

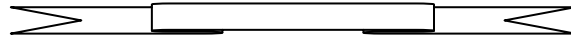
INSTAGRAM MARKETING GOLDMINE



Instagram Marketing Excellence

By

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WHAT IS INSTAGRAM?

You may have heard a lot of things lately about a mobile app called Instagram, and are wondering what it is, and why so many people are talking about it. In this report we are going to talk a little about what Instagram is and why you should use it as a part of your marketing plan. Just in case you aren't familiar with Instagram, it is an extremely popular social network that provides a fun way for its users to take and share photos with friends and followers online.

Unlike other social networks you can only access Instagram from a mobile application. So, to take advantage of this powerful network for your business you will need a mobile device like your smart phone, or a tablet, and an Instagram account. Then you can snap, upload and edit your photos on the fly for sharing on multiple social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Tumblr.

Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in October 2010 It reached 100 million active users by April 2012, reaching that number faster than Facebook or Twitter. In 2012, Instagram was purchased by Facebook for \$1 billion in cash and stock and currently outpaces all other social media networks in brand adoption. In December of 2014, Instagram had grown to over 300 million members and is still expected to have rapid growth as more and more people use mobile devices to connect to the internet.

It has taken off faster than any other app in recent years and has quickly become the go-to choice for users who want to edit and share their photos on the go. However, not just social users are indulging in Instagram. Many businesses are finding ways to tap into the massive mobile traffic that it receives every day and using it as a way to build their brands and market their products and services. With the increase in technology, especially with smart phones allowing you to take better pictures and even short videos, a program like Instagram has massive appeal.

Whether you have a mainly online or offline business, it is not enough to have a social media presence, you need to make sure you are tapping into the massive mobile market. Instagram is a great way to do that, and take the pictures and videos you make and integrate them with the rest of your social media networks including Facebook, all from the convenience of your cell phone.

HOW TO GET STARTED?

First start by downloading the app to your mobile device. You can find the app for free in either iOS or Android App Stores. Then you will be prompted to open an account. Instagram accounts are public by default, and though for your personal account, you may want to change that; for your business account, you will want to keep it public. Click the register button and then go create your user ID and password. You even have the option of just using your Facebook data to do this step, or choose to do it manually.

Once you have your account set up, it is time to find friends. Select the “Find Facebook Friends” option, to tell the app to automatically search for people you know. You can choose to follow individual friends by pressing the “Follow” button next to their name or tap the button on the bottom of the screen to follow all of them at once. If you’d rather

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get started with uploading images, you can hit the “Next” button at the top to skip this step altogether. Hit the “Find Friends from Contacts” button, to jump start the same process for your phone book. After this step, Instagram provides its own suggestions of accounts to follow, but if you’re not a fan of these you can just hit the “Done” button in the upper right corner to return to your profile.

Now you are ready to use the app, to take pictures and videos, edit them, and upload to your favorite social media sites. Here are a few tips to help you get started with this process. As you now know, Instagram now has over 300 million active users sharing millions of photos every day. With that level of popularity, people take notice, particularly those who understand the power of social media and how it can affect their business.

We all know the value of a good picture, but for a long time sharing photos online was a difficult process that required either an expensive digital camera, a scanner, or going to a photography store and having them transfer physical pictures into digital ones, that is no longer the case. By incorporating image sharing sites like Instagram into your marketing campaign you can actually reach out to more consumers and establish a solid brand following faster than any other type of media. This is because images are visually appealing and easily consumed.

One of the things that makes Instagram popular is that it's easy to use and has built-in editing tools, so you don't have to spend hours trying to get your photos to look good. Here are some basics to get you started.

Adding photos

When it comes to adding photos there are a few ways you can go about it. You can click the blue camera button in the center of your Instagram navigation panel and it will automatically activate your device's camera, so you can simply snap a photo. One nice thing about using the camera from within your Instagram navigation panel is that it will already be perfectly sized and ready for sharing.

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You can also add photos that you already have saved on your device by clicking the square button in the lower left-hand of the camera screen. This will pull any photo you choose on to your navigation panel for editing and uploading. When it comes to adding photos from your computer, you have to get a little bit more creative. Since Instagram was designed as a mobile app there is no upload interface. To work around that the easiest solution is to use a service like Dropbox, upload your photos there and then share them on Instagram.

Editing photos

When it comes to editing your photos, Instagram makes it a breeze, with several built-in filters you can make your photos look like they were taken by a professional. Once you have taken or selected an image you want to use the filters will appear beneath it. Take some time to scroll through and explore the different filters. By experimenting with each of the filters, you will soon get a good feel for which ones work best with certain photos.

You'll also notice a small sun icon in the lower corner of your editing panel. This auto enhances your photos instantly. The little teardrop icon adds a soft blur, and the curved arrow rotates your image. For more tips on taking, editing and sharing your photos, you should definitely take some time and visit the Instagram help Center: <http://help.instagram.com/365080703569355>

Sharing

Once your photo is ready to go click on the green button at the top of your screen. This will bring you to the social sharing screen. From there you can add a caption, include your hashtags and choose all of the social networks you want to share your photo on. If you have location services enabled you will also be able to tag where you took the photo and choose whether or not you want to add it to your photo map. This is an extremely powerful tool if you have an off-line business because it can directly link the photo to your place of business.

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Making short videos

You can now make videos using Instagram. Videos show up in your stream the same as photos, and they load as you go. You can shoot videos that are three seconds minimum, 15 seconds maximum, and the format is square. How is this different from Vine? Four main things make Instagram video stand apart. 1) Filters, fifteen to be exact. 2) The ability to go back and delete or add scenes after you've shot some of your video. 3) Longer videos. Vine caps videos at six seconds. 4) No looping.

How do you shoot a video? Tap the camera button to go into photo shooting mode. You'll see an icon of a video camera on the bottom right. Tap it, and you're now in video shooting mode. To shoot video, hold the big video button down. For as long as you're holding it, it'll shoot video! This means you can shoot one long stream or shoot a series of clips to make a mini movie. Can you upload old videos? No, actually! We kinda like it that way, though. That way, you know everyone's videos were shot right at that moment, and it also gives you a fun challenge.

When you go to upload, you'll see the option to pick a thumbnail. This is the image that will show up on your stream. Take time to pick the best frame! This will make it more likely that your followers will take out the time to watch it.

Edit as you go.

One of the coolest things that sets Instagram video apart from Vine is that you can view your video (with filters on it even!) and then go back and delete or add shots. The stage to do this is before you've uploaded the video and when you're ready to add filters. To delete a shot, go back to video shooting mode, tap the "x" button on the bottom left. It'll highlight the last shot in red. Tap the button again to confirm that you want to delete that shot. Now you can keep adding new shots or leave it as is!

Adjust exposure as you shoot.

To adjust how light or dark your video is, tap around your screen when you're in shooting mode. You'll notice if you tap a dark spot, the entire image will brighten, and if you tap a light spot, the entire image will get darker. Since exposure and focus go hand-in-hand, this also means the spot you're tapping will be the part of your video that's in focus.

There are other features that can help you make the most of your Instagram experience which are beyond the scope of this report. Now you may be thinking this sounds like a fun toy, but how can I better use it for business purposes? Here are a few tips:

1. Employ Hashtags to Increase Discoverability
2. Sponsor Contests
3. Create Hype for New Products
4. Utilize Cross-Promotion with Facebook
5. Humanize Your Brand via Engaging Content

Instagram is potentially highly lucrative for brands, then, and is a very smart place for them to invest their time and their money. While this may be true though, it's also very *different* from other platforms and other social networks. What this means, is that it you need to approach it differently and you need to have different objectives lest you be disappointed.

So what does this mean? For starters, you need to be aware that Instagram *isn't* about making direct sales and conversions. You can't include live links in your description that will send people anywhere, so you can't have a 'Click Here to Buy Now' call to action there. Remember: this is a *good* thing at the end of the day as far as your marketing is concerned.

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So instead, what you need to be focusing on is your brand's visibility, popularity, loyalty and authority. Your aim is to build followers *on* Instagram, so that they will see your content and be constantly reminded about your brand and why it matters. Likewise, you want the people who already like your brand to learn to like it even more and to be constantly reminded that you exist and of all the great things they can buy.

This is very much a 'slow burn' marketing strategy and it should not be measured in terms of immediate ROI. This should be measured in terms of engagement, growth and popularity. In the long term, this is actually much more valuable to you than a single sale. Social media is extremely powerful and if used correctly, can make a huge difference to your business.

Mix promotional (sales, new product announcements) and non-promotional (pictures of followers, behind the scenes, *making of* or order fulfillment photos) with a bias towards non-promotional. Strive for an 80/20 mix of non-promotional to promotional posts. Ask users to post photos using your products / services along with your unique hashtags. Award one user per week or month a prize for doing so. Follow those who follow your competitors. This can often lead to a "follow back," which means you're creating opportunities to market to the audience of your competition.

While, content is still king, it has never been more important to consider images when optimizing your content so that it will rank well in the search engines. When it comes to using

Instagram to drive traffic to your website, it is more about social media optimization, so it is important to post images that capture and engage your audience, because the more likes

and comments your photos receive, the better the search engines will rank them.

Before you begin posting images, think about how your photos can enhance and emphasize your products or services. The same basic rules of selling apply. You want

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to stand out from your competition, so be creative and don't be afraid to experiment with different types of images. Try using funny, creative, intriguing, emotional and even controversial (not offensive) images and then pay close attention to how your viewers react.

This will help you see which type of image works best for your business. Primarily, Instagram provides instant gratification for its users. They snap, edit and upload. They can also like, share and comment on photos that interest them which makes the viral power of Instagram virtually unstoppable. Imagine having thousands of people comment and share photos from your business, literally within seconds. It really can be that easy!

Secondly, it offer users an easy set up; there is no need to fill in a lengthy profile like other social networks require. You simply download the app to your mobile device, create an account and get started right away.

For marketing purposes you can use it to showcase your products, services and increase the awareness and popularity of your brand online. Instagram photos and albums are extremely powerful for adding personality to brands in a way that no other network has been able to achieve successfully.

If you'd like a good example of how major brands are using Instagram, try doing a search for major brands like Pepsi, Nike, or Lexus and you can see how their utilizing simple photos to build their online presence. Another powerful feature of Instagram that makes it appealing to businesses is that it is integrated with the Foursquare location database, which allows users to Geotag the actual location where the photo was taken. This instantly links the photo to the location of your business.

So, how can you make pictorial content that will make you stand out and build your brand? Obviously, Instagram caters *very well* to creative brands and to companies that sell crafts, clothing, ornaments or anything else that is aesthetically appealing and

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likely to appeal to an audience that likes beautiful things. If you knit plush toys, or design shoes, then you can upload pictures of these to show off your products in a very stylish way. Restaurants and food companies meanwhile can be *highly* successful showing images of what they're cooking or preparing.

Surprisingly, this will also work very well for technology companies, car manufacturers – even companies creating kitchen cutlery. Technology nerds can get surprisingly excited about some 'sexy' new hardware and, if you compose the shot correctly, this can be very effective. Services might also work – whether you show photos of the beautiful websites you've helped to create, or you upload images of your team looking over the shoulder of someone working at the computer (for a consultant).

Another angle is to think of the lifestyle and the 'value proposition' surrounding your brand. There's a saying that you 'don't sell hats, you sell warm heads'. What is the equivalent of your 'warm head'? In other words, if your company sells fitness equipment then you can upload photos of the equipment but you can *also* upload photos of the *lifestyle*.

This could mean a photo of a taped and chalked hand, ready to grab a pull up bar. It could mean a photo of an empty protein shaker, or it could mean a picture of a figure running on the horizon against a sunrise. Maybe it means a picture of someone looking very confident and in great shape on the beach? Here are a few other quick things you should keep in mind when posting your images to achieve building your brand on Instagram.

Be consistent

Be sure to post on a regular basis. If you've been doing business online for any length of time you already know that the search engines like consistency, so just like posting content to your blog it's important to regularly update your Instagram feed with relevant and engaging photos.

Use hashtags

The symbol # (known as a hashtag) is used to attach keywords or topics to your images. Adding tags to your photos will make them visible on public tag pages and also make it easier for people to find your content.

Link it up

It's also a good idea to link your Instagram account with your Facebook page, so that your Facebook fans can like and comment on your Instagram photos. This way you can increase the amount of attention your photos receive, without taking the time to post them on each individual site separately.

Instagram is effective because it allows you to upload and use images to paint a visual story about your business. The right picture can captivate, entertain and ignite consumer interest in your products and services, so that they will follow you and ultimately make a purchase from you. When it comes to getting the best results from your Instagram marketing campaigns there are a few things you should keep in mind:

The perfect username

It's a good idea to use your business or brand name as your Instagram username. This way when people search for your products and services it will be easier for them to find you. Don't worry if you've already set up your Instagram account under a different name, you can simply log in and edit your profile. Keep in mind that it may take some time for your new username to display.

Share well

As we have discussed before it's important to share compelling and engaging photos, so that your followers will be inclined to like and share them with others. It's also important to make sure you share frequently. Just like with any other type of social marketing consistency is key because your followers will leave you in the dust if you don't keep them entertained.

Ask Your Customers Questions

One sure way of finding out what your followers want is to ask for their feedback. Don't be shy, try to make the process as fun and engaging as possible for them. You can do this by offering them something in return for their honest opinions or by running a little contest to see who can post the most thought-provoking comment or idea. Remember, social marketing is all about engagement.

Tell a story

Make sure your photos tell a story about your business. You can do this by posting images of your products or services while they're in development, so that your consumers can see each step of the process. You can also share images of happy employees, and customers enjoying your products. The bottom line is be as creative as possible so that your followers will look forward to seeing what you post next.

Don't forget your Hashtags

Hashtags are an extremely important part of your Instagram marketing campaign, because they help consumers quickly find images that interest them. They will also get your images listed on Instagram's public tag pages, and in the search engine results, which can help send your likes and comments through the roof. Another good idea is to create a unique hash tag for your business and encourage your followers to use it when sharing your photos. A good example of this is Coca-Cola. Not only did they create a hash tag for their main brand they've also created hash tags for their other products like #DietCoke and even for some of their promotions.

Geo-tagging

As we've discussed before, Instagram's location services are an extremely powerful way to drive customers to your business. By geo-tagging your photos you can get consumers in your local community more involved with your business. A quick way to do this is by adding photos to your photomap. You'll find this option on your Instagram share panel.

Get connected

Finally make sure that you connect all of your business related social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Flickr. By synchronizing all of your accounts, you will have a much better chance of expanding and engaging your audience on multiple platforms.

Instagram is extremely simple to use, but don't let that fool you because it is also an extremely powerful tool. With a little time testing and creativity there is no reason that you can't use it to market your business, products and services in a way that is fun, engaging and extremely effective. Finally, consider these vital Instagram marketing 'dos and don'ts' to guide you as you head forward in your efforts.

DO engage with your audience, respond to comments and generally stay active.

DON'T let your account become a ghost town with no new photos and no new comments or likes.

DO use your real-world networking to help enhance your Instagram efforts.

DO put real thought into your images.

DO consider using stock images when you're at a loss, such as those from Compfight.

DON'T upload content that doesn't gel with your mission statement, your tone or your niche. A consistent and strong brand identity is key.

DO create a good logo to use across all your social media.

DON'T be too salesy or pushy. Instagram is *not* the place for that.

DON'T measure your success based on conversions – Instagram is about art, expression and the personal touch.

DO think about the lifestyle you want to portray and the emotion behind that.

DO look for the beauty and the artistic opportunity in everyday activities.

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Hopefully throughout the course of this book you will have learned a great number of techniques you can use to grow your Instagram account and to find new followers and customers. At the same time though, what's actually more important than that is that you understand the *feel* of Instagram and the kind of user that it attracts.

I wish you all the best in your Instagram Marketing endeavours!

Warm Regards

Muhammad Jaafar

Good luck - and if you have any questions - just drop us message at Facebook Messenger:



[Click here to discover the lucrative strategies for building a solid network of customers and a loyal following of repeat buyers with Instagram Marketing](#)