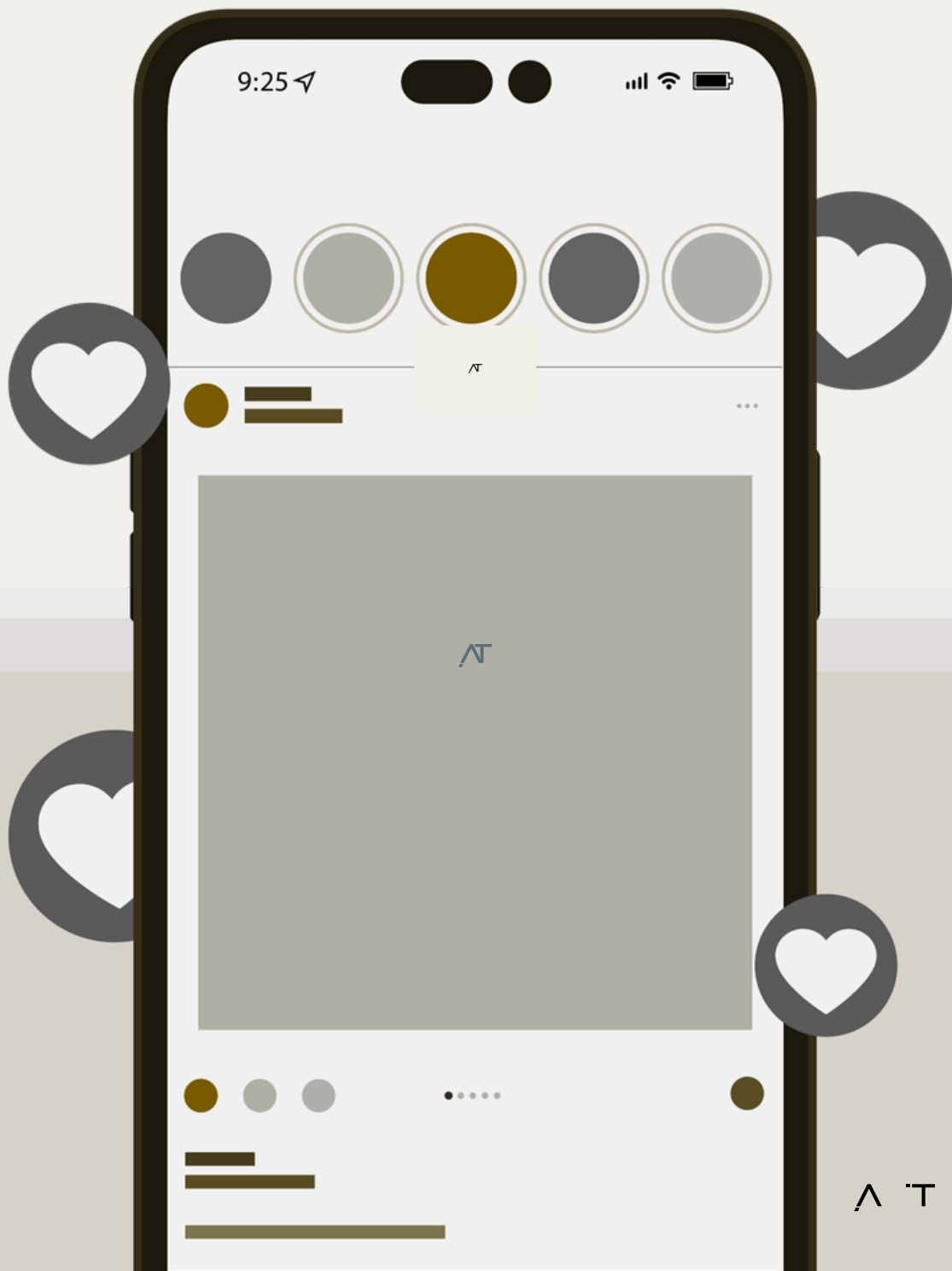


How to Use Instagram for Business

by Andrea Gomez



A T R I U M

ANDREA IS A SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERT WITH 10.9K INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

ABOUT



Andrea Gómez, known as @motivandie, is a social media micro-influencer and digital strategist specializing in brand growth through innovative content and trend-driven marketing. With 10.9K followers on Instagram and 1.2K on TikTok, she has helped brands gain exposure and turn visibility into real sales.

As part of Atrium Creative Agency, Andrea brings her expertise in engagement-focused strategies, viral content creation, and audience connection to help businesses stand out. Passionate about crafting impactful content, she continuously explores new techniques to maximize reach and drive results.

This "Instagram for Business" eBook is packed with Andrea's top insights to help you optimize your Instagram strategy and grow your brand.

ATRIUMVISUAL.STUDIO

Table of Contents

3	Introduction
4	Identifying goals creating a strategy
6	Engagement and followers
9	Square pix to video: Insta today
11	Instagram: The Platform In-depth
38	Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Doing it for the 'gram, or is the 'gram doing it for you?

When you think of Instagram, what comes to mind? Trendsetting influencers showcasing artfully plated dishes? Breathtaking travel shots—golden beaches, vibrant city nights—that spark wanderlust? Or perhaps engaging makeup tutorials, viral memes, and impeccably curated fashion editorials?

These common tropes are only scratching the surface of the platform's potential. Instagram today is a huge social media channel, with an estimated **1.07 billion monthly active users** who are each looking for their own niche content to engage with. You can guarantee that your customers are following accounts they love on Instagram, and if you want your brand to be seen then you should be there, too.

There's no one size fits all approach to success on Instagram. It's more than just growing a follower count—the platform's ever evolving algorithm demands a thoughtful, adaptable strategy. The right approach drives tangible business results like increased revenue, while also fostering deeper, less measurable wins—like building a loyal, engaged community.

In this guide, you'll learn the ins and outs of Instagram and how to harness the power of this intricate social media platform. Find out how each feature can be used effectively to reach your ideal audience, and the best practices to make Instagram work for your business.



Identifying goals and creating a strategy

Your Instagram strategy should include specific ways to use the features of the platform to deliver a great experience. That will differ based on your industry, your objectives, and of course, your bandwidth. Are you trying to increase your brand visibility by driving followers to your company profile? Do you want to use Instagram for community building and connecting with existing customers? Is there a product or service you're trying to sell through the platform? Each of these goals requires a holistic approach to ensure success.

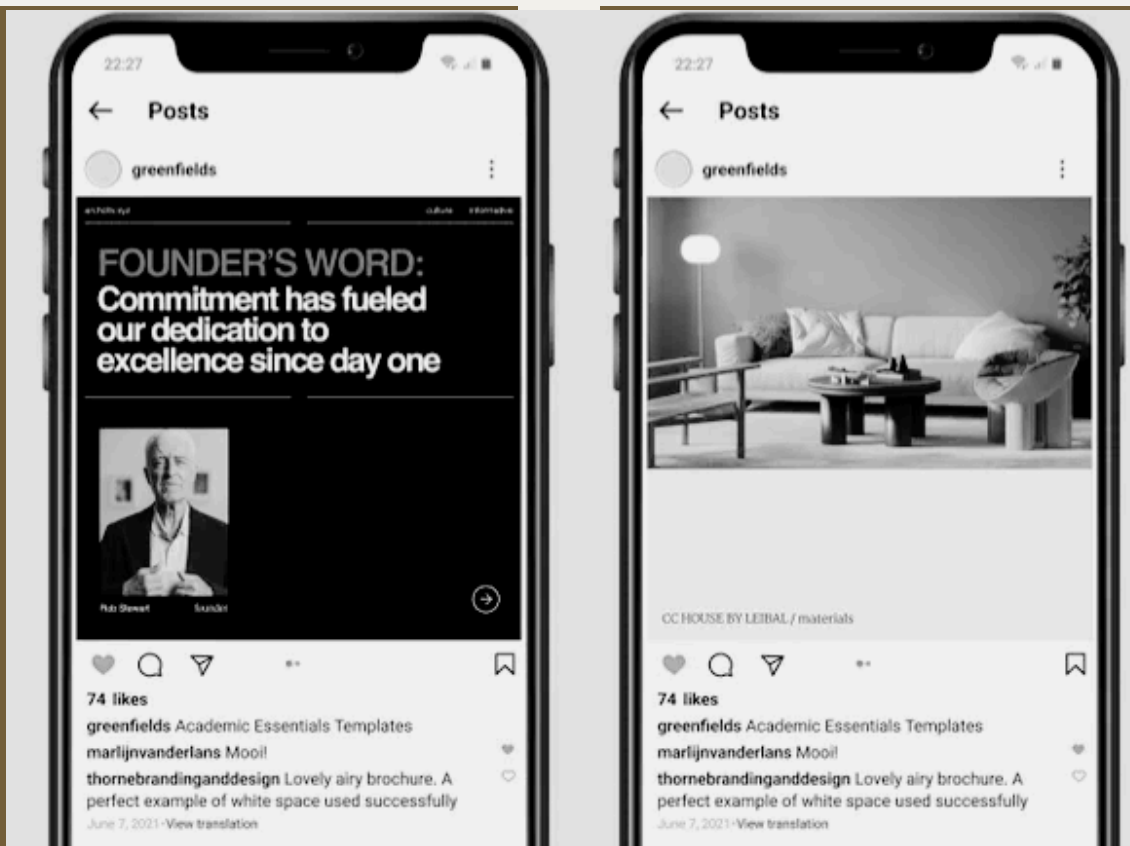
Your first priority when setting up Instagram for your business should be to identify your goals for the platform. Set KPIs to track, and build a strategy to get you there. Then test, improve, and iterate until you come up with a repeatable way of achieving those goals month after month.



Free Instagram Templates

Use these templates to create eye catching visuals using the best practices outlined in this ebook.

POST TEMPLATES



Want to take social media off your plate? We handle everything—from strategy and design to posting and engagement. **Let's chat!**

Engagement and followers

A strong social strategy prioritizes engagement—it's the secret sauce that keeps audiences coming back for more. When a brand actively connects with its followers, it sparks a craving for content that's hard to satisfy.

As a creator, it's natural to focus on what draws your current audience in. But to expand your reach, think beyond them—how can new users discover you?

Beyond direct engagement through comments and likes, two key places can put your brand in front of fresh eyes: the search bar and the Explore page



SEARCH BAR

Treat the Instagram search bar like you would any other search engine, like Google or YouTube. Set up your business profile accordingly with the right keywords in your handle, bio, and post content.



Assuming that people aren't searching for your brand on Instagram directly, you can meet them in the Search bar by applying SEO principles to your Instagram profile.



Describe what you do in your Instagram name and bio. This will make your account more likely to appear in searches for similar products and services.



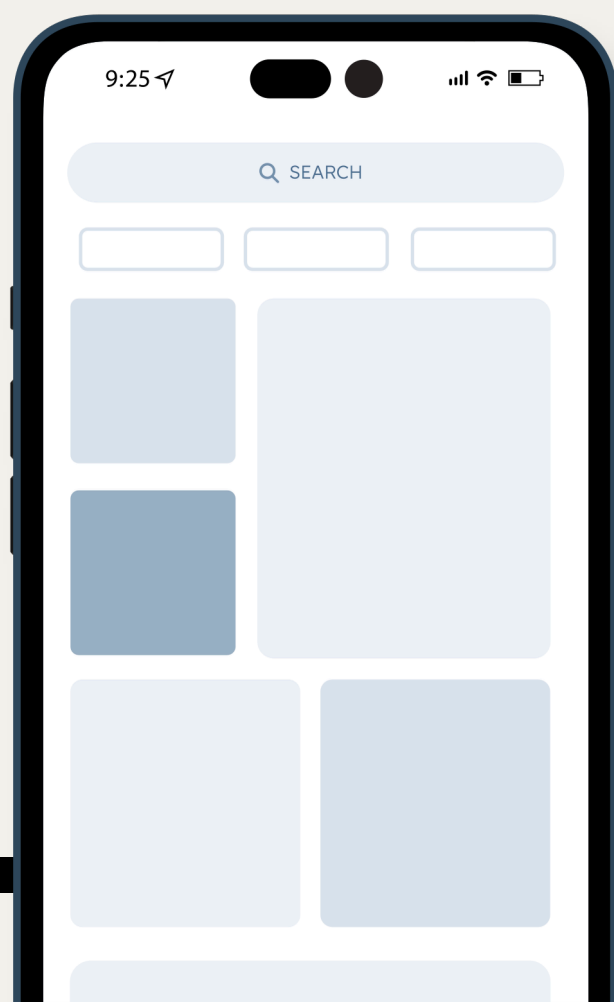
Be active, following, and creating content around the hashtags that are relevant to your brand. That's the next best way for your followers to find you in Search.

EXPLORE

When your brand does crack the Explore page within your niche, it's like hitting the viral jackpot. Expect a surge in impressions, post saves, and yes, a healthy boost in followers.

The Explore page can be a powerful gateway to new audiences, but it shouldn't be your primary growth strategy. In competitive spaces like makeup tutorials or travel, breaking through is tough—after all, top-tier creators are producing outstanding content, too. Conversely, you might find yourself on the Explore page for a hyper-niche topic like knitted toe rings or vintage Tamagotchis without even realizing it.

The key? Focus on creating exceptional content. The Explore page rewards quality, not just ambition. If your only goal is to land there, you might never produce content worthy of it. Instead, aim for excellence—the rest will follow.



💡 Insta Biz Tip

Post saves are a good KPI to benchmark—they're similar to a "super like" that validates the value of your content. If followers are saving one of your posts for the future, it's a clear sign that you're serving up the right Instagram content and can help inform your editorial strategy.

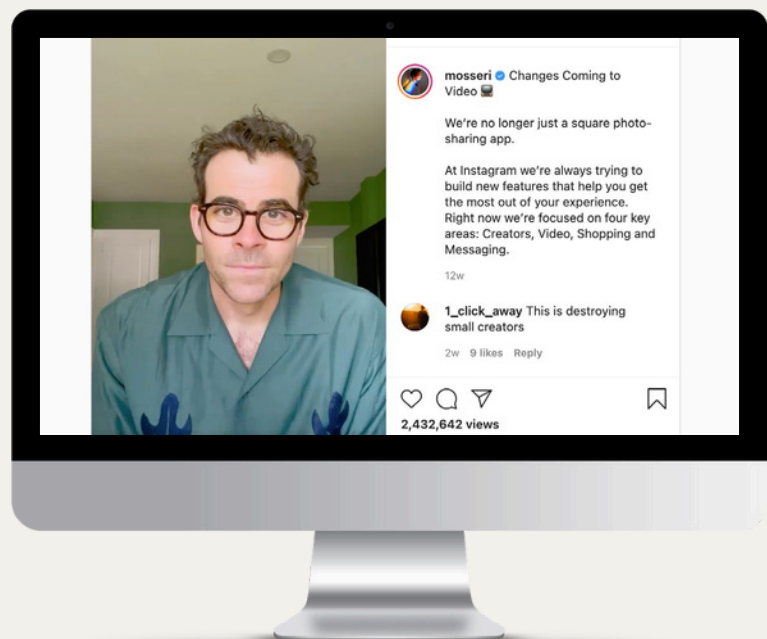
Square pix to video: Insta today

Today's Instagram is a very different animal from the platform Facebook bought back in 2012. In fact, it's a different platform from what it was just a year or two ago. With all sorts of new features, buttons, and ad formats added, it's clear that Instagram is going to keep evolving in the future.

Today's Instagram places a premium on video content. Adam Mosseri, the head of Instagram explains it himself in this video:

“
We are no
longer a
square photo
sharing app,”

he says. According to Mosseri, the number one reason people use Instagram is to “be entertained.”



This philosophy should inform your content creation strategy for Instagram.

Entertainment can come from viewing something beautiful or funny, something incredible or educational. Your brand must figure how to entertain your audiences while achieving business goals.

And of course, nothing online captivates people's attention like video.

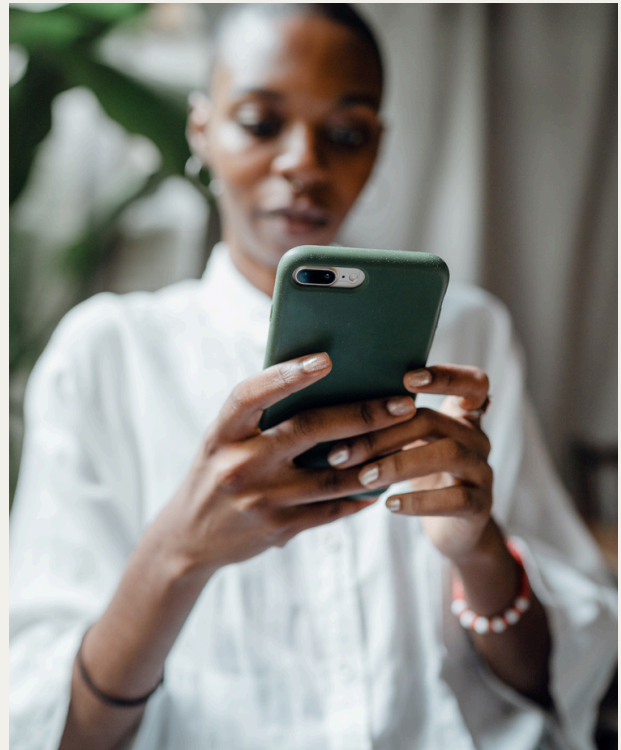
INSTAGRAM VIDEO SPECS TABLE

Video Type	Aspect Ratio	Best Size Pixels	Other Accepted Sizes Pixels	Note
Feed	4:5	1080x1350	1080x1080 1080x608	This dimension gives you maxscreen space
Carousel	4:5	1080x1350	1080x608 1080x1350	Pay extra attention to the thumbnail on your first video of the carousel
Stories	9:16	1080x1920	1920x1080	Good for linking, and always consider - will this play in your Highlights section?
IGTV	9:16	1080x1920	1920x1080 1080x1080 1080x1350	This is your home for longform content
Reels	9:16	1080x1920	- -	Made to be shared, so think big for engagement outside your community
Live	9:16	1080x1920	- -	In-the-moment content; broadcasts from phone only & must be vertical

Instagram: the platform indepth

Let's dive into the many ways you can leverage this dynamic platform. Experimenting with different formats is key—see what resonates with your audience and refine from there. Try interactive stickers and widgets in Stories, then share your insights. Curate your top content into Guides. Shake things up with a Reel. The more you explore, the more opportunities you create to connect and grow.

Test and repeat to find the formats that work best for your business objectives.



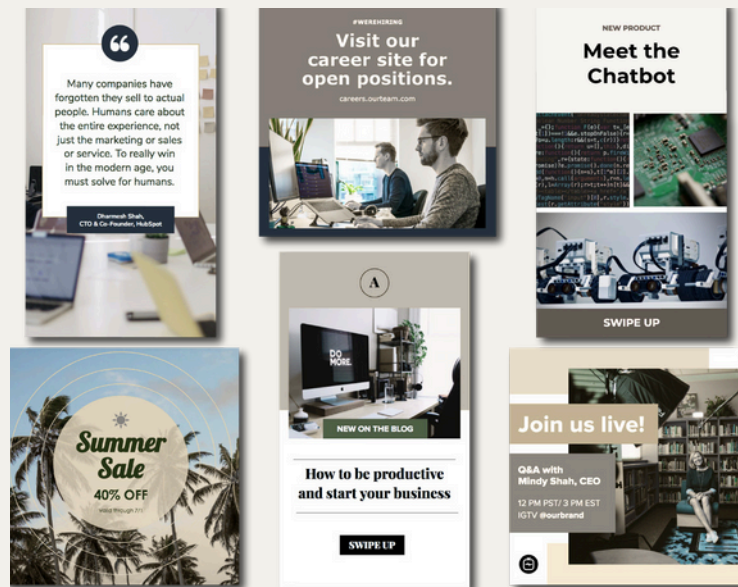
Want to take social media off your plate? We handle everything—from strategy and design to posting and engagement. **Let's chat!**

GRID & NEWSFEED

Anything you post to your feed lands on your profile grid, with your nine most recent posts front and center. Think of this as the digital equivalent of “above the fold” in a newspaper—immediately visible, no scrolling required.

Your followers will encounter your posts in their newsfeeds, so keep that visibility in mind when curating your profile grid. Gone are the days of rigid 3x3 aesthetic layouts—while visually striking, they often fell flat in the feed. Instead, focus on ensuring each post stands strong on its own while maintaining a cohesive brand identity.

Your goal? A recognizable visual style that captivates your audience. Each post should be compelling enough to make someone pause mid-scroll, engage, and even share.



SIZES

1080x1080

1080x608

1080x1350

Aspect ratio 4:5

Videos: Up to 1 minute long, up to 10 per post
Carousel Images: Up to 10 per post

Your followers — as well as people who find your content out in the wild — will give you feedback on it in the form of likes, comments, saves, and shares.

WHEN TO POST?

Timing depends on your audience. Are they busy professionals or always online? Does seasonality matter? Where are they located? A solid starting point: post in the morning. This maximizes exposure throughout the day and avoids the clutter of evening updates



Insta Biz Tip

Consider what time zone your core customers live in when scheduling posts. An international audience will be looking at your content at very different times of day, so plan what you're promoting accordingly.

HASHTAGS: WHERE TO PUT THEM?

There are three primary methods for adding hashtags:

1. In a comment immediately after posting.
2. At the bottom of the caption.
3. Embedded within the caption text.

Each approach helps tag relevant topics and products, but character limits mean you need to be strategic. Adding hashtags in the first comment keeps captions clean while allowing for more descriptive tags without appearing spammy

Instagram's algorithm favors hashtags in chronological order, meaning hashtags added in comments right after posting can boost visibility. But social media is unpredictable, so testing different strategies is key.

Use Instagram Insights to analyze performance and refine your hashtag approach based on real engagement data. Experimentation is the best way to find what works for your brand.

STORIES

Stories are one of Instagram's most engaging features and often the first place your audience checks for fresh content. They offer a unique way to promote your brand through bite-sized updates, gather real-time customer feedback, and drive traffic to your products or services with external links.

Because Stories auto-play in a continuous stream, users engage with them effortlessly—no scrolling required. Just like with posts and hashtags, Instagram's algorithm favors new, interactive Story content. Keep yours updated and make use of Instagram's built-in tools to maintain audience engagement.

SIZES

1080x1920px

1920x1080px

Aspect ratio: 9:16



STORY PHILOSOPHY

It's essential to define your brand's approach to Stories. Since content disappears after 24 hours, it may seem like a fleeting effort.

But instead of viewing this as a limitation, think of Stories as an opportunity to share exclusive, time-sensitive, or behind-the-scenes content that adds depth to your brand. Unlike curated feed posts, Stories thrive on authenticity and spontaneity

Once you know how your brand will act in Stories, set about creating your content.



Insta Biz Tip

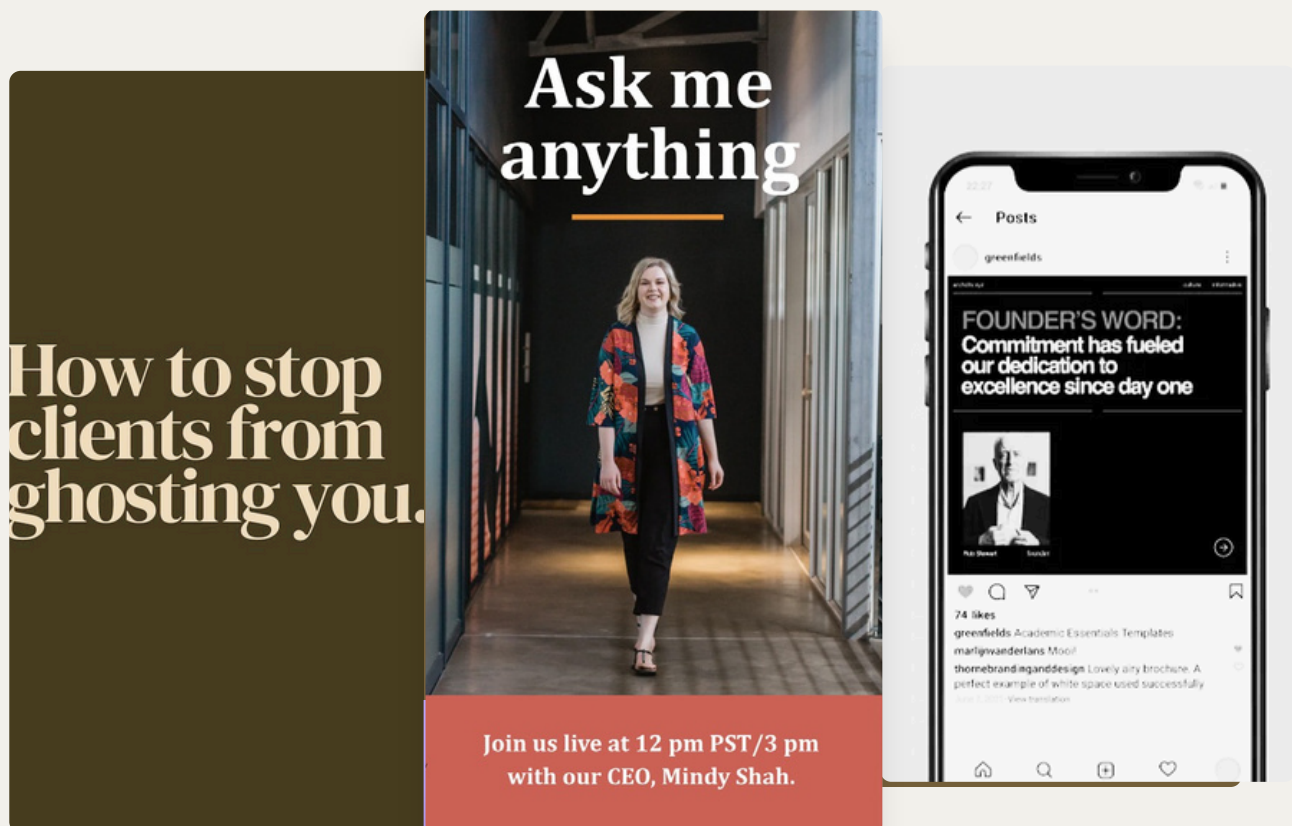
Save your most important Stories in your highlights - this allows you to preserve it publicly and add it to your brand's profile to be seen by anyone at any time. It's also a great way to build your brand story further through your Instagram presence.

STORY LAYOUT

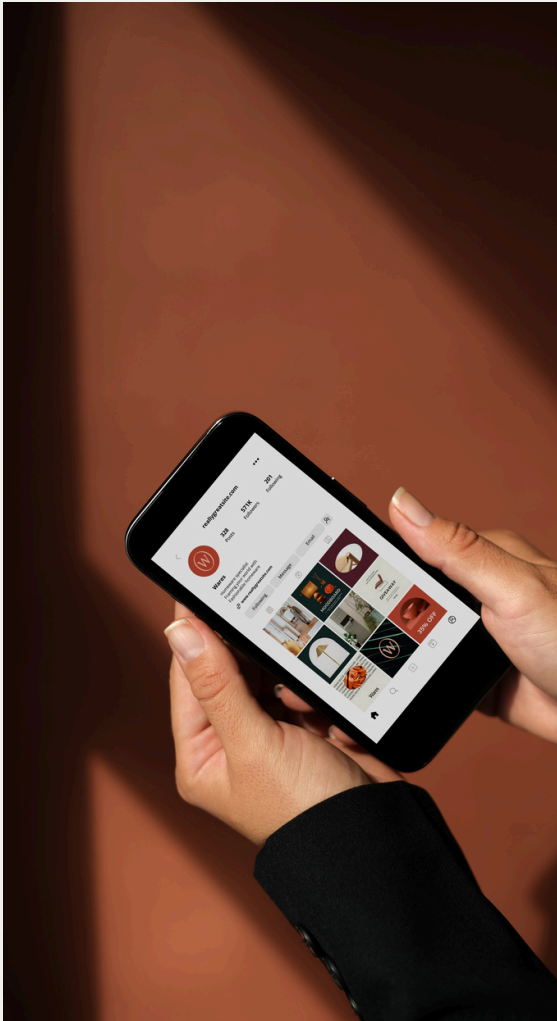
Instagram offers five layout options for Stories, depending on how many images you want to feature in a single frame. Instead of overcrowding one Story slide, consider breaking your message into multiple posts for a more natural flow and a better viewing experience.

Videos in Stories can run up to 15 seconds each—anything longer automatically continues into the next slide. If you're sharing a multi-part video, be sure to apply stickers, text, and widgets consistently across segments to maintain a cohesive experience.

You can also turn static images into videos using Instagram's Photobooth feature, which stitches multiple photos into a short, animated clip. Other creative tools like Boomerang, Multi-capture, and Hands-free mode add movement and personality to your Story content, making it more engaging.



CLOSE FRIENDS



Insta Biz Tip

Place followers on your brand's "close friend" list as a prize in contests and promotions. It's a great way to encourage continued engagement after your campaign has gotten them through the door so that you can continue to provide value.

You can also turn static images into videos using Instagram's Photobooth feature, which stitches multiple photos into a short, animated clip. Other creative tools like Boomerang, Multi-capture, and Hands-free mode add movement and personality to your Story content, making it more engaging.

Instagram's Close Friends feature allows you to curate a private audience for exclusive Story content. How you use it depends on your brand's goals—whether it's rewarding your most loyal followers, offering premium paywalled content, or creating an internal space for employees and collaborators. Consider who would find the most value in this private, behind-the-scenes access.

STICKERS AND WIDGETS

From Giphy™ stickers to location tags, hashtags, and interactive widgets, Instagram Stories offer plenty of ways to enhance your brand's presence. Tagging a location—like the Eiffel Tower—can boost discoverability by placing your Story within Instagram's map, reaching users exploring that area. Other features, like countdowns, donation stickers, and music overlays, help drive interaction and engagement, making your content more dynamic and shareable.



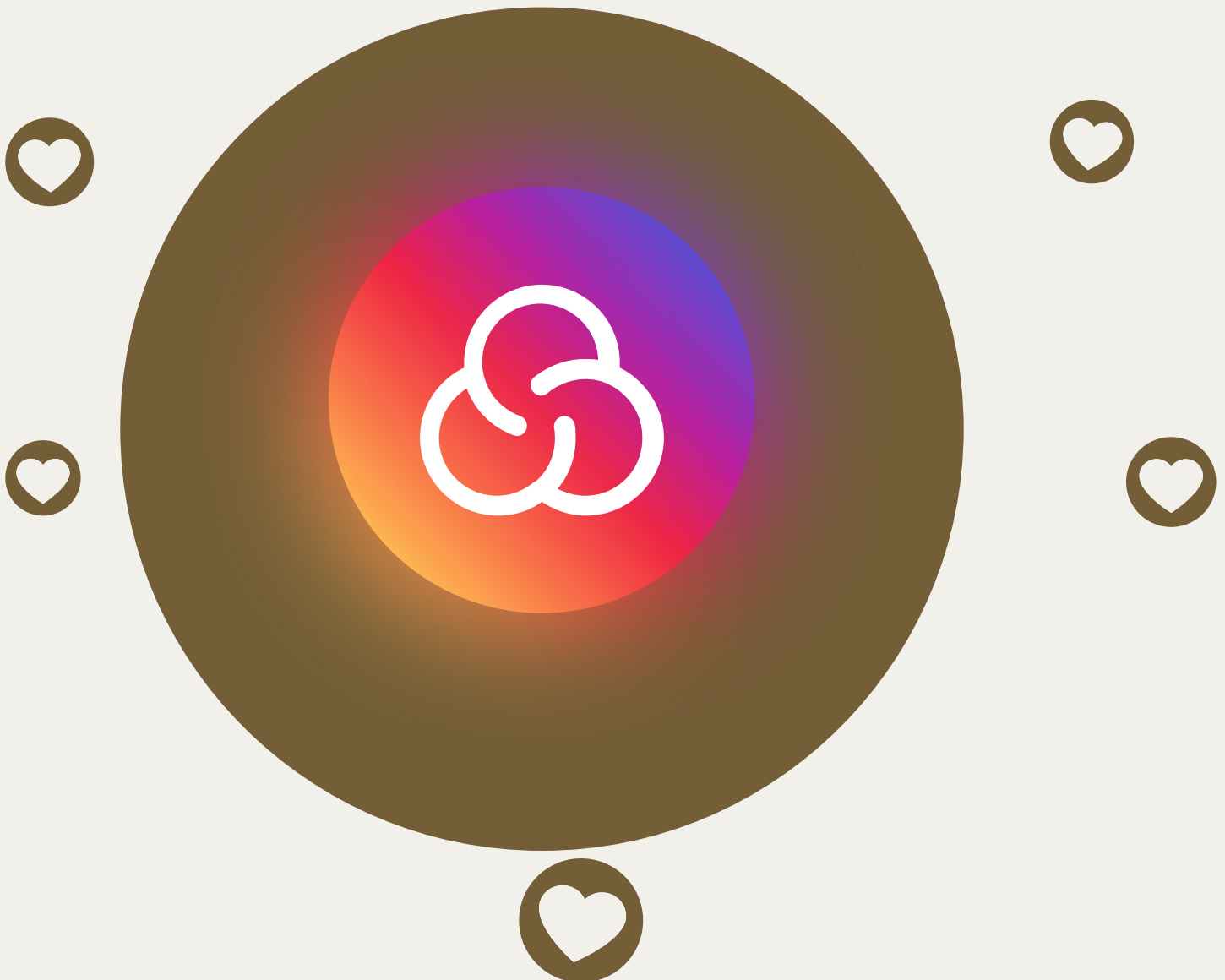
Amongst the widgets that encourage interaction are:

- **Questions** Which provide a free answer box you can then share the results of.
- **Polls** Everyone can see the results, and it's a great way to take the pulse of your community.
- **Sliding Emoji Scale** Light the engagement rate on fire by asking a great question.
- **Quizzes** Do it for trivia night, share a fun fact, or just do it for the meme. Quizzes ask your audience for brain power but not the same physical commitment that leaving a comment does.

FILTERS AND BACKGROUNDS

Filters and backgrounds are the final touch on your Instagram Stories. You can choose these from the Story “home” or your camera before capturing your shot. Instagram offers a range of built-in filters, seasonal effects, and even custom downloads. If your brand’s design team has the resources, you can create and upload a custom filter to share with your audience, adding a unique branded touch.

However, filters and backgrounds should be used with intention. While they can enhance an otherwise plain image, they can also be distracting or overused—diluting your message and making your content blend in with everything else on the platform. Use them sparingly, and only if they add value to your brand’s visual identity.



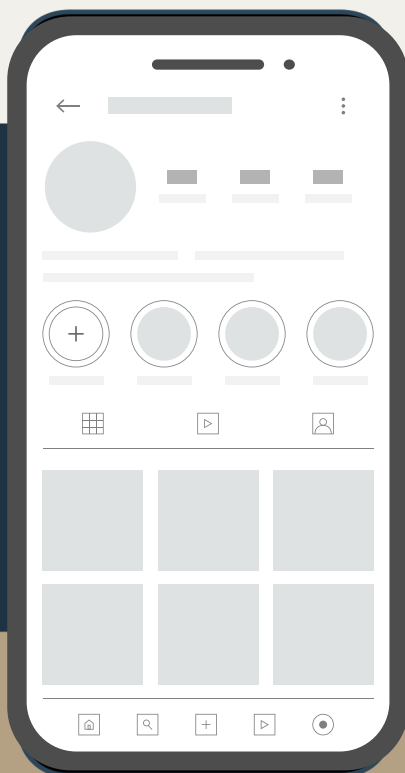
REELS

Reels is Instagram's hub for short-form video, offering a unique opportunity for content to reach new audiences beyond just your followers. Unlike other video formats on the platform, Reels are designed for discoverability **through recommendations that are tailored to each user**. If you're looking to increase brand visibility or even go viral, Reels is the place to focus. Bonus: Instagram's algorithm tends to give Reels an initial boost in the days following posting, making it a great format to test for quick engagement and follower growth.

The Power of Audio in Reels

One of Reels' standout features is the ability to remix audio, splitting content into two distinct engagement drivers: the video itself and the sound attached to it. Video performance metrics will tell you about overall engagement, such as likes, shares, and comments—but the audio can take on a life of its own.

Trendy audio clips often go viral, with brands seeing success by jumping on meme-worthy sounds and trending music. If you invest time in crafting original, catchy audio—whether it's a clever soundbite or a relatable lyric—it can spread far beyond the original video, taking on its own momentum as others repurpose it for their content.



💡 Insta Biz Tip

You have the choice as to whether a Reel appears in your followers' newsfeeds, or only in the Reels tab of your profile. Choose where you want your Reel to live based on how far you want to spread the word.

Developing a Killer Instagram Reels Strategy

Did you know that 2 billion people watch Instagram Reels every month? And 2.5 billion people will engage with the Reels feature by 2023.

Instagram Reels are a popular and creative way for your business to share content and increase your social media following. But having a killer Instagram Reels strategy is key to your success.

In this chapter, we're running through the basics — plus, some tips to get you started.

3 Questions to Ask Before You Start

01

What are my KPIs?

Without knowing what your KPIs (key performance indicators) are, you'll find it difficult to know what actions to take.

You can measure different metrics, such as Reach, Engagement, Leads, and Conversions. For Reels, most social media managers will focus on engagement. Engagement measures the likes, shares, tags, and comments that your Reel receives.

The metric for calculating your engagement looks like this:

Reel engagement % = Total number of Reels liked + shared + commented / total number of reels viewed

02

What resources do I have?

You will often hear brands talking about professional video shoots, makeup artists, studios, and money as necessities to boost Reels.

To succeed on Instagram, you don't need a million-dollar budget.

But you do need to be realistic and work with what you've got. The essential resources you will need are:

- ★ High quality content. You can't compromise on this part!
- ★ An understanding of the tools, templates, and effects available. Also, know the way Instagram's algorithm deciphers quality content.
- ★ Good lighting and a fairly good quality camera or camera phone.
- ★ Time to not only record a great Reel but also edit it and add captions, music, and effects. You will also need time to monitor the comments and interact with fans.

03

How will I achieve my KPIs?

Once you know what your KPIs are and the resources you have to work with, you can start getting creative!

Some hacks for boosting your engagement are:



Use trending audio.

Instagram, like TikTok, uses trending audio on its videos. Top creators stay updated with sounds, soundtracks, and effects that are trending to boost engagement. When you scroll through Reels, look for the arrow next to the sound. The arrow indicates that it's trending!



Include hashtags. Your Instagram Reel will get more attention if you use 5-8 relevant hashtags. However, avoid low-quality hashtags like #instagramreels or #trending. Instead, choose hashtags specific to your product, topic, or business.

Also, add the hashtags at the end of your caption. Most people only see the first few words, so the hashtags won't spoil your aesthetic.



Share IG Reels to Facebook. Back in 2021, Meta announced that Reels would also be available on Facebook. Connect your Instagram and Facebook accounts and enable sharing to expand the reach of your Reels.



Be authentic. Fans will warm to you more if you're authentic and sharing real experiences and honest content as opposed to "salesly" content.



Schedule your Reels. Yes, you can now schedule Reels! Use a tool like Agorapulse to schedule Reels and other social media posts. The benefits include being able to post consistently, hitting the right time zones for your audience, and taking a vacation.



Split Test. Creating a winning strategy takes time. Try split testing your content with and without hashtags. With captions and effects or without. You can also vary your content formats by going behind the scenes, sharing promos, offering tips and reviews, teases and reveals or meet the team features. You can also boost your Reels to see what impact it will have.



Use Instagram Collabs. This cool tool allows you to share credit with another creator. They can then share the Reel from their page as if it was native! For brands working with micro and macro influencers or those with brand partners, this is a must-try. You can access Collabs by selecting "Tag" and inviting collaborators before you hit publish on your Reel. Once the other user accepts your collaboration request, it will show on their own Reels tab!

DID YOU KNOW?

As part of Instagram's commitment to investing \$1 billion+ in creators through 2022, the company is helping creators earn money when people view their reels.

The Reels Play bonus pays eligible creators based on the performance of their Reels and will be available on Facebook and Instagram. This is an added sweetener for influencers teaming up with brands.

Reward your followers. If you can provide a discount code, merchandise, or an exclusive offer for your fans, they will love you for it. But remember to add end dates to offers to increase the FOMO (fear of missing out) appeal for your Reels.



💡 Insta Biz Tip

If you want to create viral Reels, you need to hit the sweet spot of "replayability." You can aim for this by using trending themes and music, providing value, and including humor. Many of the top viewed Reels are just 15 seconds long. That's because short Reels tend to loop, so they will count as multiple views!



Want to take social media off your plate? We handle everything—from strategy and design to posting and engagement. **Let's chat!**

INSTAGRAM LIVE

Instagram Live is all about real-time engagement. When you go live, you're creating an open stream that anyone can join and watch. As the host, you're in control, able to interact directly with your audience by responding to comments, asking for feedback, and sharing the spotlight with others in the stream. Your live sessions can last up to an hour, offering an intimate and immediate way to connect with your followers

Scheduling your live session in advance allows you to promote it across other platforms and build excitement ahead of time. Whether you're using it for an informal webinar, a product launch, or just to make a special announcement, it's important to alert your audience—share the news on social media, send emails, and keep your community in the loop about when they can tune in. The more you prepare, the higher the chances of attracting new viewers who will find your content valuable

A major perk of going live is the push notification that your followers will receive, alerting them that you're streaming. Even if only a handful of people join, it's a guaranteed visibility boost for your brand.

However, live streaming requires creativity and adaptability. A host who can think quickly, keep the conversation flowing, and add some personality will hold viewers' attention. Whether it's making witty remarks or adding an interesting backdrop (imagine riding a bike, skateboarding, or exploring a scenic location while live!), you'll keep your audience engaged—even if your content isn't entirely relevant to them.

In short, a successful Instagram Live needs to offer engaging content, dynamic interaction, and an experience that captures both the attention and interest of your target audience.

Insta Biz Tip

Use widgets & features in story posts to boost visibility and engagement for your next Instagram Live. Add a countdown sticker or a poll to get your audience and customers excited about the event.

GUIDES

If you're ready to make an Instagram Guide, that means you must have created some successful content that engages people and keeps them coming back again and again. Compiling a Guide with these posts makes that content easy to find for your potential customers.

Guides are a compilation of your best newsfeed content. Instead of having your followers scroll through all your content to find the best-performing posts or what's most relevant to them, Guides give you the option to title various posts and compile them in one section on your profile. It's a curated view of thematic Instagram content.



💡 Insta Biz Tip

Create Guides that highlight both your offering and your customers' experience to give audiences a 360-view of your business. Make a Guide on how to use your product. Generate another consisting of customer reviews. Make one for FAQs or UGC (user-generated content), and curate a Guide about new and creative ways people are using your products. Each presents an opportunity to showcase your brand and its impact.

IGTV

IGTV is the perfect platform for sharing longer, more polished content. From your mobile device, you can upload episodes that last up to 15 minutes, while using a desktop browser lets you extend that to 60 minutes. If live streaming feels a bit too unpredictable or impromptu for your brand, IGTV gives you the opportunity to plan and share scripted, well-crafted videos.

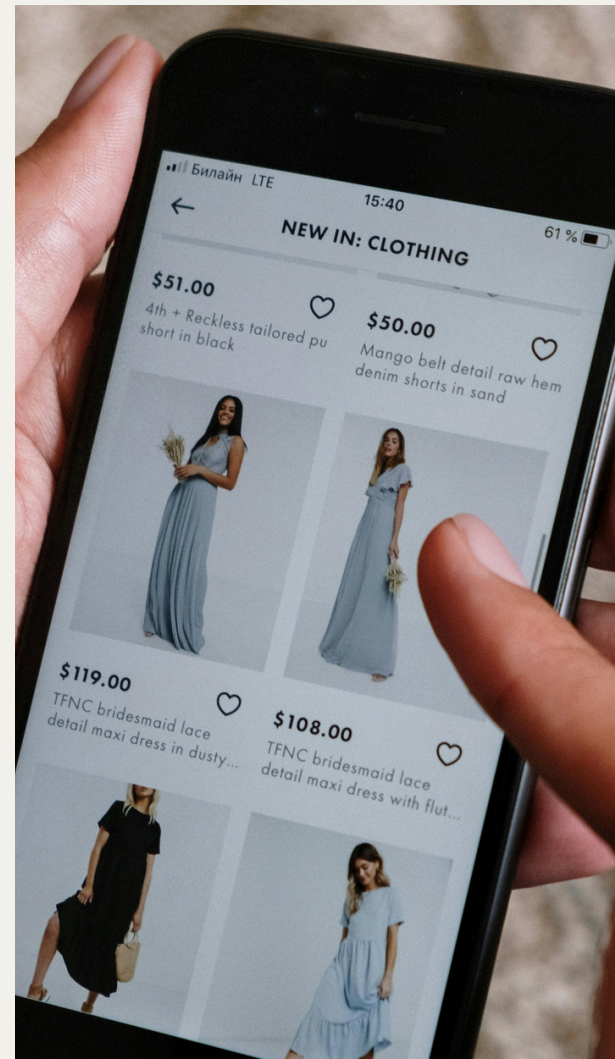
If the on-the-fly, free-wheeling creativity needed for going live is too much to bear, a scripted performance can be shared with Instagram on IGTV. It also plays an important role in shopping on Instagram because it allows you to tag products in your brand's Facebook Shop within your IGTV episode.

SHOPPING ON

INSTAGRAM

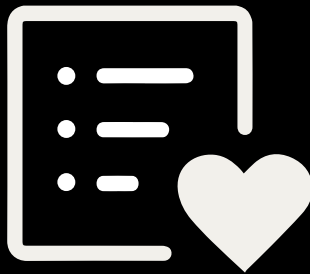
Instagram has turned itself, in some regards, into the glossy and beautiful magazine it always was compared to – now featuring products you can buy without leaving the platform. The addition of two stylized arrows >> in the Instagram brand colors on posts now indicate to users that products being pictured can be purchased right there. By integrating shoppable posts into your Instagram strategy, you'll give followers a way to buy your products inspired by your content.

Instagram's shift to a new UI in July 2020 brought major changes to the shopping experience. The Notifications icon moved to the top right, making room for a Shop icon at the bottom



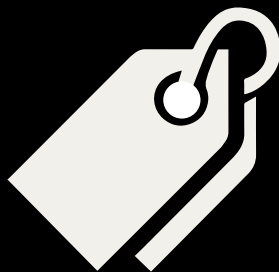
highlighting Instagram's commitment to e-commerce. This feature lets users browse products from brands they follow as well as explore suggested shoppable posts from other brands, making it easier than ever for them to discover new products.

There are three key components to how shopping works on Instagram; if you plan to use the platform for e-commerce, take them all into account when creating shoppable posts:



WISH LISTS

For users, the ability to add products to a wishlist makes shopping more convenient. They can return later to complete a purchase, and even track items they're interested in. Like the "Save" feature for posts, this tool allows followers to keep their desired products easily accessible and reminds them when they're ready to buy. Additionally, if an item is removed from a shop, it will disappear from the wishlist, helping users stay updated on available inventory.



PRODUCT TAGS

Instagram debuted product tags in 2016. These helpful links create mini-profiles for business accounts' products. These profiles can then be tagged by the business across the spectrum of Instagram post choices (Stories, Posts, IGTV, Live, Reels).

This makes it seamless to purchase the tagged product in-app, creating a one-click buying experience for customers and streamlining payments through Instagram. It also makes it easy for a business profile to create content around their own products.

💡 Insta Biz Tip

In order to generate a product tag, the product must first exist in your Facebook Store and be configured to receive sales via Facebook Pay. Make sure that your Facebook Store is fully set up before rolling out an Instagram shopping experience to ensure a great user experience.

CHECKOUT



The checkout line is where Instagram has really innovated the purchasing experience in the platform. Users have the option to add a tagged product to their cart, or check-out immediately. Payment information can be stored so check-out is even quicker next time around. Payments are handled through Facebook Pay and some can even qualify for a purchase protection agreement.

💡 Insta Biz Tip

While the checkout feature makes purchasing through the platform easy for users, it also makes Instagram a middleman between a merchant and their end customer with them holding valuable first-party data. If you do plan to use Instagram Shop, make sure to have a strategy in place for follow-up messaging with customers so that you establish communication with them and can get their details in your CRM.

DIRECT MESSAGES

There's one last place your brand can interact with followers, strangers, potential customers, and soon-to-be fans on Instagram, and that is through Direct Messages.

Some brand accounts set up an auto-message to send to new followers explaining what their page is about and how they can benefit from it. If that's actually what your message contains, it might work. But some users may think of these "you followed me, learn more" messages as simply spam, and links to other websites or products will be a turn-off to audiences. A brand that starts a DM conversation must truly have something valuable to say to the recipient.

Wait for your audience to come to you with their questions, concerns and problems. Then you are given a one-on one forum where your customer service and brand excellence can really shine. It's an opportunity for you to show off the brand personality and deliver dedicated support. It also allows you to establish a personal connection with your followers, and can improve their perception of your products and services.



INSIGHTS

Find metrics and performance data on your Instagram posts in the Insights tab. Here you'll get info on post engagement to understand whether your audience prefers things like video to static images, the times of day that see the most successful posts, or if people are clicking on your hashtags. While metrics provided by Instagram can be limited, any amount of data and reporting you can generate around your business' social media presence can help you strategize your next campaign or product launch.

You have two ways to access insights:



From your profile

This will give you a 7- and 30-day view on all of your content, outlining overall engagement trends, follower increases & decreases, and your profile reach.

On an individual post

Find out how many engagements, saves, DMs, and comments your post generated. You can see if the post is driving people to your profile, or if they're clicking through on the link to your website embedded in your profile. You can also see the accounts reached by this post and whether they were following you or not beforehand. You can even find out where the audience is finding your content from.

Your ad budget, reputation, or follower count don't entitle you to any more information in Insights than a business account that was created yesterday with four followers. So do what the data shows you will deliver success, and you can optimize the resources that you have available.

For example, many B2B brands on Instagram find that the weekends are not a good time to post. It makes sense, logically, since many businesses are closed on the weekends. Don't fight against your audience's tendencies in an effort to post every day - if you don't think you'll get engagement on a Saturday post, then skip it. Conversely, consumer facing brands on Instagram might find the weekends are when a majority of their sales are happening via the platform because that's when their audience has free time to go shopping.

Either way, there's data in the platform that can make your decisions feel easier - so seek out that data, distill it into actionable insights, and then execute according to your goals.

Insta Biz Tip

Supplement the narrow data structures given to you in the Insights tab with an open-data consumer intelligence platform. Taking the same commoditized metrics from the Instagram insights tab, a good consumer intelligence platform is able to "squeeze" out and then visualize much more information than what's available in Instagram insights. Find out how frequently groups of words are clustered together in a comment thread, what the main themes of a post are in commenters eyes, or maybe you just want a comparison of your most recent post's engagement rate to the brand's historical average.



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How to Use Instagram Algorithms to Your Advantage



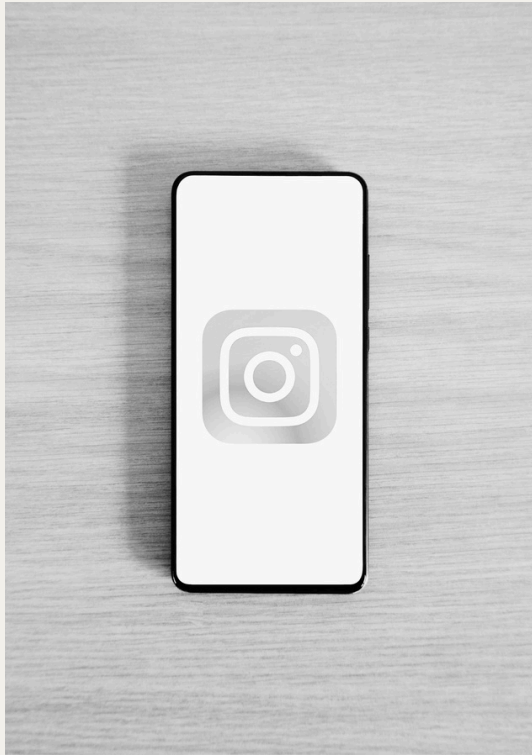
Jenn Herman is a social media consultant, speaker, and globally recognized Instagram expert. She has been featured in Inc., Fox News, BBC News, Yahoo Finance, Entrepreneur, HuffPost, The Verge, CBS Radio LA, and numerous other podcasts and publications. She is the author of “Instagram for Dummies”, “Instagram for Business for Dummies”, and “The Ultimate Guide to Social Media Marketing”.

Algorithms may sound confusing and complicated, but they’re designed to enhance the experience of users on the platform. When you keep that in mind, you can create content that uses the algorithm to reach more people and generate more engagement.

All the Instagram algorithms (yes, plural!) work on two main concepts:

01. Personal user preference over popularity
02. Showing users content that will keep them active and stay longer on the platform

Algorithms are designed to give users a better, personalized experience. If you tap into the right data, you can increase how many people see your content.



FEED ALGORITHM

In general, Instagram's feed algorithm is driven by personal preferences. The more a user engages with specific types of content—whether it's dog photos, rock bands, or home improvement tips—the more Instagram will prioritize similar content. This is determined through a combination of AI scraping post content and analyzing keywords in captions and hashtags.

Engagement from specific accounts also influences where those accounts appear in a user's feed. The more a user interacts with content from an account, the more likely they are to see new posts from that account in their feed.

It's important to note that Instagram also values "positive" engagement beyond just likes or comments. Actions like scrolling back to revisit content, swiping through a carousel, tapping "...more" to read a full caption, or pausing to look at a post for longer all contribute to improving an account's algorithmic ranking.

So, how do you optimize for this?

You need to create scroll-stopping content. Focus on some of these tips:

- ➡ Have a clear focal point without a busy background.
- ➡ Consider using the color blue somewhere in your content, which can increase engagement by 20% or more.
- ➡ Add a human component – even if just a hand holding something in the photo.
- ➡ Keep the images "Instagrammy" and visually appealing – not graphics and text heavy posts.



STORY ALGORITHM

The Story algorithm, on the other hand, focuses heavily on personal interactions. The Stories that appear first in a user's feed are those from accounts they engage with most frequently through Stories, not necessarily posts in their main feed.

The two feeds operate independently—engagement with a user's feed posts does not automatically boost that account's visibility in their Stories feed.

While passive engagement (only watching Stories) is engagement within Stories—such as tapping on stickers, rewatching a Story, or replying with messages or quick reactions—helps increase the visibility of that account's content in the viewer's feed.

You can take advantage of this for your brand by including actionable prompts for your viewers. Consider these methods:

- Use stickers that invite engagement. Add Yours, Questions, Poll, Quiz, and Countdown stickers are all great ways to get your audience to click and participate.
- Use the link sticker to drive clicks and show active interest in your content on and off Instagram
- Add text to the Story that requires viewers to hold and pause to read the whole story or tap back to finish reading.
- Use GIFs or doodles to draw attention to stickers, calls to action, or other aspects of the post

REELS ALGORITHM



Reels, while still influenced by personal preferences, now place greater emphasis on the popularity of the content.

The more a Reel performs well with others—through likes, shares, and views—the more likely it is to be seen by other users, especially if it aligns with their individual content interests.

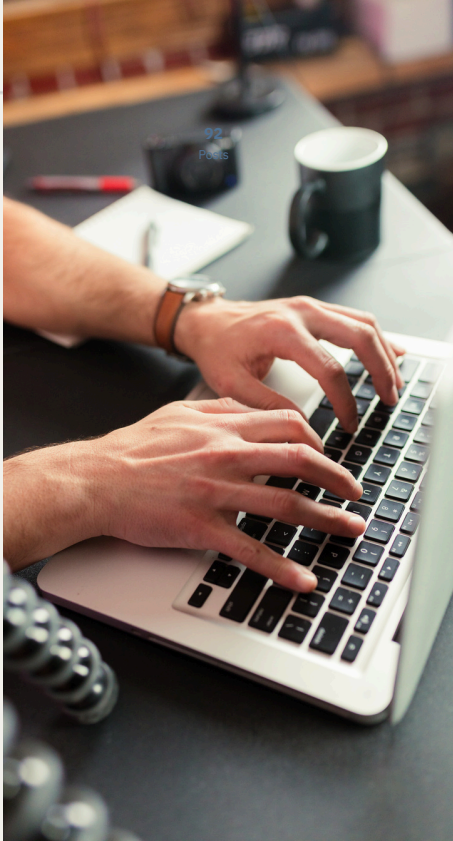
If a user is likely to like or watch a Reel in its entirety, it will appear higher in their feed. Additionally, if the user often engages with a certain trending audio, Reels featuring that audio will be prioritized in their feed. The same principle applies to topics they frequently engage with—those will be surfaced more often.

With that audio will likely appear for them. If the video is about a topic that the user is likely to consume, it will place higher in the feed

To take advantage of this:

When trending audio is relevant to your brand and messaging, use it! Create timely content related to news and updates in your industry. Focus on shorter videos (under 15 seconds) for reaching new viewers who don't have the relationship with you to watch longer videos

Save longer Reels (over 30 seconds) for providing value to your existing audience.



FOCUS ON HIGH PERFORMING CONTENT

The key to improving reach and engagement on Instagram lies in giving your audience the content they're most interested in. Keep a close eye on your insights to identify which types of content generate the highest reach and the best individual metrics—such as likes, shares, and link clicks. By understanding what resonates most with your audience, you can refine your content strategy to better meet their expectations and drive more impactful engagement.

Then, map your content strategy around the content format and styles that achieve those results.

Remember that what works for your competitors or other companies may not be what works for your brand.

Test, test, test, and do more of what drives results for you.



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Conclusion

Instagram is a vast platform, offering countless opportunities for brands to establish a meaningful presence. The key is to focus on delivering excellence, value, and entertainment through your content. When you do this, your audience will respond by engaging—returning for more, sharing content in DMs and Stories, or reacting with enthusiasm.

To amplify this engagement, celebrate your audience and make them the center of your story. Recognize their contributions and interactions, and they'll feel valued. In return, your business will build deeper connections, encouraging loyalty and ultimately reaping the benefits of a strong, engaged community



Additional resources

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<https://www.facebook.com/business/news>

Instagram Help Center. "Using Instagram Reels: Tips for Businesses."
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<https://influencermarketinghub.com>

Meta Investor Relations. "Meta's Earnings Call: Key Takeaways."
<https://investor.fb.com>