

3.4. Using Instagram Stories, Reels, and IGTV to Grow Your Account

Using Instagram Stories, Reels, and IGTV strategically can be an effective way to grow your Instagram account. These features offer different formats and engagement opportunities that can help you reach a wider audience and keep them engaged.

1. Instagram Stories: Stories are temporary posts that disappear after 24 hours. They appear at the top of your followers' feeds and allow you to share photos, videos, text, and interactive elements like polls and quizzes. Stories offer a great way to showcase behind-the-scenes content, share updates, promote limited-time offers, and provide glimpses into your brand's personality.

You can also use engaging features like stickers, filters, and interactive elements to make your Stories more captivating. By consistently sharing Stories, you can keep your audience engaged and encourage them to visit your profile or website for more.

2. Instagram Reels: Reels are short-form videos, up to 60 seconds in length, that can be enhanced with music, effects, and filters. Reels allow you to showcase your creativity and entertain your audience.

They also have the potential to reach a wider audience through the Explore page, as Instagram algorithmically suggests Reels based on user preferences. By creating engaging and entertaining Reels, you can attract new followers, increase your reach, and ultimately drive more traffic to your account.

3. IGTV (Instagram TV): IGTV is a feature that allows you to share longer videos, up to 60 minutes for verified accounts and 10 minutes for others.

Unlike Stories and Reels, IGTV videos can be more in-depth and provide a platform for you to share tutorials, interviews, webinars, or any other content with more substance.

IGTV videos can also be shared on your feed and in your Stories, reaching a broader audience.

3.4.1 Utilizing Video Content

What works best for videos?

“Our top videos on Instagram over the last year have been Reels. Specifically, Reels that inspire and offer immediate value for viewers. The shorter the video the better, but don’t sacrifice good storytelling. Consider what’s absolutely essential for viewers to get out of a video you’re producing.” - Olivia Jepson, Social Media Strategist





Repurposing video in new formats and on new channels can expand your audience, give you more content and increase opportunities for engagement.


7. Use Stories


With 500+ million people using Stories daily, they get your content in front of an active audience and beat the algorithmic feed. Break up your longer videos into Stories.

Build a step-by-step Story guide, a listicle viewers can tap through, and feature the top five moments or quotes from a longer video—get creative.



Pro tip: “Resharing Reels/videos on Stories almost always gives it more life and views. Consider sharing it more than once across a week or a few weeks to capture different people within your audience.”


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WHEN WE
COMPILE
OUR TRENDS LIST
RIGHT IT'S
OUR LOOK INTO

  **LISTEN NOW**

sproutsocial 

Reply to sproutsocial... 

8. Build Story Content into Highlights

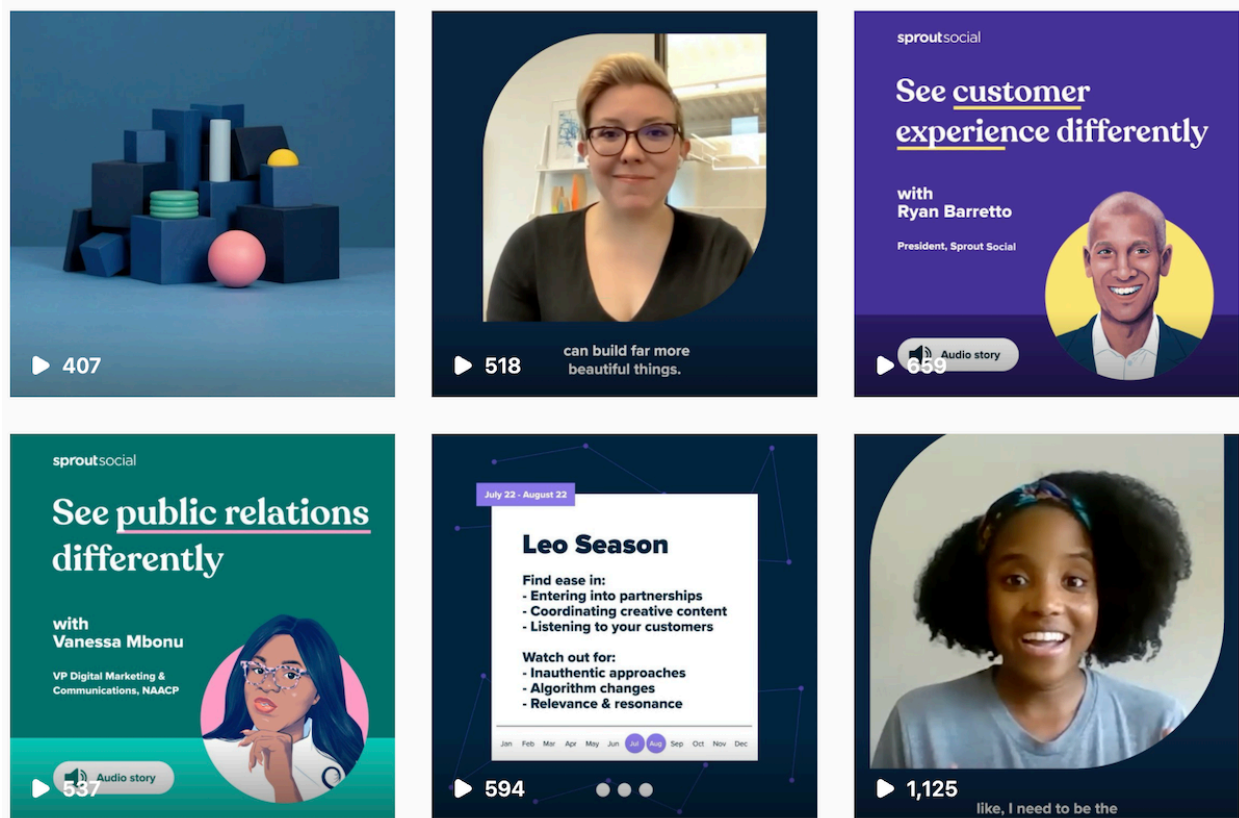
Turning Stories new and old into Highlights gives your ephemeral content new life. Use Highlights as areas to tell different stories, and choose a Highlight cover that brings your brand colors and graphics to life.

9. Turn longer videos into short-form

2021 data found 58% of viewers will watch a whole video if it's under a minute, but only 24% of viewers will watch an entire video that's more than 20 minutes. Repurpose longer videos—like former IGTV or Live content—as shorter clips.

10. Spruce up your video with branding

Give old videos a refresh by posting them with branded frames, logos, title cards, graphics and more with an app like Canva.



11. Get new life out of your Lives

You can share your Instagram Lives—both new and old ones from your archive—as Instagram Videos in your feed. Share your entire Live, or break it up into short, shareable chunks.

12. Make your old videos more accessible

Adding captions to your videos is a best practice when it comes to accessibility. But did you know 79% of videos online are watched without the sound on? If you have captionless videos you're reposting or repurposing into Reels or Stories, be sure to add captions.



14. Create Instagram Guides

As defined by Instagram, [Guides](#) are “a curated flow of posts with commentary—which is great for step-by-step guides, tips and recommendations.” These curated posts can be yours or from other accounts. Include existing video posts in a Guide to use this relatively new feature.

15. Re-share your greatest hits

If enough time has passed—around six months or more, ideally—reshare old, successful content as a throwback, reminder or as a culturally-relevant piece. This will please existing fans who recognize the video, as well as new fans who are seeing it for the first time.

3.5. Building a Strong Instagram Community

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.

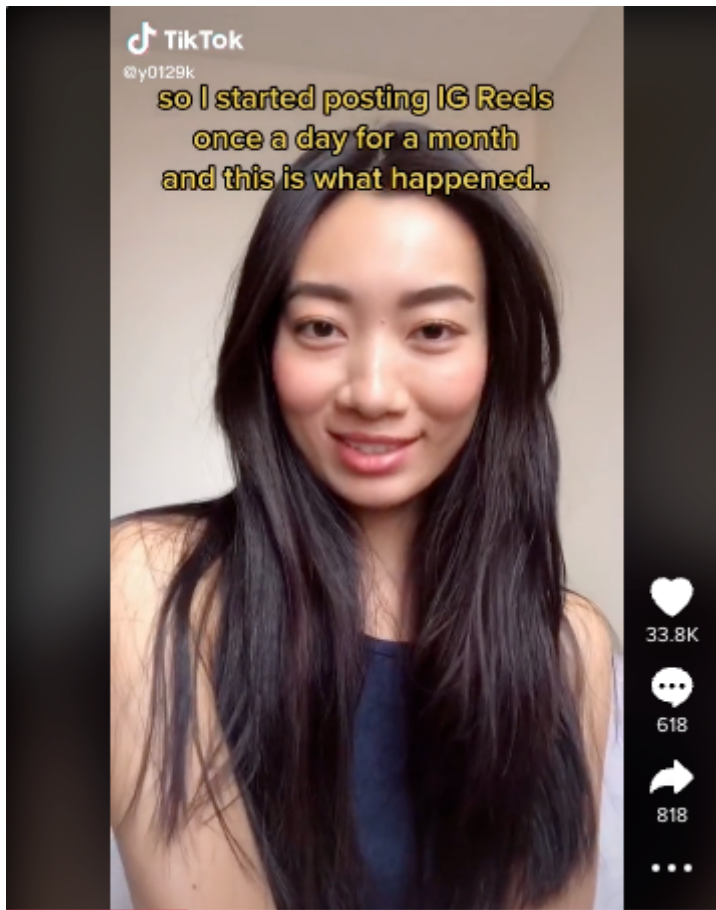
Instagram Reels launched in 2020 and slowly rolled out to all users throughout 2021. This micro-video addition to Instagram was created to compete with Snapchat and TikTok and has continued to grow in popularity.

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 2024 and, despite recent news of content discovery becoming a focus in 2024, it seems like the platform is definitely continuing to prioritize this type of content.

However, does that also impact an Instagram account's overall reach? One content creator even shared on her TikTok that she experimented with posting Reels to

Instagram once every day for a month and she grew her follower count by 33% (from 8500 to 11.4k).



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.

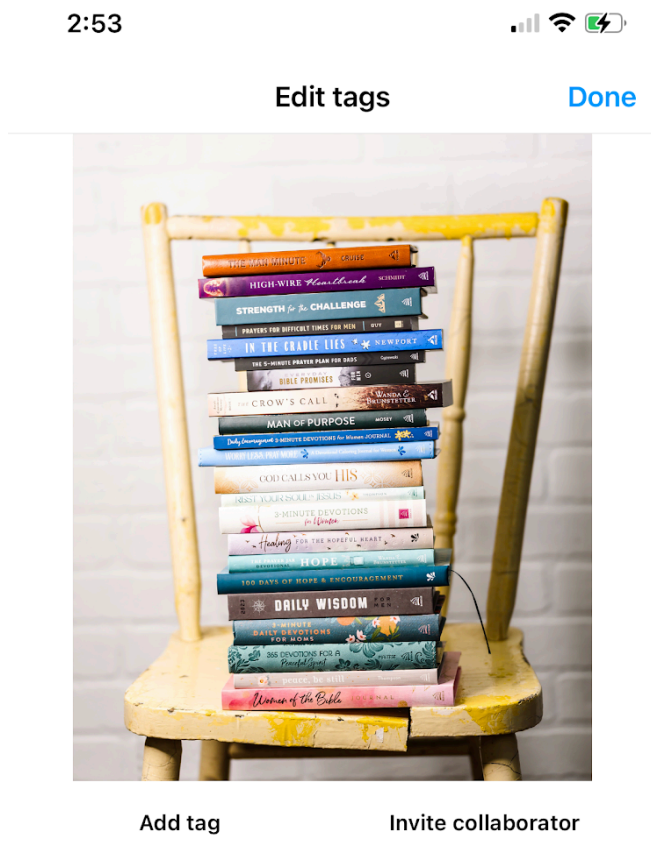
Tap on the “Add Yours” option from the available stickers and type in a prompt. This could be something like “What are you reading?” or “Outfit of the day,” or “Your favorite feature.” Make sure the prompt is relevant to your business but simple enough for someone to want to share their own photo on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



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.

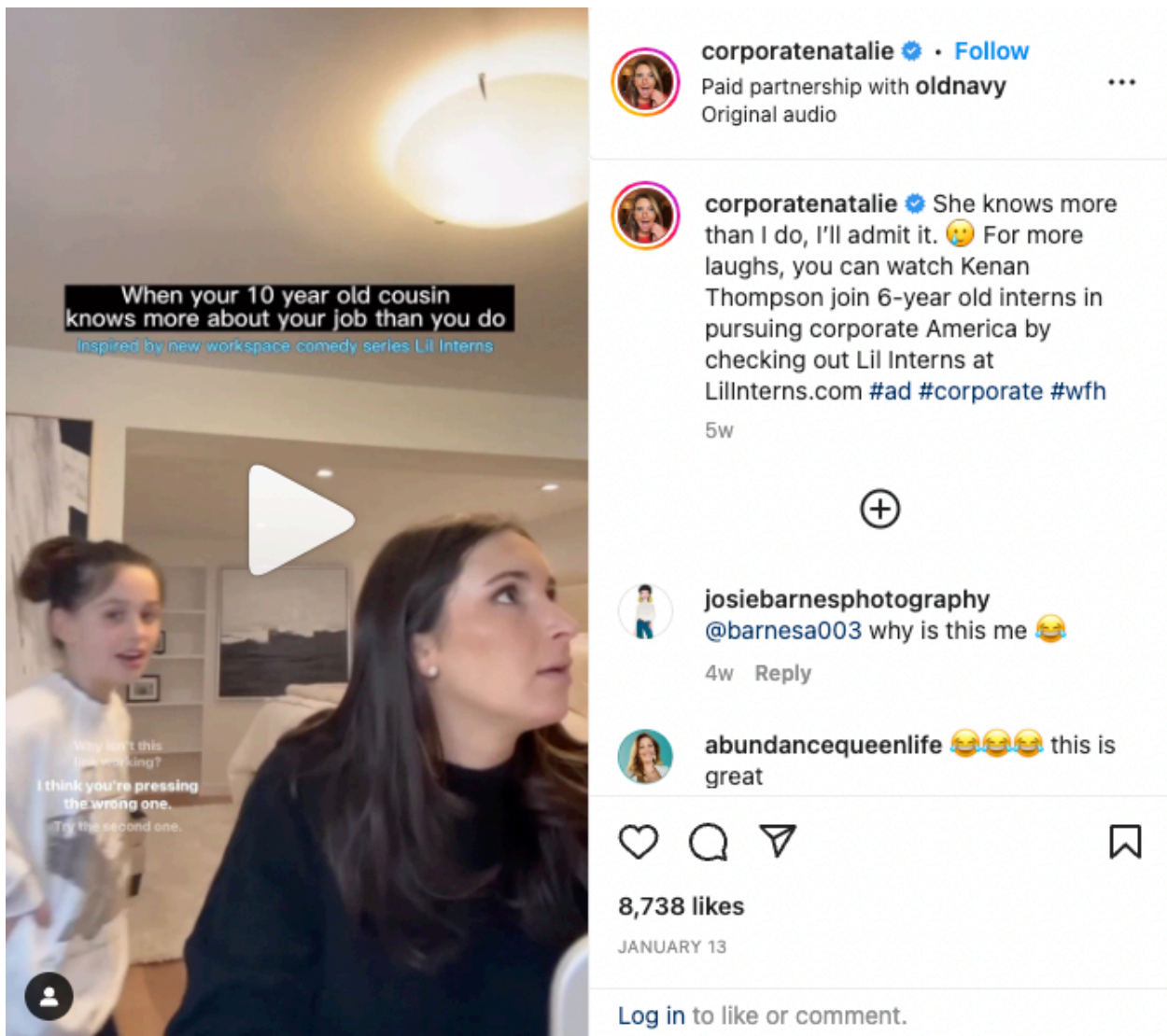
Here's an example of what this would look like in action below, where a travel guide partnered with a local brewery to host an Instagram giveaway.



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.



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Paid partnership with **oldnavy**
Original audio

When your 10 year old cousin knows more about your job than you do
inspired by new workspace comedy series Lil Interns

Why isn't this you making?
I think you're pressing the wrong one.
Try the second one.

corporatenatalie She knows more than I do, I'll admit it. 😂 For more laughs, you can watch Kenan Thompson join 6-year old interns in pursuing corporate America by checking out Lil Interns at LilInterns.com #ad #corporate #wfh
5w

josiebarnesphotography
@barnesa003 why is this me 😂
4w Reply

abundancequeenlife 😂😂😂 this is great

8,738 likes
JANUARY 13

Log in to like or comment.

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 2024 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 2024.

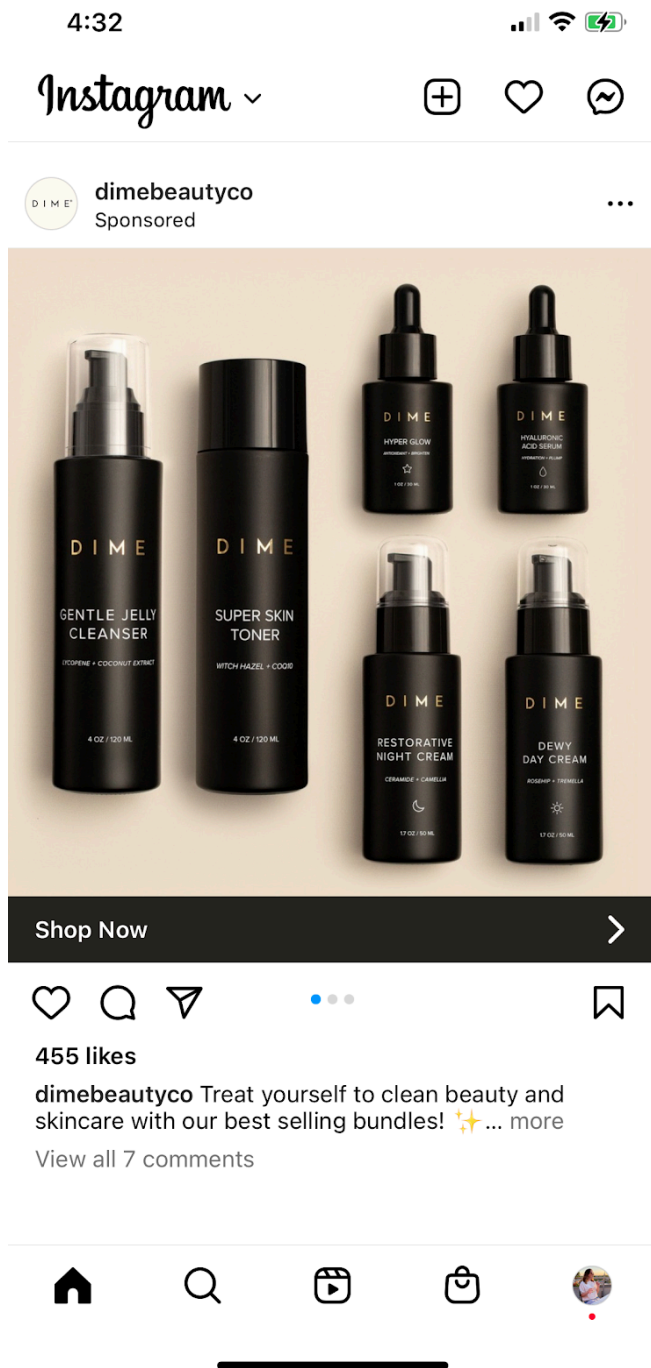
In this social justice era, we've also seen the onset of a number of social justice Instagram accounts like [@so.informed](#) and [@impact](#) that share news and updates from the US and around the world. These [social-justice slideshows](#) help users learn and spread awareness about causes that matter 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 2024.

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 2024 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.

Create carousel posts that tell a story, such as products from a new launch or an educational slideshow.

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 2024. 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.