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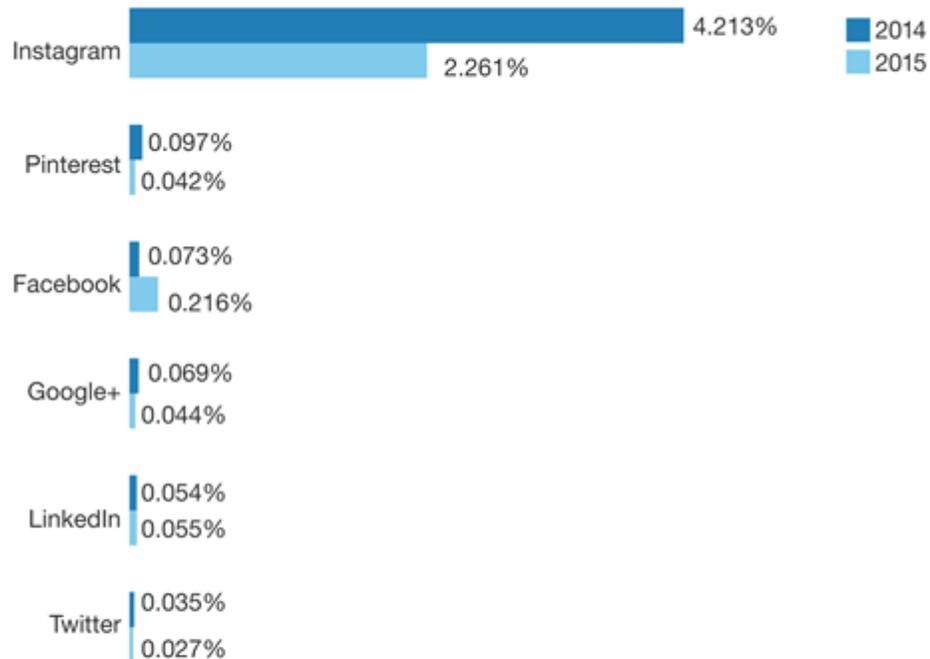


How To Market Your Business on Instagram – A Complete Guide

At only six years young, [Instagram has exploded](#) as not only a social media platform, but also as a versatile tool for marketers. It currently has more than 400 million monthly active users and 80 million photos generated per day. As a mobile-based application that gives users the power to share images and videos, the platform has an unparalleled engagement rate when compared to other social media sites.

In a Forrester research study across Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, they were able to confirm what marketers have long feared: engagement levels between people and brands are very low. Across five of the six networks studied, there was an average of 0.184% engagement from followers. Interestingly enough, Instagram blew these platforms out of the water with an engagement level of 2.261%, or about 10 times more engagement than Facebook and over 83 times more engagement than Twitter!

User interactions with brands as a percentage of brands' fans or followers



Base: 27 to 48 large brand pages on social sites

Source: Forrester's Q1 2014 US Top 50 Brands Social WebTrack and Forrester's Q1 2015 US Top 50 Brands Social WebTrack

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc. Unauthorized reproduction, citation, or distribution prohibited.

[Source](#)

Whether you're already active on Instagram or looking for an introduction on how to get started, check out our guide below to creating a successful Instagram campaign!

How to Set Up your Business Account

In contrast to other social networks, Instagram is an app-based platform. So, the best place to start when setting up your business account is to download the app onto your smartphone. Once downloaded, it will give you an option to create an account by logging in with your Facebook – be careful with this! Often times it will connect to your personal Facebook account instead of your company page. In order to avoid this, create a separate account using your work email and manually link it to each of your other social media pages after you're all set up on Instagram.

The last step in the account set up is to pick the perfect profile photo – this is very important! To do this, tap on the +Photo button to add a photo of your logo, business office, or something recognizable that represents your brand.

As we mentioned earlier, now is the perfect time to link your new Instagram with your already established social media accounts like Facebook and Twitter. By going to the “Profile” button and tapping the gear (settings) shape in the top-right hand corner, you will see an option to link your accounts. Here you can link any account you would like to make posting across platforms faster and more efficient in the future.

The last piece of information to include is in the bio section. This is the **ONLY** place on Instagram that allows for a clickable URL to be posted. Any links that are posted alongside a photo are not able to be clicked on directly from followers, so it is important to put any link that you want followers to see in this “bio” field. This can be updated as often as you like with whatever URL is most relevant to you and your company at the moment.

Tips for Instagram Posts

Now that you’re all set up with your Instagram account, the next step is to create your first posts. If you can, try to create these first few posts *before* you start sending out follower requests and building your audience. This way, followers will have something to look at on your page to get an idea of your brand once they arrive. The following points are great to keep in mind, not only for your first posts, but also for all of your Instagram activity in the future.

1) Hashtags: Hashtags are a way that Instagrammers can filter and discover new content and accounts for them to follow. As a company, it is important to incorporate at least one hashtag into each post to help your posts gain exposure. Instagram allows up to 30 hashtags per post or comment, so they can be a great way to gain exposure on your posts, particularly when you’re just getting started. You can [view trending hashtags](#) in Instagram’s search tab to find opportunities for your brand to join relevant conversations.

2) Caption: The caption on Instagram, which is limited to 2,200 characters, is an area where brands have room to play based on their marketing strategy for Instagram. The key here is to remain consistent with your style. Will you write captions or not? Will they contain emojis and hashtags or not? Will you mention an updated URL in your bio so followers can follow a relevant link? All of these are effective strategies for Instagram captions, so it’s best to outline the strategy your brand would like to follow and stick with it!

3) Utilize your Bio Link: As we touched on earlier, the bio is the only place that Instagram allows for a click-able URL. As a result, brands can be savvy about updating this link to correspond with their most recent posts, promotions or events. The URL can be to a blog post, to the company website or to any page that provides more information about the promotion or event that the brand wants to advertise. As URLs can be quite lengthy, try a tool like [goo.gl](#) to shorten the URL as well as allow for you as a brand to track the followers who arrive to your website from that particular Instagram link.

4) Influencers: Instagram is a great platform to [incorporate influencer marketing](#) campaigns. Not only can it help you grow your audience base when you’re just getting started, it will help build your credibility among your target consumers and other brands across the industry. We will elaborate on this in more detail, so keep reading on to catch these tips!

5) Geotagging: Geotagging is the ability to include a location with your post. You can get creative with geotagging so you're not always tagging your posts from your office building. Instead, try to tag local businesses or areas of interest that show the culture of your company within your community. Geotagging can provide a huge payoff in terms of engagement, so it's an important thing to remember when getting started on Instagram.

Best Types of Posts for Instagram

There are a ton of posts that are effective to publish on Instagram to increase engagement and help showcase your brand. Some of these include:

- Behind-the-scenes shots
- Timely posts for holidays, fun days like National Ice Cream Day, and more
- [Hyperlapse videos and GIFs](#)
- Contests and giveaways

1) *Behind-the-scenes shots* are a great way for a brand to showcase both the personality of its company as well as provide a sneak peak into something new that your company has on the horizon. For example, a post to show a fashion shoot that is in progress with a few new pieces of a spring collection will help build anticipation, excitement and engagement ahead of the release.

2) *Timely posts* help the company show that they are aware of current events and what is happening in the Internet world. Nowadays, there is a day to commemorate "National Sibling Day," "National Croissant Day," and any number of other themes. If a company can stay on top of the days that are relevant to its target audience and its brand, it can really leverage it with a corresponding post – like the one below from Starbucks.



[Source](#)

3) *Hyperlapse and GIFS* help to grab your follower's attention for a few additional seconds as they stop to watch the video that you've put together or shared. These posts can showcase your products, an event you've coordinated or just be something funny. A hot topic across Instagram at the moment is animals; including an animal in your post helps to increase engagement, regardless of whether or not your business is directly related to animals.

4) *Contests and Giveaways* are one of the most effective uses of Instagram. They are a huge engagement driver and extremely easy to implement through a URL in the bio, tagging followers in the comment section or starting your own contest hashtag. There are so many ways to

implement a contest and, by implementing it on the platform that is hailed as the “King of Social Engagement,” you can be sure to increase the size of your audience and frequency of interactions with them. Here’s an example of a successful Instagram giveaway we did for one of our clients, [Promax Nutrition](#).



Paid Ads on Instagram

Now that you’ve mastered the basics of marketing on Instagram, let’s dive into some of the additional tools that the platform has to offer!

There are three main advertisements that companies can use to market through Instagram: image ads, video ads and carousel ads. In a study of over 475 campaigns by Nielsen, researchers discovered that [ad recall from Instagram ads was 2.8 times higher](#) than for other online advertising formats.

- *Image ads* provide companies the opportunity to post a photo that represents your brand, and aims to attract traffic to your page. The difference here is that the photo is sponsored and featured in places that are outside of where it would normally be seen. It isn’t

restricted to the people who follow your page, but instead strategically placed to be seen by either as many people as possible or by the target audience that you're aiming to reach.

- *Video ads* offer the same visual quality as the image ads, but also include sound and motion. Videos can be up to 30 seconds long and can also include Hyperlapse videos, which allow you to crunch even more content into a short window.
- *Carousel ads* are a series of photo or video ads combined into a single place. Instead of having a single photo or video feature, you can choose 3-4 to include in the same featured ad and allow viewers to swipe between them (without leaving the post). Carousel ads also include a “call to action” button within the post to give viewers a faster route to your company Instagram page.

Each of these ad formats has unique benefits and caters to particular needs and objectives of the advertiser. Whether you're looking to send traffic to your company website, increase the number of people who install your mobile app or just boost awareness of your brand, there is a format that can help you to achieve this goal.

Influencer Marketing on Instagram

Depending on the size of your business, these options may or may not be within your advertising budget. It can sometimes be more cost-effective to advertise by [leveraging an influencer marketing strategy](#) on your company's Instagram page.

One way that you can leverage an influencer for Instagram is by inviting them to do a “takeover” of your brand's account for anywhere from 1- 3 days. This guest Instagrammer is usually someone who has a well-established following within your target audience or another market of interest for your brand. When a takeover happens, the influencer will usually post on their own account to let their followers know that they will be running a particular brand's posts – something that will drive people over to your account instantly!

Here is an example of a post by Kat Tanita, a New York-based fashion blogger, who was invited to take over the Amazon Fashion Instagram for a day.



[Source](#)

If you're not looking to give up complete control of your Instagram page, you can reach out to influencers individually and ask them to post about your brand. Depending on your strategy, you can compensate influencers to post about an upcoming contest that you're hosting or to have them showcase your newest product to help generate interest. These influencers can be used for a one-time post, or you can also consider putting together [a partnership agreement where both parties agree on a number of Instagram campaign posts](#) over a specified period of time and for a specified price.

The Final Word

Instagram provides a host of opportunities for businesses both large and small. The tips and tricks in this guide are a great place to start for those new to the platform, and a great way for veteran Instagrammers to check in to make sure they're maximizing their presence. With a network of over 400 million active users, we want to make sure that you're making the most of Instagram.

Source: Marketing Zen / n/d

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