo or Video, and Send Message. If you choose Send Photo or Video, you can either take a photo/video or upload one from your camera roll, edit it just as you would any other post, add filters, write a caption, and then choose a user (or multiple users) to send it to. If you choose Send Message, Instagram will prompt you to select a suggested user or to type in the user you would like to DM. Once you've selected your user or users, simply hit Next and you'll be taken to a chat screen where you can send your message.

What Is an Instagram Hashtag?

Like Facebook or Twitter, you can use a hashtag on Instagram that will help you attract new followers. A hashtag provides an easy way to search similar topics for people who are interested in what you're posting. You should familiarize yourself with a few broad popular hashtags— #throwbackthursday or #TBT, #ootd (Outfit of the Day) or #selfie—and category-specific ones that apply to your business. (<https://help.instagram.com/351460621611097>)

It's a good idea to look at other established brands (or even personal users and bloggers) in your industry for examples of what to do, especially when it comes to hashtags. Following and paying attention to other successful Instagram users in your field can help you get a feel for what works and what doesn't. *Search for a hashtag before adding it to a post. Be sure it is associated with content related to you.

Tips & Tricks

Tagging People – Remove tags of yourself you do not want through your profile. Within you profile click on the icon with the head and shoulders; this shows 'photos of you'.

Geotagging – By adding a 'location' to a post you are geotagging that image. What this does is tell your followers where the photo was taken and then groups it together with all other photos taken at that location with the larger Instagram community of users. These geotags also allow you to create a 'Photo Map' in your profile. By clicking on the location icon

Connect to Other Social Media Accounts – Push your posts to your other social media accounts within the Instagram app. This will help create awareness of your presence on Instagram and gain more followers.

Respond to Comments – If your followers comment on your post reply with a personalized comment by mentioning the follower and writing a response.

Use Hashtags – Research current hashtags within your community/industry. Creating a unique hashtag is another way to increase engagement and get followers to use it in their posts.

- There is a trick to separating the photo caption and the hashtags. Type the desired caption with line breaks and then the hashtags in the Notes app on your mobile device and then copy and paste it into the Instagram post.

Crowd Source Images and Opinions – Get your followers to take and post photos of your product using a hashtag and/or geotagging their images. Collect these images and create videos (slideshow) featuring your followers' images.

Engage Your Followers – Post various photos and ask for followers' opinions.

Be Consistent & Creative – Create a schedule for regularly posting photos. Try different types of photos to see what gets the greatest response.

Add URL to Profile – Insert the URL in the bio section of the profile.

Host Contests & Offer Exclusive Content

Follow, Like, Mention & Comment – Proactively seek out other businesses, organizations, etc. to follow. This may encourage them to start following you as well. Build a network on Instagram. Once you have developed a relationship with others you can collaborate with them to continue broadening your network of followers.

Repost – If followers mention you or post a photo of your business/product, contact them for permission to repost their post. This is done through third-party apps like, Repost for Instagram.

Time of Posts & Frequency – Be cognizant of the time you post, they say you have about 4 hours from when you post until it gets buried in the news feed. They also say posting between 1 and 3 times per day is a good strategy.

What are the Rules for an Instagram Contest?

Contests can be a fabulous way to gain more followers and engagement on Instagram, provided you follow the rules and terms of service. Note that it should be stated that contests are not sponsored by Instagram and that the platform does not help brands and businesses administer contests. To execute a law abiding Instagram contest, you should do the following: (<https://help.instagram.com/179379842258600>)

- Set your goal(s) for the contest.
- Determine your key metrics.
- Choose the hashtag you'll be using. This is required so you can track users. As per Instagram's promotion guidelines, "You must not inaccurately tag content or encourage users to inaccurately tag content."
- Choose a selection method for winners.
- Set up the rules, terms, and conditions.
- Launch and promote the contest. Figure out how you'll support the contest (other social networks, a news release, and/or advertising).
- Notify winners and follow up with everyone else.

Helpful Online Resources

- <https://business.instagram.com/>
- www.socialmediaexaminer.com/
- Dummies.com – Search for Instagram
- There are endless articles out there with tips, tricks and strategies. Just do a simple Google search.