

Online Media Works

THE SOCIAL MEDIA CAFÉ

YOUR BUSINESS WITH INSTAGRAM

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Boost your business with Instagram

Our plan for today is:

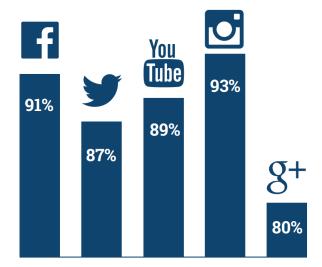
- 1. Introduction to Instagram.
- 2. Why use Instagram in your business?
- 3. Optimise your account.
- 4. What to post?
- 5. Which hashtags to use?
- 6. Stories
- 7. Promote your account.
- 8. Measure effectiveness.
- 9. What's next?

Please ask lots of questions as we go through!

1. Introduction to Instagram – the story so far.....

Launched in October 2010, Instagram lets registered users upload photos or videos to the app.

After its launch in 2010, Instagram rapidly gained popularity, with one million registered users in two months, 10 million in a year, and ultimately 700 million as of April 2017. The service was acquired by Facebook in April 2012 for approximately US\$1 billion. As of April 2017, the Instagram Stories functionality has over 200 million active users, while Instagram Direct has 375 million active users.



Percentage of month-over-month audience growth (months that brands added followers for each social channel)

Source: HubSpot

Users can apply various digital filters to their images, and add locations through geotags. They can add hashtags to their posts, linking the photos up to other content on Instagram featuring the same subject or overall topic.

Users can connect their Instagram account to other social media profiles, enabling them to share photos to those profiles as well.

In June 2012, an "Explore" tab was introduced in the mobile apps, showing users a variety of media, including (but not limited to) popular photos and photos taken at nearby locations, trending tags and places, channels for recommended videos, and curated content.

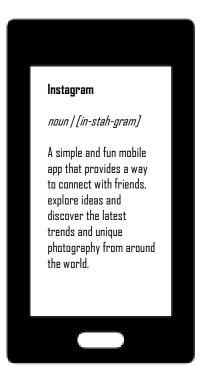
Support for videos was originally launched in June 2013, and had a 15-second maximum duration and limited quality, with Instagram later adding support for widescreen and longer videos, up to 60 seconds.

Private messaging, called Instagram Direct, was launched with basic photo-sharing functionality in December 2013, and has gradually received major updates incorporating more features.

Originally, a distinctive feature of Instagram was its confining of photos to a square; this was changed in August 2015, when an update started allowing users to upload media at full size.

Updates include easier private sharing from the news feed, threaded conversations, sharing locations and hashtag pages, increased support for text and emoji, and the ability to make photos "disappear" after being viewed by the recipient.

In August 2016, Instagram introduced a "Stories" feature, letting users add photos to a story, with the content disappearing after 24 hours. Instagram added live-video functionality to Stories in November 2016, augmented reality stickers in April 2017, and face filters in May 2017



TOP TIP

In order to capture the attention of your audience you must be active on the platform, creating content that is engaging for your target customer.

2. Why use Instagram in your business?

Since the dawn of time when cave dwellers told stories by painting on their walls, people have loved visual storytelling. Now in the 21st century people love Instagram because the visual content inspires them and they discover things they care about, this includes both photos and videos from brands and businesses. Some people think that Instagram is the happiest place on the internet!

If you're looking to increase brand awareness, Instagram is a statistically sound place to invest your time and energy.

60% of people say they discover new products on Instagram.*
75% of Instagrammers take action after being inspired by a post*

It is one of the fastest growing social networks in the world with over 500 million active users who share an average of 95 million photos/videos and post 4.2 billion likes every day. Instagram users have shared over 40 billion photos to date, that's a lot of photos! (source instagram-press.com)

Instagram announced in June 2016 that 80% of all Instagram users come from countries outside of the United States, so it's not just an 'American thing'!

Instagram is used by 48.8% of brands, this is expected to rise to 70.7% by 2017.

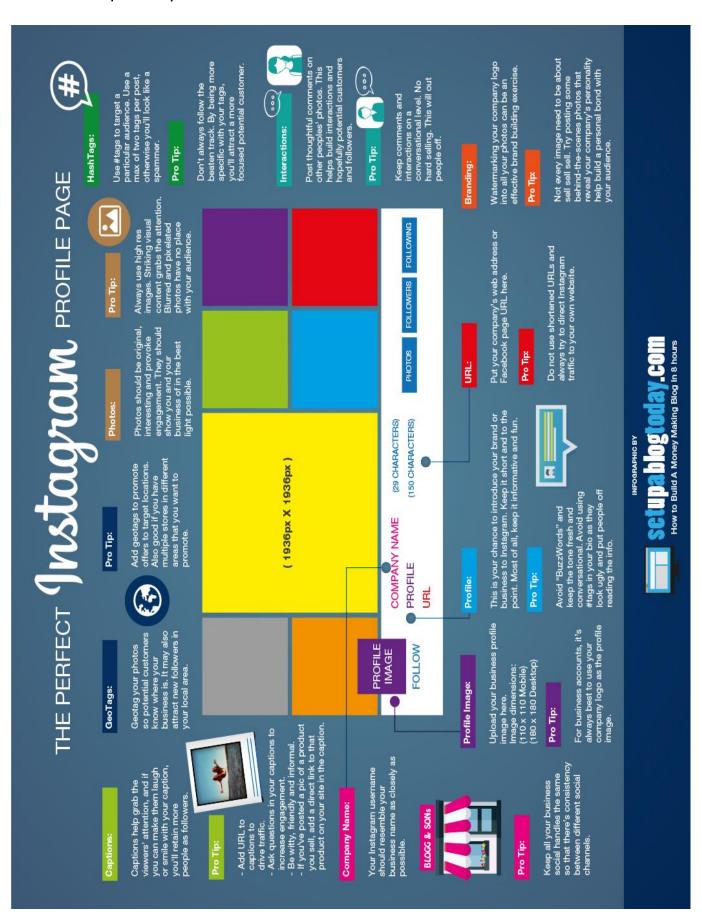
A social media survey by Forrester discovered that top brands posted 4.9 times per week on Instagram in 2016, an increase of more than 50% over 2015, so the brands that are active on the platform are seeing results and are posting more regularly. There is the theory about where you place your attention is where the magic happens.

Forrester also found that Instagram delivers 58% more engagement per follower than Facebook and 120 times more than Twitter.



^{*}Source: Instagram User Survey November 2015

3. Optimise your account



Setting up an Instagram account is straightforward and easy. Download the app to your smartphone, choose an account name (that mirrors your business name) add a short bio, a photo and a weblink.

TOP TIP

Make sure you choose a free business account, this means that you can: get real-time analysis on how your posts perform throughout the day. get insights into your followers and how they interact with your posts and stories. add information about your company, such as business hours, location and phone number.

To optimize your Instagram profile, begin by selecting a clear and memorable profile photo. Your logo is usually the best choice, however if it doesn't display well as a thumbnail photo, consider creating an adapted version or using a memorable branded graphic.

Next, turn your attention to the bio field and the website field.

In addition to the content you share, your bio is an opportunity to entice people to follow your account. Use it to communicate what your company does and what unique or exciting content you share.

The website field is the only spot on your profile where you can place a clickable link that lets people navigate from Instagram to your website. Use this spot to drive traffic to the most relevant page on your website.

Simply pick the best page for potential visitors to land such as your blog or online shop, or create a custom landing page meant just for Instagram users. Remember most people clicking this link will be on a mobile device, so any website you choose should be optimized for a mobile experience.

Finally, double check that your account is set to public so Instagram users don't need to request your permission to follow you or view your content

CHECKLIST
Decide on your username This can be up to 30 characters long, and will also be used as the URL for your profile page. Make it as similar to your company name a you can.
Select a password Make this as secure as possible to prevent social media hacks.
Write your bio You get 150 characters to talk about your company (or product or service). Keep in mind that URLs you include in your bio are clickable but URLs that you include in photo captions are not. Edit the way your Instagram bio looks by changing the spacing or font of the

icons, is to write your content in Google Docs or something similar, then copy and paste the text into your bio.
Add your website This URL will generally be the homepage of your main website, unless you're creating a dedicated account for a specific product or service. In that case, link to the appropriate landing page.
Enable location services: Turn this on in your phone's settings to automatically geotag photos and put them in a map so users can browse your photos by location. You can also geotag photos after you've already posted them.

text to make it stand out. The easiest was to save the formatting, such as hard returns and visual

Images Needed

✓ Upload a profile picture

This displays as 150x150px on most phones mobile apps, but displays larger on a desktop. You should upload a slightly larger size/resolution to accommodate this difference. Make sure your logo is simply designed, high contrast, and easy to read and identify amid all the photos.

✓ Post a photo

The maximum file upload size is 2048x2048px, which will be resized to various square dimensions for mobile and desktop feeds

✓ Write a caption

Captions are limited to 2200 characters and 30 hashtags per post, though very long captions are difficult to read on the mobile app.

✓ Edit photos

The Instagram apps has all sorts of editing options, including adding filters, adjusting saturation, upping the contrast or brightness, sharpening the image, and so on.

✓ Tag and mention accounts

You can tag other accounts that are pictured in the photo. Even if they're not in the photo, you can mention accounts in captions or comments and they will receive a notification.

✓ Follow and unfollow accounts

You can't follow more than 7500 accounts, but there's no limit on how many people can follow you. You also can't follow more than 20 people per hour, or unfollow more than 100 people per hour.

✓ Comment and like posts

Comments are limited to around 240 characters, but there's not an exact cut off. You can't like more than 350 posts per hour.

✓ Link to other social accounts

If you give Instagram access to these accounts, it allows you to easily cross-post to Facebook, Twitter, etc. from inside Instagram's app

TOP TIP

Use Linktree to link to multiple links so you can always have relevant content on display rather than just one clickable link in your bio.

6. What to post?

The grid on your Instagram feed is the showcase for your company, so what you post should always be the best it can be. Take pride in posting, creating and curating your account to maximise the way it looks and feels.

TOP TIP

Post exclusive content to Instagram that you don't put on your other social media platforms. Make it personal to your brand.

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☐ Showcase your products or the processes that make them.
☐ Introduce your employees or reveal what's happening around the office.
Highlight events your company hosts or attends.
☐ Give behind-the-scenes glimpses of events relevant to your industry.
Customer stories
Employees – a day in the life of
Work in progress, behind the scenes
Industry news
☐ Motivational posts, quotes
□ Videos/Boomerangs
☐ User Generated Content (UGC) with their permission repost and acknowledge your followers and promote them
☐ Carousel - you can now combine up to 10 photos and videos in one post and swipe through to see them all
☐ Video posts on Instagram used to be limited to just 15 seconds. Now, video length limits have been increased to 60 seconds.
Increasing the lengths of videos means it's ever more important to capture users' attention within the first few seconds. Experiment with different video styles to see what works best for your audience. Remember that just because you have 60 seconds doesn't mean you have to use it all. Giveaways/contests Guest posts/Reposts
ACTIVITY
Ask yourself, what does my target customer want to see?

7. Build your library of photographs

Start by building a library of good quality content. Decide on the image your brand portrays and the story you want to tell.

ACTIVITY

Spend some time browsing at similar brands and businesses to your own and see how they project their image.
Look at the engagement their posts get (in terms of numbers of likes and comments)

A great technique on Instagram is to establish a particular style and stick to it.

This means that you become more memorable within the newsfeed, and all your posts remain within your distinctive branding.

Whether that's picking the same filter and border every time like Deliciously Ella or whether you use similar colours and angle in your shots. A great example of this is Lucky Dip Club on Instagram, who use bright, fun and retro images that are completely on brand.

TOP TIP

Photo tips

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/goodpictures-phonetips#sm.0000fer2r3rb9d5ytz32re8h687ql

Make sure you use Instagram for additional content that's a little bit special. If you are just posting the same thing to Facebook and Twitter as well, you are giving people less of a reason to follow you on Instagram. Think product launches, behind the scenes, a look at life running a business, and places you are visiting for inspiration.

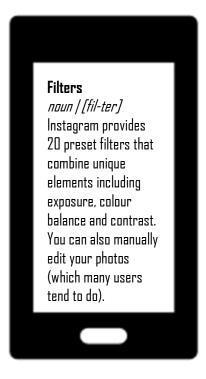
If your company utilizes a visual style guide (colours, fonts, etc.), make sure that your Instagram posts are "on brand" and follow the guidelines.

For example, does your company only post social images in your brand's specific colour scheme on Twitter and Facebook? Should your pictures all include your company's logo?

Use of filters

There are 20 filters, how can you use them? Should you?

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/15/instagram-filters-ranked n 5127006.html



You may have a few favourite filters and others you never touch. To make editing photos easier, you can reorder the filters in your editing window, and hide the ones you never use.

To reorder or hide filters, add a new post and begin editing it. When you get to the filters page, scroll to the very far right of your filters options and click "Manage."

To reorder filters, hold your finger down on the three grey lines on the far right of the filter you'd like to move, and drag it to reorder. To hide them, deselect the checkmark to the right.

Captions

Captions are like a mini blog post, you want to engage customers to your brand, so avoid sound like a catalogue, sales page or brochure. Encourage comments by asking questions. Another idea is to tell a story that links with your picture.

Some brands only post pictures in certain colours, to give consistency to their feed.

Extra info

How to use Instagram stories

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/instagramstories-guide#sm.0000fer2r3rb9d5ytz32re8h687ql

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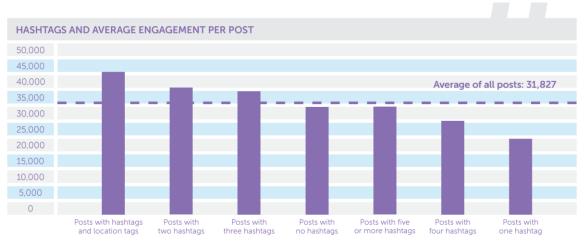
FEED

noun / [feed]
Your photo gallery or
'feed' is the collection of
photos you've posted to
Instagram to create a
collection of your photos.
Try to think of your
Instagram account not
just as a single photo
posted at a time but
rather as a whole visual
experience where the sum
is greater than its parts.

8. Which hashtags to use?

Hashtags are a powerful feature to engage followers, they act as keywords providing a way or users to find photos through a simple search.

Posts with at least one hashtag average 12.6 percent more engagement than those without, according to a study by Simply Measured. It's best to be specific rather than general in your use of hashtags, this will help you connect better with your target audience.



Posts that include both a hashtag and a location tag over-index engagement, averaging 43,061 Likes and Comments each. Posts with multiple hashtags also perform better than average

Source: Marketo

Use a website such as hashtagify.me/hashtag/Instagram to research and uncover the top hashtags that are being used in your sector. Sometimes a little creativity goes a long way to get found in a busy landscape.

TOP TIPS

Put the hashtags into a separate comment rather than in the caption, it looks tidier.

Put the hashtags in a notepad on your phone for easy copying and pasting.

You can use up to 30 hashtags per post.

Using the right hashtag (or a combination of hashtags) can help you expose your brand to large and targeted audiences, it's like an easy way to find all the posts filed under the same topic.

You may want to create your own hashtag that your customers can use when uploading their own photos or for an event. This is a great way to promote your brand.

Using a branded hashtag in your posts is an effective way of curating user generated content. Additionally, make sure to regularly search Instagram for mentions of your brand to see where you've been 'hashtagged'.

When reposting content, credit the original source in a shout out as a means of showing your customers that you value their contributions.

If you're a brick and mortar business, check your geo-location for photos taken in your shop that may not have been tagged with your name. You can also use a hashtag for your neighbourhood to let your presence be known to anyone who's using Instagram to explore the area.

Consider participating in popular instagram trends such as Throwback Thursdays (see the glossary on page 25) to give users a glimpse into the history of your business. This is a great way to show a personable side of your brand and engage with an already active community topic.

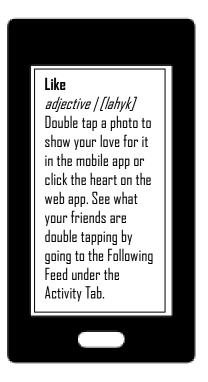
Lastly, the character limit for photo captions on Instagram is generous. This provides an opportunity to tell a great story alongside your photo and provide your audience with better context and insight into a particular topic.

ACTIVITY

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Explore some hashtags that you could use for your brand:-	

9. How to engage your followers?

Social media is about being social, so find accounts to follow, like their posts, leave comments, start a conversation.



Make sure that you are always professional, respectful and on-brand. Find the influencers in your industry sector and follow them.

You should always thank the user for their post, leave a comment, follow them back and you may like to repost their photo. You can use the 'Repost' app for this which makes it easy.

Selfies are a great way to increase brand awareness, encourage your customers to take a picture of themselves with your product or in your business and post it on Instagram with your hashtag.

It's a good idea to respond in a timely way and not to use the same standard responses or comments to every follower, make it personal and let your brand shine through.

Geolocation is another point of engagement, by tagging your location users can discover your account. This is ideal for events or instore promotions.

Once you've started building a following, it's important to engage with them regularly. Apps such as Iconosquare can show you the people who interact with your content most often. Keep an eye on these followers, recognize their engagement, and follow them back. These are the people who you could potentially consider for brand advocate roles, and their profiles can offer deeper insights into what they find interesting.

Make use of the content your community is sharing, such as photos of customers enjoying your products or visiting your business. Frequently featuring your customers on your own feed is a great way to strengthen relationships by showing them that you appreciate their support. Don't forget to

credit content from other people by mentioning their username in the caption or by tagging it in the photo.

A common practice on Instagram is to @mention other users—sometimes in a descriptive caption, sometimes in a comment—to give credit or draw their attention to a certain photo or video. If you receive notifications that your brand is @mentioned, it might be worth spending a moment to acknowledge an on-brand fan photo with a Like or a comment.

TOP TIP

Want to see all the photos you've ever liked on instagram? On the mobile app click the gear icon in the top right corner, under the account section, click photos you've liked and voila!

Timing

There are two schools of thought either research to see when your target audience is online or to be instantaneous (keep the 'insta' in Instagram!) You can research using programs such as Iconosquare which offer 'best times to post' but try to post consistently, at least once a day.

Contests

Whether you're looking to support the launch of a new product, generate attention or build momentum with consumers quickly, contests are by far the best way to expand your reach and engage your community. It is easy to run competitions on Instagram and these are a great way to build followers and engagement. You could ask followers to share brand related photos with a special hashtag to win a prize, or vote for their favourite photo that you've posted. Advertise the competition on all your social media platforms, on your website and in your business.

Among all the different types of contests you could be running on Instagram, nothing encourages people to engage with your brand and connect with your products more than UGC (User Generated Content) contests. Asking for content expands the emotional connection between the consumers and the brand.

Also, by running a photo or video contest you also generate authentic marketing content that is created by and for consumers. This helps to spread the campaign reach beyond your audience because when Instagram users post their entries, their followers see it too.

Here are the 11 elements of setting up an Instagram contest

- 1. Plan objectives: timeframe, budget, targets and benchmarks
- 2. Create an entry method for the contest
- 3. Find the perfect hashtag
- 4. Define a theme for the contest
- 5. Outline how winners will be chosen
- 6. Devise a method on how the prize will be distributed
- 7. Create rules for the contest
- 8. Set up a landing page
- 9. Promote, promote, promote!
- 10. Monitor
- 11. Follow-up

10. Instagram Etiquette

No matter what the social network, there will always be people out there posting negative or inappropriate comments.

Respond to positive comments on your Instagram content. As best practice, check comments at least once a week thoroughly, especially for contests/timely posts.

Engage with people who follow you, or other people in your category that you follow. Spend time daily or at least weekly "liking" and commenting on other posts besides your own.

Follow these guidelines outlined by HubSpot's social media and content strategist, Brittany Leaning:



For those messages that stand out as requiring a response, you should have a plan in place for handling certain types of messages, including:Support or customer service inquiries
Negative or disparaging comments
Career inquiries
Sales leads

Spam

Certain messages may require a reroute to another platform; for example, it may be easier to handle support issues via live chat, phone or email.

Instagram Direct allows users to send a photo or video directly to anyone rather than publishing it to their feed. If a user sends this type of message to your handle, and you aren't following them, the post will be in your requests queue, where you can accept their request in order to review and respond to their post.

11. Promote your account

Make it easy for people to find you. Add your Instagram address to your email signature, your website and to your other social media accounts.

Once you have a social media policy in place ask your staff to like, comment and share posts on their accounts too.

If you have a Facebook Business page, you can create and manage Instagram ads through the Facebook advertising platform.

As always, begin by selecting an objective that most closely matches your business needs. A number of objectives are available for Instagram Ads, including Clicks to Website, Website Conversions, Video Views, and Page Post Engagement.

You can use the rollovers of the objectives on the Facebook Ads "Campaign" page, to identify and match your Instagram objective.

If you have a mobile optimized web property such as an online shop, consider selecting send people to your website or increase conversions on your website.

Since Instagram does not allow links in posts, these objectives are an effective way to drive traffic from Instagram to your website.

With 'boost your post' you can create a brand-new post or use a previously published Facebook post to drive likes and comments. This objective is optimized to drive interaction with the ad through likes and comments.

You can also create ads within the Instagram app, if you have an Instagram Business account

To promote a post within the app, simply click the "Promote" button below a post. You can then select an objective from the options listed. This method is useful if you don't have ready access to the Facebook advertising platform but still need to promote a post on the go.

Once you've selected the campaign objective for your Instagram Ad, it's time to define details including audience, budgeting, schedule, and creative.

The same targeting options available for Facebook are available for Instagram ads, including location, demographics, interests, behaviours, as well as advanced options like lookalike audiences.

An advantage of running your ad on both Facebook and Instagram, is that your ad will be optimized to show on the platform that meets your campaign objective at the lowest cost. For example, if you're running a campaign to get visitors to your website and Instagram visitors are converting better than Facebook visitors, the campaign budget will be automatically reallocated to Instagram.

Performance metrics for Instagram ads will be available in Power Editor and Ads Manager shortly after your campaign is approved. If you created your ad through the Instagram app, you can also view metrics by selecting the promoted post and clicking "View Insights".

Instagram Pods

Instagram pods are private groups of 10-15 Instagrammers, bloggers, or businesses that have similar audiences and the desire to increase their Instagram engagement and get more followers.

Instagram pods communicate with each other via Instagram Direct, and every time someone in the pod publishes a new Instagram post, they share it in the group message thread.

Instagram pod members will then click on the post, like it, and leave a genuine comment which encourages other, regular followers to engage with the post too. The more likes and comments your post receives shortly after posting, the better your post will perform in the algorithm. High initial engagement signals to Instagram that you're posting quality, engaging content and as a result, your post can move higher up in people's feeds (and potentially go viral).

12. Build a plan

"If you don't know exactly where you're going, how will you know when you've got there?"

Steve Maraboli

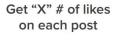
What are your goals?

1. Have a plan.

Keep in mind you can hone in on goals, too. For example:

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Gain "X" # of followers per day, week, month, quarter



Post "X" # of video posts







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ACTIVITY What's the plan for Instagram in your business?

	What's the business objective?
2.	Who is your target audience? Be really specific!
3.	Where do they hang out? Online? Offline? When?

4.	Listen Listen, observe, learn
	Position yourself as an expert What is my area of expertise?
ô.	Work your plan What will I post? When?
7.	Measure the results Follows? Likes? Comments? Shares?
3.	Reflect What worked? What didn't? What will you change?

13. Measure effectiveness

Track the number of followers you have, posts and engagement by using the analytics within Instagram.

Alternatively, other apps such as Iconosquare and Hootsuite can be used to measure your results.

Staying active is important and as we saw earlier top brands post 5 times a week so consistency is crucial.

You may not see an instant increase in sales but Instagram offers a way to connect with your customers and build brand awareness.

In 2016, Instagram introduced their Instagram for Business platform with a built-in Insights tool so now you can see who your followers are and which posts resonate best with your audience.

Keep a running tally of followers gained per day/per week and more; determining these metrics before you get started and as you focus your strategy will help determine both your success and ability to repeat what's working and cut what isn't.

The new Insights tool lets you see who your followers are and what kinds of content performs best for your audience. Insights also tells you how many total number of impressions, reach, and engagement each of your posts are getting.

Tracking how well your content performs and your follower growth will allow you to adapt your Instagram marketing strategy over time. This allows you to deliver more of the content that your audience responds to while optimizing your plans for future campaigns.

14. What's next?

Instagram is a growing channel that will allows you to grow and humanize your brand, recruit future employees, showcase your product, company culture, delight customers, and generate new business. All with images you can create and share.... Give it a shot: make a profile, start testing and learn from what works and what doesn't.

Keep an eye on the changes, Instagram never stands still and there are new things to learn all the time!

Have fun!

Suggested Apps to download

Boomerang

Flipagram

Instagram

Instagrid

Instasize

Pic Collage

Repost

Wordswag

Sneakpeak

Other useful programs

Canva

Iconosquare

Linktree

Picmonkey

Laters

Sites for free stock photos

Pixabay

Pexels

https://blog.bufferapp.com/free-image-sources-list

About me



I'm Esther Partridge-Warner and I have extensive sales and marketing background spanning 25 years.

I've worked in large multinational corporations and micro businesses, across various industry platforms from educational publishing, security, IT, to health, recruitment, creative industries (especially Etsy) and many others.

In 2006 I graduated from Worcester University with a degree in IT for Education & Training. In autumn 2017 I will commence lecturing in Social Media in the Business School at the University.

Now I'm a successful entrepreneur, trainer and speaker, providing business and marketing support for business owners, as well as for all sizes of business.

I'm a recognised online marketing and social media expert and in 2017 I won an Instagram competition run by Enterprise Nation.

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