INSTAGRAM MARKETING

The Ultimate Guide for Business

The 2020 Edition

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# The Ultimate Guide to Instagram Marketing for Business

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Introduction

Instagram is the second most popular social media platform, with over one billion people using it every month. It was also the second most downloaded free app (just behind YouTube) in the Apple app store in 2018.

Small businesses, large businesses, social media managers, brands, individuals, influencers, and celebrities are successfully growing followings, building relationships, and making sales on Instagram.

This article provides an extensive breakdown of all there is to know about Instagram marketing for business.

**BONUS:** Want to automate the organic growth of your followers on Instagram? Check out Kicksta!
What is Instagram?

Instagram is a visually-powered social network where users share images and videos, often creatively styled with filters, styles, and text-based content.

The image-based app launched in 2010, (almost a decade ago). It grew so quickly that Facebook noticed and determined that acquiring it would be a great opportunity, so they purchased Instagram in 2012.

Over the years it has evolved, adding features like direct messages, stories, IGTV and Instagram Live, among many others, as the app has grown exponentially in popularity.

Why is Instagram so popular?

Instagram is driven by images, and people respond more to photos than to long blocks of text, especially when quickly scrolling on a smartphone.

Instagram has become a hub of information for people to search for restaurants, places to visit, and people to follow.

While constant updates can feel frustrating, by adding new features Instagram is keeping itself one of the hottest apps on the market.

Who uses Instagram?

Instagram appeals to a wide variety of people.

- Instagram sways slightly female – 52% of all users are women.
- 43% of women in America use the app, while only 31% of men in America do.
- It’s the most popular social network for teenagers – 72% of teens say they use the app.
- 67% of 18-29-year-olds are on the app.
- 47% of those aged 30-49 use Instagram.
- 23% of people aged 50-64 have accounts.
- Only 8% of people aged 65 or older are on Instagram.
Instagram basics

Setting up your Instagram account

Creating an account on Instagram is quite intuitive. You simply need to download the app and create an account with a username, email address, and password. The more complex part is crafting a compelling bio, choosing a profile picture, and beginning to post.

Personal vs. Business Accounts

Instagram accounts are automatically made as personal accounts, but it's easy to switch to a business account under settings.

The perks of having an Instagram Business Account include:
Did you know that 200 million users visit at least one business profile every day?

If you're not on the app, you're missing out on the chance to reach thousands of potential customers.

People are using Instagram to discover and research new products and recent features, like shoppable tags, allow users to make a purchase within the app.

Instagram also gives you the chance to connect with your audience.

So, you can provide them with customer support, create relationships with your customers, or receive feedback from them to improve your business.

This will certainly help you build rapport and improve your customers' feelings toward your brand.

Beyond that, you can engage them in conversations and learn what they want.
You can get ideas for new products and understand the language they use to talk about your product.

By being where your audience is, you can improve your ability to connect with them.

**Types of Instagram content**

**Instagram Feed**

The first type of content to understand is the feed content.

These are the typical photos and videos you see when you open the app and start scrolling.

Feed posts are the most traditional type of post on Instagram, and they’re the posts most affected by the algorithm.

Most users will add hashtags to feed posts in order to reach more people with their content.

Instagram allows up to 30 hashtags per post, but the most important thing is that they’re relevant to your post.

If you have a photo of a dog and you use #waterslide, Instagram knows those aren’t related, and they can actually penalize your account.
You also don’t want to just copy and paste the same block of hashtags on every post.

By taking the time to make your hashtags hyper-relevant to each post, you will reach new people easily and organically.

Rapid-fire hashtag tips:

- Use all 30 hashtags because you’re creating 30 different ways someone can find you.
- Think about your audience when thinking of hashtags. Are they actually going to type this in to try to find content?
- Try not to use hashtags with over 500,000 posts – your post can easily get lost.
- If you have a niche business, try to use specific, small hashtags (with maybe 1,000 posts) that might not be popular, but would be highly relevant for the people using them.

Finding niche hashtags that people are actually using can be tricky and complicated. If you’re feeling like this, consider using a hashtag generator to find the perfect tags for your niche such as Hashtagsforlikes.

Hashtagsforlikes detects the most trending hashtags based on a search of your choice and instantly provides analytics, data, and hashtag recommendations that you can use to increase your exposure.

**Types of Feed Posts**

Even if you’re watching what a competitor is posting, your audience might respond differently. You’ll want to do some experimenting to see what posts resonate best with your audience, but here are some of our suggestions for posts that capture people’s attention.
1. Stunning Photos
Whether you want to post a beautiful flat-lay or a gorgeous landscape scene, well-composed photos can go over well. The subject of your photo will vary by industry, but it’s always a good idea to have some stunning shots saved in case you need to make a quick post.
2. Interesting or Amusing Videos
People love to watch videos. Whether you’re teaching them a quick tip or sharing a funny story, videos go over well in the feed. Video, in general, is a great way to connect with your audience. Whether you’re on camera, sharing your latest news, or if you have a montage of people using your products, videos help businesses come alive.
3. Testimonials

Instagram is a great place to sneak in some testimonials. You can make a graphic with the testimonial written on it or you could get a video testimonial. Showing the person giving the testimonial can give it more credibility for some of your followers. Testimonials showcase your capabilities without sounding like you’re bragging.
4. Quote Cards
Depending on your industry, quote posts can go over really well. They’re easily shareable, so your audience might help you reach new followers. Quote cards are often simple graphics with a meaningful or motivational quote, either from you or someone else. These graphics are an easy way to insert your branding into your feed by using brand colors, fonts or designs.
5. User-Generated Content (UGC)

UGC is just like it sounds – content that your customers, clients, and users create for you. Some studies have shown that people trust UGC more than brand-created content because they believe other users more strongly than brands themselves. Some UGC is made naturally, especially if you have raving fans who are excited to share your product or service with their following. If you don’t have that, don’t worry. You can still include UGC in your content plan. The easiest way is to create a contest and ask your followers to post about your product to be entered to win a prize.

Instagram Stories

As we mentioned earlier, feed posts aren’t the only type of content on Instagram. Stories are another way to reach your audience, and some people believe they’re actually the best way. Stories appear at the top of the app, and they disappear after 24 hours. This creates a feeling of urgency for many users, so they want to check them out before they’re gone.

Stories are generally meant to give a behind-the-scenes look into your business, whether that’s day-to-day activities, or bringing your audience along during an event. Stories can also be a useful promotional tool.

You can promote a new challenge.
Show your book tour behind-the-scenes (and encourage people to attend later stops).

Link to your newest podcast episode and tag the guest you interviewed. You can plan stories in advance if you’re looking to get a particular message across. If you know you want to promote your new product on Black Friday, for example, you can create story slides in advance so they’re well-branded, and so you know all of your information is included.
Then, you can either post them live or find a content scheduling tool that allows you to schedule your stories.

Take @stacyschul for example. She used stories to promote her upcoming five-day challenge. She asked questions of her audience to see if they were the right fit, then told them about the challenge. Just two stories later, she posted about her daughter and how they’re watching Survivor together.

This is the beauty of stories. You can promote and build real connections on the same platform. Stories also provide a great way to generate engagement. The stickers, polls, question boxes, quizzes, etc. give your followers an easy way to engage with you.

**Pro tip:** Respond to users’ engagement with a direct message to start building relationships with them!

### Charity donations

Did you know you can now collect donations for nonprofits directly in your Instagram stories? There’s a relatively new sticker available with the engagement buttons that allows you to select a nonprofit. Then, users can make a donation without having to leave Instagram. This can be a great way to include a call-to-action while increasing awareness about a cause that is important to your brand.

While these charity donations are great for raising money for nonprofits, they’re also creating a new means of exposure. Celebrities, influencers and even smaller brands or individuals are sharing links to donate to these nonprofits. This is a new way of promoting their cause and messaging to reach new audiences.
When to post on Instagram

Deciding when to post your content on Instagram seems to be the age-old question so you can take advantage of the algorithm. Think about when your audience is likely going to be on the app. People who work 9-5 jobs are probably more likely to be on in the mornings, evenings, and during lunchtime.

Parents of young children probably won’t be scrolling in the early evening while they’re trying to get the kids to bed. Really the best time to post differs for every industry, so use your analytics to determine the demographics of your followers and when the best time to post is.

Don’t forget though, that Instagram is a social platform. Above all else, you want to post when you’ll have time to engage with your followers who comment on your posts. A good rule of thumb is to be engaging for about 15 minutes before your post, and continue engaging for 30 minutes after. This
shows the algorithm that you’re a real person who’s ready to engage and build relationships.

**Instagram marketing strategy**

Instagram is a great tool for marketers and businesses, but it typically requires strategy, unlike personal accounts. So even if you’ve had an Instagram account for years and you’ve got thousands of followers, you might not be entirely sure of how to use it to grow your business as efficiently as possible. That’s where having an *Instagram marketing strategy* comes into the game.

**Setting goals**

The first thing you want to think about is **what your goal** is on Instagram. If you’re looking to increase brand awareness, you’ll have a very different strategy than someone looking to convert followers to customers within the app. Think about goals like:

- More engagement on your posts
- [More traffic to your website](#)
- More revenue
- More podcast downloads

**Defining a target audience**

Once you know your goal, you want to determine your **target audience**. See which accounts your ideal audience is following. Understand what posts are resonating with them. If their profiles are public, see what they’re sharing. The more you can understand about how they’re using Instagram, the better you can create a strategy to reach them.

- Research your competitors and see who their followers are.
- Know your audience demographics and find accounts that appeal to them.
- Search for hashtags they’re following and what they’re using.
Creating a unique value proposition

Next, craft your unique value proposition. We’re not necessarily talking about your company’s or your product’s value proposition, although that is important. We’re talking about the value prop of your Instagram account.

What are you going to do to make someone in your target audience want to follow you? Chances are they don’t just want to see pictures of your products everywhere. How are you going to portray your brand on Instagram? If you’re feeling stumped, start with these questions:

● What does your business, product, or service offer?
● What makes your account different from others?
● Why is your offering valuable to your followers and customers?
● What are your buyers’ pain points? How can you use those to appeal to them?

Once you’ve answered these questions you’ll understand who you’re targeting, why you’re using the app, and how you’re going to position yourself.

Getting real Instagram followers

Getting more real, organic followers is always a key part of your Instagram strategy. By increasing your followers you can reach more people that are interested in you, your business, products, etc. The more people you reach, the more you can potentially convert into customers.

But getting more followers can be difficult...

There are plenty of bad ways to get more Instagram followers, and these are the spammy tactics and risky companies you should avoid:

● Playing a follow/unfollow game can make Instagram suspicious.
● Trying to purchase a guaranteed number of followers is also a bad idea because you’ll likely end up with plenty of bots that won’t engage.
● Using follow-for-follow accounts will likely get you bots, too.
There are still plenty of ways to get real followers. One of the most effective ways is known as engagement marketing.

Engagement marketing involves engaging with potential followers to create relationships, in the hopes that you’ll catch their attention and they’ll decide they want to follow you. The only problem is that engaging like this can take a lot of time, and it’s easy to get distracted. If you like the idea of engagement marketing, but don’t have the time to devote to it, there are high-quality Instagram growth services that can automate the engagement process for you and have proven to help grow thousands of businesses and brands on Instagram.

**BONUS:** Want to automate your engagement on Instagram? Check out Kicksta!

**Instagram Contests**

Brands run contests on Instagram primarily to increase their engagement or their followers. You can also choose to partner with another brand or an influencer or run a contest on your own. Some contests can also be great for creating user-generated content.

If your engagement has seemed low recently, run a contest that encourages your followers to engage with a particular post (or set of posts). By doing so not only will you make sure they see your most recent content, but by liking your posts they’ll be telling the algorithm that they want to see more of your content.
Contests can also be a great way to get more Instagram followers.

Here are some of the best types of contests to help you get engagement or more followers:

- Encourage your followers to tag their friends, who then need to follow you for a chance to win.
- Ask your followers to post about you on their page and tag you or use a specific hashtag.
- Choose to partner with another account and stipulate that users must be following both accounts in order to be entered to win. This can be a great way to reach a new audience when partnering with a brand that is similar to yours.
- With any contest, consider offering an “extra entry” for people who share your giveaway to their stories.
Providing coupons and discounts

Instagram is also a great place to encourage people to buy your products or invest in your services by offering a good deal.

You could do this in stories, either with the swipe up feature if you have 10,000 followers, or by offering a discount code only available to people who watch your story.

You could also offer individual discounts to people who reach out to you via direct message.

This will take more work, but it can also make a big impact on the people who receive it.

Within your feed, you could announce flash sales, or provide coupons if you’re having a bigger promotion.

Instagram influencers

Working with Instagram influencers can be a great way to reach a new audience. Typically influencers have built up a strong level of trust with their followers. When they promote your brand or product, their followers are ready to learn more about you or even purchase your product.
There are many different types of influencers, from celebrities (think: Kim Kardashian) to macro-influencers (someone with 50K-300K followers) to micro-influencers (2K-50K followers). Celebrities are obviously the most well-known, although they can be difficult for smaller brands and businesses to get in contact with to form a partnership.

Macro influencers are slightly smaller, while still having very, very large followings. You’re more likely to be able to get in contact with them, but they might be out of your budget.

Micro-influencers are the easiest to get in contact with, but they sometimes protect their audiences even more. They’ve probably worked very hard to build this following and know they trust the influencer’s words – and recommendations.

Before you reach out to an influencer, build a relationship with them.

Engage with their posts, send them casual messages, and see if you can serve them in any way.

Then approach them with a partnership proposal that benefits both of you.

Once you come to an agreement and after they’ve created whatever posts you need, it’s time to measure the ROI of your influencer campaign. You should have already created a campaign goal to know what you’re measuring and how you’ll measure it, whether that’s purchases from a particular link or follower increases. If you’d like, you can invest in a management platform that
will measure a variety of KPIs. Otherwise, you can measure the clicks from an influencer’s unique URL, their custom discount code, or the number of followers you get during a three-day contest window.

**Instagram advertising**

Much like parent company Facebook, Instagram is beginning to offer more and more opportunities for brands to purchase advertising to reach new users, or to re-target their existing followers with a particular message. Instagram ads vary in cost, and it all depends on who you’re targeting and how specific that audience is.

Ad cost can range from 20 cents to $2 per click in a cost-per-click (CPC) campaign, or around $5 per 1,000 impressions in a cost-per-impressions (CPM) campaign. The exact cost is based on the demographics of your target audience (male/female, location, age), whether you’re using an automatic or manual campaign, and which type of ad you’re using.

**Start with an objective**

As with most other types of advertising, you’ll begin creating Instagram ads by choosing a campaign objective. Whether you want to increase brand awareness, optimize for conversions, or increase engagement on a particular post. The campaign objective you choose will also impact the cost of your Instagram ads. Other campaign objectives include video views, app installs, event responses, and store traffic.

**Types of ads**

You can create ads to appear in the feed or in stories. Let’s look at all the different types.
Story ads

These are becoming increasingly more popular in part because users are spending more time watching stories. These ads are 15 seconds long and you can have three in a row, meaning you have 45 seconds to get your messages across. Use videos, static images, or a combination to capture your viewers’ attention and stop them from clicking through.
Single image feed ads
These ads are typically on the more expensive end. They look just like a typical feed post, but they include the word “Sponsored” and might have a banner where viewers can click to learn more.
Carousel ads

Carousel ads include up to 10 photos in the feed. This could show off a new collection, multiple testimonials, or various product offerings in a slideshow format.
Video ads

Videos tend to perform very well on social media, and Instagram is no exception. Video ads can be a great option to capture people’s attention.
Collection ads

Collection ads are a good choice if you’re looking to showcase a product collection. Users can click “Learn More” to access a shoppable collection page within the app.
Explore ads

These will appear in the Explore page of Instagram. Once a user selects a post on the page and begins to scroll through the feed, these ads will begin to appear, just as they would in their home feed.

By creating ads that resonate with your ideal audience, you can stop their scroll and encourage them to take action. The best type of ad to use will depend on your audience, but overall you can’t go wrong with video. Sponsored videos get three times the engagement of sponsored photos.

Instagram certainly isn't the only social media platform offering advertising. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Snapchat, LinkedIn and even TikTok all
have unique advertising options. Users are inundated with ads every single day, so they’re either used to them or they’ve learned to tune them out. By spending time creating a strong ad strategy, you can stand out on Instagram and capture your audience’s attention.

Instagram does have a variety of ad type options, which makes it unique. You can choose specifically how you show up in your audience’s apps. Advertising on Instagram works – about 75% of all users will interact with an ad at some point, and 30% of Instagram users have purchased a product they found on the app.

**Instagram tools**

As you’ve probably realized, Instagram can be a lot of work. There’s no need to get overwhelmed though because there are plenty of Instagram tools out there that can make the process easier.

Whether you are looking for a platform to help you schedule your posts, grow your Instagram followers and engagement organically, edit your photos to give a cohesive look, or capture deeper analytics so you can learn more about your audience, these tools can help improve your Instagram marketing.

Let’s look at some of the best tools that can make your life easier on Instagram.

1. **Kicksta**

Getting more followers on Instagram can be really tricky, and increasing your organic followers can be even harder. There are so many apps and tactics for growing your following that are frowned upon by Instagram that the idea of outsourcing your growth can feel overwhelming. That’s where a reputable Instagram growth service like Kicksta comes into play. Kicksta uses engagement marketing to like posts from your ideal followers on your behalf.

You’ll provide Kicksta with a list of profiles whose followers you’d want to follow you. These can be competitors or they can be profiles or companies that are similar to yours. They could even be influencers in your niche. The more examples you can provide, the better.
Then they’ll start liking the photos of the followers of the target accounts that you provide. Those users will likely be curious about who you are and they’ll come to visit your feed. Your content will take over from there, inspiring them to hit “follow.”

**Kicksta** has helped over 10,000 brands and influencers grow their followings with real, engaged people who want to see their content and turn into paying customers.

2. **Agorapulse**

*Agorapulse* helps you automatically schedule and publish posts (including video) directly to Instagram. You can also reply to comments and get stats on your activity. One other thing this tool has is a cool hashtag search feature, which allows you to quickly add high-performing hashtags to your Instagram posts.

It will save you hours every week!
3. VSCO

Editing your images to create an overall cohesive look is an important part of branding. You want your posts to be recognized as yours, and VSCO helps you do just that. Whether you’re using presets, or browsing the inspiration gallery, there’s no shortage of editing options within VSCO. Creating an aesthetically pleasing feed is a great way to show your followers (or potential followers) that you’re worth their time.

4. Iconosquare

Iconosquare is a great tool that offers detailed Instagram analytics. Analytics are critical to making sure your content is resonating with your audience and that you’re on the right track. With Iconosquare you’re able to see your
engagement rate, follower information and industry benchmarks so you can see how you’re doing compared to others in your industry. They’ll even show you data on your promoted posts or Instagram ads if you choose to go that route.

5. Unfold

Hopefully, you’re ready to be active on Instagram stories. As we said earlier, stories are a great way to give your followers a behind-the-scenes look into your business and daily life. But maybe you want to use your stories more strategically. **Unfold** lets you plan your stories in advance. This app lets you upload your photos or videos and make simple edits to create beautiful, compelling story slides. Let your branding and the feeling of your feed carry over into your stories by adding a little design and editing.
Conclusion

Engaging with users is the best way to increase your followers, but it doesn’t stop there. Once you have followers, don’t stop engaging. Spend time commenting, liking posts, and sending direct messages to build relationships. Instagram is a great tool for helping your followers go from knowing who you are to liking your brand and then trusting you enough to become a customer.

Now you know all there is to know about Instagram marketing. Instagram is incredibly popular and won’t be slowing down anytime soon. If your business isn’t already on Instagram, or if your strategy needs a bit of a refresh, now is the time to make it happen.
About the author: Rafaella Aguiar is the Marketing Manager at Kicksta. She specializes in content and social media marketing. You can find more daily marketing tips from her at @kicksta.co.