

Instagram



Instagram for business Strategy guide

Businesses of all sizes and across industries are finding marketing success on Instagram. The platform is highly effective for achieving branding goals such as:

- Driving awareness for your brand or products
- Shifting or reinforcing brand perceptions
- Creating associations with celebrities and partners

When shaping your strategy on Instagram, start with your business objectives and then explore how elements of the platform can help you meet them.

Here is an overview of the primary features, tools and opportunities that make Instagram a powerful marketing platform and our recommendations for how to use them to maximize the impact for your brand.

Instagram



INSTAGRAM + CONTENT

Creating content on Instagram

Content is central to the Instagram experience. It's why tens of millions of people visit the app every day--to view beautiful, interesting imagery in their feed and to post their own unique photos and videos. The sharing of this visual art is what makes the Instagram community so dynamic and engaged.

Your brand's content should add to the experience of being on Instagram for your followers. We recommend the following guidelines for creating content on Instagram:

1. **Identity & voice:** Develop a framework for bringing your brand's identity to life on Instagram, based on your business objectives. Identify words that reflect your brand's voice and tone; the feelings you want followers to associate with your brand; and the role you want your brand to play in their lives. This framework will inform your content, and in turn the experience that followers have when viewing your images.
2. **Content themes:** Establish regular content themes, or pillars, that are authentic to your brand and fit the Instagram platform. Ensure that your posts adhere to these pillars. This allows for a diversity of content that also remains consistent over time. Followers will know what to expect from your brand on Instagram as you reinforce key brand associations.
3. **Image subjects:** Post photos and videos of unexpected and behind-the-scenes moments that feel authentic and immediate. Candid, insider access is what people love about Instagram. We recommend avoiding overly promotional images or those that are simply repurposed from other channels. These images appear out of place on the platform and detract from establishing a clear and differentiated brand identity and voice.
4. **Image enhancement:** Adjust your images with filters and other tools available through the Instagram app. These effects give images that unmistakable "Instagram" look that people respond to.
5. **Text:** Keep captions short and fresh. Incorporate hashtags where relevant, but not so many that they detract from the simplicity of the post. (Refer to section on hashtags for more guidance). Ask questions in the captions of your images to engage with followers.

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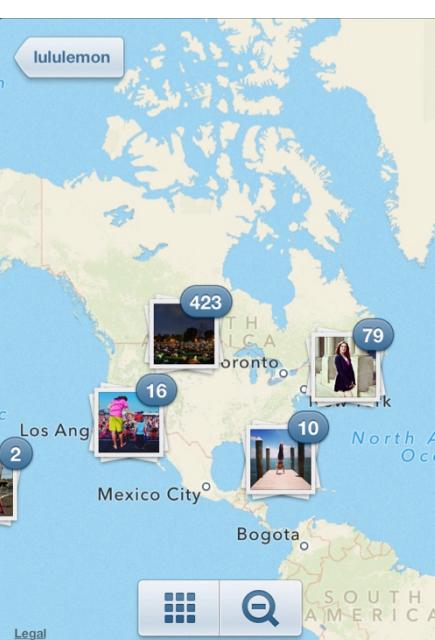
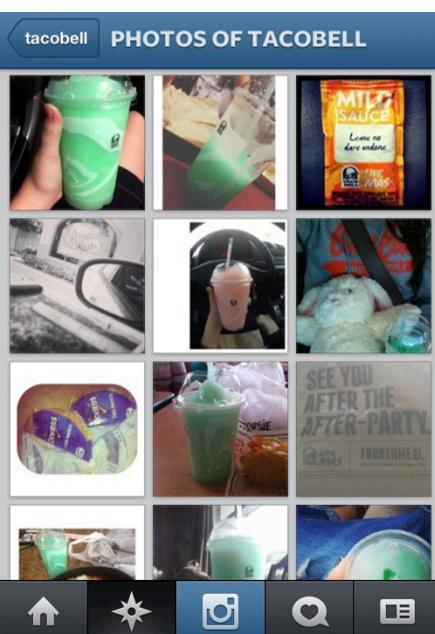
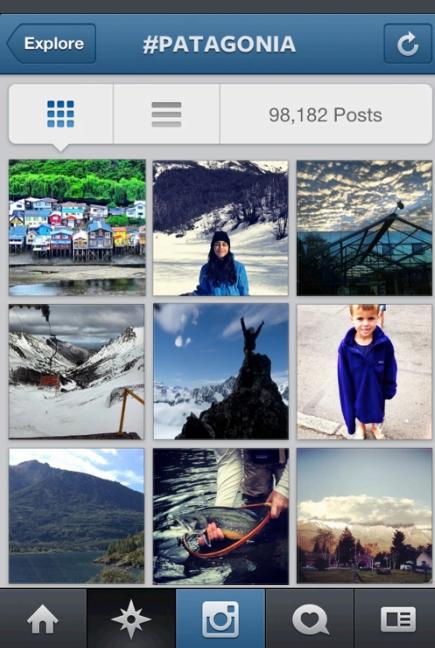
6. Location & people: Include the location of your photo or video when it helps tell the story of the image (i.e. it was taken at an event, roadshow, retail location, company headquarters). Use the Add People feature to tag accounts in your image when they will help you reach a broader audience and you have permission (i.e. partner brands, celebrity spokespeople, etc.)
7. Timing: Moderate the number of posts you make per day to ensure a consistent but non-intrusive presence. We recommend anywhere from 1-3 posts per day. Experiment with posting at different times of day by monitoring engagement. If posting content from a live event, consider creating a separate account to avoid annoying your followers by taking over their feeds.

Creating video content on Instagram

Instagram recently launched the ability to capture and share short videos on the platform. While businesses are still experimenting with this new feature, we recommend the following guidelines:

1. Include video as part of your content strategy consistent with your identity, voice, and content pillars.
2. Utilize features outlined above when they enhance the quality of the content, such as filters and hashtags.
3. Consider which unique moments in the life of your brand are best shared through a moving image. Here are a few examples:
 - Share an inside look at how a product gets made, or how new products are developed
 - Preview a new product or service and show how it works
 - Offer short product tutorials
 - Show how your brand fits in to people's everyday lives
 - Capture moments from brand events or experiences

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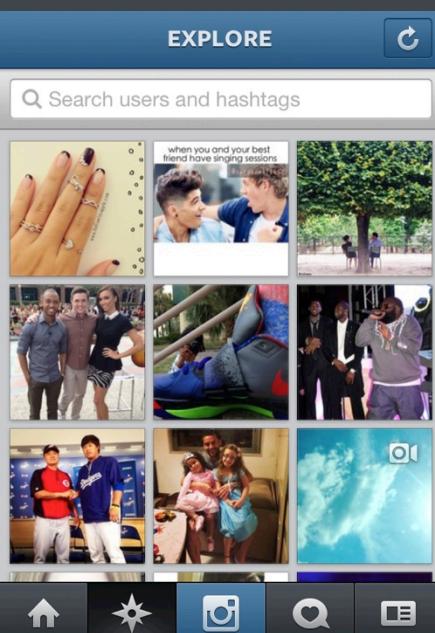
INSTAGRAM + CONTENT

Making content discoverable on Instagram: Hashtags, Photos of You, Photo Maps

Instagram offers useful tools for you to find content posted by other accounts about your brand, and for people to discover the content you post. You can tag photos with topic (hashtag), account (Add People), and location (Name This Location). We recommend the following:

- 1. Hashtags:** On Instagram hashtags serve many purposes for brands. Use them to classify the images you post, for instance tying them to different content pillars. Use them to reach new people who may be searching a hashtag related to your brand. Or use them to support campaigns or contests aimed at driving awareness by asking people to tag their photos with a hashtag associated specifically with your brand. Hashtags should be used in moderation and when relevant, not simply to capitalize on a current event or popular hashtag.
- 2. Add People (Photos of You):** While hashtags are a useful tool, we also recommend encouraging your followers and brand advocates to add your official account to their posts using the Add People feature, so that they appear in your Photos of You. Photos of You can be accessed from your Instagram profile whereas hashtaged images cannot. Hashtag images must be searched for and often surface images with no association to your brand (for example, consider the hashtags #apple or #target). Many businesses set up manual approval for Photos of You so that they can approve content before it becomes part of their profile.
- 3. Name This Location (Photo Maps):** You can add a specific location when posting your content on Instagram, which adds the photo or video to your Photo Map. This feature is most useful when posting content from an event, roadshow, retail location or company headquarters. Your Photo Map can be accessed from your Instagram profile and gives users a new way to explore the images and videos you've shared. When you add location to an image, the image can also be seen by anyone who views that location in the future (by clicking the location on a post).

Instagram



NORDSTROM

SHARE
YOUR LOOK!

1

TAKE A PICTURE
(of your Anniversary Sale finds or a #selfie)

2

POST IT TO INSTAGRAM
USING #NSALE

3

FOLLOW @NORDSTROM
We'll be reposting our fave pics—
one of them could be yours!

WE ♥ OUR FAN PHOTOS!



SHARE YOUR BLUE PRINTS
ON INSTAGRAM

@tieks | #tieks

tieks
by Gesslein
THE BALLET FLAT. REINVENTED.

INSTAGRAM + COMMUNITY

Building awareness for your account on Instagram

There are many ways to let people know you have an Instagram account and encourage them to follow it. We recommend the following:

1. Announce your Instagram account on other platforms like Facebook or Twitter with a link to your account. Posts on Facebook can be sponsored to reach a desired target audience.
2. Notify people about your Instagram account with signage at your retail locations, a link on the homepage of your website, and in communication like emails, postcards and delivery boxes.
3. Run contests or encourage people to post content that relates to your brand, including relevant hashtags and/or adding your official account to the post using the Add People feature.
4. Make the content you post discoverable by adding hashtags, people and location.

However, it's not enough to just let people know you have an Instagram account. The best way to gain and keep followers is to create high quality, on-brand content that they want to see in their Instagram feed. It's easy to follow and unfollow an account on Instagram. Many people are open to following new accounts, but if they don't like the content, they may be just as quick to unfollow.

Creating strong content also increases the likelihood that your account will be discovered by non-followers on Instagram, because your posts may appear on the Explore tab (which uses an algorithm to surface interesting content) or News tab (where people see that the accounts they follow have liked your posts).

Finally, you should not use services that offer to sell you followers. The quality of these followers is usually low in terms of affinity to your brand. You will have the most success acquiring followers through the means outlined above.

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Engaging with the Instagram community

Engaging with the Instagram community is essential to your success on the platform because your brand is a part of the community. In addition to posting high quality content, you should follow other accounts, comment on and like posts by other accounts, and respond to questions and comments on your posts. We recommend the following:

1. Accounts to follow: Follow your brand's partners, spokespeople, advocates, and influential members of the community whose content may relate to your brand.
2. Commenting & liking: Use hashtags, location and Photos of You to find images posted by other accounts about your brand and engage with them by liking and commenting on their images.
3. Account moderation: Set up policies and procedures for responding to questions and negative comments. Determine how you will handle offensive or inappropriate comments on your content.
4. InstaMeets & InstaWalks: Host an event or walk where you invite the community to meet in person and take Instagram photos and share them with a specific hashtag. Reach out to local Instagram Meetup groups to attend. You can find a list of Instagram Meetup groups at meetup.com/instagram.
5. Weekend Hashtag Project: Participate in Instagram's weekly event when we invite Instagrammers to take images throughout the weekend that fit a specific theme and post them with a specific hashtag. A new project is posted every Friday and a roundup of favorite submissions is posted on Monday morning at blog.instagram.com.

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Leveraging user-generated content (UGC) on Instagram

The ability to source high quality brand content from the Instagram community is one of the major benefits of the platform. Filters, image effects and the square format help anyone turn a simple snapshot into a work of art. People frequently post images of products or of retail locations and because many also share their posts publicly, you can view them by searching hashtags or locations associated with your brand. People may also use the Add People feature to add your brand to their photos, which enables them to appear in Photos of You in your Instagram profile (pending your approval).

We recommend the following guidelines when sourcing user-generated content on Instagram:

- 1. Curation:** While much of the user-generated content on Instagram is high quality, it will be necessary to review and curate the photos and videos you want to use. Designate a team to handle this internally or consider hiring a third party company to assist with this process.
- 2. Image attribution:** Always attribute an image to the original creator by listing their handle and referencing the source (i.e. “[@username] on Instagram” or “[camera logo] @[username]”) on the image itself or in the caption when posting to your Instagram account.
- 3. Legal considerations:** Instagram cannot advise your brand on how to obtain approval for the use of images posted by other accounts on Instagram. We recommend that you discuss with your legal team and establish a process for leveraging content posted by other accounts, whether you are reposting on your own account, a website or in any other marketing materials.



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Running a photo or video contest on Instagram

Brands often run contests to inspire people to post photos or videos of their brands' products and locations to increase awareness of a product, campaign or initiative. We recommend the following guidelines when running a photo or video contest on Instagram:

1. Use a unique hashtag for submissions. This helps to ensure that the account intended to submit the photo or video for your contest and reduces the amount of moderation needed.
2. Create a photo or video to share on Instagram to introduce the campaign. Share it on Facebook and Twitter to promote the campaign to your followers on those platforms as well.
3. Have a few examples ready to display immediately when you start the campaign. This gives people some direction as to the type of photos or videos they should submit and encourages higher quality and creativity in the submissions.
4. Display a curated set of the photos or videos somewhere (on your website, on a Facebook tab, highlight some in your Instagram feed, etc.). Displaying a gallery shows people that others are participating and will encourage them to do the same.
5. Do not choose the winner based on the number of Instagram likes a photo or video receives. This tends to trigger bad behavior on Instagram (spam comments, auto-following, etc.) rather than encouraging good quality content.



Instagram



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Connecting your Instagram account with your accounts on other platforms

The ability to cross-post to other online platforms is a unique feature of Instagram's platform. We recommend linking your Instagram account to your accounts on other platforms. Sharing content from Instagram to other platforms lets people on those platforms know about your account. However, you should develop a strategy for determining how often and which posts to share to other platforms according to your objectives. For detailed steps on how to connect your Instagram account to other platforms, refer to the guide *Connecting and sharing from Instagram to Facebook & Twitter*.

Embedding photos and videos on other websites

Instagram provides the ability to embed public photos and videos from the platform on your site. We recommend using this feature whenever the images will enhance content on your website or as a way of letting visitors to your website know about your presence on Instagram. The embed feature automatically gives credit to the original creator of the content, showing the image or video with the username. For more on embed codes, visit the Instagram help center at help.instagram.com.

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Leveraging the Instagram API

The Instagram API can be used for a wide range of creative executions, many of which haven't even been imagined yet. The API allows you to pull photos and videos from Instagram and display them on another website, digital interface, or even physical objects, in the real world. Photos and videos can be accessed by user, hashtag, time, or place. For more about the API, visit the the Instagram developer help center at instagram.com/developer.

Here are some of the best uses we've seen of the Instagram API:

- Pull selected photos and videos with a specific hashtag into your site to show real people using your products or attending your events.
- Ask people to submit photos or videos for contests or campaigns and create a place online to display them.
- Create a digital map of photos and videos posted by your account and/or other accounts posting about your brand.
- Create a large screen or multiscreen display that pulls photos and videos from Instagram in real-time during live events.
- Print photos to use in displays or to give to attendees at events.

Working with API partners

Many third-party developers offer tools and services to manage and monitor your Instagram account beyond what is currently available from Instagram. These service range from account management and insights to content integration. Instagram does not officially endorse any third-party developers, but this list includes those that we've worked with and are familiar with our API.

Account management & insights

Nitrogram
Statigram
Gnip
MomentFeed
Expion
HootSuite
Simply Measured

Content integration (API)

Chute
Mass Relevance
Olapic
Social Print Studio
Geofeedia
Sprinklr
Spredfast
Thismoment



Instagram



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Using the Instagram brand and trademark

We recommend using the Instagram brand and trademark in your communications to partners and customers to spread the word about your Instagram account.

Download official Instagram assets from our press site at instagram.com/press.

Find guidelines to ensure legal compliance when using our brand and trademark at help.instagram.com.



Using Instagram screenshots

Should you want to include Instagram screenshots in your marketing materials, please follow these guidelines to ensure legal compliance:

- Screenshots must be unaltered, meaning they cannot be annotated or modified in any way from their appearance on Instagram.
- Screenshots with personally identifiable information (including photos, names, etc. of actual users) require written consent from the individual(s) before they can be published.
- Screenshots of any user photos will need written consent from its creator before use.
- Please include: "All Instagram™ logos, marks and symbols are the property of Instagram, Inc. Copyright 2010-2013. All Rights Reserved."

