

INSTAGRAM TIPS AND TRICKS

These days, Instagram is everywhere - and it's clear that it's a powerful tool for businesses to share their work and advertise their services.

However, staying up to date with the platform and ensuring your content is not just seen, but seen by as many eyes as possible, isn't always easy.

With that in mind, we've put together a series of tips and tricks to help you get the most out of Instagram!

UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

The first thing to remember is that the followers you're aiming to attract are real people with real interests, and it's your job to create content that connects with those people and their interests.

Successful marketers (across all industries) have the ability to tap into the minds of their audience and develop an understanding of them.

The very first tactic you should use to see what types of posts your audience will find most valuable is to look at previous high-performing posts. By analysing which of your (and your competitor's) posts performed well, you can get a good idea of what your audience wants to see more of.

If your marketing or business plans have created a customer / audience profile, using this to help inform your decisions (ie: what are their pain points, aspirations, etc.) will be invaluable.

Once you understand your audience, you'll be able to tailor your Instagram content to them.

FIND THE RIGHT TIME TO POST

When you find the best time to post on Instagram, you'll be able to maximize potential engagement and reach more people.

You can easily find the optimal time to post by clicking on the insights button on your profile:

Better Business Network

Community

A community of founders and leaders that create action and make an impact.

linktr.ee/betterbusinessnetwork

Edit Profile

Ad Tools

Insights



How To Join



Testimonials



Future Events



What We Do



Who We Are

Next, go into the 'Audience' section.

If you scroll to the bottom, you'll see some information about your followers. When you are in the 'Hours' section, you'll be able to see what hours of each day your followers are most active.

Most active times

Hours Days

< Mondays >



CONVERT TO A BUSINESS ACCOUNT

Having a business account will give you a lot of the right tools to help you grow your business, so if you haven't already, we certainly recommend that you do so.

It's easy to set up a business profile (it will only take a couple of minutes!) and once it's ready, you'll be able to:

- Access Instagram Insights for your account (ie: analytics)
- Create Instagram ads to further promote your business and grow your audience
- Gain access to the "swipe up" feature for Instagram Stories (however, this is for accounts with more than 10,000 followers only)
- Add action buttons to your profile
- Add shoppable posts

With the variety of benefits of converting to a business account, there really is no reason to not make the switch.

HAVE A CLEAR PROFILE

When a potential follower lands on your business's Instagram page, a clear bio will increase the likelihood that they will hit the 'follow' button.

Your bio should be easy to read, helping your followers to understand who you are and what your business is about. You only have 150 characters to get the message across, so make it clear and concise!

After you've done this, ensure your Instagram profile photo is similarly clear for people to see and understand who / what it is. You can use an image of yourself if your business is more reliant on you as a personality, otherwise the business's logo is ideal.

Finally, you'll want to make sure your followers know where else they can find you. Include a link to your website or landing page (we use Link Tree, for example), any relevant contact information, and your location. This way, your followers can find out any information they may need in one convenient place.

WRITE COMPELLING CAPTIONS

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words, but a great caption can seriously add value to your posts.

While there's no ideal length for your caption, two things to bear in mind are to maintain your brand voice, and make sure that with every post and caption you are providing value.

The majority of consumers will stay loyal to brands that they share the same values with. One way to communicate your business's values to your audience is by developing a strong brand voice which is then used consistently across all social media channels, website(s) and even offline advertising / marketing.

Value can be added to your Instagram captions in a variety of different ways; you could tell a story that helps your followers envision themselves in a specific scenario, you could provide tips & tricks to help them overcome a problem or you can write uplifting messages of encouragement to your followers.

Whatever you choose to add to your captions, make sure you think to yourself 'does this provide value for my audience?' before clicking the 'post' button.

INCLUDE A CALL TO ACTION

All good Instagram posts have a Call To Action (also known as a CTA).

While it would be easy to think of CTAs as simply 'sign up here' or 'click here to purchase', your CTA doesn't always have to be promotional.

Non-promotional CTAs could encourage your followers to complete a particular kind of action. For example; liking a post, sharing it with their followers, or tagging a friend in the comments.

It's also worth experimenting with different Call To Action to see which ones bring you the highest amount of engagement.

REPLY TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Engagement with your followers on Instagram is very important.

The relationship that you cultivate with your followers is an important factor in Instagram's algorithm (the thing that helps your posts get seen by more people) and on top of that - it wouldn't make any sense to ignore your followers if they're actively engaging with you.

Replying to messages and comments, as well as liking / sharing where appropriate can all be done directly on your phone via the Instagram app, or even using the desktop app / website.

If it seems overwhelming to be always 'on' and having to reply to comments and messages as they come in, then block out a specific timeframe within your day to reply to all messages and comments that have come in.

GROW YOUR FOLLOWING AUTHENTICALLY

It can be very easy to simply look at the numbers when using Instagram. But better than a large following is an *engaged* following - no matter its size. Remember, you're building a community.

There are a handful of 'tactics' one could use to increase a following (buying likes, mass followings) but this won't help with the overall goal of building a community that is engaged with you and your business.

Take your time - it's a marathon, not a sprint.

INCORPORATE USER-GENERATED CONTENT

User-Generated Content, which is also known as 'UGC', is a piece of content (and so in the case of Instagram, photos or videos) that was created by members of your audience, rather than by you and your business.

Examples of UGCs include testimonials or photos of a follower using your products / utilising your services.

Consumers trust other consumers and so UGC can be a big boost to your business's Instagram - not to mention that it pulls some strain from yourself in the content creation department!

It's important to remember the following when incorporating User-Generated Content into your Instagram planning:

- Always ask for permission from the content creator before posting / reposting
- Give credit to the original content creator poster (ideally within the first line of the caption)
- Tag the original content creator in the photo

QUALITY

This might seem obvious but it's worth saying; high quality content will stand out.

Your Instagram feed is an opportunity to showcase your business and so posting crisp, clear images is a reflection of your brand (in a good way) and posting blurry or badly-framed images is a reflection of your brand (in a bad way).

Your feed should be visually striking and aesthetically pleasing - this will help create brand awareness and recognition too.

Instagram itself has many filters you can use, and there's also a wide variety of apps you can use to create brilliant images that fit your brand's aesthetic sensibility.

We love to use Canva, but there are many more (often free) apps and websites available to help you create quality content for your business's Instagram feed.

And similarly to what we discussed above regarding captions, whatever you choose to post, make sure you think to yourself 'does this provide value for my audience?' before clicking the 'post' button.

INCLUDE (RELEVANT) HASHTAGS

The easiest way to describe what hashtags are within Instagram is to say that they are like keywords for your photos / images that can help people (ie: potential followers) to find your content, and therefore your business.

Hashtags also increase engagement - so there's pretty much no excuse for not using them.

At present, you are able to include a maximum of 30 hashtags in posts and 10 for stories. But while these maximums exist, it's worth remembering that the hashtags you use should be relevant to the post and your business. So if only one or two are relevant, that's all you should use.

You should think about what you think your audience / potential followers are likely to be searching for too.

If you're unsure, search for a single word hashtag within the search bar on Instagram and see what other suggestions come up as Instagram will automatically recommend similar and related hashtags.

If you Google 'hashtag generator' you'll also find a large amount of online services (some free, others not) that could be of use to you here as well.

USE ALL OF INSTAGRAM

Instagram provides you with a variety of options to make it easy for businesses to sell their products and services, including: Instagram Stories, Instagram Live, IGTV and Shoppable Stickers. So use them all!

On top of these extra features, each of them will also have extra features within them. With Instagram Stories, for example, you're also able to add location tags, mentions, hashtags, music and much more. Spend time looking through the options available and experiment with what works for you and brings the most engagement to your profile and feed.

MAKE YOUR CONTENT ACCESSIBLE

Accessibility should be one of the things at the forefront of your mind when creating social media content, and for Instagram it's no different. You want your brand to be available to everyone, including the hearing or visually impaired.

Many videos (within posts or stories) are watched with the sound off anyway and so ensuring everyone is able to understand what is happening within your posts / stories is important.

Some simple steps you can take to make your content accessible include adding captions to videos and making use of Instagram's alt text feature (adding a simple description of the image),

SCHEDULING

One thing we advocate for here at The Better Business Network is the avoidance of burnout - and the idea of trying to come up with great content on the go is something that doesn't sit with our ethos.

Having a schedule for your content, planned for and designed in advance will make your life easier as well as help you remain consistent.

REPURPOSING CONTENT

Repurposing your content allows for your Instagram posts, stories, etc. to have an increased lifespan.

For example, you could turn the Instagram post that received a high level of engagement into a blog post, you could expand upon the ideas mentioned into a new video too. You could combine your stories into a new IGTV post, or share your IGTV posts on other social networks like Facebook or Twitter.

ANALYSE

All of the above is important and we highly recommend that you take the time to put all of it into effect, but to really get the most out of these tips and tricks, the key is to analyse your content. What worked? What didn't? What's still bringing engagement to your profile and what's changed?

The Instagram Insights built into the platform are invaluable, and so is your own analysis. Use the data to help inform your social media strategy.

And finally - remember that it's not all about Instagram. Putting all your eggs into one basket within any marketing strategy could be dangerous. Who knows which social network will be the next MySpace!

Use the tips and tricks above to get the most out of Instagram, and use what you've learned to inform other aspects of your social media / marketing strategy.

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