

INSTAGRAM MARKETING

WHAT THE TOP INFLUENCERS AND BRANDS
KNOW THAT YOU DON'T ABOUT THE HOTTEST
SOCIAL MEDIA



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Instagram has evolved from a photo-sharing app to an important marketing platform that brands use to target their prospective customers.

When it first started in 2010, it was just another social media platform for people to share pictures (remember Pinterest?). And now it has become an important social media marketing platform crawling with influencers, brands, and marketers.

So, let's take a look at what makes it so useful as a marketing platform and how you can use it to your advantage.

Why Instagram Marketing?

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms with a massive user base. As of April 2019, Instagram had over 1 billion active monthly users. So, the platform's user base is too big for any brand or marketer to ignore.

If that's not reason enough for you to start marketing on Instagram, check out these Instagram statistics that will definitely convince you.

- Instagram has approximately 2 million monthly advertisers and over 25 million business accounts.
- 44% of Instagram's active users use the platform for researching and discovering brands.
- 53% of Instagram users follow their favourite brands on the platform.
- Over 95 million posts are created on Instagram every day.

Now that you know the importance of Instagram as a marketing platform, let's take a closer look at ways to do it well.

We have prepared an in-depth guide on Instagram marketing and have covered everything that you need to know to succeed at it.

Set Up an Instagram Business Account

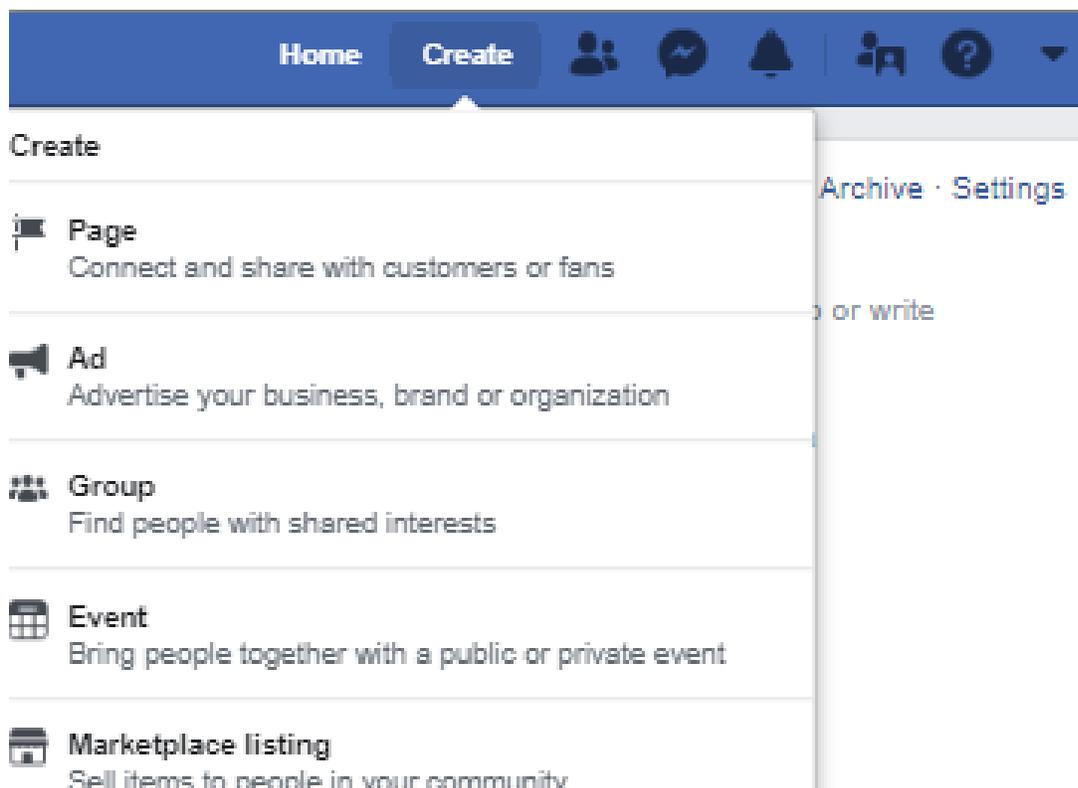
The first and most important thing that you need to do before you start marketing on Instagram is to set up a business account.

Instagram provides you with the option to either create a personal account or a business account. If you want to market on Instagram and establish your presence as a business, then the latter is the way to go. Moreover, it comes with its own set of advantages.

An Instagram business account comes with cool features like the ability to add links to Stories and to create Shoppable posts.

How to Set up an Instagram Business Account

To create an Instagram business account, you first need an active Facebook business page. You can simply go to the “create” tab at the top right and select the “page” option.



Then you select the “Business or Brand” page option and create your Facebook business page.

Create a Page
Connect your business, yourself or your cause to the worldwide community of people on Facebook. To get started, choose a Page category.



Business or Brand

Showcase your products and services, spotlight your brand and reach more customers on Facebook.

[Get Started](#)



Community or Public Figure

Connect and share with people in your community, organization, team, group or club.

[Get Started](#)

Give an appropriate name to your page. One that represents your business. Then select your business category.

Business or Brand

Connect with customers, grow your audience and showcase your products with a free business Page.

Page Name

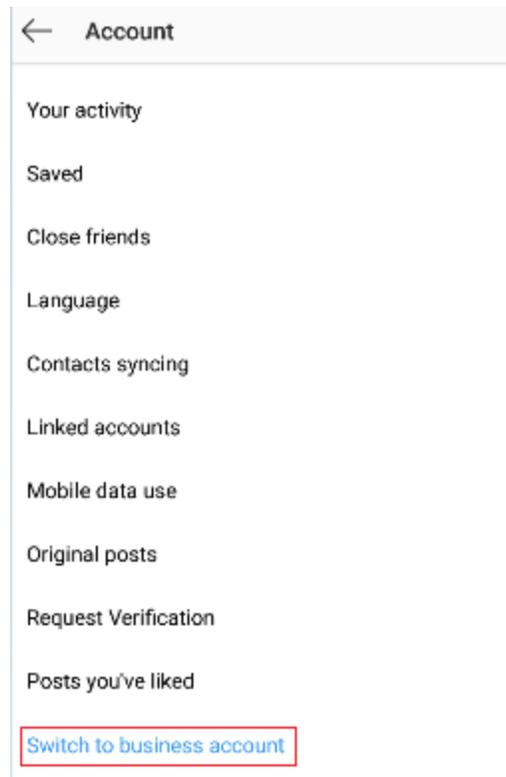
Category

When you create a Page on Facebook the [Pages, Groups and Events Policies](#) apply.

[Continue](#)

Now, you are all set to create an Instagram business account. Just go to your account settings on Instagram and select “Switch to business account,” as shown below.



Also, ensure that your profile is set to “public” and is not a private profile. A public profile allows anyone to view your posts, which is what you will want as a business or marketer.

How to Optimise Your Instagram Profile

Your Instagram profile is your one chance to make a first impression on your profile viewers and convert them. When someone views your profile, you have a very short span of time to engage them and convert them into customers. This is why it is important to have an optimised Instagram profile.

Here are some things that you can do to optimise your Instagram profile:

- Select a profile name that accurately represents your brand.
- Write an engaging bio to tell your story and showcase your brand to prospective customers.
- Add a link to your website in your bio, preferably a shortened URL that looks neat and is trackable.
- You can also promote your branded hashtag in your bio.
- Select an appropriate, high-quality profile picture that represents your brand.
- Select a colour palette or brand aesthetic for your posts and use it consistently.

Leverage All Types of Instagram Content Formats

In addition to basic posts, Instagram offers a variety of other content formats, each with its unique advantages and uses. You should not limit yourself to only standard posts and should experiment with all of these fun and engaging content formats.

Instagram Stories

Instagram Stories are an engaging and fun way for brands to connect with their audiences and market themselves. The short, temporary format requires you to create fun, attention-grabbing content to engage your audience.

When Should You Post Instagram Stories?

Unlike Instagram posts that get prioritised by the latest algorithm and need to be published when people are most active, Stories can be posted anytime. These are visible at the top of the feed for 24 hours. So they can be accessed by your audience during that period.

What Kind of Content Should be Posted as Stories?

Instagram Stories can be used to post a wide variety of content. Here are some of the numerous ways in which you can leverage Instagram Stories:

Promote a giveaway or contest.

This is an easy and effective way to grab your audience's attention, increase your followers, and drive audience engagement all at the same time.

Giveaways immediately grab audience attention and encourage people to learn more. So, you should always have a CTA directing those viewers to the actual post or your website where you're running the contest.

Also, you can ask people to follow your social media profiles to be eligible to participate, as this will help increase your followers.

Ask a question.

Ask a relevant question that will spark your audience's interest and encourage them to answer. Instagram Stories have a specific sticker that you can use to ask a question.

This is a simple, yet brilliant way to engage your audience and start conversations with them. But, you need to understand your audience well to start successful conversations with them.

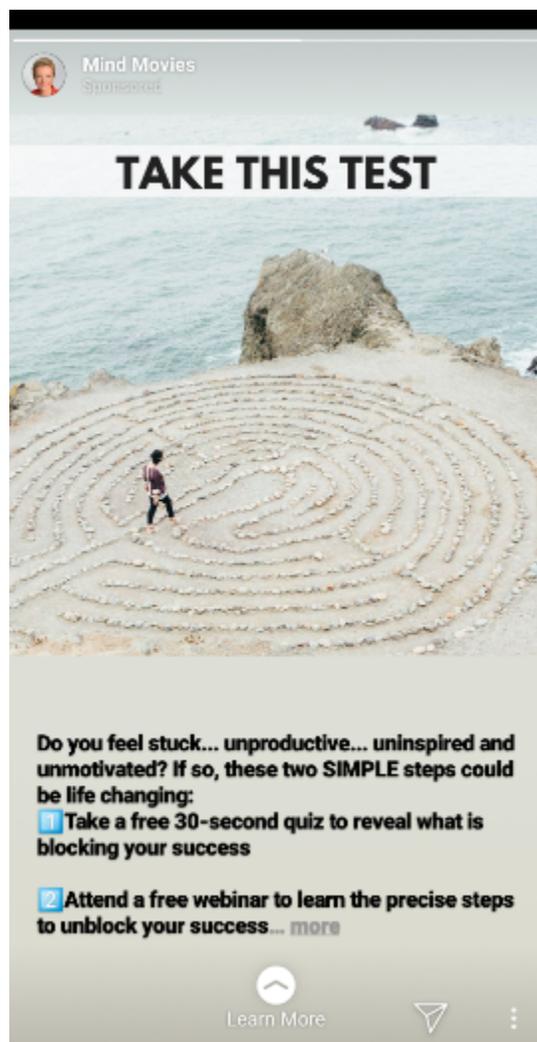
The best part is, that you can then post all of the answers that you get from your followers. This way, you will have enough Instagram Stories content for two days, without having to create new content every time.

Create quizzes and polls.

Polls and quizzes are, by their very nature, engaging types of content. The moment someone sees a quiz, they get tempted to answer to find out if they can answer correctly. Similarly, polls feed on the human need to relate to others and that's why people want to know if their opinions match those of the majority or not.

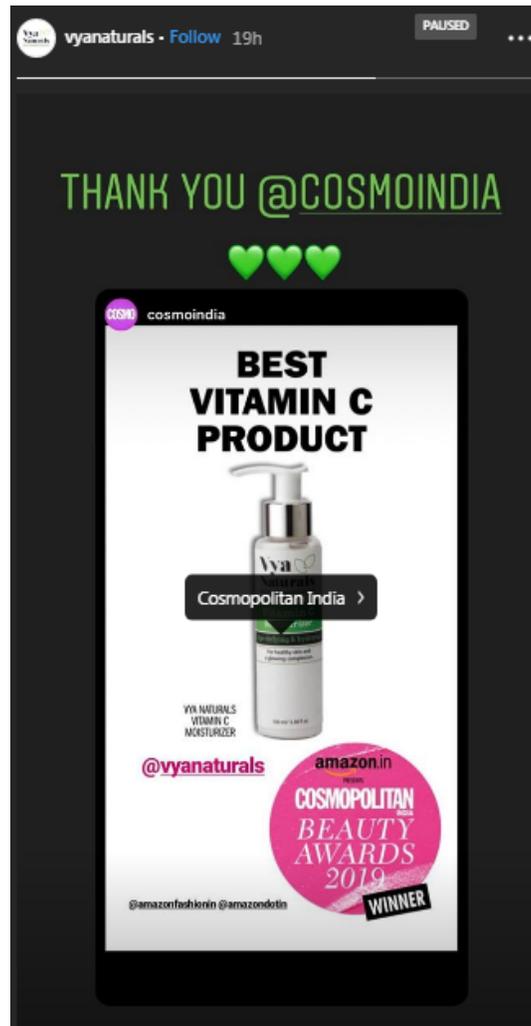
To create polls, you can simply use Instagram Stories stickers. For detailed quizzes, you can share the link or promote the quiz via Stories. This will direct viewers to your website to take the actual quiz.

Here's an example where this Instagram page has done just that. They introduced the quiz and asked their viewers to head to their website to take the quiz.



Showcase your achievements.

If you've recently won any awards or achieved an important milestone, then you can share that with your audience via Stories. While this may not directly drive conversions, it will definitely enhance your brand image and encourage people to try your products.



Post Instagram Stories Ads with purchasable links.

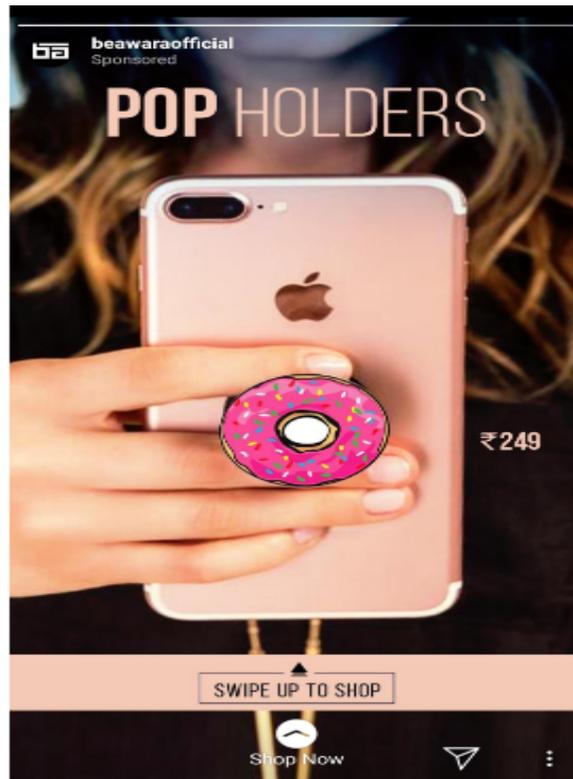
Instagram Stories ads are another great way to utilise the Stories format. They have an advantage over normal Instagram Stories because these can help you reach a larger number of people.

Your Instagram Stories will be available only to people who follow you, but ads can be targeted to a much broader audience. The format remains the same, just the reach increases.

Here are some best practices that you should follow to get the best out of your Instagram Stories ads:

- ○ Always add a call-to-action, along with a purchase link to drive conversions from your ads.
- ○ Use high-quality product images that clearly show the product being promoted.
- ○ It also helps to mention the price of a product, especially if there's a discount, as that encourages people to click on the ad to check out the product page.

Here's an example of an Instagram Stories Ad that has all of the above-mentioned characteristics. The product has been displayed in an eye-catching and visually-appealing manner and has a clear CTA.



Highlights

Instagram Highlights are just Instagram Stories that you decide to keep permanently displayed at the top of your feed. The format, essentially, is the same as Stories but the position is different. Instead of showing in your followers' feed, Highlights are displayed on your own Instagram profile.

So, you can think of Highlights as a part of your Instagram profile and use these to showcase content that you want to draw attention to.

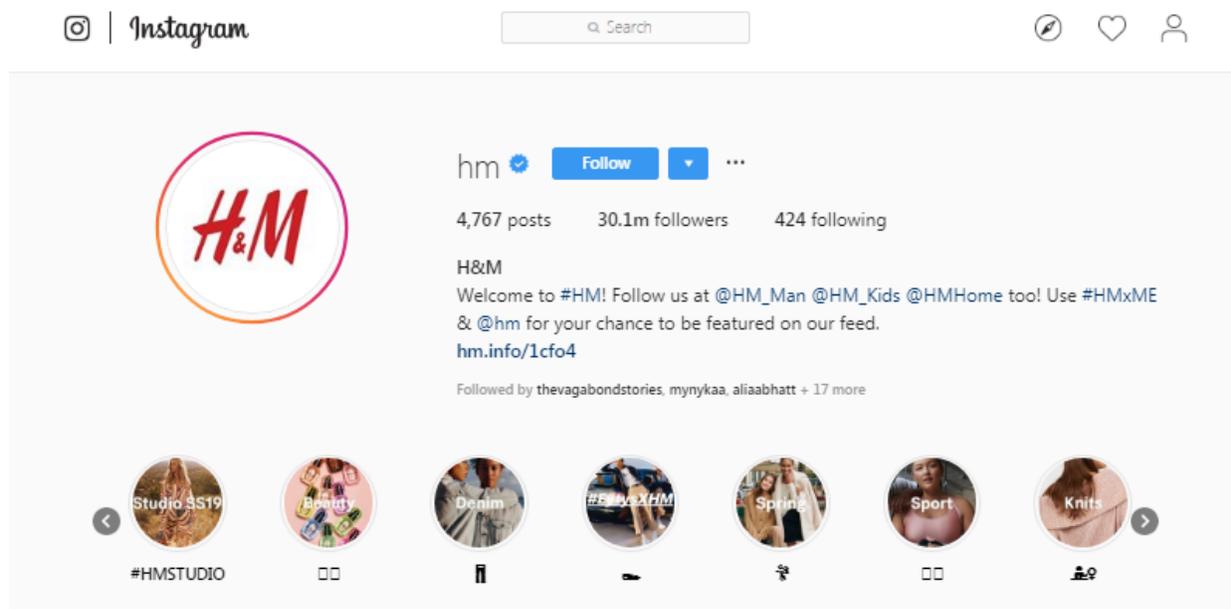
To Announce New Product Launches

A lot of brands use Instagram Highlights to announce their new product launches. This is effective because Highlights are displayed right at the top and centre of the profile. And Highlights immediately grab attention and therefore are a good way to bring attention to the new product launches.

To Showcase Product Collections/Categories

You can also use Highlights to neatly categorize and display different product categories or collections. And, you can add your respective website links to each to drive people from your Instagram to your website.

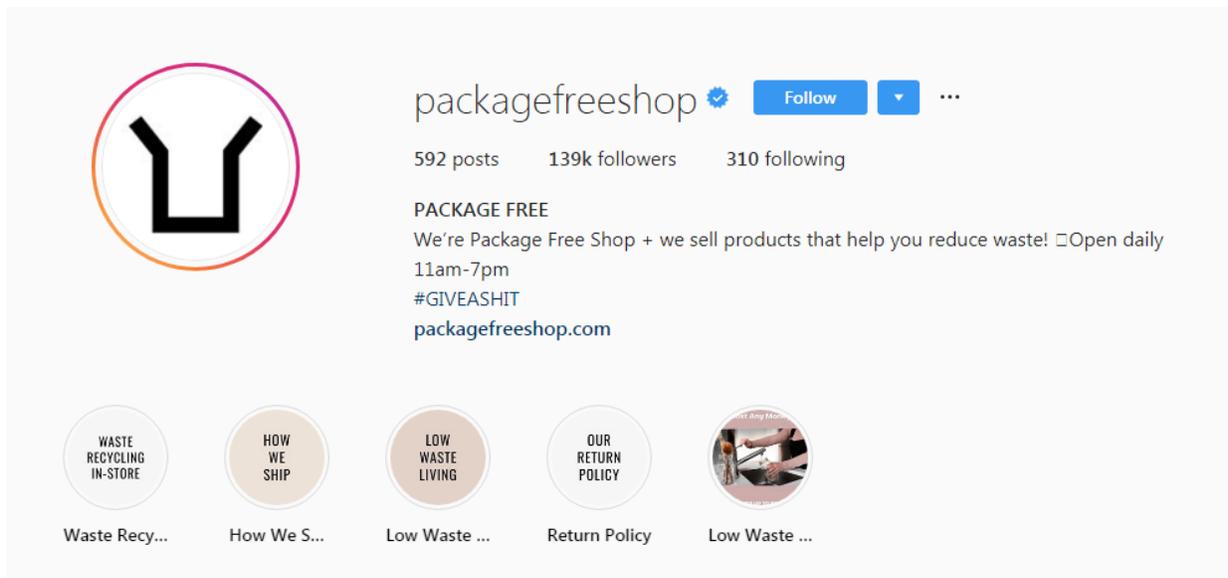
For instance, clothing brand, H&M, uses their Instagram Highlights to showcase different product categories like accessories, shoes and clothing.



For FAQs

You can also use Highlights to answer customer queries and commonly-asked questions. FAQs help your prospective customers resolve any concerns or queries about your brand or products. This, in turn, helps them to make informed purchase decisions.

In the example below, this brand uses Highlights to provide information on their policies.

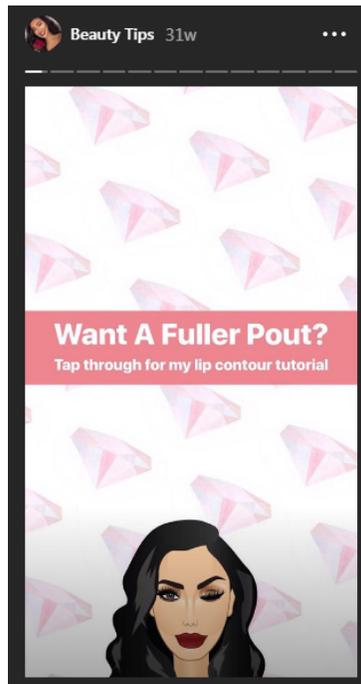


To Display Hacks, Recipes, Tutorials, and Tips

This is another brilliant way to use Instagram Highlights as you get a chance to educate your prospective customers on how to use your products. Showing your products in use is not only informative for consumers but often encourages them to buy them and try out the hack or tutorial themselves.

Similarly, for food & beverage brands, recipes are the equivalent of tutorials. Showing tempting food preparations using your products encourages people to try them themselves.

Take the example of the cosmetics brand, Huda Beauty, which provides makeup and beauty tutorials in their Instagram Highlights.



To Showcase Pictures and Videos from Brand Events

Showing footage from an exclusive brand or industry event is another effective way to use Highlights to engage your audience.

Here's an example of how the cosmetics brand, Lakme, uses Highlights to showcase pictures and videos from their brand events.



IGTV

Instagram TV is a cool new feature that everyone was waiting for. It allows you to post longer videos than those supported by Instagram posts or Stories. For Instagram posts, the maximum length for a video is 60 seconds and for Instagram Stories it is 15 seconds.

IGTV is the solution to this problem as it allows you to post videos of up to 60 minutes for larger, verified accounts. For other accounts, it allows a maximum video length of 10 minutes.

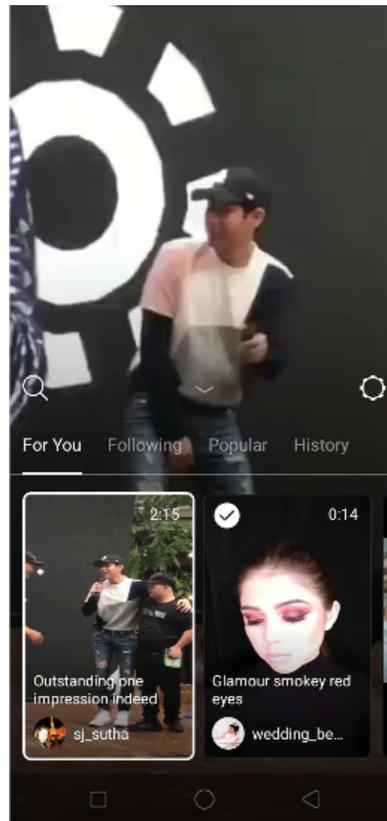
IGTV is designed to be compatible with mobile devices as it supports vertical videos. It is quite an engaging format as people end up watching one video after another for a long time. This makes it especially useful for brands and marketers that want to reach their audiences when they are most engaged. But, before you can start posting IGTV videos, you need to create a channel.

How to Create an IGTV Channel

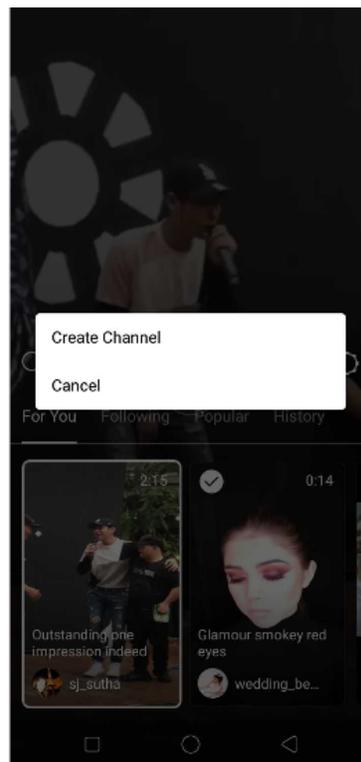
Step 1: Click on the IGTV logo at the top right of your Instagram feed.



Step 2: Click on the gear icon.



Step 3: Click on “create a channel” and follow the on-screen prompts to create your IGTV channel.



How to Post IGTV Videos

Once you have created your channel, you can simply click on the IGTV icon at the top right of your feed and then the plus icon to start adding videos from your phone's gallery.

One expert tip that you can follow is to share a 1-minute preview of your IGTV videos on your Instagram feed to promote them. This will bring viewers from your feed to your IGTV channel where they can watch the full video.

Types of IGTV Videos That You Can Create

There is no dearth of the types of videos that you can create for your IGTV channel. However, there are some types of videos that work better on this platform than others.

Here are some effective types of videos that you can leverage to engage your audience via your IGTV channel.

- Tutorial videos explaining product features and uses
Q&A or AMA sessions answering a set of commonly-asked questions
- Showcase customer testimonials or success stories to provide social proof
- Host a regular IGTV show similar to a TV show, to build a loyal audience

Instagram Live

This is another useful feature that Instagram has rolled out in recent years. Using this, you can stream live videos that will appear in your Instagram Stories. The biggest advantage that live videos have is that they allow you to engage with your customers in real time.

So, the best way for brands to leverage Instagram Live feature is by engaging in a live Q&A or AMA session. Viewers can comment on your live video and ask questions that you can answer in real time, as shown in the example below.

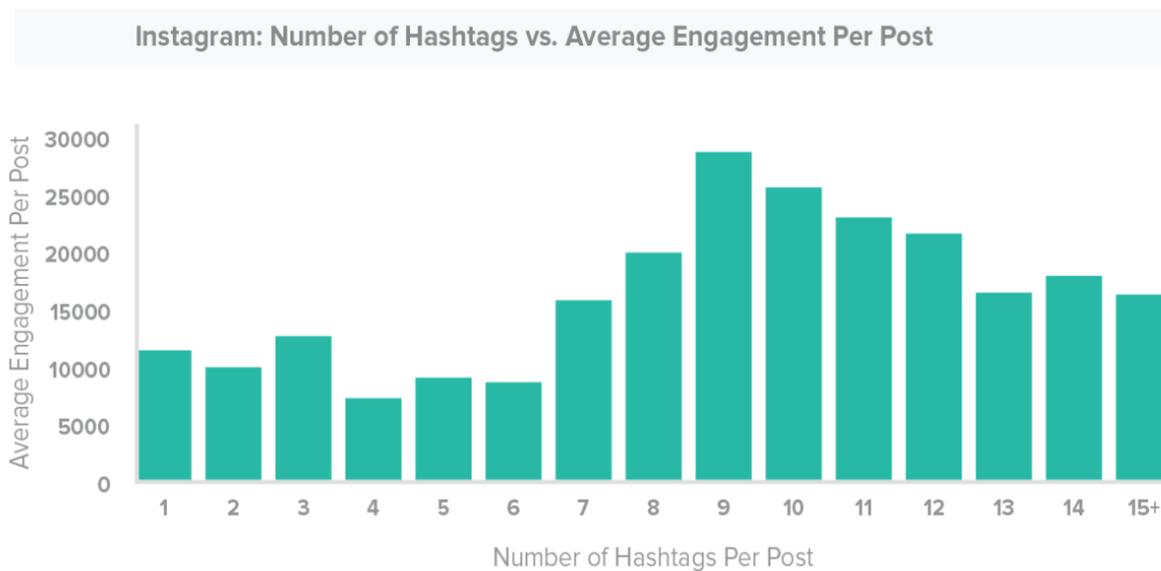


Another brilliant way to use live videos is to invite guests to feature in your videos and have a chat with them.

Use Hashtags to Boost Your Campaigns

Using hashtags with your Instagram content can give a significant boost to your marketing efforts. Hashtags allow you to reach a more relevant audience and also increase your content's reach. Moreover, using hashtags on your posts also has a positive correlation with your engagement rates.

According to a recent study, using up to 9 hashtags per post increases the engagement rates per post. However, don't go overboard and use more than 10 hashtags because that might have the opposite effect.

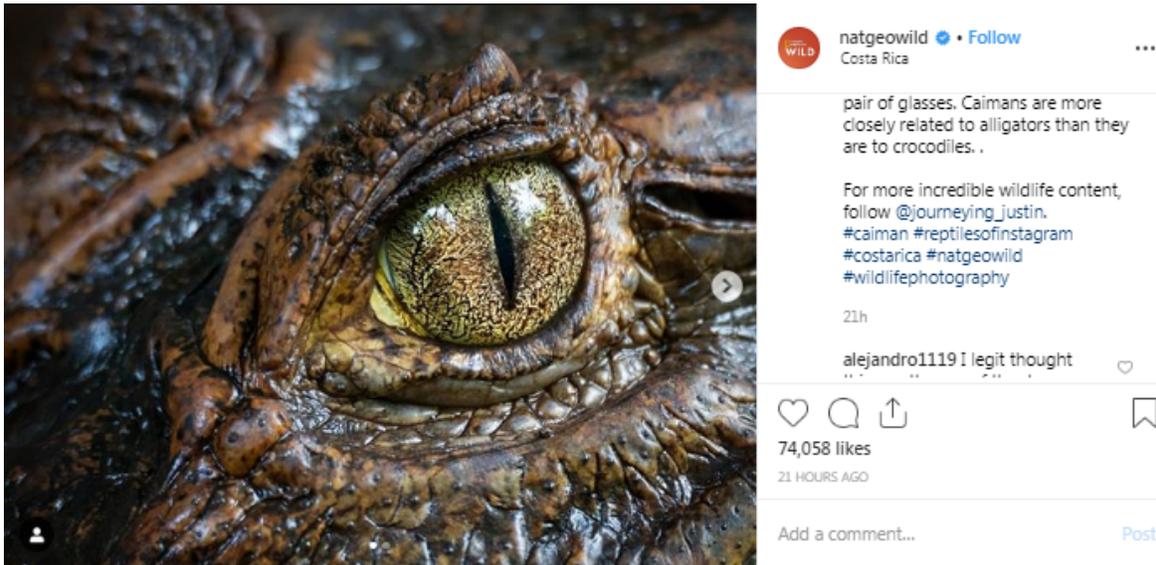


Use Popular Industry Hashtags

The most common way to leverage hashtags for promoting your Instagram content is to use relevant hashtags from your niche. Also, ensure that you use relevant hashtags specific to each post as that will help you target the right audience who is interested in that topic.

Try to avoid using very generic hashtags that are usually flooded with posts. Instead, focus on more niche ones that are popular enough, but don't have too much competition.

Take the example of this post by National Geographic's wildlife channel. They could have used popular hashtags like #photography #photooftheday, but they chose to use more specific hashtags that are relevant to the particular post.



Create a Brand or Campaign Hashtag

Another effective way to leverage hashtags to market your brand or campaigns is to create a brand or campaign-specific hashtag. The advantage of doing this is that you can use one hashtag to promote all types of content across Instagram. And, it also allows you to check the performance of your content from one place.

Use the following best practices to create and use your own hashtag:

- Make it short and easy to remember.
- Keep it relevant to a specific campaign or unique to your brand.
- Use the hashtag for all your Instagram content related to that particular campaign (if it's a campaign-specific hashtag).
- Ask your audience to use that hashtag when reposting or sharing any of your content or participating in your contest.

Check out this post from Lays in which they used the hashtag #dousaflavor to run a marketing campaign during which they asked people to select their favourite flavours.



amymarie • Follow

amymarie Chillin' out, maxin' relaxin' and snackin all cool...can't decide which new @Lays flavor I love the most, what about you guys?! 🍷👉 Make sure to vote for your favorite flavor at lays.com #DoUsAFlavor #sponsored

Load more comments

amymarie @kimberly_batchelor happy birthday Leo twin! ❤️

amymarie @amirbarakat36 thank you thank you! ❤️

amymarie @xrandomgurl thanks so much!! ❤️

amymarie @di.london thank you!❤️ ❤️

amymarie @danieluuus ❤️❤️❤️ ❤️

amymarie @lmao_jasmine thank you so much!👉🍷❤️

amymarie @francesca_athletes ❤️

Collaborate With Influencers

No guide on Instagram marketing is complete without the mention of influencer marketing. Influencers are an integral part of the platform and have a massive presence and tons of followers on Instagram.

How to Find Influencers

Before you start any Instagram influencer marketing campaign, you need to first find relevant influencers in your niche. This is the most crucial step in running a successful influencer campaign and often the one where most marketers falter.

According to a recent study, 40% of marketing teams struggle with finding the right influencers and state that it is their biggest challenge.

You can find relevant influencers in your niche either by doing a manual search or by using influencer-search tools.

Manual Search

The best way for you to look for influencers manually is to do a hashtag search. Just go to the Instagram search bar and type in the most relevant hashtags from your niche. For each hashtag, look at the posts that have used that hashtag and people who have posted those.

Look for people with a substantial following and good engagement rates who use those hashtags. These will be the influencers that are relevant for your brand.

Influencer-Search Tools

If you don't want to go through the hassle of doing a manual search, you can always use tools to find influencers. There are numerous free and paid tools available in the market.

BuzzSumo , Traackr , and BuzzStream are some of the most popular ones.

All you need to do is type in your industry name, topic, hashtag, or a keyword and these tools will help you find relevant influencers as well as top-performing content.

Criteria for Influencer Selection

Once you have found influencers in your industry, the next step is to select the ones that you want to work with. This is no easy task if you don't know what parameters to look for.

Here's a list of some of the most important parameters that you should consider before selecting an influencer.

Reach

This is determined by the number of followers an influencer has. The higher the number of followers, the bigger their reach.

Engagement

This is determined by the number of likes, comments, and shares that the influencer gets on each post.

Brand-Alignment

This is a more subjective assessment of how well the influencer's personal brand aligns with your brand values. And, it is the most important criteria because this is what determines whether an influencer is relevant to your brand or not.

Authenticity

This is another important parameter for influencer-selection. An authentic influencer will usually work with a smaller number of brands that they actually believe in. And they will stay true to their opinions and post only relevant content for their audiences.

Avoid influencers who promote too many unrelated brands and don't stick to their niche in terms of posting content.

Types of Brand-Influencer Collaborations

There are several ways in which you can collaborate with influencers, here are a few of the most popular ones.

Mentions

Influencers have substantial sway over their audiences. And if they merely mention a brand, their followers are likely to check it out or even make a purchase. Brand mentions are one of the most common ways in which brands collaborate with influencers.

Reviews

Getting influencers to write product reviews is another effective way in which brands can leverage influencers. People trust the influencers that they follow. And a positive product review from them can definitely enhance your brand image and credibility.

Takeovers

You can also invite influencers to take over your Instagram account and post on your behalf. This is a comparatively less popular method of brand-influencer collaboration. But it is an effective way to drive more users to your Instagram profile.

Giveaways

You can collaborate with influencers to run a joint giveaway or ask them to promote your contests and giveaways. Running contests and giveaways is a tried and tested way to get people to follow you because they often require that as a necessary criterion for participation.

Moreover, if an influencer promotes your giveaway on their channel, then you can reach their audience in addition to yours. This will help your promotions reach a much broader audience.

Create Content That Stands Out

Instagram has no dearth of brands, marketers, and influencers all trying to grab the attention of the same people. In such an intensely competitive environment, it is crucial that you create content that stands out and is consumed by your intended audience.

Here are some expert tips and tricks to create Instagram content that stands out:

- Try different formats like images, videos, gifs, memes, Boomerang videos, etc.
- Use high-quality stock images for creating visually-appealing posts.
- Maintain high image quality for all of your image and video posts.
- Post content that is useful and relevant to your audience.
- Post at the right times, preferably during the day time on weekdays, to get maximum engagement and views.

Leverage User-Generated Content

Creating fresh and relevant content regularly and consistently is tough. And with the new Instagram algorithm, it has become even more important to keep the relevance and frequency of your posts high.

In light of this, user-generated content is an Instagram marketers best bet. It allows you to not only engage your audience but also provides you with a regular flow of content to post.

A lot of brands leverage user-generated content and some use it exclusively on their Instagram feeds. Here are some ways in which you can leverage user-generated content to your advantage:

- Ask your audience to tag your brand or use your hashtag to get a chance to be featured on your Instagram feed.
- Reward your existing users by featuring their pictures of themselves using your product on your Instagram feed.
- Repost user-generated content relevant to your brand and give credit to the original creators of the posts.

For example, the smartwatch brand, Garmin, leverages user content and posts it on their Garmin Outdoor Instagram channel.



Measure Your Performance and Improve

After you have implemented your marketing initiatives and have run your campaigns, you need to evaluate how well they performed. This will help you understand what works for you and what doesn't. These insights, in turn, can fuel your marketing strategy and help you improve it for the future.

You can measure the performance of your Instagram marketing campaigns either by using Instagram's built-in analytics feature or third-party tools.

Instagram Insights

All business accounts on Instagram have with a built-in insights feature that provides data on basic performance metrics. You can check your posts' reach and engagement. You can also get insights into your overall Instagram account's performance. And, you can also view your audience demographics.

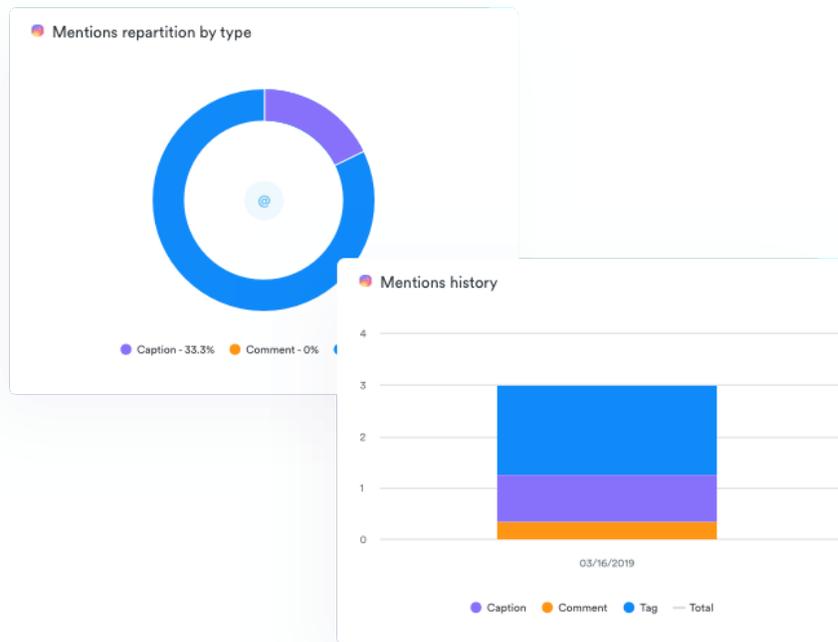
Instagram Analytics Tools

If you want more advanced analytics to measure your performance, not only of your Instagram account, but specific campaigns, then you can use analytics tools. From spying on your competitors to getting hashtag analytics, there are tools available for all of your Instagram analytics needs.

Here are some of the best Instagram analytics tools that you can use:

Iconosquare

This is an Instagram audit tool that provides detailed insights into your Instagram account and content's performance. It has cool features like Instagram Stories analytics and Tags & Mentions Analytics that can help you understand exactly how each content piece performed.



Quintly

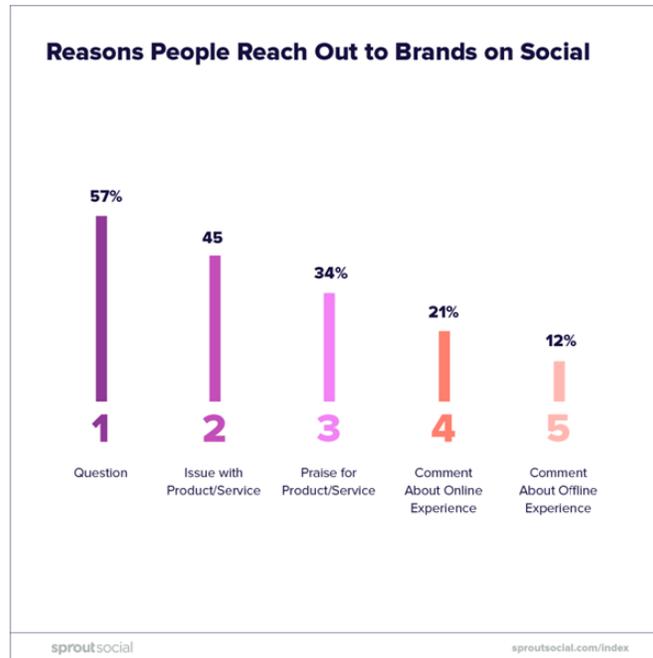
Quintly is a useful audience analytics tool that provides detailed insights into your own followers' profiles and those of your competitors. Apart from audience demographics, it also provides insights into all of your interactions with your followers.

Create a real impact with Instagram Analytics

Make sense of your Instagram marketing effectiveness by tracking all public and Insights data. Leverage your competitive advantage with social media benchmarking and optimize your strategy based on easy to create automated reports.



This brilliant tool takes Instagram analytics to the next level by not only telling you which posts resonate best with your audience but also you telling why. It provides insights at a granular level and can even tell you which photo or video filters perform best for you.



These are just a few of the numerous tools available in the market that you can leverage to get insights into your Instagram marketing performance. You can even get separate tools for measuring the ROI of your influencer marketing campaigns and hashtag campaigns.

So, take your pick and leverage these tools to gain insights into your performance and keep improving your Instagram marketing strategy.

Use this detailed Instagram marketing guide to run successful marketing campaigns and initiatives. These expert tips will help you ace your Instagram marketing game and stand out from the crowd.



You are now ready to take your Instagram Business to the next level, we hope you enjoyed our guide.
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