

# INSTAGRAM

## BIBLE



**The Laws of Instagram Management**

**University of Social Media™**

# Instagram Bible

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## 1.0 Law of Call to Actions

Creating social media content is much more than simply writing clever captions to accompany your photos and blog posts. While that's still important to up your social media engagement, there's more to it than that when it comes to getting your potential customers to take action.

What's equally important is getting people to click on your links, submit inquiries and ultimately become customers. To make that happen, you need to be able to write strong copy and call to action phrases that make your audience want to do what you're asking them to do.

### **What is a call to action?**

Call to action wording can be anything from "Download now!" to "Give us a call to learn more."

Essentially, you're just giving your audience a clear call for what to do right after seeing your post. Do you want them to download your eBook? Do you want them to click and read your blog post? Do you want them to request a demo?

Let your audience know what their exact next steps should be with a call to action, or CTA.

## How to write a call to action

First things first, you need to know your objective of your social media post or website page. What action should your audience ideally take next?

If it's a top of funnel page or post, it might be something as simple as "Read on." Whereas, if it's a bottom of funnel page or post, a "Sign up now" or "Call us" or "Send us a message" call to action makes more sense for your goals.

When you're actually crafting your CTA, there are three things you need to do:

- Start with an action word, like read, download, call, contact and more.
- Create a sense of urgency with words like today, now or in the next 24 hours.
- Tell your audience what's in it for them if they do take action.

Focusing on those three steps will help you create a powerful call to action that will entice your readers and website visitors to take the next step.

Let's dive into a few great CTA phrase examples so that you can see some of these in action.

## Social media call to action examples

It's not always enough to know what a CTA is and how to write one. You need to see actual examples of these phrases in the wild to get an idea of how to implement them. So we've pulled 10 examples of some of the best call to action phrases that work so that you have proper inspiration the next time you need to persuade your audience to make a move.

## 1. Read on

Like we mentioned, a simple top of funnel can be as easy as “Read on” leading into a blog post link.



If you're sharing a blog post on social media, give a brief snippet of what your audience can learn inside before leading into your “Read on” call to action phrase.

## 2. \$100 off

Another great call to action that entices your audience to take action is offering a discount. While it might not necessarily be \$100, this number is interchangeable with whatever makes sense for your product, service or business.

### 3. Get started today

This is a great CTA that simultaneously creates a sense of urgency. You're telling your audience exactly when to get started. Today!



**Mailchimp**  
July 11 · 🌐

Liven up your newsletter with eye-catching, on brand graphics. No design skills? No problem. With [Canva](#), anybody can create stunning graphics – and export them to the Mailchimp Content Studio for free! Get started today.

MAILCHIMP.COM

**Canva | Mailchimp**

The easiest way to create stunning graphics for your newsletter. Made...

This can be a great strategy for getting people to take action right away. You're not saying "Consider this" or "Think about signing up" at some point in the future. No way. You're telling your audience to get started today. It's compelling, and a great CTA to include in bottom of the funnel content.

## 4. Retweet

Another great way to ask your audience to take action is by asking them to share your post.



**Visme**  @VismeApp · Sep 9

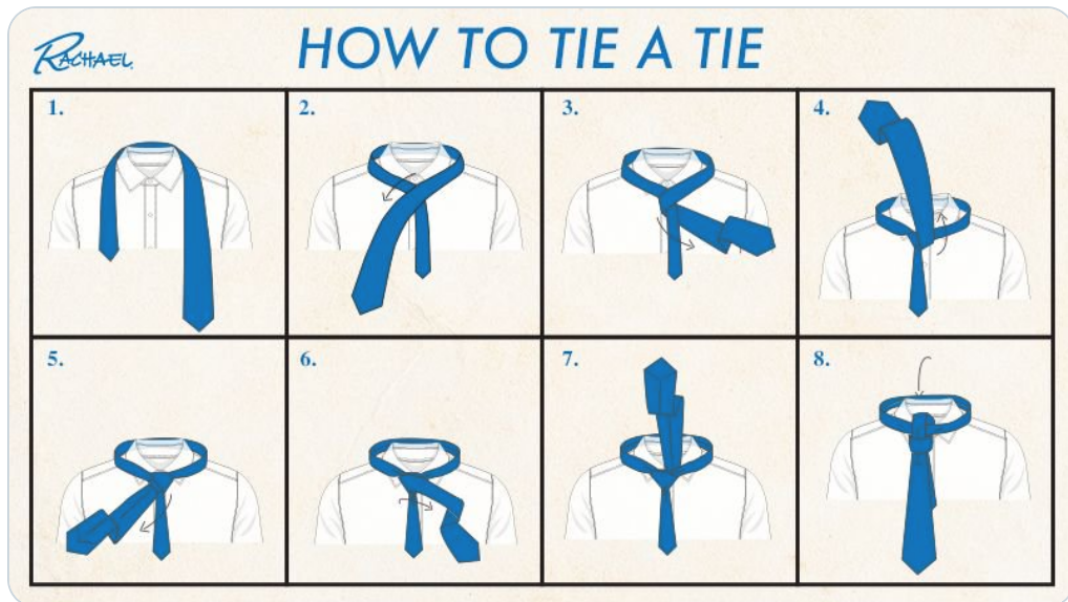
Infographics don't need to be vertical or even boring!

They can be:

- ▲ Horizontal
- ▲ Square
- ▲ With a small dose of information
- ▲ Printed
- ▲ Interactive

Retweet if you agree! Leave your ideas also if you have them.

[#infographics](#) [#information](#) [#blogging](#) [#contentmarketing](#) [#visuals](#)



 2

 6



Asking your audience to retweet your post if they agree is a great way to engage with them, leading them to share your content—and subsequently your business—with their own followers.

You can do this on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. Simply close out post with a quick “Share with your friends!”

## 5. Install now

Another great way to use call to action phrases on social media is by adding a button directly onto your post or ad.

**Grammarly**  
Sponsored

Grammarly's mobile keyboard makes it easy to compose high-quality, mistake-free text. Now you can diversify your vocabulary, too!

Introducing synonyms in the Grammarly Keyboard!

The plan looks good

and on

q w e r t y u i o p  
a s d f g h j k l  
z x c v b

**Get the Grammarly Keyboard**  
Grammarly's Mobile Keyboard is the personal editor you can take with you wherever you go. With hundreds of checks and  
ITUNES.APPLE.COM

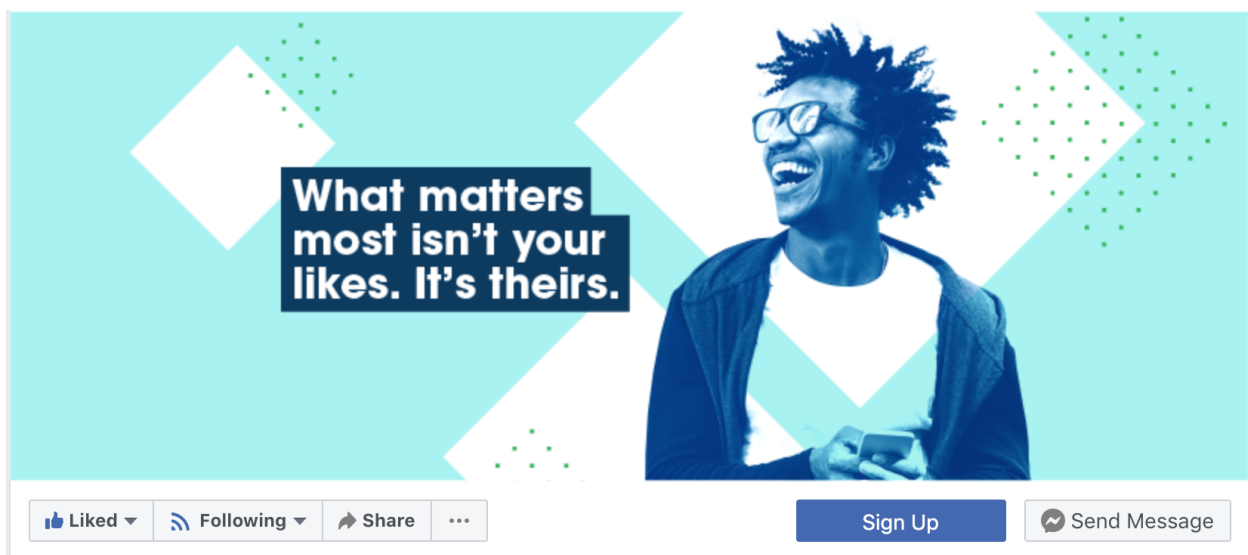
Install Now

When you create an ad, you're able to choose which CTA button you want to use. This is a great way to add an extra dimension of interactivity within your ads.

Not everyone will read your caption all the way through. And while it's still important to include a CTA there, having a separate button with a succinct and powerful call to action phrase grabs the viewer's eye and can help inspire even more clicks than before.

## 6. Send message

Asking your customer to get in contact with you is a great way to move them towards the end goal. If someone is nervous about diving in and making a purchase or signing up for service, making yourself or a team at your company accessible is important.



Facebook makes it easy for you to place a Send Message button at the top of your business page, directly underneath your cover photo.

You can even use your cover photo as an even more obvious CTA, by using text or design elements that tell people to message you about your service or an arrow pointing to the Send Message button.



## 7. While supplies last

Another great way to create a sense of urgency in your audience is by letting them know that this is a limited time offer, sale or product. Nothing gets consumers clicking like realizing they might miss out on something.



This Instagram post is creatively offering a sale on a candle scent that's relevant to a social holiday while simultaneously letting their followers know that this sale won't last forever.

First of all, it's a one day sale. Second of all, supplies might not even last that long. If someone wants a 50% off candle, they need to act immediately. This CTA works.



## 8. Free download

Ready to seriously awe your audience? Give them something for FREE. Putting together an ebook, checklist, cheat sheet, template or other useful content, and offering it as a free download is a great way to get your audience taking action.



While you typically want to pair this with a full CTA like “download your free ebook now,” just the word “free” works to draw your audiences’ attention.

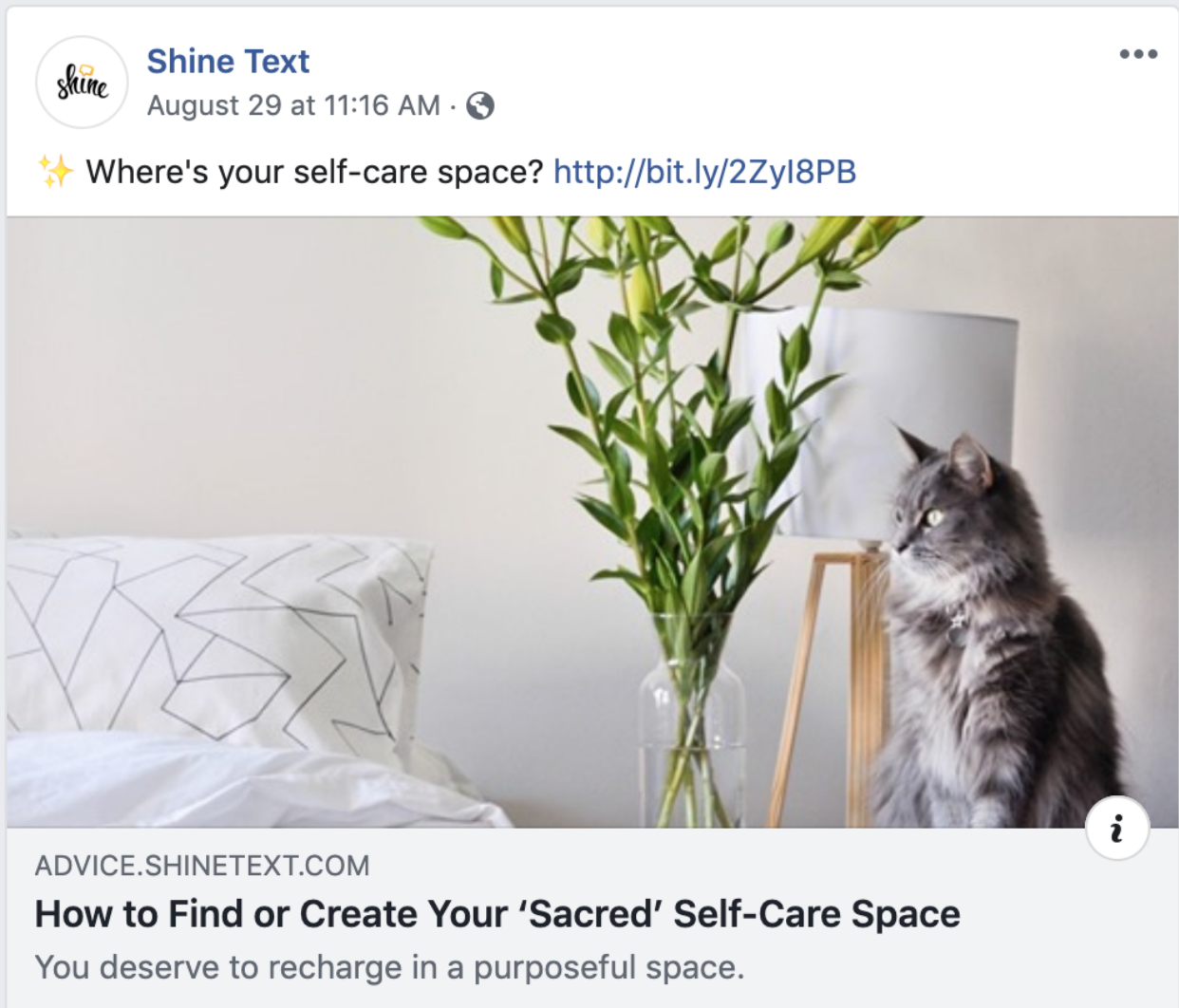
Giving your audience something for free helps your company to stick out in their mind because they were able to get valuable information from you without having to even pull out their wallet.

Of course, you can easily offer free downloads in exchange for an email address to add them to your email list, but this is a much easier exchange than a purchase.

Plus, this way your business stays top of mind and you can place a call to action in an email for making a purchase to eventually convert these customers.

## 9. Ask a question

When you ask a question, whether it's relevant to the content you shared or you're genuinely asking your audience for their input, it's a call to action for your viewer to engage and respond.

A screenshot of a Facebook post from the page 'Shine Text'. The post is dated August 29 at 11:16 AM and is public. The text of the post asks 'Where's your self-care space?' and includes a link to 'http://bit.ly/2Zyl8PB'. Below the text is a photograph of a cozy bedroom corner. On the left is a bed with a white sheet and a pillow featuring a geometric pattern. In the center is a clear glass vase filled with green bamboo-like plants. To the right, a grey and white long-haired cat is sitting on a wooden chair, looking towards the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. At the bottom of the post, there is a link to 'ADVICE.SHINETEXT.COM' and the title 'How to Find or Create Your 'Sacred' Self-Care Space' with the subtitle 'You deserve to recharge in a purposeful space.'

**Shine Text**  
August 29 at 11:16 AM · 🌐

🌟 Where's your self-care space? <http://bit.ly/2Zyl8PB>

ADVICE.SHINETEXT.COM  
**How to Find or Create Your 'Sacred' Self-Care Space**  
You deserve to recharge in a purposeful space.

Ask for your audience input. Creating a call to action doesn't have to be all about getting your customer to do something for you, like sign up for your newsletter or make a purchase.

Instead, a CTA for engagement can simply be a great way for you to open communication with your customer and build rapport. This leads to customer loyalty and brand recognition and makes your customer feel good.

Don't ever underestimate the power of good, old-fashioned social media interaction with your audience. Ask a question the next time you're creating social content and see where it gets you.

## 10. Subscribe

Last, but not least, is subscribe. This is the perfect call to action to get your audience to subscribe to your email list and receive your newsletter.



If you're going to use this CTA, you need to be sure to let your audience know exactly why they should subscribe. What's in it for them?

Let them know what your newsletter covers and why they're going to want to read it. Will they learn something? Will they get a great deal or discount code by subscribing? Do you share exclusive content with your email list?

Another great call to action that can be used similarly here is "Sign up." If you're looking to grow your email list, make sure your newsletter sets you apart from competition, then set up a lead magnet or sign up form and ask your audience to subscribe.

It's as simple as that!

Creating CTA phrases doesn't have to be overwhelming. Remember, all you're doing is giving your audience a next step to take after viewing your content.

## 2.0 Laws of Hashtags

It's a known fact that hashtags can help enhance and expand the reach of your content on social media. When you use the hashtag or # symbol preceding a word or phrase, you've categorized your content with other similar content on social.

Instagram hashtags can help your Instagram content get discovered by an even larger audience than the one that already follows you on the platform. Including relevant hashtags in your captions or comment section helps improve the visibility of your posts.

Throughout this article, we'll talk more about how to use hashtags on Instagram, the benefits they bring your brand and marketing strategy, top Instagram hashtags and more.

### What are Instagram hashtags?

Instagram hashtags are words, phrases or numbers with the pound or hashtag symbol (#) in front of them in Instagram captions. Using this symbol categorizes your Instagram content and helps them be found more easily on the app.

Here's an example of what an Instagram caption with hashtags might look like:



You can include up to 30 Instagram hashtags on one single post, though Instagram itself recommends sticking to between 3-5.

## How to use hashtags on Instagram

Hashtags have several different uses that can help you grow your account and keep your content organized. Let's run through a few of the main uses for Instagram hashtags.

### Increase visibility on your posts

First, like we've mentioned, hashtags help increase visibility on your posts. Not only do hashtags make your posts come up in search results for keywords you've used, they also help fuel the Instagram algorithm.

The algorithm will place posts in other users' feeds based on their interest in the hashtags included within your post.

### Invite user-generated content

Instagram hashtags are also a great way to invite users to create user-generated content (UGC) for you to share on your feeds.

Highlight a branded hashtag in your Instagram bio for followers to engage with and so your team can easily find UGC photos. Here's an example of what this might look like:



### Categorize Instagram posts

You could also choose to use hashtags for more of an internal purpose, like categorizing your Instagram posts. For example, a clothing store called The Closet might use hashtags for their various products, like #TheClosetShoes, #TheClosetAccessories or #TheClosetDresses.

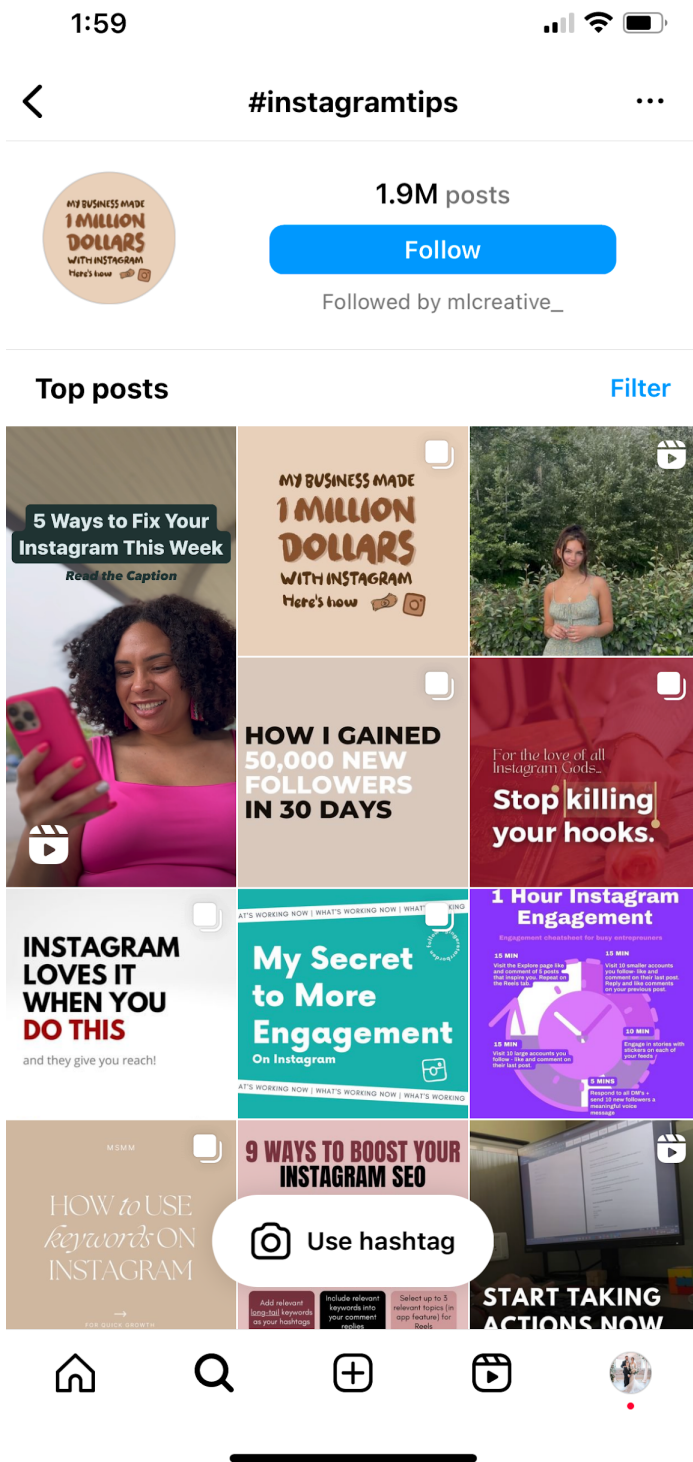


## **5 Benefits of hashtags on Instagram**

Hashtags should be a major part of your Instagram marketing strategy. There are many use cases for them—but also many benefits. Let's cover five major benefits that hashtags can provide.

### **1. Increases exposure & discovery**

The biggest reason for using hashtags is for the increased exposure and discovery. Clicking on a hashtag in Instagram leads to a gallery of both the top posts and latest posts that used the hashtag.



From there, you're able to explore all the related posts, making hashtags a great way for people interested in a certain topic to find more accounts to follow. This means

that if you use the right and most relevant hashtags for your brand, others searching on that hashtag will find those posts.

In addition, your audience can use branded hashtags to show off their experiences with your products or services as a form of brand advocacy. Hashtags are good for overall brand awareness. Even clicking through one post on the search results page will lead you to other similar posts.

## **2. Encourages audience interactions**

When you use branded hashtags and encourage their use, it becomes another form of engagement.

Tagged feed posts are saved in search results and tagged Story posts are saved for the duration of the Story. Think of Instagram hashtags as just another way to reach and engage your customer base.

## **3. Competitor analysis**

How much digital space are your competitors taking up in your market? Hashtags help you analyze your share of voice on social media. Chances are that you and your competitors will have overlapping hashtags, especially if you're using industry and local ones.

With a social media competitive analysis, you'll be able to analyze the share of voice, sentiment and engagement of those posts.

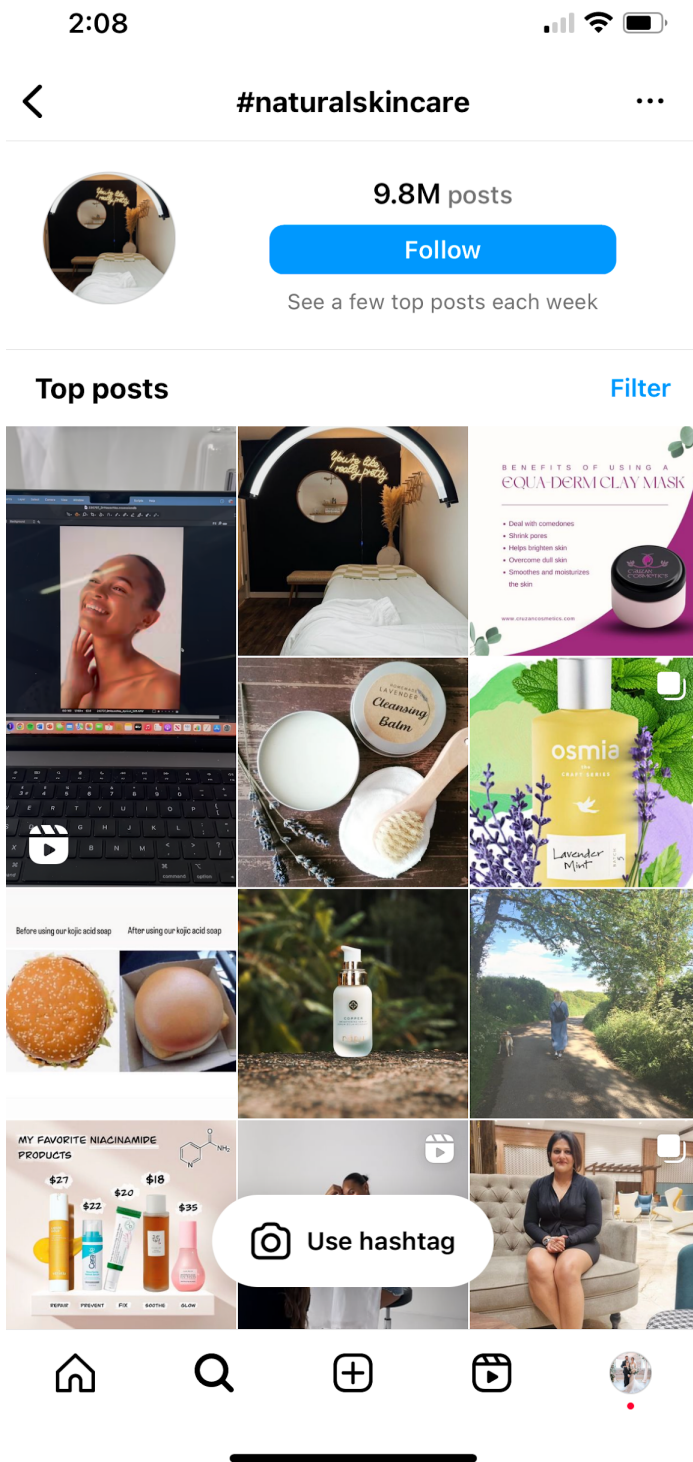
In an ideal share of voice situation, your posts and ones that your customers have tagged are taking up the bulk of those hashtag search results. You can also check out

posts with your relevant hashtags for content inspiration and to get ideas on where your brand might be falling short compared to competitor content.

#### **4. Content research**

Similar to what you would do for SEO keyword research, hashtags can help you research different content ideas.

Say you want to increase your share of voice in the #NaturalSkincare hashtag. That's rather tough since there are over 9.8 million posts using the hashtag.



However, you can use the search results page's Top tab to see what the best posts have been. Use this area as inspiration.

What seems to be working for similar brands? Is there a certain style or caption that's trending now? By clicking into top posts for details, you might also be able to find additional hashtags that are less highly populated, but just as relevant to your audience, similar to secondary keywords for search optimization.

## **5. Links digital and IRL campaigns**

Go shopping in any retail store these days and chances are that you'll come across a marketing campaign with a hashtag attached.

Whether they encourage you to use their general brand hashtag or a campaign one, hashtags offer an easy way to connect digital and in-real-life campaigns.

## **Top Instagram hashtags in 2023**

If there's one rule to keep in mind when using Instagram hashtags, it's to always keep them relevant to your business and the content you're posting.

However, there's nothing wrong with using popular hashtags in your industry—so to help you find those, here are some of the top Instagram hashtags of 2023 for a variety of different industries.

### **Top 50 Instagram hashtags in 2023**

1. #love (2.1B)
2. #instagood (1.6B)
3. #instagram (1.1B)
4. #art (1B)
5. #photooftheday (1B)
6. #photography (1B)

7. #beautiful (823M)
8. #picoftheday (720M)
9. #happy (698M)
10. #follow (695M)
11. #instadaily (639M)
12. #tbt (583M)
13. #repost (557M)
14. #summer (548M)
15. #like4like (514M)
16. #reels (509M)
17. #instalike (502M)
18. #photo (488M)
19. #me (454M)
20. #selfie (451M)
21. #music (441M)
22. #friends (438M)
23. #life (436M)
24. #smile (435M)
25. #family (435M)
26. #girl (426M)
27. #trending (372M)
28. #model (358M)
29. #design (353M)
30. #motivation (351M)
31. #handmade (345M)
32. #lifestyle (343M)
33. #likeforlike (328M)

34. #sunset (323M)
35. #artist (316M)
36. #dogsofinstagram (307M)
37. #beach (294M)
38. #amazing (287M)
39. #drawing (286M)
40. #nofilter (285M)
41. #cat (282M)
42. #instamood (279M)
43. #igers (277M)
44. #sun (270M)
45. #sky (260M)
46. #follow4follow (250M)
47. #funny (236M)
48. #14l (221M)
49. #followforfollow (212M)
50. #tagsforlikes (191M)

### **Top 10 Instagram hashtags for B2B**

1. #b2b (3M)
2. #work (147B)
3. #smallbusiness (121M)
4. #business (109M)
5. #entrepreneur (99.4M)
6. #success (87.9M)
7. #marketing (75.8M)
8. #digitalmarketing (29.7M)



9. #sales (20.4M)
10. #ecommerce (14.2M)

### **Top 10 Instagram hashtags for fashion and beauty**

1. #fashion (1.1B)
2. #style (641M)
3. #beauty (528M)
4. #ootd (426M)
5. #makeup (395M)
6. #hair (242M)
7. #fashionblogger (165M)
8. #shopping (154M)
9. #outfit (146M)
10. #fashionista (136M)

### **Top 10 Instagram hashtags for fitness**

1. #fitness (520M)
2. #gym (254M)
3. #workout (216M)
4. #fit (191M)
5. #health (164M)
6. #training (140M)
7. #fitnessmotivation (139M)
8. #bodybuilding (134M)
9. #fitfam (123M)
10. #goals (111M)

## **Top 10 Instagram hashtags for food, beverage and restaurants**

1. #food (507M)
2. #foodporn (300M)
3. #foodie (241M)
4. #instafood (237M)
5. #yummy (199M)
6. #delicious (148M)
7. #foodstagram (119M)
8. #foodphotography (109M)
9. #foodblogger (83.8M)
10. #foodlover (77.3M)

## **Top 10 Instagram hashtags for technology and software**

1. #technology (26.4M)
2. #tech (19.7M)
3. #engineering (14.8M)
4. #innovation (14.2M)
5. #programming (6.6M)
6. #computer (6.5M)
7. #coding (6.1M)
8. #electronics (5.9M)
9. #software (5.9M)
10. #instatech (2.1M)

## **Top 10 Instagram hashtags for travel**

1. #nature (782M)
2. #travel (697M)

3. #explore (489M)
4. #naturephotography (230M)
5. #travelphotography (216M)
6. #travelgram (173M)
7. #wanderlust (149M)
8. #adventure (143M)
9. #instatravel (125M)
10. #travelblogger (84.9M)

## Top Instagram hashtag generators

If none of the keywords we compiled above fit your business (or you want to find more options), you can use a hashtag generator tool to help. Here are the top six Instagram hashtag generators you might want to try to build the perfect list of hashtags for your business.

### 1. Sistrix Instagram Hashtag Generator

The screenshot shows the Sistrix website's navigation bar with the logo and menu items: Software, Pricing, Resources, and Support. A search icon and a LOGIN button are also present. Below the navigation bar, there are links for SISTRIX Blog, Free Tools (highlighted), Ask SISTRIX, Tutorials, Workshops, and Academy. A FREE TRIAL button is located on the right side. The breadcrumb trail at the bottom of the navigation area reads: Home / Free Tools / Instagram Hashtag Generator.

#### Instagram Hashtag Generator

The SISTRIX Instagram Hashtag Generator suggests **successful hashtags** for your posts. Achieve **higher visibility** and **more followers**. Simply enter a hashtag 'to start.

#hashtag1, #hashtag2, #hashtag3 ...

The use of the tool is free. You can do up to 25 queries a day. Once the limit is reached, a registration will be needed.

#### Why do I need to use hashtags on Instagram?

Instagram doesn't offer a traditional search so hashtags function as the most important search-and-find tool on Instagram. With our Instagram hashtag generator you can find suitable and potentially advantageous hashtags.

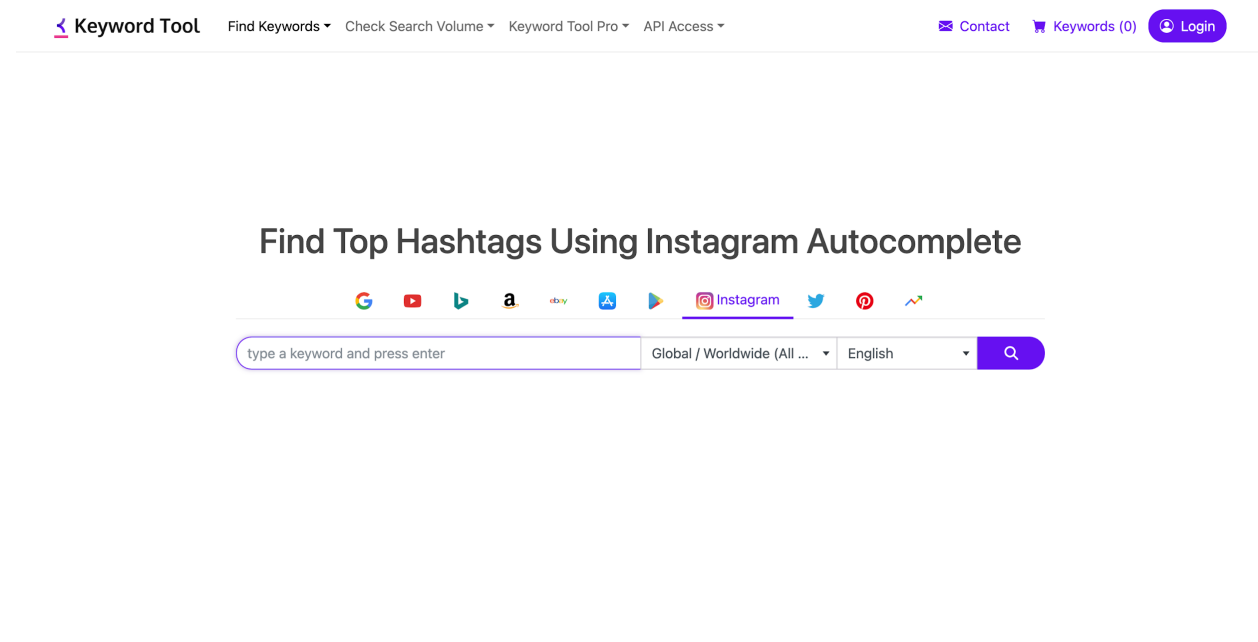
#### What data set is used in this tool?



The Sistrix hashtag generator tool is easy to use—but only allows limited use with a free account. You can get 25 free queries a day before you'll need to pay for a premium account. Twenty-five queries is quite a lot, so you may be able to get by without needing to upgrade.

Simply type a or a few hashtags into the text box and press the Enter/Return key to get the best 30 hashtags relating to your initial search. Pick out the most relevant ones to add onto your post.

## 2. Keyword Tool



[Keyword Tool](#) is a useful tool that can help brands find keywords across a number of sites—including hashtags for Instagram. With this option, you can even use some geolocation to ensure you're finding top hashtags in a certain area.

This is a plus for local brick-and-mortar businesses who only service customers in a specified location. It also has the option to select which language you want hashtags to appear in.

Type your initial hashtag or keyword into the text box, change the filters if needed, then click the magnifying glass icon. The results you'll receive are limited for the free account—just a list of hashtags without details on their usage. But if you want more information, you can upgrade to a paid account. Plans start at \$69/month.

### 3. Inflact

The screenshot shows the Inflact website's navigation bar with the logo on the left and menu items: General, Services, Tools, and Lab. There are 'SIGN IN' and 'SIGN UP' buttons. Below the navigation is a header with 'HASHTAG GENERATOR' and 'HASHTAG TRENDS' options. The main heading is 'HASHTAG GENERATOR FOR INSTAGRAM'. The introductory text explains that the tool is AI-based and analyzes photos, keywords, or links to generate social media hashtags. Below the text are three tabs: 'GENERATE BY KEYWORD' (selected), 'GENERATE BY PHOTO', and 'GENERATE BY POST URL'. A text input field contains the example: '(A-) Example: Paris, France, Girl in Paris, Travelling with Dog'. To the right of the input is a blue 'GENERATE HASHTAGS' button. At the bottom, a small disclaimer states: 'This site protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply.'

[Inflact](#) is an AI-based hashtag generator that can help come up with hashtag ideas based on a keyword, photo, or existing Instagram post. This can be useful if you're not even sure of which keyword to start with—or if you simply want to see what the tool would come up with for your photo.

Once you input your query, the tool will provide you with hashtags from three categories based on how often the hashtag is used: Frequent (hard to rank in top posts), Average (medium chance of ranking) and Rare (easy to rank). The tool also gives you a recommendation of how many hashtags to use from each category.

## 4. Toolzu

Toolzu

Services ▾ Tools ▾ Tutorials Blog Contact FAQ

Sign In Get Started

Hashtag Generator Top Hashtags Wedding Hashtags

Likes and Followers? Reach and Impressions? Money and Fame?

Pimp your Activity on Instagram! Find the **top hashtags** that drive the target audience to your page. Fill your posts with the best selection from 12+ million hashtags divided into multiple categories, trending, and high-convertible. Use **hashtags for Instagram**, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and other social media.

### Hashtag Generator for Instagram

Generate By Keyword Generate By Url Generate By Photo

Generate Hashtags

Popular searches: [Travel girl](#), [Paris](#), [Like4like](#)

This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) apply.

Hashtag Generator App on [GET IT ON Google Play](#) [Download on the App Store](#)

[Toolzu](#) is similar to Inflact in the ways you can start your hashtag query. Input your information (either keyword, URL or photo), then click Generate Hashtags to get started. This tool will generate the volume of posts using the hashtag and how difficult it may be to get viewers using the hashtag.

Toolzu also has iOS and Android apps so you can easily search for hashtags on the go while you're on your mobile device.

## 5. Display Purposes

FOR DISPLAY PURPOSES ONLY

MAP GRAPH BLOG BEST

#oslo #architecture #film

type a few hashtags in the search box to begin

Relevant hashtags will appear here. Banned and spammy tags are filtered out. You could use these hashtags on – for example – popular image sharing app Instagram.

Build effective hashtags strategy with IQhashtags, the most advanced Instagram account management platform.

@kate283 Scan profile

Copy Mode

0 tags

Tag Selection

Auto

Manual

Limit

30

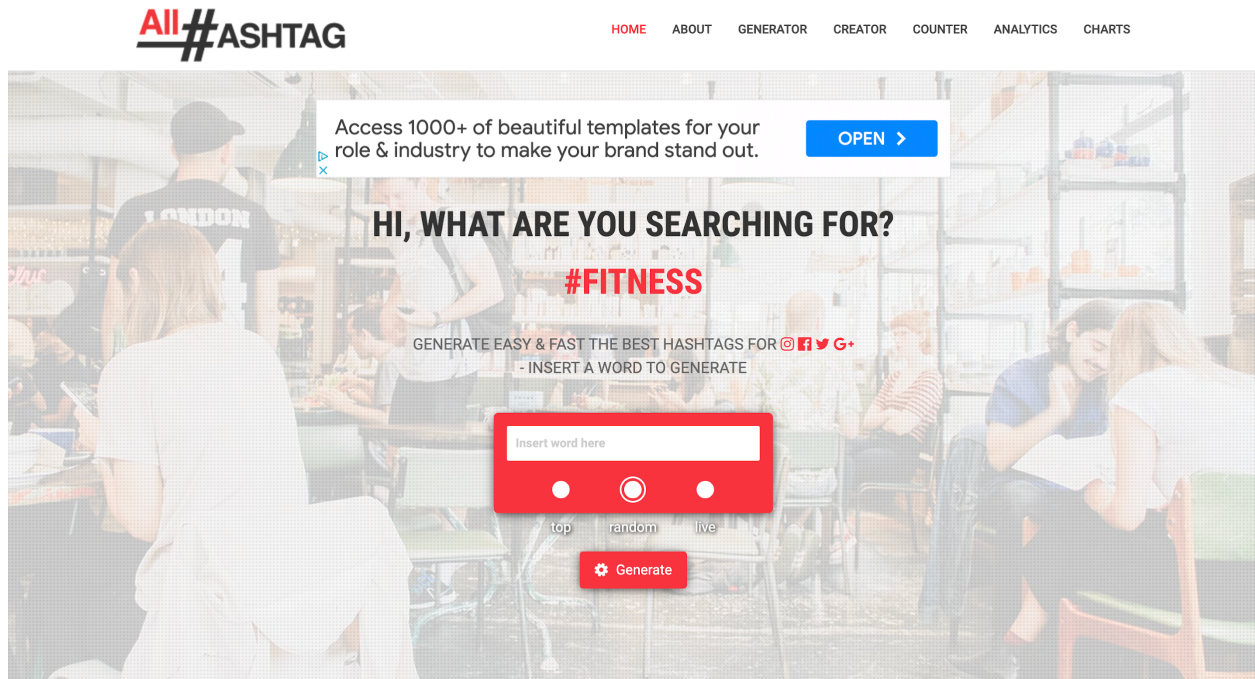
Unlock The Power of Instagram Reels Insights! Track These Metrics to Make Better Instagram Reels

REELS

[Display Purposes](#) will provide you with a list of hashtags based on a starting point. Type a few hashtags into the text box to get started. Each suggested hashtag generated is scored based on relevancy to our query and popularity.

Daily Purposes offers another tool that will scan your profile and come up with hashtags based on the content you've already been posting, which is a useful feature.

## 6. All Hashtags



[All Hashtag](#) can generate hashtags based on a single keyword. Choose whether you want top results, random results or results for hashtags that are currently trending. You'll get a list of the best 30 hashtags based on your query.

The tool has a “Copy” button making it easy to immediately copy all 30 hashtags and paste them into your caption or comment. Remember to limit the number of hashtags you use per post for best practices and quality engagement.



## Types of Instagram hashtags

There are a few different types of hashtags that brands should know about, each with its own benefit and application. Learn more about the types of Instagram hashtags you'll want to use.

### Branded & product hashtags

Branded and product hashtags are hashtags that you create with your brand and/or product name in them. These are often used for gathering UGC and increasing brand awareness.

Here's an example of a branded hashtag. Plant store The Sill uses the hashtag #PlantsMakePeopleHappy in their Instagram bio. They've also created product videos surrounding this hashtag.



If you click the hashtag, you'll see that there are 12 million posts in the results, meaning it's a popular and well-used branded hashtag.

All of the posts included are relevant to The Sill's content as well, so they can easily reach out to people posting content under that hashtag to ask if they can feature it on their own feed.

5:27



#plantsmakepeoplehappy



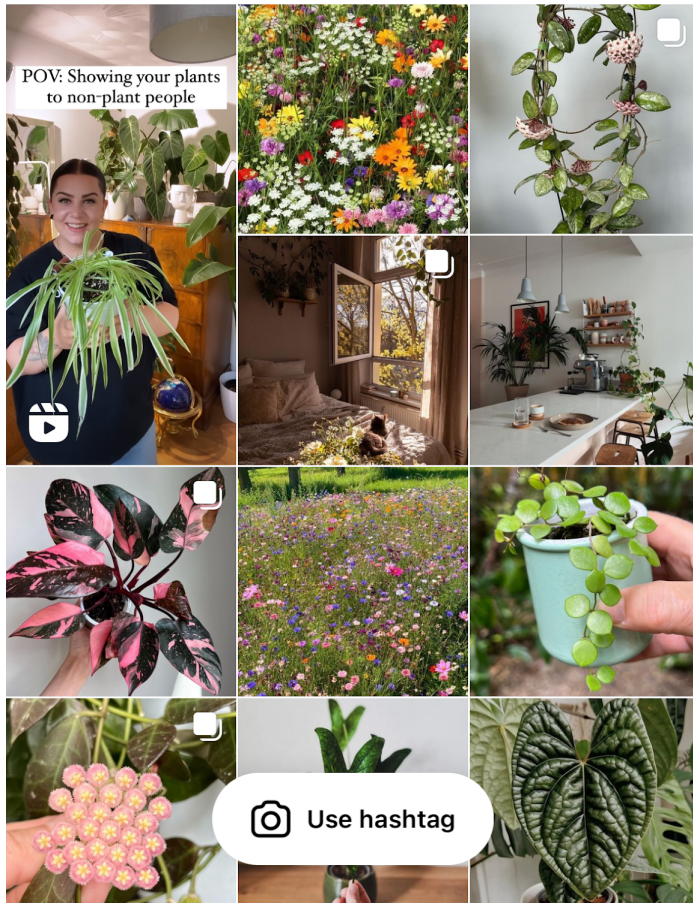
12M posts

Follow

Followed by growarber

Top posts

Filter



## Campaign hashtags

Campaign hashtags are specific to marketing campaigns that you're running. Usually, these involve the brand running a regular campaign and adding a hashtag to it in a caption or in the corner of the post.

One example of a campaign hashtag is the [#EssenceFestxTarget](#) one used to promote their recent collaboration. For all posts related to this campaign, both Target and Essence Festival will use the unique hashtag, as well as any influencers they work with.

Campaign hashtags don't need to be tied to a product or sales. REI's #OptOutside campaign encouraged people to go out rather than shop on Black Friday, and therefore wasn't centered around purchasing.

## Community & industry hashtags

Nearly every brand community and industry has at least one hashtag that's used within them. To find yours, head to some popular community and industry influencer posts and check out their hashtags. Many of these hashtags are simple. The hashtags that are easy to think up are usually the most used.

For craft beer enthusiasts, several exist: #CraftBeerLover, #CraftBeerLife and #CraftBeerNotCrapBeer are just a few of them. As you can see, all three of these are pretty straightforward and natural to think up, and include in posts for relevant brands.

5:56



#craftbeerlover



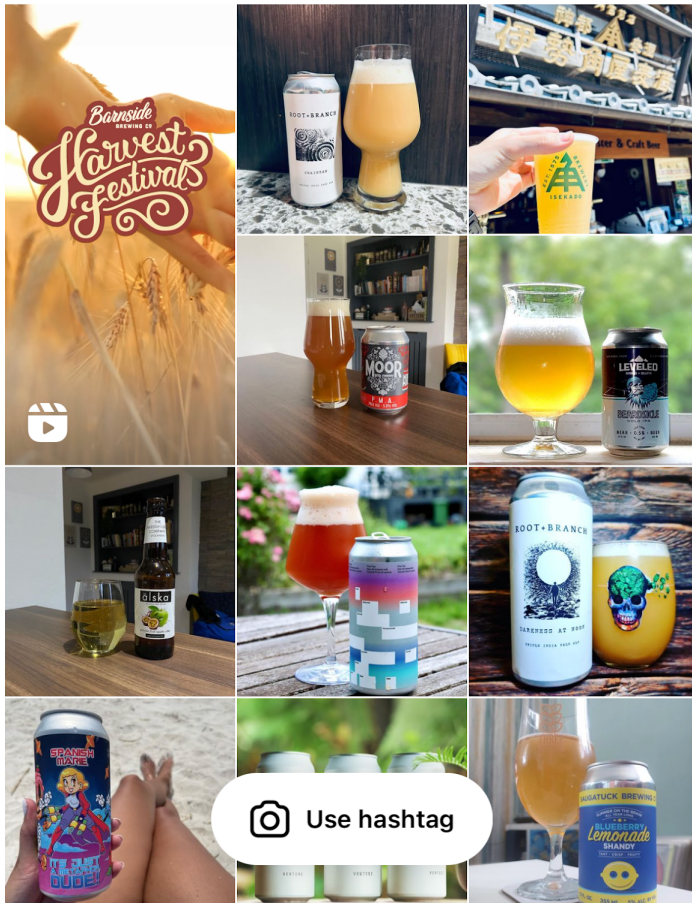
4.1M posts

Follow

See a few top posts each week

Top posts

Filter



## Location hashtags

Location hashtags are pretty self-explanatory. Most brands are based somewhere and if you have a physical location, this is even more useful for you. Relevant location hashtags include your city and its associated topical hashtags, your neighborhood, the mall name you're in and any other defining features.

One example is the above #chseats. This is one of those location + topic hashtags. The posts tagged with these are relevant for anyone searching for food recommendations or users in the Charleston, SC area.

Other location hashtags to explore include any branded ones that your city's and state's tourism boards have already established.



5:59



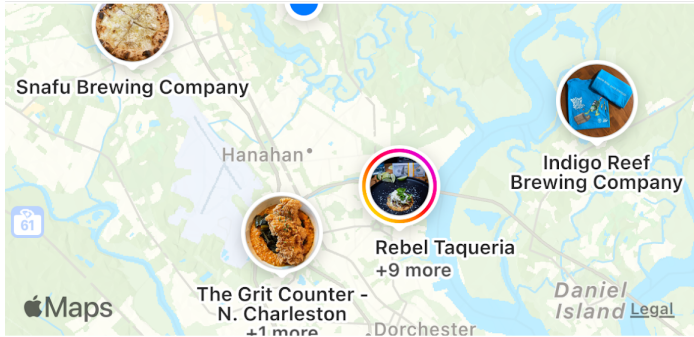
#chseats



361K posts

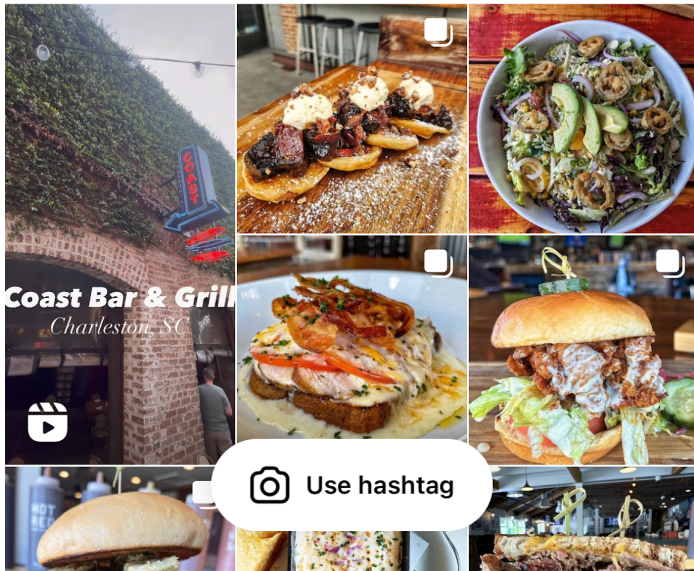
Follow

Followed by spanglishchs



Top posts

Filter



## Themed or holiday hashtags

Participating in relevant social media holidays can be a fun way to engage your audience. Things like [#InternationalSushiDay](#) and [#InternationalDogDay](#) can be great for sushi restaurants and veterinary offices to post about.

One of the hashtags we mentioned, [International Sushi Day](#), is on June 18, and on Instagram, the hashtag has over 23k posts. This is perfect for sushi restaurants and sushi-adjacent businesses to post about.

## Daily hashtags

Daily hashtags aren't limited to Instagram and they're easy to find. These hashtags include the day of the week and a specified topic. There are generalized ones such as [#MondayMotivation](#) and [#ThrowbackThursday](#).

Nearly any brand can take part in these, and there are plenty of niche topics covered. These hashtags cover more interest-based topics and also happen to be daily. For example, on [#MonsteraMonday](#), plant lovers post a photo of their monstera plants.

These daily hashtags take a little more work to find but if you're following influencers in specific fields, you'll see them in your feed.

## Trending hashtags

This type of hashtag is one of the more difficult ones to post since it involves keeping tabs on the latest and knowing how to apply them to your brand.

For example, one of the trending memes at the moment is a superimposed video of Jennifer Lawrence from the Hot Ones wing-eating challenge crying and asking, "What



do you mean?” over and over again. By searching the hashtag [#WhatDoYouMean](#), we can see a number of brands and creators using this meme for their content.

Keep in mind that memes and trends are short-lived. You need to catch on early to participate and reap the benefits of jumping on the trend.

You may need to up your trendspotting skills for social media to get the most out of jumping on memes and trends in a timely and brand-relevant way that resonates.

## **Tracking and analyzing Instagram hashtags**

So you’ve decided on all of your hashtags and you’re ready to get started on the new social strategy. What’s next? Checking in on how all these hashtags are working out for you.

Tracking your hashtag analytics is important to ensure you’re improving performance with the ones you chose. If not, you may need to find better hashtags to use.

As you start to use the same hashtags, you’ll start noticing when you receive more engagement or more spam comments.

Sprout Social’s Outbound Hashtag Performance Report keeps track of all the hashtags you use on posts as well as their performance. With one glance, you’ll notice which hashtags you use the most and which ones get the most engagement.

These two may not generate the same results, especially if you’re switching up the hashtags for posts. By reviewing your analytics, you might end up finding that your most relied-on hashtags are not actually the ones resonating the most with audiences.

## 7 Best practices for Instagram hashtags

Gone are the days where hashtags were new and brands threw in every popular hashtag, regardless of its relevance. While there's no single right way to use hashtags on Instagram, there are some best practices to improve performance. Here are several to think about:

### 1. Test how many hashtags to use on Instagram

How many hashtags should you use? This is a tricky question because the answer varies wildly. If you're including them within your caption, stick to 3 to 5—like Instagram recommends.

If you're going to use the first comment for hashtags, then up to the full 30 hashtags would be acceptable. However, this is not to say that you should use 30 hashtags for every post. This leads us to our next tip.

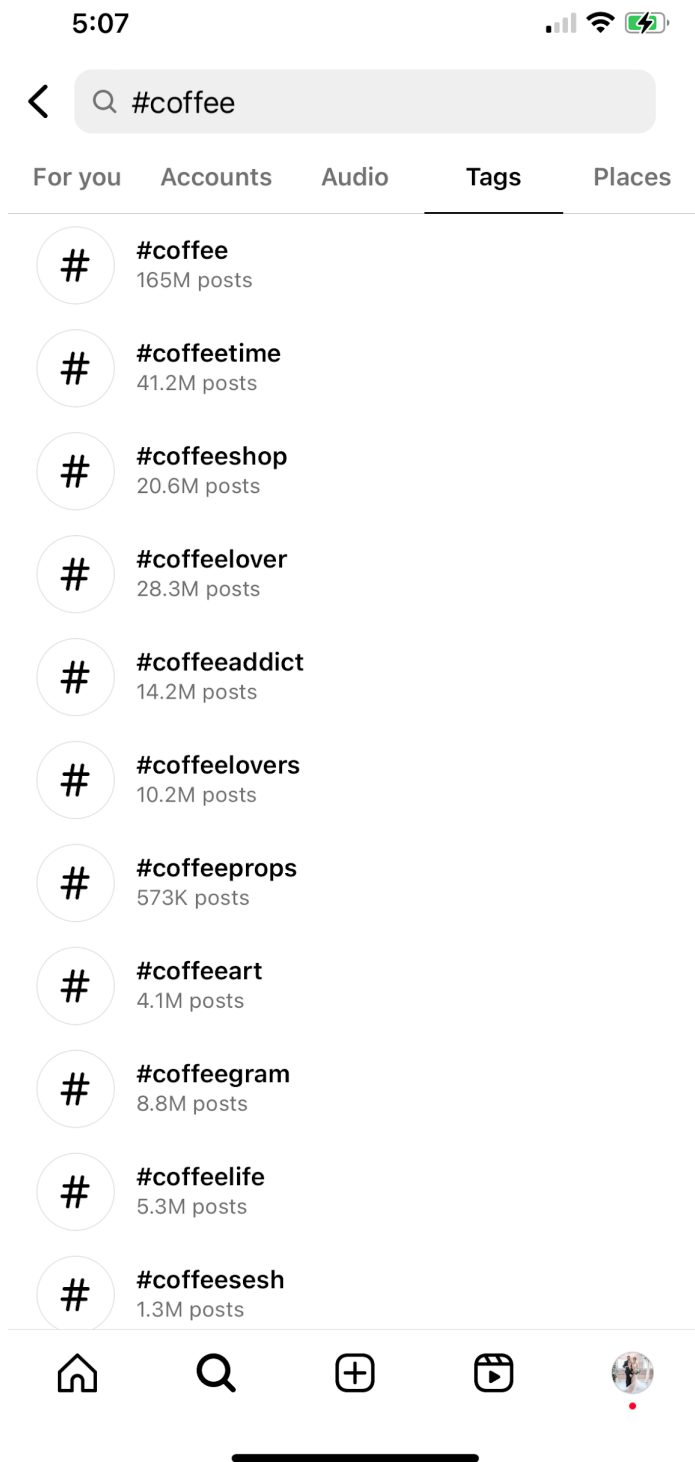
### 2. Use hashtags in the first comment

Too many hashtags in a caption can overwhelm valuable real estate and make posts look messy. Keep captions minimal, and if you're using more hashtags, move them to a comment.

### 3. Find the best hashtags for you

There are several ways to find the best hashtags for your brand. The first and easiest is to look at the influencers and accounts you already follow and note which hashtags they're already using.

Another way is to begin brainstorming various ones and type them into the Instagram search bar. As you type, related hashtags also show up.



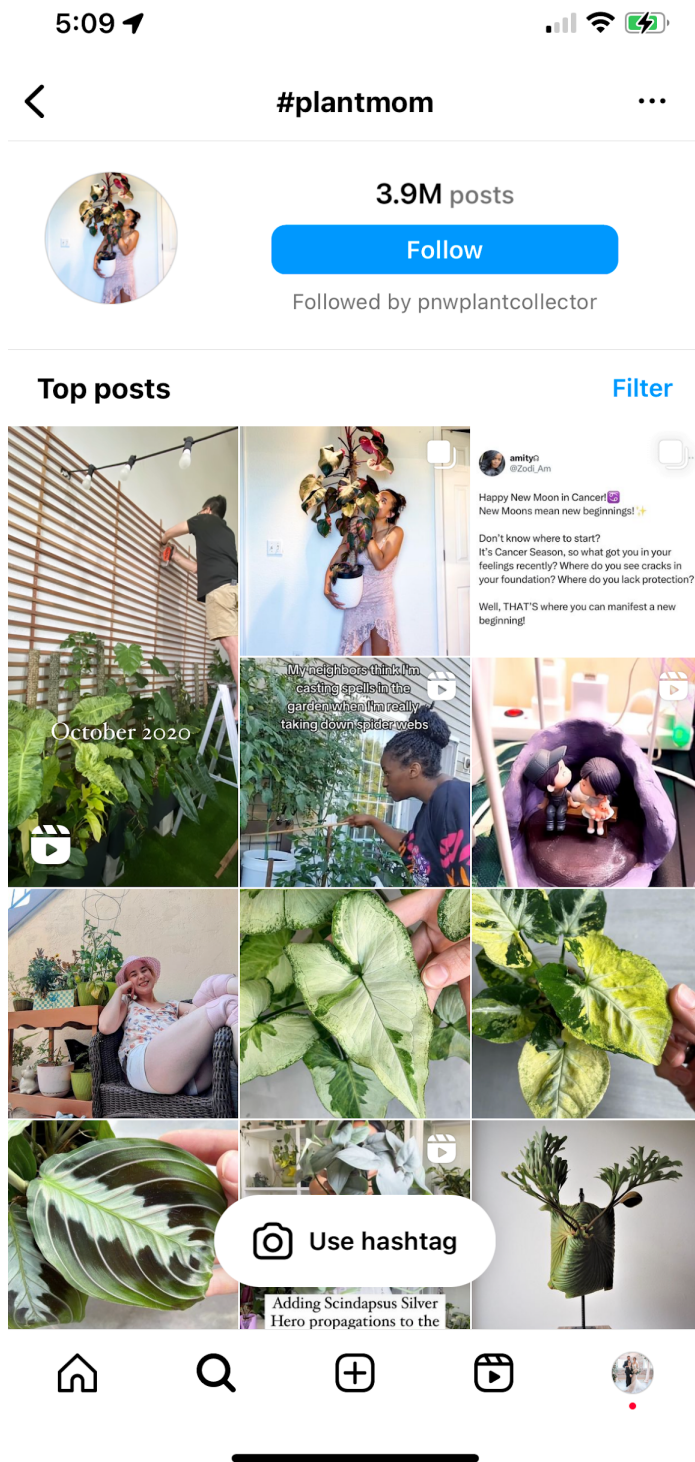
In the example above, #coffee is such a popular hashtag that using it might result in more spam comments than you want. Instead, scroll further down the results to find more niche ones that are targeted and relevant to your audience.

#### 4. Follow relevant hashtags

Instagram offers the ability to follow any hashtag's search results. When you do this, these posts appear in your feed, alongside all the other posts from accounts you follow.

This is a good tactic to use for following industry or community hashtags because it helps you keep tabs on them.

It should not be used as a solution for branded hashtags, though, because it doesn't guarantee that every post will show up in your feed.



The above example uses #PlantMom as the hashtag. Simply hit that follow button to stay informed on that Instagram hashtag.

## 5. Encourage the use of branded hashtags

Once you've created your list of branded hashtags, make sure to start using them in every relevant post. The most general branded hashtags are often placed in the Instagram bio along with a call-to-action for using them.



In the above example, Grove Collaborative puts their branded hashtag #GroveHome in their IG bio. Customers can then use this hashtag whenever they post about the brand. It makes it easy for Grove to find and share those photos on their own feed.

## 6. Create a list of hashtags

Instead of copying and pasting the same set of hashtags for every post, divide them up into topical ones. For example, your education posts might have different hashtags than a new product announcement post.

Instead of generating a new list for each post, keep different lists handy for the various types of content topics that you post.

Save these types of list and text Sprout's Asset Library to make it easier to attach the right hashtags to each Instagram post.

## **7. Add hashtags to Instagram Stories**

While Stories do disappear after 24 hours, don't discount the use of hashtags on them. These show up in the search results, too, and are another easy way of getting more interested followers.

Have too many hashtags to put into a Story? Enter your text like normal and then hide them behind a gif or sticker.

## **Get started with Instagram hashtags today**

Using hashtags on Instagram has many benefits for brands: increased brand awareness, higher engagement and improved competitor analysis insight.

Before jumping into hashtags, it's recommended to understand the various types that are out there and some best practices to follow.

## **Instagram Hashtags FAQs**

### **How many hashtags should I use on Instagram?**

Instagram recommends using between 3-5 hashtags on a single post. However, you can use up to 30 hashtags if you place them within the first comment on the post for even greater visibility.

## **Do hashtags work for Instagram?**

Yes, you can use hashtags within a post, Reel or Story, and we highly recommend you do so. They can be used for collecting UGC, categorizing content and increasing the reach to your content.

## **What are the top 10 hashtags on Instagram?**

The top 10 hashtags on Instagram include:

1. #love (2.1B)
2. #instagood (1.6B)
3. #instagram (1.1B)
4. #art (1B)
5. #photooftheday (1B)
6. #photography (1B)
7. #beautiful (823M)
8. #picoftheday (720M)
9. #happy (698M)
10. #follow (695M)



## 3.0 Law of Instagram Insights

Optimizing your Instagram presence doesn't have to be a guessing game. You can find most of the answers you need within the app itself.

Anyone with an Instagram Business account can use the network's in-app reporting feature, Instagram Insights. While it may not provide the same level of detail as an advanced Instagram analytics tool, it's still a valuable resource for conducting on-the-fly analysis.

## What is Instagram Insights?



# What is Instagram Insights?

Instagram Insights is a free Instagram Business Account feature that offers performance data on your profile and posts, providing enhanced visibility into your audience's preferences and engagement patterns.

Instagram Insights is a free Instagram Business Account feature that offers performance data on your profile and posts, providing enhanced visibility into your audience's preferences and engagement patterns.

With Insights, you can measure the success of your content, including grid posts, Stories, Reels and Live videos. It's a valuable tool for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of your Instagram marketing strategy.

## How to get access to insights on Instagram

Before we get into how to use the Insights tool, let's go over how to access them.

Heads up: This is a mobile-exclusive feature, so you'll need the app ready to go before you get started.

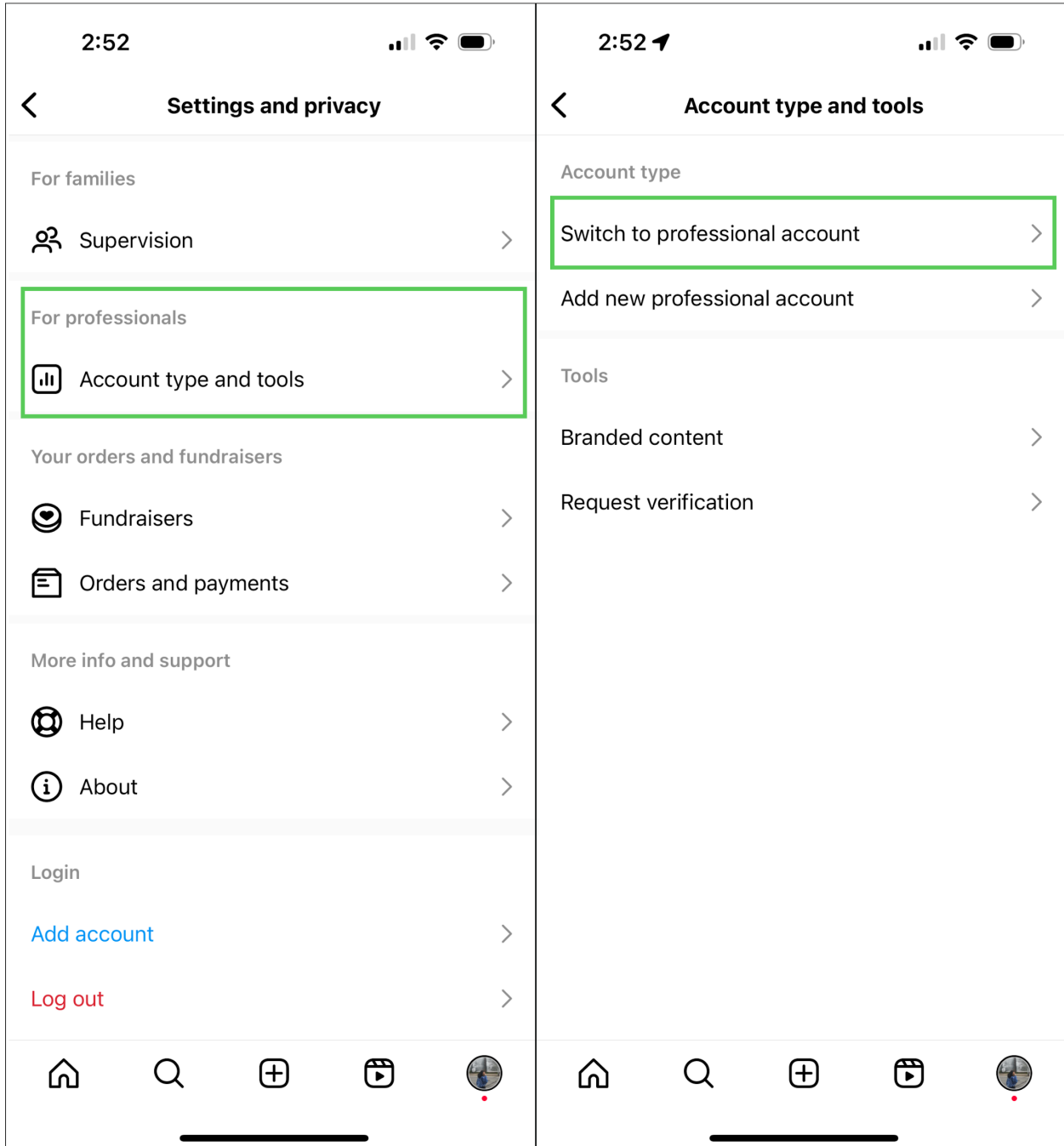
### 1. Go to your profile settings

Go to your profile, then tap the hamburger menu in the top right corner of the app.

Tap Settings and then tap Account to get started.

### 2. Create a professional account

To set up your Instagram for Business account, tap Account type and tools under the For professionals section of the Instagram Settings page.



Tap Switch to professional account and you're ready to go.

### 3. Choose your category

Instagram business categories allow brands to clearly showcase the purpose of their business above their profile description. Choose the category that best describes your business.



## What best describes you?

Categories help people find accounts like yours.  
You can change this at any time.

🔍 Search Categories

### Suggested

Product/service

Gamer

Restaurant

Beauty, cosmetic & personal care

Grocery Store

Photographer

Shopping & retail

Video creator

Done



Pro tip: The options listed under the suggested categories are just a fraction of the full catalog you can pick from. Use the search function to find the option that best suits your business, and don't be afraid to get specific.

#### **4. Navigate to Insights**

Now that your professional account is all set up, you can access Insights from the same hamburger menu you used for your account settings.

You can only access performance metrics on content you've posted since converting to a business or creator account. If you recently switched to a professional account, you'll have to wait until it has enough historical data to use the Insights tool.

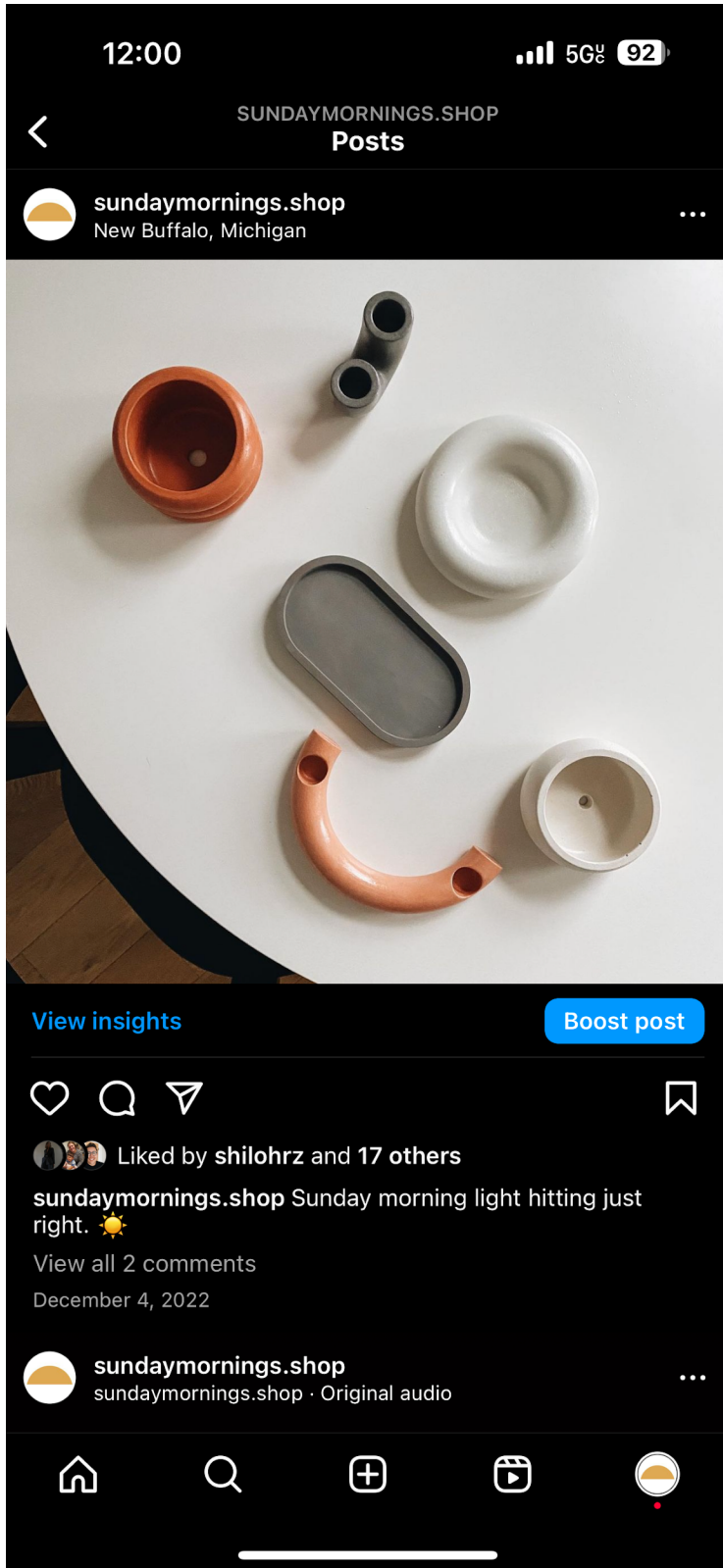
### **How to see post insights on Instagram**

Instagram offers a variety of ways to connect with your audience—grid posts, ephemeral content, short-form video, live streams, you name it.

To find out if your Instagram post ideas are resonating, check out the explainers below.

#### **Instagram Posts insights**

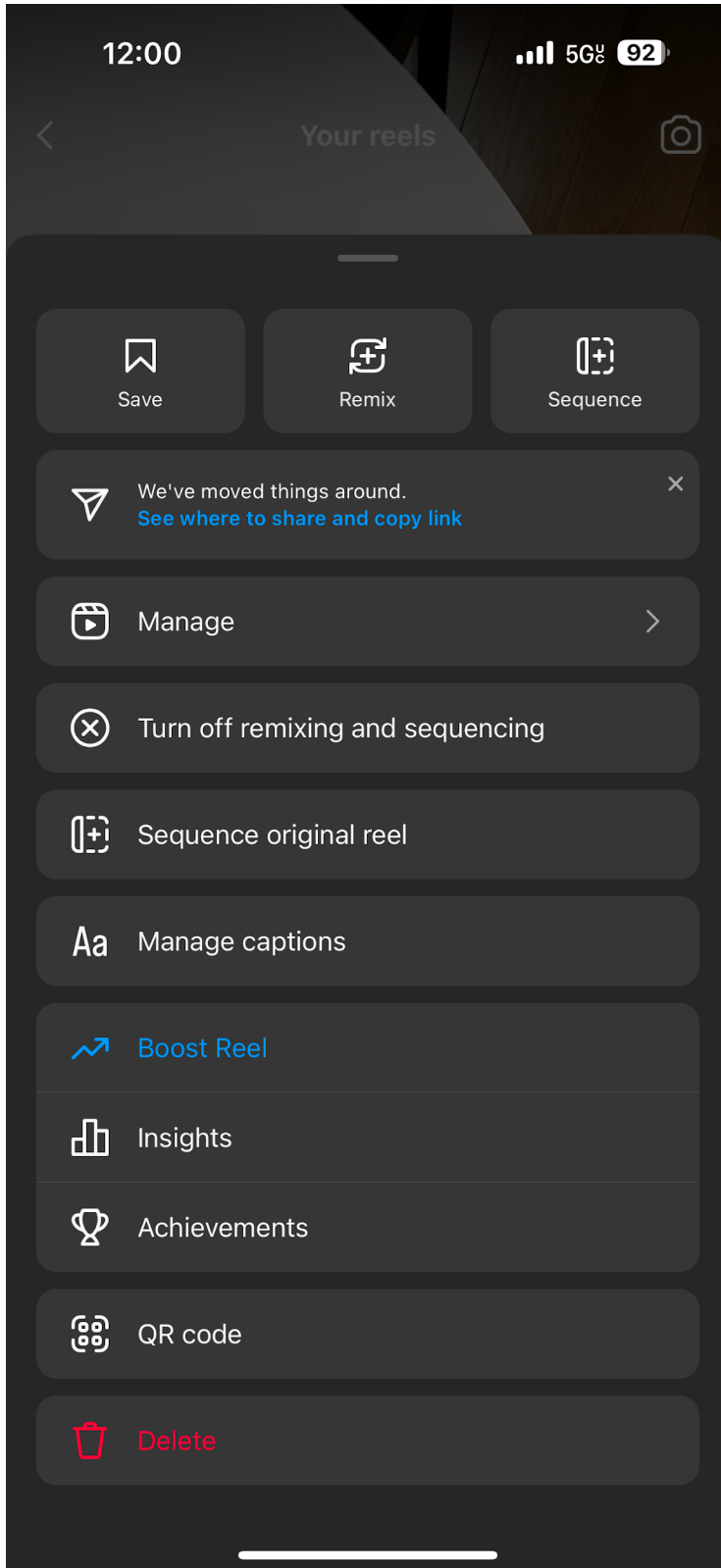
Go to your Instagram profile and tap a post you'd like to get metrics for. From there, tap the View Insights button below the image.





## Instagram Reels insights

To view insights on an Instagram Reel, go to the Reels tab of the Instagram app. From there, select the Reel you'd like to view metrics for. On the lower right-hand side of the Reel, tap the ... icon. Then, tap the Insights button.

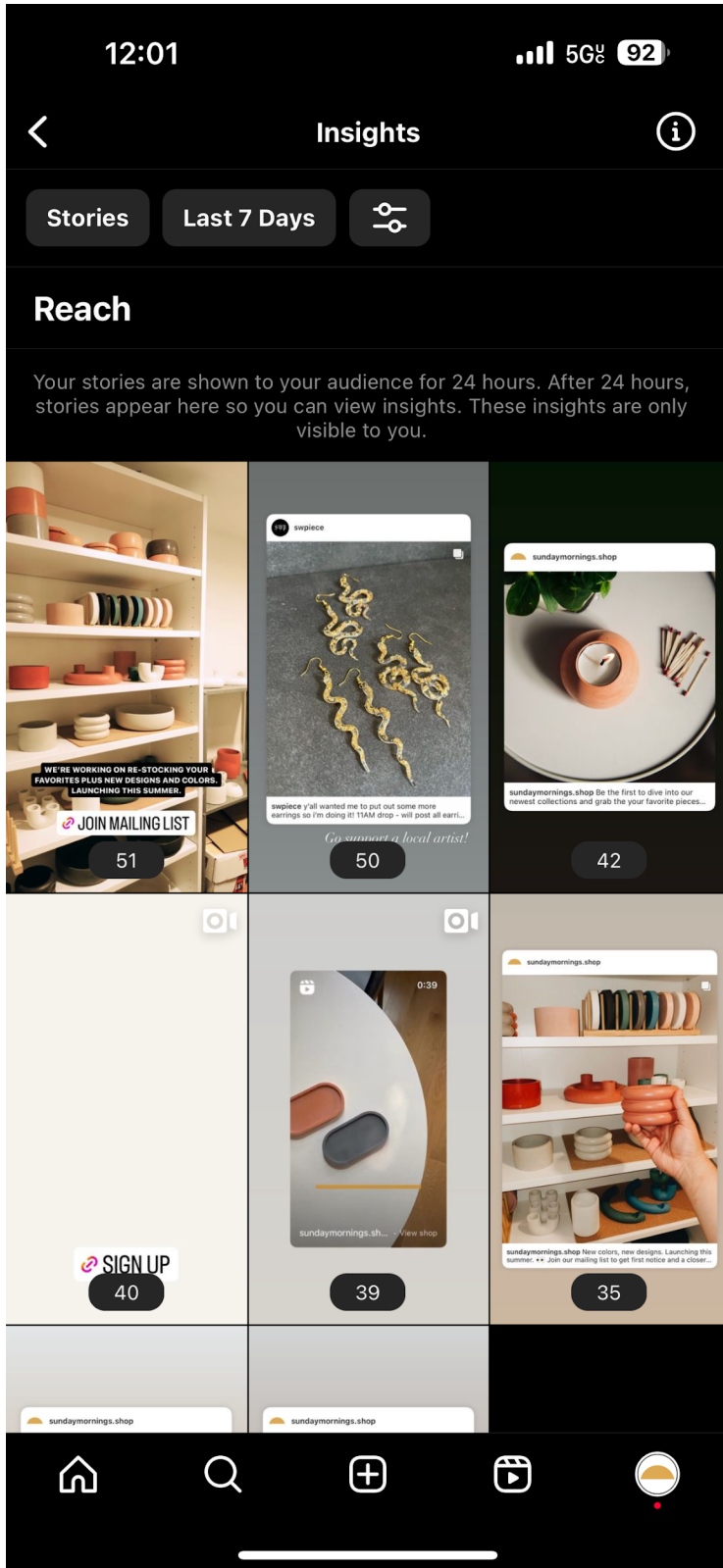


## Instagram Stories insights

There are two different ways to view insights on Instagram Stories.

If the Story is live on your account, tap your profile picture. Tap through to the Story you'd like to report on. Once you're there, swipe up on the image or video for Insights metrics.

If you're looking for performance data on an older Story, tap the Insights action button on your profile and find the Story under Content You Shared.



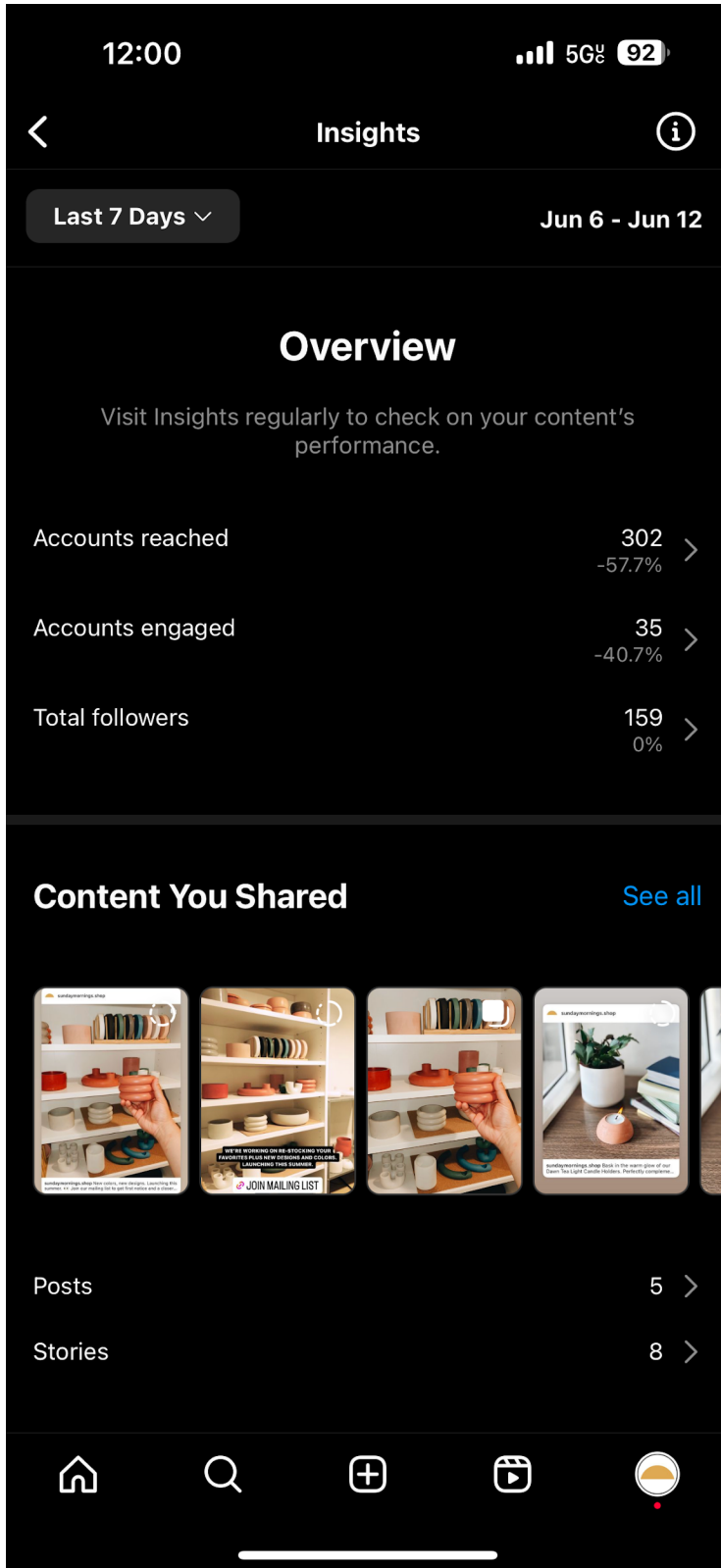
## **Instagram Live insights**

To view Instagram Live insights, go to your profile.

Tap Insights, then scroll down to the live video section in the content you've shared for a detailed breakdown on your Instagram Live performance.

## **What kind of performance data is available in Instagram Insights?**

Once you navigate over to the tool, you'll see some high-level Instagram audience insights and a gallery of recently shared content.

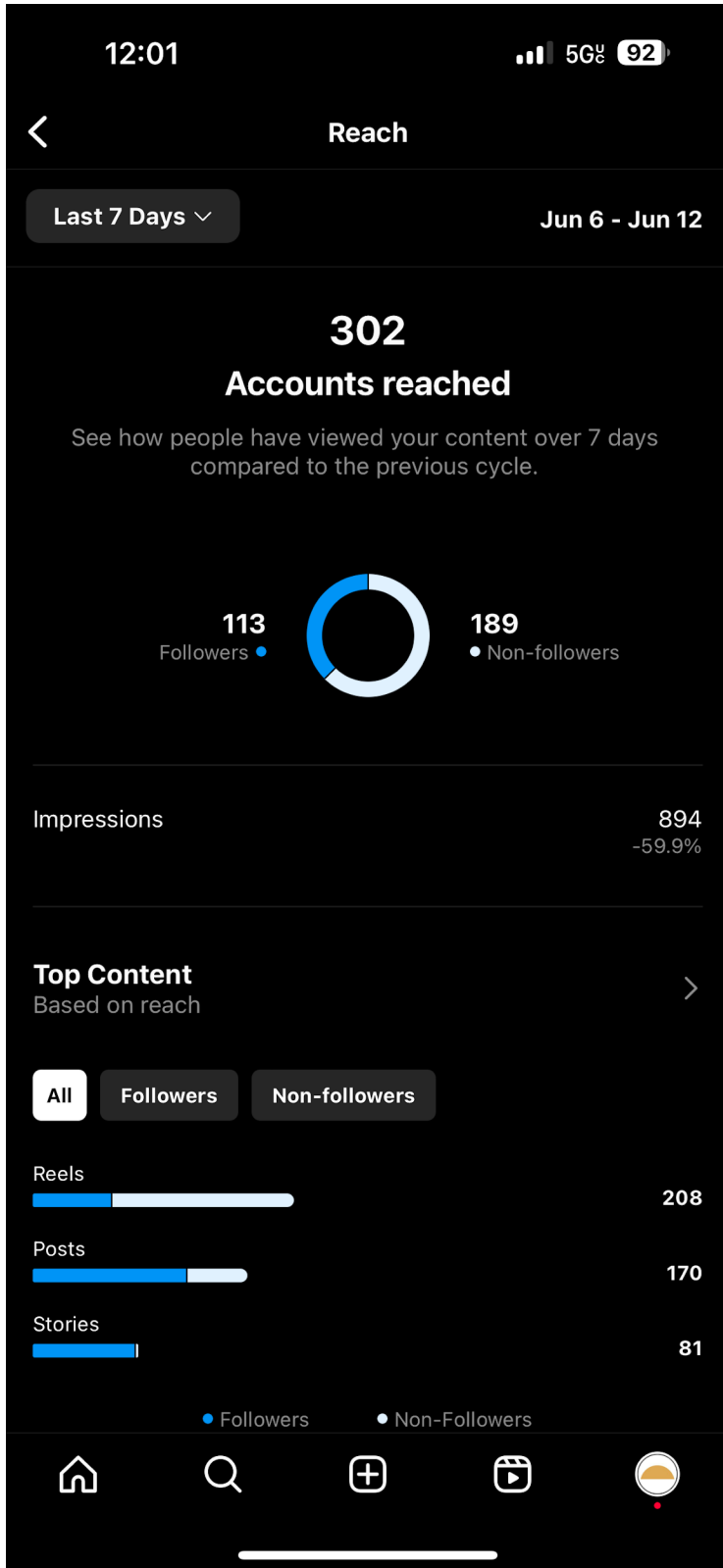


Click into either section for a more detailed look into the following metrics:

## Accounts reached

For all Instagram content aside from Reels, accounts reached is the number of unique accounts that have seen your posts on their screen at least once. For Reels, accounts reached means the number of unique accounts who have seen your Reel at least once, whether or not they watched the video.

Once a post has reached more than 100 accounts, you can access demographic data on accounts reached. This data includes top countries, cities, age ranges and a gender breakdown.

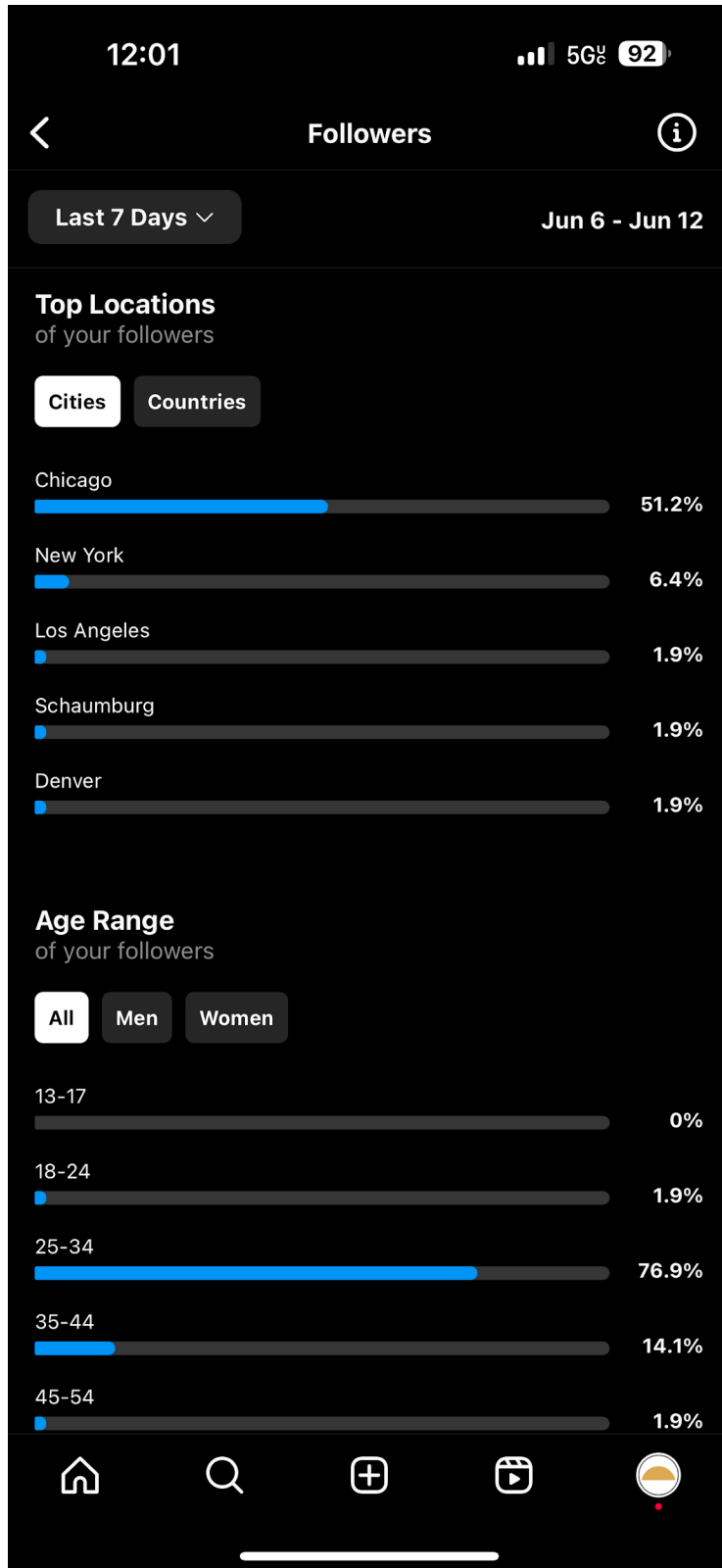




## Accounts engaged

Accounts engaged is the number of unique accounts that have interacted with your Instagram content through likes, saves, comments and other engagement activities. For posts, stories and Instagram Live, these metrics are drilled down into followers and non-followers.

## Total followers



Business accounts with more than 100 followers can view overall trends in growth over time. They can also access follower demographic and platform usage data, including:

- Top locations
- Age range
- Times your audience is most active on Instagram

## **Plays**

Plays is the number of plays video content received within a set time frame. That includes when a video plays automatically while a user scrolls through the app.

## **Using Instagram Insights for performance analysis**

To take your Instagram game to the next level, you need to be making data-driven decisions. Luckily, you now have a wealth of performance data right in the palm of your hand.

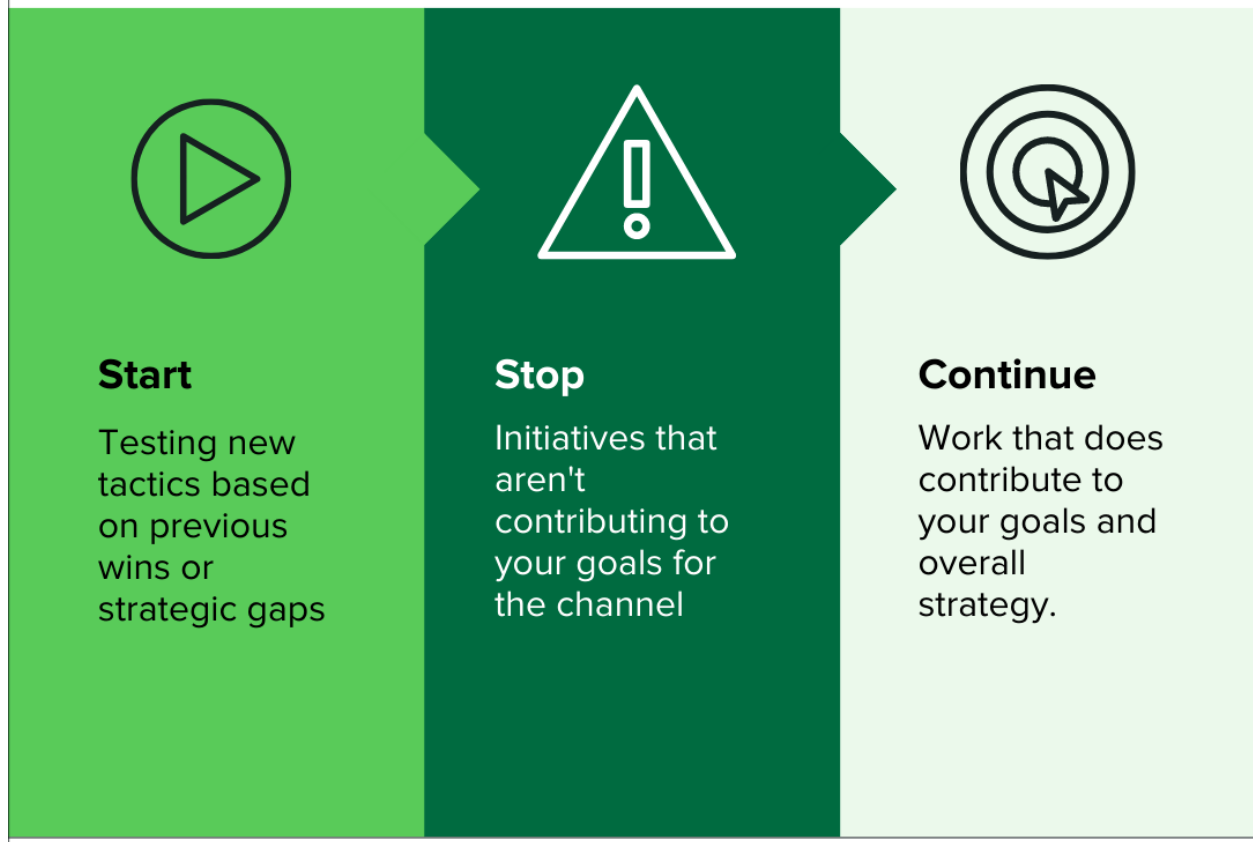
Here are four ways to use your new Instagram business insights to your advantage:

### **Identify popular content**

With Insights, you can quickly identify the content that resonates most with your audience. All you need to do is look for patterns in what your audience finds compelling and tailor your content strategy accordingly.

For on-the-fly action items, we recommend conducting a brief start-stop-continue analysis of your Instagram performance data. This analysis evaluates the effectiveness of content and determines what actions to start, stop or continue.

## Conducting a start-stop-continue analysis



It's important to note that this type of spontaneous analysis is designed to provide quick takes on your Instagram strategy's effectiveness, such as whether people reacted positively to a particular post.

### **Track growth and engagement trends**

A quick dip into the Insights tool is all you need to do to ensure you're pacing well toward your monthly performance targets.

Use the Instagram Business Profiles Report to identify which types of content are driving results. That way, you can make strategic adjustments to stay on track toward achieving your desired outcomes.

### **Make stronger paid marketing decisions**

Did you know that 50% of users become more interested in a brand after seeing an ad for it on Instagram? With these types of results, making every dollar count is critical.

Use Instagram Insights to optimize your paid performance so you can make better use of your budget.

Analyze your organic content performance to identify trends, themes and creative elements that resonate with your audience. Then, leverage that data to take your paid marketing efforts to the next level.

### **Gauge the impacts of an algorithm shift**

An Instagram algorithm update feels like a monthly occurrence at this point. Keeping up with all the changes is one thing. Understanding how they impact your social media strategy is a different beast entirely.

Next time you hear about a rumored or confirmed algorithm update, use Instagram Insights to see how your strategy is weathering through the change. If everything is going according to plan, then you're good to go.

If you notice any performance dips, it's time to investigate further using a tool that can provide a more comprehensive analysis.

## **Use Instagram Insights to create a picture-perfect social strategy**

Instagram's landscape is constantly changing. Trends come and go quickly, and what's popular today may not be tomorrow. Use Instagram Insights in combination with a tool like Sprout to stay informed and up-to-date on what works and what doesn't.

Algorithms might seem mysterious, but in reality, they're just a method of sorting posts by relevance to the end user. Social media networks are constantly tweaking their algorithms to improve the user experience and increase stickiness.

Unfortunately, these changes can sometimes shake up your performance.

If it suddenly feels like the Instagram algorithm is out to get you, review your past few monthly reports. If you're posting at the same frequency and with the same content mix, it may be time to adjust your strategy.

### **Instagram Insights FAQ**

#### **Can I view Instagram Insights from a desktop?**

No, Instagram Insights is only available on the Instagram mobile app.

#### **Can you view Instagram Insights without a business profile?**

No, you must switch to a professional account to access the Instagram Insights tool.

### **How can businesses and influencers benefit from using Instagram Insights?**

Instagram Insights allows businesses and influencers to gain insights into their target audience's demographics and behaviors, which can help them create personalized content and marketing strategies.

By carefully analyzing engagement metrics and trending content, they can evaluate the effectiveness of their strategy and make data-driven decisions to optimize performance.

### **Are there any limitations or drawbacks to using Instagram Insights?**

One major limitation of Instagram Insights is that it can only be accessed through a mobile device, which means you cannot directly share performance data from the tool.

## 4.0. Law of Instagram Trendz

There are over 200 million business accounts on Instagram. That's a lot of competition if you're looking for your brand to stand out. However, if you keep up with some of the latest Instagram trends, you should be able to create an Instagram marketing strategy that will grab attention and facilitate growth.

### 1. Instagram Reels still on the rise over images

This has been a trend since their inception, but Instagram Reels are still taking priority. Do me a favor:

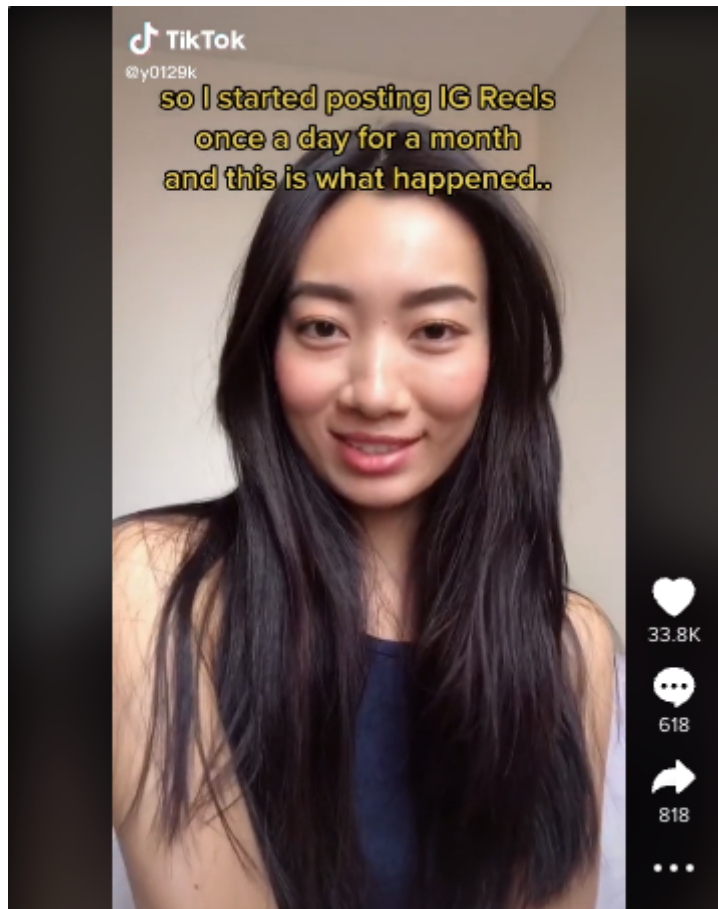
Open your Instagram app and scroll through the first 10 to 15 pieces of content. As you scroll, you might notice a common theme—most of the posts are Reels.

Instagram Reels launched in 2020 and slowly rolled out to all users throughout 2021. This micro-video addition to Instagram was created to compete with Snapchat and TikTok and has continued to grow in popularity.

Many brands and content creators will repurpose their micro-videos across each of the platforms—TikTok, Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts.

Instagram began prioritizing Instagram Reels over photos in 2022 and, despite recent news of content discovery becoming a focus in 2023, it seems like the platform is definitely continuing to prioritize this type of content.





While posting Reels every single day may not make sense for your strategy, you might want to consider adding them to your content calendar more often.

Take a look at some examples of how to use Reels for your brand.

1. Ecommerce plant store [Bloomscape](#) showcased three giant plants for plant parents, and linked to the products from their Instagram store.
2. Fitness clothing brand [AYBL](#) shared a workout routine featuring their activewear.
3. Graphic design tool [Visme](#) uses Instagram Reels to show real-world applications of some of their best features.

The takeaway: Start incorporating Instagram Reels into your own strategy to help your brand generate more reach, increase your follower count and stay relevant on the app.

## **2. “Add Yours” Story stickers attract buzz and UGC**

There are a plethora of interactive stickers available to add to your stories, one of the newer ones is the “Add Yours” sticker.

Incorporating stickers like questions, polls, quizzes, etc., into your Stories helps engage your audience and increase the amount of time they spent interacting with your account.

This, in turn, increases the likelihood that they see your Stories towards the front of their feed, keeping your business top of mind.

Tap on the “Add Yours” option from the available stickers and type in a prompt. This could be something like “What are you reading?” or “Outfit of the day,” or “Your favorite feature.” Make sure the prompt is relevant to your business but simple enough for someone to want to share their own photo on their story.

## **3. Create partnerships with collaborative posts**

Collaborative posts are another big trend that you’ll start seeing pop up more and more. This is because Instagram recently released a feature that allows users to “invite collaborators” to a post as well as to tag brands in paid partnerships, having both involved accounts show up—and publishing the post to both collaborators’ profiles.

To invite a collaborator, you’ll go through the motions of publishing your Instagram post, then tap the option to Tag people. You’ll see this window pop up below where

you can either add a tag (the same way you always have on Instagram) or invite a collaborator.

2:53



Edit tags

Done



Add tag

Invite collaborator

Tap photo to tag people.

People

Products



Select the user you're working with on your post and publish your post. However, Instagram won't show the tag or post to the collaborator's profile until they approve the tag.

Here's an example of what this would look like in action below, where a travel guide partnered with a local brewery to host an Instagram giveaway.



**charleston.travel and bevibene\_brewing**  
Thurston Harris · Little Bitty Pretty  
One

**charleston.travel** 🇺🇸 🎁 Giveaway 🎁

National Booch Day is this Sunday, January 15th!

To celebrate National Booch Day, [@Bevibene\\_brewing](#) hard kombucha will be priced symbolically at \$1.15 from 12 – 7 p.m.

For the giveaway, we would like to offer 5, \$15 gift cards to Bevi Bene.

Bevi Bene Brewing Co. is a brewery located in Charleston, S.C.'s brewery district on the upper peninsula. Owned and operated by husband-

331 likes  
JANUARY 13

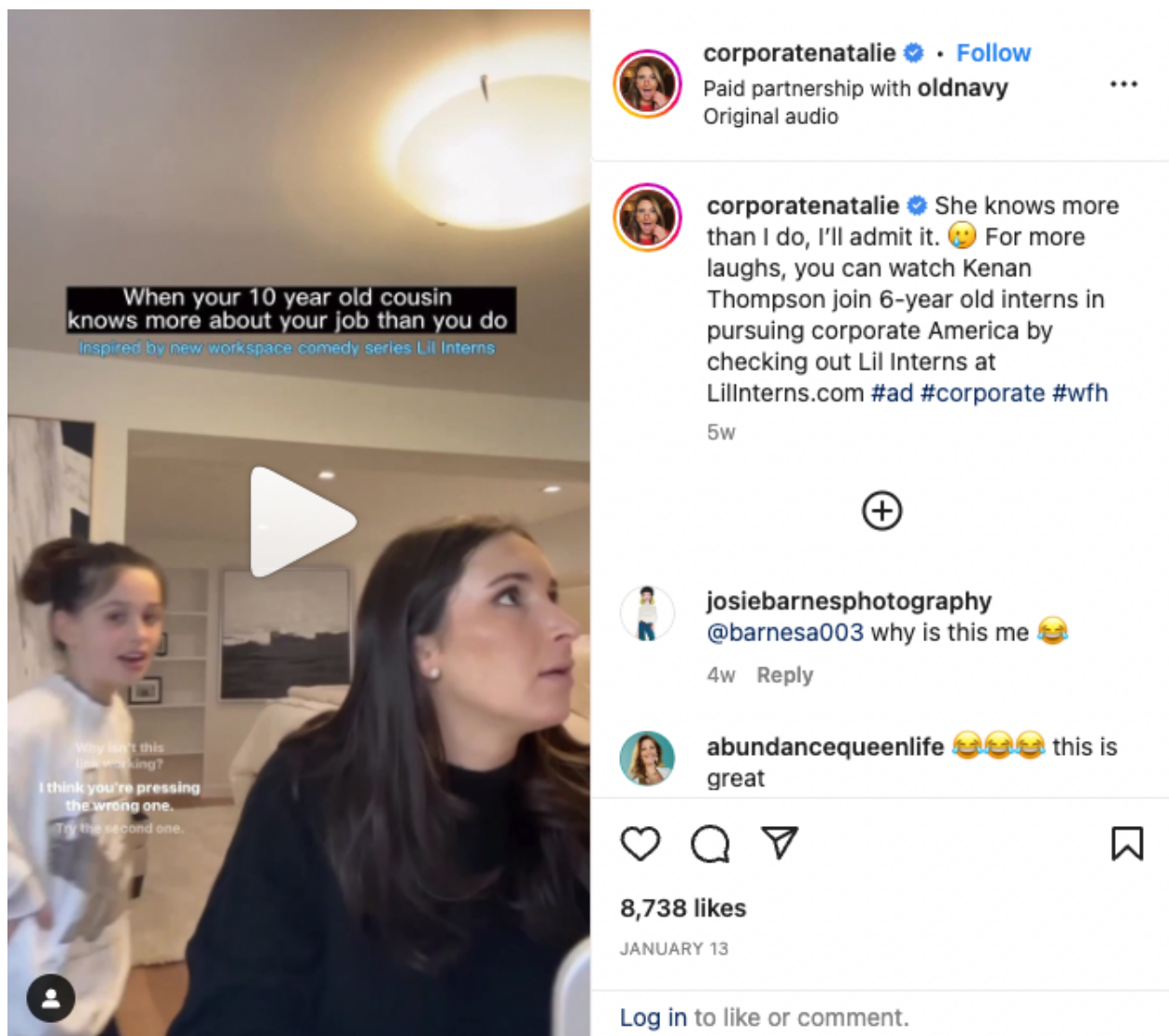
Log in to like or comment.

Collaborative posts will also be part of paid partnerships as Instagram also simultaneously released a feature that tags when posts are sponsored and even allows

the content creator to tag the brand sponsoring the content right inside the Instagram post.

For an influencer to tag brands in sponsored posts, they'll manage the Advanced settings part of their post before publication, scroll down to the Paid partnership feature and tag the applicable brands.

Again, brands will have to approve the partnership before they're publicly tagged in the post.



The image shows a screenshot of an Instagram post. On the left is a video player with a play button. The video has a text overlay: "When your 10 year old cousin knows more about your job than you do" and "inspired by new workspace comedy series Lil Interns". Below the video, there is a caption from the user "corporatenatalie" which says "Paid partnership with oldnavy" and "Original audio". The post has 8,738 likes and is dated January 13. There are three comments visible: one from "josiebarnesphotography" asking "why is this me", and another from "abundancequeenlife" saying "this is great". The interface includes icons for likes, comments, shares, and a bookmark.



Whether you're partnering with another brand or an influencer, take advantage of Instagram's features to help improve your overall reach and make your Instagram content more engaging.

## 4. Social justice movements on Instagram

The two largest age groups on Instagram are 25–34 at 31.2% (Millennials) and 18–24 (Gen Z) at 31%. Younger generations are increasingly more interested in what's happening in the world and which brands are helping to make the world better and more accessible.

Instagram reports that Gen Z is an activist community, and though only 30% of Gen Z are old enough to vote currently, they care about the brands they buy from. They're following brands on Instagram that talk about social justice issues and stick up for issues they believe in.

They're following influencers who care about accessibility. And they're making purchases from the ones that they believe in.

This means it's okay—in fact, it's encouraged—for brands to be open about the causes they support and the social issues they believe in. Your customers want to see it.

Genuine brand authenticity goes a long way with your customers.

TOMS is a great example of this. The brand was created as a way to give shoes to children in need, giving away a free pair for every pair purchased. They've since increased their donations, also giving away impact grants to charities they support.

TOMS shared a 2022 roundup to showcase how much they were able to give away in donations throughout the year:

The brand's tagline is "Wear TOMS. Wear Good." And that resonates with customers in 2023.

In this social justice era, we've also seen the onset of a number of social justice Instagram accounts like @so.informed and @impact that share news and updates from the US and around the world. These social-justice slideshows help users learn and spread awareness about causes that matter to them most.

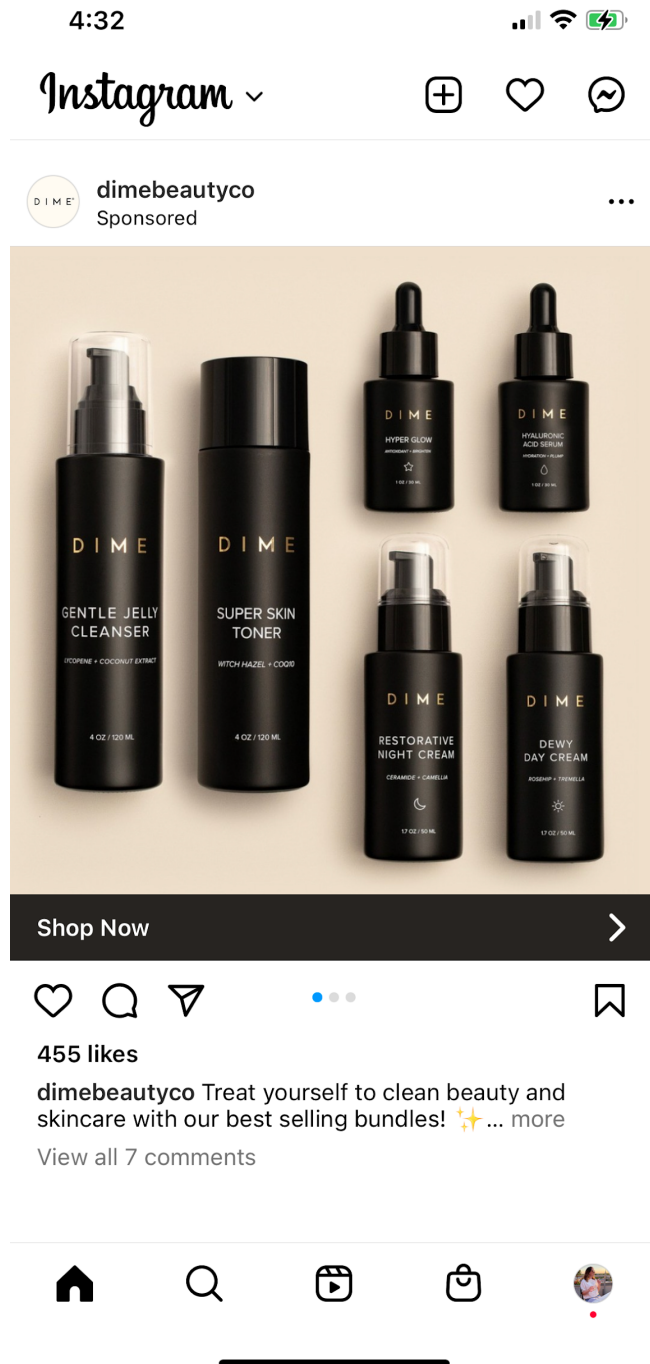
## 5. Paid promotion is growing

As the popularity of social media platforms grows and their user bases grow, the need for algorithms to best serve their users also grows.

And when an algorithm is deciding who gets served your content, you might see a decline in reach. Because of this, Instagram paid promotions are a growing trend in 2023.

Let's go back to our exercise from the first trend, where we scrolled down to see the first 10 to 20 posts.

If your feed was anything like mine, you saw about nine Reels, six regular posts and five sponsored posts. That means about 25% of your feed is filled with paid ads, like the one below.



While that might seem like a lot, let's look at it from a different perspective. It also means that 25% of your target audience's feed is filled with sponsored posts. And that if you start investing in Instagram ads, your brand can be part of that 25%.



## 6. Shoppable posts simplify the ecommerce experience

Instagram shopping is still extremely popular, with nearly half of all Instagram users saying they use the app and its shopping features to shop their favorite brands each week.

By creating your Instagram shop catalog full of your products, you can make it even easier for your followers to make a purchase.

By tagging your products in a shoppable post, you're creating the ability for someone to see your post and make a purchase without ever having to leave the Instagram app. Shoppable posts will continue to be a major trend in 2023 due to how easy it makes shopping for customers.

And products can be tagged in any type of Instagram post—a photo post, a carousel, a Reel and a Story.

## 7. Memes are incorporated into social content calendars

Who doesn't love a good meme? According to a [YPulse study](#), 75% of those aged 13-36 share memes. Which is why they've become and stayed so prevalent on Instagram.

Although brands have leveled-up how they share memes from their accounts by adding branded background colors and other design elements.

Many brands also will take screenshots of Tweets to share on their Instagram with a colorful background to fit their brand aesthetics. Incorporating memes into your

social strategy is a fun trend, but make sure the trend works for your brand before jumping in with both feet.

## **8. Engage users with carousel posts**

Instagram carousel posts can include up to 10 photos and videos in a single post. They can be used in a number of different ways to share even more content with your audience at once. Plus, one study discovered that Instagram carousels are the most engaging post type on the platform.

## **9. Interact with followers in broadcast channels**

Instagram recently announced the debut of broadcast channels as a one-way messaging tool for creators to engage with their followers. These channels will give creators an opportunity to give behind-the-scenes or latest updates to their followers in a one-to-many messaging format for a more intimate and interactive space.

Currently, creators can send text, photo, video and voice notes but Instagram will be adding more features in 2023. The goal is to create a new way to connect with fans and followers. It's still too early to tell if this will expand to other professional or business accounts or if it will remain just for digital content creators.

## **Use Instagram trends to update your strategy**

Instagram trends arise from influences based on other networks and introductions of new features. Keeping up with the current trends on Instagram freshens up your content and shows your audience that you're not afraid to try new things.

## 5.0. Laws of Instagram Giveaway

Running an Instagram giveaway or contest is a strategic way to engage your audience and grow your following. Plus, it's a fun way to give back to your followers—and work to turn more of your followers into customers.

There are so many social media contest ideas out there that could be a perfect fit for your brand, and they can even be a stellar tactic for building a library of user-generated content and new followers.

### **Why should you host an Instagram giveaway?**

An Instagram giveaway or contest tends to start with an Instagram post that asks your audience to complete some sort of task to enter into a giveaway to win a free product or prize.

This type of campaign can generate a lot of excitement around your brand, bringing in new eyes and increasing reach and engagement... sometimes by a lot.

There are a number of benefits to employing this strategy—let's cover the most important ones.

#### **Get more followers**

Many brands require that users entering their giveaway must first follow them on Instagram. Follow-gating your giveaway like this ensures that your Instagram following grows alongside your entries.

While you'll likely start receiving entries from those who already follow you, prepare to see some growth as your giveaway gains traction.

## **Generate higher engagement**

Instagram giveaways can generate higher engagement on specific posts (your giveaway announcement, obviously)—but it can also improve your engagement overall.

Algorithms work in funny ways, but once it realizes that you're getting a lot more engagement than usual, it'll start to place your content in front of even more eyes, boosting your total engagement.

## **Increase reach and impressions**

Similarly, your Instagram giveaway can help you increase your overall reach and impressions. The more engagement on your giveaway posts, the more likely your content will be shown to followers.

If users keep seeing your content and interacting with it, you'll pop up at the top of their feeds more often, helping to increase your reach.

## **Create an opportunity to collaborate with others**

Lastly, Instagram giveaways present a great collaboration opportunity. Many brands (as you'll see us cover shortly) choose to co-host giveaways.

Find a brand with a product that's complementary to yours (i.e., if you sell silk pillowcases, collab with a brand that sells hair masks) and give away those products together in a beautiful little bundle.

## Types of Instagram giveaways

There are five main types of Instagram giveaways that you'll see brands utilize. We'll walk you through how each of these works and why you might want to choose that route.

### 1. Like, comment and follow

One of the most popular methods of entry is to have people like your photo announcing your Instagram contest, leave a comment and follow your account in order to gain entry.

Or, you could make commenting the most important part of the entry, like we see in this fun holiday-themed giveaway from Edible Arrangements:



When you use this tactic, simply name your prize, lay down the ground rules and watch the entries fly in. You can ask people to comment on why they should win, nominate someone to win or simply tag a friend to spread the word.

That last option is a great contest idea all on its own — read on for more ways to make tagging friends in contests work effectively.

## **2. Tag a friend**

Want to really get the word out about your Instagram contest? Ask people to tag a friend when they enter! Users can tag as many friends as they like in order to get even more entries.

Then, those users are likely to enter and tag some of their own friends, creating a ripple effect of awareness around your contest and brand. You can also host a tag-a-friend Instagram contest in order to ask your followers to nominate someone who deserves a prize.

Here's an example of what this might look like from Edible Arrangements:



Edible Arrangements asked users to enter the contest by tagging a friend in the comments. Many giveaways allow users to tag multiple friends as a way of entering more than once, increasing their chances.

### 3. User-generated content

If you're looking to put together a campaign around gathering user-generated content (UGC) to share online, creating an Instagram giveaway around that concept can be a great way to do it.

Ask your audience to share a photo onto their feed using a specific branded hashtag or tagging your business so that you can easily find all of the entries in one place.



Not only does this reward your customers for helping you out, but it gives you an entire arsenal of user-generated photos to share on your feed for future content planning.

Because this type of giveaway entry requires a lot more effort on your audiences' part, you'll want to make the prize worth it.

#### **4. Collaboration**

As we mentioned earlier, another way to broaden your audience is by collaborating with a similar brand for your giveaway prizes.

This way, the audiences of all involved brands can learn about new, similar brands, and have an even better prize at the end.

Here's an example of this type of collaborative giveaway where three brands got together to offer a major prize bundle as their giveaway prize:





Many influencers also host collaborative giveaways like this, meant to help their followers discover new brands and bloggers, and vice versa.

If you're working to grow your Instagram presence, a collaborative contest or giveaway might be your best bet.

## 5. Instagram Stories

While Instagram contests are all about giving back to your audience, there are important benefits for your overall Instagram marketing strategy too: brands can garner a lot of attention and generate a bigger audience through them as well.

Having your audience share a post on their Instagram Stories as a form of entry can be another great way to get the word out there.

It's super easy for users to share posts to their Instagram Stories, so asking for something like this as an entry isn't asking too much of your audience, and can be a great way to spread the word.

## How to run an Instagram giveaway in 6 steps

Running an Instagram giveaway is a fun way to increase engagement and followers, but you need to follow the right steps to maximize your success.

Utilize this blueprint for your next contest or giveaway to make sure you're covering your bases before you announce the prize(s).

### 1. Define your Instagram giveaway goals

Before anything else, you need to make sure you define the overall objective of your Instagram giveaway. Otherwise, how will you determine whether or not it was successful in the end?

A few questions you might ask yourself to determine your goals are:

- Are you trying to engage your audience more in your content?
- Are you aiming to generate a larger following?
- Is your plan to build a library of UGC to share on social media?

This is going to determine what type of Instagram giveaway you run. Whatever your main goal or objective is, keep it in mind throughout your entire contest planning process so that everything you do makes sense for your end goal.

## 2. Identify your budget and prizes

The next step is to identify what your budget is and how large of a prize or prize bundle you're able to give away for free. You might start with a single, small prize for your first giveaway to test the waters before eventually moving onto a larger prize down the road.

Keep in mind that your prize should be specific to your target audience and something unique for them to win.

For example, a cash prize or an iPad or iPhone could apply to anyone, whereas a gift card or limited edition product from your shop would appeal only to the people who would buy from you anyways.

This helps engage your target audience further and can also help your awareness goals. If the winner posts their own photos of the products they received from your contest, you'll get additional awareness and reach out of your efforts.

## 3. Plan and run your Instagram giveaway or contest

First things first, are you running a giveaway or a contest?

For the most part, these are one in the same. However, some brands choose to create more in-depth contests, where entrants are asked to put their best foot forward and a winner is selected by their performance.

A giveaway, though, has a randomly-selected entrant win the prize.

The next thing to consider is how users will enter your Instagram contest. Think back to the examples we shared above. Which contest or giveaway type falls most in line with your main goal or objective?

Whatever you decide, make sure it's easy for people to enter your contest. No one is going to enter a contest that requires them to do a lot of work—people want your entry process to be simple and easy.

Once you decide the best entry method for your contest, it's time to start planning out the rest of the details.

First, determine how long your Instagram contest will last. How many days will your audience have to enter? Make sure that deadline is predetermined and that you clearly let your audience know when entering will end.

Second, are you going to use a hashtag for your campaign? Whether you have people post photos with that hashtag or ask them to use it in the comments, creating a campaign-specific hashtag that no one else is using is a good idea. This way, you'll be able to tell the contest entries from regular posts about your brand.

Third, what is the theme for your contest? This is especially important for UGC-focused contests. You want to make sure your audience knows what types of photos you're looking for them to share.

And finally, how will you notify the winner? Will you tag them in a comment? Share a new post? Message them? Tag them in an Instagram Story?

These are all things you need to plan before you launch the contest.

#### 4. Design your campaign assets

Next, you need to put together campaign assets to announce and promote your Instagram contest. Not only will this draw attention to followers, it'll help you cross-promote it on various platforms, in your email newsletter, on your website and more.

Create imagery for both your Instagram feed and to share on your Instagram Stories to increase the number of followers who see the contest early on, giving you plenty of time to collect entries.

You'll want these to stand out and increase the total number of entries. Consider getting high-quality photos of the prize and add "GIVEAWAY" or similar copy in big, bold lettering to the top of your graphic.

Next, you need to think about your captions. Start with an attention-grabbing hook so that you can reel viewers in. Then explain what the prize is, how to enter the giveaway and what the overall rules are.

You must also follow Instagram's terms and release them of any affiliation with the giveaway.

#### 5. Measure your giveaway entry results

Keep a close eye on how many people are entering your giveaway, if you're receiving any questions about it and how many relevant entries are coming in with the giveaway hashtag.

Also pay attention during and right after the giveaway to see if you've generated an influx in sales as well.

## **6. Select your winner with an Instagram giveaway picker**

Once your giveaway timeframe has ended, it's time to choose a winner. The best way to do this is by using an Instagram giveaway picker tool. There are a number of available tools for you to take advantage of specifically for these purposes.

Many brands will even record themselves using a tool to select the winner and share the video on their Instagram Stories as a way to prove that the winner truly has been randomly chosen.

A few popular Instagram giveaway pickers include:

1. [Wask](#)
2. [GiveawayPick](#)
3. [Comment Picker](#)
4. [Iconosquare](#)

## **Turn Instagram giveaway entrants into customers**

Start running your own Instagram giveaways to boost your followers, increase social media engagement and, best of all, ramp up conversions.

By introducing new people to your product, you're increasing the chances of introducing someone to your brand for the first time and becoming a customer.

## 6.0 Laws of Instagram Engagement

Are your Instagram posts getting enough Likes and comments? When you're marketing on Instagram, driving authentic organic engagement should be a top priority.

Sure, you may be creating awesome content. But if no one is Liking or commenting on it, there's a good chance your account will fall through the cracks. Next thing you know, you're struggling to get customers from Instagram, and your investment simply goes to waste.

### What is Instagram engagement?

Instagram engagement refers to a measure of how people are interacting with your content. It considers details such as your follower count along with interactions such as likes, comments, saves and shares. This metric helps you gauge how well your content resonates with your audience.

### How to calculate your Instagram engagement rate

To calculate your Instagram engagement rate, you'll need to look at the total number of content interactions. This includes Likes, comments, shares, Story replies and saves. Then use the formula below to calculate.

Engagement rate = (Total interactions/Impressions) x 100

## What is a good engagement rate on Instagram?

According to the latest Instagram stats, posts typically get an average engagement rate of 0.98%. So anything around this number should be safe. That said, you'd ideally want to shoot for a higher engagement rate than the platform average.

## 13 tips to improve your Instagram engagement rate

Now it's time for the fun part. The following tips will show you how to get more Instagram engagement.

### 1. Actually engage with your audience

We're starting this list off easy. To drive more engagement from your followers, you need to interact with them. Social media isn't a one-way street. If you want to build an engaged audience, you need to acknowledge your followers.

Remember, every comment you get means someone took the time to stop, look at your post and share their thoughts. After all that, why wouldn't you respond? If you want to build up engagement, know that it takes time and you need to start conversations on posts other than your own.

Asking questions, responding to comments and replying to Stories are some of the few ways to engage more with your audience.

As your account starts to grow and you get more comments, you might not be able to respond to everyone. But that doesn't mean you should give up entirely. You can still Like comments or just try to reply to as many as possible.



For instance, Canva has over a million followers on Instagram. The brand deals with hundreds of comments on its posts, so it's not always viable to reply to every single comment.

However, it takes time to respond to comments that ask questions or bring up an important feature.



**canva** · [Follow](#)



**rasamek** How do I offer my elements (art) to Canva? 🙏



1d 2 likes Reply

— Hide replies



**canva** @rasamek Hi there! You might be interested in joining our Element Creators program. More about this here: <https://www.canva.com/help/canva-creators-program/>. Hope this helps! ^mi



18h 2 likes Reply



**thestemdiaries** Love these! Especially the bubble ones 📄



1d 2 likes Reply

— Hide replies



**canva** @thestemdiaries Yay! Will you be using these elements on your next design, Emily? 📄 ^bm



1d 1 like Reply



**raekdata** @thestemdiaries The bubbles are dope!



21h Reply



**ga\_xing.bmf** It would be better if the search words for the elements were written. Plus, adjusting isn't working in canva



1d 1 like Reply



**2,146 likes**

1 DAY AGO



Add a comment...

[Post](#)

## 2. Copy your top-performing posts

What works for you might not work for someone else. Take a look at your past months' best-performing posts. Is there a common theme among your top performers?

For example, you might find that photos with bright and bold colors get a ton of Likes. Or maybe people are engaging more with Reels that have music in the background.

Use our Instagram dashboard to find your top-performing posts. Then look for commonalities between the posts and try to incorporate more of them in the future.

## 3. Use Instagram Stories to your advantage

Instagram offers plenty of stickers that make it easy to drive engagement through Stories. Every time someone engages with those stickers, it counts toward your engagement.

Use these stickers to conduct polls and quizzes or get your followers to ask you questions. See how Living Stone Construction creates a simple poll asking people to vote if they like the renovation work. You could make it more fun and competitive by asking people to guess the correct answer to a question.

livingstoneconst 1h

before & after

Yes

No

Reply to livingstoneconst...

The question sticker is perfect for hosting an AMA (Ask Me Anything) session. You'll then be able to share a series of Stories answering those questions.

One of the latest Instagram trends involves using the “Add Yours” sticker. Use this sticker to start a challenge and get people to engage with your brand. Share a prompt and encourage people to participate in your challenge by adding their own content.

#### **4. Promote across networks**

It goes without saying that the audience for your Facebook Page might not be the same as the audience on your Instagram account. Chances are that some of your Facebook audience is on Instagram, but they just don't know that you exist there yet.

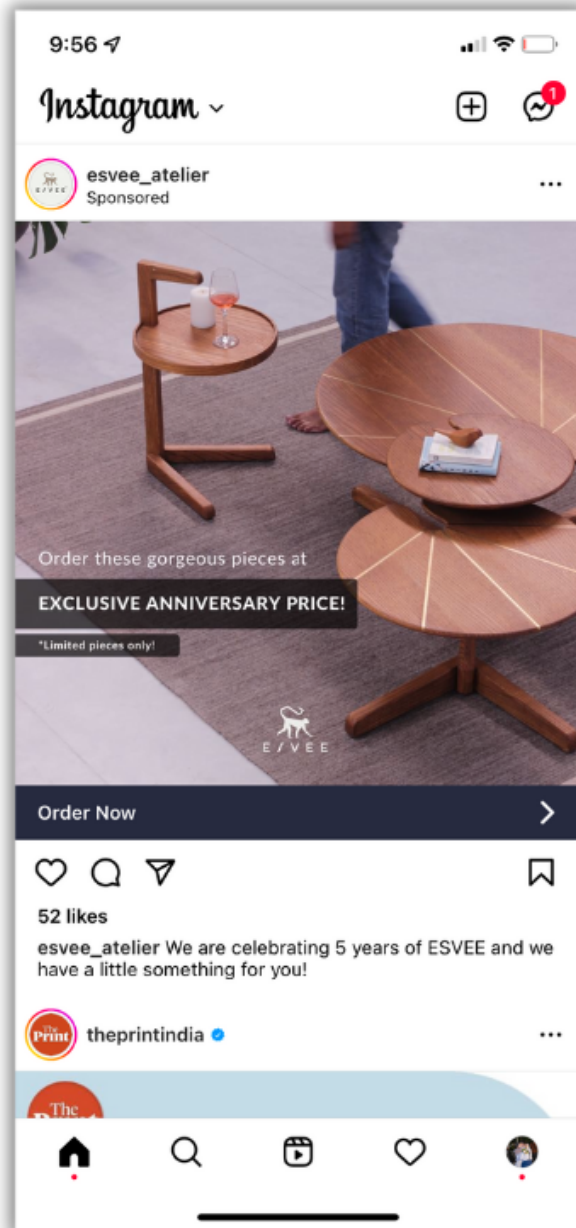
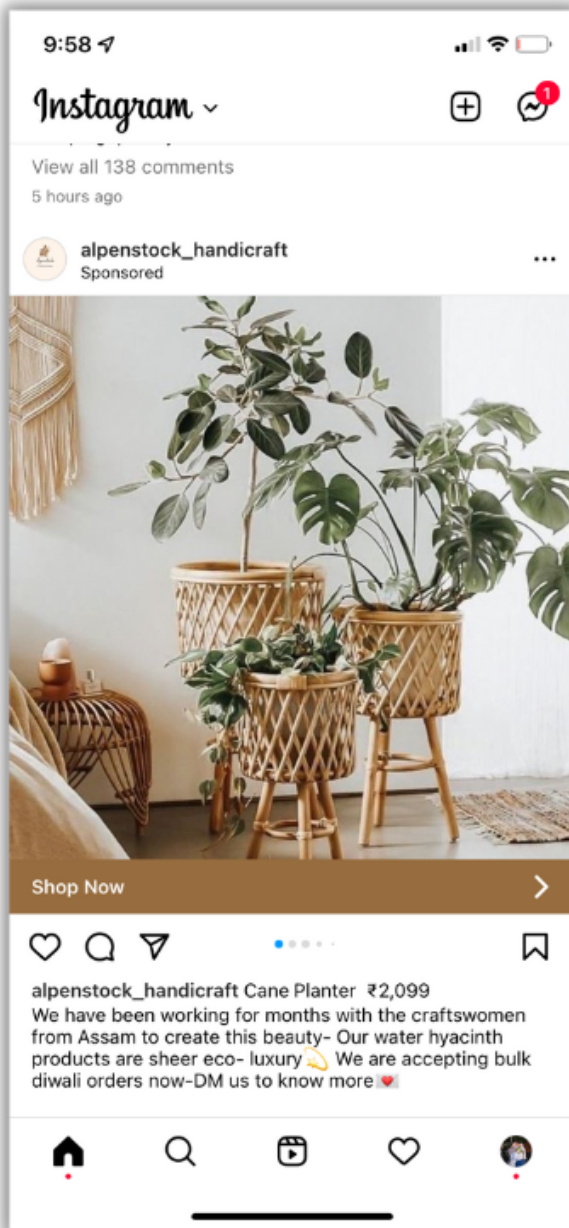
Don't be afraid to sprinkle some cross-network promotional posts to encourage more followers.

#### **5. Be strategic with Instagram ads**

When Facebook added Instagram into their Ads Manager, new targeting possibilities opened up. Sure, you can boost a post or promote your account, but it's important to be more nuanced and strategic about it.

Take advantage of the customization by using retargeting and custom audiences. For instance, if you visit a furniture store website like Pottery Barn, you'll start to get ads from other furniture stores.

After searching around for a bookshelf, we found the following ads from other brands that sell furniture.



Custom audiences can come from many sources. But to start, try using:

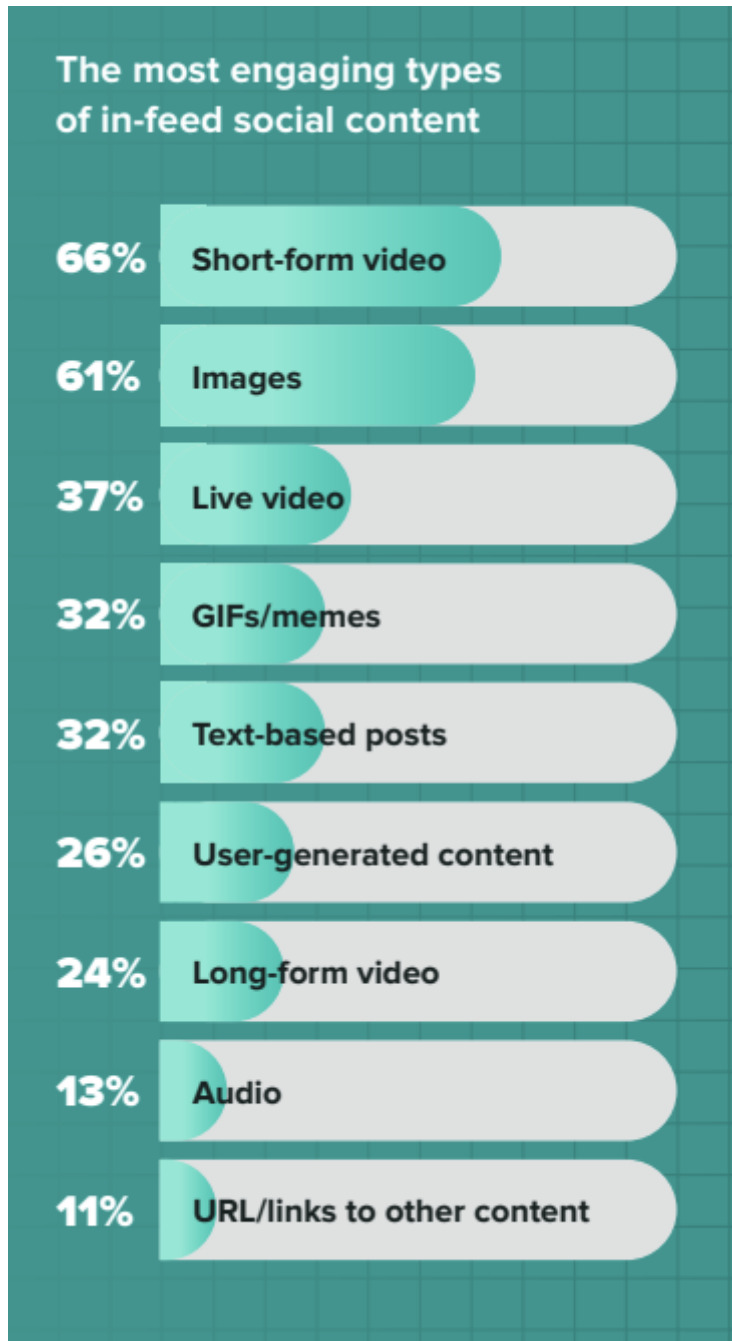
- Your newsletter lists
- People who have visited your store
- Those who purchased from your website
- People who've engaged with your Facebook or Instagram accounts

From there, you'll then be able to find even more people similar to any of the above audiences using the lookalike audience feature.

Getting familiar with all the Instagram advertising options will put you ahead of your competitors. And retargeting will further help you improve conversions and lower your ad costs.

## **6. Create more short-form video content**

Guess what we found in the 2022 Sprout Social Index? Short-form video is the most engaging type of in-feed social content. That means your Instagram content strategy needs to change direction. And the focus should shift to creating more short-form videos.

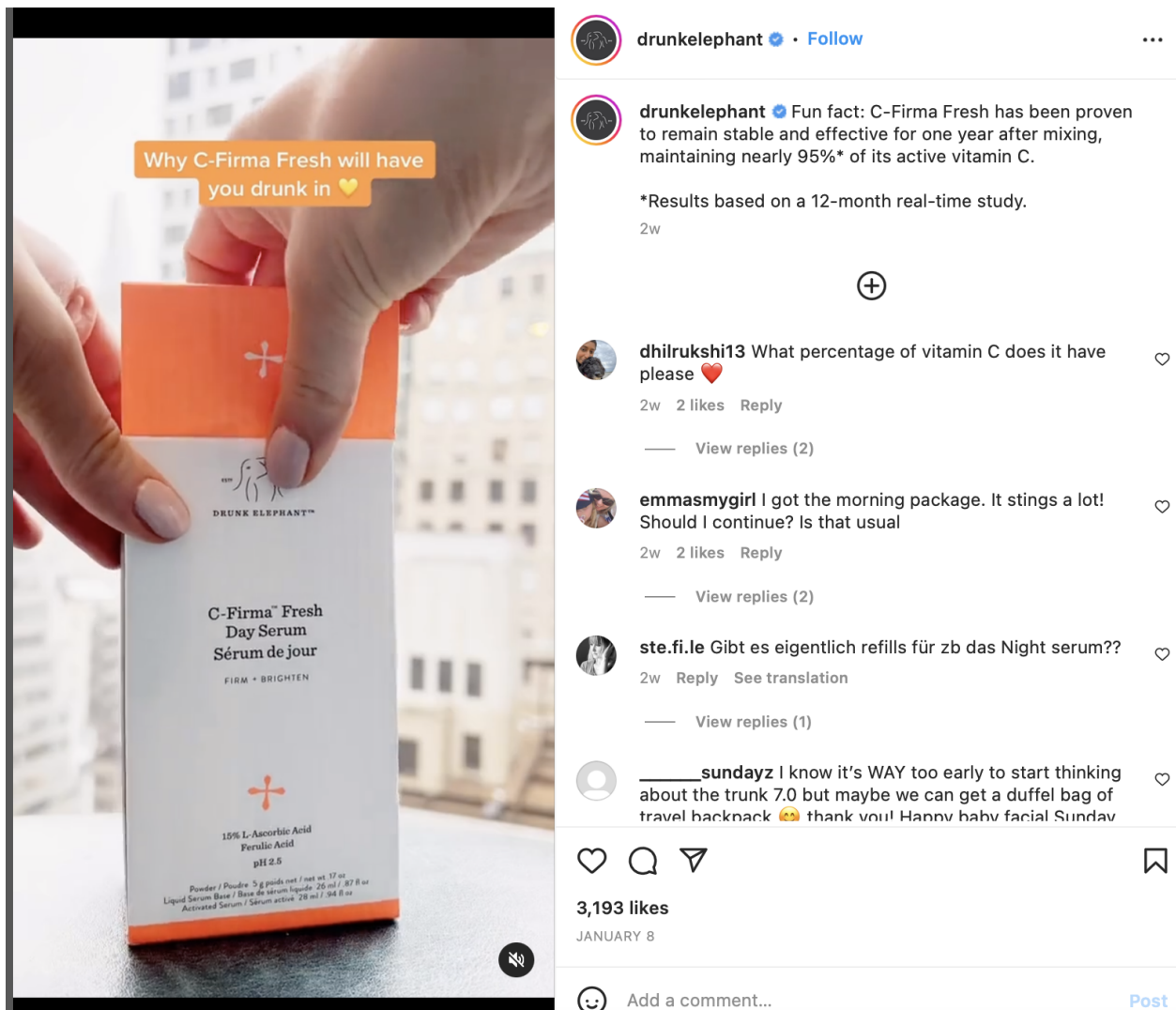


In other words, Reels are your best friend for boosting your Instagram engagement. Who knows? It might even be just the thing you need to go viral on Instagram.

Create Reels showing how-to tips and tricks or behind-the-scenes processes, for instance. Reels can be informational as well, providing a quick list of things people



might want to know. See how Drunk Elephant creates a Reel listing some reasons why a certain product is great.



## 7. Make the most of the Collab feature

Instagram recently introduced a feature enabling users to create Collab posts with other users. A Collab post shows up in the Feeds of both of your followers, meaning a chance to garner higher engagement. So make the most of this feature to collaborate with influencers, industry leaders and brand partners.



The Honest Kitchen regularly creates Collab posts with pet influencers to promote its human-grade pet food. This allows the brand to get its products in front of a massive and relevant audience i.e., the pet influencer's followers.

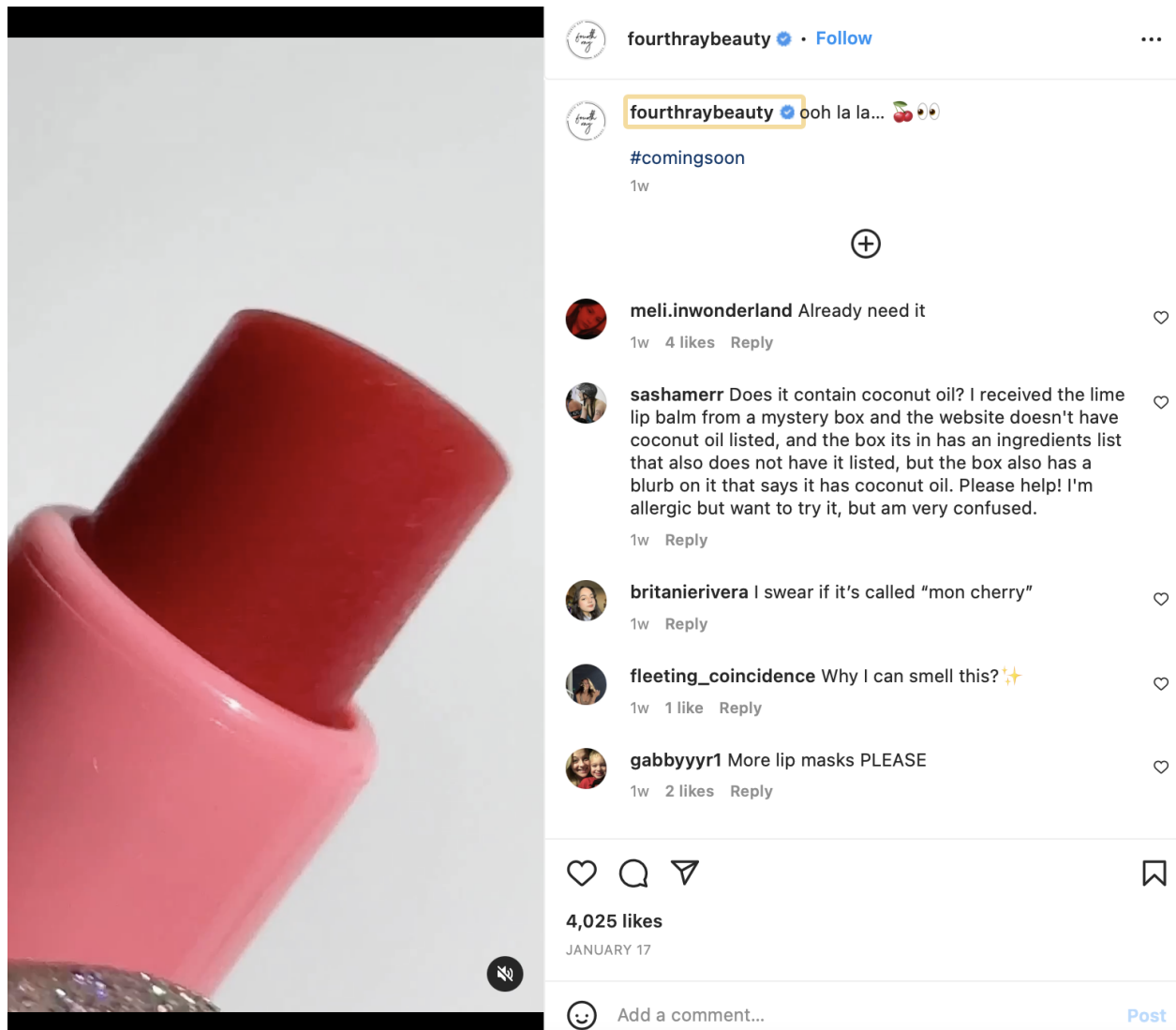
As expected, these posts have managed to garner hundreds of thousands of Likes and comments.

## 8. Give sneak peeks and hints

Followers love it when you let them in on a secret. Even if they're public posts, giving sneak peeks and hints of new releases makes the audience think they're part of a

special group. It entices them to guess what's going on and encourages them to revisit the profile to see if there's been an announcement.

Check out how Fourth Ray Beauty shares a teaser for an upcoming product without giving too much away. The Reel gives a short close-up shot of the new product. And the caption only gives a hint by including a cherry emoji.



**fourthraybeauty** • Follow

fourthraybeauty ooh la la... 🍒👁️

#comingsoon

1w

+

**meli.inwonderland** Already need it  
1w 4 likes Reply

**sashamerr** Does it contain coconut oil? I received the lime lip balm from a mystery box and the website doesn't have coconut oil listed, and the box its in has an ingredients list that also does not have it listed, but the box also has a blurb on it that says it has coconut oil. Please help! I'm allergic but want to try it, but am very confused.  
1w Reply

**britanierivera** I swear if it's called "mon cherry"  
1w Reply

**fleeting\_coincidence** Why I can smell this? ✨  
1w 1 like Reply

**gabbyyr1** More lip masks PLEASE  
1w 2 likes Reply

4,025 likes  
JANUARY 17

Add a comment... Post


## 9. Write captions that drive engagement

Your Instagram captions give you the perfect opportunity to include a call for action. In this case, the action would involve some type of engagement.

For example, asking a question in your caption would encourage your followers to share their answers in the comments.

Or you could share a prompt that would make them want to share their experience or thoughts by commenting.

For example, Pottery Barn shares a carousel post showcasing different stool and pendant pairings for a kitchen island. It then asks followers to vote for their favorite in the comments. Needless to say, the post managed to rack up plenty of comments from enthusiastic followers who wanted to vote.



**potterybarn** • Follow

Make your island the center of attention with the perfect counter stool and pendant pairings. Vote for your favorite below 🗳️

1d

+

**tra\_c\_fran6co** First one  
21h 2 likes Reply

**roni33333** #1 🍌  
9h Reply

**jennifershultice** First one.  
15h 1 like Reply

**ourhousestark** I like them all but number 1 let's the island and shelves shine 🥰  
1d 2 likes Reply

**dnij88** Love them all! For once in my life I can't choose 😂  
1d 1 like Reply

**gwendolynfairbanks** The 1st one!  
14h 1 like Reply

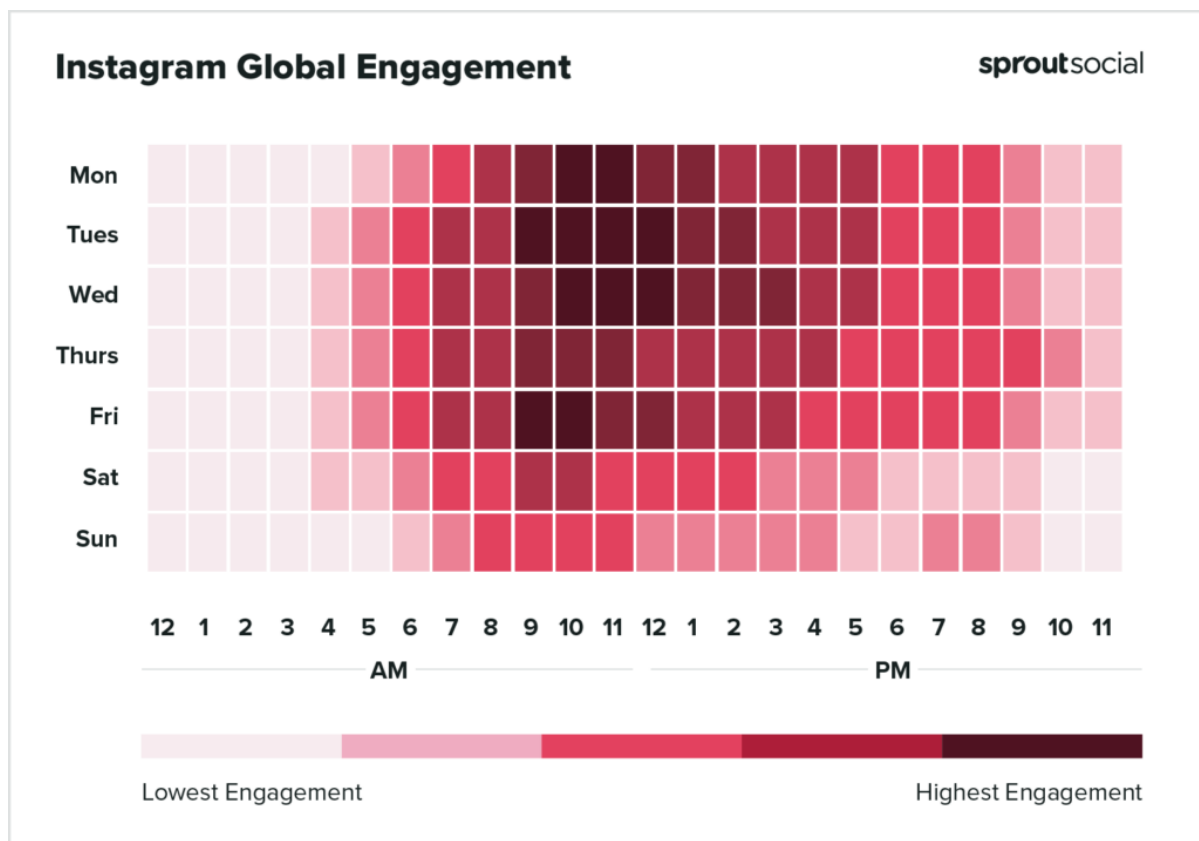
1,432 likes  
1 DAY AGO

Add a comment... Post

## 10. Post your content at the best times

Use our Instagram analytics to find out when the best time to post is for you. You want to post when most of your followers are online and engaging on the app. Even with the best photo and wittiest caption, you could still miss out on engagement if you're posting at the wrong hour.

We did some research into the best times to post on Instagram, and here's what we found for Instagram.



But keep in mind that the specific timing may be different for your account.

Instagram business accounts offer analytics that tells you when your followers are most active.



Use this information to schedule your posts and free up your time to engage with comments. Alternatively, use Sprout's ViralPost feature to automatically schedule your posts at the optimal time. This feature ensures that your Instagram posts go out at a time when you receive the most engagement.

## **11. Encourage customer and employee posts**

Use branded hashtags to help you organize user-generated content. If you engage in these hashtags and incorporate a UGC strategy, more people will take notice and begin using the hashtags, too.

Your employees can be your strongest advocates as well. Their accounts give a more personal, unfiltered perspective of the company. Remember, people like feeling as if they're in a secret club. If you reshare from your employees, you're offering perspectives that your brand normally wouldn't offer.

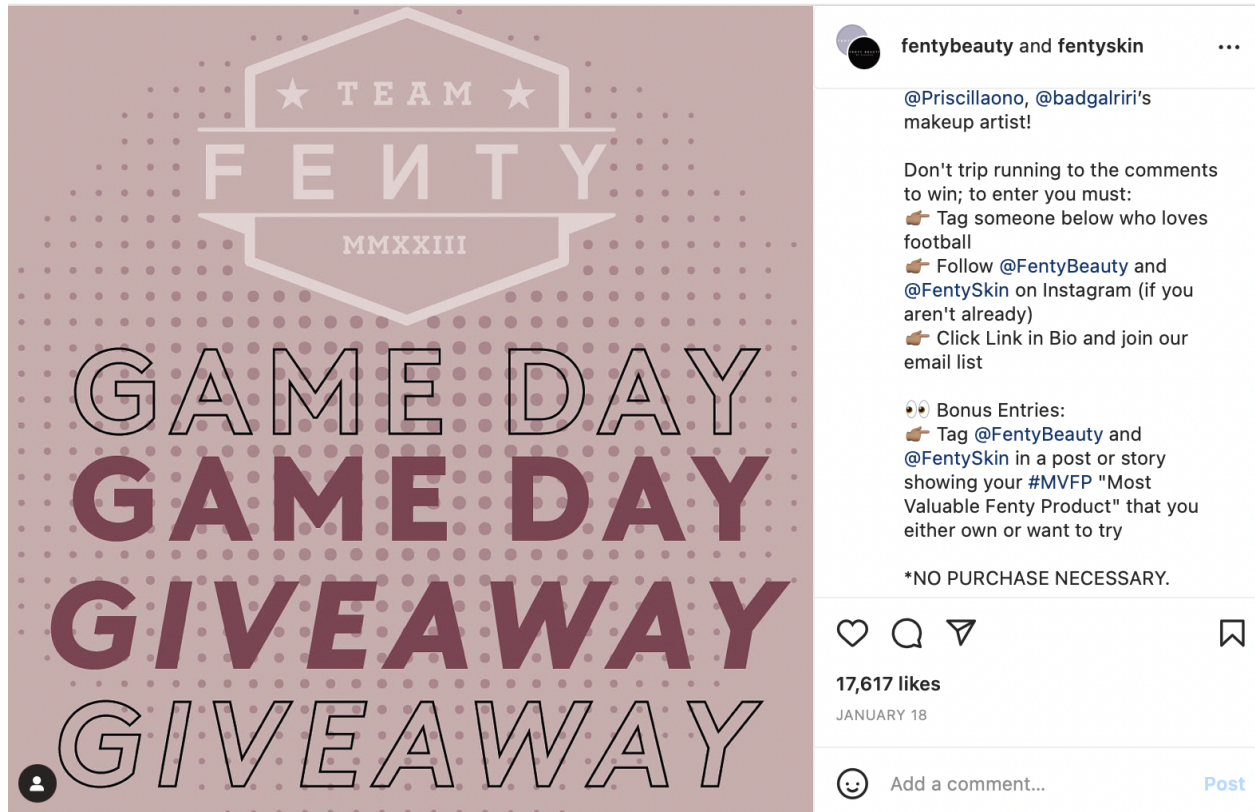
## **12. Host a fun giveaway contest**

Who wouldn't want to win free stuff? That's exactly why social media giveaways are so great for boosting your Instagram engagement. They get people to engage with your brand in a way you've never seen before.

Whether the contest involves commenting, sharing or contributing a story—you get to drive engagement either way.

That said, your giveaway contest must be strategic and intentional. Make sure to design the rules keeping your goal in mind i.e., boosting engagement. Moreover, the prize should be attractive; it should be valuable enough to get people to participate.

For example, Fenty Beauty hosted a Game Day Giveaway for a chance to win two tickets to the Championship Game. The brand would cover the cost of flights, hotels and ground transportation. As you can expect, this post saw more than 17k Likes and almost 18k comments.



### 13. Improve your Instagram hashtags

It's a well-known fact that using the right hashtags helps you grow your reach. But with that increased reach comes a greater chance of boosting engagement. The more people see your content, the higher the chance that they'll engage with it.

Use relevant and niche hashtags that will let you tap into the right audience. The goal is to get Instagram to show your content to users who have shown an interest in

topics related to that hashtag. So when these users see your content, they're likely to check it out and engage.

## **Why a good engagement rate matters on Instagram**

So what's the big deal about Instagram engagement? Check out these key benefits of having a good engagement rate on Instagram.

### **Improve platform visibility**

The Instagram algorithm uses several factors to rank and display content. While relevance is one crucial element, engagement is another major consideration.

Even among relevant content, posts that see tons of engagement are more likely to show up in a user's Explore. So having a good engagement rate is essential to improve your visibility on Instagram.

### **Attract a new audience**

With higher visibility comes an increased chance of attracting a new audience. Instagram will typically show your content to people who are most likely to be interested in it.

If these users like your content enough, they may want to check out your profile and even follow you. In other words, a good engagement rate may help you grow your Instagram following.

### **Boost credibility**

To the average Instagram user, a post that has tons of engagement means other people are enjoying it. As such, good engagement serves as social proof and reflects



positively on your brand authenticity. People may feel more comfortable trusting your brand because so many others are engaging with it.

## **Start growing your Instagram engagement**

These tips will give you a much-needed engagement boost on Instagram. But a one-off spike in engagement numbers isn't enough. Make sure you're following these tips consistently to maintain high levels of engagement.

## 7.0. Laws of Instagram Stories

Instagram Stories have become a big deal. They've become so popular that 83% of marketers said they plan to use Stories for influencer marketing. They're tap-friendly and time-sensitive, which makes them highly appealing to the average Instagram user.

Moreover, changes to the Instagram algorithm has put a damper on organic reach. As a workaround, brands are using Stories as a low-hanging opportunity for visibility and engagement.

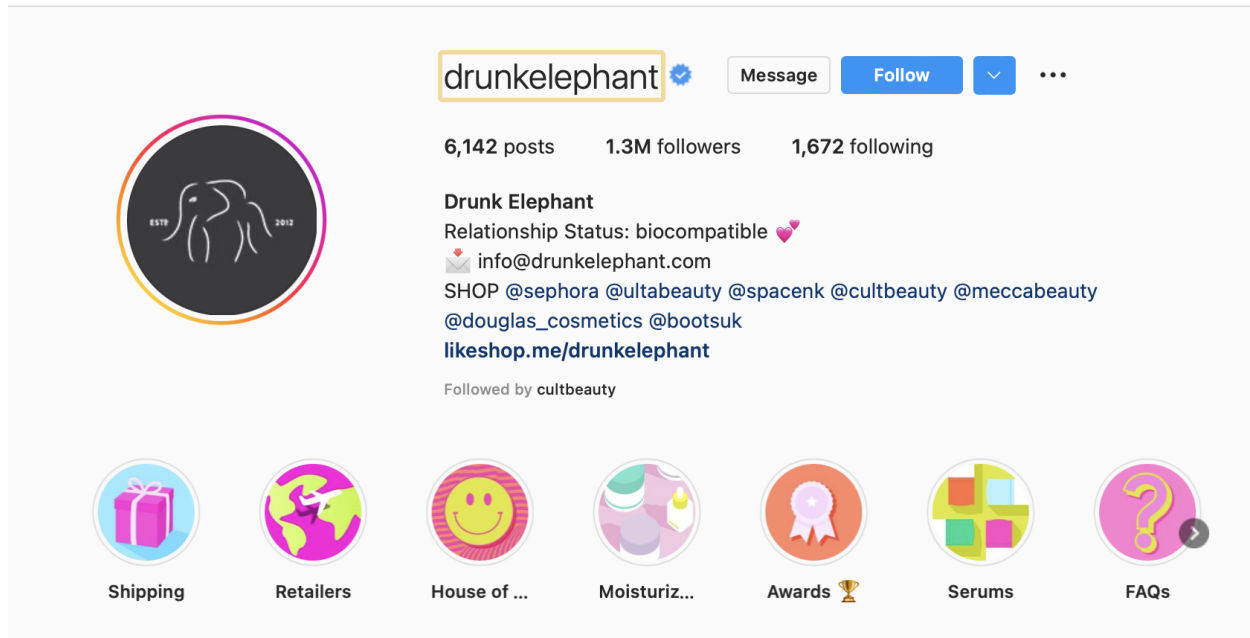
But if you're still struggling to make sense of Stories, we get it. That's why we put together this detailed guide breaking down how to use Instagram Stories. Read on to learn about how to view, create and use Instagram Stories to improve your brand's

### What are Instagram Stories

Instagram Stories are a feed of photos (or videos) that disappear from your profile after 24 hours. Your Stories content is separate from your traditional feed.

Stories act as a sort of slideshow, with each photo or video uploaded to your feed representing a new slide. Photos present themselves for seven seconds by default, while videos can be up to fifteen seconds long.

Whenever you publish a new Story, a purple and orange ring appears around your profile picture. This signals to your followers that you have fresh content to check out. While Stories expire after a day, you can save your best slideshows as Stories Highlights. These Highlights then appear on your profile right above your regular feed.



Users can reply to your Stories via DMs or through interactive elements such as polls and stickers. Meanwhile, unique captions, overlays and custom music give your Stories a creative touch.

Think of Stories as a sort of secondary, exclusive feed of content for your most dedicated followers.

## Why use Instagram Stories

The benefits of integrating Stories into your content strategy are well-documented. It goes beyond getting your brand in front of the right audience. In fact, recent Instagram stats note that 50% of Instagram users have visited a website to make a purchase after seeing it in Stories.

Here are some key reasons why Stories should be a top priority for growing a company account.

## **IG Stories put you front-and-center in followers' feeds**

This is the big one. Whenever you post a new Story to Instagram, you automatically “skip the line” in your followers’ feeds.

That’s because the Stories feed is always right there and above the fold on the Instagram home screen.

So, if you’re consistently publishing Stories, you’re always on your customers’ minds. Considering how the Instagram algorithm is constantly changing, the Stories feed is prime real estate for brands. It allows you to get more eyes on your content without having to worry about reach.

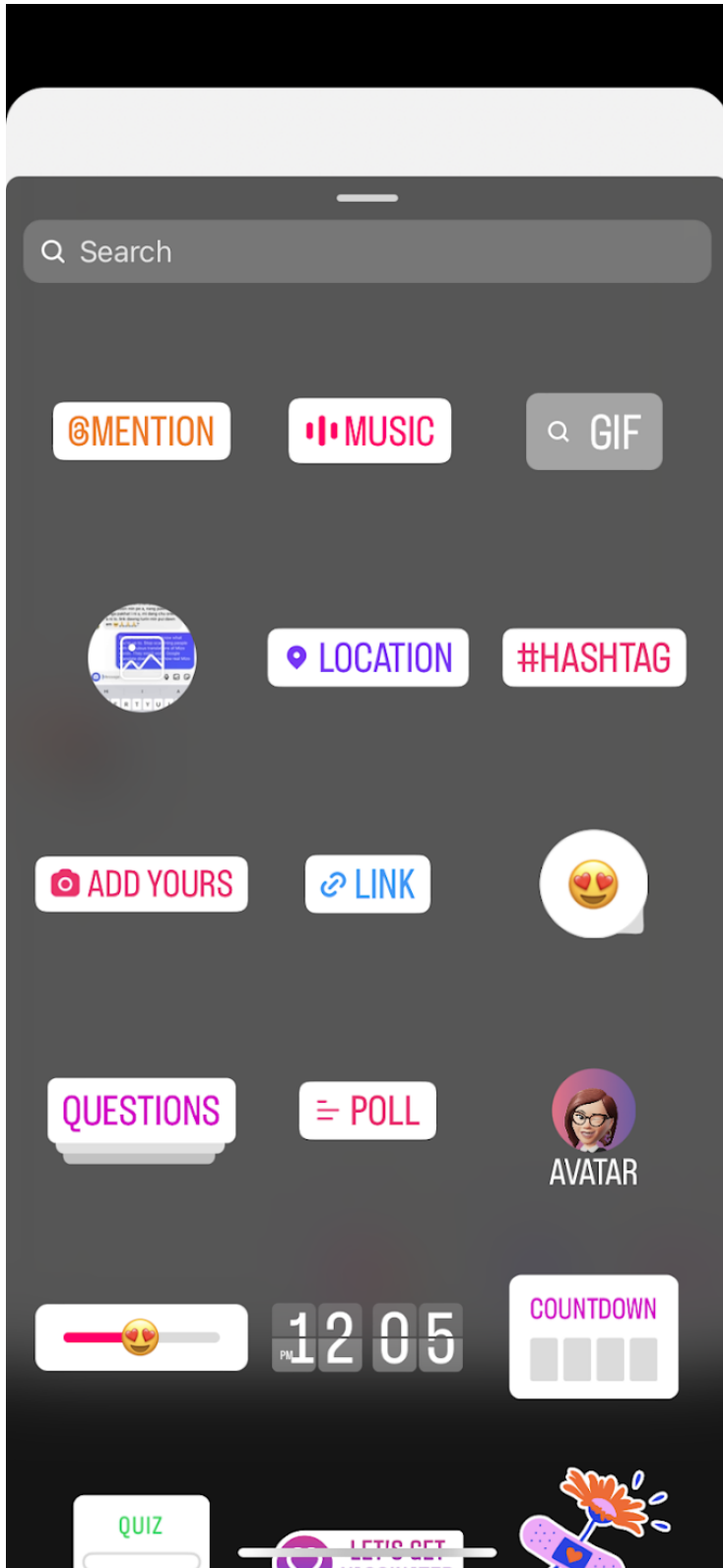
## **Stories are perfect for humanizing your brand**

Keep in mind that most Instagram Stories are off-the-cuff and informal, even from brands. This represents a stark contrast from the more “optimized” or salesy content you might see on your main feed.

Snap a selfie of your team? Want to share a quick personal anecdote? Go for it. Stories are the ideal place to talk to your customers like people for the sake of showing off your brand’s voice and personality.

## **Insta Stories offer endless opportunities to engage**

The features baked into Stories are ideal for brands that want to go back and forth with followers while having a bit of fun. Polls and quizzes. Custom stickers and music. #hashtags and @mentions. The list goes on and on.



With a bit of creativity, Stories empower you to engage followers and get them talking in just a couple of taps.

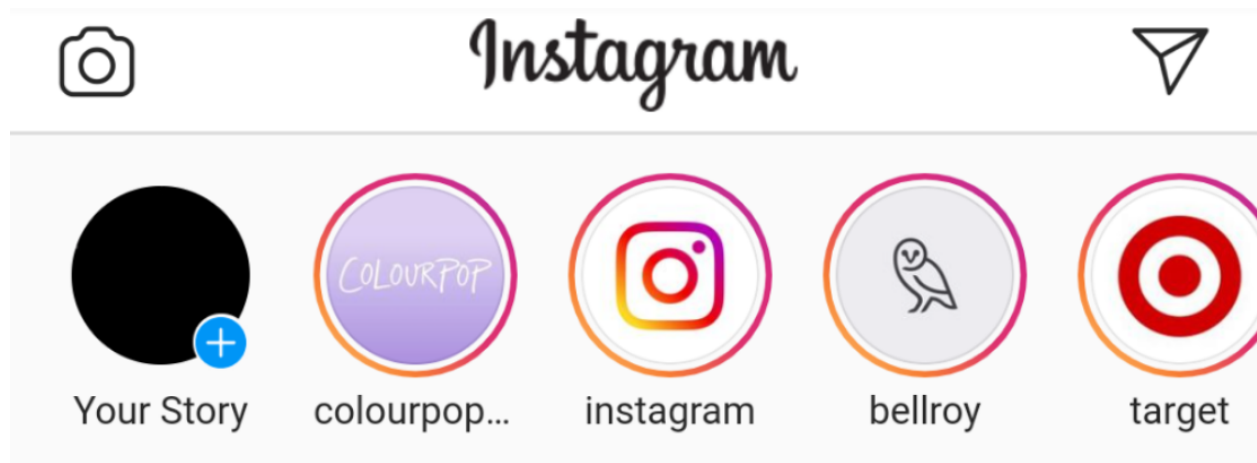
## How to view Instagram Stories

Instagram Stories are prominently visible at the top of the screen. They're often the first thing people see when they open the app, making them more likely to drive views and engagements. Let's take a look at how you can view Instagram Stories.

### Step 1: Go to your Instagram home screen

Once you open your Instagram app, navigate to the home screen by tapping on the home icon at the bottom of your screen.

On your home screen, you'll see a number of profile pictures with orange and purple circles along the top. Each of these circular icons indicates that the user has an active Story you can view.



### Step 2: Tap on the Story you want to view

Tap on any of the circular icons from your Stories feed. This will open up the Story that the user has posted.

### **Step 3: Tap left, right or hold to explore**

Once you open up a Story, you can tap and hold to pause the Story and view it for as long as you like. Tap on the right side of the screen to view the next Story and tap left to go back to the previous Story.

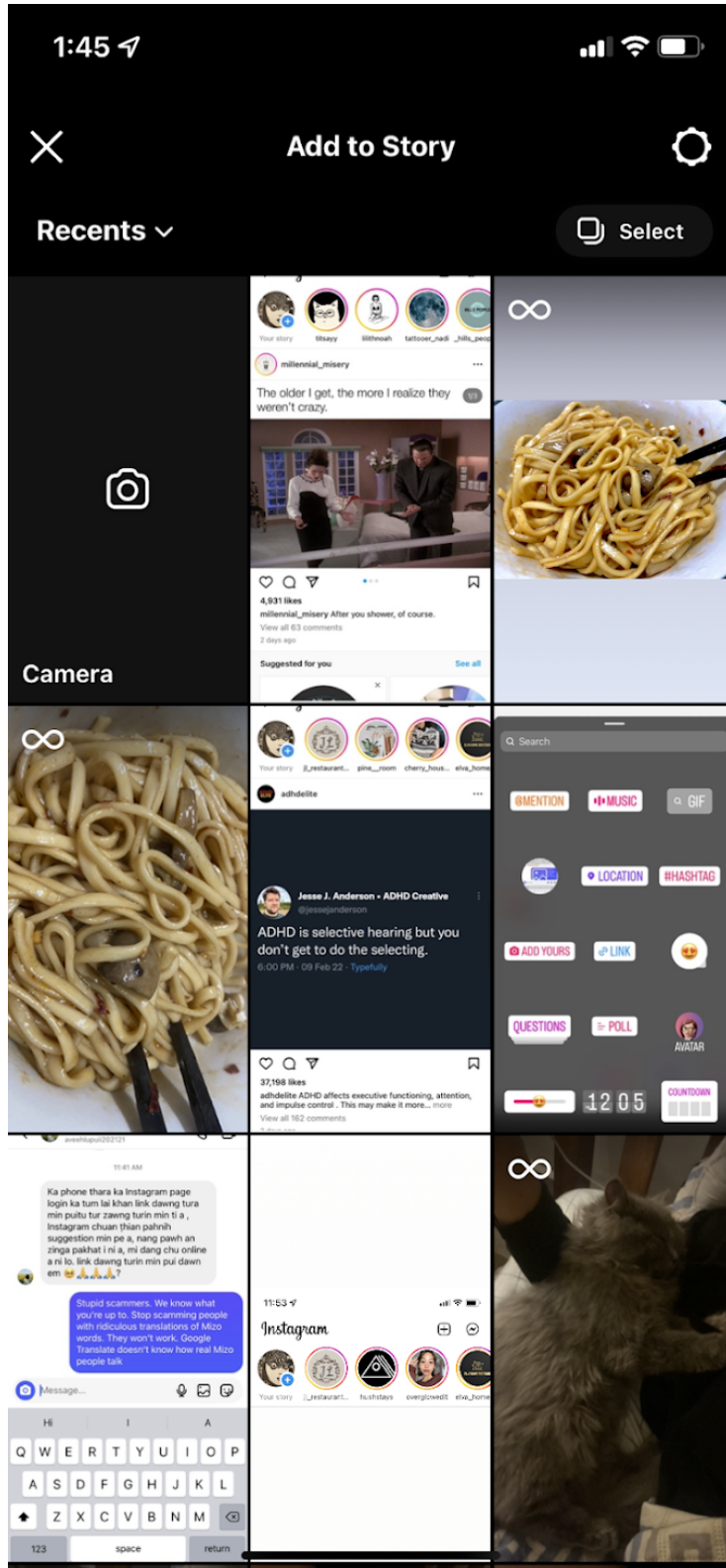
Swiping left will let you automatically skip to the next user's Story. Swipe right to go back to the previous user's Story.

## **How to make an Instagram Story**

It's easy to start creating an Instagram Story. The challenge is creating one that engages your audience. But first, let's look at the basic steps to make an Instagram Story.

Step 1: From your Instagram home page, tap on your profile picture at the top left-hand corner. This will open up the option to add to your Story.

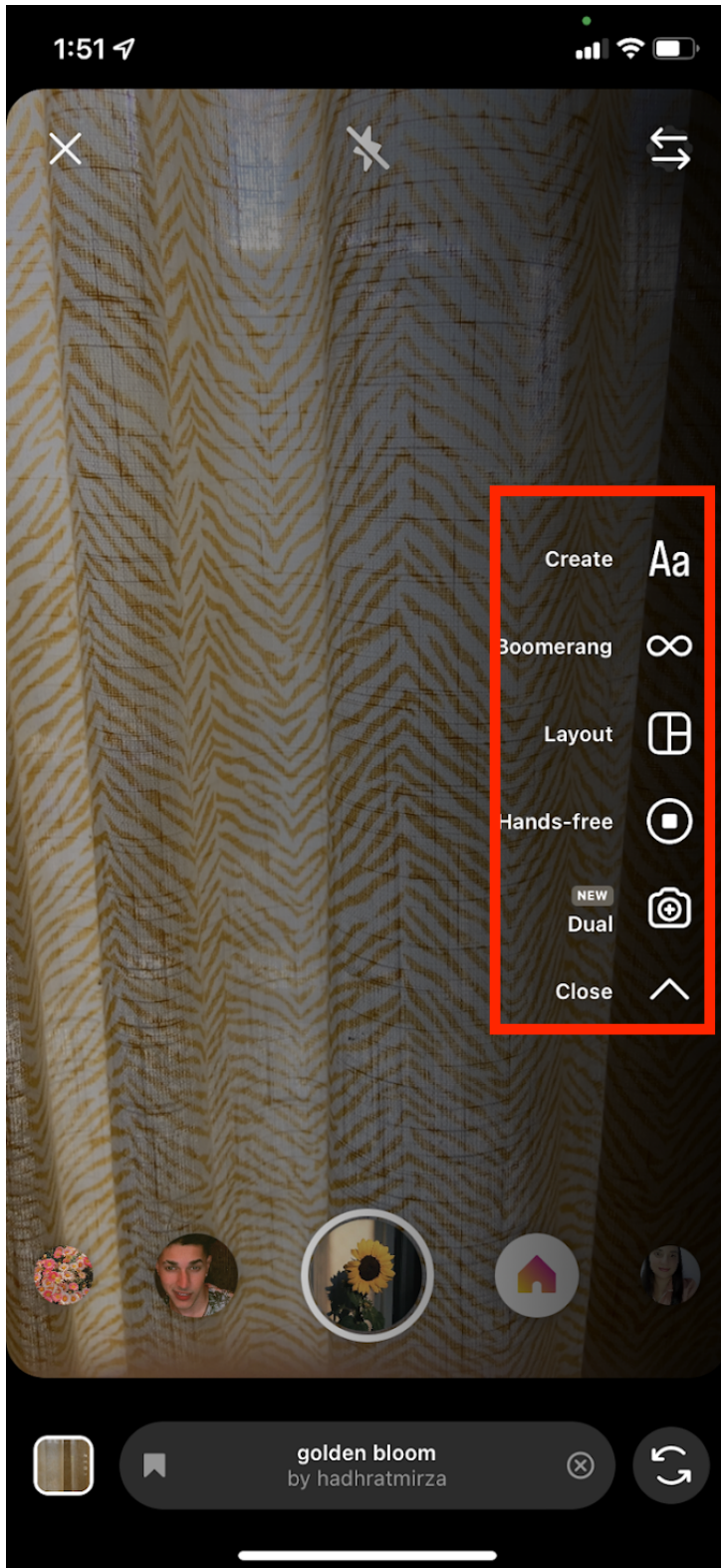
Step 2: Tap on the "Camera" button in the "Add to Story" window to start creating a new Story. Or choose an image or video from your camera roll to add to your Story. Alternatively, you can swipe right from your home screen to open the Instagram camera app. From here, you can instantly record a video or capture a photo to add to your Story.



Step 3: If you're capturing a new photo or video, choose a filter at the bottom of the screen. You can even decide on a capture mode for the photo or video. Tap on the

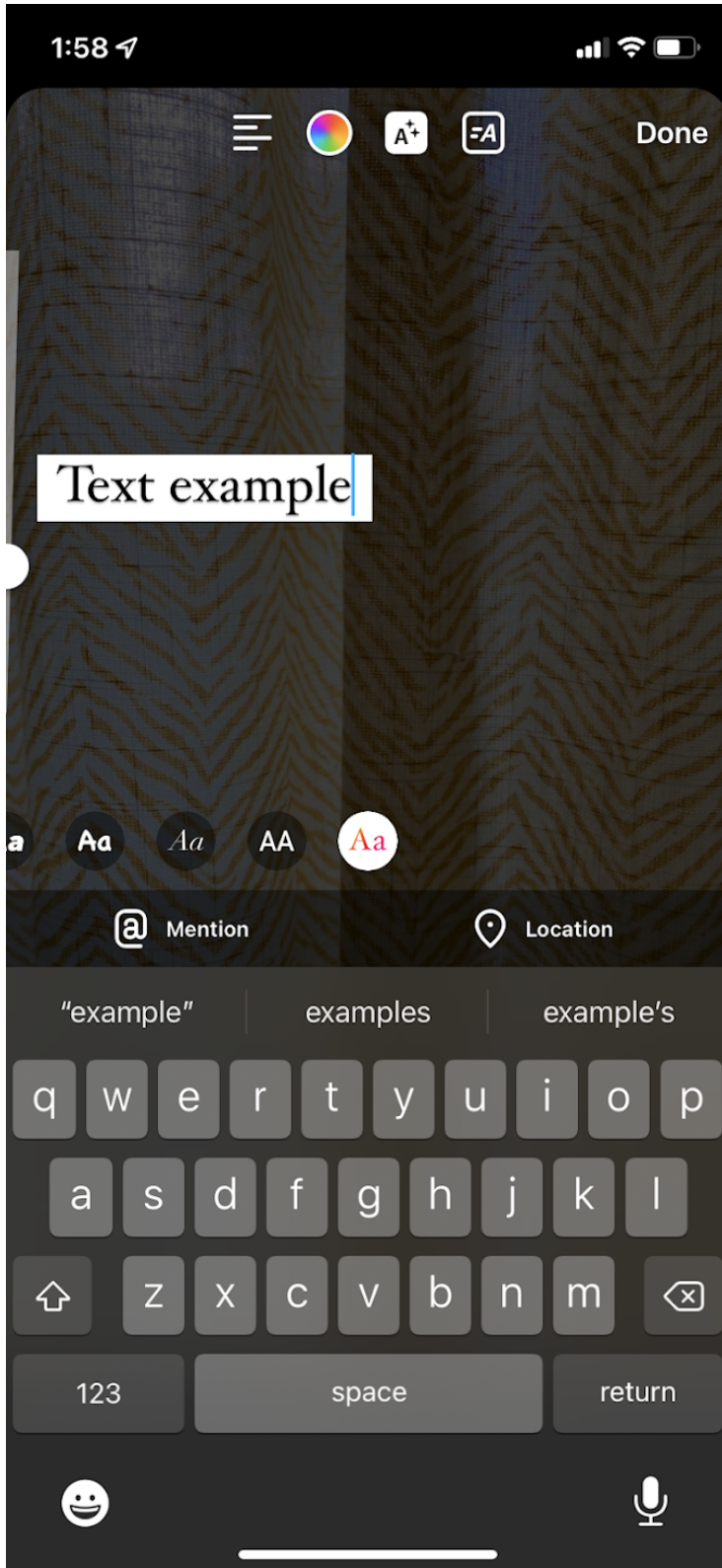


arrow from the side panel to expand your options. Then choose whether you want to use boomerang, layout, hands-free or dual. The “Create” button lets you create a new text Story.



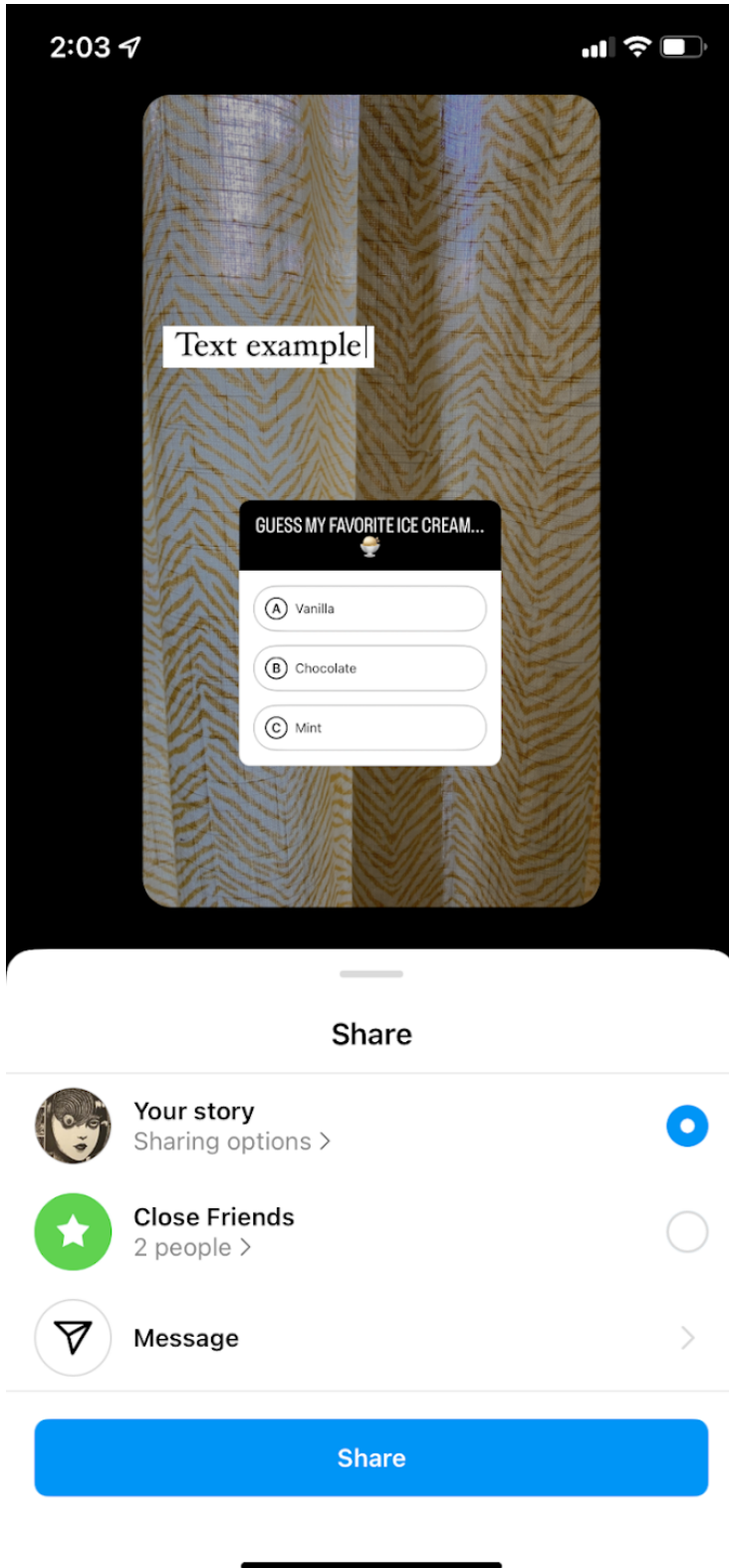
Step 4: Once you've decided on a filter and a capture mode, tap the "camera button" to take a photo. Tap and hold if you want to record a new video.

Step 5: After you've captured the photo or video, tap on the text icon at the top to add text to your Story. Type in your message and the text will appear as an overlay. You can change the font and text color, and even add text effects to get your message across clearly.



Step 6: Tap on the sticker icon to edit your Story with relevant stickers. From the sticker dashboard, you can add location tags, mention tags, music, polls, links, hashtags and countdown timers. Or if you want to add a sticker relevant to your message, type in a keyword from the search bar at the top and choose the sticker you want.

Step 7: Once you're done editing the Story and adding the necessary stickers, tap on the arrow button at the bottom of the screen. Then choose the option to share to "Your Story." Instagram even gives you the option to share a Story with a select group of people you've added to your Close Friends list. Tap on "Share" and the Story will instantly go live.



## **How to use Instagram Stories**

When you're using Instagram for business, Stories should be integral to your strategy. But coming up with content can be daunting for first-timers.

Don't sweat it. Below, we've provided a few actionable tips on how to use Instagram Stories as a part of your social media marketing strategy.

### **Educate your audience with how-to's and tutorials**

The sequential format of Stories makes them perfect for step-by-step, how-to-style content. From recipes to beauty tutorials, you can create bite-sized educational content that's highly engaging. These are an easy alternative to traditional videos and blog posts.

### **Go back and forth with polls, quizzes and questions**

Stories are a great place to carry on conversations with your customers.

Features such as polls and quizzes make doing so seamless and fun. Benefit Cosmetics regularly uses polls, quizzes, questions and voting stickers in its Stories. This serves as a fun and easy way to engage the brand's audience.





benefitcosmetics 12h



# 3 for \$30 minis

which mini are you picking?



@benefitcosmetics

Reply to benefitcosmetics...





## **Make announcements and break your own news**

Some brands use Stories as a space to make announcements. This is a smart move for the sake of keeping your followers in the loop about what your business is up to.

## **Highlight the latest posts in your main feed**

This is an example of how to use Stories to bypass the Instagram algorithm.

Let's say you have an awesome new post in your main feed. Hying it up via Stories is totally fair game to maximize your reach.

Depending on how often you post to Instagram, don't be too aggressive about announcing your posts. Try to reserve doing so for your most important announcements and offers.

Now that Instagram allows every user to add links to Stories, you can make the most of this feature to promote new content from outside Instagram. Use this feature to share your latest blog posts, press releases and other important content.

## **Post teasers of upcoming content or products**

If nothing else, Stories encourage you to tease what you have coming down the pipeline. Maybe you're excited about a new collaboration. Perhaps you're about to drop a new product.

Stories allow you to spread your message far and wide. Creative stickers and countdowns make it easy to create a sense of anticipation.

## **Promote time-sensitive offers and deals**

Just as you'd promote an offer via Instagram, you can do the same via Stories. This is perfect for ecommerce and brick-and-mortar stores alike. You can use your Stories to promote limited-time deals or simply to highlight a current sale.

## **Share user-generated content and customer photos**

Many brands share Stories dedicated to their followers' user-generated content. Using Stories to do so allows you to either create a dedicated customer slideshow. And you won't have to worry about clogging up your main feed with UGC.

Plus, reposting content into Stories is even easier than traditional methods of regramming.

## **Take your followers behind-the-scenes**

Part of the beauty of Instagram Stories is that they don't have to be big, polished productions. In fact, many brands create Stories that are on the fly and unfiltered. Think of different ways to use Stories to take your followers along for the ride.

You could post event photos and "day in the life" content that highlights your typical routine.

## **Instagram story tips**

While Instagram Stories don't require a ton of optimization per se, you shouldn't just start blasting them at random.

To wrap things up, let's look at seven key best practices of Instagram Stories as you integrate them into your content strategy.

## 1. Leverage stickers in your Story

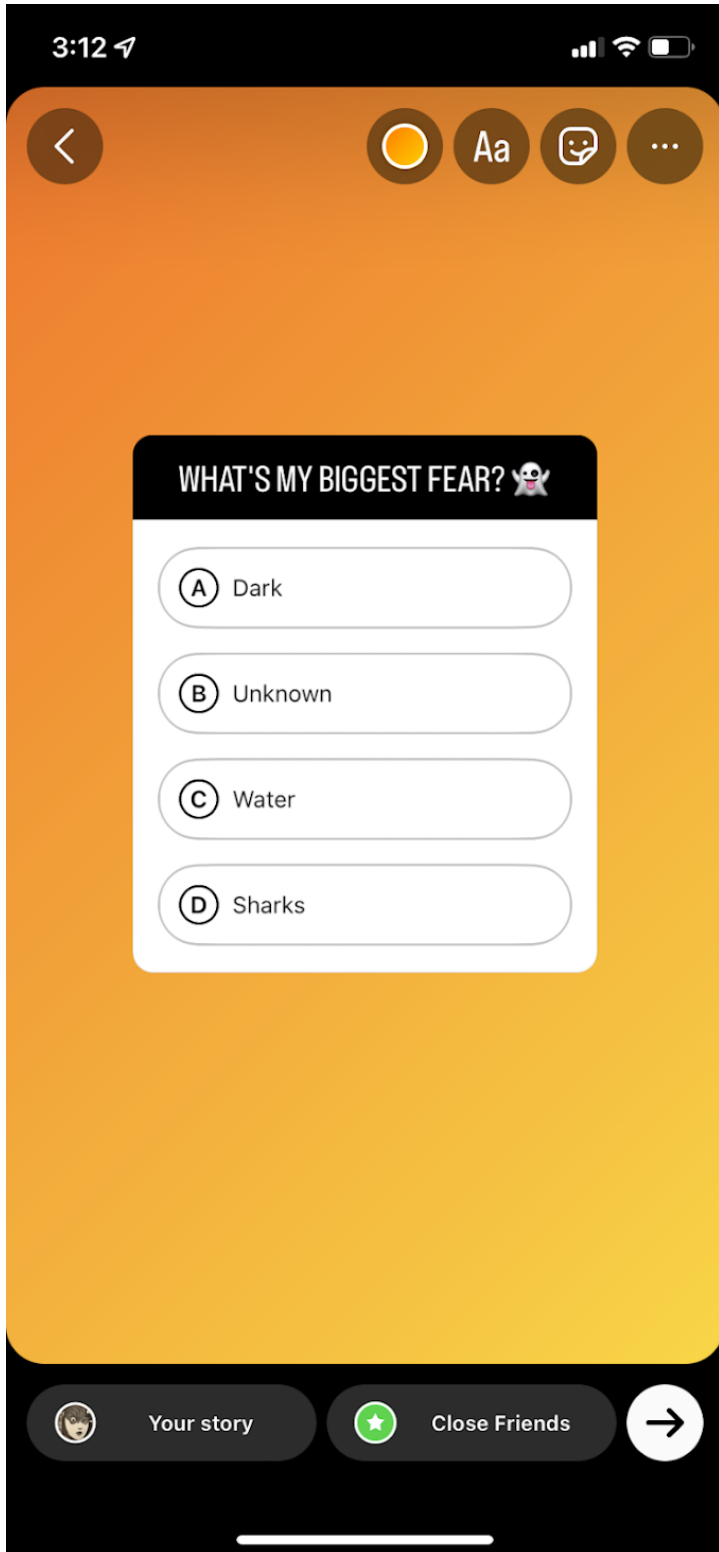
Instagram offers a ton of stickers that you can use to customize your Story. With these, you can add fun graphics and GIFs to jazz up your Stories.

Additionally, let's take a look at the key types of stickers and what you can do with them.

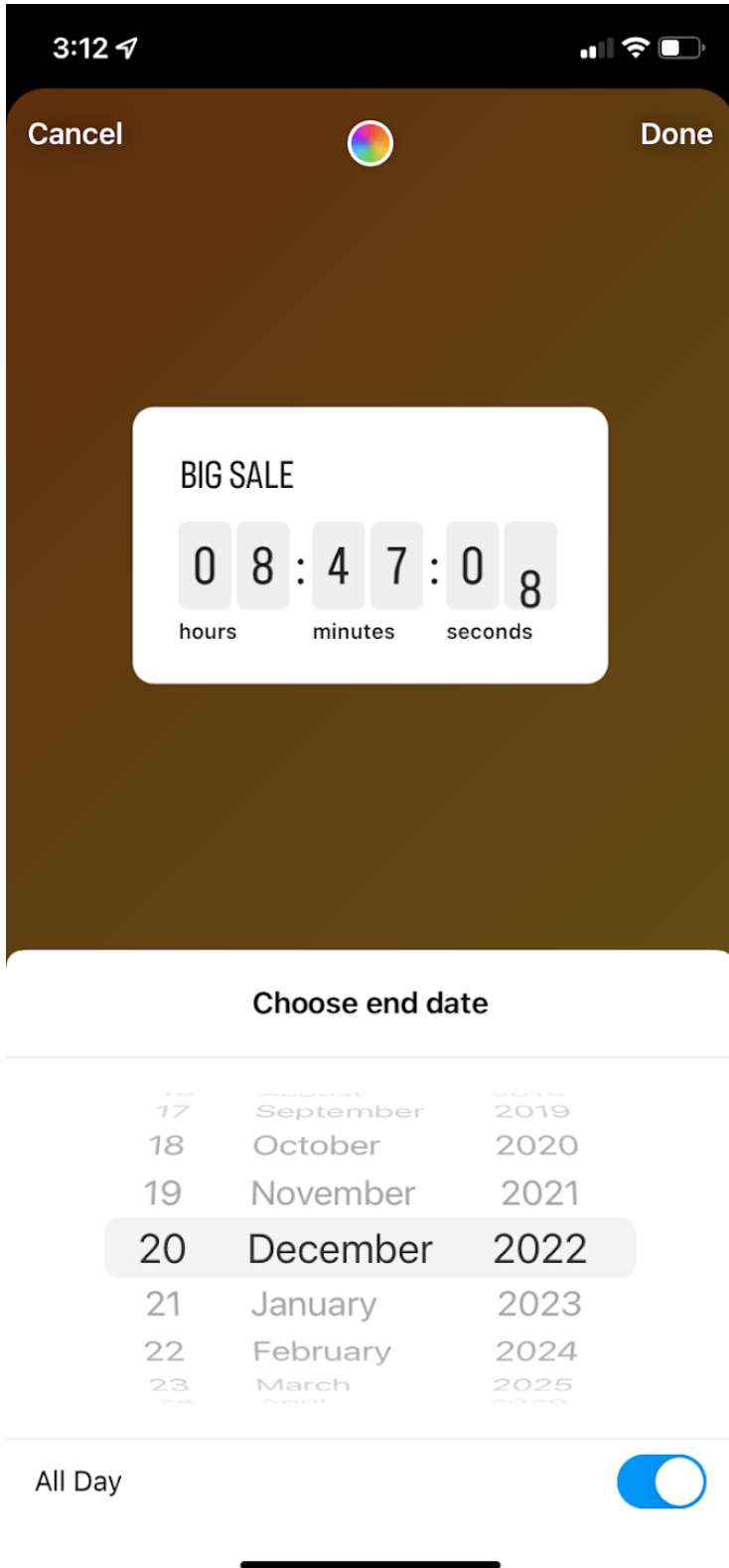
- Location – This sticker lets you add a location tag to your Story. Tap on the sticker icon and search for the place you want to tag. Select the location and this will automatically add the location to the Story.



- @Mention – This lets you mention other accounts and users in your Story. Select the sticker and enter the username of the person or account you want to tag.
- Add Yours – The “Add Yours” sticker lets you create a prompt and add a photo based on the prompt. When other users view your Story, they can tap on the prompt to contribute their own photo.
- Questions – This lets you collect questions from your followers. Some even use this to ask a question and collect answers.
- Music – With this sticker, you can choose your favorite music to add to the Story. This is a great way to keep your Story interesting with fun audio tracks from the Instagram music library.
- Poll – This sticker lets you create a poll and provide up to four answers/options. Users can cast their vote by selecting the option they want best.
- Quiz – The quiz sticker works almost like the poll feature, except you need to select one correct answer. This is a fun way to keep your audience engaged through Stories.



- **Emoji slider** – The emoji slider is a type of voting sticker. You enter a prompt or question, and users have to slide the emoji to provide an answer. For example, they may share how excited they are about an upcoming launch.
- **Link** – This sticker lets you add an external link to your Story. Tap on the icon and enter the URL, which will appear as a link in your Story. You can customize the text that will show up in place of the naked URL.
- **#Hashtag** – The hashtag sticker is pretty self-explanatory. It allows you to add a hashtag to your Story, which users can tap on like a regular Instagram hashtag in feed posts.
- **Countdown** – This sticker lets you add a countdown timer to your Story. You can name the countdown and set an end date and time. This is perfect for counting down to an upcoming event such as a product launch or a sale.

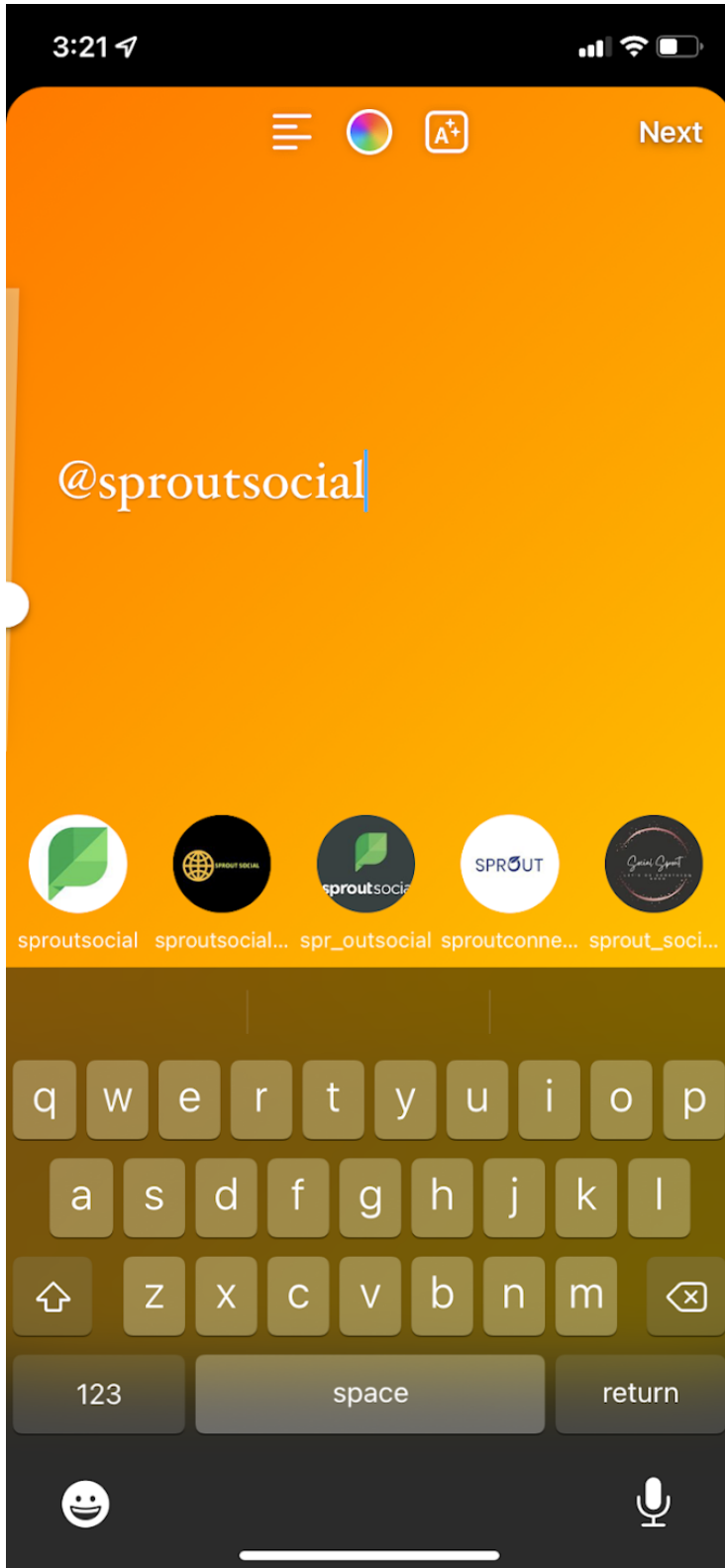




## 2. Mention and engage with other users in your Story

Mentioning other users is a great way to ensure that people see your Story and engage with it. You can mention influencers, customers, employees or even other brand accounts. This is perfect for starting conversations and getting others to hear what you have to say.

To mention another account, use the @Mention sticker from your sticker dashboard. Alternatively, you can tap on the Story to start typing and enter the “@” symbol to mention another account.

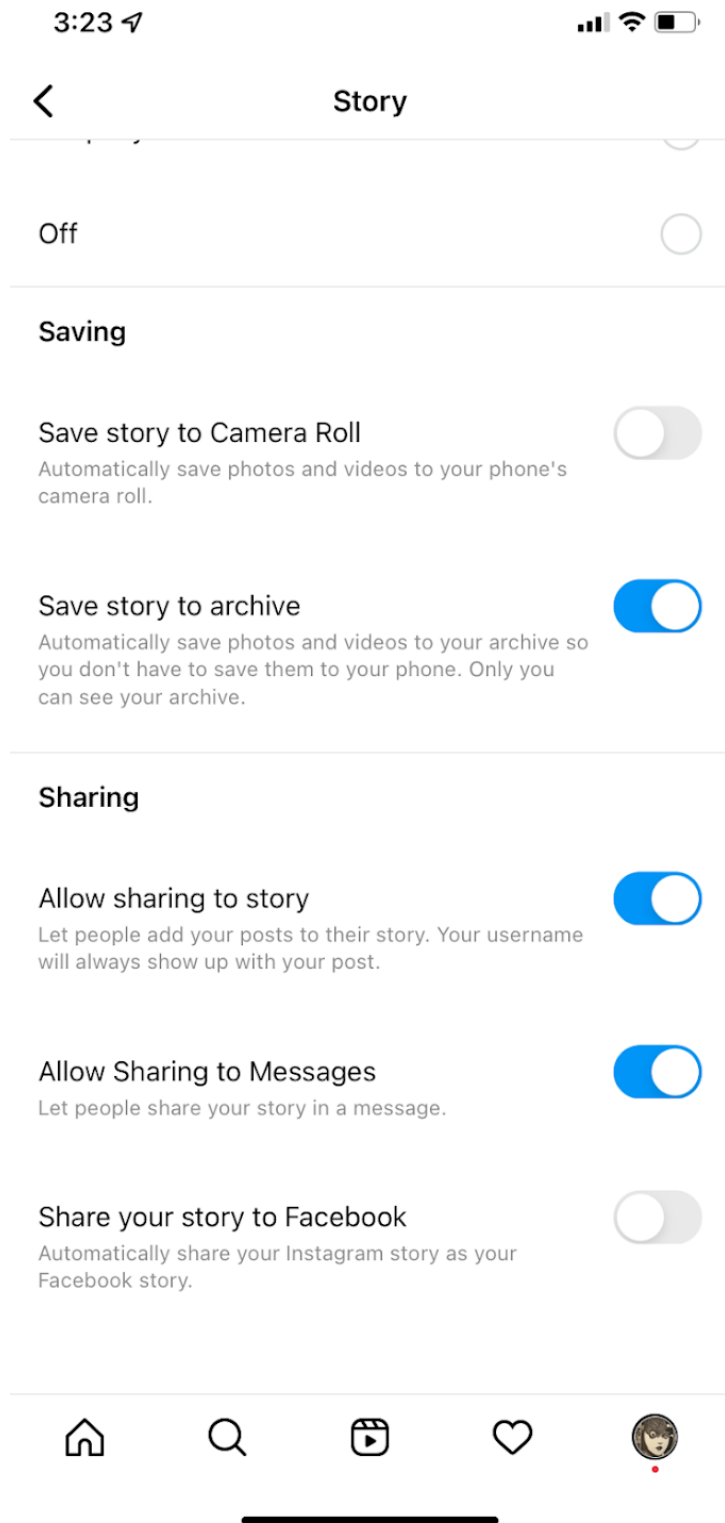


If you're in luck, the tagged users might even share the Story with their own followers. This allows you to get more views for your Stories.

### 3. Allow users to share your Story

Speaking of other users sharing your Story, give your followers the freedom to share your Story with their friends. This would enable them to share the Story via DMs, enabling you to get more Story views.

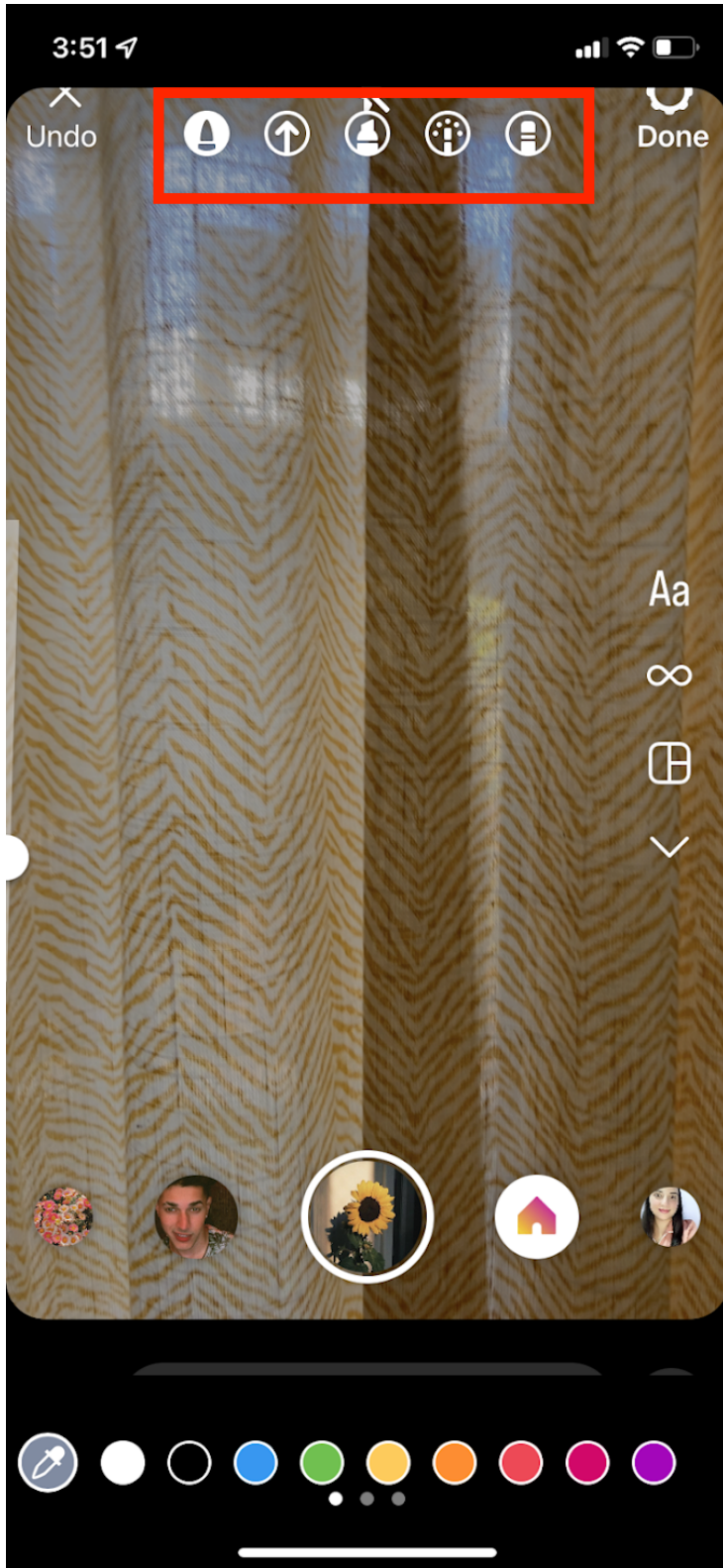
To allow other users to share your Story, go to your Privacy settings. Select “Story” and under “Sharing,” slide on the option to allow sharing to Messages.



#### 4. Get creative with Instagram Story features

One of the best parts about Instagram Stories is the ability to get as creative as you want. Since it offers so many cool features, tools and stickers, you can have fun with them to come up with eye-catching and original content.

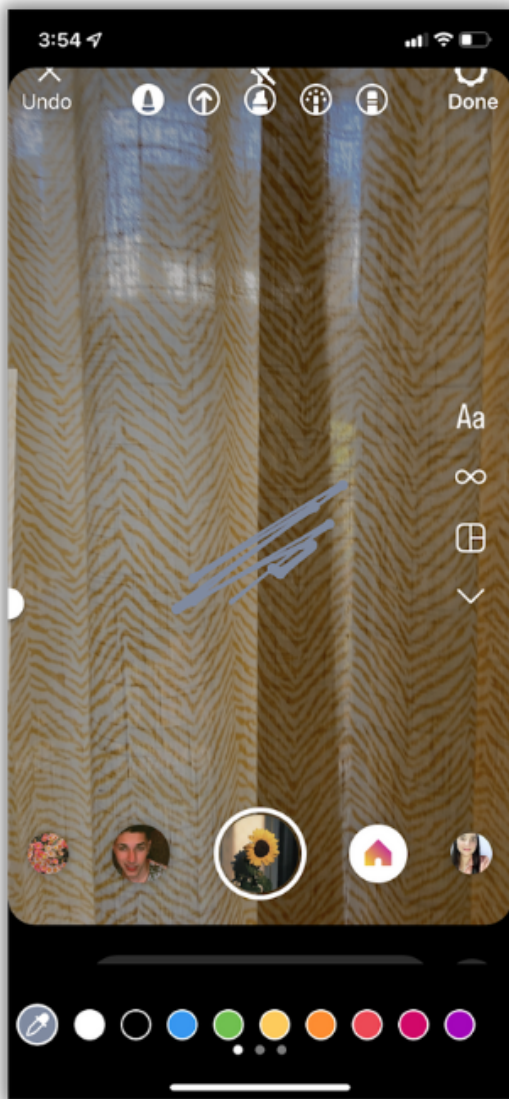
For instance, the pen tool lets you draw directly on your Story. This allows you to highlight some parts of the text or even point to specific details in your photo. You can change the color and pen style as needed.



Instagram even lets you create custom ink and background colors. So you can choose the perfect shade to match your branding guidelines or creative vision.

Just choose a photo from your camera roll that contains your desired color. Then open the pen app by selecting the “Draw” icon. Tap on the color picker icon at the bottom of the screen and drag the picker to your desired color.

If you want to use this new custom color as a background color, tap and hold the screen. This will change the entire background to the color of your choice.



## 5. Figure out your publishing frequency

A key upside of Stories is that you can publish them frequently without worrying about spamming your followers.

That said, there's no denying investment of time and resources that goes into publishing anything on a daily or near-daily basis. Consider Stories as a supplement to your regular posts without sacrificing content quality.

Once you've figured out the ideal publishing frequency for your Stories, follow it consistently. Additionally, it's important to publish your Stories at the right time when people are more likely to take notice. Try to find out the best time to post to your Instagram Stories and plan your publishing schedule accordingly.

## 6. Take full advantage of creative features, tools and formats

Beyond what we've discussed already, Instagram is consistently rolling out new features and functions to Stories.

For the sake of finding fresh opportunities to engage customers and keep up with trends, we recommend keeping a close eye on such updates.

The recent updates that Instagram has implemented to compete with TikTok are a good example. For example, you can upload trending music to your Stories and cross-post your Reels.

## 7. Keep a close eye on your Instagram Stories engagement

Watching your social analytics is a no-brainer, but Stories are often treated as an afterthought when it comes to tracking data.

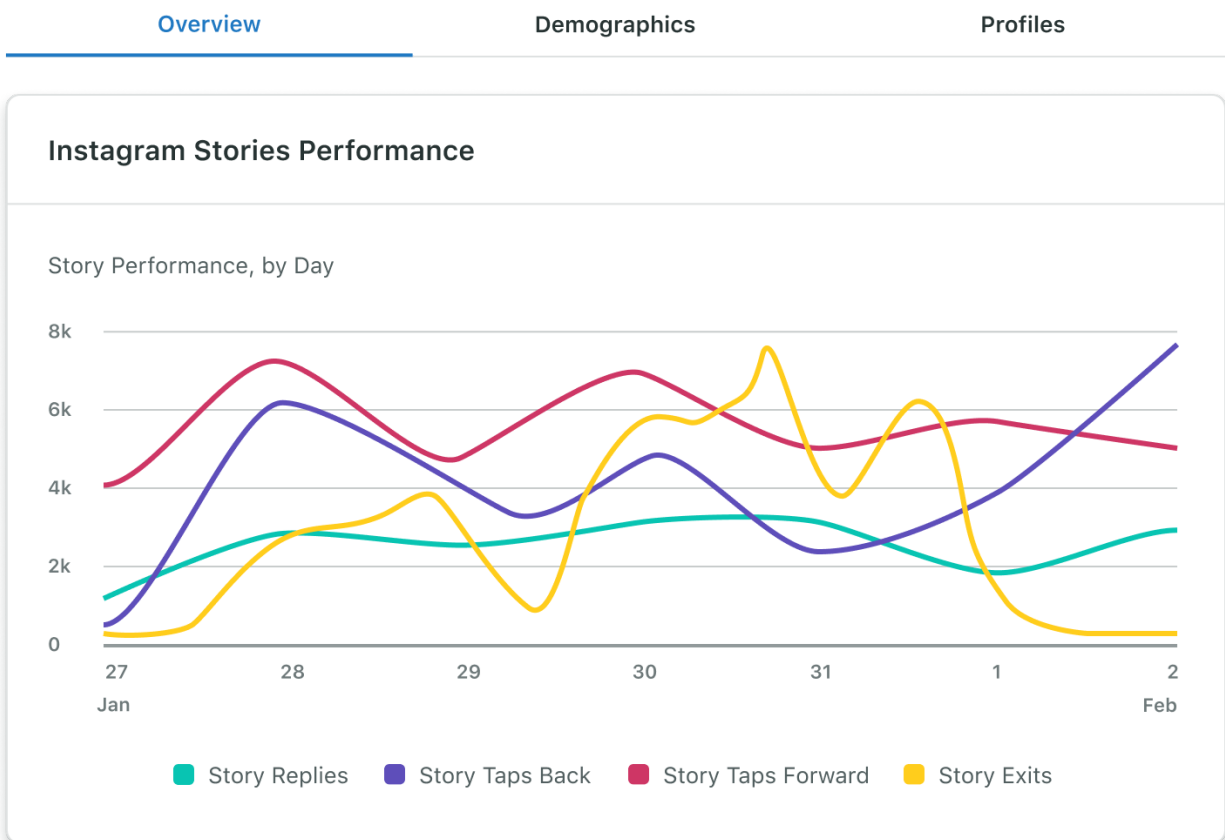


That's because Stories are so simple, right? What's there to glean from a few seconds of content?

However, consider how tracking Instagram Stories analytics can clue you in on insights such as:

- Which types of Stories receive the most views, replies and engagement
- How often you should publish Stories based on firsthand data
- How engaged your total audience is versus your Stories viewers

The good news is that Sprout Social can highlight all of the above in a simple, easy-to-read dashboard. These data points let you fine-tune your content strategy. So you can publish Stories that really resonate with your audience.



But of course, you can't understand what's working and what isn't until you start publishing Stories on the regular.

And with that, we wrap up our guide!

### **Are you making the most of your Instagram Stories?**

There's no doubt about it: Stories should be central to your Instagram strategy.

Given so much creative freedom, publishing your initial Stories might require a bit of trial and error.

But by sticking to the tips and best practices above, you can get started with Stories with a sense of confidence.

## 8.0 Laws of Gaining Followers

Instagram is the foundation of so many brands' social presence. The platform is proven to drive traffic, support sales and engage customers.

And that's why 59% of marketers plan to up their investment in Instagram this year. But if you're not thrilled with your Instagram growth and engagement, you're not alone.

### 10 ways to increase Instagram followers

Before we get into the nitty-gritty, this post is about building an organic following. And yes, the distinction matters!

Some brands want to take shortcuts when it comes to trying to get more Instagram followers. We don't pretend that pay-for-play sites exist.

That said, these services aren't worth it for brands long-term. The Instagram algorithm weeds out low-quality accounts and phony engagement from paid bots. But we'll bite: there's definitely some legwork involved in growing your audience authentically.

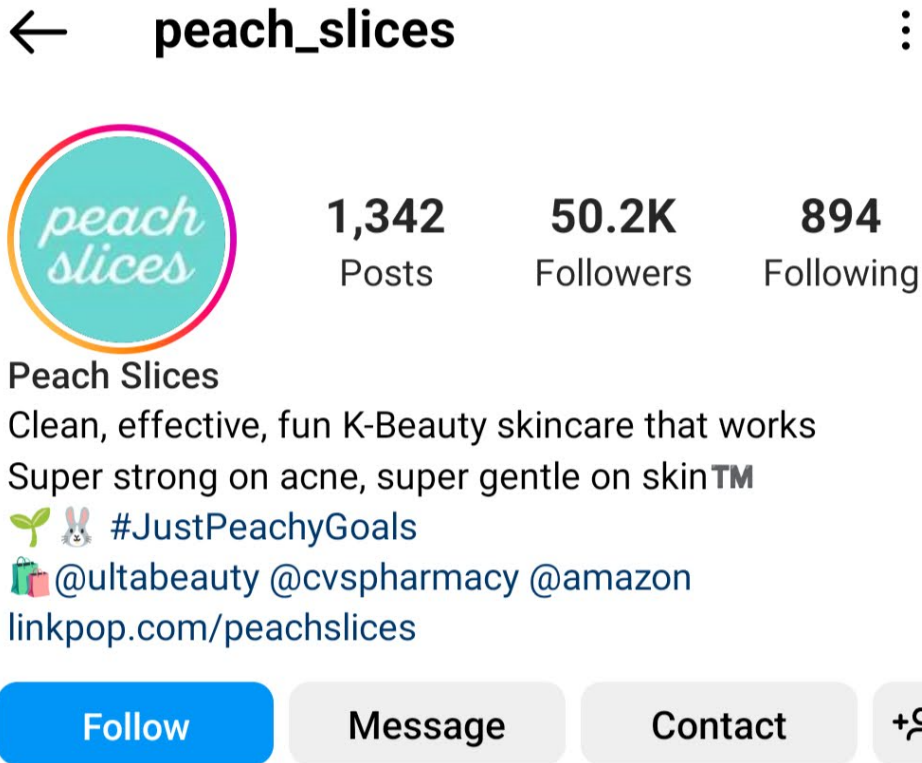
#### 1. Optimize your Instagram account

Before you worry about how to get followers, consider how your Instagram account is set up first.

Ask yourself: does your profile "look the part?" For starters, consider your:

- Your Instagram bio (including your slogan, tagline and/or a branded hashtag)
- Your profile picture

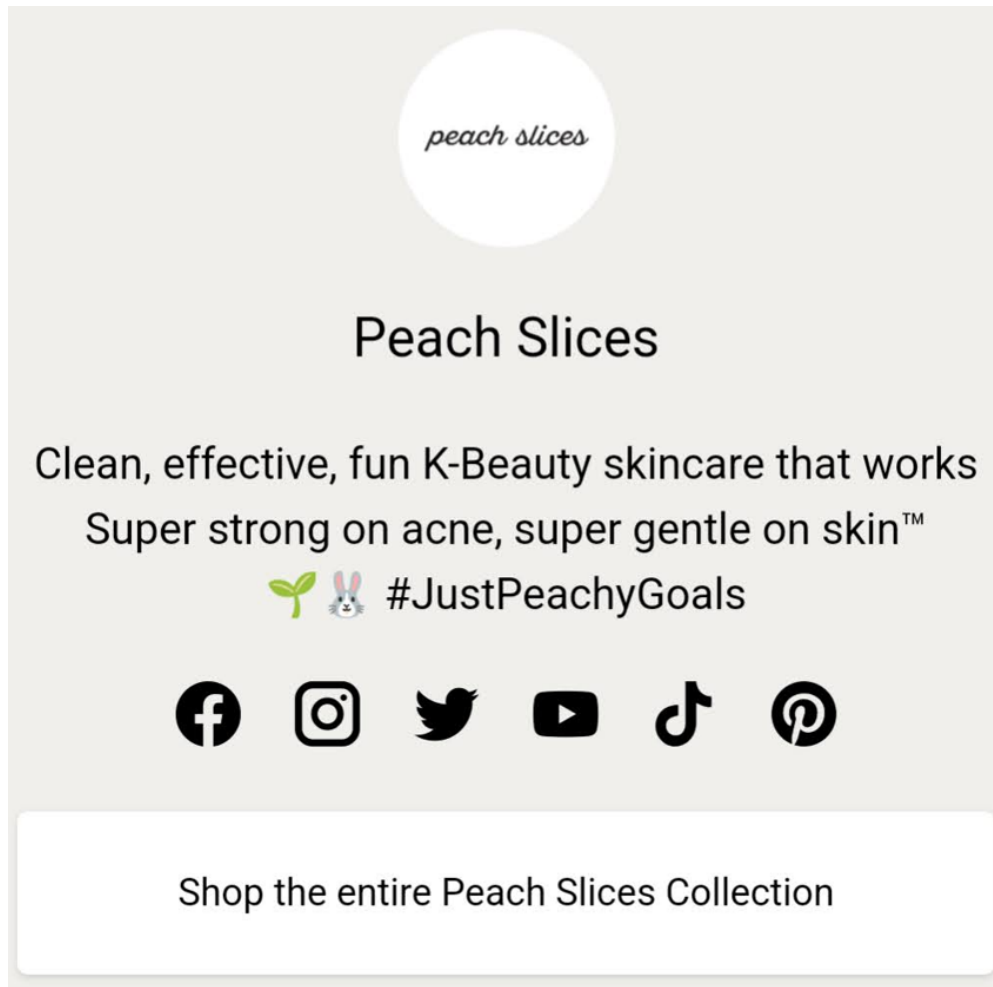
- Your bio link (and where it points to)



These details define your brand identity on Instagram. More importantly, they impact your account's discoverability. Building a follower-friendly account means:

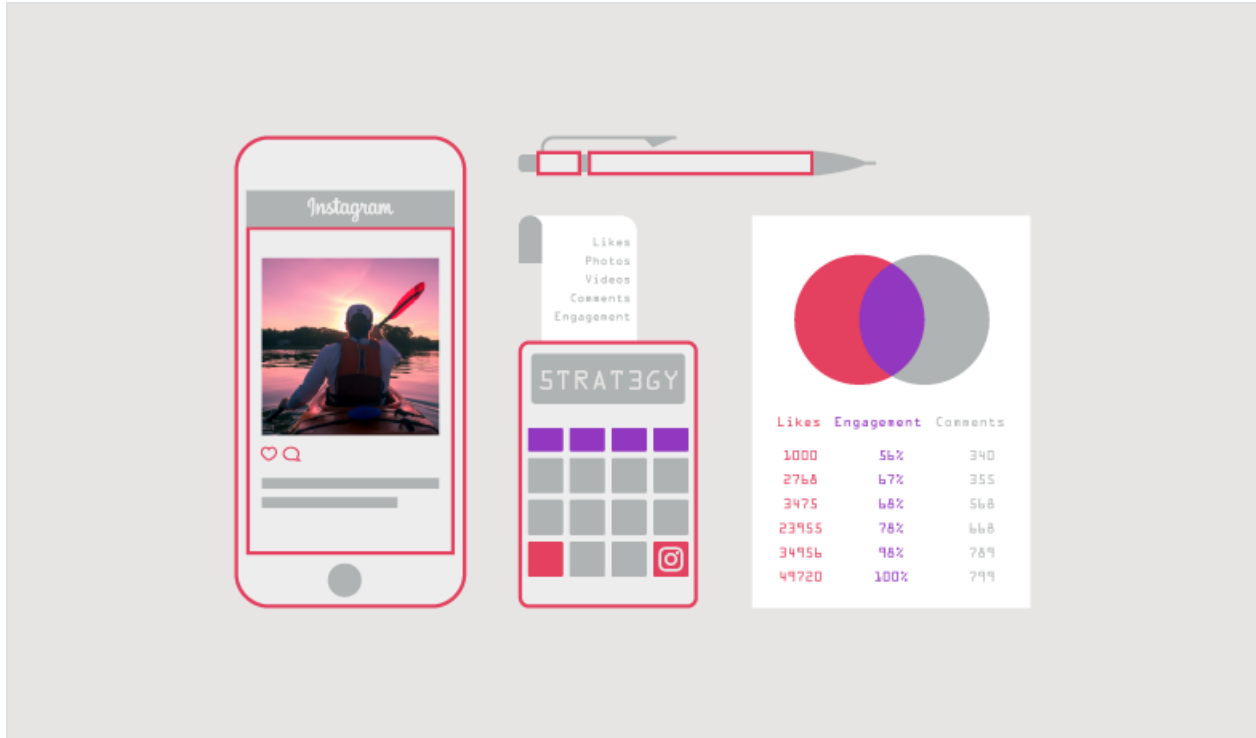
- Having a search-friendly username. Stick to either your brand name or whatever's closest to your existing social handles. If your name is too long, shorten it to a variation your audience would recognize (ex: Cold Stone Creamery's account is @coldstone).
- Making your profile picture professional. An [appropriately-sized](#) logo is ideal. Any text in your profile picture should be legible on a smartphone screen.
- Minding where you point your bio link. This is crucial for turning Instagram followers into meaningful traffic or customers. It's your only way to funnel social traffic to your site and promotions.

Linking to your homepage is fine but not always ideal. To encourage more meaningful interactions, a social landing page that points to multiple links can help.



This gives your audience total control of how they engage your business next. That means a better experience for your followers.

The best way to optimize your account is to follow a proven Instagram marketing strategy. Download our free guide to get started.



## 2. Keep a consistent content calendar

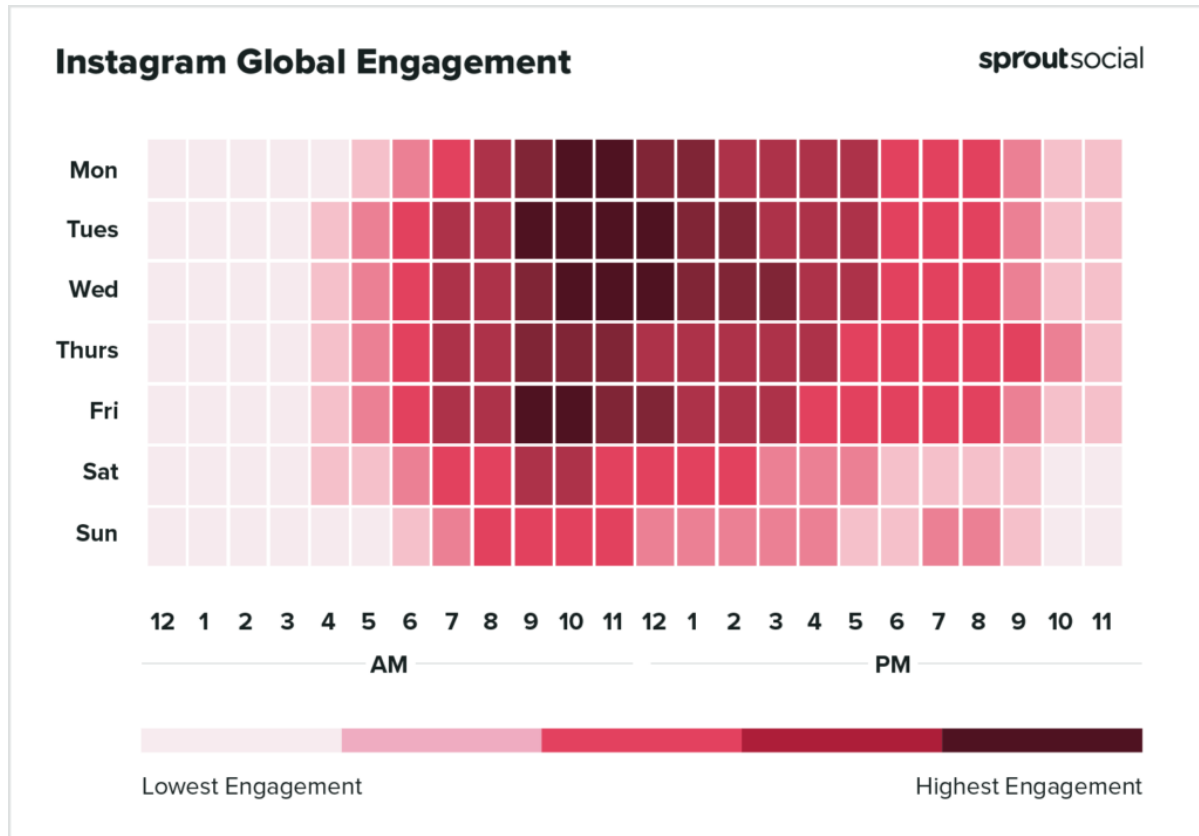
Momentum matters on Instagram. In other words, you likely won't get followers on Instagram if you post at random.

Creating content and providing value is what builds your audience. Doing so consistently is what helps you keep them. Don't let your Instagram account gather cobwebs.

That's why sticking to a regular posting schedule is crucial. In terms of when and how much to post, you don't have to stick to a set-in-stone number. Most brands post daily or near daily. This tracks our own research on how often to post as well.

For reference, below is a breakdown of the best times to post to Instagram.

“Optimal” engagement is during the mid-to-late morning and early afternoons during the week.



If you're worried about your posts not getting seen enough, we get it. Consider how features like Stories can get more eyes on your content if it wasn't seen the first time.

### 3. Schedule Instagram posts in advance

There's no denying that brands are at the mercy of the Instagram algorithm for reach. Still, posting at the right times can still give your posts more visibility. Anything you can do to maximize engagement is a plus.

This speaks to the value of scheduling Instagram content. With Sprout's newest tools, brands can schedule Stories, Carousels, Reels and Posts.

## 4. Engage with customers, brand advocates and influencers

Figuring out how to get more Instagram followers means engaging your audience. And one of the best ways to do that is through responding to and republishing their posts.

Enter the power of user-generated content. UGC campaigns build social proof by showing followers you're invested in them. For example, Drunk Elephant regularly regrams their followers' posts. They gather content with their [#BareWithUs](#) and [#DrunkBreak](#) hashtags.

Partnering with [influencers](#) with an established following is another way to grow your own audience. Content creators can get your brand in front of your target audience and build ongoing awareness for your products.

## 5. Avoid fake Instagram followers

There's a big difference between fake and legitimate followers on Instagram. We get it, too. For the sake of quick growth, it might be tempting to purchase followers.

But the drawbacks outweigh the benefits 100%. Why? Because fake Instagram followers...

- Confuse your potential organic followers. An inactive, low-engagement account with a big following is suspicious. This can be a turn-off for fans that'd otherwise follow you and engage.
- Provide no monetary value to your business. Think about it. Your bot followers can't buy your stuff, can they?



- Generate no buzz: If you have 10,000 fake followers, how many are going to engage with your posts? Does it really even matter if your posts are brimming with spam comments?

Real people have the ability to share, like, comment and engage with your Instagram posts. Additionally, real followers actually appreciate the time you spend interacting with them.

Demonstrating this kind of authenticity is much more powerful and long-lasting, rather than resorting to buying instagram likes or other ineffective tactics.



For example, Lush Cosmetics takes the time to answer questions and engage followers all the time. This results in customers regularly returning to share shout-outs and positive comments.

## 6. Showcase your Instagram everywhere you can

Don't be shy about promoting your Instagram if more followers are your goal.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to promoting your 'gram, either. Here are a few ideas:

- Add social media icons to your website and marketing emails. Social media icons make it easier for people to find your business and help you connect with customers.
- Feature an Instagram feed on your homepage or product pages. Many ecommerce brands have dedicated UGC feeds on-site (see below).
- Reshare Instagram-specific content or announcements on other social channels. For example, you could talk about an upcoming IG Live via TikTok or Facebook.

## As seen on Instagram

See how our products look in real homes! Share your photos on Instagram with #MyIKEAUSA or tag @IKEAUSA for a chance to be seen here!



## 7. Post content that followers actually want to see

Easier said than done, we know.

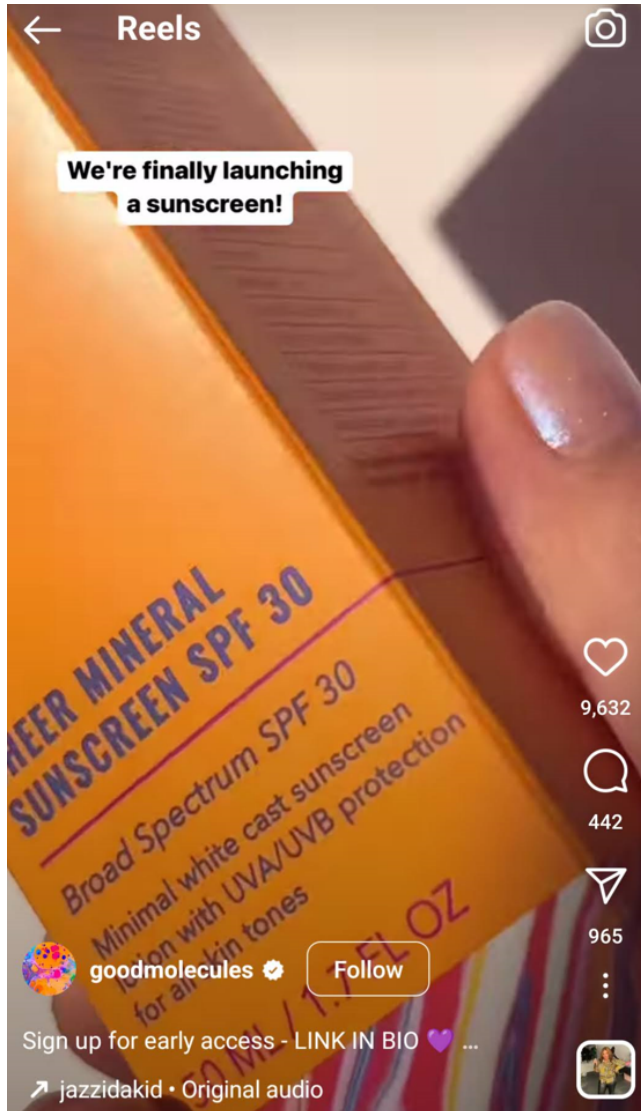
Filters. Captions. Content types. Post times. That doesn't even scratch the surface.

There are so many variables to consider, right? It doesn't help that Instagram's algorithm is fickle. What works for one brand might not work for the next in terms of format and timing.

For example, some brands swear by Carousels. Others are all-in on Reels. Both approaches can work. You'll quickly find on Instagram that some content performs better than others. This is why testing is so important.

Be confident in your content strategy by analyzing those variables we mentioned earlier.

And if you're unsure where to start, try analyzing your competitors. A staggering 90% of brands say that social media data helps them keep up with competing social accounts.



## 8. Make meaningful conversation with your audience

Food for thought: 60% of marketers use Instagram as a service channel.

The platform is perfect for going back and forth with followers. Likewise, many popular post ideas center around asking questions and engaging in a dialogue for a reason.

Off-the-cuff questions, shipping concerns or praise for products are all fair game from followers. Check out how Cometeer responds to all of the above on their Instagram posts:



## Comments



**chelsea.dickey** Love cometeer!! Do you have any holiday coffee recipes to go along with the capsules? Peppermint mocha? Pumpkin spiced latte?



2w Reply Send



**cometeer** Great suggestion! We have a holiday collection dropping soon with holiday recipes and exciting roasts. We'd love for you to check it out: <https://cometeer.com/holidaycollection>.



2w 1 like Reply Send



**kaityhollway** Do you have any decaf varieties?



2w Reply Send



**cometeer** We do! Feel free to order here: <https://cometeer.com/products/pilot-program/decaf>



2w 1 like Reply Send



## Comments



**yassine1973** I need someone to PLEASE post me this to Australia 🇺🇸 @cometeer



6d Reply Send



**cometeer**  @yassine1973 Right now we're limited to shipping within the continental US due to the nature of our frozen product. Sorry about that! If you follow us @cometeer, we'll be sure to announce when we're available in Australia!



5d 1 like Reply Send



**yassine1973** @cometeer Will do! Thanks



5d Reply Send

Being supportive and responding promptly shows people that you care.

You'd be surprised at how your Instagram followers increase once you start acting more personable. Our Index research shows that 89% of consumers will buy from a brand after following them on social. Every interaction counts.

Again, try to respond to as many questions or comments as possible. Doing so could make or break someone becoming a long-term follower or a customer.

### 9. Find hashtags where your followers hang out

Instagram hashtags have been a staple of the platform, like, forever.

That said, they don't hold as much weight as they used to.



Dumping hashtags into your posts isn't going to net you any new followers. Especially when there's so much noise on the platform.

Be proactive by focusing on industry-specific hashtags relevant to your customers. For example, Lashify regularly posts content to the #LashEducation hashtag. Tags are less general and competitive than #beauty.

Becoming more visible within these types of tags is meaningful for brands in the right niche.

← #lasheducation



347K posts

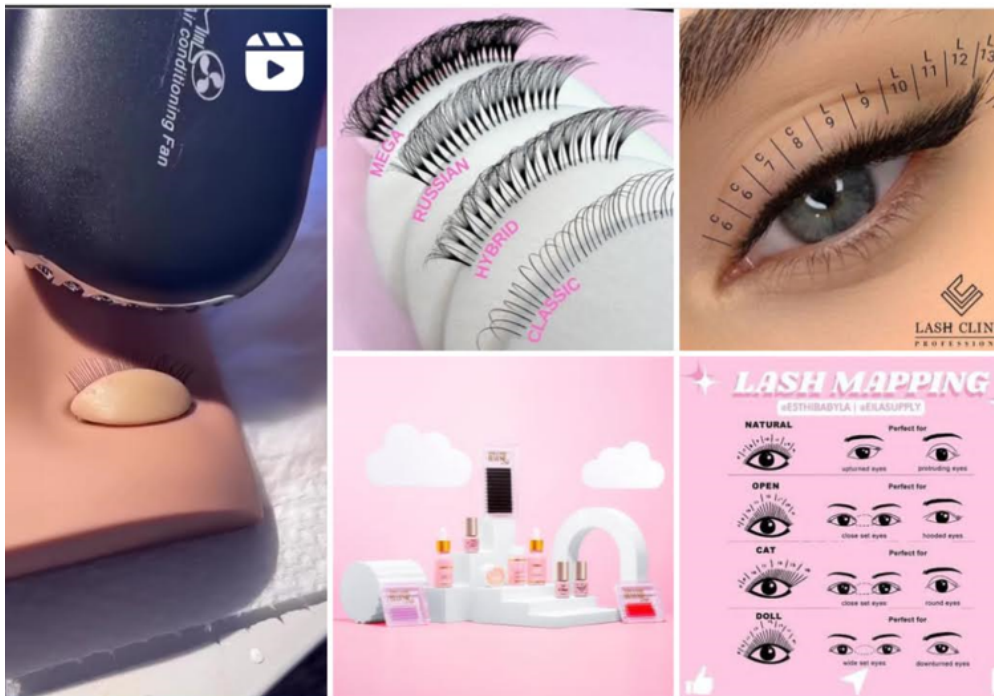
Follow

See a few top posts each week

Top

Recent

Reels



### 10. Take steps to delight your Instagram followers

When you make your Instagram followers happy, you'll see the payoff in audience growth. The best Instagram accounts have fans and communities (hint: not just followers).

The tips below are the building blocks for a follower-friendly account. Put them into practice in a way that aligns with your brand voice and values. Avoid coming across as needy, solesy sales-driven or robotic at all costs.

So much of how to get Instagram followers for free is about creating an authentic community. For many accounts, this means building customer relationships.

Content that highlights your personality and the humans behind your brand is a plus.

This includes:

- Inspirational content
- Humorous content
- Re-sharing UGC with unique captions
- Storytelling posts
- Behind-the-scenes photos and videos
- Posts that raise awareness for social causes

## **How to get more Instagram followers (the wrong way!)**

Disclaimer: Sprout Social does not endorse purchasing Instagram followers. We don't recommend services that sell followings or "Likes."

As the social space becomes more crowded and competitive, brands are willing to take risks for the sake of instant results.

We'll say it again: brands shouldn't buy Instagram followers. Nobody should!

## **Why you shouldn't buy followers on Instagram**

Here are some reasons why buying followers to grow your account is a serious mistake.

## **Your real followers know what fake followers look like**

Social consumers are getting savvier. Privacy concerns and social scammers have made people hyper-aware of weird activity. In short, people today are spam-detectors.

A sudden follower spike is a red flag.

Not to mention having bots stink up your account with endless spam followers. This all damages your reputation and keeps you from growing an authentic Instagram following.

## **Fake followers bring nothing to the table**

You're probably worried about your Instagram metrics and understandably so.

That said, your follower count doesn't mean much if your "followers" don't drive engagement.

You might look "bigger" at a glance but who cares? Consider how your engagement rate on the platform will suffer if your follower count is inflated.

## **If nothing else, buying Instagram followers violates TOS**

No surprises here.

Consider how Meta has taken direct action against buying engagement in the past. They've gone as far as to shut down companies that sell likes. That's because this practice violates the platform's terms of service: